



Asia Programs

Japan Studies | Korea Studies | South Asia Studies | Southeast Asia Studies

Newsletter, May 2017

Letter from the Director & Associate Director

Dear Students, Alumni, Friends and Colleagues:

Last fall, as part of Johns Hopkins SAIS' ongoing efforts to update and enhance our Asia-related academic programs, Dean Nasr asked us to lead an integration of the administration of the four regional studies programs - Japan Studies, Korea Studies, South Asia Studies, and Southeast Asia Studies – under a new structure, Asia Programs.

Our four programs are well recognized for providing Johns Hopkins SAIS students with an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the trends shaping Asia in the 21st century and applying theoretical propositions on development, strategy, and conflict resolution to real circumstances in the Asia region, among the states of Asia, and in U.S.-Asia relations. Recognizing these strengths, the four Asia programs' core curricula and requirements will remain the same, and individual program activities and opportunities, including sponsored study trips and discussions, will continue to be offered. The new structure will build on these strengths by providing a more comprehensive, cross-regional approach that addresses issues common to all programs.

Over the course of this year, as the Director and Associate Director of the Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs, we have been working to help strengthen and enhance the four programs, consolidating and updating administrative operations, and identifying programmatic synergies in areas such as curriculum planning and development. We have organized joint activities with other academic programs and policy organizations, and supported a calendar of activities and events focused on contributing both to our concentrators' academic and professional growth and to the policy dialogue at Johns Hopkins SAIS, in Washington, and beyond.

We are currently developing our 2017-2018 activities and events calendar, and look forward to supporting opportunities for our concentrators and the Johns Hopkins SAIS community to engage in policy research and dialogue. We are also launching Asia Programs on social media, and encourage you to follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

We are excited about the promise these changes bring and the progress we have made, and look forward to building upon our progress in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Kent Calder, Director
Sharon Yanagi, Associate Director



Sharon Yanagi, Kent Calder, Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX), Dean Vali Nasr, and Wendy Cutler, at this April's joint event, *The First 100 Days: U.S.-Asia Relations under the Trump Administration* | Photo by Noel St. John

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Meet the Director & Associate Director



Kent E. Calder

Director, Asia Programs

Director, Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies

Before arriving at Johns Hopkins SAIS in 2003, Dr. Calder taught for twenty years at Princeton University, was a Visiting Professor at Seoul National University, and Lecturer on Government at Harvard University. A specialist in East Asian political economy, Dr. Calder has spent 11 years living and researching in East Asia. His most recent works include [Singapore: Smart City, Smart State](#) (2016), [The U.S., Japan, and the Gulf Region](#) (2015), [Asia in Washington](#) (2014) and [The New Continentalism: Energy and Twenty-First Century Eurasian Geopolitics](#) (2012). Dr. Calder has served as Special Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and as the first Executive Director of Harvard University's Program on U.S.-Japan Relations. Dr. Calder received his PhD from Harvard University in 1979, where he worked under the direction of Edwin O. Reischauer. Dr. Calder was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon by the Japanese government in the fall of 2014.



Sharon Yanagi

Associate Director, Asia Programs

In a newly created position as Associate Director, Sharon Yanagi is the central academic administrator for the school's Japan, Korea, South Asia, and Southeast Asia Studies programs. She has extensive program management experience and a background in Asia policy from a career working in government and for international policy and business organizations. Most recently, she was Chief of Staff at the U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, where she was part of a senior management team overseeing bureau performance during a period of significant policy and organizational change. During the Clinton Administration, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Asia and the Pacific at the Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, and as a Bureau Congressional and Public Affairs Director. She has also served as Executive Director of the U.S.-Japan Council, Deputy Director of the Brookings Institution's East Asia Policy Studies Center, a consultant at the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, and Public Affairs Director at the Tokyo-based American Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

SAIS Asia Programs held many events throughout Academic Year 2016-2017, including roundtables, seminar discussions, lectures, and high-profile conferences.

SAIS Asia Conference 2017

Kaj Malden

China Studies, May '17

On March 31, 2017, Johns Hopkins SAIS hosted its 6th annual Asia Conference. Each year, the conference provides Johns Hopkins SAIS students interested in Asian Studies a unique opportunity to organize, manage, and run a whole-day conference that brings together students and experts in the Asia policy community to present and discuss original research on pressing issues in Asia-Pacific affairs.

As Co-Chairs, Ashwini Srinivas (SAIS MA '17, Southeast Asia Studies) and I had to figure out early on what the exact theme of the 6th conference would be. It was September 2016, and news coverage of the upcoming U.S. presidential election was nonstop. Similar leadership transitions were already unfolding in Asia. Over the previous summer, Rodrigo Duterte won the Philippine presidential election, and the upper echelons of the Communist Party of China were busy choreographing the 19th Party Congress to be held in Beijing the following year. It was against this backdrop of recalibration of leadership and political dynamics in U.S.-Asia relations that the Conference Organizing Committee decided on the theme of "U.S.-Asia Relations: Past and Future."

Throughout the fall, the team received dozens of research abstracts from students around the world exploring similar questions: As President Obama prepares to leave office, how should analysts assess his "Asia Rebalance" policy? Given both presidential candidates' disavowal of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), what should observers expect from U.S. engagement with Asia in 2017? How will U.S. partners (and competitors) in Asia react to this new engagement?

These questions are difficult to answer, but conference panelists and guest speakers offered the SAIS and wider Asia policy communities insightful starting points for doing so. Student panelists presented papers on a range of topics in U.S.-Asia relations, including cyber espionage, the possibility of a Thucydides trap in Asia, international collaboration in regimes governing outer space, and the evolving roles of U.S. non-NATO allies in Asia. SAIS professors collaborated with panelists in assessing the past and future of U.S.-Asia relations, and provided student presenters with invaluable feedback on their research and analysis.

Right: Co-Chairs Kaj Malden and Ashwini Srinivas, with keynote speaker Antony Blinken, former Deputy Secretary of State and Deputy National Security Adviser to President Obama, and the Herter/Nitze Distinguished Scholar at the SAIS Foreign Policy Institute.

The Conference Organizing Committee was particularly excited to welcome two speakers for the event. Matthew Goodman, the William C. Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, delivered a morning presentation that examined emerging complexities in U.S.-Asia trade relations and the implications of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) for Asian economic integration and intrastate trade. In the afternoon, Antony Blinken, former Deputy Secretary of State and Deputy National Security Adviser to President Obama, and the Herter/Nitze Distinguished Scholar at the SAIS Foreign Policy Institute, reminded audiences in an eloquent keynote address that U.S. engagement with Asia must be maintained to ensure global stability and prosperity. Blinken related to attendees the strategic priority that he and his colleagues in the White House placed on the Asia-Pacific region, and highlighted the challenges and opportunities the Asia Rebalance strategy faced in promoting a rules-based economic and security order in one of the world's most dynamic regions.

"Understanding and engaging with that dynamism is what makes events like the SAIS Asia Conference so important."

Understanding and engaging with that dynamism is what makes events like the SAIS Asia Conference so important. By bringing together former practitioners and future shapers of foreign policy vis-à-vis Asia, the SAIS Asia Conference contributes to global stability. I was honored to participate in its stewardship, and look forward to seeing how future generations of SAIS students advance important dialogues on Asia-Pacific affairs.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

The First 100 Days: U.S.-Asia Relations under the Trump Administration

Stephanie Papa

Program Administrator, Asia Programs, SAIS Class of '13



On 25 April, 2017, a few days shy of the 100 day mark of the Trump Administration, Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs and the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI), in association with the Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Affairs and the U.S.-Korea Institute, hosted a conference examining how the Trump Administration has engaged the Asia region and begun to define its foreign policy agenda in Asia, and what the implications are for U.S.-Asia relations. This was our first collaboration with ASPI, the Asia Society's policy arm, whose mission is to advance international cooperation and effective policymaking for Asia.

The program opened with keynote remarks by Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy. Senator Gardner discussed several of the Trump Administration's most urgent priorities in Asia, including a nuclear North Korea and escalating tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea. He also discussed the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), legislation he introduced to strengthen U.S. security commitments to allies and build partner capacities in the region to "deter aggression, project power, and combat terrorism."

Senator Gardner's remarks were followed by an expert panel comprising Kent Calder, Director of Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs and the Reischauer Center, Wendy Cutler, Vice President of ASPI, Richard Fontaine, President of the Center for a New American Security, Michael Swaine, Senior Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Joshua White, Associate Professor of the Practice of South Asia Studies at Johns Hopkins SAIS. Jacob Schlesinger, Senior Correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, moderated. Panelists discussed some of the most critical issues facing the United States in Asia, including North Korea's continued nuclear weapons development and testing, the U.S. withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and transactional relations with India

Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX), founding Co-Chair of the U.S.-Japan Congressional Caucus and the Congressional Caucus on ASEAN and Member of the House Committee on Intelligence and the House Foreign Affairs Committee, delivered luncheon keynote remarks. Congressman Castro discussed challenges facing the United States in Asia. He emphasized that the United States must demonstrate leadership through the implementation of well-thought-out policy and steady diplomacy and said that it has so far been challenging to decipher what direction President Trump's foreign policy will take. While such unpredictability has advantages, the Administration runs the risk of being perceived by our allies as untrustworthy.



Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX)



Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO)

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Asia Programs Student Roundtable with Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX)

Siddarth Ravishankar

South Asia Studies Minor, May '17

On April 25th, Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX) participated in an event titled “The First 100 Days: U.S.-Asia Relations Under the Trump Administration.” After the public portion of the event, he spoke with students from the Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs in a closed door session.

Congressman Castro is the founding co-chair of the U.S.-Japan Caucus and the Congressional Caucus on ASEAN. During his time in Congress, he has worked to advance the breadth and scope of U.S.-ASEAN ties. In the meeting, students and Congressman Castro discussed U.S. priorities in Asia and his efforts to increase U.S. engagement with the region.

During the earlier speech and the meeting, Congressman Castro discussed U.S. relations with China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and participation in multilateral deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). He highlighted the importance of sustained engagement with Asian countries, part of his efforts as a co-founder of the two Asia-focused caucuses.

The SAIS students who spoke with Congressman Castro came from diverse backgrounds and raised questions about public service, the economy, and international relations. Students also asked general career advice and



Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX) answers a question from Siddarth Ravishankar, South Asia Studies Minor, '17
Photo by Noel St. John

discussed the value of perseverance. Each student brought to the table their expertise on specific issues in Asia, ranging from maritime security to the dynamics of ASEAN.

The speech and the meeting helped familiarize students with the practical and policy experience of Congressman Castro. It was an excellent opportunity for SAIS students, made possible by active Asia Programs that take advantage of SAIS' location in the heart of Washington, DC.

Asia Programs and China Studies' Co-Hosted Lunar New Year Celebration, January 2017



Left:
Foods of Asia

Right:
Kite of a Daruma doll, a talisman of good luck



STUDY TRIPS

Every year, several students in the Asia Programs take study trips to Asia. This year, students traveled to India, Korea, and Japan to study a wide range of topics, from infrastructure to political economy, policy-making to national security, and more.

International Politics in Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula

Shan Wu

Korea Studies, May '18

During Korea Studies' spring trip to Seoul through the class, "International Politics in Northeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula," we visited institutions that are at the center of South Korea's policy-making decisions and deepened our understanding of our research topics. We visited the National Assembly soon after the presidential impeachment and engaged in conversations with leaders from such parties as the People's Party, Bareun Party, and the Minjoo Party. The Minjoo Party's candidate, Mr. Moon Jae-in, recently became South Korea's 19th President. During our conversation with Congressman Kim Kyung-hyup from the Minjoo Party, he emphasized the importance of dialogue in dealing with North Korea.

We were particularly excited to have a discussion with a North Korean defector journalist, Mr. Joo Seong-ha, at a South Korean representative newspaper, *Dong-A Daily* (*East Asia Daily*). On the subject of potential nuclear and missile provocation from North Korea, Mr. Joo said that the possibility is low because North Korea's priority is to maintain the "Kim Jong-un Dynasty" and conducting a preemptive strike would mean the end of the regime. *Dong-A Daily* reported our visit in its newspaper on March 22nd.

While visiting the U.S. and Japanese embassies, we learned the importance of U.S.-Japan-South Korea cooperation in dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat. From our conversations with the Japanese Deputy Ambassador, Mr. Hideo Suzuki, we learned about the Japanese effort in building trust with other countries in the region through cultural exchange programs and Official Development Assistance (ODA) to ASEAN.



Throughout the trip, we discussed the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile (THAAD) deployment with representatives from the South Korean congress, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Defense University, think tanks, U.S. Force Korea, and Chinese academia. These discussions highlighted the importance of U.S.-China cooperation in addressing complex issues and in improving South Korea-China relations. We also visited South Korean palaces and the Blue House, and witnessed mass demonstrations.

Before leaving South Korea, we traveled to the Demilitarized Zone, where Secretary Tillerson had visited a week earlier. By visiting the North Korean tunnels and the Panmunjom at the 38th Parallel, we uncovered the Cold War imprint and pondered on maintaining peace and security on the Korea Peninsula. During the trip, I overheard a tourist say that the Korean War had not officially ended, which reminded me of my pursuits at Johns Hopkins SAIS and beyond.

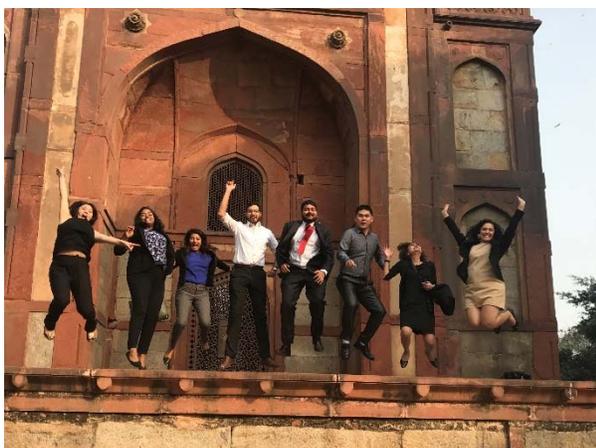
STUDY TRIPS

The Rise of India and China

Shiyana Gunasekara
South Asia Studies, '18

In the fall of 2016, South Asia Studies offered the course, “The Rise of India and China,” which included a study trip to New Delhi, India to gain context of the evolving status of India and China relations. Our class included students from a variety of regional concentrations and functional backgrounds, which truly added depth to our course discussions, including meetings we had with key interest groups and government officials in India.

Our week in Delhi covered numerous topics related to the political and economic development of India, and how they relate to the rise of China. We spoke to business leaders with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII); experts on urbanization, the environment, and agriculture; and senior U.S. diplomats based in India’s capital, to name a few of our meetings.



While our days were mostly packed with informative discussions that gave us a comprehensive understanding of what motivates India’s political machine, we did find some time to visit some of the country’s world renowned historical sites. The Taj Mahal was a breathtaking experience that I doubt will ever lose its appeal, and I am fortunate to have seen it for my second time with a group of students who have a true appreciation for ancient cultures.

This course has overall greatly shaped my growing curiosity in Asia by balancing my regional interest in South Asia to one that more actively engages China, and its role in the Indian Ocean. I look forward to taking more courses on China in the upcoming semesters!



Infrastructure and Development in South Asia

Jacky Xie
South Asia Studies, '18

As a South Asia Studies concentrator, I have always wanted to visit India. With all the news coverage I have seen (on the one hand, news of social cleavages, crime, and pollution, and on the other, news of a booming economy, effective reforms, and a surge of innovative enterprise), I have to ask, is India a heaven or a hell? Those questions propelled me to take the course “Infrastructure and Development in South Asia.” As part of this course, we went on a tour to New Delhi, India to examine the status quo and future trends in infrastructure development by talking to senior policy makers, entrepreneurs, and think tank scholars.

It turned out to be a fantastic journey. We managed to meet with senior officials such as the Joint Secretary at the Department of Economic Affairs and representatives of the Ministry of Finance, and visit world-renowned Indian company Tata Power and talk to prestigious academics such as Dr. Arvind Panagariya.

Meeting with Dr. Arvind Panagariya, the Vice-chairman of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), was the highlight of my trip. Having read his foundational book on Indian economy, *The Emerging Giant*, I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to have a discussion with him on the Modi government’s reform agenda. One thing he mentioned interested me greatly: in order to push forward reforms in key sectors, such as labor regulations and land acquisition, the central government plans to decentralize such reforms. States would be encouraged to compete against each other on foreign investment by carrying out pro-efficiency reforms—exactly what China has done. Will India succeed in emulating China’s reform strategy and create an “India Miracle”? It is such an intriguing question that I will have to find out the answer.

Everything I had read about India came alive through this trip. India is neither a hell nor a heaven — it is a promising land, with great potential yet to be uncovered.

STUDY TRIPS

United States and Japan in Global Context

Discussion with Professor William Brooks
Adjunct Professor, Japan Studies

Johns Hopkins SAIS Asia Programs sat down with Professor William Brooks to discuss his class, “United States and Japan in Global Context,” the student research trip to Tokyo during Spring Break, and the annual publication of the U.S.-Japan Yearbook. Supported by the Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies, a research institution that supports the study of transpacific and intra-Asian relations, these three elements of the Japan Studies program are invaluable opportunities for students to expand their critical thinking and research skills, as well as gain first-hand experience in the region.



Professor Brooks' class examines the history of wartime and postwar U.S.-Japan relations and current issues facing the relationship, especially in the context of shifting geopolitical balances, economic patterns, and domestic political agendas. This class is an opportunity for students to write a publishable-quality original paper on a timely topic of U.S.-Japan policy. Once completed, these papers can be incorporated into the U.S.-Japan Yearbook, “The United States and Japan in Global Context,” published by the Reischauer Center.

The U.S.-Japan Yearbook has been published for over 25 years. Student authors examine general trends in U.S.-Japan relations, as well as specific issues such as multilateral and bilateral trade relations, direct investment trends, security posture, maritime security, and the nuclear threat from North Korea. In a region where the future is so in question, and one where the regional architecture may be edging out the United States, these topics are especially salient.

In the upcoming issue of the Yearbook, for example, one student's paper will examine how Japan uses development assistance as a soft power tool, particularly in light of the limitations of Japan's Pacifist constitution. The student asks how might soft power be strategically applied and how might the power of Japan as a “Global Citizen” entice other actors in the region to be more moderate. Past paper topics in the Yearbook have touched on economic, security, and political issues, but also more unexpected topics such as sports diplomacy in Japan and Japan's lack of competitiveness in the gaming industry.



In order to conduct more intensive research for their Yearbook papers, students may elect to participate in a research trip to Tokyo during Spring Break. Prior to the trip, the students conduct a literature review and interview subject matter experts around Washington, DC and at Johns Hopkins SAIS. While in Tokyo, students locate key experts with whom they would like to speak and Japan Studies assists them in arranging one-on-one or group discussions. Students meet with members of the foreign policy community, government, economic institutions, think tanks, and the Japanese National Diet, among others.

The study trip to Tokyo this past year also featured a group briefing by the U.S. Embassy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, and members of the trade industry. Students and faculty also spoke with representatives of the American Chamber of Commerce and received a group briefing at Temple University Japan. One of the highlights of the trip was the students' participation in a class at Tokyo's famous tea ceremony school – perhaps the most challenging class the students will ever take, and without a doubt the most unique!

The 2017 U.S.-Japan Yearbook will be published in the fall of 2017. Keep an eye out for announcements on the Reischauer Center's social media pages.

Left: As one of the group meetings, students meet with researchers at the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA).

Top Right: Before participating in an Urasenke tea ceremony, students first learn the proper purification method.

*Bottom Right: Students and Professor Brooks celebrate a successful research trip at Gonpachi, the restaurant that inspired the House of Blue Leaves in the movie *Kill Bill*.*

INTERNSHIPS

Each summer, students are sponsored to embark on exciting internships in Asia. See below for the internship experiences of Timothy White (Japan Studies, '16) and Ashwini Srinivas (Southeast Asia Studies, '17).

Internship at the *Yomiuri Shimbun*

Timothy White
Japan Studies, '16

Before coming to SAIS, I had worked in communications, and because of my interest in the field, the Japan Studies program secured me an internship at the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. My internship was at *The Japan News*, a daily English-language newspaper run by *Yomiuri*. The day-to-day tasks included editing translations of articles that had been originally written in Japanese, writing headlines, and checking the layout for pages before they went to print. Despite being an intern at one of the largest media companies in the world, I was immediately treated like one of the team, and was working on front-page re-writes and headlines by the end of my first day.



Timothy White with Alex Ramirez and John Gibson

I attended daily rundown meetings that determined content for *The Japan News*, and observed editorial meetings for the parent newspaper. While I had previously studied in Tokyo and visited on business, my two months at the paper provided a level of exposure to a Japanese work environment that I had never experienced before.

The internship also allowed me to continue research I was interested in, as I was able to speak to the employees on the sports desk of the newspaper about my work on Japan's sport diplomacy. Through these connections, I was invited to watch a baseball game from the press box, and speak with one of the few foreigners to manage a Japanese team.

While in Tokyo, I stayed in a guest house with several other SAIS students and met other young professionals from around the world. My fellow SAIS students and I also met up with alumni in the Tokyo area for one of Tokyo's fireworks festivals. I'm very thankful to the Japan Studies program for giving me the opportunity to live and work in Tokyo for a summer!

Internship at AmCham Singapore

Ashwini Srinivas
Southeast Asia Studies, '17

I spent the summer of 2016 as a Business Development and Government Affairs intern at the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore (AmCham). My supervisors at AmCham entrusted me with meaningful projects, and I was given the freedom to take the lead and approach the projects in my own manner.

I collaborated with the Government and Public Affairs team on their annual publication, the *ASEAN Business Outlook Survey*, which aims to understand U.S. business sentiment in Southeast Asia. I worked with the Business Development team to provide detailed analysis of their annual membership survey, with recommendations to increase membership. I also contributed to other ongoing projects such as membership retention, Small-Medium Enterprise member retention, and the AmCham weekly newsletter.

Over the course of my internship, I had several opportunities to apply the skills I acquired at SAIS, such as research and writing, as well as learn new, highly valuable skills such as business process mapping and data analysis. I also greatly benefited from the high-quality events that were populated with subject-matter experts from relevant industries. Overall, the internship was a really rewarding experience and aided both my personal and professional development.



Ashwini Srinivas with her coworkers at AmCham Singapore

MEET YOUR PROFESSORS

SAIS Asia Programs interviewed two faculty members new to SAIS in Academic Year 2016-2017: Vikram Nehru, Distinguished Practitioner-in-Residence in Southeast Asia Studies and Joshua White, Associate Professor of the Practice of South Asia Studies. They discuss their professional backgrounds, their outlooks on Southeast Asia and South Asia, and some advice for SAIS students!

Interview with Joshua White

Associate Professor of the Practice of South Asia Studies Fellow, Edwin O. Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies

What, in your view, are the biggest policy challenges facing the United States in South Asia?

The Trump administration faces three key challenges in South Asia. The first is choosing a path forward for dealing with what has become America's longest war — the conflict in Afghanistan. Here there are no easy options, as the Taliban have steadily gained ground in recent years. Withdrawing U.S. forces could lead to the collapse of the state, and neither is there much appetite for dramatically increasing U.S. presence. The administration must find a way to sustain our valuable counter-terrorism platform, even if that means sinking billions of dollars a year into Afghanistan for the foreseeable future.

Second, the United States faces the challenge of how to sustain the very positive momentum in U.S.-India relations. Both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations deepened U.S. engagement with India as a strategic investment, believing that India would, over the coming decades, become an influential and like-minded partner to the United States. As President Trump seems to take a rather transactional view of relationships, it's not yet clear how much energy his administration will invest in a country like India that promises long-term benefits to the United States but is often a difficult and frustrating negotiating partner.

Third, the United States does not yet have a coherent and well-resourced response to China's ambitious plans for South and Central Asia that have taken shape under its Belt and Road Initiative. This is not to say that the United States should respond "in kind" with a focus on huge infrastructure and energy projects. But countries across the region are eager to know what we — and our partners including Japan and India — are bringing to the table to bolster regional connectivity and prosperity. The United States, with its vibrant and innovative private sector, has a good story to tell, but thus far has struggled to do so.

What is your advice to SAIS students who might want to pursue a career similar to yours?

For those who are interested in an international affairs career that includes both scholarly research and government service, there are two important components: travel is an indispensable experience, and writing is an indispensable skill. Travel of course can provide rich insight into culture and history. But it is also a great way to uncover important questions. I'm always satisfied when I come back from a trip and have a note-

book replete with question marks — be they academic queries or policy challenges that I didn't know I faced. The other piece of advice that I always give students is to use their time in graduate school to hone their writing skills. Poor writers can land jobs in academia and in government, but they rarely rise to the top. Good writers are always in demand.

What are you working on at the moment?

In addition to planning courses and South Asia events, I am responsible for advancing SAIS's academic partnerships in South Asia. We have recently revived an old partnership with the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies in Colombo, which is doing some fascinating work on Sri Lanka's place in the wider Indo-Pacific. Johns Hopkins SAIS has a partnership with Pakistan's National Defence University, and we are working to finalize an agreement with another leading university in Pakistan that would involve student and faculty exchanges and joint conferences.

As for my own research, I'm finishing a manuscript on Islamic political movements in Pakistan. In addition, I'm pleased to be working with Professor Dan Markey on a collaborative project funded by the Foreign Policy Institute on "China and South Asia: A U.S.-China Academic Dialogue," which will bring a number of leading Chinese scholars to Washington this summer. I am also beginning some research on the future of the U.S.-India-Japan security relationship, building off my experience with this trilateral dialogue while I was at the White House.

What are you reading right now?

[Defeat is an Orphan: How Pakistan Lost the Great South Asian War](#), by Myra McDonald — a highly readable examination of the India-Pakistan competition, focusing on the decade between the 1998 nuclear tests and the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

[Poised for Partnership: Deepening India-Japan Relations in the Asian Century](#), edited by Rohan Mukherjee and Anthony Yazaki — a relatively thorough edited volume that describes an increasingly important bilateral relationship in Asia.

[Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces](#) — a cautious, muddled, poorly-written treatise that (inadvertently) sheds light on the current state of Indian defense planning.

MEET YOUR PROFESSORS

Interview with Vikram Nehru

*Distinguished Practitioner-in-Residence
Southeast Asia Studies*

What, in your view, are the biggest challenges to development in Southeast Asia?

Southeast Asia -- ten countries of varying size and development levels, and at different stages of nation and state building -- sits astride one of the world's busiest sea lanes, enjoys access to plentiful natural resources, and lies in close proximity to the world's two giant countries -- China and India. The region's diversity, economic integration, and strategic location not only drive Asia's rapid and resilient economic growth but also its biggest challenges. The region's openness to trade and financial flows leave Southeast Asian economies vulnerable to global trade and financial shocks. Its strategic location has placed it at the epicenter of emerging geopolitical rivalries with long-term security implications. And its diversity has made effective regional cooperation an uphill struggle.

Internally, most Southeast Asian countries contend with deep social, political, and economic fault lines that pose a threat to political stability and sustainable development. No country exemplifies this better than Myanmar which faces complex social, political, and economic transitions that are interconnected at many levels. Like other countries in the region, it must simultaneously establish a national identity to unify the country and strengthen state capacity to deliver essential public goods and services and provide the foundations for a stable, inclusive, and prosperous society.

How does your professional background influence how and what you teach?

I spent most of my career with the World Bank where I worked alongside developing country policymakers and practitioners on challenging issues in different countries, political systems, and social settings. These experiences -- such as during the Indonesian debt crisis of 1998 -- gave me an appreciation of how development policies and programs are formulated and implemented in real time, usually without the luxury of good data or well-functioning institutions. In most developing country situations, identifying what needs to be done is only part of the challenge; the other, perhaps more important part is identifying how, when, and by whom it should be done which requires a solid understanding of the country's history, politics, culture, and institutional capabilities.

So it's hardly surprising that the courses I teach at SAIS tend to focus on development -- whether it's the political economy of Southeast Asian countries (a region I specialized in while at the World Bank and later at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) or the broader course on "Topics in Growth and Development." In these courses, I try not only to give students an understanding of the breadth and complexity of development challenges, but also provide them powerful tools to analyze difficult development problems and identify appropriate solutions.

What is your advice to SAIS students who might want to pursue a career similar to yours?

Rather than presume to give students career advice, let me reflect on qualities in others that I have found most valuable in the course of my career. Perhaps my most valuable colleagues and counterparts were the ones who brought sharp analytical tools to a problem. At one point in my career, for example, I had to confront the challenge of debt sustainability in low income countries, and it was incisive economic analysis that helped find an innovative way forward for lenders and borrowers alike. Investing time to acquire and sharpen such analytical tools is a lifetime endeavor and its never too early to start.

For economists, another valuable quality is the ability to work in multi-disciplinary teams. Inviting perspectives from other disciplines and examining issues through different prisms -- sociological, anthropological, political, historical, scientific -- not only enriches economic analysis and understanding but increases the probability of finding successful ways forward. Perhaps for this reason I have always valued colleagues who see the big picture without losing sight of the details, the ones who connect dots that others don't see, and link specific actions to broader strategy. They are the ones who combine depth with breadth -- the prototypical renaissance intellect who reads widely and brings context to analysis.

What are you working on at the moment?

Being new to SAIS and to teaching, much of my time during term is spent on developing course material, preparing lectures, and helping students with assignments. I have interspersed this with speaking assignments at other venues, writing for journals and mainstream media, and consultancies for multilateral financial institutions, bilateral aid agencies, and developing country governments seeking help on specific issues. I also expect to embark on a couple of book projects (on topics I would prefer not to divulge at this point) for which I have been compiling material.

What are you reading right now?

[When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics](#) by Milan Vaishnav -- an impressive empirical analysis of criminality in the Indian political system and the reasons why it continues to flourish.

[Return of a King: The Battle of Afghanistan, 1839-42](#) by William Dalrymple -- a historical account of Britain's disastrous intervention in Afghanistan in the 19th Century with important lessons for contemporary external interventions in that country.

[The Curse of Cash](#) by Kenneth Rogoff -- which makes a compelling case for countries to transition to electronic payment systems and with some interesting implications for development strategies.

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