



### Haber Bilgileri

THE FEMALE DEPUTIES OF AK PARTY UNDERLINES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ERBAKAN AND ERDOĞAN

Yayın Adı: Turkish Daily News  
Yayın tarihi: 17 Kasım 2002 Pazar

Üretim tarihi: 17 Kasım 2002 Pazar

Sütun / CM: 0 / 0  
Sütun x CM: 0  
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**T METNİ GÖR**

# The female deputies of AK Party under the difference between Erbakan and Erdoğan

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The looks of female deputies of election winner Justice and Development Party (AK Party) form a contradictory view with the party. Female deputies of AK Party, who were elected as the representatives of party supporters, do not really represent typical AK Party grassroots. In reality, the majority of female AK Party electors are wearing headscarves. This is the main contradiction.

The first item on the agenda of the masses that formed the stronghold of AK Party for many years was the headscarf issue, preventing a number of females from attending university or work in a state office in headscarves due to an ongoing strict dress code. In this light, 13 newly elected female deputies of AK Party who have never experienced such an issue as they do not wear headscarves will have an interesting experience as the representatives of these masses.

According to the dress code, women wearing headscarves are not allowed in schools and state offices.

Meanwhile, almost all the spouses of AK Party administrators including party leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wear headscarves. This is also a contradiction with AK Party female deputies.

In the past the spouse of AK Party deputy leader Abdullah Gül was not allowed to enrol in an university program as she was wearing a headscarf. She protested this incident to the media. Prominent AK Party figure Bülent Arınç said during the party's election campaign that solving the headscarf issue was among the main goals of the party.

Despite these facts, Erdoğan used his power as the leader of the party to nominate female deputy candidates who have never worn headscarves in their lives. Moreover, he didn't include any headscarved candidates into the list of deputy candidates.

Erdoğan might have preferred not to nominate any female deputy candidates from his party so as not to experience the stress of having headscarved female deputies in Parliament. In contrast, he placed 13 female deputies without headscarves into the spotlight. This marks the distinction between Erdoğan and the politically banned Necmettin Erbakan, whose Welfare Party (RP) was banned by the Constitutional Court on charges of being the center of anti-secular activities. The most important difference between Erbakan and Erdoğan is the profiles of their choice of female deputies, revealing their differing views on regime and strategy.

Erdoğan is different from Erbakan due to his priorities and strategies. Erdoğan's former leader, and mentor of Political Islam in Turkey, Erbakan followed a totally different strategy. By urging the election of Merve Kavakçı, who wore a headscarf, he showed he had the intention of struggling with the regime.

Erbakan, who didn't nominate a female deputy candidate in the 1995 elections as he didn't want to experience the headscarf problem, urged the Virtue Party (FP) to name Kavakçı as their deputy candidate after his RP was forced to leave power and banned by the Constitutional Court. FP was the successor of RP and Erbakan was mentioned as the phantom behind the ruling of the party.

After the 1999 elections, Kavakçı appeared at the oath-taking ceremony with her headscarf. This

## Women of AK Party



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**Erbakan showed that he would not back down from conflicts with the state when he nominated the headscarved Merve Kavakçı to Parliament. On the other hand, Erdoğan gave the signal that, apart from being the party of the elections, he aims AK Party to become a party capable of exercising the powers of a governing party and a willingness to solve problems in a regime one by one by nominating 13 modern female deputy candidates.**

*Some 22 female deputies had entered Parliament after 1999 elections. At the last elections a total of 24 female deputies, 13 from AK Party and 11 from the CHP entered Parliament. Winner of 1999 elections DSP had 12 female deputies*



created havoc in Parliament and Democratic Left Party (DSP) leader and Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit stated it was a challenge to the state.

Erdoğan's choice to nominate female deputies without headscarves is a signal of his possible approach to governing the country. He showed that he does not have any intention of struggling with the state.

But this does not mean that the party would not bring the headscarf issue to its agenda in Parliament even though AK Party has become a party that is 100 percent harmonious with the regime.

It is predicted that after Erdoğan has settled the AK Party powerbase

he will bring these issues into Parliament one by one. Female deputies of AK Party may be viewed as window models helping AK Party to become a ruling party that is capable of using its power. Time will tell if this is true or not.

Erdoğan's AK Party needs the votes of four independent deputies in order to amend the Constitution without the support of Parliament's sole opposition, Republican People's Party (CHP). This is a very important advantage. There are nine independent lawmakers in the new parliament, increasing Erdoğan's chances to find support easily.

It is also interesting that AK Party

is making history with the highest number of female deputies in the history of modern Turkey. A total of 22 female deputies entered Parliament after the 1999 elections. Currently, there are 24 female deputies, 13 from winner AK Party and 11 from sole opposition CHP, in Parliament.

Female deputies of AK Party are as follows: Ayhan Zeynep Tekin from Adana, Reyhan Balandi from Afyon, Remziye Öztoprak from Ankara, Semiha Oyus from Aydin, Fatma Sahin from Gaziantep, Gulseren Topuz from Istanbul, Zeynep Armagan Uslu from Istanbul, Nimet Cubukcu from

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