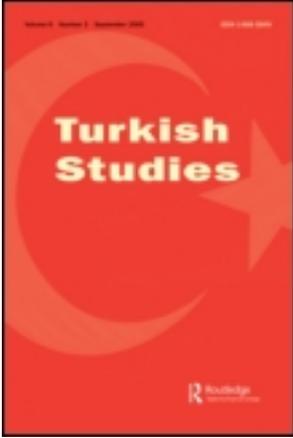


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The Final Curtain for the Turkish Armed Forces? Civil–Military Relations in View of the 2011 General Elections

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ABSTRACT *After providing a brief overview of civil–military relations in Turkey prior to the June 12, 2011, general elections, this article focuses on the way in which the ruling Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), the opposition Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), and the Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi treated this issue in their election campaigns. It argues that the AKP had a dual discourse on civil–military relations and the CHP occasionally showed signs of defending the role of the military in Turkish politics. However, both the victorious AKP and the main opposition CHP adopted policies that accentuated the reduction of the military's role in politics. An analysis of the election campaigns and results suggests that until the next elections, civilian control over the military will further increase.*

The armed forces have been a significant actor in Turkish politics, first entering the political stage in an explicit manner when they overthrew an elected government in 1960. This was repeated in 1980. The military has also intervened in politics (or threatened to do so) in a subtler manner several times in recent decades. In fact, it is safe to say that the military was one of the leading actors of Turkish politics until the declaration of Turkey's candidacy for full membership to the European Union (EU) in 1999, which began a process of change in civil–military relations. Reforms have continued since the Justice and Development Party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) won the elections in 2002. With the June 12, 2011 elections producing another victory for the AKP, it is likely that the role of the military will be scaled down even further.

Civil–military relations were an important issue in the elections of 2011. The campaigns of the major political parties, events leading up to the vote, and developments in the first few weeks following the elections suggest that the Turkish military will lose its political significance and veto powers increasingly in the upcoming years. Even though the victorious AKP's election manifesto did not prioritize civil–military relations, the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk*

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Partisi) altered its previous position and began to emphasize reforming the role of the armed forces in Turkish politics and society. More than future reforms, however, the issue in civil–military relations that dominated the election campaign period was the trials of retired and active military officers, which first began in 2008. The legal process continued before the elections and new measures since the elections have been taken against those civilians and officers who were accused of planning coups. While the trials and investigations were important indicators of how the military’s role could change in the future, the stance of the political parties toward the court cases was also significant in showing the nuanced yet firmly adverse attitudes of politicians across the political spectrum toward the intrusion of the military in politics.

This article focuses on the developments prior to the elections and how the AKP and the opposition parties of the CHP and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) addressed issues related to civil–military relations in their campaigns. After a brief analysis of changes in civil–military relations in Turkey since 1999, this article covers in detail the period between February and July 2011.¹ It is argued that even though the CHP at times showed signs of continuing to defend the role of the military, it changed its policy significantly and became the leading party to propose further reforms in civil–military relations. The other opposition party, the MHP, maintained its policy of holding the military in high regard and did not mention amending the role of the military in Turkish politics during the campaign period. However, the party has not obstructed the reform process since 1999 and the same attitude can be expected to continue after the elections. The party that won the 2011 elections, the AKP, adopted a dual discourse during the campaign period. On the one hand, the party leadership made statements honoring the armed forces, while on the other hand, it stressed its success in reforming civil–military relations in the past and showed signs of intending to do more once it was re-elected.

Analyzing the positions that political parties took regarding the military’s role in politics before and immediately after the ballot reveals that the issue of civil–military relations is still significant in Turkey. The elections also provide an outlook for the future and which direction civil–military relations might go until the next elections. Given the AKP’s record and platform, one might expect the role of the armed forces to decline further after 2011. Moreover, the changes in the CHP’s policy line and the MHP’s past record suggest that the AKP’s future efforts in this direction will not be inhibited by the opposition, especially when the government decides to write a new constitution, replacing the one that was adopted after the 1980 coup. It seems as though the Turkish Armed Forces will have to relinquish their leading role in the Turkish political scene even further in the next 4 years and will have to be content with the idea of being on the stage only as an extra amidst more powerful civilian actors.

Civil–Military Relations before the 2011 Elections

The Turkish Armed Forces have had political autonomy since the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and have intervened in politics through two different

mechanisms: first, by staging overt coups (1960 and 1980) and, second, by pressuring the elected governments to resign through implicit or explicit threats of coups (1971 and 1997). For much of the country's history, the military also exercised tutelary functions without overtly intervening in democracy. After 1999, however, two inter-related developments began a series of reforms that introduced changes in these functions and roles of the military in Turkish politics.² The first significant event was the decision of the EU to declare Turkey an official candidate for membership in the Helsinki Summit of 1999. After this date, the coalition government of the Democratic Left (DSP, *Demokratik Sol Parti*), MHP, and Motherland (ANAP, *Anavatan Partisi*) parties started a reform process and amended the constitution and laws in order to adopt the EU *acqui* and the Copenhagen Criteria. Some of these reforms aimed curbing the political privileges of the armed forces and altering the balance of power in favor of civilians.

The second important development in Turkish politics that would affect the political standing of the military was the victory of the AKP in the 2002 elections. The AKP had its origins in the Welfare Party (RP, *Refah Partisi*), which was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1998 for carrying out Islamist activities against secularism. In 1997, in collaboration with several civil society organizations, the military had forced the coalition government of the RP and True Path (DYP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*) parties to resign from office. The generals used the National Security Council (NSC), which gave military commanders tutelary powers over the civilians, as the main mechanism to pressure the government on February 28, 1997. The electoral success of the AKP 5 years after this incident suggested at first the continuation of the Islamist-secularist cleavage in Turkish politics. It seemed as though the military, as one of the principal institutions of the secularist camp, could have a showdown with the AKP government. However, during its first term in office, the AKP successfully continued the reforms to reduce the powers of the military and tied these reforms to the EU accession process. Despite the fact that the powers of the military were being reduced after 1999, the overall stance of the General Staff was supportive of the EU and Turkish EU membership.³ This certainly did not mean that the armed forces as a monolithic entity approved every aspect of the Turkish-EU relations or the amendments in the military's role in politics. In fact, there were generals who made declarations against the reforms and the EU accession. Yet, there was at least tacit approval of the reforms, and the military hierarchy overall did not strongly oppose the process.

The reforms that were carried out after 1999 and during the AKP's first term in office reduced the role of the military in the legal system by amending the functions and powers of the military courts. In addition, the autonomous role that the armed forces had in providing internal security through the NSC was significantly curtailed. In the AKP's second term in office, more steps were taken in reducing the role of the military in internal security by abolishing the Protocol on Cooperation for Security and Public Order (EMASYA) in January 2010. In addition, the September 2010 referendum that approved the constitutional reform package of the government increased the powers of the civilians in decisions regarding discharges from the military and

further restricted the jurisdiction of the military courts. Notwithstanding the importance of the amendments, the reform process was not completed by 2011 and, albeit in a significantly reduced format, the military continued to have autonomy in budgetary matters, providing internal security, and gathering intelligence.⁴

The AKP's second term in office was marked more by investigations of alleged coup attempts than by institutional reforms.⁵ The presidential crisis in April 2007 was perhaps the most significant event that could account for this seeming shift from the AKP's first 5 years in power when the reforms were higher on the government's agenda. On April 27, 2007, the General Staff made a declaration on its website implicitly threatening the governing party and opposing the presidency of its candidate, Abdullah Gül. The priority that the AKP gave to the investigations after this event can be explained by the existential threat any possible coups would cause for the party. Indeed, the presidential crisis has shown that legal reforms and amendments alone would not lead to behavioral changes among officers who were inclined toward interventions. The coup allegations called into question the earlier belief that the entire military cadre tacitly endorsed (or at least would acquiesce to) the rule of the AKP and the reforms during the party's first 5 years in power. Thus, from the perspective of the AKP, future amendments and civilianization depended on cracking down interventionist elements in the armed forces. This concern might explain why the AKP has focused on the court cases rather than on the legal reforms since 2007.

The first inquisition implicating military officers started in the summer of 2007 after the security forces discovered small arms in a shanty house in Istanbul. The inquiry then led to the allegation that a secret organization, entitled *Ergenekon*,⁶ which operated within and in collaboration with the security organizations of the state and was allegedly behind the plots, aimed to overthrow the AKP government. In the trials that started in October 2008, suspected individuals, including retired and active military officers and civilians from various backgrounds, have been charged with attempting to incite turbulence in society and preparing the conditions for the military to intervene. In February 2010, another investigation implicating military officers began. According to the allegations, the First Army located in Istanbul planned a coup plot, named *Balyoz* (Sledgehammer), in order to topple the AKP government in 2003. Similar to the accusations related to the *Ergenekon* case, implicated individuals were suspected of carrying out operations that would prepare the right circumstances in society for staging a military coup.

Altogether more than 500 people were charged with preparing coup plots from 2007 until the few months leading up to the 2011 general elections. Both the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* court cases resulted in significant controversies in Turkish politics.⁷ One segment of society argued that the cases mark a crucial moment in Turkish history since they were bringing coup plotters, including generals, to justice and contributing to democratization in civil–military relations. The government, as well as media groups and intellectuals who supported the AKP, advanced this type of argument. The opposition, however, interpreted the court cases quite differently. According to a significant faction of the media, civil society organizations, and intellectuals, both cases rested on shaky, even sometimes planted, evidence. Some suspected

individuals were detained without formal charges, and the trials have been long delayed. These judicial problems led to uneasiness and questions about the legality and impartiality of the process. Moreover, since some of the suspects were known opponents and critics of the AKP, the court cases were interpreted as mechanisms for the government to eliminate its political rivals and to create a more authoritarian environment in which the media and intellectuals would be afraid to freely voice their opinions.⁸

Developments in the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* Cases during the Election Campaign Period

Even though the AKP did not completely abandon the reform agenda and the main opposition party, the CHP, stressed the need for further legal amendments (see below), the main issue involving the military during the elections was the court cases. There were additional arrests and interrogations during the election campaign period, which resulted in the opposition and the government clarifying their positions on the trials. In particular, it was the arrest of journalists as part of the *Ergenekon* investigation that caused the opposition parties to take a harsh stance against the government. In February 2011, the owner and several journalists of an internet news website, Odatv, were detained with the charge of being members of *Ergenekon*, inciting the public to malice and hatred, and procuring and publishing secret documents related to the country's security.⁹ A few weeks later, on March 3, 2011, ten more journalists were taken under custody with the same accusations.¹⁰ Even though these investigative reporters were not the first group to be accused since the beginning of the investigation, their imprisonment was widely criticized within Turkey and abroad. For example, the US ambassador to Turkey, Francis Joseph Ricciardone, stated that the USA was having difficulties in understanding the detainments and how imprisonment of journalists could accord with freedom of the press, and the EU Commissioner responsible for enlargement, Stefan Füle, declared that the EU was following the process with concern.¹¹ Within Turkey, civil society activists, including intellectuals, newspaper columnists, businessmen, and professional organizations representing the media, united in their opposition to the arrests.¹² In a significant show of protest, on March 13, 2011, thousands of people gathered at the center of Istanbul to advocate the freedom of the press.¹³ Even liberal intellectuals, who at first supported the coup investigations as part of a process that would lead to democratic civil–military relations, began to question where the case was going. Since the arrested journalists, who had earlier given support to the *Ergenekon* investigations, were critical of the government and were investigating the links between the police and a religious movement that was suggested to support the AKP, opponents claimed that the arrests were carried out in an effort to repress political adversaries.¹⁴

Similar questions regarding the true purpose of the coup investigations were raised due to developments in the *Balyoz* case. In February, the criminal court hearing the case decided to try 163 suspects while holding them under custody. The suspects included retired armed forces commanders, 50 generals, and 106 active officers.¹⁵

As will be analyzed in detail below, the opposition parties fiercely reacted to this decision and accused the AKP government of interfering in the judicial process. Shortly before the elections, in late May, seven more generals and one colonel were called upon to give their statements as suspects. Among those detained was the commander of the war colleges, the highest ranking active officer ever arrested with the charge of planning a coup in Turkish history.¹⁶ With this second wave of *Balyoz* detainments, the number of active generals and admirals in prison exceeded those in the Turkish General Staff headquarters and any other unit in the military.¹⁷

Despite these significant developments affecting the powers of the military, the General Staff maintained, in public at least, a neutral position toward the investigations before the elections. After the decision of the courts to adjudicate *Balyoz* suspects under arrest, Chief of Staff Işık Koşaner visited the officers' club located at the center of Istanbul to meet with the Minister of Defense Vecdi Gönül and also met with the relatives of the arrested officers. Later that day, Koşaner had talks with Prime Minister Erdoğan, but neither government officials nor the General Staff made any declarations following their sessions together.¹⁸ The Chief of Staff and the commanders of the military also visited the prison where the officers were being held. However, again there were no statements from the hierarchy of the military.¹⁹ Only after the court decided to reject the plea of the arrested officers to be released on April 5, 2011, the General Staff declared on its website that the armed forces were having difficulties in understanding why the officers were still held under arrest. In its hesitant announcement, the General Staff also noted that the Turkish Armed Forces "especially avoid behaviors that could mean interventions in the ongoing judicial process."²⁰

The cautious attitude of the General Staff to developments in the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* investigations before the elections was not matched by the attitudes of the political parties. Significant events in civil–military relations, which could be interpreted either as steps toward democratization or as obstructions of justice, had important effects on the election campaigns of the political parties and arguably on the election results.

The Election Campaigns of the Opposition Parties and their Perspectives Toward Civil–Military Relations

In the 2011 general elections, the CHP and the MHP won the second and third places, respectively, and entered the parliament as the opposition to the AKP. The election campaigns of the two parties and how they approached questions of civil–military relations were as important as the stance of the ruling AKP on the same issue. Compared with the previous parliamentary period, the CHP, in particular, altered its policies significantly, which suggests that the main opposition party can move in tandem with the government in further reforming civil–military relations in the future.

The transformation of the CHP, in important respects, was due to the leadership change in May 2010, when during the party congress, the veteran chair of the party Deniz Baykal was replaced by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. During the Baykal era,

the CHP represented the status quo and elites who could lose their socioeconomic and political positions as a result of the changes that the AKP was introducing, including those involving the military.²¹ Between 2002 and 2010, the CHP stressed secularism and national unity against what it identified as the government's Islamist tendencies and its policies in the Kurdish-dominated eastern regions. In its approach to civil–military relations, the party was defensive of the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* suspects and it was ill disposed to reforms, especially to the constitutional package that was approved by the majority of the Turkish electorate on September 12, 2010. In fact, in important respects, the CHP carried out an opposition centered on the military.²² However, with the new leadership of the party, the CHP appeared to have abandoned its focus on maintaining the status quo. Instead, the party began to advocate political change, democratization, and further reforms in civil–military relations.

The election manifesto of the party published in April marked the CHP as the only major party that dwelled on democratic civil–military relations in its program. The CHP declared in the manifesto that it

has not, and will not, accept the *de facto* limitation of the powers of the government and the parliament, elected with peoples' votes, by any force other than the democratic institutions and rules provided for in the laws. In this scope, CHP opposes ... the military's interference in politics. The armed forces should be under the control of the civilian authority. To this end, CHP starts out with an extensive demilitarization programme.²³

The party proposed the following changes in order to carry out a demilitarization scheme in politics and society:

- full control of the armed forces by the civilian government;
- revision of article 35 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law, which gives the military the duty to protect and look after Turkish territory and the republic;
- enhancement of professionalism in the military;
- reduction of military service to 6 months for everyone;²⁴
- narrowing down of the jurisdiction of the military courts in general; and
- abolishment of the Military High Administrative Court that reviews administrative cases involving military personnel and that can currently overrule the decisions of the civilians if it wishes.

The “Democracy Report” that the party published in May also included these propositions. Indicative of the priority given to civil–military relations, the report's first section was entitled “National Will, Civilianization and Democracy.” After noting that no decision area should be outside the control of the civilians, the report stressed that all matters involving the military, including conscription and the defense budget, should be decided by civilian authorities. The national assembly must be involved in auditing and supervising the military, and the Chief of Staff should regularly attend

defense committee meetings to answer the deputies' inquiries.²⁵ The CHP also criticized the AKP in the report for not being sincere on civilianization and argued that "the real reason why [the AKP] used a discourse of civilianization in the past is not because it believed that civilians should control the security bureaucracy at all times, but because of the worry that the security bureaucracy [was] not on its side."²⁶

In concordance with the publications of the party, Kılıçdaroğlu in his speeches implicitly accused the AKP of not being truly democratic. Referring to the website declaration of the General Staff against the presidency of Abdullah Gül on April 27, 2007, Kılıçdaroğlu questioned why the government had not called into account the former Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt, who was behind the website declaration that implicitly threatened to overthrow the government, and instead gave him a "distinguished service medal" and an "armored vehicle." Kılıçdaroğlu claimed that under their rule, those who give such memorandums would immediately stand trial.²⁷ This assertion was just one instance of a more common phenomenon where the CHP leadership made proposals that would not be welcomed by the armed forces. For example, demonstrating a radical break from past policies, Kılıçdaroğlu asserted that the military should be responsible to the Ministry of Defense, the military Court of Appeals must be abolished, and those responsible for the 1980 coup should be brought to justice.²⁸ Demonstrating a willingness to challenge the wishes of the armed forces, in March, the CHP submitted a proposal to the parliament in order to shorten the duration of compulsory military service.²⁹ Thus, despite the fact that the remnants of old policies re-appeared at times during the campaign period,³⁰ the overall policy of the CHP toward civil–military relations changed significantly.

Such alteration in policy was not witnessed in the case of the MHP. Since its foundation, the main ideological principles of the party have been nationalism, idealism, and the unity of the Turkish nation with its land and people. For nearly 30 years, the party was led by one of the colonels who staged the 1960 coup, Alparslan Türkeş. Since his death in 1997, the new leader of the party, Devlet Bahçeli, has essentially adhered to the same ideology and policy lines. The MHP has traditionally presented a pro-military posture, but as a partner in the coalition government between 1999 and 2002, the party signed onto important reforms that reduced the autonomy of the military. Since 2002, the MHP has handled AKP victories and policies tactfully. The party perceives religion as an integral component of the national tradition and, therefore, it does not condemn the government on the basis of secularism. Most of the critiques of the party toward the AKP governments are based on how the state should respond to the demands of the Kurdish minority in Turkey. The MHP does not give precedence to political solutions and focuses on the need to combat terrorism, which accentuates the role of the military against Kurdish separatism. In other areas involving civil–military relations, the MHP does not in principle oppose reforms but takes a defensive attitude against what it perceives as attacks that would tarnish the prestige, honor, and reputation of the armed forces.

These policy lines of the MHP continued during the election campaign period, despite the fact that civil–military relations were not a high priority for the party.

In the election manifesto, the party pledged to improve the movement capabilities, the deterrence levels, and the modernity of the military. The party also committed to increase the number of professional personnel in positions that require expertise and vowed to maintain a system based on military conscription for the remaining positions.³¹ Finally, the program stressed that “the opportunity will not be given to wear out at home and abroad the Turkish military’s dignity in the resident conscience of the Turkish nation by making it a subject of random polemics.”³² The manifesto of the party did not address reforms in civil–military relations, but, instead, centralized the issue of protecting the honor of and strengthening the Turkish Armed Forces.

With regard to the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* cases, both the CHP and the MHP criticized the procedures that the judiciary followed and blamed the AKP government for politicizing the investigation. After the arrest of journalists in early 2011, the leader of the CHP, Kılıçdaroğlu, declared that Prime Minister Erdoğan was establishing an “empire of terror”³³ and the AKP could not tolerate the activities of the reporters, free media, and uncensored press.³⁴ Kılıçdaroğlu indicated that he did not believe in the existence of the *Ergenekon* terrorist organization by making the following bold assertion: “How does one become a member of this organization? I cannot figure it out. Where is this organization? I am going to become a member!”³⁵ Similarly, the MHP Group Deputy Chairman Mehmet Şandır argued that the AKP was claiming to establish an advanced democracy, but instead keeping 100 journalists in prison, which cannot go hand in hand with democracy and freedom.³⁶

Following the decision of the court to try the defendants of the *Balyoz* case under arrest, Bahçeli asserted that the Turkish Armed Forces were the “apples of the nation’s eye, the nation’s military [and therefore] cannot be hurt.”³⁷ Even though Bahçeli insisted that the MHP does not support coups d’état, he argued that institutions should not be incriminated for political purposes and “the arrest of 163 people due to the *so-called* coup claims . . . brings to mind [that the real purpose is] to take revenge on these valuable figures.”³⁸ Bahçeli asked the government to accelerate the judicial process so that “the slanders and lies would be eliminated.”³⁹

In a fashion similar to that of the MHP, following the *Balyoz* arrests in February, the CHP leader, Kılıçdaroğlu, claimed that in Turkey the judicial process was politicized and subjective, and as a result, there existed a system based on the law of the rulers and the powerful.⁴⁰ A few months later, Kılıçdaroğlu questioned who would carry out a military exercise and who would engage in combat in case of a war, since a politicized court had jailed almost all the high-ranking officers.⁴¹ During the election campaign period, in order to show that the CHP was taking part in the trial of the officers and keeping track of the process carefully, 14 parliament members went to the courtroom and announced that “they would follow [the trials] as long as the prosecutors continue to behave as if they were members of a political party . . .”⁴²

The CHP and the MHP went so far as to nominate a number of *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* suspects as candidates running in the elections from their own party lists. The MHP nominated retired Lieutenant General Engin Alan, who was arrested as a *Balyoz* suspect shortly after he had become a member of the party. The CHP

presented as candidates the following *Ergenekon* defendants: journalist Mustafa Balbay, medical professor Mehmet Haberal, businessman Sinan Aygün, and retired attorney general İlhan Cihaner. Although this move of the CHP and the MHP did not mean that they were exonerating all the accused, symbolically it got the message across that the opposition did not approve of the investigations and believed in the innocence of at least some of the suspects.

All the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* nominees were elected as deputies in the June 12 vote. Among the elected, Aygün and Cihaner were not detained in prison, so they were able to take their seats in the parliament. However, the MHP deputy Engin Alan and the CHP parliamentarians Mustafa Balbay and Mehmet Haberal were still under arrest. The criminal courts that oversaw the cases decided not to release them, which in effect meant that they could not be present in the parliament as MPs.⁴³ The reaction of the CHP to the decision of the courts was quite radical: the elected members of the party as a whole refused to take the oath in the parliament during the opening day of the new assembly.⁴⁴ Kılıçdaroğlu explained the decision of the party on July 7 in a 16-item “Democracy Manifesto.” After noting that the CHP does not accept the executive’s tutelage over the judiciary and the legislature, Kılıçdaroğlu accused the AKP of being hypocritical and seeing “nothing extraordinary in the situation where deputies without any convictions cannot take their oaths.” He argued that the CHP is “stand[ing] against practices that suspend the right to elect and be elected” and that the party “does not ask for immunity or amnesty” for the deputies.⁴⁵ What became known as the “oath crisis” dragged on for some time, but it was finally resolved in the following month. The main opposition party took the pledge on July 11, after the AKP and the CHP leadership agreed on a reconciliation statement, which noted the common conviction that all parties and elected deputies should take their seats in the parliament.⁴⁶

While the CHP and the MHP have criticized the handling of the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* cases, both parties have also shown a tendency indicating a concern that if they criticized the way the AKP was treating the military too much, they could unintentionally increase the votes of the ruling party. This anxiety dates back to the 2007 elections, when the AKP increased its votes by nearly 12 percent. The success was attributed to the confrontation that the party experienced with the General Staff and the Constitutional Court over the election of its candidate, Abdullah Gül, to the presidency of the republic. After the AKP won the elections, it was suggested at times that the government was provoking the military on purpose so that the party once more could appear as a victim.⁴⁷ Fearing that the AKP would again portray itself as the defender of democracy, the MHP and the CHP were cautious not to appear too protective of the military. For instance, Bahçeli asked the wives and relatives of the *Balyoz* suspects not to take the issue to the streets and protest because this would strengthen the AKP and result in the party gaining favor in the eyes of the people.⁴⁸ Similarly, Kılıçdaroğlu urged the armed forces to stay in their barracks and not to react following the arrest of the commander of the war colleges because they would be rising to the bait and allowing the government to represent itself as a martyr.⁴⁹

In summary, the CHP criticized the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials during the election campaign period and shared a similar policy line with the MHP on this issue. However, the two parties diverged significantly in the number of references they made to reform the military's role in politics and society. While the MHP did not mention the reforms in the manifesto or in any other major speech of the party leadership, the CHP stressed this issue in its publications and in the declarations of its chair. The policy change of the CHP was meaningful especially once it is considered that the MHP had approved of the reforms in the past (and especially during the period that it took part in the coalition government). It seems as though neither of the opposition parties in the parliament will be seriously opposed to reforming civil–military relations if the new AKP government decides to introduce such amendments.

The Election Campaign of the AKP and the Duality in the Party's Discourse Toward Civil–Military Relations

During the election campaign, the AKP portrayed a dual attitude on civil–military relations. The general election campaign of the party rested on a theme that emphasized the continuation of its policies in government if it were to be re-elected. Even though the election manifesto of the party did not refer to civil–military relations explicitly,⁵⁰ the general theme and some of the declarations of the party leadership implied that the AKP would continue to restrict the autonomy of the armed forces. While this was one aspect of the AKP's policies with respect to the role of the military in politics, another feature suggested a more nuanced perspective, conveying the message that the party actually upheld the prestige, power, and the interests of the Turkish Armed Forces. The party thus tried to represent two major ideological groups in Turkish society that could at times have contradictory views of the military: first, those sections of the electorate that were satisfied with the reforms and/or wanted to see more amendments in civil–military relations and, second, nationalist voters, who cherished the armed forces and held them in high esteem.

The twofold discourse was especially evident in the replies of the party leadership to the critiques of the opposition on the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials. Indicative of its earlier stance against the role of the military in Turkish politics, the party portrayed an attitude supportive of the continuation of the court cases. Following the arrests of journalists under the *Ergenekon* investigation, the AKP leadership, including Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç, insisted that the reporters were held in prison because of their possible membership in a terrorist organization and not because of their activities as investigative journalists.⁵¹ Erdoğan and other party officials argued numerous times that they could not interfere in the judicial process and that they were guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary and upholding the rule of law.⁵² The AKP leadership also argued that some of the declarations of the opposition were interventions against the impartiality of the judiciary and against the rule of law.⁵³

Indeed, the AKP leadership accused opposition parties, especially the CHP, of lauding coups. In a rally conducted in Ankara in May, Erdoğan spoke in rather

austere terms: “Democracy and the CHP can never be side by side. The CHP equals coup d’état. The CHP equals encouragement of coup d’état.”⁵⁴ The party especially passed judgment on the opposition parties for their decisions to nominate coup suspects as candidates in the elections. In the meeting in which the AKP introduced its own candidates, Erdoğan criticized the CHP and the MHP in a manner that implied a conviction in his mind that the nominees and the opposition parties were already proven guilty of unlawful activities:

They could not find candidates from the outside, so they transferred candidates from [prison]. I am asking the MHP and CHP here; are you representing the nation’s will or the will of the gangs, mafia, and junta? Are you taking your strength from the nation or from the gangs, mafia, and dark organizations?⁵⁵

With reference to the MHP’s nomination of retired Lieutenant General Engin Alan, Erdoğan recalled that the general did not stand up to greet the Prime Minister in a memorial ceremony in 2004 and stated that “he should stand up; if he does not, he would pay the price. In any case, he did . . . Afterwards what was necessary was done . . . But now you see that he found his place.”⁵⁶ Alan was one of the officers imprisoned as part of the *Balyoz* investigations and, therefore, the opposition interpreted the statement of the Prime Minister as Erdoğan himself being responsible for the detainment of the general.

After the elections, when CHP deputies refused to take their oaths in the parliament, the AKP portrayed an uncompromising attitude, emphasizing that the judiciary was independent from the executive and the government must obey the law and that the courts’ verdict was beyond their control.⁵⁷ This type of stance after the 2011 elections was in tune with the AKP’s posture before the elections, especially with respect to the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* trials and the CHP’s nomination of Haberal and Balbay. Indeed, since the very beginning of the investigations, the governing party had a position that was supportive of the court cases. In the summer of 2008, for instance, Prime Minister Erdoğan and the then leader of the CHP, Deniz Baykal, exchanged bitter words. Erdoğan declared that he was the prosecutor of the nation, while Baykal announced that he was the attorney of the *Ergenekon* investigation and suspects.

However, before the 2011 elections, and especially immediately after the arrests of the journalists in the spring, the dual discourse of the party in civil–military relations kicked in and the AKP changed some of its rhetoric with regard to the investigations.⁵⁸ The day after the journalists were detained, on March 4, Prime Minister Erdoğan asserted that the government was not “the prosecutor, the judge or the attorney.” A much more critical assessment of *Ergenekon* was also witnessed when on March 8, Erdoğan attested that the party was uneasy about the time it took to settle the cases and that he did not approve of the prolonged detention periods.⁵⁹ In analogous terms, when referring to the arrest of officers as part of the *Balyoz* investigation in May, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç advocated that when people “who are in service, who hold such high ranks” and “have a certain reputation in public” were

being arrested, extra caution and diligence should be exercised, as well as additional care given not to fray the military.⁶⁰ Even though since 2008 the AKP had given its blessing and even encouraged the investigations, the implications in statements that added a negative spin to the trials exemplified the dual discourse of the party before the elections and gave the impression that the government cherished a strong and powerful military.

The duality in the party's discourse was evident also in other issues related to civil–military relations. Reflecting one side of the party's stance, the government depicted a constructive attitude toward the armed forces and indicated several times that it cooperated with the military closely on important issues, including foreign policy.⁶¹ When the CHP proposed shortened military service through payment, the AKP opposed it, claiming that the proposal was unjust for those who could not afford to pay the fee, and argued that the defense of the country would be jeopardized.⁶² The party also emphasized that it worked on this issue together with the armed forces. In a televised interview, Prime Minister Erdoğan asserted that he cared about the perspective of the armed forces on military service and that the government discussed with the General Staff whether conscription could be shortened. Erdoğan also maintained that they would take action on this issue if and when they reached a consensus with the General Staff.⁶³ The fact that the government was prepared to follow the military on matters related to conscription was also clear from the declarations of the Minister of Defense Vecdi Gönül. The minister demonstrated a posture in line with the armed forces hierarchy when he maintained that as long as terrorist activities continued, shortened military service would not be on the agenda of the government.⁶⁴

During the AKP's election campaign, comments dignifying the armed forces and messages of close cooperation with the General Staff indicated an attitude that reinforced the military's significance in politics. Yet, the duality of the party's discourse was evident at times when the AKP did not refrain from criticizing the armed forces. In response to the General Staff's website declaration against the courts' decision to try officers in the *Balyoz* investigation in detainment, Erdoğan made the following statement:

My wish is that the [Turkish Armed Forces] do not make such a statement from their website. According to me that was a mistake . . . If the final decision had been made, they could have criticized it. But I do not find it appropriate to [criticize] at this time. This is an effort to influence the process.⁶⁵

Ironically, a month later, when journalists asked Erdoğan questions on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1960 coup, he declared that he was proud that the armed forces did not intervene in politics anymore and that they responded to issues only through their website and with short messages. For Erdoğan, this was a positive development that needed to be supported by the media.⁶⁶ The importance that the AKP gave to restricting the autonomy of the armed forces was apparent again when Erdoğan contended in an interview conducted by an American TV

channel that one of the government's greatest achievements was the military's withdrawal from politics.⁶⁷

These types of remarks were reminiscent of the general election campaign, which underscored the government's promise that its previous record was an assurance of what it would be doing in the future. Thus, reminders of past achievements were frequently used as a tactic that the AKP fell back upon. For instance, Deputy Prime Minister Arınç recalled the events of April 27, 2007, when during the party's first term in office, the General made a declaration on its website opposing the presidency of Gül. After reminding that those who threatened the government "learned their lessons," Arınç implied that the generals were now greeting President Gül with respect. Despite this somewhat unexpected reprimand, typical of the dual discourse that the AKP displayed during the election campaign, when faced with criticisms, Arınç claimed that dishonoring the Turkish Armed Forces was not his intention and disrespecting the military never even crossed his mind.⁶⁸

In conclusion, the governing party used a dual discourse during the election campaign period and after the elections. The AKP reminded the electorate of its past achievements in decreasing the autonomy of the armed forces, curtailing their power, and demilitarizing Turkish politics. Similarly, the party maintained its neutral (if not supportive) line toward the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* cases, fiercely criticized the policies of the opposition toward the investigations, and accused other parties of endorsing coups. Yet, at the same time, the party praised the power of the armed forces, disapproved of the long detention periods, took pride in its close working relationship with the General Staff, and argued that the prestige of the military should not be damaged.

This twofold discourse can be explained by the AKP's effort to capture nationalist voters, who would be uneasy about efforts that tarnished the stature, position, and power of the armed forces. However, at the same time, the AKP tried to represent religiously conservative and (to a lesser extent) liberal electors, who would prefer to see the secular military lose its previous autonomy, veto powers, and privileges in Turkish politics.⁶⁹ The delicate balance between nationalist and conservative voters was maintained during the campaign period by what seemed like contradictory declarations.⁷⁰ This method could in fact be interpreted as an attempt to distinguish the issue of democratic civil–military relations from questions on the reputation and strength of the armed forces. The tactic also implies that further legal reforms and changes in practice will continue during the AKP's third term in office despite positive statements honoring the military.

Conclusion

The analysis of the election manifestos and speeches of the top three parties before the 2011 general elections shows that civil–military relations are still on the agenda of Turkish politics. At the same time, the election campaign of the AKP government and the opposition CHP and MHP reveals that the reforms that started in civil–military relations in 1999 are likely to continue in the aftermath of the elections.

Looking at the period between February and July 2011, there are three reasons that lead to the conclusion that the armed forces will be gradually withdrawing to the backstage of Turkish politics in the following years. First, the victorious AKP has been responsible for the legal amendments and changes in practice since 2002. Moreover, the party's discourse on the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* cases, as well as its criticism of the military's intrusions in politics, strongly suggests that the government will continue to support the coup investigations and attempt to bring the armed forces further under control. In that sense, despite the dual discourse of the party stressing its close cooperation with the military on defense matters, the election campaign of the AKP did not have any surprising elements.

The real unexpected development during the campaign period was the change witnessed in the main opposition party, the CHP. In fact, the second reason why it is possible to expect more changes in civil–military relations is due to the CHP's policies. The CHP, in agreement with the other opposition party, the MHP, denounced the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* investigations, yet it also came up with quite radical propositions to modify the role of the military in Turkish politics and society. Finally, even though the MHP leadership did not address the issue of amending civil–military relations, given its previous concordant attitude toward reforms and the fact that it holds a little less than one-tenth of the seats in the new parliament, it is not expected to obstruct possible future reforms in this area.

In the summer of 2011, there were already early signs of what might happen in the upcoming years. The Turkish military had been the primary actor providing internal security against Kurdish terrorism in the southeast. However, after the death of 13 soldiers in an attack on July 13 in Silvan (Diyarbakır province), for the first time, the Ministry of the Interior carried out its own investigation running parallel to the military's examination of the attack. The cabinet also decided to increase the role of the police to combat terrorism in the region. These were important signs that the government was attempting to decrease the role of the military in providing internal security.

Moreover, shortly before the August 1, 2011 meeting of the Supreme Military Council that decides on military promotions, the court overseeing the case involving suspects setting up internet websites against the AKP ordered the detainment of 22 people, including generals. In addition, the government pushed ahead plans to retire from the military 14 generals and admirals in custody who had completed the necessary time for their promotions. In response to these developments and especially as a protest to the loss of promotional rights of 14 generals and 58 colonels, Chief of Staff Işık Koşaner and the commanders of army, air force, and navy resigned and asked for their retirement.⁷¹ Reversing his silence before the elections, Koşaner's farewell message to the armed forces chastised the *Balyoz* investigation:

It is impossible to accept that the detainments are compatible with universal legal rules, rights, justice, and values of conscience . . . It does not escape attention that one of the purposes of the investigations and the long periods of

detainments is to attempt to create the impression in public opinion that the [Turkish Armed Forces] are a criminal organization . . . ⁷²

The resignations of the heads of the military were an unprecedented event in Turkish history, but they were also an important sign of the changing dynamics in Turkish civil–military relations after the elections. As one foreign newspaper reported, the act seems to be an “effort by a beleaguered institution to exert what is left of its dwindling political power.”⁷³ The resignations marked the weakness of the military commanders in asserting their position *vis-à-vis* the government, especially in an area where the armed forces had enjoyed political autonomy. Promotions of military personnel had been under the control of the Supreme Military Council until August 2010, when the AKP government refused to promote the generals who were arrested under the *Balyoz* investigation.⁷⁴ The repetition of this incident a year later demonstrated the resolve of the AKP in reducing the power of the military hierarchy. Indeed, the opposition parties shared the view that the AKP was deliberately wearing out the military and leading to a crisis of the state. According to the MHP leader Bahçeli, the AKP was attempting to “mess up the hierarchical order of the military” and “design the [Turkish Armed Forces] all over again.”⁷⁵ Similarly, the CHP leadership argued that for democracy, “no decision-making area should be outside the control of civilian authorities,” but at the same time there should be “concordance among state institutions.” In its official statement, the main opposition party stressed that the constant slander and dishonoring of the military would “engulf the armed forces in to fervent politics” and, therefore, the government should keep its hands off the judicial process.⁷⁶

The government representatives, however, maintained that there was no crisis or showdown between the executive and the military and that Turkey was in fact democratizing.⁷⁷ The government’s positive assessment of the resignations turned out being a correct one in the following days. In the Supreme Military Council meetings that convened in August 2011, the former gendarmerie commander Necdet Özel, who had not resigned with the other commanders, became the new Chief of Staff. The government and the military hierarchy reached a compromise and decided to extend the tenure of 14 generals under custody for a year, one time only. Despite this concession, however, the authority of the civilians was evident during the meetings since for the first time the Prime Minister headed the meeting without the Chief of Staff sitting next to him. The new seating arrangement was interpreted as a sign that the true head of the Council was the civilian executive as it is in advanced democracies.⁷⁸

The aversion of a major crisis after the resignation of the commanders and the following Supreme Council Meeting signify a weakened General Staff that could not enforce its decisions on the government and chose to resign instead. The opposition parties criticized the *Balyoz* investigation and the rift between the AKP government and the military, yet they did not oppose the final decisions of the Council. This first incident after the general elections and the attitudes of the governing and opposition parties, as well as the armed forces, demonstrate that the 2011 vote might in fact be

the critical turning point that leads to the closing of the final curtain for the Turkish military.

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Notes

1. This is the interval between the start of a new wave of arrests in the coup plot investigations and the date that the CHP took the pledge in the new assembly (see below for more on these developments). Even though the article covers the policies of the top three parties that got into the parliament, it does not examine the independent candidates of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) that won 36 of the 550 seats in the general assembly. The BDP mainly represents the Kurdish minority in Turkey and, therefore, its main policy agenda is focused on this issue. The party is antagonistic toward the military partially because the armed forces have been the principal actors who fought against Kurdish separatist movements in the eastern regions since the 1980s.
2. For an extensive analysis of the reforms between 1999 and 2010, see Yaprak Gürsoy, "The Impact of EU-Driven Reforms on the Political Autonomy of the Turkish Military," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2011), pp. 293–308.
3. Metin Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (April 2005), pp. 33–44.
4. See Table 2 in Gürsoy (2011, p. 305).
5. For an overview of the investigations, see Ersel Aydınltı, "Ergenekon, New Pacts, and the Decline of the Turkish 'Inner State'," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (June 2011), pp. 227–239. For more information on the reasons for the coup investigations and their consequences for Turkish democracy, see Yaprak Gürsoy, "The Changing Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: Democratization through Coup Plots?" *Democratization* (forthcoming), doi: 10.1080/13510347.2011.623352.
6. The name of the alleged organization is derived from the *Ergenekon* epic in Turkish mythology, which tells the story of the rebirth of the Turks. The epic has been an important symbol of Turkish nationalism since the 1930s.
7. Şule Toktaş and Ümit Kurt, "The Turkish Military's Autonomy, JDP Rule and the EU Reform Process in the 2000s: An Assessment of the Turkish Version of Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DECAF)," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (September 2010), pp. 397–398.
8. "Press Freedom in Turkey: A Dangerous Place to be a Journalist," *The Economist*, March 10, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/18333123> (accessed June 5, 2011).
9. "Haber Yapma Demişler, Niye Yapıyorsunuz" [They Said Do Not Make News, Why Are You Making It?], *Hürriyet*, February 18, 2011.
10. "Odatv Dalgası Gazetecileri Vurdu" [The Odatv Wave Struck the Journalists], *Hürriyet*, March 4, 2011, p. 20.
11. "Gözaltıları Anlamakta Zorluk Çekiyoruz" [We Are Having Difficulties Understanding the Takings into Custody], *Hürriyet*, February 16, 2011, p. 23; "ABD: Kaygılıyız, AB: Endişeliyiz" [The US: We Are Anxious, The EU: We Are Concerned], *Akşam*, March 4, 2011, p. 13.
12. "Şener ve Şık'tan Notlar . . ." [Notes from Şener and Şık], *Radikal*, March 6, 2011.
13. "Özgürlük Yürüyüşü" [The Walk of Liberty], *Hürriyet*, March 14, 2011, p. 24.
14. Pelin Turgut, "Why is Turkey Arresting Journalists?" *TimeWorld*, March 6, 2011, <http://www.time.com> (accessed July 18, 2011).
15. "Balyoz Şoku" [The *Balyoz* Shock], *Hürriyet*, February 12, 2011, p. 22.
16. "Orgeneral Balanlı Cezaevinde" [General Balanlı is in Prison], *Milliyet*, May 3, 2011, p. 14.

17. "Hasdal Ordusu" [The *Hasdal* Army], *Milliyet*, June 1, 2011, p. 16.
18. "Harbiye'den Dolmabaççe'ye" [From Harbiye to Dolmabaççe], *Hürriyet*, February 13, 2011, p. 20.
19. "Balyoz Tutuklularına 4 Yıldızlı Ziyaret" [A 4-Star Visit to Balyoz Prisoners], *Milliyet*, February 19, 2011.
20. Press release dated April 6, 2011, number BA-05/11. Available on the Turkish Armed Forces General Staff website http://www.tsk.tr/10_AR_SIV/10_1_Basin_Yayin_Faaliyetleri/10_1_Basin_Aciklamalari/2011/BA_05.htm (accessed July 23, 2011).
21. Ruşen Çakır, "CHP Sahiden Değişiyor Mu? CHP Sahiden Değişebilir Mi?" [Is the CHP Really Changing? Can the CHP Really Change?], *Vatan*, May 29, 2011.
22. Oral Çalışlar, "Ordu Eksenli CHP Muhalefetinin Sonu Mu?" [An End to the Military Centered CHP Opposition?], *Radikal*, March 16, 2011.
23. *A Land of Freedom and Hope: Everyone's Turkey, CHP 2011 Election Manifesto* (Ankara: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2011), p. 7.
24. The current duration of military service ranges from 6 to 15 months, depending on the education level of the conscript and the needs of the armed forces.
25. *Demokrasi: Eşit Yurttaş Özgür Toplum* [Democracy: Equal Citizens, Free Society] (Ankara: CHP Bilim, Yönetim ve Kültür Platformu, 2011), pp. 6–10.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
27. "Kim Muhtıra Verirse Doğru Yargı Önüne" [Whoever Gives a Memorandum Immediately Faces the Judiciary], *Akşam*, March 3, 2011, p. 12.
28. Murat Yetkin, "Bedelli Askerlik ve CHP'de Değişim" [Paid Conscription and Change in the CHP], March 17, 2011. The trial of the 1980 coup-makers was also mentioned in the democracy report.
29. According to the CHP's scheme, male citizens who had not yet been conscripted despite their age and who earned incomes above a given bracket would pay pre-determined fees to serve in the military for 21 days, and those who are below a certain income level would get only basic training. "Yaş Sınırı 28, Fakire Bedelsiz" [The Age Limit is 28, Free of Charge to the Poor], *Hürriyet*, March 17, 2011, p. 24.
30. For instance, when the vice-president of the party, Süheyl Batum, likened the armed forces to a "paper tiger," he implied that the military should have intervened in politics against the AKP and implicitly criticized the fact that the military stood idly by as the government introduced reforms in civil–military relations and retired and active officers were arrested. However, it is important to note that Kılıçdaroğlu publicly warned his vice-president, implicitly threatened to fire him, advised against conducting politics over the military, and claimed that no one other than the chair of the party could direct criticisms against the armed forces. "Kılıçdaroğlu, Batum'u uyardı: Ordu Üzerinden Siyaset Yapma" [Kılıçdaroğlu Warned Batum: Do Not Play Politics over the Military] *Radikal*, February 9, 2011, p. 13; "Kılıçdaroğlu, Batum ve Güneş'i Görevden Alabilir" [Kılıçdaroğlu Can Dismiss Batum and Güneş], *Milliyet*, February 9, 2011, p. 17.
31. *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi 2011 Seçim Beyannamesi: 2023'e Doğru Yükselen Ülke Türkiye Sözleşmesi, Ses Ver Türkiye* [MHP 2011 Election Statement: The Agreement of the Nation Rising towards 2023, Respond Turkey] (Ankara: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, 2011), pp. 180–181.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
33. "Baskılar Halkı Patlatır" [Pressures Could Make the People Explode], *Hürriyet*, February 15, 2011, p. 24. It is important to note that during the interrogation of some journalists, the public prosecutor asked questions about the CHP leadership, which led to implications of an illicit deal in the sale of a TV channel and a sexual harassment scandal. The attorney general did not pursue these issues; however, because the information was leaked to the press, the CHP leadership argued that the purpose of the interrogation was to tarnish the image of the party. "Taciz İddiası Savcılıkta" [The Harassment Charge Is In the Hands of the Public Prosecutor] *Hürriyet*, March 7, 2011, p. 21; Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Hem Bana Hem Kemal Bey'e Komplö" [A Conspiracy Both Against Me and Against Mr. Kemal], *Milliyet*, March 9, 2011.
34. "Kılıçdaroğlu'ndan Savcılara: Hesap Vereceksiniz" [From Kılıçdaroğlu to the Attorneys: You Will Be Called to Account], *Radikal*, March 11, 2011.

35. "Nerede Bu Örgüt Üye Olayım" [Where is this Organization, Let Me Register], *Hürriyet*, February 16, 2011, p. 23.
36. "Ülkenin Çivisi Çıktı" [This Country is Perturbed], *Hürriyet*, February 15, 2011, p. 24.
37. "Ordumuz İncitilmesin Darbeci Ayıklansın" [Do Not Let Our Military Be Hurt, Clean Out the Putschists], *Hürriyet*, February 13, 2011, p. 21.
38. Emphasis added, "Bahçeli'den Erdoğan'a Balyoz Eleştirisi" [A Balyoz Critique from Bahçeli to Erdoğan], *Radikal*, February 15, 2011.
39. "Yargıyı Çift Vardiya Çalıştır" [Make the Judiciary Work Double Shifts], *Hürriyet*, March 14, 2011, p. 24.
40. "Üstünlerin Hukuku" [The Law of the Rulers], *Hürriyet*, February 13, 2011, p. 21. See also a similar statement of CHP Secretary General Bihlun Tamaylıgil, "Biletini Halkımız Sandıkta Kessin Hesabını da Yargıçlar Sorsun" [Let Our People Dismiss Them at the Ballot Box and the Judges Call Them to Account], *Hürriyet*, Şubat 15, 2011, p. 24.
41. "Kılıçdaroğlu: Yarın Savaş Olsa Ne Olacak?" [Kılıçdaroğlu: What Would Happen If There Was A War Tomorrow?] *Milliyet*, May 28, 2011, p. 26.
42. "Balyoz'a 14 Vekil" [14 Deputies to Balyoz], *Hürriyet*, March 15, 2011, p. 25. The CHP also followed the arrests of the journalists in the *Ergenkon* case by visiting their homes, see "Kılıçdaroğlu Soner Yalçın İçin Görevlendirdi" [Kılıçdaroğlu Assigned for Soner Yalçın], *Hürriyet*, February 15, 2011, p. 24.
43. "Balbay ve Haberal'a da Parlamento Yolu Kapalı" [The Road to Parliament Is Closed to Balbay and Haberal], *Radikal*, June 24, 2011.
44. The MHP decided to take an approach different from that taken by the CHP and took the oath in the parliament. However, the MHP leadership criticized the government for not taking on more responsibility, describing the crisis as regrettable, and defining the court's decision as a judicial scandal. "MHP Liderinden Başbakan'a Çağrı" [An Appeal from the MHP Leader to the Prime Minister], *Radikal*, June 24, 2011; "Hukuk Skandalı' Dedi Ama Yemin Edecek" [He Said "Judicial Scandal" But He Will Take the Oath], *Radikal*, June 26, 2011.
45. "A Democracy Manifesto from the CHP Leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu," dated July 7, 2011, available on the CHP website at <http://www.chp.org.tr/en/?manset=a-democracy-manifesto-from-chp-leader-kemal-kilicdaroğlu> (accessed July 30, 2011).
46. "Yemin Krizi Çözüldü" [The Oath Crisis Is Solved], *Radikal*, July 11, 2011.
47. Murat Yetkin, "Asker Üzerinden Seçim Kampanyası" [Election Campaign over the Military] *Radikal*, May 29, 2011. See also Devlet Bahçeli's declaration in February, "Komutanlardan İntikam Alınıyor" [Revenge Is Being Taken on the Commanders], *Hürriyet*, February 16, 2011, p. 22.
48. "Eşler Değil Aydınlar Üstlensin" [Let the Intellectuals Take Over, Not the Wives], *Hürriyet*, February 20, 2011, p. 23.
49. "Askere Çağrı. Sakın Ola Tepki Vermeyin" [An Appeal to the Military: Avoid Reacting], *Hürriyet*, May 31, 2011, p. 18.
50. For an item-by-item comparison of the AKP, CHP, and MHP election manifestos, see Deniz Zeyrek, "Bu Vaatleri Bir Kenara Yazın" [Take Note of These Promises], *Radikal*, April 24, 2011, pp. 16–17.
51. "Gazeteci Kılıklı Kişiler İçin Ayağa Kalktılar" [They Are Revolting for People Who Appear To Be Journalists], *Hürriyet*, March 14, 2011, p. 24; "SistematiK Karalama Kampanyası" [Systematic Slander Campaign], *Hürriyet*, March 15, 2011, p. 24.
52. See the declarations of the Minister of State Faruk Çelik and the vice-chairman of the party Hüseyin Çelik, "TSK Çürükleri Ayıklasin" [Let the Turkish Armed Forces Sort out the Rotten Ones] and "Yargıya Başbakan Bile Telkinde Bulunmamalı" [Even the Prime Minister Should Not Inculcate the Judiciary], *Hürriyet*, February 17, 2011, p. 22. Also see Erdoğan's speech on March 4, "Yargının Tasarrufu Bize Çamur Atmayın" [Judiciary's Authority, Do Not Slander Us], *Akşam*, March 5, 2011, p. 12.
53. "'Nerede Bu Örgüt Üye Olacağım' Sözü Yargıya Müdahale" [The Expression "Where is this Organization, I Will Register" Is An Intervention in the Judiciary], *Hürriyet*, February 17, 2011, p. 22.
54. "Yeni CHP İçin Boş Proje" [The New CHP is An Empty Project], *Milliyet*, May 30, 2011.

55. "Ergenekon Ofisi Açacaklar" [They Will Open An Ergenekon Office], *Hürriyet*, April 19, 2011, p. 24.
56. "Ayağa Kalkmayan Korgeneral Yerini Buldu" [The Lieutenant General Who Did Not Stand up Found His Place] *Akşam*, May 19, 2011, p. 13.
57. "Erdoğan: Muhalefet İster Meclis'e Gelsin İster Gelmesin" [Erdoğan: Let the Opposition Either Come to the Parliament or Not], *Radikal*, June 30, 2011; "Laf Ebeleri Değil Hukuçular Konuşsun" [Let the Lawyers Speak, Not the Yappers], *Radikal*, June 30, 2011.
58. Sedat Ergin, "Erdoğan'ın Ergenekon Söyleminin Evrimi" [The Evolution of Erdoğan's Ergenekon Discourse], *Hürriyet*, April 2, 2011, p. 22.
59. Quoted in *ibid*.
60. "Arınç: Belli Görevlerde İnsanları Tutuklarken Çok İnce Düşünülmeli" [Arınç: When Arresting People in Certain Positions it is Necessary to be Very Considerate], *Milliyet*, June 1, 2011, p. 17.
61. See, for instance, the comment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu on the perfect harmony that the government and the military had during the evacuation of Turkish citizens from Libya. "TSK ile Tıkır Tıkır Çalıştık" [We Worked with the Turkish Armed Forces Like Clockwork], *Akşam*, April 12, 2011, p. 13.
62. See Erdoğan's press conference in March, "Başbakan'dan Bedelli Askerlik Açıklaması" [Paid Conscription Declaration from the Prime Minister] *Radikal*, March 17, 2011, and Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan's announcement, "Peki Kim Korumayacak Bu Memleketi?" [Well Then, Who Is Going To Protect This Motherland?] *Vatan*, March 13, 2011. It should be mentioned that the AKP government passed a new law in November 2011 allowing people over 30 years old to pay a certain fee instead of serving in the military.
63. "Başbakan'dan 'Bedelli'ye' Yeşil Işık" [Green Light From the Prime Minister To "Paid Conscription"], *Radikal*, June 9, 2011.
64. "Bedelli Gündemde Değil" [Paid Conscription is not on the Agenda], *Hürriyet*, February 18, 2011, p. 21.
65. "TSK'nın Balyoz Açıklaması Yanlış" [The Balyoz Declaration of the Turkish Armed Forces Is Wrong], *Akşam*, April 14, 2011, p. 13. Also see similar comments of other government officials in "Hem İktidardan Hem Muhalefetten Tepki" [Reactions from Both the Government and the Opposition], *Akşam*, April 8, 2011, p. 10.
66. "Asker Artık Kısa Cevap Veriyor" [The Military Now Gives Short Replies], *Milliyet*, May 30, 2011, p. 14.
67. "Ordu Durması Gereken Yerde" [The Military Is Where It Should Stand], *Hürriyet*, May 13, 2011, p. 24.
68. "Asker Artık Topuk Selamı Veriyor" [The Military Now Gives the Heel Salute], *Akşam*, May 14, 2011, p. 18; "TSK'ya Saygısızlık Aklımdan Geçmez" [I Would Not Think of Disrespecting the Turkish Armed Forces], *Hürriyet*, May 17, 2011, p. 27.
69. In a public opinion survey conducted in 2006, it was revealed that a significant portion of the Turkish public is conservative, religious, xenophobic, and intolerant. See Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 27–63. Thus, a political party that can successfully appeal to the nationalist and religious sentiments of the voters can win the elections with a wide margin.
70. The argument that nationalist and religiously conservative voters have different stances toward the military does not necessarily mean that they have dissimilar attitudes toward other issues. In fact, on other policy matters, such as foreign policy, the two groups might have complementary and overlapping perspectives.
71. For a summary of the events that led to the resignations, see "Soğuk Savaş," [Cold War] *Posta*, July 30, 2011, p. 1, and "Emekliliğe Götüren Süreç," [The Process Leading to Retirement] *HaberTürk*, July 30, 2011, p. 14.
72. "TSK'yı Suç Örgütü Gibi Gösteriyorlar," [They Are Making the Armed Forces look like Organized Crime], *Milliyet*, July 30, 2011, p. 18.
73. "Top Generals Quit in Group, Stunning Turks," *The New York Times*, July 30, 2011, A1.

74. There was one exceptional instance after the 1980 coup when Prime Minister Turgut Özal refused to promote Necdet Öztoran to the position of Chief of Staff in 1987. Since this incident, however, all the Council's nominees have been promoted by the government.
75. "Muhalefet Ne Dedi?" [What Did the Opposition Say?], *Milliyet*, July 30, 2011, p. 20.
76. "Kurumlar Arasındaki Kopukluğun Göstergesi," [An Indicator of the Rupture between Institutions], *Milliyet*, July 31, 2011, p. 20.
77. "İktidar Ne Dedi?" [What Did the Government Say?], *Milliyet*, July 30, 2011, p. 20.
78. Derya Sazak, "Şura'dan Sonra" [After the Council], *Milliyet*, August 5, 2011, p. 20.