

# Erdogan Needs Enemies More Than Friends

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

Apr 7, 2017

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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

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

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**A Turkey expert discusses how the upcoming constitutional referendum could exacerbate the internal divisions that the longtime leader has deliberately sown over the years.**

**Cipher Brief:** How would a Yes vote in Turkey's April 16 referendum change the Turkish constitution, and how would it expand the powers of the presidency?

**Soner Cagaptay:** The biggest point is that it eliminates the office of prime minister, and it consolidates the position of prime minister into the office of the president, which is occupied by Erdogan. This change would make Turkey the only democratic country in Europe, except for Cyprus, that does not have a separate office for the prime minister. It would be the only European nation except Cyprus to give the president the power to determine government budgets and appoint judges to the high courts. Winning the referendum will culminate the process of consolidating power into Erdogan's hands. This process has accelerated in the aftermath of the attempted military coup against Erdogan last July. It has always been an open secret that Erdogan wants to become an executive-style president. However, before the coup, people expected him to push for this goal during the next presidential elections in 2019. Now, the coup has allowed him to fast-forward and consolidate power sooner. The constitutional amendments would allow Erdogan to become not just the head of state and head of government, but head of the ruling party as well. He will become **the most unassailable Turkish politician ([http://His publications include the soon-to-be-published book \*The New Sultan: Erdogan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey.\*](#))** since Turkey became a multi-party democracy in the 1950s...

**[Read the full interview on the Cipher Brief website. \(https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/middle-east/erdogan-needs-enemies-more-friends-1091\)](https://www.thecipherbrief.com/article/middle-east/erdogan-needs-enemies-more-friends-1091)** ❖

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