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A World Without a Center:

Who Leads When The Rules Run Out?



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PUBLIC SESSIONS

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Türkiye: From Regional Power to Multi-Regional Actor

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The international system is becoming increasingly fragmented. As the axes of security, the economy, energy, and diplomacy are reshaped beyond traditional regional boundaries, the geopolitical role of states can no longer be defined solely by a single sphere of regional influence. In the post-Cold War era, new patterns of power distribution have enabled states to maintain a simultaneous presence across multiple geopolitical basins, project influence, and assume meaningful roles within distinct regional systems.

In this context, Türkiye has emerged not merely as a conventional regional power but as a multi-regional geopolitical actor capable of exerting influence and employing multilayered foreign policy instruments across interconnected geopolitical spaces, including Europe, the Middle East, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Eurasia. Türkiye's position within NATO, its role in Black Sea security, its balancing policy vis-à-vis Russia, its strategic partnerships with Gulf countries, its expanding diplomatic and economic engagement in Africa, and its growing outreach toward Asia and Eurasia demonstrate that it has evolved into an actor that is not only influential within its immediate neighborhood but is also increasingly capable of shaping outcomes and exercising strategic agency across multiple regional systems. This transformation reflects a shift in Türkiye's foreign policy from a primarily regional framework to a broader, multi-regional geopolitical role.

This session will examine Türkiye's evolving geopolitical position and its multi-regional strategy in the context of contemporary crises and changing regional orders. In particular, it will assess Türkiye's mediation efforts during the Russia-Ukraine war, especially its role in the Black Sea Grain Initiative; its position in debates surrounding NATO and European security; and its strategic relationships with the Gulf countries, Africa, Pakistan, Egypt, and Eurasia.

By analyzing these developments, the session will explore whether Türkiye should continue to be understood merely as a "bridge country" or a conventional regional power, or whether it should instead be recognized as a multi-regional geopolitical actor.

Discussion Themes

- In the contemporary geopolitical environment, marked by the reconfiguration of Europe's security architecture and the emergence of new regional security orders across the Middle East, how should Türkiye's role as a multi-regional actor operating across multiple security domains be understood?
- How is Türkiye positioning itself as both a balancing power and a strategic nexus amid NATO's transformation, Europe's pursuit of strategic autonomy, and the evolving security landscape of the Middle East?
- To what extent do the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Türkiye's mediation efforts during the Russia-Ukraine war, and its expanding strategic engagement across the Gulf and Africa demonstrate the emergence of Türkiye as a new-generation security provider in crisis management and diplomatic mediation?
- How do Türkiye's expanding defense, diplomatic, and strategic partnerships with Pakistan, Egypt, Qatar, and African states contribute to the development of an emerging cross-regional security architecture in an increasingly interconnected geopolitical environment?

SESSION 2 AMERICA

The American Paradox in the International System

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For decades, the United States has cast itself as the guarantor of the liberal international order, serving as rule-maker, security provider, and, at times, global policeman. The second Trump presidency has reignited debate over whether Washington is abandoning that role in favor of a more transactional, unilateral, and selectively isolationist foreign policy. From skepticism toward alliances such as NATO, QUAD, and AUKUS to renewed tensions over global governance, America's evolving posture raises a fundamental question: is the United States retreating from global leadership, or simply redefining it on more overtly interest-driven terms? Meanwhile, the increasingly competitive yet interdependent U.S.-China relationship underscores the broader transformation of great-power politics.

This session will examine how the second Trump presidency is reshaping the character and legitimacy of American power. While anti-war rhetoric remains central to Trump's political messaging, recent military actions and coercive diplomacy point to a foreign policy that continues to rely on deterrence, economic pressure, and strategic bargaining. Against a backdrop of intensifying geopolitical competition, the discussion will consider whether the United States is moving away from multilateral leadership or recasting it in a more personalized, transactional, and less institutional form.

Discussion Themes

- Is the second Trump presidency signaling the end of America's role as guarantor of the liberal international order, or simply a new way of exercising U.S. power?
- How has the conflict with Iran affected the credibility of Trump's anti-war and "America First" agenda?
- As competition between the United States and China intensifies, what does Beijing's emergence as a system-shaping power reveal about the fragmentation of the international order and the rise of competing geopolitical blocs?
- What do cases such as Iran and Venezuela suggest about the relationship between American strategic interests, energy security, and the future of multilateralism?

SESSION 3 ECONOMY

Towards a Rocky Recovery: National Economies After the Wars in the Middle East

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The global economy is entering a period of heightened uncertainty, shaped by a fragile post-pandemic recovery, persistent supply chain disruptions, volatile energy markets, and intensifying geopolitical rivalry. Against this backdrop, the wars in the Middle East have produced consequences that extend well beyond regional security, disrupting energy markets, maritime trade, financial stability, and global supply chains. Heightened risks across the Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz have increased transport costs, insurance premiums, and uncertainty for investors while exposing the vulnerability of critical trade corridors. As a result, post-war recovery is no longer solely a regional challenge but a strategic concern for Europe, Asia, and the wider global economy. Much as the Gulf War reshaped the international economic landscape, the aftermath of today's conflicts is likely to be defined by energy security, reconstruction financing, shifting trade routes, inflationary pressures, and broader geoeconomic realignments.

This session will explore how national economies may navigate recovery in the aftermath of the wars in the Middle East, and whether that recovery is likely to prove fragile, uneven, and protracted. It will examine the impact of conflict on energy markets, supply chains, maritime trade, capital flows, and the economic repositioning of Gulf states, while assessing the challenges of reconstruction financing, sanctions, declining investment, and regional economic reintegration. The discussion will also consider the wider implications for Europe, Asia, and globally integrated production networks. Ultimately, it will ask whether post-war recovery should be viewed not simply as a process of rebuilding and stabilization, but as the emergence of a new economic landscape in which trade routes, energy partnerships, investment flows, and regional and global economic architectures are being fundamentally reshaped.

Discussion Themes

- How are the wars in the Middle East reshaping regional economies, and to what extent are their effects reverberating through global energy markets, trade routes, and financial systems?
- What role will energy security, reconstruction financing, resilient supply chains, and strategic trade corridors play in shaping post-war recovery, and how durable is that recovery likely to be?
- How might the conflicts alter the economic positioning of Gulf states, investment flows, and prospects for regional integration, while affecting interconnected economies in Europe and Asia?
- Does post-war recovery point beyond reconstruction towards a new regional and global economic order defined by shifting energy partnerships, logistics networks, investment patterns, and geoeconomic competition?

SESSION 4 GAZA

Gaza at the Intersection of International Law and Humanitarian Collapse

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The war in Gaza has become a defining test of the international legal and humanitarian order under conditions of prolonged, high-intensity conflict. Israel's genocidal campaign, marked by sustained military operations, repeated ceasefire collapses, mass civilian casualties, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access, has exposed the widening gap between established legal norms and their enforcement. While institutions such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court continue to address questions of state responsibility and individual accountability, the persistence of the conflict underscores the limited capacity of existing enforcement mechanisms and the growing difficulty of protecting civilians and delivering aid in an active war zone. At the same time, political divisions, selective application of international norms, and competing geopolitical interests continue to shape global responses and constrain meaningful accountability.

This session will examine how Gaza illustrates the simultaneous erosion of legal enforcement and humanitarian protection in contemporary conflict. It will explore alleged violations of international law, the practical and political obstacles to enforcing judicial decisions, and the operational challenges facing humanitarian organizations, including restricted access, security threats, and fragmented coordination. Beyond these legal and humanitarian dimensions, the discussion will also consider the growing influence of media, culture, and public discourse in shaping international perceptions of the conflict, including debates over censorship, blacklisting, and the politicization of artistic and cultural spaces. More broadly, it will ask whether Gaza represents not only a humanitarian catastrophe but also a turning point in the credibility of international law, global governance, and the institutions designed to uphold them.

Discussion Themes

- How has Gaza exposed the gap between international legal norms and their enforcement during prolonged conflict?
- To what extent can institutions such as the ICJ and ICC ensure accountability when political considerations constrain enforcement?
- How have blockade policies and restrictions on humanitarian access shaped conditions on the ground?
- Does Gaza represent an exceptional failure of the international legal order, or does it reflect a broader transformation in the way global governance operates during conflict?
- What role, if any, have Gaza's offshore gas reserves played in the conflict, and what rights do Palestinians hold under international law over their natural resources?

SESSION 5 GEOPOLITICS

The New Geopolitics of Connectivity: Sea Lanes, Chokepoints, and Corridors

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In an era of mounting geopolitical instability, connectivity is no longer viewed as a neutral driver of economic integration. It has become a strategic asset and, increasingly, a source of competition and coercion. The growing militarization of maritime chokepoints, trade routes, and critical infrastructure, highlighted by tensions around the Strait of Hormuz following the recent Iran-Israel-US escalation, has exposed the vulnerability of global supply chains. Energy flows, shipping lanes, digital infrastructure, and logistics networks are now deeply embedded in national security calculations, where disruption can trigger far-reaching economic consequences. As states seek to reduce dependence on critical maritime bottlenecks, competition over alternative trade routes, transport corridors, and energy networks has intensified.

This session will examine how the geopolitics of connectivity is reshaping global trade, energy security, and regional stability. It will explore the growing strategic importance of resilient and diversified transport and infrastructure networks, while assessing Türkiye's role as a key hub linking Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Particular attention will be given to initiatives such as the Development Road Project with Iraq, the Middle Corridor, and cross-regional energy partnerships, considering whether they can strengthen economic resilience, reduce geopolitical risk, and contribute to a more stable regional architecture. The discussion will also examine Türkiye's emergence not only as a transit country, but as a diplomatic and strategic actor shaping the future of regional connectivity.

Discussion Themes

- How has the growing militarisation of trade routes and critical infrastructure reshaped the relationship between economics and security?
- To what extent can alternative trade and energy corridors reduce vulnerabilities created by maritime chokepoints and fragile supply chains?
- What distinguishes resilient and politically sustainable transport and infrastructure networks from those vulnerable to coercion, disruption, and geopolitical fragmentation?
- How can Türkiye leverage its geography, infrastructure, and diplomatic positioning to strengthen regional connectivity and contribute to a more secure and diversified economic landscape?

SESSION 6 MEDIA

Who is in Charge in the Algorithmic Age? Companies, Countries, Citizens

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For much of the modern era, the flow of public information was shaped primarily by newspapers, broadcasters, and the regulatory authority of nation-states. Today, that landscape has been fundamentally transformed. A small number of technology companies increasingly determine how information is discovered, prioritised, and consumed. They design the algorithms that shape visibility, control the platforms through which news circulates, influence the interfaces through which citizens encounter political reality, and are rapidly becoming intermediaries between users and journalism through AI-powered search and answer systems. In this emerging landscape, often described as a form of techno-feudalism, influence stems not only from ownership of media, but from control over the digital infrastructure of attention, recommendation, ranking, and synthetic content generation.

This session will examine how the concentration of algorithmic power is reshaping the production, distribution, and consumption of information, while blurring the boundaries between fact, fabrication, and visibility. It will explore the role of technology companies as gatekeepers of public discourse, the capacity of governments to regulate or counterbalance platform power, and the implications of algorithmic amplification for democratic accountability. The discussion will also consider the growing influence of disinformation, deepfakes, and AI-generated content on elections, conflict narratives, and public trust, while asking whether citizens can still exercise meaningful agency within increasingly opaque digital ecosystems.

Discussion Themes

- How is the concentration of algorithmic power among a small number of technology companies reshaping the production, distribution, and visibility of information?
- To what extent can governments regulate or counterbalance platform power without undermining innovation or fragmenting the global information environment?
- How are algorithmic amplification, deepfakes, and other forms of AI-generated content reshaping public trust, electoral processes, and conflict narratives?
- In an increasingly platform-mediated information ecosystem, do citizens still retain meaningful agency over the information they consume and the opinions they form?

SESSION 7 POLITICS

Aftershocks of Energy Crises: Institutions Under Strain

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Energy has once again emerged as a defining force in global politics, with governments and public institutions absorbing the consequences in real time. The 2026 disruption of the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint that carries roughly a quarter of the world's seaborne oil, marks the second major energy shock in four years and has exposed the persistent vulnerability of the global energy system. Such disruptions move rapidly from markets to politics: rising fuel prices drive inflation, inflation fuels public discontent, and mounting economic pressure tests the legitimacy and resilience of governments. At the international level, the crisis has also strained democratic alliances, challenged the effectiveness of emergency decision-making, and raised fresh questions about the durability of an order built on secure maritime trade and freedom of navigation. The response has been uneven, with divisions among both allies and Gulf energy producers highlighting the political complexity of managing a global energy crisis.

This session will examine how governments and international institutions respond to the political aftershocks of energy disruption. It will explore the pressures placed on governance systems, the tensions between energy security and climate commitments, and the challenges of coordinating international responses during periods of acute instability. More broadly, the discussion will consider what genuine resilience would require, and whether governments can move beyond recurring crisis management towards a more durable and strategically secure energy framework.

Discussion Themes

- How do energy shocks translate into domestic political pressure, and why are governments and public institutions particularly vulnerable to these disruptions?
- What do differing responses among allies and Gulf energy producers reveal about the limits of international coordination during an energy crisis?
- How are governments balancing the competing demands of energy security, affordability, and climate commitments under conditions of sustained geopolitical uncertainty?
- Can governments and international institutions move beyond reactive crisis management towards lasting energy resilience, and what structural reforms would such a transition require?

SESSION 8 TECH

Navigating Responsibility in the Age of AI

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Artificial intelligence is rapidly blurring the boundaries between human agency and machine autonomy, creating profound legal, political, and ethical questions around responsibility. From autonomous vehicles and AI-enabled drones to algorithmic content moderation and synthetic media, decisions once made by humans are increasingly delegated to systems that operate at speed, scale, and opacity. As AI becomes embedded in warfare, governance, media ecosystems, and public discourse, traditional frameworks of liability and accountability are struggling to keep pace. Questions surrounding who bears responsibility when civilians are harmed by autonomous systems, when political deepfakes distort democratic processes, or when AI-driven moderation shapes public narratives are no longer hypothetical; they are becoming defining governance challenges of the digital age.

This session examines the growing uncertainty surrounding accountability in the age of artificial intelligence, focusing on how responsibility can be identified, distributed, and enforced across increasingly complex AI ecosystems. The discussion will address the legal and political challenges of attributing liability in cases involving autonomous decision-making, civilian harm, algorithmic discrimination, disinformation, and platform governance. Bringing together perspectives from law, technology, governance, security, and human rights, the session will further explore whether existing regulatory frameworks remain adequate in an era of diffused responsibility, and how governance models can evolve to ensure accountability, transparency, and meaningful human oversight.

Discussion Themes

- Who should bear legal and moral responsibility when AI systems cause harm: developers, deployers, governments, platforms, or users?
- Can existing liability and accountability frameworks keep pace with increasingly autonomous and opaque AI systems?
- How do deepfakes, synthetic media, and AI-generated disinformation reshape political manipulation, public trust, and democratic legitimacy?
- To what extent should governments regulate AI-driven content moderation and algorithmic decision-making without undermining freedom of expression and innovation?

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