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Just like the militaries of Egypt, Pakistan, Thailand, Burma etc., Turkish military had been the fundamental tenet of the establishment that wanted to create a society that were Sunni (No Alawites/Shia), secular (No conservatives) and Turk (no Kurds or other nationalities).

Every time there was a threat to the Turkish state, either through communism or Islamism, the military acted. It is in the army's DNA to "protect" the nation as a Sunni, secular and Turkish entity. Those genes still exist in the military.

Every time things "went wrong", the military contemplated the possibility of overthrowing the government. In the mid-1990s (against Islamist govt), in 2003 (to protest Annan's Cyprus plan), in 2007 (against Erdogan) and in 2016 (against Erdogan).

The Turkish military was so powerful until 2007 that any type of anti-government activity in the military took place with complete impunity. Soldiers plotted and imposed complete domination over media, judiciary and bureaucracy.

Erdogan and his close friends (Gul, Arinc, Sener) knew that everytime they are elected to the government, the powerful military would topple them down. They decided (in 2003) to push Turkey to join the EU so that Brussels can limit the military's role in politics.

Turkey's possible accession to the EU was contingent upon the resolution of Cyprus. Kofi Annan came up with a plan and put it to referendum. Turkish military was furious. They viewed it as "Europe's attempt to jail Turks into Anatolia."

The military came up with half a dozen coup plans such as Balyoz, Ayisigi, Yakamoz. Most of them were disguised as war games. The military was so powerful that it didn't really need to hide these plans. Most of these plans were leaked 5 years later.

When Erdogan came to power, his team had zero human resources. Under the shadow of the military, media was fiercely against him. Hostile judiciary and uncooperative bureaucracy made it extremely difficult for him to navigate. Coup plans piled up one after another.

Because Erdogan said he "took off his [Islamist] jacket", he found an unlikely ally, Gulen movement, which believed that Erdogan could be the much-anticipated government that can make Turkey part of the European Union. This is what made

Erdogan exceptionally powerful.

Gulen movement had vast resources in Turkey. From education to health, bureaucracy and the law enforcement, it was a sprawling group of conversative young and dedicated community that believed they could change Turkey for the better.

Between 2003 and 2008, Gulen movement's top goal was to prevent the military from toppling the Erdogan's government. It threw its weight behind uncovering every single plot against Erdogan to preserve the civilian government.

In 2007-08, with the help of Gulenist media and bureaucracy, infamous Ergenekon trials started. Almost every single person you see in the media today that calls these trials "sham" was wholeheartedly supported these trials.

Individuals that were used by the Turkish state and the military for nasty things in the 1990s such as killing Kurds and melting them in acid wells or cooperating with Istanbul mafia were taken into prison. Among arrested were military personnel who drafted coup plans in 2003.

The word "Ergenekon" has slowly started to become a useful label to jail dissidents. Journalists, publishers, Kurdish activists have become targets. Most liberals who supported Ergenekon trials slowly turned away.

In 2010, the government introduced constitutional changes that were supported by Gulenists. It included restricting the military's role in politics and restructuring judiciary in line with European standards. The outcome would be disastrous.

After constitutional changes, Erdogan government became so powerful that it didn't need to join the EU. It also no longer needed Gulenists, prompting internecine albeit quiet cold war between these two conservative groups. Erdogan purged almost all liberals from his party in 2011

This cold war erupted into hot wrestling match in 2014. Erdogan undermined and manipulated every rule and law to finish off the Gulen movement. The sagging economy and "wrong direction" disturbed the military. In late 2015, they started humming.

Erdogan was so worried about impending military coup that the intelligence kidnapped several high-profile Gulenists in early 2016 who knew ins and outs of pro-Gulen military personnel. In April 2016, the gov't scored big by jailing dozens of Gulenists with army connections.

Between January and May 2016, it is believed that Erdogan's gov't unveiled names of around 12,000 Gulenist military personnel, including nearly 100 generals and admirals. But purging them would be almost impossible — it would be a suicide.

To ensure ultimate survival in a military dominated by seculars for decades, Gulenists didn't usually communicate among each other beyond 3-5 people in the military. Most Gulenist officers wouldn't even recognize or know other Gulenists in the military.

Not only could the government prove these officers were Gulenists, purging them would be tantamount to suicide. Erdogan needed some kind of "gift from God." And he needed allies in the military to pull off the scam of all scams.

Here is what happened: In the period leading up to the coup, Erdogan kept bashing the chief of military, Hulusi Akar, for siding with Gulenists by not purging them, deliberately sending false signals to Gulenist officers and Gulen that Akar is favoring Gulenists.

Army chief Akar also spoke in every private event against Erdogan (according to tons of testimonials by military officers), sending a false signal to possible coup plotters. The goal was to trick passionate coup plotters into staging a coup and catching them red-handed.

High-level Gulenists were convinced that the coup was real, army chief has full support & it's a point of no return. Erdogan's allies in the military, pro-Russian generals, engineered a coup attempt by assigning Gulenist officers in key positions. It was a coup programmed to fail

Gulenist officers were mostly in the Air Force. These NATO-educated pilots were assigned unimaginable horrifying tasks such as bombing the Parliament (to alienate opposition), killing the police and civilians (to alienate public) and to do sonic booms (to install fear).

Most of these pilots were junior kids who were given coordinates to bomb as part of "fight against ISIS" and the orders came from only two colonels. Every step was designed to ensure that it would fail and generate tremendous anger in the public. It "worked."

99 percent of around 15k army personnel who participated in the coup attempt had no idea what's going on. Their generals, both Gulenists and secular anti-Erdogan Kemalists, later on that night realized that it was a trap to catch them red-handed.

First time in Turkey's history, generals, including the army chief, betrayed their fellow generals against the government and engineered their humiliation and arrest. It is an extraordinary event to disrupt what was Turkey's longstanding tradition of military coups.

Today, some generals in the army and retired ones are again "disturbed" by the way Erdogan rules the country. Reflecting disgruntled active-duty generals' sentiment, 103 retired generals made a joint statement. Erdogan knew about it beforehand and let them.

Just like in 2016, it was a perfect storm for Erdogan to portray this as another assault to his civilian government.

Erdogan is a shrewd politician, excellent communicator and willing to do whatever it takes to survive in power.