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A Contemporary Analysis of World Peace through Balance of Power: A Study of Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Madina**Dr. Farhana Mehmood***

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Abstract

With the creation of universe, *Allah* almighty Himself took the responsibility to maintain peace and order in this world, and send messengers to maintain balance of power. *Qur'an* uses the word '*Dhif 'a*' which means the balance of power. "For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of *Allah* is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down." (22:40) This verse is considered as *Allah* Almighty's action towards the oppressed people and a warning to the oppressors through the annals of world history none of the powers in the world can maintain their hegemony forever with their invasion of culture and identity of the people whenever they overrule their limits, *Allah* Almighty replaces their powers with another and maintain balance and peace in the world. World nations and communities have a major role in the balancing of power and keeping of the peace and harmony in the planet earth. Therefore the Prophet of *Islam* set many examples in the history of *Madina*, where through the balance of power attained during war and peace by the mutual understanding, mutual cooperation and treaties among different nations and communities of the city state of *Madina*. This cooperation was for not only goodness of the people and the pleasure of *Allah*, but also for the eradication of aggression and destruction of the world peace. This article explores the *Seerah* of the Prophet *Muhammad* at *Madina* which sets direction how to direct the efforts of the leaders of the nations and religious communities in the direction of dialogues and not to misuse of power and destroy the humanity at large which is biggest challenge of today's world.

Keywords: Peace, War, Power, Madina, Seerah, Sunnah, Quran

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Introduction

World peace has been one of the most sought-after ideals in human history. Nations, religions, and philosophies have all attempted to provide mechanisms through which global harmony could be established. In modern political science, the concept of “balance of power” plays a central role in maintaining peace, preventing conflict, and ensuring that no single authority can dominate others unjustly. In Islam, the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Islamic worldview does not advocate either passivity in the face of aggression or unchecked militarism; rather, it establishes a just balance, rooted in divine revelation, that prevents oppression while guaranteeing security. This essay explores how the Qur’an and Hadith articulate principles of peace through a balance of power. It will first examine the Islamic concept of peace, then outline how the Qur’an frames the idea of justice and deterrence, followed by the role of prophetic traditions in reinforcing this balance. Historical applications will be considered, along with the relevance of these principles to contemporary global politics.

Purpose and Scope of This Study

This essay will examine the Qur’anic and Prophetic teachings that establish world peace through balance of power. It will begin with a detailed analysis of the Qur’an’s treatment of justice, oppression, deterrence, and reconciliation, followed by a study of Hadith traditions that reinforce these principles. It will then explore historical applications during the time of the Prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, before comparing Islamic thought with modern theories of balance of power. Finally, it will consider contemporary relevance, addressing misinterpretations of Islamic teachings and outlining how Muslim-majority nations might contribute to global peace today. By integrating scriptural exegesis, historical practice, and modern application, the study aims to show that Islam’s vision of peace is not merely idealistic but deeply practical, grounded in a divinely revealed order that emphasizes justice, strength, and reconciliation. In this way, Islam contributes not only to religious ethics but to the broader discourse on international relations and the pursuit of world peace.

1.1 Linguistic Foundation of Peace in Islamic Traditions

The word *Islam* itself is derived from the Arabic root *s-l-m*, which conveys meanings of peace, submission, and safety. The Qur’an emphasizes that ultimate peace lies in submission to God’s will:

“Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam.” (Qur’an 3:19)

The greeting among Muslims, *as-salāmu ‘alaykum* (peace be upon you), reflects the centrality of peace in everyday life. Peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a comprehensive state of harmony, justice, and security.

1.2 Qur’anic Emphasis on Peace

The Qur’an repeatedly describes God as *As-Salām* (The Source of Peace) (59:23). Believers are instructed to incline towards peace if others do so:

“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah.” (Qur’an 8:61)

This principle illustrates Islam’s preference for reconciliation over conflict, provided it does not compromise justice.

1.3 Prophetic Teachings on Reconciliation

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized peaceful coexistence and forgiveness. He stated:

“The strong man is not the one who overpowers others, but the strong man is the one who controls himself in anger.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

Peace, therefore, is tied to self-restraint, justice, and ethical behavior.

· Balance of Power in the Qur’an

2.1 Justice as the Foundation

The Qur’an establishes *‘adl* (justice) as a non-negotiable principle:

“Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives; and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression.” (Qur’an 16:90)

Without justice, peace cannot endure. Balance of power in Islam ensures that no group monopolizes authority unjustly.

2.2 Prohibition of Oppression

The Qur’an forbids transgression:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.” (Qur’an 2:190)

This verse highlights the principle of defensive warfare: power is to be exercised only to repel aggression, not to initiate tyranny.

2.3 Deterrence and Preparedness

The Qur’an explicitly recognizes the role of deterrence in maintaining peace:

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know whom Allah knows.” (Qur’an 8:60)

This is not a call for militarism but for preparedness, ensuring balance so that aggression is discouraged. A justly distributed balance of power prevents domination and secures peace.

2.4 Conflict Resolution

When disputes arise between groups, the Qur'an advises intervention to restore justice:

“And if two groups of believers fight, make peace between them. But if one of them oppresses the other, fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act justly. Truly, Allah loves those who act justly.” (Qur'an 49:9)

This principle aligns with modern notions of collective security, where power is used to restore balance and peace.

Balance of Power in the Seerah

Islam seeks to establish an equilibrium between these two aspects of life - the material and the spiritual. It says that everything in the world is for man, but man was created to serve a higher purpose: the establishment of a moral and just order that will fulfill the will of Allah. Its teachings cater to the spiritual as well as the temporal needs of man. Islam enjoins man to purify his soul and to reform his daily life - both individual and collective - and to establish the supremacy of right over might and of virtue over vice. Thus Islam stands for the middle path and the goal of producing a moral man in the service of a just society.

3.1 Prophetic Diplomacy

The Prophet ﷺ demonstrated remarkable diplomacy in treaties, notably the Treaty of *Hudaybiyyah* (628 CE). Despite seemingly unfavorable terms, the Prophet accepted compromise to prevent bloodshed. This reflects the Qur'anic principle of inclining towards peace when possible (Qur'an 8:61).

3.2 Strength and Preparedness

The Prophet ﷺ emphasized both spiritual and physical strength. He said:

“The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, while there is good in both.” (Sahih Muslim)

This Hadith underlines that strength is not inherently negative but must be directed towards good, serving as a balance against potential aggressors. The Holy Prophet said:

"Each of you is a keeper or a shepherd and will be questioned about the well-being of his fold. The head of the state will be

questioned about the well-being of the people of the state. Each man is a shepherd to his family and will be answerable about every member of it. Each woman is a shepherd to the family of her husband and will be accountable for every member of it. And each servant is a shepherd to his master and will be questioned about the property of his master." (Bukhari and Muslim)

the teachings of Islam guides that it is an all-embracing way of life and does not leave out any field of human existence to become a playground for the forces of evil. Balance between the Individual and Society. Another unique feature of Islam is that it establishes a balance between individualism and collectivism. It believes in the individual personality of man and holds everyone personally accountable to Allah. It guarantees the fundamental rights of the individual and does not permit anyone to tamper with them. It makes the proper development of the personality of man one of the prime objectives of its educational policy. It does not subscribe to the view that man must lose his individuality in society or in the state.

3.3 Avoiding Aggression

The Prophet ﷺ prohibited treachery and aggression:

“Do not kill women or children or the aged, or hermits in their cells. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees, and do not destroy inhabited areas.” (Sunan Abu Dawood)

These commands limit the abuse of power, ensuring that balance is maintained ethically. Building upon the proscriptions of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslim jurists insisted that there are legal restrictions upon the conduct of war. In general, Muslim armies may not kill women, children, seniors, hermits, pacifists, peasants or slaves unless they are combatants. Vegetation and property may not be destroyed, water holes may not be poisoned, and flame-throwers may not be used unless out of necessity, and even then only to a limited extent. Torture, mutilation and murder of hostages were forbidden under all circumstances.

Historical Applications

4.1 The Constitution of Madinah

When the Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madinah, he drafted the Constitution of Madinah, establishing a pluralistic political order. Different religious communities were granted autonomy while agreeing to collective defense. This reflects balance of power through cooperative security. The Prophet (SAAS) was commanded to rule in accordance with the ‘truth’

and the ‘path of Allah’ (2:24). The Qur’an uses multiple words like *sunnat* Allah (the way or tradition of Allah), *mizan* (scale), *qist* and *adl* (both meaning justice), perhaps to demonstrate the significance of justice. The Qur’anic justice not merely protects the weak and the oppressed but also warns of harsh punishments for those who blatantly transgress their rights and cause confusion in society. The Qur’an demands an individual a high moral standard so that he may stand as a witness even against himself. A just political order manifests itself in having upright and capable public officials managing public policy in a just way and distributing wealth and opportunities in an equitable manner. *Adalah* postulates two fundamental principles of ‘freedom’ and ‘equality’. It is an essential condition and consequence of the establishment of justice that the people should be free to act according to one’s own moral convictions. Also to make ideological or intellectual choices, and to take decisions on the basis of these convictions and choices. The Qur’an there is no coercion in al-din, refers not merely to matters of faith but to every conceivable area of human life.

4.2 Ethical Expansion

As Islam spread, rules of warfare set by the Prophet and the Caliphs ensured that conquest was not anarchic but governed by justice. Abu Bakr (r.a.), before sending armies, instructed:

“Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate, nor kill children, women, or aged men. Do not destroy palm trees or burn them.” (al-Tabari, *History*)

The Qur’anic prescriptions simply call upon Muslims to fight in the way of Allah, establish justice and refrain from exceeding the limits of justice in fighting their enemies. Islamic principles also call for the followers to contest good deeds, which help a man to be dearest to his Lord and to keep stability and peace in society. In this context, prioritizing one for a good deed cannot be a violation of the equality and liberty of an individual. Not only this, the decree of *Sharia’h* toward the believers is the advice from their Lord; and following this advice is part of belief (Iman). From this point of view, it cannot harm the liberty of an individual. So, Islamic direction, in this regard, is very clear that human liberty and freedom within Islam should be permitted to develop.

4.3 Relations with Superpowers

Muslim dealings with the Byzantines and Persians were based on balance. Neither superpower was allowed to dominate Arabia after the rise of Islam. Peace treaties and alliances maintained equilibrium. Accountability is to ensure the actions and decisions taken by concerned authorities and individuals are clearly reflecting the commitment made by them before. Accountability is the

concept mainly denoted with several keywords like transparency, answerability, and enforceability. However, in Islam, accountability mainly refers to spiritual answerability. That is the spirit of *Taqwah*, which is an indicator of people in the account of what they have done. *Taqwah* is derived from the Arabic word *waqa wiqayah*. It refers to avoiding anything that has the possibility to lead towards sin (Al-mahzur). Allah says in Qur'an, "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord, they rely".⁷⁵ Every Muslim should have fear awareness that Allah is watching, that Allah is watching us, and have nothing out of His sight. So, the fear of Allah is always pre-cautioning a Muslim not to lead towards unethical, illegal, and non-Islamic deeds, aims, and objects. As clearly stated in the Qur'an, "Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is (one who is) the most righteous of you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware".

5.1 Deterrence and Global Security

The Qur'anic principle of preparedness (8:60) aligns with the modern balance of power theory in international relations. Power, when balanced, prevents unilateral domination and creates conditions for peace.

5.2 International Law and Collective Security

The Quranic injunction in 49:9 resembles the idea of the United Nations' collective security principle—intervening against aggressors to restore peace.

5.3 Role of Muslim Nations

In the modern world, Muslim-majority countries can contribute to global peace by upholding justice, rejecting oppression, and cooperating to deter aggression without becoming aggressors themselves.

6. Misinterpretations and Challenges

6.1 Extremist Misuse of Verses

Some groups misuse verses on jihad to justify aggression. However, classical scholars emphasize context: jihad in the Qur'an is primarily defensive. The misuse of these texts undermines true balance of power.

6.2 Pacifist Misreadings

Conversely, some interpret Islam as purely pacifist, ignoring the Qur'anic emphasis on preparedness. Absolute pacifism risks inviting oppression. Islam calls for a middle path: peace with strength.

Conclusion

Islamic teachings in the Qur'an and Hadith establish a vision of world peace through a just balance of power. Peace is the ultimate goal, but it cannot be achieved by weakness or domination. Instead, it requires justice, strength used

responsibly, and willingness to reconcile. The Qur'anic verses on justice (16:90), self-defense (2:190), deterrence (8:60), and reconciliation (49:9), along with the Prophet's ﷺ diplomatic and ethical teachings, demonstrate a comprehensive framework for peace. There is a considerable body of legal writing prohibiting Muslim rulers from violating treaties, indulging in treachery or attacking an enemy without first giving notice, but the literature on the conditions that warrant a jihad is sparse. It is not that the classical jurists believed that war is always justified or appropriate; rather, they seemed to assume that the decision to wage war is fundamentally political.

In the modern era, these principles remain deeply relevant. A world where nations maintain balance—not through unchecked militarism but through just deterrence and respect for peace—is consistent with the Qur'anic vision. Islam thus provides not only spiritual guidance but also a practical political philosophy for achieving sustainable world peace.

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