

A Fleeting Alliance: Emperor Hirohito and the American Occupation of Japan

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This Thesis of the Master of Arts Degree by
Shane Michael Thomas Moran
has been approved on behalf of the
Graduate School by

Thesis Committee:

Ronald B. Frankum, Jr., Ph.D.
Research Advisor

Onek C. Adyanga, Ph.D.
Committee Member

David A. Owen, Ph.D.
Committee Member

January 25, 2023
Date

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By

Shane Moran

Millersville University, 2023

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Directed by Ronald B. Frankum, Jr.

ABSTRACT (MAX 150 WORDS):

In the aftermath of the Second World War, there was an almost universal desire to punish the aggression that led to global conflict. Initially, Allied propaganda portrayed Japanese emperor Hirohito as the mastermind of their aggression. As the war ended and the United States occupied the island nation, a significant shift in policy occurred. General Douglas MacArthur, the occupation's overseer, believed that the emperor was the key to successful democratization attempts. Due to the unique relationship between Hirohito and the Japanese people, MacArthur and his advisors maintained that the emperor could assist the occupation by demonstrating to his people that positive change could occur. As the Americans began focusing on the Cold War, any aspirations for an independent, democratic Japan faded in favor of their desire to have an ally in Asia. Hirohito, who had become a symbol of Japan's progress, was cast aside in favor of conservative politicians.

Keywords:

Emperor Hirohito, Occupation of Japan, Cold War, Douglas MacArthur

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Preface

As with most good research projects, this paper far exceeded what I had first envisioned. Originally, it was not even supposed to be a thesis. My initial goal was to explore one of the primary theaters where American foreign policy at the beginning of the Cold War had developed. Because the occupation began before the Cold War dominated American foreign policy, it provided me with an excellent case study to explore how the United States shifted to accommodate for their fear of communism. Because I am more familiar with the later years of the Cold War, I had meant this to be a foundational project to build later work on. However, the more I researched and wrote, the project continued to grow. Once I was given the opportunity to extend my independent study into a thesis, I had spent enough time reading American foreign relations memos to recognize just how much more there was to this subject than I had initially assumed. Rather than letting it fall into the ever-growing list of research projects that deserve to be revisited, I chose to continue writing.

Writing this thesis has been quite the learning experience. When I started, I only had a passing knowledge of America's occupation of Japan, most of it unrelated to what I eventually found myself researching. Once I began, however, I continued to find information that deserved to be highlighted. I happily included the portions relevant to my thesis. The rest, however interesting, I had to toss aside unless I wanted to expand the scope of my project even further. Considering I have also been working towards a second master's degree while writing this thesis, the entire process has been a scheduling miracle. Without the support of Dr. Frankum as my

thesis advisor, I likely would not have made it this far. Through his guidance, I have been able to write extensively on Japan's postwar development without straying too far off track. This entire project may have been unexpected, but it has become one of the most informative parts of my graduate education.

Introduction

The Second World War had a devastating effect on dozens of countries. Scars from the conflict lasted decades after peace was obtained, and many nations were left struggling to recover. For the Allied victors, the end of the war created an opportunity to reshape the world. Starting with the countries responsible for the war, the Allies sought to establish more equitable forms of government. However, the United States and the Soviet Union both held vastly different ideas regarding what form of government would best lead the world toward a new peaceful age. In this new postwar era, each superpower sought to expand their spheres of influence in the name of self-defense. Eventually, this led to a decades-long ideological conflict between the Americans and Soviets. As the border between those two spheres of influence, Japan had the potential to define how this conflict played out in Asia.

In this postwar period, Japan became an area of vital strategic importance for the Americans. When the occupation first began, the primary goal of American policymakers was to establish democratic tendencies within Japan. At the same time, establishing close ties with this newly democratic Japan meant further expanding the United States' sphere of influence. As communism started to spread across the rest of Asia, the Americans began viewing Japan as their foothold into the continent, existing on the frontlines of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. This shift in how Japan was seen by the Americans also changed how occupation policy was implemented. At first, they emphasized democratizing Japan and removing any remnants of the system that had allowed the militarists to take control. In the later years of the occupation, the Americans abandoned their earlier efforts to establish strong conservative political elements that would prevent Japan from falling to the Soviets.

The change in policy toward Japan during the Cold War was best seen through the treatment of Hirohito, Japan's emperor. Despite his support of Japan's militarist faction during the war, the Americans had determined that Hirohito was the key to convincing the Japanese people to support democratic reforms. As the early years of the occupation showed, they were right. The emperor was remarkably adept at instilling democratic values within his people, and he soon proved himself to be a valuable asset to the occupying forces. However, once the Americans shifted their priorities to address Cold War concerns, his assistance was no longer necessary. Japan had progressed to the point where it would follow American directives without Hirohito's guidance. Slowly, he faded into the background. Hirohito had been critical to the success of Japan's occupation, but he was soon forgotten as policymakers focused on reshaping Japan into a bastion of democracy that could stand against the communist threat in Asia.

Chapter 1: Planning for the Postwar Period

As the war in Europe ended and the Pacific theater neared its conclusion, Allied attention shifted toward establishing plans to rebuild and rehabilitate the defeated nations. The United States, as the primary force driving the Allied campaign in the Pacific, led the discussions on Japan's role after the war, debating internally on the best way to lead Japan towards democracy and international cooperation. Within the American government, there was significant disagreement on this subject. The former Ambassador to Japan before the attack on Pearl Harbor and Under Secretary of State, Joseph C. Grew, was a constant advocate for a soft peace with the Japanese. Soft peace, in this context, meant a desire to quickly forgive the Japanese for their wartime conduct, focusing more on rehabilitation rather than punishment. Since 1943, he and his supporters voiced their belief that Japan could be a valuable partner in the post-war period, born from their deep respect for the Western-oriented liberal elite within Japan.¹ To achieve this future, Grew pointed to emperor Hirohito and the Japanese throne as the "cornerstone for healthy and peaceful internal growth in Japan."² This belief, that the emperor alone had the power to influence Japan and cultivate democratic tendencies, eventually became the foundation of American occupation policy.

Despite the influence Grew had on the formation of America's occupation policy toward Japan, other Americans contributing to the formation of a cohesive plan did not approve of such a soft peace. Some organizations within the government, such as the Civil Affairs Division of the

¹ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 38-39.

² Joseph C. Grew to Stanley Hornbeck, September 30, 1943, MS Am 1687, vol. 116, Grew Papers. Quoted in Hal Brands, "Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946," *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 274-275, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

War Department, maintained that the imperial throne should be abolished.³ Outside experts were calling for Hirohito himself to sign the eventual peace treaty, arguing that “He must be humbled in such a way that his entire people know it,” before he was stripped of his rank and exiled.⁴ Most of the people who held sway over planning Japan’s occupation were deeply influenced by their desire to punish and humiliate the country for its attack on Pearl harbor and the subsequent war in the Pacific. Grew’s position, despite the influence it eventually had on occupation policy, was not the dominant one for much of the war.

Eventually, as an Allied victory in the Pacific seemed more likely, the position of the American government mellowed as it acknowledged the pragmatism of Grew’s position. Taking elements of the many opinions that were voiced throughout the earlier years of the war, the first true plan for Japan was outlined on June 11, 1945.⁵ This policy outlined three distinct phases of the occupation of Japan; a military occupation defined by “stern discipline” to punish Japan for its war conduct, a transition into close surveillance based on Japan’s willingness to embrace peace, and an eventual movement towards a peaceful and responsible Japan that could coexist with other nations. The desire to punish Japan remained, but a distinct shift toward cultivating them as an ally had occurred. However, there were continued concerns regarding their initial plan’s effectiveness. Without the Japanese people themselves willingly moving towards

³ Hal Brands, “Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946,” *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 275, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>. The Civil Affairs Division was responsible for planning the military aspects of the upcoming occupation.

⁴ “Experts on Pacific Plan Japan’s Fate: Hot Springs Institute Puts the Abolishing of Emperor Rule as First of Peace Terms,” *New York Times*, January 10, 1945, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/experts-on-pacific-plan-japans-fate/docview/107331685/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁵ “Summary of United States Initial Post-Defeat Policy Relating to Japan,” June 11, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 383, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d383>. Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 51.

democracy and away from militarism, any type of occupation would fail.⁶ To ensure its success, the United States needed to work through the Japanese people, while simultaneously breaking down the existing political structure of the country, and destroying the militant nationalism that had led Japan towards war.⁷ However, due to the influence of Grew and others, policymakers eventually decided to keep one significant aspect of Japan's political structure intact: the institution of the emperor.

While the idea of having an emperor as the ruler of a nation was seemingly, by definition, undemocratic, American policymakers nonetheless understood that removing Emperor Hirohito from his position was not a feasible option, at least while the Japanese people adapted to their new position. Through early 1945, Grew continued to argue that the emperor was the “only voice which the Japanese people, and probably the Japanese military forces, are likely to obey.”⁸ Some prominent members of the public also began voicing their support for keeping Hirohito in power. Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, the president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, believed Hirohito was “liberal in sentiment” and responsible for delaying Japan's entry into the Axis, even if he could not prevent it entirely.⁹ As the arguments of Grew and others gained

⁶ “Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Ballantine) to the Under Secretary of State (Grew),” August 6, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 391, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d391>.

⁷ “Draft by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee,” August 12, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 395, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d395>.

⁸ “Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Grew) to the Secretary of State,” January 3, 1944[1945], *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 370, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d370>. Note that the date originally written on the document was January 3, 1944. However, based both on the correction present in the online version of the document and the note mentioning that this memorandum was referencing a December 16, 1944, letter, the actual date of this document is almost certainly January 3, 1945.

⁹ “Calls Hirohito a Liberal: Bishop Tucker Says Let Japanese Keep Their Emperor,” *New York Times*, August 6, 1944, 16, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/calls-hirohito-liberal/docview/106919419/se-2?accountid=12461>.

support, more people began to believe that the potential benefits and stability created by keeping Hirohito in power outweighed the consequences of retention, such as propping up a monarchical system.¹⁰ In order to justify their decision to keep the imperial institution intact, American policymakers looked toward the British for proof that Western-style democracy and monarchy were theoretically compatible.¹¹ Although keeping the emperor was no ideal from a democratization standpoint, the Americans believed he would be a useful ally. As the war raged on, one of the most immediate benefits they saw to keeping Hirohito in power was a quick end to the war. Even though the Allies saw increasing success in the Pacific, they were still faced with the daunting task of defeating Japan itself. Many believed that the only way this would be possible was through a direct invasion of the archipelago, which would be extremely costly. Hirohito, through his influence over the Japanese people, was seen as a potential way to avoid such a bloody conflict.¹² If it meant saving the lives of Allied soldiers, keeping Hirohito in power was an easy concession to make.

Some of the Allies disagreed significantly with the American government's position regarding the future of the emperor. From this point all the way through the first phase of the occupation, world public opinion was extremely hostile toward Hirohito.¹³ Australia and New Zealand in particular were vocal supporters of a harsh occupation and punishment for the emperor, including a complete dismantling of the emperor institution. While the Australians did understand that Hirohito would be exceedingly helpful to the Allies in obtaining the Japanese

¹⁰ 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 (Fall 2005): 445, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

¹¹ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 331, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

¹² 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 (Fall 2005): 432. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

¹³ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 353, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

surrender, they still believed that he should be held responsible for Japan's aggressive actions, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Japan's Head of State.¹⁴ Partially, this was because they had seen the capabilities of a fully militarized and expansionist Japan. Their territory and domestic security had been directly threatened, and only a harsh military peace and international monitoring would prevent a similar occurrence in the future.¹⁵ However, even if Australia supported strong measures to prevent remilitarization, it did support a soft peace in other areas. In particular, it believed that trade should not be stifled in the postwar period, as the new power dynamics in the Pacific could potentially lead to Australia becoming a dominant power in the region.¹⁶ As shown by the Australian response to the American plan to save the emperor, it was primarily domestic concerns that informed countries' reactions. For example, Kilsoo Haan, representing the Sino-Korean People's League, argued that allowing Hirohito to retain his sovereignty would allow the Black Dragon Society and other militarist elements to remain.¹⁷ As a Korean, Haan was aware of what Japan's militarists were capable of. He believed that the only way to prevent further Japanese expansion, even after they had been defeated, was to remove Hirohito. The Swiss, as a neutral power far removed from Japan's expansion during the 1930s and 40s, believed that Hirohito should be left alone.¹⁸ Because they had no part in the

¹⁴ "The Australian Legation to the Department of State," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 432, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d432>.

¹⁵ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 78.

¹⁶ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 79. For more information on Australia's conflicting stance on post-war Japan, see Christine de Matos, "Encouraging 'Democracy' in a Cold war Climate: The Dual-Platform Policy Approach of Evatt and Labor Toward the Allied Occupation of Japan 1945-1949," *Pacific Economic Papers* 313 (March 2001).

¹⁷ "Korean Sees Danger in Saving Hirohito," *New York Times*, August 11, 1945, 8, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/korean-sees-danger-saving-hirohito/docview/107163543/se-2?accountid=10559>.

¹⁸ "Sweden Easy on Hirohito: Neutral Stockholm Favors the Allies' Letting Him Alone," *New York Times*, August 12, 1945, 7, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/sweden-easy-on-hirohito/docview/107000185/se-2?accountid=10559>.

conflict, their public sentiment had not been enflamed as much as it had in Allied countries. This, in turn, led to a much softer stance compared to countries that were directly impacted by Japan's aggression.

Along with Australia, New Zealand was one of the strongest advocates within the British Commonwealth for a harsh peace. However, its desire to remove Hirohito was even stronger, rhetorically, than Australia. Because it did not have the long-term goals that led to a mixed policy from Australia, its hostility toward Japan and the emperor lasted for decades. Following Hirohito's death in 1989, New Zealand's defense minister, Bob Tizard, publicly stated his belief that "Hirohito should have been shot immediately after the war; executed with eight bullets in a public square."¹⁹ These views, expressed nearly forty-five years after the end of Japan's occupation, echoed the beliefs that were held at the end of the war. A telegram to the Secretary of State from Kenneth Patton, the minister stationed in New Zealand, on August 13, 1945 revealed that their government believed the "whole structure of feudalism of which [the] throne is [the] capstone should be eradicated" and that New Zealand as a whole supported the emperor's removal.²⁰ However, that same telegram revealed that the American government was not entirely alone in their support for retaining Hirohito.

The British, primarily concerned with recovering their colonies, believed keeping the emperor in place would make an occupation of Japan much easier. While they did not particularly care about how the occupation itself played out, the British Foreign Office's early suggestions for the United States lined up surprisingly well with what would be their defining

¹⁹ As quoted in Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 6.

²⁰ "The Minister in New Zealand (Patton) to the Secretary of State," August 13, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 429, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d429>.

postwar policy for Japan; working through the Japanese, rather than directly governing the country.²¹ The British approach involved almost no direct control over Japan. Although they were willing to retain the emperor and use the existing political structure of Japan to achieve Allied goals, their position did not change the strong anti-emperor positions of the Commonwealth states located much closer to the nearly conquered empire. To ensure that they could feasibly retain the emperor without causing significant political difficulties, the Americans needed to begin moving towards justifying the absolution of the emperor from his responsibility for the war.

As the Americans had begun to realize, Hirohito had the potential to be an extremely valuable tool to assist with the United States pacification of Japan, one which could be an essential asset to preventing guerilla warfare after the occupation. Despite understanding the potential benefits that “saving” Hirohito could have, some officials had doubts. Public sentiment was still fluctuating, and many were still calling for the emperor to be harshly punished for his role in the war.²² By linking Hirohito to the stability and success of the early occupation, a more lenient policy towards the emperor’s future was essentially guaranteed.²³ Even the countries most affected by Japan’s actions during the war acknowledged the usefulness of Hirohito retaining his position, at least temporarily. The Australian government, while exceedingly hostile towards the idea of the emperor retaining his position or avoiding penalties for the war,

²¹ “The British Chargé (Balfour) to the Acting Secretary of State,” August 1, 1945, “*Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 389, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d389>.

²² 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 (Fall 2005): 437-438, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>. As Brands discusses, early attempts from the Office of War Information to increase public support for policies retaining Hirohito were resounding failures. However, in this later phase of the war, they found greater success.

²³ Hal Brands, “Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946,” *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 273, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

understood that “the Emperor should be retained at the moment in order that he can be expressly associated with the surrender terms.”²⁴ Consistent with the United States’ own understanding of the issue, the Australians recognized that no matter how strongly they felt towards punishing Hirohito, he was a vital asset in ensuring a smooth transition from the initial surrender into a lasting occupation.

While reservations regarding the role of the emperor after Japan was occupied were quite pronounced, even Allies like Australia and New Zealand understood that keeping Hirohito around in the short term would be advantageous in the first steps after the war. Japan’s soldiers were loyal to the emperor above all else. American intelligence had heard the news reports coming out of Japan regarding the final message received after the battle of Saipan.²⁵ The Japanese commander, once it was clear that victory was hopeless, apologized to Hirohito for losing so many of his subjects.²⁶ This, along with many other examples, had shown the Allies just how loyal the Japanese were to their emperor. That loyalty, depending on how it was used, could mean the success or failure of the occupation. Allied understanding of Hirohito’s value did not mean, however, that he was safe from prosecution for war crimes. The Australians continued to insist on a harsh punishment for the emperor, with Minister of External Affairs Herbert Evatt asserting that any Japanese attempt to protect the emperor from consequences of surrender was “unacceptable.”²⁷ Although Evatt recognized the value of having the emperor under Allied

²⁴ “The Australian Legation to the Department of State,” undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 432, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d432>. This document is undated, however it was received by the Secretary of State on August 13, 1945.

²⁵ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Saipan,” July 21, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 50, BC7-BC8.

²⁶ Although the commander is not named, it is likely that the Japanese were referring to Yoshitsugu Saitō.

²⁷ “Australia Wants Emperor Curbed: Says Strict Allied Control Over Hirohito Would Smash Myth of Divine Birth,” *New York Times* August 13, 1945, 3, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/australia-wants-emperor-curbed/docview/107079461/se-2?accountid=10559>.

control, he held a strong conviction that anyone involved in Japan's aggression should be punished in some way. While most of the discussions about his culpability for war crimes occurred during the post-war occupation period, the American defense of the emperor was evident as early as May 1945. At that time, they had acknowledged that the emperor would be exceedingly valuable to the future occupation but had not settled on any specific plans.

The early rhetoric of American anti-war crime messaging came out of the Japanese people's profound loyalty to the emperor institution. In what began as a primarily practical argument, Grew, as Acting Secretary of State, informed President Harry Truman that the Japanese would likely reinstate the emperor institution, should it be removed, soon after any occupation ended.²⁸ While Grew acknowledged that Hirohito was responsible for the war, since he had signed off on it, he also emphasized that the war would have happened regardless due to the extremists in power. After hearing Grew's argument that the emperor could "become a cornerstone for building a peaceful future," Truman acknowledged that his own thoughts indicated that the United States should preserve Hirohito's position.²⁹ After years of advocacy, Grew had finally gained support from the most powerful man in the country. The argument that the emperor was forced into his position of supporting the war, once fully articulated during the actual discussion of war crimes, helped ensure that the push for a war crimes trial for Hirohito by Allies like New Zealand and Australia would never materialize. By positioning Hirohito as a passive source of power, rather than an active political force in the country, the Americans were

²⁸ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State," May 28, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 379, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d379>. Joseph C. Grew served primarily as the Under Secretary of State, but occasionally served as the Acting Secretary of State when the Secretary of State at the time (either Edward Stettinius or James Byrnes depending on the date) was away.

²⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 215.

able to simultaneously begin manipulating public perception of the emperor's role during the war and reinforce the idea that great influence and political power in Japan rested in the hands of whoever could most credibly claim Hirohito's support.³⁰ For the Allies, this meant that a significant amount of power over the Japanese people could immediately be transferred to an occupying force if it established a believable association with Hirohito's will.

Although Hirohito's future during the occupation was an ongoing debate among the Allies, there was one argument made by the Americans that obtained universal support. Even if he was not directly in control of Japan's military forces, there was no denying that Hirohito was the reason that many soldiers fought.³¹ As the Allied victory approached, concern shifted from winning the war toward how bloody an invasion might be, if the Allies needed to attack Japan directly in order to secure a defeat. American journalists, despite still advocating for a harsh peace, slowly began encouraging the government to make an announcement confirming that Hirohito would be protected in the postwar period.³² They wanted to see him punished, but they also maintained that such a guarantee would convince the Japanese to accept a peace without invasion. This assurance was never publicly given by the American government, even though they continued to advocate for Hirohito's protection to their allies. However, they did adopt a tactful silence regarding the emperor's future. On his speech celebrating the victory in Europe, for example, Truman purposefully avoided stating what Hirohito's fate would be, once Japan

³⁰ "Hirohito Survival Crucial to Japan: Cult of Shintoism, Doctrinal Base of Society, Centers in Person of Emperor," *New York Times*, August 11, 1945, 4, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-survival-crucial-japan/docview/107138567/se-2?accountid=10559>. Hal Brands, "Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946," *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 274, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

³¹ "Empire's Fateful Hour Is Near, Tojo Says; Japan Called to Sacrifice 'Body and Soul'," *New York Times*, January 1, 1944, 6, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/empires-fateful-hour-is-near-tojo-says-japan/docview/106804463/se-2?accountid=10559>.

³² 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 (Fall 2005): 442-443. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

capitulated.³³ This was meant specifically to appeal to the peace-minded advisors surrounding the emperor, while also avoiding an uncomfortable domestic reaction from Americans who believed Hirohito should be harshly punished. By connecting Hirohito's protection to an easy transition toward peace, this strategy persuaded those who were tired of the fighting to accept the proposed American plan to establish Hirohito as a tool of the occupation.

Some Americans like Grew understood the potential benefits of keeping Hirohito in power after the war, but most of the Allies, including other Americans, strongly believed that the emperor was directly responsible for the war. As more American officials began embracing the idea of using Hirohito as an ally, the question of his postwar status became a topic of significant debate amongst the Allies. The debate over a possible war crimes trial for Hirohito was not truly discussed until after the occupation of Japan had begun, but the tensions between the United States and the rest of the Allies on that question began in the last days of the war, as United States officials moved towards absolving the emperor of any war guilt. China pointed towards Hirohito as the factor that led to Japan's aggression.³⁴ According to Chinese media, he was just as bad as Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini, if not worse.³⁵ Calls for his execution were frequent. Soong Tse-vung, acting Premier of China, even advocated bombing the emperor's palace, killing him before any trial could be held.³⁶ When Australian officials indicated that they

³³ "Truman Said to Ease Japanese Peace Bid," *New York Times*, May 13, 1945, 3, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/truman-said-ease-japanese-peace-bid/docview/107104690/se-2?accountid=10559>.

³⁴ "Chinese Demand Hirohito Be Tried as War Criminal," *New York Times*, February 13, 1945, 7, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/chinese-demand-hirohito-be-tried-as-war-criminal/docview/107304436/se-2?accountid=12461>.

³⁵ "Death for Hirohito Asked As Japan's No. 1 Criminal," *New York Times*, May 7, 1945, 8, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/death-hirohito-asked-as-japans-no-1-criminal/docview/107166164/se-2?accountid=12461>. "Chinese Broadcast Condemns Hirohito," *New York Times*, August 12, 1945, 26, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/chinese-broadcast-condemns-hirohito/docview/107067813/se-2?accountid=12461>.

³⁶ "Soong for Bombing Hirohito," *New York Times*, March 29, 1945, 16, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/soong-bombing-hirohito/docview/107335771/se-2?accountid=12461>.

would be demanding Hirohito's execution, China immediately indicated its support for such a demand.³⁷ However, as a statement from the acting Prime Minister of Australia, Joseph B. Chifley, revealed, this was not the official Australian policy.³⁸ Even though they consistently advocated for a harsh peace and trial for the emperor, their government was unwilling to officially support a summary execution without trial.

For the most part, the Japanese agreed with the position the Americans held, particularly regarding the importance of the emperor. These arguments fell squarely into two main points; the sway the emperor held over the Japanese people and the desire to fight Communist advances in Asia. While the threat of Communism was not the primary focus for the Americans until after the war had ended, the Japanese peace-seekers spoke towards the desire to keep Japan out of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. By November 1944, the Japanese were emphasizing the growing split between the Soviets and Americans, even acknowledging that this conflict would likely focus on Asia.³⁹ At first, this was part of an attempt to court the Soviets, convincing them to break their alliance with the Americans in favor of the Japanese.⁴⁰ These attempts, in part, were why they believed that the Soviets would be more likely to accept a peace offer.

The emphasis on growing tensions was also used to garner support from the Americans. The Counselor of the Japanese Legation in Portugal, Masutaro Inoue, asserted that retaining Japan's pre-war lands would prevent the Soviets from encroaching too much into Europe. He also called for a united front against Soviet expansion, predicting that the Soviets would drift

³⁷ "Australians Ask Hirohito's Death," *New York Times*, May 25, 1945, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/australians-ask-hirohitos-death/docview/107312455/se-2?accountid=12461>.

³⁸ "Denies Australia Asks Hirohito Death," *New York Times*, May 26, 1945, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/denies-australia-asks-hirohito-death/docview/107197746/se-2?accountid=12461>.

³⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "United States – Soviet 'Clash'," November 10, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 58, BA13.

⁴⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Overtures Toward Russia," Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report 74, BA 23-BA25.

away from their wartime allies once peace had been obtained.⁴¹ The Japanese Ambassador to Switzerland, Shunichi Kase, believed that “one of the few provisions the Japanese would insist upon would be the retention of the Emperor as the only safeguard against Japan’s conversion to Communism.”⁴² While the American perspective did not hold the same anti-Communist rhetoric at this point, both sides vocalized more practical reasons for Hirohito keeping his position. It was the belief of the Japanese that only the emperor could effectively surrender on behalf of Japan while preventing internal chaos.⁴³ The Americans, as a part of their reasoning for keeping Hirohito as an asset during the occupation, believed he was one of the very few individuals that could keep the peace in Japan following its defeat. This consistency in the thinking of both Japanese and American officials helped reassert the value of retaining the emperor for the Americans. The Japanese emphasis of their desire to protect Hirohito, using the same arguments the Americans had voiced internally months earlier, signaled that their beliefs regarding his usefulness were correct.

⁴¹ “The Ambassador in Portugal (Baruch) to the Secretary of State,” May 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 346, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d346>.

⁴² “Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan) to the Secretary of State, May 12, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 349,

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d349>. Kase also pushed for direct talks with the Americans and British, rather than through the Soviets, to prevent an increase in Communist presence in Asia.

⁴³ “Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan) to the Secretary of State,” July 16, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 361,

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d361>. “Memorandum by the Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Buxton) to the Secretary of State,” June 4, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 357, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d357>.

Chapter 2: Hirohito during the war

The Allies may have realized how important Hirohito could be to the success of a post-war occupation, but their plans largely hinged upon the emperor being willing to cooperate. Considering that the popular belief was that he was the undisputed driving force behind Japan's military aggression, this was a rather risky assumption to make. Fortunately for Grew and other supporters of Hirohito's retention, the emperor's direct involvement in Japan's aggression seemed to be minimal, although there was significant debate on this topic throughout the occupation. Due to a variety of factors, including the desires of the Americans to protect Hirohito from war crimes accusations, multiple conflicting interpretations emerged regarding the extent to which he was involved in the decision-making process of Japan's government at the onset of the war.

Matching the longstanding view that the Japanese people themselves held towards the role of the emperor, some believed that Hirohito generally acted as a passive onlooker to the conflict. In his memoirs, Prince Fuminaro Konoye emphasized the emperor's passivity and reluctance to act.⁴⁴ Hirohito's advisors consistently pushed him to "take as little initiative as possible," allowing the militarists to consistently strengthen their hold within Japan's government. As a child, Hirohito was rather introverted and dependent, much preferring to follow others.⁴⁵ As he grew, his shy nature remained, allowing advisors to manipulate him easily and strengthen their own agendas.⁴⁶ With a timid disposition, Hirohito likely fell into an easy

⁴⁴ "Konoye Memoirs Explain Tojo Rise: Emperor Held to Have Been Too Passive in Efforts to Curb Those Who Wanted War," *New York Times*, December 29, 1945, 6, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/konoye-memoirs-explain-tojo-rise/docview/107410138/sc-2?accountid=10559>.

⁴⁵ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 15-16.

⁴⁶ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 82-83.

pattern of doing what his advisors recommended, rather than exerting his influence for his own aims. However, Hirohito's personality and the pressures from his advisors cannot entirely explain his passiveness in decision-making.

Others argue that Hirohito was essentially powerless during the war, unable to act even if he wanted to. This explanation presents the emperor as essentially a prisoner of the military, unable to act against them.⁴⁷ His personal views regarding increased Japanese aggression and the eventual outbreak of the war played a secondary role compared to his inability to act, although these arguments also often portrayed Hirohito as a liberal-minded advocate for peace. The emperor was little more than a figurehead. While he, in theory, stood at the top of the government and military, the real influence was wielded by political and military factions who ruled in Hirohito's name.⁴⁸ As with the rebellious soldiers acting "in the name of the emperor," these factions cared little for Hirohito's actual beliefs and desires. The militarists, at this point, revered the emperor as an institution, not Hirohito specifically.⁴⁹ If he proved to be enough of a nuisance, they could replace him with someone else. When the emperor did speak out, as he did in support for a peaceful end to the Manchurian Incident, Marquis Kōichi Kido's diary noted that "it was decided among us [the militarists close to the throne] that the Emperor had better not say anything" that went against what the Army wanted.⁵⁰ As the militarists gained more influence in Japan before and during the war, Hirohito's ability to function as a true ruler became essentially nonexistent. Even when he sought to intervene, he was quickly brushed aside and ignored.

⁴⁷ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 64.

⁴⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), xxxiv.

⁴⁹ Freeman Cleaves, "The Executive's Bookshelf: Spotlight on Japan," *New York Times*, March 6, 1945, 8, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/executives-bookshelf/docview/131619319/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁵⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Diary of Marquis Kido," July 5, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 7, Radio Report Number 133, BB1.

By the time Japan was on the road to war, this new power dynamic had fully set in. Even if Hirohito was still told of military matters, as some assert, he had no real authority to intervene.⁵¹ However, it was likely that the emperor and his advisors were often not told of many military matters until after they had occurred. Frederick Moore, a former foreign advisor to Japan on American affairs, had sat in on conferences where significant decisions were made. As he revealed during the war, most of those decisions were made without even a mention of what the emperor would think.⁵² Hirohito's approval was considered a guaranteed outcome, an act of a figurehead who could do little more than agree with the true ruling class. Even though there were still people around the throne that opposed war, it was the militarists in the Army that were in control.⁵³ When the time came, Hirohito believed he had no choice but to acquiesce to their demands and sign the war declaration.⁵⁴ While the idea of a passive emperor connected with the pre-occupation Japanese belief of a divine emperor who watched and guided Japan without direct involvement, the accounts of Hirohito's frustration toward his dwindling ability to curb the militarists instead revealed a man who was, for the most part, powerless to intervene despite the prestige of his position.

Despite the difficult position Hirohito was in for much of the war, some argue that he consistently fought against the militarists, seeking peace at every possible point. This position was presented by the remaining Japanese officials and the Supreme Commander for the Allied

⁵¹ For arguments asserting Hirohito's knowledge of military matters, see Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 336-337 and Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), xxxv.

⁵² Frederick Moore, "The Emperor Did Not Want War," *World Affairs* 106, no. 1 (March 1943): 49, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20663803>.

⁵³ Frederick Moore, "The Emperor Did Not Want War," *World Affairs* 106, no. 1 (March 1943): 46, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20663803>.

⁵⁴ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 124. Leopold H. Tibesar, "Hirohito: Man, Emperor, 'Divinity'," *The Review of Politics* 7, no. 4 (October 1945): 501, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1404070>.

Powers (SCAP) during the early occupation period.⁵⁵ It was their goal to rebrand the emperor as peaceful and liberal to set an example for the rest of the Japanese people. At the same time, many of the surviving militarists faced trial for war crimes. These militarists, including Hideki Tojo, Prime Minister throughout most of the Second World War, were pressured to testify that Hirohito had sought peace throughout the war.⁵⁶ In doing so, Hirohito's image was reconstructed into that of a benevolent monarch who advocated for peace at every turn.

While it is true that many of the stories about Hirohito's desires for peace were presented in the postwar period as a way to justify keeping him in his position, there does seem to be some truth to them. Accounts from the emperor's formative years indicate that he was an advocate for peace long before the militarists began to seize power. After seeing the devastation caused by the First World War during his tour of Europe in 1921, Hirohito developed a strong desire to avoid any similar destruction from occurring in the future.⁵⁷ However, once he ascended to the throne, he soon found himself unable to act against the militarists as their influence grew. Despite the risk of being replaced as emperor, Hirohito still acted on occasion to curb the excesses of the military. Hirohito's distaste for war can even be seen in his more private writings. In one of the many poems he wrote throughout his life, sent to the widow of a fallen General, Hirohito praised the general's ability to avoid war.⁵⁸ This poem, while also meant to comfort the grieving widow,

⁵⁵ Although SCAP was the official title for General Douglas MacArthur during the occupation, it was also used to describe the larger offices of the occupation that assisted him. Hal Brands, "Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946," *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 293-294, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

⁵⁶ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 586. "Togo Says Emperor was in Dark on Peace" *New York Times*, December 19, 1947, 11, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/togo-says-emperor-was-dark-on-peace/docview/108018861/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁵⁷ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 32-33.

⁵⁸ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 58.

emphasized the emperor's belief that conflict should be avoided whenever possible. However, due to fear that the Army might learn of the poem, it was kept secret.

For most of the war, as shown by the incident with the poem, Hirohito could not freely express his thoughts on the conflict. As the war dragged on, however, he was eventually given a chance to regain some influence within his own government. According to Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS) reports, it was Hirohito's "concern" over Japan's defeat at Saipan that led to the resignation of the Tojo Cabinet.⁵⁹ This was a major blow to the militarists and the beginning of their loosening grip on Hirohito. For the first time in years, the militarists had shown enough weakness to allow Hirohito an opportunity to re-establish some ability to interject and seek peace.

After yet another Premier stepped down, the emperor chose Baron Kantaro Suzuki to lead Japan's government. While he had not regained enough power to replace Tojo with an advocate for peace immediately, the choice of Suzuki signaled the creation of a "peace cabinet" meant to end the war.⁶⁰ Baron Suzuki had, in 1936, been removed from the Army, and was known for his apprehension towards war with the United States. Some believed this choice was due to a growing number of Japanese businessmen and politicians who were advocating for an end to the war. Others, however, believed that Suzuki's closeness to the emperor meant that Hirohito desired a Premier who he could trust to lead Japan forward. Considering Hirohito's demonstrated desire for peace, it is much more likely that he selected Suzuki in order to ensure he had a supporter in the highest position of power to guide Japan out of the war with as little harm to the

⁵⁹ The Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service was eventually renamed to the Foreign Broadcast Information Service in late 1946. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "The Emperor's Concern," July 21, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 50, AA2.

⁶⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "The Suzuki Cabinet," April 20, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 5, Radio Report Number 70, AAA6.

Japanese people as possible. Suzuki's own actions show how drastic a change this was. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in office just days after Suzuki entered his new position, the premier expressed deep sympathy for the American people over the loss of their leader.⁶¹ The official statement from the Japanese government did portray Roosevelt as an imperialist who had caused the war with Japan, but none of the same sentiment was reported in Suzuki's words.⁶² Despite years of conflict, Japan's Premier chose to express his condolences, rather than emphasize the loss as a sign that the Americans would lose the war, as militarists like Tojo would have done. Suzuki's appointment represented a significant departure from the leadership of the past. As the war dragged on and Japan sustained more losses, advocates for peace were able to slowly begin to act on their desires. Although Hirohito was one of the most prominent members of Japan's political structure who wanted an end to the war, he was not alone.

As the militarists gained power in Japan, there were some instances in which Hirohito revealed a profound frustration toward the aggressive faction seeking to control Japan's future. In one instance in particular, members of the Japanese military, under the guise of a rebellion, attacked Hirohito's closest anti-war advisors, including Prime Minister Keisuke Okada, using the emperor's name as justification.⁶³ Rather than simply accept this, as a truly passive ruler may have, Hirohito reportedly acted with extreme anger toward the culprits. Ignoring the Military Attaché who was desperately trying to emphasize that the soldiers had acted due to sincere devotion to the Imperial throne, the emperor called for them to be branded as rebels who should be immediately punished. This, along with his reaction to the military's role in the false flag

⁶¹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Prime Minister Suzuki," April 20, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 5, Radio Report Number 70, BA24.

⁶² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Reactions to the President's death," April 20, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 5, Radio Report Number 70, BA21.

⁶³ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 70-72.

operation that justified Japan's invasion of Manchuria, showed that the emperor was quite capable of expressing intense emotions regarding the decisions of the Japanese government.⁶⁴ However, the actions of the militarists also demonstrated the lengths to which they were willing to go to increase their power. If Hirohito had taken a strong enough stance against them, he may have placed himself in jeopardy. This fear was understandable, considering his experiences with the military. Some soldiers, at the time of the rebellion that had led to the death of Hirohito's advisors, openly advocated for replacing the emperor with his brother if he refused to enact their reforms.⁶⁵ If he became too significant a problem, the military could easily replace him with someone more willing to assist them. As shown by multiple accounts, Hirohito was naturally timid. However, it was the ever-present threat against the lives of himself and the people around him that likely contributed the most to his passive nature during the lead-up to the war.

Some aspects of the emperor's conduct regarding the war called into question his dedication to peace. Even though Hirohito's peaceful nature and dislike of the militarists was well-known among those closest to him, he was also reluctant to actively speak out against the war. This reluctance or inability to speak out was interpreted by some as a sign of implicit support for the war. In the months leading up to Pearl Harbor, Hirohito had been significantly involved in the efforts to get his advisors to negotiate with the Americans and avoid conflict.⁶⁶ However, some assert that Hirohito had given up on negotiations by early November 1941.⁶⁷ Contradicting the claims made by Moore on how military decisions were made, Hirohito was accused of explicitly approving Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and supporting the declaration of

⁶⁴ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 79-80.

⁶⁵ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 75.

⁶⁶ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 122.

⁶⁷ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 424.

war on the United States, after taking the necessary steps to make it seem like he had attempted to avoid the conflict.⁶⁸ After Japan entered the War, Hirohito further suppressed any innate desires for peace he held. Even though he did not dictate policy, he played an active role throughout the war in supporting his country along the path it chose.⁶⁹ This interpretation asserts that when Japan continued to suffer heavy defeats across the Pacific, the emperor urged the country forward. As others began doubting Japan's ability to win, Hirohito sought "one last, decisive battle" to turn the tide against the Allies or, if he was as focused on the wellbeing of his people as many claim, to seek better peace terms for Japan.⁷⁰ The emperor who avidly supported Japan's aggression throughout the war was in stark contrast to the image of an advocate of peace that was pushed by SCAP and the occupation government. The peaceful man who sought to counter the militarists at any turn would not have advocated for the Japanese people to fight to extinction rather than accept surrender, as he did in June 1945.⁷¹ However, a warmonger would not have spent so much effort, risking assassination, to avoid a conflict that was widely supported by his advisors. The contrasting images of Hirohito that were projected both during and after the war significantly complicated later efforts by the Americans to use his soft power to assist in the occupation period.

⁶⁸ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 421. As Bix argues in "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility, Higashikuni told the Americans that Hirohito had not known about Pearl Harbor but was unable to answer how it had happened if he had not known. Bix's belief that Hirohito had known and approved of the attack is based primarily on the assertion that, as theoretical Commander in Chief, he *must* have known.

⁶⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 256-257.

⁷⁰ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 353, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>. Bix attributes the firebombing of Tokyo and the eventual use of the atomic bombs almost entirely on Hirohito's reluctance to support peace measures until after Okinawa.

⁷¹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 222.

The reality of Hirohito's position during the war was somewhere between these arguments. Undoubtedly, the emperor was trapped in his position, unable to act based on his true beliefs without risking the wrath of the military. His anger toward the militarists for their early aggression shows that he did not blindly follow their will, but there is significant evidence that he actively supported the war once it began, even in the face of defeat. Most likely, this was because Hirohito sought one last victory, which obscured his otherwise peace-seeking desires.⁷² Both aspects of the emperor's will share an underlying reasoning that often went unrecognized. Above all, Hirohito was a man who was driven to act on what he believed was best for the people of Japan. It was his sense of duty that drove him to first avoid the suffering that came with any conflict and, after the Japanese people demonstrated their enthusiasm for the war, wholeheartedly support the military's objectives. It was only after Japan had suffered significant losses that the suffering of his people drove Hirohito back toward peace. Once it was clear that Japan would not win the conflict, he worked toward establishing a peace that could salvage any chances of a prosperous future for the country, actively defying the wishes of the militarists.

As the descendant of a long, allegedly unbroken line of emperors who claimed to protect Japan and lead the country through hardships, Hirohito's duty to the success of his people was engrained into him from the moment he was born. His grandfather, the emperor Meiji, had helped facilitate a massive re-imagining of Japan's political structure that, in theory, was meant to empower the people. It was up to Hirohito to live up to the legacy of his grandfather and continue the work he had started, since his father had been too sickly to continue Meiji's legacy. Particularly in the earlier years of Hirohito's reign, this led to a strong hesitance to overstep his

⁷² Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 302.

role, as defined by the Meiji Constitution. When the military invaded Manchuria, it was this aversion that led to a muted response from the emperor, particularly when his advisors decided that he should no longer voice his thoughts on the subject.⁷³ Even though the military and nationalist elements within the government held little concern for following the spirit of the Meiji Constitution, Hirohito continued to act under the belief that he had a duty to follow the document his grandfather had helped enact.⁷⁴ Once Japan had started down the path of war, the emperor's constitutional responsibility, as he saw it, was to support his people throughout the conflict.⁷⁵ Japan's aggression was not only a product of the military. The people themselves strongly supported the Army's actions.⁷⁶ Because of his personal dedication to the people that his family had ruled over for centuries, he acquiesced to their decision.

Once the war had begun, Hirohito believed that it was his duty to fully support Japan, no matter the outcome. This was not simply a case of him justifying his own desires. The decision to support the war forced him to give up the few activities he used to escape from the heavy burden of his position and, eventually, led to a nervous breakdown.⁷⁷ He supported the war effort as enthusiastically as he could, but that caused a significant personal burden, which he carried with him years after the conflict ended. As General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, later revealed, Hirohito had placed the burden of the conflict entirely on his own shoulders, even though he had initially sought to avoid war as tensions rose.⁷⁸ In part, he

⁷³ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 69.

⁷⁴ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 87.

⁷⁵ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 128-129.

⁷⁶ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 76.

⁷⁷ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 116-117.

⁷⁸ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 147.

likely blamed himself for forgetting, even for a short period of time, the lessons that the First World War had taught him in his youth.

As the madness of war lifted, Hirohito was left in the midst of a conflict that was getting increasingly desperate for the Japanese as they lost ground in the Pacific. Even if he had remembered his desires for peace, his duty to support his people remained. This internal conflict most likely directly contributed to his reported desire to see one last military victory. While, in reality, this mindset ended up significantly prolonging the war, a significant military victory could have pushed the Allies to settle for a peace that was more beneficial to the Japanese.⁷⁹ For Hirohito, who longed for both a quick peace and the prosperity of his people, this would have been the best option available, particularly as the Allies demonstrated their stubborn desire for an unconditional surrender. However, as victory slowly became a distant fantasy, particularly after the fall of Okinawa in June 1945, he began to realize that continuing to support the war effort was a mistake, regardless of what the Japanese people wanted.⁸⁰ This realization helped motivate Hirohito to begin pressing for peace more urgently, working with the growing peace faction to try and reach out to the Allies. When the time finally came to end the war, Hirohito made his position clear. No matter what his future in the hands of the Allies was, he desired peace.⁸¹ Despite knowing that some of the Allies would call for his execution, the emperor made the decision that he believed would be best for his people. Although the way in which it manifested itself had changed significantly since the beginning of Japan's aggressive action, Hirohito's sense of duty and dedication to his people never wavered. He was, in many ways, complicit in

⁷⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 221.

⁸⁰ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 36.

⁸¹ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 133.

Japan's actions leading up to and during the war. However, this was not due to a personal desire for conquest, but instead a representation of his dedication to the Japanese people. Even when moving in a direction with which he personally disagreed, Hirohito would support his country to the end.

Hirohito's dedication to his people during the war can best be seen through his connection to factions within Japan's government that sought peace. Despite numerous reports of peace attempts by Japanese officials, the only officially acknowledged peace requests were those that occurred following the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With the militarists in Japan's government denying any of these attempts during the war, the Allies could not engage in peace talks, even if they were genuine, until the militarists were removed from power. In the final days of the war and throughout the postwar period, new stories of Japanese peace attempts continued to appear. Unlike the stories during the height of the war, however, these all had a common thread: connections to Hirohito. With SCAP spending considerable effort justifying the retention of the emperor and its hope to avoid his inclusion in war crimes trials, these tales of Hirohito's active involvement in pursuing peace served to enhance the rhetorical push to establish him as a lover of peace. Similarly, the remaining Japanese officials who sought to protect Hirohito also had a vested interest in presenting him in the most favorable light. This called into question the reporting done on Hirohito's alleged attempts at peace, since most sources, American or Japanese, held the specific desire to prove that the emperor had always wanted Japan to remain peaceful. However, it is unlikely that every account was fabricated, primarily due to the rough timeline that was present throughout these stories. Although some did attempt to argue that Hirohito had endeavored to pursue peace throughout the entire war, most agreed that these attempts did not start until June 1945, meaning he had made

no attempt to stop the conflict until after defeat was essentially guaranteed. This directly contradicted the idea that Hirohito had never supported the war, but instead presented him as a consistent supporter of his people, only abandoning their pro-war stance when victory seemed increasingly unlikely.

Regardless of whether Hirohito was dedicated to peace throughout the entire war, it was undeniable that he played a vital role in bringing an end to the conflict. By Spring 1945, there was enough support for peace among Japanese officials that an unofficial “peace party” had formed. These officials sent peace feelers to the Soviets by May, hoping to capitalize on their neutrality.⁸² At the time, regardless of his personal feelings, Hirohito was not informed of these actions. It was only in late June that the peace advocates sought and obtained the emperor’s consent to find an end to the war. Soon after, on June 22, he broke with tradition to address his advisors and request that they create plans to end the war.⁸³ For most of the conflict, if he was an advocate for peace throughout, he was unable to stand against the militarists without risking his life. However, when he discovered that there was a growing minority within the Japanese government that also hoped for a quick end to the war, he allied himself with that faction. He was also vital in creating the conditions necessary for such a faction to emerge; the emperor had been responsible for Suzuki becoming Prime Minister, which occurred right before the “peace party” became active. Hirohito was also not afraid to acknowledge his failure to intervene sooner. Several months after the end of the war, the emperor admitted that it was Konoye who had taken the initiative to end the war, back in February 1945.⁸⁴ Hirohito, unwilling to pursue

⁸² Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 222.

⁸³ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 222.

⁸⁴ Herbert P. Bix, “The Showa Emperor’s ‘Monologue’ and the Problem of War Responsibility,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 301-302, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

peace when his people still avidly supported the war, chose to follow the army and navy's advice to wait until a decisive battle had been fought at Okinawa. This specific acknowledgement that he had failed to end the war, when given the chance, directly contradicted the presentation of Hirohito the pacifist that Japanese officials and SCAP were emphasizing. However, it does correspond with Hirohito as a pragmatist. As recollections from people who knew him in his early years revealed, he detested war and loved his people. With the Japanese people convinced that an aggressive war was the best course of action, due to militarist propaganda, he ignored his own innate desire to avoid war in order to support his people. Only when defeat seemed inevitable, and he had discovered the existence of a peace faction, was he willing to advocate for an end to the war.

There is also evidence to suggest that Hirohito acted even sooner to end the war, although in a much more careful and subtle way. Due to the nature of his position, the emperor's every move was carefully watched. With the militarists firmly in control of Japan's government, any overt action from Hirohito that contradicted their goals could have put the emperor's life in considerable danger. With an inability to tell who he could trust, Hirohito turned toward those closest to him: his family. One of the prime examples of this was the peace mission sponsored by Prince Takamatsu, Hirohito's brother.⁸⁵ Although that mission was cancelled due to fears that the military would discover the plot, his presence indicates support from the highest levels of the imperial family for an end to the war. If Hirohito felt that he could not express his hopes for peace to the vast majority of the people surrounding him, his brother would have been the perfect person to use; Takamatsu was not as closely watched as his brother, but he still carried with him the authority of the imperial family. Similarly, according to a Chinese newspaper's reporting on

⁸⁵ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Approach to Sweden and Portugal," Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 8, Radio Report Number 149, BF1-BF2.

August 11, Hirohito's wife, the empress Nagako, had played a significant role in an early June attempt to raise the issue of ending the war.⁸⁶ This plan also failed, although it did result in the creation of a commission to decide whether Japan should continue the war. Nagako's involvement indicates that Hirohito had begun overtly seeking an end to the war, even before the "peace party" had reached out to him. If his wife supported an end to the war to the extent that she openly advocated for it, the emperor would have at least known of her plans or, if he was attempting to work through his family to introduce the possibility of peace, had requested that she work on his behalf. The origin of the report also indicated some level of truth to the story. The Chinese did not have the same goals toward Hirohito that the Americans and Japanese officials did. In fact, they were one of the most vocal supporters for the emperor to be harshly punished for his role in the war. Considering their views toward him, a newspaper with direct ties to the Chinese Army fabricating a story to help protect Hirohito was improbable. Although it was likely that some stories indicating Hirohito's advocacy for peace were exaggerated, the involvement of his family in some of the peace attempts raised significant doubts to claims that he had never supported an end to the war until it jeopardized his personal future.

⁸⁶ "Move by Empress for Peace Bared: Surrender of Japan Mapped Before Atom Bombs Fell, Chinese Paper Says," *New York Times*, August 14, 1945, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/move-empress-peace-bared/docview/107059708/se-2?accountid=12461>.

Chapter 3: Propaganda and the Shift in Public Perception

While some of the Allies held steadfast beliefs regarding what they believed was the proper way to handle Hirohito, they understood that the Americans had steadily been drifting towards a more sympathetic view of the emperor. In discussing the Potsdam Proclamation's condition of unconditional surrender, it was explicitly emphasized that the ultimatum did not prevent the United States from implying or stating "that the Emperor had been deceived and misled."⁸⁷ This, essentially, established that any attempts to begin absolving the emperor, and therefore sparing him from any war crimes trials, would not negatively impact the ultimatum given to the Japanese at Potsdam. In doing so, they also ensured that the other Allies would not question the United States' support of the Proclamation. While the United States government had decided Hirohito would be a valuable asset, meaning he should be protected from being tried for war crimes, the American public disagreed. In the last days of the war, public opinion polls in the United States showed that a significant portion of the population openly advocated the emperor's execution.⁸⁸ Meanwhile, only three percent of the American public supported the Allies retaining him to assist with the transition. Between the opinions of the American public and the rest of the Allies, the United States government's position on the question of war crimes culpability for the

⁸⁷ "The Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Ballantine) to the Assistant Secretary of State (MacLeish), August 8, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 392, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d392>. The Potsdam Proclamation, issued during the 1945 Potsdam Conference between the leadership of the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, called for the complete surrender of all Japanese armed forces under threat of complete destruction.

⁸⁸ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Ballantine) to the Under Secretary of State (Grew)," August 6, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 391, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d391>.

emperor was far removed from common sentiment. Propaganda on both sides of the conflict only heightened resistance to this policy.

Throughout the war, both the Americans and the Japanese conducted extensive propaganda campaigns, each seeking to prove to their people and the world that their cause was the righteous one that should be supported. Particularly in the later stages of the war, much of Japan's propaganda was meant to strengthen the crumbling morale of their people. By the end of 1944, the Americans had noticed an increased tendency for Japanese media to refer to the Imperial Myth to bolster morale.⁸⁹ This was often contrasted with an emphasis of American brutality, reasserting the idea that the Japanese had moral superiority over the Americans in the war due to the emperor's existence and continued support. Part of the reason this eventually became necessary was due to the losses that the Japanese military faced. Although it attempted to delay announcements of major defeats and emphasize the Allied losses, which became common after the Battle of Saipan, continued setbacks left a heavy mark on Japanese morale.⁹⁰ However, the Japanese media also sought to use these losses to garner further support from their people. How the media covered the final message received from the commander of Japan's troops at Saipan demonstrated this perfectly.⁹¹ Japan's media sought to martyr the soldiers who had died, emphasizing that their deaths were on behalf of the emperor. This was particularly effective rhetoric. At this point, the emperor was believed to be divine. They viewed him as the protector of Japan, without whom they would not be able to live fulfilling lives. As long as the imperial

⁸⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Home Front Morale," October 27, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 57, BA11.

⁹⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Saipan," July 21, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 50, BC7-BC8.

⁹¹ Although the commander is not named, it is likely that the Japanese were referring to Yoshitsugu Saitō. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Saipan," July 21, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 50, BC7-BC8.

household and the people's belief in the emperor remained, Japan had nothing to fear.⁹² This idea helped sustain the Japanese people throughout the war, even as their losses increased. However, this was only effective due to the anti-American propaganda that made them believe that there was no choice but to continue supporting the war effort.

As is often the case in war, fear was a powerful motivator in keeping the Japanese people's support for the war effort. While the threat of their own government's response to dissent was a constant presence, it was fear over American brutality that was consistently used to convince the Japanese people that death was preferable than an American victory. Often, it was unnecessary for the Japanese media to fabricate claims of American violence against their enemies. It was widely reported that American soldiers had started desecrating the corpses of fallen Japanese soldiers, taking their skulls like hunting trophies.⁹³ For the Japanese, such conduct was "a kind of savagery comparable to the lowest cannibalism."⁹⁴ When discussing these incidents, Japanese disgust at the disrespect toward their fallen soldiers was palpable. With the Americans demonstrating that they viewed the Japanese as animals whose bones could be claimed as macabre trophies, it was unsurprising that they were determined to prevent American dominion over Japan. Japanese propaganda consistently portrayed the United States as a "vicious beast" that allowed atrocities against its own citizens, pointing towards the systematic oppression of minority groups in America that had been present for decades.⁹⁵ Since the Americans were willing to treat their fellow citizens in such a manner, the Japanese had no reason to believe that

⁹² As shown in Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "The 'People' Speak," August 4, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 51, BA5.

⁹³ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "The Episode of the Skull," August 18, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 52, AB1.

⁹⁴ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Kagawa Scores America," August 18, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 52, AB2.

⁹⁵ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Exposé of 'American Bestiality'," Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number BA16.

their treatment would be any different under American rule, even without the reports of American trophy-taking. This conduct, according to Japanese propaganda, penetrated through the very core of American identity. Even Roosevelt, who many viewed as a paragon of American ideals, had implicitly supported the mutilation of Japanese corpses when he accepted a letter opener made from the forearm of a Japanese soldier as a gift.⁹⁶ Although he eventually returned the forearm due to the number of complaints received, his initial acceptance of the gift reasserted the Japanese belief that Americans were brutal and could not be allowed to win the war. Much of the propaganda from the Allied media also helped to reinforce this belief.

As the Japanese accused the Americans of barbarity, American propaganda often did the same, supporting unreasonably harsh punishments for all Japanese people, even those not directly involved in the war effort. In extreme cases, this included advocacy for the extermination of all Japanese people.⁹⁷ Even politicians, such as New York City mayor Fiorello La Guardia, supported this position. In one of his multiple anti-Japanese tirades that were reported in the *New York Times*, La Guardia argued that the Pacific war “cannot stop until we wipe out the vermin entirely.”⁹⁸ The dehumanizing way in which he referred to the Japanese people were common in American rhetoric and propaganda at the time, with the American media often portrayed them as subhuman, particularly as reports of Japanese war crimes reached the United States.⁹⁹ In doing so, it became easier to accept news of violence and atrocities against

⁹⁶ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Roosevelt’s Letter Opener,” August 18, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 52, AB3.

⁹⁷ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3.

⁹⁸ “La Guardia Calls Hirohito One of Japan’s ‘Monkeys,’” *New York Times*, January 29, 1944, 4, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/la-guardia-calls-hirohito-one-japans-monkeys/docview/107023074/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁹⁹ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 90.

the Japanese from American soldiers, such as the desecration of their corpses. However, this was only one small portion of anti-Japanese propaganda from the Americans. Most of this propaganda focused on targeting Hirohito himself, who the Americans saw as the lynchpin of Japanese society.

Considering the Japanese admiration and the cult of emperor worship that permeated Japanese society throughout the war, it was unsurprising that most American propaganda attempts sought to sever this relationship. If Hirohito, who some Americans believed was “impersonating God” and a steadfast member of the Japanese military clique, could be separated from the Japanese people, the entire basis for Japanese popular support for the war would crumble.¹⁰⁰ However, American officials feared that overt attempts to end emperor worship through propaganda would, in practice, solidify Japanese support for Hirohito and the military.¹⁰¹ With this in mind, psychological warfare operations were coordinated throughout 1944 and 1945 to drop millions of pamphlets on Japanese cities and troop positions. These pamphlets claimed that the Japanese government and military had betrayed Hirohito. If the Japanese people had been convinced that Hirohito’s wishes were different from what the rest of the government claimed, a large portion of Japan’s population would have rushed to their emperor’s aid.

These efforts, however, were consistently disrupted by the domestic attention Hirohito received in the United States. To the frustration of those in the American government who hoped

¹⁰⁰ George E. Jones, “Halsey Ridicules Japanese Power: Admiral Challenges Remnants of the Enemy Fleet to Fight, Scorns ‘Fifth Team’ Fliers,” *New York Times*, June 4, 1945, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/halsey-ridicules-japanese-power/docview/107292789/se-2?accountid=12461>.

¹⁰¹ Hal Brands, “Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946,” *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 274, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

to convince the American public of Hirohito's usefulness in the postwar period, the media refused to accept that it was possible to differentiate between Hirohito and other Japanese leaders.¹⁰² Throughout 1943 and 1944, Hirohito was consistently portrayed as the chief military official of Japan, directly responsible for every action made by the Japanese.¹⁰³ Although this started to change in the last months of the war, the idea that Hirohito was to blame for any loss of American life at the hands of the Japanese continued to permeate through the American consciousness. Catchy slogans also helped disseminate this view of the emperor, making it even more difficult for American officials to convince the public to support their policies.¹⁰⁴ With the views of the American media toward Hirohito loudly on display, any attempts to use propaganda to disrupt the relationship between Hirohito, the military, and the Japanese people were doomed to fail. A cursory look at American headlines easily disputed any claims of sincerity in the pamphlets that were dropped. At the height of the fervor of war, America's anti-Japanese propaganda had escalated to the point where even the American government was largely unable to prevent headlines that perpetuated American hatred of Hirohito.

At this point in the war, the American public had cultivated a distinct hatred for Hirohito, stemming from years of negative media coverage and the belief that he was directly responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbor. Since the 1930s, the American media had emphasized the threat that Japan posed.¹⁰⁵ Once war broke out, those fears were confirmed. For most American citizens, this justified rhetoric that showed their desire that the Japanese people and Hirohito be

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 (Fall 2005): 435, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

¹⁰³ Hal Brands, "The Emperor's New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II," *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 5, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

¹⁰⁴ 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 (Fall 2005): 435, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

¹⁰⁵ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 88.

thoroughly punished after the war. Although some government officials had begun to believe that the emperor was the key to a successful post-war occupation, public opinion was not on their side. The American media often portrayed the Japanese people as subhuman, relying on racially charged messaging to keep domestic war support high.¹⁰⁶ This extended, in some circles, to advocacy of the extermination of all Japanese people.¹⁰⁷ Even Roosevelt was influenced by this rhetoric, incarcerating thousands of Japanese Americans in concentration camps and discussing the possibility of using eugenics to make the Japanese people more docile after the war.¹⁰⁸ By this point, it was public knowledge that Grew and the State Department believed that Hirohito was the key to an easy postwar transition. However, advocates for a harsher peace did not care. Dr. Max Radin, a professor of Law at the University of California, argued that Hirohito was just as culpable for the war as Hitler and Mussolini.¹⁰⁹ In explaining his perspective, his only comment was that he did not have “the same reverence for the crowned gentleman our State Department seems to have.”¹¹⁰ It was no secret that the State Department believed that the emperor should be retained, at least for a time. However, the hatred for Hirohito and the Japanese people that was present in the minds of most Americans at this time eclipsed any reasoning introduced by Grew and his supporters.

¹⁰⁶ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 90-91.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 4.

¹⁰⁹ “Invokes World Law for War Criminals,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1944, 16, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/invokes-world-law-war-criminals/docview/107029008/se-2?accountid=12461>.

¹¹⁰ “Invokes World Law for War Criminals,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1944, 16, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/invokes-world-law-war-criminals/docview/107029008/se-2?accountid=12461>.

Of all the rhetoric present in this period, there was one policy proposal that encapsulated the hatred felt toward Hirohito specifically. By March 1945, when American bombers were consistently attacking the Japanese homeland, members of the public increasingly called for the royal palace in Tokyo to be designated as a military target.¹¹¹ Although this was soon adopted by some, like Premier Tse-vung, as a way to deal with Hirohito, this was initially meant to be a symbolic attack. For advocates of this policy, such as Jesse F. Steiner, a professor of Sociology at the University of Washington who had spent seven years in Japan, it was believed that destroying the palace would help persuade the Japanese people to abandon the imperial system. Refusing to target the palace was believed to bolster the Japanese people's belief in Hirohito's divinity.¹¹² If the rest of Tokyo was being destroyed by American bombs, killing thousands of civilians and leaving even more without a home, the miraculous survival of such an iconic location, one of the physical representations of Hirohito in Tokyo, was guaranteed to reassert the conviction that he could not be targeted. This belief was not entirely due to blind hatred, either. Steiner, for example, acknowledged the State Department's position that preserving the emperor's rule would be the best way to prevent chaos and revolution following the war.¹¹³ However, he maintained that such a policy was absurd and unrealistic. If carried out, Steiner argued that it would only breed more violence as Japan rallied behind Hirohito. In destroying the palace in Tokyo, the Americans could shatter the Japanese people's faith in the emperor's divinity. Hirohito and his family, meanwhile, would "probably" be safely located in a mountain

¹¹¹ Jesse F. Steiner, "Shall We Bomb Hirohito's Palace? Yes, says one who knows the Japanese; it is the seat and symbol of Japanese militarism." *New York Times*, March 11, 1945, SM5, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/shall-we-bomb-hirohitos-palace/docview/107258348/se-2?accountid=12461>.

¹¹² "Celler Urges U.S. Fliers to Bomb Hirohito Palace." *New York Times*, April 29, 1945, 25, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/celler-urges-u-s-fliers-bomb-hirohito-palace/docview/107000665/se-2?accountid=12461>.

¹¹³ Jesse F. Steiner, "Shall We Bomb Hirohito's Palace? Yes, says one who knows the Japanese; it is the seat and symbol of Japanese militarism." *New York Times*, March 11, 1945, SM5, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/shall-we-bomb-hirohitos-palace/docview/107258348/se-2?accountid=12461>.

or seaside villa.¹¹⁴ For foreign officials that still held significant animosity toward the emperor, such a campaign provided an easy solution to the question of Hirohito's fate. The American public, although steadily coming around to the idea of retaining him, would not have been disappointed by the news of his death.

American public opinion toward Hirohito during the war was not a monolith, despite the rhetoric that came from people like Steiner. By the last year of the war, the anti-emperor consensus in America had begun to fray, particularly because retaining him could potentially save American soldiers from having to invade Japan.¹¹⁵ With the State Department's plan to use the emperor as a means to prevent an extended military effort as seemingly the only other option, some Americans drifted away from the passions of wartime rhetoric and embraced a more pragmatic approach. This was likely the reason why Steiner felt it necessary to reassure readers that Hirohito would likely be untouched if his home was destroyed. Earlier in the war, most of the American public would have been elated to hear that Japan's emperor had been killed by American bombs. However, as the idea that he was necessary to prevent the deaths of even more American soldiers increased in the public consciousness, Hirohito's death was no longer a universally desired outcome. Many people would likely have celebrated the occurrence, even at this point, but the public had finally begun accepting the State Department's perspective.¹¹⁶ Once the war ended and the occupation began, this shift continued. Although the change in American

¹¹⁴ Jesse F. Steiner, "Shall We Bomb Hirohito's Palace? Yes, says one who knows the Japanese; it is the seat and symbol of Japanese militarism." *New York Times*, March 11, 1945, SM5, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/shall-we-bomb-hirohitos-palace/docview/107258348/se-2?accountid=12461>.

¹¹⁵ 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 (Fall 2005): 443-444. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

¹¹⁶ For details on how the State Department and the Office of War Information failed to persuade the American public to support their objectives toward Hirohito, see 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 (Fall 2005): 444-444. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

public opinion had been subtle at first, the elation felt at the end of the war, along with SCAP attempts to recontextualize Hirohito's place in Japanese society, significantly improved the general American views towards Japan's emperor.

Chapter 4: The end of the war

The general goals of what an occupied, post-war Japan would look like in the eyes of the Allies had been discussed throughout 1945 until the United States had tentatively developed their initial policy of control through emperor Hirohito. However, it was still necessary to reach the end of the war before any plans could be implemented. By April 1945, the Allies were finally in a position to begin pushing their adversaries for peace. Yet, Japan represented a somewhat unique challenge. Because of a spur of the moment decision from Roosevelt, the Allies had been pushed into adopting the doctrine of unconditional surrender.¹¹⁷ Such an idea had been discussed by the State Department, but there was still significant disagreement on the subject before Roosevelt made his announcement to the press. This made achieving peace significantly more difficult, but the internal disagreement on unconditional surrender did lead to a somewhat flexible definition. However, for the Japanese, this decision solidified their resolve to continue fighting.

Because they were at war with the Allies, the Japanese had no choice but to assume that Roosevelt's announcement was an accurate representation of Allied policy. For a time, this eliminated any chance at peace. If the Allies had recanted Roosevelt's statement, this may have been different. Japanese commentators argued that, if the United States actually wanted peace, the American government should present conditional terms.¹¹⁸ Based on the FBIS report on these arguments, Japan was showing a strong desire for peace by late July 1945. However, through Swedish diplomats in Tokyo, the Allies knew that the Japanese would likely never accept

¹¹⁷ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 21-22.

¹¹⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Surrender Thoughts," July 28, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 78, BA19.

demands for unconditional surrender and continuing to advocate for the policy would only lead to “desperate action on the part of the [Japanese] people” who strongly believed that Japan could not be conquered.¹¹⁹ Even after multiple major defeats in the Pacific, they remained resolute. Because of what the Americans saw as Japan’s “national characteristic” to react stoically to defeat and continue fighting, the Japanese were likely to push forward no matter how dire the situation.¹²⁰ The greatest obstacle preventing acceptance of unconditional surrender terms was the potential for Hirohito’s removal and the dissolution of the Imperial throne.¹²¹ Although the emperor held little real power at this point, he remained a god to those who followed the Shinto beliefs. While peace was possible, it was clear early in the peace process that the Allies would have to compromise to save Japan’s honor, or else face a hostile population that would constantly resist any measures introduced during the occupation.

The Allies knew that unconditional surrender would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain without significant difficulties and that continued to be their policy towards Japan as they moved forward in the last months of the war. The general understanding of the Japanese position by the time of the Potsdam Proclamation was quite clear. They believed that unconditional surrender would mean the complete removal of the emperor institution, which was unacceptable.¹²² In many ways, the Japanese people believed that Hirohito’s future directly paralleled Japanese society. As Suzuki argued, unconditional surrender would lead to “the

¹¹⁹ “The Minister in Sweden (Johnson) to the Secretary of State,” April 6, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 343, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d343>.

¹²⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Defiance Unbroken,” May 18, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 72, AA1.

¹²¹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 214-215.

¹²² “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State,” May 28, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 379, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d379>.

destruction of the national structure and people of Japan.”¹²³ Even for the peace-minded Suzuki, any terms that meant the Allies could eliminate the emperor was equivalent with agreeing to the wholesale destruction of Japanese society. The Japanese position was clear; the emperor needed to remain. In one such attempt, through Alfred Hirs, the Director of the Swiss National Bank, the Japanese contact was firm that they “could not accept unconditional surrender but that, if they could keep their Emperor, he was sure we could obtain their surrender under our own terms.”¹²⁴ Some have argued that Japanese hesitance to accept the Potsdam terms was simply a product of Hirohito’s resolve to continue the war.¹²⁵ However, even supporters of this perspective acknowledged that Hirohito and other peace-minded Japanese leaders sought peace through the Soviets at that exact moment. As far-fetched as these attempts may have been, it does show that the Japanese refusal to accept the Potsdam terms was not due to a desire to continue the war.

Despite knowing the Japanese would not accept any terms that risked the emperor’s position by the time of the Potsdam Conference, a demand for unconditional surrender was still issued. The Potsdam Proclamation, in its demand for an unconditional surrender, emphasized the removal of all influencing factors that led to Japanese aggression, as well as punishment for all war criminals.¹²⁶ Even with officials like Grew advocating for assurances regarding Hirohito’s retention, there was enough doubt about his future that the other Allies continued to vocalize

¹²³ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Speech by Suzuki,” June 15, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 75, BA3.

¹²⁴ “The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State,” July 18, 1945. *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 362, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d362>.

¹²⁵ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 501.

¹²⁶ “Proclamation by the Heads of Government, United States, China and the United Kingdom,” July 26, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference), Volume II, (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 1382, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945Berlinv02/d1382>.

their desires to punish the emperor.¹²⁷ For the Japanese, this was enough to reassert their belief that the Allies would destroy the foundation of their society if they surrendered, even though the American policy was steadily moving towards accepting retention. While none of the Proclamation specifically targeted the emperor, the harsh terms left the impression that, without intimate knowledge of the American plans for the emperor, he would be removed and possibly face trial for war crimes.

By the last months of the war, Japan understood that its defeat was essentially a matter of time. With the defeat of their enemies in Europe, the Allies were free to direct the entirety of their military might towards the Pacific theater. Although, for a time, their resolve remained, Japanese media felt it necessary to threaten everyday citizens with “annihilation” if they did not believe their country would win the war, even as early as September 1944.¹²⁸ If support had remained high, this would not have been necessary. The fact that it was necessary revealed that even among average citizens, Japan’s belief that it would emerge victorious was crumbling. By May 1945, Japanese commentary increasingly referred to defeat as a real possibility.¹²⁹ As shown by American interactions with Japan’s media during the later occupation, Japanese commentators were used to functioning as a direct connection between the government and the people. If Japan’s reporters were discussing defeat, it was only because those fears permeated the government as well.

¹²⁷ Hal Brands, “Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946,” *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 279-280, 284, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

¹²⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Public Morale,” September 29, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 55, BA9.

¹²⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Increasing Reference to Defeat,” May 18, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 72, AA7.

While the situation was turning even further against the Japanese, their desire to retain some semblance of honor in their defeat meant any request for peace would be short of unconditional surrender. Postwar investigations had indicated that, by early 1945, Hirohito had gained enough freedom within his own government to make his desires for peace known.¹³⁰ As early as March 1945, Japanese officials had been putting out peace feelers, including the mission that was sponsored by Prince Takamatsu, the emperor's brother. Although that specific mission was later cancelled, the involvement of Hirohito's brother indicates that the emperor was desperately trying to establish communications with neutral powers and begin peace talks. By May 7, 1945, a day before the Allies celebrated Victory in Europe Day, the first step toward peace in the Pacific was reported.¹³¹ Inoue had approached an undercover Office of Strategic Services agent and had requested contact with the American Embassy to determine the Allied objectives in the Far East. While he was explicitly clear that this was not a "peace feeler," Inoue recognized that Japanese defeat was likely, and hoped that the Americans would be willing to find a compromise to combat Soviet imperialism. Just twelve days later, the same agent reported that Inoue stated that the actual terms for peace were unimportant, although he still pressed to avoid unconditional surrender.¹³² On May 12, tentative contact through another channel was

¹³⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Approach to Sweden and Portugal," Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 8, Radio Report Number 149, BF1-BF2. Although there is a chance that such a report was an attempt to rehabilitate Hirohito's image, there are a few reasons why this was not the case. First, the emperor was known to work through other members of the royal family, who were in a better position to act. Second, the FBIS had transitioned into a purely governmental organization by this time in the postwar period. While, previously, private citizens could access these reports, only government officials that had need of them could read FBIS documents from 1946 onward.

¹³¹ "The Ambassador in Portugal (Baruch) to the Secretary of State," May 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 346, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d346>. Masutaro Inoue's name is seemingly misspelled in this document as "Inouye." This is corrected in follow-up documents.

¹³² "Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to President Truman," June 2, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 356, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d356>. Interestingly, it was the term "unconditional surrender" that Inoue seemed to take issue with, not the actual idea of such a surrender.

reported, this time by one of the primary Japanese naval representatives in Europe, only referred to as Fujimura. While it was early June by the time the legitimacy of this contact was confirmed, it asserted the Japanese position that their primary concern was the retention of the emperor.¹³³ By July, contacts claiming to be connected to the Minister of Navy and other high-ranking officials again approached the Allies, this time going so far as to inquire how the Japanese government could directly establish contact with Allied representatives.¹³⁴ However, the Potsdam Proclamation, delivered on July 26, virtually eliminated any chances of a compromise peace. Despite numerous signs that the Japanese desired peace, including intelligence reports that indicated people close to the emperor supported an end to the war, the Allies doubled down on their terms. Even with the question of Hirohito's future remaining vague, the peace-minded officials in Japan's government continued to seek an end to the war. While each attempt fell short of the unconditional surrender the Allies sought, the terms requested remained relatively consistent.

Of all the Japanese requests made while they sought peace, the most common was the retention of the emperor. In almost every request for peace talks, the preservation of both the imperial system and Hirohito after the war was emphasized as a necessity.¹³⁵ On one occasion,

¹³³ "Memorandum by the Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Buxton) to the Secretary of State," June 4, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 357, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d357>. This contact was reported to be in direct contact with the Japanese Minister of Navy. By this point in the war, Japanese political power had transferred from the Army, who had strongly supported the war, towards the Navy.

¹³⁴ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan) to the Secretary of State," July 16, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 361, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d361>.

¹³⁵ For examples, see "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan) to the Secretary of State," July 16, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 361, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d361>. "Memorandum by the Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Buxton) to the Secretary of State," June 4, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States:*

this request was extended to the entire imperial family, but the primary emphasis was to save the emperor from losing his position and facing accusations of war crimes.¹³⁶ While other questions regarding the state of Japan after peace were raised, they were largely inconsistent. Fujimura, the naval representative, emphasized the Navy's desire to retain part of its fleet of merchant ships and their lands in Korea to assist in feeding their people.¹³⁷ Requests regarding Japan's occupied land were the most common, after pleas to retain the emperor. Some included the reasoning behind these requests, like Fujimura's assertion that Korea was necessary to supply sugar and rice to mainland Japan. Inoue, offering another justification for the retainment of Japan's pre-war holdings, pointed towards preventing the Soviets from taking over the Asian markets and retaining American access to China.¹³⁸ However, the requests to keep some of their land were secondary to their primary concern of protecting the emperor. While keeping at least some of the land they had prior to the war was desirable, the people extending peace feelers treated it as a request. The emperor's retention, however, was a necessity.

In almost all instances where peace feelers were made public, the Japanese government was quick to denounce them as the actions of rogue agents who did not represent the desires of their country. These denials allowed the Allies to later argue that Japan had never sought peace

Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 357, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d357>. "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Donovan) to the Secretary of State, May 12, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 349, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d349>.

¹³⁶ "Memorandum by the Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Cheston) to the Secretary of State," July 13, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 360, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d360>.

¹³⁷ "Memorandum by the Acting Director of the Office of Strategic Services (Buxton) to the Secretary of State," June 4, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 357, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d357>.

¹³⁸ "The Ambassador in Portugal (Baruch) to the Secretary of State," May 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 346, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d346>.

before the use of the atomic bombs, forcing their hand by August 1945. However, one 1944 incident called into question the Japanese government's claims regarding peace feelers. In July of that year, a peace request sent through Ken Harada, Japan's ambassador to the Vatican, asked that Japan remain sovereign.¹³⁹ This early request would have given Japan a way out of the increasingly desperate situation in which it found itself. However, the acting spokesman of Japan's Information Board, Katsuo Okazaki, denied the allegations. Considering the Information Board was a vital part of keeping morale in check as Japan suffered more losses, it is unsurprising that they denied the claim. As with many of the other reported attempts at peace, the Japanese government asserted that the individuals who broached the topic of peace were not acting on behalf of the government. However, later FBIS reports which mentioned Harada call this into question. Just a month later, he was noted as the subject of a complaint against the United States from the Japanese government.¹⁴⁰ According to their accusations, Harada had been accosted and threatened by American soldiers as he conducted his duties at the Vatican. While the incident itself is relatively unimportant, it revealed critical information that called into question the Japanese government's assertions regarding peace attempts. Harada had reportedly attempted to garner support for an end to Japan's involvement in the war without the blessing of the Japanese government, conduct that would have been considered treasonous.¹⁴¹ However, a month later, he was still working in the same position. He had not been punished for his actions, and the Japanese government was even defending him from the Americans. If he had truly acted

¹³⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Peace Offensive," July 21, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 50, AA3. This incident was reported on July 17, a day prior to Japan's announcement that they had lost Saipan.

¹⁴⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "The Ken Harada Affair," August 18, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115, Container 4, Radio Report Number 52, BA2.

¹⁴¹ As shown by such calls being labeled as disruptive to national unity in Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Curbing of Peace Agitation," June 1, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 74, BA7.

against the wishes of government officials, they would not have kept him as an ambassador, particularly at the height of the war. A more likely scenario is that he had acted with the approval of the Japanese government, but either due to the Allies disregarding the peace feeler or fear that the report would devastate Japan's morale, the Information Board claimed it was unsanctioned. If the Japanese government had denounced one legitimate peace feeler to protect their position in the war, it is likely that it was willing to do the same for others, including ones with connections to Hirohito.

Despite the multiple attempts by the Japanese to find a negotiated end the conflict in the last months of the war, the United States repeatedly ignored their efforts. To some extent, this was understandable. At the end of May 1945, M. Iguchi, a spokesman for the Japanese government, strongly denied any attempts to request peace during a press conference and dismissed contrary reports as propaganda meant to weaken Japan's morale.¹⁴² As shown by the Ken Harada affair, this was their consistent response to any rumors of peace feelers. As United States officials were unable to always confirm that the people coming forward with these requests had the authority to negotiate an end to the conflict, conversations with potentially unauthorized Japanese representatives were ignored.¹⁴³ However, there were attempts that the United States did believe were likely legitimately connected to the Japanese government since at least early May with Masutaro Inoue's statements and the contact with the naval representative. FBIS had been reporting Japanese coverage of peace feelers, including propaganda rhetoric that indicated Japan's war-weariness, for over a year. Despite having probable contact with

¹⁴² "The Ambassador in Portugal (Baruch) to the Secretary of State," May 30, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 355, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d355>.

¹⁴³ "The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in China (Hurley)," May 30, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 354, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d354>.

representatives of the Japanese government periodically from May 1945 onward, the eventual conclusion of the Department of State was that there was “no evidence of any peace offer or of any statement looking toward peace transmitted to this Government prior to August 10, 1945 from official Japanese sources.”¹⁴⁴ While Dean Acheson, the Acting Secretary of State who asserted that no peace feelers had been sent, acknowledged that this assessment did not include any communication from unofficial sources, the communications connected to the Japanese government that were sent earlier that year were ignored. Partially, this was because of a desire to punish Japan. Although an invasion would be costly, some people believed that the only way for the Japanese to accept democratic reforms was for the country to be taught the “lessons of war” by devastating their homeland.¹⁴⁵ Ignoring potential peace feelers, intentionally or otherwise, allowed the Allies to continue punishing the Japanese military through consistent defeats. The Japanese requests before August 10 did include pleas for the retention of the emperor and other minor considerations, which meant they were not the terms of unconditional surrender demanded by the Potsdam Proclamation. However, the few requests they did vocalize were consistent with the American desires for postwar Japan.

After months of intelligence showing that the Japanese were looking to capitulate with relatively few requests for considerations, the Allies obtained new technology that allowed them to obtain unconditional surrender without a costly invasion. Military experts agreed that a conditional surrender from Japan might prevent the loss of hundreds of thousands of Allied soldiers in an invasion attempt, although such a surrender could potentially have later

¹⁴⁴ “The Acting Secretary of State to Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, of California,” December 18, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 367, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d367>.

¹⁴⁵ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 104-105.

consequences.¹⁴⁶ After atomic weapons became available for military use, the Allies were presented with a solution that would circumvent a land invasion without having to compromise on peace terms. Their use had an immediate effect on the Japanese. At first, there was disbelief and anger, with commentators labeling it a “sadistic atrocity.”¹⁴⁷ As the second bomb was dropped on August 9, anger had become shock. A day earlier, the Soviets officially declared war on Japan, invading Manchuria soon after. The Japanese media and government had no reaction to the devastating news, having already begun the process of accepting the inevitable.¹⁴⁸ Although most Japanese citizens would not know this until much later, the highest levels of their government had already begun preparing for their surrender.

Once the Americans had unveiled their devastating new weapon, advocates for peace in the Japanese government knew the war was over. Initially, Potsdam had pushed the “peace party” away from surrender, as they were unwilling to accept terms without negotiation.¹⁴⁹ However, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, along with the Soviet entry into the war, had galvanized members of the cabinet into considering the Potsdam terms. While the peace-minded members still sought assurances regarding Hirohito’s postwar position, the militarists proposed a four-point peace that sought to prevent an occupation and leave the Japanese government in charge of prosecuting war criminals.¹⁵⁰ The militarists, even after witnessing the devastation caused by this new atomic threat, did not know when they were beaten.¹⁵¹ It was their belief that they could still

¹⁴⁶ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 150-151.

¹⁴⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Atomic Bomb,” August 11, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 79, BA18.

¹⁴⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Last Minute Reception,” August 11, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 79, B9.

¹⁴⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 222.

¹⁵⁰ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 223.

¹⁵¹ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 139.

turn the tide, despite facing increasingly desperate odds. However, because of the peace party's growing influence, the militarists could no longer make decisions unilaterally. The cabinet was split as they debated surrender. In an unusual move, considering Hirohito's status as a figurehead, the emperor was left to make the final decision once an agreement could not be reached. Immediately seeing a way to achieve the peace that he had desperately wanted, the emperor voiced his support for full acceptance of the Potsdam terms, even if it put his future at risk.¹⁵² At the first moment he could seize enough power back from the military and make a decisive choice to end the war, Hirohito acted. He had spent much of his reign as a puppet, only meant to serve as justification for nationalist aggression. But through his first real act as emperor in some time, Japan had moved toward peace.

Following two uses of atomic weaponry that led to tens of thousands of civilian casualties, the United States received notification of Japan's surrender on August 10, 1945, including a full acceptance of the terms given at Potsdam, outside of one stipulation.¹⁵³ The Japanese, in a last-ditch effort to secure Hirohito's safety, had requested assurances that the Potsdam terms did not specifically state any demands regarding the emperor's prerogatives as a sovereign ruler. Unknown to them, their request had already been guaranteed through American policy. However, that did not mean such terms could be openly accepted. Some, particularly in the United States, strongly opposed accepting these terms. La Guardia, in one of his anti-

¹⁵² Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 130. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 223.

¹⁵³ "The Swiss Chargé (Grässli) to the Secretary of State," August 10, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 406, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d406>. This was the one attempt at surrender that was eventually accepted as "legitimate" by the State Department, as shown by "The Acting Secretary of State to Representative Bertrand W. Gearhart, of California," December 18, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 367, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d367>.

Japanese speeches, argued that accepting terms that would guarantee the emperor would be a violation of the Potsdam agreement.¹⁵⁴ In his vitriolic address following the announcement of the terms, he called upon the Japanese people to murder Hirohito as a sign of their desire to end the war, “just as the Italians did with Mussolini.”¹⁵⁵ Although the American government did not fully agree with the sentiment behind La Guardia’s words, they refused to accept Japan’s terms. In the official reply to the August 10 surrender, Secretary of State James F. Byrnes asserted that Hirohito must be subordinate to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in the postwar period.¹⁵⁶ Although his statement alluded to the fact that the emperor would retain his position, it was a clear message to the Japanese that they were in no position to request anything. To further emphasize this point, the Americans resumed their bombing campaign over Tokyo on August 13, signaling a continuation to Japan’s devastation if it did not give in. Hirohito, the primary driving force behind the August 10 surrender, yet again insisted that his government relinquish power to the Allies and accept their fate.¹⁵⁷ After the rest of the government agreed to accept the Potsdam terms in full, the emperor “lifted his white-gloved hand to wipe away the tears that streamed down his face, displaying his profound sadness – or perhaps relief.”¹⁵⁸ At last, Hirohito had achieved peace. Although his future remained uncertain, he had finally been able to throw off the military’s grip from Japan’s government and ended the devastating conflict.

¹⁵⁴ “Mayor Urges Rejection of Offer, Holding It an Evasion of Potsdam: Declares That Retention of Emperor Would Prevent Democracy’s Growth in Japan – Tells the Foe to Hill Hirohito,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1945, 8, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/mayor-urges-rejection-offer-holding-evasion/docview/107180340/se-2?accountid=10559>.

¹⁵⁵ “Mayor Urges Rejection of Offer, Holding It an Evasion of Potsdam: Declares That Retention of Emperor Would Prevent Democracy’s Growth in Japan – Tells the Foe to Hill Hirohito,” *New York Times*, August 11, 1945, 8, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/mayor-urges-rejection-offer-holding-evasion/docview/107180340/se-2?accountid=10559>.

¹⁵⁶ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 504.

¹⁵⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 46.

¹⁵⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Meetings with the Emperor,” August 25, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 80, B3.

Obtaining the surrender of the Japanese meant that the Allies could put into effect the plans they had begun drafting since the beginning of 1945, although with some changes. Originally, the United States had planned for Hirohito to be the party responsible for surrendering on behalf of Japan, as the Commander in Chief of Japan.¹⁵⁹ However, partly due to the wording of the Potsdam Proclamation, the British requested a change in the prepared draft, so it was the Japanese government and military signing the surrender terms and not the emperor, a change which was quickly adopted by the Americans.¹⁶⁰ While they still expected Hirohito to play an important role in the surrender, it was the British belief that it would be more valuable for him to command the Japanese military to surrender as he announced Japan's capitulation. This also helped guarantee a smooth transition into the occupation; Hirohito, incoming Premier Prince Naruhiko Higashikuni, and Konoye's absence from the signing meant that the Japanese people could avoid any overt notion that the imperial family had been compromised by the defeat.¹⁶¹ This change in focus demonstrated the evolving role of the emperor from the perspective of the Allies. Instead of being viewed as the primary leader of his country, his position – and responsibility for Japan's involvement in the war – was emphasized less relative to that of the Japanese government and the military leaders controlling it. However, at the same

¹⁵⁹ "Report by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee's Subcommittee for the Pacific and Far East," February 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 374, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d374>.

¹⁶⁰ "The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State," August 11, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 408, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d408>. This change's adoption can be seen in "Report of the SWNCC 'ad hoc' Committee on the Legal Implications of Unconditional Surrender," August 10, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 393, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d393>. While the communication sent by Winant was sent on August 11, London time, it was received in Washington on August 10.

¹⁶¹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 59.

time, he was vital to the conclusion of the conflict. It was his announcement that cemented the peaceful transition into peacetime and occupation, preventing a violent reaction from the “undefeated armies” that remained in mainland Japan.¹⁶² Instead, Hirohito was presented as a leader uninvolved with the inception of the war but responsible for ending it, reinforcing his connection with the tired Japanese people.

¹⁶² United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 5.

Chapter 5: Transition into Surrender

Once the Japanese surrender took effect, command over the occupation was given to MacArthur, who had commanded the United States Army forces in the Far East during the war. Through General Order No. 1, revised as late as August 11, and issued on August 15, the entirety of the Japanese armed forces were ordered to cease hostilities immediately and disarm, along with a full cessation of movement by both military and civilian transportation until ordered otherwise by MacArthur.¹⁶³ Once the Japanese surrender had fully taken place, MacArthur was authorized to use any authority deemed necessary to carry out his mission.¹⁶⁴ However, MacArthur was strongly urged to work through the Japanese government and the emperor as much as possible, adapting Japanese institutions into something more desirable for the United States. Even with the concern from the Japanese regarding Hirohito's future, the American intentions of working through Japan's government was known to them. At one point during Hirohito's official surrender rescript, he asserted that the surrender meant they had "been able to safeguard and maintain the structure of the Imperial state."¹⁶⁵ This indicated that, on some level, Hirohito knew of the intent to work through Japan's pre-existing structure. Once this was confirmed, the other Japanese leaders wanted to "make the most of these favorable

¹⁶³ "Revision of General Order No. 1," August 11, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 418, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d418>.

¹⁶⁴ "Instructions to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur (Message No. 1)," September 6, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 491, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d491>.

¹⁶⁵ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Imperial Rescript," August 25, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 80, B5-B6.

beginnings.”¹⁶⁶ Any overt act of disobedience risked Hirohito’s precarious position, meaning their loyalty to the Americans was essentially guaranteed.

Even without MacArthur’s instructions to work through the Japanese government, he understood the value of introducing change gradually. As he admitted in his memoir, “Nothing that was good in the new Japanese government was going to be done because I imposed it, or because of fear of me and what I represented. Any change pressed home on these grounds would last only as long as I lasted.”¹⁶⁷ Practically, using the pre-existing structure of the Japanese government also meant that the Allies could contribute less manpower and resources compared to if they set up a new government from scratch.¹⁶⁸ From the start, MacArthur sought to connect with the Japanese people’s sense of honor and respect. When he first arrived at the defeated country, he refused to carry any weapons with him, seeking to show his desire for Japan to become a pacifist nation.¹⁶⁹ Although his original guidelines were vague and unclear, MacArthur’s desire to work through the Japanese government and truly shift its culture to one of peace defined the early occupation.¹⁷⁰ His command spanned the majority of the Japanese occupation, until he was removed from his position and replaced by General Matthew Ridgeway in 1951 over his criticism of the Truman administration’s handling of the Korean War. In that time, he almost singlehandedly dictated the future of Japan, molding the country based on what he believed was best for it and the United States.

¹⁶⁶ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Japanese to Retain Sovereignty,” August 25, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 80, B33.

¹⁶⁷ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 294.

¹⁶⁸ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 18.

¹⁶⁹ Axel Berkofsky, “Japan’s Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies,” *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 9, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

¹⁷⁰ William M. Leavitt, “General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan,” *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 317, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

MacArthur's difficulties with the Truman administration started much sooner than the Korean War. From the very start of Truman's presidency, his dislike of MacArthur was palpable, expressed with nicknames such as "Brass Hat" and "Mr. Prima Donna."¹⁷¹ However, due to the general's successes in the later parts of the war, Truman had little choice but to select him as Supreme Commander. This animosity was not one-sided, either. In his memoir, MacArthur characterized the president as a man with a "violent temper and paroxysms of ungovernable rage" whose indecisiveness was to blame for the later failures in Korea.¹⁷² Even before the debacle of the Korean war, MacArthur had little respect for Truman.¹⁷³ Once MacArthur was made the de facto ruler of Japan, this mutual dislike led to multiple clashes that often emphasized the differing opinions within the American government on how Hirohito and Japan should exist in a postwar period.

Despite their dislike for one another, MacArthur was still subordinate to Truman, due to the President's position as Commander in Chief. Less than a month into the occupation of Japan, MacArthur issued a statement reflecting an extremely positive outlook for the Allied presence in Japan, announcing that Allied objectives could likely be achieved with a force of 200,000 men after six months.¹⁷⁴ Upon hearing of MacArthur's statement, Truman immediately requested MacArthur be contacted to clarify his position, as the statements gave "a wholly erroneous impression of our policy in the occupation" and gave the impression that the United States

¹⁷¹ W.G. Beasley, "Personal Reminiscences of the Early Months of the Occupation: Yokosuka and Tokyo, September 1945 - March 1946," in *The British Commonwealth and the Allied Occupation of Japan, 1945 – 1952: Personal Encounters and Government Assessments*, ed. Ian Nish (Leiden, The Netherlands: Global Oriental, 2013), 35.

¹⁷² Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 393.

¹⁷³ William M. Leavitt, "General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan," *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 317, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

¹⁷⁴ "Statement Issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Forces in Japan (MacArthur)," September 17, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 495, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d495>.

intended to let Japan itself control its demilitarization with little oversight.¹⁷⁵ In the telegram sent to MacArthur, Truman's frustration was made even more clear, as George Marshall, Chief of Staff for the Army, alerted MacArthur that the statements made had the potential to further damage both efforts to maintain the draft for reinforcing the occupation, and the general political position in the Far East.¹⁷⁶ Regardless of the potential truth to MacArthur's statement, admitting publicly that the Japanese were cooperating with little resistance risked damaging the President's position politically, both domestically and abroad. Upon hearing of the President's frustration with his comments, MacArthur clarified his position and apologized, citing his belief that he was acting under the War Department's desire to demobilize as soon as possible.¹⁷⁷ While MacArthur and the domestic American leadership generally shared similar views regarding the goals of the occupation, this early dispute emphasized a significant disconnect between MacArthur and policymakers in the United States. It also helped remind him that he was not completely free from American oversight, despite being given broad powers to complete the objectives in Japan.

Regardless of the pushback MacArthur received for his comments regarding the ease of the ensuing occupation, there was some truth in his analysis. His prediction that the cost would be cheaper than expected rang true based primarily on an assessment of the Japanese people.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State," September 17, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 496, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d496>.

¹⁷⁶ "The Chief of Staff (Marshall) to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur," September 17, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 497, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d497>.

¹⁷⁷ "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Chief of Staff (Marshall)," September 18, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 498, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d498>.

¹⁷⁸ For MacArthur's predictions on the cost of the occupation, see "Statement Issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Forces in Japan (MacArthur)," September 17, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 495, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d495>.

While the occupation wasn't without difficulties, the Japanese people generally welcomed the changes MacArthur brought after the war, particularly in the first months. In part, this was due to their war-weariness and ability to adapt quickly, as shown by internal media coverage during the war.¹⁷⁹ Although fear over Hirohito's fate remained, years of war led to easy acceptance of Japan's loss. After the surrender announcement, tears and prayer were a common sight.¹⁸⁰ However, outside of increased cases of ritual suicide, there were no emotional outbursts. The people remained calm, having anticipated Japan's defeat. Some feared American landings, believing that the Allied soldiers would act with the brutality they had heard so much about in propaganda.¹⁸¹ In the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this fear was likely even more pronounced, due to the Japanese media's consistent emphasis of American brutality during the war.¹⁸² However, the Japanese people were tired and no longer had the will to fight. Their emperor had urged peace and cooperation, and that was exactly what they were going to strive for.

MacArthur was wrong that the occupation would be inexpensive and only last a short amount of time, particularly due to the tensions of the Cold War and the deterioration of economic conditions in Japan. However, despite the issues that would arise over the next few years, the basis of his initial analysis was still accurate. American catharsis met Japanese trauma

¹⁷⁹ ¹⁷⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Complaining Populace," September 29, 1944, Record Group 262, Entry Number PI-115 34, Container 4, Radio Report Number 55, BD1. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Defiance Unbroken," May 18, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 72, AA1.

¹⁸⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Public Reaction," August 25, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 80, B7.

¹⁸¹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Problems of the Occupation Period," August 25, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 80, B33.

¹⁸² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Atomic Bomb," August 11, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 79, BA18.

to begin the process of healing.¹⁸³ Unlike many other nations in the face of such extreme trauma, the Japanese ability to adapt allowed them to move forward towards democracy and peace. At times, this was a difficult process, impacted by changing American goals and the continued presence of conservative politicians. However, at the beginning of this process, the Japanese people were desperate for a new start. While the Americans were expecting an unruly population that was liable to engage in guerrilla warfare, especially if the emperor's position was jeopardized, they found a country tired from years of war and extremely distrustful of the leaders that had led them astray.

The American concern over continued resistance to an occupation was an understandable conclusion. Not only were the Japanese known for their strong nationalist leanings before and during the war, but much of the intelligence received by the United States indicated that the Japanese people were willing to continue fighting, even after their government capitulated, if their emperor was threatened. In the immediate postwar period, receiving the full cooperation of both the Japanese people and their government was vital.¹⁸⁴ If they resisted the changes brought by the Allies, the entire plan for democratization could crumble. Between Japan's surrender and August 30, 1945, when MacArthur finally arrived to begin his work as Supreme Commander, it was still unclear whether they would be able to arrive peacefully.¹⁸⁵ Kamikaze pilots, trained to give their lives for Japan, posed a significant threat to MacArthur and his entourage. The potential for violence had mostly died down, but there were still concerns that the Americans

¹⁸³ Grant K. Goodman, *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies, 1968), vi.

¹⁸⁴ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 14.

¹⁸⁵ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 269. Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 24.

would meet some resistance. Most of the country were as war weary as their emperor, but some segments of the military still sought to fight until the end. When they learned that Hirohito's surrender rescript had been recorded and was going to be played for all of Japan to hear, hundreds of soldiers attempted to storm the Imperial Palace and stop the announcement.¹⁸⁶ If successful, this would have at the very least prevented the emperor's words from reaching the soldiers still deployed across the Pacific. Peace was already inevitable, but Hirohito's assassination at this final hour would have plunged Japan into chaos.¹⁸⁷ Clearly, not everyone in Japan agreed with the emperor's decision. And yet, despite the risks involved, Hirohito persisted. It was his announcement that quelled the army. The fact that Japan's soldiers unquestioningly laid down their arms, despite their many victories on land, when Hirohito ordered them to do so, was a testament to the influence he wielded.¹⁸⁸ The Allies were right to be concerned about whether they would be able to successfully occupy Japan without bloodshed. If they had not already decided to protect the emperor, they would have needed, by MacArthur's judgement, a million troops for an indefinite number of years.¹⁸⁹ Unknown to the Americans, their decision to retain Hirohito had already prevented guerrilla warfare. They had hoped that doing so would guarantee an easier transition, but Hirohito's own desire for peace contributed to a transition period that was easier than anyone had hoped.

¹⁸⁶ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 8, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

¹⁸⁷ "Army Plot to Balk Surrender Thwarted," *New York Times*, September 8, 1945, 4, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/army-plot-balk-surrender-thwarted/docview/107149177/se-2?accountid=10559>.

¹⁸⁸ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 124. Leopold H. Tibesar, "Hirohito: Man, Emperor, 'Divinity'," *The Review of Politics* 7, no. 4 (October 1945): 499, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1404070>. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 56. Hirohito went above and beyond to ensure compliance, dispatching Imperial princes overseas to help the military understand that the war was over.

¹⁸⁹ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 332, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

As MacArthur soon discovered, most of the Japanese population was tired of fighting. According to the early analysis of George Atcheson, Jr., the political advisor to MacArthur in Japan, the strongest feeling present among the Japanese people was relief that the war was over.¹⁹⁰ As tired as they were, there was little regret for the war present. Atcheson discovered a “spirit of determination to recover Japan’s position through diligence and cooperation with the occupying forces.”¹⁹¹ As war weary as they were, the Japanese people still had fierce pride in their culture and systems. This meant that a period of drawn-out guerrilla warfare was likely if the occupation threatened major pillars of Japanese society, including the emperor. With these considerations in mind, MacArthur moved cautiously at first, encouraging the emperor and other Japanese leaders to begin the process of democratization through the already-existing machinery.¹⁹² A subtle approach was necessary to prevent widespread disarray, which helped justify the American position that Hirohito should be retained to help guide Japan towards democracy.

¹⁹⁰ “The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State,” September 27, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 507, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d507>.

¹⁹¹ “The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State,” September 27, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 507, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d507>.

¹⁹² Frank L. Kluckhohn, “M’ Arthur Moves Cautiously To Reform Japan: Use of Emperor to Bring About Changes We Desire Will Be Tried,” *New York Times*, September 16, 1945, E3, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/marthur-moves-cautiously-reform-japan/docview/107210320/se-2?accountid=10559>.

Chapter 6: Initial Occupation changes

If the Americans wanted to successfully reform Japan, their first step was to organize an effective headquarters to assist in drafting and enforcing new directives meant to democratize the Japanese people. With this in mind, General Headquarters (GHQ) was established, divided into multiple sections based on the focus of their duties.¹⁹³ Each section had a designated mission, which was completed by either working directly with the Japanese Government or drafting recommendations that were then presented to MacArthur.¹⁹⁴ For ensuring the success of the occupation, the most important groups were the Government and Intelligence sections. The Government section existed to supervise and assist Japan's civil government as it transitioned toward a more democratic system.¹⁹⁵ Intelligence, meanwhile, was further broken down into Counter-Intelligence and Civil Intelligence.¹⁹⁶ Civil Intelligence sought to oversee civilian public safety while also ensuring that Japan's government continued to comply with SCAP directives, while Counter-Intelligence was the primary office within SCAP responsible for security matters. Although, in theory, these two sections were meant to act separately, they were both headed by one person, effectively consolidating them into a single Intelligence section.¹⁹⁷ Initially, it was Brigadier General Elliott Thorpe that led intelligence-gathering operations. However, following an early 1946 decision by the Pentagon to reduce the rank of all officers who received wartime

¹⁹³ GHQ was often used interchangeably with SCAP. Both were used in reference to MacArthur and the larger occupational structure, as the many offices and sections of SCAP were generally seen as an extension of MacArthur's own will. To further emphasize this relationship, the occupation's structure will be referred to as SCAP from this point forward.

¹⁹⁴ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 15.

¹⁹⁵ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 15.

¹⁹⁶ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 15.

¹⁹⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 163-164.

promotions, Thorpe resigned in protest.¹⁹⁸ This allowed the autocratic Major General Charles A. Willoughby to take control of SCAP's intelligence arm, setting the stage for an increased conservative influence over the entire organization.

Although vastly successful in their implementation of American policy objectives within Japan, SCAP was not without its flaws. Many of the racial prejudices and hatred left over from the war were still present, particularly within the military personnel assigned to assist SCAP in its mission. This led to multiple instances of brutality against Japanese citizens, particularly in the beginning of the occupation. Robbery, rape, murder, and other crimes were frequently reported in the press, but few soldiers faced punishment for their crimes.¹⁹⁹ In the infrequent cases where Japanese citizens sought to protect themselves, they faced severe punishment. The fear of severe reprisals prevented most Japanese people from issuing complaints against the American soldiers.²⁰⁰ When they did complain, it was primarily when young women became pregnant. Although this initial spree of violence eventually faded, SCAP was never an entirely benevolent organization. Throughout the occupation, there was a significant difference in the quality of life between the Japanese and even the lowest occupying soldier.²⁰¹ Eventually, most of Japan viewed the occupation and MacArthur with fondness. However, at the beginning of the

¹⁹⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 164.

¹⁹⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 67.

²⁰⁰ Although the author claims that complaints against soldiers were taken seriously, other evidence indicates that this was not the case. T.B. Millar, "An Australian's Experience," in *The British Commonwealth and the Allied Occupation of Japan, 1945 – 1952: Personal Encounters and Government Assessments*, ed. Ian Nish (Leiden, The Netherlands: Global Oriental, 2013), 123.

²⁰¹ Some contemporaries, noticing this disparity in conditions, even compared the occupation to the British Raj in its heyday. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 75.

occupation period, SCAP often acted as a brutal neo-Colonial occupying force that cared little for the people it was trying to influence.

While the Japanese people generally accepted the occupation, the governing powers that had led Japan to war needed to be broken down to ensure success in pushing the occupied nation in the direction the United States wanted. The original plan, as outlined in Message No. 1 to MacArthur, was to exercise SCAP's power through the Japanese government, as long as the results were deemed satisfactory.²⁰² Initially, he found some success in doing so, as his contentious September 17 statements revealed.²⁰³ By not replacing the Japanese government immediately, as requested in Message No. 1, MacArthur believed that SCAP could significantly reduce the Allied resources needed for a successful occupation. This, along with the decision to keep Hirohito in his position, was a signal to the Japanese people that the Americans were not opposed to keeping the core concepts of the previous system in place, as long as democracy was established.²⁰⁴ Even before they had confirmation from the Allies, Japanese officials had convinced the public that Potsdam's terms would leave Japan's social and political institutions, including the emperor system, intact.²⁰⁵ This further reinforced the importance of American directives to work through Japan's existing structure, as any move to replace its institutions at the beginning of the occupation period would have led to significant unrest. However, the occupying

²⁰² "Instructions to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur (Message No. 1)," September 6, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 491, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d491>.

²⁰³ "Statement Issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Forces in Japan (MacArthur)," September 17, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 495, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d495>.

²⁰⁴ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 317.

²⁰⁵ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 62.

forces recognized by early November that the Japanese who held power – the officials, bureaucrats, and businessmen – were much less willing to cooperate when compared to the general population.²⁰⁶ Even when Cabinet ministers worked to enact the changes sought by MacArthur, they were prevented from doing so by the bureaucrats that remained in place. This forced SCAP to re-evaluate its initial position that no structural changes were needed and begin making changes to better acclimate Japan to the planned reforms.

One of the most important steps in breaking down the pre-existing nationalist structure was to target the education system. Outside of general propaganda, education was one of the most effective ways that the Japanese government had been able to influence the population before and during the war. It was for this reason that educators who held tendencies toward the old system were systematically removed from their positions.²⁰⁷ If they had been allowed to continue influencing the next generation of Japanese citizens, teaching the same values that had led to rampant militaristic tendencies, no real progress would be made by the occupation. To prevent this, SCAP engaged in education reform and other initiatives to encourage social and psychological changes toward democratic tendencies.²⁰⁸ As schools had been the backbone of Imperial Japan's development of nationalistic tendencies, they were the perfect vessel to begin urging Japanese society toward more democratic beliefs. No matter how effective such a change to the education system was, it would not have succeeded without even more drastic intervention into Japan's government.

²⁰⁶ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," November 5, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 593, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d593>.

²⁰⁷ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 33-34.

²⁰⁸ Robert E. Ward, "The American Occupation of Japan: Political Retrospect," in *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View*, ed. Grant K. Goodman (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies, 1968), 2.

The National Diet, Japan's legislature, was another area of concern. While early progress had been made in establishing new political parties, Acheson believed that it was likely these new and inexperienced parties, and the people running under them, would lose to the politicians that had more experience and were a part of the wartime government. To address this, Acheson essentially forced the legislature to be rebuilt from scratch, as he recommended that Prime Minister Kijūrō Shidehara be informed that most of the current Diet members should not stand for re-election, based on the Potsdam Proclamation's guidelines.²⁰⁹ If the occupation's goals were to be completed, the officials and bureaucrats that were uncooperative needed to be removed from power. By forcing the replacement of the people who had obstructed initial attempts to implement change in the Japanese governmental structure, MacArthur both sent a message that the occupation was unwilling to humor attempts at retaining the old systems and that he was willing to exercise his powers as SCAP when needed. While the overall structure of the Japanese government remained, outside of proposed changes to their constitution that eventually led to a new constitution being adopted, the occupying forces stripped it of the people involved in Japan's turn towards ultra-nationalism. In many ways, these initial attempts at removing nationalist tendencies were unsuccessful. They failed to significantly alter Japan's political makeup, even with the removal of Diet members.²¹⁰ The left-leaning political parties were too weak in these initial months to adequately organize and provide an alternative to the remaining conservatives. The later purges did help balance the political climate, but the initial exclusion of Diet members did not have the effect MacArthur hoped it would. At first,

²⁰⁹ "Memorandum by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson), November 9, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 604, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d604>.

²¹⁰ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 48.

MacArthur had sought to work through the existing government, but when he met resistance in implementing even the most basic of reforms, he sought to remove the few remaining roadblocks to enacting the early occupation's policies.

Of all the direct moves by SCAP to permanently rid Japan of the influence that had led them down the path of aggressive military action, the purge was the most successful at shattering the country's political structure, at least at the beginning. Under the initial purge policy, any industrialist, military leader, or politician who had played a significant role in Japan's conduct during the war was barred from office and stripped of any additional power they held, preventing them from influencing Japan further. With this drastic action, SCAP hoped to fully rid Japan of any militarist influence and destroy the likelihood of a conservative resurgence before it occurred. However, at the same time, it was important for the occupation to avoid what had happened in Germany; purging the entire political structure of Japan would have forced SCAP to take direct control of the conquered country.²¹¹ As this contradicted the desires of both MacArthur and the Truman administration, a significant portion of the bureaucracy was kept in place, along with politicians who were sympathetic to the militarist cause but had not held power during the war.

This policy had the possibility to fundamentally alter the fabric of Japanese politics. On its surface, the purges crippled the conservative Liberal and Progressive parties.²¹² The entire leadership of the Progressive Party was forced to resign, and Ichirō Hatoyama, who had organized the Liberal Party and aspired to become Prime Minister in the initial postwar period,

²¹¹Alvary Gascoigne to Ernest Bevin, Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, November 14, 1946, in *Interviews with General MacArthur*, (Government Papers, The National Archives, Kew, 1946), 8, https://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/FO_262_2054.

²¹² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Party Reactions to Purge Described," February 13, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 31, BB4.

was also purged.²¹³ With Japanese socialists finally free to establish a political party without fear of governmental targeting, many believed that the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) would gain the most from these purges. In fact, after SCAP enacted the first round of purges in January 1946, the JSP gained enough political support to eventually capture a plurality of seats in the Diet and establish two coalition governments between 1947 and 1948.²¹⁴ However, this early success hid the failure of the purges to significantly shift Japan's internal political makeup.

With the two largest conservative political parties significantly weakened by the purge and the JSP increasing in support, Japan's political makeup in the early occupation seemed to indicate a quick acceptance of their postwar status. However, there was one glaring weakness in how fast this change occurred. Although the prewar political parties were entirely dismantled and the new conservative parties were at constant risk of losing members to the purges, the fundamental political makeup of Japan was not changing.²¹⁵ The leftist parties like the JSP and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) were disorganized and inexperienced. Conservative parties, despite their setbacks, remained strong. Although the Liberal Party lost their founder, Shigeru Yoshida was quickly chosen as Hatoyama's successor.²¹⁶ In the last election under the Meiji Constitution, which took place in July 1946, the Liberal Party was still strong enough to gain a plurality and choose Yoshida as its Prime Minister. Even after the JSP won its plurality in the

²¹³ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Progressive Party 'Falls to Pieces'," February 20, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 36, BC1. Yong Wook Lee, "The Origin of One Party Domination: America's Reverse Course and the Emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 372, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23258199>.

²¹⁴ Yong Wook Lee, "The Origin of One Party Domination: America's Reverse Course and the Emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 385, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23258199>.

²¹⁵ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 48.

²¹⁶ Yong Wook Lee, "The Origin of One Party Domination: America's Reverse Course and the Emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 372, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23258199>.

next election, Yoshida remained exceedingly popular, enough so that he was again elected in 1948, remaining in office until the end of the occupation. His ascension and the close relationship he had with SCAP, particularly during his second term, was an indication of the shaky ground on which the JSP stood. At the very beginning of the occupation, SCAP provided support to both the JSP and the JCP.²¹⁷ This was primarily meant to encourage democratization efforts by presenting radically different options compared to the more traditional political parties to which Japan was accustomed. However, this pseudo-alliance was cast aside in favor of Yoshida and more conservative political elements once the Cold War became a dominating factor in American foreign policy.

The last remaining source of political power in Japan was the Zaibatsu business conglomerates that dominated Japanese industry. By the end of September 1945, the White House issued orders to destroy the influence of the Zaibatsu by breaking them up into smaller businesses.²¹⁸ Some of the Zaibatsu, as ready to follow SCAP directives as the general Japanese population, submitted their own proposals to MacArthur for their dissolution, although these plans were mostly rejected. Instead, William Clayton, the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, suggested that a small group of experts prepare criteria to ensure that the “objective of destroying their influence over Japanese political and economic life has been met.”²¹⁹ The occupying forces were quick to act against the Zaibatsu, but attempts to limit their

²¹⁷ Yong Wook Lee, “The Origin of One Party Domination: America’s Reverse Course and the Emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 386, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23258199>.

²¹⁸ “The Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Clayton) to the Assistant Attorney General (Berge),” October 31, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 581, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d581>.

²¹⁹ “The Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Clayton) to the Assistant Attorney General (Berge),” October 31, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 581, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d581>.

power were a resounding failure. By the end of the occupation, only nineteen out of over 300 firms were broken up, and banks were completely exempt.²²⁰ The continued presence of the Zaibatsu helped shape Japan's economic recovery, for better or worse. Their unpaid debts from the war were a major contributor to the inflation that devastated Japan's economy during the occupation.²²¹ However, their continued existence did have one significant benefit for Japan; the hold that the Zaibatsu held on the economy pushed American labor leaders to seek a strong labor movement in Japan to function as a counterweight.²²² Although the desire for a strong labor movement eventually faded as the Cold War became the dominating factor in policymaking, this early focus on creating a counterweight to the power of the Zaibatsu caused a ripple effect that bolstered support for democratic tendencies. While the breakdown of the Zaibatsu was not as successful as the changes made to Japan's government, it was a significant step in limiting or fully eliminating the structures that contributed to Japan's involvement in the war. Even with the occupation forces working through the Japanese government as often as possible, there was soon a power vacuum left as Japanese leaders other than the emperor were pushed out of power.

²²⁰ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 48, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

²²¹ Martin Bronfenbrenner, "The American Occupation of Japan: Economic Retrospect," in *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View*, ed. Grant K. Goodman (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies, 1968), 19.

²²² Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 250, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

Chapter 7: An Emerging Relationship: Hirohito and SCAP

Between the breakdown of the Zaibatsu, difficulties with the bureaucracy, the steps taken to deny wartime Diet members from continuing in the legislature, and the purge, Japan's political structure was shattered by the end of 1945. Outside of occupying forces, the only potential sources of political power left were the Emperor and his Cabinet. The Cabinet, however, was in no position to utilize any political power it had effectively. The initial postwar Cabinet, led by Prince Higashikuni, didn't even last two months before it was replaced. The Shidehara Cabinet, which succeeded the short-lived Higashikuni Cabinet, was designed to be a stop gap until Japan was able to hold a national election.²²³ This Cabinet was almost entirely chosen because the members had not been prominent wartime officials, meaning they were free from the possibility of being accused of war crimes.²²⁴ However, this meant that the Shidehara Cabinet could do nothing but cooperate and enact changes that met Allied demands.²²⁵ Even though they were in no position to do anything but assist SCAP, the Shidehara cabinet still proved to be an unintentional thorn in MacArthur's side. Just a few months into the occupation, MacArthur was forced to threaten military rule after Shidehara attempted to resign over difficulties within the government.²²⁶ Although MacArthur's threat was enough for Shidehara to rescind his

²²³ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," October 10, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 526, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d526>.

²²⁴ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," October 24, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 560, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d560>.

²²⁵ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," October 24, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 560, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d560>.

²²⁶ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "MacArthur 'Forced' Cabinet to Remain," January 14, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 9, BA8.

resignation, it emphasized the weakness of his Cabinet. Later, due to its conservative beliefs, the cabinet failed to properly address the need for constitutional revisions, only pushing for minor modifications.²²⁷ Despite the frustrations it caused, MacArthur still wanted the Cabinet in place, since it existed as a placeholder until proper elections could be held. Even when it caused difficulties for SCAP, MacArthur wanted it in place to provide some level of stability to the country. They held little power, and even the Japanese understood that this Cabinet would not last long. While a useful tool to ensure Japanese institutions remained in place, the Cabinet did not hold the political power or willingness necessary to help guide the Japanese people towards democracy.

The emperor, on the other hand, arguably held more power than he had previously, at least during the start of the occupation. He was one of the few people that the average citizen retained faith in, and he was no longer beholden to the military factions that had dominated Japan before and during the war. This allowed him to use the skills he had learned in his youth, before the military had seized complete power. During stay in England during his 1921 tour of Europe, Hirohito had been able to witness the public relation skills of King George V first-hand, which served as a significant lesson in how a constitutional monarch could exercise its soft power.²²⁸ This experience was vital in showing Hirohito how to navigate this new climate. As SCAP directly referenced the British monarch in clarifying the emperor's new role, Hirohito's time learning from George V proved to be invaluable.²²⁹ It was those lessons that showed him how to properly assist SCAP in connecting with the Japanese and, simultaneously, demonstrate

²²⁷ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 14, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

²²⁸ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 118-119.

²²⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Clarification of Authority," March 7, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 47, BB1.

to the Japanese that embracing democracy would be beneficial for them. While he was beholden to a new power – MacArthur and the rest of the Allies – SCAP’s choice to use Hirohito to connect to the population of Japan meant the lack of political power in Japan’s other institutions made the emperor even more effective in assisting MacArthur. Some American commentators had hoped that Japan’s defeat would help separate the people from Hirohito.²³⁰ However, as they soon found, the Allied victory had caused the exact opposite. By freeing Hirohito from the military’s influence, the Americans had enabled him to begin acting as a true constitutional monarch, connecting with and guiding his people without directly controlling them.

While any institutional power the emperor wielded before or during the war was essentially gutted by the occupation, the soft power Hirohito wielded – his influence over the Japanese people – made him exceedingly effective at pushing the United States’ foreign policy goals for Japan. Unlike the rest of Japan’s leadership, Hirohito lost no prestige in the face of defeat.²³¹ If anything, his pivotal role in making the decision to surrender actually increased the Japanese people’s respect for their emperor. Although some SCAP officials, including Acheson, strongly disliked the idea of retaining the emperor through the beginning of 1946, his usefulness in assisting the occupation was well-known.²³² He could evoke the obedience of officials and regular citizens with ease, and as Acheson admitted, Hirohito was “seemingly more anxious to

²³⁰ Hal Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II,” *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 7, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

²³¹ Report on Allied Occupation Problems and Policy in Japan, “The Emperor,” in *Situation in Japan; future of the Emperor and revision of Constitution; Allied occupation problems; organisation of Japanese government during occupation. Code 23 File 95 (to paper 749)* (Government Papers, The National Archives, Kew, 1946), 66, http://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/FO_371_54126.

²³² “The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to President Truman,” January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

be democratic than some of the people around him.”²³³ This was clearly seen in the lead-up to Japan’s first election after enfranchisement had been increased. He strongly urged his people to vote, calling on all voters – including women, who had previously been unable to vote – to demonstrate their desires through voting.²³⁴ This election saw an unexpectedly large number of women voting, as well as an unprecedented number of male voters counted at every polling station across the country.²³⁵ Japan saw a turnout rate of 65-70%, just months into SCAP’s occupation. Considering the fondness that the Japanese people held for Hirohito, his urging indisputably impacted the turnout. These democratic processes were a stark contrast to the system the Japanese people were used to, but the genuine endorsement from Hirohito encouraged people who had never been able to vote previously to exercise this new right.

Considering one of the goals at this point was to essentially indoctrinate the Japanese population using prominent figures, Hirohito’s soft power and his sincere dedication to establishing democracy made him an excellent candidate to help guide the Japanese people in the direction SCAP wanted. As discussed by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East, the occupation enacted a broad policy of complete reeducation of the entire Japanese through schools, media, and prominent leaders.²³⁶ This was meant to increase the population’s likelihood of adapting democratic ideals, essentially convincing them to embrace reform without SCAP needing to force those changes. It was Hirohito, however, that made these

²³³ “The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman,” January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

²³⁴ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Emperor ‘Commands’ Subjects to Vote,” April 10, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 71, BA1.

²³⁵ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Unexpected Turnout of Women,” April 10, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 71, BA4. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Broadcast Highlights,” April 11, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 72, A1.

²³⁶ “Report by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East,” January 8, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 119, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d119>.

changes possible without significant disturbance or protest during the first year, when the occupation was most at risk.²³⁷ By positioning Hirohito, the most recognizable figure in Japan and the only person with political power that the general public still trusted, in a central role, the occupation could show the Japanese people that even the emperor wanted the changes that were being enacted.

Although Hirohito's post-war position granted him a significant amount of political power purely due to his prominence in Japanese society and connection to the Japanese people, this soft power was limited. As Japan adjusted to the occupation and dealt with the devastation left by the war, reverence to the emperor slowly faded. Hirohito was still greatly respected, but his position as a pillar of Japanese society was slowly being dismantled by democratization efforts. By the time of his first birthday since the end of the war, April 29, 1946, such an event barely warranted a mention in the Japanese press.²³⁸ Considering his place in Japanese society, this was particularly surprising. By October 1946, MacArthur reasserted that, under Japan's new constitution, Hirohito was as open to criticism as anyone else.²³⁹ This new position for the emperor was codified when three charges of *lèse-majesté* were dropped, indicating to the Japanese people that they would no longer be punished if they spoke up against Hirohito. Although this specific change did not affect Hirohito's soft power directly, it did emphasize to the Japanese people that he was no longer the untouchable, divine figure that had presided over the nation before and during the war.

²³⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Respect for Emperor," August 19, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 9, Radio Report Number 164, BC3.

²³⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Press Plays Down Emperor's Birthday," April 30, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 85, BE4.

²³⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "MacArthur Defines Position of Emperor," October 10, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 12, Radio Report Number 202, BE1.

This new ability to criticize the emperor was best demonstrated in response to one of Hirohito's most significant blunders during the occupation period. As hunger in Japan continued to run rampant, with food production consistently failing to meet demands, some Japanese people began protesting their conditions.²⁴⁰ Hirohito, as SCAP's connection to the Japanese public, was asked to intervene. His speech, in which he urged his people to share with others to get through the difficult time, was poorly received, with some pointing out that "although we want to share with others, we have nothing to share."²⁴¹ Although he had meant to urge the public to demonstrate the same tenacity that they had during the war, his word choice failed to connect properly. This event helped demonstrate to his people that Hirohito was human and capable of making mistakes, just like any of them. For some, this may have helped increase the connection they felt toward their emperor. Disappointment, however, was the most common reaction to his speech.

One of the most important reasons why Hirohito was so useful to the Allied forces in Japan was because, besides being the last remaining source of political power outside the occupation, the Japanese people were thoroughly disillusioned with any leadership besides the emperor. The aftermath of the war had led to a general sense of disillusionment with the political leaderships and institutions that had led to the conflict.²⁴² Hirohito, however, was the exception to this. It was the emperor who was credited with the end of the war, after years of inaction and

²⁴⁰ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 40.

²⁴¹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Reactions of Common People Described," May 27, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 5, Radio Report Number 104, BC4-BC6.

²⁴² Robert E. Ward, "The American Occupation of Japan: Political Retrospect," in *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View*, ed. Grant K. Goodman (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies, 1968), 7.

continued aggression from the government.²⁴³ Even though it was years until Hirohito was willing to intervene, either because he lacked the power previously or due to his desire to support the Japanese people, he was lauded for his part in ending the war. Of the political parties that rose to prominence in the early months, it was only the Communists that sought to abolish the emperor institution.²⁴⁴ However, based on Atcheson's analysis at the beginning of 1946, the Communists held beliefs too extreme for the Japanese people, especially when it came to the future of the emperor. While there was "wide and outspoken criticism of the men who misled them and brought disaster" to Japan throughout the general public, most did not blame the emperor for their position, and continued to have a positive view of Hirohito.²⁴⁵ Responsibility for the war rested solely in the hands of the people the Allies blamed. While there were some countries that did extend that blame towards the emperor, like New Zealand and Australia, the United States was the primary driving force of the occupation. They continued to present Hirohito as the benevolent figurehead who had done what he could to return Japan on the path towards democracy, which protected him from being targeted. Even after the people directly responsible for the war were removed from power, there remained a distinct dissonance between the government and the rest of the country; while the government focused entirely on trying to appease the Allies and end the occupation as soon as possible, the public was more concerned with the widespread food shortage.²⁴⁶ Not only had they finally escaped years of war caused by

²⁴³ Lindesay Parrott, "Prestige of Emperor Among Japanese Rises: Hirohito Gets the Credit for Having Brought the War to a Close," *New York Times*, October 28, 1945, E5, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/prestige-emperor-among-japanese-rises/docview/107084491/se-2?accountid=10559>.

²⁴⁴ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

²⁴⁵ "Memorandum by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson)," November 6, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 700, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d700>.

²⁴⁶ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State," October 24, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI

the government, but when peace had finally been obtained – although through an occupation – the government ignored the people’s needs in favor of giving the Allies what they wanted. However, as distrust in the Japanese government flourished, “the fundamental attachment of the masses for the Emperor remains as strong today [February 11, 1946] as in the past.”²⁴⁷ Considering the American plans to reach the Japanese people through Hirohito, maintaining the emperor’s cooperation was vital for the occupation reaching its goals.

Throughout the occupation, Hirohito was exceedingly supportive of MacArthur and the occupying forces. In practice, his position was essentially the same as it was during the war; as he had been a tool of the military, he was similarly beholden to SCAP.²⁴⁸ However, there was one vitally different change between the two regimes that drastically affected how Hirohito responded. Unlike with the military during the war, the emperor actively championed the direction that SCAP was taking his country. This meant that, even if he held no tangible power over decision-making, he could honestly discuss his beliefs and show why he supported the changes being made. While the first governments in place during the occupation were incompetent at best and filled with deeply entrenched elements stalling progress when possible, the emperor accepted the changes as they came, and even occasionally attempted to help without prompting from MacArthur. When the imperial family was stripped of its financial assets in early 1947, the emperor reportedly accepted the dissolution of his family’s wealth with

(Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 560, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d560>.

²⁴⁷ “Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, to the Secretary of State,” February 11, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 142, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d142>.

²⁴⁸ Report on Allied Occupation Problems and Policy in Japan, “The Emperor,” in *Situation in Japan; future of the Emperor and revision of Constitution; Allied occupation problems; organisation of Japanese government during occupation. Code 23 File 95 (to paper 749)*, (Government Papers, The National Archives, Kew, 1946), 63, http://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/FO_371_54126.

dignity.²⁴⁹ Even through the erasure of his family's wealth, Hirohito remained cooperative. While he did not have any choice but to accept whatever terms were presented – otherwise he would have lost what protection MacArthur's favor offered – he presented no resistance to the complete transformation of the emperor institution that took place, even offering to take things further without prompting.

Even if he had not actively supported the changes being enacted by SCAP, Hirohito likely would have complied with its wishes. Since birth, he had cultivated a strong sense of moral obligation to his ancestors.²⁵⁰ Hirohito's ancestors were the source of his family's legacy and the prestige it held. By cooperating with the Allies, he was able to protect that legacy and avoid risks to the emperor institution. This did require some sacrifices, although many of them seemed to line up with the emperor's own beliefs. Famously, Hirohito denied the long-emphasized belief that the imperial family was divine in nature, just as the occupation began to do away with the distance that had long been in place between the emperor institution and the public.²⁵¹ In the first months of the occupation, Hirohito even expressed a strong willingness to abdicate and likely remove the emperor institution as he did so.²⁵² Whether this was due to his desire to protect his family's legacy or because of his personal convictions and belief in SCAP's objectives, the result was the same. Especially compared to the struggles SCAP had with the rest

²⁴⁹ According to some reports, this was a voluntary decision to enhance his popular appeal. "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff," January 30, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 178, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d178>. Hugh H. Smythe and Masaharu Watanabe, "Japanese Popular Attitudes Toward the Emperor," *Pacific Affairs* 26, no. 4 (December 1953): 336, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752870>.

²⁵⁰ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 38.

²⁵¹ "Report by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East," April 13, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 181, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d181>.

²⁵² "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," November 5, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 593, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d593>.

of the governmental institutions of Japan, Hirohito proved to be exceptionally cooperative, to the point where he readily moved away from both personal authority and the legacy of his family.

In the earliest days of the occupation, optics were vital in establishing MacArthur's position. By securing Hirohito's support, SCAP could ensure a population that was relatively receptive to Allied reform measures if the emperor remained secure. However, it was important to establish early on that it was the Allies that remained in charge even as they used Hirohito and the Japanese government to enact their policies. In part, this was done in subtle ways. From the start of his time in Japan, MacArthur was guarded by the Japanese with the same level of care that they would normally give the emperor.²⁵³ By positioning Hirohito as subservient to MacArthur, the occupation forces were able to implicitly reassert to the Japanese people that MacArthur held unquestionable power over the fate of Japan moving forward. Soon after the occupation began, MacArthur rejected a call from the emperor.²⁵⁴ As MacArthur was preoccupied with overseeing the subjugation and complete demilitarization of Japan, answering Hirohito's call was likely not a priority for him in the moment. However, the unintentional snub was soon capitalized on by Acheson, who urged MacArthur to not return the call. While he acknowledged that doing so would cause the emperor to "lose face" – and that the Japanese people believed the same – Acheson argued that such humiliation was "not necessarily undesirable" from their perspective.²⁵⁵ By not answering Hirohito when the emperor called, SCAP signaled that diplomatic formalities were tertiary to occupation objectives. If

²⁵³ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 308.

²⁵⁴ "Memorandum by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan," October 13, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 536, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d536>.

²⁵⁵ "Memorandum by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan," October 13, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 536, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d536>.

considerations were given to Hirohito, they were only at SCAP's convenience. The emperor may have been an important figure in the early stages of the occupation, but the political power he held was limited to what MacArthur and the Allies allowed.

Although it seemed politically prudent to Acheson for MacArthur to ignore Hirohito's call, it was necessary for the two powerful men to meet eventually, particularly if SCAP was to use the emperor to assist with its goals. At first, MacArthur's staff urged him to summon Hirohito as a show of power.²⁵⁶ MacArthur, however, disagreed. He believed that such a move would enrage the Japanese people, particularly those who still believed Hirohito to be descended from divinity. Instead, MacArthur chose to wait until Hirohito reached out again. Hirohito, concerned about the treatment of his people and the future of Japan and his own position, soon requested the meeting, which was set for September 27, 1945.²⁵⁷ Upon his arrival to the American Embassy, where the meeting took place, Hirohito looked lost among the stone-faced American soldiers.²⁵⁸ When he and MacArthur greeted each other, the Supreme Commander remained stoic and professional. To see the people who were in control of Japan's future greet Hirohito without the decorum he was used to as emperor likely heightened his anxieties over what the meeting held.²⁵⁹ This first discussion between MacArthur and Hirohito helped define the entire occupation period.

Prior to the meeting itself, a quick photograph of the two legendary figures was captured, shocking the Japanese public. For such a momentous occasion, the fact that a photo was taken

²⁵⁶ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 287.

²⁵⁷ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 143.

²⁵⁸ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 144-145.

²⁵⁹ Hirohito was so nervous that he was trembling much of the time, even refusing coffee when he was offered, due to his anxiety over the meeting. Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 146.

was unsurprising. However, based on the photo and reports of Hirohito's conduct toward MacArthur, the Japanese people were left with the distinct impression that their divine emperor had submitted to MacArthur. This was the exact effect SCAP wanted. By documenting the stark contrast between the uncomfortable, formally dressed emperor and MacArthur, who wore casual clothes and a relaxed demeanor, SCAP had created visual confirmation of Hirohito's subservience to MacArthur.²⁶⁰ Their difference in posture perfectly represented each nation's post-war position: Hirohito as the nervous, defeated nation and MacArthur as the confident victor.²⁶¹ For those who clung to the belief that Japan had not truly lost as long as the emperor remained, this was a harsh reality check. Hirohito may have still occupied the throne, but it was MacArthur who indisputably ruled Japan.

Unsurprisingly, considering the years spent emphasizing Hirohito's divinity, Japan's government did not react well to the publication of this humiliating image. Used to having full control over media in Japan, the government initially sought to ban the photo's publication because of the disturbing implications of its imagery.²⁶² At first, the photograph was conspicuously absent from stories in Japanese newspapers discussing the meeting. After SCAP protested the attempt to hide the image, three newspapers did publish a censored version of the picture.²⁶³ However, Home Minister Yamazaki Iwao intervened and seized all copies of the

²⁶⁰ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 236. Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 145. Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 549-550.

²⁶¹ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 324, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

²⁶² "The Emperor Bows: To American Victors," *New York Times*, September 30, 1945, 71, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/emperor-bows/docview/107213687/se-2?accountid=10559>. Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 324, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

²⁶³ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 324-325, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

papers, once again attempting to prevent the image's circulation. This forced SCAP to take a more direct approach. It ordered that the photo be printed, and fully stripped any remaining powers Japan's government had to control Japanese media. The Japanese government believed that the photograph would have a detrimental effect on the nation, but SCAP was adamant in providing the Japanese people with physical proof both of Hirohito's humanity and his subservience to MacArthur.

Although most of the attention in the aftermath of the meeting, at least in Japan, focused on the photograph between the two men, the meeting itself had the most significant impact on the future of the occupation. If it had went poorly, the entire foundation of SCAP's plan to use Hirohito to help connect to the rest of Japan would have been ruined. The exact events of the meeting were shrouded in mystery, due to the lack of an official record.²⁶⁴ Whatever was discussed remained between the two men and a single translator, although based on their demeanor, the outcome was a positive one. Before the meeting, MacArthur believed that the emperor was going to plead his case against being tried as a war criminal.²⁶⁵ However, as he revealed when discussing the meeting afterwards, the opposite was true. A visibly nervous Hirohito had come to place the blame of Japan's conduct during the war entirely on his own shoulders.²⁶⁶ It was his hope, according to MacArthur, that his people would escape a harsher punishment if he were to offer himself as tribute, even if it meant his own execution. Accounts from Japanese sources contradict this claim.²⁶⁷ In a *New York Times* interview prior to the meeting, Hirohito had placed most of the blame on Tojo. If he had planned on offering himself to

²⁶⁴ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 323, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

²⁶⁵ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 152.

²⁶⁶ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 288.

²⁶⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 236.

MacArthur, there was no reason for him to create any doubt in his sincerity. Regardless of the actual content of the meeting, both men seemed to be pleased with the outcome, with MacArthur letting Hirohito know that he was always welcome to make suggestions regarding Japan's reconstruction.²⁶⁸ This meeting had helped establish a mutual relationship of deep respect between the two leaders. For SCAP, it also helped secure Hirohito's cooperation throughout the occupation. Even if MacArthur had exaggerated the emperor's willingness to accept responsibility for the war, the meeting had left him with the impression that Hirohito would be willing to work with the Americans.²⁶⁹ It was MacArthur's belief, based on that first meeting, that the emperor had "a more thorough grasp of the democratic concept than almost any Japanese with whom I talked."²⁷⁰ Hirohito, meanwhile, was reassured that the Americans would treat his people with respect and dignity as they enacted their democratization efforts. For both parties, the meeting concluded as ideally as possible.

²⁶⁸ "M' Arthur Pleased Hirohito, Aide Says: Japanese Spokesman Declares General Now Is Expected to Call on Emperor," *New York Times*, October 2, 1945, 5, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/marthur-pleased-hirohito-aide-says/docview/107176174/se-2?accountid=10559>.

²⁶⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 236.

²⁷⁰ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 288.

Chapter 8: Democratizing Japan through Hirohito

Despite his position as one of the last monarchs to retain the title “emperor” and the legacy of his position as that of a living god, Hirohito was surprisingly supportive of democratic encroachment in Japan. Multiple Japanese officials interviewed by SCAP at the beginning of the occupation argued that the emperor had tried to avoid war before it happened and pushed for peace as soon as he was able.²⁷¹ Toshio Shiratori, an ex-diplomat waiting to be tried for war crimes, revealed that he had known of Hirohito’s love of peace from his time working with the emperor sixteen years prior.²⁷² He had seen firsthand the emperor’s distrust of the militarists, and his personal dislike for dressing as a military leader. Shiratori’s retelling was accompanied by a plea to the public in favor of keeping the emperor system, meaning that his primary reasoning for mentioning this anecdote was to help defend Hirohito’s position. However, that does not mean the story was pure fabrication. Similar narratives were heard from almost every person who interacted with the emperor, from his childhood through the occupation.

Even if Shiratori had exaggerated somewhat, the underlying theme of Hirohito’s distaste for the militaristic aspects of Japan leading up to the war were consistent. According to an interview with Prince Konoye which detailed the political developments leading up to and following his resignation as Prime Minister, Hirohito expressed a strong desire to avoid war and

²⁷¹ “Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Max W. Bishop of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan,” November 9, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 488, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d488>. “Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan,” November 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 702, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d702>.

²⁷² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Emperor’s Interest in Peace,” March 20, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 3, Radio Report Number 56, G3.

negotiate with the United States to Tojo, Konoye's successor.²⁷³ However, as Japan drifted closer towards war and the military dominated the government, Hirohito was unable to voice his true beliefs unless he wished to risk his own life.²⁷⁴ Two administrations later, Suzuki was in power and Hirohito finally felt safe expressing his true feelings.²⁷⁵ According to Sakomizu Hisatsune, the Chief Secretary of the Suzuki Cabinet, it was Hirohito who was responsible for attempts to open communications with the Allies in search of peace, requesting that steps be taken to end the war during an Imperial Conference.²⁷⁶ While it is possible that both Konoye and Sakomizu were attempting to protect the emperor from Allied prosecution, their admissions did line up with MacArthur's impressions of the situation, and would help explain the extent to which Hirohito was willing to help the occupation. Powerless to stop the war until it was too late, the occupation provided Hirohito with an opportunity to guide his country towards peace and democracy.

After the war ended, the emperor continued to show a similar love of peace and democracy, which played directly into the hands of SCAP. Their entire purpose for keeping Hirohito in his position was to use him as a conduit to spread democracy. If he did so on his own, without pressure from the occupying forces, it would only come across as more genuine. In part,

²⁷³ "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan," November 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 702, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d702>.

²⁷⁴ "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Chief of Staff, United States Army (Eisenhower)," January 15, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 308, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d308>.

²⁷⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Max W. Bishop of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan," November 9, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 488, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d488>. As Suzuki had been the Emperor's Aide-de-Camp from 1930 to 1936 and a personal friend to Hirohito, it was unlikely Suzuki would act against Hirohito regardless of the views expressed.

²⁷⁶ This conference was attended by the Prime Minister, the War Minister, the Navy Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Chief of Staff for the Army, and the Chief of Staff for the Navy.

this was achieved simply by being more visible to his people. His renunciation of the emperor's divinity was a significant step toward democratization, as it led to free discussion of the Tenno system.²⁷⁷ However, he did not stop there. Hirohito made an active effort to tour Japan and witness first-hand the damage that was dealt during the war, as well as the struggles that the everyday Japanese citizen was dealing with. He also disregarded the military attired and more traditional dress code of previous emperors, instead choosing to wear civilian attire.²⁷⁸ In doing so, he was presenting himself to the Japanese people as a fellow human, rather than the divine figure they had always believed the emperor to be.

Hirohito's enthusiastic support of the constitutional revisions also demonstrates his dedication toward democracy. On March 5, 1946, the emperor gave a rescript announcing his desire that the constitution should be revised, echoing what had happened decades prior in the lead-up to the Meiji Constitution.²⁷⁹ The next day, an outline of the finalized draft, heavily influenced by MacArthur, was presented to the Japanese public. As Hirohito had known that the draft was being prepared, the quick succession of these events indicated that his rescript was meant to broach the topic to the Japanese people before the draft was released. By showing his support, the emperor could guarantee an enthusiastic response from his people, who still looked to him for guidance. Once the revisions were announced publicly, he immediately voiced his support, despite knowing that the power of his position would be almost completely stripped

²⁷⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "A New Constitution," March 18, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 3, Radio Report Number 54, BD3.

²⁷⁸ This also lends some credibility to Shiratori's claims, since Hirohito's distaste for military attire was central to his account. Clinton Green, "Hirohito to Visit Subjects on Tour; Will Appear Only in Civilian Attire," *New York Times*, February 19, 1946, 12, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-visit-subjects-on-tour-will-appear-only/docview/107411420/se-2?accountid=10559>.

²⁷⁹ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 19-20, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>. United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 21.

away.²⁸⁰ Although his support made the process significantly easier, Hirohito's advocacy was unnecessary. He had been a vital part of the occupation's plan to ensure a peaceful surrender, but at this point, the Japanese people had already accepted their new position. Risk of an armed uprising was almost nonexistent, especially after the disarmament program was completed. Despite being in a position to push for constitutional revision without him, SCAP still worked with Hirohito to achieve its goals. This was likely due to MacArthur's impression that he had a better grasp on democracy than most. Because SCAP trusted Hirohito to speak honestly about his desires regarding the democratization of Japan, he was given a pivotal role in announcing the revised constitution. When the new constitution finally took effect, the emperor was reportedly "feeling happiness more than any one of the people."²⁸¹ After years of war and military control, Japan was finally on the road toward peace and democratization.

Particularly when it came to convincing the Japanese public to accept the new constitution, Hirohito showed his strong desire for democratic reforms. While his position as SCAP's connection to the Japanese people necessitated his involvement, the emperor's support far exceeded the actions of someone who did not believe in what they were fighting for. In the initial announcement to the public that the constitution was being revised, Hirohito strongly urged the Japanese government to do whatever necessary to see the revisions completed. He also appealed to the Japanese people directly, presenting the new constitution as the best way to

²⁸⁰ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 300. "Press Release Issued by General Headquarters, United States Army Forces, Pacific, at Tokyo, March 6, 1946," March 6, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 162, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d162>. "Memorandum by Mr. William J. Sebald, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan," March 12, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 164, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d164>.

²⁸¹ Foreign Broadcast Information Service, "Entrance of Emperor," November 4, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 13, Radio Report Number 219, BA1.

achieve Japan's "strong consciousness of justice, its aspirations to live a peaceful life and promote cultural enlightenment and its firm resolve to renounce war and to foster friendship with all the countries of the world."²⁸² By appealing to Japanese ideals, with a particular emphasis on the hopes of a war weary population to avoid another conflict, the emperor simultaneously endorsed a revised constitution and again presented democracy as the way towards lasting peace. Partially because of his support, there was almost unanimous agreement to support the new constitution among the budding political parties, apart from the Communist Party. By actively supporting democratic measures, even when they meant a reduction in power for the emperor institution, Hirohito had a significant impact both on the development of Japan and the success of occupation goals.

The constitutional revisions, while prominent, were only one example of Hirohito's support for SCAP reforms. Throughout the early occupation, the emperor subtly influenced his people into accepting various democratic changes. Those who Hirohito saw as detrimental to reforms, like Higashikuni, were urged to step down in favor of officials who were more willing to enact change.²⁸³ When he was able to more directly ask the Japanese people to support reforms, such as the expanded voter enfranchisement, he acted without hesitation. His clear willingness to participate in political and social liberalization was visible enough to wane the animosity of the American public.²⁸⁴ Hirohito's support was most visible in his personal life. As reported by New York Times foreign correspondent Lindsay Parrott, the emperor was finally

²⁸² "Press Release Issued by General Headquarters, United States Army Forces, Pacific, at Tokyo, March 6, 1946," March 6, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 162, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d162>.

²⁸³ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 293.

²⁸⁴ Hal Brands, "The Emperor's New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II," *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 9, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

able to relax and truly enjoy himself after renouncing his divinity.²⁸⁵ After years of living under a system that treated him as a god-emperor and used him as justification for aggressive action, the occupation had provided him the opportunity to return to a role similar to what he had been trained for in his youth. The emperor had also personally requested that his son was taught English by an American.²⁸⁶ Practicality likely played a role in this decision, as Japan had found itself tied to the United States for the foreseeable future. However, most assessments of the occupation concluded that it would not last long. The fact that Hirohito still sought out an English tutor for his son indicated that he hoped to continue cultivating a close relationship with the Americans, even after the occupation ended. If he had not supported the changes brought by the occupation, he would not have done this. While some Allies still believed he deserved to be tried as a war criminal, the success SCAP saw through the approval of a revised Japanese constitution was dependent on the emperor's support.

In his most significant contribution to the democratization process, Hirohito officially renounced the idea that Japan's emperor was a divine being during his New Years Rescript on January 1, 1946.²⁸⁷ This simple act helped to destroy any remaining vestiges of State Shinto, which emphasized Japan's emperor as the direct descendant of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. In doing so, Hirohito helped shatter any remaining connections to the militarist regime that controlled Japan throughout the war, as they had used State Shinto to justify and strengthen their

²⁸⁵ Lindesay Parrott, "At Long Last Hirohito Begins to Enjoy Life: Japan's once-divine Emperor 'romps today with what might even pass for abandon.'" *New York Times*, May 12, 1946, 95, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/at-long-last-hirohito-begins-enjoy-life/docview/107784261/se-2?accountid=10559>.

²⁸⁶ "U.S. Woman To Teach Hirohito Son English," *New York Times*, April 5, 1946, 5, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/u-s-woman-teach-hirohito-son-english/docview/107435455/se-2?accountid=10559>.

²⁸⁷ For the full text of this Rescript, see "Text of Hirohito New Year Rescript," *New York Times*, January 1, 1946, 15, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/text-hirohito-new-year-rescript/docview/107552831/se-2?accountid=10559>.

aggression. For some people, this announcement had little effect. Even if Hirohito denied his divinity, the rescript did not dispute the unbroken nature of his family line.²⁸⁸ Because his family had continued to rule over Japan for centuries, it did not necessarily matter whether they were descendants of Amaterasu; the emperor's family had always ruled Japan, and they always would. However, the New Years Rescript did significantly contribute to the humanization of the emperor for a vast majority of the Japanese population.²⁸⁹ For SCAP, this was vital in reconstructing Hirohito as a symbol of the people, rather than the mysterious icon he had been during the war. Following his announcement, people were shocked to see Hirohito in a suit, much more casual than the ceremonial robes in which they were accustomed to seeing him.²⁹⁰ In the immediate aftermath of the rescript, this helped solidify Hirohito's humanity more than his own words, particularly because some were left with the impression that the speech had been ordered by SCAP.

The belief that SCAP persuaded Hirohito to renounce his divinity was not unfounded. MacArthur claimed that he had not suggested or discussed the matter with anyone beforehand.²⁹¹ However, considering the lengths to which the Japanese were attempting to appease the Americans, it was unlikely that Hirohito would have made such a drastic announcement without at least cursory approval from SCAP. Some have argued that SCAP had urged Hirohito to renounce his divinity, with the actual wording of the rescript receiving direct input from SCAP

²⁸⁸ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 362.

²⁸⁹ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 360, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

²⁹⁰ Lindsay Parrott, "Japanese Feel Closer to Hirohito Now That Divinity Fence Is Down: Most Persons Amazed, However, at First New Year's Picture of Emperor in Civilian, and Not Regal, Attire," *New York Times*, January 3, 1946, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/japanese-feel-closer-hirohito-now-that-divinity/docview/107627885/se-2?accountid=10559>.

²⁹¹ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 311.

staff working with the emperor's advisors.²⁹² Most of the doubt toward Hirohito's sincerity resides in the alleged edits his advisors made at the end of this process, particularly regarding the start of the rescript. This portion directly referenced the Meiji Charter Oath, which introduced the first hints of democratic ideals to Japan. For those who believed this was meant to emphasize the union of democracy and the monarchy since the Meiji period, this addition was meant to undercut the intended renouncement of Hirohito's divinity.²⁹³ If this was the intent of Hirohito's advisors, they failed. The Japanese public universally understood the New Years Rescript to be a renunciation of the emperor's divinity.²⁹⁴ More importantly, the references made to the Meiji Charter Oath clearly emphasized the democratic ideal that the document had intended to introduce. SCAP may have had some influence on the New Years Rescript, but the primary factor in this monumental event was Hirohito's own innate belief in democracy and his own humanity.

Although the emperor was forced to reassert the divine myth throughout his entire life leading up to the New Years Rescript, this was primarily an act. Since his youth, he had known that the emperor was not the divine figure most of Japan believed him to be.²⁹⁵ During one of his classes on Japanese History, he informed his tutor of his belief. Although Hirohito's father instructed Kimmochi Saionji, one of his most trusted advisors, to persuade Hirohito to follow tradition, Saionji failed. All he could elicit was a promise from the young Hirohito to keep his disbelief to himself. Regardless of the reaction from the court, his disbelief was unsurprising.

²⁹² Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 157-158. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 237.

²⁹³ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 329, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

²⁹⁴ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "New Changes Expected from Rescript," January 5, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 3, BB1.

²⁹⁵ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 36-37.

Even people who were not exposed to the intimate workings of the imperial family did not fully believe the emperor was divine.²⁹⁶ For the educated, at least, believing in the emperor's divinity was primarily an act, reinforced by an autocratic system that prevented outspoken criticism of the throne until after the war.

This act extended to the emperor, as well. Hirohito's belief in his own humanity continued throughout his life.²⁹⁷ Biology was one of the few hobbies the emperor retained, even at the height of the war. In studying science, he likely came to understand more of his family's origin that called into question the mythology surrounding their divine ancestry.²⁹⁸ This was corroborated by Shinjiro Yamamoto, one-time tutor of Hirohito, who confided to Leopold Tibesar, a Catholic priest who had spent much of the war defending Japanese Americans throughout the internment period, that he wished he was free to discuss what Hirohito thought of his own divinity.²⁹⁹ Based on the context of their conversation, Tibesar believed that this was an indication that Hirohito did not seriously believe the myths surrounding his family. Considering Hirohito's history of skepticism toward his divinity, the New Years Rescript was likely the result of an intersection of desires between the emperor and SCAP's goals. For SCAP, such a rescript would shock the Japanese people out of the beliefs that had led them to wholeheartedly support militarist aggression throughout the war. For Hirohito, assenting to the request meant he could finally free himself of the shackles of divinity while, simultaneously, urging his people toward democratization.

²⁹⁶ As one teacher at a Tokyo university mentioned, belief in the emperor's divinity was as genuine as the American belief in Santa Clause. Leopold H. Tibesar, "Hirohito: Man, Emperor, 'Divinity'," *The Review of Politics* 7, no. 4 (October 1945): 498-499, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1404070>.

²⁹⁷ Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 87, 156-157.

²⁹⁸ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 62.

²⁹⁹ Leopold H. Tibesar, "Hirohito: Man, Emperor, 'Divinity'," *The Review of Politics* 7, no. 4 (October 1945): 498, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1404070>.

Chapter 9: Japanese Progress

While Hirohito played a vital part in enacting United States policy in Japan during the early occupation, he was not the only member of the larger imperial family directly involved. Prince Konoye, the Prime Minister of Japan that led the country towards their involvement in the Second World War, also sought to assist MacArthur whenever possible, primarily through constitutional reform. By the beginning of October, MacArthur had discussed with Prince Konoye the necessity of revising the constitution.³⁰⁰ Although MacArthur was forced to distance himself from Konoye over his ties to Japan's earlier aggression, this meeting helped jump-start the constitutional revisions.³⁰¹ At his own volition, Konoye reached out to Acheson for advice on what exactly should be addressed in the constitutional revisions, and asserted that he would be actively working for revisions that would meet the requirements of the occupation. Soon after, Hirohito placed Konoye in a position where he could actively focus on the revisions, assisted by constitutional experts.³⁰² Konoye did seek more direct advice on what should be changed but, outside some general unofficial guidelines given to him by Acheson, the Japanese were left to consider revisions on their own. However, by early November, MacArthur ordered SCAP to refrain from guiding the course of the revisions.³⁰³ This led to some significant confusion in the

³⁰⁰ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," October 10, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 524, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d524>.

³⁰¹ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 13, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

³⁰² "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," October 12, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 533, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d533>.

³⁰³ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson)," November 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 599, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d599>. "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," November 8, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The

process, as SCAP simultaneously refrained from interfering with constitutional revisions while also having specific ideas for what the end product should look like. While Konoye's role in the constitutional revisions was cut short after his suicide in December 1945, his involvement further emphasizes the willingness of some of the people in power to assist the Allied occupation.³⁰⁴ Konoye may have been attempting to make up for his role in guiding Japan towards war, but regardless of his reasoning he sincerely sought to enact changes that would appease the occupation.

SCAP's handling of the early attempts at constitutional reform represent a surprising lack of understanding towards the remaining Japanese leadership but did show the Americans that more direct influence was necessary to enact the reforms they wanted. Once the Japanese had settled into the reality of their occupation, the more politically minded ones sought constitutional reforms sooner rather than later.³⁰⁵ They believed that some level of reform was going to be required by the Americans and decided to plan accordingly. Considering Acheson believed constitutional revision was "one of the most vitally important questions" that the occupying forces needed to address, this reaction was unsurprising.³⁰⁶ However, enthusiasm for change did

British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 600, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d600>.

³⁰⁴ As Konoye's suicide took place during the last American call for alleged war criminals to turn themselves in, it is likely that he was concerned that he would be targeted as a war criminal due to his actions leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, including his involvement in the Japanese invasion of China. However, SCAP only wanted him as a witness. Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 367.

³⁰⁵ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Secretary of State," October 4, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 518, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d518>.

³⁰⁶ Although constitutional revision was not listed among the five fundamental reforms that MacArthur gave to the Japanese government, Acheson's influence with MacArthur led to the revisions being treated as a mandatory reform. Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 11, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>. "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson), November 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 599, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d599>.

not mean cohesion in the thoughts of both parties regarding what changes were to be made. Prince Konoye, in his attempts to assist with the constitutional reform, failed to fully understand what changes were necessary to meet the occupation's goals. The angle taken by his committee was one that would have perpetuated the imperial system, ultimately stifling development of a free and democratic government.³⁰⁷ Similarly, the conservative Cabinet was hesitant to accept any provisions that would strip the emperor of his power.³⁰⁸ Although this desire was deflated by Hirohito's later denial of the emperor's divinity undercut many of the theological arguments for his constitutional power, the cabinet's disconnect with what SCAP wanted in late 1945 emphasized the division between the two. This impasse needed to be overcome if constitutional revisions were going to occur. However, just as Konoye's committee was evaluating their position on constitutional questions, MacArthur ordered SCAP officials to refrain from assisting the Japanese. In part, this was because the American government had directly told MacArthur to let the Japanese decide on constitutional revisions.³⁰⁹ MacArthur, as usual, chose to ignore these orders. Although he did eventually remove SCAP influence from the Japanese revision attempts, this was primarily because of internal political considerations. By offering any more input on the committee's progress, MacArthur risked providing Konoye political capital, and opened the occupation up to criticism on the grounds of being too directly involved in Japanese political reform.³¹⁰ By remaining ostensibly uninvolved in the process, the optics would be that the

³⁰⁷ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson), November 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 599, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d599>.

³⁰⁸ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 42.

³⁰⁹ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 11-12, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

³¹⁰ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson), November 7, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 599,

Japanese moving towards democracy on their own free will, with the occupation merely a presence to ensure they did not revert to hostility.

This lack of input, however, did not mean SCAP would accept the first reform attempt that the Japanese presented. As mentioned, Konoye's committee continued to retain an undemocratic perpetuation of the imperial system. Although it was initially believed that the system of imperial rule would "naturally" be discussed during the revisions, the people responsible for Japan's draft wanted Hirohito's status to remain "substantially unchanged."³¹¹ Specifically, Dr. Matsumoto Joji, the person officially assigned to draft a revision to the constitution, publicly stated twice that Articles 1 through 4 of the initial constitution would be preserved, ensuring that "there will be no change in the fundamental principle of the sovereignty and control of state affairs of the Emperor."³¹² While the Americans did see Hirohito as a useful ally in pacifying the Japanese people, allowing him to retain the special powers granted to him by those articles was antithetical to the goal of introducing democracy to Japan. As SCAP failed to guide Konoye's committee and refused to communicate the specific facets of change desired, MacArthur was left with the strong possibility that the Japanese government would end up presenting a draft revision that did not meet the occupation's requirements. When he saw their draft, the Supreme Commander was left with the impression that they had essentially re-written

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d599>. "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State," November 8, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 600, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d600>.

³¹¹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "New Changes Expected from Rescript," January 5, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 3, BB1. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Minor Change Seen in Emperor's Status," January 24, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 17, BB4.

³¹² "Memorandum by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson)," December 13, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 639, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d639>.

the old Meiji constitution but made it even more restrictive.³¹³ This finally forced MacArthur to realize that, at the time, the Japanese government was incapable of developing a constitution that adequately redefined the pre-existing power structure that the Americans wanted to change.³¹⁴ To prevent this draft from moving forward, Acheson suggested a more direct involvement yet again, requesting the establishment of a liaison with Matsumoto so he understood the specific desires of the Americans.³¹⁵ Preventing SCAP from providing input to Konoye had been a mistake. While MacArthur's reasoning was born from legitimate political concerns, the lack of communication led to a situation that could have been disastrous for the occupation, even if the emperor was uninterested in retaining the power originally granted to him by Japan's constitution.

With the proposed Japanese version of the constitution entirely unacceptable, MacArthur decided to exert his power as Supreme Commander to directly impose his own version of the revised constitution on Japan. Originally, the American government had ordered him to ensure that the revisions came directly from the Japanese, explicitly hoping to avoid an American-made draft.³¹⁶ He was once again reminded of this order in January 1946, along with a request to encourage the Japanese people to reform or abolish the emperor institution. However, in a theme that was consistent throughout the occupation, MacArthur only followed orders from Washington when they aligned with his own desires. Since constitutional revision had been entrusted to the Far Eastern Commission (FEC), if it had not been approved prior to their first

³¹³ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 300.

³¹⁴ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

³¹⁵ "Memorandum by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson)," December 13, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 639, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d639>.

³¹⁶ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 10-11, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

meeting in February 1946, MacArthur was working under a strict deadline to prevent Allied influence on the new constitution.³¹⁷ It was his belief that, if the FEC was allowed to dictate the new constitution, it would be less than charitable toward Hirohito's future.³¹⁸ Since his primary methods of handling the occupation and controlling the Japanese people relied on Hirohito remaining emperor and escaping a conviction for war crimes, this was unacceptable to MacArthur.

Due to the impending FEC meeting, MacArthur was working on a strict timeline. After laying out three non-negotiable principles for the new constitution, his subordinates in SCAP created the initial American-approved draft in one week.³¹⁹ These principles abolished both the feudal system and Japan's right to establish a military. More importantly for the occupation, however, MacArthur solidified Hirohito as Japan's Head of State, although still beholden to the will of the Japanese people. This guideline essentially eliminated any threat to the emperor institution, solidifying it if the Japanese people continued to support it. Although it was amended to make the system more democratic, completely stripping the emperor of any political power, it kept Hirohito in a position where he was able to assist SCAP as long as the occupation continued. When this draft, which made significantly more changes in comparison to the Matsumoto draft, was shown to the Cabinet, they were shocked.³²⁰ However, since it at least guaranteed the continued existence of the emperor institution, they were quick to accept it.

³¹⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 274-276.

³¹⁸ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 323, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

³¹⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 276. Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

³²⁰ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 337, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

Although they were allowed to introduce amendments to the MacArthur draft in the Diet, everyone involved with the process understood that accepting this version of the constitution was a demand, not a request.³²¹ Doing so was in direct breach of guidelines from Washington, but MacArthur succeeded in establishing a version of Japan's constitution that fulfilled his desires for the country.

One of the reasons why this draft was so quickly accepted was the alleged use of threats to Hirohito's future. According to Tatsuo Sato, an official in the Cabinet Legislation Bureau and Matsumoto's assistant in drafting a revised constitution, the chief of the Government Section at SCAP, Major-General Courtney Whitney, had informed Japan's Cabinet that the guaranteed safety of the emperor relied on the approval of MacArthur's draft.³²² Matsumoto corroborated this claim, adding that Whitney had warned that Hirohito would be tried as a war criminal if the draft was not accepted. Whitney, although acknowledging that he had threatened the Cabinet, claimed that he had only warned that he would take the MacArthur draft to the Japanese people, if the government did not accept it. Although there was some dispute regarding this particular threat, other evidence from Japanese officials does indicate enormous pressure put on the Cabinet to accept the draft. Kinoshita Michio, the Vice Grand Chamberlain, mentioned in his personal diary that the Americans had given the Cabinet an ultimatum: accept the MacArthur draft or they could not guarantee the "person of the emperor."³²³ Kinoshita indicated that this was due to MacArthur's desire to avoid Hirohito's abdication and quell international opposition

³²¹ It was these amendments that eventually allowed the creation of Japan's Self-Defense Force. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 279-280. Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

³²² Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

³²³ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 323, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

to the emperor system. Considering MacArthur's dedication to keeping Hirohito in a position where he could be useful to SCAP, this was likely a bluff meant to convince the Cabinet to support the MacArthur Draft quickly, before the FEC could intervene. However, it does indicate a willingness from MacArthur and SCAP to use threats in order to achieve their desired goals. As the occupation continued, Hirohito's precarious positioning remained a reminder to the Japanese that orders from MacArthur could not be circumvented.

Primarily because the intervention from MacArthur in the drafting process went against orders from Washington, he attempted to distance himself from claims of direct involvement. According to his account, MacArthur merely directed his staff to assist and advise the Japanese in creating an acceptable draft.³²⁴ If this were the case, it would have addressed the primary reason why the Matsumoto draft was unacceptable to SCAP. However, the quickness with which the new draft was created and the fact that the State Department only learned about the new draft when it was published in the Japanese newspapers indicated that MacArthur and SCAP had more direct involvement than he later claimed.³²⁵ Knowing that Washington would not approve of a constitution that was essentially American-made, MacArthur allowed some subtle changes to make it more Japanese in character.³²⁶ Overall, these changes created a final product that was more conservative in nature, but MacArthur's primary demands remained relatively untouched. Some lauded the final document as a "perfected" form of the American constitution.³²⁷ By the time officials in Washington had learned of the MacArthur draft, it was too late. By introducing

³²⁴ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 300.

³²⁵ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 150.

³²⁶ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 287-288.

³²⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "MacArthur 'Touch'," March 7, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 47, BB2.

it to the papers without approval, MacArthur had achieved the same result that Japan's Cabinet had feared when threatened with similar action; once the Japanese people saw the draft, they immediately supported it. The draft undoubtedly had "a heavy MacArthur touch," but it still succeeded in establishing a more democratic system.³²⁸ Hirohito remained in his position but was stripped of any power he previously held. Simultaneously, Japan was set to become the first country that had pacifism explicitly engrained into their constitution. Although his influence on the process likely frustrated American officials, MacArthur's gamble had succeeded.

In this early occupation period, one of the clearest examples of progress was seen through the strengthening of labor. Prior to the occupation, unions and advocacy for increased labor rights were minimal. Once the Americans established themselves in Japan, SCAP officials spent a significant portion of their time encouraging labor organization, hoping to build a strong union movement in the country.³²⁹ It was the belief of the Americans that, by encouraging labor, the working class would develop the desire and ability to support and interact with democratic institutions.³³⁰ In this regard, the success of labor was equated with the success or failure of the occupation itself. This early support of unions led to a significant amount of growth. In less than a year, almost 13,000 unions with 3.8 million total members had been organized.³³¹ By March 1949, more than 50% of the workforce had unionized. However, SCAP support for unions was not universal. As early as November 1945, it had prohibited strikes from miners and other

³²⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "MacArthur 'Touch'," March 7, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 47, BB2.

³²⁹ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 44.

³³⁰ Miriam S. Farley, "Labor Policy in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Affairs* 20, no.2 (June 1947): 132, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752314>.

³³¹ Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 251, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

workers who were deemed to be vital to the occupation's larger mission.³³² Although it was beneficial to the occupation's mission to increase general union support, a clear line was established to prevent organization and direct action that harmed Japan's recovery.

These early reforms were not perfect, even though they were vital in introducing concepts of democratization and popular organization to the Japanese people. As the November 1945 strike prohibition showed, workers could only organize to the extent that SCAP deemed acceptable. Japan's Trade Union Law, the flagship labor legislation of the early occupation period, held significant weaknesses.³³³ Under the law, requirements and regulations were established that, in practice, gave the Labor Relations Committees the power to harass or dissolve legitimate unions. In part, this was due to the constant fear that unions could become infected with communist, militarist, or nationalist influence.³³⁴ By providing a means for the government to directly interfere with unions that had been allegedly tainted, SCAP laid the groundwork for the later shift towards reducing the political power of unions. Although a vast improvement over the pre-war period, the early union reforms were short-lived and reliant on the whim of SCAP.

The press in Japan during the early occupation period was one of the few places where democratization did not fully occur. Although significant improvements were made in some respects, SCAP retained broad control over what the press was allowed to do. This was demonstrated at the very beginning of the occupation period, when it was forced to temporarily

³³² Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 312.

³³³ Miriam S. Farley, "Labor Policy in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Affairs* 20, no.2 (June 1947): 133-134, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752314>.

³³⁴ Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 250, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

suspend the publication of several newspapers.³³⁵ This was primarily in response to accusations from these newspapers that American soldiers had already started accosting Japanese citizens, which had the potential to fuel anti-American sentiment at the tensest period of the occupation. To prevent further incidents like this, a ten-point code for the press to follow was established in September 1945.³³⁶ This code was primarily meant to prevent the publication of propaganda that could incite violence against the occupation, but in practice it functioned as an organ for censorship, which was fundamentally contrary to the ideals of democracy that the Americans sought to introduce. Although this code was only meant to provide general rules to guide the Japanese press after the war, the elasticity of its guidance meant that the code was often applied unevenly, with some publications being targeted more than others.³³⁷ However, despite these drawbacks, SCAP did succeed in significantly improving how the press operated in Japan.

Prior to the Allied victory in the war, the Japanese press was used to functioning as an extension of the Japanese government, only printing what they were told. Once the Americans took control, they expected to be treated similarly, looking to the press division in the Civil Information and Education section of SCAP for directives on what to publish.³³⁸ However, the Japanese newsmen were bewildered to find no such desire to control the flow of information from SCAP. Some amount of censorship had been established, but SCAP still hoped to democratize the press and teach it how to write its own stories. Over time, throughout the first few years of the occupation, American press officers convinced the Japanese press that it was not

³³⁵ Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey* 16, No. 14 (July 23, 1947): 162, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3021349>.

³³⁶ Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey* 16, No. 14 (July 23, 1947): 163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3021349>.

³³⁷ Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey* 16, No. 14 (July 23, 1947): 163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3021349>.

³³⁸ Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey* 16, No. 14 (July 23, 1947): 163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3021349>.

beholden to any governing body, including SCAP.³³⁹ As shown by the establishment and use of the ten-point code, this was not entirely accurate. However, convincing the Japanese press that it was allowed, and even encouraged, to act independently from the government was a crucial step in democratizing Japan. Without such steps, there would not have been any way for widespread disagreement against SCAP or government policy to be disseminated throughout the population. Freedom of the press in Japan was successfully adopted in the early part of the occupation, but the continuation of censorship practices prevented full democratization from occurring.

Hirohito's continued dedication to democratization efforts in Japan during the occupation period was vital in ensuring that American goals were met. However, following the shocking photograph of the emperor's first meeting with MacArthur, the Japanese people understood that Hirohito was no longer at the top of Japan's political structure. If the Japanese people were unable to connect with and look up to MacArthur in the same way they had with Hirohito, the reforms he enacted were likely to fail. Fortunately for the Americans, MacArthur entered his position with a strong desire to create a bond of mutual faith between himself and the Japanese.³⁴⁰ Occupation goals could not be achieved by force, which meant MacArthur needed to find other means to establish his policies. At first, this was achieved through showing a surprising amount of gentleness in executing initial occupation policy.³⁴¹ As most of the Allies called for harsh treatment of the Japanese in response to their wartime conduct, MacArthur had set out to truly reform the country. MacArthur was also openly critical of the use of atomic

³³⁹ Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey* 16, No. 14 (July 23, 1947): 163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3021349>.

³⁴⁰ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 283.

³⁴¹ William M. Leavitt, "General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan," *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 319, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

weapons.³⁴² For people that had experienced the terrifying power of those weapons, either personally or through the shock and fear that occurred after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this likely introduced some amount of implicit favorability. After a devastating defeat and their country decimated by the effects of war, the Japanese people were presented with an overseer who was sympathetic to their position. MacArthur expected changes that shocked the Japanese people at times, but he was also a leader that seemed to truly wish for their quick recovery.

It was this attitude that led the Japanese people to truly admire and appreciate MacArthur as a leader. When he was eventually removed as Supreme Commander, their reactions were heartfelt. Crowds lined the streets of Tokyo, with some people holding handmaid signs, written in English, that proclaimed “We love you General MacArthur.”³⁴³ This appreciation was palpable throughout the occupation, even before his removal from the position. In the first election following the enfranchisement of new voters, at least one person chose to vote for MacArthur, rather than one of the real candidates.³⁴⁴ In the space designated for their second choice, they simply wrote “I am serious.”³⁴⁵ Even though MacArthur’s position was clearly more powerful than any elected representative at the time, there were still people who wanted to demonstrate their support for the work he was doing. Some people even hoped that the occupation would continue for an extended period, if it meant MacArthur remained.³⁴⁶

Developing an appreciation within Japan for MacArthur was a necessity, if the Americans

³⁴² Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 305.

³⁴³ William M. Leavitt, “General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan,” *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 317, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

³⁴⁴ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “A Vote for MacArthur,” April 11, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 72, BA11.

³⁴⁵ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “A Vote for MacArthur,” April 11, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 72, BA11.

³⁴⁶ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Popularity of MacArthur is Growing.” May 9, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 92, BB3.

wanted to succeed in introducing long-term change. While Hirohito was still vital to their mission, he could only successfully introduce democratization if the Japanese people also respected MacArthur, the one person to whom their emperor appeared subservient to. By showing a significant amount of respect towards the Japanese people, MacArthur successfully established that bond of mutual faith he had sought.

Chapter 10: Disconnect between American and Allied Goals

From the beginning, the American perspective on how the Japanese occupation should play out was significantly different from that of the rest of the Allies. In theory, the occupation was a joint Allied operation.³⁴⁷ As revealed in the months after Japan's surrender, in practice it was entirely dictated by the Americans. The solidifying ideal of a post-war Japan that informed American policy throughout 1945 and 1946 was significantly different from the rest of the Allies. Because the Americans sought to slowly convince the Japanese people to embrace democracy, the steps taken were often rehabilitative, rather than punitive. The Americans had the intention of consulting with their allies, according to their initial post-surrender policy, but only with the understanding that they would make the final decision, when there were differences of opinion.³⁴⁸ Essentially, this was a clear sign to the Allies that their desires regarding Japan's postwar development would only be considered if they lined up aside the already-decided American policy.

As with much of the antagonism between the Americans and other Allies regarding occupation policy, Commonwealth countries were some of the most vocal in their frustrations. Officials from Australia and New Zealand did acknowledge that Hirohito would be useful in the early days to help ease the Japanese people into their new position, but they made it clear that past the beginning of the occupation, the emperor should be removed. By September 20, after MacArthur's contentious announcement that early progress in Japan had been a resounding success, word got to American officials that both Australia and New Zealand were concerned

³⁴⁷ William M. Leavitt, "General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan," *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 318, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

³⁴⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 98.

with the light touch MacArthur was applying to Japan. Peter Fraser, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, insisted that there should be no soft peace with Japan, advocating for an extended occupation and the trial of the emperor for war crimes to properly punish Japan for its conduct during the war.³⁴⁹ The Australians, years later, continued to push for greater Allied control, particularly regarding Japan's constitution.³⁵⁰ The Americans, once again emphasizing their willingness to exclude the Allies in major occupation policy, firmly opposed the move. As the Commonwealth members in the Pacific voiced their dissatisfaction in how SCAP was conducting reform in Japan, the British were simultaneously expressing concern over the unilateral control wielded by the Americans.

Since the beginning of the occupation, the Americans had continued to make decisions with little regard for the opinions of their allies. Sterndale Bennett, the Head of the Far Eastern Department of the British Foreign Office, urged the Americans to change this and set up an Allied control commission for Japan which would, at least in part, share power with MacArthur over Japan's progress.³⁵¹ While he also emphasized that he did not see any significant differences in desire between the British and Americans, despite the strong insistence by parts of the Commonwealth to harshly punish Japan, the ability of any such commission to interfere with MacArthur's authority was a risk to America's goals. For MacArthur and the War and Navy Departments, the FEC's creation risked disrupting their desire for complete American

³⁴⁹ "The Minister of New Zealand (Patton) to the Secretary of State," September 20, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 500, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d500>.

³⁵⁰ Christine de Matos, "Encouraging 'Democracy' in a Cold war Climate: The Dual-Platform Policy Approach of Evatt and Labor Toward the Allied Occupation of Japan 1945-1949," *Pacific Economic Papers* 313 (March 2001): 10.

³⁵¹ "The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State," September 22, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 501, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d501>.

domination of the Pacific, which they saw as vital to the United States' global security interests.³⁵² As expressed in a conversation between Secretary of State James Byrnes and Chinese Ambassador Dr. Wei Tao-ming, giving a control council the power to conduct policy in Japan might risk invalidating the surrender terms, as Hirohito had agreed to take orders from the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers only.³⁵³ The FEC, once firmly established, lacked the control mechanisms mentioned by Ambassador Wei. By its very nature, the fact that each of the four major powers in the FEC were able to veto decisions made it ineffective.³⁵⁴ Instead, it functioned primarily as a place for the member countries to express their thoughts on how the reform efforts should proceed, with votes being conducted over policy recommendations. However, the decision on whether to follow these recommendations remained in the hands of MacArthur and the American-led occupation.

While the FEC held no actual power over SCAP policy, it played an important part in the evolution of United States policy regarding Japan, particularly as tensions with the Soviet Union grew. Initially, the FEC had been created as a compromise between the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁵⁵ However, because of the unilateral control the Americans retained over decision-making in Japan, it became the primary conduit for disagreement between the two superpowers. Although there was a wide area of agreement between them at the beginning of the occupation, tensions slowly increased until reaching a point of blatant antagonism on both sides

³⁵² Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 97.

³⁵³ "Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Chinese Ambassador (Wei)," October 29, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945*, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 571, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d571>.

³⁵⁴ The four major powers being the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and China. Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 292.

³⁵⁵ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 8.

from 1948 onward.³⁵⁶ The Soviets, facing unimpeded American control over Japanese development, expressed significant dissatisfaction over the occupation as fears grew that the Americans may one day use Japan as an avenue to attack the Soviet Union.³⁵⁷ It was these concerns that led the Soviets to demand information on Japan's naval bases and coastal fortifications.³⁵⁸ They believed that SCAP was using its position in Japan to take advantage of their leftover military resources, establishing a stronghold that could easily strike the Soviet Union. The Americans, in turn, assumed this was purely an attempt to discover how much they knew of Soviet preparedness in East Asia.³⁵⁹ These suspicions demonstrated the growing tension and paranoia between the two superpowers, even before their relationship was defined by open antagonism. For the Soviets, the establishment of an advisory commission created a pathway to potentially influence Japan's development, even if the resulting Commission had no official power. As tensions between the two powers increased, the FEC became one of the many battlegrounds of the Cold War.

Despite holding no official power to dictate the direction of Japan's occupation, the Commission did occasionally clash with MacArthur. Following MacArthur's approval of the draft constitution, the Commission attempted to reassert their power, forcing MacArthur to respond. On March 20, 1946, they passed a policy requiring its agreement before any draft of the

³⁵⁶ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 7.

³⁵⁷ "The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Secretary of State," October 30, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 578, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d578>.

³⁵⁸ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Exclusive Soviet-American Affair," September 19, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 11, Radio Report Number 187, BB1.

³⁵⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Soviet Suspicions," September 19, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 11, Radio Report Number 187, BB2.

new constitutional provisions could proceed.³⁶⁰ However, without consulting the Commission, MacArthur approved the draft, later arguing that the thoughts he gave were not meant in a professional capacity but were purely personal. According to Shidehara, MacArthur's primary reasoning for approving the draft was to guarantee Hirohito's safety at any cost, warning that the FEC was discussing changes that could negatively impact Japan's development if they were allowed to proceed.³⁶¹ While MacArthur continued to argue that his approval was only on a personal level, he also reiterated that the Commission, as a policy making body, did not have the authority to require MacArthur to consider its opinion.³⁶² This occurrence was not unique, either. Although MacArthur's power was theoretically limited by the length of the occupation and the Potsdam terms, he generally ignored these constraints.³⁶³ His reputation, which was what gave him the leverage needed to exert his personal desires for the occupation, let him oppose the FEC as he wished. As the only avenue for the non-American allies to officially express their desires regarding Japan's occupation, it is understandable that the Commission and MacArthur occasionally held conflicting perspectives.

Not only did the Commission contain a Soviet representative to express policy desires that were increasingly antithetical to American desires, but the presence of Britain and members of the Commonwealth introduced an official body where Australia and New Zealand could

³⁶⁰ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) to the Secretary of State," April 19, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 186, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d187>.

³⁶¹ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 337, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

³⁶² "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) to the Secretary of State," April 19, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 186, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d187>. "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff," May 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 192, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d192>.

³⁶³ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 96.

continue to push for a harsher punishment for Japan. Even after Japan had been occupied for over two years, some Allies still wanted to punish Japan. When they were struggling from food shortages in late 1947, New Zealand's representative to the Commission reasoned against supplying food to Japan, arguing that the people in countries that were targets of Japanese aggression should be prioritized.³⁶⁴ Even after making significant progress in embracing democracy, Japan was still blamed for their wartime conduct. The only exception regarding relief that was discussed was specifically to prevent the endangerment of occupying forces. Essentially, it was seen as acceptable to let the Japanese people starve for their government's wartime conduct, as long as it did not risk the occupation itself. Along with a general desire to continue punishing Japan, the specific desire to label Hirohito a war criminal was a constant theme among the Allies in the early years. The Americans continued their attempts to push past the war crimes question, but the FEC allowed the Australians to force the issue, for a time.³⁶⁵ Their continued desire to see Hirohito punished compelled the Americans to respond; Secretary of State Byrnes denied the FEC's authority in naming war criminals. By doing this, the Americans asserted their unilateral control over who was charged. The Allies could still voice their desires, but it was still up to the Americans to make the final decision. As both the emperor institution and Hirohito himself were seen as symbols of Japan's continued prosperity, targeting Hirohito for prosecution as a war criminal provided yet another avenue for some Allies to extend their desire for revenge against Japan.

³⁶⁴ "Statement by the New Zealand Representative, Far Eastern Commission, December 11, 1947," December 18, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 282, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d282>.

³⁶⁵ Hal Brands, "Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946," *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 295, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

Chapter 11: Hirohito Absolved

As the occupation progressed, the possibility of extended civil distress over a war crimes trial for the emperor was severely reduced. The possibility remained, particularly as the Japanese people's fondness for their emperor was as strong as it had been since the end of the war, if not stronger. However, demilitarization of the occupied nation meant that SCAP had uncontested disciplinary authority and therefore could more easily address any unrest that may occur. The question of war crimes culpability for Hirohito was by no means a primary concern as the Allies focused on other areas, but it did remain as an open question both among the Allies and the Japanese public. Initially, the War Crimes Commission had clear intentions to charge Hirohito, with Commissioner Lord Robert Wright stating in an August 14, 1945 meeting with Ambassador John Gilbert Winant that he intended to move Hirohito's name onto the Commission's list of war criminals.³⁶⁶ Considering the desire of members of the Commonwealth – particularly Australia and New Zealand – to see the emperor held responsible for Japan's conduct, the British Lord's inclusion of Hirohito on that list is unsurprising. However, because of intervention from the Americans, substantial arguments for his prosecution didn't extend past the first weeks of the occupation. In the case that the Commission had succeeded in charging the emperor, the Americans took steps to assert his innocence right after the surrender. Brigadier General Bonner Fellers, MacArthur's military secretary, contacted two acquaintances in Japan to urge that the Japanese prove that Hirohito had no responsibility for Pearl Harbor as quickly as possible.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ "The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State," August 15, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 663, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d663>.

³⁶⁷ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 319, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

Even with quick and consistent American intervention, the question of Hirohito's fate remained an open question through the first months of 1946. One Tokyo newspaper, *Yomiuri*, expressed the belief that the "Emperor cannot avoid responsibility" for the war and the infringement on human rights that occurred during its course.³⁶⁸ While this belief was built off recent directives from SCAP, the newspaper's reporting emphasizes a significant concern that the emperor would be targeted if Japan did not democratize as fast as SCAP wanted.

Domestically, American opinion was not as homogenous regarding Hirohito's fate as SCAP policy indicated, particularly at the beginning of the occupation. Just a month into the occupation, on September 18, 1945, Joint Resolution 94 was introduced in the Senate.³⁶⁹ This resolution sought to solidify the emperor's status as a war criminal, regardless of the intentions from the State Department. As he introduced this resolution, Senator Richard Russell (D – Georgia) argued that Hirohito's continued freedom helped solidify the Japanese people's belief that they had not been truly defeated.³⁷⁰ Unless he was properly punished, the "head and heart of Japanese imperialism" would continue to influence the nation's development.³⁷¹ As Russell continued advocating for his resolution, colleagues interrupted him to express their approval of such a strong policy. Even within the American government, there was a deep divide regarding a

³⁶⁸ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State," January 8, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 118, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d118>.

³⁶⁹ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 320-321, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

³⁷⁰ C.P. Trussell, "Senator Demands Trial of Hirohito: Russel of Georgia Declares Our 'Kid Glove' Policy Lets Japanese Forget Guilt," *New York Times*, September 19, 1945, 6, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/senator-demands-trial-hirohito/docview/107108420/se-2?accountid=10559>.

³⁷¹ C.P. Trussell, "Senator Demands Trial of Hirohito: Russel of Georgia Declares Our 'Kid Glove' Policy Lets Japanese Forget Guilt," *New York Times*, September 19, 1945, 6, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/senator-demands-trial-hirohito/docview/107108420/se-2?accountid=10559>.

possible trial for the emperor. However, it was MacArthur and policymakers in the State Department that held the real power in determining Hirohito's future.

The Japanese media believed SCAP would potentially target Hirohito later in the occupation if they did not make significant steps towards progress, but the Americans running the occupation had staunchly defended the emperor since the beginning. While Lord Wright initially indicated that he would include Hirohito on the War Crimes Commission's list of war criminals, he was urged by Ambassador Winant to reconsider.³⁷² Almost immediately, Lord Wright agreed to refrain from including the emperor on the list, and instead would wait for American action on the matter.³⁷³ Not only does this emphasize the influence the United States had over its allies, it shows the beginning of the active defense of Hirohito from war crimes accusations by American officials. This defense of Hirohito was risky, considering the large amount of support for charging him with war crimes both with Allied officials and the public. Despite warnings from Lord Wright that responsibility for Hirohito's exclusion would rest on the United States, if the decision attracted substantial criticism, the Americans readily acknowledged their position as the deciding factor in the emperor's continued freedom.³⁷⁴ While there was

³⁷² "The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State," August 15, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 663, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d663>.

³⁷³ "The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State," August 15, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 664, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d664>. This also extended to the inclusion of people deemed "major" war criminals, although there was a clear intention to charge the rest once Japan had been fully occupied.

³⁷⁴ "The United States Commissioner, United Nations War Crimes Commissions (Hodgson), to the Secretary of State," September 11, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 676, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d676>.

some internal disagreement among the Americans regarding his protection, a significant amount of time was spent finding justifications to defend their defense of the emperor.

By the beginning of 1946, Hirohito's safety was essentially guaranteed. Publicly, American officials like Secretary of War Robert Patterson were pushing for the Japanese to make the final decision regarding the emperor's fate.³⁷⁵ Even if he was guilty, putting Hirohito on trial had the potential to upset the stability and progress that had been achieved. To the Japanese, MacArthur was arguing that calls for the emperor's trial from the United States were "un-American" and only emphasized the need to continue proving that Hirohito was blameless.³⁷⁶ MacArthur essentially functioned as an independent political entity. While he was theoretically beholden to the American government, his popularity and the authority granted to him as Supreme Commander meant that nothing would happen in Japan without his approval. Because of this, his consistent protection of Hirohito guaranteed the emperor's fate, even when the war crimes trials continued to be discussed. However, when it came to Hirohito's future, MacArthur was not acting alone. He had received an order in January 1946 explicitly prohibiting the emperor's prosecution.³⁷⁷ By this point in the occupation, due to the support of both the American government and MacArthur, Hirohito was unlikely to face significant consequences. This did not, however, fully settle the war crimes question. These decisions were made privately, away from both the public and the other Allies. Publicly, the Americans actively sought to convince the world that the emperor was more useful as a free man.

³⁷⁵ "Patterson Holds Hirohito Not Guilty Enough to Quit," *New York Times*, January 12, 1946, 9, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/patterson-holds-hirohito-not-guilty-enough-quit/docview/107660035/se-2?accountid=10559>.

³⁷⁶ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 344, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

³⁷⁷ "Immunity Directive on Hirohito Disclosed; Top '46 Order Kept Him Out of Tokyo Trial," *New York Times*, January 14, 1949, 11, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/immunity-directive-on-hirohito-disclosed-top-46/docview/105797934/se-2?accountid=10559>.

Of all the attempts to rehabilitate Hirohito's image and persuade the Japanese people to accept the new, more democratic, position of the emperor, Hirohito's tours of Japan received the most attention during the early occupation. Although these tours were first suggested by the British, the emperor zealously took to the task, using it as an opportunity to better connect with his people.³⁷⁸ Publicly, these tours were meant as an opportunity for Hirohito to see firsthand the recovery effort's progress, along with providing him with a chance to associate with the Japanese people.³⁷⁹ After spending his entire life sheltered and kept away from truly interacting with his people, Hirohito took the chance that SCAP's democratization desires afforded him. By making himself a present figure in the lives of the people, Hirohito was losing the sense of divine mysticism that contributed to the belief that he should not be open to criticism. His presence provided a "tangible lesson in democracy" that meant more to the Japanese people than any words from American officials would.³⁸⁰ Although many were shocked to see him, his presence served as a physical reminder of the changes occurring within Japan.

When planning Hirohito's tours across the country, this reaction was what SCAP had hoped to achieve. Coverage of his tours consistently emphasized the promotion of democracy inherent in his presence among common people.³⁸¹ Hirohito also intentionally wore an ordinary business suit, rather than the uniforms most Japanese people expected their emperor to wear.³⁸²

³⁷⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 284.

³⁷⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Emperor to Tour Tokyo and Kanagawa," February 14, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 32, BF1.

³⁸⁰ Clinton Green, "Hirohito Inspects Factory Damage: Emperor, in Civilian Suit, Also Gives His Amazed People an Idea of Democracy," *New York Times*, February 20, 1946, 12, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-inspects-factory-damage/docview/107451230/se-2?accountid=10559>.

³⁸¹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Emperor's 'Democratic' Tour Described," February 20, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 36, BD1-BD3.

³⁸² Clinton Green, "Hirohito to Visit Subjects on Tour; Will Appear Only in Civilian Attire," *New York Times*, February 19, 1946, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-visit-subjects-on-tour-will-appear-only/docview/107411420/se-2?accountid=10559>.

Although this change had begun after the New Year Rescript, this was one of the first times the Japanese public saw him dressed so casually. Further dissuading the notion that he was superior or required special attention, Hirohito specifically sought to avoid anything but the simplest announcement possible. His tours were, essentially, facilitating a shift toward a drastically new version of the monarchy in Japan.³⁸³ By avoiding a detailed announcement of his plans route, Hirohito signaled that he did not believe that he should receive any special attention. Although he was still the emperor, that position was significantly different under a democratic system than it had been just a year prior. Many steps were taken to convey this change in how the emperor system existed to the rest of the country. When his voice was recorded for the second time, it was during these tours as he had a conversation with someone in the working class.³⁸⁴ Rhetorically, this put him on equal ground with workers, showing anyone who heard the recording that Hirohito did not see himself as being of a higher class than anyone else in Japan. The Japanese people, for their part, readily accepted this new monarchy. There was a significant change in how the public reacted to imperial visits between the pre-war period and during the occupation.³⁸⁵ Prior to the war, any public appearance made by the emperor was met with silence and bowed heads. However, after the war, crowds gathered to catch a glimpse of him, cheering as he moved past. The etiquette and discipline that had defined the Japanese public's reaction to his presence had vanished as they accepted this new, more democratic version of the monarchy.

³⁸³ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 347, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>. Although Bix doubts Hirohito's sincerity, he does acknowledge that these trips helped facilitate a significant shift in how the monarchy in Japan was viewed.

³⁸⁴ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Emperor's 'Democratic' Tour Described," February 20, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 36, BD1-BD3.

³⁸⁵ Hugh H. Smythe and Masaharu Watanabe, "Japanese Popular Attitudes Toward the Emperor," *Pacific Affairs* 26, no. 4 (December 1953): 336, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752870>.

Arguably the most subtle change Hirohito made throughout the occupation to accommodate for the democratization of the emperor institution was seen through the shifts in his speech. The fact that Hirohito was speaking to the Japanese people directly was a revolutionary change. Prior to his rescript ending the war, he had never directly spoken to his people, which helped solidify the emperor's position as a divine figure who presided over Japan. Even in the rescript, this assumed divinity was present through his use of "divine voice broadcasting," which used the classical Chinese writing style to convey the emperor's authority.³⁸⁶ However, once Hirohito was free to begin dismantling the imperial myth, his word choice changed to reflect his new position within Japan. He increasingly began favoring more simple language that the people understood, rather than the formal language that few were familiar with.³⁸⁷ Hirohito had been told in 1931 that adopting such simple language would help his people better connect with their emperor. However, due to the presence of the militarists, he was unable to effectively implement this language shift. Once he was free of their influence, however, he remembered this piece of advice and took it to heart in order to dispel the notion that he was divine.

As Hirohito made a conscious effort to become a more public figure with his tours across Japan, this shift in his speech patterns became more prominent. At first, following the New Years Rescript, he excessively shifted his word choice to appear more gender neutral, at times even using more feminine language.³⁸⁸ By emulating the speech that most Japanese people would expect from a maternal figure, who generally had a very low status in Japanese society, Hirohito

³⁸⁶ Shoji Azuma, "Speech accommodation and Japanese Emperor Hirohito," *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (1997): 192-193, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42888108>.

³⁸⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Emperor said to favor simple language," January 5, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 3, BB1-BB2.

³⁸⁸ Shoji Azuma, "Speech accommodation and Japanese Emperor Hirohito," *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (1997): 194, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42888108>.

was intentionally indicating to his people that he no longer saw himself as divine. By voluntarily assuming the role of a maternal figure through his speech, Hirohito also reasserted the familial connection he had to his people. Although the emperor was traditionally seen as the father of Japanese society, Hirohito had begun presenting himself as a mother-like figure through his language. This was partially due to the lack of status women had in Japanese society at the time, but it still helped him retain that connection even as he debased his own status. Those who witnessed this drastic change reacted enthusiastically, treasuring their interactions with Hirohito.³⁸⁹ Although this was such a drastic change in how the emperor spoke, the Japanese people understood and appreciated the underlying meaning for this shift.

After he had established this drastic change within his speech patterns, Hirohito readjusted again, finding a middle ground between the maternal speech patterns and the divine broadcasting voice. As he continued his tours, he began talking with the people he met as if they were regular strangers, rather than his subjects.³⁹⁰ This allowed him to continue connecting with his people without overexaggerating his new position, as he had previously. His words remained casual, greeting one group of farmers with a simple “how are you guys doing?”³⁹¹ By presenting himself in this manner, Hirohito was subtly introducing the Japanese people to the idea that their emperor was human and, therefore, open to criticism. In tearing down the barriers that existed between everyday Japanese citizens and the leaders of their society, he was introducing a key aspect of democracy while also reasserting his own relationship with them. However, this shift in speech was often asymmetrical. Although Hirohito was consistently speaking in a more informal

³⁸⁹ Shoji Azuma, “Speech accommodation and Japanese Emperor Hirohito,” *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (1997): 195, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42888108>.

³⁹⁰ Shoji Azuma, “Speech accommodation and Japanese Emperor Hirohito,” *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (1997): 197, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42888108>.

³⁹¹ As translated by the author. Shoji Azuma, “Speech accommodation and Japanese Emperor Hirohito,” *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (1997): 198, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42888108>.

manner, the people he greeted continued to use more formal and polite styles of speech in response.³⁹² The Japanese people were still adjusting to this new presentation of the emperor that they had not seen previously. Regardless of how he presented himself, Hirohito was still held in great respect by the Japanese people. This did not mean Hirohito failed in introducing democratic thinking through the shift in his word choice. The changes in his speech were noticed by the Japanese people. Even if they did not respond similarly, they at least understood that this change indicated Hirohito's own implicit support of the idea that he was human and equal to anyone else in the country.

As the campaign was under way to rehabilitate Hirohito's image into that of a benevolent patriarch who loved democracy and peace, a shift was occurring within the United States toward how the public viewed the emperor. Although there had been some vocalized support for Hirohito and SCAP's plan to use him to secure the occupation since the war, that was largely a minority opinion. However, almost as soon as the war ended, Americans began shifting their tone. The Pennsylvania American Legion, despite being comprised partially of veterans who had seen first-hand the conflict with Japan, rejected a resolution to classify Hirohito as a war criminal.³⁹³ It was their belief that he was not the same as Hitler, Mussolini, and other war criminals, which was starkly different from the beliefs that many veterans held at the end of the war. However, American public opinion was still extremely volatile at the time of the surrender.³⁹⁴ As the occupation settled in, this instability gradually settled. Newspapers began

³⁹² Shoji Azuma, "Speech accommodation and Japanese Emperor Hirohito," *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (1997): 197, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42888108>.

³⁹³ "Legionnaires Bar Listing Hirohito as War Criminal," *New York Times*, August 29, 1945, 7, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/legionnaires-bar-listing-hirohito-as-war-criminal/docview/107255192/se-2?accountid=12461>.

³⁹⁴ 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 (Fall 2005): 449, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

focusing on the emperor and his family as if they were celebrities, seeking insight onto their daily lives rather than debating whether Hirohito was tied to Japanese war crimes.³⁹⁵ The public, in turn, lost interest with the political implications of what would happen with Hirohito.³⁹⁶ Although this was partially due to the fervor of war fading, the most significant impact on this change in views comes from how SCAP worked with Hirohito to change how the world saw him.

American officials, both in Washington and Japan, worked diligently to shift public perception toward Hirohito. In part, this included active participation from the American media, who portrayed Hirohito as if he were distancing himself from traits that the American public found objectionable.³⁹⁷ Eventually, this led to most Americans viewing the emperor as harmless and a beneficial influence on his people.³⁹⁸ At the same time, MacArthur was working to ensure that public opinion would not eventually sway against Hirohito once more. As he believed, such negative views toward the emperor held strong connections to communism, as shown by his criticism of “normally responsible” newspapers echoing statements on the subject made by the communist *Daily Worker*.³⁹⁹ With the JCP publishing anti-Emperor material consistently, this connection was easy to disseminate into the larger American public consciousness, particularly as conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States became more common. Through this, the anti-emperor position within the United States acquired political connotations that were

³⁹⁵ As shown by Burton Crane, “Japanese Royalty Lives Simple Life: Hirohito and Wife, in First Joint Interview, Tell of Sharing Subjects’ Privations,” *New York Times*, June 4, 1947, 4, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/japanese-royalty-lives-simple-life/docview/107928429/se-2?accountid=12461>.

³⁹⁶ 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 (Fall 2005): 449, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41939991>.

³⁹⁷ Hal Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II,” *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 3, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

³⁹⁸ Hal Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II,” *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 4, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

³⁹⁹ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 280.

uncomfortable for anyone who wanted to avoid being associated with communism.⁴⁰⁰ In creating a narrative that only communists supported Hirohito's removal, MacArthur ensured that any Americans who held anti-communist beliefs would continue to support Hirohito as long as the occupation continued. With the decrease public support for Hirohito's removal from his position, SCAP had succeeded in defending the emperor in the eyes of the American public. The Allies were still critical of their policy, but American domestic support meant that they were free to continue using Hirohito for their democratization efforts.

Although the Americans had already made significant progress in rehabilitating Hirohito's image and convincing the world that it would be best to keep him as emperor, it was the Tokyo War Crimes Trials that helped fully solidify his perceived innocence. The trials of major war criminals provided new details to the inner workings of Japan's wartime decision-making processes, with particular focus on Hirohito's involvement. The common theme of the trial was that Hirohito was afraid to act, even when he wanted to, due to the Army and the influence they wielded.⁴⁰¹ This fit directly into the narrative that had been presented by SCAP since the beginning of the occupation and essentially absolved Hirohito of most of the blame for Japan's conduct during the war. The known desire from SCAP to defend Hirohito did have the potential to cause issues in the legitimacy of the trials, but it worked diligently to prevent rumors indicating this. Publicly, there was a significant effort expended in establishing the impartiality of the trials.⁴⁰² In practice, however, this was not the case. Most of the military leaders standing

⁴⁰⁰ Hal Brands, "The Emperor's New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II," *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

⁴⁰¹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Emperor's Fear of Army," July 1, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 7, Radio Report Number 129, BC2.

⁴⁰² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Impartiality," March 4, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 2, Radio Report Number 44, BC2.

trial hoped to absolve Hirohito of any war responsibility.⁴⁰³ This sentiment was also clearly shared by MacArthur, since many of his occupation goals hinged on keeping Hirohito free.

This shared goal led to some collaboration between SCAP, the Imperial household, and Japan's war criminals. Potentially incriminating evidence against Hirohito was routinely hidden, and SCAP officials like Fellers reached out to contacts in Japan to help prove that Hirohito was not involved with Pearl Harbor, the event that was most likely to lead to the emperor facing trial.⁴⁰⁴ Even Tojo, the war criminal most responsible for Japan's aggressive actions, worked with SCAP to exonerate the emperor. A large portion of his trial was dedicated to proving that Hirohito held no responsibility for the war, rather than seeking to justify his own actions. At one point, when Tojo accidentally acknowledged that Hirohito could have stopped the war at any time, he was allowed to correct his statement in court.⁴⁰⁵ This incident called into question the impartiality of the trial, at least when it came to the emperor. There were even allegations from Shiobara Tokisaburō, Tojo's defense lawyer, that SCAP had pressured Tojo into defending Hirohito, which would have explained why he insinuated that Hirohito had, in fact, held some sway.⁴⁰⁶ However, this was done simply by reminding Tojo that his testimony would either harm Hirohito or contribute to his protection. Although this does show SCAP's intent to intervene in the trials on behalf of the emperor, that intervention did not extend so far as to intentionally fabricate claims in order to protect Hirohito. Its involvement does call into question the accuracy

⁴⁰³ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Tanaka Testified to Absolve Emperor," July 10, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 7, Radio Report Number 136, BC1.

⁴⁰⁴ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 259. Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 319, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

⁴⁰⁵ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 374-375. Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 604-605.

⁴⁰⁶ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 586.

of Tojo's testimony, but it left SCAP with enough plausible deniability to escape overt accusations of corrupting the trial proceedings.

The one person who consistently presented a different interpretation of events during his trial was Kido, who had served as Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal of Japan during the war. Kido, in contrast to most other major war criminals, focused his defense on blaming Hirohito for Japan's wartime conduct. According to Kido, Hirohito had known of American attempts to end the war in 1941 but chose to ignore the correspondence due to the advice of Tojo and other advisors.⁴⁰⁷ During his trial, Kido was insistent that Hirohito had never been the "ignorant puppet" that many thought he was.⁴⁰⁸ Instead, according to Kido's version of events, Hirohito had directly contributed to discussions leading up to the war. This testimony was in direct contrast to the narrative of events that was being presented by the other war criminals. Although Kido also insisted that Hirohito had sought an end to the war since February 1943, his testimony contradicted the idea pushed by SCAP that Hirohito had no choice but to follow the directives of the militarists.⁴⁰⁹ Fortunately for Hirohito, Kido's testimony did not significantly impact the chances that he would be charged with war crimes. Because MacArthur and most of the Japanese leadership wanted to avoid implicating the emperor during the war crimes trials, even Kido's testimony was not enough at this point to lead to significant changes in policy toward Hirohito.

⁴⁰⁷ "Hirohito Aide Says Japan Chose War: Marquis Kido Reveals Emperor Ignored Pleas for Peace by U.S. in 1941," *New York Times*, September 25, 1945, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-aide-says-japan-chose-war/docview/107187422/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁴⁰⁸ Lindsey Parrott, "Hirohito Pictured as Force in Policy: Kido's Defense Shows Emperor as Fully Aware of Japan's Pre-War Aggressions," *New York Times*, October 15, 1947, 17, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-pictured-as-force-policy/docview/108056058/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁴⁰⁹ Lindsey Parrott, "Hirohito Pictured as Force in Policy: Kido's Defense Shows Emperor as Fully Aware of Japan's Pre-War Aggressions," *New York Times*, October 15, 1947, 17, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-pictured-as-force-policy/docview/108056058/se-2?accountid=10559>.

With such conflicting stories, the trials never produced a definite answer regarding the role Hirohito played during the war. Most likely, Hirohito's true role existed in between these views. Tojo's slip during the trials revealed his belief that Hirohito still held enough sway within the government to end the war whenever he wanted. Kido's testimony reflected similar amounts of influence. As revealed by Kido's diary, he also knew that the emperor was often controlled by his advisors to prevent him from further protesting their actions.⁴¹⁰ As revealed by Shigenori Togo, the Foreign Minister of Japan during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Kido himself had been responsible for hiding Hirohito's peaceful inclinations from other advisors.⁴¹¹ If he was involved with the efforts to steer Hirohito during the war, as Togo claimed, Kido's testimony was likely even closer to the truth. As he had revealed, one of the primary reasons why Hirohito had listened to his advisors to ignore American attempts to avoid war was because they urged him to acknowledge the war sentiment within Japan.⁴¹² Although he continued to emphasize that Hirohito had been directly involved in the war, Kido's portrayal of the Emperor was that of a man who was surrounded by militaristic advisors and a population that wanted war. Hirohito's support for the war only existed because of these factors. Unlike those who had been charged and, eventually, found guilty of war crimes, the emperor had been guided into supporting the war, rather than actively seeking aggressive conflict and expansion.

One of the difficulties in determining the extent to which Hirohito was involved with Japan's conduct during the war was the questionable reliability of Japanese accounts. By August

⁴¹⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Diary of Marquis Kido," July 5, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 7, Radio Report Number 133, BB1.

⁴¹¹ "Togo Says Emperor Was In Dark On Peace," *New York Times*, December 19, 1947, 11, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/togo-says-emperor-was-dark-on-peace/docview/108018861/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁴¹² "Hirohito Aide Says Japan Chose War: Marquis Kido Reveals Emperor Ignored Please for Peace by U.S. in 1941," *New York Times*, September 25, 1945, 2, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-aide-says-japan-chose-war/docview/107187422/se-2?accountid=10559>.

1945, most Japanese records were destroyed, hidden, or falsified.⁴¹³ This meant that, when it came to conduct the war crimes trials, the Allies had to rely almost exclusively on the memoirs and oral testimony of officials who had been directly involved with Japan's war effort and would eventually stand trial. Because it knew that most of the major war criminals hoped to protect the emperor institution, SCAP readily accepted their accounts as fact, rarely questioning the accuracy of their claims. The international press, however, was not so willing to allow these accounts to take hold without serious questioning. On September 18, 1945, Prime Minister Higashikuni told the press that Hirohito had not known in advance about the attack on Pearl Harbor, pushing the narrative that American officials like Fellers wanted.⁴¹⁴ However, rather than accepting his claims, they started questioning how the attack was even possible without the emperor's knowledge. Likely because he was not expecting any response but acceptance of his statement, he was unable to provide them with an answer, instead choosing to end the conference. This press conference encapsulated the Japanese expectations for how questions involving Hirohito were handled. Because of indications from Fellers and others, they knew that the Americans wanted to protect Hirohito. This, along with Japanese officials being used to their own press following the narrative presented to them, likely led Higashikuni to believe that his word would be enough to secure the idea that Hirohito had not known about Pearl Harbor.⁴¹⁵ Although this was clearly not the case, this inability to prove that Hirohito had not been involved never caused significant issues. The people who ardently believed that Hirohito should be charged remained an ever-decreasing minority, particularly as that position was associated with

⁴¹³ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 295, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

⁴¹⁴ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 304, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

⁴¹⁵ Robert H. Berkov, "The Press in Postwar Japan," *Far Eastern Survey* 16, No. 14 (July 23, 1947): 163, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3021349>.

communist sympathies. SCAP, meanwhile, was still willing to believe whatever it was told from Japanese officials if those stories helped secure its policy decisions.

One of the early difficulties in protecting the emperor was due to his closeness to those who were much more difficult to defend, like Prince Konoye. However, as Atcheson acknowledged, the Japanese press articulated an argument that worked for their purposes quite well; “political responsibility rests in the Emperor’s advisers but never in the emperor because the Emperor acts only in accordance with the recommendations of his advisers.”⁴¹⁶ This line of defense was again articulated by the Chief Secretary of the Suzuki Cabinet in 1946, who indicated that Hirohito had on multiple times expressed his disagreement with the war, but believed that he himself should refrain from decision-making and accept the advice offered by his Ministers.⁴¹⁷ Over time, a narrative was formed that positioned Hirohito as the man who had dared to challenge the militarists, even though he was powerless in his position.⁴¹⁸ These arguments from both the Japanese press, who were able to provide an explanation based on the cultural understanding of Hirohito’s position, and the observations of an official who witnessed Hirohito’s interactions with his Cabinet provided strong justification for the American defense. Once the trials began, even more evidence was presented to protect Hirohito’s future. SCAP and the American government worked with Tojo to further exonerate the emperor.⁴¹⁹ Although Tojo’s fate was already sealed, his defense reinforced the idea that Hirohito was not responsible

⁴¹⁶ “The Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State,” November 17, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 709, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d709>.

⁴¹⁷ “Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, to the Secretary of State,” February 16, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 324, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d324>.

⁴¹⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 258.

⁴¹⁹ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 375.

for the actions of the militarists. In doing so, he assisted the Americans in protecting Hirohito from both public opinion and the Allies.

Ultimately, the Americans succeeded. Hirohito was never charged with war crimes in connection to Japan's involvement in the Second World War. Many, including Justice Sir William Webb, who proceeded over the Tokyo trial, continued to believe that it was a mistake to let the "leader of the crime" run free without a trial.⁴²⁰ From the beginning of the occupation, Hirohito had been singled out by the Americans as a valuable ally in ensuring their objectives were met. Despite the political risks of their protection, the Americans insisted he remain untouched. At the urging of American officials, every nation that opposed Japan during the war, including the Soviets, agreed to exempt the emperor from war crimes prosecution in 1946.⁴²¹ In part, this was because charging Hirohito would risk the success of the occupation. Truman understood that a decision to remove Hirohito would be extremely unpopular among the Japanese people.⁴²² By MacArthur's estimation, indicting the emperor would have forced the Americans to establish a military government to even attempt to control the country and protect against guerrilla attacks.⁴²³ Although it was likely that Hirohito could have abdicated without the upheaval that would have occurred with his sentencing, this would have left him unable to assist SCAP.⁴²⁴ By focusing on creating a narrative of the emperor's innocence, the Americans were

⁴²⁰ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 18-19. "Webb's Opinion Hits Hirohito," *New York Times*, November 13, 1948, 9, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/webbs-opinion-hits-hirohito/docview/108233136/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁴²¹ "Foes Agreed on Hirohito; All eleven of Japan's Enemies Exempted Him From War Crimes," *New York Times*, January 15, 1949, 4, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/foes-agreed-on-hirohito/docview/105802131/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁴²² Hal Brands, "The Emperor's New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II," *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 1, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

⁴²³ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 288.

⁴²⁴ Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 316-317.

able to keep him in his position throughout the occupation. This ensured that he was free to help convince the Japanese people that the proposed reforms were beneficial, which was vital in completing SCAP objectives. However, the American defense of Hirohito did not mean they wished for him to remain as emperor indefinitely.

Chapter 12: The Emperor Question

Once SCAP had settled comfortably into its position and Japan was finally making progress towards democracy, one significant question remained; what to do with the emperor. The question on the future of the emperor institution was a hotly debated topic, both for SCAP and the Japanese themselves.⁴²⁵ This “emperor question” defined the last days of the early occupation, demonstrating both the evolution of Japanese political thought and the American perspective on the future of the ally who helped ensure the occupation was successful. In retrospect, the fate of the imperial institution had essentially been decided already, due to the emperor’s enthusiastic and early support for his people.⁴²⁶ At the time, however, Hirohito’s fate was heavily debated. The Americans had decided Hirohito would not be held accountable for Japan’s conduct during the war, but that did not mean they wanted him to remain in his position indefinitely. The Japanese, despite their attachment to the emperor institution, made surprising initial movement towards limiting, or even ending, the monarchy. Even Hirohito himself, despite his family’s long history on the throne, seemed willing to abdicate if asked. As democratic tendencies grew within occupied Japan, the emperor question became, for a time, the dominant political question in Japan.

Considering the basis of Hirohito’s continued protection was the fondness the Japanese held for their emperor, their views on the emperor question are, at face value, unsurprising. In 1945, only the Communists supported the dissolution of the imperial institution. Their position, rather than convincing some of the public to follow, emboldened many of the more reactionary

⁴²⁵ For differing views on the emperor question, see Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 165-166.

⁴²⁶ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 132.

figures to offer their increasingly vocal support of Hirohito as they tied the dissolution of the throne to the extinction of Japan itself.⁴²⁷ By the beginning of 1946, however, the Social Democrats, a minority party that Atcheson compared to Britain's Labor Party, had joined the Communists as one of the only factions that advocated for any sort of change to the imperial institution.⁴²⁸ Among the general Japanese population, very few supported the dissolution of the emperor institution. SCAP, in their estimates, believed support for the retention of the emperor was as high as 95 percent.⁴²⁹ These polls were given at a time when most of the Japanese people were unlikely to disclose their innermost thoughts.⁴³⁰ The nationalist doctrines Japan had passed in the years prior to the war were meant to increase the Japanese people's loyalty to the emperor, but the public had never fully accepted them. However, their fondness for Hirohito extended well past the end of the war. Even when embracing other democratic reforms, there was a profound reluctance towards any changes that would end the emperor institution. Initially, at least, most of the Japanese agreed that regardless of what changes occurred, the emperor would remain.

The Communists, ironically considering the American dislike for them, held the views closest to SCAP's opinion on the emperor question. Since 1945, they had been vocally opposed to retaining the emperor long-term, a position exceedingly unpopular among the general

⁴²⁷ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State," November 15, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 612, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d612>.

⁴²⁸ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

⁴²⁹ "Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, to the Secretary of State," February 11, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 142, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d142>. Hugh H. Smythe and Masaharu Watanabe, "Japanese Popular Attitudes Toward the Emperor," *Pacific Affairs* 26, no. 4 (December 1953): 337-339, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752870>.

⁴³⁰ Hugh H. Smythe and Masaharu Watanabe, "Japanese Popular Attitudes Toward the Emperor," *Pacific Affairs* 26, no. 4 (December 1953): 343, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752870>.

population. Communist leaders openly argued that Hirohito should be held responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbor and, because of his involvement in the war, should not remain in power.⁴³¹ Partially because of these inflammatory comments, communism remained weak in Japan at this point. The calls to remove the emperor actually helped strengthen general public opinion in his favor.⁴³² In America, the communists' anti-emperor stance helped garner support for their policy. Advocacy of punishing Hirohito had become associated with communism.⁴³³ As Cold War tensions increased, people distanced themselves from positions that were associated with communism, including anti-emperor views. In Japan, the leader of the Communist Party, Nosaka Sanzō, revealed to Max W. Bishop, who worked under Acheson, that their influence extended far more than their actual membership.⁴³⁴ Although the communists' anti-emperor stance was extremely unpopular, this did not seem to affect individual support of general communist policy, unlike in the United States. Younger people, women, and blue-collar workers were particularly sympathetic to the Communist perspective.⁴³⁵ The public strongly disagreed with the JCP's initial position regarding the emperor's future. However, there was still some willingness to support their other policies, at least for the time being.

⁴³¹ United States Department of State, *Occupation of Japan: Policy and Progress* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 21. "Tokyo Red Calls Emperor Criminal: Shiga, Head of Communist Party, Says That Hirohito Must Take Pearl Harbor Blame," *New York Times*, November 13, 1945, 3, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/tokyo-red-calls-emperor-criminal/docview/107097515/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁴³² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Popularity of sovereign," June 10, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 5, Radio Report Number 114, BH2.

⁴³³ Hal Brands, "The Emperor's New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II," *The Historian* 68, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24453490>.

⁴³⁴ "Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, to the Secretary of State," February 19, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 145, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d145>.

⁴³⁵ According to Nosaka Sanzō, the communists had been making special appeals to both women and younger people. It is likely that the influence the Communist Party held over the listed groups was a combination of targeted outreach and their ideals representing such a stark change compared to the Japanese government during the Second World War. For the groups most negatively impacted by wartime Japan's government, a party that seemed to stand for such starkly different politics may have seemed desirable.

Due to the unpopularity of their original position, the JCP adjusted slightly by the beginning of 1946. Right after the start of the year, Sanzō and other Party leaders announced their intention to retain the imperial family as figureheads, if the people desired it, although they would be stripped of any political power.⁴³⁶ Some of these beliefs were present within the Party even before Japan's defeat, with Susuma Okano, a representative of the Party during the war, emphasizing that there should be a national referendum to decide Hirohito's fate, due to his religious significance, in June 1945.⁴³⁷ Although a referendum never occurred, Okano's position, and that of the communists in 1946, was remarkably similar to what the Americans advocated: Hirohito's fate would be decided by the Japanese people, but no power would remain with the imperial institution. This would have ensured that the emperor held no actual power, while appeasing the general population by not removing him entirely from his position unless they desired it. However, most of the Japanese were not yet at a point where such an outcome was acceptable, even as they slowly moved towards supporting a reduction of power for Hirohito.

One of the most significant reasons why Hirohito was so loved by the Japanese people was due to their view of him as a national father figure. Perhaps a remnant of the belief that Japan's emperor was divine, they strongly believed that his relationship to the rest of the nation was "that of a father to the family. It is a sentimental, deeply-rooted emotional feeling."⁴³⁸ As argued by Dr. Tetsuo Waki, the Japanese people believed that their general will could only be

⁴³⁶ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to the Secretary of State," January 17, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 125, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d125>.

⁴³⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "The Emperor," June 15, 1945, Record Group 262, Entry Number 34, Container 6, Radio Report Number 75, BA34.

⁴³⁸ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

expressed through the emperor.⁴³⁹ Without him to express that will, there could be no freedom for the Japanese. This relationship was exactly why he was so effective at guiding Japan towards democracy, but it also made SCAP's desire to end the emperor institution even more difficult.

The Japanese retained an intense pride for their race and culture. The emperor, as the patriarch of that culture, remained a source of that dignity throughout the occupation. Hirohito, compared to his predecessors, had held a particularly fond place in the Japanese people's hearts since his coronation.⁴⁴⁰ His ascension to the throne was marked with bitterly cold weather and rain. Rather than remain sheltered under a tent while the crowd remained uncovered, he requested the tent be removed. After he arrived at the event and noticed the crowd had removed their jackets, he elected to do the same in a show of solidarity. This solidified the people's understanding of the fondness and appreciation he held for them. During and after the war, "sweeping parties" would be held, where volunteers cleaned and repaired the imperial grounds and palace, which had been decimated by the conflict.⁴⁴¹ Their fondness for Hirohito, present from his coronation through this time, drove them to take the time to clean and repair the physical representation of the emperor institution, at a time where even basic survival was difficult to secure. This sense of honor and attachment extended past Hirohito towards the imperial institution in its entirety, as they believed it was that institution that helped bind the Japanese people together.⁴⁴² When the dominant political question of the occupation transitioned

⁴³⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "People's Will and Emperor," January 4, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 2, BB3.

⁴⁴⁰ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 54-55.

⁴⁴¹ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 153-154. Edwin P. Hoyt, *Hirohito: The Emperor and the Man* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1992), 154-155.

⁴⁴² "Memorandum by the Chairman of the Far Eastern Commission (McCoy) to the Secretary of State," March 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 159, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d159>.

from the constitutional reforms to the emperor question, the Japanese people's fondness for Hirohito informed their opinions on what the future of the imperial institution should be. For those who continued to see Hirohito as the father of Japan, removing him from his position would destroy Japanese society in its entirety.⁴⁴³ Almost unanimously, apart from the Communists, they agreed that they wanted Hirohito to remain. However, the increase in democratic sentiment pushed by SCAP did have an impact on the future of the emperor institution.

Hirohito, who continued to be a strong advocate of democracy and a supporter of the changes made through the occupation, held his own views on his future as emperor. For those who were skeptical of the emperor's dedication to democratization, it seemed likely that most of his actions in the postwar period were meant to protect his position. The emperor's assistance in ushering Japan towards democracy, from the New Years Rescript to his urging that a new constitution be established, was only a part of a propaganda campaign to reduce pressure for his abdication.⁴⁴⁴ His actions, according to the skeptics, were entirely selfish in nature. Hirohito believed in his divine right to rule, even after he renounced his divinity, and it was this belief that prevented his abdication.⁴⁴⁵ This analysis, while a logical conclusion if Hirohito was purely motivated by self-interest, does not accurately represent his thoughts on the matter.

As analyses of Hirohito's childhood, early reign, and interactions after the war revealed, the emperor had never been enthusiastic about his position. He was timid and unwilling to lead, even within his own childhood social group, where his younger brother's confidence earned him

⁴⁴³ Hugh H. Smythe and Masaharu Watanabe, "Japanese Popular Attitudes Toward the Emperor," *Pacific Affairs* 26, no. 4 (December 1953): 335, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752870>.

⁴⁴⁴ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 299, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

⁴⁴⁵ Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 16.

the leadership role among their friends.⁴⁴⁶ After the long years of being under the control of the militarists, forced to give up his hobbies as the war raged on, he was tired of his position. Because of this, abdication seemed desirable.⁴⁴⁷ Doing so, during serious debates over the emperor institution, would have made it much easier to transition away from a monarchy. Hirohito was the one the Japanese saw as the father of their national family. While that fondness likely would have transitioned to his successor, the type of parasocial relationship that was the foundation for Hirohito's soft power over the Japanese took time to develop. By offering to abdicate, Hirohito was essentially giving the occupation a chance to end the institution. However, as he had proven to be a valuable ally for SCAP, he was urged to remain in his position. The primary reason for his offer, according to SCAP intelligence, was his concern that foreign criticism would lead to him being named a war criminal.⁴⁴⁸ Hirohito's concern was unnecessary, as Acheson advised President Truman to provide the emperor "some sort of immunity from arrest and [while] at the same time told that we regard his continuing on the Throne as necessary to carrying out the surrender conditions."⁴⁴⁹ SCAP had not fully decided on whether Hirohito should be retained or not at this point, as the weakening of the emperor institution was desirable to those within SCAP that believed its very presence damaged any attempts to democratize Japan.

⁴⁴⁶ Toshiaki Kawahara, *Hirohito and His Times: A Japanese Perspective* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1990), 15-16.

⁴⁴⁷ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to President Truman," November 5, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 593, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d593>.

⁴⁴⁸ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to President Truman," January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

⁴⁴⁹ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Acheson) to President Truman," January 4, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 110, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d110>.

At this point of the occupation, SCAP had already decided that regardless of the eventual answer to the emperor question, Hirohito would remain a figurehead at best.⁴⁵⁰ When pushing for constitutional reform, the reduction of power for the emperor was repeatedly emphasized. When the Japanese House of Representatives finally voted on the constitutional revisions on August 21, 1946, Article Four specifically emphasized that “Never shall he have powers related to government.”⁴⁵¹ This, along with the later seizure of the imperial family’s wealth meant the end of the emperor institution’s implicit political power. While the soft power Hirohito wielded could not be as easily erased, it did mean that he could not actively engage in political matters outside voicing his personal opinion. The changes to the emperor institution were largely what the Japanese public expected. Bishop’s investigation into their opinion on the emperor question did reveal almost universal support for Hirohito, but he also emphasized that the Japanese expected and mostly welcomed changes to his position.⁴⁵² Widespread support for Hirohito did not mean a strong resistance to change. As democratic tendencies grew, the Japanese slowly adapted to the idea of the emperor institution becoming something similar to the monarchy in England: a constant presence, and still relevant for cultural reasons, but with no real political power. The respect the Japanese people continued to feel towards the emperor, along with their acceptance of the institutional changes introduced by the Americans demonstrated the beginning of a reconciliation between their deep cultural bond and the democratic values being introduced by SCAP.

⁴⁵⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, “Emperor Won’t Be Tried for War Crimes,” Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 3, Daily Report 43, BB1.

⁴⁵¹ “Memorandum of changes in Japanese Draft Constitution as Adopted,” November 21, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 277, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d277>.

⁴⁵² “Mr. Max W. Bishop, of the Office of the Political Adviser in Japan, to the Secretary of State,” February 11, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 142, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d142>.

The Americans had clearly gained from retaining Hirohito, capitalizing on his influence to better connect with the Japanese people. Even with his institutional power stripped, the emperor still held substantial influence over Japan. His people still believed in what he and the imperial house stood for.⁴⁵³ Because of this, even after the new constitution stripped the imperial institution of its political power, Hirohito remained relevant to Japan's internal development. Despite his usefulness and clear support for democratic tendencies, his future remained an open question among SCAP. Multiple officials expressed significant distaste for his continued prestige, but the official American policy on the emperor question was to let the Japanese decide. While acknowledging that the retention of the emperor institution was inconsistent with American objectives, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East made specific contingencies meant to guide Japan into limiting the emperor's power, securing democratic tendencies even if the Japanese people decided against ending the institution.⁴⁵⁴ SCAP was directed to encourage the Japanese to eventually cast aside their emperor, but the occupation's consistent use of him doomed any chances of ending the institution. The first year of the occupation was spent increasing democratic tendencies and ensuring the Japanese remained receptive to American influence, particularly using Hirohito's soft power. This meant that the Japanese public consistently saw their emperor, whom they already had a deep affection for, actively working to make Japan a peaceful and democratic nation. No matter how readily they adopted democratic tendencies, it was unlikely that they would decide to cast aside the man who they viewed as responsible for the end of the war and the positive changes that had occurred

⁴⁵³ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 337, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

⁴⁵⁴ "Report by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East," January 7, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 116, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d116>.

since. As the threat of communism grew, this eventually worked in favor of the Americans. Despite his liberal tendencies, the Americans believed the emperor was a bulwark of conservatism in Japan, capable of fending off significant communist encroachment.⁴⁵⁵ Just by being present, Hirohito helped solidify Japan's existence as an anti-communist nation.

The best the Americans could hope for, as they themselves recognized, was the retention of the emperor institution with significant limitations to the emperor's power. Once it became clear that this was what most Japanese preferred, with the Communists being the only group desiring complete removal, MacArthur was directed to refrain from advocating for the full end to the institution.⁴⁵⁶ Although most of Japan continue to support the emperor, SCAP still took steps to ensure that there would be no sudden upheaval. When a plan was introduced to encourage critical public discussion of the throne, Washington sent secret instructions to see the proposal killed, citing a fear of strengthening communist and ultra-nationalist tendencies.⁴⁵⁷ Eventually, this fear evolved into policies that penalized even implied criticism of the emperor or the occupation's decision to preserve the throne.⁴⁵⁸ The time to abolish the institution had passed. Even though it continued to be discussed, MacArthur had already made the decision to retain Hirohito, at least for the remainder of the occupation. When he was instructed in early January 1946 to decide whether the institution would be reformed or abolished, his belief in Hirohito's

⁴⁵⁵ Hal Brands, "Who Saved the Emperor? The MacArthur Myth and U.S. Policy toward Hirohito and the Japanese Imperial Institution, 1942-1946," *Pacific Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (May 2006): 295, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2006.75.2.271>.

⁴⁵⁶ "Report by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Subcommittee for the Far East," April 13, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 181, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d181>.

⁴⁵⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 243.

⁴⁵⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 390.

usefulness to American goals cemented this reality.⁴⁵⁹ However, perhaps due to hope that the Japanese would eventually decide to fully end it, MacArthur was also instructed to keep the issue open.

Once the Japanese constitution was nearing passage, the Americans actively endorsed a version of the Allies' future plans for Japan that kept the emperor question alive, even siding with the Soviets over the British to support their perspective.⁴⁶⁰ The plans that were reviewed did deal with more than just the emperor question, but the Americans' following internal discussion of the debate emphasize their view that there were no issues with keeping the emperor question alive. The Japanese had mostly decided that they wanted to retain Hirohito, although with significant reductions to his power. The Americans, however, continued to hope that they might change their minds and decide to end the emperor institution. Although Hirohito was an extremely useful ally in establishing new democratic institutions in Japan, the belief that the emperor system was undemocratic in nature remained among some American officials. By leaving the emperor question open, they signaled their hope for a future Japan free of the imperial institution, even though it was vital to the occupation's success.

The possibility of Hirohito's abdication remained an open question for over two years, long after the emperor question had been otherwise settled. Even after the explosive accusation from Marquis Kido during his war crimes trial that Hirohito had known more about Japan's wartime conduct than had been previously revealed, the Japanese people lacked the sentiment

⁴⁵⁹ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 333-335, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

⁴⁶⁰ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson)," June 24, 1946, , *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 217, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d217>.

necessary to remove him.⁴⁶¹ At that point in the occupation, only strong advocacy from every Allied country would have forced abdication, which the Americans would have prevented. It was only on November 12, 1948, that Hirohito officially notified MacArthur that he would not be abdicating his position.⁴⁶² Notably, this was the same day that the Tokyo War Crimes trials officially concluded.⁴⁶³ Although abdication remained a possibility after this point, it was increasingly unlikely. At that point, the occupation's focus had shifted from the internal development of Japan towards the Cold War, meaning there was less of a focus on Japan's democratization. Acheson's advisement to President Truman showed that until a decision had been made, Hirohito would continue to be protected from accusations of war crimes. As this was, at least according to SCAP intelligence, one of the primary reasons he had considered abdicating, this meant there was no reason for the emperor to do so. However, the fact that it remained an open question for Hirohito as well until the end of 1948 shows that there were other reasons for his willingness to renounce the throne. If his primary concern was to protect himself, there would have been no reason to leave the decision up to SCAP for so long, especially once it was clear that their priorities were elsewhere. As a strong proponent of democracy in Japan and a staunch ally of the American occupation, it is more likely that he offered to abdicate in order to open Japan to a future without an emperor but wanted to make sure that any actions on his part were not detrimental to the occupation's goals. Because SCAP kept an ambiguous position on the

⁴⁶¹ Lindesay Parrott, "Hirohito's Throne Is Not Threatened: Japanese Discount Testimony of Kido – Abdication Not Regarded as Feasible," *New York Times*, October 19, 1947, 19, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohitos-throne-is-not-threatened/docview/107794646/se-2?accountid=12461>.

⁴⁶² "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," November 18, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 610, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d610>.

⁴⁶³ Herbert P. Bix, "The Showa Emperor's 'Monologue' and the Problem of War Responsibility," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1992): 333, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/132824>.

matter, wanting the dissolution of the throne but electing to let the Japanese make the final decision themselves, Hirohito's position remained in a state of limbo.

Chapter 13: The Reverse Course

By early 1947, American foreign policy was experiencing a significant shift. Increasingly, diplomatic efforts focused on the growing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. The onset of the Cold War had a drastic impact on all aspects of American foreign policy, including the Japanese occupation. The Cold War did not start with one event but was instead the cumulation of tensions that had been growing since even before the end of the Second World war. However, its place as a major influencing factor on American foreign policy in Japan was not present until after the first steps of the occupation had already been carried out. Soviet frustration toward how the United States was conducting its occupation had been present as early as October 1945, but at that point it was treated similarly to Australia and New Zealand's disapproval of how the emperor was being treated.⁴⁶⁴ It was only in 1947 that the growth of communism across the world, particularly in Asia, led to an active response by the Americans. This response meant significant changes to the United States' foreign policy goals in Japan as they began focusing on creating a steadfast ally in Asia to function as a staging ground for anti-communist action in the area. Hirohito, having secured his safety from facing consequences over Japan's past aggression through assisting with the occupation's transition, began losing his effectiveness as global politics reached a new stage. He retained his sway over the Japanese people, but shifting priorities meant SCAP cared less about cultivating Japan's independence as a democracy. As Americans adopted a Cold War mentality, their desires towards Japan's future role in international society transitioned from being that of an

⁴⁶⁴ "The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Secretary of State," October 30, 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1945, The British Commonwealth, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 578, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v06/d578>.

independent democracy towards being a nation that was fundamentally tied to the United States and starkly anticommunist.

With the Americans and Soviets increasingly at odds, both ideologically and geopolitically, direct confrontation seemed likely. This antagonistic relationship came to the forefront of international politics, particularly as both countries sought to expand their spheres of influence in the postwar period. As a result, the Americans quickly adopted a mindset that emphasized Soviet expansion as an existential threat to freedom and democracy.⁴⁶⁵ This Cold War mentality helped shape both domestic and foreign policy for the United States. As time went on, American officials increasingly believed that any decision made to prevent the spread of communism was justified, even if those decisions went against the democratic principles they sought to preserve. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Americans had developed a vested interest in establishing a buffer zone across the Pacific to protect their west coast.⁴⁶⁶ At the same time, the Soviets hoped to establish a similar defensive zone through the spread of communism to adjacent countries. Because Japan sat between both spheres of influence, the Americans viewed the entire occupation through this Cold War mentality.

MacArthur, as Supreme Commander, played the most significant role in introducing this Cold War mentality to Japan. Even before the Cold War began, he was known for his conservative nature and a willingness to put the United States and its objectives before anything else.⁴⁶⁷ Once the working relationship between the Americans and Soviets deteriorated, he was quick to acknowledge the impending conflict between the countries. However, for MacArthur,

⁴⁶⁵ At the same time, the Soviets adopted their own mindset that mirrored what was occurring in the United States.

⁴⁶⁶ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 53-54.

⁴⁶⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 7-8.

the Cold War was not a conflict between democracy and communism. Instead, he believed that the primary battle was between communism and Christianity.⁴⁶⁸ As a religious man, the Soviet Union's anti-religious stance accelerated his already antagonistic stance toward the communist threat. Even though most of the occupation had been spent democratizing Japan, the Cold War eventually became such a dominating factor in American foreign policy that, in 1949, MacArthur even questioned whether the JCP should remain legal under Japanese law.⁴⁶⁹ Compared to the early months of the occupation, when SCAP had allied with the JCP and JSP to encourage democratization, this was a significant shift.

With the onset of the Cold War as a significant factor in American foreign policy, the United States-led occupation pivoted how it dealt with Japan. This "reverse course" era saw significant rollbacks in initial Allied goals for Japan, including the reintroduction of some elements originally deemed undesirable. This was done to better respond to existing Cold War threats.⁴⁷⁰ Originally, the Allies wanted a demilitarized and peaceful Japan that could contribute to international affairs and help emphasize the importance of democracy while fully abandoning the nationalism of their past. Through policy guided by this desire, "Japan had become the world's greatest laboratory for an experiment in the liberation of a people from totalitarian military rule and for the liberalization of government from within."⁴⁷¹ However, this idealized version of Japan faded into the background as the Americans increasingly focused on the

⁴⁶⁸ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 69.

⁴⁶⁹ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 116.

⁴⁷⁰ In particular, the United States were greatly concerned with the growing influence the Soviets wielded as communism spread around the world. Asia in particular saw a massive explosion of communist influence in the early parts of the Cold War, which made it even more important, from an American perspective, to reinforce the presence of democracy in Asia through Japan.

⁴⁷¹ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 282.

communist threat. While these objectives remained through the reverse course, a clear desire developed for Japanese politics to retain a significant conservative element; labor unions were politically crippled, and many conservative bureaucrats and politicians who had been purged were encouraged to rejoin society. Some saw this as merely a shift in emphasis toward economic revitalization, rather than a reversal of SCAP's previous work.⁴⁷² Even if this was the initial goal at the time, the results of these policies led to a resurgence of conservatism and significant harm to Japan's budding labor movement. Democratization was no longer the focus, and that was reflected in the conditions within Japan.

Although occupation policy shifted in the latter years, the noticeable social improvements that had already occurred forced SCAP to be subtle in executing its new policies. As progress was made, the need for a full-scale military occupation faded. SCAP soon began to recognize that the continued military presence could damage their objectives in Japan.⁴⁷³ However, because of the Cold War, the Americans retained a strong desire to remain present in the area, at least until they could be assured that Japan would remain an ally against the Soviets. Because of this, the Americans needed to balance their approach, coaxing the Japanese toward desiring a continued American presence, even after it was clear that most of their initial objectives had been achieved. Change would have led to opposition from the Japanese and other allies, so it was vital to enact a policy that was rapid but camouflaged.⁴⁷⁴ In articulating American policy on the issue, John P. Davies, Jr. of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff emphasized that the United

⁴⁷² Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 473.

⁴⁷³ "The Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," June 19, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 223, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d223>.

⁴⁷⁴ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 46, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

States' central objective was "a stable Japan, integrated into the Pacific economy, friendly to the U.S. and, in case of need, a ready and dependable Ally of the U.S."⁴⁷⁵ The Americans may not have wanted to impact their previous democratization efforts, but this was the start of a new worldwide security policy that had lasting consequences.⁴⁷⁶ Instead of simply democratizing Japan, the goal had moved towards ensuring it remained connected to America, serving as an extension of American foreign policy goals in the Pacific.

More than almost any other change made during the reverse course, the reintroduction of conservative officials emphasized the stark differences between SCAP policy before and during the Cold War. By the beginning of 1948, Americans were advocating for significant modifications to their initial purge policy.⁴⁷⁷ They justified this change by arguing that it had removed too many experienced individuals who could be valuable in assisting a smoother transition, particularly in the wake of economic trouble. These people had been the most active in building up and running Japan's war machine.⁴⁷⁸ As the desire to punish the people responsible for Japan's involvement in the war faded in favor of combatting the Soviets, these industrialists were forgiven in order to re-establish Japan as an economic power in the region. Initially, the purge had been meant to ensure that the people involved in Japan's former aggression could not regain political power. However, due to desires brought on by the Cold

⁴⁷⁵ "Memorandum by Mr. John P. Davies, Jr., of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff (Kennan)," August 11, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 393, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d393>.

⁴⁷⁶ Yong Wook Lee, "The Origin of One Party Domination: America's Reverse Course and the Emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 380, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23258199>.

⁴⁷⁷ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman)," January 16, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 494, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d494>.

⁴⁷⁸ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 48, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

War, American policymakers retroactively re-interpreted it as a strategy that had led to the penalization of people who were simply following orders and helping their country.⁴⁷⁹ The influence this decision had on Japan's political development was clear. Because of the Cold War, the Allied governments began to believe that dealing with the consequences of old hostilities was less important than ensuring that Japan acted as an effective member of the American bloc.⁴⁸⁰ Through this new interpretation of the previous purge policy, the contributions of Japanese leaders to the country's aggressive actions during the Second World War were essentially forgiven, paving the way for them to regain some of their lost influence.

The removal of militarists from power had been a requirement of the occupation, as laid out in the Potsdam Declaration. Despite this, American officials increasingly supported a relaxation of these policies, including the full reintroduction of the removed individuals into Japanese government and society.⁴⁸¹ To some extent, there were logical reasons for this move. As George Kennan, the Chief of the Division of Planning and Policy in the State Department, argued, the existence of a large group of people dissatisfied with their current lot due to their status as purgees could potentially be exploited by communist elements to increase discontent in Japan.⁴⁸² However, this shift in policy was also influenced by the increased power of more

⁴⁷⁹ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman)," January 16, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 494, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d494>.

⁴⁸⁰ Sandra Wilson, "War Criminals in the Post-war World: The Case of Katō Tetsutarō," *War in History* 22, no. 1 (January 2015): 89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26098225>.

⁴⁸¹ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," April 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 522, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d522>. "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," May 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 552, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d552>.

⁴⁸² "Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Canadian Department for External Affairs," June 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 558, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d558>.

conservative members of SCAP. Most of the liberals had been forced out, leaving MacArthur with advisors such as Major General Charles A. Willoughby, who the Supreme Commander referred to as “my lovable fascist.”⁴⁸³ Willoughby led SCAP’s intelligence branch, which wielded the most power throughout the occupation, and openly advocated for the reinstatement of purged military and political leaders.⁴⁸⁴ With such a man occupying one of the most powerful positions within the occupation, second only to MacArthur, it is unsurprising that SCAP reversed much of its initial purge policy.

Many in SCAP also believed the reintroduction of experienced politicians and businessmen would help alleviate the economic struggles Japan was facing. Some, like Kennan, even argued that the dissolution of the Zaibatsu was a step too far. They believed that the earlier, more liberal directives made it easier for communists to subvert Japan’s political development.⁴⁸⁵ Only by restoring Japan’s capitalist class to undisputed authority would the communist threat be repelled. None of this dissatisfaction was voiced until America had firmly settled into a Cold War mentality. This belief that earlier liberal reforms benefitted the Left too much occurred only when the United States began embracing more conservative ideals as an attempt to combat the rising threat of communism.⁴⁸⁶ By adapting a perspective that portrayed global politics as a struggle between authoritarian left-wing communism and democracy, SCAP began viewing the purged individuals as a large group with political, economic, and industrial

⁴⁸³ Willoughby took pride in the nickname “Little Hitler” given to him by his subordinates. Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 161.

⁴⁸⁴ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 162.

⁴⁸⁵ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 459.

⁴⁸⁶ Howard Schonberger, “U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism,” *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 44, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

knowledge. They could either be embraced and reintroduced into Japanese society or be used by the communists to disrupt American goals. This abrupt pivot away from their initial occupation policies also meant Hirohito had become essentially useless. He was an effective ally in guiding Japan towards becoming an independent democracy, but the reverse course required more direct involvement from MacArthur and SCAP.

By this point in the occupation, the Japanese people had essentially been pacified. Early on, one of the primary reasons for retaining the emperor and protecting him from accusations of war crimes was because of his ability to connect with his people. His effectiveness did not change as the reverse course began, but at that point there was no longer a significant concern over the possibility of a popular uprising or guerrilla warfare. Japan had been fully disarmed and the occupying forces were firmly entrenched, meaning they could handle dissent if needed. Even when discussing the devastation that had been inflicted on them by the Americans at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, no sense of anger at their occupiers was present.⁴⁸⁷ Although there were some questions on whether the Americans would help them rebuild, even this was accompanied with an acknowledgement that Japan's war conduct meant they had deserved such attacks.

One of the most emphasized aspects of the occupation, as outlined in Message No. 1 to MacArthur, was that work should be done through the Japanese whenever possible. Forcing democracy and reform onto the Japanese was essentially a last resort, since that would prevent the changes from being fully accepted. Because of Hirohito's soft power, he was the perfect connection point between SCAP and the Japanese people to slowly urge them towards the desired reforms by consistently showing his public support for the Allied occupation. Once the

⁴⁸⁷ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Tour of Atom-Bombed Cities Described," January 9, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 1, Radio Report Number 6, BC3-BC5.

occupation's focus began drifting away from their initial goals due to the concerns brought on by the Cold War, Hirohito's usefulness faded. The emperor question had already been answered, meaning he would remain in his position unless the Japanese people later decided to end the monarchy. Although this decision had been made because the Americans wanted to use his soft power, the changes in occupation during this period removed the need for his assistance. SCAP was no longer focused on slowly moving Japan towards being an independent but peaceful contributor to the international community, instead desiring a steadfast ally against communism in Asia. This sudden shift was only possible due to the groundwork established during the first stage of the occupation, with Hirohito being a significant contributor. At this point, however, the Japanese people had been guided to a position where SCAP could more directly influence them in a direction deemed desirable by the Americans.

Despite the emphasis the Americans put on the threat of Soviet intervention in Japan, the Soviet Union had a distinct lack of interest in pulling the Japanese over to their side. The Japanese people had a longstanding and intense dislike for the Soviets and were staunchly anticommunist. Just a year after the United States decimated two of their cities with nuclear weapons, which itself was preceded by sustained firebombing campaigns over dozens of others including Tokyo, hatred for the Soviets and communism far outweighed any resentment for the Americans.⁴⁸⁸ The Japanese Communist Party did have some influence, but not to any meaningful extent. According to American intelligence in December 1947, the Soviets viewed a communist takeover of Japan as a tertiary objective, seen as an extremely unlikely outcome

⁴⁸⁸ "The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State," August 20, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 241, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d241>.

unless they already controlled most of Asia.⁴⁸⁹ If an opportunity had presented itself, the Soviets may have made attempts to increase their influence. However, their success elsewhere in Asia meant it was entirely unnecessary. The Soviet Union's focus remained on ensuring that its sphere of influence included the rest of Asia. With the Americans making clear their goals to have Japan function as their vassal in Asia, any move by the Soviets against Japan would antagonize the United States for little potential gain. This was known to the Americans months before they justified their continued occupation of Japan. However, continuing to focus on the possibility of attacks on Japanese democracy by the Soviets allowed them to justify remaining in the country until an official peace could be solidified. In doing so, the United States could continue its attempts to mold Japan in being the perfect ally.

By this point, the United States' focus on Japan had clearly drifted away from its desire to create a peaceful and independent democratic nation in Japan. The Cold War did not lead to a full reversal of those ideals, as it still cultivated democratic tendencies in Japan, but it did significantly change America's focus. Japan's future, as envisioned by United States officials who had fully transitioned to a Cold War mentality, was that of an ally it could depend on who could not stand on its own in a military conflict.⁴⁹⁰ Initially, demilitarization in Japan was meant to prevent further aggression like what had contributed to the start of the Second World War. However, from the perspective of a growing global conflict, Japan's lack of an ability to adequately defend itself meant it was required to form an alliance with a country who did have proper defense capabilities. The United States, who had spent so much time rebuilding the

⁴⁸⁹ "The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Durbrow) to the Secretary of State," December 2, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 450, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d450>.

⁴⁹⁰ "Memorandum by Mr. John P. Davies, Jr., of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff (Kennan)," August 11, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 393, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d393>.

country and encouraging democracy, believed itself to be the perfect fit. In May 1947, MacArthur reportedly pledged to Hirohito that he would guarantee Japan's defense, since their new constitution prevented the re-establishment of Japan's military.⁴⁹¹ However, perhaps because of a desire to avoid enhancing Soviet suspicions, MacArthur soon denied those claims. The damage had already been done, in part. This denial led to Japanese officials believing that their peace delegation must press for an international security guarantee.⁴⁹² As such an action may have caused significant delays to the peace treaty if the Soviets and Americans clashed over the issue, their statement emphasized the significant security concerns that the Japanese officials held as tensions increased. The United States, as the country that had guided most of their reforms, was responsible for protecting them against Soviet aggression. For the Japanese, losing American military support meant the constant possibility of their safety being threatened.

At this point in the occupation, even the United States was uncertain in how its policy regarding Japan would evolve. On August 12, 1947, George Kennan rejected the Policy Planning Staff's draft treaty for Japan because the United States, as far as he knew, had "not yet formulated with any degree of concreteness our [their] objectives with respect to Japan and the Pacific area."⁴⁹³ He believed it would be dangerous to begin peace discussions without first deciding what the United States objectives were in the area, despite MacArthur's pledge to Hirohito. Two years after the start of the occupation, the United States, according to the Director of the Policy Planning Staff, had no specific plan laid out for its desires in the area. However,

⁴⁹¹ "Pledge to Defend Japan Reported," *New York Times*, May 7, 1947, 3, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/pledge-defend-japan-reported/docview/107952141/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁴⁹² Lindsey Parrott, "Japanese Say U.S. Must Be Defender: Believe We Can Get Assembly of United Nations to Guarantee Aid Against Aggressor," *New York Times*, May 10, 1947, 7, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/japanese-say-u-s-must-be-defender/docview/107952763/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁴⁹³ "Memorandum by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan) to the Under Secretary of State (Lovett)," August 12, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 394, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d394>.

this was not entirely the case, no matter what Kennan claimed. Ever since Pearl Harbor, the Americans had been keenly aware of the need to further extend their sphere of influence to protect United States holdings in the Pacific.⁴⁹⁴ The satellite islands around Japan, particularly Okinawa, were perfect staging grounds. This desire was not just a Cold War issue, either, as there had been advocates for seizing the islands all throughout the war.⁴⁹⁵ Although the Cold War certainly enhanced the likelihood that such a military presence would be necessary, it only served to further justify what the Americans already wanted.

The lack of policy regarding American objectives in Japan, as mentioned by Kennan, was not due to a lack of oversight, but instead it emphasized the massive impact the onset of the Cold War had on American policy development. The increased hostilities that the Soviets had driven the Americans into forced them to re-write their foreign policy positions to encapsulate the new threats to their influence. The desire for an American military presence on islands like Okinawa had existed for some time, but those goals were built off a general fear of another Pearl Harbor-like attack. The Cold War, however, brought the possibility of war with the Soviets as an even greater threat than the Japanese had been in 1941. That generalized desire for a military buffer in the Pacific solidified into a national security priority. It was at this point, when they were forced to redefine their goals for Japan's occupation, that the Americans began exerting a stronger direct influence on the Japanese. They sought to bind Japan to the United States economically as they assisted in alleviating the burdens of a struggling economy. SCAP also began exerting a more direct impact on Japanese political development, ensuring that their government could

⁴⁹⁴ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 53-54.

⁴⁹⁵ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 135.

continue to support the United States and enact the changes that were most beneficial to their slowly developing Cold War policy.

Chapter 14: Changes in Japan

Considering the onset of the Cold War, a more direct intervention on Japanese political development held a few advantages for the Americans. First, it could help ensure that the people chosen by the Japanese were amenable to policies that aligned with the American perspective, molding Japan until it was in the perfect position to assist with whatever outcomes the Cold War had in the area. Second, it meant the United States could ensure that the political elements that might be sympathetic to the Soviets remained only a small voice in the Japanese political landscape. It was this second aspect of more direct American involvement that led to the modification of purge restrictions on politicians. By allowing people who had previously been banned from holding public service positions back into the Japanese political arena, experienced politicians could help Japan's government run more effectively.⁴⁹⁶ United States observers believed this was crucial, since there were concerns on whether new leaders could successfully replace the old in efficiently running the country. More importantly, the purge had removed many people who were "distinctly pro-American before the war and all of whom are [were] anti-Communist," the exact people who would be most beneficial to the Americans to have in power.⁴⁹⁷ From the American perspective, Communism was just as bad as the worst of Japan's militarist factions during the war.⁴⁹⁸ They hoped the Japanese would reject the extreme left as

⁴⁹⁶ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman)," January 16, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 494, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d494>.

⁴⁹⁷ "Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman)," January 16, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 494, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d494>.

⁴⁹⁸ "Reply on Behalf of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur," February 27, 1948, *The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 507, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d507>.

they had the extreme right. However, the Japanese had not thrown out the extreme right – the nationalists – on their own. It was only because of the influence of the occupying forces, the requirement that Japan adopt democracy, and the removal of conservatives through the purges that the extreme right was “thrown out.” Similarly, the Cold War and the threat of Communism led the Americans to engage in a similar level of intervention, systematically targeting elements that may have led to an increased level of support for communist ideology.

One of the clearest examples of SCAP influence on Japanese politics was through their growing anti-labor policies. Increasingly, labor unions had become a source of significant political power in Japan, and often held a left-leaning political stance. MacArthur asserted that Japan’s labor movement was allowed more rights and protections than in most other democratic countries, claiming that the real danger to Japanese labor unions was infiltration by communists seeking to exploit the organizations.⁴⁹⁹ It was this possibility, according to MacArthur, that led to his decision to deny Japanese workers the ability to conduct a general strike.⁵⁰⁰ Doing so would have also directly affected the occupation’s ability to continue addressing Japan’s economic woes, but MacArthur claimed that the threat of communist influence was the primary reason for this decision. Some argue that this general strike was, in reality, an attempt to overthrow the Yoshida government by force.⁵⁰¹ However, if this were the case, a government ban on organizing would not have prevented such an action. Regardless of the ban, SCAP would have stepped in to prevent such an upheaval, particularly if it meant the possibility of a communist government seizing power. Arguing that the ban on a general strike was the only reason that an

⁴⁹⁹ “Press Release Issued September 17 by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur at Tokyo.” September 17, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 581, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d581>.

⁵⁰⁰ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 308.

⁵⁰¹ Justin Williams, Sr., “American Democratization Policy for Occupied Japan: Correcting the Revisionist Version,” *Pacific Historical Review* 57, no. 2 (May 1988): 188, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4492265>.

uprising did not occur both vastly overestimated the presence of communist sympathy within unions and ignores SCAP's presence in its entirety. Following the ban, American officials claimed that Japanese communists had begun infiltrating government-affiliated unions.⁵⁰² When these unions threatened to strike, MacArthur intervened yet again by recommending revisions to the National Public Service Law, removing their ability to strike.⁵⁰³ This action led to the resignation of James S. Killen, the Chief of the Labor Division of SCAP, who believed such actions would cripple the labor movement in Japan. The "communist dominated" labor unions strongly opposed the change, but the Japanese Government had taken MacArthur's recommendation to do so as a direct order.⁵⁰⁴ Regardless of how MacArthur later presented the issue, his involvement led Japan's government to believe that his recommendation was a command issued through his power as the Supreme Commander of the occupation. This decision was highly contentious, with delegates from the Soviet Union, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain harshly criticizing MacArthur through the FEC.⁵⁰⁵ However, the FEC had proven itself to be an ineffective body to dispute American policy in Japan. In this case, like many others, these complaints led to no substantial changes.

There were other, more pragmatic, arguments against the labor movement, as well. It was believed that once the initial improvements had been completed, Japan's economy was in such

⁵⁰² Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 309.

⁵⁰³ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 77-78. "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State, August 13, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 576, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d576>.

⁵⁰⁴ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State, August 13, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 576, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d576>.

⁵⁰⁵ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 99.

disrepair that the country could not afford their workers being paid more.⁵⁰⁶ According to this argument, restricting the ability of workers to advocate for themselves was necessary to bolster Japan's economy. Those who disagreed, however, argued that SCAP was subverting its own reforms when it attacked the ability of labor unions to engage in direct action.⁵⁰⁷ MacArthur's letter directing the revision of the National Public Service Law, for example, was harshly criticized by the both Labor and State departments, as well as American labor leaders.⁵⁰⁸ Although pragmatism may have been a factor in MacArthur's decision to crack down on the Japanese labor movement, it was tertiary at best. As with most of the decisions made during the reverse course, the primary focus was combatting the perceived threat of communism.

This anti-labor stance was quickly adopted by the conservative Japanese government. Even when labor strikes did not directly violate SCAP directives, the government sued labor leaders in the name of the occupation.⁵⁰⁹ This only heightened the distrust toward the Yoshida cabinet that was held by most people involved in the labor movement.⁵¹⁰ It was their belief that giving Japan's government legal authority to dictate which unions and labor actions were acceptable would limit the ability of legitimate unions to organize. While theoretically, SCAP only desired a labor movement free of communist influence, the Japanese government, particularly when Yoshida was serving as premier, consistently moved to exert even greater control over labor.

⁵⁰⁶ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 76-77.

⁵⁰⁷ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 333.

⁵⁰⁸ Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 262, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

⁵⁰⁹ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Striking Captain is Sued," September 19, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 11, Radio Report Number 187, BD2.

⁵¹⁰ Miriam S. Farley, "Labor Policy in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Affairs* 20, no.2 (June 1947): 134, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752314>.

Much of the shift in how SCAP viewed Japan's labor movement can be traced back to one fundamental misunderstanding in how each culture viewed the concept of labor movements. For the Japanese, workers advocating for themselves was an inherently political action. If they were to succeed, it would not be through the careful discussions with which American labor was familiar. In the United States, there was essentially no political connotations to the labor struggle, at least at this point.⁵¹¹ This distinction meant that American labor leaders often saw Japan's unions as revolutionary cells with no interest in slowly reaching agreements with their employers through negotiation.⁵¹² When they began reinvigorating the labor movement in Japan, SCAP either ignored or was unaware of these cultural differences. Instead, it focused on putting the machinery of American labor in place before it worried about teaching the Japanese people how to conduct labor disputes the "right" way.⁵¹³ When it saw unions developing with the political undertones that were common in Japanese labor, SCAP assumed that this was due to communist intervention. Eventually, this assumption evolved into a general belief that all of Japan's labor movement was tainted by the presence of communists.

As SCAP argued, the labor unions had been thoroughly infiltrated by communists who sought to actively disrupt the ability of Japan to progress, necessitating some sort of response. Even Killen, the labor advocate who had resigned over the National Public Service Law controversy, argued that Japan's labor unions had been infiltrated by small groups of Soviets who hoped to establish a communist police state.⁵¹⁴ By equating strikes and other powers of

⁵¹¹ Miriam S. Farley, "Labor Policy in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Affairs* 20, no.2 (June 1947): 138, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752314>.

⁵¹² Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 254, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

⁵¹³ Miriam S. Farley, "Labor Policy in Occupied Japan," *Pacific Affairs* 20, no.2 (June 1947): 137, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2752314>.

⁵¹⁴ Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 256, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

bargaining with communist attempts to fully disrupt Japan's progress, SCAP had created a strong argument for revoking the political power of workers when it threatened their own goals for Japan's future. MacArthur was already familiar with using accusations of communism to attack political activists he disagreed with. In 1932, MacArthur took personal charge of the army in Washington to crush the Bonus March.⁵¹⁵ After the protestors were removed, he went to the press, decrying the protestors as communists. In Japan, however, the Supreme Commander did not receive the same ridicule he had following the Bonus March. Instead, he successfully perpetuated the idea that Japanese labor was largely influenced by the communists and, therefore, should be stripped of their recently granted rights. Such power over Japan's labor rights was further justified by FEC policy if MacArthur found labor actions to be negatively impactful to the objectives of the occupation.⁵¹⁶ Considering the already-established ability for MacArthur to interpret FEC directives in whatever way most benefited American foreign policy directives, this meant he was able to justify anti-labor actions to the international community while weakening the political power of organizations that could negatively impact United States objectives in Japan. Limiting the ability of Japanese workers to collectively bargain, despite the inherently undemocratic restrictions on allowing people to voice their desires, was seen as "desirable as a matter of policy" to the Americans.⁵¹⁷ Doing so paved the way for further courtship of conservative political elements in Japan, who the Americans believed were more in line with their thinking regarding Japan's future.

⁵¹⁵ William M. Leavitt, "General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan," *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 316, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

⁵¹⁶ "The Department of State to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Tokyo," October 8, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 591, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d591>.

⁵¹⁷ "The Department of State to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Tokyo," October 8, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 591, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d591>.

The conservatives in Japan were strongly supportive of MacArthur's influence in curbing labor practices and, partially because of this action, Prime Minister Yoshida was extremely confident that his party would gain significant ground during the next general election.⁵¹⁸ SCAP's demonization of labor unions, while also arguing that they were really protecting labor from an "invasion of licentious minority pressures" sent strong signals of their preference for the more conservative elements in Japan's political sphere.⁵¹⁹ MacArthur's actions in limiting the power of labor unions acted as a call to action for conservatives in Japan, leading to a conservative stranglehold on Japanese politics that lasted decades after the occupation ended. Union members, themselves, also experienced this shift. Increasingly, they began supporting more moderate leaders and programs.⁵²⁰ At the time, some argued that this was because union members were finally recognizing the threat of communism. However, considering the significant amount of hostility that Japanese labor faced, from both their government and SCAP, it is likely that they had started to recognize that they had no hope for improved labor conditions unless they conceded the conservative elements. By stifling labor movements, the Americans ensured that Japan's anti-union government continued to support SCAP policy while simultaneously destroying any chances for the communists to exert influence through the working class.

⁵¹⁸ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," December 9, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 621, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d621>. The Ashida Cabinet, who had been running the government until October 6, 1948 and had revised the Public Service Law that ended the ability for government workers to strike had resigned due to a scandal, which led to Yoshida being elected as Prime Minister.

⁵¹⁹ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," December 9, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 621, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d621>.

⁵²⁰ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 83-84.

The onset of the Cold War caused fundamental shifts in how the Americans viewed their occupation of Japan. While their rhetoric often remained the same, advocating for a peaceful and democratic Japan, the shifts in policy reveal just how extensively the Cold War impacted Japan's development. Initially, Japan was to remain completely unarmed, with only enough police forces as was necessary to ensure internal stability. With security increasingly becoming a major concern due to the Cold War, however, the Americans began advocating both for the establishment of a Japanese coastguard and a strong, centralized police force.⁵²¹ By 1954, this advocacy led to the establishment of a pseudo-military. Many in the United States continued to be strongly opposed to full rearmament for Japan, but the fact that it was even considered so soon after the end of the Second World War shows just how deeply concerned the Americans were over both the Soviet threat and Japan's future. This clear change in American policy towards Japan extended far beyond security measures. By June 1848, Kennan argued for an end to the reparations program.⁵²² This program, meant to help countries impacted by Japan's conduct during the war recovery, was deemed to be too significant a burden to Japan's economy and American goals. Some alternatives were discussed, but Kennan argued that the United States would not tolerate "meddling in Japanese industrial recovery through some 'frivolous' reparations program while she was paying out \$500,000,000 a year to get Japan on her feet again."⁵²³ The Americans were pouring money into Japan to ensure it would be in the best

⁵²¹ "Memorandum Prepared in the Canadian Department of External Affairs," June 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 557, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d557>. This centralized police force was the foundation for the Japan Self-Defense Forces, which is essentially Japan's military force.

⁵²² "Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Canadian Department for External Affairs," June 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 558, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d558>.

⁵²³ "Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Canadian Department for External Affairs," June 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 558, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d558>.

possible position to assist with their Cold War objectives. Reparations, no matter how necessary for the recovery of other parts of Asia, would cause substantial damage to Japan's economic recovery and therefore its ability to be a useful ally to the United States. At the same time, the economic justification for the reverse course changed. Initially, significant focus had been put on decreasing the burden that American taxpayers were feeling. However, once the Cold War mentality had firmly set in, focus shifted toward preventing ideologies that "thrive upon hunger" from gaining appeal.⁵²⁴ The financial burden paid by the United States was bearable, if it meant preventing a communist takeover of Japan.

Changes also occurred in the social and political development of Japan. At first, the Americans had planned and, in some cases, enacted significant reform measures meant to make Japanese society much closer to that of Western countries. In some respects, this continued even after the Cold War began, but some Americans, including Kennan, argued that too much reform would be detrimental to their cause.⁵²⁵ By destroying the traditional social fabric of Japan, the Americans were introducing a strong possibility of Soviet influence expanding as the Japanese mistrust in the ruling class continued. Although SCAP introduced significant reforms in other areas, assaults on the political interests that ruled over Japan were limited.⁵²⁶ The Zaibatsu breakdown had failed, and even the purging of conservative politicians was reversed. When the labor movement started gaining political power, SCAP stepped in to crush any chances that it would significantly impact Japan's political development. This argument, that the traditional

⁵²⁴ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 52, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

⁵²⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Canadian Department for External Affairs," June 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 558, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d558>.

⁵²⁶ William M. Leavitt, "General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan," *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 322, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

hierarchy of Japanese society was vital in keeping communism from infiltrating the nation, further justified the reasons for reintroducing formerly purged individuals back into Japanese society.

Along with this reintroduction of a traditional Japanese societal structure, SCAP began to end its more direct influence on internal political matters. At this point in the occupation, democratic institutions had been introduced and tested to an adequate level, with overwhelming support from Japanese citizens. Simultaneously, SCAP had guided political development to the point where the government in power held strong pro-American beliefs and was readily prepared to assist the United States with whatever it needed. With their primary Cold War objectives regarding Japan's political structure secured, the National Security Council recommended an end to SCAP's direct intervention in further development.⁵²⁷ In doing so, it allowed the Japanese to transition away from their occupied status, with the relationship between the two countries evolving into a strong alliance. When needed, the Americans still had the power to influence Japanese development, as they had cultivated a close relationship with more conservative political leaders, but the plan was to allow Japan to further develop those bonds naturally.⁵²⁸ At the same time, the United States began radio campaigns in Japan to rival those of the Soviets, reinforcing "an understanding and appreciation of American ideas" to further cement their relationship.⁵²⁹ Even as SCAP loosened its control on Japan, measures were taken to retain its

⁵²⁷ "Note by the NSC Executive Secretary (Souers) to President Truman," October 7, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 588, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d588>.

⁵²⁸ Howard Schonberger, "American Labor's Cold War in Occupied Japan," *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 260, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24910112>.

⁵²⁹ "Note by the NSC Executive Secretary (Souers) to President Truman," October 7, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 588, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d588>.

importance as a Cold War staging ground, particularly emphasizing allyship with the United States that would ensure its involvement in the conflict when necessary.

Chapter 15: America's Democratic Bastion in Asia

As United States policy focused more on the Cold War, its goals for the future of Japan radically changed. Even before the Cold War began, the Americans saw Japan as their “future bulwark in the Far East against Russia.”⁵³⁰ The Soviets had already seized Manchuria and were assisting the Chinese Communists in their fight against the Nationalists, demonstrating their intention to expand their presence in the Far East as they had in the West.⁵³¹ The Americans, in their desire to spread anti-communist ideals, also hoped to dominate Asia ideologically.⁵³² Japan, due to its strong anticommunist beliefs and its ties with America through the occupation, was in essentially the perfect position to provide the Americans with a foothold against the Soviets in the region. In part, this originated with Kennan, who believed both Japan and Germany would be effective regional leaders against Soviet expansion.⁵³³ Although some, like the Australians, disagreed with using Japan in this way, this policy was cemented through a September 1947 directive from the Policy Planning Staff in Washington.⁵³⁴ Those new objectives meant that SCAP needed to change how they conducted their occupation; there was no assurance that a fully independent Japan would assist the United States in the Cold War. In modifying the original occupation goals, however, SCAP could ensure that the eventual peace could further

⁵³⁰ “The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State,” August 20, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 241, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d241>.

⁵³¹ “The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State,” August 20, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 241, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d241>.

⁵³² Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 99.

⁵³³ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 88.

⁵³⁴ Christine de Matos, “Encouraging ‘Democracy’ in a Cold war Climate: The Dual-Platform Policy Approach of Evatt and Labor Toward the Allied Occupation of Japan 1945-1949,” *Pacific Economic Papers* 313 (March 2001): 19. Robert Harvey, *American Shogun: General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 2006), 386.

American goals. By late 1947, Japan had been disarmed to the point where it needed to gravitate towards either the Soviets or the Americans willingly or face a coup d'état.⁵³⁵ Considering the amount of time and effort the United States put into the Japanese occupation up to this point, the loss of Japan to the Soviets would have been a devastating blow. To retain their strategic presence in the region and ensure their economic investment was not wasted, the Americans needed to forge closer bonds with Japan. It was important to ensure that Japan, even after the occupation ended, kept their close ties to the United States.

With the occupation's goals transitioning as Cold War considerations took hold, SCAP had a few avenues in which they could ensure Japan remained firmly under America's influence. In some circles, this had always been the goal. Grew, for example, had wanted Japan as an economic and political partner since at least 1943, and he was not alone in this desire.⁵³⁶ After the first years of the occupation, a bond of mutual faith was established between MacArthur and the Japanese.⁵³⁷ Every action he had taken up to the beginning of the reverse course was with the goal of securing strong ties between Japan and the United States, while simultaneously developing Japan's internal political structure as he saw fit. Although he was surrounded by left-leaning staffers that he greatly respected at the beginning of the occupation, the Cold War justified MacArthur's shift toward his own innate conservative and America-first beliefs.⁵³⁸ This

⁵³⁵ "Memorandum by Mr. John P. Davies, Jr., of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff (Kennan)," August 11, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 393, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d393>. While Davies presents the issue as the United States needing to ensure strong democratic tendencies to prevent the Soviets from engineering a coup and establishing a communist Japan, the Americans were just as likely to do the same. Coups and other strategies were used by both throughout the Cold War to oust unfavorable governments and replace them.

⁵³⁶ Dayna L. Barnes, *Architects of Occupation: American Experts and the Planning for Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2017), 38.

⁵³⁷ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 283.

⁵³⁸ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 7-8.

shift, along with the bond that had formed between MacArthur and the Japanese people, was vital to SCAP's ability to further pull Japan under American influence.

After the war, Japan had been virtually destroyed. Its infrastructure was gone, and there was no way for the country to receive supplies outside humanitarian efforts from the Allies.⁵³⁹ Although significant progress had been made, both politically and economically, Japan was still only partway down the long road to recovery. These economic troubles had become significantly enhanced by the beginning of 1947, plaguing the island nation.⁵⁴⁰ This meant an increasing burden on the American public as the occupation sought to financially support the Japanese people, but it also provided an avenue for SCAP to extend its influence as it sought to alleviate Japan's economic woes. By August 1947, the Americans had begun considering whether to allow the Japanese government to begin trading with other countries and allow foreign businessmen to enter the country. Until the occupation ended, SCAP was to remain firmly in control to ensure the trade that occurred was compatible with its objectives.⁵⁴¹ In part, this change in focus to the economy was because they hoped that stabilizing it would prevent people from looking toward more radical alternatives, such as communism.⁵⁴² However, there was also a more pragmatic reason behind this decision; Japan could easily be guided into becoming a key part in the global capitalist trading structure that the Americans sought to strengthen.⁵⁴³ No

⁵³⁹ William M. Leavitt, "General Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Public Administrator of Post-World War II Japan," *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 315-316, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24757426>.

⁵⁴⁰ "The Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," January 5, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 168, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d168>.

⁵⁴¹ "Statement of United States Policy With Respect to Restoration of Private Trade With Japan," August 20, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 257, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d257>.

⁵⁴² Yong Wook Lee, "The Origin of One Party Domination: America's Reverse Course and the Emergence of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 381, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23258199>.

⁵⁴³ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 40, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

matter how much it tried convincing the other Allies, this “shift of emphasis” in the occupation demonstrated the changing viewpoint of the Americans regarding Japan’s future.⁵⁴⁴ Through the establishment of Japanese dependence on certain American resources, the Americans could ensure their loyalty even after the occupation ended.

The Allies also recognized the change in American goals for Japan. Esler Denning, the Assistant Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the British Foreign Office, affirmed that the British supported tying Japan to the United States through a bilateral defense pact.⁵⁴⁵ Other Allies disagreed with the emphasis the Americans put on establishing Japan’s dependence on the United States’ resources, with New Zealand’s government believing Japan’s needs should not be put in front of other countries, even if it risked the development of democratic tendencies there.⁵⁴⁶ However, the final decision was up to the United States, due to their position as leaders of the occupation. By increasing Japan’s ability to trade with other nations while continuing to exercise their authority as the occupying force, the United States could manipulate Japan’s trade relationships to further increase its dependence on Allied nations. Paired with a growing interference with policy development in Japan, the United States steadily molded Japan into a steadfast ally against the Soviets, abandoning the initial goals of establishing a fully independent nation.

⁵⁴⁴ “The Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman) to the Under Secretary of the Army (Draper), November 12, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 276, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d276>.

⁵⁴⁵ “Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs,” June 2, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 555, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d555>.

⁵⁴⁶ “Statement by the New Zealand Representative, Far Eastern Commission, December 11, 1947,” December 18, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 282, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d282>.

Interference in Japanese economic development was only a symptom of the larger change occurring as occupation goals were adapted to fit the Cold War mentality. Increasingly, SCAP extended its influence on Japan in a more direct way. While it was authorized to exert its power in any way deemed necessary since the beginning of the occupation, that directive was meant as a contingency in the case of Japanese resistance to reform measures. MacArthur initially believed that he could not force any positive changes on Japan, only guide them.⁵⁴⁷ However, the Cold War brought a more urgent tone to foreign policy objectives for the Americans, which justified a more hands-on approach in controlling Japan. They did not fully abandon their desire to work through the Japanese government, but they did slowly begin to issue more firm directives. Gone were the days where SCAP refused to work with the Japanese government over concerns that some would believe that the United States was forcing their reforms on Japan. By late March 1947, direct influence from SCAP was beginning to become more common. In a strongly worded notice to Prime Minister Yoshida, MacArthur reminded the Prime Minister that it was the Japanese government's responsibility to exert all resources available to avoid another food crisis, warning him that aid to the country was entirely dependent on the government's successful management of resources.⁵⁴⁸ As Yoshida disclosed, MacArthur never directly ordered him to do anything. However, as with the reminder to avoid another food crisis, MacArthur's letters and memoranda virtually dictated his will.⁵⁴⁹ MacArthur's warning achieved two goals. First, it re-established the occupation's power over Japan by reminding Yoshida that aid could be revoked at any time, if SCAP's goals were not met. Second, it served as an implicit order for the

⁵⁴⁷ Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 294.

⁵⁴⁸ "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Japanese Prime Minister (Yoshida)," March 22, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 192, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d192>.

⁵⁴⁹ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 114.

Prime Minister to ensure that Japan did not continue to be an economic burden on the United States – which MacArthur emphasized by recounting the United States’ role in supplying food to Japan the previous year.⁵⁵⁰ He may not have managed Japan through direct action and strictly enforced directives, but MacArthur indisputably guided Japan’s policies. Direct supervision of Japan’s development was meant to decrease after strong democratic trends in government had been established, but the demands of the Cold War ended this hope.

Despite indications of trends towards democracy, including multiple successful elections, SCAP retained a firm grip. Although MacArthur claimed that there was no longer a military occupation by 1949, only the “friendly guidance of a protective force,” there had been no substantial progress made in transferring power back to the Japanese people.⁵⁵¹ The Japanese were still effectively puppets of the Americans. Although they had their own government that had been reformed and democratized, MacArthur and SCAP still firmly controlled their actions, when needed. By this point in the occupation, American goals depended on the Japanese government effectively carrying out MacArthur’s instructions.⁵⁵² The occupation had become about more than just Japan’s development. The Americans viewed themselves as introducing democracy, and most of the Japanese people would have agreed.⁵⁵³ However, even in this period

⁵⁵⁰ “General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Japanese Prime Minister (Yoshida),” March 22, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 192, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d192>.

⁵⁵¹ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 11.

⁵⁵² “The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of War (Patterson),” April 14, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 201, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d201>. The Secretary of War’s place in this discussion further reveals the mindset in which the Americans were considering the occupation. Japan had been fully disarmed, but the Cold War turned its occupation back into a military matter, a strategic objective to secure the region in the case of war with the Soviets.

⁵⁵³ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 116.

where MacArthur claimed the military occupation was over, the Japanese government and people had no real ability to disagree with the imposed SCAP agenda.

Although this had been the case since the beginning, Cold War concerns led the Americans to prioritize their own objectives within the occupation, even when their allies disagreed. While SCAP and MacArthur did, to some extent, represent the rest of the Allies as well, they were urged to interpret and execute directives in ways that would best advance American foreign policy goals.⁵⁵⁴ MacArthur sought for these positions to be openly expressed, arguing that the Americans had no need to obscure their positions, but Bishop believed MacArthur's position showed he had "not yet grasped the sense of United States desire" regarding Cold War policy in Japan.⁵⁵⁵ In the war of ideals between the United States and the Soviet Union, Asia had become an ideological battleground, with each superpower fighting to expand their sphere of influence. MacArthur may not have understood why, but the Cold War necessitated some level of subterfuge in directing Japan's development. By hiding its objectives behind general Allied goals for Japan, the United States could defend themselves from accusations of undue influence from the Soviets, even as it continued to establish Japan as the American foothold into Asia.

By remaining in Japan, the Americans were able to continue influencing their development. However, with the Cold War a dominating factor in United States policymaking, the Americans quickly shifted their goals for the occupied nation. The Soviets had little interest

⁵⁵⁴ "Draft Cable Informally Agreed to on December 24," December 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 634, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d634>.

⁵⁵⁵ "Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs (Bishop) to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)," December 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 634, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d634>.

in bringing Japan into their sphere of influence while they focused on the rest of Asia, but they did make some attempts to disrupt cooperation with the Americans. In radio broadcasts and newspapers, the Soviets spread messages accusing the United States of using the occupation to further its own imperialistic goals, undermining the very democratic tendencies they were meant to be spreading.⁵⁵⁶ These accusations were not entirely inaccurate. The Americans had pivoted their goals with the occupation, no longer working entirely for the benefit of Japan alone. As they adopted to the Cold War mentality, reforms in Japan were meant as an extension of ideological security in the United States, protecting the individual freedom of American citizens.⁵⁵⁷ Even the Japanese Constitution's pacifism clause was influenced by America's Cold War concerns. The threat of Soviet intervention caused both the Japanese and Americans to abandon the idea that Japan should fully embrace pacifism. By 1954, Japan had established a Self-Defense Force, justifying its partial rearmament by pointing toward the Soviet threat.⁵⁵⁸ It was only because of the Cold War that the question of self-defense was raised, particularly as the Americans pursued the establishment of military bases on Japanese islands.

Japan's safety and continued progress may have been a consideration, but the occupation was not extended for purely altruistic reasons. Primarily, the Americans viewed the Cold War as a military and diplomatic matter. There was certainly an ideological battle being fought, but it was the threat of expanding influence and military presence that informed the American Cold War mentality. If the Soviets were not a threat militarily, Japan would not have played such an

⁵⁵⁶ "The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador of the Soviet Union (Novikov)," May 10, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 210, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d210>.

⁵⁵⁷ "Memorandum of Detailed Comments on the Kennan Report," April 9, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 525, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d525>.

⁵⁵⁸ Axel Berkofsky, "Japan's Post-War Constitution. Origins, Protagonists and Controversies," *Il Politico* 75, no. 2 (May-August 2010): 6, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24006503>.

important role. The Americans wanted a bulwark in the Far East against Soviet expansion, and portions of the United States military believed Japan would be that bastion of American ideals, even before the Cold War fully set in.⁵⁵⁹ Japan's future was certainly a consideration for the occupying forces, but the United States and its goals was still their priority. An official peace, regardless of when it would occur, needed to be beneficial to the United States' objectives.⁵⁶⁰ In the context of the Cold War, that meant keeping an avenue into Asia open to prevent the Soviets from completely controlling the region. The United States also prioritized their presence in the Pacific, expanding their defensive sphere to encapsulate the entire ocean.⁵⁶¹ Japan, outside of being a potential ally against communism in the area, provided the perfect place for the Americans to house tactical forces, prepared to respond to any acts of aggression that occurred.⁵⁶² Those soldiers, in theory, were only going to be present while the occupation remained in effect. However, as the United States continued to expand the scope of its strategic presence in Japan, even as it began to cut back on the size of its occupying forces. Concern for Japan's security was, in reality, only a justification for the further establishment of Cold War policy in Asia.

⁵⁵⁹ "The Ambassador in China (Stuart) to the Secretary of State," August 20, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 241, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d241>.

⁵⁶⁰ "Memorandum by Mr. John P. Davies, Jr., of the Policy Planning Staff to the Director of the Staff (Kennan)," August 11, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 393, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d393>.

⁵⁶¹ "Mr. Frank G. Wisner, Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman), to the United States Representative on the Far Eastern Commission (McCoy)," February 27, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 506, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d506>.

⁵⁶² "Memorandum by Mr. George H. Butler, of the Policy Planning Staffs to the Secretary of State and the Undersecretary of State (Lovett)," May 26, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 549, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d549>.

As American leaders saw things, the only way that goal could be achieved was by ensuring that major nations remained democratic. Stability without democracy, from their perspective, left nations untrustworthy. Democratization was never fully abandoned, even at the height of the reverse course.⁵⁶³ In some respects, it was de-emphasized in favor of reforms that would strengthen Japan as an American ally, but the core desire to establish democracy in Japan remained until the occupation ended. American goals in Japan were no longer focused on ensuring that Japan would become the first truly peaceful nation in the world. Instead, Japan was to become a bastion of democracy in Asia, positioned to help protect American citizens from the evils of communism.

The change in American policy in Japan did not go unnoticed by the rest of the Allies. Australia, New Zealand, India, and Pakistan in particular expressed uncertainty regarding the future of the occupation. Compared to the early clarity, they thought the American position “did not seem to add up” other than knowing they were no longer prioritizing a peace treaty.⁵⁶⁴ Even the British, who rarely disagreed with American occupation policy, were apprehensive of their plan to position Japan as a dominant power in Asia.⁵⁶⁵ As the United States dealt with adapting to its new Cold War reality, its communication with allies faltered, instead preferring to deal with things on its own. In part, this was because many of the allies were hesitant to accept the American position that this reverse in policy was necessary to address the Cold War.⁵⁶⁶ For

⁵⁶³ Robert E. Ward, “The American Occupation of Japan: Political Retrospect,” in *The American Occupation of Japan: A Retrospective View*, ed. Grant K. Goodman (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas, Center for East Asian Studies, 1968), 3.

⁵⁶⁴ “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Lovett),” May 27, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 550, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d550>.

⁵⁶⁵ Michael Schaller, *The American Occupation of Japan: The Origins of the Cold War in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 100-101.

⁵⁶⁶ Howard Schonberger, “U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism,” *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 54, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

Australia, its disagreement with American policy toward Japan was primarily due to its belief that the post-war world should be multipolar, rather than the bi-polar one that was forming between the Soviet Union and the United States.⁵⁶⁷ Partially because of their own hope that Australia would be the dominant power in the Pacific, Australian politicians strongly opposed American reverse course policy. If the Americans succeeded, it would have been the end of their own aspirations.

This disconnect extended to the Allied Council, subsection of the FEC, which was in complete disarray by the middle of 1948. Sebald, who had replaced George Atcheson as the Political Adviser in Japan after his death in August 1947, reported that the Council was “slowly dying from inanition.”⁵⁶⁸ Considering the Council included a representative from the Soviet Union, the lack of substantial discussions was to be expected. It had become yet another place where the antagonism of the Cold War was on full display. Anything the Americans tried to justify was used by the Soviets to further criticize the occupation’s progress. For SCAP, this was beneficial. MacArthur, in particular, was strongly opposed to any attempts to make the Council useful again, as it had “always been a thorn in the side of SCAP” and had not contributed anything substantial to Japan’s occupation.⁵⁶⁹ The conflict within the Council allowed SCAP to continue working on strengthening the United States’ Cold War objectives unimpeded. While they were cooperative with their allies in the past, the Cold War caused a certain level of

⁵⁶⁷ Christine de Matos, “Encouraging ‘Democracy’ in a Cold war Climate: The Dual-Platform Policy Approach of Evatt and Labor Toward the Allied Occupation of Japan 1945-1949,” *Pacific Economic Papers* 313 (March 2001), 4-5.

⁵⁶⁸ “The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Chief of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs (Allison),” June 26, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 567, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d567>.

⁵⁶⁹ “The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Chief of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs (Allison),” June 26, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 567, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d567>.

isolation as the Americans sought to win the ideological battle against the Soviet Union. This was made most visible through their desire to continue Japan's occupation without outside scrutiny. Even though SCAP was planning a significant reduction to its direct influence on internal Japanese development, it did not want any outside risks to their push for Japan to become an American ally in Asia against the advance of communism.

Chapter 16: An Extended Occupation

One of the most significant changes brought by the shift in American policy for Japan was on the future of an official peace between the two nations. Originally, the United States desired a quick peace, although only if Japan had demonstrated enthusiastic progress towards the required reforms. By August 1946, Yoshida publicly stated that he believed a peace conference was likely to occur before May 1947.⁵⁷⁰ Although this statement occurred before Cold War considerations affected American policy in Japan, this sentiment was present even after the shift toward the reverse course began. In March 1947, on track with Yoshida's initial timeline, MacArthur told a group of correspondents in Tokyo that Japan was ready for a peace treaty.⁵⁷¹ As the occupation dragged on, the issues that became most important in Japan no longer fit the scope for which SCAP was prepared.⁵⁷² In particular, it was believed that the occupation created "cumbersome restrictions" that prevented the Japanese from recovering economically. By allowing for an early peace treaty, the United States could significantly reduce its financial obligation while moving the oversight needed to ensure continued Japanese cooperation onto the FEC. Even though the Cold War had become the primary foreign policy focus at this point, the Americans still believed that they could retain their presence in Asia through a stable and pro-American Japan without extending the occupation period. Policymakers in the United States

⁵⁷⁰ Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Yoshida Hints Early Peace Conference," August 9, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 8, Radio Report Number 158, BE1.

⁵⁷¹ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 182.

⁵⁷² "Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Japanese and Korean Economic Affairs (Martin)," October 3, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 256, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d256>. This document contains an extract from a confidential memorandum sent on September 26, 1947, added by the Office of the Historian, expanding on the first portion of the document. This confidential memorandum is the source of the information discussed here.

wanted peace, even if the treaty did not include the Soviets.⁵⁷³ At this point, they believed that ending their obligations in Japan meant they could focus on other matters while still having the support of the Japanese when needed. However, as the Cold War became the dominant factor in American foreign policy, the Americans drifted away from the desire for an early peace. Peace meant an end to their occupation of Japan, As the Soviets expanded their influence in Asia, retaining a military presence in the area became more desirable than officially obtaining peace with Japan.

The Americans wanted a quick and lasting peace in Japan, even after the Cold War radically changed how they viewed their occupation. However, the deeper they got in the growing ideological conflict, it became starkly clear that leaving Japan early could be a disastrous tactical decision. By the end of 1946, Japan's potential to wage war had been destroyed after SCAP's demilitarization campaign. Originally, before tensions with the Soviets radically changed American foreign policy, the plan had been to begin working on a peace treaty once Japan was fully demilitarized.⁵⁷⁴ Within the context of the Cold War, this could not occur. Doing so would leave Japan, the United States' primary ally in Asia, completely defenseless. Even if the Soviets did not threaten Japan militarily, there was a strong belief among the Americans that the presence of occupation forces was one of the only reasons why Soviet

⁵⁷³ "Mr. Frank G. Wisner, Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of State for Occupied Areas (Saltzman), to the United States Representative on the Far Eastern Commission (McCoy)," February 27, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 506, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d506>.

⁵⁷⁴ "Memorandum by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur," March 21, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 372, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d372>. "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," May 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 552, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d552>.

propaganda had not significantly impacted Japanese politics.⁵⁷⁵ It was this belief that informed the October 14, 1947 decision to postpone a peace treaty until Japan was politically and economically strong enough to “prevent communist penetration.”⁵⁷⁶ The Americans had spent significant time and resources in building Japan up to be their foothold in Asia, coaxing the Japanese people into accepting democracy while ensuring they did not embrace communism. In deciding to extend the occupation, they could further stabilize Japan, securing the country’s existence as the American gateway into Asia.

If the Americans had simply pulled out, leaving Japan to fend for itself against potential Soviet aggression, they believed that the time and resources spent during the occupation would have been wasted, or even potentially actively benefitted their adversary. It was these considerations that led the Americans to believe that an early treaty may not be as desirable as they had initially believed. The first proposed plan, as discussed in a memorandum from MacArthur, was to continue the occupation even after a peace treaty was signed, although with the FEC being replaced by a control council.⁵⁷⁷ As he pointed out, this proposal was extremely unrealistic. Outside of the accusations of imperialistic policy it would bring, the continued occupation would replace the existing control machinery and cripple their ability to create timely policies.⁵⁷⁸ This first proposed adjustment to the initial plan for peace did show the changing perspective of the Americans; the Cold War necessitated a continued American presence in

⁵⁷⁵ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 186.

⁵⁷⁶ Howard Schonberger, “U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism,” *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 44, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

⁵⁷⁷ “Memorandum by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur,” March 21, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 372, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d372>.

⁵⁷⁸ If the control mechanisms were to be moved from Japan to Washington DC, as proposed, a significant delay in responsiveness would have been created, leading to much less effective leadership.

Japan, at least until they could determine how best to retain their foothold in the area without sacrificing Japan's autonomy.

The occupying forces were left in a difficult position. An early peace was not feasible, but significantly extending their time in Japan could also lead to difficulties. The British, while sympathetic to the American desire to retain their strategic position, believed they "should resign itself to this situation and get on with the treaty negotiations."⁵⁷⁹ It was their belief that the Soviets would try and ensnare the Japanese regardless of whether a peace treaty was in place or not, and the better avenue would be to try and resolve the conflict separately in an Allied conference. These fears were shared by the Americans, who believed the Soviets would not leave the country alone, no matter what they promised.⁵⁸⁰ However, while the British saw this as a reason to continue as planned, the Americans believed the safer option would be to keep American soldiers in Japan. The delay of a peace treaty also meant potential issues from within Japan. Up to this point, the Japanese people had been remarkably cooperative with the occupying forces, partially due to Hirohito's influence. However, their work towards adopting democracy had been done with the understanding that their sovereignty would be restored once they had adequately met Allied conditions. Extending the occupation time meant an increased possibility of Japanese resistance, particularly as they recovered mentally from the shock of defeat.⁵⁸¹ Although many people in Japan held great admiration for MacArthur and hoped that the

⁵⁷⁹ "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," May 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 552, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d552>.

⁵⁸⁰ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 185.

⁵⁸¹ "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," May 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 552, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d552>.

occupation would last a long time, these views were not universal.⁵⁸² The goodwill that the Americans had enjoyed since the end of the war would not last indefinitely, and the longer they stayed, the more likely it was that they would frustrate the Japanese people. A Japanese populace frustrated at the American occupation could lead to increased difficulties for the occupation enacting their goals, including the increased possibility of Soviet intervention. The Japanese did have significant dislike for the Soviets but growing frustrations towards the Americans occupying their territory could lead to some deciding the Soviets were the lesser of two evils. It was these considerations that forced the Americans to re-evaluate their options, adapting how they interacted with the Japanese to ensure that they had Japan's continued support as they moved towards extending the occupation's timeline.

Prior to the onset of the Cold War, the United States believed a prolonged occupation would ultimately be harmful to Japan's development. By late 1946, the types of problems Japan was dealing with internally were outside of the scope of what the occupation was prepared to handle.⁵⁸³ Those internal problems did not fade as the Cold War began, but the increasing tensions brought on external considerations that the Allies had hoped would not be an issue in the near future. Japan, as the first country to have "taken an advanced position in the evolution of civilization through its renunciation of war, of the future maintenance of armed force," had no way to defend itself from outside aggression if it were to occur.⁵⁸⁴ The Allies knew this would leave Japan vulnerable. To ensure the country's perpetual neutrality and disarmed state, they

⁵⁸² Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, "Popularity of MacArthur is Growing," May 9, 1946, Record Group 262, Entry Number 24, Container 4, Radio Report Number 92, BB3.

⁵⁸³ "Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Japanese and Korean Economic Affairs (Martin)," October 3, 1946, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 256, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d256>.

⁵⁸⁴ "Memorandum by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur," March 21, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 372, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d372>.

planned for the United Nations to eventually retain responsibility for defending Japan, if need be, hoping that the body would act as a deterrent against others taking advantage of Japan's unarmed state. However, the United Nations was still in its formative years, and there were serious doubts in its ability to effectively assist Japan in the near future.⁵⁸⁵ In the early parts of the occupation, this was not seen as an issue. Most of Asia was still recovering from the Second World War, which made conflict extremely unlikely. However, the Cold War brought a constant fear of conflict, spanning across the entire world.

For the Americans, an attack on Japan after the occupation ended by the Soviets or their allies was a distinct possibility. Even when discussing an early peace treaty in late 1947, the United States believed it was likely that the Soviets would not agree to a peace with Japan, leaving open the possibility of further conflict if it were to benefit Soviet objectives.⁵⁸⁶ As Japan was one of the cornerstones of American security policy in the Pacific, the island nation needed to be controlled by people that the United States could either directly influence or rely on to remain loyal.⁵⁸⁷ With the United Nations not yet equipped to ensure Japan's safety and the belief that the Soviets were likely to act aggressively and refuse peace, the United States slowly drifted away from advocating an early peace. However, this change did not occur all at once. At the beginning, when tensions with the Soviets first interrupted American plans for an early peace,

⁵⁸⁵ "The Assistant Secretary of State (Hilldring) to The Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson)," June 9, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 376, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d376>. While John Hilldring specifies that the idea was to place responsibility for Japan's economic recovery in the United Nations and does not mention defensive responsibility, MacArthur's memorandum on March 21, 1947, revealed the Allied intentions to use the United Nations as a peacekeeper as well. The same lack of preparedness due to the young age of the organization would have applied to both facets of its potential support for Japan.

⁵⁸⁶ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," December 8, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 455, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d455>.

⁵⁸⁷ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 51, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

they reacted by shifting back their ideal timeline. Eventually, Yoshida's hope of a treaty before May 1947 disappeared. By December 1949, Japanese and American policymakers were still arguing for an early peace.⁵⁸⁸ Over two years had passed, with no sign that a treaty was imminent, and it was still being referred to as an "early peace." Most likely, this was because policymakers hoped to avoid publicly acknowledging that American goals in Japan had changed. Doing so risked angering the Japanese people, destroying the goodwill that had been established in the early years.

At first, the realities of the Cold War did not fully dissuade the Americans from advocating for an early peace. They still believed that extending the occupation might lead to significant frustrations from the Japanese, which could potentially diminish their usefulness to American objectives in the area.⁵⁸⁹ The United States had a vested interest in ensuring that Japan continued to support them even after the occupation ended, and extending the occupation had the potential to destroy the relationship between America and Japan that had carefully been crafted over the past two years. Instead of outright changing their policy to an extension of the occupation to ensure their objectives remained secure, the Americans instead focused on justifying their military presence even after a peace treaty was signed. By August 1947, the peace treaty draft included providing the United States with the ability to establish and maintain military bases at Yokosuka and on some of the Ryukyu islands.⁵⁹⁰ The next month, Hirohito

⁵⁸⁸ Lindesay Parrott, "Early Peace Hope Hinted By Hirohito: Diet Told Japan Is At Stage for Reinstatement as Member of 'World Society'," December 16, 1949, 14, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/early-peace-hope-hinted-hirohito/docview/105886251/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁵⁸⁹ "Memorandum by Mr. Max W. Bishop of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs to the Deputy Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Penfield)," August 14, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 400, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d400>.

⁵⁹⁰ "Memorandum by Rear Admiral E. T. Woolridge, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Politico-Military Affairs, Navy Department, to the Chief of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs (Borton)," August 18, 1947, , *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 402, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d402>.

voiced his support for the establishment of American bases on the islands in a discussion with William Sebald, MacArthur's political advisor.⁵⁹¹ Additionally, he specifically requested that the Americans retain control of Okinawa so they could better assist in confronting the Soviets, if necessary. The Navy Department also argued that a continued military occupation was necessary until the United Nations could provide the level of protection given by the Americans. This represented a significant shift in American thinking regarding the peace treaty. They recognized the desirability of an early peace at this point, but the Cold War necessitated some level of military presence in Japan to retain their foothold in Asia. By advocating for the continuation of the military occupation even after the treaty was signed, justified as being done to protect the Japanese, the United States could protect its interests without risking their prestige or Japan's support by delaying the occupation.

The American insistence on lengthening their occupation was twofold. In part, they genuinely wanted to protect Japan from Soviet encroachment. A defenseless Japan would be a sitting duck, extremely vulnerable to both covert and overt attempts to disrupt their growth. The Soviets had promised that they would not interfere with Japan's development, but the Americans were doubtful that they would keep their word.⁵⁹² In the first years of the occupation, Japan's growth had been substantial, with MacArthur praising them for their quick adaptation of democratic principles.⁵⁹³ However, this quick recovery and Japan's strategic position in the Pacific meant that it had once again become a valuable asset that would greatly benefit the

⁵⁹¹ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 351, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

⁵⁹² Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 185.

⁵⁹³ "Memorandum by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur," March 21, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 372, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d372>.

Soviets if communism took hold. By leaving them to fend for themselves, particularly during their continued economic difficulties, that effort might have been for naught. The United Nations was not yet able to provide economic support, and Japan could not defend itself if the Americans left without planning for the post-occupation period.⁵⁹⁴ The Cold War was a prominent factor in American decision-making regarding the extended occupation, but part of their considerations were made from genuine concern over the future of Japan if steps were not taken to reinforce and protect the progress they had made. Even when it seemed like their occupation would continue, the United States actively took steps to reduce the burden on Japan; every effort was taken to reduce the occupation's cost on the Japanese economy and the psychological impact it had on the Japanese people.⁵⁹⁵ By making sure it had a sustained presence in the area, the United States believed it could protect Japan and the investment it had poured into the country.

Despite what it believed, the United States had little need to justify their extended occupation. To ensure full acceptance of any approved peace treaty by the Allies, the exact terms were left to the FEC. However, as the Cold War dominated international politics, the FEC was unable to obtain a consensus opinion, leading to a stalemate.⁵⁹⁶ At the same time, the FEC's role was steadily diminishing. The Cold War had heightened the tensions within the Commission,

⁵⁹⁴ "The Assistant Secretary of State (Hilldring) to The Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson)," June 9, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 376, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d376>. "Memorandum by Rear Admiral E. T. Woolridge, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Politico-Military Affairs, Navy Department, to the Chief of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs (Borton)," August 18, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 402, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d402>.

⁵⁹⁵ "Memorandum by Mr. George H. Butler, of the Policy Planning Staffs to the Secretary of State and the Undersecretary of State (Lovett)," May 26, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 549, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d549>.

⁵⁹⁶ At this point, the dominant countries in the Far Eastern Commission were the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. While other countries did contribute, they did not play a significant factor in policy outcomes. Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 183.

and representatives spent most of their meetings strongly disagreeing with each other even on the most basic of policies. By 1948, most of the representatives had hopes that the FEC would “die on the vine.”⁵⁹⁷ Despite the FEC’s inability to function as a proper decision-making body, it were still responsible for approving Japan’s peace treaty, which is why the United States went to the Commission to argue its case for an extension to the occupation.

Since the beginning of 1948, the United States strongly supported extending the occupation. This position was justified by arguing that a stable economy was required to ensure Japan could retain the changes made during the occupation.⁵⁹⁸ From their perspective, at least the one they presented to the FEC, the fundamental objectives of the occupation could not be achieved unless Japan could properly contribute to the world economy, which it could not do until its own economy had been secured. As shown by their internal communications, this was not the only reason why the Americans wanted an extended occupation period. The British, strongly supportive of American objectives, understood that it was strategically desirable to retain a military presence in Japan, but disagreed with what the optimal policy should be moving forward. From their perspective, there were significant political advantages in withdrawing occupation forces from Japan sooner rather than later; allowing the Japanese people to forge their own way would likely lead to them aligning themselves with the Western democracies that opposed Soviet expansion.⁵⁹⁹ Unfortunately for the Americans, Britain was their only major ally

⁵⁹⁷ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 8.

⁵⁹⁸ “Statement To Be Made to Far Eastern Commission by United States Member and Transmitted to SCAP for Information and Released for Publication,” January 21, 1948, , *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 496, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d496>.

⁵⁹⁹ “Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Hugh Borton, Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth),” March 19, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 515, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d515>.

that remained amenable to their perspective, even if each country differed in the specifics for how their objectives should be obtained.

The Soviets, at this point, were essentially a lost cause. The United States operated under the belief that the Soviet Union would not agree to any terms for peace that were laid out, particularly if the terms would benefit the American position in Asia. This idea of a partial peace, without the Soviets and Chinese, found greater support as the process dragged on. The Yoshida government strongly supported the idea of a separate treaty. By the end of 1949, it even sought to use Hirohito to further its cause, arguing that his advocacy for peace in the Diet was an implicit endorsement for securing peace with the West, even if it meant excluding the Chinese and Soviets.⁶⁰⁰ This introduced some significant risks, as acknowledged in meetings between the Americans and the British; if the Soviets chose not to sign the FEC-approved peace treaty, they were free to offer the Japanese more favorable terms including fishing rights and access to raw materials.⁶⁰¹ However, this was deemed to be an unlikely outcome due to the Soviets' need for their own resources.

The Soviets were not the only ones hesitant to accept peace with the Japanese. With the Soviet Union essentially a nonfactor in treaty negotiations, outside of appearances of civility, it was the Chinese that created the most difficulty for the FEC treaty negotiations.⁶⁰² As

⁶⁰⁰ Lindesay Parrott, "Early Peace Hope Hinted By Hirohito: Diet Told Japan Is At Stage for Reinstatement as Member of 'World Society'," December 16, 1949, 14, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/early-peace-hope-hinted-hirohito/docview/105886251/se-2?accountid=10559>.

⁶⁰¹ "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," May 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 552, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d552>. "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," June 2, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 555, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d555>.

⁶⁰² "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Hugh Borton, Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth)," March 19, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and

MacArthur saw the issue, this was primarily due to the internal difficulties China was experiencing as the Nationalists and Communists each fought for control in a prolonged civil war. He argued that China had, until recently, believed itself to be the dominant power in Asia after Japan's defeat.⁶⁰³ Concerned that Japan would once again become the most significant political force in the area, the Chinese had sought to roadblock any measures that might advance Japan's status further.

The FEC continued to move forward with the creation of a peace treaty that would satisfy the various political considerations of its member nations, but the constant disagreements essentially ended the possibility of a quick peace. By the end of May, George Kennan, intimately familiar with the arguments occurring in the FEC, believed the American occupation of Japan would likely continue for several years as the Allies attempted to find common ground.⁶⁰⁴ Yet again, the Americans were left to reconsider their position in Japan, taking advantage of the disagreements between the Allies to justify their continued presence in that country.

For a time, the United States simply watched to see how the fractured opinions in the FEC would develop. A bewildered MacArthur, in a conversation with George Kennan, could only say "I'm damned if I know" when the Allies will agree on a treaty.⁶⁰⁵ The future of the treaty was uncertain, and the Americans were in no rush to find an answer. Instead, they were

Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 515, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d515>.

⁶⁰³ "Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan)," March 25, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 519, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d519>.

⁶⁰⁴ "Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Marshall Green of the Division of Northeast Asian Affairs," May 28, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 552, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d552>.

⁶⁰⁵ "Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan)," March 25, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 519, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d519>.

content to wait until the other Allies could agree among themselves on how to move forward.⁶⁰⁶

The extension of their occupation, even as a hiatus period until the Allies could agree on a treaty, meant they could continue to establish a military presence around Japan. By this point, the underlying policy position on the matter was that Japan would not remain unprotected.⁶⁰⁷

Without knowing when a treaty would be fleshed out, post-treaty arrangements were left an open question, based entirely on the position of the Soviets at the time.⁶⁰⁸ If they had significantly weakened and were willing to sign an international treaty, Japan would be completely demilitarized. However, if they remained a threat or Japan seemed vulnerable to ideological influence, the Americans would postpone the treaty.

Regardless of the future, the United States had decided to take steps to establish a lasting presence in the Pacific. They believed that doing so was a strategic necessity in protecting American assets.⁶⁰⁹ This included the use of Japanese islands like Okinawa, which could allow a naval strike force to control every port in northern Asia. The delays in a peace treaty allowed the United States to establish a more concrete policy regarding its presence in Asia. That policy was constantly adapting to new considerations, as was the nature of all foreign policy during the Cold War. The underlying belief remained consistent; the Americans would retain an active military presence around Japan. By June 1948, the Americans were no longer passively waiting for the

⁶⁰⁶ “Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan),” March 25, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 519, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d519>.

⁶⁰⁷ “Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary for Occupied Areas (Saltzman), to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Butterworth), April 9, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 525, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d525>.

⁶⁰⁸ “Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan),” March 25, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 519, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d519>.

⁶⁰⁹ “Report by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Kennan),” March 25, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 519, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d519>.

other Allies to make up their minds regarding peace in Japan, but instead believed it was best to actively prolong the pre-treaty occupation period.⁶¹⁰ Doing so meant a continued military presence in the area, allowing the United States to protect Japan directly from potential Soviet threats while allowing them to develop further under American guidance. Additionally, because of the delay in the FEC, the Americans had found a convenient excuse on which to blame the extended occupation.⁶¹¹ They had found their justification, as well as a plausible excuse to evade accusations that they were remaining in Japan for their own benefit.

⁶¹⁰ “Memorandum Prepared in the Canadian Department of External Affairs,” June 3, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 557, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d557>.

⁶¹¹ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 184.

Chapter 17: Where was the Emperor?

As the United States focused on developing Japan's occupation within the scope of the Cold War, there was a significant and noticeable shift in how SCAP utilized the emperor. In the early years of the occupation, he was a vital ally in ensuring the Japanese people continued to develop in a direction that benefitted American objectives. Once the Cold War pushed the occupation into its reverse course, however, the United States began to transition away from using his connection to the Japanese people. In part, this was because his usefulness did not extend to what the Americans needed to address the Cold War. He was uniquely qualified to connect with Japanese citizens, but there was no real need to convince them to support American Cold War objectives. They already despised the Soviet Union, and the occupation had led to an increased understanding and respect for the Americans. Additionally, Hirohito no longer wielded any official power. The emperor institution had been broken down and relegated to that of a figurehead.

The transition away from utilizing Hirohito's soft power did not mean SCAP had given up on influencing Japan's development through prominent Japanese officials. Instead, it increasingly relied on the Prime Minister. By 1947, the democratic institutions introduced by SCAP had firmly taken hold, with the well-liked Yoshida leading the first fully democratic administration Japan had seen.⁶¹² Yoshida, whose position had been affirmed by a vote including 75% of the Japanese voting population, was a much more suitable avenue for promoting American policy preferences without reinforcing the emperor institution. For some, he was

⁶¹² As argued in "The Political Adviser in Japan (Atcheson) to President Truman," January 5, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 168, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d168>.

influential enough to be compared to Winston Churchill.⁶¹³ This influence was noticed by MacArthur, as well. Throughout Yoshida's time as Prime Minister, he met with MacArthur over seventy-five times.⁶¹⁴ Hirohito, by contrast, only met with the Supreme Commander once every six months. During their meetings, MacArthur went to the Prime Minister when there were specific actions he wanted taken, including elections and an increased focus on the economic recovery.⁶¹⁵ This relationship, while still primarily meant to benefit the United States, existed on much more even footing.

Hirohito, for most of the early occupation, remained firmly in a subservient position as he sought to appease the occupying forces. He genuinely believed in the reforms he advocated for, but the open question regarding his culpability for war crimes and the recency of the war meant he could not be regarded as a sovereign head of state. Yoshida, by contrast, ascended to power at a period where the United States was winding down the military aspect of its occupation. As the desire to punish Japan for its conduct in the Second World War faded and democratic tendencies increased, a continued heavy hand risked harming their goals. Instead, by guiding their objectives through Yoshida as an allied leader, SCAP could achieve their aims while retaining Japan's dignity and legitimacy as an emerging democracy. Yoshida himself recognized the mutually beneficial relationship he had with MacArthur. When told of his departure from his position of Supreme Commander, Yoshida expressed deep sadness and acknowledged a

⁶¹³ Robert A. Fearey, *The Occupation of Japan, Second Phase: 1948-1950* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), 109-110.

⁶¹⁴ Takemae Eiji, *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and its Legacy*, trans. Robert Ricketts and Sebastian Swann (New York: Continuum, 2002), 5.

⁶¹⁵ "Report by the Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Bishop)," February 7, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 183, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d183>. "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur to the Japanese Prime Minister (Yoshida)," March 22, 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 192, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d192>.

significant personal debt to MacArthur, attributing his political success to the Supreme Commander's guidance.⁶¹⁶ This guidance helped steer Japan's development in ways that benefitted the United States' Cold War aims while simultaneously ensuring Yoshida retained popular support. By transitioning from use of the emperor to enact their policies to Yoshida, SCAP had pivoted their occupation towards dealing with the Cold War, fully abandoning their previous cultivation of Hirohito as their connection to the Japanese public.

The new focus on external matters did not mean Hirohito was completely ignored by the occupying forces. Considering his prominence within Japanese society and the sizeable effort expended by the Americans to ensure he would remain in his position, SCAP had numerous reasons to continue its relationship with him. The emperor occupied a leading position within Japanese society, even after the powers of his position were reduced. The Japanese people retained their familial connection to him, making it impossible for anyone to fully cast him aside. Some did try and return his prominence to what it was under the previous constitution. When the members of the Katayama Cabinet faced a corruption scandal in early 1948, they submitted their resignation directly to Hirohito, as required under the old Meiji Constitution.⁶¹⁷ In doing so, SCAP believed they were returning the emperor to the position of authority he held before the war.⁶¹⁸ Revealing the significant shift in how the occupying forces viewed Hirohito, his involvement was barely mentioned in Sebald's report on the matter. He was a central figure in

⁶¹⁶ "The United States Political Adviser to SCAP (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," April 11, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, Asia and The Pacific, Volume VI, Part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 547, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p1/d547>.

⁶¹⁷ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," March 4, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 511, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d511>.

⁶¹⁸ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," March 4, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 511, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d511>.

what was essentially the first major challenge to the MacArthur constitution, but SCAP discussed him as if he had no real involvement. For it, he was little more than a figurehead. He may have accepted the Katayama Cabinet's resignation, but Sebald viewed this more as a matter of him responding to their political maneuvering over any active involvement. This perspective, that Hirohito was no longer actively involved in Japanese politics, extended to SCAP's own treatment of him. When they did use the emperor to achieve their names, they essentially only invoked his title to garner support among the Japanese people. The clearest case of this occurred near the end of the occupation when, in 1951, the Allies finally moved forward with an official peace treaty. The personal relationship between MacArthur and Hirohito also faded in this period. Although MacArthur continued to have lengthy discussions with Hirohito up through 1949, his soft power was no longer the valuable asset that it was just a few years prior.⁶¹⁹ For the emperor, this was a welcome change. He had never desired the prominent role into which he was thrust, and this shift allowed him to fade back into the background.

On the surface, the American interaction with Hirohito leading up to the peace treaty seems similar to what would be expected from a mutually agreed upon treaty. In early February 1951, Ambassador John Foster Dulles met with the emperor to discuss the treaty. Hirohito, continuously supportive of the occupation goals, expressed "wholehearted agreement and appreciation to the United States for the friendly manner in which the 'negotiations' had been carried out" between the American representatives and the Japanese government.⁶²⁰ The emperor had no active involvement with the treaty negotiations, as he no longer held any political power.

⁶¹⁹ "Hirohito Visits M'Arthur: Japanese Emperor Holds 2-Hour Talk on Undisclosed Topics," *New York Times*, January 11, 1949, 3, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/hirohito-visits-marthur/docview/105812430/se-2?accountid=10559/>.

⁶²⁰ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the United States Political Adviser to SCAP (Sebald)," February 10, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 505, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p1/d505>.

The Japanese government, similarly, had no real say in the terms laid out. They were an occupied state, still being controlled by the United States and its Allies, even if the occupation had slowly allowed Japan's government more control over internal matters. The peace treaty was prefaced with the understanding that American forces would remain in Japan indefinitely.⁶²¹ Japan may have demonstrated its ability to adapt to the postwar period, but the United States still believed it was necessary to retain a military presence in the area. American officials like Sebald recognized the lack of control held by the Japanese, using quotation marks to indicate that no real peace negotiations with the Japanese had taken place, regardless of what Hirohito believed. There was, however, a reason for the visit. By obtaining the emperor's endorsement, the Americans could make sure that the Japanese people also supported the treaty. Hirohito continued to be a vital connection to the rest of Japan. Associating him with the treaty whenever possible was the key to obtaining favorable public opinion among the Japanese.⁶²² After years of assisting SCAP, the emperor's support was essentially already secured. Reaching out to him was little more than a formality, with the Allies already assuming he would support their objectives. Throughout the occupation, Hirohito had done what the Americans wanted him to do, as he genuinely believed in their goals for Japan. Despite being virtually ignored by SCAP since the onset of the Cold War, he remained a steadfast ally as he offered them his support yet again.

The emperor had primarily been a tool of pacification for SCAP in the early years of Japan's occupation. Even contemporaries understood that Hirohito's supporters and enemies

⁶²¹ Howard Schonberger, "U.S. Policy in Post-War Japan: The Retreat from Liberalism," *Science & Society* 46, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 57, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40402374>.

⁶²² "The Secretary of State to the United States Political Adviser to SCAP (Sebald)," August 8, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI* (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 678, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p1/d678>.

would each present vastly different interpretations of his actions.⁶²³ This assessment was correct both during and after the occupation, but the opinions of others never affected the emperor's dedication to the Japanese people. He genuinely believed in the betterment of his people through the introduction of democratic tendencies, but his relationship with the occupying forces was an uneven one. For them, his primary purpose was to connect to the Japanese people and convince them to listen to occupation policies. This would have happened regardless, as the Potsdam Proclamation required specific changes before any peace could be established, but his involvement helped SCAP avoid forcing those reforms onto the Japanese, instead guiding them towards enacting them willingly. In a situation where the Allies were unsure whether they would face guerrilla warfare and civil disobedience during the occupation, he was the perfect candidate to assist in a peaceful transition. Once the Japanese people had been thoroughly pacified and were adapting to the many changes desired by the Allies, Hirohito had served his purpose. By 1947, two significant changes occurred that further reduced SCAP's need to use the emperor's soft power. The establishment of democratic tendencies and a successful election meant that Japan's new Prime Minister was a more suitable candidate for influencing the Japanese people directly, as he had been specifically selected to lead them. Simultaneously, the Cold War's onset meant a diminished focus on Japanese internal development from the United States as it mostly focused on ensuring Japan would remain its ally against the Soviet Union. The emperor's value as an ally faded as American occupation objectives changed.

Hirohito may not have been fully ignored during the Cold War period of Japan's occupation, but his importance to the Americans was significantly reduced. Initially, his future

⁶²³ Leopold H. Tibesar, "Hirohito: Man, Emperor, 'Divinity'," *The Review of Politics* 7, no. 4 (October 1945): 496, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1404070>.

had been a frequent topic of conversation between SCAP and United States government officials. However, by 1948, he was barely mentioned in internal communications. While there were a handful of exceptions, such as the notification that he would not abdicate, they were due to factors outside of SCAP control. Hirohito himself was the one to reach out to MacArthur with the news that he would remain in his position.⁶²⁴ The other rare times he was mentioned during this period were only when people outside SCAP involved him in Japanese affairs. The Americans were fully focused on the Cold War, and the emperor did not play a significant factor in their considerations. His ability to connect with the Japanese people was useful, particularly in 1951 when the peace treaty was finally introduced, but even that was mostly a formality.⁶²⁵ Publicly, Hirohito was once again regarded as Japan's head of state.⁶²⁶ Newspapers had returned to addressing the emperor with honorifics, and he occasionally exchanged letters with other heads of state. However, this did not mean he was politically relevant. Once the Americans transitioned away from using him to connect with the Japanese people, Hirohito's role was primarily ceremonial. The United States had kept its position as an occupying force over Japan in order to retain a strategic position in Asia, but even by 1948 its direct involvement with Japanese development was minimal. By its own admission, remaining in Japan for as long as it did was primarily to protect its investment into Japan. The Americans no longer needed to directly guide the Japanese people, which meant Hirohito was largely unnecessary. With the establishment of

⁶²⁴ "The Acting Political Adviser in Japan (Sebald) to the Secretary of State," November 18, 1948, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VI (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 610, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v06/d610>.

⁶²⁵ "Memorandum of Conversation, by the United States Political Adviser to SCAP (Sebald)," February 10, 1951, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1951, Asia and the Pacific, Volume VI, Part 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office), Document 505, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v06p1/d505>.

⁶²⁶ Herbert P. Bix, "Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 349, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/133011>.

long-lasting democratic institutions headed by politicians sympathetic to the American perspective, the United States had achieved its objectives.

Conclusion

The American occupation of Japan after the Second World War helped define the Cold War in Asia. It was through the shift in policy toward Japan's development in the latter years of the occupation that the United States first developed its strategy in combatting communism. As shown through the reintroduction of purged politicians and the later attacks on Japanese labor, this was done by allying with conservative factions that were unlikely to ally with the Soviets over the Americans. Occasionally, this meant making decisions that were inherently anti-democratic to avoid an increase in leftist sympathies. Because the Americans were no longer focusing entirely on democratization, Hirohito slowly lost relevance as SCAP increasingly relied on conservative politicians. He had represented the occupying force's democratization efforts. As the Americans adjusted to focus on threats related to the Cold War, they no longer needed his support in convincing the Japanese public to support change. The Americans, MacArthur in particular, had established a relationship of dependence and respect with Japan. The Japanese people were willing to adhere to American policy, even without open advocacy from Hirohito.

The emperor, in turn, welcomed this change. The democratization efforts introduced by the Americans allowed his people to decide for themselves what was best for them, nullifying any need for Hirohito to attempt to influence Japan's ruling class. Because of this, along with the insistence by the Americans that Japan's emperor should not hold political power, Hirohito found himself in a position where he no longer needed to bear the burden of the throne. As shown through insights from multiple people who knew him as a child and young adult, he had never truly believed in the divine myth of his family. He certainly wanted to continue his family's legacy, particularly the work of his grandfather in introducing more democratic tendencies through the Meiji Constitution. The war, however, had shown the emperor that a

government ruled by the emperor was constantly at risk of radicals who were willing to use that prestige for their own gain. By supporting the Americans in stripping his position of all its power, Hirohito helped reshape Japan's political system into one that more honestly reflected the will of the common people.

Once the Americans shifted focus toward addressing the Soviet threat, the emperor steadily lost the remainder of his political power. Although officially stripped of his ability to influence Japan through the ratification of the MacArthur constitution, Hirohito's soft power and connection with his people remained. The Americans had taken advantage of this in the beginning of the occupation, but their shift toward working through Japan's government meant Hirohito could slip into the background. The emperor remained a cultural symbol for Japan, but he no longer held any sway over its development in this new era of the occupation. For the first time, he was allowed to simply watch as his people progressed.

Although he had supported Japan's militarists throughout most of the Second World War, Hirohito was primarily a pacifist. His support for the war had primarily been based in the desire to support his people, who avidly backed the militarists in their conflict. With the acceptance of MacArthur's constitution, Japan had become the first formally pacifist nation. For the pacifist Hirohito, this was yet another burden lifted by the Americans. If those provisions in the Constitution remained, Japan would never again wage war in the name of him or his descendants. However, the Cold War had brought new threats of conflict that shook that newly erected foundation. Continuing to follow American directives meant a guarantee of protection from the superpower, should the Soviets directly threaten Japan's sovereignty. Even though Hirohito had stepped back from being an active presence amid a new conflict, he understood that the United States would not allow Japan to fall to communism.

Hirohito's role during and after the war constantly shifted. Within the span of a few years, he had supported both military aggression and pacifism, authoritarianism and democracy. The Americans, despite concerns from their allies, chose to trust the emperor with assisting in democratizing Japan. They protected him from prosecution for Japan's aggressive actions and actively sought to include him in the implementation of early occupation policy. He, in turn, trusted that the Americans would help guide his people toward a new future. This relationship helped redefine Japan and, through the reverse course, set the standard for American foreign policy during the Cold War. SCAP could have succeeded without Hirohito's assistance. However, as many Americans involved with the occupation admitted, his assistance made policy implementation significantly easier. In just a few years, Hirohito and the Americans were able to fully transform Japan's political identity. Although the country remained politically conservative due to American Cold War concerns, any shred of militarist or autocratic tendencies had become a relic of the past.

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