

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

The ninth group of fellows from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, and Mongolia completed a six-week program of high-level meetings and research in Washington, D.C. from October 1 to November 10, 2012. The group included *Ms. Afghani Barakzai* (Afghanistan), the Office and Special Projects Manager at the USAID funded Central Asia Development Group (CADG); *Ms. Varya Meruzhanyan* (Armenia), a Project Manager at Eurasia Partnership Foundation Armenia Office; *Mr. Zaur Shiriyev* (Azerbaijan), a research fellow in the Foreign Policy Analysis Department of the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) in Baku; *Mr. Levan Khurtsidze* (Georgia), a Counselor at the OSCE Division of the Department for International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia; *Mr. Duman Zhumadilov* (Kazakhstan), the Deputy Director at *Natural Foods LLP*, a beverage production company in Kazakhstan; *Mr. Ermek Niyazov* (Kyrgyzstan), a Technology Sales Representative for *Oracle Corporation* in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the Chairman of the Bishkek Business Club; *Ms. Zarina Chekirbaeva* (Kyrgyzstan), a Corporate Affairs Manager and an Executive Assistant to the Chairperson of the Management Committee at CJSC JerooyAltyn, a gold mining company based in Kyrgyzstan; *Mr. Baska Tumurbat* (Mongolia), a Specialist for the Board of Directors at *Oyu Tolgoi LLC*, a gold and copper mining company in southern Mongolia; *Ms. Gulya Kolakova* (Turkmenistan), an independent consultant that recently worked as a Procurement Manager at *Arrow General Supplies Company*, an Afghan company and supplier to the U.S. military; and *Ms. Bahar Charyyeva* (Turkmenistan), an Associate in the International Arbitration group of the U.S. law firm Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt and Mosle LLP.



Fellows with Mr. and Mrs. Rumsfeld and Dr. Starr at the Final Dinner

The group had an intensive schedule of high-level group meetings with representatives of current and former U.S. Administrations, the U.S. Congress, the Judiciary, business community, media, think tanks, academia, NGO's, and advocacy organizations.



Fellows at the office of Dewey F. Bartlett, Jr., Mayor of Tulsa, Oklahoma

Since the fall of 2011, the Rumsfeld Fellowship has partnered with the Open World Leadership Center to organize local programs with host communities outside of Washington, D.C. in an effort to show the fellows American democracy and how businesses and governments work on the local level. This fall the fellows traveled to *Tulsa, Oklahoma*, and *Phoenix, Arizona*. The program theme in *Tulsa* was "Accountable Governance," focusing on how accountable and transparent local governments work with businesses, civil organizations, and individuals to bring benefits to the U.S. economy and society. In *Phoenix* the program theme was "Immigration," focusing on current state legislation and policy and their various effects on the local communities. The entire group then traveled to Dallas, Texas for meetings at the office of former President George W. Bush, the Dallas/Fort Worth World Affairs Council, and Hunt Oil Company.

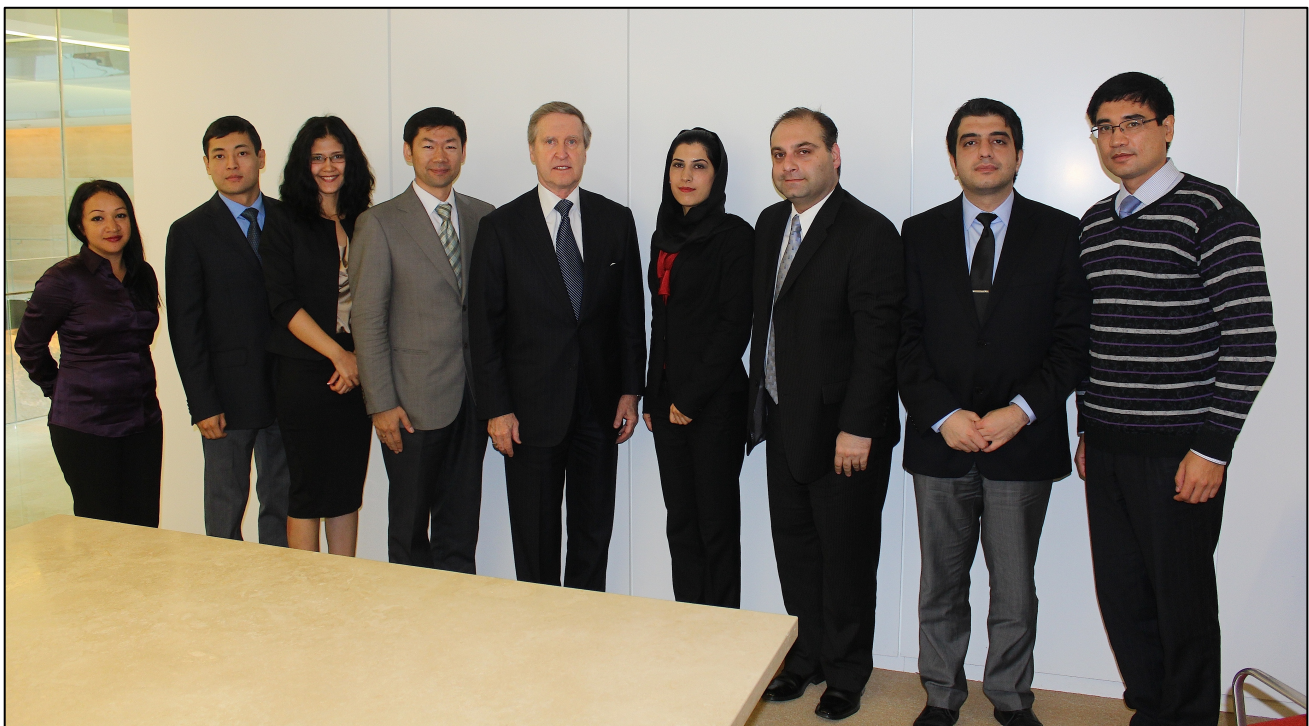


Fellows with George W. Bush, Former President of the United States



Fellows with Richard B. Cheney, Former Vice President of the United States

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 CACI/SAIS where the topic of discussion was “Implications of U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 on Central Asia, Caucasus and Mongolia.”



Fellows with William Cohen, President of the Cohen Group and Former Secretary of Defense



Fellows with Zalmay Khalilzad, Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq and Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Afghani Barakzai (Afghanistan): *“The Rumsfeld Fellowship program allowed me to meet people who play important roles in the long-term relationship between my country – Afghanistan – and the United States. This program offered true opportunities for cultural exchange and was, as a result, much more than an introduction to American policy. At every turn, the program offered me extra time with civil and community leaders, giving me not only insight into international affairs but local politics, human rights, the role of women in American politics and the practice of democracy in both the United States and Central Asia.”*

Baska Tumurbat (Mongolia): *“The Rumsfeld Fellowship offers the most a visiting fellow to the United States could ask for. In a short six-week time period I met former U.S. President George W. Bush and former Vice President Dick Cheney, countless of other high officials in the U.S. government and private sector, witnessed the Presidential election, and even experienced the great Superstorm Sandy! I am extremely grateful for the friendships I made, and I hope to bring back to my country a deeper perspective of America!”*

Varya Meruzhanyan (Armenia): *“I can hardly think of any other program that brings together so many high-level decision-makers and prominent thinkers for an open conversation with young people like ourselves. Some meetings were eye opening in terms of how U.S. politics and policies are shaped, while other speakers were truly inspirational by sharing their personal stories, pathways in life and recipes for success. This program has been one condensed learning experience and certainly a life-changing journey!”*

Ernek Niyazov (Kyrgyzstan): *“During this fellowship I had a chance to meet with nearly all of the top officials of the U.S. Government during the Bush years. These meetings gave me a possibility to see issues from different angles. But the most memorable part was that these very influential people also shared their personal feelings on the issues they worked on. This type of perspective cannot be understood by just watching TV.”*



Fellows at the Verizon Center with Ted Leonsis, Washington Capitals and Washington Wizards Owner

Bahar Charyyeva (Turkmenistan): *“This program has exceeded all my expectations. Perfectly organized and managed, it opens doors to the world of success, inspiration and great friendships.”*



Fellows with Dr. Charles Krauthammer, Political Commentator and Columnist



Fellows with Elaine Chao, Distinguished Fellow at the Heritage Foundation and Former U.S. Secretary of Labor

Zarina Chekirbaeva (Kyrgyzstan): *"The Rumsfeld Fellowship Program was bigger, deeper and more than I had expected. It carved out another page of my life where I was personally exposed to world-class politicians, successful business leaders and my fellow-friends whose shared experiences, wisdom, knowledge, intellect, spirit and diversity far exceeded my expectations. Every once in a while I had to pinch myself to make sure that I was not dreaming because I could not believe that this incredible, powerful and life enriching experience could be true! "*

Levan Khurtsidze (Georgia): *"It has been a sheer blessing to have been part of this wonderful fellowship offering a unique opportunity to get an intimate and insider's perspective of how the Washington policy-making community works. This fellowship impressed me beyond all my expectations and boosted my confidence to become a better leader. Truly, these were the best six weeks of my life actively spent observing, studying and discussing U.S. foreign and domestic policy."*

The next group of fellows will visit Washington, D.C. from April 1 to May 12, 2013. The winners of the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program for spring 2013 will be announced in late February.