

Holy Prophet as a Military Strategist

Introduction:

like the other facets, the military aspect of life of the Holy Prophet is also unique. During his whole life the Holy Prophet (PBUH) fought 27 wars (Ghazwat) in which he exhibited excellent military skills. He always led the muslims from the front and always preached that martyrdom was better than turning back from the battleground. He was careful and cognizant about the military preparedness of muslims and had made arrangements for imparting training during the peacetime. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) altered the standards of war. The Pre-Islamic wars were fought for the purpose of robbery, plundering, tyranny, and aggression. Islamic wars were different from pre-Islamic war. A war in Islam means Jihad. That is to say it is a sacred fight in the way of Allah to emancipate the muslim brethren from suppression and persecution.

The Holy Prophet proved a great military strategist. None of the battle he fought was lost as a consequence of lack of military stagnation or any misplaced strategic position.

War According to the Quran

According to the Quran, the main objective of war is self-defence and prohibition of aggression.

وَمَا تَلَوْا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يِقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

⇒ "fight in the way of Allah to those who fight you but do not transgress; Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."

Allah orders to fight for the protection of innocents.

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوَالِدَانِ

⇒ "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."

War According to Hadees

The Holy Prophet instructed that:

اِقْتُلُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، قَاتِلُوا مَنْ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ

"Let your invasion be in the name of Allah and for his sake. Fight those who disbelieve in Allah".

Prophet's characteristics as a strategist

(i) Concept of war according to the Prophet

The Holy Prophet told us that a war is lawful only when it is fought to secure the freedom for preaching of Islam and for the maintenance of law and order.

(ii) Prophet's strong belief in Allah

The Prophet had a strong belief in Allah and in the mercy of Allah. Not a single thing he did without the commandment of Allah. One of them was war fought against the enemies.

"The Prophet in the Battle of Badar was outnumbered by 1000 to 313 but the Prophet did not lose hope and believe in Allah."

(iii) The Prophet (PBUH) reformed the concept of war

The Prophet reformed the whole concept of war and gradually abolished all the pre-Islamic war barbaric practices. The precepts of Holy Prophet on the conduct of war

are an invaluable treasure.

(iv) Use of innovative war strategies

The type of warfare employed by the Holy Prophet had a huge impact over the enemy. For instance, a psychological warfare was an important mean of reducing and weakening the morale of enemy's army. In most cases, the enemy just by hearing the thunderous sound of muslim were force to lay the arms due to fear.

(v) Distinction between the combatants and non-combatants

Indeed Muhammad (PBUH) commanded the following uncompromising rules of war.

"O people! I charges you with ten rules. Learn them well for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate the dead bodies. Neither kill a child nor a woman, nor an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire especially those which are fruitful."

(vi) Rights of combatants among enemy.

Along with the detail instructions regarding the treatment of non-combatants, it has been decreed that the muslims troops do not have unlimited power to deal with combatants as they like. There are certain

bounds in which they must treat the ~~non~~ combatants

(vii) Prohibition of night assault.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) abolished the custom of night assault which the Arab used to deliver and laid down the rule that enemy was not to be attacked before the dawn.

"When the Prophet of Allah approach the hostile people, he would not attack them till dawn".

(viii) Prohibition of immolation of enemy

Before the Prophet, the enemy in their fury of taking revenge used to burn their enemy alive but the Holy Prophet declared these barbaric practices:

"NO one has the right to put enemy to the torment of fire sans he who is the creator of fire".

(ix) Ban on killing of prisoners

The Holy Prophet said that "Do not kill a wounded person nor run after a fleeing one or kill a captive".

(x) Matchless leadership

No military work has ever been comprehensive enough

to refer to the attributes of which the Holy Prophet possessed in full measure because the attributes were only possessed by him and none else could ever dream of attaining it.

(vii) Military Planning.

Without the effective military planning, the personal qualities of the commander and the highly equipped and trained army become useless. In the military planning, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was inimitable as he stood matchless in his qualities. He adopted all those strategies which were necessary before and during the war.

The planning includes the following steps:

- 1- Fixing an aim and taking all steps to achieve it.
- 2- Assault on enemy
- 3- Gathering power
- 4- Proper use of force
- 5- True
- 6- Initiative
- 7- Strengthening morale

(viii) Consultation with companions

In all matters of wars, except the expedition of Hudaibiyah, affecting the common interests of the Muslims, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) always held counsel with his illustrious companions and he accepted their advice even when it was contrary to his views.