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We now have a key player in the spread of democracy in Asia to present a view on these questions of global governance.

Nambaryn Enkhbayar

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very glad to be here again for the third time, and this time I will try to reflect on current events and global governance from an Asian perspective. Mongolia is a part of Asia; it is part of Northeast and Central Asia. This is why I will reflect on the situation in North Korea, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan.

North Korea is geographically very close to Mongolia; Afghanistan is a country where Mongolia has sent its troops, and success there would also be a success for my country. Kyrgyzstan is a country with a nomadic culture. I would say that I am not going to criticize or praise these countries, but I just want to share my observations based on the processes which have happened in my own country.

Regarding North Korea, we have recently been quite interested in watching how the third generation of North Korean leaders are coming onto the stage, and we can say that it is now a feudal monarchy; it is a country where power is passed onto the next generation by one family. When I was in North Korea in 2003 with the Prime Minister of Mongolia, I noticed that North Korea as almost an empty country. I could not see anyone freely walking on the streets, although I knew that North Koreans are very hard working people.

It was quite interesting for me to see that almost everything in that country exists in one version; there is one leader, one party, one family, and one pathology. Despite its rhetoric, it cannot solve its own problems, and I doubt whether there is any country in the world, including the US, which can solve all its problems on its own. The whole issue of peace in Northeast Asia is hidden behind the one leader and the one family. Therefore, we think a policy of engagement is needed, because we are very interested in seeing a Korean peninsula which is free from nuclear weapons, and we look forward to the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

Regarding the governance arrangements which have been introduced to solve the problems on the Korean peninsula, we have to look at the Six-Party Talks, and try to define the relations of North Korea with the other members. I think that there is no trust between North Korea and the US. They speak to each other in different languages, perhaps using English, but implying completely different things. Both think that they are a danger to each other, but at the same time they are very interested in each other. Recent visits by Presidents Clinton and Carter to North Korea prove that there is a lot of interest in North Korea on the part of the US and vice versa.

North Korea and China are good friends and close neighbours. We can see frequent visits between the leaders of the two countries, coordination of activities, and Chinese assistance to North Korea. We can see that there is a mutual interest between Russia and North Korea, but at the same time that, although it is its neighbour, Moscow is geographically very distant. We can recall a historic visit, a ten-day train journey, by Kim Jong-Il to Moscow. North Korea and Japan have a very difficult relationship; there is no trust between them, and they have a very difficult history. They speak very different languages, not in the sense that they speak Korean and Japanese respectively, but in the sense that they interpret events differently; both consider the other to be a danger to it.



Korea is one nation but two countries, and maybe in the future it is possible that there will be one country and two systems. Mongolia is a small country, so it presents no threat to North Korea, but we have different experiences which we can share with them. We are an open country, but unfortunately our friends in North Korea are closed, so we are trying to persuade them that there is no danger in opening themselves up. It is up to them to listen to us, but the message we try to give to North Koreans is that there is no danger in being open.

Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan are in a permanent transition to democracy. Afghanistan has been in transition since 9-11, Kyrgyzstan since the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Unfortunately, this transition has been characterised by instability; based on our experience in Mongolia, I would like to say that, after all the changes in the early 1990s, these countries have not been very successful in building up democracies. This is even the case with Mongolia.

Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and we in Mongolia are on the way to democracy. We have made such mistakes as holding falsified elections and setting up political parties not around values and ideologies but around charismatic leaders. The governments are semi-legitimate, because there are very deep gaps between government and people. We are still unable to deliver results in fighting poverty and corruption.

Therefore, my general observation with regard to Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan would be that no country can solve its own problems alone, so we have to operate together. Good governance is about engaging others, not excluding; about regulating and coordinating, not dictating; about giving everyone a chance, even North Korea, Mongolia, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan. Good governance is about having common goals, but, unfortunately, all the countries I have mentioned have different goals when they stop talking with each other. We may have to define common goals so as to reach good results from our meetings and discussions. Good governance is about holding everyone responsible for the results and to deliver these results, because, finally, it is about efficiency in delivering results.

These are the remarks I wanted to make on this issue from an Asian perspective, and I would like to express my gratitude to the organisers of this conference.