

FITCH: Hello, I'm John Fitch, MIT science reporter. We're at the home of Dr. Vannevar Bush in Belmont, Massachusetts. During World War II, Dr. Bush was the organizer, guiding spirit, and driving force of our nation's scientific efforts in a global conflict.

As director of the office of scientific research and development, he was responsible for mobilizing the forces which produced many of the technological advances that played an important part in the winning of the war. Doctor Bush worked closely with Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and in effect was the first of our scientific advisers. He shared the enormous responsibility for the development and use of our most fearsome weapon, the atomic bomb. Let's meet Dr. Bush.

Well let's start off by going back to 1945 in New Mexico when you witnessed the first atomic bomb blast. What was your personal reaction then?

BUSH: Well, of course, my first reaction was one of great relief that the program had been successful and the bomb had gone off on schedule.

FITCH: Now when you go look back from a vantage point of 18 years, do you have any regrets about it?

BUSH: No. Of course, President Truman made the decision to use the bomb, but I thought then and I think now that he was right for a number of reasons. One, by ending the war abruptly, it saved a 100,000 or more American casualties, it saved the lives of Japanese, for that matter. Then two, the bomb was bound to appear and I think it was well that it appeared in a dramatic fashion, so that civilization would face up to it. As it wouldn't have if it had come in in some test way. And the world has got to live with it and had to learn to live with it.

FITCH: Well, don't you think it's sort of a paradox that this tremendous instrument of warfare, the greatest we've ever known, may very well be the strongest force for peace in our time?

BUSH: There's no doubt that since the war we've had a stalemate. We have today determination on the part of Russia and ourselves not to get into an all-out war because of the A-bomb. I think we may be able to learn to live with it that way. Certainly, in my opinion, the deadlock of the sort that we have today is preferable to the situation we've had for some 3 or 4,000 years of continual warfare, renewed every generation, devastating and just as cruel as any war.