

September 25, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES:

Dr. Oppenheimer and I called on Acting Secretary of State Acheson yesterday afternoon (September 24th) at 2:30 P.M. Mr. Marks was present. At the beginning of the meeting, we went over Mr. Acheson's proposed statement to the President on the matter of negotiations with Russia concerning the control of the atomic bomb. On the whole, it was an excellent statement and, for our records only, was in substance a paraphrase of Secretary Stimson's statement.

He went pretty far in stating that the evidence seems to be that sooner or later it will be possible to improve the bomb to a point of world destruction, igniting the atmosphere, etc. Both Oppenheimer and I thought this was unnecessarily drastic as the evidence thus far merely indicates that perhaps that might some day be true but it is not likely.

A good part of the discussion, which lasted over two hours in all, related to the possibility of separating the types of information which might be given to the Russians. Query: Is it possible to say that we will give them virtually all of the scientific data but none of the technical information regarding the manufacture of material or the production of the bomb? Dr. Oppenheimer said he thought that it was possible to make this distinction; although, to be fair, he said he believed that sooner or later, these processes or other processes would also be available to the Russians by their own effort.

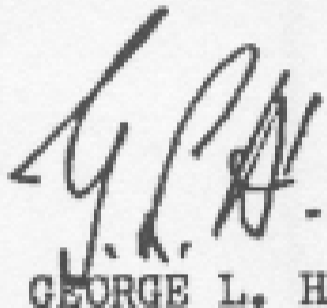
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However, I pointed out that for practical and political reasons it was both possible and wise to draw the line of distinction between the two classes of information. As to this, both Oppenheimer and Acheson agreed.

Dr. Oppenheimer philosophized at great length about the work of the scientists, their objectives, their prejudices and their hopes. There is a distinct opposition on their part to doing any more work on any bomb -- not merely a super bomb but any bomb. However, as he pointed out in the letter which he had previously sent to the Secretary of War and a copy of which was given to Secretary Byrnes, of the Government, for political or security reasons, thought such work was necessary they would, of course, comply. He says that much of the restiveness in his laboratory is not so much due to the delay in legislation as to a feeling of uncertainty as to whether they are going to be asked to continue perfecting the bomb against the dictates of their hearts and spirits. This is true particularly in terms of a better one, but the feeling persists even as to continuing the manufacture of the present one. Mr. Acheson seemed much interested in this. Dr. Oppenheimer did point out, however, that the introduction and passage of the legislation would no doubt be helpful in the sense of giving some direction and certainty as to the future of their work and research.



GEORGE L. HARRISON