## AT: QPQ CP – Democracy

### 2AC – Solvency – Turkey – AT: Democracy

#### Erdogan uses democracy to further his authoritarianism – the counterplan only worsens democracy

Massicard ’21 [Elise, Massicard is a political sociologist with research focusing on the political sociology of contemporary Turkey 5-17-2021, "Populism in Turkey: Towards the Demise of Democracy?," Cogito, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/research/cogito/home/populism-in-turkey-towards-the-demise-of-democracy/?lang=en>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

Behind the Success of the AKP

The AKP, the Justice and Development Party, is undoubtedly on the demotic side. It originates from the Islamist movement, the long-standing pet hate of the Kemalists and military powers, and has long been ostracised from the legitimate political field. It has always had a clearly stated populist dimension. Having gained power in 2002 in the wake of the severe economic crisis of 2001, the AKP benefited from the widespread rejection of the established political classes and the establishment by large segments of society. It targeted the republican, secular elite, accusing it of failing to represent the people and holding democracy hostage. It promised to bring to power modest and conservative groups, which had long been prevented from accessing positions of power, and proclaimed itself a defender of the masses and of popular will, and therefore of democracy. It built its mobilisation discourse against westernised ‘elites’, along with their military and bureaucratic ‘bastions’, criticising them as limits to the popular opinions expressed in the ballot box.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, originally from the Islamist movement and one of the founders of the AKP, embodies this populism in several ways. He appears to be the first truly popular political leader, in touch with the values and hopes of his people. He promotes his modest social origins, even in his manner of speaking and body language. During his political ascension, and even upon gaining power, he accused the establishment of being authoritarian and oppressive. Condemned and imprisoned for a poem with Islamist intonations that he recited in 1998 as Mayor of Istanbul, Erdoğan acted on this martyr status, oppressed by the military, bureaucrats and Kemalists … in fact all that is ‘anti-democratic’.

With a solid electoral base since 2002, representing between 40 and 50% of votes expressed, Erdoğan has succeeded in incarnating the popular will with remarkable longevity. This massive support, resulting in repeated large parliamentary majorities, has enabled his party to make substantial modifications to the institutional balance. In particular, it has drastically reduced the army’s institutional power over political matters, all in the name of democracy,

Growing Authoritarianism

In 2013, two million Turkish citizens took to the streets, protesting in favour of preserving Gezi Park and inclusive, participative urban planning, and against a government they deemed intrusive and business-oriented. Thanks to his undeniable electoral popularity, Erdoğan, who was then Prime Minister, was able to reject the demonstrators’ claims, reasoning that in a representative democracy, the elected power cannot be called into question by demands from people in the streets, however many they might be. The head of the Turkish government thus opposed the authentic ‘people’, i.e. those who expressed themselves via the ballot box, and the hordes of çapulcu, i.e. looters who could make no claims of a representative or democratic nature. However, this ‘absolutism of national will’, to use the well-coined expression of political scientist and editorial writer Ahmet Insel, is also what has enabled and even justified the restrictions on pluralism, i.e. the regression of public liberties, notably with regards to opinion and expression.

### 1AR – Solvency – Turkey – AT: Democracy

#### Turkey will use the counterplan’s “tailored democratic reforms” to reinstate populism and authoritarianism through appeals to democracy

Li ’22 [May, 5-17-2022, "Rise of Erdogan and Democratic Erosion in Turkey," Democratic Erosion, <https://www.democratic-erosion.com/2022/05/17/rise-of-erdogan-and-democratic-erosion-in-turkey/>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

The popularity behind Erdogan even though Turkey is no longer considered a free country according to the Freedom House, is also at the core of the rise of populism and populist leaders such as Erdogan himself. The modern state of Turkey was built under leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who created a secular nation for the Muslim majority. Secularism allowed Turkey to break from its imperial past, creating a new national identity for Turkish citizens. This meant that Islam would no longer play a significant role in the policies and laws of the new modern state. While the goal of secularism was intended to modernize Turkey, it also created a division between religious opposition within the population.

Then came Erdogan, a charismatic politician who appealed to the conservative population of Turkey. Using the deep division between those who supported a secular Turkey and those who supported an Islam State, liberalist and conservatives, and different groups of nationalists, Erdogan was able to emerge himself as the “voice and hope of the people.” He targeted the secular elites and blamed them for the failures of the state and for failing to represent the people. The economic boom during his time in office has also greatly contributed to his popularity. As said by Baris Unlu, a former political science professor, “Many people supported the APK Party even though they weren’t supporters per-se because they were sick of pre-2002 Turkey.”

In the 2016 attempted coup, Erdogan strategically used social media to appeal to the citizens. Appearing on people’s FaceTime, he urged people to “take to the streets and defend democracy.” On Twitter, his staff was putting out tweets on both his official account and public account calling for the public to rally. By using social media, Erdogan successfully manipulated the event to work in his favor to delegitimize his opposition. Images on his Twitter showed pictures of the rally as people defending democracy, rather than a revolt against his regime.

#### No democracy internal and turn – Turkey can use the counterplan to bolster authoritarianism

Cook ’19 [Steven A., 5-13-2019, "Turkish Democracy Can't Die, Because It Never Lived," Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/13/turkish-democracy-cant-die-because-it-never-lived/>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

The moves and countermoves of Turkish politics belie the notion that the country was a democracy or was democratizing until the AKP won its first election in 2002. Turkey, like a host of other countries, became proficient in some democratic practices, and its constitutions established what resembled democratic institutions, but few of its leaders ever demonstrated a commitment to democratic norms. Without it, cynicism and authoritarianism flourished alongside of, and even with the help of, democratic practices.

### 2AC – Solvency – Turkey – Lies

#### Can’t solve the INB – Turkey lies –

#### Erdogan promised reforms in 2021

Reuters ’20 [Reuters Staff, 12-26-2020, "Erdogan says Turkey will break economic 'triangle of evil' with reforms," U.S., <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-economy-erdogan/erdogan-says-turkey-will-break-economic-triangle-of-evil-with-reforms-idUSKBN2900A9>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

Erdogan promised a slate of judicial and economic reforms last month, leading to expectations of the possible release of politicians, including Kurdish ones, and human rights advocates from jail. But Erdogan’s recent comments on court rulings and criticism aimed at his government have fuelled scepticism about his pledge.

Speaking via videolink at a ceremony in Ankara, Erdogan said 2021 would be “the year of democratic and economic reforms” and that efforts to present the reforms to parliament would move “as soon as possible”.

“We hope to overcome troubles from economic attacks and the pandemic measures as soon as possible. By speeding up structural reforms, we are determined to form a system based on production and employment and breaking the interest rates, inflation and exchange rates triangle of evil,” Erdogan said.

“We are not carrying out democratic reforms because anyone forced us to, but because our people deserve them,” he added.

#### They didn’t happen.

Freedom House ’22 [Freedom House, 2022, "Turkey: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report," <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2022>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

Key Developments in 2021

In January, President Erdoğan appointed a political ally as the rector of Turkey’s top-ranking Boğaziçi University, prompting months-long protests by students and faculty that the police violently dispersed on multiple occasions. Erdoğan ultimately removed the rector in July, only to replace him the next month with a different political ally.

In June, the Constitutional Court accepted a case to shut down the country’s second-largest opposition party, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP). The charges accuse the HDP of having links to terrorism and threatening Turkey’s territorial unity. Meanwhile, arrests of HDP officials carried out during the year added to the thousands of party members who have been detained since 2016.

In March, President Erdoğan unilaterally withdrew Turkey from the Istanbul Convention, an international treaty to combat gender-based violence, sparking outrage from domestic and international advocacy groups and foreign governments. Turkey’s opposition parties and most of the population remain opposed to the move, and civil society groups have attempted to appeal it as unconstitutional.

Osman Kavala, Turkey’s most prominent political prisoner, continued to have his due process rights denied throughout the year. In January, an appeals court revoked his 2020 acquittal, ostensibly because some evidence had been excluded from court. Authorities rearrested him in February under newfound charges of allegedly aiding a coup attempt and supporting terrorism. As of the end of 2021, Kavala remained in detention, despite a 2019 order by the ECHR for his immediate release.

### 2AC – Say No – General

#### The CP fails – Turkey, Poland, and Hungary say no due to structural factors and external pressure isn’t sufficient

Bechev ’22 [Interview of Dimitar Bechev by Ferenc Laczo, 2-22-2022, "The competitive element in competitive authoritarianism is still very pertinent. Dimitar Bechev on Turkey Under Erdogan," Review of Democracy, <https://revdem.ceu.edu/2022/02/22/the-competitive-element-in-competitive-authoritarianism-is-still-very-pertinent-dimitar-bechev-on-turkey-under-erdogan/>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

Ferenc Laczo: While you underline in the book that tilting the playing field was Erdogan’s way of surviving and prospering in politics, you also insist on long-term structural and institutional forces behind the rise of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. What would you say are the main reasons behind the quite dramatic democratic decline in the country leading to the rise of competitive authoritarianism? How special or different is the Turkish regime as compared to other countries frequently cited these days when it comes to the subject of democratic decline, such as Russia, Poland, Hungary, or Serbia, to take examples only from Central and Eastern Europe, but you may, of course, wish to compare the country more globally too?

Dimitar Bechev: That’s a great question and I could spend hours upon hours delving into it. Turkey never had a perfect democracy. Even in the best of days, there were many conflicts and deficiencies that tainted the image of Turkish democracy, such as polarization within society, the prevalence of what Turks would call the deep state (even if the term is contested), the nationalist undercurrents in Turkish politics, the history of violence, and the culture of winner takes all, which has been quite systematic.

At a certain stage, it became a matter of survival for Erdogan. The conclusion he drew around 2007-08, when AKP was threatened with closure, was that to persist on top he needs to defeat the opposition and shoot down the alternatives. Power sharing, a coalition culture was never in the cards. The idea that there is no real exit became a self-fulfilling prophecy and I think this applies to this day.

Another factor beyond path-dependency and Erdogan’s persona is the weakening pull of the EU, which is something we could observe also within the EU.

Even though the situation is very different in Poland and Hungary, suffice to say that once you become a member, the external anchor doesn’t have the same impact on domestic affairs. The same thing happened in Turkey for a different set of reasons, because the prospect of membership weakened with the Cyprus issue and especially after Nicolas Sarkozy came to power in France in 2007. The dismantling of checks and balances and the external anchor being dismantled partly because of the EU itself led to the system we currently have in Turkey.

#### Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Portugal and the Baltic countries say no OR fail to implement democratic reforms

Paul **Poast**, Political Sciene @ UChicago, **and** Alexandra **Chinchilla**, Political Science @ UChicago 20, “Good for democracy? Evidence from the 2004 NATO,” International Politics, Volume 57, Issue 3.

NATO has a curious view of itself. The preamble of the North Atlantic Treaty listed ‘democracy’ as a ‘founding principle’ even though Portugal, a founding member, was under the authoritarian Estado Novo regime when the treaty was signed. Neither Turkey nor Greece, the frst two countries to join NATO following its formation, was suspended from the alliance during periods of authoritarian backsliding. One might assert that these seemingly hypocritical exceptions to the democratic principle were driven by Cold War necessities. Indeed, compare the language used in the 1968 NATO Strategic Concept—a periodically revised document of NATO’s strategic priorities—and the post-Cold War 1991 and 1999 Strategic Concepts. Whereas the 1968 document contains zero uses of the word ‘democracy’ (or variations, such as ‘democratic’), it has 28 uses of the word ‘deterrence.’ In contrast, the 1991 document contains 5 mentions of ‘democracy’ and just 6 of ‘deterrence,’ and the 1999 document contains 12 mentions of both terms. When NATO countries agreed to expand the alliance, NATO’s 1995 ‘Study on Enlargement’ noted ‘encouraging and supporting democratic reforms’ as a core tenet of expansion (NATO 1995). Hence, it appears that one of NATO’s post-Cold War strategies was to fnally take seriously its democratic principles (NATO 2018).

Given that NATO documents clearly demonstrate that democratic development became a core mission of NATO after the Cold War, how well has it fulflled this mission? Although some key post-Cold War expansion members, notably Poland and Hungary, have backslid on democratic reforms, has the post-Cold War NATO expansion fostered democratic development more broadly in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space? The existing scholarship on this question offers mixed answers. Gibler and Sewell (2006, 429) maintain that ‘the expansion of NATO eastward… aided the creation of a peaceful environment for democracy to survive.’ According to them, NATO reduced levels of external threat and provided much-needed bargaining leverage with Russia to resolve border issues and remove Russian troops from Eastern European states. In contrast, Dan Reiter (2001) expressed skepticism nearly two decades ago: ‘NATO membership has not and will not advance democratization in Europe…. [E]nlargement did not contribute much to democratization in the three East European states admitted in 1999, and the promise of NATO membership is unlikely to speed democracy within any of the nine countries currently awaiting a decision on their request for membership.’ Reiter then highlighted the ‘risks of further enlargement’ vis-a-vis Russia as pointing toward holding of on further expansion. Mearsheimer (2014) argues similarly that by antagonizing Russia, NATO expansion threatened the prospects for democratic development in Ukraine. Poast and Urpelainen (2018) ofer a middle-of-the-road argument. Exploring the post-Cold War experience of the Baltic states, they argue that these states’ nascent democratic regimes were underpinned by actions and efforts taken by the states themselves, along with Nordic assistance, well before NATO membership was even a possibility. NATO membership did not harm the prospects of democratic development, but it also did not directly foster the peaceful environment necessary for democracy to fourish. NATO’s role was, at best, indirect.

We seek to adjudicate among these three views on the NATO–democracy relationship. We do so by focusing on the 2004 NATO expansion that brought in the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. We focus on the states that joined NATO in 2004 because they represent the **ideal test** of NATO’s influence on democracy. The states that joined NATO in 1999—the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland—could be hard tests of the democratization theory, given that they were selected for membership ahead of their peers partly because they were more democratic and therefore more ready for membership than other states. Reiter (2001) argued, for example, that these three states democratized quickly well before the prospect of NATO membership. The states that did not make the first cut at NATO enlargement but were later brought into the alliance should be where NATO would have the strongest effect on democracy in prospective members. In addition, now is an ideal time to reevaluate these claims, for two reasons related to data availability. First, for the seven states that joined NATO in 2004, more years have now passed since NATO entry than passed between their regime transition and NATO entry. Second, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project is now producing measures of regime type that not only well capture the core components of democratic systems, but also offer a measure that is **more refined** than the commonly applied Polity Project data. We leverage these two data advancements to consider a tricky empirical counterfactual: Was NATO expansion critical to the development and survival of democracy in the 2004 expansion states?1 This is an enormous question with too many angles to be fully explored in a brief article. But we can show how the available data ofer insights into it.

We begin by reviewing the process of post-Cold War NATO expansion, and the way in which it relates to democratic development, by reviewing the main arguments for NATO infuence on democratization drawn from the literature. Throughout this section, we refer to examples from the experience of new NATO member states, with a lengthier example drawn from the Baltic states’ experience of gaining NATO membership. Reviewing the Baltic states’ experience introduces terms and concepts, such as the Membership Action Plan (MAP), that will be used in our main analysis. The Baltics are also representative cases of how NATO’s security guarantee provided a powerful incentive for new regimes to seek membership in NATO. The next section presents our analysis of how NATO membership infuenced democratic development within the 2004 expansion states. We begin by explaining why we use the Liberal Democracy Index score from the V-Dem Project to capture the state of democratic development within a country. We then present regression analysis suggesting that gaining NATO membership had **little influence** on a country acquiring or keeping democratic institutions. Instead, we find the anticipation of **European Union** (EU) membership, not NATO membership, had the largest influence on democratic development.

### 1AR – Say No – Hungary

#### Vague conditions ensure Hungary says no or circumvents—they’d used democratic tools to consolidate power and undermine the alliance

**Nietsche 19** [Carisa; research assistant in the Transatlantic Security Program at the Center for a New American Security; “How Hungary’s Orban Puts Democratic Tools to Authoritarian Use”; 06-10-19; World Politics Review; https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/27928/how-hungary-s-orban-puts-democratic-tools-to-authoritarian-use]

In his visit to the White House last month, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who proudly describes himself as an **illiberal democrat**, did what every good populist does: He explained that he had a mandate from the people. “From the people, by the people, for the people. That is the basis for the Hungarian government,” he said when asked about democratic backsliding in his country.

Like other populist leaders, Orban uses a number of tactics to back up his claims: sidelining the media to quell critics, whipping up perceived threats from migrants, refugees and others from abroad, and, like other euroskeptics, casting the European Union as a bogeyman. One less-documented item in Orban’s toolkit, which is cast in a seemingly democratic sheen, is his use of national consultations—soliciting citizen feedback on government policies or regulations through surveys and opinion polls.

In the past five years, Orban has launched several of them, all designed to consolidate his political position and justify his illiberal agenda. A national consultation in 2015 focused on the supposed linkages between immigration and terrorism. Another one, in 2017, fixated on the so-called “Soros Plan,” which claimed that billionaire philanthropist George Soros was behind the European migration crisis in an attempt to destabilize Hungary and weaken its Christian culture. Last year, Orban launched a national consultation on measures designed to promote and protect families and children, one of many efforts by Orban to build an “old-school Christian democracy” in Hungary. The consultation pits the Orban government’s efforts to deal with Hungary’s demographic decline, as birthrates continue to fall, by supporting families—against the solution of “Brussels bureaucrats” to reverse the shrinking population through increased immigration.

At first glance, national consultations appear democratic. On closer inspection, however, Orban’s methods of collecting direct public feedback about government policy are far from it. Their methodologies defy all of the best practices of survey design. In the 2015 consultation on immigration and terrorism, respondents were given three choices—two of which represented agreement with the government and a third which represented disagreement—thereby giving the Hungarian government a two-out-of-three chance that the respondents would rubberstamp their proposed action. For instance, they pose questions like, “Would You support the Hungarian government if, contrary to the permissive policy of Brussels, it introduced stricter regulation of immigration?” In the family law consultation, respondents were given a “yes” or “no” choice to answer a series of questions addressing how Hungary should address demographic decline, without an opportunity to expound on their position.

In addition to the methodology, respondents are often primed to agree with the government position. Accompanying the “Soros Plan” consultation, Orban included a fear-mongering letter that cited the impetus for the consultation. “In Brussels, plans are being made on our future which involve major threats,” it stated ominously. In last year’s family law consultation, the government included a paragraph before each question that stated its position on the proposed solutions to demographic decline, including increasing support for mothers with three or more children. The paragraphs provide essentially a form of leading the witness to the conclusion of supporting the government’s line.

As more democracies risk sliding toward autocracy under populist leaders, more of them will rely on **seemingly democratic tools** to consolidate their rule.

Recent consultations also suffer from a troubling lack of transparency. After the 2017 national consultation on Soros and immigration, the government reported that the survey received 2.2 million responses. Yet there was no public release or verification of the results from an independent and objective body. Instead, Minister of State for Government Communication Bence Tuzson held a press conference trumpeting the outcome. “Based on the results so far,” he stated, “practically every respondent said no to the fact that 1 million immigrants should be resettled in Europe as part of the ‘Soros Plan.’” It was a convenient conclusion, of course, and one that gave Orban public support for his plan to make George Soros an enemy of the government and bolster support for Orban’s reelection.

Rather than actually gauge public opinion, the primary purpose of these consultations is to enable Orban to claim a democratic justification for enacting his “illiberal” agenda. Research shows that legitimacy is an important factor in stabilizing an authoritarian regime due to the public’s direct role in empowering the rise of the autocrat. A supposedly democratic mandate from the people allows Orban to bypass institutions that could potentially constrain him, like parliament. The unmediated access established through a national consultation often serves as a pressure release valve for the wider populace and creates the perception of a direct dialogue between the government—and the leader, in Orban’s case—and the people, which research shows can build loyalty to the regime.

The national consultations further consolidate Orban’s power by providing him with campaign insights and enabling him to identify opponents. The information collected from national consultations allows Orban to notice weaknesses in his electoral strategy. In conjunction with the “Soros Plan” consultation, Orban and his Fidesz party launched a large-scale media campaign laced with scare tactics and bolstering the government position—which also served as a reelection platform for Orban and Fidesz, paid for by taxpayer dollars. The potential campaigning power of national consultations goes a step further. In the 2015 national consultation on migration, NGO representatives and think tank experts suspect that Fidesz used the collected information to illegally build a database of potential Fidesz voters. Reports suggest that the national consultation allowed the government to monitor the perspective of voters region-by-region, as well as identify which voters potentially disagreed with the government’s stance due to a lack of a response. These measures blur the lines between campaigning and governing at the expense of Hungary’s taxpayers.

Orban’s growing use of national consultations suggests he could be learning from authoritarian leaders like China’s Xi Jinping and Russia’s Vladimir Putin. Over the past few years, China has launched a national consultation roughly every two weeks, for everything from a Chinese Medicine Ordinance to a review of electoral arrangements. However, reports show that 15 of 25 consultations yielded no more than 100 responses; some only yielded a handful of responses. Despite the paltry response rate, the Chinese government often utilized the results as a justification for official government policies.

The ability to identify challenges to a regime is an added benefit of national consultations and potentially a lesson Orban learned from Russia. Putin has utilized a public discussion page on his website, a telethon and even an online petition platform known as the Russian Public Initiative, which crowd-sources federal, regional and municipal level policy changes from citizens across Russia. In most cases, these tools have given Putin’s government insight into potential critics and opponents, or about issues that could lead to social instability and anti-government protests.

When used in bad faith and for undemocratic ends, national consultations can guide countries down the path to autocracy by stabilizing the regime in power, providing the cover of a democratic mandate, and bypassing the institutions that are supposed to act as checks and balances. It is likely that other populist leaders will learn from Orban’s tactics, just as he seems to have learned from Xi and Putin. As more democracies risk sliding toward autocracy under populist leaders who nevertheless came to power through democratic means, more of them will rely on seemingly democratic tools to consolidate their rule. The old tactics of regime survival are evolving, from Beijing to Budapest. Dressed up as democracy, measures like national consultations are in fact undermining it.

#### Hungary’s democratic backsliding means they’d never say yes

Judy **Dempsey 20**. Nonresident senior fellow at Carnegie Europe and editor in chief of Strategic Europe. "Orbán Exploits Coronavirus Pandemic to Destroy Hungary’s Democracy". Carnegie Europe. 3-31-2020. https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/81410

As if European Union leaders didn’t know what has been taking place in Hungary **over the past decade.**

Since his election as prime minister back in 2010, Viktor Orbán has **systematically** undermined the rule of law, weakened the judiciary, grabbed control of large parts of the media, and curbed independent academic institutions, such as the Central European University.

As if that was not enough, he has demonized refugees, built a barbed-wire fence to keep them from crossing into the country, and denied nongovernmental organizations and human rights activists access to any detained refugees or migrants, for example to help them file asylum requests.

**All these actions are being taken by a country that is a member of the EU and NATO.** Both organizations are supposed to be based on upholding freedom and fundamental rights, although NATO’s non-record on speaking out about Turkey’s erosion of democracy is next to shameful.

Orbán, a dissident during the communist era, has railed **against the EU**, in particular its commitment to democratic values. For him, his **political ideology** is about creating an **“illiberal” democracy** based on nationalism and a conservatism based on select Christian values. Forget the fact that an illiberal democracy is a contradiction in terms. Forget too that defending national sovereignty doesn’t have to mean weakening the rule of law.

[EMORY’S CARD BEGINS HERE]

Not content with chiseling away at Hungary’s democratic institutions—and knowing that the EU and even the European People’s Party (EPP), the European Parliament group that represents conservative parties throughout the EU, were too weak or cowardly to rein in his ambitions—Orbán has now gone a stage further.

### 1AR – Say No – Poland

#### Poland says no—nationalist control the government and dismantled democratic checks and balances

**Hjelmgaard** 20 [Kim Hjelmgaard, “These countries quietly slid into authoritarianism. Should the US be concerned under Trump?,” USA Today, Oct 7, 2020, pg. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/10/07/what-authoritarian-countries-can-tell-us-democracy-and-trump/3518563001/

In nearby Poland, President Andrzej Duda and the powerful leader of his ruling Law and Justice party, Jarosław Kaczyński, have slowly **dismantled** **many** **democratic checks** **and balances** by filling the ranks of the nation's courts with loyal judges.

The Law and Justice Party has tightened the government's grip on state institutions and companies including the media, increased its powers to spy on its citizens and imposed new taxes on those who oppose socially conservative measures such as keeping gay marriage illegal, strict immigration laws and a proposed near-total ban on abortion in a country that already has some of Europe's most restrictive reproductive laws.

"Poland has become a place where horrible intolerances, whether anti-semitism or racism, are now articulated freely in the street," said Mateusz Klinowski, a law professor and former mayor of Wadowice, the birthplace of Pope John Paul II.

In 2019, Paweł Adamowicz , a friend of Klinowski's and the mayor of the Polish city of Gdansk who espoused liberal causes including giving refuge to asylum seekers at odds with **Poland's conservative nationalist government**, was assassinated by a former convict during an annual charity event. Klinowski has been stalked.

### 1AR – Say No – Turkey

#### Fundamental strategic divergence means neither carrots nor sticks get Turkey on board

**Kontos 19**, [Michalis Kontos, Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and Governance, School of Law, University of Nicosia, Cyprus, CYPRUS AND THE GREAT POWERS AN EVALUATION OF RUSSIAN-CYPRIOT RELATIONS IN THE NEW EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ENVIRONMENT]

The study of contemporary Eastern Mediterranean and the broader Middle East verifies, to a large degree, the validity of these theoretical assumptions. The structure of the international system is changing due to uneven growth dynamics, which cause respective adaptions at the level of perceptions and prestige. In that sense, US overexpansion and its consequences forced Washington to a strategic withdrawal from the Middle East, which, subsequently, changed the way others saw the US and transformed its prestige accordingly. Consequently, Russia exploited this situation in order to establish its presence and increase its influence in the region, which led to a redistribution of power and triggered a struggle for the formation of a new regional balance of power. In this framework, realignment of interests and reconfiguration of bilateral and multilateral relations was a natural outcome of the changing power distribution and perceptions. If we focus our microscope on bilateral and multilateral relations between the US, Russia, Turkey and Cyprus we may observe two independent variables, which define the direction of the overall set of relationships, which are mutually reinforcing: Turkey’s post-Kemalist foreign policy and the degree of tensions between Russia and the US/NATO. It seems that **the more Turkey distances** itself from its Western allies the more **impetus** its **relations** with **Russia** may gain. On the other hand, the more US-Russian relations **worsen**, the more **Russia** is **motivated** to **embrace Turkey** aiming to **put NATO’s** **internal** **unity to the test**. At the same time, Turkey’s **independent regional agenda** and **hegemonic aspirations** in the Eastern Mediterranean tends to **disturb** its **relations** with **regional States**. **Whether Washington’s decision is** (or will be) to **change** its **partners** in the region, **or** to try to **bring Ankara back** **on board** through a **stick**-and-**carrot** **strategy**, US interests **will** more or less **favor** the convergence between **Israel**, **Cyprus** and **Greece**. Moreover, the **more** Washington is engaged in **containing Russia**’s influence in the region the **more** its **coop**eration with these countries will be **enhanced**. Therefore, we may assume that the more Ankara and Moscow converge and the more Washington and Moscow clash, the **more** US-Turkish relations will be **disturbed** and US-Cypriot relations will improve.

#### Turkey responds to US pressure by breaking off completely—Erdogan perceives it as US attempts to plot a coup AND he’s able to withstand pressure AND thinks he has leverage

Williams 19 [Katie Bo Williams is the senior national security correspondent for Defense One, where she writes about defense, counterterror, NATO, nukes, and more, “How Do You Solve a Problem Like Ankara?”, 12-2-2019, https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2019/12/how-do-you-solve-problem-ankara/161611/]

**Turkey has long felt underappreciated** and **disrespected in NATO**.

Although the country almost always contributes manpower to NATO missions — in Afghanistan and elsewhere — its most important resource, as far as the West is concerned, is not economic or military might but its strategic location.

“We look at Turkey as the cork in the bottle of the Black Sea. They don’t think of themselves like that at all,” said Ben **Hodges**, a former commanding general of U.S. Army Europe. “I can remember years ago the **Turks saying**, ‘You guys don’t appreciate us. You don’t respect us. You only come to us when you need something.’”

As President Donald Trump heads to London this week for a NATO summit, the relationship between Turkey and its Western allies is in a particularly rocky moment. Washington and Ankara remain in a standoff over the latter’s purchase of a Russian air-defense system that could [compromise](https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2019/07/why-s-400-and-f-35-cant-get-along/158504/) the stealthy F-35 flown by several NATO partners. In October, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent forces into Syria to attack Kurds whom the United States considers partners in the fight against ISIS. That has incensed Congress and touched off a spat with France.

How the West should navigate the moment is dividing policymakers in Washington, and raising the question: Could a rocky moment become a permanent break?

“Turkey does what’s good for Turkey, period. Full stop,” said a U.S. official with **subject matter expertise**. For the United States, that official said, the **question** might **become** **not** only “**Can we live with a rogue Turkey?”** but “**Do we have a choice?”**

The debate in Washington

On the Hill, frustration is rising. Lawmakers recently voted to [recognize the Armenian genocide](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/oct/29/us-house-overwhelmingly-votes-to-recognize-armenian-genocide), a long-discussed move long opposed by Turkey. They are pushing to sanction Ankara over its Syrian incursion. A handful of lawmakers on [both](https://www.businessinsider.com/lindsey-graham-warns-turkey-nato-suspension-sanctions-if-kurds-attacked-2019-10) [sides](https://thehill.com/homenews/house/465847-democratic-lawmaker-expelling-turkey-from-nato-should-be-on-the-table) of the aisle have even suggested that Turkey could be suspended or kicked out of NATO.

“I think that we shouldn’t underestimate in this town, in Washington, how people’s long-term perceptions of a country affects their policymaking,” said Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., a former senior defense official in the Obama administration. “The Armenian genocide resolution has been a topic of conversation on Capitol Hill for thirty years. And it passed this year.”

But inside the executive branch, officials are keenly aware of the **cost of a deeper split with Turkey**, according to a half-dozen U.S. officials who spoke anonymously to Defense One about sensitive U.S.-Turkey relations that they were not authorized to discuss publicly. The **stakes include access** to **several key U.S. and NATO sites**. Incirlik Air Base hosts American B-61 **nuclear gravity bombs**, and is a friendly **jumping-off point into the Middle East**. Turkey also controls the Bosporus, which under a 1936 agreement means it controls naval access to and from the Black Sea.

For many Turkey hands in the U.S. government, what’s new is not the friction in the U.S.-Turkish relationship but Turkey’s increasingly autocratic president. Erdogan has effectively ruled Turkey since becoming prime minister in 2003, assuming the presidency in 2014 and centralizing his power through a series of reforms. A “master politician and a master strategist,” said the U.S. official, “This is a man who should never, ever be underestimated.”

Under Erdogan, Turkey has exploited the power it derives from its critical geography better than it has under any other leader in recent memory, the official with subject matter expertise said. Erdogan’s recent Oval Office visit — which came after his incursion into Syria — and his ability to withstand pressure on the Russian anti-aircraft S-400 system is “next-level stuff,” that official said.

**Turkey** also **enjoys new leverage** because Donald **Trump** has **taken a personal liking** to Erdogan, inviting him to the White House over the howls of U.S. lawmakers. (Trump also faced fierce bipartisan fire for pulling American forces out of the way of the Turkish incursion, which critics say “green-lighted” attacks on a U.S. partner.)

“There is great frustration at Erdogan personally” within government, said another senior government official in an email. “President likes him, but rest of government sees him as a wild card, acting in highly risky ways.”

“Everyone I know beneath POTUS believes Turkey’s actions in Syria has fundamentally changed the relationship,” said a second senior administration official.

What is Turkey’s plan?

Some analysts and lawmakers have argued that Turkey’s purchase of the S-400 shows it is moving away from the U.S. and the rest of NATO, and towards Russia — or, relatedly, that Russia is using existing fissures in the relationship to try to cleave Turkey away from NATO.

“Biggest problem right now in the relationship is F-35/S-400,” the first senior government official said. “Neither side willing to back down despite high level efforts for compromise.”

But some Turkey specialists within government see that assessment as reductive. The U.S. official with Turkey expertise argued that Ankara has “always” made tactical and strategic decisions based on what it considered its best interests. In this case, several officials said, **Erdogan’s belief** that **the U.S**. **had** a **role in** an unsuccessful 2016 **coup attempt** may have made him more leery of an American-made anti-aircraft system.

As for the Syria incursion, several outside analysts as well as the U.S. Turkey specialist suggested that policymakers underestimated the degree to which Erdogan considered the U.S.-backed Kurds on his southern border an existential threat. “It’s an area where Turkey is willing to accept the most risk,” the official said. Russia tacitly supported the move and helped to broker a broader ceasefire deal that solidified Turkish gains into northeastern Syria.

Some analysts pin Turkey’s tactical friendliness with Russia on uncertainty in Washington. Trump has at times [publicly questioned](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/18/world/europe/trump-nato-self-defense-montenegro.html) core principles of NATO and demanded that other countries pay more towards their own defense.

“I think that Turkey is doing what a lot of countries are doing right now, which is hedging their bets: diversifying their relationships, their policy, because they’re not sure about the future relationship with the U.S.,” said Slotkin, who just returned from a trip to Turkey intended both to press Ankara on the S-400 and to “reassure” it of U.S. support.

Broadly, analysts say, **Erdogan is seeking to broaden Turkey’s** **international clout** as an independent power, and he is **willing to pique NATO** to do so.

#### Turkey won’t back down to US pressure—empirics prove they’ll fight NOT rollover

Taylor 19 [Adam Taylor writes about foreign affairs for The Washington Post. He studied at the University of Manchester and Columbia University, “Turkey’s Erdogan tests the limits of Trump’s threats”, 10-10-2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/10/10/turkeys-erdogan-tests-limits-trumps-threats/]

It remains to be seen how the Turkish government would respond to economic pressure. **Erdogan** has **shown** himself **repeatedly willing** to ignore U.S. interests; his allies view Syria’s Kurds as an existential threat. “Like the United States, Turkey does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy,” Turkey’s communications director Fahrettin Altun wrote in an op-ed for The Post. “But when monsters attempt to knock down our doors and harm our citizens, we have to respond.” Though **Trump** prefers to use economic pressure rather than military strength or diplomatic negotiations, it often fails to produce the desired effect: It is **not clear why Turkey** would **back down** in the face of U.S. sanctions **when** countries such as **Iran,** **North Korea**, **Russia and Venezuela have not**. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday afternoon, Trump suggested that it would ultimately be Erdogan’s decision. “I’ve gotten him to stop for virtually from the first day that I was in office,” Trump said at the White House. “But they’ve wanted to fight and that’s the way it is and they’ve done it for so long.”

#### Erdogan is all in on authoritarianism and would never say yes—institutions are too sticky to go back

**Cook 18** (Steven A. Cook, PhD and MA in political science from the University of Pennsylvania, MA in international relations from Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, Eni Enrico Mattei senior fellow for Middle East and Africa studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, 7-5-2018, "Strongmen Die, but Authoritarianism Is Forever," Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/05/strongmen-die-but-authoritarianism-is-forever/)

Turkey’s political trajectory is an **exemplary** case of a country **permanently rolling back** democratizing reforms, but it’s not the only one. Husngary’s Viktor Orban and Jaroslaw Kaczynski’s Law and Justice party in Poland are undermining the rule of law, democratic values, and human rights in the service of what they define as authenticity and security. These are developments that predate the migrant crisis that is buffeting Europe, though the large number of people from Africa and the Middle East seeking refuge in the European Union has made Orban’s and Kaczynski’s message more politically potent, and thus the undoing of democratic institutions and liberal values politically acceptable, for large numbers of Hungarians and Poles. Observers often describe the way these leaders — including Erdogan — have forged illiberal democracies, or in Turkey’s case, an elected autocracy, as demonstrations of power politics. But these pejoratives are meaningless outside the imprecisions of newspaper editorials. Orban, Kaczynski, and Erdogan have articulated a vision of the future of their societies that appeals to and makes sense for large numbers of people. The Hungarian and Polish leadership have done so basically in opposition to the liberal principles upon which the EU was built. In the Turkish case, the AKP’s program can best be summed up as piety, prosperity, and power. Voters in all three countries have justly rewarded these leaders. Yet for all their apparent success, the Turkish, Hungarian, and Polish leaders have opposition. Over the last 15 years, about half of Turkey’s electorate has consistently opposed the AKP and Erdogan. In 2016, Orban staged a referendum aimed at preventing migrants from entering Hungary. The proposed measure received 98 percent support of the people who voted, but in a political blow, it fell well short of the 50 percent voter turnout needed to become binding. In Poland, the Law and Justice party’s turn away from the West produced the Committee for the Defense of Democracy that has been able to bring large numbers of people into the streets at various times to protest Kaczynski’s worldview. But what’s important is how, in response to opposition, leaders in Turkey, Hungary, and Poland have established new institutions, manipulated existing ones, and hollowed out others to confront political challenges or to close off their possibility. Formal institutions come in the form of laws, rules, regulations, and decrees; their origins are found in political contestation and often reflect the interests of the winners in those conflicts. Informal institutions are uncodified, but that doesn’t mean they are less powerful than formal institutions. Sometimes these norms, which are based on the way things have long been done, are more powerful than written rules. The old boys’ network that has sustained elite, white, male privilege in the United States has often trumped legislative and administrative measures created to level the playing field for women and minorities. One of the best examples of institutional manipulation is the way in which Turkey’s AKP used its majority in the Grand National Assembly to whitewash a 2014 parliamentary investigation into corruption charges against four government ministers that threatened to ensnare Erdogan and his family. The process rendered the idea of parliamentary oversight essentially **meaningless** and gave the Turkish leader an opportunity to argue — credibly for his constituents — that the original allegations were an attempted coup. Since the corruption allegation, Erdogan has manipulated institutions to **reverse the outcome of an** **election** he did not like in 2015, tried his opponents in **courts packed with his supporters**, and debased Turkey’s electoral laws to ensure the passage of a referendum on constitutional amendments that would grant the presidency extraordinary powers. The AKP has used the legal system to jail journalists — most often on spurious terrorism-related charges — and force ownership changes in the media industry. These attacks on the press, along with the transformation of the state-owned broadcaster and state-run news service into an arm of the AKP, have crowded out independent newsgathering. In the recent elections, the state-owned Anadolu Agency called the presidential election for Erdogan well before the Supreme Electoral Council — made up of AKP appointees — could count the vast majority of ballot boxes. This prompted Erdogan to appear on television graciously accepting another presidential term, making it impossible for the election board to contradict Anadolu’s projection and thus rendering the board a mere prop in AKP’s electoral theater. The institutional manipulations and innovations during the AKP era that have been employed to serve Erdogan’s goals will endure after he is gone. This is because **institutions tend to be sticky** — they remain long after the moment when they are needed, often leveraged by a new cohort of politicians to advance their agendas. This does not imply that institutional change is impossible. It is just that revisions take place in the context of existing institutions and previous innovations. For example, the origins of Egypt’s current repressive laws concerning the press and civil society organizations can be traced back through any number of revisions to the 1950s and 1960s. In this way, authoritarianism tends to build on itself. It may eventually give out, but short of a revolution that undermines a mutually reinforcing political and social order, institutions will have a lasting impact on society. Despite all the apparent change in Egypt since early 2011, the country’s politics still revolve around a system that Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers founded in the 1950s. The data social scientists have generated indicate that transitions to democracy often fail: Some countries lose their democracy, and those that do only get it back in rare and very specific circumstances. France became democratic again after the defeat of the Vichy government and Nazi Germany. Hungary and Poland were supposed to be shining examples of transitions to democracy. Those countries may yet live up to democratic ideals that as EU members they ostensibly share with other democracies, but because of what Orban and Kaczynski have done, the path to that goal will be long and hard. As for Turkey, no doubt the military will outlast Erdogan, but it is unclear if it will outlast Erdoganism.

#### Turkey says no—deep anti-American sentiment, lack of credibility, and Erdogan wants to look strong for elections

Elden 21 [Tuba; Dr. Tuba Eldem is a Research Fellow at the Center for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin and an Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Fenerbahçe University in Istanbul; TQP, volume 20, number 2; SPOTLIGHT TURKEY: A PIVOTAL SWING STATE IN NATO”; https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tuba-Eldem/publication/354610810\_SPOTLIGHT\_TURKEY\_A\_PIVOTAL\_SWING\_STATE\_IN\_NATO/links/614243a8dabc4638f12b6f44/SPOTLIGHT-TURKEY-A-PIVOTAL-SWING-STATE-IN-NATO.pdf]

As Turkey is reaching a crossroads, its Western allies need to act responsibly refraining from any discourse or action that may trigger an opportunity for the incumbents to increase their approval ratings through a ‘rally round the flag’ effect.21 Previous research has shown that the rally round the flag phenomenon creates incentives for political leaders who face domestic discontent to engage in diversionary and risky foreign policy moves, sometimes even initiating wars to solidify public support prior to elections. More common than diversionary wars are invocations of diversionary threat and scapegoating — rhetorical emphasis on risks to the nation which divert citizen focus from more serious and credible domestic concerns.22 Under these conditions, a sound and responsible policy is needed to keep anti-Americanism and possible foreign policy adventurism in check.

Where to Now?

First, the Biden administration should use caution when applying sanctions, embargoes, or isolation mechanisms to Turkey if it really wants to retain its Western orientation and electoral democracy. History indicates that these methods often prove counterproductive. The CAATSA sanctions announced by the United States on Turkey on 14 December, 2020, for its purchase of Russian S-400 missile system, may strengthen Turkey’s quest for strategic autonomy in national arms production as has been the case back in the 1974 US arms embargo over Cyprus, or what worse may also push Turkey back to Russia as a preferred and reliable source of weapons, enhancing rather than eroding Russia’s defense industry. Moreover, requiring the removal of S-400s from the Turkish territory to lift the sanctions would also be very costly, especially given the deep anti-American sentiment in the country, often fuelled by incumbents and pro-government media.

The ongoing legal proceedings undertaken by the U.S. District Court in New York against Turkish state bank, Halkbank, for an alleged plot to evade Iran sanctions continue to hang over Turkish economy creating another element of uncertainty to already troubled bilateral relationship. A conviction of Halkbank may lead to Turkey’s already struggling financial industry collapsing, raising unpredictable domestic political consequences. The financial hardships may, undermine incumbents’ political prospects or on the contrary might only boost incumbents’ popularity at the ballot box by fueling rampant anti-Americanism and nativism.

The second message for the Biden administration in all of this is that, if it really wants to restore America’s lost soft power, it should think twice about its enthusiasm for an “alliance of democracies” as an instrument to advance its own interests. Global public goods problems cannot be resolved without the active participation of the major non-democracies and neither Turkey nor any other swing state wants to be forced to make win-lose choices between the US and its rivals. A reconsideration of an “alliance of democracies” is also imperative not least because there is a justified degree of skepticism about the quality of America’s own democracy at home but also democracy promotion abroad. The promotion of a liberal democratic rule-based world order requires consistent and principled action. Instrumentalization of liberal democratic norms for strategic ends, inconsistency or selectiveness in democracy or human rights promotion, perceived hypocrisy or double standards create high reputational cost for any major normative power. For a rule-based system to work “rules must be visibly observed by their principal and most powerful advocates” tells a 2015 Chatham House paper. Rule breaking actions, such as the invasion of Iraq without UN authorization; the failure to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, the presidential ‘war on terrorism’ directives ordering lethal drone strikes on adversaries in the Middle East and Pakistan; Edward Snowden’s revelations of illegal NSA surveillance activities “open the door for others to pursue a ‘might is right’ approach.”23 Inconsistency or selectiveness in democracy or human rights promotion, such as the U.S. disavowal of Hamas after it won the free and fair Palestinian elections, its refusal to use the word “coup” after the military coup in Egypt due to the financial aid implications; its ongoing close relationship with theocratic dictatorships and reluctance to sanction Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul cast a long shadow over America’s claim to be the principal democracy and human rights promoter.

#### Turkey says no to every democratic reform – new crackdowns, financial crises, and power-grabs

Goodman ’18 [Peter S. Goodman, 8-18-2018, "The West Hoped for Democracy in Turkey. Erdogan Had Other Ideas. (Published 2018)," NYTimes, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/18/business/west-democracy-turkey-erdogan-financial-crisis.html>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

In Western capitals a decade ago, Turkey’s now-paramount leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, held promise as a potential beacon of democracy for a region rife with religious conflict.

Turkey was a stalwart NATO ally bridging Europe and the volatile Middle East. As Mr. Erdogan sought to secure a place for his country in the ranks of the European Union, he presented himself as a moderate and modernizing Muslim leader for the post-9/11 age. He catered to perceptions that Turkey was becoming a liberal society governed by tolerance and the rule of law.

But that was before Mr. Erdogan began amassing supreme powers, and before his brutal crackdown on dissent following an attempted coup two years ago. It was before Turkey descended into a financial crisis delivered in no small measure by his authoritarian proclivities and unorthodox stewardship of the economy. Whatever was left of the notion that Mr. Erdogan was a liberalizing force has been wholly extinguished.

For the West, Mr. Erdogan has devolved from a righteous hope — would-be proof that Islam and democracy can peacefully coexist — into another autocrat whose populism, bombast and contempt for the ledger books have yielded calamity.

Regional experts contend that visions of Turkey’s leader as an agent of liberal progress were always fantastical. Mr. Erdogan — who served as Turkey’s prime minister for 11 years before becoming its president in 2014 — forged his political career as an Islamist intent on challenging the strictures of Turkey’s state-imposed secularism. His early democratic reforms and assertion of civilian control over the military were largely about winning the welcome of the European bloc while enabling Turkey’s Muslim populace to practice its religion free of state interference.

“For us, democracy is a means to an end,” Mr. Erdogan once declared.

History is full of examples of Western nations — especially the United States — projecting their aspirations and values onto foreign leaders with their own objectives.

In its effort to prevent China from falling under the control of Communists, Washington backed the Chinese Nationalist general Chiang Kai-shek, celebrating him as a courageous hero even as he brutalized opponents and profited on the spoils of American support. In Vietnam, Afghanistan and elsewhere, the United States cast flawed figures as veritable George Washingtons before writing them off as corrupt tyrants.

“As much as we might fantasize about things changing and there being liberal progress, we probably got overly carried away with those sorts of visions for Turkey,” said Philip Robins, a professor of Middle East politics at the University of Oxford.

#### Turkey does not care – Erdogan is irrational and undermines national security to preserve authoritarianism

KirişCi & Esen ’21 [Kemal and Berk, Kirişci was a professor of international relations and held the Jean Monnet chair in European integration in the department of political science and international relations at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul and earned a doctorate in international relations from the City University, London, Esen is an IPC-Stiftung Mercator Fellow in the Center for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) and Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Sabancı University, Turkey and he received his PhD in Government from Cornell University in 2015 and was also a visiting researcher at Columbia University and Torcuato di Tella University, 11-22-2021, "Might the Turkish Electorate Be Ready to Say Goodbye to Erdoğan After Two Decades in Power?," Just Security, <https://www.justsecurity.org/79306/might-the-turkish-electorate-be-ready-to-say-goodbye-to-erdogan-after-two-decades-in-power/>, St. Mark’s, AshritM]

The political scene is marked by diminished media freedoms, severely weakened judicial independence, and a repressive environment that have placed Turkey at the very top of the list of countries, after Mali, experiencing the sharpest declines in freedoms in the last 10 years. An aggressive Turkish foreign policy based on confrontation rather than diplomacy has left the country isolated regionally – it has no ambassadorial representation in a string of key countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Israel. His most recent move to have 10 ambassadors from the United States, several European countries, Canada, and New Zealand declared “persona non grata” has been described by former diplomats and experts of international relations as “irrational” and “unprecedented,” severely damaging Turkey’s national interests. (The action apparently was prompted by their joint letter calling for the release of a prominent civil society leader.) Finally, his decision to deepen relations with Russia and purchase its S-400 ballistic defense missile system has profoundly damaged relations with Turkey’s traditional allies in NATO, including the United States, developments considered by many analysts as seriously weakening the country’s national security.