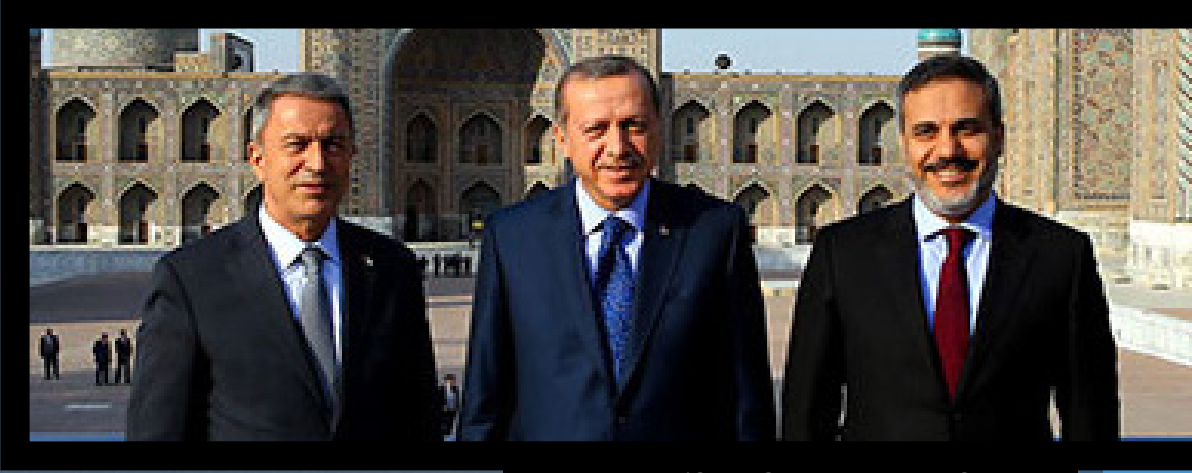


**JULY
15**



ERDOĞAN'S COUP



**TURKEY'S PRESIDENT WITH HIS
INTEL AND MILITARY CHIEFS (L)**

JULY, 2017

Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is an advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms with a special focus on Turkey, a nation of 80 million that is facing significant backsliding in its parliamentary democracy under its autocratic leaders.

SCF, a non-profit organization, was set up by a group of journalists who have been forced to live in self-exile in Sweden against the backdrop of a massive crackdown on press freedom in Turkey.

SCF is committed to serving as a reference source by providing a broader picture of rights violations in Turkey, monitoring daily developments on fact-based investigative journalism and documenting individual cases of the infringement of fundamental rights. The founders of SCF are top-notch journalists who had managed national dailies in Turkey and worked for leading media outlets before they were forced to leave. They have the expertise, human resources and network on the ground to track events in Turkey despite serious challenges.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The July 15th failed coup attempt in Turkey was a false flag operation orchestrated by Erdoğan in partnership with a cadre of military and intelligence officials to consolidate his power, secure an imperial-style presidency, smother all opposition, and pave the way for the launch of a military incursion into Syria. The attempt, doomed to fail from the start, was hailed by Erdoğan as a “gift from God” and should be considered a successful bid from his perspective, judging by the results.

A huge gap has emerged between the facts and the government’s narrative on the coup bid despite intense efforts by the Erdoğan regime in the form of censorship, propaganda, pressure, threats, and even torture and ill-treatment. The testimonials from defendants and the evidence uncovered so far have further bolstered the view that the coup attempt was nothing but a set-up.

The conflicting public accounts from Erdoğan regarding the chain of events on the day of the coup, his recollections that even differ from the indictments issued by a judiciary that is tightly controlled by his regime, the anti-democratic measures taken in the aftermath of July 15, the shuttering of thousands of institutions, and the arrests of tens of thousands of civilians cast a long shadow over the events of July 15.

The fact that the head of the intelligence service, Hakan Fidan, was tipped off about the coup in advance according to his own written statements sent to Parliament, but he informed neither the prime minister nor the president strengthens the claim that the coup bid was totally staged. There is no explanation for why the officials who were, first and foremost, responsible for discovering, thwarting, and halting the coup attempt against the elected government remained unreachable on the day of the coup and why they followed daily routine even after they learned about the attempt.

Against the background of intelligence chief Hakan Fidan’s lack of testimony, either as a suspect or witness, in any judicial investigation into the coup attempt, his no-show at the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission to give testimony, and the very fact that he has kept his job, Erdoğan apparently demands that everybody believe in his constructed narrative about the coup attempt without even questioning or investigating anything significant.

The fact that Hakan Fidan met with the top military officials for hours the day before the coup as well as on the coup day, his trip to the General Staff’s headquarters despite the alleged tip-off that he was going to be whisked away and detained by the military, his leaving the military headquarters without any hindrance, and the launch of the coup attempt right after his departure has not been explained and justified until today.



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (C), Hulusi Akar (L) and Hakan Fidan, the three main figures in Turkey's controversial coup bid, cheerfully pose in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in a trip taken after July 15.

It is also important to note that the General Chief of Staff Hulusi Akar made conflicting statements. Testimonials by witnesses and defendants do not confirm the account provided by Akar. The military experts that SCF has consulted in preparing this report clearly underline that because of the advance tip-off, the coup bid could easily have been stopped in its tracks and prevented by quick and simple measures. Yet, Akar's not resorting to such preventive measures fuels deep suspicions about the July 15 events.

It was highly unusual for the top commanders of the military to go on with their usual routine, even attending wedding ceremonies at a time when there was credible and alarming intelligence of a coup attempt. This is against the established traditions, practices, and rules of the operating procedures in the Turkish military.

According to the official account, 8,651 officers took part in the coup, corresponding to 1.5 percent of the total military personnel in the Turkish Army. Of those 1,761 were private conscripts, 1,214 were military students, and 5,761 were officers and non-commissioned officers. But even these numbers do not reflect the actual mobilization that was seen on the ground during the coup attempt. Given the fact that 168 generals and thousands of officers are now being tried on coup charges, the military experts find it odd that such an insignificant number of troops took part in the coup attempt. It is estimated that there are 200,000 troops under the command of these generals who are charged with the attempt.

The strange events such as closing down the Bosphorus bridge to the traffic in one direction only, hitting targets that did not serve the aims of the putschists at all, the sparing of politicians who should have been the primary target, killing civilians, and trying to seize institutions with only a handful of troops have not been explained. The limited mobilization of military assets was confined to few cities and the teams that were supposed to detain Erdoğan came to his hotel hours after his departure. All these events make no sense and this suggests that they were merely staged to give an impression and supply footage and photos of the coup.

Even after one full year, the Turkish government has failed to present convincing and solid evidence that proves the Hizmet movement (popularly known as the Gülen movement) was behind the coup attempt, either as mastermind or participant. The

fabricated and forced testimonials apparently taken under heavy torture in custody were later refuted by defendants when they appeared in court for trial hearings.

As the research published or reported by international institutions has revealed, the officers who are charged with attempting the coup have various ideologies and backgrounds. In most cases, the troops were mobilized over impending terror threats or as part of a military drill, defendants' statements in the court have shown.

Fethullah Gülen, in a written interview given to Stockholm Center for Freedom, states that the coup bid was an “outrageous, heinous scenario constructed by Erdoğan and his accomplices.” He says it was launched to pursue an unprecedented witch hunt against Hizmet. He made it clear that if anyone who is sympathetic to the Hizmet movement took part in this heinous act, they betrayed the very ideals of the movement. Gülen reiterated his call for an international commission to thoroughly investigate the coup, an offer to which Erdoğan failed to respond.

The uncertainty about ballistic investigations on the weapons used in the murder of civilians and troops still lingers. The paramilitary groups that took part in clashes, and that later appeared in various videos taken on the coup night have not been identified and how they were organized and mobilized still remains a mystery. There are also reports that Turkish police distributed high-caliber weapons to civilians on the night of the coup.

Turkey is no longer a country governed by the rule of law and democratic principles. It is now a state ruled by government decrees under a constant state of emergency. The judiciary is under the full control of the government; freedom of the press and expression are on hold; parliamentary is no longer functioning; and opposition politicians are behind bars.

More than 150,000 government employees have been dismissed from their positions on the basis of their critical views without any effective judicial or administrative probes. The purges in the military, judiciary, foreign service, and security apparatus have reached alarming levels. The state has put 51,889 people behind bars, without evidence, trial or conviction, mostly housewives, teachers, students, doctors, merchants, and journalists who were affiliated with Hizmet movement.

As confirmed by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the instances of torture and ill-treatment of detainees, unsolved murders, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and the leveling of charges that have no basis in the criminal code are on the rise in Turkey. The complaints filed by victims fail to receive a response from the authorities.

SCF invites all international institutions, primarily the United Nations, NATO, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as allies and partners of Turkey, especially the United States, to pay close attention to the preservation of human rights and freedoms in Turkey. SCF strongly believes there is an urgent need to put in place measures and policy actions to put an end to the autocratic Erdoğan regime's anti-democratic policies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION9

**1. CHAPTER 1: A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT
(JULY 11-JULY 15, 2016)**

1.1. Monday, July 11, 201617
 1.2. Tuesday, July 12, 201618
 1.3. Wednesday, July 13, 201618
 1.4. Thursday, July 14, 201619
 1.5. Friday, 15 July 15, 201619
 1.6. The Statements In The Indictment Confirm This Timeline23
 1.7. “We Were Told That There’d Be An ISIL Attack On The General Staff
 Headquarters”25
 1.8. Questions Awaiting for Answers27

**2. CHAPTER II: CRITICAL LOCATIONS WHERE JULY 15 COUP
ATTEMPT TOOK PLACE**

2.1. General Staff Headquarters30
 2.1.1. Staff And Equipment Inventory And Civilian Deaths Of The Coup
 Attempt36
 2.1.2. Questions Still Unanswered36
 2.2. Akıncı Air Base: The Epicenter Of The Coup Attempt41
 2.2.1. Thirty-Three Special Forces Soldiers Met At Akıncı Air Base And Raided
 The General Staff42
 2.2.2. Transfer Of Chief Of The General Staff Akar And Other Commanders
 To Akıncı Air Base44
 2.2.3. Akar’s They-Will-Surrender Phone Call To Prime Minister And MİT
 Undersecretary47
 2.2.4. Tip To National Intelligence: “The Center Of The Coup Attempt Is Akıncı
 Air Base”48
 2.2.5. Akıncı Air Base Commander Refuted Claims About Adil Öksüz50
 2.2.6. The Coup Attempt: A Hodgepodge Of Curiosities55
 2.2.7. “I Didn’t Ask Akar To Talk With Gülen”57
 2.2.8. Who Made The Rosters On The Coup Night And How Were They
 Prepared?57
 2.2.9. Did Chief Of The General Staff Akar Entrust His Life To The Putschists?59
 2.3. Moda Marine Club59

2.3.1. The Moment Of The Raid And Its Aftermath.....	61
2.3.2. The Target Of The MAK Team Was The Wedding In Moda Since Morning.....	63
2.3.3. Questions Still Unanswered.....	64
2.4. The Bosphorus Bridge.....	65
2.4.1. The Beginning Of Military Activity.....	66
2.4.2. The Events Escalated With The Arrival Of the Tanks.....	67
2.4.3. The Tide Turned With Commanders Appearing On TV.....	68
2.4.4. The Bloodshed On The Bosphorus Bridge.....	69
2.4.5. Was There A Sniper On The Bosphorus Bridge?.....	70
2.4.6. Questions Still Unanswered.....	71
2.5. Marmaris.....	72

CHAPTER III: FIGURES PLAYING CRITICAL ROLES IN JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

3.1. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.....	82
3.1.1. The Role of Military Coups In Erdoğan's Career.....	82
3.1.2. Why Was The Coup Attempt A "Gift From God" For Erdoğan?.....	83
3.1.3. Contradictions In Erdoğan's Statements About July 15.....	86
3.1.4. Erdoğan's Efforts To Prevent Investigations.....	87
3.1.5. The "Controlled-Coup" Argument Or The "Coup Within A Coup".....	90
3.2. Chief of The General Staff Hulusi Akar.....	91
3.2.1. Did Akar Analyze The Threat Correctly?.....	91
3.2.2. Did Akar Take Relevant And Adequate Precautions?.....	92
3.2.3. Did Akar Track His Orders To Ensure That They Produced The Expected Results?.....	95
3.2.4. The Contradictions In Akar's Statements.....	97
3.2.5. What Is Akar's Role In the Coup?.....	98
3.2.6. Questions Still Begging For Answers.....	101
3.3. MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan.....	101
3.3.1. 'The Confidant' Of July 15.....	101
3.3.2. Tracking Fidan's Actions.....	103
3.4. Zekai Aksakallı And Semih Terzi.....	108
3.4.1. Rival Special Operations Commanders.....	108
3.4.2. Questions Still Begging For Answers.....	116
3.5. YAŞ Member Akın Öztürk.....	121
3.5.1. Is Öztürk No. 1 Of The Coup Attempt?.....	121
3.5.2. Akın Öztürk's Role In July 15.....	122
3.5.3. Why Was Öztürk Shown To Be No. 1 Of The Coup Despite His Attempts To Stop It?	126
3.6. First Army Commander Ümit Dündar.....	127
3.6.1. The Role Dündar Played On The Night Of The Coup Attempt.....	127

3.6.2. Dündar Denied Claim That He Called Erdoğan To İstanbul129
3.6.3. “There Wasn’t Any Prospect That Gülenists Would Stage A Coup”130
3.6.4. The Major-General Acting On Dündar’s Orders Was Arrested For
Being A ‘Putschist’131
3.6.5. Questions Still Begging For Answers132
3.7. Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal134
3.7.1. When Did Ünal First Learn About the Coup?134
3.7.2. The Report Ünal Submitted To The Ministry Of National Defense137
3.7.3. Events After Abidin Ünal Was Taken Into Custody139
3.7.4. Abidin Ünal’s Mood On The Coup Night141
3.7.5. Did He Say, “Don’t Tire The Boys Out–They’ll Get Tired In The Evening?”143
3.8. Adil Öksüz145
3.8.1. The Civilian Used To Link The Coup With The Gülen Movement145
3.8.2. “He Could Be A Person Used By The State”146
3.8.3. Why Did The Conviction Grow That Öksüz Was Used By The Intelligence
Agency?147

CHAPTER IV: THE WINNERS OF JULY 15 AND EURASIANISM

4.1. The Coup Attempt Turned Out To Be A “Gift From God” For Eurasianists As Well
.....152
4.2. Eurasianist Perinçek: “Erdoğan Switched to Our Side”154
4.3. The Purges And Detentions Started Long Before The Coup Attempt156
4.4. Perinçek And Erdoğan Had Information About July 15 Coup Beforehand.....160
4.5. A Controlled Coup For The Sake Of Unbridled Dictatorship161
4.6. Eymür: July 15 Is A Derailed MİT Operation162

CHAPTER V: THE AIM OF THE COUP ATTEMPT: DEMOCRACY AND THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT

5.1. Where in the July 15 Coup Attempt was Gülen?167
5.2. Was it Gülen Sympathizers in the Army who Staged the Coup?168
5.3. July 15 is a Coup against the Gülen Movement173
5.4. Interview with Fethullah Gülen176

CONCLUSION180

ERDOĞAN'S COUP IN TURKEY

A bizarre coup bid that was set to fail from the get-go

INTRODUCTION

Turkey, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with the second largest army in the alliance in terms of manpower, experienced a controversial coup attempt on July 15, 2016 that, by all indications, was set to fail from the start. The attempt was suppressed quickly, but its effects are likely to have far-reaching consequences for Turkey and its allies and partners for years to come.

Immediately after the attempt the government declared a state of emergency and suspended many fundamental rights and freedoms. Turkey submitted official notification to the UN on July 21, 2016 stating that it will derogate from its obligations under Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by declaring emergency rule. Turkey also informed the Council of Europe (CoE) about a formal notice of derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as foreseen under Article 15 of the Convention.

In a resolution adopted on April 25, 2017, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) concluded, “Unfortunately, eight months after the attempted coup, the situation has deteriorated and measures have gone far beyond what is necessary and proportionate. The authorities have been ruling through decrees going far beyond what emergency situations require and overstepping the parliament’s legislative competence.”¹ PACE also ruled to place Turkey under formal monitoring mechanisms to track rights violations.

The European Parliament’s on Turkey, dated July 6, 2017, criticized Turkey for measures taken under the state of emergency that have large- scale, disproportionate and long-lasting negative effects on a large number of citizens as well as on the protection of fundamental freedoms in the country. It condemned “the collective dismissal of civil servants and police officers, the mass liquidation of media outlets, the arrests of journalists, academics, judges, human rights defenders, elected and unelected officials, members of the security services and ordinary citizens, and the confiscation of their property, assets and passports, the closure of many schools and universities, and the travel ban imposed on thousands of Turkish citizens”.²

1] The functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey, 25 April 2017, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23665&lang=en>

2] 2016 Report on Turkey, European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2017 on the 2016 Commission Report on Turkey (2016/2308(INI)), <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGM-L+TA+P8-TA-2017-0306+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

With decrees having the force of law (KHK) being used unconstitutionally for illegitimate purposes under renewed emergency rule, a government has emerged in Turkey that is totally free from any effective legislative and judicial reviews and with checks and balances destroyed.

Unprecedented in the country's history, a massive purge has removed 140,000 public officials from their posts in the army, judiciary, bureaucracy, and universities without any due process, and the victims of the purge have been declared terrorists or affiliated or in association with terror groups by simply putting their names in law-decrees without any administrative or judicial investigation and without individual reasoning based on any solid evidence.

Tens of thousands of military officers, civil servants, journalists, teachers, doctors, union members, academics, and others have been arrested. One of the hardest hit groups has been the judiciary, with 30 percent of all judges and prosecutors (4,424) losing their jobs and many being imprisoned without indictment, trial, or conviction. Likewise, 30 percent of career diplomats working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been purged and declared terrorists, and senior ambassadors who have represented Turkey overseas for years have been arrested on trumped-up charges of terror and coup-plotting.

According to official records, 51,889 people—most of whom are housewives, teachers, students, doctors and shopkeepers—have been arrested for their alleged links with the Gülen movement, a civic group inspired by the US-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen; 2,099 educational institutions including top-performing universities and high schools have been shut down; 965 private companies have been taken over by the government on dubious charges, and the assets and wealth of many private individuals including journalists have been seized without trial or conviction.

Nearly 200 independent, critical, and dissident media outlets have been closed; 264 journalists have been imprisoned as of July 12, 2017; and arrest warrants have been issued for 105 journalists who fled Turkey or are still on the run. Hundreds of associations, foundations and civil society organizations have been shuttered. Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, the co-chairs of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP), the third largest party in Parliament by number of seats, and 11 lawmakers from the same party, as well as one lawmaker from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) are still in prison pending trial.

During this roller-coaster period, Turkey has been highly criticized in reports published by international human rights organizations as a country where unsolved murders and enforced disappearances have made a comeback, claims of systematic and widespread torture have soared, and inhuman and degrading treatment by the authorities does not spare even women and children. Eighty-two people have died or committed suicide under suspicious circumstances and 13 people have been kidnapped by security forces. At times, monitoring bodies from the UN and other organizations have been denied access when attempting to investigate these claims.

In his report submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council, David Kaye, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, highlighted “a squeezing of civil society space that signals a radical backsliding

from Turkey's democratic path and deserves the most urgent attention to reverse.”³ Kaye concluded that “the situation for freedom of expression in Turkey is in grave crisis and requires immediate steps for Turkey to be compliant with its obligations under international human rights law”.

Obscuring the Evidence

The July 15 coup bid and the ensuing unconstitutional and unlawful developments have wreaked greater havoc on Turkish democracy than past military coups that were actually successful in overthrowing elected governments. Although a year has passed, the Turkish government has failed to shed light on many crucial aspects of the coup bid, including operational plans, how it was executed, what series of events led to the planning, and who was actually involved in masterminding the putsch attempt. Instead, Erdoğan and the government were quick to pin the blame on the Gülen movement without offering convincing evidence implicating either Fethullah Gülen or the movement as a whole.


In contrast, the information, testimonies, and documents that have surfaced during the investigation and trial of alleged coup suspects have lent credibility to the claims that the July 15 coup bid have been orchestrated with Erdoğan's approval to set up his opponents for mass persecution, suppress all dissidents, and further consolidate his grip on power, and that this was intended to transform NATO's second largest military into a bastion for Islamists and pro-Russia Eurasianists. Unfortunately, the smoke screen over July 15 has not fully lifted because the free and independent media in Turkey has been incapacitated and the independent judiciary has been destroyed. Nevertheless, the statements of those involved and the evidence that has been uncovered has significantly weakened the official narrative propagated by Erdoğan and the government.

The Turkish government has done everything in its power to systematically obscure the investigation into the coup bid, suppress knowledge, and hide facts. Shortly after July 15, the judge of the 7th Criminal Court of Peace in İzmir issued a blanket media blackout on reporting the statements of suspects and witnesses when some of the leaked testimonials started to poke holes in the official government story-line. The ban included criticisms, interviews online and off-line media as well. What is more, some statements that appear to support the government line are now widely believed to have been made under torture, as can be seen from the pictures and videos broadcast by the government news agency as part of an intimidation campaign. Firing court trials, many defendants refuted their original statements on the grounds that they were taken under torture and forced to sign prepared documents.

Now that the Turkish media has been almost completely placed under Erdoğan's control with critical and independent media outlets shut down and investigative reporters jailed, it is nearly impossible to encounter news reports in Turkey about July 15 that contradict the official discourse systematically and deliberately delivered to the public. In most cases, independent journalists and observers are not allowed to follow court trials. The

3] “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Turkey”, Human Rights Council, Thirty-fifth session 6-23 June 2017, https://t.co/lgt1GyOIL1?tw_i=873393987364601856&tw_e=link&tw_p=archive

confidentiality of lawyer-client privilege is being seriously hampered and access to lawyers restricted by the government. The right to a defense in a fair trial has been seriously curtailed, and the suspects' statements that they have been tortured are not even entered in court records or documents by judges.



There is a historical pattern of similar plots devised by Erdoğan to secure what he desires and the July 15 coup planning was unfortunately not the first clandestine scheme experienced in Turkey under his repressive rule.

With the government's blessing and encouragement, pro-Erdoğan groups fill the courthouses and are allowed to stage demonstrations outside to harass defendants as they are taken to and from the courts. Just as the suspects' pleas and motions are obstructed in all kinds of ways in the hearings, the panel of judges is placed under constant pressure by the government-controlled media. Cabinet ministers and ruling party lawmakers also place political pressure on the courts by appearing in the courtrooms in person. Erdoğan has publicly said he is closely following these cases through his aides and calls on civic groups to

show up in the courthouse to put pressure on judges. When the proceedings did not go as planned by Erdoğan government, prosecutors and judges who look into coup trials were quickly reassigned and demoted.

The Purpose Of The Coup Bid

There is a historical pattern of similar plots devised by Erdoğan to secure what he desires and the July 15 planning was unfortunately not the first clandestine scheme experienced in Turkey under his repressive rule. Before the local elections of March 30, 2014, an audio recording leaked into social media and acknowledged by the officials of the time as authentic revealed the then Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu, National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Undersecretary Hakan Fidan, then Minister for Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioğlu, and the Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler discussing how they could produce excuses for attacking Syria. In the recording, intelligence chief and Erdoğan's confidante Fidan was heard saying, "If need be, I'll send four men to Syria. I can have eight rockets fired into Turkey. Or we can have them attack the tomb of Suleiman Shah." The Minister for Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu was heard saying, "[The] Prime Minister [Erdoğan] said it [the tomb of Suleiman Shah] should be used as an opportunity in this conjuncture."

Just one month after the July 15 coup attempt, the Turkish army launched the cross-border military offensive in Syria that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had long been advocating against well-known opposition from senior military leaders. Faced with a setback from what appeared to be a failed coup bid, the Turkish military yielded to pressure from Erdoğan and launched a military incursion into Northern Syria with tanks and armored vehicles backed by air power. Sixty-seven soldiers had lost their lives during the six-month operation.



Defense and intel chiefs Hulusi Akar (R) and Hakan Fidan have not testified in person either in the court or before the Parliamentary Commission.

The subsequent April 16, 2017 referendum on constitutional amendments that gave Erdoğan immense powers was marked by great controversy as it was held during a state of emergency (OHAL) while opposition voices were being suppressed and the media was held under a clampdown. Irregularities in vote counting, last-minute unlawful changes in tallying the unsealed vote sheets, and the campaign period which was described by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as unfair resulted in a slim margin of victory for Erdoğan. Some international observers even suggested the actual vote was against Erdoğan. The Supreme Board of Elections (YSK), which had been put under pressure when three of its members had been arrested for the coup bid in 2016, made a series of pro-Erdoğan decisions including the unlawful approval of unsealed votes in a last-minute change during vote-counting.

After the referendum, the AKP immediately reappointed President Erdoğan as chairman of the party, thus merging the positions of the head of state and the government and moving Turkey from a decades-long Parliamentary democracy to an executive presidency with no effective separation of powers. Mechanisms of checks and balances were ruined and the judiciary fell under the full control of Erdoğan's political will.

The Purpose Of This Report

The most tragic result of the July 15 coup attempt was the killing of 249 citizens. Yet, in violation of the rules in the investigation of any murder, it was reported that no autopsy was performed on the people slain and no forensic ballistic examination has yet been performed on the weapons and bullets that killed or wounded the people. If there is any, the government has kept secret and did not share the with the public.

There are very serious claims about how and by whose hands the people killed that night lost their lives. A claim that the police distributed arms to civilians on the night of the coup and that some of the deaths resulted from these weapons made headlines after a murder case. On June 8, 2017, Turkish daily Hürriyet reported that in 2016 a civilian called Mustafa Maraş had killed a tractor driver with an MP-5 submachine gun. Maraş, who had used a weapon that is illegal to sell, said in his defense, "They distributed the weapon on the night of July 15 in front of Ankara Police Headquarters."



SADAT, known to be a paramilitary force set up by former general Adnan Tanrıverdi (C), is believed to be behind many killings on July 15. Tanrıverdi became chief advisor to Erdoğan in the aftermath.

According to fire-arms regulations, MP-5 weapons are in a category that cannot be sold to citizens even with a license.⁴ The Ankara governor's office announced there was only one MP-5 missing from police inventory.⁵ Shortly afterwards, aHaber, a network controlled by Erdoğan's family, reported the number of missing high-caliber guns including G-3, Kalashnikov and MP-5 to be at least 16.⁶ The actual number of guns missing from police inventory and which have ended up in civilian hands is believed to

be much higher and still unaccounted for.

Further, videos and photographs were posted on the Internet showing various paramilitary forces linked to Erdoğan taking to the streets that night. Retired Brigadier-General Adnan Tanrıverdi, who headed the paramilitary Islamist SADAT forces and became President Erdoğan's chief advisor after July 15, stated that he had orchestrated retired or dismissed soldiers to take to the streets on night of the coup attempt. Statements of relatives of the deceased to the media indicate that there are many unknowns about these deaths. Also, very little is known about soldiers who were lynched by a mob and how they died; no investigation is under way and officials are not making any statements about these deaths. The families of the soldiers who were slaughtered cannot investigate how their children were murdered because of the risk of being stigmatized as traitors and the risk of prosecution and jail on fabricated charges.

Nevertheless, despite challenges accessing facts and evidence, Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) has examined the July 15 events based on publicly available information as well as its own private investigation to shed light on what really happened on July 15 and the days preceding that awful blood-drenched night. SCF investigators have gathered many new pieces of information from interviews with military experts and eyewitness testimonies.

In Chapter 1, the report lays out as briefly as possible, step by step, the relevant events of the days leading up to the coup bid, the night of the attempt, and the following day's events. In Chapter 2, it examines in more detail the events in each of the key locations of the coup attempt, and in Chapter 3, the report scrutinizes the key actors and their own statements. Chapter 4 then looks at the winners of the July 15 events and examines how Erdoğan, his Islamist associates and pro-Russian Eurasianist partners groups consolidated their grip on armed forces. It reviews how Turkey's notorious intelligence agency MİT put

4] "Silahı o gece polisten aldım" [I took the gun from the police on that night], Hürriyet, 8 June 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/silahi-o-gece-polisten-aldim-40483169>

5] "Emniyet silahıyla cinayet haberine ilişkin basın açıklaması" [Press statement about the murder weapon that was provided by police], 9 June 2017, <http://www.ankara.gov.tr/emniyet-silahiyla-cinayet-baslikli-habere-iliskin-basin-aci-klamasi>

6] "15 Temmuz gecesi kaç silah kayıp oldu?" [How many guns went missin on the night of July 15], Ahaber, 20 June 2017, <http://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2017/06/20/15-July-gecesi-kac-silah-kayboldu>



Erdoğan held first press event after landing in Istanbul airport at midnight, made a huge gaffe by calling the coup bid as 'Gift from God'. His son-in-law and Energy Minister Berat Albayrak, sitting on his right, appeared quite happy.

its assets in use in planning July 15. The report looks at the Turkish government's evidence against the Gülen movement and the conclusions of foreign governments, Parliaments, intergovernmental bodies, and intelligence services about it. SCF also requested an interview with the leader of the Hizmet movement (popularly known as the Gülen movement), Fethullah Gülen, whom Erdoğan accuses of being the "mastermind" of the coup bid, and he agreed to respond to written questions. Excerpts from his interview are included in this report and the full text is in Chapter 5.

The central theme of the July 15 coup bid is that it was known beforehand. Official records tell us that an air force major went to the National Intelligence Agency (MİT) on July 15 and reported the imminent coup attempt at 14:20. It is also known that MİT Undersecretary Fidan and Chief of the General Staff Akar later had meetings in the General Staff headquarters and had taken some precautions. However, it is obvious that these measures did not work out or they were planned to fail deliberately. The military experts SCF has interviewed concur that simple, quick, and effective measures in advance could have easily ended the coup attempt before it started and saved the lives of hundreds of people. If necessary measures were implemented in time, experts say civilian casualties could have been easily averted.

This situation makes intelligence chief Fidan and Chief of the General Staff Akar two prime suspects in the controversial coup bid because of their critical roles.

Gülen strongly denies any involvement in the coup and notes that he had heard rumors before July 15 that Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar was planning a military coup. SCF has interviewed many people from the Gülen movement to get a reading of what they make of the coup attempt, and all appear to have been taken aback by the events of July 15. They pointed out that the fundamental values of the Gülen movement, which is rooted in interfaith and intercultural dialogue, community involvement, civic participation, a pro-democracy stance, and staunch opposition to military interference in politics, have been consistently defended by the members of the movement for decades. They also recalled that Gülen himself said that if anybody who sympathized with him was involved in the coup bid, that person has in fact betrayed his ideals and views.

Our review of the bills of indictment, the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission report, and statements of high-ranking state officials, as well as a rigorous comparative study of court statements by the soldiers tried on charges of attempting the coup clearly show that the official coup discourse of the Turkish government is groundless, inconsistent, and often contradictory.

It is crucial for the clarification of all aspects of the July 15 that the trials of the coup suspects should be transparent, all the actors should be questioned within the framework of accountability as required by a democratic government, all officials should be available for information no matter what position they may hold, a true and impartial investigation that includes opposition parties should be carried out, the media should be able to work freely, and finally international monitoring bodies, independent observers and the opposition should be able to follow the trials freely. Therefore, it is essential that all the suspects should be given the right to defend themselves without imposing any restrictions on their legal rights, bans on the media should be lifted, and political intervention in the legal procedures, especially by Erdoğan, should stop. President Erdoğan, Chief of the General Staff Akar and MİT Undersecretary Fidan should share with the public all the activities they engaged in before and during the coup.

This SCF report is based on the information gleaned from publicly available data as well as interviews with sources whose identities are being kept confidential for safety reasons. Despite all kinds of restrictions and suppression attempts by the government, the information revealed so far clearly leads to the conclusion that the official government narrative does not hold water and the real story is quite different what from public has been told by Erdoğan, his associates and his propagandist media.

SCF concludes that July 15 was not a real coup attempt in a military sense but rather planned as a “false flag” action by Erdoğan with the involvement of his intelligence, defense and military chiefs. The very limited mobilization, the venues selected for military deployment, selection of targets, poor planning and execution, and many other details SCF has uncovered lead to the conclusion that the coup bid was doomed to utter failure right from the start, Erdoğan was fully aware of all the details before it happened and during the attempt, and he was in full control of developments all the time.


CHAPTER 1

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT (JULY 11-JULY 15, 2016)

Information collected by Stockholm Center for Freedom from confidential military sources about the July 15 coup attempt shows that the circulation and activity in the chain of command started from July 11, 2016. Here is the story of how the five critical days that changed Turkey's course developed around Special Forces Command (ÖKK) and the General Staff Headquarters.

1.1 Monday, July 11, 2016

There were conversations taking place among certain officers at Special Forces Command (ÖKK) in Gölbaşı, Ankara about a secret operation plan that was being circulated on the basis of the “need-to-know.” This operation plan, which appeared to be within the



A secret operation plan on the “need-to-know” basis set the false flag coup bid in motion on July 11, 2016.

chain of command, was a military exercise called “KOH” or “Unconventional Operation” (“Konvansiyonel Olmayan Harekat” in Turkish), a specialized term used in the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) Land forces for irregular warfare and guerilla tactics. The mission order that was circulated on a need-to-know basis was based on a plan in which a terrorist attack might target the Chief of Staff Headquarters and the Headquarters’ security would be provided by the Special Forces. The choice for this mission was Special Forces Command (ÖKK), which was not under any force commanders but rather was commanded directly by Deputy

Chief of the General Staff. The military exercise would be carried out by officers assigned by the ÖKK.

The order was issued by the ÖKK commander Major-General (since promoted to Lieutenant-General) Zekai Aksakallı, and hierarchically under him were Chief of Operations and Training Colonel Ümit Bak, Regiment Staff Officer Colonel Fırat Alakuş, Deputy Garrison Commander Colonel Murat Korkmaz and Vice Chief of Staff Lieutenant-Colonel Halit Kazancı. The order was also sent to Brigadier-General Semih Terzi, who was the commander of the First Special Forces Brigade in Turkey’s southeastern city Silopi. This order required that only the selected people knew about it, they should act on a need-to-know basis, and no one spoke to others about it by “official command.” Talking on the phone about this mission and order was especially forbidden. Those who needed to know would only know what they had to and carry out the orders.⁷

7] The report by Special Forces Command (ÖKK), dated August 10, 2016 and titled “Administrative Investigation Report” stated that the first step was taken on July 11, when Colonel Murat Korkmaz entered the armory using somebody else’s ID card on the pretext of preparations for logistics review for the units. See “Özel Kuvvetler İdari Tahkikat Raporu”, [Special Forces Administrative Investigation Report], <http://m.pes24.com/haber/ozel-kuvvetler-idari-tahkikat-raporu-/2647/#sthash.SJefuUPh.dpuf>

1.2 Tuesday, July 12, 2016

According to information obtained by Stockholm Center for Freedom, Colonel Ümit Bak summoned Colonel Fırat Alakuş, who was under him, and asked him to act according to the order given to him by his superiors. Alakuş was acting for the brigade commander who was on leave then. Colonel Alakuş was ordered to make a list of reliable officers for the KOH drill and wait for the travel order. The said operation was to include protection and security. Therefore, he was asked to make a list that comprised sergeants rather than specially trained enlisted men. Colonel Bak would prepare and give the list of those to be included in the drill.

Colonel Alakuş called Murat Korkmaz, who had been promoted to colonel only two weeks before, on the same afternoon and communicated the order to him. He gave him an envelope, specifically adding that the order came from Commander Aksakallı in person. The envelope included the names of the team members who would participate in the drill under Colonel Korkmaz. He was supposed to contact every one of the names on the team and give them the operation order. Colonel Alakuş emphasized that Colonel Bak was included in the KOH and he must not share any detail about the operation with anyone. Colonel Alakuş met with Lieutenant-Colonel Halit Kazancı in the same manner and gave him the KOH order and the said envelope. Colonel Alakuş stressed that Zekai Pasha knew about the operation and he himself gave the order. The date of the operation would be July 15.

The officers who received the order questioned where the KOH drill came from and whether it was reliable, but they could not ask anyone because it was a secret mission. However, they were told that the brigade commander and garrison commander knew about the operation.

According to the order they received, the military staff who would participate in the operation had to—contrary to normal practice—go to the drill location in their private cars and in their camouflage outfits and then get their weapons and ammunition from another brigade’s arsenal. No unnecessary effort would be spent to reach staff that could not be reached on the day of the operation and telephone communication would be especially avoided. This was also an order from the command.

The commanders who got the order were surprised when they saw the lists and realized that they knew almost no one. Yet there was not much they could do because they were told that they should not talk to anyone and Major-General Zekai Aksakallı was very sensitive on the issue.

1.3 Wednesday, July 13, 2016

When the commanders who got the mission order looked through the names on the list given to them, they saw that most were from different brigades, some were on official leave, and some were trainees on the Special Forces Expertise Training (“Özel Kuvvetler İhtisas Kursu” or “ÖKİK” in Turkish) who would soon graduate. It was not obvious how and for what reason the names on the teams had been chosen. Those on the drill list did not know why they were on it. Those who wanted to add names they trusted to the list were prevented from doing so. This was against the standard operating procedures as team

members were usually selected by commanding officers who know them well for the success of the mission. That afternoon there was a ceremony for the mission farewell. After the ceremony Major-General Aksakallı, Colonel Bak, School Commander Staff Officer Ömer Faruk Bozdemir, Chief Staff Officer Erdiñç Kocayanak and the Garrison Commander came together and had a chat in Colonel Alakuş's office. In this meeting no one talked about the KOH drill that would be carried out on Friday (July 15), but Major-General Aksakallı said, "You know we have moved the Friday ceremony to tomorrow. The chief and the deputy of the General Staff will come with other guests. The preparations should be made accordingly." School Commander Colonel Bozdemir announced that they were postponing the parachuting program until Monday so that the activities would not be mixed up.⁸ He added that they would finish the procedures for the discharge certificates of the trainees by Friday afternoon.

Before leaving the room, Major-General Aksakallı turned to the other commanders and said, "You continue with your activities." The present officers were relaxed because they thought Aksakallı meant the KOH drill about which they still had suspicions and question marks in their minds. They had been troubled. Getting a signal from the highest commander convinced them that they were not doing anything wrong.

Meanwhile, the information Major-General Aksakallı had shared in the room came as a

8] But it was announced later that it was cancelled due to bad weather. "Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi?" [Where were Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan the day before the coup?], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 27 February 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>



Erdoğan paid a surprising visit to the Special Forces Command (ÖKK) headquarters on May 3, 2016. ÖKK was the epicenter of events on July 15.

surprise because it was a military tradition to hold Special Forces graduation ceremonies on Fridays. A second surprise was that the Chief of the General Staff would participate in the ceremony because so far only the Deputy Chief of the General Staff had been present even for the most important ceremonies in the Special Forces. It was the first time the Chief of the General Staff would come for this ceremony.

1.4 Thursday, July 14, 2016

The Special Forces Expertise Training (ÖKİK-4) graduation ceremony, which had been moved from Friday to Thursday, was held on July 14. As announced, Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler were present for the ceremony. The surprise was the participation of National Intelligence Agency (MİT) Undersecretary Hakan Fidan,⁹ which was unusual. Once the program was over, it was time for dinner. Two important meetings were held that night. The first was between Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler, MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan, and ÖKK Commander Aksakallı. Afterwards, Akar and Fidan had a private meeting between 20:30 and 00:30, which was most unusual and remarkably long.

The surprise meetings of the night were not over. After Akar left, Fidan and Aksakallı talked for one hour as they walked together from the security gate of Special Forces Command (ÖKK) towards the building of the defense company FNSS Defense Systems A.S.¹⁰ This was very unusual as well. It was obvious that something extraordinary was going on. The commanders who learned about these meetings thought they were about the KOH drill that would take place on Friday. They were growing accustomed to the drill. It seemed like former mobilization exercises.

1.5 Friday, July 15, 2016

The trainees who were graduating from the Special Forces Command expertise training received their discharge certificates and left the premises.

The same day at 14:20, Major O.K., who worked at Army Aviation Academy Command

9] This information came to light in a trial hearing at Ankara No. 14 High Criminal Court about the death of Ömer Halisdemir. Staff Sergeant Mehmet Bilge, who was on the team of First Brigade Commander Brigadier-General Semih Terzi and is now detained for the coup, told the court on February 22, 2017 that the graduation ceremony should have been held on Friday. He said the weather was nice but the ceremony was pushed forward to July 14 instead of July 15. He said the ceremony was wrapped up at 17.30 but General Chief of Staff Hulusi Akar and Intelligence Chief Hakan Fidan had talked for hours until 23.00. He said Akar left but Fidan stayed around with a military officer. See “Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi” [Where were Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan the day before the coup], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 27 February 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>

10] Turgay Usanmaz, non-commissioned officer who served as a coordinating officer for Erdiñç Kocayanak at Special Forces Command (ÖKK), told a hearing held at Ankara No.14 High Criminal Court on June 6, 2017 that a dinner was prepared at 20.00 after the ceremony as is protocol. He said, “The tables were arranged. When the time to serve came, Hulusi Akar took Hakan Fidan to another table. This was something we have never seen before. I am telling you as a man who participated the previous ceremony. They were eating together and talking to each other for three and half hours. At 23.00, Akar left. Then, Zekai Pasha [Aksakallı] and the MİT undersecretary walked in the area you examined for 30 to 40 minutes. This, too, drew our attention. After seeing the guest off, Zekai Pasha [Aksakallı] left at 00.30.” See “Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan’ın darbeden bir gün önceki buluşmasını anlattı” [Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan told about their meeting one day before the coup], Odatv, 6 June 2017, <http://odatv.com/silah-sesleri-gelince-panikledik-0606171200.html>.

Erdoğan departed from Marmaris, also a military airport, landed in İstanbul Atatürk Airport located next to the Air Force School, without any hassle. That contradicts news that the coup bid was still underway at those hours.



went to the National Intelligence Agency's (MİT) campus in Yenimahalle, Ankara, and informed them about mobilization at the military.¹¹ There are conflicting explanations and discussions about what the information was about. According to the deposition he gave to the prosecutor which was published by the media, O.K. informed the Agency that there would be a coup.¹² The 36-page report submitted by MİT to the Parliamentary Commission for investigating the coup bid on May 22, 2017 claimed that it was not a warning about a coup but information that there would be an attack on MİT Undersecretary Fidan.¹³ Chief of the General Staff Akar sent an 8-page report to the Parliamentary Commission on May 30, 2017 with the same claim that the information was not about the coup.¹⁴

According to the same report, Undersecretary Fidan called Deputy Chief of General Staff Yaşar Güler at 16:20 and informed him about the warning, and then Güler informed

11] "MİT'in TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu'na gönderdiği 22 Mayıs 2017 tarihli ve 'gizli' kaşeli rapor"; "MİT'in Darbe Komisyonu'na gönderdiği raporun tam metni," [Full text of the report MİT submitted to TBMM Coup Commission], Habertürk, 26 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonusuna-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>; "İşte o binbaşının ifadesi," Yeni Şafak, 20 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/iste-o-binbasinin-ifadesi-2671698>

12] "İşte o binbaşının ifadesi," [Here's the major's testimony], Yeni Şafak, 20 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/iste-o-binbasinin-ifadesi-2671698>; "O binbaşı anlattı: Kod adım Tarık," [The major spoke: My code name is Tarık], Hürriyet, 29 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-binbasi-anlatti-kod-adim-tarik-40472736>

13] "MİT'in Darbe Komisyonu'na gönderdiği raporun tam metni," [Full text of the report MİT submitted to Parliamentary Coup Commission], Habertürk, 26 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonusuna-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>

14] "Hulusi Akar'ın darbe komisyonuna verdiği yanıtlara NTV ulaştı," [NTV got hold of the responses Hulusi Akar gave to coup commission], NTV, 30 Mayıs 2017, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/hulusi-akar-in-darbe-komisyonuna-verdigi-yanitlari-ntv-ulasti%2cPU0hYXrkHUaU4q_4R1RhWg

Akar about the situation. At 16:40 Chief of the General Staff Akar called Undersecretary Fidan and asked for the details of the intelligence. Upon this request, Fidan sent one of his deputies to Deputy Chief of the General Staff Güler to share the details.

The MİT deputy who entered the General Staff Headquarters at 17:32 had a meeting with Deputy Chief of the General Staff Güler and then left the building at 17:54.¹⁵ Güler went to meet Akar and passed on the information. At around 18:00 Akar called Undersecretary Fidan and invited him to his headquarters. Fidan entered the General Staff Headquarters at 18:10.¹⁶ There with the inclusion of Güler and Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak, a meeting was held among the four of them.

Meanwhile in Special Forces Command (ÖKK) the units were being given weapons and bullet-proof vests for the drill in the evening. The preparations were over by around 18:00. They started waiting for the travel order. Some of the non-commissioned officers who were called for duty at short notice had not even found time to change. The security gates were closed to vehicles. When the persons who were assigned to the drill could not drive in, they walked in and changed.¹⁷ At around 18:30 Chief of the General Staff Akar ordered a “ban on all domestic military flights.”¹⁸ The order from the General Staff reached Air Force Operations Headquarters by 19:05.

At around 18:00 Special Forces Chief of Operations and Training Colonel Ümit Bak called the first group to join the operation and ordered them to go to their posts. The drill was under way. Colonel Fırat Alakuş and Lieutenant-Colonel Halit Yazıcı, who had moved to Akıncı Air Base with the units under their command, were to go to General Staff Headquarters and provide the security for Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar. Colonel Murat Korkmaz was called at about 21:00 and ordered to take his team to the Presidential Guard Regiment. They were supposed to say that they were there “for a drill” when they arrived at their designated locations.

At 20:22 MİT Undersecretary Fidan left the General Staff Headquarters, where he had been staying until then.¹⁹ Only one minute later, at 20:23, thirty-three soldiers who were waiting at Akıncı Fourth Main Jet Base under Colonel Fırat Alakuş’s command left the base on a military bus for the General Staff Headquarters.²⁰

According to research by the Stockholm Center for Freedom, Colonel Murat Korkmaz and his team of 15 men left the Special Forces Command (ÖKK) barracks at around 22:00. The team entered the security gate of the Presidential Guard Regiment Headquarters 45 minutes later.

15] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 675.

16] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 676.

17] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 676; “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 246.

18] “Albay Fırat Alakuş’un ifadesi,” [Colonel Fırat Alakuş’s testimony], “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 773.

19] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 251; “MİT’in TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu’na gönderdiği 22 May 2017 tarihli ve ‘Gizli’ kaşeli rapor”; “MİT’in Darbe Komisyonu’na gönderdiği raporun tam metni,” [Full text of the report MİT submitted to Parliamentary Coup Commission] Habertürk, 26 May 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonuna-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>

20] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 252.



Despite complete air traffic ban, how alleged putschist general Semih Terzi allowed to fly to Ankara begs question. He was killed by a sergeant, dubbed as a hero, who was later executed by lieutenant who was also hailed as man who prevented the coup.

1.6 The Statements In The Indictment Confirm This Timeline

The statements in the July 15 Main Trial Indictment confirm what has been reported here so far if we look at the contents of the indictment. In his statement at the prosecutor's office, Colonel Fırat Alakuş recounted the events he saw as follows:²¹

“Special Forces Command Chief of Operations and Training Staff Officer Colonel Ümit Bak called me to his office on Tuesday, July 12, 2016 and told me that he would assign me a top-secret duty. He stated that there was unconfirmed news about a possible attack on the TSK [Turkish Armed Forces] chain of command. He informed me that I was assigned the duty to protect our commanders against such acts of sabotage. This sabotage was going to be done by PDY members²² within the TSK and it was not known where they had infiltrated. That's why, he added, it was vital that the chief and the deputy of the General Staff should be secured in such an act. “I was asked to form a team from among reliable persons and tell my subordinates that ‘a protection drill would be performed.’ So I verbally assigned the duty to my subordinates Colonel Murat Korkmaz and Colonel Halit Kazancı. I asked them to pick at least 50 men for the duty who had been in teams before. We selected the men and then agreed that Colonel Murat would meet with First Level Presidential Guard Regiment staff and that Lieutenant-Colonel Halit Kazancı would meet at the Akıncı Fourth Main Jet Base Command. “Colonel Ümit Bak called me at 18:00 and told me to go to our places of duty immediately. He indicated that the duty was to secure the protection of the command in the General Staff. And I called Colonel Murat Korkmaz and told him to go the place of duty. We, together with Lieutenant-Colonel Halit and his team, departed on a military bus for the General Staff. We entered the General Staff from the south gate. Before we arrived at the gate I talked to Colonel Doğan [General Staff Project Development Department Director Colonel Doğan Öztürk] on the phone and he said he knew about it and so was waiting for us.

21] “15 July Main Coup Indictment,” p. 773-774.

22] Prior to the attempted coup the AKP government had begun referring to the Gülen movement as the “Parallel State Structure” (“Paralel Devlet Yapısı” or “PDY” in Turkish) to defame the group.

We met when we entered the gate and went to General Staff command floor along with him and his team. “When we were on the command floor, the Chief of the General Staff and his deputy were in their offices. I went out to ensure outside security. Later Brigadier-General Mehmet Partigöç told me that the Chief of the General Staff was not safe here and he would be taken to the safer Akıncı barracks on a helicopter. He asked me to secure the perimeter. Five of us formed a wall of flesh around the Chief of the General Staff and boarded him on the helicopter. My men and I continued to protect him. I learned about all these events from television around morning. My team and I were set up. I had no knowledge of the coup attempt. I just carried out the duty given to me by my superiors. In his defense for the July 15 Main Case at High Criminal Court No.17 in Sincan Prison, detained coup suspect Fırat Alakuş said, “I got the order from Zekai Aksakallı.”²³

In his defense Alakuş said: “I performed my duty to protect the General Staff within the chain of command. I think my team and I were set up by the putschists. The duty was to increase security in the General Staff Headquarters against possible terror activity because there was some intelligence about it. I got the duty from Special Forces (ÖKK) Commander Zeki Aksakallı himself. [...] “Special Forces Commander Zekai Aksakallı said that there might be important events that weekend, we should be ready, and I should get the details from Chief of Operations and Training Colonel Ümit Bak. I went to see Ümit Bak. He told me that TSK command was being made a target by DAESH [ISIL or ISIS] on July 15, there was sensitive intelligence about the PKK [outlawed terror group Kurdistan Workers’ Party] planning to make a Merasim-Sokak-like attack,²⁴ other terrorist organizations such as FETÖ²⁵ could make use of it, and therefore we would support the headquarters’ security. [...]

“The certificate ceremony was held for the trainees at Special Forces on July 14. It is interesting that the Deputy Chief of the General Staff left early when the Chief of the General Staff was still there, which is normally out of the question. It is against protocol. Afterwards Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan had dinner together for almost three hours. From what I learned later, Aksakallı and Fidan had a private conversation after Akar left. Considering all this, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler’s release with the order from the Chief of the General Staff raised questions in my mind. I believe Zekai Aksakallı

23] “Darbeci Kurmay Albay Fırat Alakuş: Görevi Aksakallı verdi,” [Putschist SO Colonel Fırat Alakuş: Aksakallı gave the mission], Karar, 25 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/darbeci-kurmay-albay-firat-alakus-gorevi-aksakalli-verdi-492789>

24] The February 17, 2016, Merasim Street car-bomb attack on military shuttles in Ankara killed 29 people and wounded 60. The attack happened at the heart of the Turkish capital near government buildings, the headquarters of the army, and the Turkish Parliament; it targeted a convoy of shuttles carrying both civilian and military personnel working at the military headquarters during the evening rush hour. The government initially blamed the attack on the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG), a Syrian Kurdish militia that has been supported by the United States. Authorities identified Salih Nekar, a Syrian national, as the suicide attacker. However, DNA evidence collected from the blast site, showed that Turkish national Abdalbaki Somer, born in the eastern Turkish city of Van, was the bomber. The Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK), affiliated with the outlawed PKK, claimed responsibility for the bombing.

25] “FETÖ” is a derogatory term amounting to hate speech perpetuated by President Erdoğan and his government to smear the Gülen movement, which is inspired by the US-based Turkish Muslim intellectual Fethullah Gülen, who is one of the many vocal critics of the Turkish government. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) rejected on April 2017 a proposal from Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) deputies to use the term “FETÖ” instead of the phrase “Gülen movement.”

was one of the actors behind the scene.”²⁶

Detained coup suspect Colonel Murat Korkmaz said in his testimony at the prosecutor’s office that on July, 11, 2016, Second Special Forces Command Deputy Colonel Fırat Alakuş called him and said that there would be a protection and security drill during the week, he would be given the list of names for the duty, he would not talk to anyone about it, and he should make weapons, equipment and ammunition ready for the drill.²⁷

Meanwhile, Brigadier-General Gökhan Şahin Sönmezateş, who commanded the teams going to Marmaris to take President Erdoğan and is being tried in the Marmaris case, stated that he learned about the plan on July 11. According to his statement in the Akıncı Air Base Indictment, which he made in Ankara Police Department Branch Office, where National Intelligence Agency (MİT) men were present during the questioning, Sönmezateş said, “I learned about the coup when Semih Terzi informed me on July 11. I accepted the duty on July 13.”²⁸ In his second statement, he emphasized that “I am sure I heard about the coup planning on 11 July 2016.”

1.7 “We Were Told That There’d Be An ISIL Attack On The General Staff Headquarters”

According to the July 15 Main Case Indictment, Korkmaz and his team of 19 men left the Presidential Guard inside the Çankaya Köşkü [former presidential palace that is now being used by the Prime Minister] in their private cars at 00:19. They entered General Staff Headquarters from gate 1-A at 00:29 under the supervision of General Staff security officer Lieutenant-Colonel Gökhan Eski.²⁹

The Stockholm Center for Freedom’s (SCF) investigation indicates that the team coming with Murat Korkmaz believed that there had been an ISIL-like attack on the General Staff Headquarters and they were being called to defend it. Civilians who were gathering outside the headquarters and trying to enter the building made the team’s conviction stronger. Leading the civilians were bearded men who kept shouting “Allahu Akbar,” as can be seen in the self-shot videos crowd members posted on the Internet. This made the soldiers even surer.³⁰ Civilians were being told, “The General Staff Headquarters is being occupied,” while the soldiers were being told, “There will be a terrorist attack on the headquarters; come for defense.”

When Korkmaz’s team entered the building, there was a crowd of 300 civilians outside the headquarters who were shouting slogans. All the soldiers who were coming in from other brigades for protection were surprised. They were told that the Armed Forces (TSK) had

26] “Darbeci Kormay Albay Fırat Alakuş: Görevi Aksakallı verdi,” [Putschist SO Colonel Fırat Alakuş: Aksakallı gave the mission], Karar, 25 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/darbeci-kormay-albay-firat-alakus-gorevi-aksakalli-verdi-492789> ; “Darbe sanığı generalden çarpıcı iddia: FETÖ’cülerin listesi şu anda AKP milletvekili. . .,” Odatv, 25 May 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akaran-urkutucu-yuzu-var-di-dedigi-isimden-cok-konusulacak-iddialar-2505171200.html>

27] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 775.

28] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1002.

29] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 684.

30] “Darbe Girişimi Gecesi Genelkurmay’a Tekbirlerle Giren Vatandaşlar”, [The Civilians who Entered the General Staff Shouting Allah-u Akbar], <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4kkt8b>. Last accessed on June, 4, 2017.

seized control of the government, the Chief of the General Staff and his deputy had gone to Akıncı Air Base, and they would be commanding the operation from there.

Later in the night some tanks came and demolished the outside wall of the gate, where soldiers disembarking helicopters were stationed. Some of these soldiers were arriving from Air Force Academy and were only military cadets. When they were asked why they were coming, they said, “When we were on an exercise at night, they said General Staff Headquarters was being attacked by civilians and brought us here by helicopter.”

Some of the arrivals were from the 28th Mechanized Brigade. Most did not have ammunition clips for their weapons. They insisted, “Our commander told us there was an ISIL attack on the General Staff Headquarters, and that’s why we have come.”

Most troops appeared to have been mobilized on terror alerts on July 15. Perhaps the most critical development with regard to the rules of military engagement on such attacks is the reestablishment of EMASYA protocol that allowed military troops to respond to domestic security threats in cooperation with police and other law enforcement agencies.³¹ EMASYA which stands for Police-Security Cooperation Protocol was abolished in 2010 by Erdoğan government on the grounds that it was amounted to the military interference into politics and paved the way for coups.

Surprisingly the AKP government reinstated EMASYA as part of the amendment in the law that was approved in Turkish Parliament on July 13, 2016 and signed into law by Erdoğan a day later. According to the rushed amendment, the military was empowered to conduct security operations to fight against terror without a permission from the governor, organize search and seizure operations in terror-related incidents without prior authorization from a judge. The chief of staff would decide on troops deployments, their size and mobilization and the military commander would be in charge in joint military-police operations. In short, the military was given new powers to operate as law enforcement agency within the borders of Turkey.³² EMASYA was renamed as KOKTOD.

During the trial hearings into July 15 events, many defendants testified that they were deployed on terror alerts.³³ ³⁴ Stating that they entered into premises of Bayrampaşa Riot Police department as part of the protocol that allowed military to support law enforcement agencies in public events, also known as KOKTOD, Col. Yusuf Sarı said “those who planned July 15 events wanted to pit the military against police and the public.”³⁵

31] A year of tragedy in Turkey, TRT World, 11 December 2016, <http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/timeline-of-bomb-attacks-in-turkey-during-2016-249647>

32] “EMASYA 6 yıl sonra geri geldi” [EMASYA came back six years later], Sözcü, 14 July 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/emasya-6-yil-sonra-geri-geldi-1313922/>

33] “Bayrampaşaya Çevik Kuvvet şube müdürlüğü işgal davası”, [The case of takeover of Bayrampaşa Riot Police Department], Hürriyet, 7 April 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bayrampasa-cevik-kuvvet-sube-mudurlugunu-igal-40420629>

34] “Bayrampaşa Çevik Kuvvet Müdürlüğü işgal davası” [The case of takeover of Bayrampaşa Riot Police Department], Sözcü Gazetesi, 6 April 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/bayrampasa-cevik-kuvvet-sube-mudurlugunu-igal-girisimi-davasi-3-2-1778960/>

35] “Mahkeme Başkanından uyarı” [The warning from Presiding Judge], Cumhuriyet, 23 May 2017 http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/746683/Mahkeme_baskanindan_uyari__Sen_kendini_hala_albay_saniyorsun__eski_albay_sen_sen_ve_saniksin.html

Staff Col. Sadık Cebeci who was the commander of 47th Mechanized Infantry Regiment, denied allegations that he engaged in an unlawful activity and said he performed his duties according to the order given to him within the confines of the law. He testified that “in the last two years during which we had received so many intelligence on possible terror attacks, we remained prepared [to intervene] as part of KOKTOD teams”. Cebeci emphasized that there were three regiments in Istanbul that were assigned to respond such terror attacks as part of KOKTOD and 47th Regiment Command was another force that was tasked under this protocol.³⁶

At around 02:00 the civilians started to enter the headquarters from the side of the junction. They confronted the soldiers. Some soldiers kept asking each other, “What’s happening here? Why are the people attacking us? Which side are we on?” When things became clearer, some of the commanders would take their troops to safe places and order them to wait until the dust settled.

When the sun rose, prosecutors started to come and detain the soldiers. Some commanders said, “We haven’t done anything wrong. I won’t leave this place like a criminal. I won’t take off my uniform. If I surrender and they try to detain us in just our underwear, I’ll fight and die if necessary.” They spoke with the prosecutor, put their weapons and equipment in a safe place and surrendered.

1.8 Questions Awaiting Answers

1. Who gave the order for the Unconventional Operation (KOH) whose preparations were started in Special Forces Command on July 11? Fırat Alakuş says he received the order from Zekai Aksakallı. Was Aksakallı aware of it?

2. Who planned the KOH? Who made the team lists and what were the selection criteria?

3. Why were two programs scheduled for Friday, July 15, 2016 switched to other days? Why was the graduation ceremony switched to Thursday, July 14, 2016? Why was the parachuting program cancelled? Staff Sergeant Mehmet Bilge, who was on the team of First Brigade Commander Brigadier-General Semih Terzi and is now detained for the coup, claimed that the parachute jumps were cancelled due to weather conditions.³⁷ Is it true that the parachute jumps were cancelled because of adverse weather conditions? What kind of weather conditions could prevent parachuting in July? The discharge process of the trainees was finished by Friday noon. Was the place evacuated for a reason on Friday, July 15, 2016?

4. Why did the Chief of the General Staff come for the trainees’ graduation ceremony although it is against common practice?

36] “Darbeye neder karşı koymadınız sorununa yanıt”.[Response to the question of why you did not resist to coup], 1 June 2017 <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/darbeye-neden-karsi-koymadiniz-sorusuna-yanit,eSjw5Ygdf0K11zar80DBxw>
37] “Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi,” [Where were Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan the day before the coup], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, February, 27, 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>



The limited military mobilization for coup bid took off right after intelligence chief Fidan left the headquarters of the Chief of Staff where he met top commander Akar for hours.

5. Why was MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan present for the Special Forces Command graduation ceremony?³⁸

6. The Special Forces Command (ÖKK) is under the command of the Deputy Chief of the General Staff. Although Deputy Yaşar Güler was the host and the Chief of the General Staff and National Intelligence Agency (MİT) Undersecretary were guests, how could he depart and leave them alone in the Special Forces Command Garrison?

7. What did Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar and MİT Undersecretary Fidan discuss in private for four hours?³⁹

8. Why did MİT Undersecretary Fidan not leave the Special Forces Command after Akar left the place? What did he talk about for one hour with Major-General Zekai Aksakallı after 00:30?

9. Colonel Ümit Bak called Colonel Fırat Alakuş at 18:00, notified him that the operation was starting, and ordered him to go to General Staff Headquarters immediately.⁴⁰ At that moment the MİT Undersecretary had not yet entered the headquarters, and Hulusi Akar had not yet issued the flight ban. No one but Akar and Güler in the Armed Forces knew that information had been passed on to the National Intelligence Agency. It should be duly noted that Bak ordered the operation to start at this minute because indictments and other statements claim that the flight ban made the putschists think that they were exposed, they panicked and so moved the beginning of the coup attempt from the preannounced July 16, 03:00 to July 15, 20:30. However, Colonel Bak pushed the start button when there was no sign of anything. What was the exact time Ümit Bak gave the order? If Alakuş's statement is correct, what made Colonel Bak give the order at 18:00? Or did Colonel Bak believe it was simply a drill?

10. Colonel Fırat Alakuş says in his testimony that Ümit Bak, who called him at 18:00, ordered him to move to his place of duty at the General Staff Headquarters immediately. In contrast, official records say that he moved from Akıncı Air Base at 20:23, which is

38] The Office of the General Chief of Staff and National Intelligence Agency (MİT) kept silent on details of the secret meeting on July 14, 2016 held on the sidelines of the graduation ceremony until June 19, 2017 when intelligence sources told a journalist in Ankara that MİT head Hakan Fidan had also participated in a similar ceremony held on March 11, 2016. "TSK ve MİT'in 14 Temmuz yanıtı", [Response by TSK & MİT for July 14], Serpil Çevikcan, Milliyet, 19 Haziran 2017, <http://m.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/serpil-cevikcan/tsk-ve-mit-in-14-July-yaniti-2470687/>

39] The National Intelligence Agency indirectly claimed via a journalist in Ankara that Fidan and Akar talked about the upcoming meeting of the Supreme Military Council (YAŞ) that decides on promotion, retirement, and dismissal of officers. That information did not sound credible as the other members of the YAŞ and force commanders were absent. The claim that Akar came to a meeting with four members of his staff was not confirmed either. ("TSK ve MİT'in 14 Temmuz yanıtı", [Response by TSK & MİT for July 14], Serpil Çevikcan, Milliyet, 19 Haziran 2017, <http://m.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/serpil-cevikcan/tsk-ve-mit-in-14-Temmuz-yaniti-2470687/>

40] Col. Fırat Alakuş's testimony, July 15 Main Indictment," p. 773.



**Gökhan Şahin
Sönmezateş**

one minute after the MIT Undersecretary left General Staff Headquarters. Why did Alakuş leave approximately 2.5 hours late? MIT Undersecretary Fidan stayed in the General Staff Headquarters between 18:00 and 20:22. If Colonel Alakuş and his team had left when the first order arrived, he would probably have got to the General Staff Headquarters by around 19:00. This way he could have “secured” not only Akar but also Fidan. In other words, if he had been acting according to a coup plan, he could have arrested Fidan. Why did he not act before but wait until Fidan left the headquarters?

11. According to the indictment, the putschist unit entered the office of Chief of the General Staff Akar at 21:00 to notify him of the military intervention, and if he resisted, to arrest him.⁴¹ The Special Forces team under Colonel Alakuş, however, arrived at the General Staff Headquarters at 21:20.⁴² Did Colonel Alakuş and his team wait on purpose, or were they kept waiting?

12. Brigadier-General Gökhan Şahin Sönmezateş, one of the coup suspects, stated that he learned about the coup on July, 11, 2016 from Semih Terzi. Is the coup plan in question the same as the KOH plan mentioned on 11 July 2016? If so, were Colonel Alakuş, Colonel Murat Korkmaz, and Colonel Halit Kazancı told that this was a coup plan?

14. Did Colonel Ümit Bak tell Colonel Alakuş that the PDY—an acronym used by pro-Erdoğanists to identify the Gülen movement—would attack the General Staff Headquarters and they would resist it with the KOH operation?

15. Why was Colonel Alakuş unable to understand when the commanders were being arrested that it was not a drill but rather a real coup attempt? Or did he know from the very beginning that this was a coup attempt?

41] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 253.

42] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 253.

CHAPTER 2

CRITICAL LOCATIONS WHERE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT TOOK PLACE

2.1 General Staff Headquarters

The General Staff Headquarters on 15 July 2016 ranks top among the locations where the veil of secrecy over events that transpired at in the coup attempt turns into a thick shroud. There are many unclear points and unanswered questions about what actually happened at the headquarters. It is useful to go over the events that took place at the headquarters minute by minute.

At around 14:00 a meeting about the fight against terrorism started in İnönü Meeting Hall under the command of Deputy Chief of General Staff General Yaşar Güler.

At 14:20 Pilot Major O.K., who was stationed at Land Aviation Academy Command, went to the National Intelligence Agency (MİT) and informed them of the forthcoming coup attempt.⁴³ Major O.K. informed them that three helicopters would leave Land Aviation Academy that day and one of them would carry out an operation against MİT and take Undersecretary Fidan captive. He specifically stressed that it was preparation for a coup.⁴⁴

At 15:30 MİT officials listened to what the major had to say. They took the news seriously and let Undersecretary Fidan know about it.⁴⁵

At 16:20 MİT Undersecretary Fidan called Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Güler and informed him of the news. Güler in turn sent the message to Chief of the General Staff Akar.⁴⁶

At 16:40 Chief of the General Staff Akar called MİT Undersecretary Fidan and asked for detailed information. So Fidan sent one of the deputy undersecretaries to the General Staff Headquarters to meet Deputy Chief Güler.⁴⁷

At 17:32 the deputy undersecretary went to the headquarters, shared the details with Güler, and left the building at 17:54. Afterwards, Güler informed Chief Akar about it. Upon

43] “İşte o binbaşının ifadesi,”[Here’s the major’s testimony] Yeni Şafak, 20 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/iste-o-binbasinin-ifadesi-2671698> ; “O binbaşı anlattı: Kod adım Tarık,” Hürriyet, 29 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-binbasi-anlatti-kod-adim-tarik-40472736>

44] “O binbaşı anlattı: Kod adım Tarık,” [The major spoke: My code name is Tarık], Hürriyet, 29 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-binbasi-anlatti-kod-adim-tarik-40472736>

45] “MİT’in Darbe Komisyonu’na gönderdiği raporun tam metni,” [Full text of the report MİT submitted to Parliamentary Coup Commission], Habertürk, 26 May 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonusuna-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>

46] Ibid.

47] Ibid.



Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar and intelligence head Hakan Fidan stand out as the two most controversial figure in Turkey's coup bid. The two met hours on July 15 and the day before.

any flights.⁵⁰

At 18:30 Chief of the General Staff Akar called Armed Forces Command Operations Center (SKKHM) and ordered the landing of all military craft and the imposition of a nationwide flight ban.⁵¹

At 18:36 Land Forces Commander Çolak entered Land Aviation Academy Command in Güvercinlik, Ankara.⁵²

At 19:05 Chief Akar's flight ban reached Air Forces Operations Center.⁵³

At 19:12 Chief Akar called Land Forces Commander Çolak and asked him about his impressions. Çolak said he was not seeing anything out of the ordinary.⁵⁴ However, he would continue to check. Indeed, in his statement in the indictment he said, "During this inspection we saw that the helicopters were inside hangars, the facilities and landing sites were clear, and there was nothing extraordinary. Meanwhile, when we were walking, brigade commanders in charge of the facilities escorted us. They confirmed that there were no night flights. I asked the officers numerous questions to learn more, yet I couldn't find anything. I couldn't see any unusual situation."⁵⁵

By 19:25 Chief Akar called Ankara Garrison Commander Major-General Metin Gürak and ordered him not to allow any tanks or armored vehicles from Etimesgut Armored Units

48] "July 15 Main Indictment," s. 675-676.

49] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 676.

50] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 676.

51] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 676.

52] "Land Forces Command Indictment," "AVM'de darbe talimatı beklemek,"[Waiting for coup directives at the mall], Sedat Ergin, Hürriyet, 28 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/sedat-ergin/avmde-darbe-talimati-beklemek-40472109>

53] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 246.

54] "Land Forces Command Indictment," "Orgeneral Akar'ın 15 July'daki maskeleye stratejisi," [General Akar's masking strategy on July 15], Sedat Ergin, Hürriyet, 27 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/sedat-ergin/orgeneral-akarin-15-Julydaki-maskeleye-stratejisi-40471227>

55] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 494.

this news, Akar invited Fidan to the headquarters.⁴⁸

At 18:10 MİT Undersecretary Fidan entered the General Staff headquarters.⁴⁹ Deputy Chief Güler and Land Forces Commander (KKK) Salih Zeki Çolak participated in the meeting held in Akar's office. Concluding that the intelligence pointed to a much greater conspiracy, Akar ordered Çolak to go to Land Aviation Command immediately. He asked him to take along a military prosecutor, Land Forces Staff Officer General İhsan Uyar, and Ankara Garrison Commander Major-General Metin Gürak. He told him to get to Land Aviation Command before 19:00, investigate the premises, and arrest pilots if there were

School to pass.⁵⁶

At 20:09, according to the July 15 Main Case Indictment, upon seeing MİT Undersecretary Fidan in Chief Akar's office, General Staff Department Head Major-General İlhan Talu told General Staff General-Admiral Department Head Colonel Cemil Turhan that Fidan was inside the building and Land Forces Commander Çolak had left for Land Aviation Command. According to the allegation, the coup activity was thus moved from the scheduled July 16, 2016 at 03:00 to an earlier time of July 15, at 20:30.⁵⁷ However, both Talu and Turhan reject this allegation.

At 20:22 MİT Undersecretary Fidan left the Armed Forces headquarters.⁵⁸

At 20:23 the 33-strong Special Forces team waiting at Akıncı Air Base under Colonel Fırat Alakuş's command left for the General Staff Headquarters.⁵⁹

At 21:00 General Staff Strategic Transformation Department Head Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli, who is alleged to be a member of The Council of Peace in the Homeland (the group in whose name the coup attempt was announced), entered Chief Akar's office and notified him of the coup. According to the allegations, Akar reacted and stated that he did not support this attempt under any circumstances. So Dişli left the room and ordered the team that were waiting on standby to "seize the commander."

56] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 676.

57] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 677.

58] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 677.

59] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 252.

The CCTV footage showed Intelligence chief Hakan Fidan leaving military headquarters on coup day without any problems although he was tipped off for abduction by military.





Akar's aide-de-camp Levent Türkkan's (R) testimony under custody, cited as crucial evidence by the government, must be discounted as photos filed by state news agency showed he was tortured severely. He refuted his original testimony in trial hearing.



Upon this order, General Staff Executive Assistant Head Staff Officer Colonel Ramazan Gözel, Akar's chief advisor Staff Officer Colonel Orhan Yıkılkan, Captain Serdar Tekin, Sergeant Abdullah Erdoğan and Akar's aide-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonel Levent Türkkan entered the room. Akar was handcuffed with plastic clamps and his mouth was taped. According to allegations, Levent Türkkan threatened Hulusi Akar with a handgun. Akar did not step back, and asked them to take off the cuffs. With Dişli's approval, the plastic cuffs on Akar's hand were cut off.⁶⁰

Dişli, on the other hand, stated at the prosecutor's office that he was a victim, he was threatened by the putschists, he resisted those who wanted to seize Akar forcefully, and he was detained and taken to Akıncı Air Base.⁶¹

At 21:08 Land Forces Commander Çolak entered Land Aviation Command.⁶²

At 21:20 Colonel Alakuş and his team arrived at the General Staff Headquarters. Two minutes later a group of putschists, among whom was aide-de-camp Major Mehmet Akkurt, entered Deputy Chief Güler's office and seized him.⁶³

At 21:30, as the putschist soldiers were outside trying to take away Deputy Chief Güler in a car, they faced resistance from Guard Brigade Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Osman Tolga Kılınçarslan. According to the indictment, Güler's aide-de-camp Major Akkurt got out of the car, shot three times at Kılınçarslan and wounded him. In response to this, Gate Security Duty Officer Lieutenant Muhammet Reşit Budak shot at Major Akkurt and killed him.⁶⁴ After the skirmish, Deputy Chief Güler was put in an ambulance at 21:33 and sent back to General Staff Headquarters.

At around 21:30 General Staff Current Operations Department Head Staff Officer Colonel Osman Kardal seized the Armed Forces Command Operations Center (SKKHM). At about the same time, General Staff General-Admiral Department Head Colonel Cemil Turhan came to the Communications Center with some Special Forces staff. They seized it and started sending orders through the Message and Document Distribution System (MEDAS).⁶⁵ First of all, the message "Preparation Warning and Unit Transfers" was signed by Colonel Kardal as the Armed Forces Command Operations Center (SKKHM) Head and by Major Erhan Metin as Executive Officer and sent to the address "MAGG 5101" at 21:30, July 15, 2016.⁶⁶ In his statement at the prosecutor's office Turhan said that

60] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 678.

61] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 815–816

62] "Land Forces Command Indictment," "Darbenin helikopter üssünde az kalsın..." Sedat Ergin, [... should stay at the helicopter base of the coup], Hürriyet, 25 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/sedat-ergin/darbenin-helikopter-ussunde-az-kalsin-40468738>

63] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 679.

64] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 679–680.

65] MEDAS (Messaging and Document Distribution Network) is document managing system used internally by the Turkish military to distribute documents and messages.

66] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 680.



Brigadier General Mehmet Dişli, the alleged putschist, is brother of Şaban Dişli, senior official of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government. He has been cryptic in his testimony.

the CD that had the orders on it was brought in by Deputy Chief Güler's aide-de-camp Major Akkurt at 20:00 and he sent it to units when he was told that it was Güler's order.⁶⁷

At 21:37 the message "Armored Communications Vehicle Transfer" was sent to numerous addresses.⁶⁸

At 21:45 Land Forces Commander Çolak and Staff Officer Major-General Uyar, along with their aides-de-camp, returned from the inspection at Land Aviation Command and entered General Staff Headquarters. There they were seized by troops from Special Forces. Land Forces Command Security Head Captain Burak Akın and Sergeant Bülent Aydın in his security detail intervened in the incident, were shot by the putschists, and were taken to hospital. Sergeant Aydın lost his life.⁶⁹

At 21:52 a message with the title "Appointment" was sent to the headquarters, as well as commands with the signatures of Mehmet Partigöç as Staff Planning and Management Department Head and Cemil Turhan as General-Admiral Department Head Colonel.⁷⁰

At 22:04 Ankara Garrison Commander Major-General Metin Gürak was seized by the putschist Special Forces team at the security gate.⁷¹

At 22:08 an F-16 fighter jet took off from Akıncı Air Base started to fly low as part of coup.⁷² Four F-16 jets took off eight minutes later. At 22:17 Land Forces Commander Çolak, General İhsan Uyar, and General Staff Head of Public Relations Brigadier-General Ertuğrul Gazi Özkürkçü were put in a helicopter and taken to Akıncı Air Base.⁷³

At 22:21 a message titled "State of Emergency Instructions" was sent to all government ministries.⁷⁴ All these messages were received by related units between 21:43 and 22:55.

At 23:02 Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım called in to NTV live and said that there was an attempt by a group in the military and it could not be called a coup proper.⁷⁵ This was

67] "Darbe mesajları ve sıkıyönetim direktifi Hakan Fidan Genelkurmaydayken gönderildi." [Coup messages and state of emergency directives were sent when Hakan Fidan was at the General Staff], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 28 November 2016, <http://odatv.com/darbe-mesajlari-ve-sikiyonetim-direktifi-hakan-fidan-genelkurmaydayken-gonderildi-2811161200.html>

68] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 680.

69] "Salih Zeki Çolak'ın ifadesi, July 15 Main Indictment," p. 495, p. 681.

70] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 680.

71] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 682.

72] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 255.

73] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 682.

74] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 681.

75] "15 Temmuz akşamı Başbakan Binali Yıldırım'ın Canlı Yayında Darbe Açıklaması," [Live coup announcement by Prime Minister Yıldırım on July 15 night], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBRmv9zX8Bk> (Last accessed June 4, 2017.)



Erdoğan appeared on CNN Türk for the first time after having gone missing for unusually long five days and called on people to take to streets.

the first announcement from the government.

At 23:04 Chief Akar was taken to Akıncı Air Base by helicopter. Mehmet Dişli was present in the helicopter.⁷⁶

At 23:37 Deputy Chief Güler, with his hands cuffed, was put in a helicopter and taken to Akıncı Air Base.⁷⁷

At 23:50 the coup declaration was read out on the state-run TRT television channel.⁷⁸

At 00:24 President Erdoğan called CNN Türk on the FaceTime application and announced first that this was an attempt by a small minority group. Soon afterwards he referred to the Gülen movement and claimed that they were behind the putschists. Erdoğan called the people to the streets.⁷⁹

At 00:52 tanks belonging to the 28th Armored Division Command came to stand in front of the south security gates of General Staff Headquarters.⁸⁰ At 02:21 civilians who had taken to the streets at Erdoğan's call were seen to enter from the east gate into the General Staff Barracks and then into the headquarters.⁸¹ Four minutes later people pulled down the big iron gate and entered the barracks. About 50 civilians started shouting slogans and walking on the floors. Soldiers shot at and killed some of the civilians.

From 02:29 onwards, 161 trainees from the Turkish Military Academy were dropped at the General Staff Barracks in seven sorties.⁸² However, as time rolled on, the number of civilians increased and disorder began to erupt.

At about 05:30 the power line that fed eight surveillance cameras inside General Staff Headquarters was cut and camera recording was prevented.⁸³

At 06:11 some putschist troops crushed under tanks the memory cards that had been recording the videos of the General Staff Headquarters building and burned them one hour later.⁸⁴

At 10:00 some of the troops who recognized that the attempt was failing started to desert first their sentry boxes, the security gates in the north and south, and then, at 10:22, the barracks.⁸⁵ At 13:22 procedures started for detaining staff, especially from the Special Forces.

76] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 683.

77] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 684.

78] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 684.

79] "Son Dakika Cumhurbaşkanı CNN Türk Canlı Yayın!," [Breaking news President CNN Turk Live!], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd1DvDrv3EQ>, (Last accessed June 4, 2017.)

80] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 685.

81] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 685.

82] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 685.

83] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 686.

84] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 686.

85] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 687.

2.1.1 Staff And Equipment Inventory And Civilian Deaths Of The Coup Attempt

Ten civilians were killed in the headquarters in addition to Land Forces Command security guard Bülent Aydın. The only putschist that was killed was Deputy Chief Güler's aide-de-camp Major Akkurt.⁸⁶

According to the July 15 Main Case Indictment, more than 8,000 staff, 35 airplanes, 37 helicopters, 74 tanks and 246 armored vehicles were used in the coup attempt.⁸⁷ Of the military staff, 1,676 were enlisted privates and 1,214 were military students.⁸⁸

During the coup attempt, a total of 249 people who resisted the coup lost their lives, 173 of whom were civilians, 4 were soldiers, and 63 were police officers. The wounded numbered 2,735, 154 of whom were police officers, 23 were soldiers, and the rest civilians.⁸⁹ General Staff Acting Chief General Ümit Dündar made an official announcement on the morning of July 16, 2016 that 104 putschist troops had been killed.⁹⁰ Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, on the other hand, announced on 17 August 2016 that the number of putschist troops killed was 36.⁹¹

2.1.2 Questions Still Unanswered

1. Although Major O.K., who provided the intelligence specifically indicated that he went to the MİT and informed them of the coup,⁹² why did Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar⁹³ and MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan⁹⁴ say in the written statements which they sent to the Parliamentary Commission, "It was not a tip about a coup. It was about the kidnapping of the MİT Undersecretary"? Who then is telling the truth? The major or the

86] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 688–689.

87] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 690.

88] "Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri'nin 27 Temmuz 2016 tarihli resmi açıklaması"; "TSK, darbe girişimine katılan personel sayısını açıkladı," [Official statement by Turkish Armed Forces on 27 June 2016; The TSK announced the number of staff participating in the coup], NTV, 27 July 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/tsk-darbe-girisimine-katilan-personel-sayisini-acikladi.ns92udU75k2vw-1OIEK4gQ>

89] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 690.

90] "Org. Dündar: 104 darbeci öldürüldü, 1,564 kişi tutuklandı," [Gen. Dündar: 104 putschists killed, 1,564 arrested], CNN Türk, 16 July 2016, <http://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/org-dundar-104-darbeci-olduruldu-1564-kisi-tutuklandi>

91] "Başbakan açıkladı: Kaç darbeci öldürüldü?" [Prime Minister announced: How many putschists were killed?], İhlas Haber Ajansı, 17 August 2016, <http://www.ih.com.tr/haber-basbakan-acikladi-kac-darbeci-olduruldu-580952/>

92] "İşte o binbaşının ifadesi," [Here's the major's testimony], Yeni Şafak, 20 May 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/iste-o-binbasinin-ifadesi-2671698>; "O binbaşı anlattı: Kod adım Tarık," [The major spoke: My code name is Tarık], Hürriyet, 29 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-binbasi-anlatti-kod-adim-tarik-40472736>

93] "Hulusi Akar'ın darbe komisyonuna verdiği yanıtlara NTV ulaştı", [NTV got hold of the responses Hulusi Akar gave to coup commission], NTV, 30 May 2017, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/hulusi-akar-in-darbe-komisyonuna-verdigi-yanit-lara-ntv-ulasti%2cPU0hYXrkHUaU4q_4R1RhWg

94] "MİT'in Darbe Komisyonu'na gönderdiği raporun tam metni," [Full text of the report MİT submitted to Parliamentary Coup Commission], Habertürk, 26 May 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonusuna-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>

Akar-Fidan pair?

2. It has been revealed that Major O.K. gave his testimony on August 11, 2016 to the then Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor Harun Kodalak and Deputy Chief Prosecutor Necip Cem İşçimen, who carried out the July 15 Main Case investigation.⁹⁵ Why is the record of the statement not included in the indictment?

3. Why were Chief Public Prosecutor Harun Kodalak and Deputy Chief prosecutor Necip Cem İşçimen, who took Major O.K.'s statement relieved of duty, demoted, and assigned to lower-ranked postings?

4. When prosecutor Alparслан Karabay, who wrote the indictment about Land Aviation Command where Major O.K. worked, wanted to get a statement from O.K.,⁹⁶ who had now become a MİT staff member, why was his request rejected? Why does MİT (the National Intelligence Service) not allow the major to speak?

5. Why was Major O.K. relieved of his duty in the Armed Forces (TSK) after the coup attempt?⁹⁷ Why was he re-instated? Why was he then transferred to MİT?

6. What was the reason the major went to MİT rather than to Chief of the General Staff Akar?

7. Chief Akar says that during his meeting with MİT Undersecretary Fidan in his headquarters at 18:10 the information could have pointed to a much bigger conspiracy and states that he thus banned tanks and armored vehicles in Etimesgut Armored Units School from leaving the barracks. Why then did he not inform Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal, Naval Forces Commander Bülent Bostanoğlu, Special Forces Commander Zeki Aksakallı and Commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces Galip Mendi who were at weddings that night, and make sure they were safe and secure?

8. Why did MİT Undersecretary Fidan go to the General Staff after receiving information that he would be kidnapped? Was the General Staff safer for him?

9. Why did the putschist troops not seize MİT Undersecretary Fidan when he was already in the headquarters? Why did the Special Forces team act after Fidan left the building?

10. Why did Land Forces Commander Çolak, who checked the Land Aviation Academy, report that “there is nothing unusual and no extra activity here”? The indictment says that “the security footage has shown that the Land Forces Commander and the delegation escorting him came from the direction of Land Aviation Command Headquarters in four

95] “O binbaşı anlattı: Kod adım Tarık,” [The major spoke: My code name is Tarık], Hürriyet, 29 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-binbasi-anlatti-kod-adim-tarik-40472736>

96] “Darbe ihbarcısı subay sır oldu,” Cumhuriyet, 19 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/742897/Darbe_ihbarcisi_subay_sir_oldu.html ; “Darbeyi bildiren binbaşının ismi ne ve şimdi nerede?” [What is the name of the major who informed of the coup and where is he now?] Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 10 March 2017, <http://odatv.com/yazar/muyesser-yildiz/darbeyi-bildiren-binbasinin-ismi-ne-ve-simdi-nerede-1003171200.html>

97] Ibid.



Yaşar Güler, deputy chief of the Gen. Chief of staff, was taken under detention. He was alleged to have issued marshal orders against the government on July 15 through his aide-de-camp who was killed.

official cars, drove past the tarmac, and went to the area of the Land Aviation Academy Maintenance Command hangar and the safety hangar for CH-47 helicopters, and at 19:58 one T-29 ATAK and three AH-1W helicopters were seen on the apron in front of the attack hangar.”⁹⁸ How did Çolak fail to see this preparation? If he saw it, why didn’t he report it?

11. According to the Land Aviation Command Indictment, attacks were launched by helicopters from this base at the premises of the Presidential Palace and the General Staff Headquarters, the Police Headquarters, the MİT Compound, Gölbaşı Special Forces Command, the TRT building and premises and the TÜRKSAT compound in Ankara. The indictment says that 28 people were killed in these attacks and 276 were wounded. All these events started after Çolak reported everything ‘clear’ and left the division. So why isn’t Çolak among the suspects of the coup attempt? Why isn’t there an investigation into whether he cooperated with the putschists and overlooked the preparations for the coup attempt?

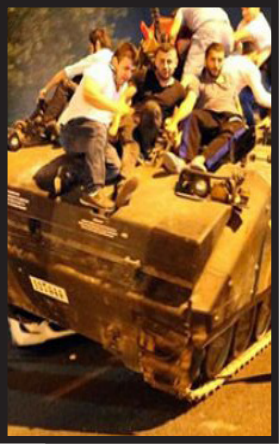
12. Why didn’t Fidan and Akar accept the invitation to testify that was sent by the Parliamentary Commission? Why did they avoid answering questions? Why did they feel they had to send written statements one after another once Major O.K.’s statements appeared on the media?

13. The indictments, Akar, the generals, and the National Intelligence Service claim that the coup was supposed to commence at 03:00 on July 16, 2016, but the putschists moved the coup to 20:30 on July 15 once they realized that they were exposed. However, there is no hard evidence about how, where, and by whom this decision was made. Although there was supposed to be a council called “The Council of Peace in the Homeland” that had 38 members, it is claimed that such an important decision was taken by some of the putschists on the spur of the moment. Who exactly made this decision? Who was he with? How did he do it? Now that Akın Öztürk, former commander of the Air Force, is claimed to be the head of the council, surely Öztürk must have made this decision, or at least shouldn’t he have been consulted with? There is no information or document in the indictment that indicates any such phone call was made to or by him. There is not a single clue in the witness testimonies or suspects’ statements about the issue.

14. How did a 33-strong Special Forces staff incapacitate the General Staff barracks? The Troops of Guardsmen are under Deputy Chief Güler, so was it neglect on his part?

15. One of the most critical events of the night of July 15 was the transmission of state of emergency instructions from the General Staff to all military units, which led some soldiers to think that the coup was performed in the chain of command. Detained suspect

⁹⁸ “Land Forces Command Indictment,” p. 192; “AVM’de darbe talimatı beklemek,” [Waiting for coup directives at the mall], Sedat Ergin, Hürriyet, 28 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/sedat-ergin/avmde-darbe-talimati-beklemek-40472109>



Military mobilization in July 15 events was very limited to qualify even as a coup attempt according to military experts. The official account stated only 1.5 percent of military force was deployed, and many were cadets.

Colonel Cemil Turhan, accused of having signed the state of emergency instructions and messages, claimed that he transmitted the messages under orders from Deputy Chief Güler. In his statement at the prosecutor's office, Turhan said,⁹⁹ "Deputy Chief Güler's aide-de-camp Major Mehmet Akkurt brought me a CD at around 20:00 on July 15 when there were rehearsals of the YAŞ meeting. He told me it was Güler's orders and asked me to send the five messages and state of emergency instructions in it. I sent these messages at about 20:30. Then I notified Mehmet Akkurt that the state of emergency instructions were not within my field. When he restated that it was the commander's order I had to send it. I carried out the order and transmitted the instructions to related military units."¹⁰⁰ Was Güler aware of these messages and the state of emergency instructions? Was it Güler who gave these orders?

16. The indictment claims that state of emergency instructions started to be sent at 21:30, while Colonel Turhan says that he "sent them at about 20:30." Which one is correct?

17. Aide-de-camp Major Akkurt, who is alleged to have brought the orders to send the state of emergency instructions from Deputy Chief Güler, is the only putschist who was killed in the General Staff Headquarters that night. If it was Güler who sent the instructions as alleged, Major Akkurt was the only witness to the incident. Are there any suspicions about the death of Major Akkurt?

18. Brigadier-General Mehmet Partigöç, who is alleged to have his signature on the state of emergency instructions sent from the General Staff, said in his defense during the trial that "I didn't sign anything. I didn't sign anything like this and I didn't see it. Cemil Turhan is my departmental head; if he says that he showed them to me, I'll accept the accusations."¹⁰¹ Is it possible that some other person signed the instructions?

19. There is security camera footage of Chief of the General Staff Akar's being taken out of the General Staff Headquarters and taken to Akıncı Air Base. In the footage, soldiers are walking along with Akar and he does not seem to be taken forcefully. Why was it that he was so calm? Was Akar detained or was he taken to Akıncı Air Base because it was safer as alleged? Some of the arrested officers who are being tried on coup charges testified that Akar was not detained and even got angry at the helicopter pilot for coming late.¹⁰²⁻¹⁰³ Another proof that Akar was not placed in custody is the fact that he was allowed to talk to his wife. Akar stated in his testimony, "I talked to my wife on the military phone and

99] "15 Temmuz çatı davasında sanık Albay Cemil Turhan: Sıkıyönetim direktiflerini Yaşar Güler'in emri dahilinde çektim," [Suspect Cemil Turhan in July 15 main indictment: I sent the emergency directives under orders from Yaşar Güler], T24 23 May 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/15-Temmuz-cati-davasinda-sanik-albay-cemil-turhan-sikiyonetim-direktifleri-ni-yasar-gulerin-emri-dahilinde-cektim,405517>

100] "July 15 Main Indictment," p. 706.

101] "Partigöç meydan okudu: Hulusi Akar çıkıp konuşsun," [Partigöç challenged: Hulusi Akar should come out and speak], TR7/24, 29 May 2017, http://www.tr724.com/partigoc-meydan-okudu-hulusi-akar-cikip-konussun/?utm_content=buffer1f7e2&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

102] 15 July'da MİT'e ihbarda bulunan Binbaşı O.K. gerçekte kim? [Who is that major O.K. who informed the MİT on July 15], Kronos.news, 11 June 2017, <http://www.kronos.news/tr/15-Julyda-mite-ihbarda-bulunan-binbasi-o-k-gercekte-kim/>

103] Darbecisini bekleyen komutan. [The commander who awaits his putschist], 10 June 2017, <http://www.ikincibolge.net/yazarlar/muyesser-yildiz/darbecisini-bekleyen-komutan/8891/>

told her that I am well and stationed at Akıncı Air Base and asked them to take real care of themselves. After everything was said and done, I realized that my wife shared this information with the authorities.”¹⁰⁴

20. Ufuk Çiçek, a police officer at Ankara Province Police Headquarters Traffic Supervision Bureau, was a witness who said at the prosecutor’s office that “Mehmet Partigöç came to us and said, ‘There’ll be an attack on the commander from the outside; take precautions.’”¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Ahmet Topacık, another police officer at Ankara Province Police Headquarters Department of Protecting State Officials, told in his statement as a witness that at around 21:00 or 21:05, “Brigadier-General Mehmet Partigöç, whose name I learned later, came to us and stated there would be an attack on the General Staff Headquarters.”¹⁰⁶ Why did Partigöç warn the soldiers and police officers of such an attack immediately before the Special Forces entered the headquarters when he was alleged to be one of the highest commanders in the putschist Council of Peace in the Homeland? Why would a putschist general ever do such a thing that would disrupt the operation?

21. The General Staff Department of Public Relations made an announcement on July 27, 2016 that 8,651 military staff had taken part in the July 15 coup attempt. The number was declared to account for 1.5 percent of the present Armed Forces personnel. Minister of National Defense Fikri Işık, on the other hand, stated on December 10, 2016 that “22,085 people have been purged from the TSK.” Minister Işık said that 16,409 of these were military students. If 8,651 military staff took part in the coup attempt, who were the 13,500 military staff members that were purged? Why were they purged? While the General Staff’s announcement said that 1,214 military cadets participated in the coup, the Minister of National Defense said 16,409 students were discharged from schools. For what reasons were the other fifteen thousand students punished?

22. An announcement from the General Staff on July 27, 2016 said, “Only 1.5 percent of TSK staff took part in the coup attempt. So the numbers prove that the great majority of the TSK fiercely resisted the heinous coup attempt.”¹⁰⁷ If so, why were 168 generals and 6,810 colonels and officers of lower ranks arrested for the coup?¹⁰⁸ The General Staff’s press release dated September 9, 2016 stated that the number of military staff purged from the TSK was 21,320.¹⁰⁹ Why were so many soldiers purged?

104] Akar’ın ifadesi ortaya çıktı. [Akar’s statement came to light], Hürriyet, 25 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-genelkurmay-baskaninin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40168493>

105] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 622.

106] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 624–625.

107] “TSK darbe girişimine kaç askerin katıldığını açıkladı,” [The TSK announced how many soldiers participated in the coup], Vatan, 27 July 2016, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/tsk-darbe-girisimine-kac-askerin-katildigini-acikladi-970987-gundem/>

108] The number of generals in custody was 168 in July 2017 when this report was written “Bekir Bozdağ son rakamı açıkladı,” [Bekir Bozdağ announced the latest figure], Sözcü, 6 May 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/bekir-bozdag-son-rakami-acikladi-1834818/>

109] “Darbe girişimi sonrası TSK’dan 21 bin 320 personel ihraç edildi,” [21,320 staff dismissed from TSK after coup attempt], Independent Media Platform, 9 September 2016, <http://imp-news.com/tr/news/21056/tskdan-210-bin-320-personeel-ihrac-edildi>

23. Detained Major-General İlhan Talu, who was the Staff Department Head at the time, said in the letter¹¹⁰ he sent to CHP lawmaker Dursun Çiçek that 14 generals and admirals were not promoted in the 2015 YAŞ meeting in compliance with the report from the MİT that stated that they were affiliated with the Gülen movement. If the number is this low, what are the grounds for accusing 168 generals and admirals of being “Gülenists”? Is it possible that the number skyrocketed in a single year? If the justification is the coup attempt, why was it declared that only 1.5 percent of the army took part in it? Also, if the number of Gülen sympathizers was so low, can it be said that the remaining 154 generals had different worldviews?

24. Ümit Dündar, then acting General Chief of Staff and the commander of the 1st Army stated that the number of the putschists killed was 104. Months later, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım announced the number was 36. Why is there so much difference between these two figures?

2.2 Akıncı Air Base: The Epicenter Of The Coup Attempt

One of the main bases where the July 15 coup attempt was commanded was Akıncı 4th Main Jet Base Command.¹¹¹ A group of soldiers, some in plain clothes, were led from the 143rd Fleet. The putschist troops bombarded the Parliament, the bridge crossing near the presidential palace (15 were killed), Ankara Province Police Headquarters (2 were killed), Gölbaşı Police Headquarters Special Operations Department building (44 officers were killed), Police Headquarters Aviation Department (7 officers were killed), and TÜRKSAT facilities with the airplanes and helicopters that flew from Akıncı Air Base. Also, the National Intelligence Agency (MİT) building was raked with gunfire on orders from Akıncı Air Base. Nine civilians who were protesting in front of the security gate of the base were shot and killed.

Another important detail that makes Akıncı Air Base important is that it is where several high-ranking officers and commanders were kept hostage. Among the 22 high-ranking generals and officials who were kidnapped and taken hostage on the coup night were Presidency Secretary-General Fahri Kasırga, Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler, Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal, who was taken captive in Eskişehir Combatant Air Force and Air Missile Defense Commander Major-General Mehmet Şanver’s daughter’s wedding in Istanbul, Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak, Commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces Galip Mendi who was taken hostage at the wedding hall in Ankara Gazi Officers’ Club, and Land Forces Training and Doctrine Commander Kamil Başoğlu.¹¹²

According to the findings of the Ankara Prosecutor’s Office, the number of soldiers at the Akıncı Air Base who took part in the coup attempt on July 16, 2016 was 481. The group included a four-star general, 6 lieutenant generals, 18 brigadier generals, 22 colonels, 26 lieutenant colonels, 33 majors, 56 captains, 62 lieutenants, 115 second lieutenants, and 131 sergeants and specialized sergeants. They are held responsible for the deaths of 77 people

110] “Bir komutanın cezaevi mektubu,” [A commander’s letter from prison], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 19 August 2016, <http://www.sozcü.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/bir-komutanin-cezaevi-mektubu-1357139/>

111] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 384.

112] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 333–334.



**Mehmet
Şanver**

and the injuries of 222 people.¹¹³

Akıncı Air Base Commander Hakan Evrim said in his statement at the prosecutor's office that he was threatened at gunpoint by putschist commandos but did not take part in the coup, yet he issued several orders in accordance with their directives.¹¹⁴ The operations commander on the Akıncı Air Base was Colonel Ahmet Özçetin, who is alleged to have ordered the planes to make the assaults. The commander of the 141st fleet, where the flights and assaults were coordinated, was Lieutenant-Colonel Hakan Karakuş (Akın Öztürk's son-in-law), and the commander of the 143rd fleet was Major Mustafa Azimetli.

According to Lieutenant-Colonel Nihat Altuntop, who tried to hinder the coup attempt from the control tower and notified a friend of his who used to work as MİT department head, Özçetin played an active role in the coup and commanded and controlled the planes that flew from the Akıncı Air Base in person. He organized the kidnapping of anti-coup commanders and their accommodation.¹¹⁵

On July 15, 2016, military staff reinforcements were brought to Akıncı Air Base, the headquarters of the coup, from the General Staff Headquarters, Air, Land and Navy Commands, Turkish Gendarmerie Forces Command, Special Forces Command, Relief Works Division, Land Forces MEBS Command, Konya MAK team, and Istanbul SAT Command. Moreover, pilots and F16s from Diyarbakır, Kayseri and Adana gave support.¹¹⁶ The pilots who wanted to perform a duty on the coup day were called to Akıncı Air Base, and they had a meeting at the 141st Fleet. At the meeting, Lieutenant-Colonel Hakan Karakuş said that they would conduct a counter-terrorism operation, it was a secret mission, and no information should be leaked.¹¹⁷

2.2.1 Thirty-Three Special Forces Soldiers Met At Akıncı Air Base And Raided The General Staff

Thirty-three Special Forces Command (ÖKK) members met at Akıncı 4th Main Jet Base Command and set off on a bus at 20:23. The soldiers reached the General Staff Headquarters at 21:20.¹¹⁸ According to his statement at the hearing, the team commander General Staff Colonel Fırat Alakuş got his orders from ÖKK commander Major-General Zekai Aksakallı. He thought he was acting upon intelligence and his mission was to take Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar to Akıncı Air Base and maintain his security. In his statement at the hearing, Alakuş said, "We entered General Staff Headquarters and deployed to the command floor where our Chief of the General Staff was located. First, we secured the perimeter on the ground floor. During the deployment, I told the personnel that this was no longer a close protection exercise but that we were taking precautions against a sensitive terror threat."¹¹⁹

113] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 328–329.

114] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 535.

115] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 4584–4585.

116] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 239.

117] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 613.

118] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 253.

119] "Genelkurmay Başkanı'nın 'ürkütücü' dediği komutan: Darbe123 bilgisayar şifrem", [Commander of whom COS says is 'frightening: Darbe123 (coup123) is my computer password], Cumhuriyet, 25 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/747724/Genelkurmay_Baskani_nin_urkutucu_dedigi_komutan_Darbe123_bilgisayar_sifrem.html

When they went up to the command floor at 21:22, Alakuş noticed that Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar was in front of his office, and at this time learned that Deputy Chief Yaşar Güler had been evacuated upon Akar's orders. Alakuş recounted these moments as follows: "Soon afterwards, sounds of gunfire started to come from the outside. I said our priority was our Chief of the General Staff. I ordered the men to take security precautions at the entrances to the command floor. When I went to entrance gate A and asked, 'What's happening?' they said, 'Sir, the gunfire sounds are coming from nearby. At that moment, our Chief of the General Staff's executive assistant came and said, 'Land Forces Commander has come in through the entrance gate; he's coming here. We have to ensure that he comes in immediately.' As the Land Forces Commander was entering, we heard gunfire. Our Land Forces Commander and others near him lay on the ground. We had bullet-proof vests. We went next to them to make them secure. The Chief of the General Staff's aide-de-camp Sergeant Serhat came in and said, 'Sir, let's take him to the Deputy Chief's office.' And we quickly took our commander and the delegation with him to the deputy's office.

"Then I went downstairs again. I tried to understand what was happening outside but it was chaotic. I did not step outside. First and foremost, I tried to make sure that it was secure inside the headquarters. Sergeant Serhat came again and said, 'My commander has given an order. A helicopter will come soon. He is to be evacuated.' I went upstairs to provide close protection, where Halit, one of my men, came and said, 'Sir, I couldn't understand exactly but the Deputy Chief's car has been shot at. One man has been killed, and another, wounded. They took the commander to a safe location.' I said six men would be enough to evacuate our Chief of the General Staff. We took precautions so that our commander could leave. Afterwards Hulusi Akar, Mehmet Dişli and an aide-de-camp went out of the office. I remember him asking for his cap. He quickly walked downstairs as he talked to Mehmet Dişli. We deployed to a helicopter on Ayyıldız Street and I ordered three men to go along with the commander."¹²⁰

Alakuş said that he saw tanks entering the General Staff Headquarters, and when he saw on TV that the declaration of the coup attempt was being read, he realized the truth, and after the president's announcement, he understood that he had been pushed into a setup. Alakuş continued in his statement, "As a precaution I started to move the staff toward the entrance of the headquarters. Neither I nor my men shot at the police or the civilians. We just carried out the orders. I gathered my men and said, 'We've completed our duty successfully. This is a coup attempt. We won't be a part of it. We won't shoot at the police or the people and then surrender.'"

Colonel Alakuş says he thought for a time that the coup order had come from the Chief of the General Staff Akar, who was not handcuffed on the way to Akıncı Air Base and all of whose requests were carried out.¹²¹

120] "Orgeneral Akar'ın "Ürkütücü" Dediği Komutan Fırat Alakuş Savunma Yaptı: Tuzağa Düşürüldük", [Commander whom General Akar described as "frightening" made statement: We've been ambushed], haberler.com, 25 May 2017, <https://www.haberler.com/orgeneral-akar-in-urkutucu-dedigi-komutan-firat-9656485-haberi/>

121] "Darbe sanığı generalden çarpıcı iddia: FETÖ'cülerin listesi şu anda AKP milletvekili...", [Striking claim from the coup suspect general: A list of FETO perpetrators are now AKP lawmakers ...], Odatv, 25 May 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akarin-urkutucu-yuzu-vardi-dedigi-isimden-cok-konusulacak-iddialar-2505171200.html>

2.2.2 Transfer Of Chief Of The General Staff Akar And Other Commanders To Akıncı Air Base

At about 23:00 on the night of July 15, Chief of the General Staff Akar, who was accompanied by Lieutenant-General Dişli and four Special Forces (ÖKK) members, was put on a helicopter flown by Halil Gül and taken to Akıncı Air Base. He was put in a minibus there and taken to the command room in the base headquarters, around which soldiers in plain and official clothes were stationed with their arms. According to Mehmet Dişli's statements, with whom he stayed inside the room, Akar watched the developments on the TV and looked angry. A while later Rear Admiral Ömer Faruk Harmancık, Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim and a colonel he did not know entered the room. When Akar asked, "What's happening?" Ömer Faruk Harmancık said that the first declaration had been read and they wanted the second declaration, which he pointed at with his finger, to be read by Akar. He said the people would calm down if Akar read the declaration. Akar rejected the request, saying, "Are you crazy? Does such a thing make any sense in this era?"¹²²



Abdullah Gül

Meanwhile, Akın Öztürk, former commander of the air forces and member of the Supreme Military Council (YAŞ), was in a military boarding house on the Akıncı Air Base where his daughter was staying. He had learned about the military activity from Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal in their phone conversation and come to the base. When he entered the room where Akar was waiting, he saw in the room Çiğli Main Jet Base Commander Air Lieutenant-General Kubilay Selçuk, North Territorial Waters Chief of Staff Rear Admiral Ömer Faruk Harmancık, Akıncı Air Base Commander Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim and AKP Vice Chairman Şaban Dişli's brother Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli. To Öztürk, Akar was comfortably sitting in an armchair.¹²³ When Öztürk asked Akar what was happening, Akar said that the people in the room had the intention of a coup and asked Öztürk to convince them to stop. So Öztürk told them that what they were doing was wrong.



Ahmet Davutoğlu

Chief of the General Staff Akar later said that topics that caused uneasiness could be solved by reaching an agreement with all sections of the society and such problems could be settled by talking to people like former president Abdullah Gül and former prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, the opposition, NGOs, and opinion leaders. To Akar, at this moment Hakan Evrim said, "We can have you talk with our opinion leader Fethullah Gülen." However, when the statements of Dişli, Öztürk, Selçuk and Harmancık, who were the other people said to be in the room, were revealed in the Akıncı Air Base Indictment, none of them claimed to have heard any such expression. Hakan Evrim said in his statements at the prosecutor's office and the hearing, "Because I was the host, I said to Akar, 'If there is anyone in the ruling party, the opposition, the NGOs or other opinion leaders you want to talk to, we can put you through to them.'"¹²⁴

122] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 713.

123] "Akın Öztürk hava hareketliliğini televizyondan öğrenmiş," [Akın Öztürk learned about irregular aviation activity from TV], Anadolu Ajansı, 1 Mart 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/15-July-darbe-girisimi/akin-ozturk-hava-hareketliliğini-televizyondan-ogrenmis/785683>

124] "Hulusi Akar'ın darbe gecesi çözüm için Gül ve Davutoğlu'nu işaret ettiği iddia edildi," [It is claimed that Hulusi Akar referred to Gül and Davutoğlu for a resolution on coup night], Siyasi Haber, 30 October 2017, <http://siyasihaber3.org/hulusi-akarın-darbe-gecesi-cozum-icin-gul-ve-davutoglu-ny-isaret-ettigi-iddia-edildi>

One of the most important justifications for associating the Gülen Movement with the July 15 coup attempt and even declaring it a terrorist organization was the claim that Hakan Evrim told the Chief of the General Staff Akar ‘We can have you talk with our opinion leader Fethullah Gülen.’ However, this claim of Akar was refuted by all the other witnesses. Indeed, Prime Minister Yıldırım specifically pointed out this expression when he announced who was behind the coup. Yıldırım said, “Even the Chief of the General Staff says in his statement that this is a terrorist organization. They said to him at Akıncı Air Base, ‘We can have you talk with our opinion leader Fethullah Gülen,’ but the commander rejected it. There are other expressions too. So it is no longer a mystery that it is a terrorist organization and Gülen is its leader.”¹²⁵

The officers in Akar’s room asked for his permission and then left. Only Akar, Dişli and Öztürk remained. As he was following the developments on the TV, Akar told Öztürk that this thing should be brought to an end. Akar asked Öztürk to go and talk with the putschists and convince them to end the attempt. First Akın Öztürk and then Mehmet Dişli left the room. Akın Öztürk went over to the area where the putschists were said to be and tried to convince them. Dişli also talked to the same generals several times.¹²⁶

Later that night other high-ranking officers and commanders started to be taken captive and brought to Akıncı Air Base. Presidency Secretary-General Fahri Kasırga was taken from entrance gate of the former presidential residence No 25; Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler and Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak, from their offices in the General Staff Headquarters; Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal and Major-General Mehmet Şanver, from a wedding in Istanbul; and Commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces Galip Mendi, from a wedding in Ankara Gazi Officers’ Club. A total of 20 high-ranking officers were held in different rooms. Some of them had their hands or arms tied and eyes blindfolded.¹²⁷

Akın Öztürk spent the night in the room with Akar. He occasionally went out to the putschist soldiers in the 143th Fleet, told them what they were doing was wrong, and then came back. However, these interactions would not convince the putschists. According to Öztürk, he only managed to convince the putschist soldiers to give up the coup attempt in his fifth visit before sunrise.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler was dragged out of his office, his hands tied, mouth taped and head bagged, by soldiers under Mehmet Akkurt’s command. After being kept on the ground floor of a building, he was transferred to Akıncı Air Base. He was kept in the same room until the morning hours.

Güler describes his rescue thus: “I gathered from the sounds that jets were flying and maneuvering at the base, attacking with heavy machine guns and bombs. I guessed that this was the armed forces reaction to the rebels. I felt relieved. During these events, I noticed

125] “Başbakan Binali Yıldırım: Uzun ve karanlık geceydi,” [PM Binali Yıldırım: It was a long and dark night], NTV, 24 July 2016, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/basbakan-binali-yildirim-uzun-ve-karanlik-geceydi,8y_zacTSJ0iRDtJY7khr9g

126] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 713–714.

127] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 333–334.

people coming in and going out and there was hectic activity. However, silence fell in the environment. Then I heard the door open and heard General Akın Öztürk's voice: 'Yaşar why are you wandering about here? I had no idea you were here.' I found out after I was rescued with an operation that the Chief of the General Staff had been kept in the next room when I was living through the experience. So my present evaluation is that it is impossible that Akın Öztürk did not know about my being there until that hour."¹²⁸

Akın Öztürk's quarters sergeant İsmail Keskin had realized that Yaşar Güler was held captive in a nearby room when he was looking for a military uniform for his commander. Here is how Keskin reported this situation to the prosecutor: "I heard the Chief of the General Staff say 'Son, it's almost morning, get me in touch with the prime minister, with the president, and end all this.' When the group was leaving, I saw that the Land Forces Lieutenant-General said, 'Yes sir' as if in the chain of command and left. I was talking with Can Kaya. I said the person in the operations commander's room looked like the Deputy Chief of the General Staff and that he was all tied up. We gave each other knowing looks as we muttered, 'The Deputy Chief is handcuffed and the chief is here.'"¹²⁹

Deputy Chief Güler did not consider it was possible for Akın Öztürk not to notice that he was kept in the adjacent room until morning. However, it was Akın Öztürk who personally removed the blindfold from Güler's eyes. He also cut the cuffs on his wrists and ankles. Meanwhile Öztürk told Güler that he had been there since 23:00 trying to convince the putschists to stop. He said that there was an armed guard at the door and then left. Güler said afterwards in his statement, "I stayed alone in the room. The clock on the wall showed it was 11:15. I didn't open the door because of Akın Öztürk's warning about the armed guard. At about 15:30–16:00, I rose, took the phone in the room and dialed the number I had memorized. When the person stationed at the quarters recognized my voice, I told him, 'Son, tell madam that I am fine; also, call Special Forces Commander Zekai Pasha [Aksakallı].' I told him the number on the phone was 4210. Some time later Zekai Pasha called. 'What are you doing? Why don't you come and save me?' I asked. I said there was an armed guard outside and hung up."¹³⁰ [It is worth noting that Güler, who was allegedly deprived of communication capabilities, knew that Aksakallı was not detained and he was not one of the coup plotting generals. How he knew that begs further scrutiny.] "Then Akın Öztürk came in once again and said, 'It says on TV that they are looking for me. Do you know about it?' I said I hadn't turned the TV on. He said to me, 'How will we get out of this situation?' Some time later Akın Öztürk came to me again and said the men there had decided to surrender. At about 18:30 Major-General Yıldırım Güvenç and a team from special forces came to me. They said, 'Sir we are ready to take you.' Akın Öztürk entered at the moment and said, 'Let me go along with you to Ankara.' Yıldırım Pasha and Akın Öztürk said there were other hostages and they did not know their whereabouts. Then we went to the 141st Fleet in four cars. We took Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal and two other air force generals. We also went to a place—I don't know the name—to take five or six captives. When we got there, we saw 7–8 people lying on beds with their hands and feet tied. They were wearing plain

128] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 4550.

129] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 2682.

130] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 4550.

clothes but they were army and air force generals I knew. We rescued all of them and got into the vehicles. It was 19:15 when I got home.”¹³¹

Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal had been taken prisoner at a wedding in Moda, Istanbul, and brought to Akıncı Air Base on a helicopter. He was kept in a room untied. Although Ünal called Akın Öztürk as soon as he heard of the coup and asked him to check Akıncı Air Base, Akın Öztürk was not detained, which was suspicious because Ünal was a captive. In his statement at the prosecutor’s office Ünal said, “They took me to Akıncı Air Base on a helicopter. Base Operations Commander Colonel Ahmet Özçetin met me. He told me they were trying to correct settings that had gone wrong. I resisted. They locked me in a room without tying my hands or blindfolding me. Then Akın Öztürk came to the room. He told me that he had been going to the headquarters to talk the staff out of their action, the attempt was about over, and the putschists had surrendered. He came to me at about 15:30, told me he had the Deputy Chief with him and said, ‘Let’s go.’ I went to the Air Force Headquarters in my own car. I had been kept in a room in the 141st Fleet. Because the coup perpetrator Hakan Karakuş was Akın Öztürk’s son-in-law, Major Mustafa Azimetli was Akın Öztürk’s former private secretary, and Operations Commander Colonel Ahmet Özçetin was his executive secretary, I drew the conclusion that Ahmet Özçetin was the person who commanded the coup attempt operation and Akın Öztürk was in it.”¹³²

Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak was among the officers taken hostage and brought to Akıncı Air Base. Infantry Sergeant Bülent Aydın, who was in his protection detail, had been killed resisting the putschists. Çolak was brought to Akıncı Air Base on a helicopter at about 23:00 on July 15 night. He was held with hands and feet tied. Other hostage commanders were occasionally put inside the room. In the hours when the coup was ending in failure, Çolak and the other captured commanders got rid of their bonds by themselves by about 16:00 on July 16.¹³³

As Chief of the General Staff, Akar asked Mehmet Dişli and Akın Öztürk to conduct negotiations to end the coup attempt; he also summoned the generals alleged to be putschists to the room. In the room there were Lieutenant-General Kubilay Selçuk, Rear Admiral Omer Faruk Harmancık, Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim, another person whom Hulusi Akar considered to be the base commander’s aide-de-camp, Akın Öztürk and Mehmet Dişli. Akar told them about the President’s and Prime Minister’s announcements on TV, people’s resistance at the cost of their lives, and the hopelessness he saw in the eyes of the putschists when they surrendered.¹³⁴

2.2.3 Akar’s They-Will-Surrender Phone Call To Prime Minister And MİT Undersecretary

Chief Akar asked to be put through to Prime Minister or president at about 08:30–09:00. A mobile phone was brought. He talked to Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım. Akar said in his

131] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4550.

132] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 455.

133] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4555.

134] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 308–309.



statement about the phone call, “As I looked the traitors there in the eye, I said to our prime minister, ‘There won’t be any negotiation. They will surrender to military prosecutors, public prosecutors, police and military police.’ I called the MİT Undersecretary and informed him as well.”¹³⁵

Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli on the other hand described their return to Çankara Köşkü as follows: “We made a plan with the commander. According to the plan, we would go to General Staff Headquarters. He would notify the Armed Forces (TSK) that the chain of command was being taken back, all the units should return to their barracks, the president and prime minister would order the police to retreat, and administrative, judicial, and military procedures would be started. The proposal was accepted by the putschists. A while later a phone call came from the prime minister that air security had been established and the helicopters were being asked to go to Çankaya Köşkü, rather than General Staff Headquarters”¹³⁶

Akar said that Akın Öztürk wanted to go along with him when it was decided that they would go by helicopter and he rejected his offer: “Öztürk Pasha said, ‘Let me come with you sir’ when it was decided that I would be taken. Considering his status and my impressions about him throughout the night, I said it would be inappropriate and added, ‘You stay here; your daughter’s house is here.’ But he kept on insisting. We left him behind in the base building.”¹³⁷

When Chief Akar got on the helicopter, only Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli was with him. According to Dişli, they had the following dialogue before the helicopter moved: “Akar was sitting back, obviously tired. He turned to me and said, ‘Thanks, son.’ Then he asked ‘Are you ready? What are we going to say when we get there?’ I said, ‘Sir, we are going to say whatever happened.’ Once the helicopter’s engine started, we couldn’t talk because of the noise.”¹³⁸

135] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4548.

136] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 714.

137] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 309.

138] “Mehmet Dişli’ye soruldu: Ağabeyinizi neden aramadınız?”, [Mehmet Dişli was asked: Why didn’t you call your brother?], Hürriyet, Mayıs 30, 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/mehmet-disli-kendini-boyle-savundu-beni-yanlis-anlamis-olabilir-40474255>

2.2.4 Tip To National Intelligence: “The Center Of The Coup Attempt Is Akıncı Air Base”

Although all the flights had been banned by the General Staff Headquarters, air traffic activity started on Akıncı Air Base at 22:01. When he could not make any sense of jet planes soaring through Ankara skies, which was out of the ordinary, and then learned from television that the Bosphorus Bridge had been closed by soldiers, Air Traffic Lieutenant-Colonel Nihat Altuntop, who was stationed at Akıncı Air Base, called his friend Korkut Gül, a former department head at National Intelligence, at about 22:30. He said planes were taking off from Akıncı Air Base and making low flights over Ankara, and Istanbul Bosphorus bridge was closed, and asked what was happening. Gül, who said he was driving, answered, “There’s a big terrorist threat.”

When Altuntop realized that Akıncı Air Base was the center of the coup attempt, he tried to obstruct the flights and ordered his staff not to allow any take-offs. Then he called MİT official Gül at 23:10 and informed him about the situation. He told Gül that helicopters were starting to come in and heard on wireless that they were bringing in VIP hostages who would be gathered in Akıncı Air Base. Korkut Gül replied that he was going to his place of duty. However, Korkut Gül called Altuntop at 24:00 and asked him to delete their previous phone records. So Altuntop deleted all records of his talks with Korkut Gül. It is not clear why the MİT official asked for the deletion of phone records in which he talked about a “big terrorist threat.” However, at that time MİT officials were aware of the coup attempt and had warned the General Staff hours earlier so that they could take precautions.

Altuntop tried to communicate with the anti-coup forces within the base for some time. He tried to put out the lights on the runway but failed. When he refused to act according to putschists’ orders, Altuntop was arrested by two commandos sent to the tower by Colonel Ahmet Özçetin.

Altuntop reported a phone conversation with Colonel Ahmet Özçetin in his statement at the prosecutor’s office. According to his statement, he called Colonel Ahmet Özçetin on the intercom after the flights had started on the night of the events and asked, “What’s happening, sir?” Özçetin replied, “Operation Peace in the Homeland has started,” and said he would tell him about the operation when he got to the tower. Altuntop stated that Lieutenant-Colonel Hakan Alakuş and Lieutenant-Colonel Doğan, who stayed in the tower during the night flights, did everything to confuse them and tried to keep the TV off. When they turned the TV on briefly, he said they saw a caption that said F-16s had downed putschist helicopters. Lieutenant Hakan Karakuş said to him, “You see, we are on the side of anti-putschists.”¹³⁹

One of the bloodiest acts of the July 15 coup attempt was the assault on Police Headquarters Special Operations Department. Pilot Captain Uğur Uzunoğlu and Pilot Hüseyin Türk, who worked at Akıncı 4th Main Base 143rd Fleet, dropped a GBU-10 bomb on the police building from an F-16 with the tail number 93-0691 and code ASLAN-3 during the first seconds of July 16 at 00:00. Forty-four special operations officers were killed

139] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4587.



Lt.Col. Hakan Karakuş is the son-in-law of former Air Force Commander Akın Öztürk

and 36 were wounded. Pilot Uzunoğlu went on a second mission that night, this time with pilot Hasan Hüsnü Balıkçı. They dropped another GBU-10 bomb from an F-16 with the tail number 94-0105 and code ASLAN-5 at 02:35. The bomb injured 32 people. Uzunoğlu stated that he did the bombings according to the coordinates and orders he was given and that he realized it was a coup attempt when he got back to the base.¹⁴⁰

Uzunoğlu, who surrendered to the prosecutor's office several days after the event, claimed that he had been told a big anti-terrorist operation would be performed and was thus called on duty, and he did not know he had hit police officers at Police Special Operations Department. Saying that he carried out the orders given to him within the chain of command, Uzunoğlu gave an interesting detail in his statement. He said, "There were rumors before the event that non-Gülenist officers in some fleets were retiring from flights on the grounds of different health issues."¹⁴¹

That night President Erdoğan, who was the most important target of the coup attempt, was staying at a hotel in Marmaris. The order to take Erdoğan from the hotel was given by Semih , who was later killed by Sergeant Ömer Halisdemir at the Special Forces (ÖKK) gate, to Brigadier-General Gökhan Şahin Sönmezateş. "My orders were to bring the president safely to Ankara after taking him from Marmaris. We were kept waiting in Çiğli Base for four hours. We took off from the base at about 02:25. Our president left Marmaris at about 00:30. His plane took off from Dalaman at about 01:40. When all the world knew that the president was in Istanbul, when all TV stations and the Internet were broadcasting live news. ... We were isolated, focused on our mission. We were sent to Marmaris in accordance with the orders. Someone kept us waiting four hours," said Sönmezateş in his statement at the hearing on May 25, 2017. He stated that the order to wait was given by a general from Akıncı Air Base through a Lieutenant-Colonel Hüseyin. He said he did not know this person and expected the court to find the answer. Sönmezateş claimed that they were deliberately sent to a location when the president was absent from that location.¹⁴²

2.2.5. Akıncı Air Base Commander Refuted Claims About Adil Öksüz

Another important detail that makes the developments at Akıncı Air Base on the night of the coup attempt crucial was the alleged presence of certain civilians on the Akıncı Air Base, who are accused of being linked to Fethullah Gülen, thus holding the Gülen movement responsible for the coup attempt. The civilians claimed to have been present are Adil Öksüz, Kemal Batmaz, Nurettin Oruç, Harun Biniş and Hakan Çiçek.

It is claimed that Adil Öksüz was the "Air Forces Imam" and that he commanded the coup from Akıncı Air Base. The purported evidence is Hakan Evrim's statement in the Akıncı Air Base Indictment that he saw Öksüz in the mess area of the 143rd Fleet, where Lieutenant-Colonel Balıkçı was the commander. "Because I saw his pictures on the media.

140] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 1256.

141] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 1260.

142] "Sönmezateş: Emri Semih Terzi'den aldım,"[Sönmezateş: I got the order from Semih Terzi], Hürriyet, 25 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/sonmezates-emri-semih-terziden-aldim-40469865>

When I saw Adil Öksüz, he was talking to others around him. But I don't know what they were talking about. Yet, like I said, there were too many people in plain clothes inside and it wasn't like a usual TSK command center. Then the pieces fell into their places and I understood that the officers' mess in the 143rd Fleet was the center of the coup committed against our country that night," said Evrim.¹⁴³

Yet, during his hearing on May 29, 2017, Hakan Evrim said in answer to a question about Adil Öksüz, "As far as I know from the indictment he is said to be coming from Kazan, which is 20 kilometers from us. It is clear who entered the base and how. If they did, it has to be in the records. Such a thing couldn't have happened. Even if it did, I wouldn't have known."¹⁴⁴ It is a critical question how the statement that he saw Adil Öksüz was added to the prosecutor's indictment, despite this denial of knowledge by Evrim.

Another person who, according to the indictment documents, testified that Adil Öksüz was at Akıncı Air Base was Colonel Uğur Kaplan, who was the pilot that took Chief of the General Staff Akar and Lieutenant-General Saban Dişli to the Çankaya Köşkü (Palace). "When I went to the hall used for briefings in the headquarters at 06:30 there was a group of 10–12 brigadier and lieutenant generals. They were all in official uniforms. Only one was in plain clothes. I recognized him because I saw his pictures later on the media. Adil Öksüz, whom I recognized from the media, was there," said Kapan in his statement in the indictment.¹⁴⁵

Lieutenant Pilot Muslim Macit from Akıncı Air Base, accused of having taken part in bombings, is also reported in indictment documents as saying, "I didn't know him before I saw him on TV. As far as I can remember, I saw someone who resembled Adil Öksüz. When we were detained and taken to prison after the coup, Staff Officer Captain Pilot Mustafa Mete Kaygusuz told me that Adil Öksüz was there." However, it is striking that Mustafa Mete Kaygusuz did not give any statement about having seen Adil Öksüz at Akıncı Air Base, although he is supposed to have clearly expressed that he was affiliated with the Gülen movement. Indeed, certain clear statements that found their way into the indictment documents were later denied by the speakers themselves, which shows that the harsh and systematic torture during questioning produced misleading statements. Not one person has stated so far during the hearings that they saw Adil Öksüz at Akıncı Air Base.

Akıncı Air Base Indictment, on the other hand, claims that Adil Öksüz held meetings with the putschist commanders before 15 July, 2016, developed plans, and went to the US to inform Fethullah Gülen. According to the indictment, Öksüz went to the US with Kemal

143] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 538.

144] "Akıncı Üssü'nün Eski Komutanı Hakan Evrim'den Adil Öksüz Açıklaması", [Statement about Adil Öksüz from Akıncı Air Base former commander Hakan Evrim], Milliyet, 29 May 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/akinci-us-su-nun-eski-komutani-hakan-ankara-yerelhaber-2073776/>

145] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 338.



It was highly unusual for the release of Adil Öksüz, a key civilian suspect allegedly involved in the coup.

Batmaz, returned from his last trip on July 13, and, receiving orders from Gülen, went to Akıncı Air Base and commanded the coup with the officers in the 143rd Fleet.¹⁴⁶ Another detail that requires questioning is the fact that Adil Öksüz, the civilian alleged to have organized the coup attempt on July 15, was released by a judge at the Criminal Court of Peace after giving his statement.¹⁴⁷ The prosecutor's objection to his release was rejected by another judge as well. It is extremely controversial that Adil Öksüz, alleged to be an 'organization leader,' was allowed to flee when 168 generals and 6,810 lower ranking officers of the Armed Forces (TSK) were arrested. It should be noted here that former National Intelligence (MİT) official Mehmet Eymür has claimed that Adil Öksüz was in fact an MİT spy. Eymür argued that Öksüz was recruited from the Gülen movement on orders by MİT, implying that the coup attempt was orchestrated by MİT.¹⁴⁸

Considering the seriousness of the accusations, the fact that Öksüz was released twice by judges goes against common sense and defies logic when thousands were arrested. After Öksüz was released by the first court, the prosecutor's office objected to this decision but the objection was rejected by another judge. Both judges who ordered his release were working for Erdoğan's special project courts, the Criminal Courts of Peace, set up by the government in 2014. The reasons behind all these events are unknown. In an environment where thousands of judges and prosecutors were removed from their posts on groundless accusations and then imprisoned, it only thickens the veil of secrecy that no administrative steps were taken against Çetin Sönmez, the judge who released Öksüz, and an arrest was not issued for Köksal Çelik, the judge who rejected the prosecutor's objection until ten months after the event.¹⁴⁹

Sönmez was arrested in May 2017. Çelik was dismissed on 6 May 2017, but he was not arrested.¹⁵⁰

The presence of civilians among putschist soldiers was one of the most controversial issues about the coup attempt. However, until today, it has not been proven that Adil Öksüz was there.

In the statement he gave when he was detained, Adil Öksüz claimed that he went to Kazan District near Akıncı to look for property to buy: "I work as a faculty member at Sakarya University Department of Theology. My uncle Mehmet Öksüz used to work at a bank in Kazan. He had said that there was some valuable land near Kazan that would bring in a lot in the future. So I went from Sakarya to Kazan on the night of July 14. My uncle Mehmet Öksüz has a house in Keçioren and I stayed there on Friday night. On the morning of July 16 at about 09:00–10:00 I went to a village near Akıncı by taxi and the gendarmerie

146] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 341.

147] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 358.

148] "Eski MİT'çi Mehmet Eymür: 15 Temmuz rayından çıkmış bir MİT çalışmasıdır," [Former MIT official Mehmet Eymür: July 15 is an MIT operation that's run off its track], Haberdar, 1 June 2017, <http://www.haberdar.com/gundem/eski-mit-ci-mehmet-eymur-15-july-rayindan-cikmis-bir-mit-calismasidir-h53484.html>

149] "Adil Öksüz'ü serbest bırakan hakim yeniden tutuklandı," [The judge who released Adil Öksüz is arrested again], Hürriyet, 23 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/adil-oksuzu-serbest-birakan-hakim-yeniden-tutuklandi-40466574>

150] "Adil Öksüz'ü serbest bırakan hakim itirafçı oldu" [The judge who released Adil Öksüz became informant], 21 May 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1502115-adil-oksuzu-serbest-birakan-hakim-itirafci-oldu>

detained me from a field on that road. I do not know any officers or sergeants at Akıncı Air Base. I never entered the base. I have no idea what kind of place it is.”¹⁵¹ After telling the court that he was beaten by plain-clothes police officers, Öksüz was released by the court and never caught again.

Former general manager of Kaynak Paper Company, known to be affiliated with the Gülen movement, Kemal Batmaz, claims that he is not the person shown on the videos used to locate him at Akıncı Air Base. It was claimed that the video footage showed Akıncı Air Base Commander General Hakan Evrim salute him. Both Batmaz and Evrim, who gave their testimony at court, denied this claim.¹⁵²



Air Base commander Hakan Evrim described the selection of targets on July 15 and the use of aircrafts were planned to give an appearance of the coup attempt for which he called amateurish.

It is claimed in the Akıncı Air Base Indictment from the Ankara Chief Prosecutor’s Office that Kemal Batmaz commanded the coup from Akıncı Air Base with Adil Öksüz. It is also claimed that Batmaz and Öksüz had made a trip to the US together and some pictures taken at the airport were presented as evidence. Batmaz, on the other hand, said that he travelled to the US frequently and it was merely a coincidence that they travelled together. He stated that he did not know Adil Öksüz. He claimed that it was coincidence that they were walking one behind the other or that they spoke in the line, as was shown in the pictures.¹⁵³

Batmaz stated that he started in the real estate business after leaving Kaynak and he was living in Beykoz, Istanbul. In the statement he gave on July 21, 2016 he said, “On the night of the coup I was going to Nevşehir from Istanbul. Harun Biniş (a former employee of Turkish Telecommunications Authority, BTK) called me. He said, ‘If you are coming via Ankara, I have some money. Help me look for some land.’ I met him in Çayyolu. We went to Kazan together. I learned about the coup attempt when I was with Harun in Çayyolu. The gendarmerie stopped us in Kazan.” Batmaz was arrested and in four different statements he denied having any affiliation with Gülen.¹⁵⁴

Harun Biniş, who worked for BTK for a while and in a software company linked to the Middle Eastern Technical University (ODTÜ), confirmed Kemal Batmaz in his statement and said that they were in Ankara to find some land and they were detained near Akıncı. Biniş continued, “We went to a village in Kazan by taxi. Because Kemal Batmaz was in the real estate business, he left me there to look around.” He recounted their detention by the gendarmerie as follows: “The gendarmerie asked for our IDs. As we were showing them, they said, ‘We’ll check them later. Get in. We’re going.’ and put us in a vehicle that belonged to the gendarmerie. They took us to a gendarmerie station we didn’t know.”¹⁵⁵

151] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 335.

152] “Tutuklu Tuğgeneral Hakan Evrim görüntülerdeki selamı reddetti,” [Detained Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim denied the salutation in images], T24, 30 May 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/tutuklu-tuggeneral-hakan-evrim-goruntulerdeki-selami-reddetti,406461>

153] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 371.

154] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 371.

155] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 438.

An expert report claimed that Harun Biniş was the person caught on camera in the corridors of the 143rd Fleet in Akıncı Air Base at 03:00. Told of the expert opinion, Biniş gave another statement and said only, “I do not want to add anything to my previous statement. I don’t accept the accusation that I was at Akıncı Air Base on the coup night.”¹⁵⁶

Another civilian alleged to have been at Akıncı Air Base on the coup night was Nurettin Oruç, who said that he did not know Adil Öksüz, Kemal Batmaz, Harun Biniş or Hakan Çiçek. He claimed he went to the villages near Akıncı Air Base to shoot a documentary about animal husbandry. He said that he reached a village in Kazan District near Akıncı Air Base on the morning of July 16 at about 08:00 for the documentary and he was detained there. “It is a coincidence that I was on a US trip on the same date as Batmaz and Çiçek. I might have been at the airport at the same time as Batmaz and Öksüz on December 31, 2015. It is purely a coincidence. We took different flights. But I didn’t meet these people at the airport nor have a meeting with them,” said Oruç.¹⁵⁷ Stating that he went to the US for a film festival, Oruç said that he knew Fethullah Gülen from the media, he had never met him, and he had no links with the movement. Some camera footage to support the claim that Oruç was at Akıncı Air Base on the coup night was put in the court file but he was not asked any questions about it during questioning.

Another person accused of being at Akıncı Air Base on the coup night was Hasan Çiçek, the owner of Anafartalar Schools. Çiçek said that Colonel Ahmet Özçetin’s child went to his school and Özçetin invited him to Akıncı Air Base for a social activity at 20:00 on July 15. In his statement Çiçek said, “I went to Akıncı Air Base. Colonel Ahmet Özçetin was with me. There were a few other people whom I don’t remember. A few minutes after I left, military action started but I didn’t know what it was about.”¹⁵⁸

Still another civilian alleged to have been at Akıncı Air Base 143rd Fleet on the coup night is Hasan Balcı, a department head in Atatürk Research Center of Atatürk Council For Language and History. It was alleged that he was the person caught on camera in the corridor at 03:00 in the 143rd Fleet. Balcı, on the other hand, was reported as saying, “I don’t accept that I was at Akıncı Air Base on the coup night. I don’t know Adil Öksüz, Hasan Çiçek or Nurettin Oruç. I know Kemal Batmaz from the days I worked within Kaynak Holding. I met Kemal Batmaz to find land and fields after the coup night.”¹⁵⁹ However, later it turned out that this statement was not made by Balcı but “mistakenly” copied from Harun Biniş’s statement.¹⁶⁰ Balcı was arrested three months after the coup attempt and accused of having phone conversations with Adil Öksüz at 15:15, 15:20 and 15:25 while the fugitive suspect Öksüz was in detention.¹⁶¹ In his defense, Balcı said his son, who was in detention along with Öksüz called him from Öksüz’s phone to ask him to

156] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 441.

157] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 418.

158] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 400.

159] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4526.

160] Gözaltındayken Adil Öksüz’e telefonunu nasıl verdiler? [How was Adil Öksüz given a phone when he was in detention], 10 April 2017, <http://odatv.com/gozaltindayken-adil-oksuz-telefonunu-nasil-verdiler-1004171200.html>

161] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4528.

find a lawyer.¹⁶²

The Akıncı Air Base Indictment claims that Hasan Balcı’s younger son, Halil Burak Balcı, was a sergeant in the MAK (Combat Search and Rescue) team in Konya 3rd Main Jet Base Command and that he went to Istanbul on July 15 before Konya and participated in the kidnapping of anti-coup commanders. Later it was stated that Halil Burak Balcı stayed at Akıncı Air Base, which was the command center of the coup. It was also claimed that Balcı’s elder son, Gökhan Balcı, was a staff major in the 8th Infantry Tank Division under Land Forces Command in Tekirdağ and that there were pictures of him in plain clothes taking part in the coup attempt in the General Staff Headquarters. The picture of the armed person in plain clothes claimed to be Major Balcı was included in the file.¹⁶³

2.2.6 The Coup Attempt: A Hodgepodge Of Curiosities

Akıncı 4th Jet Base Commander Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim made statements at Ankara 17th High Criminal Court at Sincan Campus of Department of Corrections on May 29, 2017 about the events of the night in the military base under his command. In his first statement at the court, Evrim said the events of July 15 night were ‘beyond reason’ for a military coup. He described the coup attempt saying, “Based on all the experiences I’ve had during my career, I can say this coup attempt is a series of curiosities that is very amateurishly planned, irrational, unlike TSK traditions.”¹⁶⁴

In his statement Evrim drew attention to the fact that the National Intelligence Agency (MİT) received a tip about the coup between 14:00–15:00 on July 15, 2016 and notified the Chief of General Staff at 17:00. He said, “A coup attempt that could have been prevented if a message had been sent that said no staff should leave the barracks or all staff should report could not be prevented because a simple action was not taken. Not only was it not prevented, a lot of our people were killed or wounded. Although the intelligence about the coup was received at about 14:00, the president learns about it from his brother-in-law, and the Chief of the General Staff—according to the indictment—from Mehmet Dişli, and other commanders from those who detained them. How is that even possible?”

The huge discrepancies between the suspects’ statements in the indictments and the statements suspects gave at the courts indicated that many of the suspects signed their statements under torture and heavy pressure and were forced to include details that they did not know. Credible reports suggested that during detention suspects were forced to sign statements prepared by others to support the government’s story line about the coup bid. Arguing that the government knew about the coup in advance, Brigadier-General Evrim said in his statement, “In the middle of the night construction trucks that belonged to the state and municipalities, filled with sand in their dumpers, lined up in front of the security gate of Etimesgut Armored Units Command in military order in such a way as not to allow for the passage of tanks. The following day HSYK (the government-controlled judicial council)

162] Gözaltındayken Adil Öksüz’e telefonunu nasıl verdiler? [How was Adil Öksüz given a phone when he was in detention], 10 April 2017, <http://odatv.com/gozaltindayken-adil-oksuze-telefonunu-nasil-verdiler-1004171200.html>

163] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4528.

164] “Dönemin Akıncı Üssü Komutanı: Darbe girişimi bir garabetler manzumesi,” [Akıncı Air Base ex-Commander: The Coup Attempt: A Hodgepodge of Curiosities], Diken, 29 May 2017, <http://www.diken.com.tr/donemin-akinci-ussu-komutani-darbe-girisimi-bir-garabetler-manzumesi/>

held an emergency meeting to discuss the situation of pro-FETÖ judges and prosecutors. Detention warrants were distributed in the morning hours. Military staff were sent messages to go to their posts and banned from leaving the country. I believe you can evaluate the speed with which such a reaction could be given without previous preparation.”

Contrary to the allegations in the indictment, the TSK continued to fight FETÖ, said Evrim, and he claimed that especially after the revelation of the December 17–25, 2013, corruption investigations Armed Forces staff had been profiled unlawfully. Evrim asserted that the coup had not been prevented although it was known about and there was intelligence in advance, and procedures were being started against everyone from all walks of life, whether they participated in the coup or not. However, pointing to the absence of a political leg in the coup indictment, Evrim said, “A plan that doesn’t take into account controlling Ankara Esenboğa Airport... It is meaningless to try to control the airports in Istanbul. Closing one direction of one of the bridges in Istanbul doesn’t in any way overlap with the

TSK’s principles of target selection.” Evrim maintained that the coup attempt could not have been planned by the TSK and argued that the coup plan was designed for failure from the beginning.

According to the July 15 Main Indictment, about 10 percent of the TSK active officers corps were used in the coup attempt. However, more than half of the generals in the TSK have been arrested for being members of the Gülen movement or being involved in the coup. Listing shortcomings in the planning, Evrim asked why the putschists did not use thousands of police officers who had been purged before the coup on accusations of being in the Gülen

movement. Stating that at least half of the commanders in Air Forces Command had been arrested although they were at a wedding on the coup night, Evrim continued, “If these commanders, these generals were members of FETÖ, why did they go to the wedding that night? Why doesn’t an organization that will attempt a coup ensure that the commanders of the bases where the airplanes will be used are present at their posts?”¹⁶⁵

According to Evrim, the Parliament building was hit on the morning of July 16 when it was obvious that the attempt had failed. Considering the number of F16s, the targets bombed, and the timing, the airplanes must have been used to spark public outrage against coup plotters rather than to support the coup. The most meticulous planning of the coup was about taking President Erdoğan hostage in Marmaris where he was on holiday. Yet, the plan was already doomed when the location was not secured, the area was not monitored with UAV reconnaissance, and entrance to and exit from the holiday resort was not taken under control.

2.2.7 “I Didn’t Ask Akar To Talk With Gülen”

Evrin, under whose orders it was claimed soldiers entered the room where the Chief of



The bombing in Parliament was claimed to have been done by IAD planted in advance rather than aerial bombardment.

¹⁶⁵] Ibid.



Akıncı Base Commander Hakan Evrim denied claims in the court that he told Gen.Chief of Staff Hulusi Akar he could arrange a phone conversation with Fethullah Gülen.

the General Staff was kept hostage, said, “The Chief of the General Staff indicated that he agreed to the complaints about the state of the country listed in the declaration and said even some of the lawmakers in the ruling party were similarly protesting about them. The Chief of the General Staff said that the country should be saved by a joint effort from all sections of society. He said the problems in the country could be solved with the participation of, for example, Abdullah Gül, Ahmet Davutoğlu, intraparty opposition, opposition leaders, nongovernmental organizations, unions, opinion leaders. I didn’t know the Chief of the General Staff was brought there by force. Everyone inside was acting warmly and respectfully.”

One of the most striking parts of the indictment is where Evrim is reported as saying to Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar, “If you wish, we can have you talk with Fethullah Gülen, our opinion leader.” It was Akar who gave this statement to the prosecutors. In his defense on this issue Evrim stated that as he was leaving the room, he addressed Chief of the General Staff Akar and said, “Sir, if there is anyone in the opposition, NGOs, opinion leaders you mentioned that you wish to talk to, they can put you through to them” and then left the room: “That is the only statement I used in the room. I neither talked to Gülen nor phoned him. I never uttered such an expression. I don’t know if Gülen’s name was dropped after I left. I never met him. It is impossible that I offered him the chance to talk with Gülen. I am a soldier who is true to his nation and oath, I’m not a terrorist.”¹⁶⁶

Staff Colonel Mustafa Barış Avıalan, also accused of being a Gülen movement member, said at the hearing that someone must have planned his going to Akıncı Air Base that night and picked him specifically. Describing himself as pro-Atatürk and nationalist, Avıalan said, “This plan is an amateurish military plan that is designed to fail. It is a trick and a diversion. Who did it? Whoever made use of it must have done it.”

Stating that 1.5 years after the 17-25 December corruption investigations he was selected by Hulusi Akar and placed at the top of a list submitted to the president by former General Chief of Staff Necdet Özel, Avıalan said of Erdoğan, “I was told he wanted me to become regiment commander. Can you ever believe that he would appoint me without conducting a thorough investigation even of my most distant relatives?”¹⁶⁷

2.2.8 Who Made The Rosters On The Coup Night And How Were They Prepared?

Another issue that should be investigated about the coup day is the claim that the names called for duty were picked from among names that were close to the Gülen movement. In his statement to the prosecutors on September 29, 2016, detained pilot Captain Uğur Uzunoğlu said that officers in several fleets who were keeping their distance from the Gülen

166] “İşte Akıncı Üssü eski Komutanı Tuğgeneral Hakan Evrim’in savunması,” [Here is Akıncı Air Base ex-Commander Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim’s testimony], DHA, 29 May 2017, http://www.dha.com.tr/iste-akinci-ussu-eski-komutani-tuggeneral-hakan-evrimin-savunmasi_1519460.html

167] “Mahkeme Başkanı o sözlere tepki gösterdi: Demedin mi sen kimsin bir sor ya kurmay albaygın”, [Presiding judge snapped at those words: Didn’t you ask, who are you, you should have, you’re an SO colonel], OdaTV, 1 June 2017, <http://odatv.com/beni-hulusi-akar-secti-0106171200.html>

movement took leave of flights for various health problems.

Equally interesting was the arrest of Land Forces Logistics Commander Yıldırım Güneç, who tried to suppress the coup attempt by going to Akıncı Air Base under the orders of First Army Commander Ümit Dündar. The reasons for his arrest caused controversy at the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission.¹⁶⁸ CHP lawmaker Aykut Erdoğan asked General Ümit Dündar, the then commander of the First Army and current Deputy Chief of the General Staff, “Land Forces Logistics Commander Yıldırım Güneç said, ‘General Ümit Dündar, Acting Chief of the General Staff, ordered me to go to Akıncı. I commanded the operation at Akıncı and saved it.’ Presently this general is under arrest. Did you give such an order to this major-general? Did this major-general complete the mission? If he actively fought the coup, why do you think this major-general could be under arrest?”

Dündar replied, “I ordered him on the phone to be responsible for the activities in Ankara and he should coordinate other friends there and report the developments to me. And he went to Akıncı Air Base and left the place after getting it under control. That’s how I’d put it... I can’t possibly know or evaluate why he is behind bars. This has nothing to do with me.”

Detained Special Forces Colonel Harun Olgun makes an interesting point on this issue as well.¹⁶⁹ In his official petition he summarizes the random nature of becoming a hero or a traitor putschist as a result of following orders: “Upon getting a call from Command Center that there would be a protection drill, I went to the Troop of Guardsmen. On the plaque of Martyr Ömer Halisdemir’s sculpture his conversation with his commander is inscribed. He is asked to ‘Go shoot that traitor’ on the phone. And he does. He is now everyone’s hero for such an understanding of duty... Likewise, I was ordered to go to the Troop of Guardsmen; there’s a drill,’ and I went. They landed us with helicopters in Akıncı Air Base. As I was trying to understand the situation, I did not face any civilians or police officers. When I understood it, I waited until the prosecutors came. I have no connection with FETÖ. A game was staged, and I was put on the losing side! It feels like a candid camera show. Am I the one who is responsible for a coup attempt that could have been stopped in five minutes? When I look into the mirror, I see an honorable Turkish officer. Statistically, I can have 15 more years of quality life. I will not beg anyone for 15 years. I told the judge at the court, ‘You take the risk of living with your decisions for a lifetime. I did not defend myself. I have no lawyers. I cannot afford a lawyer because you froze my accounts.’... I only pray to the Owner of Time that he keep alive all the figures of this era until the masks on faces fall!”

168] TBMM Komisyon tutanakları (Minutes of Turkish Parliamentary Coup Commission), 18 October 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

169] “Trump’ın kozu ve 15 Temmuz’daki maskeli balo!” [Trump’s ace up his sleeve and the masquerade ball on July 15 night!], Yeniçağ, 18 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/trumpin-kozu-ve-15-Julydaki-maskeli-balo-42826yy.htm>

2.2.9 Did Chief Of The General Staff Akar Entrust His Life To The Putschists?

It was discovered that the pilots who gathered at Akıncı Air Base had set up a WhatsApp group for themselves called ‘ATAKANLAR.’ One of the members of this group was Land Pilot Colonel Uğur Kapan, who flew Chief of the General Staff Akar and Lieutenant-General Dişli to the prime minister’s office at Çankaya Köşkü. Explaining that this app was used for communications by the group, Kapan said in his statement, “When it became apparent at 03:00 that the operation would be unsuccessful, panic spread at Akıncı Air Base. At about 07:00 the Chief of the General Staff’s car sped towards me. I ran to it. Admiral Uğur said, ‘Take me out of here quickly with the helicopter.’ My second pilot, my sergeant and I got the helicopter ready. My team and I rescued the Chief of the General Staff who had been held hostage at Akıncı Air Base and took him to Çankaya Köşkü. “After taking the Chief of the General Staff to Çankaya Köşkü, there was a Lieutenant-General (Mehmet Dişli) with him. I asked him, ‘Shall we stay here?’ He said, ‘No, go. You will go back to Akıncı.’ On our way to Akıncı, they forced us to land in Etimesgut with a plane escort. The Chief of the General Staff prevented me from going to Akıncı. Then Central Command delivered us to the police. I’m innocent.”¹⁷⁰

Pilot Colonel Uğur Kapan and Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli are still detained on the grounds that they are putschists. Chief of the General Staff Akar—in his own words—suspected Dişli of being a putschist. However, he did not consider it a problem to take him on a Sikorsky helicopter to Çankaya Köşkü. It is an apparent contradiction that raises serious questions that Akar went to see the prime minister under such conditions with someone he suspected of being a putschist.

Another claim with respect to Akıncı Air Base was raised in a report titled “A Search for Truth: A Closer Look Into 15 July 2016 Turkey”. It was alleged that explosion in Turkish Parliament building might have been caused by a bomb planted between the two columns rather than an aerial bombing by F-16s. “Shortly after the explosions, the Prime Minister told reporters on TV that the Parliament had been bombed by F-16s using a domestic Penetrator Bomb. These types of bombs have dual warheads. The first warhead clears the way for the second one, which allows the bomb to penetrate and deal devastating damage”. It noted that “Lots of blast damage versus no fragmentation damage which is quite unconventional for an air-dropped bomb”.¹⁷¹

2.3 Moda Marine Club

Another important location on the night of July 15 was Moda Marine Club in Kadıkoy, Istanbul, where there was a wedding reception which Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal and 22 generals would attend. The host of the reception was Major-General Mehmet Şanver, who was the commander of Eskişehir Combatant Air Unit and Air Missile Defense under

170] “Tümgeneral, Akıncı’ya gitmemi istedi, Org. Akar engelledi,”[Brigadier-General asked me to go to Akıncı, Gen. Akar stopped me], Habertürk, 13 October 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1309561-tumgeneral-akinci-ya-gitmemi-istedi-org-akar-engelledi>

171] “A Search for Truth: A Closer Look Into 15 July 2016 Turkey” P.48-49

Air Forces Command. His daughter Çiçek Şanver was marrying Toykan Necdet Taştan, the son of retired Air Pilot Brigadier-General Levent Taştan. The wedding reception started at 19.00.¹⁷² There are two pieces of information about when the irregular activity started as everything was proceeding normally. The problem is that the source of both is the same person: Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal.

Ünal gave his witness statement as a victim to Ankara West Chief Prosecutor's Office two days after the coup attempt on July 17, 2016, where he said, "I was in the reception hall at about 19:30. I didn't notice any unfavorable or unusual thing until then. I think it was about 21:30 when my wife called me on the phone. She said Air Major-General Fikret Erbilgin, who was working at the headquarters had been detained and she wanted to learn about his condition. So I called Lieutenant-General Cevat Yazgılı, whom I had left as my acting deputy in Ankara. As I was talking with Yazgılı on the phone, I heard the sounds of jets. I asked what it was. He said, "I don't know either but jets are soaring over Ankara now."¹⁷³

However, Ünal made a supplemental statement 13 days later. In this statement he gave a completely different account of when he first learned about the coup attempt: "There were some developments before the wedding reception. At 19:06 on July 15 Air Forces Operations Center called me and told me about the headquarters' directive that all the flights in the airspace should be landed and no planes should be allowed to take off. And I ordered Operations Command (Air Forces Command Center) to carry out the directive immediately. Then I gave the same directive, that is landing of all flights and prevention of all take-offs, to Joint Air Operations Center (BHHM) in Eskişehir. At about 19:26 I learned from the BHHM in Eskişehir that my directives had been sent to all units."¹⁷⁴

These two wildly conflicting statements spread a thick veil of secrecy over the events in Moda. They will be addressed in detail in the section that profiles Abidin Ünal. If Ünal's second statement is correct, he came to the hall before 19:00 because he says he received the flight ban information at 19:06 when he was at the reception. Immediately after this he is engaged in a series of calls and meetings with commanders. If the first statement is correct, he starts managing the situation after his wife's call at 21:30 and is then engaged in call traffic.

In both versions, it starts to get hectic in the wedding at Moda Marine Club at 21:30 at the latest. In his first statement Abidin Ünal said that after getting the news he ordered Major-General Ziya Cemal Kadioğlu and Major-General Nihat Kökmen, who were at the wedding hall, to go to Eskişehir to support Eskişehir Air Operations Center Commander

172] "Mehmet Şanver: Üst rütbeliler devşirildi," [Mehmet Şanver: Top brass bought out], Yeni Şafak, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

173] "Orgeneral Abidin Ünal'ın ifadesi," NTV, 28 Temmuz 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-ifadesi-PcAmhLjF3kyxKT7MkoeUpA> ; "Org. Abidin Ünal'ın ifadesi ortaya çıktı," [Gen. Abidin Ünal's testimony exposed], Hürriyet, 27 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/org-abidin-unalin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40172614>

174] "Komutanın uçağındaki sivil darbeci," [Civilian putschist on commander's aircraft], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 6 November 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/komutanin-ucagindaki-sivil-darbeci-1491245/>

Brigadier-General Recep Ünal.¹⁷⁵ Later this order was said to be at 22:45 in a report sent to the National Defense Ministry by Air Forces Command.¹⁷⁶

Şanver, who said he noticed that there were some unusual events taking place at 19:30, stated that his offer to send a team of commanders to Eskişehir air base as reinforcement was turned down by Abidin Ünal. His testimony is as follows: “At around 19.30 or 19.45, my deputy, general Kadioğlu, came to me with his phone in his hand and appeared not to have a full grasp of the situation and he said ‘Commander, there is something going on in Eskişehir and the general we left in our place was feeling uneasy,’ and I told him, ‘Well, you’d better go there then.’ The wedding ceremony had not been performed yet and I was greeting the guests. While I was thinking how to send him to Eskişehir, I told the Air Force Commander [Ünal] that ‘with your permission, I will arrange a flight for General Kadioğlu and let’s send him to Eskişehir. Our commander [Ünal] replied by saying that ‘there is no need for that at this stage; if the need arises, we can send him there on my plane.’”¹⁷⁷ Why did Ünal refuse to send General Kadioğlu to Eskişehir early on and why did he decide to wait until 22.45? If Kadioğlu had been allowed to fly to Eskişehir, the course of events could have developed completely differently.

In later parts of his statements, Ünal said that the managers of the club came to him and offered him the use of the meeting room inside and he went there with his panel of generals. As the meeting continued, a MAK (Combat Search and Rescue) team from Konya 3rd Main Jet Base raided the wedding and detained the commanders. In the raiding teams, commanded by Major Gökhan Maldar, were Abidin Ünal’s guards Sergeant Fatih Kahraman, Sergeant Gökhan Gerboğa, and Sergeant Mustafa Turgut.

2.3.1 The Moment Of The Raid And Its Aftermath

According to the Akıncı Air Base Indictment, the MAK teams raided the wedding hall at 23:55. Abidin Ünal described the moment in his statement: “Other than the ones I saw off, 17 generals at the wedding and I started to assess the situation. At about 23:30 I saw my guards, whom I had left behind in Ankara, appear at the door with weapons in their hands and in full camouflage. They said to me, ‘Sir, we’ve come to maintain your security.’ Although I understood what it meant, I asked, ‘I didn’t order such a thing. Who is the order from?’ They said, ‘We don’t know, sir.’ I told them to leave us alone and stay away. When the Lieutenant-General attempted to go out to see his wife, they tried to stop him. When he insisted, they fired shots towards the wall and window. They did not fire towards the floor. [...] As it was approaching 24:00, a group of about ten fully-equipped men came to the ante-room, shouting and firing shots at the ceiling. They all had plastic clamps in their hands. I told everyone to be calm. They delivered me to the first group and asked us to go by helicopter. When I looked back, I saw my friends were being handcuffed and two lieutenant-

175] “Org. Abidin Ünal’ın ifadesi ortaya çıktı,” [General Abidin Ünal’s testimony], *Hürriyet*, 27 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/org-abidin-unalin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40172614>

176] ‘Hava’da 21 saat 24 dakika: Generallerin savaşı,’ [21 hours 24 minutes in the air: War of generals], *Deniz Zeyrek*, *Hürriyet*, 10 August 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/havada-21-saat-24-dakika-generallerin-savasi-40187396>

177] “Mehmet Şanver: Üst rütbeliler devşirildi,” [Mehmet Şanver: Top brass bought out], *Yenişafak*, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

Many commanders including Air Force Commander attended to a wedding in Moda during the prime time when July 15 events were unfolding. They failed to take any precautions despite alerts issued already.



generals were being forced to the ground and handcuffed.”

However, many of the soldiers on the MAK teams that launched the raids report that there was no resistance or protest from the commanders or guards. For example, Sergeant Ali Murat Karataş stated that “there was no scuffling or instance of drawing guns between the guards and the teams, and I did not exactly see resistance from the guards.”¹⁷⁸ First Sergeant Yılmaz Bahar said, “Gökhan Maldar shouted at the commanders in a very harsh tone, ‘We have to leave this place immediately, go out.’ At that moment there wasn’t any intervention from guards in plain clothes or uniforms.”¹⁷⁹ Air Staff Sergeant Ali Uçar said in his statement, “The high-ranking commanders we took did not in any way intend not to come with us.”¹⁸⁰

An interesting claim about the raid was that the MAK teams were applauded by the civilians at the wedding. Sergeant Mustafa Turgay, who was one of Abidin Ünal’s guards, said, “When we entered the building, the civilians inside started to applaud us. I did not understand why they did so. I thought they were applauding because we were going to rescue the commander.”¹⁸¹

Chief Master Sergeant Yılmaz Bahar, who was also in the MAK team, said, “When we were entering the building, women in evening gowns who were waiting at the stairs—and I thought they were wedding guests—started to applaud us and take our pictures with their mobile phones.”¹⁸²

178] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1985.

179] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2026–2027.

180] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2050.

181] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2150.

182] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2025.

Abidin Ünal was put on a helicopter without handcuffs and taken first to Sabiha Gökçen Airport and then from there at 01:10¹⁸³ to Akıncı Air Base in Ankara on a CASA plane, which made its landing in Akıncı at about 02:00. Abidin Ünal was placed into a room on his own.¹⁸⁴ Ünal said he continued to deliver orders on board the plane while he was under arrest: “I was in contact with friends in Eskişehir until the plane landed and I was told that flights were still continuing and real ammunition used in Ankara.”¹⁸⁵

After the coup was completely suppressed the following day at about noon, he was taken out of the room by former Air Forces Commander Akın Öztürk.

The other commanders at Moda Marine Club were handcuffed with plastic clamps and taken to Akıncı Air Base in groups with helicopters.

2.3.2 The Target Of The MAK Team Was The Wedding In Moda Since Morning

When investigating the events in Moda, one needs to focus on a very important detail: the operation plan of the Combat Search and Rescue (MAK) teams who came from Konya 3rd Main Jet Base to rescue the commanders at the wedding. All the soldiers who joined the operation were informed that they were going to secure the lives of Air Forces Commander Ünal and the other generals accompanying him at the wedding in Moda, Istanbul. The order was given by Regiment Commander Major Gökhan Maldar. Some soldiers said that they were told about the nature of the mission at about noon, hours before they got to Istanbul.

Sergeant Fatih Suçatı from the Konya 3rd Main Jet Command MAK team reported that they got to the military compound in Samandıra, Istanbul, at about 17:30 and Major Gökhan Maldar told them there that the Air Forces Commander was in danger and they were going to protect him.¹⁸⁶

Similarly, Sergeant Göksel Bayram declared that Gökhan Maldar and Chief Master Sergeant Yılmaz Bahar said on the way that Abidin Ünal and other commanders were at Moda Marine Club and that they would protect and rescue them.¹⁸⁷ Air Infantry Petty Officer Yunus Dağcı,¹⁸⁸ Air Infantry Staff Sergeant Ramazan Dede,¹⁸⁹ Sergeant Yücel Lökeşe,¹⁹⁰ and Sergeant Fatih Pancar¹⁹¹ gave similar statements. Pancar stated that the mission was announced to them at only 07:00.

One of the most detailed and critical statements belongs to Sergeant Ali Murat Karataş, who said, “On July 15, 2016 at about 06:15 the six of us on the team, whose names I listed

183] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 266.

184] “Orgeneral Abidin Ünal’ın savcılık ifadesi ortaya çıktı,” [General Abidin Ünal’s testimony at prosecutor’s office exposed], *Akşam*, 27 July 2016, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-savcilik-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti/haber-536794>

185] *Ibid.*

186] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1939.

187] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1945.

188] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1950.

189] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1956.

190] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1961.

191] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1971–1973.

above, left the base. [...] After driving for about 40km, we turned right on the road and stopped the three cars 1-1.5 km further, near a wooded area. After a quick breakfast, Fatih Suçatı turned to us, ‘Friends, the reason we are out now is not a drill. We are going to Samandıra, Istanbul. We are going to protect the Air Forces Commander and we must be in Samandıra, Istanbul, between 17:00 and 20:00. Let’s make the preparations here.’ [...] Also Fatih Pancar gave out ten plastic clamps to everyone.”¹⁹²

2.3.3 Questions Still Unanswered

It is apt to start questioning the Moda events from these statements because they not only shed light on the onset of the events but also provide important clues about all July 15 events. The indictments, as well as the ruling AK party, anti-putschist generals, and police officials insist that in fact the planned starting time of the coup was 03:00 on July 16, but that upon a tip from a major, MIT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan went to General Staff Headquarters at 18:00 on July 15 and met chief Akar; as the meeting was in progress, Akar issued a nationwide flight ban at about 18:30, then sent Land Forces Commander General Salih Zeki Çolak to Land Aviation Academy for an inspection, which led the putschists to think that they were exposed, so they panicked and moved the coup attempt at an earlier time. However, the Combat Search and Rescue (MAK) team from Konya were told that the target was the wedding at Moda Marine Club, their mission was to detain the generals there for their protection, and the team members were given plastic clamps early in the morning, all of which indicates that the coup was not planned for 03:00 on July 16. On the contrary, it indicates that the operation would start in the evening hours of the day before. For this reason, the following questions still linger:

1. Was the initial coup plan to start at about 21:00–22:00? Was it not moved to an earlier time unlike Gen. Chief of Staff Akar’s claim? If so, what is the reason for starting a coup attempt—unlike all previous coups—at a time when everyone was awake and in front of the television? Who made this decision?
2. If the coup were to start at 03:00, why was the MAK team from Konya given the assignment earlier in the day for the wedding in the evening? Why were the teams prepared for a raid at 23:00? Would it not expose the coup and waste all the operation plan?
3. Prime Minister Yıldırım made a live appearance on NTV at 23:02 and announced that it was a military coup.¹⁹³ Did no one on the teams learn about this announcement? Why was the mission not aborted?
4. Were the putschists who went on the raid applauded by civilians?
5. The raid time was 23:50. If the MAK teams were applauded, a) Did Abidin Ünal and accompanying generals not inform the wedding guests about the coup attempt until that time? b) Did no one at the wedding receive information on their mobile phones about the coup although almost an hour had passed since the prime minister’s announcement? Did none of them follow breaking news on their smart phone? c) If the civilians were aware of

192] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 1983–1985.

193] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 258.

the news, why did they applaud the putschist teams?

6. Why were Major-General Ziya Cemal Kadiođlu and Major-General Nihat K kmen at the wedding ordered to go to Eskiřehir at 22:45? If Abidin  nal learned about the flight ban at 19:06 as he said in his second statement and given the fact that the offer was made by Gen. řanver to send the reinforcements to Eskiřehir early on, was it not neglect of duty for  nal to issue the order after 3.5 hours?

7. Why was it at 23:51 that Major-General Mehmet řanver gave Colonel İsmail  ner at Eskiřehir Joint Air Operations Center (BHBM) the order that Ankara Air Forces Operations Center was acting illegally and none of its directives should be obeyed? Considering that the first plane took off from Akıncı Air Base at 22:08, what could have made him wait for 1 hour 40 minutes?¹⁹⁴

8. Major-General Mehmet řanver was No. 2 in the Turkish Air Forces and the commander of combatant air forces. He objects to the way the flight ban was enacted: “It is against the normal flow of life. The moment such an order was issued I should have known it as the commander responsible for the control of airspace. The order was issued. Before it was issued, during the process of the order, I should have been informed about it.”¹⁹⁵ In such circumstances, was the order issued to be able to say, “we took necessary precautions” later?



2.4 The Bosphorus Bridge

Istanbul’s Bosphorus Bridge was the first place where the public found out about the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. It was also the location where the images and symbols about the coup made their way into public awareness. That night events connected with the coup bid took place at 26 different sites in Istanbul¹⁹⁶ but none was as horrifying as those that happened on the Bosphorus Bridge. Indeed, the bloody events that occurred at the bridge

¹⁹⁴ “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 255.

¹⁹⁵ “Mehmet řanver:  st r tbeler devřirildi,” [Mehmet řanver: Top brass bought out], Yeni řafak, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

¹⁹⁶ “İstanbul İl Emniyet M d r  Mustafa alıřkan’ın 1 November 2016 tarihinde TBMM 15 Temmuz Arařtırma Komisyonu’na verdiđi bilgi,” [Istanbul Province Police Commissioner Mustafa alıřkan’s testimony on 1 November 2016 for Parliamentary July 15 Investigation Commission], TBMM 15 Temmuz Arařtırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi , 1 November 2016, p. 10, 33, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

The government failed to take simple military measures to prevent casualties in Bosphorus Bridge when a handful of troops shut it down to one way traffic.



were the justification for renaming it “Bridge of Martyrs” later. According to the July 15 Istanbul Indictment, 52 civilians and 4 police officers were killed during the events that occurred on and around the Bosphorus Bridge.¹⁹⁷ It was after the first spark at the Bosphorus Bridge that news began to flow that a group within the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) was enacting a coup, the Bosphorus and Fatih Sultan Mehmet bridges had been closed by soldiers, warplanes were starting to make low flights over Istanbul and Ankara, gunshots had been heard around General Staff in Ankara, Istanbul Atatürk Airport had been taken by soldiers who arrived in tanks, and a group of soldiers was advancing towards Sabiha Gökçen Airport.

According to the indictment drawn up by the Istanbul Chief Prosecutor’s Office about the Istanbul part of July 15, the putschist soldiers closed one way of the Bosphorus Bridge at 22:10. At 22:28 news channels first reported that “the passage from Anatolia to Europe on the Istanbul Bosphorus and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridges has been closed by the gendarmerie.” At about 22:35 putschist soldiers arrived at Atatürk Airport on tanks and entered the control tower.

Prime Minister Yıldırım called in to the NTV news channel live at 23:02 and said, “Obviously there is unlawful activity outside the chain of command by some soldiers within the army.”¹⁹⁸ At about 23:25 access to social media, namely Facebook and Twitter, was blocked but was soon unblocked. At 00:24, President Erdoğan called in to the CNN Türk news channel via FaceTime and called people to the streets. The people quickly organized and went outside. At about 01:40 some of the soldiers reportedly opened fire on people who were trying to walk past the bridge.¹⁹⁹ As the number of civilians increased and blood was shed in several incidents, the putschists lost control after 02:00. At 06:40 the soldiers in control of the Bosphorus Bridge began to surrender.

2.4.1 The Beginning Of Military Activity

The activity in Istanbul became known at about 21:30 when some putschist commanders called deputy police commissioners and declared to them that martial law was in effect.²⁰⁰ In the Parliamentary Investigation Commission briefing of November 1, 2016, Istanbul Police Commissioner Mustafa Çalışkan stated that there was a security meeting about ISIL at about 20:30–21:00. He claimed that some putschist generals called deputy commissioners, declared martial law, and told them to surrender or work with them. According to Çalışkan, they got news at about 21:30 that 30–40 soldiers were trying to get the guns of police officers in Beylerbeyi. This indicated some unusual developments.

197] “July 15 Main Indictment,” p. 690.

198] “15 Temmuz akşamı Başbakan Binali Yıldırım’ın Canlı Yayında Darbe Açıklaması,” [Live coup announcement by Prime Minister Yıldırım on July 15 night], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBRmv9zX8Bk>, (Last accessed on 4 June 2017)

199] “15 Temmuz İstanbul İddianamesi,” p. 2.

200] “İstanbul İl Emniyet Müdürü Mustafa Çalışkan’ın 1 Kasım 2016 tarihinde TBMM 15 July Araştırma Komisyonu’na verdiği bilgi,” [Istanbul Province Police Commissioner Mustafa Çalışkan’s testimony on 1 November 2016 for Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission], TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi (Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes), 1 November 2016, p. 30, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

Police Commissioner Çalışkan then decided to go to the bridge, and called First Army Commander General Ümit Dündar on the way, but he did not know about the developments. They agreed to meet at the Bosphorus Bridge. Çalışkan reported that when they got to the bridge, they saw that two military vehicles had closed the bridge. Soon police radios announced that tanks were coming. After 23:00 civilians started to come to the bridge to resist the coup.²⁰¹

Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Ümit Dündar confirmed this chronology in his statement to Parliamentary Investigation Commission briefing dated October 18, 2016. According to Dündar, when he set out to reach the Bosphorus Bridge at 22:20, he called all the commanders who were his superiors including Chief of the General Staff Akar. However, he could not reach anyone. After his meeting with the police commissioner, Istanbul governor Vasip Şahin came to that location at 22:45. With the arrival of the 3rd Corps Deputy Commander Lieutenant-General Yavuz Türkgenci, the four of them together made an assessment of the situation.²⁰²

2.4.2 Events Escalated With The Arrival Of Tanks

The attempt that started with two military vehicles and about 50 soldiers on the Bosphorus Bridge escalated with the arrival of tanks and anti-coup civilians at the bridge. The soldiers had closed the passage from the Anatolian side to the European side. When the putschists fired shots at about 22:30 police commissioner Çalışkan lost a close protection officer, and a guard and an executive assistant were wounded.²⁰³ Soon afterwards, prayers started to be heard from public loudspeakers of mosques. Çalışkan stated that they contacted Director of Religious Affairs Mehmet Görmez for this and it was he who issued the directive.²⁰⁴ After the call to prayer, people flocked to the streets.

Because Chief of the General Staff, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Land Forces Commander, and Air Forces Commander had been detained that night, there was chaos in the chain of command. At this point First Army Commander Ümit Dündar acted as Chief of the General Staff because he was the highest-ranking officer outside. He started to command the Armed Forces.

In joint assessment with Yavuz Türkgenci at around 22.45, Dündar concluded that five different military units in İstanbul had joined the coup bid.²⁰⁵ Two army corps stationed

201] “İstanbul İl Emniyet Müdürü Mustafa Çalışkan’ın 1 Kasım 2016 tarihinde TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu’na verdiği bilgi,” [Istanbul Province Police Commissioner Mustafa Çalışkan’s testimony on 1 November 2016 for Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission], TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu, 1 November 2016, 1 November 2016, p. 30–31, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

202] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 18 October 2016, p. 7–9, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743 ; TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 1 November 2016, p. 9, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

203] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 1 November 2016, p. 32, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

204] Ibid., p. 32,

205] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi (Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes), 18 October 2016, p. 9, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743



The iconic picture of July 15 events in Turkey. The closing of suspension bridge to one way traffic in prime time by two truckloads of soldiers was found quite odd.

in Trakya, which included the 2nd Army Corps in Gelibolu and 5th Army Corps in Çorlu did not participate. Dündar shared important information when he was asked in the Parliamentary Investigation Commission how the tanks managed to reach the Bosphorus Bridge without any intervention: “The elements start their exit at about 22:15. At that time I am on the bridge. So there was no way of stopping the tanks coming from the direction of Maltepe... because the only unit on the Anatolian side is the 2nd Armored Division in Maltepe and they have made their exit. Also they have control over the barracks. Of the 80 tanks there, 20 are out. [...] For this reason, Acting Army Corps Commander Lieutenant-General Yavuz Türkgenci assigned staff from among those he trusted to go to the 2nd Armored Division area. The staff took the police force by their side and took back the barracks, I think starting from 04:30 till 05:00.”²⁰⁶

According to the July 15 Istanbul Indictment, 21 tanks were mobilized from the 2nd Armored Division Command: 3 to the Bosphorus Bridge, 5 to Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge and Çekmeköy, 7 to Üsküdar Square and in front of Üsküdar Riot Squad Campus, 2 to Army Headquarters in Selimiye Barracks, and 4 to Sabiha Gökçen Airport.

2.4.3 The Tide Turned With Commanders Appearing On TV

It is claimed that one decision taken on the Bosphorus Bridge was effective in suppressing the coup attempt. The decision was to have Dündar and other commanders go live on television and state that “this is not a military operation done within the chain of command. It is an unlawful attempt of a group in the army.” It is argued that by their doing this the soldiers who were confused and undecided about whether to leave the barracks were stopped and people were encouraged to take to the city’s squares.

Istanbul Governor Vasip Şahin described the decision process: “It was about 24:00. We went to a safer place with our army commander upon evaluation and recommendation from friends and started to manage the crisis. [...] From that safe location, we went live at I think 00:50. I spoke first, then our 1st Army Commander did.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶] Ibid. p. 31.

²⁰⁷] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 1 November 2016, p. 9–10, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari_goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

Dündar talked about the decision as follows: “As we continued working from the safe location we moved to, I talked to many people on the phone. I talked to former Chief of the General Staff Necdet Özel Pasha. I made two or three calls with him. Meanwhile, after meeting with the governor [of Istanbul], we decided that it would be useful if we made a live television announcement. During these talks, our Aegean Army Commander, General Abdullah Recep, called me. We decided with him that it would be appropriate for both the 2nd and 3rd Army Commanders to make announcements. We called both the 3rd Army Commander and the Aegean Army Commander and had them go live on TV for the announcements. Then we had army corps commanders in Çorlu and Gelibolu, who were under my command, make announcements. I think that was the turning point of July 15.”²⁰⁸

2.4.4 The Bloodshed On The Bosphorus Bridge

Bloody events took place that night on the Bosphorus Bridge. Putschist soldiers opened fire on civilians, many of whom were killed. Among them were President Erdoğan’s advisor and advertising campaign agent Erol Olçok and his 16-year-old son.

A dark event in the night was the killing of Military Academy students. Tens of military students, unaware of anything untoward, were told that “there’s a drill” and taken to the bridge, where they found themselves in the midst of gunfire. Angry civilians were attacking every soldier and military student they believed to be responsible for the coup. Some of the military students were knifed and beaten to death. About ten of the putschists were killed.²⁰⁹ No light has been cast on any of these events.

CHP lawmaker Aykut Erdoğan asked Governor Vasip Şahin, whose testimony was requested by the Parliamentary Commission, “We hear that the military students who were taken to the bridge had been told ‘We’re going on a drill.’ That’s what the students say too. I don’t know how true it is but these are 15- or 16-year-old children. Have they been found, the murderers of the military students who were beaten to death or who were killed by having their throats cut? Are there any investigations into this?”²¹⁰ Şahin simply said, “I don’t have detailed information about judicial procedures because it is within the scope of our public prosecutors and the judiciary.”

However, Governor Şahin said that they started intervening with the putschists at about 23:00, with people taking to the streets and the bridge.²¹¹ He stated that they had complete control of the situation in Istanbul early in the morning by about 02:00–02:30.²¹² He said, “I think by 02:00-02:30 we had complete control.” Considering the fact that the first irregular

208] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 18 October 2016, p. 9–10, s. 30, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

209] “İstanbul Valisi Vasip Şahin,” TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 1 November 2016, p. 15, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

210] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 1 November 2016, p. 14, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

211] Ibid. p. 10.

212] Ibid., p. 11.

activities started at 21:30, the coup started and ended in six hours.

President Erdoğan landed at Istanbul Atatürk Airport at 03:20 on July 16. Governor Şahin reports, “Before Mr. President landed, the airport had been cleared by a joint operation of the people and the police.”²¹³ After landing, Erdoğan held a press conference in which he put the blame on the Gülen movement and described the attempt as “treason by a minority within the Armed Forces.” He continued, “They are going to pay dearly for this attempt, which is treason to the country, sooner or later. This attempt is a gift from God to us because it will lead to the cleansing of our armed forces.”²¹⁴

After the complete suppression of the events on the Bosphorus Bridge, Istanbul Governor Şahin and 1st Army Commander Dündar departed at about 06:00 from the Anatolian side of Istanbul for Atatürk Airport. President Erdoğan called Dündar on the way and notified him that he had been appointed Acting Chief of the General Staff.²¹⁵ The prime minister declared his official appointment at 06:52.

2.4.5 Was There A Sniper On The Bosphorus Bridge?

There has been a great deal of speculation about the high number of deaths on the bridge. It has been suggested, for example, that a putschist sniper climbed up the leg of the bridge and shot civilians. Those who have doubts about the coup attempt and believe the government had a hand in it argue that a sniper from a paramilitary group opened fire on civilians, helped increase the number of civilian deaths, and thus provided an excuse for the mass purges after July 15. In the crosshairs of these allegations sits SADAT (the International Defense Consultancy), which is claimed to be Erdoğan’s paramilitary and headed by Islamist former general Adnan Tanrıverdi, who became chief military aide to Erdoğan after the failed coup bid. Former Pentagon official and American Enterprise Institute analyst Michael Rubin wrote, “SADAT appears to have been behind much of the killing of civilians.”²¹⁶ He shared a Twitter message in Turkish from his personal account on November 17, 2016 that said, “It is time to search/investigate SADAT for the civilians they killed on July 15. No one should be untouchable.” In response to a question in the Parliamentary Commission, Istanbul Province Police Commissioner Çalışkan said that the allegations about a sniper did not reflect the truth and added, “It is an urban legend. There wasn’t any sniper there.”²¹⁷

Still, no light has been cast on any of the murders on the bridge, particularly that of Erol Olçok. Three months after July 15, Istanbul Province Police Commissioner Çalışkan replied to a question from the Parliamentary Commission, “General investigations continue.

213] Ibid., p. 12.

214] “Erdoğan İstanbul’da açıklama yaptı,” [Erdoğan made an announcement in Istanbul], Deutsche Welle Türkçe, 17 July 2016, <http://www.dw.com/tr/erdoğan-istanbulda-açıklama-yaptı/a-19403922>

215] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 18 October 2016, p. 14, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

216] “Erdoğan prepares for a bloodbath,” Michael Rubin, American Enterprise Institute, 31 October 2016, <https://www.aei.org/publication/Erdoğan-prepares-for-a-bloodbath/>

217] TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi [Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission Minutes], 1 November 2016, p. 49, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1757

If we can determine the bullet and the gun it was used in, it can be solved. I can't comment now but whatever we have at hand will be examined in detail."²¹⁸ Yet the forensic ballistics of the bullets used in the murders and analysis reports for the guns and barrels have still not been done.



Strange claim by Istanbul Police Chief Mustafa Çaliskan who said he learned about the coup from deputies who received phone calls from putschists.

Çaliskan also provided information about the number of police officers on duty that night. Çaliskan, who said that he heard about the attempts during a meeting with his deputies about ISIL, shared the following figures: “I mean what I call the ISIL operation is a routine done every week, every 10 days, every 15 days. But that day the number of addresses was particularly high; there were more serious tips. There was a nice coincidence: one thousand officers were ready for this operation. I mean we couldn't have done it in that time otherwise. We have an operation called Yeditepe Huzur (Seven Hills Peace) that we do every 15 days in Istanbul. Five thousand officers take part in this operation. It was the day of the Yeditepe Huzur operation. It was implemented between eight and midnight, so we had 5,000 extra officers ready. Look, even if it had been planned, we could not have done it like that. We had 5,000 like that. Including the officers on normal duty, we had enough officers as if we had been prepared for it—which I think is from heaven.”²¹⁹

2.4.6 Questions Still Unanswered

1. İstanbul Police Chief Çaliskan announced that more than six thousand police officers were on duty on the night of July 15. Did the putschists, alleged to have been making preparations for a long time, not consider the routine operations to be done that night? Why did the insiders, alleged to be inside the police force, not warn the putschists?

2. Police Chief Çaliskan said that some of the putschist soldiers called province police commissioners and declared martial law and then offered them the chance to surrender or work with them.²²⁰ He added, “Of course, because we didn't consider this to be normal, we said, ‘It must be a lunatic. It is impossible. Look into it.’” In a standard coup, people in such critical posts are detained; they are never made such an offer. Who were the commanders who made—in Çaliskan's words—this ‘lunatic’ offer?

3. Çaliskan said, “I am especially proud of my organization for July 15. Not one of my assistants even yawned. Look, I have 40 assistants. If one of them had yawned, our power would have decreased by 25 percent, 30 percent. If three had, it would have decreased by half. They acted heroically, from the police officers to Deputy Chiefs, I believe.” Then why were thousands purged from the İstanbul Police Forces because of FETÖ allegations after July 15?

4. In his meeting with the Parliamentary Investigation Commission on November

218] Ibid.

219] Ibid. p. 39.

220] Ibid., p. 30.

1, 2016, Çalışkan stated that the forensic ballistics of the guns for civilian casualties had not been done and they were continuing with detailed, thorough investigations. These investigations had still not been finished when this report was compiled in July 2017. Why haven't the investigations into camera footage and forensic ballistics of the bullets as well as 'thorough' investigations been completed despite all the time that has passed?

5. Çalışkan said, "Now, this coup is something that includes not only Ankara and Istanbul but all Turkey as well."²²¹ They published a list of martial law commanders. They made appointments to even the smallest provinces [...]" If the putschists appointed martial law commanders no matter how small the province, why did they act in only a few provinces such as Ankara and Istanbul? Why was there not simultaneous participation in the coup? While the prime minister, ministers, and lawmakers would be detained in a normal coup, is it normal that this time not a single AKP official was taken into custody anywhere in Turkey?

6. Don't Çalışkan's words, "A group cannot simply sit and say, 'we will do this'" show that the coup was prepared within the chain of command or at least such an impression was given? Similarly, Çalışkan stated, "The famous coups we well know about are the ones done at four, five in the morning. And when such a coup took place—God forbid—would we be able to make a single move? Could we establish communication? These are very difficult and troublesome things. I mean it is absurd that one starts such an attempt at 20:00 or 21:00 in the evening."

Why would the putschists attempt the coup at that hour in the evening? How convincing is the argument that 'They had to?' Why would one 'have to' if it is doomed to failure at the outset? Why did they have to do it when the harm they would suffer as a result would be less than the purge they would suffer if they did not do it?

7. While the AKP government imposed restrictions on social media for far less important developments,²²² why did they not do it on the coup night? Who overruled the ban in such a short time and why?

2.5 Marmaris

Muğla's Marmaris district was undoubtedly one of the most significant locations of the July 15 coup attempt along with Ankara and Istanbul. The events that transpired in Marmaris, where President Erdoğan and his family were on holiday, provide important clues to July 15.

Reviewing the meeting minutes including those from the Parliamentary Investigation Commission, Marmaris Indictment, Akıncı Air Base Indictment and the statements from the tried soldiers helps us understand the events in Marmaris. The events that took place in Marmaris on July 15 can be summarized as follows: President Erdoğan learned about the coup attempt when he and his family were in the region for a holiday. He made his first

²²¹ Ibid., p. 51

²²² The government often secured blanket and sweeping gag orders on media when terror attacks took place, and access to Internet sites was denied, slowed down or prevented.



Erdoğan appeared on CNN Türk TV via FaceTime link to make a statement on coup bid allegedly after his first message to local reporters were not made into news.

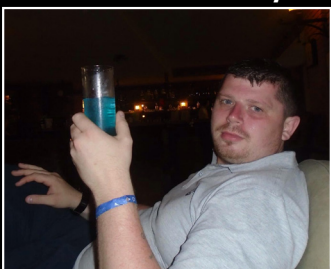
announcement to thirteen journalists in front of the residence from which he went live on CNN Türk via FaceTime and called people to the streets. He then travelled to Dalaman Airport by helicopter, and from there he flew to Istanbul on an ATA airplane. Three hours after Erdoğan left, three military helicopters bearing putschist soldiers landed near the hotel where he had been staying. His protection detail, who had remained at the hotel because there was not enough room in the helicopter which had left with the president, and police officers in Marmaris who were on duty exchanged gunfire with the soldiers. When a helicopter that came to evacuate them, because of the resistance from the president’s guard and police, the putschist soldiers failed to get on and spread into a wooded area nearby, from where they were later caught and arrested.

According to the indictment written and submitted to Muğla 2nd High Criminal Court by Chief Prosecutor Necip Topuz, who was appointed five days after the coup attempt, 47 persons, one of whom was fugitive and 37 soldiers, are being tried for an assassination attempt on the life of the president, infringement of the Constitution, crime against the legislative branch, crime against the government, membership of an armed terrorist organization, premeditated murder during public duty (twice), attempting premeditated murder during public duty (fourteen times), depriving persons of freedom by using force and threat repeatedly, inflicting grievous bodily harm, repeated armed threats, vandalizing public property (twice), vandalizing property (nineteen times), and aggravated violation of dwelling immunity.²²³ The trial is called “the trial for the assassination of the president” by the Public Prosecutor’s Office, and pro-government media.

Serkan Yazıcı, who owned The Grand Yazıcı Hotel and the luxurious villa where Erdoğan stayed with his family, provided information to the Parliamentary Investigation

223] Marmaris Indictment

Martin Brady



A British tourist, Martin Brady who stayed at the room next to Erdoğan bodyguards provided his account of what he witnessed that night. Brady said the hotel threatened to take legal action on him for taking these photos.



Commission about when President Erdoğan's visit to Marmaris was arranged. Yazıcı says that he went to Istanbul to meet the president, who had just returned from the Warsaw NATO Summit, so that he could make up for the embarrassment when he could not answer the president's call on time at the Eid Festival of July 5-7, 2016 and give him his best wishes for the celebration. Serkan Yazıcı reported about the day, whose date he could not remember at first, that the famous football player Samuel Eto'o of Antalya Sports Club was among the people who met Erdoğan and he invited the president to an exhibition match in Antalya that his foundation was organizing for July 16, in which world famous football players would participate. He says that Erdoğan promised to go. Archives show that day was July 9, 2016, as Yazıcı confirmed later.²²⁴ Yazıcı says that he met the president at the airport and invited him to the hotel for a holiday. He adds that he later talked to the president's Executive Assistant Hasan Doğan about the details and told him that the place where Erdoğan would stay was a private residence separated from the rest of the hotel facility.²²⁵

Considering that he had said he would play in an exhibition match on July 16, 2016, it seems that Erdoğan may have made a snap decision to go on holiday with his family and travel to Antalya. The following day, after the July 9 meeting, security police working for the presidency went to Marmaris and did routine security checks at the villa where President Erdoğan would stay.²²⁶ President Erdoğan arrived at the hotel in the evening on July 11, 2016 without taking any of his military aides along with him. Serkan Yazıcı reports that he did not see Erdoğan until July 14. When media websites and newspaper articles are examined, it can be seen that there is no news about where Erdoğan was for the July 11–July 14 period, neither in the pro-Erdoğan nor the dissident media. The news about Erdoğan in the pro-Erdoğan media comes to an abrupt stop. Commission minutes hold that Erdoğan left the villa where he was staying to examine the presidency compound in Okluk Bay on July 14. Erdoğan made the trip in the hotel's helicopter.

On the night of July 14, an appalling terrorist attack was carried out with a cargo truck in Nice, France. Previously, on November 13, 2015 there had been another attack in Paris for which Erdoğan had stood before the cameras late at night, made a statement, and condemned terrorism. For the Nice attack, however, no video announcement was made to camera; only a message of condemnation was released on the presidency website and Twitter.

July 15, 2016 was a Friday. Erdoğan frequently appears in public for Friday prayers when he goes to various places for a visit. It is an opportunity for party members wishing to see him and lawmakers and local officials wishing to greet and meet him. When the state-owned Anatolian news agency correspondent got wind that Erdoğan could be in the region, he called Muğla AKP lawmaker Nihat Öztürk, who said, "I have been a provincial chairman for four years. Mr. President has come to the region a lot. I can't know where he is for security purposes and they would never tell me. There's no chance you can find out. He shows up somewhere. Because he came during Eid Festival in 2007, we came face to face in

224] "Eto'o da Erdoğan'ı karşılamaya geldi," [Eto'o came to meet Erdoğan too], Akşam, 9 July 2016, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/etoo-da-erdogani-karsilamaya-geldi/haber-531816>

225] "TBMM 15 Temmuz Darbesini Araştırma Komisyonu toplantı tutanağı [Parliamentary July 15 Coup Investigation Commission Minutes]," Marmaris, 21 December 2016, p. 2.

226] Ibid.

Bördübet after Friday prayer. He came to Akkaya in 2004 and went to Friday prayer there.... Go, look, he'll show up somewhere,"²²⁷ according to commission minutes.

It can be understood that local media workers were guessing that Erdoğan would show up in a mosque somewhere on Friday, July 15 for the Friday prayer.²²⁸ According to the information CHP İzmir lawmaker Aytun Çıray provided at the commission, preparations were made in the Çamlı Village mosque.²²⁹ It always made news when Erdoğan left his hotel for Friday prayer during his holidays in the region.²³⁰ this time

Also reported in the commission statements is the fact that Erdoğan's son-in-law and Energy Minister Berat Albayrak and Erdoğan's executive assistant Hasan Doğan went on a boat trip at about 15:00 at hotel owner Serkan Yazıcı's invitation. Doğan learned during this boat trip that president's place of residence had appeared on the website of Sözcü daily (posted at 16:25), and they decided to return.

After they all returned to the hotel, the President's Security Director Muhsin Köse said he had to check the perimeter of the villa and asked hotel owner Serkan Yazıcı to accompany him, and they did it together. When they later sat down for some tea, Yazıcı said Security Director Muhsin Köse received a phone call. Yazıcı remembers Köse saying, "I can't disturb Mr. President now." He reports that Köse got a second call but this time he rose in panic and said they had to go to the villa. When they got to the villa, he noticed that there was some unusual activity.

The indictment about the coup attempt states that the phone calls Yazıcı talked about were from MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan. Deputy Chief of Staff Yaşar Güler says in his statement that during his meeting with Chief of General Staff Akar in the headquarters "Fidan said, 'Sir let me inform Mr. President about it.' He said, 'Can I talk to Mr. President?'"

227] "TBMM 15 Temmuz Darbesini Araştırma Komisyonu toplantı tutanağı [Parliamentary July 15 Coup Investigation Commission Minutes]," Marmaris, 20 December 2016, p. 12.

228] "İşin Aslını Anlatayım," [Let me tell you the real story], Soner Yalçın, Sözcü, 6 September 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/soner-yalcin/isin-aslini-anlatayim-1378799/>

229] "İzmir Milletvekili Aytun Çıray'ın Dinlenmesini Talep Ettiği Bazı Kişilerin Komisyona Davet Edilmemesine İlişkin Açıklaması," [Statement by İzmir Lawmaker Aytun Çıray that some of the persons he demanded be heard were not invited], (10 / 276, 277, 278, 279) Esas Numaralı Meclis Araştırması Komisyonu, 22 December 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.mv_goruntule?pTutanakId=14337

230] On his vacations President Erdoğan often attends Friday prayers at local mosques, and greets the local residents. Below are links to some news articles about Erdoğan's trips to mosques on Fridays: Erdoğan performed Friday prayer in Belek: PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan left the Rixos Premium Hotel where he had been having a holiday with his family and performed his Friday prayer in Belek Mosque. See 31 July 2009; PM Erdoğan left the hotel he was staying at after 36 hours. PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan left the five-star Ottoman Palace Hotel in Antakya, where he went on holiday, after 36 hours and performed Friday prayer in Habib-i Neccar Mosque, which is the first mosque built in Anatolia. See Milliyet, 10 April 2009.; Erdoğan left Denizli among display of affection. PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan finished his 5-day holiday in Sarayköy district of Denizli. Erdoğan, who went on holiday to Umut Termal Hotel located 9 kilometers from Sarayköy district of Denizli with his wife last Tuesday, left the hotel only for some visits and Friday prayer during the five days. See Haber Vitrini, 17 September 2007. ; Journalists searched mosques to find Erdoğan: On his fourth day at the Rixos Hotel in the resort town of Tekirova, Kemer, PM Erdoğan went out for Friday prayer. Performing Friday prayer in Böğürtlenözü (Sarıören) mosque in Çamyuva, Erdoğan stayed in the mosque for a brief time and conversed with the congregation; Erdoğan left the hotel for Friday prayer: PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan left the Rixos hotel in Belek, where he arrived on the first day of sacrifice holiday, for Friday prayer today. See Milliyet 12 December 2008.

I didn't hear the response. Fidan then asked, 'So, Muhsin, do you have enough weapons and men if there is an assault from the outside?' He got a response but I don't know what it was. He asked one more time, 'Muhsin, do you have enough weapons and men if there is an assault from the outside?' The response must have been positive because he said, 'Good luck,' and hung up the phone."²³¹

It can be inferred that the security director answered Hakan Fidan in the affirmative about having enough ammunition and staff for assaults—including those from land, air and sea—at a time when security measures had been decreased to a minimum so that it would not be known that the president was in the region on holiday with his family. It is quite strange that Erdoğan's security director did not bother asking the substance of the threat and responded positively to Intelligence chief Fidan when asked if there were enough measures and resources available in case of attack. These phone calls were made at about 19:00. Yazıcı's similar statement to the commission that there was unusual activity when they arrived at the villa also indicates that information that had been obtained by Muhsin Köse was also received by the team of Erdoğan in the villa and the security team had been taking precautions.



This photo showed Erdoğan as teaching the Qur'an to his grandson reportedly during the hours when the coup attempt was unfolding.

Witness testimonies also show that Erdoğan and his entourage worked on a plan to leave Marmaris. However, no information has been made public about what exactly happened and what was discussed in the villa between 19:00 and 23:00. Erdoğan has said on many TV programs that he was constantly in contact with the prime minister but he failed to get through to Akar and Fidan. Erdoğan said that his first contact with Fidan was towards 22:00.²³² However, there does not seem to be a reason why he could not reach Hakan Fidan or Hulusi Akar in the period in which Muhsin Köse ran toward the villa in a panic, according to the official chronology of events.

A photograph that shows Erdoğan teaching his grandson to read the Qur'an later went viral on social media. Erdoğan said on news channel 24 that the photograph was taken on the night of the coup attempt.²³³ Journalists tried to correct him, saying, "Was it daytime?" when he said "that night," but despite attempts at correction he insisted it was night. It is known that there was a coup attempt underway earlier and the security director was called by Hakan Fidan and asked to take precautions against an attack, so Erdoğan's photograph with his grandson studying the Qur'an leads to controversies about its date and time. It has been claimed that the photograph was shared to support his statement that he learned about the coup attempt at 21:30 from his brother-in-law.

Hotel owner Serkan Yazıcı says that he went to Erdoğan's room at about 23:00 on the coup night. He told the commission that before that he was ordered by the president's

231] Genelkurmay Çatı İddianamesi [The main Indictment on the Office of Gen. Chief of Staff], p.510.

232] "Erdoğan 15 Temmuz darbe girişiminin detaylarını anlattı," [Erdoğan told about the details of July 15 coup bid], aHaber, 29 July 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxl_gx_1C3hk

233] "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Torununa Kur'an Öğrettiği Fotoğrafın Hikayesini Anlattı," [President Erdoğan told the story of the photograph in which he is teaching the Quran to his grandson], 24 TV, 8 April 2017, https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5hmuwr_cumhurbaskani-erdogan-torununa-kur-an-ogrettiği-fotoğrafın-hikayesini-anlattı_news



It was claimed that F-16 fighters jets run surveillance flights on July 12-13 over the hotel in Marmaris where President planned to stay.

team to keep all the cars, boats and helicopters on standby. Erdoğan announced on a live aHaber news program on July 29, 2016 that they had made plans for escape from four different airports—Aydın Çıldır, Muğla Dalaman, Milas-Bodrum, and Izmir Adnan Menderes airports.²³⁴ If this information is accurate, experts believe that to prepare four planes and their crew members to be ready on standby around 23:30, when Erdoğan said he knew about the coup attempt would have required hours of advance preparations.²³⁵

Erdoğan held a five-minute press conference with local media workers in Marmaris at 00:04 and called people to the squares and airports.²³⁶ Yet when he saw that the news was not being broadcasted on national TV channels, he went live on CNN Turk via FaceTime at 00:24 and again called people to take to the streets. According to the commission minutes, the local journalists attributed the delay of the announcement to technical difficulties. After his appearance on CNN Turk, Erdoğan and his family boarded the helicopter waiting at the hotel's heliport and left for Dalaman Airport. Here an ATA airplane which belonged to the presidency was waiting for him. The airplane had come from Izmir Adnan Menderes Airport and landed in Dalaman airport. At 01:30 Erdoğan and his family were quickly transferred to the airplane from the helicopter, which landed near the airplane. According to the details in the Marmaris indictment, the ATA airplane was disguised as a passenger plane with the code THY-8456 and it left Dalaman Airport at 01:43.

Two separate reports about July 15 reveal contradictions on the flight map of Erdoğan's plane.²³⁷ A report by the main opposition party (CHP) notes that a picture taken by Flightradar at 00.30 on July 16, 2106 showed that a plane with the code TK-8456, which was supposedly disguising the president's plane ATA-TC, was clearly identified as a government plane. In other words, the president's plane was in descent over the Marmara Sea within minutes of Istanbul Atatürk Airport. The data showed the departure point as Dalaman but did not say the destination point. "The official statement was that president arrived in Istanbul at 03.20 on July 16, 2016. But this screen shot showed the plane with a substitute flight code was in descent over Istanbul approximately 2 or 2.5 hours earlier," the report said. This report also pointed out that the president's plane took off from Dalaman but did not fly directly to Istanbul, instead flew towards İzmir first, then moved towards Mudanya and circled around there for a while before proceeding to the Marmara Sea for a descent to Istanbul. The report said both president and prime minister have been trying

234] "Erdoğan 15 Temmuz darbe girişiminin detaylarını anlattı," [Erdoğan told about the details of July 15 coup bid], aHaber, 29 July 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxl_gx_IC3hk

235] Gerçeğin Peşinde, [After Truth], 17 June 2017, p. 38 https://www.dropbox.com/s/5mi42zdyu93cd8t/Gercegin_Pesinde_17_Haziran_2017.pdf?dl=0

236] "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın 15 Temmuz gecesi yaptığı ilk konuşma, 4 ay sonra yayımlandı," [The first statement President Erdoğan made on July 15 night is aired four months later], Sputnik Haber Ajansı, 20 Kasım 2016, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201611201025892099-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-15-July-ilk-yayin/>

237] Gerçeğin Peşinde, [After Truth], 17 June 2017, p.37 https://www.dropbox.com/s/5mi42zdyu93cd8t/Gercegin_Pesinde_17_Haziran_2017.pdf?dl=0

to cover up very many details of what happened on July 15, leaving many unanswered questions.²³⁸ The burning question is why Erdoğan picked Istanbul airport, which was controlled by the military, instead of secure airports like Esenboğa in Ankara or dozens of other airports that had not been taken over by coup plotters. The conflicting statements by Erdoğan and his family members muddy the water further, whether the first destination was Istanbul or not.

According to the commission notes, local officials and security officers were very relieved when they saw Erdoğan off safely. Yet while they were engaged in taking other precautions in the province, they received another piece of news from Marmaris. At about 03:20 three military helicopters were hovering near the hotel Erdoğan had left two hours before. When he first heard this news, of which no one could make sense, Muğla Police Commissioner Hakan Çetinkaya stated that he thought the putschists had come to take Marmaris District Police Center.²³⁹

Contrary to the police commissioner's guess, the soldiers had come to take Erdoğan, who was no longer at the hotel, and take him to Akıncı Air Base. The operation was being commanded by Brigadier-General Gökhan Şahin Sönmezateş, who later stated he had received the order from Brigadier-General Semih Terzi, who was killed during the coup attempt. Sönmezateş said that he had spoken to Semih Terzi on a secure military line on Monday and Wednesday before the day of the coup and was ordered to assemble a team. Thinking that it was a military operation within the chain of command, Sönmezateş stated that after his aide brought him the declaration by the general staff he believed the developments were unfolding as expected and the Armed Forces (TSK) had seized the government within the chain of command.²⁴⁰

The Marmaris Indictment and commission reports include great detail about where the helicopters came from, where they fueled up, how they were seized, and where the ammunition was. Yet there is no answer to the most critical question about July 15: Why did the soldiers come to Marmaris two hours after Erdoğan left?

On a night when television was broadcasting live, the Internet was open and unrestricted, and mobile phones were working without a problem, it is very interesting that the soldiers who took part in the operation were so isolated from the world. The soldiers' statements show that they were in contact with the outside world and could get on the Internet via their mobile phones.

The military experts interviewed on condition of anonymity by Stockholm Center for Freedom explained that units that go on an operation with air vehicles must be in constant contact with a point on land, and it is impossible to think otherwise. According

238] CHP'nin 15 Temmuz raporuna muhalefet şerhi: Öngörülen, Önlenmeyen ve Sonuçları Kullanılan Kontrollü Darbe, [CHP's Dissenting Opinion to Parliamentary Coup Investigation Report], p.179-180, <http://www.chp.org.tr/Public/0/Folder//87360.pdf>

239] "TBMM 15 Temmuz Darbesini Araştırma Komisyonu toplantı tutanağı [Parliamentary July 15 Coup Investigation Commission Minutes]," Marmaris, 20 December 2016, s. 24.

240] Marmaris Indictment.

to this routine procedure of the TSK, the contact spot on land should have followed the developments, coordinated moves, and communicated them to the units in the air on a night when all means of communication were open. There is strong evidence that this did not happen or there was some different instruction. The operation commander Brigadier-General Sönmezateş stated that they were kept waiting for four hours at İzmir Çiğli Military Base. Defining this as a “mastermind,” Sönmezateş said, “We got the instructions to wait from Akıncı Air Base Operation Center. I spoke to a Lieutenant-Colonel called Hüseyin whose last name I can’t remember. But I know which generals gave the order. I thought the order was given within the chain of command. I expect those generals to give an explanation.”²⁴¹ No information has been made public about the names of the generals or military staff who sent the team to take Erdoğan, kept them waiting, and then directed them to Marmaris hours after Erdoğan left. It is unknown what roles these persons had in the coup or whether they are still on duty. The military experts interviewed by SCF find it impossible to explain how the putschists tried to take the No. 1 target of the coup in such an amateurish way when one considers the structure of the special forces and the TSK’s operation procedures.

It can be seen that the soldiers had planned to take the president from the Okluk Bay site, which belongs to the presidency. Among the pieces of evidence seized were preparations made on an Okluk Bay map with acetate pens.²⁴² It is quite interesting that the soldiers did not know where Erdoğan was even after the hotel where Erdoğan was staying was revealed in the afternoon and posted on media websites. Also included in the Marmaris Indictment is the fact that the soldiers who landed the helicopters had to ask people around there for the address of the hotel.

If the arrival of soldiers on the bridge in Istanbul is taken as the beginning of the coup, there is no explanation for the 6-hour delay against the primary target.

The helicopter that took Erdoğan from his hotel landed at Dalaman Airport, which is a joint civilian and military airport.²⁴³ The Coup Commission reports hold that there were four military staff in the tower, two of whom were airmen and the other two marines. There are two command centers next to the airport, one of Naval Forces and the other of Air Forces. It was a huge risk for a president who was being threatened by a military coup to go to Istanbul via an airport also used by soldiers. The security detail who arrived at the Dalaman Airport before Erdoğan replied to police officers who offered to evacuate the military staff from the tower or incapacitate them that it was not necessary.²⁴⁴

The Akıncı Air Base Indictment indicates that a black minivan with its beacon light on approached the left wing of the presidential airplane parked at lot no. 5 and checked the airplane between 00:53 and 00:57. Despite this information, which means the president’s

241] “Genelkurmay Başkanı’nın ‘Ürkütücü’ dediği komutan konuştu,” [Commander COS described as ‘frightening’ spoke], Doğan Haber Ajansı, 25 May 2017, http://www.dha.com.tr/genelkurmay-baskaninin-urkutucu-dedigi-komutan-konustu_1516646.html

242] “Deliller dosyası,” [Evidentiary File], Marmaris Indictment.

243] Devlet Hava Meydanları İşletmesi resmi web sitesi [State Airports Administration official website], <http://www.dhmi.gov.tr/havaalanlari.aspx?hv=5#.WTSQtHfBLq1>

244] “TBMM 15 Temmuz Darbesini Araştırma Komisyonu toplantı tutanağı (Parliamentary July 15 Coup Investigation Commission Records),” Dalaman Havalimanı, 20 December 2016, p. 2.



Putschists who were sent to detain Erdoğan from his hotel in Marmaris arrived two hours after President left. They could not find the location and asked tourists for a direction.

plane had been spotted, Erdoğan continued with the departure plan from Dalaman, which Erdoğan said was one of the four planes readied for him. Another unusual detail is the fact that of all the airports in Turkey the putschists only tried to take the airports in Istanbul on July 15. Ankara-Esenboga Airport was not included in any plan, which is remarkable when compared with previous coups. Erdoğan went to land in Istanbul Atatürk Airport, which is next to the Air Force Academy, at a time when planes and helicopters were taking off and was insistent on landing there, which cannot be explained by the tower being cleared of putschists.

In his interview on CNN International immediately after the coup Erdoğan said, “If I’d stayed 15 minutes longer, I’d have been killed,” a claim he repeated several times later. The information in the prosecutor’s indictment, witness testimonies and commission reports clearly show that the soldiers arrived in the area of the hotel more than two hours after Erdoğan had left. The president shared information with the public that conflicts with the evidence.

About 15–20 minutes away from the hotel where Erdoğan was staying is Aksaz Marine Base, which is one of the most important military establishments in Turkey. Brigadier-General Namık Alper, the commander of the base, was detained on the morning of July 16 and then arrested. Statements indicate that Erdoğan and his entourage kept this plan in mind when making their exit plan, and Muğla Police Headquarters was anxious to take precautions against Aksaz. The base had two divisions, nearly four thousand staff, warships, and anti-aircraft guns, yet it did not make any attempt to move on Erdoğan’s hotel. The military experts Stockholm Center for Freedom has interviewed find it odd that this base was not included in coup plans when it could have provided active support to land and air forces.

The military team that went to Marmaris stated that they were going to take the president to Akıncı Air Base on a military airplane that was waiting for them if they could have achieved their target.²⁴⁵ Yet such an airplane landed neither at Çiğli Air Base nor at another airport nearby. This information confirms that the soldiers in the operation were left in the lurch, yet the prosecutor stated that there was no hard evidence about the soldiers’ return plan and used this lack as support for his assassination argument in the indictment. There are also suspicions about the death of two police officers killed during the raid on the hotel in Marmaris. The indictment

245] Marmaris Indictment

says that one of the officers was killed with Major Seymen’s gun, while no forensic or ballistic report was obtained about the bullet that killed the other officer.²⁴⁶ The soldiers claim that the police officers killed their colleagues in friendly fire.

A British tourist, Martin Brady, who contacted SCF after Turkish version of this report was published earlier, provided his account of what he witnessed that night. The booking documents he shared indicates Brady and his family stayed at Grand Yazıcı Hotel on July 15, 2016. Their room was located next to the one where police bodyguards of Erdoğan were staying. “Gunshots being fired constantly. However, we never witnessed the soldier shoot. I’m not sure where the shots were coming from. I believe the first to shot had to be the security of the president who had be waiting to ambush the suspected coup plotters”, Brady said. He maintained that because of the layout of the hotel it would be impossible for anybody to know exactly where any security personnel were staying. He holds a firm view that first shot should have to come from Erdoğan’s security. Brady’s recollection corroborates the account provided by a suspect during the sixth hearing of the Marmaris trial.²⁴⁷ Gökhan Güçlü, non-commissioned officer, testified in the court that it was a part of the plot that a master mind staged the skirmish between the police officers and soldiers, hoping for even a massacre with more casualties despite the fact that Erdoğan left the hotel hours before troops arrived.

A Doğan News Agency reporter who went to the hotel for Erdoğan’s press conference reported that there were intelligence agents there in a Transporter that had advanced technological equipment in it.²⁴⁸

When Erdoğan appeared live on CNN Turk, someone was heard in the background telling Erdoğan, “Say, I’m the commander-in-chief.” The identity of the person next to the president who could speak so informally with him led to much speculation but no definitive answers.²⁴⁹

According to Parliamentary Investigation Commission minutes, during the deployment of the putschists to Çiğli and their wait there, two pilots refused to support the putschists and disabled their helicopters. One pilot was assigned to take the Aegean Army Commander.²⁵⁰ All these pilots were purged from the army. It is not known why the pilot who openly resisted the coup by disabling the putschists’ vehicle was purged.

246] Marmaris Indictment

247] “Cumhurbaşkanına suikast girişimi davasında altıncı duruşma” [Sixth hearing into the case of assassination attempt to president], 1 March 2017, Habertürk, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1409028-cumhurbaskanina-suikast-girisimi-davasinda-altinci-durusma>

248] “TBMM 15 Temmuz Darbesini Araştırma Komisyonu toplantı tutanağı [Parliamentary July 15 Coup Investigation Commission Minutes],” Marmaris, 21 December 2016, p. 23.

249] “Erdoğan’a 15 Temmuz akşamı CNN Türk yayınında ‘başkomutanım de’ telkini,” [Suggestion to Erdoğan that he should say ‘I’m commander-in-chief’ during live CNN Turk broadcast], 4 April 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54d4tv4pBBY>

250] TBMM 15 Temmuz Darbesini Araştırma Komisyonu toplantı tutanağı [Parliamentary July 15 Coup Investigation Commission Minutes],” Marmaris, 21 December 2016

CHAPTER 3

FIGURES PLAYING CRITICAL ROLES IN JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

3.1 President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

3.1.1 The Role of Military Coups In Erdoğan's Career

Military coups and interventions hold an important place in the life of Turkey's authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The February 28 post-modern coup in 1997 shaped the political movement he rose out of and provided a golden opportunity for the birth of the The Justice and Development Party (AKP). The Welfare Party (RP)²⁵¹ and its continuation the Virtue Party (FP)²⁵² were closed one after the other. The administrators, especially its leader Necmettin Erbakan, were banned from political activities. Erdoğan²⁵³ served four months in prison for a poem he recited but turned his victimization both in the eyes of the Turkish people and the world public into an opportunity for his political career. The AKP he founded with friends came to power in the November 3, 2002 elections,²⁵⁴ although he could not assume the position of prime minister because of his political ban. Thanks to the Republican Peoples' Party's (CHP) support, the ban was lifted and Erdoğan became prime minister.²⁵⁵

Another military action that was important to Erdoğan's political career was the "e-coup" of April 27.²⁵⁶ A memorandum issued in 2007 while Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt was in office, the e-coup was the signal flare of military intervention in the presidential election. The April 27 declaration was posted on the website of the General Staff and drew reaction from the public because even innocent activities such as the commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's birth were presented as a dangerous threat. The crisis in Parliament, induced by the judiciary and the main opposition political party and backed by the military, prevented the AKP's presidential candidate Abdullah Gül from being elected as president in Parliament.²⁵⁷ Erdoğan took the party to snap polls on July 22, 2007, acquired a fresh and strong mandate with 46.5 percent of the vote and helped Gül be elected

251] "Refah'a kilit" [Lynchpin on Refah], *Hürriyet*, 17 January 1998, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/amp/ve-refah-a-kilit-39002805>

252] "Fazilet Partisi kapatıldı" [Fazilet Party closed], *Türkiye*, 22 June 2001, <http://m.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/Genel/a113975.aspx>

253] "Erdoğan'a 10 ay hapis" [10-month imprisonment for Erdoğan], *Milliyet*, 22 April 1998, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1998/04/22/siyaset/siy00.html>

254] "Seçim sonuçları" [Election results], *Habertürk*, 3 November 2002, <http://www.haberturk.com/secim2002>

255] "59. Türkiye Hükümeti" [59th Turkish Government], 14 March 2003, https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/59._T%C3%B-Crkiye_H%C3%BCk%C3%BBmeti

256] "27 Nisan Genelkurmay basın açıklaması" [April 27 General Staff press release], 27 April 2007, https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/27_April_Genelkurmay_Ba%C5%9Fkanl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1_Bas%C4%B1n_A%C3%A7%C4%B-1klamas%C4%B1

257] "Anayasa Mahkemesi kararı" [The Constitutional Court decision], 27 June 2007, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2007/06/20070627-17.htm>

as president.²⁵⁸ Another political crisis of military origin thus helped consolidate Erdoğan's power.

The coup attempt of July 15, 2016 opened the path to a Turkish-style presidential regime whereby Erdoğan concentrated all the powers in his hands.²⁵⁹ In his first press conference on the coup night, Erdoğan said of the coup, “This attempt, this activity is a gift to us from God.”²⁶⁰ Other important figures were reported using the expression “gift from God.” For example, AKP lawmaker Ravza Kavakçı Kan stated, “When we look back at that day, when we consider that night, we see that, interestingly enough, everybody was somehow where they had to be. I mean our citizens did not crowd into a single place. Not everyone went to the bridge. They went to different places. This is very interesting indeed—like a gift from God I believe—but other than that we don't know how it happened.”

3.1.2 Why Was The Coup Attempt A “Gift From God” For Erdoğan?

It soon became clear why Erdoğan defined the cataclysmic event that claimed the lives of 249 people as “a gift from God.” He expressed it himself: “During the present process we've attained—thanks God—the capability and power to do many things we wouldn't be able to do at normal times.”²⁶¹

Turkey has been governed under state of emergency conditions since July 21, 2016. The state of emergency declared for three months after the July 15 coup attempt has been extended three times on October 19, 2016, January 3, 2017 and April 18, 2017. Twenty-five decrees having force of law have been issued since the July 15 coup attempt.

We shall list here the things Erdoğan said they “wouldn't be able to do” during normal times and they were able to do under the state of emergency (OHAL) procedures declared after the coup. As of 31 May 2017, 6 news agencies, 45 newspapers, 30 TV channels, 19 magazines, 32 radio stations and 31 publishing houses that were critical or independent have been closed with these decrees; 1,411 associations and 141 foundations in the entire country that Erdoğan believed to be against him have been discontinued; trustees have been appointed to 79 elected municipalities, replacing elected mayors with government appointed caretakers; areas with Kurdish majorities such as Diyarbakır, Van, Şırnak and Mardin are among the provinces where trustees have been appointed.²⁶²

258] “2007 seçim sonuçları” [2007 election results], Habertürk, 22 July 2007, <http://www.haberturk.com/secim2007>

259] “16 Nisan 2017 referandum sonuçları” [16 April 2017 referendum results], 16 April 2017, https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_T%C3%BCrkiye_anayasa_de%C4%9Fi%C5%9Fikli%C4%9Fi_referandumu

260] “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Bedelini ağır ödeyecekler”, [President Erdoğan: They'll pay for it dearly], NTV, 16 July 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/cumhurbaşkanı-erdogan-bedelini-cok-agir-odeyecekler.LAhkH2jhckSDTMgtuqNowg>

261] “Erdoğan: OHAL ile normal zamanlarda yapamayacağımız şeyleri yapabilme gücüne sahip olduk”, [Erdoğan: With state of emergency we've got the power to do many things we wouldn't be able to do at normal times], T24, 22 September 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-ohal-ile-normal-zamanlarda-yapamayacagimiz-seyleri-yapabilme-gucune-sahip-olduk.361194>

262] “15 Temmuz'dan bugüne KHK ihraçları” [KHK purges from July 15 to present], Dağ Media, 25 May 2017, <https://dagmedya.net/2017/05/25/15-temmuzdan-bugune-khk-ihraclari/>



Nurettin Canikli

Since the coup attempt, 965 companies have been handed over to the Deposits and Savings Insurance Fund (TMSF) and seized on the grounds that they were affiliated with the Gülen movement. Deputy Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli said that these companies had assets worth 41 billion Turkish lira (approximately \$11.3 billion) and employed nearly 50,000 people. The TMSF was also appointed as a trustee for the seized assets of 107 individuals.²⁶³ Minister of the Environment Mehmet Özhaseki said in a statement dated November 13, 2016 that 15 billion liras' worth of properties from associations, foundations and companies has been transferred to the treasury, and 190,000 properties of people and establishments under judicial investigation have been frozen.²⁶⁴

In addition, at least 140,000 passports have been cancelled, and legal action taken against 4,238 (4,424 in some sources) judges and prosecutors who were dismissed from their posts after the coup attempt.²⁶⁵ Two members of the Supreme Court were dismissed and then arrested. The number of those purged from the Council of State, Court of Accounts and Court of Appeal reached 429. More than three thousand judges and prosecutors, 104 members of the Court of Appeal, 41 members of the Council of State, 2 members of the Constitutional Court, and 5 members of the judicial council (HSYK) have been arrested.

The number of police officers purged under the law-decrees in OHAL is 24,568, and 17 governors, 74 deputy governors and 100 district governors have been arrested. The number of staff purged from the TSK was 7,356, while 6,035 soldiers were arrested, 168 of whom were generals.²⁶⁶ According to data obtained by Stockholm Center for Freedom, the number of suspicious deaths and suicides in detention since July 15 reached 82 by July 12, 2017.²⁶⁷ The number of detained journalists exceeded 260. According to Human Rights Joint Platform, under the state of emergency 4,811 academics have been purged, including 312 signatories of a peace declaration. When the 2,619 academics laid off because of the closure of universities are added, the number of academics dismissed from universities reaches 7,619.²⁶⁸ Also, 1,078 lawyers have been detained, and of these 513 were arrested.²⁶⁹ In total 168,801 people have faced legal action, most in the form of detentions, and 50,504 have

263] "Turkish Gov't Seizes 965 Gülen Movement Affiliated Firms With \$11.3 Billion Worth," SCF, 7 July 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/turkish-govt-seizes-965-gulen-movement-affiliated-firms-with-11-3-billion-worth/>

264] "Çevre Bakanı: 15 milyarlık 'FETÖ' taşınmazı hazineye geçti", [Minister of Environment: TL15 billion worth of 'FETÖ' property transferred to treasury], BirGün, 13 November 2016, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/cev-re-bakani-15-milyarlik-feto-tasinmazi-hazineye-gecti-135385.html>

265] "15 Temmuz'dan sonra 4 bin 238 hakim ve savcı ihraç edildi" [4,238 judges and prosecutors dismissed after July 15], 11 May 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/15-temmuz-dan-sonra-4-bin-238-gundem-2448679/>

266] "CHP'den OHAL bilançosu raporu: Şüpheli sayısı 100 bini aştı, en az 25 kişi canına kaydı" [OHAL tab from CHP: Number of suspects exceed 100,000, at least 25 commit suicide], 2 March 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/chpden-ohal-bilancosu-raporu-supheli-sayisi-100-bini-asti-en-az-25-kisi-canina-kiydi,391620>

267] "Suspicious Deaths And Suicides In Turkey", 9 July 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/suspicious-deaths-and-suicides-in-turkey-updated-list/>

268] "Akademide OHAL bilançosu: 4 bin 811 akademisyen ihraç edildi" [OHAL effect on academy: 4,811 academics dismissed], 26 April 2017, <http://gazetekarınca.com/2017/04/akademide-ohal-bilancosu-312si-baris-imzacisi-4-bin-811-akademisyen-ihrac-edildi/>

269] "Turkey Issues Arrest Warrants For Another 56 Lawyers Over Alleged Gülen Links," SCF, June 24, 2017 <http://stockholmcf.org/turkey-issues-arrest-warrants-for-another-56-lawyers-over-alleged-gulen-links/>



In several interviews, Erdoğan gave conflicting accounts on when he first learned about the coup attempt.

been arrested since the failed coup bid.²⁷⁰

During all these events, it was undoubtedly Erdoğan who is the biggest winner of July 15. With the referendum on April 16, 2017, he attained the Turkish-style imperial presidency of his dreams, and he has been the official chairman of his political party AKP since then. He has also seized full control of the right to appoint effectively all members of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK). As president, he now appoints six of the 13-member council, and, as the chairman of the majority party in Parliament (AKP), he also appoints the remainder. He has seized the right of legislation from Parliament through the Decrees Having the Force of Law under the state of emergency. Decrees that are

supposed to deal with only urgent matters such as national security, terror threat and other serious matters are now issued on a wide range of issues that include even commercial and trivial matters like changing requirements for snow tires²⁷¹ and restricting popular marriage programs on TV networks.²⁷² It is unclear when the state of emergency which was originally declared to be “for only three months” will end. Judging by remarks by Erdoğan who said “maybe 12 months will not be enough”, it is unlikely to be lifted any time soon.²⁷³

Among the extraordinary “gifts” of the coup attempt are the referendum that bestowed Erdoğan with powers fit for a dictator and the events before it. Erdoğan described the April 16, 2017 referendum as the “revenge” for July 15.²⁷⁴ He even went further and stressed that voting “No” in the referendum would mean “treason to country.”²⁷⁵ Bans were issued on “no” campaigns.²⁷⁶ The Supreme Election Board (YSK) took a last-minute decision to accept unsealed votes in violation of an explicit ban in the election law.²⁷⁷

270] “Turkey’s Justice Minister Bozdağ Says 50,504 Arrested Since Coup Attempt”, SCF, 9 July 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/turkeys-justice-minister-bozdag-says-50504-arrested-since-coup-attempt/>

271] “KHK’da kar lastiği değişikliği” [Snow tire amendment in KHK], NTV, 9 February 2017, http://www.ntv.com.tr/otomobil/khkda-kis-lastigiuygulamasinda-degisiklik,4h_ch2501k6g712huGki2g

272] “Evlilik programları KHK ile kaldırıldı” [Marriage programs banned with KHK], Hürriyet, 30 April 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/evlilik-programi-khk-ile-yasak-40442535>

273] “Erdoğan: OHAL kalkmayacak” [Erdoğan: OHAL will not be lifted], BirGün, 21 May 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/erdogan-ohal-kalkmayacak-160569.html>

274] “Erdoğan: 16 Nisan, 15 Temmuz’un intikamı olacaktır” [Erdoğan: April 16 will be the revenge on July 15], İHA, 17 Mart 2017, <http://www.ih.com.tr/haber-erdogan-16-nisan-15-temmuzun-bir-intikami-olacaktır-631125/>

275] “Erdoğan: Hayırcılar ve terör aynı safta” [Erdoğan: Naysayers and terror are on the same side], BirGün, 13 March 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/erdogan-hayircilar-ve-teror-ayni-safta-150734.html>

276] “Hayır demek yasak; Kadıköy’de hayır bildirisi dağıtanlar gözaltına alındı” [It’s forbidden to say ‘no’; Distributors of ‘no’ flyers detained in Kadikoy], Gazete Karınca, 4 February 2017, <http://gazetekarınca.com/2017/02/hayir-demek-yasak-kadikoyde-hayir-bildirisi-dagitanlar-gozaltina-alindi/>

277] “Rezalet: Mühürsüz oy pusulaları geçerli sayılacak” [Scandal: Unsealed voting ballots will be considered valid], Cumhuriyet, 16 April 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/721968/Rezalet..._YSK__Muhursuz_oy_pusulalari_gecerli_sayilacak.html

It would have been surprising if the Supreme Election Board had taken a different decision given three of its members were arrested in the aftermath of the failed coup. Sabah, a daily controlled by Erdoğan, covered these arrests as YSK was “cleansed” of “FETÖ terrorists” and reminded readers that these members had voted against ruling party challenges in the June 7 and November 1, 2015 elections.²⁷⁸ The same story revealed that nine judges who were serving as the heads of provincial election commissions, 45 judges serving as members of provincial elections commissions, and 143 judges who were the chairpeople of the district-level elections commission had all been dismissed.

Tana de Zulueta, Head of the ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) limited election observation mission said on April 17, 2017, “The referendum took place in a political environment in which fundamental freedoms essential to a genuinely democratic process were curtailed under the state of emergency, and the two sides did not have equal opportunities to make their case to the voters.”²⁷⁹

“The campaign framework was restrictive and the campaign imbalanced due to the active involvement of several leading national officials, as well as many local public officials, in the “Yes” campaign,” de Zulueta said. “We observed the misuse of state resources, as well as the obstruction of “No” campaign events. The campaign rhetoric was tarnished by some senior officials equating “No” supporters with terrorist sympathizers, and in numerous cases “No” supporters faced police interventions and violent scuffles at their events.”

Cezar Florin Preda, Head of the delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) said, “In general, the referendum did not live up to Council of Europe standards. The legal framework was inadequate for the holding of a genuinely democratic process.”

3.1.3 Contradictions In Erdoğan’s Statements About July 15

It still has not been ascertained when President Erdoğan learned about the coup attempt despite the eleven months since that night. This information is crucial because if action had been taken when the tip-off about the coup was received by MİT, the attempt could very well have been thwarted before 249 people were killed and more than 2,000 wounded. Erdoğan might be held accountable for not preventing the coup despite the intelligence he received, which puts the spotlight on MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan and Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar. It is not in the least normal that such information should be held back from the president. Despite such an apparently unforgivable mistake, the two officials have kept their posts. The standard operating procedures dictate that Erdoğan should have been made aware of the information about a coup at 16:00 at the latest when the General Staff Headquarters were informed about it.

278] “YSK, FETÖ’cülerden arındırıldı” [YSK, FETÖ’cülerden arındırıldı], Sabah Gazetesi, 24 Ocak 2017, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2017/01/24/ysk-da-fetoculerden-arindirildi>

279] Turkey’s constitutional referendum: an unlevel playing field, 17 April 2017, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=6596&cat=31>

Akar's and Fidan's ambiguous attitude about the issue and avoidance of testifying other than presenting belated written responses to the Parliamentary commission can only make suspicions grow. Questions increase when conflicting statements from Erdoğan on when he first learned about the attempt are considered. The president made a statement about the issue in a press conference at the airport when he landed in İstanbul in the early hours of July 16: "As you know there was irregular activity today in the afternoon, unfortunately, within our armed forces." This statement reveals Erdoğan knew the mobilization in the military in the afternoon of July 15 which contradicts his other remarks on when he first learned about the coup attempt. It also suggests he was informed what was going on in real time.²⁸⁰

However, Erdoğan gave a different answer every time he was asked when he learned about the coup. For instance, he told Reuters, "I was in Marmaris with my family. At about 4–4:30 pm I got a call from my brother-in-law. He said, 'There are some problems in İstanbul. Soldiers are blocking roads near Beylerbeyi Palace. They aren't allowing entrance to the bridge.' To tell the truth, I didn't believe it when I first heard it. I immediately called the MIT Undersecretary but couldn't reach him. I called the Chief of the General Staff; I couldn't reach him because he wasn't answering the phone. I tried to communicate with our prime minister. We managed to establish communication, although there were problems. During these events, by the way, this activity continued until 20:00. As a first task, we invited the television and media groups there to our location."²⁸¹ It is also bizarre that Erdoğan's first task was to call the media rather than trying to put measures in place to thwart unfolding coup attempt.

In a live aHaber broadcast, Erdoğan repeated that he learned about the coup attempt from his brother-in-law but said it was at 21:30 PM.²⁸² He said to CNN International that the time he talked to his brother-in-law was 20:00.²⁸³

3.1.4 Erdoğan's Efforts To Prevent Investigations

Erdoğan has never taken a positive attitude towards demands that July 15 should be investigated thoroughly, independently, effectively, and with full transparency. On the first day, Fethullah Gülen, whom Erdoğan blamed for being behind the coup, proposed forming an international commission to reveal the culprits.²⁸⁴ Gülen declared that he would abide by any decision this commission should make and would return to Turkey if necessary and repeated his proposal in the interview he gave to Stockholm Center for Freedom for this

280] "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Bedelini ağır ödeyecekler" [President Erdoğan: They'll pay for it dearly], DHA, 16 July 2016, http://www.dha.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-bedelini-agir-odeyecekler_1281100.html

281] "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Reuters'e flaş açıklamalar" [Historic statements from President Erdoğan to Reuters], Hürriyet, 21 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-reutersa-flas-aciklamalar-40159494>

282] "Erdoğan: Düşman bile bunu yapamaz" [Erdoğan: Even one's enemies won't do this], aHaber, 30 July 2016, <http://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2016/07/30/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-dusman-bile-bunu-yapmaz>

283] "Erdoğan: TBMM idam cezasını getirirse onarım" [Erdoğan: If TBMM enacts capital punishment, I'll approve it], Sputnik, 18 July 2016, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201607181023932634-tayyip-erdogan-tbmm-idam-cnn/>

284] "Fethullah Gülen: Uluslararası bir komisyon darbeyi araştırсын, sonucunu şimdiden kabul ediyoruz" [Fethullah Gülen: I urge an international commission to probe coup, we accept any outcome], T24, 17 July 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/fethullah-gulen-uluslararasi-bir-komisyon-darbeyi-arastirsin-sonucunu-simdiden-kabul-ediyoruz.350385Parliamentary>

report. He said, “I am ready to make a statement to this commission. I will respect their decision no matter what it is.”

Erdoğan not only steered clear of this proposal but also prevented the investigations in Turkey from being performed transparently and impartially. The Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission set up in Parliament with the backing of all four parties did not perform well.²⁸⁵ It was established on July 26, 2016, but the commission was able to convene for the first time on October 7, 2016 because Erdoğan’s AKP did not appoint any members to the commission.²⁸⁶ The AKP overlooked tradition, usual political practice, and etiquette and selected the chairman, deputy chairman, spokesman, and secretary of the commission from among its own members. The AKP had full control of the commission including whom it should summon to testify and what to include in the report. Instead of calling the eye witnesses of the event and hearing their testimonies, the commission obtained statements from names who would confirm the narrative drawn by Erdoğan. For instance, many people such as the Red Crescent chairman and İstanbul Stock Exchange chairman, who appear to have nothing to do with the coup investigations, appeared before the commission. But neither Erdoğan himself nor the MİT Undersecretary and the Chief of the General Staff testified to the commission despite the fact they were the primary targets and key players in July 15 events.

Mithar Sancar, lawmaker from the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) said to the investigation commission, “The AKP do not want the coup to be thoroughly investigated and examined and the truth to be revealed in all aspects. There is a scenario constructed by the AKP. They wanted to instrumentalize this commission to reproduce this scenario. And according to this rhetoric, all the blame will be placed on FETÖ, and there is nothing else to investigate. They want us to call only the people who will confirm it and investigate only the events that support this rhetoric.”²⁸⁷

The main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) argued that commission chairman and an Erdoğan loyalist Reşat Petek especially was obfuscating the investigation.²⁸⁸ In the meeting where Petek announced the report, the document he showed to prove the link between the CHP and Fethullah Gülen turned out to be fabricated.²⁸⁹ Petek could not defend the document and suddenly had amnesia and failed to remember where it

285] “TBMM’de darbe girişimiyle ilgili komisyon kurulmasına karar verildi” [Commission to be set up in Parliament for coup bid], Vatan, 26 July 2016, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/tbmm-de-darbe-girisimiyle-ilgili-komisyon-kurulmasi-na-karar-veril-970750-gundem/>

286] “TBMM Araştırma Komisyon tutanakları” [Parliament’s Investigation Commission minutes], 7 October 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari_goruntule?pTutanakId=1738

287] “Mithat Sancar: AKP 15 Temmuz Gerçeklerinin Ortaya Çıkmasını İstemiyor” [Mithat Sancar: The AKP don’t want the facts of July 15 to be revealed], Bianet, 16 December 2016, <https://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/181780-mithat-san-car-akp-15-temmuz-gerceklerinin-ortaya-cikmasini-istemiyor>

288] “CHP: Darbe Komisyonu Başkanı Petek, girişimi karartmak için çalıştı” [CHP: Coup Commission Chairman Petek strove to obfuscate the coup], Sputnik, 29 May 2017, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201705291028648870-chp-darbe-komisyonu-petek-girisim/>

289] “Darbe Komisyonu Başkanı Petek sahte belgeyle rapor hazırlamış” [Coup Commission Chairman Petek had report written with fake document], TR7/24, 26 May 2017, <http://www.tr724.com/darbe-komisyonu-baskani-petek-sahte-belge-ile-rapor-hazirlamis/>

came from.²⁹⁰

The AKP members did not allow the questioning of MİT Undersecretary Fidan and Chief of the General Staff Akar, whom Erdoğan claimed had not informed him of the coup. Likewise, his brother-in-law, whom Erdoğan had said told him about the coup, escaped from giving a statement to the commission. About the issue, Erdoğan said, “I don’t want to talk about this issue anymore. The coup commission has done its investigations. I think it would be appropriate if they took the final steps fast and write and submit their report.”²⁹¹ That was interpreted as an order by the AKP members of the commission including the chairman. The commission completed their work with haste despite the protests from opposition party members, and the controversial report was published only with the signatures of the AKP members under it.²⁹²

The courts where the coup suspects were tried have also come under intense pressure from President Erdoğan and his government. Erdoğan does not even bother hiding his feelings that he is not happy with testimonials provided by defendants.²⁹³ He continues to provoke people by saying that even if coup suspects are convicted and serve time, they will face punishment on the streets when they finally get released.²⁹⁴ AKP lawmakers and cabinet ministers attend coup trial hearings in groups to pressurize the courts, while the AKP grassroots organizes bus trips to transport members to the courthouse.²⁹⁵ Judges who render decisions not to the liking of Erdoğan are reassigned immediately.²⁹⁶ As a result, not only legislative inquiry is hampered by interventions by the government and Erdoğan but also court proceedings have come under pressure. In April, Stockholm Center for Freedom issued a comprehensive report on the comprehensive deterioration in the rule of law in Turkey.²⁹⁷

290] “Darbe Komisyonu Başkanı Petek: Belgenin nereden geldiğini hatırlamıyorum” [Coup Commission Chairman Petek: I don’t remember where the document came from], Politik Yol, 27 May 2017, <https://www.politikyol.com/darbe-komisyonu-baskani-petek-belgenin-nereden-geldigini-hatirlamiyorum/>

291] “Komisyon Başkanı’nın Hulusi Akar çıkışı sonrası Erdoğan devreye girdi” [Erdoğan intervened after Commission Chairman’s statement about Hulusi Akar], BirGün, 9 December 2016, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/komisyon-baskani-nin-hulusi-akar-cikisi-sonrasi-erdogan-devreye-girdi-138941.html>

292] Turkish Parliamentary Coup Commission’s Report, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9_GvKNS8oOacVo5UjNaeXkza2M/view

293] “Erdoğan, mahkemelere talimat verdi: Kendilerini bu acı sondan kurtaramayacaklar” [Erdoğan ordered courts: They won’t be able to save themselves from this tragic end], TR7/24, 2 June 2017, <http://www.tr724.com/erdogan-mahkemelere-talimati-verdi-kendilerini-aci-sondan-kurtaramayacaklar/>

294] “Erdoğan FETÖ davalarının bizzat takipçisi” [Erdoğan monitors FETÖ trials in person], İnternet Haber, 7 Haziran 2017, <http://www.internethaber.com/erdogan-feto-davalarinin-bizzat-takipcisi-1783525h.htm>

295] “AKP, MYK üyeleri sincanda” [AKP, MYK members in Sincan], Karar, 5 Haziran 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/ak-parti-myk-uyeleri-sincanda-504508#>

296] “ByLock’tan mahkumiyet kararını bozan hakimler sürüldü” [Judges who reversed imprisonment judgments on ByLock relegated], Odatv, 27 May 2017, <http://odatv.com/bylocktan-verilen-mahkumiyet-kararini-bozan-o-hakimler-suruldu-2705171200.html> ; “Judge who reversed judgment on ByLock relegated,” Haberdar, 10 May 2017, <http://www.haberdar.com/gundem/bylock-hakkindaki-karari-bozan-hakim-suruldu-saniklari-asin-gitsin-bari-h51298.html>

297] “Turkey’s Descent Into Arbitrariness: The End Of Rule Of Law” (April 14, 2017) <http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Turkey%E2%80%99s-Descent-Into-Arbitrariness-The-End-Of-Rule-Of-Law.pdf>

3.1.5 The “Controlled-Coup” Argument Or The “Coup Within A Coup”

CHP chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu’s “controlled coup” argument²⁹⁸ infuriated Erdoğan, who replied, “He says it’s a controlled coup. Hey, Kılıçdaroğlu, this very expression of yours will hurt the spirits of our martyrs. These are words that will bleed the hearts of the martyr’s families and the veterans. One who sits in a controlled seat believes that every job is performed that way... You lost seven elections. Now he’s preparing for an eighth but trust me he won’t leave, he won’t. The seat is controlled, but no matter what, we will move forward despite them. The CHP has become an alternative for terrorist organizations.”²⁹⁹

HDP co-chairman Selahattin Demirtaş who was jailed since November 2016 made the following evaluation of the July 15 military coup attempts: “We are up against a coup within a coup, one of the greatest conspiracies in the history of the Turkish Republic.”

He added that “They are fighting against democratic forces that resisted the coup under the guise that they are fighting against the coup. We’ve asked again and again, ‘Where’s the political leg of this coup? Who would be ministers, prime minister, president if the coup were successful? Why don’t you announce them? You fire civil servants who transferred money from Bank Asya. How many lawmakers are there in the AKP who learned about the coup or who were engaged in the coup? Why don’t you give an explanation? He says he learned of the coup from his brother-in-law. It’s a blatant lie. He knew about the coup before you, before me, before the brother-in-law, before MIT. You get intelligence about the coup, (and) you should take precautions. Two hundred and twenty-five people [the number went up to 249 later] will die, simply for you to consolidate your power. You will wait for them to start action instead of preventing it. We are up against a coup within a coup, one of the greatest conspiracies in the history of the Turkish Republic. Everyone knows that you had the list of the putschists name by name days before.” Demirtaş indicated that the coup was not a scenario but a reality, and he said, “But the precaution taken against it is a big scenario.”³⁰⁰ After this declaration Demirtaş was put behind bars. In fact, 11 other lawmakers from his party HDP are detained in prison. The number reaches 20 if we include the ones who have been released and those who were detained and then released.³⁰¹

Journalist Levent Gültekin claimed that Erdoğan knew about the coup in advance and that he even brought a camera to the hotel where he was staying to make an address to the

298] “Kılıçdaroğlu, kontrollü darbeyi maddeler halinde açıkladı” [Kılıçdaroğlu explained controlled coup item by item], BirGün, 5 April 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/kilicdaroglu-kontrollu-darbe-yi-maddeler-halinde-acikladi-154055.html>

299] “Erdoğan’dan Kılıçdaroğlu’na kontrollü darbe tepkisi” [Erdoğan’s reaction to Kılıçdaroğlu for controlled coup], CNN Türk, 8 April 2017, <http://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/erdogandan-kilicdarogluna-kontrollu-darbe-tepkisi>

300] “Selahattin Demirtaş: Darbe içinde darbeye karşı karşıyayız” [Selahattin Demirtaş: We’re up against a coup within a coup], NTV, 4 October 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/selahattin-demirtas-darbe-icinde-darbeye-karsi-karsiyayiz,2smsTEal0U-6XzDKcBNG6w>

301] “Haydi mektup yazalım” [Let’s write a letter], 8 June 2017, <http://www.hdp.org.tr/tr/guncel/haydi-mektup-yazalim/9623>

nation. Gültekin, who comes from the same Islamist background as Erdoğan, said that he learned this information from a person closest to Erdoğan.³⁰²

The deep suspicions about July 15 will persist until the relationship between President Erdoğan, MİT Undersecretary Fidan and Chief of the General Staff Akar is revealed by a fully authorized commission and independent and impartial courts. Unfortunately, the three figures do not seem likely to cooperate, which casts a larger shadow about their real roles in the coup. Erdoğan tries to hush up increasing questions about him by having more dissidents arrested every day³⁰³ rather than answering the questions in a straightforward fashion.

3.2 Chief of The General Staff Hulusi Akar

Chief of the General Staff General Hulusi Akar is one of the most controversial figures in the coup attempt. Not only the events of the coup day but also the purges Turkish Armed Forces were subjected to place him as commander at the center of huge debate. He will be remembered for his statement “The coup was moved earlier with the precautions taken and was caused to fail”³⁰⁴, a statement that conflicts with the hard evidence cited in this report and it will have legal repercussions in the future, if not today.

With regard to the pattern of behavior displayed by Akar, one must ask the following questions in order: “Did Akar analyze the threat correctly? Did he take relevant and adequate precautions in time? Did he follow upon his orders and ensure that they were complied with and generated the expected results? These are the basic rules in the officer’s textbook when it comes to analyzing the risk, giving orders and following up on orders within the military chain of command.

3.2.1 Did Akar Analyze The Threat Correctly?

MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan³⁰⁵ and Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar³⁰⁶ argue that the tip-off they received at 14:30 on July 15 was not about the coup. However, this argument is not supported by the precautions they tried to take and by the open statement of the informer. Major O.K., working in Land Aviation Academy, who informed them of the coup, has been questioned neither as a witness nor a suspect. He was first dismissed and then reinstated in a position in MİT. We do not have O.K.’s statements because permission is required to question MİT staff and it has not been given. But he was interviewed before

302] “Levent Gültekin: Erdoğan darbeyi önceden biliyordu” [Levent Gültekin: Erdoğan knew about the coup in advance!], 5 November 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXpOyMi7kXA>

303] “Jailed and wanted journalists in Turkey—Updated List,” SCF June 6 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/updated-list/>

304] “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonu’na yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], Hürriyet, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

305] “MİT’in Darbe komisyonuna gönderdiği raporun tam metni, [Full report by MİT that was sent to Parliamentary Coup Commission], Habertürk, 26 Mayıs 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonu-na-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>

306] “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonuna yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], Hürriyet, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

he started at MİT as a “person holding information.” Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor Harun Kodalak and Acting Public Prosecutor Necip İşçimen interviewed him. All the members of this investigation team, who wanted to interview MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan as well, have been dismissed.³⁰⁷ Interestingly, Kodalak, who was demoted to plain prosecutor, was considered close by the AKP. He was the prosecutor who closed the first corruption investigation that implicated the AKP government. He was dismissed anyway.³⁰⁸

O.K. said in his statement that “(At the MİT) they asked me what it could be. I said it could be something big, that ‘it could even be coup activity.’ They asked, ‘What is meant by taking Hakan Fidan in?’ I told them it can’t be a well-intended activity as they said ‘a lot of blood will flow.’ I remember very well that I used the expression ‘there could be a coup.’”³⁰⁹

The informant’s words clearly indicate a coup. Even if it was not clear at the time, it is obvious that three military helicopters would not land in the MİT compound and kidnap the undersecretary for a ransom. Indeed, Akar said that they “thought it could be part of a bigger plan.”³¹⁰ But they did not say that the bigger plan could be a coup. The precautions both Fidan and Akar took showed that they knew about the coup intelligence. Fidan called Erdoğan’s Security Director Muhsin Köse and asked, “Do you have enough weapons and men against an assault from the outside?”³¹¹ Akar, on the other hand, did not only send an inspection commission headed by Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak and including military prosecutors to Land Aviation Academy but also closed Turkish air space to all military flights. He called Ankara Garrison Commander Lieutenant-General Metin Gürak and ordered him to “go to Etimesgut Armored Units Academy and Training Center Command prevent any tank and armored vehicle from leaving the military unit.”³¹²

307] “Ankara Cumhuriyet Başsavcısı Harun Kodalak’a tenzili rütbenin nedeni Hakan Fidan mı?” [Is Hakan Fidan the reason for relegation of Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor Harun Kodalak?], T24, 20 January 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/ankara-cumhuriyet-bassavcisi-harun-kodalaka-tenzili-rutbenin-nedeni-hakan-fidan-mi,384156>

308] “Deniz Feneri’nde savcı şoku” [Prosecutor shock in Deniz Feneri], Radikal, 24 August 2011, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/deniz-fenerinde-savci-soku-1061189/>

309] “O binbaşı anlattı: Kod adım Tarık” [The major spoke: My Code name Tarık], Hürriyet, 28 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-binbasi-anlatti-kod-adim-tarik-40472736>

310] “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonuna yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], Hürriyet, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

311] “Marmaris’e uyarı telefonu” [Warning call to Marmaris], Serpil Çevikcan, Milliyet, 21 July 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/serpil-cevikcan/marmaris-e-uyari-telefonu-2281299/>

312] “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonuna yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], Hürriyet, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

3.2.2 Did Akar Take Relevant And Adequate Precautions?

In his statement as a plaintiff to the Prosecutor’s Office, Akar claims that he took the necessary precautions.³¹³ In the written statement he submitted to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission,³¹⁴ on the other hand, he said that he “caused the coup to be moved to an earlier time and thus caused it to fail.” The public and even his comrades are not satisfied with this answer. Special Forces Commander Major-General Zekai Aksakallı said in his statement at the court, “In the TSK, the staff are ordered not to leave the barracks in crises and unusual circumstances. If this order had been issued on July 15, the coup attempt would have been exposed.”³¹⁵ Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Ümit Dündar, who was then İstanbul First Army Commander, said, “If the information had been about some coup, I believe it would have been supported by different orders from our Chief of the General Staff.”³¹⁶ Both generals think—one openly and the other by implication—that the precautions were not sufficient to prevent the coup.



Fehmi Kuru

The credibility of the ‘controlled-coup’ scenario grew stronger especially after the informant’s statements were exposed. Many columnists voiced the opinion that “if necessary precautions had been taken, the coup could have ended before it took off and so many people would have been spared.” Mehmet Y. Yılmaz from the Hürriyet daily asked, “Why did Akar and Fidan act that way?”³¹⁷ Ertuğrul Özkök in the same daily asked, “Why was so much precious time lost although the mysterious O.K. openly provided coup information.”³¹⁸ Even Fehmi Kuru, an Islamist journalist whose friendship with Akar since his days as a second lieutenant was revealed, wrote, “Why isn’t the order ‘no one leaves the barracks’ mentioned by Special Forces Commander Major-General among those precautions? That precaution is important because if it had been implemented the disturbances that would claim 240 lives could have been prevented.”³¹⁹

Brigadier-General Erhan Caha, former Land Forces Command (KKK) Department Head of Forces Development and Training, expressed his view that, “If the staff had been warned as soon as the attempt was found out, none of these events would have happened.”³²⁰

313] “Chief of the General Staff’s testimony revealed” [Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonuna yanıtları], Hürriyet, 25 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-genelkurmay-baskaninin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40168493>

314] “İşte Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın darbe komisyonuna verdiği yanıtlar” [Here’s Chief of the General Staff Akar’s responses to Coup Commission], NTV, 30 May 2017, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/hulusi-akar-in-darbe-komisyonusuna-verdigi-yanitlari-ntv-ustasi,PU0hYXrkHUaU4q_4R1RhWg

315] “Aksakallı: Halisdemir’le 8 kez telefonla görüşüm” [Aksakallı: I spoke to Halisdemir 8 times on the phone], Hürriyet, 20 March 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/zekai-aksakalli-omer-halisdemirle-8-kez-gorustum-terziyi-oldurmesini-istedim-40401291>

316] “TBMM Darbe Komisyonu tutanakları” [Parliamentary Coup Commission minutes], 18 October 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari_goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

317] “Akar ve Fidan niye öyle davrandı?” [Why did Akar and Fidan act that way?], Mehmet Yılmaz, Hürriyet, 24 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/mehmet-y-yilmaz/akar-ve-fidan-niye-oy-le-davr-andi-40467586>

318] “FETÖ dava dosyasına girmeyen önemli sır” [The important secret not included in the FETÖ case file], Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 4 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ertugrul-ozkok/ertugrul-ozkok-40467641>

319] “MİT de açıkladı, Genelkurmay Başkanı da...” [MİT announced too, and the MİT Chief of the General Staff...], Fehmi Kuru, 31 May 2017, <http://fehmi.kuru.com/mit-de-acikladi-genelkurmay-baskani-da-15-temmuz-gecesiyle-ilgili-bir-parca-aydinlandik/>

320] “Tuğgeneral Caha: Darbe girişimi MİT ve Akar’ın bilgisi dahilinde” [Brigadier-General Caha: Coup attempt within knowledge of MIT and Akar], Deutsche Welle, 25 May 2017, <http://www.dw.com/tr/tu%C4%9Fgeneral-caha-darbe-giri%C5%9Fimi-mit-ve-akar%C4%B1n-bilgisi-dahilindeydi/a-38979394>

Caha drew attention to another important issue that weakens the argument that appropriate measures were taken: “How are we supposed to interpret the fact that Chief of the General Staff—although he considers that the information received could point to a bigger plan—sends Major-General Metin Gürak to Armored Units School, which is a non-combatant training unit, to impose the order to keep all tanks inside the barracks rather than to the 28th Mechanized Infantry Corps, which played an important role in the coup attempt and is one of the most important military units under Land Forces Command?”³²¹

In other words, the order “Do not leave the barracks” was sent to a training unit instead of a combatant unit that was likely to take part in the coup. This order is the most important evidence that the intelligence was assessed to be about a coup but also that the precautions were a pretense. An interesting detail at this point is that tanks that left the 28th Mechanized Corps on July 15 got lost in the streets of Ankara. Reportedly, because the putschists panicked, radio communication and the recently-maintained tanks broke down. The impossible somehow happened and only eight of the thirty-six vehicles were able to reach the General Staff headquarters.³²²

The armored vehicles that were being deployed because of a terrorist attack on the Parliament and General Staff Headquarters got lost in their own capital city before getting to General Staff Headquarters. The reason given for this bizarre mishap is that “the vehicles heading for the General Staff lost radio communication because of civilian vehicle traffic.” This strange and hard-to-believe claim further strengthens the argument that tanks and military vehicles sufficient for the appearance of a coup were released onto the streets and then left to their own devices.

There are other examples to suggest that the mobilization was nothing but a pretense. For instance, three officers accompanied by ten private soldiers were sent to Erdoğan’s presidential palace where some 2,000 guards were on protection duty. As might be expected, they were immediately detained by Erdoğan’s protective detail upon arrival. Another bizarre incident was that 85 putschist soldiers, composed of 59 officers and 25 privates, who were carrying missile batteries and destined for Ankara at 03:00 were intercepted and detained by only one police chief and three or four traffic police. That scenario defies logic.³²³

The developments in İstanbul make up the biggest gap in the Chief of the General Staff Akar’s defense argument that “all precautions were taken.” Akar and his team, who closed the country’s air space and foresaw the possibility of armored vehicles in Ankara leaving their barracks, did not implement any precautions for İstanbul. General Ümit Dündar, First Army Commander and the highest-ranking officer in İstanbul, learned about the coup attempt on the phone at 21:40 from İstanbul Police Commissioner Mustafa Çalışkan when he was sitting at home with his guests.³²⁴ He left his home at 22:20 to prevent the İstanbul leg of the coup whose

321] “Daha büyük plan Fidan’ın tankla kaçırılması(!)” [The bigger plan was abducting Fidan with tanks (!)], TR7/24, 1 June 2017, <http://www.tr724.com/daha-buyuk-plan-fidanin-tankla-kacirilmasi-ahmet-donmex>

322] “Darbecilerin tankları Ankara sokaklarında kayboldu” [Putschists’ tanks got lost in the streets of Ankara], Karar, 13 April 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/darbecilerin-tanklari-ankara-sokaklarinda-kayboldu-447761>

323] “15 Temmuz kumpasından kareler” [Snapshots from July 15 plot], 19 June 2017, <http://www.tr724.com/15-temmuz-kumpasindan-kareler-sefer-can/>

324] “Parliamentary Coup Investigation minutes,” 18 October 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tut-anaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

intelligence was given at 14:30. He met İstanbul Governor and Police Commissioner on the Bosphorus Bridge at 22:50 and assessed the situation. It was well after the putschists captured the bridge and other critical spots and confronted the people.³²⁵ It is incomprehensible that Akar overlooked İstanbul, the largest city that is the center of business and media, and hence a priority target in all coups. The toll was high for not informing the civil and military bureaucracy that governed the city. The number of casualties increased because of that.

In the meantime, it is worth noting that Akar and Fidan hastily submitted their written statements to Parliamentary Investigation Commission, which they had not done until O.K.'s statement that he informed them about the coup was revealed. Another reason for the counter-move of the Akar-Fidan pair is that CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's "controlled-coup" argument³²⁶ has found an increasing audience. "Akar's words support the controlled-coup attempt," said CHP lawmaker Barış Yarkadaş,³²⁷ while CHP Deputy Chairman Aykut Erdoğan said, "The controlled-coup argument is confirmed."³²⁸ Even Ahmet Taşgetiren in the pro-AKP Star daily came to say, "I ask this question by overlooking the statement 'It could be a coup; it was said a lot of blood would be shed' by Major O.K., who went to the MİT and provided the intelligence. If O.K. made any such statement, 'failure to read the coup' would be a terrible act of carelessness."³²⁹

Erhan Başyurt, the Editor-in-Chief of the Bugün daily, which was closed down by the government, said, "Now that those who failed to prevent the coup that day are still on duty today and conduct purges as they wish, the possibility that the coup was controlled has gained weight."³³⁰ Likewise, Kemal Öztürk, pro-AKP columnist on Yeni Şafak daily and Erdoğan's former press advisor, stated that "I have to add that the statements sent by Chief of the General Staff Akar and the MİT to the commission and the commission's preliminary report provide fodder for endeavors for abusing the coup. I see that some of the obscure and complicated situations (during the coup) increase people's suspicions and play into the hands of those who hope to use the coup to their advantage."³³¹

325] Ibid.

326] "Kılıçdaroğlu: 15 Temmuz kontrollü darbe girişimidir" [Kılıçdaroğlu: July 15 is a controlled coup attempt], BBC Turkish, 3 April 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39478777>

327] "Yarkadaş: Akar'ın sözleri 'kontrollü darbe girişimi'ni destekler nitelikte" [Yarkadaş: Akar's words support 'controlled coup attempt'], Sputnik, 1 June 2017, https://tr.sputniknews.com/seyr_u_sabah/201706011028698872-akarin-sozleri-kanit-yarkadas/

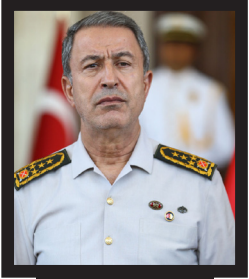
328] "CHP Genel Başkan Yardımcısı Aykut Erdoğan: Kontrollü darbe tezi doğrulandı" [CHP Deputy Chairman Aykut Erdoğan: Controlled coup argument is verified], CNNTürk, 29 May 2017, <http://www.cnnurk.com/video/turkiye/erdogan-kontrollu-darbe-tezi-dogrulandi>

329] "Kontrollü darbe söylemi dehşet verici bir söylem; ama..." [Controlled coup rhetoric is terrifying rhetoric but...], Ahmet Taşgetiren, T24, 1 June 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/star-yazari-tasgetiren-kontrollu-darbe-soylemi-dehset-verici-bir-suclama-ama,406797>

330] "Kontrollü darbe netleşiyor" [Controlled coup becoming clear], TR7/24, 31 May 2017, <http://www.tr724.com/kontrollu-darbe-netlesiyor-erhan-basyurt/>

331] "Darbeyi ne tarafa çekelim?" [How to skew the coup?], Kemal Öztürk, Yeni Şafak, 2 June 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/kemalozturk/darbeyi-ne-tarafa-cekelim-2038265>

3.2.3 Did Akar Track His Orders To Ensure That They Produced The Expected Results?



Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar.

Another line of criticism directed at Chief of the General Staff Akar is that he withheld critical information from the relevant authorities in spite of the extent and gravity of the risks. To wit, all the criticisms levelled at the MIT Undersecretary are also true for Akar and in fact, even more so. The standard procedures of government dictate that such an important piece of intelligence cannot be held back from President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Yıldırım. Naturally, the prime suspect is Fidan, the first senior government employee who received the intelligence whose duty is to inform the government and the president right away. Akar, on the other hand, is to be held accountable for not sharing that with top commanders, which should have helped him crush the coup attempt. As a result, force commanders who held critical positions heard about the coup indirectly and long after the coup was launched. Or at least, that is what the force commanders claim, though there are some conflicting statements.

In the report he submitted to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission Akar said, “First of all, I issued the directive to Armed Forces Command Operations Center (SKKHM) at 18:30. It included all the helicopters and aircraft in Ankara airspace as well as the whole of Turkey as a precaution. The directive was ‘the military aircraft and helicopters in the air must return to their bases and permission mustn’t be given for new flights.’ Then I learned that my directive reached Air Forces Commander and Air Forces Command as well as Land Aviation Command which held helicopters and other related addresses at 19:06.”³³² Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal, on the other hand, stated to the prosecutor’s office that he was at Major-General Mehmet Şanver’s daughter’s wedding, did not see anything unusual until 21:30 and noticed peculiar events only when his wife called.³³³ In a later statement, Ünal reaffirmed Akar’s written explanations.³³⁴

Major-General Mehmet Şanver, who hosted 22 generals including Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal at the wedding on July 15, was both No. 2 in the Turkish Air Forces and the commander of all combatant air forces. As noted earlier, he objected to having been informed in this way and says, “Before it was issued, during the process of the order, I should have been informed about it.”³³⁵

332] “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonuna yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], *Hürriyet*, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

333] “Abidin Ünal’ın savcılık ifadesi ortaya çıktı” [Abidin Ünal’s testimony at prosecutor’s office exposed], *Akşam*, 28 July 2016, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-savcilik-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti/haber-536794>

334] “İşte o gecenin kritik belgesi” [Here is the most critical document on that night], *Sözcü Gazetesi*, 28 October 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/iste-o-gecenin-kritik-belgesi-1-1473864/>

335] “Mehmet Şanver: Üst rütbeler devşirildi” [Mehmet Şanver: Top brass bought out], *Yeni Şafak*, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

Commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces Galip Mendi, who was supposed to take precautions against the putschists, was at another wedding in Ankara Officers' Mess Hall. He learned about the developments at 21:30 from his guards who heard gunshots from the General Staff.³³⁶ Special Forces Commander Major-General Zekai Aksakallı, who was also at the wedding, said that he met Mendi, who was trying feverishly to get the General staff on the phone, at the exit door. Aksakallı understood the situation when they tried to detain him outside the wedding.³³⁷ Aksakallı escaped the putschists, while Mendi was detained and sent to Akıncı Air Base. Commanders of two forces who could very well have resisted the coup apparently learned of the coup attempt by chance amid unfolding events.

The military experts who talked to Stockholm Center for Freedom question Akar's motives, asking why Akar did not put force commanders on alert but imposed a flight ban instead irrespective of the threat origin, be it a terrorist attack or a coup attempt. They underline that Akar did not call the Air Forces Commander who is responsible for the airspace after issuing the order. They also pointed out the basic rule in the army: It does not mean a lot to give an order. What is important is tracking the execution of that order. Even civilians on compulsory military service know that oral repetition of an instruction confirms that the order is understood correctly. Inadvertently or deliberately, Akar assisted the kick-off of the coup by not implementing the simplest military rules.

3.2.4 The Contradictions In Akar's Statements

Akar made several conflicting statements after July 15, some of which he was forced to rescind later and many of which were refuted by the witness testimonies. The criticisms against Akar increased after defendants' statements and witness testimonies, and suspicions grew over his words. In his first statement he said, "Hakan Evrim said something like, 'We can have you talk with our opinion leader Fethullah Gülen.' I scolded him saying, 'I won't speak to anyone.'"³³⁸ The phrasing 'our opinion leader,' however, has never been used by the followers of Gülen.

Hakan Evrim himself said during hearings that he did not say anything like that³³⁹ and added that it was Akar who used the expression 'opinion leaders' without making any reference to Gülen. Evrim said, "The Chief of the General Staff indicated that he agreed to the complaints about the state of the country listed in the declaration and said even some of the lawmakers in the ruling party shared similar concerns with him. Chief of the General Staff said that the country should be saved by a joint effort from all the sections of the society. He said the problems in the country could be solved with the participation of, for example, Abdullah Gül, Ahmet Davutoğlu, intraparty opposition, opposition leaders, nongovernmental organizations, unions, and opinion

336] "Parliamentary Coup Investigation minutes," 2 November 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1763

337] "Aksakallı 15 Temmuz'u anlattı" [Aksakallı told about July 15], NTV, 20 March 2017, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/zekai-Aksakallı-15-temmuzu-anlattı,1Ujspi8d70i74jxMl0mTxx>

338] "Genelkurmay Başkanı'nın ilk ifadesi ortaya çıktı" [Chief of Staff's Initial Statement Revealed] *Hürriyet*, 25 Temmuz 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-genelkurmay-baskaninin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40168493>

339] "Evrim:Akar'a Gülen'le görüşme teklif etmedim" [Evrim: I didn't ask Akar to speak to Gülen], *Cumhuriyet*, 29 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/750499/Hakan_Evrim_Hulusi_Akar_a_Gülen_ile_gorusme_teklif_etmedim.html

leaders. I just listened to him and didn't say a word. As far as I can tell, it was not like the people inside were trying to convince the Chief of the General Staff but rather the Chief of the General Staff was directing them by offering more powerful alternatives from a different perspective. I didn't know the Chief of the General Staff was brought there forcefully. Everyone inside were acting warmly and respectfully."³⁴⁰

The respectful attitudes towards Akar, in Evrim's words, which was denied to other commanders, can be seen in other testimonials as well. Former Air Forces Commander Akın Öztürk's quarters sergeant Ismail Keskin, who accompanied him to Akıncı Air Base, told that he served Akar a drip coffee, appetizers and tea, and said, "I saw the land lieutenant-generals leave after saying 'Yes, sir' as is required by the hierarchy."³⁴¹

Some officers who are charged with coup-plotting also testified that Akar was not detained, and in fact chided the pilot of the chopper for being late to pick him up.³⁴²⁻³⁴³ Another proof that Akar was not detained is the fact that he talked to his wife on a military line from Akıncı Air Base.³⁴⁴

A striking gap in Akar's first statement³⁴⁵ at the prosecutor's office is that he did not say a word about MİT Undersecretary Fidan with whom he stayed at the General Staff Headquarters for at least 2 hours and 12 minutes on the day of July 15 talking about the precautions to be taken. What makes this detail even more important is the fact that Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler and KKK Commander Çolak, who were present in the meeting, did not mention Fidan's visit to the General Staff.³⁴⁶ Such an omission cannot simply be a memory lapse considering Akar called Prime Minister Yıldırım first and MİT Undersecretary Fidan afterwards once he got his phone back from the putschists.³⁴⁷

Another important aspect of the relationship between Akar and Fidan that needs emphasis is their long meeting on the eve of the coup.

As soon as the intelligence given by the informant-major appeared in the media, Akar immediately submitted a written statement to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission

340] Ibid.

341] "Akıncıdaki odaya giren ismin ortalığı ayağa kaldıracak ifadesi" [Stirring testimony from the name who entered the room in Akıncı], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 8 April 2017, <http://odatv.com/15-temmuz-gecesi-akincidaki-odaya-giren-ismin-ifadesi-ortaligi-ayağa-kaldıracak-0804171200.html>

342] "15 Temmuz'da MİT'e ihbarda bulunan Binbaşı O.K. gerçekte kim?" [Who is the major O.K. who informed MİT on July 15?], Kronos.news, 11 Haziran 2017, <http://www.kronos.news/tr/15-temmuzda-mite-ihbarda-bulunan-binba-si-o-k-gercekte-kim/>

343] "Darbecisini bekleyen komutan"[Commander who awaits for his putschist], 10 Haziran 2017, <http://www.ikinci-bolge.net/yazarlar/muyesser-yildiz/darbecisini-bekleyen-komutan/8891/>

344] "Akar'ın ifadesi ortaya çıktı" [Akar's testimony revealed], Hürriyet, 25 Temmuz, 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-genelkurmay-baskaninin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40168493>

345] Ibid.

346] "Darbeyi bildiren binbaşının ismi ne ve şimdi nerede?" [What is the name of the major who informed of the coup and where is he now?], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 10 March 2017, <http://odatv.com/darbeyi-bildiren-binbasinin-ismi-ne-ve-simdi-nerede-1003171200.html>

347] "Chief of the General Staff's testimony revealed," Hürriyet, 25 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-genelkurmay-baskaninin-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti-40168493>

for the unanswered questions. He blamed the carrier for the delay.³⁴⁸ Yet, the Parliament building is just opposite the General Staff headquarters. Still, Akar did not answer the most important questions in his statement once again: “Did he assess the intelligence as a coup/ uprising? If he did, did he inform Force Commanders about it? Did he have contact with the president and prime minister or their executive secretaries about the intelligence?”³⁴⁹

3.2.5 What Is Akar’s Role In the Coup?

There are three scenarios about Chief of the General Staff Akar’s role in the July 15 coup attempt in which he is a) a hero who resisted and disrupted the coup, or b) a coward who was caught red handed in the act of plotting the coup and ratted out his junta, or c) a conspirator who plotted against his own army. There is evidence for all three scenarios.

Erdoğan fans, AKP supporters, and the pro-government media endorse the first argument. Now that the coup attempt apparently failed to achieve its stated goal and the elected government is still in place, this view is credible at least on face value.

However, Akar’s special treatment, both when he was taken captive and at Akıncı Air Base, bolsters the second view.³⁵⁰ Also in favor of this argument is the fact that Akar could not be reached until he arrived by helicopter at the Prime Minister’s Office on the morning of July 16 with Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli. In court Dişli alleged that Akar said, “Thanks, son. What will we say when we get there? Are you prepared?”³⁵¹

Former Air Forces Commander Akın Öztürk’s testimony also supported the second view when he said that the people in the room where Akar was held did not act superior to him but acted respectfully as the chain of command dictated. Öztürk added that he did not have any recollection of Ömer Faruk Harmancık reading aloud the two-page coup declaration and telling Akar to sign it. “But it might have happened when I was out,” said Öztürk. In response to the question “You spent seven hours with Chief of the General Staff. Did he seem to have an attitude toward preventing the coup?” he said, “No, he didn’t have any such attitude. But he was saying, ‘We lost face as the TSK.’ He was very sad.” When he was asked, “Did he give out an order like ‘I order you’ or ‘You are arrested’?” Öztürk replied, “No, he didn’t.” To the question “As the highest-ranking officer, did Akar warn them about disrupting the chain of command?” Öztürk said, “Not when I was there.”³⁵²

348] “Akar’ın ifadesi postaya takılmış” [Akar’s testimony alleged to be delayed in delivery], Cumhuriyet, 30 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/750740/Hulusi_Akar_in_ifadesi_postaya_takilmis_.html

349] “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın Darbe Komisyonuna yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], Hürriyet, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

350] “Akıncıdaki odaya giren ismin ortalığı ayağa kaldıracak ifadesi” [Stirring testimony from the name who entered the room in Akıncı], Odatv, 8 April 2017, <http://odatv.com/15-temmuz-gecesi-akincidaki-odaya-giren-ismin-ifadesi-ortaligi-ayaga-kaldiracak-0804171200.html>

351] “Eski Tümgeneral Mehmet Dişli: Hulusi Akar beni yanlış anlamış olabilir” [Former Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli: Hulusi Akar might have misunderstood me], NTV, 30 May 2017, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/eski-tumgeneral-mehmet-disli-hulusi-akar-beni-yanlis-anlamis-olabilir,aLLJZz5Zd021mfptsZgd7A>

352] “Akın Öztürk’e Akar sorusu” [Question about Akar to Akın Öztürk], Hürriyet, 22 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/akin-ozturke-akar-sorusu-40466459>

In response to SCF’s question “Were you expecting a coup? Did you hear any such thing?” Fethullah Gülen, the Turkish cleric residing in the US since 1999 who is alleged to be ‘No. 1 suspect’ of July 15 coup attempt by Erdoğan regime, replied, “that the Turkish military was in preparations for a coup had been talked about all over”. He stated rumors were circulating in Turkey that the Turkish military and Chief of General Staff were planning to stage a coup and this rumor was even being discussed by journalists in Ankara.

The third argument (that he was a conspirator plotting against his own army) gained more credibility after the revelation of the informant-major testimonial and the statements Fidan and Akar sent to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission. All these suggested that they could have crushed the uprising before the soldiers left their barracks by taking necessary precautions during the seven critical hours before the coup broke out. Many officers and civilians hold this conviction.³⁵³ The controversy centers on whether the insufficiency of the preventive actions and precautions resulted from incompetence and misanalysis of the situation or whether they were deliberate.³⁵⁴

Among those who support the ‘controlled coup’ argument are the main opposition party CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and many other CHP lawmakers, who stress that the written statement Akar submitted to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission proves them right.³⁵⁵ “So if (the informant) told them about the coup, why didn’t the MİT of the country, the General Staff of the country prevent the coup? For what reasons did they not prevent it? They get angry when we say, ‘controlled coup.’ The number of obscurities is not one or two but a whole lot,” says Kılıçdaroğlu.³⁵⁶

Many leftist and liberal intellectuals have started to voice similar arguments. Ahmet

353] “Akar ve Fidan niye öyle davrandı?” [Why did Akar and Fidan act that way?], Mehmet Yılmaz, Hürriyet, 24 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/mehmet-y-yilmaz/akar-ve-fidan-niye-oy-le-davr-andi-40467586>, “MİT de açıkladı, Genelkurmay Başkanı da...” [The MIT announced too, and the MİT Chief of the General Staff...], Fehmi Kuru, 31 May 2017, <http://fehnikoru.com/mit-de-acikladi-genelkurmay-baskani-da-15-temmuz-gecesiyle-ilgili-bir-parca-aydinlandik/>; “Aksakallı: Halisdemir’le 8 kez telefonla görüşüm” [Aksakallı: I spoke to Halisdemir 8 times on the phone], Hürriyet, 20 March 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/zekai-aksakalli-omer-halisdemirle-8-kez-gorus-tum-terziyi-oldurmesini-istedim-40401291> “Parliamentary Coup Commission minutes,” 18 October 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743 “FETÖ dava dosyasına girmeyen önemli sır” [The important secret not included in the FETÖ case file], Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 24 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ertugrul-ozkok/ertugrul-ozkok-40467641>

354] “Tuğgeneral Caha: Darbe girişimi MİT ve Akar’ın bilgisi dahilinde” [Brigadier-General Caha: Coup attempt within knowledge of MIT and Akar], DW, 25 May 2017, <http://www.dw.com/tr/tu%C4%9Fgeneral-caha-darbe-giri%C5%9Fimi-mit-ve-akar%C4%B1n-bilgisi-dahilindeydi/a-38979394>

355] “Kılıçdaroğlu: 15 Temmuz kontrollü darbe girişimidir” [Kılıçdaroğlu: July 15 is a controlled coup attempt], BBC Turkish, 3 April 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39478777>

“Yarkadaş: Akar’ın sözleri ‘kontrollü darbe girişimi’ni destekler nitelikte” [Yarkadaş: Akar’s words support ‘controlled coup attempt’], Sputnik, 1 June 2017, https://tr.sputniknews.com/seyr_u_sabah/201706011028698872-akarın-sozleri-kanit-yarkadas/ “CHP Genel Başkan Yardımcısı Aykut Erdoğan: Kontrollü darbe tezi doğrulandı” [CHP Deputy Chairman Aykut Erdoğan: Controlled coup argument is verified], CNNTürk, 29 May 2017, <http://www.cnnurk.com/video/turkiye/erdogdu-kontrollu-darbe-tezi-dogrulandi>

356] “CHP Genel Başkanı Kılıçdaroğlu’nun Meclis Grup konuşması” [CHP Chairman Kılıçdaroğlu’s Parliamentary group speech], 30 May 2017, <https://www.chp.org.tr/Haberler/36/chp-genel-baskani-kemal-kilicdaroglu-tbmm-chp-grup-toplan-tisinde-konustu-30-mayis-2017-59538.aspx>

Nesin,³⁵⁷ for instance, says that it was Erdoğan who staged the coup. Yavuz Baydar,³⁵⁸ who has been critical since the beginning of the coup, for whom arrest warrants have been issued, and whose house was searched, continues to offer his views. “Any analysis is unrealistic that is made without taking a clear x-ray picture of July 15 and without explaining the real factors that triggered the attempt and revealing the names and positions of the main actors behind its design,” wrote Baydar. In another article he wrote, “We face a situation like the intrigues of March 9–12, 1971. We will see in due time who sold out who and how, as well as how the letters FETÖ were used like a skeleton key.”³⁵⁹

3.2.6 Questions Still Begging For Answers

Only 8,651 soldiers took part in the coup, merely 1.5 percent of the Turkish Armed Forces, according to the official statements from the General Staff. Of this number, 1,676 were enlisted privates and 1,214 were military students. The common opinion is that such a small rebellion in the army could have been crushed rather easily. Then why was it allowed to develop into something that killed 249 people and wounded more than two thousand?

Of the 168 generals purged from the TSK since July 15, 2016, two were full generals, 10 major-generals, 6 lieutenant-generals and 148 brigadier-generals; 1,882 high-ranking officers, 6,563 officers, 1,589 sergeants and 16,409 military students were dismissed. Many have been arrested and are being tried. Yet it is obvious that so many officers and soldiers did not take part in the coup. Who is conducting the purges and what are the criteria? Why is Akar permitting such an injustice to be perpetrated against NATO’s second largest military? Or was the coup staged simply to enable these purges?

3.3 MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan

3.3.1 ‘The Confidant’ Of July 15

“I called but couldn’t reach him,” said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the critical bureaucrat whom he needed most on the coup day, senior government official Hakan Fidan, the MİT undersecretary who retains his position despite a colossal failure of intelligence if he was not involved in the plot to stage a coup. Is he the hero who defeated a coup that he learned about only seven hours earlier? Is he a pragmatist who attempted to overcome a preventable coup on his own and should thus be held accountable at least for negligence because he did not share the intelligence? Or is he the mastermind and executioner of the “controlled coup” as some put it? The revelations so far appear to be supporting the last version which is his complicity in staging a false coup to help Erdoğan set up his critics for mass persecution and purges.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Erdoğan stressed the failure of intelligence and stated that the coup could have been prevented: “I learned about the coup from my-brother-in-law.

357] “Erdoğan bu darbeyi neden yaptı!..” [Why did Erdoğan stage the coup?], Ahmet Nesin, Artı Gerçek, 3 June 2017, <https://www.artigercek.com/erdogan-bu-darbeyi-neden-yapti>

358] “15 Temmuz’un röntgen resmi: yalanlar ve gerçekler” [An x-ray photograph of July 15: truths and untruths], Yavuz Baydar, Artı Gerçek, 28 May 2017, <https://www.artigercek.com/15-temmuz-un-rontgen-resmi-yananlar-ve-gercekler>

359] “15 Temmuz kördüğümü: Çözdükçe dolaşiyor” [The July 15 knot: Getting knottier as undone], Yavuz Baydar, Artı Gerçek, 30 May 2017, <https://www.artigercek.com/15-temmuz-kordugumu-cozdukce-dolasiyor>

It is obvious that there is a fault with intelligence here. If intelligence were adequate, the activities of the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) could have been prevented.”³⁶⁰

When asked, “The president of the Turkish Republic learns about the issue from his brother-in-law, and the prime minister from relatives, wife, kin and guards. It has been fifteen days but people question this point as a matter of course. Have you got a definitive answer at this point?”, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım replied in the same line: “I asked this of the MİT undersecretary. I said, ‘I mean how is it even possible? The prime minister has no knowledge of it. The president has no knowledge of it. Okay, it is natural that the Chief of the General Staff knows it, but you must inform the prime minister at the same time. Because you are subordinate and accountable to the prime minister.’ Certainly, he couldn’t answer that. And he didn’t say anything. This is the truth. There is no justification for why the notice wasn’t sent to me and to our president.”³⁶¹

Moreover, Fidan did not immediately inform the Minister of Interior Efgan Ala, a name that was as important as the president and prime minister. According to what he said to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission, Ala learned about the coup from Undersecretary Fidan on the phone at about 23:00.³⁶² If the coup had been revealed at 14:30, the police force could have intervened and suppressed the coup bid but the minister who was in charge of hundreds of thousands of police officers did not know anything until very late.

Celalettin Lekesiz, the national police commissioner of the time, also learned about the coup after it started to roll. According to his statement in the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission, Ankara Police Commissioner called him on the phone when he was at home eating dinner at 21:35 and said, “We have received news that sounds of gunfire are coming from the direction of the General Staff. We’re looking into it. For your information, sir.”³⁶³

Mehmet Kılıçlar, the governor of the Turkish capital, where the coup was felt most heavily, was one of those who called the MİT Undersecretary but failed to reach him. He said, “I could contact neither MİT Provincial Directorate nor the Undersecretary’s Office. They didn’t call me. If I remember correctly, I called but couldn’t reach them.”³⁶⁴

The gendarmerie, another law enforcement agency, which provides security for rural areas, learned about the event after gunfire sounds at the General Staff. Commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces General Galip Mendi found out about the coup attempt while at

360] “Erdoğan: Darbeyi eniştemden öğrendim” [Erdoğan: I learned about the coup from my brother-in-law], Al Jazeera, 12 July 2016 <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-darbeyi-enistemden-ogrendim>

361] “Yıldırım: Fidan cevap veremedi” [Yıldırım: Fidan couldn’t answer], Hürriyet, 3 August 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/basbakan-Yildirim-fidan-cevap-veremedi-40179261>

362] Parliamentary Coup Investigation minutes, 18 October 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

363] Parliamentary Coup Investigation minutes, 08 November 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1771

364] Parliamentary Coup Investigation minutes, 2 November 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1763



Two prime suspects in Turkey's false-flag coup bid are defense and intelligence chiefs who had met unusually long hours before and during the July 15 events.

a wedding in Gazi Officers' Mess Hall.³⁶⁵

In short, if all these statements are true, Fidan did not inform anyone who could have played crucial role in preventing the coup attempt. However, during the hours when no one could reach him, Fidan met Director of Religious Affairs Mehmet Görmez, the top government Imam. A report by Odatv about this meeting has not been denied until today.³⁶⁶ Was it during this meeting that they planned to incite the people through continuous public announcements and prayer calls from the loud speakers of mosques encouraging citizens to take to the streets and face the putschists?

In his written statement submitted to the commission, Fidan said he returned to the MİT headquarters to meet the Syrian opposition leader Ahmad Moaz Al-Khatib Al-Hasani after leaving the General Staff. However, he neither confirms nor refutes his meeting with Görmez.³⁶⁷ It was also very strange for him to keep a routine appointment with a Syrian rebel leader when he knew about a coup bid or at least a plot to detain him.

The information about what Fidan did on the coup day or days preceding it can be gleaned from testimonials of defendants and witnesses, but not from Fidan himself. Fidan made no statements in administrative or judicial investigations as a witness, suspect, or plaintiff apart from the written statement he submitted to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission.³⁶⁸ The impunity and the veil of mystery surrounding MİT and Fidan has thickened further. The team that carried out the investigation were dismissed, including the chief prosecutor and his deputy, when they attempted to question Fidan. The claims that the prosecutors demanded to hear Fidan have not been denied. Chief Prosecutor Harun Kodalak has been demoted to the position of plain public prosecutor.³⁶⁹ Kodalak was the prosecutor who closed the Deniz Feneri corruption case³⁷⁰ that implicated government officials in corruption and was previously seen as an Erdoğan loyalist. He was appointed to be a member of the Court of Appeals on July 5, 2017 in what was seen as hush-up assignment after his abrupt sacking from Ankara chief prosecutor's office.³⁷¹

3.3.2 Tracking Fidan's Actions

A major came to MİT at 14:30 and provided intelligence about what would happen that evening. He said military helicopters would land in the MİT compound, detain

365] Ibid.

366] "Bu yazıdan sonra Ankara karışacak" [This article will stir Ankara], 22 July 2016, <http://odatv.com/bu-yazidan-sonra-ankara-karisacak-2207161200.html>

367] "Full text of the report MİT submitted to TBMM Coup Commission" [MİT'in Darbe komisyonuna gönderdiği raporun tam metni], Habertürk, 26 May 2017, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1508784-mitin-darbe-komisyonusuna-gonderdigi-raporun-tam-metni>

368] Ibid.

369] "Ankara Cumhuriyet Başsavcısı Harun Kodalak'a tenzili rütbenin nedeni Hakan Fidan mı?" [Is Hakan Fidan the reason for demotion of Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor Harun Kodalak?], T24, 20 January 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/ankara-cumhuriyet-bassavcisi-harun-kodalaka-tenzili-rutbenin-nedeni-hakan-fidan-mi,384156>

370] "Deniz Feneri'nde savcı şoku" [Prosecutor shock in Deniz Feneri], Radikal, 24 August 2011, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/deniz-fenerinde-savci-soku-1061189/>

371] "Yargıtay'a 7 Yeni Üye" [7 new members to Supreme Court of Appeals], NTV, 5 July 2017, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/yargitaya-7-yeni-uye,jp53cbKwJ0u7iKiXPBD78Q>

Undersecretary Fidan and take him away. “MİT were informed by a major and a private about the coup. The major and the private are in prison now as a precaution to protect them,” said Selçuk Özdağ,³⁷² the AKP lawmaker in the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission, thereby adding a second source of intelligence that tipped off authorities about the coup.

The fate of the informant-major remains a mystery and needs explanation. Odatv news portal reported³⁷³ that the decision to dismiss the informant-major was rescinded and he started working at MİT. It should be noted that the major, who was the most important witness, did not make a statement to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission or the court, not as a witness, nor as a suspect, nor as a plaintiff. The Land Aviation Indictment did not include the major. The prosecutor wanted to question O.K. but his request was denied.³⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Major O.K. was interviewed as a “person holding information”³⁷⁵ before he was employed by MİT, thus rendering him untouchable by prosecutors. The minutes of the interview show that the informant-major clearly expressed the possibility of a coup or at least the possibility of the kidnapping of a powerful bureaucrat of the country from the compound of the intelligence agency with military helicopters.

According to the MİT sources of journalist Serpil Çevikcan from the Milliyet daily, “Hakan Fidan called in person Muhsin Köse, the security director of the president who was staying in Marmaris. He did not talk about the possibility of a coup but asked, ‘Are you prepared for an assault from the land, air or sea?’ Köse’s reply was, ‘We are prepared.’³⁷⁶ It is remarkable that the security bureaucracy that was thinking of the possibility of an attack on the president has persistently claimed that they had not been informed about a coup. It is also strange that Erdoğan’s chief security officer hung up the phone without even asking for the substance of the threats and details.

Upon receiving the intelligence, Hakan Fidan talked to Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar on the phone. Then he sent his deputy to the General Staff Headquarters. He went to see Akar in person before 18:00. Meanwhile, Akar met Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler and Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak to develop precautions. He took the issue so seriously that he ordered Çolak and Land Forces Staff Officer General İhsan Uyar as well as military prosecutors and Headquarters Commander to Land Aviation Academy. He closed all the airspace of the country to military flights. He called Ankara

372] “Bu ihbarı bir er yapmış” [This intelligence was given by a private], Milliyet, 4 December 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/mit-e-darbe-ihbarini-bir-er-de-gundem-2355866/>

373] “Darbeyi bildiren binbaşının ismi ne ve şimdi nerede” [What is the name of the major who informed of the coup and where is he now?], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 10 March 2017, <http://odatv.com/darbeyi-bildiren-binbasinin-ismi-ne-ve-simdi-nerede-1003171200.html>

374] “İhbarcı subay sır oldu” [Officer who informed of coup vanish], Cumhuriyet, 17 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/742897/Darbe_ihbarcisi_subay_sir_oldu.html

375] “İşte o binbaşının ifadesi” [Here’s the major’s testimony], Yeni Şafak, 20 May 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/iste-o-binbasinin-ifadesi-2671698>

376] “Marmaris’e uyarı telefonu” [Warning call to Marmaris], Serpil Çevikcan, Milliyet, 21 July 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/serpil-cevikcan/marmaris-e-uyari-telefonu-2281299/>



Garrison Commander Major-General Metin Gürak and ordered him not to allow even a single tank to leave Etimesgut Armored Corps.³⁷⁷ But somehow General Çolak returned without taking any action against the officers whose names were provided by the informant-officer as being involved in the plot. In fact, he was debriefed by them. Later everything started to roll in the Land Aviation Academy according to plan.

Erdoğan said to Reuters: “I was in Marmaris with my family. At about 4:00–4:30 pm I got a call from my brother-in-law. He said, ‘There are some problems in İstanbul. Soldiers are blocking roads near Beylerbeyi Palace. They don’t allow entrance to the bridge.’ To tell the truth, I didn’t believe it when I first heard it. I immediately called the MİT Undersecretary but couldn’t reach him. I called the Chief of the General Staff; I couldn’t reach him because they weren’t answering the phone. We made an assessment of the situation there at 20.00. I made an announcement on TV and called my people to the streets.”³⁷⁸

There is a clear contradiction in this statement. General Akar was detained at about 21:30, and the assault on MİT started at 22:38. The president, who “learned about the coup from his brother-in-law” says he could not reach either of them. At the time when Erdoğan was making an assessment with his team, Fidan and Akar were still together, and there was no action against them. It seems Fidan was unable to call the president but was able to call Security Director Muhsin Köse, to ask him “Are you prepared for an assault from the land, air or sea?” and get a reply “We are prepared.”³⁷⁹ And Erdoğan did not share the information from his brother-in-law with Muhsin Köse, the security director who stayed close to Erdoğan twenty-four hours a day. Meanwhile, Köse was not aware that Erdoğan was trying to reach Fidan.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler stated, however, that Fidan tried to reach Erdoğan but could not.³⁸⁰ According to Güler’s statement, when he failed to reach Erdoğan he called Security Director Muhsin Köse. The statement MİT submitted to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission corroborates Güler. No matter which scenario is correct, it is unthinkable that the dialogue between the MİT undersecretary and the security director was not reported to Erdoğan. Why then does Erdoğan insist that he learned about the coup from his brother-in-law? Even if we assumed that the security director was compromised, Fidan could very well have reached Erdoğan through other bureaucrats in the office of the presidency.

It is clear that MİT Undersecretary Fidan did not try to get in touch with the prime

377) “Genelkurmay Başkanı Akar’ın yanıtları” [Chief of the General Staff Akar’s replies to Coup Commission], Hürriyet, 30 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-iste-genelkurmay-baskani-hulusi-akar-in-yanitlari-40474658>

378) “Erdoğan darbe gecesini Reuters’e anlattı” [Erdoğan told Reuters about coup night], Mynet.com, 22 July 2016, <http://www.mynet.com/haber/dunya/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-reutersa-darbe-girisimi-gecesini-anlatti-2551729-1>

379) “Marmarise uyarı telefonu” [Warning call to Marmaris], Serpil Çevikcan, Milliyet, 21 July 2106, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/serpil-cevikcan/marmaris-e-uyari-telefonu-2281299/>

380) “Darbeyi bildiren binbaşı kimdi, şimdi nerede” [Where is the major who informed of the coup?], Müyesser Yıldız, OdaTV, 10 March 2017, <http://odatv.com/darbeyi-bildiren-binbasinin-ismi-ne-ve-simdi-nerede-1003171200.html>



Hakan Fidan, the head of Turkey’s notorious intelligence agency MİT that is known for orchestrating false-flags for president Erdoğan.

minister under whom he works. Fidan did not call Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım at all. Yıldırım, on the other hand, tried to reach Fidan but could not. The truth is that Fidan should have first informed the prime minister, to whom he was directly accountable. “The National Intelligence Agency submits all intelligence it receives to the prime minister. It’s almost like a divine commandment. It informs the prime minister first. If the content of the intelligence requires such, it submits it to the president, relevant commands, relevant institutions, and relevant ministries,” said the previous MİT Undersecretary, Emre Taner, in his testimony to the Parliamentary Coup Commission,³⁸¹ stressing that the prime minister should be informed first even if the information is not confirmed.

As mentioned earlier, Fidan had stayed at the General Staff Headquarters for nearly three hours. Considering the dinner and the private meeting at the graduation ceremony for the trainees in Special Forces Command the previous day, the heads of the two security organizations spent almost nine hours together in 24 hours.³⁸² Then ÖKK Commander Major-General Zekai Aksakallı acted like a good host and had a private conversation with Fidan after Akar left. The close encounters of the three important players that started on July 14 and lasted for hours turned into close coordination on July 15.

A burning question that needs to be answered is why the putschists who were planning a risky operation like raiding the MİT with three helicopters to capture Fidan did not touch Fidan when he was in the General Staff Headquarters for hours. It is significant that the soldiers from the Special Forces arrived at the General Staff Headquarters right after Fidan left. Yet they did not need to wait for the ÖKK teams to arrive to capture him. After all, tens of soldiers, generals among them, who were working in the headquarters are being tried today for being putschists. But somehow they did not think to incapacitate one of their most important targets when the said target was in the same building for hours. What is more, the putschists had already launched the action when Fidan was still in the General Staff Headquarters.

General Staff General-Admiral Department Head Colonel Cemil Turhan, who sent coup messages and emergency declarations to military units, said in his statement at the prosecutor’s office that he got the instructions at 20:00 and transmitted them to relevant units at 20:30.³⁸³ According to camera records, on the other hand, Fidan left the General Staff Headquarters at 20:22.³⁸⁴ In other words, if the putschists had detained the undersecretary, who was already in their hands, the raid on MİT would have been unnecessary. But then the most impressive, Hollywood-style cinematic footage of the coup would not have been taken.

“The trials have started, there are lots of indictments and an investigation commission was set up in the Parliament, but we still do not know what happened on July 15, 2016

381] Parliamentary Coup Investigation minutes, 9 November 2016,

https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyona_tutanaklari_goruntule?pTutanakId=1775

382] “Akar ve Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi” [Where were Akar and Fidan the day before the coup?], OdaTV, 21 February 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>

383] “Darbe mesajları ve sıkıyönetim direktifleri Hakan Fidan, Genelkurmaydayken gönderildi” [Coup messages and state of emergency directives were sent when Hakan Fidan was at the General Staff], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 28 November 2016, <http://odatv.com/darbe-mesajlari-ve-sikiyonetim-direktifi-hakan-fidan-genelkurmaydayken-gonderildi-2811161200.html>

384] “15 Temmuz çatı iddianamesinde Hakan Fidan detayı” [Detail about Hakan Fidan in July 15 Main Indictment], Karar, 4 March 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/hakan-fidani-ugurlayan-kadin-asker-kim-406852#>

between 14:30 and 22:00, when the coup started, and why the coup was not prevented despite the intelligence. After all of this, I can make the following comment: This coup attempt could have been prevented before so many people were killed or wounded and became disabled,”³⁸⁵ wrote Hürriyet daily columnist Mehmet Y. Yılmaz.

Ertuğrul Özkök, another columnist at Hürriyet, wrote on the same day, “Why was so much time lost when the mysterious Major O.K. openly gave the ‘coup’ intelligence? Why were president, prime minister, and ministers of defense and internal affairs not informed although the received intelligence was this serious. Why was the major’s statement kept secret until today, and why was it not put in the indictment? Why was the mysterious major appointed at the MİT?”³⁸⁶

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the chairman of the main opposition party CHP, explained what he meant by “controlled coup.” He said this expression means “knowing about the coup before it happened,” and noted that the government “had information about the coup beforehand.”³⁸⁷ Kılıçdaroğlu added that “We are going to air the coup attempt’s dirty linen in public soon, and everybody is going to see it.”³⁸⁸ He later expanded on by saying that “What we mean by saying ‘a controlled coup’ is the one that was known, but not prevented and benefited from its results.”³⁸⁹ The objection to the Parliamentary Coup Commission report was aptly titled “A Controlled Coup that was anticipated, but not prevented and its results were exploited.”³⁹⁰

More and more people have started to openly question MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan’s role in July 15 events: Did he really learn about the coup bid on July 15? What did the private meeting he had with Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar for six hours the previous day have to do with the coup? What could be the reason Chief of the General Staff Akar, Land Forces Commander Çolak, and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Güler did not mention Hakan Fidan’s visit to the Headquarters and his long meeting in their first statements? Is it possible they collectively “forgot” about it?³⁹¹ There is no doubt

385] “Akar ve Fidan niye öyle davrandı?” [Why did Akar and Fidan act that way?], Mehmet Yılmaz, Hürriyet, 24 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/mehmet-y-yilmaz/akar-ve-fidan-niye-oy-le-davr-andi-40467586>

386] “FETÖ dava dosyasına girmeyen önemli sır” [The important secret not included in the FETÖ case file], Ertuğrul Özkök, Hürriyet, 24 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ertugrul-ozkok/ertugrul-ozkok-40467641>

387] “Kılıçdaroğlu: 15 Temmuz kontrollü darbe girişimidir” [Kılıçdaroğlu: July 15 is a controlled coup attempt], BBC Turkish, 3 April 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39478777>

388] “Kılıçdaroğlu: Kontrollü darbenin ipliğini pazara çıkaracağız” [Kılıçdaroğlu: We’re going to air the controlled coup’s dirty linen in public], T24, 23 May 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/kilicdaroglu-kontrollu-darbe-girisiminin-ipligini-yakinda-pazara-cikaracagiz-bunu-da-herkes-gorecek,405497>

389] “Kılıçdaroğlu: Darbeyi önlenmeyen ve sonuçlarından yararlanan darbeye kontrollü darbe denir”, Zaman Avustralya, 30 Haziran 2017, <http://www.zamanaustralia.com/2017/06/kilicdaroglu-darbeyi-onlenmeyen-ve-sonuclarindan-yararlanilan-darbeye-kontrollu-darbe-denir>

390] CHP’s objection to Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission’s Report, <http://www.chp.org.tr/Public/0/Folder/87360.pdf>

391] “Darbeyi bildiren binbaşının ismi ne ve şimdi nerede?” [What is the name of the major who informed of the coup and where is he now?], 10 March 2017, <http://odatv.com/darbeyi-bildiren-binbasinin-ismi-ne-ve-simdi-nerede-1003171200.html>



The headquarters of the MİT, the National Intelligence Organization, in Yenimahalle district of Turkish capital.

today that Fidan learned about the coup attempt at 14:30 at the latest on July 15. Why did he not take any preventive action in the remaining seven hours? Is he avoiding making a statement to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission and the courts because he cannot answer such questions? Now that it is certain that he did not inform the president, prime minister, and law enforcement agencies that could have taken action against the coup, should he not be sanctioned and punished? How can he still hold his position?

Allegations and suspicions grow every day over MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan, one of the most prominent actors who can confirm or refute claims of a controlled coup or self-coup, but he prefers to remain silent because if he talks, the government narrative may collapse like a house of cards. It seems that Fidan and his co-conspirators fear that if they make themselves available to public scrutiny, they will be exposed. After all, even the statements they sent to the Parliamentary Investigation Committee and the reports they wrote about the informant-major cannot hide the telling shortcomings in their story.



Zekai Aksakallı (L) and Semih Terzi.

3.4. Zekai Aksakallı And Semih Terzi

3.4.1 Rival Special Operations Commanders

One of the six main theaters of the coup attempt on the night of July 15, 2016 was the Special Forces Command (ÖKK) in Gölbaşı, Ankara.³⁹² It was the soldiers of ÖKK who raided the General Staff Headquarters and allegedly detained the Chief of the General Staff as well as other generals. It is known that these teams acted in accordance with the Unconventional Operation (KOH) plan that is reported to have been approved by ÖKK Commander Major-General Zekai Aksakallı on July 11, 2016.

Special Forces Command deserves careful analysis because it is where complicated and mysterious events took place: the alleged putschist ÖKK First Brigade Commander Brigadier-General Semih Terzi was killed, Sergeant Ömer Halisdemir who killed Terzi was also killed, and the ÖKK Commander emerged as one of the heroes who reportedly prevented the coup.

The ÖKK was founded in 1992 to replace the Special Warfare Department (ÖHD), which was set up in 1952 after Turkey became a NATO member. ÖHD was a secret bureau formed for unconventional warfare strategies, which worked directly under the command of the Deputy Chief of the General Staff and received orders from no one else. It was one of the “stay behind” armies set up under the NATO umbrella against Soviet occupation. Many NATO countries demobilized their “secret” armies after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ÖKK was set up at the level of a brigade, but was then upgraded to division level, and finally to corps level. What has not changed is that it is under the command of the Deputy

^{392]} The others: The General Staff Headquarters, Akıncı Air Base, İstanbul Bosphorus Bridge, İstanbul Moda Marine Club and Marmaris, where President Erdoğan was on holiday.

Chief of the General Staff.

As discussed above, the graduation ceremony for the Special Forces Expertise Training (ÖKİK) program which was planned for Friday, July 15, 2016 was moved forward to Thursday, July 14, 2016. Moreover, the parachuting program planned for July 15 was mysteriously cancelled.³⁹³ Chief of the General Staff³⁹⁴ attended the ceremony and MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan Hakan was among the guests.³⁹⁵

After the ceremony was over, Chief of the General Staff Akar, MİT Undersecretary Fidan, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Güler, and ÖKK Commander Aksakallı had dinner. Then Güler left the garrison although he was the host. Akar and Fidan had a four-hour private meeting. Later Akar left although Fidan was still there, which was unconventional. Afterwards, the MİT Undersecretary and Commander Aksakallı took a walk together and conversed at length.

Earlier, at 14:00 on July 15, there had been a meeting about the fight against terrorism in the General Staff Headquarters.³⁹⁶ Before he attended the meeting, Aksakallı was called by Brigadier-General Semih Terzi, the ÖKK commander of First Brigade in Silopi. Saying that his father was ill, Terzi asked for permission to go to Ankara. Aksakallı told Terzi that there was a Special Forces cargo aircraft scheduled for that day and he could take it.³⁹⁷

ÖKK Chief of Operations and Training Colonel Ümit Bak also attended the meeting about the fight against terrorism in the General Staff Headquarters chaired by Deputy Chief Güler.³⁹⁸ The meeting ended at about 19:00.³⁹⁹ But Güler and Chief of Staff İhsan Uyar had left earlier one after the other because they were called by Chief of the General Staff Akar.

393] “A closing ceremony was held for the course in Special Forces Command on July 14. Normally it should have been held on Friday. But it was held Thursday. Why Thursday? Is there a reason for that? You should ask Special Forces. Who are the guests? Chief of the General Staff and MİT Undersecretary. Parachute jumping was going to be done but was cancelled because of so-called bad weather. As far as we know, it was quite clear in Ankara that day. I demand that meteorological services be asked for the day’s weather conditions,” said ex-Staff Sergeant Mehmet during hearings dated 22 February at 14th High Criminal Court 2017 about Ömer Halisdemir’s murder. See “Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi” [Where were Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan the day before the coup?], [Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 7 February 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>

394] Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi” [Where were Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan the day before the coup?], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 27 February 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>

395] Ex-Staff Sergeant Mehmet Bilge made a statement about this issue at 14th High Criminal Court during the hearing dated 22 February 2017 about ‘Ömer Halisdemir’s murder case’. Bilge said, “The ceremony ends at 17:30. The men can’t say anything because they fear. They might even deny it. After the ceremony, Chief of the General Staff and MİT Undersecretary have a conversation in the pool garden. I’m telling what I heard and what I know. Even Zekai Pasha isn’t allowed to go near them. This conversation continues until 23:00. While everyone expects the MİT Undersecretary to leave, Chief of the General Staff does. The MİT Undersecretary stays there with another military official.” See “Hulusi Akar ve Hakan Fidan darbeden bir gün önce neredeydi” [Where were Hulusi Akar and Hakan Fidan the day before the coup?], <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-ve-hakan-fidan-darbeden-bir-gun-once-neredeydi-2702171200.html>

396] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 509.

397] “Zekai Aksakallı’nın savcılık ifadesi” [Zekai Aksakallı’s statement at prosecutor’s office], July 15 Main Indictment, p. 513-14.

398] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 513; “Ümit Bak’ın savcılık ifadesi” [Ümit Bak’s statement at prosecutor’s office], Ömer Halisdemir Indictment

399] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 514.

At 19:15 the crew of the CASA-type cargo aircraft Zekai Aksakallı had mentioned to Semih Terzi went to the aircraft to take off, but they were notified that the flight was cancelled. The Chief of the General Staff had cancelled all military flights. So First Pilot Captain Cemal Yılmaz called ÖKK Etimesgut Air Regiment Commander Ümit Tatan, who told him to stay put.⁴⁰⁰



**Mehmet
Partigöç**

At about 20:30 the alarm directive sent from the General Staff reached ÖKK Command.⁴⁰¹ The order was to increase security precautions. The lieutenant-colonel who was the shift commander on duty notified Chief of Operations and Training Colonel Ümit Bak, who ordered him to take necessary precautions.⁴⁰²

At 20:50 Etimesgut Air Regiment Commander Ümit Tatan called the CASA aircraft's second pilot Captain Ersun Atılga, who was waiting for orders, told him that the flight would continue as planned, and approved the flight. Yet, the Chief of the General Staff had not cancelled the flight ban.⁴⁰³

At 21:00 the assignment and state of emergency directives sent from the General Staff reached Special Forces Command.⁴⁰⁴ The first message was the alarm order signed by Armed Forces (TSK) Command Control Commander Staff Officer Colonel Osman Kardal. The second message, signed by Staff Planning and Management Department Head Brigadier-General Mehmet Partigöç, said that Brigadier-General Semih Terzi had been assigned by Special Forces Command and Zekai Aksakallı had been dismissed. The third message included the list of appointments in state of emergency commands, ministries, and other public institutions across Turkey as well as the new chain of command in the TSK. Colonel Bak called TSK Command Control Center, from where the first message came, and got confirmation.⁴⁰⁵

At 21:20 state of emergency directives were received by Etimesgut Air Regiment Command, which was under the ÖKK.⁴⁰⁶

At 21:22 the CASA aircraft that belonged to the ÖKK took off from Etimesgut Air Regiment Command for Diyarbakır, although state of emergency directives had only arrived two minutes earlier. Etimesgut Tower and Esenboğa Briefing permitted the take-off.

400] The statement as a witness by Captain Ersun Atılga, second pilot on the flight, who talked to the prosecutor.

401] The statement by 'suspect' Lieutenant-Colonel M. Ali Çelik, the shift commander on duty at the headquarters. According to July 15 Main Indictment, the first directives started coming as of 21:30. But the same indictment also claims that General Staff General-Admiral Department Head Colonel Cemil Turhan, whose signature appeared on some these directives, said he started sending the directives at 20:30 under Deputy CoS Yaşar's orders.

402] Colonel Ümit Bak, on the other hand, said in his statement at prosecutor's office that directives for alarm, state of emergency and assignments were sent at 21:30. See "Darbeci Generali vurdu" [He shot putschist general], Hürriyet, 17 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/darbeci-general-vurdu-40151653>

403] Pilot Captain Ersun Atılga's witness testimony to prosecution.

404] The testimony of 'Suspect' Lieutenant-Colonel M. A. Çelik, who was shift commander on duty at the headquarters on that night.

405] Ümit Bak says it was 21:30 in his testimony. See "Darbeci Generali vurdu" [He shot putschist general], Hürriyet, 17 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/darbeci-general-vurdu-40151653>

406] The witness testimony of E.U., who was the soldier on duty at the regiment, to prosecutor. See Special Forces Command Main Indictment.

Semih Terzi was going to take this flight.⁴⁰⁷ According to the plan, the aircraft would go to Diyarbakır first and then to Cizre and take 26 ÖKK staff to return to Ankara.

At 21:10 Semih Terzi, First Brigade commander in Silopi, called 12th Battalion Commander Major Fatih Şahin and ordered him to send the teams from the 12th and 16th battalions for the operation. Teams 1 and 3 started preparations to go to Ankara.⁴⁰⁸

At 21:30 Aksakallı left the wedding in Moda with his wife. Some time later a Mercedes Vito cut across his car's path. Two men in plain clothes attempted to kidnap him but he and his wife managed to escape.⁴⁰⁹ Later in his statement to the prosecutor Aksakallı claimed that one of the kidnapers was Colonel Fatih Yarımbaş.

At about 22:15 when Aksakallı reached Kirazlıdere in Kızılay, Ankara, he went to a police checkpoint and called Special Forces Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Ümit Koçak. He requested that an armored vehicle and protection detail go to ÖKK barracks. He ordered that the security gates of the barracks be closed and no one including generals be allowed in. According to Lieutenant-Colonel M. Ali Çelik's and Colonel Ümit Bak's claims, Aksakallı said, "Let only Semih Terzi in. Do not let anyone else in."⁴¹⁰ Coup suspect Lieutenant Colonel Çelik said in the hearing on April 24, 2017 at 14th High Criminal Court, "Zekai Pasha ordered that only Semih Terzi would be allowed in the barracks and other generals would not be allowed to go in." It was Ümit Koçak who received this order. Then Koçak ordered that "only Semih Terzi will be allowed to enter" and sent the staff in the barracks to the security gates.⁴¹¹

Lieutenant-Colonel Koçak then ordered Captain Bal, the officer on duty, to send an armored car to the Sports School to pick up ÖKK Commander Aksakallı.

At 22:20 a state of emergency directive reached the ÖKK. The commander on duty, Lieutenant-Colonel Çelik, notified Aksakallı of this message at 22:40.⁴¹² Upon this order, Aksakallı ordered ÖKK Chief of Staff Erdiñ Kocayanak to go to the barracks and seize control of the situation. He also called ÖKK Academy Commander Staff Officer Colonel Ömer Faruk Bozdemir and ordered him to take all the staff he trusted to the military unit and take over the chain of command.⁴¹³

407] Etimesgut Air Regiment Commander Colonel Ümit Tatan's second statement to prosecution dated 19 July 2016; Pilot Captain Ersun Atılğan's witness testimony to prosecution.

408] 'Suspect' Major Fatih Şahin's statement. Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz, 122nd Special Forces Commander in 1st Brigade Command, said in his witness testimony to prosecution that it was '19:30.'

409] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 515.

410] "Çelik's ve Bak's statements," Ömer Halisdemir Indictment; Ümit Bak repeated his allegation at court. Making his defense in the hearing on 7 June 2017 at Ankara 14th High Criminal Court, Bak said, "Zekai Aksakallı ordered (us), 'to shut down the military unit, (and) not to let anyone in, even generals, except Semih Terzi Semih without his orders.'" See "15 Temmuz ÖKK Davası'nda tahliyeler" [Releases in July 15 ÖKK Case], Odatv, 7 June 2017, <http://odatv.com/aylardi-merakla-beklenen-isim-kendisini-nasil-savundu-0706171200.html>

411] "ÖKK'daki darbe girişimi davası: Zekai Paşa tarafından FETÖ'cü darbeci hain ilan edildi" [The coup attempt case in ÖKK: We are declared to be pro-FETÖ putschist traitors by Zekai Pasha], Karar, 24 April 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/okkdaki-darbe-girisimi-davasi-zekai-pasa-tarafindan-fetocu-darbeci-hain-ilan-edildik-460118>

412] Ibid.

413] "Zekai Aksakallı's statement to prosecution," July 15 Main Indictment, p. 516.

At 22:20 Brigadier-General Semih Terzi left for Diyarbakır, from where he would soon fly to Ankara.⁴¹⁴

At 23:15 the CASA-type aircraft, which took off from Etimesgut Air Regiment, landed in Diyarbakır. At about the same time Aksakallı decided that his house was unsafe so he went to the place of a friendly general in ÖKK Sports School military quarters and dropped his wife there. He would wait for the armored vehicle and protection team right there.⁴¹⁵

At 23:30 Brigadier-General Semih Terzi landed in Diyarbakır from Silopi.⁴¹⁶ Terzi called Pilot Captain Cemal Yılmaz to tell him that he should urgently go to Ankara with his teams and that Aksakallı knew about it. So, he had the CASA aircraft's flight to Cizre cancelled and ordered the pilots to get back to Ankara.⁴¹⁷

At 23:39 Aksakallı had a phone conversation with Kemal Eskintan from the National Intelligence Agency (MİT). He said that he had sent some staff to clear the ÖKK barracks of putschists but they did not have any weapons other than pistols. He demanded weapons and ammunition from MIT. Eskintan said that he could provide the weapons and ammunition.⁴¹⁸

At 23:59 the CASA-type aircraft transporting Brigadier-General Terzi from Diyarbakır to Ankara took off. On the aircraft there was a 24-member ÖKK team that included 12th Battalion Commander Major Fatih Şahin, Terzi's aide-de-camp Ahmet Kara, Special Forces Team Commander Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz and Lieutenant Mihrali Atmaca. Despite the General Staff's flight ban across the country as of 19.06, Diyarbakır tower permitted the aircraft to take off.⁴¹⁹ Nearly all the team members had learned from their mobile phones that there was a chaos in the country and some had seen the prime minister's announcement on NTV that "this is a military rebellion." Many said in their statements to prosecutors that they were confused and believed they were going to Ankara to crush the rebellion.

At 00:30 Brigadier-General Terzi said to 12th Battalion Commander Major Fatih Şahin, "The Turkish Armed Forces have taken over the government. They may stop us too when we land. Take precautions accordingly."⁴²⁰

At 00:55 Aksakallı reached Command Sergeant Major Ömer Halisdemir, who was on protection duty at Special Forces Command, through Protection Sergeant Makbul Uluğ. He said to Halisdemir, one of the soldiers he trusted most and who had been his protection sergeant for three years, "Monitor the activities of Colonel Ümit Bak, the head of the putschists in Special Forces Command, and putschist Lieutenant-Colonel Mehmet Ali Çelik

414] Ömer Halisdemir Indictment.

415] "Zekai Aksakallı's statement to prosecution," July 15 Main Indictment, p. 517.

416] Ömer Halisdemir Indictment.

417] Captain Cemal Yılmaz's witness statement for the prosecution; 2nd pilot Captain Ersun Atılğan's witness statement for the prosecution.

418] "Zekai Aksakallı's statement to prosecution," July 15 Main Indictment, p. 518.

419] Captain Cemal Yılmaz's witness statement for the prosecution.

420] Major Şahin's 'suspect' statement to prosecution. Ahmet Kara, Terzi's aide who sat next to him on the aircraft that night, stated that 'I didn't hear Semih Terzi call out to Fatih Şahin that 'Turkish Armed Forces seized control of government.'"

and render them harmless if you can.” In other words, he gave the “kill” order.⁴²¹

Urged by Sadık Üstün from the MIT Undersecretariat, Aksakallı gave live interviews to TGRT TV at 01:00 and to NTV at 01:47. He said that the coup was not within the chain of command and it was a treacherous attempt.⁴²² After his TV interviews, Aksakallı had a conversation with Prime Minister Yıldırım. In his own words, they just talked about taking the people to the streets.⁴²³

Afterwards, Aksakallı gave NTV’s phone numbers to Gendarmerie Security Corps Commander Major-General İsmail Metin, 8th Corps Commander Major-General Yılmaz Uyar, 7th Corps Commander İbrahim Yılmaz, and 6th Mechanized Infantry Division Commander Lieutenant-General Osman Erbaş and demanded that they make anti-coup statements, which the commanders did. Aksakallı later said that he chose these commanders because their places of duty were critical.⁴²⁴

Meanwhile, Aksakallı called Halisdemir 8 times and insisted on his kill order. In his first statements Aksakallı said he gave the order to “kill Ümit Bak if you can”; in his later statements he said, “Semih Terzi is a traitor. A putschist. I order you to shoot him in the name of our country and our people.”⁴²⁵

According to Aksakallı’s statements, Ömer Halisdemir started his career in 1997–98 as a specialized sergeant beside him. They participated in the operations in the Tunceli–Bingöl area together. Aksakallı encouraged him to become a non-commissioned officer. He took him to the exams in person. They had been working in close company for 20 years. Halisdemir had been his protection sergeant in the last three years.⁴²⁶

At 02:05 the cargo aircraft that was carrying Brigadier-General Semih Terzi landed in Etimesgut Special Forces Air Regiment Command. Before the landing, Captain Cemal Yılmaz, the pilot of the aircraft, asked for permission from Ankara Control, which controlled civil aviation, and the permission was given. He also talked to the military radar and did not get a negative answer. So he landed the aircraft. “As we were coming here, we talked to all radar control centers. None gave us a negative answer,” Pilot Captain Yılmaz would later say in his witness testimony at the prosecutor’s office.⁴²⁷

Before the aircraft landed in Etimesgut, 12th Battalion Commander Major Fatih Şahin said to team commander Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz, “We’ll go to Gölbaşı Oğulbey Barracks as soon as we land. If there’s one helicopter, 14 persons will take it. If there are two helicopters all of us will go. Pick the first 14 persons to go.”⁴²⁸ Captain Yılmaz picked

421] “Zekai Aksakallı’s statement to prosecution,” July 15 Main Indictment, p. 519

422] Ibid.

423] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 521

424] “Zekai Aksakallı’s statement to prosecution,” July 15 Main Indictment, p. 519.

425] Ibid.

426] Ibid. p.520

427] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 520

428] Captain Cemal Yılmaz’s witness statement for the prosecution; 2nd pilot Captain Ersun Atılğan’s witness statement for the prosecution.

14 from among 24. He chose seven of them particularly: Mihrali Atmaca, Erkan Kütükçü, Ahmet Muhammet Demirci, İsmail Çınar, Mehmet Bilge, Hüseyin Oğuz and Hasan Aksoy.⁴²⁹

The 14-member team that included Brigadier-General Terzi, his aide-de-camp Ahmet Kara and Major Ahmet Şahin took off with the helicopter to arrive urgently at ÖKK's headquarters in Gölbaşı Oğulbey Barracks. Captain Yılmaz, who picked the 14-member team, did not want to go to the barracks because he was suspicious of Terzi and stayed in Etimesgut Air Battalion, which was one of the strangest incidents of the night.⁴³⁰ Captain Yılmaz said that Captain Fatih İpek called him from Diyarbakır immediately after the helicopter left and asked him to contact Colonel Fırat Çelik. Meanwhile, Çelik was in front of the security gate of Gölbaşı Oğulbey Barracks with his soldiers trying to get in but could not because of the orders given to the guards. For this reason, there was an armed conflict at the gate. Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz called Colonel Çelik and got information about the situation.⁴³¹

At 02:14 two helicopters that took off from Etimesgut landed in Special Forces Command. Terzi started to walk directly towards the headquarters building. The rest is told in the Ömer Halisdemir trial indictment as follows: "As Terzi was about to enter the building, Ömer Halisdemir blended in with the crowd that had come to meet him and fired 3 or 4 shots from behind the right side of Terzi. Terzi, who was wounded, fell to the ground. Halisdemir ran for the wooded area to the right. Surprised by the incident, the team members beside Terzi fired shots in that direction and Halisdemir was shot too. Meanwhile, medics and other soldiers were trying to intervene in Terzi's care. Other team members dragged the wounded Halisdemir to the area on the right of the entrance gate to the building and laid him down. An ambulance was called to the scene immediately. Kamil Aksoy, an immediate medical response specialist in Special Forces Command Natural Disasters Search Rescue Battalion, checked for Halisdemir's pulse. It was weak.⁴³² He was in critical condition. "Let's save him,"⁴³³ said Captain Bal. During their medical intervention, Lieutenant Atmaca from the team from Diyarbakır was pacing toward and away from them. Finally, he took out his service pistol and fired two shots at Halisdemir in the chest, who was lying on the floor, wounded, and killed him. It was 02:26. "Why did you kill him? We could have made him talk," said a member of the team. Major Bal said, "He was a good boy. Why did you shoot him?" Atmaca left the scene without saying anything.⁴³⁴

Mustafa Afyonlu, a sergeant in ÖKK Medical Company who had come on the ambulance for medical intervention, said that as they were trying to check Halisdemir's pulse Atmaca came to them, said, "Move aside," and shot two times. He also said that Atmaca said, "The medics can leave" and sent the ambulance from the scene.⁴³⁵ Meanwhile,

429] Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz's witness statement for the prosecution.

430] Ibid.

431] Ibid.

432] Kamil Aksoy's witness statement for the prosecution," Ömer Halisdemir Indictment

433] Kamil Aksoy's witness statement for the prosecution.

434] Kamil Aksoy's witness statement for the prosecution," Ömer Halisdemir Indictment.

435] "Medic Sergeant Mustafa Afyonlu's witness statement for the prosecution," Ömer Halisdemir Indictment.

Colonel Bak and some soldiers beside him took medic Hüseyin Oğuz inside to attend Terzi urgently. The immediate medical response was performed there. Then a helicopter was called by Colonel Bak so that Terzi could be taken to a hospital.

As these events were taking place in front of ÖKK Headquarters building, Major Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz, who had stayed behind in Etimesgut, called Colonel Fırat Çelik at 02:30 for the second time and said, “I have competent men inside. I’m at your service.”⁴³⁶ In response, Fırat Çelik called Aksakallı and said, “The team commander Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz who came with Terzi from Diyarbakır is ready for your orders.”⁴³⁷

At about 02:50 the wounded Terzi was taken to GATA Military Hospital by Major Fatih Şahin and other soldiers beside him. But he could not be saved. Terzi lost his life there.

At 02:54 Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz, who had stayed behind in Etimesgut Air Regiment, called Aksakallı upon orders from his commander Colonel Ömer Faruk Bozdemir.⁴³⁸ He said, “Sir, we came with Semih Terzi but we are at your command.” He added that his most trustworthy men were in the headquarters.⁴³⁹ Aksakallı told him that Semih Terzi, Ümit Bak and Mehmet Ali Çelik were putschists. Aksakallı said in his witness statement to the 14th High Criminal Court, “Captain Yılmaz said that there were men in the team heading for Special Forces Command that he trusted a lot, and I ordered him to render the names I just mentioned harmless. As far as I can remember, after our conversation at 02:54, I talked to Captain Ahmet Kemal five times on the phone. I learned after this conversation that Major Ahmet Kemal had established phone contact with the staff he trusted who had gone to the ÖKK.”⁴⁴⁰ From this moment on, Aksakallı began to convey directives through Captain Yılmaz to the men he “trusted a lot.”

At 02:59 Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz called Lieutenant Mihrali Atmaca, who was the man whom he trusted most inside. At 03:05 he rang Ali Güreli. He conveyed Major-General Aksakallı’s directives in these conversations. He said Semih Terzi and Fatih Şahin were traitors.⁴⁴¹ Yılmaz and Atmaca called almost every one of the team members and repeated the same things.

At about 03:08 team commander Atmaca entered the headquarters building with Muhammet Demirci, İsmail Çınar, and Ali Güreli, who were the other team members who had changed sides, and started to detain the putschists.

At 03:10 Mihrali Atmaca and the team members by his side first detained Lieutenant-Colonel Ali Çelik and took him down to the ground floor of the headquarters.⁴⁴²

436] Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz’s witness statement for the prosecution.

437] “Zekai Aksakallı o geceyi anlattı” [Zekai Aksakallı told about that night], Vatan, 20 March 2017, <http://www.gazete-vatan.com/zekai-aksakalli-o-geceyi-anlatti-1049993-gundem/>

438] Ibid.

439] Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz’s witness statement for the prosecution.

440] “Zekai Aksakallı o geceyi anlattı” [Zekai Aksakallı told about that night], Vatan, 20 March 2017, <http://www.gazete-vatan.com/zekai-aksakalli-o-geceyi-anlatti-1049993-gundem/>

441] Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz’s witness statement for the prosecution.

442] 414. Special Forces Command’s Administrative Investigation Report dated 10 August 2016; “11 Temmuz’da darbe hazırlığına başlamışlar” [They started coup preparations on July 11], Hürriyet, 15 December 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/11-temmuzda-darbe-hazirligina-baslamislar-40307627>

At 03:20 Atmaca, Demirci, and İsmail Çınar went to Colonel Ümit Bak's office to detain him. Sergeant Major Nedim Şahin, who was waiting at Bak's door for security, tried to stop them. Mihrali Atmaca and İsmail Çınar shot and killed Şahin in the confusion that broke out. Then they detained Ümit Bak.

At 05:07 Colonel Fırat Çelik and his 10-member team, who had been trying to pass the security gate for hours upon Aksakallı's orders, breached the fences and reached the headquarters. They united with the team led by Lieutenant Mihrali Atmaca and detained Terzi's team together. Sergeant Major Turgay Usanmaz, Sergeant Major Şenol Soylu and Sergeant Major Muzaffer Han were detained and handcuffed and placed next to Ümit Bak and Mehmet Ali Çelik, who were kept downstairs.

At 06:43 the soldiers inside waved a white flag and started to surrender.⁴⁴³

By 07:40 ÖKK Headquarters was cleared of all the putschists.⁴⁴⁴

At 10:38 ÖKK Commander Aksakallı came in an armored vehicle provided by MİT⁴⁴⁵ official Kemal Eskintan and took over the chain of command at the headquarters.⁴⁴⁶

Aksakallı stated that he talked to MİT Undersecretary many times on the phone that night.⁴⁴⁷ In his witness statement to the 14th High Criminal Court, he explained that the active participants in the attempt made up 5.4 percent of the present personnel of the ÖKK.⁴⁴⁸ It was determined that 146 soldiers who worked at the headquarters in Gölbaşı took active part in the coup.⁴⁴⁹ Four putschists were killed that night: Semih Terzi, Nedim Şahin, Gökmen Ata and Ercan Şen.⁴⁵⁰

3.4.2 Questions Still Begging For Answers

1. Although a flight ban was issued for all military aircraft and helicopters across the country at 19:06, why did Etimesgut Air Battalion Commander Ümit Tatan give take-off permit at 20:50 for the CASA aircraft that would fly to Diyarbakır? Did he call Zekai Aksakallı and notify him of this?

2. "The flight ban is issued at 19:30. Yet the aircraft takes off thanks to orders from the General Staff and Special Forces Command and Battalion Commander Ümit Tatan's

443] Ibid.

444] Ibid.

445] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 522

446] Special Forces Command's Administrative Investigation Report dated 10 August 2016; "11 Temmuz'da darbe hazırlığına başlamışlar" [They started coup preparations on July 11], Hürriyet, 15 December 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/11-temmuzda-darbe-hazirligina-baslamislar-40307627>

447] July 15 Main Indictment, p. 521

448] "Zekai Aksakallı told about that night," Vatan, 20 March 2017, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/zekai-aksakalli-o-geceyi-anlatti-1049993-gundem/>

449] Special Forces Command's Administrative Investigation Report dated 10 August 2016; "They started coup preparations on July 11," Hürriyet, 15 December 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/11-temmuzda-darbe-hazirligina-baslamislar-40307627>

450] Ibid.

extraordinary effort. I want you to investigate all the conversation records about the aircraft's departure, arrival in Diyarbakır, and flight from there to Ankara. Those who strove for the aircraft's take-off are heroes, while we are in prison for membership of a terrorist organization," said detained Pilot Major Mehmet Sağlam,⁴⁵¹ who took Semih Terzi from Etimesgut to Special Forces Command by helicopter, in the hearing on February 6, 2017 of Etimesgut Air Battalion Command trial in Ankara 13th High Criminal Court. Why did Ümit Tatan insist so much that the aircraft should take off and bring Terzi? Was Aksakallı aware of Tatan's persistence?

3. Pilot Major Mehmet Sağlam said in the same hearing, "I demand that Ümit Tatan's phone records between 20:00 and 23:30 be investigated. Whom he spoke to should be investigated. It is impossible that he did not know what was going on."⁴⁵² Detained Major Hüseyin Çakıroğlu, the commander on duty at Air Battalion Command on that night, also claimed in the same hearing that, "Battalion Commander Ümit Tatan kept track of the aircraft taking off to bring Semih Terzi, which we couldn't make any sense of. Although he was reminded of the flight ban, he said, 'We got permission for this flight. Inform me if there's any other flight.' It is not possible that Zekai Aksakallı and Battalion Commander Ümit Tatan were unaware of the coup attempt at about 23:30."⁴⁵³ Did Aksakallı not talk to Ümit Tatan at any point after about 21:30 when he was attacked by the putschists after leaving the wedding? Why does he not mention this in his statements?

4. Did Aksakallı give an order to Lieutenant-Colonel Mehmet Ali Çelik that only Terzi would be allowed in and others would be barred?

5. Why did Aksakallı give the order that no one but Terzi should be allowed to enter the headquarters although there had been a kidnapping attempt against him after the wedding at about 21:30 and he knew about the state of emergency directives sent by the General Staff?

6. Aksakallı said that he went to his house at about 22:50. He explained that he called Special Forces Command Center again and talked to putschist Lieutenant-Colonel Mehmet Ali Çelik once more. He said, "He told me that a message came from the General Staff, I was dismissed from my duty as Special Forces Commander, and Semih Terzi was assigned to my position." At this moment Semih Terzi had not yet taken off from Diyarbakır. Moreover, there was a flight ban. The aircraft could easily have been stopped from taking off. But one hour after this phone call at 23:59 the aircraft took off with Terzi on it. Aksakallı knew that Terzi was going to come to Ankara. Why did he not try to stop this aircraft from taking off? Indeed, coup suspect Major Fatih Şahin said, "One should investigate why Zekai Aksakallı did not call and ask us to stop Semih Terzi from 21:30, when the alarm directive was given, until 24:00, when the aircraft took off."

7. How could the aircraft carrying Terzi be given permission to take off from Diyarbakır

451] "Darbeci binbaşı: Ömer Halisdemir kadar vatanseverim" [Putschist Major: I'm as patriotic as Ömer Halisdemir], Sözcü, 6 February 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/darbe-girisiminden-yargilanan-binbasi-aksakalli-ve-tatan-dan-sikayetci-oldu-1663925/>

452] Ibid.

453] Ibid.

and land in Ankara despite the flight ban? Why was its landing not prevented? The flight ban issued by the Gen. Chief of Staff cannot be lifted except by specific order from the Chief of General Staff. Who overruled the flight ban?

8. Most of the soldiers coming from Diyarbakır said that they thought they were going to crush the coup or the rebellion that had broken out. Major Fatih Şahin stated, ““On the aircraft Semih Terzi said to me, ‘The TSK has taken over the government. We must be ready. Those who made the intervention may intervene against us.’ Then I started to think that our mission was against those who made the intervention.” Harun Topbaş, a suspect who was a sergeant first class, reported that Sergeant Erhan Almaz told him “We are going to crush a rebellion, if there is one, I think. Why else would we ever go to Ankara?” Sergeant Erhan Almaz said, “We heard the prime minister’s announcement on the radio that went ‘A small group is in the act of a rebellion; it’s going to be crushed.’ I said, ‘Now we know why we’re going to Ankara.’” Why did Terzi, alleged to be going for a raid on ÖKK Headquarters to take over the chain of command, set off with a team of 24 people who did not know where they were going and whom he did not know and trust? Or did Terzi think that the coup was within the chain of command and he was going to take over the duty with Aksakallı’s approval?

9. In his statement, Aksakallı said that he called chief of staff Erdiñ Kocayanık and School Commander Faruk Bozdemir and ordered them to “go to the barracks with their trustworthy men and take over command.” In that case, why did he prefer to give the orders from his house instead of going to the barracks in person?

10. Aksakallı said that he could not go to ÖKK Headquarters because there was an assault on the armored vehicle that came to take him. Was there not any other way of going to the barracks? Why did he not use alternative means of transport? How was Aksakallı unable to enter the barracks when Colonel Bozdemir and Colonel Çelik were able to do so on his orders?

11. Major-General Aksakallı said that he called ÖKK 3rd Commander Brigadier-General Halil Soysal, who was in Salahaddin City in Northern Iraq, and ordered him take control of Silopi Special Forces Operations Command and arrest coup participants.⁴⁵⁴ Why did he not give an order for Terzi’s arrest, whose plane had not yet taken off from Diyarbakır, or for the interception of the aircraft’s take-off? There was already a flight ban. He could easily have had the order executed.

12. Aksakallı said, “When I started receiving phone calls by which I thought they could be tracking my phones to locate my position, I considered that staying at home could be dangerous and I moved to a friend’s house in the same building complex and started use that place as headquarters.”⁴⁵⁵ Was another house in the same building complex safer? Where did Aksakallı spend the night?

454] “Zekai Aksakallı’s statement to prosecution,” July 15 Main Indictment, p. 518.

455] “Korgeneral Aksakallı: Halisdemir’in üzerindeki örtüyü kaldırdım, alnından öptüm” [Major-General Aksakallı: I lifted the cover on Halisdemir, kissed him in the forehead], Anadolu Agency, 20 March 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/korgeneral-aksakalli-halisdemirin-uzerindeki-ortuyu-kaldirdim-alnindan-optum/775701?amp=1>

13. Aksakallı gave a live interview on TGRT at 01:11 and another on NTV at 01:47. What was the reason he did not mention Semih Terzi, who was still in the air, in these interviews? If he had exposed this flight during the live interview, Brigadier-General Terzi might not have landed in Etimesgut and deployed to Gölbaşı.

14. When he appeared on NTV at 23:02, the prime minister announced that it might be a coup attempt. At 00:24 President Erdoğan took to the airwaves of CNN Turk, using FaceTime and called for the people to hit the streets. The aircraft that was carrying Semih Terzi landed in Etimesgut at 02:05. He did not face any opposition. Moreover, he got on another helicopter and headed for Gölbaşı, still without the least resistance. Why was he allowed to move so freely? What was Zekai Aksakallı doing in the meantime?

15. Why did Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz, who came along with Semih Terzi from Diyarbakır, not get on the helicopter with his team although he was the team commander at Etimesgut Air Battalion Command?

16. The coup suspect Major Fatih Şahin requested Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz to choose the staff on the two helicopters to go to Gölbaşı Oğulbey Barracks with Terzi. Yılmaz chose the 14 men but chose to stay behind. Then he entered Zekai Aksakallı's service. After Ömer Halisdemir died, Yılmaz conveyed Aksakallı's directives to Mihrali Atmaca in Oğulbey Barracks. The ÖKK report written on Aksakallı's orders put Yılmaz on the list of commanders who prevented the coup. Isn't all this suspicious?

17. Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz said to Aksakallı, "I have trustworthy men inside." The team seems to be loyal to Captain Yılmaz, rather than to Semih Terzi. Mihrali Atmaca, who was one of the men Yılmaz trusted, stated that they had no connection with Semih Terzi or Fatih Şahin and were left out intentionally.⁴⁵⁶ What were the criteria by which the team members were chosen? If Semih Terzi was a putschist and if he dared to get into an armed conflict to take over ÖKK Command, does it make sense that he went there with a small team of soldiers he did not know and trust?

18. Mihrali Atmaca intentionally shot Ömer Halisdemir twice in the chest when he was wounded and lying on the ground. It was the same Atmaca who claimed that Commander Aksakallı thanked him saying, "My lad! God bless your hands," when he got to the barracks in the morning.⁴⁵⁷ Sergeant First Class Harun Topbaş, who was present there, said, "Zekai Pasha came (and) kissed [the corpse of] Sergeant Ömer Halisdemir on the forehead and congratulated Atmaca for preventing the coup."⁴⁵⁸ Aksakallı said that he did not thank anyone.⁴⁵⁹ Who is telling the truth?

456] Ömer Halisdemir Indictment.

457] "Paşa 'Aslanım' dedi ama tutuklandı" [Pasha said 'You're my man' to him but he got arrested], Sözcü, 18 August 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/pasa-aslanim-dedi-ama-tutuklandi-1356468/>

458] "Şehit Halisdemir davasında ikinci gün ifadeleri: Aksakallı'dan hain Fatih Şahin'i vurun emri" [Second day statements on Halisdemir case: Aksakallı's order to shoot traitor Fatih Şahin], 22 February 2017, <http://www.karar.com/guncel-haberler/sehit-halisdemir-davasinda-ikinci-gun-ifadeleri-aksakallidan-hain-fatih-sahini-vurun-emri-395963>

459] "Korgeneral Aksakallı: Halisdemir'in üzerindeki örtüyü kaldırdım, alnından öptüm" [Major-General Aksakallı: I lifted the cover on Halisdemir, kissed him on the forehead], Anadolu Agency, 20 March 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/korgeneral-aksakalli-halisdemirin-uzerindeki-ortuyu-kaldirdim-alnindan-optum/775701?amp=1>

19. Captain Ahmet Kemal Yılmaz, who carried out Aksakallı's orders, said of Mihrali Atmaca that he "trusted him." What was the reason that, despite the presence of medics attending Ömer Halisdemir, who was still alive, Atmaca fired two more shots at him?

20. "We exercised our right to self-defense given by law and fired. We fired as a reaction when the shot was fired. If only someone had warned us to stop. If only the shot hadn't been fired like in a raid and we hadn't shot our comrade. I wish neither Semih Terzi nor Ömer Halisdemir had been shot," said coup suspect Major Fatih Şahin in his statement at the court.⁴⁶⁰ School Commander Colonel Ömer Faruk Bozdemir said in his witness statement, "We would have taken the headquarters without Semih Terzi being killed." Why then did Aksakallı insist that Terzi be killed by making eight calls? Terzi and Halisdemir, two of the most important witnesses of the coup, would probably be alive today if he had not.

21. In his statement at the prosecutor's office Aksakallı said that he had proposed Semih Terzi be dismissed in 2015 and 2016 but it was rejected, and that he told him five months before the coup attempt to "write his resignation, and get the hell out of the barracks."⁴⁶¹ Did this personal grudge influence his insistence on Terzi being killed?

22. In the ÖKK Administrative Investigation Report dated August 10, 2016, Mihrali Atmaca was among the names who prevented the coup. Why did Aksakallı exonerate the officer who killed Halisdemir, after Halisdemir had killed Terzi upon his orders? How can Mihrali Atmaca be a hero if Ömer Halisdemir is a hero too?

23. Eighteen suspects are being tried for Ömer Halisdemir's murder. Thirteen of these are described as soldiers who "prevented the coup" in the Special Forces Command Administrative Investigation Report written on Zekai Aksakallı's orders and sent to the prosecutor's office. In his witness testimony at the 14th High Criminal Court, Aksakallı said, "The team under Lieutenant Mihrali who had come with Semih Terzi executed the orders we gave them through our friend Captain Ahmet Kemal."⁴⁶² Then why are all these soldiers jailed pending trial? Why does Aksakallı continue mentioning Mihrali Atmaca and protecting him?

24. Semih Terzi's wife Nermin Terzi said that her husband's time of death was reported to be at 23:30 on July 15, 2016. However, the ÖKK report said it was July 16 at 02:16. Nermin Terzi, who herself is a doctor, claimed that she went to GATA Military Hospital to look for the doctor who had signed the death certificate but got the answer, "There's no one here by that name."⁴⁶³ Is Terzi's death certificate fake?

25. Why did Aksakallı come to the barracks at 10:38 although Terzi had been shot at



Ömer
Halisdemir

460] "Halisdemir'e ateş eden Fatih Şahin'den akılalmaz savunma!" [Incredible plea from Fatih Şahin who shot Halisdemir!], Hürriyet, 22 February 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/halisdemiri-ates-eden-fatih-sahinden-akilalmaz-savunma-40373433>

461] "Zekai Aksakallı's statement to prosecution," July 15 Main Indictment, p. 523.

462] "Zekai Aksakallı o geceyi anlattı" [Zekai Aksakallı told about that night], Vatan, 20 March 2017, <http://www.gazete-vatan.com/zekai-aksakalli-o-geceyi-anlatti-1049993-gundem/>

463] "Semih Terzi'nin eşi hakim karşısına çıktı: Nasıl 15 Temmuz'da ölü, 16 Temmuz'da mesaj attı" [Semih Terzi's wife appeared before judge: How can it be that he died on July 15; he sent a message on July 16], Sputnik Turkish, 26 January 2017, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201701261026952697-semih-terzi-nazire-tersi-darbe-girisimi/>

02:16 and Colonel Ümit Bak, who was commanding the putschists, had been detained at about 03:20? Where was he in the meantime?

26. As far as one can tell from the indictments, all the events happened among nearly 20 people. When five of the fourteen persons who came with Terzi changed sides, the putschists lost unity and the barracks were taken back. What kind of a coup raid is that?

27. General Staff Protocol employee Kübra Yavuz, who is now in custody, claimed that Aksakallı set up an interrogation room in the General Staff Headquarters, although he was not authorized to do so, and tortured her. She stated that she was threatened with death and forced to sign a statement.⁴⁶⁴ Similarly, Pilot Major Mehmet Sağlam alleged, “We suffered tortures for two days on orders from Zekai Aksakallı and Regiment Commander Colonel Ümit Tatan.”⁴⁶⁵ Is Aksakallı a torturer?

28. Uğur Kent, a sergeant assigned to the protective detail of Yaşar Güler, said Aksakallı gave an order to execute some generals on the coup night. Testifying during the hearing held at Ankara 17th High Criminal Court, Kent said, “When I was going to the bathroom, I took my phone from the table outside without drawing any attention. I reached Makbul Uluğ, the bodyguard of Aksakallı, and explained to him our situation. Aksakallı took the phone and ordered me to shoot Mehmet Partigöç, Abdurrahim Aksoy, and other suspects. I witnessed Zekai Pasha giving execution orders with no questions asked. I insisted that if they want to conduct an operation, we could have made our moves from here as well. But Aksakallı simply cited the names we ought to be shooting down and then hung up the phone. We kept Zekai Pasha informed all night but he did not conduct the operation [to secure premises] until the next day.” Why did Aksakallı insist on killing all the critical names? Is it possible that he did not want to leave any witnesses behind?⁴⁶⁶

29. Güler testified that he called his residence from the room where he was detained at the first opportunity. “My son, tell Madam I’m well. Also, call Zekai Pasha and give the number 4210 I see on the telephone to him and I will be waiting for the phone to ring three times.”⁴⁶⁷ How was Güler so sure that Aksakallı was not among coup plotting generals when he was detained by the ÖKK soldiers?

464] “15 Temmuz gecesi Fidan’ı uğurlayan Yavuz: Genelkurmay’daki ifademi ölüm tehdidi altında verdim” [Yavuz who saw Fidan off on July 15 night: I made my statement at the General Staff under threats of death], Sputnik Turkish, 7 March 2017, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201703071027523444-darbe-gecesi-mit-mustesari-fidani-ugurlayan-kubra-yavuz-genelkurmaydaki-ifademi-olum-tehdidi-altinda-verdim/>

465] “Darbeci binbaşı: Ömer Halisdemir kadar vatansverim” [Putschist Major: I’m as patriotic as Ömer Halisdemir], Sözcü, 6 February 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/darbe-girisiminden-yargilanan-binbasi-aksakalli-ve-tatan-dan-sikayetci-oldu-1663925/>

466] “Hep Hulusi Akar’ın yanında çalışmışsın [...]” [You always worked with Hulusi Akar...], Oda Tv, 16 June 2017, <http://odatv.com/hep-hulusi-akar-in-yaninda-calismisin...-1606171200.html>

467] “Orgeneral Yaşar Güler’in kan donduran ifadesi” [Chilling testimony from Gen. Yaşar Güler], Vatan Gazetesi, 23 July 2016, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/orgeneral-yasar-guler-in-kan-donduran-ifadesi-969716-gundem/>

3.5 YAŞ Member Akın Öztürk

3.5.1 Is Öztürk No. 1 Of The Coup Attempt?

The AKP government claimed to have determined the perpetrators of the July 15 coup attempt in the very first hours of its inception and immediately declared the Gülen movement the culprit. They identified Air Forces Commander General Akın Öztürk, who was also a member of the Supreme Military Council (YAŞ) as No. 1 in the coup's military wing. It was claimed that he was to be Chief of the General Staff if the coup had been successful.⁴⁶⁸

Öztürk went to Akıncı Air Base upon a request from Air Forces Commander General Abidin Ünal and negotiated with putschist commanders upon directives from Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar. No hard evidence has yet been presented that he led the putschists. However, he was detained on the second day of the coup attempt for giving orders and directives. Soon afterwards news appeared in pro-government media that a year earlier Akın Öztürk had been reported by a group of officers to the General Staff for having “the potential to stage a coup.”⁴⁶⁹

Akın Öztürk, on the other hand, said in the press statement he wrote before being detained, “As a member of the Supreme Military Council (YAŞ) who is at this nation's service, I, Air Force General Akın Öztürk, went to their location soon after the rebellion broke out and acted in unison and stood by the side of Chief of the General Staff General Hulusi Akar. Not only did I not take part in any stage of the coup attempt that targeted our people and our democracy but also I did my best that it could be overcome with the least harm to our country. I negotiated with the perpetrators in person upon the request of Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal and strove to have them correct their mistake.”⁴⁷⁰

Akın Öztürk was detained immediately after the coup attempt on July 16, 2016. It can be clearly seen in the photos taken when he was being questioned in Police Headquarters that he had been tortured because there were bloody marks in various places on his body. The conditions of the many officers in the same photos were no different. The generals, some bandaged on the head, some on the arm and some on the ear, were lined up so that they could pose for state-run Anadolu news agency (AA) to take pictures. These images of high-ranking commanders including Öztürk seem to have been published by state media AA and Turkish Radio and Broadcasting Network (TRT) as part of propaganda indicating that “revenge has been taken on the putschists.”

Despite pressure and torture, there do not seem to be any contradictions in the statements General Akın Öztürk made at the police station, the prosecutor's office, and the court.

468] “Darbe başarılı olsaydı Genelkurmay Başkanı o olacaktı” [If the coup had been successful, he would be Chief of the General Staff], Akşam, 17 July 2016, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/darbe-basarili-olsaydi-genelkurmay-baskani-o-olacakti/haber-533981>

469] “Cinnetin perde arkası” [The backdrop of the frenzy], DHA, 16 July 2016, http://www.dha.com.tr/cinnetin-perde-arkasi_1281463.html

470] “Gözaltında olan Orgeneral Akın Öztürk'ten yakınları aracılığıyla açıklama” [Detained General Akın Öztürk's statement through his relatives], BirGün, 17 July 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/gozaltinda-olan-orgeneral-akin-ozturk-ten-yakinlari-araciligiyla-aciklama-120275.html>

Öztürk used every opportunity to avow that he did not take part in the coup, and rather the opposite, he strove to deter the putschist officers. Chief of the General Staff Akar and Air Forces Commander Ünal confirmed that they summoned Öztürk to negotiate with the putschists at Akıncı Air Base. Still, the prosecutor's office and some of the commanders had suspicions about Öztürk. Two of the most important reasons—as they appeared in the Akıncı indictment—were that he was not detained and taken hostage by the putschists, and that Lieutenant-Colonel Hakan Karakuş, 141st Fleet Commander, who was one of the sources the pilots took orders from during the coup bid, was his son-in-law. Öztürk was arrested for being responsible for the coup attempt and the deaths of 249 people.⁴⁷¹

3.5.2 Akın Öztürk's Role In July 15

Akın Öztürk had gone to İzmir to visit his father, who was being treated for a cancer, on July 4, 2016. He was staying at Air Forces' Özdere Training Camp until July 15. According to his statement, he had been planning to return to Ankara on July 17, 2016 but decided to do so on July 15 on the aircraft that Land Forces Commander Salih Zeki Çolak took. The Command Control Aircraft, boarded by his wife, his guards and General Çolak, landed in Ankara at about 14:00. It was about 14:30 when he got to his daughter's house in Akıncı 4th Main Jet Base Military Quarters.⁴⁷²

On the same day, Akın Öztürk was going to be Şanver's daughter's marriage witness along with Air Forces Commander General Abidin Ünal in the wedding at Moda to be attended by many generals. However, he called the hosts of the wedding at about noon and told them he would not be able to make it because of his wife's illness. Interestingly, Akın Öztürk and Mehmet Şanver had a close relationship from their long years in the same fleet and their families saw each other regularly.

In an interview Şanver, who resigned from the TSK one month after the coup, said, "I know Akın Öztürk and his family. I thought we had a special relationship. We worked in the same fleet together. He was my son's godfather. I was base operations commander when he was base commander; I was air forces staff officer when he was air forces commander. He made the decisions as our senior about when we asked for the hand of the girl for my son's marriage, and when they [his in-laws] came to ask for my daughter's hand. We believed he would come to my daughter's wedding, come hell or high water, but he didn't. It was a great disappointment. But it's not just him... . All of the airmen with whom we worked together in the fleet, flew side by side, trusted each other, and put our lives in danger... . Both made us sad and hurt us deeply."⁴⁷³

According to Öztürk's statement, Mehmet Şanver called him some time later and asked, "Aircraft are flying over Ankara. What's it about? Do you know anything?" Öztürk replied that he had no information. Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal, who was watching TV, took the phone from Şanver and said, "Sir the aircraft are taking off from Akıncı. Now that

471] "Akın Öztürk'e Cezaevinde Darp Girişimine Soruşturma" [Probe into physical assault against Akın Öztürk in prison], 4 August 2016, <https://onedio.com/haber/akin-ozturk-e-cezaevinde-darp-girisimine-sorusturma-724425>

472] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 463

473] "Mehmet Şanver: Akın Öztürk oğlumun kirvesiydi" [Mehmet Şanver: Akın Öztürk was my son's godfather], Vatan, 2 November 2017, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/mehmet-sanver-akin-ozturk-oglumun-kirvesiydi-1002344-gundem/>

you are already there, can you go over to the base and take a look around?”⁴⁷⁴

Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal confirmed Akın Öztürk’s statements. However, he also reported several details that pointed to his suspicions. In his statement at the prosecutor’s office, Ünal said that he learned about the coup attempt when his wife called him: “I planned on calling General Öztürk. I knew he was at Akıncı with his grandchildren. I also knew that Akın Öztürk’s son-in-law Hakan Karakuş was 141st Fleet Commander in Akıncı. I couldn’t get through to Akın Öztürk for a long time. Then I asked Major-General Mehmet Şanver to reach Akın Öztürk. Mehmet Şanver handed the phone to me when he reached Akın Öztürk, to whom I said, ‘They are flying aircraft in Ankara. What’s happening up there? Are they staging a coup despite your orders?’ He answered, ‘I thought they were just night flights. I’ll look into it.’ I said, ‘They are not night flights but there are low flights in Ankara.’ Akın Öztürk did not get back to me at all later. Even if he tried to, I don’t know whether he tried to get back to me because I didn’t have the phone.’ So I summoned the base commanders who were at the wedding, (and) ordered them, ‘Everyone will call their base. Confirm that there aren’t any flights and there mustn’t be any.’”⁴⁷⁵

After this conversation, Akın Öztürk called Akıncı Air Base Commander Hakan Evrim, who said to him, “Sir, there’s an operation. Our commander’s here. We expect to see you as well.” Akın Öztürk called Military Quarters Sergeant İsmail Keskin to go to the base. According to Keskin’s statements in the indictment, “We arrived at the building where Akın Öztürk was located. When I got to the building, I went up to the upper floor. I rang the bell to say, ‘I’ve come.’ His daughter opened the door. Akın Öztürk and his wife were watching TV. There was an image on the screen that showed that the Bosphorus Bridge was closed. When I entered, Akın Öztürk said, ‘What’s happening, İsmail?’ I said that I had learned from a specialized sergeant at the security gate of Air Forces Command that there had been an attack on the General Staff. He told me to call the operations command. I couldn’t reach them. Then I got the phone number of General Staff Operations Center and called them. A major answered the phone. I told him that Akın Öztürk wanted to speak to the major. But he said that he [General Öztürk] should speak to the general whose last name was Partigöç. I dialed the general whose name was Partigöç on Öztürk’s phone. I went downstairs when Akın Öztürk was speaking to the general called Partigöç. It was about 23:00. Fifteen to twenty minutes after I went downstairs, Akın Öztürk called and asked me to go upstairs. I rang the bell; his wife opened the door. Akın Öztürk was talking on the phone. I heard him say to the person on the phone, ‘Abidin, where are you? What are you waiting for up there? Get on an aircraft and come here.’”⁴⁷⁶

“The person Akın Öztürk snapped at on the phone was Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal, who was at the wedding in Moda Marine Club in İstanbul. Then he said, ‘We are going to the headquarters,’ got in the vehicle and went to the headquarters. We entered the office of the base commander which was at the end of the corridor. When he entered the commander’s office, he saw that Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar was sitting in the visitor armchair.

474] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 464.

475] “Org Abidin Ünal’dan 15 Temmuz ifadesindeki bombalar” [Bombshells in Gen Abidin Ünal’s July 15 statement], Internet Haber, 27 July 2016, <http://www.internethaber.com/org-abidin-unalin-15-temmuz-ifadesindeki-bombalar-1702182h.htm>

476] “İsmail Keskin’in ifadesi” [İsmail Keskin’s statement], “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2680.

Akar was not handcuffed and he looked calm. The other people in the room were Çiğli Main Jet Base Commander Air Lieutenant-General Kubilay Selçuk, North Territorial Waters Chief of Staff Rear Admiral Ömer Faruk Harmancık, Akıncı Air Base Commander Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim, and AKP Deputy Chairman Şaban Dişli's brother Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli—all of whom were arrested for attempting the coup. Öztürk said, 'Good evening, what's up, sir' to Akar, who replied, 'These guys want to stage a coup. Talk to them. Convince them to stop.' So Öztürk told the others that 'they were making a mistake and should stop.' He repeated his appeals several times later.⁴⁷⁷



**Turkish
Prime
Minister
Binali
Yıldırım**

In the meantime, Akın Öztürk made sure that the military quarters sergeant under his command was serving tea, coffee, and appetizers. When he learned that those who were commanding the coup were in 143rd Fleet headquarters, Öztürk got in his car and went there. Aircraft kept taking off and landing. Öztürk said about later developments, "There were about 30–40 people in the mess area. They were in military uniform. There were MAK and SAT soldiers there. I didn't see any civilians. When I entered the mess, I saw Kubilay Selçuk and Ömer Faruk Harmancık there. There were also pilots and land airmen. But I couldn't be sure who the people were because it was somewhat dim inside. I escorted Kubilay Selçuk and Ömer Faruk Harmancık outside the fleet. I told them that what they were doing was wrong and such a thing would be unacceptable in this era. Here Ömer Faruk Harmancık made statements that stressed that they were serious about staging the coup."⁴⁷⁸

Then Öztürk went to Chief of the General Staff Akar again and told him that the putschists were determined. When talking about the events at the court, Öztürk stated that the Chief of the General Staff was sitting comfortably and he was not handcuffed and he did not in any way try to convince him, which he demanded the Chief of the General Staff should be asked about. When he was asked at the court about Hulusi Akar, with whom he spent seven hours that night, whether he "looked like he was trying to stop the coup," Öztürk replied, "No, he didn't, but he was saying 'We lost face as the TSK.' He was very sad." Moreover, in response to another question, he replied that Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli, who was arrested for the coup, "was not in a position to defy orders."⁴⁷⁹



**Zekai
Aksakallı**

According to his account, Akın Öztürk had tried to convince the putschists to stop the coup on the night of July 15. In the morning hours, he finally managed to convince the putschists, whom he visited on five different occasions. Akın Öztürk stated that the Chief of the General Staff spoke to Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım when he got a positive reply from 143rd Fleet and said, "We're wrapping this up. We're going to the Prime Minister's Office." But Akar said to Öztürk later, "You stay. Look after the friends here for another hour." Although Akın Öztürk insisted that he want to come and he might not be able to come later in all the confusion, Akar told him that he would have him picked up.⁴⁸⁰ Akar took Lieutenant-General Mehmet Dişli with him and landed at about 09:00 on the helipad of the Prime Minister's Office at Çankaya Palace. Akın Öztürk called Mehmet Dişli almost

477] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 464.

478] Ibid.p.465

479] "Akın Öztürk'e Akar sorusu" [Question about Akar to Akın Öztürk], Hürriyet, 23 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/akin-ozturke-akar-sorusu-40466459>

480] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 465

10 times and when the phone was finally answered he said, “Were you not going to have me picked up from here? The helicopter hasn’t come.” Dişli replied, “I told the commander about it.” Yet, no helicopter came to collect Akın Öztürk.⁴⁸¹

Although Öztürk did attempt to get on a helicopter there, shots were fired at the helicopter he boarded when it was taking off and it was forced to land. He was wounded in the leg with fragments of shrapnel. Meanwhile, learning that Deputy Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Güler and Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal were being held at Akıncı Air Base, Öztürk went to the room in the headquarters area and untied the cuffs on Güler’s hands and feet. When he entered the room in 141st Fleet where Abidin Ünal was kept, Ünal was sitting inside and was not cuffed. Öztürk told him he was sorry to see him like that and said that the putschists had been convinced to end the coup attempt. Akın Öztürk explained that he saved about 15 officers who had been taken hostage. Then Öztürk left the barracks with Yaşar Güler, Abidin Güler following them in the car behind.⁴⁸²

3.5.3 Why Was Öztürk Shown To Be No. 1 Of The Coup Despite His Attempts To Stop It?

When they got to Air Forces Headquarters, Öztürk saw that he was being named as No.

1 in the coup attempt on the TV. “Here I said to Yaşar Güler ‘The number 1 culprit has been found.’ But I was certainly shocked to see the news. I was shocked to see that I was being found guilty when I was trying to stop the coup. When we got to Air Forces Headquarters, Abidin Ünal talked to our president on the phone. Abidin Ünal said to our president that Akın Öztürk was here (and) wounded. And our president said to him, ‘But they made him their head.’ Abidin Ünal, however, told our president that I had tried to stop the coup and had been wounded. Then Abidin Ünal talked to the Minister of National Defense. When they were talking I said, ‘I’d like to talk to Minister of National Defense Fikri Işık,’ and took the phone. I told the minister that I had tried to stop the coup, was successful to some extent, and the Chief of the General Staff and Deputy of the General Staff, as well as Abidin Ünal, were my witnesses. The minister said, ‘They say you are among the plotters.’ I asked, ‘Who says that?’ ‘That’s what all the public say,’ he replied.”⁴⁸³

Akın Öztürk was detained at his house at 01:30, July 17. Öztürk was arrested although he had tried to stop the putschists by saying that what they were doing was wrong, but it was striking that he was not handcuffed like other commanders. Another suspicious issue was that he said he never talked to his son-in-law Hakan Karakuş, who was one of the fleet commanders at Akıncı Air Base.

18
defendants
in the murder
of Ömer
Halisdemir
are being
tried.

481] “Akın Öztürk: Hulusi Akar’ın talebiyle sabaha kadar darbecileri ikna etmeye çalıştım” [Akın Öztürk: Upon Hulusi Akar’s request, I tried to convince the putschists until morning], BBC Turkish, 22 May 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-40006976>

482] “Ya Yaşar, sen burada ne geziyorsun?” [Hey Yaşar, what are you doing here?], Aljazeera Turk, 23 July 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/ya-yasar-sen-burada-ne-geziyorsun>

483] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 466



Former Air Force General Akın Öztürk insists he had not taken part in a coup bid but rather tried to prevent it at the request of top brass.

In his statement at the prosecutor’s office on July 17, Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal, who had been released after being taken hostage, said, “I don’t know whether Akın Öztürk told his son-in-law Hakan Karakuş about the situation or whether he talked about these issues between 09:00 and 12:00. Also, I don’t know—as I explained above—whether Akın Öztürk told the putschists what they were doing was wrong or why the putschists did not intervene when he said that or why they did not detain him.”⁴⁸⁴

In an additional statement at the prosecutor’s office on July 30, Ünal expressed his suspicions, “Because Akın Öztürk gave a different answer to every person in his conversations with others except me, I later saw that the information he gave me during our conversations was not correct. After all these events and according to my observations during the aftermath of the coup attempt, I think that Akın Öztürk was part of the coup attempt.” In another statement he made in Akıncı Air Base Indictment, Ünal said that he believed Akın Öztürk was part of the coup attempt because Lieutenant-Colonel Hakan Karakuş, who is in custody for the coup, was his son-in-law, Major Mustafa Azimetli was his executive secretary, and base commander Colonel Ahmet Özçetin was his former secretary general.⁴⁸⁵

On the other hand, Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar said in his statement at Ankara Chief Prosecutor’s Office that General Akın Öztürk was alone when he came to the room in Akıncı Air Base. “I was surprised both because of this and because I saw him there. I asked him why he was there. He said that he had come from İzmir with his wife and Land Forces Commander on an aircraft belonging to the command, and he came there because Abidin Ünal called him when he was in the military quarters in the base and told him some men were flying aircraft from the base and he should look into it. He even said, ‘He told about this issue, tried to explain it but they did not listen,’” said General Akar.

It was later revealed in a statement given by a major-general that Hulusi Akar gave an order for a helicopter to bring in Akın Öztürk but the order was not executed. According to this statement, Lieutenant-General, whom Akın Öztürk called insistently for the helicopter to be sent to take him to Prime Minister’s Office as promised, reached the major-general on duty and told him that it was the Chief of the General Staff’s order that he should permit Akın Öztürk to leave on a helicopter. However, the major-general hung up the phone without giving an answer. Later the Chief of the General Staff called in person and said, “Solve the Akın and Yaşar issue!” The lieutenant-general did not listen to this order either.⁴⁸⁶

The announcement on the General Staff Headquarters’ official website on July 22, 2016, said of Akın Öztürk: “Moreover, the Air Force Commander called General Akın Öztürk, who was staying in the military quarters, told him the aircraft were taking off from Akıncı

484] “Orgeneral Abidin Ünal’ın savcılık ifadesi ortaya çıktı” [General Abidin Ünal’s statement to prosecution revealed], Akşam, 28 July 2017, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-savcilik-ifadesi-ortaya-cikti/haber-536794>

485] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 4551.

486] “Hulusi Akar darbenin ‘1 numarasını’ neden sahiplendi” [Why did Hulusi Akar back coup’s No. 1?], Odatv, 4 March 2017, <http://odatv.com/hulusi-akar-darbenin-1-numarasini-niye-sahiplendi-0403171200.html>

4th Main Jet Base Akinci illegally, and asked him to go there urgently and convince the rebels.⁴⁸⁷ These words have been interpreted to mean that Hulusi Akar was protecting Akın Öztürk. Still, Akın Öztürk has been in custody since July 16, 2016.

3.6 First Army Commander Ümit Dündar

3.6.1 The Role Dündar Played On The Night Of The Coup Attempt

General Ümit Dündar, Deputy Chief of the General Staff at present, is one of the most important figures of the coup attempt. Dündar, the then İstanbul First Army Commander, became the acting Chief of the General Staff because he was the next highest ranking officer after Chief of the General Staff, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, and Land Forces Commander, all of whom were detained. He commanded the Armed Forces until morning, when he was officially appointed acting Chief of the General Staff. He played a crucial role in crushing the coup.

Ümit Dündar was invited to the fourth hearing of the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission on October 18, 2016. He provided important details when he told about what he experienced during the coup night.⁴⁸⁸ According to Dündar’s account:

At about 21:40, when he was sitting with his guests, he was called by İstanbul Police Chief Mustafa Çalışkan and informed about unusual military activity in the area of Beylerbeyi. He agreed to meet Çalışkan at the legs of the Bosphorus Bridge on the Anatolian side.

At about 22:45 he met İstanbul Police Chief Mustafa Çalışkan at the bridge. He drove his own car toward the location where the vehicles of the putschists stood, but when the putschists fired into the air he realized that they were not friendly and went back to Çalışkan.

At about 23:45 they saw that the Bosphorus Bridge area was not safe, so he moved to a safer location with İstanbul Governor Vasip Şahin. Police Chief Çalışkan and Lieutenant-General Yavuz Türkgenci stayed at the bridge.

Dündar spoke to former Chief of the General Staff Necdet Özel on the phone two or three times. Necdet Özel would later talk about this conversation to journalist Fikret Bila: “I encouraged him. I suggested that he appear on TV. I asked Ümit Pasha about the situation of army corps commanders. ‘Second Corps and Fifth Corps are fine; Third Corps Commander is on leave,’ he said.”⁴⁸⁹

After these suggestions, they made an assessment with Governor Şahin and decided to

487] “Son dakika haberi: TSK’dan Akın Öztürk açıklaması” [Breaking news: Statement form TSK about Akın Öztürk], Sözcü, 21 July 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/son-dakika-haberi-tskdan-15-temmuz-icin-ikinci-aciklama-1324555/>

488] “TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi” [July 15 Parliamentary Investigation Commission Minutes Journal], 18 October 2016, p. 7-47. https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

489] “15 Temmuz ve kumpas mağdurları sorusuna yanıt: Yüreğim yanıyor vicdanım sızlıyor” [Reply to question about July 15 and conspiracy victims: It tears my heart out, it pricks my conscience], Hürriyet, 11 August 2016 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/15-temmuz-ve-kumpas-magdurlari-sorusuna-yanit-yuregim-yaniyor-vicdanim-sizliyor-40190089>



First Army Commander Ümit Dündar in Istanbul is one of few important figures who played key roles in July 15 events.

go on live TV. The phone numbers of Aegean Army Commander General Abdullah Recep and third Army Corps Commander Erdal Öztürk⁴⁹⁰ were then given to TV channels, and they made their announcements, and so did the corps commanders in Çorlu and Gelibolu under Dündar’s command.

At about 06:00 Dündar and Governor Şahin took the boat to the European side and then headed for Atatürk Airport to meet President Erdoğan.

At about 06:30 President Erdoğan called Ümit Dündar, who was on his way to Atatürk Airport, and informed him that he was appointing him acting Chief of the General Staff. At 06:52 he was publicly appointed.

Meanwhile, Fatih Tezcan, a pro-Erdoğan journalist, shared a Twitter message at about 00:30 that said, “I am announcing the perpetrator of the coup: Ümit Dündar! Don’t obey him! HIT THE STREETS! REBEL!⁴⁹¹ After Dündar was appointed as acting Chief of the General Staff in the morning hours, Tezcan sent another message at 10:19 which said, “I spoke to Ümit Dündar, who was appointed to be the Chief of the General Staff. I apologize for the tweet I sent by mistake last night. Please forgive me.” These messages are important because they show the mood and confusion of the AKP grass roots. While the AKP grass roots had suspicions about Dündar in the evening hours, they came to perceive him as a hero after the Chief of the General Staff was taken hostage and Erdoğan appointed Dündar acting Chief of the General Staff.

Events gave rise to varying opinions, not only on the AKP side but in nationalist circles as well. For instance, the Twitter account ‘açık istihbarat’ (open intelligence), which was mentioned in the Ergenekon trials [see chapter 4] shared the following tweet: “Why didn’t First Army Commander Dündar intervene in the Bridge that was only a few km away? [...] If an army commander cannot even trust a battalion of soldiers to capture the soldiers on the Bridge, he shouldn’t be promoted, but should resign.”

3.6.2 Dündar Denied Claim That He Called Erdoğan To İstanbul

The most important claim about Dündar was about a conversation he had with President Erdoğan on the night of July 15. According to the claim, Dündar called Erdoğan, who was developing plans to move to a safe location, and said, “Mr. President, do not go to Ankara. Come to İstanbul. I will ensure your safety.”⁴⁹² When Erdoğan asked him, “How can I trust you?”, in response, he said “Ask [Nationalist Movement Party] MHP Chairman Devlet

490] Despite this information, Gen. Öztürk was arrested on charges of involvement in the coup bid.

491] “Yandaş Fatih Tezcan’ın ‘darbeci’ dediği isim Genelkurmay Başkanı yapıldı” [The one that partisan Fatih Tezcan called ‘putschist’ appointed as Chief of the General Staff], Haber Sol, 16 July 2016, <http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/yan-das-fatih-tezcanin-darbeci-dedigi-isim-genelkurmay-baskani-yapildi-162199>

492] “Darbe gecesinin kader anları” [Critical moments of the coup night], Abdülkadir Selvi, Hürriyet, 17 July 2016 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/abdulkadir-selvi/darbe-gecesinin-kader-anlari-40150159>

Bahçeli about me.”⁴⁹³

Dündar denied this claim in his statement to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission. “No, I didn’t have such a conversation with Mr. President. I reported to him first when I went to the airport on the morning of July 16 and met Mr. President in person. Other than that, I was only notified by Mr. President on the phone as I was on my way to the airport that I was appointed as acting Chief of the General Staff,” said Dündar,⁴⁹⁴ and added that Erdoğan did not inform him of it before coming to İstanbul.⁴⁹⁵

Dündar was asked a barrage of questions about Erdoğan’s trip to İstanbul: “How was Mr. President’s security provided for his trip to İstanbul? Who was it provided by and how was it ensured that his aircraft flew and landed safely in the airport? How were the precautions at the airport taken, who took them, that is, who coordinated the security forces? Wasn’t there a system that ensured his safe landing in the airport? Did Mr. President put his life—God forbid—in danger by coming here?” Dündar simply said, “I mean, I can’t possibly answer that. Mr. President made a decision and it is impossible for me to know how he did that, but I wasn’t in the decision-making process, that I can say.”

3.6.3 “There Wasn’t Any Prospect That Gülenists Would Stage A Coup”

To a question from a member of the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission, Ümit Dündar replied that there had not been any intelligence or prospect whatsoever that Gülenists would stage a coup.⁴⁹⁶ “We sometimes had some idea about who could be part of this organization, but no one ever had the belief that this organization would transform into a coup,” stated Dündar.

Dündar reported to the commission that they saw the coup was not within the chain of command because few military units participated in it at its onset. “We felt relieved to be against a small unit—in the sense of suppressing it,” he said.⁴⁹⁷ Detailing how he understood that the coup attempt was not staged within the chain of command, Dündar stated, “When I spoke to the commanders in Çorlu and Gelibolu, I saw that neither they nor lower elements were in it. After I talked to the Aegean Army Commander as well as other army commanders, it became crystal clear. Hence we determined that it was indeed a minor group within Turkish Armed Forces.”⁴⁹⁸

As Ümit Dündar points out, the small number of military units taking part in the coup attempt made it easier to suppress it. Yet it also leads to a big question mark that triggers suspicions about the coup. Explaining to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission

493] “Sizi korurum, beni Bahçeli’ye sorun” [I’ll protect you, ask Bahçeli about me], Sözcü, 27 July 2016 <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/gundem/sizi-korurum-beni-bahceliye-sorun-1330479/>

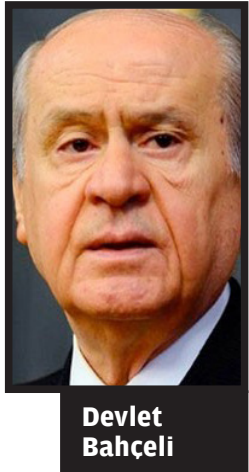
494] “TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi” [July 15 Parliamentary Investigation Commission Minutes Journal], 18 October 2016, p. 14, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari_goruntule?pTutanakId=1743

495] Ibid., p. 28

496] Ibid., p.12

497] Ibid., p.13

498] Ibid, p.27



that only 20 tanks participated in the coup that night, Dündar continued, “The departure of the elements starts at 22:00–22:15. So I was on the bridge too at those hours. There’s only one unit on the Anatolian side, which is the 2nd Armored Brigade in Maltepe. And they have the vehicles out already, so you don’t have the means and ability to find another element to oppose them. Police officials don’t have the means and ability to stop the tanks either. Although there are approximately 120 tanks there, only 20 were out. I mean only 20 of the 120 tanks have left. Correction, 20 of the 80 tanks were out.”⁴⁹⁹



It is important that the developments that transpired on the Bosphorus Bridge be revealed in full because it is both where July 15 coup attempt started rolling and where most civilians were killed.

Contrary to what must happen in a normal military coup, the putschists took action as early as 21:30 and then did something inexplicable: they blocked only one direction of traffic on the bridge. It made no sense at all. Dündar was also asked at the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission why the Bosphorus Bridge was open in one direction but closed in the other, “I mean was the planning this way or did the putschists set out but some returned midway, and a leg remained like that?” Dündar answered, “I think the plan was for one leg. So, even though they closed only one leg, the important thing was to give a message. My evaluation is that they gave the message and attained their aim.”⁵⁰⁰

The members of the “Council of Peace in the Homeland” as well as its political vision and aims are still a source of major controversy. Although three months had passed since the coup attempt when he spoke to the commission, Deputy Chief of the General Staff Dündar said, “I don’t have the slightest idea about who made up the Council of Peace in the Homeland. So far it hasn’t been revealed in any way.”⁵⁰¹

3.6.4 The Major-General Acting On Dündar’s Orders Was Arrested For Being A ‘Putschist’

Undoubtedly, one of the most important spots of the night of July 15, 2016 was Ankara Akıncı Air Base, where Chief of the General Staff Akar, Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal, Secretary General of Presidency Fahri Kasırga, and several other commanders were taken hostage. Land Forces Logistics Commander Major-General Yıldırım Güvenç launched an operation on Akıncı Air Base and played a role critical in rescuing the hostages, yet he was arrested for being a “putschist” and sent to Sincan Prison. “General Dündar, who was appointed as acting Chief of the General Staff, ordered me to go. I commanded the operation at Akıncı and saved the hostages,” he said in his statement at the prosecutor’s office.⁵⁰²

The Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission asked Dündar, “Did you give this major-general such an order? Did the major-general carry out the duty? Why do you think this major-general is in custody if he actively fought against the coup?” Dündar answered,

499] Ibid., p.31

500] Ibid., p.29

501] Ibid., p.18

502] “Komutandan mektup: Sizi ben kurtardım” [Letter from commander: I saved you], Hürriyet, 13 September 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/komutandan-mektup-sizi-ben-kurtardim-40223231>

“At that moment I was the highest-ranking officer in the land forces, and Major-General Yıldırım Güvenç was the highest-ranking officer in Ankara of those who contacted me. So I ordered him take command of the operations in Ankara, coordinate the activities, and report the developments to me. It’s impossible for me to know and assess why he is in prison. Yes, he carried out the orders. Seizing control of Akıncı Barracks carried importance in the end. So I thought the place had to be taken under control and cleared of the putschists and gave him an order accordingly. Let me say that he went to Akıncı Barracks too and left the place after taking control.”



**CCTV footage
from Akıncı
Air Base on
the night of
July 15.**

Similarly, Land Forces Training and Doctrine Command (EDOK) Communications and Support Training Commander Major-General Metin İyidil claimed that he spoke to Dündar that night, fought against the putschists, and played a key role in preventing the coup by stopping 200 tanks from going to Ankara.⁵⁰³ Like Major-General Güvenç, İyidil was arrested.

“I acted under General Dündar’s command in all my activities and informed him regularly,” he stated.⁵⁰⁴ Ümit Dündar was also asked about his situation at the commission. Dündar replied, “Metin İyidil rang me twice. In both calls he said he was intervening in the 4th Army Corps, and in the second call he added that he was intervening in the events in Etimesgut. I did not give him any orders whatsoever. I mean there was no order given by me that told him to do this or to do that. He told me what he was doing.”⁵⁰⁵

Dündar, who was First Army Commander at the time, stated that he did not know anything about the wedding. First Army Command is in Selimiye Barracks in Üsküdar, İstanbul. Moda, where the wedding was held, is a 15-minute drive by car. Answering the questions about the wedding, Dündar said he did not know about the wedding, nor was he invited. This is quite extraordinary, considering the strict rules of protocol in the military.

One of the greatest enigmas of July 15 is whether Major O.K. gave intelligence to MİT about the coup or about an attack against MİT Undersecretary Fidan. During the commission hearings, Dündar was asked, “After being appointed as Deputy Chief of the General Staff, you probably discussed these with Chief of the General Staff Akar, exchanged information, and went over the fine points. It is said that the first intelligence was not about the coup and that the intelligence MİT Undersecretary shared with Akar was about an assassination against himself by a group that had infiltrated the Armed Forces. In other words, it is claimed that MİT shared information not about the coup but about an assassination against his person. What’s your idea about it?”

503] “Korgeneral Eyidil: 200 tankın Ankara’ya gitmesini engelledim” [Major-General Eyidil: I stopped 200 tanks from going to Ankara], Hürriyet, 17 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/korgeneral-eyidil-200-tankin-ankaraya-gitmesini-engelledim-40151444>
504] Ibid.

505] “TBMM 15 Temmuz Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanak Dergisi” [July 15 Parliamentary Investigation Commission Minutes Journal], 18 October 2016, p. 25-26, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari_goruntule?p-TutanakId=1743

Dündar replied, “It’s not possible for me to know about a private conversation between two people. But I can only comment on it: If the received intelligence—I don’t know what it is, and this is my frank opinion—had been about a coup, our Chief of the General Staff would have supported this with other orders.”⁵⁰⁶

3.6.5 Questions Still Begging For Answers

The statements of the then First Army Commander Ümit Dündar lead to several important questions:

1. The First Army, commanded by Ümit Dündar, is at Selimiye Barracks, which is 15 minutes away from the Bosphorus Bridge. How could it be that no one intervened against some 50 soldiers, 3 tanks 1 ZPT vehicle and 4 UNIMOG military vehicles on the bridge that night? Civilians faced the putschists and many lives were lost.

2. If the civilians had been evacuated from the bridge and the putschists encircled and forced to surrender, both the civilian casualties and lynching of soldiers by civilians would have been avoided. Why was this method not implemented?

3. Ümit Dündar said, “The fact that the number of the military units was few showed that the coup was illegal. We felt relieved to be against a small unit—in the sense of suppressing it.” Then why would anyone stage a coup with such a small unit? Does such a coup attempt make sense from a military perspective? In the same vein, İstanbul Police Chief Mustafa Çalışkan said in the tenth hearing of the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission dated November 1, 2016, “We saw that about 40–50 soldiers had closed the bridge with two vehicles.”⁵⁰⁷ What is the reasoning behind closing the bridge with very few number of soldiers?

4. Dündar said he did not know about the wedding attended by Air Forces Commander and he did not attend the wedding because he was not invited. Is it probable that First Army Commander did not know about a wedding attended by so many high-ranking officers? Is it normal that he did not get an invitation?

5. It is understood from Dündar’s statements that President Erdoğan made a personal decision to go to İstanbul that night and did not get any information from any official in İstanbul, which is confirmed by statements from İstanbul Governor Şahin and Police Chief Çalışkan.⁵⁰⁸ The report Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal submitted to the Ministry of Defense said, “By about 04:00 the entire Air Operations Center was inactivated. It was at 04:40 that complete control was obtained.”⁵⁰⁹ According to this information, there were “uncontrolled aircraft” in the air during the hours when Erdoğan took off from Muğla and arrived in İstanbul. What did Erdoğan rely on in this situation and what assurances made him

506] Ibid., p.47

507] Ibid., p.30

508] Ibid., p. 16, p.34

509] “Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanı o geceyi anlattı-2” [Air Forces Commander told about that night-2], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 30 October 2016, <http://www.sozcü.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/hava-kuvvetleri-komutani-o-geceyi-anlat-ti-2-1477726/>



**Ekmeleddin
İhsanoğlu**



**Fahri
Kasırga**

take this decision? How did he ensure that his aircraft would not be downed?

6. Dündar took responsibility as the highest ranking military officer on the coup night and played a role in suppressing the coup. Yet, he had no contact with any civilian official except the İstanbul governor. Dündar did not call the president or prime minister on the phone. A member of the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, raised this issue during proceedings and had it confirmed that there was no contact. Is this normal?

7. “The aim was to give a message and they gave it,” said Ümit Dündar of closing one direction over the Bosphorus Bridge. Why did the greatest number of casualties occur on the bridge if the aim was to give a message? Did the junta that set out with a small military unit close the bridge to give a message? Are we up against a junta that could not consider what would happen after giving the message and all the repercussions afterwards?

8. Dündar indicated that the breaking point of the night was when he and other army commanders appeared on TV and stated they did not support the coup. He added that another key point was the fact the coup attempt, which was supposed to launch at 03:00, was moved forward to about 22:00 the night before. Then there was already a junta that had failed to gain the support of the Chief of the General Staff and his deputy as well as force commanders and First and Third Armies. What is more, they began to feel worried that the coup plan had been exposed because of the orders given in the evening or that it could be stopped. Viewed from the perspective of normal human thinking and military logic, which one makes more sense: staging the coup with a no-matter-what attitude or discontinuing all the plans and giving up? What is the reason for launching a coup attempt that was doomed to fail by 19:30–20:00 at the latest?

9. Dündar stated that the tanks that came to the Bosphorus Bridge arrived at about 22:00–22:15 from Maltepe 2nd Armored Brigade. He added that it was the only armored unit on the Anatolian side and there was no other force that could stop these tanks. Allegedly, the brigade was in the hands of the putschists. According to the numbers he provided, there were 80 tanks but only 20 of them had gone out. Now that the putschists did not command the First Army and the army corps under it and they needed the maximum force they could muster, why did they send out only one quarter of their tanks? What is the reason behind it?

10. When asked, “There is a claim that MİT informed the General Staff of intelligence not about the coup but about an assassination attempt on the undersecretary. What do you say about that?” Dündar replied, “It’s not possible for me to know about a private conversation between two people.” Can the acting Chief of the General Staff on the night of July 15 who was appointed as Deputy Chief of the General Staff the following morning and thus commanded the headquarters say—even after three months—that he didn’t know about it. Is it not essential that such important information should be made public already and declared to commanders, prosecutors, and the media?

11. Dündar stated that he had no idea—in October 2016—about who made up the Council of Peace in the Homeland. The indictment says, “No document or statement has been found about the members of the Council of Peace in the Homeland during the

investigation.” How did the list of the names on the Council of Peace in the Homeland find its way into the July 15 Main Indictment? Why did the General Staff not reveal the junta council for months?

3.7 Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal

Air Forces Commander General Abidin Ünal was one of the key figures of July 15. He is also claimed to be one of the key figures who prevented the coup. That night Ünal had attended Major-General Mehmet Şanver’s daughter’s wedding at İstanbul Moda Marine Club, where he was detained and then taken to Akıncı Air Base in Ankara.

His role in July 15 must be revealed because the statements he gave as a plaintiff and the report he submitted to the Ministry of National Defense contain contradictory information.

3.7.1 When Did Ünal First Learn About the Coup?

In his first statement, which he made to Ankara West Chief Prosecutor’s Office two days after the coup on July 17, 2016, he said he was at the wedding hall at about 19:30, did not sense anything unusual until then, and learned about the coup when his wife called him at 21:30.

However, Ünal provided a different account in the additional statement he made thirteen days later. This time he said that he learned about the coup when he got a call from Air Forces Operations Center at about 19:06, executed the orders immediately, and issued the directive that no aircraft should be allowed to take off. He explained that he tried to reach Chief of the General Staff Akar at about 20:00, learned that Akar was not available, and then nobody got back to him.⁵¹⁰

According to Akıncı Air Base Indictment, Chief of the General Staff Akar’s directive to close airspace to all flights was at 19:05. It is impossible that Air Forces Command Center (HKHM), which received the flight ban at that moment, did not notify Abidin Ünal of the ban. Such a possibility is out of the question considering all military procedures and traditions. It is probably because Ünal noticed this irrationality that he needed to correct it in his second statement.

At this point, there are questions Abidin Ünal must answer:

1. When did he first learn about the coup attempt or the flight ban? Which version of his statements is true? Why did he make different statements?
2. If the first statement is true,
 - a) Why did Chief of the General Staff Akar not inform Air Forces Commander of such an important issue?
 - b) Why did Air Forces Operations Command not inform Abidin Ünal?

510] “Komutanın uçağındaki sivil darbeci” [Civilian putschist on commander’s aircraft], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 6 November 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/komutanin-ucagindaki-sivil-darbeci-1491245/>

c) Major-General Mehmet Şanver (now retired), the host of the wedding at Moda Marine Club, said in an interview with the Yeni Şafak daily, “This is unlike the normal course of events. The moment such an order was issued I should have known it as the commander responsible for the control of airspace. The order was issued. Before it was issued, during the process of the order, I should have been informed about it.”⁵¹¹ As it is contrary to the normal course of events, is it possible that he was not informed?

d) As the flight ban must have been sent to all bases and all the base commanders were with Abidin Ünal at the wedding, did not any officer on duty at any of these bases notify their commander of the flight ban? If the base commanders got the information, why did they not inform their commander, who was at the same wedding?

e) “This written directive reached Eskişehir at 19:26 but I didn’t know it as Combatant Air Force Commander. Whoever received the order should have informed me about it. I’m the commander responsible for airspace,” said Mehmet Şanver,⁵¹² Eskişehir Combatant Air Force Commander and the host of the wedding. It is the same Şanver who said, “The putschists had taken Air Forces Command in Ankara and its Operations Center. But we still had control of Eskişehir.”⁵¹³ Then why did Eskişehir not inform Şanver about it?

3. If the second statement is true,

a) Why did he say in his first statement that he was not aware of the ban until 21:30?

b) Why did he say it was his wife, not the HKHM, that called him first?

c) He said he learned about the ban by 19:06. But he had explained in his first statement that he was attending the wedding at about 19:30. Then is the time of his attendance at the wedding not true? If the time of the wedding is correct, did he learn about the flight ban before he went to Moda Marine Club? Then why did he not change his mind about attending the wedding? Why did he prefer to attend the wedding instead of taking care of the unusual situation?

d) If he learned about the ban by 19:06, an Air Forces Commander should have known that the situation meant something unusual. So he should have reacted in accordance with the gravity of the situation. He should have called and asked the Chief of the General Staff immediately. But he said he made the call at about 20:00. Why did he wait for almost an hour? The Chief of the General Staff was having a meeting with MİT Undersecretary Fidan at that time; that is, he had not yet been captured by the putschists. Why was the Air Forces Commander unable to reach him? The putschists had not taken action yet. The aides-de-camp had not started playing out their roles. Is it possible they did not inform Akar about Ünal’s phone call? Does it make sense that the aides-de-camp could have defied the Air Force Commander?

511] “Mehmet Şanver: Üst rütbeliler devşirildi” [Mehmet Şanver: Top brass bought out], Yeni Şafak, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

512] Ibid.

513] Ibid,

e) Upon learning about the flight ban across the country and being unable to reach the Chief of the General Staff and his deputy, shouldn't Ünal have realized that something was not right and set off for Ankara immediately? The wedding had just started. In Şanver's words, it started at 19:00.⁵¹⁴ Indeed, it is claimed that former Air Forces Commander Akın Öztürk, whom he called to see to the situation, told Şanver on the phone to do just that. "It was about 23:00. Fifteen to twenty minutes after I went downstairs, Akın Öztürk called and asked me to go upstairs. I rang the bell; his wife opened the door. Akın Öztürk was talking on the phone. I heard him say to the person on the phone, 'Abidin, where are you? Why are you waiting for up there? Get on an aircraft and come here,'"⁵¹⁵ said İsmail Keskin, Akın Öztürk's military quarters sergeant who went to Akıncı Air Base with him, in his statement in the Akıncı Air Base Indictment. As can be seen, it was not normal behavior for Abidin Ünal to remain at the wedding hall and not deploy to Ankara. Then why did Ünal not leave for Ankara in one way or another?

f) Major-General Mehmet Şanver, the host of the wedding, said in an interview he gave to Yeni Şafak daily after his retirement, "We learned about the coup attempt later, after the events started to roll. The wedding started at 19:00 but we—at least I—had no preliminary intelligence about the coup until about 21:00–21:30 when the events began. ... We air force commanders learned about the event at about 21:00–21:30"⁵¹⁶

Why didn't Abidin Ünal, who learned about the beginning of the events by 19:06, inform Şanver, who was the most critical person under him? It is stressed that the inclusion of Eskişehir Air Command Center played a very important part in crushing the coup. Indeed, Mehmet Şanver stated, "Eskişehir was critical. Combatant Air Force Command and its Operations Center, which controlled all combatant units, were here. The putschists had taken Air Forces Command in Ankara and its Operations Center. But we still had control of Eskişehir."⁵¹⁷ Did Abidin Ünal commit neglect of duty by not informing Şanver on time?

3.7.2 The Report Ünal Submitted To The Ministry Of National Defense

Abidin Ünal had a report drawn up about the events of the night after his statement at the prosecutor's office and sent it to the Ministry of National Defense.⁵¹⁸ According to the report, the procedure for the flight ban was completed by 21:05 and 36 aircraft did land. Abidin Ünal said, "The procedures for discontinuing the functions of the Air Operations

514] Ibid.

515] "15 Temmuz gecesi Akıncı'daki odaya giren ismin ifadesi ortalığı ayağa kaldıracak" [Stirring testimony from the name who entered the room in Akıncılar], Müyesser Yıldız, Odatv, 8 April 2017, <http://odatv.com/15-temmuz-gecesi-akin-cidaki-odaya-giren-ismin-ifadesi-ortaligi-ayaga-kaldiracak-0804171200.html>

516] "Mehmet Şanver: Üst rütbeliler devşirildi" [Mehmet Şanver: Top brass bought out], Yeni Şafak, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

517] Ibid.

518] "Hava'da 21 saat 24 dakika: Generallerin savaşı" [21 hours 24 minutes in the air: War of generals], Deniz Zeyrek, Hürriyet, 10 August 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/havada-21-saat-24-dakika-generallerin-savasi-40187396>; "İşte o gecenin kritik belgesi" [Here's the critical document of the night], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 28 August 2016, <http://www.sozcü.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/iste-o-gecenin-kritik-belgesi-1-1473864/>; "Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanı o geceyi anlattı-2" [Air Forces Commander told about that night-2], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 30 October 2016, <http://www.sozcü.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/hava-kuvvetleri-komutani-o-geceyi-anlattı-2-1477726/>

Center in Ankara started at about 23:00. It took until 04:00 to stop all of it. Control in the real sense was established with Mr. Prime Minister's reassignment of 'Authorization for Downing Friendly and Hijacked Aircraft' to Eskişehir Air Operations Center at 04:40. After confirmation that the aircraft on air defense duty in the airfields were in the right hands, loaded aircraft for air defense were removed from four airfields first (Erzurum 04:53, Diyarbakır 05:02, Dalaman 05:43, Balıkesir 06:49). They were directed against uncontrolled aircraft doing the assaults and their activities were prevented. The last aircraft controlled by the putschists landed at 08:00.⁵¹⁹

He also explained how it was ensured that President Erdoğan's aircraft could not be monitored and how the coup was crushed: "104 sorties were carried out to incapacitate the putschists throughout the day. It was determined that the putschists flew 31 aircraft throughout the night. ... Demands from the Special Forces in Diyarbakır for aircraft were not met throughout the night. Helicopters to be used for assassination were not serviced in Dalaman Airfield, and terrorists were prevented from using identified flight tracking images. Thus, it was made impossible for terrorists to monitor Mr. President's aircraft."⁵²⁰

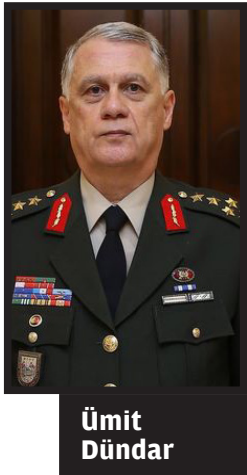
The report concluded as follows: "As a result, by 04:00, July 16, 2016, the putschists had been stopped from commanding and controlling flights through Air Operations Center in Ankara. The coup was crushed as a result of the air counter offensive performed under the control of Air Operations Center in Eskişehir."⁵²¹

There are also questions about this report that need to be answered:

1. It is stated that the information conveyed from the General Staff to Air Forces Command did not hint at any coup attempt. However, it is known that Major O.K. from Land Aviation Academy went to National Intelligence Agency (MİT) at 14:20 and informed about the coup.⁵²² Making a statement on 11 August 2016, O.K. said, "I went over to the MİT at 14:20. I said there could be a coup. They had me wear a wire. I went back to the military unit at 19:00."⁵²³ If so, why didn't the General Staff Headquarters inform Air Forces of the coup? Why didn't Hulusi Akar call Abidin Ünal immediately and order him to get to Ankara?

2. According to Air Forces inventory, there are 240 F16 aircraft in the TSK.⁵²⁴ Why did the putschists fly only 31 aircraft?

3. It is stated that the situation was under control by 22:30 in all the base commands



Ümit
Dündar

519] "Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanı o geceyi anlattı-2" [Air Forces Commander told about that night-2], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 30 October 2016, <http://www.sozcü.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/hava-kuvvetleri-komutani-o-geceyi-anlat-ti-2-1477726/>

520] Ibid.

521] Ibid.

522] "İşte o binbaşının ifadesi" [Here's the major's testimony], Yeni Şafak, 20 May 2017, <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/iste-o-binbasinin-ifadesi-2671698>

523] Ibid.

524] "Hava Kuvvetleri Envanterindeki Uçaklar" [The aircraft in Air Forces Inventory], https://www.hvkk.tsk.tr/tr-tr/Türk_Hava_Kuvvetleri/Hakkımızda/Günümüz_Hava_Kuvvetleri/Envanterdeki_Uçaklar

except the 8th Main Jet Base in Diyarbakır. It is explained that two major-generals, one lieutenant-general and one brigadier-general who were at the wedding in İstanbul set out for Operations Command in Eskişehir by 22:45. It is added that by 23:00 Ünal issued the directive that “Orders in the name of Air Forces Commander will be taken not from Ankara but from Joint Air Operations Center in Eskişehir.” It is also reported that aircraft taking off from Eskişehir parked on the runways and taxiways at Akıncı Air Base by about noon on July 16, and thus prevented other aircraft from taking off.

a) Although Eskişehir was fully authorized by about 23:00, why couldn't the helicopters carrying commanders to Akıncı Air Base be stopped?

b) Why couldn't the bombing of Parliament be stopped?

c) Why did Eskişehir start to bomb the runways at Akıncı the following day at 11:45, not in the early hours of the previous night?

d) It is reported that Prime Minister Yıldırım authorized ‘Downing Friendly and Hijacked Aircraft’ from 04:40. Why wasn't this authorization provided earlier? Why wasn't it used? How could it be that the areas around the junction, highway, and mosque near the Presidential Palace were hit at about 06:00?

4. Ünal said that Diyarbakır Special Forces' demands for aircraft were not met. How then could the aircraft that took Brigadier-General Semih Terzi to Ankara have taken off?

5. In his first statement, Ünal said that after he was made aware of the situation, he ordered generals Ziya Cemal Kadioğlu and Nihat Kökmen, who were at the wedding in İstanbul's Moda, to go to Eskişehir to support base commander Recep Ünal.⁵²⁵ The report sent by the Air Force Command to the Ministry of Defense later stated that Ünal's order was given at 22.45.⁵²⁶ However, Mehmet Şanver, the host of the wedding, said he wanted to send the reinforcements to Eskişehir early on around 19.30 but that request was turned down by Ünal. His statement is as follows: “At around 19.30 and 19.45, my deputy, general Kadioğlu, came to me with his phone in his hand and appeared not to have a full grasp of the situation and said ‘Commander, there is something going on in Eskişehir and the general we left in our place was feeling uneasy’, and I told him ‘Well, you'd better go there then.’ The wedding ceremony had not been performed yet and I was greeting the guests. While I was thinking how to send him to Eskişehir, I told the Air Force Commander [Ünal] that ‘with your permission, I will arrange a flight for Gen. Kadioğlu and let's send him to Eskişehir.’ Our commander [Ünal] replied by saying that there was no need for that at this stage, ‘if the need arises, we can send him there by my plane.’⁵²⁷ Why did Ünal refuse to send the general Kadioğlu to Eskişehir early on and why did he decide to wait until 22.45?

525] “Org. Abidin Ünal'ın ifadesi ortaya çıktı” [General Abidin Ünal's testimony], NTV, 28 July 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-ifadesi,PcAmhLjF3kyxKT7MkoeUpA>

526] “Hava'da 21 saat 24 dakika: Generallerin savaşı” [Hava'da 21 saat 24 dakika: Generallerin savaşı], Deniz Zeyrek, Hürriyet, 10 Ağustos 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/havada-21-saat-24-dakika-generallerin-savasi-40187396>

527] “Mehmet Şanver: Üst rütbeliler devşirildi” [Mehmet Şanver: Top brass bought out], Yenişafak, 18 November 2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/mehmet-sanver-ust-rutbeler-devsirildi-2566089>

3.7.3 Events After Abidin Ünal Was Taken Into Custody

Abidin Ünal said about the developments after he was taken into custody at the wedding: “As it was approaching 24:00, a group of 10 fully-equipped men entered the ante-room, shouting and firing in the air. They were all holding plastic clamps. I cautioned everyone to be calm. They delivered me to the first group that had arrived and asked us to go to the helicopter. When I looked back, I saw that the other friends of mine were being handcuffed and two lieutenant-generals had been pushed to the floor and handcuffed. They did not handcuff me. We went to the helicopter. The helicopter landed in Sabiha Gökçen Airport. They put only me on this helicopter and I saw a CN235 CASA aircraft was ready, waiting. We flew directly to Akıncı Air Base and landed at about 02:00. I continued contacting the friends in Eskişehir until we landed. They said the flights from Eskişehir were continuing and real ammunition was being dropped in Ankara.”⁵²⁸

Combat Search and Rescue (MAK) Team Commander Air Infantry Sergeant Major Yılmaz Bahar, who was in the team that took the commanders into custody, made important statements about the events of that night. Explaining the events in detail in the additional statement he made at Ankara West Chief Prosecutor’s Office on August 10, 2016 as a suspect, Bahar stressed several points.⁵²⁹ He said that he was given the mission by Brigadier-General Gökhan Şahin Sönmezateş, whom he had known for 20 years and with whom he had taken part in the Suleiman Shah Tomb Operation in Syria, and Major Gökhan Maldar, who was his company commander in Konya 3rd Main Jet Base. He added that they did not tell him what the mission was and he did not question it because of his trust in his commanders.

Bahar was among the first group of soldiers who got to Moda Marine Club that night. He reported that they went there to ensure the security of Air Forces Commander Ünal and other generals. According to Bahar’s account, with Ünal’s guards in Fenerbahçe Officers’ Mess, they went to the wedding hall in two helicopters. In the first helicopter were—apart from him—Abidin Ünal’s close protection Lieutenant Fatih Kahraman and the other guards Sergeant Gökhan Gerboğa and Sergeant Mustafa Turgut. Major Gökhan Maldar was in the helicopter behind.

Bahar said about the events after they raided the wedding: “I think it was about 23:00. ... Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal was sitting at one end of the table and having a conversation on the cell phone. I knew Konya 3rd Main Jet Base Commander Major-General Haluk Şahar (the commander whom Bahar worked under) and Commander Major-General Mehmet Şanver, who were at the table. As Abidin Ünal was talking on the phone, his guards Fatih Kahraman and Gökhan Gerboğa were standing at attention near him. Fatih Kahraman was trying to tell Abidin Ünal something. ... Fatih was cringing with embarrassment while he was talking. ... When I was there, the commanders did not look like they were in danger. ... But the 3rd Main Jet Base Commander Haluk Şahar walked out of the room. I immediately went to his side because he was my base commander. I stood at attention in front of him,

528] “Orgeneral Abidin Ünal’ın ifadesi” [General Abidin Ünal’s testimony], NTV, 28 July 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-ifadesi,PcAmhLjF3kyxKT7MkoeUpA>

529] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2022–2035.

trying to ask him about the situation we were in. He looked at me, made a grimace, then went back into the room of the other commanders. If he had told me the situation was like this, I would have risked clashing with the others if necessary. But I had no idea about what was happening. ... I asked Gökhan Maldar what exactly we were going to do. He told me he had spoken to Operations Center: we would take all the commanders onto the helicopter, we would take them to Akıncı Air Base, we would use force if necessary, we had to do it, the Air Forces Commander's life was in danger. ... Gökhan Maldar turned to all the commanders and bellowed, 'We have to evacuate this place, get out.' Meanwhile, none of the uniformed or plainclothes guards intervened in any way. ... As some of the generals were walking out, Abidin Ünal rose from the table, walked past the other generals with Fatih Kahraman and Gökhan Gerboğa by his side, and left the building by the stairs. His guards Fatih and Gökhan walked next to or behind him in accordance with military procedures. Meanwhile, the commander did not look like he was a hostage or he was being kidnapped. Neither we nor any one there showed disrespect to the commander. ... Meanwhile, the other generals gathered in the big hall in front of the room. Because I was growing suspicious of what was happening, I felt uneasy about Gökhan Maldar. I went to my base commander Haluk Şahar. He was standing like the other generals. I stood at attention with my rifle and looked him in the face so that he would give me an order. Lieutenant-General Haluk Şahar, whom I'd seen feeling troubled because of his facial expression and gestures before Abidin Ünal, left the place, looked at me this time and nodded as he smiled as if he meant, 'Everything's fine.' When I saw him do this, I started to think what we were doing was fine."

Sergeant Yücel Lökçe in the MAK team from Konya 3rd Main Jet Command said in his testimony, "We had Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal on the helicopter, his hands free, like he was there willingly."⁵³⁰ Air Staff Sergeant Ali Uçar, another soldier who was ordered to take the commanders in Moda to Akıncı Air Base, said in his testimony, "Our high-ranking officers whom we'd taken, did not in any way declare an intention that they did not want to come with us."⁵³¹

These accounts bring up so many questions to be answered:

1. What did Abidin Ünal and his guard Fatih Kahraman talk about?
2. Why were Ünal and the other commanders allowed to speak on the phone if they were hostages?
3. Nearly all of the soldiers who participated in the operations that night stated that they were told there was a riot, they were assigned to provide security for Abidin Ünal and the other generals, and they realized they were used for the coup only in the morning. Why didn't any of the seventeen generals who were in the meeting tell the soldiers, "What are you doing? You are being used in the coup?"
4. Why wasn't there any sign of nervousness on the part of the generals according to the statements? Why didn't any of the generals resist or raise objections?

530] Ibid., p. 1961

531] Ibid, p. 2050



**Air Force
Commander
Gen. Abidin
Ünal**

5. Why wasn't Abidin Ünal cuffed with plastic clamps? Why didn't he look like he was being taken hostage?

6. How could Abidin Ünal continue talking to the commanders in Eskişehir on the phone when he was on the aircraft going from Sabiha Gökçen to Akıncı Air Base? Why did the putschists overlook it? If Eskişehir played a critical role in crushing the coup as stated, why didn't the putschists stop him?

3.7.4 Abidin Ünal's Mood On The Coup Night

Abidin Ünal's mood, body language and behavior during that night raise question marks. It was summarized above that his personal guards were in the teams that kidnapped him from Moda, they stood at attention beside him, he was not handcuffed, he did not look like he was in custody, and he was allowed to give orders over the phone on the aircraft.

It is interesting that similar observations were made after he was taken to Akıncı Air Base. Known as the pilot who bombed the Presidential Palace, Müslim Macit said in his additional statement on September 30, 2016, "I know that Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal was taken to 141st Fleet at midnight. He was not handcuffed. He said to us, 'Good evening, good luck,' as he walked past."⁵³²

In his first statement, Major İbrahim Yozgat, 182nd Fleet commander in Diyarbakır 8th Main Jet Base Command, testified about the first time he saw Ünal: "I saw Air Forces Commander General Abidin Ünal half an hour after I came to Akıncı Air Base. He was not handcuffed but there were a few armed soldiers around him. I stood up when I saw him. Then everybody stood and saluted. He said, 'Good evening' to us."⁵³³ In his additional statement, Major Yozgat narrated the same moments: "Meanwhile, Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal came, without any cuffs on his hands. He looked quite happy. He didn't look like he was a hostage. I stood up when I saw him. As he walked past, he said, 'Good evening, guys.'"⁵³⁴

Abidin Ünal's guard Sergeant Mustafa Turgay said, "We landed in Akıncı Air Base at about 02:00... Commander (Abidin Ünal) said, 'Good evening, boys,' to the second-lieutenants who were there and went in. Commander and Colonel Ahmet Özçetin entered a room. A short while later Colonel Ahmet Özçetin went out of the room, locked the door,

532] "O pilot 15 Temmuz'u anlattı: Bilerek vurdum" [The pilot told about July 15: I hit it on purpose], Hürriyet, 19 October 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/o-pilot-15-temmuzu-anlatti-bilerek-vurdum-40253454> ; "Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanı bizlere 'iyi akşamlar, kolay gelsin' diyerek geçti" [Air Forces Commander said to us 'Good evening, good luck' as he walked past], Odatv, 20 October 2016, <http://odatv.com/hava-kuvvetleri-komutani-bizlere-iyi-aksamlar-kolay-gelsin-diyerek-gecti-2010161200.html>

533] "Akıncı Air Base Indictment," p. 1480-1481.

534] Ibid., p. 1483

gave the key to Fatih Kahraman, and went out with Fatih Kahraman.”⁵³⁵

General Abidin Ünal, however, said in his testimony, “I was met by Akıncı 4th Main Jet Base Operations Commander Staff Officer Colonel Ahmet Özçetin. He said, ‘You are welcome, sir.’ I said, ‘I’m not welcome.’ He said, ‘We’re trying to correct settings that have gone wrong.’ And I said, ‘Your settings have gone wrong.’ That was all the conversation we had.”⁵³⁶

It has been noted that Major-General Mehmet Şanver and his wife were close family friends with Abidin and his wife Leyla Ünal. It is almost a military tradition to attend such weddings with one’s spouse. Leyla Ünal did not attend the wedding although she was at Fenerbahçe Officers’ Mess, which was only four kilometers away from Moda Marine Club.⁵³⁷ The reason has not been given so far.

Abidin Ünal’s personal security Sergeant Mustafa Turgay stated that Ünal went to Yalova Air Force Academy with his aide at about noon that day and he was ordered to stay with madam.⁵³⁸ Saying that Leyla Ünal went to Fenerbahçe Officers’ Mess first and then left at about 14:00, Turgay continued, “She told me that she was going to do some personal shopping, and I didn’t have to come. So I got out of the car near the security gate. Then I started to wait for the commander, who arrived at about 15:30... Our commander left the mess at about 17:00 for the wedding.”⁵³⁹

3.7.5 Did He Say, “Don’t Tire The Boys Out, They’ll Get Tired In The Evening?”

There has been quite a controversy over Abidin Ünal’s words at the Military Academy Applied Training Camp in Yalova Airfield Command in the afternoon of July 15. After the coup attempt started, the Air Force Academy cadets in this camp were transported by buses in groups to different places in İstanbul including the Bosphorus Bridge “as reinforcements.” All of the cadets defended themselves by saying, “They told us there was unplanned training. We didn’t know about the coup. We thought we were on a mission against a terrorist attack or suicide bombers.”

In his article dated November 2, 2016, the Milliyet columnist Melih Aşık brought up the claim that the Air Force Commander said at noon on the day of the coup, “Don’t tire the boys out—they’ll get tired in the evening,” when he was visiting the camp in Yalova. Aşık shared a letter sent to him by the brother of one of the cadets. The letter said, “My brother was in Yalova for the camp they went to every year... On the day of the coup, Air Forces Commander Abidin Ünal comes. He says, ‘Don’t tire the boys out—they’ll get tired in the

535] Ibid., p.2151

536] “Orgeneral Abidin Ünal’ın ifadesi” [General Abidin Ünal’s testimony], NTV, 28 July 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/orgeneral-abidin-unalin-ifadesi,PcAmhLjF3kyxKT7MkoeUpA>

537] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2147-2148

538] Ibid., p. 2147-2148.

539] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 2147-2148; “Kurşun siktıkları komutana ‘bizi affet’ diye yalvardılar” [They begged ‘Forgive us’ to the commander they shot at], Sabah, 31 August, 2016, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/08/31/kur-sun-siktiklari-komutana-bizi-affet-diye-yalvardilar>

evening,’ and talks to the commanders at the camp, then leaves for the wedding.”

One day before the event, Colonel Hüseyin Ergezen ordered 10 buses from a company in Yalova. On the day of the event, 450 cadets were put on the buses and sent to İstanbul. They were told it was a drill. The buses took 80 cadets to Sabiha Gökçen Airport, 300 to Digtürk, and 70 to the bridge.⁵⁴⁰

A Twitter user ‘İhsan Sınay’ who claimed to have been one of the cadets at the camp in Yalova posted a series of tweets on April 6, 2017: “Abidin Ünal paid a visit to Military Academy Applied Training Camp in Yalova on July 15. The conversation that took place at lunch is very interesting: 1) Abidin Ünal asked Air Force Academy Regiment Commander Air Plt.S.O.Col. Hüseyin Ergezen about trainees. 2) Col ERGEZEN said, sir, cadets will run 5000 m. with rifles and have the Friday ceremony. 3) Do you know how Abidin ÜNAL replied, it’ll freeze your blood, like he knew something! 4) Abidin ÜNAL: cadets have things to do tonight. Cancel sport and Friday ceremony, don’t tire them out! 5) And we had neither sport nor Friday ceremony that day! It was a first in Military Academy history! ... 7) It’s Abidin ÜNAL who lured cadets into trap. As he’s now lying at home, walking freely outside, 263 Air Cadets are still inside!”

Sözcü daily columnist Saygı Öztürk, on the other hand, wrote that Abidin Ünal did not utter these words. Writing four days after Aşık brought up the issue in his column, Öztürk reported: “There was news in the media that Air Forces Commander General Abidin Ünal said, ‘Don’t tire the boys out, they’ll get tired in the evening’ during his visit to Air Force Academy camp. When we get to the source of these words, we get different information. There was a selection flight for the students who were going to enter Military Academy, those who were not even students yet. I’m told he demanded that they should not exhaust the ones who would fly. But these words changed from mouth to mouth and ‘they’ll get tired in the evening’ was fixed to the end.”⁵⁴¹

Some of these cadets are being tried at İstanbul 24th High Criminal Court. Ahmet Hamdi Göçer, one of the military cadets who testified at the first hearing, said that the only unusual situation that day was Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal’s visit for an inspection.⁵⁴²

Some of the cadets are being tried in Ankara. It is claimed that 142 Air Force Academy students were sent from İstanbul to Ankara four days before the coup attempt and they participated in the event. Air Force Academy Regiment Commander Colonel Hüseyin Ergezen is one of the suspects detained in this case. Rejecting all allegations, Ergezen’s lawyer claimed that the students went to Ankara on Abidin Ünal’s orders and demanded that

540] “Hesabı görelim” [Let’s settle the account],” Melih Aşık, Milliyet, 2 November 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/melih-asik/hesabi-gorelim---2337726/>

541] “Komutanın uçağındaki sivil darbeci” [Civilian putschist on commander’s aircraft], Saygı Öztürk, Sözcü, 6 November 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/komutanin-ucagindaki-sivil-darbeci-1491245/>

542] “Hava Harp Okulu öğrencilerinin 15 Temmuz davasından: Bizi oyuna getirdiler; darbeden haberimiz yoktu” [From Air Force Academy students in July 15 case: We were tricked, we had no idea about the coup], T24, 13 March 2017, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/hava-harp-okulu-ogrencilerinin-15-temmuz-davasindan-bizi-oyuna-getirdiler-darbeden-haberimiz-yoktu,393402>

Ünal be heard as a witness.⁵⁴³

The questions that beg for answers are:

1. Considering that cadet Ahmet Hamdi Göçer said that Ünal's visit was unusual, one can assume that the visit was not scheduled. Why did Abidin Ünal visit the camp in Yalova on that day?
2. Did Ünal say 'Don't tire the boys out, they'll get tired in the evening' to Staff Colonel Hüseyin Ergezen? Was the students' sport program in the afternoon cancelled?
3. Did Hüseyin Ergezen order 10 buses from Yalova on July 14?
4. Second-Lieutenant Burhanettin Koyuncu, one of the commanders who took the students at the camp to İstanbul, said at the court that he got the transport order from Colonel Hüseyin Ergezen.⁵⁴⁴ Did Ergezen give this order? Who did Ergezen get the order from?

3.8 Adil Öksüz

3.8.1 The Civilian Used To Link The Coup With The Gülen Movement

Adil Öksüz is the most critical “civilian” name in the coup attempt. An assistant professor at Sakarya University, born in 1967, Adil Öksüz was taken into custody by the gendarmerie the day after the coup attempt in Kazan district, 20 km from Akıncı Air Base. His first processing was done by police officers who went to the gendarmerie station.⁵⁴⁵ After 22 hours in custody, he was scheduled to be taken to Ankara Police Headquarters Anti-Terror Branch, but because the detention rooms were full he was put in the detention rooms of Ankara West Courthouse (Sincan). He was questioned at the prosecutor's office by 02:28 on July 18, and the court he was taken to released him on judicial control condition. He was released at 11:22, and the prosecutor's objection to his release was denied by the court.⁵⁴⁶

News about Adil Öksüz's presence at Akıncı Air Base on the day of the coup and his arrest started to appear on Internet sites on July 19 in the afternoon.⁵⁴⁷ The following day almost all the newspapers gave the news about the arrest along with the claim that he was the “Gülen Movement's Imam for the Air Forces.” The Akıncı Air Base Indictment alleged


543] “FETÖ tutuklusu Hava Harp Okulu öğrencisi: Komutanımız darbeci askerlere karşı geldi” [Air Force Academy student detained for FETÖ: our commander defied the putschist soldiers], Cumhuriyet, 9 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/737170/FETO_tutuklusu_Hava_Harp_Okulu_ogrencisi_Komutanimiz_darbeci_askerlere_karsi_geldi.html

544] “Hava Harp Okulu davasında tüm sanıkların savunması tamamlandı” [All the suspects completed their defenses in Air Force Academy case], Anatolian Agency, 16 March 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/hava-harp-okulu-davasinda-tum-saniklarin-savunmasi-tamamlandi/773346>

545] Akıncı Air Base Indictment p. 335.

546] “Adil Öksüz'ün gözaltında yaşadıkları anlatıldı” [Adil Öksüz told about his experiences during his detention], Sputnik News Agency, 8 December 2016, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201612081026202344-adil-oksuz-gozalti/>

547] “Yrd. Doç. Dr. Adil Öksüz gözaltına alındı” [Asst. Prof. Adil Öksüz taken into custody], Habertürk, 19 July 2016, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1268815-yrd-doc-dr-adil-oksuz-gozaltina-alindi>



Many questions about Adil Öksüz, a civilian who was claimed to be on Akıncılar Base on July 15 still linger on.

that Adil Öksüz had travelled abroad many times, especially to the United States. It was reported that the last time Adil Öksüz went to the United States was July 11, he returned to Turkey on July 13, and the aim of his visit was allegedly to discuss the coup plans with Fethullah Gülen. Also in the indictment were flight records and images that purportedly showed that Adil Öksüz was affiliated with other civilians alleged to have been present at Akıncı Air Base. The most important claim about Adil Öksüz in the indictment depends on a secret witness testimony that states that Öztürk held preliminary meetings attended by soldiers in Konutkent.⁵⁴⁸

However, serious questions have emerged on the reliability of secret witnesses in various coup trials. For example, a secret witness code named as ‘Kuzgun’, whose identity was revealed in the court as Brigade Commander Halil İbrahim Yıldız, claimed he witnessed coup plotters’ secret meeting in his testimony to the prosecutor. However later in trial hearing he failed to identify soldiers in the courtroom. Suspect Gökhan Şahin Sönmezateş and other five defendants were ordered to stand up for identification by Yıldız as the camera zoomed in on their faces. Yet Yıldız said he does not recognize any of them.⁵⁴⁹

Adil Öksüz is claimed by the indictment to be the plotter, organizer, and executive of the coup attempt who acted on behalf of the Gülen movement. However, no photograph or image has been revealed so far that shows Öksüz was at Akıncı Air Base. The soldiers who claimed to have seen him at Akıncı Air Base did not confirm it at the hearings.⁵⁵⁰ The news items about Adil Öksüz include photographs about his past in Gülen movement.⁵⁵¹ The photographs, taken at different times, show that Öksüz is with Fethullah Gülen and other guests who are visiting Gülen.

3.8.2 “He Could Be A Person Used By The State”

Stockholm Center for Freedom’s interviews with volunteers and participants of the Gülen movement have revealed that their first reaction to the appearance of news about Adil Öksüz after the coup focused on his identity, and many asked others whether they knew or had heard of him. It was clear that the allegations and information on pro-government media frustrated Gülen movement participants because people were questioning whether there was a relationship between the movement and the coup.

Volunteers and participants of the Gülen movement said that the fact that all the media

548] “Akıncı Air Base Indictment,” p. 242.

549] “Kuzgun kod adlı itirafçı general tanık olarak ifade verdi” [Witness general whose code name Kuzgun testified], Milliyet, 27 Nisan 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/kuzgun-kod-adli-itirafci-general-tanik-mugla-yerelhaber-2005591/>

550] Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim, who had said he saw Öksüz in his statement to prosecution, said the following at the court: “As far as I know from the indictment he is said to be coming from Kazan, which is 20 kilometers from us. It is clear who entered the base and how. If they did, it has to be in the records. Such a thing couldn’t have happened.” See “İşte Akıncı Üssü eski Komutanı Tuğgeneral Hakan Evrim’in savunması” [Here’s the testimony of former commander of Akıncı Air Base Brigadier-General Hakan Evrim], Doğan News Agency, 29 May 2017, http://www.dha.com.tr/iste-akin-ci-ussu-eski-komutani-tuggeneral-hakan-evrimin-savunmasi_1519460.html

551] “Adil Öksüz’ün yeni fotoğrafı bulundu!” [A new photograph of Adil Öksüz has been found!], Sabah, 1 September 2016, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/09/01/adil-oksuzun-yeni-fotografi-bulundu> ; “Adil Öksüz, „Gülen ile aynı karede!” [Adil Öksüz and Gülen in the same picture!], Vatan, 13 August 2016, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/adil-oksuz-gulen-ile-ayni-karede--976085-gundem/>

outlets affiliated with the Gülen movement were silenced by the government after July 15 played a great role in this ambiguity. Yet growing suspicions over the coup attempt, Erdoğan’s contradictory announcements on the coup night, disproportionate use of force afterwards, mass human rights violations that have turned into persecution, and growing uncertainties about Adil Öksüz have changed people’s point of view, and they started to think that Öksüz might have been affiliated but—deliberately or unknowingly—acted against the Gülen movement and he could very well be someone who was used by the Turkish government.



Interestingly, Adil Öksüz was not arrested at a time when mass detentions were happening right after July 15 and judges and prosecutors, of whom thousands were dismissed and arrested the next day, were not taking any risks by releasing suspects, and were trying to avoid attracting suspicion to themselves.⁵⁵² Yet Öksüz was released and the prosecutor’s request for his arrest was denied. In his statement on July 16, 2016 when he was in custody, he said he was in the area “to look for some land property,” which is hard to believe given the extraordinary circumstances the country was in and justifies suspicion. It is incomprehensible—both with respect to normal course of human activities and the realities of the country—that he “was looking for land property” the day after July 15 when the country had barely avoided a coup, people had been killed, and there was great chaos and uncertainty. It defies logic that an academic of the age of 50 would not have considered this and that the court accepted his justification at face value.

Thousands of judges and prosecutors were taken into custody and arrested hours after the coup attempt.⁵⁵³ While many of their colleagues were summarily detained and arrested without even bothering to conduct any judicial or administrative investigations, a probe was launched for only those judges who released and denied objections to the release of Adil Öksüz, who had become a key player in the government’s narrative of July 15. But only after one month, on August 16, 2016, were they suspended from the job. Çetin Sönmez, the judge who denied the prosecutor’s objection, was dismissed ten months later on May 5, 2017. Sönmez was taken into custody the following day but released under house arrest. Upon reaction from pro-government columnists, he was arrested two weeks later and put in Ankara Sincan Prison.⁵⁵⁴ No dismissal procedure has yet been applied for Köksal Çelik, the judge who released Öksüz at his first hearing. The prosecutor Cihan Ergün who interrogated Öksüz, referred him to the court for an arrest and later challenged the release decision was

552] For example, in a case where 23 judges and prosecutors were asked for a formal arrest in Turkey’s Denizli province right after the July 15 events, a judge H.A. denied the prosecutor’s request because of the lack of the evidence of any crime in the charge sheet other than a list provided by the Judicial Council HSYK. The judge was immediately sacked and the new judge who took over the case ruled for the arrest of all 23 judges and prosecutors. In another case that took place in Düzce province, a criminal judge K.O. who ruled for the release of two women judges on the grounds that they needed to breastfeed their babies got suspended and later arrested. See “Turkey’s Descent Into Arbitrariness: The End Of Rule Of Law” 14 April 2017, page 19, <http://stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Turkey%E2%80%99s-Descent-Into-Arbitrariness-The-End-Of-Rule-Of-Law.pdf>

553] “Turkey: Judges, Prosecutors Unfairly Jailed, Human Rights Watch,” 8 August 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/08/05/turkey-judges-prosecutors-unfairly-jailed>

554] “Prosecutor responds pro-Erdoğan journalist’s call with SMS,” Turkish Minute, 23 May 2017, <https://www.turkishminute.com/2017/05/23/prosecutor-responds-pro-erdogan-journalists-call-with-sms/>

Köksal Çelik (L) and Çetin Sönmez are two judges who released Adil Öksüz from detention.



The troops who came to wedding in Moda, Istanbul, testified they were ordered to provide security for Air Force Commander and denied coup allegations.

reassigned to Kırıkkale province, an hour drive from Ankara.⁵⁵⁵

It is hard to explain Öksüz's release by the judges' alleged affiliation with the Gülen movement as they had been seen as government loyalists who were helping to persecute the movement volunteers. There are claims that prosecutors and judges affiliated with the movement were issuing arrest warrants for members of the movement to protect themselves. It is also claimed that Adil Öksüz was shown to be an ordinary person during gendarmerie procedures and then in police files reportedly to secure his release.⁵⁵⁶

3.8.3 Why Did The Conviction Grow That Öksüz Was Used By The Intelligence Agency?

Investigations reveal that Adil Öksüz is a name well known by the intelligence agency. His name is included in the main indictment about the Gülen movement submitted to Ankara 4th High Criminal Court the day before the coup. The indictment, which includes his sister's husband Cemal Türk as a suspect, mentions Adil Öksüz as "the person in charge of naval forces"⁵⁵⁷—an accusation of organized infiltration. Therefore, one can safely assume that he has been monitored by Turkish intelligence for years.

Kemalettin Özdemir, a former member of the Gülen movement who had been working for the government for some time, gave witness testimony in the main case at Ankara 4th High Criminal Court on January 13, 2017, where he said, "I told both MİT and the Sabah daily about Adil Öksüz."⁵⁵⁸ Kemalettin Özdemir and Adil Öksüz worked in the same faculty of Sakarya University for years.

Another name who is known to have informed judicial authorities about Adil Öksüz is Latif Erdoğan, an anti-Gülenist, pro-government writer and television producer who volunteered for the Gülen movement for a period in the past.⁵⁵⁹

It is quite suspicious that a person who has been reported so many times can continue living his normal life in Turkey. It is well known that members of the Gülen movement who had been reported and threatened left the country because of the wave of arrests launched by the government after the 17–25 December 2013 corruption and bribery investigations that incriminated Erdoğan, government ministers, Erdoğan's family members, and his business

555] "780 hakim ve savcının görev yeri değişti; Adil Öksüz'ü sorgulayan savcı, Kırıkkale'ye atandı" [780 judges and prosecutors were reassigned; the prosecutor who interrogated Öksüz was appointed to Kırıkkale], Hürriyet, 3 Temmuz 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/son-dakika-780-hakim-ve-savcinin-gorev-yeri-degisti-40508548>

556] "Adil Öksüz Korunuyor mu" [Is Adil Öksüz being protected?], Hürriyet, 30 August 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/abdulkadir-selvi/adil-oksuz-korunuyor-mu-40212196>

557] "FETÖ davasında Adil Öksüz skandalı" [Adil Öksüz scandal in FETÖ case], Gazete Duvar, 25 Kasım 2016, <http://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2016/11/25/feto-davasinda-adil-oksuz-skandali/>

558] "Adil Öksüz'ü hem MİT'e hem Sabah gazetesine 5 yıl önce söyledim" [I informed both MIT and the Sabah daily about Adil Öksüz], Odatv, 13 January 2017, <http://odatv.com/adil-oksuzu-hem-mite-hem-sabah-gazetesine-5-yil-once-soyledim-1301171200.html>

559] "Hanefi Avcı: Adil Öksüz 2 yıldır biliniyordu" [Hanefi Avcı: Adil Öksüz was known for 2 years], Sputnik News Agency, 26 October 2016, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201610261025479285-hanefi-avci-adil-oksuz/>

associates. It is also known that criminal procedures had been started against names reported by such anti-Gülenist people as Latif Erdoğan and Kemalettin Özdemir who are taken as references in operations against the Gülen movement by Erdoğan government.

Adil Öksüz is known to have landed in Sabiha Gökçen Airport from Esenboğa Airport after being released in Ankara and gone to his house in Üsküdar. His phone received signals from cell towers in Üsküdar on the night of July 18.⁵⁶⁰ He drove his car to his father-in-law's house in Akyazı on July 19. He had a conversation with family members at about 02:30, and told them about his experience. Then he went to bed and woke up in the morning and left with his bag. The information Stockholm Center for Freedom has obtained shows that he left his father-in-law's house saying he would be back for dinner. No one has heard of him since. A phone conversation at 13:02 on July 20, which he had with the line registered to the university he worked at, is his last known conversation.⁵⁶¹

Adil Öksüz's relaxed actions after his release are as unusual as his having been released at a time when every Gülen movement member was panicking and feeling the need to hide in the face of Erdoğan's accusations and the government crackdown. SCF has learned from eye-witnesses who met him on July 18 and 19 that Adil Öksüz did not look at all alarmed. He told these witnesses that he had been detained and kidnapped by the police, then released in Kazan, where he had been captured by the gendarmerie. But this information needs confirmation. Besides, it is interesting that someone who lived through such a kidnapping experience went to an address where he could easily be spotted. The fact that he drove his car from İstanbul to his father-in-law's house in Akyazı, Sakarya, supports the observations that he was not worried about his safety.

Adil Öksüz's disappearance brings to mind possibilities such as his being detained somewhere by security forces or his being killed. If he is alive and hiding somewhere, it is surprising that he remains silent despite all these grave allegations and does not make an announcement to the public.

Another important allegation about Adil Öksüz is that he was an agent for the MİT. CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has repeatedly implied that Öksüz was working for MİT. He made similar statements about Öksüz's release. It is speculated that the most important part of Kılıçdaroğlu's argument for a controlled coup is Adil Öksüz and his connections, for which he points to MİT's involvement with such questions as "Which government agency imported the GPS device Adil Öksüz had in his possession?"⁵⁶²

Still another allegation is that Adil Öksüz was turned into an asset by MİT in 2014 and started to work for MİT with the code name "Timsah" (Alligator). Former MİT Deputy Head of Anti-Terror Department Mehmet Eymür stated that the document shared on social

560] "Adil Öksüz son telefon görüşmesini 20 Temmuz'da yaptı" [Adil Öksüz made his last phone call on July 10], Al Jazeera, 31 March 2017,

<http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/adil-oksuz-son-telefon-gorusmesini-20-temmuzda-yapti>

561] Ibid.

562] "Kılıçdaroğlu'ndan Adil Öksüz Soruları" [Kılıçdaroğlu's questions about Adil Öksüz], Hürriyet, 5 April 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/chp-lideri-kilicdaroglu-erdogana-bu-sozlerle-yanit-verdi-40418475>

media about the allegation that Öksüz was working for MİT is true.⁵⁶³

Although even the passports of journalists known to be close to the Gülen movement and their spouses were seized long before July 15, 2016, Öksüz was able to easily travel abroad a few days before July 15 on the national flag carrier Turkish Airlines (THY) without experiencing any trouble. No action was taken against him when pro-government Twitter account “Üst Akıl Oyunları” (Mastermind Games) disclosed allegations about Adil Öksüz being “the Imam for the Air Forces” a few months before the coup attempt. Gülen movement sources, anonymous for safety concerns, have expressed to SCF their growing conviction in the light of present information that Adil Öksüz was specially used by MİT to link the coup attempt to the Gülen movement.

Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office has launched an investigation into the disappearance of Öksüz and prepared an indictment charging 28 people, including 13 soldiers, 14 police officers and a government employee named as Ali İhsan Sarıkoca who worked as an advisor to the Prime Minister. The indictment against suspects who are accused of aiding and abetting of the release of Adil Öksüz include details on the intelligence agency MİT’s connection to the events at Akıncı Air Base on July 15.⁵⁶⁴ According to the indictment, two non-commissioned Gendarmerie officers named Ahmet Camgöz and Semih Kaman testified that they halted a black Honda car that was leaving the military base around the the time when Öksüz was detained. When Cengiz approached to the car with his gun unholstered, the driver came out of the car and told the officers to “relax” and showed them his MİT badge. Then the gendarmerie allowed the vehicle to proceed and did not search the car. “With the driver, there were four or five people in the car”, Cengiz stated.



Adil Öksüz (L) accompanied by his lawyer M.C. leaving the Sincan Court House after the court unexpectedly released him.

It was also revealed that Öksüz’s lawyer identified with initials as M.C. was present during his client’s testimony both at the prosecutor’s office and in the arraignment hearing at the court.⁵⁶⁵ A whistleblower account on Twitter by the name of Saffet Kayalı⁵⁶⁶ claimed that Öksüz’s retaining a lawyer at very early hours [around 5 or 6 am in the morning of July 16] seems very odd when other suspects who were detained around the same time were unable to bring their lawyers. Considering that almost all attorneys who were seen affiliated with the Gülen movement were either arrested or forced to flee the country, Kayalı asked how a lawyer M.C. who defended very controversial suspect in the coup bid was able to keep working and avoided any prosecution at all.

The indictment file also includes a claim that Sarıkoca visited Öksüz while he was in the custody of the gendarmerie. Sarıkoca was suspended in April 2017 but not dismissed yet. He was not detained either. He has been with Erdoğan since the 1990s when Erdoğan was

563] “Kontrollü darbe tezine hangi eski MİT’çi destek verdi?” [Which former ex-MIT official supported controlled coup argument?], Odatv, 1 June 2017, <http://odatv.com/kontrollu-darbe-tezine-hangi-eski-mitci-destek-verdi-0106171200.html>

564] “Jandarma raporundaki detay: Siyah aracın içindekiler MİT’çi miydi?” [Detail in Gendarmerie report: Were MİT agents in black vehicle], 4 July 2017, Hürriyet, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/jandarma-raporundaki-detay-siyah-hondanin-icindekiler-mitci-miydi-40508682>

565] “Yakalama kararı çıkarılmadı, gitti”, [No arrest decision was made and he left], 8 April 2017, Milliyet, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yakalama-karari-cikarilmadi-gitti-gundem-2428496/>

566] <https://twitter.com/EmineSaffet/status/882698332568682496>

the Mayor of İstanbul. He also served as executive secretary for Ömer Dinçer who was the undersecretary of the Prime Ministry, the top bureaucrat in the government. He has managed the Prime Ministry Communications Center (BİMER), which handles complaints, tips and intelligence. At one point, he also served as the acting Chairman of the Board for state-run Anadolu news agency (AA).⁵⁶⁷

It appears Sarıkoca has been one of the most trusted bureaucrats in the Erdoğan government. His visit to Öksüz cast further doubts on what role Öksüz played in the failed coup bid. Moreover, allowing Öksüz to use his cell phone while he was in custody is a privilege that is rarely seen even under normal circumstances and cannot be justified under the extraordinary conditions of the country was in the aftermath of July 15.⁵⁶⁸ Sarıkoca was in İstanbul on the same day and at the same hours as Öksüz, who flew from Ankara to İstanbul. None of the 27 suspects who were indicted in connection with Öksüz are under arrest. With the exception of two, none of them have been dismissed either.⁵⁶⁹

CHAPTER 4

THE WINNERS OF JULY 15 AND EURASIANISM

4.1 The Coup Attempt Turned Out To Be A “Gift From God” For Eurasianists As Well

The military coup attempt of July 15, 2016 had two important outcomes, among others: a) the escalation of Eurasianist policies that envision Turkey’s rapprochement with Russia and China with the massive purge of pro-NATO and pro-Western Turkish military officers, and b) the decimation of civil society organizations including the Gülen movement, against which Erdoğan and the AKP joined forces with the nationalist/Eurasianist circles.

The idea of Eurasianism was first put forward by intellectuals fleeing from Russia after the October 1917 revolution. The movement resurfaced in the 1990s when the Cold War ended. In the years when the United States was striving to establish a unipolar “New World Order” neo-Eurasianism made its second coming with books and articles penned by Russian geo-politicians including Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin. Dugin started to become a star player with Putin’s rise to power.⁵⁷⁰ To challenge Atlantic-American bullying, the only way out –purported Dugin – for those who stick to the tenets of Eurasianism in these

567] “Adil Öksüz’ü ziyaret eden Başbakanlık müşaviri hangi birimin başındaydı?” [What department was the Prime Ministry’s Aide who visited Adil Öksüz in charge], 24 June 2017 <http://odatv.com/adil-oksuzu-ziyaret-eden-basbakanlik-musaviri-hangi-birimin-basindaydi-2406171200.html>

568] “Gözaltındayken Adil Öksüz’e telefonunu nasıl verdiler?” [How was Adil Öksüz given mobile phone when he was in custody], 10 April 2017, <http://odatv.com/gozaltindayken-adil-oksuz-telefonunu-nasil-verdiler-1004171200.html>

569] “Öksüz’le görüşen müşavirden 5 yıldızlı yalan” [Five-star lie by an advisor who met Öksüz”, Sözcü Gazetesi, 27 June 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/oksuzle-gorusen-basbakanlik-musavirinden-5-yildizli-yalan-1910341/and>

570] “Avrasyacılık ve devrimciler” [Eurasianism and Revolutionaries], İleri haber, 15 August 2016, <http://ilerihaber.org/icerik/avrasyacilik-ve-devrimciler-58397.html>

circumstances was to forge alliances with Eastern countries and nations struggling for their geopolitical independence.⁵⁷¹ As for Turkish Eurasianism, that supported the strategy of the nation-state, so Turkey should give up the idea of being a member of the European Union. Otherwise, Turkey would run the risk of becoming merely a province of the European Union. Eurasianism, on the other hand, promised to maintain the Turkish state as a nation-state erected by Atatürk on the pillars of complete independence and national sovereignty.⁵⁷²

Nationalism/Eurasianism became a hot topic in Turkey in 2007 during investigations launched against clandestine organizations known as “Turkish Gladio” or “Ergenekon” that were nestled in the Turkish state structures. It was claimed at the onset of the operations that the purges were mainly targeting a Eurasianist/pro-Russian cabal within the Turkish military. Many academics and columnists who supported the Ergenekon investigations expressed the view that the anti-EU, anti-US and pro-Russia clique that aimed to switch Turkey to the Russia-China-Iran axis was being purged with the support of the US and NATO.⁵⁷³

General Tuncer Kılınç, who was taken into custody during those investigations, advocated Eurasianist expansionism for Turkey when he was secretary general of the National Security Council (MGK). Kılınç emphasized that Turkey should gear towards a Russia-China-Iran alignment rather than NATO-EU. General Şener Eruygur, former commander of the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces who was jailed pending trial for coup plans during the investigations, also voiced similar views about Eurasianism, as did several civilians. Eruygur proposed that Turkey should leave NATO, join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and form a new military alliance in the region with Russia and Iran.⁵⁷⁴

In a 2009 article about the Nationalist/Eurasianist organization whose members were being tried for such crimes as coup attempts and unidentified murders, Prof. İhsan Dağı wrote:

“Ergenekon is a state organization that has gone rogue. Its origins are clear: Special Operations Department. After Turkey’s membership of NATO, it was organized in us like it was in many NATO countries. Its financial resources and equipment were provided by NATO. The primary objective was to organize civilian resistance in case of a possible Soviet occupation or a communist coup d’état during the Cold War period. These organizations, which were supposed to “sleep” during peace time did not idle about. They engaged in politics, violence, and financial gain. They were disbanded after the end of the Cold War when NATO no longer needed these crime-ridden organizations. Turkey is living through a similar period.

571] “Türkiye ve Rusya Ekseninde Avrasyacılık” [Turkey and Eurasianism in Russian Axis], Meşdi İsmayilov, 2011, p. 155,

572] “Emekli Korgeneral Suat İlhan: AB üyeliği, Türk tarihine aykırıdır [Retired Major-General Suat İlhan: EU membership is against Turkish history], TGRT Haber, 24 March 2002, <http://www.tgrthaber.com.tr/medya/40616.html>

573] “Ergenekon süreci ABD ve NATO operasyonu muydu?” [Was Ergenekon process an operation by the USA and NATO?], Yeniçağ, 14 February 2013, <http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/ergenekon-sureci-abd-ve-nato-operasyonu-muydu-25774yy.htm>

574] “Ergenekon Davası, hukuk ve demokrasi sınavıdır!” [Ergenekon Case is a test of law and democracy!], Milliyet, 24 October 2008, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sinavdan-gecmenin-kosulu---buyuk-ergenekon-u-cozmektir/hasan-cemal/siyaset/siyasyazardetay/24.10.2008/1007255/default.htm>



Prof. Dr.
İhsan Dağı

Turkish Gladio, transgressing its boundaries and fallen under the control of a pro-Russian clique, is not protected any more. The reason is obvious: the Russia-West tension that has become evident in Georgia and the natural gas crisis have made Turkey an indispensable front country once again. The question is whether they will sit back and watch a pro-Russian clique that opposes cooperation with NATO, the USA, and EU seize control of an army within the Western security matrix for fifty years. Moreover, this clique was trying not only to rise within the army but also to seize the government with a coup as could be seen in the Özden Örnek diaries. But they failed; a pro-Russia coup was not given the go-ahead.⁵⁷⁵

Dağı claimed in his article that after the demise of the Soviet Union, which was the common enemy, the Turkish Army failed to grasp NATO's politics that were oriented not by a "common enemy" but by "common values" built upon democracy, human rights, and state of law. The reason behind the failure to internalize the "common values" was the anxiety of the Turkish Army about losing its position within the regime. Therefore, a group inside the Turkish Army slid to the Eurasian and pro-Russian line. To Dağı, the Eurasianists/pro-Russia supporters within the Turkish Army embraced their ideals simply because the US did not support the coup they wanted to stage against the AKP.⁵⁷⁶

In an article titled "Our Fraying Alliance with Turkey," ex-CIA official and Turkey specialist Graham Fuller said, "Turkish generals, angry with Washington, even mutter about a Russian strategic 'alternative' if it is stiff-armed by the West. Although there is some rivalry over the routing of Central Asian energy pipelines to the West—whether via Russia or Iran and Turkey—Ankara values its ties with Moscow. ... If the Chinese-Russian-sponsored Shanghai Cooperation Organization bids to be the dominant geopolitical grouping in Eurasia, then Turkey, like Afghanistan, Iran, and India, would like an association with it. Washington opposes that."⁵⁷⁷

As for the suspects in the Ergenekon and Balyoz lawsuits, Dugin maintained that pro-Eurasianist soldiers were being arrested on the pretext of a coup plan. He stated that high-ranking Turkish officers had consequently been taken into custody and some had lost their posts; thus, the US had managed to tighten its grip on Turkey and the Erdoğan regime once again. Asserting that "Neo-Ottomanism" was yet another American project, Dugin cautioned Ankara about the probable outcomes of this policy: the Turkish Republic might cease to exist; a civil war might break out among secular nationalists, Kemalists, republicans and minority religious groups, which might ultimately mean Turkey losing its ethnic identity. He also argued that the incarcerations in the Ergenekon investigation were "defiance against Russia" and added that it was time Russia responded to these challenges.⁵⁷⁸

575] "Pro-Russia coup and Ergenekon," İhsan Dağı, *Time Türk*, 13 January 2009, <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/makale/ihsan-dagi/rus-yanlisi-darbe-ve-ergenekon.html>

576] Was Ergenekon process an operation by the USA and NATO?" Yeniçağ, 14 February 2013, <http://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/ergenekon-sureci-abd-ve-nato-operasyonu-muydu-25774yy.htm>

577] "Ergenekon Davası ve Türk Ordusu" [Ergenekon Case and Turkish Army], 6 August 2013, <http://www.21yyte.org/kose-yazisi-yazdir/7147>

578] "Ergenekon'a Rus desteği" [Russian support for Ergenekon], 27 March 2008, <http://habervesaire.com/ergenekon-a-rus-destegi/>

Then Prime Minister Erdoğan dubbed the Ergenekon investigations launched in 2007 as “Operation Clean Hands” and stated that he would personally be the prosecutor on behalf of the nation. On a TV program, he remarked that he had listened to CDs containing voice recordings about coup plans, and about the annihilation of the Gülen movement and the AKP. He underlined that the available evidence was extremely concrete. “I was flabbergasted. A friend of mine from the (YAŞ/Supreme Military Council) meeting ... a friend with whom I took trips ... I would not believe it if I hadn’t heard it. I am taken aback when I hear his voice How can this ever happen, I say.”⁵⁷⁹

The Progress Report of 2010 published by the European Union referred to Ergenekon and other investigations into coup attempts and pointed out that “Overall, the investigation into the alleged criminal network Ergenekon and the probe into several other coup plans remain an opportunity for Turkey to strengthen confidence in the proper functioning of its democratic institutions and the rule of law.”⁵⁸⁰

Yet, the interference of politicians in the ongoing investigations and lawsuits eventually resulted in social polarization and after a while these probes came to be seen as trials in which opponents of the ruling party were being indicted. The AKP government and Erdoğan ceased their support for these investigations especially after the February 7, 2012 crisis, about MİT in which prosecutors summoned intelligence chief Hakan Fidan over his alleged links to terror groups, the December 17-25, 2013 corruption and bribery scandal that incriminated Erdoğan, and the the Tawhid-Salam Quds Army investigation that exposed Iranian intelligence’s penetration into the Turkish government including the top leadership.⁵⁸¹

Erdoğan then declared war on the Gülen movement, which he held responsible for the probes that were putting him and his government in hot water. Erdoğan announced, “We were deceived” about the probes and lawsuits.⁵⁸² It was during this period that he described the lawsuits as a “conspiracy” and all the Ergenekon suspects were released by amendments rushed through Parliament by Erdoğan’s political party. In a TV interview, Erdoğan admitted that they had made the releases possible and reproached the suspects for not thanking them.⁵⁸³

579] “Başbakan Erdoğan, Ergenekon İçin ‘Arı Kovanına Çomak Soktuk’ dedi” [PM Erdoğan said, ‘We stirred up a hornet’s nest’ about Ergenekon], 18 January 2019, <https://www.haberler.com/basbakan-erdogan-ergenekon-icin-ari-kovani-na-comak-haberi/>

580] Turkey 2010 Progress Report, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf

581] “7 Şubat’tan 15 Temmuz’a” [From February 7 to July 15], Aljazeera Turk, 7 February 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/7-subattan-15-temmuza>

582] “Sahte belgelerle kandırıldık” [We were tricked by fake documents], Ulusal Kanal, 19 March 2015, <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/gundem/sahte-belgelerle-kandirildik-h53633.html>

583] “Erdoğan’dan tahliyelerle ilgili ilginç açıklama: Bize teşekkür etmediler” [Interesting statement from Erdoğan about releases: They didn’t thank us], Shaber, 13 March 2014, <http://www.shaber3.com/web-tv/erdogandan-tahliyelerle-ilgili-ilginc-aciklama-bize-tesekkur-etmediler-7977-video-haberi/>

4.2 Eurasianist Perinçek: “Erdoğan Switched to Our Side”

“We are on our mettle like unsheathed swords ... We will root out religious communities and sects ... We will topple the government of those who divide Turkey. We will found the government of those who will unite Turkey. We will destroy the reigns of Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, and Fethullah Gülen, those who are destroying the republic [...]” These utterances belong to Doğu Perinçek,⁵⁸⁴ one of the detainees in the Ergenekon trials, who was released after spending six years in jail. Homeland Party (Vatan Partisi) leader Perinçek, who issued the above press release on March 10, 2014 shortly after his release from Silivri Prison, had been sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment on the grounds of being a ringleader in the deep state structure and putschist.⁵⁸⁵



Neo-nationalist Homeland Party leader Doğu Perinçek

The Ergenekon trials grew to include 275 suspects (66 detained) including İlker Başbuğ, the former Chief of the General Staff of Turkey. As for the Balyoz (Sledgehammer) case, it included former commanders-in-chief of the armed forces, high-ranking generals, 365 Turkish military officers (250 detained). In the late 90s, in the case about the February 28 so-called postmodern coup, which had attempted to oust the Refahiyol government, 103 Turkish military officers (37 detained) stood trial.⁵⁸⁶ While the trials were in process, all suspects indicted for the coup attempt and being part of a deep state network were acquitted by individual applications right up to the Constitutional Court and a series of government-endorsed amendments about detention limitations and abolition of special court-martials. Homeland Party leader Doğu Perinçek, who had been sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment, yet acquitted through political interference and machinations, stands as a salient symbol of the Eurasianist movement in Turkey.

Doğu Perinçek, who held the AKP government and Gülen movement accountable for the indictments and threatened to do away with them, corroborated the allegations of his collusion with Erdoğan. “We stick to our program. Within this context, Tayyip Erdoğan came to us, we did not go to them.”⁵⁸⁷ Naturally, the Gülen movement was the primary common target.

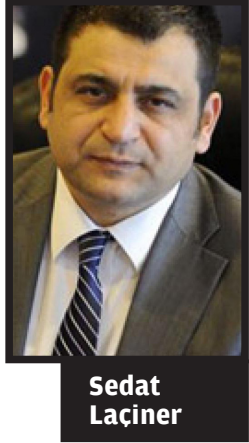
Most analysts regarded the acquittals and releases as a demonstrating reconciliation and collusion between Erdoğan and Turkish Gladio—a deep-state structure that was responsible for unsolved murders and enforced disappearances in Turkey’s dark past. Professor Dr.

584] “Doğu Perinçek: Kınından Çıkılmış Bir Kılıç Gibiyiz” [Doğu Perinçek: We’re like an unsheathed sword], 13 March 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oh6knZWhJ-0>

585] “Ergenekon davasında Doğu Perinçek’e müebbet hapis cezası verildi” [Doğu Perinçek is sentenced for life in Ergenekon case], *Hürriyet*, 5 August 2013, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ergenekon-davasinda-dogu-perinceke-muebbet-hapis-cezası-verildi-24462317>

586] “Her rütbeden tutuklu var” [There are detainees from all ranks], *Milliyet*, 27 January 2013, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/her-rutbeden-tutuklu-var-gundem-1660794/>

587] “Perinçek: Tayyip Erdoğanlar bizim yanımıza geldi” [Perinçek: Tayyip Erdoğan and his folks came to our side], *Cumhuriyet*, 3 January 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/457739/Perincek__Tayyip_Erdoganlar_bizim_yanimiza_geldi.html



Taner Akçam interpreted the mass releases: “Suspects in the Ergenekon and Balyoz (Sledgehammer) cases are out, and the culprits of unidentified murders are gradually set free. Thieves, robbers, grafters are never prosecuted. If all the suspects in the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials and the culprits in unidentified murders were let go scot-free, why was this war waged? The AKP reckoned that it had taken the deep state under control by imprisoning them. Now they surmise that it will obey the government by reconciliation and making alliances. This is, was and will be their biggest mistake. The AKP have made a historical mistake by not implementing tools to control the deep state by civilian politics. On the contrary, through laws such as the ones on the Court of Accounts and National Intelligence Organization, AKP has caused civilian politics to lose its grip on the deep state and created the conditions for the deep state to gain more power.”⁵⁸⁸

Sedat Laçiner, the former rector of Çanakkale 18 Mart University, stated that Erdoğan aimed to pit the so-called Ergenekon affiliates and the nationalists against the Gülen movement. Erdoğan changed sides. Pursuant to the agreement, whatever Perinçek and the others demanded was readily granted. In an interview Laçiner said, “In my opinion his aim in that period was never to obliterate the deep state. His sole purpose was to strike a deal with them while taming the army. Eventually he reached his goals. At a period when a whole gamut of military officers—ranking from the Chief of the General Staff to sergeant, were arrested, Erdoğan took the reins and browbeat the army. Thus, Erdoğan accomplished one of his objectives. His second mission was to negotiate rather than fight with them. This is the most significant reason behind the cases were never concluded. The trials remained a pretense and were dragged out. After 2010, they sought to find a ground for reconciliation and that opportunity presented itself in 2013. In 2013, all the prison doors were opened and all the suspects of Ergenekon, Balyoz, and other trials were released one by one. Nowadays, even the minister of justice confesses that “many putschists beat the rap.” Those trials were political trials. When the attorney general, namely the prime minister, withdrew the lawsuit; consequently, the case was terminated.⁵⁸⁹ Laçiner, jailed for a year and released only to be detained again, remarked in an article about his experiences during his detention that “there I noticed that Balyoz Coup Plan had already been put into practice, I saw the framework of the Erdoğan-Perinçek coalition during my detention.”⁵⁹⁰

CHP lawmaker Barış Yarkadaş, in a program on Halk TV channel, claimed that Erdoğan struck a deal with Ergenekon suspects to cover up corruption cases and to find support for the operation against the Gülen movement: “In exchange for the December 17-25 (2013) corruption cover-up and for the underpinning of the army, Erdoğan changed his Kurdish policies. It was merely a barter. At this juncture, the connection started to take shape. The release of people like Yalçın Küçük was an outcome of this rapprochement. That was a flag of truce. They released Ergenekon detainees in exchange for the promise to buttress the

588] “Prof. Akçam: Erdoğan, derin devletin kendisine biat edeceğini düşünerek hata ediyor” [Prof. Akçam: Erdoğan makes a mistake by thinking that deep state will obey him], T24, 19 August 2014, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/prof-akcam-erdogan-derin-devletin-kendisine-biat-edecegini-dusunerek-hata-ediyor,268073>

589] “Prof. Dr. Laçiner: Ergenekon’un 2.0 versiyonu devrede” [Prof. Dr. Laçiner: Ergenekon version 2.0 is at play], Zaman Australia, 7 March 2016, <http://www.zamanaustralia.com/2016/03/prof-dr-lacinerergenekonun-2-0-versiyonu-devrede>

590] “Laçiner’den Perinçek’e anlamlı mesaj” [Meaningful message from Laçiner to Perinçek], 9 January 2016, <http://www.shaber3.com/lacinerden-perinceke-anlamli-mesaj-haberi/1215398/>



Fuat Yilmazer, a police chief, was arrested on July 22, 2014 and remains in prison pending trial.

operation against the Gülen movement. Moreover, they settled on the Kurdish issue and the cover-up of December 17-25 cases. The concept of a peaceful solution remolded into the concept of ‘battering down the Kurds and taming them.’”⁵⁹¹

Critical voices rose even from the AKP ranks against this coalition. AKP lawmaker Şamil Tayyar, who wrote a series of books on Ergenekon stated that it was a mistake for the AKP government to team up with a coterie defined as “the dregs of the deep state” to uproot the Gülen movement. He said that “the fight against the parallel state has turned into the exoneration of cabals like Ergenekon.

For example, most of our companions in our group start their sentences with expressions such as Ergenekon plot or Balyoz plot, etc. Nobody could talk to me as though these coup attempts have never happened. The situation blew out of proportion to such an extent that Cemil Temizöz was acquitted in unidentified murder cases. Gentlemen, with all due respect, nobody can make me believe that all of these decisions have been taken within the legal framework. Nobody should abuse the fight against the parallel state to vindicate the old deep state.”⁵⁹²

4.3 The Purges And Detentions Started Long Before The Coup Attempt

The process of the purges and detentions started long before the coup attempt of July 15, 2016. The AKP government also defined the December 17-25, 2013 corruption investigations as “coup attempts.” It claimed that the prosecutors and police officers conducting the investigation were members of the Gülen movement. In accordance with orders by then Prime Minister Erdoğan, the prosecutors of all investigations unfavorable to Erdoğan and the government were reassigned, all the trials were derailed, and the investigations were hushed up. In June 2014, the “Criminal Courts of Peace”, dubbed “special project” courts by Erdoğan, were set in motion to have extensive powers in arrests, prosecutions, and assets seizures.

From June 22, 2014 onward, police officers as well as high ranking police commissioners were taken into custody on trumped-up charges. Thousands of police officers were reassigned. Within the course of just one year 80,000 police officers were either dismissed or reassigned, 460 were suspended, 185 were laid off, and 42 were arrested.⁵⁹³ Judges and prosecutors faced dismissals and detentions because of their verdicts. As a result of the witch hunt initiated across the country, tens of thousands of public officials, teachers, academics, doctors, civil servants, and journalists lost their jobs on the basis of their alleged affiliation with the Gülen movement. Schools, newspapers, TV channels, and conglomerates were confiscated.

In the aftermath of July 15, 2016, purges, detentions, and the witch hunt gained momentum. By May 28, 2017, 168 out of 358 generals were in custody; 6,810 colonels

591] “Erdoğan’la anlaşıp hapisten çıktılar” [They made an agreement with Erdoğan and left prison], Odatv, 28 December 2015, <http://odatv.com/erdoganla-anlasip-hapisten-ciktilar-2812151200.html>

592] “Tayyar’dan itiraf üstüne itiraf” [Confession upon confession from Tayyar], SHaber, 7 January 2016, <http://www.shaber3.com/tayyardan-itaraf-ustune-itaraf-haberi/1214473/?307652813>

593] “42 polis tutuklu 460’ı açığa alındı 185’i ihraç edildi” [42 police officers in custody 460 suspended, 185 dismissed], Hürriyet, 17 December 2014, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/42-polis-tutuklu-460-i-aciga-alindi-185-i-ihrac-edildi-27787911>

and low-ranking officials had been arrested; More than 50,000 people from different walks of life such as policemen, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, journalists, teachers, students, academics, doctors, businessmen, and craftsmen were arrested on the basis of their affiliation with the Gülen movement; More than 168,800 people have faced detentions and legal action.⁵⁹⁴ Since the involvement of people working at educational institutions, hospitals, and media organizations in the attempted coup could not be satisfactorily explained, the overall surveillance, detention and purges have been interpreted as revenge operations.

Doğu Perinçek and other neo-Nationalist/Eurasianist groups have stated that they orchestrated the purge and detention operations undertaken by the AKP government against the Turkish military and bureaucracy and that they submitted the purge lists to the government.⁵⁹⁵ Moreover, in an interview after his release, former Chief of General Staff İlker Başbuğ said that he had personally submitted to Prime Minister Erdoğan a list of Gülen movement members in which the Deputy Police Chief in Charge of Intelligence topped the list. He asserted, “These investigations mustn’t be confined to the December 17–25 events. That would be a big mistake. We see the great majority of the detained [police] chiefs took part in the conspiracy against the armed forces. With the aid of various resources, we prepared a list about the police. We handed a list of these police officers to Erdoğan. As far as I remember, Ali Fuat Yılmaz [jailed former police intelligence chief] is at the top of the list. Erdoğan himself took the list and said he would take care of it.”⁵⁹⁶

In reply to an interview question, “Do you fully support Erdoğan in operations against the movement?” Doğu Perinçek said “No, I say no such thing. He supports us, for we started it all along. It is we, not Erdoğan, who have been fighting against the Gülen movement since the 1970s and contending that it is a terrorist organization.”⁵⁹⁷ Perinçek, who has allegedly been allied with Erdoğan since the December 17–25 investigations, expressed his support for the dismissal of the generals from the army on August 17, 2016, saying, “We prepared the purge lists.”⁵⁹⁸ Recent developments make it still clearer that, with the help of Perinçek leading anti-NATO retired generals, Erdoğan purged as many pro-Western and pro-NATO officers and generals in the armed forces as possible, regardless of their affiliation with the Gülen movement.

In another statement Perinçek stressed that in the aftermath of the coup attempt almost

594] “Turkey’s Justice Minister Bozdağ Says 50,504 Arrested Since Coup Attempt,” SCF, July 9, 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/turkeys-justice-minister-bozdag-says-50504-arrested-since-coup-attempt/>; “15 Temmuz hukuksuzluğunun bilançosu: Asker, polis, hakim, savcı, vali, kaymakam, 50 bin tutuklu, 155 bir gözaltı” [Balance sheet of lawlessness of July 15: 50,000 prisoners, 155,000 detainees among whom many are soldiers, police officers, judges, prosecutors, local governors], TR7/24, 28 May 2017, <http://www.tr724.com/15-temmuz-hukuksuzlugunun-bilancosu-50-bin-tutuklu-155-bin-gozalti/>

595] “Doğu Perinçek: Cemaate yönelik operasyonları başlatan biziz, Erdoğan bizi destekliyor” [Doğu Perinçek: It is we who started the operations against the Movement, Erdoğan supports us!], T24, 7 January 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/dogu-perincek-cemaate-yonelik-operasyonlari-baslatan-biziz-erdogan-bizi-destekliyor,323258>

596] “İlker Başbuğ: Listenin başında Ali Fuat Yılmaz vardı” [İlker Başbuğ: Ali Fuat Yılmaz topped the list], Milliyet, 24 July 2014, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ilker-basbug-listenin-basinda-ali-gundem-1916717/>

597] “Doğu Perinçek: Cemaate yönelik operasyonları başlatan biziz, Erdoğan bizi destekliyor!” [Doğu Perinçek: It is we who started the operations against the Movement, Erdoğan supports us!] T24, 7 January 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/dogu-perincek-cemaate-yonelik-operasyonlari-baslatan-biziz-erdogan-bizi-destekliyor,323258>

598] “Orduda yapılan tasfiye listelerini bakın kim vermiş” [Look who has given the lists for purges in the army], 17 August 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MVsf2O5IIA>

all of the detained and purged officers particularly in Turkish Naval, Land and Gendarmerie Forces were names he had profiled.⁵⁹⁹ NATO sources also corroborate the view that pro-NATO officers and generals were discharged. General Curtis Scaparrotti, Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO Allied Command Operations, maintained that the purge of assigned officers in Brussels by the Turkish government after the July 15 coup attempt weakened the alliance. At a press conference in Brussels, he said that almost 150 high-ranking Turkish armed forces officers commissioned in NATO had been arrested, recalled, or retired since the coup attempt. Scaparrotti added, “these officers served well here in NATO. ... I had talented, capable people here and I’m taking a degradation of my staff for the skill, the expertise and the work that they produced.”⁶⁰⁰ Asked whether he ever had any suspicions that any of the officers who were removed might be involved in planning a coup, General Scaparrotti said, “No.”

Constantly manipulating July 15 in accordance with the Eurasianist agenda, Perinçek endeavored to hold NATO and the US responsible for the coup in the early minutes of the attempt. In remarks he made in the very first minutes of the coup on his TV channel, he said, “It is a pro-American upheaval,” and added, “The uprising hasn’t got anything to do with the Turkish Armed Forces. You will witness that the Turkish Army hand in hand with the Turkish nation will crush this pro-American and pro-Gülen insurrection.” Perinçek, who put the blame on the US and Fethullah Gülen on the spur of the moment without any clear identification of the true actors of the coup, used the term “American” or “pro-American” 21 times and “Fethullah” or “pro-Fethullah” 6 times in his speech.⁶⁰¹

As his name was also mentioned among coup plotters, American academic Henry Barkey replied to these slanderous claims: “First of all, I didn’t stage the coup; secondly, had I done it, I would have succeeded. I mean, it was an amazingly amateurish coup attempt. They did it during rush hour in İstanbul on the most important bridge that crosses from the Asian to the European side when the place was already blocked and they brought in the tanks.”⁶⁰²

Many western political analysts made similar evaluations. Dave Burke, a columnist for the Daily Mail, wrote that “‘Anti-western’ and pro-Russian figures are being given top diplomatic and NATO posts by Turkey, in what will be a major victory for Russian president Vladimir Putin, it is claimed.” He added, “Hundreds of NATO officials and diplomats have been purged by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan since a failed coup in July, in a move branded illegal by the Council of Europe. Concerns have been voiced that they are being replaced by ‘ultra-nationalist’ and ‘anti-Western’ officials after experienced staff were

599] “Teke Tek - 16 Ağustos 1. Bölüm” [Teke Tek - August 16 Part 1], HabertürkTV, 17 August 2016, <http://www.haberturk.tv/programlar/video/teke-tek-16-agustos-1bolum/197305>

600] “Turkey military purge has ‘degraded’ Nato, says general”, Financial Times, 7 December 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/102a20f0-bc92-11e6-8b45-b8b81dd5d080>

601] “Vatan Partisi Genel Başkanı Doğu Perinçek Darbe Yorumu” [Homeland Party Chairman Doğu Perinçek’s comment on the coup], YouTube, 15 July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17MZU0bn1sg>

602] “Eski CIA danışmanı Henri Barkey...” [Former CIA advisor Henri Barkey...], 18 May 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-tVQmo6FWA&feature=youtu.be>

removed from their positions.”⁶⁰³

The arrests, purges, and detentions on the basis of prepared lists is also another major controversy. The question “How were tens of thousands of people employed in public institutions discharged and arrested in one week, on what charges and evidence, based on what investigation?” still awaits an answer. The most striking examples which reveal the fact that the purge and detention lists were prepared long before the coup are instances of dismissals and detention orders issued for police officers and civilians who had already lost their lives. For example, Naval Noncommissioned Officer Esat Kalkan was killed in action in Afghanistan on August 4, 2016. Yet, he was discharged from the army after the coup attempt by emergency law-decrees issued on November 22, 2016.⁶⁰⁴

On December 24, 2015, tension had escalated between Russia and Turkey due to the downing of a Russian warplane by Turkish jets on the Syrian border. The hawkish attitude of the AKP government and remarks like “If it happens again, we’ll do it again,”⁶⁰⁵ brought the relationship to breaking point. Nevertheless, later, ties with Russia grew so much stronger that Turkey would side with Russia against the European Union and NATO. When, with Erdoğan’s apologies, there was a Turkey-Russia rapprochement,⁶⁰⁶ Perinçek stated, “We intervened and smoothed things over in the altercation between Russia and Turkey.”⁶⁰⁷ No denial or explanation was issued by the Turkish government. Perinçek said, “When the Russian plane was downed, we were the sole power block that did not get excited. We expressed that it was wrong. We advocated and took concrete steps for Turkey to ameliorate its relationships with Russia. Upon our invitation, Putin’s generals came to Turkey and we hosted them. We arranged meetings between them and Erdoğan’s people.”

Konstantin Malofeev—a wealthy businessman and Russian ultra-nationalist who is also known as “Putin’s Soros”—received a delegation from Perinçek’s party. According to the account provided by retired general Soner Polat, who heads the Homeland Party’s National Strategy Center in İstanbul (USMER), Malofeev stated, “For the first time this group informed us that pro-Fethullah [Gülen] members are extensively organized in Turkey; and they added that Erdoğan can’t act without taking the pro-Fethullah threat into consideration even though their leader lives in America. This visit was very fruitful. We had the conviction that a consensus must be maintained provided that Erdoğan extends his apologies.”⁶⁰⁸ In

603] “Turkey ‘gives key Nato posts including jobs in London to pro-Russia hardliners’ in the wake of failed coup against Erdogan”, 10 December 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4019744/Turkey-gives-key-Nato-posts-including-jobs-London-pro-Russia-hardliners-wake-failed-coup-against-Erdogan.html#ixzz4lNu1L5yH>

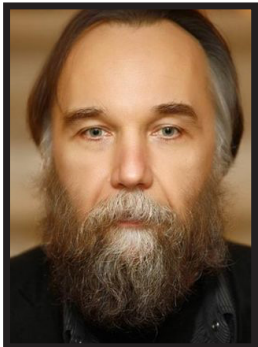
604] “Afganistan’da şehit olan Astsubay da KHK ile ihraç edildi” [The sergeant who was killed on duty in Afghanistan purged with KHK], Çağdaş Ses, 24 November 2016, <http://www.cagdasses.com/guncel/56072/afganistanda-sehit-olan-astsubay-da-khk-ile-ihrac-edildi>

605] “Erdogan’dan Putin’e yanıt: Bugün olsa yine yaparız” [Erdoğan’s reply to Putin: We’ll do it again, if it happens today], Cumhuriyet, 26 November 2015, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/433073/Erdogan_dan_Putin_e_yanit_Bugun_olsa_yine_yapariz.html

606] “Kremlin: Erdoğan özür diledi” [Kremlin: Erdoğan apologized], BBC Turkish, 26 June 2016, http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/06/160624_erdogan_rusya

607] “Önce İttifak Ettiler Şimdi Ayrılıyorlar Mı?” [First they allied, are they parting ways now?], Furkan Haber, 13 October 2016, <http://www.furkanhaber.net/once-ittifak-ettiler-simdi-ayriliyorlar-mi/9705/>

608] “Rusya’nın önde gelen isimlerinin ağzından Rusya ile ilişkilerin düzelmesinde Vatan Partisi’nin rolü” [Opinions of prominent figures from Russia about the role of Homeland Party in improving relationships with Russia], Ulusal Kanal, 11 August 2016, <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/gundem/rusya-nin-onde-gelen-isimlerinin-agzindan-rusya-ile-iliskilerin-duzelmesinde-vatan-partisi-nin-rolu-h116261.html>



**Aleksandr
Dugin**

those days, the discourse of Turkish government officials similarly changed and assumed a moderate tone even towards Syria's Assad regime, an ally of Russia.⁶⁰⁹

4.4 Perinçek And Erdoğan Had Information About July 15 Coup Beforehand

As more information surfaced about July 15, the idea strengthened that the Erdoğan-Perinçek coalition had made moves to channel a pre-planned coup attempt in their own favor. In Fethullah Gülen's view, expressed to SCF, "July 15 was an evil scenario staged by Erdoğan and his associates."

At every opportunity, Perinçek revealed that they knew beforehand that the coup would take place and had given notice of it as early as 14 days before.⁶¹⁰ It is also known that Hasan Atilla Uğur, a retired colonel and a close friend of Perinçek, informed the pro-government and Islamist Yeni Şafak newspaper the day before.⁶¹¹ It is noteworthy that Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin, a Eurasianist ideologue and Perinçek's ally, visited Ankara the day before the attempt. Dugin, who consulted with AKP circles on July 14, 2016, expressly revealed that he had informed them about coup preparations.⁶¹²

Erdoğan and Perinçek's accusations against the Gülen movement immediately after the coup have not been found credible across the globe. For example, the Chief of the General Staff's aide-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonel Levent Türkkkan is alleged to be a member of the Gülen movement and is supposed to have said Gülen was involved in the plot; however, at the trial hearing he denied all the allegations, testified that that he had been tortured, and refuted all his signed depositions, saying they were taken under duress: "I was trashed and was drip-fed. None of the statements are truly mine."⁶¹³

4.5 A Controlled Coup For The Sake Of Unbridled Dictatorship

In his speech at a HDP party parliamentary group meeting on October 4, 2016, co-chair of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtaş, who has been incarcerated for months by the Erdoğan regime commented, "On the pretext of fighting the coup, they are preying on us—the democratic bulwarks who stand up against coup attempts. Time and time again, we have questioned the political roots of the coup. Who would be seated as prime minister or president if coup had been successful? Why don't you explain it? Instead, you discharged

609] "Türkiye'den Esat'a yeşil ışık" [Green light from Turkey to Assad], Cumhuriyet, 11 August 2016, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/582785/Turkiye_den_Esad_a_yesil_istik.html

610] "Doğu Perinçek: Darbeyi 14 gün önce milletimize duyurduk" [Doğu Perinçek: We announced the coup to our people 14 days before], Ulusal Kanal, 16 July 2016, <http://www.ulusalkanal.com.tr/gundem/dogu-perincek-darbeyi-14-gun-oncemilletimize-duyurduk-h112022.html>

611] "Perinçek: Darbeyi bir gün önce Yeni Şafak'a bildirdik" [Perinçek: We notified Yeni Şafak of the coup], Cumhuriyet, 15 February 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/676506/Perincek__Darbeyi_bir_gun_once_Yeni_Safak_gazetesine_bildirdik.html

612] "Putin'in Özel Temsilcisi: 14 Temmuz'da uyardık" [Putin's Special Envoy: We warned on July 14], 3 October 2016, Hürriyet, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/putinin-ozel-temsilcisi-14-temmuzda-uyardik-40238167>

-613] "'Evet Cemaat üyesiyim' ifadesi veren Hulusi Akar'ın yaveri: İfade işkence altında alındı" [Hulusi Akar's aide who testified he was a follower of the movement: The testimony was taken under torture], soL, 23 May 2017, <http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/evet-cemaat-uyesiyim-ifadesi-veren-hulusi-akar-in-yaveri-ifade-iskence-altinda-alindi-197368>



**Konstantin
Malofeev**

a civil servant who transferred money at a Bank Asya branch. How many AKP lawmakers got the tip-off before the coup and how many played an active role during the coup? Why don't you reveal it? He alleges that his brother-in-law notified him. It is an out-and-out lie! He knew it before you, me, and his brother-in-law, even before the National Intelligence. You got the intelligence, you took precautions, 225 people lost their lives [later the number rose to 249] so you could consolidate your power. Instead of curbing the coup threat, you waited intentionally for their move. We face the biggest conspiracy of the republican era; interwoven plot schemes, a coup within a coup. Everybody knows you got the list of all the names of the putschists days before.”⁶¹⁴

He pointed out that the coup was real, not a scenario, yet “the measures taken against the coup are a monstrous scenario.” He was arrested and put into prison for the above remarks. As the thick mist over July 15 dissipates, the idea and argument that it was a “controlled coup” has become stronger. One of the advocates of this view is the main opposition party CHP's leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu.⁶¹⁵

Controlled or not, many facts uncovered since July 15 actually point to a staged coup. Most of the depositions provided by the defendants in various court trials indicate that troops were mobilized for a possible terrorist attack or military drill. The unidirectional blockage of the Bosphorus bridge, the small number of tanks and soldiers dispatched, the inability to come up with a logical explanation as to why parliament, the presidential palace, and security units were bombed during the coup bid strengthens the view that limited mobilizations were planned to give the appearance of a coup for public consumption.



**Mehmet
Eymür**

Turkey's most powerful institutions, which were tipped off 7 hours before the coup, failed to take necessary precautions and caused the death toll to climb 249 civilians. It appears not to have been the result of a failure on the part of the General Chief of Staff or the National Intelligence Organization but rather a deliberate scheme to benefit Erdoğan, who is bent on destroying all critical opposition and independent groups in the country.

Erdoğan's scandalous “This is a gift from God” in the heat of the uprising further boost the likelihood of this scenario. Levent Gültekin, who is quite familiar with the political Islamist circles from which Erdoğan rose, says that “Erdoğan knew it beforehand.” What is more, on July 15, Erdoğan had a camera ready at his hotel in the Marmaris to record a speech to the nation. He noted that one of Erdoğan's bureaucrats gave him this information.⁶¹⁶

Journalist Can Ataklı, who has scrutinized the coup attempt in depth, highlights the anomalies: “This coup attempt had been quashed long before. The soldiers dispatched were under the illusion they were staging a coup under the Chief of the General Staff's chain of command. Later this attempt was curbed during daytime. Pro-government journalists give

614] “Selahattin Demirtaş: Darbe içinde darbeye karşı karşıyayız” [Selahattin Demirtaş: We are facing a coup within a coup], NTV, 4 October 2016, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/selahattin-demirtas-darbe-icinde-darbeye-karsi-karsiyayiz,2s-msTEal0U-6XzDKcBNG6w>

615] “Kılıçdaroğlu: 15 Temmuz kontrollü darbe girişimidir, [Kılıçdaroğlu: July 15 is a controlled coup attempt], BBC Türkçe, 3 April 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39478777>

616] “Levent Gültekin: Erdoğan darbeyi önceden biliyordu” [Levent Gültekin: Erdoğan knew about the coup in advance], 5 November 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXpOyMi7kXA>

this account. In this context, the Undersecretary of National Intelligence met the Director of Religious Affairs at 17.30. He requested that *adhan* and *sala* prayer be recited from the minarets. It is impossible for politicians to have been left in dark. I was on the street that night. The municipalities let the trucks out onto the streets at 9:30. Trucks were lined up before a few AKP municipality buildings.”⁶¹⁷

4.6 Eymür: July 15 Is A Derailed MİT Operation

Mehmet Eymür, the Director of the Counter Terrorism Department in the National Intelligence Agency, published a video to YouTube on 24 April 2017. As Eymür put it, “July 15 was a derailed MİT Operation.”⁶¹⁸ He claimed that Adil Öksüz is an agent in the National Intelligence Agency.

During the course of the trials, as defendants have submitted their statements, the government narrative of the coup bid has started to fall apart. The military aide of the President, Ali Yazıcı, who testified in main trial hearings at the High Criminal Court, said that Erdoğan himself appointed him as his aide. Yazıcı mentioned these points in his testimony: “Erdoğan carried out an investigation about me for 3–4 months. He inquired about me at AKP district organization level and of the local neighborhood headman. He asked for information from the National Intelligence Agency. If I had a connection with the Gülen movement, he would not have picked me. I am being tried for plotting to assassinate the President. As his aide, I was always with him, and I didn’t kill him when I had all the opportunity. Yet, it is alleged in this case that I would kill him when I was away from him [when he was vacationing in Marmaris without any military aides accompanying president]. This is preposterous.”

Defining himself as a “pro-Atatürk officer,” Yazıcı said his past had been dug through extensively by the president’s team before he was assigned to him as military aide. When he was asked, “Who staged the coup?” he said that Erdoğan’s advisors had been talking about a coup on the President’s aircraft one or two months before.⁶¹⁹

Brigadier-General Erhan Caha, the Former Head of Force Enhancements in the Turkish Land Forces said in his statement, “If military personnel had been ordered to go on full alert the moment this information was intercepted, none of these events would have occurred. I and thousands of officers like me wouldn’t have gone through such a disgraceful ordeal.” He said that he believed the coup bid to have been a civil one with a military front. In his defense, he stated, “This desperate and nefarious coup attempt was staged under the planning, coordination, and control of the Chief of the General Staff, the Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the undersecretary of the National Intelligence Agency.

617] “Can Ataklı’dan şok iddia: Askerler hükümetin bilgisi dahilinde sokağa çıktı!” [Shocking claim from Can Atakli: Soldiers hit the streets with government’s knowledge!], 5 November 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6YbhDF8Njw>

618] “Eski MİT’çi Mehmet Eymür, 15 Temmuz ile ilgili çok konuşulacak açıklamalar yaptı” [Ex-MİT Mehmet Eymür made extremely controversial statements about July 15], Haberdar, 1 June 2017, <http://www.haberdar.com/gundem/eski-mit-ci-mehmet-eymur-15-temmuz-rayindan-cikmis-bir-mit-calismasidir-h53484.html>

619] “FETÖ çatı davasında Erdoğan’ın eski Başyaveri Ali Yazıcı’dan sarsıcı ifadeler: Bekliyorlardı” [Shocking statements from Erdoğan’s former chief aide in FETÖ umbrella case: They were anticipating it], Cumhuriyet, 23 May 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/746885/FETO_cati_davasinda_Erdogan_in_eski_Basyaveri_Ali_Yazici_dan_sarsici_ifadeler_Bekliyorlardi.html



**İsmail Hakkı
Pekin**

When they testify before the court even as witnesses, it will shed light on the truth. With the tip-off, the Turkish Armed Forces were pushed into the alleged coup and eventually it will come to the point of the liquidation of the Turkish military. Who are the people behind this coup plan? Only on July 16 when the truth became apparent did I discover how the army was coaxed into a conspiracy. And I became one of the victims of this conspiracy.”⁶²⁰

Zekai Aksakallı, an Eurasianist general, appears to have played a key role in orchestrating the coup bid in line with Erdoğan’s wishes and helped the government to purge pro-Western officers from NATO’s second largest army. Despite the fact that so many officers have pointed their fingers to him as the man who issued mobilization orders, the courts refused to summon him to testify even as a witness. In fact, when a presiding judge İsmail Ademoğlu who chaired critical coup trials at Ankara No.14 High Criminal Court wanted to summon him to testify as a witness in the trial hearing after defense lawyers submitted a motion to cross examine him, Aksakallı refused to testify reportedly by saying that “neither Akar nor Fidan were summoned to testify” and he would not want to give statement to the court either.⁶²¹ In the end, no summon issued for Aksakallı and the judge Ademoğlu who wanted to issue a summon was dismissed, demoted and reassigned to another court.⁶²²

One of the officers who revealed interesting information during a trial hearing at Ankara 17th High Criminal Court was Staff Colonel Fırat Alakuş. Alakuş, who was charged with leading his team to the Headquarters of General Staff to take the Chief of the General Staff as a hostage, said, “I was given orders to ensure and maintain the security of the Chief of the General Staff. I carried out my duties in the chain of command. I believe that my team and I were entrapped by the putschists. In accordance with the intelligence, our mission was to reinforce the General Staff headquarters against a possible terrorist operation. I was assigned by ÖKK Commander Zekai Aksakallı. And I was told to get the detailed debriefing from Colonel Ümit Bak.” Mocking the defendant, the chief judge overseeing the trial said, “You shouldn’t have fallen into the trap,” and issued no decision to summon Zekai Aksakallı, who actually gave the alleged orders.⁶²³

According to the claims of Mehmet Ali Güler, who has worked for years for the neo-nationalist network Ulusal Kanal and the *Aydınlık* daily owned by Perinçek, the coup bid was intercepted early and was forced to premature birth. His scenario says that the putschists were composed of a coalition of various factions, “the pro-FETÖ structure, the pro-Atlantic



**Dursun
Çiçek**

620] “Darbe sanığı Tuğgeneral Erhan Caha: Bu girişim öğrenilir öğrenilmez personel ikaz edilmiş olsaydı bu olayların hiç-biri yaşanmazdı” [Coup suspect Brigadier-General Caha: If the staff had been warned as soon as the attempt was noticed, none of the events would have happened], *Hürriyet*, 24 May 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/darbe-sanigi-tuggeneral-erhan-caha-bu-girisim-40468535>

621] “Ankara’da bu konuşuluyor: Bir komutan “Akar ve Fidan’ı dinlemediniz beni de dinleyemezsiniz” dedi mi”, [This was being talked about in Ankara: Did a commander say ‘You did not summon Akar and Fidan to testify, you can’t summon me either], *OdaTV*, 10 July 2017, <http://odatv.com/bir-komutan-akar-ve-fidani-dinlemediniz-beni-de-dinleyemezsiniz-dedi-mi-1007171200.html>

622] “Ankara Adliyesinde Kritik Görev Değişimi” [The critical change in Ankara courthouse], 10 May 2017, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/gundem/ankara-adliyesinde-kritik-gorev-degisimi-2-1842488/>

623] “15 Temmuz Çatı Davası: ‘Görevi Aksakallı verdi” [July 15 Main Case: ‘Aksakallı gave the mission’], *Evrensel*, 25 May 2017, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/321036/15-temmuz-cati-davasi-gorevi-aksakalli-verdi>

group, and a third group composed of disgruntled dissidents who would be retired soon.” According to Güler, “It can be deduced that one of these groups was persuaded and forced to back down. Another group never mobilized or those who started quickly beat a retreat.”⁶²⁴ However, SCF’s analysis of evidence and testimonials refutes claims that the coup bid was moved to an earlier timeline.

A journalist with insight about the Turkish Armed Forces because of his military background, Metehan Demir shared a post which he deleted later on the social media claiming that “The Council of Peace in Homeland is a pro-Atatürk group.”

Former Head of the General Staff Intelligence Department and retired Major General İsmail Hakkı Pekin, a Eurasianist who is the deputy chairman of Perinçek’s Homeland Party, said that not only pro-Gülenists but also officers driven by the thought “We are losing our homeland” took part in the coup.⁶²⁵ He cites the name of Adem Huduti, a detained commander of the Second Army Corps, as an example of this second group: “I have known Adem Huduti for a long time. I have never witnessed his relationship with Fethullah.”

According to Pekin, another group that can be classified as “pragmatists and self-interested social climbers” participated in the coup with expectations of “getting unearned income.” Pekin claims that Akın Öztürk, one of the high-ranking convicted soldiers and the former Commander of Air Forces, most likely belongs to the last group.

According to Brigadier-General Mehmet Tevfik Bedük, pro-Gülenists may amount to 10–15 percent of the army and some joined the coup for the sake of “homeland” and “country.”

Retired Colonel and CHP lawmaker Dursun Çiçek, who was arrested in the Ergenekon investigations for a while and later released from prison, stated in an interview before the failed coup bid that the possibility of the Gülen movement’s staging a coup was zero.⁶²⁶ When he was asked about his claim that the percentage of pro-Gülenists in the General Staff is 10 percent, Çiçek replied, “I worked in Psychological Operations Department of the General Staff for 7 years. I worked 7 years in the Headquarters of Naval Forces. Our intelligence and findings indicate this. When the AKP took power, it objected to the dismissal decisions taken in the Supreme Military Council (YAŞ). This situation created pressure on the Armed Forces and rendered the discharge of movement members difficult. The number of discharges declined after 2013, then ceased. Since they have been infiltrating for the last 10 years, they are only low-ranking officers. Some say they constitute 40 percent. If it were true, they would capture the army and wouldn’t have needed the Ergenekon and Balyoz operations to neutralize the army.” When asked, “Could this 10 percent pro-Gülenist body stage a coup?” his reply was, “I would laugh at it; I don’t perceive such danger.”

624] “Kontrollü değil, erken doğurtulmuş darbe girişimi” [Not controlled but prematurely aborted coup bid], Mehmet Ali Güller, 29 April 2017, <https://mehmetaliguller.com/2017/04/29/kontrollu-degil-erken-dogurtulmus-darbe-girisimi/>

625] “15 Temmuz darbe girişiminin arkasında kim var?” [Who is behind July 15 coup bid?], BBC Turkish, 20 July 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-36843901>

626] “Ordudaki Fethullahçılar darbe yapma gücü sıfır” [The power of Gülenists to stage a coup is zero], Hürriyet, 23 March 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ahmet-hakan/ordudaki-fethullahcilarin-darbe-yapma-gucu-si-fir-40074000>

The July 15 coup attempt has been blamed on the Gülen movement well in advance of any solid evidence, thorough investigation, or effective trial. Pro-NATO generals and officers have been arrested on the grounds they are Gülen movement members. The commanders who were discharged have been replaced by the anti-Western officers who stood trial in the Balyoz and Ergenekon cases.⁶²⁷ Some of the suspects in these cases were promoted at the first Supreme Military Council (YAŞ) meeting held after July 15. It is remarkable how the names of the generals arrested for the July 15 coup coincide with the list of names in complaints and books by the suspects in the Balyoz case. For example, ex-convict in Balyoz case and retired Staff Colonel Mustafa Önsel wrote a book titled “Woodworm-Fethullah’s Soldiers” which listed names of alleged pro-Gülen officers in the armed forces. All 20 officers named in Önsel’s book were arrested after the coup attempt.⁶²⁸

627] “Mağdur oldular, cezaevinde yattılar, beraat ettiler ve göreve dönüyorlar” [Victimized, incarcerated, exonerated and now being reinstated], Hürriyet, 22 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/magdur-oldular-cezaevinde-yattilar-beraat-ettiler-ve-yeniden-atandilar-40163342>

628] “Cezaevinden generalliğe; Balyoz ve Askeri Casusluk davaları sanığı 7 general ile darbeye direnenlere terfi” [From prison to generalship; 7 generals tried for Sledgehammer and Military Intelligence files and anti-putschists promoted], T24, 29 July 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/balyozdan-yas-2016da-terfiye,352532>

CHAPTER 5

THE AIM OF THE COUP ATTEMPT: DEMOCRACY AND THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT

5.1. Where In The July 15 Coup Attempt Was Gülen?

Turkish Muslim scholar Fethullah Gülen categorically denies all allegations that he was involved in the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016. Not only did he condemn the coup bid while it was still underway, but he also denies all allegations of his involvement. Gülen went further than denial, suggesting that an independent international commission be set up to reveal all the facts. He reiterates this proposal at every opportunity. Neither Erdoğan nor the Turkish government has responded to this proposal. Stressing that he would comply with any recommendations such a commission would make, Gülen also ruled out people who sympathize with the Hizmet movement engaging in a military coup in any way. Gülen said that if anybody who sympathizes with him was involved in any way, that person has betrayed his lifelong values and ideals.

Prominent figures close to the Gülen movement have made numerous statements and published articles with the same line of thought and argued that the coup attempt was a calculated strategy by which to make the Gülen movement a scapegoat, set up Gülen's followers for persecution, criminalize the movement he inspires, and annihilate it. Gülen, who has suffered in the past every time the military staged a coup or interfered in government, has a consistent record of opposing coups. His movement is a peaceful, non-violent, civil-society organization that works in education, interfaith dialog, community involvement, charity work, and humanitarian aid in 170 countries. He is known for his staunch opposition to all kinds of religious radicalization, extremism, and terrorism, and he has expressed strong condemnation of terrorist organizations and acts of violence many times.

Fethullah Gülen, in a statement published in the heat of the July 15 coup attempt, said, "I condemn the military coup attempt in the strongest possible terms. Governments should change not by use of force but through free and fair elections. I pray for Turkey, the Turkish people and everyone who is in Turkey now. I pray to God that the problem will be solved in the most expeditious and peaceful way. Having personally suffered in every military coup staged in the last 50 years, I find it humiliating to be associated with such an attempt. I categorically deny all such allegations."⁶²⁹

Turkish newspapers known to be close to the Gülen movement published headlines on July 16 condemning the coup attempt but they were closed down by emergency decree a few days later. Arrest warrants were issued for the journalists working at the newspapers. The Journalists and Writers Foundation (GYV), a non-governmental organization whose

629] "Gülen: Darbe girişimini lanetliyorum" [Gülen: I denounce the coup bid], Artı49, 16 July 2017, <http://www.arti49.com/gulen-darbe-girisimini-lanetliyorum-517506h.htm>

honorary chairman is Gülen, also made a statement on July 16 condemning the coup: “We oppose all types of attempts against democracy. Our democracy, which has been suspended for some time, has received another unfortunate blow. In democracies, governments come to power through elections and step down through elections. The opposite is unthinkable.”⁶³⁰

The witch hunt against the Gülen movement had already started three years before the coup attempt, and it simply intensified after the failed coup. Gülen continued repeating his calls to set up an international commission to probe the July 15 coup attempt in his interviews with TV channels and newspapers.⁶³¹ Also, the investigation commission set up by the Turkish parliament to probe the coup bid did not make any effort to get a statement from Fethullah Gülen although he was alleged to be the number one suspect in all the coup indictments, which demanded hundreds of life sentences. The Gülen movement was declared a “terrorist organization” by the government without awaiting the outcome of any criminal proceedings in the judicial system.

5.2. Was It Gülen Sympathizers In The Army Who Staged The Coup?

From the moment the coup attempt was launched, President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Yıldırım, and other AKP party officials claimed that the uprising originated from a small faction of Gülenists in the military. The caveat they quickly added was that they were not sure about the force commanders and the the Chief of General Chief of Staff. Bizarrely, they made these accusations without even knowing the identities of the coup plotters or who was loyal and who are putschist in the army.

This strange situation is best summarized in the exchange at the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission between Burhanettin Uysal, ruling AKP deputy, and gendarmerie commander Lieutenant General Arif Çetin, who was testifying to the commission:



Burhanettin Uysal (Deputy for Karabük): Commander, now, you learned about the coup at 21.00 but you came to the command center at 22.40, where the real action took place: two of the four colonels were wounded and two colonels came up to you and said, “Commander, FETÖists, parallelists have taken over.” But you did not find this strange. You did not ask who these FETÖists are, you carried on business as usual. Who are they? I mean... .”

General Arif Çetin: It was impossible to know who was inside. The only thing was we knew two from the clashes at the gate that resulted in injuries and from the conversations of friends, but we became aware of who was inside once we entered the building. We had no idea who was inside. You must understand that we were outside the garrison and they were inside. From the outside, it was impossible for us to know how many and who was inside. Naturally, the next day

630] “Fethullah Gülen Hocaefendi, darbe girişimini şiddetle kınadı” [Fethullah Gülen vehemently condemns coup bid], 16 July 2016, <http://fethullahgulen.com/tr/fethullah-gulen-kimdir/fethullah-gulenin-mesajlari/50646-fethullah-gulen-hocae-fendi-darbe-girisimini-siddetle-kinadi>

631] “Fethullah Gülen: Uluslararası bir komisyon darbeyi araştırсын, sonucunu şimdiden kabul ediyoruz,[Fethullah Gülen: Let an international commission probe the coup, we are accepting its verdict in advance], T24, 17 Temmuz 2016, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/fethullah-gulen-uluslararasi-bir-komisyon-darbeyi-arastirsin-sonucunu-simdiden-kabul-ediyoruz,350385>

we saw and knew...”⁶³² As it can be seen from this exchange, it was impossible to know who was who during the confusing events on July 15 yet Erdoğan magically knew exactly who to blame.

A report published by the German Focus magazine in August claimed that Turkish government members decided to put the blame for the coup attempt on Gülen half an hour after the uprising and agreed to begin a purge of Gülen followers the next day.⁶³³ According to the article that was sourced on the British intelligence and security organization Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) that provides signals intelligence (SIGINT) to the UK Armed forces and the government, communications among Turkish government officials pointed out at the plot to present Gülen as the brain behind uprising and plan to launch mass purges.

To declare that the putschists whose names and numbers were not even known at the time were affiliated with the Gülen movement simply defies logic and lends credence to the claim that this was all set up by Erdoğan and his associates to consolidate their power and to transform what is NATO’s largest army after the US into a bastion for Islamists and neo-Nationalists.

There is no shortage of bloated figures quoted on the number of officers believed to be Gülen sympathizers in the Turkish Armed Forces both before and after the coup attempt. Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, which is carrying out the July 15 investigation, claims that 90,000 officers⁶³⁴ are affiliated with the Gülen movement. Given that officers in the Turkish military total 91,227,⁶³⁵ it is clear that this claim is far-fetched and advanced by partisan prosecutors and the pro-government media.

The General Staff, on the other hand, announced that the number of personnel engaged in the coup was 8,651, of whom 1,676 were privates and 1,214 were military cadets. The General Staff added that this figure accounted for 1.5 percent of the Turkish military forces.⁶³⁶ Yet, more than 23,000 officers and 16,000 military students have been purged since July 15.

There are far lower estimates of the number of officers and soldiers claimed to have taken part in the coup attempt in Ankara and İstanbul on July 15. The İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor announced that only two of 47 colonels alleged to be affiliated with the Hizmet movement took part in the coup. When asked why 45 colonels did not take part in it, the prosecution said, “Not all Gülenists participated in it because they were reserving them for

632] Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission minutes, 9 November 2016, p. 36, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1775

633] Macht. Wahn. Erdogan.”, Focus, 30 July 2016, http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/titelthema-macht-wahn-erdogan_id_5753730.html

634] “90 bin FETÖcü asker var” [There are 90,000 pro-FETO soldiers], Cumhuriyet, 16 March 2017, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/700546/90_bin_FETO_cu_asker_var.html

635] “TSK’da personel sayısı açıklandı” [Number of TSK staff announced], aHaber, 2 January 2017, <http://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2017/01/02/tsk-personel-sayisini-acikladi>

636] “Darbe envanteri” [Coup Inventory], Takvim, 28 July 2016, <http://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2016/07/28/darbe-envanteri>

a second coup.”⁶³⁷ The prosecution’s claim that the movement staged the coup with a small part of its power and reserved a majority “in case the first one fails” is not supported by any hard evidence, nor does it stand to reason.

Perhaps this is the reason most countries do not accept the official narrative from Erdoğan’s office. Even putting aside their own intelligence assessments that do not show Gülen’s complicity, the illogical claims floated by the Turkish government have undermined Erdoğan’s story. Moreover, almost a year since the coup bid, the Turkish government has failed to present any direct evidence that Gülen and the movement were involved in the coup as a whole. Instead, testimonials extracted from victims under torture and conflicting statements from key players have been presented as evidence. Nobody seems to have bought the narrative that has fallen apart.

Norwegian media outlet Aldrimer published a story on January 25, 2017 that stated the dominant assessment in NATO is clear in concluding that Erdoğan staged the coup against himself. “Senior NATO sources tell aldrimer.no that they believe Erdoğan staged the coup himself. However, they stress that there is no written NATO documentation for that claim, because it is simply too sensitive. That’s because all member nation’s have the right to access to all intelligence information gathered by the alliance.” It added that “The senior officers, three- and four-star generals, and those who worked with Turkey for 30-40 years and who mentored Turkish officers for four or five years, say they do not believe that there was a coup. If the Turkish Armed Forces wanted to carry out a coup, they would have succeeded. That’s a tradition in Turkey,” a NATO source told Aldrimer.⁶³⁸

A story in the UK’s The Times newspaper on January 17, 2017 gave some details from the European Union Intelligence Center’s (INTCEN) July 15 report. According to Bruno Waterfield’s article, the report by INTCEN states that Erdoğan had planned the purges before the July 15 coup attempt, which was mounted by a range of opponents to Erdoğan and his ruling AKP: “The European intelligence contradicts the Turkish government’s claim that Fethullah Gülen, an exiled cleric, was behind the plot to overthrow the Turkish government.” It added, “It is unlikely Gülen really had the abilities and capacities to take such steps.”⁶³⁹

Similarly, Germany’s federal intelligence BND chief Bruno Kahl said in an interview with Der Spiegel on March 18, 2017, “We’re not convinced that Gülen is behind the coup.”⁶⁴⁰ Stating that Turkey was trying to convince them of Gülen’s involvement with the coup at every venue, Kahl added, “but so far it has not succeeded.” He also said the attempt was not plotted by the state. Kahl indicated that “before July 15 the government had already

637] “Savcılık 15 Temmuz’da Hizmet’ in olmadığını itiraf etti” [Prosecutor’s office confesses Hizmet not part of July 15], Aktif Haber, 14 April 2017, <http://aktifhaber.com/15-temmuz/savcilik-15-temmuzda-hizmetin-olmadigini-itiraf-et-ti-h94695.html>

638] “NATO insiders suspect staged Turkey coup” Aldrimer.no, 25 January 2017, <https://www.aldrimer.no/nato-insiders-suspect-staged-turkey-coup/>

639] Erdogan plotted purge before coup, say Brussels spies, Bruno Waterfield, 17 January 2017, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/erdogan-plotted-purge-before-coup-say-brussels-spies-2hh8mgx6h>

640] “Alman istihbarat şefi: Darbenin arkasında Gülen’in olduğuna ikna olmadık” [German Intelligence Chief: We’re not convinced Gülen is behind coup], DW, 18 March 2017, <http://www.dw.com/tr/alman-istihbarat-%C5%9Fefi-darbenin-arkas%C4%B1nda-g%C3%BClenin-ordu%C4%9Funa-ikna-olmad%C4%B1k/a-38006818>

started a big purge,” and so “parts of the military thought they should do a coup quickly before it hit them too. But it was too late. They were purged as well.”

The coup was “a welcome pretext” for President Erdoğan, said Kahl. In response to Der Spiegel’s question, “Is the Gülen movement an extremist-Islamist movement? Is it perhaps even a terrorist group?” he said, “The Gülen movement is a civilian association for religious and secular education. For years, it was a collection of tutoring centers and training facilities that worked together with Erdoğan.” Kahl stressed that the Gülen movement cannot be defined as a sect and it is not a minority that can be brushed aside as insignificant.

Hans Georg Maassen, President of the Germany’s Federal Bureau for the Protection of the Constitution, said on March 28, 2017, “Outside Turkey I don’t think anyone believes that the Gülen movement was behind the attempted putsch,” and added, “At any rate I don’t know anyone outside Turkey who has been convinced by the Turkish government.”⁶⁴¹

Chair of the US House Intelligence Committee Republican Devin Nunes addressed the issue on Fox TV on March 19, 2017. Chris Wallace asked Nunes, “In Turkey they’re saying that the Trump administration is considering the extradition of Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic cleric who has been in this country and Turkey wants to get back. They say he was the architect of the attempted coup against Turkish president Erdoğan. Do you know anything about that?” Nunes replied, “I find that hard to believe. The Erdoğan government is becoming very authoritarian, a NATO ally that for a long time has been a strong ally of ours. They’re becoming more and more worrisome in terms of actually being a reliable and you know I don’t know that we would extradite somebody like that. I haven’t seen the evidence for that, that Gülen was involved in anything like that.”⁶⁴²

The report published on March 21, 2017 by the UK’s House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee titled “The UK’s relations with Turkey” included some findings about July 15. The report said, “The evidence presented so far to argue in favor of the culpability of the Gülenists for the coup attempt has been overwhelmingly anecdotal or circumstantial, and often based on confessions. The validity of these confessions has been called into question in some cases, amid accusations that they were detained under duress.”⁶⁴³

The report drew the following conclusions: “Given the brutality of the events of 15 July, the severity of the charges made against the Gülenists, and the scale of the purges of perceived Gülenists that has been justified on this basis, there is a relative lack of hard, publicly–available evidence to prove that the Gülenists as an organization were

641] “Alman istihbarat şefi: 15 Temmuz’un arkasında Gülen hareketinin olduğuna kimse inanmıyor” [German Intelligence Chief: No one believes Gülen movement is behind July 15], BBC Turkish, 28 March 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39417246>

642] “Alman İstihbarat Şefinden Sonra ABD Kongre İstihbarat Şefinden Türkiye’yi Sarsacak Gülen-Darbe Yanıtı Geldi” [Momentous Gülen-Coup Reply from US House Intelligence Committee Chairman following German Intelligence Chief], Washington Hattı, 20 March 2017, <https://washingtonhatti.com/2017/03/20/alman-istihbarat-sefinden-abd-kongre-istihbarat-sefinden-gulen-darbe-yaniti-geldi/>

643] “İngiliz Parlamentosu da Gülenlerin Darbenin Arkasında Olduğundan Emin Değil” [UK Parliament not sure whether Gülenists behind coup], Washington Hattı, 26 March 2017, <https://washingtonhatti.com/2017/03/26/ingiliz-parlamento-su-da-gulencilerin-darbenin-arkasinda-oldugundan-emin-degil/>



Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım (R) appears for a joint press event with visiting US Vice President Joe Biden.

responsible for the coup attempt in Turkey. While there is evidence to indicate that some individual Gülenists were involved, it is mostly anecdotal or circumstantial, sometimes premised on information from confessions or informants, and is—so far—inconclusive in relation to the organization as a whole or its leadership. As we publish this report, nine months after the coup attempt, neither the UK nor Turkish governments can point us to one person who has been found guilty by a court of involvement in the coup attempt, let alone anyone being found guilty with evidence of involvement with Gülenist motives. We also note that, despite Turkey purportedly submitting 80 boxes of “evidence” to the US to achieve the extradition of Fethullah Gülen on the basis that he masterminded the coup attempt, the US judiciary has not yet moved to deport him.

“Since around 2013, individuals associated with the Gülenists have adopted a political agenda opposed to the AK Party government of Turkey, and have possessed the means, motive, and opportunity to support the coup attempt, but their culpability has yet to be definitively proved. The FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] told us that it did not have evidence to justify the designation of the Gülenists as a terrorist organization by the UK, and we agree with this assessment.”

The US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee held a session after protestors were beaten by Erdoğan’s security detail in front of the Turkish ambassador’s residence during Erdoğan’s visit to Washington between 15 and 19 May 2017. The topics of Fethullah Gülen and coup allegations were also discussed. Congressman Brad Sherman indicated that the allegations by the Erdoğan government about Gülen, about whom he had some suspicions, were not credible. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, who spoke at the same session, drew the conclusion that the Gülen movement must be a “a positive thing” after seeing the videos of the incident in the US and Erdoğan’s obsession with closing all Gülen schools. Also mentioning the coup allegations, Rohrabacher claimed that Erdoğan used the supposed coup as an excuse to destroy his opposition.⁶⁴⁴

The then US Vice President Joe Biden said of the coup during a visit to Turkey on August 24, 2016 that “President Obama was one of the first world leaders to speak out in support of the Turkish government, even while the coup was still unfolding. I remember at the time when he and I heard the news, we weren’t sure whether it was real or whether it was some concoction made up on the Internet and the Web. I’m serious. It was so startling.”⁶⁴⁵

The European Parliament’s resolution that approved the critical 2016 Commission

644] “US Congressman: No credibility in charges by Turkey against Gülen,” Turkish Minute, May 26, 2017, <https://www.turkishminute.com/2017/05/26/video-us-congressman-no-credibility-in-charges-by-turkey-against-gulen/>

645] Remarks to the Press by the Vice President and Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım in Ankara, Turkey August 24, 2016, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=121170>

Report on Turkey on July 6, 2017, which called for the freezing of accession talks, also underlined that Turkish government is yet to present a compelling evidence on alleged coup plotters. It stated that European Parliament “notes with regret that the disproportionate measures undertaken following the declaration of the state of emergency have targeted, through detention, dismissals, arrests and property confiscation, not only thousands of people who are alleged members/supporters of the Gülen movement, but also dissenters in general and political parties of the opposition in particular; is still awaiting compelling evidence as regards the perpetrators of the coup attempt”.⁶⁴⁶

5.3. July 15 Is A Coup Against The Gülen Movement

Since July 15, Erdoğan and his authoritarian regime have dismissed at least 150,000 people, including judges, prosecutors, academics, teachers, doctors, nurses, accountants, lawyers, musicians, and others, on charges of belonging to a terror group. They have been punished, and convicted by law-decrees without any administrative or judicial proceedings. The government has had over 50,000 people arrested, 15,000 of whom are women, for alleged links to the Gülen movement. Eighty-two people have committed suicide or died under torture or other suspicious circumstances because of the unfounded accusations, slander, duress, and persecution they were having to live through.⁶⁴⁷



İsmet
Yılmaz

According to official data from the Ministry of Justice, 154,694 suspects faced legal action; this often means arbitrary persecution and long detentions of people who are suspected of being affiliated with the Gülen movement.⁶⁴⁸ Prosecution did not proceed for 2,763 of them, but 50,136 have been arrested. Among the arrestees are 2,431 judges and prosecutors, 104 members of the Council of State, 41 members of the Court of Appeal, 2 members of the Constitutional Court and 3 members of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). Also arrested are 1,982 soldiers, of whom 168 are generals; 8,816 police officers; 23 governors, 73 deputy governors, 112 local governors, and 31,550 civil servants. There is a total of 7,112 outstanding arrest warrants for 211 judges and prosecutors, 6 members of the Council of State, 25 members of the Court of Appeal, 137 soldiers, 369 police officers, 3 deputy governors, 8 local governors, 6,353 public officials and civilians.⁶⁴⁹

Contracts with Social Security were abruptly cancelled for hospitals and health institutions opened by people close to the Gülen movement. Then a total of 35 hospitals and medical centers across Turkey were shut down by law-decrees while many patients were

646] 2016 Report on Turkey, European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2017 on the 2016 Commission Report on Turkey (2016/2308(INI)), <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGM-L+TA+P8-TA-2017-0306+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

647] “Suspicious Deaths and Suicides in Turkey – Updated List (As of July 9, 2017)” <http://stockholmcf.org/suspicious-deaths-and-suicides-in-turkey-updated-list/>

648] Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ updated the figures on July 7, 2017 and said since a controversial coup attempt, 50,504 people have been arrested and 168,801 are the subject of legal proceedings for their alleged involvement in the organization of the coup. “Turkey’s Justice Minister Bozdağ Says 50,504 Arrested Since Coup Attempt,” SCF, 9 July 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/turkeys-justice-minister-bozdag-says-50504-arrested-since-coup-attempt/>

649] “Darbe girişiminin 10 aylık bilançosu: 50 bin 136 kişi tutuklandı” [10-month balance-sheet of coup attempt: 50,136 arrested], Diken, 28 May 2017, <http://www.diken.com.tr/darbe-girisiminin10-aylik-bilancosu-50-bin-136-kisi-tutuklandi/>

still in intensive care units.⁶⁵⁰ Health Minister Recep Akdağ made a statement on February 4, 2017 that 6,500 health workers were dismissed from the civil service by emergency decrees issued after July 15. He announced 1,500 doctors were being dismissed.⁶⁵¹

Minister of Education İsmet Yılmaz said on February 10, 2017, “The number of our staff were dismissed by emergency decrees is 33,065.”⁶⁵² Teachers were not only purged but also became targets of police operations. Thousands of teachers were taken into custody after July 15, and 2,635 of them were arrested. With the closure of Gülen-affiliated schools, the teaching certificates of 28,163 teachers who worked at these schools were cancelled. The teachers who lost their jobs were rendered unable to work.

Fifteen foundation universities affiliated with the Gülen movement were closed.⁶⁵³ In addition, Minister of Education Yılmaz said that a total of 2,249 other educational institutions were closed after July 15, 1,060 of which were private schools, 345 other private educational institutions and 844 private dormitories.⁶⁵⁴ The more than 140,000 students who went to these schools were victimized by the unjust treatment. School fees for the 2016–2017 educational year had been paid by March 2016, and parents did not get their money back. The amount appropriated by the state in this way is estimated to be 3 billion Turkish lira (approx. \$830 million).

On Erdoğan’s orders, prominent business people were arrested and many successful holdings and companies were seized. After 17–25 December, many companies, including 21 companies of media tycoon Akin Ipek, Bank Asya and 31 companies of Boydak Holding, were transferred to the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF). After July 15, 965 companies⁶⁵⁵ were seized and transferred to TMSF. Deputy Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli said on May 29, 2017 that the total assets of these companies were worth 40.5 billion lira (approximately \$11.3 billion) and they employed 44,868 people.⁶⁵⁶ Environment Minister Mehmet Özhaskeci said on November 13, 2016 that 15-billion lira’s worth of property from Gülen-affiliated associations, foundations, and companies was transferred to the Treasury and 190,000 properties belonging to people and institutions under investigation were frozen.⁶⁵⁷

650] “FETÖ operasyonlarında kapatılan hastaneler” [Hospitals closed in FETÖ operations], Sözcü, 30 July 2016, <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/saglik/feto-operasyonlarinda-kapatilan-hastaneler-1333533/>

651] “Bakan Akdağ açıkladı: 1500 doktor ihraç edildi” [Minister Akdağ announced: 1500 doctors dismissed], Milliyet, 4 February 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/bakan-akdag-acikladi-1500-doktor-gundem-2390569/>

652] “33 bin 65 personel MEB’den ihraç edildi” [33,065 personnel dismissed from MEB], TRT News, 10 February 2017, <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/33-bin-65-personel-mebden-ihrac-edildi-298277.html>

653] “Sayılarla Kapatılan Üniversiteler” [Closed universities in figures], Bianet, 2 August 2016, <http://bianet.org/bianet/egitim/177442-sayilarla-kapatilan-universiteler>

654] “FETÖ kapsamında 2 bin 249 eğitim kurumu kapatıldı” [2,249 educational institutions closed as part of FETÖ], Time Türk, 15 November 2016, <http://www.timeturk.com/feto-kapsaminda-2-bin-249-egitim-kurumu-kapatildi/haber-376009>

655] “Turkish Gov’t Seizes 965 Gülen Movement Affiliated Firms With \$11.3 Billion Worth,” SCF, July 7, 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/turkish-govt-seizes-965-gulen-movement-affiliated-firms-with-11-3-billion-worth/>

656] “Turkish Gov’t Seized 942 Companies Worth TL 40.5 Bln Since Failed Coup”, SCF, 29 May 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/turkish-govt-seized-942-companies-worth-tl-40-5-bln-since-failed-coup/>

657] “Çevre Bakanı: 15 milyarlık ‘FETÖ’ taşınmazı hazineye geçti” [Minister of the Environment: 15bn worth of ‘FETÖ’ property transferred to Treasury], BirGün, 13 November 2016, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/cevre-bakani-15-milyarlik-feto-tasinmazi-hazineye-gecti-135385.html>

Three news agencies, 16 television stations, 23 radio stations, 25 newspapers, 15 magazines, as well as 29 publishing houses and marketing companies were closed within the scope of the Gülen movement investigations. Their property, assets, and rights were transferred to the Treasury.⁶⁵⁸ Arrest warrants were issued for more than 240 journalists who worked in these institutions. Thousands of journalists were laid off.⁶⁵⁹

The Erdoğan regime’s persecution of the Gülen movement is not limited to the above-mentioned actions. Criminal proceedings and profiling are carried out against Gülen followers both at home and abroad. Civilians living in countries such as Malaysia and Myanmar were kidnapped even though there were no arrest warrants for them.⁶⁶⁰ Other people have been kidnapped both in Turkey and abroad.⁶⁶¹ The systematic torture and ill-treatment Gülen followers and others have endured is causing deaths both in custody and after being arrested.

658] “Kapatılan televizyonlar ve gazeteler belli oldu!” [TVs and papers to be closed announced!], Hürriyet, 28 July 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/3-ajans-16-tv-45-gazete-23-radyo-kapatildi-40172869>

659] “Jailed and wanted journalists in Turkey – Updated List,” SCF- Stockholm Center for Freedom, 9 July 2017, <http://stockholmcf.org/updated-list/>

660] “Kaçırılan 11 kişi nerede?” [Where are the 11 abductees?], BirGün, 30 May 2017, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/kacirilan-11-kisi-nerede-161826.html>

661] “Malezya’dan kaçırılan Türk eğitimcileri yazdı” [Paper writes about teachers abducted from Malaysia], Shaber, 30 October 2016, <http://www.shaber3.com/malezeyadan-kacirilan-turk-egitimcileri-yazdi-haberi/1275064/>



5.4. Interview With Fethullah Gülen

Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) posed questions to Fethullah Gülen about the course of events that led to the dismissal of 150,000 people, detention of as many, and even worse, arrest of more than 50,000 for allegations of membership to terrorist organization.

1- When did you learn about the coup attempt? What was your first reaction?

I learned about the coup from the media. Some of the friends here told me. As a person who has seen all the coups in Turkey to this day and personally experienced the harms of the coups to the country, my first reaction was ‘May God protect our nation.’ I’m a man who dared to say, ‘There’s no return from democracy’⁶⁶² at a time when some people in Turkey viewed democracy as ‘atheism.’ Having personally suffered the harms of the coups and seen their heavy toll on the people, I was worried about my country. And I opposed it by condemning it harshly before it was crushed.

2- Were you worried before July 15 that a coup attempt could be made?

662] Fethullah Gülen: Demokrasiden dönüş yok,” [Fethullah Gülen: There is no return from democracy], Gülen’in Dede-
man Oteli konuşması, 30 June 1994, <https://youtu.be/VLmCYC9upfA>

That the Turkish military was in preparations for a coup had been talked about all over. A journalist friend of mine was telling me that this was even rumored discreetly among journalists in Ankara. I was hearing that Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar had long been engaged in coup preparations and working seriously to that end as well. There might be people who thought there was a coup going on within the chain of command under the influence of these rumors. Allah knows the truth. But staging a bloody coup to end the Hizmet movement, that never crossed my mind.

3- In an interview with the foreign press, you likened the coup to a “Hollywood scenario.” What data and reasons led you to this conclusion? Who do you think wrote the scenario? Who is behind July 15?

I’ve witnessed three coups in Turkey so far. Some coup attempts have appeared in the media in the recent past as part of the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases. This, on the other hand, was a heinous dramatic play that was unlike successful coups or draft coup plans and even a child could see it was a scenario. Many things have been said and written about this play. Perhaps even this part is a matter that deserves an independent and long research. Going into details would take hours but you can list tens of items from its starting hour to the fact that only a handful of troops blocked one way of the bridge on a summer evening when everybody was outside. Some retired generals later said that the coup had been ‘plotted to fail.’ Even American Vice President of the time Joe Biden likened the events to a computer game.

Certainly, I don’t intend to downplay the issue by calling it a dramatic work or a scenario. Its cost was, and is, heavier than all the successful coups in Turkey. Two hundred and forty-nine of our people lost their life. Fifty thousand innocent people are imprisoned. New stories of grievance and ill-treatment are heard every day. Schools and universities are closed. Thousands of companies are seized. Turkey is derailed from the path of democracy that it has been inching along. The nation is polarized, seeds of hostility that are hard to eradicate are being sown among people. A Baath-type dictatorship is being established under the pretext of an executive presidency.

Unable to reach the results he desired through legal means, despite all kinds of pressures on the Hizmet movement, Erdoğan resorted to this appalling act. He had revealed openly his intention to ‘declare Hizmet a terrorist organization to the world with the help of a few police officers and a prosecutor’ before. But it was impossible for him to do it through legal means because Hizmet’s qualified people had not even stepped on an ant, taken to the streets, or thrown a stone at anyone. Therefore, he attempted such a heinous act that could show Hizmet people as armed. As a result, he not only opened the path to his dictatorship but also launched almost an unprecedented witch hunt against Hizmet. Again, he couldn’t convince the international public but turned Turkish people into enemies of Hizmet through dozens of newspapers and TVs broadcasting in the same vein. If only the issue were restricted to anti-Hizmet feelings. The future of the country is destroyed. The state is eviscerated. There are hundreds of thousands of victims. Thousands of qualified, educated

minds who love their country are either in jail or are forced to flee the country. In short, July 15 was an outrageous, heinous scenario constructed by Erdoğan and his accomplices.

4- It has always been alleged that the Hizmet movement infiltrated the state and its institutions and was attempting to penetrate the judiciary and the army. Are these claims true? Does Hizmet have such an aim?

I absolutely do not accept all ugly allegations like infiltration, penetration, and influence peddling since from the start, the Hizmet movement has been emphasizing voluntary work and education and encouraged people to be good, qualified, well-behaved, knowledgeable, modern, loyal, devoted, and altruistic. Similar allegations have been raised since forever. And I have humbly said each time that it is not infiltration for the people of a country to send their children to their own institutions; it is their natural right. I have expressed this numerous times in public conversations and interviews. I am still of the same opinion. It is not infiltration for a people to send their children to their own institutions; it is their natural right.

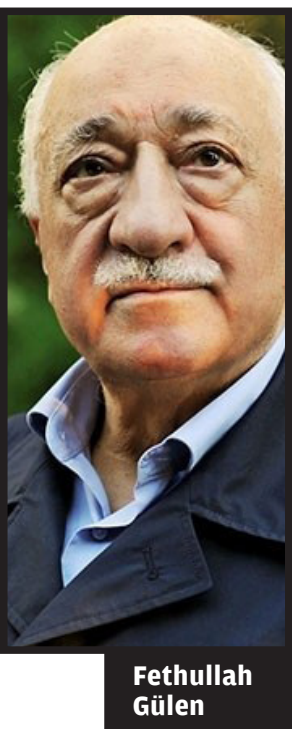
There might be people among those who considered my words worthwhile and who sent their children to different faculties, universities as well as to these places. There might have been those who sympathize with Hizmet and adopted Hizmet's perspective of love, peace, and universal values in the places you've mentioned. And this is not something that should be seen as an odd. But some have always been disturbed by the existence of these people there. The extermination plan executed against Hizmet in the last few years is nothing but a manifestation of this disturbance.

I don't know how many of the police officers, judges, prosecutors, or soldiers who have been dismissed or jailed are affiliated with Hizmet. I don't know a great majority of the people who sympathize with Hizmet. And there is no record, ledger, etc. of this. Hizmet is entirely a movement of volunteers. I'd like to express one thing I've said before once again: if there was anyone engaged in the coup who sympathizes with Hizmet, they have betrayed Hizmet's fundamental principles.

5- You proposed that an international investigation commission be formed. What was your expectation? Intelligence reports from different countries were published later. Did they meet your expectation of an international commission?

No, they [published reports] did not [meet my expectations]. I made such a proposal [of setting up international investigation commission] right after the coup drama. I still insist on my proposal. International institutions, the UN, the European Union, NATO, or any other body should set up an independent commission to probe it. I'm ready to make a statement to this commission. I will truly respect to the end whatever decision they make.

But Erdoğan and the AKP did not accede to this proposal. Demands for sessions in the Turkish Parliament about the issue were rejected by their votes, let alone an international commission. You know what happened to the showpiece Parliamentary Commission that was set up months later because of the pressures. None of the key figures of this drama bothered to come in and give their accounts to the people's parliament.



**Fethullah
Gülen**

It is not enough to see reports by countries like the US, UK, and Germany with powerful intelligence services which indicate a lack of concrete evidence implicating the Hizmet movement in the coup although these have meant the declaration of Hizmet's innocence of charges. Because there was no effect on Turkey in a positive sense. I am of the opinion that this matter should be dealt with more seriously by a commission that will be binding on the whole international community. I want this very much for the acquittal of thousands of people who have been hurt in Turkey based on this lie. If you look at what has happened in Turkey in the last year based on this lie, the significance of my insistence on an international commission would be understood better.

6- Plans were exposed in which AKP ministers made plans with US President Trump's former security advisor Flynn to kidnap you. What do you think about it? Are you informed about other attempts against you?

When I heard of it, I felt sorry especially for my country. I felt sorry that the Republic of Turkey, a country with a long-established tradition, which was more or less on a journey to democracy, has turned into a mob organization. Unfortunately, there are incidents of kidnappings of Hizmet people by mafia-like methods that cannot be associated with the rule of law and human rights and freedoms in countries undeveloped or underdeveloped with respect to democracy, rule of law, human rights, and freedoms. It looks like they were making a similar attempt here [in the US] but this is a country where democracy functions smoothly in all its institutions and the rule of law and its universal values are really above everything. It is impossible for them to accomplish it here. The security agencies here have warned and informed us about some assassination attempts before.

CONCLUSION

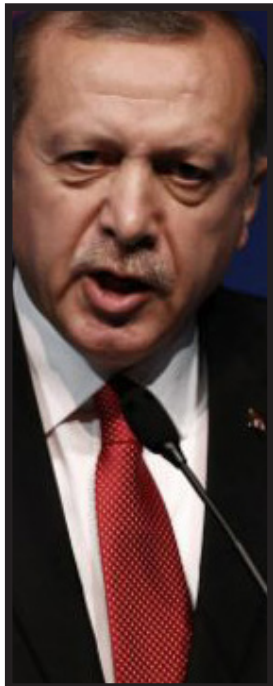
The information that has emerged despite censorship, bans, pressures, and threats from the Turkish government clearly indicates that there is a huge gap between the rhetoric and official narrative of the Erdoğan regime and the facts and truths with respect to the July 15 coup attempt. The body of evidence gathered by SCF that was summarized in this report points out at the elaborate sceme in the disguise of coup attempt in order to benefit Erdoğan and his associates. July 15 events certainly deserve further review, closer scrutiny and deeper investigation.

There are many instances in world political history of authoritarian and totalitarian leaders who have orchestrated fake coups, staged false assassinations, set up uprisings, and plotted “false flags” to consolidate their power, mobilize public support behind them, by-pass checks and balances, sideline parliamentary and judicial scrutiny, and silence civil society, dissidents, and the media. Indeed, before the coup Erdoğan tried to cause public unrest but failed in such scandalous fabrications as the “Assassination on Erdoğan’s daughter,” in which he implicated the opposition CHP, and the “Mass attack on a veiled pro-AKP woman by half-naked men” which supposedly occurred in the Kabataş district of Istanbul during Gezi Park protests.

It is worth to remember that Erdoğan had long failed to persuade generals into a cross border action and military incursion into Syria despite a great deal of pressure and provocations before the coup attempt. The Euphrates operation in Syria was possible only after the failed coup. In addition, MİT had been profiling pro-NATO and pro-Western officers, as well as those affiliated with Gülen and pro-Atatürk officers one by one and the Erdoğan government had been putting on immense pressure to have these officers purged from the army. Yet the Armed Forces resisted these unlawful and unconstitutional pressures because there was no hard evidence against the unsuspecting officers, and so the military protected the generals and officers who had served for years with integrity, and honesty.

In many ways, the July 15 coup attempt resembles Hitler’s Reichstag Fire in 1933 with respect to its outcomes. The blame was immediately put on the dissidents, and an emergency decree was issued whereby freedoms were suspended, the media was censored, communication was restricted and demonstrations were cancelled. Election campaigns were abrogated for all parties except the governing Nazi Party and its ally the nationalist party. One hundred and eighty-one members of parliament from the opposition German Communist Party were arrested. In the ensuing elections Hitler won the majority. Historians consider the Reichstag fire the beginning of Hitler’s journey to dictatorship and Germany’s demise.

With the emergency decrees issued after July 15, freedoms in Turkey have been suspended, 150,000 civil servants accused of having dissident views have been purged on terror charges, censorship of the media has reached alarming levels, and a total of over 50,000 soldiers, prosecutors, police officers, diplomats, academics, journalists, businesspeople, lawyers, doctors, teachers, students, and housewives have been arrested.



**Tayyip
Erdoğan**

Torture and ill-treatment in detention centers and prisons has become widespread, and impunity is promoted by the government. Images depicting torture have been published by the state agency to intimidate dissidents and instill fear in society.

It has become almost impossible for dissidents to hold a demonstration or a rally without brutal police intervention. Indeed, as President Erdoğan seized all the reins of power after the referendum, being a dissident came to mean being a “traitor” and “terrorist.” As OSCE and PACE observers rightly put it, people went to the referendum ballot boxes in an atmosphere of fear and inequality of opportunity. Erdoğan has been using all the tools of the state in his own favor. In the end, the constitutional amendments were ratified that have paved the way to his becoming sole decision-maker and establishing “one-man rule” without checks and balances.

Today parliament has become dysfunctional. Many elected representatives of the Kurdish political movement are behind bars. One lawmaker from the main opposition party CHP was also jailed on trumped-up charges, prompting CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu to launch a March for Justice from Ankara to İstanbul. The judiciary has turned into a structure that acts on Erdoğan’s instructions. The cabinet and prime minister, who represent the executive, have become symbolic posts.

In the light of the available information, SCF concludes that July 15 was designed to give an impression that it was a coup within the chain of command at the outset but was flawed at so many levels that most officers immediately recognized its planning was amateurish. Hence, very few soldiers participated, and even those who joined the action did not have any idea of what was going on as they were called in to secure premises or provide safety for the commanders in the face of an impending “terror attack.” By all accounts, the coup was doomed to failure from the start. It appears a select core group of military officers were involved in moving a very small number of troops to places that did not make any sense from a military perspective but were successful in providing footage for the media and public consumption.

The modus operandi of the July 15 coup bid breaks all the rules of past successful coups and thus looks like an insidious false-flag plan orchestrated by Turkish Intelligence to terrorize the public. This conclusion is supported by the one-way blocking of the Bosphorus Bridge in İstanbul and the bombing of the parliament building in Ankara.

A law signed by Erdoğan right before the coup attempt authorized soldiers to intervene in uprisings in urban settings so that they could take to the streets for intervention. At a time when ISIL and PKK had performed a series of terrorist attacks in the heart of Ankara, soldiers in some military units which were on alert were made to leave their barracks on missions resembling military drills or an intervention in a terrorist attack to help the nation’s main law enforcement agency the police department.

Most of the soldiers involved in the coup bid quit the attempt once they realized it was not being performed within the chain of command and it was not a terrorist attack or a military drill.

According to official statements from the Turkish Military, 98.5 percent of the Armed Forces did not participate in the coup bid. Nevertheless, the number of staff in the military was axed from 561,641 to 351,176 right after the event. A great majority of officers and non-commissioned officers among the discharged personnel have remained behind bars for almost a year without a trial and conviction.

Erdoğan's claim that he was informed about the coup by his brother-in-law at 21:30 has been refuted by official documents and witness testimonies. Even if the plausible scenario that the coup was Erdoğan's own setup is put aside, even after being informed about the limited mobilization, Erdoğan did nothing to immediately quash it. That actually supports SCF's conclusion that it was Erdoğan's bidding all along. As the Commander-in-Chief, he was certainly negligent in his duty, to say the least, and therefore responsible for the deaths of 249 people.

It is vital that light be shed on the exact role of MİT (the National Intelligence Organization) in the July 15 coup attempt in order to understand how and what happened. MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan's communications and actions before and during the coup, his coziness with senior generals in the days leading up to July 15, MİT's preventing the officer who tipped it off about the coup from testifying in the trials and his recruitment as a MİT agent raise great suspicion about the role of the intelligence agency in the coup attempt. The fact that Hakan Fidan has not testified to any investigatory commission or court also reinforces these doubts. Among the contradictions that begs for clarification are the fact that the coup attempt was launched deliberately soon after Hakan Fidan, who was allegedly the main target of the putschists, left the Headquarters of the General Staff on the night of the coup, and the fact that putschists accompanied him to the gate instead of neutralizing him within the headquarters.

The Chief of the General Staff, Hulusi Akar's actions before, during and after the coup attempt and his taciturnity about the issues he could not account for to the public necessitate a much deeper investigation into what he knew about the coup. It is unprecedented in the history of the Turkish military for a Chief of the General Staff who has been informed some hours before to fail to thwart an uprising by a few soldiers. There are numerous dubious points Akar needs to answer for, a man who has been noted among his friends as a rigid authoritarian and a commander who is uncompromising about his orders.

Even the word "scandal" fails to express the bitter fact that there are still no publicly available reports about the autopsies on the civilians and soldiers who were shot dead on the night of the tragedy of July 15. Nor is there any information about the ballistics of the guns used for killing them. If there are any, the question of why the government is keeping them secret raises more suspicions. Also needing explanation is the involvement of pro-Erdoğan armed paramilitary groups that took to the streets on the night of July 15. Credible reports suggest many civilians were handed guns by the police in Ankara and some of these guns were not accounted for after the coup bid was over.

Describing July 15 as a "controlled coup" or a deliberate "false flag action" should not be considered disrespect to the memory of the people who lost their lives. In fact, they

deserve the truth and need to know what really happened to their loved ones and why to get a closure. SCF urges all families to be more inquisitive and to press the authorities for real answers. SCF is of the conviction that sacred notions of “martyrdom” and “sacrificing one’s life for homeland” should not be abused by the authorities to cover up the murders, hush up effective investigations, and thereby protect the real perpetrators.

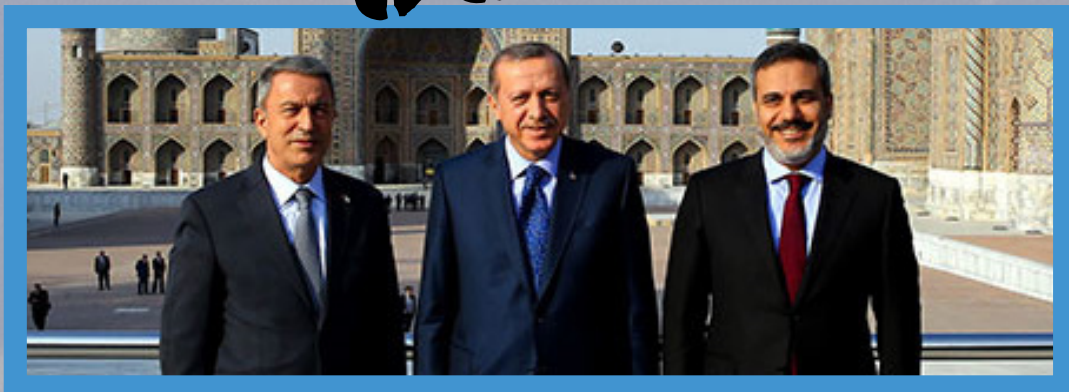
SCF urges the opposition parties, especially the main opposition CHP and its leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who have often reiterated doubts about the coup attempt, to be vocal, outspoken, and persistent in asking for an independent, thorough, and effective investigation into the coup attempt. If they discover any information relevant to the coup, it must be shared immediately with the public, the media, and others. Opposition parties should avoid parroting the government line and finding scapegoats, and resist the temptation to bash vulnerable groups like the Gülen movement.

A delay in divulging information about the coup bid, which cost the lives of 249 people and catapulted Turkey into a catastrophe in terms of democracy, rule of law, and basic rights and liberties will surely mean turning a blind eye to the victimization of hundreds of thousands of people and aiding and abetting the horrendous violation of rights. The CHP’s report on the coup which was appended to the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission was a step in the right direction but not sufficient to fully uncover what really happened on July 15, 2016.

SCF invites once more all international and local human rights organizations, the partners and allies of Turkey, the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, the European Council, and the Council of Europe to take concrete steps against the violations of human rights in Turkey. The debilitated internal dynamics of Turkey are clearly insufficient to cope with systematic and deliberate torture and ill-treatment, increasing numbers of unsolved murders, arbitrary detentions and arrests, and seizure of private property. The fact that Turkey, a NATO member, EU candidate state and founding member of the Council of Europe, is being driven away from democracy and is sliding into an oppressive and authoritarian regime is a big threat not only to 80 million people of Turkey but to the peace and security of the region and the world as well.

This page intentionally left blank

15
JULY



ERDOĞAN'S COUP

SCF

stockholm
center for
freedom