

## FELLOWS



**ELENA ASHBURN**  
**University of Florida '26**

Elena is a senior at the University of Florida, majoring in political science and international studies, with minors in philosophy, African studies, and family, youth, and community studies. Growing up as a military kid, her passion for public service was shaped by the impact of foreign policy on her life and community. Her regional foci are Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa, with interests in post-colonial political development, global conflict, and sanction policy. Elena interned with the Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs, earning the prestigious Meritorious Honor Award for her efforts. She has also worked with the American Political Science Association, the National Military Family Association, and the UF Bob Graham Center for Public Service. Following graduation, Elena plans to pursue a graduate degree before joining the U.S. Foreign Service. She believes defense and diplomacy are not opposing forces, but complementary tools essential to global strategy. Through the National Defense Fellowship, she hopes to strengthen this perspective and build the skills needed to serve effectively at the intersection of both.



**SALLY BROWN**  
**University of Florida '27**

Sally Brown is a Rosenthal-Levy Scholar at the University of Florida, where she studies Political Science and Politics, Philosophy, Economics, and Law (PPEL), with a minor in Russian. Her research focuses on the rise of illiberal democracy, the dissemination of propaganda in Eastern Europe, and the enduring national security challenges posed by Russia. Her interests also extend to the historical development of Zionist movements in Russia and Israel. She is a recipient of the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship from the U.S. Department of Education, through which she completed the intensive Russian immersion program at Middlebury Language Schools and pursued advanced Russian study in Tbilisi, Georgia. She has also served as a researcher on a White House cyber task force in partnership with Girl Security. At the University of Florida, Ms. Brown is the co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of *The Florida Finibus*, a student-led publication dedicated to advancing the American intellectual tradition through scholarship on foreign affairs and U.S. politics. She intends to further refine her expertise through working in Washington, D.C., and abroad before pursuing doctoral research in War Studies. As a National Defense Fellow, Ms. Brown looks forward to engaging with distinguished experts in national security and collaborating with her cohort of fellows.



**MARINA CHEMIN**  
**Georgetown University '27**

Marina is a junior at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service studying International Politics, Russian, and International Business Diplomacy. She is fascinated with the role emerging tools of warfare will play in determining whether the United States can sustain its military edge amid mounting threats from adversaries who are rapidly modernizing their own capabilities. She has interned at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, where she researched Russian hybrid warfare, at a stealth-mode startup using artificial intelligence to analyze and predict geopolitical events, and spent her summer as an analyst at Kinetica, a defense tech-focused VC fund, as a part of Birthright Israel Excel. As a National Defense Fellow, Marina looks forward to deepening her understanding of the defense industrial base, learning from practitioners at the forefront of technological innovation, and collaborating with peers who share her commitment to strengthening U.S. and allied national security.



**PETER CONSTANT JR.**  
**Jessup University '26**

Peter is a rising senior at Jessup University, double-majoring in public policy and psychology with a minor in theology. He served as Jessup's Student Body President twice and is now the President of Jessup's Alexander Hamilton Society and Intercollegiate Studies Institute chapters. His passion for foreign affairs began when he studied geopolitics and strategy in Greece during his junior year. This past summer, he interned at the American Legislative Exchange Council on their Veterans and Military Affairs Task Force. As a National Defense Fellow, Peter looks forward to exploring how America's national security and defense policy has evolved and how public perception has influenced our leaders. Upon graduation, he aspires to work at the intersection of national security, policy planning, and psychology.



**KATELYN CZAJKOWSKI**  
**University of Connecticut '27**

Kate is a rising senior at the University of Connecticut double-majoring in Political Science and Human Rights with an interest in the intersection of national security and technology policy. She is passionate about creating opportunities for students to engage with foreign policy on her college campus and is the Founder and President of the University of Connecticut Chapter of the Alexander Hamilton Society. She has previously worked at Systems Planning and Analysis on the AUKUS International Agreements Team, the American Enterprise Institute on the Critical Threats Project, and recently represented the United States at the 2025 NATO Youth Summit in Montenegro. She looks forward to deepening her understanding of how emerging technologies are being integrated into the United States' defense strategy.



**BENJAMIN ELKINS**  
**University of Pennsylvania '26**

Benji is a senior at the University of Pennsylvania, double-majoring in history, concentrating in intellectual history, and classical studies. His intellectual interests center around eras of great political transformation, such as Imperial Russia on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution and Rome during the age of Caesar. At Penn, Benji served as president of the campus' Alexander Hamilton Society chapter, co-president of the undergraduate legal society JLAW, and a senior editor for Under the Button, Penn's satire magazine. Last summer, he participated in the Tikvah Fund's Beren Summer Fellowship and worked under Dr. Michael Doran of the Hudson Institute, investigating the shift in American partisan positions towards Israel following the October 7th attacks. As a National Defense Fellow, he hopes to sharpen his understanding of the theory, practice, and organization behind U.S. defense policy.



**ROBERT GIOIA**  
**University of Michigan '27**

Rob is a rising junior studying public policy at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. He is fascinated by the national security implications of international trade and holds a regional focus on Latin America. This fall, Rob is interning with the Department of Commerce, where he assists Michigan businesses with export opportunities through the U.S. Commercial Service. Rob previously completed research internships with the American Foreign Policy Council, Center for a Secure Free Society, and Vandenberg Coalition. Planning a career in the Executive Branch, Rob is eager to study the application of defense policy on topics in economic warfare, including supply chains, sanctions, and trade-based leverage tools. He will incorporate lessons from the National Defense Fellowship into his career, countering the economic encroachments of China, Iran, and Russia in the Western Hemisphere. In his free time, Rob serves as the Director of Policy for the University of Michigan's Alexander Hamilton Society and runs The Michigan Review, a student newspaper.



**JOSHUA HANSEN**  
**Harvard University '26**

Joshua is a senior at Harvard College studying philosophy with a focus on emerging tech ethics. Having been raised in Wyoming, he believes strongly in the importance of bipartisan political communication and the need for policymakers to respond to the diverse needs and perspectives of their constituents. He focuses his studies on the cutting-edge challenges facing humanity, conducting research on the proliferation of political misinformation enabled by large language models, U.S.-China tensions over Taiwan, the developing landscape of computer governance, and innovations in PropTech responding to domestic housing affordability. He is interested in just war theory and ensuring that emerging technologies contribute to sustained peace and global flourishing. He is extremely grateful to both the Ronald Reagan Institute and Alexander Hamilton Society for their efforts in educating the next generation, and looks forward to learning from both key American stakeholders in defense and from his peers in the program. After graduation, Joshua hopes to pursue a joint J.D./MBA and apply his interdisciplinary background to work across the public and private sectors.



**TESS KESLER**  
**University of Notre Dame '26**

Tess is a Senior at Notre Dame studying Political Science and Italian with a certificate in International Security. Her interests lie in European security and Italian politics, and she is currently writing a thesis on how the Russian invasion of Ukraine shaped European defense policy. Her regional focus was shaped by studying abroad in Rome, where she interned for the Hanns Seidel Foundation, conducted independent research, and lived in a homestay. She has also previously interned for her district representative in the House of Representatives and for the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. After graduation, Tess plans to combine her passion for international security with a career in public service, working in Congress or a U.S. agency. Tess is looking forward to being a part of the 2025 National Defense Fellowship cohort, sharpening her knowledge of the defense budgeting process, and creating lasting connections with future colleagues.



**RANIA KOLLURI**  
**Northeastern University '27**

Rania is a rising junior at Northeastern University, majoring in international affairs with a minor in Arabic. Her interests focus on U.S. foreign policy and defense strategy, with particular attention to the Middle East and security challenges in the Red Sea. She has worked with the Department of Defense through the Virtual Student Federal Service program as an intelligence analyst intern and separately with the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security as a co-op. This past summer, Rania studied U.S. governance in the Middle East through a six-week program in Egypt, Cyprus, and the United Arab Emirates. On campus, Rania co-founded and leads the university's Alexander Hamilton Society chapter, organizing discussions on pressing national security issues. She is also an active member of the International Relations Council, where she has competed in Model Arab League conferences and contributed to policy-focused dialogue. In her classes at Northeastern, she has researched the Yemeni Conflict and had the privilege of speaking with the Yemeni Ambassador to the United States regarding the ongoing conflict in the region. Through the National Defense Fellowship, Rania looks forward to engaging with her peers on U.S. grand strategy in emerging regional conflicts and protecting American interests abroad.



**BEN MCDANIEL**  
**University of Georgia '23**

Ben is a recent graduate of the University of Georgia, where he earned degrees in Journalism and Political Science, along with a minor in International Affairs. Over the past year, he has worked on Capitol Hill and currently serves on the armed services and foreign affairs legislative team for Senator Markwayne Mullin. Ben's interest in national security is driven by a deep commitment to public service and an understanding of the complex, evolving threats facing democratic institutions and global stability. Through the Hamilton National Security Fellowship, he looks forward to expanding his network and learning from seasoned professionals in the field to further develop his expertise. In the next five years, Ben plans to continue building a career in national security and contributing to meaningful policy solutions on critical global issues.



**LUKE MILLER**  
**College of William and Mary '27**

Luke is studying International Relations and Economics. Luke has always been fascinated with the world around him and with learning how it works. Luke's majors provide me with information as well as tools for understanding the world. Luke's academic journey has led him to apply his interests and skills in a way that supports a common cause, safeguarding our nation's security. As the military is one of the more prominent tools in national security, the National Defense Fellowship is a perfect opportunity to learn more about defense policy and the difficult decisions made by American officials every day. Over the next five years, Luke hopes to have an impact on national security decision-making and to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the threats that the U.S. faces.



## **THOMAS NELLIGAN**

**Harvard University '27**

Thomas is a rising junior at Harvard University, where he is concentrating in social studies. His academic interests are the intersection of technology and political institutions. His interest in international affairs and national defense began in 2014 during the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the following reactions from the international community. Previously, Thomas interned on Capitol Hill in the Office of Colorado Senator Michael Bennet. Prior to attending Harvard, he spent seven years in the Army as a Cryptologic Linguist serving in several commands. He is excited to deepen his engagement with foreign policy as it relates to national security and international relations. Thomas looks forward to meeting with other students who are similarly interested in foreign policy and national defense.



## **ALEXANDER RICHTER**

**University of California, Berkeley '27**

Alexander is a third-year student at UC Berkeley studying political science and economics with a minor in public policy and Chinese. An internship with the Institute for the Study of War's China team and an interest in China's nuclear weapons sparked his interest in Indo-Pacific security. On campus, Alex leads research initiatives for the Nuclear Policy Working Group and is an AHS executive board officer. He was previously a Hertog War Studies Fellow and has interned with the American Enterprise Institute, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Marine Corps War College. Through the National Defense Fellowship, Alex seeks to better understand the process of formulating and implementing defense strategy. Upon graduation, he seeks to pursue a career at the intersection of net assessment, nuclear strategy, and China studies.



## **ISABELLA SANTOS**

**James Madison University '25**

Isabella is a first-year master's student at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, studying international relations with a focus on Asia. Isabella's first congressional internship for Congressman Ami Bera developed her passion for U.S. foreign policy and security in the Indo-Pacific region. She has since deepened her regional expertise through student conferences in Indonesia and Japan, and an academic exchange program in South Korea. Isabella also worked on a semester-long project sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service and traveled to the U.S. Embassy in San José, Costa Rica, to brief and interview U.S. diplomats and Marines. Isabella is a Diplomatic Fellow pursuing a career in the U.S. Foreign Service. Through the National Defense Fellowship, she is excited to learn about the interagency process and how the federal government interacts with the private sector on matters of national security and defense.



**CHARLES SCHELL**  
**Cornell University '27**

Charles is a junior at Cornell University, double-majoring in Government and Spanish with minors in Global Development and International Relations. He serves as the Co-President of the Cornell AHS chapter and is the Vice President of Programming for Phi Alpha Delta, Cornell's pre-law fraternity. His interests lie in the intersection of national security and U.S. legal policy. In particular, he is interested in the role of economic sanctions and the review of foreign acquisitions of U.S. critical technologies assets. As a Spanish major, he will spend the Spring semester at an intensive language immersion program studying at the University of Seville. He previously interned with the Mayor of Tordesillas, Spain. Through a National Defense Fellowship, he hopes to advance his study of national security with a focus on Spain and Latin America.



**MAKENA TOM**  
**University of California, Berkeley '26**

Makena is a sophomore at UC Berkeley studying Political Economy with a China concentration and a minor in Nuclear Engineering. Her interest in the region stems from her years at a Chinese international school, which first sparked her curiosity about U.S.-China relations. She now focuses on how the United States should navigate strategic competition with China, particularly where defense, technology, and energy security intersect. At Berkeley, she conducts research on nuclear proliferation risks and early-warning systems through the Nuclear Policy Working Group and writes on international affairs for the Berkeley Political Review. She has also interned with the Hudson Institute and participated in the Reagan Academy for Civic Education and Engagement. As a National Defense Fellow, Makena hopes to refine the frameworks she uses to think about deterrence and strategy. Over the next five years, she aims to serve in national security or foreign service roles, contributing to a stronger American position abroad.



**NOEL TUMBASZ**  
**Kenyon College '27**

Noel is a junior from Budapest, Hungary, studying political science and Chinese with career interests in foreign policy and diplomacy. He focuses on U.S.-China military, geopolitical, economic, and ideological rivalry, and Chinese influence in Eastern Europe. To engage more in depth with his areas of expertise, most recently, Noel participated in Zack Cooper's cohort of "China and Competition in the Indo-Pacific" through the American Enterprise Institute's Summer Honors Program, and studied abroad in Beijing to immerse himself in the Chinese language and culture. At Kenyon, Noel is also a member of the Chinese Club and the Finance Club and is the co-founder of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Club. Beyond academics, he is a member of Kenyon's varsity swim team. Through the National Defense Fellowship, Noel is excited to learn more about the prominent challenges and initiatives of American defense and national security and interact with like-minded fellows and the foremost defense policy experts.



**ANDREW WEAVER**  
**Columbia University '26**

Andrew is a senior at Columbia University studying political science and Mandarin Chinese. His interests in China's foreign policy and military affairs began as a congressional intern in August 2022, when he watched Beijing launch live-fire military exercises around Taiwan in retaliation for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei. He has supported projects related to Chinese foreign policy and Indo-Pacific security as an intern for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the U.S. Department of Defense, Carnegie China, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He is currently writing a senior thesis on the causes of change in Taiwanese military strategy since the end of the Cold War. Through the National Defense Fellowship, Andrew hopes to learn methods for assessing military doctrine, force structure, and defense budgets, which he plans to apply in a future career as an analyst at the Department of Defense.



**DARCY WEBER**  
**Bowdoin College '26**

Darcy is a senior at Bowdoin College, majoring in international relations and minoring in art history. Her experiences growing up near the Naval War College in Newport, RI, and playing squash on an international level sparked her interests in defense and international relations. Darcy's summer as a Hudson Institute Political Studies fellow affirmed her interest in Middle East policy while cultivating the philosophical understandings necessary for a career in politics. Last summer, Darcy returned to the Hudson Institute as a Middle East research intern, refining her knowledge of the region and learning from prominent scholars in the field. During the National Defense Fellowship, Darcy hopes to learn more about America's military presence overseas and the defense policy options available to leaders at home. After graduation, Darcy aims to influence the development of U.S. Middle East policy by working at a think tank, on Capitol Hill, or at an executive agency.