

Turkey's Future Role in the "Arab Spring"

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What kind of role can and should Turkey play in "Arab Spring" countries exiting authoritarian rule?

As Egyptians and Tunisians vote to replace ousted despots and the Syrian government teeters on the brink, Turkey's role in the "Arab Spring" is under scrutiny. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey became a nation state, turning its face to Europe and abandoning the Middle East. In the last decade, this has changed. Turkey has witnessed record-breaking economic growth. It is no longer a poor country desperately seeking accession to the European Union. It has a \$1.1 trillion economy, a powerful army, and aspirations to shape the region in its image. As political turmoil paralyzes the Middle East and economic meltdown devastates much of Mediterranean Europe, Turkey is one of the only countries in the area that has been spared. Accordingly, Ankara is exerting influence over the "Arab Spring." What kind of role can and should Turkey play in countries exiting authoritarian rule?

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