

Answer to Question

Reasons and Causes for the Dismissal of the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu

Question:

The media is still circulating the issue of Erdogan's forcing Davutoglu to resign; some say that it is because Davutoglu was not enthusiastic about the subject of the presidential system, and others say it is because he slid into negotiations with the European Union on the issue of the flow of refugees to Europe... I hope to get clarification on the subject, particularly because Davutoglu was on the side of Erdogan for about 14 years and from his confidants. Thereby how is it that he quickly resigned, rather dismissed? Please clarify this matter and thank you very much.

Answer:

Reviewing the circumstances of this resignation or dismissal, as well as indication of the situation gives evidences for the reasons and causes, and it is as follows:

1- The observer, will not notice a big difference between President Erdogan and his colleague Ahmet Davutoglu throughout the period of the premiership of Erdogan, where the first year of the premiership of Davutoglu, this duo were symbols of the political system in Turkey, led by the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Although Erdogan's personality is far superior than Davutoglu in terms of being a 'go-getter' (high achiever), having a love of responsibility and leadership... Davutoglu did not show throughout the years of his work any disagreement with Erdogan, not when he was his adviser between 2003 and 2009, nor when he served as foreign minister between 2009 and 2014, nor when he became head of government in June 2015. But Erdogan's personality does not accept the symbolic position in accordance with the applicable constitution and was expecting that the circumstances will allow him to adopt a new constitution that gives the President, i.e. Erdogan, full authority in the state. However, the AKP's failure in the elections of 2014 in obtaining an absolute majority, as being accustomed to, meant that he was unable to change the constitution to the presidential system, which he aspires to, and then he called for early elections, hoping that he will win more votes....

2- After the 2014 elections, two matters emerged from Davutoglu that annoyed Erdogan:

First: The lack of enthusiasm by Davutoglu about the presidential system, as desired by Erdogan, especially the comments by Davutoglu in the wake of the June 2014 elections, when he said in a television program "We wanted to move to a presidential system, but the people did not allow us this right. There is a new agenda for the time being, and all must take this agenda into account." [Milliyet, 11/06/2015]. This disturbed Erdogan, as this comment shows that people are not in favor of Erdogan on the issue of the presidential system at a time when Erdogan focuses on being elected by the people and that the people supported him in his views, most notably the presidential system.

Second: Davutoglu's involvement in the negotiations with the EU on the flow of refugees to Europe and the aura that surrounded him during the negotiations and the European interest in his movements, even raised some eyebrows, some political analysis in the media noted the strong closeness between Turkey and Europe, in contrast to a rift between Turkey and America!

All due to the progress of the negotiations harmoniously between Davutoglu and the EU, which developed fear within Erdogan and America behind him, that Davutoglu will be influenced by Europe, especially that he is not as politically astute as Erdogan, rather he is closer to being naive in political awareness, which makes it easier for European political savvy to influence or at least win his friendship!... Thus, Europe tried to deceive Davutoglu through negotiations to win at least his friendship, to use it for other purposes... and Erdogan and America behind him do not want Europe to find a gateway to Turkey, even if it was just a friendship according to them!

3- The first issue irritated Erdogan, but it did not pose a threat to Erdogan, to drive his dismissal in such a humiliating manner, while being one of Erdogan's closest assistants... Commenting on the elections in that way was because the election results did not allow the AKP to reach two-thirds, which enables it to approve a presidential system, even if his comment was intended, his remarks reflected the reverse later, and he could have handled this quietly.

But it seems that the matter that required decisiveness and the dismissal of Davutoglu, is the second matter, and America is behind this, to be a lesson for all politicians who get closer with Europe... Davutoglu did not walk with Europe, was not close to them, but he only negotiated with them, without the use of fiery speech against Europe, like Erdogan, and so this was the fate Davutoglu!

As for the evidences for the second matter, as mentioned above, that the reasons behind the dismissal are:

A- Erdogan began proceedings in this matter after his return from America in 04/01/2016 and his meeting with Obama... so it was after his return that he began such proceedings! It reminds us of the Obama - Putin meeting on 30/9/2015, when Putin upon his return announced the air intervention in Syria! Thus, Obama's meeting with Erdogan and then starting upon his return the dismissal procedures of Davutoglu, shows America's role in this matter, so as to strike any ideas of interference by Europe in Turkey, so that the influence in Turkey remains purely by the American policy.

B- Erdogan's proceedings in sacking Davutoglu nearly finished when the negotiations with the European Union nearly ended! Dar Al-Hayat website reported on 22/05/2016 that the decision was directly taken after the 'good' news from Brussels on 4 May, about a very important agreement between Turkey with the European Union... and the declaration of the European Commission its approval on what was Turkey asking for years, which is the abolition of the requirement for Turks to obtain visas to enter the countries of the Schengen area in the EU... but rather than celebrating, Erdogan and Davutoglu, the occasion, the Turkish president summoned his prime minister to a meeting that was limited to the two men, that lasted an hour and a half, after which it was announced the intent of Davutoglu to leave Erdogan's team, which means practically breaking the bonds of a close relationship between the two, that spanned at least a decade. Davutoglu was unanimously elected as leader of the AKP in the first extraordinary meeting of the party's conference, and as the successor to Erdogan as the 62nd president of Turkey. Moments after his election, the signs of interference of the President in his work began to show, as the latter began to receive instructions from Erdogan through internal channels of the ruling party in shaping the country's foreign and regional policy...)

And then Ahmet Davutoglu announced in a press conference held on 5/5/2016 after his meeting with Erdogan for over an hour and a half, on Wednesday 4/5/2016, that he would step down at an extraordinary conference held by the AKP later this month and added that his decision was "not the result of personal choice, but a necessity," and added: "I have decided for the unity of the ruling party the change of the head of the party is more appropriate. I'm not thinking of running on the May 22nd Conference". [skynewsarabia, 05/05/2016])

4- Erdogan prepared the ground for the decision to dismiss Davutoglu, with the following steps:

a) He has withdrawn Davutoglu's authority as head of the Justice and Development Party of the appointment of party officials in provinces on Friday, 29/4/2016. Reuters reported on 02/05/2016, "The step taken on Friday during a meeting of the executive committee of the ruling Justice and Development is one of the strongest evidence so far of the tension between Erdogan - who wants the presidency with executive powers in Turkey - and between Davutoglu, who will be sidelined in the event of a parliamentary system change..."

b) On May 1st, only four days before the stepping down of Davutoglu, and after only two days of the most famous meeting of the central body of the party, an anonymous blog called "Pelican File" (pelikan dosyası) appeared on the Web, and became the discussion of political and media circles in Turkey, until Davutoglu announced his decision.

This blog did not bear a name and did not refer to the source, or its reference, its introduction asked readers to see it as a "cry" from the "those who sacrifice their lives for the president"... The main idea of the blog is about trying to prove that the Prime Minister Davutoglu - which it referred to as "Khoja" i.e. professor - has decided to depart from President Erdogan's line and "betray" him and turn against him. It tried to demonstrate this through narrating several events and conversations that took place in public or behind the scenes or on the phone... and the blog mentions that Erdogan took a pledge from Davutoglu to support the presidential system and defend it in the face of "the West attempts to turn against it." It is mentioned in the blog (Pelican file) that Davutoglu did not meet his promise... and recalls many violations by Davutoglu... Although the blog does not include any formal "documents", but it was publicised and raised controversy around Davutoglu to distort his image... Deeply analyzing and pondering what was written in the blog, shows that it is likely that those behind it are not far from the inner circles of Erdogan.

c) Erdogan's followers are still giving out statements that flow in this direction; for example, the speaker of parliament, Ismail Kahraman who is a close associate of Erdogan finally confirmed that "a car driven by two drivers cannot avoid accidents" [<http://www.france24.com/ar/20160505>] even though they are well aware that Davutoglu was just sitting next to the driver.

5- As expected, the AKP held a conference on Sunday, 22/05/2016, i.e. rapidly, and Ben Ali Yildirim was elected head of the party. Davutoglu handed his resignation as head of government, President Erdogan commissioned the new head of the party, loyal to him to form a new government... And in a swift move the government was formed on Tuesday, 23/5/2016, and (the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, chaired on Wednesday, the first meeting of the new government in the initiative that confirms his intention to tighten control over the executive authority, at a time when the opposition warns of chaos, if the president is granted greater powers. Immediately after taking office, the Prime Minister pledged to "do everything in his power" and quickly to adopted a presidential system similar to the US and French model. (Alarabia, 25/5/2016). On its website, Turk Press published on 24/5/2016 the following: Ben Ali Yildirim, the leader of the AKP, received the functions of prime minister formally from his predecessor, Ahmet Davutoglu, in Chankaya Palace, shortly after announcing the list of the new government. Davutoglu left the palace in his private car, after the long closed-door meeting, in which he handed over his duties to Ben Ali Yildirim, which lasted about 30 minutes. then Ben Ali Yildirim announced today the list of the new government, after its presentation to the Turkish president Erdogan, and he received his approval, he later went to the headquarters of the AKP, and held his first meeting with party, as Prime Ministers..."

It has appeared in the extraordinary conference of the ruling Justice and Development party that the real the leader of this party is Erdogan...Ben Ali Yildirim is more loyal to Erdogan and will carry out Erdogan's priorities immediately, therefore this is why he was elected as president of the ruling Justice and Development party. Yildirim stressed also in his speech at the extraordinary conference on the consistency and the presidential system, and said that the leader of this party is Erdogan, he also emphasized that path of the Justice and Development Party, is the path of Erdogan.

6- Thereby it became clear that the likely reason of dismissing Davutoglu is his involvement in the negotiations with the EU on the flow of refugees to Europe and the aura that surrounded him during the negotiations and the European interest in him and in his movements as mentioned above... and this is asserted when we review the statements from the stakeholders: America, Europe, Erdogan, which are as follows:

a) The United States: US State Department Spokesperson, Mark Toner, said on Thursday that the United States considers the resignation of the Turkish Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, "This is an internal political matter for Turkey." (Sputnik Russian Agency, 05/05/2016) i.e. it accepted the resignation.

b) Europe: Europe's statements were strong, as British newspapers described what happened as a "palace coup" and defended Prime Minister Davutoglu. AlJazeera.net quoted on

06/05/2016, "The dispute between the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on powers within the ruling party, dominated the British newspaper headlines today. The Financial Times wrote that the Turkish power struggle threatens the pivotal deal to stop the flow of migrants from Turkey to the European Union in which Davutoglu negotiated personally with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The newspaper pointed to what it called a cold response of President Erdogan to the agreement concluded by his prime minister; he showed a growing hostility towards the European Union. The newspaper quoted officials in the EU who believe that the waiver of visas for Turkish citizens deal was the "straw that broke the camel's back" in the rift between Davutoglu and Erdogan, and that the recent collapse came after just hours from the recommendation of the European Commission to proceed with the deal day before yesterday. The article described Erdogan as an authoritarian president, and he is from the "neo-Islamists" and that he is an enemy of Davutoglu, it mentions also that he had a point of view that is less positive towards the EU."

C) Erdogan: Erdogan has attacked Europe, accusing it of hypocrisy, he said in a speech in the capital Ankara, "The European Union stands to tell us to ease off our fight against the terrorist organization," referring to the war of Turkey against the PKK rebels. He added by directing his question to the European Union, "Since when do you run this country, who gave you the right to do so?" (Al Jazeera Net, 12/5/2016). In one of the fiercest criticisms recently of the European Union, Erdogan accused the bloc of hypocrisy when he said, *"They believe they have the right [to fight terrorism] but find it a luxury and unacceptable for us. Let me say it clearly – the name for this is hypocrisy. A EU that tramples on its own values and principles will be worth nothing to its members, or the world ... The visa business ... we sorted it, we signed it ... now they come with 72 conditions. They squeeze terrorism [reforms] in there. Where did that come from? Show me where that's in the acquis, in the visa rules Did they demand it when South American countries were given visa-free travel? We know very well what the reason is – don't let anybody be fooled. We're waiting for this union's warped and wary attitude to Turkey to end. In the near future we will either strengthen our ties with the EU, or we will find ourselves a new path. Our preference is to build new Turkey with our European friends. We're waiting for their response."*

7- Therefore it is likely that the main reason for the dismissal of Davutoglu is his involvement in this long line of negotiations with the European Union as we have pointed out above, and not his lack of enthusiasm for the presidential system, though his lack of enthusiasm has upset Erdogan... By dismissing the Prime Minister Davutoglu, Erdogan was able to resolve the orientations of Turkey towards America, and closed the British and European dreams of Turkey for some time... therefore Tayyip Erdogan considered that the extraordinary conference of the ruling justice and development party which took decisions to dismiss Davutoglu and appointment a new president of the party as:

"One of the most important political turning points in the history of modern Turkey. this is an indication of what to follow this conference of big and radical changes in the party and state leadership. this is reflected directly and was clear in the list of the new leadership of the party, which changed more than forty percent. It is expected that the change will continue in many of the pillars of the government and the state. (Turk Press, 24/5/2016). This is confirmed by what has been said about Erdogan's speech in the conference, "it was heard attentively and received with a standing ovation, which is a new phenomenon in conferences of the Turkish Justice and development party. It is an expression and acceptance of everyone, under the leadership and commanding of the party's founder and the structure of the state." (Turk Press, 24/05/2016)

This is the reason for the dismissal of Davutoglu from the leadership of the party and the government. Allah Knows Best, He is Most Wise.

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