

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, June 12, 2011 4:21 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Turkey ruling party wins election with reduced majority (BBC)

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From: Fogarty, Daniel J
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To: Sullivan, Jacob J; Wells, Alice G
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants
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FYI.

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Sunday, June 12, 2011 03:54 PM
To: NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-EUR
Cc: SES-O_Shift-III; SES-O_OS
Subject: Turkey ruling party wins election with reduced majority (BBC)

Near-complete results from Turkey's election show the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan has won a third term.

With 99% of ballots counted the AKP had 50% of the vote, which local media said translated to 326 seats in parliament.

But that would be 41 seats short of the two-thirds majority needed to amend the country's constitution unilaterally.

The secular Republican People's Party (CHP) had 26% of vote and the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) 13%.

Both parties were therefore on track to exceed the 10% threshold required to enter parliament. New constitution More than 50 million people, about two-thirds of Turkey's population of 73 million, were eligible to vote in Sunday's election.

The BBC's Jonathan Head in Istanbul says Turkey faces another four years with Mr Erdogan the dominant figure, and his AK party pretty much able to do what it likes in parliament.

Because the MHP passed the 10% threshold, the AKP was denied the two-thirds "super majority" and will not be able to push through a new constitution without putting it to a referendum, our correspondent adds.

And the AKP's failure to win at least 330 seats means it will not even be able to put amendments to the public without consulting the opposition. The party won 341 seats in 2007.

The CHP meanwhile won 135 seats, 23 seats more than last time, and the MHP 54, 17 seats fewer.

Under its new leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the CHP ditched its image as a supporter of military intervention in politics, fielded young candidates, and presented itself as a champion of European social democratic values.

Turkey is a member of Nato and a candidate for EU membership.

Independent candidates fielded by the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) also did well in the south-east, winning 5.8% of the vote and 35 seats.

Our correspondent says this will increase pressure on the government to address its long standing demands for greater autonomy and official recognition of Kurdish identity. 'Turkey is proud of you'

The AKP, which has Islamist roots, has presided over strong economic growth and a more assertive foreign

policy since taking power in 2003.

It has also seen unemployment fall - down to 11.5% in March from 14.4% in the same period last year. The country is a member of Nato as well as a candidate for membership of the European Union.

The AKP put its economic record at the centre of its campaign, promising an ambitious programme of new construction if elected.

Projects included a canal from the Black Sea to the Aegean, a new city outside Istanbul and new bridges, airports and hospitals.

Casting his vote in Istanbul, Mr Erdogan said he hoped the election would "contribute to strengthening of peace, rights and freedoms".

Earlier, he shook hands with supporters outside the polling station, who burst into applause and chanted: "Turkey is proud of you."

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.