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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. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | [**Birds and Global Challenges**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/flyways-the-story-of-migratory-shorebirds)  In our present stressful world, nothing is more relaxing than time spent in nature. Failing that, a good wildlife documentary is second best - that is why the world so loves David Attenborough’s work. From time to time our own ABC TV also hits the sweet spot, as was the case recently with [**Flyways: The Story of Migratory Shorebirds**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/flyways-the-story-of-migratory-shorebirds). This tells the story of birds that every year commute from the northern to the southern hemisphere and back again, following journeys of tens of thousands of kilometres. Birds featured in this story include the Red Knot that flies from East Africa to Siberia; the Hudsonian Godwit, from Chile to Alaska; and the endangered Eastern Curlew from Australia to North China.  Even more amazing than the cinematography are the references to the environmental and political threats to these international travellers: reclamation of marshlands, drying up of oases, air and water pollution, war and pandemics. Conservation of migrant birds is covered by United Nations treaties including Ramsar, to which Australia acceded in 1975. These should but do not guarantee breeding habitat and protection of sites where the birds can stage during their long journeys. The Flyways documentary is a reminder of the interconnectedness of science and politics and the existential threats that face us as well as these precious birds.  Image credit: **[Soumadeep Das](https://www.pexels.com/photo/white-and-black-birds-973165/" \t "_blank)** | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This documentary 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. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | [**Challenging Climate**](https://www.challengingclimate.org/)  Australian reporting on the politics of climate change is often shallow and parochial. An intractable domestic debate over the value of mitigation policy means that local media often overlooks major international developments and policy dilemmas. [***Challenging Climate***](https://www.challengingclimate.org/) fills in many of these gaps. In addition to exploring international mitigation efforts, the podcast also covers developments in carbon removal and solar geo-engineering – both topics that are receiving increasing attention from the Biden administration. Episodes provide deep dives into topics such as: how climate models are created (Glenn Peters & Linda Steg); changing conceptions of nature (Emma Marris); climate change in popular fiction (Neal Stephenson); moving beyond fossil fuels (Holly Buck); and cloud brightening above the Great Barrier Reef (Daniel Harrison). The podcast is hosted by climate scientist Dr Pete Irvine and legal academic Dr Jesse Reynolds who is currently serving as Executive Secretary of the ‘Global Commission on Governing Risks from Climate Overshoot’ and Senior Policy Officer at the Paris Peace Forum. This is a serious podcast that values measured analysis over emotive politics, so it's unlikely to hit the top of the most listened charts. But, if you are interested in understanding how climate change is impacting global politics, Challenging Climate’s is an invaluable resource.  Image credit: **[Lighttosensor](https://www.flickr.com/photos/190540361@N08/" \o "Go to Lighttosensor’s photostream)** | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This podcast was suggested by Jonathan Symons. Jonathan is Discipline Chair of Politics and International Relations in Macquarie University's School of Social Sciences. Prior to joining Macquarie, Jon held teaching positions at Lingnan University, Hong Kong, and at La Trobe University, Melbourne. Jon's current research primarily focuses on global climate politics, including debates over solar geo-engineering and carbon dioxide removal. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | [**Banning the Bomb - Easier Said Than Done**](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396330701733928)  It is many years since I stood in the rain in Trafalgar Square listening to the renowned philosopher, Bertrand Russell, rail against the bomb. It wasn't banned then, but the call to do so has persisted. The latest indication of this is the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which was adopted by the United Nations in 2017 and is now open for signature.   Australia has not signed the Treaty, but neither have the nine states possessing nuclear weapons, nor have many of their allies. Why is this so?   From the beginning, the bomb was regarded as a horrible weapon, but a weapon nevertheless. Its creation was motivated by fear that Hitler might be building it and would use it to win World War ll. Thereafter, security concerns caused the collapse of post-war efforts to control nuclear weapons and have featured prominently in the rationales of the states that have built them since. Supporters of the TPNW must demonstrate the credibility of proposals for some sort of “higher” kind of security that does not involve possession of nuclear weapons. But as President Harry Truman [**once said**](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00396330701733928): “Let us not become so preoccupied with weapons that we lose sight of the fact that war itself is the real villain”.  Image credit: [**U**](https://unsplash.com/photos/B_TdfGFuGwA)[**nited States Department of Defence**](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:L%27explosion_%22Baker%22,_suite_%C3%A0_l%27op%C3%A9ration_Crossroads,_un_essai_nucl%C3%A9aire_de_l%27arm%C3%A9e_am%C3%A9ricaine_sur_l%E2%80%99atoll_de_Bikini,_Micronesia,_le_25_juillet_1946.png) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This piece was selected by Bob Howard. Bob researches aspects of the history of international relations in the twentieth century, with special reference to developments in international security. He is an honorary associate and former lecturer in the Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney and has written extensively on international relations, international security and Australian politics. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **From the Interns** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | In addition to our Councillors' recommendations, we invited our interns to share with you what they have found insightful or interesting in the world of international affairs over this week. This week Nadia Maunsell discusses the 50th anniversary of Australia-Viet Nam relations while Isobel Logan recommends an interesting conversation in Foreign Affairs over Prigozhin's rebellion as it unfolded over the weekend.   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. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | [50th Anniversary of Australia-Viet Nam relations](https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights/the-50-year-transformation-of-australia-vietnam-relations) The recent visit by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to Viet Nam saw a historic step forward in Australia-Viet Nam relations, celebrating the [**50th anniversary**](https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights/the-50-year-transformation-of-australia-vietnam-relations) of the Whitlam Labor Government extending diplomatic recognition to the communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Australia and Viet Nam are now poised to upgrade the relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Australia would be only the [**fifth country**](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2023/April/Australia-Vietnam-relations) to attain the highest status of diplomatic relations Viet Nam has to offer, after China (2009), Russia (2012), India (2016) and the Republic of Korea (2022). This comes as Australia continues to [**strengthen its ties**](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2023/April/Australia-Vietnam-relations) with other ASEAN countries, demonstrating how crucial the region is to Australia's economic and security interests.  Image credit: [**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**](https://www.pmc.gov.au/news/australia-vietnam-looking-future) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Nadia Maunsell. Nadia is a recent graduate with a Bachelor of International Studies and a Bachelor of Media from the University of New South Wales. Currently, she works as a Research and Content Analyst for a financial education start-up. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | [**Prigozhin’s Rebellion, Putin’s Fate, and Russia’s Future**](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/prigozhin-rebellion-putin-fate-russia-future-stephen-kotkin)   Last weekend saw one of the most dramatic challenges to President Vladmir Putin’s twenty-three year rule with Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of mercenary Wagner organisation launching rebellion against the Russian military. Executive editor of Foreign Affairs Justin Vogt spoke with Stephen Kotkin, a Russian historian and author, to discuss these events as they unfolded. In this interesting conversation, the two discuss the role of technology in the mutiny, the ‘stress test’ on Putin’s power and the implications for the Ukraine war. For now, [**Belarus appears to have brokered a de-escalation deal**](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-06-25/wagner-fighters-returning-to-ukraine-live-blog/102520958) between Putin and Prigozhin that has seen the mercenary boss tell his forces to return their bases and Russia drop charges. This insightful conversation highlighted in ‘real time’ what the options and possibilities were as the remarkable events unfolded.  Image credit: [**Ruslan Braun**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/combat-market/) | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Isobel Logan. Isobel is an honours student at the University of Sydney in Politics and International Relations. She is currently writing her thesis on international and domestic climate policy. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **What else we're reading** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | * A new Boston Consulting Group report reveals the [**50 most innovative companies of 2023**](https://www.bcg.com/publications/2023/advantages-through-innovation-in-uncertain-times?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=most-innovative-companies&utm_description=organic&utm_topic=marketing&utm_geo=global&utm_content=2023&linkId=215805232), with Apple, Tesla and Amazon taking the top three places. * Nigeria's Central Bank Governor has been [**arrested**](https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/6/14/the-downfall-of-nigerias-all-powerful-central-bank-governor) and is in custody for interrogation as part of an "ongoing investigation of his office and planned reforms in the financial sector", according to an Al Jazeera article. * The latest International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Yearbook report ranked Australia [**third worst out of 64 countries**](https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/australia-s-dud-report-card-on-innovation-and-entrepreneurship-20230621-p5digj) for entrepreneurship, but third overall for life expectancy and health coverage. * Ahead of the UNFCCC's release of the inaugural Global Stocktake of countries' Nationally Determined Contributions, the Net Zero Tracker's own annual [**Net Zero Stocktake 2023**](https://zerotracker.net/analysis/net-zero-stocktake-2023) provides insight into the themes of integrity, regulation and implementation that are likely to emerge and be key talking points at COP28. * The most recent Rachman Review podcast [**episode**](https://open.spotify.com/episode/3gcfdIZ3NCRWm9GI0hN3rb?si=acdab06e4f354dbc) discusses the contemporary use of the 'responsibility to protect' principle with Indian opposition Congress politician and former diplomat Shashi Tharoor. * In Foreign Policy (US) Pascal Lottaz and Heinz Gärtner [**suggest**](https://foreignpolicy.com/author/heinz-gartner/) that, despite Finnish accession to NATO and Sweden’s application for membership, attitudes to the Ukraine war demonstrate that neutrality and non-alignment remain widely held - particularly on the part of most non-Western countries, including India. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | | |  |  | | --- | |  | | |