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UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

Vol IX (a)

EXHIBIT

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In the Matter Of:

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

CLASSIFIED TESTIMONY OF DR. WALTER G. WHITMAN

~~RESTRICTED DATA~~

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MR. GRAY: Let us resume. Dr. Evans is out for a moment but will be back.

Dr. Whitman, do you wish to testify under oath? You are not required to do so.

DR. WHITMAN: I am perfectly willing to.

MR. GRAY: All the witnesses have so testified.

(Dr. Evans entered the hearing room)

DR. WHITMAN: Yes, I will be glad to.

MR. GRAY: Would you be good enough to stand and raise your right hand, please. What is your full name?

DR. WHITMAN: Walter G. Whitman; Walter Gordon Whitman.

MR. GRAY: Walter Gordon Whitman, do you swear that the testimony you are to give the Board shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

DR. WHITMAN: I do.

MR. GRAY: Will you be seated, please, sir.

It is my duty to remind you of the existence of the so-called perjury statutes, Dr. Whitman. May we assume that you are familiar with their existence and penalties?

DR. WHITMAN: Yes.

MR. GRAY: I should like to ask that in the course of your testimony if it becomes necessary for you to disclose or refer to restricted data that you notify me in advance so we may take necessary and appropriate steps.

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Finally, Dr. Whitman, we treat these proceedings as a confidential matter between the Atomic Energy Commission and its officials and Dr. Oppenheimer, his witnesses and representatives. The Commission will initiate no public releases with respect to these proceedings. It is my custom to express on behalf of the Board a hope that witnesses will have the same view.

Mr. Silverman, will you proceed.

Whereupon,

WALTER GORDON WHITMAN

was called as a witness, and having been duly sworn, was examined and testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q Dr. Whitman, will you state what your profession is, please?

A I am a chemical engineer and the head of the Chemical Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Q Do you hold any governmental position?

A I am a member of the General Advisory Committee of the Atomic Energy Commission.

Q How long have you been such a member?

A Since the summer of 1950.

Q I understand that you were formerly chairman of the Research and Development Board of the Department of

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Defense?

A Yes, sir. I came down under General Marshall in the summer of 1951, served under him, Mr. Lovett and Mr. Wilson for two years.

Q Will you tell us something about your association with Dr. Oppenheimer.

A My first meeting with Dr. Oppeneheimer came in 1948 at a time when I was the Director of the so-called Lexington Project which MIT ran for the Atomic Energy Commission to determine or pass upon the feasibility of nuclear powered flight.

In connection with that project I met Dr. Oppenheimer in June of 1948 at the time we were getting background information. The contact was not important. My real contact began in September, 1950 at the first meeting of the General Advisory Committee after my appointment.

I knew him in General Advisory Committee work quite intimately for the next two years until the termination of his six year term on the General Advisory Committee. He was, of course, the chairman of the committee, as you know.

I had very close association with him also when I accepted the position as chairman of the Research and Development Board because he was then a consultant to me and a member of my committee on atomic energy, a committee composed of high ranking military officers from the three

4 services concerned with Atomic Energy and certain civilians, Dr. Oppenheimer, Dr. Bacher and a few others.

Q Dr. Bacher was chairman?

A Dr. Bacher was chairman of that committee. That association was very close from August 1st, 1951 for the next two years while I was in the Pentagon. I also served on a special panel headed by Dr. Oppenheimer in December, 1950. This was in the Pentagon under the Research and Development Board before I became chairman and the purpose of this special committee was to review the status of atomic energy and military applications and try to point out the lines of research and development which should be followed in a wider exploitation of atomic energy for military purposes. It was a look into the future.

I also had one special connection with Dr. Oppenheimer in December, 1951 on a trip to visit SHAPE Headquarters and General Eisenhower to discuss with him the findings of the so-called VISTA report. The VISTA report carried out at the California Institute of Technology for the military was headed by Dr. Lee DuBridge. Dr. DuBridge, Professor Charles Lauritsen and Dr. Oppenheimer went over to discuss this report with General Eisenhower and others -- General Gruenther, General Norstad, under the general sponsorship of the Research and Development Board, of which I was chairman. So I accompanied them on this one-week trip with the

5 approval of Mr. Lovett, the Secretary of Defense.

I would say that my other contact official connection which is of less importance was as a fellow member of the Science Advisory Committee from about the fall of 1951 until December of 1953.

MR. GRAY: Science Advisory Committee of what?

THE WITNESS: Of the Office of Defense Management.

Of these various contacts my close association on the General Advisory Committee, the trip to Europe in connection with the VISTA report and the close association as my consultant in the Research and Development Board and a committee member are the significant ones.

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q Would you tell us something about how Dr. Oppenheimer ran, if that is the correct word to use, the meetings of the GAC so far as bringing out or permitting expressions of views of the members and so on is concerned?

A In the first place Dr. Oppenheimer worked very hard in advance of the meeting in order to prepare a most worthwhile agenda for consideration by the committee. Some of the items were suggested by the Commission itself and others were brought up by study by other members of the committee, particularly by Dr. Oppenheimer. He was very careful to outline the problem and to see to it that we had authoritative presentations of the situation on which we were

6 to give advice. I may say that he made it quite a point to assure the participation and the expression of views by all members of the committee, not to initially state his own views and try to coerce others to those views.

I think we were all, at least I was, remarkably impressed by his ability to summarize the conclusions and the thinking of the committee in the presentation before the Commissioners themselves at the end of the three day meeting.

Perhaps I should say that initially we would meet with the Commissioners and discuss the subjects that would be brought up. They would point out particular things on which they would like our views and advice.

Q This was an oral discussion?

A This was an oral discussion. The last item of the three day meeting was a meeting with the Commissioners themselves at which was presented the conclusions and thinking of the committee.

During the progress of the meeting very frequently individual Commissioners would come in to participate in the discussions which we were holding.

In his final summarization of the committee advice, Dr. Oppenheimer had a remarkable ability to pull it together and he would also make quite a point of asking individual committee members to explain more at length their views,

7 which might be entirely in accord with his summary, or might represent a different position. So I always had a feeling that as the chairman of the meeting he was most anxious that the commission get the benefit not only of the summary which the chairman of the committee could give, but also the views which might represent differing shades of opinion or even disagreement.

Q You, of course, were not a member of the General Advisory Committee at the famous October, 1949 meeting on the hydrogen bomb?

A No, I had nothing to do with that, knew nothing of it and didn't enter the scene until a year later when the President's decision had been announced and many months had elapsed.

Q During the period from the time you became a member of the General Advisory Committee in September, 1950, until Dr. Oppenheimer's term expired in the summer of 1952, would you care to say anything about Dr. Oppenheimer's attitude and contributions, if any, toward the work of the GAC in connection with the hydrogen bomb?

A This subject came up again and again at our meetings. Frankly, I was shocked to read any comment that there was an attempt to obstruct progress after the decision was made, because all the way through I had the feeling that he not only was not obstructing but that he was working hard toward

8 helping toward the early success of the hydrogen program.

Q Do you recall a meeting at Princeton in the late spring or early summer of 1951 on the hydrogen bomb?

A I do.

Q Can you tell us anything about that and particularly Dr. Oppenheimer's roll there?

A Dr. Oppenheimer was the moderator of that meeting, which consisted of him, if not all of us on the General Advisory Committee, some of the Commissioners, people like Dr. Teller, Dr. Bradbury, and at that time there was a very thorough consideration of what the status was today, what the hopes and prospects were and at the conclusion of it, a program was discussed with which the meeting was in pretty general agreement on pushing ahead the lines that should be pushed hardest.

I should say frankly that I, not being a nuclear physicist, found that when Dr. Teller, Dr. Oppenheimer, Dr. Bethe and Dr. Fermi got talking about some of the technical problems, it was a bit over my head. I, however, was in a position, I believe, to sense the significance of what was being discussed and to concur wholeheartedly in the conclusions which were reached.

Q Was Dr. Oppenheimer's position at that meeting one of actively being in favor of going ahead with whatever line of development was there agreed upon?

A Yes. He very much took the position of being the moderator of the meeting to be sure that all of the facts were brought out, that the discussion was active between some of these very brightest minds of the country, and to see to it that the thing was pulled together in the way of a conclusion as to future action.

Q Have you from time to time discussed with Dr. Oppenheimer and worked with Dr. Oppenheimer on the matters involving the proper use of atomic weapons?

A Oh, yes. This was a very important part of his function as advisor to me in the Department of Defense.

Q Would you care to say something about Dr. Oppenheimer's work or contributions in developing the concept of tactical use of atomic weapons?

A Yes. Dr. Oppenheimer fully realized that atomic materials -- the raw materials for nuclear explosions -- would become increasingly abundant and increasingly cheaper. There had been in the early days of scarcity a very strongly held belief that the bomb was useful in strategic bombing and there had been very little thought given to the expansion of the use of the bomb for other military purposes.

I should say that always Dr. Oppenheimer was trying to point out the wide variety of military uses for the bomb, the small bomb as well as the large bomb. He was doing it in a climate where many folks felt that only strategic

10 bombing was a field for the atomic weapon.

Q Strategic bombing is a large bomb somewhere where the Army is not?

A In Russia. I should say that he more than any other man served to educate the military to the potentialities of the atomic weapon for other than strategic bombing purposes; its use possibly in tactical situations or in bombing five hundred miles back. He was constantly emphasizing that the bomb would be more available and that one of the greatest problems was going to be its deliverability, meaning that the smaller you could make your bomb in size perhaps you would not have to have a great big strategic bomber to carry it, you could carry it in a medium bomber or you could carry it even in a fighter plane.

In my judgment his advice and his arguments for a gamut of atomic weapons, extending even over to the use of the atomic weapon in air defense of the United States has been more productive than any other one individual. You see, he had the opportunity to not only advise in the Atomic Energy Commission, but advise in the military services in the Department of Defense.

The idea of a range of weapons suitable for a multiplicity of military purposes was a key to the campaign which he felt should be pressed and with which I agreed.

I think it rather significant to realize that in

11 the days of scarcity there was such a strong --

Q Scarcity of what, sir?

A Scarcity of fissionable material. In the early days there was such a strong feeling that the bomb was the peculiar and sole property of the Strategic Air Command. It was very necessary to open up to the minds of the military the other potential uses of this material which was going to become more available and cheaper all the time, and that deliverability was going to be a vital factor.

Q On what occasion did Dr. Oppenheimer express and urge these views?

A The first time I ran into them was on the special panel over in RDB in September of 1950 on the forward look to the atomic weapon in the Department of Defense. At that time I didn't have enough background, frankly, to contribute very much to it. Subsequently when I became chairman of RDB this was rather a key point in my own determination of emphasis in research and development.

Q Was Dr. Oppenheimer opposed to the use of atomic weapons for strategic purposes?

A That is a hard thing to say. He was certainly not opposed to the development of atomic weapons useful for strategic purposes. This is what I would like to say specifically. I saw no evidence of obstruction in the development. I think many of us felt that if and when the atomic

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weapon is really loosed in a strategic campaign, which would be on both sides, it is the end of civilization as we know it, and that the efforts must be predominantly to prevent any such thing from happening. But the necessity for being strongly armed for strategic air I have never questioned Dr. Oppenheimer's realization.

Q Perhaps I have not expressed it too clearly, but what I would like is for you to comment on Dr. Oppenheimer's views as to emphasis on one branch or another of the use of atomic weapons, or as to a feeling that it is a matter of ballance or what have you?

A Yes. I think very definitely he felt that great emphasis should be put on having a spectrum in the arsenal of atomic weapons; that there were so many potentialities to this new material. He recognized as practically everybody has that the strategic use was being pushed with utmost speed.

He felt it quite incumbent -- I am interpreting, this is my feeling of how he felt -- to emphasize the many other potentialities of the atomic weapon, and since that was not being talked about by others he was peculiarly conscious of his responsibility.

Q Did that cause some trouble for him in the Department of Defense?

A The Strategic Air Command had thought of the atomic

13 weapon as solely restricted to its own use. I think that there was some definite resentment at the implication that this was not just the Strategic Air Command's weapon.

Q Did Dr. Oppenheimer urge this view of balanced defense and the gamut of atomic weapons on this trip to SHAPE that you mentioned also?

A Yes. In the talks which were held with then General Eisenhower, General Gruenther, General Norstad. General Eisenhower, of course, at that time with the defense of Europe was particularly interested in the views as to what the developments might be and how they could be employed in his mission.

Q How well do you feel you know Dr. Oppenheimer as a man, with respect to his loyalty and character and so on?

A I feel I know him quite well.

Q Do you have an opinion as to Dr. Oppenheimer's loyalty to the United States and as to whether he is a security risk?

A I have a very strong opinion.

Q Would you state that opinion, please?

A I have an opinion that he is completely loyal and that he is not any more of a security risk than I am. Perhaps I should explain.

I feel that anyone who has secret information is to a degree a security risk, which would be illustrated by the

14 fact that if I were unfortunately in communist hands and they elected to torture me, I have no confidence in my ability to refrain from disclosure. Under those circumstance I think almost any of us would be security risks and the more information we have the greater the risk. But with the exception of this, which is common to all of us, I do not regard Dr. Oppenheimer as any more of a security risk than I regard myself.

Q And even that is not an exception, I take it. I will withdraw that.

A At least I have some confidence in myself.

Q Have you read the letter of the Commission dated December 23, 1953?

A I have.

Q Reverting to the one suspending Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance and your answer is that you have?

A I have.

Q That contains certain items of derogatory information.

A Yes, it does.

Q Does that letter change your views as to Dr. Oppenheimer's loyalty or his being a security risk?

A It does not.

Q Were you familiar with those items of derogatory information, except for the hydrogen bomb as to which you

said you were rather shocked, prior to the Commission's letter?

A I was.

Q Will you tell us the circumstances under which you became familiar with that?

A In my position in the Pentagon, Dr. Oppenheimer's case was brought to my personal attention through the security officers. This was close to the completion of my term in the Pentagon. I said that I would personally review the whole case and leave for my successor my recommendation in terms of whether or not Dr. Oppenheimer should be reappointed for another year as a consultant in the Department of Defense.

MR. ROBB: Could we have the date on this?

THE WITNESS: That was early July 1953.

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q Dr. Whitman, that was pursuant to the President's executive order requiring a review of all such cases?

A That was in line with the President's order which required a review of cases which had significant derogatory information.

Q What was your position at that time?

A I had been Chairman of the Research and Development Board until the reorganization plan went into effect on the 20th of June 1953. My successor, who was to be appointed as Assistant Secretary of Defense, Research and Development, was not going to take office until the latter part of the

summer.

MR. GRAY: What was his name, for the record?

THE WITNESS: Donald Quarles. He subsequently took office on the first of September. In the meantime I continued operating with the same functions which I had, but under the official designation of Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Research and Development. I took a Saturday when no one else was around to study the file very thoroughly. As I understand it, it was a summary by the FBI of the material in Robert's folder. It was a file that may have had 50 or 60 pages in it.

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q How long did it take you to read it?

A It took me at least two hours, and I think more, because I was reading it very carefully and re-reading to feel that I had the significance of the file.

At the conclusion I wrote longhand a memorandum pointing out that I had been --

Q Do you have a copy of that memorandum?

A I have a copy of the memorandum.

Q Perhaps it would be simpler to read the memorandum than for you to tell what it said.

A "Regarding Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. I have known for some time of the general nature and salient features of the information contained in this file. It discloses nothing

which would cause me to modify my previous confidence in his loyalty.

"Based on extensive association with Dr. Oppenheimer over the past three years in the General Advisory Committee of the AEC and in the Office of Defense Management Science Advisory Committee, and in the Research and Development Board, I am convinced that he can be of great service as a consultant to the research and development work of the Department of Defense.

"I unqualifiedly recommend his reappointment as a consultant."

Q I take it nothing has happened between the date of that memorandum and today that would cause you to change your opinion as to Dr. Oppenheimer's loyalty or being a security risk?

A No, sir, I would make the same recommendation today.

MR. GRAY: What was the date?

THE WITNESS: The date of that was July 10, 1953.

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q So far as you can now recall, are there any items of derogatory information in the Commission's letter of December 23, 1953, other than the hydrogen bomb, that was not included in the file that you then examined?

A To the best of my recollection everything except the references to the hydrogen bomb was in the file which I examined.

MR. SILVERMAN: I think I have no further questions to ask Dr. Whitman.

MR. GRAY: All right.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. ROBB:

Q Doctor, do you know whether he was reappointed?

A I do not know for certain. I left at the end of July. This is hearsay. I think that the case was really brought up to the attention of Mr. Wilson some time in the fall after the new Assistant Secretary, Mr. Quarles, had taken office on the first of September.

Q Who would have made the appointment -- Mr. Wilson?

A It had been previous practice for me to make the reappointments. The practice was in process, I think, of change during the summer of 1953, following the President's executive order, and I frankly do not know what the present procedure is, whether Mr. Quarles makes the appointment or whether Mr. Wilson does.

Q Or maybe Mr. Quarles recommends and Mr. Wilson makes the appointment.

A I just don't know.

Q I seem to recall seeing a statement in the press the other day from Mr. Wilson to the effect that he will not have Dr. Hppenheimer over there. Did you see that?

A I saw Mr. Wilson's press statement. In fact, I

have a copy of the whole thing.

Q If that were accurately reported, it would indicate that he was not reappointed.

MR. GARRISON: Mr. Chairman, I didn't think Dr. Oppenheimer's name was mentioned.

MR. ROBB: Apparently the witness understood it as I did.

MR. GRAY: I think the Chairman would make this observation. Perhaps Mr. Garrison is technically correct, but I believe there seems to be no question in the minds of any of us that Mr. Wilson in every likelihood was referring to Dr. Oppenheimer.

MR. ROBB: I have forgotten what the pending question was.

MR. EVANS: Do we have a copy of that?

MR. ROBB: Dr. Whitman says he has a copy of it. Do you have a copy?

THE WITNESS: I have a copy of his statement which was sent to me, or at least of the press conference. I think I have. This is entitled, "Excerpts from Department of Defense, Office of Public Information, Minutes of Press Conference held by The Honorable Charles E. Wilson, Secretary of Defense, Wednesday, 14 April 1954."

BY MR. ROBB:

Q Do you want to read the pertinent portion to us, or

do you want me to read it?

A It is rather extensive. I would just as soon give it to you for the committee if you care to have it.

Q Thank you.

A It is not significantly different from the report that came out in the New York Times.

MR. ROBB: It is quite long, as the witness says. It is five pages. So I will not attempt to read it now.

MR. GRAY: The state of the record now would indicate that Mr. Wilson would not have accepted your recommendation in all probability, at least that is the impression. If counsel want to straighten it out--

MR. SILVERMAN: I have no information on the subject. The only comment I wish to make is that it is perfectly possible that Mr. Wilson reviewed the file. I have no idea what Mr. Wilson did. I do think there is a difference in the weight to be given to a determination and a recommendation made by a man who reads through a file with the duty of trying to make a recommendation, and with all due respect to cabinet officers and even ex-cabinet officers, the statements that they make in a press conference.

MR. GARRISON: Mr. Chairman, I think since the matter has been brought up, I would request that the press conference be read into the record.

DR. EVANS: I think that is very wise.

MR. GRAY: As Dr. Whitman indicated, this is entitled, "Excerpts from Department of Defense, Office of Public Information, Minutes of Press Conference held by the Honorable Charles E. Wilson, Secretary of Defense, Wednesday, 14 April 1954, 3:00 p.m., Room 3E-869, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C."

There are some dots. I am not clear what that indicates, but following the dots:

"THE PRESS: Mr. Wilson, can you discuss the Dr. Oppenheimer situation at all?

"SECY. WILSON: No. I'd class this in the same category. That is apparently going to be reviewed by a board. I shouldn't comment on that either.

"I would like to comment, without referring to people or any particular incidents. On this question of security risks and loyalty, they are distinctly different things. If a man is accused of being disloyal or subversive, that is some kind of an act against the country. The security risk business is simply trying to eliminate the people that are more than average security risks, so that you don't get them in the wrong place where they might do some damage. In other words, we are trying to prevent the trouble instead of getting into trouble and then accusing somebody of disloyalty or subversive activities and trying them or court martialing them like we would in the Army. That is a distinct difference and it should be understood.

"I might explain it. It is a little bit like

selecting a teller in a bank. The president of a bank selects a teller. If the man frequents gambling joints and has contacts with the underworld, you ordinarily don't hire him. Or if you found out after you did hire him that at one time he had been convicted of theft or something like that, maybe he is reformed and all, but you still don't expose him again. You don't wait until he has stolen money from the bank and then try to do something about it. You try to get people that are qualified and are not financial risks in that sense.

"Now, the American people, I am sure, would like to get rid of the people that are security risks out of their armed services. It is too important a matter. So, if you men could clarify this business for the benefit of the public, the difference between accusing a man of being disloyal to his country and of subversion, in which case he could go to jail or have all kinds of things done to him for the crimes that he had committed, the other thing is that just on account of his association and his train of thought and his previous activities he is a bad risk, so you don't expose him to a place where he might do the wrong thing."

Then there are some more dots.

"THE PRESS: This hypothetical question concerns, say, some specialist in a field that the military services might require. He is one of the three or four men in the country who is qualified to handle a certain problem that concerns

weapons that the Defense Department is interested in, and the project is a very important one, a top priority project. This man as a young man may have had some communist connections or sympathies and at the present time he indicates that he no longer has them. His services are important to the Defense Department. What would you do about bringing him in to work on that project?

"SECY. WILSON: I'd look at the other two or three if he is one out of three or four. (laughter).

"THE PRESS: Let's add another point. Suppose that he is the key man in that situation and without him you could not get any success in the project.

"SECY. WILSON: This is an awfully big country and I doubt if there are any such people.

"THE PRESS: Mr. Secretary, I'll ask you a specific question on the same lines. I believe it is correct that the Army and possibly the Air Force brought to this country a great number of German scientists to work on guided missiles development, men with a record of recent past association with the Nazis. How does that square with what you are saying, or do you think that was a mistake?

"SECY. WILSON: There is no way I can pass on it broadly. You'd have to look at each case on its own.

"THE PRESS: Would you say, sir, that we have reached the stage in our atomic weapons development so that we no

longer need the services of important theoretical physicists and mathematicians, that it is now largely an engineering or applications engineering problem?

"SECY. WILSON: No, I wouldn't say that.

"THE PRESS: In other words, we still need the type of scientist that I was referring to earlier?

"SECY. WILSON: That's right."

More dots.

"THE PRESS: Mr. Secretary, have you expressed yourself about the various reports that the H bomb development might have been unduly delayed?

"SECY. WILSON: No. I have never made any comment on it.

"THE PRESS: Do you have one?

"SECY. WILSON: No.

"THE PRESS: Do you know of any such delays?

"SECY. WILSON: See, I wasn't even here in my present position, and that one also comes under this category of something that is being reviewed. So, I shouldn't try to get into the play from the sidelines.

"THE PRESS: Sir, has the Defense Department brought down a blank wall between any other scientists and its atomic weapons research besides Dr. Oppenheimer?

"SECY. WILSON: Well, we are carefully going over everything in connection with our present security regulations for civilians and military people as well. The directive I

put out last Thursday clarified the thing somewhat in the military establishment and was an effort to have the uniform procedures and step them up and handle the thing more promptly than we had.

"THE PRESS: But nothing has been done in the case of any individual?

"SECY. WILSON: Well, of course they are being worked on all the time.

"THE PRESS: Has there been any attention --

"THE PRESS: Any more top attention, someone, say, as of great prominence as Dr. Oppenheimer. Do you know of anyone else?

"SECY. WILSON: No, I don't.

"THE PRESS: Mr. Wilson, there has been a suggestion--

"SECY. WILSON: See, actually we are not trying to hurt anybody or smear anybody. We are just trying to do a good job for the country as quietly as we can and quite frankly, I have great sympathy for people that have made a mistake and have reformed, but we don't think we ought to reform them in the military establishment. They ought to have a chance somewhere else.

"THE PRESS: Does that mean that Dr. Oppenheimer will no longer be admitted to military bases --

"SECY. WILSON: Well --

"THE PRESS: -- or military secrets?

"SECY. WILSON: His case is being reviewed by a proper board that has been appointed for the purpose, I understand."

More dots.

"THE PRESS: Mr. Secretary, is Dr. Oppenheimer on any advisory boards or committees in connection with special weapons or research and development in the armed forces?"

"SECY. WILSON: No, he was a consultant to the Research and Development Board until that was abolished last July after we got the Reorganization Plan No. 6 in effect for the Department of Defense.

"THE PRESS: Why was he dropped then?"

"SECY. WILSON: We dropped the whole Board. That was a real smooth way of doing that one as far as the Defense Department was concerned. (Laughter)."

More dots.

"THE PRESS: Mr. Secretary, if the Defense Department needed a scientist -- this is a hypothetical question -- who had questionable association in his past and where the Defense Department thought that the services they could get from that scientist would outweigh the harm he might do because of possible bad associations, would you take him on?"

"SECY. WILSON: Well, I suppose the answer there would depend on how critical the thing was and what the degree of past record was and so forth. That is one I might put up

to Moses. (Laughter) Any of you remember reading how Moses' father in law told him how to organize the children of Israel for effective operation?

"THE PRESS: Well, how about Saint Paul -- (Laughter)

"SECY. WILSON: I don't know whether you would refer that one to Moses or not."

More dots.

"THE PRESS: Mr. Secretary, another Moses question. During the time that this has been up, this current problem we have with the AEC and so on, has anybody figured out how to keep secrets from men who probably put the secrets in in the first place?

"SECY. WILSON: Well, maybe I should tell you a story on that one."

That is the end of the document which I have.

BY MR. ROBB:

Q Doctor, do you agree with Mr. Wilson's philosophy or theory respecting security risks as expressed in that press conference?

A I would find it quite difficult to say what Mr. Wilson's philosophy is from this press conference.

Q May I ask you another question along those same lines? You said that you reviewed this file. From that am I to take it that some question had arisen which you were asked to answer?

A Yes. The President's executive order had come out. This file was referred to my attention because it obviously fell under the President's security order. It was obvious to the security officers of ODM. They felt that this was a case to be reviewed.

Q That is what I am getting at. You did not read the President's order and automatically get the file. Somebody brought it to you because of the President's order?

A That is correct, yes.

Q Am I to gather that whoever it was that brought it to you expressed the view that this file on its face raised some question about Dr. Oppenheimer?

A Yes.

Q Doctor, you spoke of the Vista Project and your trip to see General Eisenhower. Had you participated in the writing of that report?

A I had not.

Q Was that the report that was prepared in Pasadena in the fall of 1951?

A Yes.

Q Had Dr. Oppenheimer taken any part in that as far as you know?

A I am quite sure that Dr. Oppenheimer had worked with the Vista Project to some degree, particularly in the section dealing with atomic energy.

Q Do you know what part he had played in connection with that section?

A I am not too clear on that, but I believe he had quite a significant part in helping in the drafting of that chapter.

Q Did you ever discuss it with him?

A Yes.

Q Could you tell us from your discussion with him what his views were on that subject?

A I know that he felt that the atomic weapon had a potentially very important part in the problem of ground operations, particularly in the defense of Western Europe. He felt that there were many opportunities to exploit the atomic weapon which should be aggressively developed.

Q I assume that these questions relate to the fall of 1951. Did he give you his views at that time in connection with this report, about how he thought the available stockpile of atomic weapons should be divided?

A Yes. With the growing stockpile he very definitely felt that a range of the smaller weapons which would be useful for tactical purposes should be increased in numbers as against what we supposed to be the current plans on the production schedule.

Q You mean the current plans with respect to the proportion which should be assigned to the Strategic Air

Command.

A As I recall it, the nature of the proposal was to considerably increase the amount available for the smaller weapons -- my recollection is weak on this -- but I don't think it seriously or greatly changed the amount available for the big weapons. I may be wrong on that.

Let me point out that the technology was developing at that stage to the point where it became possible to make these weapons with a much smaller amount of fissionable material than had previously been regarded as necessary.

Q Did Dr. Oppenheimer express the opinion that the proportion of atomic weapons to be assigned to the Strategic Air Command should be kept the same, increased or decreased?

A Frankly I don't recall.

Q Did he express any opinion to you as to whether there should be any announcement by the United States with respect to the possibility of a strategic atomic attack on Russia?

A I am going to try to answer this as carefully as I can.

Q Yes, sir.

A In the course of our trip over to SHAPE -- we flew over and we had discussions and we met with General Eisenhower as I say, and we had other discussions -- many facets of the atomic weapon utilization were discussed among the four of us who were there. As is customary in such discussions,

almost every shade of opinion was expressed in exploring the future of the atomic weapon.

For example, I would probably present the arguments one way and then turn around and try to present them the other way. Dr. Oppenheimer certainly expressed many views about the most effective utilization of the atomic weapon in the problems of our military strength. He was quite convinced, as was I, that the Department of Defense had not yet realized what the potentialities of the atomic weapon were, and hence were riding the initial horse of nothing but the strategic air use of the weapon, and failing to capitalize on other uses, specifically in this case the uses in the possible defense of Western Europe.

Q Did he express any opinion as to any announcement with respect to the strategic bombing of Russia?

A We discussed the question of whether an announcement in terms of the strategic bombing of Russia would be desirable or undesirable. I think we all reached the conclusion that anything which implied any hesitancy on the part of the United States about being willing to retaliate with the atomic bomb would be disastrous. That the enemy must have no question or no feeling that there was a question in the minds of the United States about the willingness to retaliate.

Q When you say "we", whom do you mean?

A I mean the four of us.

Q You and Dr. Oppenheimer?

A Dr. DuBridge and Dr. Lauritsen.

Q You used the word "retaliate", Doctor. Was there any discussion about whether or not the United States should announce that it would not initiate a strategic bombing of Russia?

A Frankly I don't remember. It could have been discussed. I say probably it was because we were exploring all of the facets of it.

Q Can you tell us what Dr. Oppenheimer's view was on that question?

A No.

Q What was yours?

A My view was that we must give no intimation to Russia that we would hesitate to retaliate with the strategic bombing.

Q Yes, sir. What I am attempting to direct my question to now, sir, is a question not of retaliation, but of using the atomic weapon first

A I don't believe that any of us really discussed that. To me in my own view it doesn't seem like the right way to go at it, and I don't believe we discussed that.

Q Did you have any discussion about the value of the thermonuclear weapon?

A No. We were concerned at this stage with the

Vista Report dealing with the ground forces and the defense of Western Europe and the concept of the thermonuclear weapon being involved in the immediate defense of Western Europe didn't seem pertinent. We knew at that time, of course, that thermonuclear weapons of great magnitude -- well, we felt they would find their usefulness in the strategic campaign, rather than the tactical.

Q Did you have a copy of this Vista Report with you when you went over there?

A Yes, a draft of it.

Q A draft of it?

A Not the final Vista Report. In fact, might I interject one of the main reasons for going on this trip was so that General Eisenhower and others over there could be apprised of the Vista findings and tentative conclusions and could express their judgment before the report was quite finalized.

Q Did the draft that you had with you include the section to which you referred on atomic weapons?

A Yes.

Q Was that section later changed?

A I think it was. I think practically everything in that draft -- I mean many of the salient features of that draft -- were changed. That was the purpose of the visit.

Q Can you tell us anything about what led up to the change in the section of that report having to do with

atomic weapons?

A I think that the discussions at that time were an important part of the process of bringing the report into final form. May I emphasize the main purpose of this was to go over with a rough draft and see what the final report should say.

Q What was the date when you went over? I don't mean the exact date.

A It was early December of 1951.

Q Before you went over, do you recall talking to Mr. William Burden and Mr. Garrison Norton about the report?

A Yes.

Q They came to see you in your office, did they?

A They did.

Q And they discussed the section of the report having to do with atomic weapons, didn't they?

A Yes.

Q Did they tell you that they were disturbed about it?

A Yes.

Q Did they tell you why?

A Yes.

Q What did they say?

A They were very much concerned --

Q May I interrupt before you start that? Will you tell who those gentlemen were?

A Mr. Burden was the Special Assistant to Tom Finletter who was the Secretary of the Air Force. Mr. Garrison Norton, I believe, was assistant to Mr. Burden.

Q Now will you go ahead and tell us what they said about it?

A Yes. They were quite disturbed that the effect of the presentation of atomic weapons in the tactical picture would react unfavorably upon the strategic air force which -- no, I will try to give you what they said -- on the strategic air force and its mission to knock out Russia.

Q Did you have a copy of the draft before you when you talked with them?

A No, I think not.

Q Did they tell you who had prepared the particular section to which they took exception?

A They said that chapter had been written primarily by Dr. Oppenheimer.

Q Did you tell them you were disturbed too about it?

A I said I was disturbed because they were disturbed and that I would have an opportunity to discuss this with Dr. Oppenheimer and Dr. DuBridge.

Q Did you express the view that efforts should be made to have this section modified?

A I certainly said that if it contained the implications which they were worried about, there should

probably be some modification. You must realize that I was not familiar at that time with what the chapter said.

MR. ROBB: That is all I care to ask, Mr. Chairman.

MR. GRAY: I have a couple of questions.

I would like to continue now, because I think we are so nearly through we won't have to call you back after lunch.

For the record under whose auspices was the Vista contract made?

THE WITNESS: The Vista contract was administered under one of the branches of the Army. It may have been the Signal Corps. I am not sure.

MR. GRAY: But not under the Research and Development Board?

THE WITNESS: No.

MR. GRAY: So you had no responsibility for the Vista report?

THE WITNESS: I had only this responsibility, that the general problem of coordinating the research and development was a responsibility of my office and this was a project which, administered by the Army, nevertheless had great Air Force and a little Navy interest in it. It was so full of suggestions on research and development that there was a distinct interest and responsibility on my part in terms of the nature of the report and the subsequent implementation of the research and development features.

MR. GRAY: I didn't mean to imply by that that you were dealing with something which was not your concern. But it was not your direct responsibility.

THE WITNESS: That is correct, although Mr. Lovett and I, talking over the question of the visit to SHAPE Agreed that this Vista report was of such significance in research and development that the particular visit should be arranged as a Research and Development Board visit with me in attendance as the Chairman of the RDB. So we really went over under the sponsorship of the RDB rather than of the Army.

MR. GRAY: In your testimony, Dr. Whitman, you said that Dr. Oppenheimer more than any other man had educated the military as to the true potentiality of atomic weapons or something to that effect.

THE WITNESS: That is my belief. From my observation I would so say.

MR. GRAY: I don't question it. I am interested to know how was this educational process carried out? What were the mechanics? Who were the people? Who was it that needed to be educated?

THE WITNESS: Practically all of the officers. After all, this was really a very new field. Dr. Oppenheimer was able to carry out that education considerably by virtue of his connection with the Research and Development Board as a member of the Committee on Atomic Energy, which contained

such people as Admiral Parsons, who subsequently has died. As Captain Parsons he dropped the bomb over Hiroshima. General Nichols, now the manager of the AEC, General Bunker of the Air Force, men of that ilk.

MR. GRAY: Military people.

THE WITNESS: I might say also General McCormack who at that time was in the AEC in charge of the Military Division, but who subsequently went back into the Air Force. Men of that ilk who were leaders in the field and lots of others who were coming along. There has been a tremendous problem of education in this entirely new weapon.

MR. GRAY: But it was in Dr. Oppenheimer's relationship to the Research and Development Board that these educational processes took place?

THE WITNESS: I would say that was an important part of it. He, of course, has had many contacts with the military in other ways. This is the one I had the best opportunity to observe.

MR. GRAY: Dr. Whitman, I don't suggest anything sinister about this, but I think you are the third witness who has said that he felt that the use of hydrogen weapons in an all out war would mean "the end of civilization as we know it." This is I think the precise language. This language appears in a report some place in which you participated. I don't want to pursue this too far, but I was just struck by

the fact --

THE WITNESS: I don't recall it in any report. But in my conversations when Mr. Lovett was Secretary of Defense, in our circle, I reiterated this point and brought it up again and again as indicating the relative emphasis which we must follow in the Defense Department, particularly in research and development, but in other ways. In other words, what things come first. I have had occasion to appraise this and biological warfare and chemical warfare and lots of other things, and these are rather testing appraisals over a period of two years when I was responsible there, and every time the answer came up that while we had the gun pointed at Russia's heart, Russia now has it as well pointed at our heart. Either one can put it through to knock the other fellow out. I do feel that the future of civilization --

MR. GRAY: I don't question your feeling. I don't want to pursue it.

I have two questions now, and I am through.

In your testimony earlier you said that the reading of the Nichols letter of December 23 does not change your mind at all or would not change your position which you took in July of 1953, with respect to clearance of Dr. Oppenheimer, for classified information. I would just like to have it clear, is that on the assumption that the derogatory information contained therein is true, or that it is not true, or do

you make any assumption about that?

THE WITNESS: Might I explain why I say this?

MR. GRAY: Yes, I would like for you to.

THE WITNESS: General Nichols' letter contains for the most part material which I had already reviewed and had rather prayerfully reached my own conclusion. It contains in addition what I regard as a very serious charge, that Robert Oppenheimer obstructed and tried to delay progress on the hydrogen bomb. Because my own association with him started in 1950, and had been quite intimate since that, when he would have put in the obstructions after the President's decision if he were obstructing it, my own personal experience with him convinces me that is false. So the only additional information above the file is something on which I have a right to a strong personal opinion by association.

MR. GRAY: I think that is a clear statement.

My question now is, did you come to your conclusion with respect to the other derogatory information, other than the hydrogen bomb obstruction, on the assumption that all of that might have been true, and nevertheless you felt there was no security problem?

THE WITNESS: Yes. I realized of course that it could not all be true, because some of it is contradictory. I was willing to assume that the damaging statements in there could have been true and still reached the conclusion.

MR. GRAY: Or today you would say assuming it is true, you would still reach this conclusion?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

MR. GRAY: Did the security officers in the Military Establishment make any recommendations to you with respect to your position, which is reflected in the memorandum you wrote?

THE WITNESS: I think they made the recommendation that this is a case which I must review under the President's order. I don't know. In fact I don't recall ever having had them say that "We think"-- I mean express the judgment -- that he should not be reappointed. They may well, but I don't recall it. I wouldn't be advised if they had, because security officers are notably careful as policemen to take the negative point of view.

MR. GRAY: Aren't government officials generally careful?

THE WITNESS: I am afraid they are too much. This is why I said I rather prayerfully thought this whole thing over before I came out with the unqualified recommendation that he be reappointed.

MR. GRAY: Yes. Your recommendation is very clear. Do you have any questions?

DR. EVANS: Are you a Communist?

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

DR. EVANS: You have never been, have you?

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

DR. EVANS: Are you a fellow traveler?

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

DR. EVANS: You never have been?

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

DR. EVANS: Have you belonged to those subversive organizations mentioned by the Attorney General?

THE WITNESS: No, sir.

DR. EVANS: Have you met any Communists?

THE WITNESS: I have met Russians during the war when I was with the War Production Board where I had to deal with them on issues of supplies for Russia.

DR. EVANS: Have you met any Americans that turned out to be Communists?

THE WITNESS: I don't recall that I ever have, Dr. Evans.

DR. EVANS: I have no more questions.

MR. SILVERMAN: I have, I think, two questions.

REDIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q Dr. Whitman, if you can answer this in the presence of people who are not cleared to receive classified information, would you say whether the military is now following the policy of the broad use of atomic weapons pretty much as you stated

Dr. Oppenheimer's views to be?

A As of the time when I left the Defense Department last summer, there was great progress in that direction. I can't speak beyond that, the 31st of July 1953.

Q Was that true in connection with the defense of Europe, too, again if you can say it?

A Yes. Of course, we are also, or they were actually seriously considering the use of the atomic weapon in our own air defense here in this continent.

Q Did you feel that Dr. Oppenheimer's views as to relative division of fissionable materials between strategic bombing uses and other uses were motivated by anything other than considerations for the security and defense of the United States?

A Not at all.

MR. SILVERMAN: I have no further questions.

MR. ROBB: No further questions.

MR. GRAY: Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

MR. SILVERMAN: Mr. Chairman, there is one question I overlooked. May I ask it?

MR. GRAY: Counsel has another question for you.

MR. SILVERMAN: I am sorry.

BY MR. SILVERMAN:

Q Dr. Whitman, did you have an informal or formal

security board that looked into the question or looked at your recommendation afterwards with respect to Dr. Oppenheimer?

A I had a security board set up under me to give me advice. This particular board did not look at Dr. Oppenheimer's case prior to my receiving it. Now, by hearsay I understand that that board was continued by my successor, and did review the case and my recommendation, but that is purely hearsay.

Q Do you know whether they agreed with your recommendation?

A Hearsay, they did.

Q Who were the members of the board?

A Dr. Robert W. Cairns, who at the time was my vice chairman. Dr. L. T. E. Thompson, who at the time was my vice chairman, and General John Hines, who was my senior Army officer.

MR. SILVERMAN: That is all.

RE-CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. ROBB:

Q You mean you already decided the case before they reviewed it?

A No, I think I explained that because my term was going to be over at the end of the month, and I realized that this case would not be finally decided until the new Assistant Secretary came in, what I did was reviewed the case and gave my recommendation which by hearsay subsequently Mr. Quarles

referred to this same informal committee that I had appointed.

MR. ROBB: That is all. Thank you.

MR. GRAY: Thank you very much.

(Witness excused.)

MR. GRAY: We will reconvene at 2:15.

MR. GARRISON: Mr. Chairman, could we have a little bit longer, because we have a problem with witnesses. Could we make it 2:30?

MR. GRAY: We will make it 2:30.

(Thereupon at 1:15 p.m., a recess was taken until 2:30 p.m., the same day.)