

RAND Corporation Turkey Report 2020

News:

The Rand Corporation put the following expressions in its report titled “Turkey’s Nationalist Course: Implications for the U.S. – Turkish Strategic Partnership and the U.S. Army”: **“Midlevel officers are reported to be extremely frustrated with the military leadership and concerned about being removed in the continuing post-coup purges. This discontent could even lead to another coup attempt at some point, and Erdoğan appears to take the threat seriously.”** (Rand Corporation Turkey Report 2020, page, XIV)

Comment:

The Rand Corporation, an American think tank organisation, released a 276-page report including the appendix regarding Turkey. This report consists of nine chapters and different topics related to Turkey are discussed in each section. However, although the report contains nine chapters and addresses different topics, Turkish media brought “coup discussions” forward. Other issues in the report were not emphasized. From politicians to journalists, to non-governmental organizations and academicians, every segment of society addressed and discussed the issue at the point where some of the officers in the military could make a coup. Without going into details, in this report, we will both analyse the Rand report with main headings and evaluate the coup discussions.

1- First of all, the Rand Corporation report appears to be a report that needs to be examined in a detailed and careful way. Indeed, in the Rand Corporation report, prepared in 1996 during the Refahiyol government, it was stated that “to bring comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem, Turkey needs to be ruled in the presidency of Abdullah Gül and in the prime ministry of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.” Therefore, the axes of the domestic and foreign political courses that should be applied in Turkey on the U.S. side in the next decade can be seen here.

2- With this report, America reveals how the political party in power should act, and especially, which course should be followed in foreign politics:

a. As in the image given to the Turkish opinion over Erdoğan, it will be continued to show Turkey led by Erdoğan as a country fighting against the U.S. and the whole world. As a matter of fact, in a recent survey, the answers to the question of what is the reason of the presence of the Turkish army in Syria were as follows: 45% responded that it is there to fight YPG-PYD-PKK, 9% responded that it is to oppose the world and 16% responded that it is to oppose America.

b. In the next period, Turkey will continue to set an enemy view, while acting on behalf of the USA in the outer world and serving for the interests of the USA by sending its soldiers, as it is doing now in Syria and Libya. Indeed, in the introduction part of the report, it is stated: “Turkey and the U.S. have strategic partnership for more than six decades, but the partnership has become strained in recent years.”

c. On the one hand, this report makes evaluations that means it is desired to see Erdoğan in power for the next ten years, while, on the other hand, it expresses the possibility of an alternative structure in the following way: “If a viable coalition were to emerge in Turkey, Erdoğan and the AKP would be dislodged from the power in

2023... Nevertheless, deep public suspicion of the United States and Europe would constrain the pace and scope of the rapprochement with Turkey in the future.” Thus, on the one hand, while the messages are given to the Turkish opinion, on the other hand, it is explained that Erdoğan who wants to remain in power in the expense of protecting of the American interests should know no boundaries for the interests of America. By giving an image that all opposition members, other than AKP and MHP, act in same ranks with America, the conservative section is asked to continue to support Erdoğan.

3- As for the coup statements in the report, although, given the circumstances we are in, the probability of a military coup is extremely weak, the pro-British officers and others, who have been expelled from the military or arrested because of the Ergenekon and FETO cases bear grudges and hatred against Erdoğan and America. Therefore, they continue to dream of a coup without getting tired of it. Because, since July 15, without exception, arrests and custodies for soldiers have been carried out under the name of FETO operation. The British supporters, who were extremely disturbed by this situation, started the debate of the so called “political leg of FETO” from the mouth of İlker Başbuğ and with this, they seriously cornered AKP, especially Erdoğan. This situation disturbed Erdoğan and his party who tries to serve America with all the might, despite the blood of millions of Muslims, especially in Syria, and to realise America’s interests. In a stage where discussions are concentrated at this point, the Rand report has become a lifesaver for the ruling party. The pro-Erdoğan authors and commentators, by emphasizing the statement from the report “This discontent could even lead to another coup attempt at some point”, stated that they are Kemalist officers and wrote about it. Thus, Erdoğan and the AK Party, who were on the target board through the "political leg of FETO" discussions, had the opportunity to reverse the pressure on them and change the agenda.

On the other hand, Erdoğan, in his speech made on the return from his Pakistan visit, threatened those who consider to make a coup by saying “They have already got the necessary answers, especially on July 15. And our nation gained a very serious experience on these issues now. In other words, as soon as there is such a thing, our nation no longer asks us whether we should get out of the door or not. They will go out with whatever they have.”

Regarding the same issue, the Minister of Defence, Hulusi Akar said the followings: “So far, it has been taken action on 24,185 people. This number is changing day by day. So far, there are also those who were expelled from the military with the approval of minister in the framework of these legal regulations. 3.963 people were expelled by us, with our signature. Therefore, there is no question on a decrease, slowdown and deviation in this fight. All that has to be done, has been done and continues to be done with the same sensitiveness.” With these explanations, Hulusi Akar stated that the operations against the British under the name of fighting with FETO will continue and there will be no step back from it.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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