

An Overview of Contemporary Mongolian Politics

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The paper addresses a general survey of contemporary Mongolian politics. The scope of the paper thus is the constitutional design and actual dynamics of contemporary Mongolian politics. Firstly, an overview of Mongolian political and constitutional history is provided. Then the paper shows the Mongolian politics and constitutional system in general and briefly describes governmental structure. In the final part of the paper, the results of the National Parliament election held in June 2004 are summarized. Generally, the author believes that this short paper will serve as an introductory guide to those who are not so familiar with current Mongolian politics.

I. A Brief Introduction to Mongolian Political History

In this part, I would like to briefly explore Mongolian political history.¹⁾ The Constitution of Mongolia is the general instrument of Mongolian politics and government; and it is the supreme law of the land. For 13 years, it has guided the evolution of governmental institutions

1) Mongolia is located in the heart of Central Asia, between Russian Federation (bordered by 3485 km to the north) and Republic of China (bordered by 4673 km to the east, west and south). It has a population of approximately 2.8 million people living sparsely over the territory of 1,566,500 sq. km. Mongolia's terrain is characterized by semi-desert and desert plains, mountains in the west and south-west and the Gobi Desert in the south-east.

and has provided the basis for political stability, individual freedom, economic growth and social progress. The introductory part of the Mongolian Constitution, ratified in 1992, claims: “Inheriting the traditions of national statehood, history, and culture” (see State Great Hural 1992, Preamble).

In the 13th century, Mongolia was one of the most powerful states in the world. In 1206, Great Emperor Chinggis Khaan unified the Mongols, and as a result of the wars undertaken by him and his successors with the purpose of “conquering the whole world” Mongolia became a powerful empire, extending from the East China Sea to Western Europe, covering vast areas of Europe and Asia. All major world trade and political relations went through the capital of Mongolia of that time, Khar Khorin (which is situated in the present territory of Mongolia). Chinggis Khaan’s powerful empire that covered the huge land from the Baikal Lake in the North to the Great Wall in the South and from the Khingan Mountains in the East to Altai in the West, needed a unified legal system to strengthen the state and regulate various relations in society. The main primary law of the Mongolian State was Chinggis Khaan’s “Great Yasa”. Many scientists and writers such as Persian scientist Makrizi, Ibn-Batuta of Arabia, Armenian historian V.Vartang, the friar Mahakia, Iranian scientist Rashid-al-Din and famous travelers like Plano Carpini, Wilhelm Rubruk and Marco Polo, scientist Ata Malik Juwaini, noted about Chinggis Khaan’s Great Yasa and other teachings in their works.

The main significance of the “Great Yasa” is that it systematized and developed into laws the best moral values of the Mongols. American scientist George Vernadsky argued that the “Great Yasa” was a completely new Constitution, based on laws and customs, containing all aspects such as state administration, military, civilians, punishment, trade and customs (for further reference, see Vernadsky 1938). The main idea of Vernadsky’s conclusion seems to be significant in illuminating the fact that during the times of Chinggis Khaan the Mongols operated their political and social institutions through fundamental laws of state. After the “Great Yasa” the laws such as “Yuan Dynasty’s Law”, “The History of Ten White Virtuous Teachings”, “Khutagtai Prince’s Laws”, “Law Documents of Altan Khan”, “Noble Documents of Laws of Khalkha’s”, “Laws of Mongol Oirads”, “Khalkha Juram”(Laws of Khalkha’s), “Law Documents of Mongolian State” regulated political and social relations of that certain period of time.

After Chinggis Khaan's death, the Great Mongolian Empire was divided into several powerful Mongol states, but these broke apart in the 14th century. A sustained period of internecine strife as well as clashes with the Manchus followed. The Manchus completed their takeover of Mongol lands in 1632 and under the terms of the Convention of Dolonnor of 1691, Mongolia ceased to exist as a political entity and became a frontier province of Manchu Qing Dynasty.

In 1911, the republican revolution in China saw the demise of the Manchu empire and encouraged Mongolian nationalists to declare independence. With backing from the Russian Empire, Mongolia gained autonomy as a feudal Buddhist monarchy. Following the Russian revolution, China began to reassert control in Mongolia. Mongolian leaders appealed to the new Soviet regime for help, and in March 1921 Mongolian revolutionists met on Soviet territory to found the Mongolian People's Party (renamed the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, or MPRP, in 1924). On 11 July 1921, the Mongolian Government proclaimed independence and restored the monarchy after nationalist forces, with Soviet help, overthrew Chinese control of the Mongolian capital. After the death of the Mongolian Bogda King in 1924, a republic type of government was installed by the first Constitution; it became a Soviet-style Republic with one-party system as the only party — MPRP — officially permitted to function, lasting until 1990.

The administration is the party's servant, and the party becomes a bureaucratic machine itself in the effort to parallel other rival power structures in the Soviet type of government. As Merle Fainsod has pointed out:

Soviet public administration is one-party administration. The conception of the politically neutral civil servant who serves his successive political matters' with equal fidelity and equal contempt' is utterly foreign to the Soviet scene. Soviet public administration is suffused with political content (see Fainsod 1963, 387).

The second Constitution of 1940, finished by the first stage of the People's Revolution, emphasized on the laws from the perspective of socialist ideology and values. The Constitution of 1960 adopted socialist laws and included among its articles the confirmation of the achievements in building socialism, leaving out capitalism. The highly centralized

governmental structure was divided into three major parts: the executive branch, presided over by the Council of Ministers; the legislative branch, represented at the national level by the unicameral People's Great Hural (the national assembly); and the judicial branch, with a Supreme Court presiding over a system of law administered by courts and by Office of the Procurator of the Republic. The duties and responsibilities of each of these major bodies were identified in the Constitution promulgated in 1960.

Analyses of the three laws presented above, show that all of them had to implement essential principles derived from the central socio-political goals of the certain period of time. Nevertheless, all of these constitutions served to the socialist dogma neglecting the traditions of Mongolian statehood and culture (for more reference on the issues of Mongolian constitutionalism, see Janar 2002a). The winds of the East European socio-political changes of the late 1980s also came to the country. Mongolia's democratic history began in February of 1989, when a group of young artists and intellectuals held a meeting at the Mongolian Revolutionary Youth Union. The Mongolian Democratic Coalition was formed at that meeting, an organization that was to serve as a precursor to the Mongolian Democratic Party. The meeting was held in secret and from it sprang a movement that in just 18 months would force the ruling communist party to hold free elections. The world's second socialist state in history, after the USSR (abbr. of Soviet Union), was no more. New democratic and freedom parties were created, and a peaceful, democratic revolution changed the country's political system. What replaced it was a parliamentary democracy. I will further explain this term in the next part. In July of 1990, the first democratic free election took place in Mongolia, and the country became, finally, a parliamentary republic with a president and multi-party system. Economic activity traditionally has been based on agriculture and breeding of livestock.

The year 1992 is an important landmark in the history of Mongolia's democratic development, as this is when the Parliament adopted the new Constitution of the country. A new political system was established based on the principle of the separation of powers, and the inviolability of fundamental human rights and freedoms was acknowledged.

Scientists and professionals such as state and party leaders, lawyers, economists, historians and linguists participated in the development project of the new Constitution. Moreover foreign representatives from the USA, Australia, Austria, Germany, France, Russian

Federation, Poland and Japan and expert opinions from international organizations such as International Human Rights Committee, UN, International Parliamentary Committee and International Advocacy Organization were reflected. The Constitution of Mongolia from the 13th of January 1992, ratified to strengthen the new state democratic system and to provide a legal basis and guarantee the country's development, replaced the former structure and identified political and legal standards to establish the Mongolian state's social structure and democratic principles of Constitutionalism.

From this point the 1992-ratified Mongolian Constitution became modern and democratic, based on modern scientific achievements and reflecting recommendations of many professionals from various countries with long-term traditions of democracy.

The new Constitution of Mongolia is very significant and specific in comparison with the laws and constitutional periods in the history of Mongolia:

1. It replaced the totalitarian regime in Mongolia, following the requirements and principles of International Parliamentarism, transmitted into democratic and market relations. It also confirmed the aims to establish a "humane, civil and democratic society".
2. It provided democratic state systems directed to the principles of power separation, and defined its organizations and regimes.
3. According to the Constitution, the state shall be under the control of voters and respect national independence, security, solidarity and serve its citizens. The state itself, all citizens from ordinary people to the head of state, shall be equal under the laws.
4. The citizens are at the center of the social policy; the development of each side is considered to be realization of humanity, thus confirming human rights and freedom.
5. It legally confirmed a position of Mongolia in the International Community, its open foreign policy's goals and principles.

The current Constitution contains a parliamentary system of government with some aspects of a presidential system. The First Amendment to the Constitution was made in May 2001.

II. Political System in General

At present, independent and sovereign Mongolia, in terms of its state structure, is a unitary state upholding human rights, freedom, and free economy; in political and geographical respects, it is a developing country in Asia, landlocked between Russia and China, flanked on the west by Central Asia (Kazakhstan) and on the east by the Korean peninsula.

Freedom House rated Mongolia on political rights with a 2 and on civil liberties with a 2, both on a scale of 1 to 7 (in which 1 is the most free). Freedom House considers Mongolia to be a *free* country (Freedom House 2005). In accordance with paragraph 1, Article 10 of the Constitution, Mongolia adheres to the universally recognized norms and principles of international law and pursues a peaceful foreign policy. Currently over 140 countries have diplomatic relations with Mongolia.

Mongolia is a republic with powers shared among the President of Mongolia, the legislature called the State Great Hural, the Government as Executive Cabinet and the Judiciary. The president is the Head of State and is elected for a term of 4 years. The 76 members of the unicameral State Great Hural are elected for 4-year terms. By its state structure Mongolia is a unitary State. So the territory of Mongolia is divided into administrative units-aimags (the country has 21 aimags) and an administratively separate city-capital Ulaanbaatar only. Local hurals are elected by the 21 aimags (provinces) plus the capital, Ulaanbaatar. On the next lower administrative level, they are elected by provincial sum (subdivisions) and urban sub districts in Ulaanbaatar.

Mongolia is a parliamentary democracy. A direct democracy is almost impossible to realize, unless on a very small scale. The form of democracy we know is a representative democracy. From the idea of popular sovereignty, we have to deal with the question of how the opinions and wishes of the people could be translated into the policies and behavior of politicians. Representation, therefore, is one of the key concepts of democracy (Dahl 1956; Riker 1982; Lijphart 1984).

But an electoral system is more than this. The rules are applied in a specific context. How the rules are applied can matter as much as the rules themselves. A review of arguments for

and against different systems can be found in Lijphart and Grofman. In Mongolia, discussions on the issue of reform of Mongolia's Parliament-State Great Hural electoral system have only just begun. Fortunately, the importance of this issue has recently attracted increasing attention among Mongolia's general public. In democratic countries, sovereignty rests in the people. This basic principle was stated in Article III of the Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaimed at the time of the French Revolution in 1789. This idea or principle is referred to in the Constitution of Mongolia, stating in Chapter III, Article 3, Section 1, that the state power is vested in the people of Mongolia. The people exercise it through direct participation in state affairs and through representative bodies of state power elected by them. The political idea of representation is based on the idea that some person or institution acts on behalf of the people, by representing their beliefs, attitudes and perspectives. The Mongolian political system is one in which the people elect members of Parliament to represent them; hence the system of representative government. Mongolia's particular kind of representative government is a parliamentary democracy.

However, there is the problem of whether elected representatives should act merely as a relay mechanism for the views of their constituents, or whether they should act more independently, taking advantage of their knowledge and skills to lead their constituents to a more informed decision that is better for the greater good of the community. But it is not sufficient to simply describe Mongolia as having a system of representative government.

A legislature is usually characterized as a representative institution. A representative is occupied in more than one sense. One common understanding of being representative focuses on the characteristics of the population and how these are reflected in a body such as legislature. In discussing the representativeness of legislatures, for example, Loewenberg and Patterson note:

Recruiting processes ... translate into party divisions in the electorate into party divisions in the legislature; occupational patterns in the country into occupational patterns among legislators; ethnic, racial, religious, sex and age distributions among the constituents into similar distributions among the elected legislators (Loewenberg and Patterson 1979, 111).

A more comprehensive explanation will contain details of other aspects of the representative system. For example, Mongolia has also adopted a system of responsible government, whereas the Republic of Korea is a presidential republic with an elected National Assembly.

In this way, “responsible government” is one of the most fundamental terms used to describe the Mongolian political system, but it is also one of the most misunderstood. Responsible government is the term used to describe a political system where the executive government, the Government and Ministry, is drawn from, and accountable to, the legislative branch. In practice, this means that elections to the Parliament are the means by which we decide who shall govern. The Constitution requires in its Article 41, the Prime minister leads the Government and is responsible to the State Great Hural for the implementation of state laws. The Government is accountable for its work to the State Great Hural.

Governments are held accountable to the people through elections, but in between elections the function of the parliament is to hold the government accountable. This is achieved through such things as parliamentary questions, debate on legislation and parliamentary committee investigations. Thus, the term “responsible government” should not be confused with its everyday meaning.

III. Governmental Structure

As Ball noted, the major characteristics of the parliamentary type of government could be listed as follows:

1. There is a nominal head of state whose functions are chiefly formal and ceremonial and whose political influence is limited. This head of state may be a president, as in Germany, India, Israel and Italy, or a monarch, as in Japan, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
2. The political executive (prime minister, chancellor, etc.), together with the cabinet, is part of the legislature, selected by the legislature, and can be removed by the legislature if the legislature withdraws its support.
3. The legislature is elected for varying periods by the electorate, the election date being chosen by the formal head of state on the advice of the prime minister or chancellor (Ball

1977, 47–48).

In the field of political science, the study of constitutions is of the utmost importance. Central to the study of a constitution is the study of the legislative branch. Mongolia's Constitution of 1992 established new legal grounds for the status, the functions, and the operation of its permanent parliamentary institution within the state and government structure.

State Great Hural of Mongolia is the legislative branch of the government, prescribed by the Constitution to represent the will of the people. In accordance with article 20 of the Constitution of Mongolia, the State Great Hural is the highest organ of state power, and the supreme legislative power is vested only in the State Great Hural. It is a unicameral parliament and consists of 76 members in single-seat constituencies, elected by popular vote. Table 1 shows a chronology of the State Great Hural of Mongolia, from the time of New Constitution.

The functioning of the National Parliament is based on the principles to defend the independence and sovereignty of Mongolia, to form a law-governing power, to ensure the will, aspirations, interests and unity of the Mongolian people and to secure the guarantee and implementation of democracy, justice, human rights and freedom (for more reference, see Janar 2002b). Nowadays, the Mongolian Parliament has been operating according to the powers as provided for in the Constitution. However, there is a need to perfect the operations of the parliamentary institution to a more upgraded level in accordance with modern conditions and requirements of a political democracy.

According to contemporary constitutional theory, the unicameral system is more

Table 1. A Chronology of the State Great Hural of Mongolia (1992–present).

Regime Type	System of Government	Parliament	Term
Democratic	Parliamentary Republic	Constituent	June 1992–June 1996
		Second	June 1996–June 2000
		Third	June 2000–June 2004
		Fourth	June 2004–present

appropriate to democracy, bicameral systems being regarded as essentially designed to restrain and moderate the ebullience of popular sovereignty, which would operate in too ruthless a manner if there were only a single chamber. The single chamber should ideally be elected by direct universal suffrage, and that is in fact the commonest practice (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1962, 11).

As the supreme government organ, the Parliament is empowered to enact and amend laws, determine domestic and foreign policy, ratify international agreements, and declare a state of emergency. The Parliament meets semiannually. Parliament members elect a chairman and vice chairman who serve 4-year terms.

In the country, Parliament decides who will govern. This is an issue of the formation of the government. In parliamentary types of government the political chief executive is selected by majority vote in the parliament. In other words, the strongest party in the parliament provides the necessary political support for its leader to emerge as prime minister, and to select the majority of the members of his government from his party represented in the parliament. In Mongolia's case, to form a government and choose a prime minister, a party needs a simple majority of 39 seats in the Parliament, a legislative body of 76 nation-wide representatives. Mongolia's president is separately elected by the people but he holds little political power. So all political attention is focused on the Parliament, where for 85 years the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party was the ruling party and enjoyed almost absolute control except between 1996~2000. In the 2000 election, for example, they won 72 out of the 76 available seats.

The Constitution of Mongolia provides that the State Great Hural may consider, at its initiative, any issue pertaining to domestic and foreign policies of the country. They make representations on behalf of their constituents to the government and the public service. The passage of legislation is by majority vote of the Parliament.

A president may be the ceremonial head of state in parliamentary-cabinet systems of government. In case of Mongolia, the president is the head of state, commander in chief of the armed forces, and head of the National Security Council. He is popularly and directly elected by a national majority for a four-year term and limited to two terms. President is nominated by parties in the State Great Hural and elected by popular vote for a four-year term; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or majority coalition is usually the elected

prime minister by the State Great Hural. The former president was N. Bagabandi, MPRP. He was first elected in 1997 then re-elected in 2001, so he could not run for the third time in 2005. President appoints judges and has the veto power (which can be overturned by a 2/3 vote in Parliament).

The constitution empowers the president to propose a prime minister, call for the government's dissolution, initiate legislation, veto all or parts of legislation, and issue decrees, which become effective with the prime minister's signature. Cabinet is appointed by the State Great Hural in consultation with the president. In the absence, incapacity, or resignation of the president, the Speaker of Parliament exercises presidential power until inauguration of a newly elected president.

The Government, headed by the prime minister, has a four-year term and is the highest executive body of the state. In accordance with item 2, Article 1 of the Constitution, democracy, fairness, freedom, equality, ensuring national unity and respect for law are basic principles of governmental processes. The Government based on the foregoing basic principles assumes the roles, functions and mandates of a supreme Executive branch of the government within the framework of the undergoing laws:

1. Constitution of Mongolia
2. Law on the Government of Mongolia
3. Law on Administrative and Territorial Units, and their Governance
4. Law on Government Service

The prime minister is nominated by the president after discussions with the majority party in Parliament and confirmed by the Parliament. The prime minister chooses a cabinet, which is subject to Parliament approval. Dissolution of the government occurs upon the prime minister's resignation, simultaneous resignation of half the cabinet, or after a Parliament vote for dissolution. In the transition to a market economy in a democratic society the Government must assume policy, planning, regulatory and service providing functions in the national interests to achieve the goal of enhancing its management and national leadership capacities.

Mongolia's judicial system comprises of a Supreme Court, provincial courts, and a Constitutional Court. Supreme Court serves as appeals court for people but rarely overturns

verdicts of lower courts; judges are nominated by the General Council of Courts for approval by the president. The Supreme Court is the highest judicial body. Justices are nominated by the General Council of Courts and confirmed by the Parliament and President. The court is constitutionally empowered to examine all lower court decisions — excluding specialized court rulings — upon appeal and provide official interpretations on all laws except the constitution.

Specialized civil, criminal, and administrative courts exist at all levels and are not subject to Supreme Court supervision. Local authorities — district and city governors — ensure that these courts abide by presidential decrees and Parliamentary decisions. At the apex of the judicial system is the Constitutional Court, which consists of nine members, including a chairman, appointed to 6-year terms, whose jurisdiction extends solely over the interpretation of the constitution.

IV. Elections

A parliamentary democracy is one in which the people choose representatives at regular elections.

The Mongolian Constitution provided a term of office of four years for the parliament (State Great Hural 1992, Ch. III, Part I, Art. 21, Sec. 2). The term of Office begins with an Oath taken before the State Emblem as indicated in paragraph 2, Article 23 of the Constitution. It expires with an Oath taken by the newly elected members of the State Great Hural at its coming election. The Constitution requires that the MPs must be at least 25 years of age and are citizens of Mongolia. Since democratic politics means self-government, an ideal democracy would be based upon direct participation of the people. However, it is impractical to utilize direct democratic methods in modern countries with large populations and great territories. Therefore, democracy is nowadays practiced through indirect methods, namely the representative system. Thus, when it is stated that sovereignty is vested in the people it means that they have the right to participate indirectly in the government through their elected representatives.

In accordance with article 21 of the Constitution of Mongolia, the members of Parliament are elected by citizens qualified to vote, based on universal, free, direct suffrage by secret ballot. Parties or coalition of parties, officially registered before the day of election, are ensured the right to nominate the membership of the State Great Hural. Of the legislative members, constituency representatives do not lose their seats when they change their party affiliation such as Korean National Assembly (For further reference on Korean National Assembly, see Park 1998). In addition, each party draws up a statement of its position on various issues, called a platform. Voters thus make their decisions on the basis of the individuals running for office, and the political, economic and social philosophies of the parties they represent.

It is possible for a candidate to run for office in a general election without the backing of a political party. To run as an independent, a person must present a petition, signed by a specified number of voters who support his or her candidacy. Parliamentary Electoral Law requires that citizens of Mongolia who has obtained not less than 801 of the votes cast in the electoral constituency shall be eligible for independent candidacy for the election as member of the State Great Hural (State Great Hural of Mongolia 2000, Ch. 1, Art. 2, Sec. 3).

As Manin noted, election selects a particular type of elite: the notables. Representative government began as the rule of the notable (Manin 1995, 260). Generally, democratic elections are viewed as possibilities through which voters influence political leaders. But even in free democracies they can also be seen from the top down, as institutions expand the authority of the rulers over the ruled. For some authors such as Ginsberg (Ginsberg 1982) this is the major function of elections — competitive elections as well as elections without choice. Since the nineteenth century, notes Ginsberg, governments have ruled through elections even when they have sometimes been ruled by them. Elections strengthen the political elite in three ways — by increasing the stability, effectiveness and authority of the system they control. King (King 1981) provides a very clear review of the rather technical literature on the consequences of competitive elections. On specific countries, Pomper (Pomper 1980) is a good guide to the United States and Park (Park 2002) is best for the Republic of Korea. An election is a process in which a vote is held to elect candidates to an office. It is the mechanism by which a democracy fills elective offices in the legislature, and sometimes the executive and judiciary, and in which electorates choose local government officials. For democracy to work

there must be candidates for office, and for voters to have a choice, there must be competing candidates for most offices. Elections are part of the internal workings of a country, and citizens are participants in, and assessors of, national elections. The parliamentary elections of last year ended with surprising results. For the first in modern history of Mongolia elections results were so close to each other. The result of this election showed a narrow and shocking victory over the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) for Motherland-Democracy Coalition (MDC), and an unexpected loss of seats for the MPRP.

As shown in Table 2, The MPRP have won 37 seats, the MDC took 34 seats, independent candidates won three seats, while one candidate from the Republican Party (RP) also won a seat. One seat remained undecided. This led to the formation of a grand coalition government of the MPRP and the MDC under Prime Minister Ts. Elbegdorj of the DP and departing Prime Minister N. Enkhbayar of the MPRP was named Speaker of Parliament. The Republican Party's victory represents their first ever seat in parliament. The three independents are actually democrats although they were expelled from the DP just before the election, following a disagreement over election candidacy, and they had decided to run independent candidacy for the Parliamentary election.

As for the voter turnout, more than 80 percent of Mongolians consistently turn out for elections as they did for the parliamentary elections. Advanced polling techniques

Table 2. State Great Hural Election Results: 27 June 2004

Votes cast: 82.2% voted.

Political parties and coalition	%	Seats (76)
MPRP	46.5	37
MDC (DP, CWRP, MP)	44.8	34
RP/Republican Party/	1.5	1
Non-partisans (former members DP)	3.6	3
Undecided		1

Source: Election statistics were compiled by the General Election Commission of Mongolia and computed by the author.

Note: MPRP = Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party; MDC = Motherland-Democracy Coalition; DP = Democratic Party; CWRP = Civic Will-Republican Party; MP = Motherland Party; RP = Republican Party.

compartmentalized this vote among the 21 provinces, people's political affiliation and the voters' jobs, revealing a democracy surprisingly complex. The political parties engaged the pollsters to fine-tune their campaign messages for the campaigns leading up to the voting date. Though they reflect the American model where money and negative advertising produce results—these messages were infused with a distinctive Mongolian feel. There is no exit polling in Mongolia and votes are tabulated by hand. The results are not known until early next morning. So tallying ballots from Mongolia's nomadic population requires extra time, sometimes as much as a week. Like all pre-election poll estimates, the 2004 election was to be another demonstration of this hegemony. In April, a poll conducted by the International Republican Institute showed that the MPRP held a 10-point lead over the Motherland-Democracy Coalition. Each party scrambled to offer the best financial package for children and families, money that would be taken directly from government coffers. The MDC promised 10,000 tugriks (about \$10) every month for children under the age of 18, while the MPRP offered 500,000 tugriks for newlyweds.

However, in general, balanced government will be good for Mongolia because it will make everyone accountable for their actions and legislative proposals. Member of the Parliament will now have the "opportunity" to an "open" debate of their ideals in the State Great Hural. In other words, their ideals will have to be good enough to persuade a majority of Member of Parliament's; with different ways of thinking, to vote in favor of their legislation...that is plural democracy at its best. Though the 2004 election was both murky and controversial, two aspects of Mongolian politics are clear. One is that for the first time in Mongolia's young democratic history, the Parliament will not be dominated by one party. This will hopefully give Mongolian democracy its first vocal plurality. The second is that Mongolians still strongly support and relish their role in this democracy. As previously said, more than 80 percent of eligible voters turned out for the elections. In a country still dominated by bad roads, sporadic communication systems and rural living, this number is impressive. I expect that for the first time ever, the MPRP and the opposition will be forced to work together over the next four years in order for the government to function. Indeed, a bipartisan delegation left for Israel after the election to study how such governments have been negotiated in the Knesset. The Cabinet — finally — formed, a 50/50 split between the Democrats and MPRP at the end of

September. The elections had been held in late June, and they spent three months arguing over the results and jockeying for power and influence.

Along with this, after seven Standing Committees had been established in Parliament and as a result there was an odd number of committees, the right to select the head of the committee for Nature and Rural Development was decided by tossing a coin. The MPRP won the toss and gained the right to appoint the heads of four out of seven of the standing committees.

Mongolia's transition to democracy has been remarkably peaceful, and the young democracy is robust — largely as a result of this, there are now more than 20 political parties registered in the country. Currently, Mongolia employs a multi-party system at the parliamentary level. A brief overview of the dominant parties and coalitions in Mongolian politics today will now be introduced.

The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) was the ruling party during the socialist period. As is well known, the most important analysis of the party structure has been offered by the French political scientist Duverger. He put forward a fourfold classification of party structure: these were 1) the caucus; 2) the branch; 3) the cell and 4) the militia. (Duverger 1962, bk I, 17-40). Duverger's third type of structure, the cell, is an invention of the revolutionary socialist parties. During communist period of time MPRP was a kind of cell-structured party. It has been and continues to be heavily criticized by the democratic parties, but it maintains a strong base in the more conservative countryside. In the Parliament elected in 1996, they won 25 seats, a stunning defeat after holding the vast majority of seats in the Parliament from 1992 to 1996. However in the 2000 elections, they retook the Parliament with 72 seats. They currently control about half of the Parliament, and N. Enkhbayar, the former Prime Minister, is the Speaker of the Parliament. Later, he was elected as the President of Mongolia in May 22, 2005.

The Democratic Party (DP) is a result of the union of the Mongolian National Democratic Party and the Mongolian Social Democratic Party in December 2000. The Mongolian National Democratic Party was actually formed from a number of other parties in the early 1990s. The two parties that formed the Democratic Party were the ruling coalition from 1996-2000, when they held 50 of the 76 seats in the Parliament. The Civic Will Party was founded in March 2000, by S. Oyun, an MP. It later merged with the Republican Party and thus technically

became the Civil Will — Republican Party. Motherland Party (MP) was founded in the spring of 1999. It was founded and bankrolled by B. Erdenebat, a wealthy businessman who runs the Erel conglomerate. (So it has been at times referred to as the “Erel Party.”) The Republican Party (RP) was founded and is headed by Jargalsaikhan (known as Buyan’s Jargalsaikhan, after the cashmere company he heads). The Republican Party, which had merged with the Civic Will Party (and so for a time it was the Civic Will-Republican Party) for the 2001 Presidential election separate back off just before the 2004 Parliament elections and fielded their own candidates. There was obvious dispute whether all this was technically legal.

The 27 June 2004 parliamentary elections initially led to a hung parliament, with two months of political deadlock leading to an agreement between the Democratic Coalition and the MPRP to share power. The power-sharing agreement subsequently broke down and 21 members of the Democratic Party joined the voting caucus of the MPRP. The MPRP once again regained control of the parliament.

Here, I would like to briefly mention the recent presidential election and its results. Four candidates had been declared in the last election. For MPRP, there was N. Enkhbayar, the Speaker of the Parliament (by the said time) and former Prime Minister between 2000-2004. B. Jargalsaikhan was running for the Republican Party, and M. Enhsaikhan was running for the Democratic Party. B. Erdenebat was running for the Motherland Party. The latter two candidates, both businessmen, ran in the presidential election. Based on opinion poll results, some poll centres were predicting that this presidential election may not be decided on the first vote alone. Under Presidential Election law, if one candidate does not win a clear majority (50%+1 of the vote), the two candidates with the most votes are put through to a second round of voting. Mongolia’s first president P. Ochirbat and former president N. Bagabandi both won in the first round. Presidential terms are four years, and former President N. Bagabandi served his maximum two terms. According to Mongolian law, Enkhbayar must distance himself from his party as president, though he is allowed to campaign with party support.

MPRP candidate N. Enkhbayar, a former prime minister of the ruling Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party, claimed victory in May 22 presidential election in the country. He secured 53.46 percent of the votes, while his main rival M. Enkhsaikhan of the Democratic Party took 19.76 percent, the General Election Committee announced. Republican Party

Table 3. Presidential elections voter turnouts 1993-2005

Election year	Average Voter Turnout Percentage
1993	93
1997	85
2001	83
2005	74.9

candidate B. Jargalsaikhan won 13.92 percent of the ballots while MotherLand Party candidate B. Erdenebat took 11.4 percent.

Table 3 shows popular participation in Presidential elections since 1993. The election was only the fourth presidential race in the vast country of nomads and grasslands, which embraced democracy 16 years ago. Turnout was 74.91 percent of the 1.34 million eligible voters. The election was watched by about 100 international observers from countries including Britain, Russia, Japan and the United States.

V. Concluding Remarks

In an important manner, Mongolia is still in transition toward parliamentary democracy. This means that our political system will be based on the idea that Parliament is supreme, or sovereign. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." As a national policy-making body, the State Great Hural of Mongolia, to be an image of the national legislature is an important issue for the country's government's efforts to receive responsibility for a task social and political reform. However, there is a need to improve the operations of the parliamentary institution, to better meet the modern conditions and requirements of a political-economic environment. From election act of looking to building democratic institutions, few areas in political system seem to be in such need of change and reform as campaigns and electoral processes. The democratic regime may be a good instrument to address these problems.

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