

The Military Campaigns of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH: Strategy, Leadership, and Legacy

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Iltimas Khan

Lecturer Department of Islamiyat University of Peshawar

Abstract

This article focuses on the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) decisive battles during the early days of Islam. It also looks at these battles as the most significant display of the Prophet's military strategy and this is also crucial in explaining the change in leadership style. The movie focuses on the most important battles like Badr and Uhud to deal with the Muhammad's art of battles, his unconquered ability of bringing the forces together and his beliefs in the humanity even for the enemies, revealing his gift in the battles and his moral conduct. Besides that, the paper also clarifies the short-term results of the various campaigns, among them the invention of the first Islamic state, and how they influenced long term politics and the Islamic military thought forever. Historical context and what various researchers have to say about it are brought into light by the paper in order to give depth to the content and show the multi-faced legacy of these campaigns and uses these as a basis for Islamic history from which lessons can be drawn from.

Keywords: Prophet Muhammad SAW, Military Strategy, Islamic State, Campaigns

Introduction

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is not only honored, but also highly respected by Muslims around the world because they consider him as the last messenger of God (ALLAH) of the Islamic religion. The city of Mecca where he was born is about 570 CE. Throughout the 23 years that he lived, he received divine revelations, which were compiled and made into the Quran, the holy book of Islam. As a religious leader, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) propagated monotheism, emphasizing the worship of one God and the importance of ethical conduct, compassion, and social justice (Quran, 21: Another challenge is deforestation, as it increases carbon emissions into the atmosphere and disrupts the natural carbon cycle. Forests play a crucial role in removing carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in their soils and biomass. He laid the bases of Islam as its religion, advancing the practice of always acknowledging the will of Allah and submission to the tenets of the Islam. Besides, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had been both a spiritual guide and political leader, and in the process, he managed to get the peoples of Arabia with such different and varied tribes together as one Muslim nation. He took power and as a result the first Islamic state came into being in Medina. There he served as both a spiritual guide and a state's personnel, and decided on the laws based on divine revelation, showing justice and equality.

The importance carried by military operations in the initial period of the Islamic organization cannot be overemphasized. These military movements, e.g. Ghazawat and Sariyahs, were also the driving force in securing the spreading of the religion of Allah, the mighty. The Battle of Badr (624 ACE) is the most well-known military encounter where a small Muslim army of less than 500 men, led by Muhammad (peace be upon Him), fought against a force made up of around 1000 Qurashi men. This important victory strengthened the position of the Muslim community in

Medina and gave them cheer and courage, despite the pain of persecution (Ibn Ishak, 155). Gradually, the military campaigns progressed on with Uhud and Hudaibiyyah Treaty being an immediate and prominent evidence of the early Muslim community's war skills. Eventually this resulted in expansion of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula (Al-Bukhari, 1981). The paper will examine Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) strategy, leadership, and have a brief look at the effect of these military campaigns on Islamic thought and history. Through an assessment of the Prophet's (PBUH) command and control strategies such as a guerilla warfare, coalition, and diplomacy, a paper wishes to find out the reasons behind the success of his military adventures (Abu Khalil, 2007). On the other hand, it intends to focus on the leadership qualities of the Prophet (PBUH) as notable such as his capability to create a firm loyalty among his followers, create the unity among his group and highly resilient in the hardship (Lings, 1983). Concluding the paper, the legacy of these campaigns will be examined, regions it still existence in contemporary finale of Jihad, just war theory and relationship between religion and politics in the Muslim world. The primary aim of this research is the particular element concerning the multiple aspects of the prophetic contribution to the early Islamic society in that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) acted as both a religion and a politics leader.

Historical Context

The Prophet's migration to Medina (Hijrah) is considered to be a turning point which separated Mecca and Medina in terms of social and political development. By 7th century Mecca, which had long prospered as an important hub of trade in the Arabian Peninsula, had become predominantly tribal system that was controlled by the Quraysh tribe, which then enjoyed economic and religious power (Rodinson, 2002). The way the city economy worked was based mainly on pilgrimage to the Ka 'bah, one of the central shrines in the region where the representatives of different tribes worshipped their idols they hold in high esteem. Contrary to this, prior to their migration to Medina which was referred to as Yathrib, they were living in a multi-ethnic community of farmers that was highly diverse and comprised of several clans including Jewish tribes (Haykal, 2008).

The fictionalization of the political power among the Bedouin tribes in Medina, was not exactly a merit and led to the conflicts coupled with hidden or declared alliances. Breaking from the existing religion and being counted with the newly arrived Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his pioneer Islamic community was a major blow to the haughty pagans of Mecca. Muslims had to face different forms of abuse such as boycott of their economic transactions, social avoidance, and even physical violence (Ibn Ishaq, 1955). The leaders of Quraysh, being anxious that their religious and wealth domination would be eroded by the growing influence of Islam, increased their pressure to suppress the Islam expansion altogether. The persecution reached its climax, as the Prophet and his Companions migrated to the neighboring Mekka which was approximately, 13 years later; in the year 622 CE. The Muslim community, however, took up military engagement for the sake of safeguarding their religion as well as in a bid to spread/propagate it. Initially, defensive battles, such as the Battle of Badr, were waged in response to Meccan aggression and

attempts to annihilate the Muslim community in Medina. This defensive warfare was the way to preserve the emerging Muslim community from the enemies who wanted to turn their worship away from Islam and posed an existential danger to the emerging faith (Ibn Kathir). Nevertheless, as the Muslims got stronger and more significant in the society, they initiated defensive operations such as the conquest of Mecca so as to make the region duly and justly govern (Sa'd Ibn, 1967).

Strategy

The Prophet Muhammad's military strategies in the key battles, like Badr, Uhud, and the Ditch, demonstrate his great tactics and ability to prove himself (Haykal, 2008). Having the advantage of a terrain is the essence for any successful battles and this can be well witnessed in the battle of Badr (624 CE). Even though the companion of Muhammad (PBUH) were few in number compared to those of the Quraysh fighters, Muhammad (PBUH) managed to secure an outstanding victory against them through positioning his troops strategically enough to gain advantage from the terrain (Ibn Isha The major implication of this was transmitting intelligence, including reconnaissance missions and interrogations of captives to the Muslim forces. This enabled them to predict enemies' actions, positioning themselves at positions of strength (Ibn Kathir, 2000).

The same happened in the Battle of Uhud (625-CE), where Prophet Muhammad excluding shortcuts introduced the formation of the defensive lines and set the archers on mount Uhud who protected Muslims' flank (Rodinson, 2002). But, due to the fact that some Muslims relinquished discipline and faithfulness to the Prophet's (PUBH) directives, the numbers of the Ummah and the conquering areas were decreased reflecting the role of discipline and following the Prophet's (PUBH) directions for success (Ibn Sa'd, 1967). It was at this particular trench battle (627 CE) that the Prophet (PBUH) elaborated on the defensive style as means to protect Medina from Quraysh and other opposing tribes which led the siege. Bringing into play their own defensive line by the trenches and the network of the neighboring tribes, the Prophet was undoubtedly thus able to annul the quarrel of the defensive force's alliance (Lings, 1983). One of the factors that greatly contributed to the defense of Medina and the preservation of the Muslim state, as we know it now, is the remarkable diplomacy skills that Muhammad used to forge strategic alliances and enduring partnerships. The military strategies of the Prophet (PBUH) bear the imprint of his capacity to deal with unforeseen forces and the evolving circumstances of war. There were two sets of imperatives; the defensive task and the offensive operation. The approach of the saint leader reflected a realistic appraisal of the environment situation, which strive to defend the integrity of Islam principals (Abu Khalil, 2007). Through her (PBUH) military background studies go on and add for scholar and military strategist, it reflect on the lasting relevance of the Prophet's (PBUH) ideas and techniques in military science and leadership.

Leadership

Muhammad 's charisma and military strategy are what helped him achieve justice and uphold Islamic Authority that he founded during military campaigns (Haykal, 2008). He was endowed

with a leadership style which had the power to appeal to diverse followers of Islam, looking past the boundaries that separate tribes and ethnic groups (Lings, 1983). He managed to make the followers of Imam Ali (PBH) feel as a community and loyal to their leader, so unity and conviction were the result of this. (Ibn Ishaq, 1955) The most crucial aspects of the Prophet's (SAW) leadership were to stand as the controller of their forces in the field of the battle. He constantly demonstrated to his fellows, the utmost faith in Allah and the resoluteness to hold the Islam precepts that in fact, bolstered their courage and stamina to push through despite the impassable challenges they faced. At the front lines the Prophet's presence had a significant impact on military units not only morale but also his high example of how to lead by setting the example. This earned the trust of all his followers and was understood to be a sign of faith and leadership (Rodinson, 2002). Besides, in the fields of strategy during the battles, the Prophet Muhammad's choices were a combination between pragmatism and ethics. Holistic approach which comprised of strategic acumen gifted to him by God and knowledge of maximum victory with minimum of casualties including amongst the Muslim and non-Muslim combatants was taken by him (Armstrong, 1993). Moreover, the people witnessed that Prophet (PBUH) made members of the conquered nations as his prisoners of war and treated them beautifully. He urged that the captives should be treated like the civilians and be later freed. Others also were allowed to stay in the country (Ibn Sa'd, 1967). During the Prophet Muhammad's campaigns as a military leader, his excellence and distinguished qualities of wisdom, bravery and compassion revealed themselves. With his outstanding ability to mobilize the Muslim forces through the best of his organizational and judicious powers as well as his tactfulness and humane treatment of his adversaries, he added more luster to his already impeccable legacy as a historical figure who stirred the change.

Legacy

The decisive impact of Prophet Muhammad's military campaigns on the construction of the Islamic state was unprecedented, and it signified a turning point in the consolidation of Islamic Government in Medina as per Haykal (2008). From the remarkable military triumphs as the Battle of Badr and the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, the Prophet who is known as the Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) attained not only territorial integrity and political sovereignty but also planted the seed for the formation of a single Islamic state (Ibn Ishaq, 1955). These military successes, aside from strengthening the position of the Prophet (PBUH) as a leader, in addition, helped to promote the idea that Islamic law and politics are the main tools for shaping social norms and institutions (Ibn Kathir, 2000). Besides that, during these very military campaigns, the lasting effect on the political and military ideas of Islam is not to be underestimated. The principles of defensive jihad and just war theory, as well as other ethical considerations in waging wars, which Allah's messenger (PBUH) have demonstrated, are still the basic standard for the Islamic jurisprudence and military strategy (Harold, 1993). The Prophet (PBUH) urged for justice, kindness and devotion to Islamic laws during Martial conflicts, thereby making it a starting point for ethical

behavior in war. That ethical code was the basis for Muslim rulers and military leader's actions all over history (Ibn Sa'd, 1967).

In the Islamic literature and scholarship these campaigns are regarded as important segments/stages of prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) mission of establishing the Islam as an all-encompassing way of life (Lings, 1983). Every particularly important victory is regarded as the outcome of God's backing and the fulfillment of the prophets' prophecies, such a triumph symbolizes the victory of truth over falsehood, and the gradual development of Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. Therefore, the historians scrutinize the campaigns with a range of perspectives, taking into account both historical contexts, their purpose in the overall strategy, and their moral impact, which in turn provides scholars with deeper knowledge about the Prophet (PBUH) leadership, battle tactics, and the formation of the Islamic nation as we know it today.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the outcomes of the Prophet's intelligently drawn strategy, influential leadership, and the long-term significance of the military campaigns show an inconsistent story of tactical brilliance, emotionally vigorous leadership, and long-term influence. The Battle of Badr, Uhud, and the Trench, amongst other crucial pillars, are clear manifestations of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) aptness of the soil, his grit as the commander to bind and unify, and morality of warfare. The impact of these battles was so profound that the principles of just war which were usually accepted as rules of combat, as well as the ethical conduct towards warfare were completely changed. Recognizing that the reality and point of view are flip-side is of great importance as there are many factors that influence how different or same people understand events in different contexts, cultures, religious beliefs etc. Nevertheless, a variety of opinions was spread amongst the campaigners about the role of Islam in general. But, the historical impact of those campaigns in the Islamic development was undisputedly strong. They symbolize key phases in Islamic history, laying the foundation for the first Islamic state, the propagation of Islam outside of Arabia, and the establishment of the Prophet's credibility (PBUH) as a basic and historical canon. Ultimately, it could be said that these campaigns stand out from all the battles for the level of his vision, endurance, and uninterrupted mind oriented to the Muslim advancement, no doubt, leaving the great mark on the Islam development and at the same time directing its path for the long time period.

References

- Abu Khalil, S. (2007). The Battle of Badr: A Case Study of Jihad and Just War Theory. *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, 9(1), 65-82.
- Abu Khalil, S. (2007). The Battle of Badr: A Case Study of Jihad and Just War Theory. *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, 9(1), 65-82.
- Al-Bukhari, M. (1981). *Sahih al-Bukhari (Arabic-English)*. Lahore: Islamic Book Service.
- Armstrong, K. (1993). *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Haykal, M. H. (2008). *The Life of Muhammad*. Indianapolis: American Trust Publications.

- Ibn Ishaq. (1955). *Sirat Rasul Allah (The Life of Muhammad)*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Ibn Kathir, I. (2000). *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Vol. 3)*. Riyadh: Darussalam.
- Ibn Sa'd, M. (1967). *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir (Vol. 2)*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.
- Lings, M. (1983). *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*. Rochester: Inner Traditions.
- Lings, M. (1983). *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*. Rochester: Inner Traditions.
- Rodinson, M. (2002). *Muhammad: Prophet of Islam*. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks.