



*A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center*

**RUMSFELD FELLOWSHIP NATIONAL COORDINATORS for 2016-2017**

**Mr. Samiullah Mahdi (Afghanistan, Fall 2011)**, is the Chairman of the PAYK Investigative Journalism Center in Afghanistan and an Associate Director of TOLONews, Afghanistan's top 24/7 news and current affairs television channel. He previously worked as CEO of Khurshid TV from 2013 to 2014 and as Director of News and Current Affairs at 1TV from 2009 to 2012. At 1TV, Mr. Mahdi produced and hosted internationally acclaimed programs such as "Kabul Debate Live," "The Mask," "Amaj" and others. He was also an op-ed contributor to major Afghan newspapers and magazines. In 2012, Mr. Mahdi was awarded the prestigious Knight International Journalism Award from the International Center for Journalism for his excellent and courageous reporting. Prior to joining 1TV, Mr. Mahdi began his career as a journalist in 2007 with Tolo TV, where he hosted a weekly show, "Hardtalk." Mr. Mahdi holds a BA from the School of Law and Political Science of Kabul University (2009) and a MA in International Relations from the University of Massachusetts Boston as a Fulbright Scholar (2016).

**Ms. Zara Chatinyan (Armenia, Spring 2015)**, is the Local Representative of German Development Bank (KfW) in Armenia. KfW manages more than 600 million euro investment portfolios in Armenia's energy, drinking water and irrigation, banking, and agriculture sectors. Ms. Chatinyan works closely with the governments of Armenia and Germany to identify sectors in need of reform and infrastructure projects, to facilitate intergovernmental negotiations, to participate in multi-million sovereign loan negotiations, to support the introduction of international standards in project management and to facilitate cooperation with international financial institutions. Ms. Chatinyan has more than ten years of experience with USAID financed projects in decentralization, policy and institutional development, strategic planning and municipal service improvements. Ms. Chatinyan holds a BA in Philology from the Teachers' Training Institute in Armenia (1998), a MPA from the University of Delaware as a Muskie Fellow (2000), and a Certificate in Executive Management and Leadership from the Judge Institute of Management at the University of Cambridge (2003).

**Mr. Emil Gasimli (Azerbaijan, Spring 2016)**, is the Chief of Marketing and Business Development at the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan where he is responsible for the coordination of marketing and business development activities in the Caspian region and beyond including the Southern Gas Corridor. Prior to his current position, Mr. Gasimli spent 5 years working in different IT consulting companies, as well as for BP. Over the years, he has participated in numerous international conferences and events on energy issues. Mr. Gasimli holds a BA in Finance and Accounting from the Azerbaijan State Oil Academy and Georgia State University, USA (2007), a MBA from the University of Louisiana (2009) and a

MBA from the Azerbaijan State Economics University (2010). He has also completed the Advanced Foreign Service Program at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy and has earned a Master Certificate in Project Management from George Washington University (2015).

**Ms. Tamar Kekenadze (Georgia, Spring 2014)**, is the Executive Secretary and a member of the Board of the Free Democrats Political Party. Before joining the party in February 2015, she was a Civilian Representative of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia to NATO and the EU. Prior, she served as a Head of the Euro-Atlantic Integration Division at the Ministry of Defense of Georgia. Previously, Ms. Kekenadze worked for five years in civil society organizations on national and international levels. In 2008, she was awarded the “Young European of the Year” Prize for outstanding commitment to fostering international understanding and the union of Europe. In 2009, she was privileged as a non-EU member country

representative to intern in the Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament. Ms. Kekenadze holds a BA in Computer Systems and Networks (2003), a BA in Jurisprudence (2007) and a MA in Computer Engineering, Information Science and Control Systems (2006), all from Georgian Technical University.

**Mr. Rakhim Oshakbayev (Kazakhstan, Spring 2016)**, is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Center of Applied Research “TALAP,” a think-tank focused on macroeconomic research and economic policy. Before joining “TALAP,” from 2015 to March 2016 Mr. Oshakbayev served as a Vice-Minister for Investments and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan where he was responsible for the development and implementation of investment policy and international cooperation in this area. Prior to joining the Ministry of Investment and Development, from 2011 to 2015 Mr. Oshakbayev served as a First Deputy Chairman of the Board of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan “Atameken”. Mr. Oshakbayev also has robust experience working in senior management positions in different state-

owned and private companies in Kazakhstan. Mr. Oshakbayev holds a BS in Economics from Lomonosov Moscow State University (1999).

**Ms. Nazira Beishenalieva (Kyrgyzstan, Spring 2013)**, is the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of CJSC Bank of Asia, a family owned business, where she oversees the activities of the Board in the formation of bank policy and the execution of bank strategy. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the American University of Central Asia. Previously, Ms. Beishenalieva was the Chairperson of the Bishkek Business Club and the President of the Rotary Club of Bishkek. For the last eight years, Ms. Beishenalieva has engaged in educational, cultural and social charity projects in Kyrgyzstan. Ms. Beishenalieva holds a BA in Journalism and Public Relations from the American University of Central Asia (1998), a degree in Accounting, Analysis and Audit from the Moscow Institute of Entrepreneurship and Law, Bishkek Branch (2004) and a Degree in Law from the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (2005). She also graduated from the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School (2014).

**Mr. Saintulga Munkhgerel (Mongolia, Fall 2014)**, is a consultant for energy projects in Mongolia working on a 54 MW wind farm project in Sainshand city with German investor, Ferrostaal. He previously worked as CEO of Khotgor Minerals LLC, a company developing one of the largest rare earth element deposits in Mongolia. Prior to joining Khotgor Minerals, Mr. Munkhgerel worked with Rio Tinto Group on its Oyu Tolgoi copper-gold mine development project in Mongolia where he negotiated with the Mongolian government to obtain a license to build a 450MW power plant. In 2009, while working as a relationship manager at Golomt Bank, Mr. Munkhgerel helped to structure a deal between Standard Bank, the Mongolian Ministry of Finance and other Mongolian commercial banks for the funding of gold mining projects worth 90 million USD. He is also a core member of NextGen Mongolia. He holds a BA in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2008).

**Mr. Almaz Saifutdinov (Tajikistan, Fall 2015)**, is a Economic/Commercial Advisor at the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan, where he is responsible for promoting U.S. commercial interests in the region. He is also Founder of the Economic News Tajikistan Facebook group. With over 6,000 members, including economists, business leaders and government officials, the group serves as a primary source of information and a discussion platform. Mr. Saifutdinov also serves as a member of the board at the Open Society Institute-Tajikistan. Prior to joining the U.S. Embassy in 2003, Mr. Saifutdinov worked as the Deputy Manager at the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development in Tajikistan. Mr. Saifutdinov holds a BA in English and

French languages from Dushanbe State Pedagogical University (1997) and a Master of Development Administration from Western Michigan University (2002). He is an author of numerous analytical articles on economic and commercial issues.

**Ms. Gunesh Bakgalova (Turkmenistan, Fall 2014)**, is working for the European Commission's project on budgeting reforms in the Ministry of Finance of Turkmenistan. Prior to her current position, she was a Senior Legal Counsel and Regulatory Compliance Manager at Schlumberger Corporation in Turkmenistan. Previously, Ms. Bakgalova worked for numerous national agencies, law firms, and international organizations including the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, the Ministry of Justice, the National Coordinating Unit of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, ABA Rule of Law Initiative in Turkmenistan, OSCE Center in Ashgabat, AK Counsel-SNR Denton, PPG Industries Inc. and Miller & Martin PLLC. Ms. Bakgalova holds a LLB from the School of Law & International

Economic Relations of the Turkmen State University (1999), a LLM from the Law School at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (2009), and a MA in Political Science from the Institute for European Politics in Berlin, Germany (2012).

**Dr. Alisher Abidjanov (Uzbekistan, Spring 2009)** is the Deputy Director of the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre of Developing the Innovational Methods for Teaching Foreign Languages under the Uzbekistan State University of World Languages. From 2003 to 2007, he served as a Program Coordinator at the University of Washington office in Tashkent. Dr. Abidjanov's research interests include theory of civil society, social changes in the transition period in Central Asia and political culture and the democratization process. Throughout the 2002-2003 academic year and spring of 2004, he was a visiting Research Professor at George Washington University and in spring 2005, he was a Visiting Scholar at Princeton University. From 2009 to 2010, Dr. Abidjanov was a Fulbright Scholar at SAIS at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C., and during the 2011-2012 academic year, he taught at Constantine the Philosopher University (Slovakia). In 2013, he established a private educational center. Dr. Abidjanov holds a BA, MA and PhD in Philosophy from the National University of Uzbekistan.