

# Turkey's Presidential Prospects: Assessing Recent Trends

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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



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**If Erdogan hopes to become Turkey's first directly elected president, he will need to continue courting Kurdish voters and burnishing his economic and populist credentials.**

**T**he outcome of Turkey's March municipal elections and other recent developments offer new insight into how the country's upcoming presidential election season will unfold. To win the presidency in August, the governing Justice and Development Party's presumed candidate, Prime Minister Erdogan, will need to win at least 50 percent of the vote -- a considerable task even for a longtime leader with several electoral victories under his belt.

In this paper, Soner Cagaptay explains how the AKP's largely successful approach to the March elections -- from courting the increasingly powerful Kurdish voting bloc to highlighting Erdogan's sound economic policies and reputation as an "authoritarian underdog" -- will likely be repeated in the presidential campaign.

## The Author

**S**oner Cagaptay is the Beyer Family Fellow and director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute. His recent publications include *[The Rise of Turkey: The Twenty-First Century's First Muslim Power](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-rise-of-turkey-the-twenty-first-centurys-first-muslim-power)* (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-rise-of-turkey-the-twenty-first-centurys-first-muslim-power>) (Potomac Books). ❖

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