

The Turkey Analyst

BI-WEEKLY BRIEFING

VOL. 1 NO. 11

18 JULY 2008

ANALYSIS:

IS A SECULAR CENTER-RIGHT VIABLE?.....3

Halil Magnus Karaveli

The solution to Turkey's regime crisis must logically be sought in the center of the political spectrum. However, the revival of the center-right force of Turkish politics represents a difficult challenge. For it to make a difference, the right must break with its tradition of playing with religion. An alternative must be formulated that is more strictly secular than what the center-right traditionally has been. But for it to be viable, such a centrist force needs simultaneously to be attractive to the conservative base of the centre-right, a challenging task.

FINDING A PLACE: THE PKK'S EFFORTS TO REMAIN RELEVANT.....7

Svante E. Cornell

In early July, the PKK terrorist organization abducted three German climbers on Mt. Ararat, in an apparent revenge for Germany's decision to ban the PKK's mouthpiece, Denmark-based television channel Roj TV. The episode points to the PKK's continuous difficulties in maintaining its claim to represent Kurdish opinion, faced with multiple challenges – from both the Turkish military and governing party, who otherwise agree on little; as well as the EU's refusal to grant the PKK legitimacy and the Iraqi Kurdish parties' success in making Iraqi Kurdistan the beacon of Kurdish hope, eclipsing the PKK. It remains to be seen whether the PKK will be successful in taking advantage of the current Turkish crisis.

THE FORTNIGHT IN REVIEW:

I. What the Columnists Say11

The Ergenekon-arrests have generated a flow of comments from the columnists. The perspectives and interpretations vary widely. According to Ismet Berkan the arrests represent a victory for Turkish democracy, while Reha Muhtar speaks about a collapse of the regime. Ergun Babahan and Emre Aköz interpret the alleged conspiracy as one that is equally directed at the government and the military. Sabahattin Önkibar urges the military to show caution and let the constitutional court take care of the AKP.

II. Domestic Politics.....10

II. Foreign Relations.....15



Central Asia- Caucasus Institute
Silk Road Studies Program

The Turkey Analyst

BI-WEEKLY BRIEFING
VOL. 1 NO. 11
18 JULY 2008

ANALYSIS

IS A SECULAR CENTER-RIGHT VIABLE?.....3

Halil Magnus Karaveli

The solution to Turkey's regime crisis must logically be sought in the center of the political spectrum. However, the revival of the center-right force of Turkish politics represents a difficult challenge. For it to make a difference, the right must break with its tradition of playing with religion. An alternative must be formulated that is more stridently secular than what the center-right traditionally has been. But for it to be viable, such a centrist force needs simultaneously to be attractive to the conservative base of the centre-right, a challenging task.

FINDING A PLACE: THE PKK'S EFFORTS TO REMAIN RELEVANT.....7

Svante E. Cornell

In early July, the PKK terrorist organization abducted three German climbers on Mt. Ararat, in an apparent revenge for Germany's decision to ban the PKK's mouthpiece, Denmark-based television channel Roj TV. The episode points to the PKK's continuous difficulties in maintaining its claim to represent Kurdish opinion, faced with multiple challenges – from both the Turkish military and governing party, who otherwise agree on little; as well as the EU's refusal to grant the PKK legitimacy and the Iraqi Kurdish parties' success in making Iraqi Kurdistan the beacon of Kurdish hope, eclipsing the PKK. It remains to be seen whether the PKK will be successful in taking advantage of the current Turkish crisis.

THE FORTNIGHT IN REVIEW

I. What the Columnists Say11

The Ergenekon-arrests have generated a flow of comments from the columnists. The perspectives and interpretations vary widely. According to Ismet Berkan the arrests represent a victory for Turkish democracy, while Reha Muhtar speaks about a collapse of the regime. Ergun Babahan and Emre Aköz interpret the alleged conspiracy as one that is equally directed at the government and the military. Sabahattin Önkibar urges the military to show caution and let the constitutional court take care of the AKP.

II. Domestic Politics.....13

The fortnights politics were dominated by four major issues: continued developments in the AKP closure case; AKP founder Sener's decision to form a new center party; the attack on police outside the US consulate in Istanbul; and the roundup of prominent figures in the Ergenekon investigation.

II. Foreign Relations.....18

Foreign minister Babacan took part in the D-8 summit, while Prime Minister Erdogan took part in the Mediterranean summit in Paris, having received assurances that French plans will not affect Turkey's EU candidacy.

THE TURKEY ANALYST

Editorial Board

Svante E. Cornell, Editor-in-Chief
Halil Magnus Karaveli, Managing Editor
M. K. Kaya, News Digest Editor

The Turkey Analyst is an English language journal. It is a publication of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Joint Center, designed to bring authoritative analysis and news on the rapidly developing domestic and foreign policy issues in Turkey. It is published biweekly, and includes topical analysis, as well as translations and summaries of selected Turkish news reports.

The Turkey Analyst aims to provide our industrious and engaged audience with a singular and reliable assessment of events and trends written in an analytical tone rather than a polemical one. *Analyst* articles reflect the fact that we have a diverse international audience. While this should not affect what authors write about or their conclusions, this does affect the tone of articles. *Analyst* articles focus on a newsworthy topic, engage central issues of the latest breaking news, and are backed by solid evidence. Articles should normally be based on local language news sources. The lead analyses appearing in the *Turkey Analyst* are unsigned, being written by one, two, or all of the three Editors.

The *Turkey Analyst* occasionally publishes signed guest analyses, which are normally solicited. Each 1,000-1,500 word analytical article offers a concise and authoritative statement of the event or issue in question. An article must provide relevant, precise and authoritative background information. It also must offer a sober and analytical judgment of the issue as well as a clinical evaluation of the importance of the event. Authors must cite facts of controversial nature to the Editor who may contact other experts to confirm claims. Since *Analyst* articles are based on solid evidence, rather than rumors or conjecture, they prove to be reliable sources of information on the region. By offering balanced and objective analysis while keeping clear of inflammatory rhetoric, the *Turkey Analyst* does more to inform our international readership on all sides of the issues.

The Editors reserve the right to edit the article to conform to the editorial policy and specifications and to reject the article should it not be acceptable to our editorial committee for publication. The copyright for the article will reside with the *Turkey Analyst*. However, the author may use all or part of the contracted article in any book or article in any media subsequently written by the author, provided that a copyright notice appears giving reference to the contracted article's first publication by the "Turkey Analyst, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center."

Submission Guidelines:

Analytical articles require a three to four sentence Key Issue introduction to the article based on a news hook. Rather than a general, overarching analysis, the article must offer considered and careful judgment supported with concrete examples. The ideal length of analytical articles is between 1,200 and 1,400 words. The articles are structured as follows:

KEY ISSUE: A short 75-word statement of your conclusions about the issue or news event on which the article focuses.

BACKGROUND: ca. 500 words of analysis about what has led up to the event or issue and why this issue is critical to the region. Include background information about the views and experiences of the local population.

IMPLICATIONS: 500 to 700 words of analysis of the ramifications of this event or issue, including where applicable, implications for the local people's future.

CONCLUSIONS: ca. 200 words that strongly state your conclusions about the impact of the event or issue.

Those interested in submitting an article to the *Turkey Analyst* should send their submission, or an article query describing the main arguments of the article, together with a CV to: info@silkroadstudies.org.

Editorial Correspondence should be direct to:

Editor, *Turkey Analyst*
Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program
Institute for Security and Development Policy
V. Finnbodavagen 2, SE-13130 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
info@silkroadstudies.org

IS A SECULAR CENTER-RIGHT VIABLE?

Halil Magnus Karaveli

The solution to Turkey's regime crisis must logically be sought in the center of the political spectrum. However, the revival of the center-right force of Turkish politics represents a difficult challenge. For it to make a difference, the right must break with its tradition of playing with religion. An alternative must be formulated that is more stridently secular than what the center-right traditionally has been. But for it to be viable, such a centrist force needs simultaneously to be attractive to the conservative base of the centre-right, a challenging task.

BACKGROUND: The expectation that the constitutional court will rule on the closure of the Justice and development party, AKP, has created a fertile environment for political maneuvering. It role of leadership. Last week Sener officially resigned from the AKP, declaring his intention to form a new party, Yeni Olusum Hareketi, the new grouping movement (www.yeniolumsumhareketi.org).



Abdüllatif Sener

has long been known that Abdüllatif Sener, who was one of the four original founders of the AKP (the others being Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Abdullah Gül and Bülent Arinc), was aspiring to shoulder a

the moderate Islamists. Indeed, Bülent Arinc, the former speaker of the parliament, last week challenged Sener to explain in what way his

The new party is, declared Sener, going to be a party of the center, bringing together people from the center-right as well as from the center-left. Although that makes political sense, it is doubtful whether Sener will be able to perform the task of occupying the center of Turkish politics.

Abdüllatif Sener was deputy prime minister during the AKP's first term in government. His political and ideological background is no different than that of the other leaders of

political agenda differs from that of his former colleagues in the AKP. “Your wife wears a headscarf just like mine does”, Arinc pointed out.

Sener’s background is in the Islamic Milli Görüş (National outlook) movement from which the AKP has risen. His wife and two daughters wear the Islamic headscarf. Even though no one has the right to pass any judgment on the personal choices of the members of the Sener family, they are bound to contribute to an image problem as Sener seeks to establish himself as a moderate at peace with secularism.

As deputy prime minister, Sener took care to reach out to the secular segments of society. Yet, the chances of him becoming the leader that manages to reconcile conservatives and seculars are slim. So far, his new alternative seems to be just another religiously conservative grouping. He is said to be counting on the support of sixty former AKP parliamentarians. These are the deputies who were left out of the candidate-lists by Prime Minister Erdogan prior to the election last year because they were too openly Islamist-oriented.

It is also telling that Sener chose to hold his first political rally in the city of Konya, the heartland of political Islam in Turkey. Evidently, he wanted to display that he is going to appeal to the traditional base of the Islamist movement. Whether that base will be inclined to heed the call of Sener’s new party is difficult to tell. Political commentator Ahmet Hakan in *Hürriyet*, who himself has a background in Islamist circles and who has otherwise taken a favorable view of Abdüllatif Sener, was however dismayed by the attempt to take advantage of an anticipated closure of the AKP; “there is yet no body to pick”, he wrote. Hakan guessed that the

electorate of the AKP would be equally dismayed by such display of opportunism. In that case, the Sener initiative could turn out to be a non-starter.

Currently there appears to be no political leader in Turkey with a stature comparable to that of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Erdogan’s political charisma will inevitably make itself felt even in the case of a closure of the AKP, and even if the prime minister is banned from party politics. In that case,



Rifat Hisarciklioğlu

Erdogan will in all likelihood return to parliament – and government – as an independent deputy after a probable early election. As long as Erdogan chooses to remain politically active, there will be little room left for those who aspire to occupy the political base of the prime minister.

Mesut Yilmaz, a former prime minister and the former leader of the center-right Motherland party (ANAP) is believed to be involved in the search for an alternative that could ally forces of the center-right and center-left. Yilmaz has, according to reports in Turkish media, been holding meetings with representatives of secular business leaders such as Rahmi Koc, president of the Koc Holding. The discussions are said to have focused on estimating the potentials of possible leaders for the new centrist force. Those reported to be evaluated include, among others, Abdüllatif Sener, Rifat Hisarciklioglu, president of the Turkish Union of chambers and commodity exchanges (TOBB), former finance minister Kemal Dervis and Professor Mehmet Haberal. It is known that the business community of Istanbul would like to see Kemal Dervis, who was recently invited for a gathering of Tüsiad, the association of Turkish industrialists, return to politics.

IMPLICATIONS: What appeal can such an alternative be expected to have? The outlook of the electorate evidently suggests that the center is politically the right place to be in. According to a survey taken by Istanbul's Bosphorus University in conjunction with the Open Society Institute in 2007, a majority of Turkish voters is clustered in the center, with a clear tilt to the center-right. Thus, 35 percent declare themselves to be closest to the right and 24 percent are at a center-position which combines the values of the right and those of the left. Close to 60 percent are consequently positioned at the center or center-right, with only 15 percent taking up a position to the left of the spectrum.

The proportion between right and left reflects Turkish political realities. The ruling force in Turkey has traditionally been the center-right. Except for a brief period in the 1970s, the left has always trailed the combined right. The 1977 election remains the exception to the general rule

of Turkish politics: the social democratic Republican People's Party won with 42 percent of the votes, an all-time high never again to be repeated. While there are obviously several factors which combine to explain the electoral weakness of the left and the strength of the right, one stands out: the religious factor. The social democratic victory in 1977 was no coincidence; for once, the left had copied the right and explicitly courted religion. During the 1970's social democratic leader Bülent Ecevit had distanced himself from the Kemalist heritage, stating that Kemal Atatürk's revolution had created a cultural alienation. "What good did it do us that we changed the way we dress?", Ecevit rhetorically asked.

The center-right has since the founding of the republic associated itself with religious conservatism. The tone was set already in 1924, by the Progressive Republican party, the precursor to a long line of center-right parties with changing names but with a consistent stance which has until recently successfully combined economic liberalism with religious conservatism - the Progressive Republican party notably sought to capitalize on the opposition to the abolition of the caliphate. Thus, while it has been argued that the moderate Islamist AKP represents something new in Turkish politics, being a party akin to European Christian democrats, that definition in fact applies to the whole of the Turkish center-right tradition.

What is new about AKP is rather the fact that the ideological gap that has, at least to a certain extent, existed between the leadership of the center-right parties and a large portion of the electoral base of the right has been bridged. The center-right politicians, though apt at using the religious card, have themselves generally been secular and westernized. Former president and former prime minister Süleyman Demirel, who recently declared to the *Turkey Analyst* that he had had to make use of religion in order to counter Islamic

fundamentalists, epitomizes the stance and dilemma of the center-right. The experience of Turkish liberalism and secular conservatism illustrates an innate difficulty to control religious conservatism. Secular liberals have invariably ended up being overtaken by the force they had harnessed. The example of Fethi Okyar, the leader of the Free Party, Turkey's second center-right attempt, is a telling case in point: In 1930, Okyar challenged the rule of the Republican people's party. Although Okyar himself was a secular liberal (and a close friend to Kemal Atatürk), he could not resist the temptation to play the religious card, calling for the reinstatement of sharia, the Islamic law; it focalized popular religious sentiments to such a degree to the Free Party that the party ended up becoming a threat to the survival of the secular regime, something which Okyar had not intended. He subsequently



Fethi Okyar

dissolved his party. There is indeed a line running from Fethi Okyar, the regretful liberal, to a repentant Süleyman Demirel: after having spent much of his political life courting religious feelings, Demirel today agitates for secularism, and believes that he would be able to reach out to seculars as well as conservatives.

CONCLUSIONS: As religious conservatism has come to impregnate Turkish society, the task of trying to shore up secularism is bound to be demanding. Radical departures from past policies will have to be contemplated. The challenge facing those who aspire to recreate the center-right will be to induce the religiously conservative part of the electorate, the bedrock of the right, to return to a center alternative that no longer can afford to play with religion - if anything has been learnt from past experiences.

FINDING A PLACE: THE PKK'S EFFORTS TO REMAIN RELEVANT

Svante E. Cornell

In early July, the PKK terrorist organization abducted three German climbers on Mt. Ararat, in an apparent revenge for Germany's decision to ban the PKK's mouthpiece, Denmark-based television channel Roj TV. The episode points to the PKK's continuous difficulties in maintaining its claim to represent Kurdish opinion, faced with multiple challenges – from both the Turkish military and governing party, who otherwise agree on little; as well as the EU's refusal to grant the PKK legitimacy and the Iraqi Kurdish parties' success in making Iraqi Kurdistan the beacon of Kurdish hope, eclipsing the PKK. It remains to be seen whether the PKK will be successful in taking advantage of the current Turkish crisis.

BACKGROUND: The PKK's relationship to Europe has always been complex. On the one hand, Europe shares with northern Iraq the distinction of being a safe haven and base of operations for the PKK. Its operatives, financiers and recruiters have been able to operate relatively freely in Europe for decades. The organization built up a sophisticated network across the western European states with substantial Kurdish

populations, which was key to its survival. Much of the PKK's income derives from donations or extortion from Kurds in Europe; a perhaps even larger number comes from the PKK's heavy involvement in drug trafficking, as it controls a significant portion especially of heroin trafficking from the eastern Turkish borderlands into Europe. And finally, the PKK has used Europe as a key platform for its propaganda activities. It has



reached out to Kurds via its European-based newspapers, radio and TV channels, and engaged in often successful opinion-building vis-à-vis European governments and societies.

But on the other hand, the PKK has failed to establish itself in Europe as a legitimate representative of Turkey's Kurds – negating its long-standing aim to take a place at the negotiating table with the Turkish government over the Kurdish question. Recognized as a terrorist organization by European governments, the PKK has been shunned. European governments, pressured by Turkey and the U.S. has castigated the PKK's violence and urged it to drop its weapons. That said, the PKK has been tolerated by European countries, as long as it did not engage in overt acts of violence. Yet, the PKK's often vicious treatment of defectors – two were shot dead publicly in Sweden in the mid-1980s and others elsewhere – drew the attention of law enforcement and political leaders, as did its drug trafficking connections. Yet European governments have only rarely gone after the PKK, perhaps because of the organization's undisputable clout and organizational skill. The fact that there has been sympathy for the Kurdish cause may also have played in. Instead, a kind of implicit understanding seems to have existed to the effect that the PKK will be left alone as long as it keeps its head down; and the PKK's various front organizations even more so, as their claim not to have anything to do with terrorism has often been taken at face value by European governments eager to protect freedom of speech and assembly.

The prelude to the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan at the Greek embassy in Nairobi, with the assistance of Israel and the United States, illustrated Europe's ambivalence. No European country was ready to host Öcalan, given his obvious terrorist credentials. But neither were European governments ready to hand him over to

Turkey, ostensibly over concerns of fair treatment and the death penalty, but in all likelihood more in fear of the substantial Kurdish crowds of support that the PKK could muster across Europe.



In any case, the capture of Öcalan was a heavy blow for the PKK. Öcalan's meek performance at the court, asking for forgiveness and recanting all his principles in a desperate attempt to save his life, demoralized an organization reared on a Stalinist personality cult centering on Öcalan. Meanwhile, the ensuing political reforms in Turkey helped reduce much of the Kurdish support for the PKK, which had always been partial at best. The rise of the AKP, in particular, gathered substantial support among Kurds, showing that Kurdish identities were not immune to being transcended by Muslim solidarity. Hence the PKK-aligned Kurdish political parties, who grew to a formidable and often unchallenged force in municipal elections in the Kurdish southeast, rapidly lost ground to the AKP.

The PKK's years in the wilderness seem to have ended with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the subsequent chaos in that country, making the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq virtually independent. As they were the only calm areas of Iraq, the Kurdish leaders had substantial leverage with the U.S. until the Iraqi situation stabilized in 2007. Hence the PKK was again able to operate freely in the Kandil mountains near the Turkish border, while the Turkish military was unable to follow its recent practice of regular incursions into Iraq to deny the PKK a safe haven. As had happened in the early 1990s, the PKK was able to utilize northern Iraq as a base for its escalating terrorist campaign against Turkey.

IMPLICATIONS: The PKK had to choose, effectively, between continuing to dominate the Kurdish movement in Turkey, and gaining legitimacy. By following the PLO or IRA examples, the PKK could have made itself a legitimate interlocutor, had it once and for all given up terrorism. But it was clear to the PKK that doing so risked plunging it into irrelevance. As the AKP's electoral successes show, Turkey's Kurds were not reliably nationalistic at the voting booth, and their votes could easily split between Kurdish and moderate Islamist parties. The PKK's Marxist-Leninist ideology, in fact, prevented it from gaining legitimacy and support both locally and among the Kurdish diaspora in Europe. This implied that coercion and polarization were its only way to continue to dominate the Kurdish movement. Only by implicit or explicit threats of violence could the PKK control Kurdish political parties and NGOs and force them to tow the line; and only by polarizing the situation through continued acts of terrorism provoking inevitable retribution was it able to prevent Kurds from slipping away from Kurdish nationalism. By raising tensions in the southeast once again, the PKK succeeded in preventing alternative and

peaceful expressions of Kurdish political identity from emerging – not least by ensuring continued control over the Democratic Society Party (DTP), represented in parliament by ca. 20 members elected as independent candidates in 2007.

In Europe, the PKK once again met with obstacles as a result of its terrorist approach. The European Union in 2005 explicitly pointed to the PKK as the main cause of unrest and violence in southeastern Turkey. European ambassadors in Ankara refuse to meet the DTP unless it condemns PKK terrorism, something it has refused to do, apparently on orders from Öcalan. Moreover, as a result of strong U.S. pressure, European governments did go after the PKK slightly more than half-heartedly. A series of arrests in 2007 disrupted the PKK's training camps and financing operations, though most operatives were released rather than tried or extradited. In particular, Austrian authorities released the alleged head of the PKK's financial operations, Riza Altun, in July 2007, allowing him to flee to Iraq.



More seriously for the PKK, European governments have lately been paying closer attention to its media and propaganda operations.

After British authorities banned its first television mouthpiece, MED TV in 1999, Medya TV had been allowed to broadcast from France. But in 2004, French authorities closed it down, forcing the operations to move to Denmark, where Roj TV began broadcasting in March 2004. By 2005, both Washington and Ankara were exerting pressure on European governments, particularly Denmark, for the closure of Roj TV. Turkey filed numerous court cases in Danish courts, which were all rejected. But in 2008, the tide began to turn. In March, Belgian authorities fined Roj TV almost 4 million Euros, and in July, German authorities closed down the station's facilities in the country. Denmark is now under increasing pressure by both Turkey and the U.S. to act, given that other European countries – from Britain and France to Belgium and Germany – have now acted against PKK-controlled media outfits, compromising Denmark's high-profile commitment to the struggle against terrorism.



It is in this context that the PKK's growing provocations against European interests should be seen. Seizing three German climbers following the ban on Roj TV was a blatant attempt to blackmail Germany and warn other European governments of the damage that the PKK can still inflict on them. In this sense, the PKK seems to

have learnt from Islamist movements that European government are prone to be blackmailed – as the widespread rioting following the Muhammad cartoons showed. But in the past, the PKK's attempts to blackmail European governments have tended to backfire on it.

CONCLUSIONS: The PKK is obviously seeking to remain relevant in a rapidly developing scene, faced with a deteriorating climate for its operations in Europe. However, it is likely to seek to benefit from the current political troubles in Turkey. Indeed, the fact that both the DTP and the AKP are facing possible closure by Turkey's constitutional court serves the PKK's efforts to polarize the Kurdish issue in Turkey. To begin with, the bans are likely to affect Turkish-EU relations negatively, something the PKK hopes to benefit from. More importantly, the Kurdish vote in the 2007 elections went overwhelmingly to these two parties. Banning both of them may well be interpreted by large parts of the Kurdish electorate as a move to disenfranchise the Kurds. This is a message that the PKK is sure to capitalize upon in order to stir up tensions yet further.

The risk of growing and more intense PKK provocations should therefore not be discounted. The PKK has clearly embarked on a strategy of seeking to intimidate European governments, something that is likely to continue. It is therefore crucial for Europe to stay firm, and to keep marginalizing the PKK. For the future, two issues will be of paramount importance. First, to ensure that the next Turkish government to emerge from the current political crisis and the likely banning of the AKP engage in conciliatory and positive policies toward Turkey's Kurdish population; and second, to seek to cultivate political movements among Kurds that are willing to break with the PKK and condemn terrorism and violence.

THE FORTNIGHT IN REVIEW

SECTION I: WHAT THE COLUMNISTS SAY

What chance does Turkish democracy stand? There is a growing pessimism among secular columnists about the prospects of democracy surviving the ongoing turmoil. They see democracy as being squeezed between religious authoritarianism and military rule. The closure of the AKP is now not taken for granted. Columnists who support the government have become confident that the party will survive. And the issue of whether or not secularism has taken root in society continues to preoccupy.

COSKUN: DEMOCRACY DOES NOT STAND A CHANCE

Bekir Coskun in *Hürriyet* takes a pessimistic view of the prospects for the survival of Turkish democracy. Democracy is about being able to make choices; however for those who aim to establish a religious order the choices are divinely inspired, they can by definition not be contested. What has once been decided can not be altered as the result of rational reasoning and democratic deliberations. Neither is the military mind innately democratic; the world of the military is about giving and taking orders. Which of these alternatives will end up taking care of our democracy? That is the issue we are faced with. Democracy has no chance at all. None at all.

MÜNIR: WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The political system at place since 1960 has collapsed, writes Metin Münir in *Milliyet*. That system was based on a tacit civilian-military understanding, with the president acting as a balancing factor between the two sides of the unofficial ruling coalition. Cracks appeared in the system when the AKP came to power, and it has now definitely collapsed. The AKP refuses to share power. As president, Gül is not a balancing factor, but the prolonged arm of the government. Does everybody accept the collapse of the old system? Do we know what kind of a system that will eventually replace the defunct one? We are headed towards chaos because these questions remain unanswered. The obvious solution is democratization. The military should withdraw from politics. But Erdogan

has not displayed democratic reliability; he refuses to take the views of others into consideration, he mixes religion and politics. Turkey does not want a return to the old system; nor does it want to capitulate to the will of Erdogan.

GÜLERCE: AKP WILL NOT BE CLOSED DOWN

Hüseyin Gülerce, writing in *Zaman*, is confident that the AKP will not be banned. Recent developments have rendered such an outcome utterly improbable. A month ago I wrote that the probability of the party not being closed down was one percent. But that was before the arrests of the Ergenekon ringleaders. The forces behind Ergenekon are defeated. For the first time, the judiciary has taken on to investigate a plotted coup. When the judiciary hearings begin, it will become all the more impossible for the opposition to refuse to admit the realities. It will be a victory for Turkish democracy. Contrary to expectations, Prime Minister Erdogan will not turn into an authoritarian leader. I am confident that, following the acquittal of the AKP, Erdogan and his colleagues will be more conscious than ever about the need to bring people together and dispel the worries that exist in certain minds.

ÇAKIR: A CLOSURE STILL PROBABLE

Rusen Cakir in *Vatan* notes that there is a growing expectation in Turkey and in international quarters that the constitutional court may not rule on the closure of the governing AKP. Certain international and Turkish observers that I have met in recent

days, among whom former US ambassador to Turkey Mark Parris, have come to assume that the Ergenekon investigation will have the effect of intimidating the forces that want the AKP to be closed down. I use to remind them that there is no such, evident link between the Ergenekon investigation and the deliberations of the constitutional court. Rather, a judge who is already inclined towards voting for a closure can be expected to become even more determined.

ALKAN: TO NOTE THE CHANGE

Türker Alkan in *Radikal* writes that the assumption that the confrontation in Turkey is a static one, pitting secularists against religious fundamentalists is misplaced. We always assume that these two groups have not evolved during almost hundred years of republican history, and as if the issues of contention invariably have remained the same during the course of this period. In fact, there was a time when there was uproar among seculars over the issue of veiled women; today the veil is gone, and we discuss the headscarf. And there used to be calls for the reinstatement of religious law; the notion of women taking part in societal life was abhorred by conservatives; the replacement of the Arabic alphabet with Latin letters and the Turkification of language were widely questioned. These changes are well internalized today; even the religiously conservative want to be a part of Europe, their wives and daughters work as well, and even the most conservative writer uses a pure Turkish.

SECTION II: DOMESTIC POLITICS

Summary: The fortnight's politics were dominated by four major issues: continued developments in the AKP closure case; AKP founder Sener's decision to form a new center party; the attack on police outside the US consulate in Istanbul; and the roundup of prominent figures in the Ergenekon investigation.

PAKSÜT: THE CASE WILL FINISH WITHIN 4 OR 5 WEEKS

4 July

Constitutional Court Deputy Chairman Osman Paksüt stated that the AKP case will finish soon. "At this point it can be said that the case will finish within 4 or 5 weeks, however it can be 3 or 6 weeks depending on the circumstances." Upon a question concerning the verbal defense of the AKP, Mr. Paksüt responded: "Mr. **Çiçek** made the verbal defense. However, because it was quite long he did not have time to express certain points. He gave us those points in written form and we will record them. There were also some news about the AKP, which were later refuted; Mr. **Çiçek** presented us those pieces of evidence for the record. Now it is the rapporteur's turn." (*Radikal*)

THE AKP BORROWS POINTS FROM THE WELFARE PARTY'S DEFENSE IN ITS CLOSURE CASE

5 July

Although the AKP repeatedly states that it is not a continuation of the Welfare or Virtue Party, Deputy Prime Minister Cemil **Çiçek** used some parts of Virtue Party's defense before the Constitutional Court. Mr. **Çiçek** stated that closing the AKP would cause a government collapse by antidemocratic means and further claimed that Chief Prosecutor Abdurrahman **Yalçınkaya** placed religious people under reproach. In the 177-page verbal defense, Mr. **Çiçek** stated that political parties were mirrors reflecting social realities and added that realities would not change by destroying the mirror. Underlining that today's wrongs may be tomorrow's rights, Mr. **Çiçek** equated closing political parties to the death penalty for individuals and emphasized that

it was not on the AKP agenda to pose any kind of threat to democracy. Underlining that some of the sentences used for religious elements could spark antagonism between people, Mr. **Çiçek** stressed that the Directorate for Religious Affairs which was shown as anti-secular, was making appointments to the mosques in the eastern part of the country in line with the National Security Council and High Council on Struggle against Terrorism. Mr. **Çiçek** said, "Closing a party that is in power and banning its chairman means that the government will collapse. This would be a victory for the people who did not get what they wanted in the elections." Mr. **Çiçek** stated that his party was accused of being against Atatürk. However, earlier they had expelled one of its members who had told a joke, disgracing Atatürk. "At a time when disinformation reaches a peak via the Internet, putting any words you stumble upon into search engines as a means of evidence is not freedom" said Mr. **Çiçek**. (*Milliyet*)

CHP ACCUSES ERGENEKON PROSECUTOR

5 July

CHP Deputy Group Chairman Kemal Anadol stated that they will seek judgment against the Prosecutor of the Ergenekon operation because of the information that leaked to the media. Mr. Anadol organized a press conference in the Parliament in which he said, "In this investigation, which was prompted by an unknown individual, thirteen months have passed without any indictment. On September 12 (After the 1980 military coup) I stood before the judge after only six months. But then there was a coup. Now there is a government that is supposed to support change and transformation. In this environment, people are being held under custody for 13 months

and they cannot stand before the court; this is disastrous.” Mr. Anadol also pointed to the situation of Ergenekon suspect Kuddusi Okkır, who had been detained in prison for a long time, while suffering from cancer and is currently struggling for his life. Calling the Human Rights Investigation Commission of the Parliament to look into this matter, Mr. Anadol asked, “Mr. Lagendijk and Olli Rehn are human rights defenders and I ask myself where they are now.” Mr. Anadol referred to the news published about Ergenekon Prosecutor Zekeriya Öz, and wrote letters to the MIT (National Intelligence Agency), the Police and the General Staff, emphasizing that they had faced a ban of publication: “The cases are not even given to the attorneys of the suspects. I am asking the prosecutor who is responsible for the leakage of information to the media? This information is usually kept secret from the suspects’ advocates.” (*Radikal*)

ŞENER DECLARED THAT HE WILL ESTABLISH A PARTY

6 July

Abdüllatif Şener, who was Deputy Prime Minister during the first AKP government and did not take part in the 2007 elections, answered the questions of journalists regarding the current political atmosphere in Turkey. Mr. Şener stated, “We are experiencing an abnormal process. We are living in unnatural conditions. Every single person in this country is living under these unnatural conditions. This situation is harming everyone. And the aggrieved of this process is 70 million people of Turkey. We are all aggrieved by these developments”. “This environment should be refreshed. I am not discussing who did it and I am not looking for someone to blame, but this environment should immediately be normalized. How could this happen? This is the problem. I think that a new approach to politics may play a significant role in relieving the atmosphere. I also agree with those who think that general elections are needed for this normalization”. “I have been outside the parliament for a year. Even though I am an academic, it seems the time has come for me to re-enter politics. I think that a new political party that will be established in accordance with the needs of Turkey is necessary and I will do whatever I can in line with the social demand in order to make that happen”. (*Hürriyet*)

COUNCIL OF STATE CHIEF PROSECUTOR ÇÖLAŞAN: THEY WANT TO TRANSFORM TURKEY

7 July

Council of State Chief Prosecutor **Tansel Çölaşan** made heavy accusations against “politicians” in an international law symposium. She said, “We are not playing politics here. They want to transform Turkey. The Judiciary is trying to defend itself on all fronts”. Ms. Çölaşan stated that those who had taken power through elections were unable to embrace democracy, and did not accept the rights of those that did not win power through elections.” Ms. Çölaşan said that the political leadership appears unable to accept an independent judiciary. Speaking obliquely of “politics”, she accused politicians of showing one face outside the country, in Europe, but another one at home. “The legislative and executive powers do not have the right to do whatever they want because they came to power through elections. They must show respect to contemporary democratic standards and abide with universal rules. They can only sustain their legality in this way. Otherwise they cannot go beyond becoming a ‘police’ state. In this context they must accept the independent judiciary” Ms. **Çölaşan recalled that the separation of powers is key in any democracy.** (*Radikal*)

DOCUMENTS CONCERNING GENERAL BÜYÜKANIT IN THE ARCHIVES OF TOLON

8 July

In the archives of retired General Hürşit Tolon, who was taken under custody in the framework of Ergenekon operation, a file concerning Chief of General Staff **Yaşar Büyükanıt**'s personal and family information was found. During the interrogation in Istanbul's 13th Criminal Court, Mr. Tolon confirmed the existence of such a file and was arrested on July 6. Before his arrest, Mr. Tolon gave following answers to Judge Sedat Sami **Haşiloğlu**'s questions: “During my 50 years of military career, I remained loyal to my oath and did not perform any illegal acts. I never had a connection with an illegal organization. I learned in the police station that the documents about Ergenekon were in a CD in my son's house. I had the chance to see these documents for the first time in my life. The file containing personal and family information about General **Yaşar Büyükanıt** was sent to me by an unknown person while I was the commander of the Aegean Army. There was no specific purpose. They were archived in a routine

archiving exercise and sent to the 1st Army Commandership after my appointment there and then to my home after I retired. I have no relationship with this organization, neither in the past or in the future. I request you to consider my age and health condition and social status while making a decision. I have known about this case for almost a year. If I were a part of this organization I would already have destroyed those documents.” (*Hurriyet*)

ŞENER’S AIM: 20 DEPUTIES

9 July

One of the founders of the AKP and member of the central committee, Abdüllatif Şener, is parting with the governing party. Declaring that he will found a new party, Mr. Şener began to contact the AKP’s “offended” deputies and disappointed people who were not made candidates in the last election. It is being claimed that Mr. Şener was trying to pull 20 deputies away from the AKP in order to establish a parliamentary group and enter the next elections. The party administration apparently sent orders to the party organization in order to stop Mr. Şener. Planning to establish a “center” party, Mr. Şener is said to be in contact with important names from both the left and right. Among the “displeased” whom Mr. Şener is gathering together are former Agri deputy Halil Özyolcu, former Sinop deputy Mustafa Öztürk, former Sanliurfa deputy Mahmut Kaplan and former Hatay deputy Mehmet Soydan. (*Milliyet*)

ATTACK AT THE U.S. CONSULATE

9 July

An armed attack was conducted against the police post in front of the U.S. consulate-general in Istanbul. In the skirmish a guard, three police officers and three terrorists died. According to the sources it is most likely that the attack was orchestrated by either Al-Qaeda or the DHKP-C terrorist organizations. Among the four terrorists, three were killed and one escaped in a Ford Focus. (*Sabah*)

GÜL WILL MEET ÖZKÖK

10 July

Turkish President Abdullah Gül will meet with retired General and former Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök, who called for mediation from an objective person in order to relieve the social tension caused by the AKP case and arrests in the framework of the Ergenekon investigation. With regard to the previous statement made by Mr. Özkök, “an official actor

should begin the process of normalizing the environment as soon as possible”. As a response to that, President Gül said the following: “I have put much effort ever since Turkey entered this atmosphere. From time to time I shared my messages with the media. I held the meetings that you have seen. I am arranging other meetings and studies which you did not see. These efforts will continue”. It was also remarked that the Gül-Özkök meeting will take place following the former Chief of General Staff’s interview with Milliyet Ankara Representative, Fikret Bila. Mr. Özkök discussed the coup plans, which were claimed to include a retired General who was captured during the Ergenekon investigation “I will neither verify nor refute the existence of those plans.” Mr. Gül will meet with European Court of Human Rights Judge Rıza Türmen for lunch next Monday. (*Milliyet*)

GÜL MET WITH ÖZKÖK

11 July

Former Chief of General Staff Özkök met with President Abdullah Gül. Mr. Özkök stated that he gave an interview to Fikret Bila from Milliyet newspaper and discussed a number of proposals regarding the current situation in Turkey. President Abdullah Gül met with the retired General who made a call, stating that “an official actor should come up and start the movement which will normalize the environment”. The main topic of the meeting was how to ease the tension increased by the AKP case and the Ergenekon investigation. Mr. Özkök stated that they mentioned Ergenekon while discussing the present situation of the country in general and did not go into details. He also said that they did not talk about the coup plans issue. Upon the question “Do you intend to testify about the coup diaries?” Mr. Özkök responded, “We shall see if the day comes”. (*Milliyet*)

ŞENER RESIGNED FROM THE AKP

11 July

After attending the central committee meeting of the AKP for half an hour, Mr. Şener declared his resignation from the party and left the meeting. Mr. Şener said, “I presented my petition. Resignation is not a situation of struggle. It is a civilized mechanism. Thus, the Prime Minister showed great kindness and gave me the chance to speak. I made my farewell speech and said goodbye to my friends. The Prime Minister expressed his best regards and we parted. Addressing a question if there was any tension during

the meeting, Mr. Şener replied “No. There was great kindness. Politics should be made chastely. Politics made in a chaste way is crucial for the harmony between society and institutions and improving the system’s capability to solve problems. Şener answered questions about the content of the meeting by saying, “As you know, those meetings are closed meetings. Things discussed in these meetings happen within the rules of secrecy”. (*Sabah*)

AKP DEPUTIES WOULD TRANSFER TO ANOTHER PARTY IF CLOSED

12 July

Instead of forming a new political party, AKP is in talks with another political party to transfer its deputies in case a closure decision comes from the Constitutional Court.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and the leader of Powerful Turkey Party (GTP) Tuna Beklevic held talks on a potential formula if the AKP is closed and reached a deal on the issue. According to the deal, if the Constitutional Court closes the AKP, the party would not form a new political party but the existing deputies, who would not be banned by the Court, would be transferred to the GTP. Mr. Beklevic declined to comment on the issue. "I cannot make any comment on the issue. I expect to be in a position to speak more frankly in the coming days. I am doing my best to help Turkey to overcome this crisis," he said. The AKP would not seek to form a new political party to avoid a renewed risk of being closed, as the constitution does not allow a closed party to continue its activities under another one. Turkey's chief prosecutor had asked the Court to ban 71 officials, including more than 30 MPs of the party as well as its closure. In case of closure, the number of banned deputies has particular importance, as it would determine whether the AKP would continue to hold its majority and single party government. Also the number of banned AKP deputies would be decisive with regard to possible early general or by-elections. If less than 26 deputies are banned, then holding early elections would depend on the decision of the successor of the AKP, which is expected to remain in power. However if more than 26 AKP MPs are banned, then, according to the constitution, by-elections should be called to replace the empty chairs in parliament. (*Hürriyet*)

THE HEADSCARF IS NOT THE PEOPLE’S PRIORITY

13 July

The problem of the Islamic headscarf in universities, which the AKP perceived as an issue that needed to be dealt with immediately, turned out to be less important from the people’s point of view, according to a report prepared by the Prime Ministry’s Human Rights Directorate. Based on the report prepared for the first time, titled: “2007 Turkey Human Rights Report,” the most problematic issue is health and violations in the rights of ill people and the most criticized institutions are the municipalities. (*Radikal*)

IT BEGAN WITH THE RETIRED SERGEANT AND REACHED THE GENERALS

14 July

The Ergenekon operation has distressed Turkey, with the news of arrests of former rectors, politicians, journalists and generals. The Ergenekon investigation also created heated debates. With the submission of the indictment today, a new process will begin. Some evidence and accusations that have not previously been told will be included in the indictment. The most important matter is that people will be able to grasp the claims that previously appeared in the newspapers. The case will also shed light upon many developments that took place in the past in Turkey. The first sign of this 13-month long process was a warning that came from Trabzon in June 2007. Following this warning, the police found a slum building full of explosives and grenades on June 13. Former renter of the house Ali Yigit claimed that the explosives belonged to retired sergeant Oktay *Yıldırım*. Although Mr. Yıldırım denied this claim his fingerprints were found on a crate containing grenades. In the same month, another armory was found in Eskişehir, which belonged to retired Major Fikret Emek. 15 people were arrested in that operation. They were accused of establishing a terrorist organization, stealing secret documents of state, keeping explosives and records of people. It was at this point that newspapers began to mention “Ergenekon.”

In July, Prime Minister Erdoğan made sure that the author Ergün Poyraz, who was writing books about Erdoğan’s wife, was arrested. He was accused of being a member of a terrorist organization and of capturing secret documents belonging to the state. On August 18, former Youth Party (GP) member Emin *Şirin* was taken into custody and later released. The custody of Mr. *Şirin* was perceived as a sign that the Ergenekon investigation was more than just following an armed gang. Five months passed. On

January 22, thirty-three people including majors, lieutenant generals and journalists were taken into custody. Contrary to the previous occasion, the official document was titled "Ergenekon terrorist organization" and the accusation was to provoke people against the government by establishing a terrorist organization. But the real disaster was the accusations that were not backed by proof. Ergenekon was an organization within the state. Actions intended to create social rupture were being planned, and assassinations were arranged. The plan of the organization was to create an environment suitable for a coup. Branches of the organization consisted of defense, propaganda, law, logistics, finance, etc. In February 2008, the fourth wave of Ergenekon appeared. This time, on the order of prosecutor Zekeriya Öz, the target was the academic wing of the organization. Assoc. Prof. **Ümit Sayın** from Istanbul University, Assoc. Prof. Emin Gürses from Sakarya University, famous jeweler Hayrettin Ertekin, journalist Vedat Yenerer, writer Orhan Tunç and the closed Santa Claus Foundation (Noel Baba Vakfı) founder, Muammer Karabulut, were arrested. While everyone assumed that the investigation was about to come to an end, Turkey woke up with news of arrests of 13 people including Cumhuriyet Newspaper Columnist **İlhan** Selçuk, former Istanbul University rector Prof. Kemal **Alemdaroğlu**, and Workers' Party (IP) Chairman Doğu Perinçek. According to the accusations and testimonies, Ergenekon was preparing a coup. Ergenekon was allegedly trying to form a second state within the state and find supporters in the media and finance sectors. Ergenekon also planned to sustain the closure of the AKP. People still expected an indictment. However, this time a last big operation was being held on July 1, with the arrests of retired Generals Şener Eruygur and Hursit Tolon, Ankara Chamber of Industry chairman Sinan Aygün, Cumhuriyet Newspaper Columnist and Ankara Representative Mustafa Balbay, and writer Erol Mütercimler.

According to the diaries, which allegedly belonged to former Naval Forces Commander Admiral Özden Örnek, there were two coup plans named: "Ayisigi" and "Sarikiz", which were prepared in 2003-2004 by retired General Eruygur. The two generals were arrested and accused of trying to overthrow the government or obstructing the government to perform its duties and establishing a terrorist organization. (*Radikal*)

HEAD OF CONSTITUTIONAL COURT SAID AKP RULING WILL NOT CAUSE DOOMSDAY

15 July

"Turkey's Constitutional Court's decision on the closure case against the AKP will not cause a 'doomsday' and Turkey is strong enough to handle the situation", the country's top judge said on Monday. **Haşim Kılıç**, head of the court, however, refused to announce a date for the AKP case decision. "Turkey is a great country. We will not have Armageddon. This country has lived through many things. Nobody should be concerned. Turkey's institutions are functioning. They are fulfilling their duties," Mr. **Kılıç** told reporters in a bid to soothe concerns over the ruling on the case. Turkey has been waiting for the court's ruling on the closure case against the AKP. The rapporteur of the court is expected to submit his final report on the merits of the case on Wednesday. Once the report is submitted, it will be distributed to court members and Mr. **Kılıç** will set a date for the first hearing. Mr. **Kılıç** refused to specify a date. "I will discuss with other court members to see when they can complete their evaluation on the case. I will then select a date to include the case on the agenda," he said. Earlier the Deputy Chairman of the court, Osman Paksüt, implied that the case could be finalized at the end of July or early August. Mr. Paksüt also said that regardless of the outcome of the ruling, it would not cause "doomsday" in Turkey. (*Hürriyet*)

SECTION III: FOREIGN RELATIONS

Summary: Foreign minister Babacan took part in the D-8 summit, while Prime Minister Erdogan took part in the Mediterranean summit in Paris, having received assurances that French plans will not affect Turkey's EU candidacy.

SURPRISE VISIT BY AMERICAN GENERAL

4 July

The second in command in the U.S. General Staff, James Cartwright, who provided intelligence support for the Turkish Armed Forces operations against the PKK in northern Iraq made a surprise visit to Ankara. This is Mr. Cartwright's third visit to Turkey within a year. Mr. Cartwright stayed less than 24 hours in Ankara. Meeting with the Turkish Chief of General Staff *Yaşar Büyükanıt* and Second in command Ergin Saygun, Mr. Cartwright evaluated the operations held against the PKK and asked if they were content with the intelligence support. The Turkish Generals expressed their contentment and requested intelligence cooperation between Turkey and U.S. to be strengthened. (*Radikal*)

PRESSURE TO MODERATE ARMENIAN PRESIDENT

6 July

Serzh Sarkisyan, who became President in February, became the target of the opposition's demonstrations due to his efforts to normalize the relationship with Turkey. During a visit to Moscow last week, Mr. Sarkisyan, regarding the joint commission proposal of Turkey in order to investigate the Armenian claims, said, "I am for this proposition in principle. First, we must deal with our border problem, which does not fit into the 21st century. We must open our borders mutually and strengthen our relations." After this statement around fifty thousand people, organized by the opposition leader and Sarkisyan's predecessor Ter Petrosyan, took to the streets. In the statement of opposition it was said that Mr. Sarkisyan was creating obstacles to Armenia's bid for their claims to be recognized by supporting Turkey's joint commission proposal. (*Sabah*)

BABACAN IN MALAYSIA

7 July

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan went to Malaysia in order to attend the Developing Eight Countries (D-8) summit. Mr. Babacan met with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad for approximately 20 minutes. During the meeting they discussed Iraq and the PKK. Mr. Babacan also met with Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Bedevi. It is stated that Mr. Babacan presented a letter from Mr. Erdoğan explaining why he could not attend the D-8 summit. The Malaysian Prime Minister stated that the two countries were very close despite the geographical distance. During the meeting, Mr. Babacan and his counterpart Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Ahmed Chowdhury discussed bilateral economic and political relations and Mr. Babacan congratulated Mr. Chowdhury for the reforms in Bangladesh. Mr. Chowdhury underlined that the relations between two countries stem from a long history and also the trade relationships should increase. Mr. Chowdhury proposed cooperation with Turkey in the medicine sector and proposed the establishment of a student exchange program. In the D-8 meeting tomorrow, prime ministers and foreign ministers from Turkey, Malaysia, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Nigeria will be present. (*Sabah*)

ECHR: ELECTION BARRIER NOT A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

8 July

The European Court of Human Rights stated that an election barrier is not a violation of human rights. The court already decided on this issue on January 30, 2007, however litigants appealed the decision. In the second meeting on the case on December 21, 2007, advocates of the Turkish government said that the election barrier was necessary for stability. The attorney of the litigants said that the barrier created a problem for a pluralist democracy, representation and legitimacy. Today, the court gave its final decision and

repeated its previous verdict. Resul Sadak and Mehmet Yumak, members of the closed DEHAP, submitted another case indicating that the 10% election barrier obstructed the realization of freedom of self-expression of the voters on the basis of the European Human Rights Convention's supplementary protocol's third point concerning free elections. (*Sabah*)

ATTACK AT THE U.S. CONSULATE

9 July

An armed attack was conducted against the police post in front of the U.S. consulate-general in Istanbul. In the skirmish a guard, three police officers and three terrorists died. According to the sources it is most likely that the attack was orchestrated by either Al-Qaeda or the DHKP-C terrorist organizations. Among the four terrorists, three were killed and one escaped in a Ford Focus. (*Sabah*)

IF THE AKP WINS, TURKEY WILL RESEMBLE JORDAN

9 July

In an article in the Wall Street Journal, Dr. Soner Cagaptay who is the Turkey Program Director at the Washington Institute, wrote that Turkey will become like Jordan if the AKP wins the ongoing struggle. Dr. Cagaptay states in the article that, "Turkey will not become a Sharia state if the AKP wins.

Fundamentalist Islam is alien to the spirit of Turks. However, Turkey will become a country where belonging to the opposition will be increasingly difficult and Turkish society will transform into a position where the relationship between religion and state is close. Islam will dominate politics and education, and shape the administrative maneuvers of the government in the issues of restricting the situation of women in workplaces or giving alcohol warrants. In other words Turkey will be less similar to secular, liberal-democratic Italy and more similar to authoritarian half-secular Jordan." (*Hurriyet*)

TURKISH PRIME MINISTER IN IRAQ

10 July

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was in Iraq for official meetings. Mr. Erdoğan met with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki during his visit. In the meeting, Mr. Erdoğan brought the PKK issue to the agenda and said, "Destroying the PKK is one of the most important, serious issues of the two countries. Dealing with this problem will benefit both countries. Mr. Erdoğan expressed his happiness with his visit by

saying, "This is a late visit. We are sorry for this. We are neighbors and beyond that, we are brothers." Pointing to the problems faced by the Iraqi people since 2003, Mr. Erdoğan said, "We want these problems and pains to come to an end. Turkey is ready for everything that will sustain the stability of Iraq." Prime Minister Erdoğan and Iraqi Prime Minister Al Maliki signed an agreement for the establishment of a "Strategic Relations High Council" between the two countries, aiming to improve relations. According to the agreement, the Prime Ministers will meet once a year, while related ministers meet three times and technical commissions meet four times a year. There are also points suggesting Iraqi officers and teachers to be trained in Turkey. (*Sabah*)

BABACAN: FRANCE SENT AN INVITATION LETTER THREE TIMES

12 July

Reminding that France sent three invitation letters for the Mediterranean summit, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head Negotiator Ali Babacan stated that, "The President of France Nicolas Sarkozy called our Prime Minister and gave his personal guarantee." After his contacts in Brussels, Mr. Babacan organized a press conference in which he told journalists how the decision to participate in the Mediterranean Union was taken. Mr. Babacan said that in the first proposal made by France in the project, there was a distinction between EU member countries and Mediterranean partners. Turkey rejected this. "We said that the situation of Turkey and a northern African countries is not the same. Our status should be different. And this was accepted," said Mr. Babacan. Mr. Babacan stated that while the draft final decision was being prepared for the Mediterranean Union summit, the candidate country status entered into the text. The point indicating that the decisions will be taken by consensus and irrespective of EU or non-EU status, all countries will have equal status.

ERDOĞAN REQUESTS SARKOZY TO REMAIN LOYAL TO HIS COMMITMENTS

13 July

Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan urged France to remain loyal to its commitments in the negotiations with Turkey at his meeting with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris on Sunday, where he is attending the summit on the "Barcelona Process: Mediterranean Union." Mr. Erdoğan had

communicated Turkey's expectations from France during France's EU presidency, while Mr. Sarkozy promised to allow accession talks to continue. The negotiation chapters, which were ready for review, would be opened to negotiation during the French Presidency. The two leaders discussed Turkey-EU relations, bilateral issues, the Middle East peace process, and the AKP case. Mr. Sarkozy also appreciated Turkey's mediation between Israel and Syria, and welcomed Turkey's active participation in the Union for Mediterranean Project. Mr. Sarkozy reiterated that the Mediterranean Union Project and Turkey's EU bid were entirely different issues. "The Mediterranean Union is a project aiming at developing cooperation in the Mediterranean region. This project is not an alternative to Turkey's EU membership process. It was underlined by European leaders on many occasions," Mr. Erdoğan said in Istanbul before his departure for France on Sunday. "The final statement to be released at the end of the summit will also refer to this. From the very beginning, Turkey has been advocating to develop tangible projects for the development of cooperation in the Mediterranean," he added. (*Hürriyet*)

IRAN APPOINTED AN AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY

14 July

Iran, which is closely monitored by the U.S. and the EU due to its nuclear program, has kept its representation in Turkey at the level of chargé d'affaires for many years because Turkey also shared the international society's concern about Iran's nuclear program. Huseyin Pour, who was Iran's Consul General to Istanbul until 2003, will start his duty as ambassador in the coming days. Iran reduced its representation level in Turkey soon after Mahmoud Ahmedinejad became President in 2005. (*Sabah*)

THE PRESIDENT "CARES" ABOUT THE EU PROCESS

15 July

President Abdullah Gül met with the European Court of Human Rights Judge, retired Ambassador Riza Türmen within the framework of "meeting people with certain status from different parts of society." Stating that Mr. Gül regarded the EU process and the developments in the European Court of Human Rights, Mr. Türmen said, "I found the chance to transfer my knowledge and experience in this matter to the President. We discussed the impacts of globalization on law and ways to bring European standards to Turkey". Upon the questions of journalists asking if Ergenekon was mentioned during the meeting, Mr. Türmen said, "No, that issue was not our agenda. There is nothing to discuss with regard to Ergenekon with the President". In a previous statement made to CNN Türk, Mr. Türmen said that if the AKP was closed, the important issue for the European Court of Human Rights will be "democracy". Mr. Türmen also said that it was difficult to see evidence concrete enough to legitimize a possible closure. In an interview he gave to Devrim Sevimay from Milliyet, Mr. Türmen stated that he finds a warning, instead of closure, more appropriate. Stressing that the reactions being shown against the judicial organs was a problem, Mr. Türmen also stated that Mr. Gül could not be judged over his actions before he became president. In the coming days Mr. Gül will meet with former Undersecretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador to Italy *Uğur Ziyal*. (*Milliyet*)

