

# Gul and Erdogan face to face again

Wednesday 10 October 2007, by [Esra Erduran](#)

**One is charismatic and straightforward and even sometimes rude, the other is calm and confident. One is the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the other is Abdullah Gul who is newly elected as President after long debates.**

Close associates President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan have never been able to avoid comparison. Currently, their style and manner regarding their response to Supreme Board of High Education (YOK) Chairman Erdogan Tezic who over the last week openly opposed the Constitution draft prepared by the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party.

"Headscarf ban is a legal situation that emerged by the decisions of supreme courts and European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The implementation in Turkey was found in harmony with the norms and values of Europe," Tezic has said following a rectors committee meeting.

He also argued that the Constitution draft presented the view of one party and named this process as not democratic.

Naming Rectors Committee as group of elites, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan responded to Tezic as the final decision about headscarf belongs to people of the country and told rectors to mind their own business. Meanwhile, Gul's tone in his response was softer.

"Most important role of university is enlightening society and becoming the voice of society, but they should represent pluralism, democracy, mind and science while fulfilling this role," Gul said during his speech at the beginning of educational term in Hacettepe University.

Gul also received Tezic at the Cankaya Presidential Place and mended fences between YOK and AK Party.

Following the meeting, Tezic underlined that his statements were misunderstood. "I did not make comments about the content of the draft. I only mentioned the map to be followed," added Tezic.

Throughout their long political companionship based on trust, similarities and differentiations between two popular names of the AK Party were discussed in many different times and in different aspects.

Gul is a true diplomat who successfully served the country as foreign minister apart from his important previous roles in politics. Erdogan is the leader who is capable of addressing crowds and knows how to address the Turkish people.

Erdogan comes from National View tradition founded by veteran political leader Necmettin Erbakan who is also the mentor of Political Islam in Turkey. He served as the chairman of youth branch of National Salvation Party who was also founded by Erbakan. He ran for Parliament after the 1980 military coup from Erbakan's Welfare Party and later became the Mayor of Istanbul. On the other hand, Abdullah Gul comes from Great East movement mentored by Necip Fazil Kısakurek who opposes some views of Erbakan.

He became a member of Welfare Party due to party's new policy to get the support of differing views.

These historical notes revealed that Erdogan and Gul came from different political backgrounds although they had the common point of being members of Welfare Party. After that period, they never fall apart despite differences.

In addition to their personal and political differences, currently they have separate roles in serving the

country. Prime Minister Erdogan is also the leader of AK Party while Gul has to be neutral according to the requirements of being the president of the country.

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## **Sources**

Source : The New Anatolian /Ankara 28 September 2007