

# A Sultan in Autumn

## Erdogan Faces Turkey's Uncontainable Forces

by [Soner Cagaptay \(/experts/soner-cagaptay\)](/experts/soner-cagaptay)

Jun 6, 2021

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Soner Cagaptay \(/experts/soner-cagaptay\)](/experts/soner-cagaptay)

Soner Cagaptay is the Beyer Family Senior Fellow and director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute.



In-Depth Reports

---

**The unprecedented economic growth and personal popularity once enjoyed by the Turkish leader have given way to stagnation, a dwindling support base, and problems abroad.**

**D**uring his first decade in power, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan maintained his popularity by delivering unprecedented economic growth and dramatically increasing access to healthcare, education, and other essential services. But in recent years, he and his party have faced setbacks, including humiliating mayoral election losses in Istanbul, Ankara, and other major cities in 2019. At home, the once robust Turkish economy has sputtered, while abroad Erdogan must balance a perilous alliance with Russia's Vladimir Putin against the need to maintain amicable relations with Washington. A potential refugee crisis from Syria looms as another threat. And on the political front, Erdogan can no longer count on majority support from Turkish voters, a trend driven by disillusionment among millennials, his own clumsy anti-elitist messaging, and establishment fatigue, among other factors.

**[Download \*A Sultan in Autumn\* \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/4600\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/4600)**

**[Purchase \*A Sultan in Autumn\* \(https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/sultan-in-autumn-9780755642809/\)](https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/sultan-in-autumn-9780755642809/)**

In this taut and compelling volume—copublished by The Washington Institute and I.B. Tauris—Soner Cagaptay lays out the mounting challenges to Erdogan's rule. While suggesting the adaptive president may still survive politically—with undoubted costs for Turkey's citizens, institutions, and allies—he also offers a more hopeful subtext, intimating that the country's resilient democracy can outlast any one leader. ❖

---

## RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [Rise and Fall of the AKP's Islamist Appeal in Türkiye](#)

Apr 22, 2024



Mustafa Gul

[\(/policy-analysis/rise-and-fall-akps-islamist-appeal-turkiye\)](#)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [Coordinated Iran Sanctions Require Coordinated Enforcement](#)

Apr 19, 2024



Matthew Levitt

[\(/policy-analysis/coordinated-iran-sanctions-require-coordinated-enforcement\)](#)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

### [China's Military Objectives and Operational Experience in the Middle East](#)

Apr 19, 2024



Grant Rumley

[\(/policy-analysis/chinas-military-objectives-and-operational-experience-middle-east\)](#)

## TOPICS

[Arab & Islamic Politics \(/policy-analysis/arab-islamic-politics\)](#)

## REGIONS & COUNTRIES

[Middle East \(/policy-analysis/middle-east\)](#)

[Turkey \(/policy-analysis/turkey\)](#)