

## Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as Military Strategist/Field Commander

### Introduction

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was forced by his enemies, who were his own tribesmen, to leave his native town and migrate to Madina; but even there they did not let him live in peace. They attacked Madina many times with well-equipped men in order to destroy Muhammad (PBUH) and his followers; and each time He (PBUH) led his small group of companions in the battle field. He (PBUH) fought with courage and determination and defeated his enemies. He (PBUH) fought many battles to defend his faith, his honour and the lives of his family and those of his followers during life at Madina and everytime He (PBUH) was successful against very heavy odds. In his ten year of war with the chiefs of Makkah, the Jews of Madina and the unbelievers of Arabia, He (PBUH) did not lose a single battle but also altered the objectives of war. And Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was forced into very delicate and defensive ~~into~~



~~very~~ situations by triangular forces of enemies but by the Grace of God, his principles, qualities of military Commander, military strategist and also military organization gave him victories against his enemies in every war.

Holy Prophet (PBUH) alters objectives of war in Islam.

Pre-Islamic objectives:

In pre-Islamic warfare was prevalent among the various tribes and communities of the religion. The object of war during that time was often driven by factors such as tribal disputes, acquisition of wealth and resources, seeking vengeance, and asserting dominance. The Pre-Islamic Arabs engaged in warfare for a variety of reasons, and their objects varies depending upon the specific context and circumstances. Some common objectives are mentioned below.

- 1) Tribal ~~and~~ Honor and Prestige
- 2) Control of resources
- 3) Retaliation and Revenge
- 4) Expansion and territory
- 5) Economic gain

### Post Islamic Objectives:

In Islam the objectives of war are guided from the Holy Quran, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and Islamic jurisprudence. While warfare is generally seen as defense measure in Islam, there are specific objectives that are recognized. Here are some key objectives of war in Islam.

#### 1) Self-Defense:

The primary objectives of war in Islam is self defense. Muslims are permitted to engage in armed conflict when their lives, religion or basic rights are under direct threat.

"Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory."

(22:39)



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## 2) ~~Maintain~~ ~~Maintinance~~ of peace and Justies:

Islam emphasizes the ~~maintance~~ maintain of peace and the establishment of justice. If peaceful means fail to resolve a conflict and oppressive forces Threat on peace and justies, then ~~restoria~~ resorting to war may Considered as a means to restore balances and protect the oppressed. According to Holy Quran:

~~And if they incline to~~

"And if they incline to peace, you should also incline to it."

(Surat-41-Anfaal-8: 61)

~~(Surat-4)~~

~~According~~

## 3) Protection of Religious freedom:

Islam recognizes the importance of protecting religious freedom. Muslims are permitted to fight in defense of their religion and to protect places of worships from destruction. ~~Howev~~ However it is important to note that the protection of

religious freedom does not imply aggression or forced conversion.

"And fight them only till the end of fitna."

(Surat-41-Baqara-2: 193)

4) Upholding Human Dignity and Rights:

Islamic teachings stress the importance of upholding human dignity and protecting the rights of individuals, both

Muslims and non-Muslims during the times of war. The mistreatment, killing, or harming of non-combatants, prisoners of war, or innocent civilians is strictly prohibited.

5) Removal of oppression and Tyranny

Islam encourages believers to fight against oppression and tyranny. If a tyrannical ruler or regime is engaged in gross human rights violations or poses a threat to the well-being of people, Muslims may engage in warfare to remove



Such oppression and establish justies.

And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah and [For] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, "Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people and appoint for us from yourself a protector and appoint for us from yourself a helper?"

(Surat-un-Nissa-4:75)

## Principles of War

1) Restricting Targets and non-Combatant Immunity:

In the light of Holy Quran:  
"Do not kill a wounded person nor run after a fleeing one nor kill a captive."

The holy Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the protection of non-combatants during warfare. He (PBUH) ~~probs~~ prohibited

the killing of woman, children, the elderly, and non-combatants ~~and~~ civilians. According to Sunan Abu Dawood (2614). "Do not

✦

~~2) Avoid~~

2) Avoid to Destroy the Infrastructure and Environment:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explicitly prohibited the destruction of public properties and environment. He (PBUH) said: do not cut down trees and ready crops and also do not kill sheep, cows, or camels except for food.

3) Treatment of prisoners of War:

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) laid down guidelines for the treatment of prisoners of war, emphasizing kindness, compassion, and fair treatment. During the Battle of Badr, the holy Prophet (PBUH) instructed his companions to treat the captured enemy soldiers with



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~~morally~~  
~~morally~~

and dignity.

4) Prohibition of Torture and Mutilation:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) <sup>also</sup> instructed his Companions do not to

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) prohibited his Companions from torturing others and mutilation the enemies' bodies.



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## Qualities of Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a military Commander/Strategist

The personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was complete in all respects. He was entrusted to convey the message of Allah to all of humanity. All of his wars therefore were for the cause of Allah and Propagation of Islam. He was possessed of great military acumen and war stratagem in and outside the battlefield.

### 1) Strong Belief in Allah:

The Prophet (PBUH) had absolute belief in Allah whose message he was carrying in ~~one hand~~ one hand (Quran) and the sword in the other.

### 2) Outstanding Achievements:

By the virtue of his greatest leadership skills, the Muslims conquered Makkah etc. After migration to Madina Muslims ~~was~~ fought almost 100 wars. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) achieved great

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Success with minimum human losses. According to <sup>the book</sup> Muhammad at Madina by Montgomery Watt "During the 100 wars 1058 were passed away, In this number 259 Muslims were martyred and 799 non-Muslims were killed."

3) Courage: ~~the~~ Hazarat Ali (RA) has said that, during battle, whenever the circumstances took an unprecedented turn, the mujahid used to look towards the bold and confident attitude of the Prophet and gain courage. Moreover, At the peak of battle, ~~he~~ he would display extraordinary daring and nerve and move as close as possible to the enemy to overwhelm him. All his Mujahideen would then gain courage and aspire to follow his example.



#### 4) Constant and Firm Faith:

The Prophet (PBUH) regarded victory with modesty and humility as a blessing and gift of Allah Almighty. This attitude was solely due to trust, faith and a right sense of values. When the Prophet (PBUH) entered Makkah triumphantly after conquering it, his head was bowed low down on the hump of his horse in gratitude to Allah Almighty, His creator.

#### 5) Confidence and Steadfastness:

During the battle of Hunnain when the army was falling apart due to the pressure being exerted by the enemy the Prophet (PBUH) stood firm in the battle field and with great fervor said:

"I am the True Prophet, it is no lie, and I am the Son of Abdul Mutallib!"

Seeing the resolute stand taken by him, the army which was scattering in fear rallied round him. Thus, their Commander

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Prophet (PBUH) displayed  
confidence and steadfastness.



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## Military Strategies of the Holy Prophet (PBUH):

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the founder of Islam, was not only a spiritual leader but also a skilled military strategist. His military strategies during his lifetime played a crucial role in the success of early Islamic campaigns. Here are some key military strategies employed by Prophet Muhammad:

### 1) Strategic Retreat and Defensive posture:

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) adopted a defensive posture when faced with superior forces, especially during the early years in Makkah. He (PBUH) avoided direct confrontations and instead focused on protecting the Muslim community from harm. The principle of strategic retreat is evident in the migration from Makkah to Madina, where the Muslims established a stronger and more secure base. "Permission has been

given to those who are being  
~~fa~~ fought, because they were  
wronged. And indeed, Allah is  
~~compt~~ competent to ~~given~~  
give them victory. Those who  
have been driven from their  
homes unjustly only because  
they said, 'Our lord is Allah'

## 2) Diplomacy and Alliances:

Prophet Muhammad  
(PBUH) skillfully used diplomacy  
to build alliances with neighboring  
tribes and communities, even  
with non-~~an~~ Muslims, in order  
to strengthen the Muslim  
position and safeguard their  
interests. One notable  
example is the treaty of  
Hudaybiyah, secured a ten-year  
truce with the Quresh,  
allowing the Muslim peacefully  
coexist and expand their  
influence.



### 3) Preparation of War:

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always used to make great preparations for an imminent war. He maintained very strict discipline and order among the ranks of fighting men.

"Prepare against them whatever force you can, and the trained horses whereby you frighten Allah's enemy and your own enemy."

(Al-Anfaal 8:60)

### 4) Surprise Attacks and Night Raids:

In certain situations, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) utilized surprise a

### 4) Espionage and Surveillance of Enemy:

Espionage is a crucial war strategy for risk assessment and better preparations. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) took practical steps to find out the enemy's plans, the strength of their forces

and the nature of their weaponry. So Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) acted as spy himself before Badr and also sent Huzaifa R.A as a spy during Khandaq.

Army patrolling was also a major strategy for this purpose. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) deployed his companions all over the ~~Arab~~ Arabian peninsula who kept him informed of the enemy's activities.

5) Secrecy in war planning/strategy:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was fully conscious of the military strategy and of need for secrecy. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always prepared his war plans very ~~carefully~~ and carefully and took every possible precaution that they were not ~~disclosed~~ disclosed to anyone except his close advisers with whom Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to counsel regarding the preparations for and techniques of war.



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### 6) Innovative war strategies:

The Prophet (PBUH) always adopted new war techniques and strategies in order to thwart the plans of enemy. Therefore, this method was used in the battle of Ahzab, when he dug out trenches. This was quite innovative war strategy and unexpected for the Arabs.

### 7) Effective strategies in the Battle field:

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) always took advantage of his position and selected a better place for fighting. In the Battle of Badr he selected higher place and sandy land so that in case of rain earth would be leveled. He (PBUH) selected that direction where sun was in his back while sunlight beaming in enemy's eyes. In the Battle of Uhud, he appointed archers to guard it. In the battle of Ahzab, he ordered his fighters to remain there under all circumstances to block enemy access to the trench.

## 8) Kind and Humane Treatment of prisoners of war (POWs):

Before the advent of Islam, captives were killed brutally. After fixing in earth, arrows were thrown upon them. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) treated the prisoners well and advised his companions to treat them mildly. In the Battle of Badr, seventy pagans were captured. The Holy prophet (PBUH) distributed prisoners among his companions with strict instructions that they should be well treated. They offered them food while they remained hungry. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) forbade killing the prisoners and liberated them on easy conditions. Some of the conditions for getting liberty were: Embracing Islam, paying ransom, or educating the Muslim children.



## Military Organization Under the Prophet (PBUH)

During the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the military organization was an essential aspect of the growing Islamic community in Madina:

Here are the key features of the military organization under Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

### 1) Leadership

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the overall Commander of the Muslim army. He (PBUH) made crucial decisions regarding military strategies, appointed leaders for specific expeditions, and provided guidance to the soldiers.

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## 2) Commanders

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) appointed experienced and trusted companions as commanders for different military expeditions. Notable commanders included Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Khalid ibn al-Walid, and others.

He (PBUH) appointed ~~Usama~~ Usama bin Zaid R.A as a commander of an extremely important battle even though he was just 18 years old, and even though the army consisted of many senior companions.

## 3) Strategies and Tactics

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) employed various strategies and tactics in different battles. He utilized the element of surprise, made strategic retreats when necessary, and always emphasized the importance of unity and discipline.



#### 4) Tribal Structure

The Arabian Society at that time was tribal, and the early Muslim army also followed this tribal structure. The soldiers were grouped based on their tribal affiliations, and each tribe had its own leader or chief. These chiefs would ~~coordinated~~ coordinate with the Prophet (Peace be upon him) during campaigns.

#### 5) Decentralized Nature

The military organization was relatively decentralized. When a campaign or battle was planned, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would consult with his companions and gather their opinions. This consultative approach ensured a sense of unity and cooperation among the Muslim forces.

As Salman Farsi (RA) gave the idea of trench in the Battle of Khandaq, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) accepted that idea.

## Conclusion

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) military strategies were a combination of strategic acumen, moral principles, and a deep sense of responsibility for the welfare of his followers and the greater good. His legacy as a military leader is not only significant in the Islamic tradition but also offers valuable lessons in leadership, diplomacy, and ethics for leaders and scholars across different civilizations and epochs. Studying his life and the principles he espoused can provide insights into how to navigate challenges and conflicts with wisdom, compassion, and justice.