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This week, our Councillors take a look at the Vatican's finances, greenhouse gas reduction targets, and Australia's relationship with Taiwan.   Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Vatican Finances**](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/world/the-times/pope-moves-on-vatican-finances-after-scandal/news-story/7c17f369d345c143a7eedd3811dfd89e)  There has been recent [**media coverage**](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/world/the-times/pope-moves-on-vatican-finances-after-scandal/news-story/7c17f369d345c143a7eedd3811dfd89e) of renewed efforts by Pope Francis to act against possible malpractice in the administration of the Church finances, following the dismissal in September of Cardinal Angelo Becciu from the Church’s Secretariat of State. Controversy about Vatican finances is not new. David Yallop’s [**In God’s Name**](http://docshare04.docshare.tips/files/24043/240435065.pdf), published in 1984, drew connections between the murder of a senior Vatican finance official, Roberto Calvi, and alleged corruption, and explored rumours that the death of Pope John Paul I was associated with financial matters. Pope Francis aims to make the Vatican’s [**economy**](https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/030613/secret-finances-vatican-economy.asp) less complex and opaque. Australia's Cardinal Pell has previously been heavily involved in this project. The Holy See generates income through donations, part of which it invests in stocks, bonds, and real estate, while Vatican City generates revenue through museum admissions and the sale of coins, stamps, and publications. The Vatican Bank, also known as the Institute for the Works of Religion, is a private bank located in Vatican City which has at times been at the centre of accusations of mismanagement and fraud.  Image credit: [**Nils**](https://unsplash.com/photos/kaEhf0eZme8) | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was 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. | | | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**The Net-Zero Moment**](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/31/net-zero-what-if-australia-misses-the-moment-on-climate-action)  Once again Australia is out on its own on climate change. Often viewed around the world as a climate pariah, Australia is doing nothing to shake that reputation by refusing to adopt a target of net-zero emissions by 2050, a goal that is becoming the international standard. In the past three months China, Japan and South Korea, three of Australia’s top trading partners, announced they would commit to net-zero by 2050 or near after. President-elect Biden is also committed to that aim, But there is more on the line than international reputation. There will be likely be economic consequences to Australia bucking the global trend. Adam Morton, the Guardian’s environment editor, [**looks at**](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/oct/31/net-zero-what-if-australia-misses-the-moment-on-climate-action) the accelerating momentum behind the net-zero target and what it could mean for Australia. While this article was written before the US election, its conclusions have arguably become more important since Biden’s victory.  Image credit: [**Hello I'm Nik**](https://unsplash.com/photos/QXv1T5c359o) | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Alex McManis. Alex holds a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in Government and International Relations from the University of Sydney. He is currently the Climate and Energy Security Fellow at Young Australians in International Affairs. Alex has served on the Council since 2019. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Taiwan: Rising Stakes for Australia**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/taiwan-rising-stakes-australia)  In the Lowy Interpreter, Jade Guan (Deakin University) and Wen-Ti Sun (ANU) [**argue**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/taiwan-rising-stakes-australia) that America’s policy of “strategic ambiguity” towards Taiwan is being hotly contested and, whether Australia likes it or not, Australia is at risk of being dragged into events. Yet as a middle power, Australia also has the potential wherewithal to mediate and prevent conflict. To achieve this, they argue that Canberra needs to leverage multilateral mechanisms to pool risks and capacities with other similarly affected regional partners, using the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit as a starting point.  Image credit: [**Tim Dennell**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/shefftim/50104691688/) | | A sunset over a body of water with a city in the background  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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, Amelia Proudlove looks at Australia's response to cyber-security threats, and the intersection of surveillance technology and authoritarian governance in China.   Disclaimer: The views expressed below by interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**China, COVID and Digital Authoritarianism**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/digital-authoritarianism-china-and-covid)  In responding to COVID-19, many states have expanded their mass surveillance and tracing intelligence programs. In this article Lydia Khalil likens this to ‘digital authoritarianism.’ She discusses the implications such cyber intrusions and strict media control have on Chinese civilians and globally through the Chinese Cyber Superpower Strategy. The article [**notes**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/digital-authoritarianism-china-and-covid) that at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak doctors who attempted to warn about the dangers of the virus faced state reprimand, silencing orders and digital surveillance. It illustrates how these actions are increasingly being utilised globally and warns of the dangers in removing civil liberties under the guise of responding to COVID-19.  Image credit: [**Reinhold Möller**](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_Peking_T%C3%BCrschloss_1320576-PSD.jpg) | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [**Responding to Digital Threats**](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/as-state-sponsored-digital-threats-escalate-australia-plans-to-defend-itself/)  The growing need for multifaceted responses to cyber threats has been recognised by the Australian Government and developing an adequate response is slowly being given more attention as attacks increase. A recent example of this is the Australian Cyber Enhanced Situational Awareness and Response program. However, in an article for the Australian Outlook, Anton Lucanus [**explores**](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/as-state-sponsored-digital-threats-escalate-australia-plans-to-defend-itself/) how this may be an insufficient response to the threats that cyber attacks harbour. Anton argues that as the international game has changed, we must wait to determine if the current strategies in place are effective or whether Australia will require further safeguards to protect against a digital attack.  Image credit: **[pxfuel](https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-xdvzb" \t "_blank)** | | A picture containing blue, table, sitting, water  Description automatically generated | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | These articles were selected by Amelia Proudlove. Amelia is in her final year of a dual degree of a Bachelors of Arts/Law majoring in International Law and Global Governance at Macquarie University. During her studies she has focused on the role of international humanitarian law during conflicts, changing security, and counterterrorism. Amelia has been interning with the AIIA since February 2020. | | | | | | | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **What else we're reading** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | * The Atlantic carries [**an excerpt**](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/11/barack-obama-i-still-believe-america/617073/?fbclid=IwAR3IwiQdw7FwzYOUUga90AVjebR9l3EeBgnZT8HlluETIwCIWkGxMsXAx8U) from Barack Obama's new memoir [**A Promised Land**](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/562882/a-promised-land-by-barack-obama/). In the excerpt the former US president explains his continued faith in the "possibility of America". * Kyle Springer, writing in The Australian Financial Review [**reflects on**](https://www.afr.com/policy/economy/deal-will-send-indo-pacific-trade-south-from-china-to-asean-20201116-p56ev5)the implications of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. * In Pearls and Irritations, former President of AIIA NSW Colin Chapman FAIIA [**breaks down**](https://johnmenadue.com/high-drama-in-downing-street-dominic-cummings-sacked/)the drama around the sacking of Boris Johnson's key adviser Dominic Cummings. * With President-elect Biden making key administration staffing announcements this week, this NPR [**article**](https://www.npr.org/2020/11/17/933848488/biden-administration-heres-who-has-been-nominated) tracks what roles have been filled so far. * On Talking Politics, Cambridge University's David Runciman and Helen Thompson are joined by Daniel Yergin to [**discuss**](https://www.talkingpoliticspodcast.com/blog/2020/284-china-climate-covid-the-new-energy-map) China's role in global energy politics. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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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