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This week, our Councillors examine Russia's war in Ukraine, South Korea's presidential elections and Biden's world view.   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 person sitting at a table  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | | [**Inside Vladimir Putin’s paranoia**](https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/ir/2022/03/05/inside-vladimir-putins-paranoia/164639880013447#hrd)  Ukraine is suffering an unimaginable catastrophe and we have to ask “Why?” The answer appears to be somewhere in the head of Russian President Vladimir Putin. University of Melbourne Professor [**Mark Edele’s article**](https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/ir/2022/03/05/inside-vladimir-putins-paranoia/164639880013447#hrd) in the Saturday Paper is a valiant attempt to explain his thinking. Cavan Hogue, who has firsthand experience of dealing with Putin as former Ambassador to both the Soviet Union and Russia, has some [**perceptive comments**](https://johnmenadue.com/tsar-vladimirs-scorecard-off-to-a-bad-start/) on “Tsar Putin.” and John Cleese adds a [**witty reflection**](https://johnmenadue.com/john-cleese-alert-levels-in-response-to-the-russian-threat/) on Europe’s weak response to Russian aggression. Some commentators in Australia and the US speculate that Beijing might emulate Moscow and seek to seize Taiwan by force. This is very superficial analysis and should not be taken seriously, as Ryan Hass sets out in [**an article**](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/22/learning-the-right-lessons-from-ukraine-for-taiwan/) that appeared originally in the Taipei Times. Image credit:[**Presidential Press and Informational Office**](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vladimir_Putin_18.03.2021.jpg) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | 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 person speaking at a podium  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | | [**The ‘Gwanghwamun President’ and the Future of South Korea**](https://asiasociety.org/australia/gwanghwamun-president-and-future-south-korea)  From the US midterms to the Philippines and Australia, 2022 marks a big year of elections across the Indo-Pacific. Perhaps one of the most important and contentious of them will be the presidential elections coming up in South Korea. Not only will it have enormous domestic consequences for Asia’s fourth largest economy, it will also hold geostrategic consequences for the wider region. In this piece, published by the Asia Society Policy Institute, I review the complex legacy which the incumbent President Moon Jae-In leaves behind and the contentious dynamics of the current presidential race.  Image credit: [**Republic of Korea**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/koreanet/34409283652/in/photolist-UqCzef-UEVxmx-UqCxHj-UEVuWT-2hq4FFu-UEVymi-TosHyd-UEVvv8-UtqbVx-UtpWSH-U5Q4fm-28Dc2hW-TosHrj-Trm7PX-UEVw54-Trm81t-UqCzSQ-UEVxbn-Trm9vH-Trm9Ut-U5QiA5-2dVuYJm-2kZNhAp-UtqbRV-UEVBg6-TosMF1-UBiSGN-2m5Jfr9-2epe9WQ-UEVA3p-24TCF8X-2j4d92t-2atmUHY-23Wg2qb-2m6at3q-TmWnpq-2mwSYYH-H42F9H-2aUZY57-R15jd1-2atmV3f-23TBaGF-U5Qi8m-2bRhPue-2bRhPyH-2mfKNEC-2dgbtzF-TmWnsb-U5QhMm-2bRhPGD) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Chris Khatouki. Chris is an Associate at Asia Society Australia. He is also a PhD Scholar at the University of New South Wales, where he was appointed the Graduate Fellow for the Korea Foundation. He joined the AIIA NSW Council in 2018. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A person in a suit  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | | [**The World According to Biden**](https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-bidens-washington/we-are-going-to-be-ok-the-world-according-to-biden)  According to The New Yorker’s Susan Glasser, the problem for President Biden’s first State of the Union address wasn’t that the nation was in crisis, but that there were so many crises: Ukraine, inflation, COVID, gun violence, fraying democracy. He mentioned them all during his address, though without making a particularly strong argument for what he would do about any of them. He concluded his address with an unscripted exhortation to “Go get ‘em!” But was he talking about Putin? And was he exhorting the Ukrainians? The Democrats? Who knew. But according to Glasser, the President “seemed delighted to have made it through this particular American 'ritual'. Image credit: [**Gage Skidmore**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/48651032061/) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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, our new interns Sachin Khunte and Victor Ruifeng Liang discuss India and China's position on the Russian invasion of Ukraine.  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 person, suit, person, dressed  Description automatically generated | | [India’s stake in the Ukraine conflict](https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/indias-stake-in-the-ukraine-conflict/) Former UN assistant secretary-general and ANU professor Ramesh Thakur explains in [**ASPI’s The Strategist**](https://mailchi.mp/www.aspistrategist.org.au/indias-stake-in-the-ukraine-conflict)why India chose to abstain from voting on the UN Security Council resolution to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Russia’s action in Ukraine violates one of India’s fundamental foreign policy beliefs: that states should always respect each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Its Quad partners, the US, Japan, and Australia, have all imposed sanctions on Russia. But Russia is a historically strong ally of India in the geopolitical dynamics India faces in its west Asian region. Thakur describes India’s major concern as its military supplies from Russia; condemning Russia would damage these supplies, which would in turn affect India’s ability to respond in Kashmir and on its Pakistan and China borders. The abstention shows India’s difficulties in balancing its contrasting relationships; India’s allies need to understand the geopolitical complexities India faces. Image Credit: [**Narendra Modi**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/narendramodiofficial/28064299602/in/photolist-JKWSww-AxER9z-A9B5JH-pNHXGX-FJG7Ji-FJG7WT-Fhpxk3-KRgU8M-VfXyEf-q3ZMDd-KRgUiB-AswLWT-B82sii-2mPcVFB-q5VpnF-B5QSCL-o4E7wB-om7ZF5-LU1Knx-2mQtxfE-B6uLsg-FGob6N-FJG6Ta-2csbnbw-2mQtw58-ocTBs7-vLUAWj-MjLGBt-B5oAXE-A9qqNc-NCZbFq-oQRXjC-oQTKkr-xAr2XW-oxit9S-Ly3A8D-MjLGez-okQ4Sp-Ufit2n-qqCG7L-232Ym3S-qsZkwe-244Xtkh-2mQsgaV-2mQjKyx-2htGssG-2mQjKNL-FxHS7d-2mQqcjg-2mQjLWh) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Sachin Khunte. Sachin is a recent Bachelor of Arts graduate majoring in Politics and International Relations and International Business at the University of Sydney. He is working as a Team Lead and an editor in an American intelligence and counterterrorism firm. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [A couple of men in suits standing in front of flags  Description automatically generated with low confidence](https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-jrhcu) | | [****Why the Chinese Internet is Cheering Russia's Invasion****](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/27/business/china-russia-ukraine-invasion.html) Li Yuan observes in the [***New York Times***](https://mailchi.mp/internationalaffairs.org.au/www.nytimes.com/2022/02/27/business/china-russia-ukraine-invasion.html) that there is a significant dissonance, even within China’s own narrative, between claimed adherence to international rules and norms and simultaneously supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This is reinforced by personal observations of Chinese social media and other websites including Weibo and Zhihu; there is censorship of the Ukraine perspective whilst the Russian perspective is freely disseminated. Chinese state-affiliated media have also shown a greater willingness to quote Russian media reporting than Western media (including quoting the Chairman of the State Duma’s claims that Zelenskyy had fled Ukraine). A reading of Li Yuan's reporting and analysis, and a projection of her views, would suggest that this pro-Russian stance could be explained by China's deliberate approach to portray the United States and the West as a morally bankrupt hegemonic power. Domestic opinion, without access to many Western sources of information, is deflected from actions taken by Russia or China simply by quoting other actions by the West with similar or greater moral questionability. Any escalations to regional conflicts could also be framed through the lens of 'anti-Western hegemony' to the extent of providing Russian and Chinese decisions with a normative legitimacy.  Image credit: [**Presidential Executive Office of Russia**](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vladimir_Putin_met_with_Xi_Jinping_in_advance_of_2022_Beijing_Winter_Olympics_(1).jpg) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Victor Ruifeng Liang is a fourth-year student at the University of Sydney, studying Politics and International Relations and International Business. He is currently a Project Officer at the Australia China Business Council, an Editorial Assistant at the University of Sydney’s Journal of Chinese Tax and Policy, and a Programme Coordinator for the 2022 GIR Symposium. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **What else we're reading** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | * In a paper summarised in Pearls and Irritations, Professor Jocelyn Chey [**comments**](https://johnmenadue.com/any-talk-of-cooperation-is-being-called-as-soft-on-china/) that the anti-China rhetoric started in the United States under Trump has been enlarged and enhanced in Canberra, and expresses concern at the government's effort to politicise China policy as the Australian election approaches. * Geoff Raby, in his 2022 Fraser Oration, [**addresses**](https://johnmenadue.com/leadership-in-a-changing-world-2022-fraser-oration-extracts-mm-we-will-need-link-to-oration-on-mu-site-jm/) the forward-looking elements in Malcolm Fraser's foreign policy in environment, relations with China, and the danger of excessive identification with the United States. * Writing for the Brookings Institution, Bruce Riedel [**discusses**](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2022/02/24/could-ukraine-be-putins-afghanistan/) the political and humanitarian consequences of involvement of the West in the Russia-Ukraine conflict by using the analogy of the Afghan-Soviet War. * Christopher Chivvis, writing in the Guardian, [**analyses**](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/08/russia-ukraine-war-possible-trajectories) the possible future trajectories and endpoints of the Russia-Ukraine war. * Sergey Aleksashenko, in Al Jazeera, [**offers**](https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/3/3/how-much-damage-will-sanctions-do-to-russia) a different perspective on the impacts of sanctions imposed by Western countries on Russia. * The Climate Council [**explains**](https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/breaking-down-latest-ipcc-report/) the grim findings of the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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 edition'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 edition'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 fortnight's newsletter. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | |  | | |
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