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This week, our Councillors reflect on the enormous legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the challenges facing Myanmar and ongoing student-led protests in Thailand.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by Councillors are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A person sitting on a table  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**RBG: The Legacy of a Revolutionary Justice, and the Fight Ahead**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/rbg/video/ZW1893A001S00)  Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the 107th Justice of the US Supreme Court and only the second woman to be appointed to the Court, died on Friday from complications with pancreatic cancer. Justice Ginsberg, or RBG as she was colloquially known, was a leading liberal jurist. She was a pioneering figure for gender equality known for her powerful dissents in an increasingly-partisan Supreme Court. The ABC has re-uploaded the [**documentary**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/rbg/video/ZW1893A001S00)[**RBG**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/rbg/video/ZW1893A001S00) which tells the story of Ginsburg’s remarkable journey to the Supreme Court. Ginsburg's death has also set up a titanic political battle over who will succeed her on the court less than two months out from the US Presidential election. President Trump has vowed to fill the seat before his term is out and entrench a conservative majority, while Democrats are determined to stop him. FiveThirtyEight’s politics podcast [**looks at**](https://fivethirtyeight.com/videos/the-potential-pitfalls-in-rushing-to-confirm-a-new-supreme-court-justice/)the electoral upsides and downsides of the two parties’ positions as US politics absorbs the biggest 'September surprise’ in recent memory. Image credit: [**Wake Forrest University School of Law**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/wfulawschool/10843463554/in/photolist-hwczWb-hwdvDv-hwbN6e-hwdv4x-hwbNvx-hwbPur-hwc7qw-hwcyUG-hwc9em-hwbNev-hwczz9-hwbMuK-hwbP6R-hwduQB-hwduBR-hwcyLq-hwc6WW-hwc8CS-hwbMzV-2jJquj9-2jKe4Nx-2jK1ejF-2jKbUmq-2jK1xWs-2jJqFUZ-2jJqS22-2jJmqze-2jJmoAp-2jJpXbr-2jJqMGF-2jJpWMF-2jJpVPo-2jJqLgV-2jJqKDY-2jJmnu6-2jJqNia-2jJmmGp-2jJaicd-2jJqPzJ-2jJmm8J-2jJmmk7-2jJqS6q-2jJpU7f-2jJqJL5-2jJahZV-2jJqNsZ-2jJqK5S-2jJmjX2-2jJpUrJ-DJQmHW) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | 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. | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | [**The Hidden History of Burma**](https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-History-Burma-Capitalism-Democracy/dp/1324003294)  Thant Myint-U's 2019 book [**The Hidden History of Burma: Race, Capitalism and the Crisis of Democracy in the 21st Century**](https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-History-Burma-Capitalism-Democracy/dp/1324003294) demystifies the recent period of change in Myanmar and critiques the West's thinking and approach to the country. He provides a unique perspective as both an insider and outsider through his family background and career. This allows him access to the motivations of key players, including the Obama administration, ex-generals and democracy campaigner Aung San Suu Kyi. Thant also traces Myanmar's current conflicts over race, religion and identity, including the Rohingya crisis, back to its colonial past. His analysis of the 21st century challenges that Myanmar faces around social media, migration, climate change, inequality and great power competition is insightful not only for those wishing to understand Myanmar but also for reflecting on our own global future. Image credit: [**Donny Cymek**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/purrr/331419065/in/photolist-vhBkP-5eaPtY-4abrkf-4fAbwA-4a7qsc-va341-dd184g-dd17Z2-bKihst-ddbdwT-4a7pai-4a7okz-4a7qog-5eaugh-4bvUPj-4a7p74-5e67ft-4abpD3-4abrf5-5e67pk-kpJF8-5eauGd-4brSXx-4bvUHC-4absLm-aUkPwc-5e67L8-5eauuA-5e67ZR-4bvUUj-5e67i8-4896u-72uh-cGUJUm-qiXGHk-aUkvKX-r9bUAB-j8LkgC-5e6rQF-e29a5a-AkaTzr-rwrJy7-gJgGGp-dGjwZi-4aVDkc-pMjzCF-aUkuDM-aUkzP4-mBwqi3-29Qhd) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This book was selected by Vicki Sideris. Vicki recently graduated as a Bachelor of Commerce (International Studies) at UNSW, majoring in International Relations and International Business. She is a compliance associate at Macquarie Group, and has previously interned at the Australia-Thai Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok, the Social Impact Hub and AIIA NSW. Vicki has served on Council since 2018. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people standing in front of a building  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**Rising protests and a sinking economy spell trouble for Thailand**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/rising-protests-sinking-economy-spell-trouble-thailand)   Michael Sainsbury in the Lowy Institute’s The Interpreter [**examines**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/rising-protests-sinking-economy-spell-trouble-thailand) the current troubling upheavals in Thailand. It is disturbing to see the unprecedented unrest in a country which many Australians love, but this is understandable and almost predictable. There has always been a healthy but low level of distrust between the military and general society which was generally moderated by the incredibly high respect in which the previous King Bhumibol Adulyadej was held. Previous protests were against individual political leaders, but the current demonstrations call for constitutional change, an end to political intimidation and reform of the monarchy. The present King is not held in high regard. An economy already in decline has suffered badly from the COVID-19 pandemic. Image credit: [**bee!**](https://www.flickr.com/photos/beebah/214779298/in/photolist-853CRg-8TrYFp-82A87f-8Tv2bJ-8TrW5D-8Tv2ZG-83NNhT-853EUT-8TrXki-83SrKS-8TrXte-856Qr7-8Tv7os-82AdP9-8Tv2oo-8Ts14H-8Tv6vL-83NN4v-9cWSTD-9xRiSa-9rYFA4-9s2swE-9xRCoF-9xUoym-9xUjQs-9rYtE2-7jsnwu-9rYjme-73bQEH-9s2sWL-9BoLRp-jYNpm-9cZW4h-8ZYGUy-9cZWvE-9jArHm-9xUmPN-9pX2q2-9s2ueE-7p7xAE-9jxo22-9BoP2i-9s2tKU-9xUs43-9s2s9b-9s2Dmf-995GUG-9s2whf-9rYDEk-jYNmd) | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | This article was selected by Glen Robinson. Glen has spent the last 30 years providing advice and assistance to organisations wishing to establish or enhance a commercial presence in the ASEAN region. He has developed a wide range of colleagues in both government and the private sector in the region. | | | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **From the Interns** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | In addition to our Councillors, we invite one of 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, Evangeline Larsen examines the road to independence for New Caledonia and how Tajikistan is being squeezed between great powers.  Disclaimer: The views expressed below by interns are their own. The Australian Institute of International Affairs New South Wales does not take policy positions. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Text  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**New Caledonia, made new again**](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=329300851821783&ref=watch_permalink)  New Caledonia may soon be independent, with a referendum on self-determination to be held on October 4. The Nouméa Accord, agreed on in 1998, set out a decolonisation process from France over a 20 year period during which additional powers have been progressively delegated to New Caledonia. A total of three referendums were prescribed under the Accord. During the first, held in 2018, more than 56 per cent of voters opted to maintain the status quo. However, voters will be voting in the second ballot in several weeks under very different circumstances. In a Griffith Asia Institute [**webinar**](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=329300851821783&ref=watch_permalink), a new generation of leaders discuss how a critical combination of health, economic and climate crises facing the Pacific may impact the 2020 referendum. The third independence referendum is due in 2022. Image credit: **[gérard](https://www.flickr.com/photos/35803445@N07/45702319691/in/photolist-2cCykpa" \t "_blank)** | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | A group of people standing in front of a flag  Description automatically generated |  |  | | --- | | [**Tajikistan stuck between a rock and a hard place**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/china-s-gambit-tajikistan-partner-or-overlord)  Suzanne Levi-Sanchez, for the Lowy Institute's The Interpreter, [**notes**](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/china-s-gambit-tajikistan-partner-or-overlord) that China has been making alarming historical claims to the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan. Cho Yao Lu, a Chinese government-supported historian, has implied that the region should be returned to Chinese control in the future. The Pamir Mountains also border the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang where, in the city of Kashgar, over a dozen Uyghur concentration camps are located. Tajikistan is in major debt to China and is repaying this through land and mining rights, but China's apparent encroachment on the region is being met with disapproval from Russia. Tajikistan is now stuck between two major powers vying for influence, while also partnering with the EU and US on various development and security projects. Image credit: **[Ninara](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ninara/28868872127/in/photolist-KZ3vUB-szDDdB-cH9DdN-th37aS-29JTVJc-fpHpbm-fpHJzj-6fLeb2-fptsVT-6gVNLx-5Hsqva-fpts2K-4VuTFZ-6gZLs1-5sLUfA-4weWCr-6gZLsm-fgArET-AuiGLx-2hSZtZ4-8YSaAu-ryRRv-4Hq1zi-ryRKQ-HjnXxQ-2gPmH8H-M8fHfP-8YPa8x-8YPabr-cH9zSy-rNReo-rNRnX-ryY2e-hDjNTP-ryXPP-ryXxe-28fXDng-84id92-pVoMap-baPR3v-xt8FE9-baPZFg-Nj6dPE-baPzWe-cH5tfN-baPVhx-buLEop-8YP8ni-4zqNPP-TfUHWH" \t "_blank)** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | These articles were selected by Evangeline Larsen. Evangeline is a Dual BA graduate with degrees from the University of Sydney and Science Po, France, majoring in French and International Relations. Having also studied in Lebanon, she is particularly interested in Middle Eastern politics and is becoming an accredited mediator to learn more about conflict resolution. | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **What else we're reading** | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | * An ABC Four Corners investigation [**exposes**](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/four-corners/series/2020/video/NC2003H033S00) the scale of modern slavery and labour exploitation in Britain. * In an Al Jazeera broadcast, Middle Eastern commentators [**contextualise**](https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2020/09/abraham-accords-pr-peace-deals-200919064546046.html) the recent formalisation of relations between Israel and two Gulf states, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. * In The Australian, Veteran analyst and AIIA Fellow Paul Kelly [**counteracts**](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/our-china-relationship-needs-help-before-its-too-late/news-story/0c37e5bb3480b0d48f55fc935491103b) three myths about Australia's relations with China. * Dr Bryce Wakefield, AIIA National Executive Director, [**assesses**](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/for-japans-new-prime-minister-personnel-is-policy-and-politics/) the likely policy approach of Japan’s new Prime Minister, including in foreign relations, in an article for Australian Outlook. * An [**interactive article**](https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/09/world/climate-covid-money-intl/) from CNN suggests that the 'golden opportunity' to reduce emissions provided by the COVID-19 pandemic will likely be lost. * Lynsey Chutel [**explores**](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/21/world/africa/south-africa-police-brutality.html) the complex post-apartheid racial divides in South Africa following the recent shooting of a disabled, mixed-race teen in the Johannesburg township of Soweto. | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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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