

CAMCA FELLOWSHIP REPORT



SPRING 2023

The Spring 2023 group of CAMCA Fellows from Central Asia, Mongolia, the Caucasus and Afghanistan completed a six-week program of high-level meetings and research from March 21st-April 28th, 2023.

The Fellows had an intensive schedule of group meetings in Washington, D.C. with representatives of the U.S. government, business community, media, think tanks, academia and NGOs, as well as attended conferences at top institutions to better understand opinion-making and policy-making in the U.S. Fellows also traveled to Chicago, Illinois, South Bend, Indiana and Kalamazoo, Michigan for meetings with local government officials, businesses and organizations, gaining insights on American democracy beyond the nation's capital.

In the final week of their program Fellows collaborated to present on the topic of "Ripples from Russia's War in Ukraine" at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Forum for local professionals interested in the region.

SPRING 2023 FELLOWS

CAMCA Fellows represent some of the best and brightest rising leaders from the region. Fellows were selected for their demonstrated excellence and leadership within their professional fields and broader community, as well as for their commitment to promoting development, prosperity and cooperation in the CAMCA region.

Below are the 12 representatives who comprised the Spring 2023 cohort:

- **Mr. Mohibullah Noori (Afghanistan)** - Founder and President, Fajristan-Heart of Asia Nations Integration Movement
- **Ms. Arzula Elmi (Afghanistan)** - Senior Fellow, Afghanistan House
- **Mr. Areg Kochinyan (Armenia)** - President, Research Center on Security Policy, a think-tank that provides consultations on politics, security and other spheres of public life
- **Mr. Sanan Shabanov (Azerbaijan)** - Senior Investment Officer for the Central and West Asian Department of the Asian Development Bank, Azerbaijan Resident Mission
- **Ms. Nino Egadze (Georgia)** - Founder of Design Institute based in Tbilisi, Georgia
- **Ms. Laura Demessinova (Kazakhstan)** - Head of the Investor Relations Division at the National Welfare Fund "Samruk-Kazyna Trust"
- **Mr. Sovetbek Kachkynbaev (Kyrgyz Republic)** - Founder of Matsunoki, an eco-boutique hotel
- **Mr. Niyaz Irsaliev (Kyrgyz Republic)** - CEO, Unis-Kurulush LLC, a construction company that specializes in civil and industrial buildings
- **Ms. Nomin Dashnyam (Mongolia)** - Partner, MahoneyLiotta LLP, a leading law firm in Mongolia
- **Mr. Firdavs Mirzoev (Tajikistan)** - Co-Founder, Alif, a fintech company currently operating in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
- **Mr. Merdan Atayev (Turkmenistan)** - National Consultant, Development of Trade Facilitation Portal at the International Trade Center of the World Trade Organization; Finance Specialist at Gujurly Inzener Economic Company
- **Mr. Ulugbek Gulomov (Uzbekistan)** - Consultant, Agency for Strategic Reforms under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

MEETINGS

Spring 2023 Fellows met with top leaders including:

Clark Adams, Director, Central Asia Office,
U.S. Department of Defense
Amb. John Bolton, former National Security Advisor to the
President of the United States
Doug Conant, former CEO of Campbell Soup Company
Dr. JD Crouch II, former Deputy National Security Advisor to
President George W. Bush
Lawrence Di Rita, Greater Washington, D.C. Market
President for Bank of America
Dr. John Hamre, President and CEO of the Center for
Strategic and International Studies
Amb. Richard Hoagland, former U.S. Amb. to Tajikistan and
Kazakhstan
H.E. Khazar Ibrahim, Amb. of Azerbaijan to the U.S.
Donald Lu, Assistant Secretary of State for South and
Central Asia at the U.S. Department of State
H.E. Lilit Makunts, Amb. of Armenia to the U.S.
Erica Olson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Dr. Alexander Sokolovski, Deputy Assistant Coordinator,
Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, USAID
Amb. Kurt Volker, former U.S. Amb. to NATO

Fellows also met with representatives
from the following organizations and more:

American Foreign Policy Council
Atlantic Council
Blue Star Strategies
Caspian Policy Center
Center for International Private Enterprise
Foreign Policy Research Institute
Heritage Foundation
Hudson Institute
JP Morgan
McLarty Associates
Middle East Institute
Open World Leadership Center
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
University of Chicago
USAID
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Institute of Peace
U.S. International Development Finance Corporation
White & Case LLP
William Blair
World Bank



TESTIMONIALS

"The CAMCA Fellowship was an unforgettable journey that exposed me to a wealth of knowledge and diverse viewpoints.

It equipped me with the tools necessary to navigate the complexities of the world, shaping me into a more informed and capable global leader."
- Nino, Georgia

"A key feature of the Fellowship that I would like to highlight is its ability to soften the harshest and most critical viewpoints held by some, while sharpening the less acute views of others, by providing critical nuance and immersing participants into the realities of a life and experiences so different from what they are accustomed to." - Ulugbek, Uzbekistan

"The Fellowship was truly a unique experience for me and forced me out of my comfort zone. It also deepened my conviction that small nations surrounded by great and middle powers should strive to strengthen their own institutions and regional ties, rather than rely on other larger powers to come to their aid in their time of need. I am left with more questions than I had six weeks ago and for that I am thankful." - Nomin, Mongolia

"I personally found the policymaking process in the U.S. to be quite a unique and complex process, at least in comparison to what we have in our countries. The format of having open and friendly discussions with experts from various industries made it easier to better understand the interplay between numerous players involved in this process. It was also a great opportunity to make friends from all around the CAMCA countries. I hope this network will serve as a basis for further improvement of cooperation between the CAMCA countries in the years to come." - Firdavs, Tajikistan

"These six weeks were a great opportunity to grow, to meet new highly intellectual people and to learn about the United States. I would definitely advise mid-career professionals who are interested to have a deeper view on politics, international relations, civic society and global changes to participate in this program." - Laura, Kazakhstan

"The CAMCA Fellowship was very valuable, especially in understanding how foreign policy and diplomacy work in the U.S. and how partner countries should develop an effective strategy in Washington, D.C. given there are various layers of decision-making and policymaking. Despite that we were from different backgrounds, the speakers we met explained complex topics in a very effective way. The program provided me with a broad knowledge of international affairs, foreign policy, global security architecture and local governance in the U.S. among many other topics."
- Sanan, Azerbaijan





"This Fellowship is a one-of-a-kind and fruitful opportunity that expounds the true and complicated architecture of how policy planning and policy implementation happens in Washington, D.C.

After the six-week loaded schedule one has the chance to identify the main driving and braking forces in the political processes in U.S. The Fellowship creates a chance to develop your social capital to a level that you will need months if not years to be able to digest. It is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity for anyone to experience, to learn and of course to make new connections and friends." - Areg, Armenia

"The CAMCA Fellowship provided me with hope and a deeper understanding of both the CAMCA region and of U.S. policy."

- Mohibullah,
Afghanistan

"This Fellowship unites a vibrant community of rising leaders from CAMCA countries, each with their own unique perspectives and ideas. By exchanging these differences, we gain a deeper understanding of CAMCA's rich culture and diverse identity. The variety in perspectives along with the commonality of a desire for peace and stability in the region has made the program unique. Last but not least, what I found most fascinating about this program is that Fellows can freely discuss their ideas and thoughts. Being able to raise key issues and concerns of our respective countries with different institutions in the United States, a country which plays a vital role in promoting peace and stability in the CAMCA countries, adds another importance to this program." - Arzula, Afghanistan



ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The CAMCA Fellowship aims to encourage intraregional cooperation among the program countries as well as to foster stronger relations between the U.S. and the CAMCA region, and serves as a starting point for continued collaboration among the innovative regional leaders that comprise its alumni network.

Since its establishment in 2008, the Fellowship Program has hosted over 260 rising leaders from the region through 26 Fellowship sessions.