Chapter - II

Successors of Iltutmish - The Development in their foreign Policy
CHAPTER II

By the end of the twelfth century the rise of the Mongols in Central Asia was a significant development and the foreign policy of the early Turkish Sultans was mainly directed against the Mongols as discussed in the previous chapter, it was a menacing problem and Sultan Iltutmish's policy viz. a viz the Mongols had three distinct phases. In the beginning of his reign when the Mongol danger loomed large on the Indian horizon Iltutmish adopted a policy of aloofness diplomacy and appeasement. But after the death of the Mongol leader Chengiz Khan, Iltutmish seemed to have taken to resistance against the Mongols.

The year following the death of Iltutmish in 1236 A.D. saw great turmoil and unrest within the Sultanate of Delhi. The weakness
of the Crown and the supremacy of the Turkish slave officers was the main feature of the struggle during this period. Ziauddin Barani, our main historian for this period rightly observes, "During the reign of Shamsuddin (Iltutmish) Maliks and famous Amirs who had been administrators and leaders for years along with wazirs and persons of distinction fled (from their own countries) to the court of Shamsuddin from fear of the massacre and killings of Ghengiz Khan, the accursed Mongol and owing to the presence of these fearless maliks, wazirs and persons of distinction, who were not only free born, men of noble and distinguished lineage but were also educated, wise and capable, the court of Sultan Shamsuddin had become stable like the court of Sultan Mahmud and Sanjar^1"
But after the death of Iltutmish, the competency of his successor's and the predominance of Shamsi slaves, left no dignity with the Crown and the court of Shamsuddin was now a thing of no value.

Minhaj-us Siraj another great historian of this period testifies Barani's assertion in his chapter "Shamsi Maliks." It was during this period of chaos and turmoil within the Delhi Sultanate that we find the Qarlugh rulers, who had previously paid allegiance to Iltutmish, started extending his political sway and influence over a fairly large area in the north-west frontier. He had even assume

the royal title and had coins struck in his name. He had even become covetous of the Sind and Punjab regions. He had already established control over the Kuh-i Jud (salt range) region and the Hindu Rais of the Koh Parya (foot hills of the eastern Punjab Himalayas) paid allegiance to him instead of the Sultan of Delhi. This development seemed to have taken place probably with the backing of the Mongols as the relation of the Qarlugh ruler with the mongols were more than cordial at this time. Some times in 1236-37 A.D. Hasan Qarlugh marched with a strong army towards the city of Uchch held by Malik Saifuddin Aibek, the Muqta of Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz Shah, son


2. Ibid.
of Iltutmish. Hasan Qarlugh hoped for an easy victory but he had underrated Saifudding Aibek who marched out of Uchch with a well-equipped army and defeated the Qarlughs who took to flight.¹

Emphasizing the importance of this victory achieved during the reign of Sultan Ruknuddin Minhaj states that it not only enhanced the prestige of the Delhi Sultan but also frightened the internal enemies of the Sultan who after Iltutmish's death had begun to raise their heads and entertain designs to become independent of the centre.²

¹ Raverty II, pp. 730-31.
² Ibid.
But again after two years the relations of the Qarlugh with the Mongols became strained. The Qarlugh ruler fled towards Multan. According to the author of *Tabagat-i-Nasiri*, Hasan Qarlugh who was left untouched by the Mongols in Binban on the condition that he will pay an annual tribute to them was suddenly attacked by the Mongols in 1238 A.D. The flight of Hasan Qarlugh towards Multan meant the appearance of Mongols in that region. At this juncture the Qarlugh ruler is said to have sought an alliance with Sultan Razia (1237-40) who was ruling the Sultanate at this time, against the Mongols. Hasan Qarlugh sent his son to the court of Sultan Razia. She received him kindly and
even gave him the revenues of Baran for his expenses but she refused an anti-Mongol alliance with the Qarlughhs.

Thus, an analysis of the Indo-Qarlugh as well as Qarlugh-Mongol relations is essential in order to understand the developments that took place in the diplomatic circles of Delhi and Central Asia.

Although the conquest of northern India was not the Mongol objective at this time but since plundering was their regular source of income, the Mongols carried on predatory incursions into the border territories of India, looted property and made people captives. The
accounts of Minhaj-us Siraj, Amir Khusro, Isami and Barani are full of descriptions of atrocities perpetrated by the Mongols of India. When the Mongol armies appeared "the cloud of dust eclipsed the sun."

These incursions of Mongols often unleashed a reign of terror. During the fierce and violent Mongol raids on Uchch and Multan in 1258 A.D. the whole area including the countryside was over-run and peasants holdings were

1. Tabagat-i- Nasiri.
2. Khazain-ul Futuh
3. Futuh-us Salatin
4. Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi
5. Isami, p.460.
ruined. These reprisals often forced people to leave their home town and wander in wildness. After the havoc caused by the Mongols, inflationary conditions usually developed.  

When Sultan Muizuddin Bahram Shah ascended the throne, the most significant event of his reign was the evacuation of Lahore by Ikhtiyaruddin Karakush governor of Lahore in December 1244 A.D. and its sack by the Mongols.  

The Mongol commander at this time was Bahadur Tair Minhaj-us Siraj who has referred to this event in detail attributes it to the uncoperative attitude

2. Barani, pp. 126-129.  
3. Ibid.  
of the merchants and traders of Lahore and secondly to the Delhi army which was dissatisfied with the reigning monarch. "Most of the inhabitants of the city were merchants and leaders and had undertaken journeys during the time of the Mughals into the Upper parts into Khurasan and Turkistan and by way of precaution every one of them had obtained a pass from the Mughal, and a safe conduct and knowing this in defending and fighting for the safety of Hisar of Lahore, they used not to act in Unison with Malik Karakush and would neither render assistance nor make resistance nor encounter the enemy".  

The Mongols had destroyed and massacred the inhabitants of the city of Lahore but a large

number of Mongols were also killed. According to Minhaj "such a large number of Mongols went to hell as cannot be computed or numbered about. There was not a person in the infidel army that did not bear the wound of arrow."

The Mongols retreated after the sack of Lahore which was reoccupied by Malik Karakush who returned after the departure of the Mongols. In Qaraqorum the Mongol leader Ogbei (Uktae Khan) died soon after the sack of Lahore and according to the Mongol Yasas no expedition could be

undertaken for one and a half year (three years according to the Mongol calendar) after the Qa'an's death.¹ We do not come across any Mongol invasion till 1244-45 A.D. when the Mongols attacked the town of Uchch during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah son of Ruknuddin Piroz Shah and grandson of Iltutmish.

Meanwhile Hasan Qarlugh is reported to have invaded Multan several times² during this

---

² Ibid., pp. 1154-6
period since there was a little respite from the Mongols. However in 1245 A.D. he fled from Multan on the appearance of the Mongols. The Mongols laid siege to the town of Uchch and plundered its environs. The people of Uchch successfully defended the city and killed the Mongols in large numbers.¹ At this time Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah was advised by Naib-i Mamlakat Ulugh Khan² to march towards Multan against the Mongols. But the idea behind this campaign was not to fight with the enemy but to

² Later on Sultan Balban.
frighten them and make them retreat from Multan. This was what Ulugh Khan had planned and fortunately his plan succeeded. As soon as the Mongols heard about the advance of the Delhi Sultan with a large army they raised the seige and returned to Khurasan.¹ Isami supplements this but according to him "Sultan Alauddin Masud marched his army from Delhi, defeated the troops of the Mongols infidels and captured many of them."² Isami also adds that "after coming back into the city he abandoned justice since he had become conceited through routing the Mongol infidels."³

³. Ibid.
Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud ascended the throne of Delhi in 1246 A.D. The brain behind his policies and decisions regarding the administration of the empire was his Naib-i Mamlakat, Ulugh Khan. Among other things it was his policy to take the Sultan with the royal standards for the winter campaign against the Mongols, independent Hindu chiefs or rebellious Maliks. By doing this he always kept the army full prepared both mentally and physically to fight back whenever the occasion demanded. And at that time keeping the army always ready became a necessity due to the danger of the Mongols and their repeated invasions on the Indian borders. Minhaj-us Siraj, has given the account of the events of Sultan Nasiruddin's
reign year by year, for the first fifteen years. The details furnished by other contemporary writers about the Mongol throne in Qaraqorum say that at that time not only the Qarlugh rulers but even the Muslim rulers of Herat were with the Mongol army under the leadership of the Nu-yin Sali.

The author of *Tarikh-i Nama-i Hirat* supplements Minhaj by informing that in 1246 A.D. Malik Shamsuddin and the Mongol general Nu-Yin Sali marched towards Hindustan. They laid siege to the city of Multan which was held by Jankar Khan the slave of Sultan Iltutmish. At this juncture the author also informs us about the

help sought by the Delhi Mughal, Jankar Khan of the Suhrawardi saint Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria. On the fourteenth day of the siege Jankar Khan sent Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria to persuade the Mongol leader to accept money and leave Multan. His visit had the desired effect and on his pursuit Nu-Yin Sali collected one hundred thousand dinars and then went to Lahore where the extorted 30,000 dinars, thirty ass loads of soft goods (cloth) and hundred captives. These details have been suppressed by Minhaj probably to feed the vanity of his patron.

By the end of 1250 A.D. we find that there arose a situation in the Delhi Sultanate in which there started a struggle among the Turkish

slave officers and there was a split in the nobility. There arose two rival groups and each tried to take the Sultan under its respective control. This situation resulted in the flight of princes and other political dignitaries to the Mongol court. Whenever Ulugh Khan's group succeeded in winning over the Sultan, the other group of Qatugh Khwaja and Balban Kishlu sought protection and alliance of the Mongols and vice-versa. Hence Mongols had become the only resort of the flying princes and Turkish officers. This in turn gave rise to the establishment of Mongol vassal states of Lahore, Multan and Sind.

The first Delhi prince who paid a visit to Mangu Khan the Mongol ruler, Prince Jalal was the son of Iltutmish who fell out with Sultan
Nasiruddin Mahmud in 1248 A.D. and fled away from his jagta of Sambhal and Badaun to Central Asia. \(^1\) Minhaj omit the fact of his going to the court of the Mongol ruler but Rashiduddin Fazlullah gives additional information about the Prince. According to him Prince Jalal Khan reached Qaraquorun in 1235 A.D. He was soon followed by Sher Khan Sungar (mentioned by Rashiduddin as Sher Khan). Mongke \(^2\) treated Jalal Khan with honour and ordered his general Salih Bahadur along with other officers


\(^2\) Mangu Khan.
to help him against his enemies.\(^1\)

Prince Jalal accompanied by Sali Bahadur who had also taken with him the Qarlugh ruler Nasiruddin Muhammad, entered Lahore and drove away the Delhi muqta from the iqta\(s\) of Lahore and Jalandhar and installed Prince Jalal there. The latter assumed the title of Sultan Jalaluddin Masud Shah and ruled over the vast region of Punjab as a Mongol vassal.\(^2\)

---


The contemporary European traveller Rubruquis confirms this statement of Rashiduddin. He says that "About the 15th of June 1254 A.D. when Ka-an held a great assembly as Karakorum at which a number of ambassadors attended, he noticed the ambassador from the Sultan of Delhi. This could be no other than Prince Jalal and his Party of Sher Khan Sungar, for it is quite certain that no ambassador was ever sent from India by Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah."

Hence, throughout the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud we find that whenever any prince or noble fell out with the Sultan he went and

---
sought alliance of the Mongols. In 1254 A.D.
Ulugh Khan and his faction were completely over­
shadowed by the other rival faction of Qatlugh
Khwaja and Kishlu Khan who came closer to the
Sultan, Ulugh Khan along with his cousin Sher
Khan Sungar and Sultan Jalaluddin Masud Shah
marched from Lahore against the royal army of
Delhi. But a direct confrontation between the
two armies was avoided by the intervention
of certain nobles which resulted in a compromise
between the Sultan and Ulugh Khan. This develop­
ment annoyed Sultan Jalaluddin Masud Shah and
he fell deceived by Ulugh Khan and his cousin
Sher Khan Sungar, because they had promised
him the throne of Delhi.  

1. Tabaqat-i Nasiri, Eng. trans. Raverty,

2. Ibid.
however, returned to reign till 1266 A.D. In the same year Sher Khan was assigned the charge of the *igta* of Tabarhinda, but in 1258 A.D., this *igta* was taken away from him and he was assigned the *igtas* of Gwalior, Bayana, Jalesar and Kol. This was done in view that there was hostility between Sher Khan and Jalaluddin Masud Shah as Sher Khan wanted to occupy Lahore. Hence, there was a possibility of his attack on Lahore which in turn could invite the Mongols to help their vassal.¹

The other noble of the Delhi Sultanate who declared his independence and became the Mongol vassal was malik Izzuddin Balban Kishlu Khan, rival of Ulugh Khan. He was the *muqta* of Sind and Multan. After the eclipse of his allies and the

ascendancy of Ulugh Khan and his party at the Delhi Court he sent his officer Malik Shamsuddin Ghori to Iran for an alliance with Hulaku, brother of Mangu Khan. There arose an understanding between Hulaku and Kishlu Khan who accepted a Mongol Shahna at court. He even sent his grandson to Iran as his Wakil. On the other hand Ulugh Khan who had become the defacto ruler of the Delhi Sultanate decided to weaken the Mongol influence on the Indian territory through his diplomacy. He entered into a secret alliance with Sultan Nasiruddin Muhammad Qarlugh and with his help concluded a peace pact with Hulaku in 1258 A.D. Minhaj-us Siraj furnishes interesting information with details of the arrival of emissaries from the court of Hulaku to Delhi in 1259 A.D. This provided a clue to the secret alliance between Ulugh Khan.

Khan and Nasiruddin Qarugh. The contemporary historian tried to create an impression that the Sultan of Delhi could not wish to improve his relationship with the Mongols who were the enemy of Islam and who had killed the Caliph of Baghdad. But the circumstances took such a turn that the undesirable happened. When the emissaries from the Mongol court visited India, the Sultan of Delhi eager to win the friendship of a powerful neighbour, accorded a royal reception to them. "More than two lacks footmen and fifty thousand horsemen linked up the entire route from the town of Kilugarhi to the royal

palace while twenty rows of spectators and officials assembled there to welcome the emissaries.¹ The Court chronicle would have us believe that all this was done to impress the Mongols with the glory and greatness of the Sultan of Delhi but to please the Mongol ruler was an equally strong reason for the welcome given to them.²

This gesture of the Sultan had the desired effect and Hulaku reciprocated by warming his soldier's "If the hoof of your horse enters the dominion of Sultan Nasiruddin all the four

---


². Ibid.
legs of the horse shall be cut off. After this we do not find any Mongol incursion till Sultan Nasiruddin's death in 1266-67 A.D.

Among other problems which Balban had to face on his accession was the Mongol problem which guarded him from following an expansionist policy. Though a thorough imperialist he followed a policy of consolidation only. Hulaku was dead and the Mongol danger was again looming large on the Indian frontier. Being a seasoned statesman Balban carefully watched the activities of the

1. K.A. Nizami, Some Aspects of Religion and Politics During the 13th century, p.333.
2. Ibid.
Mongols and diverted all the resources of the empire towards the protection of his frontiers. He supervised the defence measures personally and was well-aware of the activities of the Mongols. "He used to go out every day upto Riwari under the pretext of military exercise and hunting excursions." Reports of hunting expeditions of the Sultan were carried to Hulaku at Baghdad and he said "Balban is a strewd ruler and has had much experience in government. He goes out apparently to hunt...... but really to exercise his men and horses so that they may not be wanting when times of danger and war arrive." Unlike the

2. *Ibid.* p.103
previous Sultans it was Balban's desire to strengthen his defence machinery. For this he even appointed his son prince Muhammad as the warden of marches. By appointing his son on the frontiers Balban wanted to eliminate the Mongol influence from those territories.

But Balban had to pay a heavy price for such a policy towards the Mongols. He lost his son Muhammad in this struggle with the Mongols. But at the same time his prestige inside as well as outside India was considerably enhanced.

Besides Balban had adopted a number of measures to safeguard his frontiers. In 1270 A.D., he got the fort of Lahore reconstructed and the villages and areas which had been destroyed and depopulated by the Mongols, were re-habilitated. The territories of Lahore, Sunam, Samana, Multan, Dipalpur and Uchch were always in the hands of the Sultan Balban's officers. He had first appointed Tamar Khan, the governor of Sunam and Samana, put keeping in mind the examples of Kishlu Khan and Sher Khan (who had sought help from the Mongols) the transferred these two provinces to his second son Bughra Khan on whose activities he always kept Barids.  

---

1. A distinguished Member of the favourite "Forty" (Chihalgani) Turks.
Throughout the whole of early Turkish period we find that the foreign policy of the Sultanate was mainly directed against the Mongols whose regular and irksome incursions on the Sultanate of Delhi had destroyed the peace and prosperity of the country and had considerably disturbed its inhabitants. It is worth asking how the Turks whose extra ordinary Indian conquests attributed to their personal valour, military superiority and strategy were themselves surpassed by the Mongols. Not only in physical appearance but also in their ferocious capacity of warfare, the Mongols had totally be numbered the spirit of the Indians. Isami says that the arrival of the Mongol troops and their crossing Indus had almost always resulted in "The vanishing of conceit" from the minds of the Delhi Sultans. A gallant ruler like

1. Isami, Futuh-us Salatin.
Balban expressed in inability to undertake large scale conquests just because "these (Mongols) have set their hearts conquering and plundering India-twenty year passes that an Year does not pass peacefully when they do not come here and plunder the villages. They watch the opportunity of my departure on a distant campaign to enter my cities and ravage the whole Doab. They even talk about the conquest and sack of Delhi. I have developed all the revenues of my kingdom to the equipment of my army and I had all my forces ready and prepared to receive them".  

Another occasion Balban openly confessed that but for the Mongols he would have pursued a vigorous expansionist policy. That he was forced to perform simply police functions and defensive role due to the Mongol pressure on the north-west frontier.¹ When Balban's general Adil Khan and Tamar Khan suggested to him the conquest of Gujarat, Malwa and other provinces of Hindustan which had been under the sway of Aibek and Sultan Iltutmish, Balban thus stated his policy; "It will be not an act of wisdom to leave Delhi and go on distant campaigns in these days of turmoil and insecurity, when the Mongols have occupied all the lands of Islam devastated Lahore and made it a point to invade our country once every year. Maintaining

¹ Barani Trans Elliot and Dowson III p. 98.
peace and consolidating our power in our own kingdom is far better than invading other territories while our own dominion is insecure. Further the new conquered areas will require competent officers and well equipped armies which I am unable to spare at the moment". The accounts of Minhaj-us Siraj, Amir Khusro, Isami and Barani are full of descriptions of atrocities perpetrated by the Mongols in India. When the Mongol Armies appeared "the clouds of dust eclipsed the Sun", they indulged in raids enroute and surrounded Delhi like "thorns hedging a garden."¹ Isami, further records how their advance spelt destruction to all the places they visited and admits that when Qatluugh Khwaja's "terrible but graceless" army proceeded towards India in successive groups and when they crossed the river Indus", the fortress

¹ Isami, *Futuh-us Salatin*, p. 460.
of every part of the country began to tremble
inspite of the preparations that have been made
for defence."\(^1\) To add to the discomfiture
Qatlugh Khwaja had even threatened Zafar Khan that
"this time I will work the same havoc in India as
autumn wind-works in a garden.\(^2\)

Barani describes in 1285 A.D. the
incursion of the Mongols on Lahore and Dipalpur
which unleashed a reign of terror. On a similar
occasion during the fierce and violent raids on
Multan and Uchch in 1258 A.D. "the whole area

\(^1\) Isami, Futuh-us Salatin, p.428.
\(^2\) Ibid, p. 430.
including the countryside was over-run and peasants' holding were ruined.¹ "These reprisals often force people to leave their home town² and wander in wildness. It was customary that while marching the Mongols always plundered villages and carried away captives and heavy booty and war equipments, their cavalrymen had to march on foot. While their horses carried the load of their plunder. The horses were so overburdened with the loot that they "would hardly move freely and stumbled ten times in the way³." After the havoc wrought by the Mongols' inflationary conditions usually developed."⁴

---

¹ Isami, Futuh-us Salatin, p. 269
² Barani, Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi, p. 130.
³ Isami, Futuh-us Salatin, p. 272.
⁴ Barani, Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi, p. 85.
The Mongols, however could not always succeed in having their way. They had to face defeat, also and suffer reprisals at the hands of Indian warriors. Amir Khusro who had once fallen in the captivity of the Mongols boasts how "the bones of Mongols were ground to powder" and Targhi's "bold head on the spears of the Champion of Islam" looked like a wine cup place over a ladle.¹ Isami also rejoices when the mongols are turned out of the country like the "owls turned out of a garden."²

While summing up the Mongol Problem and the relations of the early Turkish rulers with the mongols. We may way that during the 13th century the mongol danger was the most baffling problem and it left its impact on every aspect of Indian life—social, economic or political.

For nearly a century the Mongols dominated the Indian political scene directly of indirectly. The Mongol invasions posed a constant threat to the infant Sultanate of Delhi and the Delhi Sultans were often puzzled as to what method and strategy should be adopted so as to discourage the Mongols finally.¹ Those who were successful in "routing" the

1. Isami, Futuh-us Salatin, p. 207
"Mongols infidels" often prided in themselves. Isami describes how Sultan Alauddin bin Ruknuddin "abandoned justice" since he had become "conceited" through routing mongol infidels. Balban openly confessed that but for the Mongols he would have followed a vigorous expansionist policy. The decision of Iltutmish to avoid a direct confrontation with the Mongols by refusing to give asylum to Jalaluddin Mangbarni had determined the direction of the policy of the early Turkish Sultans towards the Mongols. This was based on grim political realism. Not only in the north-west frontier did Iltutmish avoid consolidation and expansion till

1. Isami, Futuh-us Salatin, p. 266.
Chengiz Khan was alive but even on the domestic scene but he did not consolidate his power as long as Changiz Khan was alive for he had many rivals and there was always the danger of their alliance with the Mongols or their desire to send an invitation to Chengiz Khan for invading India. We find that whenever there is even a slight news of any Mongol civil war or any other preoccupation of the Mongols in Central Asia, the Delhi Sultans at once taking advantage of his opportunity started consolidating their power and suppressing the rebels within the empire.

---

1. In the second regnal year of Sultan Nasiruddins' reign we see that Ulugh Khan (the defacto ruler of the Sultanate) on getting the news of Mongol civil war decided a campaign in Doab. Cf. Habib & Nizami's "Comprehensive History of India, Vol. V, p. 258."
The early Turkish rulers therefore guarded their foreign policy keeping in view the Mongol danger which loomed large on the Indian horizon. Thus Mongol problem determined their theories of Kingship, limited their expansionist policies, moulded their economic policies and exercised far reaching influence on the administrative structure of the Delhi Sultanate.