

Briefing :: Mongolia Moves Toward Europe

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BRIEFING

Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission
Mongolia Moves Toward Europe

Witnesses:
Khasbazaryn Bekhbat,
Ambassador of Mongolia to the United States

Terrence Hopmann,
Professor,
Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

John Tkacik,
President,
China Business Intelligence

The Hearing Was Held From 2:00 p.m. to 3:20 in Room Number 210, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C.,
[Representative Joseph Pitts (R-PA), CSCE], Moderating

Date: Wednesday, October 12, 2011

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH PITTS (R-PA): This hearing will come to order. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to this U.S. Helsinki Commission briefing entitled "Mongolia Moves toward Europe." And let me give a brief opening statement and then we will introduce our three presenters and then go to questions, and we will even give an opportunity for audience to go to the podium and ask questions if you have any.

I'm Congressman Joe Pitts of the 16th congressional district of Pennsylvania. I'd like to welcome all of you here today for a briefing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. As a long-time commissioner of this commission as well as the chair of the Congressional Mongolia Caucus, I'm pleased that we have this opportunity to discuss the topic of Mongolia's participation in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as OSCE.

Mongolia has been an Asian Partner for Cooperation with the OSCE since 2004.

By establishing a framework for cooperation with like-minded countries, such as Mongolia, the OSCE is able to further its mandate, particularly in addressing security threats and conflict prevention, and is also able to explore opportunities for a wider sharing of OSCE norms and principles and commitments.

And Mongolia has been an active partner, hosting conferences in the year 2007 and in June of this year, and offering its own very relevant experience as an emerging democracy to the OSCE-participating states.

In July of 2008 I participated in a briefing this commission held on the unrest that Mongolia experienced following a national election. The imposition of a state of emergency was a cause for concern by some observers but, happily, three years later we can see that democracy in Mongolia remains intact and the political sphere is just as vibrant as before.

Today we are here to discuss a more - much more positive time in Mongolia's development, and that is to discuss Mongolia's decision to seek full membership in the OSCE. I'm very pleased that we have His Excellency Ambassador Bekhbat here with us once again to tell us first hand Mongolia's intentions with regard to the OSCE.

However, I am sure that one of the main drivers of this effort is Mongolia's democratic resilience during what has been, at times, a very difficult economic and political transition. And it is exactly this resilience that is one of the main reasons why I think Mongolia would make such an excellent OSCE participating state.

We are also joined today by two other distinguished panelists - Mr. John Taxic (ph) - Takik (ph) -

JOHN TKACIK: Tkacik.

REP. PITTS: Mr. John Tkacik, president of China Business Intelligence, and Dr.

Terrence Hopmann, professor of international relations at John Hopkins (ph) University School of Advanced International Studies. We have distributed the complete bios of each of our panelists, so I won't read them to you. Instead I will invite Ambassador Bekhbat to begin his presentation at this time. Mr. Ambassador, you have the floor. Welcome.

KHASBAZARYN BEKHBAT: Thank you very much, honorable Joe Pitts, for your introductory remarks and for your warm words towards Mongolia, my country.

Honorable Mr. Chairman, honorable members of the U.S. Congress, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, it's indeed a great honor and a pleasure for me to participate in this briefing entitled Mongolia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, that's been convened by the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

Eight years have passed since Mongolia became Partner for Cooperation of the Organization - this world's largest regional security organization. This partner status has proved - provided Mongolia with an opportunity to work and to get closer with the European and Central Asian states on the basis of OSCE-agreed principles and norms. Mongolia strives to make contributions to the OSCE-(relief ?) processes by abiding by its standards and values and participating to the extent possible in its multidimensional activities.

Today, Mongolia fully shares the values of the OSCE, as contained in its founding documents, and has increasing ability to make further positive contributions to collectively address a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, democratization and human rights, counter-terrorism and economic and other environmental activities.

As you know, over the past twenty years Mongolia has fundamentally transformed its former political, social and economic systems and laid down all the necessary pillars for new democratic governance that promotes and protects a market economy, free elections, freedom of the press, and civil society. Today, my country is recognized as an example of democratic nation, which in a span of two decades has changed itself from one of the most closed societies into a vibrant, pluralistic democracy. Mongolia stands on the path of an accelerated economic growth which will allow it to be deeply integrated into regional and international economy.

In pursuing our democracy-building efforts, we are learning from both our own and international experiences. We are aware that the lessons of democratic traditions in - transition in Mongolia can also serve as a positive example for others in our vast Eurasian region.

Mongolia is proud of being an active member of the Community of Democracies. From July this year, Mongolia has assumed the honorable and responsible duties to chair this Community of Democracies, which is the only international intergovernmental coalition aimed at promoting and to strengthen democratic norms and values around the world. During its presidency over the next two years, Mongolia will give priority to the promotion of democracy education and good governance, to building partnership with civil society and the consolidation of regional cooperation of CD members.

And I am pleased to note that OSCE and its partners have in general been very

supportive of the Community of Democracies goals and mission. In this regard I have no doubt that Mongolia, as the chair, will have full understanding, support and collaboration from the U.S., in particular from U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Chairman, Mongolia's foreign policy has always been peace-loving, multipillared or multidimensional, its actions proactive and constructive. Given the specifics of our geographical position, we attach priority to relations with our two immediate neighbors: Russia and China. We have no border or unresolved political problems with any one of them. We are working to turn the policy of good neighborliness to that of a strategic partnership, to work with them not only bilaterally but also more within multilateral context.

Bordering with Russia is an important link and access to OSCE. In order to enrich further its cooperation with the countries of larger Eurasia, Mongolia needs to go beyond bilateralism and work actively – be involved with and in regional institutions promoting, as we call, our third-neighbors policy, this important component of Mongolia's foreign policy. Hence, Mongolia has negotiated and initialed (ph) with the European Union a Partnership Cooperation Agreement which is expected to be signed in the very near future. Likewise, two years ago, the Mongolian government has taken a decision to introduce European Union common principles, criteria and standards in all fields, including education, healthcare, industrial and agricultural production, mining, environmental protection, et cetera.

As a Northeast Asian country, Mongolia stands for a multilateral mechanism of a dialogue on security issues in this region. It considers that the Korean peninsula must be nuclear-free and the reunification of the two Koreas can be achieved only by means of negotiations. Mongolia continues its efforts to strengthen further its own nuclear-free status.

We believe that the vast area stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok is where Mongolia can find answers not only to the Eurasian dimension of its foreign policy; we could and wish to develop with all OSCE member states an increasingly effective interaction in responding to those tremendous challenges and threats the international community faces today as a whole.

To take only one small example, Mongolia remains committed to international efforts to combat terrorists, to prevent crises, to strengthen peace and security through cooperation. Since 2003, over 5,000 Mongolian peacekeepers were deployed to Iraq, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Chad, Sudan to undertake peacekeeping missions. We have also deployed troops and a mobile training team to Afghanistan to support the training of the Afghan National Army.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has been a reliable partner of Mongolia. We are profoundly grateful - thankful to the U.S. for having been our best friend and general supporter in our democratic journey since its very beginning. Our ties are based on shared values and principles of democracy, human rights and freedom, and we could build up a deep mutual understanding and a productive, interactive dialogue at all levels, including the highest one. The meeting between President Elbegdorj and President Obama last June in Washington D.C. and the visit to Ulan Bator by Vice President Joe Biden last August clearly demonstrated the ever-deepening friendship and partnership between Mongolia and the United States.

This year Mongolia is marking 2,220th anniversary of its statehood, centenaries of regaining its independence and establishment of modern diplomatic service. We are celebrating also this year the 50th anniversary of Mongolia's joining the United Nations. And it's my earnest hope that this year would be also remembered as Mongolia being able to expand further its cooperation with OSCE to the next level - that of a participating states - state. Thank you very much for your attention.

REP. PITTS: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. It's been a pleasure to - an honor to work with you as you've ably represented your country in many of the events that I've been able to attend, and thank you for your testimony. This time, the chair recognizes Dr. Terrence Hoppman from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

TERRENCE HOPPMAN: Thank you, Congressman Pitts, Ambassador Bekhbat, distinguished members of the Helsinki Commission, and ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to be able to address you today as the CSCE commission considers the request of Mongolia to become the 57th participating state in the OSCE. I appear before you not as a specialist on Mongolia but rather as a scholar who has observed and written about the development of the CSCE and then the OSCE and its many contributions to security in the broad European area going back to the negotiation of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. Therefore, my focus today is on the history of enlargement decisions in the OSCE and the criteria that might reasonably be applied and that have been applied in previous decisions in considering the request of an applicant to become a participating state in the OSCE.

I would like today to deal basically with three issues that might be raised in this context. The first deals with the geographic scope of the OSCE, the second deals with decision-making processes within the OSCE and the third deals with the implementation of OSCE norms and commitments.

The OSCE has become the largest institution dealing with European security, in addition to holding by far the broadest definition of security, to include not only military confidence-building and transparency but also the economic, environmental and human dimensions of security. But it was formed with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 by 35 heads of state in the very midst of the Cold War. Therefore, at the outset, it focused mostly on bridging the chasm that divided Europe through the middle. Its initial participating states therefore consisted of all members of the two Cold War alliances: namely NATO, with 15 member states at the time; the Warsaw Pact, with 7 member states at the time; along with 13 neutral and nonaligned states of Europe as well as the Holy See.

Due to its original structure based in part on the Cold War blocs, it included within NATO the two North American participants, the United States and Canada, as well as the Asian portions of Turkey. Within the Warsaw Pact, it included all of the 15 republics of the former Soviet Union, including five Central Asian republics and three republics located in the southern Caucasus. As a consequence, ever since 1975, OSCE followers have generally described its geographic scope as including all of Europe "from Vancouver to Vladivostok the long way around."

Since 1991, 22 additional states have become participants in the OSCE, while one, the German Democratic Republic, ceased to exist with German reunification.

Of the 22 new participating states, 20 emerged from the breakup of three multinational states that were previously participating states: namely, the Soviet Union, by which 14 states were added; Yugoslavia, by which five constituent republics were added; and Czechoslovakia, when of course Slovakia became a separate member state of the OSCE.

To date only two states have entered the organization that were not part therefore of the original geographic territory covered in 1975: namely Albania, an outlier among the Warsaw Pact states that did - or among the communist states that did not join the Warsaw Pact, and Andorra, a microstate on the border between France and Spain, that did not participate in the original Helsinki process. But, of course, both of these states are located within the core area of the OSCE. But, therefore, from the very beginning, the geographic boundaries of Europe have been defined broadly to include parts of

Asia and North America, but heretofore they have not significantly extended beyond the external boundaries of the original 35 participating states.

After the end of the Cold War, the OSCE also developed special relationships with six Mediterranean and five Asian Partners for Cooperation. Of these, only two are contiguous with the original OSCE participating states, namely Afghanistan and Mongolia, both bordering the territory of the former Soviet Union. Both - because most of the OSCE Partners for Cooperation are geographically separated from the OSCE core region, but more importantly because they are located in regions preoccupied with a very different set of security concerns, I believe that we should be careful about setting a precedent that might enlarge the OSCE to include most or all of the partner states. On the other hand, it seems to me that the participation of Mongolia as a special case, though it might be perceived by some as setting a precedent, does not create such a significant break with tradition as to preclude its participation. In short, on the basis of the geographic scope of the OSCE alone, it seems to me that, in spite of some potential issues, there are no clear reasons for opposing enlargement to include Mongolia.

A second issue when considering the enlargement of the OSCE is the question of decision-making. The OSCE makes decisions by consensus of all participating states, with the exception of the "consensus minus one rule" applied only once, when the rump Yugoslav Federation, otherwise known as Serbia-Montenegro, was suspended in 1992 in reaction to its military role in Croatia and Bosnia.

Every new participating state thus formally adds a potential veto over decisions. Consensus within the OSCE was difficult to find in the Cold War period, but became significantly easier in the decade of the 1990s. But, since 2000, consensus has once again become notably difficult to achieve. The primary state parties that have made reaching consensus difficult in the recent past include the Russian Federation as well as Serbia, Greece and Cyprus. The Russian role in Georgia, in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as the Transdnestrria region of Moldova, has been a frequent source of stalemate. Similarly, the status of the Republic of Macedonia remains an object of dispute, including the mandate for the OSCE field mission that has worked there effectively ever since 1992.

However, the most controversial issue for the immediate future is the status of the important OSCE field mission in Kosovo, which has recently taken on many of the tasks previously performed by UNMIK and, of course, more importantly, Kosovo's eventual entry as a participating state within the OSCE. The latter has been blocked so far by the strong opposition of Russia, Serbia, Greece and Cyprus, and they are likely to maintain their opposition to Kosovo's entry

for
the foreseeable future. For the present, likely the best that we can hope
for
is the continued acquiescence of these participating states in the regular
renewal of the mandate for the OSCE mission in Kosovo, though even that
remains
somewhat uncertain.

The United States, with its long support for Kosovo's independence, should
therefore seek assurances that any new participating state admitted to the
OSCE
would not do anything to hinder the effective implementation of the
important
mandate to the OSCE mission in Kosovo or to block eventual participation by
Kosovo in the OSCE.

Finally, the OSCE remains the most comprehensive institution in the field of
multilateral security cooperation, embracing a broad definition of security
that includes, but goes well beyond physical security from violent attacks
to
include economic well-being, a healthy environment, and respect for human
dignity and the security of the individual. Therefore, the most important
obligation for any new OSCE participating state is to agree to do its utmost
to
implement all of the obligations undertaken on a political basis in the
Helsinki Final Act and the ensuing acquis, including the 10 fundamental
normative principles of the Decalogue; the full set of military
confidence-building measures contained in Basket One and in the subsequent
Vienna Documents on confidence-building; commitments to open economic
exchange
and environmental cooperation in Basket Two; and fulfillment of all of the
human dimension obligations contained in Basket Three and in subsequent
documents, especially the 1990 Copenhagen Document and the 1991 Moscow
Document
that recognize the importance of fundamental freedoms, basic human rights,
and
open and democratic political processes.

Especially important in my view is the commitment in the Moscow Document in
which participating states agreed by consensus, and I quote, "categorically
and
irrevocably that commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension
of
the CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating
States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the States
concerned," unquote. In other words, participation of the OSCE requires
that
states relinquish a small part of their sovereignty, especially their
sovereign
prerogative to deprive their own citizens of their basic political, economic
and cultural rights. Like all multilateral cooperative arrangements, this
small sacrifice of sovereignty brings with it the benefits of living in a
more
secure environment.

Nonetheless, many governments of the states that entered the CSCE in late

1991

and early 1992 frankly appear to be largely unfamiliar with these obligations as they were rapidly swept into the organization in the period of euphoria that accompanied the end of the Cold War. This has led to a number of serious deficiencies in the implementation of fundamental OSCE principles by some new participants, as well as backtracking in the fulfillment of obligations by some of the original participating states.

In this regard, fortunately, Mongolia's long-term participation as a Partner of Cooperation in Asia means that it has had a great deal more time and spent a great deal more effort clearly in preparing and understanding the obligations associated with OSCE participation, frankly, than many of the countries that entered as the Cold War was coming to an end.

To be sure, none of the 56 participating states in the OSCE though fully meets all of the obligations contained in the Helsinki Final Act and in the extensive acquis of politically binding agreements that have followed. However, the OSCE has never insisted on prior compliance with the normative principles as an absolute condition of entry. This contrasts, for example, with the Council of Europe, which requires its member states to fulfill criteria for entry, but once a state has entered, there is no significant further monitoring of its continued implementation of these principles.

The OSCE, on the other hand, has brought in participating states that fell short of the principles embodied in the Helsinki Final Act and the follow-on documents and has instead sought to assist them in fulfilling their obligations over the long run. This has been the central role of virtually all OSCE field missions that are permanently stationed on the territory of many participating states, both to monitor their compliance with OSCE norms and, more importantly, to assist them in fulfilling those normative obligations, especially to resolve ongoing conflicts within their societies and with neighboring states. It is also the function of the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to monitor and assist participating states in conducting free and fair elections; of the representative of the freedom of the media to observe the performance of states in meeting their commitments to a free press and media and to help them to do so when they fall short; and of the high commissioner on national minorities to see to it that all persons belonging to national minorities

have
a right to participate fully in the political life of their country.

In conclusion, my - in my opinion the primary criteria for bringing any new state into the OSCE community, therefore, should be the willingness and capability of the government seeking participation, first, to be fully aware of
all the obligations entailed by participation; second, to be willing and able
to make every possible effort to implement those commitments; and third, to be
willing to accept the advice and assistance of OSCE institutions and representatives to help them fulfill their obligations in both their internal
governance and in their cooperative relationships with neighboring states that
are also participants in the OSCE.

It's not primarily for me here today therefore to see whether or not Mongolia
satisfies these criteria, though I was very much enlightened and enheartened by
the comments of Ambassador Bekhbat suggesting clearly that Mongolia has carefully considered the criteria that I have just identified as part of its application for participation in the OSCE. But my role today has been primarily to emphasize considerations that I believe should guide all current
OSCE participating states, especially the United States, in evaluating the request of the government of Mongolia or any other state that seeks participation in the OSCE in the future to become a full participant in the organization, which I believe continues to have a very important role to play
in promoting security and international cooperation "from Vancouver to Vladivostok the long way around."

Thank you very much.

REP. PITTS: The chair thanks the gentleman and now recognizes Mr. John Tkacik,
president of China Business Intelligence.

JOHN TKACIK: Well, thank you, Congressman Pitts, Ambassador Bekhbat, Professor, thank you very much for being here and asking me to share with you
my thoughts on Mongolia's application for status as a participating member of
the OSCE.

I guess the reason that I've been invited here is because I'm controversial, and I say things that get people thinking. So I hope that you'll understand that whatever I say, it's not - it's not meant to be complacent; it's not meant
to be something that you'll - will go in one ear and out the other.

I think I made - I had the honor five years or six years ago of being a(n) election monitor in Mongolia for the parliamentary elections in June of

2005.

And three years ago, I was also before this committee testifying on the reasons that Mongolia should be in the OSCE and, you know, I went back and looked at my testimony from three years ago, and I - it was absolutely spot on. You know, what can I say? In fact, now, here in 2011, Mongolia I think has become even more important geopolitically in every way to America's and Europe's security, and I don't know why there's a problem in letting Mongolia in - into the OSCE.

Mongolia has been a - almost a poster child of democratization in Central Asia.

Let me read you what one former Mongolian prime minister explained to the U.S. ambassador several years ago. And I - this is a quote: "We decided on the democratic market economy path in large part to distance and free ourselves from our two immediate and hegemonistic neighbors. Democracy is how we maintain our sovereignty in Mongolia. Only by developing and integrating ourselves with the other democracies and market economies, particularly with our third neighbors, such as the U.S., Japan, South Korea and Germany, and with regional organizations can we develop our people and guarantee our sovereignty."

So my point would be that you don't have to worry about Mongolia meeting the norms of the OSCE. Frankly, it's got a far better track record than half of the other members right there, and Mongolia's membership is important to the OSCE for much broader reasons. It's geopolitically essential to peace and stability in Eurasia.

Really? - you must be thinking. You know, we love Mongolia and all that but really now, is it that important? Mongolia is not after all either a European country or one of the former Soviet states. I mean, what does Mongolia have to offer European security? Now, I love Mongolia, but I don't think that you should have Mongolia in the OSCE just for Mongolia's sake. I think certainly Mongolia would have automatically been a member of the OSCE in 1991 when it had, for 70 years, been considered the unofficial 16th republic of the Soviet Union.

In fact, I repeat the joke that I made three years ago, but I always - I still think it's funny. In 1978, when I was the ambassador - I mean, when I was a consul in Peking, my - I had a Russian colleague at the Russian embassy, and we'd just had some guy come in from Mongolia who had run afoul of the Chinese police. At any rate, Ivan said to me - he said, John, what is most neutral country in the world? And I said, I don't know, Ivan; what is most neutral country in the world? He said, Mongolia; it doesn't even interfere in its

own
internal affairs. (Laughter.)

Well, this underscores what Mongolia was as of 1991. It had been an unofficial member of the - unofficial republic of the Soviet Union. It was offered membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States, but turned it down precisely for the reasons that the prime minister mentioned in his talks with the ambassador five years ago. It was a matter of Mongolian identity, and it was through that identity that it distanced itself from both Russia and China.

So the answer to the question is, what of - "What does Mongolia offer?" lies in Mongolia's peculiar geographic and strategic location. Now, I have a nine-, 10-page paper that I left with Mrs. Han here, but let me try to boil down what - Mongolia's importance. And one of the reasons is, is that I don't understand why the Russians are so adamant about not letting Mongolia join the OSCE because it strikes me that in the competition that we're now seeing unfold in the Eurasian landmass between China and Russia, that Russia would probably be better served to have Mongolia as integrated into the - into a broader international community rather than to consider Mongolia as simply a bilateral issue with the Chinese, which is what is happening.

One reason, I think, that - or maybe the big reason that the OSCE should be concerned and should have the - Mongolia as a participating state is to help the preservation of Mongolia as a(n) - as a(n) independent actor in Northeast Asia. Mongolia is a buffer between Russia and China, and as China emerges in this century as Eurasia's predominant if not hegemonistic power and as it exerts itself to maintain rapid economic growth, it will inevitably butt up against Russia in the Eurasian Far East.

China needs minerals; it's looking to expand its presence in Mongolia. It also needs water. And I think one of the - (let me ?) just - a factoid here is that the - one of the major river systems of Mongolia provides over half of the fresh water to Lake Baikal. Mongolia does have a - is a source of abundant fresh water. And frankly, China is going to be looking in the next 10 to 20 years for new sources of water for North China.

China will likely - I'd say in the next 10 to 15 years - begin to articulate its territorial claims to Mongolia in the same way it articulates its claims to Taiwan now, its claims to the South China Sea and, most recently, its claims to India's Himalayan states. We've seen in the recent past several Chinese

moves

to promote Inner Mongolian integration with Outer Mongolia. China's leadership will be driven to assert its historic claims in Mongolia, not just in a quest for mineral resources to feed its industries and water resources to slake the thirst of its hundreds of millions of people in north China, but for regime legitimacy.

Now, it's not very well understood here in Washington, but I think it probably is very well understood in Ulan Bator, but they can't talk about it, so I'll talk about it.

China's Communist leaders - and when I say "Communist," I don't mean that in a pejorative sense; I'm just saying that the - historically, the Communist Party in China has consistently and pointedly complained about Russia's aggressive and forceful alienation of Mongolia from China during the last century.

In 1949, Mao Zedong asks Stalin to return Mongolia. And this is in the - in the alliance negotiations of January of 1950 - December of '49, January of 1950. He asked, well, what we need is for Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia to be united so that the Mongol people can be together within the Chinese federation.

Liu Shaoqi - Zhou Enlai asked Anastas Mikoyan in 1956 to rectify the mistakes of Stalin and let Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia unite in a plebiscite.

In 1964, Mao Zedong complained to a delegation of Japanese socialists that Stalin stole Mongolia under the cover of the Yalta agreement in 1945. This is 1964; Mao Zedong made this long impassioned speech to these Japanese socialists - that was recorded by the delegation - complaining about Yalta.

Now, you say, maybe Mao was just - you know, he was just blowing off steam. But it was interesting to me that 25 years later, in 1989, Deng Xiaoping made just the exact argument to George H. W. Bush. You know, this is an exchange that picks up an entire page of George Bush's memoir, "A World Transformed." But interesting to me is that Mongolia is not even in the index of "A World Transformed." Got that entire page, Deng Xiaoping complaining to George Bush about Yalta, the Russians taking over Yalta - taking over Mongolia under cover of Yalta, and it's not even in the index, which I thought was sort of odd.

So this tells me that when Deng Xiaoping is using the same terminology to complain about Mongolia and the Russians taking Mongolia from China under cover of the Yalta agreement, as Mao Zedong used in 1964 to the Japanese - and

then,
of course, you know, Mao Zedong also complained about it directly to Stalin
in
1949 - and, by the way, I cover this in the paper, so when it gets
published,
we'll have all the sources - the thing is, is that when you see these exact
same words coming out decade after decade, you know that there is a
considerable institutional memory in the CCP leadership, the Chinese
Communist
Party leadership, about Mongolia's rightful place within the Chinese
motherland.

Now, it wasn't just this - it turns out - and I also cover this in my paper
-
when Kissinger met with Zhou Enlai in 1971, interestingly enough, Zhou Enlai
said this to Henry Kissinger - this is sort of - you know, in this - all
these
lengthy interminable tours de horizon that Kissinger and Zhou Enlai were
having
40 years ago, Zhou Enlai said this: If Japan puts forces to bring about a
so-called independent Taiwan, that will be the beginning of the end for
peace
in the Far East. It will be the end of relaxation of tensions - (sighs) -
for
the Japanese armed forces to bring about a so-called independent Taiwan
would
be the same as independence of Outer Mongolia if done by the Soviet Union.

Well, of course, you know, this is 1971, and the independence of Outer
Mongolia
was already a foregone conclusion.

As late as five years ago - four years ago, in 2007, as Inner Mongolia
celebrated its 60th anniversary, I happened to read a newspaper article by a
Taiwanese journalist who had been - who had just come back from Inner
Mongolia.

And he basically says that - and I put it here - he said, basically, Inner
Mongolia and Outer Mongolia need to be united - he was reporting talks that
he'd had with various political officials in Inner Mongolia.

And my - I don't have much time left - I would simply say that the idea that
China still has a territorial claim on Outer Mongolia should not be
discounted.

Now, in the coming 10, 20, 30 years, China and Russia will be engaged in a
rivalry for Mongolia's resources. One way to help defuse that rivalry and
to
help preserve a buffer between China and Russia is the preservation of
Mongolia's independent identity within the world community.

Mongolia's had a tough time getting into some of the major international
fora -
the APEC, the Asia Political - Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum;
should
have been let in 10 years ago and wasn't. It should have been a NATO member
-

the Partnership - the NATO Partner for Peace; it wasn't. It is a member of the United Nations, but I'll tell you, when - you know, when push comes to shove, if Mongolia is left as a bilateral issue between Russia and China, I think the potential for it to blow up in everybody's face is quite dramatic.

Membership in the OSCE, I think, is not going to be a hugely important factor in it. However, it will be a factor and it will be a factor that tells both China and Russia that Mongolia is accepted as a fully legitimate partner of Europe in the preservation of security and cooperation on the Eurasian landmass.

And that's my statement.

REP. PITTS: Chair thanks the gentleman. The presentations of our panelists is concluded at this point. We'll go to questions and answers. And I'll start questions. I have a few questions for each of the panelists.

First of all, Mr. Ambassador, during your bilateral consultations, have any participating states raised objections with Mongolia?

AMB. BEKHBAT: As far as I am aware, there is no major objections. We met overwhelmingly favorable comments and welcome. (Thank you ?).

REP. PITTS: Do you foresee any obstacles to full membership? And if so, what steps is Mongolia taking to overcome any objections that may be raised?

AMB. BEKHBAT: Personally, I don't think there is any reasonable objection to be - to - for Mongolia to be admitted as a full-fledged member participating state of the OSCE. We have extremely friendly relations with almost all the participating states and partner states, and we meet all relevant requirements put forward by this regional security organization in which we are most interested in.

REP. PITTS: What is the timeline for Mongolia joining the OSCE? Do you have a timeline mapped out?

AMB. BEKHBAT: I think, for Mongolia, it's not to be anticipated, not to be anticipated, but we are ready and we are doing everything to go forward with our application.

REP. PITTS: Have you had any consultations with China specifically on this topic? If so, what was the outcome?

AMB. BEKHBAT: On this specific topic, we don't have any consultations with China. It's a matter of our own foreign policy activities, foreign policy actions.

REP. PITTS: Do you think the Shanghai Cooperation Organization members will look positively on Mongolia's bid to join the OSCE?

AMB. BEKHBAT: Is - the respectable number of the Shanghai Organization of Cooperation (sic) is, at the same time, members of the OSCE. We don't see any difficulties on that side.

REP. PITTS: Mmm hmm. (Affirmative.) All right. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Doctor, you have a couple of questions?

OK - oh.

Dr. Hopmann, what impediments do you see within the OSCE process that could block Mongolia or any other country from joining the OSCE?

MR. HOPMANN: Well, again, the biggest impediment, of course, is simply the consensus rule. Any one country is sufficient, unfortunately, in this context, to block any other state from becoming a participating state. And in that respect, of course, I presume the major concern here would be with the Russian Federation.

I think it's clear that OSCE participation, frankly, isn't going to do very much with respect to China. China - the OSCE is a cooperative security organization among the participating states; it's not a defensive alliance against nonparticipating states. That's a very different kind of arrangement.

I think we can make a good case for Mongolia also being a partner in NATO and so forth, but for this purpose, at least, clearly, relations with Russia, particularly the ability to exchange military observers at large exercises that might be near the borders and other aspects of economic cooperation could be very key, both from Mongolia's interest - but again, it depends upon the Russian willingness, also, I think, to assent to this at this point in time. But that would seem to me to be the most logical, at this point, source of opposition. I don't know of any other country that might have any concerns there.

Some, again, who are concerned about the precedent issue - and I think we need to be aware that - I mean, I think, frankly, East Europe needs its own security organization, which deals with the issues of China and the two Koreas and Japan and Taiwan and, I mean, a whole set of - a security complex of its own that is really critical and needs its own security set of institutions. But I think if we were to bring all of those problems into the OSCE, we would probably destroy the OSCE by flooding it with problems that it simply doesn't have the

capacity
to deal with. So I think we do need to reassure other participating states
as
well that Mongolia's entry does not necessarily mean that suddenly, we're
going
to be bringing into the OSCE context all of the problems of East Asia which
are
beyond its capacity. Afghanistan is, of course, another precedent issue
because it does border the region, and I think it's clear that Afghanistan
is
probably not ready, in most parties' minds, for participation, and would be
a
much more controversial applicant as well. But it's this precedent concern,
I
think, that I've heard voiced by most participating states that have
reservations.

REP. PITTS: Thank you. Professor, do you see any inherent downsides for
the
organization to expanding the number of OSCE participating states?

MR. HOPMANN: No. I mean, I think - again, I mentioned the consensus rule,
but
57 versus 56 vetoes doesn't really change very much. (Chuckles.) It still
is
a very large number of vetoes in an organization that has a hard time making
tough decisions, and Mongolia's entry is not going to change that reality.

REP. PITTS: And - and -

MR. HOPMANN: And so I don't see any significant problems, though,
associated
with its - with its joining.

REP. PITTS: And back to the issue of the precedent-setting that you raised,
are there any precedents that would be set by Mongolia's membership, say,
for
the Mediterranean partners?

MR. HOPMANN: The Mediterranean partners, again, of course, I think, again,
exist in a somewhat different security environment. I mean, the security
issues, particularly since the Arab Spring, and the relation of all of the
states in that region with Israel and, therefore, with all of the
Mediterranean
partners, are huge, complex security and political issues which I don't
think
OSCE is prepared to grapple with. And again, in this case, none of them are
contiguous to the present OSCE participating states.

So I think, again, that - there's - there, I don't think, is a very strong
case
for the immediate addition of any of the Mediterranean partners to the OSCE.
And I think bringing them in at this point would likely, again, perhaps
flood
the OSCE with a set of problems that it's not really, frankly, prepared to
cope

with at this point in time.

REP. PITTS: Well, thank you, Professor.

John, couple questions for you. Even though China is not affiliated with the OSCE in any way, what role do you think they will have in influencing the outcome of Mongolia's membership bid? Particularly, do you think China will use the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a venue to garner support from other countries to block Mongolia's bid?

MR. TCACIK: Well, I'm not - I'm not sure that there'd be much sympathy in the SCO. I think most of the SCO members are former Soviet states, and they would - with the exception of Pakistan, I think, is a full member now, but most of the Soviet - most of the former Soviet state members I think would be sympathetic to Mongolia's odd position vis-à-vis China.

China, I think, was - created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization 10 years ago - well, the treaty was signed 10 years ago - I think primarily in an effort to try to fill a vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union in Central Asia. And I think now, the SCO is pretty much a - I don't think that the Central Asian members of the SCO are going to be sympathetic to China's pressures on Mongolia.

I'm trying to think of - one of the - one of the real problems I have is I still don't understand why Russia would object to Mongolia being a member of the OSCE except just to punish Mongolia for its cooperation with the United States and other countries in Iraq and Afghanistan, because frankly, Mongolia has been a very big help, punched way above its weight in participating in the Iraqi and Afghan campaigns. So - I mean, it could be that the Russians just want to show Mongolia who's boss.

And then, finally, I'll say, it should - the Russians should not be comfortable with leaving Mongolia as a bilateral issue between them and China left over from Yalta or left over from the Stalin days. It strikes me that everybody, with the exception of China, would be better off with Mongolia firmly integrated as an independent actor in the international structure. And being a member of the OSCE can only help that. I don't see how it can stop that.

REP. PITTS: Finally, Kosovo has been recognized by many OSCE participating states as a new nation, yet has not been able to join the OSCE as a participating state. Will the fact that Kosovo has not become a full member hinder Mongolia's bid, in your opinion?

MR. TCACIK: In my opinion? I don't - I don't think so. I think that - Kosovo of course is a - was forcefully alienated from another OSCE member, Serbia; you know, the Yugoslavia - the Belgrade government was a client of Moscow, and

you

can see that the precedent issue is just - it seems to be something that's primarily focused on the Kosovo facts on the ground and not on a - on the issue

of, you know, expansion and do we really need more members and all the rest of it.

REP. PITTS: Thank you - and thank you, Professor.

All right, we'll go to the questions from staff.

Mr. Milosch?

MARK S. MILOSCH: Thank you, Congressman.

My name is Mark Milosch; I'm the staff director at the commission and, on behalf of Commission Chairman Chris Smith, I'd like to ask a couple questions of - the first one is for Mr. Tkacik and Dr. Hopmann, and it is on, what would the effect of Mongolian membership in the OSCE be on - in Central Asia? I'm looking at Central Asia and, of course, seeing - sometimes they have some of the worst human rights records in the world, and Mongolia is in the same general neighborhood, if you look at a globe, and has - and does quite a bit better. You know, would Mongolian membership put pressure on those countries to improve their records? You know - you know, how are those countries looking at the prospect of Mongolian membership?

And sort of with a natural add-on to that question, what should we do in this process, as Mongolia approaches OSCE membership, to really maximize its good influence, which I believe it will be a good influence on its Central Asian neighbors?

Mr. Tkacik?

MR. TKACIK: Well, I think that there's a fundamental difference between Mongolia's political structure and that of most of the other Central Asian states, one of which is that Mongolia adopted a fully parliamentary democracy that's - (chuckles) - that experiences quite frequent elections whereas the Central Asian states went to the presidential systems, most of them, and as a result have been dominated by very powerful autocratic presidential figures. And whether or not Mongolia - Mongolia's experience would help change that - well, you know, now that I think about it, the experience in Kyrgyzstan might be - might be telling, which is to say, Kyrgyzstan, I think, did have the - their revolution in - when it was - in 2007? I've forgotten - and the parliament in Kyrgyzstan is more responsive. It could be that, in Central Asia, the example of a - of Mongolia's very successful - still - it's not perfect, it's not - it's not clean-cut, but it really is probably the most successful democracy in - one of the most successful democracies in all of

Eurasia - I mean, in all of the Asiatic mainland, and I think that it certainly is, outside of the Baltic states, probably the most successful democracy of the former Soviet sphere.

So you're right: I mean, it could - now that I think about it - yes, the example of Mongolia, the idea that Mongolia has been very welcomed, both in Washington as well as Pyongyang, tells you a lot about the ability of the Mongolians to make friends and to be - and to be an honest broker, and I think certainly Mongolia's influence can in no way hurt; and you know, if you think about it, probably - Mongolia's influence in Central Asia would be very, very positive.

MR. MILOSCH: You know, one thing I think of immediately is that Mongolia with its relatively successful, if messy, democracy really gives the lie to the implicit argument that you often hear from Central Asia, which is - you know, it's often not made explicitly, but implicitly - it's that, well, democracy is for countries that come out of a certain historical circumstances, is - you find those in Western Europe and not here in Central Asia. But then - but then you look at Mongolia, which is after all a country with Tibetan Buddhists - heritage - religiously - I mean, vastly different from the history of France or Bulgaria or - but is a - is a - is a better democracy in many ways than some of the countries in - even in the heart of Europe, in the Balkans.

Dr. Hopmann?

MR. HOPMANN: (Off mic) - I don't really have very much to add to what's already been said.

It strikes me that, again, that there might be somewhat different responses from - different to the Central Asian states. Kazakhstan, I believe, during its chairmanship was at least not discouraging about the Mongolian proposal to join the OSCE, and Kazakhstan is also physically closest and offer economic and environmental and other kinds of cooperation - perhaps has more in some ways also to benefit from having Mongolia in.

Turkmenistan, on the other hand, certainly has been the most repressive of the - perhaps along with Belarus, which started off as the most democratic, but has become the most repressive of the post-Soviet states - are the ones that are perhaps mostly likely to be concerned about the comparison, but, frankly, both have tried to play a fairly low profile in the OSCE lately and have not

wanted
to sort of bring attention upon themselves, it seems to me, and I don't
think
they'd be inclined to exercise a veto that would perhaps highlight their own
rather sad record in terms of meeting OSCE commitments. So I wouldn't
expect
that to be a serious problem - no, not at all.

MR. MILOSCH: OK, thank you.

I have a quick second question here for Ambassador Bekhbat and Dr. Hopmann,
and
that goes to the issue of an - of a potential OSCE field mission in
Mongolia.
Field missions have been extremely helpful in establishing democratic norms
and
human rights in a number of countries. I believe now that there's the -
there's a tendency or a trend in some OSCE countries to not want field
missions
because they want to show that they've - are graduated out of that, and yet
I
think that a field mission, you know, is something that could possibly,
potentially do a - be appropriate for Mongolia and help to really cement it
or
consolidate it, you know, in the OSCE so they would really feel like an OSCE
country.

So, first I'd like to hear from Ambassador Bekhbat on the question of OSCE
field missions and then from Dr. Hopmann on whether he sees that as suitable
-
or his thoughts on the general question. Thanks.

AMB. BEKHBAT: We always welcome field missions from abroad in Mongolia, and
we
will be very happy to have election monitor mission from OSCE during -
coming
in May, June next year - (inaudible) - parliamentary elections in Mongolia.

MR. HOPMANN: I think the OSCE field missions have been the main distinctive
feature of the OSCE - that is, instead of sending in missions just to
monitor
elections or other special activities - to have individuals on the ground
year
round, full time, in a number of countries that are trying to meet OSCE
obligations, I think, has been perhaps the most important, though least
often
understood aspect of the OSCE activities, particularly over the last decade.

There are small OSCE missions of course in the five Central Asian states -
in
Azerbaijan, Armenia, no longer in Georgia - but therefore most of the other
states that are in the region indeed do have small OSCE missions stationed
on
them permanently. And I - you know, if Mongolia's willing - and, I mean,
for a
long time, these missions were viewed by many as if we've done something

wrong,
therefore they're sending this mission in, and I think we have to get out of that attitude and recognize that the primary role of OSCE missions is to help states fulfill their obligations and commitments, and to engage in a kind of slow process of socialization to help bring countries closer to the European norms that are incorporated in the Helsinki Final Act and the acquis. And I think if Mongolia were willing to accept a field mission on the ground for a couple of years, I think that would be good for Mongolia; it would be good for the OSCE; and therefore it would be, I hope, something that could be negotiated again and shouldn't be viewed, again, as being in any sense, you know, pejorative or something that suggests that something is really wrong in Mongolia, but rather, you know, this is helping you in the transition of becoming (a) fully participating democratic state in the OSCE tradition.

MR. MILOSCH: Well, with answers like that, thank you very much. No follow-up, and - but thanks especially to Ambassador Bekhbat for his clear statement of welcome.

Congressman?

REP. PITTS: Thank you. I think that concludes the questions from the staff. We'll go to the audience now; if there are any questions of the panelists, please feel free. Just go to the mic up here at the podium and ask your question. Direct it to whomever you wish.

Q: Good afternoon, my name is Aaron Zelin (ph) from American University; this goes to anybody on the panel. How would Mongolia's membership to the OSCE impact the country's capacity to develop its mineral wealth and capacity to be a lead exporter abroad?

REP. PITTS: All right, who wants to take that first? Mr. Ambassador, mineral wealth?

AMB. BEKHBAT: (Off mic.) You know, I brought with me some of my staff members, including defense attaché and the officer in charge of trade and economic issues, Ariunaa, so please feel free to raise any question you might have regarding Mongolia's bid to OSCE.

For the mineral resources, you know, Mongolia is entering in a new stage of its economic development, just at those days or those years, and this new stage of development is driven by mining sector mostly. So we have quite a good number of world-size deposits we intend to use, to exploit in the very near future. In that way that - environmental concerns are growing tremendously in

Mongolia

because of climate change, negative consequences on Mongolia of growing concerns related to the desertification phenomenon which is so obvious last few years in Mongolia. We are making efforts in order to prevent - how to prevent disastrous consequences of development of mining sector, of exploitation of our mineral resources. In that - on that way, we are collaborating with the international community in a larger sense. We are member of many international instruments aiming at regulating mineral resources sector friendly - to make the mining sector as friendly as possible environment.

REP. PITTS: Doctor? Dr. Hopmann?

MR. HOPMANN: I don't really know very much about the mineral resources of Mongolia, and that's not what I really want to talk about here. But, I mean, very briefly, the second basket of OSCE on economic and environmental issues, frankly, is the one that has largely fallen into almost disuse since the end of the Cold War. The budget of the OSCE is minuscule by comparison with almost all other international institutions, and so it clearly is not in a position itself to provide economic assistance or other kinds of things like that.

The one thing it has done from time to time with participating states is to organize donor conferences and to try to bring together international institutions such as IMF, World Bank, bilateral aid programs and so forth - the European Union aid programs, et cetera - to focus on particular problems in particular countries, and again this is something often organized by a mission on the ground, a field mission. So, again, it's another advantage of having a field mission in Mongolia, I think, is that it might - it might help organize conferences to try to get more economic support from outside, but the OSCE itself is not going to provide that with its - with its incredibly small budget.

REP. PITTS: Thank you.

Mr. Tkacik?

MR. TKACIK: Well, I think there - I mean, the - one of the key things to getting foreign investment into Mongolia to develop mineral resources and other resources as well is its legal system and its legislative institutions, its ability to handle corruption. And I think OSCE, you know, an OSCE field mission definitely is not - is not needed in Mongolia. However, if it had one, it would simply give Mongolia even more credibility for foreign investment.

And frankly, when foreigners go into - when the big international

corporations
go into Mongolia to invest in uranium or copper or coal or gold mines,
they're
looking at the Mongolian legislation, the mining law that came out, the
uranium
law that came out a year and a half ago that sort of got everybody all spun
up.

I think just -Mongolian membership in the OSCE - and if there were a field
mission in Mongolia, it would simply enhance Mongolia's credibility, which
is
already pretty good anyway, but in - that's the only way I could see OSCE
membership actually enhancing the development of Mongolia's resources.

Otherwise, Mongolia's resources are so vast and so attractive that, you
know,
Mongolia's basically trying to keep people away. The Chinese want to come
in
in a big way; the Russians want to get into the act; the Mongolians would
very
much like to have third - their third neighbors come in and administer
Mongolia's mining structures with best practices and environmentally sound
methods, et cetera. But I think it's - truth to be told, a little bit
peripheral to the OSCE mission though.

REP. PITTS: Thank you.

All right, any other members of the audience wish to ask questions?

If not, let me just say, in conclusion, I have visited Mongolia. I have
witnessed its government's commitment to democracy and strengthening its
ties
to the West. Mongolia and its people have demonstrated a proven commitment
to
confronting global challenges and contributing to efforts for peace and
prosperity and security. The OSCE's member states and the United States in
particular, I think, should welcome Mongolia's reach beyond its regional
borders into institutions committed to human rights and open markets and
international cooperation. So I look forward to the consideration of
Mongolia's membership, and let me check with the staff: Is there anything
else
that should be done here?

MR. MILOSCH: (Off mic) - we're done - (off mic).

REP. PITTS: All right, I'd like to thank all the presenters again for being
here today. Appreciate this and thank you for your attendance. And with
that,
the briefing is adjourned.

Yeah, go ahead, Mr. Ambassador.

AMB. BEKHBAT: (Off mic) - the congressman.

I want, on behalf of the Mongolian government to thank you very much, U.S.
Helsinki Commission, for holding today's briefing on Mongolia. This
briefing

is entitled "Mongolia Moves Toward Europe." Yes, Mongolia moves toward Europe, Mongolia moves toward more security, Mongolia moves toward being responsible member of the international community.

You know, we believe that security is indivisible. It's very true for such a large political and security, economic and other space - that is, Eurasia. Being at the heart of Eurasian space, Mongolia is - has to be interested in being OSCE full-fledged member. We believe that our own national interests and our own security interests - the interests of economic, democratic development of Mongolia, they are best ensured and protected in broader, a larger multilateral regional framework.

So I would like to extend our thanks once again to U.S. Helsinki Commission, to all participants of today's briefing for understanding, for friendship and for your support for Mongolia, (a) country which I have the honor and the privilege to represent and to be very proud in the United States.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

REP. PITTS: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. (Applause.)

The ambassador gets the last word. Thank you very much for attending.

(END)