

## Announcing the 2019 Congressional Nuclear Security Fellows

Categories : [NSWG news](#)

### The 2019 Class of Congressional Nuclear Security Fellows

The Nuclear Security Working Group is pleased to welcome 9 incoming Congressional Nuclear Security Fellows for the 2019 calendar year. The Nuclear Security Working Group's Congressional Fellowship program, which began in 2017, provides highly qualified up-and-coming national security professionals with an opportunity to spend a year working in either the U.S. Senate or the House of Representatives.

Fellows serving in the House of Representatives will work closely with Members of the Congressional Nuclear Security Working Group (CNSWG), a bipartisan House caucus dedicated to facilitating awareness and engagement on the urgent threats posed by the prospect of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. The CNSWG's goals include strengthening nuclear safeguards, securing fissile material, and preventing the misuse and spread of sensitive nuclear materials and technologies. The bipartisan caucus is lead by founding co-chair Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) who was recently joined by three additional co-chairs: Congressmen Bill Foster (D-IL), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), and Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN).

*The Nuclear Security Working Group Fellowship Program is made by possible by funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.*



**Omar S. Bashir** is serving in the office of *Senator Ed Markey (D-MA)*. He was previously a Senior

Associate at the Financial Integrity Network, where he specialized in sanctions issues and helped to build safeguards against proliferation financing, money laundering, corruption, and other financial crimes. He received his Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University. At Princeton, he was a Fellow at the Center for International Security Studies, a Harold W. Dodds Fellow, and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow. Omar previously received two aerospace engineering degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and an M.Phil. in International Relations from the University of Oxford, where his thesis was awarded Distinction. He has published peer-reviewed work in social science and engineering journals.



**Mike Canzone** is serving in the office of *Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND)*. Prior to this appointment, Mike spent 15 years as an officer in the United States Navy where he flew the F/A-18F Super Hornet and deployed in support of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. He served as an action officer on multiple Pentagon staffs and as the Executive Assistant to the Executive Director of the F-35 Joint Program Office. He most recently deployed as a member of a Joint Special Operations Task Force. Mike holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of California, Davis, a M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies with a regional emphasis in East Asia from the U.S. Naval War College, and a Master of Policy Management from the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown.



**Katherine Earle** will serve in the office of *Senator John Hoeven (R-ND)*, beginning in May 2019. Earle previously worked as the Senior Program Manager for the Foreign and Defense Policy Studies Department at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). Prior to that, she was a research associate for AEI's Director of Russian Studies, focusing on Russian domestic politics and security issues in Russia and the former Soviet Union. During the summer of 2018, Earle worked for the U.S. Army's Directorate of Strategy, Operations, and Planning at the Pentagon. She will earn her Master of Arts in Security Studies from Georgetown University in Summer 2019 and holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a focus on Russia and Eastern Europe from Middlebury College.



**Matthew Golub** is serving in the office of *Representative Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)*. Matthew joins the NSWG fellowship program after five years of service in the U.S. Navy as a Surface Warfare Nuclear Propulsion Officer. He spent his first tour of duty in ballistic missile defense on the guided missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68). Following completion of nuclear propulsion training, Matthew served on the commissioning crew of USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), delivering the world's most advanced nuclear energy system to the Fleet. Matthew completed his bachelor's degree in Water Resource Engineering with Honors in International Affairs at the Penn State University Schreyer Honors College and also earned a graduate certificate in geospatial intelligence analytics.



**Susannah V. Howieson** is serving in the office of *Representative Bill Foster (D-IL)*. Howieson has spent the past 8 ½ years conducting science and technology policy analysis for the IDA Science and Technology Policy Institute, a federally funded research and development center that supports the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and other Federal agencies. She has worked on many topics relevant to the Nuclear Security Working Group and national security more broadly. Most notably, Ms. Howieson co-led the research team for the Commission to Review the Effectiveness of the National Energy Laboratories (CRENEL), an assessment of all 17 Department of Energy (DOE) laboratories that was mandated by Section 319 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014. Other relevant work includes a review of the launch approval process for space nuclear power systems and an evaluation of DOE's Agreements for Commercializing Technology (ACT) pilot. Ms. Howieson also supports OSTP in its role on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). Prior to joining STPI, she worked as an attorney at Sidley Austin, LLP in New York, NY, and for the Office of Climate Change Policy and Technology at DOE. Ms. Howieson has a BA from Rice University, a JD from Boston University, and an MEM in Environmental Economics and Policy from Duke University.



**Ian A. Merritt** is entering his second year in the office of *Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE)*, a founding co-chair of the CNSWG. Mr. Merritt was previously a research assistant in the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, focusing on regional geopolitics, military affairs, and counterterrorism. He has a Master of Arts in Security Studies from Georgetown University.

**Blake Narendra** is entering his second year in the office of *Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)*. A graduate of Colorado College, Blake worked on two presidential campaigns in 2007-2008 before moving to Washington D.C. He was an associate in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, worked as a Special Assistant at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) during Senate consideration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Following

graduate studies at the Fletcher School at Tufts University, he worked as a contractor to the U.S. Air Force in its arms control branch, as a fellow at the Ploughshares Fund and as a special advisor in the U.S. State Department Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance (AVC). He most recently was a press officer at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In his first year in the Senate, he led two bipartisan resolutions which successfully passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee – on a civilian nuclear cooperation (123) agreement with Saudi Arabia and another taking stock of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on its “golden birthday” – in addition to other legislative initiatives.



**Paul Warnke** is serving in the office of *Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)*. He was previously a graduate student at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, where he received a M.A. in Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies and served as a graduate research assistant for the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS). At CNS, Paul contributed two chapters to an edited volume on U.S.-Soviet nonproliferation cooperation published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Over the course of his graduate studies, he held internships at the State Department, United Nations, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. He completed his undergraduate degree at Middlebury College, earning a BA in History.



**Travis Wheeler** is serving in the office of *Representative Pete Visclosky (D-IN)*. He previously was a research associate at the Stimson Center, where he researched nuclear deterrence and strategic competition in Southern Asia as well as managed educational initiatives. He has published widely on nuclear and strategic issues and co-edited several publications, including [The Lure and Pitfalls of MIRVs: From the First to the Second Nuclear Age](#) and the “[Southern \(Dis\)Comfort](#)” series in *War on the Rocks*. He was also part of the 2017 cohort of CSIS’ Nuclear Scholars Initiative. Wheeler earned an MA from The Fletcher School and a BA from DePaul University.

---

We are looking forward to a third successful year of the Congressional Nuclear Security Fellowship Program. We sincerely thank everyone who applied for the 2019 Congressional Nuclear Security Fellowship and encourage any interested national security professionals to apply for the 2020 class when applications open in June. For more information on the Nuclear Security Working Group and the fellowship program, visit [nuclearsecurityworkinggroup.org](https://nuclearsecurityworkinggroup.org). For any questions please email Mary Chesnut at [chesnut@gwu.edu](mailto:chesnut@gwu.edu).