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TURKEY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A SYNOPSIS OF KEY CHALLENGES AND THREATS

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The following article tries to critically examine some of the major challenges and threats that Turkey presents to the rest of the world. The main analytical focus revolves around salient decisions made by NATO member Turkey (such as, the recent purchase of the S-400s from Russia) and what that entails for the Western world (say, the USA and its allies). Other aspects that are also of paramount importance when analyzing Erdogan's Turkey include, inter alia, the power of language in the context of political communication. Thus, the aim here is to offer to the reader an overview of Turkey's latest developments.

The Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who considers himself a leader of the Muslim world, is said to be trying to communicate that Turkey must be the country influencing the Middle East in lieu of the West.¹ To elaborate further with the help of Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish research program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Erdogan is running on his image as Turkey's strongman president; with the central theme of the election for his campaign based on the idea (via the use of the word *beka* or existence)² that Turkey and the Muslim world are under threat – i.e., a narrative that fits well into the rhetoric regarding the recent terrorist attack in New Zealand targeting Turkey/Muslims and, how Turkey is going to come to their rescue.³

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¹ Bybelezer, C. and Kavalier, T. (23 March 2019), "Erdogan's Words After N.Z Shooting Latest in Line of Provocative Comments", *The Jerusalem Post*, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Erdogans-words-after-NZ-shooting-latest-in-line-of-provocative-comments-584340> accessed 23 March 2019.

² To be more specific, "beka" means survival and abidance in old Turkish. For further info, please see: Uras, U. (29 March 2019), "New test for Erdogan: What's at stake in Turkish local elections?", *Al Jazeera*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/test-erdogan-stake-turkish-local-elections-190327190617999.html> accessed 29 March 2019.

³ Yackley, J.A. (20 March 2019), "New Zealand, Australia outraged over Erdogan's remarks on Christchurch attacks", *Al-Monitor*, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/03/new-zealand-outrage-erdogan-christchurch-mosque-attack.html> accessed 23 March 2019.

At this point, it is noteworthy mentioning how the language utilized to express the ideas of a speech happens to be critical.⁴ It is rather fair then, for the sought-after title of World's Leading Demagogue to go to Erdogan – who accused the West as a whole (following the massacre of New Zealand Muslims in their mosques by Australian terrorist Brenton Tarrant, as already mentioned above) of “preparing” Tarrant’s manifesto and “handing it to him”, with New Zealand being presumably merely the West’s chosen weapon.⁵ In terms of communication, an acrimonious rhetoric that crosses the line towards hate speech appears to be the case, with Erdogan’s Turkey not hesitating to use the incident in question to produce hatred versus the “crusading West” whilst arguing that “if you don’t deal with attacks against Islam, we will”.⁶

In the wake of the Christchurch attack, Erdogan indeed called on Western governments to do more to fight against Islamophobia; still, in the meantime, he seems to be politicizing the massacre by discussing it at events prior to the recently held local elections e.g., although the victims were blurred out, he aired footage of the mosque shooting – while ignoring protests from New Zealand⁷ – that had been live-streamed by the suspect.⁸

To continue further on the New Zealand shootings, Erdogan thrives on creating an enemy, portraying Turkey as under threat and himself as its savior, especially when nearing elections; faced with latest local polls (and now results), posing a significant challenge to his party (amidst high inflation, unemployment and a plummeting currency),⁹ he went into classic diversionary attack mode – previous targets over the recent years include Germany and the Netherlands, media outlets like the BBC as well as, other regular targets such as America, Israel and the UN besides other domestic enemies (including Kurdish militants and those behind the 2016 failed coup).¹⁰ In other words, it feeds the conspiracy theories of a nation taught from school of how the West

⁴ Mann, R. and Perlmutter, D.D. (2011: 130), *Political Communication* (ed.), The Manship School Guide (USA: Louisiana State University Press).

⁵ Dyer, G. (23 March 2019), “World’s Leading Demagogue”, *Cyprus Mail Online*, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/03/23/worlds-leading-demagogue/> accessed 24 March 2019.

⁶ Baydar, Y. (25 March 2019), “Erdogan is busy proving Huntington right”, *Ahval News*, <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-new-zealand/erdogan-busy-proving-huntington-right> accessed 27 March 2019.

⁷ Yackley, J.A. (29 March 2019), “Erdoğan ‘the invincible’ faces tough elections test”, *Politico*, <https://www.politico.eu/article/tayyip-erdogan-turkey-election-the-invincible-faces-tough-election-test/> accessed 29 March 2019.

⁸ Berlinger, J. (20 March 2019), “Turkey's Erdogan sparks diplomatic row by invoking Gallipoli in aftermath of Christchurch terror attack”, *CNN*, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/20/australia/erdogan-gallipoli-christchurch-attack-intl/index.html> accessed 28 March 2019.

⁹ To be more precise about Turkey’s economy, it happens to be in recession; inflation is at 20 percent (%); unemployment is at 13.5 % (with youth unemployment being 12 points higher); and, per capita GDP has dropped. For further info, please see: Cook, A.S. (26 March 2019), “Erdogan Is Weak. And Invincible.”, *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/26/erdogan-is-weak-and-invincible/> accessed 28 March 2019.

¹⁰ Lowen, M. (20 March 2019), “Christchurch shootings: Why Turkey's Erdogan uses attack video”, *BBC*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47638936> accessed 25 March 2019.

tried to dismember Turkey (a well-known motto being “the only friend of a Turk is a Turk”) – and above all, it plays directly to his conservative and devout support base, who relish his strongman rhetoric.¹¹

With regards to the US-Turkey relations, the two NATO allies have been at odds for at least six years now given Erdogan’s descent into autocracy and, his assertive brand of Turkish nationalism alongside anti-American rhetoric; a prolonged crisis in terms of relations now enters a new and decisive phase – let alone, allowing much room for optimism after surveying the US-Turkish bilateral relationship.¹² Suffice to mention the often uneasy cooperation between America and Turkey on the Middle East policy, which broke down completely due to opposing stances concerning the Syrian civil war and the regional Kurdish issue.¹³ In addition, given Turkey’s extant relations with Russia and how Turkey is currently an authoritarian state run by someone who does not view his country as integrated into the Western-led order then, at best, the S-400 purchase is dangerous to NATO security.¹⁴

But to give also a different view, one could declare that a trend among the Western political-military analysts comprises to reduce Turkey’s geopolitical ties with NATO into a simpler frame of military procurements or day-to-day politics; thought-provokingly as it may sound, one can argue how the main reasons behind Turkey’s S-400 procurement remain a serious fault on the part of Western defense diplomacy in its method of approaching Ankara.¹⁵

On the whole, then, it becomes evident under the leadership of Erdogan that his vision is to restore elements of the Ottoman Empire; wishing that by 2023 -that is, the centenary of modern Turkey- the country shall enjoy as much power/influence that was once relished by the Ottomans.¹⁶

To turn the heed now on home affairs, in accordance with Professor Andreas Theophanous (the President of the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs), somebody can say that some aspects of the undocumented immigration process into Cyprus are supported by Turkey, under the dimension of “hybrid warfare”; what is more, Turkey has changed the population structure in the north with the majority being settlers and, most of

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Hoffman, M. (21 March 2019), “Responding to Turkey’s Purchase of Russia’s S-400 Missile System”, *Center for American Progress*, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2019/03/21/467518/responding-turkeys-purchase-russias-s-400-missile-system/> accessed 27 March 2019.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kasapoğlu, C. (20 March 2019), “OPINION - How Turkey’s NATO allies ‘successfully’ advertised S-400?”, *Anadolu Agency*, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/opinion-how-turkey-s-nato-allies-successfully-advertised-s-400/1423785> accessed 27 March 2019.

¹⁶ Ben-Meir, A. and Xharra, A. (18 October 2018), “Diyamet: Erdogan’s Islamic Vehicle To The Balkans”, *Alon Ben-Meir: Professor*, <http://alonben-meir.com/writing/diyamet-erdogans-islamic-vehicle-to-the-balkans/> accessed 2 December 2018.

the people that come to Cyprus (from the buffer zone), merely do so thanks to Turkey's tolerance.¹⁷

Moreover, the Sixth Trilateral Cyprus-Greece-Israel Summit in Jerusalem aimed at furthering the development of energy resources and security in the eastern Mediterranean, with the conference including also the participation of the US State Department.¹⁸ The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, stated that Turkey itself, through its own actions in the Mediterranean, has managed to become isolated if one takes the example of the recent Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, whereby Turkey was the only country absent.¹⁹ Nonetheless, according to the Foreign Minister, nobody is excluded from the current regional cooperation (including Turkey).²⁰

Intriguingly, the Turkish seismic ship *Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa* is carrying out an unauthorized 'seismic survey' inside Cyprus' EEZ.²¹ According to Dr. Zenonas Tziarras, a geopolitical analyst and researcher with PRIO Cyprus Centre, one should certainly not discount Turkey drilling inside Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Although as nobody knows 100% if Turkey will actually drill in Cyprus' EEZ – nevertheless, its likelihood has been warned by Turkish officials numerous times and, a lesson learnt vis-à-vis the recent Turkish foreign policy is that: it rarely bluffs.²² In view of the 1974 tragic events and the subsequent tragedy incurred by the Cypriots,²³ in addition to what Clausewitz most famously said, 'War is a continuation of politics by an admixture of other means',²⁴ warnings of such nature may not be taken lightly, even by the layman.

¹⁷ Alsaafin, L. (30 January 2019), "Southern EU Summit sends strong message to Turkey", *Al Jazeera*,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/01/southern-eu-summit-sends-strong-message-turkey-190130160705666.html> accessed 13 March 2019.

¹⁸ Kokkinidis, T. (20 March 2019), "US Secretary of State Pompeo Attends Greece-Cyprus-Israel Summit in Jerusalem", *Greek Reporter*, <https://greece.greekreporter.com/2019/03/20/us-secretary-of-state-pompeo-attends-greece-cyprus-israel-summit-in-jerusalem/> accessed 22 March 2019.

¹⁹ Hazou, E. (21 March 2019), "Trilateral summits 'not designed to isolate Turkey', Cyprus says", *Cyprus Mail Online*, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/03/21/trilateral-summits-not-designed-to-isolate-turkey-cyprus-says/> accessed 22 March 2019.

²⁰ SigmaLive (26 March 2019), "ΥΠΕΞ: Δεν αποκλείουμε την Τουρκία από την περιφερειακή συνεργασία", <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/energia/560619/ypeks-den-apokleioume-tin-tourkia-apo-tin-perifereiaki-synergasia> accessed 27 March 2019.

²¹ Staff Reporter (21 March 2019), "Barbaros 'harassed' two tankers in international waters south of Limassol – reports", *Cyprus Mail Online*, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/03/21/barbaros-harassed-two-tankers-in-international-waters-south-of-limassol-reports/> accessed 23 March 2019.

²² Hazou, E. (11 March 2019), "The gas quandary: it's not so much the find but the route", *Cyprus Mail Online*, <https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/03/11/the-gas-quandary-its-not-so-much-the-find-but-the-route/> accessed 22 March 2019.

²³ Κονδύλης, Π. (2017: 395, 407), *Θεωρία του Πολέμου* (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Θεμέλιο). For further info: Χριστοδουλίδης, Ν. (2013: 28), *Οι Σχέσεις Αθηνών-Λευκωσίας και το Κυπριακό 1977-1988* (Αθήνα: Ι. ΣΙΔΕΡΗΣ).

²⁴ Coker, C. (2017: 147): *Rebooting Clausewitz: On War in the 21st Century* (London: Hurst & Company). To define war *per se* with the help of Clausewitz, it comprises an act of violence

A parenthesis here is that diplomacy, at its core, is about promoting coexistence or ending violence.²⁵ And so, it is our duty to always strive to resolve any intricate issue/-s through diplomatic channels i.e., favoring soft *contra* hard power. A good point of departure would, perhaps, constitute the better understanding of different cultures in an effort to bolster our capacity to coexist with others. Beyond any shadow of doubt, the world badly needs cultural/social bridges like those, for instance, the British Council builds by having offices in 100+ countries, focusing on the reinforcement of British influence via the promotion of the English culture.²⁶

Let us now delve into the recent decisions made by Turkey, a NATO Member State,²⁷ that went on to acquire the Russian missile system; thus, raising concerns among its fellow NATO members and Washington (with Congress pushing back on the scheduled transfer of two F-35 jets to Turkey), who are cautious in terms of Moscow's growing military presence in the region.²⁸ It is worth underlining that NATO-member Turkey remains committed to this purchase despite warnings from the US-led alliance that the S-400s fall short of being integrated into the NATO air defense system.²⁹ In fact, Erdogan said on March 14 that Turkey would not make a U-turn on its deal to buy the Russian S-400 air defense systems, expecting the missiles in July.³⁰ Erdogan went so far to even say that, Ankara may then seek to buy S-500 systems.³¹

On the other side, the deputy head of the Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies (a Moscow think tank), Konstantin Makienko, stated in regards to Turkey's attempts to diversify its defense suppliers that a big advantage of the

intended to compel one's opponent to fulfill her/his will. To find out more on the latter definition, please read: Clausewitz, v.C. (1982: 14), *On War* (London: Penguin Classics).

²⁵ Fletcher, T. (2017: 265), *The Naked Diplomat: Understanding Power and Politics in the Digital Age* (London: William Collins).

²⁶ Gornall, J. (22 March 2019), "Middle East needs its own soft power institution like the British Council", *Arab News*, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1470946> accessed 24 March 2019.

²⁷ Davutoğlu, A. (2010: 247), *Strategic Depth*, translated in Greek by Nikolaos Raptopoulos (Athens: Ekdoseis Piotita).

²⁸ Macias, A. (19 December 2018), "A messy multibillion-dollar weapon sale between Turkey, Russia and the US just got more complicated", *CNBC*, <https://www.cnbcm.com/2018/12/19/a-messy-multi-billion-dollar-weapon-sale-between-turkey-russia-and-the-us-just-got-more-complicated.html> accessed 23 March 2019.

²⁹ Gumrukcu, T. and Potter, M. (16 February 2019), "Turkey's Erdogan says no going back from S-400 deal with Russia: NTV", *Reuters*, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-russia-arms/turkeys-erdogan-says-no-going-back-from-s-400-deal-with-russia-ntv-idUSKCN1Q506Z> accessed 22 March 2019.

³⁰ Hürriyet Daily News – Anadolu Agency (15 March 2019), "No U-turn on Russian S-400 deal, says Turkey's president", <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/no-u-turn-on-russian-s-400-deal-says-turkeys-president-141906> accessed 22 March 2019.

³¹ EURACTIV.com with Reuters (7 March 2019), "Erdogan says Turkey will not go back on missile defence deal with Russia", <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/erdogan-says-turkey-will-not-go-back-on-missile-defence-deal-with-russia/> accessed 29 March 2019.

Russian systems consists of how it gives the buyer some control over the technology, as opposed to the US counterparts.³²

Unsurprisingly then a backlash continues, with US Vice President Mike Pence saying during his speech at the Munich Security Conference that, “we will not stand idly by while NATO allies purchase weapons from our adversaries. We cannot ensure the defense of the West if our allies grow dependent on the East.”³³ In addition, the Head of US European Command and NATO’s supreme allied commander, General Curtis Scaparrotti, stated that America must not sell Lockheed Martin F-35 jets to Turkey if Ankara continues with her plans to buy the Russian systems;³⁴ the US says that the S-400s are not interoperable with NATO systems and, would compromise the security of the F-35.³⁵ The two S-400 batteries may come with their own radar, command center and missile launcher (costing reportedly \$2.5bn), packing more bang for the buck than most rival systems; however, this particular purchase may end up costing Turkey a lot more as, unless Turkey walks away from the deal or mitigates the risks the system poses to NATO, it could end up on the receiving end of US sanctions – and, the clock is ticking.³⁶

All the same, the US now expects that Turkey will buy the US Patriot system instead of the Russian S-400 missile defense system;³⁷ as Washington put a freeze on its joint F-35 fighter jet program with Turkey, in protest to the S-400 deal, once Ankara opts for the Patriot missiles then, the F-35 program shall continue.³⁸

To move onto a different tangent, the Turkish authorities imprisoned tens of thousands of people they accused of aiding the 2016 failed coup against the government of President Erdogan or the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), an

³² Hacaoglu, S. and Kozok, F. (19 December 2018), “Turkey Unlikely to Give Up Russian Missiles on U.S. Offer”, *Bloomberg*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-12-19/turkey-said-planning-to-buy-both-russian-and-u-s-made-missiles> accessed 23 March 2019.

³³ Copp, T. (16 February 2019), “Pence: ‘We will not stand idly by’ as Turkey purchases S-400”, *Military Times*, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/02/16/pence-we-will-not-stand-idly-by-as-turkey-purchases-s-400/> accessed 22 March 2019.

³⁴ It is noteworthy stressing here that according to the top uniformed officer in NATO and the head of US forces in Europe, General Curtis Scaparrotti, the F-35 comprises one of America’s most advanced technological capabilities. To find out more, please read: Mehta, A. and Gould, J. (5 March 2019), “Top US general in Europe: Don’t give Turkey F-35 if they buy Russian system”, *Defense News*, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2019/03/05/top-us-general-in-europe-dont-give-turkey-f-35-if-they-buy-russian-system/> accessed 29 March 2019.

³⁵ E Kathimerini (15 March 2019), “Turkey pressured over S-400, Greece meets NATO target”, *ekathimerini.com*, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/238583/article/ekathimerini/news/turkey-pressured-over-s-400-greece-meets-nato-target> accessed 22 March 2019.

³⁶ The Economist (14 March 2019), “Turkey is soon due to take delivery of its Russian missiles”, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/03/16/turkey-is-soon-due-to-take-delivery-of-its-russian-missiles> accessed 22 March 2019.

³⁷ SigmaLive (3 April 2019), “ΗΠΑ: Θα βρούμε λύση και για Patriot και F-35 με την Τουρκία”, <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/international/561829/hpa-tha-vroume-lysi-kai-gia-patriot-kai-f35-me-tin-tourkia> accessed 3 April 2019.

³⁸ France 24 (3 April 2019), “Pentagon expects Turkey to buy US missile system”, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190403-pentagon-expects-turkey-buy-us-missile-system> accessed 3 April 2019.

outlawed militant and political group; alongside journalists, opposition politicians and other critics as the government's tolerance for dissenting voices faded.³⁹

Needless to add here that, Erdogan said on March 24 that it is possible to change the legal status of the iconic Hagia Sophia Museum (a landmark of Constantinople and a UNESCO World Heritage site) to a mosque as it was before 1935.⁴⁰ However, such action – i.e., turning Hagia Sophia that was originally a Byzantine Christian cathedral into a mosque⁴¹ – requires to be first approved by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).⁴²

Furthermore, Turkey remains at odds with NATO ally Greece on issues ranging from ethnically split Cyprus to, air space and overflight rights; a case in point, according to Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Turkish jets buzzed his helicopter as he was flying last March 25th to a Greek island (Agathonisi) in order to mark the anniversary of the 1821 uprising against Ottoman rule – more specifically, they forced the helicopter he was on to maneuver low until Greek jets intercepted the forces violating Greece's national air space (albeit, Turkey denied there was any attempt to intercept his flight).⁴³

In relation to the latest developments with respect to the Turkish elections, the ruling coalition's defeat in Turkey's capital, Ankara, marks a huge loss for the ruling party given the long-held power of Erdogan's religious-conservative movement there.⁴⁴ It is noteworthy pinpointing here that Erdogan blames the economy for losing hold of Ankara and Constantinople, and the attacks by the West for the economy.⁴⁵ Interestingly, the election results in Ankara and Constantinople alike are being challenged by the president's AKP (or, Justice

³⁹ Fahim, K. (24 March 2019), "Turkey's prisons fuel a literary boom", *The Washington Post*, <http://thewashingtonpost.newspaperdirect.com/epaper/viewer.aspx> accessed 24 March 2019.

⁴⁰ Hürriyet Daily News (25 March 2019), "Hagia Sophia can be reverted to a mosque: Erdoğan", <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/hagia-sophia-can-be-reverted-to-a-mosque-erdogan-142153> accessed 25 March 2019.

⁴¹ E Kathimerini (27 March 2019), "Changing Hagia Sophia's status requires UNESCO approval, officials say", *ekathimerini.com*, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/238940/article/ekathimerini/news/changing-hagia-sophias-status-requires-unesco-approval-officials-say> accessed 27 March 2019.

⁴² SigmaLive (27 March 2019), "UNESCO: Η αλλαγή ονόματος της Αγ.Σοφίας χρειάζεται η έγκρισή μας", <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/international/560798/unesco-i-allagi-onomatos-tis-agsofias-xreiazetai-i-egkrisi-mas> accessed 27 March 2019.

⁴³ Reuters (25 March 2019), "Greek PM says Turkish jets forced his helicopter to reduce altitude", <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-pm-turkey/greek-pm-says-turkish-jets-forced-his-helicopter-to-reduce-altitude-idUSKCN1R61JY> accessed 27 March 2019.

⁴⁴ Weise, Z. (2 April 2019), "Erdoğan loses control of Ankara in Turkish elections", *Politico*, <https://www.politico.eu/article/recep-tayyip-erdogan-loses-control-ankara-turkish-elections/> accessed 3 April 2019.

⁴⁵ EURACTIV.com with Reuters (1 April 2019), "Erdogan loses hold over Ankara and Istanbul, blames it on the economy", <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/erdogan-loses-hold-over-ankara-and-istanbul-blames-it-on-the-economy/> accessed 3 April 2019.

and Development Party) party;⁴⁶ not to mention, how the majority of the media are being either pro-government or controlled by Erdogan's supporters – with critics believing that opposition parties campaigned at a disadvantage (as Erdogan's rallies dominated TV coverage).⁴⁷ Regardless of any mayoral race, however, one must note that the Turkish strategy is still the same.⁴⁸

All in all, Turkey has turned toward a regional strategy aimed at increasing its role in the wider region of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East; that is to say, Turkey wishes to increase its influence within the wider Arab world and become a regional hegemon – according to International Relations expert, Dr. Michalis Kontos, a significant change is yet, undoubtedly being observed in the way America along with a number of EU Member States face Turkey.⁴⁹ Not to mention, how Erdogan recently said that Turkey is set to become a global player in the defense industry with its unique designs and advanced technology.⁵⁰ But, Turkey's worsened economic situation led many defense engineers to go abroad and work at defense/technology firms.⁵¹

In conclusion, Turkey seems to be faced with a number of internal problems besides its other foreign policy issues; for example, the rise in prices as said earlier made the cost of living more difficult for a plethora of people,⁵² with the Turkish lira comprising the second-worst performing major currency in 2019.⁵³ But in spite of the above analysis and the fact that Turkey's economy remains

⁴⁶ It is worth noting how the Presidential Communications Director, Fahrettin Altun, urges everyone (including foreign governments), to respect the legal process and refrain from any steps that may be construed as interfering in Turkey's internal affairs. For more info, see: Daily Sabah (3 April 2019), "Foreign gov'ts should respect electoral process in Turkey, communications director Altun says", <https://www.dailysabah.com/elections/2019/04/02/foreign-govts-should-respect-electoral-process-in-turkey-communications-director-altun-says> accessed 3 April 2019.

⁴⁷ BBC News (1 April 2019), "Turkey local elections: Setback for Erdogan in big cities", <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47764393> accessed 3 April 2019.

⁴⁸ Charalambides, Y. (2 April 2019), "Οι εκλογές στην Τουρκία και ο συμπαθής Κατρούγκαλος", *SigmaLive*, <http://www.sigmalive.com/blog/charalambidesg/2019/04/2458/oi-ekloges-stin-tourkia-kai-o-sympathis-katrougkalos> accessed 3 April 2019.

⁴⁹ SigmaLive (4 March 2019), "Δρ. Κοντός: Τουρκία, «ζωτικός χώρος» ΑΟΖ και Κύπρος (VID)", <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/politics/557517/dr-kontos-toyrkia-zotikos-xoros-aoz-kai-kypros-vid#> accessed 23 March 2019.

⁵⁰ Hürriyet Daily News (24 March 2019), "Turkey to become global player in defense industry: Erdoğan", <http://www.hurriyetcailynews.com/turkey-to-become-global-player-in-defense-industry-erdogan-142131> accessed 24 March 2019.

⁵¹ Herschelmann, K. (7 January 2019), "Turkish defence industry experiencing "brain drain", politician claims", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, <https://www.janes.com/article/85551/turkish-defence-industry-experiencing-brain-drain-politician-claims> accessed 29 March 2019.

⁵² Davies, P. with Reuters (2 April 2019), "Turkey local elections: Erdogan's AK Party disputes results as it loses grip on major cities", *Euronews*, <https://www.euronews.com/2019/04/01/turkish-opposition-set-to-seize-ankara-izmir-in-major-setback-for-erdogan> accessed 2 April 2019.

⁵³ Courcoulas, C. and Karakaya, K. (27 March 2019), "Foreign Investors Are Trapped in Turkey Days Before Vote", *Bloomberg*, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-27/foreign-investors-are-trapped-in-turkey-days-before-elections> accessed 27 March 2019.

weak,⁵⁴ Erdogan is still a great politician who runs hard and saying shocking things precisely because he is such an outstanding politician.⁵⁵ Further, although the Turkish President has moved over the past years towards authoritarianism, pushing away western allies while employing questionable stewardship of the economy besides, opting to purchase Russian military hardware that has raised further concerns, he nevertheless has a real opportunity to change course so as to repair Turkey's relationship with the west i.e., a win-win relationship with Europe and the US given how Turkey comprises a strategically vital partner for both; having said that, however, the key obstacle to the aforementioned change of direction remains the S-400s.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Partington, R. (27 March 2019), "Turmoil in Turkey's financial markets after currency crackdown", *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/27/turmoil-in-turkeys-financial-markets-after-currency-crackdown> accessed 28 March 2019.

⁵⁵ Cook, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ The editorial board (20 March 2019), "Turkey can still reset its relations with the west", *Financial Times*, <https://www.ft.com/content/8187a6a4-4a58-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d> accessed 24 March 2019.