

Divided conservatives win in Iran

by UPI

TEHRAN - The conservatives who won the Iranian parliamentary elections include blocs who may oppose hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Ali Larinjani, who formerly represented Iran in nuclear negotiations, will be a member of the new Majlis or parliament, the BBC reported. Larinjani, head of a group calling themselves reformist conservatives, ran for parliament from the holy city of Qom after a falling out with Ahmadinejad. Another member of the group, Tehran Mayor Mohamed Qalibaf, is reportedly a likely candidate to run against Ahmadinejad for president. The reformist conservatives, like Ahmadinejad, are loyal to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini. The BBC said that the ayatollah may see a divided movement as easier to control. More moderate reform members will remain a minority in parliament, although they picked up a few seats. Election officials said about 65 percent of the nation's 44 million eligible voters cast ballots in the Islamic republic's eighth parliamentary elections, al-Alam reported. About 4,500 candidates were running for 290 seats. Ahmadinejad cast his vote Friday after returning from Senegal, where he attended the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit, al-Alam reported.

© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Divided conservatives win in Iran by UPI