

## Erdogan and the AKP Restore Factory Settings on Secularism

### News:

President Erdogan answered questions of journalists during his visit in Croatia. Erdogan's statements regarding the secularism discussions were striking. President Erdogan commented on the words of Parliament Speaker Ismail Kahraman who said, "There should not be secularism in the new constitution". He said, "We laid down our view regarding secularism in the AKP's constitution. Mr. Kahraman, as a member of the party, has accepted this program. He just expressed his personal opinion during the ongoing preparation of the new constitution. If you present and implement secularism like non-religiousness, then you will face opposition for sure."

Regarding views like "The new constitution should have an Islamic emphasis", Erdogan stated that, "These are empty words. If I am able to live my faith as a Muslim, the issue is done." Answering questions from journalists during his visit in Croatia, Erdogan briefly gave the following messages:

[http://www.cnnurk.com/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-yeni-anayasada-islam-vurgusuna-ihtiyac-yok?utm\\_content=buffer7a823&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.cnnurk.com/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-yeni-anayasada-islam-vurgusuna-ihtiyac-yok?utm_content=buffer7a823&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

### Comment:

First of all I would like to start by emphasizing the following: Since its establishment in 2001 and its coming to power in 2002 till today, there has not been an essential change in the AKP's manifesto regarding its views on Turkey's domestic and foreign policy, and more importantly in its view towards values like secularism and democracy. The above-mentioned official and political comment by President Erdogan regarding secularism, confirms this. I say official and political, because there also exist unofficial and non-political emotional and exhilarating statements of President Erdogan which he made towards the public in order to vent off the Muslims' air. So the public faces two Erdogans!

Hence we can say that parliament speaker Ismail Kahraman's statement is a political statement. However, this statement was postulated by Erdogan and the AKP as a non-binding personal statement. The binding and official statement regarding secularism was made by Erdogan and the AKP administrators.

Erdogan used exactly these following phrases: **"Our parliamentary speaker revealed his personal opinion, and views in the context of the constitutional debate. My personal thoughts on this issue - and you know - since the beginning of my presidency, are clear. And above all, most important is my speech in Egypt on this issue."**

And Ahmet Davutoglu made the following statement: **"Turkey's quality of being a secular democratic social law state today is out of debate."** Also AKP spokesman Ömer Çelik made the following statement: **"The implementation of religion within the constitution does not exist in the AKP's politics."**

This statement confirms that the AKP's and Erdogan's ideological mission was loaded upon them by the US and the West. This is because his call for secularism addressing the Muslim Brotherhood after the revolution in Egypt is not related to Turkey, but rather a political call to the Middle East and the Arab world. In other words, this call is a necessity of the project of Turkey as a role-model to the Middle East. Therefore we can clearly say that the AKP's and Erdogan's ideas about secularism and democracy are not limited to Turkey, but rather involve the Middle east and the Muslim world in general.

So then, why did Ismail Kahraman make this statement out of the blue? So is this statement by Kahraman who is known to be very close to Erdoğan, who is a founding member of the AKP and who provides proposal texts to the government in its constitutional work, who is the former president and manager of "Foundation for Union" (Birlik Vakfı); a deliberate one, or was it just a figure of speech? Considering the fact that Kahraman is an experienced politician, and presidential speaker, we can't say that this statement was just for the sake of the word. So this statement was intended to create an agenda and discussion on this issue. It is a statement in order appeal to the public's pulse.

But what is most important is, that this statement came right after President Erdogan's visit to the US and his meeting with Obama. In my opinion, the AKP's concept of secularism and democracy has lost credibility - especially after the developments in Turkey and the Middle East over the last 3-4 years - both in the eyes of the secular and liberal circles in Turkey as well as the US and the West's public opinion. It seems that these official statements by Erdogan and the AKP regarding secularism aimed at restoring trust of Turkey's seculars and liberals, and of the West. Erdogan put an end to the issue of secularism by virtually saying, "**There is no room for doubt, we are the guardians of secularism.**"

President Erdogan's other face continues to hold Islamic, emotional religious, exhilarating talks towards the Muslims, and he will further continue. He will also continue to exploit the Palestine issue. He will also continue to dissemble the fact of being the USA's ally in the Syria and Middle East issue from the public with his heroic rhetoric and talks. He will distract the Muslims with the nonsense of the Islamic Union by exploiting the fact that this Ummah is rudderless.

I ask my Lord that the Muslims see and understand accurately these statements by Erdogan and the AKP regarding secularism. InshaAllah, there will develop the necessary foresight among the Muslims, and thus enable them to distinguish between the true leader and the liar and untrustworthy leader.

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