



Greater Central Asia Rumsfeld Fellowship Conference, June 22-25, 2013

The Foundation hosted the second conference of fellows from its program in cooperation with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies from June 22-25, 2013 at Lake Issyk Kul, Kyrgyz Republic. Over four days, attendees discussed issues of importance to the Greater Central Asia region as well as ways to strengthen and improve their growing alumni network.



Reunion Participants at the Karven Four Seasons, Issyk Kul, the Kyrgyz Republic

Over 40 alumni of the Fellowship Program, with representatives from all 10 countries and all 10 fellowship classes, traveled to the Kyrgyz Republic to participate in the conference. Also in attendance were representatives of both the Rumsfeld Foundation and the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. Additional assistance for the conference activities was provided by local partner and sponsor, the Bishkek Business Club.



Fellows participating in conference discussions

The reunion consisted of panel discussions, smaller working groups, and cultural activities, with a particular focus on strengthening the fellowship program, the alumni network, and planning for future conferences.

Panel discussions covered topics relevant to the region including “Doing Business in Greater Central Asia, the Caucasus and Mongolia:

Challenges and Opportunities,” and “Regional Economic Cooperation in Greater Central Asia: Bridging Asia and Europe.” Reunion participants considered a wide range of issues affecting the region such as country specific investment climates and economic outlooks, business opportunities and challenges, trends of foreign direct investment, difficulties and opportunities for entrepreneurship and SMEs in the region, transportation issues and prospects, and the political transition in Afghanistan. Dr. Fred Starr, Chairman of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, provided remarks and insights to the panel discussions.



Ermek Niyazov, Kyrgyz Republic

The second half of the conference focused on various aspects of the fellowship and network, with an alumni working group stimulating the discussion with ideas and recommendations the group discussed prior to the conference. Over two sessions, reunion participants proposed ideas, discussed, and ultimately came to understandings on actionable items to strengthen the network and improve future conferences. Following these discussions, the Rumsfeld Foundation, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, and fellowship alumni look forward to advancing the network with these recommendations and goals in mind.



Fellows visiting “Rukh-Ordo” Spiritual Site

To gain a feel for the Kyrgyz Republic outside the conference facilities, the fellows spent an afternoon on a boat cruise on Lake Issyk Kul where they had an opportunity to appreciate the beautiful Kyrgyz landscape.

Participants also went on a guided tour of “Rukh-Ordo,” a spiritual site along the shores of Lake Issyk Kul consisting of various places of worship of major religions.

Additionally, before and after the conference many fellows were able to spend some time in the capital city of Bishkek where they were warmly hosted by the Kyrgyz fellowship alumni.

Conference participants were also provided with a fine taste of Kyrgyz culture and dining through various events including a Bar-B-Q dinner along Lake Issyk Kul. Also, at the final dinner, fellows were treated to performances by a Kyrgyz dancing troupe, a traditional Kyrgyz musical group, as well as a special performance by a popular musical entertainer.



Kairat Karmanov (Kazakhstan), Nazira Beishenalieva (Kyrgyz Republic), Dzhura Babaev (Tajikistan) at the BBQ Dinner

Attendees of the conference experienced a productive and memorable meeting of many of the brightest minds and rising leaders of Greater Central Asia. Perhaps the biggest impact of the conference was the inspiration participants felt by having the opportunity to interact with one another, causing all to depart the Kyrgyz Republic with optimism for the future of the region after spending time with such impressive and dedicated talents.



Reunion Participants at the Final Dinner at Karven Four Seasons

The Rumsfeld Foundation remains committed to supporting the fellowship program and the growing alumni network and looks forward to developments in the years to come.

Conference Panels



Fellows participating in conference discussions



Bahar Charyyeva (Turkmenistan) and
Zarina Chekirbaeva (Kyrgyz Republic)



Mohammad Omar Sharifi
(Afghanistan)



Bayram Atayev (Turkmenistan) and
Gauhar Kassymzhanova (Kazakhstan)



Fred Starr, Central Asia-
Caucasus Institute



Varya Meruzhanyan
(Armenia)



Bahridin Najmudinov (Tajikistan)
and Asset Yerali (Kazakhstan)



Dulguun Baasandavaa
(Mongolia)

Cultural Activities



Boat Cruise on Lake Issyk Kul



Abdul Nafi Olomi (Afghanistan), Bakai Zhunushov (Kyrgyz Republic), and David Abesadze (Georgia) testing the water in Lake Issyk Kul



Dadebay Kazakov (Turkmenistan), Khatuna Mshvidobadze (Georgia), and Uluk Kydyrbaev (Kyrgyz Republic)



Alisher Abidjanov (Uzbekistan) with a Tour Guide at "Rukh-Ordo"



Ermek Niyazov (Kyrgyz Republic) and Duman Zhumadilov (Kazakhstan) at "Rukh-Ordo"

Conference Receptions



Fellows and Rumsfeld Foundation staff at the Welcoming Reception



Traditional Kyrgyz musical entertainment



Kyrgyz Dancer



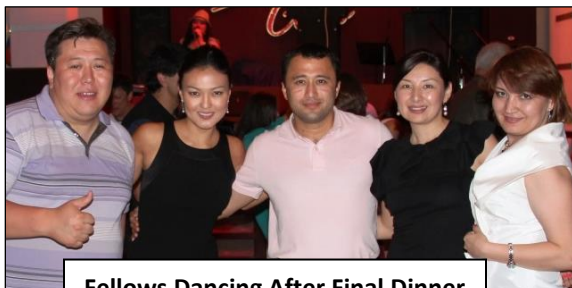
David Soumbadze, Alisher Abidjanov (Uzbekistan), Fred Starr, Don Rumsfeld, and Bakai Zhunushov and Bakyt Asanov (Kyrgyz Republic)



Fellows at Outdoor Bar-B-Q Dinner



Bahar Charyyeva (Turkmenistan), Zarina Chekirbaeva (Kyrgyz Republic), and Varya Meruzhanyan (Armenia)



Fellows Dancing After Final Dinner



Fellows Toasting at Final Dinner