

Turkish newspaper identifies US general behind failed military coup

Johannes Stern
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Two weeks after the abortive military coup to overthrow and kill elected Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, more information is coming to light about the heavy US involvement in the bloody events that led to the bombardment of the Turkish parliament and the deaths of 246 Turkish citizens.

In an article titled “US commander Campbell: The man behind the failed coup in Turkey,” the conservative Turkish newspaper *Yeni Safak* claims that General John F. Campbell “was one of the top figures who organized and managed the soldiers behind the failed coup attempt in Turkey.” According to the paper, the information has been revealed by sources close to the ongoing legal processing of pro-coup detainees.

Campbell is a retired US general and has some experience with bloody military interventions and overseeing war crimes. He was the commander of the Resolute Support Mission and United States Forces in Afghanistan between August 2014 and May 2016. One of the major US crimes perpetrated in this period was the horrific attack on a hospital in Kunduz last October, which slaughtered dozens of innocent patients and medical staff.

According to *Yeni Safak*, “ongoing investigation unveiled” that Campbell, prior to the putsch attempt, had secretly traveled at least twice to Turkey since May. Military sources also reported that the US general held a series of top secret meetings at the Erzurum military base and at Incirlik Air Base. Campbell was the man, “who directed the process of trending/blacklisting the military officers in the base.”

The Turkish newspaper describes a huge Pentagon/CIA-sponsored operation spanning several months and involving billions of dollars to prepare the coup against Erdogan. According to the newspaper, Campbell managed more than \$2 billion in transactions

via the UBA Bank in Nigeria, and used CIA links to distribute money among the pro-coup military personnel in Turkey.

Based on its sources, *Yeni Safak* reports that “an 80-person special team of the CIA” was working with pro-coup elements within the Turkish military, close to US-based preacher Fethullah Gülen. The cleric is widely believed to be a CIA asset and Erdogan himself has accused Gülen, former ally and now archenemy, of having masterminded the coup.

According to *Yeni Safak*, pro-Gülen officers at Incirlik Air Base established an investigation desk as early as 2015. They began to categorize all soldiers under their command into three groups: opponents, neutrals and supporters. Soldiers who were considered to be opposed to the establishment of a military junta were barred from “financial support.” Members of the army categorized as “those who will move with us,” were provided with the largest amount of money.

The newspaper claims that money transactions began in March 2015, through a commissioned “courier.”

A bag with a large amount of money was found in the room of Brigadier General Mehmet Di?li, one of the top military officials arrested for their involvement in the coup attempt.

General Campbell angrily dismissed the allegations made by the Turkish paper. He told the *Wall Street Journal* that the story “doesn’t even warrant a response” and was “absolutely ridiculous.” President Barack Obama had already declared last week: “Any reports that we had any previous knowledge of a coup attempt, that there was any US involvement in it, that we were anything other than entirely supportive of Turkish democracy are completely false, unequivocally false.”

It is not possible to judge whether all the details in the

newspaper's report are true or not. But far from being “ridiculous” or “completely false,” the Pentagon and the CIA unquestionably had a major hand in the coup attempt.

It has already been fairly well established that Incirlik Air Base—which hosts about 5,000 US airmen, stores the largest stockpile of US nuclear weapons in Europe and serves as the base for the US-led bombing campaign against Syria and Iraq—was at the center of the putsch.

During the coup attempt, Turkish fighter jets operated by plotters flew in and out of Incirlik under the eyes of the US military. After it became clear that the putsch would fail, the base commander General Bekir Ercan Van asked the US for asylum. Obviously abandoned by his backers in Washington, he and other pro-coup soldiers at the base have been arrested.

Shortly after the aborted coup, Turkish Labor Minister Suleyman Soylu, speaking on the broadcaster Haberturk, directly charged that “the United States is behind the coup.”

As a matter of fact, Washington has a long and bloody history of supporting military coups in Turkey, in order to preserve American geostrategic interests. In 1960, the US supported the coup against then Prime Minister Adnan Menderes after he turned to Moscow for economic aid. The putsch in 1980 was launched just hours after Turkey’s air force chief had returned from an official trip to Washington. The US State Department publicly announced the coup before anyone in the Turkish government.

The initial response of the US government to the latest coup attempt was highly suspicious. When the coup was still unfolding, US Secretary of State John Kerry called, in very general terms, for “stability and continuity within Turkey.” As in Egypt, where the US backed the 2013 military coup against Islamist president Mohamed Mursi, Washington made no call to defend the democratically elected president and issued no expression of concern for his personal safety or even survival.

The fact that the Obama administration actually wanted the coup to succeed, and Erdogan dead rather than alive, is most clearly expressed in the response of the American media. Immediately after it became obvious that the putsch had failed, leading newspapers began a concerted propaganda campaign denouncing

Erdogan and his government. To cite only a few examples: The *Economist* accused the Turkish president of “staging his own coup against Turkish pluralism;” The *Hill* complained that the “failed Turkish coup helps Putin;” and the *New York Times* opened its editorial pages to Gülen.

As more evidence of US involvement in the coup emerges, the relationship between Ankara and Washington is becoming increasingly fraught. On Tuesday, the Turkish government issued another public call for the United States to immediately extradite Gülen. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu declared, in an article published by *Al-Jazeera*, that “Turkish people are appalled at the US’ insistence in harboring him” and warned that the extradition ruling “may shape the future relations” of the US and Turkey. A survey conducted by pollster Andy-Ar showed on Tuesday that nearly two-thirds of the country believes that the US-protected cleric orchestrated the coup.



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