The issues of war with Japan coverage in the Presidential project «Fundamental multi-volume work»

The Great Patriotic War of 1941 - 1945 «»

Fundamental multi-volume work «The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945» is being developed in accordance with the Decree № 240-п of May 5, 2008 of the President of the Russian Federation. The work is developed under the organizational leadership of the main drafting committee headed by the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Army General Sergey Shoigu. Major General V.A. Zolotarev, well-known Russian scientist, Doctor of Historical and Legal Sciences, Professor, Academician of the Academy of Natural Sciences, State Councilor of the Russian Federation Deputy Chairman of the GRK is appointed as scientific director of the multi-volume work.

Fundamental structure of a multivolume work:

Volume 1 - «The main facts of the war,»
Volume 2 - «The origin and the beginning of the war»
Volume 3 - «Battles and actions that changed the course of the war,»
Volume 4 - «Freeing of the USSR, 1944 «
Volume 5 - «The final victory. Final operations of World War II in Europe. War with Japan «
Volume 6 - «The Secret War. Intelligence and counterintelligence in the Great Patriotic War «
Volume 7 - «Economy and weapons of war»
Volume 8 - «Foreign policy and diplomacy of the Soviet Union during the war»
Volume 9 - «Allies of the USSR in the war»
Volume 10 - «The power, society and war»
Volume 11 - «Policy and Strategy of Victory. Strategic governance of the war and the armed forces during the war, »
Volume 12 - «The war lessons learned»

By the time of the conference 8 volumes of work were published, the 9th is completed in authoring, publication of the final volume is scheduled before the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory. Incidentally, the theme of the coalition interaction which was raised at today's conference is considered in details in the 5th and 8th volumes and most fully revealed in the 9th volume of the multivolume.

Each of the volumes in varying extent contains issues related to the Japanese military factor and its influence on decision-making by the Soviet leadership before and during the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War, the development of the military-political situation in those difficult years for the world, as well as the influence of the policy of the Soviet state and the developments on the Soviet-German front and on the course and outcome of military operations in the Asia-Pacific theater of World War II.

World War II was a convincing demonstration of the fact that different peoples and nations can and should be above any differences in front of danger to the future of all mankind. Fascism, its fanatical ideology and bloody, terrible practice is a global threat. Only joint efforts made it possible to crush fascism. But, as history shows, Soviet Union played the main role in this epoch-making task. USSR made a major contribution to the defeat of the armed forces of Nazi Germany and its European allies. Soviet Union also made significant contribution to rapid defeat and peace enforcement of militarist Japan. The defeat of million strategic Kwantung group of Japanese troops by the Soviet troops and naval forces put the winning point in the history of the Second World War.

After going through years of tragic trials and triumphs in the struggle against fascist aggression the soldiers of the Soviet Armed Forces honorably fulfilled international mission, they brought freedom to the people of 11 countries in Europe and two countries in Asia from the occupation and colonial oppression. Soviet-Japanese War is described in the 12-volume edition for this and other reasons as a logical continuation of the Great Patriotic War, although it started only August 9, 1945, 3 months after the signing of the unconditional surrender of Germany.

In the first volume in general and in the second volume of a 12-volume edition more specifically through the prism of geopolitics, taking into account the civilizational approach and the powerful influence of the ideological factor they consider the contradictions between the major world powers of that time. Moreover, in assessing the features of Soviet policy in the prewar period the authors proceeded from the fact that old Europe-centric approach in Soviet and European historiography to the analysis of this period is that our main enemy at that time and the main culprit of unleash the Second World War on September 1, 1939 was the only Germany is not quite correct. Hitler's Germany, indeed, brought the most grief and suffering of the peoples of Europe and especially of the Soviet people. The USSR losses in the war against Nazism were almost 27 million people. And a large part of a multi-volume materials is justly devoted to it.

But we need to understand clearly (it is stated in the first and more detailed
in the second volume) that the first places of future fires of World War II even before Hitler came to power were fired up by Japan at the beginning of the 1930s, at a sufficiently calm our relations with Germany in those years. Japan was the first of the aggressive powers beginning September 18, 1931 military action, capturing Manchuria, and then the whole of the North-East China, and in July 1937 launched an all-out war in China, making it, in fact, as the base of expansion on the continent. And all this took place near the borders of the USSR. Japanese military factor, therefore, was always visibly presented in the formulation of security policy by Soviet leadership just before and in the initial period of the Second World War. The authors of the second volume convincingly demonstrated, taking into account this factor as a whole is correct, balanced political and military course of Soviet leadership up to the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, including forced signing a treaty of non-aggression with Germany in those conditions (75 years ago, in the days of study on initiative of Berlin and the signing of this agreement, Soviet and Mongolian troops under the command of the corps commander Zhukov were fierce battles with the compounds of the Japanese 6th Army in Khalkhin Goal in a friendly and bordering Mongolia with USSR). So, the signing of the Soviet Union treaty with Germany in the days of the defeat of the Japanese forces in Mongolia undermined trust relationship Tokyo and Berlin, torn from the alliance with Japan, Germany, led to the fact that Japan did not blindly follow in line with Hitler's policies in the deployment of Hitler's aggression against the USSR that with the signing of the Soviet Union neutrality Pact with Japan, April 13, 1941 allowed USSR to avoid a war on two fronts.

Undisguised policy of Western countries aimed at encouraging the aggressors in the east of Eurasia and in the center of Europe to attack the USSR pushed Moscow to the signing of the Treaty with Germany. Nazi Germany and militarist Japan were at that time for the Western democracies more attractive than «communist» Soviet Union. After the war, former French Prime Minister Daladier, who on September 30, 1938, together with the British Prime Minister Arthur N. Chamberlain signed infamous Munich Agreement with Germany and Italy on separation of Czechoslovakia with the explicit accounting to give eastern vector to the aggressive policy of the German, acknowledged that ideology played the most role in this. Authors of the volume, however, convincingly demonstrated that «the Munich policy» as a phenomenon was born long before the Munich in the Far East in the early and mid-1930s, when the West turned a blind eye to Japan's aggression against China, Mongolia and the USSR, believing promises of Japanese that their main goal - the communist Soviet Union. Thus was manifested the absolute indifference of the Western leaders to the fate of the peoples of Asia, and to partition of China by Japan. Exactly the same approach was manifested later in the policy of the Western powers to the partition of Czechoslovakia.

It should be recognized that the ideology played a cruel joke on all the leading members of the future anti-fascist coalition: in the end, the Allies during the war were those who were considered enemies, and those who tried to build a joint
strategy, became enemies. This is one of the most important lessons of the last war.

In the subsequent third and fourth volumes of the 12-volume edition in close conjunction of events in all theaters of World War II there shown military actions that changed the course not only of the Great Patriotic War, but the entire World War II, including the Asia-Pacific theater. This includes Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk battle, the battle for Leningrad, the Caucasus, the Dnieper, Belarus. These battles have led to the destruction of large strategic groupings of enemy and allowed the Soviet Union to achieve significant political and strategic results and led to expulsion of aggressor from Soviet soil. The heroic actions of the Armed Forces of the USSR on the Soviet-German front - the main front of World War II - after unsuccessful for the United States and its allies, the first months of the war in the Pacific and South-East Asia, objectively contributed to the recovery and the gradual rebuilding Allied armed forces and their offensive capabilities in the war against Japan, which is convincingly demonstrated in the relevant sections of the volumes.

The problems of the Soviet-Japanese War of 1945 are disclosed the most detailed and complex in the 5th volume of multi-volume «Winning the final. Final operations of World War II in Europe. War with Japan» by the team of authors which I had the honor to lead. For the first time in the national historiography the display of all the military operations, overseas (as of June 22, 1941), parts of Europe and Asia is undertaken in a separate volume of the fundamental work of the Great Patriotic War of 1944-1945. It demonstrated readers the coalition nature of the war, USSR loyalty to duty as an ally and a truly humane internationalist mission of liberation of the Soviet state in relation to countries - victims of aggression, which is now trying to blacken the unscrupulous politicians and scientists, including some domestic.

Soviet-Japanese War is shown in the volume not only as one of the final campaigns of the allied forces in the final stages of World War II. On estimations of allies it allowed for at least a year - half shorten the war and save the lives of millions of servicemen United States, Britain and other participants anti-Japanese war, including Japan itself. This war in consideration of numerous hostile Japanese stocks against the USSR and the Soviet Union goals is considered as a logical continuation of a four-year Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people and its Armed Forces for their freedom and independence, the implementation of the liberating mission in relation to the Chinese and Korean peoples, establishing true not only west, but the eastern borders of the USSR, to ensure its security in the East Eurasia.

Particular attention in the volume is paid to the showing of USSR loyalty to duty as an ally. Also it is given a convincing rationale for compliance decisions of the Soviet government to declare war on Japan with international law. It shows the international character of the actions of the Soviet soldiers during the liberation mission in Asia, high moral and combat qualities of the Soviet soldiers, their heroism in armed struggle on foreign territory, responsible attitude as a defeated enemy, and the local population liberated territories.
Proceedings of the 5th volume on the war with Japan reveal the content, forms and methods of operation of the Far East of the USSR campaign, fighting interaction of the Soviet Union and its armed forces with its allies and patriotic forces of liberated countries of Asia. Considerable attention is paid to the analysis of the successes and failures of allies in the war in the Pacific and causes of persistent complaints of their leadership the USSR to join the war in the Far East. The theme of war with Japan accounts for more than 350 of the 900 large-format pages of the 5th volume. In this brief report, I will try, therefore, to present only the most important issues related to this war.

The surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945 marked the end of the war in Europe. But in the Far East and the Pacific, Japan continued persistent struggle against the United States, Britain, China, and their allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Allies managed to expel the Japanese forces from much of the territory they occupied at the beginning of the war. The joint efforts of the Allies forced Japan to withdraw to the «inner line of defense», but its perimeter was still huge.

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Map: strategic situation in the Pacific and in Asia by the beginning of 1945
Serious damage to the Japanese fleet in a number of naval battles and battles with the American fleet in the Pacific and the inflight of the American armed forces at the approaches to the metropolis of Japan did not, however, create the conditions for assuming the offensive. Naval blockade and bombing of Japanese cities by the Americans, clearly did not give a quick effect. Bringing Japan to exhaustion required huge power, money and a long time. In addition, with the beginning of the massive bombing, the Japanese began to disperse their industry, build underground factories, strengthen anti-aircraft and coastal defenses. Under these conditions, plans to force Japan to surrender with the actions of only Navy and Air Force, which were previously supported by all the political and military leadership of the United States, including the President, have been qualified as «a strategy of limited objectives», and it was assigned a supporting role. «This strategy», - the document of the Joint Staff stated - «does not guarantee that it will lead to an unconditional surrender or defeat.»

Japan still did not think about the unconditional cessation of hostilities and, continuing resistance by the forces of five strategic groups, it launched preparations for a decisive rebuff to the US-British attack directly on the Japanese islands, as well as in the defense of Korea and northeast China.

The Japanese army was able to prolong the war against China, the USA and the UK for over an extended time frame. By August 1945, the armed forces of Japan had more than 7 million people, compared to about 2.5 million of allied troops. In addition, Japan had the opportunity to mobilize another 1.5 million people in the army has, create a multimillion militia, army of suicide murderers. US-British command justifiably considered that the landing on the islands of the Japanese land alone would cost the Allies more than a million lives. In addition, the preparation and conduct of amphibious operations were associated with great difficulty, and the operations themselves could begin no earlier than November 1945 on the secondary island of Kyushu. But the United States and the United Kingdom there were not sure that even after their landing operations succeed, Japan would surrender, and its strategic groups in the Asian continent would also lay down their arms. Allies estimated that the war in the East could be prolonged as a whole for 1.5 - 2 years (moreover, Commander of Allied forces in the war against Japan, Douglas MacArthur, based on his experience, believed that without the participation of the USSR, Japanese resistance could last 5-7 years), and would claim lives of at least 1.5 million soldiers and officers of the American and British armies, as well as

about 10 million lives of the Japanese. These were not the only losses that the war-ravaged nations of the Asia-Pacific region would suffer in case of the continuation of war.

The position of China, which by modern Chinese estimates, lost more than 35 million of its citizens as a result of the criminal aggression of Japan, was similar. According to the memorandum of Chiang Kai-shek, discussed on November 22, 1943 at a joint meeting of American-British Chiefs of Staff, only in November 1944-May 1945 it was possible to conduct operations of liberating Guangzhou and Hong Kong; in May and November 1945 - to carry out the bombing of Taiwan; in November 1945 - the onset of Shanghai. Invading the territory of Japan thought to be possible only after 1947.

A dead-locked situation was created in the war in the Pacific. Neither the one nor the other warring party found efficient solutions, leading to the end of hostilities.

That is why the U.S. Secretary of War, G. Stimson, in a memorandum addressed to President Truman's July 2, 1945, offered to find a way to force the Japanese army to surrender, without resorting to forcible occupation of Japan itself. According to the military authorities of allies, it was only possible to make the Japanese surrender in a short time by applying the most decisive defeat of a large, strong, strategically important group of Japanese troops on the mainland. The Manchu-Korean district with its more than one million army group, large industrial and resource base and large strategic reserves matched these parameters. This area served as a link between the mainland and the Japanese metropolis. The Allies were well aware that losing this important strategic area, Japan will lose most of its funding to continue the war, and will inevitably «ask for mercy». Only the Soviet troops could solve this problem in a short term. Therefore, a number of prominent military commanders of allies linked their plans to a mandatory entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan. On the other hand, the leaders of the USA and the UK were well aware that «if Russia continued to be neutral» that «huge Japanese army in Manchuria could be thrown on the defense of Japan itself.»

General MacArthur was

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convinced that American troops «should not land on the islands of Japan, while the Russian army begins military operations in Manchuria».39

Thus, the strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific theater of war in August 1945 was favorable for states fighting against Japan, but without the participation of the Soviet Union in military operations, there would be no use relying on the rapid defeat of the enemy.

It demanded that the leadership of the Allied Powers made crucial decisions, and they were developed and thoroughly elaborated at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of the leaders of the Big Three in February and July 1945. It resulted in the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in the Far East. The country had its own reasons for military actions against Japan.

Operations were conducted near the far eastern borders of the USSR, where the Soviet leadership throughout 1941-1945 was forced to keep 32 to 59 settlement divisions of ground forces, from 10 to 29 air divisions and up to 6 divisions and 4 brigades of air defense forces, totaling over 1 million people40, which certainly made it difficult to resist Nazi aggression. The Soviet Union could consider the security, provided in the Far East safe, when the blazing fire of war was flaring and Japan continued to pursue its policy of occupation. In this situation, on April 5, 1945, the Soviet Union announced the denunciation of the Neutrality Pact with Japan, that is, the intention to terminate it unilaterally, with all the ensuing consequences. However, the Japanese government did not consider this a serious warning, and until the end of the war in Europe, continued to support Germany, and then rejected the Potsdam Declaration published on July 26, 1945, by the governments of the United States, Great Britain and China, and subsequently supported by the Soviet government. The declaration contained the demand for unconditional surrender of Japan. On August 8, 1945, the Soviet government announced the entry of the USSR in the war with Japan the next day, and with the onset of the day, large-scale hostilities in the Far East of the Soviet Union unfolded.

The entry of the USSR into the war against Japan was a demonstration of coherent policy of the Soviet Union aimed at defeating the aggressors in the West and in the East, a testament of its loyalty to the ally duty.

The political objective of the military campaign of the Soviet Union in the Far East was to ensure that the last hotbed of the Second World War would be eliminated as soon as possible, as well as the constant threat of attack of Japan on the Soviet Union. The goal of the USSR and its allies was to expel them from the Japanese-occupied countries and to help restore peace in the world. The Soviet entry into the war with Japan fully met the alliance commitments


40 Military history of the Fatherland from ancient times to the present day. In 3 volumes, vol. 2, Moscow, 1995, p. 394.
of the USSR taken at the Yalta and confirmed at the Potsdam conferences, it met the fundamental interests of the Soviet people and the oppressed peoples of Asia. A soon end to the war relieved the mankind, including the Japanese people, from further millions of victims and contributed to the development of the national liberation movement in Asia.

The main military-strategic goal of the Soviet Armed Forces in the war with Japan was the defeat of its core land forces - the Kwangtung grouping, and the liberation of Northeast China (Manchuria) and North Korea from the Japanese invaders. The solution to this problem was to have a decisive influence on the acceleration of Japan's surrender and ensure success in defeating the Japanese troops in southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands.

The intention of the Soviet Far Eastern campaign envisaged to inflict two deep counter-strikes from the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic and the Soviet Primorye region, that made the troops of the Kwangtung groups face the need to conduct the defense on two fronts, as well as several ancillary blows on the directions toward the center of Manchuria. For the isolation of the Kwangtung group from the Japanese Expeditionary Force in China and Japan, support strikes were planned to be inflicted over a Kalgan-Beijing direction towards the coast of the Yellow Sea and along the east coast of North Korea. Then, depending on the achievement of the original goal - the overthrow of the Japanese forces in Manchuria and North Korea - the release of South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands was planned, and in case of continued Japanese resistance - a large landing operation on Hokkaido.41

The plan for the Far Eastern campaign, developed by the General Staff, was approved by the Supreme High Command, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, and the State Defense Committee on June 28.42 There was only no consensus on the question of a landing operation on the island of Hokkaido. On June 28, 1945, commanders of troops of the Trans-Baikal and Far East (future 2nd Far Eastern) fronts and the Group of Navy Forces (later the 1st Far Eastern Front) received tasks.43

The Soviet command involved three front associations to carry out the Far Eastern campaign - Transbaikal (commander - Marshal of the Soviet Union, Rodion Malinovsky), the 1st Far Eastern Front (commander - Marshal Meretskov) and 2nd Far Eastern Front (commander - General of the Army Purkayev), the Pacific Fleet (commander - Admiral Yumashev), Amur flotilla

of the order of the Red Banner (Commander - Rear Admiral Antonov), three air
defense armies, as well as a part of the Mongolian People's revolutionary Army
(commander in chief - Marshal Choibalsan). The Soviet and Mongolian troops
and naval forces in the Far East totaled more than 1.7 million people, about
30 thousand guns and mortars (without anti-aircraft artillery), 5.25 thousand
tanks and self-propelled artillery, 5.2 thousand aircraft, 93 fighting ships of the
main classes. Overall management of the troops was carried out by a specially
organized General Command of the Soviet troops in the Far East (Commander -
Marshal Vasilevsky).^{44}

The Japanese Kwantung army groups was composed of the 1st and 3rd
fronts, the 4th detached and the 2nd Air Army, and Sungari Flotilla. On August
10, it had quickly subdued the 17th (Korean) front and the 5th Air Army, which
was also located in Korea. The total number of the enemy troops concentrated
near the Soviet border, exceeded 1 million people. They had 1,215 tanks, 6,640
guns, and 1,907 aircraft. The Sungari Flotilla counted more than 30 warships and
boats. In addition, in Manchuria and Korea, a significant number of Japanese
gendarmerie, police, railway and other groups were located, as well as troops
of Manchukuo and the puppet Prince of Inner Mongolia Devan (Tonlop). On
the border with the Soviet Union and Mongolia, the Japanese had 17 fortified
areas with a total length of over 800 km, in which there were about 4.5 thousand
fortified emplacements.^{45}

The Japanese command hoped that Japanese troops in Manchuria will
hold throughout the year «against the superior in strength and training Soviet
troops». In the first stage (about three months), it is planned to show stubborn
resistance to the Soviet-Mongolian troops in the fortified border areas, and then
on mountain ridges, barring the way from the territory of Mongolia, Transbaikal,
Amur and Primorye to the central regions of Manchuria. In case of breaking
this line, the depart of Japanese forces to the railway line Lancang-Changchun-
Dalian (Far) was envisaged. It was proposed to organize a defense there, and
then go on the offensive in order to restore the original position. Therefore, the
main forces of the Japanese army were concentrated in the central regions
of Manchuria, and only one third - in the border zone.^{46}

At the critical moment it was envisaged to transfer troops of the Suiyuan
Japanese Army Group and the North China front of Expeditionary Force in
China to support the Kwangtung grouping.

Apart from Manchuria, southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands were

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^{44} History of the Second World War 1939-1945. In 12 volumes, vol. 11 Moscow, 1980,
pp. 193, 196-197.

^{45} Daytoa Senso Kokan sen si (The official history of the war in the Greater East Asia). In 110
volumes, Kantogun (Kwantung army group). Part 2 Kantokuen. Syusendzi-but taysosen (Plan
«Kantokuen», Military operations against the Soviet Union at the final stage). vol. 73 Tokyo,

^{46} Ibid. pp. 383-397; S. Shtemenko, General Staff during the war. In 2 volumes, vol. 1,
Moscow, 1975, pp. 403.
included in the area of impending actions of Soviet troops. It held parts of the units of the 5th Front, the headquarters of which were located on Hokkaido (3 infantry divisions, independent mixed brigade, separate infantry regiments and separate tank), and, under certain conditions, Hokkaido itself.

Far Eastern theater of war covered the territory of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, North Korea and adjacent waters of the seas of the Pacific. In its area, the length of border and physical-geographical conditions, it differed sharply from the European theater. The area of the land of the Far East theater was 1.5 million square kilometers with the population of 70 million people. This vast territory exceeded the size of the territories of the main aggressors - Germany, Italy and Japan together. It stretched 1,500 km from north to south, and 1,200 km from east to west. The total length of the boundary line, along which the Soviet troops were to be deployed, amounted to more than 5 thousand kilometers.

In its physical and geographical conditions the theater was very complex and was a combination of mountainous taiga, marshy and desert terrain in the presence of well-developed hydrographic network to the east of Greater Khingan. On this terrain, operational formations and even connections could conduct offensive operations only in certain areas, sometimes isolated from each other by hundreds of miles.

The sea part of the theater, in which the Soviet Pacific Fleet operated, was vast as well. It included a pool of Okhotsk, Japan and the Yellow Seas and the waters of the north-western part of the Pacific Ocean. Its length in the meridional direction was about 4 thousand miles (7.5 thousand km).

The theater of military operations against the Soviet troops had been prepared in advance in terms of establishing a system of fortifications, points of based airfields and communications network. To break through these defensive positions and successfully develop the offensive, a powerful force and a modern logistics system were needed.

The supply of means of logistics to the Far East started in February, before the surrender of Germany, but the main stream of troops and supplies began to flow from May 1945. In a short term, within three months, by the Trans-Siberian Railway alone, 2 front and 4 army controls, 15 controls of the infantry, artillery, tank and mechanized corps, 36 rifle controls, artillery and anti-aircraft artillery divisions and 53 brigades of ground troops, 2 fortified areas, which accounted for a total of 30 divisions, were transferred to the Far East from the European part of the USSR within a distance of 9-12 thousand miles. The total number of divisions by the beginning of hostilities amounted in 87.5. In addition, the management of the 6th Bomber Air Corps and 5 air divisions, as well as 3 air defense corps, arrived.

From May to August 8, 1945, more than 403 thousand troops, about 275 thousand firearms, 7,137 guns and mortars, 2,119 tanks and self-propelled guns,

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17,374 lorries, about 1.5 thousand tractors and trucks, more than 36 thousand horses were transported by ground forces from the west to the Far East. On the spatial scale, time frames and the number of transported troops, weapons, military equipment and materiel, it was the largest strategic realignment in the history of warfare. Accomplished transportation, according to the Chief of the Soviet troops in the Far East, Marshal Vasilevsky, «had no equal in the history of the Second World War and was an instructive strategic operation.»

Experienced commanders and warlords were sent to the Far East: A. Vasilevski, R. Malinovski, K. Meretskov, M. Zakharov, S. Ivanov, A. Krutikov, A. Beloborodov, N. Zakhvatayev, N. Krylov, A. Luchinskiy, I. Lyudnikov, I. Managarov, I. Chistyakov and others. These were units and associations which not only had a huge military experience, but those who could successfully solve problems in specific conditions of the Far Eastern battleground. Thus, the units of the 5th and 39th armies which were involved in breaking the fortified defensive lines in East Prussia, intended to break the network of fortified areas in the border zone, and the units of the 6th guards tank and the 53rd combined-arms armies, who had experience in mountain-steppe areas, were transferred to the Trans-Baikal Front for the offensive in mountainous areas and wide desert areas of Manchuria.

In accordance with the objectives, which were scheduled for performance on each direction, shock troops were created with the account of soldiers arriving from the west front. Formations and units with the experience of breaking through strong fortifications, were sent to the 1st Far Eastern Front, which had to overcome a continuous strip of concrete fortifications, designed for long-term independent survival. And conversely, the troops that had experience of warring in mountains, were sent to the Transbaikal Front, which had to overcome a huge mountain range of Greater Khingan.

All activities on the preparation for military actions against Japan was conducted in such a way, so that the enemy didn’t manage to reveal the contents of activities, as well as the plans of the command of Soviet forces to conduct operations and the war in general. As a result of much preliminary work, a week before the fighting started, the troops of the Far East were almost completely ready to perform for the defeat of the Kwangtung army groups.

On August 7, the forces of the Trans-Baikal, the 1st and 2nd Far Eastern fronts received a directive from General Headquarters, which stated that the fighting must begin on August 9, to achieve the goals set on June 28, 1945.

From the first hours of August 9, the shock troops of the Soviet fronts attacked Japanese troops on land, air and sea. Command posts, headquarters and communication centers of the enemy were destroyed by powerful blows of aviation. As a result of this attack, which was attended by hundreds of

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Soviet bombers and, the connection between headquarters and units of the Japanese troops in Manchuria in the first hours of the war was broken, and the command of the Kwangtung group lost control of its troops, which facilitated the task set to the Soviet troops. The fighting took place on the fronts of the total length of more than 5 thousand kilometers (See the general course of the war in the Far Eastern campaign of the Armed Forces of the USSR on the map).

The Pacific Fleet went out to sea, cut the sea lines of communication used by the Kwangtung army for connecting Japan, air forces, and torpedo boats, and struck a powerful blow over Japanese naval bases in North Korea. With the assistance of the Red Banner Amur Flotilla and the Air Force, the Soviet troops successfully forced along a broad front the rivers of Amur and Ussuri, and, breaking fierce Japanese resistance in border fortified areas, began to develop a successful offensive deep into Manchuria.

Armored and mechanized units of the Transbaikal Front advanced especially rapidly. They included the divisions which passed the war with Nazi Germany and cavalry units of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army.

As a result of crushing blows inflicted by the Soviet Armed Forces, the powerful Japanese fortified lines, created along the Amur, Ussuri and the Great Khingan ridge, were intruded everywhere, and where the Japanese continued to stubbornly resist, they were blocked and circumvented. The rapid action of all Soviet ground troops, aircraft and ships of the Navy, disrupted Japanese plans to use bacteriological weapons.50

In the first six days of the advance, Soviet and Mongolian troops defeated their fanatically resisting enemy in 16 fortified regions and the front of the Trans-Baikal moved 250-450 km, the 1st Far Eastern Front - 120-150 km, and the 2nd Far Eastern Front - 50-200 km.\textsuperscript{51}

The Soviet offensive was developing successfully. On the fourth day of the Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation of the 6th unit of the guards tank army of Colonel-General A. Kravchenko overcame the «impregnable» Khingan and broke through to the Manchurian plain, wedging deep in the rear of the Kwangtung army groups and pre-empting the output of its main forces to this ridge. By the end of August 12 rushed, they were already on the way to the key centers of Manchuria - Changchun and Mukden (Shenyang).

The command of troops demonstrated a high art of war, and the soldiers showed heroism and selflessness, the combat reports serve as evidence to it. Here is what was said in one of them about the actions of the troops of the 53rd Army: «Just in the time frame, army units came to the Great Khingan and immediately began to force it along camel trails in the mountain, in a completely unknown place, where no troops had ever been before, without accurate maps of the area, with no guidance... the path had to be laid through mountains, wetlands and narrow valleys. It took a huge effort, people could work for several days without sleep or rest building roads, walkways, blowing rocks, filling ravines, they dragged cars, guns, vehicles, and carried ammunition on their backs through mountains, swamps and sand.» \textsuperscript{52}

«If I were told earlier, - commander of the 1136th Infantry Regiment of the 338th Infantry Division of the 39th Army, Colonel Savokin said - that my regiment will pass through hot sand, mountains and gorges with the speed of the march up to 65 km per day, with a limited supply of water and with such a load, I would never believe that ... Great Suvorov was a master of big marches, but his soldiers were trained and had been serving for 20-25 years, and I had youngsters born in 1927 in my regiment ... Only people with high morale can do so.»

Great assistance was provided by the sailors of the Pacific Fleet and the Red Banner Amur Flotilla to the Soviet troops in Primorye (North Korean), Sungari and Sakhalin operational areas.

The troops of the 1st Far Eastern Front were advancing in the coastal areas. They were supported by the Pacific Fleet in the sea, which, during the Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation, with the help of landing troops, took over Japanese bases and ports Yuki, Racine, Seishin, Odechin, Genzan in Korea and the fortress of Port Arthur, depriving the enemy of the possibility to strengthen its forces by sea or evacuate them to the metropolis.

On Sungari and Sakhalin directions, the main forces of the Red Banner Amur Flotilla, which consisted of three brigades of river ships, operated.

\textsuperscript{51} The History of the Second World War, 1939-1945, col.11, p. 237

\textsuperscript{52} Victory in the Far East: Historical memoirs and documentary narratives on the defeat of imperialist Japan in August 1945, Khabarovsk, 1985, p. 507.
Flotilla supported the advance of the 15th and the 2nd Red Army of the 2nd Far Eastern Front. It provided ferrying troops across the water boundaries, provided artillery support to ground troops and landed tactical troops. Front commander, Army General Purkayev, gave the highest assessment to the actions of riverine soldiers.

The offensive of the Red Army in Manchuria developed so rapidly, that the enemy was unable to impede the advance. Within ten days, the combined-arms formations of the Red Army with the active support of the air and naval forces, were able to break up into pieces and actually defeat the strategic group of Japanese troops in Manchuria and North Korea.

Thus, by August 20, Soviet troops advanced deep into Manchuria, approached the Manchurian plain, dismembered Japanese troops on a number of isolated groups and completed their encirclement. Since August 19, the enemy troops began to surrender almost everywhere. In order not to give the enemy an opportunity to evacuate or destroy its values, in the period from 18 to 27 August, assault troops landed in Harbin, Shenyang, Changchun, Jilin, Lushun, Dalian, Pyongyang, Hamhung and other cities. To this end, there were also forward observer troops operating and successfully performing their tasks.

The rapid advance of the Soviet and Mongolian troops put Japan in a desperate situation, the hopes of its command for persistent defense and following counter-attack with decisive goals were thwarted. The million-strong Kwangtung army group was battered.

The great success of the Soviet troops in Manchuria, achieved in the early days of the war, let the Soviet command launch an offensive in southern Sakhalin on August 11. The operation was handled by the troops of the 56th infantry corps of the 16th Army of the 2nd Far Eastern Front and the North Pacific fleet. South Sakhalin was defended by the reinforced Japanese 88th Infantry Division, which made part of the 5th front, with its headquarters on the island Hokkaido. It was based upon the Cotonou fortified area of 12 km wide and up to 30 km in depth. The fighting on Sakhalin began with a powerful breakthrough of a fortified area. Soviet troops had to operate in difficult conditions of marshy terrain. Offensive was carried out along a single dirt road linking the North and the South Sakhalin and lying between hard-to-reach spurs of mountains and swampy river valley Poronai. On August 16, amphibious assault troops landed at the rear of the enemy in the port of Toro (Shakhtersk).

Amphibious troops blocked roads leading to the fortified area along the west coast of Sakhalin. Counterblows of Soviet troops, coming from the front and rear, overran the enemy’s defense on August 18. Soviet troops spread a rapid advance to the southern coast of the island. On August 20, amphibious

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54 Military history of the Fatherland from ancient times to the present day. In 3 volumes, vol. 2, Moscow, 1995, p. 408
troops landed in the port of Maoka (Kholmsk), and in the morning of August 25 in the port of Otomari (Korsakov). On the same day, Soviet troops entered the administrative center of southern Sakhalin city Toyohara (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk), where the headquarters of the 88th Infantry Division were located. Organized resistance of the Japanese garrison of around 30 thousand soldiers and officers in the South Sakhalin ended.55

Successful course of military operations in Manchuria, Korea, and southern Sakhalin allowed Soviet troops to initiate the operation to liberate the Kuril Islands on August 18, and at the same time to prepare a large amphibious operation in Hokkaido, the need for which soon disappeared. Troops from Kamchatka defense area and the ships of the Pacific Fleet were involved for carrying out the Kuril landing operation.

The 5th Japanese Front had over 50 thousand soldiers and officers on the Kuril Islands. The Shumshu Island - the closest to Kamchatka – was the most fortified against amphibious operations. The Soviet command was supposed to suddenly drop amphibious troops in the northeastern part of the island Shumshu, the possession of which would violate the whole system of defense of the northern Kuril Islands. And using it as a base could easen the advance on Paramushiro, Onekotan and other islands of the archipelago.

On August 18, troops began landing on the island Shumshu the fighting was fierce. Overcoming stubborn resistance of the enemy, the Soviet troops on August 23 completed the liberation of the island. By early September, the troops from the defense area of Kamchatka and Petropavlovsk naval base occupied the whole of the northern ridge of islands, including the island of Urup, and the forces of North Pacific fleet - the rest of the island to the south of Urup.56

Crushing blow over the Kwangtung forces in the Far East was one of the determining factors in the defeat of Japan. It led to the largest World War II defeat of the Japanese armed forces, and the most severe losses among them. The latest exceeded 720 thousand soldiers and officers, including 84 thousand killed and wounded; more than 640 thousand were seized as war prisoners.57 Japan, having lost the largest military-industrial base in the Asian continent and the strongest ground forces, was unable to continue the armed struggle. It significantly reduced the period of the Second World War. The defeat of the Japanese forces by the Soviet Army in Manchuria and Korea, as well as in southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, deprived Japan of all bridgeheads and bases that it had been creating for many years, preparing for aggression against the USSR. Thus, the security of the Soviet Union in the Far East was provided.

55 Ibid.
56 O.Borisov, V. Buturlin A. Noskov, Y. Schebenkov, Victory in the East. p. 47; CAMD
On September 2, 1945, at 9:04, aboard the U.S. military ship «Missouri», located in Tokyo Bay, on behalf of the Emperor, the Japanese government and the Imperial Headquarters, Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and Chief of General Staff of the Japanese Army Yoshijiro Umezu signed the act of unconditional surrender. Japan fully accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945. According to the Act, the military action on its part stopped immediately, all armed forces of Japan and those under the control of Japan surrendered unconditionally. Weapons, military and civilian property were preserved without damage. Japanese government and the General Staff ordered the immediate release of Allied prisoners of war and civilian internees. All Japanese citizens, military and naval officials were obliged to obey the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers and carry out its orders and instructions. Also the activities of the Emperor and the Japanese Government on the management of the state became accountable to the Allied Powers. Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers vested right «to take such steps that it considers necessary to implement the terms of surrender.»

The appointment of a commander of such high authority by the United States was a fair reflection of the role played by the United States in the common effort of long-term fight against Japan.

With the signing of the Act, World War II eventually ended. The Far East campaign of the USSR became a final battle in the war against Japan.

Having endured the brunt of the bloody struggle in the European theater of operations and then defeating the backbone of the Japanese army – the million-strong Kwangtung group of troops - the Soviet Union made a significant contribution to the common victory.

Soviet entry into the war against Japan which ensured the peace enforcement of the latter as soon as possible, not only led to a favorable for Russia solution to the conflict, but increased the role and importance of the Soviet Union in the affairs of the Asia-Pacific region, and brought the day of the long-awaited peace much closer, saving humanity and many millions of lives.

Victory over Japan opened a new page in the history of the peoples of Asia. Favorable conditions for the struggle of the democratic forces and the rise of anti-colonial national liberation movement were created. The defeat of the Kwangtung army groups has enabled the Chinese people to achieve victory in the anti-Japanese war and reunite with the north-eastern part of China with its 40 million population. Japan's defeat led to the release of the Korean people from nearly a half-century of Japanese colonial rule, it served as a prelude to the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Ending the war was of great significance for the Japanese people. It helped them get rid of military dictatorship, millions of victims and other innumerable calamities of war.

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Victory was not easy to win: the Armed Forces of the USSR lost in the war with Japan killed, wounded and missing 36,456 people, including 12,031 dead. \(^{59}\)

Soviet-Japanese War lasted less than four weeks, but in its scope, the skill of the operations and the results of it considered an outstanding campaign of the Second World War. Achieved in a short time, this major victory was clear evidence of the power of the Armed Forces of the USSR, a new manifestation of the high domestic military art. 93 warriors were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for their feats in the war against Japan, and 6 people were awarded this title for the second time. One of the clearest examples of the dedication of the Soviet soldiers in the performance of their military duty during the war with Japan was the fact that 11 members of the Army, border guards, sailors of Pacific and Amur repeated the feat of Alexander Matrosov, throwing themselves on the loopholes of Japanese firing points, forcing them to go quiet and allow their companions to solve the set task.

In the war against Japan the best traditions of the Russian army were demonstrated once again - a deep love for the country, a willingness to give their lives for their interests, the internationalism of the Soviet soldier, his willingness to help other people, loyalty to ally duty. As for native Russian (Sakhalin, Kuril Islands) and in the adjacent areas (China and Korea), Soviet soldiers showed miracles of heroism in the name of the earliest end of WWII, saving millions of soldiers and people of fighting sides from death, restoration of historical justice in relations with Japan, careless of their own blood and lives.

The Postwar Order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the 3rd of September was announced the Day of Victory over Japan.

Our country is going through a watershed in history. At such moments, people have a special need for spiritual support, which they are looking for, referring to the experience of their ancestors, their heroic combat and labor traditions, their religious asceticism, and even to their victims and the tragic errors.

Studying the history of the Great Patriotic War is relevant, as it helps to answer the highly relevant question for today's Russia: what helped our people to survive during the ordeal, unprecedented hardship and at the same time preserve the best moral and spiritual qualities, faith in clear ideals, in difficult and therefore particularly desired Victory.

Our 12-volume work is specifically intended to serve as a solution to this important task.

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