



TURKEY ON THE EVE OF UNCERTAINTY

June 7th elections and the day after.

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On the night of June 7th Turkey will enter a new and unmapped area where the main characteristics will be political tensions and uncertainty coupled with widespread feelings of defiance and change.

Regardless of the results of the ballot box, Turkey will be introduced into a swinging period: the country could oscillate between political/parliamentary uncertainty and civil unrest, while the newly emerged psychology of change and defiance could be swinging from constructive cold bloodiness to maximalist introversion.

During the next two to three years, Turkey will experience a major accentuation of the already in progress political and social transformations, re-equilibrations and transitions that from now on will be materializing within an overwhelming atmosphere of constant change and uncertainty.

Consequently, for the first time in over a decade, the results of the upcoming elections in Turkey are practically impossible to predict. Therefore creating an environment of hope for some and of anxiousness for many.

The final results will crucially depend on whether HDP manages to reach the threshold of 10% required for a party to enter the Parliament. Consequently, under the current circumstances in Turkey, every single vote will make a difference, making it impossible to predict with safety the political scene that will emerge in the morning of June 8th.

Nevertheless, some projections are worth noting.

Based on calculations, using the average results of the latest polls¹, AKP is expected to receive now around 40,9%, the Republican People's Party (CHP) around 27,4%, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) around 16,7% and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) around 10,8%. These results introduced in a simulator (which is not 100% precise when it comes to MP's numbers) give us the following outcomes:

AKP would get approximately 269 seats, CHP approximately 137 seats, MHP approximately 89 seats and HDP approximately 55 seats.

If this case materializes, AKP will not be able to form a government on its own, opening the way for either a coalition government or early elections. If AKP decides to form a coalition with another party, the only real option seems to be the nationalist MHP.

¹ <http://www.jamesinturkey.com>



If HDP leadership ever decided to form a coalition government with AKP, it is expected to see its newly acquired broad electoral basis, which brought together for the first time ever Kurds and Turks, destroyed rapidly. A possible collaboration between AKP and HDP concerning the change of the constitution, after intense and hard negotiations on the administrative structure of the State and the individual rights, seems to be the only kind of synergy that HDP electoral basis would accept.

CHP would also pay a tremendous price if its leadership decides to form a coalition government with AKP. The main reason being the fact that for CHP electoral basis, AKP is an Islamist party which puts in danger the secular principles of the Republic and of the society.

For MHP, despite the fact that Tayyip Erdogan's personality is a dividing factor, it would be easier to come to reach a coalition with AKP, with which there is today some significant social, class and ideological overlap.

That said, the toxicity generated by the perceptions of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's personality is dominating the political scene, thus making it a rather complicated and risky option for an opposition party, such as MHP, to enter into an alliance with AKP.

The role of R.T. Erdogan in these elections has emerged as crucial and extremely polarizing. Overshadowing the PM Ahmet Davutoglu and attacking on all sides, ranging from local and foreign press to homosexuals, to non-Muslims, the Turkish President has created a dangerous political and social tension as well as an important dynamic of discomfort and embarrassment against him within AKP and the wider Islamic movement.

Still, the abovementioned scenario, based on the calculations of the poll averages, a coalition with MHP is not the only probable outcome of the elections.

HDP is still too close to the 10% threshold according to the various polls, and its success to reach it is far from guaranteed. All polls have a margin of statistical error of around 1,5-2%, while the rising concerns for a possible electoral fraud should not be neglected.

In the event HDP does not make it to 10%, many in Turkey believe that there is a real possibility of massive demonstrations and eruptions of violence mainly in the southeast regions. Parallel to that, the legitimacy of the electoral procedure and ultimately of the Parliament that will emerge from the ballot boxes will be severely challenged and the prospect of early elections in some stage in the near future seems to be a highly probable scenario.

The scenario considered by foreign diplomats and local and foreign investors as the best one, namely AKP being able to form a government on its own after having secured a marginal or small majority while concurrently HDP manages to reach 10% and to enter the Parliament, is still possible, but not particularly probable anymore.



Regardless of the scenario that will emerge on the night of June 7th, Turkey will not be the same country in the morning of June 8th. AKP's fatigue and severe weakening of its initial reformist dynamic and its primary identification with the "outsiders" and the "others", in combination with the alleged systematic corruption and the movement's incapacity to re-produce an appealing narrative, will open a new era for the party and its internal dynamics.

HDP's emergence as a crucial factor not only for the June 7th elections, but also broadly for the canalization of the progressive undercurrents in Turkey on the one hand and for the dynamics of the Kurdish movement on the other, has entered a path of no return. The biggest challenges of the party's political leadership will start in the morning of June 8th, regardless of the results of the elections.