Russia and Mongolia are close neighbors, and their immediate geographic proximity has determined the mutual geopolitical pull of Russia and Mongolia, an objective contributing to political, military, trade and economics, cultural, and other bilateral ties. Russian-Mongolian relations, characterized by traditional good-neighborliness, are comprehensive, oriented to further development in the spirit of strategic partnership, based on a long history of bilateral interaction.

The first legal foundation for bilateral cooperation was set on November 5, 1921. Until the mid-1940s, Mongolia was one of the few socialist states to which the USSR provided significant military and economic aid. The Soviet Union was directly involved in the secularization of the Mongolian People’s Republic, which allowed this state to become a modern and influential actor in the international arena fairly quickly.

And in 1939, in the Battles of Khalkhin Gol, the USSR supported Mongolia’s independence against Japanese aggression. During the Second World War, Mongolia fought alongside the USSR and provided it with a great deal of material support. Installed on Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow, On the Roads of War monument was sent by the people of Mongolia. The memorial sculpture, commemorating the fighters of Mongolia during the Great Patriotic War, is placed at the Patriot Park in the Moscow region. In addition, representatives of the Mongolian Armed Forces are constantly invited to participate in Victory Parades. Most Mongolian ranking members of the military have been trained in Russia, and weapons and equipment are upgraded based on bilateral cooperation.

Until 1945, the USSR was the only country to recognize Mongolia as an independent nation. The rest of the international community still considered the Mongolian People’s Republic part of China. In 1945 a referendum was
held in Mongolia, with an absolute majority voting in favor of independence from The Celestial Empire. Due precisely to the USSR’s political support, Mongolia was recognized by other countries as a full-fledged state.

In September 2019, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, for a meeting with Mongolia’s President Khaltmaagiin Battulga. The two countries signed an open-ended Treaty on Friendship and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the talks.

This year, on July 11, Mongolia celebrated the centennial of independence. November 5 celebrated the centennial of diplomatic relations with Russia in the fall. It is symbolic that on December 16, the new Mongolian President, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, made his first trip abroad to Russia on an official visit and met with Russian President Vladimir Putin. “This visit has historical significance. Close and friendly cooperation for a hundred years is a rare historical precedent. Our relationship is a good, traditionally historic relationship,” the Mongolian leader said. According to him, the people of Mongolia perceive the friendship and comradeship of the states as an example of “good relations not only in our region but also worldwide.”

After a lengthy conversation, the two sides adopted a declaration on cooperation and called for increased economic cooperation. As emphasized in the declaration, the parties will continue to cooperate in combating the spread of the coronavirus, facilitating the resumption of transport links, and exploring opportunities to restore trade, economic, and humanitarian cooperation after the pandemic.

It is emphasized that Russia and Mongolia view military and military-technical cooperation as an essential part of a comprehensive strategic partnership and intend to deepen cooperation on defense and security. In addition, the parties will take measures to prevent the falsification of history and the glorification of Nazism.

The leaders discussed cooperation in the energy sector in detail. “Russia is a reliable supplier of energy to Mongolia,” Putin stressed, noting that our country provides about 80% of the republic’s demand for oil products. An extension of the Power of Siberia gas pipeline will pass through Mongolia to China. The project, called Soyuz-East, will begin to be implemented in 2024. At a meeting with the President of Mongolia, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the government is completing a feasibility study to construct the gas pipeline. The outline of the draft project should appear shortly.

For his part, Mongolia’s President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh said that Ulaanbaatar supports the Greater Eurasian Partnership initiative. He also spoke about the modernization of the central rail corridor and the construction of an energy corridor. The president noted the great opportunities for cooperation in the energy sector. “We are very pleased with the results of the work we are doing on the project to build a gas pipeline from Russia to China through Mongolia,” Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh said.

The positions of Russia and Mongolia on important regional and international issues coincide or are very close, and the countries well coordinate their actions on the United Nations platforms, Putin said.

Mongolia’s President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh also held talks in Moscow with the Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia, Valentina Matviyenko, culminating in the consolidation of the main guidelines for developing bilateral relations. The parties decided to hold another meeting shortly to create a new mechanism for inter-parliamentary cooperation. The Speaker of the Federation Council noted that Mongolia is one of Russia’s key strategic partners in Asia.

During his visit to Russia, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh also held talks with Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. They exchanged views on the possibility of developing cooperation between Mongolia and the Eurasian Economic Union.

Behind the protocol talks in Moscow by Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, there is an essential message on which the existence of Mongolia and the security of Russia largely depend. There has never been any contradiction between Russia and Mongolia. Mongolians are very friendly to Russians. During Soviet times, all Mongolians studied Russian, and the older generation know it well. 4,500 Mongolian students are studying in Russia today. Recently, Ulaanbaatar, to avoid a negative impact on Lake Baikal, not without pressure from Moscow, refused to build a cascade of hydroelectric power plants on the Selenga River and its tributaries. That is why the discussions in Moscow on Russia’s assistance in strengthening Mongolia’s energy security and the development of multifaceted economic cooperation between the two countries were of particular significance. As history shows, investments in Mongolia have always more than paid off.

Russia’s interests in Mongolia are undoubtedly of strategic importance. As past and present convince us, any
significant changes in this country and Northeast Asia as a whole have always required special attention and appropriate response from Russia. Therefore, Russian-Mongolian relations are a natural and vital part of the eastern vector of Russia’s foreign policy. This was emphasized in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. It was always mentioned during official contacts between representatives of both states, including during the current official visit of the new Mongolia’s President, Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh, to Moscow.

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