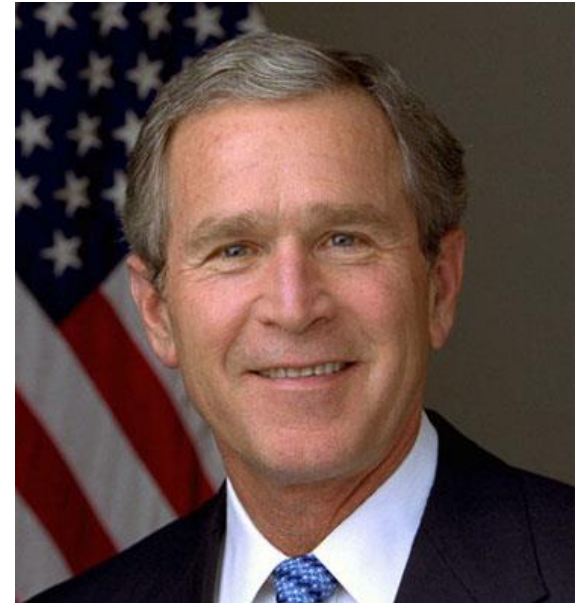


ARMIES AND NAVIES

The role of the general

Politicians and Generals

- Today politics and military are two strictly defined and separate spheres of public life.
- The leader or leading group in a state is expected not to belong to the military.
- Although heads of state and members of a government may decide to wage war, they are not expected to lead troops into battle.



General Tommy Franks.
Commander
in Chief of US
Forces in
2nd Gulf War

Dictatorship

- Today, if a military leader achieves political power, he/she is considered a dictator.



Military Experience

- Today people do not expect of their political leaders to have had military experience, much less experience of actual war-time conditions.
- However, a politician may score points if his/her country is at war or expects to be in war in the near future, if he/she has had military experience.

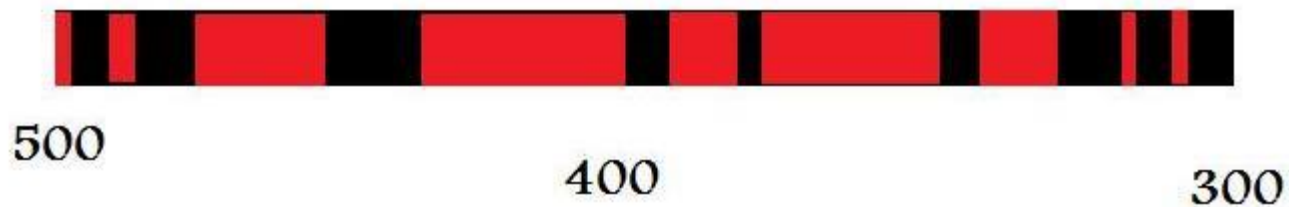


The Common Condition of the State

- The division between politics and military today is a consequence of the popular belief that the common condition of the state is **peace**.
- Although that is not true in a great number of countries, it is true of a lot of countries, particularly in the West.
- The same was not true in the Greek world.
- There the common condition of the state was **war**.

Great Wars in the Classical Period

- Ionian Revolt: 500-499
- Persian Wars: 490, 481-79
- 1st Peloponnesian War: c460-446
- 2nd Peloponnesian War: 431-404
- Sicilian Expeditions: 427-4, 415-3
- Carthaginian Wars: 408-5, 395-2, 383-75, 368, 344
- Corinthian War: 395-386
- Theban Conflict: 382-362 (intermittent)
- Social War: 357-355
- Third Sacred War: 356-346
- Fourth Sacred War: 340-338
- Agis' Revolt: 331-30
- Lamian War: 323-2



Leadership and Military

- The constant wars that plagued the classical period meant that the leaders of a state had to be versed in war.
- Since the majority of the citizen male population was part of the military, political leaders had to prove their worth on the field of war as well, at least in the 5th century.

The Athenian Strategoi

- The military leadership of Athens in the classical period was in the hands of the board of the strategoi.
- The board was established in 501/0.
- Unlike the other offices in the democracy, the strategoi were always elected by vote rather than by lot.
- There were 10 strategoi, one for each tribe.

The Polemarch

- Before the institution of the strategia, the chief military commander of Athens was one of the 9 archons, the Polemarch.
- In case of division between the strategoi, the polemarch had the deciding vote.
- The Athenian generals were of divided opinion, some advocating not fighting because they were too few to attack the army of the Medes; others, including Miltiades, advocating fighting. [2] Thus they were at odds, and the inferior plan prevailed. **An eleventh man had a vote, chosen by lot to be polemarch of Athens, and by ancient custom the Athenians had made his vote of equal weight with the generals.** Herodotos 6.109

The Strategos as Political Leader

- As the greatest elected office in democratic Athens, the strategia became the domain of the top politicians in the 5th century.
- The great political figures of 5th century Athens were often elected to be strategoi.
- Miltiades, Kimon, Themistokles, Perikles, Cleon, Nikias, Alkibiades.



Strategoi as Politicians

- The strategoi were subject to rigorous examination of their duties and decisions by the Athenian assembly.
- They were subject to the regular euthyna at the end of their term and also to a vote of confidence in the Assembly once every prytany.
- The Athenians being exasperated against him on this account, he tried to appease and encourage them. [4] He did not, however, succeed in allaying their wrath, nor yet in changing their purposes, before they got their hostile ballots into their hands, became masters of his fate, stripped him of his command, and punished him with a fine. The amount of this was fifteen talents, according to those who give the lowest, and fifty, according to those who give the highest figures. The public prosecutor mentioned in the records of the case was Cleon, as Idomeneus says, but according to Theophrastus it was Simmias, and Heracleides Ponticus mentions Lacratides. Plutarch *Perikles* 35

Cowardice as a Political Issue

- And pointing at Nicias, son of Niceratus, then general, whom he hated, he tauntingly said that it would be easy, **if they had men for generals**, to sail with a force and take those in the island, and that if he had himself been in command, he would have done it. Nicias, seeing the Athenians murmuring against Cleon for not sailing now if it seemed to him so easy, and further seeing himself the object of attack, told him that for all that the generals cared, he might take what force he chose and make the attempt.[2] **At first Cleon fancied that this resignation was merely a figure of speech, and was ready to go, but finding that it was seriously meant, he drew back**, and said that Nicias, not he, was general, being now frightened, and having never supposed that Nicias would go so far as to retire in his favour. [3] Nicias, however, repeated his offer, and resigned the command against Pylos, and called the Athenians to witness that he did so. **And as the multitude is wont to do, the more Cleon shrank from the expedition and tried to back out of what he had said, the more they encouraged Nicias to hand over his command, and clamored at Cleon to go.** Thucydides 4.27-8

Death in Battle and Policy Changes

- Now, however, after the Athenian defeat at Amphipolis, and the death of Cleon and Brasidas, **who had been the two principal opponents of peace on either side**—the latter from the success and honor which war gave him, the former because he thought that, if tranquillity were restored, his crimes would be more open to detection and his slanders less credited—the foremost candidates for power in either city, Pleistoanax, son of Pausanias, king of Lacedaemon, and Nicias, son of Niceratus, **the most fortunate general of his time, each desired peace more ardently than ever**. Thucydides 5.16

Politics and Loss of Military Expertise

- Now the people at home deposed the above-mentioned generals, with the exception of Conon; and as his colleagues they chose two men, Adeimantus and Philocles. As for those generals who had taken part in the battle, two of them—Protomachus and Aristogenes—did not return to Athens, but when the other six came home— [2] Pericles, Diomedon, Lysias, Aristocrates, Thrasyllus, and Erasinides. ..When Euryptolemus had thus spoken, he offered a resolution that the men be tried under the decree of Cannonus, each one separately; whereas the proposal of the Senate was to judge them all by a single vote. The vote being now taken as between these two proposals, they decided at first in favour of the resolution of Euryptolemus; but when Menecles interposed an objection under oath and a second vote was taken, they decided in favour of that of the Senate. After this they condemned the generals who took part in the battle, eight in all; and the six who were in Athens were put to death. Xenophon *Hellenika* 1.7.1-34

The Change in the Fourth Century

- The increased professionalism of the 4th-century armies meant that the political aspect of the strategica became less and less important.
- The great Athenian generals of the fourth-century were not politicians.
- Timotheos, Chares, Iphicrates, Konon.

The Politician as soldier not general

- But he spoke, I believe, about service in the field, and named me “the fine soldier.” But I think, in view of my present peril rather than of his slander, I may without offence speak of these matters also. For where, or when, or to whom, shall I speak of them, if I let this day go by? **As soon as I passed out of boyhood I became one of the frontier guards of this land for two years.** As witnesses to this statement, I will call my fellow cadets and our officers. My first experience in the field was in what is called “division service,” when I was with the other men of my age and the mercenary troops of Alcibiades, who convoyed the provision train to Phleius. We fell into danger near the place known as the Nemean ravine, and **I so fought as to win the praise of my officers.** I also served on the other expeditions in succession, whether we were called out by age-groups or by divisions. **I fought in the battle of Mantinea not without honour to myself or credit to the city.** I took part in the expeditions to Euboea, and at the battle of Tamynae as a member of the picked corps I so bore myself in danger **that I received a wreath of honour then and there, and another at the hands of the people on my arrival home;** for I brought the news of the Athenian victory, and Temenides, taxiarch of the tribe Pandionis, who was despatched with me from camp, told here how I had borne myself in the face of the danger that befell us. Aischines 2.167-9

Kingship and Generalship

- The tradition of the leader as general continued in the Greek world, albeit outside Athens.
- Spartan leaders were always assumed to be not only soldiers but also commanders (ex. Lysander, Brasidas, vs. Archidamos, Agesilaos).
- The Macedonian and Hellenistic kings were also expected to be commanding in battle, although not necessarily fight in the battlefield.

QUESTIONS?
