

## Session 3

# Türkiye's Century: Reflecting on the Past and Shaping The Future



## **Moderator**

**Yusuf Erim**

## **Speakers**

**Luke Coffey**, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

**Ali Bakir, Professor**, Ibn Khaldon Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Qatar University

**Murat Yeşiltaş**, Professor, International Politics, Ankara Social Sciences University

**Michael Reynolds**, Professor, Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University

## **Discussants**

**Prof. Tarık Oğuzlu**, Professor of International Relations, Istanbul Aydın University

**Prof. Özden Zeynep Oktav**, Professor of International Relations, Istanbul Medeniyet University

**Dania Thafer**, Executive Director, Gulf International Forum

**Dr. Valeria Giannotta**, Director, CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye (Italy)

**Dr. Esmira Jafarova**, Board Member of the Center of Analysis of International Relations, AIR Center

**Doç.Dr. Şuay Nilhan Açıkalın**, Associate Professor, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University

**H.E Mazen Kabbara**, Ambassador, Republic of Lebanon

**Bilgehan Öztürk**, Researcher, SETA

## Key Takeaways

- The establishment of the Republic of Türkiye a century ago marked a unique moment in the region's history. Türkiye's democratic evolution, influenced by Western ideals, distinguishes it as a regional power.
- Turkish foreign policy is depicted as pragmatic, adaptable, and intricate, considering factors like geography, economy, social dynamics, regional/international situations, and institutional orientation. Recent shifts in Gulf-Türkiye relations are attributed to various regional dynamics.
- The resurgence of Turkic identity in post-Soviet states, particularly in Central Asia, influences geopolitical dynamics. Türkiye's role in the region and potential collaboration with the US are crucial for future developments.
- Türkiye's historic reforms, military advancements, and diplomatic efforts position it as a regional power. The emphasis on regionalism, mediation, and cooperation in areas like energy and transportation contributes to its growing role.

## Summary

This session delved into Türkiye's century-long journey, emphasising its unique democratic evolution and pragmatic foreign policy. The rise of Turkic identity in post-Soviet states, especially in Central Asia, adds complexity to geopolitical landscapes. Türkiye's regional influence is explored through historic reforms, military advancements, and diplomatic endeavours, portraying it as a significant player in mediating regional issues.

The discussion on strategic autonomy highlighted the intricate transformations in Türkiye's foreign policy linked to identity and geopolitical changes. Uncertainties in Turkish & EU relations, with questions

about Türkiye's role and strategic autonomy, are explored. It was argued in this expert roundtable that the concept of a transactional relationship gains prominence in global geopolitics.

Eventually, developments on nuclear weapons and new considerations posed by this stance, especially in a rapidly changing security dynamic are discussed. The session underscored the need for global cooperation in nuclear disarmament. It was stated by the experts that Türkiye's role in this shifting international landscape remains crucial, reflecting its intricate position in regional and global affairs.