



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

# The Future of US Presence in Asia

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## Key Aims

- ✓ Identify the challenges to US presence in the Asia-Pacific
- ✓ Advance the argument of why US presence should and will remain a cornerstone of Asia-Pacific security
- ✓ Point out some of the implications for future Asian security integration

# Three Interrelated Challenges

- ✓ The Rise of China
- ✓ Diminishing US Leadership Role?
- ✓ US presence an impediment to Asian regional integration?
- ✓ Basic propositions
  - ✓ US retrenchment from the Asia-Pacific unlikely
  - ✓ US presence a precondition for China's accommodation
  - ✓ Bilateral and multilateral structures of Asia-Pacific security cooperation will persist unless effective alternative mechanisms for collective defence are found

## Proposition I: US retrenchment unlikely

- ✓ Military presence in the Asia-Pacific as an integral part of US Grand Strategy
  - ✓ Overstated predictions about US military decline and Chinese strengths
  - ✓ Military presence linked to US leadership model
  - ✓ Chinese assertiveness increases counterbalancing behaviour by Asia-Pacific countries
- The question is not if the US reduces its military presence but what security functions it will be able to perform in the future

## Proposition II: Precondition for China's Peaceful Rise

- ✓ US military presence not destabilising but essential to reassure allies and friends, and encouraging responsible Chinese behaviour
- ✓ US presence in an increasingly 'contested maritime space'
- ✓ The Role of US presence in a new Asia-Pacific order
  - ✓ Asian Cold War
  - ✓ US-Chinese Condominium
  - ✓ A Concert of Powers

## Conclusion and Outlook

- ✓ End of substantial US military presence neither desirable nor likely
- ✓ US military presence a stimulus for future security in the Asia-Pacific
- ✓ Lack of credible alternatives to address the many security dilemmas
- ✓ Bilateral and multilateral security structures will continue to exist in parallel
- ✓ Will Asia-Pacific countries develop a new framework for 'collective defence'?