Response Week 4

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HST 415 / Alex Wellerstein

Why and how did the Soviet US relations go so bad? They fought together in the war and from your accounts in the lecture they were just trying to be on even footing with US. I guess they were paranoid on both sides. Why did Oppenheimer do whatever General Groves said? He supported the original Johnson-May bill even though that was completely against his beliefs. What would have happened if the scientist’s bill went through? How would the world be today with open information about the atomic bomb? The world could have been vastly different and relationships with countries would have been different as well.

I think the practicality of the proposal was decent. Controlling the spread of information about these bombs is hard. Trusting people not to gab about one of the most important lifechanging pieces of technology in the world at that time would have been impossible. Controlling the materials needed to make the bomb would have been easier to do. However, there could have been reserves somewhere in Russia or somewhere else that could have been secretly discovered and mined for the use of nuclear weapons. Also, entire secret facilities could have been built without the knowledge of the UN or anybody else and could endanger the integrity of the ADA system.

I think today if it worked it would have been a great idea. A central body that controls and disperses the global uranium supply would have probably helped many up and coming countries to rise to the level of the United States. I think a large issue would have been funding for the ADA since it would have to have serious training for inspections and such involved. I think the only problem would have been innovation such as bomb design since the ADA commission probably would not give you uranium for bombs.

I still find this very appealing; world peace sounds nice.

The issue I chose from the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists is February 15th, 1946. The headline reads: “The Effect of the Atomic Bomb on Naval Power”. I think at the time many people were talking about the use of the bomb and that is why this popped up. If a submarine was equipped with an atomic missile the range of the bomb would be pretty much around the world. Any place can become target suddenly without even knowing. If the navy had access to the atomic bomb there would be a constant threat of instant annihilation. The second part of the article talks about the economic implications of atomic energy. To harness atomic power during that time was a kind of dream. To have it accessible to all would be a great thing for the world. Economies that can use this unlimited energy would be able to innovate a lot faster. The article also goes into the expenses of piles of plutonium to generating heat for electrical transmission. I thought most of this would be restricted data. Reading more it looks like the writer did not use specific numbers to describe the economics of creating these piles and such.