

# TSAKHIAGIIN ELBEGDORJ

Former President of Mongolia

## Ali Aslan, International TV Presenter and Journalist

President Elbegdorj, it might seem peculiar at first to have a former President of Mongolia speaking on a panel about the future of the European Union. However, for those who may not be familiar with it, you spent many years in Ukraine and as a former President of Mongolia, you have met President Putin many times, over 30 times I believe, throughout your term. Since we are talking about the future of the European Union and the implications for European security, give us an outsider's perspective here of someone who knows Ukraine well but also knows President Vladimir Putin very well.

## Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj

Thank you very much. You know, this Ukrainian war has global implications. I think without a Ukrainian war, Chinese President Xi Jinping would have started the forceful unification with Taiwan yesterday. I think the Chinese leader is now weighing that in two ways and facing two scenarios. The first is the scenario of the forceful unification of Taiwan that goes like Crimea in 2014, in that case he would have started the process yesterday. However, he now sees that it might be a different scenario, more like 2022 for Putin and he is weighing that. It means that the Ukrainian war has great implications not only in Europe but worldwide and in Asia.

There are also other connections between Mongolia and Ukraine, and there is only one country between us. Ukraine is a free, democratic, and independent country in Europe; Mongolia is a free, democratic, and independent country in Asia. As I said, there is one country between us, and it means that we share common interests. Also, the global implications mean that the frontline of the Ukrainian is much wider, it is the frontline between the free and totalitarian worlds, and it even goes across Africa and Asia, everywhere. If Ukraine loses, I think it will encourage the autocrats but if it wins, those autocrats will be discouraged. I think you know even from the latest news that President Xi Jinping is still distancing himself from Putin and trying to build more connections with Western countries. It means that Ukraine is fighting not only for Ukraine but also for the global faith of humanity and that is very important.

Another important thing is that, since 1990, Mongolia has been the only democratic and fully functioning democracy between Russia and China. I think one of the reasons Putin started the invasion of Ukraine is because if Ukraine is free and prosperous, and in Europe, then I think it is going to be a bad example for Russia. I know that one day this war will end and one day we will see a more liberal Russia. If Russia becomes more liberal and more freedom-minded, if there are some democratic developments, I think Ukraine will have a greater impact from the European side, while Mongolia has a greater impact from the East, from the Asian side. Ukraine will liberate Russia from dictatorship from the European side, and Mongolia will liberate and



have influence on Russia from the Asian side. It means that even though there are small countries, those examples of freedom are greater and, because of that, I think this Ukrainian war has big implications. This war is now in an uglier stage, they are directly targeting infrastructure and energy, everything to try to freeze Ukrainians to death and I think we need to help Ukraine more than at any other time since the war started. I am now a member of the Club de Madrid and the newest member of the Elders, and we are working to help Ukraine. If we are talking here and you can think about that, if you send one generator or something to a Ukrainian city, that can save thousands of lives. I hope I saw that, among the speaker, Foreign Minister Kuleba is coming. I lived and studied in western Ukraine for many years, and I know the spirit of the Ukrainian people. They are very proud people, and they are never going to kneel in the face of aggression, and I am really happy that the World Policy Conference has brought this topic to light.

**Ali Aslan**

Thank you.