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The failed coup attempt in Turkey has had a profound effect on Turkish society and bureaucratic institutions. As the coup attempt was unfolding, the Turkish government blamed Fetullah Gulen, a cleric from Turkey's Nur movement, for instructing his followers in the military and bureaucracy to overthrow Turkey's democratically government.

The events of July 15th are still, largely, a mystery. The evidence available in open sources does suggest that Gulenists played a part in the coup attempt, but it also appears that Kemalists and Turkish nationalists were also involved. Contrary to the narrative, the coup plotters were not bumbling fools. The putchists included officers from different branches of the Turkish military, including: the Air Force, the land forces (with representation from two different armies, the first and second), special operations forces (Maroon Berets), and the Navy and Coast Guard. The plotters nearly succeeded in their primary mission, the decapitation of government, but also appear to have been operating under the false assumption that the Turkish people would accept military rule. The latter assumption proved inaccurate and, ultimately, the start of protests against the putchists' actions upended the coup attempt.

In the weeks following the failed coup attempt, the Turkish public has "rallied around the flag" and lent support to measures taken to purge Gulenists from state institutions. To date, more than 80,000 public servants have been suspended from work, with many of them arrested for alleged Gulenist ties. Fetullah Gulen has little popular support and Turkey and these purges are viewed as long overdue and necessary for the long-term health of Turkish bureaucratic institutions.

Nationalist sentiment in Turkey has increased following the coup attempt, with many Turks blaming the United States and the European Union for failing to show proper solidarity with their NATO ally. The AKP has instrumentalized this growing anti-Western sentiment for two reasons: First, there are elements within the AKP and, certainly, among its voter base that genuinely believe that the United States was involved in the coup, or at the very least, was hedging its bets during the coup attempt because of concerns about Erdogan and political Islam. Second, the blaming of the "foreign other" helps to absolve the AKP of its own role in helping to grow the Gulenist presence in the Turkish bureaucracy – and by extension, how its own efforts to coup proof the military contributed to the July 15th coup attempt.

The United States – obviously – had nothing to do with the coup attempt in Turkey, nor was the White House slow to condemn the events of July 15th. The coup attempt and subsequent purges are entirely a result of Turkish domestic politics and political culture that has nothing to do with the United States, with one exception: Gulen is a U.S. green card holder.

Fetullah Gulen fled Turkey for the United States in 1999, following the so-called "post-modern coup," wherein the Turkish military used the threat of a military intervention to force the government to resign. Following the post-modern coup, Turkish authorities banned the Welfare Party and its leader,

Necmettin Erbakan, from politics. Erbakan is the father of Turkey's political Islamist movement and mentor of the current Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Turkish military and elements of the bureaucracy accused Gulen of instructing his followers to infiltrate the bureaucracy and military, in order to eventually remake the Turkish state – the very same charges that the Turkish government is currently accusing him of.

Gulen and AKP forged an alliance following these events, deepening their partnership after the 2002 election. The AKP relied heavily on the Gulenists for more than a decade, largely to increase the number of “friendly” elements in the Turkish bureaucracy and military. The two groups were symbiotic, in that the AKP needed the Gulenists to act as a political counterweight to Kemalist elements in the Turkish bureaucracy and the military, while Gulenists relied on the AKP to grow in strength.

In the case of the latter, the AKP gave political and bureaucratic support to Gulenist-led trials – Ergenekon and Balyoz – that accused members of the military of plotting a coup. These trials resulted in the suspensions and arrest of numerous high ranking officers. Many of the officers promoted to take their place have since been accused of sympathizing with the July 15th coup and have been discharged from the Turkish military.

The military purges have had a serious impact on Turkish military readiness and capabilities. A total of 149 Admirals and Generals were purged after the failed coup, which prompted the Turkish government to promote 99 officers to take their place. Currently, Turkey has some 50 less flag-ranking-officers than before the coup. The Air Force has also suffered. 274 Air Force pilots have been discharged and Turkey now faces a serious fighter pilot shortage, with the number of F-16 pilots dropping from a healthy 1.25:1 pilot-to-cockpit ratio to just .8:1. In response, Turkey has shuttered three F-16 squadrons and has plans to shutter two more. This shortage comes amid Turkey's continuing air operations in support of its counterinsurgent campaign in southeastern Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan, alongside the commitments made to cross border operations in Syria, as part of Operation Euphrates Shield. This shortage could impact Turkish military planning in the near term, a reality that the United States should account for when considering potential collaboration with the Turkish Armed Forces in Syria, or for NATO operations in a different, unforeseen, contingency.

The tempo of operations for airstrikes against the PKK does appear to have slowed in recent weeks, perhaps because finite assets are now being asked to protect ground forces in Syria. This comes amid continuing unrest in Turkey's southeast and near-daily PKK attacks on military and civilian targets. In this latest round of fighting, 676 Turkish security force members have been killed in attacks, with the plurality dying in improvised explosive attacks since July 2015. Numerous Kurdish-majority cities have also been destroyed and there are now more than 400, 000 internally displaced people, independent of the refugee burden posed by the Syrian civil conflict. In recent days, the Turkish government has replaced 28 elected mayors, the majority of which were Kurds from the Democratic Peoples' Party, or HDP. The HDP's leadership, Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksedag, both of whom are under investigation and face lengthy prison sentences, have called for street protests.

In the near term, Turkey will remain unstable. The purges have impacted every key Turkish institution and will have an impact on governance and security. The Turkish Air Force is suffering from a pilot shortage and the military is being asked to fight a two-front counterinsurgent war in three different countries: Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. Turkish domestic politics remains fractured along ethnic and

nationalist fault lines, with the Kurdish issue being the most pronounced, amid a façade of political unity after the failed coup attempt. These issues are local to Turkey and have little to do with the United States, other than Washington's interest in a stable Turkey, capable of pulling its weight in the NATO alliance. In the near term, the United States should prepare for a period of tension with Ankara. These tensions are linked to Gulen's status in the United States, the concurrent Department of Justice-led review of Turkey's extradition request, and divergences over Syria policy. In the longer term, however, both sides have an incentive to look beyond these disagreements. Turkey is a NATO ally and is part of the 60 or so countries with which the United States has a military alliance or partnership. The U.S. has an interest in preserving these partnerships because its interests are global and require strong relationships with countries in key global regions.