The Soviet Far Eastern Strategy and International Order

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Introduction

This paper analyzes the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy and international order during the two World Wars, clarifying the realities of the impact of the Soviet Union (Russia) to the security environment in modern East Asia, with a special focus on war and diplomacy of both Japan and the Soviet Union. Geographically, the East Asia includes Japan, China, and the Korean Peninsula; strictly speaking, it does not include the Soviet Union. However, during the two World Wars, the Soviet Union became a key player in the East Asian security environment as one of the great powers of the Far East.

The history of Japan-Soviet relations at this era can be expressed as a "coexistence of war and peace," based on the great power relations. This can be divided into three periods, taking the Siberian Intervention launched in 1918 and the "tentative occupation" of Northern Sakhalin as historical backdrop. In the first period, as increased tensions in the Soviet-Manchurian border areas due to the Manchurian Incident and the subsequent foundation of Manchukuo, Japan formed an anti-Soviet and anti-Communism political regime based on the conclusion of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact, and on the contrary, the Soviet Union formed collective security system through military alliances with the Mongolian People's Republic (Mongolia) and the Chinese Nationalist Government. Due to the Nomonhan Incident (the Battle of Khalkhin Gol) and the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact) in 1939, these tensions ended with the Soviet Union's military victory in the Far East and the diplomatic victory in Europe. In the second period, the Japan's strategic perception toward the Far East changed radically and the Japan-Soviet relations succeeded to neutralize. The Second Konoe Fumimaro's Cabinet aimed to disintegrate the British Empire's colonial system and divide it into spheres of influence, based on the continental vision of a Quadripartite Entente, which was composed of Japan, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. Although this concept of international order did not actually realize, the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact was concluded in April 1941, forming stable international relations of both countries in the Far East. In the third period, while this Pact continued to exist as a diplomatic negotiation route of both sides (the Allied Nations and the Axis Powers) during World War II, the relationship between great powers of Japan and the Soviet Union ended as a result of the Soviet entry into the war against Japan in 1945 (the Soviet-Japanese War) and the Japanese diplomatic failure of Suzuki Kantaro's Cabinet to carry out the war termination with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union succeeded in securing its rights and interests in East Asia, and the Northern Territories (Kuril Islands) dispute transformed from the issue of spheres of influence into the issue of national territory.

From these points of view, this paper clarifies the overall picture of the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy launched fully after the Manchurian Incident from the perspectives of war and diplomacy. It also focuses on the Nomonhan Incident and the Soviet entry into the war against Japan—the two "war histories" between Japan and the Soviet Union—and points out that the Soviet Union played a key role in the formation of the international order in East Asia by making the most of its victories in these battles. Moreover, it concludes that the end of the Pacific War not only signified the end of the relationship between great powers that had historically existed between Japan and the Soviet Union; it was also the beginning of the Cold War in Asia. In this paper the author defines the phrase "relationship between great powers" as "relationship between sovereign nation-states that have enough powers to be able to exert international influences in the field of politics, diplomacy, and military."[1]

1. The Soviet Union's Far Eastern Strategy after the Manchurian Incident

(1) The establishment of the Soviet Union's hardline policy toward Japan

Due to a strong sense of caution regarding the Manchurian Incident and the subsequent foundation of Manchukuo, the Soviet Leaderships at the center of General Secretary Joseph V. Stalin, showed great interest in defense in the Far East. Notably, they significantly increased the number of military personnel in the core troops, the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army, and strengthened its technology and equipment based on the Second Five-year Plan launched in 1933; the Soviet Union army (the Red Army) achieved modernization in stages through large-scale military construction in the Far East.[2] Moreover, the Far Eastern Navy (reorganized the Pacific Fleet in January 1935) was established in April 1932 for maritime defense, and the military construction began on the naval port city of Komsomolsk-on-Amur in the Amur River basin, and special construction units for building naval bases, shipbuilding factories, and aircraft factories was organized. These aimed for economic development as well as national border defense in the area and are thought to have contributed to the development of heavy industry and the defense industry.[3] The Soviet Union also set up coastal defenses in the Far East, and increased military personnel in coastal cities such as Vladivostok, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, and Aleksandrovsk-Sakhalinsky. New artilleries were deployed in Vladivostok

1 Paul Kennedy clarifies the relationships between great powers from 1500 onwards as well as the strategic and political interactions between main countries while tracing the changing global economic balance in his book *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, Random House, 1987. Furthermore, Dominic Lieven defines the six elements of power (military, political, economic, cultural, geopolitical, and demographic) in his book *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals,* Pimlico, 2003. This paper focuses on war and diplomacy in the history of Japan-Soviet relations while acknowledging the importance of the economic power in relationships between great powers, to shed light on the fact that both countries adopted national strategies that placed importance on diplomacy and security during the two World Wars.

2 A.S. Lozhkina, K.E. Cherevko and I.A. Shulatov, "Stalin no Nihonzo to Tainichi Seisaku [Stalin's Image of Japan and his Policy toward Japan]," ed. Iokibe Makoto, Shimotomai Nobuo, A.V. Torkunov, and D.V. Streltsov, in *Nichiro Kankeishi: Parallel History no Chosen* [The History of Japan-Russian Relations: The Challenges of Parallel Histories], University of Tokyo Press, 2015, p. 272.

3 Tomita Takeshi, *Stalinism no Tochi Kozo* [The Governing Structure of Stalinism], Iwanami Shoten, 1996, p. 40.

in particular, advancing its fortification.[4]

It was Marshal Michael N. Tukhachevsky who emphasized military build-up in the Far East in the same vein, although there was political discord with Stalin. Having reflected on his defeat by the Polish Army at the Battle of Warsaw in 1920, Tukhachevsky acknowledged the importance of continuous operations, and systemized "deep battle theory" by exploring the construction of a theory of "tactics in the area of military operations." This military theory was developed in the *Red Army Field Manuals* of 1936, which stipulated that deep battle theory is "simultaneous assault on enemy defenses by aviation and artillery to the depths of the defense, penetration of the tactical zone of the defense by attacking units with widespread use of tank forces, and violent development of tactical success into operational success with the aim of the complete encirclement and destruction of the enemy. The main role is performed by the infantry and the mutual support of all types of forces are organized in its interests."[5] It is very interesting that the deep battle theory would be possible after the Soviet Union had achieved domestic industrialization, and the modernization of the Red Army was pushed forward together with the development of heavy industry and the defense industry.

It is thought that the Soviet Union established its hardline Far Eastern strategy toward Japan between 1933 and 1934. This coincides with the period in which Japan withdrew from the League of Nations, and the Soviet Union restored diplomatic relations with the U.S. and joined the League of Nations, suffering the Holodomor (a severe famine) in Ukraine. According to a Russian historian Oleg V. Khlevnyuk, Stalin explicitly announced a hardline policy toward Japan in October 1933; the historical research makes it clear that in a letter sent to his close comrades Vyacheslav M. Molotov, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, and Lazar M. Kaganovich, a member of the Political Bureau, Stalin fiercely argued that, "In my opinion, now is the time that the Soviet Union and the rest of the world must prepare to form a comprehensive and rational international public opinion to oppose Japanese militarism. These preparations must be developed through the *Pravda*, party newspaper, and the *Izvestia*, governmental newspaper....At the same time, it is necessary that we clearly outline the imperialist, aggressive, and militaristic aspects of Japan."[6]

During the process of establishing its hardline policy toward Japan, the Soviet Union also carried out largescale military reorganization in the Far East. Originally, the People's Revolutionary Army—the troops of the Far Eastern Republic (a buffer state that the Soviet government founded to face off against the Siberian Intervention), established after the Russian Revolution—was responsible for the Soviet Union's Far Eastern defense, under the control of Transbaikal, Primorskaya, Amur, Sakhalin and Kamchatka provinces. However, in October 1929, during the Sino-Soviet War with Zhang Xueliang's forces over the Chinese Eastern Railway, the various troops in the Far East were removed from the control of the

4 Asada Masafumi, "Stalin to Ishiwara Kanji: Manso Kokkyo o meguru Kobo [Stalin and Ishiwara Kanji: Attack and Defense on the Manchuria-Soviet Borders]," ed. Matsudo Kiyohiro et al, in *Roshia Kakumei to Soren no Seiki 2: Stalinism no Bunmei* [The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Century 2: The Civilization of Stalinism], Iwanami Shoten, 2017, p. 239.

5 David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle*, Frank Cass, 2017, pp. 21-25.

6 *Хлевнук, О.В*. Сталин и Каганович, Переписка, 1931-1936. РОССПЭН, 2001. С. 386.

Siberian Military District and a new Special Far Eastern Army was formed. After this, the Far Eastern Military District was established on May 17, 1935, and the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army became the core troop. Their headquarters were set up in Khabarovsk, and Marshal Vasily K. Blucher, who had served as a military advisor to the Chinese Nationalist Government, was appointed as the commander. Although it was once again reorganized into the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army on June 2 of that same year, the Far Eastern District Army was formed on July 1, 1938.[7] The Transbaikal Military District was also established on May 17, 1935. This military district was adjacent to the Far Eastern Military District and was responsible for the defense of the East Siberia region, the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Republic, and the Yakut Autonomous Republic, and for military assistance to the Mongolian People's Republic. Its headquarters were in Chita, and its core troops included the 11th Armored Corps, the 5th Aviation Corps, three rifle divisions, and two cavalry divisions. These various divisions are also known to have participated in the Nomonhan Incident.

In conjunction with the large-scale military reorganization in the Far East, the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy gradually took up a preferential position in its diplomacy and security strategy. As tensions with Japan increased, the Soviet leaderships estimated that the skirmishes between Japan and the Soviet Union would be highly dangerous and regarded the Manchuria as the most likely battleground. Consequently, they deemed that a complete research and study of Japan and the Japanese military was necessary, and some educational directives were issued to the various units in the Far East: "You should carry out research and study on Japan, the Japanese military, and Manchuria, which is expected to be a future battleground, from every angle....During all tactical lessons, you should establish an accurate understanding of the tactics of the Japanese forces. Especially during the winter, you should reach a profound understanding of the characteristics of the Japanese military and of Manchuria, which is expected to be a future battleground."[8] At the end of 1936, it is estimated that there were over 290,000 Soviet troops (32 divisions) in the area east of Irkutsk, which accounted for over one quarter of the Soviet forces. Armaments had been increased to 3,200 tanks, 3,700 artilleries, 300 heavy bombers, and 345 light bombers; in addition to overwhelming the Kwantung Army with resources, the construction of numerous small pillboxes were positioned in the border zones between Manchuria and the Soviet Union.[9]

In fact, the incessant disputes continued between Japan and the Soviet Union as well as Manchuria and the Soviet Union to ensure rights and interests in Manchuria and Mongolia. According to the records in *Senshi Sosho: Kantogun (1)* [Military History Collections on the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy during the Greater East Asian War: Kwantung Army (1)], there were 152 skirmishes along the Manchukuo-Soviet border from 1932 to 1934, 176 in 1935 (including the Battle of Khalkhyn Temple), 152 in 1936 (including the Changlingzi Incident), 113 in 1937 (including the Kanchazu Island Incident), 166 in 1938 (including the Changkufeng

7 Министерство Обороны РФ, Военный Энциклопедический Словарь. Военное Издательство. 2007. С. 225.

8 Lozhkina et al., "Stalinism no Nihonzo to Tainichi Seisaku," *Nichiro Kankeishi*, p. 286.

9 Inako Tsuneo ed., *Roshia no 20 Seiki* [The 20th Century of Russia], Toyo Shoten, 2007, p. 337.

Incident or the Battle of lake Hasan), and 159 in 1939, meaning that they occurred at a high frequency—on average, one every two or three days.[10]

(2) The Collective Security System in the Far East

Analyzing the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy from diplomatic and security perspectives shows that the formation of collective security system in the Far East was of major significance. In particular, the deepening military cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic not only avoided the political risk of a new pro-Japanese/anti-Soviet government being born in Mongolia and threatening the Soviet Union's sphere of influence; it also led to the Mongolian People's Republic becoming practically independent from China and consolidated its position as a "satellite state" of the Soviet Union.

The Directive on October 19, 1933 "The Fact-finding Investigation of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army's Military and Political Preparations and of the Defensive Capabilities of the Mongolian People's Republic against the Threat of Japan's Invations by Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU" required that the Mongolian leaderships shared an awareness of the issue of increasing tensions in the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union, and instructed that attention should be paid to the movements of the Kwantung Army, which was attempting the military invasions via Manchukuo and Inner Mongolia.[11] It then mentioned a fact-finding investigation on the material and technical capabilities of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army, strengthening the defensive capabilities of the Mongolian territory, and a military and economic mobilization plan in preparation for Japan's invasions, as well as ordering investigations of supplies transportation, the formation of supplies stockpiles, the improvement of roads and automobile transportation, the use of water transport, the prosperity of livestock farming, the processing of agricultural products, etc.[12] In fact, the Soviet leaderships developed rail networks centered on the Siberian Railway for the military transport of both the Soviet Union and Mongolia, as well as promoting with the construction of main roads between the two states. Notably, when military use of the railways in the Far East was formally determined at the end of 1932, political sections were set up at various railway sites across the Soviet Union, enabling them to prepare for Japan's invasions by arranging military mobilization. At the time, the Soviet Union and Mongolia were connected by four main roads (Kyakhta, Borgia, Chuya, and Tunkin), and the Selenga River was frequently used for river transport.[13] The reinforcement of military transportation meant improving the logistical capabilities of military cooperation between the Soviet Union and Mongolia and made it possible to move military forces and supplies between both countries on a large scale.

Moreover, to strengthen Mongolia's defensive capabilities, the Soviet leaderships

10 Office of War Study of the National Institute of Defense Studies, Japan Defense Agency, *Senshi Sosho Kantogun (1)* [Military History Collections on the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy during the Greater East Asian War: The Kwantung Army (1)], Asagumo Shinbunsha, 1969, p. 310.

11 Российско-Монгольское Военное Сотрудничество (1911-1946). Часть I. С. 306.

12 Там же. С. 306.

13 Terayama Kyosuke, *Stalin to Mongol 1931-1946* [Stalin and Mongolia 1931-1946], Misuzu Shobo, 2017, p. 142.

proactively extended its financial support for Mongolia's national defense budget. In 1936, it promised to provide funds of 8 million tugrik for national defense expenditure, and in exchange asked Prime Minister Peljidiin Genden to increase the personnel of the Mongolian Army from 10,000 to 18,000, and to increase the national defense budget from 8 million tugrik (25% of the national budget) to 16 million tugrik (50% of the national budget).[14] The result was that Prime Minister Genden agreed to accept the money and in the case of a request from the Mongolian government, the Soviet Union would be ready to dispatch their mechanized troops. On this point, Galindiv Myagmarsambuu, a former professor at the Mongolian National Defense University, analyzes the sharp rise in the Mongolian national defense budget in the second half of the 1930s and points out that in 1937 it took up 49% of the national budget, in 1938 it took up 52.5%, and in 1939 it took up 60.6%.[15]

Thus, on March 12, 1936, a Soviet-Mongolian Friendship and Mutual Assistance Protocol was signed in Ulaanbaatar. The preamble of this protocol included the words, "the hope of maintaining peace and stability in the Far East, with the aim of promoting an even stronger friendship between our countries," and agreed that, in the event that a third country threatened an invasion of Mongolian/Soviet territory, both countries would promptly discuss the situation and take all necessary steps to maintain territorial integrity (Article 1); that, if there were a military attack on a signatory nation, the Soviet Union and Mongolia would mutually provide full aid, including military support (Article 2); and that, in the same vein as the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Mongolia in 1925, the Soviet Union and Mongolia would immediately withdraw foreign units stationed in a signatory nation with the purpose of fulfilling the obligation of the above article when the need for their presence was resolved (Article 3); the protocol went into effect when it was signed, and would be effective for ten years.[16]

The signing of this protocol led to military cooperation between the Soviet Union and Mongolia developing into something close to the military alliance, and it could be said that this played an important role in the formation of collective security system in the Far East. In April 1936, Soviet troops began to be stationed in Mongolian territory, and the 57th Special Corps of the Transbaikal Military District became responsible for the defense of Ulaanbaatar. This Corps was the core troops of the Soviet/Mongolian forces involved in the Nomonhan Incident; considering this historical fact, while strengthening military cooperation with Mongolia did function effectively as the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy, it could also be interpreted as having a major effect on the border conflicts and skirmishes with neighboring Manchukuo. In addition, the agreement of the protocol was hugely significant to the security environment of

14 Mandakh Ariunsaikhan, "Mongol-Soren Sogo Enjo Giteisho no Teiketsu to Nihon, Soren, Chugoku [The Soviet-Mongolian Friendship and Mutual Assistance Protocol of 1936 and its Impact on Japanese-Sino-Soviet Relations]," in *Hitotsubashi Bulletin of Social Sciences*, no.2 (2007): p. 23.

15 Galindiv Myagmarsambuu, "Haruhagawa Senso ni Sankashita Mongol Jinmin Kakumeigun [The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army's Participation in the Battles of the Khalkhin Gol]," ed. Borjigin Husel, in *Haruhagawa, Nomonhan Senso to Kokusai Kankei* [The Khalkhin Gol, Nomonhan War and International Relations], Sangensha, 2013, p. 71.

16 Русский Архив: Великая Отечественная. Советско-японская война 1945 года: история военно-политического противоборства двух держав в 30-40 годы. Москва, ТЕРРА, 1997, Том. 18 (7-1). С. 65-66.

the Far East, in the sense that the Mongolian People's Republic was presented as a legal entity in international society.

Following this, the signing of the Sino-Soviet Non-aggression Pact was also vital to the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy when it came to forming the collective security system in the Far East. Of particular interest is the fact that the Xi'an Incident of December 1936 led to the solidification of Chinese foreign policy of anti-Japanese exclusion movements and the Second United Front within China, and consequently realized the stabilization of Sino-Soviet relations as part of the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy before the Sino-Japanese War.

The Directive on March 8, 1937 "The Resolution of the China Problems by Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU" adopted the following articles regarding collective security.[17]

1. The resumption of negotiations on the Sino-Soviet Non-aggression Pact is entrusted to our Comrade Dmitry V. Bogomolov
2. If the Chinese Nationalist Government (the Nanjing Government) shows an initiative regarding the conclusion of a Pacific regional agreement (a Pacific regional treaty), we [the Soviet Union] promise to support them
3. Over six years, beginning within the next two years, the Soviet Union agrees to provide the Chinese Nationalist Government with 50 million Mexican dollars in credit, and to sell aircraft, tanks, and munitions. To compensate for this payment, it will receive tin and tungsten, as well as tea, the scope of which will not exceed the current amount
4. It is agreed that the Chinese pilots and tankmen will be trained within the Soviet Union
5. If he agrees, there will be no opposition to Chiang Kai-Shek's son (Chiang Ching-Kuo) "visiting" China.[18]

The Soviet leaderships initially entrusted the negotiations for the signing of a bilateral agreement between China and the Soviet Union to Bogomolov, the Soviet ambassador to China, but People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Maxim M. Litvinov aimed to form a Pacific regional agreement with various countries in the Pacific, such as the U.K., the U.S., and Australia, with the addition of Japan. By concluding this agreement together with the Sino-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, Litvinov was attempting to avoid the Soviet Union taking responsibility for all of the China problems, including the confrontation between China and Japan, rather than just stabilizing relations between China and the Soviet Union in the Far

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17 Русско-Китайские Отношения в XX веке: материалы и документы. Памятники исторической мысли, 2000. Т. 4-1, С. 40-41.

18 Chiang Ching-kuo was dispatched to the Soviet Union to study in Moscow Sun Yat-sen University (the Sun Yat-sen Communist University of the Toilers of China) in October 1925, and remained in the Soviet Union for over 11 years, returning to China in April 1937. This resolution adopted the wording that Chiang Ching-kuo was "visiting" China; although it was accepted that at this point in time Chiang Ching-kuo was not returning home but visiting to China, his "return home" was not decided. Shinoda Kimiko, "Sorengawa Shiryo kara Miru 1937-nen no Shokeikoku no 'Kitaisareta' Kikoku [The 'Anticipated' Homecoming of Chiang Ching-kuo in 1937, Seen from the Soviet Archives]," in *Journal of Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies*, Waseda University Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (2016): p. 31.

East. During a meeting between Litvinov and Tsiang Tingfu, the Chinese ambassador to the Soviet Union, on March 11, Litvinov sharply pointed out that, "If a Pact was made between China and the Soviet Union, any opportunity to make a Pacific regional agreement would be completely derailed. I believe that, if at all possible, the U.K. and the U.S. do not wish to take on new obligations. To defend China from Japan's invasions, they anticipate that a Sino-Soviet pact will be sufficient to merely watch over both Chinese and Soviet actions from afar."[19]

As expected, on June 29, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt formally communicated to Alexandr A. Troyanosky, the Soviet ambassador to the U.S., that he had no intention of participating in any Pacific regional agreements, and so the idea of international order based on this agreement came to nothing. The sudden outbreak of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7, led to Sun Fo, President of the Legislative Yuan, holding a meeting with Bogomolov, telling him, "The Chinese Nationalist Government takes this situation very seriously, and is concerned that a large-scale military skirmish will occur……I have spoken of this conflict with Chiang Kai-shek; Chiang voiced his certainty that this will become large-scale conflict, and drag into the quagmire. He believes that this conflict will develop into open war between China and Japan." Sun Fo suggested signing a Sino-Soviet non-aggression pact or a mutual assistance agreement between the Soviet Union and China, with the major aim of military cooperation between the two countries, rather than a multi-national agreement such as the Pacific regional agreement.[20]

Thus, the Sino-Soviet Non-aggression Pact signed on August 21 provided momentum for the Soviet Union to offer full-fledged support for Chinese military affairs during the Sino-Japanese War, and it began providing credit as well as Soviet-made aircraft, tanks, and other equipment to the Chinese Nationalist Government. This Pact also swept away the Soviet leaderships' fear that China would participate in anti-Soviet/anti-Communism regimes based on the Anti-Comintern Pact, and played an important role in the implication that the Sino-Soviet relationship would be stabilized within the security environment of the Far East and the East Asia as the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy established a hardline policy toward Japan.

In addition, according to the recent historical research, it has become clear that there was a highly confidential "oral statement" in the Sino-Soviet Non-aggression Pact: the Soviet Union was not to conclude any non-aggression treaties with Japan until the official resumption of normal relations between the Chinese Nationalist Government and Japan.[21] It is thought

19 Boris Slavinsky/Dmitriy Slavinsky, *Chugoku Kakumei to Soren: Konichi Sen made no Butaiura* [The Chinese Revolution and the Soviet Union: Backstage up to the Anti-Japanese War], trans. Kato Yukihiro, Kyodo News, 2002, p. 364.

20 Русско-Китайские Отношения в XX веке. Т. 4-1, С. 60.

21 Previous research on the Russian side: Boris Slavinsky, *Kohsho: Nisso Churitsu Joyaku* [Documentation: The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact], trans. Takahashi Minoru and Ezawa Kazuhiro, Iwanami Shoten, 1996, p. 85. This is based on archival documents of Molotov in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Previous research on the Chinese side: Xijun Lu, "Nitchu Senso Chokika no Seisaku Kettei Katei ni okeru Soren Yoin no Kyojitsu [The Truth and Lies of the Soviet Factor in the Process of Deciding the Policy to Lengthen the Sino-Japanese War]," *Gunji Shigaku* [The Journal of Military History] 53, no. 2 (2017): p. 56. This is based on confidential documents in Academia Historica (Taiwan).

that this was behind the fact that in April 1941 the Soviet Union signed the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact, rather than a Japanese-Soviet non-aggression Pact.

(3) The Nomonhan Incident

It was the Battle of Khalkhin Gol in 1939 where the Soviet Union's Far Eastern strategy faced a full-scale direct confrontation with the Kwantung Army. The battle described as the "Nomonhan Incident" in Japan and as the "Battle of Khalkhin Gol" in Russia and Mongolia, was an intense modern conflict that took place between the Japanese-Manchurian army and the Soviet-Mongolian army over a roughly four-month period between May and September 1939. The main cause of this conflict is considered to be the clashing perceptions between Japan and the Soviet Union about the Manchurian-Mongolian border; the Japanese-Manchurian army regarding the Khalkha River as the border and the Soviet-Mongolian army regarding a line approximately 13 km east of the river as such. As two different names suggest, both camps deployed large-scale military forces with more than two or three divisions. However, as neither the Japanese nor the Soviet governments made an official declaration of war, the conflict did not escalate into a full-out war.

Due to the influence of judgements of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (known as the Tokyo Tribunal), there has been a strong tendency until now to regard the Nomonhan Incident as a Japan's one-sided crushing defeat. This defeat has been largely recognized as the failure of the Kwantung Army's strategy to ignore the Army General Staff's non-expansionary policy and across the Machurian-Mongolian border on the pretext of a punitive expedition to stir up and expand the conflict, during which they suffered a counterattack from the Soviet mechanized troops. For this reason, it is described as a "recurrence" of the Battle of Cannae, which was a major battle of the Second Punic War that took place in Apulia on the southeastern part of the Italian peninsula in August, 216 BC. However, the fruits of research in recent years have revealed that many casualties were suffered on both sides. According to Grigori Krivosheev, a former professor at the Russian Academy of Military Sciences, the estimated number of casualties on the Russian side increased significantly to 25,655 soldiers following the declassification of historical archives after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[22] This greatly exceeds the number of casualties on the Japanese side, shown to be in the vicinity of about 18,000 to 20,000 soldiers according to the analysis presented by a modern Japanese historian Hata Ikuhiko.[23]

The decisive factor that the Nomonhan Incident had come to a showdown was the Soviet war preparation of operations and logistics after the Japanese bombing of Tamsk (Tamsak-Bulak). Particularly with regard to logistics, the great success achieved in military transportation originating from Borgia Station along the Trans-Siberian Railway, approximately 650 km from Nomonhan-Bürd-Oboo, contributed to realize the August all-out attacks. It is widely known that various troops centered the 57th Special Corps were reorganized as a First Army Group

22 Кривошеев, Г.Ф. Россия и СССР в войнах XX века: Книга потерь. Вече, 2010. С. 159.

23 Hata Ikuhiko, *Mei to Ann no Nomonhan Senshi* [The Brightness and Darkness of the Nomonhan War History], PHP Institute. 2014. p. 347.

on July 19, and Georgy Zhukov was appointed as Commander of this Army Group, controlled the strategic offensive. And as for the logistic supports, Grigori Shtern, Commander of the Far Eastern Front Group, controlled to supply the necessary personnel, tanks, armored cars, firearms, aircraft and military supplies form the Transbaikal Ministry District.[24] As a result, the Kwantung Army's 23rd Division was devastated by the Soviet-Mongolian all-out attacks from three directions in the siege and annihilation operations that began on August 20. It is thought that this was a prelude to the Soviet entry into the war against Japan in 1945.

In addition, the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact that was signed on August 23, caused Hiranuma Kiichiro Cabinet to resign altogether, and on September 1, the Wehrmacht advanced to Poland and World War II began. On the same day, Stalin was informed of the victory in the Battle of Khalkhin Gol and was convinced that the Soviet Union avoided the military threat at the East-West borders. After that, when the Japan-Soviet ceasefire agreement was signed on September 15, the Soviet troops began to advance to Poland on the 17th. The Soviet Union achieved a military victory in the Far East and a diplomatic victory in Europe.

2. The Concept of Quadripartite Entente and the Japan-Soviet Neutrality Pact

Having received a double shock—the defeat in the Nomonhan Incident and the conclusion of the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact—Japan's strategic perception toward the Soviet Union radically changed, with efforts subsequently being promoted by the Japanese Ministry of Army and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to neutralize foreign relations with the Soviet Union. The Abe Nobuyuki Cabinet, formed on August 30, proclaimed the "establishment of independent diplomacy" and began to pursue the adjustment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union at the same time it did so with the U.K., U.S. and France, so as to press ahead with nonintervention in the World War of Europe and a resolution of the Sino-Japanese War. The next Yonai Mitsumasa Cabinet, formed in January 1940, inherited the diplomatic policy line of adjusting relations between Japan and the Soviet Union. Amidst diplomatic moves by Foreign Minister Arita Hachiro to advance the concept of a New Order in East Asia, Japan made progress on adjusting its relations with the Soviet Union, one great power of the New Order. In particular, the rapid victorious advances of the Wehrmacht across the European Front, leading to the fall of Paris on June 14, 1940, pushed the Japanese government to take an initiative in the Southeast Asia. At the same time, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations due to the Winter War with Finland that began in November 1939, and it seemed that the division of spheres of influence between Germany and the Soviet Union would be realized in Europe.[25]

Japan's foreign policy line, namely, the concept of a New Order in East Asia and the

24 Hanada Tomoyuki, "Soren kara Mita Nomonhan Jiken: Sensoshido no Kanten kara [The Nomonhan Incident as Seen by the Soviet Union: From the Perspective of War Leadership]," in *Soren to Higashi Ajia no Kokusai Seiji 1919–1941* [The International Politics of the Soviet Union and East Asia 1919–1941], ed. Asada Masafumi, Misuzu Shobo, 2017, p. 302.

25 Hanada Tomoyuki, "The Nomonhan Incident and the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact," Tsutsui Kiyotada ed., in *Fifteen lectures on Showa Japan: Road to the Pacific War in Recent Historiography*, Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2016, p. 188.

adjustment of Japan-Soviet relations was succeeded by the Tripartite diplomacy furthered by the Second Konoe Cabinet. As far as relations with the Soviet Union were concerted, the so-called *Ogikubo Kaidan* that had preceded the formation of the cabinet advocated for the signing of a Japanese-Manchurian-Mongolian Border Nonaggression Pact that would be valid for five or ten years, as well as for the "enhancement of military preparedness" against the Soviet Union. The gist of those talks was reflected on the "*Sekai Josei no Suii ni Tomonau Jikyoku Syori Youkou* [Principles for the Settlement of Current Affairs in line with Changes in the World Situation]," that was decided in the Imperial Headquarters Government Liaison Conference held on June 27, and on a proposal for reinforced the political ties with Germany and Italy appended with a "dramatic adjustment of Japan-Soviet relations."[26]

In the Article 5 (the so-called Soviet exclusion clause) of the Tripartite Alliance concluded by Japan, Germany and Italy on September 27, 1940, there was no clear intension of an antagonistic attitude toward the Soviet Union. On account of that, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew up a proposal for guidelines of adjusting the Japan-Soviet relations on October 3. This is thought to reflect on the concept of a "Quadripartite Entente" among Japan, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, which Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke proclaimed. According to the proposal, a nonaggression pact would be concluded by Japan and the Soviet Union after the peaceful resolutions of natural resources issues in the Far East, such as oils and coals in northern Sakhalin as well as fishing in northern sea. It would also include a mutual recognition of the division of spheres of influence between two countries, with Japan's sphere to extend to Inner Mongolia, northern China, and Southeast Asia, and the Soviet sphere to include the Mongolian People's Republic, Xinjiang, and the Near and Middle East. The world new order thus promoted in cooperation with Germany and Italy.

Still, the possibility of realizing the Quadripartite Entente ended with the breakdown of diplomatic negotiations between Germany and the Soviet Union, caused by Adolf Hitler's failure to respond the Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov's "additional conditions" answered on November 25, 1940, which were made in the Hitler-Molotov meetings held earlier on November 12 and 13. Those conditions were as follows: (1) a demand for the Wehrmacht to pull its troops out of Finland, (2) the establishment of Soviet military bases in the areas along both the Bosporus and Dardanelles Straits, (3) recognition of territory from Batumi (Georgia) and Baku (Azerbaijan) south to the Persian Gulf, and (4) Japan's renunciation of oils and coals in northern Sakhalin, etc. In fact, it was Directive No. 21 (Operation Barbarossa), signed by Hitler on December 18, 1940, which sent the concept of the Quadripartite Entente into the dustbins of history.

The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact was signed on April 13, 1941, involved definitive promises of peaceful friendship and the reciprocity of territorial integrity and border inviolability of both countries (the Soviet Union dominating the Mongolian People's Republic and Japan dominating the Manchukuo). In this Pact it also stated that neutrality was to be maintained throughout the duration of conflicts if either side were to be the target of military actions by a third country. And then, Article 3, set the period of expiration date of the Pact to

26 Ibid., p. 189.

run through April 1946, also stipulating that any notifications of the future abrogation of the Pact was to be made a year before the end of that period. Ironically, the last article came to have an important significance on August 1945.

The concept of Quadripartite Entente that Matsuoka regarded it as a basic part of the Japan-Soviet Neutrality Pact went up in smoke on June 22, 1941, on account of the breakout of the Eastern Front between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army. Even so, this Pact was functioned as an official diplomatic negotiation route of both sides during World War II. In addition, the existence of this Pact brought "tranquility in the north" for Japan's Army and Navy, served as a historical turning point in Japan's military advance southward. It is interesting that Japan and the Soviet Union concluded the Neutrality Pact under different diplomatic and security initiatives, not shared common interests and values.

3. The Soviet Entry into the War against Japan and Japan's Diplomatic Peace

(1) The Soviet Entry into the War against Japan

During World War II, the Japan-Soviet relations remained superficially stable, and although the military and diplomatic expectations of each other greatly differed, it can be said that the great power relations existed on mutual non-interference in the Far East. Additionally, in the latter half of World War II, the German-Soviet peace negotiations towards Japan and the Japanese-U.S. peace negotiations towards the Soviet Union (including the agreements at the war termination) were sometimes expected to play the role of mutual intermediary countries, but the former raised concerns that releasing Soviet troops from the Eastern Front would increase the threat to Japan in the Far East, the latter raised concerns that releasing Japanese troops from the Pacific Front would increase the threat from the Far East to the Soviet Union, and neither was realized.[27]

The Soviet leaders were behind the scenes preparing offensive operations and logistics for the invasion of Manchuria. From the aspect of international affairs with great powers, in the Teheran Conference the "Generalissimo" Stalin had promised to attack the Japanese Empire after the German defeat in exchange for opening a second front in Europe, and in the Yalta Conference the Big Three decided the Soviet military offensive in Manchuria after three months from the German defeat. And as famous, in the Crimea was also concluded "secret agreement," which guaranteed: (1) the status quo in Outer Mongolia, (2) the southern part of Sakhalin, (3) the internationalization of the commercial port of Dalian, (4) the lease of Port Arthur as a Soviet naval base, (5) the Chinese Eastern Railroad and the South Manchurian Railroad jointly operated by the Soviet-Chinese company, (6) the transfer to the Kuril Islands.

As analyzed by a Russian historian Boris Slavinsky, when the Soviet Union concretely began to plan the military offensive in Manchuria was in October 1944. The Chief of General Staff of Red Army, Alexandr Vasilevsky planned with the General Staff and submitted an operation plan to the Stalin after the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers. Moreover, this plan requested 60 divisions and supplies, foods, equipment, tanks, and tracks enough to

27 Hanada Tomoyuki, "The Soviet Military Leadership's Perceptions of Japan during World War II," *Security & Strategy*, vol. 1 (2021): p. 64.

attack the Japanese Empire, and large-scale material aids (3,000 tanks, 78,000 tracks, 5,000 aircraft, fuel 206,000 tons) from the United States.[28] And the General Staff calculated that it took three months to transport the Soviet forces and supplies from Europe to the Far East using the Siberian Railway.

On March 26, 1945, the Soviet Supreme General Headquarters (STAVKA) gave two confidential orders (No. 11047 and No. 11048) to the Primorsky Army Group and the Far Eastern Front. These two orders entitled “Preparation for the Advance of the Japanese Army,” were nominally for preventing the construction of bridgeheads to the Far East coast and the landing operations to the territory of the Soviet Union. Although they appeared the defensive postures, it should not overlook that this became the first step to transport the Soviet forces and supplies from Europe to the Far East for entering the war against Japan.

Under these orders, both Command Headquarters were obliged to submit the “defense plan” in the Far East to the General Staff at least by May 15. Stalin and Alexei Antonov (successor of Vasilevsky) gave confidential orders for large scale transport from Europe to the Far East to implement the operation plan step by step. Since the end of the “Great Patriotic War” on May 8, the scale of transport was expanded, and on June 3, the Soviet State Defense Committee (GKO) adopted the Resolution No. 8916 “Military Joint and Transport in the Trans-Baikal Military District, the Primorsky Army Group and the Far Eastern Front.” This Resolution requested the transport of elite units in the Eastern Front to the Far East, concretely the Karelian Front and Second Ukraine Front (4 armies, 15 army groups, 36 divisions, 53 brigades, etc.), and they contributed to reinforce military capability in the Far East. In particularly, 5th and 39th Armies which fought and won in the Königsberg Front were dispatched to the eastern Manchuria and reorganized in the Primorsky Army Group, and 6th Guards Tank Army and 53rd Army which fought and won in Hungary and Austria were dispatched to the western Manchuria and reorganized in the Trans-Baikal Front. [29]

Following the large-scale transports, on June 28, the Supreme General Headquarters gave special confidential orders (No. 11112, No. 11113 and No. 11114) to the Trans-Baikal Front, the Primorsky Army Group and the Far Eastern Front that intended “siege and annihilation operations” against the Kwantung Army. In these orders each strategic goal was defined. The Far Eastern Front was ordered to invade the Sōnghuājiāng to occupy the Harbin (No. 11112), the Primorsky Army Group was ordered to invade the central Manchuria to occupy the Harbin, Changchun and Chongjin (No. 11113), and the Trans-Baikal Front was ordered to invade the western and central Manchuria to occupy the Chìfēng, Mukden and Changchun combining with the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Army (No. 11114). As an important point, these offensive operations were carried out from three sides and all preparations for the invasion were completed by August 1. Then the Soviet leaders assumed the timing of invasion was in the middle of that month.

With these operational orders, larger scale transportation was made to the Far East. By the end of July, about 1.5 million soldiers, 5,250 tanks, 5,170 aircraft were gathered in

28 Борис Славинский, Советская Оккупация Курильских Островов. Лотос, Москва, 1993. С. 38.
29 Русский Архив: Великая Отечественная. Том.18 (7-1). С. 332.

the Far East. In the midnight of July 5, Marshal Vasilevsky arrived in Chita, where the Far East General Headquarters was established, and he was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of Soviet Forces in the Far East. [30]

The author points out that the logistics of the Red Army also contributed to make it feasible to implement the military offensive in Manchuria. General Alexei Khlulev, the Chief of Logistics in the Red Army, managed to transport large scale military supplies using the Siberian Railways. According to the Russian archives of the State Defense Committee, on April 13, the Far East Railroad District was established in Chita and about 6,000 kilometers railroad between Novosibirsk (halfway point of Siberian Railway) and Vladivostok was used for the military transport of 24 round trips a day until May 1 (2,708 vehicles), 30 round trips a day until August 1 (2,947 vehicles), and 38 round trips until October 1 (3,107 vehicles). [31]

This Soviet offensive plan to enter the war against Japan not only involved the territorial ambition to secure the Soviet rights and interests in East Asia by strictly adhering to the Yalta "secret agreement" no matter what, and its diplomatic obligations as an Allied Nation; it was also connected to the U.S.-Soviet military intelligence that, based on the "The Guidelines of Imperial Army and Navy Operational Plans" issued by Imperial Headquarters on January 20, 1945, the Kwantung Army had been weakened by diverting elite troops from Manchuria to the Pacific Front and to prepare for a decisive battle on the Japan's mainland. It also showed that the confidential military information concerning the war-potential composition of the Kwantung Army was transmitted to the Soviet leaderships via American intelligence agencies.[32]

(2) Japan's War Termination Diplomacy

One of the difficult issues facing the Suzuki Cabinet was the diplomatic notice from the Soviet Union on April 5, 1945, which stated that it would not be extending the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact. In a meeting with Sato Naotake, the Japanese ambassador to the Soviet Union, Molotov criticized that "when this Pact had been concluded in April 1941, neither the Operation Barbarossa nor the Attack on Pearl Harbor had occurred. The situation has completely changed. Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and Japan supported Germany in the war against the Soviet Union. Moreover, Japan fought both the U.K. and the U.S., which are both Soviet allies. Under these circumstances, the Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact loses its meaning, and it is impossible to extend its term of validity."[33]

In response to this notice, The Japanese Supreme War Leadership Council was held from May 11 to 14. The main topic of discussion was diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union following the defeat of Germany, and Prime Minister Suzuki reaffirmed that preventing the Soviet Union from entering the war was an essential condition for Japanese war leadership. On top of this, the Council agreed a new diplomatic policy—"to ensure mediation to

30 Hanada Tomoyuki, "The Soviet Military Offensive in Manchuria and the Collapse of Japanese Empire in August 1945," *Senshi Kenkyu Nenpo* [NIDS Military History Studies Annual], No. 22 (2019): pp. 87-89.

31 РГАСПИ, Ф.644, Оп.1, Д. 397, Л. 148.

32 David Glantz, *The Soviet Strategic Offensive in Manchuria, 1945*. Frank Cass, 2003. p. 354.

33 Kajima Institute of International Peace ed., *Gendai Kokusai Seiji no Kihon Bunsho* [The Contemporary International Relations: Basic Documents], Hara Shobo, 1987, p. 77.

our advantages with regard to the war termination"—in addition to their future goals of "preventing the Soviet Union's entry into the war," which reflected the Army's intentions, and the "favorable neutrality," which reflected the Navy's intentions, and decided to begin negotiations between Japan and the Soviet Union.[34] Furthermore, when it came to Soviet-mediated initiatives for the war termination, there were deliberations about abandoning the Treaty of Portsmouth and the Japan-Soviet Basic Convention as a policy for the advantageous development of negotiations with the Soviet Union; more specifically, Japan decided that it must prepare itself to (1) eliminate fishery rights, (2) open up the Tsugaru Straits, (3) transfer various railways in North Manchuria, (4) guarantee the influence of the Soviet Union in Inner Mongolia, and (5) offer the lease of Port Author and Dalian. In addition, the Council also called for concessions such as "likely yielding the northern half of the Kuril Islands depending on the situation,"[35] but ensuring the independence of Manchukuo to the greatest extent possible, for example by making South Manchuria into a neutral zone, while Japan held the Korean Peninsula.

Considering the decisions made by the Supreme War Leadership Council, former Prime Minister Hirota Koki strived to realize a meeting with Yakov A. Marik, the Soviet ambassador to Japan, to advance a war termination initiative mediated by Marik, so he could explore the Soviet Union's intentions. Hirota presented three conditions from the Japanese side: (1) Manchukuo's neutrality (after the Pacific War Japan would withdraw its troops, both Japan and the Soviet Union would respect Manchukuo's sovereignty and territory, and wouldn't interfere in its domestic affairs), (2) if Japan was provided with oil, it was prepared to eliminate its fishing rights, and (3) any suggestions desired by the Soviet Union would also be discussed.[36] On the contrary, Ambassador Marik said he would definitely convey this message to the Soviet Union, but did not proceed with any negotiations, and the meetings ended up being suspended.

Furthermore, the Japanese government decided in a Supreme War Leadership Council on June 18, that if the U.K. and the U.S. demanded Japan's unconditional surrender, we would continue to fight to the end, but in the meantime would seek a peace negotiation with a third country. This reflected Kido Koichi's "Tentative Measures to Control the Situation" drafted on June 8; the idea was to go ahead with peace negotiations with the Allied Nations, mediated by the Soviet Union. The Japanese Emperor also strongly desired the acceleration of negotiations with the Soviet Union, and in the Imperial Council on June 22, he anticipated that the initial stages of the war termination would take shape.

In addition to diplomacy with the Soviet Union, the Suzuki Cabinet's initiatives for the war termination also involved an attempt to realize peace negotiations with the Allied Nations through the mediation of a third country: there was a visible peace initiative carried out by

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34 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs ed. *Nihon no Sentaku: Dainiji Sekai Taisen Shusen Shiroku (Chukan)* [Japanese Choices: War Termination History of World War II (Middle Volume)], Yamate Shobo Shinsha, 1990, p. 453.

35 Jun Eto ed., *Shusen Kosaku no Kiroku* [Records of the War Termination Policies], Kodansha Bunko, 1986, p. 82.

36 *Nihon no Sentaku: Dainiji Sekai Taisen Shusen Shiroku,* p. 575.

Okamoto Suemasa, the Japanese minister to Sweden, and Vidar Bagge, the Swedish minister to Japan (Sweden was a neutral country in WWII); direct negotiations between Japan and the U.S. carried out by Allen W. Dulles, head of the Swiss branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and Kase Shunichi, the Japanese minister to Switzerland; and a Vatican City initiative by Bishop Vagnozzi of the Roman Curia and Father Tomizawa Takahiko, a staff member of the Japanese legation.[37] In particular, the peace initiative through Dulles did convey Japan's request for its three peace requirements of maintaining sovereignty (the national polity and the status of the Emperor), retaining the status quo of the merchant fleet, and continuing to possess the Korean Peninsula and Taiwan,[38] but Dulles continued to recommend unconditional surrender to the Japanese side, and would not indicate his stance in response to their request. In fact, the Japanese government made the decision to prioritize diplomacy with the Soviet Union above all, and so these efforts were not successful in obtaining any concrete results.

The Suzuki Cabinet's initiative for the war termination was set up based on diplomacy with the Soviet Union; an understanding of the relationship between Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori and the Soviet Union is a key clue considering from a historical perspective. Why did the Japanese government bet Japan's fate on the Soviet Union? In his work *Jidai no Ichimen* [One Aspect of the Era], Togo wrote that he had studied the history of various defeated countries in Karuizawa from fall to winter 1944, before he was appointed Foreign Minister of the Suzuki Cabinet. He showed strong concern in the defeat of the Russian and the German Empires during WWI, and feared that "If, when we lean toward defeat, we do not have an appropriate method to deal with it, there won't just be a political revolution, there will also be a social revolution."[39] On the other hand, Togo distrusted the U.S., which had confronted him with the Hull Note in 1941 (Togo was also Foreign Minister of the Tojo Hideki Cabinet): "They may make outrageous demands based on a feeling of contempt that regards the Imperial Household as a relic of the previous century, and a misunderstanding that this is the root of imperialism."[40] Togo thus judged that the time had come to go beyond preventing the Soviet Union entering into the war against Japan; Japan should handle the Japanese-Soviet relations from the perspective of the war termination. It is believed that his aim was to "use the wishes of the military authorities to lead the way to a rapid peace."[41]

Togo's diplomatic stance has also been clarified via postwar interviews with Ohno Katsumi, who served as the Minister's private secretary; Ohno stated, "Mr. Togo studied the history of various defeated countries before forming the cabinet. And [he thought that] there was no other way but to catch a powerful country with strong international influence and make a frontal breakthrough together with that country."[42] He also noted that Togo said, "The Soviet Union has not yet entered the war against Japan. It is a neutral country; of course, gaining

37 JACAR (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records) Ref. B02033033100.

38 *Nihon no Sentaku: Dainiji Sekai Taisen Shusen Shiroku*, p. 423.

39 Togo Shigenori, *Jidai no Ichimen* [One Aspect of the Era], Hara Shobo, 1967, p. 315.

40 Ibid., 316.

41 Ibid., 328.

42 Yomiuri Shimbunsha ed. *Showashi no Tenno 4* [The Emperor of Showa History 4], Chuko Bunko, 2012, p. 284.

peace through the Soviet Union means plunging into the heart of the Allied Nations—it would be good to make a frontal breakthrough by taking the plunge. And when I [Togo] was the Ambassador to the Soviet Union, I made a considerable impression on the Soviet authorities." The author surmises that the last part pointed out the fact that when Togo became the Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1939, he carried out diplomatic negotiations with Molotov for a Nomonhan Incident ceasefire agreement, and one can assume that this peace initiative by a frontal breakthrough directed at the Soviet Union was the foundation of his diplomatic stance. In contrast to Togo, Ambassador Sato in Moscow sent a telegram indicating his opinion on the war termination on June 8, which questioned the peace initiative mediated by the Soviet Union. The Ambassador calmly concluded that the possibility of the Soviet Union prioritizing the Soviet-Japanese relations over the Soviet-U.S. relations was almost non-existent: "With the defeat of Germany today, why the Soviet Union would have considered promoting the relationship between Japan and the Soviet Union even if sacrificing the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States ?"[43]

On July 12, former Prime Minister Konoe received the Imperial wish to act as a Special Envoy to the Soviet Union, and had Lieutenant General Sakai Koji writing an "Outline for Peace Negotiations."[44] Then, at 20:50 that same day, Togo sent an emergency telegram to Ambassador Sato, stating, "Before the Trilateral Meeting [the Potsdam Conference] begin, it would be appropriate to convey the Imperial wish for the war termination to the Soviet side,"[45] giving the directive to convey the Emperor's desire for peace to the Soviet Union. However, Ambassador Sato was unable to meet Molotov and only passed on the above intent to Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Solomon Z. Rozovsky. As a result, the Japanese Emperor's letter, which should have been passed on by Special Envoy Konoe, did not reach the hands of Stalin; perhaps this is an irony of history, but the destination of the Stalin and Molotov on the European railway was Potsdam, where the final meeting of the Big Three of the Allied Nations.

On July 26, the Potsdam Declaration was adopted by the U.K., the U.S., and China, and the Soviet Union accepted it through later ratification. The Declaration demanded the unconditional surrender of Japan, and warned that if it did not accept this, the Allied Nations would "strike the final blows upon Japan." There was massive opposition from the Japanese government—from the Imperial court and senior statesmen in particular, who had wished for the war termination with maintaining national polity; they had overturned the foundation for the peace initiatives. In a press conference, Prime Minister Suzuki announced his intention to ignore the Declaration and uphold firm resistance. The word "ignoring" had an implication of avoiding domestic oppositions by winning over the military, but as a result the Soviet Union made the decision to enter the war against Japan.

43 *Nihon no Sentaku: Dainiji Sekai Taisen Shusen Shiroku*, p. 635.

44 Ibid., pp. 602–605.

45 Ibid., p. 613.

Conclusion

The “double shock” of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and the Soviet Union entering the war against Japan on August 9 drove the Japanese Emperor to desire peace. Kido passed on the “Imperial Command” to Suzuki and urged him to quickly accept the Potsdam Declaration. Togo also visited Suzuki and advocated for “the necessity of decisive action to quickly end the war.” The Supreme War Leadership Council was held on August 9 and two subsequent “Imperial Decisions” led to Japan accepting the Potsdam Declaration.

As for the “double shock,” there are academic debates which had the greater impact on Japan’s war termination. According to *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku* [Annals of Emperor Showa], which was released in recent years, on August 8, 1945, the Japanese Emperor said, “With the use of this type of weapon, it is no longer possible to continue the war, and it would be inadvisable to miss the appropriate time to end the war to gain advantageous conditions, so I wish to end the war as quickly as possible,” but did not use the word “accepted the Potsdam Declaration.” Kido’s message from Suzuki, “I have heard that the Supreme War Leadership Council has decided its approach to the Potsdam Declaration,” came after the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan.[46]

Even after the war ended on the Japan’s mainland, the Soviet invasion continued, and the intensity of the battles in Manchuria, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands increased. Notably, the Soviet Union’s invasion on the Kuril Islands started with the battles on Shumshu Island on August 18, Paramushir Island on the 24th, Onekotan Island on the 25th, Etorofu Island on the 28th, Urup Island on the 31st, Kunashiri Island and Shikotan Island on September 1, and the Habomai Islands on the 4th. These have become negative political heritage as the Northern Territories Dispute.

On September 2, Stalin pointed out in his speech commemorating victory over Japan, that the Soviet Union’s entry into the war against Japan was the revenge of Japan’s “predatory acts” such as the Russo-Japanese War, the Siberian intervention, the Changkufeng Incident, and the Nomonhan Incident, and emphasized that “The southern part of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands revert to the Soviet Union henceforth will serve not as a barrier between the Soviet Union and the ocean and as a base for Japanese attack upon our Far East, but as a direct means of communication between the Soviet Union and the ocean and as a base for the defense of our country against Japanese aggression.” [47] It is very interesting that at this time, Stalin strategically positioned the Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands territory as an exit to the Pacific Ocean.

After the Manchurian Incident, the Soviet Union fully developed its Far Eastern strategy, which made the Soviet Union an important power in the security environment in modern East Asia from the perspectives of diplomacy and security. In particular, the Soviet leaderships made maximum use of the two “war histories” of Japan and the Soviet Union—the Nomonhan Incident and the Soviet entry into the war against Japan—to form an international order that secured its rights and interests in East Asia. A Japanese political scientist Hosoya

46 Imperial Household Agency ed., *Showa Tenno Jitsuroku* [Annals of Emperor Showa], Vol. 9, Tokyo Shoseki, 2016, p. 750.

47 СТАЛИН: PRO ET CONTRA. РХГА/Пальмира. 2017. С. 254.

Chihiro expressed Japan's diplomatic efforts with the Soviet Union to the war termination as "illusionary diplomacy,"[48] these efforts were not merely due to overconfidence in its diplomacy with the Soviet Union, but were a political decision made by the Japanese government on the verge of a crisis of defeat, without any other choices, to carry out diplomacy with a great power. The demise of the relationship between great powers that had existed between Japan and the Soviet Union attributed to the open the curtain of a post-war world. This was the start of the Asian Cold War.

48 Hosoya Chihiro, *Ryotaisenki no Nihon Gaiko* [The Japanese Diplomacy during the two World Wars], Iwanami Shoten, 1988, p. 303.