

# RUMSFELD FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

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2025

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# WORDS FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

*Sarah C. Tonucci*

**SARAH TONUCCI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we begin a new year, we are proud to reflect on an important chapter for our Fellowship Programs, shaped by the leadership and initiative of the Fellows who animate them. To our partners, supporters and friends — longstanding and new — thank you for investing in a community that continues to show up in service.

This past year reaffirmed a core truth of our work: there is power in community, and meaningful advancements come when we build in partnership with the networks of truly remarkable individuals that we have been fortunate to have as our Fellows.

Across our Graduate Fellowship Program, Fellows drove the development of new initiatives, transforming their insights, curiosity and collaboration into opportunities for shared learning and growth. Prioritizing a focus on empowering our networks, we worked to shape our programming in response to their evolving interests, ambitions and expertise.

Within the CAMCA Fellowship, last year marked a significant milestone as we completed our 30<sup>th</sup> Fellowship session, hosting over 300 Fellowship participants since the program's start. Additionally, we were thrilled to see a number of impressive projects launched and funded by the Fellowship's alumni network, the CAMCA Network, taking the network's collaboration to a new and exciting level.

Together, these developments highlight the extraordinary talent, creativity and commitment of our Fellows, as well as the expanding impact of initiatives they champion. Looking ahead, we are motivated by the opportunity to deepen this approach — supporting new ideas, strengthening collaboration across networks and enabling our Fellows to turn their visions into action.

As we move forward, our mission remains: to foster leadership, public service, and free political and economic systems at home and abroad. We do so with confidence, knowing that our direction is guided by an engaged, thoughtful and service-driven community.

***Thank you again for being an important part of our work.***



# IMPACT SINCE 2007

**\$19.3M+**  
IN TOTAL GRANTS

**Mission:** *The Rumsfeld Foundation encourages leadership, public service and free political and economic systems at home and abroad. Across our focus areas, we are committed to providing opportunities for rising leaders, honoring service to nation and to promoting liberty.*



221  
GRADUATE FELLOWS



319  
CAMCA FELLOWS



11  
CAMCA FORUMS



24  
NETWORK CONFERENCES

# GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

We support a nationwide network of talented professionals selected for their demonstrated leadership, moral character and public service career aspirations. As members of the Graduate Fellowship Network, Fellows receive financial assistance during their graduate studies and are provided ongoing access to robust activities and resources designed to support them in their professional journeys. The network's year-round programming cultivates beneficial connections with like-minded colleagues committed to serving our nation and provides a platform to showcase members' expertise.

## 2025 FELLOWSHIP STATS



Following nominations made by our program Advisers teaching across the country, **7 new scholars** were accepted into the network in 2025. Fellows (at left at our annual conference) were selected for their demonstrated **leadership potential, commitment to public service, intellectual ability, moral character, academic achievements and civic contributions**. Their degree studies include fields ranging from international relations and security studies to public policy and statecraft.

With the addition of 2025's Fellowship class, our Graduate Fellowship Program has supported **221 Graduate Fellows** and awarded over **\$4.1 million** in grants since 2009.



## WHERE ARE OUR ALUMNI NOW?

Fellowship recipients go on to work in important public service posts benefiting our nation. Alumni worked in the following organizations across the past year:

Air War College  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Defense Intelligence Agency  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Federal Reserve Board  
Harvard University  
Idaho National Laboratory  
International Atomic Energy Agency  
NASA  
National Defense University

National Nuclear Security Administration  
Naval War College  
Office of the National Cyber Director  
Office of the Secretary of War  
U.S. Air Force  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. China Commission  
U.S. Congress  
U.S. Dept. of the Air Force  
U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

U.S. Dept. of Justice  
U.S. Dept. of State  
U.S. Dept. of Treasury  
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Dept. of War  
U.S. Embassies abroad  
U.S. Energy Info. Administration  
U.S. Navy  
U.S. Strategic Command  
and many more...



# 2025 NETWORK ACTIVITIES

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## ALUMNI LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Our network's leadership body helps us plan and develop network initiatives - voicing the network's interests and needs as we continue calibrating our strategic trajectory.

At the close of 2025 we welcomed **3** new members to the Leadership Council. We are eager to put their fresh perspectives and insights to good work in the coming year!

## 2025 SPRING RETREAT

In May, network members gathered in Annapolis, Maryland for our annual Spring Retreat. Events began with a discussion with a former Fellow on U.S. national security, deterrence and professional development. Participants then heard from Jim Hake, Founder and CEO of Spirit of America, who spoke on launching and leading a mission-driven organization, lessons in entrepreneurship and his experiences working alongside our nation's diplomats and service members.

Formal sessions concluded with sector-based breakout discussions, where participants addressed timely questions across their chosen fields.

Rounding out the evening, attendees enjoyed a scenic sunset cruise (photo below) on the Chesapeake Bay and dinner in the historic downtown.

## NETWORK CONNECT

Through our Network Connect mentorship initiative, we have now successfully matched **50** mentees with seasoned alumni in their fields of interest who have offered tailored guidance in career growth and professional development. We are grateful that so many leaders among our network have volunteered to pay their expertise forward!

## INITIATIVES & EVENTS

We hosted numerous events showcasing the diversity of professional expertise and specializations in the network. Two of these events included in-person gatherings focusing on Fellow-authored publications: one special report on the next decade of strategic competition and another, on a book about U.S. defense policy toward Israel.

We were also particularly excited to support a Fellow-led working session on sustaining the industrial base and labor force behind U.S. supply chains. This discussion was carried forward at the Annual Conference through a working-table session that drew new insights into a key question: *"What trades and skills are essential for securing America's place in the world?"* We look forward to seeing what comes from this continuing conversation.



# 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 18-19 - WASHINGTON, D.C.

Our Graduate Fellowship Network's 13th annual flagship gathering was another top highlight of the year.

Fellows and Advisers participated in a full lineup of productive sessions with seasoned experts and ample time for networking. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Retired General Richard Myers, offered keynote remarks on strategic leadership and the Foundation's Board participated in a panel discussion, "Reflecting on Rumsfeld's Rules," during which they shared leadership lessons from working closely with Sec. Rumsfeld.

Attendees also exchanged insights in collaborative roundtable discussions led by alumni and Advisers, exploring topics such as emerging defense technologies, lessons from history and the intersection of culture and politics, and the future of U.S. deterrence strategy.



A special element amidst this year's programming was a Welcoming Reception (pictured above) at the home of Foundation Board President Torie Clarke. Network attendees were joined by several former colleagues who had worked alongside Sec. Rumsfeld at the Department of Defense and beyond. Fellows and Advisers enjoyed this unique networking opportunity and it was a terrific tribute to our founder's lasting legacy and wide-reaching community.



At the Closing Dinner, the **2025 Alumna of the Year Award** was presented to **Theresa Campobasso** for her distinguished service to national security and her many contributions to the Fellowship Network, including service on our Alumni Leadership Council. The award ceremony included a video message from Theresa's nominator and a special tribute from the President of Exiger (pictured together below) who offered heartfelt remarks recognizing Theresa's exceptional impact at Exiger and beyond. Read more on our awardee's outstanding accomplishments in our [2025 award feature blog post](#).





# CAMCA FELLOWSHIP

*We bring exceptional rising leaders from **Central Asia, Mongolia, the Caucasus and Afghanistan (CAMCA)** to the U.S. for a high-level, intensive exchange experience designed to forge enduring personal and professional connections among its participants. The 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.*



## 2025 FELLOWSHIP STATS

The 2025 Fellows participated in over **100** meetings in Washington, D.C. and dozens more throughout their travels to **7** cities where they learned about governance and economic development at the local level: Burlington, Vermont; Manchester, New Hampshire; Boston, Massachusetts; New York City, New York; Huntsville, Alabama; Louisville, Kentucky; and Nashville, Tennessee.

**After hosting our two Fellowship cohorts in 2025, we have now supported 319 CAMCA Fellows through 31 Fellowship sessions in partnership with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the American Foreign Policy Council.**

## 2025 FELLOWS

CAMCA Fellows represent the next generation of leaders dedicated to regional connectivity from the **10 CAMCA countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.**

### 2025 Fellows held the following positions:

- Founding Director of a think tank dedicated to advancing access to digital education
- Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer for one of the largest platforms of former and current heads of state
- Co-Founder and CEO of a pioneering music and arts festival and Public Fund
- CEO of one of Mongolia's largest NGOs
- Award-winning film director and producer
- Managing Director of a biopharmaceutical company
- Partner and Executive Director at Colliers Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
- CIO of the largest startup accelerator in Central and South Asia
- CEO and Co-Founder of an award-winning explanatory journalism startup
- CEO of a leading fintech company driving digital banking solutions across Central Asia
- Director of an Uzbek independent online media outlet

## 2025 PROGRAM MEETINGS

Fellows met with top leaders including:

- Senator Steve Daines, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation
- Carlos Gutierrez, Former Sec. of Commerce
- Danica Starks, Advisor to the U.S. Executive Director of the World Bank
- Soofian Zuberi, Global Head of Equities, Chairman & CEO, Bank of America Securities
- Doug Conant, Founder and CEO, ConantLeadership
- Amb. Kurt Volker, Former U.S. Amb. to NATO
- Gov. Bill Lee, Governor of Tennessee
- Andrew Wilson, Executive Director, Center for International Private Enterprise
- Damon Wilson, President and CEO, National Endowment for Democracy
- Dr. J.D. Crouch II, Former U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor



A special highlight of our Spring 2025 Fellows' program was a visit with Sec. Rumsfeld's longtime friend and renowned economist, Dr. Art Laffer, in Nashville, TN. (Pictured above.)

***Thank you to all of our friends and partners who met with the 2025 Fellows!***

## CAMCA NETWORK

The Fellowship's alumni group, the **CAMCA Network**, organizes year-round network events and activities, and manages joint projects focused on regional cooperation.

This year the network's sector working groups convened **14** times to further projects advancing regional cooperation, and the network's board approved funding for several interesting regional projects including a digital magazine which is featured on pg. 9.

Hosted alongside the 2025 CAMCA Regional Forum in Ulaanbaatar, the network's annual in-person meeting included country updates from each country team, updates from the working groups and specific initiatives, and finally the annual Alumni Award presentations. The CAMCA Academic Consortium (another network-led initiative) also organized the 3rd ESTEC Conference focused on climate resilience.

In addition, in February a delegation of 35 network members continued the network's engagement with the UAE business community at Investopia 2025 in Abu Dhabi where they conducted a panel and represented the CAMCA Network as an official partner of this major international event. (Pictured below.)





# CAMCA REGIONAL FORUM

JUNE 2025  
ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA

As part of our efforts to encourage intraregional cooperation among the CAMCA countries and to support and engage our CAMCA Fellowship's alumni network, the Foundation annually organizes the CAMCA Regional Forum in partnership with the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the CAMCA Network.



The **2025 CAMCA Regional Forum** was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia over June 19th-20th, convening over **350** attendees from **20** countries to discuss key regional issues and developments surrounding the Forum theme, “**Envisioning a Regional Future: Business, Society and Governance in CAMCA.**”

Keynote speakers included the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia; the Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia; the Director of External Affairs of the Green Climate Fund; and the U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia. Other speakers represented top industry leaders and experts from organizations like the IFC, EBRD, CSIS, AIFC, Oyu Tolgoi, Big Sky Capital VC, National Defense University, Badrakh Energy and many more. Representatives of 16 regionally focused companies also participated in the Forum's Business Expo, showcasing their unique products and initiatives across the CAMCA region.

## FORUM PRESS COVERAGE:

*“The second pillar is soft-power networking through the Central Asia–Mongolia–Caucasus–Afghanistan (CAMCA) Forum...CAMCA has become the region’s main gathering for next-generation policymakers, entrepreneurs and scholars. Its rotating meetings champion ideas such as a regional travel visa, digital customs systems and shared green finance schemes – reframing Mongolia not as a peripheral bystander but as an essential tenth stakeholder alongside its Central Asian and Caucasus peers.”*  
– The Astana Times





## 2025 NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

### FELLOWSHIP NETWORKS - Holiday Reception at the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Washington, D.C.

The Embassy of Azerbaijan generously co-hosted our annual Holiday Reception where members of both of our Fellowship Networks gathered at the Embassy to toast to another terrific year! In addition, the reception also celebrated the upcoming CAMCA Regional Forum which will be held in Baku in June of 2026. We were pleased to introduce our Foundation friends and Graduate Fellows to one of our longtime partners.

We are incredibly grateful for the Embassy's continued partnership and hospitality over many years now - regularly hosting many of our CAMCA Fellowship cohorts for receptions and embracing our mission of regional cooperation.

(Picture at top.)

### CAMCA NETWORK - "CAMCA Talking" E-magazine Launch

Founded by CAMCA Network members, Aizhan Zhintayeva, Fidan Husseyinli and Laura Demessinova, **CAMCA Talking** magazine was launched in the fall of 2025 featuring insights from regional experts and changemakers and highlighting stories of collaboration, innovation and leadership shaping the region's future. *CAMCA Talking* represents the voice of a new regional generation and is the sole magazine about the region and from the region - an intellectual platform that unites CAMCA's diverse voices, stories and perspectives. Two issues were released in 2025, featuring articles by **25+** Fellows thus far - we look forward to their future issues! Read them at: [camcanetwork.com](http://camcanetwork.com).





# SUPPORTING OUR WORK

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## TO OUR DONORS

Through your generosity, you are investing in the future leaders of the U.S. and the CAMCA region. **THANK YOU** for supporting our programs and their journeys.

## YOUR IMPACT

*"The opportunity and privilege to be a member of this network has given me the blessing of a strong and supportive foundation which has translated into academic and professional success."*

- Graduate Fellow

*"The Fellowship has been a paradigm-shifting experience...it equips leaders not only with perspective, but with the tools to turn their visions into real impact."*

- CAMCA Fellow

**Interested in supporting our work?**  
**Tax-deductible contributions can be made online or mailed by check.**

## \$1.2 MILLION+

In profits from Don Rumsfeld's projects - his memoir, *Known and Unknown*, the Churchill Solitaire app and his last book, *When the Center Held* - have benefitted our programs.

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