THE CONFERENCE ON THE REFLECTIONS OF 15 JULY COUP ATTEMPT IN ISLAMIC GEOGRAPHY 24-26 August 2016 Kütahya gesam.dpu.edu.tr

IRANIAN REFLECTIONS OF THE JULY 15 ATTEMPTED COUP D'ÉTAT

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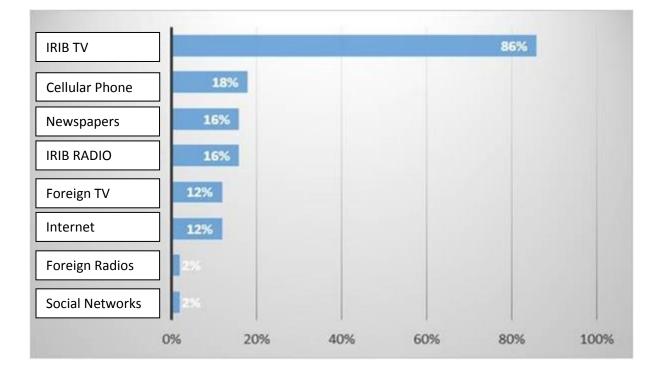
Attempted coup d'état that took place in Turkey in July 15 and its aftermaths found wide coverage in Iranian press and media as it was all around the world. "Supreme National Security Council" conducted an emergency meeting as soon as the attempted coup d'état was heard. Representative of religious and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini and Secretary of Supreme National Council Ali Shamkhani, Commander of The Elite Quds Force Qasem Soleimani attended the meeting along with other senior officials assembled under the presidency of Iranian president Hassan Rouhani. Iranian government condemned the attempted coup d'état and declared that they supported the democratically-elected government. According to the news taken place in Iranian news agencies, Iranian-Turkish border was sealed and Iranian jets started flying along the Iranian-Turkish airspace boundary when the coup attempt started.

Attempted coup d'état in Turkey was approached from various aspects by Iranian press and media. Many experts tried to understand the event from different angles. Iranian-Turkish experts tried to interpret how the events taken place after the attempted coup d'état would eventually affect the Iranian-Turkish relations. In the lines below you will find how

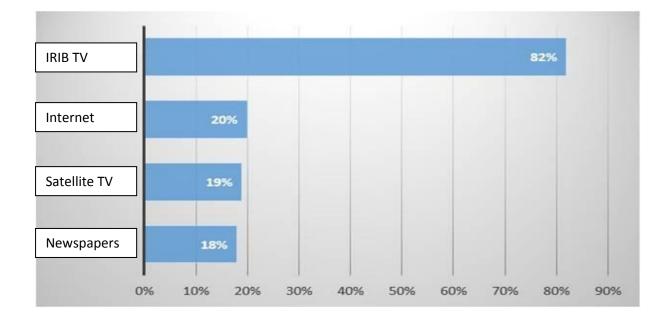
Iranian press and media approached to this event and the examination of the comments of Iranian analysers.

Media Effect in Iranian Public Opinion

Since the broadcasting of private TV and radio channels are banned in Iran, strategic centres tried to answer the question of to what extent which of the media can affect the Iranian public opinion. American centred GALLUP published a research results about Iranian public opinion and media effect. The results are stated below:



Ayendeban Centre also conducted a similar public survey same year in Iran and published the results below:



As seen here, IRIB TV ranks first in both researches whereas other mediums differ from one another.



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The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état

The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), which is directly connected to the religious and

revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, reflects the official ideas of Iranian government alongside the ideas of conservatives dependant to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. On July 16 all the IRIB channels discussed attempted coup d'état in Turkey in their news bulletins. All the news bulletins went live to Ankara at first and IRIB Ankara representative Macit Ahavan broke the news and latest developments. Macit Ahavan avoided relaying the news from Turkish Media and commenting about them. IRIB News TV on July 16 at 09:00 local Iranian time in a program called "On the News Line" discussed the attempted coup d'état in Turkey. Turkey specialist Shuyib Bahman made this analysis: "there are different speculations about who is/are behind this coup attempt. Some thinks that this is Erdogan's own trick. According to those who support this, Erdogan wants to eliminate his rivals for good. As for myself, this doesn't have strong basis.





Another group think that the recent intimacy developed with Russia has bothered some parties in NATO and therefore the power behind the coup attempt is NATO. Yet, Erdogan himself

accuses Fethullah Gulen as the power behind. Fethullah Gulen, however, condemned the coup attempt and denied the accusation. I also don't think this is the doing of Gulen

Congregation. Dissident generals in the Turkish Armed Forces are behind this coup attempt."

IRIB News TV on July 16 at 16:00 local Iranian time went live with Ahmet Kazimi on the phone after it broke the news about the

failed coup attempt. Ahmet Kazimi commented on why the attempt failed and said that

preparations made by President Erdogan and his close circle to stand out against the coup, all the political parties' coming out against the coup, bad memories of previous coups in the collective memory of Turkish people and the inharmoniousness in the Turkish Armed Forces about the coup were the main reasons for the failure.

IRIB TV discussed the attempted coup once again at 22:45 local Iranian time in the program called "Headline of the Night." Two guests were invited to the program. Sadik Meleki was one of them who was known to be loyal to religious and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Zeki Turkyılmaz, aTurkish citizen living in Iran. They discussed the attempted coup from many perspectives.

Sadik Meleki, after talking and giving information about the old relations between Gülen and AKP, commented that the coup attempt was most probably the game of Erdogan himself. According to Meleki, if the USA wanted a coup they wouldn't do it in classical ways and would easily overthrow Erdogan with her capital in Turkey with a soft economic coup. Yet, Ziya Türkyılmaz claimed that this coup attempt was the doing of NATO due to recent Turkey-Russia convergence.

TV2 of IRIB on July 16, at 23:00 local Iranian time analysed the attempted coup in "Special News Report" program. Guest of the program was the former Minister of Foreign



Affairs Menuçehir Müttaki. Muttaki had also served as an ambassador in Turkey. He commented on what happened in Turkey as follows:

"He was the mayor of Istanbul when I was in Turkey. That he was

successful was in the limelight. Erdogan is a strong politician. Now he claims that Gulen

Congregation is behind the coup attempt. As for myself, Gulen congregation has nothing to do with this coup. Because, if Gulen had wanted a coup, he would have used all his resources in Turkey. First of all, we should pay attention to the period when Erdogan was in prison; how he rose so quickly? As for myself, a triple alliance was formed at that time. An agreement was concluded among Erdogan, a deep group obligated to protect the laicism in Turkey, and foreign capital representatives who wants Turkey to stay laic. Erdogan acts like a good politician most of the time. In short, Erdogan is a figure watched over by the foreigners against Islamic Republic of Iran."

When we consider the comments of the IRIB analysts, we see that they are sceptic about who is/are behind the coup attempt, are inclined to associate the attempt with Erdogan and take Syrian politics to the front and claim that Fethullah Gulen has nothing to do with the attempted coup.

Iranian Printed Press and the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état

Newspapers, web pages, and magazines that we qualify as printed press in Iran can be examined in three categories as Conservative, Reformist and Ethnic Press.



Conservative Press:

When we examine the headlines and comments of the various conservative press in Iran after the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état in Turkey, we see that they handled the things that happened on July 15 and its aftermaths over common outlines. These outlines as it was in the attitude of IRIB have been to approach the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état sceptically, to ensure that this was the doing of Erdogan himself, to say that Fethullah Gulen had nothing to do with the coup attempt and to give a pessimistic figure from Turkey.

Thusly, the Cavan Newspaper which is known to be closer to Iranian Revolutionary Guards Intelligence Agency by publishing a photo of people beating a soldier chose this headline: "Failed Coup against the Transformation of Turkey." This made do with only news report about the attempted coup in Turkey and didn't highlight the event much. Another newspaper handling the attempted coup was Vatan-i Imruz which is also known to be closer to the Revolutionary Guards. Like other conservative newspaper, Vatan-i Imruz had also contented with a short news analysis of the coup attempt in Turkey. The news about the overjoyed Assadist Syrians and their revelry on the streets due to the Overthrowing of Erdogan by a military coup in Turkey was also given space. Additionally, this newspaper claimed that the West was cognizant of the coup suggesting that Fethullah Gulen had nothing to do the with the attempted coup. Newspaper Keyhan which is known by its closeness to Iranian Religious Leader Ayatollah Khomeini and whose managing director is directly assigned by Ayatollah Khomeini had been another conservative newspaper handling the coup attempt in Turkey. Keyhan Newspaper handled this topic on July 17 in the news entitled as "One Coup and How Many Possibilities, in What Sort of Vortex did Turkey Sink." This newspaper published the coup attempt in a newsworthy manner and reflected its own ideas between the lines. Keyhan dwelled on the idea that the coup attempt is President Erdogan's own trick but gave space to other commentaries by not completely sticking to this claim. Keyhan, as a result of its analysis attributed the coup attempt to President Erdogan's Syrian politics.

Headlines of Conservative Newspapers:

Cavan (July17, 2016):



Vatan-ı İmruz (July17, 2016):



Keyhan Gazetesi (July17, 2016):



Reformist Press:

When we take a look at the headlines, news, and commentaries of the reformist newspapers known to be closer to President Hassan Rouhani after the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état, we see that they differ from those of the conservative press. Although Reformist press also claimed that the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état is the conspiracy of President Erdogan himself between the lines, they wanted to approach the events taking place in Turkey more positively. Hence, Reformist press gave space to news and commentaries that tell about the Turkish people winning out over the tanks and backing the democratically elected government and that the democracy said no to coup. In line with this, Iran Newspaper, official media organ of the government of Iran, which is governed by the kinsmen of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, addressed the attempted coup on July 17, 2016 with this headline: "Coup under People's Feet." This newspaper published a special issue about the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état in Turkey with analysis, commentaries and news. This failed coup in Turkey had been scrutinized by various experts from different perspectives. In this special edition, Iranian newspaper mainly commented and told to its readers that people prevented the coup. By emphasizing the importance of the social media and bad sides of the coup, all commentaries pointed out the role of people pouring the streets in preventing the coup.

Iran Newspaper (July 17, 2016):



Iran Newspaper Special Edition:



أغازو فرجام يك كودنا

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Ethnic Press:

Various peoples from different sects and ethnics live in Iran. When their media organs are examined, we see that they approached the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état from different perspectives. When the media organs of the Azerbaijani Turks, other Iranian Turkic societies, and Kurdish ethnic media acting within the scope of Islamic unity, it is seen that they were clearly against the coup, that they supported the Turkish people and that they condemned the state media organs' propaganda against President Erdogan. As oppose to this, media organs belonging to PJAK, Iranian extension of PKK terrorist organization, tried to draw a pessimistic picture, concentrated on the events that took place after the attempt, and continued its counter propaganda against President Erdogan. Media organs of the Iranian Arabs made news about the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état under the influence of the media of Arabic world and fell into line with Saudi Arabian and the United Arab Emirates. No serious exposure or reflection of the July 15 Attempted Coup d'état are seen among the other minorities of Iran.

Web Page of the Azerbaijani Turks and other Turkic Societies:



BBC Persian:

Since the broadcasting of private TV channels are prohibited in Iran, some countries attaching importance to public opinion in Iran broadcast in Persian to Iran via satellite TV channels. Among these satellite TV channels, BBC Persian has quite a large audience. BBC Persian started live broadcasting as soon as the events started in Turkey via their reporters in Turkey. Istanbul reporter of BBC Persian Hashayar Cuneydi discussed and commented on the events taking place by attending every news bulletins. In the news bulletin he attended on the night of July 16, Hashayar Cuneydi talked like this: "There is merely an air of unity in Turkey, and every part of the society, no matter what her or his political tendency, is cursing the coup attempt." Ankara reporter of BBC Persian Nefise Kuhnevert addressed to Iranians in front of the TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly). After relaying the news from official sources, she shared her own impressions. While Nefise Kuhnevert was conveying her observations, she claimed that an anti-American medium is created and people shouted slogans of Allah-u Akbar. When the BBC Persian's Turkey news is examined, people's demand of death sentence for the attempters and discharge operations come to the fore.

Conclusion

When we take a look at the way the coup attempt in Turkey reflected in Iranian media and press, it is seen that the current political discourse is presented by interpreting their point of view in line with Iranian internal politics. The differences in the way the reformist and conservative press handle the military coup attempt in Turkey are as follows: Reformist newspapers that are closer to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani gave larger coverage to the coup attempt in Turkey, tried to analyse the event from various perspectives, and claimed that the people won over the armed forces. All reformist newspapers published the pictures of men and women on the tanks on their first pages and they tried to popularize the belief that democracy can win out over the guns. In the newspapers closer to conservatives and Iran Revolutionary Guards, attempted coup in Turkey was mostly handled with relatively short commentaries. Question of "who attempted the coup?" was frequently discussed and they tried to convince that this was President Erdogan's own trick and conspiracy. When the coup failed, pictures of soldiers who were attempted to be lynched were published and the feeling of what would happen when a military organisation fails to win against public was tried to be given to the society. In the media organs of the Iranian ethnics, it is seen that Islamist Kurds and Azerbaijani Turks supported President Erdogan. Yet, as oppose to this, it is clear that Iranian extension of PKK, PJAK acts co-ordinately with the media organs of PKK and the press of Iranian Arabs with those of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. TV channels broadcasting outside Iran in Persian like BBC Persian mainly concentrated on what went on after the coup attempt and FETO/PDY (Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation / Parallel State Organisation) discharges in the state.