

# ***Dateline: Erdoğan's Grand Ambitions***

by Burak Bekdil

**B**y June 2015, the Turks will have gone to the ballot box three times in a span of fifteen months: local polls in March 2014, the presidential race in August 2014, and parliamentary elections next June 2015. Turkey's ruling Islamists, under the roof of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), are probably heading for their ninth electoral victory in thirteen years. But in the longer term, a simple win may not suffice to keep afloat this coalition of Islamists, conservatives, Sunni supremacists, business cronies, and liberals. AKP's ambitions go beyond winning elections, and although it remains the most powerful political grouping in Turkey, with its votes now possibly at a saturation point, the party may be vulnerable to potential externalities. For now, Turks seem to have ignored the worst corruption scandal in their political history,<sup>1</sup> but there are no guarantees that they will keep the stunning events of last December out of their memories forever.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Sol Portal* (Istanbul), [Dec. 17, 2013](#), June 24, 2014; Ana Sayfa, "[Darbenin Degil Rezilligin Tarihi](#)," *Asal Medya* (Istanbul), June 24, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Sol Portal*, [Dec. 20, 2013](#); Mehmet Yilmaz, "[Bu nasıl ustalik anlayan var mi?](#)" *Hürriyet* (Istanbul), Jan. 3, 2014.



*Once the best of allies, Fethullah Gülen (right), in self-exile in rural Pennsylvania, and Turkish prime minister Erdoğan openly clashed in 2013 over what looked like a power-sharing matter.*

## **A Family Feud**

Something "Nordic," i.e., political transparency and lack of tolerance for nepotism and corruption, appeared briefly in the notoriously corrupt Crescent and Star in December 2013. Along with nearly fifty other high-profile suspects, police arrested the sons of three cabinet ministers, including that of the interior minister, on charges of corruption.<sup>3</sup> But a few hours later, everything was back to normal: Five police chiefs in charge of the operation, along with dozens of

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<sup>3</sup> *Sol Portal*, [Dec. 17](#), [Dec. 18](#), [Dec. 19](#), [Dec. 20, 2013](#).

other officers whom government bigwigs thought may have been their accomplices, had been removed from duty.<sup>4</sup>

Prime Minister

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his nomenklatura rarely disappoint. After the first shock, they announced their verdict on the affair: The arrested were innocent before trial. They had not even examined any of the prosecution's evidence which, by law, must be secret until court proceedings open. But they were certain that the investigation was the work of the clandestine network operated by the powerful Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen and his men in the police force and judiciary.<sup>5</sup> Once the best of allies, Gülen, in self-exile in rural Pennsylvania, and Erdoğan had openly clashed earlier in 2013 over what looked like a power-sharing matter.<sup>6</sup> Gülen, whose Hizmet movement runs hundreds of charter schools in the United States and more than eighty other countries, had his men systematically running up the ladders of Turkey's bureaucracy under Erdoğan's nod. Ideological differences and the Gülen network's "dangerous rise to power" had already begun to unnerve Erdoğan in 2011. Last year, AKP passed legislation to close down all private tutorial schools in Turkey. A quarter of those schools belonged to Hizmet.<sup>7</sup>

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The police officers involved in the affair were removed from duty one by one, but that was not the end of Erdoğan's troubles.

Unknown sources began to upload recordings of telephone conversations to various social media platforms—conversations that in any decent country could cause a public uproar and bring the collapse of any government. The recordings detailed how Erdoğan controlled the media; how his business cronies donated vast amounts of money to his son's foundation; how the son, despite orders from Erdoğan, was unable to get rid of stacks of cash he kept at his home; and how Erdoğan ordered businessmen to buy newspapers or to sack journalists.<sup>8</sup> Erdoğan denied any wrongdoing and claimed that all the audio material on the Internet was a "montage."<sup>9</sup> Thousands of pages of evidence the police had produced after several months of technical and physical surveillance were all declared bogus and the work of dark forces.

By March 2014, Erdoğan was clearly nervous as his former and powerful friend had now become a powerful foe. Gülen's men were knocking on every door in the Anatolian heartland, a traditional Erdoğan stronghold, to convince voters not to vote for a corrupt man.<sup>10</sup> About ten days before the elections, senior Hizmet figures privately claimed that Erdoğan's vote would drop to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., [Dec. 17](#), [Dec. 18](#), [Dec. 19](#), [Dec. 22, 2013](#); Yılmaz, "[Hadi Gelin 'Büyük Fotoğrafı' Bakalım](#)."

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Monitor* (Washington, D.C.), Aug. 16, 2013; *Ulusal Kanal* (Istanbul), [Nov. 15, 2013](#).

<sup>6</sup> *Al-Jazeera TV* (Doha), Jan. 30, 2014; *Avrupa-Postasi* (Hamburg), [Nov. 20, 2013](#).

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Jazeera TV*, [Nov. 21, 2013](#); *Milliyet* (Istanbul), Nov. 26, 2013; *The Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 27, 2013; *Hürriyet* (Istanbul), Dec. 3, 2013.

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<sup>8</sup> "Yalçın Akdoğan ile Nermin Yurteri Ses kaydı 2," You Tube, Mar. 11, 2014; *Zaman* (Istanbul), [Feb. 13, 2014](#); *Radikal* (Istanbul), [Feb. 2, 2014](#).

<sup>9</sup> "[Başbakan Erdoğan: Ses Kaydı Montaj Dedi Showhaber](#)," Vıdivodo, accessed Oct. 7, 2014; NTVMSNBC, [Feb. 25, 2014](#).

<sup>10</sup> *Anadolu Ajansı* (Ankara), [Mar. 19, 2014](#); AK Party website, Mar. 24, 2014.

around 35 percent, from nearly 50 percent in 2011. They were underestimating Turkish pragmatism and overestimating ethics in Turkish society.

### **Erdoğan Is the Average Turk's Mirror Image**

My 2006 analysis offered this assessment:

The average Justice and Development Party (AKP) politician is the mirror image of the average Turkish voter: devoutly Muslim but pragmatist, anti-Western in genes but pro-European Union in anticipation of economic/political benefits, collectivist in theory but individualist in practice, and moralist when “the other” goes corrupt but tolerant [to corruption] when “we” do. Hence, the unusually large margin of tolerance for corruption and mal-governance in Turkey.

All that, however, does not change the typology of the average Turkish voter, the one who is willing to tolerate corruption as long as things go smoothly for him, his family, friends, and their families and friends.<sup>11</sup>

Instead of a cold reception at the peak of the corruption scandal, Erdoğan was given a hero's welcome by party loyalists across Turkey, including a bizarre-looking group who greeted the prime minister after having wrapped themselves in white clothes, which



*Female supporters of the ruling Turkish AK Party wear masks of Prime Minister Erdoğan during an election rally in Konya, March 31, 2014. Erdoğan's government faced a sweeping corruption scandal in December 2013 when police arrested the sons of three cabinet ministers along with nearly fifty other high-profile suspects on charges of corruption. Instead of a cold reception at the peak of the corruption scandal, Erdoğan was given a hero's welcome by party loyalists across Turkey.*

symbolize death in Islamic tradition. The message was clear: “We're with you to the death!”<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, the list of usual suspects Erdoğan claimed were trying to topple his government by means of a coup was getting bigger and richer in humor. Shortly before the March polls, the list included “intergalactic conspirators, dark forces, most of the Western hemisphere's prominent news outlets, Jewish diaspora, Germany's national carrier, Germany, the U.S. ambassador to Ankara, the United States, the interest rate lobby, financiers, traders, and the robotic lobby, and the preacher lobby [the Gülen movement].”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Burak Bekdil, “[Why Is AKP the Mirror Image of the Average Voter?](#)” *Hürriyet*, Mar. 29, 2006

<sup>12</sup> *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), [Dec. 23, 2013](#).

<sup>13</sup> Burak Bekdil, “[There is a thief!](#)” *Hürriyet*, Mar. 7, 2014.

In reality, in 2014, Turkey's sociopolitical demography became an even more fertile ground for the AKP than it was before.

It was not for nothing that Erdoğan has prescribed that every Turkish family should have at least three and “even four or five” children each. Erdoğan knew that every new, jobless young man would either end up at a religious order or turn up at the ballot box as a pious but poor Muslim voting for the AKP, or both. The Turkish population is estimated to be five-to six times larger than the Kurdish. So, mathematically speaking, greater Kurdish birth rates do not mean greater Kurdish preeminence. Also, more importantly, it is a fact that Erdoğan traditionally wins half of the Kurdish votes, too. So, he would not mind if his prescription is also followed by Kurds.

**Erdoğan traditionally wins half of the Kurdish votes.**

### Turkey by the Numbers

Turkey was not in good shape by any internationally-accepted criteria, except for a steadily growing economy. There are only three Turkish universities in the world's top 500.<sup>14</sup> The infant mortality rate in Turkey is a grim 17 per 1,000 live births<sup>15</sup> while 24 percent of children aged 10 to 14 are in the labor market in Turkey.<sup>16</sup> Per capita health spending is one-tenth of Italy's. According to the World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report*, Turkey ranks 120 in a list of 136

countries.<sup>17</sup> Press freedom in Turkey, according to Freedom House's world map, falls into the red zone of “not free.”<sup>18</sup>

And the *World Press Freedom Index* of Reporters Without Borders puts Turkey's world ranking at 154.<sup>19</sup>

But there is one globally credible index that sums it all up. The United Nations Development Program's *Human Development Report*, a comparative measure of life expectancy, education, standards of living, and quality of life, reveals whether a country is developed, developing, or underdeveloped. On that index, Turkey ranks 69, with about a \$10,000 per capita income.<sup>20</sup>

### The Winner Wins Again

On March 30, 2014, Erdoğan's AKP emerged as the winner, garnering 43.3 percent of the national vote, based on votes cast for city councils in which voters choose “a party” not a municipal candidate. But it was a slightly bitter victory. Erdoğan had managed to defeat his rivals despite a slew of embarrassing scandals but was given a polite warning. His votes had dropped to 43.3 percent from 49.8 percent in 2011 as two million fewer Turks voted for him.

This was important because Erdoğan's longer-term game plan is to

14 “[World University Rankings, 2013-14](#),” *Times Higher Education* (London), accessed Oct. 13, 2014.

15 “[Mortality rate, infant](#),” World Bank, Washington, D.C., accessed Oct. 8, 2014.

16 “[Child Labour Persists around the World](#): More than 13 Percent of Children 10-14 Are Employed,” International Labour Organization, Geneva, June 10, 1996.

17 [Gender Gap Report 2013](#) (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2013), p. 10.

18 “[Turkey](#),” *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House, Washington, D.C., accessed Oct. 27, 2014.

19 “[Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Authoritarian Regional Models](#),” *World Press Freedom Index 2014*, Reporters Without Borders, Washington, D.C., accessed Oct. 8, 2014.

20 [Human Development Report](#) (New York: U.N. Development Programme, 2014) p. 40.





*Ahmet Davutoğlu (right), formerly Erdoğan's foreign minister, happily took the job of prime minister and pledged absolute loyalty to Erdoğan.*

amend the constitution to launch an executive presidency instead of the present largely symbolic powers the president has now. To take any constitutional amendment to referendum, a party would need at least 330 seats in parliament. If March 30 were a parliamentary election instead of municipal, with 43.3 percent of the vote, Erdoğan would only have won around 290 parliamentary seats.

All the same, 43.3 percent was good enough to convince him that he should run for the presidency on August 10. In order to defeat Erdoğan, two main opposition parties, the social democrat Republican People's Party (CHP) and the right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), agreed on a joint candidate, conservative professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, who had run the Saudi-sponsored Organization of the Islamic Conference. The opposition strategists had calculated that a conservative candidate could snatch votes from Erdoğan's grassroots supporters. Maybe he did, but it appears he lost more from CHP's left-wing and social democratic grassroots.

Erdoğan won 51.8 percent of the vote while İhsanoğlu finished at 38 percent. Erdoğan had succeeded in becoming Turkey's

twelfth president. During his presidential campaign, Erdoğan already signaled that he would be an unconventional "running and sweating" president, an explicit reference to his intention to force the limits of the constitution through executive powers. All he needed was a new prime minister to succeed him, someone to whom he could entrust the executive branch and whose strings he could pull from the presidential palace. That man was Ahmet Davutoğlu, his foreign minister. Davutoğlu happily took the job and pledged absolute loyalty to Erdoğan.<sup>21</sup>

### Behind the Numbers

The March 30 and August 10 elections require more detailed analysis to understand what really lies behind what looks like a simple victory for AKP. The following table helps explain where AKP's popularity stands today in comparison to when it first emerged on the political scene in 2002.

The table below shows that AKP's votes doubled in number between 2002 and 2014 from nearly eleven million to more than twenty-one million. But caution is required. Despite this sharp increase, votes cast for Erdoğan in presidential elections do not reflect votes for the party. First, some Turks outside the AKP base (especially from among the nationalists and non-AKP Islamists) voted for Erdoğan due to ideology and his personal charisma. Second, some fiercely anti-Erdoğan Turks also voted for him, calculating that he would pose less danger to Turkey if he took up the largely symbolic post of presidency and gave up his executive powers as prime minister. Third, the voter turnout in August was exceptionally

<sup>21</sup> Al-Jazeera TV, [Aug. 27, 2014](#).

Election	Votes for AKP	AKP % of Actual Votes	Total Registered Voters
2002 (parliamentary)	10,800,000	34.2	41,400,000
2004 (municipal)	13,500,000	41.7	43,500,000
2007 (parliamentary)	16,300,000	46.6	42,500,000
2009 (municipal)	15,400,000	38.4	48,000,000
2011 (parliamentary)	21,400,000	49.8	50,200,000
2014 (municipal)	19,400,000	43.3	52,700,000
2014 (presidential)	21,400,000	51.8	52,700,000

low (74 percent, compared to nearly 90 percent in March), which resulted in a slender 51.8 percent for Erdoğan. Many opposition voters did not show up, expecting that Erdoğan would win.

Another careful analysis is required to understand how Erdoğan's popularity changed since 2011 when it peaked. In 2011, AKP won 21.4 million votes, or 49.8 percent when the total number of voters was 50.2 million. Between 2011 and 2014, some 2.5 million new voters were registered, bringing the total number of voters to 52.7 million. If in the March 30 elections AKP (or Erdoğan) had maintained the same level of support as in 2011, the party would have garnered 26.2 million votes. Instead, its votes stood at 19.4 million—a loss of 6.8 million. This assumption excludes invalid votes but does not change the fact that AKP lost a significant number of votes despite what it portrays as an overwhelming election victory. There has been widespread speculation about election fraud, but none has been officially or independently proven. A report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe expressed “a certain level of confidence in the electoral process.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> “[Republic of Turkey](#), Presidential Election, 10 August 2014,” Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Warsaw, May 7-9, 2014.

### “Champion of Turkey’s Greatness”

In the days when the world’s foreign policy intelligentsia had the habit of mentioning Davutoğlu’s name with euphemisms such as “Turkey’s Kissinger,” “champion of Turkey’s greatness,” and “always the hero of his own narrative,” this author referred to him as “Dr. Strangelove,” “The Man Who Made Tomorrow,” or “The Man Who Rides the Thunder.” Turkey’s foreign policy under Davutoğlu was “a not-so-funny Turkish *opera buffa* with the main characters resembling those of [Miguel de] Cervantes’s famous book.”<sup>23</sup>

Davutoğlu is otherwise known to be a fine gentleman: an honest, modest, hard-working man who wants the best for his nation—though not always in the most realistic way. His tolerance for dissenting opinion is considerably more Western compared to Erdoğan’s. Davutoğlu is also Turkey’s first prime minister—after the late Bülent Ecevit—who is entirely free of any corruption allegations. In other words, Davutoğlu is Mr. Clean.

Unfortunately, the fundamentals of Davutoğlu’s foreign policy will not

<sup>23</sup> *Hürriyet*, [Sept. 13, 2011](#).

miraculously metamorphose from blind ideology into reason. Previously, Turkey essentially had two foreign ministers, Erdoğan and Davutoğlu; now it will have three with the appointment of EU minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, as foreign minister.

It is out of the question that the third man will devise his own foreign policy independent of Erdoğan and Davutoğlu. It will be old wine in a new bottle. So from now on, three gentlemen, instead of two, will be fighting coup makers in the Middle East if they oppose the Muslim Brotherhood, hoping to pray at the al-Aqsa mosque in the “Palestinian capital Jerusalem,” working to depose Syria’s Bashar Assad, maintaining a game of pretension between the neo-Ottomans and the Iranian regime, aggressively seeking Iranian regional hegemony, and working day and night for the advancement of Turkish Sunni Islamism in former Ottoman lands.

But Davutoğlu could be Erdoğan’s unwilling gift to Turkey, especially if Davutoğlu, with his intellectual honesty, reviewed the applicability of twenty-first-century Turkish Sunni supremacy in former Ottoman lands. Or if he stopped viewing Ankara’s foreign relations with the former Ottoman lands as domestic Turkish affairs. Or if he stopped believing that he has a holy mission to correct the “incorrect” flow of history.<sup>24</sup>

### **Everything May Not Be Coming up Roses**

Ostensibly, everything in the house of AKP proceeds perfectly. The party is heading for its ninth election victory within thirteen

**Erdoğan remains unchallenged:  
The opposition is weak.**

years, a first time in Turkish political history. Erdoğan remains unchallenged: The opposition is weak, to put it

mildly. Turks continue to admire the president despite embarrassing graft scandals. He won the presidential election in the first round as he promised. He has a loyal man as prime minister in Davutoğlu, who is not likely to object to his leader’s de facto executive presidency and one-man show. Davutoğlu is known to every Turk, and to nearly half of them, he is the champion of a foreign policy that promises the revival of their collapsed imperial power. He is pro-Hamas and anti-Israeli, a perfect recipe for popularity at the ballot box. And luckily, on September 20, 2014, Davutoğlu made a heroic start when the jihadist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) released forty-six Turkish hostages and the three Iraqi consulate employees it had held since it attacked the Turkish consulate in Mosul on June 11.<sup>25</sup> No doubt, Davutoğlu was the darling of all Turks when he smiled and posed for the cameras together with the cheerful hostages, which included the consul general, disembarking the plane that took them to safety and the embrace of their loved ones.<sup>26</sup> “Only Davutoğlu could snatch them from the jihadists unharmed,” one taxi driver told this author after their release. As he kept driving, he added: “Don’t misunderstand, sir. I have never voted for AKP. I dislike Erdoğan. I am a nationalist. But I think I will vote for Davutoğlu next year.” What more could a fresh contender hope for?

But this is only a partial narrative. As noted, election results suggest that the AKP’s votes may now have saturated at around

<sup>24</sup> “[Turkey’s Foreign Policy Objectives in a Changing World](#),” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., Feb. 10, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> *The Guardian* (London), [June 11, 2014](#).

<sup>26</sup> Reuters, [Sept. 20, 2014](#).

twenty million, and there is no meaningful sociopolitical data explaining why AKP's vote should significantly rise under Davutoğlu. With an increasing number of Turks qualifying to vote next June, AKP's nationwide vote may be pressured down between what it won in March (43.3 percent) and the critical 40 percent threshold.

Davutoğlu may appeal to some Turks, but others will be loyal only to Erdoğan and not even to his choice of the prime minister. "I will never vote for anyone other than Erdoğan," a waiter at a fancy Ankara restaurant told me. "Davutoğlu can only be his second-in-command, and I don't want to



*Abdullah Gül (right), a co-founder of the AKP, was completely sidelined by his closest political associate, Erdoğan. In an unusual protest, Gül's wife Hayrünnisa (left) spoke to journalists when her husband was forced to vacate the presidential palace and angrily complained that "our devout comrades have betrayed us."*

vote for a second-in-command. I will abstain and wait for the next presidential elections [2019] to vote for Erdoğan again."

Not only that. To get Davutoğlu elected as prime minister at a party convention, Erdoğan had to exact an important sacrifice: that of Abdullah Gül, his predecessor at the presidential palace, the second most powerful AKP figure, and Erdoğan's closest political comrade since the late 1990s. Gül, along with Erdoğan, was the co-founder of AKP. He is always a calm voice. But apparently his wife is not. In an unusual protest, Hayrünnisa Gül spoke to journalists, shortly before the couple vacated the presidential palace, and angrily complained that "our devout comrades have betrayed us; they made us sorry, and I'll never forgive them for that."<sup>27</sup> She revealed a potentially major crack.

Gül, jobless for the moment, declared earlier that he is "too young to retire."<sup>28</sup> Completely sidelined by his closest political associate, the always-patient Gül will most probably wait to become a center of attraction for other disgruntled AKP members. Under a self-imposed party rule, no AKP member of parliament can run for the house for more than three uninterrupted terms.<sup>29</sup> That means more than seventy AKP bigwigs, including several present and former cabinet heavyweights, will have to retire, like Gül, in June. And, like Gül, they are too young to disappear from the political scene.

<sup>27</sup> "[Hayrünnisa Gül](#): Bizi çok üzdüler asıl intifadayı ben başlatacağım," You Tube, Aug. 20, 2014; Murat Yetkin, "[Hayrünnisa Gül](#): Asıl intifadayı ben başlatacağım," *Radikal*, Aug. 8, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> *Sabah* (Istanbul), [Jan. 30, 2013](#).

<sup>29</sup> [Parti Tuzuğu](#), AK Parti, 2002.



Despite reassuring statements from party leaders that “within AKP there will never be a split,”<sup>30</sup> most political observers think that these assurances indicate the party indeed fears a split. Some politicians speculate that a recently-launched, center-right party, the Center Party (MP), will house disgruntled AKP politicians “if Davutoğlu perform[s] worse than Erdoğan expects him to” next June.<sup>31</sup> A critical threshold could be if AKP’s vote drops to 40 percent or below.

Even if there is no split between Turkey’s conservatives under the roof of AKP, Erdoğan’s broader plans may face two serious challenges. Erdoğan’s first ambition is that Davutoğlu wins enough seats (at least 330 out of 550) to amend the constitution<sup>32</sup> and launch a de facto executive system that would give Erdoğan what he wants. If, as noted above, AKP’s votes stand around 43 percent, it will probably win around 290 seats. Even if AKP wins support for any constitutional amendment from Kurdish members of parliament (who traditionally win 20-25 seats), this will not suffice to pave the way for Erdoğan’s grand design.

Erdoğan’s (and his new prime minister’s) explicit struggle to win a constitutional majority in the June elections is proof that he is not comfortable with his current position despite his control of all levers of government and his disregard of the constitution. He wants a one-man show and does not want to be dependent on an ally.

**Erdoğan prefers to be a fully constitutional president, not one his opponents can accuse of violating the constitution.**

There are a number of reasons for this: First, the president is keenly aware that an undetermined part of AKP’s popularity stems from his own personal

charisma, and he does not know how well another man will perform in the future, no matter how much he supports him. Second, Erdoğan prefers to be a fully constitutional president, not one his opponents can constantly accuse of violating the constitution. Third, he fears that the present setting may one day be susceptible to inner strife and a split. He fully trusts Davutoğlu for the moment, but he once fully trusted Gülen, too. The chances that Davutoğlu may turn into a foe are slim but do exist. Erdoğan has never hidden his desire to avoid what he calls a “double-headed” administration (i.e., a government run by two people).<sup>33</sup> Still, in a span of less than two months, Erdoğan and Davutoğlu have made totally contradictory statements on various issues.

Erdoğan’s second ambition—which he has declared publicly several times—is to raise “devout[ly Islamic] generations.”<sup>34</sup> Later, in defense of his words, the president said, “Don’t expect a conservative party to raise atheist generations.”<sup>35</sup>

Erdoğan and his comrades have always won. But they are always tense. Often, they look pensive and unhappy. They are angry, always ready to pick a fight. Full command over nearly one half of Turkey will not satisfy them. They want to win the other half, the half they privately envy, the same half that smartly teases them and laughs at their childish “[Islamic] cause.” That half—

<sup>30</sup> *Analiz Merkezi* (Istanbul), Apr. 13, 2014; *Medyagündem* (Istanbul), [July 31, 2012](#).

<sup>31</sup> *Zaman*, July 7, 2014; *Sözcü Gazetesi* (Istanbul), [June 10, 2014](#).

<sup>32</sup> “*Anayasa için kritik eşik 330*,” *Hürriyet*, accessed Oct. 14, 2014; *Zaman*, [Oct. 12, 2012](#).

<sup>33</sup> *Hürriyet*, Oct. 21, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, [Feb. 2, 2012](#).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, [Feb. 2, 2012](#).

the human half—enjoys living life, defends the right to sin, and does not want to create a fake country, ostensibly dry and sin-free, but really a half-wet and sinful land. The AKP's leaders secretly know that theirs is a losing war, despite impressive victories at every political battle fought.

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