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CIANESA NESAR 89-010

# Near East and South Asia Review



5 May 1989

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Near East and  
South Asia Review [REDACTED]

5 May 1989

Articles

Prime Minister Bhutto and the Pakistani Nuclear Issue [REDACTED]

Page

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[REDACTED]

Prime Minister Bhutto's influence on nuclear issues is circumscribed by the military's firm control over nuclear decisionmaking and strong commitment to a nuclear weapons program. Even if she sharply increased her influence, she would probably not try to stop the weapons effort or significantly reduce existing capabilities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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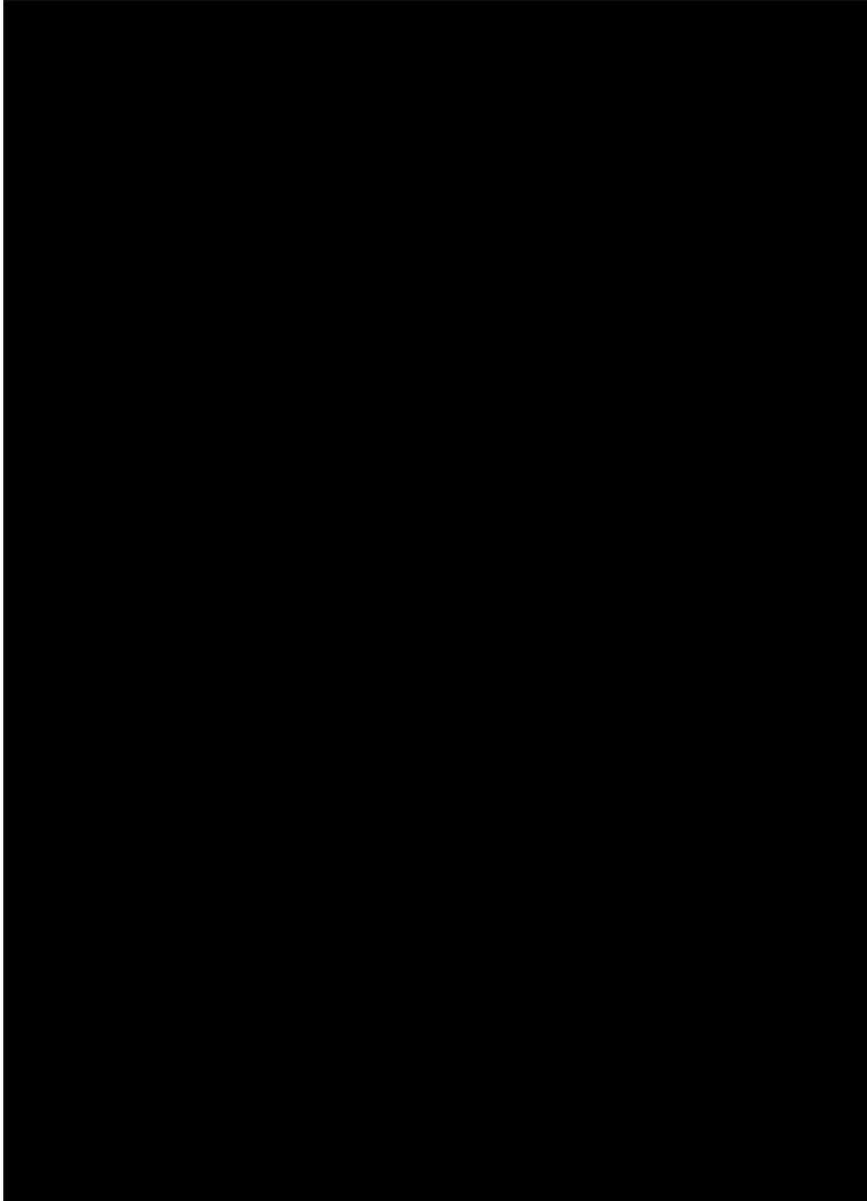


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*Some articles in the Near East and South Asia Review are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the views of a single analyst; an items like this will be designated as noncoordinated view.*



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Near East and  
South Asia Review

Articles

Prime Minister Bhutto and the  
Pakistani Nuclear Issue

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's influence on nuclear issues is sharply circumscribed by the military's firm control over nuclear decisionmaking and strong commitment to a nuclear weapons program.

Moreover, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan gives full support to the military's dominance and direction of nuclear policy. Although Bhutto's access and leverage on nuclear issues have increased since she assumed office last December, she is unlikely to gain control over nuclear decisionmaking anytime soon. Even if she were to gain the upper hand, we do not believe she would try to stop Pakistan's nuclear weapons effort or significantly reduce existing capabilities.

Prime Minister Bhutto agreed not to interfere with Pakistan's nuclear policies as one of several conditions levied by the Army on her in exchange for military support for her becoming Prime Minister.

By appointing advisers with close ties to the military, discussing nuclear matters with foreign leaders and diplomats, and making statements on nuclear issues supportive of longstanding Pakistani positions, Bhutto probably has gained entree to certain nuclear policy deliberations—particularly those involving US aid requirements.

Her knowledge—which may be far from complete—has probably been gained through international press

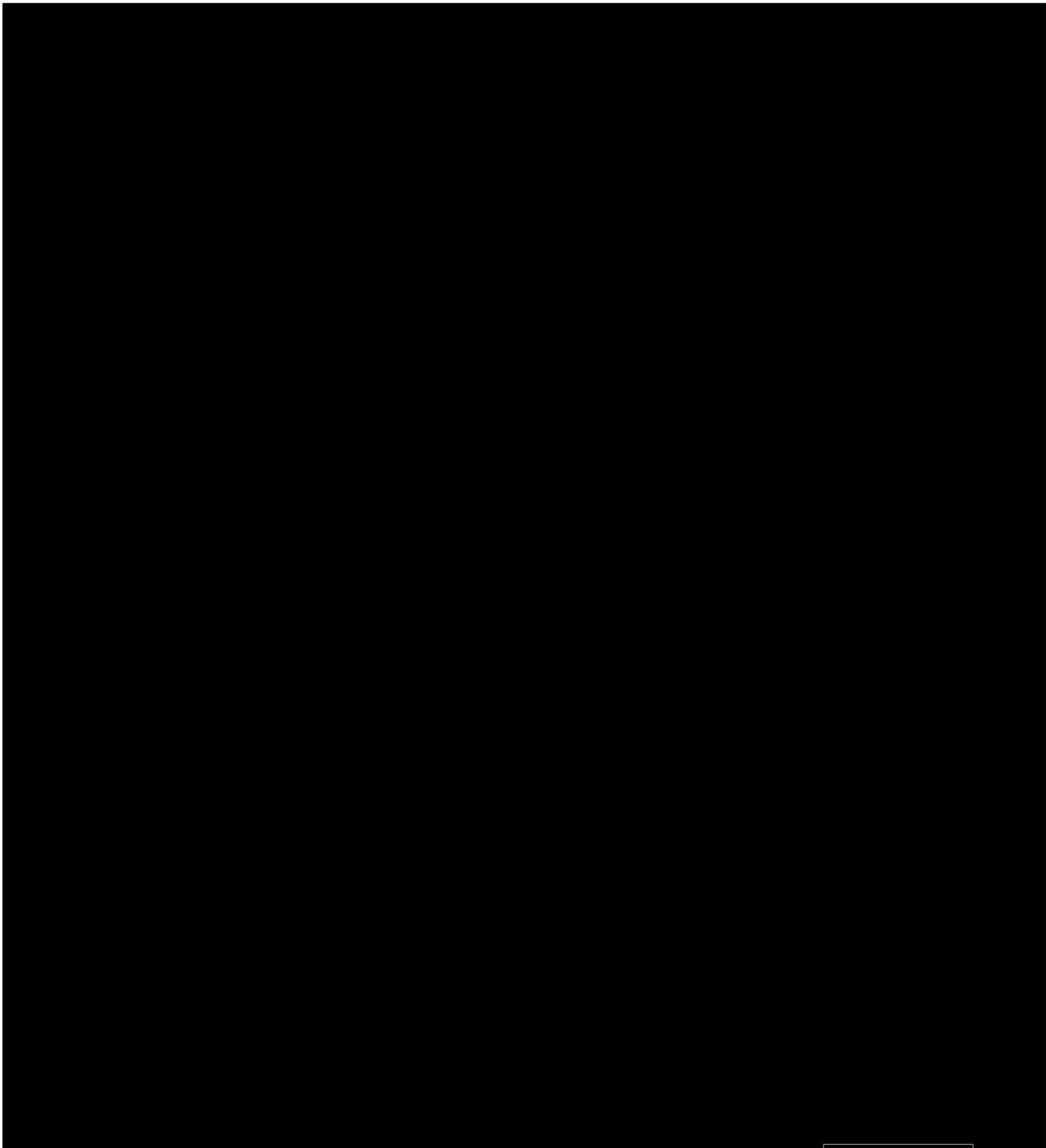
reports on Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, demarches on the nuclear issue presented by foreign governments, and information her national security advisers have obtained.

Prime Minister Bhutto's position on a nuclear weapons option for Pakistan is not clear and possibly not relevant at this stage. Although she has publicly stated that she does not favor developing nuclear weapons and that Pakistan is not pursuing a weapons option,

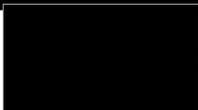
she has also been quoted as blaming Zia for undermining Pakistan's dream of becoming a nuclear power. The Prime Minister clearly does not want Pakistan's nuclear progress to precipitate a cutoff of US aid, but we believe she has a strong interest in promoting the policies and initiatives of her late father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who started Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. Because of the military's commitment to a nuclear weapons option, her father's involvement in the program, and the broad consensus among Pakistanis about the need for a nuclear weapons capability to deter possible Indian aggression, we believe Bhutto would not try to abolish or significantly cut back the weapons program.

Bhutto, however, may be more sensitive and responsive than the military to US concerns over the nuclear issue. Her recent public denials of Pakistan's nuclear weapons intentions, for example, have come close to promising that Pakistan will not assemble or test nuclear weapons. Bhutto's statements probably are in response to much-publicized US concerns stemming from the US review in fall 1988 of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities. Her public posture

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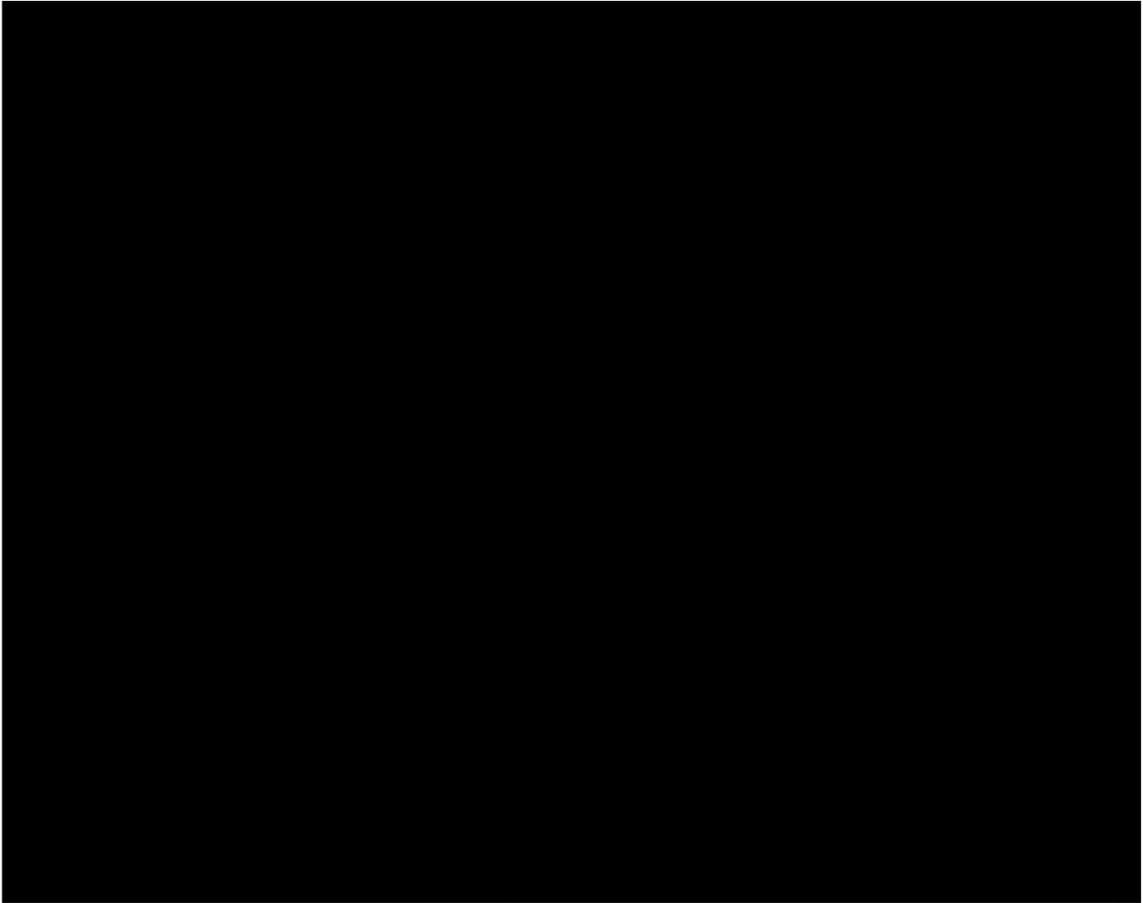
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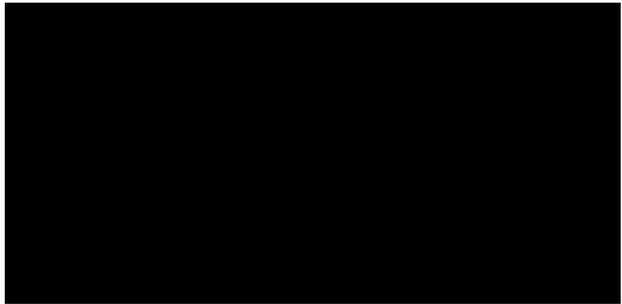
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implies that she might support limited moves—such as giving the United States specific private assurances about procurement, enrichment, or development of nuclear weapons or making public unilateral commitments forswearing deployment of nuclear weapons—to alleviate US concerns complicating future aid considerations. Whether she could deliver on these commitments is another matter. We believe that the military would strongly oppose any action that diminishes Pakistan's existing nuclear weapons capability or seriously constrains its future weapons options. [REDACTED]



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**Nuclear Arms Control**

Bhutto wants to reduce tensions with India, and toward that end she has publicly endorsed regional and bilateral approaches to nuclear and conventional arms control in South Asia. In her first month in office she concluded an agreement with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. The pledge, one of three treaties signed with India at the end of December 1988, had been under consideration for three years. The pact has not been ratified, but we believe it will be. Bhutto probably has encountered little opposition from the Pakistani Army or President Ishaq Khan on the agreement, since, in our view, neither country's military in recent years had seriously contemplated this type of attack during peacetime. [REDACTED]

Bhutto's other nuclear arms control statements have generally followed traditional Pakistani policy positions, such as agreeing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty simultaneously with India and encouraging a South Asian nuclear weapons free zone—approaches Islamabad probably believes India will not accept. India's strongly held position that nuclear arms control must take place in a global, not regional or bilateral, context and longstanding Indian concerns about Pakistani threats to Indian security and internal stability make additional accords on sensitive nuclear issues unlikely in the near or medium term. [REDACTED]

**Outlook**

Preventing a cutoff of US assistance to Pakistan because of US concerns over Pakistan's nuclear activities is a high priority for Bhutto. During her visit to Washington in June, she probably will make a strong attempt to convince US officials that Pakistan is acting with restraint on the nuclear issue and that it will continue to do so. At the same time, Bhutto must not appear overly conciliatory to US concerns and probably must stay within limits of discussion or action [REDACTED] No doubt the [REDACTED] will be watching Bhutto's performance carefully during her visit. Skillful and diplomatic handling of the nuclear issue within guidelines they have set probably will help assure Bhutto continued participation in their dialogues on selected nuclear issues. In the longer term, we expect the military will retain firm control over nuclear decisionmaking in Pakistan, leaving little room for Bhutto to gain significant additional influence on the nuclear weapons issue. [REDACTED]

