

INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM OF HOLY PROPHET (PBUH) AN IMPORTANT MILITARY TOOL

Nasir Majeed Malik

Wing Commander, Pakistan Air Force.

Hafiz Munir Ahmed Khan

Dean, Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

Ubaid Ahmed Khan

Chairmen, Department of Usooluddin, University of Karachi.

Aziz ur Rehman Saifce

Chairmen, Social Science Department, Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, Karachi.

ABSTRACT

In the modern warfare, intelligence plays a pivotal role, and is, therefore, considered an essential part of defense strategy in all countries. In the Islamic defense system, intelligence has been an important tool right from the days of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). This paper aims at explaining the importance of intelligence for the defense of an Islamic State according to the teachings of Islam. The word intelligence in this paper has been used in the military sense. The scope of this paper is limited to the Holy Quran, Hadith and prominent events of the Hijrah, battles of Badr, Uhud, Trench and consequent of Makkah. Intelligence is considered the most important tool of war in modern times. No army can fight without it. Getting information about enemy's plans, assets and movement (ops intelligence) and safeguarding own information; morale and loyalty of the troops (counter intelligence) are its two main aspects. An overview of the Holy Quran, Hadith and life of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) reveals that both these aspects of intelligence have been given due importance in Islam.

KEYWORDS: Islamic defense system, Islamic laws, Sharia teachings, Islamic State, Islamic military system, Qitaal.

Defense of the state

Islam lays great emphasis on the defense of an Islamic State. Besides being a homeland, an Islamic State enables the Muslims the Muslims to fulfill their religious obligations. Defense of an Islamic State is the climax of Jihad Fi Sabilillah. Amongst the various stages of Jihad, Qitaal is the highest stage where believers are called upon to fight in the way of Allah Almighty. Jihad (Struggle in the way of Allah) is obligatory upon every Muslim whereas Qitaal is an obligation of defense personnel. It has great rewards in the life here and hereafter. Allah Almighty has enjoined upon Muslims the categorical words:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ ۖ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ
وَعُدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا.ⁱ

“Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for their in return is Gardens of paradise. They fight in His cause and slay and are slain.”

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَآخَرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ ج لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُم ج اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ ط وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ.ⁱⁱ

It is obligatory on Muslims to carry out necessary preparation for Jihad all the time. Allah Almighty orders the believers:

“Prepare against them whatever force you can, and the trained horses whereby you frighten Allah’s enemy and your own enemy and others besides them whom you do not know. Allah knows them. Whatever things you paid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.”

“Another commandment of Allah Almighty regarding defense reads:

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يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اخْذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ فَانفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ وَافِرُوا جَمِيعًا.

“O you, who believe, be on you guard, and march in groups, or march all together.”

Groundwork for defense is necessary in all respects. Besides military operation, gathering of information on numbers, movements and resources of the enemy is also required for war. Similarly, security of information, morale of the troops and their loyalty are also essential. These all are components of intelligence.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) has also declared the duty of the defense of an Islamic State as a very sacred job. He said:

رِبَاطٌ يَوْمٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا وَمَوْضِعُ سَوْطِ أَحَدِكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا وَرَوْحُهَا الْعَبْدُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ الْعَدُوُّ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عَلَيْهَا.^{iv}

“To guard in Allah’s cause for one day is better than the world and whatever is on its surface, and a place in Paradise as small as that occupied by the whip of one of you is better than the world and whatever is on its surface: and a morning’s or an evening’s journey in Allah’s cause is better than the world and whatever is on its surface.”

Guarding the frontiers of an Islamic state and its military installations is vital because the enemy may come through any unguarded sector. Similarly, security of the information regarding plans, assets, locations, movements and other strategic subjects is inevitable and deserves equal importance and reward.

Importance of Intelligence

Armed forces carry out operations on the basis of information. If any operation the enemy’s territory is required, it may only be planned well if necessary information regarding the enemy’s location, man power and equipment etc is available. An operation does not mean an abrupt attack. It takes a series of steps to launch an operation. Intelligence is the foremost step and the most important technique. It is as necessary in countering the attack by the enemy as any other fighting machine. Islam strongly advocates intelligence operations against the enemies as well as countering

their intelligence operations in war.

Intelligence in the Holy Quran

A spy plays a vital role in an intelligence operation. He gets secret information and passes it to the enemy's country. Muslims are required to be vigilant about spy activities. Allah Almighty, while cautioning the Muslims against the spies of the enemy, says:

وَفِيكُمْ سَمْعُونَ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ^v

“Still, among you there are those who spy for them. Allah is aware of the wrongdoers.”

Intelligence needs authentic information. Military operations cannot be carried out of mere assumption or hearsay. SO authenticity of the information must be need Allah Almighty says.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَا لَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ^{vi}

“O you who believe, if a sinful person brings you a report, Verify its correctness, lets you should harm a people out of ignorance, and then become remorseful on what you did”

An operation should be based on solid facts. Allah Almighty Warns:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا^{vii}

“And do not pursuer that of which you have no knowledge. Surely, the hearing the sight, the heart all of those shall be questioned.”

This knowledge may be obtained through authentic report by responsible operators. Surely, the operator will be questioned about all this deeds.

Intelligence sharing should be only with competent authorities. Allah Almighty Condemns those not doing so. Allah says:

وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوْ الْخَوْفِ أَذًا عَوَابِهِ ط وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعِلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ

يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ ط وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَا تَبَعْتُمْ الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا^{viii}

“When news concerning peace or fear comes to them, they go about spreading it. Had they referred it to the Messenger and to those having authority among them, the truth of the matter would have come to the knowledge of those of them who are able to investigate. But for Allah's grace upon you, and mercy, you would have followed the Satan, save a few.”

Vital information should not be passed on to those who are not among the community of Muslims. They may harm you. Allah Almighty Strongly Prohibits doing so:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِنْ دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ خَبْرًا ط وَدُوَامَا عَيْنَتُمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ

وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ ط قَدْ يَبَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ^{ix}

“O you , who believe! Do not take anyone as an insider but those from among your

own selves. They would spare no effort to do you mischief. They want you to be in trouble. Malice has come out of their mouths while what is concealed in their hearts is still worse. We have made the signs clear to you, if you understand.”

Intelligence in Hadith

Protection of information was given due importance by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He also gave equal importance to the intelligence missions in military operations. In almost all of these battles, he used this tool effectively.

Keeping in view the importance of secrecy, he categorically states:

من كنتم سره كانت الخيرة في يده^x

“He, who guarded his secret, has its authority.”

It means that if someone loses information, he has no more control over it; others may spread it. Alternatively, if he keeps it secret, he can go with his mission without interruption. Same fact has been endorsed in another Hadith. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said:

استعينوا على قضاء الحوائج بالكتمان^{xi}

“Get help of secrecy of completing your jobs”

Passing any information without verification is declared false. So, such reporter should not be given attention. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) says:

كفى بالمرء كذبا ان يحدث بكل ما سمع^{xii}

“It is sufficient for a man to be a liar if he narrates all what he hears.”

Every member of the system is bound to keep the information of the meeting restricted to him. It is said in the Hadith:

المجالس بالامانة^{xiii}

“Information of a meeting is sacred.”

Another Hadith reveals:

المستشار موثمن^{xiv}

“He, who is consulted, is a trustee.”

Control over tongue and control over sexual sentiments are very crucial in this regard. Muslims should be very careful about these two factors. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) says:

من بضمن لى ما بين لحييه وما بين رجليه اضمن له الجنة^{xv}

“Who gave me assurance about his tongue and sex, I assure him of heaven.”

This Hadith describes the gravity of misuse of tongue and sexual lust. In addition to other aspects these factors have crucial importance in intelligence leakage. Enemy intelligence always searches for people with these weaknesses. Practically, such people have moved dangerous for national cause.

Intelligence in the Holy Prophet's life The Hijra

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) spent thirteen years in Makkah spreading the message of Allah Almighty. Besides not responding to his message, the inhabitants of Makkah opposed and tortured him and his followers to an unbearable degree. Ultimately, the

Holy Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Madinah according to the will of Allah Almighty.

Secrecy of Plan

When the Holy Prophet was asked by Allah Almighty to migrate from Makkah to Madinah, he came to Abu Bakar RA and inquired about any person other than trustworthy one, Abu Bakar replied that there were only his two trustworthy daughters; Ayesha RA and Asma RA. Only then did the Holy Prophet reveal his plan of movement.

Secrecy of Movement

While migrating from Makkah to Madinah, the Holy Prophet managed full secrecy of his movement. He ordered Ali RA to sleep on his bed to give an impression that the bed of the Prophet was not empty.

After the departure of the Holy Prophet and Hazrat Abu Bakar RA, Abu Jahal came to the home of Abu Bakar RA and inquired about the movement of the Prophet and Abu Bakar RA. Asma Ra, despite being beaten by Abu Jahal did not disclose the movement.

Information of Enemy Activities and Secrecy of Logistic Support

Abdullah bin Abi Bakar RA used to apprise the Prophet of the activities of Mushrikeen-e-Makkah. Aamir bin Fuhaira used to provide meal at late night and manage to remove the footprints of Abdullah by passing his flock of sheep of these.

The Battle of Badr

The Muslims expected a peaceful life after migrating from Makkah to Madinah, but the inhabitants of Makkah did not spare any moment to carry out conspiracy against them. The battle of Badr in 2 AH was the result of such conspiracies. This was the first big confrontation between Muslims and Non-Muslims. The Holy Prophet planned and fought this battle in a very professional manner.

No sooner did the Holy Prophet get the information about the expected battle of Badr, he sent several pickets for intelligence purpose. Their goal was to get awareness of the ways, tribes in the ways and their loyalty to an agreement with them.

Mission of Busaisa RA

The Holy Prophet sent Busaisa RA to inquire about the caravan of Abu Sufyan (an expected party of the battle of Badr). He got complete information and apprised the Prophet accordingly.

Mission of Abdullah Bin Jahash RA

On the other hand, the Holy Prophet sent Abdullah bin Jahash RA towards Makkah to get information about the movement and groundwork of Quraish (another expected part of the battle of Badr)

Mission of Ali RA, Zubair RA and Saad bin Abi Waqas RA

Another mission comprising Ali RA, Zubair RA and Saad bin Abi Waqas RA was sent to get information about the movement and number of Quraish. They caught two slaves and brought them to the Holy Prophet. The slaves were very reluctant to give information. However, after discussion, the Holy Prophet came to know that the Qurraish had started movement. To know about the number of Qurraish the Holy Prophet asked:

“How many camels do they slaughter daily?”

The slaves replied:

“One day they slaughter nine camels and the other day, they slaughter ten camels.”

From this, the Prophet estimated the number of the enemy as 900 to 1000.

Information Gained from a Maid. Another team comprising two companions was also sent towards the battlefield of Badr. They heard that there was a woman talking to another woman about her loan. The woman under debt said that Quraish were about to come by next day or the other day and she would work for them, earn and then would return her loan. He pies of the Holy Prophet noted and apprised the Prophet.

The Battle of Uhud

The battle of Uhud was fought in 3 AH. The polytheists of Makkah attacked Muslims at Uhud in revenge for Badr. Unfortunately, the Muslims could not give an exemplary punishment to the enemy due to an incident of low discipline at a sector during the battle. However, the Holy Prophet did not spare any effort to plan and fight the battle.

Initial information

Abbas RA, the uncle of the Holy Prophet wrote a letter to him that the Quraish had planned an attack on Madinah out of revenge for Badr. After receiving the information, the Holy Prophet sent two of his companions, named Anas RA and Monis RA to get necessary information about the movement of Quraish.

Demoralising the Enemy

After inflicting loses on the Muslims at Uhud, the Quraish left the battlefield for Makkah. The Holy Prophet realised that they might come back. The Quraish themselves realised that they should have annihilated the Muslims for ever at that stage. The Holy Prophet organised an army and started chasing them. The following message was conveyed through a loyal non-Muslim Mabad of Banu Khaza'a from a point in the way:

“Muhammad is coming with such a huge army that I could not see an example of that till today. Those companions who could not join the battle of Uhud have also joined the army now. They all are full of anger and spirit of revenge and have decided not go back without an exemplary revenge.

Thus, the enemy was demoralized and they gave up the idea of coming back to annihilate the Muslims forever.

The Battle of Trench

In 5 AH, the Quraish formed an alliance with a number of non-Muslim tribes to attack Madinah and end the dispute for ever. The Muslim under the leadership of the Holy Prophet fought the battle courageously. The Holy Prophet moved a number of intelligence mission to plan and fight against the enemy.

Mission of Zubair Bin Awam RA

The Holy Prophet managed to dig the trench because he had received the information well in advance. When the Holy Prophet migrated to Madinah, he made a peace agreement with important tribes of Madinah and its vicinity. Banu Quraiza, a Jew tribes, was one of them, which lived near Madinah. Due to its suspected loyalty, the Prophet wanted to confirm its allegiance to peace pact at that crucial time. The Holy Prophet asked for any volunteer among his companions for this task. Zubair Bin Awam RA offered his services for three times for this risky task. The Holy Prophet was so pleased with his offer and said:

“Surely, there was a companion of every prophet and Zubair Bin Awam is my companion.”

Mission of Saad RA

As stated earlier, the Banu Quraiza was one of the disloyal tribes of the Jews, living in the vicinity of Madinah. Although it had made a peace agreement with the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), it joined all conspiracies hatched against Muslims. Due to its suspicious habit, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) sent Saad Bin Ubada RA, Saad bin Muaz RA, Abdullah bin Rawaha RA and Hawat bin Jubair RA to inquire about its loyalty to the agreement. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) directed not to report openly if they were found disloyal; rather they should report in decrypted form. Moreover, if they were found loyal to the agreement, the team should report it openly. The team after inquiring into the matter reported “Adl-o-Qara”, meaning that they were treacherous like them. The Prophet thus gained the information and protected the morale of his troops.

Mission of Khuzaifa Bin Yaman RA

On the other hand, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) sent Khuzaifa bin Yaman RA to the camp of the Quraish to inquire about their plans at that dangerous time. Khuzaifa RA went there and got the information skillfully. When he came back and apprised the Prophet (ﷺ) that the Quraish were about to retreat, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) gave him the good news of heaven.

Mission of Nuaim Bin Masood RA

Nuaim bin Masood RA, a prominent figure of the Banu Atfan, embraced Islam during the war. He came to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said that he was a new Muslim and his

tribe and the Quraish were not aware of his accepting Islam. He offered his services for any suitable task. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) assigned him the task to break up the alliance of the enemy.

Nuaim approached Banu Quraiza and propagated that Quraish and Atfan (two main components of allied forces) might move back and leave Banu Quraiza alone. In this way, it might face severe consequences due to its neighborhood with the Muslims. Banu Quraiza should ask for some men as a surety from the allied forces, so that they might not leave it alone. On the other hand, he went to Quraish and Atfan and told them that Banu Quraiza might show disloyalty and might demand for some men as a surety, who might be handed over to Muhammad (ﷺ) to safeguard the tribe from Muslims. So, Quraish and Atfan should be careful about this plan. Being tired of the prolonged besiege, Quraish and Atfan asked Banu Quraiza to attack Madinah from both sides at once. In reply, Banu Quraiza asked for some men as a surety; otherwise, it would not participate in the attack. It increased the faith of Quraish and Atfan in Nuaim bin Masood (RA). They refused to hand over their men as hostage which resulted in the breakage of their alliance.

The conquest of Makkah

Banu Khuza'a and Banu Bakar were two non-Muslim tribes in the vicinity of Makkah. The former was an ally of Muslims and the later an ally of Muslims and the later an ally of Quraish. Once, Banu Bakar murdered some men of Banu Khuza'a. Banu Khuza'a sought help of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) sent a message to the Quraish, saying either to pay Diyyat to Banu Khuza'a or be ready for war. The Quraish chose the second option. So the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) managed skillfully an attack on Makkah in 8 AH.

Sense of Responsibility of Ayesha RA

When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) intended to invade Makkah, he kept his movement very secret. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his wife Ayesha RA to make necessary preparations. While she was busy doing so, Abu Bakar RA came in and asked repeatedly about the expected movement. Ayesha RA, being his daughter, did not tell him about the movement. When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) himself came in, he told Abu Bakar RA his plan.

The Incident of Hatib Bin Abi Balta'a

Hatib bin Abi Balta'a RA was one of the companions of Prophet. He lived in Madinah but his family was in Makkah. As he was not among Quraish, he was fearful about his family. When he came to know about the mission of invading Makkah, he wrote a letter to Quraish to inform them about the proposed attack. He handed over the letter to a woman. As soon as the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) got the information about this

letter he sent Ali RA, Zubair RA and Miqdad RA to apprehend her. They caught her in the way and forced her to give the letter to them. Thus, they protected their secret information from the enemy.

Conclusion

The injunctions of the Holy Quran, Hadith and the strategy of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) support that intelligence is of paramount importance for the defense of an Islamic state. Any effort in this regard carried reward and is laudable. So, every member of the society and military is bound to safeguard the national interest by protecting vital information from leakage. They are also to co-operate with their own intelligence agencies in ensuring the security of information.

People working on intelligence assignments have more responsibility and rewards accordingly. Information gained for this purpose must be carefully verified and then used as a base for any action. For carrying out intelligence missions, sometimes, apparently undesirable strategy may also be devised to achieve a national goal. But this should be restricted to unavoidable situations only. In normal circumstances, intelligence operators should strictly follow the ethical values of Islam.

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