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## China Likely to Be More Active In South Asia After Bhutto Visit

China will probably begin to conduct a more active policy toward the Indian subcontinent following the visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto to Peking this week.

Bhutto informed the Chinese that, with the repatriation of Pakistani prisoners from India, Islamabad intended to foster normal relations among the principal states of the subcontinent. He said Pakistan's interests would no longer be adversely affected if China did the same. Mao, in response, explicitly endorsed Bhutto's efforts and said that Peking looks forward to an end of tensions in the region.

Chinese statements have implied that Peking is prepared to improve its own relations with India and, particularly, with Bangladesh. Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping praised the agreements on the withdrawal of forces from occupied territories and the prisoner repa-

triation—Peking's long-standing conditions for warmer relations. A *Peoples Daily* editorial pointed out that a pattern of normal relations on the subcontinent worked to Moscow's disadvantage.

With no major obstacles left, early Chinese recognition of Bangladesh appears likely. The restoration of normal Sino-Indian ties is more complicated. Both Bhutto and the Chinese treated India gingerly during the visit. Their restraint was more than offset, however, by explicit Chinese endorsement of Kashmiri self-determination, a statement which was offensive to India.

This Chinese statement reinforces Indian arguments—reportedly advanced by Mrs. Gandhi—that India's close ties with the USSR are due in part to continued Pakistani claims, backed by China, to Kashmir. It is, conversely, India's relationship with the USSR that Peking finds especially troublesome. The Chinese may hope New Delhi will eventually make some gesture suggesting that ties with Moscow have been loosened.

The final communique of the Bhutto visit made clear that the special China-Pakistan relationship will endure, even if Peking becomes more friendly to India and Bangladesh. The Pakistani press reported that Bhutto discussed ways of utilizing a \$100-million commodity assistance loan pledged by China, and the composition of the delegations suggests the two sides discussed military cooperation.

A *Peoples Daily* editorial, however, did signal that increased Chinese attention to its own interests in the region might over time result in looser ties with Pakistan. The editorial stressed that past Chinese support had helped Pakistan to stand on its own feet. [redacted]