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| |  | | --- | | A person in a suit and tie  Description automatically generated with low confidence | | [**Lightning Strikes Again: Paul Keating on China**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/national-press-club-address)  Former Prime Minister Paul Keating [**addressed**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/national-press-club-address) the National Press Club in conversation with ABC journalist Laura Tingle on 10 November. He expressed concern that Australia remains at odds with our geography, failing to pursue our security as part of the Asian region, and that Western strategists have failed to understand and accommodate China’s place in the world as its economy burgeons. Our focus needs to be on the ASEAN countries: the “Indo-Pacific” concept takes us in the wrong direction – India’s focus is on its own region. The US needs to accept China’s pre-eminence in East Asia, while maintaining a US Pacific presence as a balancing power. Too much of our policy making is in the hands of intelligence agencies in Canberra.   He said we should not take too much notice of China’s “wolf diplomacy” – China is at an adolescent phase in its role as a world power. Its aggressive posture in the South China Sea derives from its concerns to keep the US away from its borders. China is not a threat to Australia, despite our planned acquisition under AUKUS of long range nuclear-powered submarines integrated into US military planning. We should aim for China to be more involved in international bodies like the WTO, IMF, World Bank and Trans Pacific Partnership. We need to accept the validity and legitimacy of China’s rise and its usefulness to the Australian economy.   University of Queensland Vice-Chancellor and former DFAT Secretary Peter Varghese made similar points, as eloquently if less colourfully, in an excellent address to AIIA Queensland on 9 November. He started his address by saying that the most urgent international task for Australia is to prevent a cold war between the US and China. In contrast, the general response to Keating’s comments has been hostile. Journalists have mocked his claims that Taiwan is not a core interest for Australia and that China is not a threat. Liberal MP James Paterson has described Keating’s stand as morally vacuous: “we need to stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies ... against military action initiated by China”. Defence Minister Peter Dutton has said “it would be inconceivable that we wouldn’t support the US in an action” undertaken by the US.   Image credit: **[Idpercy](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ldpercy/3255793486/in/photolist-5XGMYs-2hKSdde-xrz58M-2hKR7Pe-2hKNtb4-JszfPX-K3z4v-4TwK8d-xqbinf-2hKSdgk-FpPKoH-GhNJiq-FpQ7w4-FpDD7L-GbWKam-Geegvr-no8Yjh-2hKR7UK-7P2oQ5-QJeBG-9UJ5PN-9rWmq-bnT21F-38gMxf-arAMsY-aryajg-aryaBn-74nZae-FpP9Hv-FpNHNF-aryazD-Gefjhg-ovfg2n-aryaxB-GhLYP3-qYb4Ey-Gk5wfH-FpBKvm-7g6D8A-7g6D3G-GefM8k-dMq5CE-92PnbX-FpNSui-dsXVZD-pM9pUq-pJYM9L-8o8o7i-7atJkK-arAMx9" \t "_blank)** | |

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| |  | | --- | | A group of tall buildings  Description automatically generated with low confidence | | [**China’s Great Wall Of Debt**](https://www.dinnymcmahon.com/)  I have just completed [**China’s Great Wall of Deb**](https://www.dinnymcmahon.com/)**t** by Dinny McMahon which was published in 2018, and it explores the shadow banks, ghost cities, massive loans and ponders on the end of the Chinese miracle, and explores and describes how things got so bad.  What makes this book so different is that Dinny spent 10 years in the country as a correspondent, commenting on the positive developments in economy, and had the opportunity to view the eventual demise first hand, and is now watching and commenting on the elements which could be applied to fix the problem.  That makes this book so compelling as Dinny has spent so much time in the country, watching the events in a range of commercial sectors both State and privately owned and the effects on the overall economy, an opportunity very few commentators are afforded.  The country’s economy has ballooned in size but also in complexity and risk, and Dinny’s analysis is that the economy is a mish-mash of shadow banking entities, informal financial institutions, and complex corporate funding arrangements which threaten the whole economic system. Because of the accumulating debt, many economists are predicting a financial crisis of gargantuan proportions.   Dinny’s presentation and the analysis is very easy to read, even for the non-economist, and it is refreshing to read an authoritative book penned by a knowledgeable writer.   Image credit: [**Alexander Schimmeck**](https://unsplash.com/photos/bxDnyoXEOQE) | |

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| |  | | --- | | A picture containing solar cell, sky, outdoor, outdoor object  Description automatically generated | | [**The Future is Electric**](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2021/11/04/the-future-is-electric/)  In this month’s issue of The New York Review of Books, Bill McKibben (a contributing writer to The New Yorker) [**reviews**](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2021/11/04/the-future-is-electric/) ‘Electrify: An Optimist’s Playbook for Our Clean Energy Future’ by Australian-American inventor, Saul Griffith. McKibben notes that the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report paints a grim picture: we are on a trajectory for destabilising increases in temperature. But the IPCC report pales before the reports issued by mother nature: record heat waves from Canada to the Mediterranean, record fires from California to Siberia, and record floods from Belgium to Henan. In this context, some of the solutions long on offer (from a carbon tax to changes in personal behaviour) no longer qualify as enough. And he argues that this leaves one remaining route, laid out by Dr Griffith: we must immediately figure out how to electrify everything we do, and then supply that electricity with non-carbon energy. Image credit: [**American Public Power Association**](https://unsplash.com/photos/XGAZzyLzn18) | |

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| |  | | --- | | A person standing at a podium  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | | [Aung San Suu Kyi charged with election fraud and ‘lawless actions’](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/16/myanmar-aung-san-suu-kyi-charged-with-election-and-lawless-actions) Rebecca Ratcliffe [**reports**](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/16/myanmar-aung-san-suu-kyi-charged-with-election-and-lawless-actions) on the charges against Aung San Suu Kyi put by Myanmar’s military junta, including election fraud. Since the military took over the nation through a coup in February, they have made many claims of election rigging and had Suu Kyi in detention. However, independent watch dog, Asian Network for Free Elections, has dismissed these claims. Additionally, the military-controlled media in Myanmar stated that Suu Kyi had violated existing laws relating to election sub-commissions, threatened election officials, and wrongly added names to voter lists. The military junta has also accused her of breaching a communications law and an import law through the illegal possession of walkie-talkies. The election results from the last year which saw Suu Kyi’s party, the National League for Democracy, secure a win, have been overruled, with another election scheduled for August 2023. The junta has gagged Suu Kyi’s legal team. Image Credit: [**Asia Society**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/asiasociety/29845547905/in/photolist-MtmeAa-bX2JCV-8U66Sx-2hJWVWg-cfjdvm-mDsk8j-LemUAA-cgkBrU-8UYgfh-21K9kZh-2hYu81H-bXnbzD-2fNAt-cgkBBY-ceJAZU-Mtkv58-hydCsk-3ekGW3-bXnbGH-gTdugV-kBGa2i-cieYJj-gSZa29-kBGgCK-gUM94r-ddHW4v-L4akWE-ct49Tu-dc4k72-4Yqsf3-4Ym9sc-cgkDf5-2j2QekU-denLdM-cgkBQu-4YmdrP-mqJ3F8-Mqcntb-Mqcnff-4Ym63V-4YqnjW-4YqpT3-4Ym6Wz-ciMHjh-4Ym5er-4YqruE-gRvCtU-Mtkvat-4YqqJJ-ciLbzj) | |

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| |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Niki Beri. Niki is a fourth-year student at the University of Sydney, studying a Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Advanced Studies (Politics and International Relations, Music). She is currently a Parliamentary Liaison at Jasiri Australia, facilitating the NSW Girls Takeover Parliament program and Secretary of the Sutherland Shire Chuo Sister City Association. Through her studies she has developed a keen interest in human rights, ethnic conflict and women’s issues and rights. | |

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| |  | | --- | | [A group of jets flying in the sky  Description automatically generated with low confidence](https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-jrhcu) | | [****Would a war over Taiwan be legal?****](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/would-war-over-taiwan-be-legal) This question is discussed in the **[The Interpreter](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/would-war-over-taiwan-be-legal" \t "_blank)**by Ben Saul. Would a war over Taiwan be legal and how would countries like Australia and the United States justify it in international law if it came to war?  He explores the legal difficulties that may arise over Taiwan’s defence due to its legal status. Saul suggests that the ambiguous way Western states deal with the Taiwan issue and vaguely acknowledge China's claim to Taiwan could make it difficult to justify military action under international law. Legally speaking, as Taiwan is not recognised by most members of the international community as a state, it (and others) has no right to defend itself from China. However, he contends that international law may offer three unconventional theories which could favour military action. The first is that Taiwan is a stabilised ‘de facto’ state that possesses a right to self-defence comparable to an actual state; the second is that states must peacefully settle dangerous international disputes and the third theory is that Taiwan has a cultural identity entitling it to self-determination free of Chinese coercion. Saul argues that it will be incumbent on other countries such as Australia and the US to declare a legal justification to defend Taiwan, and that they will have to test these ideas with the wider international community. Image credit: [**Connor Baker**](https://unsplash.com/@connerbaker) | |

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| |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Cameron Smith. Cameron is a recent Bachelor of Arts (Honours) graduate majoring in History and International Relations at the University of Wollongong. Currently, he is working as an Electorate Officer at the Parliament of Australia and is the Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer of the Australia-Pacific Youth Dialogue. He has a particular interest in US foreign policy, international security, and grey-zone operations in the Indo-Pacific. | |

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