



The election results were not a surprise to observers: it would have come as a shock if the incumbent president had not been re-elected.

Mongolia's Path to Economic Prosperity and Political Liberalisation

Moğolistan için Ekonomik Refaha ve Siyasi Liberalleşmeye Giden Yol

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Özet

Günümüzde Moğolistan farklı geçişleri yaşamaktadır. Büyük ölçüde tarım öncelikli ekonomiden madencilik hakim olduğu geçişin orantısız büyümeye katkıda bulunarak Moğolistan'da önemli bir sorunu şiddetlendirmiş bulunmaktadır. Geçiş süreçlerinde ekonomik özgürlük, şeffaflık, düzenli seçimler, hukukun üstünlüğü, insan hakları, örgütlenme özgürlüğü ve ifade özgürlüğü üzerinde sıkça durulmaktadır. Demokrasi geniş bir proje olarak kabul edilirse bunun içinde yoksulluğun kalkmasına, eşitlik ve sosyal adaletin gerçekleşmesi de sözkonusudur. Siyasal olarak Moğolistan demokrasiye geçişte çeşitli engellerle karşılaşmıştır. Yine de son başkanlık seçimi bu konulara ışık tutacak nitelikte olduğunu ve Moğolistan'ın geleceği için olumlu bir perspektif sunduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Three candidates contested the election: the incumbent Tsakhia Elbegdorj from the Democratic Party (DP), Badmaanyambuugiin Bat-Erdene, a former wrestling champion of the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) and Health Minister Natsagiin Udval, representing the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP).

Abstract

Mongolia is currently enduring multiple transitions. The transition from a largely agricultural economy to one dominated by mining has contributed to disproportionate growth and exacerbated a problem in Mongolia. During the transition process much is made of economic liberty, transparency, regular elections, rule of law, human rights, freedom of association and freedom of speech. Furthermore, the eradication of poverty, equity and social justice all fit into the broader project of democracy. Therefore, the political transition to democracy in Mongolia encountered several hurdles. Nevertheless, the recent presidential election shed an optimistic light on these themes and offered a positive perspective for the future of Mongolia.

Keywords: *Mongolia, election, transition, democracy*

Introduction

Transition, wherever it occurs, incurs a major societal challenge. The collapse of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s opened up prospects for political change not only in Mongolia but in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Many believed that it ought to be issues of democratization that had to be tackled first.¹ Economic reform, addressed as measures towards a more market-based system was also high on the agenda of post-communist transition. Corruption, collusion and clientelism unfortunately all played a part in this process.² Thus, the state participated in a vital role, termed as being "dysfunctional" at the outset, transforming into a "blackmail" state.³

The legacies of the previous regime, socioeconomic conditions, institutional choice, political culture, ethnic diversity and conflict, and policies of external actors also contributed throughout the transition process. The menu for a successful transition, therefore, is considered to include economic development, democratization, high levels of literacy and higher education, high levels of GDP, equal distribution of income, an accountable state, civil societal organisations, durable and effective institutions.⁴

The logical corollary of such a recipe is that only through a rapid adoption of democratic reforms could a successful "transition" to democracy and capitalism be assured. Rather than this, however, many post-communist states such as Albania and Ukraine emerged as "hybrid regimes" exhibiting both democratic and nondemocratic features.⁵ Mongolia, however, has been regarded as a notable success story in terms of democratization and economic liberalisation.⁶ It has progressed far in terms of holding democratic elections, having "had relatively free elections since 1990"⁷, the last of which was the presidential election of June 26th which was keenly followed by many interested observers.

One of the reasons for this concerned Mongolia being extremely well endowed in terms of natural resources such as copper, gold and coal. The elections were classified as free and fair democratic elections.⁸ Three candidates contested the election: the incumbent Tsakhia Elbegdorj from the Democratic Party (DP), Badmaanyambuugiin Bat-Erdene, a former wrestling champion of the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) and Health Minister Natsagiin Udval, representing the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP).

The campaign was on the whole quite low key. Very few billboards and campaign leaflets, brochures were distributed or seen by the electors. One of the reasons for this was due to the new Presidential Election Law (PEL) passed last December.⁹ Accordingly, candidates were limited to campaign solely on matters directly concerning the areas within which the president had responsibility for: security and defence matters. The idea behind the law was to ensure presidential elections are not transformed into a party political battlefield with all issues being legitimate to discuss debate and attack each other.

The primary concern was to prevent a free-for all political climate with candidates attacking each other concerning their respective party political histories, therefore, leading to a convoluted and dirty campaign. This election, however, was far from that and can be classified as quite a sanitized electoral campaign. This was also evidenced by the official campaign websites of the three main candidates where they focused primarily on the issues and concentrated on identifying their pledges for the future.¹⁰

Result

The election results were not a surprise to observers: it would have come as a shock if the incumbent president had not been re-elected. Having said this however, Mongolia is unique in being a post-socialist state transforming into a democracy, whereby incumbent presidents are not re-elected as of right, as has been the norm in most Central Asian states. In Mongolia's case the president was re-elected due to both his strengths and due to his opponent's weaknesses.

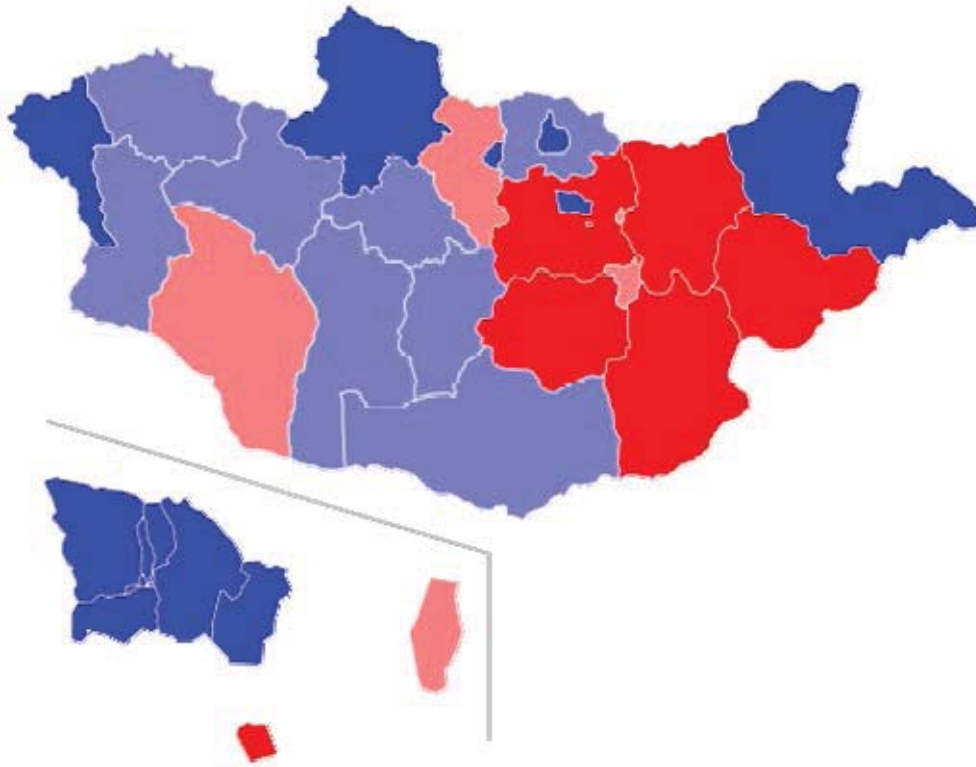
President Elbegdorj's particular strength concerned his previous political activism. Firstly, he had been Prime Minister of Mongolia on two occasions (1998, 2004-2008) and his democratic credentials were highlighted by the fact that he was one of the few people who demonstrated in 1989 urging the Mongolian Communist Party to adopt multi-party elections and abolish the one-party state.¹¹ Secondly, his close association with political transition was a powerful factor in convincing Mongolians to allow him to remain in office as head of state.

A significant important detail was the inclusion of a woman candidate in the presidential election - a first in Mongolian history. Nevertheless, despite this positive development, however, the gender gap remains in Mongolia as there are very few women in parliament with the ratio of women in the cabinet also being quite low.

The other presidential candidate from the MPP was extremely well-known given the fact that he was a prominent champion wrestler in the country. The incumbent president benefited from endorsements by two famous sportsmen who joined the Democratic Party (DP). Through this he was able to counterbalance the sporting popularity of his main opponent Bat-Erdene.

The strength of the DP in terms of votes gained at the presidential election can be seen in the following map and table. Map: 1 below marks the regions and districts of the capital city won by Elbegdorj (blue), Bat-Erdene (red). The darker shades represent a majority (more than half), whereas the lighter shades represent pluralities.

Map 1. Voting Breakdown in Ulaanbaatar



Source: *Mongolian Presidential Election, 2013 - Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia, accessed August 16, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolian_presidential_election,_2013.*

When investigating the results of the election one can clearly see a rural urban divide. Mongolians who lived in the capital city especially and in other urban conurbations tended to support

the incumbent president, whereas Mongolians who lived in the vast steppe voted for the populist main opposition challenger.

Table 1. Voting Breakdown by Region

Mongolian Regions	Elbegdorj DP		Bat-Erdene MPP		Udval MPRP	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Arkhangai	15,688	44.13%	14,535	40.88%	4,615	12.98%
Bayan-Olgii	18,839	53.34%	13,297	37.65%	2,240	6.34%
Bayankhongor	16,134	48.37%	14,725	44.15%	1,986	5.95%
Bulgan	10,023	40.03%	12,075	48.23%	2,577	10.29%
Govi-Altai	9,731	41.57%	11,218	47.92%	2,199	9.39%
Dornogovi	9,842	37.85%	13,880	53.38%	1,866	7.18%
Govisumber	2,664	42.17%	3,111	49.25%	436	6.90%
Dornod	16,098	53.06%	11,798	38.89%	1,886	6.22%
Dundgovi	6,401	36.43%	9,455	53.81%	1,524	8.67%
Zavkhan	15,530	49.24%	14,728	46.69%	960	3.04%
Ovorkhangai	21,012	46.12%	20,808	45.67%	2,876	6.31%

Omnogovi	11,502	45.93%	11,181	44.64%	2,179	8.70%
Sukhbaatar	10,290	39.58%	14,168	54.49%	962	3.70%
Selenge	20,377	47.15%	17,900	41.42%	4,233	9.79%
Tov	14,848	39.39%	19,165	50.84%	2,971	7.88%
Uvs	15,402	46.17%	15,299	45.87%	2,066	6.19%
Khovd	20,144	61.17%	10,562	32.08%	1,765	5.36%
Khovsgol	27,056	52.28%	20,827	40.24%	3,106	6.00%
Khentii	10,156	33.37%	19,019	62.50%	776	2.55%
Darkhan-Uul	20,474	50.02%	17,248	42.14%	2,785	6.80%
Orkhon	22,084	51.50%	16,274	37.95%	4,092	9.54%
City of Ulaanbaatar						
Khan-Uul	31,870	54.23%	22,883	38.94%	3,413	5.81%
Baganuur	5,685	46.69%	5,880	48.29%	475	3.90%
Bagakhangai	791	45.07%	894	50.94%	53	3.02%
Bayanzurkh	70,763	55.01%	49,777	38.70%	6,822	5.30%
Nalaikh	7,559	50.04%	6,078	40.24%	1,262	8.35%
Sukhbaatar	33,366	54.91%	23,681	38.97%	3,157	5.20%
Chingeltei	38,614	53.73%	28,130	39.14%	4,318	6.10%
Bayangol	49,903	57.08%	32,158	36.78%	4,702	5.38%
Songino Khaikhan	67,209	53.86%	48,343	38.74%	8,079	6.47%
Overseas	2,739	64.57%	1,283	30.25%	182	4.29%
National Total	622,794	50.23%	520,380	41.97%	80,563	6.50%

Source: Mongolian Presidential Election, 2013 - Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia, accessed August 16, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongolian_presidential_election,_2013.

From Table: 1 it can be seen that Natsagiin Udval, the candidate for the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) managed to receive 80,563 votes, which translated as 6.5% of the national vote. She received her highest percentage of votes in the regions of Arkhangai, Bulgan and Selenge which indicates a regional pattern. All three regions lie to the north and west of the capital.

It was interesting to note that the region where she received the least amount of votes was in the home region of Bat-Erdene the MPP candidate. Udval could only manage to garner less than 3%, which is evidence of the fact that the non-DP vote was consolidated by the MPP in the Khentii region. Looking at the total amount of votes Udval received, it is noticeable that 40% came from the capital city: 32,281 votes. Therefore, from

the whole of Mongolia only 6 out of 10 votes came from outside of the capital city.

As for Bat-Erdene, he naturally won 62.5% of the vote in his home region, which was the highest any candidate received in any region. Furthermore, looking at the results it is clear to see that he was the popular choice of the south of the country, scoring well in the regions of Sukhbaatar and Dundgovi. Similar to Udval, he also received 42% of his total votes from the capital city: 217,824 of 520,380.

The incumbent performed very well in the capital city which has always been a stronghold for the DP. In fact their candidate was elected Mayor of the city last year as well as holding onto 26 of the 45 city council seats. In the end Elbegdorj secured 305,760 votes in Ulaanbaatar. The high



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turnout in the capital city was welcome news for the DP which meant that of all the votes cast in the capital, their candidate received more than half: 55%.

Furthermore, the capital city accounted for nearly half of all the votes he received (49%) in total, which meant that of his entire national vote, almost one of every two came from Ulaanbaatar. Having performed admirably in the city Elbegdorj also did extremely well in the regions, especially those in the west such as Khovd (his home region); Bayan-Olgi and Khuvsgul, winning 14 in total.

Evaluating the results an interesting fact emerges. Elbegdorj won the election by a margin of just over 102,000 votes. The difference between the winner and the runner-up was practically the margin of victory in the capital city; as Elbegdorj received 87,000 more votes than Bat-Erdene.

According to Dierkes, if one puts together “all the non-Ulaanbaatar districts minus the diaspora, respective shares are 47.36% for Elbegdorj, 45.4% for Bat-Erdene, and 7.25% for Udval. Using this same definition of country vs. city, 54.23% of all votes were cast outside of Ulaanbaatar”.¹² This incidentally means that the capital city accounted for more than 45% of the national vote, which once more underscores the vitality of Ulaanbaatar¹³ in both electoral and political terms.

Therefore, with the result of the presidential election, Mongolian politics certainly resembles a strong domination by a single party. The Democratic Party (DP) now controls the presidency prime ministry and parliament - through being the largest part of the coalition. Furthermore, they also control the Mayoralty of the capital city Ulaanbaatar, henceforth all the most important and visible political posts are held by the DP. In

any democracy, however benevolent or successful a political party in government might be, it is vital for a credible opposition to exist. At the moment the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) seems to be fulfilling that mission, though it is far from being the leading political force in the country.

Evaluation

Mongolia desperately needs to have convincing opposing voices to correct the government when it makes miscalculations, as it surely will given all democratic governments some time or another, inevitably do. The lack of a respectable opposition would please the DP in the short term but certainly in the long term it would be highly detrimental to both the party and the country.

Despite the fact that the election was a positive sign for the development of democracy in Mongolia, it had several defects. One of the criticisms leveled at the presidential election was the inability of individuals to stand as an independent candidate to become head of state. The constitution and the PEL limited the right to nominate presidential candidates to parliamentary parties and coalitions.

Another criticism concerned the media; of who owned which media source and how independent it was. There was much vagueness concerning ownership. These fears were noted and expressed by the OSCE who had sent short-term and long-term observers to the presidential election in declaring that political actors had either direct or indirect ownership of media outlets thus restricting 'editorial independence' and 'a robust public debate'.¹⁴

Nevertheless, when one looks at the election from an overall perspective, they were far and away much more liberal, open and democratic compared to any other post-socialist state transitioning towards an open-market democracy. It is due to this, therefore, that Mongolia has consistently been highlighted as a very good example of a socialist state transitioning towards democracy.¹⁵ It was precisely this theme that President

Obama reiterated in his congratulatory message: "Through its impressive democratic achievements and its progress on economic liberalization, Mongolia serves as a significant example of positive reform and transformation for peoples around the world."¹⁶

Mongolia has been able to achieve this primarily due to the domestic desire to establish and entrench a more open and liberal political regime. It has been such a domestic demand for progress that has driven Mongolia further along the road to democracy. Having said this, however, one cannot dismiss the international dimension. International aid and assistance has been given to Mongolia, encouraging its transformative path. What has also considerably assisted in this process has been the economic wealth that Mongolia has literally been sitting on. With its mineral wealth speculated to run into trillions of dollars, this has made Mongolia a magnet for foreign investments, especially the international mining companies.¹⁷

In terms of the international dimension, Mongolia's inclusion into the OSCE which was achieved at the end of last year is another sign of Mongolia's desire to play a full part in international relations.¹⁸ Mongolia has demonstrated its willingness to play a role in maintaining international peace and security through participating mainly in peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo, Eritrea, Kosovo, Chad, Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, it has enhanced its international prestige by chairing the Community of Democracies¹⁹ - an intergovernmental forum of democracies formed in 2000 - thereby, once again highlighting its commitment to democratic values.²⁰

The Mongolian presidential election was considered to be an important steppingstone, especially by the international mining companies and foreign investors. They were very keen to find out whether Mongolians would continue to support their reform-minded president or reject his approaches instead preferring a different candidate whose image projected him as a fervent environmentalist who would protect Mongolian lands against the negative consequences of mining.

Mongolia desperately needs to have convincing opposing voices to correct the government when it makes miscalculations, as it surely will given all democratic governments some time or another, inevitably do.

Throughout the run up to the election much was made of ‘resource nationalism’ defined as “increases in taxes and royalties....more costly and demanding conditions, such as the ‘use it or lose it’ policies, social investment requirements increase, restrictions on foreign ownership and requirements for indigenous shareholdings”²¹ and the fear this created in international mining circles.²² Whilst there are genuine elements of such a sentiment that can be witnessed in some political parties, it is an aberration to categorize it as widespread.

The future for Mongolia looks very bright indeed. In the short term a dip in the prices of commodities will certainly have a detrimental effect on the Mongolian economy and its economic growth rate. Looking towards the medium and long term, however, if the Mongolian government gets the balance right in terms of investments, transparency and redistribution, then Mongolia can certainly become the best transition model for all post-socialist and even post-authoritarian regimes endeavouring to become more liberal democracies.

Mongolia has indeed made very good progress over the last two decades. In this respect it has certainly been aided and abated by the economic fortune it has held. Whilst it is appreciated that wealth does not always equate with liberalism or democracy, most democracies in the world are not poor. The chances are that the wealthier the individual citizen is, the more likely it is that their country’s political regime will be more open, more liberal and more democratic.

Related to this, whilst all countries prefer to have vast natural resources, very few in the world pos-

sess them; it is simply a matter of a luck of the draw. Modern states also do not have the privilege of choosing their location on earth. Just as humans do not have the opportunity to choose their parents or siblings countries do not have the opportunity to choose where they are located on earth and who their neighbours are.

Mongolia is a very good example of this obvious truism. Certainly it would wish to be in a different region with more numerous neighbours. Stuck between the Russian Federation and China, Mongolia has consistently been attempting to create a third neighbour.²³ Landlocked between these two giant countries, Mongolia has been endeavouring to create a third neighbour. Such neighbours in this category have included the United States, European Union, Japan, Turkey and other Central Asian countries.

In this respect it must not be forgotten that one of the largest minorities living on Mongolian territory are Kazakhs. Given the two countries are only separated by 38 kilometers, the Kazakh government has over the past few years been investigating ways and means to increase contact with Mongolia, especially in the economic and commercial spheres. Kazakh President Nazarbayev alluded to this in his congratulatory telegram by mentioning the good-neighborly and friendly relations between the two countries as well as the strengthening of mutually beneficial collaboration. He expressed confidence “that our close relationship towards the benefit of the two countries will further deepen”²⁴

The dual challenges of transforming a centrally planned economy to a free market based economy and a centralised authoritarian socialist po-



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litical regime to a multi-party parliamentary democracy are difficult and fraught with hurdles. The most pressing economic task is to eradicate poverty and achieve equitable redistribution.

Socio-Economic Challenges

Concerning the Mongolian economy, Saurabh Sinha, a senior economist at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ulaanbaatar worries that “On the one hand you have the mining sector which is running away and driving the entire economy and on the other hand you have the agriculture, the livestock and nomadic lifestyle. And between these two, the urban manufacturing sector is really scant and limited.”²⁵ The short-term prospects for the economy remain excellent, as the International Monetary Fund predicts the gross domestic product to expand by 14% this year.²⁶

Nonetheless, poverty remains a problem despite the fact that it has been reduced with the aid of

the economy having grown at an annual average of 9 percent in the past decade or so. Nevertheless, the latest available figure for 2012 shows that poverty still stands at 27.4%²⁷, despite the double-digit economic growth in the past two years. However, the rate was 29% in 2011 and 39% in 2010.²⁸

The unanswered question remains whether this reduction is related to the government’s popular cash hand-outs of the past three years, or if it is a systematic trend. Whatever the explanation, maintaining economic growth and expanding the opportunities related to it, such as the reduction in youth unemployment, will be vital for Mongolia to meet the goal of reducing poverty to 18% in the next two years.²⁹

According to a report by the Ministry of Economic Development and the Central Bank of Mongolia, there were over \$960 billion worth of investments registered as of the first half of 2013.³⁰ When compared to the same period last

year, however, investment had decreased by 43%.³¹ As for investments in the extractive sectors they had decreased by 32%, while foreign investment in the tourism sector had decreased by a substantial 98%.³²

Corruption, a perennial problem for all post-socialist states, has continued to increase in Mongolia. Between 1999 and 2012, while the economy was performing admirably, Mongolia's corruption ranking has managed to drop from 43d, where it was ahead of fellow post-communist countries in Europe such as Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia to a dismal 94th behind China, Zambia, Burkino Faso, Saudi Arabia, Ghana, Namibia and Rwanda surveyed by the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 2012.³³

Having said this, it was a promising sign that, in a single year (2011-2012) Mongolia did ascend 26 places in ranking.³⁴ To combat the ongoing cancer of corruption, the Mongolian government has announced plans to reform the civil service,³⁵ judiciary³⁶ and police³⁷, the institutions which have been identified in surveys as the most corrupt.

All too often, as has been the case in Central Asia, political power can be used for economic gain which in turn can be used for buying political influence. The result of such a vicious cycle is for very few benefits or dividends going to the public at large. The net effect witnessed then becomes one of persistent poverty among a large segment of the nation, made far worse through the provision of poor social services.

If policies of reform are continued then government effectiveness ought to improve and create an enabling governance environment to focus on poverty eradication. In the near future Mongolia's significant extractive wealth also needs to be managed in a transparent and inclusive manner so that benefits accrue to the whole population in an equitable way. Given that the eradication of poverty is essential for any healthy democracy, this ought to become a major principle for the Mongolian government.

Legacy

It is precisely such topics that the re-elected Elbegdorj will be focusing his attention upon. If he is able to manage the Mongolian economy well in tandem with his political party in parliament then the next four years should provide more stability and greater wealth and growth for all Mongolians. Public trust then will be maintained and outcomes that ensure prosperity, justice and security for the people be possible.

Should this be realized, President Elbegdorj will have ensured a very important place for himself in Mongolian political history. One development, however, is certain: Mongolia will definitely have a new president in 2017. The constitution, similar to the American one, forbids any individual serving more than twice as head of state.

Therefore, not only for greater Central Asia but also for the Asia-Pacific region, Mongolia is becoming a shining beacon of economic and political advancement. Observing the progress that Mongolia has achieved in terms of political and economic transition it is easy to predict that many countries will try and court Ulaanbaatar. This immediately came forth after the election result was announced from President Putin. He declared: "I believe that Mongolia's economy and society will be developed intensively further under your leadership. I want to express my willingness to collaborate with you to enlarge bilateral relations between Mongolia and Russia, strength regional and international partnership and cooperation. I wish you all the best, good health and success in your leadership."³⁸ It will come as no surprise to see regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation try to foster closer relations over the next few years alongside other industrialized states and multinational energy companies.³⁹

Mongolian-Turkish University

On a final note, in April 2013 when Mongolia hosted the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, the 'Community's Attainments and Global Challenges' were identified by the Ulaanbaatar Declaration. The third article read:

“We commend the concrete actions undertaken by the Presidency in promoting education for democracy, and will work together to promote the full and meaningful implementation of the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/67/18 on Education for Democracy, which would contribute to the strengthening of democratic society and institutions, the realization of human rights and the achievement of the MDGs. We further commend to the attention of all CD member states the action plan contained in the International Steering Committee’s Charlottesville Declaration on Creating a Culture of Democracy through Education (CCD)”⁴⁰

This is precisely the area where Turkey can play a significant role; in higher education. Democratizing states as highlighted by the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, can always benefit from well-educated, globally experienced young patriotic citizens. New generations fully immersed in modern technologies, actively engaged in politics, committed to further progress is essential for newly independent countries. Therefore, research projects collaborating on deepening the roots of democracy and the better functioning of a market economy can be mutually rewarding for both countries.

Given the Turkish commitment to assisting higher education in Central Asia, this should be extended to Mongolia as soon as possible. Steps were taken in this regard in 2001 when a protocol was signed between the Mongolian National University and TIKA, the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency, establishing a Turcology Department within the university.⁴¹

Through American assistance, however, Mongolia is already host to a couple of international universities, namely, the Mongolian International University and the American University of Mongolia. Therefore, a Mongolian-Turkish University would be a feather in the cap of Turkish diplomacy helping Turks to better understand Mongolian culture and traditions as well as their politics and economic trajectory.

Turkey has sufficient experience to successfully carry out such a venture; all that it requires is

the political will to give it the green light. More scholarships ought to be given to Mongolian students in the meantime who may well in time become the staff and administrators of such a new university. For Mongolia it would be another symbol of the importance that Ankara attaches, which goes beyond recollecting the past through the Orkhun Monuments, but focusing on the country’s dynamic future and its beautiful eager-to-learn young minds.

Conclusion

Mongolian democracy continues to face pressing issues such as “poverty, corruption, economic distortion and inequality, as well as some continued problems with human rights violations”⁴² The manner in which, and the path to take, in order to overcome such challenges and firmly establish a free-market democracy was agreed to in Mongolia a decade ago when in September 2003, it hosted the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies bringing together over five hundred participants from over 100 countries to discuss democracy, good governance and civil society. The conference adopted a declaration (not surprisingly) entitled the Ulaanbaatar Declaration which identified six key features that democratic societies must possess:

- i.** just and responsible
- ii.** inclusive and participatory
- iii.** promoting and protecting the rights and freedoms of all their members
- iv.** open and transparent
- v.** functioning under agreed rules of law and accountability, regardless of the challenges faced
- vi.** demonstrating solidarity towards others

Hillary Clinton had written that “Mongolia has shown an example of how democracy can prevail in places, where democracy seemed impossible. I say to democracy doubters to come to Mongolia”⁴³ Her successor as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, reiterated that “the people of Mongolia recently participated in yet another free and fair presidential election, evidence of Mongolia’s strong commitment to its democrat-

ic process..... Mongolia is playing an active and important role in promoting peace and stability around the world.”⁴⁴ If Mongolia is able to meet the requirements of both the Ulaanbaatar Dec- larations, then it will continue to be considered by many in the international community as the beacon of light for democracy and economic liberalism.

ENDNOTES

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