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American views on Turkey

BILA

9/222/2016

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has gone to the U.S. for the first time since the July 15 failed coup attempt. The New York trip has special importance because the person Erdoğan declares is behind the coup attempt, Fethullah Gülen, is living and being protected in the U.S.

He warned all countries against Gülen at the U.N. General Assembly, explaining that Gülenists were a global threat.

Turkey was the center of attention in New York at the U.N. sessions. The reason was that Turkey has climbed into an effective position in Syria with the Euphrates Shield Operation it is conducting, and because it has developed its relations with Russia. It is also because it is the country that bears the heaviest burden of refugees and because it hosted the first Humanitarian Aid Summit.

The Euphrates Shield Operation Turkey is conducting against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has rapidly changed the perception about Turkey. Because of the anti-propaganda against Gülenists, Turkey was perceived in the U.S. as a supporter of ISIL. Turkey's military operation repelling ISIL away from its borders and effective air operations destroying several targets have changed this perception.

Turkey recovering relations with Russia and Israel also seems to have been influential in this change.

The Americans, who could not associate Gülenists with the coup attempt, are now 55 percent convinced that Gülenists were behind the coup.

The extradition of Gülen was also discussed. The fact that the U.S. is saying that it is waiting for evidence is assessed as making things difficult. The file about Gülen is about to be completed in Turkey. Erdoğan's close aides say they are curious what the U.S. will do after the file is sent.

Another important factor that has changed the American view on Turkey is the Turkey-Russia convergence. Russian Chief of General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov's Ankara visit annoyed the U.S. They suggested that talks at this level be conducted trilaterally. Americans want to know what military matters were discussed between Turkey and Russia.

It is expected that the operation conducted by the Free Syrian Army (FSA) with the Turkish Army's support will go down to al-Bab. Even though this may take some time, talks are held on how the city will be governed after capture. However, Turkey has conveyed its determination to carry out the operation to a depth of 30 to 35 kilometers south of the border.

Al-Raqqah also holds a very important place in the Syrian issue. What kind of operation will be conducted against this ISIL capital?

According to what I gathered in New York, after Turkey's fierce objection to the intention of using People's Protection Units (YPG) as a land force in an operation on al-Raqqah, the U.S. is reconsidering the situation. We can say that the U.S. and Turkey are brainstorming on formulas without the YPG.

It is said that Turkey is not in favor of sending a land force to al-Raqqah, but was ready to contribute to the air operation. In this case, it has not been decided yet how the land force would be formed. If the YPG is not to enter al-Raqqah, then which land force will go there? Experts say that at least a 12,000-person land force is necessary for al-Raqqah.

This matter is also one of the top subjects Turkey and the U.S. are working on at the moment.