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Japanese Security Policy under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe: the US - Japan alliance, 'rebalancing', and regional challenges

Tuesday 12 February 2013 6pm – 7.30pm, refreshments served from 5.30pm

Professor Rikki Kersten Professor, Department of Political & Social Change, School of International, Political & Strategic Studies, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

Weston Theatre JG Crawford Building (#132), Lennox Crossing, ANU



The advent of the second Prime Minister Shinzo Abe administration in Japan in late 2012 seems to indicate that Japan's security posture will become increasingly assertive. Abe has already announced planned increases in Japan's defence budget, an upgrading of defence capabilities and a determination to defend the Senkaku Islands from Chinese incursions. Moreover, Abe is known as a hawk and a conviction nationalist who aspires to revise the pacifist clause of Japan's postwar constitution. But since Abe's first brief stint in office in 2006-7, the context for Japan's security policy has changed both at home and abroad. This lecture will examine the context of the US' rebalancing policy framework, ongoing socio-economic and political malaise within Japan and the erosion of self-imposed constraints on Japan as a security actor, and ask how this might shape the direction of security policy under Abe. The existence of dissonance between Japan and the US on issues such as collective self-defence, territorial disputes and basing indicates that Abe's security policy stance will encounter a number of challenges, all of which will impact on how Australia elaborates its own security relationship with Japan.

Rikki Kersten is a former Australian diplomat who has served in the political section of the Australian embassy in Tokyo. She received her doctorate from Oxford University in 1993, and has taught at the universities of Sydney and Leiden before joining the ANU in 2006 as Dean of the College of Asia and the Pacific and the Faculty of Asian Studies. She is a specialist in modern Japanese political thought, foreign policy and security policy. Her recent publications include *Bilateral Perspectives on Regional Security* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), which she co-edited with William Tow. At present she is Professor of Modern Japanese Political History in the School of International, Political and Strategic Studies at the ANU.

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