



CONGRESSIONAL STAFF PROGRAM on ASIA

News Release

September 9, 2016

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Congressional Staff Program on Asia kicks off on Capitol Hill today

Inaugural class includes bipartisan group of Congressional staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The East-West Center in Washington, with support from Sasakawa USA, will hold the first session of the [EWC-Sasakawa USA Congressional Staff Program on Asia \(CSPA\)](#) today on Capitol Hill. This bipartisan educational certificate program for Congressional staff members will cover a range of contemporary, policy-relevant topics in U.S.-Asia relations over a series of weekly sessions, featuring speakers and discussions with U.S. officials and leading experts.

The inaugural class was selected from a competitive application process, and represents both chambers and political parties, and staff detailed to committees as well as Congressional offices. The 2016 CSPA participants include:

- **Mr. Erik Ashida**, Legislative Assistant, Office of Congressman Denny Heck, WA-10 (D)
- **Mr. Francisco Bencosme**, Legislative Research Assistant, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- **Ms. Patricia Boh**, Legislative Correspondent, Office of Senator Cotton, Arkansas (R)
- **Mr. Robert Edmonson**, Chief of Staff, Office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, CA-12 (D)
- **Mr. Bobby Fraser**, Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Deb Fischer, Nebraska (R)
- **Mr. Jason McMahon**, Military Legislative Assistant, Office of Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam (D)
- **Mr. Angel Nigaglioni**, Legislative Director and Counsel, Office of Congressman José E. Serrano, NY-15 (D)
- **Mr. Will Quinn**, Research Analyst, Senate Armed Services Committee
- **Ms. Melissa Robel**, Legislative Assistant, Office of Congressman Dennis A Ross, FL-15 (R)
- **Ms. Reagan Thompson**, Policy and Communications Advisor, Office of Congressman Mike Pompeo, KS-4 (R)

“This new program will provide congressional staff members with the opportunity to build new networks with leading experts and gain valuable insights into key issues in Asia that are more relevant than ever here at home,” said [Adm. Dennis Blair](#), Chairman and CEO of Sasakawa USA, who will speak at the first CSPA session today on the U.S.-Japan Alliance and the U.S. rebalance to Asia. “We are excited to support this program that is vital to strengthening Asia expertise among congressional staff and fostering diplomatic relations with a key, strategic region of the world.”

About Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA

[Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA](#) is an independent, American, non-profit, non-partisan institution devoted to research, analysis, and better understanding of the U.S.-Japan relationship. Through research and education programs, Sasakawa USA facilitates people-to-people exchanges and dialogue between American and Japanese policymakers, influential citizens, and the broader public.

About the East-West Center

The [East-West Center](#) promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue. Established by the U.S. Congress in 1960, the Center serves as a resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise, and develop policy options. The Center’s [Washington, D.C. office](#) focuses on preparing the United States for an era of growing Asia-Pacific prominence.