

Headlines:

- **One Year Since the US was Defeated in Afghanistan**
- **Full-Scale Nuclear War Could Kill 5 Billion People, Study Shows**
- **China Announces New Military Drills as more US Politicians Visit Taiwan**

Details:

One Year Since the US was Defeated in Afghanistan

Monday 15th August 2022 marked one year since the Taliban entered Kabul and the now defunct US-backed Afghan government officially collapsed. There has been drastically less violence in the country since the US troops left, but Afghans are now facing a dire humanitarian crisis that is being exacerbated by US sanctions and Washington's seizure of Afghan central bank funds. *The Wall Street Journal* reported Monday that the Biden administration has decided not to release any of the \$7 billion in Afghan central bank reserves that are held in the US as millions of Afghans are facing starvation. The administration also suspended talks with the Taliban on the funds. The UN has warned that a staggering 95% of Afghans are not getting enough to eat and that nearly one-half of the population is facing acute hunger. A UN official said in March that the situation threatens an "entire generation of Afghans."

Full-Scale Nuclear War Could Kill 5 Billion People, Study Shows

Five billion people would die in a modern nuclear war with the impact of a global famine -- triggered by sunlight-blocking soot in the atmosphere -- likely to far exceed the casualties caused by lethal blasts. Scientists at Rutgers University mapped out the effects of six possible nuclear conflict scenarios. A full-scale war between the US and Russia, the worst possible case, would wipe out more than half of humanity, they said in the study published in the journal *Nature Food*.

The estimates were based on calculations of how much soot would enter the atmosphere from firestorms ignited by the detonation of nuclear weapons. Researchers used a climate forecasting tool supported by the National Center for Atmospheric Research, which allowed them to estimate productivity of major crops on a country-by-country basis. Even a relatively small-scale conflict would have devastating consequences for global food production. The study comes after the specter of conflict between the US and Russia was raised following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned in April that there was a "serious" risk of nuclear war breaking out.

China Announces New Military Drills as more US Politicians Visit Taiwan

China has announced more military drills around Taiwan as a number of US politicians visited the island nation. Tensions between the two have grown recently following visits from American politicians. The exercises are intended as a "resolute response and solemn deterrent against collusion and provocation between the US and Taiwan," China's defence ministry said. Nancy Pelosi became the first US House Speaker to travel to the island in 25 years when she stopped there at the start of the month. The latest round of drills was announced as a US congressional delegation visited Taiwan. It is not yet clear when they will take place. The delegation included Democrat Senator for Massachusetts Ed Markey, Democrat Representatives for California John Garamendi and Alan Lowenthal, Democrat Representative for Virginia Don Beyer, and Republican Delegate for American Samoa Aumua Amata. According to NBC News, they were set to meet Taiwanese leaders to talk about security, trade, supply chains and other issues. Taiwan's Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a statement: "At a time when China continues to raise regional tensions, the US Congress is once again organising a heavyweight delegation to Taiwan to show its undaunted friendship and demonstrate strong US support for the island."