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Metallurgical Laboratory

MUC-LS-71

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July 25, 1945

DR. LEO SZILARD ON
AND WAS TURNED OVER TO
ARGONNE NATIONAL LABORATORY
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1958

Major General L. R. Groves
P.O. Box 2610
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Major C. C. Pierce

Dear Major Pierce:

Enclosed I am sending you a copy of the letter which I wrote to Captain Lavender on February 27, 1945. I understand that the procedure which I proposed in it comes in conflict with certain general regulations which your office has issued. Since my proposal is compatible with actual requirements of security even though it may not fit in with your general regulations, may I request that an exception be made in order to fit the requirements of my case?

In view of the last paragraph of my letter of February 27 Captain Lavender's organization did not feel free to hand over to me the text of such patent applications as they have prepared for fear that I might make a copy for myself. As a result a situation has arisen in which I am asked to study voluminous documents prepared by Captain Lavender's organization which are shown to me but are not handed over to me. This procedure is quite anomalous and makes it exceedingly difficult for me to ascertain that the patent applications are properly drawn-up and that I am actually their joint or sole inventor.

Your general regulations as interpreted by Captain Lavender are in the circumstances hindering the speedy filing of patent applications which have been prepared by Captain Lavender and of which I might be the inventor.

Very truly yours,

Leo Szilard

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cc: Dr. R. C. Tolman

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Metallurgical Laboratory

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July 26, 1945

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MRP
J. M.

Major General L. R. Groves
P.O. Box 2610
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Major C. C. Pierce

Dear Major Pierce:

In 1940 I sent a manuscript to the Physical Review which was received on February 16, 1940 and subsequently accepted for publication. The printing of this paper was held up at my request since I believed that the publication of this paper was against the interests of the United States.

On your last visit to Chicago you acquainted me with certain material which you said might be released for publication in the near future. It is my impression that if and when that material is released for publication the further holding up of the printing of my paper would no longer serve any useful purpose. I would, therefore, appreciate your letting me know if you see any objection to its printing if the release of information which you now anticipate becomes an actual fact.

A report, A-55, which is practically identical with the original manuscript of my paper is enclosed for your convenience in order to enable you to answer the question raised in this letter.

Very sincerely yours,

LS

Leo Szilard

LS:sw

enc. (1)

CONFIDENTIAL
WAR DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 2610
WASHINGTON, D. C.

September 15, 1945

Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Chancellor Hutchins:

I have just learned that you are planning to have a meeting from September 19 to September 22 of physical and social scientists, public officials and other citizens to discuss the problems raised by certain recent applications of new scientific developments in military use. I understand that a number of scientists who have been connected with the Manhattan District have been invited and that some of them are planning to attend.

Frankly I am worried about the grave security hazards. Such hazards are inherent in any discussion which inevitably will constantly border on classified information particularly where the degrees of authorized knowledge possessed by the individual participants are so varied. Experience has taught us that it is impossible to control such an affair. No matter how well planned the conference, discussions can not be limited to the necessary degree. The situation is made even worse by the well known fact that the War Department still has a secret contract with the University of Chicago.

The President of the United States has directed all government executive agencies that all vital information pertaining to the Manhattan Project remain secret. These vital phases include everything pertaining to the supply of raw materials, the present state of research, the design and construction of the bomb and everything pertaining thereto, stockpiles of end material, and the production capacities and methods. The limits of discussion are the Smyth Report and other authorized public releases.

Not only is information harmful but misinformation and speculation, no matter how wild, in such a group in a conference sponsored by one of the several universities which played important roles in the successful development of the atomic bomb is certain to be most damaging to security and to the best interests of the United States.

For your information I am enclosing a copy of an announcement to the press which the President of the United States has just directed. I would suggest that you call its contents to the attention of the persons attending the conference.

If there are any details which may bother you regarding the security problems involved in your scheduled conference, Lt. Col. A. V. Peterson who is now in Chicago at the Metallurgical Laboratory would be happy to discuss them with you.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) L. R. Groves
Major General, USA

1 Incl.