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Erdogan's visit to the Gulf: Messages and indications:

The Turkish president's visit to Kuwait and Qatar earlier this week, heading a high-level delegation, came about three months after his last visit and five months after the start of the Gulf crisis.

However, this visit looked very different from the previous one in July. While the July visit was almost restricted to searching for solutions to the Gulf crisis and providing support for the Kuwaiti mediation, the economic and trade dimensions dominated this visit.

The second visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the Gulf did not include Riyadh this time, which is a significant indication that could be related to Saudi Arabia's internal developments, Saudi dissatisfaction with the Turkish position on the Gulf crisis, and Ankara's frustration over the Saudi position on the Kurdish file in Syria and Iraq.

Also, the name of the UAE was dropped from Erdogan's statement, saying, "Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and all the Gulf countries are our sister states..." Also, it seems that Erdogan was hinting at the UAE when he said, "We have witnessed a policy of driving wedges between brothers for a long time, and we know well who is behind this policy..." This confirms the idea of Turkey's frustration over Abu Dhabi's regional policies, amid reports that the UAE played a role in supporting the failed coup attempt in Turkey.

The Kuwaiti hail of Erdogan during the visit was very clear, which was manifested in adorning some Kuwaiti towers with the Turkish flag, the joy shown on the face of the



Kuwaiti Emir, and the agreements signed between the two parties in: sports, investment, science and technology. This visit came two weeks after the visit of Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Simsik to Kuwait, and two months after the visit of the Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Ankara. Perhaps the pace of visits and agreements signed between the parties - especially in security and military fields - carries a clear message related to the Gulf crisis.

As for Qatar, the Gulf country is undoubtedly very pleased with the visit which deepens the relations, partnership, and cooperation with Ankara. However, what is more important is that Qatar is no longer confined to thinking about the military and security defense aspects due to the Gulf crisis, but the tiny Gulf country is now talking about development, economy and stability.

The same message was carried by

The wide-range composition of the Turkish delegation that accompanied President Erdogan and his wife to the Gulf carried a similar message, where it included the presidential spokesman, the chief of staff of the Turkish army, the chairman of the national intelligence organization; the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, economy, energy and natural resources, justice, transport, communications and maritime transport, youth and sports, tourism and culture, forestry and water resources, food, agriculture and livestock.

This summit was the fourth one between the Turkish President and the Emir of Kuwait. However, the summit between President Erdogan and Qatari Emir was the third one after the Gulf crisis, the fourth one this year, and the 15th summit since Erdogan took office in August 2014. The visit resulted in signing 14 agreements in various fields.

During the Turkish President's visit to Qatar, Erdogan along with the Emir of Qatar co-chaired the meeting of the third session of the Qatar-Turkey Supreme Strategic Committee between the two sides. However, the visit is also related to the level of

cooperation and coordination between the two countries. The timing of this visit also carries a clear message in light of the re-talk about a likely military intervention against Qatar. Hence, we should not read Erdogan's visit to his soldiers at Turkish Al Rayyan military base as a mere routine or protocol visit.

"Turkey has proved to be the righteous friend in the dark days," says the well-known Qatari mediaman, Jaber al-Haremi. Like Qatar, Kuwait appears to have recently decided to enhance its relations with Turkey. Qatar signed its military cooperation agreement with Turkey after the 2014 crisis with the three Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain), and accordingly Ankara decided to deploy its troops to the Qatari territories after the recent crisis. In the same context, we should look at the protocol of cooperation in the field of education and training for members of Turkey's Gendarmerie General Command and the Kuwait National Guards signed last September by Turkey and Kuwait during the visit of the Kuwaiti Prime Minister to Ankara as a step in the same context in light of leaks about Kuwait's quest for a similar agreement in the future.

In fact, the wrong policies - adopted by Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain - are based on false visions, information and tools; so they bear fruit but only in the opposite direction. The siege imposed on Qatar has not led to subjugating the Gulf country, but instead it pushed it to search for options, alternatives and alliances. Also, the rhetoric against Kuwait will not convince its leadership to adopt the position of Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Manama, and unfortunately, the result for this is only paralyzing the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) and dividing its countries into two axes.

These policies push Qatar, Kuwait and perhaps Oman to further strengthen their relations with Turkey and to a lesser extent with Iran for achieving a regional balance. In fact Turkey and Iran have broken the siege on Qatar and balanced the Gulf and

Egyptian pressures, as they have the potential to prevent or face any disturbing scenarios. Also, the recent course of rapprochement between Ankara and Tehran will support such an option. In fact, a new undeclared axis or alliance seems to have been formed between Turkey, Iran and the three Gulf states (Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman) in the face of the axis including Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, regardless of the extent of Iran's engagement and the role that it can play in this regard.

