

Headlines:

- **Imran Khan Caves in to US Pressure and Frees Indian Pilot while Conflict Still Ongoing**
- **Trump's Talks with North Korea Collapse**
- **Taliban Attack in Afghanistan Shows Leadership Still Divided over Talks with Americans**

Details:

Imran Khan Caves in to US Pressure and Frees Indian Pilot while Conflict still Ongoing

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan is presenting this week's unprecedented and humiliating release of a captured Indian pilot while military conflict is still ongoing, as favourable for Pakistan and South Asia generally. According to the *Dawn*:

Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Friday Pakistan was making all-out efforts to maintain peace in South Asia and added that freeing of the captured Indian Air Force wing commander was meant to ensure that peace reigned supreme in the region.

Abhinandan Varthaman was handed over to Indian authorities late in the evening after completion of documentation at the Wagah immigration centre.

In actual fact, whatever Imran Khan has done has been favourable only for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is facing a tough campaign for re-election as his five year term draws to a close.

It is now becoming quite apparent that India and Pakistan have just repeated their 2016 'surgical strike' tactic, in which India claimed a cross-border counter attack while Pakistan claimed nothing had happened; this was in response to the attack on the Indian military in Uri. Now, after the 14 February 2019 Pulwama attack, Modi needed to find some way to pacify Indian public opinion without starting a war with Pakistan. Hence the Balakot attack. But it all went off script the next day when Pakistan Air Force jets succeeded in downing an Indian fighter jet, whose pilot was then captured by Pakistan forces. America had to intervene directly to save Modi's disgrace. On the day that Imran Khan announced releasing the Indian pilot, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described how he had spent the preceding night in intense phone discussions with Imran Khan and Modi; according to *Dawn*:

`We were and continue to be very engaged with the issue between India and Pakistan,' Secretary Pompeo said. `I spent a good deal of time on the phone last night talking to leaders in both countries, making sure there was good information exchanged, encouraging each country to not take any action that would escalate and create increased risk.

He said he `had good conversations` with those leaders and was hopeful that `we can take down the tension there, at least for the time being, so they can begin to have conversations that don't portend risk of escalation to either of the two countries`. `So we're working hard on that,` he added.

US President Trump also spoke of America's role in the crisis:

`We have, I think, reasonably attractive news from Pakistan and India. They have been going at it, and we have been involved in trying to have them stop,` said President Trump while addressing a news conference in Hanoi, Vietnam.

According to a transcript released in Washington, the US president also said he had `some reasonably decent news` from the region, apparently referring to Pakistan's planned release of an Indian pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman.

While Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is virulently anti-Muslim, he is nevertheless firmly within the American camp, and this is the real reason that the Pakistani leadership is supporting Modi's re-election.

Muslims will never be able to escape their present day crises as long as they are ruled by an agent class who prioritises serving the foreign disbeliever over the interests of the Ummah and her Deen.

Trump's Talks with North Korea Collapse

According to the *New Yorker*:

President Trump was boastful as he opened his second summit with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, in Hanoi, on Wednesday. "Everybody having a good time?" he said after the two leaders' first half-hour tête-à-tête. "Boy, if you could have heard that dialogue, what you would pay for that dialogue. It was good," Trump said. "A lot of things are going to be solved, I hope. And I think it will lead to, really, a wonderful situation long-term." The White House schedule called for a lunch and a joint signing ceremony to wrap up the historic diplomacy—and some kind of deal.

But early Thursday—with the water glasses already filled and the floral arrangements on the lunch table—the President's boldest foreign-policy gambit abruptly collapsed. The first inkling that something had gone wrong was a notice to the press pool of an unexpected "schedule change." The talks then suddenly ended—two hours early. There was no lunch, no signing ceremony, no final hand-shaking.

The two nations, technically still at war, were too far apart to reach a formal peace for the 1950-53 conflict or to stave off the potential for future hostilities. "Sometimes you have to walk, and this was just one of those times," Trump said at a press conference afterward. The talks were "very productive," he insisted. He also continued to praise Kim. "He's quite a guy, quite a character."

In fact, Trump did not fail, as many commentators are insisting but he achieved exactly what he needed to achieve, which is to keep the North Korean issue festering as a problem on China's border, enabling America to justify vast military presence in Japan and South Korea, whose real purpose is in fact to contain China.

The Western political elite know well the emptiness of their values of democracy and freedom, so when it comes to foreign policy their real motivation is nationalistic self-interest. America's priority now is to manage China's rise so that it is pushed inland towards confrontation with other Eurasian powers and is blocked from expansion into the Pacific Ocean, which America has come to consider to be its private waters.

Taliban Attack in Afghanistan Shows Leadership Still Divided over Talks with Americans

According to the *Washington Post*:

Taliban suicide bombers and gunmen assaulted a major army base in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province early Friday, an attack that left 23 Afghan security personnel and 20 assailants dead as a new round of peace talks between U.S. officials and Taliban delegates in Qatar was underway.

There were no casualties among the U.S. advisory troops housed in the same base, officials said. But the attack, which began before dawn, lasted until midmorning. Afghan forces battled insurgents, armed with grenade launchers, who had penetrated the sprawling and heavily fortified joint base.

The Taliban immediately asserted responsibility for the attack, which was the group's second assault on a major military target since peace talks began several months ago. In January, insurgents attacked an Afghan intelligence training compound, killing 26 people.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, said Friday's assault caused serious damage to a fleet of military helicopters parked inside the base. An aide to the Helmand governor denied that claim...

Taliban and U.S. negotiators in Qatar paused Friday after three days of discussions, which both sides described as positive. Zalmay Khalilzad, the special U.S. envoy for Afghan peace, said earlier this week that he expected the talks to be "significant," in part because Taliban leaders had sent a key official, Abdul Ghani Baradar, to head their delegation.

Taliban leaders had said this week's meetings would focus on their demand for the total withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, in return for a Taliban guarantee that Afghan soil would not be used against U.S. or foreign interests.

There have been separate reports this week that President Trump plans to withdraw about 1,000 troops this year. About 14,000 U.S. forces are stationed in the country.

It is only under extreme pressure from Pakistan that the Taliban leadership has had to resort to negotiations with America. On their part, the Americans have had to accept the Taliban demand of not negotiating with the Kabul regime, which they correctly view as simply a proxy for the ongoing American occupation. But ongoing Taliban military activity demonstrates that the leadership have not fully accepted American demands.

The key to the Afghan situation is actually Pakistan, which is under pressure from America because of its present financial crisis, and has collaborated fully with America over Afghanistan, particularly after Imran Khan became Prime Minister.

Jihad to liberate occupied territories is an obligation on Muslims but it has become quite evident from the numerous occupations of Muslim lands that this obligation requires the backing of a strong state, which will not be possible until the Muslim Ummah re-established the righteous Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw) that shall unify all Muslim lands, liberate her occupied territories, implement her Deen and carry its call to the entire world.