One day in a clearing in the forest, Confucius came upon a woman in deep mourning, wracked by sorrow. He learned that her son had just been eaten by a tiger; and he attempted to console her, to make clear how unavailing her tears would be, to restore her composure. But when he left, he had barely reentered the forest, when the renewed sounds of weeping recalled him. “That is not all,” the woman said. “You see, my husband was eaten here a year ago by this same tiger.” Again Confucius attempted to console her and again he left only to hear renewed weeping. “Is that not all?” “Oh, no,” she said. “The year before that my father too was eaten by the tiger.” Confucius thought for a moment, and then said: “This would not seem to be a very salutary neighborhood. Why don’t you leave it?” The woman wrung her hands. “I know,” she said, “I know; but, you see, the government is so excellent.”

This wry tale comes to mind often when one observes the efforts which the Government of the United States is making to turn the development of atomic energy to good ends, and the frustrations and sorrows of the negotiations within the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission to which these efforts toward international control have now been reduced.
In these notes I should like to write briefly of some of the sources of United States policy, and of the formulation of that policy in the context of the contemporary world. Against the background of present prospects, which manifestly make success in any short term seem rather unlikely, to write of these matters today must of necessity be difficult. We are beyond advocacy, and not yet far enough for history. Yet the effort may not be without some slight usefulness in helping us to achieve an appreciation of what was sound, what was timely, and what was lasting in the policy adopted by the United States, and even more than that, in helping us to see why this policy has not been successful. To answer simply that we have failed because of noncooperation on the part of the Soviet Government is certainly to give a most essential part of a true answer. Yet we must ask ourselves why in a matter so overwhelmingly important to our interest we have not been successful; and we must be prepared to try to understand what lessons this has for our future conduct.

Clearly, such understanding must depend in the first instance on insight into the nature and sources of Soviet policy, and indeed into our own political processes. Such an analysis, which in any final sense may transcend the collective wisdom of our time, is of course wholly beyond the scope of this paper. These notes are concerned solely with questions of our intent with regard to atomic control, questions which, though necessarily overabstract, are yet a part of history.

II

The development of atomic energy had none of the other-worldliness normally characteristic of new developments in science. It was marked from the very first by an extreme self-consciousness on the part of all participants, which has given it an often heroic, though not infrequently rather comic, aspect. Thus when the phenomenon of fission was discovered by Hahn, after less than a decade of intensive exploration of nuclear structure and nuclear transmutations, we were all very quick to hail it, not as a beautiful discovery, but as a likely source of a great technological development. Long before it was known that conditions could be realized for maintaining a fission chain reaction, long before the