

## **„TURKEY’S JULY 15<sup>TH</sup> COUP: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY“**

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The Republic of Turkey was formed in 1923 by the first President of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Since the creation of the Republic of Turkey, the state has been based on two pillars: Turkish nationalism and secularism. In the history of the Republic of Turkey, the army has always had a significant influence and represented the “iron guard of secularism”. The army guarded the secular state and did not allow the return of Turkey to the Ottoman Islamic tradition. In order to protect the secular orientation of Turkey, the army carried out four coup attempts in the past. However, this situation slowly began to change with President Turgut Özal who allowed Islam to re-enter the pores of Turkish society through education. However, a wider opening towards Islam followed in 2002 with the Party of Justice and Development (AK Party) coming to power. Namely, AK Party found support in an influential Turkish Islamic movement called Hizmet Movement and formed a coalition with them (p.8). The cooperation of these two “political subjects” lasted until their disagreement when Hizmet Movement and its leader were accused of attempting a coup in Turkey.

The coup attempt on July 15th, 2016 in the secular Republic of Turkey was a key point that determined the current position and policy of Turkey. The attempted coup on July 15th aimed at taking over the current authorities in the Republic of Turkey. This unfortunate event resulted in 272 deaths as well as hundreds of injuries. For this event, Turkey’s government and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the former Turkish Imam Muhammad Fethullah Gülen and his Islamic Movement Hizmet (Service). The AK Party declared Hizmet Movement as terrorist organization of Fethullah Gülen (FETÖ). The former Turkish Imam, who currently lives in a self-imposed exile in the United States (USA), rejects accusations and denies participation in organizing coup attempt.

In order to explain and analyze what actually happened on 15th July 2016 in the Republic of Turkey, a group of academic researchers from the University of Utah, led by Hakan Yavuz and Bayram Balci, the first academic researchers who worked on analyzing the activities of Hizmet Movement, organized a workshop on topic: Is the founder of Hizmet Movement Fethullah Gülen, the inspirer and the organizer of the coup attempt in Turkey in 2016? The workshop was held in October 2016. Thanks to this workshop the book *„Turkey’s July 15th coup: What Happened and Why“* was published.

The book *"Turkey's July 15th coup: What Happened and Why"* consists of an introduction and twelve chapters that analyze the rise of the Gülen movement, the political connection between the Gülen Movement and the AK Party, and finally the causes that led to the coup attempt in the Republic of Turkey in 2016. The authors of these chapters, in addition to Javuz and Balci, are also Mujeeb R. Khan, Rasim Koç, Michael A. Reynolds, Kiliç Kanat, Caroline Tee, Sabine Dreher, David Tittensor, Yavuz Çobanoğlu, Kristina Dohrn and Joshua Henrick. We must emphasize that all these authors are important for analyzing the political activities of the Hizmet Movement precisely because of the fact that most of the authors wrote their doctoral dissertations that analyzed the activities of Fethullah Gülen and his Hizmet Movement from different points of view.

The authors in this book used qualitative methods, as well as primary and secondary sources. The main goal of this book is to determine the true nature of the political and social action of the Hizmet Movement, as well as to answer the question about the involvement of Gülen and the Gülen Movement in the coup attempt in 2016 in Turkey. Namely, the coup attempt in 2016 in Turkey was the key point in understanding the nature of the Hizmet Movement. It was this coup attempt that revealed "the hidden goals and strategies" of the Gülen Movement (p.17). Yavuz finds that the Hizmet movement has undergone three phases through its history: 1. communitarian network of piety (cemmat), 2. education-cum-media global movement (hareket) and 3. a secretive religio-political configuration commonly referred to as a "parallel structure" of the state (p.20).

In addition to transforming the Hizmet movement into a purely political movement, the authors described in detail the nature of the Hizmet Movement's cooperation with the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in the Republic of Turkey. Just in the period of the AK Party's rule from 2002 to 2013, the Gülen Movement became the dominant force in the civil and state sector of Turkey. "Gülenists" have infiltrated the key institutions of the system in Turkey—the military, the judiciary, the police and the education sector. The authors emphasized the importance that the "Gülenist" network had in Turkey and beyond. "Gülenists" controlled all spheres of society and politics in the country. They entered the army that was "the guardian of secularism" to suppress its influence and slowly return Turkey to Islamic orientation again. The impact on the elimination of secular power in the army was confirmed by the participation of "Gülenists" in the trials against a significant part of the army in the case of "Ergenekon" in 2007. When they became dominant in "the most important institution of Turkey" — the army, "Gülenists" began to conquer the political scene in Turkey. After the parliamentary election held in 2011, "Gülenists" sought 52 seats in the Turkish Parliament. It was this request of the Hizmet Movement that "angered" the ruling AK Party and Erdogan (p.41).

The authors of this book have come up with significant and new details related to the organization of the coup attempt and even emphasized that the Gül-

en movement was involved in the coup by proving that the two close people of Gülen, Kemal Batmaz and Adil Öküz, were at the forefront of the night's attempted coup (p.124). Javuz and other authors firmly defend the thesis that the coup was organized and planned by Gülen's military officers (p.12).

This book also analyzes the deterioration of the bilateral relations between the Republic of Turkey and the United States caused by the coup attempt, as well as the refusal of the United States to deliver Fethullah Gülen, the founder of Hizmet Movement, to Turkey, stating that Turkey did not provide enough evidence for charges (p.120).

In addition to answer the question of what happened on 15th July 2016 in Turkey, this book points to the academic responsibility of academic researchers. Namely, a number of Western academic researchers did not critically and thoroughly analyze the functioning of this transnational Islamic movement. In this way, Western academic researchers failed to perceive the true nature of this political movement characterized by secrecy and hierarchy (pp. 217-.232).

As we observe, the book *“Turkey's July 15th coup: What Happened and Why”* abounds with important data that tell about the true nature of this religious-political movement in the contemporary politics of the Republic of Turkey. This important, well-written academic book points to the political, religious and ideological consequences of the coup attempt in Turkey. One of the political consequences that the coup attempt had on Turkey is the transformation of the political system into the presidential system. The weakness of this book, however, is a significant number of repetitions, especially when it comes to chapters. This significant study would be even more complete if the authors had devoted a little more attention to the critical aspect of the activities of the authorities in Turkey.

We hope that this study will be of use to interested academic researchers in Politics, Politology of Religion, International Relations and others to critically and objectively investigate complex political processes as well as the political behavior of religious actors that causes certain political consequences.

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