

MIDDLE EASTERN CONGRESS ON POLITICS AND SOCIETY

9-11 October 2012
Sakarya - Turkey

ORGANIZED by

SAKARYA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

and

CENTER FOR KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURE

CALL FOR PAPERS

Important Dates

Deadline for Submission of
Abstracts: 22 July 2012

Announcement of Accepted
Abstracts: 7 August 2012

Deadline for Submission of
Full Articles:
1 October 2012

Contact us:

www.ortadogu.sakarya.edu.tr
&
middleeastcongress@gmail.com

Institute for Social Sciences of Sakarya University is pleased to announce "Middle Eastern Congress on Politics and Society" which will be held between 9 and 11 October, 2012 in Sakarya, Turkey. The Middle East is under spotlight thanks to the Arab Awakening. The latter refers to a groundbreaking chain of events that require radical reworking not only in the Middle Eastern politics but also in the groves of academe, which have largely been caught off guard and oblivious of the new social dynamics of the region. This congress invites students of the region to reconsider and rework not only the highly topical events of the day but also several phenomena that include citizenry, political action, state building, democratic politics, social legitimacy of authority, social justice, social media, new political



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consciousness, national self-determination and the post 9/11 international politics of the Middle East. While Europe and the US needed several centuries to develop modern political governance and civil society, the challenge for the Middle Eastern peoples is to press on the means of democratic politics in a much lesser time frame and under perilous conditions. Sakarya University invites scholars, public figures and activists of all stripes to join the panels and colloquiums for advancing our understanding of the region. The language of the Congress will be English, Arabic and Turkish with simultaneous translation provided.

The opening speech of the congress will be given by the Foreign Minister of Turkey, **Ahmet Davutoglu**.

The Keynote speech of the Congress will be delivered by Prof. **Norman Finkelstein**.

Some of the other confirmed participants of the Congress include **Prof. Mohammed Ayoob**, **Prof. Anoush Ehteshami**, Prof. Udo Steinbach, **Prof. Amr Hamzawy**, **Mohammed al-Humaikani** (Yemen Islah Party), **Ahmed Maher** (6 April Youth Movement), **Emad Abdul-Ghafour** (Al-Nour Party), **Ammar Ali Hasan** (Middle East News Agency), **Diaa Rashwan** (Ahram Centre for Strategic Research) **Gideon Levy** (Haaretz) ve **Abdulbari Atwan** (Al-Kuds Al-Arabi).

Papers should cover one of the following panels:

Panel 1: Arab Awakening and the Transformation in the Middle East

Public movements which have been experienced recently in the Middle East and Northern Africa, so-called “Arab Awakening” have led to the reconstruction of social and political fabrics of countries of the regions. While having changed into “a revolution” in Egypt, Tunis, and Libya through a regime take-over, these public movements are still uncertain future in the countries like Syria and Yemen. Arab awakening displays different characteristics from many previous revolutions in terms of being composed of public movements; and of its methods and tools used. Determining the features making Arab Awakening unique and different and revealing new actors, tools and methods playing a role in the revolutions have gained importance. Within this scope, subjects expected to be discussed are as follows:

- Arab Awakening and Social Media
- Arab Awakening and Role of Women
- Arab Awakening and International Actors
- Arab Awakening and Regional Actors
- Arab Awakening and New Face of Revolutions

Panel 2: The Middle East Politics

In 2011, public movements in Arab countries, in addition to the termination of past political experience -infamous democratic development level of the region-, have destructed the thesis defended by certain analysts that the Islamic world in particular and the Arab world in general is incompatible with democracy. The Arab political scene has gained a new dimension with these revolutions and has taken an opportunity to get rid of the Western pressure. However, the regimes changes and the wipe-off of dictators from political scenes are not new in the Middle East. The emergence of new social movements in civil societies, the coming of Islamic political parties into the power in Turkey, Tunisia and finally in Egypt and the salience of structures in which democratic transformations have spread into the grassroots have led to the experience of a new era changing the fundamental dynamics of the political structure continued long years in the Middle East. Within this scope, in this panel it is aimed to analyze and discuss the collapse of dictatorial orders, how new social movements and Islamic political parties will take place, what kind of impacts they will have and what sort of transformations they will generate in the new political order of new Middle East.

- Political Parties and Election Systems
- Constitution-Making Process and Social Participation
- New Security Understanding in the Middle East and the Actors
- (Dis)armament and Nuclear Weapons

- Alternative Democratization Wave
- Policy of Global Powers and International Organizations towards the Middle East
- International Intervention and Human Rights

Panel 3: Religion and Society

The importance of religion in the Middle East politics and especially impacts of religious differences on the conflicts of the region are indisputable facts. This situation reveals the fact that in order to understand the Middle East politics correctly, the religious structure of the region has to be well-analyzed. The emergence of Islamic movements linked to the political Islamic tradition with the developments experienced within the scope of Arab Spring and the soaring discussion between parties of religious radicals and seculars in Israel seem to have important place in the future of the Middle East. Within this framework papers concerning the subjects below are expected:

- Religious Structures and Administrations in the Middle East
- Religious Movements and Communities in the Middle East
- Political Islam and Future of Islamic Tradition
- Religion-Society Relation in the Middle East
- Social Transformation in the Middle East and Its Political Effects

Panel 4: Turkey-Middle East Relations

After AK Party's coming to the power, the most determinative area of activism having been experienced in Turkish foreign policy is the new foreign policy vision towards the Middle East. This new Middle East oriented policy is closely related to definition of AK Party's political Islam. Another determinative element is that the success of approaches developed by the new Turkish foreign policy is being discussed on the basis of the Middle East policies. Within the context Turkey-Middle East relations, outputs of approaches like "zero problem policy with neighbors", "maximum cooperation", "integrated foreign policy", rhythmic diplomacy", order-setting country" towards the region have been developed on the policies such as "mediation", "high-level strategic cooperation agreements", "lifting visa requirements", "economic integration"; and the concrete indicator of these approaches has generally been discussed on the bases of these outputs. Discussion of "identity" dimension which determines the dynamics of these policies have been carried out within the context of "new Ottomanism" and "Turkish model". The success of these foreign policy tools and identity-based foreign policy vision will be subjected to an important test especially in the new Middle East order of the post-Arab Spring period. Within this scope papers focusing on the subjects below are expected:

- New Turkish Foreign Policy in New Middle East

- Arab Awakening and Turkish Foreign Policy
- Turkish Attitudes towards the Middle East Issues
- New Turkish- Israeli relations
- Political Economy of Turkey's Middle East Policies

Panel 5: Iran

The energy resources it has, its regime based on political Islam; and seeking for regional and global power generated by a deep-rooted state tradition have led Iran to be one of the mostly-spoken countries of the region. While one of the most important developments in the contemporary Middle East is the developments experienced within the scope of Arab Spring, the other issue is the increasing pressures of Israel, the USA and other Western countries over Iran and the risk changing into an armed conflict. The attitude taken by Iran within the scope of Arab Spring and its disagreement in this issue with Turkey, an important neighbor of Iran in the region, are also important subjects required to be analyzed. Within this framework, papers are expected regarding the subject titles below:

- Iran in the Global System and in the Regional Sub-system
- Nuclear Programme of Iran and Possibility of Armed Intervention
- Arab Spring and Iran
- Iran and New Turkish Foreign Policy: Cooperation and Crisis Areas
- Domestic Politics in Iran: Crisses and Actors

Panel 6: Israeli Issue

In the post-September 11 period, the victory of Hamas in 2006 elections, the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza, "security wall" constructed between the West Bank and Israel, the Second Intifada (Uprising), increasing weight of right-wing extremism in the Israeli politics and thus the Lebanese and Gaza attacks and the increasing Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the Wikileaks documents putting Al-Fatah into a difficult situation and finally Arab Spring have added new dimensions into the Palestine question. Among these developments, specifically Arab Spring, as in the case of the First Intifada, is conspicuous, which could be the most influential development in the future of Palestine issue. Apart from short-term effects like the end of Egypt's isolation policy against Gaza, the start of talks between Hamas and Al-Fatah, Arab Spring has a long-term effect on the reconfiguration of the regional balance of power effective in the Palestine question. The stand to be taken by Israel to Arab Spring, the states of regional powers whose regimes have changed recently and great powers' policies towards the issues of the new era will play a significant role in the Palestine issue. The subject titles of presentations considered to be made are as follows:

- Arab Spring and Israeli Issue
- Future of Domestic Politics of Palestine

- New Approaches to Israeli Issue
- Formation of Domestic Politics in Israel and New Dynamics
- Obstacles to Peace

Panel 7: Economy

The global crisis and the following regional crises have re-brought the political economy of the Middle East in the international system into the agenda. In addition to the traditional actors determining the economy of the Middle East such as the USA, Russia and the European Union; the involvements of new actors such as China, Turkey and Brazil into this competition area have been reshaping of the political economy of the Middle East. In the existing global economic order, a new economic model is required, which enables sustainable development out of energy-oriented economic systems and puts new production means into action. In this panel, subjects to be discussed are as follows:

- Energy Resources and Policies
- Political Economy of The Middle East
- Economic Development and Social Transformation
- The Middle East in the World Economy
- New Economic actors in The Middle East

Paper Proposals

Paper proposals should be around 500 words with a short-bio attached and mailed to middleeastcongress@gmail.com as word or pdf file.

Panel proposals are also welcome. Proposed panels should preferably include one chair and three or four paper presenters.

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