



COMMUN VIII
HISTORICAL JOINT CRISIS COMMITTEE (HJCC)

SECOND GRECO-PERSIAN WAR

Background Guide

Authored by Will Narasimhan '24 and Aaron Li '24

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to COMMUN VIII. Our names are Will Narasimhan and Aaron Li and we would like to thank you for choosing our committee on the Second Greco-Persian War. As crisis heads, our role mostly takes place behind the scenes, where we will be staging the many events that unfold over the course of the day, but you may see us pop into your rooms from time to time. Both of us have been doing Model UN for many years now and appreciate the useful public speaking and discussion skills delegates can learn during conferences, empowering students to speak up and become more knowledgeable about the world around them.

Our committee is a Historical Joint Crisis Committee (HJCC). This means that delegates will deal with events as they unfold, and you will be updated on major developments throughout the day. Delegates will be split into two rooms, one representing the Greeks and the other the Persians. For the most part, delegates will remain in their assigned rooms, but in some cases, both rooms may meet to engage in negotiations, or one delegate may switch sides and move to the opposite room. Unlike in regular Model UN committees, delegates' actions will directly impact the final result of the committee, and by the end of the day, the conflict will most likely have come to a resolution. We hope you enjoy our committee, and if you have any questions, feel free to reach out.

Will Narasimhan

WNarasimhan@commschool.org

Aaron Li

ALi@commschool.org

Historical Background

Important note:

This committee takes place directly after a real-life historical event, the battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE. However, delegates are under no obligation to follow real-life events, as long as they take actions that are *reasonable* given the circumstances and the assigned role.

By the beginning of the first Persian War (599 BCE), both Greece and Persia were well-developed civilizations. Many Greek city-states¹ had begun expansion, establishing colonies in Ionia (Asia Minor/modern-day Turkey), Southern Italy, and Sicily. The Persian Empire, which had recently begun expansion into Asia Minor, took over the Greek colonies already stationed there, installing tyrants (who were themselves Greek) to rule over them. The Persian method of conquering a city usually consisted of intimidating the defenders with an overwhelming show of force. Upon their surrender, they would select a leader from the ruling class of the conquered city and instate them as a governor of the newly captured city. The governor was loyal to the Persians but also better understood the people of the conquered city, and would thus be a more effective leader. Of course, if they didn't surrender, the city would be razed.

¹ A Greek city-state, known as a *polis*, was an independent city that ruled the land around it. Examples include the democratic Athens and more militaristic Sparta.



https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Persian_Empire *The largest extent of the Persian Empire*

The Persians instated Aristagoras, the ambitious son of the previous ruler, as the tyrant of Miletus. Attempting to take advantage of Greek dissatisfaction with the Persian occupation of colonies in Asia Minor, he and the other Milesians began an open revolt, establishing an Ionian coalition. He established a democracy in Miletus and other Ionian cities and demanded help from Sparta and Athens, the two most powerful Greek city-states. The Spartans refused, fearing that their army would remain far from home for too long, but the Athenians agreed to send ships. The Athenian-backed Ionian coalition quickly overtook the city of Sardis, and a supposedly accidental fire burned it down entirely. However, Persian reinforcements arrived and made short work of the coalition, and the Athenian troops retreated and left Aristagoras and his Ionians to face the Persians alone. However, for the destruction of Sardis as well as the widespread rebellion incited by this incident, Darius, the Persian king at the time, swore revenge on the Athenians. Miletus was eventually defeated and razed.

On the other side, the Athenians overthrew the brutal tyrant Hippias with the aid of Cleomenes I, the king of Sparta, by 510 BCE. Cleomenes then attempted to instate a pro-Spartan tyranny in

Athens. Opposing him was Cleisthenes, the head of one of the most powerful families in Athens. In a bold attempt to deny Cleomenes' attempted takeover, Cleisthenes announced the establishment of a democracy. The people supported his plan, and in 507 BCE, they kicked the Spartan tyrant and Cleomenes out of Athens. Meanwhile, Hippias turned to the Persians to help him regain control of Athens. Athenian ambassadors were told to accept Hippias as their ruler, an insulting proposition to the newly Democratic Athens. Since Persia backed Hippias, Athenians opposed Persia, and thus their campaigns in Ionia.

First Persian War

In 490 BCE, the Persians, under king Darius I, began a campaign to subjugate Athens. They moved through the Aegean sea, conquering the Cyclades islands and Naxos. After they landed on the Greek mainland, the Persians ransacked Eretria, a nearby city-state, before continuing on to the beach at Marathon, with the intent of continuing on to Athens.



The Athenians, fearing subjugation, sent a runner to Sparta to appeal for aid. Unfortunately, the Spartans were supposedly celebrating the festival of Carneia and were unable to help them,

though many historians believe that this was because of a fear of a helot² uprising. The Athenian army was mostly on its own, reinforced only by a small contingent from the nearby city-state of Plataea, and attacked the Persian army which was camped at Marathon. Despite the Persian numerical advantage, the Athenians, under the command of general Miltiades, routed the Persian forces, who were forced to retreat.

After the failure of the first Persian invasion, the Persians were, by and large, unable to continue their campaign. A rebellion had arisen in Persian-controlled Egypt, and Darius spent the rest of his life putting down the uprising. Eventually, the rule of the Persian empire was passed down to his son, Xerxes I, who quickly put down the rebellion in Egypt.

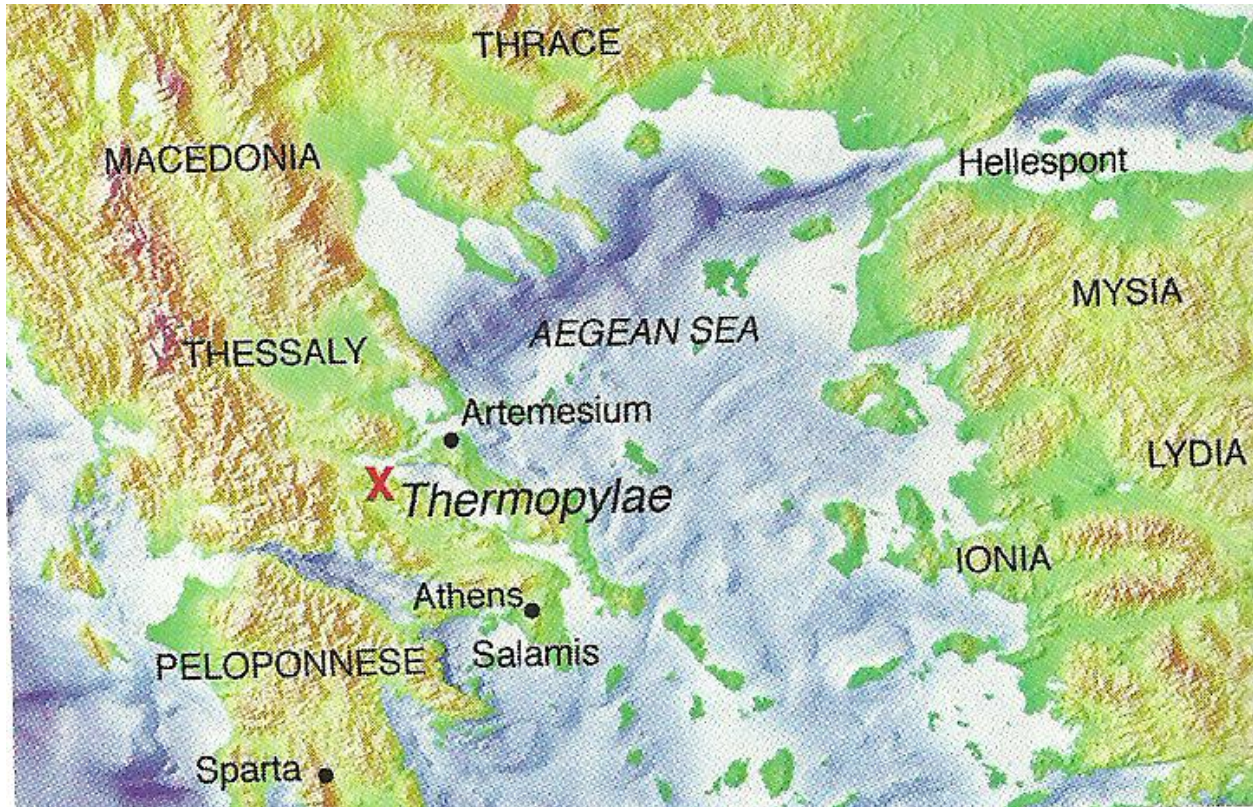
Interim Period and Themistocles's rise to power

After the first Persian war, the Athenians consolidated their democracy, and Themistocles—a prominent politician—rose in popularity and consolidated power. In 483 BCE, the Athenians discovered a major vein of silver in the Mines of Laurion. Under the leadership of Themistocles, they used this money to reinforce their Navy, constructing over 200 ships.

Second Persian Invasion

After being put into power and shutting down the Egyptian rebellion, Xerxes I immediately began to plan his invasion of the Greek mainland. He planned to invade Greece from the north with a massive land army, through Thrace and Macedonia.

² The majority of the Spartan population consisted of slaves, known as Helots, to the point where Helots outnumbered actual Spartan citizens roughly 25:1. This fact was partially what prompted Sparta to develop an elite land army: to put down Helot uprisings.



The Greeks responded by forming an alliance against the Persians. At the forefront of the Greek armies were Athens and Sparta, although other city-states had significant influence. The Spartans claimed control of the allied land forces. Themistocles attempted to take control of the navy in a similar fashion, however, he was blocked by other naval powers such as Corinth and Aegina. As a compromise, the alliance agreed to put the Spartan navarch Eurybiades in command instead, though the real power was mostly in the hands of Themistocles. Delegates from Thessaly advised that the Greek coalition take a stand at the Vale of Tempe, at the Thessalian border, to block the Persian advance. The location was of strategic importance – the numerically superior Persian army would need to pass through a narrow pass to reach the more heavily armored Greek phalanx, and thus sustain significant losses. In 480 BCE, the Greeks sent a contingent of 10,000 hoplites, under the joint command of Themistocles and a Spartan polemarch (military leader). However, due to the fact that the vale could be fairly easily bypassed, the 10,000-strong

contingent of hoplites from an assortment of city-states was forced to fall back. It is after this event that the committee begins.



Delegate Roles:

Greek Delegates:

Themistocles

Themistocles was one of the major leaders of Athens and advocated for Athens using their naval power. Viewing the superior Persian navy as the largest threat to Athens, Themistocles argued that Athens should focus on building ships so that they could reconnect with colonies in the Aegean sea. Themistocles was also worried about the naval power of Aegina, a rival city-state that Athens had fought with numerous times.

Portfolio powers:

Themistocles has strong connections with other important leaders, and as a result may hear information before the rest of the committee. Themistocles also has a small naval force of 200 ships.

Aristides

Aristides was another prominent leader of Athens and a strong naval commander. Aristides founded the Delian League, a confederacy of Greek states created to fight against Persian naval superiority.

Portfolio powers:

As the head of the Delian League, Aristides leads a force of 13,000 Hoplites, 16,000 Garrisoned Athenians, 2,000 archers, and about 25,000 regular infantry troops. Aristides only has absolute control over roughly 50% of these troops, with the others willing to follow orders as long as they are not going against the interests of the committee as a whole.

Pausanias the Regent

The leader of Greece's combined land forces, Pausanias the Regent was a powerful Spartan leader. Pausanias has for the most part stayed out of the war until the point when the committee starts, and some suspicion has been raised over his allegiance to Greece.

Portfolio powers:

Pausanias has direct command over a large portion of the Hellenistic league's forces, including 10,000 hoplites, 20,000 garrisoned troops throughout Greece, and 40,000 regular infantry troops.

Leonidas I

Leonidas I was the leader of Sparta and fought in the Battle of the 300 (i.e the Battle of Thermopylae) to hold off the Persian forces. Leonidas had control over the Spartan Army and was a capable military commander.

Portfolio powers:

Leonidas has command of Sparta's large land force, made up of 40,000 well-trained spartan troops and 40,000 regular infantry troops.

Eurybiades

Leader of the Greek navy and a loyal spartan, Eurybiades feared the growing Athenian naval power. Eurybiades believed Greece shouldn't have to rely on Athens for all maritime defense, and wanted other Greek states to contribute to the navy. Eurybiades led a sizable fleet of ships to defend against Persian naval attacks.

Portfolio powers:

Eurybiades has a total command of 400 triremes stationed throughout Greece.

Adeimantus of Corinth

Adeimantus of Corinth was the leader of Corinth during the Second Greco-Persian War and mainly focused on the interests of his city-state. Due to Corinth's advantageous geographical position they saw immense profit during the war, and tried to maintain a fairly neutral stance.

Portfolio powers:

Adeimantus controls a major economic power in Greece, and as such may cut off or establish trade with any group of people deemed fit. Adeimantus may also lend money when advantageous to his own self-interests.

Leader of Thebes

Thebes was a strong Greek city-state positioned incredibly close to the front lines at the start of this committee. Though Thebes does benefit from significant trade with Athens, the Leader of Thebes' first priority is to protect his citizens from the Persians.

Portfolio powers:

This leader has control over 40,000 troops stationed in Thebes.

Leader of Thespieae:

Thespieae is one of the only city-states in northern Greece still actively fighting against Persian rule. Persian forces control all the territory in Thespieae, forcing Greek loyalists to fight covert guerrilla warfare and request forces from the rest of Greece. This leader still has the full support of his people, but it is hard to organize war efforts with people scattered and no main base.

Portfolio powers:

Though people are spread out and communication is hard, this leader does have a loyal army of 30,000 troops, as well as a small hoplite army of 1,000 troops who travel with him.

Leader of Arcadia

Arcadia is a loyal Greek city-state located next to Persia and fully supports the war effort. Sparta had waged a war against Arcadia 50 years prior to the Persian invasion, and general sentiment in Arcadia still favored Athens over Sparta.

Portfolio powers:

The leader of Arcadia has control over a standing army of 25,000 troops, as well as an army of 10,000 hoplites.

Leader of Aegina

Aegina was a long-standing enemy of Athens and had fought numerous wars against them.

Athens was fearful of Aegina's growing naval power and even built up its own navy in response.

After a failed attempt to destroy Athens by allying with the Persians, Sparta overthrew Aegina's government and established a new one.

Portfolio powers:

The leader of Aegina commands a small infantry force of 15,000 regular infantry troops, as well as a navy comprising 400 ships. While this leader does command these forces, Sparta does have a significant amount of control over this region and may put pressure on Aegina to conform to its wishes.

Persian Delegates:

Xerxes I

Xerxes I was the leader of Persia and hoped to conquer Greece in memory of his father who had previously failed. Xerxes was very involved in the planning of the war, and led the brunt of the attack personally.

Portfolio powers:

Xerxes commands an impressive army of 130,000 troops and 300 ships.

Mardonius

Mardonius was a nephew of Xerxes I and took a leading role in the Persian military during the invasion of Greece. Mardonius was one of the strongest proponents of an invasion of Greece and had worked hard to convince Xerxes to avenge his father's defeat.

Portfolio powers:

Mardonius has many political ties and can use them to call in favors. In addition, Mardonius commands an army of 40,000 troops and 200 ships.

Achaemenes

Achaemenes, son of Xerxes, was the Satrap of Egypt during the invasion of Greece and had been put in place by Persia to rule after a series of unsuccessful rebellions caused the death of the previous ruler. At this point, Achaemenes is trying to contribute to the war effort by sending troops to support his father, but he still needs to address the turmoil in his own state.

Portfolio powers:

Achaemenes has command over Egypt, though he does face rather harsh opposition by some of his people. In addition, Achaemenes commands a standing army of 50,000 troops and 200 ships.

Hydarnes II

Hydarnes II was a prominent military leader in Persia and led the infamous “Immortals”, a 10,000-troop elite heavy infantry group used in the hardest battles during the invasion. Hydarnes II led the final charge against the Spartans during the battle of Thermopylae, where he flanked their forces and brought about a decisive victory.

Portfolio powers:

Hydarnes II has total control over all 10,000 troops in the Immortals and may use them for particularly dangerous or high-skill operations. Hydarnes also commands 40,000 regular troops.

Ariabignes

Ariabignes was a powerful naval commander and led one of the 4 major fleets against the Greeks. As the eldest son of the Persian king Darius I, Ariabignes was the clear successor to the throne in the case of Darius’ death and was well respected as a good man and brave fighter.

Portfolio powers:

In addition to having strong diplomatic ties in the government, Ariabignes commands a large naval force of 500 ships.

Leader of Macedonia

Macedonia was a former Greek city-state conquered by Persia early in the war. Macedonia was known for its fierce cavalry units that it could supply to the Persians. At the time the conference starts, Macedonia is entirely loyal to Persia.

Portfolio powers:

Though still recovering from recent fighting with the Greeks, Macedonia has a standing force of 40,000 regular troops and 25,000 mounted troops.

Leader of Thessaly:

Thessaly was a city-state in northern Greece that surrendered to Persia to prevent destruction. At this point in the war Thessaly is focusing on self-preservation, and will support whatever side they believe will help them. Thessaly is hoping to establish trade and move the war off their land so that they can continue farming.

Portfolio powers:

This leader has an army of 40,000 troops, as well as power over Thessaly's trade partners and diplomatic relations.

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