

CAMCA FELLOWSHIP REPORT



SPRING 2025

The Spring 2025 group of CAMCA Fellows from Central Asia, Mongolia and the Caucasus completed a five-week program of high-level meetings and research from March 24 to April 25, 2025.

In Washington, D.C., Fellows met with representatives of the U.S. government, business community, think tanks, consulting firms, media, academia and NGOs to learn about policy-making, entrepreneurship and innovation. For insights into economic development and accountable governance beyond the U.S. capital, the group also spent a week traveling across Huntsville, Alabama; Louisville, Kentucky; and Nashville, Tennessee.

SPRING 2025 FELLOWS

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

Below are the 10 representatives who comprised the Spring 2025 cohort:

- **Mr. Daniel Abdylidaev – Kyrgyz Republic** – Chief Investment Officer at Accelerate Prosperity, the largest startup accelerator in Central and South Asia
- **Mr. Undral Amarsaikhan – Mongolia** – Co-Founder and CEO of TenGer TV and Unread Media, the only media company listed on the Mongolian Stock Exchange
- **Ms. Yelena Gareyeva – Turkmenistan** – Logistics Coordinator for C5+O.N.E. at the American Councils for International Education and Founder of the SAGA Podcast
- **Mr. Rati Golijashvili – Georgia** – Managing Director of BioChimPharm, a Georgian-based biopharmaceutical company
- **Mr. Rufat Hasanov – Azerbaijan** – Award-winning film director and producer with over 15 years of experience in content creation, training and international consulting
- **Ms. Hokuma Karimova – Azerbaijan** – PR and Corporate Communications Director at NAR (Azerfon), a mobile telecommunications company
- **Mr. Tsogtbilguundari Khishigbat – Mongolia** – CEO and Co-Founder of unnu.news, an award-winning explanatory journalism startup
- **Mr. Nuriddin Lafizov – Tajikistan** – CEO of Alif Uzbekistan, a fintech company driving digital banking solutions across Central Asia
- **Ms. Assel Mussabekova – Kazakhstan** – Partner and Executive Director at Colliers Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
- **Mr. Davlat Umarov – Uzbekistan** – Director of Gazeta.uz, an independent online media outlet covering political, economic and social developments in Uzbekistan

MEETINGS

Spring 2025 Fellows met with top leaders including:

Ian Brzezinski, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Europe and NATO Policy
Victoria Clarke, Executive Vice President and Chief Public Affairs Officer, 3M; Rumsfeld Foundation Board President
Doug Conant, Founder and CEO, ConantLeadership
Dr. J.D. Crouch II, President and CEO, United Service Organization
H.E. Khazar Ibrahim, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to the U.S.
Dr. Arthur Laffer, Founder and Chairman, Laffer Associates
Gov. Bill Lee, Governor of Tennessee
Julian Mueller-Kaler, Director of the Strategic Foresight Hub in the Executive Office, Stimson Center
Thom Shanker, Former NYT Pentagon correspondent
Kurt Volker, Former U.S. Ambassador to NATO and Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations
Tommy White, Director, Veloric Center for Entrepreneurship, Kogod School of Business, American University
Andrew Wilson, Executive Director, Center for International Private Enterprise
Damon Wilson, President and CEO, National Endowment for Democracy

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

American Georgia Business Council
 American Foreign Policy Council
 Atlantic Council
 Becker Glynn
 Blue Star Strategies
 Council on Foreign Relations
 Columbia University
 Durion
 Foreign Policy Research Institute
 Gunster Strategies
 Halifax International Security Forum
 Heritage Foundation
 Hudson Institute
 Macro-Advisory
 McLarty Associates
 National Defense University
 Saratoga Foundation
 U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
 World Bank



GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE, BILL LEE

TESTIMONIALS

“More than just a front-row seat to American politics, the CAMCA Fellowship was a mirror and a lens – sharpening how I see our own region and widening how we imagine its future. I didn’t just learn about how D.C. works, I returned with a clearer vision of home.” - Davlat, Uzbekistan

“The Fellowship has been a paradigm-shifting experience! A truly exciting opportunity to witness how politics, business and media collide and collaborate in the beating heart of global affairs: Washington, D.C. Beyond the 50+ eye-opening meetings with world-class leaders, what surprised me most was discovering a new circle of lifelong friends – brilliant, like-minded, yet incredibly diverse, peers from different sectors across the CAMCA region and the U.S.

This program isn’t just about knowledge; it’s about unlocking a regional force of 300+ changemakers. The combination of this intensive learning program and access to its powerful network equips leaders not only with perspective, but with the tools to turn their visions into real impact.” - Rati, Georgia

“The CAMCA Fellowship gave us rare front-row seats to power, principle, and paradox – by witnessing history as it was being written. Diversity wasn’t just a feature of the program; it was its greatest strength, reflected in every conversation, background, and perspective. We learned as much from one another as we did from Washington’s finest minds. I walked away with sharper insights, deeper questions, and lasting connections. As a media entrepreneur, it reshaped how I understand influence – and how stories shape power.” - Undral, Mongolia

“What began as a schedule of meetings unfolded into, I believe, a beginning and first steps of a far-reaching journey. My time in D.C. was defined by five transformative weeks of bold ideas, deep discussions on foreign policy and strategy, and truly meaningful exchange. The CAMCA Fellowship didn’t just expand my horizons – it recalibrated my inner compass. The potential for purposeful, enduring cooperation within and beyond this remarkable network of alumni in the region with a shared vision is nothing short of inspiring.” - Assel, Kazakhstan

“I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the exceptional CAMCA Network. From key meetings in Washington, D.C. to deep discussions in the South, this experience offered priceless insights into the dynamic cultural diversity of the American people as well as the highest levels of policy-making in the country. It made me reevaluate how I think and made me realize how powerful cross-border human connection is.

As we proceed on after this program, the real impact begins now. I deeply appreciate the hard work of everyone involved in making this experience so enriching and impactful.” - Hokuma, Azerbaijan



U.S. SPACE AND ROCKET CENTER



"Without any exaggeration, this has been a truly life-changing experience - this program makes a meaningful contribution to strategic cooperation not only between the U.S. and the CAMCA region, but also among the CAMCA countries themselves. I firmly believe that as our region rises to become a global leader, we will be able to fully recognize the important impact this program had in building such a future." - Daniel, Kyrgyz Republic

"The program is a life-changing experience! It offers both valuable knowledge and connections throughout our vast region and the U.S. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be immersed in U.S. politics, economics and culture as a professional with a variety of unique perspectives on both current and historic processes. The Fellowship has inspired me in both my professional and personal endeavors!" - Yelena, Turkmenistan

"During these 5 weeks, I've made lifelong friends and have seen how America thinks, decides and works from the inside. I'm heading home inspired, full of new ideas and proud to join a regional network of amazing people." - Nuriddin, Tajikistan

"As a young Mongol, the CAMCA Fellowship has been nothing short of transformative. It helped me to gain a regional consciousness I always felt but didn't yet know how to define or access - reminding me that Mongolia stands at a crossroad not just geographically, but also historically and spiritually. The program definitely charged me for a lifelong pursuit to understand where we belong and what we can build as a connector between the worlds of today." - Tsogtbilguundari, Mongolia

"An intense, eye-opening journey into the intersections of U.S. diplomacy and culture, where emerging leaders gain firsthand insights into the forces shaping our world and build lifelong professional and personal connections."
- Rufat, Azerbaijan



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 program has now hosted over 300 rising leaders from the region through 30 Fellowship sessions.