

# PRESS STATEMENT



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## **BHUTTO STATEMENT** **REGARDING SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR PARITY**

### *Leader of the Opposition Urges Restraint*

The long-held dream of the Bhuttos to give Pakistan the strength to stand up to Indian aggression has been realized. Now Pakistan and India have achieved nuclear parity, and I urge both nations to consider themselves to be military equals with equally horrible potential to inflict damage beyond imagination on each other. Pakistan can now openly react toward any Indian territorial adventures as an equal partner.

However, achieving nuclear parity does not deter war, it only deters nuclear war. Any further testing, or, more unsettling, deployment by either Pakistan or India only heightens tensions. Both the Sharif government and the new BJP government are embarking down a dangerous road of escalation. The poor of South Asia can not afford a costly arms race, the result of which can only be further impoverishment.

On the nuclear situation, let us not allow the tensions to escalate into a full-blown arms race. I call on Pakistan and India to immediately sign a 'no first use' pledge as a needed and constructive first step.

But, the South Asian arms race in itself is not the crisis, rather the intractable conflict of Kashmir.

This is the time for the international community, through the UN Security Council, to immediately and with vigor take active and concerted steps to resolve the roots of the tension in the region – Kashmir.

I urge and invite the international community to take unambiguous steps in concert with the permanent members of the UN Security Council to finally and without reservation fulfill the existing UN commitments for Kashmir, and to do so within a multilateral framework which addresses the security of all nations in South Asia.

Now that Pakistan and India have formally joined the nuclear club, let us not also be remembered by history as nations that used these horrible weapons.

*Benazir Bhutto.*