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This week our Councillors reflect on the recent establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, an account of the COVID-19 lockdown in Chengdu and the future trajectories of Chinese grand strategy.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A person in a suit and tie  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | **Israel and the UAE**  Israel and the United Arab Emirates have [**announced**](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/israel-uae-announce-normalisation-relations-200813145645861.html) that they will establish diplomatic relations, heralded by President Trump as a 'historic peace agreement'. The UAE has agreed to steps towards the exchange of embassies and increased tourism and trade links, associated with an Israeli suspension of planned West Bank annexations. In Guardian Australia articles, Ian Black [**argues**](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/aug/14/the-israel-uae-deal-will-make-a-one-state-solution-even-more-unlikely) that this agreement undermines prospects for a two-state solution, while Martin Chulov [**suggests**](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/13/foe-of-a-foe-interests-uae-friend-of-israel-conventions-us-trump-iran) it may enhance the prospects for the “land for peace” [**plan**](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51288218) the US negotiated with Israel in January. Articles in Al Jazeera [**predict**](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/uae-israel-deal-remove-hurdle-35-sales-200821120108765.html) that the UAE’s steps toward recognition of Israel will open the way for American sales of advanced military aircraft to the UAE, but will meet Saudi [**opposition**](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/donald-trump-expects-saudi-arabia-join-uae-israel-deal-200820070824861.html) and [**undercut**](https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/newsfeed/2020/08/agreement-uae-israel-200824080336441.html) the wider Arab position. In an authoritative [**assessment**](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/israel-and-the-united-arab-emirates-strike-an-historic-peace-agreement/) in Australian Outlook, Colin Chapman explores the historical context and regional prospects. Image credit: [**US State Department**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/statephotos/50263270972/in/album-72157715617674947/) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | These articles were selected by Ian Lincoln, President of AIIA NSW since 2017. Ian was in the Department of Foreign Affairs for 33 years including postings in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Pacific. He was later an appellate member of the Refugee Review Tribunal and has worked in a number of community organisations. | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A close up of a stone building  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**Surviving COVID-19 in Chengdu**](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/08/17/how-china-controlled-the-coronavirus)   Peter Hessler, who writes for The New Yorker, has published a delightful [**account**](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/08/17/how-china-controlled-the-coronavirus)of the last few months when he has been lecturing at Sichuan University in the Chinese city of Chengdu throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Hessler's article is a great read as it provides a personal perspective on the effect of the virus on university campus life. Anyone who is interested in understanding how China managed the crisis, what 'ordinary' Chinese citizens think of the United States and how they expect relations to evolve in the future will undoubtedly appreciate this essay. Image credit: [**David Chao**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/luzhouzjy/9191395880/in/photolist-f1diLL-nd2FHX-nf55aZ-nf7txf-nd2CAe-nf7k39-nd2CQx-nd2Akc-nf6Kt5-nd2DnK-nd1vdG-nd1skX-nd1uCU-nd24h1-5eVEyg-nf3WXK-nd2ckL-nd22uC-nd24Ee-nd1x9u-nf4ufV-nd1xS3-nf3kC6-nd29Ab-nf4eDi-nd1vHo-nd1z2N-nd4nne-nd1uFo-nd3QYD-nf4g5K-nf4fxT-nf6PQR-nf3Vox-nd1uZu-nf4dri-nd4r7t-nf5UFB-nf6QLj-nf6cyo-nd1pNH-nf4cdB-nd1tqo-nd1wzd-nd3w4Q-nf5jvG-nd1rBc-nd21Ai-nd1sUo-nf4da6) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Jocelyn Chey AM. Jocelyn is an Adjunct Professor at the Australia-China Relations Institute, University of Technology Sydney, Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney and an Adjunct Professor at the Australia-China Institute for Arts and Culture at Western Sydney University. She was previously a senior officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Jocelyn is a Fellow of Australian Institute of International Affairs. | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people standing around a plane  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**China's Grand Strategy: Trends, Trajectories and Long-Term Competition**](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2798.html)  This [**report**](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2798.html) for the United States Army by the RAND Corporation presents four varying scenarios of China's development over the next thirty years and three possible trends for US-China relations. The recommendations focus on the capabilities and concerns of the US Army, and show them playing an increasingly important - yet uncomfortable - role in the largely oceanic expanse of the Western Pacific. The report suggests that US Army thinking is far more accustomed to the plains of Western Europe and other continental domains. Image credit: [**U.S. Pacific Fleet**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/compacflt/28070687574/in/photolist-JLvBrY-57awtK-2am7bA1-2hkEWAV-xYwe2S-6Qm2jK-MSH37h-o4d9JH-DTSkDZ-2gvNkbG-H8wi9D-PTVeHt-KxFiBh-KxnqNb-22wLC1S-2hm94ME-EiW25w-LcPjvE-FwWNrq-QxPLej-QxQcZN-XvfghB-waM3a3-cJhHSJ-RAcm7i-q1ZGMZ-K7KSmX-KBxe1q-KAgfpP-YC9Gb4-vgefPV-wcrpaJ-5kK1rY-PQGUc7-vVv99f-vVvEc3-JGf4Ez-wd8AGK-PHHU2x-Kcys6o-pRScDH-igojFa-rvkrk9-73CKzJ-phjoUk-7GsMtp-igobTj-GjQxMg-9t7LyT-D6cUsv) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Chris Skinner. Chris served thirty years in the Royal Australian Navy in warships that participated in the South East Asian Treaty Organisation, the Vietnam War and surveillance of the North-West Indian Ocean. He joined the AIIA NSW Council in 2019. | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **From the Interns** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | In addition to our Councillors, we invite one of our interns to share with you what they have found insightful or interesting in the world of international affairs over the past week. This week, Wendy Hu looks at the future of Mali following its recent coup and the reasons behind the US banning WeChat and TikTok.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | [**What does the future hold for Mali?**](https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/21/mali-coup-history-violence-collapse/)  The arrest of Malian Prime Minister Boubou Cissé by the military and the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta came following weeks of protest over systemic corruption and terrorism. Powerful actors such as the United Nations have demanded the elected government be reinstated but many Malians have supported the military's actions. Kathryn Salam [**argues**](https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/21/mali-coup-history-violence-collapse/) that this should not come as a surprise. A similar coup in 2012 and French military intervention have not been the stabilising forces they aspired to be. Violent extremist groups strike fear in many communities, and economic conditions remain abysmal, exacerbated by COVID-19. Powerful external actors will need to negotiate with Mali's military for a mutually acceptable government to be installed, otherwise Mali's problems will only continue to intensify. Image credit: [**Hugues**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/chugues/2264911214/in/photolist-4s9gcm-7F3ohm-7oHn1m-7oCjPH-ovU1F-7oGdTW-4rbH2B-7oHoyj-7F3k3m-7EYpG6-7F3m6Y-ovU1x-gyA9AS-5fq6k-MjS3Jn-yC11-7EYnWv-BaYb-7EYkjK-ddUqBd-BaNW-7ogo7o-5fpTc-7EYfia-yLEm-4rfUMy-Bb2B-7EYv6T-yLdS-7F3mp1-ddUpN6-7EYoc8-ovU1H-N3Dea-Na4GLH-4rfWTy-B3Ec-ddUqFW-7oHo8W-z19S-7ocuS6-7EXDFX-BbMR-ddUufr-4pfMM4-7EYoT6-dr33Ef-7EYud4-7om6CY-7oHpEY) | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A hand holding a cellphone  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**TikTok and Chinese Digital Espionage**](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/banning-tiktok-is-a-distraction-from-broader-threats-of-chinese-digital-espionage/)  US President Donald Trump recently signed two executive orders banning TikTok and WeChat, two Chinese-owned social media platforms, from operating in the United States. The main problem for policymakers does not concern the storage of personal data on Chinese-based servers, but legislation which allows for the Chinese Communist Party to access any data which relates to 'national security'. As Alexander Ratcliffe [**argues**](http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/banning-tiktok-is-a-distraction-from-broader-threats-of-chinese-digital-espionage/) in Australian Outlook, these risks are much more significant for less prominent software and social media platforms than for TikTok or WeChat. Image credit: **[Ketut Subiyanto](https://www.pexels.com/photo/crop-person-using-smartphone-against-blurred-american-flags-4560174/?utm_content=attributionCopyText&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pexels" \t "_blank)** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | These articles were selected by Wendy Hu. Wendy is a penultimate year student at the University of Sydney studying a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Laws. She has previously interned at the United States House of Representatives and is particularly interested in the international financial system, and US politics and foreign policy. | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **What else we're reading** | | |  |  | | --- | | * Writing in Psyche, UCLA's Andrew Little and Colombia's Matthew Backus [**argue**](https://aeon.co/essays/real-experts-know-what-they-dont-know-and-we-should-value-it) that what sets experts aside from pundits is that they know what they don't know, a trait the public under-appreciates. * For the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's The Strategist, Graeme Dobell [**reviews**](https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/from-the-bookshelf-do-morals-matter-in-us-foreign-policy/) the book [**Do Morals Matter? Presidents and foreign policy from FDR to Trump**](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/do-morals-matter-9780190935962?cc=us&lang=en&) written by Joseph Nye. * John Edwards [**analyses**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/costs-covid-australia-economic-prospects-wounded-world) Australia's economic prospects in the post-COVID world, arguing that the recovery is already underway despite rising unemployment and government debt. * Peter Hartcher discusses how bubbling discontent in Thailand has [**escalated**](https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/to-anyone-familiar-with-thailand-what-s-happening-is-breathtaking-20200824-p55opm.html) into sustained protest activity, with a focus on the role of the King in politics and society. * As the world enters difficult times, Ross Gittins [**reminds us**](https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/well-done-chaps-wto-future-is-in-danger-just-when-we-need-it-most-20200814-p55lr2.html) of the importance of maintaining the effectiveness of the World Trade Organisation. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Letters to the Editor** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Get involved!**  We're committed to keeping conversations about international affairs going, so get involved in our Letters to the Editor section!  Each week, we publish letters from our subscribers about what they think of the issues we’re discussing.  You can take part in the conversation by emailing us with your comments on each week’s articles. There are just a few simple guidelines: letters should be no more than 100 words in length, and should only be about the previous week’s articles. Please include your name and affiliation, and a mobile number (which won't be published). If you are a university student, please include your university and current degree.  Send all letters to the editors at [**aiianswletters@gmail.com**](mailto:aiianswletters@gmail.com) by Wednesday at 5pm Sydney time for the chance to be published in the following week's newsletter. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | |
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