

## **“Le pdt Erdogan préoccupé par l’élection présidentielle US (au cas où ce serait Joe Biden)”**

"The US presidential elections are fast approaching and the name of the person who will occupy the White House will be known on November 3rd. Meanwhile, the leaders of many foreign countries, around the world, are making their calculations as to which candidate they want to see as the next president of the most powerful nation in the world, with whom they can work and do business. Some like to see the current president re-elected and others want to see a change. As expected, none of the foreign leaders are making their sentiments public.

Last weekend, a videotape of an interview with Democratic candidate Joe Biden, which was published in the New York Times in December 2019, began to circulate on the Internet and became a front-page news in the Turkish press. During the interview, Biden states, “We must now take a completely different approach to Erdogan. It should be noted that opposition leaders enjoy our support. We need to have direct contact with some circles of the Turkish elite. Exactly what I was doing before. We must encourage these people to defeat Erdogan. And that should happen not through a coup, but electoral processes”.

These statements did not receive much attention at the time they were first published, but now, months later, it’s dissemination so close to the elections, and the harsh response of the Turkish government through its Foreign Minister, indicates that Turkey is very much interested in the outcome of the American presidential elections.

The American media has often discussed Trump-Erdogan strange relationship. The two sides occasionally exchange barbs publicly, but the reality is that they

often cooperate in advancing the Turkish interests within the region. Trump keeps mentioning Erdogan's name among "powerful leaders", ignoring his dictatorial tendencies, such as imprisoning thousands of his political opponents, shutting down opposition newspapers and TV channels, and censoring the internet. Just this week, Trump mentioned the name of the Turkish president as a master "chess player", asserting that Joe Biden does not have the strength to measure up to him.

The Turkish president has serious cause for concern as his own presidential election is scheduled for 2023, after which his 20-year term in office could come to an end. The first years of Erdogan's rule were marked by great economic growth and an increase in the living standards of the population. That is why, many Turks, ignoring Erdogan's religious roots, continued to support him. Now the circumstances have changed and the economy is in downfall and Erdogan's popularity is on the decline. The opposition's victories in last year's municipal elections in the capital Ankara and the largest city Istanbul were not only a major blow to Erdogan's reputation, but also a warning sign about his fate in the next presidential elections.

Recently, all of Erdogan's moves are aimed at restoring his standing with his people. To this end, he has begun to play more and more on religious and nationalist strings. The conversion of the Hagia Sophia museum into a mosque, the sending of troops here and there, the escalation of tensions with Greece in the eastern Mediterranean, and the joint military exercises with Azerbaijan on the Armenian border are all aimed at diverting the people's attention from their economic difficulties.

The re-launch of Joe Biden's statements and the uproar over it are evidence that Turkey is concerned about the outcome of the US presidential elections, especially when opinion polls are predicting Biden's victory. The Turkish president prefers to see his friend Trump in the White House and not Joe Biden, who is not hiding his true feelings and attitude towards the Turkish dictator and planing to take practical steps to help remove Erdogan from office.