

## Coming home: on release of Indian pilot Wg. Cdr. Abhinandan

### The release of the IAF pilot gives India and Pakistan the chance to de-escalate tensions

With Pakistan's decision to release Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, tensions between India and Pakistan may finally wind down. The gesture, which Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan called an offer of peace and goodwill, must be appreciated, although there is evidence to suggest that there was pressure from other countries on Islamabad to make such an announcement to prevent further escalation from India. If Wing Commander Abhinandan's return provides the space for diplomacy to take over, it is because it gives both countries the opportunity to signal a victory of sorts. Islamabad will project itself as having done the decent thing, and New Delhi is likely to claim that its tough stance compelled his return. There have been a number of incidents that took the subcontinent to the brink of a conflict that could have quite easily spiralled out of control — from the Pulwama attack to the Indian air strikes on Balakot, to attempted attacks by Pakistani military aircraft in Jammu and Kashmir, and the IAF pilot's capture. The sense of uncertainty was only made worse by the utterances of public figures and the media on both sides, who tried to score points domestically. In India, within a few weeks the image of a nation in grief determined to fight terrorism appeared to have given way to triumphalism over the Balakot strikes. Pakistan went the same way after it foiled an attack across the Line of Control that saw both sides take down each other's aircraft. Videos of Wing Commander Abhinandan being manhandled by a mob before Pakistani soldiers moved in to protect him did not help. As a result, the focus changed within a few days from India's outrage over the terror strike to two nuclear neighbours poised for conflict.

It is time for New Delhi and Islamabad to use the pause afforded by the relief over the release to decide on the rules of engagement. Pakistan must realise that the time for denial and obfuscation is over. Unless it begins to act on India's and the world community's concerns about Pakistan-based terror safe havens in a time-bound manner, the two nations could be back on the brink of war if there is another trigger. If it does act, it could herald a paradigm shift in India-Pakistan engagement and help fix its own fragile economy. This has a precedent: the period that followed then-Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's 2003 announcement on shutting down terror groups, when Pakistan's military actually showed some results in the matter, was the most productive phase of engagement between the two countries in recent decades. Significantly, it was a time of economic growth and stability too for Pakistan. New Delhi must be ready to show both flexibility and a determined focus on Pakistan's action against terror groups, including the Jaish-e-Mohammad. This is the best way to build constructively on the international consensus built post-Pulwama in India's favour.

WORD	MEANING	SYNONYMS
Escalate	Increase rapidly	Grow, Intensify
Gesture	An action performed to convey a feeling or intention	Signal, Sign, Motion, Indication
Appreciate	Be grateful for something	Value, Respect, Prize
Diplomacy	Management of international relationship by country's representatives.	Tact, Tactfulness, Sensitivity, Discretion
Sort	A category of things or people with a common feature; a type.	Kind, Variety, Class, Classification, Style
Compell	Force or oblige (someone) to do something.	Force, Pressure, Impel, Drive
Brink	Something unwelcome, is about to happen; the verge	Edge, Margin, Rim, Lip
Conflict	A serious disagreement or argument	Dispute, Quarrel, Squabble, Disagreement

Spiral	Show a continuous and dramatic increase	Coiled, Helical, Curling, Winding
Utterance	A spoken word, statement, or vocal sound.	Remark, Comment, Statement, Observation
Grief	Intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death	Sorrow, Misery, Sadness, Anguish, Pain
Triumphalism	Excessive exultation over one's success or achievements	~
Foil	Prevent (something considered wrong or undesirable) from succeeding	Thwart, Counter, Oppose, Balk
Mob	A large crowd of people, whose intention is to cause trouble or violence.	Crowd, Horde, Multitude, Rabble, Mass, Body, Throng
Outrage	An extremely strong reaction of anger, shock, or indignation	Indignation, Fury, Anger, Rage, Disapproval, Wrath
Poise	Having a composed and self-assured manner	Composed, Assured, Self-Controlled, Calm, Cool
Denial	The action of denying something	Counterstatement, Refutation, Rebuttal, Repudiation
Obfuscation	The action of making something obscure, unclear, or unintelligible	Bewilderment, Mystification, Befuddlement, Bemusement
Herald	A person or thing viewed as a sign that something is about to happen	Harbinger, Sign, Indicator, Indication, Prelude, Portent
Paradigm	A typical example or pattern of something; a model.	Specimen, Sample, Exemplar, Exemplification
Fragile	Easily broken or damaged	Breakable, Brittle, Frangible, Smashable
Consensus	A general agreement	An agreement, Harmony, Concord

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### The deal-maker: on resignation and reinstatement of Mohammad Javad Zarif

### The drama over Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif's moves reflects an ideological tussle

A day after posting his resignation on Instagram, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was compelled to resume duties when President Hassan Rouhani rejected it. This sudden move by Mr. Zarif, who is widely credited with playing a key role in forging the nuclear deal in 2015, reflects the tensions within the Iranian political establishment. The U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal after Donald Trump became President, and the reintroduction of American sanctions on Iran, have sharpened contradictions between the hardliners and the moderates within the Islamic Republic, an ideological tussle that has endured for a long time. Hardliners opposed to any thaw in relations with the West, and who were always sceptical of the nuclear deal, have found in the current circumstances an opportunity to question and critique the architects of the deal. Mr. Zarif's public resignation was also a kind of a power play. He was missing in the parleys between Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his hosts in Tehran recently. Mr Assad, who is a key West Asian ally for Iran and has received military help from Tehran during the civil war, had also met Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Through his resignation and the public outcry that followed, Mr. Zarif sent a signal to his government that he was no lightweight diplomat and had a significant public standing among Iranians favourably disposed towards the regime.

The re-imposition of sanctions has been a major economic setback for Iran. The country did get some respite after the U.S. granted a temporary waiver for eight countries, including India, which are key trading partners. But with the sanctions, it is reeling under a weakening currency and galloping inflation. The major countries in the European Union — Germany, France and the U.K. — have reiterated that Iran has complied with the regulations of the nuclear deal and have created a new financial “special purpose vehicle” to facilitate trade with Iran despite the U.S. sanctions. The operationalisation of this entity is dependent on Iran abiding by rules framed by the international Financial Action Task Force. Bills that will bring Iranian laws in line with FATF rules are pending in Iran’s Expediency Council and Parliament due to a protracted debate between the moderates and the hardliners. Had Mr. Zarif, the main architect and advocate of the deal, exited the government, it would have complicated Iran’s continued adherence to the agreement. The conservatives’ critique of Mr. Zarif must be seen in this light. President Rouhani’s rejection of his resignation also indicates that he can ill-afford to lose an ally at this crucial juncture for Iran and its engagement with the West.

WORD	MEANING	SYNONYMS
Reinstatement	The action of giving someone back a position they have lost	Restoration, Return To Power, Bringing Back
Ideological	A system of ideas and ideals especially concerning economic or political theory and policy	~
Tussle	A vigorous struggle to obtain or achieve something.	Scuffle, Fight, Struggle, Skirmish, Brawl, Scrimmage
Compell	Force or oblige (someone) to do something.	Force, Pressure, Impel, Drive
Contradictions	A combination of statements, ideas, which are opposed to one another	Denial, Refutation, Rebuttal, Countering, Counterstatement
Endured	Suffer (something painful or difficult) patiently.	Tolerate, Bear
Sceptical	Not easily convinced	Dubious, Doubtful
Outcry	An exclamation or shout.	Cry, Yell, Howl, Whoop, Roar, Scream
Disposed	Inclined or willing	Prepared, Ready, Minded
Regime	A government, especially an authoritarian one	Reign, Dominion, Sovereignty, Jurisdiction
Imposition	The action or process of imposing something or of being imposed	Tax, Levy, Duty, Charge, Tariff, Toll, Excise
Sanctions	A threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule	Penalty, Punishment, Deterrent
Respite	A short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant	Rest, Break, Intermission, Interlude, Recess, Lull
Reeling	Lose one's balance and stagger or lurch violently.	Stagger, Lurch, Sway, Rock

Galloping	progress rapidly in a seemingly uncontrollable manner.	Rush,Race,Runs,Print,Bolt
Reiterated	Say something again or a number of times, typically for emphasis or clarity.	Repeat,Restate,Retell,Recapitulate
Complied	Act in accordance with a wish or command	Observe, Obey, Follow, Respect
Abiding	lasting a long time; enduring	Enduring, Lasting, Persisting, Lifelong, Continuing
Expediency	Doing what is convenient rather than what is morally right.	Advantage, Advantageousness, Usefulness, Utility, Benefit
Protracted	Lasting for a long time or longer than expected or usual.	Long, Very Long, Prolonged, Extended, Extensive
Adherence	Attachment or commitment to a person	Bond, Adhesiveness, Adhesion, Attachment
Juncture	A particular point in events or time	A point, Time, Moment, Stage

