

JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT AND FETÖ TERRORİST ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

In order to better understand the July 15 coup attempt, it is necessary to know its historical background in detail. The "Eastern Question", which western states used as a political term for the first time in the Congress of Vienna in 1815, is a critical one to expel the Turks from Europe and send them to the Central Asian steppes concept in terms of understanding our day. According to Europeans, the beginning of the Eastern Question can be traced back to the end of the Roman Empire's political existence due to the tribes migration because the Hun Turks turned the whole balance of the Roman Empire upside down (Yuvalı 2009: 102). This situation turned into Turkish hostility over time. While Albert Sorel commented that "As soon as the Turks appeared in Europe, an Eastern Question emerged" (Sorel, 1889: 6), the French Historian Sinyobos shows the beginning of the Eastern Question as the XVIII century and says that the issue was named in the XIX century. (Karadağ 2005: 7-9). Borjva, on the other hand, defines the Eastern Question as the clash of Christian and non-Christian tribes since the beginning of the Middle Ages (Karadağ 2005: 11-18).

It is possible to evaluate the Eastern Question in two stages. The first stage is the process from the Battle of Manzikert on August 26, 1071, to the Second Vienna defeat on September 13, 1683, and the second stage is the process from September 13, 1683, to the Battle of Sakarya on September 12, 1921. While Europe was on the defensive side between 1071-1683, the Turks were offensive. During this period, Europe started the Crusades to not let the Turks into Anatolia, but they failed. In the second period, Europe wanted to prevent the Turks from entering Rumelia, Europe, but it was also not successful this time. After the 1683 Vienna defeat, Europe was on the offensive side while the Turks were defensive. During this period, Europe struggled for the Christian population in the Balkans to either gain their independence or gain rights. It has also been successful. During this period, Europe aimed to expel the Turks from Europe and to take back Istanbul. The last stage of the Eastern Question was to send the Turks back to the lands they came from, that is, to expel them from Anatolia (Uluslan 2009: 234). On this subject, Romanian diplomat and historian Trandafir G. Djuvara collected 100 plans made in Europe throughout history to destroy Turkey, expel the Turks from Europe, obtain the holy lands, and publish them in a book in Paris in 1914. It is seen that the most and various dangerous plans were made in the 19th century. In this period, to achieve their goals, the great powers weakened

and unprotected the Ottoman Empire through cultural, economic, and political pressure methods and reached their final goals by using military pressure methods.

By the 20th century, the focus of the Eastern Question shifted to the Balkans, the Arab world, the Straits, and Anatolia. With the declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy on 23 July 1908 and the start of the “Committee of Union and Progress Period”, and with the new insurrections, Tripoli (1911) and Balkan Wars (1912-1913) occurred out, and the Ottomans lost great lands with these wars. In an environment where the Bulgarians advanced to Çatalca, and the support of England was withdrawn, the Ottoman Empire sought to get closer with Germany. During the First World War (1914-18), the Entente Powers agreed to share the Ottoman Empire with the Sykes-Picot Treaty (23 October 1916).

The sharing plan was implemented in line with the San Remo Conference (April 18, 1920) after the war; It resulted in establishing a series of states under British and French control in the former Ottoman lands in the Middle East. Meanwhile, the geopolitical balance established by the Ottoman Empire around Istanbul and the Bosphorus was destroyed. However, the attempts to break up Anatolia were frustrated with the Turkish War of Independence. Western states had to recognize the new Turkish Republic established in 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923). The process that started with the proclamation of the Republic on October 29, 1923, brought with it the struggle for the existence of the State of the Republic of Turkey, the last stronghold of the Turkish Nation in the Anatolian geography. Various plans were made on the Turkish Nation, which was struggling for existence in Anatolia, and it was tried to be stopped by coups. The void caused by the 1960 Coup, the 12 March 1971 Memorandum, and the 1980 Coup played a vital role in the formation of Fetö and similar organizations.

The formation called Fetö Organization was essentially an education-oriented organization in the 1970s. FETÖ schools were used as administrative recruitment centers. After establishing the organization, with the publication of Sızıntı Magazine in 1979, broadcasting and propaganda activities became one of the main areas of interest and made significant contributions to the organization in terms of creating a social sphere of influence. With the Zaman newspaper and Aksiyon Magazine published in the following periods, the organization's broadcasting and propaganda activities became even more robust. (PA 2018:16) As a reaction against such an adhesive gap in the country, especially after 1980, Fetö structures gained momentum. FETO; With their reticence, privacy, and secrets, as they move away from the great society they live in, they are entirely cut off from the real world and almost entered into an illusion (Demirci, 2016). When we look at the factors that play a role in the growth and development of the organization, it is possible to list them as follows.

1. FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE ORGANIZATION

The organization has established companies operating in different sectors such as banks, financial institutions, private education institutions, energy, health, logistics, food, tourism, and media to finance its economic infrastructure and activities. The revenues of the companies belonging to the organization operating by taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the democratic environment and the shares obtained from the tenders awarded to these companies through their employees placed in public institutions, the "benevolence money" received under the name of donation from the salaries of businessmen and public officials who are members of the organization or sympathize with the organization, constituted a significant part of its revenues. The organization has also provided resources through non-governmental organizations such as associations and foundations (YCBSR:2017:12).

STRUCTURING INSIDE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

FETÖ, whose structuring within the state institutions was under its influence, trained the students in the educational age in line with their aims and chose their professions by themselves. The organization gave some of its members the exam questions they had taken by stealing and enabled them to settle in all public institutions and organizations, especially the military, courthouse, civil service, security, and intelligence institutions (YCBSR:2017:12).

STRUCTURING IN SOCIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS

The organization tried to provide a legitimate image in public by reaching large layers of society through the unions, foundations, associations, and media organizations it founded. Organizing in areas such as banking, insurance, tourism, energy, health, media, and education, has ensured the transfer of financial resources, thereby increasing the effectiveness and visibility of the organization. (YCBSR:2017:13).

ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Unlike standard armed terrorist organizations, FETÖ has insidiously settled in State institutions and carried out its activities mainly through legal-looking institutions and organizations in line with the State model. As the details are stated in the indictment of Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office dated 06.06.2016 and numbered 2016/1632; FETO, who claims to act based on religious references; - Interpreting the rules of religion in line with their interests, - Seeing the state as an adversary and opposing front, using "code names, special communication channels, the money of unknown origin" like an intelligence organization, when it should be open and transparent with all its structure, - Managing the activities of the organization's management staff from abroad. -Using all kinds of pressure, blackmail, and illegal activities to eliminate the people they have chosen

as their targets makes it clear that this organization is an organized terrorist organization, including espionage activities (YCBSR:2017:13).

WHAT HAPPENED ON JULY 15

During the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, the epicenter of the events organized by Ankara Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) member soldiers killed 251 citizens across the country. Regarding July 15

- In the process that started with the notification received by the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) on July 15, many commanders, including Presidential Secretary-General Fahri Kasırga and Chief of General Staff Hulusi Akar, were detained by the putschists at Akıncı Base.

- While tanks and armored vehicles were leaving the barracks in many units, warplanes used by FETÖ member pilots over Ankara bombed the Parliament, the Presidential Complex, the Police Department, and TÜRKSAT, causing the martyrdom of many citizens. The events in the capital, which witnessed the heroic resistance of the citizens, came to an end at noon the next day.

- After the officer in the Army Aviation Command went to the MIT Undersecretariat at 16.16 on the day of the coup attempt and informed that FETO member soldiers would attack the institution to take Undersecretary Hakan Fidan, MIT officials informed the Deputy Chief of General Staff, General Yaşar Güler, by phone. Subsequently, an MIT Deputy Undersecretary and MIT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan came to the Chief of General Staff separately.

- The FETÖ members, who were noticed by the activity in the headquarters, panicked and decided to adjust the initiative that they had planned to start at 03.00 on 16 July to 20.30 on 15 July.

- One minute after MIT Undersecretary Fidan left the General Staff, 33 Special Forces Command (ÖKK) personnel gathered for the coup preparations at Akıncı 4th Main Jet Base Command, about 50 kilometers away from the headquarters, set off by bus to the General Staff.

- Major General Mehmet Dişli, Head of the Strategic Department of the General Staff, who returned to the Headquarters, said to the Chief of General Staff Hulusi Akar, when he entered the office at 21.00, "Commander, the operation is starting, we will take everyone, battalions, brigades are on their way." thus he announced the coup with his words. Reacting to what was said, Akar's mouth and nose were covered by other putschists, who stated that he would not support the initiative, and his hands were tied with plastic handcuffs.

- The putschist Special Forces (ÖKK) personnel coming from Akıncı Air Base detained Land Forces Commander General Salih Zeki Çolak, who was accompanied by Land Forces Chief of Staff General İhsan Uyar and his adjutant Yunus Can, who returned to the headquarters. Infantry Sergeant Major Bülent Aydın, Çolak's bodyguard, was martyred while trying to intervene in the incident.

- At almost the same minutes, the planes taken off by the putschist pilots began to fly low in the skies of Ankara.

- Polatlı 58th Artillery Private Training Brigade and Artillery Missile School in Ankara, Mamak 28th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, Beytepe Gendarmerie Training and Schools Command, Army Aviation Command, War Colleges Command, Etimesgut Armored Units School and Training Division Command, General Staff Special Forces The coup plotters in the Command and the Presidential Guard Regiment also took active action. Thousands of soldiers came out of the barracks with many tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other vehicles. The putschists in the Force Commands also mobilized.

While these developments were taking place in Ankara, the sound of explosions rose around the Gölbaşı district. The bomb dropped on the Aviation Department of the General Directorate of Security in Gölbaşı from the F-16 used by the FETÖ member coup plotters killed seven people and injured five people.

When it was 33 seconds past midnight, the Special Operations Department of the General Directorate of Security in Gölbaşı was bombed this time. Here, too, 44 policemen were martyred, and 36 injured people were taken to hospital.

While helicopters carrying the putschists opened fire on the MIT campus in Yenimahalle, the putschists, who went to TRT from the Presidential Guard Regiment, forcibly declared the coup on a live broadcast 00:13.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, connecting to CNN Türk channel at 00:24, said, "This development is an attempt by a minority in our Turkish Armed Forces, unfortunately, and this is a movement that they use as the upper mind, encouraged by the parallel structure of this known structure.". Erdogan called the nation to the squares to stand up against the coup plotters.

After the call, citizens from every district of Ankara started to gather in the squares and streets around the General Staff Presidency, especially İnönü Boulevard and Milli Müdafaa Street, and around Kızılay Square, Presidential Complex, AK Party Headquarters, and Gendarmerie General Command. Citizens reacted to the soldiers who left the barracks for the coup attempt and even entered the struggle.



Meanwhile, the putschist group, including civilians, who wanted to stop satellite broadcasts, went to TÜRKSAT's facilities in Gölbaşı by helicopter. 2 TÜRKSAT officers, who came to the institution as a precaution against the coup plotters, were martyred by FETÖ member coup plotters.

At 00.56, another bomb was dropped on the Ankara Police Department building in Yenimahalle, and at 01.08. As a result of the attack, two citizens were martyred, and 39 people were injured. Eight citizens were martyred as a result of the activities of the putschists in armored vehicles in front of the Ankara Police Department.

The plane carrying Special Forces Group Commander Brigadier General Semih Terzi and accompanying ÖKK soldiers from Diyarbakır for the coup activities landed at Etimesgut Airport at 01:13. Terzi and his team moved to ÖKK headquarters in Gölbaşı by helicopters.

Special Forces Commander Lieutenant General Zekai Aksakallı said, "I am giving you a historical mission. Semih Terzi is a putschist traitor, kill Semih Terzi on behalf of the country and the nation. At the end of this, there is martyrdom. *Hakkını Helal et* (Make your right halal to me)." Ömer Halisdemir, who was on duty in ÖKK, shot and killed Brigadier General Semih Terzi, who came to ÖKK headquarters after reaching Ankara with his soldiers. However, Halisdemir was also martyred by the putschist soldiers in Terzi's team.



Deputies from all political parties represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey gathered at 01.39 in the General Assembly Hall of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to protect democracy and the Assembly.

Citizens, who gathered in front of the General Staff to oppose the coup attempt, cut in front of tanks and armored vehicles, and climbed on them, entered the General Staff at 02:21. However, the putschists opened fire on the citizens.

Citizens were also fired on from helicopters flying around the General Staff and Gendarmerie General Command. Thirty-eight people who tried to resist the putschists inside the General Staff and around the headquarters were martyred due to firearms and helicopter attacks.

In addition, two citizens who fell over the tank at Akay Junction and one citizen who was shot with a firearm at Dikimevi lost their lives.

At 02.35, a bomb was dropped on the Turkish Grand National Assembly, a few hundred meters from the General Staff, from one of the F-16s in the air.



With the light of the day, the target of the coup plotters was the Presidential Complex this time. At 06:19, one of the F-16s used by the pilots involved in the coup attempt was dropped on the bridge crossing and the parking lot near the Presidential Complex, and 15 people were martyred. Seven people were injured in the attack of the putschists.

After the coup plotter pilots continued their flights over Ankara in the morning hours, the planes that did not take part in the coup attempt hit various points on the base and prevented the coup plotters' planes from taking off.



The bloody coup in which FETÖ/PDY members infiltrated into the Turkish Armed Forces and/or more than eight thousand military personnel supporting this organizational activity, 35 aircraft including warplanes, three ships, 37 helicopters, 246 armored vehicles, 74 of which are tanks, and nearly four thousand light weapons were used; in its attempt, the organization targeted strategic regions in Istanbul.

A group of soldiers closed the Bosphorus and Fatih Sultan Mehmet bridges to one-sided traffic around 22:00. The inexplicable military activity became news on television channels. There was news on social media that explosions and gunshots were heard in some cities, especially in Ankara and Istanbul.

By order of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, sela's were played from the mosques. The planes under the command of the putschist soldiers made low flights over the city and tried to intimidate the people with sonic explosions and prevent the people from going out.



Atatürk Airport was tried to be captured by the organization's soldiers, which were dispatched via tanks. As of 22.15, the entrances and exits to the airport were closed by the putschists. The putschist soldiers seized the flight control tower and stopped all domestic and international flights. Passenger planes were prevented from landing and taking off by making low flights with F-16 fighter jets over the airport. Soldiers fired on thousands of people who flocked to the airport at the call of President Erdogan. While 17-year-old Mahir Ayabak was martyred on the track, dozens of people were injured. In the face of the resistance of the people, the soldiers had to leave this place.

Citizens who took to the streets at the call of President Erdogan began to gather in front of the TRT building. The putschists opened fire in the air when the citizens reacted against them. Upon their failure to disperse, the putschists, who opened fire on the citizens and the police who came here, consequently martyred Fahrettin Yavuz and Murat Demirci. Forty-eight of the citizens were injured in various parts. The putschist soldiers responded with fire to the call of the police teams to "surrender". Realizing that the coup attempt had failed, the soldiers surrendered later.



CONCLUSION

The most important feature distinguishing FETO, the perpetrator of the July 15 coup attempt, from other terrorist organizations is its organizational and methodological difference. For this reason, it is possible to define July 15 as a coup attempt that has no other example in the world; because it has shown how a parallel state structure that has penetrated the deepest part of the state, as an armed terrorist organization, can martyr hundreds of people from its own people and also cause thousands of them to become veterans. In order to understand and overcome the social and political trauma of July 15, it is necessary to analyze how FETO infiltrated the state and its impact on the process leading up to the coup attempt. FETÖ has aimed to infiltrate the state since its establishment dating back to the 1960s. It has been chosen as the main target to infiltrate institutions such as the TSK, the judiciary, and the General Directorate of Security. FETÖ, which did not take a position of direct opposition to the state from the beginning, has constantly introduced itself as "moderate" at domestic and abroad and has tried to prevent its members from being accused of extremism. Thus, on the one hand, the society, on the other hand, made a plan to infiltrate the state by trying to legitimize itself in politics. The two main elements that dominate the organization's infiltration into the state levels are "confidentiality" and "speech". It has instilled in its members the awareness that every method is permissible to achieve its purposes. It is possible to list the main methods used by FETÖ in infiltrating the state as follows: Since the 1980s, the organization has aimed to infiltrate these institutions by recruiting students into high schools that train personnel for institutions such as the Turkish Armed Forces and the General Directorate of Security, which it has considered as private areas. While it prepares the students, it aimed to put into these high schools initially for exams (one-to-one) and helps them succeed; they adopted the method of stealing and distributing the exam questions after the students were deciphered, especially in military schools. Another method used by FETÖ when infiltrating the state was to seize some duties and positions in these institutions, liquidate non-organizational personnel, and fill the vacated positions with members of the organization who were previously "polished" in various ways. It has been observed that various social media tools have been chosen as a means of defaming the people whom the organization aims to liquidate and making propaganda against them and that their members have replaced the people who have been dismissed in this way. At present, the Republic of Turkey has struggled with an organization that aims to infiltrate the state for almost fifty years. However, in order for this struggle to be carried out successfully and similar experiences not to be actualized again, it should be considered essential that the strategies that FETÖ followed in order to infiltrate the state should be analyzed very proficiently by the practitioners who waged the struggle, and that all interlocutors, especially the society, should be told what kind of organization they are facing for the sustainability of social support.

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