

**SMALL POWER: MONGOLIA'S DEMOCRATIZATION AND
FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES**

by

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Abstract

Small states are in a unique position, where they cannot hope to meet their foreign policy and security objectives through hard power. Rather, small states must balance against large neighbors via more subtle and nuanced ways. Through a critique of soft power, the author presents a new analytical framework for understanding *small power* and new criteria for defining “smallness” in today’s international system. *Small power* attempts to explain small state foreign policy decision-making and the role that “attractiveness” plays in their relations with larger states. One potential source of *small power*- democratic governance- is explored through a detailed look at the Mongolian model of democratization as a foreign policy tool in its “third neighbor policy”. Successful democratic transitions in small states can attract more security-related, economic, and institutional support from leading democratic countries than their small size might initially suggest.

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Introduction

Small states stand to gain substantially from the effective implementation and nurturing of a specific form of soft power. Small states that border much stronger nations will find themselves in a position of uncertainty, their sovereign status unguaranteed, and their economies dependently tied to a larger neighbor or neighbors. The disparity in military and economic capabilities between small states and their larger neighbors means that exercising hard power is not an option. Mongolia, the primary case study of this thesis, cannot hope to stand for long in a military battle between itself and China or Russia. And, if China were to shut down rail links with Ulaanbaatar,¹ Mongolia's economy would crash with little impact on the Chinese side. Small states must rely on other ways of achieving their economic, security, and foreign policy goals.

Small states do, however, have the ability to command a different kind of power in the promotion of their interests. Hard power might be an impossible dream for Mongolia, and the current debate around soft power remains limited to larger powers. Joseph Nye defined soft power as the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments";² however, this thesis shows that soft power is not a wholly appropriate term for the way small states have sought to rise above their inherent smallness- it implies an option between hard or soft, but for small states hard power is simply absent. Rather, I present a new theory of small state capabilities, called *small power*. Small states use *small power* to attract international interest and balance the roles of their potentially threatening neighbors against the influence of global powers such as the U.S. and the E.U. (and, by extension, NATO) where no hard power

¹ For example, when the Dalai Lama visited Ulaanbaatar in 2002, rail links between Mongolia and China were temporarily shut down.

² Nye, Joseph S. Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Boston: PublicAffairs, 2005). p. x

alternative is present. After a theoretical discussion of the nature of “smallness” in today’s international system, I present a detailed, albeit preliminary, definition of *small power*. The primary case study demonstrates that by virtue of proven democratic status, Mongolia has been able to fulfill its “Third Neighbor Policy” and work towards its primary foreign policy and security objectives.

The world’s leading democratic countries promote democracy with an eye to the domestic and international benefits that democracy can bring. Democracy is promoted by the United States, the European Union, and a number of other leading democratic nations. For example, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy’s official mission remains to grow and strengthen democracies on a global level.³ The E.U. also has instituted a number of private and governmental organizations to promote and assist in international democratization. Democratic states are believed to be more stable, promote the development of open market economies, best promote human rights, and strengthen governmental legitimacy. It is in the interests of global powers to ensure a stable international system; the promotion of democracy is one way that the larger powers have gone about ensuring their own interests and objectives.

Democracy is more than a domestic policy; rather, it is regarded as strongly linked to foreign policy objectives. Leading democracies might promote democratic governance for their own goals, but what are the rewards available to small states after they have democratized? This thesis seeks to answer a relatively simple question: Do democratic credentials allow small states leverage in their foreign policy and security objectives? Or, in other words, is democracy a source of *small power* for the globe’s smaller players? Indeed, some small states with little

³ As reported on the NED’s official website: <http://www.ned.org/about> (Accessed on December 1, 2012).

economic importance and limited geo-strategic potential have been able to garner what appears to be disproportionate support from the U.S., E.U., and other democratic powers.

I conclude with implications for policy makers in both small state and American/European policy makers as to how small states can be approached with their interests in mind to improve relations between democracies and influence deeper democratization. It is argued more broadly that recognizing the potential role of *small power* as a small state security strategy would allow the United States and European countries to better partner with those states.

Theoretical Foundations

This section outlines the development of small state foreign policy, concluding that small states are confined, but not necessarily powerless in the international system. Indeed, it is argued that small states are uniquely capable of wielding a totally different kind of power, albeit with notable limitations. At the end of this section I propose a model for how small states can and do use the various means at their disposal to increase their attractiveness as potential regional partners for global powers such as the U.S. and E.U. A new analytical concept, *small power*, will be key to understanding small state foreign policy decision-making in a comparative perspective as well as directly related to the primary case study, Mongolia.

“Smallness”

Before looking directly at small state foreign policy, I propose a new, two-sided definition for identifying a “small state”. How can we define *smallness* versus *medium-ness* versus *giganticness*? The available scholarship on this topic remains limited, but several themes emerge. Some scholars have attempted to set hard parameters to define a small state according to its population, territory, and economic performance.⁴ Others have defined small states as any state that is not a large power, putting the majority of the world’s countries into this category. This paper takes a dual approach saying that small states are small when they are in a position of clear asymmetry, and when they meet a number of behavioral criteria that point to a self-understanding of their own “smallness”. That is not say that there are not other types of small states; rather, states that meet all the criteria in my two-sided approach are the types of states that

⁴ Crowards, Tom. “Defining the Category of Small States.” *Journal of International Development* 14, no. 2 (March 2002). p 143

this thesis is particularly concerned with. By extension, they are also the types of small states that require new analytical frameworks to fully access their foreign policy and security objectives.

Approaching “smallness” as an inherently comparative concept means defining small states as those that relate with other states- more often than not their immediate neighbors- from an asymmetrical position. Small states are those countries that are vulnerable because of territorial, demographic, economic, and/or military asymmetries. The exact parameters of just how asymmetrical relations must be in order to qualify as large state-small state is outside of the scope of this thesis; what is important is that this asymmetric relationship corresponds to certain norms. Brantly Womack has explored asymmetry at length, defining what he calls “asymmetry theory”⁵ as a way to understand the relations between China and its neighbors. Womack makes an important contribution to the study of “smallness” by identifying the key characteristics of asymmetrical relations along the following 4 factors:

1. **Difference in Perspectives:**⁶ Two states in an asymmetrical relationship will have differing perspectives on both their own goals and the goals of the other side. The smaller state will perceive a direct threat from the larger power, and the larger state will see the smaller as irrelevant. Conversely, the small state will see itself as a victim, while the larger power will view its own policies as fair and justified.

⁵ Womack, Brantly, *China Among Unequals: Asymmetric Foreign Relationships in Asia* (World Scientific Publishing: New Jersey, 2010).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4

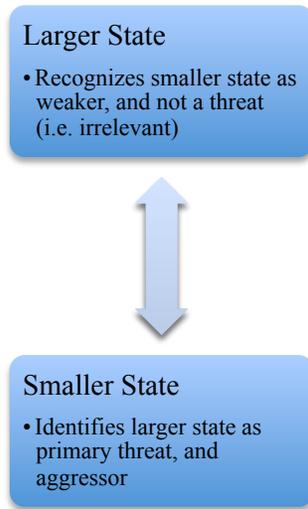


Figure 1: Perspectives

2. **Difference of Attention:**⁷ The smaller country will give priority to its relationship with the larger power. For the small country in an asymmetrical, bilateral relationship, the larger country is the largest potential threat, and the relationship must be carefully managed. The larger country often has more important relationships with other large powers, and the relationship with the smaller state will not appear as pressing a concern.

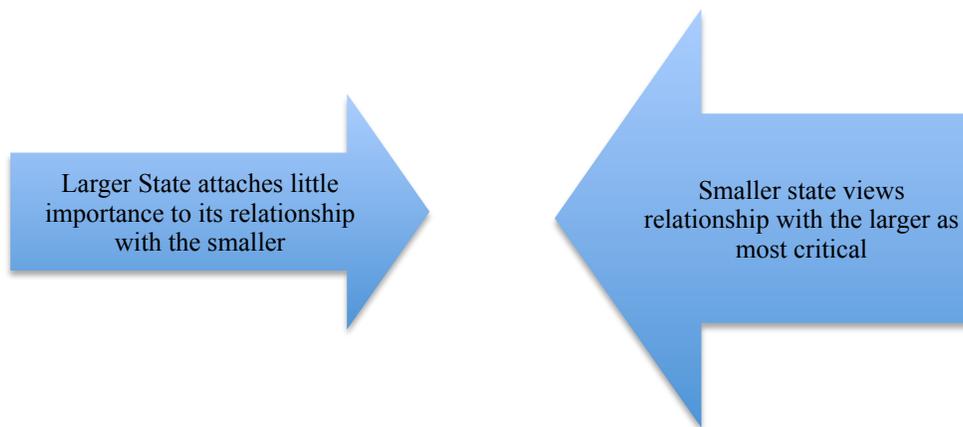


Figure 2: Attention

⁷ Ibid.

3. **Difference of Options:**⁸ The smaller state in an asymmetrical relationship will be limited in what, how, where, and when it can resist actions taken against it by a larger state. That is not to say that it will have no options, but the options available will be limited by the overwhelming disparity between itself and the larger power.

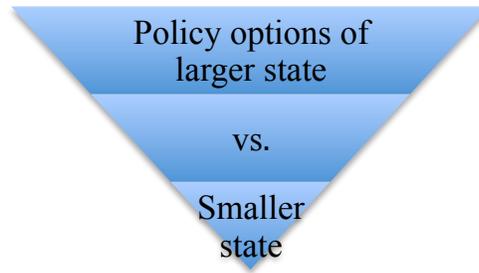


Figure 3: Options

4. **Excludes Differing Symmetries:**⁹ Finally, asymmetrical relationships are distinct from relationships of differing symmetries. For example while Japan might have a much smaller military than China, its economic output, means that their relationship is not entirely asymmetrical.

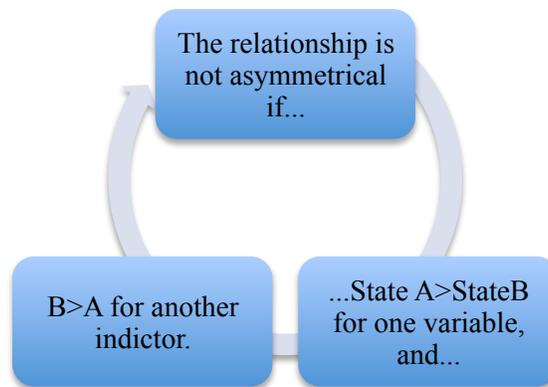


Figure 4: Differing Symmetries

⁸ Ibid., p. 23

⁹ Ibid.

All four of these factors are required for a relationship to be defined as asymmetrical and to begin classify a state as comparatively small. However, asymmetry alone is not enough, because it is unable to identify the foreign policy behaviors of small states. Asymmetry theory can identify a small state, while behavioral characteristics can shed light on what distinguishes small state foreign policy from that of larger states. With the addition of specific small state behaviors we can achieve a working definition of “smallness” in the contemporary international system that will better lend itself to analyzing small state foreign policy decision-making. I identify the following four behavioral characteristics (as summarized in Table 1) as indicative of “engaged” small states: 1) a clear “perception of vulnerability”¹⁰; 2) acknowledgement of a lack of military options; 3) demonstrated and necessary adaptability; 4) specialized balancing behavior. Adaptability and balancing are behaviors that develop over time and involve the active agency of the small state in question, while a lack of military options and vulnerability are more constant and passive characteristics that will ultimately influence decision-making.

These behavioral criteria are specific to “engaged” small states. By an “engaged” small state, I am referring to a country that is asymmetrically small and seeks to maintain its full independence through actively adapting its foreign and security policies to changes in the international system. Non-engaged small states might decide that their survival is better approached through isolation or bandwagoning with one specific neighbor. For example, North Korea has resisted adapting to today’s international norms; Laos has proven itself content to bandwagon with Vietnam; and Belarus seeks continued alliance with the Russian Federation. These states do not display adaptability or specialized balancing behavior, and instead remain effectively unengaged. As a result, either their independence is limited, or they remain isolated

¹⁰ Katzenstein, Peter J. “Small States and Small States Revisited.” *New Political Economy* 8, no. 1 (March 2003). p.

pariahs. Engaged, small states, on the other hand, will display all four of the behavior criteria identified here, taking active policy measures to improve their external security environment.

Table 1: Behaving Small

Behavior	Definition	Example
Perception of Vulnerability	The <i>perception</i> that the state is vulnerable to loosing its sovereignty and autonomy	The state perceives that a neighbor could eventually control their economy, government, etc.
Lack of Military Options	Asymmetrical military strength means the state cannot rely on military solutions for defense	The state’s military capacity is so small, that the other side could win easily.
Adaptability	Changing course and policies in reaction to changing balances of power	The rise of a neighboring state necessitates resetting relations with that country.
Specialized Balancing	Neither balancing nor bandwagoning with any state, but keep as many partners as possible	The state seeks to improve relations with two other states that are widely acknowledged as rivals.

If we accept that any state’s security identity is defined as “a product of past behavior and the images and myths linked to it, which have been internalized over long periods of time by the political elite and population of a state”¹¹ then it becomes clear how a small state would perceive its security. A key-identifying characteristic of *smallness* is a perception of vulnerability that creates an ideology of social partnership.¹² By social partnership, it is meant that small states need to partner with other states that will offer them support, without harming their already fragile and unguaranteed sovereignty. In other words, small states are states that will seek to work with other powers in order to protect themselves. The “perception of vulnerability”,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Katzenstein, *Small States*, p. 11

identified by Peter Katzenstein, is the most definitive characteristic of *smallness*.¹³ A perception of vulnerability does not immediately entail a real threat, but that the disparities between a small state and its larger neighbor(s) imply a level of strategic vulnerability. This is akin to Stephen Walt's balance of threat, according to which states will react by bandwagoning with or balancing against the largest threat, not necessarily the most powerful state.¹⁴ Threat in this sense refers to a state's aggregate power, its proximity to other bandwagoning or balancing states, the offensive capability of the threatening state, and the perceived offensive intentions of that state.¹⁵ Small states are those that perceive their acute vulnerability vis-a-vis larger powers; however, their options to mitigate that vulnerability remain relatively constricted.

Small states cannot hope to maintain their sovereignty and security through military means. Mongolia will not win in any armed conflict between itself and China and Russia; Nepal has no chance in fighting off India or China; and Georgia knows only too well how asymmetry between itself and Russia can mean almost instant defeat. It is not necessary that such a threat be forthcoming, but that the option remains. For example, it is unlikely that China would take military action against Mongolia in the foreseeable future; however, Mongolia cannot ignore that the possibility exists and that in such a scenario it would not stand a chance. Many small states' security and foreign policy objectives have been shaped by past dependence on a larger neighbor, often resulting in a loss of sovereignty and even full occupation/colonialization. Many small states know that they must find alternative methods to balance against their larger, potentially threatening neighbors, and that they must adapt those methods to new developments in the international system.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Walt, Stephen M. "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power." *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985). p. 9

¹⁵ Ibid.

Small states are those that must adapt in order to survive. There is a general tendency for small states to adapt to the international environment.¹⁶ A small state can, therefore, be defined by the fact that it must adapt to circumstances outside of its control. “Control” is the property of the larger powers, which have greater immediate influence in the international system. That is not to say that small states do not have any influence, it is simply to note that more powerful actors will largely govern the institutions of the international system. However, states without immediate influence, may adapt by finding new and innovative ways to get their voices heard. An important characteristic of small states is that they will seek out more equal status with larger powers through international institutions and other forms of multilateral diplomacy, where all players are formally guaranteed an equal say. International institutions can constrain great powers, softening the blow of international anarchy by regulating the use of force and reducing the importance of power asymmetries.¹⁷ Larger powers may use these institutions to further the status quo or challenge it, but small states generally must accept the order created by great powers in exchange for the potential benefits these organizations afford them.¹⁸ Adaptability goes hand-in-hand with the ability of small states to play larger powers off of each other. By adapting to the concerns of multiple larger states, small states are afforded more options in influencing their immediate security environment.

Newer theoretical concepts that fall outside of traditional realism or liberalism offer some important tools in analyzing small states’ broader strategic goals and security needs. Goh and Thayer have written extensively on Southeast Asia, and the role that ASEAN plays in furthering

¹⁶ Wivel, Anders. “The Security Challenge of Small EU Member States: Interests, Identity and the Development of the EU as a Security Actor*.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 43, no. 2 (June 2005). p. 395

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the security concerns faced by small states in the region.¹⁹ First among these concepts is hedging. Goh defines hedging as a time buying move that allows states not to bandwagon with any one regional player until it becomes clear which side is in their better interests.²⁰ However, as Goh later points out, Southeast Asian states do have clear strategic preferences and actively seek to influence a new regional order.²¹ To replace hedging, “omni-entrenchment”²² is proposed as an alternative strategy that better shows the interests of these states beyond simply buying time. Where entrenchment refers to the deep socialization of a given state to integrate it into institutional norms and behaviors, “omni-entrenchment” is the act of entrenching multiple states in as many ways as possible.²³ The idea is to develop international interest and importance to maintaining regional and state stability by giving as many states as possible a stake in the region.²⁴ Therefore, Southeast Asia does not need the U.S. to protect it from an aggressive neighbor, but rather needs to ensure that both global powers have sufficient interest in the region. In this way, China will not want to needlessly upset U.S. interests; the U.S. will have to engage ASEAN with regard to Chinese interests; and neither will want to see the other dominate the region. This gives the Southeast Asian states more control over the situation than they would have if they chose to bandwagon with only one large power or the other. This balancing behavior is not confined to Southeast Asia, rather is the most readily available policy option for the majority of small states.

This specialized balancing behavior is strongly related to the idea of soft balancing. T.V.

Paul defines soft balancing as:

¹⁹ See the Bibliography for a detailed list of relevant publications by these two scholars.

²⁰ Goh, Evelyn. "Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies." *International Security* 32.3 (2008). p. 119

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p.121

²⁴ Ibid., p. 122

“Soft balancing involves tacit balancing short of formal alliances. It occurs when states generally develop ententes or limited security understandings with one another to balance a potentially threatening state or a rising power. Soft balancing is often based on a limited arms buildup, ad hoc cooperative exercises, or collaboration in regional or international institutions; these policies may be converted to open, hard-balancing strategies if and when security competition becomes intense and the powerful state becomes threatening.”²⁵

Small states will seek to develop mutually beneficial relations with various partners in such a way as to most effectively safeguard their own sovereignty. While not necessarily a soft balancing measure since it is unlikely to escalate and the “balancing” partners will often include both the rising power as well as the established powers, small state balancing behavior does include many key elements of soft balancing. Through specialized balancing behavior, small states can more effectively balance the influence of large neighbors with the influence of extra-regional powers.

By defining “smallness” as both a relational concept based on asymmetry and a series of behaviors, I have sought to establish a model for identifying small states beyond cut-offs in population, geographical size, economic or military power, and strategic importance. I have also differentiated between “engaged” and “non-engaged” small states, allowing future analysis to focus on those small states that seek to actively engage with, adapt to, and change their external security environment. This relational and behavioral definition carries over into a working definition of a large state as well. A large state in today’s international system can be identified as a powerful actor in terms of economic weight, military capabilities and influence in international institutions. Large states will not necessarily have to adapt to the international system, because they inherently have some level of control over it, and they may display more direct balancing behavior vis-à-vis rising challengers.

²⁵ T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann, *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). p. 3.

Soft Power

Having defined “smallness,” we must now turn our attention back to what options small states actually have in alleviating their own small status? Small states, such as Mongolia, cannot seek to manage their external security by military force or economic coercion; still, such states do have options. In the absence of hard power capabilities, we may assume that soft power is the default option. Joseph Nye’s definition for the term he coined is simple enough: “It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies.”²⁶ He goes on to say that the basic logic is to get others to want what you want.²⁷ It is more than simple persuasion through influence or argument- soft power must be the ability to attract others to your cause through the virtue of having an attractive cause to support.²⁸ If the dictionary definition of power is the ability to affect the behavior of others, then soft power is an idea that a state can make its interests the agenda of other states without military or economic force. A country with a relatively large population, territory, resources, economy, military force, and social stability might be able to coerce other nations into working with it to achieve its own security objectives. However, a state that has managed to cooperate with other states because of shared interests has proven itself adept at exercising soft power. Generally, international soft power is produced through three different spheres: 1) culture; 2) political values; 3) foreign policy. All three are combined to further a given state’s interests and its attractiveness to other states.

The literature on soft power is primarily concerned with the United States of America, and serves as an oppositional voice to the connection between American military power and the

²⁶ Nye, *Soft Power*, p. x

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6

country's foreign policy. The concern of many articles on soft power is to point out alternatives to hard power as a way to achieve U.S. security goals and foreign policy objectives. There has been concern that despite U.S. military superiority, groups of countries could band together to resist U.S. international efforts not through hard balancing but through soft balancing, as defined in the previous section. While soft balancing and soft power refer to very different things, the connecting idea is that soft power can prevent hard or soft balancing against the United States. Scholars have noted the limitations of hard power projection, since the overreliance on military strength can alienate allies and create an international backlash. Soft power, however, is not without its own limitations both theoretically and practically in applying the concept to small states.

Small Power

Although soft power is a useful analytical concept, it has some notable limitations in its application to small state foreign policy. First, large and small states will approach power projection in very different ways. For example, Nye observed the connection between soft power and democracy, when he pointed out that “soft power is a staple of daily democratic politics.”²⁹ It may be that democracies are more adept at utilizing their soft power resources, as a result of their familiarity with political concession making at home. It seems likely that larger powers, such as the U.S. or regional actors such as the E.U. may be more familiar with soft power as a PR-campaign. For smaller states, however, it may actually be the reverse: democracy is a source of soft power, not a teacher of it. In other words, small states might be able to use democracy to attract international partners, not as a way to train themselves for other modes of power

²⁹ Nye, *Soft Power*, p. 6

projection. Second, while larger states might be able to depend on the attractiveness of their culture, smaller less-well-known countries will have to restrict themselves to the later two options (i.e. political values and foreign policy). Third, the concept of soft power assumes that hard power is an available option, as indicated by Nye's concept of "smart power" as the ideal combination of the two, which any global power must harness to remain on top.³⁰ When hard power is not available, the projection of softer resources is not necessarily soft power; rather it is the only power available.

By combining what we know about soft power, with the previously presented two-sided definition of small states, we can begin to refer to some small state-specific power, which I will call *small power*. *Small power* is an analytical concept for understanding how small states will make themselves appear more attractive for partnerships with larger, often extra-regional powers as part of an effort to discourage threats from other states, often their neighbors. Working within the modes of asymmetry and behaviors that I have previously laid out to identify small states in today's international system, the concept that small states will almost invariably engage in some sort of specialized balancing behavior has already been established. *Small power* is thereby defined as the power to affect the international system by attracting the attention of larger, less-threatening powers in an effort to balance against the role of a threatening state. *Small power* is tailored for states that have limited economic and/or mineral wealth and without clear geo-strategic advantages. Small oil-producing states, for example, can leverage their natural resources in their foreign relations, and strategically located states can leverage their territory for foreign military installations. What can a state leverage to make itself an attractive partner, when it has neither economic nor strategic incentives?

³⁰ Ibid., p. x

Small states have utilized a number of strategies to increase their *small power* resources. A number of states have volunteered a symbolic number of military personnel to peacekeeping operations,³¹ others have worked to build records of consistent adherence to international norms, and still others have sought to act in line with regional interests to help foster stability.³² The following case study will describe how Mongolia has utilized its democratic status as a source of *small power*. Mongolia is an important case study, as a small state locked between Russia and China with a clear foreign policy objective to increase outside interest in its slowly developing economy and political institutions. Since democratic governance affects the attractiveness of a small state's political values, its foreign policy goals and *small power* capability may be directly influenced by its ability to get its democratic credentials noticed and rewarded.

³¹ For example: Georgia, Mongolia, and Poland are three prominent examples of small states currently contributing troops to U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

³² South Korea and Thailand are key regional partners for the U.S.

Mongolian Case Study

Mongolia is the ideal case study for exploring both the proposed definition of “smallness” and understanding the role that democratization plays in the new concept of *small power*. In the previous section, I defined “smallness” as a relational and behavioral term that works to identify how an “engaged” small state will relate to larger powers and how that relationship will influence its foreign policy behavior. Mongolia has undertaken a specific balancing strategy that recognizes its asymmetric relations with its neighbors, while pushing the country to actively adapt to its changing strategic environment.

Mongolia is an example of a small state all too aware of its own history and struggle for independence. Since the last Mongol princes accepted the control of Qing Dynasty China in 1691,³³ Mongolians have known that their independence as a people and country are not guaranteed. It would not be until 1911, that the Bogd Khaan would establish an independent Outer Mongolia. This newly independent country was soon to learn, however, that sometimes independence came at the price of controlling allies. In 1921, Mongolian revolutionaries proclaimed the world’s second communist nation, the Mongolian People’s Republic (MPR). The MPR would maintain *de facto* independence from the Soviet Union, but its domestic and foreign policies were dominated by the agenda of the Soviet Union. This partnership was not one-sided, however, since the USSR also provided Mongolia with an important ally and economic support: one strong enough to keep Beijing at bay. Modern Mongolia, in contrast, has become adept in balancing its powerful neighbors against other leading countries.

³³ Sneath, David. "Competing Factions and Elite Power: Political Conflict in Inner Mongolia." *Conflict and Social Order in Tibet and Inner Asia* (Lieden: Brill, 2008). p. 88

Following Mongolia's democratic revolution in 1990, the MPR was dissolved and a democratic Mongolia established. At this point, Mongolia's foreign policy adapted quickly to the international reality, with an eye to ensuring the country's continued independence and sovereignty. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Mongolia could distance itself from Moscow, but still had to tread carefully in its relationship with China. Recognizing that economic and political dependence on Moscow had cost Mongolia the ability to make autonomous policy decisions, Mongolia released its first *Concept of Foreign Policy and National Security Concept* in 1994³⁴ with a distinct focus on balancing the influence of its two physical neighbors by developing deeper relations with other leading global powers. This policy has become widely known as the "Third Neighbor Policy".

The term "third neighbor" was first used by then U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in 1990, while commenting on the potential for U.S.-Mongolian relations.³⁵ The term was almost immediately picked up by the Mongolian foreign policy elite, and re-worked to refer to a larger strategy on the part of Mongolia to balance the influence of its two real neighbors, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Today the third neighbor policy has evolved and undergone significant changes, highlighting Mongolia's adaptability. While the core concern is diversification of partners, the policy has undergone at least four distinct adaptations: democratization, proactive diplomacy, peacekeeping commitments, and economic interests.³⁶ By closely cooperating with countries outside of its immediate geography, Mongolia seeks to diversify its allies, partners, investors, donors, and economy to ensure that it is not faced with a choice of only Russia and/or China. While the "third neighbor policy" may have started with the

³⁴ See 1994 Concept of Mongolian Foreign Policy

³⁵ Dorjjugder, Munkh-Ochir. *Mongolia's "Third Neighbor" Doctrine and North Korea*, 2011. p.1

³⁶ Dorjjugder, Munkh-Ochir. "Same Rules, New Dimensions For Mongolia's National Security: Adapting to the New Geo-Strategic Environment," Brookings Institute (October 2009).

deepening of ties with the United States, it ended with Mongolia cultivating relations with a far wider array of regional and extra-regional players.

Mongolia's "Third Neighbor Policy" has proven to be the defining cornerstone of Mongolian foreign policy and security objectives. Mongolia's foreign policy was later updated in 2010³⁷ further developing Mongolia's multi-lateral and multi-directional policy. Specifically, the most recently released *Concept of Foreign Policy*, mentioned Japan, South Korea, India, the U.S., and various E.U. member countries (especially Germany, France, and the Czech Republic) as countries Mongolia was most eager to cooperate more fully with.³⁸ Most notably, all of these countries have one important thing in common: they are all established and recognized democracies.

Three Directions

Mongolia's foreign policy has advanced along three directions: relations with neighbors, continued ties to old allies, and new relations with many of the OECD member states. The reasons for Mongolia to pursue relations in this three-tiered strategy vary by country, but several important themes dominate. First, Mongolia is keen to maintain a stable regional environment. Second, the country sees little reason to develop ties with its other post-Soviet partners, but at the same time sees no reason to cut ties altogether. Third, the new focus on ties with a number of OECD countries can be initially divided into 3 groups: those states with regional interests; those states with economic interests; and, those states that are potentially interested in democratization.

Mongolia recognizes that its continued independence will depend first and foremost on its ability to maintain friendly relations with its two neighbors. The geographic reality remains

³⁷ See 2010 Concept of Foreign Policy, Section II, Article 12b.

³⁸ Ibid.

that Mongolia is a small country sandwiched between two of the largest countries on the planet. In short, Mongolia's close relations with its neighbors are a matter of necessity. In this regard, Mongolia truly has no foreign policy options. However, as noted in the above discussion on Mongolia's "third neighbor policy", Mongolia has identified its neighbors' ambitions as the most pressing threat to its continued independence. To counter over-reliance on any one neighbor, Mongolia must not only balance the role of each neighbor, it must also engage with other countries outside of its immediate geography.

Before looking at the countries explicitly identified as Mongolia's "third neighbors", it is helpful to identify whom Mongolia has not sought to deepen relations with. To date, Mongolia has not made any effort to engage with authoritarian states, besides its neighbors.³⁹ Mongolia is separated from Turkic Central Asia by only a thin strip of land, and, yet, political and economic links between Mongolia and its Central Asian cultural neighbors remain extremely limited, with apparently little effort on the part of either side to remedy their diplomatic distance.⁴⁰ Mongolia does have notable ties with North Korea, Laos, and number of other non-democratic states; however, these relations are the result of close engagement during Mongolia's communist period, and close interaction in the Soviet sphere. In sharp contrast, a quick look at the "third neighbor policy" as it is developing today, and the countries specifically mentioned in Mongolia's *Concept of Foreign Policy* reveals where Mongolia is actually interested in putting its diplomatic energies.

Mongolia's relations with OECD countries run the gamut of the organization; however, of particular important for our discussion are Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia, the United

³⁹ While China's one-party system is clearly authoritarian, Russia does express a veneer of democracy. However, recent elections, the rotational government by Putin and Medvedev, and almost complete disregard for human rights allows to describe both of Mongolia's neighbors as authoritarian, non-democratic states.

⁴⁰ Daly, John C.K. "Kazakhstan and Mongolia Broaden Relations," The Jamestown Foundation. April 18, 2008.

States, and various states of the European Union. Japan and Korea both have regional interests to work closely with the Mongolian government as part of Northeast Asian cooperation and stability. Canada and Australia are both operating extensive mining operations in the country, making their presence and purpose economically driven.⁴¹ The U.S. and E.U., however, are not as easy to categorize. Economic links between Mongolia and the U.S./E.U. remain limited, and Mongolia has little to offer in terms of strategic value.

Mongolian-U.S. Relations

The United States of America and Mongolia continue to develop and deepen their relationship. Diplomatic relations were not established until January 27, 1987, with the U.S. opening its embassy in Ulaanbaatar in 1988 and a Mongolian Embassy opening in Washington, D.C. in 1989.⁴² Since that time, however, relations between these two countries have slowly developed, largely in recognition of shared interests. Mongolian-U.S. relations can be divided into three main sectors- military/defense ties, U.S. foreign development aid, and economic relations- all of which continue to develop, but remain relatively limited.

The United States and Mongolia have a shared interest in global security. For its part Mongolia recognizes that its existence as a small state depends on regional stability; the U.S., as the global superpower, recognizes that its position is dependent on global stability. This shared interest has prompted the development on notable military/defense ties between the two countries. Mongolia has contributed over 1000 troops to Iraq and Afghanistan,⁴³ and has

⁴¹ Mongolia's largest copper mine in South Gobi, Oyu Tolgoi, was explored by Canadian firm Ivanhoe Mines, and is currently being developed by Australian company Rio Tinto.

⁴² "Mongolia-United States Relations," *Embassy of Mongolia in the United States of America*.
http://www.mongolianembassy.us/mongolia_and_usa/mongolia_us_relations_2004.php (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁴³ Jargalsaikhan, Mendee. "Finally A New Era in NATO- Mongolia Relations," 2012. p. 2

stationed an additional 1000 peacekeepers around the world as part of various UN missions.⁴⁴ In return, the country has enjoyed U.S. military assistance in training and technology.⁴⁵ Mongolia continues to reform its military institutions and cooperate with the U.S. to effectively train a domestic military force capable of serving in peacekeeping missions. Khaan Quest stands out as the highest profile training exercise hosted annually by Mongolia. This multi-national training exercise is designed to promote regional peace and stability through enhancing defense readiness and tactical interoperability.⁴⁶ Khaan Quest 2012 saw the participation of over 1000 service members from South Korea, India, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, France, U.K. and Germany; observers from Russia and China were also in attendance.⁴⁷ Additional training exercises, such as Exercise Gobi Wolf, provide emergency response training to the Mongolian public service.⁴⁸ Furthermore, on March 19, 2012, Mongolia became the first country to enter the NATO Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP) under the newly established guidelines.⁴⁹ Importantly, however, while recognizing Mongolia's contribution to peacekeeping missions and global/regional stability, none of these programs means that Mongolia is a U.S. ally or completely under the U.S. security umbrella. It is important to note that the U.S. has no bases or permanently stationed troops in Mongolia, in contrast to its relations with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan.

⁴⁴ Mendee, NATO, p. 3

⁴⁵ Wachman, Alan, and Allen Wagner. *Mongolia: Growth, Democracy, and Two Wary Neighbors*, 2012. p. 5-6

⁴⁶ "Khaan Quest 2012 Opening Ceremony Demonstrates Continued Strength of Multinational Relationships in the Pacific Region," *Embassy of the United States in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*, August 12, 2012. <http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/en-081212.html> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁴⁷ Brown, Michelle Sgt. "Khaan Quest 2012 opening ceremony demonstrates strength of multilateral relationships," August 13, 2012. http://www.army.mil/article/85459/Khaan_Quest_2012_opening_ceremony_demonstrates_strength_of_multinational_relationships/ (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁴⁸ Bradshaw, Arthur L. "United States and Mongolia Conduct Exercise Gobi Wolf", 2009. p. 1

⁴⁹ Mendee, NATO, p. 1

The U.S. has supported post-communist Mongolia through a number of large aid programs to drive development, raise living standards, support Mongolia's transition to an open-market economy, and develop the country's institutional capacity. In 1991, the U.S. began sending Peace Corps volunteers to the country.⁵⁰ In 2004, Mongolia became eligible for U.S. assistance through the Millennium Challenge Account and in 2007 was awarded a \$285 million aid package.⁵¹ Additionally, USAID provides a \$20 million funding account for sustainable economic growth and political development.⁵² The U.S. recognizes that Mongolia is at a critical juncture. With increased revenues from mining operations throughout the country, Mongolia stands to become significantly richer in the coming years, if managed appropriately, and the U.S. appears keen to support that development.

Economic ties between the United States and Mongolia remain relatively limited. In 1991, Mongolia was granted permanent normal-trade-relations status, prompting an increase in bilateral trade.⁵³ Still, in 2008 trade between the two countries amounted to only \$110 million,⁵⁴ but increased to \$324 million in 2011.⁵⁵ While imports and exports remain dominated by Russia and China,⁵⁶ the U.S. is playing an increasingly important role. In 2004, the two countries signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, and the North American-Mongolian Business

⁵⁰ Dumbaugh, Kerry, and Wayne M Morrison. *Mongolia and U.S. Policy: Political and Economic Relations*. Washington, D.C., 2009. Summary page

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Program Objectives," USAID Mongolia. <http://mongolia.usaid.gov/our-work/program-areas/> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁵³ Dumbaugh, *Mongolia and U.S. Policy*, summary page

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "Mongolia," Office of the United States Trade Representative, Executive Office of the President of the United States. <http://www.ustr.gov/countries-regions/china/mongolia> (Accessed December 11, 2012) This means that Mongolia ranks 135th for U.S. trade partners.

⁵⁶ According to the CIA World Factbook, exports to China accounted for 92.1% of the total, while imports were more spread out with Chinese goods representing 30.7% and Russian imports at 24.5%.

Council continues to support U.S. companies operating in Mongolia.⁵⁷ There is also increased discussion regarding whether U.S.-based resource extraction company Peabody Energy will be awarded the coal deposit Tavan Tolgoi in South-Gobi province.⁵⁸ To foster additional trade links and U.S. foreign direct investment, a Transparency Agreement was signed in 2012 to address the restrictions in investment that have resulted from a lack of transparency and uneven law enforcement.⁵⁹ While trade remains relatively small, I argue that the efforts demonstrated to this point provide a fertile ground for future ties. However, it is unlikely that the U.S. will ever be a major Mongolian trading partner, and given issues of transportation, China and Russia will continue to dominate the Mongolian market. Mongolia can and should balance out this economic influence, but will have to accept certain geographic limitations regardless.

Mongolian-U.S. relations continue to development, albeit with notable limitations. The new partnership between Mongolia and NATO point to more military/defense agreements in the future, and there is some evidence that the U.S. Embassy in Mongolia is trying to pave the way for increased foreign direct investment through recent agreements. Mongolia's relations with European countries follow along a similar line.

Mongolian-E.U. Relations

Several E.U. member states and the E.U. as a whole have increasingly begun to work with Mongolia in the same sectors as the U.S.- defense, aid, and business. There is notable overlap in relations between the European Union and Mongolia with the United States. For

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 11

⁵⁸ "Introductory Op-Ed by Ambassador Campbell," *Embassy of the United States in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*. http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/oped_0925.html (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁵⁹ "Pivot to Our Future," *Embassy of the United States in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, October 17, 2012*. http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/remarks_101512.html (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

example, Mongolia's partnership with NATO is indicative not only of increased U.S.-Mongolian ties, but also of increased cooperation with European NATO allies. Nonetheless, there are several important elements specific to the Mongolian-E.U. relationship that support defining the E.U. collectively as one of Mongolia's key "third neighbors."

While European foreign policy, especially as regards relations with Mongolia, are largely handled through the E.U.'s Common Foreign and Security Policy,⁶⁰ Mongolia's historic connections with several key European countries, in particular, have provided the necessary impetus for improving relations in recent years. Germany is Mongolia's key partner in Europe, largely as a result of historically strong relations between Mongolia and East Germany.⁶¹ Other key Eastern European partners include Poland and the Czech Republic.⁶² Mongolia's key partners in Eastern Europe have advocated for developing relations between the European Union and this ex-Soviet satellite. A shared experience and background of interaction in the Soviet Union has produced unique historical ties between Mongolia and many of the countries of Eastern Europe, providing the necessary foundation for the expansion of ties with the E.U. as a whole.

In 1989, formal relations were established between the European Community and Mongolia.⁶³ The cornerstone of European-Mongolian relations, the 1993 Trade and Cooperation Agreement, set an important tone to the relationship.⁶⁴ This agreement allowed for future developments in the E.U.-Mongolia relationship including a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in 2010, which not only brought Mongolia into a bilateral political dialogue

⁶⁰ Interview with Assistant to Manager, Finnish Consulate in Ulaanbaatar.

⁶¹ "Mongolia," Federal Foreign Office (Germany). December 2011. http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Nodes/Mongolei_node.html (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁶² Concept of Foreign Policy

⁶³ "Mongolia-EU Partnership draws closer," *Embassy of Mongolia in Vienna, Austria*, April 21, 2011. http://www.embassyon.at/news/news_346.html (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁶⁴ "Mongolia," European External Action Service (EEAS). http://www.eas.europa.eu/mongolia/index_en.htm

process with the E.U., but also gave the country favorable trading terms.⁶⁵ In 2006, Mongolia joined the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM),⁶⁶ allowing the country to participate in ASEM structures and negotiations.⁶⁷ Today, Mongolian products are assured virtually tariff-free entry into Europe, and the E.U. is now Mongolia's third largest trading partner.⁶⁸ Furthermore, on November 20, 2012, Mongolia's accession to the OSCE was formalized in recognition of shared interests.⁶⁹ Economic relations are complemented by multiple development projects, with E.U. member countries currently devoting 15 million euro to Mongolian development and education projects annually.⁷⁰ As economic and political agreements continue to support Mongolian-E.U. relations, Mongolia stands to profit from attracting a multitude of "third neighbors" and E.U. moves to deepen ties with Eurasia.⁷¹

As the European Union settles the integration of Eastern Europe, it has increasingly sought to engage with other countries in the post-Soviet sphere of influence. Ties with Mongolia are likely to be tied to E.U. efforts to improve relations with other Central Asian states. As will be explored later, Mongolia is unique from Central Asia in several important ways, including its governance structure and ability/want to cooperate with Europe.

⁶⁵ "European initiative for democracy and human rights (EIDHR) (2000-2006)," *Europa: Summaries of EU Legislation*.
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/human_rights/human_rights_in_third_countries/r10110_en.htm
(Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁶⁶ "Mongolia," EEAS

⁶⁷ ASEM's official website: <http://www.aseminfoboard.org> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁶⁸ "Delegation to Mongolia," European External Action Service.
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mongolia/index_en.htm (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁶⁹ *Statement by the Spokesperson of the High Representative on Mongolia's Accession to the OSCE*. Brussels, 2012.

⁷⁰ "Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs): Russia, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia," *Europa: Summaries of EU Legislation*.
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/external_relations/relations_with_third_countries/eastern_europe_and_central_asia/r17002_en.htm(Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁷¹ "Political and Economic Relations: General Framework," *Delegation of the European Union to Mongolia*.
http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mongolia/eu_mongolia/political_relations/index_en.htm (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

Explaining U.S./E.U. Role

Mongolia is enjoying the rewards of close cooperation with the world's leading democracies. As demonstrated above, Mongolia has benefited from foreign investment and access to international markets in addition to development assistance, educational and institutional support. It remains unclear, however, what accounts for this increased interest over the past 10 years in what was once an ignored Soviet client state. Economic interests are growing, but to date these remain limited. Mongolia may have some geostrategic value, but the country has explicitly avoided any conflict with Russia or China. Perhaps Mongolia's secret is a little softer than its Khanate heritage would suggest.

Mongolia's economy grew over 17% in real terms in 2011, making it the fastest growing economy in the world.⁷² Driving this record growth are large mining developments such as Oyu Tolgoi copper/gold mine in South Gobi, as well as number of smaller projects throughout the country. However, international investors remain unsure about the stability of their investments in Mongolia.⁷³ The rules of the game have been known to change according to political and public demands, threatening to derail key projects and creating pressing problems in public relations for mining operations. For example, during the 2012 parliamentary election, one of the main concerns for Mongolian voters was how the country should regulate its new mining wealth and what steps should be taken regarding redistribution and investment.⁷⁴ Many investors were scared off, having perceived a high level of risk after political promises of redistribution came to the front line of the campaigns.⁷⁵

⁷² "Mongolia," CIA World Factbook. November 27, 2012

⁷³ Garvey, Paul. "Market Wary of Mongolia's poll," *The Australian*. June 25, 2012. (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

That is not to say that economic ties are not of growing importance. As Peabody Energy emerges as a possible stakeholder in Tavan Tolgoi, a large coal and gold deposit, and imports and exports continue to grow with both the U.S. and E.U., Mongolia's economy could soon become more central to its foreign policy. In fact, the "third neighbor" process also drives investment decisions, with some preference for non-Russian/Chinese held companies. Munkh-Ochir has even gone so far as to say that geo-economic balance, rather than geo-political or geo-strategic balancing, will ultimately define Mongolia's national security in the near future.⁷⁶ However, today Mongolia's economy and business/investment potential remain limited, and cannot fully account for the country's growing cooperation with the U.S. and E.U.

Mongolia is located between two huge powers, Russia and China, both of which are key foreign policy and security concerns for the U.S. and E.U. This might suggest that geostrategic interests can account for the limited, but growing interest in Mongolia. Indeed, Mongolia is located just to the south of Russia's vulnerable Siberian provinces, and has the ability to upset stability in the PRC Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region or even Xinjiang. In order to prove geostrategic interest is a significant factor, there would need to be some concrete benefit to the U.S. and E.U. by cooperating with Mongolia to the detriment of China and/or Russia. However, this is not the case. Rather, Mongolian relations with the U.S. are more about Mongolian security and Mongolian support for peacekeeping missions than they are about geopolitics or the U.S. using Mongolia as a base of operations against the Russian Federation or the PRC.

The U.S. has little strategic interest in Mongolia in anyway that could significantly further its interests vis-à-vis Russia or China. The U.S. has enough forces and allies in the area between Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Southeast Asia to serve its interests in ensuring that

⁷⁶ Dorjjugder, Munkh-Ochir. "Same Rules, New Dimensions For Mongolia's National Security: Adapting to the New Geo-Strategic Environment," Brookings Institute (October 2009).

China's rise does not upset regional stability or the global status quo. As noted earlier, there are military-to-military relations between Mongolia and the US, but these seem to further more diverse goals than the containment of Russia or China. Khaan Quest is an international training exercise aimed at developing Mongolian military capability as a NATO partner and on UN peacekeeping missions. China initially criticized the developments in Khaan Quest as a disguise for conducting counter-terrorism operations near or even beyond its border;⁷⁷ however, in recent years it has dropped its objections and has even sent observers to the exercise.⁷⁸ While China and Russia might feature highly on the list of U.S. security concerns, and Mongolia does seek closer security arrangements with the U.S., neither side is interested in the geostrategic goals that would be necessary to fully explain our puzzle.

Mongolia does not want to make any moves that might push its neighbors to take action against it. In fact, the Mongolian *Concept of Foreign Policy* clearly states that foreign forces will not be allowed to use the territory of Mongolia as a base of operations against either of its two neighbors.⁷⁹ Mongolian foreign policy options in this regard are and will continue to be limited. To highlight this point, in 2009, India was considering establishing an airbase in Mongolia to provide strategic leverage in Central Asia and to compliment its currently inactive base in Tajikistan.⁸⁰ However, the plans were rejected early on amid concerns it would be detrimental to Chinese security interests.⁸¹ Recognizing that neither China nor Russia would react favorably to foreign military engagement in the country, Mongolia is fully aware that it is not in its interests to allow the U.S. or any other foreign military force to work within its borders in anyway that

⁷⁷ Soni, Sharad K. *Towards Confidence Building: Sino-Mongolian Relations in the Post-Cold War Era*. Rep. p. 57

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Concept of Foreign Policy 1994

⁸⁰ Sharma, Ritu. "India shelves proposal to set up airbase in Mongolia?" *Jansmachar.net*. 18 Sept. 2009. Web. 17 Nov. 2009

⁸¹ Ibid.

might explicitly refer to goals in contradiction with Russian or Chinese security interests. This not only constrains Mongolian policy, it also constrains U.S. options in Mongolia. The U.S. has stated that its goals in Mongolia are not geostrategic,⁸² nor need they be.

Once again, the above is not meant to completely discount the geo-strategic value that increased cooperation with the Mongolian government can bring in furthering U.S. and European security interests. Mongolia does offer a space for “ears on China” and “eyes on Russia” as Stephen Noerper describes.⁸³ However, this strategic potential is purposely left to a bare minimum. China’s interactions with Mongolia might offer some crucial clues as to how China will treat its neighbors- some of them U.S. allies- and how states in the region might respond to China’s breathtaking economic growth, but beyond case study surveys (such as this one) the actual defensive and/or offensive potential of engaging with Mongolia remains minimal for the U.S. and would ultimately prove detrimental to Mongolia’s security.

While hard power choices, such as economic ties and military value may partially answer our question, the limitations presented mean that some other variable must be present. I propose that Mongolia has recognized the potential *small power* resource available to it as a functioning, democratic state. By being a proven democracy, Mongolia has made itself an attractive partner for other democratic states. Democracy might represent a strongly ideological base for Mongolia’s international support,⁸⁴ but ideology is not as weak as realism might lead us to assume. Ideological support is perhaps Mongolia’s strongest weapon in its *small power* arsenal. The following section will seek to demonstrate the role that democracy plays in international politics. After a brief overview of the definitions of democracy, I show that the U.S. and E.U. are

⁸² Narangoa, Li. “MONGOLIA AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY.” *Asian Survey* 49, no. 2 (2012). p. 373

⁸³ Noerper, Stephen E. *Ten Things We Get from Mongolia*. Honolulu, Hawaii, 2012. p. 1

⁸⁴ Wachman, NBR, p. 5

among the primary international supporters of international democratization. Followed by evidence that Mongolia has established itself as a clearly democratic country, I argue that its democratic status is at least one leading factor in Mongolia's foreign affairs.

Democracy Matters

While “democracy” as a term remains controversial, there are certain minimum points that seem to be widely agreed upon, and supported by international actors. Democracy refers to a set of minimum political requirements, typically including effective public political participation through elections, a constitutional basis for governance, respect for human rights, and political equality before the law.⁸⁵ Democratization is not an end result, but rather an on-going process towards a more rule-based, consensual, and participatory form of government.⁸⁶ Free and fair electoral and liberal democracies stand out as truly democratic. An electoral democracy is one in which the legislative and chief executive positions are filled through multiparty elections.⁸⁷ When elections are complemented by a constitution that ensures equality for all citizens and an established rule-of-law to guard civil liberties, the system of governance is referred to as a liberal democracy.⁸⁸ Within these basic working-definitions, individual countries and international organizations have taken to promoting democratic governance both at home (in their own regions) and abroad. In considering the role of democracy in Mongolia’s foreign policy, the exact definition of what the term “democracy” entails is not as important as understanding what the U.S. and E.U. hope to accomplish through their promotion of it.

U.S. and E.U. Democratization Support

The European Union and the United States of America have been the leading forces in global democratization, especially within the former Soviet sphere. Europe and the United

⁸⁵ Epstein, Susan B., Nina M. Serafino, and Francis T. Miko. *Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of U.S. Foreign Policy?* Washington, D.C., 2007, p. 3

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

States, however, have taken slightly different directions in their promotion of democratization, both historically and contemporarily. The United States's primary goal has been to increase global security through democratization support. The E.U., on the other hand, has been largely focused on fostering democratization in Eastern Europe as a step towards EU integration, and has only recently displayed real interest in extra-regional democratization efforts. Both players' motivations are important to understanding what benefits democratization might bring to any given country.

While U.S. foreign policy has favored democracies since the country's independence, it was in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks that the promotion of democracy became a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and tied directly to the nation's security.⁸⁹ Democracy was viewed as essential for long-term stability and fighting terrorism around the globe. In the post-9/11 world, democratization became a U.S. strategic priority,⁹⁰ being tied to two important concepts in democratization literature: democratic peace theory and the instability of authoritarian regimes. The Democratic Peace Theory maintains that democracies do not go to war with each other,⁹¹ meaning that with more democracies the world would be "safer" and more prosperous, thus furthering U.S. global and regional interests. A key caveat, however, is that the democratic peace theory seems to only apply to mature/established democracies, whereas transitional governments have proven far less stable.⁹² Democracy is supposed to facilitate long-term economic growth by allowing for the freedom of expression and innovation as well as

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 1

⁹⁰ Lagon, Mark P. *Promoting Democracy : The Whys and Hows for the United States and the International Community*. New York City, 2011. p. 3

⁹¹ Dalacoura, Katerina. "US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East : Theoretical Perspectives and Policy Recommendations." *Ortadogu Etutleri* 2, no. 3 (2010). p. 60

⁹² Epstein, *Democracy Promotion*, p. 8

promoting rule of law, which can foster predictability for investors and control corruption.⁹³ Democracy also supposedly promotes free markets as a result of individual freedoms.⁹⁴ The promotion of pluralism in mature democracies is also regarded as tantamount to stopping violent extremism.⁹⁵ Democracy is simply good governance.⁹⁶

The U.S. promotion of democracy is based on recognition of the connection between governmental legitimacy and security, and that a more stable world is more conducive to U.S. economic, political, and security interests. For the purposes of U.S. policy makers, a democracy promotion program refers to technical and financial support for the strengthening of democratic parties, governments, and institutions.⁹⁷ USAID reported \$1.5 billion dollars of expenditures directly related to the promotion of democracy in 2004; the National Endowment for Democracy provides funding for the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for their non-governmental assistance to developing democracies.⁹⁸ Through these programs the United States is able to reward democratizing regimes and further its own international interests.

The E.U. is the largest regional promoter of democracy; but the fact that it is comprised of sovereign member states, limits the extent to which one can identify a common foreign policy theme. However, the E.U. does possess several important mechanisms to further its democratization agenda, including membership privileges and a developing reputation as a moral international actor. The 2012 announcement that the E.U. would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, underscores the E.U.'s achievements as a force for democratization and, by extension, global stability and human rights.

⁹³ Lagon, *Promoting Democracy*, p. 2

⁹⁴ Epstein, *Democracy Promotion*, p. 8

⁹⁵ Lagon, *Promoting Democracy*, p. 2

⁹⁶ Burnell, Peter. "From Evaluating Democracy Assistance to Appraising Democracy Promotion." *Political Studies* 56, no. 2 (June 15, 2008). p. 415

⁹⁷ Epstein, *Democracy Promotion*, p. 6

⁹⁸ Burnell, *From Assistance to Appraising*, p. 416

In order to begin the process of obtaining E.U. membership, states must demonstrate a commitment to democracy and human rights. E.U. membership, by extension, not only carries a number of important economic advantages, but also provides some level of security as well. Organizations such as the E.U. constrain the larger powers' options and work to level the playing field between large and small states by awarding each country an equal vote.⁹⁹ The "leverage",¹⁰⁰ provided by economic and security incentives, is integral to understanding the democratization of Eastern Europe. Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, European politicians began to link political freedom and democracy to economic development.¹⁰¹ The promotion of democracy was considered one element of Europe's post-Cold War security strategy, contributing to the integration of Eastern Europe,¹⁰² whereby Europe was able to successfully integrate the previously communist regimes between Western Europe and Russia. Not only did this mean that the borders of Western Europe were more secure, it also meant that Eastern Europe could ensure the support of "the West" as it cut ties with the newly formed Russian Federation. Outside of Europe, the successful integration of the post-Soviet, Eastern European states portrayed the union as a moral actor on an international level.¹⁰³ The Treaty of the European Union, maintains that the E.U. was created under the virtues of liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights, and as such is bound to require that these principles are also held by all member states.¹⁰⁴

While the U.S. can rely on the federal government as a direct source of democratization funding and support, the E.U. is more fragmented and as such democratization efforts are largely on a country-by-country basis. The largest democracy-promoters in the E.U. include the

⁹⁹ Wivel, *Small E.U. Member States*, p. 395

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 423

¹⁰¹ Olsen, Gorm Rye. "Promotion of Democracy as a Foreign Policy Instrument of 'Europe': Limits to International Idealism." *Democratization* 7, no. 2 (2007). p. 145

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 142

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, Britain's *Westminster Foundation for Democracy*, and Germany's *Stiftungen*.¹⁰⁵ While the E.U.'s foreign policy is largely handled by each of its member states individually, the promotion of democracy is probably the most accessible means to further its security interests.¹⁰⁶ Democracy is both a goal and an instrument of European foreign policy,¹⁰⁷ meaning that not only does the E.U. foster democratization for the stability and peace that are assumed to arise from this form of governance, but it also recognizes that simply by appearing to support democratization, the E.U. is looked upon more favorably. Democratization is one way for the E.U. to cultivate soft power.

The European Parliament, through such initiatives as the European Foundation for Democracy through Partnership (EPD), the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, and the Democracy Caucus at the European Parliament, takes an active role in pan-E.U. foreign policy. The EPD provides a platform for networking between various European civil society organizations concerned with the promotion of democracy both in Europe and elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ The European Democracy Caucus is responsible for defining E.U. foreign policy as it concerns the promotion of democracy and human rights.¹⁰⁹ While the E.U. was devoted to the democratization of Eastern Europe immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, today Europe is looking to promote democracy in various strategic areas. Most notably, Europe is increasingly engaged with the Caucasus and Central Asian states. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr identify Europe's goals in the Caucasus and Central Asia as

¹⁰⁵ Wivel, *Small E.U. Member States*, p. 416

¹⁰⁶ Olsen, *Democracy as a Foreign Policy Instrument*, p. 143

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 144

¹⁰⁸ As reported on the EPD official website: <http://www.epd.eu/about/who-we-are>

¹⁰⁹ As reported by the Democracy Caucus official website:
<http://www.democracycaucus.org/42904.html?sessionidkey=sessionidval>

threefold: governance, energy, and security.¹¹⁰ While energy and security are driving factors for any state, Europe's increasingly important engagement with Inner Asia is also driven by a democratization agenda.

The United States and the European Union both have an interest in promoting democratization. They also have an inherent interest, by extension, in working more closely with those countries that have successfully democratized. Is Mongolia one such success story?

Mongolia's Credentials

The expression "not all that glitters is gold" is perhaps best rephrased for our purposes as "not all that democratizes will become a democracy". When Mongolia became an official democracy, no one was sure how a small state with less than 3 million people would manage to produce a real democracy in-between the authoritarian PRC and the uncertain democratization of the newly established Russian Federation.¹¹¹ However, all available indicators support that it accomplished just that.

Mongolian democracy has proven itself to be stable and dynamically developing since the democratic revolution in the winter of 1990. Following nationwide protests and hunger strikes, the largest of which took place in the center of Ulaanbaatar on Sukhbaatar Square, the ruling Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party declared that they would step down to allow elections and economic opening.¹¹² In short, Mongolia made the transition from communism to democratic capitalism almost overnight. Since this point, Mongolia has had 6 successful

¹¹⁰ Cornell, Svante E. and S. Frederick Starr. "The Caucasus: A Challenge for Europe," *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute: Silk Road Studies Program* (John Hopkins University-SAIS, 2006). P. 7

¹¹¹ Fish, M. Steven. "The Inner Asian Anomaly: Mongolia's Democratization in Comparative Perspective." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 34, no. 3 (September 2001). P. 323

¹¹² For a detailed history on Mongolia's political transition see: Rossabi, Morris, *Modern Mongolia: From Khans to Commissars to Capitalists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

parliamentary elections and 5 Presidential elections, all of which have resulted in a successful hand over of power. For example, the most recent Parliamentary elections on June 28, 2012 were an important step in demonstrating the strength of Mongolian democracy. Under a new election law,¹¹³ Mongolia demonstrated its commitment to continuing reform. While inconsistencies in elections, and widespread corruption are problems for any developing democracy, Mongolia's democratic development has been largely positive.

Mongolia's democratic transition was largely based on domestic political will. Real democratization ultimately is an "exercise in national political self-determination."¹¹⁴ True democratization has to be domestically driven otherwise it will lack legitimacy.¹¹⁵ From all available indicators, Mongolia has not been prone to backsliding on its democratic transition, as have other post-Soviet countries.¹¹⁶ Mongolia was ranked at 6.23 by Democracy Index 2011¹¹⁷, 6.36 in 2010¹¹⁸, 6.6 in 2008,¹¹⁹ and 6.6 in 2006,¹²⁰ on a 10 point scale, meaning that it has been consistently ranked as a "flawed democracy"¹²¹, which while admitting its problems, firmly ranks Mongolia as a democracy above hybrid and authoritarian regimes. Freedom House has ranked Mongolia as "free" for all available years (2002-2012).¹²² Although Mongolia is still a developing democracy, it is hard to argue that it is not a functioning one. Signs of increased civil

¹¹³ The Election Law is available in Mongolian at the General Election Commission's official website: <http://www.gec.gov.mn/law/34/200> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹¹⁴ Burnell, *From Assistance to Appraising*, p. 414

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 421

¹¹⁶ Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine are contemporary examples of political backsliding in the past decade.

¹¹⁷ Democracy Index 2011

¹¹⁸ Democracy Index 2010

¹¹⁹ Democracy Index 2008

¹²⁰ Democracy Index 2006

¹²¹ "Flawed Democracy" is one step below a "full democracy" according to the Democracy Index, with a score between 6 and 8, exclusive. It recognizes that a country is a democracy, but that factors such as corruption, ineffective governmental institutions, or an undemocratic political culture ultimately hinders democratic rights and governance. These flaws make it impossible to categorize a state as fully democratic, but do not entail a hybrid or authoritarian regime.

¹²² Freedom House, 2002-2012

society engagement and contested election results are actually a sign of a thriving democratic system, where the ability to change the status quo is recognized and a number of political parties are competing against each other.¹²³

Mongolia is a liberal democracy. It has a strong constitution that guarantees a number of civil liberties for its citizens and it has demonstrated a strong commitment to reforming its elections in response to domestic and international demands. As an ex-communist/currently liberal democracy, Mongolia is an ideal model of what the U.S. and E.U. hope to achieve through fostering international democratization. Democracy as a point of ideological cooperation provides impetus for the development of more security-focused arrangements. Mongolia is an example of a state that has been able to capitalize on the *small power* provided to it by the successful adoption of a democratic system, and convert that soft power into something more tangible.

U.S. and E.U. support to Mongolian Democracy

The United States and increasingly the European Union support democracy as the sole legitimate form of government. Democracy is crucial to a peaceful and a stable international system; as such, both have sought to foster democratic transition and reward successful and stable democracies. In the case of Mongolia, the U.S. has repeatedly voiced “shared values” between itself and Mongolia resulting in a number of high profile visits and joint declarations, while offering the U.S. some key benefits. The E.U. is also beginning to recognize the

¹²³ The arrest of ex-President of Mongolia, Nambaryn Enkhbayar, on charges of corruption shortly before campaigning for the 2012 parliamentary election, caused several observers to question the legitimacy of Mongolia’s government. They claimed that the charges were politically motivated and cited the arrest as a step backwards for Mongolia’s political development. However, such remarks are based largely on speculation and from information provided by Enkhbayar’s allies, both in Mongolia and abroad. For a nuanced account of the arrest, allegations, and charges please see: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/mongolia/2012/enkhbayar-corruption-foreign-reporting-rule-of-law/>

permanence of Mongolia's democracy and increasingly recognizing its potential as a regional partner over other Inner Asian hybrid/authoritarian regimes.

High profile visits are an important indication of bilateral ties and entail some level of prestige and significance to relationships between nations. Between the U.S. and Mongolia, several high-profile visits have highlighted the slowly deepening relationship between these two distant countries, often making explicit mention to Mongolia's democratic status (see Table 2 for a list of the most prominent visits). For furthering U.S.-Mongolian relations, several visits stand out. Following the 2005 visit by President George Bush to Ulaanbaatar, a joint statement was issued declaring that shared values and strategic interests were the foundation for ties between these two democratic countries.¹²⁴ The statement also highlighted U.S. support to Mongolia's political development, including parliamentary trainings and helping to establish institutional mechanisms such as ensuring legislative and public affairs offices in all ministries.¹²⁵ Following President Elbegdorj's visit to Washington, D.C. in 2011, another joint statement reiterated the two countries' shared values in regards to promoting democracy, freedom, and human rights worldwide, as well as ensuring a "peaceful, stable, and prosperous" Asia-Pacific through regional cooperation and multilateral institutions.¹²⁶ Prior to this visit, the U.S. Congress released the "Resolution of Support for Partnership between the U.S. and Mongolia" in honor not only of President Elbegdorj's visit, but also in recognition of Mongolia's commitment to democracy and promoting economic, academic, and cultural cooperation.¹²⁷ During Vice-President Joe Biden's

¹²⁴ Embassy of Mongolia in the United States of America

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ "U.S.-Mongolia Joint Statement," *The White House: Office of the Press Secretary*, June 16, 2011. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/06/16/us-mongolia-joint-statement> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹²⁷ "U.S. Senate Passes Resolution Expressing Strong Support for the Growing Relationship Between the United States and Mongolia," *Embassy of the United States in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*, June 17, 2011. http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/news_61711.html (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

visit to Ulaanbaatar on August 22, 2011, Biden made specific note of how Mongolia’s successful transition to democracy has helped forge a stronger relationship between the two states, that Mongolia continues to emerge as a shining example for other transitioning regimes, and even that his visit and others are a sign of “how impressed we [the United States] are” with this process.¹²⁸ Secretary of State Hilary Clinton’s brief visit in 2012 gave her time not only to praise Mongolia’s democratic status, but also to point out the benefits that the transition has allowed, saying that “you can’t have economic liberalization without political liberalization”.¹²⁹ Mongolia has managed to attract the attention of the U.S. and its diplomatic prestige has been increased as a result of these important high-profile visits.

Table 2: High-Profile Visits

<u>To Mongolia</u>	<u>To the United States of America</u>
2005: Rep. Dennis Hastert	1991: President Ochirbat
2005: President George Bush	2001: Prime Minister Enkhbayar
2011: Vice-President Joe Biden	2004: President Bagabandi
2012: Secretary of State Hilary Clinton	2011: President Elbegdorj

Outside of high-profile diplomacy, the U.S. has also signaled its support for Mongolia and the value it places on Mongolian democracy in a number of other statements and institutional mechanisms. The U.S.-Mongolia Friendship Caucus seeks to educate and inform U.S. politicians on Mongolia, focusing on Mongolia’s political system and the reform process.¹³⁰ The International Republican Institute (IRI) began working in Mongolia in 1992, working

¹²⁸ “Vice President Biden’s Remarks at a Public Event with Mongolian Prime Minister Sukhbaatar Batbold,” *Embassy of the United States in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*, August 22, 2011.

¹²⁹ Perlez, Jane. “From Mongolia, Clinton Takes a Jab at China.” *The New York Times* (July 9, 2012). (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹³⁰ As reported by the Embassy of Mongolia in the United States of American: http://www.mongolianembassy.us/mongolia_and_usa/us_mongolia_friendship_caucus.php. (Accessed on December 4, 2012). The other four focuses were development assistance, commercial, security, and people-to-people relations.

explicitly to support democratic governance and institutional development.¹³¹ In 2010, the U.S. Embassy hosted events celebrating the 20th anniversary of Mongolia’s “decision for democracy”, during which then-Ambassador Addleton identified democracy as one of five pillars of U.S.-Mongolian relations.¹³² In July 2011, Mongolia was granted Presidency of the Community of Democracies, and will host a meeting of the organization in 2013.¹³³ The organization makes clear reference to Mongolia as an example of successful democratization and simultaneous political and economic transitions.¹³⁴

The United States recognizes that Mongolia is an important partner as it continues to shift its diplomatic focus to the Asia-Pacific. Mongolia is a U.S./international successful story for democratization and has been held up as a model of Asian democratization, in particular.¹³⁵ The U.S. has stated that its goals in Mongolia are not geostrategic in nature, and that the U.S. is, instead, focused on helping develop “a base of democracy” in Mongolia.¹³⁶ Mongolian democracy contributes to the country’s stability in an area defined by such authoritarian powers as Russia and China.¹³⁷ The United States sees its own security as dependent on the domestic political stability of other states, and sees Mongolia’s democratic system as a potential balancing force against authoritarianism in the region.

As with E.U.-Mongolian relations more generally, there is significant overlap between the U.S. and E.U. promotion of Mongolian democracy and the support the country has earned in

¹³¹ As reported on IRI’s official website: <http://www.iri.org/countries-and-programs/asia/mongolia> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹³² “Ambassador Addleton’s Remarks at the Asia Society Breakfast: Warm Relations in a Cold Place: The United States and Mongolia,” *Embassy of the United States in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*, June 14, 2011. http://mongolia.usembassy.gov/speeches_061411.html (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹³³ The White House, *U.S.-Mongolia Joint Statement*

¹³⁴ See the Community of Democracies official website: http://community-democracies.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=3

¹³⁵ Noerper, *Ten Things We Get from Mongolia*. p. 1

¹³⁶ Narangoa, *Preventative Diplomacy*, p. 373

¹³⁷ Wachman, NBR, p. 5

return. Additionally, the U.S. has devoted far more energy to international democratization, with the E.U. initially focused on Eastern Europe with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.¹³⁸ The E.U., like the U.S., is interested in cooperating with other democracies and Mongolia's democratic credentials support the increasingly important partnership between Europe and Mongolia.

Mongolia's commitment to democracy has led the E.U. to look more favorably on Mongolia.¹³⁹ Mongolia's proven commitment to democracy is in line with E.U. global goals, particularly as they concern Central Asia.¹⁴⁰ Mongolia's accession to the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) in Europe on November 22, 2012 is a clear indication that Europe and Mongolia are coming closer together on a number of issues. As the official announcement was being made, the OSCE Secretary General noted that Mongolia's participation would allow the organization to better tackle transnational issues, while Mongolia stood to benefit from the OSCE's expertise in democratic transitions.¹⁴¹ These shared values are defined as respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.¹⁴² The Partnership and Cooperation Agreements also explicitly support democratic development.¹⁴³ The U.S. responded to this announcement in a similar fashion, citing the accession as an indicator of Mongolia's importance to the democratic community as an example of a successful transition from communism to

¹³⁸ Interview, Director of Mongolian Institute of Strategic Studies, Mashbat Sarlagatai, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. June 6, 2012

¹³⁹ Mendee, EU, p.1

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ "Secretary General welcomes Mongolia to OSCE, stresses added value to security community," *OSCE News* (November 22, 2012). (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹⁴² *Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton Following the Legislative Elections in Mongolia on 28 June 2012*, 2012.

¹⁴³ European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

democracy.¹⁴⁴ A number of European development projects in Mongolia are handled directly by the European Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, which aims to encourage democratic institutional reform and support for human rights, specifically regarding the rights of inmates and sexual minorities.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Germany's Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) political foundation has taken an active role in supporting Mongolia's democratization through seminar trainings and programs to strengthen decentralization efforts.¹⁴⁶ Europe began developing relations with democratic Mongolia at a slower pace than the United States, but the proximity of Eastern Europe to Eurasia and a shared history between Mongolia and many Eastern European nations under the Soviet Union sets the groundwork for more multifaceted relations in the future.

The U.S. and Mongolia have reiterated shared democratic values numerous times, and various E.U. countries have remarked on the progress that Mongolia has made in its democratic development. While democracy promotion might be a difficult concept to support let alone undertake, in the case of Mongolia, democracy is already established and proven, the question is not how to get a country to democratize, but rather how to reward one once democratization has already taken a firm root.

Results

Mongolian democracy stands out in stark contrast to its neighbors, Russia and China, as well as when compared across the larger post-communist world, such as the Central Asian

¹⁴⁴ "U.S. Envoy on Mongolia as OSCE Participating State," *IIP Digital* (November 22, 2012). <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/11/20121123139050.html#axzz2E82SDh1V> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹⁴⁵ "EU supports Mongolia's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector with 7 mln euro project," *Delegation of European Union to Mongolia*, May 31, 2012. http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mongolia/press_corner/all_news/news/2012/20120531_01_en.htm (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

¹⁴⁶ For more information on KAS, please see: <http://www.kas.de/mongolei/en/> (Accessed on December 4, 2012).

authoritarian states Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.¹⁴⁷ Despite all its “robustness/rowdiness”, the Mongolian political system is clearly democratic. A perfect democracy where all citizens have an equal say and where the government is equally responsive to all its citizens’ demands does not exist.¹⁴⁸ From Hilary Clinton’s statement in Ulaanbaatar in support of democratization, it can be observed that Mongolia is becoming one of the poster countries for democracy and the rewards, stability, and development benefits that are associated with this political system. Mongolia can be held against claims that democracy is not for Asia. This is by no means meant to suggest that Mongolia’s own motivation in democratizing was to attract “Western” favor; rather, the point is that once democratized, the benefits to the Mongolian state and population were international as well domestic.

At the same time, Mongolia has been able to actively leverage its democratic credentials as part of its efforts to adapt to the post-communist international system and fulfill its “third neighbor policy.” Mongolia’s *Concept of Foreign Policy* states that the country’s foreign policy is guided by international norms such as respect for human rights and freedoms.¹⁴⁹ *The Concept of National Security of Mongolia* identifies the country’s democratic government as key to the state’s continued security in the sectors of civil rights and information security.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Mongolia’s democratic government distinguishes it a region defined by Russia, China, and the Central Asian states.

Does democracy matter? It seems that democracy is a potential tool that Mongolia can and has used to increase its attractiveness as a partner for U.S., E.U., and potentially other leading democracies. Attracting this interest is a key factor in Mongolia’s foreign policy, since it

¹⁴⁷ As rated by Democracy Index

¹⁴⁸ Epstein, *Democracy Promotion*, p. 11

¹⁴⁹ Concept of Foreign Policy, Section II, Article 8

¹⁵⁰ The Concept of National Security of Mongolia, Section IV

allows Mongolia to command a larger number of “third neighbors” as a counterbalance to Russian and especially Chinese influence. It is crucial that Mongolia implements a strong policy of diversification. Indeed, as a small state between giants, it knows only too well that overdependence on any one power will not afford it the sovereignty and autonomous decision-making power that it needs to survive as an independent state. If Mongolia’s democratization was not a factor and the country’s natural resources, growing economy, and/or strategic location were the only factors influencing relations with the U.S. and E.U., we might still expect some diplomatic gestures (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are also OSCE participating states). However, we would not see the level of high profile visits, the institutional support, or rhetorical references to Mongolia as a responsible stakeholder. We would also see more emphasis on economic ties and perhaps stronger military relations.

Conclusions

This thesis has attempted to present a new framework for understanding small state foreign policy behavior. I began with a two-part definition for defining “smallness” in the contemporary international system, saying that small states are those that approach their foreign policy and security objectives from a position of asymmetry and display certain behavioral characteristics, such as a specialized form of balancing behavior. If we accept that small states are able to balance larger powers and make independent foreign policy decisions, then they must be able to harness some sort of power to affect their security environment. Hard power is certainly not an option for small states due to large disparities in military capabilities. Soft power was also shown to be inappropriate, because it is inherently paired with hard power and assumes that states have the capacity to present themselves favorably through political ideals, policies, and culture. I argued that the smaller international profile of many small states would complicate the use soft power, making it less than ideal for analyzing their foreign policy behavior. *Small power* was then presented as a viable alternative, defined as the effort undertaken by small states to attract the attention of larger, less-threatening powers to balance against the role of a larger, threatening state. One particular option for the cultivation of *small power* was explored at length: democratization.

Mongolia was presented as a detailed case study/model for understanding how a small state can leverage its democratic credentials to achieve its foreign policy goals. Mongolia’s foreign policy explicitly aims to balance the role of its two huge neighbors, the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation. This strategy, termed the “third neighbor policy”, aims to attract the attention, support, and resources of larger regional and global powers to ensure that more than just China or Russia have a stake in the continued independence and sovereignty of

the modern Mongolian state. One important direction of this policy has been to deepen the relationship between Mongolia and the U.S./E.U. After discounting strategic and economic interests as the sole driving factors in these relationships, I concluded that by virtue of being an example of a successful transition to democracy and an open market economy, Mongolia has been able to build stronger bonds between itself and the United States/European Union than its small size, population, and developing economy might suggest. Both the U.S. and E.U. have promoted democratization as a foreign policy platform, and Mongolia has been able to further its own interests as a result.

This approach leads me to a number of important policy implications/considerations for both the U.S. and E.U., as well as small state foreign policy makers (See Table 3: Policy Implications). I eschew specific policy recommendations in favor of broader implications to frame the policy debate around small state foreign policy rather than offer concrete suggestions that are likely to vary on a case-by-case basis.

Table 3: Policy Implications

<i><u>For Large States: Needs of Small States</u></i>	<i><u>For Small States: Engage with Larger</u></i>
1. Diversification over Protection	1. Military options are not viable
2. Strategic Objectives are not viable	2. Ethical Neutrality
3. <i>Small Power</i> must be rewarded	

Larger states must recognize the needs of small states in order to most effectively engage with them; to this end large powers must take the following conclusions into consideration as they seek to benefit from relations with smaller countries:

- 1. Small states often aim for diversification over protection.** Many small states approach their foreign policies with an eye to ensuring numerous partners and interested countries. Their goal is not necessarily to seek insurances of protection from a larger power, but to make sure that as many states as possible have a vested interest in the small state's prosperity and independence. The goal of such a policy is a balance the influence of large powers, and to ensure that no state would detrimental action against the small state as it would be against the interests of numerous other stakeholders.
- 2. Advancing strategic objectives is not always the best policy.** Approaching small states for geo-strategic reasons will make the state a threat to its larger neighbors, which has the potential to cause those neighbors to take actions against the small state and the U.S. or E.U. To avoid upsetting regional stability, many small states will avoid a situation that could put their neutrality at risk. Rather relations between the U.S. or E.U. with a smaller state would be more effectively formulated through economic relations and institutional support, with minimal military-to-military relations.
- 3. *Small power cultivation only works when rewarded.*** Small states will seek to influence their immediate security environment through *small power* mechanisms; however, if efforts to increase *small power* (such as contributing to peacekeeping operations or democratizing) are not properly rewarded this mutually beneficial policy option may be abandoned. Small states can make effective partners for international security operations if approached with their specific interests and needs in mind.

For their part, small states can begin to effectively balance of the influence of larger neighbors and global powers to maintain their uncertain sovereignty by paying attention to the following points:

- 1. Military options are not viable.** Small states cannot hope to defend themselves against larger powers, and as such must ensure a more nuanced balancing strategy in line with their strategic objectives. Adapting to international circumstances is often a strength of small nations, with Mongolia standing out as a prime example. North Korea, on the other hand, continues to seek military solutions to its perceived vulnerability, establishing itself as a pariah state, largely unable to maintain close political, economic, or defence ties with other countries (with larger non-democratic states like Russia and China being a notable exception).
- 2. Ethical neutrality is emerging as a successful strategy.** By ensuring that their larger neighbors do not see them as a threat, small states can greatly increase their relative security; therefore, they should aim to avoid taking provocative stances against their neighbors. However, to attract larger states in North America and Europe, small states can leverage democratic credentials and adherence to human rights norms in addition to any geo-strategic value or resource wealth to further those relations significantly. Maintaining neutrality between neighbors, but displaying adherence to emerging international norms/ethics can benefit small states both domestically and internationally.

Small states present a unique challenge to International Relations theory. In many ways, all states have the same goals: to freely control their territory and ensure their independence from other threatening powers. Small states, however, will have to approach these goals with far less policy options than larger powers. While Mongolia was presented as a clear model for understanding the role of democratic governance with *small power*, it is hardly unique in this regard. Burma/Myanmar has undertaken sweeping political reforms, at least in part to counter over-reliance on China. To its credit, it has been incredibly successful, with the E.U. and U.S. quick to drop sanctions against it. Many post-Soviet states have also been keen to leverage their democratic credentials to meet their own security and foreign policy goals. The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) quickly transitioned to democracy following their independence in 1990, and today are protected as members of the European Union and NATO. Georgia has been able to garner U.S. support for its democratic revolution, and now appears to be on target to reach its goals of E.U. and NATO membership as well. While Mongolia offered a clear example for the purposes of this thesis, other small states have demonstrated remarkably similar foreign policy behavior. Small states display unique concerns as a result of asymmetry and as such deserve special analytical efforts to more fully understand their decision-making.

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