

HONORABLE AMBASSADOR

Distinguished guests,

Dear participants,

At the outset, I would like to extend my gratitude to the managers and representatives of the Turkish Heritage Organization, who are hosting us here today with great hospitality, and giving me the opportunity to address to you here today.

I am here today to share with you my experiences from the evening of Friday, June 15, 2016, relating to the coup attempt that took place in Turkey; and after that, to share my thoughts regarding the dangerous organization that the FETÖ terror organization is.

Distinguished participants,

As everyone knows, Turkey has always held a geopolitically and strategically important role due to its position as one which connects Asia and Europe; as being located on the land routes that extend from Europe to Iran and the Middle East; as being on the sea routes that connect the Mediterranean and the Black Sea; as having its western borders on the Balkans, its eastern borders in the Caucasus, and its southern borders extending into the Middle East. Basically, our territory has always witnessed certain struggles, and not a day has gone by without a struggle, where we could take a break. As a result, for decades, our nation has had to secure our external security by having a strong army/land force in addition to its navy and air force, so that it could fight against enemies and protect its rights.

Terror organizations that have been active and continue to be active in Turkey may have had different names or ideological views, but their goals and resources have always been the same. The common goal is to ensure that the state of Turkey-- located in the world's most strategic place in terms of energy resources-- does not become strong. The latest terrorist organization that the Turkish state and nation has faced -- the Fethullah Gülen Terror Organization (FETÖ)-- has the same goal as the others, but has followed a different method in its structuring and development. Working under the guise of a community, and exploiting the religious feelings of the Turkish public; and with the support and direction it has received from global powers, it was able to organize itself, first and foremost within the state's armed forces and security forces, but in every state institution, and over time, it achieved incredible power.

For close to half a century, the organization paid attention to international and national balances, and working in a disciplined manner, became stronger by the day, using every method to achieve its main objective, which was to take over the state. The extent of the danger that this organization poses, has become clearer in the aftermath of its cooperation with the PKK/ISIS terror organizations and with its attempts to directly target the government. The government started an effective fight, and as a result, when the organization started to lose its strength, it attempted an armed uprising via its members within the armed forces and security forces.

Distinguished guests,

Up until this coup attempt, there was no economic or political crisis in our country, and the parliament was working successfully. There were no problems that risked the state's integrity over public order. There was an on-going process of extracting the elements of the FETÖ Terror Organization, a radical organization which had been holed up within the state. The coup attempt caused chaos in our country for a short period. Nevertheless, this period was successfully overcome, thanks to our millennia-old state traditions, and thanks to our nation's insight and precaution, despite grievous losses of life.

This was the context within which, on 15 July 2016, around 18.00 hours, I received an order from the Chief of the General Staff, regarding an insight from MIT (Turkey's Central Intelligence Agency) about the Land Forces Aviation Command. I was to go to the Land Forces Aviation Command before 19.00 hours, conduct an inspection and in the event of an illegal night flight, to suspend those who were conducting the flights. I was ordered to conduct the investigation along with 5 personnel from the, Military Prosecutor, Military Police and the Chief of Staff of the Turkish Land Forces. In order to mask my reason for going to the Land Forces Aviation Command, the Chief of the General Staff also requested that I get a B-200 type flight (which is a small transfer plane) ready, so that it would look like I was going to inspect the units in the barracks outside of Ankara. As I was leaving the meeting room, the Chief of the General Staff's *aide-de-camp* asked me inquisitively, "Mr. Commander, is something wrong?" And I remember saying, "Nothing is wrong, the meeting is over, we are going back to the headquarters," in an effort to hide the situation. This officer, who was one of the traitors, would later play an active role in capturing the Chief of the General Staff with other traitors.

Around 18.50, when I arrived at the Land Forces Aviation Command, the barracks were quiet. In my inspections and in the following examinations with the personnel who were with me (the Land Forces Chief of Staff, the Ankara Garrison Commander, and the Land Forces Aviation Commander), within the masked activity, I observed neither a helicopter activity, nor any personnel activity that seemed out of the ordinary. During my investigations, I had two phone calls with the Chief of the General Staff and conveyed the calmness of the situation to him.

At the end of my 2,5 hour-long inspection, when I wanted to speak with the Chief of the General Staff for the third time, the line was dropped while the Chief's *aide-de-camp* made the connection and we were unable to speak. I later learned that at this point, the terrorists had entered the Chief's office, and taken him hostage. When I tried to reach him a fourth time, the Chief's *aide-de-camp* informed me that the Chief of the General Staff was calling

me to the headquarters along with the Land Forces Chief of Staff. So I headed to the Chief of the General Staff Headquarters along with the Land Forces Chief of Staff.

Until I left the Land Forces Aviation Command, around 21.20, and even for about 15 minutes after I left, there was no activity within the unit. Because, about 15 minutes after I left the unit, I called the Garrison Commander there, when I was with the Land Forces Aviation Commander, and found out that there was nothing out of the ordinary. Unfortunately, a short time after I had the phone call, and after the Garrison Commander left the office of the Land Forces Aviation Commander, the terrorists entered the office of the Land Forces Aviation Commander, and took him hostage, holding him in a room with his mouth and hands tied. Following this, they started conducting illegal flights. We are now able to understand these as a result of the administrative investigations that we conducted. Until this point, apparently, the terrorist pilots-- whether they were within the units or not-- both domestically and internationally-- were waiting in the pockets surrounding the main road outside of the unit.

Meanwhile, despite the fact that the entire air space was closed off to flights, there were helicopters in the air that had taken off from other bases and that were flying without permission towards nearby areas.

When we arrived at the Chief of the General Staff's Headquarters' main gate around 21.40, the guards at the gate said that they were conducting military exercises, so I went first to the Military Academy gate, and after a brief evaluation of the situation, I went to the Ministry of National Defense gate and entered through this door. The military personnel dressed as special forces, along with the barrack's regularly clothed personnel were in the barracks. When I asked, they said they were conducting a joint military exercise, as part of a guise that everything was normal.

When I went towards the Chief of the General Staff Headquarters' building entry gate with my vehicle, I started hearing shots from every direction. As my vehicle stopped in front of the building, I noticed that the Chief of the General Staff's Principle Clerk was coming towards me, and screaming "Commander, you have to go inside very quickly" and also trying to make the point with his body language.

We entered the Headquarters building's glass door along with the Chief of Staff of the Land Forces ~~Chief of Staff~~ and the aide under noises of shots being fired. Shortly after, we were attacked by forces that were placed behind the round columns, with guns and rifles, some who were in special forces clothing and some in civilian clothing. The traitor Principle Clerk was directing them. They attacked us and forced us to the ground, and put pressure on our heads so that we could not lift our heads. They handcuffed our hands behind our

bodies. At this point, I saw that that they shot my bodyguard officer while he was trying to enter through the glass doors, and I saw him fall to the ground on his back. We were facing a coup attempt, but this was different than the coup attempts that we faced in the past, and that we should have never faced. A while later, with our hands handcuffed with plastic handcuffs, they took us to the second floor via the stairway, and placed us in an empty room, which only had a working TV within the Deputy Chief of the General Staff Offices. As we were entering the room, I saw that the Deputy Chief's Principle Clerk was organizing the activities in this area. I still remember his traitor looks. Before taking us into the room, they had also taken the Deputy Chief of the General Staff hostage.

Around 21.55, they sat me in a Deputy Chief of General Staff room, along with the Land Forces Chief of Staff and the aide, facing in three different directions with our hands handcuffed, and signaled strongly that we were not to speak to each other. Around 22.00, war planes had started flying above the Turkish Grand National Assembly building, located across the room. Neither these flights, nor the armored units which had showed up on the Istanbul bridge, were shown as breaking news on the television which was on. After that, a few people put wool hoods on our heads and covered our heads down to our chins. We were having trouble breathing. At the same time, they also placed plastic handcuffs on our ankles and tightened them.

We were held in this position until 22.18, during which time they would routinely come into the room and push our heads forward, forcing us to stop communicating with each other.

While we were in the room, they had apparently shot fires at the two front tires of my vehicle, which was parked in front of the main gate, so that my vehicle couldn't move, and they had also shot at the radiator, emptying its water. They took the driver to another location and held him in a closed place. One of my protective non-commissioned officers who was waiting outside, was shot by the terrorists, and martyred.

Around 22.18, we heard a sound that said "We are going." Two people took me by my arm and cut my ankle handcuffs with a knife. With my hands tied behind me, and with the mask over my head, they pushed me down the stairs, departing the building from the same door that we had entered, and put me on a helicopter. In the helicopter too, they placed people to my right and to my left, and kept putting pressure on my head to keep my head down.

After about a 20-minute flight, we landed at the Akinci Base, where they took me off the helicopter and transferred me to a vehicle. After moving for about 10 minutes, they left me inside a closed place. They placed plastic cuffs on our ankles again.

I later found out that the building where we were held was a single story, concrete building with no roof, surrounded by a wire mesh, and located right by the main flight runway, named the 141st fleet war operation room. We were put into this building around 23.00 that night, and kept there until 1530 the next day (approximately 14 hours), as hostages with our hands and ankles tied, and with snow masks on our faces.

Our wrists and ankles became numb and bruised. They treated us very rough. When the Land Forces Chief of Staff next to me declared that his hands were becoming very numb, they were very rough to him. They said, "Just like you, the President, the Interior Minister, the Undersecretary of MIT will be arrested, and we will bring them here shortly." They searched us and took whatever we had.

Planes landed and took off from the runway all night. It was probably the planes that took off from Eskisehir at dawn that were shooting with machine guns, and then plunging in to leave bombs on the runway. These noises were very loud because the place where we were being held was just 50-100 meters away from the runway. At one point, the bombs that were thrown on the runway to prevent the planes from departing from the runway caused the building to shake, and we were thrown from our places.

Probably sometime between 10.00-12.00, about every 15 minutes, the base announcement equipment started sounding this announcement: "Attention, Attention, what you are doing is an uprising against the Turkish government, our state is in full control of everything, leave the base immediately and surrender." After this point, I understood that control of the base was slowly being taken back over by our armed forces.

If we include the time we were at the Chief of the General Staff Headquarters, we were held for 18 hours with a wool mask over our heads, for 8 hours with cuffs around our ankles, and for 18 hours with handcuffs, in a closed area. Throughout the night, our need for water or to use the restroom was not heeded. Particularly during the afternoon hours, with the burning effect of the sun, and in this building with no roof, and with the effect of the wool mask over our heads, I felt like my brain was melting from extreme heat.

Of the members of the terrorist organization who took us hostage, the first group was special forces; but with the changing tide of the coup, the second group which took over after the special forces left their locations (probably the Naval Special Forces/Commando teams/) during the dawn hours, there were some improvements in their treatment of us (water, and bathroom needs were met). This group also left us there around 14.50, as we were. Later, when we saved ourselves, we realized that they had left their guns, equipment and backpacks that were in the vehicle, and had jumped over the wire mesh and escaped.

With our release from the Headquarters, they tried to break the resistance of the Land Forces Command personnel by spreading news on social media and creating the perception that I, the Land Forces Commander, had been martyred during the fight.

At the end of the day, during this 18-hour period, we were subject to the kind of treatment that a soldier would never conduct, even towards an enemy soldier.

On the evening of 15 July, traitor elements of FETÖ organized within the Turkish Armed Forces had attempted to remove the democratic constitutional order, via coercion and violence.

The goal of this malicious coup attempt was to carry the Turkish Republic's future into a chaotic environment, and to take it hostage. Within this framework, the malicious FETÖ organization had targeted first and foremost, the Turkish Republic's Presidency, the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the Prime Ministry, the Turkish Armed Forces, the Central Intelligence Agency, and its Security Forces; along with its public institutions and the national will; and without batting an eye, had used every type of weapon and means of war to include heavy weapons to achieve its goal.

Our supreme nation, which is stronger and more determined than these types of anti-democratic attempts and terrorist structures, displayed its patriotism as a role model for the world; and with resolve and determination, and with the utmost care, attention and sincerity to national values; and by uniting with the Turkish Armed Forces and the security forces, claimed national unity.

The inspection and control I did at the Land Forces Aviation Command, was one of the factors that led to panic within the organization, and led them to change the timing of the attempted coup, from the original planned start time of 0300, due to their suspicion that they were found out, to an earlier time, in the evening.

If we were to talk about the FETÖ terror organization's structure, we see that they operate in significant secrecy, and they even try to isolate their members from their own family members.

For those who joined the organization during childhood, they have boarding neighborhood houses, dorms, schools and study rooms; and they call this the service organization. They form houses for university students, and in these houses, they control members' every move via so-called "brothers" and "sisters." They never leave them alone, they give them code-names, and they establish a sense of belonging in them. These students have no right to

choose. They do everything per the organization's directives. They can deny anything with ease, including recorded images.

What career they will choose, which institution they will work for, what communication system they will use (GSM, face-to face, internet programs, encrypted lines, live courier services, meetings, social media, communication via notes, giving/taking directives via the press or publishing organs, encoded communication), whom they will have a catalogue marriage with, their parallel structure within the state organization, their perception operations, illegal methods used against those who are not members of their organization (mobbing, damaging, defamation)-- they use all of these effectively.

They successfully employ the strategy of obtaining power step by step. Every person that gets a certain job becomes a source of intelligence, a reference, a guide for the one that will follow. Over the course of 30-40 years, we see that the organization has achieved the opportunity to access institutional power, weapons and violence at any moment. Within about 40 years, with this model, the organization has been able to place members into all of our country's institutions, from the lowest levels to the highest levels. Of these people, who include the rank of General, and with whom we worked, and who we knew, some were able to turn into a robot, with a directive that came suddenly one night; while some were able to hide for the subsequent phases. Think of a curtain in front of one's eyes, when the curtain is open, they are a normal person, but when the curtain is closed, they are a robotic person with no feelings.

The 15 July coup attempt was the effort of a group of terrorists who had infiltrated the Turkish Armed Forces and unfortunately wore a uniform. It was a group of traitors who held key positions, using the state's opportunities, abilities, and its weapons, giving the directive of a coup, and by taking over media communication organs, trying to give the appearance and to persuade the entire armed forces and our nation that this was a military coup. At this point, the efforts of our President first and foremost, followed by our government, our noble nation, and the Turkish Armed Forces, whose hearts are filled with love of country; the Gendarmerie, and security forces, disrupted their attempt. The Turkish armed forces has never advanced upon its nation.

The positions that were initially lost during the coup attempt were quickly re-taken.

Those who read statements on public television were not able to reach their goal. The Turkish Radio Television (TRT) was cleaned of the coup-plotters quickly. This was the first signal that the coup was failing. Afterwards, towards the morning hours, our armed forces along with our nation and security forces suppressed the coup attempt.

I think that "This kind of an unprecedented radical terrorist attack on our country, had never happened before, Turkey was able to easily overcome this thanks to its inner dynamics. But it should be known that there is a dangerous structure here, and the world should be on alert against this type of structure, and this radicalization."

There is a need within the global community, for policies that fight against terror organizations and radicalism via principles, not via people or countries.

To conclude, terror organizations are becoming institutionalized, and globalized; and they are trying new strategies and new methods. Among these organizations, FETÖ is the most strategically organized but the newest for the world. Turkey's reaction to FETÖ should not be analyzed within the framework of a simple domestic power struggle.

The members of the Turkish Armed Forces, who are sincerely loyal to the democratic rule of law based on the nation's sovereignty; and the Atatürk's Principles, displayed a national stance, and showed everyone that they are at the orders of the state and the noble Turkish nation, from whose being they emerged.

In this geography that our country is located, the Turkish Armed Forces is fighting on three fronts at the same time. The 15 July coup attempt was not done only by the organization's members within the Turkish Armed Forces; FETÖ/The Parallel State Structure had infiltrated into security, judiciary, the civil service, national education, health, religious affairs, the central intelligence agency and other public institutions, such that it had infiltrated into all the state institutions and conducted this heinous act as a result of decades of malicious and insidious planning and organization.

Even though it is not possible to cleanse the Turkish Armed Forces from an organization that infiltrated it over 40 years using all kinds of illegal and irregular ways, the judicial and administrative investigations regarding the identification of those Turkish Armed Forces personnel who are FETÖ/PDY members who either took part in the coup attempt directly, or who are linked to this organization, are on-going with determination. Currently, the number of those arrested from FETÖ is 5.722. The number of people who have been removed from duty is 15.242.

On behalf of my country, I offer my gratitude for listening to me with patience and sincerity.