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Advance Notice

The NZIIA major conference event of 2011 is to be held in Wellington on 2 August 2011, at Turnbull House, Bowen Street, Wellington

The Arab Spring: What are the driving forces; Where is it heading; What are the Implications for the region and beyond?

For the past seven months international attention has been focussed on the extraordinary events unfolding in the Middle East and across North Africa. Undeniably it would seem a process of fundamental change is taking place. One that is not externally inspired but inwardly driven with the pursuit of self-determination at its core. Also one that few observers had forecast was imminent in the region's turbulent history.

The phenomenon that has become known as 'the Arab Spring' is not of incidental or passing interest to New Zealand. For reasons to do with trade and investment, strategic and security considerations, and cultural and religious affinities, the region is one of close concern to us. What happens there does matter, demonstrably so, to New Zealand and individual New Zealanders.

For that reason the NZIIA has brought together for this event a high profile group of participants from overseas and from within New Zealand, recognised for their specialist knowledge of the Middle East and of particular countries in the region. Each of the speakers is well-placed to address the three key questions that underpin the conference theme; Why is the 'Arab Spring' occurring now? What are the likely short to medium-term outcomes? What could be the long-term consequences? And specifically, how might significant New Zealand's interests be affected?

From overseas:

Prof. Amin Saikal, Australian National University, Canberra. Specialty: Egypt and her close neighbours
Prof. Mark N Katz, George Mason University, Virginia USA. Specialty: Transnational revolutionary movements
Prof. Tim Niblock, University of Exeter, UK. Specialty: Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States
Prof. Eyal Zisser, Tel Aviv University, Israel. Specialty: Israel's neighbours and West Asia

From New Zealand:

Prof Dov Bing, University of Waikato. Specialty; Israel-Palestine
Prof Bill Harris, University of Otago. Specialty: Syria-Lebanon
Prof. Nigel Parson (tbc), Massey University. Specialty: Israel-Palestine
Dr Weshah Razzak, Arab Planning Institute. Specialty: Political and Economic Institutions and the Arab Spring.

We believe the conference will be very timely. We are confident it will appeal to a range of New Zealand exporters and importers and to the public policy and strategic/security community. As well as to academics, NGOs, media, and to the general public.

The final conference programme and registration form will be issued in the near future.

There will be a registration fee of \$80

Time: Registration and Coffee from 8.15am. Welcome and Opening Address: 8.30am