

Do Not Drop the Atom Bomb: **Opponents of Unconditional Surrender**

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It would be criminal to subject the Japanese people to the devastation of an atomic attack. It would be more humane and in keeping with the ideals of the Allied powers if Japan were brought to the negotiating table rather than subjected to the barbarity of using a horrible weapon of mass destruction. The Japanese have already approached the Soviet Union to act as a mediator, and they are sending out peace negotiators to reach some sort of accommodation with the Allies. The Japanese leadership hopes to retain some of their conquests, but that stumbling block can be set aside for now. It will not take much to convince the Japanese that their Asian empire is finished.

At this point, the Japanese may still field an army of five million fighting men, but Japan is at the point of collapse. There are two million soldiers posted throughout the home islands; the rest are scattered in Manchuria, China, Southeast Asia, and on some of the few Pacific islands still held by the Japanese. The American naval blockade has proved to be highly effective, and very few supplies and raw materials are making their way to the home islands. The Japanese merchant marine doesn't exist; the ships are all at the bottom of the sea. Japan's major cities have been subjected to horrid incendiary attacks, with civilian casualties reaching the hundreds of thousands, mostly old men, women, and children. The Japanese have been numbed into physical exhaustion by continuous raids and bombings. They are gasping their last breath, and the end of the Pacific war is near. When the war was ending in Europe, the Japanese military had already suffered 1.140 million dead, 240,000 missing, and 295,000 wounded. Japan's industries are almost at a standstill, and very few military weapons are still being produced. The Japanese navy as a fighting force no longer exists. The Japanese air forces, both the navy and army, are extinct. The best pilots are dead, lost in countless battles over the Pacific waters. All that remains are probably a few thousand obsolete aircraft that can serve as weapons for Japan's *Kamikaze* pilots. In three or four weeks the Japanese will simply acknowledge that they've had enough, and they will willingly surrender.

The demand for "unconditional surrender" sets narrow limits that do not allow for considerations that are culturally important to the Japanese people. They are concerned about the eventual status of their emperor and the dynasty, which has existed for more than two thousand years. The Japanese are concerned that the emperor will be dishonored and tried as a war criminal. All that Japan asks is some guarantee that the emperor be allowed to retain the throne and that the institution of the monarchy be retained. The Allies continue to insist on unconditional surrender as originally stated at Yalta and again at Potsdam, and seem to feel that any change will be seen as a weakening of the resolve to bring the war to a swift conclusion and victory.

The Allies must never lose sight of the fact that this was a war waged against totalitarian tyranny and that they have already, in fighting and winning, attained the high moral plane in the conflict. To use the atomic bomb and the plutonium bomb to destroy Japan will be tragic, for they will target cities where the greatest casualties will be innocent civilians – harmless women and children. They will lose their moral superiority with such a decision. It will be a war crime as reprehensible as any committed by Hitler and his gang. The destructive power of the bombs is immense, and thousands will be killed in the explosions. Now that war in Europe is over, the Soviets will keep to their promise to declare war against Japan, helping our side to bring a quick end to the war. Many question whether the use of the bombs is simply an effort to intimidate the Soviets, and to impress Josef Stalin and the Russians with the power of this new weapon of mass destruction that only the U.S. contains in its arsenal. Whatever the issues at the moment, the Allies only have to wait for a few weeks for the Japanese to hoist the white flag of surrender of their own free will.