

**ATTITUDES OF THE FACTORS AND ACTORS IN ARAB
GEOGRAPHY DURING THE PROCESS LEADING TURKEY TO 15
JULY COUP ATTEMPT**

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Coinciding with a period in which Middle East has been going through turmoil, 15 July coup attempt is quite remarkable in terms of developments in the region following the policies pursued by the global and regional actors before and after the coup attempt. On 15 July evening, it was alleged in the declaration which was made to be read in the national public broadcaster TRT by the soldiers of junta that “Turkey has lost its credibility in the international environment”² and this situation has been regarded as one of the factors expected to give the coup attempt legal validity. It is understood that foreign countries played a role in the failed coup attempt of 15 July like in other military coups supported by external sources in Turkish political history. Implicit support of the US and European countries given

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² In the declaration, it is stated that “Our state has lost its deserved dignity in international arena and turned into a country ruled by autocracy based on fear where universal basic human rights are ignored.

to Turkey after coup attempt brought into question their ties with the coup attempt by Fethullahist Terror Organization (FETO)³.

Besides, recent developments in the Middle East, of which Turkey is also a part, reinforces the idea that the region has consciously been prepared for coup/chaos situation in Turkey and even some regional powers played a role in this coup attempt. Many countries in the Middle East, which was having utterly different continuum by the end of 2010, had been through government changes as well as experiencing partial changes in maps and overthrows in political, social, cultural and economic order. The state of affairs which was named initially as “Arab spring” has been renamed as “Arab fall” in common environment after its update. In this process, political streams that advocate the political implementations based on the same ground with those of Turkey were not let into existence in the countries which had social riot. In this context, internal turmoils, assassinations and economic crisis did exist during the rule of Nahda movement in Tunisia where Arab spring was sparked. Eventually, the presidency passed to Baci Kaid es-Sibsi, one the former regime members upon the erosion of Muhammed Munsif Merzuki who followed policies agreeable with Nahda. In spite of the fact that Raşid el-Gannuşi, the leader of Nahda Movement known for his demeanor showing bias toward Turkey, was even not a candidate for presidency, he has been consciously eroded by the media and the politicians.

In Libya, one of the important stops of the Arab Fall, there existed a never-disappearing civil war during the intervening 5 years, and, 3 separate governments came into being under the shadow of civil war that started in 2011 covering the period of the process leading to the coup in Turkey. The acceptance of General Khalif Hafter, who appeared in 2014 and was known for his hostility towards Turks so as to threaten “to expel the Turks in

³ External coup support is from the secret state in the United States. (July 17, 2016) Time, 10.

Libya”, in the international arena prevented improved relations between Turkey and Libya despite the actuality of the public supporting Mısırata in Libya.

Even though the relations between Turkey and Egypt improved between the dates of 25 January 2011, the period of the coup, and June 2012 – July 2013, the period of the president Muhammed Mursi in charge, the relations have been turned upside down because of the fact that the military coup leader Abdülfettah es-Sisi seized the control of country in Egypt that was considered as the heart of Arabian countries. Turkey known as “supporter of Brotherhood and Mursi” has got its share from the propaganda mechanism of the regime managers in Sisi’s Egypt which started a witch hunt against Brotherhood managers, politicians and civil society organizations in line with the Islam right after the coup. TV channels, radios and newspapers published defarmotory news, photographs and cartoons about the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and created false news as “Turkey’s weapon delivery to Egypt”. As a result of this news, opposition to Turkey found supporters in public as well as in governance in a serious sense⁴.

Syrian base of the factors that paves the way for the coup in Turkey is quite important from several different views. It is known that Turkey-Syria relations ended upon the fact that Esad regime did not realize reform demands of Turkey in favor of Syrian public shortly before the beginning of the civil war in the Syrian front where riots turned into a bloody civil war in 2011. Turkey, as a country closely related to the civil war in Syria in terms of political, military, cultural and social issues, had to become a neighbor of Esad regime ruling territorial area, of ISIS terrorist organization and PYD, the extention of PKK. PKK and ISIS attacks

⁴ Low rate of literacy in Egypt can be taken as one of the most important factors of the opposition to Turkey in public. According to the results of the research dated on September 2014 by Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), 25.9% of the Egyptian population over the age of 10 are illiterate. According to the same report, Egyptians over the age of 10 are illiterate compared to 64.9% in the same report. Source: <http://misirbulteni.com/capmas-misirda-okuma-yazma-bilmeyenlerin-orani-%259/> Accessed: 22/08/2016

were referred as a source of justification to legalize illegal coup in the declaration of junta: “Terrorism which political authorities refrained from fighting as a result of their improper decisions has cost lives of many innocent citizens and security guards fighting terrorists.” Appeared in Iraq geography first and then expanded from Raqqa in Syria, ISIS terrorist organization has become a great danger for national security of Turkey along with the increasing intensity of the civil war in Syria every single day. It is a fact that expansion of ISIS is enlivened under the supervision of the Western powers, let alone intangible claims of “Turkey’s help to ISIS” which is voiced by some particular walk of life in Turkey as well as by the representatives and media organizations of some countries⁵. Besides, carried by PYD-YPG as Syrian extensions of PKK, ethnic cleansing in the north side of Syria including Azez, Tel Abyad, Kobani, Hasaka, and oppression on Kurdish people are the leading efforts to get Turkey into encirclement in the process leading to 15 July. Efforts of declaring PYD corridor in the north side of Syria has been going on since the global actors’ repudiation of Turkish politicians demand of a “safe zone” from the very beginning of the war. It is also known that efforts of international coalition forces played a role in the fact that Manbij, known for its strategic importance in the process leading to the coup, was taken from ISIS and given to SDG under the supervision of PYD.

Kurdish Regional Government of northern Iraq has been one of the zones of serious developments against Turkey which is observed to be isolated in the coup process. Prime Minister Mesut Barzani’s authority has been partly shaken with the riots started by Goran

⁵ Here are some news about the agents of foreign countries who took part in the news about ISIS:

120 British agents were caught in ISIS: <http://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2015/08/15/ingilteror-1439602612>
Accessed: 08/21/2016

ISIS serves the CIA with what they do: <http://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2015/08/15/ingilteror-1439602612>
Accessed: 08/21/2016

movement in the second half of 2015 against Barzani governance which had close relations with Turkey in northern Iraq, which is considered one of the most important allies of Turkey in the region after the gas trade agreement between the two countries. Although not having a border with Turkey, Yemen is another Arab country where the effects of Turkey are unwelcomed in the same process.⁶ Apart from these, when the actors effective on the changes in the region are scrutinized, a deep sadness is observed in almost all countries in the Arabian peninsula because of the failure of the coup as in the United States and European countries. Indeed, these countries came face to face with Turkey in other geographies which experience change movements in the remaining 5-year period. It is known that anti-Turkey policies are followed in the change movements in Libya, Egypt and Syria. Gulf Countries has produced and financially aided “satellite” battle groups which are in line with their policy in Syria. They supported these groups financially and made their voice heard by media while not supporting Turkey’s expectatons in the field. Saudi Arabia and Gulf Countries which do not conceal their discomfort with the elected President of Egypt supported the coup led by general Abdülfettah al-Sisi first politically and then financially. Hence, Egyptian President Abdülfettah al-Sisi's words “money is like rice in Gulf countries” which dated on February 2014 at a meeting and leaked to the press explain this situation on behalf of the sides.⁷

⁶ Despite the physical distance to Turkey, in Yemen, as another country having Arab Spring, Iran-aided Hushi sovereignty started in 2015, politicians who could have developed relations with Turkey had to move away from governance in the capital, and the intensity of the civil war in the country increased each passing day.

⁷ In a voice record fallen to the internet, Egyptian President Abdülfettah al-Sisi says "Leaders of Gulf Countries have huge money on the budget of their own country ... we want 10 billion dollars ... a 10 billion from United Arab Emirates, and another 10 billion from Kuwait ... we need 10 billion dollars to pass on Army account. Money will enter into the Central Bank and the account of the year of 2014 will be closed." Upon Sisi's words, Kamil Abbas laughs and Sisi says ""Why are you laughing uncle? They have money like rice." Sisi's principle clerk Abbas says "Only Qatar Central Bank's reserve is 900 billion dollars," and uses indecent statements regarding the Emir of Qatar. Source: <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/sisi-korfez-ulkelerinde-para-pirinc-gibi> Access Date: 08/21/2016.

Misratah revolutionists who have public support in Libya, where existence of Turks dated back to 16th century and still maintained its presence as an identity, have been named as “terrorist militia” by United Arab Emirates, and Khalif Hafter has been supported politically and militarily as an opponent of Turkey. In the summer of 2014, when the war was at its full speed around the capital Tripoli, that the planes of UAE had ammunition sustainment at a time when the International Tripoli Airport was under the control of Hafter forces is an example of the UAE’s anti-Libya and anti-Turkey policies. While UAE was in a rush to succor Hafter forces in the west of the country, Egyptian army coordinated many air operations with Hafter forces in the west.⁸

Saudi Arabia, which is speculated to have had comprehensive route change upon the death of King Abdullah in January 2015 and king Selman’s accession to the throne, has been remarked for its silence on the coup attempt in Turkey. Upon his accession, King Selman who associated Egypt and Syria politics of Saudi Arabia with Turkey as never done before gave life to the alliance of an Islamic Army with the idea of a common force against terrorist attacks. Riyadh was chosen as central headquarter of the Alliance of Islamic Army which is declared to be established on 14 December 2015. Turkey is also among the 34 states participating in this alliance. Saudi Arabia, mentioned as among the most important US allies, had a break in its relations with the US in the time of the King Selman. According to the news reflected in the press as such “Saudi Arabia staked US of 750 billion dollar,”⁹ in April 2016, it is alleged that Riyadh government will take action to reduce the price in dollar in return for the congressional approval of the proposal of Saudi Arabia’s responsibility in the 11

⁸ _A lot of civil and children lost their lives in Darnah, Egypt, in the attacks of Khalif Hafter who called Egypt army operation for help under the pretext of “destroying terrorist centers” in June 2014. Additionally, other tragets were hit instead of ISIS as in the attacks realized by coalition forces in Syria. Source: <http://misirbulteni.com/misir-operasyonlarinda-hedef-olan-derne-mucahitleri-isis-ile-baglantisi-olmadigini-acikladi/> Accessed: 08/22/2016.

⁹ Source: http://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/suudi-arabistandan-abdye-750-milyar-dolarlik-rest,x_xqqvladk2tjoexcmpv-q Accessed: 08/21/2016.

September attacks. As reported in the news, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir stated that he will float Fed bonds and papers which are worth of 750 billion dollar if the congress passes the law. In this context, US President Barack Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry and other officials organized visits to Saudi Arabia repeatedly demonstrating that they did not want to sever ties with Saudi Arabia. It is observed that Saudi Arabia has brought its relations with Turkey to a good level while having such tension in its relation with the US. At this point, 13th Islamic Summit held by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul in April has been remarkable for the comprehensiveness of the decisions. Summit has been interpreted as a new phase in the convergence of Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Nevertheless, in the process of 15 July, an event happened, which could be considered as an indication of Saudi Arabia's silence on or even support of the coup. Explosion of three different bombs in three different cities on the days of 4-5 July can be taken into account as targeting new politics of Saudi Arabia. 6 people died as a result of the explosions the first one of which was near the American Consulate in Jeddah, the second one was near the Shiite mosque in Katif and the third one was in a distance of 100 meter from the Masjid al-Nabawi which is accepted as a sacred place by all the Muslims. Event hough the attack was not claimed by any organization, findings refer to ISIS, and despite the fact that ISIS has never targeted Saudi Arabia, it is interesting that it comes into play with such acts at a time of King Selmán's making his presence felt and of the process of convergence between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. This situation is likely to have been effective in Saudi Arabia's attitude towards the coup in Turkey.

Beside the anti-Turkey activity of the United Arab Emirates, which is one of the richest countries of the Gulf, in the regions above mentioned, its activity in preparing a coup against the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey is also reflected in the press in this process. The old Dubai Police Chief Dahi Halfan, a showcase name of the regime known for his external operations, interpreted Turkey's suspension of the European Convention of

Human Rights mockingly by saying “Let us usurp the rights of those who are opponent to our party. Then we can work together again in need of alliance.”¹⁰ Halfan, again in one of his tweets, besmirches Erdoğan by naming him “supporter of Brotherhood”¹¹, and advocates Gülen for his “disgust” of the Brotherhood and says “Has pharaohs’ curse found Erdoğan for his support of the terrorists for the devastation of Egypt?”¹²

Involvement of UAE, where the coup is welcomed with joy, in the coup attempt in Turkey can be understood from the news reflected in Turkish press 6 months before the coup.

In the news entitled as “Mulinational Coup Plan against Erdoğan” which was published on the front page of the Real Life magazine on 18 January 2016, it is stated that UAE directed the overthrow of Erdoğan to Mohammed Dahlan, who was held responsible for Arafat’s death, and UAE is also said to have allocated a 70 million dolar budget for the job.

In the news that indicates a follow-up of the similar process of the overthrow of Muhammed Mursi in Egypt, it is alleged that Dahlan had a secret meeting with a group of 15 people consisting of media memebers and politicians. In the meeting which lasted more than an hour and a half, it is also pointed out that the campaign that would be carried against the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan consisted of 4 stages. In the plan, the path to be followed for the coup is detailed as such:

1. Creating and spreading a negative impression of Erdoğan in the Arab media and opponent Turkish media.

2. Supporting and providing financial aid to the opponents of AK Party in Turkey

¹⁰ The coup support from the dirtiest man of the Middle East. (July 23, 2016). Time, 10.

¹¹ Halfan said “neither Israel nor Iran, our real enemy is the Brotherhood,” in one of his former statements. Source: <http://www.haber7.com/ortadogu/haber/1048623-ne-israil-ne-iran-en-buyuk-dusmanimiz-ihv> that Accessed: 08/21/2016.

¹² The coup support from the dirtiest man of the Middle East. (July 23, 2016). Time, 10.

3. Supporting PKK in order for spreading chaos, tarnishing security and starting riots against Erdoğan.

4. Supporting military leaders in the army in opposition to Erdoğan and AK Party.

Dahlan who is understood to have been put in charge of the last phase of the plan concerning the military continued his efforts in this direction. Broadcasting with the support of UAE, El-Gad TV of Egypt, which is among the channels to which Fetullah Gülen, the leader of Fetullah Terror Organization, gave an interview¹³ after 15 July, belongs to Dahlan.

Many claims have been published after 15 July about UAE's backing the coup in terms of financial and planning means. The news website Middle East Eye under the chief-editorship of David Hearts, the former editor of The Guardian, announced that UAE was behind the coup attempt¹⁴. Many weeks before the coup attempt, the website, having given coverage to the claims of money transfer from the government of UAE to Gülen community, stated that the mediator in the money transfer to be used in the coup was Mohammed Dahlan who had close relations with Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi. In the news it is stated that Dahlan, in the scope of coup efforts, got into contact with Fetullah Gulen, the leader of the Fetullah Terror Organization, through the agency of a Palestinian businessman living in the United States. That UAE has not denied its role in the coup attempt and that it condemned the coup 16 hours after the manifestation of its failure are meaningful in this context.

¹³ One of the most remarkable interviews with Fetullah Gülen leader of FETO after the coup attempt of 15 July was published in el-Gad tv broadcasting in Egypt. Gülen calls Western countries for intervention to Turkey

¹⁴ Source: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/exclusive-uae-funnelled-money-turkish-coup-plotters-21441671>
Accessed: 21 /08/2016

RESULT

Considering the defeat of the junta as a result of the determined manner of the Turkish nation against the failed coup attempt of 15 July that plans putting the national will in pledge and directing the country to the civil war, responses of both the Western countries and the Middle East countries have met a great surprise in Turkey. It appears that European countries, which always call Turkey for “more democracy” as a European value, do not care about democracy in Turkey when the statements formally and informally given by the European countries after the 15 July coup attempt are considered. Moreover, it is understood that they try to make Turkey an undemocratic country and organize conspiracy for this aim. In addition to this, some of the Middle East countries that are the same religion members with the Turkish nation are understood to be involved in the coup attempt as it may be comprehended from the above article. In this context, it is should be perceived significantly that Turkey, which focused on 2023 target, should interpret the developments in the Middle East in a correct way. On the one hand it is understood that Turkey should develop further its collaboration with friendly nations and on the other hand it came to light that Turkey should increase its investment in people in the Middle East where there will be change for a long time from Libya and Egypt to Syria. Additionally, it exists as a matter of fact that works of universities examining the countries in the region sould be reinforced. The countries in the area, each of which emerges after the second half of the 20th century with no basis either in history or in civilization and even Gulf countries whose ambition on Turkey has been revealed are understood to be worked on better than before.