

The AKP Congress

News:

At the AKP's 5th regular congress held at the Arena Sports Complex in Ankara, Prime Minister and Konya Deputy Ahmet Davutoğlu was re-elected as party leader with the votes of 1353 of 1445 AKP delegates. (Agencies)

Comment:

After President Erdogan passed the baton to Prime Minister Davutoğlu at the extraordinary congress last year, this congress was important for the elections. The party's true leader President Erdogan, although not being on the head of the party, has the sole authority on all decisions related to the party. This is because President Erdogan knows that when Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, the leaders of Turkey's strongest parties, became Presidents, their parties became weaker and finally disappeared. In order to prevent this tragic end for the AKP, he takes every decision regarding the party himself, in spite of being President. And in general, people in Turkey vote for the leader. Therefore he acts in contemplation of a splitting and weakening of the AKP.

President Erdoğan nominated his own list for the executive committee instead of the list prepared by the Prime Minister and party's chairman, Davutoglu. In other words, just as many newspapers have expressed it already - President Erdogan put his stamp on the management of the party. Significant changes took place in the Central Decision and Executive Board (MKYK) at this congress. A "Committee of Political Virtue and Ethics" was created in order to oversee the party and who is to be assigned by the party leader; and also two new vice presidencies. For deputies known as the heavyweights of the party, the internal three-term has been lifted. At his speech at the congress, Prime Minister Davutoglu touched on subjects like restoration, returning to the founding values, virtue and morality, fighting poverty and corruption, respect of human rights and law, pensions, as well as terrorism and peace process...

During this time of lost singular power, failed coalition efforts, where alerts of economic-political crises ring and terrorist attacks are at the highest level; this congress was of great importance for the AKP in order to undergo self-criticism, to create a renewal and a new synergy. Usually when political parties in Turkey call for an extraordinary congress, they create a negative impact through the weaker side's loss and their removal from party tasks. If there was any struggle for leadership within the party or if President Erdogan had any concerns regarding the congress, then the AKP congress would have been delayed to after the elections. A congress, away from such possibilities gave the AKP new blood.

These elections are the last chance for the AKP to come to power alone. Failing to come to power alone would weaken the hand of both President Erdogan and the AKP. Then, opposition within the party will increase and Erdogan will be questioned due to increased demands within the party. The possibility of a coalition will increase. The way will be cleared for those like Abdullah Gül and Bülent Arınç who are not in the management and who do not think like Erdogan. And the AKP who is aware of this wants to generate promises on issues like the people's economic expectations, terror and law, rather than on the presidential propaganda of the last elections. It wants to approach the people with concrete promises.

Especially a change among the deputy candidates from the 7 June elections will take place. A new list will be created. All names close to or silent about the Gülen movement will be removed. New candidates will be offered in all provinces with lost votes. Alliance talks with the Saadet Party are already in progress. Should this alliance materialize, then at least 20 deputies more will enter the parliament.

Even though President Erdogan is being criticized by names like Abdullah Gül and Bülent Arınç within the party, there is no one to advise Erdogan regarding the management of the party. In fact, President Erdogan is not open for such a counselling. After 13 years of power, there are thousands of people who do not think like Erdogan. Erdogan is alone. Should the terrorist attacks continue and the poll results turn out against the AKP, then the elections might be postponed.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir

Musa Bayoglu