



TÜRK ATLANTİK GENÇLİK KONSEYİ
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NATO - Turkey Relations in the Aftermath of Coup Attempt

Dear Secretary General of Atlantic Treaty Association

The coup attempt on 15 July 2016 marked a milestone in the recent history of Turkey. A state of emergency was implemented immediately, all the members of FETÖ (Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization) were started to be expelled from state institutions, a progress that is still ongoing.

Besides its tremendous impact on domestic politics and policies, the coup attempt undoubtedly affected Turkey's foreign policy. Although various government officials stated that Turkey still sees itself as a part of NATO, the government felt that NATO was not quick to unanimously declare solidarity with the democratically elected government and accused certain countries in the west, being NATO members, of supporting or having supported the terrorist organization led by Islamist cleric Fethullah Gülen. Ministers, the Prime Minister and the President have all stated that Turkey will remember nations first to condemn the coup and support their ally and will not tolerate the support for the FETÖ movement from foreign countries.

Turkey's reconciliation with Russian Federation, in this regard, was interpreted as a shift of Turkish foreign policy to grant Turkey a wider maneuverability and signal NATO that Turkey is not dependent on the organization. However, recent statements by the President indicate that Turkey still sees itself as part of NATO and ready to collaborate with its allies regarding solutions to regional problems. Fethullah Gülen's living in USA is what gives Turkey concerns and Turkey sees this as a violation of alliance and international war against terrorism.

Although NATO officials and representatives of the member countries condemned the attempt eventually, the public opinion and the government's stance in Turkey demand more from the alliance to prove NATO supports Turkey in its war against terrorism in three fronts: PKK, FETÖ and IS. Moreover, NATO's and US-led Coalition's warm relations with PYD in Syria, which Turkey sees as an offset of PKK, aggravate the situation.

As to the future of NATO - Turkey relations, I believe that since both parties seriously and critically need each other, the relations will gradually improve provided that NATO takes necessary steps to gain the approval of public opinion in Turkey. This is also crucial for NATO's long-term strategy and coherence within the alliance. As Brexit and other political developments cause serious concerns and give rise to remarks claiming international



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bodies such as EU and NATO are being disintegrated and slowly replaced by new ones, NATO losing Turkey as a partner and ally will undoubtedly have a chain reaction.

Moreover, as terrorism is now a global problem, utilizing new means of violence to spread the effect of activities on a larger scale, NATO should assist Turkey in its war against terrorism and benefit from its experience at dealing with insurgents and urban terrorists. As the most fundamental problem in Turkey that affects public opinion, voter choices and all policies made by any government is the terrorism, a view of NATO as a staunch ally in Turkey's war against terrorism will secure Turkey's position within NATO.

Turkey is the country affected most by the refugee crisis because of its proximity to Syria, and this problem is becoming a big burden on Turkey in social, economic and safety terms. NATO's close cooperation and understanding in Turkey's proposals regarding the means of dealing with the refugees and linked problems will surely be in favor of NATO to earn the public opinion's approval once again.

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