



PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) AS A MILITARY STRATEGIST: LESSONS FOR MODERN WARFARE

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**PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) AS A MILITARY STRATEGIST:
LESSONS FOR MODERN WARFARE**

Hafiz Munir Ahmed khan, Abrar Hussain

ABSTRACT:

The present piece of writing discusses about the outstanding military tactics of Prophet Muhammad that are applicable to complexities of warfare in contemporary times. The prophet was not only a strategic genius but also tender-hearted military general who worked towards permanent peace. Besides winning many wars like Badr, Uhud and Khandaq due to good tactical thinking, he had understanding of human nature and life itself. This rapid adaptation time under dynamic circumstances, foreseeing the enemy's tactics by a little insight and upliftment of soldiers through the idea justice as well as goals laid down by him is still relevant in present day military operations that were never religiously tolerant until they kill every single weak group's member during which settling for peaceful coexistence has been defined over a long term. These principles are timeless in an intricate world with battles dominated patterns throughout its narrative history. they tell us that real battlefield leaders are not those who have great armies alone; they entail wisdom, moral principles plus everyone's welfare. Through historical narratives this research aims at showing how today's military leaders can derive inspiration from Prophet's methods that lead them into victory as well as humanity.

KEYWORDS: Leadership, Prophet Muhammad, Modern world warfare, military strategist.

Introduction:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad is, without any doubt, the greatest military commander and war strategist in history. The holy prophet obtained minimum casualties with great victories. In his book “Muhammad at Medina,” Montgomery Watt wrote that “War under and by the prophet was the mildest on record; it can be gauged from the fact that only 1058 persons perished in one hundred battles fought between the hijrat of Madina and his own death.” He waged wars to spread Islam’s message and to defend its early statehood as well as anyone could have done. The Prophet revolutionized pre-Islamic warfare. Philosophy of war, enemy’s spying, revolutionary war and secretiveness in planning for war are some of military strategies. Today’s world warfare concept can best be illustrated by Syria, Russia-Ukraine tussle, Palestine-Israel longheaded war all that which has no principles or laws. Regrettably peace makers do not give out peace. By contrast, Islam’s last messenger showed practically that he thinks about peace and led a way for those who fight both in combats and non-combats. His leadership and example were a source of encouragement and valour for his followers every battle.

Mohammad as an Islamic prophet is usually credited as one of the most outstanding generals and tacticians in history. He established a standard which has remained unachievable through his incredible victories that caused minimum casualties in wars. As per Watt (1956), “The total number of Muslim fighters who died in this battle was less than 1,058” (P. 234).¹ The Prophet went to war not for invasion but rather to spread God’s

¹ Watt, W. M. (1956). *Muhammad at Medina*. Oxford University Press.

message and safeguard his new state.

Muhammad had innovative and complex approaches to military strategies where such elements as intelligence, strategy planning, secrecy etc were featured. Thus changing people's perception on the ethical dimension of waging wars by ensuring that damage is kept at minimal levels. If you look at contemporary confrontations like Syria, Ukraine crisis and ongoing fight between Palestine-Israel, it lacks ideologies except those who preach peace betraying it.

Furthermore, the laws of war defined by him include combatant and non-combatant rules which indicate that he was preaching peace throughout his lifetime although he fought in several battles from Bakr-Ibn-Abu Quhafa to Yarmouk; these are still effective today. A role model in the concept of warfare for generations to come; a war that is fought according to the principles of justice and humanity which has always been the fuel that has kept fighters going.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Objectives of War in Islam:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Objectives of War in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) fundamentally transformed the objectives of war, aligning them with the teachings of the Holy Quran. Here are some of the purposes that Islam's way of war is built on:

1. Defending against acts of aggression: War which aims at protecting Islamic lands from hostile forces (Quran 22:39).
2. Supporting the oppressed: To save those who are being treated badly even if they are non-Muslims (Quran 4:75).
3. Eradicating mischiefs and corruptions: Countering fitnah and ensuring societal order is maintained (Quran 2:193).

4. Eliminating oppression and cruelty: In other words, to try getting rid of injustice (Quran5:8).
5. Removing obstacles to Islam's growth and spread: Addressing and overcoming hindrances to spread Islam (Quran8 :39)

Qualities Exhibited by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a Military Strategist

In terms of military strategy, Holy Prophet Muhammad pbuh offers a perfect example of exceptional military leadership which can be categorized into following features:

1. Firm faith in Allah alone – The Messenger PBUH demonstrated this by carrying a sword on one hand and carrying the Koran on another hand.

Fearlessness – It was narrated that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said:

كنا إذا احمر البأس، ولقي القوم القوم، اتقيناً برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فما يكون منا أحد أدنى من القوم منه²

When the fighting intensified and the two sides met in battle, we sought shelter with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and no one was closer to the enemy than him.

3. Extraordinary Leadership – This is the time that most Muslims had retreated; however, he remained steadfast and called

²Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 1347, vol. 3 (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1995),

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَنَا النَّبِيُّ لَا كَذِبُ أَنَا ابْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ³.

“I am Allah’s Messenger; I am not an imposter; I am a descendant of Abdul Muttalib.”

4. He used a consultative approach – The Prophet PBUH would usually hold shura (consultative meetings) with his companions before launching major military campaigns.
5. Mercifulness and forbearance were manifested – He did not kill any opponent personally nor use weapons against them since his method has always been one of compassion and restraint.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ: قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ادْعُ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ، قَالَ: "إِنِّي لَمْ أُبْعَثْ لَعَنًا، وَإِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ رَحْمَةً"⁴

“Abu Huraira reported: It was said to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), “Invoke curse upon the polytheists,” whereupon he said, “I was not sent as a curser, but rather I was sent as a mercy.”

6. A great many accomplishments in which Muslims within a decade under this leadership have expanded their

³Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 4317, vol. 4, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997)

⁴ Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith 2599. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007

territories, unified previously divided society while experiencing minimal losses as well can be cited as quite remarkable.

Military Strategies of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

1. **Changing the Philosophy of War:** The Prophet (PBUH) shifted the philosophy of war from personal feuds and power-seeking to a campaign for Allah's message and justice. He said that wars should be fought mainly with religious objectives instead of self-help.
2. **War Preparations:** "Prepare what you can against them from strength and horses tethered, whereby you may strike terror into them, and your Lord amongst them" It was stated in the Quran. His troops were highly disciplined during battles while his prophet (pbuh) employed very strictness in respect of strategic planning.
3. **Strategic Innovations:** His military strategies involved secrecy, unconventional approach to warfare and humane treatment of captives as mention in this Hadith:

ولا تقتلوا شيخاً فانياً ولا طفلاً ولا صغيراً ولا امرأة ولا تغلوا وضيوا

غنائكم واصلحوا واحسنوا إن الله يحب المحسنين⁵

The Prophet ﷺ said: Go in Allah's name, trusting in Allah, and adhering to the religion of Allah's Messenger. Do not kill a

⁵Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Hadith No. 2614, vol. 3, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008), 1441 AH.

decrepit old man, or a young infant, or a child, or a woman; do not be dishonest about booty, but collect your spoils, do right and act well, for Allah loves those who do well.

Comparison of Modern Warfare with Islamic Principles

Warfare has evolved tremendously with modern conflicts defined increasingly by sophisticated weapons and cutting-edge technology. In contrast, Islamic principles of warfare, established centuries ago, emphasize ethics, humanity, and the protection of life even amidst conflict. This comparison highlights the stark differences between the objectives and methods of modern warfare and those outlined in Islamic teachings.

Modern World Warfare	Law of War and Peace in Islam
<p>Advanced Technology Focus:</p> <p>Modern warfare is heavily centered on fourth-generation technologies, which involve the use of various ways of fighting such as a) Air b) Bio c) Chem d) E e) N.</p>	<p>Civil Rights of Non-Combatants: Islamic law prioritizes the rights of non-combatants with principles such as: a) Do not kill old men, kids or female. b) Monks in monasteries or those in places of worship should not be harmed.</p>
<p>The use of Torture and Destruction:</p> <p>In contemporary warfare, any possible means of torturing and destroying is resorted to in order to weaken the enemy. Psychological operations, propaganda, and extreme measures</p>	<p>Rights of Combatants: The rights of fighters are clearly stipulated in Islamic law thus prohibiting a). a) Setting someone on fire b) defending the injured c). It is forbidden to kill prisoners</p>

Modern World Warfare	Law of War and Peace in Islam
such as (nuclear bombings-Hiroshima and Nagasaki) are used, which destroy not only enemy property but also its population.	of war d). Nobody ought to be executed by hanging e). Respect for the deceased and their belongings; f) refraining from plundering or wanton devastation in the adversary's area; g) returning enemy corpses.

Islamic war ideology versus modern warfare can be compared and contrasted to show the difference between the two. As a result, contemporary wars are aiming at breaking down their enemies by employing more sophisticated technologies and psychological war that is often obscene. For example, use of deadly technology such as nuclear weapons demonstrates a readiness to take human life without any regard to who they are.

The aforementioned principles would be reminders that even in a world where the end of today's wars could be characterised by the complete annihilation of entire societies around us, love, self-control and preservation of human dignity still matter.

In contrast to this, Islamic war rules are based on ethical ideas aimed at minimizing harm during the course of armed conflict. Moral guidelines separate fighters from noncombatants basing on kindness, fairness and sanctity of life. This implies a great deal about good behavior amidst inevitable enmity hence making the warrior civilized.

An Overview of The Prophet's Wars Reflecting Modern Conflict:

1. The Battle of Badr

Strategic Foresight and Planning:

His strategic foresight was demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during the battle of Badr when the Meccan forces planned to attack Medina. He used tactical planning such as choosing a strategic position and selecting a battlefield to counteract this move by his enemies that had an advantage in numbers. The detailed planning and understanding of the terrain were pivotal for repulsing the Meccan advance thereby securing Medina.

2. Battle of Uhud

Morale and Unity:

In the Battle of Uhud, despite facing a formidable enemy from Mecca, the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrated how morale and unity are important. Though Muslims forces faced challenges, good leadership by Prophet Mohammad who encouraged troops helped them remain as one unit hence affecting the outcome of that war.

3. Battle of Ahzab

Adaptability and Innovation:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) employed innovative defensive tactics at Medina in response to an Arab coalition's attempt at eliminating Islam during the Battle of Ahzab. These Persian military strategies were designed for use against enemies who fought directly rather than through

delegates but they neutralized this risk posed by Arabs thereby resulting in a Muslim victory.

4. Treaty of Hdaybiyyah

Diplomacy and Peacebuilding:

The Treaty of Hdaybiyyah reflects that he preferred diplomacy over conflict as portrayed by the prophet. Rather than engaging in combat, he chose to enter into peaceful negotiations despite being barred from entering Mecca for pilgrimage purposes. This step thus not only avoided immediate conflict but also set precedence for future peace undertakings hence paving way for propagation of Islam around Arabia.

5. Battle of Hunain

Psychological Warfare and Resilience:

This battle therefore exemplifies his understanding about psychological warfare besides resilience .The Hawazin tribe ambushed Muslims after taking over Makkah peacefully . In spite initial heavy casualties and the tight terrain which made it hard to maneuver, good leadership from the Prophet who kept on giving tactical advice led to eventual defeat of the attackers. This implied that psychological strength and adaptability are key in overcoming adversities.

These principles, derived from the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) military strategies, offer timeless insights into effective leadership and conflict management, emphasizing strategic planning, unity, adaptability, diplomacy, and psychological resilience—qualities that

remain relevant in contemporary military and strategic contexts.

Conclusion:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) excelled as a leader with unmatched skill and integrity who steered through internal and external conflicts with remarkable success. His life is an embodiment of an exceptional mix of military genius and ethical conduct that remains a yardstick for generations, especially in war zones and leadership spheres.



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