

Mongolia's Foreign Policy: Profiling Fundamental Aspects

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ABSTRACT

The end of the Cold War provided an opportunity for various nations, particularly in Asia, to experience a complete change in the international order. Mongolia too is a case in point. The collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union provided Mongolia a rare opportunity in its history to come out of Soviet grip and become part of the new international order. Mongolia, thus, came up with its own independent "Multi-Pillared" foreign policy in 1994. Further, its foreign policy made a shift when Mongolian Parliament approved a revised Foreign Policy Concept in February 2011. The geographical location has had a vital impact on the entire spectrum of Mongolia's foreign policy, and so relations with physical neighbours-Russia and China were given a very high priority. This paper, therefore, analyses not only Mongolia's foreign policy in a theoretical framework but also examines the new dimensions of the whole foreign policy concept since its inception in early 1990s.

Key Words : Globalisation, Democratic reforms, Pragmatism, Multi-pillar foreign policy, Third neighbour policy, Balanced approach

INTRODUCTION

Although no state can avoid involvement in the international sphere, it is imperative that this involvement must be systematic. It is principally the foreign policy which is concerned with the behaviour of a state towards other states. As Rodee describes, "foreign policy involves the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behaviour pattern of a state while negotiating with other states to protect or further its vital interests".¹ The actions of a state in the international arena result from individual human choices by its citizenry, its political leaders, its diplomats and bureaucrats combined through the state's internal structures. Thus, the attempts on the part of each nation for achieving self-reliance in a condition characterised by ever-increasing inter-dependence and conflict is the most fundamental fact of international relations. It is ultimately the "national interest" that the states seek to protect or achieve in relation to each other. Different nations chart their own course in international relations and arrange their priorities according to their own national

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interest which has a very important relation with foreign policy with the help of which it tries to achieve its goals. The main purpose of foreign policy is to conduct foreign relations to the best possible advantage.² Mongolia too is not an exception as it has been conducting its foreign policy to gain advantage in its foreign relations to the best possible manner. This paper, therefore, analyses not only Mongolia's foreign policy in a theoretical framework but also examines the new dimensions of the whole foreign policy concept since its inception in early 1990s.

Theoretical Approach To Foreign Policy :

As the national interests of a nation keep changing, their foreign policies also undergo change. Several scholars believe that the national interests of different nations must be compatible with each other in the interest of global harmony and peace. In that sense, international relations embrace all types of complex activities whether cultural, political or those dictated by foreign policy. George Modeski defines foreign policy as "the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of the states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment".³ However, this definition is not practical since the aim of foreign policy should be to regulate and not merely to change the behaviour of other states. On the other hand, Felik Gross (1954) goes a step further and holds that even decision to have no relations with a state is also a foreign policy. It is for each individual state to decide as to what degree of its involvement in its relations with another state would guarantee and safeguard its interest. Thus, foreign policy has both positive and negative aspects: It is positive when it aims at adjusting the behaviour of other states by changing it and negative when it seeks such an adjustment by not changing that behaviour.⁴

According to Palmer and Perkins, "[Different] nations use various mechanisms for the promotion of their national interest, like diplomacy, propaganda, imperialism and colonialism, coercive mean, economic instruments, alliances and treaties." Thus, it has been seen that the nations arrange their priorities on the basis of their resources. However, the powerful nations with world-wide political, economic and military activities place high priority on security, while small nations with limited resources compel to reorder their priorities. Whatever may be the priorities, national interest is always considered as dynamic since it keeps on changing in accordance with the needs and requirements. According to Balakrishnan, foreign policy of a particular nation "dictates how a country will act with respect to other countries; politically, socially, economically and militarily, and to a somewhat lesser extent, how it behaves towards non-state actors". Indeed, as he stresses, "foreign policy is formulated by every state so as to serve its national interests", and therefore, "the primary purpose of foreign policy is to seek adjustments in the behaviour of other states, in favour of oneself".⁵

On the other hand, the great realist thinker Hans Morgenthau is of the opinion that all politics is struggle for power, and "as long as the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in world politics."⁶ Wide opinion prevails that no government can perform against the national interest of the country, and no country irrespective of its ideals can afford to base its foreign policy on considerations other than the national interest. National interest has, thus, been termed as "the general and continuing ends for which a nation acts." National interest also lies in preserving its political independence and

territorial integrity by safeguarding its international boundaries. Explaining the national interest, Spykman makes it clear that “Because territory is an inherent part of a state, self-preservation means defending its control over territory; and, because independence is the essence of state, self-preservation also means fighting for dependent status . . . the basic objective of the foreign policy of all states is the preservation of territorial integrity and political independence.”⁷ Further, Robert Osgood is of the opinion that national interest can be defined in terms of its being a “state of affairs valued solely for its benefit to the nations.” Morgenthau, however, upholds that the main responsibility of a nation-state “is to protect its physical, political and cultural identity against threat from other states”.⁸

All these conceptual ideas point to the fact that foreign policy makers cannot afford to overlook the state's national interest, which generally implies on ensuring the state's security, economic development and maintaining a peaceful world order. More precisely, territorial defence of the state in terms of security remains to be the principal concern of a country's foreign policy. Next comes the promotion of viable economic interest that requires the conducive atmosphere favourable to the state, and lastly, particularly in the post-cold war period, foreign policy makers remain concerned with maintenance of international peace, respect for international law and peaceful settlement of international disputes. By pursuing its foreign policy a state looks for achieving a range of objectives, though the objectives vary in types and categories as per the need of different states. However, there are certain objectives which are uniformly pursued by all states, i.e., political independence, territorial integrity, economic well-being, and status of a nation. Foreign policy, therefore, means deciding on certain goals and making efforts to regulate behaviour of others to achieve the set goals.

However, the making of foreign policy and its implementation are influenced and determined by several key factors that are often termed as determinants. Some of these factors are stable or of unchanging nature while others are of changing nature and their dynamics are constantly attuned to the changing situations. Basically, as Balakrishnan (2010) mentions, “the size of a particular state large enough to support a population, a climate that is neither excessively cold nor very hot, a topography offering boundaries with natural barriers such as mountains, rivers and seas and a compact territory enable a country to make and implement an independent foreign policy.” Like the size and topography, natural resources and size of population too contribute significantly to the making of foreign policy, though the mere size of a state's population is not a manifestation of its strength. There are cases of having very small size of territory as well as small population, yet the states are found to be adopting a very aggressive and effective foreign policy. In addition, public opinion has recently become an important factor in the making of foreign policy. In short, “foreign policy is the sum total of decisions taken by a country to regulate the behaviour of other states”⁹ and, therefore, the prevailing international scenario has direct impact on foreign policies.

Such theoretical approach to the foreign policy has its relevance in the case of Mongolia also. In the pre-1991 period, Mongolia was a loyal member of the communist bloc dominated by the former Soviet Union, which dictated its domestic and foreign policies with large amounts of economic aid. As a communist state, the country was a one-party totalitarian state ruled by the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) and the ideology of Marxist-Leninism. The democratic transformation of Mongolia's seven decades old

communist rule began in the wake of the democratic upheavals that took place in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. In 1986, after Gorbachev announced the policy directives of “Glasnost” and “Perestroika” to reform the stagnant Soviet system of communism, they also had serious impact on Mongolia that decided to go for democratization through “Iltod” and “Orchilan Baigalalt”. Finally, the downfall of Marxist-Leninism in the Soviet Union as its ruling ideology also led to unexpected death of this ideology in Mongolia. This resulted in the presence of high levels of democracy in Mongolia compared to its surrounding neighbours, particularly in Central Asia, and there is no doubt that today Mongolia has become a “regional beacon for the democratic developments.” According to Benny Wilbrink (2013), “not only does Mongolia’s democratic governance raise international attention, so does its economic surge.”¹⁰ It was primarily due to mineral rich areas of the country that Mongolian traders have been able to generate substantial economic growth.

All the developments taking place in Mongolia’s drive toward democratic reforms and economic restructuring came after the collapse of the world socialist system and the former Soviet Union that dramatically changed the external situation of Mongolia. In the post-cold war period, the major changes occurred in Mongolia’s two neighbouring countries-Russia and China also had a direct impact on its external environment, particularly in terms of security. The reforms and restructuring of the country’s internal political, social and economic systems together with a changed geostrategic scenario externally provided it with favourable conditions for conducting a foreign policy based on realism and its national interests. *The Concept of Foreign Policy of Mongolia* declares that “Mongolia’s foreign policy shall be based on its national interests, as defined in its Constitution”, and that “the country’s specific external and internal situation constitutes the basis of determining its foreign policy objectives, principles and priorities.”¹¹ The document further states that “Mongolia’s foreign policy objectives reside in ensuring its independence and sovereignty by following trends of human society’s advancement, maintaining friendly relations with all countries, strengthening its position in the international community and forming with influential countries in the region and in the world a network of relationship based on the interdependence of political, economic and other interests.” Even *Mongolian Foreign Policy Blue Book* issued by the Ministry of External Relations of Mongolia in 2000 clearly says that a relatively favourable internal and external environment opened broad perspectives for pursuing an active, innovative and rational foreign policy that “truly upholds Mongolia’s national interests, enables to accelerate its economic development and ensure its national security.”¹²

Mongolia’s Foreign Policy And Its Progression :

The end of the Cold War provided an opportunity for various nations, particularly in Asia, to experience a complete change in the international order. In other words, as some analysts believe, “it was a return of history in diversity of new and emerging developments”.¹³ Another aspect of this changed scenario can be gauged from the fact that it gave enough space to nations to reanalyze the ideological and structural dimension of their policies in political, social, economic and cultural fields. This also meant recognizing the contemporary changes and its sociological implications, making structural readjustment and reshaping the pattern of future growth and development in political-diplomatic spheres. Such changes

have found their relevance in case of Mongolia as well. This is more so because the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union also provided Mongolia a rare opportunity in its history to come out of Soviet grip and become part of the new international order.¹⁴ Significantly, the new emerging forces of globalization led Mongolia to march ahead in search for a new national identity and recast her ties with the external world on a new basis. These processes were further accelerated by the democratic reforms “with stability based on peaceful evolution”.¹⁵ Moreover, unlike the Soviet period democratic reforms in Mongolia are now characterized by more flexible and pragmatic solutions to all the existing problems in all spheres of socio-economic and political domains. These reforms paved the way for framing the governmental policies in such a manner that it could benefit Mongolia both internally and externally.¹⁶ So far as external benefit is concerned Mongolia has been able to pursue the policy of maintaining cordial relations with rest of the countries, particularly in Asia.¹⁷ Therefore, a well-defined concept was required to be adopted so far as Mongolia’s foreign and security policy was concerned.

The first major change in government policy took place on 12 February 1992 when a new constitution was introduced. The constitution not only stressed on the adoption of political democracy and the market economy,¹⁸ but also stipulated that “Mongolia shall adhere to the universally recognized norms and principles of international law and pursue a peaceful foreign policy”.¹⁹ It also indicates the realization by the Mongolian policy-makers that Mongolia’s national security could only be ensured by securing international guarantees “through a combination of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures”.²⁰ Therefore, in 1994, the Mongolian Parliament introduced a set of domestic and foreign policy guidelines that, among other things, steered the country onto a new diplomatic course aimed at securing its own independence and sovereignty. The primary objective was to balance its relations with Russia and China. Secondly, Mongolia was interested in promoting its ties with Japan, the U.S., Germany, and other leading industrial countries, and in fostering closer ties with countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Accordingly, it began pursuing an active multilateral diplomatic offensive. While economic development was of course one of the goals Mongolia had in mind with such strategies, gaining prestige for itself in the international community was also on the cards. By pursuing a diversified foreign policy, Mongolia was optimistic to work out on reassuring security arrangements following the emergence of new international scenario after Soviet demise and the end of the Cold War.

The need for a fresh independent foreign policy was in fact felt back in 1986 when Gorbachev’s Vladivostok initiative sought for withdrawal of Soviet troops from Mongolia. And later this was considered to be “a clear signal to Mongolia to examine a whole range of foreign policy options”.²¹ Therefore, in 1989 it was realized that the principal motivation driving Mongolia’s foreign policy was the preservation of territorial integrity, together with the projection of a substantial measure of political independence. As already pointed out, Mongolia often served as a Soviet proxy, representing the Soviet position when and where needed throughout the Cold War period. However, in the post-Soviet period unlike the newly independent five Central Asian Republics who following their sudden independence faced similar dilemma due to their landlocked geographical position in selecting international partner, Mongolia was able to foresee some of the fallouts and take a more balanced and pragmatic

approach to the new global realities to which both domestic and international factors contributed tremendously. The key policy issues revolved around Mongolia included “national interest in the first place, depending upon how constructively the policy and strategy can achieve the defined goals”.²² Thus, the issue of national security which was actually “directly dependent on the international security” was taken as the most important factor while defining the goals of Mongolia’s external relations. For that reason, the national security of Mongolia was divided into global, regional and sub-regional and Mongolian foreign policy has been framed accordingly. Finally, Mongolia came up with its “Multi-Pillared” foreign policy, the basic tenets of which were spelled out in the three inter-related documents, i.e., Concept of National Security, Concept of Foreign Policy and the Military Doctrine which were adopted by the State Great Khural (Mongolian Parliament) in July 1994.²³

Undeniably, this “Multi-Pillared” foreign policy from the preliminary stage took an inclusive account of traditional and non-traditional aspects of national security which helped in reshaping Mongolia’s external relations on a new basis. The basic aim of Mongolia’s foreign policy has been to preserve the self-determination of the Mongol people,²⁴ and to meet Mongolia’s national interests, which are “the existence of the Mongolian people and their civilization ... the country’s independence, sovereignty territorial integrity ... relative economic independence, sustainable ecological development and national unity” (Concept of National Security, Point 3). Of these the two most important are retaining sovereignty and economic independence. In addition, Mongolia also pursues a policy of non-intervention in its neighbours’ affairs, unless its own interests are jeopardized (Concept of Foreign Policy, Point 9).

Major Shift In Foreign Policy Goals :

The turn of the 21st century witnessed changes both at the domestic as well as foreign front which motivated Mongolian leadership to rethink about revising its existing foreign policy in order to attract foreign partners not only in the politico-strategic field but also in the economic and trade sphere. As such the Mongolian Parliament approved an updated National Security Concept in July 2010 and a revised Foreign Policy Concept in February 2011. Both the documents redefined the new strategic direction of Mongolia’s security and foreign policy. In fact, it was on 8 January 2011 that G. Zandanshatar, the Mongolian Minister of Foreign Affairs submitted a draft resolution to the Parliament Speaker D. Demberel on approval of the revised Concept of Foreign Policy of Mongolia.

While analysing the major shift in Mongolia’s foreign policy Reeves clearly points out that Mongolia’s new foreign policy strategy implicitly identifies China as the country’s largest security concern which has been mirrored in Ulaanbaatar’s post-2000 foreign policy relations. It is, therefore, evident that although the 2011 Concept does retain relations with China and Russia as a key plank of foreign policy, it dilutes the original importance placed on these relations by affording them on equal footing with the need to maintain relations with ‘strategically important states’, the need to develop closer relations with the country’s third neighbours, and the need to increase cooperation with the U.S.²⁵ Such a shift in Mongolia’s foreign policy can be understood through various goals set in the revised Foreign Policy Concept. According to the revised Concept, several provisions have been made in political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian fields of foreign policy that

indicate addition of new features to the existing foreign policy of Mongolia.²⁶

Among several new additions to the foreign policy a fresh programme on economic orientation of foreign policy was also added. It all began in 2009 when Mongolian government took up a resolution on initiating a programme on enhancing the economic orientation of Mongolia's foreign policy or more precisely foreign relations. The programme came into force on 3 March 2010.²⁷ The rationale behind formulating this Programme was influenced by the fact that Mongolia's state policy and actions are directed at the advancement of the mutually beneficial economic cooperation with foreign countries. This can be achieved through materializing the country's comparative advantages with a view to intensifying the country's development in accordance with the Comprehensive National Development Strategy based on the Millennium Development Goals, the National Security Concept, the Foreign Policy Concept and the Action Plan of the Government and other policy documents. The Programme document states that "the Government of Mongolia has set its priorities to reform and diversify the present economic structure dependent on natural resources and raw materials, to increase exports of value-added goods, to develop production of import-substituting goods in certain sectors, to introduce and localize new technologies and to increase foreign investment." It further clarifies that it has become crucially important for Mongolia to direct its foreign political relations and diplomatic activities to generate increased income for citizens, create more jobs and ensure sustainable development of the country by means of increasing the economic value of foreign relations and ensuring its unified policy planning and implementation. Moreover, this Programme has been formulated to create an opportunity for rationalizing and developing tangible economic relations with foreign countries taking into account political and economic benefits from such relations as well as potential negative impact on the national security, in particular the economic security.

"Balancing Geographic Neighbours" Aspect :

One of the main features of Mongolia's foreign policy is its "pragmatism", and therefore, it relies on ongoing international political reality as well as the trends of international economic development.²⁸ In this sense, the top priority direction of Mongolia's foreign policy lies in taking an active part in the process of establishing a global multilateral security mechanism. Evidently, the geographical location has had a vital impact on the entire spectrum of Mongolia's foreign policy, and so relations with physical neighbours-Russia and China were given a very high priority. But, at the same time, Mongolia declared to have a balanced relationship with both the neighbours.²⁹ In the words of the then Mongolian President N. Enkhbayar: "Multi-pillar foreign policy concept is the outcome of our aspirations not to be isolated, but to be open, and it brings about the necessity to develop 'neighbourly' relations with such important players at the international arena as the US, Europe, Japan, India, the UN and others, thus securing the independence of the country."³⁰ Since the *Concept of Foreign Policy* puts emphasis on "balanced" or "equidistance" in maintaining relations with Russia and China, principally due to the historical, geographical and economic factors, the policy core is not to adopt the line of either of these two countries but maintain a balanced relationship with both of them.

Whereas Mongolia now maintains a strategic partnership with Russia and partnership

of good neighbourly friendship and cooperation with China, the so-called “third neighbour” policy also forms the part of its multi-pillar foreign policy, “which articulates a policy of balance”.³¹ In simple words, the “third neighbour” policy means that Mongolia will no longer be dependent only on one neighbour but rather on as many as countries and international institutions as possible apart from being a part of both Northeast Asia and Central Asia.³² Initially, in the mid-1990s when no single nation came forward to be understood in real terms as Mongolia’s “third neighbour”, North East Asia began to be viewed as a region for establishing Mongolia’s new relationship that “went beyond economic ties to include political concerns”.³³

The manifestation of Mongolia’s post-2000 foreign policy in terms of its balance of influence behaviour is its bilateral military engagement with the US, its re-establishment of military relations with Russia, its military engagement with other strategic states and institutions in Asia, and its continued relations with Beijing so as to indirectly balance China.³⁴ In that sense, Mongolia has placed a priority focus on regional and global issues, particularly those concerning the Asia-pacific region. So far as Mongolia’s approach towards regional and global issues is concerned, we find there is a commonality of interest between Mongolia and other countries of the world. Since Mongolia has established partnerships with neighbouring countries and many other countries around the world through open, peaceful and multi-faceted diplomacy, these partners have cooperated in Mongolia’s development as well. Over the past two decades, Mongolian foreign policy irrespective of changes made in it, has actually been focussing on developing friendly and mutually beneficial ties “with states beyond its immediate/powerful neighbours.”³⁵ This is in line with the Mongolian national interests, which give much attention to “the preservation of the Mongolian people and their civilization, the country’s independence, territorial integrity, and relative economic independence.”³⁶ Therefore, Mongolia has been making serious efforts for ensuring security to its border as well as having “stable” relations with immediate and distant neighbours.

The “Third Neighbour” Aspect:

In recent years, one may find that “the dominant stated theme of Mongolian foreign policy has been the so-called ‘third neighbour’ policy; that is, attempts by successive Mongolian administrations to build closer ties with partners other than Russia and China, its dominant neighbours.”³⁷ The “Third Neighbour” policy came to the light as a policy of balancing Mongolia’s two geographic neighbours, resulting from the country’s internal and external objectives as stated in the *Concept of National Security* and *Concept of Foreign Policy*. Several analysts have recently examined Mongolia’s “Third Neighbour” policy in the context of geographic neighbours and beyond. Soni (2012) argues that Mongolia is now looking beyond its geographic neighbours and hence “today Mongolian diplomacy is indeed characterized by the ‘third neighbour’ policy”.³⁸ The term “third neighbour” was used for the first time in August 1990 by the visiting US Secretary of State James A. Baker during a speech to support Mongolia’s first move towards democracy after the first free elections held in July 1990. According to Soni (2012), “such a fresh idea was quickly picked up and reinterpreted by the Mongolian elite and policy makers, who for centuries had never thought of anything beyond a pawn between the Russian and Chinese.”³⁹ Though the term began to

be used in Mongolian media and scholarly works, it was not reciprocated in the United States until the late 1990s when Alicia Campi, a well-known expert on Mongolian affairs reminded the American officials at the first American bilateral conference in Washington, DC to declare that their Mongolian counterparts could refer to the United States as a “third neighbour.”⁴⁰

Mongolian foreign policy had by then already affirmed that Mongolia will focus its attention on developing friendly relations with state beyond its geographic neighbours. This policy was then titled as the “third neighbour policy” under which Mongolia could strive to overcome its physical geographical location and increase its security internationally. The “third neighbour” policy easily explains the “multipillarity, complexity and openness of Mongolia’s foreign policy [which] undoubtedly attracted attention of the regional and world community, and the country’s position on the international arena has been strengthened substantially”.⁴¹ In 2012, while giving an interview to Allen Wagner on “Mongolia: Growth, Democracy, and Two Wary Neighbours” for *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, Alan Wachman spoke in length about Mongolia’s “third neighbour” approach to foreign relations. He said that this approach “is driven most forcefully by geography.”⁴² Since those states that are landlocked face monumental challenges to development, Mongolia too comes into this category as it is bounded by only two states—Russia and China who happen to be communist behemoths. Wachman (2012) feels that “by linking its security to a roster of states other than Russia and China, Mongolia has made its intention clear to act internationally with as much freedom as it can muster from constraints that Moscow or Beijing might wish to impose.”⁴³ Also both Russia and the China are still cautious of external powers, particularly the United States, setting down roots in states along their borders. While the Chinese are vigilant about the prospect of encirclement, Russia seems especially unsettled by the prospect of a democratic Mongolia entangled with powerful Western democracies elsewhere, the United States chief among those democracies. This is what Wachman, in his earlier article published in 2009, describes as “the geopolitical gambit”.⁴⁴ His latest analysis too points to the fact that “Mongolia hopes its “third neighbour” approach to security will encourage those external balancers to develop interests—economic, ideological, and strategic—in Mongolia that would significantly impede the effort of either Russia or China to trample Mongolia’s independence.”⁴⁵ It is clear now that in order to loosen the pressure of Russia and China, Mongolian leaders have developed the “Third Neighbour” policy.

The fact that Mongolia’s 2011 revised foreign policy concept implicitly identifies China as the country’s largest security concern which has been reflected in Ulaanbaatar’s post-2000 foreign policy relations, Chinese FDI in Mongolia in 2010 dwarfed Russian FDI by a factor of close to seventy-five. Thus, according to Backes, “even if Russian investment in Mongolia were to increase, it would have to grow at an unrealistic rate to genuinely challenge China’s stranglehold on Mongolia’s economy” and that “China’s existing dominance and the improbability of a massive influx of Russian investment into Mongolia’s natural resources sector make it very unlikely that in the near-to mid-term Russia will provide a viable alternative for Ulaanbaatar for either exports or foreign investment.”⁴⁶

There is no doubt that Mongolia’s foreign policy is strongly affected by its two geographic neighbours—Russia and China. Indeed, when geography comes into play, every resource has

to go through either China or Russia, and therefore, every deal including in the mining sector signed with one might provoke the other into accusing Mongolia of favouring its rival.⁴⁷ However, as Wilbrink sums up, “the status quo indicates that most of the exports go through China.” Nevertheless, the fact is that being a land-locked country in a geopolitical set up any future external threat to Mongolia’s security by whatever means it is, could be related directly or indirectly with either or both of its two neighbours.⁴⁸ In this regard the opinion expressed by Tumurchuluun is worth to be noted here when he says, “if Russia becomes progressively weaker, China may decide that a perfect opportunity has arisen to extend its geopolitical interests in Mongolia with little threat of Russian interests”.⁴⁹ However, in the democratic era the most important factor in Mongolia’s foreign relationship including with China and Russia is tied to economics not politics,⁵⁰ and hence China would continue to be a key factor in Mongolia’s relations with Russia.

Conclusion :

Since the main purpose of foreign policy of a country is to conduct foreign relations to the best possible advantage to serve its national interests, Mongolia too has been following the same agenda. Democratic reforms and economic restructuring following the Soviet collapse provided the best ever opportunity for Mongolia to adopt its own “Multi-Pillar” foreign policy in 1994, thus ensuring the country’s security and independent existence in the multi-polar world. The impact of foreign policy on the two physical neighbours was that it articulated a new strategy to balance Mongolia’s relations with Russia and China that is known as the “Third Neighbour” policy. After experimenting twenty years of democracy, when Mongolia felt it necessary to review its regional security status and also the “Third Neighbour” policy, it revised its existing foreign policy and in 2011 came out with a new Concept of Foreign Policy to guide the nation for its future foreign relations with Russia, China, and the outside world including the United States, Japan, India and Turkey. The revised foreign policy has new fundamental aspects so far as Mongolia’s conduct of its foreign relations is concerned. Yet, one key point that needs to be mentioned here is that although China has become a major security concern for Mongolia in its revised foreign policy concept, China would continue to be a significant factor in Mongolia’s foreign relations. This is because in the democratic era economics has overpowered politics and China does not seem to let loose the opportunity in dominating Mongolia economically while compared to that of Russia as well as other countries of the world. Over the years the Chinese investment in Mongolia has been extraordinary to the extent of some kind of “dominance” at least in the Sino-Mongolian economic and trade cooperation. But there is also no denying of the fact that Mongolian foreign policy irrespective of changes made in it, has actually been focussing on developing friendly and mutually beneficial ties “with states beyond its immediate and powerful neighbours.” This is in line with the Mongolian national interests, though it is yet to be seen how constructively the new fundamental aspects of Mongolian foreign policy work for the country’s benefits.

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