

U.S. Senate Honors Soviet Spy

The Senate of the United States on June 24 passed a resolution honoring a Soviet spy. It happened on June 24, when, under the prodding of Senator Jeff Bingaman, Majority Leader Bill Frist brought to the floor a resolution (S. Res. 321) to recognize the "loyal service" of J. Robert Oppenheimer of America's Manhattan project that produced the atomic bomb. The resolution also directed the Energy Department to honor Oppenheimer with a special event. The problem is that Oppenheimer was a member of the Communist Party and a traitor to the United States. He was part of a group that facilitated the betrayal of America's atomic secrets to the Soviet Union.

Bingaman insists, in the face of the evidence, that Oppenheimer was an "atomic patriot" and was later punished not for his communist activities but for "his opinions and past associations." The co-sponsors of his bill were Senators Pete Domenici and Diane Feinstein.

Herbert Romerstein, a former professional staff member of the House Intelligence Committee and co-author of a book on Soviet espionage, *The Venona Secrets*, says we know Oppenheimer was a Soviet spy based on American interception of communications by the Soviet intelligence service during World War II. The code name for that interception was Venona. They reveal that Soviet intelligence had close contacts with Oppenheimer and used him as an agent. Another source is the Soviet spymaster Pavel Sudoplatov, who wrote a letter to the then-head of the Soviet Communist Party, Yuri Andropov. Sudoplatov boasted about his achievements, including getting information on the U.S. atom bomb. And one of the critical sources of information for the Soviets, Sudoplatov said, was J. Robert Oppenheimer.

Romerstein says there are not enough Venona intercepts to know exactly what Oppenheimer gave the Soviets. "except that they [the Soviets] were not in contact with people for frivolous reasons. They were in contact with members of the American Communist Party such as J. Robert Oppenheimer so those people could give them classified information. That's what they wanted and that's what they got." Romerstein adds, "There isn't any question that Oppenheimer was a traitor to the United States and doesn't deserve any of the honors that these people [in the Senate] want to give him."

So how and why did the Senate honor him? Romerstein, who worked on Capitol Hill for 18 years, notes that the resolution honoring Oppenheimer was passed by unanimous consent when it was likely that few Senators were even on the Senate floor. Out of the 100 Senators, he said, there probably aren't five of them who know anything about Oppenheimer.

Frist was undoubtedly assured by Bingaman and others that it was a non-controversial resolution and that any questions about Oppenheimer had been resolved in his favor. Indeed, in a controversial development that occurred during the Clinton Administration, a statement from FBI Director Louis Freeh was released, taking issue with the evidence that Oppenheimer had knowingly supplied classified information to the Soviets. However, this was before the Venona secrets were released, confirming Oppenheimer's espionage activity.

The Bingaman resolution doesn't just honor Oppenheimer's "loyal service." It directs the Secretary of Energy to observe the 100th anniversary of his birth "with appropriate ceremonies, activities, or programs at the Department of Energy and the Los Alamos National Laboratory." In fact, Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham has already done so, having given a November 10, 2003, speech at the National Press Club heralding the "wizardry" of Oppenheimer and praising him and others who "shape the course of World War II and gave us a nuclear deterrent that helped prevent global conflict during the Cold War." In fact, Oppenheimer facilitated the passing of America's atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, making the world extremely dangerous for decades to come.

On July 11, 2004, in a separate development, Los Alamos National Laboratories Director Pete Nanos participated in a ceremony honoring Oppenheimer and featuring the unveiling of a plaque at the "Oppenheimer house," the former house of the "progressive scientist," as he was described in *la monitor*, the "online news source for Los Alamos."

There currently exists a "J. Robert Oppenheimer Study Center" on the campus of Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Controversy has followed Oppenheimer for decades. He lost his security clearance after the war amidst charges he was a communist – charges that he denied. Professor Gregg Herken, formerly of the Smithsonian Institution, says the evidence clearly shows that Oppenheimer lied about his communist Party membership. But Herken is not convinced Oppenheimer spied for the Soviet Union. Two others, Professor Martin Sherwin and Kai Bird of *The Nation* magazine, who have written a book on Oppenheimer, even dispute that he was a communist.

Romerstein says it is apparent that Herken doesn't know much about the matter. The Communist Party USA was a totally owned subsidiary of the Soviet Communist Party and received funding every year from KGB channels. The leadership of the party had the job of identifying those party members who would be useful to the Soviets for spying. And no communist party member contacted during world War II to spy for the Soviet Union turned them down. They agreed to do so because communists were Soviet patriots, They were not American patriots."

The Nation, he points out, is notorious for continuing to believe in the innocence of Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs. Hiss, who was convicted of perjury for denying he was a Soviet spy, became the first acting secretary general of the United Nations. The Rosenbergs were convicted and executed for passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. Their son, Robert Meeropol, granted an interview to the Communist Party newspaper, *The People's Weekly World* of June 24, declaring that he is voting for Kerry this year. He says, "...I want Kerry to get as many votes as he possibly can..." He's voting for Kerry, he says, because "this cabal of Bush and his cronies are so dangerous..." He fears "right-wing domination" and an "authoritarian government" in the U.S.

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RECOGNIZING J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER -- (Senate - June 24, 2004)

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Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 531, S. Res. 321.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. Res. 321) recognizing the loyal service and outstanding contributions of J. Robert Oppenheimer to the United States and calling on the Secretary of Energy to observe the 100th anniversary of Dr. Oppenheimer's birth with appropriate programs at the Department of Energy and the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the **RECORD** as if read, without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 321) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. Res. 321

Whereas from March 1943 to October 1945, J. Robert Oppenheimer was the first director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, New Mexico, which was used to design and build the nuclear weapons that ended the Second World War:

Whereas following the end of the Second World War, Dr. Oppenheimer served as a science adviser and consultant to each of the 3 principal committees planning for the post-war control of nuclear energy, including the Secretary of War's Interim Committee on Atomic Energy, the Secretary of State's Committee on Atomic Energy, and the United Nations Atomic Energy Committee:

Whereas from 1947 to 1952, Dr. Oppenheimer was the first chairman of the General Advisory Committee, which advised the Atomic Energy Commission on scientific and technical matters;

Whereas from 1947 to 1954, Dr. Oppenheimer also served on defense policy committees, including the Committee on Atomic Energy of the Joint Research and Development Board, the Science Advisory Committee of the Office of Defense

Mobilization, and the Panel on Disarmament of the Department of State;

Whereas in addition to his service to the United States Government, Dr. Oppenheimer was the director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University from 1947 to 1965;

Whereas in 1946, President Truman conferred on Dr. Oppenheimer the Medal for Merit "for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service" as director of the Los Alamos Laboratory and for development of the atomic bomb;

Whereas in 1963, President Lyndon Johnson conferred on Dr. Oppenheimer the Enrico Fermi Award "for contributions to theoretical physics as a teacher and originator of ideas and for leadership of the Los Alamos Laboratory and the atomic energy program during critical years"; and

Whereas April 22, 2004, is the 100th anniversary of Dr. Oppenheimer's birth: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate--

(1) recognizes the loyal service of J. Robert Oppenheimer to the United States and the outstanding contributions he made to theoretical physics, the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the development of nuclear energy, and the common defense and security of the United States; and

(2) calls on the Secretary of Energy to observe the 100th anniversary of the birth of J. Robert Oppenheimer with appropriate ceremonies, activities, or programs at the Department of Energy and the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

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Title: A resolution recognizing the loyal service and outstanding contributions of J. Robert Oppenheimer to the United States and calling on the Secretary of Energy to observe the 100th anniversary of Dr. Oppenheimer's birth with appropriate programs at the Department of Energy and the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Sponsor: [Sen. Bingaman, Mark](#) [NM] (introduced 3/12/2004) [Cosponsors \(2\)](#)

Latest Major Action: 6/24/2004 Passed/agreed to in Senate. Status: Resolution agreed to in Senate without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent.

Senate Reports: [108-275](#)

COSPONSORS(2), ALPHABETICAL [followed by Cosponsors withdrawn]: (Sort: by date)

[Sen. Lautenberg, Pete V.](#) [NM] - 3/12/2004 [Sen. Feinstein, Dianne](#) [CA] - 3/12/2004

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U.S. Senate Committee on

Energy and Natural Resources

Bill Wicker

Communications Director

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Speech

June 25, 2004

Bingaman To Acknowledge Historical Injustice to Atomic Patriot

The Senate last night passed a resolution recognizing the loyal service to America of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, who led the Los Alamos National Laboratory during the Manhattan Project, but who subsequently became a political target during the 1950s. The resolution, introduced by Sen. Bingaman and co-sponsored by Sen. Domenici and Sen. Feinstein, coincides with the 100th anniversary of Oppenheimer's birth year.

Tomorrow morning, Sen. Bingaman will speak at Los Alamos at a symposium celebrating the Oppenheimer centennial. Bingaman will focus not so much on Dr. Oppenheimer's contributions to the development of the atomic bomb during World War II, but on his opposition to the development of the hydrogen bomb in the early years of the Cold War, and on the high price he paid for that resistance. Dr. Oppenheimer was tried by a "personnel security board" for his opinions and his past associations and, 50 years ago next Tuesday, stripped of his security clearance, barring him from any further work on the nation's nuclear programs.

Bingaman's speech will recognize that an injustice was done. We hope you will take a moment to read it.

OPPENHEIMER RECONSIDERED Remarks of Senator Jeff Bingaman Saturday, June 26, 2004

The story of Robert Oppenheimer is as timely as today's news and as timeless as a Greek tragedy. He was a brilliant scientist who devoted his talents to the service of his country. He was celebrated for making the atomic bomb and vilified for not wanting to make the hydrogen bomb. He helped unlock the secrets of the atom for his country and, in the end, his Government would not trust him with those secrets.

His contributions to the Manhattan Project and to Los Alamos are legendary. He came up with the idea of a central weapons laboratory, and he picked the site for it, here at Los Alamos. Although there were many brilliant scientists and engineers who made enormous contributions to the Manhattan Project, Oppenheimer's contribution was unique. He was the Laboratory's first director; he recruited its original staff; and he led it to its wartime success.

Shortly after the war, Dr. Oppenheimer spoke eloquently of the Manhattan Project as having "led us up those last few steps to the mountain pass; and beyond there is a different country." He left Los Alamos and the Manhattan Project once the height was scaled, but he continued to help us find our way through the new country. He felt a deep responsibility for his work on the Manhattan Project and thought it was his duty to continue to make his technical experience and judgment available to the Government.

For nine years after the war ended, the Government drew heavily upon his talents. He served faithfully on numerous defense and nuclear policy committees. He chaired the General Advisory Committee to the Atomic Energy Commission. Under his leadership, the General Advisory Committee promoted the development of this Laboratory, the production and perfection of atomic weapons, and the development of nuclear reactors for submarines and naval propulsion. But he—and a majority of the General Advisory Committee—opposed the development of the hydrogen bomb.

It was Dr. Oppenheimer's opposition to the H-bomb, more than anything else, that made his opponents into enemies and fueled their suspicions of his loyalty. Undoubtedly, Oppenheimer had friends and relatives who were communists. Most of those associations had been formed long before the war and most had long since ended. All of them had been thoroughly scrutinized by the Army when it cleared him in 1943 and by the Atomic Energy Commission when it cleared him in 1947. They now became the basis of new allegations. In December 1953, the Atomic Energy Commission formally charged him with disloyalty and suspended his security clearance.

Dr. Oppenheimer replied, with great dignity, that he had no desire to retain an advisory position if his advice was not needed, but that he could not ignore the suggestion that he was "unfit for public service." He decided to answer the charges against him and asked for a hearing to clear his name. What he got was not the objective "inquiry" called for by the Atomic Energy Commission's rules. It was a trial—there is no other word for it — and a grossly unfair one at that.

The charges against Dr. Oppenheimer were long and complex. Most involved his past associations, which had already been thoroughly and repeatedly investigated. But the Commission went further and charged him with having "expressed" views opposing the development of the H-bomb. That was the crux of the matter.

Dr. Oppenheimer was tried, in secret, before a specially appointed three-member personnel security board. He was prosecuted by an aggressive former criminal prosecutor specially retained for the case. The FBI bugged Oppenheimer's conversations with his lawyers and potential witnesses, and reported what it heard to the Commission. Evidence was withheld from Oppenheimer and his attorneys. Legal standards were lowered to meet the evidence. The whole affair was carefully orchestrated by the AEC's chairman, Lewis Strauss.

In the end, all three board members found Oppenheimer loyal, but two of the three concluded that he was a security risk and recommended that his security clearance not be restored. They found that his failure to give "enthusiastic support" to the H-bomb program and his "highly persuasive influence" among fellow scientists were not in "the strongest offensive military interests of the country."

Dr. Oppenheimer appealed the board's decision to the five-member Atomic Energy Commission. The Commission, by a four-to-one vote, found Oppenheimer to be loyal, but by a different four-to-one vote, found him to be a security risk. The Commission steered clear of the H-bomb charges, though they probably played a role in its decision. Instead, the majority based its decision on Oppenheimer's character and his associations.

On June 29, 1954, fifty years ago on Tuesday, the Atomic Energy Commission formally revoked Dr. Oppenheimer's clearance, forever ending his involvement in the atomic energy program. Ironically, Dr. Oppenheimer's term on the General Advisory Committee had expired two years before. His only remaining contact with the AEC was a consulting contract, which was scheduled to expire, along with his security clearance, the next day anyway.

History will be a fairer judge and will reach a truer verdict than the Commission. Robert Oppenheimer will be remembered, I believe, as a brilliant scientist who applied his talents loyally and unstintingly to our national defense. He will be remembered, too, as one who thought deeply about the forces unleashed by the Manhattan Project, and realized how essential it is for mankind to use wisely, in his words, "the new powers, the new alternatives, of an advancing mastery of nature" for "his welfare and his freedom, and not his destruction."

The clouds over Robert Oppenheimer's reputation have long since begun to dissipate. His many friends and supporters, both in the Government and in the scientific community, never doubted his loyalty. One such supporter was Senator Clinton P. Anderson. When President Eisenhower nominated Dr. Oppenheimer's nemesis, Lewis Strauss, to be the Secretary of Commerce, Senator Anderson led the opposition to the nomination. Lewis Strauss had given Senator Anderson many reasons to oppose his nomination over the years, but his abusive treatment of Dr. Oppenheimer was chief among them. The Senate rarely rejects a cabinet nomination, but at Senator Anderson's urging, the Senate rejected Lewis Strauss' nomination in 1959.

In 1963, President Kennedy selected Dr. Oppenheimer to receive the Enrico Fermi award, which President Johnson bestowed on him after President Kennedy was assassinated. In 1994, the FBI publicly announced that allegations that Dr. Oppenheimer had shared secrets with the Soviets were "unfounded."

I have sought to add to these efforts by sponsoring, along with Senator Domenici and Senator Feinstein, a Senate resolution recognizing Dr. Oppenheimer's loyal service and contributions to the nation. The Senate unanimously agreed to the resolution Thursday evening.

In closing, I commend the Atomic Heritage Foundation for holding this conference and for its efforts to preserve the Manhattan Project properties here at Los Alamos and at other sites. I support those efforts and have sponsored legislation in the Senate to have the Secretary of the Interior consider adding the major Manhattan Project sites to the National Park System. The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural

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**Exposing Soviet Espionage
and America's Traitors**

Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel

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During this time, Apresyan asked Moscow for the name of the California Communist Party leader. He received no answer, but a few weeks later when meeting with Folkoff he was told the name was Bill Schneiderman. Apresyan gave Schneiderman the *Venona* code name "Nat" and "Uncle" was back to recruiting Communist Party members for Soviet espionage.³³

Folkoff had a network of Communist Party members who assisted him in "special work"—Soviet espionage activities and the closely related underground operations of the American Communist Party. Among the operatives in this network was Rudy Lambert, the head of the California Communist Party Control Commission, the West Coast equivalent of the job held by Bernie Chester in New York.

In November 1945 NKVD San Francisco reported in a *Venona* message to Moscow that one of its agents, Callahan (the NSA identified him as Jerome Michael Callahan, a ship's clerk), had advised them that Rudolph Lambert had obtained information concerning uranium deposits in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. Moscow was asked whether it wanted additional information.³⁴

The J. Robert Oppenheimer Case

Referring to a "reliable confidential informant"—FBI code for its own wiretaps—the bureau offered this summary:

A reliable confidential informant advised that J. Robert Oppenheimer was contacted on October 3, 1941, by Isaac Folkoff, an important functionary of the Communist Party, San Francisco, who advised Oppenheimer that he would be unable to attend to a matter with him over the weekend and he had made arrangements for Steve Nelson, a member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, to see Oppenheimer for

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him at that time. According to the informant an individual who was believed to be Steve Nelson contacted Isaac Folkoff on October 6, 1941, at which time Folkoff was informed that while in the East Bay, Alameda County, on the preceding day which was October 5, 1941, he got \$100 from "him" and arranged for Leo Baroway, important functionary of the Communist Party, San Francisco, to hand it to Folkoff. The informant further advised that around October 14, 1941, J. Robert Oppenheimer contacted Isaac Folkoff and requested him to arrange for Rudy Lambert, a functionary of the Communist Party in San Francisco, to contact him. The informant advised that during the same meeting, Oppenheimer advised Folkoff that an individual whom he identified as Steve had contacted him and had given him a message for Folkoff.³⁵

Oppenheimer testified during his loyalty hearing in 1954 that he was also connected with another member of Folkoff's apparatus, Dr. Thomas Addis, who contacted Oppenheimer in the winter of 1937-1938 to ask him to contribute money to the Spanish Republican cause. Addis explained to Oppenheimer that although he was contributing money to Spanish relief organizations, he could really "do good" by providing money "through Communist Party channels, and it will really help." Oppenheimer testified that he was providing as much as \$1,000 a year of his \$15,000 income to this cause.

Oppenheimer explained that he met Addis and Rudy Lambert "through Spanish relief efforts," but the Communists were not the only channels for funds to help the Spanish Republicans. Oppenheimer could have as easily contributed to the socialist and humanitarian organizations that were also raising funds for Spanish refugees.

Oppenheimer gave the money for the Communist Party to Addis, but soon Addis told him to give it directly to Isaac Folkoff,

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who was in charge of the secret fundraising.³⁶ In 1935 Addis had visited the Soviet Union as a representative of Stanford University Hospital to attend the International Physiological Congress in Leningrad. The California District of the Communist Party wrote to the Central Committee in New York requesting that, because Addis had "been effective in bringing a large number of professional people close to the Party," he be given a "silk credential" to use on the trip.³⁷

A "silk credential" was a red ribbon signed by the head of the Communist Party. Sewn into a jacket, it was taken out in Moscow and shown to the proper authorities to identify the bearer as a trusted comrade. These "silk credentials" can actually be seen today in the Comintern archives in Moscow.

Through Addis, Oppenheimer met Louise Bransten and attended "parties" in her home at which Communist officials such as William Schneiderman tried to explain "what the Communist line was all about." Oppenheimer testified that he didn't know whether Bransten, the mistress of Kheifitz, was a Communist.³⁸ Bransten, who set up these "parties" to enable her lover, Kheifitz, to spot potential recruits for Soviet espionage, was the ex-wife of Richard Bransten, Party name Bruce Minton. According to Elizabeth Bentley, Minton supplied Jacob Golos with two people in the U.S. government who could be useful in Soviet espionage.³⁹

An FBI wiretap on February 26, 1941, revealed that Folkoff was attempting to arrange a meeting between J. Robert Oppenheimer, Rudy Lambert, and an individual known only as "Tom." It is not known whether the meeting took place, and the FBI was never able to identify "Tom," but there is an intriguing possibility—that "Tom" was the code name of the experienced NKVD officer Leonid Eitingon, who was in San Francisco at that time. According to Eitingon's superior, Pavel Sudoplatov, Eitingon "traveled across America to Los Angeles and San Francisco and sailed for China in

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February 1941. Eitingon took advantage of the trip to resume contacts with two agents he had planted in California in the beginning of the 1930s. They were to become couriers in the network obtaining American atomic secrets from 1942 to 1945." Sudoplatov described one of Eitingon's "moles" as the "owner of a medium-sized retail business"; Folkoff, a charter member of the Communist Party, owned a retail clothing business, the Model Embroidery and Pleating Company in San Francisco.⁴⁰ Eitingon was also an old friend and colleague of Kheifitz. According to Sudoplatov, Kheifitz, when he was assigned to San Francisco, was given funds to support "the two moles established by Eitingon.... From this seedbed we made our first contacts with Robert Oppenheimer and the builders of the American atomic bomb."⁴¹

In 1945 a "reliable confidential informant" gave the FBI an address book belonging to Vladimir Pozner, a Russian/French filmmaker, that contained the name and address of J. Robert Oppenheimer.⁴² While we don't know how Oppenheimer knew Pozner, we do know that Pozner was another NKVD agent. The New York *Rezidentura*, in a July 1943 *Venona* message to Moscow, reported that it was "planning to use" Vladimir Alexandrovich Pozner in its work. It gave him the *Venona* code name "Platon" and described him as "a Jew born in Leningrad no earlier than 1897." Until 1925 he had lived in Germany and then until 1941 in France. He had been in the United States since May 1941. In 1943 Pozner, a Lithuanian citizen, requested Soviet citizenship.

Pozner had worked in France for Paramount Studios and MGM as a recording engineer. In 1943 he was head of the Russian section of the film department of the United States War Department. According to the *Rezidentura*, "He has contacts in the United States which are of interest to us," and so the *Rezidentura* asked for permission to use him as an agent on the recommendation of NKVD

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officer Alexandr Fomin.⁴³ By November 1943 Pozner was being used by the *Residentura* to contact other agents and to provide his address for agents to communicate secretly with the NKVD.⁴⁴

Oppenheimer lost his security clearance in 1954 after hearings before the Atomic Energy Commission's Personnel Security Board, headed by Gordon Gray. Conventional wisdom has it that Oppenheimer was punished because he had many Communist friends. But while most members of the American Communist Party and many functionaries were not involved in Soviet espionage, evidence shows that any Party member capable of aiding Soviet intelligence was invited to do so—and did. And most of the Communists close to Oppenheimer were involved in espionage.

The FBI's interest in Oppenheimer started long before the scientist became involved in the atom bomb project. According to a March 28, 1941, FBI report from San Francisco, a wiretap revealed that in the fall of 1940 Oppenheimer had been at a meeting at the home of Haakon Chevalier, a member of the Communist Party. Identified at the meeting were Party officials Isaac Folkoff and William Schneiderman. The FBI investigation continued until 1943, when army intelligence advised the FBI that because Oppenheimer was an important official of the atom bomb project and under investigation, the army "had a full-time technical and physical surveillance of Oppenheimer." The FBI thus closed its case and did not resume the investigation until 1946, when Oppenheimer left the atom bomb project.⁴⁵

Although the case was closed, information about Oppenheimer kept appearing in other FBI investigations. The FBI's "technical surveillance," or microphone, in Steve Nelson's home provided an interesting bit of information. On March 23, 1943, Nelson told the young scientist Joseph Weinberg that he had previously approached Oppenheimer to secure information about the work done at the

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Radiation Laboratory of the University of California at Berkeley. According to Nelson, Oppenheimer refused to provide the information. (Weinberg gave Oppenheimer's name as a reference when he obtained employment at the Radiation Laboratory.)⁴⁶

Oppenheimer's refusal of Nelson's request appears to relate to an incident in the winter of 1942–1943 when Oppenheimer's friend Haakon Chevalier visited him at his home and mentioned that a mutual friend, George Eltenton, had been approached by an official of the Soviet consulate to obtain technical information on the atom bomb project for the Soviet Union. Chevalier asked Oppenheimer to provide the information, and Oppenheimer later testified that he had refused.

On August 26, 1943—months after the incident—Robert Oppenheimer decided to report it to security officers. He was interviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Boris T. Pash and Lieutenant Lyall A. Johnson of the area intelligence office at the Radiation Laboratory, but at first he refused to identify the person who had contacted him on behalf of Eltenton and the man from the Soviet consulate. But under pressure from the security officers, Oppenheimer finally named Chevalier on December 14, 1943.

When Chevalier was contacted by the FBI in June 1946, he admitted the incident with Eltenton and said he had mentioned it to Oppenheimer only to find out if secret information about the project should be made available to Russian scientists.⁴⁷ Eltenton was also interviewed by the FBI and revealed much more than either Oppenheimer or Chevalier, such as that in late 1942 Peter Ivanov of the Soviet consulate had asked him to obtain information concerning research being conducted at the University of California's Radiation Laboratory. Ivanov specifically mentioned Oppenheimer's having such information,⁴⁸ and the FBI knew that Ivanov was helping Kheifitz on atomic espionage.

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When Oppenheimer testified before the Personnel Security Board of the Atomic Energy Commission, his recollection of the story had changed. He now claimed that Chevalier told him only that Eltenton had a "means of getting technical information to Soviet scientists" and that he, Oppenheimer, thought this was terrible.⁴⁹ Oppenheimer's minimizing of the incident was directly contradicted by Eltenton in his statement to the FBI.

Oppenheimer also testified that he knew Steve Nelson through his wife, Kitty Oppenheimer, who had been a member of the Communist Party and had been in contact with Chevalier as late as 1946 and 1947.⁵⁰ Her previous husband, Joe Dallet, was a Party organizer who was killed in the Spanish Civil War. When Joe wanted Kitty to visit him in Spain, he wrote her to "get in touch with Jack in Paris" in order to organize the trip. Jack was Jack Reid, whose real name was Arnold Reisky, the head of the American section of the secret Communist apparatus in Paris that organized the supply of troops to the International Brigades. He had earlier done underground work for the American Communist Party and in 1935 worked on the secret radio that broadcast coded messages between the American Communist Party and Moscow.⁵¹ At his own request, Reid, an old friend and comrade of Dallet, was assigned to a combat role in Spain, where he was killed. Kitty's friendship with Steve Nelson dated from his Spanish Civil War connection with her late husband.

Nelson and Bernadette Doyle, the organizational secretary of the Alameda County, California, Communist Party, were rather talkative in the Party office, unaware that the FBI had a microphone planted there. In December 1942 Steve Nelson said that a Party member who was very friendly with J. Robert Oppenheimer, Dr. Hannah Peters, told him that Oppenheimer could not be active in the Party at that time "because of his employment on a special project." Doyle remarked that the matter should be taken up with

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the Party State Committee since the "two Oppys" were well known as Communist Party members.

In May 1943 John Murra, a Spanish Civil War veteran suspected by the FBI of being a Soviet intelligence agent, arrived at Alameda Party headquarters to talk to Doyle. Murra wanted to get in touch with Kitty Oppenheimer, and Doyle helped him make the contact. She told him that Robert and Kitty Oppenheimer were "comrades," that Robert was working on a special secret project at the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California, and that therefore his name must be removed from any of Murra's mailing lists.⁵² Murra knew Kitty Oppenheimer from his days in the Spanish Civil War. (Murra, together with Jack Reid, had been in the Communist secret apparatus in Paris.)⁵³

Many of Kitty Oppenheimer's friends, like her husband's, had connections to Soviet espionage. In 1936, when Kitty Oppenheimer applied for a passport, she requested that it be mailed to her in care of Zelma Baker (later Mrs. Benjamin Miller) in Philadelphia. In December 1946 the FBI interviewed the Millers because of their association with the veteran GRU officer Arthur Adams, who was assigned to steal atom bomb secrets. Dr. Miller told the FBI that he first met Adams in 1940 in Chicago when another doctor, whose name he couldn't recall, suggested that he treat Adams for a cold. From then until 1943 they met six or seven times in Chicago, and in 1944 Adams visited the Miller family at their home in Bethesda, Maryland.

Adams, the GRU officer, was under constant FBI surveillance, and some of his mail, opened by the FBI, revealed that in 1944 Zelma Miller had written him a number of times. In one of the letters, in the summer of 1944, she expressed her love for Adams and told him how anxious she was to see him. She suggested that a good time for him to visit would be the weekend of September 30 or October 14. An FBI surveillance team saw Adams contact Mrs.

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Miller while she was in New York City between trains en route from Bedford Hills, New York, to Washington, D.C. When she was questioned by the FBI, Mrs. Miller insisted she knew little of Adams, having seen him only a few times.⁵⁴

In November 1945 the San Francisco *Rezidentura* reported to the Moscow Center that Oppenheimer's brother, Frank, also took part in atomic research but warned that "scholars who have taken part in these pursuits are under the surveillance of the American counterintelligence." Robert Oppenheimer, it reported, was one of the two "chief scientific leaders on the atomic bomb."⁵⁵

Robert Oppenheimer's brother, Frank, and sister-in-law, Jacquenette, called Jackie, were also members of the Communist Party. Frank Oppenheimer worked on the atom bomb project at the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California from 1941 to 1947, and during that time he also worked on and off at Oak Ridge (1944-1945) and at Los Alamos (1945). Frank and Jackie testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1949, at which time he admitted that he had been a member of the American Communist Party from 1937 to 1941 and that he knew a Communist Party functionary named Isaac Folkoff.⁵⁶ Frank Oppenheimer also said that he had left the Communist Party in late 1940 or the first months of 1941—a year and a half into the Soviet-Nazi alliance—and admitted he knew Steve Nelson but said that he had only met him at social gatherings.

Jackie Oppenheimer, who testified at the same time, also admitted being a member of the Communist Party from 1937 to 1941 and knowing that Folkoff was a Party functionary. She remembered getting a Communist Party card but didn't remember what it looked like or whether it had a seal with a hammer and sickle. She testified that she just threw it into a dresser drawer. In fact, her 1937 membership card #56370 (actually a small book) does have a hammer and

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sickle stamp on the cover and, moreover, shows that she paid dues every month from February to November and received a dues stamp which she pasted in her Party card monthly.⁵⁷ During her testimony, she said she thought that the American Communist Party might at an "earlier" time have belonged to the Communist International,⁵⁸ and yet her Party card and that of her husband showed quite clearly "Communist Party of the USA (Section of the Communist International)" and contained an "International Solidarity" stamp for money they contributed for international Communist operations.

Two years before his testimony before the House committee, Frank Oppenheimer issued a statement to the press: "The allegation made by the *Washington Times Herald* that I had been a member of the Communist Party is a complete fabrication." The Washington newspaper had listed the numbers of his Communist Party card for 1937, 1938, and 1939.⁵⁹ The numbers were the same as those cited by the committee in 1949.

We learn more about the Oppenheimer brothers from the *Venona* messages. In December 1944 Ruth Greenglass returned to New York from a visit to her husband at Los Alamos. She reported that "Oppenheim" from California was working at the camp.⁶⁰ This appears to refer to Frank Oppenheimer, since brother Robert was the director at Los Alamos.

In May 1945 the New York *Rezidentura* sent Moscow a list of places, provided by Ted Hall ("Mlad"), where research on the atom bomb was taking place and the names of the head of each. The names of all except one were given as real names. The exception was the director at Los Alamos, where the code name "Veksel" was given for Oppenheimer.

In March 1945 the NKVD Center in Moscow ordered the New York *Rezidentura* in a *Venona* message that it should send its agent "Guron" (who could not be identified by the NSA) to Chicago to

“re-establish contact with ‘Veksel’ ... as soon as possible.”⁶¹ This incident was significant, for it revealed earlier NKVD contact with Oppenheimer and that the contacts continued while he was working on the atom bomb project. The NSA in releasing the messages commented, “The role played by the person cover named ‘Veksel’ remains uncertain but troubling.”⁶²

Perhaps we would have more answers to questions about Oppenheimer if the FBI had realized that the Illinois Communist Party head, Olsen, who worked with the NKVD, was in fact Morris Childs. From 1951 on, Childs worked as a secret agent of the FBI in the Communist underground in liaison with the KGB. If he had been asked about the wartime NKVD operations in Chicago, the Oppenheimer case might have been solved.

The evidence is clear that the NKVD had contact with Oppenheimer and that the nuclear scientist and his wife were surrounded by people with Soviet intelligence connections. But since this was only circumstantial evidence, it did not prove that Oppenheimer provided secret information to the Soviets. The direct evidence was given by Pavel Sudoplatov, Moscow-based overseer of Soviet atom bomb espionage, who claimed in his 1994 book, *Special Tasks*, that Oppenheimer supplied the Soviets with classified reports on atom bomb development. He also said that some of the information came through the wife of the NKVD Resident in the United States, Zarubina, who traveled frequently to California and was in direct contact with Oppenheimer’s wife, Kitty.⁶³

Sudoplatov’s claims created a firestorm in the American press. The American Physical Society held a press conference in which five “experts” denounced the statements about Oppenheimer “as wildly inaccurate and probably fictitious.” And the organization’s forty-member council expressed “profound dismay” at the accusations “made by a man who has characterized himself as a master of decep-

tion and deceit.”⁶⁴ Numerous other scientists, journalists, and others with no direct knowledge of the case joined the protest.

The old KGB operative Sudoplatov might possibly have lied to his coauthors, Jerry and Leona Schecter, who were experienced journalists, but the Schecters found documentary evidence to back his story. Sudoplatov had been jailed in 1953 by the Soviet government because of his close association with the then-discredited Lavrenti Beria. In 1968 he was released and tried in succeeding years to get a Communist Party hearing to rehabilitate him and restore him to the good graces of the Soviet leadership. In 1982, for example, he sent an appeal to Yuri Andropov and the Politburo outlining his career and asking for rehabilitation. In this secret document, Sudoplatov boasted that he had “rendered considerable help to our scientists by giving them the latest materials on atom bomb research, obtained from such sources as the famous nuclear physicists R. Oppenheimer, E. Fermi, K. Fuchs, and others.”⁶⁵ It would have made no sense for Sudoplatov to lie to Andropov, the former head of KGB and dictator of the Soviet Union, who would have easily found him out.

Until Sudoplatov’s testimony, even *Venona* could not prove that Oppenheimer had collaborated with Soviet intelligence; the only conclusion had to have been a Scotch verdict—unproved—or, as the NSA commented, “troubling.” But with Sudoplatov’s information we can say for certain that Oppenheimer did in fact knowingly supply classified information on the atom bomb to the Soviet Union.

In May 1995 Les Aspin, former U.S. defense secretary and then chairman of the president’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, reopened the issue. He held a press conference on May 1 in which he released a letter from Louis J. Freeh, the director of the FBI, which stated, “The FBI is not in possession of any credible evidence that would suggest that Niels Bohr, Enrico Fermi, Robert Oppenheimer,

THE VENONA SECRETS

or Leo Szilard engaged in any espionage activity on behalf of any foreign power to include that involving atomic bomb secrets. Indeed, the FBI has classified information available that argues against the conclusions reached by the author of *Special Tasks* [Sudoplatov]. The FBI, therefore, considers such allegations to be unfounded.”⁶⁶

Aspin explained at the press conference that he had “negotiated” the text of the letter with FBI director Frech. He did not explain why a simple statement of the truth needed to be negotiated, unless it wasn’t exactly true. A number of the people present at the press conference, including Jerry Schecter and Herb Romerstein, challenged Aspin’s conclusions. Aspin responded, “You can believe what you want.... This is not, I presume, the last word on this subject.” He was right. Schecter then asked whether *Venona*, which had not been released, would lead to Aspin’s conclusion. Aspin said yes but that *Venona* was too sensitive ever to be released. He was wrong. In less than a year, Senator Pat Moynihan succeeded in getting it released. (Aspin said at the press conference that Sudoplatov had confused code names and identities. After so many years, Sudoplatov did not remember which code names identified which agents, but he did remember clearly the names of the agents, and he gave the same names to Jerry Schecter that he had earlier written in his secret letter to Andropov.)

The reaction in Moscow to Sudoplatov’s revelations was mixed. In December 1993—before the book came out—at a celebration of the anniversary of the KGB held in the headquarters of its successor, the SVR, there was a standing ovation for Sudoplatov as “the living history of the service.”⁶⁷ But when the book was released, the SVR denied any responsibility for it. As late as March 1998, spokeswoman Tatyana Samolis issued a statement denying that Oppenheimer had ever provided any atomic bomb information to the Soviet Union.

Atomic Espionage—California Phase

But other KGB retirees leaked information to the Russian press that bolstered Sudoplatov’s story. In 1996 *Pravda* carried an article based on SVR sources saying that documents obtained from Oppenheimer and other important Western scientists are still in the secret Soviet archives. The *Pravda* article went on:

It is no secret that first-hand information on [a] nuclear reaction experiment performed in 1942 by the Italian physicist E. Fermi in Chicago was obtained through scientists close to Oppenheimer. The source of this information was a former staff member of Comintern, G. Kheifitz, our *Rezident* in California and a former secretary to N. Krupskaya [Lenin’s wife]. He was the one who informed Moscow of the fact that the development of the nuclear bomb is a practical reality. By this time, Kheifitz had established contact with Oppenheimer and his circle. In fact, the Oppenheimer family, in particular his brother, had links with the then illegal Communist Party of the U.S. on the West Coast. One of the locations for illegal meetings and contacts was the house of the socialite Madam Bransten in San Francisco. It is precisely here that Oppenheimer and Kheifitz met. For our intelligence, people who were sympathetic to Communist ideas were extremely valuable for establishing contacts.... Madam Bransten’s salon lasted from 1936 to 1942. The Soviets supported it. Kheifitz helped transfer the funds for its financing.⁶⁸

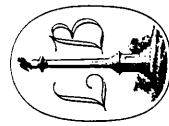
Sudoplatov died in September 1996.⁶⁹ For most of his life, he used espionage, assassination, and repression against the West and any Russians who might oppose the Soviet dictatorship. It is ironic that only two years before his death, he provided the world with significant evidence about the Soviet agents who stole the secrets of the atom bomb.

SPECIAL TASKS

THE
MEMOIRS
OF AN
UNWANTED
WITNESS—
A SOVIET
SPYMASTER

Pavel Sudoplato and Anatoli Sudoplato
with Jerrold L. and Leona P. Schecter

Foreword by Robert Conquest



Little, Brown and Company
Boston New York Toronto London

Willy Lehmann (Breitmann, Dike), who became one of our most valuable sources in Germany in the 1930s.

In 1941 Elizabeth Zarubina was a captain in the NKVD. After her husband's posting to Washington, she traveled to California frequently to cultivate the Oppenheimer family through social contacts arranged by Kheifetz. Kheifetz provided Elizabeth Zarubina with a rundown on all the members of Robert Oppenheimer's family, known for its left-wing sympathies, to enable her to approach them. He then introduced Elizabeth to Oppenheimer's wife, Katherine, who was sympathetic to the Soviet Union and Communist ideals, and the two worked out a system for future meetings. Katherine Oppenheimer was not mentioned by name in the reports, but we worked through a woman close to Oppenheimer, and it was my understanding then and is now that the woman was his wife.

Through Katherine, Elizabeth Zarubina and Kheifetz convinced Oppenheimer to refrain from statements sympathetic to Communist or left-wing groups in order not to call the attention of the FBI to himself. Zarubina and Kheifetz persuaded Oppenheimer to share information with "antifascists of German origin," which provided a rationale for taking Klaus Fuchs to Los Alamos. Oppenheimer agreed to hire and promote these people, provided he received confirmation of their opposition to Nazism before they came to the project. Oppenheimer, together with Fermi and Szilard, helped us place moles in Tennessee, Los Alamos, and Chicago as assistants in those three labs. In total there were four important sources of information who transmitted documents from the labs to the New York and Washington rezidenturas and to our illegal station, which was a drugstore in Santa Fe.

The material that reached Anatoli Yatskov, the control officer in New York, came from Fuchs and one of the Los Alamos moles and was carried by couriers, one of whom was Lona Cohen. Her husband, Morris Cohen, was recruited during the Spanish Civil War, when he served as a volunteer in the American Abraham Lincoln Brigade under the name Israel Altman. While recovering from a leg wound in Barcelona in 1938, he was transferred to a spy school in a villa in Madrid, where he demonstrated a special aptitude for undercover work. On his return to New York City, Cohen married Lona, an old high school sweetheart, and recruited her for Soviet "secret work." In Cohen's KGB file he is quoted as saying, "Moscow has already decided on Lona and me fulfilling its assignments together. There is nothing like a good

and reliable married couple." Lona's first reaction to their secret work was that it might be treason; Morris responded that he was "upholding and fighting for universal truth and justice" and this, by definition, "was not treachery at all."¹⁶

When Morris was drafted into the U.S. Army in July 1942, their controller in New York, Anatoli Yatskov, aka Yakovlev, used Lona as a courier to Los Alamos to pick up information. Lona's trips to New Mexico were explained as visits to a sanatorium for a tuberculosis cure. Yatskov, code name Johnny, recounted in 1992 his work with Lona Cohen, a "pretty young woman." On one of her trips, August 1945, she traveled to Albuquerque shortly after the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. She anxiously awaited a contact, who gave her a "thick wad" of tightly written pages that were "priceless" to Moscow Center.

As she left the security-infested town, she demonstrated her trade-craft. Carrying a suitcase, a purse, and a box of Kleenex tissues, she arrived at the railroad station just as the train was supposed to leave. She dropped her suitcase and started rummaging nervously through her purse, searching for her ticket. She handed the Kleenex box to the conductor to hold while she looked for and found her ticket. Delighted, Lona boarded the train, leaving the box of tissues with the conductor. "I felt it in my skin, that the conductor would return the box of Kleenex, and indeed later he handed it to me." When Yatskov met her in New York City, Lona told him, "You know, Johnny, everything was all right except for one thing. The police held these materials in their hands." The Kleenex box contained a detailed description and drawing of the world's first atomic bomb.¹⁷

The Cohens fled to Moscow when Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were arrested in 1950 for atomic espionage. They were trained as illegals and given New Zealand passports with the names Peter and Helen Kroger. They settled in London and established an antiquarian book business. From their house in Ruislip, outside London, they provided radio and technical support for the KGB illegal Konon Molody, alias Gordon Lonsdale. They were arrested with Lonsdale in 1961, when their net-work was exposed, and were sentenced to twenty years in jail. After

16. Ronald Radosh and Eric Breindel, "Bombshell," *New Republic*, June 10, 1991, pp. 10-12.

17. Anatoli Yatskov, in *Voprossi Istorii Estestvoznania i Tekhniki*, no. 3, 1992, p. 103.

use of hardware was needed. Vannikov was our equivalent of the American General Leslie Groves.

Not only were we informed of technical developments in the atomic program, but we heard in detail the human conflicts and rivalries among the members of the team at Los Alamos. A constant theme was tension with General Groves, director of the project. We were told of Groves's conflicts with Szilard.²¹ Groves was outraged by Szilard's iconoclastic style and his refusal to accept the strictures of military discipline. The "baiting of brass hats" was Szilard's self-professed hobby. Groves believed that Szilard was a security risk and tried to prevent him from working on the Manhattan Project despite Szilard's seminal contributions to the development of the first chain reaction with Fermi.

Kheifetz described Oppenheimer as a man who thought of problems on a global scale. Oppenheimer saw the threat and promise of the atomic age and understood the ramifications for both military and peaceful applications. We always stressed that contacts with him should be carefully planned to maintain security, and should not be used for acquiring routine information. We knew that Oppenheimer would remain an influential person in America after the war and therefore our relations with him should not take the form of running a controlled agent. We understood that he and other members of the scientific community were best approached as friends, not as agents. Since Oppenheimer, Bohr, and Fermi were fierce opponents of violence, they would seek to prevent a nuclear war, creating a balance of power through sharing the secrets of atomic energy. This would be a crucial factor in establishing the new world order after the war, and we took advantage of this.

The line between valuable connections and acquaintances, and confidential relations is very shaky. In traditional Russian espionage terminology, there is a special term, *agenturnaya razvedka*, which means that the material is received through a network of agents or case officers acting under cover. Occasionally the most valuable information comes from a contact who is not an agent in the true sense — that is, working for and paid by us — but who is still regarded in the archives as an agent source of information. Our problem was that the atomic espionage business required new approaches; we used every potential method to pen-

21. The continuing struggle between Groves and Szilard is skillfully recounted by William Lanouette in his biography of Leo Szilard, *Genius in the Shadows* (New York: Scribner's, 1992), especially pp. 305–313.

Oppenheimer.²⁰ In this way, under Oppenheimer's initiative, Fuchs was given access to material that he had no right to look at. We received reports of the bitter conflicts between Oppenheimer and General Groves, who objected to allowing summaries of applied experiments to be made available to scientists unconnected with these experiments.

One agent report cites Oppenheimer's stressing that information should be leaked in a way that was not traceable to those who worked in Los Alamos. Rather, it should be done through someone not on the permanent staff of the Manhattan Project who, due to illness or personal reasons, would leave when the work of producing a bomb was finished, perhaps even leave the country.

Elizabeth Zarubina's other mission was to check on the two Polish Jewish agents established on the West Coast as illegals by Eittingon in the early 1930s. They had remained under deep cover for more than ten years. One of these agents was a dentist with a French medical degree that the OGPU had subsidized. His code name was Chess Player. The dentist's wife became a close friend of the Oppenheimer family, and they were our clandestine contacts with Oppenheimer and his friends, contacts that went undetected by the FBI. To the best of my knowledge, even Elizabeth was not identified by the FBI as a Soviet case officer in America until 1946, after she had returned to Moscow.

We received reports on the progress of the Manhattan Project from Oppenheimer and his friends in oral form, through comments and asides, and from documents transferred through clandestine methods with their full knowledge that the information they were sharing would be passed on. In all, there were five classified reports made available by Oppenheimer describing the progress of work on the atomic bomb.

Another source of information was the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California in Berkeley. From there we received general information, not precise classified material on the actual engineering aspects of bomb production, and not on the operation of the first atomic power reactor.

We learned that military experts and managers from the field of high explosives were supervising the engineering aspects of the American project. That led us to decide to follow the American example and appoint Vannikov, our ammunition expert, to head the project when the

20. Actually Fuchs escaped arrest, but his father was imprisoned by the Gestapo. See Robert Chadwell Williams, *Klaus Fuchs, Atom Spy* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 15–19.

November 10, 2003

The National Press Club

Remarks by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham

Thank you all for coming.

And thanks to the National Press Club for hosting this event.

I'd like to welcome the directors of the Department of Energy national laboratories and the chairs of our science who are with us today.

They play an important role of Energy

class research facilities and the pivotal role we have played in supporting both basic research and technology development.

Just consider a thin slice of our legacy.

We are the heirs to the work of Enrico Fermi and Leo Szillard, who created the first controlled, continuous source of nuclear energy – and, before them, to the discoveries of Niels Bohr and others who described the atom as a nucleus with orbiting electrons, rather than a solid mass.

We are the heirs to the wizardry of Robert Oppenheimer, Edward Teller, and many others who shaped the course of World War II and gave us a nuclear deterrent that helped prevent global conflict during the Cold War.

We are the heirs to the engineering and scientific gifts of E.O. Lawrence who designed the first machine -- his cyclotron -- to break down atomic nuclei to understand the fundamental workings of the atom.

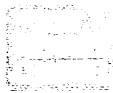
... because original, innovative, and ... our mission and our

Americans don't know that the Department of Energy operates a network of national laboratories where research has led to profound breakthroughs in medicine, environmental science, biology, and physics that have transformed – and continue to transform – the way we all live.

These Department of Energy labs are a national treasure.

They are centers of scientific discovery – as witnessed by the number of Nobel Prizes and other honors they have produced –

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Sunday, July 11, 2004

Headline News

Oppenheimer house dedicated

DARRYL NEWMAN, dreporter@lamonitor.com, Monitor Staff Writer

Under cloudy skies Friday afternoon, the former house of the late J. Robert Oppenheimer was dedicated as part of a celebration in remembrance of the progressive scientist's 100th birthday.

The dedication included the donation of a check for \$50,000 to the Los Alamos Historical Society, as well as the unveiling of a plaque to be placed at the Oppenheimer house.

The ceremony boasted an affluent guest and speaker list, some of whom included Gov. Bill Richardson, Sen. Pete Domenici and relatives of Oppenheimer.

More than 100 people gathered in the Rose Garden behind Fuller Lodge and county council Chair Nona Bowman read a proclamation designating June 25 - 26 as a celebration of "Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project."

Bowman then introduced Los Alamos National Laboratories Director Pete Nanos, who acknowledged Oppenheimer as "a man who understood fully the lessons of the Manhattan Project."

Nanos then introduced Domenici who joked about his suit and tie moments before becoming serious. (He had to buy new clothes, he said, as the airline had lost his luggage.)

He shared a story about the honoring of a house that was once occupied by a Russian scientist and his family.

"In the midst of very poor living conditions they had a house and everyone there knew where he lived," Domenici said. "Now we are doing our best to preserve a house."

The senator eloquently noted that some people view the creation of the atomic bomb as leading the world into great self-destruction. However, he said, others consider the bomb as a great human achievement.

"I choose the latter and I have a lot of respect for him," he said. "The Cold War never turned hot, because of his achievements."

Domenici touted the legacy of Oppenheimer and his ties to New Mexico.

"Many years ago, New Mexico turned out to be a place that he loved," he said. "When they asked where the lab should be placed, he picked here (Los Alamos)."

Nanos presented a \$50,000 check from Los Alamos National Laboratories to the Los Alamos Historical Society that will be used for repairs and restorations of the Oppenheimer house.

Nancy Bartlit, president of the historical society, accepted the check on behalf of the organization.

"I accept with great pleasure this check," she said. "We are very excited to have it and will cherish the representation of it and spend it wisely."

Andy Oppenheimer, the cousin of J. Robert Oppenheimer, spoke and reflected on the impact and influence that his cousin had on his life.

"I became fascinated by the drama and the tragedy of the bomb," he said. "I hope to God that I retain one atom of his wisdom."

Bill Richardson arrived late via helicopter.

"We're here to pay tribute to a man who left an indelible mark on the country and on New Mexico," Richardson said.

"This house will always be remembered in the spirit of him."

The governor thanked the community and the historical society for their work and cited it as a benefit to the economy.