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This week, our Councillors take a look at how China is portrayed in film, the Taiwan strait and climate action in the US.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors and interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A picture containing decorated  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**Movies about China**](https://radiichina.com/100-films/)  Understanding China has never been more important but few people have time to read scholarly books, articles and reports, and international travel seems out of the question at present.  It is therefore great to [**have a list**](https://radiichina.com/100-films/) of 100 Films to Understand China from the China-based media group Radii. Grouped under headings: Pre-War, Mao Years, Opening Up, Arthouse, Documentary, Wuxia, Pop(corn), China Today, Bad Films and Animation.  As the editors state on their homepage, “cinema has been an ever-evolving index of the country’s history, progress and global aspirations.”  Links from this list take the viewer to free-to-air platforms such as Youtube or Vimeo and all have English subtitles.  Some binge watching is recommended. Image credit: **[PxHere](https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1001999" \t "_blank)** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This resource 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 picture containing outdoor, person, people, day  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**Why should Australia be concerned about rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait?**](http://chinamatters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CME-Feb-2021-Taiwan-Jakobson.pdf?utm_source=China+Matters+Mailing+List+-+February+2021&utm_campaign=97f26ba7ff-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_28_02_23_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43184b2fbd-97f26ba7ff-470011709&mc_cid=97f26ba7ff&mc_eid=b29f9592e7)  This insightful and timely [**brief**](http://chinamatters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CME-Feb-2021-Taiwan-Jakobson.pdf?utm_source=China+Matters+Mailing+List+-+February+2021&utm_campaign=97f26ba7ff-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_28_02_23_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43184b2fbd-97f26ba7ff-470011709&mc_cid=97f26ba7ff&mc_eid=b29f9592e7) from the Deputy Chair of China Matters makes the compelling argument that China will move to reunify Taiwan with the Peoples Republic using ‘all means short of war.’ This sounds like a modern version of the teachings of the ancient Chinese scholar Sun Tzu. Jakobson addresses the current agonising debate on how the Biden administration may confront President Xi on Taiwan and what posture should Australia assume as a result. She concludes that Australia should prepare for a scenario which would bring retaliatory measures. Image credit: [**Florian Battalla**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/bricovoyage/49770381746/) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This brief 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. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A windmill in a field  Description automatically generated with low confidence |  |  | | --- | | [**US Climate Policy at Home and Abroad**](https://www.economist.com/briefing/2021/02/20/joe-bidens-climate-friendly-energy-revolution)  On 19 February the US officially rejoined the Paris Agreement after a brief absence under President Trump. This is not the only big change President Biden has made to US environmental policy. Since taking office in January he has issued a flurry of executive orders that have frozen new oil and gas leasing on federal land, created the National Climate Task Force and integrated climate considerations into the US’ national intelligence apparatus. This is all commendable but it begs the question how far can Biden really push climate action by purely executive powers? If Biden wants to make big dents in the US’ emissions he will probably need to entrench his policies in legislation. This will require getting moderate Senate Democrats (and possibly Republicans) on side. One thing that might help to do that is if he can spread the word about the opportunities climate action brings to the southern states of the US. As [**this article**](https://www.economist.com/briefing/2021/02/20/joe-bidens-climate-friendly-energy-revolution) from the Economist notes, while we often associate the South with oil, coal and conservative politics, the region’s massive investments in clean energy is less talked about and is already paying dividends. Image credit: [**Luke Thornton**](https://unsplash.com/photos/_zRy5fHzuDE) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This book 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 was the Climate and Energy Security Fellow at Young Australians in International Affairs in 2020. Alex has served on the Council since 2019. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **From the Interns** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | In addition to our Councillors, we invite 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 they discuss high profile cyber-attacks in the US and the Director-General of the WTO.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors and interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Text  Description automatically generated with low confidence | | [**US Senate holds hearing on SolarWinds hack**](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-live-senate-holds-hearing-on-solarwinds-hack)  On 23 February, executives from SolarWinds and Microsoft testified before the US Senate about an historic cybersecurity breach that affected 100 US companies and nine federal government agencies. The Associated Press [**writes**](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-live-senate-holds-hearing-on-solarwinds-hack) that US officials are struggling to reinforce the country's cyber defence capabilities, as classified information may have been exposed to Russia from malicious software through SolarWinds Inc.'s network. The extent of the damage is still under investigation from authorities. President Biden has stated that "dealing with Russian hacking into computer networks has become critical to protecting our collective security". The White House is close to sanctioning Russia for the data breach, with the administration confirming a decision within "weeks, not months". This will set an interesting precedent for government action on cyberattacks if the administration goes forward with sanctions in the near future.  Image credit: **[Blogtrepeneur](https://www.flickr.com/photos/143601516@N03/29723649810/in/photolist-MhztwS-EMvsp7-MEzZpm-T7NuuV-2jSo965-2kedVTb-2jSCTna-2kedWbA-2kedXqe-2kedWXF-2jSo5ph-2kedVXj-2k2Bqb5-2jwbtBm-2kehMeH-2jw8bLW-2ik5cPf-2jBmmoW-26x7xEn-nisbcd-pBfWy2-jEpFEQ-niLvmb-2gKPnnF-2jwcDbk-2keicG1-2kehMH3-2kehMi5-2kedX7t-2keid9o-2keicYU-2jwbtJR-2jw8c6o-2ik6o7t-2j542d4-p4fQhx-2jZb1BY-2j1Tgam-2jwcDnh-2jtP8Pu-2ik1Had-2gtwBBN-2i7GNkk-2i7JyqK-2aDXaww-2iBd2br-2ijX7CQ-buEKU4-2jw8bWf-2ia79nC" \t "_blank)** | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Erica Bell is a recent Honours graduate in International Studies, majoring in International Relations and Politics at the University of Wollongong. Her research interests include technology policy, cyber security, digital diplomacy and the Asia-Pacific. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A flag on a pole  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | | [**First African and Female Elected Director-General of the WTO**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0972zwm)  A recent episode of the BBC’s Africa Today podcast recently[**covered**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0972zwm)the appointment of former Nigerian Finance Minister, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, as the new Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. She will take office on 1 March. Her election to the role was welcomed by Nigeria’s president, Muhammadu Buhari, as bringing “joy and honour” to the nation. Professor Ken Ife, Chief Economic Strategist of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), spoke on the significance of Dr Okonjo-Iweala’s appointment, giving Africa a representative voice at the institution. BBC business correspondent, Andrew Walker, spoke on the initial blocking of Dr Okonjo-Iweala’s appointment by the United States under the former Trump administration. However, this challenge was lifted after President Joe Biden’s election. It is reported that Dr Okonjo-Iweala's priorities will focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, repairing the WTO’s dispute settlement process and settling agreements on free trade.  Image credit: **[Samhitha Bhat](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WTO..png" \t "_blank)** | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Adjoa Assan is a fifth-year student at Western Sydney University studying a Bachelor of International Studies/Law and a Bachelor of Applied Leadership and Critical Thinking. She has a particular interest in African affairs and global perspectives and would like to work in the areas of international diplomacy, policy-making and human rights, also pursuing opportunities at multilateral institutions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **What else we're reading** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | * Ill Wind by political scientist Larry Diamond [**explores**](https://diamond-democracy.stanford.edu/publications/ill-winds-saving-democracy-russian-rage-chinese-ambition-and-american-complacency) the potential for democracy in the 21st century. * The Sydney Morning Herald's Please Explain podcast [**covers**](https://www.smh.com.au/please-explain/facebook-flexes-its-muscles-but-will-australia-flinch-20210219-p573zy.html) the background and fallout of Facebook's news ban in Australia. * With the current mass demonstrations across Myanmar, The Atlantic [**explores**](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/02/myanmar-military-coup-joe-biden/617997/) why past activism against the military received a tepid, or even hostile, response from the public and why now is different. * In Pearls and Irritations, defence analyst Michael McKinley [**criticises**](https://johnmenadue.com/for-the-prime-minister-sovereignty-is-reduced-to-possessing-70-fighter-jets/) the Morrison government's defence purchases. * AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley and the New World Order by Kai-Fu Lee [**delves**](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/38242135-ai-superpowers) into the artificial intelligence arms race between the US and China and the responsibilities that come with global technological power. * In the wake of Alexei Navalny's sentencing, Foreign Correspondent [**interviews**](https://www.abc.net.au/foreign/poking-the-bear/13160148) his key advisors and ordinary Russians taking part in protests against the government. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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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