

EAMF 2018

## Panel Session 1

### International Relations

The first panel session of the Forum entitled “Evolution of International Relations: Global Cooling” examined how the world’s political climate appeared to be changing, as much as the weather, with the return of cold war rhetoric between world leaders, economic and political sanctions, obstructions to diplomacy and restrictions on the media.

Introducing the topic, international journalist **Riz Khan**, the Forum and session moderator, said it was ironic that global politics seemed to be cooling just as its climate was warming.

Kazakhstan’s Foreign Minister **Kairat Abdrakhmanov** said we were indeed witnessing high turbulence and instability in the world order – much fear, rivalry, proxy wars and a confidence crisis in international relations, “but it is not as gloomy as I have described. It is not as bad as the dark times of the cold war when Kazakhstan was the border between the Soviet Union and China. Now it is a border of friendship, trade and investment.”

The world had also got rid of much poverty since then, mostly because of the success of Brazil and China. Kazakhstan had done its best to contribute to world peace with the Astana process on Syria, which had resulted in an agreement between the Syrian government and some of the 65 opposition groups to allow withdrawal from the besieged enclave of Eastern Ghouta near Damascus – an agreement underwritten by Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Former Italian Prime Minister **Matteo Renzi** said Kazakhstan had provided a bridge of dialogue in the last few years between Asia and Europe. It was sad that Europe itself could not be a more efficient and able partner because the emergence of the European Union as a place of dialogue after centuries of endless wars was surely one of the main achievements for the history book.

One of the problems was a breakdown in relations between the political authorities and the general public. “We need a different relationship between people and the government everywhere from China to the United States.”

The role of the media and their story telling ability was essential to explain realities in detail and reinforce correct common values, Renzi added.

**David Chikvaidze**, Head of the Secretariat of the Director General of the UN office in Geneva, said the historical date that stood in his mind was 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the former Soviet Union. Since then the western powers and Russia had just reacted against each other, instead of building Gorbachev’s initiative.

If only other regional countries had acted in the same way as Kazakhstan. Other small countries had behaved destructively or engaged in proxy wars and double standards, while powerful countries instead of correcting this childish behaviour had behaved like children themselves.

**Gary Locke**, a former US Ambassador to China and Governor of Washington State, said the main driver of instability and new populist politics in the world was not the outsourcing of jobs or arrival of large numbers of refugees in affluent countries but new technology and AI (Artificial Intelligence).

It had been estimated that as the world population grows to eight and a half billion over the next few years, 400-800 million people will lose their jobs, a disproportionate number of them in the developed world, causing particular problems in the United States and Europe.

**Simon McGee**, a former British Foreign Office press secretary, asked about the difference between the new 'populist' parties or 'popular' parties ? People tended to call them 'populist' parties if they did not agree with them. People thought that it was only by voting for these new parties that they could make the more established parties sit up and listen to what they were saying.

There was also a sentiment that the Trump Presidency in the United States might withdraw from the United Nations. In fact in many ways it had been more active internationally than the previous administration and had used the United Nations in resolutions against North Korea, which appeared to have succeeded in bringing North Korea to the negotiating table.

**Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Jarwan**, President of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace and member of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates, said Gulf countries had western friends but on the whole tried to stand aside from power blocks. What was needed for peace was more understanding and tolerance between the world's major religions.

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