



MONGOLIA SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: May 23, 2026 - May 30, 2026

This report was produced using open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Executive Summary

Mongolia experienced a dynamic week in its security and diplomatic landscape, marked by a series of joint military exercises and intensified international engagements. The nation actively participated in "Road-2026" engineering drills with Japan and commenced "Steppe Partner 2026" joint army training with China, underscoring its commitment to both UN peacekeeping capabilities and regional counter-terrorism efforts. Diplomatically, Mongolia strengthened ties with Russia through high-level visits, deepened its strategic partnership with the European Union via extensive dialogues, and enhanced law enforcement and cybersecurity cooperation with South Korea. While the overall threat of terrorism and political violence remains low, persistent challenges in cybersecurity, including reported state-sponsored hacking attempts against government entities, and ongoing efforts in border security highlight areas requiring continuous vigilance and development.

Key Security Developments

- **Military Activities and Exercises with Japan:** The joint exercises "Road-2026" between the Armed Forces of Mongolia and the Japan Self-Defense Forces commenced on May 18, 2026, in Hitachinaka, Ibaraki prefecture, Japan. This twelfth year of joint training focuses on enhancing the engineering and sapper skills of Mongolian forces for UN peacekeeping operations, with theoretical training in Japan until June 19 and practical exercises in Mongolia in August. Fifteen Mongolian soldiers are participating, studying base construction and infrastructure for peacekeeping.
- **Joint Military Exercises with China:** Mongolian troops arrived on May 27, 2026, in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for the "Steppe Partner 2026" joint army training, which will run from late May through early June. This marks the first time the "Steppe Partner" series is held within China and focuses on joint strikes against illegal armed groups, aiming to deepen friendship, mutual trust, and enhance capabilities for regional peace and stability.
- **Participation in Turkish Military Exercises:** Mongolian servicemen participated in the "EFES-2026" joint military exercises with live fire, held at the Doganbey training ground in Seferihisar, Turkey, from April 20 to May 21, 2026. These exercises involved over 10,000 participants from 50 countries, showcasing military skills and advancements in defense technologies, including AI-supported operational management systems. The Commander of the Mongolian Ground

Forces, Major General Tsogtjargal Chimeddorj, met with the Commander of the Turkish Ground Forces, General Metin Tokel, to discuss bilateral cooperation.

- **Strengthening Diplomatic Ties with Russia:** On May 23, 2026, the Russian Foreign Ministry commented on the visit of Mongolian Foreign Minister Lundeg Purevsuren to Russia, reaffirming the priority of Russian-Mongolian relations as a multifaceted strategic partnership. Additionally, the Speaker of the State Great Khural of Mongolia, N. Uchral, paid an official visit to Russia, holding meetings with State Duma Chairman Volodin and Federation Council Chair Matviyenko to discuss parliamentary and economic cooperation. Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu also met with his Mongolian counterpart, A. Byambajargal, in Moscow to discuss aligning regional and global security actions.
- **Enhanced EU-Mongolia Partnership:** The EU Delegation to Mongolia celebrated Europe Day 2026 in Darkhan city on May 23, a historic first outside the capital, followed by high-level meetings in Ulaanbaatar on May 25 and 26, 2026. Ambassadors from 21 EU Member States engaged with Mongolian parliamentary and ministerial officials, discussing democratic governance, green transition, sustainable development, economic partnership, legislative cooperation, and addressing disinformation. An EU Trade Day 2026 was also held on May 26.
- **Cybersecurity Threats and National Strategy Implementation:** A report from April 23, 2026, revealed that a China-aligned threat actor, named GopherWhisper, targeted a Mongolian government entity, using platforms like Discord, Slack, and Microsoft 365 Outlook for covert communications and data exfiltration. This highlights the ongoing cyber threats despite Mongolia's comprehensive National Cybersecurity Strategy (2022-2027), which, as of a May 8, 2026, report, faces challenges with critically low compliance rates and a shortage of skilled professionals.
- **Border Security and Migration Cooperation with China:** Mongolia and China strengthened cooperation on border control and migration. Deputy Minister of Justice and Home Affairs D. Munkh-Erdene met with Qiu Baoli, Deputy Head of China's National Immigration Administration, to discuss deepening law enforcement and border management ties. Both nations agreed to launch joint training projects for border officials and enhance collaboration to counter cybercrime, illegal immigration, and transnational threats.
- **Diplomatic and Law Enforcement Cooperation with South Korea:** On May 26, 2026, Mongolia's Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs, S. Amarsaikhan, met with Jung Sung Ho in Seoul to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation on immigration, visa services, and law enforcement. Key topics included protecting citizens' rights, improving travel conditions, digitalizing visa operations, and strengthening cooperation to combat crimes such as drug trafficking and cyber fraud.

- **Ongoing US-Mongolia Strategic Partnership:** While no new major events were reported within the specific week, the broader context of the U.S.-Mongolia Strategic Third Neighbor Partnership remains a focus, with discussions in March 2026 reaffirming cooperation on peace and security, economic resilience, and democratic principles. The two nations are preparing to mark the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2027.
- **Intelligence Agency Activities:** The General Intelligence Agency (GIA) of Mongolia continues its role as an early warning system, collecting and evaluating information on national security threats, including international terrorism, organized crime, weapons and drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal migration, and information warfare. This agency's operations are critical in monitoring the evolving security landscape.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Mongolia's security developments during this period underscore its delicate balancing act within a complex geopolitical neighborhood, characterized by the influence of its two large neighbors, Russia and China, and its "Third Neighbor" policy with countries like the US, Japan, and the EU. The joint military exercises with both China ("Steppe Partner 2026") and Japan ("Road-2026") highlight Mongolia's strategy of maintaining defense cooperation with multiple partners to enhance its capabilities and avoid over-reliance on a single power. The "Steppe Partner 2026" drills, focusing on countering illegal armed groups, directly contribute to regional stability by addressing shared security concerns with China. Simultaneously, the "Road-2026" exercises with Japan, centered on UN peacekeeping operations, demonstrate Mongolia's commitment to international security contributions and its broader diplomatic engagement beyond its immediate borders.

Diplomatic engagements during the week further illustrate this multi-vector foreign policy. High-level meetings with Russian officials, including the Foreign Minister and parliamentary Speaker, reaffirmed the comprehensive strategic partnership and discussed economic and security cooperation. This engagement is crucial for Mongolia's energy security, with Russia pledging uninterrupted fuel supplies for 2026. Concurrently, the extensive EU-Mongolia meetings, including the first-ever Europe Day in Darkhan and subsequent high-level dialogues in Ulaanbaatar, signify a deepening partnership focused on democratic governance, green transition, and economic diversification. The EU's reiterated support for Mongolia's "Third Neighbor" policy is a clear indication of its role in helping Mongolia diversify its international partnerships and reduce dependency.

The reported China-linked cyberattack on a Mongolian government entity serves as a stark reminder of the persistent cyber threats emanating from major powers and the challenges Mongolia faces in safeguarding its digital infrastructure. This incident, coupled with the ongoing implementation challenges of Mongolia's National Cybersecurity Strategy, underscores the vulnerability of smaller states to sophisticated state-sponsored cyber operations. Mongolia's efforts to strengthen border control and migration cooperation with China and law enforcement cooperation with South Korea, particularly against cyber fraud, reflect a pragmatic approach to managing transnational threats and maintaining stability in its immediate vicinity and with key economic partners. These dynamics collectively portray Mongolia as an active, albeit carefully navigating, player in the regional strategic landscape, striving to balance its relationships for national security and economic prosperity.

Military and Defense Analysis

Mongolia's military and defense posture during this period reflects a continued emphasis on enhancing specialized capabilities, particularly for peacekeeping operations, and fostering interoperability through international exercises. The "Road-2026" joint exercises with Japan, focusing on engineering and sapper skills, are a direct investment in developing specialized units crucial for both domestic infrastructure projects and international peacekeeping missions under the UN mandate. The participation of 15 Mongolian soldiers in this training, which includes theoretical instruction in Japan and practical application in Mongolia, indicates a structured approach to professional development and knowledge transfer. This long-standing project, initiated in 2014, demonstrates a consistent effort to build a cadre of qualified military engineers, thereby improving the Mongolian Armed Forces' overall operational readiness and their ability to contribute to global security.

Concurrently, the "Steppe Partner 2026" joint army training with China, involving Mongolian troops arriving in Inner Mongolia, China, signifies a different facet of Mongolia's defense strategy. These drills, focused on joint strikes against illegal armed groups, indicate a commitment to addressing immediate regional security threats, such as cross-border crime and potential insurgencies. The shift to holding these exercises within China for the first time since their inception in 2024 suggests a deepening level of military cooperation and trust between the two nations. Furthermore, Mongolia's participation in the large-scale "EFES-2026" exercises in Turkey, involving 50 countries and showcasing advanced military technologies like AI-supported operational management, demonstrates a broader engagement with international defense partners and an interest in modernizing its forces through exposure to contemporary warfare concepts and equipment. While specific defense acquisitions or arms deals were not reported within this timeframe, the consistent

participation in diverse international exercises suggests a strategy of capability development through training, experience exchange, and exposure to varied military doctrines, rather than solely through large-scale procurement. The discussions between the Commander of the Mongolian Ground Forces and his Turkish counterpart during EFES-2026 further highlight ongoing efforts to explore and strengthen defense cooperation.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months): In the immediate future, Mongolia is expected to continue its active engagement in multilateral military exercises and diplomatic dialogues. The theoretical phase of the "Road-2026" exercises with Japan will conclude in June, with the practical field exercises anticipated in Mongolia in August, indicating ongoing development of peacekeeping capabilities. The "Steppe Partner 2026" joint army training with China will conclude in early June, likely leading to further discussions on border security and counter-terrorism cooperation. Diplomatically, the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) from June 3-6, 2026, will provide another platform for Russia and Mongolia to discuss business dialogue and economic cooperation. The momentum from the EU-Mongolia high-level meetings in May is likely to translate into continued efforts to deepen economic and political ties, potentially leading to further initiatives under the "Global Gateway" framework. Cybersecurity will remain a critical area, with ongoing efforts to address the compliance gap and shortage of skilled professionals within the National Cybersecurity Strategy.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas: The primary risk areas for Mongolia in the short term revolve around its geopolitical balancing act. While cooperation with both China and Russia is essential for its security and economy, the increasing military exercises with both powers, especially the "Steppe Partner 2026" with China, could be perceived differently by its "Third Neighbors" and potentially lead to subtle shifts in regional power dynamics. The persistent threat of state-sponsored cyberattacks, as evidenced by the GopherWhisper incident, remains a significant vulnerability, particularly for government entities and critical infrastructure. Furthermore, the OSAC report's mention of porous borders and the monitoring of visitors from countries with transnational terrorists suggests a continued, albeit low, risk of cross-border security incidents or the transit of illicit activities. Internal issues such as corruption and civil unrest, though not prominent in this reporting period, remain underlying concerns as highlighted by past events.

Indicators to monitor: Key indicators to monitor include the outcomes and subsequent statements from the ongoing military exercises with Japan and China, looking for any changes in scope, frequency, or participating forces. The progress in implementing

Mongolia's National Cybersecurity Strategy, particularly improvements in compliance rates and human resource development, will be crucial. Diplomatic statements and agreements arising from continued engagements with Russia, China, the US, and the EU, especially concerning trade, investment, and security cooperation, will provide insights into Mongolia's evolving foreign policy balance. Any reports of significant cross-border incidents, cyberattacks, or internal security disruptions would also be critical to track.

Strategic recommendations: Mongolia should continue to diversify its security and economic partnerships under its "Third Neighbor" policy, actively engaging with a broad range of international actors to enhance its strategic autonomy. Prioritizing the full implementation of the National Cybersecurity Strategy, including investing in training and accreditation for cybersecurity professionals, is paramount to mitigate sophisticated cyber threats. Strengthening border security capabilities through technology and international cooperation, particularly with immediate neighbors, should remain a focus to counter illegal immigration and transnational crime. Finally, maintaining transparency regarding its military exercises and defense cooperation with all partners can help manage regional perceptions and reinforce its commitment to a peaceful and stable regional environment.

Structured Assessment

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