

EXHIBIT 9

Gülen links are everywhere in Zarrab case



All of us are bored with all the stories about Pennsylvania-based Fethullah Gülen and his movement. Even my colleague Tolga Tanış from the Hürriyet daily declared last weekend that he is tired of digging stories either allegedly or unexpectedly connected to the Gülen Movement. We all experience the same feeling since the secretive nature of former imam Gülen's religious teachings long ago legitimized dubious tactics.

However, the recent case of Iranian-Turkish businessman Reza Zarrab, who was arrested in Miami for evading U.S. financial sanctions on Iran, is a good example of how the Gülen Movement might be the most organized and sinister network in Turkey and around the world in terms of networking and lobbying.

First, Turkish media discovered the loose and most possibly insignificant links between Preet Bharara, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and the Gülen Movement. Bharara worked with Democratic heavyweight Senator Chuck Schumer as his chief council until 2009 and was subsequently nominated to this position by his former boss. Schumer is known for his staunch stance against the Iranian regime, but his proximity to the Gülen Movement in the United States has been a central topic in Turkish media. Schumer allegedly received thousands of dollars from Gülenist donors and has been an outspoken critic of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in speeches he has given at Gülen Movement-run entities like the Washington-based Turkic American Alliance. Bharara personally responded to this claim and said that no one has influence over him.

It is important to note that Gülen Movement-linked prosecutors and judges in Turkey also went after Zarrab in December 2013 on charges of illegal financial transactions to Iran and bribing public officials. The court later acquitted Zarrab, but the larger inquiry resulted in an ugly divorce between the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government and the Gülen Movement. Since the movement tried to arrest literally everyone from ruling AK Party's entourage and illegally wiretapped dozens of high-ranking officials' phones, the government's response was severe. Since then the prosecutors declared the Gülen Movement to be a terror group.

Not surprisingly, new and peculiar details surfaced last week regarding the Zarrab case in the U.S. The court in New York released the transcript of proceedings when Zarrab appeared before Judge Richard Berman. The judge said that he had visited Istanbul in 2014 for a symposium on justice and rule of law. And guess what, according to the official website of the Venice Commission, which sent a delegation to the event, the symposium was organized by the Yüksel Karkın Küçük Attorney Partnership. The Sabah daily last month reported that the law firm had significant ties with the Gülen Movement. Hürriyet daily also independently confirmed that the firm has been known for its involvement with Gülen Movement-related cases.

The oddities do not end. Judge Berman, when he visited Istanbul in 2014, also gave a brief interview to Today's Zaman, which was seized by the government in January due to its links with the Gülen Movement. His comments were directly related to the December 2013 corruption case in which Zarrab was acquitted.

Berman told Today's Zaman that legal proceedings related to the corruption case had been interrupted. He criticized the government's legal amendments in response to the inquiry in order to restore the independence of the courts and said it was inappropriate to change the rules of the game while the game is taking place. Berman also sided with EU officials who were concerned about the developments in Turkey regarding the changes that brought more power to the justice minister. He even personally criticized then Prime Minister Erdoğan, saying he does not respect the Constitutional Court's overruling of the Twitter ban. Berman said Erdoğan's comments sent a bad message to Turkish citizens.

To sum up, we have a Turkish-Iranian citizen in Zarrab who stood trial in Turkey after Gülen Movement-linked prosecutors filed charges. Zarrab is now standing trial in the U.S. after a prosecutor who has loose ties with the Gülen Movement went after him. Finally, we have an American judge presiding over the case who also happened to have visited Istanbul with the sponsorship of a Gülen Movement-linked law firm. This judge also criticized the Turkish government to a Gülen Movement-linked daily regarding its reaction to the corruption inquiry for which Zarrab was on trial.

So my question is do you still accuse Turkish journalists of being paranoid?