

Original Paper

Study on Mongolia's Foreign Security Policy

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Abstract

Mongolia put forward the vision of neutrality in 2015, but it has not been recognized since then, and it seems that it has no further measures for neutrality. As a country with a special geographical position, Mongolia has been seeking the most suitable foreign security strategy to help the country develop better. Mongolia's foreign security strategy is also worthy of the attention of neighboring countries, especially for China. Both China and Mongolia are now facing rare opportunities for development. If we can seize the opportunities, we can promote the common development of the two countries.

Keywords

Mongolia, neutrality, foreign security strategy, third neighbor

1. Introduction

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Mongolia. As a neighboring country to China, Mongolia feels that people don't know much about it. Firstly, because of its geographical location, as a small country sandwiched between Russia and China, Mongolia as a whole feels relatively closed. Secondly, because of its low domestic economic level, it doesn't attach importance to the development of tourism. Although there are a lot of mineral resources in China, it is difficult to establish a manufacturing production chain in any industry because of its relatively small population. At the same time, there are some historical reasons.

However, as a neighboring country with special geographical position and special significance to China in history, Mongolia's foreign security strategy is still worthy of China's attention.

2. The Strategic Choice of Mongolia's Foreign Security in History

Looking at the timeline, we can see that Mongolia's foreign security strategic choice is mainly divided into four stages: when Mongolia was founded and became independent, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Mongolia proposed neutrality in 2015, and Mongolia since 2015.

2.1 When Mongolia Was Founded and Became Independent

After the founding of the Republic of China, Mongolia declared its independence with the intervention of the Soviet Union. Since Mongolia was founded with the support of the Soviet Union, at the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mongolia chose the alliance strategy of "one-sided" foreign policy to the Soviet Union and implemented it for nearly 70 years. During this period, all aspects of Mongolia were deeply influenced by the Soviet Union because it was tied up with the Soviet Union. Even during the period of Soviet control, the ruling class in Mongolia had to have a Soviet wife, which basically became a standard at that time. At that time, if the ruling class in Mongolia did not have a Soviet wife, Mongolia would be excluded from the power core. In this case, it can be said that Mongolia lost its diplomatic autonomy and was almost completely isolated from other countries in Northeast Asia during its "one-sided" Soviet Union.

2.2 After the Disintegration of the Soviet Union

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in the situation in Eastern Europe, the external environment of Mongolia has also undergone profound and obvious changes. Mongolia abandoned the "one-sided" foreign policy and began to implement the "multi-fulcrum" foreign policy. The implementation of the "multi-fulcrum" foreign policy aims to avoid being involved in disputes between neighboring countries, maintain equal diplomatic relations with neighboring countries, and actively expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation with third countries. One of the most important is "third neighbor diplomacy". As Mongolia sandwiched between China and Russia, Mongolia can always feel the invisible restraint of its two big neighbors invisibly. (Zhang, 2016) It is against this background that the leadership of Mongolia put forward the policy of "the third neighbor", and in the national parliament in 2011, the policy of "the third neighbor" was first included in the foreign policy concept in the form of legislation.

So what is a "third neighbor"?

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Mongolia, Sukhbaataryn Batbold, a former prime minister of Mongolia, gave a vivid metaphor when he visited the Chinese Academy of Sciences to give a speech: a pot supported on the ground cannot support two stones, and there must be a third fulcrum. What Bart Boulder said is the unique concept of "three cornerstones" of Mongolians, which is actually a metaphor for Mongolia's "third neighbor" policy. "Two stones" refer to the two neighbors of China and Russia, and the third "fulcrum" represents other forces in the world except China and Russia. It can be seen that the "third neighbor" in Mongolia's "third neighbor" policy is not a single country such as the United States, Japan and South Korea, but a collection of countries, which are judged by whether they are willing to help, have the ability to help, and have already implemented assistance. The core of this criterion is mainly the countries, international organizations or political forces that can have an important influence on Mongolia and its surrounding areas.

As a part of implementing the "third neighbor" policy, Mongolia is developing bilateral and multilateral

relations and cooperation with the "third neighbor" in political, economic, military and cultural fields while developing relations with China and Russia. Up to now, according to official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, only eight countries belong to Mongolia's "third neighbor", namely, Japan with a special strategic partnership to promote peace and prosperity, India with a strategic partnership, the United States with a strategic partnership, Turkey with a comprehensive partnership, Germany with a comprehensive partnership and South Korea with a comprehensive partnership.

2.3 In 2015, Mongolia Proposed Neutrality

During the UN General Assembly in 2015, Mongolian leader elbegdorj officially announced that Mongolia will implement the "permanent neutrality policy", hoping to be affirmed by all international parties.

Sakhiagiin Elbegdorj, the former leader of Mongolia, published an article entitled "Mongolia's Permanent Neutrality" in 2015, in which he expounded the following views: "The following factors should be considered in discussing Mongolia's neutrality: 1. In fact, Mongolia has been playing a neutral role since it has its new democratic constitution, but it has not yet announced its neutrality. Therefore, it is a matter of time before Mongolia declares and becomes a neutral country. Second, Mongolia's historical evolution, geographical environment and the road it adheres to meet the conditions of neutrality. Mongolia's neutrality is conducive to advancing with the times and peaceful coexistence with other countries. Mongolia's neutrality will also be supported by other countries and the international community. 3. With the passage of time, the international situation is prone to change. While neutral countries have the right to retain, adjust, improve and abolish the policy of neutrality, so that they can resist external influences and maintain relative stability ... Neutrality will surely usher in a new development opportunity around Mongolia and will certainly promote the development of various undertakings in Mongolia ... It is in Mongolia's interest to study, explore and achieve permanent neutrality. " Simply put, it is in Mongolia's interest to become a permanent neutral country in Mongolia's eyes.

2.4 2015-present

After the idea of neutrality put forward by Mongolia was not supported, it seems that the domestic bill on neutrality in Mongolia has not been further promoted. So far, Mongolia seems to be continuing its "multi-fulcrum" foreign policy and its great power balance diplomacy.

Through the vertical timeline, we can see the change of Mongolia's foreign policy: from "one-sided" to "multi-fulcrum" to the desire for neutrality, which seems to have changed a lot, but in fact it conforms to the geopolitical choice of a small country.

As a country sandwiched between China and Russia, it is not difficult to see Mongolia's anxiety and anxiety.

As mentioned above, Mongolia's independence was achieved with the support of the Soviet Union. Therefore, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, ensuring the survival of

the country was the most critical goal of Mongolia. At that time, the "one-sided" foreign policy made Mongolia lean toward the Soviet Union. Such an alliance strategy could greatly guarantee its security and alleviate its survival dilemma. After that, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the world pattern changed. Mongolia wanted to get rid of the passive situation of being controlled by other countries during the Cold War and hoped to improve its dominant position in foreign relations as much as possible. Choosing a "multi-fulcrum" foreign policy at this time can not only help Mongolia break the previous dependence on a single country, but also greatly promote the development of domestic political, economic and military strength and improve the international environment and conditions needed for national development. After that, Mongolia put forward the idea of neutrality because of its own considerations. In view of the ever-changing world situation, Mongolia itself can't get rid of the sense of insecurity sandwiched between two great powers. For Mongolia, if it decides to remain neutral forever, it can avoid becoming a bargaining chip for powerful countries and get rid of the situation of being dominated by other countries, thus contributing to the sustainability of its internal development. At the same time, Mongolia can take this opportunity to make more effective use of international resources and strive for more rich political and diplomatic benefits for its own country. Therefore, whether it is a "one-sided" foreign policy, a "multi-fulcrum" foreign policy or the idea of trying to seek neutrality later, Mongolia's choices in different periods are for the better survival of this country.

3. Why Can't the Neutrality Policy that Mongolia Wants Be Implemented?

3.1 What Is Neutrality?

Generally speaking, neutrality is a response of non-conflicting parties to war and conflict, which has a long history in international relations and appears almost simultaneously with war. Its concept first appeared in some diplomatic letters of various countries in the 14th century and treaties between European monarchies on non-participation in armed conflicts. Since the 17th century, neutrality has also been playing an important role in the world. However, neutrality at that time was different from that of neutral countries today, and it should be understood as a policy. For example, in its early history, the United States also tried to pursue a neutral policy and sought to maintain friendly relations with France and Britain, two belligerents. This is the embodiment of the neutral policy. Switzerland, which became a permanent neutral country in 1815, was the first neutral country in the world. As froman said: "... it is necessary to distinguish between the legal form of Swiss representatives and the political type adopted by countries in history-the United States, Belgium and so on." (Herman,1958) It can be said that Switzerland's legal neutrality is endowed by national laws and treaties, and it is not the neutrality policy that the country implemented in wartime. (Cheng, 2004)

Here, the conceptual difference between permanent neutrality and temporary neutrality is extended. Castren's definitions of permanent neutrality and temporary neutrality are as follows: the former means that a country is out of all armed conflicts between countries, not just out of a specific war like the

latter. (E. Castren, 1954) In this sense, even permanent neutrality is related to the state of war and has practical significance only during the war.

3.2 The Reasons for the Neutrality of Typical Neutral Countries

3.2.1 Switzerland

Switzerland was originally a militant country, but due to the Marignano War, Swiss mercenaries suffered heavy casualties, and the Swiss began to reflect on the appropriateness of their national policy. This war broke the idea that Switzerland wanted to rely on force to stand on the European continent, and made Switzerland's national policy begin to converge and turn to self-protection, which was the beginning of Switzerland's choice of neutrality policy, but the reason why Switzerland was finally neutral. It is not only because of their strict neutrality attitude and the strong force of all the people, but also because European countries also need a peaceful and neutral land for negotiations and private transactions. Therefore, under various comprehensive factors, Switzerland's permanent neutrality has gained international recognition.

3.2.2 Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan also wants to be a neutral country for many reasons. First, the people of Turkmenistan regard national independence as a top priority. Because of its prominent strategic position and rich natural resources, Turkmenistan naturally arouses the covet of the major political forces in the world. Facing the competition of major forces, Turkmenistan chooses neutrality to establish a safe line of defense for its own country's survival. (Zhang, 2001) Second, Turkmenistan is a small country, but it is rich in natural resources. Choosing neutrality can not only improve its international status, but also make full use of its own resources to build its own country. (Sun & Wu, 2022) Therefore, based on the national conditions and the world situation, neutrality is a very good choice for Turkmenistan. So through unremitting efforts, Turkmenistan has successfully become the only permanent neutral country in Asia.

3.3 Why Does Mongolia Want Neutrality?

As we all know, the reason why small countries choose neutral strategy and want to establish their status as permanent neutral countries lies in that they are under explicit or implicit threats and intend to obtain security guarantees and support from all parties in the world by virtue of this impartial position. (Li, 2018)

Mongolia's announcement of permanent neutrality reflects the direct or potential risk environment it faces. (Robert, 2015) On one level, Mongolia has been ruled by two strong neighboring countries in history, and it is sandwiched between them. No matter how peaceful the external situation seems, Mongolia always feels strong instability and threats. On the other hand, the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis in 2013 led to a sharp decline in Russia's relations with the United States and other western countries. At the same time, the strategy of "returning to the Asia-Pacific" implemented by the United States also filled the atmosphere between China and the United States with tension, which made it impossible for Mongolia to maintain its security partnership with its third neighbor, the United States,

and it was difficult to maintain its original strategic balance. Mongolia doesn't want to offend any neighboring country, and it doesn't want to alienate from the third neighboring country as a strategic fulcrum. Therefore, in order to prevent it from having to choose between the neighboring countries and the "third neighboring country" in the future, it will destroy the existing balance and thus pose a threat to itself. Therefore, Mongolia really wants to maintain a neutral position. (Ulan, 2019) Being neutral, not only in the largest. (Robert, 1969)

Therefore, in the eyes of Mongolian scholars, establishing foreign policy on the basis of neutrality not only ensures that Mongolia is respected and friendly by its neighbors, but also increases the value of its own geographical and strategic position.

3.4 Why Does Mongolia's Neutral Policy Stand Still?

Generally speaking, the measure of the success of a country's permanent neutrality strategy is whether the country can obtain "universal international recognition". Therefore, for a small country whose own power resources are insufficient to maintain independence and security under the power system of a big country, obtaining universal international recognition is the most direct and powerful means and right for a permanent neutral country to safeguard its own security. (Khurelbatar, 2017)

According to Switzerland and Turkmenistan mentioned earlier in this paper, it is not difficult to see that the success of Swiss neutrality is inseparable from its own military strength, and Turkmenistan's successful neutrality is inseparable from its resources.

Mongolia has a special geographical position and rich resources, so why did he first express his desire for neutrality at the United Nations but failed to get "universal international recognition"?

3.4.1 Special Geographical Location

Being sandwiched between China and Russia, basically no country dares to pose a threat to Mongolia's territorial sovereignty, so Mongolia's military strength has always been maintained at a low level. But also because of this geographical location, for China and Russia, Mongolia is a strategic buffer zone between China and Russia. For the United States and other western countries, Mongolia is being inserted into the heart of China and Russia, and contact with Mongolia can make China and Russia sleepless. (Song, 2020)

Therefore, Mongolia's desire for neutrality can hardly be recognized by big countries. For the two neighboring countries of China and Russia, Mongolia's neutrality is not in the national interests of both sides. For the western forces headed by the United States, Mongolia is an important factor that directly affects Sino-Russian relations. If Mongolia is neutral, they will not be able to take advantage of this. In addition, Mongolia's military strength is weak, which can't make big countries fear. Mongolia's demands are not in the interests of big countries. Under the current circumstances, Mongolia's neutrality cannot be recognized by neighboring countries and big countries in the world.

3.4.2 Natural Resource

Thanks to its special natural geographical location, Mongolia has rich grassland and rich mineral resources. However, due to uncontrolled grazing in Mongolia, nothing grows in many places, and

uncontrolled mining also dries up rivers. And the reason why they do this is also closely related to history. In the period when the Soviet Union was "one-sided", in order to better develop cooperation with the Soviet Union, Mongolia could only provide animal husbandry and mining. During this period, Mongolia sold a lot of natural resources, which seriously hindered its own industrial development. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, only mottled grassland and harsh environment brought about by over-exploitation remained in Mongolia. Excessive pumping of groundwater leads to the desertification of Mongolian grassland, and the mined mineral resources are not renewable.

However, Mongolia has not learned a lesson from it. Up to now, it still welcomes countries that come from overseas to exploit resources. In 2011, Mongolia launched the "wolf in progress" action: advantageous industries thought about rising and completed "primitive accumulation" with resources. However, this "pollution first, then treatment" scheme is also a kind of encouragement. By 2016, Mongolia's GDP will return from 17% to 1.1%, but natural resources cannot return to the original.

Recently, Mongolia seems to be trying to carry out rare earth diplomacy, but it is also difficult for Mongolia to succeed in rare earth diplomacy. The main reason lies in economy and technology. China is the largest country with rare earth reserves in the world, and it has a technology that other countries can't control: rare earth separation and purification. Although Mongolia is the second largest country with rare earth reserves in the world, even the infrastructure for rare earth mining depends on China, and Mongolia's economy cannot support its independent rare earth diplomacy. As scholar Danba Gambarte said: "Mongolian security policy is almost impossible to be independent."

Therefore, judging from the current conditions, whether it is external or internal conditions, Mongolia can basically not realize its vision of longing for neutrality.

4. Mongolia's Current Diplomatic Tendency

In the past 30 years, China-Mongolia diplomacy has been hot and cold, but it can be seen that Mongolia's diplomatic line is generally pro-China after Mongolian Foreign Minister Battsetse took office. During the epidemic in the late 19th and early 20th century, Mongolia donated 30,000 sheep to China to support China in fighting the epidemic. In 2021, Battsetse visited China and Russia at the same time. Facing the Russian temptation, Battsetse replied: "Mongolia has never faced a direct threat. We adhere to the principle of neutrality and will not join military organizations, even organizations with strong military nature will not consider it." Although U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Newland visited Mongolia in 2023, Battsetseg visited China within one month after that, which showed Mongolia's attitude towards China. It can be seen that Mongolia is obviously "more pragmatic" on strategic security issues. Battsetse attaches great importance to relations with China, which is supported by the "pragmatists" in Mongolian politics. The export of Mongolian minerals can not be separated from China, and its economic dependence also shows the importance of China to Mongolia.

However, Mongolia still continues its diplomacy of great power balance.

Mongolia not only contacted the United States, Japan and South Korea, but also actively contacted

Europe, and reached agreements with Germany and France. On the surface, it seems that Mongolia will fall to the western camp, but in fact it is impossible for Mongolia to join the western camp, and the west does not dare to really accept Mongolia. The "third neighbor" policy is only a means for Mongolia to realize the diversification of foreign aid, which is in line with Mongolia's actual interests. After all, Mongolia's geographical position, in any case, can not ignore the relationship with China and Russia. (Robert, 1968)

Mongolia emphasizes values and ideology in dealing with western countries, but it still depends on China and Russia in economy and trade. Therefore, at present, Mongolia's balanced diplomatic strategy seems to be balanced, but in fact it is very careful to practice its "third neighbor" foreign policy.

5. Summary

Nowadays, with the change of the international situation, many neutral countries' policies have also changed. If Mongolia wants to continue to promote the policy of permanent neutral countries, it should comply with the expectations of the international community for neutral countries. If Mongolia becomes a permanent neutral country, whether it can make use of its special geographical position and make a unique contribution to the international community should be considered by Mongolia. (Cheng, 2023) But before that, for Mongolia, it is more important to adjust its domestic economic development. Only by fully developing its economy and enhancing its national strength can Mongolia have the possibility of gaining neutrality.

For China, Mongolia's geographical position is very important to China's northern security pattern. China should be alert to the current development of Mongolia's relations with the United States, Japan and South Korea in order to avoid bringing hidden dangers to China. (Lu, 2011) And the understanding and analysis of Mongolian diplomacy is also conducive to the adjustment of China's policy toward Mongolia. China and Mongolia are now facing rare opportunities for development, and their societies should strive to develop harmoniously and prosper together. China and Mongolia should strive to seize the opportunity and continue to deepen cooperation in order to open up a better future.

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