

Antalya Diplomacy Forum Travel Report

From Political and International Relations

Department of İstanbul Gedik University

Day 1

On our first day of the forum our group leaders told us to wake up very early and be ready on the lobby of hotel for buses that are going to take us to the forum place, at 8 am. As students we were splitted in six groups, we were on the 6th group and every group had their own panels to attend. We arrived to the forum place around 9 am because of security controlls. The first panel started at 10 am. It's topic was, "Mapping Tomorrow, Managing Uncertainties". On this panel all of the speakers were leaders of their country. Kassym-Jomart Yokayev– President of Kazakhstan, Gordona Siljanovska Davkova – President of North Macedonia and Irakli Kobakhizade – Prime Minister of Georgia. The moderator of the panel was Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. The panel was very fun to listen but our favorite speaker was Ma'am Gordona, she was talking in a more academic and logical way instead of other talkers, and we liked her ideas about the international relations. Because of that reason right after when the panel ended, me and some of other people from my group went near her to ask for a picture.



After the end of the first panel, we went to our 2th panel at 11:30 am. We would say that this panel wasn't that interesting when we compare it with the first one. The topic was, "The Role of Regional Ownership in a Transforming World". The speakers were, Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo – President of Congo, Ndayishimiye Evariste – President of Burundi, Cevdet Yılmaz – Vice President of Türkiye, Félix Ulloa Jr. – Vice President of El Salvador, Đuro Macut – Prime Minister of Serbia, Hikmet Hacıyev- The President's Deputy for Foreign Affairs. We still listened to it very carefully, but couldn't have the fun and interest we had on the first panel.

The third panel started at 16:00 pm, its topic was "Diplomacy Despite Everything: How to Find Common Ground"? we would say that this panel too wasn't that interesting as the first one. The speakers were, Assoumani Azali – President of Comoros, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud – President of Somalia, Shaya Mohsin Al Zindani – Prime Minister of Yemen, David Moinina Sengeh – Senior Minister of Sierra Leone.

The fourth and the last panel of the day started at 17.30 pm, its topic was "Syria's Path to Stability". This panel was an interesting one since Syria is one of our neighbours and the stability on that region is always preferred instead of instability. The speakers were, Hind Kabawat - Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Syria, Musa Kulaklıkaya - Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hamish Falconer - Minister of State for the Middle East and Afghanistan, United Kingdom, Ammar Kahf - President, OMRAN Center for Strategic Studies. After this panel we went back to the hotel, and our first day was came to an end.

Day 2

Once again, we woke up early around 6 am, and got ready for a new day. We left the hotel around 8 am and our 2th day was started. The first panel was started at 10:00 am, its topic was “Securing European Security: Unity and Strategic Renewal Towards the NATO Ankara Summit”. This was an interesting one because soon we are going to have a NATO summit in our country and we had the chance to listen some of the concerns in NATO beforehand. The biggest issues was United States and because of that it seems like Europe realized that they need to protect themselves. The talkers were, Radmila Shekerinska- Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Baiba Braže- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Latvia, Kęstutis Budrys- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Lithuania, Zeki Levent Gümrukçü- Deputy Minister of Republic of Türkiye.

The 2th panel of the day started at 11:30 am and it was mostly about the Turkic states. The topic was, Rising Together: The Global Position of Central Asian States on the 35th Anniversary of Their Independence. They talked about their achievements in the region. The speakers were, Rashid Meredov- Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Zheenbek Kulubaev- Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyz Republic, A. Berris Ekinci- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey, Alibek Bakayev- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kazakhstan, Muzaffarbek Madrakhimov- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Uzbekistan.

The 3rd panel of the day started at 13:30 pm. The topic was, The Power of Balance Against the Balance of Power: Can Middle Powers Save the Rules-Based World Order? The speakers were, Comfort Ero- President & CEO of International Crisis Group, Cemil Aydın – Academician in University of North Carolina, Galip Dalay- Senior Researcher in Chatham House, Wadah Khanfar – President of Al Sharq Forum, Janne Taalas – CEO of Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation. They talked about how can cooperation of the middle powers help to create a new and more stabilized ecosystem against the major powers.

The 4th and the last panel of the day started at 16:30 pm. The topic was, A Middle East Beyond Zero-Sum Politics. This panel was an interesting one. They talked about how the issues in Middle East was limiting the cooperation between the Middle Eastern countries and causing the region to stay underdeveloped. The speakers were, Ayman Safadi- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Badr Abdelatty- Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation and Egyptians Abroad of Arab Republic of Egypt, Ahmed Aboul Gheit- Secretary-General of Arab League, Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi- Secretary-General of Gulf Cooperation Council.

After the 4th panel once again we went back to the hotel and with that the 2th day of the forum was ended.

Day 3

On our last day, they selected 30 students from all 300 students to simulate a crisis scenario. We were one of the chosen students, and luckily our team leader Ahmet Seyyid Hancı became the president of the country that he was assigned. The scenario was about an international crisis. According to the scenario, humanity has progressed technologically and created an Artificial Intelligence (AI) called "Nexus" and that AI is managing the international economy, logistics, and many systems of humanity. There are 5 countries in that fantasy world, 2 great powers, 2 countries that have historically close relations with those great powers, and 1 country which is located on an island and neutral with all other countries. All of a sudden one day, the "Nexus System" stops working in one of those countries, causing damage to its infrastructure and economy. The country uses this as a reason and states that the Nexus System is being manipulated by other countries intentionally, and makes a military operation on the Nexus Headquarters in the neutral zone. This attack on a neutral zone alerts all other countries and the United Nations. As participants, our goal was to solve that crisis. I was chosen to be the president of the island country, which is neutral with everyone. We were all given some goals to achieve and a personality to play. So this wasn't only a political simulation but it was very theatrical at the same time, basically Ahmed Seyyid Hancı roleplaying according to the personality traits that were given to him. It was a very fun experience.

After the simulation ended, around 5 pm, the panel with Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, started. I would say that it was very helpful

to understand how does the ministry works. He seemed like a very relaxed and an easygoing person. Also he gave us some tips and tricks for our future career planning. He talked about the hardships of that life, but at the same time the good sides too. Then he gave us a small lecture about a new term in the international relations, “connectivity”.

After that we again went back to the hotel and packed our belongings to get ready for our way back to home. Myaelf and Irmak and Ayça mostly talked about the panels and the forum but at the same time we met with many people, and had a very fun time in the hotel talking with each other. This was a very nice experience for us, to get to know all of this people from different backgrounds, analysing the diplomats and all of the other high ranking people was very nice.

Thank you for giving us the chance to go to the forum, Dear Professor Dr. Süha Atatüre.

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