

International Seminar

On

The Arab Spring: Region and India

15, 16, 17th February 2012

Centre For West Asian Studies

Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Concept Note

The Arab spring that began with Tunisia in early 2011 soon began to engulf the major parts of West Asia and North Africa. The democratic discontents of Arab spring continue even today in one or other form. This long, sustained and relatively peaceful nature of people's protest has toppled two governments in Tunisia and in Egypt and is posing sever challenge to the political regimes in Yemen and Syria. The Ghaddafi regime in Libya has been overthrown with the support of outside intervention.

Whatever the context of origin and nature of Arab Spring, it predominantly reflects, at least at the surface level, people's flight from culture of authoritarianism and aspiration for democratic participation in the governance of these countries. To this extent Arab spring retains the capacity of challenging the political status quo, the existing political system and political culture of the Arab world that will have far reaching implications for the stability of the region. A democratic Arab world is bound to affect the existing balance of powers and political equations in the region.

But will the Arab spring result into the democratic transformation of the Arab nations? Or is Arab spring a mere collective expression of historically accumulated grievances without any democratic vision? Or alternatively is it the case that concern, thrust and aspiration related to democracy and democratization in the Arab world has different epistemological background that can not be articulated within the framework of western modernity? These are some of key questions that this Seminar would like to address.

For these reasons, and given the dependence of global economy on the movements of oil and gas located in the region, market for the investment and its location at global trade route, the global stake holders including India is extremely concerned with development of Arab Spring, lest it jolts the political stability of the region. Therefore the global powers including India have been cautious in responding to the political developments in the region. This seminar, therefore, in part, will be geared to examine the pattern of policy responses of global and major regional powers to Arab spring and its implications for India.

Within the regional setting of Arab world it is Egypt that symbolizes the spirit of Arab Spring. From this point of view this seminar will have special focus on the 'Egyptian character of Arab Spring' and its impact in the region.

Turkey has also come to occupy an important place in West Asia in recent years. Turkey under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and AKP has become a major player in West Asia. Turkish model of democracy has been heavily debated in the Arab media, intellectuals

and policy makers in the context of Arab Spring. A part of the proceedings of the seminar will therefore also examine the viability of Turkish model of Democracy in the Arab world.

India has heavy stake in the stability of the region, particularly the stability of the Persian Gulf Region. India's rapid economic growth is premised on the stability of this region. The region's importance not only lies in terms of its uninterrupted supply of Oil and Gas products, but of late has emerged one of India's largest trading block, market for investment and largest source of remittances. Therefore a session of the seminar will devoted to India's perception, concern and policy responses to the Arab Spring.

It is in the above context that this proposed international conference seeks to discuss the various aspects of Arab Spring and its future implications for world, region and India. From this point of view the conference will have the following sub themes to be deliberated upon: -

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1. Origin, Nature and Dimensions of Arab Spring : Economic, Social and Political
2. Civil Society and Arab Spring: Democratic Transformation of the Arab world
3. Country Study : Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, Baharian, Libya, Jordan, Algeria
4. Islam, Democracy and Arab Spring
5. Global Powers and Arab Spring
 - (a) Global implications of Arab Spring
 - (b) Perception and Policy Responses Global Powers vis a - vis Arab spring : USA, Russia, European Union, France, UK, Germany, China : Implications for India
6. Regional Powers and Arab Spring
 - (a) Regional Implications of Arab Spring and Implications for India
 - (b) Perception and Policy Response of Regional Powers towards Arab Spring : Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Israel: Implications for India
 - (c) Persian Gulf and Arab Spring: Implication for India
 - (d) Arab Spring and Palestinian Question: Implication for India
7. India and Arab Spring : Perception and Policy Response
8. Turkish model of democracy and Arab Spring
9. Arab Spring and Future of Islamic Militancy in Arab World: Implication for India
10. Strategic and Security Implications of Arab Spring and Its Impact on India

Note : Participants are requested to send their abstract by 30th December and full paper by 30th January 2012 by email to me at alam.anwar@gmail.com or H. A. Nazmi at nazmi70@gmail.com or Mr. Moinuddin at moinuddin.ahmed83@gmail.com