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## THE GOLDEN HORDE STATE IN THE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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The present article examines the place of the Golden Horde in the system of international relations of the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as directions of its foreign policy.

To determine the place of the ulus of Jochi in the international system the author suggests to disclose the subject through illumination of such important issues as:

- the Mongol conquests and creation of the Chingisid state entities, the establishment of a new international order.
- formation of the ulus of Jochi as an independent State and its role in the Chingisid States' relations, the kurultai of 1269.
- international activities of the Golden Horde State during the period of its might.
- interstate coalitions in the global geopolitics and national interests of the ulus of Jochi in international systems.
- The role and place of the Golden Horde in the international life of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The program activity of the Jochids in a new geopolitical situation of the late 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The author believes that the establishment of the Golden Horde State occurred in three phases (1207–1241, 1242–1259, 1260–1269). The Jochids' policy towards their neighbors and other Chingisid states formed during this time.

Both the Distemper of the 1360–70's in the ulus of Jochi and destruction of all other Chingisid States resulted in the Golden Horde's loss of its place in the system of international relations. Therefore, the program activity of the Jochids in a new geopolitical situation of the late 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, was aimed at restoring the international authority of the State.

The author considers the directions of the Golden Horde foreign policy, which were laid down during the reign of Berke khan and remained a priority until the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Golden Horde, ulus of Jochi, Mongol Empire, system of international relations, geopolitics, Chingisids, kurultai.

The question that we analyze in this article has already been considered to some extent in the works dedicated to the history of ulus of Jochi. However, the results of these studies are insufficient to determine the place of the Golden Horde in the global geopolitics of the Middle

Ages. Writing of the history of the Golden State and its international relations implies taking into account the state, geopolitical, and economic interests of the ulus of Jochi.

These issues have already attracted attention of the first researchers of the Golden Horde [14, p. 8]. These researchers examined sufficiently well some aspects of this issue and outlined the main range of its separate components. It is especially important to note the works on the history of diplomatic relations between the Golden Horde and Mamluk Egypt [1, p. 3]. First of all, we need to determine the status of the relationship between the Tatar authorities and Russian ulus. These relations cannot be considered as an indicator of the foreign policy of the Golden Horde State. Rather, they characterize the relation between a suzerain and vassal since the Russian principalities were a part of the ulus of Jochi.

In our view, to determine the place of the ulus of Jochi in international relations, we must reveal this topic through consideration of such important issues as:

- Mongol conquests and establishment of the Chinggisid state entities, establishment of a new world order;
- formation of the ulus of Jochi as an independent State and its role in the relationship between Chinggisid States, kurultai of 1269;
- international activities of the Golden Horde State during its heyday;
- interstate coalitions in the global geopolitics and national interests of the ulus of Jochi in the international systems;
- the role and place of the Golden Horde in the international life of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Jochid political programs in the new geopolitical situation of the late 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

It is important to consider the international life of the Golden Horde State during the period of its formation. Here immediately arises the question about the Golden Horde establishment since the problem of the formation of the ulus of Jochi was directly linked both to the global political developments in Eurasia and vigorous activity of the Jochids in the world geopolitics. In our opinion, the formation of the Golden Horde State occurred in three stages.

The first stage began in 1207 and ended in 1241. In 1207, after the conquest of the so-called Forest Peoples, Genghis Khan assigned a separate ulus to his eldest son Jochi [7, p. 123]. The original territory of the ulus of Jochi was situated between the Selenga and Yenisei. Jochi was actively involved in the Mongol conquests without forgetting the expansion of its own ulus. The sons of Genghis Khan were independent in their ulus, but they had to participate in conquests of their father. These Chinggisid uluses were as states in the State.

Jochi died in 1227, leaving many children, which were led by his son Batu. It was he who was entrusted with conquest of the Western lands,

which, as is known, was completed in 1241. Because of the subsequent feud between the Jochid and Ögedeid ruling houses, Batu khan began to actively strengthen himself in the conquered territories. Therefore, we start with 1242 and end in 1259 the second period in the development of the Golden Horde State.

From 1242, Batu began to strengthen his State. Within a very short period of time he generated all the major institutions of power that did not depend on the Supreme Mongol Khan, since Batu did not recognize Guyuk. Only in 1251, when with the help of Batu, Möngke became khagan of the Genghis Khan's Empire, Batu khan acknowledged the authority of the Great Mongol Khagan, which nevertheless remained nominal. Batu khan and Möngke khan became co-rulers of the Mongol Empire [11, p. 77]: one ruled in the eastern lands of the Empire, other in the western ones. After the death of Möngke Khan in 1259, Arik Bukha and Kublai started to struggle for the throne of the Great Khan. The latter created the Yuan Empire in China. Berke khan refused to recognize him and the ulus of Jochi became independent *de facto*.

The third period covers the years 1260–1269. This was the time of both the final dissolution of the Mongol Empire and mutual recognition of the independent Chinggisid States. This period ended with the last all-Mongol kurultai, where the uluses officially recognized independence of each other. After this event, there occurred the formation of four major state entities of the Chinggisids, which subsequently determined geopolitical situation in the world for a century. These states were the Golden Horde, ulus of Hulagu, Chaghataid State, and Yuan Empire.

The ulus of Jochi emerged as a result of conquests. Therefore, when speaking about its international relations, it is necessary to take into account that during the initial period of the Golden Horde State's formation, its participation in the world geopolitics was determined by military factor. Therefore, until 1242 the Jochid relations with other states had largely a military character.

Since the Jochids conducted their conquest in the western direction, the first "partners" of their foreign policy became those states that were not included in the ulus of Jochi. These were Bulgaria and Serbia, the Latin and Nicaean Empires, Hungary, Poland, and the Holy Roman Empire. Here, the Jochid State acted as an aggressor, conqueror.

From 1242 to 1269 the Golden Horde conducted an active foreign policy. Instead of the West, that ceased to interest the Jochid government, the eastern and southern directions came to the fore. The Jochids were actively involved in the inner Mongol politics, where the main topic was the division of the Genghis Khan's political legacy, including all relative aspects. Naturally, this question was very important for the Jochids. The newly formed Mongol uluses were the most powerful states in Eurasia. The Jochids could not declare their independence immediately. It needed to be processed legally with mutual recognitions. Therefore, prior to 1259

the Golden Horde government actively cooperated with the central government in Karakorum.

In the foreign Jochid policy the priority ambition was to achieve the greatest possible impact on the Supreme Khan, since it was the Supreme Mongol Khan who was an indicator of changes in the world geopolitics. And from 1259 to 1269, the Golden Horde government considered its main foreign policy priority the legal implementation of its power and recognition of its independence. During this period the Chinggisid States also remained the main focus of the Golden Horde foreign policy.

The military might allowed the Jochids to dictate their terms to the outside world. Through the territory of the Golden Horde passed the most important trade routes linking the East and West. Many peoples of Eurasia were involved in terms of military, political, economic, and cultural relations and interests of the Tatar rulers.

Naturally, during this third period that we have identified, communications with the Old World continued to develop: with the European States, Byzantine Empire, and even with the Scandinavian countries [12]. But for entire period of the Golden Horde State's existence, this direction was never the determining one. The western direction was always secondary in the Tatar foreign policy. In initial period of the Golden Horde existence, there were two major fields in its international relations that remained relevant until the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The first field was represented by the Chinggisid States, the second was the Mamluk domain centered in Egypt.

In 1251, the sons of Jochi and Tolui jointly participated in the enthronement of Möngke khan. However, the situation changed soon after the conquest of Baghdad and the establishment of the Hulaguid State. The contradictions between them transferred to open hostility since Hulagu became Ilkhan also in those countries that were formerly under the control of Batu Khan and where Batu was in charge of governance on the rights of co-ruler of the Mongol Empire. Al-'Umari writes that the Golden Horde had political influence over the countries of Western Asia, that the region of Hamadan belonged to Batu, and that he concluded agreements with these countries [9, p. 246]. Therefore, the Jochids opposed the new campaign, especially the conquest of Baghdad.

Berke khan began to pursue an aggressive policy towards the Chinggisid States. The Jochids did not recognize the Yuan Empire and began to carry out an aggressive policy towards the Chaghataid ulus and Ilkhans. After the power in the ulus of Jochi had moved to Berke khan, Hulagu began to act independently of him. Later, during the next century, the Hulaguids became main opponents of the Golden Horde foreign policy.

Already in the 1220–30's the Mongols were fighting in the Caucasus and northern Iran. Many rulers swore allegiance to them. After that, the conquest of Asia Minor began. In 1243, the Mongols defeated the Seljuk sultanate and invaded Syria [2]. The Seljuks, Cilician Armenia, and the

Empire of Trebizond acknowledged their subordination to the Mongols [2, pp. 166–167].

In the 1240–50's, many Transcaucasian states were in vassal dependence on the Mongol Empire, but this dependence was not yet finally determined. Who had to govern these territories: the Jochid vicegerents or those from Karakorum? In fact, there might be only two possibilities: or of the central authority of Karakorum, or of the ulus of Jochi. It is known, that as a co-ruler of the Mongol Empire, Batu khan provided charters and *yarlyks* to the sultans of Rum, Syria, and other countries of Asia Minor [10, p. 22]. The Georgian rulers as well became dependent on the Mongols in the 1240s. At the same time, both the Great Khans and khans of the ulus of Jochi monitored the board in Georgia. Under the will of Genghis Khan, to the Jochids belonged all the *Dasht-i Kipchak's* lands “from the borders of *Kayalyk* to the remotest places of *Saksin*, *Khazar*, *Bulgar*”, “up to those places that the Tatar horse hoof will reach” [10, p. 204]. *Al-'Umari* reported that according to the will of Genghis Khan, to the ulus of Jochi should be annexed *Arran*, *Tabriz*, *Hamadan*, and *Meraga*. He pointed out that *Derbent* and *Baku* with *Shirvan* area formed part of the ulus of Jochi [9, p. 236, 244].

During the period of political unity of the Empire, Jochid influence and relations in Transcaucasia, Iran, and Asia Minor were significant, that was also recognized in Karakorum. Batu khan was the most authoritative and senior member of the *Chinggisid* family. And *Möngke* khan was his appointee [10, pp. 73–74]. Already when Batu Khan was alive, he appointed *Hulagu* at the head of the campaign “in the countries of Iranian land” [10, p. 67]. However, due to the Jochid opposition, this campaign began only after the death of Batu khan. That is, as co-ruler of the Empire, Batu khan did not approve this campaign.

It was decided at the all-Mongolian *kurultai* of 1251 to complete the conquest of *Baghdad Caliphate*, where at that time ruled *Caliph al-Musta'sim*. Troops for the campaign were gathered from all uluses, including the ulus of Jochi: at the rate of two soldiers out of ten [10, p. 67]. The conquest of Iran took two years and in 1258 *Baghdad* was conquered and *Caliph* was executed. But the further advance of the Mongols in the west, as is known, was halted by the *Mamluks* who defeated them in 1260 at *Ain Jalut*.

*Hulagu* founded new State in the conquered territories, which capital city was first *Meraga* and then *Tabriz*. In 1263, *Kublai Khan*, desiring to provoke him into fight against the Jochids, recognized *Hulagu* the “sovereign from the river *Amu* to the extreme limit of *Syria* and *Egypt*” [10, p. 75]. Military confrontation between the *Golden Horde* and *Ilkhans* lasted for almost a hundred years, practically up to the destruction of the *Hulaguid State*.

Once the relationship between *Berke khan* and *Hulagu* deteriorated, some Jochid troops went to the *Egyptian Mamluks* and others returned to

the Dasht-i Kipchak. Exactly starting from this time the Mamluks became the main allies in foreign policy of the Jochids. All these directions of foreign policy were laid down during the reign of Berke khan. Friendly relations with Egypt were established even when the Golden Horde had not yet become an independent State and continued until the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Having exchanged by embassies they declared war against the Hulaguids in order to “defend Islam”.

We believe that there were several reasons for the rapprochement between the Golden Horde and Mamluks. First of all, the rapprochement was facilitated by the feud between Hulagu and Berke khan. The Arab historian az-Zehebi reports that “one of the main causes of war that occurred between him (Berke khan – I.M.) and Hulak was the killing of the (last) Caliph” [9, p. 205].

The second reason, which is also has been noted by many researchers, was that the Mamluks were natives of Dasht-i Kipchak and therefore wanted to maintain close relations with their former homeland. The third reason is formed by a combination of factors. Berke khan was a Muslim and relied in the ulus of Jochi on the Muslim clergy and merchants. During his reign the bulk of the army consisted of Turkic tribes, mainly Kipchaks. If the Jochids were not active builders of the State, they would have had a different fate.

First, the rest of Chinggisid families were hostile toward the descendants of Jochi. After the death of Möngke khan, the Jochids were not able to establish friendly relations with any of the ruling houses of Chinggisids. This explains their aggressive policies towards these uluses.

Secondly, the Jochids and those Mongols who came with them, were very few in number among the Turks of Dasht-i Kipchak. Certainly, the Turks constituted an absolute majority among new immigrants from Central Asia, which contributed to the rapid convergence with the western Turks. Since the Jochids arrived here as conquerors, they had both to make some concessions to the indigenous population and become its representatives in the international politics expressing economic, political, and cultural interests of the local geographic area. Third, the Mamluks achieved the restoration of the Abbasid Caliphate destroyed by the conquests of Hulagu. As is well known, Berke actively opposed conquest of the Caliphate and further execution of the Caliph.

We believe that Berke khan wanted the Caliph of Muslims would live in his country or would be in alliance with him. But the last Caliph of Baghdad al-Musta’sim was executed. At this time, Möngke was the Great Khan and Hulagu was acting on his behalf. Berke had no opportunity to confront Hulagu. After the death of Möngke khan, the Jochids had to take part in the inner Mongol feuds. And at this time, in 1260 the Mamluks managed to restore the Abbasid Caliphate.

Naturally, Muslim Berke acknowledged the new caliph. But the Mamluks did not remain in debt. The Turkic dynasty of Mamluks

nominally recognized the authority of Jochids [6, p. 29]. So that, Hulagu had no legal right to conquer them. The khutbas pronounced in the mosques of Mecca, Medina, and other cities of Arabia, Egypt, and Syria, began with pronouncement of the name of the Caliph, Mamluk sultan, and Golden Horde khan. Through this, the Jochids became a leading force in the Islamic world. Naturally, this was the result of agreements dictated by international realities. Such serious political acts were not just expressions of the will for a long time, but were caused by geopolitical situation prevailing after the Mongol conquests.

Since the 1260's there were established diplomatic relations between the Jochids and Byzantium. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine emperors repeatedly send gifts to the Golden Horde khans, which were very substantial and comparable with the tribute [4, p. 51]. Collaboration with the Italian merchants evolved as well. Since 1260's their trade activity began to develop in the territory of the Golden Horde.

But both the turmoil of the 1360–70's in the ulus of Jochi and destruction of the rest of the Chinggisid States resulted in the Golden Horde loss of its place in the system of international relations. Because of the almost 20 year's absence of the Golden Horde State in the international arena, its losses were evident. These were the loss of its own territories, allies, vassals, satellites and, of course, of areas of interest, where previously the presence of economic and political power of the ulus of Jochi was evident.

Therefore the programmed Jochid performances in the new geopolitical environment of the late 14<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries were aimed at restoring international authority of the State. Tokhtamysh revived international relations of the Golden Horde with Eastern European countries. There were also established close friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluks [15, pp. 350–353; 13, pp. 609–610; 1, p. 15; 3, p. 93].

But towards the restoration of the former greatness, the main ideology of the Jochid program, they faced with new realities, namely of Timur's Empire. The Tokhtamysh khan's policy aimed at restoring the international status of the Golden Horde, met opposition from the side of Timur's Empire since a powerful and unified ulus of Jochi was an obstacle in the implementation of the expansionist policies of Tamerlane.

Starting from 1385, the foreign policy of the Golden Horde was focused on the struggle against Aksak Timur. The cause for confrontation between Tokhtamysh and Aksak Timur was the aggressive policy of the latter, who eliminated the buffer state entities and, thus, created a continuous border line. After that, all of the southern and south-eastern borders of the Golden Horde State were in contact with the territory of the newly established and very aggressive Central Asian State.

The Tatars, Ottomans, and Mamluks tried to coordinate in some way their actions against the active expansionist policy of Tamerlane. It was

about creating of the anti-Timurid union involving these great powers [5]. But Timur attacked the Golden Horde at the very moment of negotiations. As is well known, due to the devastating campaign of 1395 the Tatars were forced out from the active international policy.

Thus, the direction of the Golden Horde foreign policy we have discussed in this article, were basically laid down during the reign of Berke khan and remained a priority until the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

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## ЗОЛОТООРДЫНСКОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВО В СИСТЕМЕ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

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Статья посвящена определению места Золотой Орды в системе международных отношений XIII–XIV веков и направлений во внешней политике.

Для определения места Улуса Джучи в системе международных отношений автор предлагает данную тему раскрывать через освещение таких важных вопросов как:

– Монгольские завоевания и создание чингизидских государственных образований; установление нового международного порядка.

– Становление Улуса Джучи как независимого государства и его роль во взаимоотношениях чингизидских государств; курултай 1269 года.

– Международная деятельность золотоордынского государства в период его могущества.

– Межгосударственные коалиции в мировой геополитике и национальные интересы Улуса Джучи в международных системах.

– Роль и место Золотой Орды в международной жизни второй половины XIV – начала XV века. Программные выступления джучидов в новой геополитической обстановке конца XIV – начала XV веков.

По мнению автора, становление золотоордынского государства происходило в три этапа (1207–1241, 1242–1259, 1260–1269 года). В это время формируется политика джучидов по отношению к своим соседям, другим чингизидским государствам.

Смута 60–70-х годов XIV века в Улусе Джучи и гибель всех остальных чингизидских государств приводит к тому, что Золотая Орда теряет свое место в системе международных отношений. Программные выступления джучидов в новой геополитической обстановке конца XIV – начала XV веков и были нацелены на восстановление международного авторитета государства.

Рассмотренные автором направления золотоордынской внешней политики, в основе своей были заложены в период хана Берке и оставались приоритетными до конца XIV века.

**Ключевые слова:** Золотая Орда, Улус Джучи, Монгольская империя, система международных отношений, геополитика, чингизиды, курултай.

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