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Turkey's Attempted Coup – Cui Bono? An [Organized] Gift From Allah?

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"The individual is handicapped by coming face to face with a conspiracy so monstrous he cannot believe it exists."

(J. Edgar Hoover, Elks Magazine, August 1956.)

On 23rd May Sean Adl-Tabatabai wrote what now surely seems a prophetic article: "Erdogan Is Preparing For Military Coup In Turkey."

The writer warned that:

> "President Recep Tayyip Erdogan seems to be out of control. He is cracking down on opposition, imprisoning opponents and seizing media outlets ... the Turkish leader has threatened to dissolve the Constitutional Court." This at a time when: " ...the security problems have deteriorated amidst a wave of terrorism."



Moreover:

> "The events make the Turkish military emerge on political landscape again after many years of marginalization during 'Sultan' Erdogan's rule. The divisions between the Turkish military and Erdogan have a long history, but today it is amplified by tumultuous events in and outside the country. For

> instance, the plans to create a buffer zone in Northern Syria and send the Turkish troops to Syria and Iraq are opposed by military brass." (Emphasis added.)
>
> "The Turkish military has long seen itself as the 'guardian of Turkish democracy' of the staunchly secular state, created by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the modern Turkish Republic."

"Related Events": Preparing a Military Coup Leading up to a "Failed Coup"?

On 5th May, Erdogan had sacked his Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu leading to Murat Yetkin, writing in the daily Hurriyet: "As long as Erdogan is President, it will not be important who the Prime Minister is."

Davutoglu had seemingly been reluctant to endorse Erdogan's plan to change Turkey's constitution, creating a US style Presidential system but without the constitutional safeguards pertaining to the US (inadequate as some may think they are) and other Presidential democracies.

On 24th May Erdogan appointed close ally and former Transport Minister Binali Yildrim in Davutoglu's place. Yildrim had also been responsible for government censorship and expanded state surveillance. Crackdowns on thousands of websites led to Cyber-Rights.Org stating that: "the current Turkish law on controlling internet content, through its procedural and substantive deficiencies, is designed to censor and silence political speech."

Apart from being dogged by claims of questionable financial dealing, Yildrim has also been accused of being a segregationist, his wife reportedly sitting apart at an official dinner. He is also quoted as declining to go to a particular university after he saw students mixing together in the gardens which, he reflected, would lead him down the wrong path.

Two days after Yildrim became Prime Minister the Speaker of the Turkish parliament, Ismail Kahraman, sparked demonstrations when he talked of the new constitution President Erdogan hoped to achieve: "For one thing, the new constitution should not have secularism", he said, according to the Turkish media.

> "It needs to discuss religion … It should not be irreligious, this new constitution, it should be a religious constitution."

Turkish parliament speaker provokes row with call for religious constitution

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By Ayla Jean Yackley and Ercan Gurses

ISTANBUL/ANKARA (Reuters) - A call by Turkey's parliament speaker for a new constitution to drop references to secularism provoked opposition condemnation and a brief street protest on Tuesday, potentially undermining government efforts to forge agreement on a new charter.

Erdogan's AK Party has roots in political Islam thus pushing to replace the existing constitution toward Sharia law. As Speaker, Kahraman is overseeing efforts to draft the new constitutional text. His comments were widely believed to be a testing of the political waters on behalf of the President.

In context, in the most recent (April 2013) comprehensive survey of attitudes to Sharia law in majority Muslim countries, Pew Research Center found a mere 12% of Turks were in favour of making it the country's official law.

All in all NATO ally Turkey and would be EU Member was sailing in choppy political waters before the coup and the numerous question marks surrounding it.

President Erdogan was vacationing in the breathtakingly picturesque port town of Marmaris on the Mediterranean coast of south west Turkey when he was alerted to the crisis on Friday, 15 July. He escaped just minutes before a gang rushed the hotel to kill him, we are told.

Marmaris, incidentally, is historically no stranger to drama – and there has been plenty of fleeing from there. The region of it's location was invaded by Alexander the Great in 334 BC, conquered by Mehmed the Conquerer in the mid-fifteenth century and in 1798 Admiral Lord Nelson "and his entire fleet sheltered in the harbor … en route to Egypt to defeat Napoleon's armada during the Mediterranean campaign." In 1958 the town was almost entirely destroyed by an actual earthquake, not a political one. (Wikipedia.)

Minutes after Erdogan left the hotel: "Around twenty five soldiers in helicopters descended (on it) shooting … in an apparent attempt to seize him", according to CNN Turk.

Not finding him there, oddly the helicopter-facilitated soldiers apparently never thought to seek his vehicle on the road to the nearest airport, Dalaman, a one and a half hour's drive away.

Further, once in the air: 'A former military officer with knowledge of the events claimed:

> "At least two F-16s harassed Erdogan's plane while it was in the air en route to Istanbul.
>
> "They locked their radars on his plane and on two other F-16s protecting him.
>
> "Why they didn't fire is a mystery." ' Indeed.

Back in the severely damaged Presidential palace, with Parliament also ravaged and debris strewn and with, already 265 dead and 1,440 injured, President Erdogan was quoted as announcing the attempted coup: "A gift from Allah."

Arrested immediately were 2,839 army personnel with 2,745 Judges and Prosecutors ordered detained, as the purge the of accused conspirators began.

In under a week 60,000 people had been fired or detained and 2,300 institutions closed on Erdogan's orders. Latest figures stand at 70,000 including media, health, education and judiciary purged or interned according to the State sponsored Anadolu news agency – which may be the only news outlet standing since: "at least 131 newspapers, television and radio stations, magazines, publishers and news agencies" have been ordered closed this week alone." (Independent, 31st July 2016.)

The NATO ally President and would-be European Union Member is clearly not a freedom of the press enthusiast. Reports claim that even prior to the coup attempt – since 2014 – 1,845 journalists, critics and writers have faced accusations of insulting the President – which carries a potential jail sentence.

Of the latest crack down, states Tyler Durden (2) in Zero Hedge, staggeringly:

> "In his first 'emergency powers' decree … Erdogan authorised the closure of 1,043 private schools, 1,229 charities and foundations, 19 trade unions, 15 universities and 35 hospitals … The government also announced it would seize the properties of all these schools, universities and private institutions."

A "nice little earner" as the saying goes, in fact surely one of the largest real estate grabs in history. Interestingly the seizures took place just two days after Standard and Poor's Global Ratings: " … cut Turkey's credit rating deeper into junk territory, saying (the) failed coup has undermined the country's economy and investment environment."

> "The rating now stands at double-B, with a negative outlook, which indicates additional downgrades could follow." (Wall Street Journal, 20th July.)

Nothing like some prime real estate to fall back on in hard times.

The legality of the real estate grab? Perhaps, as human rights, the law itself is on hold, since Judges have become an endangered species.

Further purge figures are chilling. According to The Independent, by 21st July 2016:

- 9,000 police officers were sacked
- 6,000 military personnel arrested
- 15,200 teachers and education staff sacked
- 6,500 education ministry staff suspended
- 1,577 university Deans ordered to resign
- 8,777 Interior Ministry workers dismissed
- 1,500 Finance Ministry staff fired

Two hundred and fifty staff, including administrative and management have been fired from Turkish Airlines, Europe's fourth largest carrier

Landline operator Turk Telekom, thirty percent State-owned, has fired employees in "cooperation with the security forces" with some managers reportedly summoned by prosecutors.

Additionally, 50,000 passports have been cancelled.

Amnesty International has already issued an alarming Report (3) claiming:

> " … credible reports that Turkish police in Ankara and Istanbul are holding detainees in stress positions for up to 48 hours, denying them food, water and medical treatment … In the worst cases some have been subjected to severe beatings and torture, including rape.

"… The grim details that we have documented are just a snapshot of the abuses that might be happening in places of detention," said Amnesty International's Europe director John Dalhuisen.

Further:

> (There are) "multiple reports of detainees being held in unofficial locations such as sports centres and a stable. Some detainees, including at least three Judges, were held in the corridors of courthouses."

Moreover:

> " … 650-800 male soldiers were being held in the Ankara police headquarters sports hall. At least 300 of the detainees showed signs of having been beaten. Some detainees had visible bruises, cuts, or broken bones. Around 40 were so badly injured they could not walk. Two were unable to stand. One woman who was also detained in a separate facility there had bruising on her face and torso."
>
> "Lawyers described how people were brought before prosecutors for interrogation with their shirts covered in blood." The full Report on a NATO ally and EU aspirant Member is a shocking read – as is the near silence of NATO

> Member nations and those of the EU. The West is remarkably selective over those deemed despots who "torture and kill their own people."

In another alleged atrocity:

> "The top counter-terrorism official responsible for Turkey's campaign against Islamic State (went to) a 'meeting' at the Presidential palace in Ankara. He was later found with his hands tied behind his back, shot in the neck, according to a senior official." (4)

Ironically, Turkey is a member of the Council of Europe and is bound by the European Convention on Human Rights. It is also signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Torture.

Mr Erdogan is also reported as seeking to introduce constitutional changes bringing the Turkish intelligence agency and military Chief of Staff directly under his control. Just four days after the alleged coup he talked of bringing back the death penalty for a horrifying 8,777 people who have not even been charged or tried yet.

"Why should I keep them and feed them in prisons, for years to come?" he is quoted as saying. (5)

It has to be asked, how did the President and his loyalists, taken by surprise by an attempted coup, organize the logistics of the arresting, rounding up, firing of 70,000 people in such a short space of time?

> List names, addresses, places of work, organize teams to apprehend them, write letters or visit them to fire them. An operation of such magnitude would surely take weeks, if not months to organize.

Discussing the all with a canny, politically savvy Turkish businessman, his view: "No, he didn't plan it but he got everything he wanted from it – again – so who did to put him in to such a driving seat …?

Incidentally, the dictionary definition of "cui bono" is: "a principle that probable responsibility for an act or event lies with one having something to gain." (Merriam Webster.)

Notes

1. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3694546/At-height-Turkish-coup-bid-rebel-jets-Erdogans-plane-sights.html

2. http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2016-07-23/first-emergency-decree-erdogan-shuts-down-thousands-hospitals-schools-charities

3. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/07/turkey-independent-monitors-must-be-allowed-to-access-detainees-amid-torture-allegations/

4. http://www.moonofalabama.org/2016/07/the-after-coup-purges-in-turkey-continue-the-erdogan-administration-is-firing-any-public-servant-who-might-just-might-not.html#more

5. http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-pm-warns-against-feeling-revenge-after-coup-496420178

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