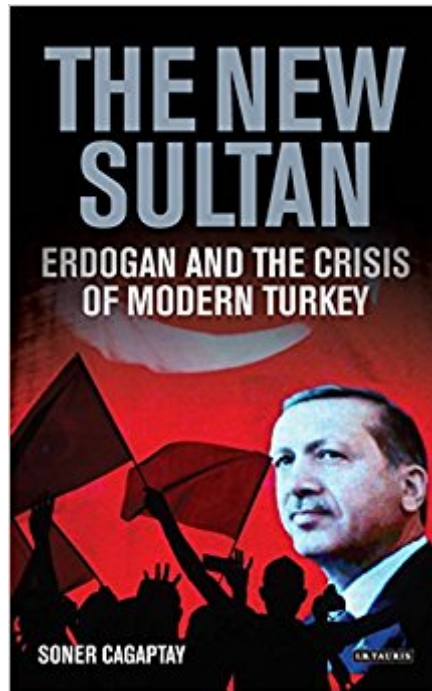




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The New Sultan: Erdogan And The Crisis Of Modern Turkey



Synopsis

In a world of rising tensions between Russia and the United States, the Middle East and Europe, Sunnis and Shiites, Islamism and liberalism, Turkey is at the epicentre. And at the heart of Turkey is its right-wing populist president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Since 2002, Erdoğan has consolidated his hold on domestic politics while using military and diplomatic means to solidify Turkey as a regional power. His crackdown has been brutal and consistent – thousands of journalists arrested, academics officially banned from leaving the country, university deans fired and many of the highest-ranking military officers arrested. In some senses, the nefarious and failed 2016 coup has given Erdoğan the licence to make good on his repeated promise to bring order and stability under a –strongman–. Here, leading Turkish expert Soner Cagaptay will look at Erdoğan’s roots in Turkish history, what he believes in and how he has cemented his rule, as well as what this means for the world. The book will also unpick the –threats– Erdoğan has worked to combat – from the liberal Turks to the Gulen movement, from coup plotters to Kurdish nationalists – all of which have culminated in the crisis of modern Turkey.

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Customer Reviews

This is a brave and balanced narrative of Turkey’s mercurial President Erdoğan. Soner Cagaptay explains how the new sultan built a modern and prosperous Turkey, but how his autocratic, illiberal side undermined these achievements and

throttled democracy. Turkey is now at a crossroads, and Cagaptay provides a clear roadmap. Nobody tells Erdogan's story better or more honestly. (David Ignatius, columnist, Washington Post 2017-03-30)

Soner Cagaptay is the Beyer Family fellow and director of the "Turkish Research Program" at The Washington Institute. He has written extensively on U.S.-Turkish relations, Turkish domestic politics and Turkish nationalism, publishing in scholarly journals and major international print media, including the "Wall Street Journal," "Washington Post," "New York Times," "Foreign Affairs," "Atlantic," "New Republic," and "Newsweek Türkiye." He has been a regular columnist for "Hürriyet Daily News," Turkey's oldest and most influential English-language paper, and a contributor to CNN's "Global Public Square" blog. He appears regularly on Fox News, CNN, NPR, Voice of America, BBC, and CNN-Turk.

Soner Cagaptay's newest book, *The New Sultan: Erdogan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey*, is every Turkey-watcher's dream. It's a clear, concise and eminently readable explanation of the rise and policies of Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. This carefully-researched and balanced presentation places Erdogan's rise in the historical context of Turkish politics since Ataturk. It covers the man, his childhood, the influences on his outlooks, his entry into politics, his mentors and opponents who shaped his later policies, and his dramatic rise to power. This detailed study shows Erdogan as a clever, wily and determined politician who initially brought economic prosperity and highly visible development to the people, but later turned away from traditional Western allies, Ataturk's secularism, and liberal democracy, becoming increasingly authoritarian and Islamist in his actions. Today, in a newly-defined presidency, Erdogan has complete power. The book also shows how democracy can be thwarted by one strong leader, a lesson we all need to understand. As a follower of Turkish politics for thirty years, I give this book the highest recommendation as THE single volume to read to understand today's Turkey and its leader. E. Shelton, Washington, D.C.

Cagaptay's previous work, *Rise of Turkey*, has more or less the same set of observations, with a much more positive tone, only a small number of reservations. Looks like Cagaptay, like many other western analysts, left Erdogan, without an open self-criticism or apology. Deserves a comparative read with the earlier work of Cagaptay.

Excellent book. Brilliantly shows how a secular NATO ally has become an Islamist dictatorship.

I finished reading this book on the 16th of April, 2017: the day that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan won the Turkish constitutional referendum. The 18 proposed amendments to the Turkish constitution were brought forward by the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). Approval means that the office of the Prime Minister will be abolished and the existing parliamentary system of government will be replaced with an executive presidency and a presidential system. The referendum was held under a state of emergency declared after a failed military coup attempt in July 2016. Other amendments include raising the number of seats in Parliament from 550 to 600 while the president will be given more control over appointments to the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). So, who is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and how has he risen to be the most powerful leader in the Turkish republic since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk? What does this mean for both Turkey and the rest of the world? In this book, Dr Cagaptay writes of the factors that shaped Erdoğan's early life, his introduction to politics, his rise in the AKP, and how he has consolidated his power over the last 15 years. The contrast with the direction in which Atatürk wanted to lead Turkey couldn't be greater: Atatürk's vision was for a secular, Westernised nation, while Erdoğan seems to want a conservative, Islamic state. The crisis of modern Turkey is the culmination of a number of different issues: Turkey has become polarised. Erdoğan has played off different groups against each other to achieve his political aims while consolidating Turkey as a regional power. But can Erdoğan's approach work in the longer term? And at what cost? Turkey is a diverse country, with a number of different ethnic, political and religious groups. In the meantime, journalists and some high-ranking military officers have been arrested, and some academics have been banned from leaving the country. One of the reasons why I chose to read this book was to try to understand how Turkey has changed in the past 20 years. This book gave me some answers, while raising more questions and issues to consider. Not all that long ago, Turkey was considered to be a wonderful (albeit somewhat flawed) example of a middle eastern democracy. Is it possible to still consider Turkey as a democracy? Of what value are democratic institutions if a president has (almost) unfettered power? What will happen next? Note: My thanks to I. B. Tauris and NetGalley for providing me with a free electronic copy of this book for review purposes. Jennifer Cameron-Smith

I finished reading this highly informative, well-researched, and well-written book on July 9, 2017, just as the Justice March is reaching Maltepe, and just six days before the first anniversary of the failed coup of July 15, 2016. I have been following Turkish politics (which I find most intriguing) for many years, but the ins-and-outs and causes-and-effects were always rather confusing and elusive for me. This book, however, brought it all together. Bravo, I say, to the author, his researchers, and his editors! The prognosis for social peace in a Turkish society divided right down the middle looks bad. Turkey is still lurching from side to side between a Western vocation and a Middle Eastern one. Neo-Ottoman "sultan" Erdogan seems doomed to trip up -- or be tripped up -- sooner or later, and there's no "graceful exit" for him, given the outstanding corruption charges against him. Wouldn't it be ironic and just if he ends his years on Imrali, or in exile somewhere in the company of Bashar al-Assad! But no unifying and charismatic leader from the center-left seems to be on the horizon. Will Erdogan be able to keep the lid on the turbulence roiling beneath the surface of Turkish society, through the centenary of the Turkish Republic in 2023? Or could the almost unthinkable eventuality of a civil war and national breakup come to pass? I chuckle to imagine Russian, American, and Saudi peacekeepers patrolling the streets of the major Turkish cities. I shudder to imagine a Turkey permanently refashioned according to the wishes of the "anti-Ataturk Ataturk" Erdogan. I weep for all the lives which have been ruined already.

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