Another historian I deeply appreciate, on the events in Turkey this time. A must-read by [Ali Yaycioglu](https://www.facebook.com/ali.yaycioglu.7)! And the only hopeful note I see in days.

TURKEY, JULY 15
Friends, who cannot follow the crisis in Turkey in Turkish. I should say, you are lucky. One can easily loose his/her mind. Things are pretty messy and its seems that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Here is my humble take on what happened.
As you know, there was a coup attempt on Friday, which was prevented. We still do not know all the details, how the coup was organized and how it failed. But before telling you the story behind it as we know, I should say that Turkey is falling into a deep darkness and the leadership does not demonstrate any sign that they understand how serious it is except that they think the coup is against them and they should protect their leadership and establishment by all means. There is no sense of responsibility whatsoever to initiate national unity or alike.
What happened was this: According to a general agreement, a faction or a clandestine network within the army and other state institutions (Judiciary, intelligence, police, education...) initiated this coup attempt. This network is following Fetullah Gulen, a Muslim cleric who has been in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, US for more than decade. You must all have heard about this man. He was a Muslim preacher, at the same time, a cold war product, who became extremely powerful during the anti-communist struggle, probably sponsored by American intelligence. From the early 1980s on, Gulenists built a huge network of businessmen, teachers, and bureaucrats some of whom graduated from the schools that this network established in Turkey and abroad. Gulen was presented as a global peacemaker who promoted inter-religion dialogue. Those who are against the Gulen movement accused him of having a hidden fundamentalist agenda, including an ambition of being a supreme religious leader, a Sunni version of Ayattullah Khomeini.
With the Erdogan government, this network became even more powerful. Erdogan openly supported the Gulenists and placed them in bureaucracy, especially in judiciary and police. Gulenists provided the AKP government with an educated and pious cadre that the AKP line could not produce. In a way, between 2002 and 2013, we see an alliance between AKP and Gulenists against the secular Turkish establishment.
The army, which was known as the guardian of secularism, was thought of being free from Gulenist penetration. But since 2005, after some rumors that the secular generals would make a coup against Erdogan, the judiciary wars started. Hundreds of army officers, who were accused of being involved in a conspiracy against the elected government, were tried. These trials (known as Ergenekon and Balyoz) were massive ones supervised by prosecutors and judges, who were known as Gulenists. Many liberals and leftists endorsed these trials with the belief that these would end the dark history of Turkey with regular military interventions. As a result, hundreds of high-ranked officers were expelled from the army. And a new generation of officers took their place. This generation was presented by the government as loyal to the elected legitimate authority. Yet, the other group, which was eliminated from the army, the so-called Kemalists, who were guardians of secularism, and those who supported their cause, argued that the generation which replaced the old one was mainly consisting of Gulenists. They claimed that the whole judiciary process was set up as a conspiracy to eliminate the Kemalists from the army. They also accused the US. Some argued that this was a US conspiracy to clean the Eurasianists, namely those group, which were critical to the American policy on the Middle East and Kurdish problem.
Well, the officers who tried to initiate the coup were mainly the high-ranked officers of the new generation who came to power after the elimination of the old group. So, in many ways, we can say that Erdogan was hit by his own guys, his own cadre. We will come to that.
Since 2011, things dramatically changed in Turkey and Erdogan increasingly demonstrated authoritarian ambitions. In summer 2013, the Gezi movement, which was a popular appraisal against Erdogan-Gulen coalition, shook the government. Erdogan had two alternatives. He might either chose to be moderate in his ambitions and start dialogue with the social opposition who refuted an Islamic-conservative transformation of Turkey or he might refuse this opposition and become more hawkish by suppressing them. He picked the second option. This cut off the tacit alliance between Erdogan and left-liberal groups supporting Erdogan's policy to eliminate the Kemalist generals. After Gezi, Erdogan decided to be (or he was pushed to be some believe) more authoritarian.
In winter 2013, something very unexpected happened. The Gulenist prosecutors and police initiated a massive corruption investigation against Erdogan's close associates and his family. This was a shock. Again, Erdogan again had two options: To reject this allegation in toto or to be sacrifice some of his men. He happened to choose the first option. He declared that this investigation was a coup attempt by those who penetrated judiciary and police, namely Gulenists. The problem was obvious. These men had been his allies. They supported Erdogan against the army and secular establishment. Now, Erdogan was declaring war against his old guards. Meanwhile, Erdogan's and his associates' telephone conversations related to the corruption case were disclosed on youtube. The investigation also included a transnational component. It somehow extended Iran. Some people in the government were accused of bypassing the embargo against Iran through some illegal money and gold transfers.
This was the beginning of the Erdogan-Gulen war. Meanwhile, "Kemalist" generals, journalists and intellectuals who were in prison after the earlier, massive Ergenekon and Balyoz lawsuits were freed and these cases collapsed. Some of these men, who were victims of Erdogan-Gulen coalition, became stark supporters of Erdogan against the Gulen movement.
Things became even more complicated with the end of the peace negotiations with the Kurdish movement and the restart of the armed conflict in summer 2015, after Erdogan declared elections in which AKP lost its majority as invalid. The failure of Turkish foreign policy in Syria caused additional tensions. Some accused the Erdogan government of helping the rise of ISIS in the region against the Kurds and the Asad regime. Erdogan, in response, accused these accusers of being spies connected to Fetullah Gulen. The tension with Russia after a Russian military aircraft was hit by a Turkish F16, even, some people argued, was a conspiracy of Gulenist pilots. Meanwhile the war with the Kurdish urban militia and PKK guerrilla in the mountains became more and more bloody. The suicide attacks in Ankara and Istanbul by ISIS further fostered the crisis.
The story is long... what happened on Friday is still a mystery. As I wrote, it is very likely that a Gulenist clique initiated the coup. Some other groups, especially those who fought against the PKK in the east seem to have participated in it since they have suffered heavy casualties fighting against the PKK and there was a growing resentment against Erdogan's Kurdish policy. Overall, it appears that the motor of the coup was a coalition of different groups within the army. Probably at one stage, some groups withdrew and "betrayed" the Gulenists so the coup was not successful.
The good news is that all parties, including the main opposition, namely CHP (a party of Kemalist-Left-Liberal coalition itself) and the Kurdish party condemned the coup attempt from the start. Therefore, the coup attempt failed to gather social support in the initial stage. Erdogan, whose life was saved at the last minute, called crowds to resist the tanks. Many Erdoganists poured out on the streets and resisted the coup. It was pretty heroic. Yet, some soldiers were lynched. Many civilians, soldiers and policemen were killed during the events. The "rebels" even attacked the national assembly with military helicopters.
The coup was quashed. As I said, probably some groups in the army, who initially promised to take part in the coup, withdrew and left the others alone. Perhaps, there were some negotiations between these groups and Turkish Intelligence, which seems to be loyal to Erdogan. Since Friday, we see that thousands of military personnel were indicted. But not only military personnel! Thousands of men and women judges (including two judges of the Constitutional Court), prosecutors, policemen, and teachers were dismissed or indicted. Academicians were banned from going abroad. Around 30 academics were also indicted. Some people think that there is no way that all of these men and women could be Gulenists and this is a witch-hunt. Some think that the government is eliminating any kind of opposition within the state. Yesterday, state of emergency was declared. It seems that such harsh measures will increase.
At the same time, Erdogan, in spite of enormous support from the people, is alone. There is no body he can trust. Some of his close associates that he appointed in the army to replace the earlier group, betrayed him. This is very personal for him, for sure. He is more and more insecure. The conservative masses on the streets love and support him. But this love and support could not transform an institutional guarantee for his power. Therefore, it is very likely that the regime will be more paranoiac and perhaps more cruel in the decisions.
However, we are missing a great opportunity. The majority of the population was against the coup from the beginning. All political parties openly condemned the intervention from the first minute. This is a wonderful chance to build a new consensus and social contract, and to end the strong polarization Turkey has suffered from. Erdogan, if he has some sense of history and responsibility, should initiate this new consensus, rather than trying to consolidate his own power. But frankly, I do not have much hope. Erdoganists, more than Erdogan himself, are so ruthless and power-hungry. There are bunch of advisers, journalist, academics and businessmen clustered around Erdogan and in many ways they try to control his decisions. Obviously his party and Prime Minister understand how serious the situation is, probably better than Erdogan himself. The Prime Minister, Binali Yildirim, constantly declares that dialogue and consensus are tremendously important at this very critical stage.
The instability will continue, probably increase. We do not know how PKK and ISIS will react after Turkish security forces are in profound crisis with the coup attempt and developments aftermath. Nevertheless, still Turkey is lucky that a coup, which was orchestrated by this obscure network, was prevented. This might be a turning point for Turkey for a new beginning and new social and political consensus. Despite all the negative indicators, we should hope (hope is always good) that Turkey would not fail to turn it?