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**Shifting Dynamics:
The International Order
in a Post-Pandemic World**

— 1st - 2nd of December | 2020 —

**New Realities in Foreign
Affairs and Interstate
Relations after COVID-19**

**TRT
world
forum**

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Shifting Dynamics: **The International Order** **in a Post-Pandemic World**

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New Realities in Foreign Affairs and Interstate Relations after COVID-19



- The pandemic has highlighted the weaknesses of key international institutions and reiterated the need for comprehensive reform.
- A return to the pre-pandemic world appears unlikely, which necessitates an adaptation to what the future holds in a post- pandemic world.
- The pandemic has worsened global poverty and inequality and eroded some important poverty reduction and sustainable development gains. It also exacerbated the already rising trends of xenophobia, intolerance, racism and Islamophobia.
- Stigmatisations, such as referring to COVID-19 as the 'Chinese Virus' or labelling Muslims as 'super spreaders', represent obstacles that stand in the way of global cooperation.
- The pandemic revealed that, in an interconnected world, nobody is safe until everybody is safe, emphasising the point that global cooperation is more necessary now than ever. Global crises such as pandemics ultimately require global responses.
- The pandemic has accelerated certain global political trends including unilateralism, nationalism and protectionism already in motion prior to the pandemic, threatening the global peace and stability.
- The pandemic has substantially affected the conduct of diplomacy as foreign ministries experience accelerated digitalisation through digital diplomacy, virtual meetings and online conferences.
- The pandemic has deepened existing conflicts and undermined mediation efforts as some countries have sought to take advantage of global divisions in order to increase their stranglehold in disputed territories as observed in Jammu and Kashmir.

Summary of the Session

The panel titled “New Realities in Foreign Affairs and Interstate Relations After COVID-19” discussed how the pandemic has changed the way states conduct foreign relations and how it has accelerated certain trends already in motion including rise of unilateralism, protectionism and nationalism, and the decline of multilateralism and interstate cooperation.

The panel opened with a keynote speech from Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu who emphasised the importance of identifying new realities that have emerged as a result of the pandemic in order to develop a sustainable vision for the aftermath. Çavuşoğlu highlighted that the pandemic has revealed the weaknesses of the current multilateral system, reaffirming the validity of Turkey’s call for the reform of international organisations. He also stressed that while Turkey has strongly supported international organisations and initiatives during this period, it has also actively engaged in its own humanitarian efforts worldwide with the understanding that nobody is safe until everybody is safe. Additionally, Çavuşoğlu contended that the pandemic exacerbated the

already rising trends of xenophobia, intolerance, racism and Islamophobia.

After highlighting that the world needs a multilateral, holistic and cooperative approach in order to deal with the pandemic, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi outlined his country’s strategy with regards to the pandemic, which is grounded upon three main pillars: help developing countries with their fiscal challenges, drop the commercial approach to the vaccine to make it accessible for everyone, and end stigmatisation.

On the EU’s handling of the pandemic, Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto noted that after the initial period that saw an uncoordinated EU reaction and a failure to show solidarity with other member-states, cooperation started to emerge as EU member states began more effectively coordinating issues ranging from border controls to the transfer of patients. Haavisto emphasised that the EU is now discussing a health union in order to respond collectively, improve the resilience of health systems across borders and how to take action to better mitigate or even prevent future pandemics.

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Keynote Speech

Mevlüt Çavuşođlu



Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Republic of Turkey

Mevlüt Çavuşođlu has been the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 62nd (August 2014 to August 2015), 64th (November 2015 to May 2016), 65th (May 2016 to July 2018) and 66th (July 2018 to present) Governments of the Republic of Turkey. He was the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator between December 2013 and August 2014. He was the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) from 2010-2012 and following this he became the PACE representative at the Venice Commission from 2012-2014. Prior to these roles, he served as Chairman of the Turkish Delegation to the European Security and Defence Assembly from 2007-2010.

Dear guests, dear participants,

The most pressing issue of this year is the coronavirus pandemic. Many lives were lost. Economies have suffered. Health systems were pushed to their limits. This is an unprecedented global crisis, however, crises also bring opportunities. With this opportunity, it is time to reflect on how we can change the way we do things to better develop a sustainable vision for the [pandemic's] aftermath. We should start by identifying new realities, as the title of this forum suggests. First, the pandemic revealed the weaknesses of the current multilateral system. It reaffirmed the validity of our call for the reform of international organisations. That is why we highlighted the need to promote multilateralism and strong institutions in the time of the pandemic. A few examples. We strongly supported the efforts within the G20. In MIKTA, we underlined the importance of robust international cooperation together with Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Australia. We invited the leaders of the Turkish Council for an extraordinary summit to better address the challenges. We called for an executive committee meeting in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation with a similar aim. We co-sponsored the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a fair, transparent and equitable access to essential medical supplies and any future vaccines. We joined the EU's Coronavirus Global Response Pledging Conference, and we also took part in the Global Vaccine Summit.

Second, with the understanding that nobody is safe until everybody is safe, we actively engaged in humanitarian efforts worldwide. We provided medical supplies to 156 countries and 11 international organisations. Before the outbreak, we were already the top donor country in humanitarian and development assistance, and the coronavirus outbreak has just earned us another badge of honour, and we became the largest supplier of medical aid worldwide. Turkey brought back more than 100,000 Turkish citizens from 141 countries. While we were busy with the most comprehensive repatriation operation in our history, we didn't forget other nations. Our repatriation flights also took on board around 5,500 foreigners from 67 different countries. We benefited, of course, from our extensive diplomatic network and the capabilities of Turkish Airlines. Having the fifth largest diplomatic network and the fourth largest flight network in the world made a huge difference.

Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen, when it comes to geopolitics it is a permanent reality of interstate relations, and this will also be true for the post-COVID era. A few actors have been actively destabilising our region. Turkey has been playing a key role in standing against these attempts. In the eastern Mediterranean, our primary concern is to protect our rights as well as those of the Turkish Cypriots, while Greece and the Greek Cypriots are trying to impose their unilateral and maximalist approach on us. We frequently see how EU solidarity is abused to promote the nationalist agenda of

these members. Recently, Operation Irini was used as a tool against Turkey. On November 22, the operation ordered the boarding of a Turkish flagged commercial vessel without our prior consent. This was a clear violation of international law. Crew members were mistreated and harassed. At the end of an 11 hour long search, nothing in violation of the arms embargo was found on board. We strongly protest this illegal act. The UN Security Council resolutions on the Libyan arms embargo do not overrule the freedom of navigation. Of course, we reserve our right to resort to every available legal and legitimate tool to respond. In any case, dear friends, as Turkey, we are ready for dialogue and cooperation in the eastern Mediterranean. This is why we call for an eastern Mediterranean regional conference with the participation of all littoral states, including the Turkish Cypriots.

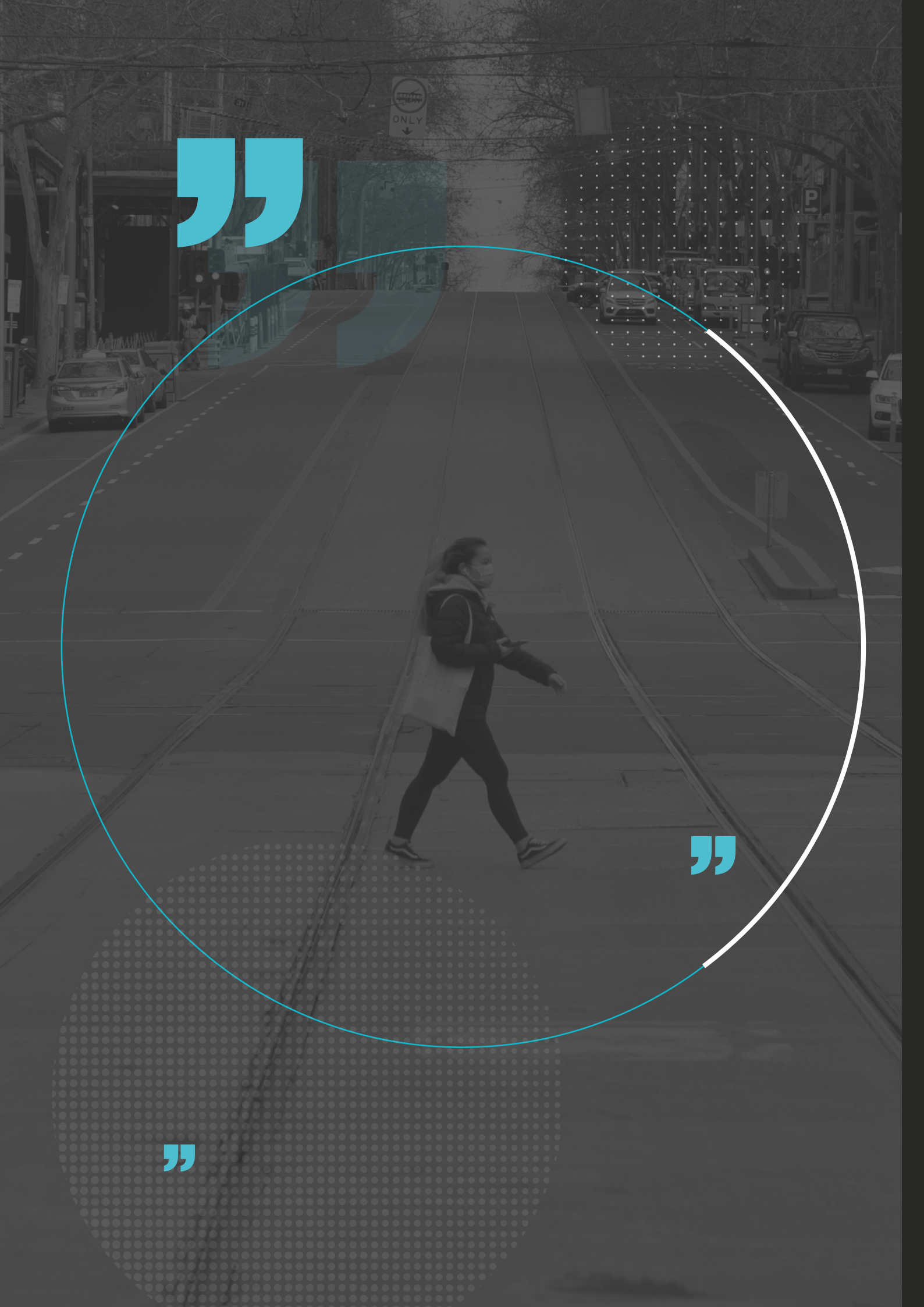
In Syria, our military operations cleared over eight thousand square kilometres from Daesh and the PKK/YPG. Thanks to our efforts, more than 411,000 Syrians returned home. Our presence in Idlib prevented yet another humanitarian disaster and a wave of migration. Our efforts as Astana guarantor, together with the UN, paved the way for the work of the constitutional committee.

In Libya, we took the initiative to prevent another humanitarian disaster. Turkey's training and advisory support for the UN-recognised Libyan government prevented a civil war. It also opened the way for the UN-led political process.

Dear participants, dear friends, the illegal invasion of one fifth of Azerbaijani territory since the early 1990s was deemed a frozen conflict. Recent developments have shown that it is no frozen conflict. A conflict is a conflict and it can escalate at any moment. It is not that these conflicts that are frozen, what is frozen is their solutions. When Armenia continued its aggression through repeated attacks, the conflict turned violent again. On the basis of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty, we supported a negotiated solution based on international law and UN Security Council resolutions. At the end, we welcome the joint statement signed between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia. Upon Azerbaijan's request, Turkey will also undertake a role to preserve peace and monitor the ceasefire.

Dear friends, had Turkey remained inactive, even in the face of such destabilising developments, we would have faced much greater problems. In fact, what we do is also good for NATO. Today, we continue our meetings within the alliance's foreign ministers. Unfortunately, at every turn, we always have to start from the beginning and wait for our friends to see the obvious. Turkey is a strong NATO ally and sees its future in Europe. Once we overcome the current confusion, existing mostly on the European side, I believe that the historic step of Turkey's accession to the European Union can be taken. This will also have a transformative effect on our wider neighbourhood as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, we do not see foreign policy as a static area of public domain. We don't view it through geopolitical lenses only. As times change, the instruments of diplomacy must also adopt. Last year, I announced three major foreign policy initiatives. The pandemic has reaffirmed their relevance and importance. Our digital diplomacy initiative was announced well before the pandemic. Our aim is to improve our digital infrastructure and use the transformative power of new technologies in all areas of our diplomatic work. The second initiative, named Asia Anew, aims to advance Turkey's engagement with the region through a more holistic and long term approach. This initiative complements our successful engagement activities in Africa and Latin America. Last but not least, with growing uncertainty, complexity and change, it is a necessity to create innovative platforms to discuss regional and global issues as TRT World is doing. The Antalya Diplomacy Forum aims to do exactly that. At the same time, Turkey will continue its more well-established approach towards building regional cooperation in the Balkans, Central Asia and around Afghanistan, including our brotherly country Pakistan. We will continue to promote global initiatives like the Mediation for Peace, [which] we are co-chairing with Finland. We will stand against xenophobia and animosity against Islam while promoting the alliance of civilisations. Turkish diplomats are already chairing the UN General Assembly and the UNESCO General Conference to achieve effective multilateralism. As I look ahead to the post-pandemic world, the need for Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian diplomacy will be as great as ever.



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Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's Highlights



Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Republic of Turkey

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has been the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 62nd (August 2014 to August 2015), 64th (November 2015 to May 2016), 65th (May 2016 to July 2018) and 66th (July 2018 to present) Governments of the Republic of Turkey. He was the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator between December 2013 and August 2014. He was the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) from 2010-2012 and following this he became the PACE representative at the Venice Commission from 2012-2014. Prior to these roles, he served as Chairman of the Turkish Delegation to the European Security and Defence Assembly from 2007-2010.

- ” This is an unprecedented global crisis. However, crises also bring opportunities. With this opportunity, it is time to reflect on how we can change the way we do things to better develop a sustainable vision for the aftermath.”
- ” The pandemic revealed the weaknesses of the current multilateral system. It reaffirmed the validity of our call for the reform of international organisations. That is why we highlighted the need to promote multilateralism and strong institutions in the time of the pandemic.”
- ” Like in all other scopes of our lives, the pandemic also affected the way we work. And we also witnessed an accelerated digitalisation in our working lives. TRT organising this forum is a good example. And at our ministry, we are also adapting ourself to the rapidly changing circumstances. As I underlined, we announced digital diplomacy initiatives before the outbreak. So, we were prepared for the new normal actually. Throughout the pandemic, I communicated, in addition to those visits that I mentioned, with many counterparts mostly online and attended a total of six to eight diplomatic video conferences and my ministry also moved its events to online platforms. And this year's ambassadors' conference was organised virtually. Actually, we tried new technology and this is domestic technology and it worked very well. We brought all the ambassadors from all over the world online and we were really satisfied with this.”
- ” The pandemic underlined the shortcomings of the existing multilateral system and the current system and its institutions could not respond to the pandemic in a timely and effective manner, unfortunately. For example, it took one hundred days for the United Nations Security Council to adopt a resolution on the matter. Second, the pandemic has worsened fragilities and conflicts. The mediation efforts that we are co-chairing with Finland [as part of the “Mediation for Peace” initiative] were also impacted. [...] Third, geopolitical competition has increased. The rivalry between the US and China was already deepening but the competition is not only restricted to great powers, many conflicts are now internationalised, unfortunately.”
- ” I do not believe there will be a return to the previous normal, but a speeded transition to a new normal [to which] we should all adapt ourselves.”
- ” Indeed, COVID-19 started off as a public health issue, but evolved into, unfortunately, a global crisis with severe social and economic implications as well.”
- ” The pandemic increased global poverty and inequality and eroded sustainable development gains. It also exacerbated the already rising trends, as you mentioned, of xenophobia, intolerance, racism and Islamophobia. And unfortunately, Europe is the focal point of such a negative trend.”
- ” We are concerned that Europe is becoming hostage to populist, racist and anti-immigrant discourses each passing day. Offensive publications, defamation and hate speech against Islam and Muslims are on the rise, unfortunately. And the security and well-being of the millions of Muslims in Europe are under threat.”
- ” What we need is vision and moderation. Populist and racist discourses will only serve to strengthen radicals and terrorists. And political leaders also have special responsibility, we have all responsibilities to reverse this trend. But if mainstream politicians also support such racist approaches, this is actually what we see today, for small political gains, we will all lose. I hope this pandemic will encourage more strategic thinking on the side of Europe as well.”

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Shah Mahmood Qureshi's Highlights



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan

Minister Qureshi has served as Minister for Foreign Affairs for Pakistan since 2018, having also held the position from 2008 to 2011. The Minister began his political career in the District Council and Provincial Assembly of Punjab. While he was a member of the Provincial Assembly, he served as Minister of Planning and Development and Minister of Finance. He was also Mayor of Multan from 2000 to 2002. Minister Qureshi is a member of the National Assembly and served as the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs in the Federal Cabinet. Today, the Minister is also Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf political party. Minister Qureshi holds a BA from Forman Christian College, and a master's degree in Law & History from Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge.

- ” “We saw, and we are seeing, an increasing trend in foreign policy: unilateral trends. These unilateral trends in an environment where there's growing competition, where there's confrontation and divisions are on the rise, can be very destabilising. They can undermine global stability, security and peace.”
- ” “What was required for this challenge to be dealt effectively was a multilateral, a holistic, cooperative approach. But, what you saw was an initial knee-jerk reaction and every country fending for itself: sealing borders, trying to protect their people, their economies, not realising, as the [Turkish] foreign minister said, that nobody is safe [until] everyone is safe.”
- ” “Gradually, this pandemic has now made us realise that we are a different world. We are an interconnected world, a world which has more interdependence today than ever before.”
- ” “Many countries, [particularly] developing countries are at a disadvantage. They need help. They have limited fiscal space. That is why Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan launched an initiative called the Global Initiative for Debt Relief, asking the world to help the developing world, because if the developing world goes under willy nilly, you will get infected.”
- ” “The other thing that we have been advocating is, let's drop the commercial approach to the COVID-19 vaccine. You know, many countries are doing research, but what we need is more sharing. [...] That is why cooperation in scientific research is important and that is why Pakistan has suggested that we need this vaccine for greater public good. Make it affordable, make it accessible for everyone.”
- ” “Finally, let's not get into stigmatisation. When we get into stigmatisation, then we lose that cooperative approach. For example, in the initial period, there was finger pointing: the Chinese virus. Then there was some finger pointing calling Muslims super spreaders of this virus. These were things that we need to avoid and have a more cooperative approach to deal with this challenge.”
- ” “The pandemic also highlighted one thing, the limitation of international institutions. For example, when we needed the WHO the most, some of us were withdrawing from the WHO and sort of not cooperating. When the Secretary General of the United Nations calls for an immediate cease fire in different conflict zones of the world to deal with this pandemic, nobody pays heed to his call. That was another challenge. And in our region, in South Asia, across the line of control on the Indian occupied side of Kashmir, we see a new sort of intensification of cease fire violations.”
- ” “Here again, unfortunately, some in our region, instead of cooperation, went the other way and took advantage of international diversion to increase their stranglehold on disputed territories like Jammu and Kashmir. You saw new restrictions imposed. You saw a new communications blockade. You saw how fundamental rights were just suspended and done away with and you saw new measures announced which were against international law. Demographic changes being forced on people, violating the Fourth Geneva Convention, international law, the UN charter. Where the world required more cooperation, there were tendencies of taking advantage of a situation in a very inhumane manner. [...] What's the way forward? Obviously, interstate diplomacy is the way forward. Obviously, dialogue is the way forward and Pakistan has been advocating it.”

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Pekka Haavisto's Highlights



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Finland

Pekka Haavisto was a Member of the Finnish Parliament from 1983 to 1995 and was returned to Parliament in 2007. From 1995 to 1999, he served as Minister of Development and the Environment and from 2013 to 2014 as Minister for International Development. From 1993 to 1995 and from 2018 to 2019, he served as leader of the Green Party in Finland. He has also served for several years as a member of the Helsinki City Council. He stood as a candidate in the Finnish presidential elections in 2012 and in 2018. He has a wide array of experience in various areas of foreign policy, including chairing UN Environment Programme (UNEP) task forces on the environmental impacts of wars in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Sudan. He has also worked as the EU Special Representative for Sudan and Darfur, Special Advisor for the UN (ASG) in the Darfur peace process, and Special Representative to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in African crises.

- ” “I just want to confirm that we have already been online so many times during the pandemic with my colleagues either bilaterally or in different international occasions. And, I would say that what is missing from these meetings is a very important ‘corridor diplomacy’ - we, of course, can hear our statements and respond [in online meetings], but usually in physical meetings, you can also have the more unofficial part. And that is what is missing during the current pandemic.”
- ” “Environmental issues are a hot topic at the moment. And what is important, I think the idea that was also presented by my colleagues, that in this crisis might be also some solutions. And that’s why we are very much looking at green recovery and the circular economy and taking the environment, the climate issues [into consideration] in all of these funding projects that are made due to the corona crisis.”
- ” “Finland has a very similar standpoint regarding the need for an international community. And in an era when the US is cutting its funding from the WHO we increased [funding] from the Finnish side. And hopefully now that we see the regime change in the US also, these policies will change.”
- ” [European] countries started to take patients from other countries to their hospitals showing solidarity through that. And also they started to cooperate on border issues in a more systematic way. So I think we are now on the better side of these things. And now we are starting to speak about the health union, that we need more comprehensive policies on health issues in the European Union.”
- ” “What we are doing together as this ‘Team Europe approach’, particularly with the African countries, is that we act together to help and coordinate our efforts[...].”
- ” “What was mentioned here, of course, is that I fully agree that the blame game is something that we don’t need at this moment. But we might ask questions like if there are these kinds of wild meat markets where maybe COVID-19 started, can we do something together? Could the international community do something together to prevent similar crises from appearing? What could be the role of the WHO in preventing these crises?”
- ” “There is a certain competition regarding who can recover most rapidly out of the pandemic and who can get their economy running. But instead of that, we should have more cooperation on developing the vaccines, giving vaccine access to all citizens and so forth. I have a certain optimism and I see the trends now in the US, particularly on this multilateralism after the Biden victory. Of course, there are signs that their cooperation with the WHO would be better. US cooperation on climate change definitely will change. Maybe even the US approach to the Human Rights Council in the UN and so forth. So we have some positive signs.”
- ” “I think, even if, maybe, the appeal of the U.N. Secretary General, Antonio Guterres to stop the wars during the Covid-19 didn’t stop all the wars and conflicts, [nevertheless] it’s very, very important that the United Nations have this voice and we support the United Nations and its appeals for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.”



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