

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

The seventh group of fellows from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Mongolia completed a six-week program of high-level meetings and research in Washington, DC from October 2 to November 14, 2011. The group included *Mr. Samiullah Mahdi* (Afghanistan), a Director of News and Current Affairs at 1TV, *Mr. Uluk Kydyrbaev* (Kyrgyzstan), the Chief Executive Officer of the Bishkek Business Club and the Chamber of Tax Consultants, *Mr. Ramid Namazov* (Azerbaijan), an Advisor at the Foreign Relations Department in the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *Ms. Khatuna Mshvidobadze* (Georgia), a Senior Associate at the Georgian Security Analysis Center at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS), *Ms. Naranzul Bayasgalan* (Mongolia), a Community Relations Manager at the Petro Matad Limited Company, *Ms. Sarnai Galindiv* (Mongolia), a senior foreign affairs officer at the Office of the President of Mongolia, *Mr. Kakhorjon Aminov* (Tajikistan), an economist with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), *Mr. Jamshed Rahmonberdiev* (Tajikistan), the Chief Executive Officer of Somon Capital Joint Stock Company, *Mr. Dadebay Kazakov* (Turkmenistan), a Business Development Manager at Caspian Mainport Ltd. (UK), and *Mr. Hikmat Abdurahmanov* (Uzbekistan), a Head of the Representative Office of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Uzbekistan (CCIU) in China.



Fellows with Mr. and Mrs. Rumsfeld and Dr. and Mrs. Starr

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



Fellows with Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Chairman of the Senate Republican Conference

For the first time the Rumsfeld Fellowship also partnered with the Open World Program and with their help the fall 2011 group traveled in two groups of 5 fellows to St. Louis, Missouri and Columbus, Ohio to learn more about participatory democracy at the local level. The program theme was “accountable governance,” which focused on how accountable and transparent local governments work with business, civil organizations, and individuals to bring benefits to American economy and society, and how people are empowered to take responsibility for themselves and others. Then the entire group then traveled to Chicago for meetings at the Northwestern University, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and local foundations and organizations.



Fellows with Hon. William Batchelder, the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives



Fellows at the Chicago Tribune

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 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 “New Silk Road Strategy: Views from the Region”.



Fellows with Congressman David Dreier (R-CA), Chairman of the House Rules Committee



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

Sami Mahdi: *“This program is a unique opportunity for young rising leaders in the greater Central Asia region who care about the future of their country. We gained incredible insight into the interests of the United States in Central Asia by being able to directly engage in discussion with many leaders in politics, business, economics and international affairs who have shaped world history.”*

Khatuna Mshvidobadze: *“A great combination of life in the United States, American opinion-makers and the environment of Washington, D.C.! A breath-taking panorama hard to imagine crammed into just six weeks. I am already building upon what I have learned on the Rumsfeld Fellowship.”*

Jamshed Rahmonberdiev: *“The fellowship program was a great opportunity for me to research my academic area of interest and to strengthen my leadership skills and contacts. By having met with the top leaders and great thinkers in one of the most influential cities in the world, I believe that my life and career prospects have changed forever!”*

Dadebay Kazakov: *“I am very proud to have completed a program that has exposed so many different angles of the United States. It has exceeded all my expectations. I was extremely impressed by the quality of high-level meetings that we had, and I am grateful to have widened my network of contacts in the United States as well as in the region.”*

Uluk Kydyrbaev: *“It is an outstanding and superbly organized high-level program. For me personally it was an extremely valuable experience, which has greatly impacted my understanding of global processes and the role Central Asia plays in all of it. Upon completion of the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program I can truly say that I have become a regional and global thinker!”*



Fellows with Dr. Alan Greenspan, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve

Hikmat Abdurahmanov: *“From my six weeks as a fellow in this program I learned three very valuable lessons. First, I realized how small the world has become and that meeting with US foreign policy legends and top financiers and scholars is possible. I also learned that there is a hope for greater cooperation in the future between our region and the United States if these kinds of programs develop. Lastly, I met incredible friends from the region that taught me a lot about their countries and we found a lot of common goals amongst each other.”*



Fellows at the Heritage Foundation with Elaine Chao, former US Secretary of Labor



Fellows with Hon. Laurence Silberman, Senior Federal Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

Naranzul Baiasgalan: *“There is an old proverb that ‘to see once is worth more than hearing a hundred times’. This fellowship gave me an invaluable opportunity to understand the US policy and decision-making process through seeing it first hand rather than hearing about it from my region of the world. The fellowship has completely changed my views. It also helped me to understand the current political and economic situation of Central Asia. If I haven’t had a chance to participate in this program I would not have known how important this region really is. The contacts and friends that I met with during these six weeks will without a doubt build upon my professional development and ultimately help the prosperity of my country.”*

The next group of fellows will visit Washington, DC from April 1 to May 12, 2012. The winners of the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program for spring 2012 will be announced in March.