

The crisis awaiting the CHP : 'Ergenekon'

jeudi 31 mars 2011, par [Göksel Bozkurt](#)

Speaking some time ago, Republican People's Party, or CHP, deputy leader Gürsel Tekin made some vague comments about the choosing of the party's candidates for the upcoming election.

"Starting with me, the candidacy of any of our candidates is not certain yet and not guaranteed either. It is not in Mr. [Kemal] Kılıçdaroğlu's nature to give any guarantees to newcomers. The list to be announced on April 11 is important."

This statement has become the harbinger of a storm expected in the upcoming days in the CHP. The arrested Ergenekon suspects Mustafa Balbay, Tuncay Özkan, Sinan Aygün, İlhan Cihaner, and Mustafa Özbek applied to the CHP to stand candidacy for deputy elections. CHP leader Kılıçdaroğlu and his team are being pressured to run other Ergenekon suspects as candidacies as well. A few big guns, from the left to the right, are asking the CHP to shoulder responsibility.

The serious pressure is becoming an internal issue in the CHP. For time is running out on whether or not to nominate the Ergenekon suspects and from the sensitive CHP grassroots, a lot of pressure is being observed.

The CHP does not have a homogenous single view on the subject, and that is the point where discussions begin. Will the CHP take a risk to include these names in its party or not ?

The final slates will be submitted to the Supreme Election Board on April 11. Since the CHP will have primaries in several provinces, the process will be run until the beginning of April. The CHP Party Assembly is expected to convene on April 8 and 9 to finalize candidacies.

And the Party Assembly meeting will be a milestone in terms of the arrested Ergenekon suspects and the clarification of the CHP's position in the future.

The sides have already begun to take action, and Tekin's move should be evaluated from this perspective. Tekin hasn't said out loud but he is fiercely against the candidacies of the Ergenekon suspects, and at this point he is not alone.

The top administration in the CHP is divided into three : Those who defend the candidacies of the Ergenekon suspects, those who stand against such a practice and those who abstain.

It's rumored that Tekin, İzzet Çetin, Umut Oran, Faik Öztrak and Sezgin Tanrıku are objecting to such Ergenekon candidacies ; this strong group is also influential on Kılıçdaroğlu.

The group says that the candidacies of Ergenekon suspects will bring no benefit to the party, and they do not look favorably upon people such as Mehmet Haberal, who is from the center-right, and Mustafa Özbek, who comes from a nationalist background.

Süheyl Batum, another deputy leader, has taken the lead among the others who defend the said candidacies and has been seconded by CHP General Secretary Bihlun Tamaylıgil and Gülsün Bilgehan. Batum and his group want to nominate the Ergenekon suspects as a way of showing their objection to the Ergenekon case, believing that the party would become more powerful with such a move.

Other deputy leaders such as Hurşit Güneş, Erdoğan Toprak, and Engin Altay are said to be coy on the subject. In fact, what they want is termed "a soft transition." Top officials, including the names above, are cold toward the candidacies of Haberal, Özkan, and Özbek, but agree that Balbay could be a symbolic

nomination.

Some Party Assembly members suggest an “interim formula,” thinking that some of the said names could be nominated, but from lower down on the list where they have little chance of getting elected.

It’s evident from this divided and fuzzy picture in the CHP that the heated debates will continue in the CHP until early April ; how this will be cleared is up to Kılıçdaroğlu.

Kılıçdaroğlu is not showing his hand for now and has not shared his views even with his closest circle as to whether or not the arrested Ergenekon suspects will be nominated. Instead, the leader is taking the pulse of Anatolia on a tour and has asked for a poll testing the party’s level of support to be conducted.

Apparently, the CHP leader has not been clear about whether or not to nominate any Ergenekon suspects ; instead, he will look at the reactions heading into April, make assessments and then make a final decision. Afterward, Kılıçdaroğlu will try to pass the decision in the Party Assembly.

Without doubt, a serious “Ergenekon crisis” is at the CHP’s door.

Perhaps the CHP, too, is taking the most difficult turn in its recent history.

For the decision to be adopted at the Party Assembly will not only help determine the results of the June 12 general elections, but also will be an indicator of the future of Kılıçdaroğlu’s leadership in the post-election period.

Sources

Source : Hürriyet Daily News, Friday, March 25, 2011