



June 10, 1980
Memorandum, Leon Billings to the Secretary,
'Non-Proliferation'

Citation:

"Memorandum, Leon Billings to the Secretary, 'Non-Proliferation'", June 10, 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, NARA, RG 59, Muskie Subject Files, box 3, Non-Proliferation
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/145132>

Summary:

The memorandum describing Billing urged the Secretary against sending a memorandum to the President that is biased toward Smith's argument.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

~~SECRET~~

*Declassified
by antran 12/27/80*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

June 10, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY

Subject: Non-proliferation

I think you are at risk of ducking the non-proliferation issue. If you have decided to duck it that's fine and we'll back off.

However, I don't think that you should duck it and I don't think that you should forward a nonprejudiced decision to the President. Gerry Smith would like you to forward a recommendation which is biased toward his position. Much like Tarapur, the Department has a highly specific view which has little support either from a domestic or an international political perspective. Tarapur may be behind us, but I don't think you should let non-proliferation get behind you without exerting a personal interest.

The State Department position on nuclear development is largely a function of the bias of the State Department negotiators. Gerry Smith is a life-long nuclear power advocate. His participation in nuclear development dates back to the four years when he was a Special Assistant to the Atomic Energy Commission -- from 1950 to 1954. Like to many others, in this field he sees nuclear development as a technology which must go ahead. And, I suspect that he views current resistance in this country as something which should be overcome. Thus, it is his view that while we are not prepared to develop full-scale nuclear breeder reactors domestically, we should encourage them internationally.

The fact is that this Administration has articulated a policy, the result of which is to discourage the proliferation of plutonium around the globe. The fact that decisions like Tarapur have been inconsistent with that policy does not justify a major change in that policy. More importantly, I am disturbed by the fact that the people who are in charge of our so-called non-proliferation policy have a life-long vested interest in

SECRET

DECLASSIFIEDAuthority NND 48608**SECRET**

-2-

the proliferation of nuclear power. And I think as Secretary of State you have a responsibility to take that into account in your advice to the President. In fact, I am shocked that heretofore prior inclinations of the negotiators have not been a consideration.

Leon

S:LB:jm

SECRET