

A NEW PARADIGM IN MONGOLIA'S «THIRD NEIGHBOR» DIPLOMACY AND SOFT BALANCING

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Abstracts: *Mongolia is the only one state in the Northeast Asian region, which has established with all states legal basis of strategic and comprehensive partnership, and friendly relationship and cooperation framework in bilateral level. In other words, Mongolia has any serious conflicts with countries of the region, and especially no political controversies became an important achievement in Mongolia's national security.*

Mongolia's "third neighbor" diplomacy is, besides of geographical policy and understanding, not only related to certain country, it is more concept of theory of international relations emerged on geographical and space specifics and covering areas of politics, economics, geopolitics and security. Mongolia's "third neighbor" diplomacy is geopolitics originated directly from Mongolia's national interests, connected with geographical specific location and in longterm in order to secure and maintain appropriate balance of power in the middle of policies and measures conducting by two neighbors and to ensure national security comprehensively by political-diplomatic and economic means, and in wider context a definition comprising subjects such as western and eastern democratic, developed countries and UN, influential to world politics, and unbending supporter of Mongolia's democracy and policy of market economy. Theoretical base of "third neighbor" diplomacy is balance of power or soft balancing and balance of interests.

At the present, Mongolia has become a "third neighbor" her global geopolitical environment and formed that is legal framework, etc.,

Keywords: *"third neighbor", "third neighbor" diplomacy, paradigm, geopolitics, soft balancing, balance of interests, comprehensive partnership, strategic partnership, foreign policy.*

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The New Paradigms in Mongolia's Foreign Policy

The Mongolian geopolitical environment has changed fundamentally in Post Cold War. Mongolia became a weak buffered country in the *land-locked, nuclear-locked, power-locked and mongol ethno-locked* environment. However a most great achievement in Mongolia's External relations in last season of XX century was that Mongolia pursued a foreign policy respecting its own genuine national interests, and a peaceful, multi-pillar, independent and open foreign policy in geopolitical new environment. This gave wider opportunities for Mongolia to have an equal relationships with her two neighbors and establish new partnership relations with Eastern and Western developed countries.

The beginning of 1990s has witnessed appearance of a term and of the notion of “third neighbor” and with that a new direction of state policy as well as theoretical and practical researches are emerging. Due to rapid development of information and communication technologies, that are creating principally new functions, the notions of space, time and the classical understanding of “neighbor” are undergoing changes in this era of globalization.

In the history of international relations there were cases, when a country in order to ensure its own genuine national interests and security by political, diplomatic and economic means conducted *pecially formulated* independent foreign policy and diplomacy, and gained much international support. Its clear examples are the “*Ostpolitik*” by Willy Brandt, social democrat and former Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany and the “*Northern diplomacy*” of the Republic of Korea. *A common basis of «ostpolitik», «northern diplomacy» and «third neighbor» diplomacy is a balance of power.*

So far no clear definition is being provided to the notion of “third neighbor” in political science, in the theory of international relations or geopolitical studies. The fact that Mongolia is developing and practicing a novel concept of the “third neighbor” or “third neighbor” diplomacy in foreign policy of small states is contributing to enriching further political science, theory of international relations and geopolitical researches.

Mongolia's "third neighbor" policy is not merely a geographical policy or a notion, nor is it a policy addressing one particular country. It is rather a theoretical notion or concept in international relations based on geographical location and space that embraces politics, economics, geopolitics and security. It is geopolitics of Mongolia, a country with weak military and economic potentials and a small population. The policy is pursued at a time when a new multi-polar order is emerging and is based on a national security policy aimed at balancing on a long term basis the power and interests of its two neighbors and the United States.

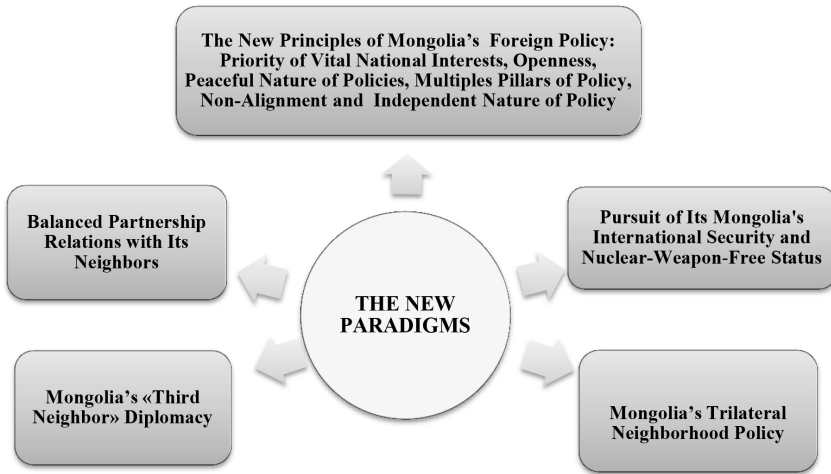
"Third neighbor" is a broad notion that includes the United States, Japan, EU and other democratic subjects of international relations that have developed economies and carry weight in international politics. Another aspect of this policy is to establish and form substantial trade and economic interests of the "third neighbors" in Mongolia.

It should be specifically pointed out that Mongolia's "third neighbor" policy is not an alliance policy in form or substance, nor is it aimed against the interests of its neighbors, but rather a geopolitics of peace time. The theoretical basis of the "third neighbor" diplomacy are balancing of power and of interests.

No comprehensive study has been undertaken until today on the nature and essence of Mongolia's foreign policy nor on "third neighbor" diplomacy from the stand point of theory of international relations, of history or the pressing issues of contemporary.

At the macro level, the parameters of the new paradigm of Mongolia's foreign policy could be defined as follows.

The New Paradigms in foreign policy defines the essence of foreign policy as:



The above represent a whole and are closely chain connected.

«Third Neighbor» Diplomacy: Purpose and Nature

The Concept of National Security of Mongolia, up-dated in 2010, states that pursuant to the “third neighbor” diplomacy, bilateral and multilateral cooperation with highly developed and democracies in political, economic, cultural and humanitarian areas would be undertaken. The Concept of Foreign Policy of Mongolia, up-dated in 2011, states that Mongolia would broaden and develop partnership relations and cooperation with the United States, Japan, the European Union and some other states and groups of states within the framework of “third neighbor” policy. These were the first direct references to the “third neighbor” policy in policy determining documents. The concepts had defined Mongolia’s “third neighbors” as a). democratic states or union of such states and b). industrially developed states.

The “third neighbor” diplomacy of Mongolia is a clear expression of the country’s policy of following the vital national interests, openness, commitment to peace, based on multiple-pillars, non-aligned and independence in policy making.

It could be said that in reality it has acquired “third neighbors” in its geopolitical environment and was able to create the legal basis of such policy.

The following documents defining the nature of relations have so far been signed by Mongolia: in 1997 establishing “*comprehensive partnership*” and in 2010 “*strategic partnership*” with Japan; in 1999 “*complementary cooperation and development partnership*”, in 2006 “*relations of partnership of good-neighborly friendship and cooperation*” and in 2011 “*comprehensive partnership*” with the Republic of Korea; in 2004 and 2005 “*cooperation and comprehensive partnership based on common values and strategic common interests*” with the United States; in 2004 “*expanded partnership*” with Canada; in 2008 “*comprehensive partnership*” with Turkey; in 2007 “*broadened partnership*” with Australia; in 2008 “*comprehensive partnership*” and in 2011 “*strategic partnership*” with Germany; in 2009 “*comprehensive partnership*” and in 2015 “*strategic partnership*” with India and in 2013 Mongolia concluded an “*Agreement on partnership and cooperation*” with the European Union.

Since 1990s, the following terms, third neighbor, partner and partnership, has been reflected into the international relations at the policy level with new idea and concept. Today, the terms such as “*strategic partnership*”, “*partnership for peace or tranquility*”, “*third neighbor*”, “*comprehensive partnership*”, “*partnership and cooperation*”, “*partnership for development*”, “*mental neighbor*”, “*partnership with broad scope*”, “*cooperation partnership with multi-parts*”, “*equal partnership*” have been reflected into the international relations and some of the terms have been used by scholars and researchers with different ideas and objectives.

The partnership relations never focus on the fixed regulation or principle. It always makes decisions for not interfering in independency, territorial tranquility and domestic matters of any country, to have equal rights, to be mutually beneficial, to respect interest and different customs or characteristics of any countries. As a result, the partnership can be comprehensive, be strategic, be with multi partners, be with broad scope and can be mental within the framework of third neighbor policy. On the other hands, the partnership relations can be any kind as different or same due to interest and opinion of 2 parts. Some countries refuse to use the word, strategic.

The strategic partnership includes the concepts of traditional and nontraditional threatens, its security issues, cooperation in the defence

field, pursue of the peace, combat against global terrorism, free trade agreement and long and steady relations. The partners involving the partnership relations can be equal to each other because the partnership never includes the idea that preferring interest of “federal coalition” and “brotherhood relations”. The responsibility is also shared equally. Thus, partnership is not only meaning as friendly or normal cooperation.

Some countries approach carefully to the strategic partnership. The strategic partnership should not be against the third part. The meaning and philosophy of economic partner has been extended. The geographical location and huge natural resources make Mongolia the main target geopolitically.

In idea of “third neighbor” is not new concept in diplomatic history of Mongolia. Because Mongolia had been seeking for “third neighbor” only as general idea until 20th century. The philosophy and idea of the term has been changed and has been elaborated since that time.

Mongolia's «third neighbor» policy and its goals and nature have to be correctly introduced and explained internationally, and here should notice that upto next supports from two neighbors on official and high levels are much important.

“To know a nation's geography is to know its foreign policy”- Napoleon Bonaparte once said.² This is very relevant to Mongolia's unique geographical location. Every country borders and stays as neighbors next to each other. There is word by german geopolitician and professor Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) said *“Neighbors are Neighbors. Friends can be chosen, not Neighbors”*³. This refers only to countries which are bordering to each other. But regarding good neighborhood, relationships can be established not only with neighboring countries also with countries far away. In this context neighbors can be as many as countries bordering **to each other, but non-direct neighbors can be chosen.**

Mongolia's «third neighbor» diplomacy is beyond the understanding of geography as well as it is not referring to one particular country; it is

² Luis Ritto. *Diplomacy and Its Practice VII. International Relations, Geopolitics and Diplomacy.* Jan. 13, 2015

³ Professor Ratzel, Friedrich, 1844-1904. *The History of Mankind.* Translated from the second german edition by A.J. Butler M.A. with Introduction by E.B.Tyler. D.C.L., F.R.S. London, Macmillan and Co.; New York, Macmillan Co., 1896, pp. 245-255

more a category of theory of international relations arisen from geographical location and spatial features, which covers some aspects of politics, security, economics and geopolitics. Thus, Mongolia's «third neighbor» strategy can be described as geopolitics associated with its unique geographical location and it is derived from Mongolia's genuine national interests directed towards securing and maintaining a long-term appropriate balance of power between the policies and actions of two neighboring powers and ensuring the national security by comprehensive political and diplomatic, and economic means. In the broader context, it comprises of those influential subjects of the global politics, such as the developed and democratic countries in the West and East, and the UN, and who are the strong supporters of Mongolia's democracy and market economy. The theoretical fundamental of the «third neighbor» strategy is a *balance of power or soft balancing and balance of interests*.

In a globalized world with growing interdependence and dynamic international relations, the ensuring of a small state's existence, its development and national security is not only a military strategical issue, but it covers a wide-range of aspects of sustainable development, economic security, trade, investment, loan, aid, reduction of poverty, smart governance, democracy, human rights guarantee and freedom, science and technology, and ICT. These are the factors expanding a category of «third neighbor».

If Mongolia's northern neighbor is a country with the largest territory that possesses nuclear weapons and is reviving its strength and glory, its southern neighbor has the largest population, also possesses nuclear weapons and is a developing country with a very rapidly developing economy. Both of these neighboring powers conduct independent policies and have their own views and policies on international issues. Therefore it could be said that Mongolia is the only country in the world with such unique geopolitical location. A new multi-polar world order is emerging in which the United States is not the only power to be reckoned with. The influence and involvement of Mongolia's two neighbors are essential and increasing.

Mongolia is guided by the principle of priority and balanced relations with its two neighbors. With the Russian Federation in 2003 it established relations of “*good-neighborly traditional partnership*” and in 2009

“strategic partnership”. With the PRC it established in 2003 “partnership of good-neighborliness and mutual confidence”, in 2011 “strategic partnership” and in 2014 “comprehensive strategic partnership”. These understandings and undertakings laid the legal basis of its relations with the immediate neighbors. They are important pre-conditions in promoting both “trilateral neighborhood relations” and Mongolia’s “third neighbor” policy.

Mongolia has initiated trilateral summit meeting with its neighbors, which is gradually turning into a permanent cooperation mechanism. The fact that the United States always compares Mongolia with its two authoritarian neighbors that have restricted human rights and freedoms and lack of free press and describes Mongolia as an exemplary oasis of democracy⁴ is an expression of the United States’ support of Mongolia’s “third neighbor” policy.

Research objective is to develop the scientific basis to define in theory that the a new multi-polar world order that is emerging is increasingly affected by the interests of the United States, Russia and China; that the study of Mongolia’s “third neighbor” policy is based on geopolitics and in ensuring regional balance of power and interests; and that besides balanced relations with its neighbors, Mongolia’s “third neighbor” diplomacy is emerging as a vital component of its policy of ensuring its security by political, diplomatic and economic means.

The “third neighbor” policy should create political, economic and legal environment whereby Mongolia’s destiny, its national security and social progress would not depend predominantly on the policies of its two neighbors, but would also depend on geopolitical and geo-economic factors, on the strategic interests, politics and interests of other influential powers.

“Third neighbor” policy is important for Mongolia to promote its security by political, diplomatic as well as economic means. That is why it is important to research the theoretical basis of ensuring balanced policy, how to adapt organically to international relations of the emerging new multi-polar world.

⁴“US Secretary of State John Kerry hails Mongolia as “oasis of democracy” in tough neighborhood”. The Straits Times. Asia. June 5, 2016.

Mongolia is a country that is sandwiched between two nuclear weapon states, land-locked, and surrounded by peoples of Mongolian origin. Until recently it was a development aid recipient country and far from world markets. However today it finds itself as a part of the most rapidly developing region and is being seen as rich in mineral resources and sources of energy and thus naturally arousing geopolitical and geo-economic interests of the great powers, transnational corporations and business groupings. This, naturally, opens up vast possibilities as well as creates enormous challenges. Hence growing importance acquires research in positions of its northern, southern and “third neighbors”, both at track I and II levels.

The theoretical basis of research are theories of balances of power and interests, distribution or re-distribution of power, methods of Hans B. Morgenthau and empirical research, meaning historical approach, comparison and following research method of advanced studies of international relations a) positive or descriptive analysis; and b) normative or prescriptive analysis.

Her Neighbors Positions

Concerns about the positions of our two neighbors regarding Mongolia’s «third neighbor» policy are a key issue in need of attention. South and North neighbors have never expressed unfavorable positions officially, but mass media, information channels, experts of international relations, geopolitics and strategy say freely their point of views.

Chinese researchers say that *first*, Mongolia is inclined to China in ways of commerce and economy, to Japan and Canada in branches such as investment, new techniques and technology, to USA in political respect, to Russia on military and defense sides. *Second*, in the framework of «third neighbor» policy, an establishment of strategic and comprehensive partnership relations with USA, Japan and India is an intent of triangle blockade round China, *third*, defining USA as «third neighbor» Mongolians explain it like a multi-pillar foreign policy, which means ‘cauldron is more stable when it has more than three pillars’.

It is certain that Russians do not regard well the impact of USA on Mongolia. According to russian experts, an aftermath of A. Kozyrev’s

policy (former minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia), **which pursued** only towards Western Europe, enabled USA to increase its geopolitical interests into Mongolia.

CONCLUSION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Mongolian alliance relationship both states established a friendly and a new strategic partnership, but Mongolia's buffer role still remains. On the other hand, interconnected with the economic rapid development of giant south neighbor in XXI century, its geopolitical and geo-economical spheres of influences are expanding. It means a "*Chinese danger*" called by Western experts.

The main pillar of the guarantee of sustainable development and security of small states is an active foreign policy and diplomacy.

The goal of the concept of Mongolia's «third neighbor» strategy is to create a political, economical and legal environment where Mongolia's fortune, national security and prosperity depend not only on two neighbors, but also on «third neighbor's» strategical interests and interdependence. Geo-economical policies of two neighbors towards Mongolia should touch in some respects interests of third neighbor too. Mongolia's «third neighbor» strategy might also contribute to ensuring the Northeast Asian security.

Furthermore, the stability of the world trade and economic situation, monetary and financial system will directly impact Mongolia's national security. The big challenges in near future are price changes of Mongolia's main export products such as copper, molybdenum, gold, coal, flourite, oil shale, wool on global market for raw materials, instability of exchange rates, natural disasters, non-traditional new disease, regional conflicts, economic management and democracy crisis. Therefore the *preventive diplomacy* and *crisis management* are important among countries in Northeast Asia.

A Mongolian national security is one part of Northeast Asian security. The Korean peninsula is a most sensitive challenge not only to Northeast Asia but it also is most likely to effect international security. Cooperations in spheres of trade, economic and other humanitarian fields are an important background for strengthening the political and military confidence in the Northeast Asia.

Finally, an experience of Mongolia's Nuclear Weapon Free Status and Mongolia's possibility to be an international peace mediator are significant to Northeast Asian security.

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