

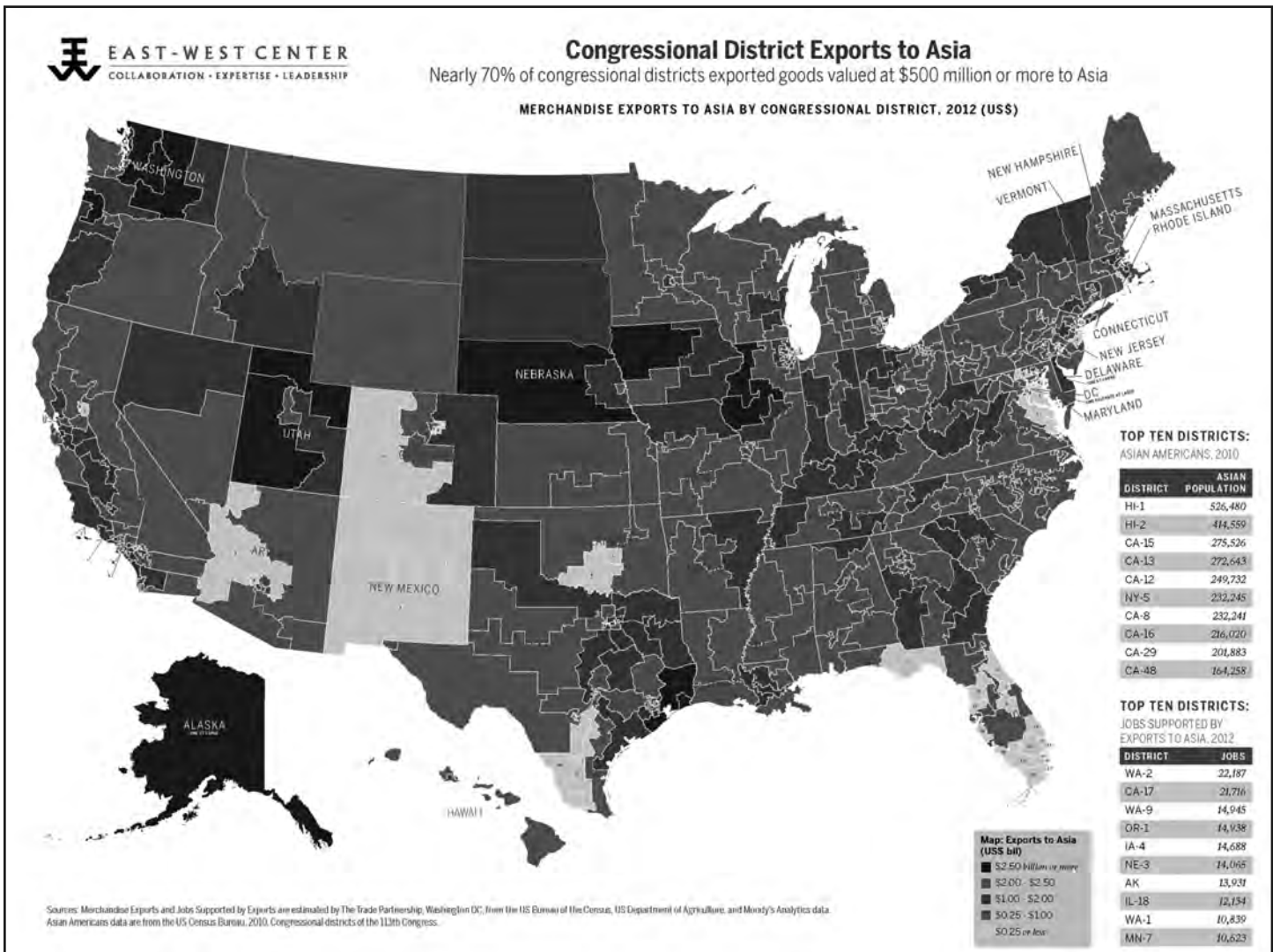
The Asia Matters for America Initiative and US-Asia Relations

By Satu Limaye

America's relations with Asia have never been all or only about issues of war, peace, and treaties; and participants in these relations have never been based only in national capitals. Former US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific James Kelly has remarked that the "general public has a growing sense that something big is going on in Asia."¹ Public opinion polling bears this out. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs Survey for 2012 showed that, for the first time, Americans viewed Asia as more important than Europe. An especially important element of the finding was that "millennials" (ages eighteen to twenty-nine) and those under the age of forty-five are more inclined to view Asia as more important to the future than Europe.²

While impossible to calculate accurately and definitively, a high percentage (let's use a ballpark figure of 75 percent) of interactions between the United States and the Asia-Pacific region occur at state and local levels. Engaged constituencies include state and local governments, private businesses, schools and universities, civic groups, and even select state-level National Guards that have partnerships with seven militaries in the Asia-Pacific region.³ Specific areas of mutual interest include building trade and investment ties; facilitating tourism and education; managing immigration; expanding cultural exchanges and civil society relationships, such as the Sister Cities program; and providing assistance during times of humanitarian disaster. A globalizing world has made direct connections among subnational actors not only possible through ease of travel and communication but also desirable. Governors and their Asian counterparts are regularly visiting each other to expand commercial, educational, and cultural ties. The US Department of State, meanwhile, has a special representative for global intergovernmental affairs whose task is to pursue subnational cooperation and dialogue on common challenges.

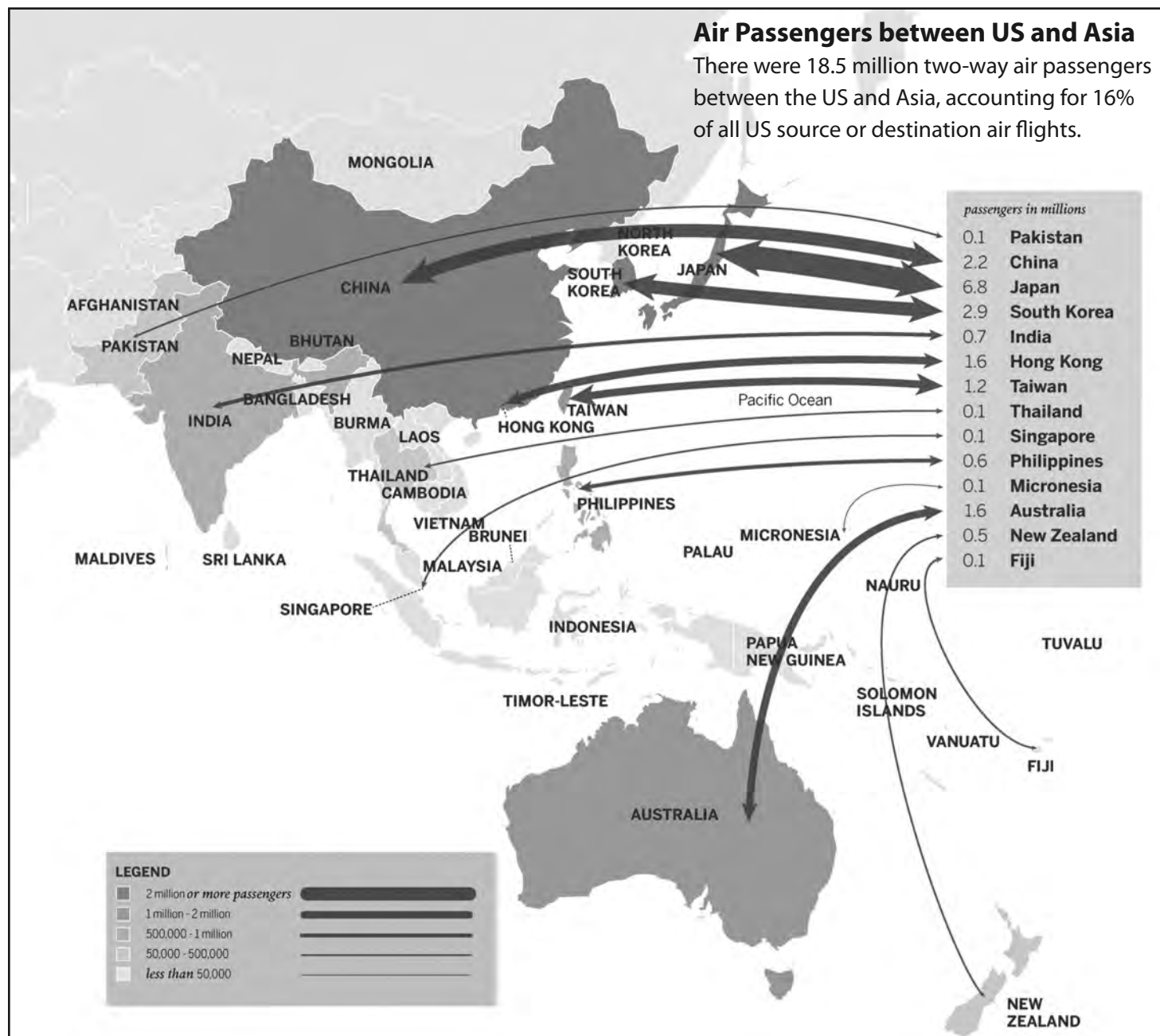
The importance of the Asia-Pacific region to the world has increased. The US seeks to harness its relations with the region to improve its domestic economy and seek cooperation on global challenges ranging



Source: *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia*, a publication of the East-West Center.

from climate change to nuclear nonproliferation. A resource site for a generalist audience to appreciate the totality of US-Asia ties at the national and state/provincial levels and that encompasses a range of issues from trade and investment to immigration and foreign policy is crucial. The East-West Center has created such a resource—it is called *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* (www.AsiaMattersforAmerica.org). The initiative has been achieved because of generous funding from the Henry Luce Foundation for the main *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* publication and website. The East-West Center has also shared funding and collaboration on specific country and regional components of the initiative with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation on *Japan Matters for America/America Matters for Japan*, the University of Sydney's

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Source: Page 23 of *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia*, a publication of the East-West Center. Download the publication as a PDF at <http://tiny.cc/9enc1w>.

United States Studies Center on *Australia Matters for America/America Matters for Australia*, the Asian Institute for Policy Studies on the forthcoming updated *Korea Matters for America/America Matters for Korea*, and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ASEAN) in Singapore on *ASEAN Matters for America/America Matters for ASEAN*.⁴

The *America Matters for Asia* initiative, which currently includes print publications and an interactive website, was created to “capture” the diversity and depth of United States-Asia Pacific interactions at the national, state, and local levels on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. The initiative’s website provides a platform where credible news information, data analysis, opinions, and perspectives can be viewed by Americans and Asians who are not necessarily Asia specialists or policy experts. Currently, the initiative focuses on forty Asian nations and has more detailed sections on Japan, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, and South Korea. The initiative plans to expand to the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), and India. Taken together, the countries and regions covered account for about 90 percent or more of major elements of US-Asia interactions in the areas of trade, investment, education, immigration, and tourism. The initiative’s main audiences include teachers and students, civic groups, media and journalists, state and local officials, and business groups.

The website is organized to facilitate learning via country, theme, or state/congressional district interests. A user can access information, data, articles, webcasts, or news on a specific country or region of Asia (eg, Asia as a whole, ASEAN countries, Australia, Japan or South Korea), major themes—which presently encompass Trade and Investment, Politics & Security, and Education & Exchange—or on a specific US state or congressional district.

To further ease access and use, specific “functional” entries into the website are also offered. For example, a section titled “Highlights” presents key findings on the overall nature of US-Asia interactions. Another section titled “Interactive Data” allows the user to interact with data and view various numerical and graphic representations of US-Asia interactions. A feature called “Articles” allows access to published analyses by leading specialists on subjects including foreign policy and security and other topics. Finally, a section titled “Publications” permits a user to access each of the printed versions of the *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* initiative in PDF format. Many of the articles, graphics, data sets, special reports, and posts are also printable.

The site can be utilized in many ways, depending on the audience or objective. For example, teachers and students will find access to articles and even webcasts on a range of contemporary issues. Media may wish to search for authors of recent analyses for interviews or to use a graphic created for the site (with proper credit to the East-West Center Asia Matters for America initiative!) within an article they are writing. Local officials may wish to use the site to spread the news of recent trade and investment successes. Businesses may wish to learn about Asia-Pacific countries where they want to start or expand ties. Currently, American chambers of commerce from across the Asia-Pacific use the *Asia Matters for America* initiative in their annual “door knock” visits to the US Congress to discuss business issues in United States-Asia relations. Academics, too, may find the easily searchable and well-organized information, data, news, and analyses relevant to their scholarship. For example, one of the United States’ leading specialists on Japan and Northeast Asia, Professor Kent Calder, used information from the *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* site in his recent book *The Making of Northeast Asia* (Stanford University Press: 2010). Civic groups can utilize the site to highlight their own

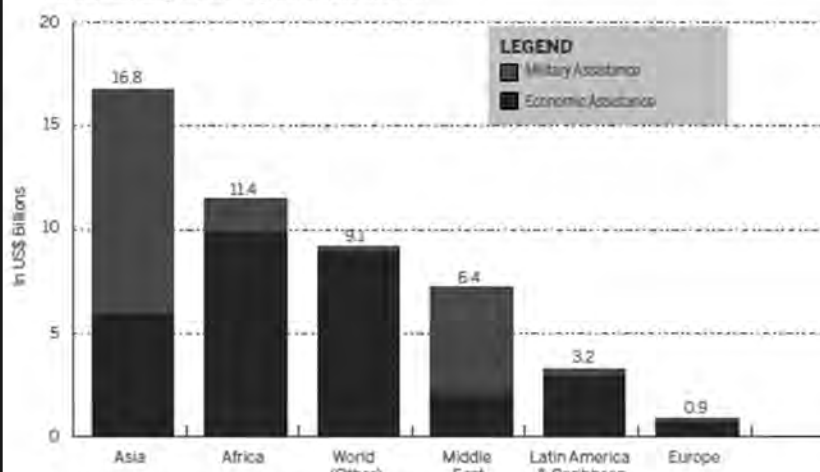
Asia’s Security Significance for the US is Rising

Asia is an area of potential conflict due to territorial disputes, historical animosities and changes in the distribution of power. Asian countries are also emerging (or reemerging) as regional and global powers. They will have a crucial role in meeting such global challenges as equitable economic growth, environmental pollution, pandemic disease, climate change and global governance. The US, with long-standing treaty commitments and new partnerships in Asia, is devoting more attention and resources to Asia. The US is working with regional groupings, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to address regional problems.



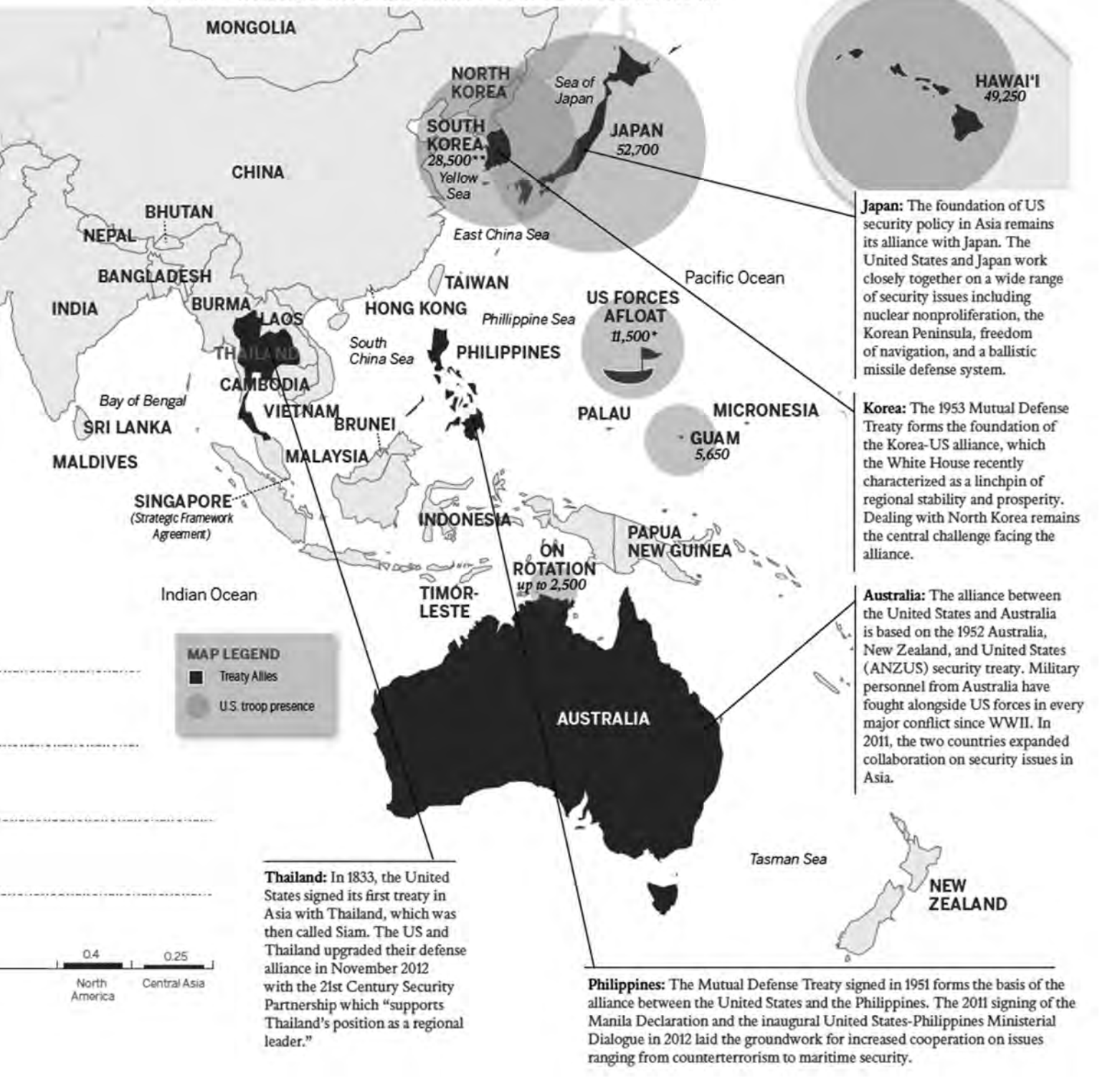
US ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Asia received US\$16.8 billion in US foreign assistance in FY2011, more than any other region in the world.



Sources: US Department of Defense (as of December 31, 2012; *March 31, 2012);**IISS, *The Military Balance 2013*; US Agency for International Development (USAID)

US ALLIANCES AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ASIA



Source: Page 27 of *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* a publication of the East-West Center. Download the publication as a PDF at <http://tiny.cc/9enc1w>.

FRANKLIN R. BUCHANAN PRIZE

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) invites submissions for the Franklin R. Buchanan Prize. Established in 1995 by the AAS Committee on Educational Issues and Policy and the Committee on Teaching about Asia, the prize is awarded annually to recognize an outstanding curriculum publication on Asia designed for any educational level, elementary through university.

The winning submission will reflect current scholarship, present innovative teaching strategies, and make a significant impact on the intended audience. Submissions must have been published after January 1, 2012, and include extensive teaching strategies in order to be considered. Various formats are acceptable, including print, CD, video, and online formats. Submissions that address underrepresented regions of Asia and/or are applicable to both secondary and undergraduate teaching are encouraged.

The 2014 Buchanan Prize will be awarded to the author of the work at the AAS Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA, March 27-30, 2014. The prize includes a \$1,000 monetary award and a one-year membership to AAS. Submissions are due November 1, 2013. For more information and a submission form, please contact:

Jennifer Murawski

E-mail: JENNM@pitt.edu

To view past awards, visit the AAS website:
[http://www.asian-studies.org/publications/
book-prizes.htm](http://www.asian-studies.org/publications/book-prizes.htm).

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engagements with the region. Recently, working in close cooperation with the East-West Center in Washington, the Japan-America Societies of Denver and Indiana each produced a special posting on their state bilateral relationship with Japan to highlight ongoing economic, civic, and cultural connections.

A wonderful but challenging element of the entire *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* initiative is that it is an ongoing, interactive, and usable resource. This makes the initiative lively, fresh, and contemporary. Data is updated when governments release revised or new statistics, such as through the US Department of Commerce. New analyses and posts are written following major events, and Department of Commerce graphics have to be created when new data sets become available. In addition, the initiative strives to continuously plan and execute new features and elements. For example, a new feature is under development called "Asia News across America" that will highlight developments between US localities and Asia culled from local news sources. Also underway are educational tools, such as a quiz on major events in US-Asia relations. The initiative is also working with Asian embassies and consulates across the United States to link information on local connections and interactions. Finally, we at the East-West Center are working to create a mobile version of the website for smartphones and tablets and possibly an interactive app. Because the initiative is contemporary and "living," we invite visitors and users of the site to contact us for suggestions of new features.

I believe that the *Asia Matters for America/America Matters for Asia* initiative will contribute to a wider dialogue about US-Asia relations precisely at a time when the US and Asia-Pacific countries are increasingly seeking to understand the domestic impacts of their foreign relations in an era of anxiety and uncertainty. The initiative is built on the premise that the time has arrived to better understand how the US and Asia interact at a time when each is growing more important to the other. ■

NOTES

1. Personal communication with Assistant Secretary James A. Kelly, February 21, 2013.
2. See The Chicago Council on Global Affairs at <http://tiny.cc/6koc1w>.
3. See National Guard State Partnerships Programs Fact Sheet at <http://tiny.cc/rqoc1w>.
4. ASEAN includes the countries Brunei Darussalam, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

SATU LIMAYE is Director, East-West Center in Washington and a Senior Advisor at the Center for Naval Analyses (IDA). From 1998 to 2005, he was Director of Research and Publications at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), a direct reporting unit to United States Pacific Command. Limaye received his PhD in International Relations from Oxford University (Magdalen College), where he was a Marshall Scholar. He graduated *magna cum laude* and *Phi Beta Kappa* from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.