Thucydides' The Peloponnesian War: Causes, Pretexts and Realist Traditions

Deborah A. Boucoyannis*

RÉSUMÉ

L'article suivant jette la lumière sur l'appropriation de Thucydide par les Réalistes aux niveaux de la justice et de l'éthique. L'analyse de l'auteur révèle à quel point les "vraies causes" méritent d'être examinées judicieusement et ne peuvent se baser sur le discours des acteurs, y compris Thucydide. Une relecture de sa relation des événements nous incite à réfléchir sur le lien entre les apparences et "ce qui s'est passé vraiment" au lieu de se limiter à ce qui a été dit ou non dit.

ABSTRACT

The following article explores the appropriation of Thucydides by the Realists, especially in terms of justice and morality. The analysis suggests that the discernment of "true causes" requires careful examination and cannot be based on pronouncements by actors, of which Thucydides himself was one. His account, read carefully, pushes one to think more deeply about the relation of appearances to "what actually happened", and not just to what was, or was not, said.

Introduction

"The truest explanation", Thucydides tells us of the Peloponnesian War, "although it has been the least often advanced, I believe to have been the growth of the Athenians to greatness, which brought fear to the Lacedaemonians and forced them into war."[1]

This statement, more than any other, has justified the placement of Thucydides at the head of the realist tradition, and his continuing relevance for the examination of the dynamics of international politics.[2] So what does this realism include? First, a focus on power considerations, as opposed to the mealy-mouthed

*The University of Chicago

invocations of justice and morality by the protagonists. Second, realism is distinguished by its attention to what *really* happened, as opposed to what people merely thought: the author signals that he, at least, is not one to fall prey to perceptions. He will go beneath the surface, to the truth. He will provide us with an astute account of the *real* causes, over and against the justifications of the actors involved.

Thucydides strongly emphasises that his own diagnosis of causes went almost unnoticed by the participants. He claims they were mislead by pretexts. The author suggests that the speeches inciting action were guided by questions of morality, justice, vengeance. Power imbalances and the fear they generated were the real causes, but Thucydides claims this knowledge as his own insight, hidden from the view of participants. Yet, in fact, when we look at the speeches that Thucydides chooses to reconstruct for the benefit of his readers, the fear caused by the rise of power of either Sparta or Athens is in fact the *primary* one advanced by the speakers, with a few exceptions. What we find is that, at every point where the interested parties are attempting to convince Sparta (or Athens for that matter) to attack the enemy, the main argument presented is the rise of the opposing power. This rise must be prevented before the opponent acquires a comparative advantage. Fear is consistently invoked, contrary to what the author has told us. Perhaps, then, we might find Thucydides' correction of commonly-held views in what he says when speaking in his own voice, when he is providing us with his own observations on events. Yet again, this does not happen. Rather, it is in the descriptive parts of the account that Thucydides gives us most of the evidence to support the thesis defended in this paper; i.e., that the Corinthians instigated the war.

The hypothesis is the following: Thucydides' famous statement is clearly negated by the evidence the author himself provides on the outbreak of the war on both the levels that it operates. First, he claims that his insight was both hidden and true. His focus on power merely iterates the persistent claims of the minor allies aimed at engaging the two major cities into war. Second, analysis shows that Sparta's fear of Athens was not at the root of systemic instability. Instead it was the Corinthians and the minor allies that pushed Sparta into war. This is what Thucydides' own account shows. Corinthian responsibility has been highlighted before.[3] It has not gained full acceptance, however, as the true, or most significant, causal factor. Rather, the strength of the Athenian

empire and its threatening capacity are seen as ultimately supporting the realist reading of power imbalance generating war. Parts of the analysis, especially the "Pentecontaetia" (I.1-19) are taken to show that, overall, Athenian power was on the rise.[4] True as that may be, one would want to see in Thucydides a successful integration of this factor, Athenian power, into the events surrounding the outbreak of conflict. One would, in other words, want a sustained analysis that showed that decisions made and actions taken were in fact the result of *such* power considerations. What emerges from the account, however, is that Athenian actions are responses to threat, and not independent evidence of power maximisation. Since the actions of participants are presented as the result of other motives, such as particular interests of minor allies, the historian has not proved his thesis. Since, moreover, fear is found to be the main argument advanced by those pleading for war, there is a double discrepancy between what Thucydides says and what he shows.

In sum, the hypothesis seeks to restate the argument for Corinthian instigation of war. It was minor allies, rather than the two main states in the bipolar system of the Greek world, that engaged in power politics and tipped the system into conflict. Sparta is shown by Thucydides to be singularly uninterested in the activities of the Athenians; it is the Corinthians who persist in bringing the matter to their attention. If the argument is restated in a deductive manner, we start with the statements that the author proffers and show the inconsistencies, even contradictions, they involve. They cannot, therefore, be accepted at face value. Instead, the evidence is presented within the narrative itself which leaves Corinth on centre stage.

Some Realist Objections

There are some obvious objections to be made here.

(1) We mentioned that the Spartans were relatively slow in perceiving the Athenian threat, and they only came to be mobilised after persistent pressure by their allies. However, one could still argue that this does not affect the validity of the realist interpretation. Athens *was* a threat, and however Sparta came to grasp this fact, the point is that the latter city reacted correctly, with or without external intervention. The allies, viz Corinth, were not, in such a view, self-interested *agents-provocateurs*, but good realists

who perceived danger and acted in time to thwart it. Yet the following argument maintains that Thucydides failed to show us that the Corinthians were acting because they considered Athens as a threat. Vengeance and honour were at the source of Conrinthian actions, and this is not *Realpolitik*, as Thucydides tells us in his own account of events. When we turn to what the actors say, then fear is invoked. In other words, just the opposite of what the author asserts. No arguments have been provided to support the view that Corinth or Sparta was seriously threatened by Athens, as will be seen in the analysis of developments.

(2) One could still insist that the above conclusion misses the point. All the rhetoric about vengeance and justice could merely be obfuscations. Even if it is Corinth that is the motor of events, it is still power that is fuelling things. We are, after all, talking about the two foremost naval powers of the Greek world, and competition was rife between them. Even if we admit this, however, we are one remove away from our opening statement, Thucydides' verdict. It is Corinth, and not the second pole of the bipolar system, namely Sparta, which was threatened by the rise of Athens. Such a conclusion has important implications for the dynamics of bipolar systems and the propensity of peripheral powers to embroil the main poles in the system. It undercuts the logic developed about the stability of bipolarity in such works as Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*.

(3) The conclusion so far seems to be that it was Corinth who responded to the Athenian rise. At which point the question becomes, was there really a rise in the power of Athens? What evidence do we have for this? What does Thucydides tell us in this regard? One should resist the temptation to make assumptions which resolve these problems, but which are unsupported by the text. We have no other evidence that Athenian power was rising except the authorial pronouncement in the introduction. In my analysis of the fifty years prior to the conflict I show that the evidence on Athenian power is mixed, and that Athens had suffered serious setbacks, as opposed to her unobstructed dominance in the earlier period of the empire. Concrete evidence about how changes prior to the war affected Corinth is not provided. It is argued below that little in the book warrants the view that Corinth was threatened by the rise of Athens. We cannot therefore say that, whatever the motives of the actors, they did act correctly in the end because Athens was a threat. We only think this

because Thucydides told us so, and one of the purposes of this paper is to show that he does not support this with facts. It is a contention, repeated often enough by minor allies.

(4) Yet again, the above argument can meet with a valid objection. Just because Thucydides does not give us sufficient evidence about Athenian aggrandizement in his account, this does not mean that such a power imbalance did not occur. Perhaps the evidence was so obvious to the eyes of contemporaries that Thucydides did not feel compelled to relate it. Upon consideration, the point does not hold water for two reasons. Thucydides' argument was that contemporaries seemed oblivious to the true cause of war. His task was to direct attention to the dynamics of power. If Athens was truly rising, the author's burden lay in conveying this point in no uncertain terms. Yet, as is shown in the first section on the fifty years before the outbreak of the war, this evidence is not forthcoming. Moreover, the historical record itself, as it has been reconstructed in recent historical and archaeological research, does not support the claim of an increase in Athenian power.

(5) The implication of the above argument is that Athens was not really rising. Spartan allies only claimed she was! This leads to another plausible objection to our line of argument: the war may have been the result of misperception. Sparta may have misperceived Athenian intentions and engaged in preventive war under the influence of the Corinthians. The whole war, in this view, would be a "mistake", and though not strictly a case for realist theory, it could be accommodated within the framework of perception theory, a refinement of realism.[5] But this view is equally problematic. Misperception cannot be claimed for the instigators, the Corinthians. Their actions were not the result of mistaken estimations of the adversary, but the purposeful pursual of goals of a non military-strategic nature, as I show in my analysis. And if Sparta had acted without Corinthian propaganda, if she had not have "misperceived" Athenian intentions without allied persistence, it is the interference of the latter, and not misperception, that is at the root of the war.

(6) It might be claimed that the Athenians acted under the misperception that the Spartans were ready to attack them. This is the argument put to them by the Corcyreans to enlist their help. Is this then a case of the security dilemma?[6] Is it action taken in order to increase one's security that inadvertently threatens other

states, causing a spiral unwanted by all? Did Athens misconstrue the actions of the other side, take actions in defence, which then triggered Spartan action? But, for this scenario to hold, the first state in the chain must be taking measures of defensive character. Corinthian actions, which elicit Athenian reaction and are thus at the beginning of the chain, are not, however, motivated by a desire for defence either against the Athenians or the Corcyreans, who draw them into action. There was no threat to Corinth posed by Corcyra. It is, on the contrary, and as shown here, Corinthian overreaction, and not objective threat or its misperception, that motivated the city's actions.

The Aim of the Analysis

The above objections correspond to two broad categories of realist argumentation: neo-realism and the refining theory of perceptions. Our analysis of the Peloponnesian War is not meant as a refutation, emendation or qualification of either. It concerns simply the empirical application of these theories to what is considered a quintessential case study of the effects of changes in the distribution of power. States do respond to shifts in capabilities, they do respond to threats and they do misperceive them. They also abuse power, as the Melian dialogue shows, so eloquently and dramatically. Our question, however, is, is this what caused the war? Our answer: no. The implications of such an insight are primarily practical: it focuses attention on the need to ascertain the conditions under which theories explain real events. One cannot falsify realism, since it obviously captures an aspect of the dynamic of international relations. One can be more rigorous in asserting its relevance to particular events, however, which is, ultimately, its fundamental purpose. Or else one risks accepting justifications of actors, in other words, ideology, as explanations. This is precisely what realism is meant to reject.[7]

The Plan of the Argument

The paper has three sections:

(I) The first section covers the period prior to the outbreak of war, which Thucydides recounts in order to show "how Athens came to be in the position to gain such strength". We argue that the evidence about Athenian power is in fact mixed. There had

been previous moments when Athenian power was incontestably greater. By 432 B.C., Athens had suffered enough losses to suggest that her power was not necessarily on the rise, as it was when the city assumed the leadership of the Hellenic cities. In fact, there is little evidence of any particular event in the period preceding the outbreak of conflict which could justify the perception of threat on the Spartan side.

(II) The second section reveals what determined the Athenian decision to go to war. The paper proceeds by examining, first, the Athenian decision to support Corcyra against Corinth, and second, the events at Poteidea, where again Athens sought to pre-empt a Corinthian-led rebellion.

(III) The third section focuses on the Spartan deliberations over entering into war against Athens, after intensive pleas by the Corinthians and other allies to do so. In each section it is shown how fear was in fact omnipresent in the discussions of the actors involved, and how the Corinthians were instrumental in bringing it to the fore. What do these inconsistencies imply and how do they affect Thucydides' narrative? It is these questions which will be addressed after the analysis of the main events in the outbreak of the war. No systematic interpretation of the motives of Thucydides in adopting such an approach will be undertaken, assuming, in any case, that the discrepancy was not unintentional. Rather, it will be taken for granted, following recent literature on the topic, that the work is a unified whole and that discrepancies are not attributable to a different dating of the passages in question.[8] What will be examined is the *effect* that this paradox entails and the impact it has exercised in subsequent interpretations perusing the work as a classic statement of the realist doctrine of international politics.

I. The Pentecontaetia

According to this argument, the war cannot be seen as the result of the change in the balance of power between the two poles in the system, since one pole, Sparta, was clearly unconcerned about the matter.[9] Equally, if not more important, is the fact that a change in the balance of power is hard to discern in the evidence provided. This issue is examined in the following section.

The main evidence in support of the argument of the rise of Athens is contained in the account of the *Pentecontaetia*, the period of about fifty years prior to the outbreak of the war, 479-435.[10]

Again, the evidence provided therein is mixed. First, we see that Athens had suffered serious defeats by the time of the outbreak of the war. Her invincibility and power were thus much compromised. Logically, Sparta should have been more relaxed at this point in time, as opposed to previous periods of Athenian ascendancy. Yet, even at times when Athens was dominant, not only did Sparta not demur, she actively encouraged her future rival. It was Sparta who conceded the leadership of the Hellenic league to Athens, after the Persian wars. After this, the Athenians embarked on an ambitious program of subjugation of Greek cities, during the 470s and 60s. Yet that did not prevent the Spartans from calling on the Athenians to help them with the slave revolt at Ithome, as allies. One would hardly invite an enemy to assist in the pacification of domestic strife. True, the Spartans ended up sending the Athenians off, as they apparently became distrustful of Athenian presence. They became threatened by the ideological difference of the Athenians, and their "novelties"; this had nothing to do with the rise of Athens: if that had been so, they would never had called on them in the first place.[11]

There had been a number of confrontations between the two alliances in the period between the end of the Persian wars in the 470s and the Thirty Years Truce signed in 446/5 BC. War broke out thirteen years later, in 432. Yet, neither the period before the Truce of 445, nor that before the outbreak of war in 432, saw any rise in the power of Athens. On the contrary, as has been argued elsewhere[12], these were times which demonstrated the limitations of Athenian power. Thucydides claims that the Spartans decided on war because the "point was finally reached when Athenian strength attained a peak plain for all to see and the Athenians began to encroach upon Sparta's allies." At this point Sparta decided "to employ all her energies in attacking, and, if possible, destroying the power of Athens." (I.118).

There is no doubt that Athens had abused the trust that the League had invested in it and that relations with many Greek cities had deteriorated. Athens had successfully turned the Delian league into the Athenian empire. This was symbolised by the transfer of the treasure from Delos to Athens, probably by 454/3.[13] But in the next decade, Athens suffered a series of blows that resulted in the retrenchment of her continental empire. The expedition to Egypt, in the late 450s, was an unmitigated disaster. The battle of Koroneia, in 447, marked her eviction from central Greece. In the following years, there came a series of defections,

by Megara, Euboia, Samos, Byzantium and elsewhere. Though Euboia was recovered, Athens did not manage to consolidate her empire on land: she even faced an invasion of Attica by the Spartans (446), which was only averted by a last minute arrangement, possibly including bribery. The message was clear to the Athenians, and they signed the Truce. In so far as the bilateral relations with Sparta were concerned, Thucydides tells us that Athens, upon conclusion of the peace, returned the territories it had previously taken from the Peloponnesians, namely Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen and Achaea (I.115). Sparta should have been quite content in her evaluation of the threat posed by Athens to the city's own sphere of influence.

So what about the intervening period, between the peace and the outbreak of the war? Is there evidence of Athenian expansionism? Kagan has persuasively shown that the events usually invoked in this respect do not stand up to scrutiny. There are two developments which have drawn attention, Athenian activities in the west; i.e., southern Italy, and the Samian rebellion. Yet, as Kagan points out, had Athens been interested in expanding her control westwards, she would have taken action in certain crucial events, and she did not. When factional strife broke out in Thurii, a city with colonists from many Greek cities, including Athens and Sparta, and the Athenian colonists failed to predominate, Athens did not intervene. Her actions in the Samian rebellion, on the other hand, were not intended to extend her empire, but to consolidate it, as it was threatened by successive secessions.[14]

What about Corinth? It was in the years prior to the war that the enmity of the Corinthians towards the Athenians developed. The reason appears not of great consequence. It was the erection of a wall at the border with Megara, around 460, which prevented Corinth from pursuing her raids in the territory of her neighbour. Yet, when the revolt of Samos broke out in 440, it was Corinth that prevented Sparta, and her allies, from going to the aid of the Samian rebels. It is hard to claim, therefore, that Corinthian hostility to Athens was long-standing, as Thucydides suggests (I.103). In the following section, the causes of the rising hostility between the two naval powers are considered with the conclusion that they are short-term causes; i.e., the Corinthians were prevented by the Athenians from establishing their control over the western colonies. War followed from the Corinthian goal of delimiting Athenian balancing efforts.

II. The Athenian Decision

The first exchange between Athens and Sparta in the account is that of 432. The war had not officially started. Two events that were central for the outbreak of war had taken place; these will be analysed below. In one, Athens assisted Corcyra against an attack from Corinth.[15] The other is the conflict at Poteidea, in Macedonia. Poteidea was an Athenian colony. The Corinthians attempted to foster rebellion there, and Athens tried to pre-empt the loss of her colony. There had occurred, in other words, by the time of the first exchange between the two cities, events which had polarised Athens and Corinth. But it is Sparta that undertook to tackle Athens and Sparta had been prompted by the Corinthians. When the Spartan envoys came to speak, the prospect of war was clearly on the horizon. Heightened Spartan fear does not appear to have been the argument used by the envoys in order to convince the Athenians to make concessions, however. We cannot know for sure, though, since Thucydides does not reconstruct the speeches made by the Spartans at the Athenian Assembly in 432. It seems that in this context, the "truest cause" of power imbalances was indeed absent from discussion. The usual pretexts were advanced, before clearly demanding the independence of the Hellenes. Yet, it is hard to see what impact such contention would have had were it invoked: the Athenians were highly unlikely to forego their assets merely because the Spartans were fearful of them.

i. The Dispute over Corcyra

This, however, does not mean that the Athenians were necessarily unaware of the true motives of the Spartans.[16] It certainly did not mean, as Thucydides implies, that the argument of fear had not been aired in public. Rather it weighed heavily on the deliberations of each side. Two embassies, from Corinth and Corcyra, had already made speeches to the Athenians. In the speeches, the envoys presented arguments why Athens should, or should not, assist Corinth against Corcyra, respectively. The Corcyreans pleaded with Athens to intervene in their favour against the Corinthians; their request had been predicated on the claim of the imminence of war (I.33 &36.1). War was threatened due to the asserted Spartan fear of the rise of Athens. Did the Corcyreans provide any evidence of this fear? They did not, and it is not clear from Thucydides' account where they could find it in

any case. The author later informs us that the Spartans were so unconcerned with the rise of Athens, that every time the Corinthians would try to persuade them to take action, they would summarily dismiss them (I.68.2). Nor is any evidence of the rise of the Athenians given in the first place.

Instead, the Corcyreans started talking about the rise of the Corinthians instead, and it is they who were claimed to be aiming at aggrandizement. The conquest of the Corcyrean fleet would be the first step before an attack on Athens, the Corcyreans argued.[17] The justification for war, as far as the Corcyreans were concerned, was on the basis of pre-emptive strategy[18] [I. 33.4]. There were three major navies in Hellas, those of Athens, Corinth and Corcyra, and if Athens allowed Corinth to annex the latter, Athens would be unable to hold her own.

The Corinthians posed a counter-argument, though in many ways they were saying much the same thing: war was only a step away. If the step was taken, and Athens allied with Corcyra, Corinth would be turned from a potential to an actual enemy. Though true in itself, the significant point is that Corinth only required one action, taken in a defensive mode, to justify an aggressive policy for herself. If so little was needed to turn the second naval power of Hellas against Athens, if the Athenian assistance to a colony outside her sphere of interest was adequate to bring about war[19], Athens was surely right to take whatever defensive measure she thought fit. And so pre-empt she did. This would seem to support a realist, "objective" interpretation of causes. The crucial qualification, of course, is that it is fear felt by *the Athenians* which is here causally relevant. Moreover, opinion about the war was mixed, and hence the fact that it prevailed was far from necessary. Thucydides tells us that at the first vote the Athenians inclined towards the Corinthians [i.e. against war], but "the second day they changed their minds in favour of the Corcyreans" (I.34.1-2).

Looking into the foundations of the argument, however, we note a conspicuous *uncertainty* about material causes. What we need to know is what turned Corinth into a potential enemy of Athens. Thucydides should surely provide us with a hard-nosed explanation of Corinthian enmity. We are provided with two suggestions. One is advanced by the Corinthians themselves, the other by the Corcyreans. Corinthians attacked Corcyra, because, they said, although a colony, she refused to give Corinth due

honours in religious events (I.41.1). The Corcyreans claimed instead that there was a Corinthian plan to undermine Athenian power; if the Corinthians were allowed to subjugate Corcyra, they would possess a navy greater than the Athenian and would use it against the Greek leader.

Accepting any of these arguments poses its own problems. Both sides have strong interests to dissemble the truth. It is the Corcyreans who are invoking the "strategic argument". Given, however, their obvious interest in enlisting Athenian help, we should be sceptical about the argument's validity. The Corinthians, on the other hand, insist that it was honour that motivated them. Yet this sounds like the kind of argument that Thucydides has warned us against. If this was a front for an aggressive policy we should surely have additional evidence. Indeed, we do: Corinthian actions at Megara and Poteidea and her persistent attempts to engage the Spartans against Athens. One should observe that in Corcyra, Athens was a latecomer. We cannot assume that Corinthian agitation was merely a response to Athenian actions; instead, it was a cause, rather than an effect. In sum, the two competing explanations are an accusation and a self-justification in turn. Given external evidence of Corinthian obstreperousness, the Corcyreans are closer to the truth. It was Corinthian aggressive policies that lay at the root of instability and crisis. Her aim was to establish control in western Greece; only Athens stood in the way of the maximisation of her power.

From the above, it can at least be claimed that the Athenians were acting on the basis of sound principles of statecraft, if in their decision to enter war they were in fact seeking to address the Corinthian threat. Such a view departs from most understandings of the causes of the war. As we shall see, Sparta came to be drawn in only after the persistent demands of the Corinthians and nowhere do we find compelling evidence that her interests were the ones threatened. The conclusion so far remains in the realm of power politics. But there has been a crucial qualification. Thucydides' claim, and most realist formulations, are predicated on the objectivity of power imperatives: if Athenian power rose, Sparta had to respond. But here it is Corinth that is responding, and the rise of Athens is far from proven.

ii. The Events at Poteidea

Immediately after the Athenians defeated the Corinthian navy, in alliance with the Corcyreans, "the events over Poteidea led to war". These events further exacerbated the "differences between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians"(I.56.1). But what caused the events at Poteidea, an Athenian ally, though a colony of Corinth? Certainly, Athens was concerned that Corinth might seek revenge. But why did the enmity of the two cities have to transport itself to such a remote theatre? Reading closely we find that when Athens turned to Poteidea, in the north of Greece, the Corinthians were not there yet, nor had they taken any action. Rather, it was Perdikkas, king of Macedon, who was persistently trying to "bring about war between Athens and the Peloponnesians" (I.57.4). On this occasion, Sparta refused the invitation, as it did at the numerous attempts by the Corinthians to drag it into conflict. Next Perdikkas approached Corinth, and then also the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans. These actions alarmed Athens, and, for preemptive purposes, a fleet was sent to Poteidea to prevent a revolt: "For they were afraid that the Poteideans, persuaded by Perdikkas and the Corinthians, would revolt and cause the rest of the allies in Thrace to revolt with them." (I.56.2)

Prudent defensive action was undertaken by Athens, creating the vivid impression again that fear was a prime motive in Athens' actions as well, and not just Sparta's. This, one should note, was a juncture which was crucial in generating the moment after which war did, in fact, become unavoidable. Two clauses, however, show that it was not the imperatives of competition with Corinth that drove developments. One is that Thucydides tells us that action on Poteidea was decided immediately after the battle at Corcyra (I.57.1). How did the Athenians know that Corinthian revenge, assuming it would come, would strike at the colonies of Macedonia? Was this pure political acumen and successful judgement? In fact, another clause, at I.59.2, may lead to a different explanation of Athenian action: we are told that it was troubles in Macedonia which were the initial aim of the expedition. There was, therefore, an independent origin to the Athenian decision. The question at this point is whether the effect of the decision was unintended, in that it sent a wrong signal to the already alarmed Corinthians. If that is so, events from Poteidea onwards can be explained as a clear case of the security dilemma.

This is, in fact, what is at first sight suggested by the account. Moreover, all parties may be seen to be motivated by reasonable, realist concerns. Macedonian actions are amenable to a realist explanation, though they are not at the centre of events. Perdikkas is keen to cause war between the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians because the former had sided with his brother Philip: side-tracking Athens could conceivably help reinforce his own position in Macedonia. Corinth became active on the issue *after* Poteidea had revolted and *after* the Athenians had sent their ships to the region. When it came to putting together a force, it was under Aristus, son of Adeimantus, "who had always been on friendly terms with the Poteideans". It was "chiefly because of friendship for him that most of the soldiers from Corinth went along as volunteers"(I.60.2). Corinthian action on Poteidea was therefore a response to Athenian initiative. And the chief motive of Corinthian action? Awareness of the danger of Athenian action and of the possibility that it would extend against them (I.60.1).

It is instances like these which seem to buttress the overall interpretation of Thucydides as an analyst in the realist tradition. Yet, this is perhaps misleading. What had prodded Athenian action? The catalyst for it was the knowledge that Corinth was harbouring plans of vengeance against her. And these plans were not based on fear. The first cause of war, and the ground for Corinthian enmity, was that the Athenians "had fought with the Corcyreans against them in time of truce"(I.55.2). Her enmity, that Athens had initially feared, stemmed from a desire to take vengeance on the Athenians, for having helped the Corcyreans (I.56.2). The previous conflict between the two cities, regarding the Megarian border, in 462BC, had long been forgotten. By 440 BC, Corinth was sufficiently well predisposed towards Athens. When the Samian revolt broke out, it was Corinth that prevented the interference of the Peloponnesian league. Passions, not interests, are the prime movers, or at least Thucydides offers us little to suggest an alternative. And of passions it is honour and justice, and not fear, which is at stake.[20]

It has been argued so far that Athenian actions in Poteidea were clearly defensive in character. Athens feared the machinations of her enemies. Not just of the Macedonian king, but, especially, of the Corinthians. And the reason we are given for Corinthian enmity was the unwelcome intervention of the Athenians in favour of the Corcyreans. Corinth was not concerned with a rise in Athenian power, it was annoyed that Athens prevented Corinth from

having her way in the Ionian sea. This prevented Corinth from acquiring hegemony in western Greece and from building up a navy which would have surpassed the Athenian one. The possibility of Corinth subduing Corcyra would mean that her naval predominance would come to an end and Athens would be threatened. Action was necessary.

In conclusion, Athens was not over-reacting, and these events were not mere pretexts. If that is so, we cannot see them as evidence of a policy of aggression and wanton expansion; nor can we accept the main claim of the book of eventual Spartan reaction as caused through fear. But if Athens' policy was not expansionary but defensive and pre-emptive,[21] then it is Spartan action that appears aggressive and expansionary. This is, in fact, a compelling argument. It has taken two forms. G.E.M. de Ste Croix has supported the view of Spartan foreign policy as relentlessly aggressive from the time of the first Peloponnesian war, which Thucydides does not deal with much.[22] An alternative, and more nuanced, view is that of Anton Powell, who argues that Sparta only attacked when the opportunity arose, when, that is, Athens was weak. Far from the rise of Athens, then, it is the city's temporary weakness that elicits a Spartan offensive.

III. The Spartan Deliberations

The Corinthians maintain the initiative in the account. The siege of Poteidea caused unquiet, so they summoned the allies to Lacedaemon. They claimed that the Athenians had broken the truce and were "wronging the Peloponnesus".[23] They were joined by the Aeginitans, who "took a leading part in fomenting the war"(I.67.1-2). It was only after this intense "lobbying" that the Spartans called the rest of the allies, including the Megarians. The latter presented many grievances, chiefly their exclusion from Athenian ports. "Lastly the Corinthians, after they had first allowed the others to exasperate the Lacedaemonians, spoke as follows...". What followed showed clearly that not only had the Corinthians on numerous previous occasions attempted to co-opt the Spartans in their various quibbles with Athens, but that the Spartans were so unconcerned about the rise of Athenian power (I.69.5), that they sent the envoys off, accusing them of pursuing their own private interest (I.68.2).[24] The Corinthians accused the Spartans of only taking an interest at an advanced stage of the

dispute, after all the allies had expressed their grievances. This made it most suitable for them to speak last, as they "ha[d] the gravest accusations to bring". But what are these? Not enslavement, because it is not the Corinthians who have been enslaved (the wrongs referred to have already occurred and are not as yet projected to the future).[25] Could the greatest crimes only be that they have been "insulted by the Athenians, [and] abandoned by you [the Spartans]"(I.68.2)?

The Corinthians claimed that Athens was surely preparing for war against them, but when they came to offer evidence on Athenian intentions of war, the crucial (and only) arguments invoked were two. One was the purloining of Corcyra, which we know that the Athenians pursued on second thoughts and only because they believed the war "would have to be faced". The second was the besieging of Poteidea, which, as analyzed, was a pre-emptive, and not offensive, move, against Corinthian and Macedonian interference. Thucydides did not give us anything that would suggest that an offensive intent was prevalent in Athens apart from the claims of the Corcyreans [I.56]. The author expects us to believe that the Spartans somehow decided on war on their own accord, that they were uninfluenced by what the allies said. Certainly, allied complaints were not enough to spur Spartans into action -witness the many failed attempts of the Corinthians. But then we need to be able to point to some objective change in the distribution of power that would motivate the Spartans at this moment. Yet the only evidence we have of movement in the system relates to Athenian intervention in the two Corinthian colonies. But this is exactly what the allies have been talking about. If there had been an external factor, over and above the statements of the Corinthians that was influencing Spartan decisions, Thucydides is strangely silent about it.

Is this again a case of a security dilemma? Were the actions of Athens, undertaken for defensive reasons, perceived as offensive in intent, thus eliciting a response, based on fear, by her adversary? Were reactions to Athenian moves then reasonable and justifiable, from the perspective of *Realpolitik*? Seemingly not since the main reason for this derives from the crucial distinction between who we take the adversary to be. We must, of course, take seriously the claim that Spartan fear lay at the roots of the war. Yet the only party that can reasonably be held to have reacted to Athenian moves were the Corinthians. As mentioned above, the Spartans had overall been so unconcerned with

for what is present? But with a view to what shall be hereafter, we should devote every effort to the task at hand..." In this speech, they admitted that they are stirring up war, but considered it just because they had been wronged and had suffered crimes by the Athenians. These were not specified, however, other than the hatred caused by Megarian decree (I.121). The Corinthians were at pains to assert, like Pericles (I.140) that the fighting is not over mere boundary lines (I.102.2). If war was not entered into, again as argued by Pericles (I.151), slavery would surely follow. The parallels between the two speeches are striking. Pericles has to twice repeat that the issue of the Megarian decree was far from a trivial matter. This is good evidence that some people, at least, did in fact consider it as such. Rather he strove to convince the Assembly that "this trifling thing involves nothing less than the vindication and proof of your political conviction." (!)

The Corinthian speech was however more persuasive, for modern realist readers at least. The interjection of prudent maxims adds *gravitas* to the claims: in I.124 the action was defended as being in the common interest, which is the surest policy for individuals and states to follow. If they did not defend the Poteideans, the rest of Hellas will soon suffer the same fate [124, 1-2]. This, of course, would certainly be true, and prudent, pre-emptive action would be necessary, *provided* that Athens had been shown to have an expansionary policy, of which Poteidea was only the first step. We have seen that this was far from true: Athens was there to put down Perdikkas and prevent the loss of tributaries, not the acquisition of new ones. The latter problem would never have arisen without the fear of Corinthian *vengeance*, hardly what a realist, rational actor would be expected to indulge in. The reasons for which this cannot be seen as an example of a security dilemma have already been argued. The first state must be acting in self-defence, but Corinth was trying to maximise her control over her colonies.

The Corinthians urged the allies to recognize that they were now facing the inevitable [120, 2]. The opening of the speech was predicated on pre-emptive logic: if action is not taken now, the consequences will be beyond control. The case, they argued, was strategically favourable for the Spartans. They admitted that it was mainly the cities that lie on the trade routes that fear Athens' power [120.2], but if the cities in the interior did not act then, "the danger may possibly some day reach them". In the Warner translation of the text, the possible has become certain: "it will not be long before the danger spreads"[27], the Corinthians are made to say.

for what is present? But with a view to what shall be hereafter, we should devote every effort to the task at hand..." In this speech, they admitted that they are stirring up war, but considered it just because they had been wronged and had suffered crimes by the Athenians. These were not specified, however, other than the hatred caused by Megarian decree (I.121). The Corinthians were at pains to assert, like Pericles (I.140) that the fighting is not over mere boundary lines (I.102.2). If war was not entered into, again as argued by Pericles (I.151), slavery would surely follow. The parallels between the two speeches are striking. Pericles has to twice repeat that the issue of the Megarian decree was far from a trivial matter. This is good evidence that some people, at least, did in fact consider it as such. Rather he strove to convince the Assembly that "this trifling thing involves nothing less than the vindication and proof of your political conviction." (!)

The Corinthian speech was however more persuasive, for modern realist readers at least. The interjection of prudent maxims adds *gravitas* to the claims: in I.124 the action was defended as being in the common interest, which is the surest policy for individuals and states to follow. If they did not defend the Poteideans, the rest of Hellas will soon suffer the same fate [124, 1-2]. This, of course, would certainly be true, and prudent, pre-emptive action would be necessary, *provided* that Athens had been shown to have an expansionary policy, of which Poteidea was only the first step. We have seen that this was far from true: Athens was there to put down Perdikkas and prevent the loss of tributaries, not the acquisition of new ones. The latter problem would never have arisen without the fear of Corinthian *vengeance*, hardly what a realist, rational actor would be expected to indulge in. The reasons for which this cannot be seen as an example of a security dilemma have already been argued. The first state must be acting in self-defence, but Corinth was trying to maximise her control over her colonies.

The Corinthians urged the allies to recognize that they were now facing the inevitable [120, 2]. The opening of the speech was predicated on pre-emptive logic: if action is not taken now, the consequences will be beyond control. The case, they argued, was strategically favourable for the Spartans. They admitted that it was mainly the cities that lie on the trade routes that fear Athens' power [120.2], but if the cities in the interior did not act then, "the danger may possibly some day reach them". In the Warner translation of the text, the possible has become certain: "it will not be long before the danger spreads"[27], the Corinthians are made to say.

The Athenian embassy which by chance happened to be in Sparta, replied to the first Corinthian speech with a totally unsolicited justification of the Athenian empire. This has caused much perplexity in commentaries, some of which have even doubted the plausibility of the speech.[28] Thucydides himself asserted that it was not the aim of the Athenians to be provocative, but rather to counsel the Spartans caution (I.71.1). (Athenian deliberations on the issue were initiated the previous year, during the dispute over Corcyra.) Clifford Orwin has correctly identified fear as the main theme of the speech, but he claims that Athenian emphasis on this point was a miscalculation: they were hoping on the deterrent effect of their disquisition on the justice of the Athenian power and the role that fear played in its construction. What is not noticed, in this, as in other accounts, is the discrepancy between Thucydides' statement concerning the final Spartan decision and the author's *own* previous account. The vote for war, he tells us, prevailed "not so much because [the Spartans] were persuaded by the influence of the speeches of the allies, as by fear of the Athenians, lest they become too powerful, seeing that the greater part of Hellas was already subject to them"(I.88).

Yet when one looks a few pages back at what it was that the allies were saying, *at least the allies that we the readers have heard*, it is *exactly* the problem of the rise of Athenian power and the need for pre-emptive action that the Corinthians expounded. What was the point of the excursion on Athenian character other than to buttress the impression of an imperialist, expansionary power? In fact, Thucydides recapitulates in a nutshell the argument that the Corinthians so strenuously were trying to put forth, and which was reiterated in the allied congress at Sparta in more direct form.

Even if we want to accept the claim that the speeches had no effect, we still need the objective change that accounts for the turn-around of Spartan policy. And, as mentioned, the only such change that may be discerned is Athenian interference in Corinthian affairs, which was meant for defensive purposes.

It is not necessary to ascertain the purpose of the author here. The effect upon the reader is clearly the creation of a solid impression of the objectiveness of fear, which Athenian arrogance shows to be fully justifiable. The Athenian speech played an effective rhetorical role in underlining the validity of the claims made by the Corinthians, in presenting Athenian expansionism as a

dangerous and unrelenting menace. Should the Spartans have been left with any doubt that the power of Athens constituted a threat, the envoys managed to totally dispel it, or so it seems. The point is whether it is not the Spartans who are, in fact, the targets of impressions, but the readers themselves. Authorial interventions discretely bias the account. They lean heavily towards Thucydides' own causal statement, even though he admits that other factors were in play. Contrary to his assertion at I.88, where fear is the motive prior to the speeches of the Spartans, he asserts that "the opinions of the majority tended to the same conclusion, namely that the Athenians were already guilty of injustice, and that they must go to war without delay"(I.79.2).[29] How is it that after the speeches of Archidamus and Sthenelaides, none of which play on the notion of fear, the final decision is asserted to be based on fear?[30] Could the Spartans, famous for their slowness and conservatism, change opinion after one speech, and, moreover, be *uninfluenced* by the Corinthians, who were harping on the same tune? Why does Thucydides draw such a false distinction? Fear seems to weigh heavily on the mind of the reader, and it is Thucydides' narrative which accounts for that. In fact, one reason that has been suggested refers to the explicit threat levelled by the Corinthians, that unless the Spartans act now, they will seek another alliance (I.71.4).[31]

Though this factor went almost unnoticed in the discussions, it is worthwhile to examine its importance. This is perhaps a cause of Spartan mobilisation which fits Thucydides' bill: though least heard in debates, the threat of Corinthian defection may have been the only fear that could goad the Spartans into action. It has been argued repeatedly here that Athens cannot be seen to be rising. If however Corinth departed from the Peloponnesian alliance, then Sparta would be seriously weakened. If that is so, it was clearly not considerations of the rise of Athens that motivated Sparta, but a threat to the internal balance of the league, which was issued by the Corinthians as a tool of coercion in order to fulfil her rather feeble objectives.

Such a view would allow us to refine the hypothesis mentioned at the end of the previous section, by Powell. It was not merely Spartan opportunism that determined the outbreak of the war. In any case, such an explanation does not differ radically from that of de Ste Croix, who posits Spartan expansionism and aggression as the independent variable. It merely gives us the *timing* of Spartan action. Sparta, in this view, harboured hostile and power

maximising intentions, but given Athenian superiority, could only act on them at time of Athenian weakness. But such a view cannot account for why Sparta repeatedly sent Corinthians away and refused to engage Athens, even at a time we know Athens to be weak, comparatively. The hypothesis defended here about the threat of Corinthian defection, which would radically alter Sparta's strength at sea, can accommodate both aspects of the situation. We cannot, of course, know for sure that Corinth had not threatened defection in the past, as we do not have evidence on these instances. But it is the only hypothesis that is not contradicted by the evidence that Thucydides gives us.

In such a case, it would be Archidamus who came closer to an adequate description of the dynamics of the situation: he warned against attacking a strong enemy, by cause of being "egged on by the complaints of our allies"(I.82.5). "For complaints, indeed, whether brought by states, or by individuals, may possibly be adjusted; but when a whole confederacy, for the sake of individual interests undertakes a war of which no man can foresee the issue, it is not easy to end it with honour."[I.77,6]. For Thucydides, Archidamus was sagacious and prudent, but he tempers these appraisals by inserting that he was only reputed as such (I.79.2).

Sthenelaides then took centre stage: he claimed boldly that they should not put off avenging the wrongs of their allies, which a few lines further down, and without explanation, in a move that replicates that of the Corinthians, became wrongs against Sparta herself. The topic did not require much consideration. He advised the Lacedaemonians to vote in a way that befits Sparta, and not to allow the Athenians to become greater (I.86.5). The final argument was moral: they should stand by their allies and avenge the wrong-doer; a moral injunction serves as a finishing statement. As the Appella decisions were issued by shouting, and Sthenelaides could not determine which opinion was loudest, "wishing to make the assembly more eager for war" by a clear demonstration of their sentiment, he called a second vote, a rather curious incident [87,2]. A large majority thought the Athenians had broken the treaty but wanted to consult with the rest of the allies as to whether they should go to war.

IV. Conclusion

Thucydides seems to have failed to provide adequate justification for his claims at the nodal points of the developments which led to the war. All we are allowed to say on this basis is not that the war happened because of Spartan fear of the rise of Athens, but because of the Corinthian and allied instigations. These cannot be claimed to be responding to an Athenian threat, as I have argued. There has not been a convincing presentation of how Athens was actually threatening other states. And, moreover, the state that was reacting to Athens was Corinth, not Sparta. The question then arises as to whether this is an illustration of realist theory -which in its prescriptive and descriptive form, claims superiority on the basis of its prudence and its attention to objective material forces which threaten the security of states. If one applies the same standards to determine whether a war should have happened according to the dictates of prudence, it is not clear that the Peloponnesian war illustrates realist principles. Given that it is changes in distribution of power and the threat of one state acquiring hegemony that provides a realist cause for war, then the Peloponnesian war does not provide us with such a cause. To subsume this case under the theoretical umbrella of realism would mean accepting dubious motives as adequate to launch a systemic war. But this would imply that realist theory changes premises depending on whether it is descriptive or prescriptive. If the prescriptive dicta are abandoned in the evaluation of past events, then the theory is tantamount to asserting that wars happen because they happen. If, in other words, we accept Corinth's motives as realist, the definition of realism is stretched beyond recognition. The theoretical purchase of realism would thus disappear.

The point is not necessarily that wars are the result of failures of subjective reason; indeed, Hermocrates' statement, that war is not the product of ignorance, nor is it deterred by fear, but will happen "if [one] thinks he will get some advantage from it"(IV,59) is as true as all the *Realpolitik* maxims that guide policy. Nor is the point that rises in power do not generate fear and cause war. It is, rather, that Thucydides' account is a careful construction which however fails to corroborate its own claims. Whatever "insights" into human nature are offered, perfectly true in themselves as they may be, they fail to account for the actions that *he* is describing. The question is not whether wars do happen in the way the author describes, it is whether *this* war did so. As a case

study it should corroborate the theory, and as argued, it does not. Rather, the author has placed overwhelming weight on the *justifications* of actors, or rather instigators, themselves, instead of evaluating the "true" causes. What this analysis has aimed to suggest is that the discernment of "true causes" requires careful examination and cannot be based on pronouncements by actors, of which Thucydides himself was one. His account, read carefully, pushes one to think more deeply about the relation of appearances to "what actually happened", and not just to what was, or was not, said.

ENDNOTES

1.Thucydides, **History of the Peloponnesian War**, transl. C.F. Smith, Loeb Class Library, 1991,I.23.6.

2. Thucydides has formed the fountainhead of the most influential statements of realism, cf. Robert Gilpin, **War and Change in World Politics**, New York, 1981, M.W. Doyle, **Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism**, W.W. Norton & Co., 1997, pp. 49-92, Robert O. Keohane, "Realism, Neorealism and the study of World Politics", **Neorealism and its critics**, ed. R.O. Keohane, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p.6.

3. C.f. Donald Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, Cornell, 1969, pp. 369-72.

4. C.f. Donald Kagan, **The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War**, Cornell, 1969, pp. 369-372.

5. R. Jervis, **Perception and Misperception in International Politics**, Princeton University Press, 1976.

6. The Security Dilemma results from the fact that actions taken in order to enhance the security of a state will increase its capabilities and thus inadvertently increase its threatening power vis-a-vis its neighbours. The rationale received a classic formulation by R. Jervis, "Co-operation under the Security Dilemma", **World Politics**, 31, 2, January 1978.

7. This point is insightfully made by Jack Snyder, in his analysis of the myth of security through expansion in pre-war Germany and Japan, in **Myths of Empire**, Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1991.

8. Cf. Jacqueline de Romilly, **Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism**, tr. Philip Thody, Oxford, 1963.

9. Gilpin draws attention to this discrepancy, in his **War and Change in World Politics**, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 90.

10. Thucydides, **History**, I.89-117.

11. Thucydides gives a clear explanation of Spartan change of heart. The Spartans invited the Athenians in the first place due to their reputation for siege operations. But once the operation was not unsuccessful, the Spartans "grew afraid of the enterprise and the unorthodoxy of the Athenians; they reflected too that they were of a different nationality and feared that, if they stayed on in the Peloponnese, they might listen to the people in Ithome and become the sponsors of some revolutionary policy." It was the ideological threat to domestic institutions which threatened the Spartans, not the power of Athens; I.102, Warner translation.

12. Anton Powell, **Athens and Sparta: Constructing Greek Political and Social History from 478 BC**, Routledge, 1988, pp. 59-135; Kagan, *op.cit.*, pp. 75-203.

13. Powell, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

14. Kagan, *op.cit.*, 154-179.

15. Corcyra is an island in North-Western Greece, and had been a colony of Corinth.

16. Both in the case of the Athenian aid being rejected at the Helot revolt at Ithome and in the Spartan demand that the Athenians do not pursue the building of the long walls, Athenians were well aware of the true motives in Spartan actions.

17. We are obviously here not dealing with unit-states, but with alliances, where the rise in the power of one ally (Corinth) is an automatic addition to the strength, and threatening capacity, of another (Sparta).

18. "To forestall their schemes rather than to counteract them."

19. Though Corcyra was the third naval force in Greece, it fell outside the sphere of interest of both Athenians and Corinth. Corinthian engagement in Epidamnus could hardly be seen as reflecting vital interests of the city. Motives for undertaking the expeditions are not presented by Thucydides as anything other than emotive. In fact, as subsequent Corinthian argumentation to

the Spartans shows, it was Athenian expansion around the mainland of Greece and the Peloponnese which constituted the real problem.

20. So far my account seems to suggest that most of the weight of "responsibility"rests on the shoulders of the Corinthians, with the Athenians emerging as mere reactors. Yet, the Macedonian expedition indicates that the matter is not that simple: Athenians were surely taking initiatives. Moreover, the Poteideans would perhaps have never ended up in Corinth had the Athenians not dismissed their embassy seeking an agreement (I.58.1). They would consequently have not incited the Spartans and Corinthians in taking up the cause of their colony in Potidea, which Thucydides asserts they did as a response to pleas from the region and would presumably not have done so without them. Athenians could have prevented escalation by more temperate treatment of the embassy. This, however, does not undermine my argument. What is needed is the weighing of the causal relevance of these points in the decision-making of the Corinthians, and there, I argue, it is not fear that was principally motivating, but considerations of honour. The point is further supported by the fact that at no further point was Corinth really threatened by Athens.

21. One would have to engage in a thorough historical examination of the period in order to show that the Thucydidean claim of the rise of the power of Athens is problematic in the least, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. For a convincing, though not unproblematic, argument of this kind cf. Donald Kagan, *op.cit.*, esp. his chapters on "The First Peloponnesian War"and "The Years of Peace", pp. 75-202; and also pp. 357-8, with reference to an early formulation of the same position by E.Meyer, **Forschungen zur alten Geschichte**, II, Hale, 1899.

22. G.E.M. de Ste Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War, Cornell**, 1972.

23. How the siege of a revolting Athenian colony was "wronging the Peloponnesus" is, of course, another matter.

24. The Spartan reluctance to enter wars, especially at a distance, was primarily due to the fear of a revolt of the Helots; c.f. Kagan, *op.cit.*, p.26, also referring back to Georg Busolt, **Die Lakedaimonier und Ihre Bundesgenossen**, Leipzig, 1878, for an early elaboration of the argument.

25. See below, the analysis of I.69.2-5, where this argument is made.

26. The obvious exception is the promise that the magistrates of the Lacedaemonians gave to the Poteideans, that they would invade Attica if the Athenians attacked their city (I.58.1). But the Athenians did attack, and as the ensuing account will attempt to show, Spartan deliberation had to go through many stages in order to arrive at the decision to fulfill the promise.

27. Thucydides, **History of the Peloponnesian War**, trans.. Rex Warner, Penguin, 1972, p. 104.

28. Cf. Clifford Orwin, **The Humanity of Thucydides**, Princeton University Press, 1994, n.31, p. 44.

29. This was, of course, wrong, as the Spartans themselves came to acknowledge later. The question is then, why did the Spartans mislead themselves into thinking so, and whether this was the final consideration in choosing war.

30. Though, of course, Sthenelaides' last phrase, "And do not allow the Athenians to become greater"(I.86.5) returns to our theme, but does not seem adequate to account for the change in opinion.

31. G.E.M. de Ste Croix, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War**, Cornell, p. 59-60. Though as de Ste Croix notes, the most likely alternative for Corinth would have been Argos, which had concluded a 30 Years Peace with Sparta in 451/50. This peace agreement was still strong. There was, in other words, not much that Corinth could actually do, except "bandwagon" with Athens. That seems highly unlikely, though.