

SIDMUN

XVIII

Historical

Armaghan Behlum (SHS)

Reginald Diedonne (ELM)

Clare Haugh (FPM)

Kerri-Leigh Hessemen (NHP)

Cori Ilardi (HFC)

History of the Problem

The Athenian Empire has spent the past few decades engaged in a series of wars with Sparta and the Peloponnesian League. The Peloponnesian Wars began after the end of the Greco-Persian War, after Persia had been repelled from Greek land by the Athenian Empire. The absence of a common enemy allowed for all rivalries to be once again become ignited. Sparta and its allies, worried about the recent growth and strength of the Athenian Empire, challenged Athens. The First Peloponnesian War began and lasted 15 years until the Thirty Years' Peace was signed in 445 BCE, under which Sparta and Athens consented that each had the right to control their individual alliance. The peace lasted a few years until new conflicts arose between the city-states. Athens attacked Potidaea which was both an ally and a colony of Corinth which was an ally of Sparta. Corinth supported its colony and Sparta supported Corinth in war against Athens. The Thirty Years' Peace was considered void at this point and a series of wars began that have lasted till the present day.

Current Status

Four hundred Athenian people, dissatisfied by the work of their democratic leaders, arranged for a coup in 411 BCE which successfully established an oligarchy in charge of the Athenian Empire. The four hundred have been accepted as the new leaders of the Athenian Empire. The committee is the first session meeting of the four hundred. Among the four hundred are strategoi (generals) that have engaged in the wars for the past several years, rich land owners who carry the financial burden of the war, and oracles that have been chosen by their temples to represent their respective gods. The four hundred must now decide the future of the Athenian Empire.

Proposed Solutions

The four hundred Athenians in the new council can choose either continuing the war with the Spartans under the new and still struggling government or ending the fighting and trying to build up the Athenian government without the stresses of war. If the council chooses to continue their war against the Peloponnesian League they must understand that the Athenian Empire is not invincible and the war has a high probability of ending badly for the city-state. A continuation of fighting would mean that the major generals of Athens would have to go out and risk their lives in battles, and some people may be against such a sacrifice. If the Peloponnesian League was destroyed, the Athenian Empire would have to take on the responsibility of controlling the newly

conquered lands. The acquirement of such large amounts of land and people would mean a more disjointed and spread out government, which could be disastrous.

The Athenian Council can also choose to seek peace with their neighbors, but they must remember that the Peloponnesian League may neither be entirely trust worthy or willing to enter a peace. They may also be suspicious of any peace offerings since they believe the Athenian Empire was the one that broke the Thirty Years' Peace. War might be imminent no matter how much either side wishes for peace. The four hundred Athenians will also have to take into careful consideration the feelings of their patron goddess and all the other gods. Angering any one god can have serious repercussions, though peace can be made with the gods through the use of their respective temples.

In 411, the council attempted peace with the Spartans on the basis of returning to existing positions, but when the Spartans refused such a peace unless the Athenians gave up control of the sea, the peace offering was revoked. During the actual war, the council continued its fighting and had some victories but also had some devastating losses. The continuation of the fighting brought strife to the Athenian government and many disagreements arose because the city-state was in war.

When making solutions for this council, you must think about the repercussions that war or peace will bring to Athens. The economy, the people, the land, and the government must all be kept in mind. Both choices have some negatives, but there is a

way that will be better for the Athenian people and the risk of war or peace must be taken.

Bloc Positions

Strategoï (Generals):

These leaders were in charge of the Athenian army while the empire was still a democracy and their authority has been carried over since the revolution. The soldiers follow the commands of their strategos, but they owe their allegiance to the Athenian Empire and the current oligarchic leaders. The strategoi do not wish for the war to end, rather they want to repay Sparta for all the Athenian lives that were lost. Years of bloodshed have caused the Athenian strategoi to view Spartans as monsters that must be exterminated. However, the strategoi do care for the lives of their men and might be willing to compromise if the situation becomes too difficult.

- *Strategoï Thrasybulus* - supported the moderate oligarchic revolution that instated the current government. He aided the revolution on Samos, which helped to establish him as a skilled and powerful general of the army. Without his influence the Samos portion of the revolution would probably have failed.

- *Strategoï Alcibiades* - once exiled from Athens, but he was able to influence the aristocrats of the Athenian empire into revolting against the democratic government. He now holds a position as one of the great generals of navy of Athens and has promised Persian support for the Athenians.
- *Strategoï Theramenes* - another supporter of the current moderate oligarchic government. His influence is what allowed Alcibiades plan to be followed and his stance on the issue has brought many Athenians to the side of the oligarchic government.
- *Strategoï Cleon* - one of the most adamant supporters of the war against Sparta and the Peloponnesian League. He was a major general in the previous Peloponnesian War and opposed the peace as he did not believe it would be a lasting solution. Cleon was not directly involved in the oligarchic revolution but he supports their authority and the government looks towards him with respect.
- *Strategoï Pericles the Younger* - the illegitimate son of the famed Athenian leader Pericles, Pericles the Younger has just achieved prominence as a military general. Due to his heritage, many look towards him as a source of new generation leadership and solidarity with the oligarchic council.

Landowners:

The landowners are the rich men of Athens. They control most of the land, money, and crops in Athens. War has been difficult on them because it has destroyed their most profitable trading partners and much of their land/crops. The landowners also finance the war against the Peloponnesian League and each year the war drags on the landowners lose more money. However, they do stand to gain more wealth if Athens is successful in destroying Spartan control over land. The landowners would look favorably upon any option that may allow them to acquire more wealth.

- *Paralus* - One of the two living legitimate sons of Pericles, the leader of Athens during its golden age. He and his brother survived the plague in 429 B.C.E. and have lived the past few decades as wealthy landowners. Paralus was carefully educated by his father and shown himself to be a resourceful peacemaker.
- *Xanthipus* - The other living legitimate son of Pericles, Xanthipus supports total war on Sparta. Having loss both his sons to battles with the Peloponnesian War and seeing what he considered incompetence on the part of the former democratic government, Xanthipus is one of the leaders at the forefront of the oligarchy.
- *Laches* - Once at strategoi in 427 B.C.E., Laches is now a prominent aristocrat. He holds a grudge against Strategoi Cleon due to previous allegations of wrong doings

after a botched invasion of Sicily, but is willing to work towards the common good of all Athenians.

- *Pagondas* - Another former strategoi, Pagondas found great success in the battles of the previous Peloponnesian Wars, but he also experiences firsthand the terrible losses violence can cause. Tired of years of war, Pagondas looks towards peace.
- *Thucydides* - Acclaimed orator and respected historian, Thucydides has kept a record of the progress of Athens to the present day. His understanding of history and studies of human nature give him insights into the causes of the current conflict, but also makes him aware of fact that war does not solve problems unless one side is completely eradicated, which is too great of a loss.

Oracles/Mythology:

According to the established lore of the lands of Greece, the Greek gods and goddesses have also chosen sides in the conflict. The oracles of the temples of each individual god understand their wishes clearly. Oracles have been selected from each temple and each represents the wish of their god in the oligarchic council. The opinions of oracles carry as much weight as that of a landowner or a strategois as all the Greeks and the oracles themselves truly believe that the oracles represent the gods. Failure to act upon the

wishes of the gods or goddesses one is meant to represent can have very serious repercussions on the war.

- *Athena* - the goddess of wisdom and the patron goddess of Athens has made clear her desire to see the Athenian Empire grow and prosper. The Oracles of Athena have much to gain if the Athenian empire is expanded as it would mean an increase of their influence. Athena is not against peace unless it means a loss for her beloved empire.
- *Ares* - the god of war supports total war and will only be pleased if he sees more bloodshed. The Oracles of Ares receive more visits and patronage in times of war and a sudden end to the war will also mean a sudden end to their benefits. Excessive losses of patronage will not be looked upon favorably by Ares.
- *Poseidon* - god of the seas is still angry that the Athenian people did not choose him to be their patron god. Though the Athenian navy is superior in comparison to all other forces on the waters, Poseidon has promised them that war will be difficult for them on the seas and expresses his desire for the end of war. The Oracles of Poseidon are of special importance as the losses in the navy will have devastating consequences on the Athenian army.
- *Aphrodite* - the goddess of love would rather neither side kill another man. The Oracles of Aphrodite support immediate peace. Though Aphrodite herself may not

be one to seek retribution for being ignored, her husband Hephaestus the god of volcanoes will.

- *Zeus*- the king of the gods wishes that both sides resolve their conflicts as quickly as possible. Disagreements between mortals and gods have caused unwarranted stresses and if angered Zeus will take drastic actions.

Questions a Position Paper must answer

1. What is your person's viewpoint towards the war?
2. What is your person's current economic status?
3. How does your economic status affect your viewpoint towards the war?
4. What role does religion play towards your person's view point in the war?
5. Should the war be stopped or re-ignited?
6. What solutions are feasible? How will they positively/negatively affect Athens?
7. How does your person expect the outcome of the war?
8. How would losing the war affect your person?
9. What influence may your person have had on passed events?
10. Is it possible to have a war with the Peloponnesian League and still maintain stability?

Questions a Resolution must answer

1. Will the war be peacefully resolved or will additional military options be needed?
2. How will the Athenian economy be affected by the war and how will the government help to build and keep a strong economy?

3. How will the new government keep control of its people and allies?
4. How will the navy and army be rebuilt and strengthened after the war years?
5. How will the new government run and who will be in charge?
6. What will happen to Sparta and its allies if a victory is won over them?