

Islamiat

CSS 2023: Discuss the Holy Prophet (PBUH) role as a Model for Military Strategy.

1- Introduction

The life of Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a role model for human beings encompasses all aspects of life. As Allah mentions in Quran:

لقد كان لكم في رسول الله أسوة

حسنة ...

"There is indeed a good model for you in the Messenger of Allah ..."

Surah Al-Ahzab : 21

Holy Prophet (PBUH) is a luminous candle in socio-political, economic, and educational aspects even in the contemporary era. Like all other facets, as a military strategist too, he set the most perfect example for the mankind. He (PBUH) won the wars by losing the least in men and material and gaining the most as far as the results are concerned. As Montgomery Watt in his book Muhammad at Medina mentions that the intensity of war waged by and under Prophet (PBUH) was least in the history which can be estimated.

from the fact that only 1058 casualties - 259 Muslims and 799 non-Muslims - happened in 100 wars - 27 Ghazwat and 73 Sarayat - led by or fought ~~by~~ under Prophet (PBUH) from migration to Medina in 622 AD till his death in 632 AD. In such a short span of ten years, he conquered Arabian Peninsula and established a stable government, which is unprecedented in the history.

2. Holy Prophet (PBUH) altered the objectives of war in Islam: Concept of Jihad

The Prophet (PBUH) altered the standards and aims of wars. The pre-Islamic wars were fought for the purposes of robbing, killing, plundering, tyranny, and aggression. Those wars were focused on winning victory, oppressing the weaker sides and demolishing their houses and installations.

Islamic wars are different from the jahiliyah wars; a "war" in Islam is a jihad. Jihad refers to striving in the name of God. It is a noble sacred fight in the way of Allah for the verification of a Muslim society that seeks to free man from cruelty, oppression, aggression and subjugation. War in Islam is a Jihad for spreading security, safety, mercy and compassion.

The celebrated Sirah writer Maulana Safiur Rahman Mubarak puri (1943-2006) has derived the following objectives of warfare in Islam in the light of Holy Quran:

- i. To fight against aggression and defend Islamic lands:
In the Holy Quran, Allah says:

"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but do not transgress, for Allah does not love transgressors"

Al-Baqarah [2]: 190

- ii. It is the duty of Muslims to assist the oppressed especially those under the oppression of disbeliever.
- iii. The third objective of Jihad is to preserve peace, through eradication of mischief (fitnah).
- iv. Jihad should be waged in order to eliminate the incidence of oppression and cruelty.
- v. Finally, Jihad is necessary to remove hindrances in the way of Islam.

3- Characteristics of Prophet (PBUH) as a military strategist

- i. Leadership skills of Prophet (PBUH)

The most important quality to fight and win a war is the leadership skills of the army commander. Since he is responsible for setting up the principles of war, and for the military strategies and organization of the military under his command.

The exemplary leadership skills of Prophet (PBUH) can be learned from the case study of Battle of Hunain. ~~During~~ In the battle, a sudden attack by the enemy archers made many of the advance forces of Muslims flee from the battlefield and Muhammad (PBUH) was left alone with few of his close companions around him, but he fought with great courage and called out to his men with a loud voice: "I am the Messenger of God. I am not an imposter. I am a decendent of Abdul Muttalib."

ii. Prophet (PBUH) was a kind-hearted military strategist

There are innumerable instances demonstrating the kind-hearted nature of Prophet (PBUH). He always advised his companions and soldiers not to kill and humiliate women, aged persons, children and those who were non-combatants. It is reported by Anas that Allah's Messenger said, "Go in God's name, trusting in Him

and adhering to the religion of His Messenger. Do not kill old men, women and children; and do not be dishonest about booty; do right and act well, for Allah loves those who act well." (Mishkat). He (PBUH) also said. "Do not kill a wounded person nor run after a fleeing one or kill a captive"

Muhammad (PBUH) never killed anyone with his own hands during the battles he led or fought except in the Battle of Uhud when one of his enemies came right at him and challenged him. He took a spear from one of his companions and stabbed his neck. After the battle of Uhud, the Prophet (PBUH) wept and prayed for every soldier that died in the way of Allah.

iii. Prophet (PBUH) used to do consultation with Advisory Council

Generally at every important juncture and especially before the war, Prophet (PBUH) used to hold a grand meeting (Shura) where his companions gave their views and proposed new strategies.

One example is found from Battle of Uhud, when some of the best honourable companions suggested that Prophet (PBUH) should go out of Madinah

and urged to accept their point of view. Prophet (PBUH) accepted their plan. Similarly, in the case of Battle of Trench, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) summoned a high advisory board and conducted a careful discussion of a plan to defend Medina. After the discussions between military leaders and people possessed of sound advice, it was agreed, on the proposal of Hazrat Salman Al-Farsi, to dig trenches as defensive lines.

iv- The bravery of Prophet (PBUH) was unparalleled

Only a few hundred people had embraced Islam and migrated to Medina with Prophet (PBUH). He (PBUH) could only gather together 313 fighting men against a thousand armed men for the Battle of Badr. Similarly, in the Battle of Uhud, there were 700 against 3000. And about 3,000 men against 1000 (one estimate was 24,000) fighting men in the Battle of Trench.

Although his enemies outnumbered his forces during all these battles, he did not fear fighting them. He won them all except in the Battle of Uhud.

The Battle of Uhud was a

victory turned into partial defeat because of the 50 archers who left their key position atop the hill. They were commanded not to leave it under any circumstances, by the Prophet (PBUH). However, seeing the enemy ^{retreating} / ~~retreating~~, they left their post. Khalid bin Walid, who finding the post undefended, attacked from the rear. About 70 men were killed against 40 of the enemy. Prophet (PBUH) also received serious injuries on his head and cheek and lost his teeth. It is Miqdad that the Prophet (PBUH) showed no sign of anxiety or weakness in this trying hour. "I swear by Allah," he ~~said~~ said, "Who sent the Prophet with the Truth, that his feet neither staggered nor wavered at this critical juncture."

4- Military Strategies of Prophet (PBUH)

i- Espionage and Surveillance of the enemy

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

Arm petrolling was also a major war strategy. For this purpose, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) deployed his detective all over the Arabian Peninsula who kept him informed of the enemy's activities. A case in point in this regard is that Prophet (PBUH) sent a group of people to get information about the return of caravan of Abu-Sufyan at the time of Badr-e-Kubra.

ii. Prophet (PBUH) had an inclination toward reconciliation.

In spite of his military superiority, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) always tried best to get benefit through his compromise strategy, although he could eliminate the enemy's power.

A case in point in this regard is the example of Treaty of Hudaibiyah. This act is according to the order of Quran, which states:

وَأِنْ حَاتِبُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْبُرْهُمُ

"If the enemy is inclined towards peace, make peace with them ..."

Surah Al-Anfal : 61

iii- Innovative strategies in the battlefield were adopted by Prophet (PBUH)

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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 levelled. He selected the direction where sun was in his back while sunlight beaming in enemy's eyes.

In the Battle of Uhud, he appointed archers to guard a key position atop the hill. In Battle of Trench, he ordered his fighters to remain there under all circumstances to block enemy's access to trench.

iv. Prophet (PBUH) always ordered the kind and humane treatment of prisoners of war.

Before the advent of Islam, captives were killed brutally. After fixing in earth, arrows were thrown upon them. Prophet (PBUH) treated the prisoners well and advised his companions to treat them mildly.

In the Battle of Badr, 70 pagans were captured. 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. On conquest of Makkah, Holy Prophet (PBUH)

commanded his army as:

"Do not kill any prisoner of war"
(Al-Hadees)

Prophet (PBUH) liberated the prisoners on easy conditions. These included embracing Islam, paying ransom, or educating Muslim children.

5- Military organization under the Prophet (PBUH).

i- Division of the military

Muslim armies consisted of infantry, cavalry and archers. As with the military tradition, the army was divided into 5 military units, called the 'Khums' namely: the Centre, the Right and Left flanks, the vanguard and the rearguard.

ii- Army formation and positioning

Each military unit was a column of three to four 'lines', called 'Sufuf'. The first line consisted of lancers, who awaited the enemy attack, to be repulsed by their lancers. Behind the lancers was a line of archers. After the lancers had hurled their javelins and spears, and archers had shot their arrows, a hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The moment enemy showed signs of retreat or defeat,

the cavalry used to collect booty and spoils of war.

iii. Tribal Basis organization of the Muslim armies

The Muslim armies under Prophet (PBUH) were organized on tribal basis. Each unit consisted of a tribe usually fighting under its Chief. Each tribe had its own tribal banner, borne aloft by its bravest member. Prophet (PBUH) always had his own banner, black or green in colour. When he ordered an expedition, this banner was implanted in the Mosque to rally Muslims under it.

iv. Weapons of Muslim armies

At first the Muslim soldiers were very deficient in the required weapons of war. But after Battle of the Ditch, as the fortunes of Islam improved, more and more sophisticated weapons were available. A Muslim foot-soldier was equipped with a sword, a bow and arrow, a sling and javelin. The horse-men carried a lance, spear as well as long sword. The Muslims possessed little or no siege-weapons.

6. Holy Prophet (PBUH) as an ideal military strategist in the contemporary era.

The military strategies/and organization of Prophet (PBUH) of his armies under varying situations are still an excellent example for those who have to formulate military principles, even in contemporary times. If his (PBUH) military tactics and characteristics are followed, then the necessary ~~are~~ end of war can be executed peacefully. He ~~this~~ is not only a role model for Muslims but also for non-Muslims across the globe. The disastrous incidents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the war on terror in Afghanistan, the invasion and war in Ukraine, the war in Iraq, and Syria, and ~~ongoing Palestine issue~~ can be either avoided or executed less destructively if the military strategies of Prophet (PBUH) were used as a role model. The destruction and chaos across the world are because countries are following brutal and violent military tactics to contain and destroy other enemy states.

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Conclusion

It can be concluded that history is witnessing that Prophet (PBUH) has exhibited excellent military skills in all his wars. He has always led the Muslims from the front and preached that martyrdom was better than turning back on the battle field. He was careful and cognizant

of the military preparedness of Muslims and made arrangements for imparting military training to Muslims during peacetime as well. Muslims were sent to other areas for getting training in the use of weapons. He fought many wars with minimum human losses.

As in the past, the protection and peace of the world lay in the teachings of Prophet (PBUH), even today it is only possible by following his teachings and of the Holy Quran. If United Nations makes a collective effort to implement military strategies of Prophet (PBUH), then the world can be ~~prop~~ protected and become a peaceful hub to live with minimum loss.