

The Global Reset: From the Old Order to New Realities

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EXPERT ROUNDTABLES

Contested Futures: Conflict and Reconciliation in East Africa

East Africa has long been confronted with multilayered crises shaped by political instability, ethnic tensions, border disputes, resource scarcity, and external interventions. Among these crises, Sudan has recently emerged as a flashpoint, where escalating violence has triggered both humanitarian and geopolitical reverberations. In Sudan, the escalation of violence, particularly actions perpetrated by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), including the recent targeting of humanitarian personnel from World Central Kitchen, constitutes grave violations of international humanitarian law and is widely regarded as amounting to war crimes. These incidents underscore not only the severity of the Sudanese crisis but also the imperative for the international community to respond effectively to such breaches. The intensifying geopolitical competition within the region directly implicates both regional actors and global powers, further complicating the delicate balance between conflict and reconciliation. In this context, international peacebuilding efforts—when aligned with credible local initiatives—must contend with fragmented governance, distrust among stakeholders, and competing regional interests.

This session will explore the evolving dynamics of conflict and peace processes across East Africa. Particular focus will be placed on Ethiopia's internal tensions, Somalia's state-building efforts, Sudan's brutal civil

war, and South Sudan's fragile peace framework. The session will also assess Türkiye's expanding diplomatic, humanitarian, and development engagements in the region, and how these initiatives contribute to stabilisation and reconciliation. Additionally, the roles of multilateral actors such as the African Union, IGAD, and the United Nations will be critically examined in terms of their capacity to facilitate durable peace and regional cooperation.

Discussion Themes

- What are the structural and historical drivers of conflict in East Africa?
- To what extent have regional and international peace initiatives been effective in addressing ongoing crises?
- How does Türkiye's multifaceted involvement in these regions contribute to peace and reconciliation efforts?
- What local and institutional mechanisms are needed to support long-term stability and inclusive governance?

Trump's America: Unpacking the Transformation

The second term of Donald J. Trump marks a period of significant shifts in U.S. domestic and foreign policy, evident in sweeping changes ranging from immigration restrictions and deregulation to tariff wars, the renegotiation of or withdrawal from key international frameworks, and the redefinition of traditional alliances. Trump's tenure is distinctly shaped by "America First" doctrine with a strong emphasis on national sovereignty, economic protectionism, and confrontational diplomacy, challenging established norms and redefining America's role on the global stage. Trump 2.0 is poised not only to reshape the U.S.' internal policy trajectory but will also leave a lasting impact on global governance and international cooperation.

This session will explore key themes shaping "Trump's America", including the symbolic and political impacts of Liberation Day, as well as the evolving nature of U.S. alliances and partnerships under the Trump administration. The discussion will address Trump's complex and often controversial involvement in major international conflicts and diplomatic relations, including Russia's war on Ukraine, and Israel's war on Gaza, as well as recalibrated relations with stakeholders including the EU, Türkiye and the Gulf states. The session will also examine the domestic implications of Trump's presidency, particularly its impact on democratic institutions,

civil liberties, and political polarisation across the U.S. By examining these multifaceted dynamics, the session aims at offering forward-looking insights into a Trump 2.0 presidency, helping businesses, governments, and institutions adapt their strategic positioning accordingly.

Discussion Themes

- How does the "America First" doctrine under Trump's second term reshape U.S. domestic and foreign policy, and what are the implications for democratic governance at home and the rules-based international order abroad?
- How do the composition and priorities of Trump's first-term cabinet differ from those of his second term, and what impact do these differences have on policy priorities, decision-making, and governance style?
- How does the Trump administration's foreign policy approach influence major international conflicts and reshape relations with key global actors?
- How can businesses, governments, and institutions adapt their strategic positioning under the Trump 2.0 era?

Cultural Diplomacy and Shared Identity in Central Asia: Pathways to Regional Engagement and Connectivity

As global and regional power dynamics shift, cultural diplomacy has re-emerged as a cornerstone for building trust and long-lasting pan-regional relations. In Central Asia, Türkiye's cultural diplomacy builds on a common and enduring identity, enhancing its impact. Rather than projecting influence unilaterally, Türkiye's approach emphasises mutual exchange, where co-produced historical media, academic partnerships, ethnosport traditions, and efforts toward a common Turkic alphabet all contribute to a living sense of cultural solidarity. These initiatives not only reinforce a symbolic connection to a shared past but also create practical avenues for building regional trust and unity among the Turkic republics.

The session will explore how Türkiye and the Turkic republics are deepening their cultural ties through collaborative projects that highlight shared heritage and mutual interests. It will examine specific initiatives such as traditional sports events, academic exchange programmes, and the ongoing work on a common alphabet as key pillars of regional engagement. Speakers will discuss how these efforts promote dialogue, foster regional connectivity, and support the emergence of a common cultural and strategic vision in Central Asia.

Discussion Themes

- How do shared cultural narratives and historical memory shape cultural diplomacy among the Turkic republics, and in what ways do they foster reciprocal engagement and equal partnership in the region?
- How do collaborative initiatives, such as academic exchange programmes and traditional ethnosport festivals, contribute to building a pan-regional sense of identity and connectivity?
- What role does the Organisation of Turkic States play in facilitating reciprocal cultural engagement, and how effective are its initiatives in promoting regional cohesion?
- How can collaborative cultural initiatives between Türkiye and Central Asian states be structured to promote not just symbolic ties, but also sustainable and strategic regional partnerships?

European Security Architecture: Between Institutional Overlap and Strategic Necessity

The European security architecture is at a crossroads, shaped by overlapping institutional mandates and diverging national interests. While NATO, the European Union's CSDP, and the OSCE form the core pillars of this framework, the ongoing war in Ukraine and increasing geopolitical polarisation have revealed critical fault lines. These developments have reignited debates on European strategic autonomy, the feasibility of a common defence policy, and the future of transatlantic security cooperation. As hybrid threats—from cyberattacks to disinformation campaigns—blur the lines between war and peace, the continent faces mounting pressure to build a more coherent and responsive security model.

This session will discuss the institutional structure of European security, assess the impact of current crises such as the Russia–Ukraine war, and explore the evolving role of NATO–EU cooperation. Special focus will be given to the legal and operational interplay between existing frameworks, regional security dynamics in Eastern and Southern Europe, and the tension between national sovereignty and collective defence ambitions. In this context, speakers will discuss the strengths and limitations of Europe's current security architecture and evaluate possible pathways toward a more integrated and adaptive defence posture.

Discussion Themes

- To what extent can the EU achieve strategic autonomy in security and defence without weakening transatlantic ties?
- How effective is the current division of roles between NATO, the EU, and the OSCE in responding to hybrid threats and regional crises?
- What are the main obstacles to building a unified European security architecture, and how can they be addressed?
- In light of the Russia–Ukraine war, how should Europe redefine its threat perception and defence priorities?

From the Margins to the Mainstream: The Global Rise of the Far Right

Once considered frontier actors, far-right movements are now gaining ground within political systems around the world. Their growing presence in parliaments, coalition governments, and executive offices reflects a profound shift in the global political landscape. Fuelled by public disillusionment, economic anxiety, and cultural grievances, these movements promote a blend of nativism, authoritarian reflexes, and hostility toward globalisation, immigration, and pluralistic norms. This resurgence has also been accompanied by rising levels of Islamophobia, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination, which are often central to far-right narratives and political strategies. Rather than challenging political systems from the outside, far right movements increasingly seek to reshape them from within, thereby redefining the boundaries of political legitimacy and institutional power.

This session will explore how far-right actors are navigating mainstream politics, infiltrating governance structures, and influencing policy agendas from within. Focus will be placed on the rhetoric, tactics, and broader conditions that have allowed this rise, along with how far-right movements are influencing policy priorities, shaping public narratives, and shifting the balance between state authority and societal norms worldwide.

Discussion Themes

- How are far-right movements moving from the political margins into positions of institutional power, and what enables their rise in different contexts?
- What tactics are used by far-right actors to work within existing systems while undermining inclusive norms and multilateral commitments?
- How is the far right reshaping global political discourse by tapping into identity-based anxieties, anti-elite sentiment, and distrust in international frameworks?
- What options are available to political institutions, civil society, and the media to respond to the far right's rise without further deepening polarisation or legitimising extremist narratives?

The Gulf Amid a Fragmenting Global Order: Vision, Rivalry and Fault Lines

As the global order becomes increasingly fragmented, Gulf states are navigating a fluid and uncertain geopolitical landscape. The War in Ukraine and the intensifying U.S.–China rivalry has complicated their traditional strategy of balancing between major powers. While these states have historically shown agility in engaging Washington, Moscow, and Beijing, shifting U.S. priorities and growing security and economic entanglements are narrowing the space for balancing acts. At the same time, national transformation agendas such as Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, Qatar’s Vision 2030, and the UAE’s Centennial 2071 set out bold goals for economic diversification and sociopolitical modernisation. Yet progress across the region remains uneven, hindered by internal structural constraints and global economic volatility. These challenges are further compounded by unresolved intra-Gulf tensions—most notably the lingering aftershocks of the Qatar crisis—which continue to cast doubt on the prospects for genuine regional cohesion and a unified Gulf response to a rapidly evolving multipolar world.

This session will assess how Gulf states are recalibrating their foreign policy amid global power shifts. It will examine whether their balancing act between Washington, Moscow, and Beijing remains viable, and evaluate the

ambitions and constraints of national transformation agendas. Panelists will also debate the extent to which intra-Gulf divisions persist beneath the surface of diplomatic normalisation, and explore the region’s potential to assert strategic agency in a realigning world order.

Discussion Themes

- How is the Gulf’s long-standing strategy of balancing relations between the global powers being challenged in today’s fragmenting global order?
- To what extent have national transformation agendas delivered tangible progress, and what structural or external constraints continue to hinder implementation?
- What role can the Gulf states realistically aspire to play in a multipolar world shaped by strategic rivalry, economic realignment, and shifting global alliances?
- Have intra-Gulf tensions truly been resolved in a lasting manner, or have they merely been temporarily deferred and suppressed?

From Victimhood to Resilience: The Path to Justice in Gaza

For decades, Palestinians in Gaza have endured systemic injustice: brutal occupation, forced displacement, a suffocating blockade, and relentless military assaults carried out with impunity. Israel's genocidal war on Gaza has worsened an already devastating humanitarian crisis and exposed the failure of international institutions to hold perpetrators accountable. Veto politics and institutional paralysis have allowed impunity to thrive, undermining the credibility of global justice mechanisms. Moving beyond victimhood requires confronting this impunity and placing Palestinian rights at the heart of legal, political, and diplomatic solutions.

This session focuses on justice as the key to addressing root causes and achieving lasting change, emphasising accountability, human rights, and dignity. The discussion will explore the international community's responsibilities, transitional justice options, and political roles in advancing justice. It will also highlight the need to shift from purely humanitarian aid towards long-term, rights-based solutions that offer a credible path forward for Gaza's future.

Discussion Themes

- How can the international community overcome veto politics and institutional paralysis to ensure accountability and end impunity for the genocidal war on Gaza?
- What are the legal and moral responsibilities of states and global institutions in advancing justice and protecting Palestinian rights?
- What legal, political, or diplomatic mechanisms exist to hold perpetrators accountable, and what are the obstacles to their implementation?
- How can the global response shift from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term, rights-based solutions that prioritise Palestinian dignity and self-determination?

The Ukraine Conflict: Diplomacy Amid the Fog of War

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has profoundly reshaped not only Europe's security architecture but also long-standing assumptions regarding international law, diplomacy, and conflict resolution. The Ukrainian crisis presents a complex case in which high-intensity military confrontation has unfolded in parallel with significant diplomatic endeavours. While active hostilities continue on the battlefield, diplomatic engagements—such as the Istanbul Talks, the Antalya Summit, and the Black Sea Grain Initiative—have underscored the persistent relevance of dialogue and negotiation. In this context, the war in Ukraine serves as a critical example of the concurrent operation of diplomacy and armed conflict, raising important questions about their interplay in contemporary international relations.

This session will explore the evolving trajectory of the war in Ukraine alongside the diplomatic efforts and negotiation attempts that have accompanied it. Particular attention will be paid to the Istanbul and Antalya talks as well as the grain deal, assessing their influence on both the conflict's dynamics and broader peace prospects. The simultaneity of battlefield escalations and diplomatic initiatives invites a re-examination of the boundaries and possibilities of conflict resolution in modern warfare.

This discussion aims to provide a forum for scholarly analysis and policy-relevant insights into the interplay between war and diplomacy in protracted crises.

Discussion Themes

- How have diplomacy and conflict progressed concurrently in the context of the war in Ukraine?
- What impact have the Istanbul and Antalya talks, along with the grain initiative, had on peace-building efforts?
- How can diplomacy be pursued in protracted conflicts when both parties remain unwilling to compromise on core territorial and sovereignty issues?
- What lessons does the Ukrainian crisis offer for understanding transitions between war and peace in the current international system?



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