

## **CAMPAIGNS UNDER CALIPH UTHMAN R.A**

### **Reconquest of Egypt**

With the death of Umar and the disposal of 'Amr ibn al-'As from the governorship of Egypt, the Byzantines seized Alexandria, thinking it to be the right time to take action. Uthman again sent 'Amr ibn al-'As to defend Egypt and made him commander-in-chief of Egypt.

### **Conquest of North Africa**

Abdullah ibn Saad the governor of Egypt felt that a regular campaign should be undertaken for the conquest of North Africa where the Byzantine influence was strong. Uthman gave him permission after considering it in Majlis al Shura and a force of 10,000 soldiers was sent as reinforcement. The King Gregory was defeated and killed in the battle. After the battle the people of North Africa sued for peace and they agreed to pay an annual tribute. Instead of annexing North Africa, the Muslims preferred to make it a vassal state (allied protectorate).

### **First Muslim invasion of Iberian Peninsula (Spain)**

According to the general books of Islamic history, the conquest of Spain is attributed to Tariq ibn-Ziyad and Musa bin Nusairin 711 - 712, in the time of the Umayyad Caliph, al-Walid I. However, Spain was first invaded some sixty years earlier during the caliphate of Uthman. When North Africa had been duly conquered by Abdullah ibn Saad, two of his generals were commissioned to invade the coastal areas of Spain by sea. An Arab force landed in Spain, and succeeded in conquering the coastal areas of Al-Andalus.. Presumably the Muslims established some colonies on the coast of Spain. There are reasons to presume that these Muslims entered into trade relations with the rest of Spain and other parts of Europe.

### **Campaign against Nubia (Sudan)**

A campaign was undertaken against Nubia during the Caliphate of Umar in 642, but the campaign was inconclusive and the army were pulled out of Nubia without any success. Since then there were tension on borders due to Nubian raiding parties.

Ten years later in 652, Uthman's governor of Egypt, Abdullah ibn Saad, sent another army to Nubia. The battle was once again inconclusive, because of the Nubian archers who let loose a shower of arrows aimed at the eyes of the Muslim warriors. As the Muslims were not able to overpower the Nubians, they accepted the offer of peace from the Nubian king. According to the treaty that was signed, each side agreed not to make any aggressive moves against the other.

### **Conquest of the islands of Mediterranean Sea**

During his reign Uthman gave Muawiyah permission to build a navy after concerning the matter closely. The Muslim force landed on **Cyprus** in 649. There was only a small Byzantine garrison on the island, which was overpowered without any difficulty. The islanders submitted to the Muslims, and agreed to pay a tribute of 7,000 dinars per year. The conquest of Cyprus was the first naval conquest of the Muslims. After Cyprus Muslim naval fleet headed towards the island of **Crete** and then **Rhodes** and conquered them without much resistance. In 652-654, the Muslims launched a naval campaign against **Sicily** and they succeeded in capturing a large part of the island. Soon after this Uthman was murdered, no further expansion was made.

### **Byzantine attempt to re-conquer Syria**

After the death of Umar, the Byzantine emperor, Constantine III, decided to re-capture Syria which had been lost to the Muslims during Umar's reign. A full-scale invasion was planned and a force of 80,000 soldiers was sent to re-conquer Syria. Muawiyah, the governor of Syria, called for reinforcements and Uthman ordered the governor of Kufa to send a contingent, which together with the Syrians defeated the Byzantine army.

### **Re-conquest of Fars (Iran)**

The province of Fars in Persia was conquered by the Muslims during the Caliphate of Umar. In Uthman's reign, like other provinces of Persia, Fars also broke into revolt. Uthman directed Abdullah

ibn Aamir, the Governor of Basra, to take immediate steps to retrieve the situation. After a violent battle the Muslims were able to regain control of the capital once again. All of the leaders among the Persians who were involved in instigating the revolt were hunted down and executed. With the fall of the capital, other cities in Fars also submitted unconditionally. Thus the Muslims once again became the masters of Fars. Uthman's appointed governor of Fars, after analyzing the situation, sent Islamic missionaries to various cities of the region to convert the people to Islam to avert future revolts. A large number of people embraced Islam.

### **Re-conquest of Sistan (Iran and Afghanistan)**

In the 7th century, the Persian Empire's province of Sistan extended from the modern day Iranian province of Sistan to central Afghanistan and the Balochistan province of Pakistan.

Sistan was captured during the reign of Umar, and like other provinces of the Persian Empire, it also broke into revolt during Uthman's reign in 649. Uthman directed the governor of Basra, Abdullah ibn Aamir to re-conquer the Persian province of Sistan. A column was sent to Sistan under the command of Rabiah ibn Ziyad. With the Muslims victorious, the citizens asked for peace. After they agreed to pay tribute the Muslims left the citizens in peace.

Thereafter the Muslims marched northward into Afghanistan to subjugate the rest of the province. Rabiah remained the governor of Sistan for two years, then he left for Basra. As soon as he left the province of Sistan, it broke into revolt once again and expelled Rabiah's successor.

### **Second Invasion:**

This time after obtaining the approval of Uthman, Abdullah ibn Aamir appointed Abdur Rahman ibn Sumrah to command the army in the invasion of Sistan. The old story of siege, blockade and surrender was repeated. Abdur Rahman ibn Sumrah made peace with the Persians undertaking to pay an annual tribute of 20 million dirham.

The Muslim force advanced into the interior of Afghanistan and, after capturing the main town most of the towns surrendered without offering resistance. After making these conquests, Abdur Rahman ibn Sumrah returned to the provincial capital and stayed there as governor till the end of the caliphate of Uthman.

### **Re-conquest of Khorasan (Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan)**

Khorasan, the province of the Persian Empire expanded from what is now north eastern Iran to western Afghanistan and southern Turkmenistan. It was conquered during the reign of Umar. After the death of Umar, Khorasan broke into revolt under Emperor Yazdgerd III.

In 651, Uthman sent Abdullah ibn Aamir, the governor of Basra, to re-conquer Khorasan. Abdullah ibn Aamir marched with a large force from Basra to Khorasan. Most cities surrendered except one, which was later taken by force. The campaign in Khorasan ended successfully in 654.

### **Campaign in Uzbekistan**

After consolidating the Muslim authority in Khorasan, Abdullah ibn Aamir crossed the Amu Darya (Oxus River) and invaded Uzbekistan.

### **Re-conquest of Makran (Pakistan)**

Makran was conquered during the reign of Umar. At the western bank of the Indus River they defeated the Hindu king of Sindh, Raja Rasil.

During the reign of Caliph Uthman, Makran broke into revolt along with other Persian dominions. Uthman sent his commander to re-conquer Makran, along with other adjoining areas of Persia. In 650, the army under his command conquered it after a series of skirmishes, however no pitched battles were fought.

During Caliph Uthman's reign in 652, Balochistan was re-conquered. It was the first time that western Balochistan had come directly under the Laws of the Caliphate and it paid an agricultural tribute.

### **Campaign in Sindh (Pakistan)**

The army first entered Sindh during the reign of Umar, in 644. In 644, the army concentrated near the west bank of Indus River and defeated the Hindu king of Sindh, Raja Rasil. His armies retreated and crossed the river.

In response to Umar's question about the Makran region, the messenger from Makran who brought the news of the victory told him:

“ It's a land where the plains are stony;  
Where water is scanty;  
Where the fruits are unsavoury  
Where men are known for treachery;  
Where plenty is unknown;  
Where virtue is held of little account;  
And where evil is dominant;  
A large army is less for there;  
And a less army is useless there;  
The land beyond it is even worse (referring to Sind). ”

After the death of Umar, these areas, like other regions of the Persian Empire, broke into revolt and Uthman sent forces to re-conquer them. Uthman also sent his agent to investigate the matters of Hind. On his return he told Uthman about the miserable conditions of the region. Uthman avoided campaigning in the Sindh interior, and, like Umar he ordered his armies not to cross the Indus river.