U.S Iran Air Strike

Why in news?

US President decided to pull back from air strikes on Iran.

What is the reason for escalation between them?

- Iran shot down an Unmanned American drone.
- Iran maintains that the US aircraft was downed in Iranian territory as it violated Iranian airspace.
- U.S maintains that the incident occurred in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz.

What is the strategic position of Strait of Hormuz?

- Strait of Hormuz passes between **Oman and Iran**.
- Through this strait, one-third of the world's seaborne oil shipments move.
- It is within Iran's range.

What is the US's stance?

- US decided to pull back from air strikes on Iran.
- US President does **not seem to be in favour of launching an open conflict** with Iran which could be prolonged and disastrous.
- Iran has ballistic missiles, proxy militias and a relatively vibrant navy.
- U.S does not want to take a risk unless there are provocations from Iran targeting American lives.
- On the contrary, US President's National Security Adviser has threatened Iran with war several times.
- The current state of tensions between Iran and U.S is seen as a product of the adviser's **maximum pressure tactic**.

What is US's maximum pressure tactic?

- A year ago, US President pulled the **U.S. out of a nuclear deal** with which Iran was fully compliant, setting off the escalation.
- His plan was **to squeeze the Iranian economy** and force Tehran to renegotiate for a "better deal" on the nuclear issue, missile programme and

regional activism.
- A year later, the U.S. and Iran are on the **brink of a war**.
- If he continues with the pressure tactics, tensions will stay high, the Strait of Hormuz would be on the brink.

What is Iran's stance?

- Iran is ready to **take limited risks**.
- Its actions such as the threat to breach the uranium enrichment limits set by the nuclear deal and the downing of the American drone suggest **to break the stranglehold of the sanctions**.
- What Iran wants the most is relief from the sanctions.

What can be done?

- US could seize the moment **to assure Iran** that his primary goal is **engagement**, not conflict.
- Instead of sticking to a policy that has proved to be counter-productive and risky, Mr. Trump could offer Tehran some reprieve in return for its remaining in the nuclear deal.
- This could be followed up by a **fresh diplomatic opening**.

Source: The Hindu

Quick Fact

Iran Nuclear Deal

- It is also called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (**JCPOA**).
- In 2015, Iran agreed a long-term deal on its nuclear programme called JCPOA with a group of world powers known as the **P5+1.**
- **P5+1** - the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany.
- It came after years of tension over Iran's alleged efforts to develop a nuclear weapon.
- Under the accord, Iran agreed to limit its sensitive nuclear activities and allow in international inspectors in return for the lifting of crippling economic sanctions.
- It is implemented by **International Atomic Energy Agency** (IAEA).

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