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# INTELLIGENCE NOTE

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## PAKISTAN'S RESPONSE TO THE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

Islamabad's response has been directed toward easing domestic concerns, maximizing international restraints on India, and stepping up its efforts to diversify sources of military equipment. Pakistan's ability to reach agreement with India on various outstanding issues is likely to be severely limited for quite some time. Meanwhile, it will be reviewing its strategic military planning and its own nuclear programs in light of the qualitative increase in India's military superiority. What Pakistan decides as a result of this process will be strongly influenced by the actions and attitudes of India and the major powers over the next few months.

The Political and Diplomatic Front. Pakistanis were profoundly shaken by the Indian nuclear explosion. Their sense of confidence and security, which Bhutto had painstakingly rebuilt after the 1971 dismemberment, was shattered. Most Pakistanis had become accustomed to India's quantitative superiority, but the dramatic demonstration of India's qualitative superiority was a staggering psychological blow. The government's initial response was to try to reassure the public by press guidance and speeches, including Bhutto's promise that he would never submit to nuclear blackmail.

Bhutto has also launched an all-out campaign designed to:

- crystallize world opinion against India;
- mobilize the UN to obtain guarantees for non-nuclear nations threatened by a nuclear power;

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- secure bilateral guarantees from one or more nuclear powers;
- assure continued foreign technological input to nuclear projects already under way (with assistance from Canada and Belgium), which he hopes eventually will give Pakistan a nuclear option;
- exploit adverse world reaction to the Indian test to obtain military equipment.

In his efforts to internationalize his problem, Bhutto has written letters urging action on nuclear guarantees to the UN Secretary-General, the permanent members of the Security Council, and several other countries. In his efforts to gain third-world support, he has raised the prospect that Israel and South Africa will develop nuclear weapons and pose a threat to all African and Asian nations.

Bhutto is also following up his letters with hastily arranged visits by senior Foreign Ministry officials, and he himself intends to raise the problem during his July visit to Moscow. His approach to the US and the UK has emphasized Pakistan's requirements for conventional weapons. In dealing with Canada, he will try to preserve Canadian nuclear cooperation. His approach to France and China will concentrate on obtaining both weapons and nuclear technology.

Pakistan's Nuclear Program. Pakistan will review the options for its embryonic but rapidly growing nuclear power program. Its Canadian-built power reactor began operating in December 1972. Several large nuclear power reactors are planned, and all of the facilities necessary for the extraction and fabrication of plutonium from the irradiated fuel elements of the present reactor are under construction or being sought.

If Pakistan continues to receive foreign technical assistance for its nuclear facilities, it could be in a position to process plutonium raw material for an explosive device by 1977. With foreign assistance in the construction of the device itself, it could carry out a test shortly afterwards. Without foreign bomb technology, it probably would take several years longer.

Pakistan's power reactor, unlike India's Thrombay reactor, is subject to IAEA safeguards. Since the Indian

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test, Bhutto has given both public and private assurances that Pakistan will not violate them. By about 1977, when currently planned facilities could be completed, Pakistan could denounce its IAEA treaty obligations and begin the construction of a significant number of bombs. Abrogation of safeguards, however, would seriously jeopardize continuing development of its nuclear power program--an important part of Pakistan's long-range development plans.

Prospects. Pakistan will continue its present diplomatic and propaganda efforts, although Bhutto probably does not expect to obtain credible nuclear guarantees. His efforts, however, will meet his internal political requirements by giving Pakistanis an impression of energetic government action to counter India's new capability. He will also hope to expand his sources of military supply and develop significant international restraints on India's nuclear weapons option. While he would welcome an Indian treaty obligation not to develop nuclear weapons systems, he would place little credence in it, and the Indians, for their part, would not want to tie their hands in this manner.

Pakistan's strategic concepts will also be reviewed, with emphasis on improving air defense. The army will have to face the problem of how to disperse its forces in the field for nuclear protection while fighting an enemy which is free to concentrate. This type of dilemma will further increase dissatisfaction in the army, where morale is already low because of its 1971 defeat and its inability to procure modern weapons. Bhutto will probably increase foreign exchange expenditures to secure modern weapons and thus maintain his position with the army. He will attempt to prove to the army that a civilian government places a high priority on Pakistan's military requirements.

Since the explosion, both India and Pakistan have announced their intentions to continue the Simla process of reconciliation. Bhutto, however, will now find it extremely difficult to reach further agreements with India. To do so would leave him vulnerable to opposition charges of knuckling under to Indian nuclear blackmail. Any successor government would experience the same difficulty. As a result, Pakistan has postponed the scheduled June 10 travel and communications talks with India until "the atmosphere becomes better." On the other hand, Pakistan can be expected to charge India with nuclear blackmail as part of Pakistan's

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effort to obtain maximum concessions on problems which might arise, for instance, from offshore oil exploration in the Rann of Kutch area.

India will probably wish to continue the Simla process in order to counter Bhutto's efforts to internationalize Indo-Pak negotiating relationships. Bhutto probably also desires to continue the reconciliation process, but he may have to harden his position to gain internal political support. In any case, normalization of Indo-Pak relations has received a severe setback.

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