

The Periodization of Mongolia–Kazakhstan Political Relations

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Abstract: *This study examines the evolution of political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992. It analyzes how both countries, emerging from post-socialist transitions, gradually deepened their partnership-from initial consolidation to strategic alignment. By situating bilateral developments within broader regional and international dynamics, the study identifies the main factors shaping cooperation and evaluates their significance for small-state diplomacy in Central Asia. The analysis draws on political documents, high-level visits and their outcomes, official negotiations, and socio-political developments in both countries since the early 1990s. The development of Mongolia–Kazakhstan political relations can be understood through three historical phases: the first phase (1992–2008) was characterized by stable and steadily strengthening relations; the second phase (2009–2018) saw a slowdown yet continued stabilization; and the third phase (2019–present) marked a period of more active, dynamic, and intensified cooperation. Tracing these shifts reveals how bilateral interaction evolved in response to domestic transformations and changes in the regional environment. Overall, the study highlights how Mongolia and Kazakhstan have expanded cooperation, elevated their ties to a Strategic Partnership, and exercised diplomatic agency characteristic of small states seeking to enhance regional stability and diversify foreign relations.*

Keywords: *political relations, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, foreign policy, Central Asia*



Introduction

In the context of contemporary international relations, Mongolia's foreign policy toward Central Asia has become increasingly active and strategically oriented. Scholars attribute this intensification to several interrelated factors, including the region's geographic proximity, its abundant natural resources, particularly the energy reserves of the Caspian Sea basin—and its role as a critical transport corridor across the Eurasian continent. These geo-economic and geopolitical considerations have positioned Central Asia as a focal point in Mongolia's external engagement. Viewed through the lens of small-state diplomacy, Mongolia's approach reflects a deliberate effort to enhance its regional presence, diversify strategic partnerships, and assert diplomatic relations within a complex and competitive geopolitical environment.

In recent years, Mongolia's foreign policy towards Central Asia has become increasingly active and dynamic (Shugatai & Bold, 2025). Researcher Bayarkhuu D. explains Mongolia's policy as strengthening of its position in the Central Asian region (Bayarkhuu, 2025). The scholar of Mongolian studies Alicia Kempe (2002) gave a speech on the topic, stating that Mongolia's integration into Central Asia will determine its future and reveal its past: "...today, Mongolia should not turn its back on Central Asia, but rather seek its third neighbor there. Mongolia's integration with Central Asia may seem like a return to the past, but in fact it is a path to a better future" (Bayarkhuu, 2005).

Professor Ulambayar Denzenlkham

(2022) also believes that "it is necessary to recognize that the direction of relations with the countries of the Central Asian region has been significantly neglected in Mongolia's foreign policy" (Denzenlkham, 2022).

Mongolia's geographical location lies at the crossroads of Northeast Asia and Central Asia. Mongolia's foreign policy since 1990 has been focused primarily on East and Northeast Asia, with relatively little involvement in Central Asia. Therefore, Mongolia has intensified its foreign policy towards the Central Asian region, increased the frequency of high-level visits with the countries of the region, and regularly implemented political dialogues within the framework of ensuring regional balance in foreign relations and foreign policy (Shugatai & Bold, 2025). Regarding relations with regional countries, Article 14.3 of Mongolia's Foreign Policy Concept defines it as "developing friendly bilateral relations and cooperation with Asian countries, participating in multilateral cooperation, and supporting policies and activities aimed at strengthening strategic stability and expanding security cooperation in East Asia, Northeast Asia, and Central Asia" (Foreign Policy Concept of Mongolia, 2011). Researchers Soyolgerel N. and Mendee J. argue that Mongolia should deepen its relations with countries such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which pursue similar foreign policies to Mongolia, and adopt a new "soft balancing strategy" in relations with Central and Northeast Asia (Nyamjav & Jargalsaikhan, 2024). Thus, Mongolia is

actively developing its relations with the Kazakhstan, an influential geopolitical actor in the Central Asian region, to the level of Strategic Partnership. Mongolia established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan on January 22, 1992.

Kazakhstan is a country that seeks to actively cooperate with Western democracies in order to re-establish democracy and develop a free market economic system,

strengthen its position in the regional geopolitical space, and thereby further increase its influence in the region.

Consequently, to advance cooperation with Kazakhstan, an influential actor in Central Asia and one of Mongolia's key strategic and "third neighbor" partners, Mongolia must deepen its understanding of Kazakhstan's regional role and strategic behavior to ensure the effective implementation of its foreign policy objectives. Regarding Mongolia's relations with Kazakhstan, some researchers (Nyamjav & Jargalsaikhan, 2024) have described Kazakhstan as

"occupying an important position in Mongolia's foreign policy." This shows that Mongolia needs to pay more attention to its relations with the countries of the Central Asian region in the future. Mongolia and Kazakhstan share many similarities, as they are both landlocked countries with China and Russia, have a harsh continental climate, are sparsely populated over vast territories, and derive their economic income from mineral extraction. Hence, it is essential to explore the possibility of expanding relations with Mongolia and the Kazakhstan based on these common interests, which is important for scientific, regional, and area studies research.

This study examined the political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan using documents stored in the Central Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, high-level state visits between the two countries, interviews with ambassadors, news and materials, major political newspapers and magazines, and academic works by other researchers.

The Inception of Bilateral Political Relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan

According to archival documents, the groundwork for relations began in October 1990 when the Mongolian Consul General, Bud. B., met with the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Kazakhstan, E.M. Asambayev, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to exchange views on cooperation. During this time, Mongolia and Kazakhstan held several meetings through the Mongolian

Embassy in Moscow to prepare for the establishment of diplomatic relations. For example, on July 23, 1991, the Ambassador of the Mongolian People's Republic to the USSR, Mishigdorj N., met with the President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, in Moscow (CAMFA, 1991–1995). At this meeting, President Nazarbayev expressed interest in visiting Mongolia in the first half of 1992.

Based on Resolution No. 75 of the Mongolian State Lower House of the Parliament, dated December 25, 1991, concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations with certain countries, the Resolution on the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Republic of Kazakhstan was adopted in 1992. This marked a historic event in the commencement of formal relations between the two countries.

On January 22, 1992, in Almaty, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, Choinkhor J., and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kazakhstan, T.S. Suleimenov, exchanged notes confirming the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Republic of Kazakhstan. This date is officially recognized as the date of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (CAMFA, 1991–1995).

During this visit, the two sides also exchanged views on cooperation issues and handed over five draft agreements to the Kazakh side. Specifically, the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Payment Agreement, and the 1992 Protocol on Trade and Economic

Cooperation were signed. Furthermore, messages from the President of Mongolia, Ochirbat P., and Prime Minister, Byambasuren D., were presented to the President of the Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, and Prime Minister, S.A. Tereshchenko (Koblandin, 2013).

As a result of these events, the beginning of political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan began to take shape. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries was fully in line with the national interests of both countries and was a historically significant event. The aforementioned historical documents on the successful establishment of diplomatic relations, which were carried out by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries and the Mongolian diplomatic mission in Moscow, are preserved in the Central Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of our country (CAMFA, 1991–1995).

It is notable that Mongolia was one of the first countries in the Central Asian region to formally recognize the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan and establish diplomatic relations with it, shortly after Kazakhstan declared its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Characteristics of High-Level Reciprocal Visits in Mongolia and Kazakhstan Political Relations

The first high-level visit from Mongolia to Kazakhstan was conducted by the Speaker of the State Great Khural of Mongolia, Bagabandi N, in 1993. Conversely, the first high-level visit from Kazakhstan to Mongolia was made by Prime Minister of Kazakhstan,

S.A. Tereshchenko in 1992. These initial high-level visits served to identify key aspects of bilateral relations and cooperation and effectively laid the foundation for modern political relations between the two countries.

Table 1. High-level and top-level visits between Mongolia and Kazakhstan from 1992 to 2025

Year	Mongolia	Kazakhstan	Mongolia	Kazakhstan	Mongolia	Kazakhstan
	President		Prime Minister		Speaker of Parliament	
1992				S.Tereshchenko		
1993		N.Nazarbayev			N.Bagabandi	
1994			P.Jasrai			
1998	N.Bagabandi					
1999		N.Nazarbayev				
2003					S.Tumur-Ochir	
2007	N.Enkhbayar					
2008		N.Nazarbayev				
2016				K.Masimov		
2019			U.Khurelsukh			
2024		Kasym-Jomart Tokayev				
2025					D.Amarbaysagan	

Data source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2025. Kazakh-Mongolian Relations. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-ulaanbaatar/activities/2140?lang=ru>

As can be seen from the table above, [Note: The table is referenced but not visible, so this introductory phrase remains], the number of Presidential visits from Kazakhstan to Mongolia is higher than the reverse. This indicates that the Kazakh side has been more active and proactive in deepening relations and cooperation between the two countries. The cumulative visit data demonstrates this imbalance:

1. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, a total of six mutual visits have been made at the level of Heads of State/Presidents. Of these, two visits were made by Mongolia and the other four visits were made by Kazakhstan.

2. Of the total four visits at the Prime Minister level, two were from Mongolia and the other two from Kazakhstan.
3. A total of three official visits were made at the level of the Speaker of Parliament two at the level of the First Deputy Prime Minister, and four at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In addition, several high-level visits have been held within the framework of regional multilateral cooperation. For example, during the meetings of the heads of state of the SCO member states, the Heads of State and Government of the two countries met to exchange views on the current state of relations

and cooperation and future directions (Koblandin, 2013).

Specific instances of these multilateral engagements include:

1. July 5, 2005: While attending the “Meeting of Heads of State of the SCO Member States” held in Astana, Mongolian President Enkhbayar N. was received by President N.Nazarbayev and held a private meeting.
2. October 26, 2005: During the regular meeting of the Heads of Government of the SCO member states held in Moscow, Prime Minister of Mongolia Elbegdorj Ts. met with Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan D.Akhmetov and exchanged views on issues of relations and cooperation.
3. October 30–31, 2008: During the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the SCO held in Astana, the Prime Minister of Mongolia, S. Bayar, met with the Prime Minister of the Kazakhstan to discuss the supply of oil and oil products to Mongolia, the establishment of a direct investment fund between Mongolia and Kazakhstan, and the possibilities of its operation.
4. 2017: Mongolian President Elbegdorj Ts. attended the SCO summit and the opening ceremony of the Astana EXPO-2017 international specialized

exhibition.

5. October 2022: Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia Amarsaikhan S. participated in the “Conference on Strengthening Cooperation and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia” held in Astana.
6. 2024: Mongolian President Khurelsukh U. attended the “Astana Summit of the SCO Heads of State” held in Astana.

The high-level visits made by officials of the Kazakhstan to Mongolia include:

- Four visits at the level of President (1993, 1998, 2008, 2024)
- Two visits at the level of Prime Minister (1992, 2016)
- One visit at the level of Deputy Prime Minister (1997)
- One visit at the level of Secretary of State (2005)
- Two visits by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2006, 2025)

In addition, the Prime Minister of the Kazakhstan, Karim Massimov, visited Mongolia to participate in the ASEM Summit in 2016 within the framework of regional multilateral cooperation.

The increasing frequency of high-level visits between the two countries in recent years has further strengthened political trust, and the parties are making tangible progress in their cooperation.

Stages in the Political Relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan

I. The Early Stage of Relations: Period of Stabilization and Strengthening (1992–2008)

The period from 1992 to 2008 was particularly significant as both Mongolia and Kazakhstan underwent a period of democracy, market, and credit reforms, and the two countries' relations developed and fostered active relations.

During the early stages of Mongolia-Kazakhstan relations, or the period when relations were steady and strengthened, a total of 12 high-level and top-level mutual visits were held between 1992 and 2008. Of these, 7 visits were made by the Kazakh side and 5 visits by the Mongolian side. Between 1992 and 2008, there were 5 visits at the Presidential

level, 2 at the Prime Minister level, 2 at the Speaker of Parliament level, 2 at the Minister of Foreign Affairs level, and 1 at the Deputy Prime Minister level. 85 percent of the presidential visits since the two countries established diplomatic relations have taken place during this period. Two presidential visits were made by Mongolia and three by Kazakhstan (Table №2).

The early period of relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan (1992–2008) was marked by a series of high-level state visits that played an important role in strengthening their political relations.

Table 2. High-level and top-level visits between Mongolia and Kazakhstan from 1992 to 2008

Presidential level visit			
1993	N.Nazarbayev	President of Kazakhstan	Official visit
1998	Bagabandi N.	President of Mongolia	Official visit
1999	N.Nazarbayev	President of Kazakhstan	Official visit
2007	Enkhbayar N.	President of Mongolia	State visit
2008	N.Nazarbayev	President of Kazakhstan	State visit
Other high-level visits			
1992	S.Tereshchenko	Prime Minister of Kazakhstan	Official visit
1993	Gombosuren Ts.	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia	Working visit
1994	Jasrai P.	Prime Minister of Mongolia	Official visit
1997	I.Tasmaganbet	Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan	Working visit
2003	Tumur-Ochir S.	Parliament Speaker of Mongolia	Official visit
2005	O.Abdykhayimov	State Secretary of Kazakhstan	Working visit
2006	Kasym-Jomart Tokayev	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan	Official visit

Data source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 2025. Kazakh-Mongolian Relations. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-ulaanbaatar/activities/2140?lang=ru>

Features of the official visit of the Prime Minister of the Kazakhstan, Sergey Aleksandrovich Tereshchenko (S.A.Tereshchenko), to Mongolia on October 26-29, 1992:

- The visit was the first high-level visit from the Kazakhstan since the two countries established diplomatic relations.
- It was a highly significant visit that marked the beginning of the development of political relations between the two countries.
- Key basic documents governing relations and cooperation between the two countries have been developed.
- It was initially established by the Agreement on the Establishment of an Intergovernmental Commission between Mongolia and Kazakhstan (Khurmetkhan, 2002).

To briefly summarize the features and results of the official visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N.Nazarbayev, to Mongolia in October 1993. The official visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Mongolia in October 1993 marked a foundational moment in the bilateral relationship between Mongolia and Kazakhstan. As the first head-of-state-level engagement since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992, the visit signaled both symbolic and substantive commitment to developing intergovernmental cooperation. It laid the groundwork for a structured bilateral framework through the articulation of core principles and the signing of the Agreement of

Friendship and Cooperation, which formalized political, socio-economic, cultural, and scientific collaboration. The visit also contributed to the creation of a favorable political climate by aligning both countries on key regional and international issues. Kazakhstan's endorsement of Mongolia's proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone, and Mongolia's support for Kazakhstan's initiative to designate Central Asia as a zone of peace and cooperation, reflected a shared diplomatic vision and mutual recognition of each other's strategic priorities. Collectively, these outcomes positioned the 1993 visit as a pivotal step in institutionalizing Mongolia–Kazakhstan relations and fostering long-term regional stability.

Highlights of the official visit of Mongolian Prime Minister Jasrai P. to the Kazakhstan in December 1994: The official visit of Mongolian Prime Minister Jasrai P. to Kazakhstan represented a key milestone in the institutionalization of bilateral relations. As the first visit at the prime ministerial level, it reinforced the political momentum initiated by earlier high-level engagements and signaled a deepening commitment to economic and legal cooperation. The two sides reached substantive understandings on trade and economic matters, with particular emphasis on operationalizing previously signed agreements. The visit culminated in the signing of several foundational documents that fortified the legal architecture of bilateral relations. These included agreements on the mutual promotion and protection of investments, the regulation of labor migration and

contractual employment, the facilitation of citizen employment in enterprises and organizations, and the reciprocal movement of citizens. Collectively, these outcomes not only advanced economic ties but also reflected a shared intent to create stable, transparent, and mutually beneficial conditions for long-term cooperation

Mongolian President Bagabandi N. paid an official visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan in March 1998. This was the first official visit by Mongolia at the presidential level, and the parties agreed that economic relations between the two countries were not very good. The main issues discussed and agreed upon during the visit were:

- To resolve issues concerning Kazakh citizens who migrated from Mongolia to Kazakhstan.
- Resolve the debt issue from the “Balkhashmys” in Kazakhstan to the Erdenet copper plant in Mongolia
- At the 1998 session of the Mongolian-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Commission, the two sides agreed to develop specific measures to address all outstanding issues.
- Expand cooperation and collaboration in humanitarian and other fields.
- Expand cooperation in the fields of science and education (Unuudur 1998.03.17№54/348/, Khurmetkhan, 2002)

The official visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N.

Nazarbayev, to Mongolia on November 22-23, 1999, was the second visit to Mongolia at the level of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The official visit marked the second presidential-level engagement between the two countries and served to reaffirm their commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation. The visit emphasized the strategic importance of regional development, particularly in Mongolia’s western provinces and Kazakhstan’s eastern regions, where both sides identified significant potential for cross-border collaboration. Key outcomes included an agreement to establish a joint felt and grain processing enterprise in Bayan-Ulgii Province and a shared commitment to advancing infrastructure connectivity through road construction and the regularization of air transport. At the same time, both parties acknowledged the limited implementation of previously signed agreements and the underdeveloped state of trade and economic relations. This candid assessment led to a mutual understanding of the need to revitalize economic cooperation and enhance institutional coordination. The visit thus underscored both the challenges and opportunities in Mongolia-Kazakhstan relations, highlighting the importance of sustained political will and practical mechanisms to translate diplomatic intentions into tangible outcomes.

Considering the specific significance of the state visit of the President of Mongolia, N. Enkhbayar, to the Kazakhstan on August 13-15, 2007: A "Joint Declaration" was issued to further develop relations and cooperation

between the two countries.

- The two countries agreed to expand and develop relations and signed 5 cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding (Khurmetkhan, 2009).
- N.Nazarbayev expressed his positive support for the Mongolian side's request to supply 1-1.5 million tons of crude oil to Mongolia.
- He promised to resolve the issue of supplying 20-30 thousand tons of wheat to Mongolia through grants.
- The two countries, based on their similar and common interests, mainly cooperate in the mining, agriculture, and banking sectors, and the Kazakh side conveyed its investment opportunities during the visit.

The main features of the state visit of the President of the Kazakhstan N.Nazarbayev to Mongolia on August 6-7, 2008:

- This is his third visit to Mongolia as the head of state of the Kazakhstan.
- Mongolia and Kazakhstan have advanced from traditional friendly relations to a “comprehensive partnership” relationship. A “Joint Statement” on further relations and cooperation between the two countries (2008.08.15) was issued.
- The two countries exchanged views on working together to strengthen peace and stability in the region.

Summarizing the characteristics and results of political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan from 1992 to 2008, the early period of relations, or the period when relations were regularized and strengthened, as a whole: Between 1992 and 2008, Mongolia and Kazakhstan underwent a formative phase in their bilateral political engagement, marked by the establishment of diplomatic relations and the institutionalization of high-level exchanges. The consistent implementation of official visits underscored the mutual prioritization of diplomatic ties and cooperation. During this period, both governments ratified foundational legal instruments that structured the regulatory framework for bilateral relations, including mechanisms for sustained intergovernmental coordination. Negotiations at various levels revealed converging interests in strategic sectors such as mining, livestock-based trade, and industrial collaboration—particularly in the joint exploration of non-ferrous metals like copper and silver, and the establishment of related manufacturing facilities. Furthermore, both states demonstrated a shared commitment to promoting regional peace, stability, and multilateral cooperation within Central Asia. This era is widely recognized as a pivotal stage in Mongolia and Kazakhstan relations, during which the legal and diplomatic architecture for long-term cooperation was actively constructed. Kazakhstan’s comparatively higher frequency of high-level visits, coupled with the respectful reception of Mongolian delegations by its top leadership, reflected its proactive and engaged foreign policy posture toward

Mongolia. Between 1992 and 2008, or 16 years, the relations between the two countries were very active. The number of high-level visits made by Kazakhstan was higher than that of Mongolia. Also, during the high-level visits, Mongolian representatives were received by

the President and Prime Minister of Kazakhstan, who paid special attention to and treated relations with Mongolia with respect, which indicates that Kazakhstan's foreign relations with Mongolia were active.

II. The Relations Slowed Down and Stabilized Period, 2009-2018

Between 2009 and 2018, Mongolia–Kazakhstan political relations entered a phase of relative stabilization and reduced dynamism. The intensity of bilateral engagement—both in terms of diplomatic activity and cooperative initiatives—declined from earlier levels, resulting in a more neutral and measured trajectory. While formal ties remained intact, the pace of interaction and development in key areas of cooperation slowed considerably compared to the formative years of the relationship.

During the period of reduced diplomatic momentum between Mongolia and Kazakhstan (2009–2018), bilateral relations were marked by a notable absence of presidential-level engagements and a decline in state and official visits, particularly from the Mongolian side. Despite this overall stagnation, Kazakhstan maintained a degree of diplomatic outreach, evidenced by the official and working visits of First Deputy Prime Minister Bakhytzhan Sagintayev in 2015 and Prime Minister Karim Massimov in 2016. These visits, while limited in frequency, signaled Kazakhstan's continued interest in sustaining bilateral dialogue and cooperation amidst a broader phase of diplomatic deceleration.

In 2015, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Bakhytzhan Sagintayev, conducted an official visit to Mongolia, during which he held meetings with President Elbegdorj Ts, Prime Minister Saikhanbileg Ch, and Deputy Prime Minister Khurelsukh U. The discussions focused on enhancing the comprehensive partnership between the two nations, advancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation, and addressing international and regional issues of shared interest.

In July 2016, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Karim Massimov, visited Mongolia to participate in the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit. During the visit, the President of Mongolia, Elbegdorj Ts., and the Prime Minister of Mongolia, Erdenebat J., received them and exchanged views on the relations and cooperation between the two countries. This was the first time that a delegation from the Kazakh side had officially visited Mongolia and worked in Bayan-Olgii aimag and met with Kazakh citizens.

Between 2009 and 2018, Mongolia–Kazakhstan relations experienced a period of reduced high-level engagement, with no presidential, prime ministerial, or foreign ministerial visits recorded.

Despite this diplomatic lull, bilateral ties gradually stabilized. The broader Central Asian context during this time was marked by persistent socio-economic challenges and unresolved ethnic tensions rooted in the post-Soviet transition, contributing to regional volatility. Concurrently, Mongolia prioritized the development of large-scale mining projects and the attraction of foreign investment, while Kazakhstan, having

already established itself as a successful recipient of such investment in the mining sector, emerged as a regional competitor. These internal policy orientations and external constraints collectively limited the scope for deepened bilateral cooperation, prompting both countries to adopt a cautious, wait-and-see approach in anticipation of more favorable conditions for renewed engagement.

III. Since 2019, when the Strategic Partnership Relationship has been Revitalized and Intensified Period

Since 2019, when the strategic partnership between the two countries was revived and activated, political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan have reached a high level and have been successfully activated, with significant progress in the content and nature of political relations. At this time, the two countries have successfully established a legal foundation for relations that meet the standards of modern international relations, and high-level visits have become regular and

frequent, which can be described as a sign of further growth in political trust, real progress in relations and cooperation, and the opening of a completely new stage.

Since 2019, there have been one visit between Mongolia and Kazakhstan at the level of the President (from the Kazakh side), one visit at the level of the Prime Minister (from the Mongolian side), one visit at the level of the Speaker of the Parliament, and two visits at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Mongolia

Table 3. High-level visits between Mongolia and Kazakhstan since 2019

Presidential level visit		
2024	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev	President of Kazakhstan
Other high-level visits		
2019	Khurelsukh U.	Prime Minister of Mongolia
2021	Battsetseg B.	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia
2025	Nurtlei B.	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan
2025	Amarbayasgalan D.	Parliament Speaker of Mongolia

Data source: Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Mongolia. (2025). Kazakh-Mongolian Relations. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-ulaanbaatar/activities/2140?lang=en>

2021, Kazakhstan 2025) (Table №3).

An attempt was made to identify the main features of the high-level state visits that have taken place since 2019, when the Strategic Partnership between Mongolia and Kazakhstan was revived and activated, to understand how the political relations between the two countries have developed during this period.

Main features of the official visit of Mongolian Prime Minister U.Khurelsukh to the Kazakhstan on October 10-12, 2019:

- This visit was an important visit by the Prime Minister of Mongolia, which sought to revive and revitalize bilateral relations after a 16-year hiatus, and provided impetus for taking the political relations between the two countries to a new level
- During the visit, important issues that have accumulated over the years in the relations between the two countries were discussed and resolved. In particular, they held wide-ranging talks on developing relations in the trade and economic sectors and many other sectors, and mutually supporting and participating in multilateral regional cooperation.
- Organized a "Business Forum" involving business representatives from Mongolia and Kazakhstan. 31 businesses participated from Mongolia, while about 160 business representatives from Kazakhstan participated. During the "Business Forum", a total of 8

documents worth about 40 million US dollars were signed between business entities (Bayarkhuu Dorj, 2022), indicating that there are business opportunities and real interest in cooperation between businesses on both sides.

This visit was a significant and high-level visit that marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of political relations between the two countries.

The results and significance of the official visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, Battsetseg B., to the Kazakhstan on October 11-13, 2021, are as follows: The official visit marked a significant advancement in bilateral diplomacy, being the first visit at the foreign ministerial level from Mongolia. The visit coincided with the 6th Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), aligning with Mongolia's strategic foreign policy objective of contributing to regional peace, security, and integration. In this context, Mongolia and Kazakhstan engaged in substantive dialogue on strengthening regional stability and enhancing bilateral cooperation. A key outcome was the approval of a cooperation plan for 2021–2024, institutionalizing regular consultations between the two foreign ministries. The two sides also agreed to convene consistent intergovernmental talks, with a date set for the next round of discussions. Proposals to jointly develop a tourism strategy and establish a trade and economic roadmap signaled a forward-looking approach to sectoral

collaboration. Additionally, the visit served as a platform to review and reaffirm the commitments made during the 2019 visit of the Mongolian Prime Minister, reinforcing continuity and shared intent in advancing bilateral initiatives. Also during this official visits of Mongolian Foreign Minister Battsetseg B. was also warmly and respectfully received by the President of the Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and the Prime Minister of the Kazakhstan, Askar Mamin. Their high talks on cooperation between the two countries were held successfully in a business like atmosphere, and they discussed and exchanged views on many issues related to the further development of relations and cooperation.

During this visit, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev emphasized that *“Mongolia is a reliable strategic partner of the Kazakhstan”* (Erdenejargal, 2021). He also expressed *“his satisfaction with the close historical ties between the peoples of Mongolia and Kazakhstan and the good tradition of mutual support in the international arena ”* (Erdenejargal, 2021). This indicates his desire to expand bilateral relations on a broader scale, and his desire to further develop bilateral relations and raise them to a new level, aiming for a long-term goal of raising them to the level of “strategic partnership”.

The visit was a highly significant one, as the talks on cooperation between the two countries were successfully held in a businesslike atmosphere and mutual views were exchanged on the further development of relations and cooperation.

Features, significance and results of the state visit of the President of the Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, to Mongolia on October 28-30, 2024:

The state visit of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan to Mongolia from October 28 to 30, 2024, marked a pivotal moment in the trajectory of bilateral relations. This visit was historically significant in that it formalized the elevation of Mongolia–Kazakhstan ties from a Comprehensive Partnership to a Strategic Partnership, signaling a qualitative shift in the depth and ambition of bilateral cooperation. The two sides acknowledged the tangible outcomes of their joint efforts to strengthen political, economic, security, cultural, and educational collaboration, and affirmed their shared commitment to contributing to regional peace and sustainable development in Central Asia and beyond (KazINA, 2024). The agreement to institutionalize the Strategic Partnership not only reflected growing political trust but also laid the groundwork for broader, more structured cooperation across multiple sectors. In particular, the visit catalyzed new momentum in trade and economic relations, creating favorable conditions for policy alignment and the expansion of joint initiatives. As such, the visit is widely regarded as a milestone that revitalized bilateral engagement and opened a new chapter in Mongolia–Kazakhstan relations.

Mongolian President Khurelsukh U. emphasized that *“this is a particularly important event that marks the beginning of a new era in the history of relations*

between our two countries. Developing strategic partnership and cooperation with the Republic of Kazakhstan is an important direction of Mongolia's foreign policy, and the Republic of Kazakhstan is Mongolia's first strategic partner in the Central Asian region" (President of Mongolia, 2024). In describing the relationship between the two countries reaching the strategic level, President of Mongolia Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed his satisfaction with the relationship between the two countries, saying, "Our cooperation, which values strong unity, has reached the level of strategic partnership" (President of Mongolia, 2024).

The two countries set goals for developing their strategic partnership and issued the "Joint Statement of Mongolia and the Republic of Kazakhstan on Establishing Strategic Partnership Relations" (2024.10.29). Thus, at this new stage of development, the two countries' relations are set to deepen and expand cooperation in many areas, including politics, security, and defense; trade, economy; education, culture, science, and information technology; transport, logistics, tourism, and people-to-people relations; and cooperation in the regional and international arenas (President of Mongolia, 2024). During this visit, 11 intergovernmental and inter-governmental documents were signed (Akorda, 2024) aimed at strengthening the legal basis of relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan and expanding cooperation in important sectors such as transport, logistics, agriculture, veterinary medicine, information technology, culture, and tourism. In the context of

expanding and developing trade and economic cooperation, the "Roadmap for Intensifying Trade and Economic Cooperation between Mongolia and the Kazakhstan in 2025-2027" (KazINA, 2024) has been established.

From this observation, it can be seen that the two countries are taking their relations to a new level, further strengthening their relations, which is due to the interests of both sides, and is an indication that high-level visits between the two countries are becoming more stable, political trust is strengthened, and a solid foundation for political relations is being laid.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kazakhstan Murat Nurtleu paid an official visit to Mongolia on June 25-26, 2025.

This is the first visit by a foreign Minister of the Kazakhstan after 20 years. The purpose of the visit is to review the implementation of the agreements reached during the state visit of the President of the Kazakhstani Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, to Mongolia in 2024.

In order to increase trade turnover between the two countries to \$500 million, the development of agriculture, tourism, and defense sectors is being prioritized. Strengthening the relationship is beneficial for both sides. Mongolia can supply its goods to Central Asian and European markets through the Kazakhstan. In turn, the Kazakhstan sees Mongolia as a gateway to East and Southeast Asian countries (Qazaqstan, 2025). To this end, views were exchanged on the possibility of implementing joint projects and programs with Mongolia to use the southern and northern corridors of the Trans-

Caspian Corridor. In order to advance cooperation in the above-mentioned areas, the two sides agreed to hold the next meeting of the *Mongolia–Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation* by 2025.

Speaker of the The State Great Khural of Mongolia Amarbayasgalan D. paid official visit to Kazakhstan on September 4-7, 2025. There has not been a visit from our country at the level of a parliamentary speaker since the Speaker of the State Great Khural of Mongolia Tumur-Ochir S. visited Kazakhstan in 2003. This recent visit marks a significant milestone, revitalizing inter-parliamentary relations and fostering deeper cooperation between the legislative bodies of both nations. During the visit, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the State Great Khural of Mongolia and the Majilis of the Parliament of the Kazakhstan, along with several other key inter-institutional agreements.

Summarize the political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan

since 2019, the relationship between the two countries has entered a very rapid deepening trend. The relationship between the two countries has been revitalized and activated, the policy direction of cooperation has become clear in the coming years, and the foundation for the rapid development of the results of the relationship has been laid, which is of great significance, and it has brought new progress to the relations between the two countries. The first visit by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs from Mongolia, which had been suspended for 16 years, and the first visit by the Speaker of the Parliament, which had been suspended for 23 years, was made during this period. The Kazakh side also successfully conducted a state visit by the President after 16 years, and a visit by the Minister of Foreign Affairs after 19 years. In other words, during this period, high-level visits were regularly held, political dialogues were successful, and the foundation of political relations between the two countries was further strengthened.

Conclusion

Since the formal establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, Mongolia and Kazakhstan have demonstrated a consistent trajectory of political engagement, evolving from traditional friendly ties to a robust strategic partnership. This progression reflects substantive advancements in bilateral relations achieved within a relatively short historical timeframe.

Over the past three decades,

Mongolia–Kazakhstan political relations have undergone a distinct trajectory of development, shaped by the broader historical transition to democracy and market economies. Initially marked by steady consolidation, followed by a period of relative deceleration aligned with domestic socio-economic shifts, the relationship has since been revitalized in response to evolving international dynamics. This renewed engagement has imbued bilateral ties with greater strategic

depth and laid a robust foundation for mutually beneficial cooperation

The increasing regularity and frequency of high-level visits between Mongolia and Kazakhstan reflect a deepening of political trust and a shared commitment to advancing bilateral cooperation. These sustained diplomatic exchanges signal a strategic focus on expanding collaboration across multiple sectors and underscore the tangible progress being made in strengthening the overall partnership. The continued advancement of political relations between Mongolia and Kazakhstan is expected to facilitate the resolution of longstanding bilateral issues, while simultaneously fostering closer ties and mutual understanding. This trajectory not only signals a deepening of the partnership but also establishes the necessary preconditions for expanding cooperation across a broad range of sectors in the future.

Mongolia and Kazakhstan political relations have evolved through distinct

phases over the past three decades, reflecting both internal transformations and shifting regional dynamics. From the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992 to the recent elevation to a Strategic Partnership, the relationship has matured in scope and depth. Periods of active engagement, temporary stagnation, and renewed momentum have each contributed to shaping a resilient and forward-looking bilateral framework. The increasing frequency of high-level visits and the institutionalization of strategic dialogue underscore growing political trust and a shared commitment to long-term cooperation. As both countries continue to align their diplomatic priorities, the foundation is firmly set for deeper collaboration and enhanced regional influence. This evolving partnership also illustrates how small states, through sustained engagement and strategic coordination, can assert meaningful agency in regional affairs and contribute constructively to the broader international system.

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