**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.**

**The Emperor's Speech: Hirohito Transformed Japan Forever**

(1) In 1945, one week after atomic bombs had obliterated the cities of Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, radios across Japan crackled with another shocking announcement, one that would come to change the course of Japanese history perhaps as much as **did** the atomic bombs Little Boy and Fat Man. At noon, Emperor Hirohito spoke directly to his subjects for the first time in his reign. His announcement would shock Japan, but it would also transform it, altering in a few short minutes the entire mission of the Japanese nation in ways that **it**, and the world, still feel today.

(2) Hirohito was more than Japan's head of state. He was the personification of both the nation and its spiritual imperative for imperial expansion. He was at the center of his nation's political, military, and spiritual life during the expansion that cost nearly 20 million Asian lives, more than 3.1 million Japanese lives and more than 60,000 Western Allied lives. The Pacific War was, in the [ultra-nationalist ideology](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65393/walter-a-skya/japans-holy-war-the-ideology-of-radical-shinto-ultranationalism) that gripped Japan for the first half of the 20th century, a "holy war," and was waged in Hirohito's name.

(3) Japan's war-rattled civilians had good reason to fear that Hirohito's radio address might bring terrible news. Surrender was officially forbidden in the Japanese military, and in the closing years of the war, Japanese civilians were told that they too might have to choose death to protect the dignity of the nation. And this is what many Japanese feared their emperor would ask of them: to "fight to the bitter end and die" as they'd been indoctrinated, or to end the imperial mission by their own hands in ritual suicide rather than allow foreigners that right.

(4) When the emperor's voice beamed across the country and out beyond it on shortwave signals for the troops stationed throughout East Asia, it was the first time that the vast majority of his subjects heard him: High-pitched, stilted, and in a classical Japanese more difficult to understand than what most people spoke in conversation. Still, the message was clear: Surrender. The unthinkable. "We have ordered our government to communicate to the governments of the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union that our empire accepts the provisions of their joint declaration," he said, referencing the allies' demand for unconditional surrender. But perhaps even more unexpected than Hirohito's call for surrender were the terms he used, which seemingly reversed the entire ideology of war and expansion that had been synonymous with his rule.

(5) "To strive for the common prosperity and happiness of all nations, as well as the security and wellbeing of our subjects, is the obligation which has been handed down by our imperial ancestors and which lies close to our heart," he explained. "The enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, not only would it result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization."

(6) He declared that the military would be disarmed, suggesting this would happen not because disarmament\* had been forced upon Japan (even though it actually had), but because Japan had made the difficult choice to honor peace. It wasn't wholly true, but it helped replace the imperial ideology of war with an ideology of peace that [persists to this day](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13439000500108109). Hirohito, after years of war, was now asking them to carry the burdens of peace, humility, and lower status. "The hardships and sufferings to which our nation is to be subjected hereafter will be certainly great," he warned. "However, it is according to the dictates of time and fate that we have made a resolution for a grand peace for all the future generations by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is not sufferable."

\***disarmament:** a process by which a country reduces or gets rid of its weapons or armed forces.

(7) To "endure the unendurable and suffer what is not sufferable" would become a sort of national motto in the following seven years of American occupation. It came to describe not just the humiliation of defeat, but Japan's struggle to find an entire new identity and place in the world. "Enduring the unendurable" also meant surviving Japan's near-total collapse. The allied bombing campaign had destroyed one third of the nation's wealth. Urban living standards plummeted to 35 percent of pre-war levels. In the country's 60 or so largest cities, bombing had destroyed nearly half of the structures, rendering 30 percent of its residents immediately homeless. Food became scarce. Disease and starvation spread.

(8) Meanwhile, millions of Japanese soldiers and colonists abroad found, with the empire's collapse, that they had no way to go home and little or no rights in the newly independent colonies. As many as 68,000 Japanese in China were conscripted into the communist rebel forces, and around 1.6 million Japanese in the Soviet Union were made to contribute labor. Of those, 300,000 never returned home.

(9) Hirohito's historic address marked the end of World War II and the end of imperial Japan's ultranationalist ideology, but it was also a beginning: of the American occupation and of a new Japan. In a generation, Japan achieved both full democracy and the amazing, much-studied "[economic miracle](http://books.google.com/books?id=bbGlwsjW-ekC&lpg=PA1&ots=JoClwIx0K_&dq=japanese%20miracle&lr&pg=PA3#v=onepage&q&f=false)". This is still the Japan of today: developed, democratic, and peaceful. The factors, internal and external, that led the country from an ultranationalist war machine to a land of passivity and high-tech exports are as numerous as **they** are impossibly complicated. But the moment, 67 years ago today, when Hirohito's speech came over the airwaves and commanded Japanese to "endure the unendurable", was a turning point in the Japanese death and rebirth that played such a major role in the 20th century.

**A. Answer the following comprehension questions. Make sure your answers do not include irrelevant information.**

1. Before the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, Hirohito’s reign was based on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Why were the Japanese surprised at what Hirohito said on the radio address?

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3. What is the cause of Hirohito’s fear that human civilization might become extinct?

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4. What was the lie Hirohito told his nation in order to help them accept an ideology of peace?

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5. Japanese colonies \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when Japan lost the war.

6. How long did it take for Japan to find an entire new identity and place in the world?

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**B. Guessing Vocabulary**

1. Find a word or an expression in paragraph 2 which means “*carry out; conduct; make”:* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Find a word or an expression in paragraph 4 which means “*shared; collective; mutual*”: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Find a word or an expression in paragraph 7 which means “*rare; limited*”: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Reference Words**

1. (Par. 1) “**did**” refers to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. (Par. 1) “**it**” refers to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. (Par. 9) “**they**” refers to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**KEY**

**A. Answer the following comprehension questions. Make sure your answers do not include irrelevant information.**

1. Before the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, Hirohito’s reign was based on

**ultra nationalist ideology OR ideology of war and expansion OR “holy war” OR imperialism**

2. Why were the Japanese surprised at what Hirohito said on the radio address?

**Because they expected him to order them to end the imperial mission by their own hands in ritual suicide OR because he ordered them to surrender.**

3. What is the cause of Hirohito’s fear that human civilization might become extinct?

**(The destructive power of) the atomic bombs**

4. What was the lie Hirohito told his nation in order to help them accept an ideology of peace?

**He declared that the military would be disarmed, suggesting this would happen not because disarmament\* had been forced upon Japan (even though it actually had), but because japan had made the difficult choice to honor peace**

5. Japanese colonies **became independent** when Japan lost the war.

6. How long did it take for Japan to find an entire new identity and place in the world?

**One generation OR 20-25 years**

**B. Guessing Vocabulary**

1. Find a word or an expression in paragraph 2 which means “*carry out; conduct; make”:*

**to wage**

1. Find a word or an expression in paragraph 4 which means “*shared; collective; mutual*”:

**joint**

1. Find a word or an expression in paragraph 7 which means “*rare; limited*”:

**scarce**

**C. Reference Words**

1. (Par. 1) “**did**” refers to **change the course of Japanese history**
2. (Par. 1) “**it**” refers to **Japanese nation**
3. (Par. 9) “**they**” refers to **the factors**