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**CENTRAL ASIA-CAUCASUS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**  
**Announcement of Fall 2016 Fellows**

Today the Rumsfeld Foundation announced the 12 professionals who were selected to participate in the Fall 2016 Session of the Central Asia-Caucasus Fellowship Program. Launched in 2008, the Program is a partnership with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, which brings rising young leaders from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Mongolia to the United States to promote better understanding and stronger relations among the people of the ten countries of the region, as well as between the United States and the region. The Program aims to foster dialogue and an exchange of ideas among exceptional young professionals working across all sectors and encourages increased regional cooperation.

As participants of the Program's 17<sup>th</sup> successful session, the Fall 2016 group will join the growing alumni network of 147 former Fellows.

Throughout their six-week program, the Fellows will attend a series of private high-level meetings with top policy-makers, business leaders, journalists, academics, military personnel and regional experts exposing them to inside perspectives on how opinion making, decision making and policy making processes work in the U.S. The group will also spend a week traveling to additional cities including Spokane, WA, Bismarck, ND, and San Francisco, CA for meetings with local businesses and officials, providing them a view of the U.S. beyond the nation's capital. In addition to group meetings, the Program staff will assist Fellows in arranging individual meetings for their independent research projects and provide opportunities for professional development and networking. In the Program's final week, the Fellows will participate in a group presentation at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute public forum, where they will engage with representatives from local embassies, businesses, universities, the media and others interested in current perspectives from the region.

The Fall 2016 Fellows consist of a diverse group of talented regional leaders:



**Mr. Lotfullah Najafizada - Afghanistan** - Journalist and Director of TOLONews, Afghanistan's top 24/7 news and current affairs TV channel, overseeing the largest news operation in Afghanistan. **Research Project: "How Free Media in Afghanistan Revolutionized a Society Silenced for Decades."**

**Mr. Sami Sadat - Afghanistan** - CEO of Blue Sea Logistics Company, a Kabul based company that supplies defense equipment and technology to Afghan Forces. **Research Project:** *"Threats to the Regional Connectivity Posed by Islamic State Khorasan Province."*



**Mr. Zafar Hashemi - Afghanistan** - Deputy Spokesman of the President of Afghanistan, and filmmaker of documentaries on child labor, freedom of speech and human rights in Afghanistan. **Research Project:** *"Afghanistan: Transforming to Roundabout from a Regional Cul-de-sac."*

**Ms. Kamala Gafarova - Azerbaijan** - Resources Team Leader with the Global Projects Organization at BP Azerbaijan overseeing the development, execution and delivery of project staffing, planning and control, as well as contract management.

**Research Project:** *"Human Capital as a Driver of Economic Development of the Caspian Basin and Central Asia."*



**Mr. Zurab Parjiani - Georgia** - Deputy Head of the Political Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, and guest lecturer at the Georgian Institute for Public Affairs and the University of Georgia, Tbilisi.

**Research Project:** *"Perspectives for the 'New Silk Road': Competing Interests and Transport Corridors."*

**Mr. Meirbek Mazhitov - Kazakhstan** - Chairman of the Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan, supporting local businesses to expand globally and helping to attract investment; Chairman of the Council of the Heads of Chambers of Commerce of the CIS countries; and Co-Chairman of the Russian-Kazakh Business Council.

**Research Project:** *"Role of NGOs in the Development of SMEs in the U.S."*





**Ms. Gaukhar Zhanabay - Kazakhstan** - Senior Manager at the Portfolio Investment Department at JSC “Samruk-Kazyna” Sovereign Wealth Fund, responsible for portfolio performance monitoring, strategic long-term targeting of portfolio composition and independent review of investment projects. **Research Project: "Infrastructure Investments in Kazakhstan: Possibilities for Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)."**

**Mr. Mirsuljan Namazaliev - Kyrgyzstan** - Owner and Director General of K-News Information Agency, one of the leading online news sources in Kyrgyzstan, responsible for strategic planning and execution, overall management, strategic communications and public relations; Co-founder of the Central Asian Free Market Institute (CAFMI) Public Policy Research Center; and a founding curator at the Global Shapers Hub in Bishkek, a World Economic Forum initiative. **Research Project: "Re-creating the Silk Road in Central Asia: Political Barriers for Free Trade."**



**Ms. Manduul Altangerel - Mongolia** - Lawyer at Allens LLP providing a wide range of legal counsel to clients regarding major investments in energy, mining and infrastructure projects in Mongolia; a founder of the Mongolian Community of Lean In, the global women’s career and leadership empowerment movement; shaper at the Global Shapers Ulaanbaatar Hub, a World Economic Forum initiative; and a lecturer at the School of Law at the National University of Mongolia. **Research Project: "Recognizing and Addressing the Impact of Transnational Corporations in National Policy-Making."**

**Mr. Zuhursho Rahmatulloev - Tajikistan** - Co-founder and CEO of Alif Capital, a micro-credit and deposit organization, specializing in SME financing and providing short-term consumer credits; Co-founder of a number of start-ups in real estate and tourism; and founder of Public Organization “Peshraft,” which supports young Tajik leaders through various stipend programs as well as charity events. **Research Project: "U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Wider Central Asia Region."**



**Mr. Farrukh Karabaev - Uzbekistan** - Project Manager at the UNDP “Support to Enhance Lawmaking, Rulemaking and Regulatory Impact Assessment” project in Uzbekistan responsible for increasing the quality of law and rule-making and enhancing regulatory policy by developing and implementing better regulation tools and good governance principles. **Research Project: "Can Better Regulation Raise Competitiveness of the National Economy: A Case Study of Uzbekistan."**

**Mr. Muzaffar Mansurov - Uzbekistan** - Deputy Head of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Project Implementation Unit (PIU) for the “Solid Waste Management Improvement Project,” leading efforts to secure a \$69 million loan agreement to establish the PIU; and Co-founder of Agro Sanoat Invest Business LLC, a consumer and specialty shoe company with production facilities and offices in Tashkent, Bukhara and the Fergana Valley. **Research Project: "Development of Entrepreneurship in the CAMCA Region: Challenges and Opportunities."**



To learn more about the Central Asia-Caucasus Fellowship Program please visit:  
[www.rumsfeldfoundation.org/focus/our/central\\_asia](http://www.rumsfeldfoundation.org/focus/our/central_asia).

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