

July 19, 2016  
Phone Briefing with Cody Sawyer  
US State Department  
Desk Officer  
Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs

Attendance: Beth Fluke and Holly Jobe

In the recent election the Mongolian People's Party (MPP) replaced the Democratic People's Party. The MPP won with 85% of the vote, indicating the unhappiness with previous administration. The election ran without incident. The Prime Minister will change. The presidential election will be next year.

Cody said the election will not alter The State Department relationship with Mongolia. John Kerry was in recently in Mongolia for a very brief visit. The visit was to reinforce the cooperation and human relations with the US and support for sending peace keeping troops.

Several issues in Mongolia is the widespread issue of corruption. It exists in almost every segment of Mongolia. Cody said, "There are some very wealthy men in Mongolia, the question is how did they amass their wealth?" Probably mining.

Another big issues in doing business in Mongolia are the regulations. Permits are given then the rules change or regulations are not enforced. There is a history of a lack of transparency creating havoc with businesses trying to do business in Mongolia. The rules and regulations can not be counted on.

A combination of the frustration of doing business and a slow down in Chinese economy has reduced foreign investment in Mongolia, down by 90%. Four years ago the GNP was up by over 17%, this past year it was less than 1%.

Regarding women's issues the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) has recently supported the government in passing a domestic violence law.

The Peace Corp still has a fairly large presence in Mongolia, USAID has a much smaller presence- one staff person. USAID is completing a project extending credit to small businesses.