

FACT SHEET

DESCRIPTION: The East-West Center (EWC) is an education and research organization established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to strengthen relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific, and the United States. Funding for the Center comes from the U.S. government, with additional support provided by private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations, and the governments of the region.

Over its nearly 50 years of serving as a U.S.-based institution for public diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region with international governance, staffing, students, and participants, the Center has built a worldwide network of more than 55,000 alumni and 600 partner organizations.

With a 21-acre campus in Honolulu and a Washington, D.C. office focused on preparing the U.S. for an era of growing Asia Pacific prominence, the Center is helping to develop global leadership through programs that help current and future leaders understand the issues and people in this dynamic region.

MISSION: The East-West Center contributes to a peaceful, prosperous, and just Asia Pacific community by serving as a vigorous hub for cooperative research, education, and dialogue on critical issues of common concern to the Asia Pacific region and the United States.

PROGRAMS:

East-West Center Research Program – conducts multidisciplinary research on issues of contemporary significance to Asia, the Pacific and the United States.

Education Program – provides a wide range of educational opportunities to help prepare the United States and the Asia Pacific Region for a new era of increased interdependence.

Seminars Program – provides short-term educational experiences for policymakers, professionals and scholars from Asia, the Pacific and the United States.

Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) – conducts a broad range of activities to enhance the quality of life in the Pacific islands. The founding mission of PIDP is to assist Pacific islands leaders in advancing their collective efforts to achieve and sustain equitable social and economic development consistent with the goals of the Pacific islands region’s people.

Washington, D.C. Office – conducts collaborative research, training, seminars, and a speaker’s forum. EWC in Washington seeks to bring Asian views to bear on policy issues, and facilitates the dissemination of the Center’s research to key Washington audiences.

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Office of External Affairs – conveys information about the Center to the public. Outreach activities include media relations, briefings, special events, and the Alumni Office and Arts Program. EWC outreach also includes a community volunteer organization, the Friends of the East-West Center.

East-West Center Foundation – expands and enhances support for the Center. Private resources support student scholarships, research and seminar initiatives not covered by the Center's core congressional funding. Contributions can be accepted online via the Foundation's secure website service at www.eastwestcenter.org/giving.

CAMPUS: The East-West Center's 21-acre campus is located adjacent to the University of Hawaii. It includes six buildings, four of which were designed by renowned architect I.M. Pei.

Through the years, gifts from various countries have become part of the campus. A Japanese garden designed by Kenzo Ogata of Tokyo was a gift from Japanese business leaders. A traditional Thai pavilion was a gift from King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit of Thailand.

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QUOTES ABOUT THE EAST-WEST CENTER

“I hope it [the East-West Center] will be supported properly, because I am quite sure it will be one mechanism through which the friendly states bordering the Pacific Ocean will be brought closer together.” – **U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower**

“The East-West Center is here to serve the world. To this Center we shall bring the wise men of the west and we shall invite the wise men of the east. From them we shall hope that many generations of young scholars will learn the wisdom of the two worlds, united here, and to use that wisdom for the purposes and the ends of mankind’s highest aspirations for peace and justice and freedom.” – **U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson**

“Through cooperative research, education, and public diplomacy, the [East-West] Center has provided a critical understanding of the region’s dynamic issues for global leaders involved in moving their countries together into the future... It is an invaluable education center and meeting ground for representatives of the Asia Pacific community wishing to work toward a peaceful Pacific Rim.” – **U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawai‘i**

“The contribution of the East-West Center is really quite extraordinary, bringing together business and academics and government officials over the years. It’s been a tremendous place of discussion and exchange and building relationships that are so critical to this important region. We also have to recognize that the Center has a special place in this Administration because the President’s mother, Ann Dunham Soetoro, was an alumna of the Center. ...” – **Jim Steinberg, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State**

“The [East-West] Center has long shown that when people from different societies come together to study, train, and conduct research they not only gain professionally and personally, but they contribute to a more peaceful, stable and tolerant global community.” – **Robert Blake, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs** (then-Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Nov. 2005)

“I was always so impressed with the work of the Center . . . It made me proud to be part of a diplomacy program that works. The students have life changing experiences that in the aggregate benefit our world. I remember the roommates from China and Taiwan who left the Center with more in common than they ever could have imagined and took this perspective back to their respective countries.” – **Patricia Harrison, President and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.** (Jan. 2007)

“Over the years, I feel privileged to have been associated with the East-West Center, a seat of learning of world renown and equally important, a bridge linking diverse cultures and peoples through the enhancement of mutual knowledge and understanding. In Thailand itself, evidence abounds of the Center’s success not only in its projects of cooperative endeavors with Thai counterparts, but also in its alumni who have risen to inevitable prominence in their chosen fields and vocations.” – **Former Prime Minister of Thailand and current statesman and Head of the Privy Council of the King of Thailand, His Excellency General Prem Tinsulanonda**

“The East-West Center is truly an international enterprise guided by a spirit of cooperation among peoples of countries separated by great geographic distances and cultural distances. It can be said that it is that spirit of cooperation which has inspired and kept alive the concept of a Pacific Basin Community.” – **then-U.S. Ambassador to Japan and U.S. Senate Majority Leader, the late Mike Mansfield**

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“The East-West Center [is] an institution known for its unique research accomplishments.” – **Prime Minister of Japan Zenko Suzuki** (in 1982 at EWC)

“Since its inception in 1960, the [East-West] Center has contributed immeasurably through its training program to the quality of life of the peoples of the Pacific, and to international understanding in generally by providing an environment in which students, staff members, and Center fellows from all nations in the Pacific region can mingle freely. The Center has also played an important role as an intellectual catalyst, provoking those who have passed through it to consider policy alternatives which may go beyond, or even conflict with, the conventional wisdom which is so often handed down from one generation of policy-maker to another.”— **then-U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Western Samoa, the late H. Monroe Browne**

EAST-WEST CENTER ALUMNI EXPERIENCES

“Once you’ve been at the East-West Center, you can no longer just look at a problem; you have to do something about it.” – **Ashok Malhotra, EWC Alumnus, SUNY Distinguished Professor, and creator of a foundation to promote literacy in developing countries.** (2006)

“Before, all I knew was my country, Burma; then the East-West Center opened my eyes and now I feel I belong to the whole world.” – **Soe Naing, EWC alumnus from Burma** (2005-2006 student)

“The EWC is really making a difference in the world by providing opportunities for future world leaders to learn from each other and work together to improve the world that we live in.” – **Tony Vaefanga Siamomua, EWC alumnus from Samoa** (2005-2006)

“The East-West Center has touched my life . . . Living and learning in the company of Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Americans caused me to reflect upon my own cultural identity and role as an Asian-American born in Hawaii.” – **Mitsuyo Lani Suzuki, an EWC Asia Pacific Leadership Program alumna** (2005-2006 student)

“From what I learned at the East-West Center, I believe I will be a better journalist, working to improve understanding between China and the rest of the world.” – **Gao Song, an award-winning senior reporter from Guizhou Province, China.** (2005-2006 student)

“The East-West Center makes you live together with people your country might have conflict with... [and] you end up thinking of each other, not as nations, but as human beings . . . that you are just like me.” – **Zarina Chekirbaeva, an EWC alumna and an Asian Development Bank Scholarship recipient from Kyrgyzstan** (2006)

“The East - West Center transforms the way you look at things.” – **Thinley Choden, an EWC Asia Pacific Leadership Program alumna from Bhutan** (2005-2006 student)

“The East-West Center has its own culture...one that breaks down barriers and brings people together...where everyone feels comfortable with each other’s differences.” – **EWCA Scholar Clare Suet Ching Chan from Malaysia** (2008-2009)

“The East-West Center’s Changing Faces Women’s Leadership Program showed me that women leaders all over the world face similar problems, and we all can bring about change, given the skills to do so.” – **Hasina Kharbhih, President, Impulse NGO Network, Meghalaya, India** (2006)

EAST-WEST CENTER NEWS AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

The East-West Center News and Information unit provides a link to the resources, research, and expertise of the East-West Center for local, national, and international journalists reporting on U.S.-Asia-Pacific issues. Resources include:

- **East-West Wire:** A news, commentary, and analysis service provided by the East-West Center. Media can use quotes and information from Center specialists and distinguished experts with attribution to the East-West Center or the person quoted. To receive the East-West Wire, send an email to EastWestWire@EastWestCenter.org
- **EWC News Releases** offer information on East-West Center events, conferences, publications, issue papers, special reports and more.
- The **EWC Specialists Guide** (www.EastWestCenter.org/specialists) links to a free PDF download of a guide for journalists that includes biodata, selected publications, direct-line phone numbers and email addresses for East-West Center specialists.
- **Journalism Fellowships** are offered through East-West Seminars. They include professional development opportunities through travel and dialogue programs for journalists from throughout the Asia Pacific region and the United States.
- **Asia Pacific Center for Journalists** (www.EastWestCenter.org/journalists) offers an array of programs and resources it offers journalists on Asia Pacific issues, including 10 fellowship travel programs for American, Asian and Pacific island journalists; a news service providing diverse commentary and analysis on breaking and ongoing Asia Pacific stories; comprehensive, updated online news coverage of the Pacific islands; and quick access to the East-West Center's specialists and 55,000 alumni throughout the region.
- **Pacific Islands Report** (www.pireport.org) is the definitive on-line news source of the Pacific islands, providing:
 - A daily email service of story briefs
 - A searchable archive of *Pacific Island Report* stories dating back to 1997
 - Country profiles, links to government websites, and more
- **Publications** on Asia Pacific-related issues written by the Center's researchers and other experts. Many are available as free downloads from the EWC Website, visit www.EastWestCenter.org/publications. Email announcements of all new publications are available by contacting ewcbooks@EastWestCenter.org and entering "subscribe" in the subject field.

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HISTORICAL TIMELINE

- 1959 U.S. Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson and Delegate John A. Burns call for the establishment of the East-West Center (EWC).
- 1960 President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs a bill establishing the East-West Center.
Asian-American architect I.M. Pei designs five buildings for EWC campus.
EWC's first student arrives – Abdul Q. Zia from Pakistan.
- 1961 Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson attends the EWC Ground breaking ceremony.
- 1963 Friends of EWC forms Board and begins assisting students.
- 1967 King of Thailand presents a Royal Thai Pavilion, known as a *sala*, as a gift to the EWC—the only sala outside of Thailand personally dedicated by the King.
Jefferson Fellowships begin first trans-Pacific exchange program for professional journalists.
- 1970 The EWC inaugurates its problem-oriented institutes in communication, culture learning, food/resources, population, and technology and development.
- 1972 Authentic Japanese tea ceremony house, *chashitsu*, donated by Soshitsu Sen, a Grand Tea Master of the Urasenke Foundation and erected in the EWC Japanese Garden.
- 1979 EWC Alumnus, Tosiwo Nakayama, elected the first president of the Federated States of Micronesia.
EWC welcomes first scholarship student from People's Republic of China.
- 1980 Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders meets at the EWC. Fiji Prime Minister Ratu Mara speaks at Center.
Pacific Islands presidents, prime ministers and governors launch The Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP), as a forum through which the heads of government from the Pacific Islands can discuss critical issues of development and formulate solutions to common challenges in collaboration with NGOs, donors, and the private sector.
- 1982 Japan Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki speaks at EWC on “The Coming of the Pacific Age.”
EWC Foundation established to diversify EWC funding base and increase scholarship awards.
- 1984 First Premier of the People's Republic of China to visit the U.S., Zhao Ziyang, delivers his first U.S. public address at EWC.
- 1985 Prime Minister of Thailand visits EWC.

- 1987 United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar delivers a talk at the EWC: “Multilateralism: A Continuing Necessity.”
- 1988 The Consortium for Teaching Asia and the Pacific in the Schools (CTAPS) established. The program received national recognition as a model program for educational planning and development.
- United States Secretary of State George P. Shultz speaks at EWC on “U.S. Policy and the Dynamism of the Pacific.”
- 1989 Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara speaks at EWC on “The Cold War: Can We End It? Should We Try?”
- Jefferson Fellows pre-arranged fieldtrip to China enables American journalists to cover the student revolution/protest in Beijing.
- 1990 President George Bush proposes the Joint Commercial Commission (JCC) at the United States-Pacific Islands Summit held at the East-West Center. **This is the first time that a U.S. president has a joint meeting with the heads of government in the Pacific Islands.**
- EWC alumnus Teburoro Tito is elected fourth president of Kiribati. President Tito, through speeches at the United Nations, interviews with international news media and active participation at International Climate conferences, begins the process of highlighting the detrimental effects of Global Warming on South Pacific island nations and their peoples.
- The Northeast Asia Economic Forum, a regional NGO, is established under the auspices of the EWC, promoting economic cooperation in a region consisting of North and South Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Northeast China, and the Russian Far East.
- The Forum Secretariat is based at the EWC with Lee-Jay Cho as Forum chairman.
- 1991 Asian Studies Development Program is established.
- 1993 The EWC serves as the Secretariat for the United States/Pacific Island Nations Joint Commercial Commission (JCC).
- EWC alumnus Morihiro Hosokawa is elected the 79th Prime Minister of Japan.
- 1994 The EWC designated the permanent secretariat for the U.S. Consortium of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Study Centers.
- Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko of Japan visit the EWC, revisiting the Japanese Garden they helped to establish.
- Dalai Lama visits EWC and speaks at function.
- 1995 EWC Art Gallery opens to enhance community outreach through arts and culture.
- EWC’s Fereidun Fesharaki is the keynote speaker at the 5th annual Middle East Petroleum and Gas Conference in Abu Dhabi. The EWC organized conference brings 700 key decision makers together to exchange information and identify strategies.
- President of the Republic of the Philippines Fidel V. Ramos speaks at EWC on “Regional Cooperation and Economic Development in the Philippines.”

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- 1996 Senior Policy Seminar launches annual forum on regional security issues for senior regional officials and experts.
- 1997 Pacific Islands Report begins via the internet—the first reliable, regional source of Pacific Islands news.
More than 245 U.S. colleges in 47 states participate in the EWC’s Asian Studies Development Program (ASDP).
- 1999 Leo Falcam, EWC’s first student from Micronesia, is elected the fifth President of The Federated States of Micronesia.
Princess Sayako of Japan attends a traditional tea ceremony and plants a Japanese Black Pine tree in the EWC’s Japanese garden.
- 2000 U.S. President Bill Clinton and Okinawa Governor Keiichi Inamine formally announce the start of EWC’s Obuchi Program at the Cornerstone of Peace, named in honor of former Prime Minister Kenzo Obuchi. The Obuchi Education and Research Program includes graduate scholarships for Okinawans, internships, intellectual exchanges, and EWC facilitation of research activities in Okinawa.
Over 31 governments make contributions to EWC programs and activities.
EWC alumnus Laisenia Qarase becomes the sixth Prime Minister of Fiji and champions for the rights of indigenous people.
- 2001 EWC in Washington established; Congressional Study Groups initiated.
EWC manages Pacific Disaster Center on Maui.
Asia Pacific Leadership Program is established through a \$4.5 million grant from the Freeman Foundation.
The International Forum for Education 2020 is established.
- 2002 EWC hosts the 25-nation Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum.
- 2003 U.S. President George W. Bush, accompanied by White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, national security advisor Condoleeza Rice, and James Kelly, assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, meets with 13 Pacific Island Leaders at the East-West Center during the seventh annual Pacific Islands Conference of leaders.
- 2004 Corazon Aquino, former president of the Philippines, receives the third annual Asia Pacific Community Building Award from EWC and delivers an address on the “People Power Movement.”
Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program starts bringing students from provincial areas of Asian nations to EWC.
EWC establishes the United States Asia Pacific Council (USAPC) with support from the U.S. Department of State.
- 2005 EWC establishes a Tsunami Relief Fund raising more than \$500,000, primarily used to rebuild educational infrastructure.
Education program enters an agreement to support students and faculty of the Ar-Raniry State Institute for Islamic Studies in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

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Schools-Helping-Schools program connects U.S. schools with tsunami-affected schools for support and interchange.

East-West Seminars holds disaster risk reduction seminars for Pacific leaders, convening national disaster managers from the Pacific to finalize a ten-year action plan to help reduce risks and manage disasters and enhance the security of civil society. EWC assists each nation to develop comprehensive action plans.

Asia Pacific Leadership Program students assist Thai Red Cross efforts and Habitat for Humanity in Sri Lanka.

USAPC leads a reorganization of Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC.) EWC President Charles E. Morrison is elected as PECC's new international chairman.

EWC hosts Pacific-Asia Free Trade and Development (PAFTAD) 30 - 2005 Conference: "Does Trade Deliver What It Promises? Assessing the Critique of Globalization," examining issues of free trade in the Asia-Pacific region.

President of Mongolia speaks at EWC on "Mongolia: At the Juncture Between Northeast and Central Asia."

2006 Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, delivers speech on an Asian Perspective of Human Rights and Politics.

Lyonpo Jigmi Yoser Thinley, cultural affairs minister and former prime minister of Bhutan, delivers a speech on "Gross National Happiness," the political philosophy of his country.

International alumni conference of 550 alumni from 36 countries in Hanoi, Vietnam marks rapidly expanding alumni chapter network.

EWC expands its Asian Muslim Initiative to address misconceptions and misunderstandings that have arisen between Asia's Islamic societies and the U.S.

Partnership formed with NOAA to establish the NOAA Integrated Data and Environmental Applications (IDEA) Center housed at the EWC in Honolulu.

2007 Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders convenes in Washington, D.C. for the first time. The 20 leaders of Pacific islands governments meet with top congressional leaders, private sector executives and State Department officials, including U.S. Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and Karen Hughes, Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

Asian International Justice Initiative (AIJI) conducts trainings in international law for the officers of the international Khmer Rouge tribunal in Cambodia and also produces videos to teach the people of Cambodia about international legal processes.

2008 Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn dedicates the newly reconstructed Royal Sala Thai pavilion and accepts the EWC's Asia Pacific Community Building Award on behalf of her father, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

533 scholars, officials, and business professionals from 45 countries gather at the EWC International Alumni Conference in Bali, Indonesia.

EWC in Washington launches new website on U.S.-Asia interactions—Asia Matters for America.

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First EWC International Media Conference is held in Bangkok attracting some 200 journalists from 21 nations.

2009

EWC's AIJI produces weekly video reports on the Khmer Rouge tribunal at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC).

EWC hosts conference for alumni from the U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship Program.

EWC launches the U.S. Institute on the Environment, a new program for young scholars from Southeast Asia and the Pacific that develops environmental leadership skills.

Taiwan President Ma speaks at EWC.

EWC hosts luncheon commemorating 50 years of the Honolulu-Hiroshima Sister City relationship, with Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima as guest speaker.

EWC, in partnership with the U.S. and Federated States of Micronesia governments, coordinates a delegation of election observers for the national and state elections in the Federated States of Micronesia.

2010

East-West Center celebrates 50th anniversary.

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**For the Record:
President Obama's
East-West Center Connections**

Since the election of President Barack Obama, much interest has been focused on the president's family background and formative years. Following is information about the relationship between President Obama's parents and the East-West Center, an internationally recognized research and education institution founded in Hawai'i by the United States Congress in 1960 to promote better relations and understanding among the peoples and nations of Asia, the Pacific and the United States.

- In the early 1960s, Obama's parents (**Barack Obama Sr.** and **S. Ann Dunham**) were both University of Hawai'i undergraduate students, but *not* on East-West Center scholarships.
- Obama's father, **Barack Obama Sr.**, was never a registered East-West Center student, although he participated in early public discussions that helped shape the Center. It is also certain that he had contact with members of the Center community as a University of Hawai'i student, as he was active in the UH international student association and was himself an international student from Kenya.
- President Obama's mother, **S. Ann Dunham**, and stepfather, **Lolo Soetoro**, both pursued their graduate degrees from the University of Hawai'i while on East-West Center scholarships.
- Obama's stepfather, **Lolo Soetoro**, was an East-West Center graduate degree fellow (M.A. in geography) from 1962-64, *before* he married Obama's mother. Obama's mother and Lolo Soetoro married in 1967 and the family moved to Indonesia. In 1971, Obama Jr. returned to Hawai'i to study at Punahou School, a prominent private K-12 school in Hawai'i.
- His mother, **S. Ann Dunham**, pursued her master's and doctorate degrees in anthropology as an East-West Center grantee. According to EWC records, she was an East-West Center degree participant during the following periods:

1973-76	M.A. in anthropology
1976-78	Ph.D. in anthropology

It is likely President Obama had regular contact with the East-West Center and its students and staff as a child when his mother spent long hours on campus as an EWC grantee. Obama's half-sister, **Maya Soetoro-Ng**, recalls playing in the Center's halls when their mother was a student here.

- President Obama's half-sister met her husband, **Konrad Ng**, at the Center, where he worked from 2000-2004 as a graduate research intern in the International Cultural Studies Certificate Program, a joint program between the East-West Center and the University of Hawai'i.

To request interviews with individuals from the East-West Center community who knew President Obama's mother or stepfather, contact EWC Media Relations Specialist Derek Ferrar at (808) 944-7204, or via email at ferrard@eastwestcenter.org.

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