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The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Mongolia's Quest for Security

Anthony V. Rinna*

Abstract

In 2014 the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO) paved the way for Mongolia to accede to full membership. Historically, Mongolia's relations with the outside world were dominated by its relationship with China and Russia, which are Mongolia's sole geographic neighbours. Even in light of the strong development of Mongolia's "Third Neighbour" policy, China and Russia continue to be important factors in Mongolia's foreign policy, besides being the largest and most powerful members of the SCO. Mongolia's decision to join the SCO, however, was made to enhance Mongolian security. The decision did not necessarily result from the Sino-Russian geopolitical pressure, but the geographic as well as political and economic realities of Mongolia's existence mean it will inevitably maintain close ties with Beijing and Moscow. This paper argues that Mongolian accession to the SCO will not fundamentally alter the country's post-communist foreign policy of balancing between China, Russia and Mongolia's "third neighbour", but rather will bring many benefits for Mongolian security.

Keywords: China, foreign policy, Mongolia, Russia, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

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Mongolia's Path to SCO Membership

Since the end of communism in 1990, Mongolia has been hailed in the West as a success story in post-communist transition to democracy, and has largely charted a foreign policy that has balanced relations with its neighbours China and Russia. Additionally, a major component of Mongolian foreign policy has been the development of a "Third Neighbour" policy, in which Mongolia has sought to create a healthy relationship with a variety of other powers from which it is geographically removed, such as Japan and the United States. In the summer of 2014, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) adopted draft documents outlining the procedure for Mongolia, along with India, Iran and Pakistan to join the organisation.

Mongolia has successfully built sound relations with other countries outside of its immediate vicinity on a bilateral level, and has also successfully obtained membership in international organizations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Former Mongolian acting Prime Minister Nyamosor Tuva declared in 1999 that the Mongolia was to pursue a so-called "multi-pillar" foreign policy, which stipulated the development of good-neighbourly relations with China and Russia, Mongolia's "sole neighbours" as well as other key countries outside of Mongolia's periphery. He stated that the good relations between China and Russia after the Cold War were a stabilising factor in the region and a healthy development for Mongolia¹. Speaking in 2005, Mongolian foreign minister Ts. Munh-Orgil stated that Mongolians had a strong sense of national identity, and as such were not afraid of regional integration. Rather, he stated further, Mongolians feared being left behind in the trend toward greater regional integration, and that Mongolia had a lot to offer the international community in terms of promoting economic cooperation and security in Asia².

Mongolia and its Geopolitical Neighbourhood

One of the most fundamental questions regarding Mongolia's accession to full membership in the SCO is the extent to which it will affect Mongolia's multi-pillar foreign policy. Indeed, the issue has two fronts, for not only will Mongolia have to continue balancing between the SCO and its proverbial "third neighbour" but also, within the SCO framework, between

China and Russia themselves. Despite the importance that Ulan Bataar has placed on its “Third Neighbour” policy, Mongolia is cautious about the development of this policy with the United States and other countries for fear of causing alarm in China and Russia³. Given Mongolia’s geographic position between China and Russia, and the important role these two powers play in the greater Eurasian region, it is natural that Mongolian foreign policy would be strongly oriented toward these two countries, and the SCO represents an opportunity to develop Mongolia’s respective bilateral relations with China and Russia within one framework.

In addition to attending the September 2014 summit of the SCO heads of state in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Mongolian President Tsakhiagi in Elbegdorj also paved the way for a separate trilateral meeting with his Chinese and Russian counterparts. The Chinese premier and Russian president accepted Elbegdorj’s proposal for a tri-party meeting in Dushanbe, aimed at increasing cooperation between China, Mongolia and Russia. The Mongolian desire to be a more integrated regional actor in the context of its position between China and Russia coincides well with the stated intentions of Chinese premier Xi Jinping. Speaking as an influential leader at the SCO summit in Dushanbe, Jinping stated that he wanted to see the SCO take a greater role in securitizing Eurasia, particularly Central Eurasia. Ultimately, this translates into the SCO taking greater responsibility for regional security to the point of eliminating the need for actors from outside greater Eurasia (such as the United States) to be involved in regional affairs. Apart from security affairs, the SCO has also professed a desire for greater economic cooperation among member and observer states, particularly in the context of the China-led Silk Road Economic Belt initiative. Furthermore, at the Dushanbe SCO summit in 2014, Xi Jinping highlighted that the SCO was based on a system of “partnership” instead of “alliance.”⁴

The current Russian foreign policy places a high level of importance on the SCO for its ability to serve as a multilateral framework. This has enabled Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin to take several initiatives and actions, to execute his foreign policy in such a manner that it is able to take critical decisions with more than just bilateral considerations⁵. This includes actions such as the transfer of Syrian chemical weapons away from the ruling Assad regime, with broad diplomatic support among SCO members.

At the 2014 SCO summit, Putin met with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, and discussed Sino-Russian cooperation on the development of the Russian Far East⁶. This will entail issues such as energy and trade, which are also important factors for Mongolia's cooperation with China and Russia, and the SCO provides just such a multilateral framework for cooperation and discussion in this regard. For Russia, the SCO's most important and urgent task is promotion of security and stability in Afghanistan. While this is not an immediate concern for Mongolia, Mongolian membership in the SCO may allow Mongolia a chance to participate in helping to securitize Afghanistan, especially given Mongolia's track record of assisting in security assistance missions abroad.

As Mongolia has pursued a more-or-less successful foreign policy of equilibrium between its neighbors and other powers, as well as engagement with international peacekeeping and security cooperation, Mongolia has largely made the decision to join the SCO in order to maintain its own security interests, rather than due to external pressure from China or Russia. From a geopolitical point of view, Mongolia comprises a neutral or buffer state between China and Russia⁷. Despite Mongolia's previous role as a pawn in geopolitics between China and Russia, especially during the 19th and 20th centuries, modern Mongolia has many important roles to play in contemporary Asian security. In particular, there is a potential role for Mongolia as an intermediary between China and the United States in the case of ensuing conflict between the two powers. Likewise, Mongolia can have an important role in moderating Sino-Russian relations, and should be able to call upon its historic importance in the Turkic world to take greater geopolitical responsibility for Turkic-speaking Central Asia⁸.

In many ways the realization of the SCO is a natural and useful development, as the organization comprises two major Eurasian powers (China and Russia) as well as several other Central Eurasian states. The SCO is the only regional structure that comprises all of these key states and that is also capable of dealing with a host of other problems such as terrorism⁹, as well as other security issues Mongolia may potentially face. Some consider Mongolia's desire to join the SCO to be based on the perceived "toughness" of American interests in Asia, American "suppression" of Asian countries' national interests, and the fact

that the SCO is currently emerging as a counterbalance to NATO. As such, joining the SCO will allow Mongolia and the other incumbent members to assert their own interests to a greater extent¹⁰. Much as China has recently begun to create a financial group, the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, which many in the West perceive as a challenge to Western financial institutions such as the IMF, at the 2013 SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, members discussed plans to create an SCO Development Bank. The establishment of such an independent financial institution will also provide Mongolia with a regionally-based resource in times of financial need as an alternative to Western monetary structures.

Some, however, have expressed concern that Mongolia's membership in the SCO will have negative implications for Mongolia's independent foreign policy and for the international goodwill that Mongolia has enjoyed as a successful and healthy post-communist democracy¹¹. It is precisely the need for Mongolia to balance between China and Russia, however that may actually help Mongolia maintain its foreign policy independence. While China and Russia's relationship with each other has been codified as a "strategic partnership", the two countries remain cautious toward each other, and their own relationship is driven largely by mutual benefit. Thus, the SCO itself does not represent a definitive bloc, much less one directed against the United States and its allies, many of which feature in Mongolia's third neighbour policy.

Mongolia's relations with China and Russia: A historical background and civilizational framework

From 1691 until the beginning of the 20th century, Mongolia had been ruled by China, and after a brief period of independence and later geopolitical contention between the Chinese and the Russians, Mongolia became a communist republic, shortly after the establishment of the Soviet Union. Mongolia remained firmly within the Soviet sphere of influence until the fall of Mongolian communism in 1990. Even after the Sino-Soviet split, Mongolia remained a consistent ally of the USSR.

After the fall of communism in Mongolia's multi-vector foreign policy sought to create a state of "equidistance" between China, Russia and the collective Mongolian "third neighbour"¹², which was to consist of Japan, the United States, and others. Mongolia's development of a "third

neighbour” policy began at an opportune time for the new country. During the 1990s, Russia had turned in on itself in order to ameliorate its own domestic situation, while China had not taken any major steps toward increasing political influence over Mongolia. As such, the newly democratic Mongolia found an opening to enhance its relations with the outside world.

Despite the Mongolian policy of developing sound relations with other countries, outside observers may be tempted to assume that Mongolia’s accession to the SCO is based on the fact that, with its small population and coveted natural resources such as copper, gold and uranium, Mongolia would not be able to withstand pressures exerted by China or Russia. Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to say, despite Mongolia’s relative weakness compared with its much larger and more powerful neighbors, that Mongolia is simply a pawn subject to the whims and will of China and Russia. In fact, Mongolia is not only able to leverage its own interests in its bilateral relations with China and Russia, respectively, but it also has a certain amount of influence on the bilateral relationship between China and Russia.¹³

This is, in part, because both China and Russia regard Mongolia as an important facet in their respective foreign policies, and while both China and Russia need Mongolia, they most likely do not want to become locked into contention or a standoff over Mongolia. Not only do China and Russia need Mongolia, but also both China and Russia need each other. Furthermore, since independence, Mongolia has managed to take advantage of its newfound position outside of Russia’s sphere of influence and build relationships with outside powers and partners. Indeed, with the broad international involvement in Mongolia today, notably in the fields of defence as well as mineral resources, Mongolia has greater room to maneuver between partners.

One of the fundamental problems with SCO territorial expansion is the fact that the organization’s regional scope is very loosely defined¹⁴. The SCO is highly versatile and flexible in terms of its membership, insofar as factors such as language, religion or even geography or civilization are concerned (unlike for example, the Arab League or ASEAN). The diversity of the SCO’s member ranks is so robust that it can be difficult to bring together so

many states to address issues of mutual concern. In response to the vast array of cultural and civilizational backgrounds within the SCO, in fact, the organization has emphasised the need to promote cultural and people-to-people exchange in order to promote emotional ties and comprehensive cooperation between member states of the SCO¹⁵.

Permanent members consist of states located in Central Asia, East Asia, and one truly Eurasian power (Russia) while its current observer states such as Afghanistan, Iran, India, Mongolia and Pakistan, are located in the Middle East, Northeast Asia and South Asia. As such, the lack of a strict regional definition of the SCO's scope in fact coincides well with Mongolia's policy of variegating its international partners. The vast territorial breadth of the SCO means that the organization first and foremost comprises two of the countries that are widely considered to be emerging "poles" in international politics (namely China and Russia). It also allows Mongolia a framework in which it can enact and pursue interests outside of its immediate periphery, such as closer ties to India. Unlike Mongolian membership in an organization like the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (which is largely Russia-centric and whose members are exclusively ex-Soviet states), Mongolian membership in the SCO does not bind the country to a single "pole" or foreign policy orientation at the expense of other partners. This diversity among member states, as well as Mongolia's own unique background, will likely help Mongolia to be an active member of the organization and not be merely subjected to the will of its much more powerful neighbours and SCO co-members.

Looking at SCO expansion and membership through a civilizational lens, the SCO comprises many different civilizational categories. In the context of the "Clash of Civilizations", for example, Mongolia is considered to be part of a so-called "Buddhist" civilization. Because Mongolia does not fit into any of the broad civilisational paradigms that constitute the SCO, such as the Chinese Confucian civilisational mold, or those of Orthodox Russia or Islamic Central Asia, Mongolia will face difficulty in becoming a member of the SCO that does not fit into a larger paradigm within the organisation¹⁶. Given the SCO's cultural-civilizational and geographic versatility, however, Mongolia's independence from any of the other broader civilizational backgrounds within the SCO may actually help

Mongolia maintain a certain degree of foreign policy independence, and will potentially assist Mongolia in continuing to execute its balanced foreign policy.

Contemporary Political Relations with China, Russia and the Third Neighbour

Even though Mongolia was primarily under Soviet influence during the communist period, China has never really considered Mongolia to be outside of its sphere of influence. Today, Russian influence over Mongolia has decreased significantly, whereas the degree of Chinese influence has become stronger. Since the end of the Cold War, Mongolia has essentially shifted once again from Russian to Chinese dominance¹⁷. Beijing regards Chinese influence over Mongolia as a major strategic imperative. China has found the degree of cooperation between Mongolia and other countries such as Japan and the US to be alarming, and for this reason China sought to strengthen its relations with Mongolia. In fact, this was a major reason why China viewed Mongolian observer status with the SCO as a source of benefit for China¹⁸.

China's economic interests overshadow its political imperatives in Mongolia. Its economic presence in Mongolia has been particularly active since the 1990s, when China replaced Russia as Mongolia's largest trading partner. Today around 50% of Mongolia's foreign trade is with China. China has been particularly interested in Mongolia's natural resource wealth. Against fears that Chinese penetration of the Mongolian economy will be excessive, Mongolia has taken measures to stem Chinese economic leverage, especially in the context of Sino-Russian economic competition over Mongolia in the natural resources sphere. In particular, Mongolia has taken measures to prevent Chinese economic involvement from turning into a political clout. Nevertheless, it recognises that China's profound economic interests in Mongolia are in Mongolia's own interest, and as such, the Mongolian government has expressed its desire to participate in Chinese economic initiatives such as the "Silk Road Economic Belt" proposed by Chinese leader Xi Jinping¹⁹. Indeed, while China's major economic interest in the Eurasia region is to secure a steady supply of energy from Central Asia, China has major interests in the economic development of its northwestern Xinjiang region. Strong economic ties with Mongolia, which

shares a long border with Xinjiang, will likely help in this regard given Mongolia's natural resource wealth²⁰.

The post-Communist Mongolia's relations with Russia were first codified in the 1993 Agreement on Friendly Relations and Cooperation. This was a departure from the Mongolian-Soviet agreement of 1966, which had previously served as the legal basis for Mongolia-Russia (Soviet Union) relations, because of the thaw in Sino-Russian relations after the collapse of the USSR as the threat to Russia's eastern borderlands had evaporated²¹. Russia, in fact, was disinterested in Mongolia during the 1990s, focusing more on domestic imperatives. Nevertheless, Russian interest in Mongolia has reemerged²². Mongolia figures in Russia's strategic imperatives in Asia largely due to the country's vast mineral and natural resource wealth, as well as Russia's geopolitical and geostrategic designs. In terms of trade, Sino-Mongolian business ties eclipse Russian economic relations with Mongolia. Russia, nonetheless, supplies massive amounts of energy to Mongolia; however, it is not only in Mongolia's interests but also in Russia's interests as well to diversify the scope of Russo-Mongolian trade²³.

The concept of Mongolia's "Third Neighbour" originates from the period immediately following the collapse of communism in Mongolia. James Baker III first used the term "third neighbour" during a state visit to Mongolia in 1990, while serving as US Secretary of State. The Mongolian foreign policy concept of a "third neighbour" is by no means limited to Mongolia's relations with the United States. Indeed, several other countries such as South Korea and Turkey fall into the category of Mongolia's "third neighbour". Yet the US is the most important part of Mongolia's Third Neighbour policy, and is also the main geopolitical rival for China and Russia in Eurasia.

The United States has consistently praised Mongolia's transition from communism to a liberal democracy. Yet Mongolia-US relations are ultimately based on the realisation of each other's respective interests. For Mongolia, relations with the US bring a steady flow of investment and the ability to maintain political independence and manoeuvrability between China and Russia. For the US, benefits from a sound relationship with Mongolia include an American geostrategic projection between China and Russia²⁴. The US military presence in Mongolia- which has mostly taken

the form of capacity building and advising on military reform- will serve as a tripwire for judging Chinese and Russian designs for Mongolia²⁵. Mongolia has also served US interests with regard to the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula as well as its decision to deploy troops to Iraq, despite opposition to the invasion of that country by China and Russia²⁶.

Strategic Benefits of Mongolian Accession to the SCO

Despite its warm relationship with the US, Mongolia has been long regarded as the most favourable country for full membership by the other permanent members of the SCO, which were otherwise ambivalent about India, Iran and Pakistan. This was based, in part on the permanent members' general perception of Mongolia as being the "least problematic" of other potential members²⁷. Aside from Mongolia's bilateral relations with its neighbours and major SCO powers China and Russia, as well as the countries that constitute Mongolia's "third neighbour", defense and energy security interests are also important factors in Mongolia's SCO membership. Mongolia, in addition to its widespread activity in international peacekeeping operations, has engaged in several bilateral military exercises with China and Russia. Even though the SCO is not a military alliance, Mongolian membership in the SCO will enhance Mongolia's military-to-military cooperation with China and Russia (as well as other SCO members) on a multilateral basis.

The abundance of energy resources with which several SCO members have been endowed is also likely to prove beneficial to Mongolia. The SCO will provide it with a framework for greater energy cooperation as the organization continues to develop its energy policy coordination (see below). Thus, the SCO will assist Mongolia in promoting its interests in both the traditional security sphere as well as in terms of non-traditional security such as its energy security. Indeed, the SCO has achieved a certain level of increased confidence building and resolution of border disputes among its members²⁸. As such, there are ample opportunities for the realisation of Mongolian security interests through accession to the organisation.

Defence and Military Cooperation

A cornerstone of Mongolian foreign policy is a policy of neutrality toward other countries-much to the benefit of Mongolia's security. Mongolia's refusal to allow its territory to become an instrument in regional strategic military issues has enhanced its own security. Part of Mongolia's multi-vector foreign policy has been the constitutional prohibition of the establishment of foreign military bases on Mongolian territory²⁹. This has not only allowed Mongolia to escape the type of geopolitical contention between military powers in Central Asia inherent in Russian-American strategic relations in the region, but has also served Mongolia well in terms of triangular China-Russia-US relations. Indeed, if any one of these countries were able to establish a permanent military base on the Mongolian soil, it could have set off alarm bells for either China or Russia, and endanger Mongolian security. In order to assuage Chinese fears, Mongolia has also agreed not to engage in any type of formal military alliance against China³⁰.

Despite the small size of the Mongolian military, the Mongolian armed forces have consistently participated in various defense and security-related operations around the world. Mongolia has been active in several UN peacekeeping missions, such as sending military observers to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia and Western Sahara, as well as deploying troops to Iraq with the US-led coalition that invaded that country in 2003. As such, Mongolia has presented itself as a dedicated participant in global peacekeeping missions³¹. In fact, the use of the Mongolian armed forces in peacekeeping operations is part of Mongolia's national strategy for developing good relations with the outside world and showing itself to be a ready and willing player in the international arena³².

This strategy, it appears, will serve Mongolia well both in its developing relations with the SCO as well as in its continued pursuit of substantive relations with other states outside of its immediate vicinity. By demonstrating its willingness to cooperate with other militaries, Mongolia will be able to project itself as an active partner in promoting security within the territorial framework of the SCO. Furthermore, enhanced military-to-military cooperation between Mongolia and other SCO members will likely increase confidence between the former and its larger neighbours. At the same time, Mongolia's active engagement in military

operations abroad will continue to allow Mongolia to maintain its multi-pillar foreign policy and increase Mongolian interoperability with Western and other militaries (such as that of South Korea, which has also been active in international operations as a way of increasing its global profile).

Under the aegis of the SCO, China has engaged in several military exercises with its fellow SCO member states in Central Asia. This has visibly raised China's profile in Central Asia, and comes as a direct response to the growing American presence in Central Asia. Furthermore, the consistent and successful execution of military exercises in the name of the SCO has served to raise the organization's profile as a whole and lend credence to the possibility that the SCO may evolve into a more viable provider of security. In fact, the SCO's credibility and projection of a strong image enhanced with its invitation to Mongolia for grant of observer status³³.

It may be noted that military cooperation between Mongolia and Russia declined sharply in the 1990s, and Mongolia sought to diversify its military partners, particularly with the United States. This cooperation, however, has recently seen a revival, especially in the form of joint training exercises. In September, 2010, Mongolia and Russia undertook joint counter-terrorism exercises, known as "Darkhan-3" at the Burdunymilitary training complex in the Russian republic of Buryatia³⁴ (a Mongolian-speaking territory in the Russian Federation). Next year, the two countries held joint exercises codenamed "Selenga-2011", with the purpose of training Mongolian and Russian units to combat illegal armed separatists groups. The exercises took place in both the Russian republic of Buryatia and northern Mongolia³⁵. Joint Mongolian-Russian military exercises are an important confidence-building measure for Mongolia, for as one Mongolian defence official states, while Mongolia does not figure in Russia's overall defence strategy, Russia is nevertheless a potential military threat given Russia's economic interests in Mongolia. Thus, the continued development of the Third Neighbour policy is imperative for Mongolia's ability to hedge a potential Russian threat³⁶.

The SCO and Mongolian Energy Security

The SCO member states, in addition to engaging in defence cooperation, have engaged in a greater amount of economic cooperation, particularly in the field of energy. The vast energy infrastructure linking Russia and the Central Asian republics together have created the possibility of a common energy market within the SCO, and in 2006 the Organization established the SCO Energy Club, at the behest of Russia. The main goal of the SCO energy club is to unite energy producers and consumers into a common framework that will allow for a level of energy self-sufficiency among the SCO states. Theoretically, the establishment and professed goal of the “energy club” is not to create undue advantages for state-owned energy corporations or monopolies, but to create a balanced and equitable playing field for SCO producer and consumer states³⁷.

One of Mongolia’s professed foreign policy goals is to diversify itself away from excessive reliance on Russian energy supplies and expand its energy resources base into Central Asia³⁸. This, however, may be hampered by the fact that the SCO lacks a comprehensive energy policy, partly because of Sino-Russian competition for energy influence in Central Asia³⁹. Nevertheless, Mongolian membership in the SCO, and the organization’s inchoate energy policy, may provide a framework in which Mongolia could develop a strong energy relationship with energy rich SCO members such as Kazakhstan. This will depend not only on Russia’s own geopolitical interests and leverage over Central Asian energy transportation, but also the extent to which China is able to assert its energy interests in Central Asia.

If, however, Mongolia can build a sound energy partnership with other states within the framework of the SCO by utilizing the strong presence and keen interests of China and Russia, this would not only be of benefit to Mongolia but also demonstrate the cooperative and mutually-beneficial nature of SCO membership. One indication of this possibility is the construction of an energy pipeline from Kazakhstan to China, which represents a new development in the potential for energy cooperation between Central and East Asia. Central Asian energy, unlike resources from most other energy-producing regions, does not require the protection of a blue water navy⁴⁰, and as such this is a major benefit for landlocked Mongolia.

In October 2014, deputy foreign ministers of China, Mongolia and Russia met to discuss trilateral relations with each other, in particular the possibility of constructing energy pipelines, electricity infrastructure and rail lines that would link the three countries⁴¹. This meeting took place outside the SCO framework, but nevertheless, ministers from the three countries met the previous month in Dushanbe, Tajikistan as delegates for the SCO. Observers have described the meeting as a discussion between China and Russia jostling for influence over Mongolia. The stated purpose of the meeting was to discuss the construction of the Altai Pipeline, a proposed pipeline that was suspended in 2013⁴².

Conclusion

Mongolia's decision to accede to full membership in the SCO has resulted from the country's quest to ensure its own security, rather than as an act of acquiescence to geopolitical pressure from China or Russia. While Mongolia has developed a largely pro-Western orientation in its foreign policy, and is an object of political interest in China and Russia, its accession to SCO membership is part of its broader plan of being an active and responsible player in the Asia-Pacific region. Mongolia's unique political and civilisational reality means that Mongolia will likely be able to maintain its foreign policy independence, and that the SCO will actually provide an optimal means for it to balance its respective bilateral relations with China and Russia. Furthermore, SCO membership will likely provide Mongolia several benefits in terms of defence and military relations with China and Russia, as well as ensuring its energy security.

Nevertheless, Mongolian membership in the SCO does not definitively mean that Mongolia has turned away from its "third neighbor" policy and that it has prioritised its relations with SCO members China and Russia at the expense of its relations with other partners. As the SCO does not represent a single "pole" in the international order, SCO membership will actually be a continuation of Mongolia's track of foreign policy independence. It leaves open the possibility of greater cooperation between SCO member states and other states that comprise Mongolia's proverbial Third Neighbour.

NOTES

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