

CAMCA FELLOWSHIP REPORT



SPRING 2024

The Spring 2024 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 19 to April 25, 2024.

In Washington, D.C., Fellows met with representatives of the U.S. government, business community, think tanks, academia and NGOs to learn about policy-making, entrepreneurship and innovation. Fellows also traveled to Norfolk and Williamsburg, Virginia, experiencing American history and cultural life beyond the nation's capital.

Culminating their Fellowship experience, the group delivered their cohort presentation, "Advancing Digital Interconnectivity in the CAMCA Region", at a Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Forum for local professionals interested in the region.

SPRING 2024 FELLOWS

CAMCA Fellows represent some of the best and brightest rising leaders from the region. Fellows are 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 11 representatives who comprised the Spring 2024 cohort:

- **Mr. Karlen Aslanyan (Armenia)** – Senior Multimedia Journalist and Broadcaster at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Armenian Service
- **Ms. Zhala Azizova (Azerbaijan)** – Head of Corporate Communications and PR at Veyseloglu Group of Companies, a consumer goods company
- **Ms. Diana Charyyeva (Turkmenistan)** – Project Manager at the International Organization for Migration
- **Mr. Azizbek Kurbonov (Uzbekistan)** – Co-Founder & Co-CEO of Sug'urta Bozor, an insurTech company
- **Ms. Byambakhand Luguusharav (Mongolia)** – Policy Director of EuroChamber Mongolia
- **Ms. Metra Mehran (Afghanistan)** – Gender and Policy Advisor for the Strategic Litigation Project at the Atlantic Council
- **Dr. Mohbonu Nakhatzoda (Tajikistan)** – National Coordinator at the Erasmus+ Tajikistan Office
- **Mr. Abaceen Nasimi (Afghanistan)** – Founder and Executive Director of Duran Research and Analysis, a research and political risk analysis firm
- **Ms. Maia Omiadze (Georgia)** – Head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration
- **Mr. Tilek Toktogaziev (Kyrgyz Republic)** – Chairman of the Kyrgyz Association of Berry Growers
- **Mr. Sanzhar Zhamalov (Kazakhstan)** – Head of the Kazakh representative office of ING Bank N.V.

MEETINGS

Spring 2024 Fellows met with top leaders including:

Stephen Biegun, Senior Vice President of Global Public Policy at Boeing and former U.S. Deputy Sec. of State

Dr. Evelyn Farkas, Executive Director of the McCain Institute and former U.S. Deputy Assistant Sec. of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia

Amb. John Herbst, Director, Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center, Atlantic Council, former U.S. Amb. to Uzbekistan & Ukraine

Doug Conant, former CEO of Campbell Soup Company

Tina Khidasheli, former Minister of Defense of Georgia

Donald Lu, U.S. Assistant Sec. of State for South & Central Asia

Thom Shanker, Director of the Project for Media & National Security and former New York Times Pentagon correspondent

Victoria Clarke, Executive Vice President & Chief Public Affairs Officer at 3M and Rumsfeld Foundation Board President

Amb. Kurt Volker, President, Alliance Strategic Advisors, LLC and Distinguished Fellow at CEPA, former U.S. Amb. to NATO

Danica Starks, Advisor to the U.S. Executive Director and Senior U.S. Commercial Liaison to the World Bank

Amb. Temuri Yakobashvili, former Amb. of Georgia to the U.S.

Dr. Dov Zakheim, Senior Fellow, CNA Corporation and former U.S. Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)

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

American Foreign Policy Council
 American University Veloric Center
 Bank of America
 Blue Star Strategies
 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
 Center for International Private Enterprise
 Center for Naval Analyses
 College of William & Mary
 Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies
 Eurasia Foundation
 Gunster Strategies
 Halifax International Security Forum
 Heritage Foundation
 Javelin
 Middle East Institute
 Partnership for Public Service
 U.S. Institute of Peace
 U.S.-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce
 U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
 World Bank



TESTIMONIALS

“This immersive journey through the vibrant landscape of Washington, D.C. has not only deepened my appreciation for the intricacies of policymaking, but has also equipped me with a nuanced understanding that will undoubtedly propel my professional endeavors forward.”

- Diana, Turkmenistan

“The CAMCA Fellowship spurred a huge transformation in my life. I have discovered and now understand U.S. foreign policy, discovered my neighboring countries, and most importantly - I discovered myself. I am grateful for this opportunity that has broadened my vision. Now I understand that we are unique, but at the same time, we are one piece of a broader picture, CAMCA.” - Zhala, Azerbaijan

“Six weeks of self-development, connections, and friendships that will follow each participant for a long time. Six weeks that will take you to the next level - you will become a confident leader, get to know Washington inside and out, network with real professionals, and envision new ways to reform your own country.” - Karlen, Armenia

“The program expanded my ‘picture of the world.’ Through dialogues with experts in various organizations and industries, I realized that the CAMCA countries may not be just an object in a big geopolitical game, but as a united region, they have the potential to become one of the most important actors on the global stage. Embracing the program’s spirit of regional collaboration over these wonderful six weeks in Washington, D.C. was an important first step toward this goal.” - Tilek, Kyrgyz Republic

“In the high-level meetings throughout the Fellowship, I wish I had had a USB drive in my brain and a couple of extra ears to capture every invaluable word spoken. Each session was packed with insights and experiences from brilliant professionals from developed countries, offering us – emerging leaders from developing nations – rich learning opportunities.” - Mohbonu, Tajikistan

“I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Fellowship’s organizers for facilitating an unparalleled experience. Interacting with a diverse cohort has not only expanded my understanding of global issues, but has also enriched my cultural awareness. Rubbing shoulders with esteemed speakers has been both humbling and inspiring, providing invaluable insights and fostering meaningful connections.” - Diana, Turkmenistan

“If you want to get to know the narratives in the U.S., this is the right program for you.”
- Abaceen, Afghanistan





“The CAMCA Fellowship established a collaborative platform for discussing and planning sustainable initiatives critical to fostering regional cooperation. The organizers provided an environment where participants could engage without judgment, encouraging the free exchange of ideas. Over the course of the program, we adopted a broader regional perspective, recognizing the unique role each of us plays. This shift from a narrow, self-serving outlook to a genuine regional mindset is a significant achievement.”
- Azizbek, Uzbekistan

“The CAMCA Fellowship marked a pivotal moment in my intellectual journey.”
- Maia, Georgia

“Participating in this program made me realize that, despite being landlocked, Mongolia shares many common values with other nations such as the value of democracy and human rights. Moreover, it was particularly enlightening to observe these democratic principles in action in the United States, where decision-makers, practitioners, and opinion leaders openly acknowledge their mistakes and willingly share best practices.” - Byambakhand, Mongolia

“During our active participation in sessions, I had the privilege of engaging with a cohort of distinguished experts. Their insights, resembling compass points, guided me through the multifaceted terrain of global geopolitics. These detailed meetings broadened my cognitive perspective, fostering a nuanced understanding of the intricate world stage.” - Maia, Georgia



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 288 rising leaders from the region through 28 Fellowship sessions.