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IN THE NEWS

Has Turkey Gone Rogue?

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By: James Kitfield

Related Expert: Eric Edelman

Eric Edelman is a former undersecretary of Defense for Policy, and U.S. ambassador to Turkey in the Bush Administration. “Erdogan has created this extremely powerful political movement under the banner of ‘Islamism,’ and he feeds it by constantly stirring up anti-American sentiment that excites his base. In that sense Turkey is no longer interested in acting like a normal ally,” he said in an interview. The response of successive U.S. governments has been to ignore Erdogan’s bad behavior and look the other way, he said, because Incirlik makes the U.S.-Turkish relationship too big to fail.

“Now we’re seeing the moral hazard of that policy because, if something is not done to change the trajectory of our relationship, U.S. and Turkish troops could very well end up shooting at each other in Syria,” said Edelman. “Anyone who tells you the relationship could never get that bad doesn’t have a lurid enough imagination, because 30 years in government taught me that things can always get worse.”