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2016 ,8 AUGUST

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As in many of the files, it is expected that the moment of the failed coup attempt in Turkey will be a turning point in the Turkish foreign policy on several axes, mostly related to its Western ties, its foreign policy strategy, and its relationship with Russia.

The visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Russia on August 9 comes in the wake of the failed coup attempt, and therefore it carries -in addition to the context of the slow, but, constant reconciliation between the two parties- at least two messages: The first message is related to the Russian stance toward the coup attempt in Turkey that was much better than the reaction of most European and Western countries (Ankara's allies), which will accelerate the bilateral reconciliation between the two sides. The second message revolves around the axes of Ankara's foreign policy in the long term.

In the first message, the context of reconciliation, it is no secret that the two parties were much affected by the Russian aircraft downing crisis, especially in the economic dimension, which pushed them towards the settlement of the dispute through simple or formality "concessions" from both of them. Bilateral relations between Moscow and Ankara – despite the historical animosity and political and strategic differences, and the immediate crises – include a volume of commercial exchange that reached \$ 31 billion in 2014, and both parties, particularly the Turkish side, desire to raising it to \$ 100 billion by 2023. In addition, there are giant strategic joint ventures, particularly the "Turkish Stream" project for natural gas, and a project to construct a nuclear plant in Turkey with a Russian investment of billions of dollars (These projects have suffered from a standstill since the crisis). Also, Russia is in need for the Turkish food commodities while Ankara benefits from the Russian tourism revenues, where the Russians are second to German tourists.



Strategically and regarding the vision of the Turkish foreign policy and its main axes, there is a “bitter” feeling that Ankara does not hide concerning the stances of its traditional Western “allies” in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, and the United States because of their faded attitudes toward Turkey’s failed coup attempt. This means that Ankara realizes that it cannot completely trust those allies in terms of their intentions towards the Turkish state and the possibility of supporting it in any likely crises. Therefore, Turkey is in a dire need for avoiding the [Western Axis]’s exclusive monopolization of its foreign policy.

This strategic dimension was of concern to the Turkish leadership before the crisis with Moscow, where Ankara sought over years to communicate with the Russian-Chinese axis through “Shanghai” organization, and earned the status of “observer” state and submitted a request for full membership. Turkey also sought to diversify its sources of weaponry outside the framework of NATO, so China won the tender of the ballistic missile system. However, the Russian fighter crisis destroyed all this after freezing Turkey’s relations with Moscow, and Ankara’s cancellation of the arms deal with China to import the system from European countries, including France and Italy.

Accordingly, Turkey’s return to a multi-axis foreign policy will be at the heart of its strategic objectives for the next phase, but the “normalization” of relations with Moscow and then developing them and later upgrading them to the level of strategic cooperation will not be so easy; as the geopolitics facts, the historical events and the intersecting strategies are deeper and much more complex than just a desire for cooperation from the leaderships of the two countries.

Thus, it would be understood that the Turkish-Russian relations will be developing steadily but slowly, starting from the economic cooperation that is important to both of them, then communicating with each other on a number of files of common interest, particularly the Ukraine/Crimea, the Black Sea, and Syria. However, The Syrian issue, in particular, is the focus of attention, where there are rising questions about the reflection of the Turkish-Russian rapprochement on it.



In fact, Turkey had lost a lot on the Syrian scene due to the direct Russian military intervention in Syria, Turkey's downing of the Russian warplane, and then Turkey's changing of its stance and giving up its condition of the need to get rid of Assad in favor of the political solution. This change of Turkey's stance is harmonious with the outputs of the Kerry-Lavrov agreement through the Geneva process. Thus, more Turkish flexibility can be expected with respect to resolving the crisis in Syria at the level of communicating with the opposition (through giving advice and/or practising pressure on them) in exchange for allowing Ankara to play a role in northern Syria to stop the Kurdish project there, which is a priority for Turkey and a red line from the perspective of its national security.

We can also predict, according to this assumption, that there will be a "flexible" Russian position toward Al-Assad himself in the case of deepening cooperation between the two capitals in the near future, especially that the Turkish officials had sent positive signals about their willingness to cooperate with Moscow to the extent of the possibility of opening the strategically important Incirlik air base for Russian planes in the context of the war against Daesh (ISIS).

So, the desire seems available to both parties towards the restoration and development of their relations, as well as the need of the two sides to each other. However, what is still remaining is the talk about tools, capabilities, and the attitude of other parties, particularly the US and NATO, and the developments that could affect all this.

