

TABLE 3: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO HIROSHIMA-NAGASAKI AND THE JAPANESE SURRENDER: FEBRUARY-AUGUST, 1945

- *Feb. 4-11, 1945: The Yalta Conference. Stalin agrees to enter the war against Japan three months after the war in Europe ends.
- *April-June: The battle for Okinawa results in 12,000 American and 100,000 Japanese deaths.
- *May: An official Japanese report expresses grave concern about the war situation and the morale of the population. (See L. Sigal, Fighting to a Finish, p. 67.)
- *May 8: Germany surrenders; Victory in Europe (VE) day.
- *July 16: The Trinity test of the first atomic weapon is successful.
- *July 18: Gen. George Marshall conveys to President Truman Gen. Douglas MacArthur's estimate of 50,000 casualties in the first 30 days of a landing on the Japanese main island of Kyushu. In MacArthur's words, his estimate was "purely academic and routine," and he did "not anticipate such a high rate of loss." (See Sigal. p. 119.)
- *July 17-August 2: The Potsdam Conference. News of the Trinity success peps Truman up. He tells Stalin that the U.S. has a new kind of weapon; to Truman *s disappointment, Stalin drolly replies that he hopes Truman puts it to good use against the Japanese. Truman convinces Stalin to delay the Soviet action against Japan from August 8 (three months after VE day) to August 15. The Potsdam Declaration of July 26 calls for unconditional surrender. The fate of the Emperor is not addressed, and the Japanese treat the Declaration "with silent contempt" (Sigal, p.151).
- *July-August: Japan tries to convince the Soviets to mediate an end to the war, but the Soviets refuse. (The Soviet Union is the only allied country Japan has diplomatic relations with.)
- *August 6: The U.S. drops an A-bomb on Hiroshima.
- *August 8: The Soviets declare war on Japan* and start steamrolling across Japanese-occupied Manchuria.
- *August 9: The U.S. drops an A-bomb on Nagasaki.
- *August 10: The Japanese offer to surrender, but only if the Emperor is allowed to

stay in place; Truman decides against any further use of atomic bombs. (See Giovannitti and Freed, The Decision to Drop the Bomb, pp. 279-281.)

*August 12: The New York Times reports that the U.S. is willing to let the Japanese keep the Emperor.

*August 14-15: The heaviest (conventional) bombing raid of Japan takes place, involving 1,014 U.S. planes (Sigal, pp. 3, 255). During the raid, Japan surrenders "unconditionally," and the Emperor remains.