

CARNEGIE
INSTITUTION
AUG 1 1945

Aug 12th 1945
19 Thoreau Drive.
Bethesda. Md.

Dear Dr. Bush,

I am writing to you because I think you are the best man to advise me what to do. As you know I was in no way connected with the project of "atomic-bomb" developement, while on the other hand, working all my life on nuclear physics, I naturally could not help not thinking about it and have rather clear ideas about the possibilities involved etc.

As long as the whole thing remained a supersecret I was naturally trying to hold all my thoughts to myself.

However now, when the thing exploded and all the newspapers are full of informations, I wonder where the boundary between what can, and what cannot be told should be placed.

Thus, for example, in my course of nuclear physics which I am giving in G.W.U. this summer I will have to speak

next week about nuclear transformations, thermonuclear reaction, and nuclear chain reactions. Should I entirely avoid mentioning explosive reactions or not?

Again, I am now preparing the new edition of my Book on Nuclear Physics for Oxford Univ. Press. How much could be told in it about this part of the problem?

Finally I was recently asked to write a small popular book on Atomic Energy.

Must I reject such offer or not?

You understand of course that in all these cases the question is not about the technical details which I do not know, but about broad "purely scientific" point of view. As the matter of fact I do not think I know much more on the subject than the scientists in other countries, as for example in Soviet Russia, know at present, so that such utterings on my part will hardly be of any particular use for the "competitors". Still, I would not like to do anything in this direction, without first receiving your advice.

Hoping to hear from you soon

Yours very truly G Gamow.

Security
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August 14, 1945.

Dr. G. Gamow,
19 Thoreau Drive,
Bethesda, Maryland.

Dear Dr. Gamow:

I am replying promptly to your letter of August 12 and I hope I can be of aid to you by very informal advice and counsel.

I do not know whether you have seen the release on the scientific aspects of the atomic bomb program, probably not, since it was given to the press on the date of your letter. In any case, I recommend that you secure a copy of this. It was prepared with great care by Professor Smyth, and released after it had been very carefully considered in all quarters. It gives a great deal of scientific and technical information background, but, on the other hand, it does not give those parts of the information which should now certainly remain secret. It hence will serve as an excellent guide for scientists everywhere and I feel that they will be acting entirely appropriately if they discuss matters mentioned in that document but with great care to remain in the proper bounds there outlined and not inadvertently to enter upon other things. This for the moment will certainly make it possible for scientists to know what is the official point of view of the United States Government, for the document was issued by the War Department. I believe that Lt. Colonel Wm. A. Considine, of General Groves' office, can readily tell you where to procure a copy.

I have no doubt that later there will be constituted in some way an official body to determine the proper bounds of scientific discussion, and undoubtedly competent scientists will be present on any such body. How this may possibly be done it is too early to know. However, in the interim there is a guide in the form of a report and after the body is established there will be a place to turn which anyone can use who may be in doubt.

Cordially yours,