

The Sixth Group of the Rumsfeld Fellows Complete Program in Washington, DC

The sixth group of eight fellows from Central Asia, the Caucasus and Mongolia completed a six-week program of high-level meetings and research in Washington, DC from March 27 to May 8, 2011. The group included *Ms. Fidan Huseynli (Azerbaijan)*, Communication Specialist within the ENPI/FLEG “Improving Law Enforcement and Forest Governance in the European Neighborhood Policy East Countries and Russia” Program in Azerbaijan, *Mr. Levan Dolidze (Georgia)*, Executive Director of the Levan Mikeladze Foundation, *Ms. Gaukhar Kassymzhanova (Kazakhstan)*, Advisor to the President of the Center for International Programs (administrator of the Bolashak International Scholarships), *Mr. Kairat Karmanov (Kazakhstan)*, Managing Director of the National Export and Investment Agency (Kaznex Invest) under the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, *Mr. Azis Abakirov (Kyrgyzstan)*, General Director of “Unique Technologies” Ltd., *Mr. Mashbat Otgonbayar (Mongolia)*, Vice Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS) under the National Security Council (NSC) of Mongolia, *Mr. Makhbub Radzhabboev (Tajikistan)*, founder and the Director of Arvand Consulting Firm, and *Mr. Elyor Rakhmanov (Uzbekistan)*, Deputy Dean at the School of International Economics and Graduate Studies at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent.



Fellows with Mr. and Mrs. Rumsfeld

The group had an intensive schedule of high-level group meetings with representatives of the US Administration, the US Congress, the US Supreme Court, business community, media, think tanks, academia, NGOs, and advocacy organizations.



Fellows with Senator Joseph Lieberman

The fellows also traveled to Philadelphia for meetings at the Campbell Soup Company, the Eisenhower Fellowships, the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, Fox School of Business at Temple University, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania which offered them a view of the United States beyond Washington.



Fellows at The Campbell's Soup Company Headquarters in Philadelphia



Fellows with General Norton Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force

In addition, through arranging individual meetings with relevant officials and experts the fellows were able to focus more specifically on their research topics in order to accommodate to their professional interests. Finally, at the end of the program the fellows gave a presentation at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute where the topic of discussion was *"The Impact of Events in the Arab World on Central Asia and the Caucasus"*.



Fellows during their presentation at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, SAIS



Fellows at the State Department with Susan Elliott, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central Asia

Azis Abakirov: *“Prior to coming to Washington I was surrounded by many “unknowns”, but after six challenging weeks in the program these “unknowns” became “known”. Thank you for this great experience and opportunity.”*

Mashbat Otgonbayar: *“This is a fantastic program for those who are really interested in how U.S. policy is made in Washington. The program is skillfully designed in such a way that introduces participants to all stakeholders in the decision making process within U.S. politics. We had meetings with high-ranking individuals many of which the ordinary American does not have access to. At the end of these six weeks we found that we had gained a precious and valuable understanding of how the U.S. system runs.”*

Elyor Rakhmanov: *“This program is an unique platform that allows participants to gain insight into how US policy is shaped and how to best interpret and understand the thought process behind the actions. This experience within these six weeks has filled the gaps of many diplomacy/policy books.”*

Gauhar Kassymzhanova: *“I consider this program as one of the major investments in my educational and professional “capital”. I earned invaluable assets in the form of acquiring a broad network of colleagues and friends as well as knowledge on many issues. The knowledge and experience I obtained during the program will help me generate new ideas and principles throughout my professional development in the future.”*

Levan Dolidze: *“This six-week program is comparable to a high level Masters program.”*



Fellows with Secretary Rumsfeld and the White House Fellows



Fellows with Carlos Gutierrez, Former Secretary of Commerce

Kairat Karmanov: *“This fellowship is a once in a life-time opportunity for those who truly want to understand how US global policy is shaped, which is driven by American values such as democracy and the free market economy. The program provides ample opportunities for the fellows to find out the essence of American political and socio-economic system. Without any doubt, meeting through the program such prominent people from the United States and the young leaders from the region made a great positive impact on my mind and my heart. It was a sincere privilege and honor to be part of this experience.”*

The next group of fellows will visit Washington, DC from October 2 to November 11, 2011. The winners of the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program for fall 2011 will be announced in mid-August.