

Recognize Mongolia

Why doesn't the United States recognize Outer Mongolia? Recognition would let Washington look and listen in a strategic Asian outpost where it now is blind and deaf. Recognition would advance the stated American desire to "build bridges" to Communist lands, and thereby promote their nationalism and our influence too. Recognition would add substance and flexibility to an active United States Asian policy, at a moment when American interest in Asia is high and growing. Recognition would put the U.S. into an unqualifiedly friendly involvement in Asia, with none of the harsh ambiguities which mark our concern in Vietnam.

Mongolia is ready and waiting. It has not wished to appear the supplicant, but for years it has made known its willingness to open up relations with Washington. For Ulan Bator, that step would enhance its pride in its own nationhood, and extend its diplomatic, political and economic wings. Mongolia, now 45 years old, is increasingly interested in breaking out of isolation and backwardness and out of its reputation as a Soviet satellite. Recognition by the United States would fit both Mongolia's goals and ours.

Nationalist China has opposed American recognition of Outer Mongolia in the past, but its argument against it is not very persuasive. Its theory, of course, is that Mongolia is a part of China, not a separate nation. The logic of this contention is not overwhelming, inasmuch as Taiwan did recognize Mongolia as a separate nation when Chiang Kai-shek was a friend of Stalin, and did not veto its admission to the U.N. in 1961. The United States should now go ahead with its earlier intention and recognize Outer Mongolia.