The Decision for Peace

Interrogation of Sakonishi, Hidehiko, a career government official, and Chief Cabinet Secretary in the Suzuki cabinet, from a report of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey.

Q. When was the Suzuki Cabinet appointed?
A. April 7, 1945.

Q. Was it the expectation that this Cabinet would consider ways of making peace?
A. The Prime Minister, Mr. Suzuki, doubted the possibility of our continuing the war, so soon after the Cabinet was formed, I ordered me to examine into the details of the Japanese fighting power and to advise whether it was sufficient to continue the war. I reached the conclusion at the end of April, rather the beginning of May, that Japan could not continue the war.

Q. What factors led you to this conclusion?
A. Our inability to manufacture airplanes, the amount of factory damage from bombing, the loss of ships and ships and local damage, the food situation, and the sentiment of the people. The official government propaganda always insisted on ultimate victory of Japan, but the people had doubts because at the time of the Okinawa battle the military said that they could defend Okinawa, but Okinawa fell. When the first B-29s came to Tokyo, Army fighter planes went up and tried to fight them, but the raid continued, the number of fighting planes which rose gradually less and less. The people saw this, and it gave them some idea of the fighting power of Japan. There were no means to stop the air raids.

Q. Did the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister usually take the sentiment of the people into consideration in their deliberations?
A. They should, but usually they do not. Tojo did not, it is clear. Suzuki did. At the very beginning of his government he asked the Emperor how he thought about the war. I think the Emperor knew the people did not want to continue the war, that their sentiment was against. I guess the Emperor told Mr. Suzuki not to. So Suzuki ordered me to make the investigations which I have told you about.

Q. By what means did the Emperor know that the people did not want to continue the war?
A. He read the propaganda through the people, through meetings with the former Prime Ministers, for example, my father-in-law (Adm. Kinko Okada), who are sort of elder statesmen.

Q. Did the Emperor have access to the foreign media?
A. I don’t know. Then also there were the members of the Imperial Household Ministry who were always against war.

Q. How did you go about finding out the sentiment of the people?
A. I listened to what they said, in the streets, on the streets, and so on. They did not know the number of airplanes we had, or the iron manufacturing capacity, but they could feel what the situation was. You can’t stop them from feeling, you know.

Q. Did you have any organized method, like the Gallup system?
A. No, there was no organization. But I saw so many people every day. As many as 20 or 30 people came to see me every day. I knew well what the actual position was with regard to Japan’s manufacturing capacity, because I was an officer of the Cabinet Planning Board at one time.

Q. How long?
A. 1941-42 and 1943-44, during part of the Tojo and part of the Kido cabinet. When I was in the Tojo cabinet, I tried to break it up. You know, there is an old Japanese proverb which says that an insect was inside the lion and the lion was killed by the insect. Hodono (Noshiro Hodono), head of the Cabinet Planning Board under one of Kido’s cabinets, and Tojo’s Chief Cabinet Secretary said to some of my colleagues that he thought Sakonishi was the insect inside the lion.

Q. You were not happy working with Hodono?
A. No, but I knew him very well. We were both in the Finance Ministry together before the Manchuria incident. I guess he wanted me in the Planning Board because he knew I had some skill in planning. I planned many things, but I was moved out of them, and especially. I would not listen to anything about the sentiment of the people. I thought Tojo did not know how to drop the war. He knew how to start one, but not how to stop it. You know, when I was learning to drive a car in...
New York, the teacher said, not that before I could learn to drive the car I must first learn how to stop it. Before Tojo the cabinet breakers were always Ritsuko, Saimaru without any nearer. They have played a particularly important role in Japanese history, and always they have been connected with the military. Under Tojo, all the Ritsuko were pledged to him because he was the military's man. Under Tojo they cherished him.

Of course, I could not indulge in any propaganda against Tojo, because I was in the Cabinet, but I believe that Okada and I were the center of the opposition to Tojo. It took just 1 year to do it.

You may wonder why Okada disliked Tojo as I shall tell you the story. Before the war Tojo gathered together all the former Prime Ministers and explained why he was going to start the war. Okada, [Adm. Mitsumasa] Yonai, [Gen. Reijirō] Watanabe did not agree. Okada asked Tojo about the condition of Japan's merchant shipping. Tojo explained that we might lose 300,000 tons per month, and I don't remember the exact amount of new construction he mentioned but it was his calculations more than enough to make up for what was lost. Okada said his estimate was wrong. And the fact was that Okada was right. It was as he said. We lost, well, maybe 300,000 or 200,000 tons per month. Our capacity for building was 500,000 tons per month, but we couldn't build that much because we didn't have the materials. There were many, many shipyards which were idle during the war for this reason. So Okada says that Tojo is a liar, but that is not the word, that he has no sense for estimating the cost. I will tell you the rest of that story.

Q: You said a few minutes ago that you felt that Tojo would give us the story of what happened in that year?

A: First we talked to [Gen. Keijirō] Kido (Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal) because he could nominate the Prime Minister. Of course, the Emperor formally nominated him, but it was Kido who actually did it. And we went to see Tojo, that it would be best for him to resign. Tojo decided to reconstruct his cabinet because Mr. Kihō (Shintaro Nakazato, Kido, Minister of Commerce and Industry) and [Rev. Gensui] Shimizu came over to our side. This was just before the Moritaka campaign. Tojo asked Yonai to be Minister without portfolio. Okada, [Gen. Reimatsu] Shimizu, and the former Prime Ministers, and they decided that Yonai should take the Tojo government so Tojo was compelled to resign. General

Aké accepted his invitation, but Tojo could not stand up against the solid opposition of the former Prime Ministers.

Okada tried to get them to build a Cabinet of peace-minded people, and the Army fought against it. Kiso was an old soldier, but outside of the government he had been very critical of Tojo, so we expected that Kiso might do something, but he was not strong enough to fight the military. I think it was a pity that Kiso ever came in as Prime Minister.

Then Suzuki was appointed. His nomination meant a change in the tendency of operation of the government. The Emperor for the first time could express his own opinions, I think. Many of the senior officials of the government, like me, had had official conferences in which we might say something like, "How can we continue the war without itself?" Next day the Kansai would come to my office and say, "We hear that at a meeting last night you expressed doubt of final victory." All are afraid of the Kansai.

Well, I came to the conclusions I have told you about before, and Suzuki declined I was right. He went to the Emperor and came back a short distance later. He said to me that we must take some steps toward peace. This was in the middle of May. So we asked Hirohito, Kido (former Prime Minister) to speak with the Russian Ambassador [Joseph Alexeyevich] Malkin in private conversation. He did so on several occasions, sounding out the Russian attitude toward understanding with America. In the beginning it looked as we might be successful, but the talks never reached a successful conclusion. In May Germany was defeated, as you know, and after that the War Minister [Gen. Korechika Anami] asked the Cabinet for a conference in the presence of the Emperor to decide the fundamental principle of the war—which to continue it or not. Of course, we [laughing] had had many rehearsals of that meeting.

The military insisted upon continuing, but I and others had different ideas, although we couldn't actually advocate the stopping of the war because the MPs were still around. I drafted the memorandum for the conference, and I started it with the statement that we should try to accomplish the war and keep the Emperor's reign intact and keep the home land. Of course, the military read the memorandum as meaning that the war should be continued, but it was followed by the detail which I had collected for my report to Mr. Suzuki. The whole thing was presented to the conference in the presence of the Emperor. Those attending were

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the Prime Minister, the war Minister, the Navy
Minister (Yosai), the Army Chief of Staff, (Gen.
Yoshitomo Umeza), the Chief of the Army General
Staff, (Admiral Kiyoma Toyoda), and the Foreign
Minister (Shigemori Togo). Each expressed his own
opinion, but none expressed his real feelings. But
if you read the details of my memorandum, it is
clear that the war had to stop. The Emperor him-
self read the report as well as the others. This was
on the ninth of June. At that time the Emperor
stated nothing.

On the 25th of June the Emperor, by his own
will, called a meeting of the Prime Minister and
the others. I just mentioned who were in the meeting
of June 25th. (At this point S. explained that the
Cabinet had presented a written request for per-
mission to hold a conference in the presence of the
Emperor, but the Emperor could not come at his own
intiative at any time, although he rarely did so.)
The Emperor told them that the conclusion in the
memorandum presented in the conference of June 25th
seemed to be very paradoxical. He knew the real
meaning of the conclusion. He said, "I think it is
necessary for us to have a plan to close the war at
once, as well as one to defend the home islands." (S.
explained that at that time the Army was making
much of the plan to defeat the American forces
when they landed on the home islands.)

As a result of this discussion by the Emperor,
Suzuki decided to stop the war. After the meeting,
when Mr. Suzuki came back, he said to me, "Today
the Emperor said what everyone has wanted to say
but we dared not to say it.

Q. What was the reaction of the military to this
decision?

A. Y landscapes understood and approved the idea.
The War Minister, Anami, also approved, but he
could not express his real feelings of the generals
around him and the fear of resurrection.

After that the government decided to send Prince
Kumey in Russia and asked Russia if he would be
possible. The Russians said that they could
not decide on the matter unless they received from
the Japanese government an expression in more
detail of the purpose of the Prince’s mission. We
must use a cable from Ambassador (Nevins) Akin in
Moscow to explain the mission, as follows:

1. To make an improvement in relations be-
between Russia and Japan (this in view of the
recent demilitarization of the Neutrality Pact).
2. To ask the USSR to intervene with the
United States in order to stop the war.

The Russian answer was that Stalin and Molot-
ove were just leaving for the conference at Pots-
dam, so an answer to the Japanese request could
not be given until they returned. We wanted an
answer before the conference, but we just couldn’t
have it, so there was nothing to do but wait.

Suzuki and I felt quite pessimistic about the
Russian attitude toward our proposal. Then on
June 26th came the Potosan Declaration. Suzuki,
Togo, and I talked together, and we felt that this
declaration must be accepted as the final terms of
peace (surrender), whether we liked it or not.
Still the military side of the government said that
the terms of the proclamation were "too dishonorable."

On the 5th of August, early in the morning, about 2 o’clock, the bell rang beside my bed. (My
own house was bombed in April and I moved to
my official residence. That was bombed in June,
so I moved my bed into my office, and I stayed
there 24 hours a day. In the room where I got
dressed, I would put my hat and walk through
the building, return to my office and hang up my
hat. That I called coming to the office. At night
I would again put on my hat and walk through
the building the same way. That was coming
home from the office.) When the bell rang beside
my bed, it was Dr. Assagi telling me that President
Truman had announced that the atomic bomb had
been used at Hiroshima. I already knew that the
Hiroshima damage had been very severe and that
it had caused by just one explosion. Everyone
said that America had used a new bomb, but they
didn’t think it was an atomic bomb because our
scientists had told us that no country could finish
the atomic bomb for use in this war.

The military said that it was probably a 4-ton
bomb bursting in the air. They made their calcu-
lations, but found that a 4-ton bomb could not do that
much damage. They suggested that it might be a
100-ton bomb. After the announcement, we sent
some scientists to Hiroshima, and they reported that
it was a real atomic bomb.

*Asked in table, why the military permitted the
appearance of the atomic bomb, if they were bombs in support of
demilitarization, Bamberger replied: "The War
Minister (Anami) knew of our suspension, but he never
told his military staff. For that I advise Mr. Assagi,
and that is why he committed suicide." He continued:
"On the outside and officially he pretended that we
must continue the war, but inside he had made his
decision that it must be brought to an end. cabinet
could have brought the bomb without anyone.
It shows his character that he didn’t, despite what he
knew of our suspension. Yosai of course, always expressed
his idea that the war should be stopped, and that is one
way of being a brave man. Mr. Assagi agreed another."
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When this news came in on the morning of the 7th, I called the Prime Minister on the phone and reported the announcement. Everyone in the government and even in the military knew that if the announcement were true, no country could carry on a war. Without the atomic bomb it would be impossible for any country to defend itself against a nation which had the weapon.

The chance had come to end the war. It was not necessary to blame the military side, the manufacturing people, or anyone else—just the atomic bomb. It was a great chance. Someone said that the atomic bomb was the Kamikaze to save Japan.

Q. How long do you think the war would have continued if the atomic bomb had not been used?

A. We had already asked the Russians to surrender, and we could expect that they would eventually give up sooner or later. If it had been unfavorable, there was just one way to bring peace and that was to broadcast directly to the United States. But it would have been difficult to find a good chance to do so. I think you can understand. Suzuki tried to find a chance to stop the war and the atom bomb gave him that chance.

I asked the Cabinet Board of Information to put all the information about the atomic bomb in the newspapers and on the radio, in order to tell the people just how fearful it was. But the General Staff Information Office stopped it. They tried hard to emphasize that the people need not fear the atomic bomb if they were in shelters. I had much difficulty with the Chief of Military Information. All the Cabinet Board of Information was finally allowed to say was that the atomic bomb had been tested at Hiroshima. This item appeared in the morning papers of August 9. Of course, all the intellectuals knew the meaning of the announcement, but there had been so many stories and novels about atomic power. I wanted all the people to understand the meaning of the bomb, but it took a full day just to get the bare announcement released.

On the morning of August 7, Suzuki and Togo [Foreign Minister] conferred and reported the news to the Emperor. They also gave their opinion that this was the chance to accept the Potsdam Declaration. Still the War Minister could not make up his mind; publicly, openly.

Early on the morning of August 9 the bell inside my last room again, and Doi reported that Russia had declared war on us. I previously had a

*Meeting at which the war would have continued until Japan was no more.

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two military assistants out, the War Minister saw what was meant, and it gave him his chance. On the surface this was a negligible event, but it really is not.
The conference lasted for 3 hours. I walked in two or three times, and each time everyone was sunk deep in his chair, and they said nothing. The atmosphere was very gloomy and very cold. Afterwards the Prime Minister came out and told me that two opinions had been expressed and no agreement had been reached.

1. To accept the Potsdam Declaration unconditionally, with the understanding that the Potsdam Proclamation did not include the requirement that the Emperor's legal position be altered.

2. To accept the Potsdam Declaration with the following conditions: First, that the Allied forces would not occupy the home islands, excepting the island of Okinawa; second, that the Japanese military and naval forces abroad were to be withdrawn by the Japanese on their own will and disbanded; third, all war crimes should be prosecuted by the Japanese Government.

Sasukai said that he, Venita, and Tojo were in favor of the first opinion; that Anami, Umezu (Army Chief of Staff), and Togo (Chief of Navy General Staff) favored the second opinion.

Then I said, "Let's have the Cabinet conference." He agreed and arranged it for 1 p.m. Sixteen ministers were in attendance. They were gathered about a large round table. As Chief Secretary, I sat at a small secretary's desk in one corner. When the meeting opened, Tojo (Foreign Minister) explained the decision of the former Cabinet meeting.

About nine ministers agreed with the first opinion (Unconditional acceptance of Potsdam Declaration), four with the second opinion (conditional acceptance) and there were two on the fence. These took such position that the three conditions in the second opinion were too many, that two were enough, that the Prime Minister should take the decision and the rest should follow. The Cabinet meeting continued until 8 p.m. with one hour out for dinner. Toward the end I wrote a note to Sasukai suggesting that he had better declare an intermission. This he shortly announced.

The Foreign Minister, the Prime Minister, and I then went in the Prime Minister's room, and I told Sasukai that it was apparent that the Cabinet conference was unable to reach a decision. I asked him what he thought we should do. Then he said, "How about this? Go to the Emperor, report the conferences in detail, and get the Emperor's own decision." I said that it would be better to have an inner Cabinet meeting in the Emperor's presence and let all the ministers express personally their own views. Sasukai agreed, and I proceeded to make the arrangements.

To hold a Cabinet meeting in the presence of the Emperor, it is necessary to prepare a document stating the purpose of the meeting, the signatures of the Prime Minister, the Army Chief of Staff and the Navy Chief of Staff. I wrote this document and got the signatures. It was taken to the Emperor and he agreed to the meeting.

The conference (with the Emperor) was held at 11:50 a.m. (the Cabinet meeting was still at intermission). I read the text of the Potsdam Declaration. It was very hard to do because the weight of the declaration are very heavy, the contents not cheerful things to read in the presence of the Emperor. Then the Foreign Minister expressed his opinion, and the other ministers, all of them, expressed their, as in the morning conference. About 3 o'clock on the evening of the 10th, the Prime Minister stood up and made the following announcement: "We have discussed this question for a long time and everyone has expressed his own opinion sincerely without any conclusion being reached. The situation is urgent, so any delay in coming to a decision should not be tolerated. I am therefore prepared to ask the Emperor and his own wishes and to decide the conference's conclusion on that basis. This wish should be realized, and the government should follow it." (At this point Sakurada explained very briefly that this was a very delicate and unusual procedure, that under the constitution the Emperor cannot decide anything by himself, that there is no constitutional procedure for the Emperor to express his wishes in matters of policy, and that the Emperor must always follow the government's advice.)

Sasukai stepped two or three steps away from the Emperor and asked him to express his own opinion. The Emperor just raised his forefinger and said to Sasukai to go back to his seat. The Emperor then started to express his own opinion: "I agree with the first opinion as expressed by the Foreign Minister. I think we should discuss the reason why I have decided so. Thinking about the world situation and the internal Japanese situation, I see that we have reached a crucial point, but the destruction of the whole nation. My ancestors and myself have always wished to promote the nation's welfare, and international peace, and peace in our present time. To continue the war-
now means that cruelty and bloodshed will still continue in the world and that the Japanese nation will suffer severe damage. So to stop the war on this occasion is the only way to save the nation from destruction and to rescue peace in the world. Lacking back at what our military headquarters above, it is apparent that their performance has fallen far short of the plans expressed. I don't think this discrepancy can be corrected in the future. But when I think about my own soldiers abroad and of those who died or were wounded in battle, about those who have lost their property or lives by bombing in the home land, when I think of all these sacrifices, I cannot help but feel sad. (Zekuniya said that the Emperor used very heavily emotional words in this part of the statement, and because of them the members of the Cabinet cried openly.) I decided that this war should be stopped, however, in spite of this sentiment and for more important considerations."

Mr. Sunaga then said, "The Imperial decision has been expressed. This should be the conclusion of the Conference." It was about 3 a.m. on August 10th.

We went back to the Cabinet offices and reconvened the Cabinet meeting. The Prime Minister reported the Emperor's decision. All the members agreed to it and signed the document (advising the Emperor that the Potsdam Declaration should be accepted unconditionally).

I forgot to say that the conference in the presence of the Emperor was attended by (Baron Kichinosuke) Hirakawa, President of the Privy Council and he did as the Emperor's special request. A Privy Council resolution is essential for the ratification of the international agreement, such as the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, but there was not time to assemble the full Privy Council. They are old men, living all over the country, and it would have taken a considerable period to assemble them all for a formal session. So, to save time, I advised the Prime Minister that this should be omitted. So Mr. Sunaga asked the Emperor to call Baron Hirakawa into the meeting. Hirakawa agreed with the first opinion (unconditional acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration), and his agreement was sufficient to constitute acceptance by the Privy Council.

The cable of acceptance was sent early, about 7 a.m., on the morning of the 11th through the Swedish and Swiss Governments. About 9 a.m. on the 12th, we received a broadcast from San Francisco giving us your government's reply, but we did not receive the official written document through the neutral countries until about 10 a.m., on the morning of the 11th.

There was little difference between the broadcast version and the official text. We studied the former the whole day on the 12th, the un oficial document. On the afternoon of the 13th, San Francisco broadcasted that the Japanese reply was very late and insisted that it was not possible to bomb Tokyo. (Meanwhile, we had heard from a prisoner of war, a B-29 pilot, that your government planned to use the aerial bomb on Tokyo on the 15th.) I was very much worried. So I asked Dönitz to broadcast that the Japanese government had not yet received the official reply of the American Government. This broadcast was stopped by the military on the grounds that they were afraid the military forces abroad would pick it up, guess that something was going on, and the effects might be serious. The military refused to permit Dönitz to send anything. I was very afraid of the possibility that the atomic bomb would be used against us again. So on my own responsibility I told Dönitz to make the broadcast despite the military.

That was about 5 p.m. Fifteen minutes later San Francisco said that they could understand why the Japanese reply was late. Immediately there after several high officials of the military came to me and asked me why I had told Dönitz to issue this broadcast. They had been to the Swiss officials and had been told that I had ordered the broadcast despite the military objections and would take complete responsibility. This conversation was repeated several times with the military officials, but nothing came of it, and no harm was
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done to me. You see, the military were very hard to cancel the Emperor's decision to accept the Potsdam Declaration unconditionally. The official answer of your government was received on the morning of the 15th, as you know. We had a Cabinet meeting beginning at 1 p.m. in the discussion with confined nature in the part which said that the ultimate form of the Japanese government should be decided by the Japanese people themselves. Some said that this meant acceptance of our proposal, while others said that it was a refusal. It is difficult to explain the second opinion, that this was set aside of our offer. (Sakurita paused at this point, reflecting.) I forget to say earlier that in our cable to the United States, which I drafted myself, I had stated that the "legal position" of the Emperor should not be altered. Hironuma, President of the Privy Council, who is a very theoretical statesmen, believed that the "prerogatives" of the Emperor are not derived from the Constitution, so that the position of the Emperor is not a legal but a natural one. He, therefore, insisted that the words "prerogatives" be substituted for "legal position." This was all we meant by the statement anyhow. But I was over-rushed.

About 13 ministers held the opinion that the American offer was acceptable, that the Japanese people could decide the ultimate form of the government. Three believed that it was unacceptable because the Emperor's position should not be dependent upon the people. Again no conclusion for the conference was reached, and we declared an intermission about 4 p.m.

I thought that another conference in the presence of the Emperor would be necessary, but I saw that was not going to be possible when the members of the military staff came to see me and said, "You need a week and a half to get the Imperial decision." They thought I had arranged and staged everything. Nevertheless, I asked the military and naval chiefs of staff to sign a request for a second conference in the presence of the Emperor." They refused. They did not want the Emperor's decision to be apparent.

(All this was going on while the Cabinet session was an intermission, if you can see, these intermissions are a very convenient thing.) I wondered what to do. The military had closed one path to a decision. I was very tired, and I thought it would be a good thing if we all go to sleep that night. But San Francisco was still broadcasting, and I was afraid of that atomic bomb. I suggested to Suzuki that the Cabinet meeting should be postponed until evening and that I would talk with the military people that night. I said I would talk with them, but I had no idea how I could get through them. The two chiefs of staff had a talk with the Foreign Minister all that night. They wanted him to put the question to the American government again, to get the answer more exactly. The Foreign Minister told them that that would mean curbing the slim string of communication between the two countries, he would not agree. They pressed him all night. I stayed with them until 2 a.m. The Foreign Minister insisted that we had been able to establish a very delicate relation with the American government, that to ask the question again would be construed as a refusal, which would result in the destruction of communications between the two governments.

Early on the 16th the Prime Minister came to the office about 8 o'clock. I said, "Did you sleep well?" He said, "Yes, did you?" I said, "One half hour." At 5 a.m. I had asked Suzuki, completely on my own responsibility, to broadcast that the Japanese Government had almost decided to accept the reply of the American Government. The military people were very angry with Suzuki, and they (Suzuki) assuredly asked me to explain that I had ordered it. But that was a minor point.

Suzuki said to me, "What shall we do now?" I suggested that he go to the Imperial Palace and ask the Emperor to call a conference of the Cabinet, the two chiefs of staff and Hironuma in the Emperor's presence. The Emperor can do that at any time, although the government cannot request such a meeting without the signatures of the chiefs of staff on the requesting document. Mr. Suzuki went to the Palace and returned about 10 o'clock. Immediately after the return, a telephone call came from the Imperial Household Ministry summoning all three people to a conference. All were in informal clothes, but with the permission of the Imperial Household Minister, we all went as we were. The 16 Cabinet Ministers, the 2 chiefs of staff, Baron Hira, the director of the Bureau of Military and Naval Affairs, and I were present at the conference. Mr. Suzuki announced that the Emperor had called us to discuss the matter of the American reply in his presence, so that everyone who had an opinion should express it freely. After (War Minister), Gen. Umezu (Chief of Staff), and Adm. Toyoda (Navy Chief of Staff) expressed the opinion that the American answer was insufficient, so that we had better ask them again for a more concrete answer or, if that were impossible, so...
The Emperor spoke. He said: "It seems to me that there is no other opinion on your side (the military's). I shall explain mine. I hope all of you will agree with my opinion." He was very important. You must remember that the Emperor never used to say anything in these conferences. Now he asked that the government agree with the opinion he expressed. This is a great thing in our political history. His opinion was the same as the one I expressed the other night. The American answer seems to me acceptable." Everything then was decided, and all the members of the conference then really recognized that Japan had been defeated for the first time in her 3,000-year history. Everyone cried like children. I had intended to write down the Imperial decisions, but I found I could not. Yet I shall remember the Emperor's words to this day, just as I dream.

The Emperor gave almost the same reasons for his opinion as he had in the former meeting with the smaller group. He expressed his opinion on the reconstruction of Japan. He said that all must cooperate together. He then asked the Government to draft the Imperial Rescript to stop the war. He said that all the people who will absolutely realize what the military situation is may be surprised. So if the ministers think it would be better, he said he would speak personally to them over the radio. He said, "If the military and naval forces especially are shocked, so I will go anywhere the Minister wants and explain the situation to the soldiers personally." The Emperor was wearing white gloves, and he himself put his hand to his eyes to brush away the tears. To see that, everyone felt that the Emperor had come back to the people from his capture by the military.

The decision was made and the conference was closed. The Cabinet members returned to their office and made the formal decision accepting the American answer. I wanted to draft the Imperial Rescript. Because I remembered his every word, it was not difficult. I put it in the Chinese style of writing. You should read the Rescript very carefully because it gives the Emperor's real statement, unlike the usual Rescript, which is drafted entirely by the Government.

The answer to the American Government was sent out about noon. The Rescript was issued at 11 p.m., and at 12 midnight, the Emperor's broadcast to the people was released for broadcast.

At 4:30 the next morning (August 15), I was awakened by the noise of machine guns outside the Cabinet office. At first I thought it was American planes on a raid, but I soon discovered it was an attack by 50-60 Japanese soldiers. I immediately left the building by an underground passage, and went to the Metropolitan Police Headquarters. The machine gun fire lasted only 2 or 5 minutes, yet it entered the building and found me unharmed. I then went to the private residence of Mr. Suzuki, which they burned to the ground. Just 5 minutes before they arrived, I had called the Prime Minister, told him of the attack on the Cabinet office, and suggested that he should get out at once, as it seemed likely that they would go next to his private residence.

At the Metropolitan Police Station I found that the Imperial Household Ministry had been occupied by a military force who were trying to get the record of the Emperor's broadcast and destroy it before it could be put on the air. They did not succeed in locating it. (Comm. Shigehito Tsuchida, Commander of the Eastern District Army, Tokyo) spoke to the leaders of the group, trying to persuade them to vacate the premises, and he finally succeeded about 7 o'clock in the morning.

At noon on the 15th of August the broadcast of the Emperor's speech to the people was made.

Q: I understand that the attack on the Cabinet office did not come completely as a surprise to you?

A: Informed people suspected that something was going on as early as the 12th or 13th. Posters were put up in the Ginza and elsewhere saying people to kill "the Red Dragon of Japan, Suzuki, Sakato, Yosumi, Osada, Togo, and Hirose." Hirose's name was left off all of the posters and leaflets. The police said they were put up by "Randoms" who were concerned with the military.

Then on the 15th, all the military airplanes came out. They had not gone out to attack the B-29's for a long time, but they all came out, hundreds of them, and spread leaflets saying, "We will continue the war!" and "The Imperial Rescript is a forgery."

For one month, I lived with two policemen at all times, and at the recommendation of the police I changed my sleeping place every night. It was not so bad, but the tire problem was difficult, as it is mentioned, and moving all the time I could not get proper rest for me and my two bodyguards.

This was the second time I had had machine guns turned on me. The first being in the February 25th incident, when I was secretary to my father, Mr. Osada, the Prime Minister. Then I had a marked man, as they were after the Prime Minister himself. This was the second time, when they were really after me. I may not be so lucky the third time.