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TO WHAT EXTENT DOES POST-1990 MONGOLIA PURSUE AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY?

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Introduction

Mongolia's 70-year alliance with the Soviet Union came to an end with the Unions disintegration in 1990. This allowed fundamental changes in Mongolian foreign policy² to take place.

Today Mongolia's foreign policy is dominated by a need to secure sovereignty and economic independence. After a brief historical background, this paper examines the extent that these two policy objectives are enacted independently of external forces, looking at both domestic and external influences on foreign policy. The paper concludes that although Mongolia as a nation is more secure than ever, inevitably its foreign policy is dominated by the need to secure financial assistance and the interests of powerful external forces. Namely the Peoples Republic of China, the United States of America, international financial institutions and to a lesser extent the Russian Federation³.

1. Historical Background

With a landmass of 1,566,500km² (Mayhew, 2001:24) and populated by a mere 2,712,315 people⁴, Mongolia is one of the least densely populated countries in the world.

Its landlocked position, surrounded completely by Russia and China is illustrated in Figure one.

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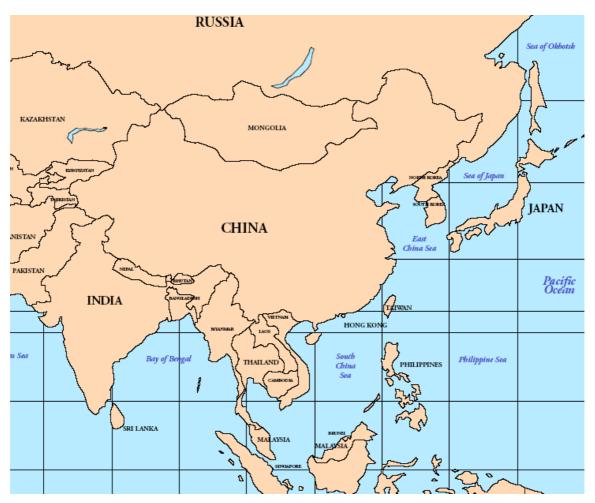
¹ Las opiniones expresadas en estos artículos son propias de sus autores. Estos artículos no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de UNISCI. The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors. These articles do not necessarily reflect the views of UNISCI.

² Foreign policy is the 'activity whereby state actors act, react and interact' (Evans and Newman, 1998:179).

³ Hereinafter referred to as China, US and Russia.

⁴ CIA World Fact Book, July 2003 estimate.

Fig. 1: Mongolia and its neighbours.⁵



From 1691 to 1911, Mongolia was part of the Manchu Empire, ruled ruthlessly by the Qing dynasty. After the fall of the Manchus in 1911, 'Outer Mongolia' declared a short lived independence. In 1919, the Chinese, taking advantage of revolutionary turmoil in Russia invaded Mongolia where they remained until 1921 when they were expelled by white Russian, anti-communist, troops.

Initially this was welcomed but 'it soon became apparent that the Russians were just as ruthless army of occupation' (Mayhew, 2001). Mongolian nationalists decided their best hope for independence was to seek help from red Russians - the Bolsheviks. They were successful, and a revolutionary government seized power, in 1924 the world's second communist country; the Mongolian People's Republic, was declared.

One-party rule by the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) followed for seventy years, political competition and dissent were illegal, and the state controlled all aspects of public life. MPRP policy was dictated by Moscow and Mongolia was 'ideologically, militarily, and economically integrated into the Soviet Union' (Batbayar, 2002:8) and as a consequence dubbed the '16th republic'.

⁵ Source: Alabama Maps.

Like other soviet republics Mongolia received significant financial support from the USSR, at one estimate, US\$ 900 million a year (europa website). As Sanders (1997:239) says 'Starting pretty much from scratch, the USSR built a miniature of itself in Mongolia ... a complete soviet state, together with soviet-style apparatus and parliament to run things' at the highest point, officially reported soviet military and civilian workers comprised 5% of the population (Ginsberg, 1999:258).

Foreign policy, dictated from Moscow was based on ideological relations and 'close comprehensive cooperation' with the Soviet Union and other COMECON⁶ countries (Sanders, 1997:219).

Soviet troops and missile bases were positioned in Mongolia between 1924 and 1956 and again between 1966 and 1992. The stated reason for their presence was to protect Mongolia from Chinese territorial ambitions. In reality they were the 'front line' of the Sino-Soviet conflict and as such, a constant point of antagonism between Russia and China. This conflict allowed Mongolia's long time leader Yu. Tsedenbal to successfully play what Batbayar (2003b:954) terms the 'China Card' squeezing increased economic assistance from the Soviets in return for 'an anti China stance'.

The political situation in Mongolia remained stable until July 1990 when, following mass public demonstrations calling for political and economic reform, the first multi-party elections took place and the People's Republic of Mongolia was renamed as Mongolia.

2. Mongolian Foreign Policy

As shown by Batbayar's (2002) analysis of Mongolia's top four⁷ political parties there is broad political consensus regarding the direction of Mongolian foreign policy. This consensus is outlined in four important documents; the Constitution (1992), Concept of Foreign Policy (1994), Concept of National Security (1994) and the Foreign Policy Blue Book (2000).

The central aim of Mongolian foreign policy is 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.

Mongolia aims to achieve this through pursuing a more open, balanced foreign policy. Of primary importance are friendly relations with both Russia and China, and the development of relations with a wide range of countries, with particular weight given to the US and Asia pacific region more generally. In addition Mongolia has a policy of non-intervention in its neighbours affairs, unless its own interests are jeopardised (Concept of Foreign Policy, Point 9).

⁶ The Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation that linked the USSR with other communist nations around the world.

⁷ MPRP, Democratic Party, Party of Civil Will, and the Mongolian Democratic New Socialist Party.

2.1. Domestic influences on Foreign Policy

The first area to be analysed are the principle domestic influences on Mongolia's foreign policy. These are the need to secure sovereignty, Mongolian identity and the Soviet past.

a) Sovereignty

Mongolia's position between Russia and China, and a recent history of soviet influence means that it has rarely satisfied the conditions for full sovereignty, that is, autonomy in foreign policy making and exclusive control of internal affairs. Its position as a small 'developing' nation means that it is a relatively insignificant player on the global arena.

Today Mongolia relies on global institutions to give voice to its opinions, and recognition and guarantees of its sovereign status. Mongolia is a member of over twenty different international groups or organisations⁸, the most important in this respect being the United Nations (UN) which Mongolia became a member of in 1961 after a fifteen year campaign. The Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MMFA) declares that Mongolia's membership has been 'the most viable guarantee of its independence and sovereignty'. Tumerchuluun (1999:286) illustrates this point using a statement made by the US which states that 'if Mongolia ever faces a threat and decides to refer the matter to the UN Security Council, the US, along with other members of the security council would consider appropriate steps to be taken'. This threat of action should act as a deterrent to any country considering directly threatening Mongolia's territory.

Mongolia actively participates in UN processes and actions, most notably recent UN sponsored peacekeeping activities, in particular the contribution of 250 military personnel (see FCO⁹ website) to assist with reconstruction in Iraq.

Not only are international institutions important but individual nations. Ginsburg (1999:250) states that Mongolia has 'aggressively courted' Europe, US and Asia in the search for a 'third neighbour¹⁰' to guarantee national security. Initially there was optimism that the US or Japan might prove to be such a 'neighbour', however political realism has set in and as authors such as Ginsberg (1999) and Bruun and Odgaard (1997b) conclude, it is the international community as a whole that guarantees Mongolia's security and survival, rather than one individual nation.

b) Identity

Mongolia is a relatively ethnically homogenous nation comprised of 86% *Khalakh* Mongols (Mayhew, 2001:34) and a small Kazak minority. Its culture is very distinct from both Chinese and Russian cultures.

⁹ Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

⁸ See appendix page 19.

¹⁰ 'The notion that Mongolia must find a nation or group of nations to counterbalance the traditional monopoly China and Russia exerted over Mongolia's foreign relations' (Campi, 2003b:30).

Traditionally a nomadic society, there is a conflict in foreign policy making between those who see Mongolia's future in embracing this traditional identity and forging closer ties to Central Asia with its similar culture, soviet history and economic ties (see Campi, 2003b) and those such as Prime minister Enkhbayar who believe nomadism to be uneconomic in a modern market economy that Mongolia is trying to become (see Batbayar, 2002) and as such ties with 'modern' countries in Northeast Asia should be encouraged.

However despite the greater potential for investment, trade and security, Campi (2003b:48) warns that 'tying itself mainly to Northeast Asia will not work economically and militarily, because Russia and China are the main developing economies which overwhelmingly attract investment money and trade' therefore Mongolia should reinforce links with Central Asia.

So the relative importance accorded to Mongolia's different identities, both modern and traditional, impacts the priority it places on relations with neighbouring regions.

The 'Concept of Foreign Policy' indicates that the reality is priority to the Asia pacific region, not Central Asia. Further confirmed by the fact there are higher levels of diplomacy and trade with this region and interestingly plans to 'Latinise' the Cyrillic alphabet¹¹. This will be the end of a significant common link between Mongolia, Russia and much of Central Asia.

c) Soviet Past

Mongolia's historical links with Russia also have a significant influence on its foreign policy. In 1991 there were considerable moves to make a clean break from Russian 'imperialism' but as Ginsburg (1999:248) points out the 'top cadres and urban intellectuals shared a common cosmopolitan orientation and common formative experiences in the USSR'. He found that virtually all the political elites between 1990 and 1998 had studied at some point in Russia or Eastern Europe. This common background means that their decisions are 'inevitably a product of their formative experiences in Russia'. This has contributed to the attitude of distrust towards China and continuation of subservience towards Russia.

2.2. External influences on foreign policy

The second area to be analysed are the principle external influences on Mongolia's foreign policy which are largely geopolitical. I will focus on relationships with the three most important states in Mongolia's foreign relations, neighbours Russia and China, the US¹² and the significant role of international financial institutions.

Mongolia has a 3485km border with Russia and a 4677km border with China¹³ (Foreign Policy Blue Book, 2000:18). As already stated¹⁴ in the past both countries have held imperial ambitions for Mongolia and today they are still the biggest threat to its sovereignty. However

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¹¹ See UB Post, July 25th 2003.

¹² Their significant influence is illustrated by the fact that they are the only nations with full-time defence attachés in Mongolia.

¹³ See Figure one page 2.

¹⁴ See page 2.

during his 1993 visit to China the then Russian President; Boris Yeltsin signed a joint declaration on the basic principles governing Sino-soviet bilateral relations. Tumerchuluun (1999:279) notes that Article 3 of the declaration makes it clear that officially neither Russia or China has threatening intentions towards Mongolia; 'neither party should resort to force or the threat of force in any form against the other party, including the use of the territorial land, water and air space of a third country bordering the other party'.

In Mongolia's Concept of National Security (Point 27, 2.2) top priority is accorded to maintaining a balanced relationship with Russia and China. This 'does not mean keeping equidistance between them or taking identical positions on all issues but this policy does mean strengthening trust and developing all-round good neighbourly, relations and mutually beneficial cooperation'.

2.3. Mongolian-Russian relations

Primarily Mongolia is of strategic importance to Russia as a buffer between itself and China. In addition it is a matter of Russian pride to retain influence over its protégé.

The declaration of friendship and good-neighbourly cooperation (1991) between Russia and Mongolia was the first affirmation of their equality as sovereign states. However relations with Russia were in decline for much of the 1990's because of Russia's internal economic and social problems (Batbayar, 2003b:965). It was not until Putin's visit to Mongolia at the end of 2000 that relations began to revitalise.

Batbayar (2003b:964) states that 'Russia had been counting on the weight of economic, military and cultural factors to ensure that it would remain the leading power in Mongolian affairs'. However he goes on to say that 'today Russia is in a weak position vis-à-vis the Mongolian economy, unable to promote economic cooperation by providing substantial aid, loans, and investment'. This is a view shared by others such as Altantsetseg (2003) and held out by the facts. Trade with Mongolia has significantly fallen (see figure two), aid is insignificant (see Sanders, 1997:238), and there has been little military cooperation because 'neither side had sufficient incentive or resources to foster a cooperation regime' (Batbayar, 2003b:963). Indeed Campi (2004) asserts that the only sector Russia retains any influence over is the energy sector because it is a 'key supplier' of oil and electricity.

Fig. 2	: Ru	ssian	and	Chinese	trade	statistics	.16
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	Rus	ssia	China		
	% of	% of	% of	% of	
	Mongolia's exports to Russia	Mongolian imports from	Mongolia's exports to China	Mongolia's imports from	
		Russia		China	
1990	78.3	77.5	1.7	2.4	
2001	10.3	36.4	55.7	21.9	

¹⁵ President of Russia.

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¹⁶ Adapted from Campi (2004).

The main foreign policy conflict with Russia was debt. Russia declared Mongolia owed it US\$10 billion for the infrastructural development it funded during the Soviet era, however many Mongolians contended that they owed nothing and that actually Russia owed Mongolia money because it had imposed lower than world average prices on Mongolian exports and damaged the environment. With the assistance of international financial institutions Mongolia and Russia resolved the issue in early 2004, with 98% of the debt being considered investment and only the remaining 2% (US\$250 million) to be repaid by the Mongolian Government. This was a significant victory for the Mongolian government and further emphasises the point that currently, the relationship with Russia, although significant, is not a threat and not a major influence because of Russia's weak state and poor economy, however it is important to remember that this will not always be the case, and a Russia in assent would be far more likely to push its interests in Mongolian foreign policy decisions.

2.4. Mongolian-Chinese relations

During the 1990s Mongolian-Chinese relations drastically improved from a state of virtual non-existence to one of mutual cooperation, based on the 'Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation' signed between China and Mongolia in 1994¹⁷. Batbayar (2002) attributes this warming of attitudes to the improvement in Sino-Soviet relations, the removal of Soviet troops from Mongolia and the collapse of the USSR.

China's interest in Mongolia, is also strategic, and forms part of what seems to be a policy of expanding its influence throughout Asia.

In contrast to Russia, China's influence over Mongolia is increasing. Campi (2004) says that 'during the past decade Chinese aid has become significant' in recent years annually upwards of 50 million Yuan. China is also the biggest investor in Mongolia, with US\$ 281 million accounting for over 40% of Mongolia's total FDI¹⁸ (Chinese Ministry of External Affairs). It seems that China is using its economic influence more prominently than its military one.

This provides a strong position for the Chinese to negotiate and influence potential issues of conflict, of which there are several.

Since 1990 Mongolia has embraced its Buddhist heritage and has allowed visits from the Dalai Lama. This does not please China who believes he is promoting political autonomy for Tibet. Because there are no direct flights from India¹⁹ to Mongolia, China has often been able to block his visits using its influence to ensure countries such as Russia and Korea think twice before issuing him transit visas. However in late 2002 the Dalai Lama flew into UB²⁰ via Tokyo. The Canada Tibet Committee (2002) reported that in retaliation the Chinese suspended its rail service with Mongolia for two days during the visit, causing much disruption. Despite

¹⁹ The Dalai Lama's home in exile.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that, although the PRC has recognised Mongolia as sovereign since 1950, the Kuomintang (KMT) Government on Taiwan did not recognize Mongolia as an independent nation until as recently as February 2002.

¹⁸ Foreign Direct Investment

²⁰ Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia's capital city.

permitting the visit Mongolian officials were careful to distance themselves from the Dalai Lama in case of further incensing the Chinese.

Secondly there are issues relating to Inner-Mongolia (the province in Northern China, bordering Mongolia). China has long been accused of suppressing the population who want independence from China. Mongolia's shared language and cultural heritage with the Inner-Mongolians puts pressure on the Mongolian government to change its official policy of non-interference in Chinese affairs, however again China is able to exert pressure and 'prevent Mongolian government support for Inner Mongolian nationalism' (Rossabi, 2000).

However the most important issue from the Mongolian perspective is a fear of Chinese expansion. The 'Concept of Security' and 'Concept of Foreign Policy' both identify 'massive inflows of migrants from a neighbouring state' as a real threat to national interests. In addition to several highly publicised (in Mongolia) maps originating in China and showing all or part of Mongolia integrated into China, there are Chinese plans for starting 'large-scale animal-husbandry operations' in southern Mongolia (Kaplan, 2004) and there is a fear that increases in Chinese investments will lead to economic if not physical control over Mongolia (Bruun and Odgaard 1997a). In this respect the Chinese have to tread carefully as actual incursions into Mongolia would probably result in at the least, outcry from the international community.

2.5. US influence

The third country to play a significant role in influencing Mongolian foreign policy decisions is the US.

In 1986 Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze gave Mongolia the 'green light' to establish independent diplomatic relations with the US. It did so in January 1987, spurred on by Gorbachev's decision to withdraw soviet troops, the loss of whose protection they feared (Batbayar, 2003b:954).

The Foreign Policy Blue Book (2000:23) states that 'the relationship with the two immediate neighbours remains a top priority in Mongolia's foreign policy, however from the country's development and national security perspective, the expansion of the relations with highly developed countries is also a top priority agenda'. So development of relations with the US is fully consistent with the national interests of Mongolia.

Perhaps at first glance Mongolia wouldn't seem to be a country of strategic importance outside of Russia and China, however as Kaplan (2003) says we live in an era when 'anyplace can turn out to be strategic' and after September 11th Central Asia, including Mongolia, became 'strategic' to the US. The USAID²¹ website states that US interests in Mongolia 'center largely on its strategic location between Russia and China, two traditional rivals that are also nuclear powers and important global players'. China's rapid growth both militarily and economically²² is of great concern to the US who wish to remain world hegemon, but 'if we look beyond the present conflagrations in the Middle East, China looms as the greatest challenge to American power' (Kaplan, 2004).

²¹ United States Agency for International Development.

²² 'Buoyed by spectacular economic development, China is rapidly increasing its military spending and vigorously moving forward with the modernization of its armed forces' (Huntington, 1993).

In addition to its own strategic interests, the US sees a stable Mongolia as important for regional stability as a whole.

Earlier this year, in an article for the Atlantic Monthly, Robert Kaplan illustrated the extent of America's military influence. Not only does 90 percent of Mongolia's foreign military training and assistance come from the US, but according to Kaplan the US is seriously considering repairing disused soviet airbases to enable it to 'potentially land any kind of fixed-wing aircraft in the U.S. arsenal'. Kaplan doesn't imply that American troops will soon be based in Mongolia, rather that the airbases will form part of the US 'footprint' strategy where it will 'have basing options everywhere without a significant troop and hardware presence anywhere'. In point 10 of the 2004 joint statement between Mongolia and the US, the US states its intention to 'further increase' this military assistance.

Point 23 (1.5) of the Concept of National Security states that Mongolia will not allow its territory to be used against other States. Such seemingly expansionist actions from the US seem to contravene this, indicating that Mongolia is apparently willingly allowing its stated foreign policy to be compromised by the US.

In addition to military support the US assists the Mongolian Government in policy making, by providing a full-time American policy adviser in the prime minister's office. According to the US Department of State (2004) this advisor 'has worked closely with the Government of Mongolia to set the policy agenda and provides policy advice and expert technical assistance for the government's major reform initiatives'.

The extent that Mongolia is compliant with American wishes is a reflection of their relative power and need for financial assistance. As Bruun and Odgaard (1997a:26) say 'for the Mongolians, there are historical reasons to see international aid as coinciding with larger, geopolitical interests. The sequence of Russian and Chinese aid reflected delicate balances between the superpowers to which the country had to submit but perhaps owed its survival as an independent nation' there is certainly an argument for this being the case today with the US replacing China and Russia.

2.6. International Financial Institutions

The collapse of the Soviet Union saw the elimination of traditional markets for Mongolian products and an end to subsidized energy prices and economic support which at some estimates was as high as 30% of Mongolia's GDP (Batbayar, 2003a). As a consequence 'Mongolia suffered the most serious peacetime economic collapse any nation faced during the twentieth century' (Boone, 1993), the effects of which are still felt today. For example 36% of the population live below the poverty line²³ and Mongolia ranks 117 out of 175 countries on the 2003 Human Development Index (see UNDP, 2003). Poverty reduction is the Mongolian government's main challenge, and it is reliant on international assistance to tackle it.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is the single largest multilateral donor, followed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the UN. For many countries (including the UK) these multilateral institutions are the means through which the majority of their assistance is channelled.

²³ CIA World Fact book

Japan is the largest donor, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs calculating that 'economic cooperation and aid extended by Japan to Mongolia accounts for approximately one-third of total aid for Mongolia'. However as Campi (2003a) notes the US plays the 'leading role of donor aid coordinator' even though it 'ranks a distant second in terms of its development assistance' (USAID, 2004).

'The west's chosen reformed communist poster boy' Leahy (2003), Mongolia is a model of a 'successful' transition to democracy for other former soviet republics²⁴. This status has ensured a high per capita level assistance. The donor community as a whole annually contributes about US\$300 million (see FCO); approximately 30% of GDP, in effect replacing Russian support with aid.

Mongolia's foreign policy decisions are influenced to a degree by the need to ensure financial assistance is continued. The conditionalities attached to aid compromise Mongolia's internal sovereignty by dictating domestic policy decisions such as the focus on macroeconomic stabilisation and privatisation. Batbayar (2003a:58) states that the Mongolian government 'understands that firm consistency in the reform agenda will be a guarantee of continued donor assistance' even if as Campi (2003a) notes there is a 'significant problem of bad donor planning and financial practices'.

2.7. Other important relationships

In addition to Russia, China and the US, Mongolia actively seeks to improve relations with other countries; particularly those in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Japan and Korea who are considered essential for Mongolia's economic development (see Foreign Policy Blue Book, 2000:27) and in the case of the Korean peninsula, essential for security. It is worth noting that Mongolia is one of the few countries with diplomatic ties to both Koreas and has been involved in trying to resolve the North Korea issue peacefully through 'engagement' not *'isolation'*²⁵. It is worth noting that a recent plan to provide a refugee camp for North Korean defectors did not come to fruition, because of strong opposition from both North and South Korea (see UB Post 30/09/03).

However as Campi (2004) points out 'Mongolia's geographical location between the nuclear powers heavily influences its freedom of action and the scope of its relations with other foreign states'. On the whole other relations centre on increasing awareness of, and economic ties with Mongolia, fully consistent with the principles outlined in the Concept of Foreign Policy²⁶

Conclusion

On page 4 I outlined Mongolia's main national interests to be sovereignty and economic independence. Today, more than ever before in recent history, Mongolia is secure as a sovereign nation in her own right, in part due to membership of, and participation in

²⁴ All five Central Asian states are still governed by the same leaders who assumed control when they were granted independence from the USSR.

See Prime Minister Enkbayar's speech to the Non-Aligned Movement in 2003.

²⁶ The MMFA website gives excellent insight into other, less significant relations.

multilateral organisations such as the UN. However despite this, I conclude that the need to secure financial assistance, and the interests of countries (in particular China and the US) that are more powerful than Mongolia, compromise Mongolia's ability to make fully independent foreign policy decisions.

As the relative balance of power between Russia, China and the US changes, the extent to which Mongolia can ensure that its national security objectives are met will alter. Tumerchuluun (1999:289) states that as long as Sino-Russian relations don't change for the worse 'the military threat to Mongolia should remain low'. However, a more likely (but in no way certain) scenario is a cooling of US-Chinese relations, which has the potential to lead to serious problems between Mongolia and China, because of Mongolia's clear support for the US.

The influences on Mongolian Foreign Policy are unique, but it is a case that illustrates a problem for all small developing countries in strategic positions; the need to walk the line between sovereignty and independence, securing economic development and giving in to the (sometimes conflicting) interests of more powerful nations. Ginsburg (1999:248) notes that in the past 'Mongolia's survival has depended on giving large powers a stake in its continuing independence'. To an extent this is happening again today with the US, particularly as it exerts considerable influence on the international financial institutions that Mongolia receives the majority of its aid from.

As Thucidiydes (cited by Nye, 2003) said 'the strong have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept'. This oft cited realist mantra seems particularly applicable in this case.

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Appendix: Mongolia's Membership of International Groupings/ Organisations 27

- Asian Development Bank (ADB),
- Customs Co-operation Council (CCC),
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP),
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO),
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank),
- International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO),
- International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL),
- International Development Association (IDA),
- International Finance Corporation (IFC),

²⁷ Source: British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website.



- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD),
- International Labour Organisation (ILO),
- International Monetary Fund (IMF),
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU),
- Non-Aligned Movement (NAM),
- United Nations (UN),
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO),
- United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO),
- Universal Postal Union (UPU),
- World Health Organisation (WHO),
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO),
- World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).