

Muslim Democrats in Turkey?

Gareth Jenkins

The Turkish general election of 3 November 2002 transformed the country's political landscape. In a damning indictment of their three and a half years in government, none of the members of the outgoing tripartite coalition won any seats in the new parliament. The Justice and Development Party (JDP), which had been formed just 15 months earlier as a result of a split in the Turkish Islamist movement, swept to power with a massive majority.

In the weeks following the elections, Turkish and foreign pundits avidly discussed what the JDP victory meant for the future of secularist, parliamentary democracy in Turkey and for the country's traditionally pro-Western foreign policy. Much of the debate centred on whether the JDP could really be described as 'Islamist' or whether, as its leaders insisted, its members were merely 'conservative democrats'.¹ In the West, particularly in the US, such questions had taken on a new resonance in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and Washington's subsequent 'war on terrorism'. In addition to its strategic importance, Turkey had now become a propaganda asset, a riposte to fears of an impending clash of civilisations between Islam and the West. To many in the Bush administration, Turkey's membership of NATO and candidacy for the EU demonstrated that the Muslim world was not inevitably inimical to the West or irrevocably destined to be ruled by authoritarian regimes. In December 2002 Paul Wolfowitz, the US Deputy Secretary of Defence, cited Turkey as 'a valuable model for Muslim majority countries striving to realise the goals of freedom, secularism and democracy'.²

Yet the West's enthusiasm for the 'Turkish model' has never been shared by others in the Muslim world, many of whom remain sceptical of Turkey's Islamic credentials. In the Middle East such doubts have been compounded by bitter memories of the final years of the Ottoman Empire³ and resentment at the modern republic's close defence ties with Israel. The Turkish version of secularism tends to be seen not so much as the separation of religion and state but as anti-religious, the limitation – even suppression – by a military-led elite of the expression of Islamic piety. As a

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result, secularism as practised in Turkey has to change in order for it to become an acceptable model for other Muslim countries to follow. Yet the fiercely secular Turkish General Staff (TGS), adamant that the JDP has an 'Islamist' agenda, is committed to preventing any attempt by the new government to erode or relax the current concept of secularism.

Islamism and secularism in the Turkish context

The designation 'Islamist' is a relative term usually used – almost invariably by outside observers⁴ – to describe a movement whose members advocate political change⁵ in order to regulate, in whole or in part, governance and public conduct in accordance with their definition of Islamic principles. As a result, 'Islamism' tends to vary according to different interpretations of the requirements of Islam and the prevailing conditions in, and political culture of, the society in which they are to be applied. There is also considerable variety in the methods used by different Islamist groups, with some resorting to violence while others opt to pursue their goals through the ballot box. However, nearly all Islamist groups are united in their cultural and political antagonism towards the West, particularly the US, and advocate a foreign policy based on Muslim solidarity rather than 'cross-civilisational' alliances with non-Muslim states.

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In Turkey, Islamism has also come to be associated with opposition to the indigenous pro-Western state ideology of Kemalism, named after Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881–1938) who founded the modern republic out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. Ataturk regarded the form of Islam as practised under the Ottomans as an obscurantist obstacle to development. During the 1919–22 Turkish War of Liberation he had used Islam as a rallying call to mobilise popular support against an invading Greek army; Turkey's first constitution named

Islam as the state religion. However, once Ataturk had consolidated his grip on power he pushed through a series of reforms which gradually expunged Islam from public life. In the period 1924–35, these included:

- the abolition of the caliphate, religious schools and Islamic *sharia* law courts and the subsequent introduction of new laws based on the Swiss civil, German criminal and Italian economic codes;
- the closure of Islamic shrines, the banning of the religious brotherhoods known as *tarikats* and the adoption of the Western Gregorian calendar;
- the removal of Islam as the state religion and the redesignation of Turkey as a secular state;

- the adoption of European numerals and replacement of an Arabic with a Latin script;
- the granting of political rights to women;
- the adoption of the metric system;
- the replacement of Arabic with Turkish for the call to prayer;
- the introduction of family names; and
- the change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday.

Under the Ottoman Empire, identity had been based on religion rather than ethnicity. Atatürk⁶ sought to create a Turkish national consciousness. He ordered the rewriting of history books in line with a theory known as the ‘Turkish History Thesis’, which sought to demonstrate that Turks formed a distinct racial entity that could be traced back over 2,000 years.⁷ As a result, rather than forming the core of collective identity, conversion to Islam was implicitly presented as a later, relatively superficial, accretion. The multi-ethnic composition of the Turkish population, particularly its large Kurdish minority, was simply ignored.

Since his death, the personality cult that accompanies the inculcation of Atatürk’s ideas has developed quasi-mystical overtones. Not only is Kemalism enshrined in the Turkish constitution as the official state ideology, but it has acquired many of the trappings of a fully fledged religion.⁸ Portraits of Atatürk hang on the walls of every classroom and government office as well as most business premises, and statues and busts adorn village and town squares. Kemalism has its own equivalent of feast days (public holidays on which Atatürk is ceremonially remembered), a place of pilgrimage (his mausoleum in Ankara) and blasphemy (laws criminalising insults to his memory). Lessons on Atatürk’s teachings and the history of his reforms are compulsory at every level of the educational system. His Great Speech of October 1927, the *Nutuk*, in which he summarised the Turkish War of Liberation, is virtually a sacred book, and his pronouncements on a vast range of subjects are cited to support arguments as if they were holy writ.

As a result, secularism in Turkey has come to mean not the removal of religion from the public sphere, but the replacement of one creed with another.⁹ This distinction has important repercussions for the definition of what it means to be secularist or Islamist and imbues what would otherwise appear to be relatively minor issues with a critical importance. Almost all Turkish secularists are Kemalists. Mere non-observance of the rites of Kemalism (for example, participation in commemorative ceremonies, displaying Atatürk’s portrait or visiting his mausoleum) by someone known to be a devout Muslim tends to be interpreted by Kemalists as an act of Islamist rebellion. Similarly, the issue of women covering their heads has taken on an iconic value. Women are currently

banned from wearing headscarves while working in state institutions or attending schools or universities. For these women, wearing a headscarf is usually seen as a religious obligation or question of personal choice. But for Kemalists it is a political statement, an assault on the ideological foundations of the state.

The rise of political Islam

Ataturk's reforms triggered a series of rebellions, particularly in the new republic's predominantly Kurdish southeastern provinces, where these rebellions combined elements of Islamism and incipient Kurdish nationalism. The most serious occurred in 1925 and was led by Sheikh Said, a Kurdish tribal chieftain and leading member of the Naqshbandi *tarikats*. All of the rebellions were ruthlessly crushed¹⁰ and the *tarikats* forced underground.

While the reforms had a major impact on Turkey's urban elite, they were less successful in penetrating rural areas, which still accounted for the vast majority of the population and where the practice of 'folk Islam' continued with little change. The introduction of multiparty democracy in 1946 provided politicians with an incentive to court the rural conservative vote. The first to do so was the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes, prime minister in 1950–60, who restored the call to prayer in Arabic, reintroduced religious lessons in schools, allowed Koranic recitations on state radio and built 15,000 new mosques.¹¹ Not only did Menderes tolerate the re-emergence of the *tarikats* but he actively sought the electoral endorsement of Said-i Nursi, the founder of the Nurcu *tarikat*, which grew to become the second largest in the country after the Naqshbandi.

In 1960 Menderes was toppled by a military coup and the Democrat Party banned.¹² It was replaced by the Justice Party (JP) under the leadership of Suleyman Demirel, who continued to court the rural conservative vote by building mosques and opening Imam Hatip clerical training schools. In 1970 an explicitly Islamist political party,¹³ the National Order Party, was established by Necmettin Erbakan, a member of the Naqshbandi *tarikat*. Before founding the party, Erbakan sought the blessing of the Naqshbandi Sheikh Mehmet Zahit Kotku and continued to consult frequently with him after the party was established.¹⁴ Most of the leaders of the party were also Naqshbandi although, initially at least, it included a large number of Nurcus.

The National Order Party was closed down following the 1971 military coup. In its place Erbakan founded the National Salvation Party, which won 11.8% of the vote in the 1973 general election and became a junior partner in a coalition government headed by the social democratic Republican People's Party (RPP) of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit.

The decision to enter the coalition was opposed by the Nurus, most of whom subsequently resigned from the party.¹⁵ But, even though its vote dipped to 8.5% in the next elections in 1977, the National Salvation Party succeeded in remaining in government, this time as a junior partner in coalition headed by the Justice Party. However, all existing political parties were closed down in the wake of the 1980 military coup and Erbakan, together with the other party leaders, was indefinitely banned from politics.

In 1983 Erbakan used a surrogate¹⁶ to found a new party, the Welfare Party, although he was not able to assume its leadership until his political ban was lifted in 1987. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s the Welfare Party steadily grew in electoral strength.¹⁷ The local elections of March 1994 established the party as a national force as it took control of 28 major municipalities, including Istanbul and Ankara. Less than two years later, in the general elections of December 1995 it emerged as the largest party in parliament with 21.3% of the popular vote and 158 seats in the 450-seat unicameral parliament.¹⁸

Although there is no doubt that the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed an upsurge in Islamist sentiment in Turkey,¹⁹ the electoral success of the Welfare Party was also fuelled by a well-funded, highly efficient party organisation and widespread public disillusion with the mainstream political parties. In addition to donations from Islamist businesses in Turkey, the Welfare Party was able to rely on a steady flow of funds from the National View Organisation (NVO), which Erbakan had established in the early 1970s amongst Turks living in Western Europe, mostly in Germany.²⁰

Inside Turkey the Welfare Party established a series of pious foundations and youth organisations, most importantly the National Youth Foundation (NYF), which provided social activities, scholarships and free lodging for university students. It developed the most efficient party machine in the country, complete with computer databases of party members and potential voters.²¹ The Welfare Party also had a remarkably active Women's Section. In poor urban areas in particular, female party workers from similar backgrounds visited potential women voters in their homes, even paying sick visits and attending family weddings and circumcisions.²²

It was among the poor that the Welfare Party's slogan of a 'Just Order' carried the greatest resonance. Most had seen their living standards eroded by persistently high rates of inflation and unemployment and had lost faith in the mainstream political parties, who had not only failed to deliver on their promises but become palpably riddled with corruption and nepotism. The Welfare Party's reputation for piety gave its promises some credibility.²³ Moreover, its mixture of populist economic policies and the rejection of Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy in favour of an alliance with other

Muslim states – with Turkey at their head – appeared to offer not only material prosperity but a restoration of national esteem.²⁴

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Erbakan had frequently referred to the Welfare Party as waging a *jihad*²⁵ and had made no attempt to contradict slogans chanted at party rallies, or speeches made by party officials, calling for the introduction of Islamic *sharia* law. Many in the Welfare Party were openly dismissive of parliamentary democracy.²⁶ Despite public denials by the party leaders, there is also no doubt that individuals on the fringes of the party had links to Islamist terrorist groups.²⁷

In June 1996, after a failed attempt by the mainstream secular parties to form a government, the Welfare Party took power in a coalition with the centre-right True Path Party, and Erbakan became Turkey's first avowedly Islamist prime minister. On taking office, Erbakan pledged his allegiance to secularism. But few in Turkey's Kemalist establishment were convinced; the powerful military, which had long seen itself as having an almost sacred duty to protect Kemalism, was particularly sceptical.²⁸

Caught between implementing a radical agenda, which would have antagonised the military, and maintaining the status quo, which would have frustrated Welfare Party voters, Erbakan chose what was probably the worst option, namely a series of high-profile gestures unsupported by any substantive changes. On taking office, in a calculated rebuke to Turkey's Western allies, Erbakan embarked on a series of visits to other Muslim countries, including Iran, Libya and Nigeria. In late 1996 the Welfare Party announced plans to form a trading bloc of eight Muslim countries²⁹ as a potential alternative to the EU, Turkey's main trading partner. Domestically Erbakan attempted no radical changes either in economic policy (such as trying to move towards an interest-free financial sector) or in the laws safeguarding Kemalist secularism. However, the Welfare Party did attempt to place a large number of its supporters in the government bureaucracy.³⁰

For the Turkish military, Erbakan's courting of states such as Iran and Libya, together with what they saw as attempts to infiltrate the machinery of government, were sufficient evidence of the Welfare Party's intentions. Their suspicions intensified when, on 11 January 1997, Erbakan hosted *tarikats* leaders at his official residence. There were also reports that the Welfare Party was contemplating allowing appeal to civilian courts for decisions of the Supreme Military Council, which the military feared could have led to the reinstatement of officers expelled for suspected fundamentalist sympathies.³¹

At the monthly meeting of the National Security Council on 28 February 1997, the military presented the government with a list of 18 measures to curb Islamist activity, ranging from restrictions on the Islamist media to the closure of private Koranic schools and courses. Heading the list was a proposal to extend compulsory continuous education from five to

eight years. The aim was to shut down the middle school sections of the Imam Hatip schools, which the military believed were being used to inculcate anti-secularist values.³²

Although Erbakan initially agreed to the measures, Welfare Party officials privately admitted that implementing them would alienate the party's grassroots. As the government prevaricated, the military stepped up the pressure: holding a series of public meetings to warn of the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism; encouraging NGOs to stage protests; privately pressing members of the True Path Party to resign from the coalition; and discreetly informing journalists that a full-blooded coup remained an option of last resort.³³ On 22 May 1997 the judiciary threw its weight behind the military campaign when the Public Prosecutor applied to the Constitutional Court for the closure of the Welfare Party on the grounds that it was attempting to undermine secularism.

Under intense public pressure, and with the coalition's parliamentary majority being gradually eroded by resignations from the True Path Party, Erbakan resigned as prime minister on 18 June 1997. Seven months later, the Welfare Party was closed down by the Constitutional Court and Erbakan banned from politics for five years.

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A new generation emerges

On 17 December 1997, as it became clear that the Constitutional Court was planning to outlaw the Welfare Party, a group of parliamentarians close to Erbakan founded the Virtue Party. Following the closure of the Welfare Party, most of its members joined the Virtue Party under the chairmanship of Recai Kutan, a longtime confidante of Erbakan.

The Virtue Party leadership was immediately faced with a dilemma: if it appeared to be a continuation of the Welfare Party, it risked closure by the Constitutional Court; but if it distanced itself from the Welfare Party, it might alienate that party's former supporters. In the end, the Virtue Party opted for a more moderate image, repeatedly stressing its commitment to secularism and appointing a number of secular women to its national executive.

Although the Welfare Party had been the only explicitly Islamist political party, most Turkish centre-right parties, such as the True Path Party and Motherland Party, had Islamist wings.³⁴ The founding philosophy of the Nationalist Action Party combined religion and ultra-nationalism in what its founder, Alparslan Turkes, described as a 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis'.³⁵

In the general elections of 18 April 1999, the Virtue Party secured only 15.4% of the vote. Many conservative voters switched parties, particularly to the Nationalist Action Party. As part of its attempt to project a more modern image, the Virtue Party had fielded several female candidates, three of whom were elected to parliament. Yet one of the women, Merve Kavakci, wore an Islamic headscarf. In what turned out to be a fatal strategic error, the Virtue Party leadership refused to heed warnings that the Kemalist establishment would never allow Kavakci to enter parliament and insisted on her attending the swearing-in ceremony for new MPs in her headscarf.³⁶ The result was uproar as secularist MPs surrounded the rostrum to prevent Kavakci being sworn in. She was forced to leave the chamber without taking her oath and her membership of parliament was annulled. In May 1999 the Public Prosecutor applied to the Constitutional Court for the Virtue Party's closure on the grounds that it had become a centre of anti-secular activity.

The humiliating miscalculation over Kavacki and the Virtue Party's relatively poor performance in the elections fuelled already simmering discontent amongst a younger generation of party members, headed by Tayyip Erdogan, the mayor of Istanbul. Born in a working-class district of Istanbul, Erdogan had attended an Imam Hatip school before joining the National Salvation Party while he was at university. When the party was banned, Erdogan joined the Welfare Party, working his way up through its hierarchy before successfully standing for mayor of Istanbul in March 1994. During his term in office, Erdogan oversaw major improvements in municipal services and infrastructure. But he also shunned Istanbul's large Western diplomatic and journalist community, and forbade alcohol at all municipal facilities. In 1993 he had famously described democracy as 'a vehicle which you ride as far as you want to go and then get off', adding, 'There is no room for Kemalism or any other official ideology in Turkey's future'.³⁷ Erdogan continued to court controversy after taking office, declaring that, 'All schools should be Imam Hatip Schools';³⁸ 'Praise be to God, we support sharia law';³⁹ and 'Parliament should be opened with prayers'.⁴⁰

During a speech in the southeastern town of Siirt, Erdogan recited a poem by the ultra-nationalist Ziya Gokalp which included the lines, 'The mosques are our barracks, the minarets our bayonets, the domes our helmets and the believers our soldiers'.⁴¹ The Public Prosecutor pressed charges and, in April 1998, Erdogan was convicted of inciting religious hatred under Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code. He was sentenced to 10 months in prison and banned from politics for life.

On his release from prison in 1999⁴² Erdogan, though still banned from holding public office, announced that he had changed. He actively courted Western diplomats and journalists, repeatedly praised parliamentary

democracy and expressed his support for Turkey's bid for EU membership. However, Erdoğan's conviction and the fact that he was not an MP, meant that he was passed over by the younger generation of the Virtue Party when they decided to mount a challenge to Kutan's leadership by putting forward their own candidate. They chose Abdullah Gul, a British-educated economist who had served as state minister and government spokesman in the 1996–97 Welfare Party–True Path Party coalition. In elections for party leader at the Virtue Party Congress in May 2001, Gul lost by 521 votes to Kutan's 631. When the Constitutional Court announced the closure of the Virtue Party in June 2001, the Islamist movement split. In July that year, Kutan and the older generation loyal to Erbakan founded the Felicity Party. One month later, 74 members of the younger generation, headed by Erdoğan and Gul, established the Justice and Development Party (JDP).

From radicalism to conservatism?

Despite doubts about his legal status,⁴³ Erdoğan became both a founding member and the first chairman of the JDP. From its inception, the Justice and Development Party sought to portray itself as a conservative rather than a religious party. When Erdoğan held a press conference to launch the JDP, the hall was draped with a huge portrait of Atatürk and all present were asked to observe a minute's silence in Atatürk's memory. After the press conference was over, Erdoğan and the other founding members of the party visited Atatürk's mausoleum.

Yet Erdoğan's new found reverence for Atatürk merely raised Kemalist suspicions. Their doubts increased when it emerged that six of the JDP's female founding members wore headscarves. Although Erdoğan continued to insist that he had changed, he refused to explain how,⁴⁴ leading many to accuse him of engaging in the religiously permitted dissimulation known as *takkiye*.⁴⁵

In December 2001 the JDP published a 65-page 'Development and Democratisation Programme', which it declared would be the basis of its policies when it took power. The programme pledged the JDP's commitment 'to the unity and the integrity of the Republic of Turkey, the secular, democratic, social state of law, and the processes of civilianization, democratization, freedom of belief and equality of opportunity'.⁴⁶ But it contained no detailed policy proposals. Even though opinion polls suggested that the headscarf issue was a priority for party supporters, the programme only made an oblique reference, stating,

Our Party refuses to take advantage of sacred religious values and ethnicity and to use them for political purposes. It considers the attitudes and practices which disturb pious people, and which discriminate against them due to their religious lives and preferences, as anti-democratic and in contradiction to human rights and freedoms.⁴⁷

Yet it gave no indication of what measures it would take to correct the situation.

In July 2002 the ruling tripartite coalition voted to hold early elections; a decision which Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit later described as 'an act of political suicide'.⁴⁸ Since taking office in 1999, the government had been tarnished by a series of corruption scandals. In February 2001 it had overseen a currency collapse which triggered Turkey's worst economic recession in half a century. During that year, the Turkish economy contracted by 9.4%, resulting in over a million redundancies and forcing the government to agree to a deeply unpopular, IMF-backed economic austerity programme.

In the run-up to the November 2002 elections, the Justice and Development Party attempted to broaden its appeal. Using the slogan 'Everything For Turkey', the party published an election manifesto which, though still short on detailed policy proposals, pledged the party's support for secularism, democracy and Turkey's traditional pro-Western foreign policy, particularly EU membership. It also declared that it would end corruption, limit parliamentary immunity and improve human rights. The manifesto reiterated the JDP's commitment to free-market capitalism, promising to boost production, attract foreign investment and introduce a more equitable tax system, while respecting the commitments given to the IMF by the previous administration.

Although women wearing headscarves formed a large proportion of the JDP's female membership and party workers, none were included in its list of parliamentary candidates. But the Justice and Development Party did recruit prominent secularists from other parties, including Erkan Mumcu of the Motherland Party, Koksal Toptan from the True Path Party and Kursat Tuzmen from the Nationalist Action Party. However, the Supreme Electoral Board forbade Erdogan from standing as a parliamentary candidate, citing Article 76 of the Turkish Constitution which stipulated that persons convicted of 'involvement in ideological and anarchistic activities' were banned from becoming deputies, even if they had subsequently been pardoned.

In the November 2002 elections, the Turkish electorate delivered its verdict not just on the outgoing government but on a whole generation of political leaders. The Justice and Development Party emerged as the largest party with 34.3% of the vote, giving it 363 seats in the 550-member unicameral parliament. The centre-left Republican People's Party (RPP), which had failed to win any seats at the previous election, finished second with 19.4% of the vote and 178 seats. Another nine seats were won by independents. No other political party managed to cross the 10% threshold. The three parties in the coalition government saw their total vote fall to 14.7%, from 53.4% in 1999. The electorate also voted out the opposition

leaders. The True Path Party of Tansu Ciller, prime minister from 1993 to 1996, won 9.6% compared with 12.0% in 1999, while the Felicity Party of Erbakan loyalists won a mere 2.5%.

Surveys of Justice and Development Party voters conducted after the election suggested that, although it had attracted votes from other parties, pious Muslims remained its core constituency. For example, 90% of JDP voters prayed at least once a day, with 60% praying five times, and 99% fasted during Ramadan. A total of 81% saw themselves as Muslims first and Turks second, while 60% said that religious values took precedence over national values, democracy, human rights or secularism. Almost half believed that it was impossible to separate religion from temporal affairs. Although only 44% thought that all Muslim women should cover their heads, 93% wanted the Justice and Development Party to lift the ban on women in headscarves entering state institutions and 84% believed that it was a sin for a woman to wear a swimsuit. Fifty-five percent believed that the educational system should be organised according to Islamic principles, compared with 65% for laws on adultery and 51% for the criminal code. A further 60% favoured the introduction of an interest-free financial system.⁴⁹

The JDP in power: domestic policy

The size of the JDP's victory sent a shock wave through Turkey's Kemalist establishment. General Hilmi Ozkok, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, announced that the military accepted the election results as representing the 'will of the people'.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, on 10 November 2002, in a written statement issued by the Turkish General Staff to mark the anniversary of Atatürk's death, General Ozkok vowed that the Turkish military would continue to 'protect the Republic against every kind of threat, particularly fundamentalism and separatism'. Privately military officials warned that not only did the Justice and Development Party have an Islamist agenda but that it would immediately begin to try to erode Kemalism.⁵¹

For the military, which has its own very rigid definition of secularism, the JDP's first three months in office appear to have confirmed its worst fears. For more impartial observers, those months have raised serious questions not so much about the JDP's agenda as its judgement and competence.

With Erdogan ineligible,⁵² Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer asked Gul, the Vice-Chairman of the JDP, to form a government. It was generally assumed that Gul's appointment would only be temporary, until the government was able to pass the necessary constitutional amendments to enable Erdogan to enter parliament. As a result, Gul was expected to avoid controversy and allow the JDP to establish itself in government by naming a Cabinet acceptable to the Kemalist establishment.

Since the National Security Council meeting of 28 February 1997, Turkey's secular establishment had attached special importance to the Education Ministry. On 18 November 2002 Gul submitted his list of ministerial candidates to Sezer for presidential approval. All but one were known moderates. The exception was Besir Atalay, a former university rector who had been dismissed in 1997 for alleged Islamist activism and whom Gul proposed as Education Minister. Sezer refused to endorse the list until Gul had demoted Atalay to Minister Without Portfolio and substituted Erkan Mumcu as Education Minister.

The government's first three months were characterised by confusion, contradiction and inertia

On 21 November 2002 the new speaker of parliament, Bulent Arinc, attended an official ceremony at Ankara airport with his wife, who was wearing a headscarf. Although it was unclear whether Arinc was being deliberately provocative, to the Kemalist establishment it was an assault on secularism, no different from Merve Kavakci's attempt to enter parliament in her headscarf in 1999. A week later, Turkey's force commanders, headed by General Ozkok, delivered a wordless warning to Arinc by visiting him in his office in parliament, where they sat in complete silence for three minutes before leaving.⁵³

The JDP further antagonised the military by appointing as head of the Parliamentary Defence Committee Ramazan Toprak, a former soldier who had been dismissed from the military in 1997 for alleged Islamist activism. Under pressure from the Turkish General Staff, Toprak resigned in January 2003.⁵⁴

However, military suspicions of the JDP were reinforced when, after a meeting of the SMC on 27 December, Gul and Arinc declared that Supreme Military Council decisions should be eligible for appeal; the same suggestion that in 1997 had contributed to the military's decision to oust the Welfare Party from power.

Yet, however much the JDP's confrontations with the military may, or may not, reveal about its true intentions, there was no evidence to suggest that they were part of a coordinated campaign. In fact, rather than demonstrating a well-prepared strategy for when it took power, the first three months of the JDP government were characterised by confusion, contradiction and inertia. Although Gul was the official prime minister and chaired Cabinet meetings, Erdogan refused to step into the background and insisted on being actively involved in policy decisions. As a result, Turkey effectively had two prime ministers, neither of whom was able to act without the other. Although Gul and Erdogan were regularly in touch with each other, neither was able to coordinate the actions of the other members of the government. The result was

a plethora of often conflicting statements and policy initiatives, almost none of which were translated into reality.

By February 2003, the government had yet to publish a coordinated economic programme, preferring to announce isolated populist measures such as increasing state pensions, or ambitious targets such as reducing inflation to single digits,⁵⁵ without providing details of how these were to be achieved.⁵⁶ Perhaps more alarmingly, it sometimes even announced conflicting targets. For example, although it promised the IMF that it would realise a primary budgetary surplus for 2003 equivalent to 6.5% of Gross National Product (GNP), the government's own projections for budgetary revenue and expenditure and GNP add up to only 3.7%. In January 2003, delegations from Turkey's largest business associations, the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD) and the Turkish Union of Chambers and Bourses (TOBB), paid separate visits to the government to warn that its failure to announce and implement a coordinated economic programme risked destabilising the economy before it had recovered from the recession of 2001.⁵⁷

By February, the pre-election pledge to limit deputies' parliamentary immunity had been quietly shelved. Far from combating corruption, some of the government's policy proposals appeared to encourage it. In December 2002 the government had announced plans to reverse proposed changes to the Public Procurement Law, which had been drawn up by the previous government under pressure from the EU to make public tenders more transparent.⁵⁸ On 31 December 2002 President Sezer had vetoed a proposed amnesty for tax evaders drawn up by Kemal Unakitan, the JDP Finance Minister.⁵⁹

The JDP in power: foreign policy

After the November elections, Erdogan embarked on a tour of European capitals to fulfil the JDP's campaign pledge to press for Turkey to be given a date for EU accession at the December 2002 EU summit in Copenhagen. Despite his lack of official status, Erdogan was received as a *de facto* head of government. However, his frustration at being unable to secure a promise of a firm date revealed his lack of international experience and diplomatic finesse. He bluntly accused the EU of applying 'double standards' and using purported shortcomings in Turkey's fulfilment of the criteria for membership to hide its own anti-Muslim prejudices. He warned that, if it was not given a firm date, Turkey would explore other possibilities and that it would be the EU which would suffer.⁶⁰ Erdogan even suggested that, if the EU was unwilling to accept Turkey, then it would join the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA).⁶¹ The EU subsequently announced that it would postpone making a decision on a date for Turkish

accession until December 2004. Although they admitted that the Copenhagen summit had never been likely to give Turkey a firm date, EU officials were privately infuriated by Erdogan's hectoring tone.⁶² But he appeared unconcerned. In a speech to JDP parliamentarians, Erdogan described the Copenhagen summit as a 'national triumph' and insisted that he had 'defended Turkey's honour'.⁶³

Although Erdogan's attack on the EU could probably be attributed to the mixture of aspiration and distrust that many Turks feel towards the EU, it was difficult to understand the logic of the JDP's policy towards Cyprus. The failure of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots to reach an agreement at Copenhagen, and the EU's approval of the Greek Cypriots' application for accession in the name of the whole island, effectively gave the two sides until 28 February 2003 to reach a settlement. After this date, it would be too late to complete the necessary administrative arrangements to reunify the island before it was formally admitted to the EU in April 2003. Both before and after the Copenhagen summit, Erdogan had repeated the JDP's commitment to making concessions and reaching a settlement based on the draft proposals presented to the Greek and Turkish Cypriots by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 12 November 2002.⁶⁴ However, the lack of coordination within the JDP meant that Erdogan, Gul, Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis and even Parliamentary Speaker Arinc all issued different statements on Cyprus. Often, these statements contradicted not only what had been said by others, but by the speaker himself on a different occasion. For example, on 13 November 2002 Erdogan declared that a settlement of the Cyprus problem would accelerate Turkey's accession to the EU,⁶⁵ on 25 November that the two were entirely separate issues⁶⁶ and on 26 November that Turkey would reach a settlement on Cyprus once it had been given a date for EU accession.⁶⁷

The confusion was exacerbated by apparent differences over Cyprus policy between the JDP and the Turkish establishment. Traditionally, Cyprus has been regarded as a security issue and thus the responsibility of the 'state' – that is, the Turkish General Staff working in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) – rather than the elected government. The Turkish military believes that the de facto Turkish protectorate in northern Cyprus⁶⁸ is vital to Turkey's strategic interests, safeguarding both Turkey's Mediterranean coastline and shipping lanes to the ports of Mersin, Iskenderun and Ceyhan. As a result, it has been reluctant to agree to any solution which would reduce either its influence or its military presence in northern Cyprus, where it currently has 35,000 troops.

On 5 November Erdogan announced that the JDP favoured the Belgian model of institutionalised bi-communality as the basis for a solution to the Cyprus problem.⁶⁹ On the following day, after a two-hour briefing by MFA officials, Yakis announced that Belgium could not be a model for a

settlement.⁷⁰ On 5 January 2003, Erdogan declared that the time had come for a change in Turkey's Cyprus policy and implied that Turkish Cypriot Rauf Denktash's intransigence in resisting a settlement was harming Turkey.⁷¹ He was supported by Arinc, who repeated his party's commitment to negotiations based on the Annan Plan. On 17 January 2003, Arinc declared that there had been no change in Turkey's traditional policy on Cyprus and that Denktash had the JDP's full support. He accused the 50,000 Turkish Cypriots who had demonstrated in Nicosia a few days earlier in support of the Annan Plan of being 'deluded' and implied that they were in the pay of the Greek Cypriots.⁷² On 26 January 2003, Erdogan again attacked Denktash, suggesting that anyone who had failed to reach a solution after so many years of negotiations should resign. On the following day, Yakis announced that Erdogan had been misunderstood and that the JDP fully supported Denktash.⁷³ At a meeting of the National Security Council on 31 January 2003, Gul signed a statement declaring that there had been no change in Turkey's policy on Cyprus and pledged the government's full support for Denktash.

A similar indecisiveness characterised the JDP's policy towards US preparations for a possible military campaign to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The Turkish General Staff decided as early as summer 2002 that, ultimately, it would have no choice but to support the US logistically and probably militarily.⁷⁴ However, it delayed giving Washington a firm commitment, partly in the hope that a peaceful solution could still be found and partly to improve its bargaining position in discussions with the US about compensation for Turkey's losses as the result of the war.

For the JDP, the issue was complicated by widespread public opposition to a war against Iraq, not least amongst its own party members, and its ambitions to establish Turkey as a regional leader.⁷⁵ Although its election manifesto had stressed its commitment to preserving Turkey's relations with the West, party officials made no secret of their hopes of improving ties with Arab states in what they referred to as a 'balancing rather than reorientation' of Turkey's foreign relations.⁷⁶ As a result, the JDP government was eager not to be seen as anxious to back a US attack on an Arab country. Despite increasing US frustration, the Turkish military was content to wait and allow the JDP to take responsibility for what would be a politically unpopular decision.⁷⁷

In mid-January 2003, State Minister Kursad Tuzmen led a delegation of 350 businessmen to Baghdad, where they signed \$695 million worth of commercial contracts with the Iraqi regime. Tuzmen dismissed suggestions that he had sent the wrong message to the US or that the Iraqi regime would probably not be in power long enough to fulfil the contracts, describing the visit as 'extremely useful and timely'.⁷⁸ The Turkish General Staff finally submitted detailed plans for possible Turkish support for a US

military campaign against Iraq to the National Security Council meeting of 31 January 2003, although it stipulated that any military action would have to be approved by parliament.⁷⁹

Closet Islamists or Muslim democrats?

There is no question that in the November 2002 elections many Turks voted for the JDP because of what it was not, rather than what it was, in a massive protest against not just the outgoing government but an entire generation of political leaders. As a result, it undoubtedly attracted support from a relatively broad spectrum of the electorate. But the majority of its voters, and the core of the party leadership, are still members of an Islamist tradition. Whatever Erdogan may say to the contrary, the JDP is seen as a religious party not just by its opponents but by most of its supporters.

Yet, although the JDP includes members of various *tarikats*, there is no indication that the party is dominated by, much less answerable to, a specific *tarikat* or religious leader. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the party leadership is prepared to tolerate any of its members having links with Islamist terrorist groups. Similarly, in the short-term at least, there is little prospect of a major change in Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy. Not only has the military retained a tight grip on what it sees as key security areas, such as Cyprus and Iraq, by ensuring the policy is formulated at the National Security Council rather than by the government, but Turkey's options are very limited. Attempts by the Welfare Party to boost ties with other Muslim countries was a manifest failure and the Arab world remains deeply suspicious of Turkish attempts to reassert itself as a regional power.

If the JDP is to make any substantial changes, these are likely to come in domestic policy. Erdogan's past record and his refusal to explain his repeated insistence that he has changed have inevitably fuelled suspicions about his real agenda. Much will be become clearer once the legal obstacles preventing him from becoming an MP have been cleared and he can enter parliament and become prime minister.⁸⁰ But there is no doubt that both Erdogan and most JDP voters want changes in the role that Islam plays in public life.

Initially, these changes are likely to focus on education and the headscarf ban. Although increasing the number of Koranic courses and Imam Hatip Schools, or allowing women to study at university or work in government offices while wearing a headscarf, may not fall within most definitions of radical Islamism, for the Turkish military they represent the incursion of religion into the public sphere. For the military, there is no ideological space for Kemalism and Islamism to exist side by side; the incursion of Islam would mean the erosion of Kemalism.

This ideological confrontation has important repercussions both for the future of Turkey's relations with the EU and for the applicability of the 'Turkish model' to other Muslim countries. Kemalism is a *sui generis*, indigenous ideology. It cannot be applied in any other country. While it remains the state ideology in Turkey it will be impossible to assess the extent to which – as its adherents maintain – Kemalism is the reason for Turkey being more democratic than other Muslim countries or whether it is irrelevant, or even, as its opponents argue, an obstacle to complete democratisation. But as long as it believes that Kemalism is under threat, the Turkish establishment will be very reluctant to relax restrictions on freedom of expression and allow the political plurality required for Turkey to meet the Copenhagen political criteria for EU membership. Similarly, while Kemalism continues to restrict its room for manoeuvre, it will be difficult to be certain whether the Justice and Development Party's avowed enthusiasm for democracy and EU accession is genuine or whether it merely seeks the freedoms that would come with eligibility for membership in order to pursue a more radical, and ultimately undemocratic, Islamist agenda.

The military insists it will not hesitate to intervene

In the short-term at least, whether or not Erdogan or any other members of the JDP has a radical Islamist agenda is probably of only academic interest. The military has already served notice that it will not tolerate even relative minor infractions of its definition of secularism. In the months ahead the JDP is likely to come under increasing pressure from its voters to introduce measures such as an easing of the headscarf ban. But the JDP's first three months in power raised doubts as to whether its leaders possess the skills to placate its supporters without antagonising the military. Privately, the military continues to insist that, if necessary, it will not hesitate to intervene to protect secularism. This would initially be in the form of a warning but, if this was not heeded, would eventually include forcing the government from office.⁸¹

Notes

- ¹ JDP Chairman Tayyip Erdogan, quoted in *Milliyet* newspaper, 14 November 2002.
- ² 'Building Coalitions of Common Values', address by US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz to the IISS, 2 December 2002.
- ³ Particularly the forced 'Turkification' programme during the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the massacres in responses to attempts at rebellion.
- ⁴ Most members of such movements prefer to describe themselves merely as Muslims.
- ⁵ Movements described as 'Islamist' tend to be activist and advocate change. The term is rarely applied to those who advocate the maintenance of the status quo. See the discussion between John Esposito, Martin Kramer, Graham Fuller and Daniel Pipes in 'Is Islam a threat' in *Middle East Quarterly*, December 1999.
- ⁶ Kemal chose 'Ataturk', meaning 'Father Turk'. He ordered all Turks to acquire surnames in 1934.
- ⁷ The Turkish History Thesis followed Joseph-Arthur Gobineau's now-discredited theory of racial determinism and the 'cephalic index' of head shapes and sizes. Although some of its more outrageous claims have been removed from modern textbooks, it still forms the basis of the history taught in schools and repeated in official publications.
- ⁸ Preamble and Article 2, Turkish Constitution. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site, www.mfa.gov.tr
- ⁹ This replacement applies to the public rather than the private sphere. Most Turkey secularists still regard themselves as Muslims, although, perhaps inevitably given that Islam is a religion of orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy, tend to be less observant than Muslims in other countries.
- ¹⁰ Sheikh Said and several hundred of his supporters were captured and hanged by special itinerant courts known as the 'Independence Tribunals'.
- ¹¹ Camilla T. Nereid, *In the Light of Said Nursi: Turkish Nationalism and the Religious Alternative* (Bergen: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1997), p 49.
- ¹² Menderes's overthrow appears to have been prompted by his increasingly authoritarian methods and high-handed treatment of the military rather than doubts about his Kemalist credentials. Menderes, together with two of his ministers, was hanged by the military junta in 1961.
- ¹³ The first Islamist political party to be established during the multiparty era, the Islamic Democratic Party, was founded by Cevat Rifat Atilhan, a virulent anti-Semite, in 1951, but folded after just six months.
- ¹⁴ Birol Yesiada, *The Virtue Party*, in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (eds.) *Political Parties In Turkey* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), p 73.
- ¹⁵ Most Nurcus switched their allegiance to the Justice Party and the ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (NAP). Soner Yalcin, *Hangi Erbakan? (Which Erbakan)* (Ankara: Basak Yayinlari, 1994), pp 106–108.
- ¹⁶ The WP's inaugural chairman was Ali Turkmen, who was then succeeded by Ahmet Tekdal. Both men were members of Erbakan's inner circle.
- ¹⁷ The Welfare Party won 8.4% of the vote in the general elections of 1987, well under the newly introduced 10% threshold for representation in parliament. In the next elections of October 1991, it formed an alliance with the NAP, winning 16.4% of the vote and 62 seats in parliament. In the 1994 local elections, the Welfare Party

- ran on its own and won 19% of the national vote.
- ¹⁸ The number of seats in parliament was increased to 550 in the April 1999 elections.
- ¹⁹ The rapid increase in electoral support for the Turkish Islamists during the 1980s and 1990s appears to have been the result of a combination of different factors, comprising both global phenomena, such as the worldwide resurgence in radical Islam and the ideological vacuum left by the collapse of communism, and local factors. Ironically, the military appears partly responsible as the junta that ruled Turkey from 1980 to 1983 reintroduced compulsory religious instruction in schools in the hope that Islam would serve as an ideological bulwark against the spread of communism.
- ²⁰ By the late 1990s, the National View Organisation had an estimated 83,000 members, with educational centres in 252 European cities providing Islamic instruction for 14,000 students. Birol Yesiada, *The Virtue Party*, in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (eds), *Political Parties In Turkey* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), p 73.
- ²¹ Over 300,000 volunteers worked for the Welfare Party during the 1995 election campaign. Adenauer Foundation, *Refah Partisi Uzerine Bir Arastirma (A Study on the Welfare Party)* (Ankara: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 1996), pp. 45–8. The databases enabled the Welfare Party to match potential voters with the most appropriate party workers, for example, dispatching to newly arrived urban migrant party workers from their town or village of origin.
- ²² For women from conservative backgrounds, working for the Welfare Party was often a liberating experience as it was one of the few occasions when the males in their family would allow them to move relatively freely in the community. Author interviews with female party workers, April–May 1994.
- ²³ 'If they lie or steal they may not fear the law, but I am sure they fear God'. Author conversation with pro-Welfare Party taxi driver, November 1995.
- ²⁴ The Welfare Party's appeal was also strengthened by the vacuum created by the collapse of communism, which left Islamism as the only viable ideology of protest. In southeast Turkey, the Welfare Party's anti-establishment image attracted the support of Kurds alienated by the often brutal tactics adopted by the state in its 1984–99 war against the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).
- ²⁵ Erbakan's frequent references to *jihad* antagonised even some of his supporters and in 1990 prompted Esad Cosan, who had succeeded Kotku as leader of the Naqshbandi, to sever the order's links with the Welfare Party. Soner Yalcin, *Hangi Erbakan? (Which Erbakan)* (Ankara: Basak Yayinlari, 1994), p 223.
- ²⁶ Abdurrahman Dilipak, 'Democracy is the Trojan horse of Western cultural imperialism', in Abdurrahman Dilipak, *Sorular, Sorunlar ve Cevaplar* (Istanbul: Beyan Yayinlar, 1993), p 93.
- ²⁷ Author interviews with members of extremist Islamist groups, February 1994 and September 1999.
- ²⁸ Article 35 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law specifically charges the military with responsibility for protecting not only national security but the Kemalist nature of the Turkish regime, including the Kemalist principles of territorial integrity, secularism and republicanism. Justice Ministry web site. www.adalet.gov.tr
- ²⁹ Known as the Developing Eight or D8, the organisation included Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran,

- Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. Although it held its inaugural meeting in Istanbul in January 1997, the D8 was subsequently moribund.
- ³⁰ Author interviews with bureaucrats, January–March 1997.
- ³¹ The then Defence Minister Turhan Tayan cited this as the catalyst for the process that culminated in the events of the 28 February 1997 National Security Council meeting. *Milliyet*, 28 February 2000.
- ³² By 1995, 493,000 students were enrolled in Imam Hatip schools. Yet there are only 75,000 mosques in Turkey and there are only 88,500 people on the payroll of the Diyanet (Department of Religious Affairs), the body responsible for employing imams. www.diyamet.gov.tr
- ³³ 'If it comes down to the wire, then there will be a coup. There is no other option'. Author's translation. Gen. (ret.) Dogan Beyazit, adviser to chief of staff Gen. Hakki Karadayi, quoted in 'Halk isterse darbe olur', *Yeni Yuzyil*, 29 April 1997.
- ³⁴ Traditionally the Motherland Party had tended to attract votes from the Naqshbandi while many Nurcus had supported the True Path Party .
- ³⁵ Alparslan Turkes, *Dokuz Isik ve Turkiye (Nine Lights and Turkey)* (Istanbul: Hamle, 1994).
- ³⁶ Kavakci refused to accept that it would be interpreted by Kemalists as a challenge to secularism, preferring to characterise the issue as one of 'human rights'. Author interview with Kavakci, 4 April 1999.
- ³⁷ Interview with Tayyip Erdogan in Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar (eds) 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartismalari (Discussions About the 2nd Republic)*, (Ankara: Basak Yayinlari, 1993).
- ³⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 17 September 1994
- ³⁹ *Milliyet*, 29 November 1994
- ⁴⁰ *Milliyet*, 8 January 1996
- ⁴¹ Ziya Gokalp (1876–1924) was one of the ideologues of the Young Turk movement which produced Atatürk. The poem from which Erdogan quoted is included in a Turkish Ministry of Education list of recommended reading for middle school students, reinforcing suspicions that the Kemalist establishment was merely looking for a pretext to try to attack Erdogan.
- ⁴² Erdogan only served four months in prison and was released early for good behaviour.
- ⁴³ After a lengthy legal process, on 22 January 2003 the Turkish Supreme Court ruled that Erdogan's conviction under Article 312 did prevent him from being a founder member or chairman of a political party at the time when the JDP was established. However, it ruled that, since the Article 312 had subsequently been amended, there was no obstacle to him becoming chairman if he was re-elected. Erdogan was unanimously re-elected as JDP chairman on 23 January 2003.
- ⁴⁴ Even when asked repeatedly. Author interview with Erdogan, January 2002.
- ⁴⁵ Most Islamic jurists argue that *takkiye* is only permissible when a Muslim's life, rather than career, is in danger.
- ⁴⁶ *Development and Democratisation Program*, (Ankara: JDP, 2001), p. 6.
- ⁴⁷ *Development and Democratisation Program*, (Ankara: JDP, 2001), p. 8.
- ⁴⁸ *Sabah*, 4 November 2002.
- ⁴⁹ Survey conducted by Bosphorus University, Istanbul, and published in *Milliyet* 15–18 November 2002.
- ⁵⁰ *Milliyet*, 5 November 2002.
- ⁵¹ Author interview, November 2002.
- ⁵² Articles 76 and 109 of the Turkish Constitution stipulate that the prime minister must be a member of parliament. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site, www.mfa.gov.tr
- ⁵³ *Milliyet*, 29 November 2002.

- ⁵⁴ *Hurriyet*, 9 January 2002.
- ⁵⁵ Annual wholesale inflation stood at 32.6% at end-January 2003.
- ⁵⁶ *Turkish Daily News*, 25 November 2002.
- ⁵⁷ *Turkish Daily News*, 20 January 2003.
- ⁵⁸ Protests from the Turkish business community, which feared that the JDP would use limited transparency to award public contracts to its supporters, meant that in February 2003 neither set of amendments had yet come before parliament.
- ⁵⁹ The amnesty would also have benefited Unakitan personally. Prior to his election to parliament, Unakitan had been under investigation for avoiding taxes by issuing false invoices.
- ⁶⁰ 'Erdogan: Turkiye'ye tarih verilmemesi cifte standart' (Erdogan: Not giving Turkey a date is a double standard', www.milliyet.com.tr, 9 December 2002.
- ⁶¹ 'Bizi NAFTA, ya alin' ('Then take us into NAFTA'), *Hurriyet*, 11 December 2002
- ⁶² Author interviews, 16–17 December 2002.
- ⁶³ 'Kopenhag Zirvesi milli basaridir...' ('The Copenhagen Summit was a national triumph...'), *Milliyet*, 18 December 2002.
- ⁶⁴ The Annan Plan foresaw the reunification of the island as a single state by two territorially distinct founding partners, the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, each of which would enjoy virtual autonomy in domestic affairs. The Plan also foresaw the transfer of territory from Turkish Cypriot administration to Greek Cypriot administration and the phased introduction of freedom of movement and freedom of settlement. Both sides had reservations about the plan. For the Turkish Cypriots the transfer of territory and partial freedom of movement and settlement went too far; for the Greek Cypriots, they did not go far enough.
- ⁶⁵ 'Erdogan: Finding A Solution To The Cyprus Question Will Accelerate Turkey's EU Full Membership Process', *Anatolian Agency*, 13 November 2002.
- ⁶⁶ 'Kibris baska, AB baska' (Cyprus is one thing, the EU another), *Milliyet* 26 November 2002.
- ⁶⁷ 'Ver tarihi al muzakereyi' (Give us a date and take the negotiations), *Radikal* 27 November 2002.
- ⁶⁸ Although the Turkish Cypriots declared independence on 15 November 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has only been recognised by Turkey.
- ⁶⁹ 'Erdogan Kibris icin 'Belcika Modeli' onerdi' ('Erdogan proposed the Belgium model for Cyprus'), *Yeni Safak*, 6 November 2002.
- ⁷⁰ 'AK Parti'den Kibris için U donusu...' ('U-turn from JDP on Cyprus...'), www.milliyet.com.tr, 6 November 2002.
- ⁷¹ 'Kibris elimizi zayıflatmasin' ('Let's not allow Cyprus to weaken our hand'), *Hurriyet*, 6 January 2003.
- ⁷² 'Arınç, Kibris sahini' ('Arinc becomes a hawk on Cyprus'), *Milliyet*, 18 January 2003.
- ⁷³ 'KKTC ile gorus ayriligi yok' ('No difference of opinion on TRNC'), *Hurriyet* 27, January 2003.
- ⁷⁴ Author interview, summer 2002
- ⁷⁵ While government spokesman in the Welfare Party–True Path Party coalition, Gul had often referred to the Arab states as 'former Ottoman provinces' and discussed the possibility of forming an 'Ottoman Commonwealth' with Turkey at its head.
- ⁷⁶ Author interview with JDP officials, June 2002.
- ⁷⁷ Author interview, December 2002.
- ⁷⁸ 'Onurumuz zedelenmedi' ('Our honour was not damaged'), *Aksam*, 14 January 2003.
- ⁷⁹ At the beginning of February 2003 it was unclear when Gul would present

the plans to parliament for approval or whether he would be able to secure the support of JDP MPs opposed to the war.

⁸⁰ By early February 2003, parliament had passed a series of constitutional amendments, although there had still been no ruling from the Supreme Electoral Board on whether they were sufficient to allow Erdogan to become an MP. If he can become a candidate in time, Erdogan is expected to stand in a by-election in the southeastern town of Siirt which is due to be held on 9 March 2003.

⁸¹ Author interview, November 2002.