

# Military Strategy of the Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him)

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## Abstract

This paper is aimed at studying in detail the war tactics and military strategies of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) which He (Peace be upon him) used in all his military campaigns i.e. Ghazwat and Saraya. Profound and thorough study of these tactics and strategies can help gain success against the adversaries in any era, in any situation and at any place irrespective of the time and place factor. By dint of the vitality and inevitability of these strategies, even the present day war experts and concerned researchers are bound to accept and acknowledge their importance and requirement.

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## 1. Introduction

The life of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) encompasses all aspects of life. His sacred life is the best model for all mankind. Each and every action of Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) is a role model for an exemplary life. Besides all other faculties, as a military strategist too, he (Peace be upon him) set the most perfect examples of sagacity and prudence. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) as war strategist, is very important role model in present age. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) took very wise and strategically very effective steps in his life to counter his enemies. Now in this dark era of Muslims history it is need of the time that we should take guidance from the actions of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) to defeat our enemies.

Throughout his life, he (Peace be upon him) exhibited the most consummate military leadership skills for protecting Muslims as well as the nascent Islamic state. Even before establishing the state of Madinah, he (Peace be upon him) was cognizant of the importance of military training of Makkan Muslims where they were being persecuted by the infidels. When he announced his Prophethood, he invited people to the way of Peace (al-Islam), but most of them rejected and forced him and his followers to leave their hometown of Makkah. He was a man of peace and not of war but his enemies attacked him even to his new hometown, Madinah, in order to destroy him and his faith and he was left with no choice but to defend his faith and his town

from the aggressors. So when atrocities of infidels became intolerable, He (Peace be upon him) was commanded by Allah Almighty to defend Islam and the Muslims against the enemies of Islam in armed way. After reaching Madinah and establishing the first Islamic city state in 622 AD, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) gave more attention to military organization of Muslims as the infidels were adamant on annihilating them.

## **2. Purposes of War (of Disbelievers)**

Some of the purposes of war (in the way of Satan) are as under:

- a. To capture lands and properties.
- b. To establish own colonies and new markets.
- c. To gain control and domination over the sources.
- d. To have supremacy over other nations.
- e. To take revenge.
- f. To show their power, strength, bravery and military might.
- g. To enjoy rule over the weak nations.

"Whenever the Roman and Iranian forces invaded any country; children, women, old people, trees, animals and places of worship, in short; nothing would remain safe from the destruction. Whatever could be despoiled was despoiled and the rest was burnt"<sup>1</sup>.

## **3. Purposes of Jihad (of Believers)**

Some of the purposes of Jihad or Qitaal (in the way of Allah Almighty / *Jihad Fi Sabilillah*) are as under:

- a. To uproot and annihilate the mischief-making or corruption.
- b. To establish rule of Allah Almighty (*Iela'ai Kalimatul Haq*).
- c. To help the oppressed and tyrannized people.
- d. To establish and ensure peace and order on the land of Allah.
- e. To stop the tyrants and oppressors from their tyranny.
- f. To provide people with their just rights.
- g. To take revenge in the way of Allah Almighty.
- h. To defend themselves<sup>2</sup>.

## **4. Contemporary War Principles in the Light of Seerat-e-Tayyibah**

War principles set and military strategies used by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) are to full extent applicable and useful in all the times even during the present day warfare and future military campaigns also. In this regard it is pertinent to note that it is very important to gain knowledge and understanding of all those strategies which the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used in his different Ghazwat and Saraaya. From these principles and strategies, many are those which were first ever introduced by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) like ranking of the force, using code words for recognition and identification, appointing special squad on vulnerable sites,

participating equally by the commander in the preparations of war, weakening or destroying the enemy allies before confronting the enemy, sending one man for special tasks, using "*Khuda'ah*" technique etc. This fact is also worth mentioning that war principles which the strategists and war-experts of the present time, have set, had already been practiced by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) almost 1500 years ago.

Keeping in view the relevance and importance of the military strategies used by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), these can never be ignored at any time and in any type of warfare. By following these principles and using these strategies maximum benefits can be gained with minimum loss or casualties. It is written by Abdul Bari: "Under the exemplary command of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) from 2AH to 9AH in just 8 years 82 military campaigns were conducted. In all these campaigns total casualties of both the sides were less than even 600 lives. Can the world history present such a revolution in which loss and casualties are so less despite so many confrontations and battles?"<sup>3</sup>

### 5.1 To Arouse and Maintain Passion Motivation Level and Morale of the Force

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to inspire and motivate his force and arouse their passion by promising the great reward of their sacrifices in the way of Allah Almighty. He (Peace be upon him) used to deliver motivational speech to his soldiers to remain steadfast and show courage just before the confrontation. As Allah Almighty says:

"يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ"<sup>4</sup>

"O (Beloved) Prophet (Peace be upon him)! Urge the believers to the fight".

a. In Ghazwa Badr the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) addressed his companions as: "By Allah, in whose control is my life, whosoever will fight today against these infidels with patience and courage, will remain firm-footed and will not turn back, will be entered the paradise by Allah Almighty"<sup>5</sup>.

b. "I incite you for the thing for which Allah Almighty has Himself has incited you... (Until He Peace be upon him, said) Allah protects and frees those people from all hardships and grief, who show patience in the times of scarcity and hardship"<sup>6</sup>.

c. When the news (rumours) of conspiracies and rebellion of Banu Quraizah spread, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) sent two spies for investigation and confirmation but at the same time realized that if the news are confirmed to be so, morale and determination level of the Muslim force may come down. Therefore, He (Peace be upon him) made the spies understand that if the rumours are proved to be right;

this should not be disclosed and announced openly rather be conveyed to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) secretly.

## 5.2 Equal Participation of the Commander in Preparation of War

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself, used to participate in the preparations of war just like His soldiers. For example, digging of trench in Ghazwa Ahzab.

a. It is narrated by Hazrat Bra'a bin A'azib (May Allah be pleased with him) it is narrated also:

"كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَنْقُلُ التُّرَابَ يَوْمَ الْخَنْدَقِ، حَتَّى أَغْمَرَ بَطْنَهُ، أَوْ اغْبَرَ بَطْنَهُ"<sup>7</sup>

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to shift the soil from one place to another until the soil had covered his (sacred) belly.

## 5.3 Surprise and Secrecy

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to keep his enemy-related intentions hidden and did not share except with very close companions. Some times the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) intentionally said something contrary to his actual plan and the same was conveyed by the hypocrites to the enemy.

a. Hazrat Ali Al Murtaza (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates that: "The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) dispatched and directed me, Abu Marthad and Zubair (May Allah be pleased with them) that ride towards Roza Khakh, after reaching there, you will find a woman from *Mushrikeen* who will be in possession of a letter from Hatib bin Abu Balta'a written to *Mushrikeen* to inform them about the Muslim's plan. So we found that woman riding on a camel, at the same place about which the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) told us..."<sup>8</sup> So the letter was captured to ensure secrecy.

b. Likewise in Ghazwa Makkah the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) appointed the guards on the routes of the advancement and asked them to keep under eyes every person passing by. Moreover He (Peace be upon him) directed them to stop any stranger from passing through so that the enemy should not be able to get any information about the advancement of the Muslim Force<sup>9</sup>.

"The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) started preparing for the conquest of Makkah after returning of Abu Sufyan and told the Companions that it should be kept secret and not be disclosed"<sup>10</sup>.

To ensure the secrecy and surprise, unfamiliar routes were used. Even the bells of the camels were removed.

## 5.4 Mutual Co-ordination and Internal Unity

It is of two types: Co-operation and Co-ordination between the soldiers and different squads of the same army and Co-operation and Co-ordination between two different armies.



a. In Ghazwa Badr this strategy was very obvious. Archers threw their arrows at appropriate time and the advance party advanced and attacked the enemy at appropriate time.

b. In Ghazwa Bani Mustalaq there was a dispute on the issue of water due to the conspiracy of Abdullah bin Ubayyi, but the dispute was settled with great wisdom by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him). Likewise the dispute which rose during the distribution of the booty in Ghazwa Hunain, was immediately settled too.

### 5.5 Consideration of All Available Material Sources (Ammunition)

In the Holy Quran Allah Almighty says:

"وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ"<sup>11</sup> -

"And make ready your strength to the utmost of your power".

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always took into due consideration the ground realities and used all available war sources against the enemy.

a. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not initiated war against the enemies until the Muslims gained reasonable manpower and war sources after migration to Madinah Munawwarah.

b. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used all available weapons which include: *club, sword, armour, helmet, arrow, spear, catapult, Dababah, Dhabur, Arradah* etc. Catapult was installed and used in Ghazwa Taaif and Ghazwa Khyber (in front of Bra'a Fort of Khyber)<sup>12</sup>.

### 5.6 To Avoid Wastage of War Sources

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to instruct and direct his soldiers to make needful use of weapons and war related sources so that the same should not go waste. Hazrat Abu Usaid (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates that: "On the day of Badr, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) asked us to run the arrows only when the enemy comes closer and to avoid wastage of the arrows"<sup>13</sup>.

### 5.7 Not Seeking Help from Pagans against Pagans

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) never sought or accepted any kind of help or assistance of pagans against the pagans. For example:

a. In Ghazwa Badr, when Habib ibn-e-Yusaaf from Banu Khazraj wanted to join the Muslim force. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "We do not want to take assistance of pagans".

b. In Ghazwa Uhad too, He (Peace be upon him) did not accept the help of the Jews who were among the allies and confederate of head of the hypocrites Abdullah bin Ubayyi<sup>14</sup>.

### 5.8 Use of Spy and Gaining Information about the Enemy

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to get prior information about the enemy.

**a.** In Ghazwa Badr, before reaching the battlefield the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) gained information about the strength (number) of the enemy force from two persons of Quraish<sup>15</sup>.

**b.** In Ghazwa Uhad the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) assigned the duty of bringing information about the strength of enemy force, to Hazrat Habab bin Mundhir (May Allah be pleased with him) who brought the correct information about their strength<sup>16</sup>.

**c.** In Ghazwa Hunain, He (Peace be upon him) sent Hazrat Abdullah bin Abi Hadard Aslami (May Allah be pleased with him) to the enemy army and said: "Enter into the enemy army and listen what they are going to plan".

**d.** Likewise in Ghazwa Ahzab Hazrat Huzaifa and in Ghazwa Badr Hazrat Talha bin Ubaidullah and Hazrat Saeed bin Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him) were sent as spies to get the internal news of the enemy<sup>17</sup>.

**e.** In Ghazwa Hudaibyah, a person was sent from Hudaibyah as a spy for the confirmation of the rumours.

**f.** In Sariya Raje'e also, He (Peace be upon him) dispatched his spies towards Makkah for fetching the news about Quraish.

## **5.9 Selection of the Most Suitable Site for Deployment**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always gave due consideration to the selection of most appropriate and suitable site for deployment of his force / troops.

**a.** In Ghazwa Badr, for example, He (Peace be upon him) after thoroughly pondering upon the situation and the conditions, selected such a site which proved to be a very suitable for the Muslims both geographically and geo-strategically.

**b.** About Ghazwa Uhad, Writer Abdul Bari, after highlighting the geo-strategic importance of the battlefield of Uhad, writes that: "The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) reached and occupied this important location before the enemy and set up his camp there<sup>18</sup>.

## **5.10 Use of Code Words for Recognition of Friend and Foe**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used some specific words as code words for recognizing own and enemy persons. This proved to be very beneficial in the hours of thick battle when both sides were amalgamated with each other during fight.

**a.** In Ghazwa Badr, for example "Ahad Ahad" was used as code word.

- b. In Ghazwa Bani Mustalaq words "Ya Mansoor Amit" were used<sup>19</sup>.

### 5.11 Ranking and Organizing the Force in the Battlefield

Quraish were totally unaware of this new strategy introduced by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the battles. The enemy was not even expecting this technique and method of fighting.

- a. Hazrat Saeed bin Musayyib (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates that: "On Badr day the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) himself arranged and straightened the lines of his force<sup>20</sup>.

While lining up the soldiers, He (Peace be upon him) always took into consideration that sunlight should not dazzle their eyes.

- b. About Ghazwa Uhad Allah Almighty says:

"وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ"

"And remember, when you set forth from your home at dawn to place the believers in the battle order. Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing"<sup>21</sup>. According to Imam A'abd Hameed this verse is about Ghazwa Uhad<sup>22</sup>.

### 5.12 Installation of Camp for the Commander at the Most Suitable Site

Tactically it is very important that there should be a specific base or camp for the commander wherefrom he can have a look on his army and himself observe the activities of his soldiers. Keeping in view the same important requirement, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to get installed his camp at a very appropriate and suitable place to monitor each and every activity of the battle.

- a. In Ghazwa Badr, a camp was installed at a hillock which was guarded by a responsible person.
- b. In Ghazwa Ahzab also, a camp was installed at "Jabl-e-Zubab" and then "Jabl-e-Sala'a".

### 5.13 Economy of Force

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) with very economic use of his army and weapons, gained victory over several times bigger and stronger enemy.

- a. In 48 out of 78 military campaigns strength (number) Muslim army was less than even 200 men.
- b. Except in Ghazwa Makkah, Ghazwa Hunain, Ghazwa Taif, Ghazwa Tabuk, in all campaigns strength of Muslim army was less than 1500 men.
- c. In Ghazwa Mauta, He (Peace be upon him) fought against the professional and well trained army of governor of Ghassan with only 3000 soldiers.

### 5.14 To Stay in the Battlefield for 3 Days after Victory

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to stay for 3 days at the battlefield after victory purposefully. This strategy was for:

- a. Creating a positive and dominant impact on the adversary.
- b. For distributing the war booty.
- c. For having sufficient time for preparation of return<sup>23</sup>. (23)

### **5.15 Exemplary Behaviour with War Prisoners**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always treated the POWs in an exemplary manner. The world history is not and will never be able to give such an example of matchless behaviour with prisoners. Even the non-Muslims have no other option except to acknowledge this fact. For example in Ghazwa Badr:

a. "The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) treated the prisoners in the best possible manner. Those who could not afford to pay ransom for their freedom were freed without ransom. Prisoners themselves used to admit that: "By God! The Muslims themselves walked by foot and made us ride, themselves suffered from hunger and thirst and provided us food and drink". Tell, O world (People)! have you ever seen such a victorian?"<sup>24</sup>

b. A prisoner (who was brother of Hazrat Musa'ab bin Umair (May Allah be pleased with him) of Ghazwa Badr states about the Muslim in whose control he was given: " They used to serve me with bread and themselves eat a few dates. Whenever they would get by chance, some piece of bread, they would hand over the same to me. I used to feel ashamed and wanted to return the same to them but they never accepted it and instead insisted that I should eat it."<sup>25</sup>

### **5.16 Establishment of Security Department and Deployment of Defending Force for Internal Security**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to make adequate arrangements for the internal safety and security of the city while leaving for the battlefield.

a. In Ghazwa Uhad for example, He (Peace be upon him) detailed such security guards whose duty was to keep an eye on the routes and to stop the persons passing by, so that any possible and sudden attack at night, can be countered.<sup>26</sup>

b. While advancing towards Uhad, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) stayed in 'Bani Najjar" and appointed Hazrat Muhammad bin Muslimah along with 50 men for patrolling around the Muslim army (at nighty).<sup>27</sup>

c. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to appoint and dispatch from time to time the patrolling squads (15-30 men) and fighting squads (50-300 men) in both war and peace times. Task of

these squads was to gain information about the enemy, to monitor the Islamic State borders, to gain awareness of the surroundings from geographical point of view, to frighten the enemy and when required, to cut their supply line and catch them unprepared.

### **5.17 Deployment of Special Squad at Sensitive and Vulnerable Site**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) with his matchless sagacity and prudence, used to take into full consideration every aspect of military strategy and leave no flaw or defect which could cause any sort of loss.

a. In Ghazwa Uhad for example, according to the narration of Hazrat Bara'a bin A'azib (May Allah be pleased with him) when the Muslim force was deployed in piedmont of Uhad, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) appointed 50 archers with Hazrat Abdullah bin Jubair as leader, at mountain pass (a vulnerable point, now called "*Jabl ur Rumaat*") so that the enemy could not use that pass to attack on Muslim army from rear.<sup>28</sup>

### **5.18 To Remain Firm and Resolute on War Decision**

It is very important that the commander should maintain his decision and remain determined for his mission. When He (Peace be upon him) would determine for war (Qitaal), he would never turn back from his decision. In the Holy Qura'n Allah Almighty says:

"فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ"<sup>29</sup>.

And when you are resolved, put your trust in Allah.

a. "In Ghazwa Uhad, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "It is not admissible and befitting for a Prophet of Allah, to unarm himself until Allah decides between him and his enemies"<sup>30</sup>.

### **5.19 Selection and Inclusion of the Most Suitable Persons in Army**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not allow those, less than 15 years old.

a. In Ghazwa Uhad when Hazrat Samra bin Jandab (May Allah be pleased with him) insisted to be included in the Muslim army, he was allowed to be part of the army only when he defeated Hazrat Rafi'e bin Khudaij (May Allah be pleased with him) in wrestling.<sup>31</sup>

### **5.20 Inspection of the Army before Confrontation**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always used to inspect and observe his army just before the confrontation with the enemy.

a. In Ghazwa Uhad for example, He (Peace be upon him) inspected his soldiers at the place of "Shaikhain"<sup>32</sup>.

### **5.21 Pursuing the Enemy after War**

For gaining psychological advantage and domination over the enemy this strategy is very much important. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to pursue the enemy even after the war. For example:

- a. In Ghazwa Uhad "When army of Quraish left the battlefield, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) asked Hazrat Ali Al Murtaza (May Allah be pleased with him) to chase them."<sup>33</sup>
- b. Likewise in Ghazwa Hunain, when Banu Hawazan were defeated, they fled away and camped at "Autaas". He (Peace be upon him) dispatched Hazrat Abu A'amir Asha'ari (May Allah be pleased with him) with a squad to pursue them.

### **5.22 Weakening the Enemy before They Regain their Power**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) never let the enemy re-compose itself and regain its strength. For example:

- a. After Ghazwa Hunain, when he (Peace be upon him) received the news about Banu Hawazan's commander Maalik bin Auof, that he has collected his force and taken refuge in a fort-like mansion in the city with a huge number of force. Moreover he has stored eatables for one complete year. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) decided to go straight towards Ta'aif from Hunain to counter them.<sup>34</sup>

### **5.23 Re-organization of the Army**

Whenever and wherever the situation demanded, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always re-organized his army in the battlefield in the best possible way.

- a. In Ghazwa Uhad and Ghazwa Hunain, when due to false rumours and sever arrow-throwing by the enemy, the Muslim soldiers were dispersed, He (Peace be upon him) called them back and re-organized them. He (Peace be upon him) re-invigorated in them, the same passion and enthusiasm which they had before their dispersal.

### **5.24 Unique Defensive War Strategy**

The Battle of Trench is known to be a unique defensive battle in the history. In this war the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) prepared a huge trench around the city and resultantly the enemy could not even dare to approach and attack the Muslims. Along with the trench, defensive fronts prepared were also prepared.

- a. Ibn-e-Hisham writes that "When the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) received the news about enemy preparations for attacking the Muslims, He (Peace be upon him) decided to dig a trench around the city and himself participated in its digging."<sup>35</sup>

### **5.25 The Concept of Deception (الحرب خدعة)**

In the military campaigns of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) the concept of deceiving the enemy and putting them in misconception, was also introduced on as and when required basis.

- a. In Ghazwa Ahzab for example, He (Peace be upon him) allowed a newly Muslim Hazrat Noa'aim (May Allah be pleased with him) by saying: "Although you are alone, but you can do whatever you want, to cause failure to the enemy".
- b. In Ghazwa Bani Mustalaq, He (Peace be upon him) allowed Hazrat Buraida bin Husaib (May Allah be pleased with him) for "*Khuda'ah*" against Harath bin Dharar.<sup>36</sup>
- c. When the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) intended to initiate an attack on Quraish-e-Makkah, He (Peace be upon him) purposefully dispatched Hazrat Abu Qatadah towards *Batn-e-Adham* with 60 men. The real purpose behind this move was just to divert the attention of the enemy and to prevent them from the preparation of war.

## 5.26 To Weaken the Enemy by Separating and Destroying its Allies

It is very important strategy to separate the allies and weaken the enemy by leaving them unsupported. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used this strategy very effectively in his various battles.

- a. In Ghazwa Ahzab for example, Hazrat Noa'aim (May Allah be pleased with him) on the order of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) created misunderstandings between the attacking force (Quraish) and their allies specially Banu Quraiza. Due to the increasing length of siege, He (Peace be upon him) used the strategy of creating misunderstandings and so separating them from each other.<sup>37</sup>
- b. Before Ghazwa Khyber, there was a pact between the jews of Khyber and Pagans of Makkah that in case the Muslims advance towards any one of them, the other side will attack on Madinah. So with His great sagacity and military wisdom, He (Peace be upon him) foresaw this expected danger and decided to make an agreement and reconcile with one of these enemies. So, He (Peace be upon him) signed a treaty with Quraish-e-Makkah and purposefully agreed on all the conditions of the other party. One of the conditions of this treaty was: "For ten years there will be no war between the parties" and another condition was: "If one party fights against its enemy the other party will remain neutral". Now the point to note, is that just after 15 days of this pact the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) initiated an attack on the jews of Khyber who had started conspiracies against the Muslims and were planning to bring loss to Islam. Moreover after just 2 years of the cancellation of the aforementioned treaty, the Muslims conquered Makkah as well.
- c. While advancing towards Khyber the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) first camped at "Raje'e" purposefully just to frighten the



allies of the jews "Banu Ghutfan" so that they can not dare to go for the support of the jews of Khyber. This strategy worked and Banu Ghutfan thought that if they will leave their homes and go for helping the jews, the Muslims might launch an attack on their hometown. So they gave up the intention of leaving their homes and helping the jews because of this haunting danger from the Muslim force.<sup>38</sup>

**d.** "The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) wrote a letter to Banu Ghutfan to remain away from helping the jews of Khyber. In return they will be given the share in case of conquest of Khyber".<sup>39</sup>

### **5.27 Initiative and Offensive War**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) successfully launched both the wars i.e. offensive and defensive based upon the situation and circumstances. In most of the campaigns he (Peace be upon him) took initiative and made the enemy fight at the place and time of His own will and wish. For example:

**a.** After Ghazwa Ahzab when the invaders had left, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) very clearly said: "Now we will invade the enemy before they think of invading us".

**b.** More examples of offensive war are: Ghazwa Khyber, Ghazwa Makkah and Ghazwa Banu Quraizah etc.

**c.** In several campaigns (like Ghazwa Ghutfan against Da'athur bin Harath and Ghazwa Buhran ), as soon as the news of the enemy's planning or preparation were received, He (Peace be upon him) immediately prepared the force, took the initiative and caught the enemy suddenly.<sup>40</sup>

### **5.28 Effective Mobility**

Mobility means the capability of a force to move from one place to another with sufficient speed. This war capability helps the force to have domination over the enemy at such a time and place where the enemy is not even ready. Under the able command of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) the Muslim force showed great mobility skills and caught the enemy un-aware and un-prepared at several occasions. For example:

**a.** In Ghazwa Badr the Muslims demonstrated great capability of mobility and reached at the desired place with speed.

**b.** In Ghazwa Uhad, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) reached the battlefield by passing through very difficult routes speedily. The enemy was not even expecting such mobility and speed.

**c.** In Ghazwa Makkah, He (Peace be upon him) successfully mobilized his force of 10000 men through unexpected routes and reached the surroundings of Makkah with such a speed that the enemy

was caught totally unaware of this advancement and left with no option other than to surrender.

**d.** In Ghazwa Khyber also, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) showed great skill of mobility and covered a distance of 100 miles within just 6 days.<sup>41</sup>

### **5.29 Frightening the Enemy Psychologically (Psychological Warfare)**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) took such steps and adopted such strategy which was purposefully aimed at frightening and horrifying the enemy psychologically. These steps include:

- a.** Arresting the enemy commander. (Ghazwa Makkah)<sup>42</sup>
- b.** lighting up of his separate candle by each individual i.e. at 10000 different places. (Ghazwa Makkah)<sup>43</sup>
- c.** Arrangement of lights at 500 different places to frighten the enemy psychologically. (Ghazwa Hamraa-ul-Asad)
- d.** Focus on the Killing of the Enemy Leaders. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) prayed for the destruction of Shaibah bin Rabiea, Utbah bin Rabiea, Waleed bin Utbah and Abu Jahal bin Hisham. (Ghazwa Badr)<sup>44</sup>
- e.** Display and Show of Power to the Enemy. (Ghazwa Makkah)<sup>45</sup>
- f.** Reaching the Border of the Enemy before their Arrival. (Ghazwa Tabuk)<sup>46</sup>.

### **5.30 To Avoid Un-necessary Bloodshed and Loss of Human Life**

World history is and will never be able to present such an example that a victorious commander despite having full control and domination over the blood-thirsty enemy, announces open and unconditioned forgiveness for all of them.

- a.** On the occasion of Conquest of Makkah, He (Peace be upon him) announced open forgiveness for the enemies by saying: "Go, you all are free and forgiven"<sup>47</sup>.
- b.** All military campaigns of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) are an obvious proof of the fact that with minimum loss of human lives (casualties) maximum benefits were gained.
- c.** It is worth mentioning that in all these campaigns only 255 Muslim soldiers embraced martyrdom whereas the life loss of the enemy was 759.

### 5.31 To Besiege the Enemy

This strategy is very useful on as and when required basis. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) besieged the enemy in various battles and thus lowered down their war capabilities, for example:

- a. In Ghazwa Khyber, Ghazwa Banu Quraizah, Ghazwa Banu Qainqa'a, Ghazwa Banu Nadhir the enemies were besieged.<sup>48</sup>
- b. He (Peace be upon him) besieged Banu Quraizah for 25 days, Banu Qainqa'a for 15 days, Banu Nadhir for 6 days.<sup>49</sup>

### 5.32 Not Attacking on Sleeping Enemy

It was of course against the bravery and dignity of the Muslim force, to attack the enemy while they were sleeping.

- a. Hazrat Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates:

"كان اذا اتى قوماً بليلاً لم يغير بهم حتى يصبح"<sup>50</sup>

"Whenever, He (Peace be upon him) invaded some nation (enemy), He (Peace be upon him) would never attack them until morning.

### 5.33 Use of War Slogan

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to use war slogans in his battles. For example:

- a. In Ghazwa Uhad, war slogan of the Muslims was "Amit Amit".
- b. In Ghazwa Makkah Slogan of Muhajireen was "Ya Bani Abdur Rehman" slogan of Banu Khazraj was "Ya Bani Abdullah" and slogan of Banu Aous was "Ya Bani Abaidullah"<sup>51</sup>.
- c. Slogan of the Muslim army in the battle of Yamama was "Ya Muhammad" (Al bidaya-wal-Nihaya)

### 5.34 Offering "Salaat ul Khauf" in Case of Danger from the Enemy

It was among the specialties of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) to offer "Salaat ul Khauf" right during the battle or when there was any danger from enemy.

- a. In Ghazwa Zee Qard for example, He (Peace be upon him) offered this prayer.<sup>52</sup>

### 5.35 Choosing the Most Suitable Person for Special Task

People recognition is a great ability of military commander. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) possessed this ability to the greatest extent.

- a. In Ghazwa Khyber for example, He (Peace be upon him) handed over the war flag (command) to the most suitable person, Hazrat Ali Al Murtaza (May Allah be pleased with him).<sup>53</sup>

### 5.36 Firmness and Steadfastness of the Commander in the Battlefield

It is of utmost importance for maintaining the moral of the force that the commander leads from the front by remaining firm and steadfast in the battlefield.

a. In Ghazwa Hunain and Ghazwa Uhad, when the Muslim soldiers were dispersed due to the enemy sever attack even then, He (Peace be upon him) did not leave his place. Hazrat Bra'a bin A'azib (May Allah be pleased with him) while narrating about Ghazwa Hunain says that:

"لكن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم لم يفر"<sup>54</sup> -

"The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not leave his place".

b. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always led from the front and set personal example of bravery, courage, valour, dauntlessness, firm-footedness, and steadfastness in all his campaigns. Hazrat Ali Al-Murtaza (May Allah be pleased with him) narrates that "Whenever thick battle started, we used to take refuge near and around the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) because due to his bravery and awe the enemy could not even dare to come closer to him.

### 5.37 Prohibition of being Proud on Material Sources Only

Despite taking into consideration all available material sources the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) never felt proud on worldly sources rather always believed that the triumph is with the benignity of Allah Almighty.

a. In Ghazwa Hunain due to large number of their force, when some Muslims just thought that in this battle no one could defeat them. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) disliked these words (as these might contain the element of pride)<sup>55</sup>.

### 5.38 Preparation of War in Accordance with the Enemy's Capabilities

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always made the preparations of war in accordance with the strength, expertise, war capabilities and weapons of the enemy.

a. In Ghazwa Hunain and Ghazwa Tabuk for example, the Muslims had to contest well trained and professional armies therefore, He (Peace be upon him) prepared against them accordingly.

### 5.39 Appointing Deputy / Succedaneum before Leaving for Campaign

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to appoint His succedaneum before leaving for any military campaign. The succedaneum was responsible for the safety and security of the city besides other administrative matters.

**a.** In Ghazwa Badr, Hazrat Abu Lubaba, in Ghazwa Uhad and Ghazwa Zee Qard, Hazrat Umm-e-Maktoom and in Ghazwa Hudaibyah Hazrat Abu Rahm Kulthum bin Hasain (May Allah be pleased with them) were appointed as succedaneum.

#### **5.40 Responding to the Call or Challenge of the Enemy**

Whenever the enemies of Islam, lost in their conceit, challenged the Muslims for contestation, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always responded positively and sent the most suitable match who within no time destroyed their pride and mingled in dust, their conceit.

**a.** In Ghazwa Badr for example, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) sent Hazrat Ubaidah (May Allah be pleased with him) against Utbah, Hazrat Hamza (May Allah be pleased with him) against Shaibah and Hazrat Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) against Waleed bin Utbah.

**b.** In Ghazwa Waadi-al-Qura'a Hazrat Zubair (May Allah be pleased with him) responded the challenge of the enemy and killed him. In Ghazwa Ahzab Hazrat Ali Al Murtaza (May Allah be pleased with him) was sent by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) to contest A'amr bin Abd-e-wud after his open challenge.

#### **5.41 Enduring the Hardships and Sever Sufferings**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) as a military commander, not only faced and endured sever hardships and sufferings himself, but also trained his men in the same manner. Resultantly his soldiers were always ready to face courageously any inhospitable and adverse situation.

**a.** In Ghazwa Tabuk for example, the Muslim army faced multi-type problems including the scarcity of food and water, severely hot weather conditions, long traveling of almost 500 miles, leaving the ripe crops etc but despite all these adverse conditions their morale and steps were not shaken at all.

**b.** In Sariya Khabt, the Muslim soldiers became so languid and sickly that they satisfied their hunger by eating leaves of trees. They had to live on just one date for the whole day<sup>56</sup>.

**c.** In Ghazwa Ahzab, digging of the trench despite sever hunger and thirst.<sup>57</sup>

#### **5.42 To Exile the Enemy (if so Required)**

When deemed necessary, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to banish the enemy. For example, Banu Nadhir were banished to Syria with permission to take their belongings with them as much as they can.<sup>58</sup>

**5.43 Best and Right Decision Making**

Of course decision making ability and power is of utmost importance in military campaigns. He (Peace be upon him) possessed this ability to the greatest extent and always made a right decision at the right time. All the campaigns of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) are quite sufficient to prove this fact.

**5.44 Counseling**

Allah Almighty says: <sup>59</sup> "وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ" -

"Consult them upon the conduct of affairs".

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to consult his close companions about war plans, war preparations, war mode and selection of battlefield etc.

a. In Ghazwa Uhad for example, He (Peace be upon him) deployed his forces in the piedmont of Uhad, as a result of counselling.

b. In Ghazwa Ahzab, trench was dug as a result of counseling. <sup>60</sup>

**5.45 Formation of Patrolling Squads**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to form regular patrolling squads which performed the following duties in peace time generally and during war time particularly:

a. To keep an eye on the war intentions and preparations of the enemy.

b. To keep an eye on the movement and advancement of the enemy.

c. To gain important news about enemy and convey the same to the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him).

d. To watch, monitor and keep surveillance of own army, both during day and night to ensure their safety and security.

**5.46 Consideration of Geographical Location and Terrain Factor**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) always gave due attention to the geographical location and terrain conditions for the selection of the most suitable place as battlefield and for the deployment of his force. This strategy is quite obvious in all his campaigns specially in Ghazwa Badr and Ghazwa Uhad.

**5.47 Concept of "Sariya"**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to appoint some other suitable person as commander and send him for the campaigns against the enemy as and when required. 28 *Saraya* are very evident example of this war strategy.

**5.48 Concept of Raid**

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to raid on the enemy as and when required. For example:

- a. He (Peace be upon him) sent Hazrat Zaid bin Harithah (May Allah be pleased with him) to raid on the enemy's caravan, who successfully caught the enemy at "*Qurdah*" and captured their goods.
- b. Raid was made on *Bani Kananah* as well.<sup>61</sup>

#### 5.49 Special Campaigns

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to dispatch individuals (comprising on 1-5 persons) for some special campaigns i.e. for killing the particular enemies of Islam.

- a. For example, He (Peace be upon him) sent Hazrat Muhammad bin Muslimah with 4 men to kill the jew Ka'ab bin Ashraf.<sup>62</sup>
- b. To kill the jew leader Abu Raafe'e Salam bin Abu Haqeeq, Hazrat Abdullha bin Ateek Khazraji was sent with 4 men.<sup>63</sup>
- c. For killing Sufyan bin Khalid Hazli, just one person (Hazrat Abdullah bin Anees) was sent.<sup>64</sup>
- d. During Ghazwa Tabuk, He (Peace be upon him) dispatched Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed (May Allah be pleased with him) with 400 men against *Akidar bin Abdul Malik Kandi Nasrani*, the leader of *Doma-tul-Jandal*.<sup>65</sup>

#### 5.50 Sudden Attack

To launch a sudden attack on enemy and catch them unprepared and unaware is a very useful war strategy. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) successfully used this strategy on several occasions like:

- a. In Ghazwa Makkah and Ghazwa Khyber, sudden attack was launched.
- b. He (Peace be upon him) while dispatching Sariya Hazrat Abu Qatadah (May Allah be pleased with him) towards Banu Ghutfan, directed them that the enemy should be attacked on, suddenly.
- c. In Sariya Abu Ubaidah bin Jarraah against the habitants of *Zil Qissah* also, sudden attack was made. As a result of sudden attack, the enemy got frightened and fled away.<sup>66</sup>

#### 5.51 Establishment of Reserve Force and Reinforcement

The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to keep a special and reserve force for any unforeseen situation and for the purpose of reinforcement as and when required.

- a. In Ghazwa Badr and Ghazwa Uhad He (Peace be upon him) formed a curator and guard squad for any critical situation.
- b. In Ghazwa Ahzab for example, a reasonable portion of the Muslim army was kept reserve.
- c. In Sariya Hazrat Muhammad bin Muslimah (May Allah be pleased with him), when all Muslim soldiers embraced martyrdom except the commander, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) sent the



second squad as reinforcement under the leadership of Hazrat Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah (May Allah be pleased with him).

d. In Sariya Hazrat A'amr bin Al A'as also, He (Peace be upon him) sent the reinforcement of 200 men.<sup>67</sup>

### 5.52 Capturing the Enemy's Goods and Equipment in War Situation (Economic Blockade)

It is included in important military tactics that in war situation or during war the goods, arms and other helping aid of the enemy be captured and taken over to stop the enemy from getting stronger.

a. In Ghazwa Ahzab the Muslims captured 20 camels loaded with grain and other helping goods of the enemy. These were sent by Hayyi bin Akhtab as an aid to strengthen enemy forces against the Muslims.<sup>68</sup>

### 5.53 The Concept of "*Fidaaei*" (Sacrificer) Attacks

There are several examples in which the Muslim soldiers took part in "Fidaaei" attacks and the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) not only allowed the same but sometimes asked for such volunteers for example:

a. To bring to the consequences, the jew Ka'ab bin Ashraf, Abu Rafe'e and Khalid bin Sufyan Hazli such volunteers were tasked.

b. In the battle of Yamama against *Musailma Kazzaab*, when the army of the enemy was fortified in a fort-like garden. Hazrat Bra'a bin A'azib (May Allah be pleased with him) said to his companions: "Lift me up and throw me inside the garden" where the enemy army was present. There he (alone) killed 10 persons of enemy and suffered more than 80 wounds. Apparently it was equal to putting one's life in full danger but none of the companions objected:

"And none of the Companions raised any objection on his act"<sup>69</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion and detail it becomes clear that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) not only adopted and demonstrated very significant war tactics and strategies, but also introduced for the first time ever various most important strategies as well. The tactics used by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) are an obvious proof of the fact, that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) was and will remain, undoubtedly the greatest ever successful military commander. This fact is not only recognized by the believers but also by the non-believers. He (Peace be upon him) introduced and used so wide and various military strategies that irrespective of the period of time, these strategies are equally applicable and most beneficial in all the times. Despite the modern and most advanced war sources and arms, no one can deny the inevitability and significance of tactics and strategies introduced by the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) almost 1500 years ago. With his military wisdom, prudence and sagacity, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) gained maximum benefits with minimum possible casualties. World history is verily unable and will remain unable to present such a great and successful military

command where with very economic use of force purpose was achieved with as less human loss as possible. Even the present day war experts, strategists and researchers can never overlook and keep aside these inevitable and much-needed strategies.

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