

**Rising Experts Program
Member Directory
2017-2018**



Talin Baghdadian recently graduated from Georgetown University with a Master of Science in Foreign Service. During the two-year program she concentrated in International Development taking classes in its theory and practice. Geographically her area of interest is Eurasia, specifically the South Caucasus countries. During the summer of 2016, Talin worked in Tbilisi, Georgia with Elva, an organization dedicated to technologically innovative solutions to data gathering and analysis. Immediately prior to the start of her Master's studies, Talin conducted a three-month independent research project in Yerevan, Armenia focusing on the South Caucasus states and their respective relationships with Russia and the EU. Additionally, her professional experience includes working at the EastWest Institute, primarily in their Global Cyberspace Cooperation Initiative. Talin holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from George Washington University. She speaks English and Armenian natively, French fluently, and Russian conversationally.



Joshua Bartlett is an International Trade Specialist at the U.S. Department of Commerce, specializing in the trade relationship between the U.S. and the nations of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. His past research has focused on the New Silk Road/Belt and Road Initiative, ethnic conflict in the South Caucasus, and EU relations with the nations of the Eastern Partnership. He has over four years of experience on the ground in the former Soviet Union, having served in the Peace Corps in Azerbaijan and worked for the American Chamber of Commerce in Uzbekistan. He holds a B.S. in International Relations from Indiana Wesleyan University and a Masters in Global Policy Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. He speaks Turkish, Azerbaijani, and Uzbek.

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Madina Bizhanova is currently pursuing an M.A. in Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies and the Landegger Honors Certificate in International Business Diplomacy at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, where she is also a Graduate Research Fellow. Madina graduated from Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan summa cum laude with a B.A. in History and minors in Political Science and Economics in May 2016. This past summer, Madina worked as a research assistant to Dr. Harley Balzer, Associate Professor of Government and International Affairs at Georgetown University, on the latest dynamics of cooperation/competition between Russia, China and Kazakhstan. She is particularly interested in the role of private sector, foreign direct investment and multilateral financial institutions in the economic development and democratization of Russia and the Central Asian states.



George Bogden is a Research Associate in the Office of Walter Russell Mead at the Hudson Institute. During the last year of his doctoral studies, he served as a Fulbright Public Policy Fellow in Kosovo. In January, George successfully defended his D.Phil. dissertation in international relations at the University of Oxford, where he was awarded a Clarendon Scholarship. Before beginning his graduate studies, he received his B.A. in political science from Yale, serving as the university's Fox International Fellow in Istanbul the following year.



Amanda N. Brown is a Policy Assistant at Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, Schreck, supporting the firm's international portfolio. She is the Transatlantic Security Program Director at the Young Professionals in International Affairs (YPIA), where she facilitates cultural engagement, dialogue, and discussion surrounding the security concerns of the transatlantic alliance. She received her MSc in International Conflict and Cooperation at the University of Stirling, and subsequently pursued a regional specialization in East European/Eurasian Studies at Indiana University's Russian and East European Institute. Amanda's research interests include: EU expansion into the Western Balkans and post-Soviet space, nationalist narratives, far-right parties, and NATO-Russia relations.

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Joniel Cha is a second-year Master of Arts Candidate at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) where he is concentrating in International Economics and Energy, Resources & Environment. Prior to his enrollment at SAIS, Mr. Cha worked in Ukraine in 2014-2015 on anti-corruption and constitutional reform with Transparency International in Kyiv and on humanitarian aid and resettlement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Donetsk. He also lived in Post-Soviet Central Asia for 10 years: Uzbekistan 2000-2006 and Kyrgyzstan 2006-2010. Mr. Cha holds a Bachelor's degree in Leadership & Public Policy and in Foreign Affairs with a concentration on Europe from the University of Virginia.



Jaime Cordes is the Program Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia on the Human Rights team at the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, Vital Voices Global Partnership. In this position, she supports the organization's programming on gender-based violence, providing regional and linguistic expertise for Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Prior to joining Vital Voices, Jaime recruited high school exchange students for the FLEX and YES scholarship exchange programs in Southeast Europe with American Councils for International Education. She also spent several years living in Eastern Europe while serving as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Russia, a Boren Fellow to Serbia, and a volunteer English teacher in Ukraine. Jaime holds a B.A. in Russian and Anthropology from the University of Notre Dame and an M.A. in Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. She speaks Russian and Serbo-Croatian and hosts a weekly radio program on Eastern European music for WERA-LP 96.7 in Arlington.



Alexis Corn is a staff assistant at Innovative Federal Strategies (IFS), a Washington-based federal government relations firm that focuses on guiding clients through the complex authorization and appropriations processes in Congress. With an emphasis on defense and cybersecurity, she works with her colleagues to ensure that clients' goals and needs are met through outreach to the executive and legislative branches. In 2015, Alexis graduated from Mount Holyoke College with a major in International Relations and a minor in Russian and Eurasian Studies. Alexis came to IFS with a background in both government and foreign relations, having worked on the Hill, at a government relations consulting firm, and for the American Interest, a foreign policy magazine.



Vladislav Cuiujuclu is a freelance translator and researcher. He holds a B.A. in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. He has interned with the Center on Global Interests, working on a project called “Who’s Who in Trump’s America?”. His research interests include separatism in Russia and the former Soviet Union, linguistic and ethnic divisions in Eastern Europe, as well as resolution of Post-Soviet 'frozen conflicts'. Vlad is fluent in English, Russian and Romanian.



Claire Haffner is a Masters candidate at the European University at St. Petersburg specializing in Political Science and Russian and Eurasian Studies with a focus on historical memory and memory politics. She is also pursuing a Masters in Russian language at the Middlebury Davis School of Russian. As a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant she taught at Penza State University and presented academic papers at conferences in Penza and Ulyanovsk. She has also worked and studied in Spain, and is fluent in Russian and Spanish. She graduated with honors from the University of Chicago with a B.A. in Slavic Languages and Literatures. Her current research interests include the portrayal of the U.S. and Russia in each other’s media, security dilemmas in Eurasia, Russian foreign policy, and the memorialization of WWII in post-Soviet space.



Erik Khzmalyan is an M.A. candidate in Statecraft and National Security Affairs with an emphasis on Public Diplomacy and Strategic Influence at the Institute of World Politics (IWP). Prior to his enrollment at IWP, Mr. Khzmalyan worked on Capitol Hill and later transitioned to a DC-based political consulting firm. Currently Mr. Khzmalyan is a Senior Fellow at the Eurasian Research and Analysis (ERA) Institute where he performs analysis on the geopolitical developments in Eurasia and directs the Institute's podcast project. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Southwest Minnesota State University.



Aaron Korenewsy Aaron Korenewsy is a consultant with the World Bank Group. Prior to that, he interned with the U.S.-Russia Business Council and worked as a legal assistant at Goldstein & Associates, a D.C. law firm specializing in oil and natural gas pipeline regulation. Aaron graduated in June 2016 from the M.A. in Public Policy program at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary, having written his thesis on the Kremlin's justification behind the Russian military intervention in Syria. He also holds an M.A. in Nationalism Studies from CEU and a B.A. in Political Science and Russian and Eastern European Studies from Tufts University. Aaron's research interests are primarily focused on media, popular culture, and nationalism in post-Soviet Russia and Belarus, with a particular emphasis on the cult of the Great Patriotic War.



Ingrid Korsgard is a second year Master of Science candidate in Development Management at American University's School of International Service. In 2013 Ingrid earned a B.A. in Russian Studies at Macalester College for which she studied for a year in Irkutsk, Russia. After graduation she researched migrant health issues in Russia as a fellow for the Eurasia Foundation's Social Expertise Exchange. Her other professional experiences are in youth development and cultural exchange with organizations in North and South America. Since coming to AU in 2016 she has held internships with the Eurasia Foundation and the Center for Energy, Natural Resources, and Geopolitics in DC as well as with an investment firm in Tbilisi, Georgia. After completing her M.S. program Ingrid hopes to work in monitoring and evaluation to maximize beneficiary impact of development projects. Her interests include data as a tool of development, youth empowerment, and cross-cultural exchange. She speaks Spanish and Russian.

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Katya Kuichik is currently an administrative assistant at Eurasia Foundation where she supports the work of Business Development & Administration departments as well as provides programmatic support to Young Professionals Network. Before joining EF, she interned in Fundraising Department at American Councils on International Education. She holds a B.A. in Global Affairs from George Mason University and is back to GMU pursuing her master's degree. Katya is native Russian speaker. Her current interests include Russia's domestic policy and Russia's relations with US and EU.



James Liska is a public policy and government affairs professional at The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. For almost five years, he managed a variety of academic public policy and lobbying programs which immersed undergraduate students in the Washington, D.C. political and foreign policy landscapes. Much of his work took him to Capitol Hill for meetings with Members of Congress and staff, but also to various think tanks and business councils to help expose international students and visiting scholars to policymakers and thought leaders. He also supported a variety of two-week programs including seminars on cybersecurity, political media, government transparency, and international affairs. James holds a Bachelor's Degree in Russian Area Studies from Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, and a Public Policy Certificate from the National Institute for Lobbying and Ethics in Fairfax, VA. His undergraduate thesis focused on the role of the Catholic Church on 20th century labor movements in Soviet-controlled Poland. James speaks Russian and Spanish, and is working on learning Polish.



Jackie Mahler is a second year M.A. candidate at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), where she is concentrating in International Economics and Russian and Eurasian Studies with a minor in Strategic Studies. She earned her B.A. in International Relations and French from Tulane University in New Orleans. Jackie started her career in 2015 as the Eurasia intern at the Center for International Policy (CIP) and has since held positions at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) where she was the Project Assistant for Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Most recently, Jackie worked in Warsaw, Poland for the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM) as an intern analyst for the European Union Programme. Her research interests are in defense and security in the region, including foreign defense acquisitions and disputed territories. She speaks Russian and French.

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Asim V. Manizada is an eCrime Investigator/Security Engineer at Facebook, where he works on a range of issues involving cyber crime and abuse, focusing on Eastern Europe and Russia. Previously, Asim worked with the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, the Bipartisan Policy Center, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the United Nations Development Programme. Asim graduated Carleton College with a B.A. in Mathematics and Economics. A native of Azerbaijan, he is fluent in Azerbaijani and Russian and tries to maintain his proficiency in Turkish and Ukrainian.



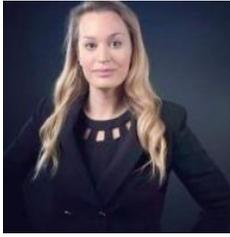
Garret Mitchell is an International Trade Specialist at the Department of Commerce. He received his M.A. in European and Eurasian Studies from George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs where he focused on natural gas trade in Eurasia and Chinese-Russian relations. Previously he was a research assistant at the U.S. Institute of Peace examining conflict resolution in the former Soviet Union. From 2013-14, he was a Russian-language Boren Fellow in St. Petersburg and earlier served as a Peace Corps volunteer in northern Kazakhstan.



Cyrus Newlin is a research assistant and program coordinator with the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). His research interests include Russian foreign policy, Russian civil society, Russian-Iranian relations, and the Balkans. He holds a B.A. in political science and Russian studies from Swarthmore College. Mr. Newlin spent a summer in Kazan, Russia, on a Critical Language Scholarship and a semester abroad in St. Petersburg, Russia.



Karina Panyan is a researcher on the Global Terrorism Database at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). She received her B.A. in Russian Language and Government & Politics at the University of Maryland, where she completed the Emerging Global Security Issues Fellowship focusing on extremism and terrorism in the South Caucasus. Karina holds an M.A. in International Economics and Conflict Management from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). She was part of a delegation that traveled to Ukraine and published a book on political, social, and economic challenges of the conflict. In the future, Karina hopes to continue studying security challenges and methods of counterterrorism.



Christina Pushaw is a DC-based political consultant and nonprofit development professional with a lifelong interest in Eurasia. She earned a Master's degree in International Relations and Economics from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in May 2017. Currently, Christina works in investor relations for a large donor network focused on domestic politics, communities, and education.

Following her interest in foreign policy, Christina studied abroad in Russia and worked for an international education management company in Georgia and Azerbaijan. She has traveled extensively in Eastern Europe, most recently in Spring 2017, when she conducted field research in Ukraine. In Washington, Christina has worked for a political intelligence firm and a think tank focused on defense, foreign affairs, and security policy. A native of Malibu, California, Christina graduated from the University of Southern California with an honors B.A. in History and Russian.



Jemile Safaraliyeva is a project assistant with the Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center at the Atlantic Council, a think-tank aimed at fostering dialogue among regional leaders, and the transatlantic community. In this role Ms. Safaraliyeva is responsible for the logistics pertaining to convening private and public events on Ukraine, Russia, and the Caucasus. Additionally, she compiles the biweekly UkraineAlert newsletter and handles the Center's administrative tasks. Prior, Ms. Safaraliyeva served as a Running Start Star Fellow wherein she worked for the legislative and press teams in the office of Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland. Prior to that, she served as a staff assistant for the Center for the Study of Democracy at St. Mary's College of Maryland, and an intern at the Karabakh Foundation in Washington, D.C. She received her B.A. in political science and history from St. Mary's College of Maryland. Her primary research interests concern Russia's influence operations and the democratization of former Soviet states. Ms. Safaraliyeva was born and raised in Baku, Azerbaijan. She is fluent in Russian.



Caroline Sagalchik is an investigative researcher and analyst focused on transnational security issues related to the Eurasian region. Caroline graduated from Brown University with a degree in international relations where she conducted research for projects ranging from a study into the explicit and implicit forms of censorship in Russia to an analysis of the prospects of Belarus someday joining the EU. Upon graduating, Caroline spent a year on the Fulbright program in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. Prior to coming to Washington, Caroline spent several years working at a white-collar law firm in New York City. She is fluent in Russian and Spanish and comes from a family of chess-players.

Leland Sidle is a first-year graduate student at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, pursuing a degree in energy policy and international economics. Leland has interned, worked, and studied in Russia for more than two years, cumulatively. Leland was awarded a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship for the 2015-2016 academic year and taught at Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University in Novosibirsk, Russia. Leland spent the 2016-2017 academic year in Tyumen, Russia, studying the Russian energy sector at Tyumen State University under a grant by the Russian Ministry of Education. Leland also previously interned at the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Russia and Eurasia Program and the Department of Subsoil Utilization and Ecology of the Tyumen Oblast'. Leland was graduated with honors and a B.A. in International Relations and Slavic Studies from Connecticut College and is proficient in Russian.



Elliott Silverman was born and raised in McLean, Virginia. After attending Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and earning a B.A. in Political Science, Elliott made his way to Capitol Hill and now handles the Defense and Foreign Affairs portfolio for Congressman H. Morgan Griffith. In this role, Elliott focuses on privacy & civil liberties issues in national security as well as U.S. – Great Britain relations. Elliott is particularly interested in nuclear statecraft as well as finding ways to regain a bi-partisan consensus in American foreign policy. In his spare time away from work, Elliott is currently learning Russian and hopes to become more involved with decision making in U.S. foreign policy with regards to Russia & Eurasia.



Ekaterina Soubeva is a second year MA student at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, where her concentration is Russian and Eurasian Studies. She is originally from Bulgaria and she earned her bachelor's degree at John Cabot University in Rome, where she also established the International Relations Society. This summer Ekaterina interned at the Russian International Affairs Council, where she worked on research of migration and refugees in Russia and Europe. Prior to that, she has interned at the Foreign Policy and Defense Committee at the Bulgarian Parliament. She hopes to work for the foreign service in her home country.

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Karin Thomas is a Senior Consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton and is currently supporting the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Diagnostic Center as a Diagnostic Analyst. She holds an M.S. in Criminology from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.A. in Criminology and Russian from the University of New Mexico. She has previously worked as a criminal justice researcher in West Virginia, Alaska, and New Mexico, focusing on topics such as justice reinvestment and sexual assault. She has successfully completed internships at the Hudson Institute in the Center for Political-Military Analysis as a Research Intern and at the U.S. Department of State. Karin was a Fulbright Scholar in Russia from 2013-2014 where she taught a variety of English and cultural classes in universities and communities in Yoshkar-Ola, Belgorod and Syktyvkar.



Nicholas Trickett received his B.A. in Comparative Literature from Haverford College, focusing on 19th century Russian and American literature. He received his M.A. in Russian and Eurasian Studies at the European University in St. Petersburg, specializing in post-Soviet foreign policy, energy security, and political economy in the post-Soviet space. Before beginning graduate school, he interned for the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship working on the committee's press operation and researching issues such as small business access to credit. As part of the Rising Experts Program, Nicholas is exploring the evolving impact China-driven infrastructure and trade initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative have on Russia's foreign policy interests and political economy in post-Soviet states. In particular, he is examining the patterns of cooperation between Russia and China that either mask competition or may lead to future conflict. Nicholas hopes to provide targeted recommendations to U.S. and Russian policymakers on the areas of potential cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. Because deteriorating U.S.-Russia relations make direct government-to-government collaboration much more difficult, Nicholas hopes to identify ground-level people-to-people means of sharing ideas about the two countries' evolving roles in the Asia-Pacific.

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