



## AGENDA Day 1

### 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM | Opening

- Housekeeping, recognition of AUBG board members and introduction of the Provost: **Despina Koleva**
- Conference Opening and Welcome: AUBG **Provost J.D. Mininger**
- AUBG Support to Students in Crisis States: AUBG Senior Vice President of Development **Susan Johnson**
- Overview of conference themes/format and introduction of keynote speaker: **Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob** (

### 9:30 – 10:45 AM | Keynote Speech and Fireside Chat

Keynote Speaker: **Prof. Kostiantyn Koshelenko**, Deputy Minister of Social Policy and Digital Transformation of Ukraine

- Duration: 40 minutes
- **10:10 AM-** Fireside Chat featuring an interactive discussion to explore key insights from the keynote
  - o Discussants: **Prof. Kostiantyn Koshelenko** and **Prof. Todor Tagarev**
  - o Moderator: **Dr. Antonio Garcia**
  - o Duration: 35 minutes

### ■ 10:45 AM- Networking Break

### 11:05 AM – 12:20 PM | Theme 1: The New Digital Battlespace: Hybrid Influence, Cybersecurity, and Information Warfare

*As warfare expands into the digital realm, the role of technology in supporting democratic governance becomes more pertinent. How can digital tools bolster democratic resilience and facilitate inclusive governance during war? How can technology sustain or enhance transparency, accountability, and civic engagement during war? In what ways can international cooperation be enhanced to combat targeted transnational cyber threats? How do foreign propaganda campaigns affect public opinion and support for war efforts, and how can they be contained? The fireside chat will explore how to strengthen democratic governance and international cooperation against transnational cyber threats. It will further explore actionable strategies to counter foreign propaganda that seeks to influence public opinion on war efforts.*

Speakers:

- **Dr. Sae Schatz (Remote):**
- **Dr. Velizar Shalamanov**
- Fireside Chat: Moderated discussion between speakers and with audience
  - Moderator: **Michael Weiss**

■ 12:20 PM – 1:35 PM | Lunch Break

**1:35 PM – 2:50 PM | Theme 2: Balancing Act: Civil Liberties vs. National Security**

*In times of war, democracies face the critical challenge of safeguarding national security while upholding civil liberties. This theme explores how democracies can strike this delicate balance. How can democracies maintain the delicate balance between ensuring national security and preserving civil liberties during times of war? What lessons can be learned from historical examples, such as the implementation of the USA PATRIOT Act or Britain's wartime measures, in terms of managing this balance? What are the implications of surveillance measures on privacy and individual freedoms in democratic societies in times of war? How can transparency and public oversight of wartime measures be ensured to prevent abuses of power? The fireside chat will focus on the implications of surveillance measures on privacy and individual freedoms, and how transparency and public oversight can prevent abuses of power.*

Speakers:

- **Prof. Phillips Payson O'Brien**
- **Prof. Bryan Watters**
- Fireside Chat: Moderated discussion between speakers and with audience
  - Moderator: **Dr. Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob**

■ 2:50 PM- Networking Break

**3:10 PM – 4:25 PM | Theme 3: Truth in Turbulence: Navigating Factual Media and Disinformation**

*With the rise of disinformation campaigns, democratic institutions must find effective ways to counteract false narratives while respecting freedom of speech and press. This theme examines strategies for media organizations to maintain public trust and disseminate accurate information. How can democratic institutions effectively counteract disinformation campaigns without infringing on freedom of speech and press? What strategies can media organizations adopt to maintain public trust and ensure the dissemination of accurate information in the face of coordinated disinformation efforts? How does disinformation impact public perception and policy decisions in wartime and what measures can be taken to safeguard the integrity of democratic decision and policy making? In times of war, how can factual media be fair, equitable, and responsible in its role as watchdog against the excesses of democratic governments without being seen as 'unpatriotic'? In the fireside chat, speakers will discuss the risks and impact of disinformation on public perception and policymaking and explore how factual media can monitor and check government actions responsibly and ethically.*

Speakers:

- **Michael Weiss**
- **Prof. Nicolas Tenzer**

- Fireside Chat: Moderated discussion with speakers and audience
  - o Moderator: **Dr. Ralitza Nikolaeva**

**4:25 PM- Closing Remarks for Day 1.**

**6.30 PM – 8.30 PM | Private Fundraising Dinner to support Ukrainian students at AUBG**

■ Day 2:

Coffee: 8.30 am – 9.15 AM

**9:30 – 10:20 AM- Keynote Speech and Fireside Chat**

Keynote Speaker: **Prof. Todor Tagarev**, Former Minister of Defence of Bulgaria

**Fireside Chat**

- o Participants: **Prof. Todor Tagarev** and **Prof. Kostiantyn Koshelenko**
- o Continuation of their dialogue on security and democracy
- o Moderator: **Dr. Antonio Garcia**

■ 10:20 AM- Networking Break

**10:35 AM- 11:50 AM | Theme 4: Multi-stakeholder Engagement in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Democratic Renewal**

Post-conflict reconstruction requires coordinated efforts from multiple stakeholders. This theme draws lessons from UN peacekeeping operations to inform community reconciliation and the reintegration of fighters. We will explore the roles of international organizations in supporting displaced persons and discuss how governments, civil society, tech companies, and academia can defend against digital threats. *What lessons from UN peacekeeping operations can inform multi-stakeholder engagement in the reconciliation of communities and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of fighters after war? What roles can international organizations play in supporting the orderly return of displaced persons in post-conflict situations? What roles can various stakeholders (e.g., governments, civil society, technology companies, academia) play in defending against digital threats to democracy, and how can collaboration between these stakeholders be fostered? What are the most effective strategies for building resilient democratic cultures and institutions that can withstand the strain that war inevitably places on democratic societies? The fireside chat will explore practical strategies for building long-term resilient democratic cultures and institutions in conflict and post-conflict societies.*

Speakers:

- **Prof. Peter De Clercq**
- **Dr. Antonio Garcia**

Fireside Chat: Moderated discussion between speakers and with audience

- o Moderator: **Dr. Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob**

11:50 AM – 12.30 PM - Closing Session

- Summary of insights and actionable strategies: **Dr. Ralitza Nikolaeva**
- Final Reflections: Speakers

■ 12:30 PM- Conference Close