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The Significance of Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Security Apparatus on a Global and Regional Scale

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Recommended Citation

Lkhaajav, Bolor, "The Significance of Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Security Apparatus on a Global and Regional Scale" (2018). *Master's Projects and Capstones*. 774.
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The Significance of Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Security Apparatus
on a Global and Regional Scale

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Master of Arts in Asia-Pacific Studies

University of San Francisco

APS 650 Capstone Project

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May 15, 2018

The Significance of Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Security Apparatus on a Global and Regional Scale

Abstract

Mongolia, land-locked between two politically, economically, and militarily powerful nations — Russia and China — often must balance its foreign and security policies with its two neighbors and countries beyond. When discussing Mongolia's foreign policy and security apparatus, historians and scholars look at the international relations of East Asia as a whole. This is the case not because Mongolia's foreign policy is insignificant but because greater powers impose greater influence on smaller states. Mongolia's partial involvement in World War II (WWII), and the Cold War introduced new challenges as well as opportunities for Mongolia to modernize its foreign policy principles and security policies. In turn, this research paper offers ways to enhance and strengthen Mongolia's foreign and security policies by carefully looking at historical turning points, addressing existing issues, and providing a solution-based analysis for policymakers. Moreover, while there is a burgeoning discussion on cyber security, as a non-traditional security threat, Mongolia's cyber security apparatus is a new contribution to the existing literature. The research essay concludes that the Mongolia's foreign and security policies are effective, timely efficient in facing both the traditional and non-traditional threats.

Keywords

Mongolia, Foreign policy, security policy, cyber security, small states, diplomacy

GLOSSARY

Chinggis Khaan	A correct way of spelling Genkhis Khan.
FPC	Foreign policy concept of Mongolia (2011).
Good neighbor policy	Good neighbor policy refers to Mongolia’s foreign policy objectives with neighboring Russia and China.
The Battle of Khalkh River	In 1939 and 1945, the Russian and Mongolian Army fought against the Japanese imperial army in Khalkh River, Mongolia.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding.
NSC	National security concept of Mongolia (2010).
Six-Party Talk	The six-party talks were a series of multilateral negotiations held intermittently since 2003 and attended by China, Japan, DPKR, Russia, South Korea, and the United States with the shared purpose of dismantling North Korea's nuclear program.
Small country diplomacy	“Small country diplomacy” often refers to the “manner which small states conduct their diplomacy to pursue their foreign policy objectives, and to manage their participation in the global community of nations .”
Third neighbor policy	Mongolia’s third neighbor policy refers to bilateral and multilateral relations with countries beyond Russia and China.
UB Dialogue NEAS	Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security (2014).
Land-linked	A term introduced by Dr. Bayasakh, to highlight Mongolia’s significance on a global and regional scale and intended to replace the use of land-locked in existing literature.
Outer Mongolia	Outer Mongolia refers to the country Mongolia, not Inner Mongolia.

The Significance of Mongolia's Foreign Policy and Security Apparatus on a Global and Regional Scale

Introduction

Mongolia, located between Russia and China, is often written in the history books as the conquerors of the world in the 13th century. The history of the Mongol Empire or the legacy of the Chinggis Khaan plays a crucial role in establishing the narrative and literature on modern Mongolia's history, foreign policy principles, and highlighting its historical security apparatus. These subjects have and continue to inspire many generations of historians and international relations scholars to build upon and augment the work regarding Mongolia's presence in world history and in our everchanging contemporary global affairs. This research highlights the most significance policy objectives and strategies that have and still are modernizing Mongolia's foreign and security apparatus. This essay examines crucial historical turning points that transformed Mongolia's policies and the country's ongoing challenges: to preserve its own autonomy while maintaining stable political, cultural, and economic relationships with surrounding countries; and to maintain bilateral and multilateral relations that do not compromise its economic goals and security. These narratives contribute to the existing literature on Mongolia by shedding more light on Mongolia's complex, unique situation, and its significant presence vis-a-vis its foreign and security policies and its efforts to produce positive outcomes at home, regionally, and globally. Moreover, while there is a burgeoning discussion on cybersecurity as a non-traditional security threat, an examination of Mongolia's cyber security apparatus will contribute to this literature.

Literature Review and Methods: Past and Present Perspectives of Mongolia

When historians and scholars look at Mongolia's foreign policy history, they often focus on the international relations of East Asia, not because Mongolia does not have foreign policy objectives per se, but greater powers impose greater influence on smaller states. Such literature is valuable, as it allows us to see the complicated position of Mongolia in terms of balancing its own interests and those of other countries.

Various sources address Mongolia's land-locked yet unique positioning in the international affairs arena throughout history and in modern times. In addition to existing literature produced by many foreign scholars— such as Morris Rossabi, who is well-known for his knowledge in Yuan Dynasty, Jack Weatherford, expert of the history of Chinggis Khaan and modern Mongolia experts, Former US Ambassador to Mongolia, Jonathan Addleton, Alicia Campi, Julian Dierkes, and Jeffrey Reeves—this research utilizes ethnographical interviews with Mongolian scholars. The contribution of these Mongolian scholars such as Galbaatar, Defense and Military Attaché, Col. Narankhuu, Bayasakh, along with reference to Mongolian sources enhance my research narrative and the overall literature on Mongolia's foreign policy challenges, security apparatus, and traditional and non-traditional security issues, such as cybersecurity.

Moreover, as extractive institutions such as Rio Tinto, Centerra Gold, China Shenhua, and many other pursue Mongolia as an emerging market, topics on good governance, economic prosperity and economic security becomes a modern-narrative that enlighten the reader's mind to broader understanding on Mongolia's unique position in the global context. Such diverse sources allow people and scholars to have a dialogue about relevant issues and to share perspectives, concerns, and offer various solutions.

Historical Turning Points: Balancing Interests

Historically, Mongolia has faced and successfully met a significant challenge: advancing its own interests while satisfying those of other countries. In the development of Mongolia's modern foreign policy, two key events— WWII (1939-1945) and the Cold War (1970-1991) drove Mongolia to establish an outward-led foreign policy while protecting its national sovereignty and security coupled with diplomacy and modernization.

Mongolia's partial involvement in WWII strengthened Mongolia's foreign policy objectives and secured its national interests. In 1939, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria allowed Stalinist Russia and Mongolia to strengthen its military ties and combat the Japanese expansion in East Asia. But with Mongolia being the buffer zone for Russia, it was in both Russia and Mongolia's interests to deter the Japanese aggression from Siberia and Outer Mongolia. In 1945, the USSR and Mongolia fought against the Japanese imperial army in Khalkh River, the Eastern front of Mongolia.¹ It was the Mongolian army that who supplied the Russians with horses, wool, and furs during its brutal winter wars. Following the Battle of the Khalkh River, the Yalta Conference was a turning point in Mongolia's history. The Yalta Conference concluded China's full-fledged recognition of Outer Mongolia as a sovereign state. Although often ignored or unmentioned in historical references, Joseph Stalin played a crucial role in having the Chinese government to set free of Outer Mongolia ambition to keep Mongolia's status quo.² On October 20, 1945, Mongolian electorate, supported by the people, opted for full independence.³ This

¹ C.R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 323.

² Bayarkhuu D, "The Yalta Conference: Mongolia's Sovereignty and Master Stalin's Accomplishments," *Baabar.mn*, February 13, 2015, <http://baabar.mn/article/6773>.

³ Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 226.

historical turning point illustrates the highpoint of Russo-Mongolia relations and highlighted the challenges with China's geopolitical ambitions. Moreover, the results of the Yalta Conference positioned Mongolia to balance its relations between its two significant neighbors, Russia and China.

See Image 1.



Nationwide Vote for Independence, *Central Archival Authority of Mongolia*. October 20, 1945.⁴

While Russo-Mongolia relations during Cold War (1947-1991) may seem like a double-edged sword to some historians, in comparison to Sino-Mongolia relations, Russia's foreign policy did not impose a direct threat to Mongolia as a sovereign state. Despite the Yalta Conference accord, the Chinese government, under Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping continued its surreptitious

⁴ Central Archival Authority of Mongolia, "Nationwide Vote for Independence," October 20, 1945, accessed April 10, 2018, https://www.archives.gov.mn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=738:1945-10-20-&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=1.

attempts to dominate Mongolia politically and economically. Although this ambition was and is understandable considering Mongolia's huge land mass, small population, and abundance of natural resources, Mongolia's good-neighbor foreign policy is currently under threat, which affects bilateral affairs on a governmental level and sometimes creates anti-Chinese sentiment within an otherwise the civil society.

In the summer of 2016, a significant document was declassified and released to the public by the Woodrow Wilson Center. It was a Memorandum of Conversation between President of the United States, George H.W. Bush and Chairman Deng Xiaoping in Beijing from February 26, 1989, two years after the establishment of Mongolia-US diplomatic relations. This memorandum of conversation proves that Mongolia's foreign policy and national security was at stake even during the late 1980s. Chairman Deng said the following to President Bush regarding Sino-Soviet relations:

“The situation is different with respect to Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union. What the Soviets gained after World War II was Chinese territory – more than three million square kilometers. In the Czarist Russia period, the Russians gained 1.5 million square kilometers or more of Chinese territory. During the Stalinist period, the Soviet Union gained in territory was Outer Mongolia, which had been Chinese territory for hundreds of years. I would like to add that one of the results of the Yalta Conference held by the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States at the end of World War II was to divide up China.”⁵

This primary document illustrates that Chairman Mao Zedong's geopolitical ambition to take over Outer Mongolia was still relevant during Deng Xiaoping's governance in 1989. Morris Rossabi, a

⁵ George H.W. Bush and Deng Xiaoping, *Memorandum of Conversation between George H.W. Bush and Chairman Deng Xiaoping*, February 26, 1989. Woodrow Wilson Center. Accessed May 8, 2017, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116507>.

historian at Columbia University, notes in his book, *Modern Mongolia*, that “A legacy of at least two thousand years of mistrust and intermittent confrontation and hostilities between the two societies has influenced contemporary Mongolia’s relations with China.”⁶ Sino-Mongolia relations have historically been quite complicated and this mentality continued into the modern era of bilateral affairs when the Chinese government’ obscures its true intentions behind political, economic, and security agendas. As Rossabi states, “Having moved away from Soviet influence or domination, the newly elected Mongolian officials sought to chart a foreign policy that emphasized greater contact with the capitalist world.”⁷ With this challenging landscape we see that, the effects of the WWII and the Cold War have shaped Mongolia’s foreign policy and national security objectives; to face the challenges of the future, the governments of Mongolia has pursued an outward-thrust in order to strengthen and modernize.

Modernization of Mongolia’s Foreign Policy

The effects of the WWII and the Cold War shaped Mongolia’s foreign policy and national security objectives—that, in turn, needed to be constantly balanced, strengthened, and modernized.

The earlier phases of Mongolian foreign policy development were significant in three areas:

1. Mongolia sought to be part of larger international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank (WB) (to be recognized);
2. to establish diplomatic relations with other nations through political, economic, and security means; and lastly;
3. to expand its influence both regionally and globally via soft power and later, the third neighbor policy.

⁶ Morris Rossabi, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). 225.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

As Mongolia's foreign policy leaned outward, national security objectives needed to be strengthened and reinforced. In this history-making role, Mongolia's prominent leader, Marshall Yu. Tsendenbal (1916-1991) took much of the responsibility of establishing the outward-led foreign policy while maintaining the balancing act between fulfilling the interests of Russia and China, and, most importantly, securing Mongolia's sovereignty. Despite the number of times it put him in danger, Marshall Tsendenbal's visit to New York allowed Mongolia to join the United Nations (UN). On October 27, 1961, Mongolia became a fully-fledged member of the UN.⁸ The membership in the UN as a sovereign state represents a significant phase in Mongolia advancing its foreign policy and national security objectives. It shows that even though Mongolia was a Soviet satellite state, its foreign policy was stepping away from the socialist mentality and leaning more towards a development-based and capitalistic approach. The UN-Mongolia relations benefited both sides overtime (which will be discussed in later sections.)

The establishment of diplomatic relations was the second phase of Mongolia's foreign policy development. Marshall Tsendenbal's far-sighted foreign policy objectives scrutinized US-Japan relations as a possible model for Mongolia's development without showing too much favoritism of the West and its alliance system. On February 24, 1972, the People's Republic of Mongolia and Japan established their diplomatic relations.⁷ Even though the Mongolian army fought the Japanese in WWII, bilateral relations were reached through mutual respect and on the basis of need of each country to develop in its own ways. Since 1972, Japan has been Mongolia's third neighbor for trade, which strengthened cooperation between the countries. According to the

⁸ Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations. Accessed May 4, 2017.
<https://www.un.int/mongolia/mongolia/mongolia-and-united-nations-0>.

Embassy of Japan in Mongolia, between 2011 and 2015, Japan had invested \$1,259.440 Mongolia's development projects through loans and grants.”⁹ Beyond political and economic ties, Japan and Mongolia engage in cultural exchanges in order to promote positive people-to-people relations, and this is accomplished through wrestling, judo, and sumo diplomacy.¹⁰ Moreover, Mongolia has long-standing diplomatic relations with the UK and the British Embassy was one of the two Western embassies in Ulaanbaatar. As Mongolia expanded its foreign policy influence, international relations strategies such as “small country diplomacy” and the “third neighbor policy” were utilized to bridge political, economic, and security relations with a number of nations in East Asia, the Middle East, and even the Americas.

Mongolia's foreign policy ambition reached the Western hemisphere by the 1980s. On January 27, 1987, the United States and Mongolia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which declared official diplomatic relations and Steven Mann was selected as the first American Ambassador to Mongolia.⁹ The establishment of the US-Mongolia diplomatic relations was in line with Mongolia's vision to democratize, develop, modernize, and prosper. Moreover, US-Mongolia relations were established through spreading and advocating democratic principles and values, enabling a market-based economy, and advancing person-to-person cooperation.¹¹ Since 2001, Mongolia has supported the US counterterrorism efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Lt. Mark Larson, writes from the 10th Mountain Division in Kabul, “The Mongolians, for certain, provide the most

⁹ “Japan's Assistance to Mongolia,” Embassy of Mongolia in Japan, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.mn.embjapan.go.jp/news/ODAenglish.PDF>.

¹⁰ Although not included in this paper, “Judo-Diplomacy” is a term that the author will be introducing to enhance people-to-people relations between Japan and Mongolia. It is a *modus operandi* for utilizing soft power.

¹¹ “U.S. Relations with Mongolia,” U.S. Department of State, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, accessed May 8, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2779.htm>.

extraordinary example of international support. That Mongolia, a landlocked country of just three million people, provides any aid at all to the international force is remarkable.”¹² On a grander scale, Mongolia’s foreign policy provides a peacekeeping service to the UN and countries in conflict. Such instances illustrate the expansion of Mongolia’s foreign policy and its positive influence on a global level.

Indeed, Mongolia’s contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is highly valued and praised by the international community. As of 2017, there are 947 individuals serving in the UN Peacekeeping mission and ranked 30th out of 123 countries.¹³ In May 2017, 850 of these peacekeepers were awarded a UN Medal for their courage and contribution in providing a global service.¹⁴ All these rankings and awards illustrate how the modernization of Mongolia’s foreign policy has created a positive impact. On a regional level, Mongolia’s strategy in the Asia-Pacific is to use small-country diplomacy in order to mediate peace negotiations related to North Korea’s nuclear crisis. This small-country diplomacy foreign policy advocates and pushes the use of “Six-Party Talk,” which involves open dialogue between China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the United States with regards to security issues on the Korean Peninsula.¹⁵ In 2014, Mongolia hosted the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian

¹² Mark Larson, “Our Lesser-Known Allies in Afghanistan.” *The New York Times*. August 19, 2010. <https://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/19/our-lesser-known-allies-in-afghanistan/>.

¹³ “Troop and Police Contributors,” United Nations Peacekeeping, March 31, 2017, accessed May 9, 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>.

NOTE: Foreign aid and developmental projects were controlled and limited in socialist Mongolia until the 1990 democratic revolution.

¹⁴ Francesca Mold, “Mongolian Peacekeepers Awarded UN Medal in South Sudan.” May 9, 2017, Accessed November 26, 2017. <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/mongolian-peacekeepers-awarded-un-medal-south-sudan>.

¹⁵ Bolor Lkhaajav, “Mongolia’s Small-Country Diplomacy and North Korea.” September 28, 2016 <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/mongolias-small-country-diplomacy-and-north-korea/>.

Security” international conference to promote stability, peace and security, and economic cooperation with North Korea.¹⁶ This landmark event, in which Mongolia hosted 35 country representatives demonstrate the valuable contributions of and corroboration of Mongolia’s foreign policy objectives and security stance. Just recently, as of May 2018, the Mongolian government has been working towards setting up a historic meeting between President Donald Trump and DPKR’s Kim Jong Un’s in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. This present-day development affirms the strength of Mongolia’s small country diplomacy not only at a regional level but an international level. Yet, in order for the Mongolian government to continue building upon its foreign policy strengths and to promote positive changes, various types of legislations and, foreign policy strategies are crucial.

Legislative Reviews Related to Mongolia’s Foreign Policy and Security Apparatus

For Mongolia to prosper and keep strengthening its influence on a global stage, its legislation and foreign policy strategies need to be modern, timely, efficient, and appropriate. In 2010, the government of Mongolia passed a Resolution 48, the National Security Concept (NSC), strictly evaluated by the Foreign Affairs Committee, National Security Council, the President and the Parliament.¹⁵ The significance of this security legislation was to renew, prepare, and deter foreign and domestic detrimental agendas as the world politics were changing quickly. In the comprehensive renewal of the NSC, important concepts such as, reassurance, adaptability, increasing capability, and security strategies were implemented. These strategies would not only protect national interest, national territories, national heritage and identity, but also extend to

¹⁶ “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue Initiative on Northeast Asian Security,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mongolia, accessed March 27, 2018 http://www.mfa.gov.mn/?page_id=30309&lang=en.

foreign policy principles. The following are some relevant excerpts from the National Security Council's official English translation of the NSC:

1.1 National Security

1.1.1. Mongolia's national security shall mean ensuring favorable external and internal conditions for securing and protecting the genuine national interests of Mongolia.

1.2.3. Integrated Security Strategy National security shall be assured through the interrelationship among the "security of the existence of Mongolia", "economic security", "internal security", "human security", "environment security" and "information security."

3.1.1 Independence and Sovereignty

3.1.1.3. A consistent peacemaking foreign policy coupled with active support for international community efforts aimed at strengthening peace and security shall be implemented.

3.1.1.4. Good neighbor friendly relations and wide-ranging cooperation with the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China shall be developed. More specifically, national interests and the history of bilateral relationships shall be taken into account while regional peace and stability as well as a general balance of relations with neighbors shall be sought.

3.1.1.5. Pursuant to a "third neighbor" strategy, bilateral and multilateral cooperation with highly developed democracies in political, economic, cultural and humanitarian affairs shall be undertaken.

3.1.1.6. Bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation shall be continuously pursued in security and defense areas with Mongolia's two neighboring states, the USA, member states of NATO, the European Union and the Asia-Pacific region along with active participation in international peacemaking missions.¹⁷

¹⁷ National Security Concept. National Security Council of Mongolia. 2010. Accessed May 8, 2017. <http://nsc.gov.mn/sites/default/files/National%20Security%20Concept%20of%20Mongolia%20EN.pdf>.

Although articles 1.1. to 3.1.1.6 are only part of the NSC, we can already see the reassurance, adaptability, capability, and stronger strategic security prospects. From a regional perspective, the Asia-Pacific is facing a number of imminent security threats: the volatile process of North Korea's denuclearization; China's assertive moves and its maritime disputes in the South China Sea (SCS) and East China Sea (ECS); the increase of global jihad in South East Asia (SEA); and the increase in non-traditional security issues, such as cyber terrorism. Although Mongolia does not border North Korea and is nowhere near the SCS, if problems occur between China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and the US, these will produce a negative impact on geopolitical, economic, and security affairs. This precaution is taken seriously by all the actors in the Asia-Pacific including those heavily disputed and involved. Hence, Mongolia's 2010 NSC attempts to maintain the policy of good relations via diplomacy, peace, and dialogue, while strengthening its own security by updating and modernizing its security objectives. Moreover, these security agendas are deeply interrelated to the 2011 Foreign Policy Concept which utilized the soft power as *modus operandi*.

In 2011, one year after the NSC legislation, the Mongolian parliament passed Resolution 10, Foreign Policy Concept of Mongolia (FPC).¹⁸ We can see that the 2010 and 2011 legislations complemented each other and strengthened Mongolia's foreign policy and national security policy framework. The 2011 FPC vigilantly defined and laid out Mongolia's foreign policy directions within the 2010 NSC framework. The 2011 FPC put an emphasis on the following: 1) the use of bilateralism, trilateralism, and multilateralism; 2) maintenance of good neighbor policies with Russia and China; 3) utilization of the third neighbor policy for political, economic, and security

¹⁸ "Foreign Policy Concept," Government of Mongolia's Legal Information Portal, February 10, 2011, accessed May 8, 2017. <http://www.legalinfo.mn/annex/?lawid=6340>.

purposes; 4) Mongolia's strengthened involvement in international missions and humanitarian assistance; and 5) creation of incentives in the technology and innovation sectors. The FPC's

English translation states:

14.1. To maintain the policy of good relations with the two neighbors, Russia and China. Will consider historical relations with both neighbors when cooperating. Will balance between Russia and China.

14.2. To expand and strengthen relations with the United States, Japan, European Union, India, South Korea, Turkey and other developed countries via third neighbor policy.

14.3. To expand bilateral relations with Asian countries, increase involvement in the Asia-Pacific regional cooperation, and support the regional peace and security by involving in security related events in the Far East, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.¹⁹

As illustrated above and in previous sections, Mongolia's foreign policy has always reached outward to third neighbor countries while maintaining and sometimes-strengthening good neighbor relations with both Russia and China. This latter outcome has always been the top priority, because without having balanced, good relations with Russia and China, Mongolia's third neighbor policy and outward-thrust will no longer be influential. The 2011 FPC also enabled opportunities for innovation and investment in the field of science and technology. For example, the Article 14.2. of the FPC was implemented in number of high-level strategic partnership agreements such as the "Mongolia-India Strategic Partnership" on cyber security.²⁰ Another mechanism worth mentioning is the 2011 FPC augmented Mongolia's third-neighbor foreign

¹⁹ Ibid.

Note: Please see Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mongolia's page for other foreign policy info.

http://www.mfa.gov.mn/?page_id=26263&lang=en.

²⁰ "Joint Statement for India-Mongolia Strategic Partnership," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, accessed May 9, 2017.

<http://mea.gov.in/bilateraldocuments.htm?dtl/25253/Joint+Statement+for+IndiaMongolia+Strategic+Partnership+May+17+2015>.

policy outreach. The principle of the “third neighbor” policy is not a *de novo* approach, but the main source of diplomatic relations that dates back to the 13th century. In modern times, this strategy is used to strengthen and establish bilateral agreements in terms of a political, economic and military relations.²¹ In the process of establishing strong economic relations with both Russia and China, Mongolia faces geopolitical implications that limit its ability to establish long-term strong economic ties with the third neighbor countries. Therefore, the 2011 FPC does not only outline Mongolia’s foreign policy opportunities but also helps to push the boundaries for enhancing economic relations.

Perplexities of Mongolia’s Economic Security and Opportunities

Mongolia’s economic security can be viewed from many different perspectives. Its geography, governance, corruption, population size, regional and global volatility, constant struggle to balance the issues of Russia and China, its neighboring proximity and geopolitical restraints—these are all significant factors. But while its actions are linked to an interconnected web of other countries, it also helps for Mongolia to distance itself, to the extent possible, from other regional security issues. To put these perspectives in a foreign policy and economic security context, for Mongolia to have a stable economic growth, institutional issues must be addressed, foreign policy and economic strategies must support growth-led models while maintaining economic sovereignty and security. According to the CIA Fact Book, Mongolia’s soil is rich in oil, coal, copper, molybdenum, tungsten, phosphates, tin, nickel, zinc, fluorspar, gold, silver, and iron.²² As extractive institutions such as Rio Tinto, Centerra Gold, China Shenhua, and many other

²¹ Bolor Lkhaajav. *Mongolia’s Third Neighbor Policy Blooms*. The Diplomat. March 28, 2016, accessed May 8, 2017 <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/mongolias-third-neighbor-policy-blooms/>.

²² “Natural Resources,” CIA Fact Book, accessed May 10, 2017. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-worldfactbook/fields/2111.html>.

pursue Mongolia as an emerging market, the incumbent government and future one's need to maintain its outward-led foreign policy while preserving the country's economic security. Both 2010 NSC and 2011 plays a major role towards this goal helping Mongolia to filter out what is most important and overrides any detrimental domestic and foreign agendas.

Following both legislations, a number of bilateral agreements and economic partnerships were established that help to protect Mongolia's interest and security. The year "2015 marked increasing diplomatic engagement for Mongolia in East Asia, the Persian Gulf, and even the Americas, and this illustrate the economic aspect of the FPC."²⁰ For example, in 2015, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) was signed between Mongolia and Japan to develop the Tavan Tolgoi²³ mining deposits, its infrastructure, and railways.²⁴ As such, the MOU illustrated the successful application of Mongolia's third neighbor foreign policy, investment-led growth strategy, and government's position on diversifying the economy. According to the Invest Mongolia Agency, the diversification of the economy helps Mongolia's economic security. Among multinational investors in Mongolia, Netherlands, China, and Luxemburg are the leading investors in Mongolia (See Graph I).

²³ Tavan Tolgoi (TT) is the second largest mining deposits in Mongolia. The existing literature on TT is often politicized, shows a sense of national protectionism, anti-Chinese sentiment, pro-business, or pro-government perspectives. It took 9 years and 2 failed mega-million investment proposals because of disproportionate deals between bidders.

²⁴ Masaaki Kameda, "Japan, Mongolia sign economic partnership agreement." *The Japan Times*, February 11, 2015, accessed May 1, 2018, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/02/11/business/japan-mongolia-sign-economic-partnership/#.WvHTYlgvxPY>.

Graph I. Foreign Direct Investments by countries, Invest in Mongolia Agency. ²⁵

New Investment law

Foreign direct investment /by countries//

No	Top investor countries 1990-2013.09.30	%	Amount /in billion USD/
1	Netherlands	29.96	4.2
2	China	26.65	3.75
3	Luxemburg	8.17	1.15
4	British Virgin Islands	7.87	1.10
5	Singapore	5.14	0.72
6	Canada	3.53	0.49
7	South Korea	2.69	0.38
8	USA	2.19	0.31
9	Russia	2.11	0.30
10	Australia	1.84	0.26

As Mongolia's economy continues to attract FDIs, it is wise for the government to rebalance the flow of FDI into technology and innovation, public health, education, and other important sectors that are crucial to the overall development of the country. While investment-led growth is often associated with heavy lobbying from both the government and the extractive institution's part, it is the government's direct responsibility to allocate the diversification of these funds into human capital within the country's borders and yet still maintain economic security. In recent years, the government of Mongolia is seeking out trilateral economic zones, and this includes possible agreements between Russia-Mongolia-China and Mongolia-Japan-US, which points towards a hopeful, opportunistic future.

²⁵ "Foreign Direct Investments by countries," Invest in Mongolia Agency, accessed May 12, 2017 http://investmongolia.gov.mn/en/?page_id=757.

Mongolia's Economic Trilateralism (Russia-Mongolia-China, Mongolia-Japan-US)

As both past events and present developments affirm, Mongolia's economic security often involves balancing its own economic goals with those of Russia and China. The cooperation between the three countries play an important role in the overall development of Northeast Asia. In September 2014, the three heads of the state (Russia-Mongolia-China) met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan to establish a Russia-Mongolia-China economic corridor which connects Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) and Mongolia's national development strategy "Steppe Road Project." Such trilateral vision allows a free flow of trades between the three nations along with, cross-border trade, service, and tourism. According to Otgonsuren B, a researcher at the Strategic Studies of Mongolia, "In order to establish an economic corridor, we need to develop infrastructure, railroad transportation, and joint working mechanisms. In this way, the three nations can solve together urgent issues and facilitate cooperation in a cost-effective way."²⁶ Considering Mongolia's economic security and outward-led foreign policy approach, the Mongolian government seeks diversification of economic gateways that includes Russia and China and beyond to strengthen Mongolia-Japan-US trilateralism.²⁷ On April 26, 2018, Mongolia, Japan, and the United States held a trilateral meeting in Tokyo. According to the Foreign Ministry of Mongolia, in a joint statement issues by Mongolia-Japan-U.S.,

²⁶ Otgonsuren B. "Mongolia-China-Russia Economic Corridor Infrastructure Cooperation." *Erina Report*. No. 127. December 2015.

²⁷ Bolor Lkhaajav, "Far East Affairs: Mongolia and Japan." *The Diplomat*. February 24, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/far-east-affairs-mongolia-and-japan/>.

“The participants reaffirmed the importance of the Japan-Mongolia-U.S. trilateral meeting as an important mechanism for the exchange of views on regional and multilateral cooperation and on mutually beneficial economic development. During the meeting, the United States and Japan detailed their vision for a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region in which all countries are free from coercion and can maintain their sovereign right to choose their own paths. Japan and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to their increased bilateral relationships with Mongolia in line with Mongolia’s “third neighbor” policy, and the three countries discussed potential avenues of cooperation to promote connectivity, good governance, and a rules-based international order throughout the Asia-Pacific region.”²⁸

As a country with a vast amount of natural resources, Mongolia has all the tools to learn, implement, and execute a policy that produces economic growth and prosperity. Despite being geographically challenged and sandwiched between Russia and China, Mongolia has implemented foreign policy concept that have established *land-linked*²⁹ position to the global market. While all these are positive outcomes of modernization, the more involved and active the country gets, the more non-traditional threats become apparent and new challenges emerge.

²⁸ “Joint Statement Mongolia-Japan-U.S. Trilateral Meeting” Foreign Ministry of Mongolia. April 26, 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.mn/?p=44496&lang=en>.

²⁹ The term “land-linked” is introduced by a Mongolian international relations scholar, Dr. Bayasakh. By introducing land-linked narrative on a scholarly level, it challenges the existing literature on Mongolia, often illustrated as land-locked.

Mongolia's Non-traditional Security Apparatus

As Mongolia's foreign policy and economy expands throughout the world, its military serves a greater purpose; one, to act with diplomacy and ensure global peace and security; two, to modernize its security apparatus in order to combat emerging non-traditional threats. Mongolia's participation in an international peace-based apparatus has a positive social impacts both at home and abroad. Since 2001, "approximately 14,000 Mongolian peacekeepers have served at UN Missions around the world."³⁰ For the peacekeepers to serve at UN Missions, they must possess certain sets of knowledge, skills, and a sensitivity to issues of diversity and culture. "In 2006, Mongolia became the first country in the region to organize a multinational peace support operations Command Post Exercise as well as Field Training Exercise."³¹ Such activities present modernizing opportunities for Mongolian peacekeepers. First of all, most UN Missions focus on developing countries including the Middle East and North Africa (MENA.) This allows soldiers to learn about the historical presence of the Mongols in those regions. Second, the Mongolian military is modernizing as its members are required to meet and cope with the high-standards expected of global citizens— learning a foreign language, being educated and trained in humanitarian assistance and gaining access to modern security-related technologies. This military trend—towards advancing humanitarian and global interests presents yet another of Mongolia's contributions to forwarding a humanitarian vision.

³⁰ Francesca Mold, "Mongolian Peacekeepers Awarded UN Medal in South Sudan." *UNMISS*. May 9, 2017, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/mongolian-peacekeepers-awarded-un-medal-south-sudan>.

³¹ Col. Jargalsaikhan, Mendee "Mongolia's Peacekeeping Commitment." *Center for Strategic Intelligence Research*, no. 15 (May 2007): 1-23. http://ni-u.edu/ni_press/pdf/Mongolia_Peacekeeping_Commitment.pdf.

Mongolia's involvement in the international missions and peacekeeping operations reflect Mongolia's historical and contemporary principles and core values. To confirm these accomplishments and to address some of the existing issues, the author conducted a Q&A with a Defense and Military Attache, Col. T. Narankhuu from the Embassy of Mongolia. In his email interview he states:

“The Mongolian FPC and security objectives are to uphold peace, open dialogue, and multilateral agreements, but at the same time respect national integrity, independence, and to maintain a balanced decision-making status. Moreover, the FPC is highly concentrated to promote third neighbor policy while strengthening good neighbor relations with Russia and China. In addition, for a small country like Mongolia, it is not wise to change its foreign policy objectives too often. Constant changes in foreign and security policies unlock the country's vulnerabilities.”³²

As Mongolia acts on its good intentions it does, as a small state,³³ faces a number of modern day challenges. In the field of international relations, this concept is known as non-traditional security issues and cyber security is indubitably one of the major concern for both developed and developing world. Neighboring Russia and China are both advanced in cyber activity—including but not limited to cyber-security, cyber-espionage, cyber-nationalism, and cyber-war—while Mongolia is still in the developing stages. This very fact opens up diverse opportunities for the government of Mongolia and businesses to improve and modernize the critical infrastructures, legislations, and technology. At the same time, Mongolia's cybersecurity apparatus opens up

³² Defense and Military Attache, Col. Narankhuu Turbat, Embassy of Mongolia, email interview with author, November 20, 2017.

³³ Small state: “small states being variously categories as having upper population limits of between 1 and 15 million and economies constituting less than 1% of world total output.”

interesting, provocative analyses regarding both Russia and China's capability to hack into Mongolia's infrastructure.

In "Mongolia's Cybersecurity Cooperation," Dr. Galbaatar Lkhagvasuren mentions the imminent cyber threat from Russia and China despite their friendly-relations with Mongolia.³⁴ According to the Cybersecurity Department of the Intelligence Agency, in the first quarter of 2016, by April, there were 22,613 cyberattack attempts from China, 4,034 from the United States, 857 attempts from Russia, and 927 from South Korea.³⁵ These estimates illustrate Mongolia's vulnerability along with the need for better cybersecurity and need to address these issues with the hacking parties—China, Russia, and the US, and others. In our quickly modernizing world, one way to develop efficiently is to look at case studies and models of countries that share similar basic vulnerabilities and infrastructure. For instance, the government of Mongolia should look into New Zealand's cybersecurity model as a small state solution for cybersecurity issues.

Joe Burton's "Small states and cyber security: The case of New Zealand" offers a practical model for cybersecurity solution to small states like Mongolia. Burton proposes a solution for how small states can secure themselves via cybersecurity through three conceptual models: *alliances, institutional cooperation and norms*. These models are derived from a perspective that small states "lack the capacity to apply power, and/or resist the application of power against them by larger states,"³⁶ and therefore, it is crucial to have alliances. However, not all small states have an alliance system, including Mongolia. Given Mongolia's geopolitical apparatus, between Russia

³⁴ Galbaatar Lkhagvasuren, "Mongolia's Cybersecurity Cooperation," *The Diplomat*. June 7, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/mongolias-cybersecurity-cooperation/>.

³⁵ "Cyberattack attempts on Mongolia's internet activities," Cybersecurity Department of the Intelligence Agency, accessed, April 17, 2016, <http://www.ncsc.gov.mn/?id=135>.

³⁶ Joe Burton, "Small states and cyber security: The case of New Zealand," *Political Science*, p. 218.

and China, alliance system has never been integrated into foreign policy nor in the security agendas. While Burton's "alliance" model may not be applicable to Mongolia, *institutional cooperation* and *norms* are adaptable to enhance the cyber apparatus of Mongolia. The government of Mongolia is currently working with India on cybersecurity technology, training personnel, and preventative measurements.³⁷ While all these are different variables that the Mongolian government ought to seek, the real intention, goal, and operations must derive from the government itself, by addressing these vulnerabilities, and assess the strengths and limitations of various alternatives before moving forward with formal solutions.

Conclusion

As our world politics—and those of the Asia-Pacific—revolve around interconnected global policy frameworks, Mongolia's foreign policy and national security objectives cannot be emphasized in isolation. The two hundred years of struggle against Manchu Qing dominance left a valuable, hard-earned lesson that strength and perseverance will lead to growth. Significant events such as WWII and the Cold War strengthened Mongolia's sovereignty and democracy. All the while, Mongolia's foreign policy sought opportunities to develop, expand, and modernize. A history is not a history without a leader. Late Marshall, Y. Tsendenbal was the prominent master mind of expanding Mongolia's foreign policy and securing national sovereignty and core values. Without his ambitious, far-sighted, courageous achievements, Mongolia's foreign policy may not be as strong, prosperous, and far-reaching. As Mongolia's foreign policy concept grew overtime, challenges also became apparent. Both traditional and non-traditional security threats challenge

³⁷ "Joint Statement for India-Mongolia Strategic Partnership," Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. May 17, 2015, http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/25253/Joint_Statement_for_IndiaMongolia_Strategic_Partnership_May_17_2015.

Mongolia's modernization and competency in solving its foreign and domestic issues. The 2010 National Security Concept and the 2011 Foreign Policy Concept became the two most important documents in shaping Mongolia's modern history. From a regional perspective, imminent threats do not end with North Korea's nuclear weapons and the maritime island disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea. Mongolia's vast natural resources are available for extractive institutions at the cost of the Mongolian people. China's economic dominance, which creates national security concerns, is no longer a secret. Various institutions and, good governance will play fundamental roles in carefully assessing bilateral agreements and deals under the framework of NSC and FPC.

While all these are significant to the overall modernization and development of Mongolia, the true power of a nation lies within the human capital, the educated, open-minded younger generation who writes, speaks, and introduces Mongolia—its complex past and hopeful future—onto the international stage. These contributions bridge cultures, societies, and people, and create a common ground and shared discourse that can rise beyond economic and political ambitions.

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Notes

30. Small state: “small states being variously categories as having upper population limits of between 1 and 15 million and economies constituting less than 1% of world total output.”
31. The term “land-linked” is introduced by a Mongolian international relations scholar, Dr. Bayasakh. By introducing land-linked narrative on a scholarly level, it challenges the existing literature on Mongolia, often illustrated as land-locked.
32. Tavan Tolgoi (TT) is the second largest mining deposits in Mongolia. The existing literature on TT is often politicized, shows a sense of national protectionism, anti-Chinese sentiment, pro-business, or pro-government perspectives. It took 9 years and 2 failed mega-million investment proposals because of disproportionate deals between bidders.
33. Foreign aid and developmental projects were controlled and limited in socialist Mongolia until the 1990 democratic revolution.
34. “Judo-Diplomacy” is a term that the author will be introducing to enhance people-to-people relations between Japan and Mongolia. It is a *modus operandi* for utilizing soft power.