

**Middle East Studies Center  
Jordan**

# **Turkey and the World**

## **After the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2016**

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# **Turkey and the World After the 15th of July 2016**

## **Abstract**

It is clear that the 15th of July 2016 has come to represent a major event in the history of modern Turkey. This is because it is the date of the failed coup attempt in the country and which led to tens of Turkish civilians being killed. Despite the fact that the coup was quashed the following day, the local, regional and international implications and its reflections in Turkish foreign policy is still being felt today. This book is published by the Middle East Studies Center to highlight the international relations of “Turkey and the World” after the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2016.

“Turkey and the World After the 15th of July 2016” book is the result of four activities and scientific works held and executed by the Middle East Studies Center (MESC) in Jordan in the second half of 2016. The first of these was "The Failed Coup Attempt in Turkey: Indications and Implications" in July, 2016. The second was a brain-storming session by the MESC Arab Crisis Team (ACT) in July, 2016. The third was symposium on "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy and the Implications of the Crises for the Region" in August, 2016. The last was a report written by ACT on the “Crisis of Turkish Foreign Policy” in November 2016.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 is about “Indications and Implications of the Failed Coup Attempt of July, the 15<sup>th</sup> 2016” in Turkey divided into six chapters, the first of which is "The Failed Coup Attempt: Narrative and Political Environment” and addresses three questions, one of which is the degree of which the Hizmet (service) movement led by Fethullah Gulen penetrated the Turkish state apparatus especially after 2010. There was then constitutional amendments and principle changes in the judicial system which were exploited by Gulen to create more pressure on the judicial system and Justice and Development Party to implement these changes. Such allowed the movement to grow and become more influential on the highest of levels of the judicial system in the country.

The second question relates to the decision to carry out the coup. According to the writer, the Gulen group realized the time has come for the military coup because of the “cleansing operation” in the police apparatus of 2012 and the fact there were leaks by police officials that the government is planning to arrest Gulen group supporters in the army on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July. This heralded the decision to carry out the coup. The third question related

to making sure the coup failed and in controlling it. The chapter concluded that the cleansing of the police in 2012 from the “parallel entity” led by Gulen was critical in controlling the coup attempt in 2016. If the government had not done so, it would have been very difficult to end it.

The book’s second chapter is titled “The Indications and Implications of the Political Coup Attempt on the Local and Regional Levels”. The chapter’s writer focuses on the domestic scene in Turkey, stressing it was a group of army rebels linked to the Service movement or the “parallel entity” which orchestrated this coup attempt.

The writer added that Turkish Intelligence discovered the coup attempt hours before it was due to take place and alerted the army’s chief of the general staff that lead to its failure through a number of military decisions. The writer then outlined the international stands regarding the failed coup and the stands of the Turkish people regarding it. He focuses on the stand of the United States, the country where Gulen resides in. He said members of the American Congress supported the military coup in Turkey. He also cites the refusal of the then Central Intelligence Agency- CIA director John O. Brennan to answer a question about whether the CIA had been involved or had been aware there was a coup attempt in Turkey being made. He emphasized the “Turkish people are convinced” that the United States played a role in the latest coup attempt as well as all previous military coups that have taken place in Turkey.

The writer also talks about the stands of the Arab states from the military attempt which varied from his point of view. He said the state of Qatar supported the constitutional legitimacy and declared its rejection of the military action. This was followed by Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. He predicted also Turkish relations with Arab countries would be positive after the coup, especially with the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. He said the current challenges remain, facing everyone and that the stability of the Turkish political system is in the interest of the just Arab issues.

Chapter 3 titled "Implications and Military Repercussions of the Failed Coup Attempt in Turkey" shows the penetration of the Gulen group of the military establishment since the 1970s and through the religious *dawa* advocacy and his open support to the 1980 military coup by Kenan Evren. It was this that allowed Gulen to penetrate the military establishment. This incursion had major effect on the military with the army slowly losing control of the establishment, creating weaknesses and imbalance in its command with the loss of prestige of the traditional army over the Turkish state. This situation also created clear lack of coordination in military

intelligence, security system and national intelligence with multiple leaderships and individual links to external chains of command with decline in confidence between units and military ranks.

The writer said there are many reasons for the coup's failure with the most important being those who sought to overthrow the government were not the Turkish army in total as the case in previous coups, but only a part of the military. In the last coup attempt, the higher military echelons and chief of the general staff stood against such an attempt. The failure of the perpetrators, their lack of coordination, early discovery of what they were up to and the quick move against them, not to say anything about the parallel force of the special police which stood with the legitimate authority, all worked against the coup-plotters. The putsch attempt may have dented the image and the role of the army on the Turkish national level and has created a wide gap widening between the military and security establishments with the latter gaining the upper hand and influence over the army.

The fourth chapter, "Readings in the Turkish Crisis on Regional and International levels" focuses on the regional and international reactions during and after the coup failure, when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan appeared in public, talking to the people, using social media tools, with popular calls through mosques' loudspeakers, expressing rejection of the coup and the failure of the coup orchestrators to control the state apparatuses. The chapter ends by stating the failure gave the government the opportunity to evaluate and treat the cultural, ethnic and ideological differences that presented themselves in the last years and become closer to the opposition and provide an opportunity to rebuild the army and the judiciary by methods based on consensus.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of those attending the symposiums and workshops. They focused on the importance of national Turkish groups away from partisanship and ideologies and calling on the Turkish government to invest in popular unity following the coup failure to deepen democracy, sovereignty of the law and rebuild the Turkish military forces in a professional manner away from political interventions.

Chapter 6, the final in part 1 is titled "Failed Coup Attempt in Turkey and its Regional Implications". It's a summary of the ACT meeting with Dr. Shaban Kardash and highlights the political circumstances facing Turkey on the international and regional levels in the light of the post-coup situation, the changes it is expected to face and the role it is expected to have and play, regionally and worldwide. This chapter highlights the goals of the

failed coup to control the higher command of the army, disseminate orders to its branches and control television to prove the state has become under military rule and therefore do away with the legitimate political system and replacement as was the case in previous coups.

This chapter states there are a number of collective reasons for the coup failure and these include the inability of the plotters to realize the needed unity inside the army for such action, the government use of its police and special forces diligently, the Turkish people which played a decisive role in aborting the coup. It had regional ramifications in the light of the situation in Syria, operations against the Kurdistan Workers Party especially in South Turkey and northern Iraq and in additions to the operations inside the country and influence on the security situation in Turkey in the short- and long- terms. This chapter shows that confidence in army personnel and state apparatus was greatly shaken and therefore expects the “bureaucratization” in these establishments to be much diminished and something that will also have major effect on Turkish domestic and foreign policies. The repercussions on the economy will also be far reaching for some countries believe Turkey is a safe place for investment and tourism. The chapter concludes nevertheless, that in the long run, Turkey will inevitably reap benefits registered by the steadfastness of its people to the coup and preservation of democracy.

Part 2 of the book “Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy After the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2016” is divided into two chapters, the first is concerned with “Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy and its Implications for the Crisis of the Region” and emanates from a dialogue between MESC researchers and four Turkish parliamentarians with the latter providing inputs and clarifications on what had taken place and its effects on the political, military and economic situations in Turkey and the region and what influence, directly or indirectly, that may have had on Turkish foreign policy and relations with regional states. The Turkish deputies said the failed putsch opened a door to the Turkish political system to comprehensively reevaluate what happened. As such this chapter provides inputs and poses questions by attendants and participants, calling on the Turkish government to reevaluate its foreign policies.

The final chapter, “Turkish Foreign Policy Crisis and its Implications for Arab-Turkish Relations and Turkey's Regional Role”, is a report by ACT and looks at the background to the crisis, reasons, motives and its effects on Arab-Turkish relations and regional crises in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. As well, it looks into the last military attempt on the changes in Turkish foreign policy, examining the geo-strategic aspects, security challenges, economic factors, regional and international situations. This

chapter also looks on the stands of the concerned parties in the foreign policy processes in Turkey especially with regards to the United States, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians as well as the conditions and developments surrounding the country.

The book ends with a number of recommendations regarding Turkish foreign policy crisis, most prominent of which includes that Turkey continues its openness policy and strives to dismantle the crisis route by greater relations with regional and international sides whilst pushing in the direction of regional stability, avoiding imbalance in political relations with external actors, disallowing relations with one party at the expense of another and avoiding political and media escalation. Experts believe Turkey should move away from the policy of reactions in the management of regional and international relations, ensure settlement of differences through dialogue and diplomatic channels, maintain popular balance and positive image of Turkish policies towards the peoples of the region and where positions are supported by a broad popular appeal in many Arab countries on the basis of favoring Arab and Islamic issues. Turkey strongly supports the Palestinian cause even whilst normalizing relations with Israel, is constantly concerned with the Palestinian people and defend their just cause, not retreating from its moral position.

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