

This document consists of 2 pages.

Copy 4 of 7 copies. Series A.

T-1314

UNCLASSIFIED

1152 20th Street  
Los Alamos, New Mexico  
March 16, 1962

1201  
Teller  
X-322  
Hiroshima  
V-471-6  
TN

~~SECRET/BD~~

NFRF

SAA200131880000

Dr. Glenn Seaborg, Chairman  
Atomic Energy Commission  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Seaborg:

A few days ago I came upon a copy of Edward Teller's recent book, entitled I think, "Aftermath of Hiroshima". It seems to me that there are in several places certain inaccuracies and/or omissions which might give incorrect impressions of Los Alamos activities and chains of events leading to the development of the H-bomb, among other things.

As long as these were contained in articles or newspaper accounts which were not directly attributable to people connected with this history, perhaps there was no need to try to correct, clarify or dissent with such accounts.

Even though in the preface the author states that the account is of his own personal view, since the book might perpetuate some misconceptions, I would like you to know some of the facts as they are known to me. Certainly a great number of people here and elsewhere who are involved in these matters also know the full story.

There are many descriptions and inferences stated either explicitly or suggested between lines where I would strongly disagree with the author. So, to mention one paragraph, the impression which is intended to strike the reader is that Dr. Bradbury (with whom the author of the book states that he still remains on friendly terms) did not intend to proceed as quickly as possible in the planning and in the construction of the H-bomb. This seems to me utterly incorrect. In fact, one could take the opposite view. The plans originally pushed by Edward were not very good and would have led to failures which would have postponed the development of the thermonuclear devices and his insistence on salvaging his original schemes cost a lot of time. It seems to me that, apart from a general enthusiasm, there was very little on which to base an actual program. I will not go in this letter into a discussion of activities and events where other people were involved, but, as for my own little role, it seems to me that I should state the following: In addition to the work of mine, which Edward mentions, proving that the old super scheme was unpromising, the history of the new "idea" leading to the present class of designs is as follows: One day early in January in 1951 it occurred to me that one should employ an implosion of the main body of the device and thus obtain very high compressions of the thermonuclear part, which then might be made to give a considerable energy yield. I mentioned this possibility, with a sketch of a scheme how to construct it, to Dr. Bradbury one morning. The next day I communicated it to Edward, who by that time was convinced that the old scheme might not work. For the first half an hour or so during our conversation, he did not want to accept this new possibility but in the subsequent discussion took to it very eagerly. In subsequent discussions we have devised certain arrangements which appear in a report written jointly by us--

DD 03938  
LRN FILE BC

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW	1. DETERMINATION (CIRCLE NUMBER(S))
2. CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO:	3. CONTAINS NO DFE CLASSIFIED INFO
4. COORDINATE WITH:	5. CLASSIFICATION CANCELED
6. CLASSIFIED INFO BRACKETED	
1st REVIEW DATE: 12/15/80	AUTHORITY: 27.1, 27.2, 27.3, 27.4, 27.5, 27.6, 27.7, 27.8, 27.9, 27.10, 27.11, 27.12, 27.13, 27.14, 27.15, 27.16, 27.17, 27.18, 27.19, 27.20, 27.21, 27.22, 27.23, 27.24, 27.25, 27.26, 27.27, 27.28, 27.29, 27.30, 27.31, 27.32, 27.33, 27.34, 27.35, 27.36, 27.37, 27.38, 27.39, 27.40, 27.41, 27.42, 27.43, 27.44, 27.45, 27.46, 27.47, 27.48, 27.49, 27.50, 27.51, 27.52, 27.53, 27.54, 27.55, 27.56, 27.57, 27.58, 27.59, 27.60, 27.61, 27.62, 27.63, 27.64, 27.65, 27.66, 27.67, 27.68, 27.69, 27.70, 27.71, 27.72, 27.73, 27.74, 27.75, 27.76, 27.77, 27.78, 27.79, 27.80, 27.81, 27.82, 27.83, 27.84, 27.85, 27.86, 27.87, 27.88, 27.89, 27.90, 27.91, 27.92, 27.93, 27.94, 27.95, 27.96, 27.97, 27.98, 27.99, 28.00
AUTHORITY: 27.1, 27.2, 27.3, 27.4, 27.5, 27.6, 27.7, 27.8, 27.9, 27.10, 27.11, 27.12, 27.13, 27.14, 27.15, 27.16, 27.17, 27.18, 27.19, 27.20, 27.21, 27.22, 27.23, 27.24, 27.25, 27.26, 27.27, 27.28, 27.29, 27.30, 27.31, 27.32, 27.33, 27.34, 27.35, 27.36, 27.37, 27.38, 27.39, 27.40, 27.41, 27.42, 27.43, 27.44, 27.45, 27.46, 27.47, 27.48, 27.49, 27.50, 27.51, 27.52, 27.53, 27.54, 27.55, 27.56, 27.57, 27.58, 27.59, 27.60, 27.61, 27.62, 27.63, 27.64, 27.65, 27.66, 27.67, 27.68, 27.69, 27.70, 27.71, 27.72, 27.73, 27.74, 27.75, 27.76, 27.77, 27.78, 27.79, 27.80, 27.81, 27.82, 27.83, 27.84, 27.85, 27.86, 27.87, 27.88, 27.89, 27.90, 27.91, 27.92, 27.93, 27.94, 27.95, 27.96, 27.97, 27.98, 27.99, 28.00	

~~RESTRICTED DATA~~

This document contains restricted data as defined in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. Its transmittal or the disclosure of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited.

~~SECRET/BD~~

UNCLASSIFIED

(29)

~~SECRET~~

T-1314

UNCLASSIFIED

Letter to Dr. Glenn Seaborg

March 16, 1962

b3

LAMS-1225.

This story and all details, chronological and otherwise, are well known to people here and elsewhere; e.g. Dr. Bradbury, Longmire, Mark, and many others. It is also known to Hans Bethe who I believe is aware of the exact sequence of events. Cryptic allusions to this origin of the idea can be found in Edward's own account in Science during the time of the Oppenheimer controversy. People like Rabi know the story fully, etc. I believe that there is a very brief reference to the origin of the successful H-bomb idea in former President Truman's Memoirs (in the second volume).

It is therefore perhaps with some surprise that I noticed in the above-mentioned book a presentation of this little history stating something as follows: "I have communicated my idea to deHoffmann who calculated ..... etc". In fact, the joint report by deHoffmann and Teller is subsequent to the report 1225 by myself and Edward and it mentions explicitly the origin of the two-stage scheme and makes use of this previous report.

All this is not to detract from the immense technical contributions which Edward made to the development of the H-bomb.

I would not enter in such detail in the discussion of this one item except for the fact that in some other places the accounts seem to me also highly personal, colored and "not very true" as the late Enrico Fermi used to say, and perhaps some other people might similarly disagree with the book's presentation.

With best regards,

Yours cordially,

S. M. Ulam.

SMU:g

cc: Dr. Norris Bradbury.

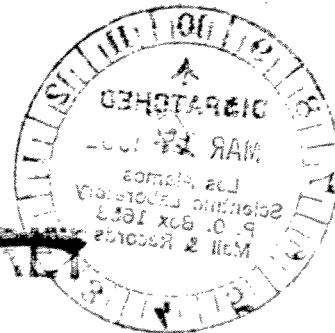
Distributions:

- 1A -- Dr. Glenn Seaborg
- 2A -- Dr. N. E. Bradbury
- 3A -- Dr. N. E. Bradbury
- 4A -- Mail and Records
- 5A -- Mail and Records
- 6A -- T-Division Files
- 7A -- S. M. Ulam

*Rec 786516*  
*81 5 849*  
*file*

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~