The Soviet Invasion of Manchuria, 1945. An Analysis of the Element of Surprise

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The Soviet Invasion of Manchuria, 1945
An Analysis of the Element of Surprise

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This study analyzes the Soviet invasion of Manchuria in August 1945 emphasizing the role played by the element of surprise. The analysis shows how the Soviets applied surprise against the Japanese at the strategic, operational and tactical levels, how the character of the element of surprise varied from echelon to echelon; and how the outcome of the campaign reflected the results of surprise.

Since its beginning the Soviet Army has shown an awareness of surprise, which usually has been included as a basic principle of war by Western military writers from the time of Carl von Clausewitz to the present. Today, modern Soviet theorists, such as Colonel V. Ye. Savkin in his 1972 work Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics, continue to count surprise among the most important principles of war. In examining the Manchurian campaign at the strategic level, we find the attainment of surprise was taken into consideration both in the diplomatic arena and in high-level military planning for the campaign as a whole. Timing was especially critical. At the operational and tactical levels, the Soviets made use of available natural factors, took elaborate precautions during their preparations for the invasion, and used such innovative tactics as spearheading the main attack with a tank army in a sector which included formidable desert and rugged mountain terrain. The invasion was fully unexpected, and when it came the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria was totally unprepared to meet it. There is little doubt that surprise was a major contributing factor in helping the Soviets achieve dramatic success against the Japanese, and the campaign is a particularly good example of how the Soviets translate their theory of military art into practice.

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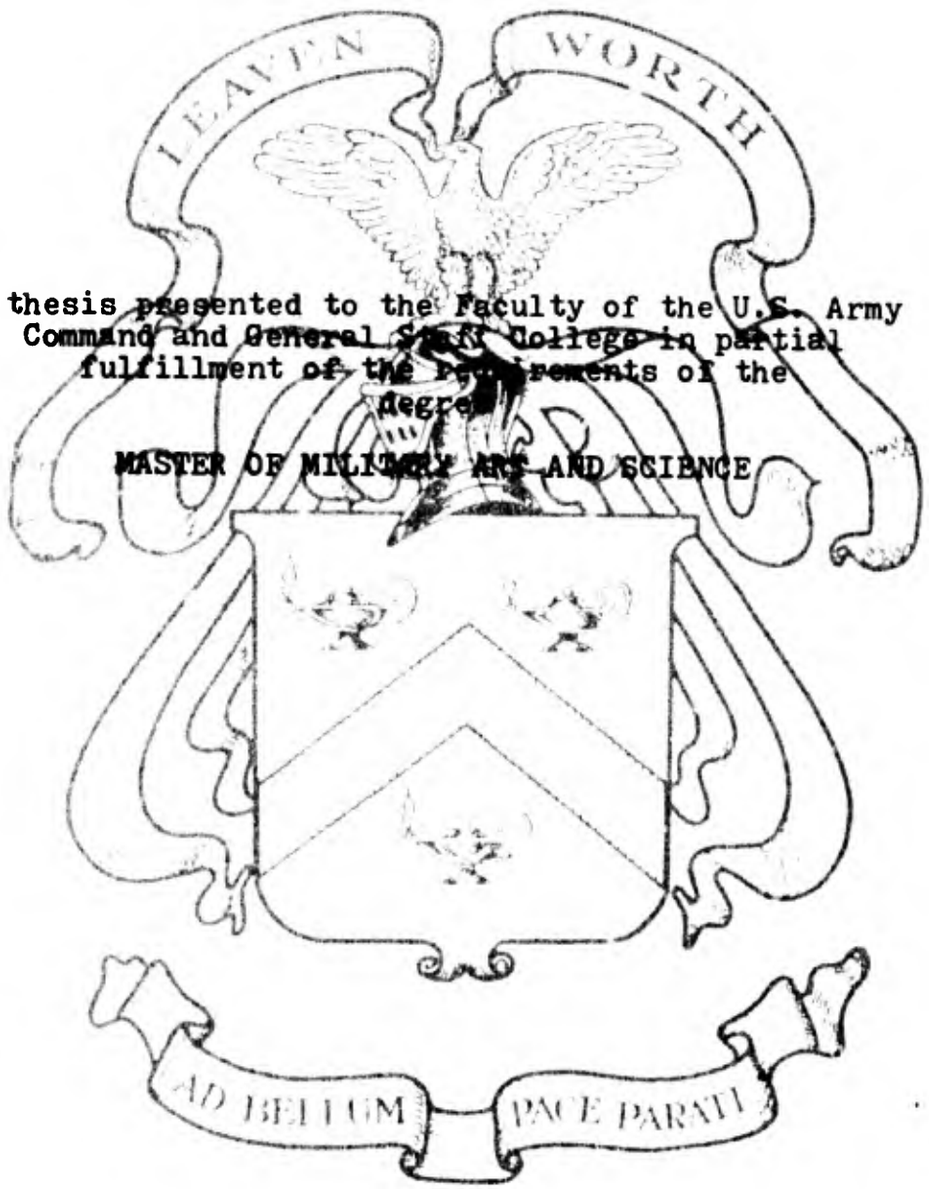
AN ANALYSIS OF THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE



A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1976

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the Soviet invasion of Manchuria in August 1945 emphasizing the role played by the element of surprise. The analysis shows how the Soviets applied surprise against the Japanese at the strategic, operational and tactical levels; how the character of the element of surprise varied from echelon to echelon; and how the outcome of the campaign reflected the results of surprise.

Since its beginning the Soviet Army has shown an awareness of surprise, which usually has been included as a basic principle of war by Western military writers from the time of Carl von Clausewitz to the present. Today, modern Soviet theorists, such as Colonel V. Ye. Savkin in his 1972 work Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics, continue to count surprise among the most important principles of war. In examining the Manchurian campaign at the strategic level, we find the attainment of surprise was taken into consideration both in the diplomatic arena and in high-level military planning for the campaign as a whole. Timing was especially critical. At the operational and tactical levels, the Soviets made use of available natural factors, took elaborate precautions during their preparations for the invasion, and used such innovative tactics as spearheading the

main attack with a tank army in a sector which included formidable desert and rugged mountain terrain. The invasion was fully unexpected, and when it came the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria was totally unprepared to meet it. There is little doubt that surprise was a major contributing factor in helping the Soviets achieve dramatic success against the Japanese, and the campaign is a particularly good example of how the Soviets translate their theory of military art into practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Soviet invasion of Manchuria in August 1945 has never been treated in depth by a Western historian. No American, for example has written a book on the campaign, and in some English language histories of World War II the campaign is completely ignored. Commonly, one finds a brief description of the invasion, portrayed as an event completely overshadowed by the exploding of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima and by the death throes of the government of Imperial Japan. From a Western viewpoint, the Manchurian campaign seems of little moment.

The Soviets view the campaign differently. Their military historians know the campaign well, a point which has attracted the attention of Henri Michel, the French historian whose recent book The Second World War has just been published in English.[1] Michel is uncommon among Western historians for affording the campaign a fairly detailed treatment, but there are at least two full-length Soviet histories on the Manchurian conflict, and an official history published in the Soviet Union in 1970, The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945, contains a very detailed

account of the campaign.[2] Soviet accounts of the conflict make the point that it was the Soviet entry into the war against Japan, more than anything else, that drove Japan to capitulate in mid-August, 1945. They are also quick to contrast their own ten-day campaign against the highly vaunted Kwantung Army, in which well over half-a-million Japanese soldiers were captured, with the slow and largely ineffective fighting of the Americans over a three year period in the Pacific.

The first atom bomb was dropped by the aircraft Enola Gay on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. It appeared that unless Stalin acted quickly the Japanese might surrender before he could act. But, on 8 August, the Soviets communicated their Declaration of War to Japanese Ambassador Sato in Moscow. The Russians began their attack only a few hours later, giving the Japanese inadequate time to warn their forces in Manchuria of the declaration. From the first, the Soviets overwhelmed their enemy. For the Japanese, who were never able to take the initiative, the campaign was mercifully shortened by the surrender of the Japanese government following a second atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki.

On the strategic level, the Japanese government was somewhat hampered in correctly assessing the situation with respect to the Soviet entry into the Pacific War. The U.S.S.R. was fully mobilized, and therefore many of the usual military indications of impending hostilities were

affected. Further complicating the assessment of usual military indicators was the traditional military confrontation between Japan's Kwantung Army and Soviet forces along the Manchurian border with the U.S.S.R. In addition, Japan was misled in the political arena by the fact that she maintained full diplomatic relations with the Soviets until war was declared, and because a non-aggression treaty agreement between them was technically still in effect until 1946, even though Stalin disavowed it in April 1945. Economic conditions were also affected by the war-footing of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, in these areas as well as others the Japanese were able to glean information which should have made them aware war with Russia was about to begin. Yet, as we will see in a more detailed examination of the events leading up to the war, the Japanese government was not fully prepared for the event and allowed the Soviets to gain the advantage of strategic surprise.[3]

The Soviet Union's horseshoe-shaped joint frontier with territories held by Japan in Manchuria stretched about 5,000 kilometers, and allowed the Soviets to attack the Japanese from three separate directions (Figure 1). The main attack, conducted under the overall leadership of Marshal of the Soviet Union Alexandr M. Vasilevsky, was made by Marshal of the Soviet Union Rodion Y. Malinovsky from the west. Malinovsky's forces attacked from the march after crossing the Trans-Baikal desert in Mongolia, and devastated the

Figure 1

The Manchurian Campaign Plan: A Generalized View[4]

unsuspecting Japanese units in their path. They eventually crossed the Great Khingal Mountains before the Japanese surrender at the war's end. Attacking from the Soviet Maritime region to the east was Marshal of the Soviet Union Kirill A. Meretskov, whose secondary attack made good headway against the stiffest of the Japanese defenses. Meretsov's forces were threatening link-up with those of Marshal Malinovsky by the end of the campaign. In addition to these two attacks, which came close to achieving the encirclement of a large portion of the Japanese Kwantung Army, another supporting attack was conducted from the north by General Maxim A. Purkayev. This attack effectively brought pressure against the Kwantung Army from three directions at once.

The Soviet invasion was a true combined arms offensive, with tank units spearheading the attack ahead of the advancing infantry and artillery. In addition to being supported by the Soviet Air Force, the ground forces also received naval support and were assisted by a riverine force in the vicinity of the Amur River. Late in the conflict, with Japanese surrender assured, the Russians used airborne forces to secure centers of communication ahead of advancing ground troops. And, while there was no direct coordination involved, Soviet naval attacks on Sakhalin and the Kuriles beginning on 15 August 1945, would have put additional pressure on the Japanese in Manchuria had the conflict lasted longer. So too would the Russian landing in North Korea,

where the Japanese had occupation troops potentially available for reinforcement in Manchuria.

In analyzing the Soviet victory, many reasons could be cited to show why the Soviets enjoyed such a huge success in Manchuria. Surely the poor condition of the Japanese forces had much to do with the overwhelming victory the Russians achieved. The Soviets had enormous advantages both in numbers and equipment, particularly heavy equipment. Excellent tactics contributed to the victory as well. The use of tank forces to spearhead the attack ahead of the slower infantry was of particular value, for example. Aside from these things, however, one aspect of the invasion stands out, and that is that the Soviets achieved complete surprise, and thereby gained the initiative that proved so overwhelming to the Kwantung Army. The Soviets did the unexpected in almost every possible instance, and the Japanese simply were not prepared for them to attack when, where, and how they did regardless of how long the Red Army had required for planning and preparation, for the massing of troops, and for stockpiling necessary material and supplies along the border.

One example of how Soviet military theorists view the Manchurian campaign is provided by Colonel V. Ye. Savkin of the prestigious Frunze Military Academy. In a discussion of principles of warfare, he makes the point that a major concern of the truly successful Soviet leader is to achieve

a decisive victory with little loss of Soviet lives. He traces the course of a number of important campaigns and battles that were models of the proper application of principles, and which without exception led to an overwhelming victory with relatively few losses for the victor. He specifically addresses the Manchurian campaign in this discussion, citing losses of the Japanese Army of over 677,000 (including 594,000 captured), compared with Soviet losses of only about 32,000. Colonel Savkin sees several factors contributing to this stunning victory, all of which illustrate particularly well-applied principles of war. According to Savkin, the Soviets won decisively because of their absolute numerical and qualitative superiority over the Japanese, the close interworking of their ground, naval and air forces, the mobility of their operations and the high rates of advance that were achieved, and because of ". . . the achievement of surprise in time, in form, and in scope of operation."[5] It is this last aspect that will receive particular scrutiny in this paper.

Analyzing surprise on both the strategic level and the lower levels of operational and tactical activity will show how the Soviets viewed the use of surprise in the campaign, how they incorporated it into their planning for the invasion, and how they applied the concept of surprise when actually conducting their attack. In addition to providing insights into their methods of applying this principle of

their military art, the Manchurian campaign may be instructive in suggesting how they may launch and conduct a future invasion elsewhere. With our continuing concern about a possible confrontation between the Soviets and NATO forces in Europe, we may be well advised to consider carefully how surprise tactics similar to those used in Manchuria might be applied elsewhere.

Surprise as a principle of war in Soviet military art is key to understanding how the principle was applied during the Soviet effort in Manchuria in 1945, and before examining the campaign itself the principle of surprise will be examined in detail. Then the campaign will be examined in what amounts to two case studies, one on strategic surprise and one on surprise at the operational and tactical levels.

First of all the strategic aspect of the campaign will be looked at to see how Soviet views about surprise are applied in practical terms, both at the highest levels of military activity and in associated diplomatic and political affairs. The period covered will begin with a brief resume of the Soviet-Japanese confrontation in the Far East prior to World War II, go on to look at how diplomatic and political decisions laid the groundwork for the campaign, examine high level military planning and the strategic implications of the military build-up in the Far East prior to the invasion, and conclude with the Soviet declaration of war

with Japan and the concurrent launching o the attack across the Manchurian border. The case study will also focus on Allied diplomatic interaction with Stalin during the war, with the changing strategic capability of Japan to wage war as World War II drained her resources, and with the political situation in Japan during the last days before surrender.

The second case study will cover the operational and tactical situation with respect to surprise. It will analyze the Soviet build-up, pointing out what was done to help insure the attainment of surprise during the actual invasion. The Japanese military situation in Manchuria will also be considered in detail, particularly those aspects of general unpreparedness which most contributed to their becoming victims of surprise. Finally, the effect of the Soviet surprise attack will be shown by outlining the first few days of battle and considering the results of the combat activity. The operational and tactical case study will not trace the campaign to its final conclusion, both because the effects of surprise were clearly evident by the end of the first week of fighting, and because the period after that was really one of Soviet consolidation following the Japanese capitulation in Tokyo.

Notes - Chapter I

[1]Henri Michel, The Second World War, trans, Douglas Parmée (New York: Praeger Books, 1975), p. 773

[2]M. V. Zakharov, Finale: A Retrospective Review of Imperialist Japan's Defeat in 1945 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972); L. N. Vnotchenko, Victory in the Far East (Pobeda Na Dal'nyem Vostokye) (originally published in Moscow by the Military Publishing House, 1966, partially translated by the Defense Intelligence Agency, 1970); and N. I. Anisimov, et al., The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945: A General Outline, abridged translation of the 1970 Russian edition (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).

[3]U. S. Department of the Army, Far Eastern Command, Military Intelligence Section, Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions Near End of World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 28 February 1950), pp. 1-11.

[4]Eugene D. Bétit, "The Soviet Manchurian Campaign, August 1945: Prototype for the Soviet Offensive," Military Review 56 (May 1976):67.

[5]V. Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (originally published in Moscow by the Military Publishing House, 1970; translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force, 1973) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 140.

CHAPTER II

SURPRISE AS A PRINCIPLE OF SOVIET MILITARY ART

Colonel V. Ye. Savkin reviews the development of principles of war in his Operational Art and Tactics, and notes that even ancient generals employed what are now understood to be principles of war. Savkin cites the employment of commonly accepted principles of war by the Theban Epaminondas in 371 B.C., by Alexander the Great of Macedonia later in the same century, and by Hannibal and Julius Caesar in the first century, B.C. But the history of warfare itself did not result in a clear understanding of the principles used by these great military leaders, and it was not until the nineteenth century that some of the principles they applied began to be set down in a theoretical manner. There were, to be sure, earlier writers who began to examine individual aspects of war, and who devoted emphasis to one or more aspects of military art. But with notable exceptions, such as Niccolo Machiavelli, there were few attempts to examine warfare in what may be considered scientific terms until the time of Carl von Clausewitz.[1]

Clausewitz' best known work, On War, was a product of the early nineteenth century. But even before him, as Savkin records, there had been others who were aware of the value of surprise. Savkin particularly mentions the great Russian General A. V. Suvorov, whose exploits in the last half of the eighteenth century were considerable. In over sixty engagements and battles fought under Suvorov, the Russian Army was not defeated once, and in almost every instance they were inferior in numbers to their enemy. Suvorov is generally highly regarded as a military tactician who employed new columnar formations and shock tactics, acted boldly and decisively to penetrate deep into the enemy's rear, and stressed the coordination of combat arms (fires and the bayonet attack). The factors of the bayonet, swiftness, and surprise were the essence of success, according to Suvorov.[2] Raymond M. Garthoff, in his Soviet Military Doctrine, quotes Suvorov as saying, "To surprise is to conquer."[3]

Before discussions of principles of war became a sensitive subject in the Soviet Union during the late 1920's, no less a revolutionary than V. I. Lenin did not hesitate to expound theories about the principles of war he thought important. Lenin, as has been well documented, owed much to his reading of Clausewitz. He believed Clausewitz to be one of the greatest military thinkers of his time, and felt his most important contribution was his stress on the idea that

war is not an isolated or independent phenomenon, but is bound up in the very fabric of the states involved. Clausewitz' dictum that war is nothing but a forceful expression of the will of a state to achieve its political objectives made eminently good sense to Lenin from his Marxist point of view. Lenin also borrowed freely from Clausewitz' ideas on principles of war, and as Colonel V. Ye. Savkin informs us, "Lenin more than once stressed the enormous importance of surprise in armed conflict . . . ."[4] (see Appendix A: Clausewitz and Western Views of Surprise).

Soviet military thinkers after the Russian Revolution eventually decided that previous ideas about principles of war were incorrect and "bourgeois" in nature, since they were not founded upon "objectively formulated" laws of military science. The advocates of the new unified proletarian military doctrine did not formulate their doctrine in terms of enumerated principles, which might have been interpreted as reliance on traditional thinking instead of Marxism-Leninism, but they did stress certain principles from time to time, including surprise, and particularly stressing maneuver and the offensive[5] (see Appendix B: The Growth of Soviet Military Doctrine).

In 1942, the situation with respect to the importance of surprise in Soviet military theory was arbitrarily changed. In that year Josef Stalin formulated what he termed the "permanently operating factors" of success.

Stalin said that the factors which operate on a permanent basis to influence wars and battles were the stability of the rear, the morale of the army, the quantity and quality of divisions, the armament of the army, and the organizing ability of commanders. Stalin did not omit all reference to surprise. What he did was relegate it to a place of secondary prominence or importance. He said that there were other factors to be considered besides those all-important permanently operating factors, and he termed these others temporary operating factors. He specifically illustrated this category by saying that surprise was an example of a temporary operating factor.[6] There was, and is today, little doubt that Stalin and the Red Army had been greatly surprised by the Germans at the outset of their involvement in World War II. Dr. Barton Whaley, in his Codeword BARBAROSSA, makes an excellent case for the fact that Stalin and his troops were surprised both on the strategic and troop levels.[7] Stalin suffered numerous setbacks in the course of the German advance across Russia, yet remained confident that eventually, as the country geared up for war and as the army grew stronger in terms of men, equipment, and organization, the Germans would be beaten. Now if this were so, Stalin could point to the surprise attack on Russia by the Germans, as well as the Japanese "sneak attack" on Pearl Harbor, and say that although this allowed the enemy to make certain gains initially, eventually the economic forces

underlying the Soviet Union and the United States would make them victorious. The German and Japanese attacks, then, allowed them only a "temporary" advantage and the surprise they achieved could not be considered a permanently operating factor.[8]

It is impossible to document accurately just how the factor of surprise was viewed by Soviet commanders at the close of World War II. It would appear that while Soviet concepts did not change very much after Stalin brought in the "permanently operating factors," the expression given those concepts may have been modified somewhat. Previously expressed "principles of war" were certainly still recognized, as Savkin makes clear, but Stalin's insistence on the importance of his five factors forced writers to couch their comments about principles in such a way as to give no personal offense to the dictator. Eventually Stalin's ideas were discredited, but not until after his death. In the interim, as the authors of Soviet Military Science relate, "Some military historians who did not examine the position of temporary and constantly acting factors belittled the importance of surprise in war and assigned it to a second place role." Further, the same work states:

> The authors of a number of works published in 1943-1953 considered the factor of surprise as secondary, temporary and attendant, almost accidental. It must be said that such belittling of surprise is incorrect. Historical experience confirms that skillfully used surprise in past wars produced positive results in war as a whole, in operations and in battle.

In a monumental put-down, the work criticizes Stalin by saying, "The Stalin formula of constantly acting and temporary factors suffered from logical and constructive incompleteness, metaphysicalness, and inconsistency."[9]

Savkin reports that from 1954 to 1959, diverse ways of achieving surprise were developed in the works of Soviet authors, following their detailed examination of the role of surprise in past wars and in consideration of the technological developments that had taken place in recent times. As Savkin's own work implies, surprise as a principle of war has continued to receive important consideration since 1960 as well. He himself seems to place great emphasis on the principle, and discusses it in detail in Operational Art and Tactics.[10]

However, because of the previously discussed Soviet reluctance to stress principles of military art in the early days, and in consequence of Stalin's relegation of surprise to a seemingly unimportant role, it is impossible to extensively document how the Soviets looked at surprise at the time of their invasion of Manchuria. In examining deception, camouflage, surprise, and security as these measures were used by the Soviets in World War II, Raymond Garthoff provides a convincing basis on which to place belief that even if surprise was not freely discussed by Red Army theorists, its value was not lost on Red Army commanders. Rather, at the operational and tactical levels it received considerable stress.[11]

Turning specifically to strategic surprise, it must be kept in mind that to the Soviets, ". . . the goals and tasks of Soviet strategy follow directly from the goals and tasks of state policy."[12] Strategy is the agent through which state policy is translated, and diplomacy and military force are manifestations of the exercise of strategic options. Military strategy is simply the expression of state policy applied to armed conflict (or the deterrence of armed conflict). The decision to declare war upon another country is a decision reflecting state policy, a decision being implemented by means of armed force. Military strategy must weigh and consider military and economic potentials, and then must devise methods and establish a framework within which operations and battles can be conducted against the enemy.

Writing in retrospect on Soviet military strategy against Nazi Germany, and specifically addressing the use of surprise in strategic offensive operations, Marshal Sokolovsky found that surprise was achieved in three different ways. First, the Red Army developed major offensives in directions least expected by the Germans. He cites the breakout at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942-1943, when the Germans were expecting the main attack to come in a westerly direction. Likewise, he mentions the attack of 1944 in Byelorussia, when the Wehrmacht was looking for an offensive in the south. Secondly, Sokolovsky cites secrecy as a means of achieving strategic surprise. He cites the

battle of Kursk as an example where the Soviets were able to keep their preparations for a major offensive secret from the German Army. Sokolovsky also mentions the fact that surprise through secrecy was possible because the plans of the Soviet Supreme Command were kept secret during the war. The third method of attaining strategic surprise in World War II against the Germans was by misleading them with regard to the time, place, and strength of attacks. This method was most used during the latter stages of the war, and was ". . . an important influence on the successful conduct of strategic operations." Sokolovsky does not, of course, have the opportunity to deal with the Soviet use of strategic surprise against the Germans except after the war had been declared. He does, however, comment on the attainment of surprise on the strategic level concurrent with the declaration of a state of war. He shows himself keenly aware of the possibility of initial surprise attacks, and carefully considers some historical examples such as the Japanese attack on the Russian naval fleet which began the Russo-Japanese War, the surprise attacks by Hitler on several European countries and on the U.S.S.R., and the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor which brought the United States into World War II. And, like others, Sokolovsky recognizes the fact that technology has changed the prospect of the military strategist, particularly the possibility of a surprise attack by an enemy willing to use nuclear weapons.[13]

Going on to examine surprise at the operational and tactical levels, surprise is generally achieved through direct military means; that is, by employing forces and directing fires at the enemy. It has only been during comparatively recent times that surprise has assumed a position of great importance at the operational level, but its importance at that level is growing. Colonel Savkin reflects that even as late as the First World War, the achievement of surprise did not mean that its result could be effectively exploited. By the time of World War II and later, technological increases allowed much more opportunity to rapidly develop situations, greatly enhancing the value of surprise. Savkin cites the introduction of motorized and mechanized forces, with their obvious increases in mobility; the "unexpected breakthrough of tank armies;" the employment of large numbers and types of aircraft, permitting a variety of fires to be delivered with speed and in great depth; the introduction of airborne tactics, and finally, the advent of nuclear warfare.[14] Colonel Savkin has this to say about surprise under modern conditions:

> The increase in the role of surprise in operations and battle has been caused by the fact that under conditions of very rapid development of combat operations enemy groupings often generally will not manage to take steps to eliminate the consequence of surprise attacks made against them. In these cases surprise may be the deciding factor in achieving total success.[15]

This failure to eliminate the consequence of surprise attacks underscores the point that the Soviets seem to feel that

surprise is becoming more important in warfare from several different aspects. One of these aspects is that the duration of the effect of surprise can be said to be increasing, or at least the possibility of prolonging its effect is greater.

Technological developments have made it easier to achieve surprise, rapidity being a key factor not only in its achievement but in prolonging the effect as well. The deep penetrations possible in mechanized warfare do not allow the enemy to regroup and end the confusion that surprise has caused. Surprise and its effects can be said to endure so long as the enemy does not employ the necessary counter-measures against it, and it may have a less temporary effect than in the past.

Colonel Savkin discusses the fact that gaining surprise through the use of a new technological development is always a possibility. Such possibilities have always existed for the side that develops a new weapon. However, Colonel Savkin recognizes three basic methods of achieving surprise which may (and usually do) operate independently of technology alone. The first, going back to the lessons of Clausewitz, is the building up of numbers of weapons systems, which like Clausewitz' concentration of forces, ". . . may lead to the attainment of surprise with their mass employment on the most important axes." Secondly, he says, one can design operations which will employ available weapons in unexpected ways, taking advantage of the fact that the enemy will

be pre-conditioned to the employment of the types of weapons he is aware of in conventional and predictable ways. The third method by which to attain surprise is to find new methods or forms of combat. He found the third way has the most potential for exploitation.[16]

In reviewing the lessons of their Great Patriotic War, the Soviets came upon a number of means of achieving surprise (as well as some means for avoiding its effective use by the enemy) at both the tactical and operational art levels. Secrecy, speed, penetration in depth, and the coordinated use of combined arms appear to be the factors the Soviets believe most important in achieving surprise. Colonel B. Zlatoverov in a 1954 article published in the prestigious Red Army journal, Military Thought, said, for example, that the

> . . . extent to which troops are saturated with rapid fire and long range weapons, with tanks, self-propelled artillery, engineer and other technical equipment creates the requisite conditions for striking a surprise blow simultaneously over a great depth, for the rapid exploitation of the blow and at the same time for prolonging the duration of the factor of surprise.[17]

Savkin has echoed this comment, and while discussing World War II offensive operations stated that:

> . . . surprise was achieved by a choice of axes of main attack or sectors of breakthrough unexpected for the enemy, by the secret regrouping of troops, by concentrating shock groupings and occupying an initial position for an attack, and by employing the most diverse methods of fire preparation. For successful development of offensive operations there was great significance in the unexpected forceful attack along axes and from the move, and in conducting the attack

> and pursuit at night and at a high tempo permitting anticipation of the enemy in occupying intermediate lines. Troops achieved great success by resorting also to the surprise maneuver of fire, forces, and means. The wise employment of forward detachments and airborne and naval landings was also very effective for a surprise penetration into the enemy's operational depth and delivering attacks against him from the rear and the flanks.[18]

While the above concerned offensive operations, the Soviets do not fail to take note of the possibilities of using surprise tactics while on the defensive. Based on the lessons of World War II, Colonel Zlatoverov indicated he thought surprise was much harder to achieve when in the defense, and that ease of employment generally lies with the attacker. However, he noted that defense in depth gives far greater opportunity for surprise tactics than defense in a static, line situation. Raids, ambushes, artillery fire concentrations, and most particularly counterattacks lend surprise during defensive operations. Night operations, the use of aircraft to support ground troops, and employing the advantages weather conditions may provide are also cited. Further, Colonel Zlatoverov discusses effective terrain masking, dispersal of defensive elements, concealment and camouflage, "switch positions," lines of deployment preselected from which a counterattack can be launched, and the creation of "fire pockets," or kill zones into which the enemy can be wedged. Marshes, floodlands, lakes, rivers, and other "complicated terrain" often create positions favorable for surprise, since the opportunity to accomplish the

unpredictable is present. Furthermore, any time the enemy can be forced or tricked into an early commitment of his reserves an attack can be launched into a weakened area.

Measures Zlatoverov said were successful in avoiding surprise during World War II battles were unit readiness, the timely warning of the troops, the use of combined arms forces which have multiple capabilities in the event rapid reaction is necessary, and a ready reserve prepared to meet a surprise threat. He also mentioned the need for vigilance, clear understanding of the mission, the maintenance of strict discipline and morale, and resourceful commanders. Further, he put stress on active and uninterrupted reconnaissance, a "reliable organization" of tactical security, and continuous functioning of the available communications systems.[19]

In reviewing contemporary Soviet ideas about surprise, particularly with respect to the lessons they have taken from World War II, it is easily seen that they have explored the subject thoroughly. Their theorists are well grounded in historical examples of surprise, as well as the ideas of Clausewitz and other thinkers who have considered it an important principle of war. They have dissected surprise to find out why it is important, how it can be effected in both the offensive and defensive roles, and how its use by enemy forces can be avoided or neutralized. Before going on to consider the details of the Soviet involvement with Japan in Manchuria, it may be well to keep in mind this thought of Colonel Savkin on the lessons of World War II:

> The Great Patriotic War was rich with a multitude of examples of creative search for new or little known . . . methods and techniques . . . which ensured the attainment of greatest operational and tactical surprise and as a result, the decisive defeat of the enemy . . . The experience in achieving surprise acquired by Soviet troops in the past war has largely retained its value and instructiveness. Therefore one must not forget it, but study it attentively.[20]

That alone offers good reason as to why we in the West should not continue to overlook the lessons of the Manchurian campaign.

Notes - Chapter II

[1]V. Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (originally published in Moscow by the Military Publishing House, 1970; translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force, 1973) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 7-9; V. D. Sokolovsky, Military Strategy: Soviet Doctrine and Concepts (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), pp. 7-8.

[2]Savkin, pp. 13-4.

[3]Raymond M. Garthoff, Soviet Military Doctrine (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953), p. 272.

[4]Savkin, p. 230; S. N. Kozlov, et al., Soviet Military Science (unedited rough draft translation of 2nd ed. prepared by the Foreign Technology Division, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, 1964), pp. 146-7.

[5]Garthoff, p. 33.

[6]Ibid., pp. 34, 273-5.

[7]Barton S. Whaley, Codeword BARBAROSSA (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1973).

[8]Garthoff, pp. 273-5; Kozlov, et al., p. 259.

[9]Kozlov, et al., p. 345.

[10]Savkin, pp. 230-40.

[11]Garthoff, pp. 265-76. Garthoff also devotes a chapter to "The Role of Surprise and Blitzkrieg" in a later work, The Soviet Image of Future War (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959), pp. 66-85. The main emphasis of this later work, however, is the re-emergence of emphasis on surprise after Stalin's death in 1953, rather than World War II views on surprise.

[12]Kozlov, et al., p. 297.

[13]Sokolovsky, pp. 138-9, 194-204.

[14]Savkin, pp. 226-37.

[15]Ibid., p. 232.

[16]Ibid., pp. 233-7.

[17]B. Zlatoverov, "Tactical Surprise and Ways of Effecting It," Department of the Army translation, Voyennaya Mysl (Military Thought), 2 (1954).

[18]Savkin, pp. 237-8.

[19]Zlatoverov, pp. 7-14.

[20]Savkin, p. 237.

CHAPTER III

STRATEGIC SURPRISE: A QUESTION OF INTENTION

The Roots of Confrontation

If we accept Clausewitz' dictum that war is an extension of politics, it follows that a surprise declaration of war affects the political sphere of activity as well as that of the military. Whether or not the Soviet Union surprised Japan when she declared war and invaded Manchuria can be understood at least partially by determining what Japan believed about the Soviet Union's intentions. If Japan did not believe the U.S.S.R. was going to declare war and attack Japanese forces in Manchuria they were surprised, to a degree reflecting the extent they understood the Soviet intent. There is little to suggest that the Japanese were completely fooled about Soviet intentions at the end of World War II, though there is certainly evidence to suggest that Soviet actions on the night of 8-9 August 1945 were totally unexpected and therefore that Japan was a victim of strategic surprise.

It will be seen from this case study on strategic surprise that two types of activity were of critical importance. On one hand the Soviets handled their political and

diplomatic affairs in such a way as to make their declaration of war quite unexpected, particularly with respect to timing. At the same time, their political decisions had to be coordinated with the strategic military planning and build-up that preceded the invasion, which were calculated to surprise the Japanese equally as much as those in the diplomatic arena. The Japanese had opportunities to reduce their uncertainties concerning Soviet intentions by seeing either the political or military picture correctly. Both disclosed much about Soviet intentions.

The situation that existed between Japan and the U.S.S.R. in August 1945, both politically and militarily, cannot be understood simply in terms of what happened just before the Manchurian campaign began. The Japanese and the Soviets had been political opponents in the Far East for almost fifty years by the time of the 1945 Manchurian invasion, and for about fifteen years each had maintained a strong military presence in Manchuria or near its borders. In order to fully understand how they arrived at their respective situations by the time of World War II, it is necessary to go back before the turn of the century, when both the Japanese and the Russians became interested in Manchuria.

China's inability to effectively rule the area beyond the Great Wall created a political vacuum in Manchuria that both the Russians and Japanese attempted to

fill during the 1890's. Early differences between them were essentially settled by the 1903-1905 Russo-Japanese War, in which the Japanese resoundingly defeated the Russians. After that, the Japanese were left with major Manchurian interests in the south, particularly the port cities of Dairen and Port Arthur on the Liaotung Peninsula, and the south Manchurian Railway which ran from central Manchuria to the Liaotung Peninsula. The Russians were conceded rights to the Chinese Eastern Railway in the north, an east-west line which shortened the distance between Central Russia and the Soviet Maritime Region that was otherwise accessible only by the Soviet Trans-Siberian Railway (see Figure 2).

In the early 1920's, the Soviet Union was not much of a threat to her neighbors, and was trying desperately to recover and rebuild after the difficult years of World War I and the Russian Revolution. During the same period Japan was rather conciliatory in her diplomatic relations, successfully ironing out serious problems with China over the Shantung Peninsula, with the United States over the disputed Pacific Island of Yap, and with Soviet Russia over the withdrawal of Japanese occupation forces from Siberia and Sakhalin Island. In addition, Japan was supportive of the League of Nations and other international efforts to secure and keep the peace, including the Washington Conference of 1921 during which an important naval limitations agreement was reached. But in the late 1920's, China tried to

Figure 2

Rail Lines in Manchuria[1]

unilaterally renounce Japan's vast treaty rights, abrogate the legal rights of her citizens living in Manchuria, and undermine the operation of the rail lines operated by the Japanese by building a competing and parallel system. These acts seriously threatened Japanese interests, and they pondered what to do.

The Japanese expansionist aims in Manchuria that resulted worried the Soviet Union so much that in August 1929 they created a new Special Far Eastern Army under Marshal V. I. Blyukher, a competent general who had been the top military advisor with Mikhail Borodin's advisory party in China in 1924. By 1929 the Soviets, like the Japanese, were feeling their interests threatened by the Chinese. Accordingly, Marshal Blyukher's first assignment in his new position as commander of the Special Far Eastern Army was to prepare for operations against the current Manchurian war-lord, who was as opposed to Soviet interests in northern Manchuria as he was to Japanese interests in the south. Blyukher, with over 100,000 men under his command, attacked the Chinese and Manchurian forces in northern Manchuria in October 1929, and in about six weeks defeated them completely. The Russians made an impressive showing.

While they looked good against Manchurian war-lord Chiang Hsueh-liang, the Soviets fully recognized their relative military weakness in the Far East. They continued to build up and maintain ready forces under Blyukher, and at the same

time attempted to achieve the preservation of Russian interests in the Far East through diplomatic means. However, the Japanese perceived the Soviet weaknesses, and Blyukher's forces had left no doubt about the extent of Chinese and Manchurian strength.

Continued difficulties and incidents with both China and Japan eventually led the Soviets to sell their interests in the Chinese Eastern Railway in northern Manchuria to the Japanese. It was not something they wanted to do, but the Soviets probably figured they would lose out to the Japanese in the long run anyway. Even a forced sale of their interests would give them something to show. The sale became final in 1935, but not until Japan had acted earlier to foreclose most of the Soviet options to selling out.

Japanese control over all Manchuria really started with the so-called "Manchurian Incident," which began on 18 September 1931, and was prompted by the "destruction" of some Southern Manchurian Railway tracks near the city of Mukden (modern Shenyang). The whole incident was engineered by the Japanese as a pretext for moving elements of their Kwantung Army north from the Liaotung Peninsula, in order to confront Chinese and Manchurian forces near Mukden, without giving the appearance of being the aggressor force. Supposedly angered Japanese railway guards opened fire without orders to do so, and the Japanese acted promptly to bring up Kwantung Army forces from the south to prevent the

situation from getting out of hand. By January 1932 virtually the whole region was in Japanese hands, secured by the Kwantung Army. In 1932 the Japanese "puppet state" of Manchukuo was formed which allowed Japan to control Manchuria without having to exercise full sovereignty over it.

In 1937 the Japanese began in earnest their war against Nationalist China, and in 1939 the war in Europe began. World events overshadowed what took place in Manchuria during the remainder of the 1930's, but two incidents along the border were taken very seriously by both Russia and Imperial Japan. The occurrences became known as the Lake Khasan Incident of 1938, which involved division-sized forces, and the Khalkin-gol Incident of 1939, involving corps-sized forces. They were known as the Changkufeng and Nomonhan Incidents, respectively, by the Japanese. The fact that such large formations were committed against each other in successive years, in what amounted to small wars, highlights the explosiveness of the situation that had built up along the Manchurian border. The Japanese claim these were only the largest two of more than a thousand such occurrences along the border between Manchuria and Russia (or Outer Mongolia). The Soviets have claimed an even larger number.[2]

Ever since the Japanese and Russians first acquired interests in Manchuria they began to engage in an endless

series of quarrels, disputes, border violations, and minor armed conflicts. Early in the century they had engaged in a major war, and by the late 1930's were on the verge of another decisive showdown. However, because World War II was just getting under way neither side wanted to continue to pursue the kind of aggressive role that had resulted in the incidents of 1938 and 1939, and both grew cautious. Afraid to become embroiled in a war over Manchuria when events elsewhere held so much uncertainty, they came to terms and signed a pact of neutrality. This pact, and the events of the war, were to keep them apart for more than five more years. The climax and final dénoument to their confrontation in Manchuria would not occur until the final days of World War II.

The Russians Prepare

As long as World War II raged, Japan was in a somewhat awkward position with respect to the Soviet Union. She was not only Germany's Far East ally, she was a neutrality pact partner with the U.S.S.R., Germany's wartime enemy. The Germans, naturally, wanted Japan to invade Russia early in the war, creating a second front from which Stalin would have had little chance of recovery. For reasons of her own, Japan did not do so.

Alexander Werth, press correspondent in Moscow during World War II, has written that there were two periods in the war between Russia and Germany when the Russians most

dreaded a Japanese attack on them. The first was the period between the initial German attack on the U.S.S.R. and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, the period of Germany's initial great successes. The second was the following summer and autumn, when the fortunes of the Red Army were low, and the Russian military situation looked most bleak.[3]

Following the German attack in 1941 the Soviet position quickly deteriorated and became precarious as she strove to stop the onslaught. Japan at this time was becoming ever more prepared for war, and ever more expansionist in attitude. Though her attention seemed to be focusing on the United States, whose Pacific Fleet was an important counterforce to the realization of her goals in the Pacific, Japan's finest military forces were deployed in Manchuria along the Soviet border. Stalin could have had little faith in the ultimate strength of the neutrality pact between Russia and Japan, for that pact reflected short term interests rather than long term friendship, and the situation changed considerably shortly after it was signed. Nevertheless, he had to place a certain reliance in it and withdraw some of his troops from the Far East area. He was undoubtedly reassured by reports from his well-placed spy in Japan, Dr. Richard Sorge, who correctly reported the Japanese would not attack Russia.

By the end of 1941, Stalin had already gone on record as saying he intended to enter the war against Japan in support of the Allies. His biggest worry at the outset of the war was that Japan might attack his rear, Siberia. General Sergei M. Shtemenko, a member of the Soviet General Staff during the war, makes clear this concern when he admits that, "While devoting our main attention to the fighting fronts, we never forgot about the Far East. Indeed, at moments of crisis in the struggle with the nazi invaders our Eastern worries were doubled."[4]

As long as the war with Germany lasted, the main reason Stalin did not want to become involved with Japan was to keep from dissipating his forces; but there were other reasons as well. He particularly wanted to establish what gains were to accrue to the Soviet Union when she joined the war against Japan. In this regard, Stalin wanted the United States and England to create a second front in Northern Europe as soon as possible, and he wanted the assurance of certain territorial concessions in the Far East at the war's end. Stalin also was concerned with appearances, and was worried that by attacking the Japanese while their neutrality pact was still in effect he would seem the aggressor and the bully. He went to some lengths to make the Soviet position seem otherwise, never quite succeeding. In an early example of his concern, during a meeting with Anthony Eden at the end of 1941, Stalin said he hoped that Japan

would eventually attack the Soviet Union, claiming he would prefer they did because it would ease matters from a legal standpoint. At that point in the war, Stalin had the Germans temporarily on the defensive, and seemed to hold the erroneous belief that the tide of war had already turned in his favor. Stalin's forecast of the way Russia would enter the war against Japan was reported this way by Eden. In 1942 Stalin's forces would begin to press the Germans hard, and as their defeat became more inevitable, they would strongly urge the Japanese to attack Russia. Japan would enter the war in order to save Germany from going down to defeat, but by then the Soviets would be ready for them. That was Stalin's scenario.[5]

Needless to say, the Germans did not cooperate in 1942. They redoubled their efforts to bring Russia to her knees, and almost succeeded. Moreover, all their urging could not persuade Japan to attack the U.S.S.R., for Japan was too heavily committed in China and in pursuit of dominance in the Pacific. Despite misgivings about doing so, Stalin had to withdraw more forces from the Far East, trusting to continued Japanese neutrality and to the information being provided to him by his critically important espionage agent in Japan, the German Dr. Sorge. Sorge again reported the Japanese had no intention of attacking from Manchuria. Using Sorge's information, Stalin was again able to risk moving forces from Siberia into the conflict against

the Germans at a critical moment. He never stripped away his defensive capability completely, and as soon as possible restored the Far Eastern defenses to a credible level.[6] However, a Japanese attack, had it come at the worst possible time, would have found few defenders along the Soviet border. Striking at their most opportune time, the Japanese could easily have accomplished something that was more important than any territorial gains they may have been able to realize. It would not have taken much to cut the slender supply route for United States Lend-Lease aid. It was this aid, massive amounts of it, that Stalin admitted was probably the difference between victory and defeat at the times of greatest crisis.[7]

In 1943 the tide finally did turn for good in favor of the Red Army. In October of that year U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull visited Moscow, and Stalin, without any prompting from Hull, unequivocally promised to join the war in the Pacific. Hull was impressed by Stalin's pledge, and took very seriously Stalin's admonition that President Roosevelt be informed of it only in the strictest confidence.[8]

Shortly afterward, in December 1943, Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Churchill met with Stalin at Teheran. Stalin confirmed the promise he had made to Cordell Hull, but the discussions at Teheran were still somewhat tentative. Stalin wanted the Allies to open up a second front against Germany before he discussed the details of Soviet involvement

against Japan, and furthermore the war with Germany was still in doubt and he did not want to bind himself to detailed obligations in another conflict while that one was still going on.[9] At the same time, just because he was being vague Stalin was not making unsubstantiated promises. N. N. Voronov, Chief Marshal of the Artillery for the Red Army, later wrote that when Stalin returned to Russia from the conference he brought the news that within three or four months after Germany was defeated the U.S.S.R. would participate in the war against Japan. Stalin even made some remarks about what spoils of victory would fall to Russia after the war, saying that he wanted everything that Russia lost during the Russo-Japanese War, but nothing ". . . that does not belong to us." Stalin swore his top military men to secrecy about his decisions, and shortly after that the first shipments of ammunition and supplies to the Far East were begun that would be used in the offensive against the Kwantung Army. Voronov noted that these shipments resulted in wonderment among some people who became aware of them, and there were complaints that supplies were being "wasted" instead of being sent to the German front where they were needed.[10]

In October 1944, during a visit to Moscow by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, General John R. Deane was present at discussions with Stalin concerning Soviet participation in the war against Japan. General Deane was then

head of the Lend-Lease Program in Moscow. During the discussions, Stalin stated the Soviet Army needed sixty divisions in the Far East in order to be able to conduct offensive operations, or thirty divisions more than were already in place. The movement of those thirty divisions over the Trans-Siberian Railroad would take three months after Germany was defeated, and aside from just the question of troops there was a problem with supplies. Two to three months of supplies would have to be stockpiled in Siberia, since not even the thirty-six trains a day that could be moved over the Trans-Siberian would be enough to supply sixty divisions. U.S. Ambassador Averill Harriman wanted to know precisely how soon the Soviets could take the offensive after Germany was defeated, provided the United States assisted in building up the necessary reserves in Siberia. Stalin said three months would be sufficient, assuming that the political aspects of the question had been worked out beforehand. Stalin, always careful, wanted guarantees of territorial concessions before he entered the war in the Pacific.

During the last of the discussions Stalin outlined his general strategy for conducting the invasion of Manchuria against the Japanese Kwantung Army. He proposed a plan that was essentially the same as that eventually put into effect in August 1945, with the main strike from the northwest through Outer Mongolian territory, assisted by two supporting

sweeps from the north and east. The three axes of attack would tend to paralyze Japanese forces in Manchuria, and the main attack across the Great Khingal Mountains from Mongolia would be headed for main centers of population and communications while at the same time separating Japanese troops in Manchuria from possible reinforcements in China.[11]

The next time Soviet plans for their campaign against the Japanese were discussed with the Allies was at Yalta, during the last conference held between the "Big Three." By the time the Yalta Conference took place, during the first ten days of February 1945, the war against Germany was all but over. The Americans had thrown back the Germans in the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge, and the Russians were realizing tremendous successes in their current Winter Offensive. It is possible the Russians were actually in a position to have taken Berlin in February 1945 when Yalta was in progress, but instead attacked elsewhere so as to occupy as much territory as possible before Germany's final defeat.[12] At any rate, the Red Army had pushed to within fifty-seven miles of Berlin by 2 February 1945, and the purpose of the Yalta Conference was not so much to consider plans for the defeat of Nazi Germany as to talk about what would happen after her surrender. The Soviet entry into the Pacific war was naturally a topic of discussion, although other topics occupied positions of greater importance on the agenda.

On 8 February 1945, Roosevelt and Stalin talked privately at Yalta. Roosevelt, in no mood to support future British or French colonialism in Asia, wanted to make sure he and Stalin reached a private understanding that would insure neither of those countries retained much influence in the Orient after the war. Roosevelt proposed that the United States establish herself as a major presence in the Pacific after the war; that China be given hegemony over the Asian mainland, subject to certain stipulations; and that the Soviet Union, China concurring, be granted certain territorial concessions in return for joining the war against Japan. Stalin had no reservations about undercutting the influence of Britain and France, and was more than willing to make his own aims known. He wanted the southern part of Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands. He wanted to lease the ports of Dairen and Port Arthur on the Liaotung Peninsula of Manchuria, and he wanted control over the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian Railroads. He also wanted to retain the <u>status quo</u> in Outer Mongolia, rather than see it fall under Chinese hegemony. Roosevelt agreed, but said he wanted to see Darien and Port Arthur internationalized, rather than given in lease to the Soviet Union. Stalin insisted that he needed the ports outright in order to justify war with Japan to the Russian people. Roosevelt suggested that he might acquiesce on this point if Chiang Kai-shek were also to agree to the Soviet leases, and Stalin,

satisfied with this arrangement, told Roosevelt he wanted the terms reduced to writing before the end of the Yalta Conference.[13] The agreements reached in private were essentially the same as those that came out of the formal conferences a few days later.

One problem in the way of Soviet preparations for declaring war on Japan was the neutrality pact that existed between the two countries. Stalin, who liked to keep up pretenses even when he was being most unscrupulous, began a campaign in 1944 which was to prepare the way for denunciation of the pact. About October 1944, when U.S. troops were landing in the Philippines, some anti-Japanese articles began to make their appearance in the Soviet press, and Stalin himself, in a speech on 6 November 1944, called the Japanese "aggressors" for the first time.[14] With Yalta over, Stalin was fully committed to war against Japan. Germany was almost defeated, and soon the major buildup of forces in the Far East could be gotten under way. It was time, therefore, to break the pact with Japan. Accordingly, the Soviets declared it void on 5 April 1945, in spite of the fact that it had yet another year to run according to its terms.[15]

Unquestionably, the uncooperativeness of the Soviets on many military matters in Europe made United States authorities hesitant about placing too much faith in Soviet promises about the Far East. There were, in fact, many

questions to which the answers were in doubt in May 1945. President Roosevelt had died the month before, and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman. For a number of reasons, President Roosevelt's former personal Chief of Staff, Harry Hopkins, was asked to go to Moscow as Truman's personal emmissary.[16] Hopkins left his sick bed to make the trip, the last official undertaking he made before his death. Hopkins met with Stalin in late May, and after each of the meetings between the two he sent a message back to the State Department and President Truman. In the cable following their third meeting Hopkins reported, "By August 8 the Soviet Army will be properly deployed on the Manchurian positions."[17]

Stalin made it clear to Hopkins that he wanted to take up matters concerning concessions by China with T. V. Soong before 1 July 1945. Stalin was determined to conclude a pact with the Chinese before he attacked Japanese forces so his territorial gains could not be contested later. As Hopkins reported, Stalin believed that, ". . . no Communist leader was strong enough to unify China," and was therefore willing to back the Nationalist Chinese against the Communist cause. Stalin also said the Japanese had begun putting out peace feelers, hoping to obtain softer terms. He still favored the policy of unconditional surrender that the Allies had earlier agreed upon, although he believed Japan would not give up if unconditional surrender were demanded. She would

have to be destroyed, just as Germany was. (Naturally, a premature surrender by Japan might affect the Soviet claim on agreed upon territorial concessions, so Stalin preferred to keep Japanese peace feelers at a low-key level, holding out for unconditional surrender.)

During these political developments the Soviets had begun military preparations for the offensive in Manchuria. It was decided to break up the troop organization that had been formed earlier for the defense of the Soviet Far East, and which at that time consisted of the Far Eastern Command, the Primorye (Maritime) Group, and the Trans-Baikal Command. In their stead, three Soviet front organizations were formed, and in late June a command-and-control headquarters, the Soviet High Command, Far East, was organized under the previous Chief of the General Staff, Marshal A. M. Vasilevsky. Beginning in April the Soviets began in earnest to build an army in the Far East that was three times the size of the one with which they started.[18]

In April 1945 some troop units and their headquarters started moving from the western front to the Far East. Initially there was some high level concern about the need for defensive operations that in retrospect was unnecessary since the Japanese were very unlikely to mount a large-scale spoiling attack. Nevertheless, the prospect of a Japanese invasion during the initial stages of the build-up was counted as a very real possibility. Soon, however the

Soviets were able to concentrate only on their offensive plans.[19]

Soviet staff estimates were assisted by good intelligence information, in contrast to the limited amounts the Japanese were able to develop. To some extent the Soviets were able to rely on intelligence that had been available for some time, such as the fortification lines that had been built by the Japanese. In the area bordering the Soviet Maritime Region the Japanese had long had concrete fortifications and bunkers, behind which, as Shtemenko says, ". . . the Japanese generals felt reasonably secure." The fortifications were tied into natural obstacles in the area as well, including mountains and swampland. In the north also, the Soviets noted the difficulties that would face them, including the Amur River obstacle, the Little Khingan and Ilhuri-Alin mountain ranges, and some spurs of the Great Khingan range. From the area near Transbaikal the approaches into the heart of Manchuria crossed a semi-desert plateau that was essentially an extension of the Gobi Desert, as well as the Greater Khingan mountains which attained heights of 1,100 meters.[20]

"We gave much thought to grouping our forces," relates Shtemenko, presenting a closely reasoned argument for adopting the plan that was finally selected after completion of the staff estimates. The three axes of advance that Stalin had discussed much earlier with the Allies

prevailed, and the Transbaikal was selected as the area from which to launch the main attack. The attack from the Maritime Region would run up against the bulk of Japanese fortifications, and the northern axis would hit formidable natural obstacles, particularly the Amur River. The attack from the Transbaikal area would not be easy either, but it was believed that if a tank army could negotiate the plateau across Outer Mongolia and make it through the Greater Khingal range it would have two primary advantages. The first was that the Japanese had not fortified that area heavily, so enemy opposition would be fairly light by comparison. The second reason was that the attack would be unexpected.

Shtemenko, writing from the Soviet General Staff, or strategic point of view, admits that the use of surprise seemed impossible when plans were being made to attack the Japanese. He shows himself well aware of the tremendous enmity that had built up between the Russians and the Japanese over the years, a steady conflict of interests that had resulted in one war already (the Russo-Japanese), and which had built up just before the beginning of the Second World War to the point that both the Russians and the Japanese were willing to risk battles between major elements of their armed forces. To Shtemenko and other strategic staff planners it did not seem there could be any doubt in the minds of the Japanese that Russia would attack soon. If a better signal were needed than the renunciation of the treaty between them

in April, it was the build-up of Soviet troops in the Far East beginning shortly after that. However, just because the Japanese could not help but be convinced of the inevitability of war with Russia, and well aware of the preparations under way for that war, that did not mean strategic surprise was not possible. When considering the problem of attaining surprise in the Far East, key Soviet staff members ". . . reflected more than once on the first days of the war [they] were still fighting." According to Shtemenko:

> Our country had also expected war and prepared for it, but the German attack had come as a surprise. So there was no need to abandon the idea prematurely.

By the end of June, planning was virtually completed.[21]

In July 1945, while the remaining troops were being transferred to the Far East in preparation for the Soviet attack, the Allied leaders met for a last conference, this time at Potsdam, just outside Berlin. Roosevelt, of course, no longer represented the United States, and during the conference Winston Churchill was defeated in an election surprise that brought in the government of Clement Attlee. The old order was fast changing.

There is no question that President Truman went to Potsdam with the goal of insuring that the Russians would enter the war against Japan.[22] At Yalta military advisors to President Roosevelt (including his personal military Chief of Staff Admiral William D. Leahy and Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall) had been in favor of Russia's entry.

Shortly thereafter they decided they did not need the Soviets any longer. Japan was going down to defeat at an even faster rate than anticipated, the atomic bomb showed great possibilities, and Soviet cooperation in other matters was much sought but seldom had. Furthermore, as General Marshall pointed out to President Truman, just the presence of a strong Russian force on the Manchurian border served to keep the Japanese from transferring troops back to the Japanese Home Islands. As long as the Soviet troops stayed where they were Russia did not need to enter the war to provide all the assistance the United States needed as they prepared for the ultimate landings on Kyushu. Just before the conferences began, President Truman told General Dwight D. Eisenhower he was going to Potsdam to get Russia into the war with Japan. Eisenhower, reflecting the then-current U.S. military thinking, cautioned Truman not to give anything away to the Russians in order to get their cooperation, because the war would soon be won even without Russia's help.[23] However, President Truman had to weigh the advice of his military men against predictions that had been made only a short time in the past about the tremendous losses of men that would result following the invasion of Japan, and of the danger the war might be prolonged if Russia did not come in.[24] The atom bomb was still no more than a possibility and could not be depended upon: besides no one had a very good idea of how much power one bomb would release,

and estimates were universally low compared to what proved to be actuality.[25] Truman thought he needed Russia in the war, and was not sure Stalin would keep his part of the Yalta bargain.

On 13 July 1945, the United States intercepted messages from Japanese Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo to Japanese Ambassador Naotake Sato in Moscow. Togo was seeking peace, and wanted Sato to attempt to use the good offices of the Soviet Union to arrange terms with the Allies. The Japanese did not want war with Russia (a point Sato was specifically to convey to the Russians), and Japan did not desire to annex any Manchurian territory. Unconditional surrender, which the United States and Britain demanded, was the only thing preventing termination of the war. More messages were intercepted on 15 July 1945. In his replies to Togo, Ambassador Sato was coldly realistic. He said there was no reality in the hope Russia would respond to a Japanese offer to give up Manchurian territory which was already as good as lost, and said it was clear Japan was thoroughly defeated. There was little prospect for Russian assistance in negotiating a peace with the Allies.[26]

On 17 July 1945 the Potsdam conferees discussed the Far East situation. Stalin said he had not yet finished negotiating with China. Stalin would probably have had better success in reaching an agreement had he not tried to negotiate based on distortions of the agreements reached

at Yalta. Chinese negotiator, T. V. Soong, who had been briefed in advance by Ambassador Harriman in Moscow, held out for the terms actually discussed and agreed upon.[27]

On 20 July 1945, another message from the Japanese Ambassador to Moscow conveyed, in the words of U.S. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, Sato's ". . . 'unreserved' opinion about the situation of Japan. . . His review left no hope of preventing ultimate and complete surrender." Ironically, only the day before the Combined Chiefs of Staff, meeting at Potsdam, selected a target date for forcing the unconditional surrender of Japan. The date set was 15 November 1946, to be adjusted as the situation demanded.[28]

On 25 July, Foreign Minister Togo again cabled Ambassador Sato in Moscow about seeking Soviet support for surrender terms. Once again, Togo stressed that although Japan could not accept unconditional surrender she was willing to surrender on any terms that secured and maintained Japanese existence and honor. What was really at stake was a guarantee of the safety of Emperor Hirohito. Sato dealt with Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov's deputy, who continued to hold out a faint hope the Russians would eventually help out.[29]

The following morning, 26 July, fissionable material was delivered to the island of Tinian, material which would be used in the first atomic bomb attack against Hiroshima. It was a week and a day after President Truman had learned

by cable that the bomb had been tested for the first time and was a success. He and Churchill discussed whether or not to keep all information about it from Stalin, then decided to tell him about it in general terms without revealing the full extent of the development. Stalin was only told of the bomb in an informal manner by Truman, who took a moment to be alone with him after concluding one of their daily meetings. Truman called it a "superbomb," and Stalin probably was not aware until later of its atomic nature (although he was certainly aware the U.S. had been working on splitting the atom, as were his own scientists).[30]

Potsdam ended, essentially, with the communication of a surrender ultimatum to Japan, an ultimatum delivered by message on 26 July 1945. Since Russia was not at war with Japan, she was not a signatory to what was later called the Potsdam Declaration. Truman later recorded that on 28 July 1945 Stalin informed the Potsdam conferees that the Japanese Ambassador had approached the Soviet government about peace with the Allies. Earlier, on 18 July, he had mentioned a similar, but less specific effort by the Japanese which he said he rejected as being "too vague." The latest offer was more definite Stalin said, and he intended to give it a more definite answer. The answer would be "no."[31] Truman, of course, was already aware of the cable traffic between Japan and Moscow. Later the same day, radio intercepts picked up the Japanese answer to the Potsdam Declaration issued two

days before. Truman was informed the Japanese had labeled it "absurd," and "unworthy of consideration."[32]

After that, the Americans continued preparations to drop their atomic bomb, and the Russians made final preparations to launch their ground offensive in Manchuria. General Antonov said at Potsdam the attack would come ". . . in the last half of August." The actual date, he said, would depend on resolving differences with the Chinese, since the Russians wanted to wait until a Sino-Soviet treaty was signed before the invasion.[33]

Japan: The Last Days

By 1 August 1945, Japan was soundly beaten, her once great military forces hopelessly defeated. The Imperial Japanese Army, which at the war's beginning had been such a formidable force, had been dissipated over the course of the long war as the Japanese pursued major objectives on the Asian mainland as well as over the vast island domain that constituted the Japanese defensive perimeter. Campaigns in China, Burma, and Indo-China wore down the fighting strength of her armies, as did the losses she suffered from Guadalcanal to Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The pride of Japanese ground forces at the war's beginning was the Kwantung Army in Manchuria. By August 1945 it had deteriorated until it was no longer the vital reservoir of units, equipment, and trained men that it once had been. True, there was still a large force in Manchuria, and even at the end of the war

Japan could claim twenty-four divisions there. However, most were divisions in name only, left there or created near the end of the war in the hope that Russians would be fooled about the true strength of the once great Kwantung Army. As for Japan's Imperial Navy, with which she had launched the pre-emptive strike against the United States fleet at Pearl Harbor in 1941, and upon which she ultimately depended for the maintenance of her island empire (as well as the support of her troops on the mainland), it lay mostly on the ocean floor by the summer of 1945. In fact, the overall potential of Japan for continuing to support the war was virtually nil by then. There were too many bombed out factories, and too few ship bottoms left to carry raw materials. Japan as a country was much like what was left of her air force, never her strong suit, which was good for little else but to use in suicical kamikazi attacks. There was potential left for destructiveness, but no capability remained to achieve decisive victory.[34] Millions of Japanese had given their effort, their honor and their lives during the struggle, and now the end neared for Japan. Yet bringing an end to the struggle depended not on the millions, but on the few in whose hands rested what power was left.

On 9 May 1945, the day of the German surrender, the people of Japan knew nothing of the real course of events of the war in the Pacific. It was not until the summer months, when the repeated bombing of Japanese cities became a constant

and undeniable fact, that the public began to suspect the extent to which things had come. Given the strong Japanese belief in death before dishonor, the samurai tradition, an admission of the true facts among Japan's ruling elite became an easier thing to do after the German surrender than before. Even so, a high official too quick to admit defeat was in the offing was literally risking his life almost right up until the end. It was a very real consideration for Prime Minister Suzuki, who did not feel he could make such an admission until the very last days.[35]

Did the Japanese learn of the results of the Yalta conference, including Stalin's promise to enter the war in the Pacific three months after Germany's defeat? The U.S. Far East Command found after the war that they did, although the information they provided in the study, Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions Near End of World War II contains no source information and must, therefore, be considered suspect. According to that document, the Japanese knew the results of the conference by 5 March 1945, having received it through the German Foreign Minister (whose source was a matter of speculation). Additionally, the Japanese received a second report on Yalta from their Ambassador in Stockholm, Sweden (though he reported the Soviets would enter the war six months after Germany's fall). According to the Far East Command, Japanese diplomats tended to believe the report received from the Germans, but to regard Soviet promises to

declare war on Japan as a political gesture. The Japanese military, according to the Far East Command, took the initial report very seriously but doubted the three-month time limit would be met.[36]

One of the first to bring realism into the highest reaches of government following Germany's surrender was Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo. Togo was one of Japan's "Big Six," the six charter members of the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, Japan's "inner cabinet." Premier Suzuki directed the Big Six, and aside from the Premier and the Foreign Minister, military representatives made up the remainder of the group. Togo, always forthright and outspoken, was courageous enough to speak his mind in May 1945, and got the Big Six to agree to a proposal that the Foreign Office begin a series of overtures to the Soviet Union. Togo proposed three guidelines, the first of which was that the Soviets must not be allowed to go to war with Japan, and the second of which was that Soviet friendship must be actively cultivated. Thirdly, the Soviets should be looked upon as possible mediators during efforts to end the conflict with the Allies on terms favorable to Japan. As previously mentioned, Togo proposed that among the concessions Japan should be willing to offer Russia was the return of territories seized after the Russo-Japanese War. Thereafter, Togo took a number of initiatives designed to end the war, dealing personally with Soviet Ambassador to Japan Jacob Malik.

He also worked through Japanese Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Naotake Sato, as has already been brought out. Stalin, of course was in no way interested in becoming a peacemaker in Asia; he wanted to end the conflict, but on much different terms than Togo wished.[37]

At the beginning of the war Japanese plans for the Kwantung Army in Manchuria envisioned offensive operations. By May 1945, the Kwantung Army had a mission to defend along the borders of Manchuria.[38] In that month, however, the Intelligence Section of the Kwantung Army was picking up more and more information on the Soviet build-up in the Far East, although a Russian capability to attack the Kwantung Army was not believed possible until at least 1946. Close surveillance of the Soviets was recommended anyway, especially after August 1945.[39]

Estimates made by Imperial General Headquarters in Japan during the same month appear to have been more accurate. In fact, General Headquarters became so concerned about the possibility of Soviet intervention in the Far East that new orders were issued to the Kwantung Army which called for delaying operations back to an area north of the Korean border, where a concerted defense effort could more easily be carried out.[40] The assessment of the Imperial General Headquarters that caused the Kwantung Army to issue new plans in June for Manchurian operations was that the Soviet Union might enter the war as early as the summer of 1945, or perhaps in the autumn. The Japanese estimated the redeployment

of forty divisions to the Far East would be necessary before the Soviets could attack; since they first became aware of troops moving to the Far East in February, they believed the build-up could be completed as early as June or July. It was assumed that one or two months after that would be necessary for offensive preparations, so the earliest they figured the Soviets would be ready was in August or September 1945.[41]

The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters estimate specifically took into account the possibility of the Soviets acting in concert with the United States. A review of the text of the estimate produced following the final capitulation of Germany shows the Japanese felt Soviet moves would depend on U.S. activities, they thought Russia might enter the war precisely when Japan was so reduced in strength surrender was imminent, and they thought seasonal weather conditions in Manchuria might be an important factor in Soviet timing. The Japanese estimate stated in part:

> The Soviet Union is now rapidly increasing her military strength in eastern Siberia in conjunction with the changing war situation in the Far East and is preparing to open hostilities at any time. The exact date of her entry into war against Japan cannot be estimated as it will depend on developments in the war situation in the Far East as well as on the Soviet estimate of the situation. However, Japan must be on the alert in any of the following events: (a) if US forces land in a strategic area in central or northern China and there is strong indication of war being expanded into the interior; (b) if US forces land in southern Korea and there is a likelihood of their advance northward; (c) if US forces penetrate the Japan Sea and there is a likelihood of their landing in strategic areas along

> the coasts of Japan; (d) if the defeat of Japan appears imminent after the US forces succeed in landing in Japan Proper; (e) when Japan's national strength has been almost completely exhausted by enemy bombing even before US forces invade Japan Proper, and (f) when internal conditions in Japan are strained to the limit, and peace with the United States and Great Britain appears imminent.
>
> If the Soviet Union finds it necessary to enter a full-scale war against Japan by the end of February 1946 she will, before the advent of the cold season (December), occupy strategic areas in northern Manchuria. For that purpose, she will open hostilities at least three months earlier, around September 1945. The Russian attitude must be watched closely especially during August and September.[42]

After the end of June 1945, the Japanese sensed a speedup of offensive preparations by the Soviets along the eastern border of Manchuria. On 10 July 1945, Imperial General Headquarters issued the order for the mobilization of 250,000 persons out of a possible 400,000 reservists residing in Manchuria. This allowed the force in Manchuria to be increased by eight reserve divisions, bringing the total to twenty-four divisions and a number of other combat and support units. Japanese Army units in Manchuria contained a total of 780,000 men in August 1945, and there were as many as 300,000 Manchurian troops under Japanese control as well (although these were fit for little but garrison duty). Additionally, there were about 250,000 men in Korea that could be counted as possible reinforcements. The Japanese had control of over a million men in uniform in Manchuria alone, but as will be brought out in more detail later, their troops were generally untrained and poorly equipped, their units undermanned and unprepared.[43]

After the fall of Okinawa in June, the main battlefield had shifted to the Japanese Homeland, a fact which was tacitly recognized by the formulation of Ketsu-go, the operational plan for the defense of the Home Islands. Imperial General Headquarters correctly judged that the United States was preparing plans for an invasion that would necessitate a landing on the island of Kyushu, and even guessed correctly the two beaches the U.S. would choose to make their eventual invasion landings.[44]

While defense preparations in Japan and Manchuria proceeded apace, air raids by the United States Air Force became more and more destructive, and by this time were virtually unopposed. General Curtis LeMay's fire bomb missions eventually eliminated whole cities as targets, including Tokyo and Yokohama. Cities, factories, military installations, communications lines, harbors, and Japanese shipping disappeared in the holocaust. In addition, United States submarines began to ply the Sea of Japan after the fall of Okinawa, the U.S. aircraft began attacking Japanese ships in the Korea Strait as well. The transportation of vital supplies from Japan to the Asian mainland became increasingly difficult, and toward the end of the war it was almost impossible to transport needed material to Japanese troops in Korea and Manchuria.[45]

Small wonder that the Japanese had been putting out peace feelers, most through their diplomatic channels with

the Soviets. However, as previously noted Russia spurned the Japanese advances, and insistence on the idea of unconditional surrender prompted the British and American heads of state to ignore Japan's efforts to bring about peace. Japan could have accepted the Potsdam Declaration of course; her rejection of that ultimatum has been a source of speculation since it occurred. The Big Six considered the declaration on 27 July 1945, and Foreign Minister Togo indicated he felt there was room for interpretation of the document. He said he believed Japan should request its clarification. The military authorities on the council were not sure what to do, and the debate continued without a definite conclusion being reached. One thing that was decided was to provide the press with a censored version of the text, without comment or criticism from the government. It was to be handled strictly as a news item. Unfortunately, things did not work out exactly as intended. Premier Suzuki, who headed the Big Six, later felt moved to say to the press that he believed the government should <u>mokusatsu</u> the declaration. <u>Mokusatsu</u> is a word which can mean something akin to "no comment," but which has a more literal meaning of "kill it with silence." Idiomatically, it is correct to translate <u>mokusatsu</u> as to ignore completely and it was this meaning that the Japanese press ascribed to Premier Suzuki's short pronouncement on the declaration. When they finished interpreting <u>mokusatsu</u> it was no wonder the message conveyed

to President Truman in Potsdam was that the Japanese had completely rejected the ultimatum. It will never be conclusively proven whether Premier Suzuki did or did not mean to reject the Potsdam Declaration. Obviously, however, it was the Japanese government's responsibility to make sure their reply would be properly understood by the Allies. Whether or not the Allies received a message rejecting the Potsdam ultimatum that was accidental, the fact remains that Japan had lost her last opportunity to end the war before suffering through the disasters of August 1945.[46]

1 August 1945 to 9 August 1945

The month of August opened quietly for Japan. There seemed to be a lull in military activity. The U.S. Air Force had discontinued its fire bombing missions, but was making final preparations for something even more destructive, the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima. In Manchuria some changes in the military pattern appeared to be taking place, but it was not certain that anything significant was happening. By late July the Soviets seemed to have virtually completed building up their ground combat troops. Estimates of the Kwantung Army Intelligence Section indicated that although they were still bringing in support troops they would be incapable of launching an attack before the latter half of the month. There was a "very great" possibility of war in the early fall. Border incidents were on the increase, and a company-sized incident took place beginning on 6 August.

The border crossing occurred on the eastern frontier, and involved an attack on a Japanese outpost. The Soviets did not withdraw for about twenty-four hours, and the Kwantung Army Intelligence Section concluded that the scale of the incident could signify hostilities were close. Subordinate units were ordered to take increased precautions, but little was done to prepare for an emergency. Most subordinate armies looked upon the incident as just another in a long series of minor incursions, signifying very little.[47]

In Tokyo, the cabinet continued to consider the Potsdam Declaration. The Allies had gotten their answer at Potsdam on 28 July 1945, as it was carried in Japanese press releases. The cabinet, which never meant to convey the impression that a negative decision had been reached, simply tried to ignore the damage that had been done. As far as they were concerned, the ultimatum was still under consideration. In some respects they were inclined to consider it favorably, since it seemed to call for the unconditional cessation of hostilities by the armed forces, rather than by Japan herself. Japan could possibly tolerate the loss of the military conflict and the defeat of her military forces, but could not honor an ultimatum that spelled abject surrender of the country, bringing dishonor on the nation as a whole.[48] Foreign Minister Togo also continued his efforts to conclude a peace in which the Soviets would act as mediators. He was hampered because Soviet Foreign Minister

Molotov had gone to Potsdam in late July and did not return to Moscow until 5 August 1945. Japanese Ambassador to Moscow Naotake Sato had been unsuccessful in trying to carry out Togo's previous instructions, although he had not actually been completely rebuffed. Sato still did not think the Soviets would assist the Japanese, but there was nothing else to do, and he was willing to try one more time.

Togo cabled Ambassador Sato on 6 August 1945 to inform him Tokyo sources reported Stalin and Molotov had returned to Moscow that same day. Togo's instructions to Sato were to see Molotov immediately. Togo's message was datelined five o'clock in the evening.[49] That morning, although he probably still did not know it, Hiroshima had been destroyed by an atomic bomb.

The first word that government officials in Tokyo had about the bombing of Hiroshima came about noon. It was reported by the Domei News Agency, based on a telegram sent from the vicinity of Hiroshima. The extent of the disaster was not made clear, either in the first report or in a later cable. The second report came through official channels, and said Hiroshima had suffered appalling damage even though only "a few" aircraft were involved in the attack. Those in Tokyo had no idea of the true fact, which was that a new weapon had been used against them the like of which the world had hardly even dreamed.[50]

The following morning another report was received in Tokyo which indicated the extent of the disaster. Vice Chief Kawabe of the Army General Staff received a report telling him, "The whole city of Hiroshima was destroyed instantly by a single bomb." Kawabe had an idea that atomic energy was involved, based on information that he had recently been given by a Japanese scientist, Dr. Nishina. Dr. Nishina was sent to overfly Hiroshima in a small aircraft to survey the damage, and on 7 August 1945 he made his report that Hiroshima had been hit by a bomb constructed from fissionable uranium.[51]

Foreign broadcasts carried the news of the atomic explosion almost immediately. It was the intercepts of these broadcasts, which went on at great length about the importance and stunning success of the bomb, that first caught the attention of many highly placed Japanese.[52] Some continued to play down the bomb's importance, and it was reported that victims were burned only where they had been actually exposed to the bomb's effects. These kinds of reports led quickly to the misplaced belief that concrete buildings and white clothing would serve as protection in the event of further atomic attacks.[53] For many, atomic energy just did not represent reality.

It is usually suggested by Western writers that it was the detonation of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima, and later Nagasaki, that caused Japan to surrender. It is

certainly true that the power unleashed by the bombs was enough to cause surrender. Japan could not continue the war in the face of the threat to her cities that the new American weapon posed. Yet it appears to be true that dropping the first bomb on Hiroshima did not result in the fear and consternation that might have been expected. Robert J. C. Butow, in Japan's Decision to Surrender, concludes that even knowledge of President Truman's announcement concerning the atom bomb, in which he promised ". . . a rain of ruin from the air, the like of which has never been seen on earth. . . ," was not sufficiently convincing. In military circles, the announcement was generally regarded as just propaganda put out for the purpose of scaring the Japanese people. In this world of unreality the atomic bomb was an unlikely cause for surrender.[54]

Some in government were concerned, of course, and on 7 August 1945 Foreign Minister Togo sent another cable in which he told Ambassador Sato the situation was so acute a clarification of the attitude of the Soviet Union was immediately necessary. Ambassador Sato cabled him back that as soon as Molotov had returned to Moscow he had requested a meeting, and that one had been scheduled for 8 August, at five o'clock in the afternoon. (When the appointment had first been made it was for eight o'clock that evening, but had been moved up three hours.)

Molotov met with Sato on schedule, and as they each occupied a chair at either end of a table in Molotov's office in the Kremlin, the Soviet Foreign Minister interrupted Ambassador Sato to begin reading the text of a document declaring war on Japan. "True to its obligation as an Ally, the Soviet Government has accepted the proposal of the Allies and has joined in the declaration of the Allied powers on July 26." Sato sat in silence as Molotov concluded, "In view of the above, the Soviet Government declares that from tomorrow, that is from August 9, the Soviet Union will consider herself in a state of war against Japan." Ambassador Sato expressed his regret that the Soviet Union was not honoring the non-aggression pact that had existed between the two countries since before the war, and which Stalin had renounced before its actual expiration. Molotov agreed to let Sato cable the news of the declaration to his government in Tokyo in code, and Sato was ushered out, expressing his regret at the pass to which things had come. "It is indeed a sad thing that we shall have to part as enemies."[55]

Almost immediately the telephones at his embassy were disconnected and the message Molotov promised to let through to Japan by means of the normal communications arrangement was never transmitted. The meeting between Molotov and Sato was held at five o'clock, Moscow time. It was then ten o'clock at the border area, and an hour later than that in Tokyo. Two hours after Sato was informed

of the Soviet decision, troops crossed the border into Manchuria. Later in the evening, in Moscow, Stalin remarked to American Ambassador Averell Harriman and U.S. diplomat George Kennan that the leading Soviet units were already ten to twelve kilometers into Manchuria.[56]

If the atomic bomb detonation over Hiroshima had produced confusion, accompanied by a surprising lack of activity, the announcement that the Soviets had attacked Japanese forces in Manchuria caused a different kind of confusion in Tokyo. There was no lack of activity, however. The government was thrown into a series of urgent meetings and consultations, the most important of which was the meeting of the Big Six of the Supreme Council. Once again they took up the question of whether or not to accept the Potsdam Declaration of 26 July 1945, and once again they reached a deadlock. No one was now opposed to the acceptance of Allied terms in principle, but there were some practical problems that made it impossible to reach agreement. While the Big Six was meeting, the word reached them that Nagasaki had suffered the same fate as Hiroshima.[57]

Was Japan Surprised?

Japan sought to the end to seek peace through the good offices of the Soviet Union. That does not mean to imply the Japanese did not recognize the unmistakable signs of trouble brewing as far back as 1944, when anti-Japanese sentiment began to be seen in Soviet newspapers. The Japanese almost certainly took into full account the fact

their treaty partner, Germany, was Russia's most hated enemy, and they probably recognized full well that Russia could possibly be drawn into the Pacific war through her ties with the United States and Great Britain. The renunciation of the non-aggression pact in April 1945, closely following the Yalta conference and almost immediately preceding the final collapse of Germany--coupled with the building up of an enormous Soviet military capability in the Far East--could hardly have signified anything of a peaceful design. Then there were the constant rebuffs by the Soviets when the Japanese approached them to assist in concluding a peace settlement. There were the increasing signs that offensive military preparations were nearing completion near Manchuria. Nevertheless, in spite of all the signs it appears that Japan was caught by surprise when the Soviet Union acted to declare war.

In Tokyo Foreign Minister Togo was trying to achieve a peace settlement by prevailing upon the Russians to act as mediators, while other members of the ruling elite argued the merits of the Potsdam Declaration and tried to come to grips with the confusing news about the attack on Hiroshima. In Moscow Ambassador Sato dutifully reported to the Kremlin on the evening of 8 August, fully prepared to discuss peace terms with Foreign Minister Molotov. Molotov cut off Sato's opening remarks in order to read him the Soviet declaration of war. In a monograph written

after war's end, Commander Yoshimori Terai, former
memb the Navy General Staff, described the Japanese
reac The Soviet declaration, Commander Terai said,

> . . was Russia's reply to Japan's request that [illegible] diate for a cessation of hostilities with the U[illegible] States, Great Britain and China. The Japanese Gov[illegible]ment had intentionally maintained silence in re[illegible]rd to the Potsdam Declaration, awaiting the result of the Soviet's mediation and was dumbfounded by the une[illegible]pected turn of events.[58]

In reviewing the accounts of some of the Japanese who wrote on this period after the war, one finds few admissions that Japan was surprised by the Russian declaration of war. Commander Terai's statement that Japan was dumbfounded by the unexpected turn of events is, for this reason, rather remarkable. While there are few admissions that Japan was surprised or caught off guard by the Soviet Union, the evidence available still lends support to Commander Terai's view that she was.

Of particular importance, there are no accounts that suggest Japan was expecting the Soviet Union to declare war or take offensive military action before at least the latter [illegible]rt of August, with the exception of the previously ment[illegible] Kwantung Army Headquarters estimate concerning the [illegible] violation of 6 August, and some subordinate unit esti[illegible] that do not appear to have been taken too seriously at t[illegible]ategic level. Though many may have foreseen that Russia [illegible]ould eventually enter the war against Japan, no one is on [illegible]cord as having predicted it precisely when it did.

The strategic military preoccupations at the time the Soviets attacked the Kwantung Army were on the one hand Ketsu-go, the plan for defending Kyushu and the other Japanese Islands, and on the other hand sorting out the truth about the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima. The diplomatic preoccupations at the time of the Soviet declaration were to seek peace through Soviet mediation, and to find a satisfactory method of dealing with the Potsdam Declaration. Earlier, the Japanese had tested the Soviets to see if they could detect a freezing of the Soviet attitude toward Japan. They felt that as long as the Soviet Union did not completely rebuff them diplomatically war was not imminent. They were hoping that the Russians would respect the full terms of the non-aggression pact of 1941, which would give them another eight months; it was supposed to run until April 1946, according to its original terms. There is no evidence to suggest the Japanese successfully gauged Soviet intentions diplomatically. On the contrary, there is evidence that points to the fact they were caught completely off-guard on 8 August 1945. Foreign Minister Togo's messages of the previous few days would point to that assumption being correct, and so would Sato's reported reactions to Molotov's announcement.

There is certainly evidence that the Soviet Union tried to achieve strategic surprise over the Japanese, though in one important aspect they may have been unwittingly

assisted by the United States' decision to use the atomic bomb. That aspect, of course, is timing. Appearances alone suggest that the Soviets attacked when they did so as to get in on the tail end of the war, thus doing something to guarantee the territorial concessions they had been granted in return for supporting the Allies against Japan. Were they moved to push up their timetable for the attack on Japanese forces in Manchuria? The Soviets say not, and their denials are supported by the numerous earlier statements and promises by Stalin that Russia and Japan would be at war not later than three months after Germany capitulated, and most specifically by Stalin's May 1945 promise to President Truman's personal emmissary Harry Hopkins that they would declare war on Japan on 8 August 1945. It is nevertheless possible that Stalin was not ready to begin hostilities so soon, even though his troops had been prepared to start the invasion according to the original schedule.

Supporting this are such things as Stalin's condition that he successfully conclude an agreement with China before attacking the Kwantung Army; a statement by Soviet spokesman General Antonov at Potsdam that the U.S.S.R. would be ready only in "the latter part of August"; and even Stalin's reference at Potsdam to being ready "by mid-August," rather than on 8 August as he had earlier stated.[59] The Japanese, who believe the atomic bomb prompted Stalin to

move up the date of the invasion, cite the fact that when the Soviets attacked the Trans-Siberian railway was loaded with needed vehicular equipment, there was a large group of horses at Irkutsk that were still in an off-loading area, and after only a few days the Soviets began to run out of critical supplies such as fuel.[60] Japanese estimative efforts contained one serious error, a rather firm reliance on the coincidence of Soviet entry into the Pacific war with the timing of a U.S. attack on Korea or the Japanese Home Islands. In one respect their estimate was fulfilled, if one accepts that the United States delivered the crushing blow to Japan through use of atomic power, rather than through actual invasion. However, there was no collusion on the timing of attacks by the United States and the Soviet Union as the Japanese believed there would be. After their experiences in Europe, neither the U.S. nor the U.S.S.R. saw benefit in staging a carefully orchestrated finale to the war with Japan.

Though it is entirely possible the Soviets did move their timetable up because of the atom bomb attack on Hiroshima, the actual truth can probably never be proved and at any rate is of little importance. The important fact is, the timing of the attack appears to have surprised the Japanese completely; they did not expect the Russians to attack so soon. General Shtemenko, in discussing the strategic level planning that took place for the invasion

of Manchuria, says the Soviets took into account the Japanese would probably not suspect an invasion before at least September. The General Staff believed the Japanese would think it would take until autumn before enough supplies for the offensive could be brought in over the limited Trans-Siberian Railway.[61] To some extent the Soviets were able to fool the Kwantung Army's intelligence experts through their system of stockpiling, discussed earlier, and it is also true that Lend-Lease had, by June 1945, supplied eighty percent of the materiel for the operation that Stalin had said was needed back in 1944 (when General Deane talked about the matter with him in Churchill's company).[62] Another reason Shtemenko believes the Japanese may have been surprised with respect to the timing of the invasion is because the phrase "three months after Germany's surrender" led to the establishment of an arbitrary date that just happened to coincide with the rainy season in that part of the world. Shtemenko says the Soviet planners suspected Japan would not believe the Russians would attack before September, when the season changed. They counted on the rains for surprise.

General Shtemenko cites other ways in which the Soviet planners of the operation specifically attempted to achieve surprise. According to him, secrecy played a large part. "Catching the Japanese off their guard depended mainly on how well the preparedness of the Soviet forces was kept secret." No one was told the date of the start

of the operations. Operational orders were passed by word of mouth, and then only between very senior commanders with an absolute need to know. The identities of units being transferred to the Far East were kept as secret as possible, and in what seems a rather melodramatic touch, even very senior commanders used fictitious names and rank. Marshal Meretskov, for example, not only was cited under the pseudonym of Colonel General Maximov in orders, but was known by this fictitious name and did not wear insignia that would identify him as Marshal of the Soviet Union. Not only did the Soviets preserve the identity of their units and key personnel and attempt to conceal the degree to which they were building up reserve stocks in the Far East, but they appear to have been highly successful in camouflaging and concealing troop concentrations, so that the Japanese never did realize the main blow would be struck across the Great Khingal Mountains instead of from the Soviet Maritime Provinces.

Shtemenko relates also that ". . . terrain was also to be used as a surprise factor. It would have been quite natural for the enemy not to expect attacks at all, let alone tank attacks, through inaccessible mountains, taiga and desert." (Taiga refers to the dense, subartic evergreen forests of Siberia.) However, the Soviet strategic planners chose not to attack where Japanese defensive preparations were most complete and formidable, and where the

Kwantung Army obviously thought the main thrust would come. Instead, says Shtemenko, ". . . mountain chains, the thickets of the taiga and the desert quicksands, all became allies of Soviet arms despite the claims of formal logic."

Finally, Shtemenko considers ". . . the audacity and speed of the Soviet offensive." So important was this factor in the planning stages of the operation that Stalin himself felt moved to take an active part in the preparations. It was he who finally settled the idea of leading the attack on the main axis with a tank army, instead of settling for the textbook solution which called for slower infantry. Stalin even selected the lead tank army and the objective it was to have taken by the tenth day of the operation. The General Staff, in recommending a tank army lead the attack, took into consideration not only the high rates of advance that could be achieved using that tactic, but the fact that the Japanese troops they were attacking had never experienced tank warfare, with its attendant speed, shock and firepower. Shtemenko sums up the success achieved by the General Staff planners this way:

> When hostilities were finally over, we on the General Staff received an exhaustive answer to the question that had worried us so deeply. Had we succeeded in achieving surprise? The historical facts supplied the answer and they were confirmed by the captured Japanese generals. The enemy had never expected our offensive to come in August; he had assumed that it would begin much later. Owing to this he had been late in preparing his defence lines.

Shtemenko says the commander of the Japanese 4th Army, General Uemura, stated that the equipping of the lines of defense would have taken another two months, and would not have been ready until October 1945. Shtemenko also cites Soviet testimony acquired from Major General M. Tomokatsu, Kwantung Army Chief of Staff, who said, "The Soviet Union's declaration of war on August 8th was a complete surprise to the Kwantung Army."[63]

That the Soviet entry into the war demoralized the Japanese also appears unmistakable, recalling Clausewitz' observations about the moral implications of surprise. The extent of the demoralization of the Japanese Kwantung Army can in no better way be demonstrated than by its virtual collapse under the Soviet offensive. As for Japan herself, on the night of 9 August, less than twenty-four hours after the Soviet attack began, Japanese Premier Suzuki and Foreign Minister Togo met with Emperor Hirohito of Japan. The Soviet declaration of war and the Manchurian offensive had so completely demoralized the Japanese ruling elite that the Emperor found that the unthinkable must finally be faced. While the three most powerful men in Japan held a midnight meeting, the Japanese Cabinet remained in session, having reached no decision on what to do about ending the war. During the conference between Emperor Hirohito, Prime Minister Suzuki and Foreign Minister Togo, the Emperor apparently came to the decision that the war must be ended

whatever the costs. The Emperor agreed to address the entire Cabinet, and in the small hours of 10 August told those assembled before him he would submit to the terms of the Potsdam Declaration.

Notes - Chapter III

[1]Meribeth E. Cameron, et al., China, Japan and the Powers, with a Foreword by Kenneth Scott Latourette (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1952), map inside front cover.

[2]Jesse Wang, "The Military Significance of the Sino-Soviet Border in the Far East" M.M.A.S. thesis, U.S. Command and General Staff College, 1965, pp. 64-71; Harriet L. Moore, Soviet Far Eastern Policy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 98-101; J. M. Mackintosh, "The Soviet Army in the Far East, 1922-55," The Red Army, ed. B. H. Liddell Hart (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1956), pp. 174-5; Otto Preston Chaney, Jr., Zhukov (Norman, Okla: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 53.

[3]Alexander Werth, Russia at War, 1941-1945 (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1964), p. 1027.

[4]S. M. Shtemenko, The Soviet General Staff at War (1941-1945), (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), p. 322; M. V. Zakharov, ed., Finale: A Retrospective Review of Imperial Japan's Defeat in 1945 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), pp. 52-4.

[5]Shtemenko, pp. 323-4; Anthony Eden, The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon, vol. 3, The Reckoning (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), pp. 348-9.

[6]Kenneth R. Whiting, The Development of the Soviet Armed Forces, 1917-1966, Air University Documentary Research Study AU-201-66-ASI, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University, 1966), pp. 48, 57.

[7]John R. Deane, The Strange Alliance: The Story of Our Efforts at Wartime Co-operation with Russia (New York: Viking Press, 1947), p. 87.

[8]Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), pp. 1309-10.

[9]Shtemenko, p. 323.

[10]Diane Shaver Clemens, Yalta (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 59-60, citing N. N. Voronov, "The Exploitation of the Soviet People," Istoriya SSSR 5 (July-August, 1965):13-27.

[11]Deane, pp. 223-4, 240-9.

[12]Shtemenko, pp. 306-17. The author discusses whether Berlin could have been taken in February, and eventually concludes it was not possible. However, he admits that Stalin himself issued an order that would have made it impossible for Berlin to be taken in a logical fashion by the advancing Russian forces. The problem, briefly, was that Stalin gave Berlin to one force as an objective, then drew boundaries that would have made it impossible for that force to take Berlin without violating those same boundaries. Shtemenko's analysis is that events that intruded upon the situation would have made it impossible in any event for Berlin to have been captured in February, and that had such events not occurred the problem caused by Stalin's faulty order would ultimately have been straightened out. That may be, but Stalin may have been in less of a hurry to see Berlin capitulate than he was to occupy more of eastern Europe before Germany's final surrender.

[13]Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973), pp. 195-9.

[14]U.S. Far East Command, Military Intelligence Section, Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions Near End of World War II (28 February 1950), p. 7. Hereinafter cited as Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions.

[15]Harriet L. Moore, Soviet Foreign Policy, 1931-1945 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1945, pp. 146-50.

[16]Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), 883-904; Harry S. Truman, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, vol. 1, Year of Decisions (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1955), pp. 237-59.

[17]Sherwood, pp. 902-3; Truman, pp. 262-5.

[18]Shtemenko, pp. 327-8; M. V. Zakharov, ed., Finale: A Retrospective Review of Imperialist Japan's Defeat in 1945 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), pp. 64-76.

[19]Shtemenko, p. 328.

[20]Ibid., pp. 328-36.

[21]Ibid., p. 336; Zakharov, p. 100.

[22]Truman, p. 100.

[23]Walter Millis, The Forrestal Diaries (New York: Viking Press, 1951), pp. 78-9.

[24]Charles L. Mee, Jr., Meeting at Potsdam (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1975), p. 204; Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference, ed. Walter Johnson (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1949), p. 98.

[25]Herbert Feis, The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 75. (originally published under the title Japan Subdued: The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II, 1961). Quoting a 1959 letter from Dr. Robert Oppenheimer (who was closely associated with the atomic bomb's development), Feis records Oppenheimer's account that ". . . our estimates of the yield were uncertain and for the most part quite low. We established a pool in the laboratory to record the guesses as to the yield of the first bomb. An overwhelming majority made estimates under a few thousand tons; figures in the hundreds of tons were popular. Two visitors, Lee Dubridge and I. I. Rabi, picked the extreme values of zero and 18,000 tons. On July 16, after the test, our first measurement of what had really happened gave 20,000 tons." Our present-day "familiarity" with yields in the megaton range may make a a conscious effort necessary to understand the uncertainties of estimating the power of atomic weapons in those days.

[26]Ibid., pp, 74-5. The diaries contain references to intercepted Japanese messages under a July 15th date heading as well as that of July 13th.

[27]Feis, p. 92.

[28]William D. Leahy, I Was There, with a Foreword by President Truman (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959), p. 410.

[29]Feis, p. 92.

[30]Mee, pp. 109-10, 221-2.

[31]Truman, p. 396.

[32]Ibid., p. 397; Leahy, p. 420.

[33]Truman, p. 382; Mee, p. 212.

[34]U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, "Japan's Struggle to End the War (1946)," Appendix, "Survey of National Resources as of 1-10 June 1945," pp i-vii. (The appendix is a translation of the estimate prepared for the pre-surrender deliberations of the Japanese cabinet.)

[35]Ibid., pp. 33-5; Robert J. C. Butow, Japan's Decision to Surrender, with a Foreword by Edwin O. Reischauer (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), pp. 79-83.

[36]Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions, p. 7.

[37]Shigenori Togo, The Cause of Japan (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), pp. 284-90; Butow, pp. 82-5, 90-2.

[38]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, Jan 43-Aug 45 (Japanese Monograph 138, 1953). This monograph contains probably the best general account of the various changes in plans that occurred with respect to Manchuria during the latter stages of the war. Planning actions are discussed on pp. 27-31, 34-7, 39-51, 90-6, and 100-8 particularly. Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Monograph 138.

[39]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia, Eastern Front (August 1945) (Japanese Monograph 154, 1954), p. 1. Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Monograph 154.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Japanese Monograph 138, p. 162; U.S. Department of the Army, Far Eastern Command, Military History Section, Imperial General Headquarters Army High Command Record, Mid-1941-August 1945, (Japanese Monograph 45, 1953), p. 233; U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Study of Strategical and Tactical Peculiarities of Far Eastern Russia and Soviet Far East Forces, vol. 13, Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria (1955), pp. 111-3. Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Special Studies, vol. 13.

[42]Japanese Monograph 138, pp. 139-40.

[43]Japanese Monograph 45, p. 244; p. 14 of Supplement No. 1; Japanese Monograph 138, p. 155.

[44]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Outline of Operations Prior to Termination of War and Activities Connected with the Cessation of Hostilities, (Japanese Monograph 119, 1952), p. 105; William Craig, The Fall of Japan (New York: Dial Press, 1967), pp. 42-5.

[45]U.S. Stragegic Bombing Survey, pp. 34-9; Japanese Monograph 119, pp. 1, 3-5.

[46]Butow, pp. 142-9; Charles L. Mee in Meeting at Potsdam, pp. 246-8, says members of the military were cause of the original "leak" to the press, and they were the ones who first left the impression the declaration was absurd. The press were only trying to get Premier Suzuki to confirm what had already been reported to them when he used that unfortunate term, mokusatsu, which was understood by the press as an expression of contempt. Suzuki, according to Mee, later said he had meant the term in its English equivalent meaning of "no comment."

[47]Japanese Monograph 154, p. 2.

[48]Butow, pp. 171-2.

[49]Togo, pp. 314-5; Butow, pp. 149-50.

[50]Butow, pp. 150-2

[51]Ibid., p. 151.

[52]Togo, pp. 314-5. Togo mentions he was first alerted to the fissionable nature of the atomic bomb through Japanese intercepts of overseas radio broadcasts.

[53]Butow, pp. 151-2.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid., pp. 153-4. Butow quotes the Soviet declaration of war.

[56]Feis, pp. 127-8.

[57]Butow, pp. 153-78, provides a detailed account of the events of the night of 9-10 August 1945 in Tokyo.

[58]Japanese Monograph 119, p. 6.

[59]Mee, p. 93.

[60]Japanese Special Studies, vol. 13, p. 117.

[61]Shtemenko, pp. 336-7.

[62]Ibid., pp. 324-5; Deane, pp. 240-51; Zakharov, pp. 69-76, 103-17; Vnotchenko, pp. 28, 66. How much Stalin relied on Lend-Lease for the Manchurian campaign is difficult to assess. It is probable that he hardly needed it, in

contrast to the very great requirement he had for U.S. aid earlier in the war. By the end of the war with Germany, the U.S.S.R. was producing war goods at an astonishing rate. Two regiments of the tank divisions assigned to the 6th Guards Tank Army arrived in the Far East without their tanks, and were issued new ones. More than that, one tank battalion of each tank brigade in the Transbaikal and Far Eastern Fronts were issued new T-34 tanks; their old tanks became the brigades' reserves. All of the Soviet accounts dwell at length on the tremendous logistics effort that was necessary to make the invasion possible. In most cases a four-month reserve supply--or more-- was available in the event the campaign became protracted and the critically important rail lines were interdicted. In some logistics areas, such as fuel resupply, distribution was a problem which had to be overcome almost as soon as the invasion got under way. On the whole, however, the Soviets seem to have taken care of themselves very well.

[63]Shtemenko, pp. 337-43, 359-60.

CHAPTER IV

OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL SURPRISE

The Soviets Prepare

Having looked at the Soviet decision to declare war on Japan and invade Manchuria, and having examined the Soviet's efforts at strategic surprise, we can now probe more deeply into events at the operational and tactical levels. To the Soviets, strategy is the most important aspect of military art and serves to guide the levels of operational art and tactics. Because of its predominant position in military art, surprise at the strategic level may impact on other levels of activity. We will find this particularly true in the case of the Manchurian campaign, where strategic planning accomplished at the General Staff level corresponded closely with planning at the operational level.

Following the Japanese occupation of most of Manchuria in 1931, the Soviets gradually lost full control of the trans-Manchurian Chinese Far Eastern Railroad connecting the Transbaikal area with the Soviet Maritime region. Having lost this control, the Soviets no longer had any real possibility of conducting large-scale military operations in

Manchuria, and this may have contributed to their decision to sell their interests in the railroad by the mid-1930's. Once the railway was fully in Japanese hands, Kwantung Army Forces began to use it to exert military pressure on both the Transbaikal and the Ussuri areas. The question of which of these areas should be given predominant attention, which was the best area for offensive or defensive activities, became a factor each side had to consider. At different times, they both faced the problem from the offensive and the defensive points of view. The relative importance of the Maritime Region to the Soviets, the location of the railways, and the natural obstacles of the Greater Khingal mountains in the northwest and the Little Khingal mountains in the north played decisive roles in the decisions reached.

The Kwantung Army's initial decision on what measures were required to consolidate their position following the Manchurian incident of 1931 largely shaped future events and tactical developments. Subsequently, most Kwantung Army activity occurred east of the Greater Khingal range, particularly along the eastern frontier. The Kwantung Army estimated that the Greater Khingal mountain range would afford them some protection in the event of a Soviet attack from the Transbaikal. Their intelligence section believed an invasion ". . . of the western front along the Manchouli-Harbin railroad [could be] ruled out . . . because of the formidable obstacles in the path of such an advance

particularly [their strong] fortifications and the Greater Hsingan [Khingan] Mountains."[1] To the Soviets, the Maritime Region was especially important because it provided a significant portion of their very limited access to the sea, and they responded to Japanese moves along the Ussuri by also placing their main emphasis in the eastern area. At first the Japanese General Staff saw increased Soviet preparations as a natural defensive response to their own army's preparations along the eastern border. They recognized that the Soviets had to concentrate along the Ussuri in order to insure that the battlefield, if there was to be one, would be in Manchuria and not on their own soil. Not only was there little depth in the Maritime Region, but transporting reinforcements there could not be accomplished quickly or without great difficulty. In 1936 the Japanese noted that the Soviets ". . . abruptly changed to an offensive operational policy, accompanied by hasty preparations including attempts to acquire [a] 3 to 1 ratio in division strength . . . ." They saw no real change from this offensive policy for five years thereafter, although they were to perceive changes in policy after Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941.[2]

During the period between 1936 and 1941, the Japanese were aware of the varying emphasis the Soviets placed on the Ussuri and Transbaikal areas. Until the Khalkin-gol (Nomonhan) incident of 1939, Japanese intelligence reported

the Soviets concentrating mainly on the Maritime Region. Following that incident (partly as a result of it) they noted the Soviets were building up their power near the Outer Mongolian border area where the trouble had occurred. Accordingly, the Kwantung Army intelligence section revised their estimate of probable Soviet intentions to indicate that in the event of an attack the main thrust would probably come from the Transbaikal.[3] In actuality, the Soviet Union never really deviated from its policy of maintaining primary strength in the Maritime Region.

During the course of the war, as has been previously noted, the Soviets were fearful that the Japanese might enter the war on the side of the Germans and create a second front in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, they pursued a policy of engaging the Germans in a maximum effort in the west, while carrying out quiet defensive actions in the Far East. Japan particularly worried the Soviets in 1941, when the Kwantung Army held special maneuvers for two months after the German invasion of Soviet territory, and the Soviets observed the Japanese were putting special emphasis on strengthening their position on the eastern border of Manchuria. Kwantung Army strength went from 350,000 to 700,000 during this period. However, during the late summer and fall of 1941, Japanese plans to pursue war aims elsewhere in the Pacific became more definite, and the Kwantung Army settled into relative quietude.[4] Both sides took great

pains thereafter to avoid a major confrontation that might flare into open war. The Soviets were to withdraw forces from the Far East during the war, but only in times of dire emergency, and then only until they could be reconstituted. When the war went badly for Japan, particularly in 1943 and thereafter, the Kwantung Army was reduced time and again by the Japanese in order to strengthen forces elsewhere in the Pacific. This was especially true toward the end of the war, when it was feared the Home Islands would soon be invaded. Ironically, as war with Russia drew nearer, the Kwantung Army grew ever weaker, until at the end it was merely a shadow of what it had once been.

Stockpiling of materiel in the Far East began well before the war with Germany ended; as was seen earlier, American Lend-Lease played a part in this effort. Beginning on 1 December 1944 vast quantities of mortars, heavy guns, and ammunition of all kinds and from every available source reached the Far East in preparation for the forthcoming invasion. By the end of February 1945, the Japanese themselves noted Soviet strength in the Far East increasing. They estimated a daily average of ". . . about ten troop trains and about five munition trains passed over the Trans-Siberian's rails."[5] The Soviets claim 136,000 railroad cars traveled the Trans-Siberian Railway in the three months of May, June and July 1945,[6] and twenty-two to thirty trains moved east of Lake Baikal daily. The Trans-Siberian alone

was not sufficient. Trunk lines were heavily used, available roads and waterways were employed as much as possible, and some troop units were forced to march distances of 1,000 kilometers and more because of the overloading of all available means of transportation.

The Soviet build-up in the Far East must be rated as one of the most stupendous efforts of World War II. Without such an effort, it would have been impossible for the Soviet Army to have achieved the results they did in the short period of time they were engaged against the Kwantung Army. While the most astonishing successes of the build-up fall primarily into the logistical and administrative spheres of interest, the build-up certainly was not without effect on the element of surprise.

The very idea of increasing the strength of the commands in the Far East area by more than a million men over a period as short as three or four months required careful organization, selection of personnel, and selection of units in order to be completely successful. The Soviets began with three commands in the Far East, which (from west to east) consisted of the Transbaikal Command, the Far Eastern Command, and the Primorye (Maritime) Group, a major subordinate command of the Far East Command formed only in April 1945. The Soviet General Staff decided to reorganize each of these commands into a Soviet front organization, and later created a new command-and-control headquarters,

the Soviet High Command, Far East, which ultimately fell to the command of Marshal of the Soviet Union Alexandr M. Vasilevsky. At first it was not thought such a command was needed. At the end of June 1945 Marshal Vasilevsky, until then Chief of the Soviet General Staff, was appointed the General Headquarters representative in charge of coordinating the invasion. The Soviet front organizations had been created earlier, and were well on their way to becoming combat ready. After only a few weeks on the job, Vasilevsky, according to General Shtemenko, found that coordination as it had been practiced in the war against Germany was impractical in the vast reaches of the Soviet Far East. The Soviet General Staff simply could not oversee everything in that theater, and Stalin was asked to approve the creation of a separate command-and-control headquarters. He did, and Vasilevsky was appointed to the new post of Soviet High Commander, Far East on 30 June 1945, little more than a month prior to the invasion of Manchuria. By that time, of course, most of the strategic planning had already been completed, and what planning remained fell to the front commanders and their subordinates.[7]

Chosen for the main strike into the heart of Manchuria from the Transbaikal was Marshal of the Soviet Union Rodion Y. Malinovsky. He is recalled by Shtemenko as having had ". . . a well-established reputation at GHQ as a gifted field commander and serious, level-headed, deep-thinking military leader."[8] The main supporting attack was

to be made by the newly created 1st Far Eastern Front, under Marshal of the Soviet Union Kirill A. Meretskov, who had formerly commanded the Karilian Front in the northern sector of the Soviet front lines during the battles with Germany. His selection came because he was an experienced commander of a Soviet front, had considerable experience with heavily forested and well-fortified areas, and had previous experience in the Far East. Meretskov, upon his appointment to the Far East as commander of the Far Eastern Front in late March 1945, initially had under his command the troops of the Primorye (Maritime) Group as well. He was replacing a Lieutenant General by the name of F. A. Parusinov, who (according to Meretskov) was being sacked because of some "peculiar" attitudes about command, and because of his lack of dynamism in preparing the forces already in the Far East for combat.[10] Not long after his assignment to the Far East Command, Meretskov took over what had formerly been the Primorye Group (redesignated the 1st Far Eastern Front), and General Maxim A. Purkayev, who had been in the Far East since 1943, was given command of the third front organization, the 2d Far Eastern Front. Commander of the Soviet naval forces was Admiral Ivan S. Yumashev, also the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet; and a separate command, the Amur Flotilla, operated under Rear-Admiral N. V. Antonov. Chief of the Air Force units supporting the campaign was Chief Marshal of the Air Force A. A. Novikov. One other

command deserves particular mention, and that was the Soviet-Mongolian Mechanized Cavalry Group commanded by Colonel-General I. A. Pliyev. During the campaign General Pliyev operated under the command of Marshal Malinkovsky's Transbaikal Front, and was responsible for the southernmost operations of the attack across Outer Mongolia into China's Jehol Province.[11]

In addition to the selection of these highly qualified leaders, all of whom had proved themselves during the war with Germany, and many of whom had seen service in the Far East before, other Far Eastern commanders on the scene were replaced with more seasoned veterans of the war in the west. There were, in fact, four new army generals appointed prior to the invasion; the commanders who were replaced typically became the chief staff officer under the new commander, valued as they were for their intimate knowledge of the Far East area and for their detailed knowledge of the unit they had formerly commanded.[12]

No less important than the selection of commanders was the selection of units themselves. According to Finale, for example, the 5th and 39th Armies had extensive experience in the breaching of German fortified zones. Accordingly the Transbaikal Front received the 39th from the vicinity of Koenigsberg, and the 5th Army was attached to the 1st Far Eastern Front after its departure from East Prussia. The 5th Army was to serve as the spearhead of the

1st Far Eastern Front in breaking through the fortified areas in its sector, while similar fortified zones in the Transbaikal Section were assigned to the 39th Army. Of particular importance to the scheme of maneuver of the Transbaikal Front was the 6th Guards Tank Army, which joined from the vicinity of Prague, Czechoslovakia, together with the 53rd Army. Both had considerable experience in fighting in mountainous conditions, and it was believed that they would be well suited for the mountainous region which the Transbaikal Front would have to negotiate in order to strike deep into the heart of Manchuria. It was decided at the strategic planning level that a tank army would spearhead the main attack from the Transbaikal across the Great Khingal mountain range, and the 6th Guards Tank Army fell natural heir to the task. As was mentioned in the last chapter, Stalin himself took a hand in setting mission objectives for the 6th Guards Tank Army.[13]

Marshal Malinovsky's Transbaikal Front was eventually to be comprised of about 654,000 men, of whom 416,000 were in combat units. This force alone amounted to almost the same number of troops the Japanese had available in the entire Kwantung Army in August 1945, but of course the Japanese were to have the advantage of being defenders. In addition to the 6th Guards Tank Army, which was to lead the attack, the Transbaikal Front consisted of four other armies, the supporting 12th Air Army, and the mechanized cavalry command of Soviet and Mongolian troops under

General Pliyev. Elements of the 6th Guards Tank Army were to make two main thrusts, one toward Changchun and the other toward Mukden. To the north of those thrusts would be the 39th Army, attacking in the vicinity of Tuchuan and continuing toward Changchun; and the 53rd Army, attacking through Lupei and continuing on toward Mukden. North of the 39th Army, the 36th Army was to attack on the axis formed by Hailar and Puhofu to seize Tsitsihar and eventually Harbin. Far to the south General Pliyev's forces were given missions on a broad front, attacking on the three axes formed by Linhsi and Chihleng, Tolunnoerh and Jehol, and Erhlien, Kalgan and Peking. (See Figure 3 for the most detailed Soviet graphic representation of the invasion available.)

General Shtemenko reveals that shortly after Marshal Vasilevsky's takeover as Soviet High Commander in the Far East, he met with Marshal Malinovsky to discuss the plans which had been made for the Transbaikal Front's attack. In addition, they visited the main operational areas of the front, and carried out some detailed reconnaissance with subordinate army commanders. During this time many ideas were worked out which later assisted in the success that was ultimately achieved. Marshal Malinovsky saw the possibility of forcing the Greater Khingan range more quickly than had at first been thought possible, and moved up the timetable for doing so from ten days to just five. The 36th Army, advancing on the northern flank of the

Figure 3

Marshal Vasilevsky's Invasion Plan[14]

Transbaikal Front, was given the mission of taking Hailar on the tenth day of operations rather than the twelfth, as had originally been planned. Other forces under Malinovsky's command also had their timetables readjusted to meet a much tighter schedule, in keeping with the all-important advance rates set by the 6th Guards Tank Army.[15]

In the other two front areas, progress of the sort expected by the 6th Guards Tank Army was out of the question. The 1st Far Eastern Front would be confronting the bulk of Japanese forces and fortifications, and even if everything went right and surprise of the main thrust was achieved Meretskov would still be attacking where the Kwantung Army most expected a major effort. Accordingly, the planned rate of advance was not so high as for the Transbaikal Front. In the north, General Purkayev's 2nd Far Eastern Front had formidable terrain to navigate, and the additional hindrance of a major water obstacle (the Amur River) to overcome. The 2nd Far Eastern front also had to provide the forces which were to liberate Southern Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles, and was not nearly so strong as the Transbaikal Front.

Marshal Meretskov outlines how he came to arrive at his final battle plan in his memoir, Serving the People. It would appear he achieved a very detailed understanding of the enemy he faced and the conditions under which his troops would have to fight. His forces were given the

mission of overcoming initial Japanese defenses along the border with the Soviet Maritime region, and advancing toward Kirin through the mountains and dense Siberian forests (taiga). The actions of the Transbaikal and 1st Far Eastern Fronts would eventually cut Manchuria in two, and the Transbaikal Front could then turn south to seize the Liaotung Peninsula and Port Arthur while the 1st Far Eastern Front secured the central area. After the Japanese in Manchuria were encircled, and then totally defeated, the 1st Far Eastern Front was to launch another drive along the Sea of Japan, routing Japanese forces in Korea.[16]

During this period of preparations for the campaign the Soviets were faced with a number of serious obstacles which had to be overcome if their plans were to be successful. Some of these impediments did not bear directly upon the attainment of surprise, such as the extremely limited rail capacity represented by the Trans-Siberian, the paucity of roads, and the lack of such necessary resources as plentiful supplies of water. The overcoming of each of these and other obstacles rate detailed historical study on their own merit. Among the difficulties faced by the Soviet forces were some which bore directly on surprise.

In the main, the Soviets depended on overwhelming superiority, shock and speed to achieve surprise, but from about March until the first week in August they could only concentrate on preserving the opportunity for these factors

to be able to work their effect. From the beginning, secrecy was an important part of the Soviets' design. Marshal Meretskov has given us some insights into how seriously secrecy was taken. He recounts that when he and other high ranking officers were enroute to the Far East every precaution was taken to prevent any leakage of information from the train. There was, for example, nothing extraordinary about the train itself, and it carried normal express markings. Anyone wishing to board enroute would have been greeted at the ticket office by the sign, "Tickets Sold Out." Meretskov himself was in mufti, and when it became necessary to put on a uniform, he and other high officers wore shoulder-boards which "demoted" them several ranks. Meretskov was even documented under a new name, Colonel-General Maximov, duplicating another Soviet officer's identity so as possibly to confuse Japanese intelligence agents. At one staff meeting Meretskov, posing as Maximov, was asked by another officer if he had heard Marshal Meretskov had arrived in the Far East. Playing his role to the hilt, Meretskov not only said he had not heard the rumor, but replied he had ". . . never seen the Marshal."[17]

Secrecy was not only practiced on the command level, it was the norm for troop activities as well. Incoming troops were detrained only at night and movement to assembly areas was made only during the hours of darkness. Troops were not allowed to be quartered with the civilian population, and even officers could not travel alone outside the

area of troop dispositions, to minimize the possibility of illicit contact with civilians.[18]

From the first, camouflage was a major effort. When standard camouflage equipment was lacking, improvised means were used. Equipment such as tanks had to be dug into reverse slopes, then covered with netting. Daytime movement, always at a minimum, was forbidden along the border. At night movement was permitted under "dimout" conditions. In some cases, major engineer troop efforts were required in the interests of camouflage. In 5th Army's sector in the Maritime Region, as an example, eighteen kilometers of vertical camouflage fencing were set up and 1,515 road screens were erected. To insure compliance with the camouflage requirements of higher headquarters special teams of officers from the front and army headquarters monitored the observance of camouflage discipline, and also manned control points to insure movements were made using correct security procedures.[19]

During the preparatory period the Soviets found themselves hampered by having to comply with all of the niceties of a normal border situation. While their troops would have liked to have used all of their intelligence-gathering capabilities, such activities as reconnaissance-by-fire would have been a tip-off to opposing Japanese troops that hostilities were near. They were, therefore, constrained to avoid provoking border incidents and had to

give an outward appearance of normality. In some cases this was more or less impossible; for example, the rail line between Khaborovsk and Vladivostok in the Maritime Region passed so close to the border sections it was readily observable by the Japanese. In other areas, the Soviets enjoyed more opportunity for success. The civilian population was not forced away from the border area and the lives of those living nearby went on as usual. Troop movements toward the border could, in some cases, be made to look like normal training movements. In garrison areas, teams of soldiers continued to work in the fields during the harvest just as they always had. In units stationed on northern Sakhalin Island, men continued to be granted leave to visit local resorts until the last minute.[20]

The Soviets' observance of communications security also deserves mention. Upon the arrival of new units in the Far East, radio sets were turned to the receive mode, if they were turned on at all. None were allowed to transmit. All transmissions by Far East Forces were made over the nets of units previously stationed in the area. At the same time, the Soviets did not miss opportunities to acquire intelligence on the Kwantung Army by listening in on Japanese transmissions, and a large intercept network was set up upon Marshal Vasilevsky's arrival in theater. In addition, intercept units of the Soviet Armies also collected information about Japanese troop dispositions.[21]

Other methods of gaining intelligence were also used, including ground observation, reconnaissance missions by troop units, aerial reconnaissance missions, and agent reports. The intelligence obtained from these missions helped the Soviets work out their plans so as to achieve the greatest degree of surprise. The extent to which observation was used can be seen from the fact that in the 5th Army sector of the first Far Eastern Front almost six-hundred observation posts were established, and in the 15th Army area of the Second Far Eastern up to twenty posts were established by each regiment.[22]

Command reconnaissance, particularly by senior commanders, has received much comment by Soviet writers. Marshal Meretskov, in his memoirs, gives a good deal of credit to this type of activity. He himself took many opportunities to inspect the border area, remarking that on his first visit to a troop unit in the Far East (the 35th Army) he toured the border dressed as a "rank-and-file frontier guard." He recounts another inspection conducted on horseback. Some of the terrain in which his troops had to operate was exceptionally rugged, and recalling one tour by jeep over about three-hundred kilometers of mountain trails, Meretskov admits "On several occasions we harnessed ourselves to the jeep and tugged it for kilometers at a stretch."[23]

The primary methods by which the Soviets planned to achieve surprise have been covered. To recapitulate, they depended on the unexpectedly massive size of their build-up, the maintenance of secrecy, the use of camouflage and troop discipline, the maintenance of normalcy in established patterns along the border, the observance of communications security measures, and the carrying out of as many intelligence collection operations as possible without alarming the enemy about intentions. These preparations were supported by planning decisions that would affect operations at the actual time of invasion, decisions that had to do with selection of the axes of advance, timing of the invasion, and the use of tactical innovations to gain surprise.

Selection of the avenues along which the main thrusts were to be made has already received comment in the preceding chapter. The Transbaikal was chosen for the main attack largely because the Soviets thought they could manage to navigate the Great Khingals if relatively unopposed, and because they perceived that this was the area of greatest weakness. Of course it was the least well defended approach precisely because the Japanese did not expect a major Soviet effort from the direction of the Transbaikal.

Timing, like "selection of the main blow," has already been covered to some extent in connection with the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima, the delivery of the declaration of war to the Japanese, and the fact that the Soviets

did not believe the Japanese would suspect an attack during the inopportune rainy season. Timing has other aspects which have not been covered, and which are more closely related to operations and tactics than to overall strategy. Marshal Meretskov reveals that the initial plans of the Soviet GHQ called for the 1st Far Eastern Front to attack eight days later than the invasion conducted by the Transbaikal Front. Meretskov says this decision was predicated on the belief the attack on the relatively unprotected western flank would cause the Kwantung Army to siphon forces off from the better defended and more heavily fortified eastern front. Eventually, according to Meretskov, subordinate commanders prevailed upon the highest echelon to permit coordinated simultaneous attacks. General Shtemenko gives a somewhat different account of the matter, though he is generally in agreement that coordinating the attacks of the three front organizations was a matter of great concern. According to Shtemenko, Marshal Vasilevsky made an estimate on 3 August 1945 that his forces would be ready to go on 5 August. He did not want to put off the attack later than the night of 9-10 August 1945 because he wanted to take advantage of the good weather the Transbaikal Front was enjoying. The weather in the Maritime Region was terrible and the Navy's airfields were out of commission, but roads were generally passable and the Soviet Air Force could still operate. Further, after 6 August the

weather in that area was due to improve. Vasilevsky, according to Shtemenko, proposed to GHQ that the advance elements of all fronts attack simultaneously, but that the main forces of the First Far Eastern Front be delayed five to seven days. Shtemenko says the Soviet General Staff went along with the date but did not find agreement with his proposal to let the advance element of the 1st Far Eastern Front carry on the attack in the most heavily defended area for as much as a week with no relief or assistance. The decision was made for the fronts to attack simultaneously. Shtemenko goes on to reveal that Stalin himself signed the directive which confirmed the missions of the three Soviet front organizations, on 7 August 1945, at four-thirty in the afternoon. At that time he must certainly have been aware of the atomic detonation that devastated Hiroshima. Once again the question arises as to whether the attack would have come so soon had Hiroshima not occurred when it did.[24]

In making preparation for their attacks the Soviets did not overlook the possibility of using tactical innovations. We have already seen that they made the decision to put a tank army in the forefront of their main attack, notwithstanding the fact that the Great Khingal mountains presented a formidable obstacle to vehicular movement. Other areas which suggest effective innovation was achieved

were the extensive use of border guards units and the use of advance battalions to seize front line outposts and fortifications.

Border guards units appear to have performed exceptionally well. As can be confirmed from examining Japanese sources, they were quite effective in their counterespionage measures, and the Japanese found little opportunity to use agents effectively. When the invasion began it was planned that they be used extensively to guide advance units, so as to catch the Japanese unaware, if possible (and in any event to keep units from straying from their initial tasks). This was especially important because many units were to go directly from concealed bivouac areas to attacking positions without first assembling along the border where they would have the opportunity of getting their bearings. Once the invasion was well under way border guards units were given the mission of mopping up small enemy units and fortifications that were by-passed, and of taking over control from civilian or military government authorities in the border area. This freed the combat troops to continue the attack deep into the Japanese rear, when possible, without worrying about Japanese elements in their own rear. In some cases border guards units operated at considerable distances inside the Manchurian border, especially in sparsely settled and lightly defended areas.[25]

The Soviet literature also cites the use of advance battalions to perform reconnaissance-in-force along the border so that initial defensive elements were knocked out before the main body of troops attacked. A salutary effect where this tactic was used was that air and artillery preparation was then not necessary beforehand. This allowed tactical units even more of a chance to gain surprise in the initial attack.[26]

These are all measures that one would expect the Soviets to take when preparing for an invasion such as that in Manchuria in 1945, at least according to their doctrine and assuming the kind of ideal conditions they had. Now, the question is, how effective were the measures that were taken? The answer to that question may lie, at least in part, in the Japanese literature on the campaign.

Final Kwantung Army Preparations

In May 1934, the Kwantung Army intelligence section said war with the Soviet Union was unlikely before 1946. Following the conclusion of the Potsdam Conference in July, that estimate had changed to an "extremely great" possibility that war with the U.S.S.R. would occur in the early fall. The intelligence section of the Kwantung Army further concluded the Soviets had virtually completed their troop build-up by July, and were concentrating on units such as antiaircraft defense units and aircraft elements. This, they estimated, indicated the Soviets were capable of attacking

as early as August 1945. Incidents on the border, briefly referred to in the last chapter, further served to alarm the intelligence section. It was concluded that the incident of 6 August was more than just simple reconnaissance, and the intelligence section therefore predicted hostilities were close at hand. Kwantung Army headquarters alerted subordinate commands, but to no avail. Japanese Monograph 154 makes it very clear how completely the warning was ignored:

> None of them [the subordinate armies] drew the conclusion that the opening of hostilities was imminent. Hence, they did not take adequate emergency measures to meet the situation.

Even the Kwantung Army Commander in Chief, General Otozo Yamada, was willing to ignore the advice of his staff and went ahead with a planned trip to Dairen on the Liaotung Peninsula. He departed his Hsinkiang headquarters on 8 August 1945. When he returned in haste to Hsinkiang on 10 August, the headquarters was gone, moved to a suburb. General Yamada was so out of touch with things he had not even been informed.[27]

Japanese estimates indicated Soviet infantry divisions along the Soviet-Manchurian border increased from nineteen to forty between December 1944 and the end of July 1945. No tank divisions or larger armored units were noted by the Japanese, a disastrous oversight. Furthermore, if the official Soviet history of World War II can be trusted, the Soviets fielded eighty divisions in the Far East in August 1945, not forty. Japanese estimates of the personnel involved amounted to 1,600,000 which tallies closely with

Soviet claims of about 1,550,000 men.[28] Based on their estimates, the Kwantung Army calculated the Soviets had a superiority of "nearly 2 to 1" in infantry troops, 5 to 1 in tanks, and an overwhelming 80 to 1 in aircraft. However, if the Japanese relied on these estimates they erred considerably. They correctly estimated the Soviets had a vast superiority in aircraft, but they probably miscalculated tank ratios and almost certainly were in error about the Soviet superiority in divisional strength. The Japanese could count twenty-four divisions, technically, plus another seven in Korea. None were up to standards in personnel, training or equipment. Four of the twenty-four divisions were organized with one less maneuver battalion than the nine that were normal, and had but one company of artillery instead of the usual one per maneuver battalion. These divisions were specifically organized and trained for mopping up operations against Chinese Communist guerillas, and had been transferred to the Kwantung Army to meet the growing Soviet threat in Manchuria. Of the remaining twenty divisions, eight had been formed during July 1945, made up of the 250,000 reservists mobilized that month in Manchuria. It requires little to imagine their state of relative unpreparedness a month later, particularly when pitted against Soviet troops that were fresh and rested from their successful combat against the Germans. The other twelve divisions were what was left of the much stronger Kwantung

Army of before, though even these units suffered from the same deficiencies as the others, just to a lesser extent. Based on the 1941 state of preparedness of one of the Kwantung Army's former elite divisions (since transferred elsewhere) the Japanese calculated the following effectiveness percentages for their divisional and separate brigade elements:

39th Division	80%
119th Division	70%
108th Division	65%
107th Division	60%
79th Division	55%
59th, 63d, and 117th Divisions	40%
112th, 122d, 123d, and 124th Divisions	35%
125th, 126th, 127th, and 128th Divisions	20%
134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 148th, and 149th Divisions	15%
70th and 80th Independent Mixed Brigades	15%
130th, 131st, 132d, 133d, 134th, 135th, and 136th Independent Mixed Brigades	10%

The strongest of the Kwantung Army divisions, the 39th, had only arrived from China on 21 July 1945; the other three divisions from China were the 59th, 63d and 117th Divisions, rated at 55% effectiveness. The elements rated at 10% and 15% effectiveness (with the exception of the 70th and 80th Independent Mixed Brigades) were the reserve divisions formed during the July mobilization.[29]

It is possible, of course, that Kwantung Army commanders and staff members did not trust their own estimate of Soviet superiority. In terms of sheer numbers of men and divisional-sized units they could justify saying the Soviets had only a 2 to 1 superiority, but in terms of

effectiveness that estimate was nothing but a pipe dream. Even had the Japanese units been at a higher state of preparedness in other respects, the Japanese Army's ability to support operations in Manchuria would probably have spelled eventual disaster in the final analysis. Supplies for the Kwantung Army were in such short supply that some units had too few rifles to go around, much less a full complement of heavy equipment such as tanks and artillery pieces. It was estimated at the end of July there was only enough ammunition for 13.5 divisions to conduct operations for three months, hardly enough for twenty-four divisions to stand off the might of three Soviet fronts over an extended period of time. If the Kwantung Army had really only been at a 2 to 1 disadvantage, as their estimates indicated, it could be argued they might have been able to make a fair stand against the Soviets. In reality, there was little hope for their efforts.

No assessment of Japanese preparedness--or unpreparedness, as the case may be--would be complete without considering the effectiveness of the Japanese intelligence effort. In December 1939, following the Japanese setback at Khalkin-gol (Nomonhan), the Japanese Army General Staff formed the "Nomonhan Incident Research Committee" to get at the roots of the Japanese failure in that confrontation. The commission found the Kwantung Army intelligence apparatus geared for peacetime, and recommended the entire effort

be redesigned to put intelligence operations on a wartime footing. After the large scale maneuvers conducted following the German invasion of Russia, the Kwantung Army intelligence organization was greatly improved.[30]

Even so, during the war (including the period when the Soviets were in the midst of preparing for war with Japan) the Kwantung Army had to rely heavily on Tokyo for information. Much of the Japanese intelligence collected on the Soviet Union came from legal (often diplomatic) sources, who were able to observe Soviet military targets and engage in collecting open documentary material. It was this source category, newspapers, magazines and the like, that the Japanese found most useful in fulfilling their military intelligence requirements. With regard to observation targets covered by legal travellers, they were fortunate enough to have an arrangement whereby couriers constantly used the Trans-Siberian railway for travel between Moscow and Far East Russia. The couriers were carefully chosen, and they were all well-trained intelligence agents who provided valuable information right up until the Soviet declaration of war with Japan.[31]

But, in July 1945 more was wanted than open documentary material and the observations of legal travellers. What the Kwantung Army needed was precisely what had been specified by the Nomonhan committee six years earlier. The Japanese intelligence system in Manchuria included two major

agencies, one of which was not producing tactical intelligence. It was the Intelligence Section of the Imperial General Staff, responsive to the requirements of those in Tokyo. There was also an intelligence section of the Kwantung Army General Staff, which corresponded to the kind of organization run by a U.S. Theater Army G2 (Intelligence) Officer. The operations run by the Kwantung Army itself were undoubtedly enhanced by higher level collection efforts such as those described, but only their own tactical effort could have assisted in preventing the Soviets from being successful in their efforts to gain an advantage through surprise.

If documentary sources were the most valuable method of acquiring Soviet information, radio transmissions were next best. More to the point, they were under the control of the Kwantung Army, and produced tactical intelligence as well as contributing to the open source effort by picking up standard radio broadcasts. Coded transmissions, particularly manual systems, were a valuable source of information, and there were a lot of low-level voice transmissions available for intercept because the Soviets were short of a wire capability. The Japanese found they had two major problems with their intercept effort. They were short of analysts, to begin with, and had too little equipment capable of handling high-speed ciphers. Then too, as the time drew nearer for the Soviet attack, the Japanese began to suspect

that more and more transmissions were being sent over wire rather than being transmitted by radio; this may have been the case, although it is also possible that the Soviets were just enjoying success with their communications security efforts. The Kwantung Army intercept effort found there were always a number of low-level voice and manually coded transmissions available for intercept, and although none of these contained highly sensitive information they were nevertheless useful. The Japanese found they were particularly successful with radio nets of Soviet border guards elements, which routinely sent some information using codes the Japanese could decipher. However, the Soviets sent all important messages using systems which featured non-repeating encipherment, and this was beyond the Japanese capability to break.[32]

Direct observations as an intelligence gathering method along the border was another valuable source of tactical information. Beginning in 1933, the Kwantung Army began a program of border surveillance from fixed observation posts, many of which were located on mountaintops and offered excellent opportunities for intelligence gathering. The system, although limited in depth to a few kilometers, was quite valuable throughout its entire existence, and was particularly useful in keeping track of train traffic on the Trans-Siberian Railway at points where the line approached close to the Manchurian border. In order to counter the

effects of the observation system established by the Japanese, the Soviets established their assembly areas out of direct surveillance access, minimizing the intelligence value of this collection effort during the build-up and final preparatory periods.[33]

Aerial reconnaissance was practiced by the Japanese as well, although the Japanese Air Force, by the summer of 1945, had little left in the way of reconnaissance aircraft. Another source of intelligence, deserters from the Red Army, could be expected to turn up frequently during hard times for the Soviets, but in fewer numbers when things looked better (as they did during the summer of 1945). There were always a percentage of "deserters" that turned out to be agents of the Soviets, but the Japanese figured they discovered most of these.[34] A last source of information, that of espionage, was an almost unknown quantity to the Kwantung Army. Espionage was their least valuable source. The Soviets made it too difficult for illegal entrants to their country to escape detection, and although the Japanese tried infiltrating agents across the border any number of times, they never were successful in using this method of intelligence collection.[35]

The evaluative aspect of the Japanese Kwantung Army intelligence section was probably its most valuable. Regardless of the fact that the Kwantung Army did not achieve ideal successes, the Kwantung Army's estimative element went a long way toward making the final intelligence product

one that met the needs of the situation. The Far East Command summed up Japanese analytical efforts in Manchuria in this way:

> Japanese intelligence experts analyzed their information well, drew sound conclusions, and did not reason beyond their data . . . They reasoned correctly that the Soviet Union would not attack Japan until the German forces were defeated, but that she would attack after that as soon as Japan seemed on the point of surrender. Their estimated probable time of the Soviet attack was within a month of the actual date.[36]

It would appear, based on the above, that it was the limited quantity and relatively poor quality of the information available that led to the Japanese failure to adequately assess Soviet intentions and capabilities. Although the accurate estimate of the number of Soviet personnel in the Far East did not result in a very realistic estimate of relative combat power, in the final analysis the Kwantung Army's intelligence analysts main problem appears to have been they were working with too little of the information they really needed.

Invasion

At ten minutes past midnight on 9 August 1945, advance forces of the Transbaikal Front crossed the Manchurian border. First echelon forces followed four hours later, crossing the border without incident as did the advance units. The 6th Guards Tank Army consisted of two mechanized corps, a tank corps, two motorized infantry divisions, and four separate tank brigades. Opposing the first echelon 6th Guards Tank Army was the Japanese 3rd Area Army (equivalent

to a U.S. Army group), which was commanded by General Jun Ushiroku. There was no immediate opposition to the attack, which accounted for the reason Marshal Malinovsky felt no need to order preparation fires by his artillery units or supporting 12th Air Army.[37]

Under General Ushiroku's 3rd Area Army were the 44th Army, facing the main Soviet thrust in the center, and the 30th Army located to its rear in east-central Manchuria (see Figure 4). Also subordinate to the 3rd Area Army was the 108th Infantry Division, which defended a sector located to the south of the 44th Army, in China's Jehol Province. North of the 44th Army sector was the independent 4th Army, which had the 119th Infantry Division and the 80th Independent Mixed Brigade facing Marshal Malinovsky's 36th Army. Other 4th Army elements were defending in the area of General Purkayev's 2nd Far Eastern Front. Soviet forces to the south, particularly General Pliyev's Soviet-Mongolian cavalry troops, were opposed only by the 3rd Area Army's 108th Infantry Division in Jehol Province, which was originally organized to fight Mao Tse-tung's Chinese Communist Eighth Route Army, a far different kind of foe. General Pliyev's forces did not attack until 10 August, and never encountered any real opposition.[39]

All Transbaikal Front forces made excellent progress on 9 August, with the all-important advance of the 6th Guards Tank Army covering as much as 150 kilometers. Advancing in two main columns toward Changchun and Mukden, advance units of the 6th Guards succeeded in crossing the broad plain

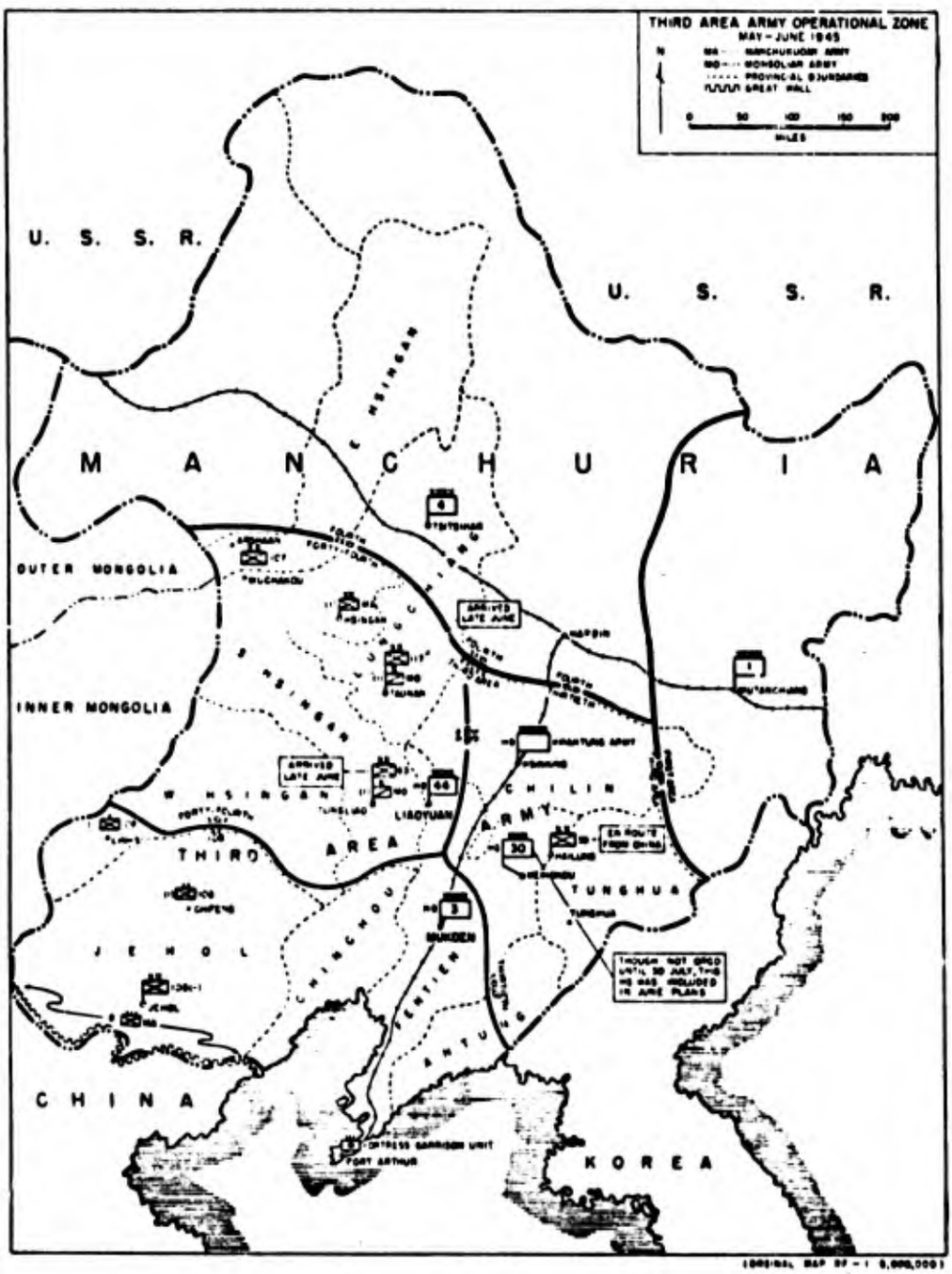

Figure 4

Japanese 3rd Area Army Operational Zone[39]

leading to the Great Khingal Mountains. The Soviet plan for the main attack was on schedule, with Japanese forces of the 44th Army offering little or no resistance.

An examination of the 44th Army's preparedness indicates the Soviets achieved complete surprise when they attacked on the night of 8-9 August 1945. It was two o'clock in the morning before 44th Army Headquarters learned of the invasion, and the word came not from a subordinate unit defending along the border, but from 3rd Area Army Headquarters. The message received was that ". . . the Soviets had penetrated the Heiho, Tungning, Hutou and Manchouli fronts, and had bombed Mutanchiang, Manchouli, Hailar, Hsinking, and other places." The 44th Army commander declared a state of emergency when relaying the message to subordinate units, and an hour later a Kwantung Army alert was flashed throughout Manchuria that put into effect the wartime defense plan developed the previous June. It was five o'clock when the first 44th Army unit, the 107th Infantry Division, reported a Soviet infantry division in its area, with Soviet strength increasing and tanks slipping around to the division rear.[40]

The initial reactions of the 44th Army indicate it was not ready for the Soviet attack when it occurred, and was not deployed to counter the invasion. Much other evidence lends weight to the conclusion that the Japanese were totally unprepared for the Transbaikal Front offensive.

Until May 1945 there were only two divisions in what, by the time of the invasion, was the 3rd Area Army's defensive sector of the border. These were the 107th Division in the vicinity of Arshaan and Wuchakou, and the 108th Division in Jehol Province. When the Japanese revised their plans in June, they redesignated the old Kwantung Defense Army (mostly garrison soldiers) as the 44th Army, and transferred the 63rd and 117th Infantry Divisions from China to Manchuria. The 44th Army's separate tank brigade ". . . and most of its directly assigned artillery units were organized or joined during July." They were hardly combat ready by August. Even worse was the case of another major subordinate unit assigned to the 3rd Area Army, the 30th Army. In June the headquarters for 30th Army did not exist, although Japanese plans did not take that into consideration. It was not, in fact, until 31 July 1945 that the headquarters was officially constituted. The 30th Army Headquarters was not organized long enough to be ready for action when Marshal Malinovsky's troops poured across the Manchurian border.[41]

The newly redesignated and somewhat strengthened 44th Army did make efforts to improve its defensive posture and retrain its troops prior to the Soviet attack. Typical of the 44th Army's units in many respects, the 107th division took over some old prepared positions in the vicinity of Wuchakou that were eighty kilometers in circumference, and tried to consolidate and upgrade them to fit the situation

and troops available. They never were able to do so because of a total lack of fortification materials, including explosive materials and rock drills. The division training plan, prepared in mid-June, called for an emphasis on guerilla warfare, designed to assist them in carrying out delaying and harassing tactics against the Red Army. There was too little time left to perfect the division's training. Inadequate lines of supply, lack of transport facilities, and a shortage of communications equipment also plagued the 44th Army, and hampered the efforts of all of its subordinate units.[42]

The 44th Army's intelligence efforts likewise did little to aid in preparedness. The 3rd Area Army intelligence plan gave 44th Army the task of collecting information on Outer Mongolia, while other 3rd Area Army commands were assigned "guerrilla targets." The 44th Army, far from realizing any great intelligence successes, ". . . was in critical need of information on the situation in Outer Mongolia, especially as regards the enemy's troop concentrations, the change of railway gauge, the extension of the Tamsag railroad, and the extent of motor transport facilities in Outer Mongolia." Beginning in late May Soviet spies began to be found in the 44th Army area, usually dressed as Japanese soldiers and carrying radios. After mid-July there were increasing reports of enemy movement along the western front, an almost totally barren and

usually deserted area. To a large extent the 44th Army was hampered by the fact that the Kwantung Army would permit few intelligence collection operations to be mounted by subordinate units, because they were afraid of an incident which might provoke Soviet forces. Then too, the Kwantung Army was so critically short of needed intelligence information that in the last days even border outposts were reporting directly back to Kwantung Army Headquarters, rather than going through normal intelligence and command channels. "Until the outbreak of war, no large concentration of Soviet forces was reported in Outer Mongolia . . ." by the 44th Army. Even after the invasion began, the 44th Army was not sure where the Soviet forces had come from, and were forced to conclude they ". . . must have advanced to our Army front immediately before the outbreak of war."[43]

Subsequent to the first day's advances, the Transbaikal Front continued to make enormous strides. Their stiffest resistance (often their only resistance) continued to be relatively far to the north. While Japanese troops in the vicinity of Solung, Arshaan, Wuchakou, and particularly Hailar, offered stiff resistance, Hailar was still taken on 11 August 1945. Ten days had been thought necessary to take Hailar, even under the accelerated plan of advance. That meant that by 11 August the Soviets were a full week ahead of schedule even in the most heavily

defended areas. The 6th Guards Tank Army, overcoming almost impossible slopes, blistering heat, and acute problems in water and fuel supply, crossed the Great Khingan range in what Finale describes as a "herculean effort."[44] The 6th Guards could not know it, but the ultimate success of their effort was being aided by none other than the Japanese 3rd Area Army commander General Jun Ushiroku himself, who refused to let his units follow the overall Kwantung Army plan and thereby disrupted the unity of the Japanese efforts.

In June 1944 the Kwantung Army assigned objectives to General Ushiroku's Area Army which called for the 44th Army and the 108th Division to avoid decisive engagement, while exhausting the enemy's fighting strength and delaying to a prepared redoubt in the 30th Army's area. The 30th Army (then not even in existence) was given the dual mission of preparing defensive positions in the redoubt before the battle was joined, and of destroying Soviet forces from their prepared positions once the 44th Army and 108th Division had withdrawn to the redoubt. The first line of defense was to be along the Darien-Hsinking Railway (advance positions); the second and third lines reflected a contracting of defensive positions around Meihokou and Tunghua, where the Kwantung Army had chosen to make its final stand (Figure 5). The area around Tunghua was, therefore, critical to the entire Kwantung Army, not just to the 3rd Area Army. Unfortunately, General Ushiroku was opposed to this

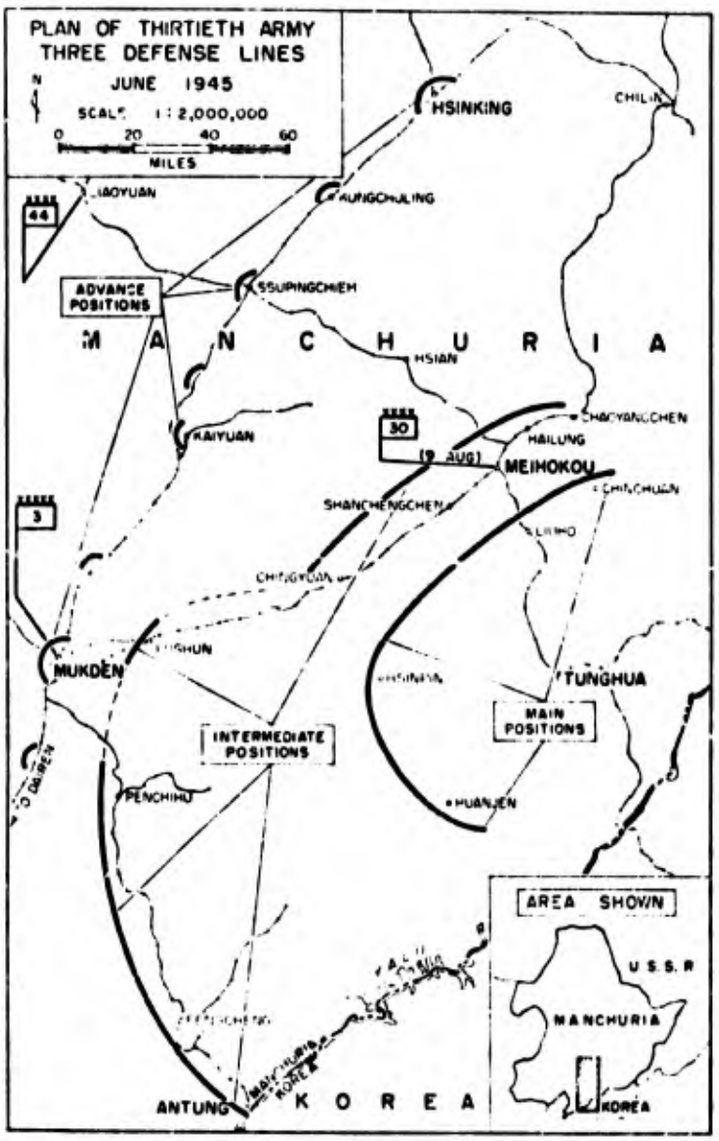

Figure 5

Plan for the Japanese 30th Army's Three Defense Zones[45]

plan, principally because he felt it would present great hardships on the large number of Japanese civilians living in Tunghua who would find themsleves in the midst of a battlefield. He concluded he had to protect those residents by making a decisive stand along the Darien-Hsinking Railway, counterattacking when Soviet supply lines had been stretched to the utmost. On 8 August, even before the Soviets attacked, General Ushiroku told the 30th Army Commander, Lieutenant General Shojiro Iida, to prepare to defend Hsinking ". . . to the last." He himself prepared to make a final stand at Mukden. On the morning of 9 August 1945 the necessary order was given, and only later was the Kwantung Army Headquarters advised of what had been done. The damage could not be repaired. General Yamada was forced to uphold his subordinate's decision in order to preserve any semblance of unity, but at the staff conference called to determine what could be done to salvage the situation, most agreed that ". . . General Ushiroku's decision appeared to strike a fatal blow to the Kwantung Army Headquarters' over-all direction of operations."[46]

Hoping to stop the Soviet forces, the Japanese began launching counterattacks during the period 12-14 August 1945, but these had little effect. Marshal Zakharov, in Finale seems to sum up the situation best when he writes:

> Having lost control of its troops the Japanese Command was now feverishly throwing its units into battle. But there was nothing it could do to stem the onslaught of the Trans-Baikal Front.[47]

By 14 August the Soviet invasion had penetrated deep into Manchuria, with Transbaikal Front forces having advanced from 250 to 400 kilometers inside the border. By that time the Japanese in Tokyo had decided to surrender, and a day or two afterward Japanese units began surrendering in great numbers in accordance with the wishes of the Japanese Emperor and the instructions of Soviet leaders. Though some combat activity was to continue for more than two weeks afterward, by 14 August Soviet penetrations in the area of their main effort had almost certainly insured victory within a short period of time.

The action in Marshal Meretskov's 1st Far Eastern Front was, in many respects, altogether different from in the west. His forces achieved less spectacular results than the Transbaikal Front's tremendous advances, but all things considered the 1st Far Eastern Front was probably just as successful in their way as were their counterparts under Marshal Malinovsky. Meretskov had under his command the 1st Red Banner, the 5th, 25th, and 35th Armies. The 5th Army was given the leading role in the invasion, with the mission of attacking through heavily fortified Japanese defenses to seize the city of Mutanchiang by the eighteenth day of the campaign. Mutanchiang was the location of the Japanese 1st Area Army headquarters, and an important center of communications. The secondary attack was to be made by the 1st Red Banner Army, which was located on the northern flank of

5th Army. On 5th Army's southern flank was the 25th Army, initially attacking west together with the 1st Red Banner and 5th Armies, but then swinging south and southwest after the breakthrough of the enemy fortified zone along the border had been accomplished. Well to the north, and not involved in the concentrated initial thrust in the center of the sector, was the 35th Army, making a supporting attack against the city of Mishan.

Plans called for the 5th and 1st Red Banner Armies to begin their assault after an extensive artillery barrage. The weather, however, was very uncooperative and caused a change in plans. The fine August day being enjoyed by both the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern Fronts gave way to a tropic rain that washed out roads, flooded into valleys, and blinded the troops waiting to launch the attack. Marhshal Meretskov, at the command post of his 1st Red Banner Army, pondered the situation. He had planned an extensive artillery barrage, accompanied by the glare of blinding searchlights to achieve surprise at the front. At one o'clock in the morning he made the decision to go ahead with the attack with no artillery preparation, and to use no searchlights. He trusted the rain alone would help achieve a measure of surprise.

> I gave the command and troops lunged forward without an artillery barrage. Advance units gained control of road centres and broke into villages sowing panic among the Japanese people. The surprise factor played its part. Taking advantage of the downpour and the

> pitch-dark night our troops broke into the fortified areas catching the Japanese unawares. Nothing could stop our men now.[48]

Marshal Meretskov briefly outlines the first six days of fighting in which his troops advanced 120 to 150 kilometers inside the border, and by August 14th reached within tank gun range of Mutanchiang. Japanese hopes of successfully defending the border area from their fortified positions were in vain, and attempts to delay the Soviet forces did not meet with great success. The Soviets forged ahead, though meeting what they termed "stiff resistance." Once past the fortified areas, the Japanese used a number of "suicide squads" to try and slow the Soviet advance, with some Japanese, explosives tied around their waists, throwing themselves beneath tank treads in the hope of stopping the enemy advance. Japanese airmen also crash-dived into Soviet tanks, hoping to block those following. In a study of Soviet tank tactics during the Manchurian Campaign, Albert Coox was led to conclude these means of anti-tank defense were among the most effective used by the Japanese. Coox's finding was contrary to the opinion of the editors of Japanese Monograph 154, who concluded, "Japanese attempts to stop tanks with suicide squads, though heroic, were futile."[49]

Marshal Zakharov cites the use of border guards units in Finale as an important means of achieving surprise in the 1st Red Banner Army sector. When the attack order came the

border guards moved out in a reconnaissance-in-force. Advancing to "a stone's throw" of the Japanese frontline positions, the border guards units deployed in a skirmish line. When challenged by sentries they moved even closer. Only when the Japanese began firing did they attack. Another tactic that was noted by Zakharov was this one:

> Rapidly penetrating the junctures between the enemy frontier fortified zones, the troops soon captured the enemy's advance positions, and drove 15-20 kilometers into enemy territory, disrupting his system of defences and opening the road for the main forces, which took the offensive at 0830 hours.[50]

Compare what Zakharov has said with this description from Japanese Monograph 154, which concerns an element of the Japanese 1st Army's 126th Division defending against the Soviet 35th Army:

> In the Suifenho sector, the main force of the superior enemy instead of dashing against our established positions, at dawn of the 9th of August penetrated through border gaps between Lumingtai and Suifenho, and between Suifenho and Kuanyuehtai. Toward the evening of that day the enemy entering the latter gap pressed on northeast of Suiyang, and began attacking the Suifenho garrison from the rear. Troops who remained in that area were encircled by the enemy and after offering desperate resistance on the 9th and the 10th were almost entirely annihilated; only a few succeeded in retreating to join our main force.[51]

The story was much the same everywhere. In those instances where the Japanese did threaten to make good their defense from fortified positions, the Soviets brought up their heavy artillery and leveled the Japanese bunkers with direct fire. The results were predictable.

Marshal Meretskov's success against his Japanese enemy can be measured in part by his capture of the city of Mutanchiang. Plans called for its capture by the 18th day of fighting. It fell on the afternoon of 16 August, ten days ahead of schedule, in the face of some of the heaviest Japanese resistance in the entire campagin. As the Japanese defenders retreated in disorder, having lost 40,000 in defense of the city, Japanese everywhere were beginning to lay down their arms in response to the surrender notification received the day before.[52]

The experiences of the 2nd Far Eastern Front differed from both of the other Soviet fronts. The terrain in the vicinity of General Purkayev's forces was complicated by the major obstacles of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers. Though not so formidable as the Great Khingans, the Little Khingan range was difficult and rugged. And, as with the eastern approaches, Japanese fortifications posed some serious problems for the invading troops.

At 1:00 A.M. on 9 August troops of the 2nd Far East Front's 15th Army attacked from southwest of Khaborovsk, seizing crossings over the Amur River and making it possible for the Amur River Flotilla to take a major part in the invasion. The 5th Corps, a separate corps of the 2nd Far Eastern Front, likewise made a successful river crossing of the Ussuri, and with the 15th Army had cleared 120 kilometers of Amur and Ussuri riverbank by nightfall, 10 August.

The Kwantung Army was able to piece together a report by the night of 9 August concerning the 15th Army crossing, which was not in the area they were expecting an invasion attempt to come. They had estimated major attacks would probably come further to the northwest, near Sunwu and Heiho, but it was not until 11 August that the 2nd Far Eastern Front's 2nd Red Banner Army was committed toward those objectives. After a good start, however, the 15th Army made only a slow advance through the swamps and low ground of the Sungari River valley. When they reached the town of Fuching, elements of the 134th Infantry Division fiercely contested their advance. The Japanese held on at Fuching until 13 August, allowing much of the 134th Division to withdraw to the southwest toward central Manchuria.[53]

The Soviet 5th Corps fared little better than the 15th Army. After crossing the Ussuri it attacked into the sector defended by the 135th Infantry Division. Like the 134th Division, it was a subordinate unit of the Japanese 1st Area Army (the major portion of which opposed the 1st Far Eastern Front to the south). Like other 1st Area Army division commanders, General Yoichi Hitomi was away from his command participating in table-top war games when he received word of the attack. Upon returning to his division headquarters by train on the evening of 9 August, he was briefed on the tactical situation and was informed that "At dawn on the 9th . . . all border garrisons were subjected

to surprise attacks." General Hitomi ordered his division headquarters to move southwest to Poli, and at the same time directed units to deploy to and prepare to defend the town of Yehho, located about four kilometers from Mutanchiang. By the night of 12 August Japanese troops were in defensive positions around Yehho. The next day a Soviet tank regiment turned up in front of Yehho and commenced to attack, but the Soviets had not managed to dislodge the Japanese by 15 August, when the 135th Division voluntarily began to withdraw to the rear. Two days later, word of the Japanese surrender was received.[54]

The 2nd Red Banner Army began operations south of Blagoveshchensk on 11 August, attacking toward Tsitsihar (about four hundred kilometers away); at the same time the 16th Army began the attack to seize the southern half of Sakhalin Island. The main attack of the 2nd Army was made toward Aihun, just across the Amur River. A major supporting attack was made about thirty kilometers to the southwest. Since the Kwantung Army expected attacks in these areas, they were a little better prepared than in most others. The main attack was into the sector defended by the 135th Infantry Brigade, an independent composite unit of the 4th Army. By order of the 4th Army commander (and against the wishes of the brigade commander), only part of the brigade was left to contest the Soviets near Aihun, while the most important element pulled back to Erhchan on 9 August, a

location about fifty kilometers from the Amur River. The Soviets did not succeed in breaking through the Aihun defenses, though elements did manage to bypass some of the Japanese fortified areas by 16 August. The secondary thrust by the 2nd Red Banner Army was made in the sector of the 123d Infantry Division, which was about at regimental effectiveness. It took the Soviets until 14 August to break out of their bridgehead across the Amur, and on 15 August the main Japanese defensive positions in the entire area, near Sunwu, came under attack. As at Aihun, the war ended before the positions were taken.[55]

The operations of the 2nd Far Eastern Front with respect to the attainment of surprise are interesting, particularly since the desultory results achieved offer a marked contrast to efforts elsewhere. The main attacks of the front on 9 August achieved surprise in terms of timing and location, but got bogged down because the initiative could not be exploited. Difficulties caused by the monsoon rains and by the naturally swampy conditions in the Sungari River area slowed the Soviet advance and prevented the dramatic gains achieved elsewhere. The 2nd Red Banner Army, which attacked only after the Japanese were forewarned (and had two days to move units and make last minut preparations for the defense of their sector) probably fared least well of all of the Soviet armies committed. Over the course of the first ten days of fighting only the

25th Army under Marshal Meretskov achieved a lower daily rate of advance.[56] However, this fact must be tempered by the consideration that forward movement after 15 August, though relatively slight, was nevertheless often uncontested. Furthermore, while the comparison is between rates of advance of Soviet armies, the enemy threat and the area of operations were not identical in all cases. These things notwithstanding, it is probable that part of the reason the 2nd Red Banner Army did not succeed as well as some of the other Soviet units was due to the fact that surprise was not on their side. Not only was their attack not synchronized with the attacks of other major elements, it came in an area where the Japanese expected to be hit. Before we criticize the Soviets, however, the real mission of the 2nd Far Eastern Front should be kept in mind. It was a supporting attack, an economy of force measure designed to tie down Japanese forces so that Marshal Malinovsky's main thrust could accomplish the major Soviet aim of cutting Manchuria in half and encircling a major portion of the Kwantung Army. With this in mind, General Purkayev's troops must be said to have been successful, in spite of their relatively low rates of advance when compared to other Soviet armies.

As was indicated earlier, the Japanese Emperor made a broadcast on 15 August announcing the termination of the war. Publicized beforehand as a major pronouncement, the

broadcast was widely monitored by subordinate Kwantung Army headquarters. Yet, instead of producing an immediate ceasefire, as one might think, it led to further confusion than already existed because of the tactical situation. No ceasefire order was issued by the Kwantung Army headquarters, nor was one received by that headquarters from Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo. Some subordinate headquarters gave the ceasefire order on their own, then were advised to rescind it by Kwantung Army headquarters. On 16 August a staff conference was held at Kwantung Army headquarters to determine what to do. Initially a majority felt that resistance to the last ditch was the proper course. Eventually the majority became the minority, when the Chief of Staff made a passionate and tearful speech that implored the others to obey the Emperor lest they all be branded as traitors. That same day, the Kwantung Army should have received a message ordering the ceasefire from Imperial General Headquarters; it arrived only after the personal visit to Hsinking by His Imperial Highness Prince Tsunenori Takeda, who flew there on 17 August on behalf of the Emperor. Because of the confused situation, with many Japanese units continuing to resist in the absence of firm ceasefire orders to the contrary, the Soviets continued their attacks, though not with the intensity of before.[57]

The Soviets had one surprise left for the Japanese, which they unveiled on 17 August. As Red Army units prepared

for the last major efforts against the Kwantung Army, airborne landing forces of the three Soviet Fronts commenced operations. These elements constituted advance detachments designed to seize centers of communication, present Soviet terms to the high-ranking Japanese officials in the vicinity, and supervise the disarming of the enemy in the area once Japanese units received the order to stop fighting. (See Figure 1 for the locations of landing sites.) The usual method used to insert the airborne elements was to make a low approach at an airport, landing without first circling. The airborne troops would then seize the air facility from the unsuspecting Japanese, proceeding forthwith to contact and negotiate with Japanese officials in the area. A variation used was to drop paratroops into the airport facility, landing the remainder of the force only after the airfield had been secured. Apparently all of the airborne and airlanding operations were completely successful.[58]

By 19 August, most Japanese troops had laid down their arms, and by 25 August the Soviets had raised their flag over Port Arthur. The war was over for the Kwantung Army. On 2 September 1945, Soviet Lieutenant General K. N. Derevyanko signed the Japanese surrender agreement for the U.S.S.R. aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay. While that was happening, according to Zakharov, "Endless columns of Japanese troops with their generals at their head moved

northwards, to the Soviet Union: they had dreamed of going there as conquerors, but they were going instead as prisoners of war."[59]

Notes - Chapter IV

[1]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Study of Strategical and Tactical Peculiarities of Far Eastern Russia and Soviet Far East Forces, vol. 13, Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria (1955). Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Special Studies, vol. 13, p. 92.

[2]Ibid., pp. 93-4.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., pp. 64-6.

[5]Ibid., p. 111; L. N. Vnotchenko, Victory in the Far East (Pobeda Na Dal'nyem Vostokye). (Originally published in Moscow by the Military Publishing House, 1966; partially translated by the Defense Intelligence Agency, 1970.)

[6]M. V. Zakharov, (ed.), Finale: A Retrospective Review of Imperialist Japan's Defeat in 1945 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972); Vnotchenko, p. 32.

[7]Zakharov, p. 75; S. M. Shtemenko, The Soviet General Staff at War (1941-1945) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), p. 345.

[8]Shtemenko, p. 327.

[9]K. A. Meretskov, Serving the People (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), pp. 339-40.

[10]Ibid., p. 331.

[11]Zakharov, pp. 245-8, provides a listing of major commanders and their key staff personnel as an addendum.

[12]Ibid., p. 74.

[13]Ibid., p. 70.

[14]Ibid., map facing p. 68.

[15]Shtemenko, pp. 341-3.

[16]Meretskov, pp. 338-46.

[17]Ibid., pp. 330-1, 337-8.

[18]Vnotchenko, p. 59.

[19]Ibid., pp. 55, 60, 85; Zakharov, p. 101.

[20]Vnotchenko, pp. 33, 58-60.

[21]Ibid., pp. 58-9.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Meretskov, pp. 332-3.

[24]Shtemenko, pp. 348-50; Meretskov, p. 349.

[25]Vnotchenko, p. 135-6.

[26]Ibid., pp. 60, 123-4.

[27]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia, Eastern Front (August 1945) (Japanese Monograph 154, 1954). Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Monograph 154, pp. 3-5.

[28]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria, Jan 43-Aug 45 (Japanese Monograph 138, 1953). Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Monograph 138, p. 138; N. I. Anisimov, P. P. Bogdanov, et al, Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945: A General Outline (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 148; Zakharov, p. 74. Zakharov maintains there were forty Soviet divisions in the Far East "throughout the war," which seems an overstatement of fact. Precisely how many were in Far East Russia before the build-up began is not recorded in any of the available literature, and it is not certain how many were deployed there when the Soviets attacked Japan (though the official Soviet history, as was previously noted, maintained there were a total of eighty). The Japanese estimate of 1.5 million, however, appears to be relatively accurate and compares closely with those recorded by the Soviets.

[29]Japanese Monograph 138, p. 157.

[30]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Japanese Intelligence Planning Against the USSR, vol. 10, Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria (1955), pp. 47-55. Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Special Studies, vol. 10. The reorganization and expansion of the Japanese intelligence network in Manchuria is the subject of Chapters V and VI, pp. 57-77.

[31]U.S. Far East Command, Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions Near End of World War II (28 February 1950), Annex 1, "Japanese Anti-Soviet Intelligence," pp. 4-7. Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions.

[32]Ibid., p. 7.

[33]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[34]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[35]Ibid., pp. 9, 11; Japanese Special Studies, vol. 10, pp. 35-9. This study outlines problems with espionage that the Japanese experienced as early as the 1935-1939 time period, problems that increased with time and were not simply a product of Soviet wartime counterespionage practices. An account of Japanese difficulties in the field of wartime espionage can also be found in Annex 2, "Useful Elements of Japan's Anti-Soviet Intelligence Experience," pp. 1-3, or Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions.

[36]Japanese Intelligence on Soviet Intentions, Annex 1, p. 12.

[37]Zakharov, pp. 128-34; Raymond Garthoff, "Marshal Malinovsky's Manchurian Campaign," Military Review, 46 (October 1966):55-8.

[38]The only Kwantung Army forces opposed to General Pliyev's cavalry units were elements of the 108th Infantry Division, which never really entered combat. The division's activities during the invasion are covered in Japanese Monograph 154, pp. 154-61.

[39]U.S. Department of the Army, Far East Command, Military History Section, Record of Operations Against Soviet Russia on Northern and Western Fronts of Manchuria, and in Northern Korea (August 1945) (Japanese Monograph 155). Hereinafter referred to as Japanese Monograph 155, map facing p. 5.

[40]Japanese Monograph 155, pp. 9-11.

[41]Ibid., pp. 6-11, 78-85.

[42]Ibid., pp. 89-94.

[43]Ibid., pp. 95-6, 99.

[44]Zakharov, p. 132.

[45]Japanese Monograph 155, map facing p. 6.

[46]Japanese Monograph 154, pp. 10-13.

[47]Zakharov, p. 134.

[48]Meretskov, p. 350.

[49]Ibid., pp. 350-4; Alvin D. Coox, Soviet Armor in Action Against the Japanese Kwantung Army, August 1945, Technical Memorandum ORO-T-38 (FEC), The Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1952), pp. 2, 16-24, 30-1; Japanese Monograph 154, p. II.

[50]Zakharov, pp. 134-5.

[51]Japanese Monograph 154, pp. 184-5.

[52]Zakharov, pp. 150-1.

[53]Ibid., pp. 142-5.

[54]Japanese Monograph 154, pp. 285-300.

[55]Japanese Monograph 155, pp. 221-5.

[56]Vnotchenko, p. 121.

[57]Japanese Monograph 154, pp. 19-25.

[58]Vnotchenko, p. 127.

[59]Zakharov, p. 221.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

There is no question that the Soviet invasion of Manchuria in 1945 was fully unexpected by the Japanese, and that surprise was a major factor contributing to the Soviet success. However, because it is also plain that other factors besides surprise contributed to the dramatic Soviet victory, the value of surprise in this case cannot be judged solely in terms of whether or not it enabled success, but rather in terms of the contribution made to turning sure success into an overwhelming victory. That contribution was significant.

The Japanese Kwantung Army was not just beaten, it was crushed. Helpless against the initial surprise assaults of the Soviets, in a few short days it was thrown into hopeless confusion. Then, after all hope of conducting holding operations was gone the army found itself totally unprepared to defend in the area that had been chosen as a final redoubt. The Soviet main attack, made in a Kwantung Army area of weakness, rolled across vast reaches of desert, then crossed rugged mountain terrain and went through what seemed like almost impenetrable forest. The vanguard 6th Guards Tank

Army, penetrating almost to the heart of Manchuria, moved almost as fast as tanks, trucks and artillery pieces could traverse the forbidding terrain. The Japanese had no early warning of the attack, had no idea the main thrust would occur where it did, had inadequate men and equipment for the situation, and were still in the process of implementing a major new defense plan when the invasion began. They thought their fortifications, guerilla tactics and samurai spirit offered them some chance of success against the tank and mechanized forces of the Soviets. Small wonder that the effect of surprise enabled the Soviets to realize their major strategic goals so quickly, after such a short period of operational and tactical activity.

When we look at how the Soviets achieved surprise at the strategic level, and what effect they expected and gained from it, we need to remember that diplomacy and military force, two methods of exercising strategic options, were inextricably related when the decision to employ military means against the Japanese was reached. In this case, Stalin's state policy was to deal with Germany before taking any strong action against the Japanese threat he felt in the Far East; then to secure the most advantageous position possible in the Far East for the U.S.S.R., even though the Allies had shouldered the main burden of Japan's defeat.

The Soviets, assuming Japan had grave suspicions about Soviet intentions with regard to Manchuria, nevertheless

decided to incorporate the element of surprise into their strategic plans. In so doing, they were handicapped by the fact that in 1944 Stalin had found it necessary to charge Japan with being an aggressor nation, and mounted a public relations campaign designed to prepare public sentiment for war in the Far East once Germany was defeated. Stalin's insistence on renouncing the pact between Russia and Japan was likewise not calculated to aid in misleading the Japanese concerning what was about to occur. The wartime strength of Soviet forces in the Far East and the huge military build-up after Germany's surrender in May 1945 also had ominous implications, and the build-up was properly interpreted by the Japanese as a prelude to the Soviet invasion. Nevertheless, in the face of all these handicaps the Soviets persisted in pursuing strategic surprise. The fact that they succeeded once again points out that surprise is possible even in seemingly illogical situations.

Secrecy and the continuation of normal diplomatic relations were the two factors on which the Soviets primarily relied for strategic surprise. The secrecy they practiced appears to have been less than completely successful, yet perhaps it served its purpose. The tremendous superiority of the Soviets was definitely a factor in their achievement of surprise, and what secrecy they were able to preserve during the build-up was probably a contributing factor. Normalcy in diplomatic relations with Japan also played an

important role in attaining strategic surprise. The Japanese were ideal victims, notwithstanding the fact they correctly assessed the situation when they decided the Soviets would probably enter the war against them either in conjunction with an Allied invasion of the Japanese Home Islands or when Japan was to the point where further resistance was totally futile. Whatever else they did, the Soviets took care never to destroy Japanese faith in the idea that something could be worked out with the Allies. The Japanese thus found it possible to be optimistic in spite of fifty years of enmity with the Soviet Union, in spite of the signs that the Soviets would probably assist the Allies in the Far East after Germany's defeat, and in spite of the military build-up that the Soviets were undertaking near the Manchurian border.

The Japanese badly misjudged Soviet intentions, and by so doing became victims of Soviet efforts to gain the initiative through surprise. This is a key point. The U.S. Army's tactical doctrine tends to stress enemy capabilities as an estimative guide, studiously avoiding the idea of assessing enemy intentions. The Manchurian campaign shows that at the strategic level the Japanese needed to be able to determine Soviet intentions. Soviet capabilities were never seriously in doubt from a strategic point of view; their attack dumbfounded the Japanese because they had misjudged Soviet intentions.

Like the strategic surprise the Soviets achieved, surprise at the operational and tactical levels also played

an important part in overwhelming the Japanese. The emphasis on surprise at these levels underscores the fact that the Soviets by no means view surprise as an isolated phenomenon, but look at it as a factor which operates on all levels of military endeavor. The guiding aspect of the strategic level becomes apparent as we see strategic plans to surprise the Japanese being echoed at the operational level. At that level, of course, the techniques involved were much different. For example, during the build-up the Red Army practiced excellent information security measures; took elaborate camouflage precautions; practiced good troop discipline with respect to movement, light and sound discipline (maintaining normalcy in the border area); increased their intelligence collection through ground and aerial reconnaissance, communications intercept and analysis, the use of agents, and the employment of border guards intelligence assets; maintained good counterintelligence and security procedures along the border; emphasized signal security measures; conducted thorough analyses of the possible effects of weather, terrain, and Japanese defenses along the border; and achieved a build-up of combat power far beyond what the Japanese suspected, occupying assembly areas from which sudden strikes could be launched in unexpected strengths and along unexpected avenues of approach on the day the invasion finally took place.

At the tactical level, measures designed to achieve surprise took on some of the aspects dictated by the level of operational art, but there were other aspects which were

specifically appropriate to the level of tactics. Reconnaissance in force by advance elements was a tactic used to eliminate the front line defenses that are usually targeted by preparatory artillery fires or tactical air strikes, but which would have served to alert Kwantung Army troops to impending invasion. The use of artillery in the direct fire mode to reduce enemy fortifications in the border area was another innovative tactical measure which helped produce some unexpectedly rapid Soviet penetrations in heavily fortified areas.

The thoroughness with which the Soviets undertook measures designed to aid in achieving surprise underscores another way of describing how the Soviets view surprise. To the Soviets, surprise is not just something to be wished for, it is something to be worked for. The unexpected does not just happen, it is made to happen. On reflection, one cannot help but realize that at all levels painstakingly detailed planning was required to create the conditions necessary for surprise. There was also an enormous amount of tedious and often backbreaking effort involved, and methodical persistance in checking and double-checking each facet of the operation was needed to make sure surprise would not be lost. The enormity of the effort only begins to come into focus when we think of those thousands of camouflage screens the engineers constructed, the countless observation and guard posts that were manned, and the innumerable

individual acts which must have been necessary to create the complete surprise the Soviets attained. The example of Marshal Meretskov in harness helping to pull his own vehicle through the Siberian mud exemplifies the kind of effort the Soviets put out to gain the advantage of surprise. Surprise did not just happen. There was no magic formula or secret tactic which made it work. Surprise in the Manchurian campaign was based on highly effective doctrine, good training and preparedness, and hard work. And, of course, on the condition of the Kwantung Army.

From the available literature, we get an overall picture of unpreparedness among Kwantung Army units that is appalling. We find poor organization, training and equipment, unfinished fortifications and defensive positions, a reliance on guerrilla tactics in the face of a mechanized and armored threat, and a reliance on spirit and determination to overcome all. We find a largely ineffective intelligence collection system that even a good analysis and estimative intelligence effort cannot overcome. It is clear from the Japanese accounts that along each of the fronts Japanese units were taken completely by surprise by the attack, and we find intermediate headquarters being informed of the attack by their higher echelons rather than receiving reports from the frontline units, as one would normally expect. The confusion of the first hours, far from clearing up later, began to be multiplied in effect. Communications

and other command and control problems grew stadily worse, until in only a week's time the Japanese were in many cases unable to exercise positive control over subordinate elements. Some of the confusion can be traced to Japanese planning, and to the fact they were in the midst of making new defensive preparations when the Soviets attacked. Some can be traced to General Jun Ushiroku's failure to adhere to the common defense plan. It is hard to say just which Japanese failures were most important, since all of them were potentially disastrous. What we can conclude is that the Japanese failures not only helped the Soviet efforts to achieve suprise, but helped multiply the effect of the surprise attained.

The question naturally arises as to whether there are parallels between the invasion of Manchuria and what may, at some future date become the Soviet invasion of the People's Republic of China. More importantly for us, can we expect similar measures to be used to gain surprise should the Soviets invade Central Europe? It is probably safe to say there will be parallels, but we need to be careful not to think of Manchuria as a precise model for a future campaign. If we go back to the earlier history of World War II, the parallels between what happened at, for example, Stalingrad are noticeable. In that case, the completeness of the build-up, the careful positioning of camouflaged assembly areas, the launching of an attack under less than favorable climatic conditions, the use of shock and rapid envelopment to gain

surprise--all these things and more can be seen as parallels. Yet, it would be wrong to say that Stalingrad, or any other Soviet campaign, furnished an exact blueprint or precise model for Manchuria. By doing so, we delude ourselves into thinking the Soviets are not imaginative and innovative, which they certainly proved to be against the Japanese.

However, rejection of Manchuria as a "blueprint" does not mean it has no current value, or that its lessons cannot be applied in other situations. The Soviets have a well-known interest in history which they turn to very practical purposes. Their efforts to apply the lessons of history to Marxist-Leninist doctrine are intense. The fact that we see important Soviet military works analyzing the campaign in recent years tends to indicate the importance the Soviets have begun to attach to it. One point that is echoed in all of the Soviet literature on the campaign is that surprise contributed greatly to the Soviet success.

We can expect Soviet theorists to take the lessons of the Manchurian campaign and use them in reformulating current doctrine, which already places heavy stress on surprise. We can expect the Manchurian campaign to have a strengthening effect on that part of their philosophy concerning surprise, and also to become an important historical campaign for study by military leaders and students. And, in some future conflict, we can expect Soviet planners to go through many of the same thought processes as did Soviet leaders in 1945, once again

seeking out enemy weaknesses, carefully and diligently preparing for action, and then launching the attack with speed and shock-power, using innovative techniques and surprise to gain and maintain the initiative.

We will find no "blueprint" for future Soviet military action, but Soviet theory is readily available for study and the lessons of Manchuria with respect to surprise are clear. The U.S. Army, while acknowledging surprise as a principle of war, has never placed the kind of stress on it the Soviets do, perhaps because the use of surprise implies something "sneaky" or deceitful that violates our sense of fair play. Whatever the reasons, we cannot expect the Soviets to restrain themselves from using surprise whenever and wherever possible. Soviet doctrine and Soviet history leave little doubt that surprise can be decisively effective, and can contribute to overwhelming success against an unsuspecting enemy. Thus it follows that vigilance and preparedness are absolutely essential to any defensive effort, and must be achieved no matter the price if surprise is to be avoided. The Kwantung Army was unable to pay the price, and the results were predictable.

APPENDIX A

CLAUSEWITZ AND WESTERN VIEWS ON SURPRISE

Clausewitz and Western Views on Surprise

The recognition that surprise lends an advantage in warfare is surely almost as old as warfare itself. It was not an original idea when, in ancient China, Sun Tzu set down his often quoted dictum that all warfare is based on deception.[1] But the element of surprise has meant different things to different people, and the Soviets have arrived at a somewhat different view of the principle of surprise than in most western countries.

In terms of basic concept, surprise consists of at least two elements, and there is the implication of a third. First, there must be some type of encounter, such as between persons or groups, or conceivably between ideas. There must also be the aspect of suddenness and unexpectedness. Surprise is not something associated with a gradual dawning, nor with a logical sequence. In fact, an unexpected encounter implies a third element of surprise, a reaction on the part of the person (or group) being surprised, one of astonishment, amazement, or consternation. To attack suddenly and without warning (which fits some dictionary definitions almost exactly, as for example The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language) can be seen to contain the necessary elements of surprise; an encounter and the unexpected.[2] Carl von Clausewitz probably would not have

have argued with that definition, though he does not define surprise in his book, On War.

Clausewitz does make the point the military leader should generally endeavor to gain relative superiority over the enemy by assembling superior forces at a decisive point. However, he points out that this is difficult advice to follow, since the enemy cannot help but become aware in most instances that the opposition is concentrating or massing forces. When the enemy has determined that the prospective attacker has begun to assemble his army, establish necessary depots and supply points, and move large forces to a position of attack, his normal reaction is to take the countermeasures necessary to neutralize the threat he perceives. Unless, that is, the attacker can somehow conceal his intentions from the enemy, or is able to move so quickly that he can strike before the enemy is able to take appropriate countermeasures. The two keys to making a success of the principle of surprise, according to Clausewitz, are the employment of rapidity and secrecy.

In reading Clausewitz' chapter on "Surprise" in On War, there seems at first to be no doubt that Clausewitz is completely and unhesitatingly convinced of the value and necessity of surprise in order to obtain conclusive results. He concedes it must lie ". . . at the foundation of all undertakings, for without it the preponderance at the decisive point is not properly conceivable." He sees it not

only as essential to the achievement of mass, but as a means of completely demoralizing the enemy as well. "When it is successful in a high degree," said Clausewitz, "confusion and broken courage in the enemy's ranks are the consequences . . . ." Yet, in almost the next thought he makes it clear that he does not see surprise as a principle whose use promises very much to the user. This appears totally contradictory. Clausewitz seems to undermine his own insistence on the importance of surprise when he says, "We should form an erroneous conception if we believed by [the use of surprise] chiefly there is much to be gained in war. In idea it promises a great deal; in the execution it generally sticks fast by the friction of the whole machine." When he talks of "the friction of the whole machine," he seems to be concluding that surprise on a grand scale is very difficult to achieve, without ruling out the possibility that surprise may be effectively employed at lower levels. He does, in fact, see surprise as more easily achieved at the tactical level rather than the strategic. However, he sees a drawback in this regard also, in that a single tactical engagement which achieves surprise probably will not have a decisive influence on the outcome of the larger whole. He cautions that although it is theoretically possible to imagine that by achieving surprise in a number of small scale actions one may "connect great results," in practice this does not follow. On the one hand Clausewitz

believes surprise to be so important as to be counted a principle of war, but on the other hand he holds out little hope that attempts to apply surprise will amount to much.[3]

Since Clausewitz' time, western military theorists have added to and embellished his ideas about surprise, and have usually included them in their own "principles of war" as well. Yet, Westerners do not usually examine surprise in as much detail as the Soviets, although this is not always the case, and some Western thinkers have placed considerable stress on surprise. One in particular, Dr. Barton Whaley (in his Stratagem: Deception and Surprise in War) investigated the causes and effects of surprise in warfare from an interesting point of view. He tried to construct mathematical models which explain the data he compiled on 168 battles, from sixteen wars, between 1914 and 1968. Thereby, Whaley attempted a unique analysis, applying scientific and mathematical methods. In so doing, he considers surprise from a Western point of view but in the kind of exhaustive detail we might expect from a Soviet theorist. Whaley's work suffers, unfortunately, from a rather serious defect, in that he does not sufficiently establish the validity of his original data upon which all his findings rest. He rather arbitrarily assigns battles to categories, such as the category of those in which surprise was attempted but not attained, or in which deception was attempted, succeeded, and surprise was attained. He does not adequately

demonstrate that he has taken all applicable cases involving surprise and deception, and does not demonstrate that those he has taken are appropriately categorized (even into such subcategories as strategic surprise and deception, as opposed to tactical surprise and deception). Nevertheless, in very general terms, he offers some valuable insights into the principle of surprise, both in terms of cause and effect.

A main element of Dr. Whaley's research was to consider not only the role of surprise in war, but also the role of deception. Whaley treats surprise and deception taken together as "strategem," which Clausewitz also discussed but did not link so closely with surprise. Deception has been linked to surprise throughout the history of military thought, yet, as Clausewitz recognized, they are not inextricably bound up together. Whaley defines the two so as to be able to distinctly identify them, and so that deception can be viewed as a cause and surprise as an effect.

Examining sixty-eight "strategic cases" between 1914 and 1968, Whaley found that sixty-one involved strategic surprise and fifty-seven involved strategic deception, indicating a high associative degree between surprise and deception at the strategic level of operations. Further, Whaley examined 115 detailed accounts of operations to determine what factors, acting singly or in concert, produce surprise. He found that absolute secrecy did not exist in a single one of the cases he studied, nor was it critical to the attainment of surprise. As he points out, "The pedestrian

textbookish answer to the planning of surprise attack is 'security'," But, more or less invariably, warnings will slip past the security screen erected by the attacker, increasing in frequency and specificity as the attacker's preparations near completion. What is most important is not the extent to which the defender acquires information about the attacker that is correct, but whether or not he is able to perceive what information is correct and what is not, then act on it. The defense can be misled by disinformation activities on the part of the attacker; by deliberate security precautions taken in a selected area to conceal a critical part of the operation; by acquiring what appears to be relevant information but in fact is mere coincidence; and perhaps in other ways. But total secrecy is neither necessary, nor in most cases possible.[4]

Dr. Whaley also considers the enemy's response time to the action producing surprise. While time is, almost by definition, a factor in achieving surprise, what is important is Whaley's finding that there may be cases when an enemy's response to surprise is delayed to such an extent that he is unable to counter the threat at all. In such cases, Dr. Whaley observes that it may be useful to think in terms of strategic paralysis or strategic impotence, rather than strategic surprise.

Dr. Whaley examines what he terms the "varieties and intensities" of surprise. He does so in terms of the

five categories or modes of intention, time, place, strength, and style. With respect to intention, Dr. Whaley finds that surprise is most commonly viewed in the military literature as an "either-or" quality. Surprise is either achieved, or it is not. For example, the decision must be made either to wage war or not to wage war. This decision is made by one adversary, and must be estimated by the other correctly if surprise of intention is not to be avoided.[5] The same decision is a propos in almost all situations in which surprise may be a factor. For example, to attack or defend, to assault or envelop, and to economize or reinforce are all decision situations in which surprise of intention can be exercised. Conceivably, all can be exercised at the same time, resulting in surprise situations of varying intensity ranging from a complete lack of surprise to complete achievement of surprise.

A last aspect of surprise operations with which Dr. Whaley is concerned is that of the causal relationship between surprise and casualties. He treats casualty statistics because they provide a ratio that can be used as a relative index of success and failure in an operation, and also because such statistics are generally available and reasonably precise. He is able to conclude that a high casualty rate is one of the most significant results of surprise. Taking 167 operations occurring between 1914 and 1967, Dr. Whaley found that only 138 were useful in analyzing the effect of surprise or the effect of its absence.

Eighty-seven cases involved the use of surprise, and in those cases the casualty ratio between the attacker and defender was 1 to 14.5. The ratio for the fifty-one cases which did not involve surprise was 1 to 1.7. The relative advantage was an astonishing eight times greater for surprise cases. Dr. Whaley takes into account the fact a very few operations involving mass casualties (or mass surrenders) greatly influenced the ratios obtained. By eliminating 5% of the cases considered at both the top and bottom of the scale, the ratios still indicate that the achievement of surprise has a multiplying effect of five times in the average case. Dr. Whaley further concludes that the same finding would hold true roughly for both the strategic and tactical ends of the spectrum of operations. Further, he demonstrates that in those cases where deception formed part of the reason for surprise, it proved a substantial enhancer of casualty statistics, indicating its value as an intensifier of the advantage normally afforded by surprise. In fact, he found that in those cases where there was surprise without deception little advantage was gained over those cases in which there had been a deception attempt without resulting surprise. Statistically, there would appear to be an advantage to the use of deception tactics whether or not surprise was achieved.

The above conclusions about surprise and its effect on casualties were determined in relation to the ratio of

casualties between those of the initiator of surprise and the intended victim. In absolute terms, the employment of surprise not only gives favorable casualty ratios, it has the effect of actually depressing the casualties of the employer of surprise, while at the same time increasing the casualties of his opponent. In other words, both relatively and absolutely surprise can be demonstrated to produce favorable casualty results.[6]

It may be concluded that the current manual of the U.S. Army for forces in the field, FM 100-5, is correct in counting surprise an important principle of war. According to FM 100-5, surprise is important because its attainment can decisively shift the balance of combat power, and because success out of proportion to the effort expended may be obtained when the principle is properly applied.[7] While Soviet theorists might not disagree, their ideas on the nature of the principles of war have not paralleled ours. We tend to see principles of war, including surprise, as fundamental truths, applicable across the total spectrum of military endeavor. To the Soviets, principles are guides to action, not fundamental truths. Like the Soviets, we trace some of our ideas about warfare back to Clausewitz, including many of our formative conceptions of the principle of surprise. Yet, to understand how they view surprise we must understand how their system of military theory has grown up differently than ours, and how surprise fits into their overall scheme of military thought.

Notes - Appendix A

[1]Sun Tzu, The Art of War, translated and with an Introduction by Samuel B. Griffith, Foreword by B. H. Liddell Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 68-70.

[2]The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1969 ed., s.v. "Surprise."

[3]Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and with an Introduction by Anatole Rapoport (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 269-71.

[4]Barton S. Whaley, Stratagem: Deception and Surprise in War (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 1-2, 164-6.

[5]Ibid., pp. 1-2, 122-6, 163-85, 210-1.

[6]Ibid., pp. 189-96.

[7]U.S. Department of the Army, Operations of Army Forces in the Field, Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 5-1, 5-2.

APPENDIX B

THE GROWTH OF SOVIET MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

The Growth of Soviet Military Art and Science

During the early 1920's arguments raged in the Soviet Union over the formation of a new military doctrine. Some argued for maintaining many of the doctrinal traditions of the old Imperial Army, while others believed that military theory and practice had to grow from the newly created proletarian dictatorship if it was not to become hopelessly "bourgeois" in nature. Chief among those who argued for continuing many of the old doctrinal concepts was Leon Trotsky, who was then serving as Commissar of War. Trotsky and his followers saw the problem of army doctrine in very practical terms, but by aligning himself on the side of what the revolutionaries could point to as reactionary thinking Trotsky was weakening his position as the natural successor to Lenin.

Trotsky's opponents argued that a unique Marxist military doctrine must be developed, a doctrine that would grow out of scientific theory and would therefore be correct, absolute, and unassailable. Trotsky's insistance on believing that military principles applied equally to both capitalists and communists alike was diametrically opposed to this view. General M. V. Frunze, whose Civil War military successes had led him to the forefront of Soviet military

affairs, said that a unified doctrine must flow "from the class essence of the state," which would in turn stem from the productive forces of the country.[1]

Essentially, the debates were settled in 1924. Stalin succeeded Lenin upon the latter's death, and lost little time relieving Trotsky as War Commissar, replacing him with M. V. Frunze. Between his appointment in January 1925 and his death in October of the same year, Frunze and his supporters began molding the Red Army according to the new theories. The task of setting down some of the basic concepts of the new revolutionary doctrine fell to another officer a short time later. General A. Svechin published a book entitled Strategy in 1926 which was in large part responsible for the crystalization of Soviet military thought. Today, Svechin by no means occupies a position of historical prominence in Soviet military history. It is as if his contributions had never been made, according to some of the more recent studies of Red Army thought.[2]

Yet it was Svechin who for the Soviets first propounded the one aspect of Soviet military art that makes it so unique today when compared with contemporary Western ideas. Svechin departed from the usual idea that military affairs occur on the levels of strategy and tactics, and added a third component level of operating art. Operating art is concerned with organizing and conducting large scale operations. It occupies a middle ground between strategy

and tactics, which are concerned respectively with the overall conduct of war, and the study of battles. Before considering these three levels in detail, it will first be useful to examine how these levels of military art fit into the overall conception of Soviet military theory.[3]

In retrospect, one of the more important doctrinal relationships resolved during the period of the great debates of the 1920's was that concerning military science and military art. It never became really important because it was one point on which both Trotsky and Frunze and their respective supporters were generally able to reach agreement. Both conceded that military affairs was an art as far as talent was concerned, but a science when it came to the codification and teaching of military art (insofar as that was possible to do). Beginning with that consensus, Soviet military thinkers have proceeded to a rather sophisticated understanding of the relationship between military art and military science.

The Soviets today look upon the theory of military art as the most important part of military science, that part of the discipline which is devoted to the study of the methods and forms of military operations of various scales, and the conduct of armed conflict on the land, sea and in the air. The theory of military art is a guide to action for commanders on the preparation and conduct of various types of military operations. It is not a never-changing

set of rules, but is a dynamic body of guidelines that is constantly undergoing change to meet new situations and developing technology.

The Soviets think of military art as applicable on three separate levels, ". . . strategy which studies the conditions of the preparation and conduct of war as a whole and its campaigns, operational art the subject of which is operations, and tactics which is concerned with the study of battle." The Soviets understand that none of these can be considered as areas completely independent of the others. All are mutually dependent and connected; they support and supplement each other, and act in concert toward the attainment of a common goal.

Strategy is the most important area of military art, and has been called the guiding part. Strategy is concerned with such things as the development of theoretical positions on how to prepare the country and its armed forces for war, with the development of the goals of war, and with the overall development of the methods and forms of warfare to be used in a war. It is also the art of directing the largest military operations and of directing a war as a whole. The overall strategy of a war, then, may encompass the planning and conduct of a number of campaigns and large operations, and innumerable battles of varying size which make up those campaigns and operations.[4]

This brings us to the Soviet view of principles of war. Their idea of military science as an objective science presupposes objective laws governing that science, just as much as there are laws of such sciences as physics and chemistry. Colonel V. Ye. Savkin traces the relationship between the laws of military science and the principles of military art in great detail. Essentially, he says that the laws of military science represent that which is continually repeated and reproduced in a phenomenon. A phenomenon, as understood by Savkin, is that which, although containing certain essential features, bears within its basis a transient, unstable character. A law of military science, while it may be applied to a phenomenon containing a multitude of aspects, concerns and governs only that which is of essence in the phenomenon. Because laws are universal, they also tend to be general in nature. Principles of military art are based on the laws of military science in the Soviet view, and essentially form a basis for action by commanders. They apply not only to the essential elements of phenomena, but to those other aspects which are present in day to day operations. They bridge the theoretical and general of military science and the practical aspects with which commanders must be concerned. They can be understood as "applied military laws."

The Soviets trace the beginnings of the development of principles of war back to well before they formulated

their theories of military science and military art, and concede that "bourgeois" perceptions of the principles of military art have not always been wrong. They maintain, however, that their understanding of the principles is superior to that of other nations, because their principles are products of the immutable laws which their Marxist-Leninist understanding has revealed. They also point out that today many capitalist countries (the United States included) are wrong in viewing principles of military art as fundamental and unchanging. The Soviets believe that only military laws are completely objective, and that principles of war are dynamic and change to conform to varying aspects of phenomena, which may themselves change over time. For the Soviets, principles may remain the same in expression while the idea embodied in them changes.[5]

Notes - Appendix B

[1]D. Fedotoff White, The Growth of the Red Army (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 159.

[2]Kenneth R. Whiting, The Development of the Soviet Armed Forces, 1917-1966 (Air University Documentary Research Study AU-201-66-ASI) (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University, 1966), p. 18.

[3]General Svechin is mentioned only briefly, and then in disparaging terms, in the following works: S. N. Kozlov, M. V. Smirnov, et al., Soviet Military Science (unedited rough draft translation of 2d edition, prepared by the Foreign Technology Division, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, 1964), p. 211; V. D. Sokolovsky, Military Strategy: Soviet Doctrine and Concepts (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 4; V. Ye. Savkin, The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 43, (originally published in Moscow by the Military Publishing House, 1970; translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force, 1973).

[4]Raymond Garthoff, Soviet Military Doctrine (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953), p. 28.

[5]Kozlov, et al., pp. 201-8, 217, 279-81, 287-8, 292.

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THE LITERATURE OF THE MANCHURIAN CAMPAIGN

In general, there is no lack of literature dealing with World War II activities at the strategic level, both from a military and international relations point of view. Soviet entry into the Pacific war is familiar ground, covered in a number of memoirs and dealt with to some extent by many historians. However, the availability and reliability of sources which deal with the operational and tactical levels is a different question, and there are some problems. As was pointed out in Chapter I, Manchuria has been of little interest to Western historians studying World War II, and since Americans were not involved in the fighting there are no U.S. archives of operations plans, logs and journals, and similar records. Soviet records of that type, as well as such Kwantung Army records in Manchuria as remained at the war's end, are now in Soviet archives. Consulting Soviet documentary sources was out of the question for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the author's lack of language qualifications in either Russian or Japanese. Sources consulted were, therefore, all in English (many in translation), and all available in the United States.

Despite some serious shortcomings, the most important contributions to the literature of the campaign

written from the Japanese point of view is the series of monographs done under the auspices of General Douglas MacArthur's Far East Command by former Japanese officers. Some deal with events at the strategic level, such as number 45, which concerns operations at Imperial General Headquarters in Japan. Most deal with the military situation at lower levels.

The most important monographs of the series with respect to the subject of this paper are numbers 138, 154, and 155. These cover preparations for the campaign, and outline the events which occurred during the actual period of hostilities. Volume XIII of a related series of Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria published by the same headquarters is also quite useful, since it deals with the moves and counter-moves of the Kwantung Army and their Soviet opposition during the years 1931 to 1945.

As useful as the monograph series can be, it has its drawbacks. The monographs were written several years after the war ended, generally from 1949 to 1953. Each was drafted by a former Japanese officer with personal knowledge of his subject, but with few factual records to guide him. In some cases Japanese records captured in Tokyo were available to shed light on a particular situation; in other cases, a diary or similar account had been kept by the author of the monograph and could be consulted. In general, however, the monographs were written from memory. The editors

found the original manuscripts for the monographs were disorganized, disjointed, and marked by frequent gaps. They tried to translate the original Japanese documents as faithfully as possible, but in view of the considerable difficulties involved with organization and, in many instances, the lack of complete clarity, the editors have cautioned against relying too closely on specific phraseology for the support of a particular viewpoint. In some cases repetitious passages were excised or consolidated, and the editors also admit to having filled some of the gaps left in the original Japanese documents, and to inserting prefatory notes in cases where the author jumped headlong into his subject. However, with all their caveats about the accuracy and completeness of the monographs, the editors tell only part of the story of the drawbacks to their use.

The monographs contain little of the lively sense of urgency that must have characterized the last days of battle for the Kwantung Army. Their almost absolute evenness is inconsistent with the violent nature of war. In recounting many of the events that took place during the first week of the campaign, one is struck by their blandness. It seems fairly obvious that, by themselves, the monographs are only marginally useful, and other sources of information are required to help balance those accounts.

Fortunately, Soviet materials provide the needed counterpoise. One of the most recent and comprehensive

accounts of the campaign is Finale: A Retrospective Review of Imperialist Japan's Defeat in 1945, published in Moscow in English in 1972. Editor-in-Chief of Finale was Marshal Malinovsky's Chief of Staff of the Transbaikal Front during the campaign, Marshal M. V. Zakharov. Malinovsky himself was a major contributor to the work. Another major work which deals in considerable detail with the campaign is General Sergei Shtemenko's The Soviet General Staff at War (1941-1945), published in 1970, which exhibits a strategic-level perspective on the campaign. Marshal Kirill A. Meretskov, commander of the 1st Far Eastern Front during the campaign, has also made a contribution to the literature by devoting a chapter of his memoir, Serving the People to the operation. Like the two previous works, Meretskov's book was translated and published in Moscow by Progress Publishers. L. N. Vnotchenko's Victory in the Far East (1966) was unfortunately only available to the author in an unofficial, partial translation. The translated portions were quite useful, however, because of their emphasis on the combat operations of the Soviet forces. The most recently published official Soviet history of World War II in the English language, The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union (Russian edition of 1970) includes a long chapter on the Manchurian campaign. The use of Soviet artillery during the campaign is dealt with in K. P. Kazakov's Always with the Infantry, Always with the Tanks (1973), available in a

1975 U.S. Government translation. While none of the Soviet sources appear to be entirely free of a certain bias, on the whole they appear adequately factual. It is important to realize that most high-ranking Japanese officers in the Kwantung Army were subjected to extensive questioning during their years of captivity after World War II, and assumedly the records of these interrogations are available to Soviet historians. Furthermore, many of the Soviet accounts are based on first-hand experiences to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the work itself.

The Soviet literature is full of references to plans for attaining surprise, the dependence of the campaign's success on achieving surprise, and evaluations of the value of surprise from a post-campaign point of view. However, Soviet claims about the importance of surprise would appear unfounded, based on just a cursory review of the Japanese monographs. The Japanese monographs would hardly lead one to believe surprise was a factor in the campaign. The truth about the matter probably lies somewhere between the Soviet and Japanese accounts, and by using both categories of sources one can form what appears to be a rather consistent account.

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