

Aaron Peplowski  
Professor Pyle  
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### **Peace at What Cost?: The Debate over Conditional Surrender in the Suzuki Cabinet**

The final cabinet of the Japanese government during World War II was often in debate over issues regarding war termination. The members of the cabinet often found themselves split into two factions, one trying to end the war, and another trying to continue the war throughout an invasion of Japan. The members of each faction were often the same, though the issue of debate changed. The reasons behind the conflict lie within the viewpoints of each group. The war group believed in the need for the army to fight to the last of their strength. They did not believe, despite heavy losses, that they were defeated. The peace group believed otherwise. Therefore, a debate on the conditions of surrender occurred, with the war group asking for four conditions in their surrender as opposed to the single condition of the peace group. In the end, it was a shared belief in something greater that terminated the war.

The leadership of the Japanese government was organized in such a way that the members had equal say within the cabinet. Each figure had different influence, however, and leaders still emerged in Anami and Tōgō. Though these men, the “Big Six,” were the men who had made the majority of the decisions during the war, Hirohito was able to make decisions above these men, if he chose to. The former prime ministers of Japan were the men who had to choose the next Premier after Suzuki’s predecessor, Prime Minister Koiso, stepped down in early April. They had hoped to put Japan on a course away from the belligerent cabinets of the past. To this effect, they installed former

admiral Suzuki Kantaro. Suzuki was a retired admiral, and popular for his integrity and loyalty to the Emperor. He had also survived an assassination attempt by a military fanatic in 1936.<sup>1</sup> The men who were in his cabinet would guide Japan through the final days of the war.

The leader of the “four conditions” group, and the military clique in general, was General Anami Korechika. Anami held adamantly to the idea that there should be a final battle for the defense of Japan, or *ketsu-go*. While some sought to negotiate a peace as a way to preserve the homeland, Anami felt that a decisive battle would be the way to defend the *kokutai*. Lieutenant General Yoshizumi Masao characterized this belief in the defense plan when he noted, “Although Japan’s victory in the decisive battle of the homeland is not certain, there is still some possibility. Therefore, the battle should be fought on the homeland at least once with a resolution to seek a way out of a desperate situation.”<sup>2</sup> Consequently, Anami had agreed to join Suzuki’s cabinet if the Prime Minister pledged to continue the war and implement the *ketsu-go* strategy. Suzuki agreed and Anami joined.<sup>3</sup>

Umezu was also from a strong military background. He became the Chief of the General Staff of the Japanese Army when Suzuki became Prime Minister. He supported Anami in most of the internal struggles in the Big Six. This includes, of course, the plan to defend Japan in a final decisive battle. Umezu’s opinion on the army, surrender, and

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J. C. Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), 59-62.

<sup>2</sup> Barton J. Bernstein, “Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory,” in Michael J. Hogan, *Hiroshima: In History and Memory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), p.48-9.

disarmament was summed up in Tanaka Nobumasa's reconstruction based on memoir of Toyoda and Tōgō, as Umezu stated:

Up to now the Japanese military has not permitted open surrender. The word 'surrender' is not in the Japanese military lexicon. In military education, if you lose your weapon, you fight with your bare hands. When your hands are no longer any good, you fight with your legs. When you can no longer use your hands and legs, you bite with your teeth. Finally, when you can no longer fight, you bite off your tongue and commit suicide. That is what we have been teaching. I do not think that it will go smoothly to order such an army to abandon its weapons and surrender. Our army and the allied army will designate the time and place in each theater of operations. We ourselves will collect the weapons in those designated places and the units also will gather there to hand over their weapons. Only afterwards will we act according to their instructions. That is what we should request of them.<sup>4</sup>

With this indoctrination, it is easy to see a base of support in the military for the continuation of the war, if not the four condition surrender.

Admiral Toyoda Soemu became the Naval Chief of Staff in the Suzuki cabinet. Toyoda was not in charge of the kind of power his colleagues where, as the Navy was decimated at this point in the war. Suzuki had hoped that Toyoda would moderate the demands of Anami and Umezu, but he agreed with them on most every issue.<sup>5</sup>

Tōgō was a veteran of previous cabinets, and had often conflicted with the proponents of the war. He was part of Tōjō Hideki's cabinet and had disagreed on many matters of war and diplomacy. This led to his resignation from that cabinet in September of 1942. He had testified that he was against the war, and has his ministry looking for peace options. Tōgō was brought into Suzuki's cabinet for these reasons and possibly, as

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<sup>4</sup> Herbert P. Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation," in Michael J. Hogan, *Hiroshima: In History and Memory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 108-9.

<sup>5</sup> David Rees, *The Defeat of Japan*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), p. 116.

Butow suggests, his experience with the Soviets.<sup>6</sup> His suggestion coming into the cabinet was to seek war termination immediately. He initially rejected the position, as Suzuki stated that he believed that the war could continue for two to three more years. However, Tōgō was pressured into joining by his peers, as his presence in the cabinet would still go a long way to strengthening the peace group.<sup>7</sup>

Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa was first requested to come into the cabinet by Prince Konoe to balance the power of General Tōjō, but the bid failed. His presence would have added more power to the end-the-war faction.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, he came to join the Koiso cabinet in and held the position into Suzuki's cabinet. Suzuki appointed him to the position of navy minister in order to balance Anami's presence in the Supreme War Council.<sup>9</sup>

Suzuki Kantaro, who became Prime Minister in April 1945 after the bloody battle of Okinawa, was often on the side of the end-the-war group, though some of his actions were either contrary or a use of *haragei*, which means saying one thing while meaning another.<sup>10</sup> For instance, Suzuki had pledged that the cabinet would “1) continue the war to the bitter end, 2) effect a settlement towards army-navy unification, and 3) exert every effort toward the complete reorganization of the nation for the prosecution of the war.”<sup>11</sup> To men like Anami, this had to sound like support for fighting the war to the end.

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<sup>6</sup> Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, 16-7.

<sup>9</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 48-9.

<sup>10</sup> The term *haragei*, as used here, is taken from Butow's work. It combines the symbols for stomach and art. It refers to “the art of stomaching” or saying one thing to hide your true intentions. An alternate translation would be “to appeal to one's gut level.” For this work, I will use the former rather than the latter.

<sup>11</sup> Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, 65.

Suzuki had been selected for the position because of his good standing in the eyes of other senior statesmen. Though he was an admiral by rank, he had little allegiances to other groups and was not in the active military. Butow suggests that his nomination indicated a move away from military control and towards peace.<sup>12</sup> However, Hasegawa notes that Suzuki's role in the peace party was limited:

The powerful combination of Kido and Togo, joined by Navy Minister Yonai, formed the core of the peace party. Within this party Prime Minister Suzuki was the weakest link. In fact, it is impossible to put him in the ranks of the "peace party," at least initially. His messages on April 7 and 8 were drumbeat calls for the Japanese people to continue defending the *kokutai*. In an interview with the newspaper *Asahi*, Suzuki stated he felt Japan would win the war. Like the emperor, he believed in waging one more decisive battle before ending the war.<sup>13</sup>

Suzuki's often ambiguous actions, his use of *haragei* during the final days of the war, often made each group consider him an enemy and a supporter at times.

Emperor Hirohito's role in the struggle was varied. Often he would merely hold audiences with his advisers to be apprised of the direction of the war and the options available to him. In the end, however, he was the figure who made the ultimate decisions. Throughout the struggle, the figures are constantly trying to gain his approval and act according to what they believed he had either wanted or decided upon.

In the months leading up to the atomic bombings, the Big Six had already been at odds about the termination of the war. The date of June 8, 1945, saw the military clique win an internal struggle, with the Emperor silently supporting the plan of the war group to continue the war to "the bitter end." Tōgō, who would lead the peace group, was the only member present at the imperial conference to speak out against the plan, noting that

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 62-3.

<sup>13</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 49.

outside help would become impossible to acquire. Though many were possible acting with *haragei*, Suzuki took the silence of the conference members as agreement with the army's plan, which would become known as the "Fundamental Policy to Be Followed Henceforth in the Conduct of the War."<sup>14</sup>

Directly after, Marquis Kido Koichi, the Lord Privy Seal, opened negotiations with Moscow. Like all of the leaders, Kido was concerned with the future of the *kokutai*. Kido believed that trying to end the war was the true goal of the Emperor. In *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, Robert J.C. Butow draws from Kido's statements to show that Kido acted in accordance to what he believed were "the Emperor's true feelings." Therefore, in his view, the moment to achieve peace needed to be seized while negotiations were still possible. In spite of this, he also knew that the *gumbatsu*, or "military clique," were the obstacle to peace, as the Allies would most likely want the *gumbatsu* removed above all else.<sup>15</sup> This assumption was correct, as Anami, Umezumi, and Toyoda were opposed to the negotiations. They still believed that Japan would be able to fight a final battle on the homeland. In their view, negotiations with the enemy should only be opened after the defense of Japan, after the enemy may have possibly sustained heavy losses.<sup>16</sup> Anami's group felt that the battle would help bring strengthen their place in negotiations.

However, Anami, in keeping with the practice of *haragei*, went along with the plan to mediate through the Russians. Tōgō knew that the plan was unlikely to work, but Kido believed that his ability to advise Hirohito gave him the advantage. Butow suggests that this indicated a weakening of the military clique, and a rise of the power of the civil

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<sup>14</sup> Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, 98-102.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-3.

<sup>16</sup> Rees, *The Defeat of Japan*, 229.

arm of the government. Although he went along with the plan, Anami reacted to the peace sentiments by trying to pressure Kido out of office, as he was unable to keep the attempts secret. Part of the June 8 decision to continue the war involved the cessation of peace movements, as it ran counter to the "Fundamental Policy."<sup>17</sup> Additionally, any sign of weakening in the military is unlikely to have contributed to a strengthening of the peace group, as many scholars have shown that the peace movement failed due to a lack of power to see their goals through.

The internal struggle continued to into the debate of how to approach the Potsdam Declaration. There was a split in how to respond, with the sides split into the normal war party and peace party. The two sides would argue over whether the declaration should be rejected outright or to *mokusatsu*, "silently kill" or ignore it. The *mokusatsu* group was inspired by Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Matsumoto Shunichi's suggestion on a response during his presentation of the declaration to his colleagues. Butow sums his argument as, "Under no circumstances should it reject the Allied demand. If there had to be any compromise with the circumstances of the moment, the only intelligent course to follow would be to say nothing at all." Tōgō had hoped for a clarification of the terms of the declaration, as well as a better indication of the Soviet mediation issue. The *mokusatsu* response was released to the press. The war party took the stance that the Potsdam Declaration ought to be rejected. To ignore it was not acceptable, as the response from the front-line called for more. Rejection was necessary for the "effect that it would have upon the morale of the troops." The pressure from this group was felt by Suzuki, who had prepared notes to reject the declaration at a press conference. In the end, Suzuki merely reiterated the declaration stating, "... the government will just ignore

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<sup>17</sup> Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, 114-5.

[*mokusatsu*] it. We will press forward resolutely to carry the war to a successful conclusion.”<sup>18</sup> Though Suzuki almost bent to the pressure of the war group, the desire of the peace group was fulfilled.

Time passed, and the bombs were dropped on Japan. Councils were almost immediately called in to session. An August 9 meeting of the Supreme War Council was called, which included Tōgō, Anami, and Yonai. The debate over the continuation of the war was split between Anami arguing in favor of continuation and the other two advocating surrender under the Potsdam Declaration. The latter side was embodied by Yonai, who stated, “There is absolutely no chance of victory. The foreign minister has stated the situation correctly. If the Allied nations will agree that our national polity be preserved and our imperial system retained, we should then accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration immediately.” To this Anami replied according to the belief he had endorsed throughout his time in the Suzuki cabinet. He argued, “There is still an excellent chance of victory. The army is confident of its ability to inflict prohibitive losses on the enemy in the decisive battle for our homeland. If we put our total effort into this battle, we may be pleasantly surprised at the outcome.” Yonai reiterated his belief, saying, “Our total effort is not enough. We have reached the end of our resources, both physical and spiritual. It is out of the question to continue.”<sup>19</sup>

This disagreement about the possibility to continue to fight, mouthed by men who both came from a military background may seem odd, but their circumstances and personalities were different. Yonai represented a branch of the military that had already seen complete military defeat in the Pacific battles. Anami’s army had also experienced

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 142-8.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas M. Coffey, *Imperial Tragedy: Japan in World War II, the First Days and the Last*, (New York: World Pub. Co., 1970), p. 338.

great losses, but still had numbers. They would exist so long as there was a homeland to defend. Additionally, Anami's beliefs are more in line with the warrior point of view, going back to the samurai spirit. Yonai was much more pragmatic. He had been, rightfully, pessimistic about Japan's chances in the war from the beginning. Now that Japan's military had been thoroughly defeated in the war, in his view, there was no rational expectation to continue on. Anami, however, found surrender as contrary to the warrior spirit. "There may be no certainty of victory," he said, "but it is also true that we are not yet defeated. And if we show ourselves determined to fight, we might still grasp life out of death."<sup>20</sup> It was the disagreement between the two factions over what "defeat" truly meant that made the debate over a multi-conditional surrender to the Allies a possibility.

The one condition that all of the Big Six agreed upon was the retention of the Emperor. The controversial additional conditions were self-disarmament, trials of Japanese war criminals would be held in the Japanese courts, and that there would be no Allied occupation in Japan. There is some debate over who proposed the additional three conditions. Tōgō insists that it was Anami's group that proposed it. However, other observers noted that the conditions were brought forward by Yonai, though he supported the single condition surrender.<sup>21</sup> Hasegawa's recent research, as published in *Racing the Enemy*, supports the argument that Yonai was the one to present the condition. He writes:

Instead of insisting on the preservation of the imperial house, as the Foreign Ministry officials, Yonai added additional conditions that his closest adviser, Sokichi Takagi, had been discussing with a small, but influential circle since June. Perhaps Yonai's position was not firmly established at this point, and he was

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<sup>20</sup> Coffey, *Imperial Tragedy*, 338-9.

<sup>21</sup> Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender," 107.

simply laying the conditions on the table as the basis of discussion. In fact, throughout the meeting, Yonai kept silent.<sup>22</sup>

In this case, Anami and his supporters merely took Yonai's suggestion and made it the base of their argument.

Kido expressed his concern over the demands of Anami and his group. He considered their wishes to be detrimental to *kokutai*. Should the attack on the homeland occur, he legitimately feared for the future of the Japanese people and the imperial line. Hirohito, worrying about the same, stated that, "If this comes to pass, we will be unable to pass on to our progeny the country called Japan that we received from our imperial ancestors."<sup>23</sup>

The one condition group and their supporters outside the Big Six had their fears on how the conditions would affect their chances for peace. Tōgō had come to the conclusion that the war was detrimental to the preservation of *kokutai*. Holding out for a final defense would weaken the nation even more. He also believed that, even if the defense worked in a way that inflicted heavy damage on the allies, a second assault would come and defense would be even more difficult. Asking for the preservation of the Imperial throne was all that was needed, and even that would be asking a great deal.<sup>24</sup> Kido and Prince Konoe acted quickly to try and gain support against the four conditions. They met with the Emperor and Prince Takamatsu and gained the support of former

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<sup>22</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 203.

<sup>23</sup> Edward J. Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Japanese Imperial Army*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p. 211.

<sup>24</sup> Rees, *The Defeat of Japan*, 164.

Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru. Kido recalled that Shigemitsu warned that "... a rupture would be inevitable if we should lay down the four conditions."<sup>25</sup>

Hasegawa's research has presented a departure from the standard view held by historians, that the two groups were divided among those who supported all four or just one. He argues that, instead, some of the peace party did not object against the additional conditions, and that Toyoda did not fully support all four. He writes, drawing on Japanese documents on Toyoda, that:

Although Suzuki and Yonai were leaning toward Togo's position, they did not raise any objections to insisting on three additional conditions. Toyoda thought it doubtful that Yonai completely supported Togo's one-condition proposal. Toyoda himself supported only two conditions, believing that the demand for non-occupation would be pointless.<sup>26</sup>

The actions of Suzuki and Yonai are understandable, from what we know about *haragei*. Toyoda's beliefs are somewhat surprising, as most scholars depict him as falling in with the war party.

The debate continued, with each side gaining support, until the cabinet reached a deadlock. An imperial conference was called, and Suzuki was forced to present the four conditions as the lowest common proposal. The floor was opened, and Suzuki called upon Tōgō to speak his mind. He believed "any attempt to broach additional terms would preclude peace." Yonai agreed. Anami opposed Tōgō's view and believed that "it was only necessary for the Japanese people to resolutely persevere in a battle for the homeland itself to achieve the additional terms." Umezu was next, adding that

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<sup>25</sup> Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York:Random House, 1999), p.291.

<sup>26</sup> Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy*, 204.

unconditional surrender would be disrespectful to Japan. Baron Hiranuma, also present, was somewhere in the middle, but stressed his concern over the war's effect on the homeland.<sup>27</sup>

Tōgō also expressed doubts over the possibility of a successful defense of Japan based upon what Anami had told him. He recalled that when:

asked whether or not they believed they could ward off an invasion of the homeland,... the army chief of staff [General Korechika Anami] replied that, if we were lucky, we could repulse the invaders before they landed, but that all he could say with assurance was that we could destroy the major part of the army.<sup>28</sup>

Given this response, it is understandable that Tōgō would support the one condition, in order to preserve the *kokutai*. It was not an answer that would inspire confidence in the military's capability to defend Japan.

However, Anami was able to gain some support for the continuation of the war from Suzuki and Yonai, during the imperial conference. There were fears that the Allies would not even accept surrender on the single condition. Anami asked the Prime Minister if the war would be continued should the Allies reject the preservation of the imperial system. Suzuki replied, "Yes. If the enemy rejects that condition, we shall continue the war." Yonai concurred. Anami used this reply to reiterate and strengthen his argument.:

You admit that we are able to continue fighting. And you stipulate one situation under which we should do so. You must understand, then, my attitude. I agree we should insist on preservation of the Imperial House. But I say it is also necessary to insist that our military forces be allowed to demobilize themselves, there be no enemy occupation of Japan, and that all war criminals be prosecuted by the

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<sup>27</sup> Frank, *Downfall*, 293-4.

<sup>28</sup> Bernstein, "Understanding the Atomic Bomb," 53.

Japanese government. These are the *essential prerequisites* to our quest for peace [italics mine].<sup>29</sup>

Tōgō argued to Hirohito, successfully, that the Potsdam Declaration really was a demand for conditional surrender, Bix notes, though he adds, “[Tōgō] probably had his own doubts about that interpretation.”<sup>30</sup> He was able to take the statement regarding the ability of the Japanese people to decide on a government based on their “freely expressed will,” as a condition to surrender. The people supported Hirohito during wartime, so they would support him after war according to their own free will.

The one condition group was not only concerned with the victory in this struggle, but how this decision would affect the nation if the conditional surrender was enacted.

Butow notes:

The immediate object was survival- national survival under the Emperor- High Priest- Father of the People. Logically these men might have been able to picture Japan without an Emperor but emotionally they could not. For this reason, they could not just have rushed blindly into surrender even if the military stood in the way. They had to be reasonably sure that their movement to end the war would save the dynasty, which, in their eyes, was synonymous with the state. The fate of the nation thus depended not only upon the action the military might take but upon the action the end-the-war cadre itself could take once the Allied response was received.

He also notes that the memory of military response to decision made by the government were the one condition group. Suzuki himself narrowly escaped assassination in 1936, so the fear was present. This fear came to be rather prescient, considering the response that did occur.

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<sup>29</sup> Coffey, *Imperial Tragedy*, 350.

<sup>30</sup> Bix, “Japan’s Delayed Surrender,” 94.

In the morning hours of August 10, the Imperial cabinet, along with the Emperor himself, met to consider the surrender of Japan. The Emperor heard from his cabinet members on the different proposals. Though Hiranuma recalled only the one-condition proposal as being offered, Suzuki called an end to the hours of deliberation and announced, "Your Imperial Majesty's decision is requested as to which proposal should be adopted- the one stated by the Foreign Minister or the one containing the four conditions." The Emperor immediately rose from his chair to give his reply:

I have given serious thought to the situation prevailing at home and abroad and have concluded that continuing the war can only mean destruction for the nation and a prolongation of bloodshed and cruelty in the world. I cannot bear to see my people suffer any longer. Ending the war is the only way to restore world peace and to relieve the nation from the terrible distress with which it is burdened.

I was told by those advocating a continuation of the hostilities that by June new divisions would be placed in fortified positions at Kujukuri-hama so that they would be ready for the invader when he sought to land. It is now August and the fortifications have still not been completed. Even the equipment for the divisions which are to fight there is insufficient and reportedly will not be adequate until after the middle of September. Furthermore, the promised increase in the production of aircraft has not progressed in accordance with expectations.

There are those who say that the key to national survival lies in a decisive battle in the homeland. The experiences of the past, however, show that there has always been a discrepancy between plans and performance. I do not believe that the discrepancy in the case of Kujukuri-hama can be rectified. Since this is the shape of things, how can we repel the invaders?

I cannot help feeling sad when I think of the people who have served me so faithfully, the soldiers and sailors who have been killed or wounded in far-off battles, the families who have lost all their worldly goods- and often their lives as well- in the air raids at home. It goes without saying that it is unbearable for me to see the brave and loyal fighting men of Japan disarmed. It is equally unbearable that others who have rendered me devoted service should now be punished as instigators of the war. Nevertheless, the time has come when we must bear the unbearable.

When I recall the feelings of my Imperial Grandsire, the Emperor Meiji, at the time of the Triple Intervention, I swallow my own tears and give my sanction to the proposal to accept the Allied proclamation on the basis outlined by the foreign minister.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Butow, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, 175-6.

The Emperor's speech meant the peace group prevailed at this stage, but the conflict between the two factions was still not over.

After the Emperor intervened, the Japanese government had to await an answer from the Allies. The answer they received was not what they had hoped for. In what would be often referred to as the "Byrnes Note," the Allied powers outlined their conditions for surrender:

With regard to the Japanese Government's message accepting the terms of the Potsdam proclamation but containing the statement "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler," our position is as follows:

From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

The Emperor and the Japanese High Command will be required to sign the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, to issue orders to all the armed forces of Japan to cease hostilities and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.

Immediately upon the surrender the Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.

The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

The armed forces of the Allied Powers will remain in Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.<sup>32</sup>

The reply from Secretary of State James F. Byrnes (Byrnes rejects the surrender, says throne will be subject to SCAP) led to a number of consequences. At the time, the

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<sup>32</sup> Herbert Feis, *Japan Subdued: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 134.

Japanese people had not been informed of the attempt to surrender under the Potsdam Declaration. Therefore, the news of surrender in America had to be counterbalanced in the Japanese media. On August 11, the President of the Board of Information released the following statement to the Japanese media:

In truth we cannot but recognize that we are now beset with the worst possible situation. Just as the government is exerting its utmost effort to defend the homeland, safeguard the polity, and preserve honor of the nation, so to must the people rise to the occasion and overcome all manner of difficulties in order to protect the polity of their Empire.<sup>33</sup>

The statement seems to most to have represented a commitment to the continuation of the war.

In addition to the above statements, the newspapers carried a statement in the name of the Minister of War. It read:

Instructions to all officers and men of the Army:

The Soviet Union has finally taken up arms against this Empire. Try as she may to disguise the facts by rhetoric, her aspirations to conquer and dominate Greater East Asia are obvious. In the face of this reality we shall waste no words. The only thing for us to do is to fight doggedly to the end in this holy war for the defense of our divine land.

It is our firm belief that though it may mean chewing grass, eating dirt m and sleeping in the field, a resolute fight will surely reveal a way out of a desperate situation...<sup>34</sup>

This statement reflected the attitude of Anami and his supporters throughout the Suzuki cabinet, but it is contrary to the decision made by the Emperor. Anami had the statement written and released to the troops before the Allied reply. The public saw the statement

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<sup>33</sup> Feis, *Japan Subdued*, 138.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 138-9.

alongside the Japanese Government's statement. Anami used the refusal as an opportunity to press for more favorable conditions, if not continuation of the war. Anami had a meeting with the Emperor the next day, where the Emperor reprimanded Anami for the statement he had released. Hirohito asked, "Was it necessary for you to release that warlike exhortation to the troops last night, when the government was waiting an answer to our peace offer? Were you not acting contrary to the cabinet policy?" To which Anami answered, in accordance with his beliefs, "Some kind of statement encouraging the troops was felt to be necessary, Your Majesty, because until peace actually comes, the army must be kept in readiness to fight."<sup>35</sup> Though research shows that the notice to the troops was most likely issued by Anami's subordinates without his full knowledge, Anami accepted the decision as his own.<sup>36</sup> Anami attitude about surrender does not change after the Byrnes response, and he continues to argue for war continuation or better conditions.

In the meetings of the Suzuki cabinet and the Supreme War Council debate continued over the nature of the surrender. During an August 12 meeting of the cabinet, Anami tried to reintroduce two of the three conditions, the ones in reference to occupation and disarmament. The meeting was held secret due to pressure from military extremists, who hope to overthrow Suzuki. Additionally, Suzuki had been influenced by Baron Hiranuma to believe that the Byrnes Note was unacceptable as far as preserving the imperial house. The Foreign Ministry still held strongly to the view that the note should be accepted. During these secret meetings, Tōgō had to deal with the possibility that the note would be rejected, and the military would fight on even if it was. He called an end to the meeting in order to await the official arrival of the Byrnes Note, in hopes

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<sup>35</sup> Coffey, *Imperial Tragedy*, 389.

<sup>36</sup> Rees, *The Defeat of Japan*, 172.

that the Emperor's decision would be upheld. Outside the meeting, Tōgō and Kido influenced Suzuki that the Emperor's desire was to proceed with negotiations with the Allies.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, Anami held a series of meetings with important figures to convince them to intervene. He met with Prince Mikasa, the Emperor's youngest brother, in hopes of persuading him to join his cause and block the surrender. Anami was harshly rejected by the prince. Mikasa told him, "Since the Manchurian Incident, the Army has not once acted in accordance with the Imperial wish. It is most improper that you should still want to continue the war when things have come to this stage."<sup>38</sup> He visited Kido the following day, to try and convince him to reject the Byrnes Note. He argued that the acceptance of their demand to create a government based on the free will of the Japanese people would result in the end of the Imperial structure. Anami also hoped to convince the Emperor to reverse his decision and give *ketsu-go* a chance. Kido would not budge from his stance. He told Anami that the Emperor had made up his mind. Rejection would disrespect the Imperial decision and make surrender even harsher for the Japanese people.<sup>39</sup>

On August 14, Kido convinced the Emperor to order an Imperial conference. The purpose of the meeting was to accept the Byrnes Note. Hirohito spoke to his cabinet, tears streaming down his face, reiterating his earlier position:

I have listened carefully to each of the arguments presented in opposition to the view that Japan should accept the Allied reply as it stands and without further clarification or modification, but my own thoughts have not undergone any change. I have surveyed the conditions prevailing in Japan and the world at large, and it is my belief that a continuation of the war promises nothing but additional

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>38</sup> William Craig, *The Fall of Japan*, (New York: Dial Press, 1967), p. 148.

<sup>39</sup> Rees, *The Defeat of Japan*, 172-3.

destruction. I have studied the terms of the Allied reply and have concluded that they constitute a virtually complete acknowledgment of the position we maintained in the note dispatched several days ago. In short, I consider the reply to be acceptable.... In order that the people may know of my decision, I request you to prepare at once an imperial rescript so that I may broadcast to the nation. Finally, I call upon each and every one of you to exert himself to the utmost so that we may meet the trying days which lie ahead.<sup>40</sup>

The Emperor had sided, once again, with the peace faction. Also, in stating that he believed the Byrnes Note to be an acceptance of the earlier surrender, it shows that the work to convince the Emperor that the Potsdam Declaration to be a conditional surrender had worked. He believed that a government decided by the people would be a government with the Imperial system intact.

However, there were those who did not believe in the Emperor's decision. A coup had been planned after the Emperor's original decision. The group had been behind the August 10 Army proclamation in Anami's name. The group, which included Anami's brother-in-law Colonel Takeshita Masahiko, planned to overtake the government in order to reject the peace terms. They planned to kill Suzuki, Tōgō, Kido, and Hiranuma. In order to follow through with their plans, they felt they needed the support of the important military leaders, including Anami and Umezu. Takeshita assured them of Anami's role, saying, "I can guarantee that the general will join with us."<sup>41</sup> However, the role of Anami and Umezu in the coup was not what the plotters had expected. Anami, before giving his answer to the conspirators, had asked Umezu: "Do you believe that the war should be continued even at the risk of launching a coup d'etat?" Umezu answered:

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<sup>40</sup> Frank, *Downfall*, 314-5.

<sup>41</sup> Craig, *The Fall of Japan*, 135-6.

No, it is impossible, because the decision of His Majesty the Emperor has already been given. Launching a coup d'etat in complete defiance of the Emperor's decision will, first of all, invite a split within military circles. Moreover, the nation will not follow us. There is nothing we can do now but to comply with the Emperor's decision.

Anami was then approached by Takeshita. Takeshita hope to convince Anami to resign, as a resignation by a cabinet member would halt any official government action. Anami refused, saying it would have no effect. Takeshita went on to press for his support in the coup. Rather than answer Takeshita directly, Anami addressed the Army ministry, in regards to his acceptance of the decision. He said:

I could not refute the Emperor's own belief any longer. Especially when he asked me in tears to forebear the pain, however trying it might be I could not but forget everything and accept it. Moreover, His Majesty was confident that the maintenance of the national polity would be guaranteed.<sup>42</sup>

The acceptance of the Emperor's decision spelled an end to the internal struggle in the Big Six. The coup went on, and failed. The surrender went through, and Anami committed suicide in order to atone for "the great crime." Whether this referred to his role in the war, his role in the cabinet, or his role in unintentionally letting the coup occur is unknown.<sup>43</sup>

A valid question to ask at this point is: "How did this struggle affect the end of the war?" Many scholars believe that there are points during the war where the possibility to attain peace were lost. In this instance, there are many points where the struggle may have affected the outcome of the war. The use of *haragei* and the split in the leadership were obstacles to a unified leadership. The members of the cabinet often acted in ways

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<sup>42</sup> Frank, *Downfall*, 316.

<sup>43</sup> Frank, 319-20

that were not in alignment to their true beliefs, while sometimes acting in secret ways that were in alignment. For instance, only a half-hearted attempt at peace negotiations with the Soviets was attempted. On the other hand, we see that all of the cabinet was in agreement in not initially accepting the Potsdam Declaration. However, had the war faction prevailed, the *ketsu-go* strategy would have likely been enacted. Regardless, all of the members of the Big Six were in agreement on one important thing- the decision of the Emperor was final and was to be obeyed. And this belief leads me to believe that the surrender was determined because of, and only because of, the Emperor's intervention.

I have found that the reason to demand the four conditions is based on a number of reasons and a difference in the viewpoints of the two groups. Anami, Umezū, and Toyoda were of the mindset that a final, decisive battle was in alignment with the best interests of the *kokutai*. They felt that the military deserved a chance to defend the homeland. The only reasonable way to abandon their plan was to achieve the security that the four conditions would guarantee them, the nation, and the Emperor. Another essential difference between the two groups was in their definitions of "defeat." Men like Anami had believed that defeat had not yet come and only fighting would preserve the national polity. Men like Tōgō, Kido and, ultimately the Emperor, believed that defeat had already come and any continuation of war would destroy the *kokutai*. However, belief in the sanctity of the Imperial decision united them. This belief ended their struggle and the war.

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## Bibliographical Essay

In writing this paper, I used many works that had already utilized Japanese documents, due to my limited knowledge in the Japanese language. The foundation of my research was Robert J. C. Butow's work, *Japan's Decision to Surrender*. I used this work because of several reasons. First, it is the basis for later works on this subject. Second, it deals entirely with Japan's surrender and those involved, as does my paper. Third, I felt that the concept of *haragei*, though it may be translated differently, was important to my research on the debate over conditional surrender. His work used many Japanese documents to summarize what went on in the days leading up to the Japanese surrender. Additionally, he was able to describe the reasons why these men came together and how their personalities reacted to one another. From this point, I used other research to bolster or modify my conclusions.

One of these works was William Craig's *The Fall of Japan*. His research allowed me further insight into conversations between key figures in the conflict. Specifically, it showed more about the coup attempt, and Anami's attempt to influence important figures after the Byrnes Note. Herbert Feis' *Japan Subdued* supplied me with translations of important documents, in an easy-to-find way. This included the statement to the troops made in Anami's name. His work was organized in a day-by-day summary of events, making the information easy to follow. Thomas M. Coffey's book went even further, breaking down the timeline into hours, at times. It was important in providing quotes that described the viewpoints of the two sides involved.

Michael J. Hogan's *Hiroshima: In History and Memory* provided two important articles in my research. Barton J. Bernstein's "Understanding the Atomic Bomb" was helpful in understanding the conflict in general, but also how the situation affected the ending of the war, which was a peripheral concern in my paper. Like other pieces, his work helped in understanding the personalities. The other piece I used was Herbert P. Bix's "Japan's Delayed Surrender." This article also looks back to missed opportunities to end the war. Among these was the debate over the conditions of surrender.

Another important work in my research was David Rees' *The Defeat of Japan*. Rees, an experienced author on the subject of conflict, was able to provide some additional information on a couple of subjects. His work was specifically helpful in recalling meetings between cabinet members. Edward J. Drea's work, *In the Service of the Emperor*, goes along similar lines but focuses on all levels of the military rather than just the leadership. In addition to supplying information on the concerns of the leaders, he was able to provide insight into the indoctrination of the troops, which showed through in the statements made by Anami and Umezu.

Some of the more recent research done on the subject was in Richard B. Frank's *Downfall*. His work was important in providing descriptions of interactions between cabinet members. Particularly helpful was his description of the moments leading up to and after the decision to accept the Byrnes Note. His work was able to help me describe the Emperor's decision, and Anami's rejection of the coup. The most recent work I had access to was Tsuyoshi Hasegawa's *Racing the Enemy*. His descriptions of the assembling of the cabinet were helpful. Of particular use, however, was his access to documents which described Yonai's thoughts, as his role was unclear in other works.