

## Prophet Muhammad's Strategies On Security And Peace Building: Lessons For The Nigerian Society

Dr. Mustapha Isa Qasim

mustaphaisaqasim@gmail.com/+2348035907822

Department Of Arts And Social Science Education(Islamic Studies section) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

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**Abstract:** *In the Name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful. Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon His Messenger, Muhammad, his Family, Companions and those who follow their guidance up to the Last Hour. The message of Islam brought by the Prophet(s.a.w.) came along with different strategies for peace and security in a community. These strategies are clearly explained in the Qur'an and exemplified in the life of the Prophet(s.a.w.) both in Makkah and in Madina. One of such strategies is when the Makkans were trying to fix the black stone at its right position at the ka'bah, there was a serious dispute on the responsibility of placing it among the various clans in Makkah. It was agreed that anybody who arrived first would take the credit. Fortunately, the prophet (s.a.w.) arrived first, he was therefore given that responsibility. Strategically, the prophet (s.a.w.) spread his blanket, put the black stone and asked the representative of each clan to hold the edge of the blanket and carry it close to the Ka'bah, the prophet (s.a.w.) then used his hand and placed it on its right position, thereby settling the dispute. With this episode, Muhammad(s.a.w.) got the title of Al-Amin(The trustworthy). This episode was before his Prophethood, at the time of his Prophethood, immediately he arrived in Madina, he demonstrated the practical application of peace and security strategies by drafting Madinan constitution which brought peaceful co-existence between Muslims, Christians, Jews and followers of other religions in Madina. This paper identifies a number of such strategies applied by the prophet (s.a.w.) in bringing peace and security in the Arabian society which could be a model for the Nigerian society.*

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### I. Introduction

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S.A.W.) was sent by Allah (S.W.T) as Mercy to mankind, and his Message has been accompanied with different strategies for peace and security in the world. It is of utmost importance to identify and discuss these strategies for benefit of the Muslim Ummah as well as the generality of mankind. Allah (S.W.T) says:

Also in another verse, He says :

This paper discusses four major areas of strategy and peace control in the life of the Prophet (S.A.W.). The first is before prophethood in Makkah on the occasion of placing the blackstone at its right position, second, the issue of migration from Makkah to Madina, third, drafting of Madinan constitution, and finally the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. These areas have been discussed thoroughly in this paper, highlighting their relevance in the establishment and promotion of peace and security in society. The Nigerian society will definitely learn a lot from these strategies.

### II. Conceptual definition

The terms used in the title of the paper need to be properly conceptualised. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word strategy means a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose. This could also mean a policy, programme or design geared towards achieving certain objectives. Security means the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack danger. In other words, security is a protection against something bad that might happen in the future. Peace means a situation or period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area. To appreciate how Islam approaches the question of peace, one has only to consider a few elementary facts about Islam. Peace and Islam are derived from the same root and may be considered synonymous. One of God's names is Peace. The concluding words of the daily prayers of every Muslim are words of peace. The greeting of the Muslims when they return to God is peace. The daily salutations among the Muslims are expressions of peace. The adjective "Muslim" means, in a sense, peaceful. Heaven in Islam is the abode of peace.

In view of the above definitions, a strategic plan for peace and security is therefore necessary for both individuals and groups in society. The Prophet (S.A.W.), as a Messenger of Allah who was assigned to extend the message of Islam obviously used some strategies for protection against external aggression to himself, his companions and the entire message of Islam he came to accomplish.

### **III. Strategies For Security and Peace Building**

The prophet (SAW) during his life in Makkah and Madinah, and within the period of twenty three years, employed very strong strategies which established adequate security and brought about peaceful co-existence in the Arab society. I have identified five of such strategies which are discussed extensively hereunder.

#### **3.1 Placing the Blackstone in the ka'abah**

When the Makkah's were rebuilding the ka'abah and the time came to place the secret black stone in its place in the east wall, they differed as to who would have the honour of laying it in place. Competition was so keen that it almost led to a new civil. The descendants of Abdul-Dar and Adiyya allied themselves together and swore that none would rob them of this honour. They were so serious in their resolution that members of the clan of Banu Abd al-Dar brought a bowl full of blood in which they dipped their hands in confirmation of their solemn oath. For thus they later called "The bloodmonger" when Abu Umayyah, son of Mughirah al-makhazumi saw what happened, he took advantage of his power and prestige and said to the Makkah's, "While we are all standing here, let the first one to pass through the gate of al-saffah be our arbitrator in this dispute. "the first one to pass through the gate was Muhammad (SAW). When they beheld him they said:, "There goes al-Amin. We shall agree with his verdict realizing, as he hastened to them, that the contenders had worked themselves up into a passion, Muhammad (SAW) thought for a moment and said: "Bring me a robe", He took the robe they brought, spread it on the ground, and placed the blackstone on its and then said, "let the elders of each clan hold onto one edge of the robe. "they all complied and together carried the stone to the site of construction. There, Muhammad (SAW) picked up the stone and laid it in its place by himself. Bloodshed was thus averted and the dispute was solved". (Haykal, 1982:65-66).

The lesson that could be deduced from this episode is fact that the prophet (SAW) was agreed by all the Makkah clans to be their arbitrator due to their recognition of his sublime character and trustworthiness, which led to naming him as Al-Amin (the trustworthy).

It could also be noted that at the time of this episode, Muhammad (SAW) was appointed as a Prophet, nevertheless, he exhibited this sound character and fair judgment.

#### **3.2 Migration to Madina**

When the situation became unbearable for the prophet (SAW) and his companions because of serious persecution of Muslims by the Makkah leaders, the prophet (SAW) thought that Makkah was no longer a safe place for him to live, he waited for permission from Allah and Allah sent Jibril to inform the prophet (SAW) to leave Makkah. The Quraysh plotted to kill the prophet (SAW) but Allah (SWT) save him. Allah (SAW) says: "And (remember) when the disbelievers plotted against you (O Muhammad (SAW) to imprison you, or to kill you, or to get you out (from your home, i.e. Makkah); they were plotting and Allah too was planning, and Allah is the best of the planners". (8:30).

When the Quraysh came to the house of the prophet (SAW), he already informed Abubakar to accompany him and asked Ali Talib to sleep on his bed, he and Abubakar sneaked to the cave of thaur from there, they found their way to Madina. (Sa'id,M (1994:115)

At the time the Quraysh learned that the prophet (SAW) has sneaked out of Makkah, they declared that whoever would seize Muhammad (SAW) would receive a hundred camels as reward. This has spurred many persons to try their luck. Among those who were on the lookout for the prophet (SAW) and his companion in order to win the reward was suraqah, the son of Malik, He, on receiving information that a party of four, had been spotted on a certain route, decided to pursue it secretly so that he alone should be the winner of the reward. He mounted a swift horse and went in hot pursuit of them on the way the horse stumbled and he fell on the ground. On drawing a lot so as to divine whether he should continue the chase or not, as the Arabs used to do in such circumstances, he found the omens-unpropitious. But the lust for material wealth blinded him altogether and he resumed onto the saddle and galloped at a break-neck speed till he came quite close to the prophet (SAW). Abubakar's heart agitated and he kept looking, back while the prophet (SAW) remained steadfast and continued reciting verses of the Qur'an. (Al-Mubarakpuri, S.:80).

The repeated stumbling of Suraqa's horse and his falling off awakened him to the situation, and realized that it was a constant warning of Allah for his evil design which he contemplated against the prophet (SAW) He approached the travelling group with a penitent heart and begged of the prophet (SAW) forgiveness in all humility. He addressed the prophet (SAW) and his companion, saying. "your people (the Quraishites) have promised a generous reward to anyone who captures you." He added that he offered them provision but they declined his offer. They only asked him to screen off their departure and blind the polytheists to their hiding place. Then the prophet (SAW) forgave him and confirmed it with a token written by 'Amir bin Fuhairah on a

piece of parchment. Suraqah hurried back to Makkah and tried to fail the attempts of those who were in pursuit of Muhammad (SAW) and his noble companions. The sworn enemy was converted into an honest believers. (Al-Mubarakpuri, S.: 81).

The point of relevance in this narration is the case of suraqah ibn Malik that despite the difficulties he encountered on the way, he was able to reach the prophet (SAW) and his companions. But vividly express the nature of the teachings of Islam of peace and security, the prophet did not give command for suraqah to be killed rather he forgave him and allowed back to Makkah safely. This what impressed suraqah and with his inability to catch the prophet in spite of his brevity and courage, therefore submitted himself to Islam.

### **3.3 Madinah constitution**

Immediately the prophet (SAW) arrived in Madina, he started with three fundamental things. There were construction of mosque, creating brotherhood between Muhajirun and Ansar, and drafting Madinah-constitution.

In Madina, the prophet (SAW) faced different categories of people his companion isolators of Madina, Jews and Christians in order to co-exist in a peaceful atmosphere, the prophet called for agreement with different groups of people. It was agreed in the meeting a constitution should be drafted to cater for the needs of each party in the agreement.

Herein, we look over some of its provisions.

In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

This is a document from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allâh, concerning Emigrants and Helpers and those who followed and strove with them.

1. They are one nation to the exclusion of other people.
2. The Emigrants of Quraish unite together and shall pay blood money among themselves, and shall ransom honourably their prisoners. Every tribe of the Helpers unite together, as they were at first, and every section among them will pay a ransom for acquitting its relative prisoners.
3. Believers shall not leave anyone destitute among them by not paying his redemption money or blood money in kind.
4. Whoever is rebellious or whoever seeks to spread enmity and sedition, the hand of every God-fearing Muslim shall be against him, even if he be his son.
5. A believer shall not kill another believer, nor shall support a disbeliever against a believer.
6. The protection of Allâh is one (and is equally) extended to the humblest of the believers.
7. The believers are supported by each other.
8. Whosoever of the Jews follows us shall have aid and succour; they shall not be injured, nor any enemy be aided against them.
9. The peace of the believers is indivisible. No separate peace shall be made when believers are fighting in the way of Allâh. Conditions must be fair and equitable to all.
10. It shall not be lawful for a believer, who holds by what is in this document and believes in Allâh and the Day of Judgement, to help a criminal nor give him refuge. Those who give him refuge and render him help shall have the curse and anger of Allâh on the Day of Resurrection. Their indemnity is not accepted.
11. Whenever you differ about a matter, it must be referred to Allâh and to Muhammad.
12. Killing a believer deliberately with no good reason entails killing the killer unless the sponsor deems it otherwise.

(Haykal, M.H (1982:180)

The madinan document provided mutual understanding between various groups in Madinah which guaranteed peace and security under the leadership of the prophet (SAW). They all agreed that if whenever they differ about a matter, it must be referred to Allah and to Muhammad (SAW). This shows the kind of recognition given to the prophet (SAW) as a peace maker and responsible leader.

### **3.4 Treaty of Hudaibiyah**

It was in the sixth year of Hijrah, the prophet (SAW) saw in a dream, while he was still in Madina, that he had entered Makkah in security with his followers, and was performing the ceremonies of Umrah (lesser Hajj). The prophet (SAW) informed companions about his dream, they happy and immediately prepared their mind, for the journey.

The prophet (SAW) had his clothes washed, mounted his camel and marched out towards Makkah with about 1,500 Muslims together with his wife Ummu Salamah. They carried no weapons with them except sheathed swords because they had no intention of fighting.

When the Quraysh about the prophet, mission, they held a meeting during which they considered the while situation and decided to resist the prophet's mission at all costs. Two hundred horsemen led by Khalid bin Al-Waleed were dispatched to take the Muslims by surprise during Zuhr (the afternoon) prayer.

The prophet (SAW) and his companions camped at Hudaibiyyah and sent Uthman ibn Affan to explain to Quraysh their mission they only intended forming the lesser Hajj not fighting. News came that Uthman was assassinated. The Muslims were greatly worried and took a solemn pledge at the hand of the prophet (SAW) that they would sacrifice their lives to avenge the death of their companions and stand firmly by their master, Muhammad (SAW), under all Ridwan (A covenant of fealty). Allah (SWT) says: indeed, Allahy was pleased with the believers when they gave their Ba'a (pledge) to you to Muhammad (SAW) under the tree" (48:8).

When Quraysh saw the firm determination of the Muslims to shed the last drop of their blood for the deface of their faith, they came to their senses and realized that Muhammad's followers could not be cowed down by these tactics. After some further interchange of messenger they agreed to conclude a treaty of reconciliation and peace with the Muslims.

The clauses of the said treaty go as follows:

1. The Muslims shall return this time and come back next year, but they shall not stay in Makkah for more than three days.
2. They shall not come back armed but can bring with them swords only sheathed in scabbards and these shall be kept in bags.
3. War activities shall be suspended for ten years, during which both parties will live in full security and neither will raise sword against the other.
4. If anyone from Quraish goes over to Muhammad (Peace be upon him) without his guardian's permission, he should be sent back to Quraish, but should any of Muhammad's followers return to Quraish, he shall not be sent back.
5. Whosoever to join Muhammad (Peace be upon him), or enter into treaty with him, should have the liberty to do so; and likewise whosoever wishes to join Quraish, or enter into treaty with them, should be allowed to do so.

Some dispute arose with regard to the preamble. For example, when the agreement was to be committed to writing, 'Ali bin Abi Talib, who acted as a scribe began with the words: *Bismillâh ir-Rahman ir-aheem*, i.e., "In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful" but the Makkah plenipotentiary, Suhail bin 'Amr declared that he knew nothing about *Ar-Rahman* and insisted upon the customary formula *Bi-ismika Allâhumma*, i.e., "In Your Name, O Allâh!" The muslims grumbled with uneasiness but the Prophet (Peace be upon him) agreed. He then went on to dictate, "This is what Muhammad, the Messenger of Allâh has agreed to with Suhail bin 'Amr." Upon this Suhail again protested: "Had we acknowledged you as Prophet, we would not have debarred you from the Sacred House, nor fought against you. Write your own name and the name of your father." The Muslims grumbled as before and refused to consent to the change. The Prophet (Peace be upon him), however, in the larger interest of Islam, attached no importance to such an insignificant detail, erased the words himself, and dictated instead: "Muhammad, the son of 'Abdullah." Soon after this treaty, Khuza'a clan, a former ally of Banu Hashim, joined the ranks of Muhammad (Peace be upon him), and Banu Bakr sided with Quraish.

**(Al-Mubarikapuri,S(2005:154)**

#### **IV. Lessons for the Nigerian society**

The strategies adopted by the prophet (SAW) to bring peace and security in Arabs society and in the world at large could serve as lessons for Nigerian society, in various ways. In the first place, the case of suraqah ibn malik who vowed to win the price set p by the Quraysh for anyone who would bring the head of the prophet (SAW) suraqah was able to reach the and his companions, but could do anything, and the prophet (SAW) was in the position to command for his killing but did not, rather he forgave suraqah, in the end he embraced Islam. This shows the merciful nature of the prophet character which Muslims should emulate and embrace. At is in line the saying of Allah:

The Madina charter also depicts the possibility of Muslims, Christians, Jews and other people with different religion to co-exist peacefully in respect and recognition of each others religion. Under common pact of understanding and mutual cooperation for peace and security.

Similarly, the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, which, from an ordinary assessment, may turn to be against the Muslims, since they were denied to perform the lesson Hajj, but eventually, the patience exercised by the prophet (SAW) for signing the agreement even though some of the conditions were not favourable to the Muslim brought peace and security to the Muslims.

This indicates the foresightedness, of the prophet (SAW) in his leadership and it is a lesson for Muslims that they should not take laws in their hands and not be in hurry while extending the message of Islam. Muslims should learn the leadership potentialities is the prophet (SAW) even before prophet hood. The recognition accorded to while placing the blackstone and little of Al-Amin awarded to him by the Qurays shows that Muslim leaders could earn respect from non-Muslim if they are honest and just.

## **V. Conclusion**

This paper is concluded with emphasis on the identified lessons from the prophet's life history. His sublime character had earned him recognition even among non-Muslims, his merciful nature as in the case of Surajah ibn Malik, high sense of responsibility and able leadership when he united the people of Madinah, and the foresightedness in dealing with people when he signed a treaty with Quraysh in Hudaibiyyah even though some of the items of the treaty were not favourable to the Muslims. These are the areas of concern in this paper, and it is strongly recommended if Muslims could emulate and implement these strategies, there would be peace and adequate security in the Nigerian society.

## **VI. Recommendations**

In view of what has been discussed in this paper of various strategies adopted by the prophet (SAW) on peace and security, I offer the following recommendations.

- (1) Muslims generally should pay more attention to the life history of the Prophet (SAW) to implement lessons learnt from history in their daily life.
- (2) The teaching of the comprehensive and Authentic Sirah of the prophet (SAW) should be made compulsory from secondary to tertiary institutions in the subject of Islamic studies.
- (3) NATAIS should endeavour to sponsor publications on the lessons from the Sirah of the prophet (SAW).
- (4) Government organizations and individuals should be encouraged to organise programmes on the teachings contained in the life history of the prophet (SAW).
- (5) Imams should dedicate special sermons on the importance and application of the lessons learnt from the Sirah of the prophet (SAW).
- (6) Ulama', preachers and intellectuals should organize lessons, lectures, seminars and conferences on the relevance of the general life of the Prophet (SAW), to peaceful co-existence of Muslims and non-Muslims in this country.

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