

Significance of U.S. Democracy in Mongolia

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210 years and a month have passed since at the American Constitutional Convention had been adopted the Constitution of the United States of America.

On September 17, 1787, 55 U.S. Congressmen¹ who had taken part in the American Revolution and well known in their states and 34 of whom were practiced law along with successful manufacturers, shippers, planters and merchants, after more than three months and a half of comprehensive and thorough discussions at last finished the writing of the Constitution. Its framers believed they had written the best Constitution possible.

It was really a good Constitution and one of the most democratic and long-standing constitutions in the world. During the whole period of its functioning only 26 amendments have been introduced into this Constitution. It was incarnation of such bright ideals of the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence as: all people were born with "unalienable rights that could not be taken away by any government; among these rights are life, liberty and and pursuit of Happiness; then purpose of goverment is to protect the rights of the people; No government can rule without the "consont of the governed" in other words it must have the approval of the people that it governs. If the government tries to take away the people's rights then "It is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it."

The main point of the American Constitution lies in the fact that the people should elect their government by universal, direct and secret votings. It meant a real democratic way of election of government.

The significance of the U.S. Constitution consists in that it partitioned off the seizure of power by once of a group of persons. Each of three branches of the U.S. government (Congress, President and Justice) has their own competent functions defined by the Constitution and no one of them could carry to excess. They are mutually dependent on each other. It is just the most important and valuable things which closed the door to a possibility of appearing dictatorship. Moreover, dictators of some countries outside of USA intentionally didn't appreciate the advantage and significance of the American Constitution. For example, Adolf Hitler called the western democracy, including the American one "as a ballyhoo"² or sensation. Joseph Stalin at the session of Supreme Soviets in 1936 considered the Soviet Constitution as "the only in the world finally democratic Constitution"³ and obviously depreciated the role and significance of the American democratic Constitution. We know the Soviet Constitution of 1936 legitimated the domination of the (communist) party system in the country and it functioned in all 55 years. It ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If to say briefly, for many years the American democratic Constitution couldn't find the support on a large scale in the world. Its democratic and humane rational value became to spread largely around the world since the middle of the 20th century after World War Two.

At present an American democracy is considered more perfect in the world. Before 1990 Mongolia had no possibility to make use of fruits of the American democracy, as Mongolia had been under the yoke of Manchus in the course of 220 years and from the middle of 1920-ies it was under the rule of one political party system.

As a result of democratic movement expanded in the fall of 1989 in spring of 1990 under the favourable international situation Mongolia chose the road to democracy.

Mongolia's democracy in principles and goals is directed to triumph of freedom and creation of democratic society and prosperous life.

From the beginning of our democracy the United States of America together with its friends gave active supports to the Mongolian young democracy.

In 1991 Mongolia's President at the invitation of US President for the first time made an official visit to America. James Baker III, then US Secretary of State came to our country.

Delivering a speech at the session of our Parliament he expressed that the United States of America would continue to support Mongolia's democracy. At the same time James Baker noticed: "You, Mongols, yourselves should have to establish democratic and Market Economy systems in your country and nobody could do it from outside".⁴

Recent years US statesmen, beginning from President Bill Clinton to American Congressmen and State Department officials and American military commanders of the Pacific navy forces made repeated statements in which they positively spoke their opinions about the democratic process in Mongolia. We are thankful for this kind of supports of us. Simultaneously, now and then there were critical attitudes towards the errors of Mongolia's democracy. That's also good. Certainly it would be only useful for our ruling circles to hear critics from outside.

Besides, since 1990 Mongol-American friendly relations and co-operations have got on the road of creative development.

During the period of these seven years Mongol-US relations have developed in various branches: politics, economics, technology, science, education, culture, health and etc.

In political branch Mongolia has established the Parliamentary system of government.

The paramount important task for our democracy was an establishment of a system of government, in Lincoln's words, "of the people, for the people".⁵

These fundamental principles of US Constitution became the basis of our 1992 Constitution. To counterplace one-party totalitarian regime our new Constitution has legalized multiparty political system in Mongolia. According to the Constitution the highest legislative organ of power in the country belongs to the Parliament.

Now our Parliament is represented by four parties: Mongolian National Democratic party (MNDP), Mongolian Social Democratic Party (MSDP), Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) and Mongolian United Traditional (Conservative) party (MUTP).

The principle indications of our Constitution on the whole resemble with the main regulations of US Constitution. By our new Constitution the Parliament and President of the country became to be directly elected by voters on the basis of secret voting.

Mongolian Parliament has no chambers while the US Congress consists of two chambers: the House of Representatives (Lower chamber) and the Senate (Upper Chamber).

Our Parliament is represented by 76 members. Certainly it resembles the Parliament of US state Colorado. However, it doesn't mean that our Parliament is wholly identical to the Parliament of State Colorado.

The differences between Mongolian and Colorado Parliaments consist in that Mongolia as a sovereign state independently pursues its foreign policy and realizes military affairs while these functions in the United States belong to the Federal Government.

Therefore, Mongolia's democracy combines the characteristic features of both of the US Federal Government and state Colorado.

As a result of last year Parliamentary elections block of MNDP and MSDP took 50 seats and has independently formed its Government. But MPRP got 25 seats found itself to be minority in the Parliament, MUTP occupied one seat in the Parliament.

Our Constitution says that the Parliament can start its work and take the most important decisions on principle only under the consent of the two thirds of all Parliament members.

In summer of 1996, when our newly elected Parliament began its work and started to discuss the question on electing a Deputy Speaker and distributing seats among the authorities in the Parliament, 26 parliamentaries from MPRP and MUTP opposed the block during a week and it nearly led to the Parliamentary crisis. Such an immaturity of our parliamentarians from the minority in

the Parliament originated from the misunderstanding of the fact that a parliamentarian should, first of all, take into account of the interests of the whole country, but not his belonging to any political party. Only expanded in the country demands of voters enforced MPRP and MUTP to give up their clumsy attempts.

One year and four months have passed since block of MNDP and MSDP (the majority) is exercising rule of the country. For this period of time two main political events took place in Mongolia. These were: election of local authorities in October of 1996 and Mongolian Presidential election in May of 1997. In both cases the block of the MNDP and MSDP was defeated and couldn't win the majority of voters.

A transition of Mongolia into democracy is not coming easy to us. A long domination of communist, totalitarian regime in the country has kept its deep roots in the consciousnesses of our people.

Besides, our justice, the third branch of government operates rather ineffectively. From materials published in our some newspapers it became known that a certain numbers of our officials, including some judges are involved into a corruption. Everybody knows that a corruption is never made openly.

Of course, there are many difficulties connected with this transition. A living standard of the people was not improved, but on the contrary, it was worsened. The increase of inflation and unemployed people, prices in goods and everything naturally causes indignation of masses.

Despite this kind of situation Mongolia's democracy in comparison with the old regime is a big step forward toward freedom, democracy and Market Economy system.

In the fields of Economy a collapse of the Centralized Planning Economic system is coming up to an end. All state and collective agricultural farms ceased their existance. Sheep, goats and cattles have passed into the hands of individuals (herdsmen).

Privatization of the state owned enterprises is going on. If to say in brief the state property is promptly breaking down. Instead, new companies or corporations emerged and are still continuing to grow.

The same is happening to service, trade, finance, education, health, culture and others.

As to the freedom of press it has done several years ago.

In conclusion, all these changes of Mongolian society became possible due to our democratic movement along with every support of democratic and friendly nations, including the United States of America, Russia, Japan, China, the Republic of Korea and other countries as well as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asia Foundation and other international organizations. So, the American democracy continues to be an urgent necessity in our advance on the road of freedom and democracy.

Taking this opportunity, at the end of delivering a speech let me express the Board of ASAK our sincere gratitude for friendly invitation of our representative to this seminar.

We with interests have listened to the papers and discussions here and got a great impressions on your seminar. And going home back we'll study attentively all the papers.

Thank you for attention.

Notes

1. These delegates had taken part in the American Revolution and well known in their states were the people of practiced law (34 of them), successful manufactures, shippers, planters and merchants. "The Declaration of Independence 1776".

2. Adolf Hitler "Mein Kampf". Cited from the Mongolian translation had published in the newspaper "Undesnii Devshil" ("National Progress"), 1991

3. J. Stalin "Voprosy Leninizma", publication eleventh, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1953, p. 562.

4. Newspaper "Undesnii Devshil".1991

5. K. Stevenson. "American Life and Institutions" (Stuttgart, 1992), p.33