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**GUERRILLA WARFARE IN HEGEMONIC WARS:
ATHENIANS' EXPEDITION TO AETOLIA**

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(υπογραφή)

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1.Introduction

In the chronicle of mankind, military history has had the spotlight for the most part. Within this spectrum, 'Great' wars, men, states and battles have often held the leading part. Thucydides' *Histories*, one of the earliest accurate accounts of war, is full of such events, but it does not shy away from its terrible sides and the smaller instances, rather it aims to convey meticulously the severity of all aspects of war. One rather small event in the history of the Peloponnesian war, was an Athenian expedition in the mountains of Aetolia, which was ambushed by the indigenous tribes and destroyed in 426 BC. What is interesting in that event is that a poorly armed force of tribal warriors, defeated an Athenian force, one of the two strongest military powers in Greece at the time. This study aims to analyze the characteristics of such instances, that seem to recur in history, particularly within the context of broader conflicts, as was the Peloponnesian war. From the perspective of International Relations, we will attempt to analyze the impact that asymmetrical conflicts may have on hegemonic wars and to find an underlying connection through time.

In the following chapter of the study, a definition of 'hegemonic' conflict takes place before we attempt to survey the characteristics of asymmetric violence in a journey through time. It has been well established in a number of studies, that asymmetric violence is not a new phenomenon. In this study too, the roots of it are reexamined. Chapter three, follows this path all the way to mid-20th century, from the Spanish "*Guerilleros*" to T.E. Lawrence and Mao Zedong. The events that transpired in Aetolia at 426 BC are closely studied in chapter four, where we follow the Athenian general Demosthenes from disaster to redemption, through a series of events, all in the same year in western Greece. In chapter five, we focus on the Peninsular war (1807-14) and the impact that the Spanish irregulars had on the outcome of one of the most important conflicts in the war for hegemony that ravaged Europe in the wake of the French revolution and Napoleon's subsequent rise. Britain like Athens was a great naval power, therefore it is interesting to examine how their maritime strategies tie into our narrative. Duke Wellington entered the books of history right beside the likes of Demosthenes, but both, as we will discuss, might 'owe' part of their 'greatness' to the favorable circumstances created by some more obscure actors.

2. Thucydides, Hegemonic Wars and Non-State Actors

Thucydides' insight in international politics, strategy and war, has an everlasting radiance throughout history, mainly because, as he himself put it, he sought "the truth of the things done and (according to the condition of man) may be done again"¹. It is on the History of the Peloponnesian War that we will set our cornerstone (as so many international theorists have done in the past) and by accepting some realist fundamentals, such as that states operate in an 'anarchical society', meaning there is no entity operating above them imposing order (such was the system of Ancient Greek City-states, 19th Century Europe and the world of the 20th Century, eras which we will be examining), they are the main actors in the world stage, although we will focus on the effects that interactions between states and non-state actors, and that their primary concern which is survival, that states ensure by possessing and seeking power.² However, dealing with the consequences of asymmetrical warfare we will be forced to take a step beyond traditional realist assertions.

In this study we attempt to find relevance between the incident that took place in 426 BC in Aetolia, where the Athenians found themselves on the receiving end of what we today would call 'guerrilla warfare' and compare it to other instances of such ways of conducting war throughout History. We will particularly study instances of a weaker actor facing a strong one, in the context of what we accept that the Peloponnesian war was, a war of hegemony. Essentially, a bipolar conflict that also attracted several other actors, where the main participants that had the most impact on the outcomes, were city-states, as would be the case with modern states in today's nation-state world³. Key players were Athens, Sparta, Corinth and Thebes, the four of them being the strongest amongst the many, in a system operating always in proximity to the powerful Persian empire⁴. However, our purpose is to examine If, How and to What extent, events of popular resistance in the form of guerrilla warfare contribute to the outcome of a hegemonic war, if at all, and what are their general implications on all participants. Although there is a solid distinction between tactics and grand strategy⁵ we will assess asymmetrical warfare as a set of tactics that provide a strategy that empowers the weaker actor against a strong state. Such tactics, used by an inferior military force to leverage a stronger one, have been called many names by many scholars such as Guerrilla, Asymmetrical and Irregular. Throughout this study we will try to accurately define the above phenomenon, always in analogy and relevant to the Aetolians' resistance to the Athenians in 426 BC. There is also a crucial difference between a Guerilla fighter and any other light unit employing similar tactics, in the essence that the guerrilla is tied with a certain land that he inhabits, uses its terrain and fights for that land; He is not just part of popular resistance, he is the popular resistance. These wars not only were fought again after Thucydides, they were fought long before his time and may as well be fought long after ours, it remains to be determined, to what extent they influence the balance of power in a system of states.

¹Thucydides, *Histories*, Trans. Thomas Hobbes (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959, 1.22, R. Gilpin "Change and Continuity in World Politics" In *War and Change in world politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981

² John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2001

³ Α. Πλατιάς, *Διεθνείς Σχέσεις και Στρατηγική στον Θουκυδίδη*, Αθήνα: Εστία, 2010 pp. 26-29

⁴ A. Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, London: Routledge, 1992. pp. 54-56

⁵ Athanasios Platias and Constandinos Koliopoulos, "Ch. 1 Grand strategy: A framework for analysis" In *Thucydides on Strategy: Grand Strategies in the Peloponnesian war and their relevance Today*. London: Hurst, 2010.

For a State does not find itself fighting abroad by accident. The struggle between states for power sets the wheels of conflict in motion, and the more powerful a state is, the further it can project power. In wars of hegemony, the competition becomes conflict between Great Powers, that spills over various territories in an effort from those powers to gain a foothold against one another. As Gilpin states: “Historically, nations have consciously decided to go to war, but they have seldom, if ever, knowingly begun hegemonic wars... It cannot be overstressed that, once a war, however limited, begins, it can release powerful forces unforeseen by the instigators of the war. The results of the Peloponnesian War, which was to devastate classical Greece, were not anticipated by the great powers of the day.”⁶ The Athenians invaded Aetolia in order to encircle Boeotia (that was part of the Peloponnesian League at the time)⁷, Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 1807 in order to prevent Portuguese trade with Britain⁸, and both of them calculated their victory to be certain and swift. That was the supposition of the U.S.A. too, when they engaged in Vietnam as part of “containing” the USSR⁹. None of the above territories were directly in control of a main rival great power, yet as the famous Kenyan proverb goes: “When elephants fight it is the grass that suffers”. Rocks do not suffer, dirt does not either, it is the people that suffer, and when they take up arms, the “grass” may become the fakir’s bed of nails. When contest between Great Powers becomes the cause of an insurgency, we will try in this study, to assess the effects on all sides caught in the conflict especially focusing on Athenians’ expedition in Aetolia and other instances like Napoleon’s occupation of Spain and Japan’s invasion of China.

The sheer scale of these conflicts, the Peloponnesian war, the Napoleonic wars and the Second World War, satisfies three propositions R. Gilpin puts forth, in order to define a war as hegemonic:

“The first is that a hegemonic war is distinct from other categories of war; it is caused by broad changes in political, strategic, and economic affairs. The second is that the relations among individual states can be conceived as a system; the behavior of states is determined in large part by their strategic interaction. The third is that a hegemonic war threatens and transforms the structure of the international system; whether or not the participants in the conflict are initially aware of it, at stake is the hierarchy of power and relations among states in the system. Thucydides’ conception and all subsequent formulations of the theory of hegemonic war emerge from these three propositions.”¹⁰

Concerning the first proposition, all three wars came at a time of major economic, political and technological changes for each system respectively. For the Greek states system, the aftermath of the Persian wars had left the winning coalition of states in an advantageous position (Sparta being the most powerful one), from which Athens propelled itself to greatness, challenging hegemony by mercantile, maritime and industrious activity that brought them great wealth and power¹¹. Napoleon transformed

⁶ R. Gilpin, “Theory of Hegemonic war” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4, *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars* (Spring, 1988), pp. 612-613 pp.

⁷ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.95

⁸ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, Penguin:2010 p.155-6, C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, London: Penguin, 2002, 5-8

⁹ Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. London: Unwin Hyman: 1988, 403-413.

¹⁰ Gilpin, *Theory of Hegemonic War* p. 592

¹¹ Gilpin, *Theory of Hegemonic War* p. 597, Watson, *Evolution of World Society* p. 55

warfare by mobilizing the masses in a scale never seen before, in the midst of the radical socioeconomic changes brought by the French revolution, while the second World War and the fierce technologic and economic changes that followed shaped the whole world as we knew it until quite recently. As for the following propositions, all three examples are of systems fully engulfed by each conflict (the Greek City States in the Peloponnesian War, most European states in the Napoleonic wars and arguably the whole world in WWII) that shook their very foundations¹².

In terms of Adam Watson's theory of the "Pendulum", these systems moved violently between the spectrum that ranges from "multiple interdependencies" to "world government" (Watson claims that the pendulum has never reached complete chaos or a single world government yet)¹³. Towards the end of hegemony is where we place our narratives of these three conflicts, where Great powers make their bid for dominance in a system. It is very crucial to this study, that at this very point, Great powers exercise great influence in the domestic affairs of all other actors around them. Citizens of other states may welcome or detest the meddling of a great power, may be inspired or repulsed by its behavior and declarations, but at this level, it's most improbable that they will remain untouched. During the Peloponnesian war, Athenians and Spartans rushed to support either Oligarchs or Democrats¹⁴, Napoleon had either conquered most European states or turned them into vassals/satellite states (Spain became one more puppet state with one of his siblings at her head during the Peninsular War) and in the 20th century, the influence of Great Powers on one another and on smaller states, can be coupled with the spread of ideologies (I.e., capitalism, fascism, and communism) that mirrored their competition for global influence, and affected states' domestic affairs. Invasions do not happen for the sake of ideology, not during the Peloponnesian war and not any more so for the spread of enlightenment after 1789 and not for freedom in the 20th and 21st centuries, it is about competition and fear, Thucydides told us so¹⁵ centuries ago, and we have little evidence to doubt him. Today we call *fear* a 'security dilemma' and *competition* 'power balance'. A state's prime concern remains to be *survival* and once it ensures it, as a rational actor would, it will pursue what it deems to be in its best interests. This means that a state, in doing so, will inevitably antagonize other states in the system, seeking to balance and then surpass the power of its antagonists, regardless of the pretense, upon which it builds a narrative for this behavior¹⁶.

However superficial the claims of an invading state may be, the opposition of the invaded, when it arises, is very tangible. In realist terms, it can be perceived as the ultimate effort of an entity losing sovereignty, a last shot at surviving. Such violent manifestations of dissent are no different from interstate wars, in the sense that when two entities clash for survival with their best interest in mind, war becomes their ultimate instrument, however big or small.¹⁷

¹² Gilpin, *Theory of Hegemonic War* p. 603, p.608

¹³ Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, 13-18

¹⁴ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.82

¹⁵ Thucydides, *Histories*, 1.23

¹⁶ Πλατιάς, Α. *Διεθνείς Σχέσεις και Στρατηγική στον Θουκυδίδη*. Αθήνα: Εστία, 2010, 32-35.

¹⁷ Waltz, Kenneth N., *The Man, State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 160.

3. A Theory of Guerrilla Warfare

3.1 Rudimentary Killing

When we strip down guerrilla warfare to its basic function, it is the ambush we get: a stalker using the element of surprise against an unheeding and otherwise unbeatable opponent. It is a situation that bears unmistakable similarity with animal hunting, whereas the prey is now other human beings. When we look back towards the dawn of mankind, we find a surge of sophistication in violence through innovations in tool-making, from approximately forty thousand years ago, when the Cro-Magnon Human (virtually indistinguishable from modern Homo Sapiens) first appeared¹⁸. It was around that time, that sharpened stones were mounted onto wooden handles to become axes and spears, and wooden sticks were sharpened to become Darts and Javelins, no different than those that the Aetolians flung at the Athenians in 426 BC, thousands of years later¹⁹. Consequentially, humans became able to successfully hunt large animals effectively, driving a number of species to extinction.²⁰

Animals were not the only living beings to be targeted by the Cro-Magnon humans, another major victim was probably the Neanderthals who were eclipsed to extinction, also forty thousand years ago, by the end of the last Ice Age. The Neanderthals were much stronger humans in terms of raw muscular power, yet they did not show any signs of innovation in terms of tools, thus were confined to sharpened stones and wood, still used separately.²¹ Cro-Magnon humans, therefore must have overrun their close relatives using the same tactics they would employ to bring down any Behemoth they had come across until then, essentially outsmarting it.

Homo sapiens leapt much further in terms of technology from their Neanderthal kinsmen, yet their development was far from instantaneous. From forty thousand years ago to the more organized battles of the bronze age four thousand years ago, technology kept improving, and so did man's capacity to kill. It is certain that humans used all kinds of crude bones, sticks and stones to kill, but it is the combination and refinement of these materials that constitutes the birth and evolution of military technology. Mounting sharpened stones and bones onto wooden ends created both tools and weapons (such as the axe, the hammer and the spear, that would be central in warfare for millennia in one form or another, be it as a sarissa, a pike, a halberd or the bayonet of a rifle)²². Although one can throw a spear or javelin, it was the emergence of the bow sometime around 10 000 BC that revolutionized the use of projectile weapons, as one could carry more projectiles, fired at a faster rate and much further (at the end of 19th Century, athletes could throw a javelin as far as 50 meters, while a rudimentary bow could send an arrow at twice that distance)²³. Only after thousands of years later,

¹⁸ Diamond, J. *The Rise and Fall of the third Chimpanzee*, London: Radius, 1991

¹⁹ Thucydides *Histories*, 3.97-98. Although Hobbes's translation mentions 'darts', the Greek word used in both the ancient and contemporary text, «ακόντια, εσηκόντιζον», translates directly to javelin or throwable spear. In any case we must assume they were some kind of primitive projectiles, coinciding with the stone age ways of the Aetolians.

²⁰ "These likely victims include the mammoths of North America (Chapter Eighteen), Europe's woolly rhino and giant deer, southern Africa's giant buffalo and giant Cape horse, and Australia's giant kangaroos (Chapter Nineteen). Thus, the most brilliant moment of our rise already contained the seeds of what may yet prove a cause of our fall." Diamond, Jared *The Third Chimpanzee*, 41.

²¹ Diamond, "Ch 1 just another Big - The great leap forward" In *The third Chimpanzee*, 35-36.

²² Arthur Ferrill, *The Origins of War* London: Thames and Hudson, 1985, 16.

²³ *Ibid.* p.19

gunpowder would enable the production of firearms, efficient enough to make the bow obsolete and substitute it on the battlefield, as well as in hunting and ambushing.

However, the most impressive and lethal evolution of that period would have been the emergence of “complex spoken language”, that made possible every other leap forward by means of collective exchange of ideas. Indeed, this was the key for man formulating *tactics*, such as a simple, yet coordinated, ambush²⁴. The weapons used at that period, most of all projectiles, would have been instrumental in ambushing since they provided the attacker with a safe distance from the unsuspecting target, vital also for a successful escape after a failed attempt to kill a stronger enemy. Therefore, effective communication multiplied the efficiency of violence by diversifying and organizing it, opening the path of *tactics* that would lead from large scale effective hunting, to elaborate coordinated ambushes and finally formations and organized warfare²⁵. ‘guerilla warfare’, the kind of warfare this study focuses on, is sometimes perceived as separate from organized warfare and its combatants are many times called ‘irregular’, yet this is quite misleading, because the successful application of such methods relies, as all tactics do, on well executed and planned action with at least some degree of discipline²⁶, leading their victims to quite regular deaths.

3.2 Organized Violence

The parallel evolution of tools and weapons during the Mesolithic Era leading to the Bronze Age shaped the organization of society and warfare. Such organization emerged trilaterally through agricultural revolution, fortified settlements and organized attacks, as one led to another. Abundance of food concentrated in a single hub, attracted both hungry animals and men, the latter of which had already mastered the spear, blunt weapons and the bow, increasing the offensive capability of the latter, which led to the fortification of settlements to make them equally defensible. Newer projectile weapons like the sling, and Bronze Age innovations such as the sword and plate armor, fueled the always present security dilemma between attackers and defenders, pushing the evolution of military affairs further, leading down the path of organized warfare. This transformation of human activity becomes most evident during the Neolithic age, in the Near East, this pioneering region which also hosted the Bronze Age advancements later on, when the sum of those practices was galvanized²⁷. In the same region we have what many scholars regard as the first well recorded organized battle between great armies, employing different units in formation and operating under a chain of command, within clearly defined hierarchies. It was the battle of Kadesh, fought between the Egyptians (Ramesses II) and Hittites at Kadesh in 1274 BC, two major powers competing for control over the Levant (very famous also because of the extensive use of chariots, the most impressive unit of that era)²⁸. Meanwhile, approximately 1250 BC, the events of the *Iliad* take place, where a coalition of Greek city states of the Mycenaean era launched a large-scale expedition against the city of Troy (a prime example of a heavily fortified

²⁴ “With language, it takes only a few seconds to communicate the message, ‘Turn sharp right at the fourth tree and drive the male antelope towards the reddish boulder, where I’ll hide to spear it.’ Without language, that message could be communicated only with difficulty, if at all.” Diamond, J., *The Third Chimpanzee*, 47.

²⁵ Ferrill, *The Origins of War*, 20-21.

²⁶ “Unorganized guerrilla warfare cannot contribute to victory and those who attack the movement as a combination of banditry and anarchism do not understand the nature of guerrilla action.”, Mao Tse tung, *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare* Trans. General Samuel B. Griffith *Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-18*, 45.

²⁷ Ferrill, *The Origins of War* pp. 26-31

²⁸ Santosuosso A., “Kadesh Revisited”, *The Journal of Military History*, 60-3 (1996), 423-444

walled city of the Bronze Age), to challenge its control on the Dardanelles straights and north Asia-minor. We find that war, in one form or another, had existed from some time in the Neolithic era yet remained unsung for centuries (writing emerged in Mesopotamia sometime around 3600 BCE, the events of the Iliad take place approximately 2500 years later and were transcribed even more years later, possibly around 850 BCE)²⁹.

Large armies created by states, clashing to settle their disputes, may have been awe inspiring and thus recorded and romanticized in epic verse, yet outside city walls violent confrontations were 'business as usual'. Thucydides, in his account of the evolution of society up until his time, marks raiding as common practice and the existence of Bandits on land and Pirates at sea widespread in his past. Such activity was naturally limited, contained and confined when stronger entities of centralized power appeared in ancient Greece, such as the Minoan civilization, the Myceneans after them and the Greek city states of Thucydides era, who were sufficient security-providers and could pursue the molding of a stable environment within their sphere of influence, in which their dealings would take place safely and their interests would be protected³⁰.

However, a complete pacification of the sum of the population in a given part of land, was not possible until much later, with the emergence of the modern state. Professor Charles Tilly writes:

“Eventually, the personnel of states purveyed violence on a larger scale, more effectively, more efficiently, with wider assent from their subject populations, and with readier collaboration from neighboring authorities than did the personnel of other organizations. But it took a long time for that series of distinctions to become established. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, the practice of using it routinely to accomplish their ends, or both at once. The continuum ran from bandits and pirates to kings via tax collectors, regional power holders, and professional soldiers. The uncertain, elastic line between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" violence appeared in the upper reaches of power. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, its actual employment, or both at once. The long love-hate affair between aspiring state makers and pirates or bandits illustrates the division. "Behind piracy or the seas acted cities and city-states," writes Fernand Braudel of the sixteenth century. "Behind banditry, that terrestrial piracy, appeared the continual aid of lords." In times of war, indeed, the managers of full-fledged states often commissioned privateers, hired sometime bandits to raid their enemies, and encouraged their regular troops to take booty. In royal service, soldiers and sailors were often expected to provide for themselves by preying on the civilian population: commandeering, raping, looting, taking prizes. When demobilized, they commonly continued the same practices, but without the same royal protection; demobilized ships became pirate vessels, demobilized troops bandits. It also worked the other way: A king's best source of armed supporter was sometimes the world of outlaws. Robin Hood's conversion to royal archer may be a myth, but the myth records a practice. The distinctions between "legitimate" and

²⁹ “The earliest civilizations inherited from prehistoric ages a legacy of weapons development, offensive and defensive strategies and tactics, and a sense of territoriality. As soon as man learned how to write, he had wars to write about.” Ferrill, *Origins*, 21-31.

³⁰ Thucydides, *Histories*, 1.1-21

"illegitimate" users of violence came clear only very slowly, in the process during which the states armed forces became relatively unified and permanent."³¹

In other words, for most of our past, the majority of rural territory on earth was a 'lively place' where all kinds of people operated, resorting to violence when they had to without any major restriction, save the aspirations of each group.

No less so, on the mountains of western Greece, where Thucydides, straight from the beginning of his book, as previously discussed tells the story of the past, speaks of untamed tribes that still roamed, living by older standards, accustomed to everyday violence. The Aetolians, living in these mountains on which defeated the Athenians in 426 BCE, did so by using guerilla tactics and possessed traits that are specifically highlighted in the book. In Thucydides' *Histories*, they are described as "warlike" and the fact that they are "light-armed" is often repeated. Their portrayal as Neolithic people coincides with them relying on javelins for their defense, that naturally would have little success in a flat terrain against a fully armed Classical Greek Phalanx. Juxtaposed with their Acarnanian kinsmen from across Achelous river, who were expert users of the sling³², we get a consistent image of fighters in this region, who used dated yet tried techniques, that were quite efficient when applied from the advantageous position that their homeland's terrain offered them.

Thucydides does not undermine the significance of these warriors even though he describes them as almost savages. He calls them a "great nation" and its people "warlike" («μάχμοι») which literally translates from Greek, to formidable and competent warriors³³. This case is similar, when he mentions other tribes in that area (the Chaones for instance or the Oiniades who come up multiple times), who as we will see in the fourth chapter are described as "fearless", despite not being very effective in some confrontations. Not all of these tribes were Greek according to Thucydides, but this was a distinction he made based on language, ancestry and sophistication of their institution. Both Greek and Barbarian primitive tribes of that area, lived in close proximity and by similar standards, and for what is relevant to this study, waged war almost the same way.

In those very mountains, banditry and guerilla warfare, sometimes two sides of the same coin, survived well after the emergence of the modern state. The raiders of the 18th century, who pestered the ottomans in these parts, turned guerrillas in the 19th century. In the same area, during the Second world war, and in fact at every adjacent mountainside from Yugoslavia to Aetolia, guerilla warfare flourished. This is not to say that terrain, in and of itself, is a sufficient cause for the emergence of raiding or guerrilla warfare. However, terrain that one actor is familiar with, while it is alien or even inaccessible to another, provides the former with both ideal fortification and unobstructed routes to use undisturbed. Such is the case with many types of terrain that raiders and guerrillas prefer, such as jungles, swamps and expectedly, mountains. The sea for that matter, is also not a place for everyone and the ones who were skilled enough to sail it with ease, have used their advantage against others, as illustrated

³¹Tilly, Charles, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime" in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 169-187. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 173.

³²Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.81

³³ "the nation of the Aetolians were great and warlike", «το γαρ έθνος μέγα μεν είναι το των Αιτωλών και μάχμοι» Thucydides, *Histories* 3.94

strikingly by the actions of the Vikings, pirates all through time and in our case, Athenians too.

Athens, a highly sophisticated society for that time, with an advanced military war machine, spent most of the first part of the Peloponnesian war (the first ten years up until Nicias Peace, also called the Archidamian war, the period discussed in this essay), raiding enemy shores, just like any efficient pirate would. Athenians, were themselves security providers, having accumulated a great naval force from the Persian wars onward, that they used for both trade and war. They taxed their allies in exchange for putting themselves on the line if trouble arose, essentially capitalizing on the expertise they had gained in that major conflict.³⁴ Asserting themselves as a security provider naturally meant aiming for a monopoly in their domain of interests and eventually establishing control over the sea from Bosphorous to at least Eurymedon river (where the famous naval Battle against the Persians took place) by defeating subjugating or destroying other maritime rivals³⁵.

The fact that Athens was run as a democracy resulted in civilians considering themselves stakeholders of the State that had both a right to the profits of its endeavors and a say on what these endeavors ought to be³⁶. Whatever sense of national identity they might have had in their day, they acted above all as people who understood the costs and benefits that derived from their actions as individuals, as well as parts of a collective unit. In fact, most Greek city states operated like, as A. Watson puts it, “*limited corporations of citizens* who were the hereditary armed proprietors of the corporation”³⁷. Athens, would therefore by nature further this approach, making a strategic culture of it, contrary to Sparta, that had a far more conservative behavior, for a number of reasons, including their political institutions, geographic location and economy, that resulted in a very different altogether strategic culture³⁸.

Putting themselves on the line was their justification for taxing their allies, using their expertise to export security as a commodity was backed through leading by example. This was a narrative that they would actively try to preserve, maintaining proportionality when it came to retributions against the Peloponnesian invasion of Attica. J.E. Lendon contextualizes hubris (ὕβρις) as this proportionality against aggressive war in Ancient Greece, while not failing to identify the use hubris as a pretext. A number of conflicts could have been products of hubris, yet all of them have an underlying cause related to power shifts, economic, military and demographic. The issue of legitimacy is also highlighted by Professors Athanasios Platias and Constantinos Kolliopoulos, in terms of both international and domestic legitimacy³⁹,

³⁴ Platias and Koliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, London: Hurst, 2010, 26., Thucydides, *Histories* 1.99

³⁵ “*The first business of this new Delian League was to winkle out the last Persian forts on the Aegean coast and to clear the sea of marauders, always remaining in readiness should the Great King make a move.*” J.E. Lendon, *Song of wrath*, New York: Basic, 2012, 63., Platias and Kolliopoulos *Thucydides on Strategy*, 28-32., Thucydides *Histories*, 1.97-100,

³⁶ In sun tzu’s Art of War Ch. VII, the following verses can be found side by side “*20. When you plunder a countryside, let the spoil be divided amongst your men; when you capture new territory, cut it up into allotments for the benefit of the soldiery... 21. Ponder and deliberate before you make a move.*”. Most certainly unbeknownst to him, the ancient democratic city-state of Athens was fueled by a combination of these principles. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Trans. Lionel Giles.

³⁷ A. Watson, *Evolution*, 49-50.

³⁸ Platias and Kolliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, 24-28.

³⁹ Platias and Kolliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, 51-53.

and how losing it has a detrimental effect on the war effort, also starkly exemplified for example by the United States' blunder in Vietnam.

Spartans would also try to cast the Athenians as tyrannical in order to deem themselves wardens of independence in ancient Greece⁴⁰. They were however launching a preemptive war to maintain the Status quo, much like the USA from 1991 onward, who also constructed a narrative of spreading democracy and freedom through what they called "humanitarian interventions". Not unlike major powers, in every level of violence, an accompanying narrative is deployed to justify the killing, lesser than state actors ranging from large rebel armies to small assassinating bands, States too, all claim their cause is the just one (as opposed to the enemy's).

Regardless of the narrative, the pattern is clear, whenever two asymmetrical forces collide, the weaker one will employ an indirect approach to counterbalance. By "weaker", we do not assert Athens was a lesser state. It was a considerably wealthier state than every other Greek city state (second only to the vast Persian empire), with a numerous population and the strongest and most experienced navy in the region. Yet Spartans were still the best trained and most successful land force of that time, thus had the upper hand, because as J. Corbet famously put it: "*Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations at war have been decided – except in the rarest cases – either by what your army can do against your enemy's territory and national life, or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do*"⁴¹. It was well established by then, that the Spartans could be much more efficient in war-making on land than anyone else at the time. It remained to be seen if Athens could counterbalance them, utilizing her fleet to its maximum efficiency. Therefore, the Athenians employed the indirect approach against the Spartans with hit and run surprise raids all over the Peloponnesian coasts, and so did the Aetolians against the Athenians when they ambushed them in the mountains of Aetolia. However strong Athens may have been, with its large population and mighty navy, the Spartans by choosing to launch a preemptive strike, gave the Athenians the opportunity to assume a defensive position from which they could preserve their justification narrative and hold out until the enemy was grinded down enough to sue for peace. This, as so happens, is also the end game of most guerrilla movements who face an invading or occupying force.

The characteristics of this "Periclean grand strategy" of Athens that was a strategy of exhaustion have been thoroughly analyzed by Platias and Kolliopoulos. It utilized the indirect approach and relied on naval mastery, instead of head-on decisive battles on land. Although the Spartans understood the need to compete with Athens in sea as well, they were not yet ready⁴², so the Athenians exploited this freedom of movement in the water as if reinterpreting the words of Sun Tzu:

"Appear at points which the enemy must hasten to defend;
march swiftly to places where you are not expected.
*An army may march great distances without distress,
if it marches through country where the enemy is not...*
You can be sure of succeeding in your attacks
if you only attack places which are undefended.
You can ensure the safety of your defense if you only hold

⁴⁰ Thucydides, *Histories*, 1.139, 2.11

⁴¹ J. S. Corbett, *Principles of Maritime Strategy* New York: Dover, 2012, 15.

⁴² Thucydides *Histories* 1.80

positions that cannot be attacked.”⁴³

Likewise, the guerilla treads on terrain familiar to him yet unreachable by an outsider. Just like the Athenians abandoned the countryside of Attica, along with everything they could not carry with them, to fortify themselves behind the walls of Athens and live through the sea, as Pericles himself advised them⁴⁴, the guerrilla takes to the mountains, the jungle, the caves, or wherever he “cannot be attacked” and from there grinds the will of the enemy to persist in Clausewitzian terms. Dispossessed by the attacking entity, the defending population simply acts on the only option left available. The Aetolians too in the summer of 426 BC, abandoned their settlements to set an ambush against Demosthenes’ advancing army, in a place and at a time, most favorable to them.

Similarly, Athens avoided confronting the Spartans on land, raiding them at times and places they chose. Professors Platias and Kolliopoulos vividly and accurately describe the contest between Sparta and Athens as follows: “*To put it metaphorically, in a contest between a lion and a shark, the lion cannot force a decision, since it cannot reach the sources of the shark’s strength*”⁴⁵. In our case, the metaphor becomes that of ‘a mammoth being ambushed by hunters’, for as we’ve established so far in our study, balancing sheer force with cunning stratagem is as old as these primitive images. Any other instances, where the indirect approach is used to counterbalance a superior fighting force, can also be viewed in this light, by analogy.

While the Spartans could not damage the source of wealth that was Athens’ maritime endeavors, they could not diminish their opponent’s willpower, as long as the reciprocity of retaliation provided sufficient justification to the defending side. Again, in analogy, the guerrilla fighters’ most valuable asset may not be wealth, as in the case of the strong state of Athens, but it is the will and manpower of the people than inhabit an invaded land. Almost by definition, an invasion provides the defending side with a justification to retaliate, and the exchange of blows becomes a contest for the depletion of the enemy’s resources and his will to fight.

For your enemy’s will to bent, yours must not, thus we are told, Pericles was adamant against the demands of the Spartans, avoiding to “appease” them, for if Athens gave in, then they would simply extend their demands⁴⁶. Refusing to appease fatally brings about the violent stage of a conflict, where the demanding side has to make good on their threats, in order to further pursue their political end, be it “through other means”⁴⁷. In the case of the guerilla, this dilemma goes to the extreme, for if the indigenous population of any given land appeases an intruding force, subsequent accumulating demands will logically reach the total nullification of their sovereignty and identity. On the other hand, if the occupying force gives in to the demands of the guerrillas, it must, at some point, remove itself completely from the land they wished to occupy. Such was

⁴³ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* VI.5-7

⁴⁴ Thucydides Histories 1.143

⁴⁵ Platias and Kolliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, 39

⁴⁶ “Wherein if you give them way, you shall hereafter be commanded a greater matter as men that for fear will obey them likewise in that. But by a stiff denial you shall teach them plainly to come to you hereafter on terms of more equality.” Thucydides, *Histories*, I.140

⁴⁷ “We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means”. Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, New Jersey: Princeton, 1984, 28.

for instance, the *danse macabre* between the indigenous populations of North America and the expanding USA in the 19th century that ended in the genocide of the former.⁴⁸

Whatever the case may be, once the indirect approach is employed, either by a small band of people, a city state or an organized army, we cannot overlook the views of two famous strategists: Liddell Hart, who popularized the term in his book “The Strategy of Indirect Approach”, and of course Sun Tzu, who is widely perceived as the progenitor of the indirect approach. Professors Platias and Kolliopoulos weave the theory of the two beautifully, in the following passage from their book on the Peloponnesian war:

“The respective grand strategic designs of both Sparta and Athens correspond remarkably to the model types that Sir Basil Liddell Hart has named the acquisitive and the conservative states. According to Liddell Hart:

‘The acquisitive state, inherently unsatisfied, needs to gain victory in order to gain its object-and must therefore court greater risks in the attempt. The conservative State can achieve its object by merely inducing the aggressor to drop his attempt at conquest-by convincing him that ‘the game is not worth the candle.’ Its victory is, in a real sense, attained by foiling the other side’s bid for victory’...Apart from anticipating Liddell Hart, Thucydides may be said to operate on the same wavelength as his near contemporary, Sun Tzu. Simply put, instead of defeating the might of Sparta, Athens chose to foil the spartan plan for victory-what sun tzu has called the highest form of strategy’⁴⁹

Liddell Hart wrote his defining work *Strategy of Indirect Approach* in 1941, after he had established a strong relationship of friendship and admiration with none other than T.E. Lawrence, a military figure that has left his mark on irregular warfare with his actions in the Arab Revolution in 1916. Although Hart had made his first steps towards his thesis before meeting Lawrence, was strongly influenced by their acquaintance, becoming “consciously or unconsciously...Lawrence’s military disciple”. The concepts of *dispersals*, *mobility*, and *economy of force* although preexisting in military literature and in Hart’s work, may have been distilled through their interactions.⁵⁰ However, they were not new at all, as we will see in the next chapter. Much literature on the subject existed already by 1900, and the above concepts are integral parts of any analysis made on the subject, from antiquity to nowadays.

In respect to the *economy of force*, it also happens to be the second underlying principle of Periclean Strategy that Professors Platias and Kolliopoulos point out, in the form of avoiding overextension⁵¹. Maintaining a proportionality in retaliatory actions, helped to maintain legitimacy and preserve enough force to be able to prolong the conflict to the displeasure of the enemy. Nevertheless, Athens did find herself involved in conflicts ranging from Thrace to Pylos and as far as Sicily to the West, already during the first ten years of the war (the Archidamian war). In this period, during one of their overreaching interventions, they met the guerrilla resistance of the Aetolian natives. Athens may have been using raids against their primary rival, Sparta, but when it came to dealing with a lesser actor, itself behaved with an arrogance characteristic of powerful states. Such behavior was not part of Pericles’ grand strategy, who had warned

⁴⁸ Angie Debo, *A History of the Indians*, London: Folio Society, 2003, Max Boot, *Invisible Armies*, New York: Norton, 2013. 133-53.

⁴⁹ Platias and Kolliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, 41.

⁵⁰ B. H. Reid, “T.E. Lawrence and Liddell Hart”, *History* 70-229 (1985): 218-231

⁵¹ Platias and Kolliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, 43.

against “extending dominion” and “unnecessary dangers”⁵². It was however, characteristic of the path Athens started to take after his death. Liddell Hart, having lived through the First World War, was especially cognizant of the dangers that come with prolonged conflicts and astronomical bodycounts, and thus advocated an economy of force in his thesis⁵³. He wrote: “Self-exhaustion in war has killed more states than any foreign assailant.”⁵⁴, completely in line with Sun tzu’s quote: “There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.”⁵⁵. Still, as any proponent of the ‘direct approach could be quick to note, one of the two warring entities will emerge victorious, however extensive be the death toll, widespread the destruction and lengthy the war. It goes without saying that any war short or long is contrary to the benefit of those that lose their lives in the process and everyone whose livelihood crumbles, regardless of their affiliation. But how did we get from ancient Greece and China to the massive wars of the 20th century? War changed as the world changed, and it changed a lot after 1700.

3.3 Theories in Modernity: From the American forests to Mao

Ancient as the practice may have been, the term “guerilla warfare” is introduced at the dawn of modernity⁵⁶. It comes from the Spanish language and describes the ‘Small War’ that irregular bands of fighters waged against Napoleon’s armies, during the Peninsular war. Having subjugated most of continental Europe in their bid for hegemony over it, the French invaded Portugal in 1807 to enforce the *Continental Blockade* of trade against Britain that they had enacted a few years before, to financially hurt their primary rival. In the process, while marching through allied Spain, Napoleon decided to turn it into a puppet state inserting his brother Joseph at the throne. The Spanish people formed armed bands that would pester the French invaders throughout the Peninsular war, successfully enough to name this ancient practice. *Guerilla*, meaning the ‘small war’ waged by armed bands, the *partidas*, and its fighters called *guerrilleros*⁵⁷. Their methods were far from innovative, local people once again rising from and withdrawing into the local crowd and landscape, avoiding direct confrontation, striking from ambushes by making use of their excellent knowledge of their land. The British landed in Portugal in August 1808, to aid Portugal and Spain whose people had already begun to resist violently⁵⁸. The complementary fighting of Spanish Guerrillas and British, Portugal and Spanish regulars would prove effective against the French, who lost the Peninsular war, being expelled from Iberia in 1813⁵⁹.

It was Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812 that was pivotal to the outcome of the grander conflict in Europe by most accounts. Napoleon’s campaign against Russia was launched, in part because Russia had left the ‘Continental Blockade’ in 1810 and ended disastrously for the French. It also was a campaign countered indirectly; The Russians,

⁵² Thucydides, *Histories* 1.144

⁵³ Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, London: Faber & Faber, 1954, 202-211.

⁵⁴ Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of indirect approach*, 205.

⁵⁵ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch.II

⁵⁶ Defined for this essay from the American and French revolutions to the Conclusion of the Second world war, the introduction of the atom bomb, and the conclusion of the remaining civil wars in Greece and China, thus from 1787 (Drafting of the American Constitution) to 1949.

⁵⁷ C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A New History*, London: Penguin, 2002, 251

⁵⁸ C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, 1-108

⁵⁹ W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998, 29-41., Max Boot, *Invisible Armies*, pp. 80-91

having an inferior fighting force to Napoleon's *Grand Army*, actively denied meeting Napoleon for a 'decisive battle'. A 'scorched earth policy', employed by the retreating Russians, further deteriorated Napoleon's army condition, and by the time the two armies met at Borodino, winter was looming over the exhausted French army that did manage to secure a marginal victory. Napoleon entered Moscow in September, just to find out that the Russians had set it ablaze and retreated once more. In the months that followed, highly mobile bands of semi-regular cavalry, including renowned Cossack tribesmen, constantly harassed the French army and their supply lines and couriers, much like the guerrillas did in Spain⁶⁰. Again, like Spain, but to a lesser extent, parts of the peasantry assisted the effort against the French and was gruesomely punished for that⁶¹. Some of these mounted irregulars still used the bow and arrow as their weapon of choice in the early 19th century, much like their steppe warrior ancestors had for centuries, a good example of the lineage of irregular warfare. Of the 422 000 soldiers that marched into Russia, only twenty thousand made it out alive, devastated by the cold but at the same time constantly picked off while retreating by mounted units and common people alike. Napoleon was dispossessed, and the might of his empire was severely diminished. He would return one last time briefly, only to face the ghosts of the Peninsular war, namely Duke Wellington. Their monumental confrontation in Waterloo was to seal the fate of Napoleon and served as the end of an era.

Soon after, it was the Greek insurgents, during the Greek war of independence of 1821, that became famous for their hit and run tactics. Mentioned in almost every guerrilla warfare study, these bandits ('klephtes', 'κλέφτες' which literally translates to 'thieves') who turned freedom fighters, embodied every defining aspect of guerrilla fighting from being an indigenous population making expert use of a difficult terrain, to avoiding direct confrontation systematically as well as having little regard for 'gentlemanly' conduct of warfare. They responded equally to the harshness and brutality of the opposing Ottoman side, thus also provoked atrocious countermeasures that played no small role in the widespread support that the cause of Greek independence received from the European public opinion at the time.⁶²

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the British versus French conflicts, prior to and during the world war that was the prelude of modernity, the Seven Years War (1756-1763), included a fair amount of irregular fighting. More specifically, in the North American theater, the Indians with their inherently irregular fighting methods would play a significant role, perhaps for the last time. Siding with either the French or the British (choosing the losing side of the French more often than not), the Natives would wage war the way they knew best, being native to the land and using their light armament, exemplifying in the process, the ways of irregular warfare to all participants who followed suit with irregulars of their own, adapting to the setting⁶³.

During the American war for independence that followed from 1775 to 1783, armed bands of irregulars operated on both the Loyalist and the Separatist sides, especially in the South after 1779, where fighting was conducted mostly on this level. Native

⁶⁰ W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 44-49.

⁶¹ "If the war against Napoleon became a people's war, it was in part the French themselves who were responsible. During their invasion of Russia they burned villages killed civilians and prisoners. "is this the civilization we brought to Russia?" Calaincourt complained in a letter to the emperor" W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 49.

⁶² W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 15-18., Max Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 101-108.

⁶³ M. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 137-9., Becket, Ian F. W., *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750*. New York: Routledge, 2001, 2-3.

American warriors participated once more, at the side of the loyalists this time, a decision that proved disastrous for them due to the outcome of the war. Once again, we see “men who had learned to fight the Indians on the frontier, used these Indian tactics against the British”⁶⁴, as well as people who were old enough to carry on their experience on irregular fighting from the Seven Years War. Such people could be found in a number of militia groups operating in that era, perhaps the best known being the iconic “Minutemen”⁶⁵. Much can be said about the contribution of the irregulars, opposite to the effectiveness of George Washington’s continental army, yet this war too was not conducted in a vacuum. It was once more, a conflict set in the midst of competition between the British, the French and the Dutch that affected the cause of the rebels⁶⁶.

By that time, printing had been going strong for many years, as reflected on the widening availability of texts, be they newspapers, books or pamphlets. Lithography was introduced in 1796 (while the French Revolutionary wars were progressing), and thus also surfaced the first texts explicitly dedicated to guerrilla warfare. Ian Becket informs us:

“Nonetheless, whatever the American perception of irregular warfare, it was the experience of North American conditions that resulted in the first modern texts on irregular warfare in the late 18th century. *Treatise on the Small War* (1790) and *The Partisan in War or the use of a corps of light troops for an army* (1789) were penned by two Hessian officers who had fought with the British army in America, Johan von Ewald and Andreas Emmerich, respectively. They were to be followed by others that derived lessons not from America but from Europe. Thus the Prussians John Wilhelm Von Valentini in *Treatise on Small Wars and the use of Light troops* (1799) and Carl von Decker in *The Small War in the Spirit of the new Conduct of Warfare* (1822), the Frenchman Le Miere de Corvey in 1823, and the Russian Denis Davidov in his essay on the theory of partisan warfare (1821) drew upon the experience of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars between 1792-1815.”⁶⁷

Almost a century later, the tension between the abolitionists and the segregationists, that would result in the American Civil war, was marked by a number of raids conducted by small armed bands, sympathizing either one side. Such were the actions of John Brown from 1856 to 1859 against segregationists that gained much publicity and helped instigate further violence⁶⁸. Similarly acted the abolitionist Jayhawkers, and W. C. Quantrill’s segregationist gang, all of them in Kansas, up until it’s admission in the Union in 1861. They all engaged in extensive raiding months prior to the official inception of the war. These were just a few of the many irregulars that operated prior and during the civil war, mostly from Kansas to Missouri, well into Kentucky and Tennessee, far from the centers of power in the East coast and deep into harsh terrain west of the Appalachian Mountains, the deep forests around the Mississippi and beyond. It is precarious to consider all these heterogenous groups of irregulars as Guerrillas, just because they raided in support of one side or another. The terror they

⁶⁴ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, New York: Knopf, 2007, 159.

⁶⁵ M. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 64-70.

⁶⁶ P. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 115-9.

⁶⁷ Becket, *Modern Insurgencies*, 4.

⁶⁸ M. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 211-7.

unleashed targeting civilians more often than not and the fact that they shared common linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds paints them in colours similar to many other opportunistic gangs may emerge in civil wars. Quite different was the case of commissioned confederate officer J. S. Mosby and his partisan rangers, that although gaining fame for their irregular operations, were part of the confederate army, operated in support of it under its permission.⁶⁹

Another prominent figure of the Civil War was union general W. T. Sherman, who in his famous “March to the sea” after the capture of Atlanta, resorted to unorthodox conduct of war, leeching of the enemy resources while destroying the enemy infrastructure, deep inside hostile territory⁷⁰. After the Civil war Sherman became Commanding General of the Army and played a prominent part in the United States’ westward expansion. Sherman would use his total war strategy as a counter-insurgency tool against the native Americans who the young state, now solidified after the civil war, by definition antagonized from its inception. In fact, all of the states that set foot on, or emerged in America, had to establish and expand sovereignty at the expense of the indigenous population and rival states⁷¹. Sherman was proclaimed “the first modern general” by none other than Liddell Hart, who wrote a biography of the general, as well as using him as one of the people that he based his indirect approach model upon.

A man that proved equally inspiring to Hart was his friend T. E. Lawrence. A menace to the railroads like Sherman, Lawrence made his name almost half a century after him, in the Arab revolt stage of the First World War, by fighting alongside prince Feisal and three thousand Arabs from 1916 to the end of WWI, that saw the allies entering Damascus victoriously against the Ottoman empire. The ‘highly mobile’ Arab riders would strike out of the desert and quickly disappear. The ottoman supply lines and railroads were their primary targets, ambush and sabotage were their preferred methods, as they managed to keep occupied an estimated force of about fifty thousand Ottomans. Lawrence would instill his insight on guerrilla warfare, which he had acquired from the desert in several writings, most extensively on ‘Seven Pillars of Wisdom’. The core of his thinking is often showcased in this popular passage from ‘The Evolution of a Revolt’, an article he first published in 1920, stating:

“Granted mobility, security (in the form of denying targets to the enemy), time, and doctrine (the idea to convert every subject to friendliness), victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical factors are in the end decisive, and against them perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain”⁷²

Although highly optimistic in claiming mathematic certainty of a favorable outcome for the insurgents, Lawrence recognizes and explicitly highlights a number of conditions that must be satisfied for Guerrillas to stand any chance at all. In every writing relevant to guerrilla warfare, from antiquity to Mao Zedong’s writings, we find recurring directives: Denying the enemy a direct confrontation in which his superior forces will crush your inferior one, and being highly mobile in order to pursue the enemy weakness, while remaining unavailable at a fixed location yourself, advice as old as Sun Tzu’s writing. Last but not least, rely on the local population for they are

⁶⁹ Max Boot, *Invisible Armies*, pp. 211-217. Becket, *Modern Insurgencies*, 10-12.

⁷⁰ Russel F. Weigley, “15. American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World War” In *Makers of Modern Strategy*, edited by Peter Paret, (New Jersey: Princeton, 1986) 432-443.

⁷¹ Peter Maslowski, “To the edge of greatness: The United States, 1783-1865” In *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, edited by Williamson Murray, Alvin Bernstein, MacGregor Knox, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 205-41.

⁷² Laquer, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 169.

your granary, your eyes and ears and your shelter. However, there is not only one way to satisfy these perquisites in every situation, for each situation is different, in all terms, from the locals' culture and fighting skills, to the landscape and topography and the grander scheme of international (or subsystem of actors) power balance. Thus, the application of different methods must depend on their effectiveness in satisfying the above conditions. Laqueur and Boot both agree that:

“Lawrence’s most important achievement was not in crafting a template for guerrilla warfare or even military advising that could be transposed to any situation. Rather, by his own example he showed how hard any soldier fighting an irregular war must work to understand and adapt himself to local conditions. He made empathy into a powerful weapon of war, striving to understand the actions of both enemies and allies”⁷³

“Lawrence succeeded on a modest scale because... he understood that he had to go for the main weakness of the enemy, and that warfare had to be adapted to local conditions, human as well as geographical”⁷⁴

When it came to gaining popular support, the power of the printing press did not elude Lawrence. He famously stated: “The printing press is the greatest weapon in the armory of the modern commander” and in many ways, Modernity was marked by the massive mobilization of the people by ideas, and ideas can be printed and copied. With the 20th century, offset printing came along, augmenting the use of printing by states and individuals, ideologues and rabble-rousers alike, shaking the balance of power both domestically and in the international system.

By the time the ‘Great War’ was over, another ideology that has its roots in the Enlightenment and arose from Modernity was beginning to leave its mark on guerilla warfare of the 20th century, namely Communism. The promise of further emancipation of man, in the vein of humanistic revolutionary ideas of the 18th century, gave wind to the marriage between fights for independence and a political cause, embodied in the nearly religious end of imposing a utopian system. The success of the Bolsheviks acquiring power in Russia through the civil war of 1917-22, created a new paradigm that would influence and inspire a plethora of guerrilla movements in the decades to come, up until the end of the 20th century.

Both the Arabs and the Bolsheviks made their moves in the midst of WWI, one of the most extensive hegemonic conflicts the world had ever seen thus far, the former claiming a homeland carved out of a receding empire, while the latter usurped the Czar in one of the biggest states in Europe. Every time the tectonic plates of a system of states move, through the cracks emerge powers that had laid dormant. The effect that they have on the system cannot be predetermined, but cannot be neglected either, being not always beneficial to one side. In the case of Lawrence and the Arabs, the Ottoman hegemony in the region was successfully challenged to an extent by an efficient guerrilla campaign, but it was not the Arabs who reaped the benefits. Whatever lands the Ottoman lost, the victorious great powers of Britain and France were quick to put under their rising influence. After all, had there been no global conflict, during which the British did not support the Arabs and had not sent one of their own to orchestrate them, would the Arabs have been successful in challenging the Ottoman dominion over the middle east? ‘A peace to end all peace’ was the agreement on the Middle East

⁷³ Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 287.

⁷⁴ Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 170-1.

called, very much like the Treaty of Versailles. The second world war that came as an aftermath of the first, caused by the same tectonic shifts, only amplified and brought even more guerrilla movements to the forefront.

Perhaps the most successful and famous Communist guerrillas were the ones of China who established their own brand of Communist-guerrilla amalgam. Focusing primarily on the rural population of China instead of the industrial urban proletariat, Mao Zedong's forces, from 1927 to 1949, managed to establish control over the world's most populous nation, overcoming both the Japanese invaders and their Chinese antagonists. The Communist Party of China (CPC) had been created years earlier, in 1921, but was quite weak until 1923, when it joined forces with the nationalist Kuomintang in what became known as the First United Front. At the time China was embroiled in a chaotic situation of clashing rival warlords, very similar to the era during which Sun Tzu's *Art of War* is often thought to have been written⁷⁵. In 1927 Kuomintang's treason against the CPC would ignite the Chinese civil war that was to be paused during WWII and the uneasy alliance of the Second united front (1937-1941). During these years, in 1939, Mao would instill his outlook favoring asymmetrical warfare in '*On Guerrilla Warfare*'. Already in 1930, the failed urban uprisings in Wuhan, Nanchang and Changsha had reinforced Mao's view that CPC should turn to rural China and Guerrilla operations⁷⁶.

Ever since, Mao's contribution to guerrilla warfare theory has been held in very high esteem by both practitioners and scholars, considering the magnitude of a successful revolution in a Nation so vast as China. Given the ancient roots and longevity of asymmetrical warfare, one cannot overlook the striking similarities between Mao's writings and his forerunners⁷⁷. Hence, in the first chapter of the *Art of War*, Sun Tzu famously writes:

“According as circumstances are favorable,
one should modify one's plans.
All warfare is based on deception.
Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable;
when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we
are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away;
when far away, we must make him believe we are near.
Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.
If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him.
If he is in superior strength, evade him.
If your opponent is of choleric temper, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak,
that he may grow arrogant.
If he is taking his ease, give him no rest.
If his forces are united, separate them.
Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.
These military devices, leading to victory, must not be divulged beforehand.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Typically, 6th-5th century bc.

⁷⁶ Παπασωτηρίου, *Η Κίνα από την Ουράνια αυτοκρατορία στην ανερχόμενη Υπερδύναμη του 210υ Αιώνα*, Αθήνα: Εστία, 2013, 175.

⁷⁷ Scott A. Boorman and Howard L. Boorman, “Mao Tse Tung and the Art of war”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 24-1 (1964): 129-137.

⁷⁸ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Ch. I

These ancient teachings immediately come to mind when one reads, arguably the most well-known passage from Mao's writings:

"In guerrilla warfare, select the tactic of seeming to come from the east and attacking from the west; avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightning blow, seek a lightning decision. When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws. In guerrilla strategy, the enemy's rear, flanks, and other vulnerable spots are his vital points, and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated. Only in this way can guerrillas carry out their mission of independent guerrilla action and coordination with the effort of the regular armies."⁷⁹

Moreover, they both underline the importance of leadership and organization. Mao asserts throughout his book, that guerrilla warfare cannot be successful on its own, it is a necessity arising from the weakness of one actor, operates in conjunction with an organized army to achieve certain ends and aims to eventually transform itself into a unified powerful organized military entity⁸⁰. Concerning Sun Tzu, his advices were neither towards regular nor irregular armies, rather for everyone willing to engage in warfare, and as such, they maintain a holistic spirit in their essence. Thus, both writers mention the importance of organization and leadership, yet they stress the need for a commander to be able to act independently when needed, for it is crucial in a war waged by surprise attacks, deception and ambushes to "maintain initiative" and "seize the moment", according to the commanders on-the spot assessment of a situation. It all comes down to, once again, adapting to the circumstances so that one can deliver a well-timed and successful strike to his prey. Mao writes: "*Because guerrilla formations act independently and because they are the most elementary of armed formations, command cannot be too highly centralized. If it were, guerrilla action would be too limited in scope.*"⁸¹ As we've already established previously, even the most basic ambush requires coordination, that will ultimately result in that well-timed and well executed attack that will yield the expected result. Such coordination becomes possible in a grander scale only through adequate organization and competent command, granted however a level of independence. This has been the case in prehistory and has remained unchanged throughout millenniums of human warfare. To make good use of any tactic, is to attain victory by it, and so Sun Tzu quite realistically states: "*If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight, even though the ruler forbid it; if fighting will not result in victory, then you must not fight even at the ruler's bidding.*"⁸²

Thus, the levels of independence and organization in command, are complementary means to an end. Mao purposely elevates the importance of actions serving a political end:

"Without a political goal, guerrilla warfare must fail, as it must if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy,

⁷⁹ Mao Tse Tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, Ch. I

⁸⁰ "The concept that guerrilla warfare is an end in itself and that guerrilla activities can be divorced from those of the regular forces is incorrect. If we assume that guerrilla warfare does not progress from beginning to end beyond its elementary forms, we have failed to recognize the fact that guerrilla hostilities can, under specific conditions, develop and assume orthodox characteristics. An opinion that admits the existence of guerrilla war, but isolates it, is one that does not properly estimate the potentialities of such war." Mao Tse Tung, *Guerrilla Ch.2*

⁸¹ Mao Tse Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Ch.7 p.114?

⁸² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Ch. X

cooperation, and assistance cannot be gained. The essence of guerrilla warfare is thus revolutionary in character. On the other hand, in a war of counterrevolutionary nature, there is no place for guerrilla hostilities. Because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation”⁸³

Mao stresses the importance of emancipating the local population, and rightfully so, as his struggle was not just a Civil war between rival ideologues, it was a war that can be understood as part of a series of conflicts from the Opium wars and China’s humiliation in the 19th century, leading towards China’s emancipation after WWII from all foreign invaders. Regardless of ideologies, this conflict too can be understood in terms of a conflict between invaders and invaded, (an acquisitive state and a conservative state in Liddell Hart’s formulation as beforementioned) and so the utmost political objectives for the invaded entity remain *independence* and *survival*. To that end, all means, regular and irregular must converge to be successful. That is where guerrilla warfare in its essence diverges from counter-insurgency, banditry, piracy and all its other tactical relatives. Therefore, directly confronting a superior enemy who would induce heavy casualties, is completely against the purpose of preserving a local population, its safety and survival. Hence, when Mao writes:

“Before we treat the practical aspects of guerrilla war, it might be well to recall the fundamental axiom of combat on which all military action is based. This can be stated: “Conservation of one’s own strength; destruction of enemy strength.” A military policy based on this axiom is consonant with a national policy directed towards the building of a free and prosperous Chinese state and the destruction of Japanese imperialism.”⁸⁴

He almost seems to refer to Sun Tzu’s quote : “*With his forces intact he will dispute the mastery of the Empire, and thus, without losing a man, his triumph will be complete. This is the method of attacking by stratagem.*”⁸⁵

Keeping one’s forces intact requires a way to shelter them, bringing us back to the topic of terrain and its importance in guerrilla warfare. After all, a population cannot be viewed separately from the land they cultivate, live on and are fed by. No theory of irregular conduct would be complete without considering the element of terrain, as it is also evident in Sun Tzu’s work. Not only does *The Art of War*, contain a separate chapter dedicated to Terrain, but also advice on the use of it by an army passing, encamping and fighting on different kinds of terrain, can be found throughout the ancient text.⁸⁶ He distinguishes different kinds of terrain such as “*accessible ground*”, “*entangling ground*”, “*precipitous heights*”, “*open ground*”, “*ground of intersecting*

⁸³ Mao Tse Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* pp. 43-44

⁸⁴ Mao Tse Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare* pp. 95-96

⁸⁵ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Ch. III

⁸⁶ For instance: “We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps.” , “It is a military axiom not to advance uphill against the enemy, nor to oppose him when he comes downhill” Ch.7 “When in difficult country, do not encamp. In country where high roads intersect, join hands with your allies. Do not linger in dangerously isolated positions. In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem. In desperate position, you must fight.” Ch. 8 And extensively in chapters 9-11.

highways” and “*difficult ground*”, to name a few ⁸⁷, and discusses them in a manner fusing the notions of *situation* and *landscape*, examining the different problems and opportunities that arise from each one. Topography is both a shelter and a vehicle, it does not produce the struggle, it harbors it. Just like a ship needs the calm waters of a port, the guerilla needs an area inaccessible to the enemy, to reside, prepare in, and withdraw to. This holds true for anyone, be it the Athenians, using the sea and their seaside strongholds like pirates, the bandits using caves and forests in mountainous areas just like the Aetolian tribesmen, and for Lawrence and the Arabs who drifted through the desert. For no one, neither bandits, guerrillas, nor pirates, however romanticized they may have become in popular literature, has superhuman capabilities that allow him to materialize from thin air and then disappear into nothingness, yet they can simply be at a place where their enemy cannot. There is no *front* or *rear*, in the traditional sense of fighting a battle when it comes to guerrilla warfare, yet there must be a place which the irregular fighter must withdraw to, and this place must be beyond the reach of the enemy⁸⁸. Safety is invaluable to the guerrilla army even more so because the guerrilla is by definition a weak actor, and thus does not have the luxury to sacrifice any one man, therefore, it is a priority for the guerrilla army to minimize losses to preserve forces.

Mao does not overlook the importance of terrain either and is concerned with it especially on the matter of establishing bases of operations. By becoming a Guerrilla movement, the CPC survived a series of persecutions and endured many hardships, by taking refuge in remote and rugged areas of China. Especially after the ‘long march’ of 1934-6, the Communists established bases in Northwest China, starting from Yan’an in Shaanxi region and across the Yellow river into the neighboring Shanxi region in 1937. Then they spread around taking hold of mostly mountainous and remote areas. At the same time, by recruiting from the local population, the CPC flourished from forty thousand members in 1937, to 800 000 in 1940.⁸⁹ Had they not been able to shelter themselves in such areas and replenish their numbers by fraternizing with the local communities, the outcome of the wars in China would have been very different and the Communists would have faced extinction⁹⁰.

⁸⁷ “Sun Tzu said: We may distinguish six kinds of terrain, to wit: (1) Accessible ground; (2) entangling ground; (3) temporizing ground; (4) narrow passes; (5) precipitous heights; (6) positions at a great distance from the enemy.” Ch. 10 “Sun Tzu said: The art of war recognizes nine varieties of ground: (1) Dispersive ground; (2) facile ground; (3) contentious ground; (4) open ground; (5) ground of intersecting highways; (6) serious ground; (7) difficult ground; (8) hemmed-in ground; (9) desperate ground.” Ch. 11

⁸⁸ “When we discuss the terms “front” and “rear,” it must be remembered, that while guerrillas do have bases, their primary field of activity is in the enemy’s rear areas. They themselves have no rear.” Mao p. 52-53 “Ability to fight a war without a rear area is a fundamental characteristic of guerrilla action, but this does not mean that guerrillas can exist and function over a long period of time without the development of base areas.” Mao, *Guerrilla*, 107.

⁸⁹ Παπασωτηρίου, *Kiva*, 195-199.

⁹⁰ “Another point essential in the establishment of bases is the cooperation that must exist between the armed guerrilla bands and the people. All our strength must be used to spread the doctrine of armed resistance to Japan, to arm the people, to organize self-defense units, and to train guerrilla bands. This doctrine must be spread among the people, who must be organized into anti-Japanese groups. Their political instincts must be sharpened and their martial ardor increased. If the workers, the farmers, the lovers of liberty, the young men, the women, and the children are not organized, they will never realize their own anti-Japanese power. Only the united strength of the people can eliminate traitors, recover the measure of political power that has been lost, and conserve and improve what we still retain.” Mao Tse tung, *Guerrilla*, 110-1.

Mao was not the first to write a manual on small wars. A number of texts specifically dedicated to the subject had existed years before he ever wrote a single line, as we discussed above. Their availability and number increased naturally in modernity, not because of any heightened significance and relevance of the subject, but quite simply because the evolution of printing methods brought this too into the light. Even Karl von Clausewitz, the ‘icon’ of direct approach, beyond making brief mention to partisan warfare in his magnum opus *‘On War’*, also addressed the issue of ‘small wars’ in a series of texts and lectures⁹¹. Ancient classics, timeless and indispensable on this subject as on any other regarding strategy, like Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* and Thucydides *Histories*, found wider audiences by the printing press and influenced many more writers. Mao Zedong was not even the last one to write about it, other famous proponents of the practice like Che Guevarra, have attempted to leave their own printed account of the subject behind. When we add the vast academic work on the subject that saw a rise as the issue became even more relevant after WWII and China’s predicament, we get more than enough texts for this subject. Over this extensive bibliography, if we had to choose a definition of guerrilla warfare, Mao’s words would once again unsurprisingly suffice:

“Guerrilla warfare has qualities and objectives peculiar to itself. It is a weapon that a nation inferior in arms and military equipment may employ against a more powerful aggressor nation. When the invader pierces deep into the heart of the weaker country and occupies her territory in a cruel and oppressive manner, there is no doubt that conditions of terrain, climate, and society in general offer obstacles to his progress and may be used to advantage by those who oppose him. In guerrilla warfare, we turn these advantages to the purpose of resisting and defeating the enemy.”⁹²

⁹¹ Sibylle Scheipers, “Clausewitz on Small War”, *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 27-2, (2016): 345-357

⁹² Mao Tse Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, 42

4. Athenians in Aetolia

4.1 Initial Conflicts

For us to better understand the events that took place in Aetolia in 426 BC, we must lay out the situation in western Greece, introduce the key actors and take into account the local topography. Acarnanea first comes into play towards the summer of 430 BC, when the Ambraciotes (who lived north and east of the Ambracian bay and were settlers of the Corinthians) mounted an attack on Amphilochian Argos. The enmity between them had begun earlier, as Thucydides tells us, when the Ambraciotes first assisted and in the process ‘hellenized’ the Amphilochian Argeians, when they first settled in Amphilochia⁹³, but had gradually dispossessed the original population. The original Amphilochians, along with their neighboring Acarnaneans, had now turned to the Athenians for help, who gladly accepted to intervene, sending their general Phormio who conquered Argos with thirty ships, enslaving the Ambracian inhabitants while restoring the Amphilochian and Acarnean population, infusing it with Athenians too. Thus, towards the end of the summer of 430, the Ambraciotes, aided by Chaones barbarians, attempted unsuccessfully to recapture the city of Argos. The tribal army became “masters of the field” but their failure shows once again how inefficient are such lightly armed bands against a walled settlement⁹⁴. Phormio then set up his command in Naupactus which he used as a naval base, harassing all enemy ships coming and going from the Corinthian gulf. From there, the Athenians could regularly launch raids around Peloponnesus, while keeping Peloponnesian pirates and foreign merchants in check.⁹⁵ This indeed is the reason why Naupactus, and by association the surrounding areas were quite important strategically. Professor J. E. Lendon writes:

“In the larger war, Athenian-allied Naupactus was by far the most important of the embattled fortress cities in the northwest. Naupactus was Athens’ naval base and home to the Messenian exiles who had already proved such valuable auxiliaries to the Athenians. Lying near the narrows at the mouth of the Corinthian Gulf, the Gibraltar of Greece, Naupactus was well placed to torment Peloponnesian ships coming and going. But by land Naupactus was less well situated, for it lay upon the borders of the Ozolian Locrians and the Aetolians, the former friendly, the latter emphatically not”⁹⁶

The following summer of 429 BC, the Ambraciotes, once more with the Chaonian barbarian friends at their side, willing to reclaim what they had lost, plus subdue the whole of adjacent Acarnanea, called upon the Spartans for assistance, requesting a thousand hoplites on a fleet. Their argument, a very sound one, was that if the Spartans provided assistance, landing from the south, together they would stand a good chance of conquering Acarnania, Zakynthos and Kefalonia. Above all, they would expel the Athenians from these parts, even from Naupactus and, in doing so, diminish their ability to raid Peloponnesus. The Spartans immediately took up the offer sending ships with a thousand hoplites led by their general Cnemus. Corinthians were also eager to help the Ambraciotes who were their settlers and so started gathering a fleet that alas did not make it in time. Another fleet though was ready and waiting at the isle of Leucadia and

⁹³ “This Argos and the rest of Amphilochia was planted by Amphilochus the son of Amphiarus after the Trojan war, who, at his return, misliking the then state of Argos, built this city in the Gulf of Ambracia and called it Argos after the name of his own country.” Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.68

⁹⁴ Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.68

⁹⁵ Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.69

⁹⁶ Lendon, *Song of Wrath*, 269.

did set sail for Acarnania⁹⁷. Eventually, an army consisting of three parts, gathered on land and marched to the central city of Acarnania, Stratos. Thucydides writes:

“So they went on, the Chaonians and other barbarians in the middle, the Leucadians and Anactorians and such others as were with these on the right hand, and Cnemus with the Peloponnesians and Ambraciotes on the left, each army at great distance and sometimes out of sight of one another. The Grecians in their march kept their order and went warily on till they had gotten a convenient place to encamp in. But the Chaonians, confident of themselves and by the inhabitants of that continent accounted most warlike, had not the patience to take in any ground for a camp but carried furiously on together with the rest of the barbarians, thought to have taken the town by their clamour and to have the action ascribed only to themselves. But they of Stratos, aware of this whilst they were yet in their way and imagining if they could overcome these thus divided from the other two armies, that the Grecians also would be the less forward to come on, placed divers ambushes not far from the city and, when the enemies approached, fell upon them both from the city and from the ambushes at once and, putting them into affright, slew many of the Chaonians upon the place; and the rest of the barbarians, seeing these to shrink, stayed no longer but fled outright.”⁹⁸

What is very interesting in this passage, is the interplay between people of different levels of military sophistication. When describing the various bands that made up the barbarian coalition, Thucydides states clearly that some of them had no kings, others were led by people considered to have heroic lineage and all leaders led “for the time being”. This implies a lack of clear hierarchy, thus insufficient command to keep this coalition organized. Not only was that force, consisting of Mesolithic⁹⁹ warriors, attacking an Iron age settlement (Stratos that was the most advanced of Acarnanea) doomed, they also lacked the organization that would allow them to coordinate the attack with the other two parts of that army. The defending Acarnaneans on the other hand, did not risk an open battle, instead some retreated behind the walls, while others laid in ambush waiting for the impetuous enemy to play right into their hands. The Stratians knew that they had to strike before the rest of the attackers arrived to aid the barbarians and so they did from their ambushes, throwing the weakly organized barbarians into disarray, panic and retreat. The Akarnaneans kept harassing the attackers from a safe distance using slings, preventing them from mounting a second offensive. The Stratians were expert users of the sling, which was not odd amongst people still accustomed to earlier forms of fighting. The sling was far more lethal than a primitive bow having superior range and accuracy and was widely used across the Mediterranean from Neolithic times¹⁰⁰. The fleeing barbarians met with the encamped Greek part of the army, while the Stratians moved swiftly, without wasting time waiting for reinforcements, and kept sniping the encamped forces from afar with their slings, pinning them down, for the enemy could not even reach for their breastplates.¹⁰¹ This was textbook efficient use of projectile weapons against a numerically superior enemy. The Acarnanian inhabitants of Stratos, while considered Greek (therefore an actor in the city state system of sufficient enough military and political sophistication), were

⁹⁷ Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.80

⁹⁸ Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.81

⁹⁹ Th. *Histories*, 1.06, 3.96

¹⁰⁰ Ferrill, *Origins*, 24-6.

¹⁰¹ Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.81

also part of the native population of that particular part of Greece that contained both barbarians and primitive Greeks, which meant they had both excellent knowledge of the terrain and the skirmish methods of their neighbors, making their counteroffensive very successful. The manner, in which these experts of ancient long-range weapons, battered the surprised yet superior Peloponnesian army, brings to our mind the admittedly vastly different battle of Crecy, where exceptional English marksmen, against all odds, staggered a much larger force of French heavily armored knights. Events like these, although diverse in many aspects, show the importance of range and mobility in a battlefield, foreshadowing the eventual dominance of firearms as the main instrument of killing, in battle or ambush. Even in our nuclear era, the shadow that weapons of mass destruction cast on us is as long as their range.

The invaders then set for their homelands, and so did Cnemus and the Spartans who had also fought against other Acarnanians, preventing them from reaching and assisting Stratos. After that, the Peloponnesians found themselves at sea where they would encounter Phormio's fleet and engage in a series of naval battles.¹⁰² After emerging victorious from these naval confrontations in a grand exhibition of superior expertise and skill, Phormio and the Athenians sailed once more from Naupactus, launching an expedition in western Akarnania. They landed on Astakos, another major city in the area, and moved inward to Stratos, expelling from Akarnania any people they distrusted or deemed hostile. When they were done, they sailed to Naupactus and from there back to Athens where they exchanged prisoners with the Peloponnesians and so ended 429 BC, third year of the Peloponnesian war.¹⁰³

Phormio's son, Asopius, was the one to lead the Athenian raids around Peloponnesus in the following year with thirty ships. At that time, the Acarnaneans had requested for a relative of Phormio to lead them against their kindred, yet hostile, tribe of Oeniads. Asopius came to their aid, but the Oeniads, like the rest of the insubordinate tribes we come across in this time and place, were not easy to subdue. Failing to pacify them, Asopius disbanded his local supporting army and sailed for Leukada instead. He landed on Neritum – Niriko, where he would be killed along with some of his soldiers in the hands of the resisting locals.¹⁰⁴

4.2 The Athenians' Expedition to Aetolia, 426 BCE

The following two years, from 428 to 426 BC, were marked by very important events such as the stasis of Mytilene, the massacre of Plataea and the Corcyra stasis in 427. The sixth year of the war came along with a series of earthquakes that postponed yet another Peloponnesian invasion of Attica. Instead, Athens became involved in conflicts at Sicily. Pericles' death at 429 BC had left a prideful Athens that marginally still benefitted from the conflict at that point without a mastermind and the effects were starting to show. The Periclean Grand Strategy of exhausting the enemy, striking from a defensive position unexpectedly but effectively through naval superiority, was now slowly turning, thanks to arrogance, into an erratic behavior that spread conflict far and wide, with reasoning becoming more and more elusive. According to Thucydides, Athens accepted to help the Ionian Leontini and Regio against their Dorian Sicilian rivals for two reasons: to stop Sicily's supply of grain to Sparta and to test the prospect

¹⁰²Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.82-94

¹⁰³Thucydides, *Histories*, 2.102-103

¹⁰⁴Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.07

of future conquest of Sicily¹⁰⁵. Provided Peloponnesus was quite self-sufficient on food¹⁰⁶ and Athens would eventually launch a full-scale expedition against Sicily years later, their involvement in 427 fits the pattern of expanding hegemony rather than attempting an indirect strike on Sparta itself. Had the plague not surged for the second time in Athens during the winter following their first visit in Sicily¹⁰⁷, Athenians might have attempted bolder and more reckless moves around that time rather than later.

Pericles had explicitly warned against such behavior in his first address:

"There be many other things that give hope of victory in case you do not, whilst you are in this war, strive to enlarge your dominion and undergo other voluntary dangers (for I am afraid of our own errors more than of their designs);"¹⁰⁸

Unfortunately for Athens, Pericles had died in 429 BC, taken like many others by the plague, and his advice slowly began to fade. By 428 BC, the Athenian fleet had reached its height, numbering 250 ships of which a hundred were sailing around Peloponnesus and another hundred were guarding Attica, Salamis and Euboea. The rest sailed in various places where operations were underway¹⁰⁹. This was the result of the successful implementation of Pericles' Grand Strategy, but this kind of power also bred the momentum for "enlarging their dominion" to the point they became exposed to "unnecessary dangers".

During this summer of 426 BC, Athens had sent sixty ships led by the famous Nicias against the unyielding Melians (this issue being much later resolved in the tragic way immortalized by the "Melian Dialogue"¹¹⁰) and another forty ships for the conduct of the usual raids on Peloponnesus. One of the two men that led those ships was Demosthenes of Alkisthenes who would rise to prominence later in the war. He sailed against the island of Lefkada (aka Leucadia) and successfully drove the locals into garrison. Although their Acarnanian allies wanted "to wall them up, conceiving that they might easily be expunged by a siege and desiring to be rid of a city their continual enemy"¹¹¹, the Athenians chose to follow the advice of the Messenians and invade Aetolia.

Demosthenes here faced two options: either appease his Acarnanian allies and destroy the Leucadians or move to secure Aetolia. The latter would include establishing dominance in the area surrounding Naupactus, a city that as we have discussed already served as a very important naval base for the interests of Athens in western Greece. The Messenian inhabitants of Naupactus would obviously want support for their home-city, but Demosthenes decision was a strategic one, estimating that it was more pressing to 'pacify' the area directly above the Corinthian gulf.¹¹² Athens was after all a sea power and most importantly a contestant for hegemony in the ongoing conflict, making their

¹⁰⁵Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.86

¹⁰⁶ Lendon, *Song of Wrath*, 247.

¹⁰⁷ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.87

¹⁰⁸ Thucydides, *Histories*, 1.144. According to the Greek text, "undergo other voluntary dangers" can also be translated as "not be willingly exposed to unnecessary/additional dangers", «να μην εκτεθούμε σε κινδύνους περιττούς» από Α. Βλάχο, «να εκτεθείτε θεληματικά σε πρόσθετους κινδύνους» according to N. Skouteropoulos who in agreeing with A. W. Gomme also notes that had Pericles lived, he would most probably stood against Athens meddling in both Sicily and Aetolia.

¹⁰⁹ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.17

¹¹⁰ Thucydides, *Histories*, 5.84-116

¹¹¹ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.94

¹¹² Ibid. "Demosthenes was persuaded at the same time by the Messenians that, seeing so great an army was together, it would be honourable for him to invade the Aetolians"

choices relevant to the moves of other major players. In that context, a foothold on the mouth of Corinth's bay and above Peloponnesus would be on their top priorities.

"It was the Messenians of Naupactus who urged Demosthenes to attack the Aetolians, for they were a perpetual threat to the Messenians' adopted city; Athens, for her part, would take any measure to safeguard Naupactus so as to protect her base. And it would be well also to clear the land road between Naupactus and the friendly Acarnanians further west: then Athens would dominate the whole of the elbow of northwestern Greece, from Mount Parnassus on the eastern border of the friendly Ozolian Locrians all the way to the Gulf of Ambracia. Besides, by attacking Aetolia Demosthenes could "do a favor for the Messenians," who, having helped Phormio so bravely in 429 BC and Nicostratus on Corcyra in 427 BC, had, to Greek thinking, every right to call in a favor."¹¹³

Messenians also based their argument on the assumption that, there was to be a tactical battle of organized armies between the locals and the Athenian confederation, so a quick and easy victory would be secured. This proved to be a false assumption, but one that the Messenians could have easily made. They originated from southern Peloponnesus and were always at odds with the Spartans and must have been very accustomed to the well-organized ways of warfare of their traditional adversaries. Coupled with the Athenian war-machine, they could have assumed a direct approach, straight through the small villages of Aetolia which would be unstoppable. On the other hand, having settled in Naupactus for quite some time, it is also unlikely that they were not accustomed to and could not anticipate the tactics and methods of the surrounding Aetolian tribesmen.

Demosthenes also believed that he could easily materialize his plans with his local allies on his side. The plan was to go through Aetolia and connect with the friendly to Athens Phoceans (by force or persuasion) who bordered Boeotia, thus flanking the hostile Boeotians, a move of strategic 'containment'.¹¹⁴ He understood very well however that the locals would prove invaluable and had asked for the Acarnanians help, who had refused, since their plan to attack Leucadia was not favored¹¹⁵. Even without the Acarnanians, meeting other local allies along the way was crucial because as Thucydides writes:

"Now these Locrians called Ozolae were confederates of the Athenians and were to meet them with their whole power in the heart of the country. For being confiners on the Aetolians and using the same manner of arming, it was thought it would be a matter of great utility in the war to have them in their army for that they knew their manner of fight and were acquainted with the country."¹¹⁶

In the following passage, the miscalculation of the situation is made clear:

"For they alleged that though the nation of the Aetolians were great and warlike, yet their habitation was in villages unwallled and those at great distances, and were but light-armed and might, therefore, with no great difficulty be all subdued before

¹¹³ Lendon, *Song of wrath*, 271.

¹¹⁴ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.95 "Phoceans, which people, for the friendship they ever bore to the Athenians, would, he thought, be willing to follow his army, and if not, might be forced; and upon the Phoceans bordereth Boeotia;"

¹¹⁵ "putting off therefore with his whole army, against the minds of the Acarnanians, from Leucas, he sailed unto Solium by the shore. And there, having communicated his conceit with the Acarnanians, when they would not approve of it because of his refusal to besiege Leucas" Th. *Histories* 3.95

¹¹⁶ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.95

they could unite themselves for defense. And they advised him to take in hand first the Apodotians, next the Ophionians, and after them the Eurytians (which are the greatest part of Aetolia, of a most strange language, and that are reported to eat raw flesh); for these being subdued, the rest would easily follow.”¹¹⁷

What the Messenians use as an argument for the Aetolians being an easy target, is exactly their advantage. Not only were these people renowned for being “great and warlike” and ‘competent warriors’ (μάχιμοι). More importantly, as we also discussed in a previous chapter, they were lightly armed warriors operating on their own land which happened to be one of the harshest bulk of mountains in Greece.

Thucydides states that Athenians would march to Phocaea with Parnassus to their right, thus we are inclined to suppose they would follow the clearest route to northern Phocis, which is the bank of river Mornos. This river conveniently runs from and through Mount Giona, passes near Aegitium and Potidania, and runs into the sea just east of Naupactus¹¹⁸. Following the river uphill, would have taken them all around the west side of Giona and standing on the springs of Mornos, they could gaze at Phocis below their feet to the north. Had they managed to somehow arrive unscathed to their destination, they would be right at the back of the Boeotians, gaining once again access to the sea. Lest we forget, the Athenians were a maritime force and every move they made cannot be seen apart from naval operations. As we already discussed, Naupactus was serving as a naval base overseeing the Corinthian gulf and a launchpad for raids on western Peloponnesus coasts, while Euboea was also being encircled by Athenian ships. Therefore, controlling the strip of land connecting the two seas also meant the containment of the Boeotians. To attempt the crossing of unfriendly mountains to establish their presence at their enemies’ backs, was a move somehow reminiscent of what Hannibal pulled off successfully 208 years later in a much grander scale, by crossing the Alps in 218 BC. The Athenians did reach the settlement of Aegitium which stood near the present-day village of the same name just south of what now is the artificial lake of Mornos, at which point the Aetolians would counterattack by ambush.

This location in south Aetolia is not more than 50 km northeast¹¹⁹ of Naupactus, the Athenians’ base of operations, and it was (and still is) mountainous and inaccessible enough for an outsider to be trapped in¹²⁰. As with their involvement in Sicily, this attempted crossing of Aetolia can only be understood as a manifestation of Athens’ arrogance.

“He, persuaded by them and confident of his fortune because nothing had crossed him hitherto, without tarrying for the Locrians that should have come in with their aids (for his greatest want was of darters light-armed), marched to Aegirium, which approaching he won by force, the men having fled secretly out and encamped themselves on the hills above it; for it stood in a mountainous place and about eighty furlongs from the sea.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.94

¹¹⁸ We must bear in mind that most rivers in Greece, Mornos as well, are in reality torrents and streams that flow in rainy seasons and in spring fed by the melting snow, but almost run dry during the summer, becoming very accessible ‘corridors’ through the mountains.

¹¹⁹ And approximately 30 km from the nearest sea, although Thucydides’ calculation of 80 furlongs is equivalent to 15-16 km.

¹²⁰ For an earlier account of the topography of Aitolocarnania see: N. G. L. Hammond, “The Campaigns in Amphilochoia during the Archidamian War” N. G. L. Hammond *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, 37, (1937): 128 - 140

¹²¹ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.97

The stage was set, Demosthenes might have thought it was good fortune, but it was far from it. He had encountered no resistance so far, because the locals refused to meet him head-on, folding his plans for a quick and easy victory. Contrary to the Athenians, the local tribes were very much aware of their enemy's plans, so they seized the initiative.

“But the Aetolians knew of this preparation when it was first resolved on. And afterwards, when the army was entered, they were united into a mighty army to make head, insomuch as that the farthest off of the Ophionians that reach out to the Melian Gulf, the Bomians and Callians, came in with their aids.”¹²²

Not only had they been falling back into the mountain, they also took the time to concentrate their forces and strike at a time and place of their choice. Demosthenes was being lured deeper and deeper into enemy territory, marching upward. Here it is stated again that the Athenians needed but lacked, because of their decisions, “darters light armed”, a unit equivalent to that of the enemy to counter their hit and run tactics.

“But the Aetolians (for by this time they were come with their forces to Aegitium) charged the Athenians and their confederates and, running down upon them, some one way and some another, from the hills, plied them with their darts. And when the army of the Athenians assaulted them, they retired; and when it retired, they assaulted. So that the fight for a good while was nothing but alternate chase and retreat, and the Athenians had the worst in both.”¹²³

And so, when the time was right, an army of Aetolian tribesmen using by all accounts pre-bronze age equipment, charged the Athenians. Apart from the element of surprise, they fired upon the enemy from multiple directions, “some one way and some another”¹²⁴ as not to give the enemy a clear target in one direction, using projectiles to maintain a safe distance from the superior in close quarters combat Athenians. When the Athenians tried to give chase, the lighter Aetolians easily and quickly retreated uphill, away from harm, since the heavy phalanxes of Demosthenes and his allies could not possibly keep up. About the phalanx A. Ferrill writes:

“Since the phalanx easily prevailed against the ‘heroic’ aristocratic armies of the eighth and seventh centuries, most Greek states south of Thessaly adopted it, and Greek warfare from 675 to 490 consisted mainly of one phalanx against another. The phalanx was extremely vulnerable in flank and rear to attack by cavalry, light infantry or skirmishers, but those units were not used in the warfare of the period. The only combat possible was between one phalanx and another, and that required fighting on level ground. On hilly terrain it was too difficult to maintain an unbroken line.”¹²⁵

The only countermeasure the Athenians had against this distant enemy, who had little to no means of armour to protect himself, were their own projectiles. But arrows, as well as morale, are not inexhaustible. In contrast, the ambushing army would have been far better prepared, both in terms of supplies, drawing from their own vast woodlands

¹²² Thucydides, *Histories* 3.96

¹²³ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.97

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ferrill, *Origins*, 103. During the 5th Century BC, in the course of the Peloponnesian war, we see the variety of units widening. Archers, cavalry and light infantry are employed in many instances, while skirmishers such as the ones in Aetoloacarnania or Thracian ‘targeteers’ (πελταστές) also partake in many battles.

in which they now were fighting in, and willpower, since they anticipated and initiated this battle for their own survival.

“Nevertheless, as long as their archers had arrows and were able to use them (for the Aetolians, by reason they were not armed, were put back still with the shot), they held out. But when upon the death of their captain the archers were dispersed and the rest were also wearied, having a long time continued the said labour of pursuing and retiring, and the Aetolians continually afflicting them with their darts, they were forced at length to fly and, lighting into hollows without issue and into places they were not acquainted withal, were destroyed.”¹²⁶

Along with the archer’s captain, their Messenian guide to these parts also died and with him any hope of finding a way out of this dead end, and thus the Athenians were completely demoralized, disoriented and decimated.

“For Chromon a Messenian, who was their guide for the ways, was slain. And the Aetolians, pursuing them still with darts, slew many of them quickly whilst they fled, being swift of foot and without armour. But the most of them missing their way and entering into a wood which had no passage through, the Aetolians set it on fire and burnt it about them.”¹²⁷

Thucydides concludes the summary of this instance as follows:

“All kinds of shifts to fly and all kinds of destruction were that day in the army of the Athenians. Such as remained with much ado got to the sea and to Oeneon, a city of Locris, from whence they first set forth. There died very many of the confederates and a hundred and twenty men of arms of the Athenians; that was their number, and all of them able men; these men of the very best died in this war. Procles also was there slain, one of the generals. When they had received the bodies of their dead from the Aetolians under truce and were gotten again to Naupactus, they returned with the fleet to Athens. But they left Demosthenes about Naupactus and those parts because he was afraid of the Athenian people for the loss that had happened.”¹²⁸

It is far fetched to say that one battle alone could influence the course of the Peloponnesian war, but Athens at this point, with the plague having resurfaced the previous winter of 427-6, certainly could not afford to lose “a hundred and twenty” of its best hoplites and a general. Athens was moving away from her previous ‘Periclean Strategy’ of exhausting the enemy with sudden strikes, no longer remaining on the defensive or retaining some proportionality. Athenians had begun seeking further conquest and actively tried to establish foothold in a series of places they deemed of strategic importance. In this strategic context was their march through Aetolia attempted, but was halted due to all conditions being unfavorable on a tactical level.

4.3 The Art of Folly

To establish why this particular expedition was doomed from its conception, we can juxtapose what transpired, with the writings of Sun Tzu, as not only was the indirect approach employed by the defending locals, but also because *The Art of War* was written at a time that corresponds very well with the time of the Peloponnesian war.

¹²⁶ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.98

¹²⁷ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.98

¹²⁸ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.98

Thus, the teachings of that ancient Chinese war manual stemmed from and were directed towards a society that waged war very similar to that of ancient Greece, at least in terms of equipment and sophistication.

First and foremost, Demosthenes decided to hastily move inward to the Aetolian mountains without the aid of other local tribes, but alongside the Messenians of Naupactus who had been settled there for around thirty years¹²⁹, less than one generation, so he essentially went forth blind. He was being guided by people who were still ‘guests’ in these parts. This was his original sin, one that is explicitly chastised in “*The Art of war*”:

“We are not fit to lead an army on the march unless we are familiar with the face of the country—its mountains and forests, its pitfalls and precipices, its marshes and swamps. We shall be unable to turn natural advantage to account unless we make use of local guides.”¹³⁰

He knew neither the intentions of his enemies nor the exact shape of their country. The opposite is true for the Aetolians, who were aware of the Athenians’ plans early enough, simply because their imposing army in semi-primitive Aetolia would have been very hard to miss. They also have been inhabiting these areas since time immemorial, much longer than their newly arrived neighbors. So, when the phalanxes began marching, the Aetolians swiftly prepared to receive them. While one side was on the offensive and ignorant of their surroundings, entering a “fog of war”, the other was choosing the time and space of the battle. The following passages from the “*Art of War*” mark the importance of being informed:

“Hence that general is skillful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skillful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.

O divine art of subtlety and secrecy! Through you we learn to be invisible, through you inaudible; and hence we can hold the enemy's fate in our hands.

...

Though the enemy be stronger in numbers, we may prevent him from fighting. Scheme so as to discover his plans and the likelihood of their success.

Rouse him, and learn the principle of his activity or inactivity. Force him to reveal himself, so as to find out his vulnerable spots.”¹³¹

The locals knew they stood no chance against one of the two strongest armies in Greece, so they did not sit and wait in their unwallied settlement hoping for the best, instead they fell back to a shelter much more effective, further up into the mountains. On preparing to receive an enemy Sun tzu writes:

“The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position *unassailable*.”¹³²

¹²⁹ They had gained their freedom in 464-456, by revolting, during the previous Athens-Sparta war aka ‘The First Peloponnesian war (460-445). Lendon, *Song of Wrath*, 462-3.

¹³⁰ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. VII

¹³¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. VI

¹³² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. VIII

“He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated. Hence the skillful fighter puts himself into a position which makes defeat impossible, and does not miss the moment for defeating the enemy.” Or according to the Roger T. Ames translation: “Therefore, the expert in battle takes his stand on ground that is *unassailable*, and does not miss his chance to defeat the enemy”¹³³

As we’ve already discussed in previous chapters, these mountainous territories, where the Aetolians were now ‘nested’, are of the most “unassailable” ones in Greece, a country that otherwise is characterized by a temperate climate, mild flora and welcoming fauna. This kind of mountains that spread throughout the Balkan peninsula, although not the highest on the planet, share a number of characteristics Sun Tzu takes special note of, like: “*precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep natural hollows, confined places, tangled thickets*” and warns that “*should be left with all possible speed and not approached.*”, but “*While we keep away from such places, we should get the enemy to approach them; while we face them, we should let the enemy have them on his rear.*”¹³⁴. He calls such terrain “difficult” (“*Mountain forests, rugged steeps, marshes and fens—all country that is hard to traverse: this is difficult ground.*”) and “Hemmed in” (“*Ground which is reached through narrow gorges, and from which we can only retire by tortuous paths, so that a small number of the enemy would suffice to crush a large body of our men: this is hemmed in ground.*”)¹³⁵. Concerning the later type of terrain Sun Tzu is explicit: “*In hemmed-in situations, you must resort to stratagem*”¹³⁶ and that is what the Aetolians did.

Demosthenes was not only walking into a trap, set in a most inhospitable environment unsuspecting of it, he was ascending from sea level, only to be met by an army already occupying higher ground. “*It is a military axiom not to advance uphill*”¹³⁷ Sun tzu wrote and “*...Do not climb heights in order to fight. So much for mountain warfare.*”¹³⁸. One may argue that Demosthenes did not know there would even be such a fight, but there was one nevertheless and his army was the last to notice. The uphill march also meant that, according to common sense and *the Art of War* alike: “Whoever is first in the field and awaits the coming of the enemy, will be fresh for the fight; whoever is second in the field and has to hasten to battle will arrive exhausted.”

What the Athenians ‘knew’ was that they were a vastly superior force to any tribe around Aetolia, but as it is made painstakingly clear when one reads *the Art of War*, there is a great number of factors that determine the outcome of a conflict and raw power, vital as it is, is not enough. The aspect of ‘knowing’ your place, in relation to anything and anyone around, is again and again being set forth and often it is what you don’t know rather than what you do know that is the problem. “*If we know that the enemy is open to attack, and also know that our men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the nature of the ground makes fighting impracticable, we have still gone only halfway towards victory.*”¹³⁹ Demosthenes kept going because he was not

¹³³ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. IV

¹³⁴ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. IX

¹³⁵ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. XI

¹³⁶ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. VIII

¹³⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. VII

¹³⁸ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. IX

¹³⁹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. X. Similarly, in the same chapter: “The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally; but a power of estimating the adversary, of controlling the forces of

afraid of the inferior enemy and must have had faith in his men, but what he did not know made “halfway to victory”, his highway to ruin.

The moment the Aetolians attacked, according to this analysis vis a vis *The Art of War*, the outcome was determined. What is even more interesting is the harmony between Thucydides account of the attack and Sun Tzu’s advice on indirect approach. This incident that the Greek historian writes about, serves as a perfect example on the application of the Chinese general’s theory. From the foreknowledge of the terrain and enemy intentions, to seizing the initiative and successfully ambushing a superior enemy, it all comes down to Sun Tzu’s most basic heeding:

“Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him. If he is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him.”¹⁴⁰.

The tribesmen broke the will of the enemy, spreading disorder amongst his forces, exhausting them with hit and run tactics: “*And when the army of the Athenians assaulted them, they retired; and when it retired, they assaulted. So that the fight for a good while was nothing but alternate chase and retreat, and the Athenians had the worst in both*”¹⁴¹, centuries before Mao wrote “*When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws*”, but not even a hundred years apart from Sun Tzu. The high value of the commanders as individuals that is highlighted throughout *The Art of War*, is also noted in Thucydides work regarding this campaign too. The panic in the Athenian side is intensified when two commanders, the Messenian guide and the commander of the archers, are killed in the fray. A part of the scattering Athenian army was even burned alive while trapped in a “thicket”, “*a wood which had no passage through*”, that the Aetolians set on fire, a demoralizing practice that is specifically addressed in the twelfth chapter of *The Art of War*¹⁴². The aim of this analysis is to showcase the continuity in guerrilla tactics which any great power, Athens in our case, might encounter while pursuing a grander strategic maneuver. The Athenians, in their hegemonic aspirations, had tried to conquer the lands on the west of Boeotia, and in doing so, had stumbled upon the successful resistance of the local tribes. This time it was the Athenian ‘Mammoth’ that was being ambushed by the ‘Huntsmen’.

4.4 Demosthenes’ Redemption

Having successfully repelled the Athenians’ attack, the Aetolians immediately sent envoys to Corinth and Sparta, seeking their protection. Wisely acting, they sought external help from the two most powerful rivals of Athens in the city state system of Greece. They seemed to comprehend that their ambush had succeeded, in part because

victory, and of shrewdly calculating difficulties, dangers and distances, constitutes the test of a great general. He who knows these things, and in fighting puts his knowledge into practice, will win his battles. He who knows them not, nor practices them, will surely be defeated.”, “If we know that our own men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the enemy is not open to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory. If we know that the enemy is open to attack, but are unaware that our own men are not in a condition to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.”

¹⁴⁰ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. I

¹⁴¹ Thucydides, *Histories* 3.97

¹⁴² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. XII, “The Attack by Fire”

their enemy failed to foresee it, but now he would most certainly expect it¹⁴³. So, they pleaded for an attack against the immediate source of their insecurity, Naupactus, for it harbored the Athenians against them. The Spartans answered their plea, and towards the end of autumn sent them “three thousand men of arms of their confederates.”¹⁴⁴ Such a force of Peloponnesian hoplites, led by the Spartan general Evrylochus, would indeed stand a chance in a direct assault against the Athenian walled stronghold of Naupactus. His “army assembled at Delphi”¹⁴⁵, and from there he sent a herald to inform the various tribes of Locris about his intention to march through their territory to Naupactus. Thucydides writes:

“Of all the Locrians the Amphissians co-operated with him most, as standing most in fear for the enmity of the Phoceans. And they first giving hostages induced others who likewise were afraid of the coming in of the army to do the like: the Myoneans first, being their neighbours, for this way is Locris of most difficult access”

Locris is the stretch of land east of Naupactus to Boeotia, south of Aetolia and Phocea. Evrylochus would take almost the same route the Athenians tried to take, from the opposite direction, to reach Naupactus¹⁴⁶. Its inhabitants had been usually friendly towards Athens, yet some of them looking to their self-interest, like the Amphissians who were compelled by their rivalry with their neighbors, the Phoceans, who were Athens’ allies, and some simply terrified of the mighty Spartan army, turned to the Peloponnesian side, providing hostages as guarantee. The few that did not, were simply taken over by the Spartans¹⁴⁷.

Demosthenes in the meantime, who was left stranded at Naupactus, too ashamed to return to Athens because of his previous blunder, had caught wind of the inbound enemy and rushed to save Naupactus, that was very important for the interests of Athens. He would not repeat the same mistake, so he immediately turned to the Acarnanians for help, who he had neglected when marching to Aetolia. They sent a thousand hoplites by boat in time to save the city, for Everylochus now knew that there would be enough fighters inside this well fortified city to man the extensive walls and counter his attack. The Acarnanians were reluctant to help the Athenians according to Thucydides, for the same reasons they refused to follow them into Aetolia earlier¹⁴⁸, but as a regiment of hoplites emphatically proves, when one more great power enters your local sphere of interests, the luxury of retaining a level of independence and detachment fades away. The Spartans turning away from Naupactus, seized every unwallled settlement they came across, now on their way to Amphilochia, acting on an invitation by the Ambraciotes to jointly attack Amphilochian Argos, and in so doing, subdue the rest of Acarnania.

According to their plan, after the summer ended the Ambraciotes invaded the vicinity of Argos with three thousand hoplites, conquering a fortress in Olpes that stood five

¹⁴³ “Do not repeat the tactics which have gained you one victory, but let your methods be regulated by the infinite variety of circumstances.” Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* Ch. VI

¹⁴⁴ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.100

¹⁴⁵ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.101

¹⁴⁶ The Athenians, we claim according to the sources, were to march from Naupactus eastward and through Mt. Parnassus and Mt. Giona, where Amphissa is, whereas the Spartans starting from Delphi went to Amphissa and then westwards through the rest of Ozolian Locris and Aetolia to Naupactus.

¹⁴⁷ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.101-102

¹⁴⁸ Because the Athenians did not lay siege to the city of Leucas as the Acarnanians wanted them to, although they had pillaged the Island. Th. 3.94

kilometers (twenty-five furlongs) from Argos. They also sent for more men from their hometown in fear that the Spartans would fail to show up. At the same time, the Acarnanians sent reinforcements to Argos, of which some entered the city and some set camp nearby to guard against Evrylochus crossing into the area and joining the Ambraciotes. They also called on Demosthenes to lead them. The Spartans, who had been quietly waiting for their allies to make their move against Argos, slipped unnoticed during nighttime and reached Olpes¹⁴⁹.

Demosthenes arrived with two-hundred Messinian hoplites and sixty Athenian archers, while twenty Athenian ships arrived in the bay of Ambracia, cutting off Olpes from the sea. They made camp on one side of a gorge, facing their enemies on the other. Six days later, both armies aligned for battle. The Acarnanian side included Amphilochean javelin-throwers¹⁵⁰, and was led by Demosthenes¹⁵¹ who was positioned to the right end with the Messinian hoplites facing Evrylochus and the Mantineans. The rest of the rival army was a mixture of Peloponnesians and Ambraciotes standing to the right. Demosthenes, facing a larger army, and one that included Spartans, innately more powerful in land battles, resorted to stratagem to even the odds. He placed four-hundred indigenous soldiers, both lightly armed and hoplites, hidden in a “thicket” of bushes in a hollow to his right, to ambush the advancing Peloponnesians, striking them from the rear once the battle had begun.

His ruse was a complete success, for *“When they were in fight, and that the Peloponnesians with that wing overreached and had encircled the right wing of their enemies, those Acarnanians that lay in ambush, coming in at their backs, charged them¹⁵² and put them to flight in such sort as they endured not the first brunt, and besides, caused the greatest part of the army through affright to run away. For when they saw that part of it defeated which was with Eurylochus, which was the best of their army, they were a great deal the more afraid.”*¹⁵³ By ambushing them, he had flanked and overpowered the opposing army’s strongest part, successfully killing their general and his second in command, and in doing so breaking the will of the rest of them to fight¹⁵⁴. It seems Demosthenes had learned his lesson from his misfortune in Aetolia very well. Although the two armies lined up for a direct confrontation, he was cooperating in harmony with the local forces, now in their own territory, and making good use of them and their knowledge of the land to ambush a superior force and gain the upper hand. The Athenian general had incorporated new methods to his arsenal that would ensure the success of this campaign.

He tricked his enemies again immediately after the battle, while they were stranded in Olpae, surrounded from land and sea. The Peloponnesians sued for a truce, and the Athenians allowed an exchange of the dead, but secretly Demosthenes made a deal to let the Peloponnesians go, but not any Ambraciotes. In doing so, he would divide the

¹⁴⁹ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.105

¹⁵⁰ As we have seen, typical unit of the area, exemplary of their more primitive arsenal.

¹⁵¹ The Athenian general was elected to lead, rather than any other local chieftain who became his “lieutenants”, it seems because even a defeated Athenian general would still be beneficial in uniting the locals against an enemy led by a spartan general. Song of Wrath p. 276

¹⁵² In the Greek text, “coming in... and charged them” is written as “Ἐπιγενόμενοι αὐτοῖς κατὰ νότου προσπίπτουσι» which can be translated as “emerged from (the ambush) and fell on them from the rear”, clearly implying that although concealed in a hollow, the ambushing party had secured the advantage of a higher ground.

¹⁵³ Thucydides. *Histories*, 3.108

¹⁵⁴ The second in command was Macarios. Th. 109, The Ambraciotai were the best fighters in these parts and were winning on their side up until they realized the blow they had been dealt. Th. 108

enemy numbers, but most importantly he made the Peloponnesians look as if they were abandoning their allies, soiling their reputation¹⁵⁵. This was an excellent move of ‘divide and conquer’, directly hurting the narrative and legitimacy of the Peloponnesian Alliance, Athens’ primary competitor for hegemony.

The immediate effects of this trick were tragicomic. The Peloponnesians tried to slip away on the pretense of looking for food supplies but were noticed by some Ambraciotes who rushed to flee too. The rest of the Ambraciotes, unaware of that secret deal and utterly confused attacked those they presumed to be ‘treacherous defectors’. The Athenians tried to let the Peloponnesians escape, while killing the Ambraciotes, but had a hard time telling who was what, and ended up killing around two hundred of the former¹⁵⁶.

Meanwhile the additional forces from Ambracia were on their way, unaware of the disaster that had befallen their countrymen, crossing through Amphilochian land. When Demosthenes was informed of this movements, he once again sent forces to set up ambushes along the roads and occupy fortified positions while preparing to march against them with the rest of his army¹⁵⁷. Once the Ambraciotes reached a hill at Idomeni, some of the men that Demosthenes had previously dispatched, moving unseen in the dark, occupied an opposite hill that was taller. On the next evening, Demosthenes started marching again towards the enemy camp with half his force while the other half he had sent through the mountains. Employing stratagem again, by dawns early light he struck the still sleeping Ambraciotes who he made sure by trickery that they would remain unsuspecting of the attack:

“For Demosthenes had placed the Messenians on purpose in the foremost ranks, and commanded them to speak unto them as they went in the Doric dialect and to make the sentinels secure, especially seeing their faces could not be discerned, for it was yet night. Wherefore they put the army of the Ambraciotes to flight at the first onset and slew many upon the place; the rest fled as fast as they could towards the mountains. But the ways being beset and the Amphilochians being well acquainted with their own territory and armed but lightly against men in armour unacquainted and utterly ignorant which way to take, they lit into hollow ways and to the places forelaid with ambushes and perished.”¹⁵⁸

Such was their terror and desperation, Thucydides writes, that some of the fleeing Ambraciotes even fell in the sea and swam towards the Athenian ships’ blockade, preferring to be killed by them rather than face the fury of the tribal Amphilochians that pursued them.

This is Demosthenes bringing a calamity upon his enemies, reminiscent of his own in Aetolia. The factors that shaped the outcome are evident; this time the Athenian general had joined forces with the local fighters, working as one army and making good use of their advantages. Their expertise on the local area and terrain and the availability of lightly armed ranged units that could easily move in harsh terrain were utilized to ambush and pursue the enemy. Even the common heritage of his Messenian allies and the Spartans was utilized for outright deception. In both ambushes, his men secured the higher ground and charged from above, while some of his forces moved in the dark to remain undetected. His ability to lay the groundwork for the success of

¹⁵⁵ Thucydides. *Histories*, 3.108

¹⁵⁶ Thucydides. *Histories*, 3.111

¹⁵⁷ Thucydides. *Histories*, 3.110

¹⁵⁸ Thucydides, *Histories*. 3.112

his irregular approach, relied very much on the fact that now his side was the one receiving the opposing army that consisted of their Ambraciotes neighbors aided by Peloponnesians. It is very important to consider, that when one receives an enemy in his own territory, he has superior knowledge of the terrain and the opponent's intentions, therefore making the defender in such cases better equipped to adjust his tactics in a such a way as to exploit the attacker's weaknesses. When formulating strategies, in the context of a hegemonic conflict, a powerful entity that can project power onto far-away lands must be very careful in its calculations, so that it does not squander its power on doomed endeavors by not taking into account the circumstances on a tactical level¹⁵⁹.

In the aftermath of these campaigns in central western Greece, the Acarnanians, the Amphilocheians and the Ambraciotes, instead of continuing the hostilities, banded together. Once Demosthenes (who capitalizing on his success could now safely return to Athens) was gone, the above warring sides called a truce that became an alliance, supposedly for a hundred years, formulating a league on the conditions that none of the three would work with Athens or Sparta against another, and that they would be obligated to aid one another against external threats.¹⁶⁰

What is very interesting is that “*if the Acarnanians and Amphilocheians, as Demosthenes and the Athenians would have had them, would have subdued Ambracia, they might have done it even with the shout of their voices. But they feared now that if the Athenians possessed it, they would prove more troublesome neighbours unto them than the other.*”¹⁶¹ “And this I know” emphasizes the Greek historian, after noting that the annihilation of the Ambracian forces was such that had been dealt the heaviest blow of any other city in the war until then. Yet the Acarnanians and the Amphilocheians chose not to insert their Athenian allies in Ambracia, for Athens was a much bigger power that if granted a foothold in the area would only further upset the power balance between the local small powers, eventually threatening their very survival as self-governed, distinct entities. Lest we forget, Athens secured Naupactus in a similar manner, by the invitation of squabbling neighbors. This grip on this stronghold over the Corinthian bay, had enabled her to further meddle in the matters of the surrounding region, resulting in the situation we are addressing. If Athens, a strong naval power, had secured Ambracia and taking full control of the Ambracian bay, a big natural port facing the Ionian Sea, the added power would allow them to expand even further at the expense of everyone else around and the locals would not have that. So, what did Athens gain from Demosthenes expeditions? Their gains were next to none. They managed to maintain control of Naupactus but secured no further land. Demosthenes had lost a hundred and twenty of the best Athenian hoplites in a war that was in its sixth year in which Athens had been decimated by plague twice. He brought disaster to his army in the Aetolian mountains by sheer recklessness, which he managed only later to mend by defeating Sparta and her allies, salvaging his personal reputation in the process.

Who benefitted from all this bloodshed in central west Greece? The final scene of the third book of *Histories* in Aetolia is three hundred Corinthian hoplites entering Ambracia. Corinth was the mother city of Ambracia that now had dire need of

¹⁵⁹ For an enlightening analysis on the interaction of the various levels of strategy (Grand Strategy-Operational level-Tactics) and a critique of the Indirect approach, see: Platias and Kolliopoulos, *Thucydides on Strategy*, 10-3, 83-4.

¹⁶⁰ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.114

¹⁶¹ Thucydides, *Histories*. 3.113

manpower¹⁶². Yet the Corinthians had kept their distance from the area and from harms' way for as long as the Athenians were there. Although the Aetolians asked for their help too, to deal with Athenian expansionism as we mentioned earlier but they arrived much later. We cannot know for sure if their delay to appear in the area was a strategic choice, but we do know that this was the city state that had pleaded to the Spartans for preemptive war against Athens in the first place, and was now waltzing in a part of Greece that had been recently sown with the dead bodies of both Athenians and Spartans alike. According A. Watson:

“The Corinthians were a small and rich community, in many ways like their Athenian competitors, but with the crucial difference that they were never powerful enough to determine the way Hellas should be run. The main Corinthian interest, therefore, was that no other corporation should dominate Greece, or even lay down the law to the rest, and that the seas should be open for their trade. This is the policy that the Dutch adopted in seventeenth-century Europe, when they were in a similar position to the Corinthians. The interest to us of the Corinthians is that they were a systematically anti-hegemonial polis, the animators of one anti-hegemonial coalition after another. They sided regularly with the vanquished against the victors after wars, which required courage as well as foresight. They seem to have understood better than other Greeks the nature of the inter-polis system and how to use it in their interest.”¹⁶³

In this context Corinth had applied a “bait and bleed” strategy from the beginning of the war. As J. Mearsheimer put it, “that states might employ to increase their relative power. This strategy involves causing two rivals to engage in a protracted war, so that they bleed each other white, while the baiter remains on the sideline, its military strength intact.”¹⁶⁴. Although Corinth got caught up in this protracted conflict too, due to being obligated through alliance and being geographically in the middle of the two rivals, it was the two main powerful rivals of Sparta and Athens that had the most part in fighting and so had their power diminished the most. Even if we accept a systemic explanation for the causes of the Peloponnesian war, meaning that regardless of Corinth's appeals, the two most powerful states of the Greek city state system were on a collision course due to Athens' rise in relative power¹⁶⁵, the “bleeding” of the two would benefit all other lesser states. Mearsheimer chooses another example for his “bait and bleed” paradigm: “The best case of bait and bleed I can find is Russia's efforts in the wake of the French Revolution (1789) to entice Austria and Prussia into starting a war with France, so that Russia would be free to expand its power in central Europe.”¹⁶⁶. He also acknowledges that the antagonists would have gone to war for reasons other than Russia's baiting: “Although Austria and Prussia did go to war against France in 1792, Russia's prompting had little influence on their decision. Indeed, they had compelling reasons of their own for picking a fight with France.”, yet the important issue here is that the antagonist most detached gets to conserve relatively the most power. The British may have been the protagonists of Waterloo, and the only state to be almost constantly at war with France, yet throughout the Napoleonic wars, France

¹⁶² Lendon, *Song of Wrath*, 282.

¹⁶³ A. Watson, *Evolution* p.56

¹⁶⁴ J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy* p. 153

¹⁶⁵ A fundamental of realism, see Th. 1.23

¹⁶⁶ J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy* p. 153-4

was mostly consumed against the forces of continental Europe, and in some cases by irregular warfare.

5. The Peninsular War: A Case Study

When Napoleon entered Lisbon in 30th of November 1807, initiating the series of conflicts that would become known as the ‘Peninsular war’, he was already at the peak of his power. The ‘Grand Army’ he had assembled in 1803 on the southern shores of *La Manche*, might have not invaded Britain as intended, but instead steamrolled eastward through the rest of Europe, creating a new reality for the continent. Defeating the Third Coalition (Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Naples and Sweden) at Ulm and Austerlitz, in 1805 and then the Fourth coalition (Prussia, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and Great Britain.), by crushing Prussia at Jena and Auerstedt in 1806, the French had reached Russia’s threshold in 1807¹⁶⁷.

France, already by 1801 (after the treaties of Campo Formio in 1797 and Lunéville in January of 1801), had expanded into Belgium, the Netherlands and parts of Italy, yet it was only after neutralizing Austria and Prussia in 1806-7, two of its four major rivals in the European system of states, that it could truly reshape Europe to its liking. Of the two left, the Russians could not balance France’s power in the continent alone, and they were forced into the Tilsit treaty in 1807. The British held their own, dominating the naval realm as showcased in the battles of Cape St. Vincent in 1797 and Trafalgar in 1805, but they too could not challenge France’s hegemony. Both Russia and Britain had exploited the relative safety provided by their geostrategic location, one being an island and the other a huge country on the eastern fringes of Europe¹⁶⁸. None of the two though were unassailable, many claim. In fact, Britain had seen a number of successful invasions in the past (Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Normans i.e.)¹⁶⁹, while Russia had no considerable geographical barriers against an army marching from the flatlands of central and eastern Europe (or so Napoleon thought). However, they were far more protected against France than its adjacent neighbors and so it is no wonder they applied a “bloodletting” strategy by “passing the buck”, as J. Mearsheimer puts it, to Prussia and Austria most of the time¹⁷⁰. And once these two great powers were dealt with after Jena, Napoleon concentrated on damaging the mercantile British, the “nation of shopkeepers” as he called them, by means of economic warfare, severing trade between Britain and everyone under his control in continental Europe. The Russians joined the Continental System aka Continental Blockade in accordance to the Tilsit treaty of 1807, alas only until 1810, when the Peninsular war was well underway on the other side of Europe¹⁷¹.

Portugal then was an obvious target in 1807, being relatively weak, and not a part of the Continental system, thus an important trade partner and ally of the British. France would invade Portugal marching through allied Spain and by occupying it, deal further damage to Britain’s position in the system. Taking advantage of the tangled political situation in Spain between king Charles IV, Prime minister Godoy and Prince Fernando VII, Napoleon first offered the treaty of *Fontainebleau* by which he promised the partition of an occupied Portugal in three pieces (one French, one for Charles and one for Godoy), if only as a pretext to position fifty thousand troops in Spain, of which a mere 1500 led by general Junot, made it to Lisbon after a hastened and exhausting march, occupying it without resistance at November 30, 1807. By the end of February

¹⁶⁷ Esdaile, *The Peninsular War: A new history* pp. 1-2

¹⁶⁸ J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy* p. 287-8, P. Kennedy, *The Rise and fall*, p. 115-9

¹⁶⁹ The French themselves for that matter made attempts to invade Ireland and raid southern England to no avail. P. Kennedy, *The Rise and fall*, p. 124

¹⁷⁰ J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy* p. 274-280, 287-8

¹⁷¹ C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, pp. 1-7, P. Kennedy, *The Rise and fall*, p. 129

1808, sixty thousand French soldiers were stationed in Spain under the command of general Joachim Murat who marched on Madrid in March, much to the pleasure of Fernando and his supporters who thought at the time that the Napoleon would put the prince on the throne and possibly provide for him a Bonaparte bride. Indeed, Spain became another Bonaparte kingdom months later, but not the way Fernando had hoped. Carlos abdicated on March 19 leaving Fernando in his place who entered Madrid at March 24, yet not recognized as King by the power that mattered, the French¹⁷².

Unrest that bred from uncertainty, was present in both Portugal and Spain since their occupation by the French, but there was no organized resistance against them to speak of, nor were they vilified and despised just yet. All this was about to change following the *Dos de Mayo* uprising in Madrid that is generally perceived as the igniting spark of the Iberian resistance. Ever since the arrival of the French, the Spanish had seized the opportunity to lash against the supporters of Godoy, who they despised. However, they had gradually come to understand that the French, having not recognized Fernando who was popular among them, would in all probability not allow him to be the sovereign. To that end, on May 2nd of 1808, a mob of Spaniards gathered outside the royal palace in Madrid, fearing that the remaining royal family was about to be displaced. The French troops that were ordered to disperse the crowd opened fire indiscriminately, killing ten people on the spot. A full-blown riot ensued on the streets of Madrid, with the locals attacking any Frenchmen in sight. Four columns of French troops stormed the city from all sides to contain the situation, resulting in two hundred more dead protesters. Another three hundred Spanish were taken captive and were executed during the night without trial. To the appalment of the devout catholic crowds of Spain, the captives were shot without proper last rites by a priest.¹⁷³ News of the slaughter soon spread throughout the country, providing the Spanish people with a narrative that would justify their upcoming wave of violent resistance against the French. Despite it all, Napoleon forced both Spanish Bourbon contenders away from the throne, and installed his brother Joseph, at the time also King of Naples, on it instead on June 15, 1808. Spain had officially become one more satellite state of France with a Bonaparte at its head¹⁷⁴. Thus far, not all of Spain was under occupation, just the northeast part, from France to Madrid, which meant that substantial parts of the Spanish regular army were still functional and ready to face the French. This Spanish army managed to secure a victory against the French at Bailen in July, above all else damaging their reputation as unbeatable, even if these particular French forces were not first-rate soldiers.

During the same summer, the British intervened seizing the great opportunity to confront their major rival in the European system of states, on a land inhabited by people actively resisting the common enemy and had invited their help. Being the strongest state on the seas, the British had previously caused the enmity of all other seafaring states, except Portugal. The northern states banded together in the two Armed Neutrality Leagues to protect themselves from the British, while Spain had sided with France¹⁷⁵. Now the British, had the chance to save this important ally and in the meantime associate with the Spanish who had also reached out for help, and achieve some external balancing. In early August, thirty thousand British troops landed on Oporto, led among others by Arthur Wellesley the future Duke of Wellington. Marching on Lisbon, they decisively beat the French at the village of Vimeiro on

¹⁷²Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, 25-35.

¹⁷³Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, 37-40.

¹⁷⁴Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, 35, 62-86, 222-249.

¹⁷⁵Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall*, 125-6.

August 21. Although the French forces could have been annihilated had the British pushed on to Lisbon itself, the Convention of Sintra was adopted instead. Junot's plea for an armistice was satisfied, allowing the French to be safely transported from Portugal to France on British ships, while getting to keep all their possessions and arms. So controversial were these terms that the commanders of that expedition were recalled, and command was transferred to Sir John Moore.

So far, the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula had not been a success, to say the least, because not only the French had failed to impose their authority successfully, the British had also landed on the same place. From the beginning of the occupation to the very end there had been resistance by regular soldiers, irregular fighters and common people¹⁷⁶, to varying degrees and intensity, at different times. Sometimes spontaneous and sometimes not, that resulted in the French having "no authority beyond the place where they stood" for most of the war as Wellington put it¹⁷⁷. Rather, it was a number of councils, the '*Juntas*' that claimed authority over the Spanish people, given the power vacuum in this country, and it was them who tried to coordinate both regular and irregular armed resistance.

The British, had hitherto only made lackluster attempts against Napoleon¹⁷⁸, (despite always being a part of the anti-French coalitions) preferring to 'buck-pass' the burden of the actual fighting to their continental allies. This time however, they mobilized thirty thousand troops in a proper expedition, although this was less than a third of the French troops that were involved in Iberia. This situation could not be ignored by Napoleon who rushed to sort matters out personally. C. Esdaile writes:

"Far from ordering the evacuation of the Peninsula as the Spaniards hoped, he (Napoleon) resolved to go to Spain himself; made repeated attempts to halt Joseph's retreat; directed some 130,000 men of the *grand armée*, including the Imperial guard, four army corps and four divisions of heavy cavalry, to head for Spain, sent for further reinforcements from Naples, the kingdom of Italy and the Confederation of the Rhine; ordered fresh levies in France; offered Britain peace in exchange for recognition of Joseph Bonaparte; and secured his rear by sanctioning Russian annexation of Finland, Moldavia and Wallachia, and threatening Austria and Prussia with complete destruction if they stood in his way. Come what may, then, Spain was to be secured. Indeed, it had become the very touchstone of Napoleon's foreign policy...for it, the British were to be offered a peace that would have left them in possession of virtually all France's colonies in the wider world; and for it, again, Russia was to be permitted greatly to strengthen her position to the east."¹⁷⁹

It was crucial for Napoleon to secure Iberia in order for his Continental Blockade against Britain to be totally effective. And it needed to be applied to the fullest, from the Baltics to Lisbon, to have the desired effect. Britain had so far been excelling in the maritime domain which also meant faring much better on the colonial level at the time, from the West Indies, to the Mediterranean and India, they were gaining territories at

¹⁷⁶ Often one and the same, as the Spaniards who fought in the Peninsular war could have had experience from previous conflicts, of they were regulars that deserted and joined Guerilla bands or peasants that through irregular resistance ended up having a rank in the army, to mention just a few cases.

¹⁷⁷ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall*, 137.

¹⁷⁸ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall*, 123-6., Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 261-2, 269-79.

¹⁷⁹C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, 128.

the expense of their French, Spanish and Dutch rivals¹⁸⁰. By exporting to the colonies and those powers outside of the conflict, the goods they were abundantly producing thanks to the industrial revolution, that was underway in their state more than in any other of the time, the British could sustain the “sinews of war” effectively, despite the negative effects of the Berlin (1806) and Milan (1807) decrees¹⁸¹. However, as we mentioned above, their success at sea and the rivalry with other seafaring states that came along with it, coupled with the subjugation of most continental Europe states by the French, had left the British almost without functional allies by 1807 and therefore lacking external balancing to Napoleon’s power. So, when the opportunity arose in 1808 to save Portugal, one of their remaining allies and in the process aid Spain, forging an alliance, Britain could not afford to pass it up. Otherwise, successful as they were outside of Europe, Napoleon’s power in his dominion would remain unchallenged.

France on the other hand, was fueling its war-machine by conquest, taxing and outright plundering the states it acquired. By expanding its domain, France also extended the market on which it depended. Her model was an inward looking one, it produced and circulated goods mostly domestically (plus within the market outlined by the satellite states and the ‘Continental System’ participants), protected against the British overseas flow of exports¹⁸². In this perspective, the port of Lisbon was a loose end, the opening through which Britain could still trade with mainland Europe. Since Britain was in control of the maritime trade routes, the ‘rimland’ as Nicholas J. Spykman put it, then Napoleon was actively pushing towards controlling a ‘heartland’¹⁸³ to use H. Mackinder’s term. That meant the whole of continental Europe and Russia as illustrated by the invasion of 1812. France’s focus on Eurasia would explain why Napoleon attempted to dominate Spain even if that meant temporarily strengthening Britain and Russian positions. And so, in the fall of 1808 Napoleon himself led an expeditionary force of experienced troops against Spain and was able to steamroll his way through the country in a matter of months. The army gathered at Vitoria on November 6 and in less than thirty days they had reached Madrid. By December 25, 1808, Napoleon’s campaign was over¹⁸⁴. The British forces in the meantime, under Sir John Moore who acted contrary to orders¹⁸⁵ had marched through the heart of the country to Salamanca. A little too late he learned of Napoleons sweeping intervention in Spain, and now the British had to follow their only option, that was to retreat to the port of Coruna from where they could be extracted. In the long march that ensued, they had to survive from, both the French who were in hot pursuit, and the exhaustion that ultimately led them to pillage, plunder and rape, on the expense of the Spanish people¹⁸⁶. In the battle of Coruna, that ensued when the French caught up with the British, Sir John Moore was killed but the remaining British forces were evacuated by sea. The French too, were slow to learn of the British advances into Spain and thus they were made possible. This was partially due to a new phenomenon in the Iberian Peninsula, one that generally is not new at all this study claims: guerrilla warfare. C. Esdaile writes:

¹⁸⁰ P. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 126.

¹⁸¹ P. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 129-131.

¹⁸² P. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 131-133.

¹⁸³ "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world." Gerry Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*, New York: Oxford, 2009, 5.

¹⁸⁴ C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, 129-139.

¹⁸⁵ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular War*, 142-4.

¹⁸⁶ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular War*, 149-54.

“For two weeks after the fall of Madrid all seemed to go well. Yet Napoleon was living a fool’s paradise. While the populace had proved not only hostile to conscription, but also -at least for the most part- unwilling to take up arms even in defence of their own homes, this did not mean that French occupation met with no resistance whatsoever. On the contrary, the winter of 1808 saw the real beginnings of *la guerilla* – the irregular struggle that was to plague the French zone of occupation for the rest of the war... Even before the fall of Madrid there had been trouble: sent from a dispatch from Lannes to Napoleon in late November, Marbot found the bodies of several Frenchmen who had been murdered along the way, including a cavalry officer nailed upside down to a barn door with a fire lit beneath his head, and was twice attacked by parties of guerrillas.

If Moore’s operations were being conducted with a sure grasp of the positions and intentions of the enemy, it was in large part due to the guerrillas’ capture of large number of French couriers. Not until 15 December was Soult informed that Moore was on the move, whilst Napoleon did not hear of the matter for another four days.”¹⁸⁷

By the time Moore’s campaign had collapsed in mid-January 1809, Zaragoza was besieged for the second time. The first Siege of Zaragoza lasted from June 15 to the 14th of August 1808 and ended with the Spaniards successfully defending the city against fifteen thousand French troops. The city was garrisoned by just 1500 Spanish regular troops, that would have had no chance on their own against the invading force. What characterized the case of Zaragoza was the extensive participation of civilian population in its defense. The sixty thousand inhabitants of the city barricaded themselves however they could and fought relentlessly against the intruders by any means available to them.¹⁸⁸ Although often associated, along with the *Dos de mayo* events in Madrid, with guerrilla resistance, the events that took place in Zaragoza (and Madrid) in 1808 are part of a different phenomenon and bear another significance. However valiantly those city-dwellers stood up to an invading army, they were for the most part almost unarmed¹⁸⁹, defending a fixed position, their own homes, with no room for hit and run tactics or a route of escape. Simply put, these people were not ambushing anyone, they were themselves trapped. However, the heroic feats of the people of Madrid and Zaragoza along with the victory of the Spanish regular army in Bailén, served as a paradigm of resistance against a Napoleon who until then was viewed as invincible. These events were used by the Juntas and the clergy as propaganda material to inspire and mobilize the Spaniards to resist. Naturally these news also spread outside the borders of Spain and thus, may have reached and motivated actors as significant as Austria that would attack Napoleon again in 1809, while the France’s power was being drained in Iberia.

The second siege of Zaragoza had started in the aftermath of Napoleon’s campaign in Spain. It lasted from December 21st 1808 to February 20 1809 and once again featured the ferocious resistance of its defenders, 38 000 regulars and an incalculable number of civilians (residents of the city plus the surrounding rural population that had sought refuge behind the walls), this time pitted against more than forty thousand Frenchmen

¹⁸⁷ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular War*, p.148

¹⁸⁸ Max Boot, *Invisible Armies*, pp. 81-84

¹⁸⁹ Most of them used makeshift weapons, tools and household items.

with cannons and siege equipment, led by the experienced marshal Jean Lannes¹⁹⁰. C. Esdaile writes: "...as in the previous siege... the defenders would not give up. On the contrary, in a foretaste of battles far in the future, the French had to advance into the city house by house, blowing holes in partition walls and methodically slaughtering the defenders of each room. Amidst scenes of desperate courage, the Spaniards fought back, engaging in repeated counter-attacks and digging mines under many French positions... Fighting even went on underground as mine was met by counter-mine, and rival parties of miners hacked at each other with picks and shovels." Such was the determination of the defenders, that they had kept fighting until late February, despite the typhus epidemic that had spread in the overcrowded city, and even after the huge explosion of the convent of San Francisco had littered the city streets with the mutilated body parts of the defenders¹⁹¹.

Meanwhile, Marshal Soult was heading for Portugal and on the 9th of March he crossed the border from Spain. Twenty days later, having overcome the little resistance they came across, the French arrived at Oporto at the 29th of March and within two hours took it. Once again, horrible scenes ensued. More than "8,000 men, women and children lay dead" some trampled, some drowned in the surrounding waters, others shot or stabbed¹⁹². Such conduct was not surprising, the French armies that as we've already discussed, leached of the lands they occupied, and in poor Iberia the few resources turned their frustration to fury, lashing out at the hostile locals. What made matters worse is that the British too, while in Spain, resorted to plunder and rape on more than one occasion, i.e. while marching to Coruna and later at the taking of Badajoz in 1812.

Thus far, Guerrilla warfare was limited but from 1809 onward, it gained a momentum that was to contribute significantly to the outcome of the war. More armed bands (*partidas*) that harassed French forces emerged and attracted more people. Were they xenophobic or not, had they been accustomed to banditry or not¹⁹³, guerrilla fighters emerged once the Spaniards of 1808-9 found themselves in a 'no man's land' where the traditional monarchy had been overthrown and substituted by the brother of the French emperor who was supposedly a bearer of reform and enlightenment. All this in a country that was, if anything, a conservative and traditionalist catholic one, leaving the inhabitants further alienated towards the French. Caught up between the weak authorities of the occupiers and the Juntas, the Spaniards armed themselves out of necessity, driven by insecurity, seeking to survive.

The lack of a strong central Spanish command also meant the slow disintegration of the regular armed forces of Spain, that no longer seemed as a viable option to the people as a means of resistance, and therefore preferred joining guerilla bands, creating a vicious circle that further decimated the ranks of regulars. The Junta Central and the provincial Juntas, encouraged to a varying degree the formation of Guerrilla bands. Some *partidas* may have been products of this call while others may have been spontaneous formations; the fact remains that in an increasingly unsafe environment with weak central authority, those who could and would bear arms, did so as *Guerrilleros*, not regular troops. The Spanish army was a less and less tempting option as it was proportionately (dis)functional to the central Spanish command. Thus, in late 1808, in December 28th the Junta Central issued directions to the *partidas* that "(they) were not

¹⁹⁰ C. Esdaile *Peninsular* 159-163

¹⁹¹ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, p.162

¹⁹² C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, pp.177-9

¹⁹³ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, p.18-22, W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, p.30

to allow themselves to be joined by men who had fled regular army or were avoiding conscription, that they were not to become too big, that each band was to be commanded by a recognized leader who would automatically be given a commission as regular officer, and that all guerrillas should be subject to the authority of the local military commander”¹⁹⁴. This attempt to contain the *partidas* was not implemented, and its quite difficult to imagine who would have enforced it.

Rather contrary to these instructions was the “*Corso Terreste*” decree of February 25 1809, that literally translates into “Land Piracy”, and allowed one to keep any valuables they had seized from the French and their collaborators (aka *afrancesados*). This initiative for the formation of bands that gave them little incentive for action other than profit, could hardly be expected to produce *partidas* loyal to anyone but themselves. However, it invited even more damage upon the enemy, while legitimizing actions that the Spaniards were already performing in these circumstances. It is no wonder that former bandits and deserting soldiers were common amongst the *partidas* for they were already skilled at using arms. Neither it is strange for peasants, farmers and herders, who had excellent knowledge of the countryside’s terrain and were hardened by their labours, to take up arms instead of idly wait to be victimized. Parts of the lower clergy were also very active in the resistance against the French, first and foremost by adding a religious aspect to the propaganda against the enemy, casting them as “Devilish”, an easy task considering the atrocities the French conducted on a pious population, already hostile towards any notion of reform, let alone by a violent intruder. Some clerics also participated by directly fighting and joined guerrilla bands such as Juan Mendieta (aka ‘El Capuchino’) and Augustin Nebo (aka ‘El Fraile’). The three most notable guerrilla leaders of the Peninsular war, Francisco Espoz y Mina, Juan Martin Diez (aka ‘El Empencinado’), and Julian Sanchez (‘El Charro’), all came from the peasantry. Sanchez and Diaz had previously fought against France in 1893-5¹⁹⁵ while Mina had initially joined the guerrilla band of his nephew, Martín Francisco Javier Mina (aka ‘El Mozo’)¹⁹⁶.

Most bands would include no more than a dozen men at their inception but would later manage to concentrate hundreds. ‘El Mozo’, that was supposed to have started off with around ten men in 1808, had 1200 fighters plus some cavalry under his command by the time he was arrested by the French in 1810. His far relative, and more renowned successor, Espoz y Mina allegedly led the only seven men who remained of Javier Mina’s army, but soon commanded four hundred men¹⁹⁷. When Duke Wellington breached Spain in 1813, Espoz y Mina controlled a force of 7000 men including cavalry units¹⁹⁸.

But Wellington was not in Spain from 1808 to 1812. The British returned to Portugal in April 22, 1809 and in the following month expelled the French from Portugal when Sir Arthur Wellesley, leading seventeen thousand British and eleven thousand Portuguese, ousted them from Oporto on May 12, ending their second invasion¹⁹⁹. The

¹⁹⁴ C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, p. 171

¹⁹⁵ C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, p. 253

¹⁹⁶ “Thus in Navarre, the Capture of ‘El Mozo’ by the French was followed by the emergence of an even more effective commander in the person of his distant relative, Francisco Espoz Ilundaín, the latter being better known as Francisco Espoz y Mina, a *nom de guerre* that he took in an effort to associate himself with the triumphs of his predecessor.” C. Esdaile, *The Peninsular War*, p. 257

¹⁹⁷ W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, p.32

¹⁹⁸ W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, p.34

¹⁹⁹ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, p. 194

counteroffensive took the British as far as Talavera, 120 km away from Madrid, where together with approximately 25 000 Spanish regulars, were victorious against Marshal Claude Victor leading 46 000 Frenchmen in late July 1809. This is the Battle that made Wellesley the Duke of Wellington, but it was a pyrrhic one nonetheless²⁰⁰. The British were to withdraw to Portugal, where they would fend off a third French invasion in 1810, by Marshal Masséna. Time was working for the British side, who barricaded themselves behind ‘the lines of Torres Vedras’. These were a series of fortifications just north of Lisbon that were built in secret, on Sir Wellesley’s orders, from November 1809 to September 1810. After an initial confrontation in Buçaco, Wellington applied a scorched earth policy on his retreat to Lisbon, and behind the now ready ‘Lines of Torres Vedras’ where he would lure the French in a dead end and exhaust them. Masséna took his starving army back to Spain in March 1811, thus ending the 3rd invasion of Portugal²⁰¹.

In the meantime, the Guerrillas in Spain had been gathering momentum and multiplying their numbers as we discussed above, becoming a serious source of constant damage to the French forces of occupation. While this tug of war between Britain and France went on from 1808 to 1812, and there was no decisive victory, the British managed to conserve their forces while at the same time upgrade the quality of the Portuguese armed forces, whereas the French were constantly harassed by guerrillas in Spain and failing at their attempts to invade Portugal and decisively oust the British. This situation alone, meant that the scale of power in Iberia was tilting against France as time went on, for not only were they overextended in Europe, they were now spreading thin across the Iberian Peninsula, their authority in it not being solidified seriously enough at any point in time. The situation might have been very different had this been just another Anglo-French war, carried out in the Iberian Peninsula but this was a hegemonic conflict in a scale unseen before. This meant than in an anarchic system of states, even the hegemon, France of 1808-12 in our case, cannot ignore potential threats from every single other state, friend or foe, concentrating her force on one enemy and turning her back on the next.

Case in point, the war of the Fifth Coalition also erupted in 1809, diverting Napoleon’s attention and the largest part of his forces to Central Europe. Although the French prevailed over Austria and its allies, this conflict too exposed the fatigue of the French state in both the battle of Aspern-Essling, another defeat after Bailen, and the Tyrol uprising. In Tyrol, the situation was strikingly similar to Spain in the sense that it was catholic peasants who used their mountainous homeland to their advantage, striking effectively against the French invaders. Also like in Spain, horrendous atrocities were committed from both sides. Unfortunately for the Tyrolean people, in the aftermath of Wagram, Austria ceased supporting them, dooming their cause²⁰².

The Spanish however, continued to enjoy the support of the British, who even if they spent most of their time in Portugal until 1812, showed enough commitment to the Peninsular affair to eventually drive the French back in France in 1813. While there is no doubt that the Spanish needed the British to succeed against the French, there is doubt on whether the British could have reached France without the Spanish share of the fighting and above all Napoleons divergence to Russia. In 1810, the Russians withdrew from the ‘Continental System’, an action that might explain why Napoleon

²⁰⁰ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, p. 194-214

²⁰¹ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, p. 311-339

²⁰² W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare*, pp. 41-44

chose to invade them in 1812, instead on focusing on the ongoing Peninsular war that had after all, began for similar reasons, namely the enforcement of the Continental System. This is not to say however that economic warfare was an end on its own, but rather means towards the prevalence of French power in the system of states.

While the French were marching to Russia to impose their will and the British were still struggling to keep their last gateway to the mainland through Iberia, the indigenous Spanish guerrilla fighters had reached a point in 1812, where “the 20 most important *partidas* numbered no fewer than 38,500 men”²⁰³. At the same time, the number of Frenchmen in Iberia that had escalated to an impressive 350 000, was reduced to 250 000 once Napoleon invaded Russia and needed of extra troops in the East. The die was cast then and Wellingtons last campaign in Spain in 1813 proved an effective one. In part, this success was due to the French being so preoccupied with the elusive guerrillas that they could not muster more than sixty thousand troops for a single battle against the Anglo-Portuguese army.

The guerrillas kept the French busy anywhere they could, all around Spain. Espoz y Mina had become a strong warlord in Navarra, one of the first provinces to resist the French and possibly the most successful. The adjacent Basque speaking provinces also harbored great numbers of guerrilla fighters as well as Aragonia, especially after the fall of Zaragoza. ‘El Empecinado’ stalked the French from the mountains of Sierra de Gredos and Sierra de Guadarrama, that oversee Madrid and Guadalajara to the southeast and Salamanca to the northwest. The capacity of the guerrillas in some of these provinces was such, that they operated their own hospitals, manufactured ammunition, clothes and equipment for themselves, even imposing their own brand of judicial and customs authorities²⁰⁴. In the absence of any higher authority, it was not guerrillas hidden in the local populace, but rather Spanish people who by taking up arms reclaimed sovereignty. Permanent or semi-permanent militias that existed in various provinces also attacked the French in a similar manner. In Catalonia the *Somartens* and the *Miqueletes* played a major role, while in Galicia the *Alarmas* taking shelter in the province’s extensive mountains and forests mercilessly attacked the French in a war that included atrocious reprisals from both sides²⁰⁵. Essentially the whole strip of land from Barcelona, Girona and northwest all the way to the Atlantic, that included the provinces with terrain suitable for Guerrilla warfare, was utilized to the fullest by the indigenous population against the French invaders. Moreover, the more south the French went, wherever the locals could, they would resist in a similar fashion, from the mountains of La Mancha and even as far south as Andalucía, in the Serranía de Ronda and Alpujarras mountains. Not to be completely neglected, was the contribution of the Spanish regular army, that fought within its capacity against the French, defending the ever receding to the south, unoccupied Spanish territories.

How can we then summarize the significance of the *Guerrilla* in the Peninsular war? What was their most important contribution? Pitted against the most formidable army in the world at the time, these armed bands could not have hoped to achieve any sort of decisive victory in a direct confrontation. Their contribution to the outcome of the war was certainly not of this kind. Instead, what they did, is to constantly inflict damage on the enemy, for a prolonged period of time, over the whole country. Even though the French remained unchallenged in urban areas, meaning within walled cities, they were

²⁰³ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular* p. 268

²⁰⁴ M. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, p. 87, W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla*, p. 38

²⁰⁵ C. Esdaile *Peninsular* pp.168-171, W. Laqueur, *Guerrilla*, p.37

unprotected in the countryside. Just like every weak actor since antiquity, the guerrillas lacked the means to besiege a city, but by operating outside the walls, that is to say in the majority of territory, compelled the French to spread their forces thin. Granted that food does not grow within cities or by any army (that yet requires large amounts of it), the network that transports supplies from a city to another, or from a rural to an urban area, or to a moving army corps was always exposed to attacks by the *guerrilleros* who roamed the countryside. More attacks on supplies demanded more men to guard the supplies, and more men meant need for more supplies to feed them, creating a vicious circle that inflated the numbers of occupiers over time. Given that guerrilla bands operated in most provinces of Spain, however numerous the occupying French forces became, they could not be concentrated effectively against a single target, most importantly Wellington's army, that was eventually capable of decisively defeating them in direct battles.

The other very important aspect of the guerrillas' contribution was on the level of communications, information and intelligence. Being in the pre-telegraph era, overlapping with the supply network was a nexus of communications equally vulnerable to attacks by guerrillas. No courier crossing the countryside was safe and all messages could be intercepted at any time, a fact that called for protection by even more French soldiers. Merely by operating in a hostile country, the movements and intentions of the French were exposed to the enemy whereas the French had very limited information. Even those willing to fraternize with the occupying forces, the *afrancesados*, were mercilessly persecuted and harshly dealt with. The outcome of this situation is distilled by C. Esdaile as follows:

“If more specific justification is required for the role played by the guerillas in the first years of the war, it is only necessary to look at some of the events of the campaign. It was the irregular resistance springing up in the sierra Morena that persuaded Dupont to halt his march before the battle of Bailen. It was a letter intercepted by Spanish guerrillas at Valdestillas that allowed Sir John Moore to launch the offensive of December 1808 in reasonable safety. It was the guerrillas of Old Castile who hid Soult's travails in Portugal from the eyes of Ney, Victor and Joseph, forced the French commanders to engage in full-scale military operations just to decide what to do next, and persuaded them to evacuate Asturias almost as soon as they had conquered it. It was the guerrillas of Aragon who saved Valencia from invasion in 1809. And finally it was the capture of a secret message from Joseph to Soult by some guerrillas near Avila that saved Wellington from disaster in the aftermath of Talavera.”²⁰⁶

Therefore, we may conclude that the ‘Small War’ waged by the people of Spain underneath the gargantuan Napoleonic wars, was most fruitful when it benefitted the war effort of France's enemies. It is probable, that had not the Spanish people ceaselessly resisted the French, the British who with their Portuguese and Spanish allied armies were still much fewer than the 250 000 Frenchmen present in Spain at 1812-3, could not have defeated them. It is equally certain that without the involvement of the British, any resistance in the Iberian Peninsula would eventually be crushed under the weight of the vastly superior French power compared to that of her Spanish and Portuguese neighbors, in terms of manpower, technology and wealth.

However, this was not just another war between France and Britain that happened to include Spain and Portugal. It was a systemic war for hegemony in Europe, a war that

²⁰⁶ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular War*, p.176

in 1808, France was winning. That also meant additional threats for France since the sum of the States in the system were affected, and those formed various balancing coalitions against her at every chance. When the Spaniards compelled Napoleon to become engaged in Spain, the Austrians rose up in what would be the war of the fifth coalition. Napoleon would emerge victorious and reach the height of his power at 1810, yet the ‘Spanish Ulcer’ as he came to call the continued resistance of the Spaniards, would persist until 1812, and the invasion of Russia. Without the destruction of the *Grand Armée* in the east, the French could have exclusively focused on the Peninsular war, terminating Britain’s efforts while establishing sovereignty over Spain and Portugal. Through a window of opportunity, that France created by “overextending”, and the fact that the Spaniards held out long enough for Napoleon to go ‘a step too far’, the British managed to finally penetrate Spain in 1813, and reach France. The Sixth Coalition was formed exactly on this tipping point when France’s exhaustion became apparent to all European states, leading to their ultimate decisive victory against France.

In fact, both Russia and Britain counted on France’s exhaustion to gain the advantage. Wellington did not test his luck after the bloody battle of Talavera, instead he fortified himself in Portugal and let the French be further starved demoralized and decimated in Spain before he attempted another offensive. The Russians, faced with overwhelming French forces, kept falling back, and relied on scorched earth tactics, letting the winter break the mental and physical capacity of the French to endure.

If Britain was a whale and France an elephant as P. Kennedy likened the conflict between the sea power and the land power²⁰⁷, this elephant was also being harassed by a group of hunters, this time the Spanish people. If the “overextension” of a growing state is the disease, then the emergence of guerrilla warfare, as a means of resistance by the invaded populations, is a symptom, which can be of invaluable assistance to rival states. The Prussian general Heinrich von Brandt who witnessed the fighting in Spain, compared the belligerents to another set of animals from Aesop’s fables, in his study on the Peninsular War:

“It was neither battles nor engagements which exhausted their forces but the incessant molestation of an invisible enemy who, if pursued, became lost among the people, out of which he reappeared immediately afterwards with renewed strength. The lion in the fable, tormented to death by a gnat, gives us a true picture of the army at that period”²⁰⁸

However, as the ancient fable goes, the gnat ultimately gets caught in a spider’s web. Spain would be plagued by a series of civil wars (the three ‘Carlist’ wars between 1833-76) between liberals and conservatives, a rivalry that would eventually be settled in the Spanish Civil War of 1936, and the State’s bleak descent into Fascism²⁰⁹. Britain on the other hand, whose territory had remained unharmed and still reigned supreme in the seas, would emerge as the unrivaled hegemon, not only in Europe, but the whole world. The hundred years that followed, until the two World Wars of the 20th century shattered the old world, and were marked by Britain’s unprecedented expansion around the globe, made possible by the outcome of the Napoleonic wars²¹⁰.

²⁰⁷ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall* p.124

²⁰⁸ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, p. 256, H. von Brandt, *The two Minas and the Spanish Guerrillas* (London 1825) pp.54-8

²⁰⁹ M. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, pp .89-90

²¹⁰ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall* p.139

6. Conclusions

The present study tries to examine the effects of sub state actors resorting to irregular warfare in the context of a hegemonic conflict. The main focus of this study is the expedition of Demosthenes in Aetolia in 426 BC and its aftermath. For our purposes, this incident of the Peloponnesian War was examined *vis a vis* other similar occurrences, such as the Guerrilla resistance of the Spanish during the Napoleonic Wars and Mao's guerrillas during World War II. Furthermore, we attempt to find a connection between these events and the literature relevant to the subject, from Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, to studies dedicated to irregular warfare, that will illuminate the impact of guerrilla warfare in a hegemonic conflict.

Therefore, we observe that guerrilla warfare can be a symptom of a state's pursuit to establish dominance in an international system. It may occur, when a great power occupies a territory of which the indigenous population fights back. Therein lies the crucial distinction between guerrilla fighters and any other actor that employs irregular tactics, such a state's commando units, or random bandits who ambush to rob. Irregular warfare waged by one faction in a civil war is outside the bounds of this study, although guerrilla resistance against an invading state and a civil war are not mutually exclusive, as exemplified in the case of Spain that entered a phase of civil strife after the Peninsular war and China that was almost perpetually in a state of civil war, in one form or another, from 1927 to 1949.

In the cases of Spain and China, the guerrillas can be viewed as remnants of a state that had been dissolved by a more powerful invading state and thus an actor that still maintains a sense of unity through identity and some sovereignty over land. Therefore, these groups of people employ any means still available to them, to reinstate their authority over territory they have lost. The case of the Aetolian natives differs only in definition, as the tribes of that area operated as a kind of loose confederation and had a sense of independent identity. They were marginally considered Greek, because of their technological ineptness, having not transcended the Neolithic standards of living, therefore cannot be considered another actor in the city-state system, like Thebes and Corinth, or even smaller ones like nearby Stratos, Amphilocheian Argos and Ambracia. Therefore, as fighters in Spain and China mirrored remnants of once powerful states that ended up what we might call 'submerged' or 'degraded' states, tribes like the Aetolians may be perceived as 'dormant' states. Those are entities that retain institutions different to those of their technologically advanced neighbors, similar to the Arab tribes that fought against the ottoman empire alongside T. E. Lawrence in World War I, or the Native Americans who had to deal with European settlers. Nevertheless, these sub-state actors still share a state's primary concern, which is survival. However little power an entity may possess, it will utilize it when faced with extinction. As J. Mearsheimer put it: "*A state's military power is usually identified with the particular weaponry at its disposal, although even if there were no weapons, the individuals in those states could still use their feet and hands to attack the population of another state. After all, for every neck, there are two hands to choke it.*"²¹¹.

Surviving means "to maintain...territorial integrity and the autonomy of...domestic political order"²¹², so as long as an entity retains control over some land and is the

²¹¹ J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, pp.30-1

²¹² *Ibid.*

source of authority on that land, it will try to defend and extend those characteristics. The Aetolians were sovereign in their mountainous areas. The Spanish were never truly subjugated in the rural areas of Spain, while in some cases like parts of Navarra, the Guerrillas operated their own institutions, from hospitals to courts of law. In China as well, the Japanese occupying forces could not realistically control the vast Chinese domain, so naturally entire regions were run by the Guerrillas. This also holds true for many regions in Italy and the Balkans towards the end of WWII and many more cases. Therefore, if survival is the end of both state and sub-state entities, the guerrillas balance their lack of power by resorting to methods that predate organized warfare. It has been well established in a number of studies and in this one that men will resort to stratagem to overcome a more powerful enemy, be it a beast in prehistoric times, another similar group of men, or a far superior in power organized fighting force.

The territories that guerrilla forces manage to control, correspond in all our cases with some “difficult” terrain, mountains predominately, as we have seen in Aetolia, Spain and China. Mountains often come with deep forests, like the ones in the United States’ east coast, whose natives were experts at utilizing. In the southern states, fighters utilized marshes and swamps for guerrilla tactics during the American Revolutionary war, much like the Vietnamese guerrillas did in the 20th century. Desert in the case of T. E. Lawrence, the harshest perhaps of all landscapes, was the natural habitat of his Arab army. We must bear in mind that all cases we examine, predate the surge of technology after WWII that allowed for the dramatic evolution of detection systems and aviation, which shed light on many obscure places. Such terrain was useful to those that knew how to navigate through and take shelter in it, because at the same time it denied access to a foreign force unacquainted with it. The expertise required to navigate through sea gives the same advantages to anyone who has mastered maritime navigation, as demonstrated by the heavily romanticized Pirates and Vikings, the seafaring equivalents of bandits and raiders, who nevertheless represented some state, more often than not. This very mobility, offered by the exclusive mastery of naval affairs, is at the core of great naval power’s strategies, such as Athens’ in the classical era, or Britain’s in the 18th and 19th centuries.

It is the lifelong experience of men and women, indigenous to the revolting lands, that makes these difficult territories accessible. Since the guerrilla, contrary to other irregular fighters, emerges from the local population, he prepossesses the necessary knowledge of the terrain, thus the distinction between guerrilla fighters and local population is a deceiving one. The distinction should rather be between armed parts of the population and unarmed ones, the latter of which are contributing to the same cause, by other means. This holds true for all our cases where the majority of the invaded, the Aetolian tribes, the Spaniards and the Chinese were hostile to the invaders. Therefore, another very important aspect that becomes evident is the fact that the guerrillas can see and hear as far as their most distant countryman can, and thus has a vast ‘information network’ at his disposal, which grants him superior foreknowledge of the enemy’s movements and intentions. The opposite applies to the invader, who is deliberately denied information and must act on his already limited knowledge of the invaded land and population. Foreknowledge made possible the timely escape of the Aetolians further uphill. The Spanish regularly intercepted French messages benefiting themselves and their allies, while neither them, nor the Chinese, nor any guerrilla in a prolonged conflict, could have evaded the enemy and survived, had they not been always informed on the enemy’s movements in time.

If we examine cases of guerrilla resistance, as the defending sum of invaded people against an invading state, their aim is to retain some power beyond the end of the conflict, in other words, to survive. The very characteristics that are normatively attributed to guerrillas, all serve in conjunction, the ultimate end of survival. One who stays 'mobile' and hides in the friendly 'local population' can this way 'deny' being targeted by the enemy and 'conserve' his power, in other words, ensure his existence. This has led to the popularization of the notion that "the guerrilla wins if he does not lose"²¹³, which is partially true because for a guerrilla to "lose" means that his people face extinction, at least to a point that they are unable to maintain any exclusive sovereignty over land or autonomy of governance, an outcome achievable by genocidal methods, such as those of the westward expansion of the U.S.A. to the detriment of the indigenous tribes. The French in Spain were not lenient with the indigenous people either, practicing what would later be called 'counter-insurgency' by sheer terror, executing hundreds if not thousands of Spanish, with or without trial²¹⁴. This atrocious approach is a premonition of the Nazi methods of quelling resistance. Max Boot concludes in his extensive survey:

"Few counterinsurgents have succeeded by inflicting mass terror-at least in foreign lands. When faced with elusive foes, armies have too often resorted to torturing suspects for information and inflicting bloody reprisals on civilians. Such strategies have worked on occasion, but just as often have failed. The point is well illustrated by revolutionary and Napoleonic France's experience. The French killed indiscriminately and successfully to repress the revolt in Vendée, a region of France in the 1790s. But the French failed to pacify either Spain or Haiti in spite of their willingness to be just as brutal. Even in the ancient world when there were no human-rights lobbies and no CNN, empires found that pacifying restive populations usually involved carrots as well as sticks. There were considerable benefits to the Pax Romana that won over subject populations; there was much more to Roman counterinsurgency than "they create a desert and call it peace." ... But in many other instances, like those of the Nazis in the Balkans and the Soviets in Afghanistan, even the willingness of counterinsurgents to inflict genocidal violence was not enough to prevail; their atrocities simply drove more people to the arms of rebels who had external backing. That is why the political scientist Stathis Kalyvas, a leading student of internal wars, has concluded that "indiscriminate violence seems to be counter-productive, with the exception of situations where there is a high imbalance of power."²¹⁵”²¹⁶

The states have used such methods, capitalizing on their far superior power that offers them an advantage, an easy solution. Yet they turn a blind eye to the futility of reciprocity of such massacre that permanently damages the legitimacy of a warring faction. They 'hit the feet to hurt the arms' in a way, realizing the oneness of fighters and civilians of an occupied country, but neglecting the 'heart and mind' of the body of people, that will resist as long as it retains a living notion of identity. The enormous cost for the success of such methods makes these methods inefficient and that can be

²¹³Attributed to Henry Kissinger: "The Vietnam Negotiations", *Foreign Affairs*, 48-2 (January 1969): 214.

²¹⁴ C. Esdaile, *Peninsular*, pp. 257-8

²¹⁵ S. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, New York: Cambridge 2006, 171.

²¹⁶ M. Boot, *Invisible Armies*, 561-2.

showcased perfectly by the 195 sovereign states²¹⁷ that exist in the world today, consisting of people that in most cases were occupied by one state or another in the past.

Notorious were also the Japanese for their conduct in China, who applied a “kill all, burn all, loot all” strategy against the guerrillas during WWII. The Nanjing massacre earlier, in 1937-8, had showcased the extent to which brutality can be exercised by an invader, who considers himself superior, and the citizens of the invaded state as “subhuman”, allowing themselves the rationalization of such conduct. In all the cases we examine, we observe an imbalance at least in technological sophistication between belligerents²¹⁸. The pioneering Athenians fought against Neolithic Aetolians, France of the revolution and the first industrial era invaded a Spain of nobles, peasants and priests and finally Japan, who at the time had outpaced all its Asian neighbors, overcame China, that had been crippled by colonialism and civil war. This inconsistency between actors may have magnified the sense of ‘otherness’ bilaterally nurturing the hostility expressed, but that must be studied across disciplines through anthropological and psychological lenses.

Legitimacy matters in a hegemonic conflict, because it can be translated into alliances. A hegemonic war begins when the power balance between great states changes and the status quo is challenged, yet a series of factors determine how it ends. The narrative on which Athenians formed the Delian league was to protect freedom, the French too claimed to embody the ideas of ‘equality, liberty, and fraternity’. However, it was not ideas but their relative rise in power that shaped their behavior and brought about a hegemonic war. And in a conflict of such scale, not only one needs allies, he cannot afford additional enemies. Legitimacy therefore partly determines who will stand by your side and who against you. This is articulated elegantly in Diodotus speech concerning the punishment of Mytilenaeans in 427 BC, where he argued that Athens should not punish them too harshly (i.e. exterminate them all in order to set an example through terror), not out of pity, but because it would be the wisest course for Athens not to scare her many allies who were her source of power and revenue after all. If the rest of the allies came to expect such punishments, there would be a chance that they would become hostile for this reason alone. He therefore concludes that by acting wisely and tending to her allies, Athens will be most dangerous to her true enemy, saying: *“For that will be both good for the future and also of present terror to the enemy. For he that consulteth wisely is a sorer enemy than he that assaulteth with the strength of action unadvisedly.”*²¹⁹ These words were uttered months before the Athenians sent their first expedition to Sicily, a year before Demosthenes expedition to Aetolia. Diodotus advice was heard and Mytilene was spared, yet his main point was neglected. In the years that followed, the Peloponnesian war only became fiercer. Interestingly enough, Thucydides in *Histories* places the famous ‘Melian dialogue’ between the story of disintegrating peace and the disastrous expedition to Sicily of 415 BC. This time the Athenians showed no mercy, but their own downfall was near.

Athens rose in power after the Persian Wars and in the following decades managed to rival Sparta’s power in the Greek city-state system. The early part of the first years of the conflict that Sparta had preemptively initiated was essentially a war of attrition by

²¹⁷ Recognized by the United State Department of State at the time of writing.

²¹⁸ Παπασωτηρίου, *Κίνα*, 186-9.

²¹⁹ Thucydides, *Histories*, 3.42-48

both sides²²⁰. The Spartans would use their land superiority to invade and ravage Attica, while Athens would utilize her superiority on sea to raid the shores of Peloponnesus. The Athenians' focus on naval operations, that were carefully conducted with enough restraint to maintain proportionality and thus legitimacy, was the essence of the Grand Strategy of Pericles. They were employing a strategy of 'indirect approach', not because it is the best strategy for every situation, a sort of 'panacea' as Liddell Hart proposed, but simply because they were very aware that they would stand no chance in a direct confrontation on land against the superior Spartan army. Similarly, a sub-state actor resorts to the 'indirect approach' to survive when faced with a powerful enemy. The difference is that the sub-state actor has no choice, guerrilla warfare is his last resort, whereas a powerful state that counters a superior one indirectly may be very direct and blunt when dealing with inferior enemies.

Ironically, the Athenians were so successful that they felt confident enough to abandon this strategy after Pericles' demise. They refused to settle for peace in 427²²¹, and instead, chose to extend the theater of their operations as far as Sicily. Demosthenes' expedition in Aetolia takes place the following year and is also a manifestation of Athens abandoning the restraints of the Periclean Grand Strategy. This misbegotten move, which is executed with complete disregard for the surrounding populations, caused the locals to respond with an ambush and ended in disaster for Athens. The aftermath is even more interesting, as the Aetolians pleaded for help and the Spartans answered the call, and on this pretense tried to expand their influence in the area through conquest. They were stopped by Demosthenes, who eventually worked harmoniously with the locals, exploiting the perks of their alliance, becoming the one who sets the ambushes this time around.

The effect of guerrilla warfare on great powers caught in a hegemonic war then becomes clearer. It is a supplementary factor in the conflict that can weaken the state that it ignites it. There is an interplay between a guerrilla war and overlapping hegemonic conflict; the guerrillas gain support and are able to survive by siding with their enemy's enemy, who is happy to help them, and deal through them additional damage to his rival. If we examine this as a case of three entities, the dominant state, the pretender and the guerilla, any one of the two big actors can provoke a guerrilla war that will consume part of his power, while it is mutually beneficial for a great power and a guerrilla to fight against a common enemy. A war ridden country is one that can only become poor, so the guerrillas will need financial and material support. An obvious source is a mercantile sea faring state, like those of Athens and Britain. Provided that such states also prefer the indirect approach, siding with guerrillas means to multiply the sources of their enemy's fatigue.

Britain answered the call of Portugal and Spain, who had been invaded by France in 1807-8, not just because their trade with Europe was being hampered, but because it was an opportunity to fight France jointly with the people of Iberia. In fact, this collective approach was their preferred one partaking in every one of the six coalitions

²²⁰ "The candidate need not have the capability to defeat the leading state, but it must have some reasonable prospect of turning the conflict into a war of attrition that leaves the dominant state seriously weakened, even if that dominant state ultimately wins the war." J. Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 5.

²²¹ "The return of the plague in the winter of 427 BC seems to offer the best context for an event we see but dimly and that comes to us without a date: an offer of peace to Athens from Sparta, alluded to by Aristophanes. One of the offer's conditions (no doubt there were others) was that the Athenians restore Aegina to the Aeginetans... After all, when plague had last come upon the Athenians, in 430 BC, the Athenians had themselves appealed to the Spartans for peace." Lendon, *Song of Wrath*, 249-50.

against France with however limited participation in manpower. To the detriment of his power, Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, while the peninsular war was still being waged. The attrition of France, because of their overreach from Portugal to Moscow, allowed for a decisive defeat in Waterloo. The breakthrough was made in the Peninsular war, where Britain by committing to the cause managed to push back the exhausted French and then assemble a most complete coalition that emerged victorious.

Napoleon could have not gone for Portugal in 1808 and still be the hegemon of Europe. And had France not invaded Russia in 1812, they might have been able to overcome all their enemies in Iberia, solidifying their empire even further. But they did not, neither did Athens try to secure her gains through a peaceful settlement between 429 BC and 427 BC, instead she “overstretched” as far as Sicily. Such behavior can be explained through the theory of J. Mearsheimer’s ‘offensive realism’. According to this theory, states will not halt their “growth” at any “point of balance”. As long as strong rivals exist, fear will compel them to pursuit as much power as they can get. J. Mearsheimer writes:

“Given the difficulty of determining how much power is enough for today and tomorrow, great powers recognize that the best way to ensure their security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to be the hegemon in the system because it thought it already had sufficient power to survive. ” But even if a great power does not have the wherewithal to achieve hegemony (and that is usually the case), it will still act offensively to amass as much power as it can, because states are almost always better off with more rather than less power. In short, states do not become status quo powers until they completely dominate the system.”²²²

His words echo those of Alcibiades, who advocated for a full expedition to Sicily in 415 BC, sixteen years after the beginning of the war:

“Men do not rest content with parrying the attacks of a superior, but often strike the first blow to prevent the attack being made. And we cannot fix the exact point at which our empire shall stop; we have reached a position in which we must not be content with retaining but must scheme to extend it, for, if we cease to rule others, we are in danger of being ruled ourselves. Nor can you look at inaction from the same point of view as others, unless you are prepared to change your habits and make them like theirs.”²²³

This expedition that was to become emblematic for the disaster of Athens was in fact a subsequent of Athens’ overreach, a result of change in strategy in 427 BC, and foreshadowed by their first involvement in Sicily. As Bertrand de Jouvenel wrote in the introduction of the 1959 edition of Hobbes’ translation of Thucydides *Histories*:

“we must admit that the Athenians wantonly cast away the many opportunities which were afforded to them of concluding an honorable peace. Thucydides

²²² Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 35

²²³ Thucydides, *Histories*, Translated by Richard Crawley, 6.18. Hobbes translates as follows: “For when one is grown mightier than the rest, men use not only to defend themselves against him when he shall invade, but to anticipate him, that he invade not at all. Nor is it in our power to be our own carvers, how much we will have subject to us; but considering the case we are in, it is as necessary for us to seek to subdue those that are not under our dominion, as to keep so those that are: lest if others be not subject to us, we fall in danger of being subjected unto them. Nor are we to weigh quietness in the same balance that others do, unless also the institution of this state were like unto that of other states.”

makes it clear that while Sparta was a republic of highly trained soldiers, it had no venturesome disposition; its conservative leaders knew that the chances of war are uncertain, and they even seem to have vaguely foreseen the corrupting influence of total victory. However much we prefer the Athenians, we have to confess that their disaster was not the outcome of a premeditated aggression by Sparta but the result of their own frenzy.”²²⁴

Therefore, we might say that a state becomes ‘frenzied’ when it departs from what is perceived to be the rational behavior, seeking survival, security and the maximization of power by calculated risks. Such states then embark on an empire-making endeavor that is characterized by the willingness to risk the sum of their resources for unlimited gains. Given that all resources are finite, they will be depleted at some point. Additional resources that come from further conquest do not come without increased dangers, from additional sources of insecurity, inviting the aggression of their previous owners.

Britain, for that matter, reaped the benefits of defeating France in the Napoleonic Wars and went on to establish the biggest empire the world had ever seen, possessing more than half of the 84% of earth’s landmass that Europeans controlled at the dawn of the 20th century²²⁵. The British prudently used their maritime supremacy and focused on alliances to put down the “frenzied” French, and with the rest of the victors, they even showed remarkable insight in keeping the balance of power in Europe, in the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818) that resulted in the Concert of Europe²²⁶. However, outside Europe, Britain acted without constraint, utilizing their vast technological advantage (being the most industrialized state at the time), and extended her colonial dominion over more and more lands. The inhabitants of these lands were of varying levels of technological sophistication, but none of them came even close to that of the British at the time. Those that stood in their way, opting for a direct confrontation were crushed. It was not long before some inhabitants of remote areas resorted to guerrilla warfare against the spreading empire. In 1839-42, the British were expelled from Afghanistan mainly by the effort of the Pashtun tribesmen, at the same time that they were defeating the massive Chinese state²²⁷. The trouble with the Pashtun tribes carried on and off until and beyond 1914 and the First World War that would set in motion the process of fragmentation of the British empire. Also notable are the Boer wars (1880-1, 1899-1902), where the Boers, South African Dutch people who had developed a unique identity, resorted to guerrilla tactics (especially during the Second Boer War) to some avail against the British²²⁸. The British empire kept contracting past the Second World War, spawning a number of sovereign states that descended from resisting entities. Whether they were ‘dormant’ states, in the form of rudimentary societies, or ‘submerged’ states as great as India and China, most entities formerly under British rule survived, attaining varying degrees of power and some even thrived.

There had been voices in 19th century Britain that predicted, or rather projected their hopes, for the infinite continuation of British hegemony, an “end of history”, much like Fukuyama’s proclamations after the end of the cold war. In both cases, a very important aspect of such globalized hegemonies is neglected. The interconnection of the hegemon and the rest of the world makes possible the sharing of knowledge and technology, inspiring any entity that partakes in this “enlightenment” to materialize her own

²²⁴ Thucydides, *Histories*, Trans. Thomas Hobbes, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1959, xi.

²²⁵ Boot, *Invisible*, 127-31. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 150.

²²⁶ Watson, *Evolution*, 238-40.

²²⁷ Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 150.

²²⁸ Boot, *Invisible*, 164-76, 184-201.

aspirations. In short, imperialism fueled in part the triumph of self-determination²²⁹. The case of the U.S.A. that succeeded the U.K. as masters of the maritime routes, global commerce and financial institutions, only repeated a familiar motif. This time around, there was no land left unclaimed in the world and borders were quite clearly defined. Thus, any move on the world's chessboard would be subject to universal rules according to the post WWII status quo, an assumption that could weigh in on the behavior of the next hegemon. Even after the end of the cold war and the collapse of their main rival, and after the obvious and much criticized defeat at Vietnam by guerrilla forces, the United States chose to continue pursuing their policies militantly in the absence of the previous narrative of necessity. Therefore, if the U.S. were to be content with the distribution of power at some point, that could very well be the 1990's. Instead, the USA carried on a series of "interventions" in other sovereign states, some legitimized more convincingly than others, and predictably were once again targeted by irregulars ranging from terrorist strikes on civilians, to standard guerrilla warfare in the mountains of Afghanistan and the streets of Baghdad.

If the hypothesis of offensive realism holds true, as evidence suggests in our case, there will always be hegemonies that try to extend and impose their grip on the whole of the globe and therefore, people who have no other means of preserving their very existence will resort to guerrilla warfare, as they have done continually since the very beginnings of history. Regardless of their rate of success in their bid for hegemony, Athens and Britain both encountered the indirect response of lesser enemies that signaled the coming of a period, short or long, of heightened danger and expenditure in terms of power. We cannot know if a Great Power will ever be able to fathom that there may be an "exact point" where past that, a state undermines itself by growing and attracting too many enemies. The fate of many states that 'flew too close to the sun', like the mythical Icarus, suggests there very well might be one. The question then becomes, whether a state can identify the significance of such point in time when upon it²³⁰. In this context, guerrilla resistance to an ever-extending state is just one of the many indications, that the wars they are in are only going to become more demanding, tiresome and costly, but however powerful a state might be, the strain caused by constant growth might be greater. And in this "frenzy", the tragic state, that meets ruin in seeking absolute safety, will have been undone not just by other rival states, but by the very men and women who itself will have turned to a very special, yet so simple and old kind of enemy.

²²⁹ . Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, 158.

²³⁰ A scholar in retrospect can claim that a number of events may have been optimal points in time for Great power to conclude her quest, but it is also reasonable that events as important as the 'Peace of Nikias' or the 'Peace of Pressburg' would have tremendous significance in their own age also, just like the end of the Cold War was awe inspiring in our time.

Chronologies

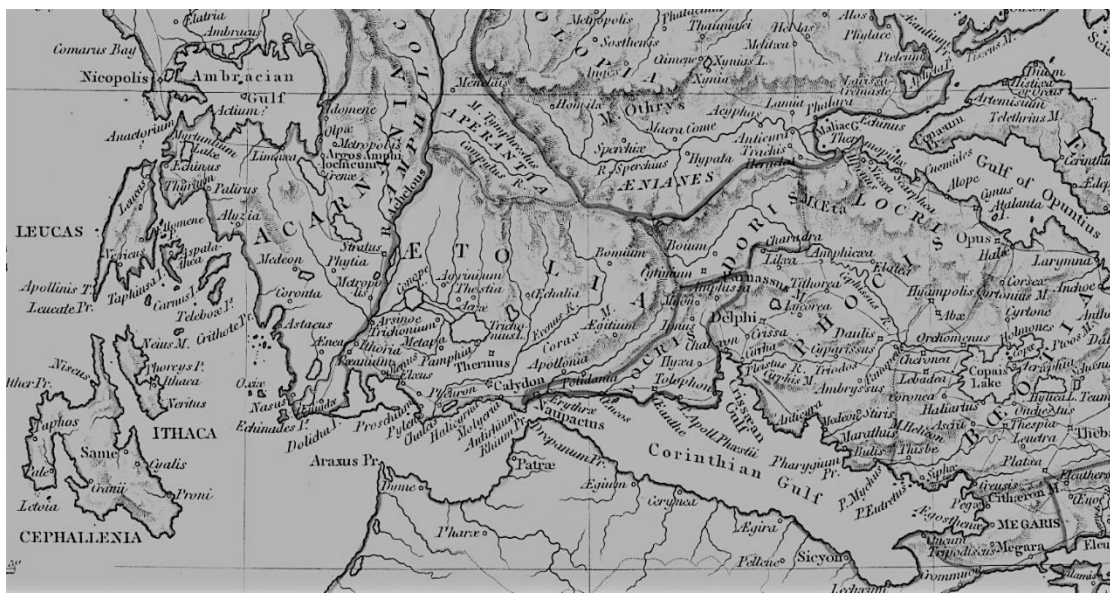
First year 431-430 BC.	First Year of the war. Peloponnesians Invade Attica. Athenians raid Laconia in turn and continue northwest, capture Sollium and Astacus.
Second year 430-429 BC.	Ambraciotes attack Amphiloichian Argos. Phormio in Amphiloichian Argos. Spartan unsuccessful expedition to Stratos. Second Peloponnesian Invasion of Attica. Plague in Athens. Athenian fleet raids Peloponnesus. Phormio in Naupactus.
Third year 429-428 BC.	Spartans besiege Plataea. Peloponnesians and Ambracians against Acarnania. Phormio's naval victories against the Peloponnesian fleet. Death of Pericles.
Fourth year 428-427 BC.	Third Peloponnesian invasion of Attica. Mytilene revolts.
Fifth year 427-426 BC.	Fourth invasion of Attica. Mytilene surrenders. Plataea mock trial. Corcyra Civil war. Athenians dispatch twenty ships to Sicily. The plague returns
Sixth year 426-425 BC.	Demosthenes raids Peloponnesus, attacks Leucas. Expedition in Aetolia and defeat. Demosthenes and Acarnanians defeat the Peloponnesians and Ambracians at Olpae and Idomene. Purification of Delos.
Seventh year 425-424 BC.	Fifth invasion of Attica. Athenian reinforcements headed for Sicily end up in Pylos. Demosthenes and Cleon defeat Spartans and take hostages at Sphacteria island. Athenians assist Democrats in Corcyra leading to the massacre of the oligarchs. Their fleet then continues to Sicily.
Eighth year 424-423 BC.	Peace in Sicily. Battle of Delium. Brasidas takes Amphipolis.
Ninth year 423-422 BC.	One year truce. Brasidas campaigns with Macedon King Perdikas against Arrhabaeus and his rebels. Nikias recaptures Mende and besieges Scione. Brassidas launches a failed attempt against Potidaea
Tenth year 422-421 BC.	End of truce. Cleon campaigns to Thrace. Battle of Amphipolis; Brasidas and Cleon die. Negotiations lead to the 'Peace of Nikias'

Appendix

Maps



Source: Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *SPAIN AND PORTUGAL: To illustrate the Peninsular war*, In: *School Atlas of English History*, London, England: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914. 56.



Source: J & C Walker, *Ancient Greece Northern Part*, "Maps of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.", London: Baldwin & Gradock, 1829

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