

Headlines:

- **China-US Virtual Summit**
- **The Battle for Libya**
- **Afghanistan on the Brink of Economic Collapse**

Details:

China-US Virtual Summit

The US president and Chinese premier Xi Jinping held a virtual summit on 16 November 2021. There was no joint press conference or a press statement after the virtual conference. This is because expectations were very low and little substance was discussed. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet and trade were reportedly discussed. Both leaders are in relatively difficult positions to be able to make big demands or concessions. President Biden is rock bottom in the polls in the US after the chaotic Afghan withdrawal and the spread of COVID-19. Whilst Xi is facing supply issues and blackouts domestically. It seems the talks were about developing mechanisms to avoid unintended escalations and it is likely these sort of talks will be the key features in future talks. The Soviet Union and the US held similar summits during the Cold War, with bi-polar powers were able to work together and agree to a mechanism on a narrow set of issues, but all in the context of there global quest for dominance. The US is using the same strategy with China now.

The Battle for Libya

The French gathered stakeholders in Libya's elections, due in December, in Paris on 12 November 2021. The Paris meeting, which included the leaders of France, Libya, Germany, Italy and Egypt and the US vice president. The summit intended to cement backing for the planned December election vote, and condemned those who may attempt to obstruct the elections, such as Turkey and Russia. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of former President Muammar Gaddafi, declared his candidacy for President. Saif al-Islam joins a list of heavyweights vying for the presidential office that includes eastern military commander Khalifa Haftar, Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah and parliament speaker Aguila Saleh. There have been many conferences over Libya with the Europeans and the US backing different personalities.

Afghanistan on the Brink of Economic Collapse

Food prices in Afghanistan have jumped more than 50% since the Taliban took power as the freezing of \$9 billion of Afghanistan's assets held in foreign central bank reserves and the withdrawal of foreign income stokes inflation. "The economic and development outlook is stark," the World Bank observed in a report. 10% of the country's GDP came from foreign aid, all of it has dried up after the International Institutions stopped the disbursement. Thousands of Afghan public servants are demanding their unpaid salaries. The United Nations has, most recently, estimated that without urgent aid, 22.8 million people are likely to experience severe food stresses warning that Afghanistan is on the brink of the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with more than half the country facing "acute" food shortages and winter forcing millions to choose between migration and starvation. Afghanistan is "at the brink of economic collapse" and the international community must urgently resume funding and provide humanitarian assistance, Pakistan's foreign minister warned Thursday as U.S, Chinese, Russian and Taliban diplomats met in Islamabad. Doing so would benefit Western countries also, he argued in later comments to state media. Western Nations are demanding Taliban to comply with conditions including human rights, for the resumption of more international assistance.