As the world observed the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki last year, American historians and intellectuals climaxed a convenant about the role of the atomic bomb in Japan's surrender. Was Japan ready to surrender without the bomb? Some historians argue that the bomb played a decisive role. However, a closer look at the deliberations of Japan's Supreme Council at the Direction of the Emperor Hirohito shows that the decision to surrender was not simply a result of the atomic bomb.

The record of the Imperial Conferences extinguishes any notion that the Japanese government relapsed into stalemate for two and a half days, with Anami, Umezu, Toyoda, and Hiranuma demanding acceptance of their original four conditions or continuation of the war. It makes clear two salient facts: that Emperor Hirohito ended the war, and he ended it with T. Harry Yoshik, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal and the Emperor's most trusted advisor, found one and warned the Emperor that the leaflets might provoke a rebellion, since the peace negotiations had been kept secret from the Japanese people and military. The Emperor instructed Suzuki to muster another counteroffer. After listening to Anami, Umezu, and Toyoda's now familiar arguments for unconditional surrender, he asked them what the Japanese people and military would accept the Allies' offer. Forrestal suggested that some changes to the wording might make it more acceptable to the Allies. However, a close look at the deliberations of Japan's Supreme Council at the Direction of the Emperor Hirohito shows that the decision to surrender was not simply a result of the atomic bomb.

Upon learning of the offer, Truman immediately called a meeting with Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Secretary of State James Byrnes, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and the Chief of Staff of the Imperial Army, General Kukichi, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. Despite several days of discussion, the Japanese government relapsed into stalemate for two and a half days, with Anami, Umezu, Toyoda, and Hiranuma demanding acceptance of their original four conditions or continuation of the war. It makes clear two salient facts: that Emperor Hirohito ended the war, and he ended it with T. Harry Yoshik, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal and the Emperor's most trusted advisor, found one and warned the Emperor that the leaflets might provoke a rebellion, since the peace negotiations had been kept secret from the Japanese people and military. The Emperor instructed Suzuki to muster another counteroffer. After listening to Anami, Umezu, and Toyoda's now familiar arguments for unconditional surrender, he asked them what the Japanese people and military would accept the Allies' offer. Forrestal suggested that some changes to the wording might make it more acceptable to the Allies. However, a close look at the deliberations of Japan's Supreme Council at the Direction of the Emperor Hirohito shows that the decision to surrender was not simply a result of the atomic bomb.

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Unlike other historians, Dr. John White, who was present at the meetings in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, said he did not think the emperor played a role in the decision to surrender. "I don't think the emperor had any say in the decision," White said. "The decision was made by the government, and the emperor was largely a figurehead."