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| The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales welcomes you to Week 37 of: |

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| **Our Councillor's Picks for the Best of 2020** |

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| Some of our Councillors have been sharing with you the articles, analytical pieces, videos and podcasts that have shaped international affairs this year. For the final of Columns for 2020, our Councillors recommend a reflection on the 21st century thus far, an examination of Australian defence policy, a book on climate and democracy, and an article about a detained journalist. Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. |

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| [**Whose century? China, the US and the world economy**](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v42/n15/adam-tooze/whose-century)A lengthy but absorbing [**review article**](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v42/n15/adam-tooze/whose-century) by British historian Adam Tooze in the London Review of Books in July brought together China’s history, its trade relations and the determined opposition its aspirations have faced from Trump’s America. The reviewed books examine the fracturing of the world trading system resulting in part from the US-China trade war, the risk that this continuing struggle could prompt a new Cold War and the distorting effect of growing inequality on the global economy. Tooze notes that US businesses and consumers have benefited from trade and investment with China, and asks whether the trade war is really about trade: US technological leadership and national security are at stake. But US proponents of a new Cold War avert their gaze from the humiliation of the Vietnam War and the resurgence of Putin’s Russia. COVID-19 has delivered a disheartening verdict on the governmental capacities of Europe and the US, and the climate crisis is at hand.Image credit: [**London Review of Books**](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v42/n15) |

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| 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. |

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| [**Australia's foreign policy 'khaki tinge'**](https://www.afr.com/policy/foreign-affairs/dfat-cuts-show-our-foreign-policy-s-khaki-tinge-20200719-p55dco)My pick of the year is a short but powerful [**article**](https://www.afr.com/policy/foreign-affairs/dfat-cuts-show-our-foreign-policy-s-khaki-tinge-20200719-p55dco) written by my former colleague and Director of the Lowy Institute’s Pacific Program Jonathan Pryke in the Australian Financial Review. As Australian policymakers, politicians and the public at large now acknowledge that we live in an increasingly disorderly and dangerous world, Australia’s foreign outlook has taken on what Pryke refers to as a 'khaki tinge’. Pryke’s article provides a concerning insight into the prioritisation of defence spending over other tools of statecraft like diplomacy and aid, with Australia in the unenviable position of having one of the smallest diplomatic networks in the Western world. As we enter a time of great uncertainty driven by a multiple, complex global challenges, Australia must seek an ambitious yet balanced international outlook that concurrently utilises the three key instruments of foreign policymaking: defence, development and diplomacy. Pryke ends on a powerful sentence that Canberra should pay close attention to, noting that "a shrinking overseas reach at a time of historic uncertainty is not the signal of an ambitious middle power, but a scared one.”Image credit: [**Leonard J Matthews**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mythoto/34218539526/in/photolist-U8LXDq-2ik1Tt4-2ijG4eR-2qrwzc-2jsoFAi-2qwts5-2qrHEk-2qrHF8-EgKEqk-2qrHEV-TGwGSP-2qrwzz-w5uWsw-DiDEYr-2kekAax-2qrwzt-2qrwzK-2jCyiM6-2ik5tjF-2qrwyZ-wmrAD-8Rp1X9-qzLuYB-pXVC3-EYcWsg-2jWAsuR-Tb7T6N-5YogBd-2ibR3Yq-h9e1Tq-DCW5nP-p6qox4-2iw5Yci-2gMiwBv-r87n7m-2ibUtxy-2hS2ESh-2ibTpbZ-Rr7u2f-qwv4RX-2gMiwJQ-JXrSXA-2itGByW-tEsAP-cDp5Ds-24JRx6H-cXmTZC-CgJuku-2hZN45V-2itGBqj) |

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| This article was selected by Euan Moyle. Euan is a final-year Master of International Relations student at the University of Sydney. He is currently a risk analyst and editor for Foreign Brief, and a Young Leader with the US-based international affairs think tank Pacific Forum. He has formerly interned with the Lowy Institute. Euan has served on the Council since 2019. |

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| [**Too Hot to Handle?**](https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/too-hot-to-handle)There is a lot to like about [**Too Hot to Handle**](https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/too-hot-to-handle). Written by Rebecca Willis, Professor in Practise at Lancaster University and an expert on citizens assemblies, the book argues that we can improve climate policy by getting more ordinary people involved in the decision making - more democracy, not less democracy. What impressed me about the book was the ease with which Willis covers the political and academic debates about climate policy, breaking down the key positions on big questions such as the role of the state in solving the climate crisis with great clarity. It is also an incredibly honest book. Willis weaves in anecdotes about her own hopes and despair about trying to tackle climate change (feelings familiar to anyone who’s researched in the area) and her anonymised interviews with politicians are refreshing candid. For anyone who cares about how we are going to solve the biggest issue of our times, this should be on your reading list.Image credit: [**Bristol University Press**](https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/too-hot-to-handle) |

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| 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. |

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| [**Trapped in Iran**](https://www.economist.com/1843/2020/01/20/trapped-in-iran)This year we have all felt a little trapped, waiting for various lockdowns and quarantine periods to end, however everyone’s pandemic experience has been a little different. Earlier this year I came across [**an article**](https://www.economist.com/1843/2020/01/20/trapped-in-iran) in The Economist that I feel a lot of people can now relate to, which reflected on the detention of journalist Nicolas Pelham in Iran. In the article, Pelham explains that while he was free to explore Tehran as his jailers became more lenient, he was self-censoring himself and preventing himself from doing certain activities in fear of being viewed as a spy. His biggest concern, however, was the uncertainty of when it would all end. This is something many of us are experiencing right now, wondering when we will see loved ones or when we will be able to explore another country again. This article was captivating, giving a real sense of the dichotomy that is Iran, and how international power relations can affect individuals quite significantly.Image credit:[**A.Davey**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/laughingsquid/14313069699/in/photolist-nNNdXM-PrXUAL-JH4EUt-h5aDdn-2534u9B-bmBBMM-5sjRDy-9iaFsj-8vLPiJ-7fP58U-HPztnn-fUPyXj-hzyNP7-224R7TT-rwcDTj-5sfurc-34xF6f-7kMWPS-EPppD4-vEEyiy-oDnoAq-FCNLbB-g7RRGL-HPtfr4-bCX4Rm-bRPwHP-bCUHQs-bRP9PM-rgVk7G-NWHB1V-5AByeQ-5AxiFe-5zhjnj-RvNtXE-vwfL7D-8LcZwE-XXf1Ss-ryuqLv-qBudwj-dTD8dz-517qLQ-cyptJY-ewDwW5-rgUjVQ-5KfVSP-exxYAc-o6hyWP-bBnyCt-PrXUym-eHeALt) |

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| This article was selected by Nicole King. *Nicole* is an AIIA NSW Council Member and recent graduate of the University of Sydney with a double degree in Arts (Government and International Relations, Spanish and Latin American Studies) and Economics (Environmental and Resource Economics). She is particularly interested in the intersection of environmental politics and international security. |

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| **Letters to the Editor** |

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| **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** by Wednesday at 5pm Sydney time for the chance to be published in the following week's newsletter. |

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