Join us for a very special program with Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae and his wife Nobuko, who have spent their careers helping to build a strong US-Japan relationship that underpins mutual security and prosperity. Ken and Nobuko have seen a remarkable evolution of that relationship, from one in which Japan was viewed often as an economic competitor and a junior security partner in the 1980s to one today in which Japan is clearly an equal economic and security partner, taking new leadership roles in the region and globally.

From his time as Director in charge of US trade issues in the 1980s to his time 20 years later as Vice Minister, the Ministry’s top bureaucratic post, to his five years as Japanese Ambassador to the US, Ken Sasae has worked tirelessly to resolve problems, build friendships and deepen cooperation. Nobuko, the other half of this power couple, also maintained a unique bird’s-eye view of that evolution as one of Japan’s top professional interpreters. From that vantage point, she gained special insight into the importance of communication in managing such a sensitive and important
relationship.

Ken and Nobuko Sasae will talk about their lives and careers, their perspectives on the US and how they see the future of that relationship as we enter a new world of fundamental geopolitical changes, particularly those centered in Asia, and rising nationalism and protectionism around the world.

The event will also feature a briefing by Satu Limaye, Director of the East West Center of Washington DC on the Japan Matters for America/America Matters for Japan initiative that highlights U.S.-Japan connections at the national, state and local levels including Japanese economic and business ties with the Bay Area that remind us why a strong US-Japan relationship is important for our collective livelihood here.

Event Agenda

4:00 – 4:30  Registration
4:30 – 4:35  Welcome (Larry Greenwood)
4:35 – 5:05  Presentation by Satu Limaye
5:05 – 5:50  Fireside Chat with President and Mrs. Sasae
5:50 – 6:20  Q&A
6:20 – 7:20  Reception

Sponsored by:
Kenichiro Sasae joined the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs after graduating from The University of Tokyo in 1974. His distinguished and illustrious diplomatic career includes prestigious assignments as Executive Assistant to the Prime Minister, Director-General of the Economic Affairs Bureau, Director-General of the Asian & Oceania Affairs Bureau, and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. During his period of service in Tokyo, he represented the Japanese Government in the Six-Party Talks on North Korean issues. He also worked as Political Director for the G-8 Summit. From 2012-2018, he was Ambassador of Japan to the United States. Subsequently, in July 2018, Ambassador Sasae was appointed President of The Japan Institute of International Affairs to head Japan’s premier foreign affairs think tank.

Nobuko Sasae’s work as a high-level conference interpreter has taken her all around the world, most recently to the East Asia Summit in Cambodia,
the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Annual Meeting in Tokyo, the Nikkei Future of Asia and the APEC Ministerial Meeting in Japan, the COP 10 meeting in Nagoya, and the World Economic Forum in China, to name only a few. While in D.C. during her husband’s term as Ambassador of Japan to the U.S., Mrs. Sasae founded and moderated the bimonthly The Nobuko Forum, which sought to empower young professional women through conversations with accomplished women. They have two sons and love mountain hiking.

Dr. Satu Limaye

Satu Limaye is Director of the East West Center in Washington where he created and now directs the Asia Matters for America initiative and edits the Asia Pacific Bulletin. He is also Senior Advisor, Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) and Senior Fellow on Asia History and Policy at the Foreign Policy Institute at Paul H. Nitze School of International Studies (SAIS). He is a magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Georgetown University and
received his doctorate from Oxford University (Magdalen College) where he was a George C. Marshall Scholar.

Earlier in his long career, Dr. Limaye focused on the Middle East (Lebanon and Israel), providing analytical support to Japanese utility companies with civil nuclear power programs and worked at the Japan Institute of International Affairs for over three years. His publications on Japan include Japan in a Dynamic Asia (co-edited with Yoichiro Sato); Tokyo’s Dynamic Diplomacy: Japan and India and Pakistan’s Nuclear Tests; US-Japan Relations and Southeast Asia: Meeting Regional Demands; and Japan and the Indian Ocean (forthcoming).

He publishes and speaks widely on Asia-Pacific regional issues and supports various foundation, fellowship, and professional organizations.