



Four Lessons From the U.S.–Iran War

The defeat of the combined US-Zionist military campaign against Iran has shaken militaries around the world. It is a watershed moment forcing military planners to rethink established doctrines of wars, deterrence and power projection. The military commanders and military institutions of Muslims are also grappling with an ‘unexpected’ outcome of the US-Iran war, where the projections depicted Iranian capitulation as a fait accompli. The symbolic reaction of the Iranian regime against US and Zionist provocations in the past also strengthened this perception within Muslim armies that defeat is inevitable in any conflict with US or the Jewish entity.

Notwithstanding the unfortunate reality that much of contemporary military culture amongst Muslims is corrupted due to pragmatism and Western theories of war and statecraft, the outcome of the US-Iran war should prompt a serious rethinking within the armies of Muslims. It should encourage them to reject their existing paradigms and replace them with the Shariah obligation of Jihad and the institution of the Khilafah (Caliphate) that implements it. The Muslim World stands at the cusp of a historic change, as the US and the West are in steep decline and there is an ideological and political vacuum ready to be filled. The only challenge that remains is the decision of sincere military commanders within the armies of Muslims, particularly those that are strong and capable, to put their weight behind the Ummah in support of Islam.

This article lays out four key lessons from the US-Iran war for Muslim armies to contemplate.

Lesson 1: The United States Is Not Invincible

For decades, American military power has been presented as nearly irresistible by agent rulers of the Muslim World. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, however, had already shown that damaging an opponent’s conventional forces does not lead to a desired political outcome. The resistance that followed American occupation of these countries signifies the criticality of political will in shaping the outcome of wars. Although Iran was never occupied, the recent war has reinforced the value of will to resist despite having top tier leadership eliminated.

Iran has singlehandedly disrupted decades long US security architecture in the Middle East. This is a feat that regional Muslim commanders deem unachievable. Iran entered the conflict without a viable air force. Yet, it relied on ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, dispersed launchers and asymmetric operations to successfully target the bases of the US and the Jewish entity across the region. These bases once regarded as secure rear areas became exposed front-line targets.

Reporting in outlets such as the Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, and New York Times has described significant disruption, damage assessments, and a broader reassessment of the vulnerability of Gulf infrastructure hosting U.S. forces. This has prompted contingency planning in Washington to further disperse assets, strengthen reliance on alternative hubs such as Jordan and the Jewish entity, and reduce operational concentration in the Gulf. Their vulnerability has therefore forced dispersal, defensive deployments and operational caution.

The larger lesson is that the US military presence in the Muslim World only exists because of agent rulers. These bases and the rulers hosting them are snakes in our backyard, whose head needs to be cutoff for the security of Muslims. These are bases from where attacks on Muslim Lands are launched or managed. These bases are vulnerable in reality and can be easily removed or destroyed as Iranian strategy

exemplifies. That it is the decision of few free men in our armies who refuse to believe in fake images of superiority of our enemies and strike them hard boldly and intelligently.

Lesson 2: American Power Depends on Local Agent Rulers and Commanders

The United States projects power into the Middle East from thousands of kilometres away. It cannot sustain that presence through aircraft carriers and long-range bombers alone. It requires airfields, ports, intelligence facilities, overflight permissions, fuel supplies, communications networks and political protection provided by regional puppet governments.

This dependence is not unique to the current Iran conflict. Pakistan's logistical, intelligence and transit cooperation was central to the American campaign in Afghanistan. Similarly, the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq depended heavily on access to Gulf bases and regional infrastructure. Türkiye refused to permit a major northern invasion route in 2003, illustrating how the decision of one strategically located state could significantly complicate American planning. Iran later exercised influence in post-invasion Iraq to help America stabilize the country.

The US-Iran war has again revealed this structural reality. American facilities across Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE provide Washington with strategic depth, but they also make host countries vulnerable to retaliation. Gulf governments therefore face a dilemma: they rely on American protection while fearing that American operations could turn their territories into battlefields. President Trump's repeated hesitation over further escalation, including his cancellation of planned strikes following desperate appeals, shows that American freedom of action is constrained by the interests and fears of its regional agents.

The lesson is clear: American dominance in the region rests solely on regional consent. Sincere Muslim military commanders in Iran, Pakistan and other Muslim regional states must join hands and remove American presence which already stands at its weakest due to Iranian strikes. Greater coordination among armies of Muslims is required to build a new regional security order centered on Khilafah, instead of artificial nation-states. The Gulf countries do not need a defense pact with Pakistan. They need a collective security framework in the form of the Khilafah which will unify our strength to act against the Jewish entity and remove its cancerous existence once and for all.

Lesson 3: The Advantage of Geography

Iran's greatest strategic asset is its geography. The same holds true for the wider Muslim World. Iran sits beside the Strait of Hormuz, through which a major share of the world's traded oil and liquefied natural gas normally passes.

By threatening shipping and disrupting energy flows, Iran transformed a regional military confrontation into a global economic problem. Traffic through the strait fell sharply, vessels changed routes and oil markets reacted repeatedly to signs of escalation or diplomacy. Recent talks involving Iran and Oman have focused heavily on navigation arrangements, while President Trump has linked possible negotiations to reopening the waterway.

Iran has therefore demonstrated how a regional power can use a vital maritime chokepoint to impose costs on United States far beyond the immediate battlefield. Geography is leverage that can be used to subdue our enemies. The wider Muslim World possesses several important strategic corridors, including the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandab, the Suez Canal, the Turkish Straits and major land and energy routes connecting Asia, Europe and Africa. A sincere and an aware Islamic leadership can deliver diplomatic victories in favor of Islam and Muslims by exploiting strategic geography which the current rulers don't have the will and vision to do so.

Lesson 4: Lessons From Islamic History

Islamic history offers examples of military commanders who combined Iman, courage, preparation and political purpose. Khalid ibn al-Walid (ra) was known for mobility and battlefield adaptability. Salahuddin understood that political unity of the Ummah had to precede lasting military success. Saif al-Din Qutuz confronted an apparently unstoppable Mongol advance at Ayn Jalut. Sultan Mehmed II combined ambition with engineering, logistics, intelligence and careful preparation before the conquest of Constantinople.

These historic achievements should not be reduced to romantic slogans as is the case in the current military education policies in the Muslim World. These heroic commanders succeeded because conviction was supported by organisation, patience, unity of command, knowledge of the adversary and above all an unwavering trust on Allah (swt) and his support. Sincere Muslim military commanders today need to emulate our heroes and change the course of history like their predecessors.

The United States and its protégé the Jewish entity failed to subdue Iran and received military punishment in return. If our enemies cannot contain one powerful Muslim region, how can it confront combined armies of Pakistan, Türkiye, the Gulf statelets, Egypt and others?

Conclusion

The US-Iran war has exposed American vulnerability and its arrogance. The task before decision-makers with the lands of the Arab and the Ajm (non-Arab), whether Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Türkiye, Iran or Pakistan, now is not to exchange one form of domination for another. It is to build an independent regional order in the form of Khilafah as our enemies are at their weakest. Sincere Muslim commanders must recognize the limitations of great powers and believe in the strength of Muslims and their massive resources. They must no longer subscribe to the destructive idea of nation-state that has only brought ruin and division to the Muslim world. The Muslim military mind must adopt the framework of Islam and Jihad and displace corrupt Western notions of war and politics. It is time for a final coordinated push to upend the pro-West regional security, economic and political order and usher a new era of victories under the shade of Khilafah.

O Officers of the Armed Forces of Muslims! Grant your nussrah (military support) for the establishment of the Khilafah Rashidah, which will unify the entire Islamic Ummah, its immense resources and strong armies, as a mighty state under a single Khaleefah (caliph), who will wage Jihad in the Path of Allah and defeat the disbelievers. Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُجِيزُكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (10) تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ﴾ “O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? (10) It is that you believe in Allah and His Messenger and wage Jihad in the Path of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you should know” [TMQ Surah As-Saff 61:10, 11].

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Muhammad Seljuk – Wilayah Pakistan**