

24 July 1945JAPANESE PEACE FEELER

Ten days ago Sato, who was Japanese Ambassador at Moscow, began sending messages to Tokyo in response to direction from the Japanese Foreign Office to explore the possibilities of using the Russians as intermediaries for peace. Sato's response was in effect that such an attempt would be quite naive, that Russia was in a position vis-a-vis England and the United States where she could not afford anything even to imply a separation of viewpoint or objective. Togo, the Japanese Foreign Minister, kept returning to the point and insisting that Sato tell Molotov of the Japanese desire to send Prince Konoye as a special envoy. Sato asked to see Molotov but was put off with Lusofsky, who was non-committal. He finally did see Molotov who was equally non-committal and said that all Russia could do would be to listen to any message which Japan wished to send.

Finally, on the first of July, Sato sent a long message outlining what he conceived to be Japan's position, which was in brief that she was now entirely alone and friendless and could look for succor from no one, that she was being exposed to continuous attack which might result in her practical extinction as a nation. He strongly advised accepting any terms, including unconditional surrender, on the basis that this was the only way of preserving the entity of the Emperor and the State itself.

He finally concluded by implying that he realized what he was saying might not be welcomed by the Government at home but that his conscience still forced him to send the message.

The response to his message was that the Cabinet in council had weighed all the considerations which he had raised and that their final judgment and decision was that the war must be fought with all the vigor and bitterness of which the nation was capable so long as the only alternative was the unconditional surrender.

JF:HCO  
7-24-45