When the Arab Spring began two years ago Turkey was held up as a role model for the future Arab regimes. This was a model that the Turkish political elite, the ruling Justice and Progress Party, was only too happy to provide. As Turkey tried to become a dominant player in the region, and indeed in the world at large, the policy Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu dubbed “zero problems with neighbors”, became a policy of “problems with all the neighbors”. Turkey’s relations with Arab states, particularly with Syria took on a more interventionist hue that came to be dubbed “neo-Ottomanism” with reference to the Ottoman past. As the Syrian crisis deepened, Turkey became more and more mired in a “Sunni Muslim Front”, with Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, The Syrian rebels and the Islamic Brotherhood on the one side and, Iran, Basher Esad, Iraq and Hizballah on the other. This talk aims to provide an updated perspective on developments in the region.

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A reception will follow