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UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

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SENATOR JOHNSON CHARGES WAR-TIME ATOMIC SECURITY LAXCourt of Current Issues at 8:00 P.M. over WABD-TV (N.Y.)
and Dumont Television Network:

Subject: "Is There Too Much Secrecy In Our Atomic Program?"

Witnesses: Dr. Hugh C. Wolfe, professor of physics at Cooper Union and chairman of the Federation of American Scientists; Dr. Harrison S. Brown, associate professor at the Institute of Nuclear Studies, University of Chicago; Mr. Michael Amrine, syndicated writer on atomic subjects; Mr. Edward E. Conroy, former special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in New York City; Senator Edwin C. Johnson, Democrat of Colorado and member of the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy; Colonel William A. Consodine, former chief of intelligence and security at the Manhattan District Atomic Program.

THE TV SCREEN SHOWED A COURTROOM SCENE. SENATOR JOHNSON WAS SEATED IN THE WITNESS CHAIR, JUDGE WELLS APPEARING IN THE BACKGROUND. DURING THE DIRECT TESTIMONY, MR. CONSODINE WAS SEEN STANDING IN FRONT OF SENATOR JOHNSON AND A LITTLE TO ONE SIDE. DURING THE CROSS-EXAMINATION, MR. AMRINE TOOK MR. CONSODINE'S PLACE. THE CAMERA FOCUSED ON ALL PARTICIPANTS FROM VARIOUS ANGLES AND DURING THE LONGER STATEMENTS, THE SPEAKER'S FACE WAS FREQUENTLY SHOWN IN CLOSEUP.

JUDGE: Francis D. Wells, Attorney.

CLERK: "Edwin C. Johnson to the witness stand, please."

CONSODINE: "Senator Johnson, what are your qualifications as a witness here this evening on this subject?"

JOHNSON: "Well, I've been a member of the Committee in Congress ever since--on Atomic Energy--ever since the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We created a committee at that time and I've had continuous membership on that Committee. In addition to that, perhaps I might say that, while I'm a Colorado farmer in Southwestern Colorado, we have the largest deposits of uranium to be found any place in the United States. And so I've been somewhat familiar with uranium at least for a long time."

CONSODINE: "You're not a scientist, Senator?"

JOHNSON: "No, sir, I'm not a scientist, but I do know a lot about atomic energy science just the same."

CONSODINE: "You, from your Committee undertaking, you know a great deal about the security we have in the United States, don't you?"

JOHNSON: "I hope I do, yes, sir."

CONSODINE: "Do you think that security is too strict?"

JOHNSON: "No, sir, far from it. I think, as a matter of fact, that the security has been slightly on the loose side of it rather than too strict."

CONSODINE: "Recently, or I mean since the war or also including the wartime period?"

JOHNSON: "No, I think--I think during the war. As a matter of fact, I heard a witness say a moment ago that we helped Russia Russian scientists about 30 days. A Norwegian scientist not very long ago made the statement that we have helped the Russian Scientists in the production and creation of atomic bombs by fully two years and I haven't heard anyone dispute that until tonight and I think that we have helped them, because we gave them very definite information on how to make a bomb and the simplest, the most effective way to make a bomb which--and we tried out four different methods of making a bomb and all of them succeeded, but one of those methods was so superior to all the others in simplicity and effectiveness and we told the Russians and we told the world that fact. Of course, they didn't have to make the experiments that we had to make to find out by elimination which method was the most effective and which was the one that they should follow."

CONSODINE: "Senator, I don't think you need to resort to any secret information to answer this question. What do you think of

Russian security?

JOHNSON: "Well, Russian security is airtight. Very little leaks from there. As a matter of fact, we haven't been able to get anything through, and we have some of the greatest experts in the world with big ears who'd like to know something about and not even a whisper comes through the iron curtain, not a whisper."

CONSODINE: "And yet, isn't it a bit marvelous that the Russians have gotten an atomic bomb by 1949 with all this terrible security by which we can find nothing at all?"

JOHNSON: "It's not surprising at all that the Russians have the bomb--got the bomb in 1949. I'm not surprised by the prediction that was made by Dr. Brown. I don't see how his predictions could have been otherwise with all the information that we gave them, with the source material, with the uranium, with the pitchblende in Czechoslovakia we made available to them by not taking it over when our armies could have marched in and taken it. We've given the Russians every help there is to make a bomb."

CONSODINE: "Dr. Brown in his book, Senator, states that we have to fear a bomb being dropped on the United States for which there is no defense other than to knock out the carrier or a bomb being carried into the United States and left here to explode. Do you think the latter is possible?"

JOHNSON: "Well, it could be brought in. It would take a truck to carry a bomb. Some folks say that you can bring it in in a suitcase. I'd say it would take about a hundred suitcases to bring in a bomb, but it could be done. But the natural way is to drop it from an airplane or to shoot it into the country from a submarine."

CONSODINE: "Thank you very much, Senator. You may cross-examine, Mr. Amrine."

AMRINE: "Senator, I'd like to get just an idea of how extensive your feeling about secrecy is. Now we know that Russia has made an atomic bomb. We were keeping things secret to keep Russia from getting the bomb."

JOHNSON: "Unfortunately, we were not."

AMRINE: "Could you dilate on that a little, Senator?"

JOHNSON: "Yes, we--just as I said before, we told them a great deal that they needed to know in order to construct a bomb--vital--vital information. And this Norwegian scientist has said that we gave them a two years' jump on the construction of the bomb."

AMRINE: "So our own scientists say, in an effort to keep ahead or to get ahead perhaps, of the Russians, we should exchange

more information. And the Russians do have the bomb. Don't you think that we might enlarge or unveil a little of the secrecy now that the main cat is out of the main bag?"

JOHNSON: "No, I do not. In a bomb you're dealing with a weapon, a tremendous weapon, the most devastating weapon that has ever been created by man and I don't believe that you can--that you can temporize with that sort of thing. I don't think you can be strict enough with that sort of thing, because the lives of millions of Americans hang in the balance and because the scientists all have a yen, like some old fisherwoman, to tell all we know, I can't believe that that's a policy for the United States. The scientists have a passion for telling everything that they know."

AMRINE: "Senator, let's get down to a specific question."

JOHNSON: "All right."

AMRINE: "To make any atomic power plant in the future, you have to have a chain reacting pile and you also have to have a chain reacting pile in order to make bomb material. So we know that Russia has..."

JOHNSON: "You don't have to have a pile to make the kind of bomb that was dropped at Hiroshima. You have to have a pile to make the kind of a bomb that was dropped at Nagasaki."

AMRINE: "I'm not sure I knew that, Senator--perhaps we'd better get away from that subject, of your theory that you could make one bomb with other methods and to make a great supply of bombs that you do have to have a chain reaction pile and that, well, let's say, on certain---"

JOHNSON: "That's the best way to make it with the--with a pile, yes, that's the best way to make it--a graphite pile."

AMRINE: "What I'm getting at is all we can learn--Russia knows how to make an atomic pile; we are laying in---"

JOHNSON: "We told them how; we told them exactly how to do it."

AMRINE: "Since we've told them, why should we worry about keeping from telling them about an atomic pile, why shouldn't we get ahead with our atomic pile program?"

JOHNSON: "I'm glad you asked me that question, because here's the thing that is top secret. Our scientists from the time that the bombs were detonated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been trying to make what is known as a superbomb. They've been devoting their time to two things: one, to make a superbomb, and the other, to find some way of detonating a bomb before the fellow that wants to drop it can detonate it. And we--we've made considerable progress in that direction. Now, there's no question at all that the Russians have a bomb more or less similar to the bomb that we dropped

at Nagasaki, a plutonium bomb. Our scientists are certain that they have that bomb, but it's--it's not a better bomb than dropped at Nagasaki. Now our scientists already--already have created a bomb that has six times the effectiveness of the bomb that was dropped at Nagasaki and they're not satisfied at all; they want one that has a thousand times the effect of that terrible bomb that was dropped at Nagasaki that snuffed out the lives of--of fifty thousand people just like that. And that's the secret, that's the big secret that the scientists in America are so anxious to divulge to the whole scientific world."

AMRINE: "Now, Senator."

CONSODINE: "I object, your Honor. He asked the question. I think the witness is entitled to answer it in full."

WELSH: "Senator, have you finished answering the question?"

AMRINE: "I have some other secrets I'd like to ask him about."

JOHNSON: "I'd be glad to."

WELSH: "Well, you proceed then to ask the question, Mr. Amrine."

AMRINE: "This thing, we saw in the Sunday papers that Russia is working, experimenting, according to a report from London, on an atomic cloud and radioactive poison gas that gave us a terrible glimpse of the future if it is true. The Smythe Report says that there is a definite possibility of making such a radioactive poison gas. The citizens of New York do not know what in the world to do to protect themselves against such an attack if it should come. Do you have any way--are you permitted to say whether that's true or not, that such an atomic cloud is possible?"

JOHNSON: "I don't think I should say anything about that atomic cloud."

CONSODINE: "I object to that, your Honor, because of national security."

WELSH: "Objection sustained on that question."

CONSODINE: "That's a top military secret."

WELSH: "You may proceed on something that has a bearing on this particular issue perhaps without encroaching upon secret, confidential matters within the purview of the Senator."

AMRINE: "Can you give us an idea at what time citizens might be told the facts they need to know for civil defense against the next war?"

JOHNSON: "Well, there's been a great deal of complaint in our Joint Committee because the civilians have not been fully informed as to how to protect themselves. I think in the next session of Congress there is going to be an effort made to give them more information. I don't know whether that's going to be so helpful or not, because you might tell--you might instruct the people of say, Philadelphia, give them full instructions and then no bomb is dropped, no bomb is dropped for ten years and we hope never will be dropped on Philadelphia, And the people there are getting the attitude of crying wolf, wolf and no wolf and they lose their interest in it."

WELSH: "That is all, Senator."