

The Spring 2018 Group of Rumsfeld Fellows Completes Program in Washington, D.C.

The Spring 2018 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 April 2 to May 11, 2018. The group included *Mr. Omaid Sharifi (Afghanistan)*, Co-Founder and President of ArtLords, a leading urban art management organization and movement in Afghanistan; *Ms. Arevik Anapioşyan (Armenia)*, Executive Director of the Institute of Public Policy; *Mr. Sarkhan Hashimov (Azerbaijan)*, Director General of Microsoft for Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan; *Ms. Ekaterina Gvelesiani (Georgia)*, Chairperson and Founder of Data Research, Analysis and Planning Center; *Ms. Tamuna Liluashvili (Georgia)*, Investment Adviser for Enterprise Georgia under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia; *Mr. Iskander Akybayev (Kazakhstan)*, Executive Director of the Kazakhstan Council on International Relations; *Mr. Yernar Zharkeshov (Kazakhstan)*, Chief Executive Officer and managing Partner at the Center for Strategic Initiatives, a management consulting firm; *Mr. Azim Azimov (Kyrgyzstan)*, public relations and political communications consultant and Founder and CEO of Media Kitchen, a media production company; *Ms. Khulan Davaadorj (Mongolia)*, Founder, Director and Chief Technologist of Natural Essentials LLC, an organic skincare line; *Mr. Farukh Sultonov (Tajikistan)*, Director of the Tajik Norwegian Centre for Sustainable Development and a Partner at Think Global, a Norway based consultancy firm; *Ms. Nurjemał Jalilova (Turkmenistan)*, Program Analyst on economic diversification, governance and inclusive growth at the UNDP Country Office in Turkmenistan; and *Mr. Bakhrom Radjabov (Uzbekistan)*, Policy Analyst at 'Bilig Brains' Central Asian Analytical Network and expert on political economy issues for the online media outlet www.redpen.uz.

The group had an intensive schedule of group meetings with representatives of the U.S. Administration, the U.S. Congress, business community, media, think tanks, academia and NGOs, as well as attended conferences, seminars and workshops at different institutions that helped them understand how opinion-making and policy-making work in Washington, D.C.



Fellows touring Northwestern University

The Spring 2018 group met with former U.S. Secretary of Labor and Secretary of Transportation *Senator Elizabeth Dole*; former U.S. National Security Advisor *Stephen Hadley*; former U.S. Secretary of Labor *Ann McLaughlin Korologos*; former U.S. Homeland Security Advisor *Frances Townsend*; former U.S. Ambassadors *Robert Blake, John Herbst, Richard Hoagland* and *Tom Miller*; Deputy Assistant to the President and the U.S. National Security Council's Senior Director for South and Central Asia *Lisa Curtis*; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs *Ambassador Elisabeth Millard*; former U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff *General Norton Schwartz*; as well as with members of the current Administration including representatives of the Departments of State and Defense, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, National Defense University, USAID, U.S. Small Business Administration, Open World Leadership Center and many others. The group was also hosted by the Ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan at their respective embassies in Washington, D.C.



Fellows with Stephen Hadley, Former National Security Advisor

In addition, the group had the opportunity to meet with business leaders and representatives of the media, think tanks, non-profits and other organizations including Editorial Page Editor of *The Washington Post Fred Hiatt*; CEO of arts organization Dupont Underground *Susan Corrigan*; Partner at global public strategy firm Mercury *Vincent Weber*; Chief Strategy Officer of 1776 *Penny Lee*; Corporate Officer and Vice President of International Governmental Affairs at Ford Motor Company *Stephen Biegun*; Executive Vice President of CSIS *Craig Cohen*; Founding Director of Georgetown Entrepreneurship Initiative *Jeff Reid*; CEO of Dog Tag Bakery *Meghan Ogilvie*; Partner of Hogan Lovells US LLP *Robert Bennett*; Resident Fellow of the American Enterprise Institute *Marc Thiessen*; Political commentator *Dr. Frank Luntz*; Director of Global Security Policy at Lockheed Martin *Anthony Aldwell*; leadership and staff at the Aspen Institute, Heritage Foundation, American Foreign Policy Council, Hudson Institute, Middle East Institute and others.

Since the fall of 2011, the Fellowship Program has partnered with the Open World Program to organize local programs with host communities outside of Washington, D.C. to help demonstrate American democracy on the grassroots level, how business and government work on the local level, and how people are empowered to take responsibility for themselves and others in their community. This fall the Fellows traveled to Asheville, North Carolina. The group then traveled to Chicago, Illinois where the program included meetings with leadership and representatives of *JP Morgan, the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, Boston Consulting Group, Bunker Labs* and a tour of the *American Writer's Museum*.



Fellows with Frances Townsend, Former Homeland Security Advisor

In the final weeks of their program, the Fellows made a presentation at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Forum on the *“Impact of Digital Connectivity on the Governance and Economies of CAMCA Countries.”*

The next group of Fellows will visit Washington, D.C. from October 1 to November 9, 2018. The winners of the Fellowship Program for the Fall 2018 session will be announced in September of 2018.



Fellows with Jeff Reid, Founding Director of Georgetown Entrepreneurship Initiative



Fellows and alumni at the Embassy of Afghanistan to the U.S.

Omaid Sharifi: “I was amazed at how well the Fellowship organizers took into consideration my unique personal and career interests in developing the program content. The six-week program in D.C. is just the beginning of many friendships and more concrete collaborations in our CAMCA region.”

Tamuna Liluashvili: “I am an ordinary person who has been blessed with extraordinary opportunities and experiences in life. This Fellowship has undoubtedly been one of those extraordinary experiences.”



Fellows with Senator Elizabeth Dole, former U.S. Secretary of Labor and Secretary of Transportation

Eka Gvelesiani: “A truly life-altering experience. This Fellowship has lifted us to another level having unveiled a new encouraging, regional dimension in our minds and having substantially advanced our leadership skills. The lifelong friendships formed after engaging with these extraordinary people during six unforgettable weeks adds even more value.”



Fellows with Douglas Conant, CEO of ConantLeadership and former CEO of Campbell's Soup Company

Bakhrom Radjabov: “The Fellowship Program was an exceptional opportunity to learn about U.S. foreign policy from those who design and implement it. Moreover, the Fellowship is a great chance for networking with like-minded young leaders and professionals from Greater Central Asia. An amazing and unique platform for communication and friendship!”

Khulan Davaadorj: “A truly unique program full of in-depth information gathering, high-level meetings, extensive knowledge, challenging moments and fun. The U.S. and the CAMCA region seem so much closer to me now through this experience and all that I have gained on a personal and professional level. I feel that it has enabled me to make better decisions toward creating positive change and impact in my own country.”

Sarkhan Hashimov: “I can’t say that this Fellowship will help us to complete the puzzle of our lives, but it is an important chapter to help shape our next steps. For those considering participation in the Fellowship, I want to encourage you to go for it and to benefit from this self-exploration in Washington, D.C.”



Fellows with Vicki Escarra, senior advisor at Boston Consulting Group and former CMO of Delta Airlines



Group Presentation at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Forum

Yernar Zharkeshov: “My experience participating in the Rumsfeld Fellowship Program has been a journey of discovery, genuine interest, intellectual curiosity, personal friendships and patriotism. I am confident that the personal friendships and fond memories of our time in the Program will last for many years to come.”



Fellows with Donald Rumsfeld, President of the Rumsfeld Foundation