

Ayalon: Regional instability could last a generation

By NADAV SHEMER
10/29/2012 16:31

Deputy foreign minister says he would not be surprised if the Arab Spring spawns eight new states in the near future.



PHOTO: YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon predicted Monday that regional instability could continue for one generation, saying that it would not surprise him if the Arab world splits into 30 separate states in the near future.

The Arab League currently consists of 22 members from across the Middle East and North Africa, including Syria, which was suspended in November 2011, and the Palestinian Authority.

“When we talk about the so-called Middle Eastern Spring, we are seeing something that is very similar to what happened in the Soviet Union,” Ayalon said at the opening to the annual Go4Europe conference in Tel Aviv.

“A dictatorial regime, a police state, suppresses all inner conflicts in the society. But when the strong regime falls, for whatever reason, everything comes out.”

“You have to remember that aside from Egypt, all the Arab countries are artificial. They were created by two European gentlemen, Sykes and Picot, British and French, who divided up areas of influence on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire – irrespective of nationalities, tribes and other geopolitical considerations,” he continued.

Ayalon said that regional instability creates complications for investors who are interested in emerging markets.

However, he also put a positive spin on the situation, saying that the Sunni- Shi'ite conflict and internal schisms within both branches of Islam are eroding the unity of the Arab League and reducing the likelihood of “Arab boycotts and OPEC extortion.”