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Overlooked Diplomacy: A Look Into Missed Diplomatic
Efforts in the Pacific Theater of World War II

By
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Senior Project Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Graduation

Department of History
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Dedicated to my Mom and Dad

With appreciation to Andrew Morris, and all other educators
who have helped me grow intellectually

ABSTRACT

Max Melanson

Overlooked Diplomacy: A Look Into Missed Diplomatic
Efforts in the Pacific Theater of World War II

This thesis examines possible diplomatic solutions that may have ceased United States-Japanese conflict throughout the late 1930s and 40s. The first chapter analyzes the declaration of the policy of unconditional surrender, and what this policy entailed. Despite Roosevelt claiming that the idea just came to him, it was a carefully developed policy, and was chosen to be enacted for a multitude of reasons. After the Casablanca conference in January 1943, unconditional surrender became a unifying policy and a politically smart policy in Roosevelt's favor. The second chapter then analyzes the tensions rising between Japan and the United States through the 1930s to provide context for the outbreak of World War II. After Japan was opened by Commodore Matthew Perry, they industrialized at a rapid pace. Like other western powers, they sought to imperialize to expand their influence, and obtain resources. Attempted diplomatic efforts to circumvent war in the Pacific before December, 1941, are analyzed. The third chapter then looks at public opinion regarding unconditional surrender, and its evolution over time. Internal strife among the federal government in trying to modify the policy is also noted. Some members of the State Department, and almost all high level military planners wanted to modify the terms of surrender to bring about a faster surrender. One way in which this was pursued was by attempting to allow the institution of the Emperor to stay intact after the war. In the end, diplomatic actions were unsuccessful. This is largely due to the combined hurdles of internal conflict, complex bureaucratic structure, the heat of war, and

unwillingness to forgo the major goals of the war. Diplomatic actions that compromised the complete destruction of Japanese militarism were not considered by President Roosevelt or Truman.

I

On the day of September 2nd, 1945, the Japanese Empire succumbed to the armed forces of the United States. Roughly four years of combat induced the complete devastation of both the Japanese Navy and Airforce, the Japanese economy, and multiple Japanese cities, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki, leading Emperor Hirohito with no choice but to formally surrender. Aboard the USS Missouri, Emperor Hirohito signed an Instrument of Surrender, in which he agreed to the terms set forth by the Potsdam Declaration. Proposed by Harry Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin in July of 1945, the declaration stated that, in congruence with Germany, Japan's militaristic advisors had led the nation to utter ruin, and if they were to continue, they would be met with prompt and utter destruction. They demanded that Japan must be wiped clean of all influence from those who cultivated, fostered and participated in irresponsible militarism. They claimed that their demands would not be deviated, nor would there be any alternatives. Surrender must be unconditional.

While the idea of "unconditional surrender" may initially seem simple, the terms of surrender that America demanded to end the second World War possessed intriguing origins, differing interpretations, and lasting repercussions. Throughout the entirety of the war, passionate debate among politicians and military personnel alike took place over the necessity and validity of the terms of surrender. While the Potsdam Declaration is attributed with being the first written demand for unconditional surrender, The Casablanca Conference of January, 1943, was the first time that the idea was proposed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Multiple historians theorize that one of the largest influences on Roosevelt's foreign policy decision-making came from President Woodrow Wilson's shortcomings during World War I. Unconditional surrender, when achieved, undeniably produced lasting consequences. One of these consequences was the

termination of the Japanese Empire, and those who drove forward Japan's violent and imperialistic nature, however, another is the birth of the Atomic Age, as America dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. Furthermore, Americans are left to wonder how significantly the policy of unconditional surrender factored into Truman's decision to drop the Atomic Bombs.

Since the end of the war, historians have tried to paint a clear picture of why unconditional surrender was demanded without any hesitation or adjustment. One of the most extensive and recent works on the field is Marc Gallicchio's book, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II*. Gallicchio is able to give an encompassing but detailed look into the factors that created a desire for unconditional surrender, the discourse which occurred around the idea, and the actual process of driving the Japanese to surrender. Gallicchio begins by analyzing Roosevelt's call for unconditional surrender during the Casablanca Conference, where he clearly stated that the Allied powers would not modify their terms for any reason, and a repeat of the factors that made World War II possible would not happen.¹ Quickly, the book moves to the United States' entrance into the Pacific, as well as the transition into Harry Truman's presidency, who would rigidly stick with Roosevelt's demands. Most importantly, Gallicchio's book discusses the partisanship and nuances which dominated the discussion of unconditional surrender.

Levels of turmoil in America through the 1930s and 40s were undoubtedly extremely high. Truman not only had to deal with political division created by Roosevelt's New Deal politics and a damaged economy from the Great Depression, but also internal debate throughout the United States regarding the war. By July of 1945, Americans began to grow tired of war efforts, and while the majority still favored the terms of surrender being unconditional, many also pleaded for the Truman administration to clarify what exactly was meant by unconditional

¹ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 1.

surrender.² Furthermore, there were some members of the State Department who advocated for Japan's emperor to stay in power throughout the United States occupation of Japan. Those in favor of this policy believed that it would both strengthen the peace faction that existed in Japan, and believed that the institution of the Emperor and Japanese militarism were separable entities.³ Another critic of unconditional surrender was a man who opposed almost all of Roosevelt's policies, Herbert Hoover. Hoover had met with Truman in the White House on May 28th, 1945, and strongly encouraged him to allow Hirohito to remain in control of Japan after the war. Hoover believed that negotiated surrender would save up to a million lives, as well as prevent Soviet entry into the war, keeping the Soviet Union from gaining influence in Asia.⁴ Hoover believed that there was a "liberal faction" in Japan which was anti-war, and would sooner agree to surrendering if the terms were specified.⁵ As the war dragged on, Gallicchio notes that the motivation to modify the terms of surrender gained traction across a wider audience of military planners and administrative office-holders.⁶

Gallicchio concludes by acknowledging broader ideas regarding how complicated the policy of unconditional surrender was in the context of its time. It was destined to be a controversial policy from its inception because it was a policy of Roosevelt's, one of America's most polarizing presidents, due to his New Deal policies.⁷ Furthermore, Gallicchio states that three central conclusions can be made about Truman's decisions concerning unconditional

² Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 73.

³ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 73-74.

⁴ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 47.

⁵ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 52.

⁶ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 36.

⁷ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 208.

surrender: that they were “strongly influenced by ideological considerations,” that “the push to modify unconditional surrender was closely tied to concern over the consequences of Soviet entry into the war,” and that the chance for a negotiated peace in 1945 were slim because the “Japanese never indicated they were willing to accept a dramatic change in their political structure that would reduce the emperor to a symbol without authority.”⁸ Soviet involvement and the development of atomic weapons then gave Truman a faster way to pull American soldiers out of the Pacific, however these options created further additional complications.⁹

Additional information about the formulation of the policy comes from Michael Balfour’s “The Origin of the Formula, ‘Unconditional Surrender’ in World War II.” His work highlights the perceived positive aspects of the policy at the time, and weighs them against the negatives. Balfour proposes the question of whether more precise terms should have been put forth, rather than the ambiguous policy of conditional surrender. He lists its benefits, which were affording FDR the ability of not needing to discuss war aims in depth, instilling faith in the American public that World War II was a war for democracy, even after the Doolittle Raid, and that unconditional surrender was a safeguard against each defeated power waging war again in the future.¹⁰ Despite these favorable features, Balfour notes that the policy was thought to be inevitable in prolonging the war.¹¹ It was also the source of a disconnect between the U.S. Military and political concepts, which historian Brian L. Villa discusses in depth.

⁸ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 208.

⁹ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Surrender of the Japanese in World War II*, (New York:) Oxford University Press, 2020, 209.

¹⁰ Michael Balfour, “The Origin of the Formula: ‘Unconditional Surrender’ In World War II,” *Armed Forces & Society*, 5, No. 2, 287-288.

¹¹ Michael Balfour, “The Origin of the Formula: ‘Unconditional Surrender’ In World War II,” *Armed Forces & Society*, 5, No. 2, 290-291.

Villa's article, "The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation." breaks down the views of the military on unconditional surrender. According to Villa, the United States military, specifically, its high level planners such as Henry Stimson and George Marshall, were skeptical of the surrender terms. Their reasons were pragmatic, as they felt the cost would be too high to achieve unconditional surrender. Moreover, even if the surrender of Japan came at a high price but was worth it, the military did not share Roosevelt's concern in rooting out evil philosophies.¹² There was a general rift between the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff for this reason. The way that government was structured, it was difficult for the military to voice their opinions on the matter, as they would typically be overruled by the sitting Secretary of State. Villas' main point then becomes that the war was not prolonged due to a desire by Roosevelt to prolong it for whatever reason, but rather, it was prolonged unintentionally due to deep divisions in the government.¹³

Other historians have focused through a smaller lense on the reasons for the desire to modify the terms of surrender, and the attempts to de-escalate the conflict. Two of these writers are Gary Clifford and Rachel Okura, co-authors of "Side-door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, and United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941." In their work, they analyze Hoover's behind-the-scenes actions before America's involvement in the Pacific which took place during 1941. Hoover had formed relationships with two men who frequently communicated with Japanese Ambassador, Kichisaburo Nomura. These men were John Callan O'Laughlin, publisher of the *Army and Navy Journal*, and William R. Castle jr., a former ambassador to Japan in 1930, and Hoover's Undersecretary of State. Because of Hoover's contact with these two diplomats, he

¹² Brian L. Villa, "The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation," *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 71.

¹³ Brian L. Villa, "The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation," *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 92.

felt that he had inside information regarding U.S.-Japanese relations, and sought to avert entering into conflict in the Pacific.

Clifford and Okura discuss the tension rising between Japan and the United States through 1941, but note that Nomura was working to keep peace. He would often disagree with Tokyo's aggressive and militaristic policies while also hinting that Japan would not be bound to support Germany if the United States entered the war in Europe.¹⁴ Despite Nomura's efforts, Hoover still felt that United States economic pressures were driving Japan to make war. Hoover suggested to Raoul Desvernine, an attorney for the Japanese Embassy, that they "'find out if the Japanese would agree to a six months' standstill agreement on all military action' and participate in a five power conference at Honolulu to arrange peace in the Pacific."¹⁵ Hoover's efforts to maintain peace clearly failed, as the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941. Hoover was unaware that Adolf Hitler was urging Japan to expand southward to take British colonies, and that Japan's "decision to move south rather than north was being formulated even before the Wehrmacht plunged into Russia and before Washington embargoed oil."¹⁶ Clifford and Okura compile useful information that sheds light on Hoover's stance pre-war and gives accounts of the multiple actors who played a hand in United States-Japanese relations before Pearl Harbor. The articles show that Hoover, among others, did not desire to get entangled in a war, and was willing to negotiate peace before conflict even started. The seeds of doubt and unwillingness were planted before America's involvement in World War II, which explains the lack of enthusiasm among some for not idealizing the policy of unconditional surrender.

¹⁴ Gary Clifford, Rachel Okura, "Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, and United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941." *Peace & Change* 38, No. 2 (2013): 211.

¹⁵ Gary Clifford, Rachel Okura, "Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, and United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941." *Peace & Change* 38, No. 2 (2013): 217.

¹⁶ Gary Clifford, Rachel Okura, "Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, and United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941." *Peace & Change* 38, No. 2 (2013): 224.

Another resource which analyses Hoover's position on unconditional surrender comes from Joan Hoff Wilson, the author of "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Ending the Second World War." This article analyzes two confidential memorandums written by Herbert Hoover, and his notes that he took during his 1945 meeting with Truman, which he then sent to historian Charles A. Beard to keep them confidential until his death.¹⁷ Wilson's analysis illustrates that as the war progressed through 1945, Hoover's largest concerns with unconditional surrender stemmed from his hostility towards the Soviet Union. He believed that the policy of unconditional surrender was "mindless," and that if "'no reparations or other concessions' were demanded of Japan and if the Emperor were maintained as the 'spiritual head of the nation,' China, Britain, and the United States could quickly end the fighting in the Far East without consulting the USSR."¹⁸ Hoover did realize that for the time being, cooperation with the soviet union was necessary, but he was so "suspicious" of Stalin's desire to expand his nation, that he believed ending the conflict with Japan as soon as possible would be beneficial for United States foreign policy.¹⁹ From a moral standpoint, Hoover also stated that the use of atomic weapons "revolted" his soul, writing that "The only difference between this (the atomic bomb) and the use of poison gas is the fear of retaliation. We (the United States) alone have the bomb."²⁰

The construction and the use of the atomic bomb is undeniably tied in with the policy of unconditional surrender. One of the most comprehensive books written on the decision to use the atomic bomb is *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the Use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, written by Samuel J. Walker. The book seamlessly leads the reader through the summer

¹⁷ Joan Hoff Wilson, "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Ending the Second World War," *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 84.

¹⁸ Joan Hoff Wilson, "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Ending the Second World War," *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 87.

¹⁹ Joan Hoff Wilson, "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Ending the Second World War," *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 87.

²⁰ Joan Hoff Wilson, "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Ending the Second World War," *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 89.

of 1945, when Truman found himself in office as president, discussing the process of creating the bomb, and the reasons which contributed to the use of the bomb. Walker views the issue through a blended lense of both traditionalist and revisionist history, acknowledging validity in the claims of historians on both sides, making his book encompassing on every detail that led to the use of the bomb.

Walker begins by quoting an alleged meeting that took place between Truman and his advisors where they had decided that the atomic bomb must be dropped in order to save the lives of up to a million Americans, which would have been lost in an invasion of Japan. The way that the meeting is described, the idea that there are only 2 possible options to end the war is presented. Immediately, Walker points out these quotes are taken out of context, as they were used after the war in order to justify the use of the atomic bombs.²¹ Furthermore, he states that it was not a choice between one or the other, but Truman had more options to end the war that did not involve invasion or the dropping of the atom bomb. This view “oversimplifies” the actual situation in the summer of 1945, as Japan was so weak that Truman and his advisers believed that the war could have possibly ended before an invasion began, and the projected casualties of an invasion were actually much lower, according to military planners.²² Throughout the book, he continually emphasizes that there was a “fundamental problem” between the Japanese and the United States, and that problem was “finding an acceptable way to end the war.”²³

Walker then lays out three possible alternative paths to victory that did not involve using the atom bomb or invading mainland Japan: To intensify the bombing and blockade of an already weakened Japan, to wait for Soviet entry into the war, which was promised to happen by Stalin

²¹ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 4.

²² Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 5.

²³ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 32.

by August 15th, or finally, to “mitigate the demand for unconditional surrender by allowing the Japanese to retain the institution of the emperor.”²⁴ All three of these potential alternatives would have brought their own potential negative consequences to the table. Intense bombing and blockade would continue to cripple Japan, however, it may have failed to yield surrender as soon as possible, which was Truman’s main aim. Soviet entry was viewed with caution by many in the state department, as it could complicate geopolitical relations after the war, and give the Soviets more influence in Asia. And lastly, Walker notes that the terms of surrender could not be changed for a multitude of reasons. Unconditional surrender was a popular policy among the American public, so changing the terms may have been political suicide for Truman. Furthermore, changing the terms of surrender may have curbed public support for the war, and strengthened the Japanese military faction by leading them to believe that the United States was softening.²⁵ The policy of unconditional surrender then grows in interest, as one can wonder if the atomic bomb may have never been used if Roosevelt did not announce the policy in 1943.

After determining that there were multiple possibilities to end the war that did not involve invasion or using the bomb, Walker proposes the question of why the bombs were dropped as soon as they were available, and less specifically, why they were dropped at all if they may have been unnecessary? He attributes the use of the bomb to 5 different factors. Most obviously, the goal was to end the war as soon as possible, under American terms, in order to result in the lowest amount of American casualties possible.²⁶ The other four “fundamental considerations” that he notes are to justify the cost of the Manhattan Project, to impress the Soviets, that there was a lack of incentives to not use the bomb, and American hatred of the Japanese or desire to

²⁴ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 37-1.

²⁵ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 43.

²⁶ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 92.

“deal with a beast.”²⁷ Some of these considerations challenge the idea that the desire for unconditional surrender was the sole reason for the use of the atomic bomb, however some favor it.

Walker credits historian Barton J. Bernstein, who has written about the history of World War II and the atom bomb, as a writer who has fallen inbetween the revisionist perspective and the traditional perspective. His works are very insightful when trying to garner a broader understanding of the use of the atomic bomb and the end of the second world war. One of his works which touches upon the Japanese surrender is titled “The Perils and Politics of Surrender: Ending the War with Japan and Avoiding the Third Atomic Bomb,” published in the *Pacific Historical Review*. The work covers the last five days of the war extensively, highlighting how the policy of unconditional surrender almost backfired on Truman, rallying the Japanese militarists into continued fighting after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. When the Japanese were finally brought to surrender on August 10th, they agreed to give up on the condition that it “does not comprise any demand prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler”²⁸ Truman and his advisors found themselves in a moment of discord, as some wanted to end the war, but others still wanted surrender to be unconditional, as the American public still favored the policy. Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, proposed the idea that a vaguely worded reply be sent back to the Japanese that would not directly confirm the fate of Emperor Hirohito.²⁹ The United State’s unwillingness to accept the preliminary Japanese surrender fueled Japanese militarists desire to achieve better terms of surrender. General Umezu and Admiral Toyoda believed that the proposed terms would “destroy the imperial polity,” and

²⁷ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 94-96.

²⁸ Bernstein, J. Barton, “The Perils and Politics of Surrender: Ending the War with Japan and Avoiding the Third Atomic Bomb,” *Pacific Historical Review* 46, No. 1, (1977): 2.

²⁹ Bernstein, J. Barton, “The Perils and Politics of Surrender: Ending the War with Japan and Avoiding the Third Atomic Bomb,” *Pacific Historical Review* 46, No. 1, (1977): 6-7.

therefore, was unacceptable.³⁰ This caused a rift among Hirohito's cabinet that almost resulted in a takeover by the militarists, which would have inevitably extended the war.

Much of the literature regarding the outbreak of the Pacific War, the policy of unconditional surrender, and the use of the atomic bomb share the common theme that the complex relations among the Allied powers and internal strife within their own government made it very difficult for President Roosevelt and President Truman to navigate their way through decision making during the 1940s. There were many politicians and diplomats who desired different conclusions of the Second World War for justifiable reasons, making the policy and execution of unconditional surrender much more multifaceted than one may expect. Furthermore, it is difficult to evaluate if the policy of unconditional surrender was a practical policy. One can speculate a great deal on how the end of the war may have been more efficient without the tenacious policy of unconditional surrender. Some questions still stand to the present day; why were the terms never modified? Was the policy of unconditional surrender mindless, or was it necessary? Could the war have ended with the same present-day results if the United States had modified the terms of surrender? Perhaps most thought provoking, to what extent did the policy of unconditional surrender influence the decision to use atomic weapons against Japan? Is the policy solely responsible for the use of the bomb?

³⁰ Bernstein, J. Barton, "The Perils and Politics of Surrender: Ending the War with Japan and Avoiding the Third Atomic Bomb," *Pacific Historical Review* 46, No. 1, (1977): 18.

II

By the beginning of 1943, the outlook of World War II had begun to shift. The Allied powers secured footing in French North Africa through Operation Torch, claiming Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers, and expelling Axis influence from the region. The victory opened a new strategic front for the United States, and the first British-American conference of World War II took place within just two months of the successful invasion, symbolizing the beginning of a tightly coordinated relationship between the Allied powers. Franklin Delano Roosevelt arrived at the Anfa Hotel in Casablanca on January 14th with the intent to discuss military strategy for the upcoming year. Also in attendance was Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, French Generals Charles de Gaulle and Henri Giraud, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), composed of the United States' Joint Chiefs of Staff and Britain's Chiefs of Staff Committee. Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin was invited, but could not attend due to the German attempted invasion of Stalingrad. The nation's leaders and elite military strategists devised a plan that encompassed how both the Pacific and European theaters should be handled over the span of January 14th to the 24th.

The Conference served to evaluate several key issues of the war. One major issue was the opening of a second front in France. While General George Marshall wanted to land soldiers in France as soon as they could, the CCS decided to invade Sicily first, in an effort to drive Italy out of the war. United States campaigns in the south and southwest Pacific were also coming to a successful finish, securing communication lines from America to Hawaii and Australia, therefore plans for a strategic offensive against the Japanese began. Other issues included assessing German U-Boat threats in the Atlantic, resource allocation to the Soviet Union and China, and

the recapture of Burma. The CCS made two very important assumptions that each decision to be carried out would operate under: that “the ultimate objective of the basic global strategy is to bring the war to a successful conclusion at the earliest practicable date,” and that “Germany is recognized as the primary or most powerful and pressing enemy.”³¹

Regardless of the latter distinction, a plan was still devised to keep pressure on the Japanese while the Allies focused on the fight in the European theater. Britain's views on the Pacific War differed from America's, undoubtedly due to the looming threat of German invasion, and the fear that too much effort in the Pacific would result in all out war against Japan, diverting U.S. focus from Germany.³² Despite this disagreement, General Marshall and Admiral Ernest King, Commander in Chief of the United States Navy, believed that more effort should be put forth due to Japan entrenching themselves in the Netherlands East Indies and the Solomon Islands.³³ They believed it was essential for the United States to protect their line of communication with Australia and other far eastern territories, and prevent the possibility of a military disaster such as “another Bataan.”³⁴ By the 18th, the CCS agreed on the importance of maintaining a presence in the Pacific and reclaiming Burma, and decided to reevaluate the situation during the summer of 1943.

To maintain pressure upon Japan, the Allies concluded that the economic and military powers of their adversaries must be weakened at a rate faster than they would be able to recover. While they committed to the defeat of Germany, Japan would face blockade to weaken their shipping, bombing to weaken their defenses, industries and morale, and assault via the sea

³¹ “C.C.S. 56th Meeting,” January 14, 1943, Casablanca Conference Papers and Minutes on Planning an Allied European War Strategy, January 14-23, 1943 (Folder 003238-001-0590), Map Room Files of President Roosevelt, 1939-1945: Map Room Conference and Special Files, 1942-1945, World War II: U.S. Documents on Planning, Operations, Intelligence, Axis War Crimes, and Refugees. Proquest History Vault.

³² “C.C.S. 56th Meeting,” January 14,” 1943.

³³ “C.C.S. 55th Meeting, January 14,” 1943.

³⁴ “C.C.S. 59th Meeting, January 17,” 1943.

(figure 1).³⁵ The Allies goal in 1943 then became to work towards positions from which Japan could be attacked “by land based air,” and to “cut enemy lines of communication,” keeping Japan on the defensive.³⁶ This would keep the Japanese from further expansion. According to General Marshall, Japan would fight with no intention of surrendering, and they would continue to be aggressive until attrition defeated them.³⁷

The Allies had laid the foundations of their plan for the rest of the war. Germany must be defeated first, Russia and China must be supported in order to support this goal, and Japan must be worn down until it would be possible to allocate more resources to the Pacific theater. On January 24th, the last day of the Casablanca Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill held a press conference to briefly publicize their accomplishments over the previous ten days. Roosevelt claimed that their studies into the war were historically unprecedented, and that Each man involved had become a “definite personal friend of his opposite number on the other side.”³⁸ The results of the meeting had also been communicated to Stalin in order to keep him informed on the Allied war aims. Further into the press conference, in a casual manner, Roosevelt announced a new goal of the war that the public, nor Churchill himself, had been told. Relaxed, the president said,

Some of you Britishers know the old story—we had a General called U.S. Grant. His name was Ulysses Simpson Grant, but in my, and the Prime Minister's, early days he was called "Unconditional Surrender" Grant. The elimination of German, Japanese, and Italian war power means the unconditional surrender by Germany, Italy, and Japan. That means a reasonable assurance of future world peace. It does not mean the destruction of the population of Germany, Italy, or Japan, but it does mean the destruction of the philosophies in those countries which are based on conquest and the subjugation of other people.³⁹

³⁵ “C.C.S. Papers, Conduct of War in the Pacific Theater in 1943, Jan 22, 1943.”

³⁶ “C.C.S. Papers, Conduct of War in the Pacific Theater in 1943, Jan 22, 1943.”

³⁷ “C.C.S. 56th Meeting, January 14, 1943.”

³⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project.

³⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project.

It was at this moment that Roosevelt announced the policy of unconditional surrender; a policy that would bind together military strategy, diplomacy, and domestic politics through the end of World War II.⁴⁰

This annunciation of unconditional surrender is what the Casablanca Conference is most revered for today. It was the first time that the policy of unconditional surrender, a policy that shaped the end of the war and the post war era, was made clear to the public. It was a policy that, towards the end of the war, fell under much scrutiny from civilians, politicians, and military strategists alike. It was not only supported by FDR, but also Churchill, who endorsed the policy as soon as FDR announced it. When questioned on the development of the policy after the Casablanca Conference, “FDR breezily claimed that the phrase had just popped into his head before his press conference with Churchill.”⁴¹ Although he claimed that the demand for unconditional surrender was a sudden stroke of genius, much more thought actually went into the policy. Surely, a policy that would affect the lives of so many people must have been subject to “long and careful debate, in the course of which the advantages and disadvantages would be clearly set out and weighed, along with those of all other available options.”⁴²

Archives made available to the public proved this to be true. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. State Department methodically launched the Advisory Committee on Post-war Foreign Policy. Created underneath this committee was the Sub-committee on Security Problems, which first convened in April 1942.⁴³ The Committee was headed by U.S. diplomat

⁴⁰ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 2.

⁴¹ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 9.

⁴² Michael Balfour, “The Origin of the Formula: ‘Unconditional Surrender’ In World War II,” *Armed Forces & Society*, 5, No. 2, 281.

⁴³ Harley A. Notter, U.S. State Department, *Post-War Foreign Policy Preparation 1939-45* (Washington, 1950), 124.

Norman Davis, and staffed with General Strong of the War Department and Admiral Hepburn of the Navy Department, among others. As written in a Department of State publication that was released in 1950, their goal was to “maintain international security in relation to ex-enemy states in the period immediately after armed hostilities ceased.”⁴⁴ Despite Roosevelt’s assertion that he had thought of unconditional surrender on the spot, the Sub-committee on Security Problems was recorded discussing the appropriate terms of surrender as early as September of 1942.⁴⁵

During a meeting when the subcommittee discussed the possibility of a negotiated armistice, they “rapidly reached the consensus that nothing short of unconditional surrender by the principal enemies, Germany and Japan, could be accepted... The calculation of the relative advantages of this policy was based in part on a historical experience with international conflict, which conferred a degree of concreteness on its conclusions.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, the policy was also recorded to be recommended in the winter of 1942 by the U.S. Chiefs of Staff, who insisted that no armistices should be made until the Axis powers offered unconditional surrender of their armed forces. On January 7th, 1943, Roosevelt informed them that he would voice support for the unconditional surrender concept at the upcoming Casablanca Conference.⁴⁷

The previously mentioned “historical experience” which led many to embrace the policy of unconditional surrender is undoubtedly the end of World War I. Members of the Subcommittee on Security Problems all shared the opinion that the United States was at war again because “Germany had not been compelled to submit unconditionally at the end of the first

⁴⁴ Harley A. Notter, U.S. State Department, Post-War Foreign Policy Preparation 1939-45 (Washington, 1950), 125.

⁴⁵ Harley A. Notter, U.S. State Department, Post-War Foreign Policy Preparation 1939-45 (Washington, 1950), 126.

⁴⁶ Harley A. Notter, U.S. State Department, Post-War Foreign Policy Preparation 1939-45 (Washington, 1950), 127.

⁴⁷ Writings: Captain Tracey B. Kittredge, "A comparative analysis of problems and methods of coalition action in two world wars", 1956 Sep, MSC-354, Box: 19, Folder: 3. Naval Historical Collection.

world war.”⁴⁸ Rather than unconditional surrender, Germany agreed to signing an armistice that followed the Fourteen Points, proposed by President Woodrow Wilson. These principles for peace emphasized liberal ideas such as free trade, democracy and self-determination. After Germany signed an armistice and peace negotiations had taken place, they signed the Treaty of Versailles in Paris, on June 28rd, 1919. The treaty diverted from the values of the fourteen points, holding Germany fully responsible for starting the war, and imposing strict repercussions. Germany felt betrayed, and claimed that the treaty was “morally invalid.”⁴⁹

The treaty had punished Germany by stripping them of territory, and making them pay stiff reparations, in an effort to weaken the country. Multiple areas which were important to German economic output were given to the victors of the war. They were also faced with severe military restrictions, imposed with limits of total number of soldiers allowed in their army and navy. Most importantly, Article 231 of the treaty read: “The Allied and Associated Governments however, require, and the German Government undertakes that to the extent of her utmost capacity, she will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied or Associated Powers and to their property by her aggression by land, by sea, and from the air.”⁵⁰ This clause essentially named Germany entirely responsible for the war, and forced them to pay an undisclosed amount of reparations, financially ruining the country. The actions of the treaty did not deliver to Germany the promise of peace and economic stability that the fourteen points (figure 2) promised. They had felt deceived, and the treaty of Versailles ultimately sparked German anger, and led directly to the rise of German militarism.

⁴⁸ Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War they Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 109

⁴⁹ Ruth Henig, *Versailles and After: 1919-1933* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 67.

⁵⁰ Treaty of Versailles, Part VIII, Section I, Article 231.

Therefore, unconditional surrender became a way to make sure that the Germans, and the Japanese, would understand that they were bested by military superiority, ensuring the mitigation of threats to peace in the future. It is also possible that Roosevelt adopted the policy for domestic policy related reasons, rather than just foreign relation policy. Many scholars have concluded that Roosevelt did not want to make the same mistake as Woodrow Wilson. As Wilson's assistant secretary of the Navy, he "remembered that Republicans had pilloried Wilson for rejecting their demands for Germany's unconditional surrender in favor of an armistice based on the Fourteen Points." Unconditional surrender would clear Roosevelt of being charged with "repeating his predecessor's mistakes."⁵¹ By the end of 1942, polls also revealed that Americans were growing less reluctant to discuss peace aims and post-war plans. Furthermore, the American public had felt demoralized by the implications of the Darlan deal, which made the Vichy French commander in chief, Admiral Jean Francois Darlan, high commissioner of French North Africa in exchange for cooperating with the Allies. Many thought that this showed Roosevelt's willingness to negotiate with the enemy. The introduction of unconditional surrender allowed Roosevelt to promise a lasting peace and ideological victory after the war.⁵²

Practical and politically intelligent, unconditional surrender was a meticulously crafted policy to bring an end to the war with the best possible outcome. Although Roosevelt passed away before World War II came to an end, the demand for unconditional surrender did not. On April 16, 1945, President Harry Truman went to Capitol Hill to address a joint session of congress, knowing that he had to operate at the high-set standards of his predecessor. He assured that he would not accept "partial victory," and declared: "our demand has been, and it remains-

⁵¹ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 9.

⁵² Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 373.

unconditional surrender! We will not traffic with the breakers of the peace on the terms of peace.”⁵³ Truman held true to his word, and both Germany and later, Japan, surrendered to the United States unconditionally. Despite the success of the policy that can be seen today, there were numerous examples of criticisms against the policy, from civilians, politicians, and military leaders alike. Many believed the terms of surrender should be eased, or further defined to the enemy in order to achieve surrender faster. Some politicians and diplomats sought to ease tensions between the United States and Japan before the Pacific war broke out, and thought that the emperor should be guaranteed to remain in power to bring about the Japanese surrender. Despite the dispute among the policy of unconditional surrender, from the Casablanca conference foreword, the Allies demand remained: Unconditional surrender.

⁵³ Harry S. Truman, Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, April 16, 1945, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project.
<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/230621>

(Figure 1)⁵⁴⁵⁴ Britannica, "Empire of Japan," April 29, 2019.<https://www.britannica.com/place/Empire-of-Japan#/media/1/2144218/237734>

THE TEXT OF THE FOURTEEN POINTS

PRESIDENT WILSON'S Fourteen Points, as set forth in an address made before the joint session of Congress, on January 8, 1918.

- 1** Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
- 2** Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action or the enforcement of international covenants.
- 3** The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
- 4** Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
- 5** A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
- 6** The evacuation of all Russian territory, and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their goodwill, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.
- 7** Belgium, the whole world will agree must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.
- 8** All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.
- 9** A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
- 10** The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.
- 11** Rumania, Serbia and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered upon.
- 12** The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.
- 13** An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.
- 14** A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.

(Figure 2)⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The National WWI Museum and Memorial, "THE FOURTEEN POINTS: Woodrow Wilson and the U.S. Rejection of the Treaty of Versailles," January 8, 1918.

III

Consistent with the nature of politics, the proper way to defeat Imperial Japan was subject to heavy debate and disagreement among numerous notable American figures. Soon after the declaration of the unconditional surrender policy, multiple politicians quickly began to criticize Roosevelt. Some historians today write that the policy was destined to be controversial, because it was Roosevelt's policy. Gallicchio writes that unconditional surrender "incited the same ideological divisions as his domestic policies and extended those battles to the arena of foreign policy and military strategy."⁵⁶ While Roosevelt was certainly a polarizing figure at the time of his presidency, some of the criticisms that the policy of unconditional surrender faced were not unwarranted. The main fear that many held about the policy was that it would elongate the duration of the war, which could have indirectly led to multiple other problems. As the war dragged on through the spring of 1945 and the Germans were defeated, the American public also began to lose motivation that they previously demonstrated towards wartime efforts. Therefore, the policy of unconditional surrender was a cause of discourse between politicians and military leaders alike.

When understanding early arguments against unconditional surrender and the diverse attitudes towards proper foreign policy towards Japan, it is important to understand the early tensions between the United States and Japan. American relations with Japan first occurred in 1852, when Commodore Matthew Perry was given the task of opening Japan for foreign trade. In an annual report written by the Secretary of the Navy, published in the New York Times in 1852, John Pendleton Kennedy wrote, "to the Commander of the East India Squadron has been intrusted the important and delicate task of opening Japan, a necessity which is recognized in the

⁵⁶ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 208.

commercial adventure of all Christian nations.”⁵⁷ Perry arrived in Edo late November, 1852, with a letter from President Millard Fillmore, addressed to Emperor Meiji Tenno (figure 3). The beginning of the letter read,

I have directed Commodore Perry to assure your imperial majesty that I entertain the kindest feelings towards your majesty’s person and government, and that I have no other object in sending him to Japan but to propose to your imperial majesty that the United States and Japan should live in friendship and have commercial intercourse with each other.⁵⁸

In the letter, President Fillmore requested that Japan be open to trade with the United States, specifically to supply American ships and crews with coal, provisions, and water, and to also provide protection for Americans involved in shipwrecks off Japan’s coasts. Perry also brought gifts with him that were intended to impress the Japanese, including a working model of a steam engine locomotive, a telescope, and a telegraph.

While the letter emphasized the ideal of friendship and Japan’s autonomy in the matter of foreign trade, the actual process of opening Japan differed. In the report published by the Secretary of the Navy, it was made clear that force and intimidation would both be used to achieve the navy’s goals. Kennedy wrote that it was very likely the “exhibition of the whole force” would “produce such an impression upon a government and people” to believe it was wise to accept the United State’s terms.⁵⁹ During Perry’s initial visit, he displayed readiness to use force, and after returning to Japan some months later for their response, he brought with him an even larger squadron. The threat coaxed Japan to unenthusiastically sign the Treaty of Kanagawa, giving the United States access to trade and other unique privileges. This was seen as

⁵⁷ "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for 1852." *New York Daily Times*, Dec 09, 1852.

⁵⁸ Millard Fillmore, President of the United States of America, to His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan, November 13, 1852.

⁵⁹ "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for 1852." *New York Daily Times*, Dec 09, 1852.

a humiliating defeat by the Japanese people, however, United States intervention led to Japanese industrialization, a prerequisite for Japanese imperialism and expansion.

This event marked the beginning of Japanese militarism and expansion. By 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt grew concerned over Japanese aggression after the Russo-Japanese war, and became suspicious of the nation's intentions. He commissioned the development of a strategy to fight against potential Japanese expansion, which came to be known as War Plan Orange. Part of this strategy entailed isolating Japan economically before taking direct military action if conflict was to arise.⁶⁰ World War I was also still on the mind of most Americans, making them opposed to direct military action. Therefore, according to historian Edward Miller, “the helplessness of Japan, if isolated economically and financially, evolved into an axiom at a time when the U.S. government was averse to fighting a war.”⁶¹

Through the 1930s, Japan ramped up their imperialistic efforts, and with the signing of the Tripartite Pact on September 27th, 1940, the nation felt a new sense of security. On July 24th, 1941, the Japanese military began to move into previously French-occupied colonies in the Pacific. Germany had come into control over France after June of 1940, therefore, France’s new puppet government had agreed to the occupation of its Pacific colonies. This was seen as an opportunistic move, putting Japan into a “position of readiness,” in order to move either north or south.⁶² The Roosevelt administration quickly responded to these actions two days later by creating a new licensing system that restricted shipment permits to Japan for petroleum. Licenses

⁶⁰ Edward S. Miller, *Bankrupting the Enemy: The U.S. Financial Siege of Japan before Pearl Harbor*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007,) ix.

⁶¹ Edward S. Miller, *Bankrupting the Enemy: The U.S. Financial Siege of Japan before Pearl Harbor*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007,) x.

⁶² Hanson W. Baldwin, "Japan's Military Moves: Reinforcing in North and South Held Preliminary to any Drive," *New York Times*, Jul 24, 1941, 8.

were then granted to roughly a third of applicants, to show Japan how a true embargo would affect their domestic life and military efforts.⁶³

Furthermore, Roosevelt seized and froze all Japanese assets in the United States, severing trade ties between the U.S. and Japan, and “dealing it the most drastic blow short of actual war.”⁶⁴ At the request of Chinese leader Chiang Kai-Shek, Chinese assets were included in the order, as Japan controlled key Chinese financial centers by 1941. Both England and the Dutch East Indies followed Roosevelt’s lead, enacting the same policy. As an island nation, Japan was much more economically dependent on America for raw materials and other products than European powers, therefore this was a significant blow. It was described by the German press as a “studied provocation and extortionist manoeuvre designed as a retaliation for the Indo-China incident” and a demonstration of “American aggression.”⁶⁵ There were several benefits of reducing oil trade to Japan and freezing assets. Chiefly among these benefits is that it would curb Japanese ambition towards expansion. It would also allow the United States to stockpile important materials for itself while denying wartime materials for a possible enemy.

These hostile economic actions were consistent with two previous ideas; the first being War Plan Orange, and the second being a speech delivered in Chicago, by Roosevelt, on October 5th, 1937. In this speech, Roosevelt indirectly accused Germany, Italy, and Japan of creating “international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or

⁶³ Hallett Abend, "Two-Thirds Cut Due In Oil Sales: Washington Will Restrict Its Permits For Shipments Of Petroleum To Japan Deals By Indies Expected Roosevelt's Belief That War Would Follow Embargo Likely To Be Guide," *New York Times*, Jul 27, 1941, 14.

⁶⁴ John H. Crider, "Vast Trade Curbed: President Ends Policy Of Appeasement That Failed With Tokyo China Also Is Affected But Statement Stresses That Action On Her Assets Will Aid In Defense President Freezes Japanese Assets," *New York Times*, July 26, 1941, 1.

⁶⁵ By Telephone To The New York Times, "Axis Press Rails At Freezing Edict: Roosevelt Chief Target In More Outbursts Against 'studied Provocation' Japan Held Undaunted Naval Power Of United States Belittled -- South American Policy Is Sore Point," *New York Times*, Jul 27, 1941, 10.

neutrality.”⁶⁶ Roosevelt made it clear that isolationism was not the solution to the global problems being created by axis powers. While denouncing the evils and tragedies of war, he still spoke against crimes committed by Japan and Germany. This became the main source of disagreement between Roosevelt and those who opposed his administration’s policies. One of the leaders in this discourse was Roosevelt’s predecessor, Herbert Hoover (figure 4). During Roosevelt’s presidency, he and Hoover clashed on many different ideas and political aims; policy regarding Japan during WWII was no different. Hoover’s and other right wingers’ ideology concerning America’s global role differed greatly from Roosevelt’s, and this can be seen in the years leading up to World War II.

While Roosevelt claimed that isolation and neutrality in the face of axis hostility were unacceptable, Hoover advocated for isolationism throughout the 1930s. In a New York Times article published in 1938, comparing the foreign policy of Roosevelt and Hoover, Arthur Krock writes,

The President spoke as an internationalist, Mr. Hoover as an isolationist. Mr. Roosevelt accepted the possibility of a totalitarian threat in the Americas and called for armament sufficient to repel any such threat with force. His predecessor dwelt long on the contention that Germany and Italy are facing east, and Japan towards the mainland, and he found no possibility of a threat in any Pan-American quarter.⁶⁷

While both men agreed that the form of domestic government in any other nation is not of the United States’ concern, Hoover brought this idea further by saying that “democracies and their opposites have always existed together,” and there must be peace between the two, greatly contrasting Roosevelt’s speech delivered in Chicago.⁶⁸ Furthermore, in a speech delivered by

⁶⁶ Roosevelt, Franklin D. Speech given on October 5, 1937.

<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/october-5-1937-quarantine-speech>

⁶⁷ Arthur Krock, “In The Nation: The Foreign Policies of Roosevelt and Hoover,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1938, 22.

⁶⁸ Arthur Krock, “In The Nation: The Foreign Policies of Roosevelt and Hoover,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1938, 22.

Hoover in 1941, he claimed that the United States should avoid conflict in order to preserve its strength so that it could give “aid to reconstruction and stabilizing of peace when Hitler collapses of his own overreaching.”⁶⁹ In congruence with this statement, Hoover closed a radio broadcast in 1939 where he clarified his proposal to sell only defensive weapons to nations at war with this statement: “My sympathies are with the Allies. Nevertheless, my deepest conviction is that America must keep out of this war, and it is in the interest of the whole world if we are to be of any help to rebuild this civilization when the war is over. The most difficult job we have in these months before us is to remain at peace.”⁷⁰

Although he did call for “arming to the teeth” and supporting Britain in any way possible,⁷¹ Hoover was recorded multiple times advocating for isolationist policy. Staying uninvolved in the war in order to rebuild once it ended was his primary goal. He even accused Roosevelt of creating a “bellicose hysteria that would destroy democracy at home,” fostered through “propaganda of fear and hate.”⁷² He made his intentions clear with his words, but his actions show the lengths that he was willing to go to in order to keep the United States out of a war. Hoover had two main sources of information that he relied on to deliver information regarding Japanese affairs to him during the early 1940s. These sources were John Callan O’Laughlin, a “former assistant secretary of state, Bull Moose Progressive, veteran journalist, colonel in the American Expeditionary Forces of World War I, and publisher of the *Army and Navy Journal*,” and William Castle Jr., a Hawaii-born former diplomat who had served briefly as

⁶⁹ Special to the New York Times, “Hoover Says Wait Until Hitler Loses: Contends in Chicago Speech Nazi Rule Will End and We Can Stabilize Peace,” *New York Times*, September 17, 1941, 1.

⁷⁰ “Hoover Calls His Plan Feasible; Stresses Our Moral Duty on Arms: Cites Opinion of Experts to Show Defensive Weapons Can Be Singled Out- Modified Embargo Held Fair To Both Sides,” *New York Times*, October 21, 1939, 1.

⁷¹ Gary Clifford, Rachel Okura, “Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, and United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941.” *Peace & Change* 38, No. 2 (2013): 209.

⁷² Hoover speeches, Oct. 30, 1940, and June 29, 1941, in Herbert Hoover, *Addresses upon the American Road, 1940–1941* (New York: Scribner’s, 1941), 44, 87.

ambassador to Japan in 1930 before becoming Hoover's undersecretary of state."⁷³ Both men received information from Kichisaburō Nomura, Japanese ambassador to the United States, and Former Japanese naval attache in Washington during World War I. He belonged to the Japanese navy's moderate "pro-American" Washington Treaty faction, which undoubtedly shaped the narrative that he fed to both Castle and O'Laughlin.⁷⁴

Nomura forged his relationship with both O'Laughlin and Castle by being critical of his superior, foreign minister Yosuke Matsuoka. He would often refer to Japanese "moderates" existing among the militant faction which was taking over the country, and made this distinction between the Japanese army and navy. Quoted in a diary of Castle's, Nomura described the army as having "no vision of the future and no knowledge of psychology," but judging "everything by what they think it will accomplish at the moment." Furthermore, he said that "all 'sober' Japanese saw it as impossible to absorb Indochina and Dutch East Indies."⁷⁵ In addition to aversion to war post World War I and isolationism, this was another reason why some opposed taking firm action against Japan: diplomats who had spent time in Japan felt that the "liberal faction" would end up steering Japan towards a less aggressive direction. This distinction between multiple factions led Hoover to believe that peace could still be negotiated with Japan.

By November of 1941, Hoover was also in contact with Raoul E. Desvernine, an attorney for the Japanese embassy who had asked Hoover to advise him. On the 23rd, he warned Hoover that the "Japanese situation" was becoming very dangerous, as secretary of state, Cordell Hull, was "driving absolutely to war. With the information that Hoover had received from Castle,

⁷³ Garry Clifford and Masako Rachel Okura, "Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, And United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941," *Peace & Change*, 38, no. 2 (2013): 208.

⁷⁴ Garry Clifford and Masako Rachel Okura, "Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, And United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941," *Peace & Change*, 38, no. 2 (2013): 210.

⁷⁵ Garry Clifford and Masako Rachel Okura, "Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, And United States-Japanese Negotiations, 1941," *Peace & Change*, 38, no. 2 (2013): 212.

O’Laughlin, and Desvernine, he believed that peace was still possible, and in order for it to be reached, action must be taken immediately. He suggested to Desvernine that they “find out if the Japanese would agree to a six-months’ standstill agreement on all military action” and called for a conference between the United States, Japan, Britain, China, and the Netherlands at Honolulu to de-escalate.⁷⁶ On the night of December 1st, 1941, Desvernine, Nomura, and another Japanese diplomat, Saburo Kurusu, created a five-point memorandum to send to Japan (figure 5).

Point one called for “a slow withdrawal of Japanese troops from China ... to be made under a joint Japanese and American Commission.” Point two demanded that the Tripartite Treaty would be “inoperative except in case of attack by some third power.” Point three proposed that all embargos should be “settled by negotiation of new treaties of commerce covering all relationships in the commercial field.” The fourth point stated that there would be a conference to deal with these first three issues, and “pending the solutions of this Conference there should be an economic and military standstill agreement.” Lastly, the fifth point called for “a relaxation of the embargo in respect to non-military commodities to be imported in normal quantities.”⁷⁷ The memorandum was presented to Roosevelt on December 2nd, and he believed that it offered a basis for a solution. The following two days, he met with Nomura and Kurusu multiple times, however just a few days later, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th. Roosevelt declared war on Japan, and Hoover argued that conflict arose from a “madman’s desire to get into war.”

America found itself involved in another conflict, despite much of the public being against intervening, after living through the horrors of World War I. Analyzing the factors that led to United States entry into the war and the attitudes of those who were either for or against

⁷⁶ Garry Clifford and Masako Rachel Okura, “Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, And United States–Japanese Negotiations, 1941,” *Peace & Change*, 38, no. 2 (2013): 217.

⁷⁷ Garry Clifford and Masako Rachel Okura, “Side-Door Diplomacy: Herbert Hoover, FDR, And United States–Japanese Negotiations, 1941,” *Peace & Change*, 38, no. 2 (2013): 218.

taking action shed light on the debate that was to come on surrender policy regarding Japan. Many republicans at this time advocated for isolationism, as they felt it was not America's responsibility to dictate other nations forms of government, nor to join a conflict that did not involve them. Diplomats who felt a personal connection to Japan thought that liberal, peaceful factions would regain influence, and steer Japan away from continued imperialism. Some of these diplomats who had experienced Japanese culture also feared that Japan would never surrender if conflict was to arise. For these reasons, some tried to avoid a pacific war at all costs possible, and once conflict was inevitable, they sought to modify the proposed terms of surrender to exit the war as soon as possible. These early attempts to take a soft stance on Japan's militarism foreshadow future efforts in the spring and summer of 1945 to end the war by modifying the terms of surrender. Roosevelt's view was different. Rather than avoiding conflict at all costs, he took a strong stand against the evils of Japanese imperialism. After the United States was attacked and declared war, he too desired to exit the war as soon as possible; but not without achieving unconditional surrender, and the ideological defeat of militant authoritarianism first.



(figure 4)⁷⁸

⁷⁸Library of Congress, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover in convertible automobile on way to U.S. Capitol for Roosevelt's inauguration," March 4, 1933.



(figure 5)⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Ambassador Nomura (left), Cordell Hull (middle), and Ambassador Kurusu (right), December, 1941. The U.S.-Japan War Talks, "Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu special envoy hold a meeting with US Secretary of State Hull to deliver their ultimatum," December 8, 1941. [.https://www.jacar.go.jp/english/nichibei/popup/pop_29.html](https://www.jacar.go.jp/english/nichibei/popup/pop_29.html)

IV

Roosevelt believed that lasting peace was unobtainable without the complete elimination of Axis powers. After announcing the policy of unconditional surrender, he did not back down by modifying the terms. Even after he passed away and President Harry Truman found himself in office, The terms of surrender would still not be changed. Through the end of World War II, the Allies' demands were not altered. Although the terms of surrender were never officially modified, there was still much dissent over how the surrender of Japan should have been reached. As the war waged on after Germany surrendered, the American public started to grow tired of the war effort through the summer of 1945. Military leaders believed that ending the war as soon as possible to reduce American casualties was their top priority. Some career diplomats in the State Department believed that Japan would never surrender if the institution of the Emperor was threatened to be destroyed. Those who had to analyze the bigger picture through a post-war lens feared Russia's involvement in East Asia and its implications for foreign policy once Japan was beaten. Therefore, there was debate among United States civilians, politicians, and military planners, with many calling for the terms of surrender to be changed in order for the war to end as soon as possible.

After World War I, most Americans did not have a strong desire to send their sons to war. They felt that although Hitler and Hirohito's regimes were unjust, intervention was not their responsibility. However, during the late 1930s, American's grew concerned over Japan's actions in the Pacific. In March of 1941, a Gallup poll revealed that 40% of Americans thought that the United States should keep Japan from taking Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, and were willing to risk war in doing so, while 39% disagreed, and 21% did not have an opinion; the

desire to take action had finally gained a slight majority.⁸⁰ By August, when asked, “Should the United States take steps now to keep Japan from becoming more powerful, even if it means risking war?,” 51% of participants favored the idea.⁸¹ Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a decisive change in public opinion occurred. A Gallup poll surveyed the public asking, “Do you approve, or disapprove of Congress declaring war against Japan?” Just 2% of participants answered “disapprove,” with a resounding 97% responding “agree.”⁸²

Propaganda graphics that were created early in the war shed light on American sentiment: utter contempt for an enemy that was believed to lack morals and intelligence. The Japanese were portrayed as either insects, rats, or subhuman creatures that desired to take over the world through violent conquest. The remedy to this conquest was annihilation. One comic, created by Fred Lasswell, highlighted America's contempt for the Japanese (figure 6). Other propaganda posters did not serve to tear down the enemy, but to rally Americans together on the homefront. These either rallied support for the military, or emphasized personal responsibility in wartime production (figure 7). Both instances of propaganda show that most Americans were strongly motivated and unified by the war effort after December of 1941.

More examples of America's support for war in the Pacific come from early news articles published soon after Pearl Harbor. An article published on December 8th by renowned journalist, Ernest Lindley, stated,

War could not have come in a way more completely guaranteeing national unity. Amid anger and anxiety, this was almost the first thought which came from every tongue Sunday afternoon and night- from high officials, news paper-men, taxi-drivers, humble pedestrians, and small groups of enlisted men in uniform on

⁸⁰ Attitude of Voters on Japan Stiffens: Number Favoring Risk of War Grows, Gallup Survey Finds," *New York Times*, March 14, 1941, 8.

⁸¹ George Gallup "Voters Approve Check On Japan: 51% Of Those Sounded Out In Gallup Survey Back Curb Even At Risk Of War Shift In Trend Sharp Public Ready To Abandon The Policy Of Appeasement Long Before Government Did," *New York Times*, August 3, 1941, 20.

⁸² Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: A Country Unified After Pearl Harbor," *Gallup*, December 5, 2016.

leave from camps nearby as they stood outside the gates to the White House and State Department.⁸³

While there were arguments of proper foreign policy regarding Japan through the 1930s, the attack of Pearl Harbor settled a divide among the United States. Action would need to be taken. According to many, this action must be swift and offensive. One article published on December 8th, by *The Atlanta Constitution*, interviewed soldiers and civilians. One soldier was recorded saying, “well, I’ve got a brother somewhere on the Pacific Ocean now. I just hope he gets three or four of those yellow rats.” Another civilian commented, “The Japanese are despicable people. They had no right to start bombing until the peace negotiations had been concluded.”⁸⁴

Hateful rhetoric showed that Americans sought revenge against an enemy. Other rhetoric did not attack a people, but rather, an ideology. Another article, also published by *The Atlanta Constitution*, pointed out a “sensational contrast” between December 7th and December 14th. M. Ashby Jones wrote, “December 7th reveals in all its naked ugliness the meaning of Japan under her present military leadership. December 14th reveals in vivid characters the true meaning of America,” referring to the 150th anniversary of the Bill of Rights. The blessings of the Bill of Rights can be seen “in their radiant clearness when contrasted with the complete ‘black-out’ of all such rights by the Axis powers.” The Bill of Rights and authoritarian leaders could never coexist, therefore, the outbreak of war did not serve as revenge against Japan, but as defense of individual liberty and freedom.⁸⁵

Analyzing both personal anecdotes and polling data, it is easy to conclude that most of the American public was ready for war against Japan by 1942. Therefore, soon after Roosevelt

⁸³ Ernest Lindley, “Attack by Japan Silences Argument, Assures U.S. Unity, *The Boston Globe*, December 8, 1941, 13.

⁸⁴ “Comment here Flares Against Move by Japan: Men in Uniform, Civilians all Heated Up Over Sudden Assault,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, Dec 08, 1941, 2.

⁸⁵ M. Jones, “Text and Pretext: Bill Of Rights Vs. Japan.” *The Atlanta Constitution*, Dec 14, 1941, 12.

announced the policy of unconditional surrender, most Americans were supportive of the policy. They sought the complete elimination of an aggressor that possessed a globally threatening ideology. Roosevelt addressed the unconditional surrender of Japan even further in November of 1943 during the Cairo Conference, where he met with both Churchill and Chaing Kai-shek, the president of the Republic of China (figure 8). A statement was released by the three saying that Japan “shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the first World War in 1914, and that all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be restored to the Republic of China.” Furthermore, the Allies vowed to “persevere in the serious and prolonged operations necessary to procure the unconditional surrender of Japan.”⁸⁶

A surge of confidence reverberated through the United States throughout 1943. The Battle of Midway had shattered Japan’s ability to counter the United States’ power in the Pacific. The Casablanca Conference set standards and a clear goal for the Allies’ wartime objectives. The U.S. Navy had finally gone on the offensive and liberated territory Japan had captured such as the Solomon Islands. Finally, the Cairo Declaration imposed tangible consequences for Japan once they were beaten, giving the public a taste of post-war planning. Therefore, unconditional surrender became a rallying cry for many. An article published in *The Boston Globe*, titled, “We, Too, Have Our Fanaticism,” compared the unwavering zealotry of the Japanese war machine to American public support for unconditional surrender. James Morgan wrote, “This war is a collision between two fanaticism. One is synthetic, the other is natural. One is monstrous delusion, stimulated and spread for the cold-blooded purpose of enslaving the minds of the people. The other is the spontaneous emotion of free men, who would rather... die

⁸⁶ “The Cairo Declaration,” November 26, 1943, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), 448-449.

on their feet than live on their knees.” He concluded that the United States must win the war in order to save the “free air” that they breathe, and that one must be fanatical in their efforts to preserve this freedom.⁸⁷

Another article, written by notable columnist Dorothy Thompson, agreed with Morgan’s sentiment. Breaking down the conflict in the Pacific, and the Cairo Declaration, she declared three conditions that would result from unconditional surrender: that China would be “consolidated as a great Asiatic nation,” that the United States would gain control over the south and central Pacific, controlling all potential future threats, and Japan would be stripped of all it had gained from imperialism. Furthermore, she concluded that for Japan, facing certain defeat after inflicting suffering upon the world, “no better terms can be conceived of.”⁸⁸ An article written by Dorothy Thompson in the summer of 1945 greatly contrasts her previous view on unconditional surrender. Asserting that the world was in a great stage of “ethical confusion,” she heavily criticized United States foreign policy directed at Japan. Particularly, she believed that Japan had already been beaten militarily, and imposing continued violence on Japan was an odd way of “reeducating” an already defeated enemy to become “peace loving” and “democratic.” In addition, she felt that the actual benefits of the policy of unconditional surrender were never truly discussed or considered by United States’ leaders.⁸⁹ For these reasons, Thompson called for immediate peace to end a war with “illimitable” objectives; objectives that dated back to the Casablanca Conference. Thompson’s change in attitude from 1943 to 1945 illustrates a shift in American public opinion regarding United States foreign policy. Unconditional Surrender

⁸⁷ James Morgan, “We, Too, Have Our Fanaticism: With a Cause That Can Not Be Compromised, The Free Peoples Must Press on to the Unconditional Surrender of a Monstrous Delusion,” *Daily Boston Globe*, August 15, 1943, 4.

⁸⁸ Dorothy Thompson, “Cairo Decisions Fulfill Terms of Atlantic Charter,” *Daily Boston Globe*, December 3, 1943, 22.

⁸⁹ Dorothy Thompson, “Unconditional Surrender of Japan,” *Daily Boston Globe*, July 18, 1945, 10.

remained a relatively popular policy, but as the war dragged on, some Americans began to question the war effort.

On July 17th, 1945, President Harry Truman, Churchill, and Joseph Stalin convened for the Potsdam Conference in Germany to proclaim the terms for Japanese surrender. They left no alternatives or deviations, and would not delay in securing their demands. In the final point of the Potsdam Declaration, the three Allied leaders concluded, “We call upon the government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.”⁹⁰ However, by Potsdam, “there were plenty of experts who believed that the time was fast approaching when the nation’s vast power would need to be tempered by statesmanship.”⁹¹ Attitudes favoring the modification of the United States surrender policy had begun to cultivate long before the summer of 1945 by civilians, military leaders, and politicians alike.

One of the most notable figures who had advocated for modifying the terms of surrender was Joseph C. Grew (figure 9). Grew was a United States career diplomat who served as ambassador to Japan from 1932 until the war broke out. He then worked in the State Department, and briefly served as Under Secretary of State during the Truman administration. Due to the extensive time Grew spent in Japan, he believed that he knew much more about Japanese culture than military leaders and politicians in the State Department, and how their culture would translate to their military efforts. Through the 1930s, he believed that the emperor was a “peace-loving monarch who regretted” Japanese aggression, but had no control over it, due to

⁹⁰ Harry Truman, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, “Potsdam Declaration,” July 26, 1945.

⁹¹ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 107.

losing power to militants in his cabinet.⁹² Despite this Japanese aggression, Grew still believed that Japanese “moderates” outweighed those who desired to wage war and launch conquest, and that these moderates would regain control, influencing Emperor Hirohito onto a more peaceful path. When Japanese aggression reached new heights and they invaded China in 1937, Grew knew that the men he had trusted to put Japan back on the right path no longer had any ability to influence policy. This can be seen when reading exchanges that Grew shared with Roosevelt.⁹³

On December 14th, 1940, while Grew was still in Japan, Roosevelt wrote him a letter expressing his own thoughts on the current situation of Japan, and asking Grew for his own. Conveying his thoughts that conflict would be inevitable, the President wrote, “it seems to me to be increasingly clear that we (the United States and Japan) are bound to have a showdown someday, and the principal question at issue is whether it is to our advantage to have that showdown sooner or to have it later.”⁹⁴ He then asked three questions;

whether and when Britain is likely to win the European war; whether our getting into war with Japan would so handicap our help to Britain in Europe as to make the difference to Britain between victory and defeat; and to what extent our own policy in the Far East must be timed with our preparedness program and with respect to the relative strength of the American and Japanese navies now and later.

Grew responded by saying that he believed diplomacy had been “defeated by trends and forces utterly beyond its control.”⁹⁵ Furthermore, his reply was consistent with his thoughts throughout the Pacific War. Grew was concerned with American safety, and vehemently disagreed with

⁹² Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 23.

⁹³ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 22.

⁹⁴ Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “The American Embassy Tokyo,” December 14, 1940, Letter expressing Grew’s views on U.S.-Japanese relations. (Folder 002166-007-0770). Documentary History of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidency. New Deal and World War II: President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office Files and Records of Federal Agencies. Proquest History Vault.

⁹⁵ Joseph Grew, “The American Embassy Tokyo,” December 14, 1940, Letter expressing Grew’s views on U.S.-Japanese relations. (Folder 002166-007-0770). Documentary History of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidency. New Deal and World War II: President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Office Files and Records of Federal Agencies. Proquest History Vault.

Japanese militaristic ambitions. He told Roosevelt that taking measures “short of war with no real intention to carry out those measures to their final conclusion” was dangerous, as Japan would be able to sense the unwillingness to commit to action, and progress their expansion with “greater incentive.”⁹⁶ However, his ultimate goal was to take diplomatic actions which would discredit Japan’s present leaders in the eyes of Japan’s citizenry, leading to a “regeneration of thought,” that would allow normal relations between the United States and Japan.⁹⁷

This letter characterizes the central dogma of Grew’s thoughts throughout the war. While not downplaying the threat of Japanese expansion and brutalization of those who had fallen under Japanese rule, Grew still strove to achieve possible diplomatic solutions to the war rather than complete destruction of Japanese institutions and culture. An article published in the *Boston Globe* affirmed Grew’s disdain towards the Japanese military. He stated that “words were inadequate to describe his ‘fiery rage’” when asked for his views of the atrocities reported of the Japanese military against American and other prisoners.⁹⁸ Regardless, Grew, and other policy makers felt that it was important to separate the Japanese militarists and Emperor Hirohito for diplomatic reasons.

Early examples of this effort come from the Office of War Information (OWI), an agency which Grew worked alongside. Japan experts in the OWI believed that propaganda attacking Hirohito would rapidly mobilize Japanese support towards its military. The Japanese military could use American attacks on the Emperor as a way to portray themselves as protectors of a “revered institution.”⁹⁹ One OWI memo that was published in 1942 explicitly said that “a rhetorical attack on the emperor ‘would solidify every element of the Japanese people,’

⁹⁶ Joseph Grew, “The American Embassy Tokyo,” December 14, 1940.

⁹⁷ Joseph Grew, “The American Embassy Tokyo,” December 14, 1940.

⁹⁸ Hulen, Bertram. 1944. “Ambassador Grew: Expresses ‘Fiery Rage’ Over Jap Barbarism.” *Daily Boston Globe* (1928-1960), Feb 02, 1.

⁹⁹ Hal Brands, “Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor during World War II,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 434.

cementing hatred for the United States more efficiently than the authoritarian Japanese government could ever do on its own.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the OWI requested that high ranking officials in Roosevelt’s administration not use derogatory attacks on the Emperor. Grew worked with the OWI to “warn audiences of the dangers of provoking ‘emperor-worship’ by speaking ill of Hirohito.”¹⁰¹ Two specific instances occurred under the advisory of the OWI: Secretary of State Cordell Hull complied with a request to address the Axis powers as “Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese,” rather than “Hitler, Hirohito, and Mussolini,”¹⁰² and New York Mayor, Fiorello La Guardia, removed anti-Emperor rhetoric from his weekly radio addresses.¹⁰³

Along with Grew, most military planners sought to modify the terms of surrender for practical reasons. According to historian Brian L. Villa, skepticism of unconditional surrender among the military stemmed from three important considerations. First, “the military questioned the need for a legally perfect *carte blanche* to justify occupation policies. The officers felt that all the legal documents in the world would not add anything to a sound occupation policy, and, similarly, no amount of legal documents could justify an unnecessarily brutal occupation.”¹⁰⁴ Second, “even if some benefit could be gained from a legally more correct position, the price paid for it would be too high.”¹⁰⁵ To achieve unconditional surrender, the military believed the cost would be extremely high. If the Japanese were faced with the uncertainty of unconditional surrender, the military thought that they would resort to suicidal, desperate fighting. Third, even

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum from Mrs. Baker to Mr. Swords, March 18, 1942, OWI-Domestic Branch, Speech Clearance Unit, 1942-45, box 48, Records of the Office of War Information, Record Group (RG) 208, U.S. National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

¹⁰¹ Hal Brands, “Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor during World War II,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 434.

¹⁰² Hal Brands, “Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor during World War II,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 8, no. 3 (2005): 434.

¹⁰³ “Mayor Discloses Deletion in Talk,” *New York Times*, August 15, 1944.

¹⁰⁴ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 70.

¹⁰⁵ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 70.

“if the officers saw the formula as a legal nicety with a very high price... they tended not to share Roosevelt's primary objective- the rooting out of evil philosophies.”¹⁰⁶ Most military officials did not believe that conflicts arose from evil philosophies, and even if they did, they did not believe that meaningful change could be brought from occupation. Furthermore, an occupation with intent to change the philosophy of an entire society would take a long time, which would soak up military resources for years to come. To circumvent these three considerations and bring both a quick and easy surrender of Japan, military planners saw an easy solution: allowing Hirohito to maintain his status as emperor in the post-war period.

In the last years of the war, attempts to preserve the status of the emperor and end the war at the soonest possible moment became more drastic. In December of 1944, General George Strong, a member of the Joint Post War Committee, presented Undersecretary Grew with two drafts for surrender instruments. The drafts were unsolicited. One of these drafts was a short and more conventional surrender instrument, but his second draft was longer, and embodied most of the unconditional surrender doctrine. However, neither of these surrender drafts called for the abolition of the emperor; “both drafts implicitly allowed for the continuation of a Japanese government, even if entirely under the control of the occupiers.”¹⁰⁷ Despite Strong’s efforts, his proposed instruments of surrender did not make it far through the bureaucracy. Expecting a divide in civilian and military goals regarding surrender, Secretary of State Edward Stettinus created the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee. The committee theoretically represented each body equally, however, “military policy was to serve national policy,” giving the State department much more power than its “coequals.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, they had an effective veto, which was

¹⁰⁶ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 71.

¹⁰⁷ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 75.

¹⁰⁸ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 76.

demonstrated when Strong's drafts were sent to the committee for consideration and then modified to fit within the guidelines of unconditional surrender policy.

Though it appears contradictory that the State Department, with figures such as Grew who believed that modifying the terms of surrender would be beneficial, would deny Strong's proposition, their cautious behavior regarding policy can be explained. Grew, undoubtedly making a personal political move, had to be strong on Japan because he was the last ambassador to serve there before war broke out. The public believed that if he had "talked straight" to the Japanese, the war may have been circumvented in the first place.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Grew had "qualms of conscience about exercising his authority arbitrarily in the presence of the new consultative structures established in the state department reorganization of December 1944." He was a member of the secretary's staff committee, which advised the secretary. "It was composed of the undersecretary, all the assistant secretaries, the legal adviser, and the special assistant for international organization, and it was gradually expanded by such other high officials as the secretary invited." Grew attended meetings with this committee constantly, and felt inclined to adopt the majority view of the group.¹¹⁰

Regardless of the obstacles put in the way, General George Marshall still fought to modify the terms of surrender. A draft of surrender instruments that was sponsored by the State Department was approved by the State-War-Navy Coordination Committee, and sent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for evaluation. The draft fell under the name "Joint Chiefs of Staff 1275," would require Emperor Hirohito to announce to the public upon defeat,

I hereby announce that I am surrendering unconditionally to the United Nations at war with Japan. I command all Japanese armed forces wherever situated and the

¹⁰⁹ Brian L. Villa, "The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation," *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 76.

¹¹⁰ Brian L. Villa, "The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation," *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 77.

Japanese people to cease hostilities forthwith and to comply with all requirements hereafter imposed by the Commander in Chief, United Nations Armed Forces. I command all civil and military officials to obey and enforce all orders and directives issued by the Commander in Chief, United Nations Armed Forces, and I direct them to remain at their posts and to continue to perform their duties until specifically relieved by him. I am relinquishing all my powers and authority this day to the Commander in Chief, United Nations Armed Forces.¹¹¹

The demand left George Marshal dissatisfied, therefore, he rejected J.C.S. 1275 multiple times, and it was sent back and forth between Joint Chiefs of Staff subcommittees and State Department subcommittees. There were three more drafts of J.C.S. 1275 from February to May, which were titled J.C.S. 1275/1, J.C.S. 1275/2, and J.C.S. 1275/3. This appeared to be in an attempt to stall in order to give him time in formulating, “an interdepartmental paper for presentation to the cabinet secretaries destined eventually for the President on the subject of unconditional surrender.”

In the same school of thought as Grew and high ranking military planners was, unsurprisingly, Herbert Hoover. Through 1945, he was making moves, in congruence, with internal government players and committees. In May, 1945, Hoover authored two confidential memorandums which he believed were proper solutions to reach surrender, and delivered them to both Truman and Henry Stimson. The first memoranda, sent to Truman on the 15th of May, called for Chiang Kai-shek to agree to three peace terms. These terms were that “Japan withdraw from all of China, including Manchuria, and hand the government of China to Chiang Kai-shek; that the Chinese Government receive all of the Japanese Government railways, ports, mines and factories in Manchuria as reparations; and that Japan be confined in Korea and Formosa.”¹¹² He then called for both Truman and Churchill to make peace on the terms that Japan “be totally

¹¹¹ “J.C.S. 1275,” February 15, 1945, Unconditional surrender of Japan, State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, (FOLDER: 003183-005-0661), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, The Pacific Theater, World War II: U.S. Documents on Planning, Operations, Intelligence, Axis War Crimes, and Refugees. Proquest History Vault.

¹¹² Joan Hoff Wilson, “Herbert Hoover’s Plan for Ending the Second World War,” *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 95.

disarmed and a disarmament commission be established in the country,” and that “no reparations or other concessions” be asked for.¹¹³ Agreement to these terms of surrender by all parties would have multiple benefits according to Hoover. He listed, “America will save 500,000 to 1,000,000 lives and an enormous loss of resources; Japan could make economic recovery which is to the advantage of all free nations; We gain everything that we can gain by carrying on the war to a finish; and it would stop Russian expansion in the Asian and Pacific areas. Japan, in these circumstances, would not be likely to go Communist.”¹¹⁴

The second memorandum was written shortly after Hoover spoke directly to Truman on May 28th, 1945. This memorandum essentially echoed his previous one, but put more emphasis on the importance of defeating Japan’s military. Two notable points were also made; America could coax Japan into surrender by reassuring them that the “Allies have no desire to destroy either the Japanese people or their government, or to interference in the Japanese way of life,” and that there was evidence which proved Japan was ready to accept a modified surrender edict. These pieces of evidence, Hoover listed, were

The desire of the Japanese to preserve the Mikado who is the spiritual head of the nation; The sense they showed after the Russo-Japanese war of making peace before Russia organized her full might; The fear of complete destruction which by now they must know is their fate; and the fact that there is a large middle class in Japan... who are liberal-minded.¹¹⁵

Even if Japan did not accept a declaration of surrender which was far less severe than unconditional surrender, Hoover claimed that the declaration itself would still yield the benefit of

¹¹³ Joan Hoff Wilson, “Herbert Hoover’s Plan for Ending the Second World War,” *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 95.

¹¹⁴ Joan Hoff Wilson, “Herbert Hoover’s Plan for Ending the Second World War,” *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 95.

¹¹⁵ Joan Hoff Wilson, “Herbert Hoover’s Plan for Ending the Second World War,” *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 101.

demonstrating that America was not at war for any other purpose than to establish order in the world.¹¹⁶

Hoover's mention of ending Russian expansion reflected the views of many advocates for modifying surrender terms. The Soviet-American alliance began in 1941 and topped the list of Truman's concerns once he entered office.¹¹⁷ The United States realized that they would need the Soviets in order to beat Germany in a timely fashion, and quickly transferred this successful philosophy to the Pacific theater after Germany had been beaten. During the Yalta Conference in February, 1945, Churchill and Roosevelt persuaded Stalin into agreeing to join the Pacific war three months after the defeat of Germany, in exchange for shares of the "Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian railways, the southern half of the Sakhalin island, the Kurile islands, and leases to the port of Dairen and naval base at Port Arthur."¹¹⁸ However, Stalin proved to care little about pleasing the Allies, and many feared that a weakened China and dismantled Japan would result in Soviet domination over Asia in the post war period. Grew wrote in a memorandum in mid May, "once Russia is in the war against Japan, then Mongolia, then Korea will gradually slip into Russia's orbit, to be followed in due course by China and eventually Japan."¹¹⁹ Those who had to deal with foreign policy after the war and those who were concerned by the spread of communism were highly motivated to bring about Japanese surrender before the Soviets could involve themselves.

Even Churchill proposed a new surrender strategy. Military planners realized that an invasion of Japan would be much more difficult than the invasion of Normandy. Even if they

¹¹⁶ Joan Hoff Wilson, "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Ending the Second World War," *The International History Review*, No. 1 (1979): 102.

¹¹⁷ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 16.

¹¹⁸ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 18.

¹¹⁹ Marc Gallicchio, *Unconditional: The Japanese Surrender in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 21.

were to succeed in crossing the sea of Japan, they would be met with the challenges of Japan having topographical advantages to Germany, and multiple other fronts in their empire to continue to wage war from. Preparation for an invasion inadvertently implied delays. It would take much planning, and would be met with Japanese resistance, which proved to be ferocious during the Battle of Okinawa. In the wake of these issues, Churchill confronted the problem by proposing a new course. He suggested that some kind of “mitigation” of unconditional surrender would be desirable, as it could save a year or a year and a half of a war in which “so much blood and treasure” had already been poured out.”¹²⁰ Churchill then called for a four power ultimatum calling on Japan to surrender at a given moment. This idea was challenged by the fact that “concessions to the enemy are notoriously difficult to achieve if approached from the viewpoint of psychological warfare. If the enemy appears strong, a concession is feared as an admission of weakness. If the enemy appears weak, no reason for concession is seen.”¹²¹ Demanding unconditional surrender right after the Okinawa campaign, which led to roughly 50,000 American casualties and over 350 damaged ships, would not be effective in the eyes of any military planner or politician.

Regardless, Churchill opening up the discussion of modifying the terms of surrender certainly gave Grew confidence in his efforts, as he took the issue to the president shortly after Churchill’s proposition. Grew’s actions led to Truman creating a special committee to study surrender, which was staffed by Grew, Henry Stimson, James Forrestal, two secretaries, one acting secretary drawn from the identical departments represented in SWNCC. The new committee had two large benefits; Grew could now express his own views on the matter of

¹²⁰ Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office,) 825-826.

¹²¹ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 85.

surrender, and the committee could include military chiefs, giving the military more representation in policy making.¹²² By July 2nd, the group was successfully able to push a surrender draft to the president which ensured the retention of the emperor, and this draft became the basis of the Potsdam declaration. However, despite the efforts of Grew, Hoover, and high level military planners finally appearing to pay off, Secretary of State James Byrnes had the privilege of traveling to Potsdam with Truman, and therefore, the privilege of the last word.

Grew and other proponents of modifying surrender terms had been left behind, and Truman was left with Byrnes advice through the days leading up to the Potsdam Conference. “Byrnes was very troubled by the discrepancy between the draft Potsdam proclamation and the previously announced positions of Roosevelt and Truman,” and believed that the “recommendations of the President's special Committee of Three were political dynamite.”¹²³ Furthermore, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee, a high level review committee, recommended deleting the paragraph that allowed the retention of the emperor. J.C.S. 1275/5 said,

To some of the extreme devotees of the Emperor, the phrase "This may include a, constitutional monarchy under the present dynasty," may be misconstrued as a commitment by the United Nations to depose or execute the present Emperor and install some other member of the Imperial feily. To the radical elements in Japan, this phrase may be construed as a commitment to continue the institution of the Emperor and Emperor worship. At present the radical element, desiring the abolition of the institution of the Emperor, is comparatively small but there are indications that this group is growing in size and importance as Japan's military situation deteriorates, if only because many Japanese associated the institution of the Emperor with national invincibility. With the disillusion of total defeat facing them, this group may assume major importance at a later stage.¹²⁴

¹²² Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 87.

¹²³ Brian L. Villa, “The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation,” *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 89.

¹²⁴ “J.C.S. 1275/5,” July 12, 1945, Military Aspects of Unconditional Surrender Formula for Japan, Joint Chiefs of Staff, (FOLDER: 003183-005-0701), Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Part 1: 1942-1945, The Pacific Theater, World War II: U.S. Documents on Planning, Operations, Intelligence, Axis War Crimes, and Refugees. Proquest History Vault.

Therefore, it was concluded that extreme emperor loyalists, as well as the small faction of Japanese extremists who hoped for abolition of the emperor, would misconstrue the statement. It would cause more problems than it was worth to be put into the surrender terms. Therefore, Truman announced at Potsdam that Japan must surrender unconditionally, did not make reference that the emperor could remain seated in his throne, and conveyed to Japan that their only other option was “utter destruction.”

Despite internal discourse among the United States government, the policy of unconditional surrender remained in place until the end of the war for multiple reasons. As previously stated, unconditional surrender remained a popular policy among the public, regardless of the opinions of military planners and high level politicians. A Gallup poll that was recorded in June, 1945, revealed that 90% of Americans surveyed believed that the war should continue until Japan was “completely beaten,” rather than accepting a negotiated surrender that did not involve a United States occupation.¹²⁵ With this public support, modifying the terms of surrender would have carried multiple risks such as decreasing the morale of the United States, and posing political threat to the president. After the Darlan Deal the American public had already become worried that the United States would be willing to withdraw from war by the means of a negotiated peace. Furthermore, modifying the terms of surrender, especially after a costly battle on Okinawa, may have given the Japanese confidence to keep fighting, because concessions during war have historically been a sign of weakness. The risks of changing a popular policy, as well as prolonging the war, would have been “political dynamite,” in the

¹²⁵ Samuel J. Walker, *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the use of Atomic Bombs Against Japan*, (Chapel Hill:) University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 44.

words of James Byrnes.¹²⁶ Notably, the idea that Japan would have surrendered if given the opportunity to maintain the emperor before the use of atomic weapons and the entry of the Soviet Union is purely speculative. There is no definitive answer as to how Japan would have responded to this proposition before August 6th, 1945, meaning that modifying the terms of surrender to allow the retainment of the emperor may have not led to a faster surrender. Finally, unconditional surrender was needed in order to end Japanese aggression and transform the nation into a peaceful and democratic state, as it laid the foundations for U.S. occupation in the post war period. For all of these reasons, a diplomatic solution to bring a faster surrender was hard to reach due to the combined hurdles of internal conflict, complex bureaucratic structure, the heat of war, and unwillingness by both presidents to forgo their major goals of the war.

¹²⁶ Brian L. Villa, "The U. S. Army, Unconditional Surrender, and the Potsdam Proclamation," *The Journal of American History* 63, no. 1 (1976): 89.

Louseous Japanicas

The first serious outbreak of this lice epidemic was officially noted on December 7, 1941, at Honolulu, T. H. To the Marine Corps, especially trained in combating this type of pestilence, was assigned the gigantic task of extermination. Extensive experiments on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Saipan have shown that this louse inhabits coral atolls in the South Pacific, particularly pill boxes, palm trees, caves, swamps and jungles.



Flame throwers, mortars, grenades and bayonets have proven to be an effective remedy. But before a complete cure may be effected the origin of the plague, the breeding grounds around the Tokyo area, must be completely annihilated.

(figure 6)¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Edmund P. Russell, "‘Speaking of Annihilation’: Mobilizing for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 4 (1996): 1506.



(figure 7)¹²⁸

¹²⁸ United States Office of War Information, "Remember December 7th!...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain...", World War II - Posters.



(figure 9)¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-hec-19143.

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