

## **Global Stability- Resilience via values or rules**

Text of the speech delivered on 31 May 2024 by Amb. Tacan İLDEM, Chairman of EDAM, at the İstanbul Security Conference co-organised by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Başkent University

Excellencies, Esteemed participants of the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to address such a distinguished audience. I thank the organisers of İstanbul Security Conference for giving me the opportunity to share my views on a topic of great interest to us all. When I was asked to speak on the question of global stability, I thought the title of this session was formulated in such a way to suggest a sort of a dichotomy between values and rules.

It has long been the conviction of the West that common values, such as democracy, human rights and individual liberties, and rule of law, foster trust and cooperation among nations. These shared values have remained as the basis to help countries align their policies and responses to global challenges.

Furthermore, such fundamental values are expected to encourage respect for cultural diversity and promote dialogue, thus reducing the risk of conflict.

On the other hand, rules provide a structured framework for international relations. Treaties, conventions, and protocols establish clear guidelines for state behaviour, promoting predictability and reducing the likelihood of disputes. Within the context of institutional framework, organisations like the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, and the International Court of Justice enforce rules, mediate conflicts, and facilitate cooperation, ensuring that disputes are managed peacefully. Rules create mechanisms for accountability, where violations can be addressed through established legal processes. Although not always the case rules are expected to deter aggression and foster a stable international environment.

Any discussion on this topic inevitably brings the conversation to the current state of affairs and level of engagement between the West and the so-called Global South within a historical context. I recall the deliberations of the Global Strategic

Advisory Group meeting of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung that I took part last year in Como where the focus was on the nature of this engagement. It is hard, if not impossible, to agree on a definition and scope of what the Global South stands for. That's why I will use the terms "Global South", as an overarching connotation, and "the rest of the world" interchangeably during my speech.

The West (primarily composed of North America and Western Europe) has been a major source of investment and trade for the rest of the world or the Global South (encompassing Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania). Western countries and multinational corporations often invest in developing infrastructure, technology, and industries in these regions. However, this relationship can sometimes be imbalanced, with the Global South providing raw materials and labor-intensive products, while the West supplies high-value goods and services.

Throughout decades Western countries have been providing substantial development aid to the Global South. This aid can foster development but also create dependencies. Conditionality attached to aid often requires the recipient countries to adopt specific economic policies, which can influence their domestic affairs.

Furthermore, many countries in the Global South face significant debt burdens to Western financial institutions. This debt influences their economic policies and their relationships with Western creditors. International financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, largely influenced by Western countries, play crucial roles in shaping economic policies in the Global South.

The West often engages with the Global South based primarily on strategic geopolitical interests. This includes, *inter alia*, securing resources, maintaining military bases, keeping freedom of navigation and gaining political allies. These engagements can lead to alliances or conflicts depending on the alignment of interests.

The structure of international organisations like the United Nations, at least in the perceptions of other countries of the globe, often reflect Western influence. That's why, together with some of the nations which are within the western

institutions, the countries of the Global South increasingly seek greater representation and influence in international organisations, first and foremost within the United Nations system, advocating for reforms that reflect their interests and priorities. It is not a coincidence that such an expectation has been exemplified with the motto “the world is bigger than five” in Turkey’s official rhetoric of recent past, highlighting the asymmetrical power distribution within the UN Security Council that does not necessarily correspond to the realities of our time.

Countries like China, India, and Brazil are striving to alter the traditional dynamics between the West and the Global South. China's Belt and Road Initiative, for instance, offers an alternative to Western investment and influence, challenging Western prominence in a transcontinental manner.

We have lately been witnessing a growing emphasis on South-South cooperation, where countries in the Global South collaborate more closely on trade, development, and political issues, seeking to reduce dependency on the West.

Issues like pandemics, migration, climate change and global security threats require cooperative approaches between the West and the Global South. These crises can either foster greater collaboration or exacerbate tensions, depending on how they are managed.

Amin Maalouf, the acclaimed French author of Lebanese descent, who is well placed to make sound analysis of the question due to his affinity to different cultural backgrounds, has extensively explored the dysfunctions of the global system. His observations were particularly relevant in the context of the historical and cultural dichotomy that I alluded to earlier between the West and the rest of the world.

Central to Maalouf's analysis is the concept of identity. He posits that individuals and societies often experience identity crises when faced with the homogenising forces of globalisation. In this connection it is interesting that he highlights how Western powers have historically imposed their values and systems on other parts of the world, often with little regard for local traditions and needs. This imposition

has led to resistance, resentment, and a push for a more multipolar world order, thus leading to the failure of the western-centric model of globalisation.

I believe there is merit in hearing what Maalouf voices regarding an urgent need for creation of an environment in which mutual respect and understanding between different cultures could be established while bringing about fundamental changes in the way how nations interact. This includes reforming international institutions to be more inclusive, promoting cultural exchange and education, and addressing the root causes of economic and social inequalities. That is why at the meeting in Como the representatives coming from the countries of the Global South were insisting on the need for a more genuine engagement through which the Western leaders could try to listen and understand the perspectives of their southern interlocutors, instead of constantly being in the lecturing mode.

For global stability a combined approach that would include both values and rules will no doubt strengthen the resilience the international community should strive for. In fact, one can strongly argue that values underpin the legitimacy of rules. For example, the rule of law is effective when it reflects widely accepted moral principles. Conversely, rules help operationalise values, turning abstract concepts into actionable policies.

Values do not remain static, but rather evolve by passage of time. A resilient global system adapts to change by evolving its rules in response to shifting values and emerging challenges. This dynamic interplay ensures that governance remains relevant and effective.

Having dwelled upon the dysfunctions of the global order I now would like to take this opportunity to focus on our continent and share with you some observations regarding the European security and what kind of future architecture could be created which would be relevant in terms of both values and rules.

The Russian war against Ukraine has brought a dramatic change to the challenging international security environment with particular implications for the future European security architecture. At a time when Europe's cooperative security arrangements are no longer functional, and there has been a clear transition from

cooperative security to competitive security, European countries need to address how to bring an end to the ongoing war in Europe by achieving not just security for Ukraine but broader stability to the continent too. Progress in this field requires astute defence arrangements, legally binding arms control instruments, confidence and security building measures, and creative thinking that goes beyond the bounds of traditional alliances.

The war in Ukraine will be a long one which many define it as a “protracted war of attrition”. The outcome of the war will certainly have ramifications for the future of the European security and beyond.

In this type of warfare, peace can only be restored when a status quo acceptable to both sides is achieved or in the case of the defeat of one side. For the Ukrainians, that defeat could be prompted by lack of timely and sustained support from the West, whether militarily or politically, and Putin most probably has been betting on such a scenario to obtain at least part of what he wants from Ukraine. Should Western support stagger, or should Russia manage to annex territories of Ukraine, then the West will have failed to guarantee the global inviolability of borders in Europe.

If Russia continues to pursue its pattern of behavior guided by its interpretation of history and its revisionist approach upending the rules-based international order, a new European security architecture that includes Russia would not be possible.

Under the present circumstances there is no way to revert to “business as usual” in relations with Russia, a mistake committed after the Russo-Georgia War in 2008. Nevertheless, the West should not fall into the trap of excluding Russia from any European security arrangement forever. The reality dictated by geography and history requires the West to have a long-term goal of enabling Russia’s return to the security order underpinned by the fundamental principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the founding documents of the OSCE which are built on the common values. It will depend on the new circumstances offered in the post-war period, and especially on how Russia would choose to behave.

2025 will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. We need to engage in a serious reflection process before it is too late that would produce the necessary outcomes for an inclusive, resilient, and good functioning European peace and security architecture.

During such a reflection period, ways and means to consolidate the full implementation of fundamental principles that underpin the European security could be contemplated. In doing so these principles should in no way be revisited or renegotiated. In this context it would be essential to address the question of how respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity of states could be ensured and how aggression as a tool of statehood should be discredited. How to eliminate the notion of spheres of influence would need to be an indispensable part of this reflection. At the same time, it would be incumbent on the countries of the West, in their ambition to preserve a rules-based order, to act in a consistent and coherent manner, without strengthening the perception of double-standards, even hypocrisy, in the eyes of others. While advocating the need to uphold international law and implement all valid legal instruments in Europe, to keep a blind eye to those blatant violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, in other parts of the globe, like in Gaza, will be an enduring alibi for undermining the standing and credibility of the West.

In conclusion, global stability and resilience are best supported by a synergetic approach that integrates the moral guidance of shared values with the structural support of rules. This dual approach ensures that international relations are both principled and practical, capable of adapting to and mitigating the complexities and contestations of global challenges.