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FPA Town Hall
New York Democracy Forum Dinner: Roza Otunbayeva
September 22, 2011

Featuring:

Roza Otunbayeva, President of Kyrgyzstan

MS. ROZA OTUNBAYEVA: Dear Mr. Gershman, your excellent presence - - ladies and gentlemen, friends. First of all, let me just tell you how much pleased I am to be here tonight. I really feel, myself, like among the friends. The last few days at the United Nations were full of diplomatic meetings, series, conferences and summits. Today, when I was going to make my speech on behalf of the Kyrgyzstan Republic, just before my speech was intervention of president of Iran, Mr. Ahmadinejad, and over there, his speech, suddenly all the European delegation started to leave the audience. And my diplomat's been very worried that nobody left to listen here.

But then after, straight after this speech, people started to return back, thank god. So I was talking about the development of democracy in my country, in our part of the world. There are so many words these days told about the Arab - - countries. United Nations sessions general conversations are full of this topic. My country once spring earlier, April 2010, overthrew the previous dictator, president, and we have put in place a parliamentary democracy. We sort of scheduled our development straight. In three months, we have promised to put on the constitutional referendum, our new constitution, parliamentary democracy. And in half a year, our elections to the parliaments, and everything has been done on time.

Our election has been recognized widely as ever open and just elections in our region by international observers. And we are proud to say that we are really trying, now, to learn about democracy in our new skins. Parliament is powerful. I

have a limited power. Executive powers, we have composed out of fractions in the parliament. And certainly our neighbors have not been very happy with all of this development. And still they are in full doubt that what we are going to do from the very high - - our development was evaluated as catastrophic, and of course for the country, in the heart of central Asia, it is not easy. We certainly depend economically from each other.

Then we started to look around. Who else is with such model of demographic development? And we found that Turkey is another parliamentary country. It's quite far, five and a half hours flight from Bishkop [phonetic]. Another country was Mongolia, and Mongolia is very much like us Kyrgyzstan. We are, together with Mongolians, we are very close nations. As a matter of fact, I want to tell you, my American friends, the topic of this conference of the United Nations is a row of mediators in conflict resolution. I think Americans are the best mediators to bring people together for the friendship. - - exercising now over our lunch and he said that I'm meeting, with the first time, with president. No, it's not for the first time, and I regret to disappoint you, but I think you are doing really a great job. In our part of the world, someone else supposed to bring us closer, but it needs to come to New York when you bring us to the one table.

Kyrgys and Mongols share a very deep history that goes back for a millennium. We are both pastoral nomadic nations, along with the Kazakhs, we are the only nations to live in - -. Ancient Kyrgys as well as Mongols roamed freely on the territory from Manchuria to the Caspian Sea. So naturally we Kyrgys have lots of historic autographs in the territory of present day Mongolia. Needless to say that the brave Kyrgys were part of the great Nomadic empire that ruled over Eurasia in the times of Genghis Khan, both before him and after. But it is because of the past that I feel like I'm here with my--it is not because I feel like I'm with my family. It is because of the present. Thanks to leadership of Mr. Elbegdorj and his compatriots, Mongolia did not abide by its geographic location. Mongolians did not say that they cannot have a democracy because they are not in the right region, or too far from Europe or America. No Mongolian choose freedom, Mongolia said that they want justice. Mongolia said they will shape their own future, and this is what makes Mongolians and Kyrgys two brother, or sister nations, because the Kyrgys also choose freedom. Because Kyrgys also said that they are ready to face hardships and maybe some misunderstanding from some of our neighbors. But we want to live freely, and we want to live by law and order, not by corruption and violence.

I heard the president Elbegdorj say that Mongolia today speaks with any nation as an equal because it is free. I can say the same for the Kyrgys. President Elbegdorj, thank you very much for your leadership and congratulations for today's award. I concur fully that young democracies like Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and other, should actively corporate and help each other. So of my delegation, which went--the delegation of our parliamentarians, which went to Mongolia, they came back very much very inspired. We have today common ground, common history, common

route to go ahead, and I do believe that, with the help of foundations like - -
endowment for democracy, we will do a lot of such very important useful projects.

As for Kyrgyzstan, I had - - one more test. I mean the presidential elections on
October 30, 2011 that will be held without my participation. We expect that
contention among the candidates for the top state job will be very competitive.
We invited the unprecedented high number of observers from foreign states, and
international organizations including, first of all, OACM [phonetic]. As the head of
state, I will try hard to create all conditions for democratic, and fair expression of
will by our citizens, as well as make sure to arrange peaceful handover of power to
the newly elected president. I can say with confidence that today we are much
stronger, both as the state and as the nation, than we were one year ago under the
ultratarian ruler. Difference, I have here delegation, we came like to one family, to
the family of democracies. We are emerging democracy, Kyrgyzstan. You brought
us together, two democracies; Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. From very far such a
month and a step region in the heart of central Asia.

We are happy to be tonight, we are happy to greet president Elbegdorj, and we are
going back as very close friends. Thank you.