

CHAPTER 9

National Security Concept of Mongolia: Basic Principle

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It's been over 21 years since Mongolia has declared that the nation will ensure its security in the ways of political democratization and economic development.

Fundamental change of the authoritarian regime, centralized economy, and highly ideologized social mentality presents systematic challenges and it is not an easy task we witness. Nevertheless, basic political and economic systems have successfully and irreversibly changed in the last two decades; moreover, democracy has eventually become the best guarantee of the independence and development of Mongolia.

These radical changes in Mongolia on the very edge of the two millenniums continue under the influence of globalization. Development of an open democratic society requires not only domestic political efforts but also favorable external conditions. To keep the synergy of external and internal factors for its development, Mongolia's endeavors are aimed at creating conditions for carrying out independent policies and becoming an active player, both in the regional and international arena.

I recall the adoption of the very first fundamental document, related to democratic Mongolia's national security, foreign policy, and military doctrine as if it was yesterday, although two decades have passed since that. The paces of external and internal developments were so fast and today's new condition requires the fundamental revision of those documents. Mongolia's role in and the content and scope of her participation in international affairs is gradually increasing, which mainly contributed to this need.

From 2011, Mongolia is leading the Community of Democracy. It did not happen accidentally. It is a result of the above-mentioned endeavors made by us, Mongolians. Contributions and efforts, made by Mongolian soldiers in the peace keeping and reconstruction processes worldwide, are the logical extension of this policy. We believe that Mongolian attention to and participation in global climate change and environmental pollution problems is linked to and represents a mandatory

principle of the development, which we have chosen.

Thus, during the last 20 years, the main documents, which define mission and guidelines for the national policies, have been revised, to reflect the changes in Mongolia's domestic and foreign environments. Amongst are Mongolia's National security concept and Foreign policy concept, which were heard and adopted by Parliament in 2010 and 2011.

The National security concept addresses issues, such as human rights, freedom, rule of law and democratic governance and declared them as the pre-requisites of ensuring national security. Also, the concept provides for the definition of national security, which means "existence of favorable conditions, both domestic and external, for ensuring Mongolia's vital national interests." In the concept, it has been emphasized that Mongolia's sovereignty and security shall be ensured by political and diplomatic means, and the country's foreign policy shall be open, peaceful, and multi-pillar.

Allow me to draw your attention to the following:

1. History shows that the external conditions such as the balance of power between the big powers were defining factors of Mongolia's security. In other words, in spite of all our efforts and will, there are real factors, which we must take into account, while defining our security policies. These factors partially change time to time, having different implications to Mongolian national security; however, the relations and balance between Russia and China—Mongolia's two big neighbors—have always been the pre-condition of the very existence of Mongolia, and changes in this balance has direct implications.

In the early 20th century, nearly 100 years ago, after the communist revolution took place in Russia, in 1919 the government of Mongolia sought protection from China. Chinese troops were immediately deployed in Khuree, the then capital of Mongolia, which in fact put Mongolian sovereignty at stake. In the 1960s or 50 years ago, the relations between USSR and PRC deteriorated, and Mongolian leaders chose to side with Moscow, which resulted in a nearly 30 yearlong deployment of Soviet troops on Mongolian territory. At that time, Mongolia would have become the first victim

in the case of war.

Mongolia's century-long experience of alliance and hostility with China and Russia, have shown that good-neighborly and balanced relations with the two neighbors is the best effective policy for us.

Therefore, Mongolia's foreign policy's priority was always given to China and Russia, and the statement of fundamental principle of "balanced relations" with the two neighbors, which was stated in the first National security concept, was kept the same way in the new National Security Concepts as well.

Nowadays, Mongolia's relations with her natural neighbors—Russia and China—have grown to the level of strategic partnership, and our cooperation and it has entered a new phase. Thus the scope of activities is increasing in political, economic, and social sectors, and opportunities are open for further extensive mutually beneficial cooperation.

Mongolia is implementing peaceful and multi-pillar foreign policy, where cooperation with and support from our two neighbors is vital for it. We are confident that in the future, we shall be able to reinforce our strategic partnerships, based in the principle of mutual benefit, and further extend our friendly, good neighborly relations.

2. The second principle of Mongolia's foreign policy is the policy of the "third neighbor." It may appear as a new phenomenon that is only relevant to democratic Mongolia. However, it has underpinned the entire 20th century history of Mongolia, and is its continuation.

The history of the 20th century shows that Mongolia has paid every effort to establish contact with a third power every time a positive change in international relations has enabled Ulaanbaatar to relatively independently define its foreign policy. For example, in 1911, shortly after the foundation of the Bogd Khan Kingdom of Mongolia, the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs effectively sent diplomatic notes to France, Britain, Germany, the USA, Belgium, Japan, Denmark, Netherlands, and Austria with the proposal to establish relations, have diplomatic exchange

programs, and develop trade relations.

In 1921, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the People's Government had sent to foreign powers the note of re-declaring Mongolia's independence, and began sending students for overseas training, and inviting foreign experts and industry specialists, again which was an attempt to establish relations with the third power.

The third attempt to establish relations with developed countries of the world has been undertaken since the mid-1980s, and continued to grow as an official policy of the "third neighbor." This time, these successful attempts have been influenced by various factors, such as significant changes in Mongolia's foreign environment, state policies, and commitment as well as the country's internal development and progress, to finally grow into the "third neighbor" policy.

The National security concept defines the third neighbor as "highly developed, democratic nations" and it is indeed the 21st century continuation of the 20th century historic tradition. It also closely connected to the clause in the document's "General provisions" section, which reads "democratic governance based on parliamentary system is the guarantee of national sovereignty and security of Mongolia," One "third neighbor" for Mongolia shall therefore have "political, economic and cultural as well as humanitarian" implications rather than defense or military, and is aimed at promotion of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

In early 1990's, Mongolia actively sought for support from highly developed democracies for its painful transition from communism to democracy. During this time the policy was named the "third neighbor." Since those days, development of economic cooperation with "third neighbors" has become the main priority of Mongolian foreign policy.

Is there a need to further elaborate the policy of the third neighbor and its implementation? Yes. First, terminology given to the relations and the levels of such relations with certain partners should be logically defined in what it means. In other words, terminology between various forms cooperation, such as "comprehensive partnership," "broader partnership," "extended partnership," "comprehensive partnership based on common values and strategic interests," "mutually compatible

cooperation,” “development partnership,” and “strategic partnership” should be clearly defined in how they distinguish one from another and establish a uniform understanding of partnership levels. Secondly, further attention is required for drafting specific policies, with regard to which states shall be defined as the “third neighbor” and which form, type, level, and sector of cooperation therewith should apply to that specific relations. It does not mean that we should rank the partners, but to clearly define, at least, with whom to begin in what form. Thirdly, paying continuous efforts to maintain and develop the relation with a certain third neighbor with the clearly defined framework of cooperation is important. In other words, all level of government system shall strictly observe the principle of consistency and continuity of the foreign policy.

3. The foreign investment policy of “one third” has been widely debated in the framework of economic security. It is the economic reflection of Mongolia’s multi-pillar foreign policy; the National Security Concept stated that “investment made from one foreign country, shall not exceed one third of the total foreign investment” due to Mongolian political, geopolitical, and security concerns. This statement is aimed not at setting limitations to any investment, by any country. On the contrary, in order to ensure a balance, it purports to diversify the foreign investments and increase the share of other countries. Within the framework of this policy, it is specifically stated to keep the investments from both neighbors and other highly developed partners balanced.

What is the present situation? Chinese investment alone dominates and takes nearly half or the total of registered investments in Mongolia in the last two decades since the 1990’s. Whereas Russian investments is quite low, excluding the large enterprises inherited from the communist past and built by Soviet departments such as Erdenet and Ulaanbaatar Railway. South Korea (5.13%), Canada (6.67%) and European Union (18.74%) lead our third neighbors by their investment. Our third neighbor has however invested 80% of their capital in only the last six years.

Creation of a multi-pillar economic structure requires balanced foreign investments in different economic sectors. Unfortunately, two thirds of the total foreign investments is made only in the mining sector, which shows a huge distortion of the policies that we strive to implement. Two neighbors’ investments are primarily made

in the over-sized mining sector; in contrast, investments by the “third neighbors” are evenly dispersed among various economic sectors. The third neighbor policy from the standpoint of investment, therefore, will clearly meet the principle of “one third,” especially in today’s situation, where Mongolia’s multi-pillar economic structure is not yet in place. Thus the policy is aimed at elimination of the existing distortions in foreign investments, and ensuring a sector balance with regards to the investments and expansion of foreign trade. We need to attract them to this policy, and create foreigners’ interests in Mongolia, which shall depend on our policies and activities.

4. Mongolia is a country that has experienced the detriments of the Cold War and the consequences of the split of the world. Therefore, the country has consistently been pursuing peaceful and multi-pillar foreign policies, and actively supports initiatives of the world community aimed at strengthening global peace and security.¹ From this point of view, on 29 April, 2013, at the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, held in Ulaanbaatar, President Ts.Elbegdorj formally initiated the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security.”

Necessity for this initiative is directly related to the regional situation. Some security issues such as territorial disputes in NEA and the Korean peninsula issue show that regional security dialogue mechanism is very much needed in the NEA region. As we know, the North Korean situation has become a hot spot and closed area in NEA. This situation influences the development of NEA and moreover world affairs. If this situation changes, it will bring good influence to the world and especially open a new way of development for Mongolia. 12 (c) of the foreign policy concept of Mongolia points out that “The third direction of Mongolia’s foreign policy activity shall be strengthening its position in Asia and securing a constructive participation in the political and economic integration process in the region. Within the framework of this objective, greater attention shall be given to Asia and the Pacific region, in particular to North-East and Central Asia. Mongolia shall take an active part in the

¹ Experience of the last 20 years of sending Mongolian Armed Forces’ (MAF) contingencies to UN peacekeeping missions has proven that military means might be used to support overall foreign policy goals of ensuring the national security by raising the international prestige of the nation as “a responsible peace contributor.” Mongolia has built the regional field training center for UN peacekeepers and organized annual international peacekeeping exercise thereon. These efforts improve the combat readiness and capability of MAF and Mongolian contingencies, which have been deployed in different hot spots of the world under the UN flag. This is Mongolia’s tangible contribution to global peace, which in turn reinforces our own security.

process of initiating dialogues and negotiations on the issues of strengthening regional security and creating a collective security mechanism. It will strive to become a member of the Asia, Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC). Prerequisites for participating in regional integration shall be created primarily through expanding and promoting bilateral relations with the countries of the region.” This article fully fits in the purpose of “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue.”

Before 2013, Mongolia has been making efforts for regional security issues. For example, since the 1980s Mongolia has proposed on several occasions the creation of a mechanism of dialogue in Northeast Asia. Thus in 2000 an initiative was launched to establishing a formal mechanism to discuss issues concerning the Northeast Asian region, and consultations have been held on this issue with the states of the region.

In April 2008, our institute organized the “Present and future Security Environment in North-East and Central Asia: Ulaanbaatar—New Helsinki” international conference in cooperation with the George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies.

Advantages of Mongolia

Now I would like to talk about Mongolia’s advantages which could make Mongolia a mediator in the region.

- Mongolia has a diplomatic and friendly relationship with all NEA countries. That is one of the advantages which Mongolia has among other NEA countries. In particular, Mongolia has diplomatic relations with DPRK since 1948, and has been maintaining and developing this relations until today. It means Mongolia is able to invite DPRK to the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue” and have dialogue about regional issues.
- In 2000, Mongolia adopted “Law of Mongolia on its nuclear-weapon-free status” and in September 17, 2012 the five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council (UNSC)—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—signed a joint declaration to reaffirm the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia, as well as their security assurance to the country. Ts.Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia said that “As a result of our efforts, the 5 permanent members of the Security Council have issued a joint declaration recognizing

Mongolia's unique status. They pledged to respect that status and not to contribute to any act that would violate it. Their joint commitment ensures that we will not be used as a pawn in any future nuclear plans or strategies. This is Mongolia's contribution to greater confidence and stability in the region," to the 68th session the UN General Assembly in September 2013. In other words, "the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia" is to become the most possible platform to have regional dialogue in a neutral situation.

- In 2012, Mongolia became a member of OSCE. The Helsinki Process had created the foundation of OSCE. Europe is an example of peaceful coexistence of countries. Taken as an example of the Helsinki Process which decided on disarmament in the 1970s, we aimed to make the NEA security mechanism by deciding on the Korean peninsula issue. It took more than 10 years to start the Helsinki Process at that time. So, it may take more time than it has because NEA has its own regional features. But we shall start it in our period.

Above mentioned advantages of Mongolia would help to make a successful start of "Ulaanbaatar Dialogue" on NEA security.

In the past, Mongolia held DPRK-Japan meetings to normalize bilateral relations in 2007 and in 2012 in Ulaanbaatar as the result of diplomatic efforts. In November 2013, Mongolia organized the Northeast Asian Women Parliamentarians. (All NEA countries' delegations except Japan, participated in the Forum.)

Goal of the "Ulaanbaatar Dialogue"

The long-term goal of the Mongolian President's initiative is to contribute to overcoming the deep mistrust among the states of the region through negotiations and to make efforts aimed at reaching the long term goals of regional peace, and to establish a step by step dialogue mechanism in Northeast Asia. Thus a real possibility will be established to discuss in a confidential atmosphere issues of ensuring peace and stability in the region.

Forms of Dialogue

The "Ulaanbaatar Dialogue" is to be pursued in an informal manner. Officials, experts, and scholars will participate in it in their private capacity. They are to pursue dialogue through the free exchange of views and discussion. This will help bring

closer the views and positions of the participants, and come to an agreement on the issues discussed. This we consider would be the needed flexible Northeast Asian dialogue mechanism.

Topics to be Discussed

The “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue” mechanism will address a range of multilateral security issues of interest for the states of the region. It could start with consideration of the following issues:

- Economic cooperation
- Military transparency
- Environmental issues
- Non-traditional security challenges
- Regional stability

Participants of the Dialogue

At the outset it intends to hold dialogue among the six parties of Northeast Asia. At the same time we shall follow the principles of openness and shall involve step by step other interested states and subjects that can directly affect regional security.

Since then, Mongolia has been engaged in informing officially the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Northeast Asian region and explaining the goals pursued and steps taken so far to start implementing the initiative.

Conclusion

It can be said that the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue” is a newly launched initiative. So, I want to emphasize that support and cooperational efforts from NEA countries are very significant and important in order to make a successful start for the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue.” In the future, it is important to strengthen the foundation of the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue” by cooperating with other regional organizations and initiatives.