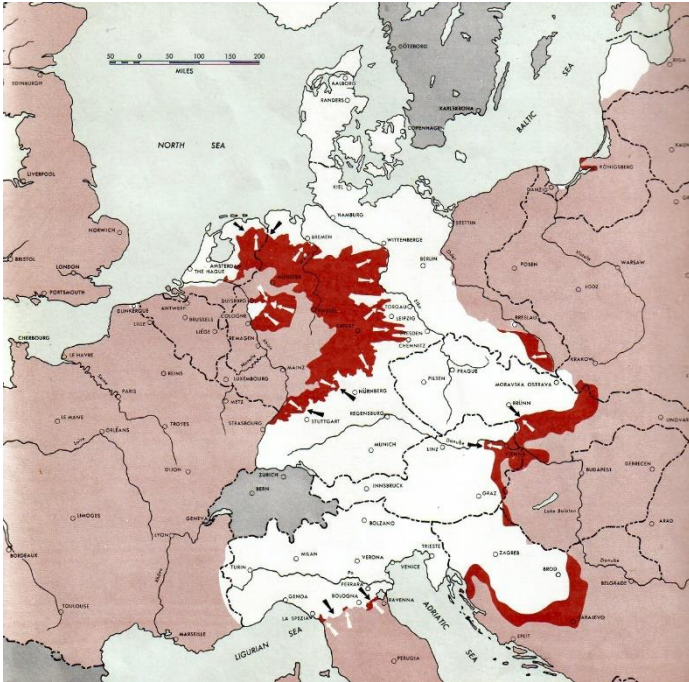
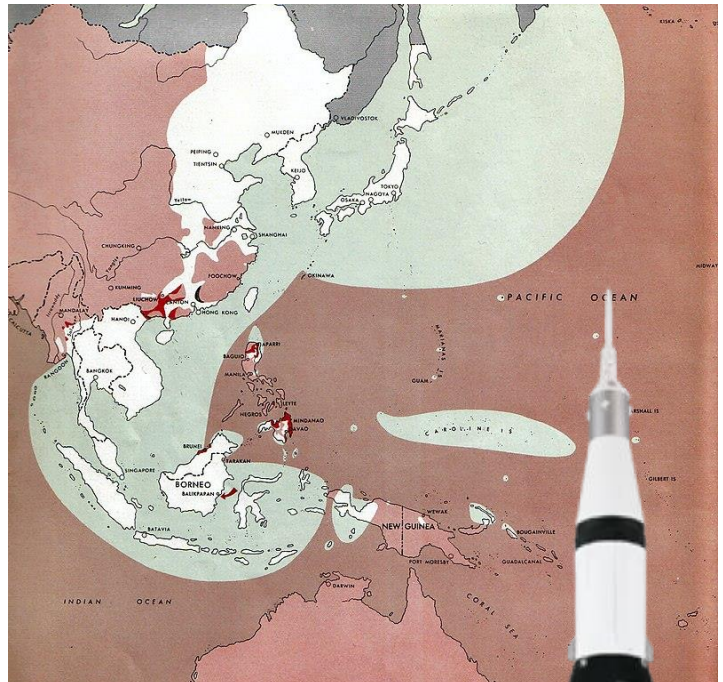


# The End of the Second World War

- By the end of 1944, beginning of 1945, it was clear that the Second World War was coming to an end. Both the German Third Reich and Japanese Empire were collapsing.



Third Reich in April 1945. Source: US Army.



Japanese Empire in July 1945

- In Europe, the American and Soviet militaries were in competition to grab as many German scientists (to learn about the new technologies developed during the war) as they can before the end of the war. Some of these new technologies included:
  - V-1 flying bomb (first cruise missile weapon)
  - V-2 rocket (first ballistic missile weapon developed by Wernher Von Braun<sup>1</sup>)
  - Messerschmitt Me 262 (first jet powered plane to see combat)
- Soviet Forces entered Berlin on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1945. The city was largely defended by soldiers outside the usual age of service (they were either very young, or older).



<sup>1</sup> Von Braun helped develop the Saturn V rocket which took men to the moon in 1969-1972.

- On April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Adolph Hitler shot himself (his partner Eva Braun took cyanide). The government of the Third Reich was assumed by Joseph Goebbels, while Admiral Karl Dönitz was proclaimed President of Germany.
- On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945, Joseph & Magda Goebbels shot themselves after poisoning their children. German President Dönitz appointed Ludwig Schwerin von Krosigk as Chancellor (leader of the German Government).
- German Forces defending Berlin surrendered to the Soviet Forces on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945.
- On May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the German Government of President Dönitz surrendered to the Allied Powers (Britain, US, France, Canada, etc). The Allied Powers dissolved the German government on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1945. Shortly after, the former members of the Third Reich's government were arrested and put on trial at Nuremberg.

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- On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945, a nuclear bomb codenamed *Little Boy* was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later, another nuclear bomb, codenamed *Fat Boy*, was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. In total, 200,000 Japanese people were killed.
  - On the same day as the destruction of Nagasaki, the Soviet Union declares war on Japan and prepares to invade.
- The Japanese Government resisted an unconditional surrender because it threatened the place of the Emperor in the future of their country. Despite intense bombing by the Americans, the lack of movement by the Japanese Government caused President Truman to seriously consider authorizing the dropping of an atomic bomb on Tokyo.
- On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945, following the request of Emperor Hirohito, the Japanese Government surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Powers. The Emperor addressed Japan via radio on August 15<sup>th</sup> – it was the first time Japanese people heard his voice. The formal surrender ceremony took place on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945, aboard the US battleship *Missouri*. Similar ceremonies took place across the former Japanese empire.





Representatives of the Empire of Japan on board USS Missouri (BB-63) during the surrender ceremonies held onboard the USS Missouri September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945.

- The Allies (led by the United States) assumed supreme control of the Japanese Government (although, unlike Germany, they did not abolish it), and brought in one million allied soldiers to occupy the country. American General Douglas MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.



- On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Emperor Hirohito paid a visit to General Douglas MacArthur at the United States Embassy in Tokyo. It was during this visit that an extraordinary photograph was taken.

What makes this photograph extraordinary (left)?

- MacArthur removed Hirohito from the “War Criminals” list. Why do you think he did this?
- A new constitution for Japan was created, coming into effect in 1947. What is significant about these passages?

We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people. This is a universal principle of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded. We reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances, and rescripts in conflict herewith.

**CHAPTER I**

**THE EMPEROR**

**Article 1.** The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the People, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.

**CHAPTER II**

**RENUNCIATION OF WAR**

**Article 9.** Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.  
In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.