Thucydides on Grand Strategy: Spartan Grand Strategy during the Peloponnesian War

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RÉSUMÉ

On a traditionnellement considéré la Guerre du Péloponnèse comme un match entre l'armée de terre (Sparte) et celle de la mer (Athènes). Assez réducteur, ce point de vue ne tient pas compte du fait que les Spartiates comprirent tôt dans la guerre la nécessité de se doter d'une flotte capable de rivaliser avec celle d'Athènes. Au fait, il est plus exact de voir la guerre en tant que concours entre deux grands desseins stratégiques. Au lieu de poursuivre la stratégie péricleenne de l'épuisement, Sparte avait opté pour l'annihilation. Ainsi les stratèges spartes visait une bataille terrestre décisive mais ils faisaient tout pour rendre la guerre plus chère aux Athéniens surtout lorsqu'ils devastèrent l'Attique. En meme temps ils ont incité les alliés d'Athènes à l'insurrection et ils ont exploité au maximum chaque nouveau front ouvert par les troupes athéniennes. Au départ, les rapports de force ne favorisaient point Sparte. Il ne serait qu'après la défaite désastreuse des Athéniens en Sicilie que les Spartes ont pu se procurer de l'aide (la Perse) afin de rivaliser avec Athènes au niveau naval. Ainsi Sparte a réussi sa grande stratégie d'annihilation.

ABSTRACT

It is customary to view the Peloponnesian War as a contest between land and sea power. This is a quite distorting position, however, since the Spartans quickly understood the need to match Athenian naval strength, and they eventually did so. It is far more accurate to view the war as a contest between two opposing grand strategic designs. In contrast to the Periclean grand strategy of exhaustion, Sparta followed a grand strategy of annihilation centered around the Spartan military might. Sparta aimed at a decisive land battle, while consistently trying to make the war costlier for the Athenians by devastating Attica, encouraging Athens' allies to revolt, and trying to exploit every secondary front the Athenians had opened. However, at the initial phase of the war the balance of power was so adverse to Sparta that her strategy could simply not work. Only after the Athenian disaster at Sicily were the Spartans able to secure the necessary support (chiefly from Persia) to match Athenian naval strength and pursue their grand strategy of annihilation with success.

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Introduction

Strategy is never conducted in a vacuum; it is always directed against one or more opponents who in turn formulate their own strategy. Consequently, no strategic analysis of the Peloponnesian War — or in fact any other war — can be complete without examining the interaction between the strategic designs of both belligerents; i.e. the "horizontal" dimension of strategy.[2] Therefore, apart from the highly publicised grand strategy of Pericles and Athens in general, it is also necessary to examine the less publicised but equally important grand strategy of Sparta.

It is customary to regard the Peloponnesian War as a contest between land and sea power.[3] However, this is a highly distorting view of the issue, since the Spartans quickly understood the need to match Athenian naval strength, and eventually did so. It is far more accurate to view the war as a contest between two opposing grand strategic designs. For the purposes of this analysis, we will use the ideal types of the strategy of annihilation and exhaustion.[4] The strategy of annihilation aims at the destruction of the enemy's armed forces through a decisive battle; whereas in the strategy of exhaustion, the battle goes side by side with the so-called maneuver; i.e., economic damage that comes of such means as territorial occupation, destruction of crops, naval blockade, etc.

The Napoleonic campaigns constitute classical examples of the strategy of annihilation. They culminated in decisive battles such as Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Wagram, in which the French emperor completely crushed the armed forces of his enemies, forcing them to sue for peace. These campaigns formed the basis of the theory of war that Clausewitz promulgated shortly afterwards. Clausewitz laid emphasis on direct approach; i.e., direction of one's war effort chiefly towards the main opponent and/or the "center of gravity" of the enemy war effort, and the need to destroy the armed forces of the enemy. In other words, the strategy of annihilation occupies a central position in Clausewitz's theory. It is no accident that this strategy continues to this day to be associated with him, as well as with Napoleon.[5]

On the other hand, Sir Basil Liddell Hart has argued in favour of the advantages of the indirect approach throughout his works. The term "indirect approach" generally connotes the sidestepping of the enemy's strong points and the avoidance of attrition warfare.[6] At the level of grand strategy, the indirect approach may be regarded as the "by-passing" of the main opponent by directing one's war effort against the secondary opponents, postponing the decisive strike in favour of a more suitable moment.[7]

In the Peloponnesian War, Sparta followed a grand strategy of annihilation, whereas Athens initially, under the direction of Pericles, followed a grand strategy of exhaustion.[8] The Sicilian expedition (415-413 B.C.) however, marked Athens' turn to a grand strategy of annihilation, which she was to follow till the end of the war.

Successful planning at the level of grand strategy needs to address four dimensions: a) assessment of the international environment, b) setting policy objectives, c) allocation of resources (means) to meet the objectives (ends), d) legitimacy of the grand strategy both at home and abroad. In the present article, a brief presentation of the domestic structures and the "strategic culture" of Sparta, where the "hegemony" of Sparta is contrasted with the "empire" of Athens, will be followed by an analysis of the Spartan grand strategy according to these four dimensions. Following that, an assessment of the Spartan grand strategy as it evolved during the war will take place.[9] Bearing in mind what has been mentioned above, we will not confine ourselves to a static analysis of the Spartan grand strategy, but we will also analyse its constant interaction with the grand strategy of Athens.

Spartan "Hegemony" versus Athenian "Empire": Domestic Structures and Strategic Culture

The clash between Sparta and Athens was a clash between two different power structures, two societies organised in different ways. The domestic structures of each of these two societies exerted a profound influence on what modern analysts call "strategic culture" or "national style" of the two belligerents.[10]

As is well-known, Athenian polity was the archetypal democracy. The most important decision-making body was the citizen assembly *(Ecclesia)* where all Athenian citizens were eligible for participation. Although the political organisation of direct democracy often resulted in erratic decision-making, this was more than counterbalanced by the feeling of energetic participation in the city affairs that every citizen experienced. This feeling ensured enthusiastic citizen support in the formulation and implementation of state policy, as well as mobilisation of all available means for the achievement of the various ends set by that policy.[11]

The domestic structures of Sparta, on the other hand, were completely different.[12] Spartan polity consisted of monarchical elements (two hereditary kings), oligarchic (a council of elders, the so-called *Gerousia*, or senate, consisting of twenty-eight members elected for life plus the two kings) and democratic ones (a citizen assembly).[13] Another institution with immense powers and steadily increasing importance was that of the five *ephors*, or overseers. The *ephors* were elected for a year, presumably with no right to re-election.[14] Nevertheless, despite the existence of all these elements, Sparta was basically an oligarchic polity. The Spartans had built a reputation for disdaining luxury,[15] and devoted their whole life from the age of seven onwards to military training. The outcome of this long and intensive training was to turn the Spartans into the best soldiers in the world.[16]

In fact, they had good reason to become such. When the Spartans originally settled in Laconia (the south-eastern part of the Peloponnese) they enslaved the indigenous population, the so-called Helots. The Helots were forced to cultivate the land and yield part of the harvest to their Spartan masters. This is why the Spartans were able to lead a military life. When Sparta also conquered Messenia (the south-western part of the Peloponnese), the number of the Helots swelled.[17] Both Spartans and Helots acted as if a state of war existed between them.[18] The Helots were looking for an opportunity to rebel while the Spartans were trying to suppress them by every conceivable means.[19] In other words, the Spartans had literally turned their city into an armed camp and lived accordingly.[20]

As to the "strategic cultures" of Athens and Sparta, one may notice that in contrast to the enterprising Athenians, conservatism and caution were the basic characteristics of the Spartans. As their Corinthian allies put it to the Spartans:

> An Athenian is always an innovator, quick to form a resolution and quick at carrying it out. You, on the other hand, are good at keeping things as they are; you never originate an idea, and your action tends to stop short of its aim. Then again, Athenian daring will outrun its own resources; they will take risk against their better judgement, and still, in the midst of danger, remain confident. But your nature is always to do less than you could have done, to mistrust your own judgment, however sound it may be, and to assume that dangers will last for ever. Think of this, too: while you are hanging back, they never hesitate; while you stay at home, they are always abroad; for they think that the farther they go the more they will get, while you think that any movement may endanger what you have already.[21]

The difference in strategic culture between Athenians and Spartans was not so much a result of their different "national characters", although this undoubtedly played a role,[22] as of the different structures of their respective polities. The democratic polity of Athens encouraged citizen participation in the affairs of the state and created a spirit of innovation, which at times bordered on recklessness. In Sparta, on the contrary, the central role of the elders of the Gerousia ensured a relative stability of state policy,[23] but at the same time led to excessive conservatism and an inability to keep up with external developments. The conservatism and caution of the Spartans were also bolstered by the continual fear of a Helot revolt, which made them view external adventures with reluctance.

These different strategic cultures were evident in the security policies of the two cities. It is rather well-known how Athens managed to

create an extensive and lucrative maritime empire in the Aegean: initially, due to her naval power (and following the withdrawal of the Spartans), she assumed the leadership of the anti-Persian struggle of the Greeks and gradually increased her control over her allies, turning them actually into tributary states.[24] Sparta, on the other hand, did not undertake such vast schemes. Thus, although the Spartans had been the initial leaders of the Greeks in the struggle against the Persians, they quickly withdrew and ceded the leadership to the Athenians, who, eventually, used it to their own benefit.

Sparta was content with the control of the Peloponnese. This was ensured by a web of alliances which has become fashionable to call the Peloponnesian League (or Alliance), while Sparta also saw to it that her allies were governed by friendly oligarchic regimes.[25] The Peloponnesian allies provided valuable manpower which assisted the elite but relatively small Spartan army. A major inhibition in Sparta's quest for complete control of the Peloponnese was the existence of the powerful city-state of Argos — a permanent rival that constantly needed to be kept in check.[26]

This examination of the two contending states brings to light an important point: although Spartan power rested on solid foundations, it lacked the dynamism Athens possessed. It would seem that the peculiar Spartan system had reached its limits. The system could ensure Spartan independence and control of the Peloponnese, but nothing more than that.[27] Sparta remained an introverted city-state whose economy depended on Helots' agricultural production. With the number of Spartans steadily declining, Spartan power was also likely to go downhill.[28] On the contrary, Athens, by creating a commercial and maritime empire, had opened new avenues and could confidently expect her power to keep growing.

Michael Doyle has come up with an interesting analysis of the different nature of the power structures of Athens and Sparta. According him, Athens' commercial activities enabled her to acquire immense influence beyond her borders, creating in this way a "periphery" that was controlled by the Athenian "metropolis". On the contrary, the

international influence of Sparta was based exclusively on her military power. The cost of military power was high for the relatively small Spartan warrior community, thus limiting Sparta's international influence. As a result, whereas Athens had created an "empire", where a metropolis controlled a periphery, Sparta had to be content with a "hegemony", where the Spartan metropolis was connected with other, less powerful metropoles.[29] It is interesting that, following the end of the Peloponnesian War, the Spartans attempted to substitute the Athenian Empire with an empire of their own. As we have already mentioned, however, their political organisation did not enable them to support such an undertaking, unless they resorted to sheer military force. Since, however, Spartan military power was relatively limited and costly, Sparta was led to overextension. As a result, her empire collapsed and she lost control of the Peloponnese and then of Messenia herself, merely four decades after her victory in the Peloponnesian War.[30]

Once again, the Corinthians captured the essence of the situation and described it brilliantly to the Spartans: "Your whole way of life is out of date when compared with theirs [the Athenians]. And it is just as true in politics as it is in any art or craft: new methods must drive out old ones."[31]

Sparta and Athens: The Bilateral Balance of Power

This issue has been extensively analysed elsewhere.[32] The argument presented there was that Sparta and Athens were the two most powerful states in Greece, that the power of Athens was growing faster than Sparta's (chiefly because of its more developed economic system) and that at the time of the outbreak of the war, the economic power, the navy and the empire of Athens made her at worse immune to Sparta and her allies and at best superior to them. As Archidamus' speech to the Spartan Assembly made clear, Spartan grand strategy had reached a deadlock: whereas Athenian power was growing and Athens was encroaching upon Sparta's allies,[33] undermining in this way a basic pillar of Spartan security, Sparta lacked the means to strike at the sources of Athenian power, namely the navy and the empire.[34]

The distinguished American historian Donald Kagan has argued that the power of Athens had not grown between 445 and 435 B.C.[35] However, he has been led astray by the territorial losses the Athenian Empire sustained in the hostilities that ended in 445 B.C., and by the fact that Athens did not acquire any new allies until the conclusion of the defensive alliance with Corcyra in 433 B.C. At the same time, he has not taken into account the continuous growth of the Athenian economic power during that period. However, Thucydides has pointed out precisely this, namely that the growth of Athens' economic power enabled her to more than counterbalance her recent territorial losses:

> Athens [...] had in the course of time taken over the fleets of her allies (except for those of Chios and Lesbos) and had made them pay contribution of money instead. Thus the forces available to Athens alone for this war were greater than the combined forces had ever been when the alliance was still intact.[36]

For Archidamus, the problem of the growth of Athenian power and the threat that this created for Spartan security could not be solved immediately. Sparta first needed to redress the balance with Athens. Apart from internal mobilization, that is marshalling their domestic resources, Sparta and her allies needed to resort to external balancing, namely securing allies, Greeks or Persians, that could provide the two things the Peloponnesian Alliance lacked — navy and money:

> What I do suggest is that we should not take up arms at the present moment; instead we should send to them and put our grievances before them; we should not threaten war too openly, though at the same time we should make it clear that we are not going to let them have their own way. In the meantime we should be making our own preparations by winning over new allies both among Hellenes and among foreigners — from any quarter, in fact, where we can increase our naval and financial resources. No one can blame us for

> securing our own safety by taking foreigners as well as
> Greeks into our alliance when we are, as is the fact,
> having our position undermined by the Athenians. At
> the same time we must put our own affairs in order. If
> they pay attention to our diplomatic protests, so much
> the better. If they do not, then after two or three years
> have passed, we shall be in a much sounder position
> and can attack them, if we decide to do so.[37]

Unfortunately for Sparta, it was not Archidamus' counsel, but the belligerent speech of ephor Sthenelaidas that carried the day with the Assembly. Sthenelaidas did not counter any of Archidamus' arguments but concentrated instead on the wrongs the Athenians had done to the Peloponnesian Alliance. The closing sentences of his speech are characteristic:

> Therefore, Spartans, cast your votes for the honour of
> Sparta and for war! Do not allow the Athenians to
> grow still stronger! Do not entirely betray your allies!
> Instead let us, with the help of heaven, go forward to
> meet the aggressor![38]

This reveals that, although both Archidamus and Sthenelaidas agreed that Athens' power was growing in relation to Sparta's, they differed in their assessment of the current balance of power. While Archidamus evaluated Athens as stronger, Sthenelaidas and, as it turned out, the majority of the Spartans, evaluated Sparta as stronger.[39] This misperception was to haunt Spartan grand strategy for the next ten years. It seems that Sthenelaidas and his followers expected a short war, believing that a Spartan invasion of Attica would lead to a quick victory,[40] while also thinking that Sparta could wage a low-cost war without suffering much herself. Events were to prove them wrong on both counts: the destruction of Attica did not bring about the capitulation of Athens, whereas Sparta was far more vulnerable to Athenian sea power than previously thought.

Thus, the net assessment of the relative balance of power indicated that the situation was not unfavorable to Athens, to say the least.

However, the majority of Spartans thought otherwise. This was a serious handicap for Spartan grand strategy, which faced a great mismatch between the (unlimited) political objectives assigned to it and the (inadequate) means that were available for this purpose.

A change in the balance of power was brought about only after the destruction of the Athenian expeditionary force in Sicily in 413. Now, apart from her traditional advantage on land, Sparta had also obtained parity at sea, while at the same time the Athenian Empire was collapsing. Furthermore, the Persians started giving financial aid to Sparta.[41] The only hope for Athens was in a change of Persian policy. As the Athenian statesman Pisander put it to his fellow citizens in 411:

> Now that the Peloponnesians have as many ships as we have ready to fight us at sea, now that they have more cities as their allies, and now that the King and Tissaphernes are supplying them with money, while ours is all gone, have you any hope that Athens can survive unless someone can persuade the King to change sides and come over to us?[42]

As we will soon see, the Persians, far from changing policy, in fact intensified their aid to the Spartans. The massive Persian support had dramatically tilted the balance in favour of Sparta. With the continuation of this support, Sparta's victory was simply a matter of time.

Political Objectives

Regarding the issue of the policy objectives of the two combatants, it has been demonstrated elsewhere[43] that Athens, under Pericles' direction, had limited objectives, merely aiming at the preservation of the *status quo*, in contrast to Sparta who had unlimited objectives, namely the dissolution of the Athenian Empire. Nevertheless, having in mind the strategic culture of Sparta, one must point out that resorting to a war with unlimited objectives must have been a novel experience for the Spartans. It has also been pointed out that Athens, the *status quo* power, formed a defensive grand strategy of exhaustion

whose aim was to convince the enemy that Athens was unbeatable in military terms and thus make him give up the effort of overthrowing the Athenian Empire. On the other hand, Sparta, the revisionist power, resorted to an offensive grand strategy of annihilation, centered around the Spartan military might. Initially the Spartans attempted to persuade the Athenians to make concessions under the threat of military defeat or devastation of their land (viz. coercive diplomacy). Following the failure of forceful persuasion, they resorted to actual warfare in which they attempted to secure victory through a decisive land battle.[44]

Archidamus favoured a strategy of annihilation, complete annihilation both on land and at sea.[45] However, he believed that Sparta lacked the means to pursue such a strategy, and therefore recommended that she make preparations and secure allies. Sthenelaidas too favoured annihilation, but, in contrast to Archidamus, he thought that Sparta *did* have the means to implement it, at least on land.[46] However, a grand strategy of this kind was highly demanding: whereas Athens had merely to make the Spartans abandon their quest for overthrowing the Athenian Empire, nothing short of a complete victory would suffice for Sparta in order to achieve her policy objectives.[47]

The political objectives of the Athenian grand strategy underwent a dramatic change in 415 when the Athenians, at the instigation of Alcibiades, undertook the Sicilian expedition. All of a sudden, Athens had set unlimited aims, namely domination of the entire Hellenic world plus the western Mediterranean. Alcibiades himself, after treasonably going to Sparta, gave the Spartans the following account of the Athenian war aims:

> We sailed to Sicily to conquer first, if possible, the Sicilians, and after them the Hellenes in Italy; next we intended to attack the Carthaginian empire and Carthage itself. Finally, if all or most of these plans were successful, we were going to make our assault on the Peloponnese, bringing with us all the additional Hellenic forces which we should have acquired in the

west and hiring as mercenaries great numbers of native troops [...]. In addition to our existing fleet we should have built many more triremes, since Italy is rich in timber and with all of them we should have blockaded the coast of the Peloponnese, while at the same time our army would be operating on land against your cities, taking some by assault, and others by siege. In this way we hoped that the war would easily be brought to a successful conclusion and after that we should be the masters of the entire Hellenic world.[48]

As a result, Athenian grand strategy was shaped according to the new objectives set by policy. To achieve these objectives, Athens had to revert to a grand strategy of annihilation; i.e., crushing her enemies on the battlefield and then conquering them. In addition, the Athenians followed a direct approach by turning against Syracuse, the strongest city in Sicily.

However, the Sicilian expedition ended in a complete disaster for Athens. Their expeditionary force was completely annihilated in 413 B.C., whereas in Greece the Spartans had reopened hostilities and some of the Athenian allies had revolted. In her attempt first to retain what had not been lost from her empire and then to recover what had been, Athens continued to rely on the strategy of annihilation. Since Sparta's challenge of the Athenian maritime empire had to be beaten off, the Athenians were seeking decisive encounters at sea. Consequently, a war that had started as a clash between a *status quo* and a revisionist power, which employed a grand strategy of exhaustion and annihilation respectively, ended with both combatants pursuing unlimited objectives and employing a grand strategy of annihilation. Still, the approach of both sides continued to be direct: since the enemy's navy was his chief asset, it was this navy that had to be sought and destroyed.

The Means of Spartan Grand Strategy

It has been demonstrated that the grand strategy of Athens employed a variety of means apart from the traditional military ones.[49]

The same was true for Spartan grand strategy, although in the latter case the military means played a comparatively greater role. A constant interaction between the means employed by one side and those employed by the other was taking place. Using the means at one's disposal in order to achieve one's political objectives entailed to a considerable degree countering the means at the enemy's disposal. The analysis that follows will try to capture the interaction between them, the "horizontal dimension" of strategy.

Spartan grand strategy did not necessarily envisage the actual outbreak of hostilities; the Spartans would be perfectly happy if they could achieve their objectives by the mere threat of war. Archidamus, especially, had a masterly understanding of the workings of coercive diplomacy and consistently tried to achieve Spartan objectives through the threat of force, holding the actual use of force in reserve. As he told his fellow citizens:

> You must think of their land [the Athenians'] as though it was a hostage in your possession, and all the more valuable the better it is looked after. You should spare it up to the last possible moment, and avoid driving them to a state of desperation in which you will find them much harder to deal with.[50]

Spartan coercive diplomacy featured the issuing of a series of demands towards the Athenians. The revocation of the Megarian Decree was one of these, whereas in their final ultimatum the Spartans stated that "Sparta wants peace. Peace is still possible if you will give the Hellenes their freedom."[51] [A blunt demand for the dissolution of the Athenian Empire.]

What made the Spartans so confident that they could achieve their aims through ultimata? We have already mentioned that the majority of the Spartans believed that they were holding a trump card, namely their ability, through their superiority in land forces, to invade Attica at will. This ability entailed two potential evils for Athens. The first was a crushing defeat in a major land battle, should the Athenians take the "normal" step of marching to oppose the invading

Peloponnesians. The second was the devastation of Attica. Spartan conventional wisdom had it that these two threats would be enough to cow the Athenians into submission. Actually, there had been a precedent when a similar advance of a Peloponnesian army to Attica in 446 B.C. had quickly made the Athenians sue for peace.[52]

The last incident and the lessons the Spartans drew from it are extremely interesting. To start with, they make clear that the past behaviour of a state determines to a very great extent the other states' expectations about its future behaviour. Thus, the majority of the Spartans expected that the Athenians would be cowed by the threat of a Peloponnesian invasion in Attica, precisely as they had previously done. This shows clearly how important it is for a state to put a "good face", namely to have a reputation for displaying determination and behaving uncompromisingly in any issue of vital importance to it.[53] It is precisely in a failure to retain such a reputation that we can trace the greatest danger of appeasement: if the adversary "gets accustomed" to securing concessions from our side, he will not believe that in a given instance we will be determined not to back down; such a miscalculation may bring about a war.[54] It is highly probable that Sthenelaidas and the majority of the Spartans committed precisely this mistake.

The mistaken analysis of the Spartans also shows the difficulty of extracting "lessons from the past".[55] It is true that in 446 Athens asked for a compromise in view of the Peloponnesian invasion, but the international situation in 432 was different. In 446 Athens had suffered serious military defeats in Central Greece and was faced with a revolt in Euboea. Athens' attempt to create a land empire in the Greek mainland had failed and the compromise reached in 446 recognised precisely this: the Athenian Empire would from then on be exclusively confined in the Aegean.[56] In 432 however, Athens had no reason at all to back down, since her imperial territories were immune to Spartan land power. This important change of the situation was missed by the majority of the Spartans.

Consequently, Pericles, rejecting appeasement, did not submit to the Spartan demands and thus did not allow the Spartans to gain any

advantage from their powerful land forces in peacetime. No such advantage was to be gained in wartime as well, since the walls of Athens completely neutralised the Peloponnesian infantry, whereas the Athenians did not come out to offer battle.[57] At the same time, Athens was drawing freely from the resources of the Empire and the rest of her allies, while continually escalating her reprisals against Sparta, culminating in the incidents of Pylos, Sphacteria and Cythera. As a result, Sparta sued for peace.[58]

This does not mean that Sparta had merely stood and watched the Athenian naval and financial power unfolding. She kept trying in earnest to thwart the effective employment of these means possessed by Athens. One may recall that Archidamus advised the Spartans that they needed to restore the balance of power with Athens before attempting to go to war; this should be done by seeking allies that could provide the Peloponnesians with money and navy. Although the Peloponessians would tap their own resources as well, these would clearly be inadequate. Archidamus had just provided the recipe for defeating a maritime power: creating an economic unit that can afford to build a navy equal or superior to that of this power.[59]

However, the premature start of the war by Sparta rendered that plan unlikely to succeed. Simply put, Sparta's chances at sea were not rated particularly high, and consequently few were prepared to risk their naval and financial assets by backing a Peloponnesian navy. Thus, as war was approaching, the Spartans tried to secure naval and financial aid from the Greek colonies in Southern Italy and Sicily.[60] No help, however, came from that quarter.[61] The Persians, who alone could tilt the balance, were also unhelpful.[62] Only rebel subjects of the Athenian Empire were willing to provide personnel for the Peloponnesian navy.[63] Clearly, Sparta's attempt to match Athens' sources of strength, that is navy and wealth, had failed.

However, this was not the only way Sparta used the various means at her disposal. A central element of Spartan grand strategy was trying to make the war as costly as possible for the Athenians. It has been pointed out that Athens' maritime strategy cost a lot in financial

terms.[64] In contrast, the Peloponnesian land forces were relatively cheap. As Spartan society was continually being prepared for war, actual warfare made little difference.[65] For the rest of the Peloponnesian allies, sending their contingents of citizen armies to an excursion in Attica for some two to six weeks a year, also implied little cost.[66]

The crux of the matter, however, was to increase the cost Athens had to incur. This attempt had three dimensions: a) destroy Attica, b) attempt to disolve the Athenian Empire, c) exploit every secondary front opened by the Athenians. The destruction of the Attic land, apart from the obvious financial cost, also created some social cost to the Athenians; the whole social fabric of Athens was upset, as the farmers and the social strata that were associated with the land were displaced and forced to seek refuge behind the walls.[67]

The second dimension of Sparta's cost-raising strategy was the attempt to bring about the dissolution of the Athenian Empire. This would be done through either encouraging apostasy or aiding revolts of the Athenian allies. The Spartans had been working towards this direction long before the outbreak of the war.[68]

The revolt of Mytilene, an island allied with Athens, in 428-427 B.C. provides an excellent example of Sparta's attempt to raise the cost of war for Athens and subsequently exploit the situation. After the Mytilenians revolted, the Spartans prepared to attack Athens both by land and by sea, while also preparing a fleet to help the rebels. They obviously believed that the Athenians could not simultaneously sustain the blockade of Mytilene, the costly siege of the city of Potidaea, the conduct of raids on the Peloponnesian coast and at the same time be able to defend their city. According to Thucydides:

> The Athenians were aware that these [Sparta's] preparations were being made on the theory that they themselves were weak, and wished to make it clear that the theory was a mistaken one and that they could easily beat off any attack from the Peloponnesian fleet without recalling their own fleet from Lesbos. They there-

> fore manned 100 ships with their own citizens (excluding the knights and the Pentacosiomedimni) and with their resident aliens, sailed out to the Isthmus, where they made a demonstration of their power and carried out landings just as they pleased on the Peloponnesian coast.[69]

Obviously, Athens' resources had yet to be depleted. Nevertheless, a Peloponnesian fleet did eventually sail for Mytilene. Although the island had capitulated before the fleet arrived, there were still plenty of opportunities either to recapture it or to spread revolt all around the Ionian coast. However, Alcidas, the Spartan commander of the fleet, must have been extremely ill-at-ease at sea and declined to exploit these opportunities.[70] Still, the lesson had been clear: Sparta was keen on undermining the Athenian Empire.

A much more vigorous attempt to destroy Athens was undertaken by the Spartans in 424 B.C., when they sent a force under the dashing general Brasidas to Macedonia and Thrace. Brasidas, using a blend of military prowess and diplomatic skill, proceeded to dismantle the Athenian Empire in that area. This horizontal escalation of the war was embarked upon by the Spartans as a diversion that would make the Athenians more amenable to peace proposals. Not only did it succeed, but it also created the preconditions for the eventual eviction of the Athenians from Macedonia and Thrace.[71]

Finally, the third dimension of the Spartan cost-raising strategy was to exploit every secondary front Athens had opened. True to the adventurous and sometimes reckless spirit that their political organisation promoted, the Athenians were eager to exploit opportunities, actual or perceived, in various places. However, wherever the Athenians appeared, the Spartans would sooner or later show up, too. They would simply not let the Athenians make easy gains.[72]

The greatest of these Athenian adventures was the expedition in Sicily. In this expedition Athens was using her financial and naval power not merely to deter the enemy, as she had been doing until then, but to expand territorially. This expedition also signified, for the

first and last time in the Peloponnesian War, a major Athenian commitment on land forces.

However, Sparta's attempt to counter this aggressive employment of Athenian means did not take long. The Spartans once again resumed their attempt to make the war costlier for the Athenians, albeit in a more systematic fashion. Thus, instead of periodically invading Attica, they established a permanent garrison there by fortifying Decelea in 413 B.C. This had disastrous consequences for Athens.

> Ever since Decelea had been first fortified [...] Athens had suffered a great deal. Indeed, the occupation of Decelea, resulting, as it did, in so much devestation of property and loss of manpower, was one of the chief reasons for the decline of Athenian power. The previous invasions had not lasted for long and had not prevented the Athenians from enjoying the use of their land for the rest of the time; now, however, the enemy were on top of them throughout the year; sometimes there were extra troops sent in to invade the country; sometimes it was only the normal garisson overruning the land and making raids to secure supplies; and the Spartan King Agis was there in person, treating the whole operation as a major campaign. The Athenians therefore suffered great losses. They were deprived of the whole of their country; more than 20,000 slaves, the majority of whom were skilled workmen, deserted, and all the sheep and farm animals were lost. [...] Then the supplies of food from Euboea, which previously had been brought in by the quicker route overland from Oropus through Decelea, now, at great expense, had to go by sea round Sunium. Every single thing that the city needed had to be imported, so that instead of a city it became a fortress.[73]

A question often posed is why it took the Spartans so long to establish a permanent fort in Attica. The fortification of Decelea is often

attributed solely to the advice of Alcibiades.[74] However some scholars go as far as to claim that precisely this delay in the creation of a permanent fort shows that Sparta did not have a strategy during the Peloponnesian War.[75] Both these claims are wrong. The idea of establishing a permanent fort in Attica existed in Spartan strategy right from the beginning. The Corinthians had mentioned it in their speech at the Assembly of the Peloponnesian League in 432, that is, before the outbreak of hostilities; whereas the Spartans during the negotiations that led to the Peace of Nicias threatened the Athenians precisely with the creation of a permanent fort in their territory.[76] The reason why the Spartans did not embark upon this scheme earlier is simple: they had not felt the need for it. As already mentioned, the majority of the Spartans believed that the war would be short. The establishment of a fort in Athens and its permanent manning — unlike the annual invasions that lasted for a few weeks — was an action entailing serious costs. The commitment of a substantial part of their workforce had important consequences for the economies of the Peloponnesian states (with the exception of Sparta), whereas the logistic support of a numerous army permanently stationed on enemy territory was impossible with the means of fifth century B.C. It was precisely for this reason that the Peloponnesians were forced to "overrun the land and make raids to secure supplies". The fortification of Decelea was a highly costly measure, suitable for a long war; since the majority of Spartans expected the war to be short, they did not initially feel the need to undertake it.[77]

Furthermore, the Spartans counterbalanced the Athenians in Sicily by offering aid to the city of Syracuse, Athens' chief enemy in the island. According to Thucydides, this aid was instrumental in preventing Athenian victory and allowing Syracuse to recover from her initial reverses.[78] From then on, the Athenians were forced to conduct a strategy of "two-and-a-half wars"; one war against Syracuse, another against Sparta, plus a possible allied revolt. As a result, they were soon faced with spiralling financial costs.[79]

The disaster in Sicily put an end to Athenian adventures and, consequently, to Spartan countermoves. However, the other two dimen-

sions of Sparta's cost-raising strategy were working at full force. Decelea was depleting Athenian strength, whereas the empire was but liquidated. Athens had reached the limit of her resources; it only had to sustain a single great defeat at sea for the final collapse to come.

That was not all, however. The Athenian disaster at Sicily enabled Sparta to implement the Archidamian plan of securing allies who could help her to match Athenian naval and economic strength. All of a sudden, everybody rushed to help the Spartans.[80] Ships and money were at last forthcoming. The Peloponnesian Alliance embarked on an ambitious ship-building program, a powerful contingent of 55 ships came from Sicily to assist the Peloponnesians, whereas the Spartans forcibly collected money from various states of Central Greece.[81]

But the real 'coup' was Persia. The Spartans entered into profitable agreements with the Persian satraps Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus. Although the relationship with them, especially Tissaphernes, was not strewn with roses, it marked an important turning point in the war.[82] Finally, in 407 B.C. the Spartans found a staunch ally in the Persian court in the person of Cyrus, son of the Persian king, who was given an extensive command in Asia Minor.[83] Persian money started flowing freely, enabling Sparta to make up for various naval reverses.[84] Archidamus' scheme was, after all, implemented, and the battle of Aegospotami settled the issue.

The Athenians, on their own part, did try after Sicily to hang on to their empire by rebuilding a fleet and reducing public expenses.[85] In addition to these traditional means of Athenian grand strategy they also utilised diplomacy, attempting to win the Persians over to their side.[86] As to the Persians, Thucydides points out that both sides tried to enlist Persian support, already before the outbreak of the hostilities.[87] However, the price of a Persian alliance was abandonment of the Greek cities of Asia Minor to Persian control. Since these cities were part of the Athenian Empire, it was easier for Sparta and more difficult for Athens to pay this price. Athenian and Persian interests were clearly irreconcilable and, as a result, Athens' attempt to coax the

Persians was doomed. The continuation of Persian support to Sparta ensured that in the long run Athens could not avoid defeat.

This concludes the examination of the means employed by the two competing grand strategies. One can see that the employment of the various means was not a static process, settled once and for all in a grand strategy. Interaction with the opponent was continuous and shaped the means employed accordingly.

The Issue of Legitimacy

Both Athens and Sparta took care of the legitimacy of their grand strategies. It is very interesting that the horizontal dimension of strategy made itself apparent in this issue as well. Once again, there was continuous interaction between the two opponents, each of them trying to ensure the legitimacy of his own grand strategy while undermining that of the opponent's.

International legitimacy played a central role in Sparta's grand strategy in the Peloponnesian War. It has already been demonstrated that the one-time allies of Athens had reverted to the status of tributary states and were looking forward to an opportunity to revolt.[88] Athens' considerable weakness as far as international legitimacy was concerned, constituted one of the trump cards of Spartan grand strategy. Sparta had built a reputation of being an enemy of tyranny and had often overthrown tyrants of Greek cities, Athens included.[89] In addition, Sparta had been the leader of the Greeks against the Persians during the crucial, defensive phase of the Persian Wars. Consequently, at the outbreak of the war it was easy for the Spartans to present themselves as the liberators of the Greeks from Athenian oppression, thus gaining widespread support. According to Thucydides:

> People's feelings were very much on the side of the Spartans, especially as they proclaimed that their aim was the liberation of Hellas. States and individuals alike were enthusiastic to support them in every possible way, both in speech and action.[90]

It may be recalled that the Spartans had presented the Athenians with an ultimatum demanding that the latter give the Hellenes their freedom. Apart from a statement revealing Sparta's unlimited aims, this was also a shrewd propaganda ploy. Sparta had just gone on record demanding the liberation of Hellas and, most importantly, was willing to fight for that cause. This was a ploy the Spartans would skilfully use throughout the war. Brasidas, for instance, during his brilliant campaign in Northern Greece, repeatedly stressed his role as a liberator; this, coupled with his just and moderate behavior, created a most favorable attitude towards Sparta in that area.

> The chief factor in creating a pro-Spartan feeling among the allies of Athens was the gallantry of Brasidas and the wisdom which he showed at this time — qualities which some knew from experience of them and others assumed because they had been told of them. He was the first to be sent out in this way, and by the excellent reputation which he won for himself on all sides he left behind a rooted conviction that the rest also were like him.[91]

Besides exploiting the lack of international legitimacy of the Athenian grand strategy, Sparta also tried to undermine its domestic legitimacy. Apart from (or even in contrast to) the direct approach favoured by Archidamus, namely matching Athenian financial and naval strength, the Spartans also followed an indirect approach to their political objectives. Ravaging Attica constituted this indirect approach, which was directed — apart from the economic and social cost that has already been mentioned — chiefly at Athenian morale. Archidamus, showing a remarkable knowledge of the domestic structure of the enemy, tried during his invasions in Attica to exploit the internal divisions of the Athenians so as to undermine the internal legitimacy of the Athenian grand strategy.[92] His conduct during the first invasion is characteristic:

> They say that Archidamus had a planned policy in remaining at Acharnae with his army all ready for bat-

tle, and not on this invasion descending into the plain. [...] When they [the Athenians] had made no move against him at Eleusis or in the Thriasian Plain, he wanted to see whether they would come out against him if he made a camp at Acharnae. Acharnae itself seemed to him a good position for a camp, and at the same time he thought it likely that the Acharnians, who, with their 3,000 hoplites, were an important element in the state, would not allow their own property to be destroyed, but would force all the others as well to come out and fight for it. If, on the other hand, the Athenians did not come out and fight during this invasion, the Peloponnesians would in future invasions have all the more confidence in laying waste the plain and advancing right up to the walls of Athens. By that time the Acharnians would have lost their own property and would be much less willing to risk their lives for the property of other people; *consequently there would be a lack of unity in the counsels of Athens.* This was the policy of Archidamus which accounted for his remaining at Acharnae.[93]

The blow to Athenian morale was tremendous. Given the erratic decision-making of the democratic Athenian polity, where everything depended on the shifting attitudes in the Assembly of the citizens, the indirect approach of the Spartans might indeed have worked. In fact, Thucydides mentions that after the second Peloponnesian invasion and the total devestation of Attica the Athenians sent ambassadors to Sparta to sue for peace. Presumably Spartan demands must have been excessive, or so they must have appeared to the Athenians, because the ambassadors did not achieve anything.[94]

Pericles, however, did manage to persuade the Athenian public to stick to the unpopular strategy of withdrawing behind the walls. The Athenians remained true to this strategy and neither attempted to offer battle to the Peloponnesians[95] nor sued for peace again. Moreover, Pericles counterattacked and tried to shape the domestic

environment of Sparta in a way compatible with the Athenian interests: if the Spartans could be convinced that war against Athens was futile, the grand strategy that prescribed war with Athens would lose its domestic legitimacy and moderate leaders would emerge. This was actually how the two opponents reached peace after the tenth year of the war, when king Pleistoanax, a supporter of peace, became the principal figure in Sparta.[96]

The two opponents, apart from the effort to shape the domestic environment of each other according to their interests, also tried to exploit the divisions that existed between democratics and oligarchics in most Greek cities.[97] However, Sparta was in the unique position to be able to exploit such divisions in Athens herself, while Athens enjoyed no similar opportunity.[98] The Spartans tried to capitalise on the oligarchic sentiments of some important circles in Athens. When an oligarchic coup took place in Athens in 411 B.C. the Athenian oligarchs tried to reach an accommodation with Sparta, whereas there is at least a possibility that they had conspired in order to lead the Spartan army into the city.[99] This internal strife aggravated an already difficult strategic situation and, according to Thucydides, drove the final nail into Athens' coffin.[100]

To summarise: Sparta formulated a grand strategy of annihilation,[101] aiming at the destruction of Athenian power and the dissolution of the Athenian Empire. The threat of a decisive land battle played a central role in Spartan grand strategy, while at the same time there was a continuous effort to make the war as costly as possible for Athens. Great stress was laid on international legitimacy, with Sparta appearing as the liberator of the Greeks from the Athenian oppression, while at the same time the Spartans attempted to undermine the domestic legitimacy of the enemy's grand strategy. Finally, a decisive role was played by diplomacy, which enabled Sparta to conclude an alliance with the Persians and thus balance the naval and financial power of Athens. Although the military dimension was clearly playing the central role in Spartan grand strategy, none of the other dimensions was ignored. What remains to do, is examine how this grand strategy actually worked in practice.

Athenian and Spartan Grand Strategies: Results

During the first phase of the Peloponnesian War, the so-called Archidamian War (431-421 B.C.), the Spartan grand strategy was a failure. The Spartans did invade Attica and wreak havoc in their path, but the Athenians did not submit. In the meantime, Athenian retaliation progressively escalated, culminating in the events of Pylos, Sphacteria and then Cythera.[102] These events were enough to throw the conservative Spartan leadership out of balance, make it abandon its bid for victory, and try to obtain peace at almost any cost. By turning against their primary opponent, the Athenians achieved decisive results. However, at this point they misused their successes and refused to negotiate, thus missing the chance to extract substantial profits.[103]

The Athenian refusal to negotiate made the Spartans embark upon two ploys they had not felt the need to use up to that point: a) the attempt to dismantle the Athenian empire in Northern Greece (viz. Brasidas' expedition) and b) the threat to establish a fort in Attica.[104] These developments did temper the Athenian attitude and bring about peace, but even the Peace of Nikias in 421 B.C. can be regarded as favorable to Athens.[105] Athens retained her profitable empire and discouraged further adventures on behalf of the Spartans, whereas the grievances of Sparta's allies were by and large ignored.[106] Ten years of futile war accompanied by terrible material and psychological setbacks was the price Sparta paid for the mismatch between means and ends in her grand strategy.

During the Peace of Nicias (421-415 B.C.), the most important development was the re-emergence of Argos as a player in the international arena after the expiration in 421 B.C. of the Thirty Years' Treaty between Argos and Sparta. Since Sparta had been forced to ignore the grievances of her allies during the conclusion of peace with Athens, a great number of these allies defected and sought security through an alliance with the Argives. Moreover, Athens seized the opportunity to develop a "continental strategy" by aiding Argos and her allies against Sparta.

All of a sudden the situation became critical for the Spartans, who found themselves in danger of losing control of the Peloponnese. To counter this threat, they once again resorted to the combination of the strategy of annihilation and direct approach. In truly Napoleonic/Clausewitzian fashion, Sparta crushed Argive power in the battle of Mantinea in 418 B.C., regaining pre-eminence in the Peloponnese.

> By this one action they [the Spartans] did away with all the reproaches that had been levelled against them by the Hellenes at this time, whether for cowardice, because of the disaster in the island, or for incompetence and lack of resolution on other occasions. It was now thought that, though they might have been cast down by fortune, they were still in their own selves the same as they always had been.[107]

The battle of Mantinea provides us with the opportunity to elaborate a bit further on the concept of *Vernichtungsschlacht* (decisive battle), which occupies a central position in the Napoleonic/Clausewitzian concept of war. It has been persuasively argued that this concept has its origins in Ancient Greece. An offensive campaign in Ancient Greece, in order to cause the greatest possible damage to the enemy, had to be conducted during the limited period of the year when the wheat crops were vulnerable to arson. This, combined with the fact that the armies of the Greek city-states consisted of farmers that would soon have to return to their fields, made the Ancient Greeks seek a quick settlement of the issue in a single, decisive battle.[108] Probably the most important of the decisive battles of the Ancient Greeks was the Battle of Plataea in 479 B.C., which led to the expulsion of the Persians from Greece proper.

However, one great problem with battles of this kind is that their outcome is often determined by minor details or unforseen developments, thus increasing exponentially the risk incurred by those who resort to them.[109] Thus, many of history's decisive battles could have had different outcomes from the actual ones.[110] It is probable that the same could have happened in Mantinea, provided the Athenians and

the Eleans had timely intervened at the Argives' side. In general, decisive battles are "high-risk ventures".[111]

The year 415 B.C. proved to be the turning point of the war, since Athens embarked on an attempt to conquer Sicily. The Spartans were quick to perceive this window of opportunity. It was clear to them that Athens had overextended.[112] Consequently, they abandoned their earlier caution and renewed hostilities in Greece while sending aid to Athens' enemies in Sicily. These actions contributed to a great extent to the Athenian disaster in Sicily, which changed the whole course of the war. Sparta showed her ability to exploit the enemy's mistakes.

During the final phase of the war, the so-called Decelean War (413-404 B.C.), it was clear that the balance of power had shifted. This new balance made it possible for the Spartans to successfully pursue their initial aim of overthrowing the *status quo*.[113] Now, for the first time, the means at their disposal matched their policy objectives. It is interesting to note that the final phase of the war was chiefly naval, conducted in the Eastern Aegean. In other words, the Spartans were now capable of challenging Athens in her own element and striking at the center of gravity of the Athenian power, namely her navy. Thus, the indecisive clash between the "tiger" and the "shark", turned into a clash between two "sharks", where decisive results could be obtained.

The Athenians, on their own part, immediately understood that they had to cut down on spending, maintain a decent navy, and secure the allegiance of their allies.[114] In all this they did quite well. Though the greater part of the empire had gone for good, they managed to preserve some important places like Samos and Euboea, while inflicting severe defeats on the Peloponnesian navy (Cyzicus 410 B.C., Arginusae 406 B.C.).[115] However, it seems that their aims were once again unlimited, since they twice rejected Spartan peace proposals.[116] Actually, everything was hanging by a thread; one major defeat of the Athenian navy would spell the end. The day of reckoning came when the Spartan admiral Lysander captured the Athenian fleet at Aegospotami in 405 B.C.[117] Athens was now blockaded by sea as well. She capitulated the following year, signifying the final triumph of Spartan grand strategy.

Conclusion

Thucydides' text contains the first detailed presentation of a theory of grand strategy. This has been acknowledged, but only insofar as the Periclean grand strategy is concerned. In other words, Pericles is credited with the first detailed grand strategic plan in history, and Thucydides with the presentation of this plan.[118] However, this tells only half the story. Thucydides did not present only one, but *two* detailed grand strategic designs that clashed with each other. Athens was not alone in having formulated a grand strategy; she had to contend with the grand strategy formulated by Sparta. Thucydides was fully cognizant that strategy involveds the interaction of two opposing wills (viz. the horizontal dimension of strategy).

The fact that this aspect of Thucydides' analysis has not been adequately understood is reflected on the "publicity" that some of the protagonists of his *History* have received. Pericles, for instance, has rightly been praised for the grand strategy he designed and formulated by being called one of the greatest statesmen and military leaders of History.[119] On the other hand, Archidamus, this remarkable general and statesman, has been ignored by contemporary scholars.[120] This is unfair, since he had a profound understanding of strategy, as shown by the "recipe" he provided for dealing with a naval power, as well as by the ingenuous way in which he used coercive diplomacy. It was Sparta's misfortune that Archidamus had less influence on the formulation of Spartan grand strategy than Pericles had on the formulation of the Athenian one. Whereas Pericles managed to achieve the domestic legitimacy of his grand strategy, Archidamus could not achieve the same for the grand strategy he had designed.

Another conclusion is that a grand strategy must correspond to the current balance of power. It has been noted that strategy is always addressed against one or more opponents. The means that can be used against an opponent are determined by the relative balance of power with him. If the means are lacking, certain ends are beyond achievement and must not be pursued (reduction of objectives). The above analysis showed that both Sparta and Athens at certain instances

misjudged the balance of power, setting policy objectives (dissolution of the Athenian Empire, conquest of Sicily, recovery of the Athenian Empire) they could not achieve with the means available to them (overextension). On the other hand, grand strategies that set objectives that were not contrary to the balance of power (Periclean grand strategy, Spartan grand strategy after the Sicilian expedition) were generally successful (strategic sufficiency) (see Table).

Table

Linking Means and Ends of a Grand Strategy

| | | Political Commitments (Ends) | |
		Few	Many
Available Means (Capabilities)	Few	Passivity	Overextension
	Many	Reduction of Objectives	Strategic Sufficiency

Sparta's grand strategy can still offer valuable lessons to the modern strategist. This strategy is an excellent example of the Clausewitzian approach to war, featuring direct approach and destruction of the armed forces of the enemy. Archidamus knew, and the rest of the Spartan policy-makers eventually understood as well, that decisive results could be obtained only by turning against Athens and the sources of Athenian strength; i.e., what Clausewitz called the "center of gravity" of Athenian power. The center of gravity of Athenian power was the navy, whereas another source of Athenian power was the Empire - which itself depended on the navy. The "indirect approach" of ravaging Attica could not enable Sparta to strike at this center of gravity; only the Persian alliance made this possible. The fact that the Spartans consciously turned against the center of gravity of the Athenian power as soon as they obtained the means necessary to

strike against it, demonstrates that they had a clear knowledge of the advantages of the direct approach.

Basil Liddell Hart has argued extensively in favour of the indirect approach, going as far as attributing every successful military action to the adoption of an indirect approach and every unsuccessful one to the adoption of a direct approach.[121] However, one of the flaws of his argument is that he often does not define the level of strategy within which he contrasts direct and indirect approach.[122] Thus, he cites the fact that indirect approach was used at the tactical or the operational level as evidence for the superiority of this approach, while at the same time disregarding the fact that at the strategic level the approach was direct. For instance, he has called Lysander's victory at Aegospotami "a tactical indirect approach at sea, which was itself the sequel to a fresh indirect approach in grand strategy".[123] The second part of this sentence is, of course, mistaken; we have repeatedly pointed out that Sparta's turn against the Athenian navy is a characteristic case of direct approach.[124] However, the first part is correct. Generally, the grand strategies of Sparta and Athens seem to provide arguments in favour of a direct approach at the grand strategic and strategic levels of war. Indirect approach may be used and in fact it may even be advisable at lower levels, e.g. at the operational or tactical levels of war.

NOTES

1. Although this is an independent article, it shares a common framework and is organically connected with an article previously published in Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies by Athanassios Platias, namely "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", in Thucydides: The Classical Theorist of International Relations, **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2 (Autumn 1998), to which references will be made.

2. For the "horizontal dimension" of strategy see Edward Luttwak, **Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace** (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987).

3. See for instance J.F.C. Fuller, **The Decisive Battles of the Western World** (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1954); Colin Gray,

The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War (New York: Free Press, 1992); Chester G. Starr, The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

4. For the classical analysis of the strategies of annihilation and exhaustion, see Hans Delbrück, History of the Art of War (4 Vols.) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975-1985).

5. The bibliography on Napoleon is immense. See among others Peter Paret, "Napoleon and the Revolution in War", in Peter Paret (ed.), Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), pp. 123-142 and David G. Chandler, The Military Maxims of Napoleon (New York: Macmillan, 1997). On Clausewitz see Carl von Clausewitz, On War [edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret] (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) and Michael Howard, Clausewitz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). For the association of Napoleon and Clausewitz with the strategy of annihilation see Edward N. Luttwak, "Toward Post-Heroic Warfare", Foreign Affairs 74, 3 (May/June 1995), pp. 109-122 and Azar Gat, The Development of Military Thought: the Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 1-45.

6. For the distinction between attrition and maneuver warfare see Luttwak, Strategy, pp. 92-99.

7. For the strategic thought of Liddell Hart see Basil Liddell Hart, Strategy (2nd rev. edn.) (London: Meridian, 1991) and Brian Bond, Liddell Hart: A Study of his Military Thought (London and New Brunswick, 1977).

8. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies, Vol. 6, No 2.

9. For an analysis of the Spartan grand strategy during the initial phase of the war see P.A. Brunt, "Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War", in P.A. Brunt, Studies in Greek History and Thought (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 84-111.

10. For the concept of strategic culture see Ken Booth, **Strategy and Ethnocentricism** (London: Croom Helm, 1979); Colin Gray, **Nuclear Strategy and National Style** (London: Hamilton Press, 1986); Yitzhak Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture", **Comparative Strategy** Vol. 10 (January-March 1991) pp. 3-23.

11. Herodotus was the first to point out the beneficial impact of the democratic regime as far as Athenian power was concerned; see V 78. See also Michael W. Doyle, **Empires** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 66-67.

12. For detailed analyses of the Spartan polity see K.M.T. Chrimes, **Ancient Sparta: A Re-examination of the Evidence** (Manchester University Press, 1949); Humphrey Michell, **Sparta** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952); George L. Huxley, **Early Sparta** (London: Faber, 1962); A.H.M. Jones, Sparta (Oxford: Blackwell & Mott, 1967); G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War** (London: Duckworth, 1972). For the Spartan legal system see D.M. MacDowell, **Spartan Law** (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986).

13. For the original Spartan text, the so-called **Rhetra**, which describes Spartan polity as it was supposedly created by the lawgiver Lycurgus, see Plutarch, Lycurgus, 6.1-2, 7-8. For the name of the Spartan citizen assembly, which seems to have been **Ecclesia** and not Apella, as many people nowadays think, see Ste. Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 346-347.

14. The exact procedure of the ephors' election is not known. See P.A. Rahe, "The Selection of Ephors at Sparta", Historia 29 (1980), 385-401; P.J. Rhodes, "The Selection of Ephors at Sparta", Historia 30 (1981), 498-502; H.D. Westlake, "Reelection to the ephorate?", **Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies** 17 (1976), 343-52.

15. In fact, things were not so simple. Austerity did not dominate Spartan life until some time in the sixth century. Moreover, there were huge inequalities of wealth in Sparta, which were continually making themselves felt. For a treatise that connects the onset of austerity with the rise of the power of the commoners in Sparta, see L.F. Fitzhardinge, **The Spartans** (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).

However, Fitzhardinge is completely wrong in claiming that the aristocratic families and the *Gerousia* lost their power in the process. The Gerousia and the nobles behind it were in firm control of the destinies of Sparta throughout the city's independent existence.

16. This was unanimously acknowledged in Ancient Greece. See Herodotus, VII 104, VII 204, IX 62, IX 71; Thucydides, I 141, V 72, V 75; Xenophon, Lacedaimonion Politeia, 13. For the Spartan military organisation see Chrimes, Ancient Sparta, pp. 356-396; Humphrey Michell, Sparta, pp. 233-280 (pp. 274-280 deal with the Spartan navy); J.F. Lazenby, **The Spartan Army** (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1985).

17. Thucydides states that in Sparta the ratio of slaves to freemen was greater than in any other city; **Thucydides**, VIII 40. The ratio must have been something like ten to one; see G.B. Grundy, **Thucydides and the History of his Age** (Oxford, 1948), p. 219.

18. In fact, each year upon entering office the ephors formally declared war to the Helots; Plutarch, **Lycurgus**, 28. Consequently, a Spartan could kill a Helot without legally committing a homicide. In practice, however, although the Spartans could be extremely harsh on occasion, their treatment of the Helots must have been tolarably good. Furthermore, there was always a distinction between Laconian Helots, who were normally loyal to Sparta, and Messenian Helots, who were Sparta's greatest enemies; see Michel, **Sparta**, pp. 75-84.

19. See **Thucydides**, I 101, IV 41, IV 80.

20. Plutarch, **Lycurgus**, 24.

21. Thucydides, I 70. All quotations from **Thucydides** are from the Rex Warner translation (London: Penguin, 1972).

22. Thucydides makes much of the difference between Athenian and Spartan national character; see **Thucydides**, I 69, I 84, I 118, IV 55, V 54-55, VIII 24.

23. Spartan foreign policy did occasionally fluctuate violently, but there is an amazing overall consistency in maintaining a high military capability and striving after hegemony first in the Peloponnese and then in the whole of Greece.

24. See Platias, **"Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand** Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Etudes Helleniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

25. Thucydides, I 19. Some of Sparta's Peloponnesian allies like Elis and Mantineia were democracies and retained their preferred regime as long as they remained loyal to Sparta. For the Peloponnesian League see Donald Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969/1994) pp. 9-30 and especially Ste. Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 96-124, 333- 342.

26. Kagan states characteristically that the allies were bound together by distrust of Argos and the common interest for the preservation of oligarchy; Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, p. 13.

27. This was precisely what Polybius argued a few centuries later. According to him, although Sparta's political organisation was enough to ensure her dominant position in the Peloponnese, her limited economic power which was a result of that very political organisation, did not allow her to extend her influence further. The message was clear: Sparta had to either change her political organisation or confine herself to the Peloponnese. See **Polybius**, I 6. 49-50.

28. The rapid decline of the Spartan population during the fifth and fourth centuries had astonished the rest of the Ancient Greeks; see Aristotle, Politics II 9, 1270a 33-34; cf. Xenophon, Lacedaimonion Politeia, 1. The subject has received detailed treatment from modern scholars; see among others W.G. Forrest, **A History of Sparta**, 950-192 B.C. (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 134-137; Ste. Croix, The Origins of the Peloponnesian War, pp. 331-332; Paul Cartledge, **Sparta and Laconia: a regional history**, 1300-362 B.C. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 307-318. For a less satisfactory account, which tries to minimise the importance of the decline see Chrimes, **Ancient Sparta**, pp. 348-356.

29. Doyle, **Empires**, pp. 54-81.

30. For the idea of the creation of a Spartan Empire and the disastrous consequences this scheme brought about, see Forrest, **A History of**

Sparta, pp. 123-126; Kagan, **The Fall of the Athenian Empire**, pp. 13, 27, 306, 328, 397-426; Barry S. Strauss and Josiah Ober, **The Anatomy of Error: Ancient Military Disasters and Their Lessons for Modern Strategists** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Doyle, Empires, p. 73.   Barry Strauss and Josiah Ober, drawing from Aristotle, claim that Sparta was in no position to conduct an imperialist policy because the strict military-oriented education of the Spartans made them overestimate the role of military power and consequently rendered them unable to conduct successful diplomacy and reach compromise; see Strauss and Ober, **The Anatomy of Error**, Ch. 3.   Despite Aristotle's authority, this claim must be rejected.   Sparta had been successfully playing the diplomatic game for centuries and can hardly be called incapable of conducting diplomacy.   Moreover, the Athenians (and later the Romans and so many others) did not acquire their empire through rhetorical and diplomatic skill, but basically through successful application of military power.   Sparta's problem was not excessive emphasis on military power, but lack of adequate military power.

31. **Thucydides**, I 71.

32. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

33. Thucydides makes this point repeatedly; see I 67-68, I 71, I 86, I 118.

34. For Archidamus' speech see **Thucydides**, I 80-85.

35. See Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 345-374. The same view is advanced in Jones, Sparta, pp. 68-69. For a rejoinder see Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

36. **Thucydides**, I 19. A similar case coming to mind is that of the British Empire after the War of the American Indepencence (1775-1783). Although the loss of the American colonies was a serious blow, British economic power kept growing at a fast pace, securing the global supremacy of Great Britain.

37. **Thucydides**, I 82. Archidamus' clear referrence to an alliance with the Persians ("foreigners") is an interesting predecessor of a number of cases where Realpolitik brought "irreconcilable enemies" together. The alliance of France with the Ottomans against Spain during the Renaissance is the first such example in modern history, whereas the alliance of Catholic cardinal Richelieu with the Protestant states of Europe against the Catholic Holy Roman Empire is another case in point. In the twentieth century, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and Nixon's rapprochement with China constitute similar cases. For a comparison of the Spartan-Persian alliance with the modern diplomatic surprises mentioned above see Strauss and Ober, **The Anatomy of Error**, p. 75. For Richelieu's partnership with the Protestants see J.H. Elliott, **Richelieu and Olivares** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984/1991) pp. 113-142 and Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), Ch. 3. For the concept of diplomatic surprise and an analysis of some modern instances of diplomatic surprise see Michael Handel, **The Diplomacy of Surprise: Hitler, Nixon, Sadat** (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Center for International Studies, 1981) and Constantinos Koliopoulos, **Understanding Strategic Surprise: An Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Strategic Surprise** (Ph.D. Thesis, Lancaster University, 1999), pp. 208-216.

38. **Thucydides**, I 86.

39. Cf. **Thucydides**, IV 18, IV 21, IV 85, V 14. An impossible theory has recently been put forward by Gregory Crane, namely that Sthenelaidas stressed "the fundamental bonds that bind human beings together", grasping that "Sparta's personalized relationships with its allies are its strength"; see Gregory Crane, **Thucydides and the Ancient Simplicity: The Limits of Political Realism** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 212-221. Interstate alliances are not built on moral bonds and this was perhaps least of all the case with the Peloponnesian League. Alliances are vehicles through which the states try to enhance their security. As we have already pointed out, for Sparta the Peloponnesian League was a means of extending her influence and increasing her military strength,

whereas for the allies it was a means of warding off external threats and (as far as the rulling classes were concerned) perpetuating oligarchic rule at home. If the League could not perform these tasks, the parties would be inclined to leave it, notwistanding the "moral bonds" among them. Actually, although Sparta did go to war and suffered some bad defeats in the process, her allies had no scruples about defecting the League en masse after the Peace of Nicias showed that Sparta was not strong enough to guarantee their security. Thus, Sthenelaidas did not appeal to "moral bonds" and the like, but simply misjudged the balance of power.

40. Thucydides, IV 85, V 14. Thucydides states that nobody in Greece expected that Athens would resist more than three years if the Spartans invaded Attica; **Thucydides**, VII 28.

41. For analyses of the balance of power between Athens and Sparta after Sicily see **Thucydides**, VIII 1, VIII 48, VIII 53. For a presentation of Spartan relations with the Persians see D.M. Lewis, Sparta and Persia (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

42. Thucydides, VIII 53.

43. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

44. We must point out here that Donald Kagan holds a different view regarding the origins of the Peloponnesian War. Having doubted the growth of the Athenian power prior to the war (see above), the American historian claims that the Spartans were reluctant to start a war with Athens but were dragged into it by their allies and their bellicose ephors. See Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, esp. pp. 286-316. Actually, there is no evidence whatsoever to support the view that Spartan citizens wanted peace in contrast to their ephors who wanted war. In addition, Kagan himself claims that the ephors must have initially been supporters of peace, but changed their minds after the incidents of Corcyra and Potidaea (ibid., p. 307, fn. 46). If this had indeed been the case, one may well enquire why it was only the ephors that changed their minds while the majority of the

Spartans continued to favour peace. This does not really make sense and consequently renders Kagan's argument groundless. For analyses that, like the present one, endorse the Thucydidean view that Sparta began the war willingly in order to check Athenian power see Ste. Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War** and Anton Powell, **Athens and Sparta: Constructing Greek Political and Social History** from 478 B.C. (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 118-128. For an analysis of the debate in the Spartan Assembly regarding the issue of war against Athens see A.W. Gomme, **A Historical Commentary on Thucydides**, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), pp. 252-256.

45. A number of scholars have claimed that since the end of the Persian Wars there existed in Sparta a group which they have called the "peace party" or the "doves", in contrast to the "war party" or the "hawks". The only evidence one can find for this is that in two sessions of the Assembly separated by about half a century (475 and 432 respectively), one part favoured war with Athens while the other one disagreed. The effort to explain the whole of Spartan security policy in the meantime as a struggle between these two parties is based on pure conjecture. It is highly interesting, however, that the exponents of this theory have depicted Archidamus as the leader of the "peace party" (Brunt, "Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War", p. 111; Jones, Sparta, pp. 63-71; Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 87, 300-304) or the "doves" (Ste. Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 142-143). However, his speech at the Spartan Assembly should leave no doubt that in principle he was not at all averse to the idea of a war with Athens. If coercive diplomacy failed, Archidamus was ready to go to war on completion of the relevant preparations. In this war, he believed that Sparta ought to follow a grand strategy of annihilation.

46. Sparta's Corinthian allies must have shared this belief as well; see the strategy they outlined in their speech in **Thucydides**, I 120-122. Although this strategy was basically sound and included many of the elements of the grand strategy Sparta actually followed (e.g. naval balancing, creation of a fort in Attica), the balance of power was so

adverse to the Peloponnesians, that this strategy could not be implemented. Most importantly, the strategy outlined by the Corinthians lacked the crucial dimension of external balancing through an alliance with the Persians. The successful balancing of the Athenian naval power through Persian help was the decisive factor which gave victory to Sparta.

47. The same point is made by Brunt; "Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War", p. 88.

48. See Alcibiades' speech at Sparta in **Thucydides** VI 90. Some scholars do not accept Alcibiades' account at face value, in the supposition that he was exaggerating so as to alarm the Spartans (see, for instance, Donald Kagan, **The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981/1992), pp. 254-257. Still, the Athenians had obviously embarked upon the conquest of Sicily. This by itself constituted pursuit of unlimited objectives. For an enthusiastic approval of Alcibiades' "grand scheme" as genuine and viable see Jacqueline de Romilly, **Alcibiades** [Greek transl., 2nd. edn.] (Athens: Asty, 1995), pp. 103-104.

49. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

50. **Thucydides**, I 82; see also II 18-20. For the classical analysis of coercion in international relations see Thomas Schelling, **Arms and Influence**, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966). For a general theory of coercive diplomacy see Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, **The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy** (Boston, 1971) and Alexander George, **Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as Alternative to War** (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991).

51. **Thucydides**, I 139.

52. **Thucydides**, I 114-115. See also Raphel Sealey, **A History of the Greek City States** ca. 700-338 B.C. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 321.

53. See Schelling, **Arms and Influence**. Also, James Alt, Randall Calvert, Brian Humes, "Reputation and Hegemonic Stability: A Game Theoretical Analysis", **American Political Science Review** 92 (June 1988), pp. 445-466; John D. Orne, **Deterrence, Reputation and the Prevention of Cold-War Cycles** (London: Macmillan, 1992).

54. For an analysis of this point see Athanassios G. Platias, "Greek Strategy at Crossroads", in Panayiotis Ifestos and Athanassios Platias, **Greek Deterrence Strategy** (Athens: Papazisis, 1992), p. 172 (text in Greek).

55. See Ernest R. May, **The Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Richard E. Meastand and Ernest R. May, Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers (New York: Free Press, 1986); Michael Howard, The Lessons of History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

56. See Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 123-126.

57. For the abortive attempt of the Spartans to preclude the rebuilding of the walls of Athens after the withdrawal of the Persians see Thucydides I 90-92, as well as the analysis in Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", Etudes Helleniques/Hellenic Studies, Vol. 6, No 2

58. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Etudes Helleniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

59. This had been the constant nightmare of British policy-makers, and their motivation for preserving the balance of power in Europe. See Paul Kennedy, **The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery** (London: Fontana, 1991).

60. **Thucydides**, II 7.

61. Cf. **Thucydides**, VI 34.

62. **Thucydides**, IV 50. **Thucydides** makes it clear that both sides tried to coax the Persians; **Thucydides**, II 7, IV 50.

63. **Thucydides**, IV 75.

64. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Etudes Helleniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

65. Plutarch has made the startling claim that, since the military training relaxed during wartime, the Spartans viewed war as a respite! Plutarch, **Lycurgus**, 22.

66. See Thucydides, I 121.   However, the Peloponnesian citizen armies could not easily campaign during the harvest period; cf. **Thucydides**, III 15.

67. See also Lin Foxhall, "Farming and Fighting in Ancient Greece", in John Rich and Graham Shipley (eds.), **War and Society in the Greek World**, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 142-143.

68. **Thucydides**, I 58, I 97

69. **Thucydides**, III 16.

70. **Thucydides**, III 26-33.

71. For Brasidas' campaign see **Thucydides**, IV 70, IV 78-88, IV 102-117, IV 120-134, V 2-3, V 6-13.   This campaign has many similarities with the "southern strategy" proposed to Hitler by Admiral Raeder, namely a massive German move to North Africa with a view to dismantling the British Empire in the Middle East.   One might be tempted to pursue this analogy further still, by pointing out to the similarities between Brasidas and another dashing commander, Erwin Rommel.   There are at least two important differences, however.   First, that Brasidas also had to exercise considerable diplomatic skill apart from operational dexterity.   Second, that Brasidas' campaign did conform to a grand strategic design, whereas Rommel's exploits did not, for Hitler had decided to concentrate against the Soviet Union instead of the British Empire.   For critical views of Rommel's conduct see Martin van Creveld, **Supplying War** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 181-201 and Luttwak, Strategy, pp. 210-221.   For an analysis of Brasidas' campaign see Simon Hornblower, **A Commentary on Thucydides**, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), pp. 38-61.

72. See **Thucydides**, III 100, III 114.

73. **Thucydides**, VII 27-28.

74. As recorded in **Thucydides**, VI 91. For a modern treatise that adopts this view see Romilly, **Alcibiades**, pp. 140-143.

75. Angelos Vlahos, **Comments on Thucydides**, Vol. I: Books I - IV (Athens: Estia Bookstore, 1992), pp. 401-408 (text in Greek). Cf. also the comment of A.H.M. Jones that "neither side [Sparta and Athens] showed much intelligence and initiative in their operations"; Jones, **Sparta**, p. 70. It must be obvious that we are in total disagreement with these views.

76. **Thucydides**, I 122, V 17. Alcibiades might have played a role in the selection of Decelea as the locus for the establishment of the fort. However, even this might not have been the case, since the Spartans had since time immemorial been well acquainted with Decelea. According to Herodotus, because of an incident dating since the days of the Trojan War, the Spartans had always held the inhabitants of Decelea in high esteem and granted them special honours. Moreover, Herodotus goes on to say that in the Peloponnesian War the Spartans spared the lands of the Deceleans; **Herodotus**, IX 73. In other words, the Spartans did not need Alcibiades to inform them about the merits of the place.

77. For the problems associated with the creation of a permanent fort in Athens see also Donald Kagan, **The Archidamian War** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 350-351.

78. Thucydides, VI 93, VII 1-7. Some scholars have attributed this Spartan action to Alcibiades; see Romilly, **Alcibiades**, pp. 138-140. In fact, the same measure had been suggested to the Spartans by the Corinthian and Syracusan ambassadors (**Thucydides**, VI 88) and it is difficult to believe that Alcibiades' words carried great weight with the Spartans. Moreover, the aid that was finally sent was much smaller than the one urged by Alcibiades. In general, one should not overestimate the contribution of Alcibiades to Spartan grand strategy. The Athenian exile always remained a controversial figure in the eyes of the Spartans and his influence was correspondingly limited. See also

Kagan, **The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition**, pp. 257-259.

79. Cf. Thucydides, VII 18, VII 28. The doctrine of "two-and-a-half wars" had been suggested as the advisable military strategy of the United States during the Cold War. According to this, the USA ought to be prepared to conduct at the same time a major war in Europe, another one in Asia and retain some additional military capability for dealing with regional conflicts in the Western hemisphere. This doctrine was never implemented. It is interesting that nowadays some Turkish analysts suggest that their country should adopt such a doctrine. According to them, Turkey must be in a position to face at the same time Greece and Syria, plus the Kurdish insurrection. See Sukru Elekdag, "2 War Strategy", Perceptions (Ankara) (March-May 1996), pp. 33-57.

80. **Thucydides**, VIII 2.

81. **Thucydides**, VIII 3, VIII 26.

82. See **Thucydides**, Book VIII. Tissaphernes followed the strategy of "divide et impera", by providing inadequate help to the Spartans with a view to exhaust both belligerents. See especially **Thucydides**, VIII 46, VIII 87. Pharnabazus, on the other hand, helped the Spartans as much as he could, but the resources at his disposal were limited compared with those of Tissaphernes; see Donald Kagan, **The Fall of the Athenian Empire** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 34, 247.

83. Xenophon, **Hellenica**, A IV 1-4, A V 1-7; Plutarch, **Lysander**, 4.

84. In the beginning of 406 B.C. a personal feud between Cyrus and the Spartan admiral Callicratidas led to the stoppage of Persian payments. However, the two men quickly came to terms and the payments were resumed; Xenophon, **Hellenica**, A VI 6-7, A VI 10-11, A VI 18; Plutarch, **Lysander**, 6. For Cyrus' tremendous financial help to the Spartans after their defeat at Arginousae the same year, see Xenophon, **Hellenica**, B I 11-14; Plutarch, **Lysander**, 9.

85. **Thucydides**, VIII 1.

86. **Thucydides**, VIII 48-56; Xenophon, **Hellenica**, A IV 5-7.

87. **Thucydides**, II 7, IV 50.

88. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Etudes Helleniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2. However, it must be noted that there was another side of the coin as well. The subjects of the Athenian Empire stood to gain from the Athenian commercial activities, and the empire provided a number of "collective goods" such as integration in a huge market, suppression of piracy, etc. Consequently, international legitimacy was not completely absent from the Athenian Empire; see Doyle, Empires, p. 57 and the sources cited there. See also below.

89. **Herodotus**, III 46-56, V 63-65, V 92; **Thucydides**, I 122, VI 53. See also Forrest, **A History of Sparta**, pp. 79-83.

90. **Thucydides**, II 8. See also III 13, III 31. On the other hand, it has already been demonstrated that Sparta did not receive much help of substance until after the Athenian disaster in Sicily.

91. **Thucydides**, IV 81; see also IV 85-89, IV 106-108.

92. See also Foxhall, "Farming and Fighting in Ancient Greece", p. 143.

93. **Thucydides**, II 20, emphasis added. However, the Achatnians continued to be ardent advocates of the continuation of the war even after the devestation of their land; see Kagan, The Archidamian War, pp. 51-52.

94. **Thucydides**, II 59.

95. The Athenians did offer battle outside their walls in 410 B.C. Interestingly enough, the Peloponnesians declined; Xenophon, **Hellenica**, A I 33-34.

96. **Thucydides**, V 16-17. See also Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Etudes Helleniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

97. See **Thucydides**, III 70-86. The existence in most cities of a democratic faction which was looking to Athens for support, was a

factor that increased the international legitimacy of the Athenian grand strategy.

98. The regime and the customs of Sparta enjoyed high legitimacy among the Spartan citizens, at least until the middle of the third century B.C. Thucydides was one of the many Ancient Greek writers who praised the Spartan polity; see **Thucydides**, I 18, VIII 24. For a praise of the Spartan customs and national character from Archidamus, who countered the accusations of the Corinthians presented in the beginning of the present chapter see **Thucydides** I 84. See also Xenophon, **Lacedaimonion Politeia** and Plutarch, **Lycurgus**. It must be pointed out, however, that Xenophon's and especially Plutarch's accounts present a highly idealised picture of Sparta.

99. For the oligarchic coup and subsequent developments see **Thucydides**, VIII 47-98. For the negotiations of the oligarchs with the Spartans and the alleged conspiracy, see VIII 70-71, VIII 86, VIII 90-96. This oligarchic "fifth column" can be regarded as a predecessor of the fascist "fifth column" that was reputedly in action during the seige of Madrid by Franco's troops in 1939.

100. **Thucydides**, II 65.

101. P.A. Brunt says that the Spartans had to adopt a strategy of attrition; Brunt, "Spartan Policy and Strategy in the Archidamian War", p. 94. However, only the cost-raising aspects of Spartan grand strategy can really be given this name. Annihilation was what the Spartans were chiefly aiming at. Even the annual devestation of Attica primarily aimed at bringing about a decisive land battle. See above, as well as Victor Davis Hanson, **Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) [revised edn.], pp. 131-173.

102. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

103. Arther Ferrill, **The Origins of War from the Stone Age to Alexander the Great** (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), pp. 127-128.

104. That the Spartans had been thinking the war would be decided swiftly by their invasions of Attica and thus had not felt the need to take these measures, can be seen clearly in Brasidas' speech included in **Thucydides**, IV 85. For the Spartan attempt to obtain peace by threatening to establish a fort in Attica see **Thucydides**, V 17.

105. See Platias, "Thucydides On Grand Strategy: Periclean Grand Strategy During The Peloponnesian War", **Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies**, Vol. 6, No 2.

106. Liddell Hart has stated that "the scales were definitely turned against Athens" by Brasidas' expedition, which he calls an indirect approach; Liddell Hart, **Strategy**, p. 13. Both his points are wrong: Athens could still obtain an advantageous peace after Brasidas' expedition, whereas it has already been demonstrated that this move against the Athenian sources of strength constituted a direct approach, in contrast to the psychological game played by the destruction of Attica.

107. **Thucidides** V 75. For Sparta's strategy against the resurgent Argos, culminating in the battle of Mantinea, see **Thucydides**, V 57-76.

108. See the now classic analysis of Victor Hanson, **The Western Way of War** (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1989).

109. This was the chief objection raised against such battles by two of the greatest 18th-century generals, namely Marshal Maurice de Saxe and King Frederick the Great. See their treatises reproduced in Thomas R. Phillips (ed.), **Roots of Strategy: a collection of military classics** (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1943), Ch. 3, 4.

110. For instance, the outcome could have been different at the previously mentioned battle of Plataea, where both sides committed a number of tactical mistakes; see Fuller, **The Decisive Battles of the Western World**, Ch. 1.

111. For the decisive effects of a timely Athenian and Elean intervention in Mantinea see Kagan, **The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition**, p. 134. Of course, other things could have happened as well: the Spartans could have achieved a crushing victory over the

Argives some months earlier (**Thucydides**, V 59-60) or their Corinthian and Boeotian allies could in turn have timely intervened in Mantinea. All this clearly shows that Alcibiades was right when boasting that with his policy (Athens' alliance with Argos) he forced the Spartans "risk their all on the issue of one day's fighting at Mantinea" (**Thucydides**, VI 16). This was something that happened to the Spartans from time to time. For two earlier instances when they were forced to gamble (and win) their hegemony in the Peloponnese with decisive battles in Tegea and Dipaea during the 470s and 460s see **Herodotus**, IX 35; Jones, Sparta, 61; Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, pp. 54-55. It is a pity we do not know more about these battles and their surrounding circumstances.

112. **Thucydides**, VII 18.

113. Gradually the Spartans were brought round to the view that they should suucceed the Athenians in creating an empire of their own in Greece. As was mentioned above, this undertaking was contrary to the Spartan political organisation and led to catastrophe.

114. **Thucydides**, VIII 1.

115. For these battles see Xenophon, **Hellenica**, A I 16-18, A VI 28-35.

116. The Spartan peace proposals came after Cyzicus and Arginusae respectively. Both called for recognition of the status quo as it stood at the time (i.e. Athenian recognition of the losses their empire had sustained) and abandonment of the forts each combatant had on the other's territory; see respectively **Diodorus** 13. 52-53 and **Aristotle, Athenaion Politeia**, 34. 1.

117. For ancient accounts of this battle see Xenophon, **Hellenica**, B I 22-30 and Plutarch, **Lysander**, 10-11. For an excellent modern analysis collating various ancient sources see Donald Kagan, **The Fall of the Athenian Empire** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 386-393.

118. See, among others, André Corvisier and John Childs, "Planning/Plans", in André Corvisier (ed.), **A Dictionary of Military History** (London: Blackwell, 1994), p. 654 and Doyne Dawson, **The Origins of Western Warfare,** (Boulder: Westview, 1996).

119. Delbrück, **History of the Art of War**, Vol. 1, p. 137. For different assessments of Pericles and his grand strategy see among others Donald Kagan, "Athenian strategy in the Peloponnesian War", in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (eds.), **The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 54 and Strauss and Ober, **The Anatomy of Error**, p. 47.

120. A.H.M. Jones calls him "a patriotic, able and courageous king"; Jones, Sparta, p. 71. W.G. Forrest, on the other hand, merely says that Archidamus conducted the invasions of Attica "without alacrity but without obvious incompetence"; Forrest, **A History of Sparta**, p. 112.

121. See Liddell Hart, **Strategy**.

122. For the various levels of strategy see Luttwak, **Strategy**.

123. Liddell Hart, **Strategy**, p. 13.

124. Liddell Hart's attempt to "usurp" all the military successes in History on behalf of the indirect approach seriously weakens his analysis. For a pertinent comment see Martin van Creveld, **Technology and War** (New York: The Free Press, 1989), pp. 5-6.