

January 31, 1980
**Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to
Ambassador-at-Large Gerard C. Smith, enclosing
excerpts from memoranda of conversations with
Geng Biao and Deng Xiaoping.**

Citation:

"Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to Ambassador-at-Large Gerard C. Smith, enclosing excerpts from memoranda of conversations with Geng Biao and Deng Xiaoping.", January 31, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, FOIA release. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #6.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114227>

Summary:

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 had an immediate impact on U.S. policy toward Pakistan and U.S. aid to the anti-Soviet resistance through Islamabad. With these considerations, the U.S. chose to "set [the nuclear issue] aside for the time being."

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This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

Contents:

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

JAN 31 1980

Honorable Gerard Smith
Ambassador at Large
Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Gerry:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning my trip to China. The subject of nuclear nonproliferation was not raised in George Seignious' meeting with his Chinese counterparts and was discussed in my meetings only in the context of U.S. assistance to Pakistan. I have enclosed extracts of the appropriate memoranda of conversations.

Sincerely,

Harold

Attachments

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EXTRACT OF MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting between Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Vice Premier Geng Biao

DATE: January 7, 1980 - 9:00-11:45 AM.

PLACE: Great Hall of the People

Secretary Brown:

-- While we are planning to resume economic and military assistance to Pakistan despite the nuclear problem, it would obviously be easier for us to secure Congressional support for a large program if the Paks reassessed their nuclear activities. We don't want to let this stand in the way. But what we can do will be influenced by Pakistan's nuclear program.

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Attachment 1

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EXTRACT OF MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting Between Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping

Date: January 8, 1980 - 10:00 AM.

Place: Great Hall of the People

Secretary Brown: Our big problem with Pakistan was their attempts to get a nuclear program. Although we still object to their doing so, we will now set that aside for the time being and concentrate on strengthening Pakistan against potential Soviet action.

Vice Premier Deng: That is a very good approach. Pakistan has its own reasons for developing a nuclear program. We ourselves oppose this because we believe it meaningless to spend money on such a program. Pakistan has its own arguments, i.e., India has exploded a nuclear device but the world has not seemed to complain about this. So now you have decided to put this aside and solve the question of military and economic aid to Pakistan. We applaud this decision....

Vice Premier Deng: We hope that since the United States has decided to give aid to Pakistan, this will satisfy Pakistan's requirements. We hope the U.S. will not be affected too much by India's reaction. We hope the U.S. will not mention the Pakistani nuclear program because India has already said that the U.S. has supplied them with information on uranium

Secretary Brown: We will continue to maintain our position against Pakistani nuclear development, but we will also provide aid to Pakistan....

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Attachment 2

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