Turkey is too diverse demographically, too big economically, and too complicated politically to be governed from a presidential palace.

There was a time when Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan ran laser-beam-sharp election campaigns, winning poll after poll. Not anymore. On Sunday, Erdogan’s hand-picked candidate in Istanbul’s mayoral race, Binali Yildirim, lost to Ekrem Imamoglu in a clear-cut defeat. This is bad news for Erdogan, especially because he is, in some ways, responsible...

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