

Vietnam - VITV Program to be aired on July 23, 2016

(The 15 minutes long `Talk-show` with H.E. Mr. Akif AYHAN, Ambassador of Turkey)

VITV studio, 19th floor, 519 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Time for recording: 11:30 am Thursday, July 21, 2016

Focus on "The latest developments in Turkey: The coup attempt and its implications"

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Question 1: How were your feelings upon hearing news on the military coup in your home country? As a Turkish citizen with family and relatives still in Turkey, what did you do during that time?

Answer 1: Before reflecting my feelings, I would like to underline that the last couple of days have been historic and extraordinary for our country and people. This is an extraordinary situation where Turkey was hit by a terrorist coup plot. This plot was quelled with determination.

Allow me to extend our sincere thanks to friendly voices which condemned the coup attempt in Turkey. Fortunately, our country is returning quickly to normal after this foiled putsch attempt.

My first reaction was astonishment as this kind of movements were no more expected in our country that had gone through and overcome any such disruptive actions many years ago.

Of course, I called my relatives to check on them. I had some moral comfort after having learned that they were safe and sound. Uncertainty last 1 or 2 days with intensity diminishing afterwards.

Question 2: What is your perception and commentary regarding the developments leading to the coup attempt?

Answer 2: Unlike in the past, Turkish people are no more eager to approve of such military actions. This time, it was the Turkish nation who subsided and thwarted the plot. They displayed outstanding solidarity as they took to streets and remained defiant, resilient. Another major player has been media, TV channels and social media networks.

Also all political components at the National Assembly firmly stood by constitutional and democratic order.

So very concisely, brave civilians came out to resolutely oppose criminal/terrorist factions from within security forces. It was a victory day of which we should be proud as a precious demonstration of the national will and determination in saving our country from a would-be abyss of darkness.

Question 3: Could you explain the developments related to the coup attempt?

Answer 3: Let me summarize what happened.

In the evening of July 15, a faction of the Turkish Armed Forces attempted to stage a coup in various cities of Turkey, particularly in Ankara and İstanbul, with the aim of overthrowing the democratically elected Government of Turkey.

After a short while, it turned out to be a terrorist drive. The perpetrators fired at people, betrayed their commanders, bombed the National Parliament and the Office of the Presidency.

From the very beginning, the command chain and vast majority of the Turkish Armed Forces stood up against the coup attempt. It was merely some elements of the Air Forces, Gendarmerie and armored units that joined the violent conspiracy.

Both the police and public prosecutors immediately took necessary measures to foil the attempt.

Above all, it was the Turkish nation who thwarted the plot. They displayed outstanding solidarity as they took to the streets and remained defiant. They stood bravely in front of the tanks and reclaimed their democratic rights.

The plotters tried to broadcast their initial public announcement by taking over studios of the state TV (TRT) and raiding private media outlets. Yet their attempt to control media did not last long. Turkish media then played a major role in subsiding the coup attempt.

All political parties displayed solidarity against the threat of disruption of constitutional order in Turkey. Throughout the process, all the political parties and Members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly stood firmly by democracy and the Constitution. Indeed, a Joint Declaration on protection of democracy was adopted at the extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly on July 16.

In battles during the bloody confrontation with plotters, some 50 putschists were neutralised whereas more than 260 loyal security forces and civilians alike perished. Some 1,500 people were injured. Civilians came out to resolutely oppose terrorist factions from within security forces.

Question 4: How is the current situation including security conditions?

Answer 4: The backbone leaders of the coup have been captured and legal processes initiated.

- The Government and our nation remain nevertheless on alert against any possible attempts by individuals or residual elements which might be tempted to take revenge or disrupt public order and pose a security threat.

- Any State has a legitimate and understandable reflex of self-protection and protection of its citizens. Therefore, the Turkish Authorities are taking necessary steps in order to quash/ defuse remnants of rioters, re-establish order and pacify the country by all means.

- As of July 21, 2016, the Turkish Government declared a three-month valid state of emergency in the whole country. This precautionary step aims to increase the efficiency of decision-making, monitoring and implementation of overall measures by the civil authorities, in particular by the Governors of provinces. Overall exercise of individual freedoms will not be affected by such measures except for ill-intending people such as culprits of the foiled coup attempt and other criminals.

Question 5: How could you explain the background and motives of this coup attempt?

Answer 5: The latest development in Turkey was a coup attempt by a faction of plotters in the military, linked to the Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), aiming to topple the democratically-elected government and crumble the constitutional order in Turkey.

- Gulen is a self-exiled Turkish cleric who leads a large number of faithful disciples across the globe and masterminds a secretive scheme of activists to build and enlarge their own axis of power in as many countries as possible.

- FETÖ terrorist organization, has undercover networks not only in the army but also in other state institutions and public administration. There is compelling proof that this coup attempt was staged by the Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization (FETÖ).

- Thanks to the democratic resolve of our state and our people, the coup attempt failed or rather was foiled. Democratic order has prevailed. Public authority has been reinstated. The government is in full charge.

- This terrorist group nourishes vicious intentions and evil objectives. The foiled coup is the latest criminal act revealing the danger posed by FETÖ. We call other countries to take effective measures to counter this group on their soil.

- To sum up, our President, Prime Minister, Government, Members of Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Turkish people all together stood up and defeated the coup attempt by standing by the constitutional- democratic order and rule of law.

Question 6: What will happen to the soldiers and other people who joined the coup?

Answer 6: Perpetrators of the coup attempt will be brought to justice.

- Suspects will be duly and swiftly investigated, prosecuted and punished as appropriate in accordance with the law.

- Charges and sentences will be determined by Turkish courts. This process will be conducted in full respect of fundamental rights and freedoms on the basis of the rule of law. All judicial remedies are available.

- Turkey is among the founding members of the Council of Europe which sets the highest universal standards in respect of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

- Turkish judicial system functions in full observance of its obligations under the UN human rights conventions, European Convention and Court of Human Rights.

Question 7: How may this event affect Turkey's economic-political and social fields?

Answer 7: The unsuccessful coup d'Etat is a turning point in the recent history of our country. Regular activities within the parliamentary sphere and multiple party political regime will resume. Our society will try to heal wounds. A consensus based inclusive approach will be observed to safeguard the national unity and territorial integrity.

On the other side, the State apparatus will have to get rid of any subversive cliques and factions operating as if they were a parallel State within the State.

This `purge` or `purification` with due consideration over the rule of law is a must if our country is to regain access to a reasonable degree of normality free from interferences of sectarian networks that also used to run quite a few private businesses such as educational facilities both at home and abroad.

Question 8: What about the relationship between Turkey and the West, including the U.S and EU after that failed military coup and in the context of Brexit?

Answer 8: The coup attempt has implications beyond Turkey. Turkey is part of several Western and European organisations. It is a pivotal member of NATO and a close accession partner of EU.

Turkey is an indispensable ally in her region in handling issues like Syria and the migration crisis. Turkish stability in a volatile area is of tremendous importance.

The latest developments will not nullify the commitments of Turkey vis-a-vis Europe and United States.

The EU faces a serious challenge with Brexit.

While considering new forms of flexible and effective cooperative integration, the EU had better not lose from its sight the principle of inclusiveness. Inclusiveness is a key word with integration and globalisation processes.

The failed coup attempt in Turkey and the latest terror attack in France could also influence the agenda of the EU further. But Turkey as a close partner will not add up to existing woes or concerns.

Although we may experience some provisional strain in our relations with the West due to diverging approaches to certain matters, we have built up a solid ground through permanent channels of communication, dialogue and coordination.

In fact, Turkey with almost 80 million inhabitants, is a complex country. The Turkish society is dynamic and pluralistic, therefore much more sophisticated today this picture is sometimes not easy to grasp in its entirety for foreign observers who tend to see everything in black or white.

Despite all our efforts and very transparent media reporting, we are quite frustrated by certain distorted comments and spinning/lip service paid by certain foreign politicians and media outlets. While we want to believe that this sort of biased and prematurely judgmental comments do not reflect the official stance of the Governments of our Western and European partners, subjective and speculative opinions might be misleading public opinion and somehow detrimental in relations.

Question 9: EU faces an immigration crisis and Turkey plays a crucial role in dealing with this. So how the situation in Turkey may affect this issue?

Answer 9: It is true that under current circumstances, the EU faces some tough choices on the issue of immigration which appears to have a growing impact on the political level.

From the perspective of Turkey, we have a set of arrangements with the EU regarding readmission of irregular migrants and unjustified asylum-seekers. There is also contemplated visa exemption for Turkish citizens. Since March this year, the flow of such immigrants and asylum seekers has been in massive decline as a result of Turkey's good-willingly endeavours. Turkey is hosting 3 million people who fled their country of origin in particular Syria.

Regardless of what happened recently in Turkey, our authorities will remain faithful to and honour any commitments made to our partners in the field of immigration. Yet, implementation of a burden-sharing policy is being delayed due to slow action on the part of EU. Progress towards visa exemption is also not so fast track. Our connection to EU goes back far in time. Our basic vocation and willingness to join the EU has not been altered.

For the ideal of European integration not to stumble or weaken, it is in the interest of the EU to work on and apply manageable solutions for Brexit, support and help Turkey with regard to preservation of the constitutional order and stability as well as properly address the issue of immigration.

Question 10: Meanwhile, the relationship between Turkey and Russia has been improving recently. What's the meaning of this improvement to Turkish economy?

Answer 10: The groundwork has been laid in recent weeks to restore our ties with Russia and Israel. Russia has been a major partner for Turkey in terms of trade, contracting, energy supplies and people-to-people contacts focusing on holiday-making by Russians in Turkey as a favorite destination.

Reconciliation under way with Russia will not only be mutually beneficial for economic relations but also will open a new window of opportunity in improving handling of regional conflicts.

Question 11: In fact, Turkey has quite high economic growth rate, despite slow world economy. What are the main reasons for this and what do you think about the outlook of the Turkey's economy in the coming time?

Answer 11: There is no uncertainty over economy in Turkey. The economy will not be derailed by the aborted coup attempt.

- In the aftermath of a development of such magnitude, there might be fluctuations on the markets but the impact will be limited.

- The Central Bank of Turkey now offers unlimited liquidity to banks. The Government is in charge and there is no need to worry. Our country is returning quickly to normal after this putsch attempt rebuffed by our nation.

- Our country`s macroeconomic fundamentals remain solid. Authorities are taking all the adequate cautions. Actually, Turkey has been one of the world`s better performing emerging markets. Growth rate was 4.5 per cent in 2015.

Thanks for having me here on VITV studio for a talk-show on current topics.