CAMCA FELLOWSHIP REPORT



FALL 2026

CAMCA FELLOWSHIP

The Fall 2026 group of CAMCA Fellows from Central Asia, Mongolia, the Caucasus and Afghanistan completed a five-week program of high-level meetings and research from October 13 to November 13, 2026.

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 to Reno, Nevada and Denver, Colorado, in partnership with the Congressional Office for International Leadership; and Salt Lake City, Utah in partnership with the Stirling Foundation.

2026 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 Fall 2026 cohort:

- **Mr. Mustafa Aryan – Afghanistan –** President of the Toronto Branch of the Canadian International Council
- **Ms. Ani Avetisyan – Armenia –** The Caucasus Correspondent for Bloomberg
- **Mr. Hovhannes Harutyunyan – Armenia –** Program Director at the National Democratic Institute in Armenia
- **Mr. Rusif Huseynov – Azerbaijan –** Founding Director of Topchubashov Center, a Baku-based think tank
- **Ms. Mariam Koyava – Georgia –** Founder and Managing Partner of SavvY, a business consulting and investment advisory firm
- **Ms. Laura Vaigorova – Kazakhstan –** Co-Founder and CEO of Smartestprep Ltd., an AI-powered university admissions and career guidance platform
- **Mr. Chubak Temirov – Kyrgyz Republic –** Deputy Director of the High Technology Park (HTP) of the Kyrgyz Republic and a technology ecosystem builder
- **Ms. Tana Jambaldorj – Mongolia –** Strategy and policy advisor specializing in long-term development policy and intersectoral coordination
- **Ms. Muna Shukurova – Tajikistan –** Fintech executive and digital finance leader serving as Managing Director of Alif Uzbekistan
- **Mr. Abbos Djurabaev – Uzbekistan –** Senior banking, capital markets, and corporate finance executive currently serving on the Supervisory Board of ApexBank

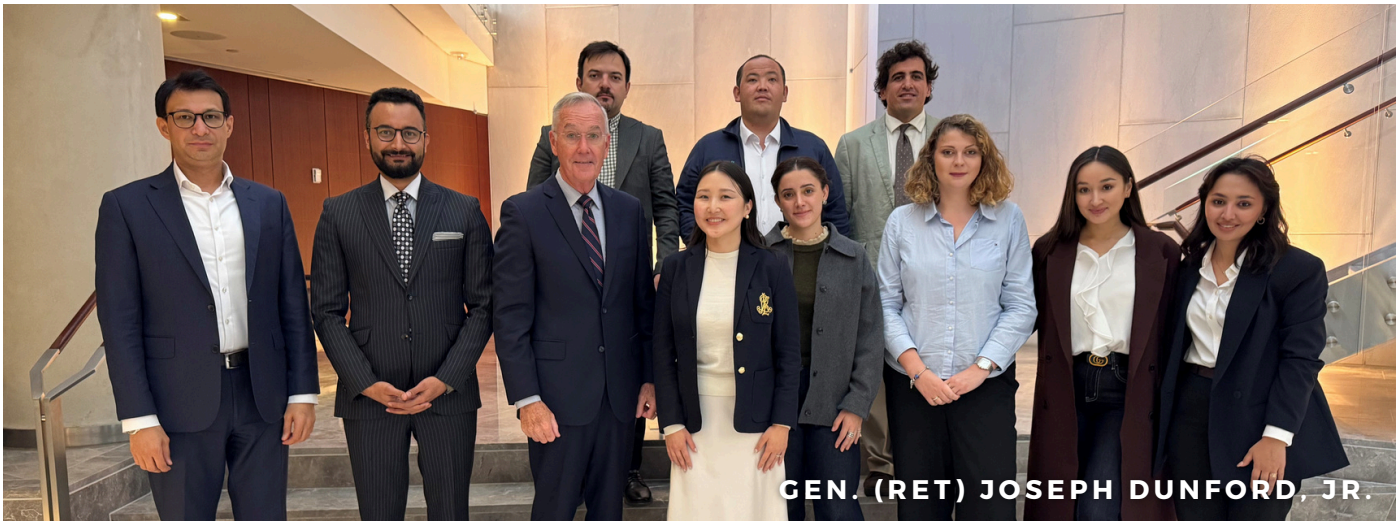
MEETINGS

2026 Fellows met with top leaders including:

Peter Andreoli, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, U.S. Dept. of State
Marc Cameron, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, U.S. Dept. of State
Victoria Clarke, Rumsfeld Foundation Board President
Allen Collinsworth, Owner, The Times of Central Asia
Dr. J.D. Crouch II, Managing Director, Global Strategy, Gallagher
Gen. (ret.) Joseph Dunford Jr., CEO, CSIS; and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Fiona Hill, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center on the United States and Europe, Brookings Institution
Patryk Loszewski, Executive Director of Central Asia, World Bank
Megan Ortiz, President, The Cohen Group
Daniel Pink, Author, Speaker, YouTuber and Playwrite
Herman Pirchner, President, American Foreign Policy Council
Amb. Philip Reeker, Partner and Practice Lead for Europe & Eurasia, DGA-Albright Stoneridge Group
Dr. S. Frederick Starr, Chairman, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute
Keith Urbahn, Founder & President, Javelin
Ambassador Kurt Volker, Managing Director and Co-Chair of the Advisory Board, BGR Group
Dr. Dov Zakheim, Senior Fellow, CNA Corporation

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

America Georgia Business Council
American Foreign Policy Council
Atlantic Council
Becker Glynn
Blue Star Strategies
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity
Center for International Private Enterprise
Congressional Office for International Leadership
Council on Foreign Relations
Delphi Global Research Center
Hudson Institute
Gunster Strategies Worldwide
Johns Hopkins University
Middle East Institute
Morning Star Global Enterprises
StrategEast
The Saratoga Foundation
The Stimson Center
University of Pennsylvania
U.S. International Development Finance Corporation
U.S. Naval Postgraduate School



GEN. (RET) JOSEPH DUNFORD, JR.

TESTIMONIALS

"The CAMCA Fellowship turns access into insight: Fellows step inside the conversations shaping policy and see their own region with fresh eyes. They leave with sharper perspectives, lasting ties across borders, and a shared sense of what they can build together."

- Mustafa, Afghanistan

"Beyond the amazing meetings and experiences, the most valuable thing I am taking away from this Fellowship is undoubtedly the friendships I have built. In just five weeks, a group of people from different countries and backgrounds became genuine friends, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have been part of it.

I truly believe these friendships will last for many years, and that we will continue to stay close, support one another, share opportunities, and be valuable friends and partners in the future. To me, this is perhaps the greatest success of the Fellowship: not only bringing exceptional people together, but creating genuine friendships and meaningful connections that will continue to grow long after the program ends." - Mariam, Georgia

"I came to the CAMCA Fellowship expecting to learn more about American policymaking, but left with something much bigger: a deeper understanding of my own region and the people who are shaping its future. The Fellowship proved once again that the CAMCA region's future lies within its borders and that its future will be shaped by the locals, not foreign powers." - Ani, Armenia

"We came as 10 countries. We left as one region with a voice in Washington. Between think tanks, embassies and late-night debates, strangers became partners, and a map of separate states turned into a shared story we're now writing together." - Laura, Kazakhstan

"The CAMCA Fellowship both broadened and deepened my knowledge on U.S. foreign policy, global geopolitics, and regional dynamics. In doing so, it pushed me out of my learned frame of thinking in so many ways. Experiencing this at such a dynamic moment in global history has been a privilege." - Tana, Mongolia

"It took a trip across the Atlantic for some of my closest neighbors to feel closer. From Washington to Denver and Salt Lake City, the CAMCA Fellowship gave us five weeks to talk about the changing world and what we want to build in our part of it." - Hovo, Armenia



DR. DOV ZAKHEIM

CAMCA FELLOWSHIP



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

"History feels different when you are close enough to hear the conversations shaping its next chapter. At a moment of profound geopolitical uncertainty, the CAMCA Fellowship allowed me to see American foreign policy through the eyes of those who help craft it, revealing a fascinating distance between how decisions are understood in Washington and how they are perceived in our region. It was a powerful reminder that understanding the world requires the courage to look at it from the other side of the map." - Mariam, Georgia

"The program brought together motivated young professionals from across the region and gave us a space to exchange ideas, challenge assumptions, and build lasting connections." - Abbos, Uzbekistan


MEGAN ORTIZ
PRESIDENT, THE COHEN GROUP

"It is easier to imagine a shared future when you know the people you might build it with. The CAMCA Fellowship gave me five weeks to learn from their experience, understand what they are working to change, and see what we could achieve together for our region." - Muna, Tajikistan

"From the very first day to the closing session, I kept feeling that this program had been designed with someone like me in mind. Few experiences offer such an extraordinary opportunity to move between the worlds of policymakers, diplomats, former officials, and leading think-tankers, engaging not only with the decisions shaping the world but with the minds behind them. Washington gave me more than a front-row seat to the workings of power – it gave me new lenses through which to understand my own region and its place in the world." - Rusif, Azerbaijan


AMB. KURT VOLKER


FIONA HILL

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 hosted 329 rising leaders from the region through 32 Fellowship sessions.

FELLOWSHIP ORGANIZERS

RUMSFELD FOUNDATION

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute