

Research Article

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF ENSURING BORDER SECURITY THROUGH DIPLOMATIC MEANS: THE ROLE OF BORDER DIPLOMACY

¹* UYANGA Perenlei and ²MUNKHSARUUL Baatarjav

¹Doctoral Candidate, National Defense University, Senior Lecturer, School of Law and Social Sciences, Internal Affairs University Mongolia.

²Student at Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea.

Received 22nd July 2025; Accepted 15th September 2025; Published online 18th October 2025

ABSTRACT

The issue of ensuring security through diplomatic means is a broad field of study that encompasses multiple disciplines, including international relations, political science, and security studies. Border security is a strategically important matter that directly affects a country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. Our article examines the theory and methodology of ensuring border security through diplomatic means, applying a balanced approach based on the theory of idealism in international relations and the systemic theory and approaches of security studies. The research identifies that border diplomacy plays a crucial role in resolving border disputes, establishing joint control mechanisms, strengthening mutual trust, and developing effective border management.

Keywords: Border security, threats, border management, diplomatic means, system, foreign policy, international relations.

INTRODUCTION

Activities aimed at ensuring border security through diplomatic means are implemented based on theoretical foundations, multilateral coordination, and legal regulations. From a systems theory perspective, it is essential to ensure the interconnection of actions among the parties involved, to identify potential risks in border and border-adjacent areas in advance, and to manage them through a unified policy consistent with legal norms.

Diplomatic measures are not merely instruments of foreign relations but constitute a strategic component of national security. They are explained through methodological concepts such as strategic planning, risk management, international relations theory, and governance coherence. As a result, achieving border security through diplomatic means becomes possible only when foreign policy, border protection, and national security policy are effectively integrated and aligned.

The term “**diplomatic means**” may be understood as a strategic framework that guides and directs activities, while “**diplomatic operations**” consist of specific actions and tasks carried out within that framework. In this sense, “diplomatic means” define the principles and strategy (the first process), and “diplomatic operations” represent the practical implementation (the second process). Based on the principle of “one border, two states,” diplomatic strategies and step-by-step operations should include mechanisms for joint border protection, information sharing, prevention measures, and cooperation against cross-border crimes and threats.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ensuring border security within the border area is of utmost importance. At the **tactical level**, it requires a precise definition of territorial boundaries and the integration of conditions in foreign policy

and border relations to prevent external threats. Internally, it is essential to properly structure and position institutions, systems, and organizational frameworks that ensure border security.¹

From this perspective, **foreign policy and diplomatic activities** serve as key instruments for creating a favorable external environment for national security and for implementing the objectives of domestic policy. Therefore, policies aimed at ensuring border security must be systematically aligned with foreign policy objectives.

Border threats constantly challenge a nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. These threats evolve continuously depending on changes in modern international relations, regional geopolitics, and socio-economic conditions in border areas. Consequently, it is theoretically unfounded and practically impossible to assume that border threats can be completely eliminated.

The process of ensuring border security through diplomatic means can be interpreted using an input-process-output (IPO) system model. In this framework, *inputs* include risks, policies, and the legal environment; *processes* encompass diplomatic methods and cooperation mechanisms; and *outputs* represent a stable border and a favorable external environment.

From the perspective of systems theory, the border can similarly be explained by the IPO model:

- Input – threats, legal context, and political and economic factors.
- Process – diplomacy, negotiations, and international cooperation.
- Output – a stable border, reduced risks, and increased mutual trust.

By systematizing diplomacy, negotiation, and international cooperation theoretically, border security can be understood not

*Corresponding Author: UYANGA Perenlei,

1Doctoral Candidate, National Defense University, Senior Lecturer, School of Law and Social Sciences, Internal Affairs University Mongolia.

¹Наранжамц Н., Улсын хилийн аюулгүй байдлыг хангах тогтолцоо бодлого, стратеги.-//Хилийн аюулгүй байдалд тулгамдаж буй асуудал, шийдвэрлэх арга зам/ Олон улсын эрдэм шинжилгээний хурлын эмхэтгэл/-УБ.,2018.,150.

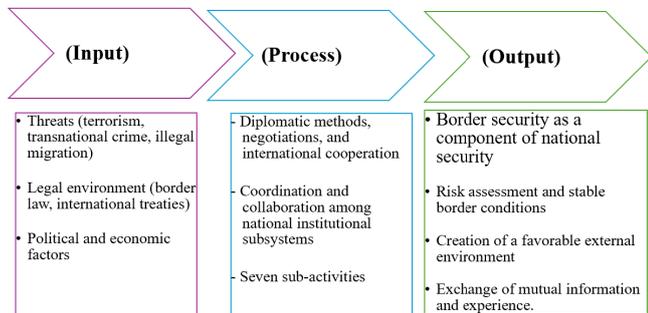
merely as a militarized defense function but as a comprehensive approach that integrates political, economic, and social dimensions. According to R. Barston in his work *Diplomatic Method*, “diplomatic method” refers to a strategic tool for managing inter-state relations and resolving conflicts peacefully—through negotiation, dialogue, and compromise rather than coercion or military means. In contrast, “diplomatic operations” are concrete actions aimed at achieving desired outcomes in international arenas based on domestic policy objectives.

British scholar J. R. Berridge further explains that “*diplomatic activity is essentially political in nature and constitutes a core component of national power. Its main goal is to enable states to pursue their foreign policy objectives without resorting to force, propaganda, or legal coercion.*”

The issue of ensuring border security is not the responsibility of a single institution; rather, it is a comprehensive system involving multiple actors, coordination mechanisms, policies, and implementation processes. In systems theory, the performance of subsystems directly influences the overall effectiveness of the entire system. Therefore, the outcomes of diplomacy-based activities directly affect border security as an integral element of national security.

Analyzing the system for ensuring border security through diplomatic means from a systems-theoretical perspective allows the issue to be understood as a complex, interrelated, and dynamic social system. According to Ludwig von Bertalanffy’s General Systems Theory, every system is open, interactive, and structured through input–process–output–feedback relationships.

1.3 (Input–Process–Output, IPO)



Therefore, border security should not be confined solely to state border protection; rather, it must be understood within the broader framework of the elements that ensure it. The effectiveness of diplomatic sub-system activities directly determines the degree to which border security is maintained.

The diplomatic method functions as the core process element within this sub-system, influencing all inputs and directly affecting the output—border security itself. Hence, it can be regarded as the “main conduit” that impacts all sub-system’s processes and outcomes. From the theoretical perspective of international relations, the development of border diplomacy has evolved through distinct paradigms. Traditionally, it was grounded in neorealist theory, emphasizing hard power, sovereignty, and the defense of national independence and security. However, since the late 20th century, the field has increasingly been shaped by liberalism and neoliberalism, which prioritizes cooperation, institutions, and interdependence as key components of diplomatic engagement. In the 21st century, the rise of soft power theory has significantly influenced diplomacy. Cultural influence, mutual trust, shared values, and human resource development have gained greater importance, transforming diplomacy into a more multilateral and networked system that

ensures balanced participation of state and non-state, local, and regional actors—an approach often referred to as networked diplomacy.

Furthermore, modern diplomacy now extends beyond traditional state-to-state (Track I) interactions to include Track II and Track III diplomacy, encompassing civil society, non-governmental organizations, and local partnerships—thereby creating a broader, more inclusive, and innovative participatory environment for managing border and security relations.

ANALYSIS OF BORDER DIPLOMACY

Illegal Cross-Border Crimes (Drug Trafficking, Narcotics, Human Trafficking): These threats undermine national security and public safety by facilitating organized criminal networks. Border diplomacy addresses them through multilateral negotiations, intelligence sharing, and joint capacity-building programs. Such collaboration helps states develop coordinated responses, establish common databases, and conduct joint training exercises. These measures contribute to reducing illegal transboundary flows, improving surveillance and law enforcement coordination, and strengthening mutual trust among neighboring countries.

Border Disputes and Border-Area Conflicts: Territorial disagreements and border-related incidents pose serious risks to peace and stability. Diplomatic efforts—such as high-level bilateral or regional meetings, confidence-building measures, and formal dispute resolution agreements—help prevent escalation. Through diplomacy, states can mitigate tensions, clarify boundaries, and prevent conflicts triggered by illegal crossings or misunderstandings.

Technological Risks: Rapid technological development introduces new challenges, including cyber threats to border surveillance systems or misuse of drones and digital communication tools by criminal groups. By engaging in technical cooperation, sharing international best practices, and implementing training programs, countries can strengthen their border management systems. These diplomatic and technical exchanges enhance the technological and operational capacity of border authorities, leading to more effective prevention and control of cross-border threats.

Natural Disasters or Environmental Hazards (Floods, Ecological Issues): Transboundary natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and ecosystem degradation often disrupt border infrastructure and population movements. International environmental cooperation and joint monitoring initiatives enable countries to share data and coordinate mitigation strategies. Such collaboration contributes to reducing and preventing transboundary environmental risks, ensuring both ecological stability and border security.

Table 01. The Impact of Border Diplomacy

Д/д	Threats	Border Diplomacy Outcome	Impact on Ensuring Border Security
1	Illegal cross-border crimes (drug trafficking, narcotics, human trafficking)	Multilateral negotiations, information exchange, joint training	Reducing illegal flows and strengthening mutual trust
2	Border disputes and border-area conflicts	High-level meetings, confidence-building measures, dispute resolution agreements	Mitigating border tensions and preventing conflicts arising from illegal border crossings

3	Technological risks	Technical cooperation, exchange of international experience, training programs	Enhancing the technical capacity and systems of border protection for prevention and control
4	Natural disasters or hazards (floods, ecological issues)	International environmental agreements, joint monitoring activities	Reducing and preventing transboundary environmental risks

Border threats emerge in multiple and evolving forms, encompassing security, political, economic, technological, and environmental dimensions. These include illegal cross-border activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and smuggling; political tensions arising from territorial disputes; risks linked to emerging technologies and cyber vulnerabilities; and natural or ecological hazards that transcend borders. Because these challenges are complex and interconnected, diplomatic engagement provides the most effective, sustainable, and non-militarized approach to managing them.

First, in addressing illegal cross-border crimes, diplomacy fosters *multilateral cooperation* among neighboring states and international organizations. By facilitating *information exchange*, *joint training programs*, and *capacity-building initiatives*, diplomacy enhances preventive measures and establishes long-term trust between border authorities. This cooperative framework helps harmonize legal standards, improve cross-border investigations, and strengthen mutual confidence essential for sustained peace and order.

Second, in situations involving border disputes and armed or political tensions, diplomatic channels such as *high-level summits*, *confidence-building measures*, and *negotiated agreements* serve as peaceful instruments to de-escalate crises. These diplomatic actions not only prevent confrontations but also enable parties to resolve disputes with minimal political and human costs. The process promotes a culture of dialogue, compromise, and mutual respect—key elements for maintaining regional stability.

Third, regarding technological risks, diplomacy enables *technical cooperation* and *knowledge exchange* on border surveillance, cyber protection, and information management systems. Collaborative research and technical assistance programs enhance the capacity of border agencies to detect and respond to emerging risks, ensuring technological resilience and reducing vulnerabilities that could be exploited by criminal or hostile actors.

Finally, in confronting natural disasters and ecological threats, *international environmental diplomacy* plays a pivotal role. Cross-border cooperation in environmental monitoring, data sharing, and joint response mechanisms strengthens preparedness for floods, earthquakes, and other ecological crises. Such initiatives not only reduce environmental risks but also cultivate regional solidarity and a shared responsibility for sustainable development and resource management.

In essence, border diplomacy extends far beyond the resolution of territorial disputes. It constitutes a comprehensive and systemic mechanism that integrates political dialogue, institutional cooperation, and mutual capacity building. Through these means, diplomatic engagement contributes to the creation of a stable, predictable, and cooperative border environment, reinforcing both national and collective security while nurturing trust and multilateral stability among neighboring states.

CONCLUSION

In international relations, the approaches and methods for ensuring security have always varied depending on the prevailing geopolitical circumstances and theoretical perspectives of each era. In the current context, there is an emerging need to examine this issue through a balanced understanding of both international relations and security theories.

From the perspective of idealist scholars, the means of ensuring security are not limited to the use of force or coercive policies. Rather, they emphasize that cooperation, mutual understanding, and the involvement of international organizations—that is, diplomatic approaches—can provide a more stable and long-term foundation for security. In this view, ensuring border security through diplomatic means is considered a peaceful and sustainable approach that integrates national security policy, international relations trends, and regional geopolitical contexts.

From the perspective of systems theory, ensuring border security through diplomacy is understood as a coordinated process involving multiple subsystems—ensuring interconnectivity, comprehensively assessing risks, improving legal and institutional frameworks, and regulating international relations. It reflects the idea that border security depends on the integrated functioning of political, legal, and institutional mechanisms.

A border is not merely a geographical demarcation; it is a central expression of a state's sovereignty, security, and national existence. Therefore, ensuring border security through diplomatic means should not be seen as a temporary or reactive measure, but as a genuine mechanism for establishing mutual trust, long-term stability, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

For this reason, many states now place special emphasis on the role of diplomacy in their border security policies and actively work to expand and strengthen the scope of diplomatic engagement. Responding to border threats through effective border management and cooperative mechanisms—aimed at reducing risks, preventing crises, and establishing stable control—represents a realistic and effective strategic approach in contemporary international relations.

REFERENCES

1. Наранжамц Н., Улсын хилийн аюулгүй байдлыг хангах тогтолцоо бодлого, стратеги.-//Хилийн аюулгүй байдалд тулгамдаж буй асуудал, шийдвэрлэх арга зам/олон улсын эрдэм шинжилгээний хурлын эмхэтгэл.-УБ.,2018.,т150
2. Dr. R. P. Barston, *Modern Diplomacy*, Fourth edition published 2013 by Pearson Education, Published 2014 by Routledge
3. Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Little, Brown, 1977.
4. Hocking, B. "Multistakeholder Diplomacy: Forms, Functions and Frustrations." *Multistakeholder Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities*. DiploFoundation, 2005.
5. Diamond, L., & McDonald, J. *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*, 3rd ed., Kumarian Press, 1996.
6. European Commission – Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. (2024, October 1). Global collaboration against organised crime secures major wins. https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/news/global-collaboration-against-organised-crime-secures-major-wins-2024-10-01_en
7. Legrand, T. (2021). Securing cross-border collaboration: Transgovernmental initiatives. *Policy & Society*, 40(4), 565–584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2021.1975216>

8. Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. (2000). International cooperation to combat transnational organised crime: With special emphasis on mutual legal assistance and extradition. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/international-cooperation-combat-transnational-organised-crime>
9. The White House. (n.d.). Build international capacity, cooperation, and partnerships. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/partnerships>
10. Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TRACCC), George Mason University. (2024). Internationalizing the fight against hubs of illicit trade [White paper]. <https://traccc.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/HIT-White-Paper.pdf>
11. United Nations. (2024). What is transnational organized crime? UN Peace & Security. <https://www.un.org/en/peace-and-security/transnational-crime>
12. Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. (n.d.). International cooperation score – Organized crime. https://ocindex.net/crime/international_cooperation
