

# Turkey at a Crossroads: What Do the Gezi Park Protests Mean for Democracy in the Region? (Part 1)

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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.



Articles & Testimony

**T**he director of the Institute's Turkish Research Program addressed the House regarding the large-scale demonstrations that have swept Turkey since May. The following is an excerpt from his prepared remarks; [download the PDF to read the full testimony](#). ***Also read Ambassador James Jeffrey's testimony before the same panel. (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkey-at-a-crossroads-what-do-the-gezi-park-protests-mean-for-democracy-2>)***

"Turkey, a key NATO member, is an important country for the United States. It is America's only ally that borders Iran, Iraq, and Syria. According to some analysts, the recent protests that rocked Istanbul and other Turkish cities pose the greatest challenge the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has faced in over a decade in power. What do the protests mean for Turkey's stability and democracy, as well as for democracy in the Middle East?

"Since coming to power in 2002, the AKP has implemented sound economic policies, making Turkey a member of the Group of 20, as well as turning it into a majority middle-class society for the first time in its history. Yet, the recent protests show that the ruling AKP has, perhaps, become a victim of its own success..." ❖

*House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats*

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