

# The Origin, Causes and Termination of the Peloponnesian War and its Drivable Lesions for the Contemporary International System

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## Abstract

This paper examines the origin, causes and termination of the Peloponnesian war and its drivable lesions for the contemporary international system. The Peloponnesian war (430BC-404BC) was a geostrategic struggle between the two most powerful Leagues of Powers in Ancient Greece; the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League. The study revealed that the war was furthered by imperialist aspirations, commercial rivalry and vain desire for military glory. The end of the war marked a significant power shift in Ancient Greece balance of power and ushered in a period of regional decline, in which Athens, the most culturally advanced Greek city-state was brought into final eclipse. The war crippled Greek economy, military strength, and undermined the most critical and influential period of its history. It slowed Greek political life, weakened her political institutions, led to the failure of the city-state system and the disbandment of Athenian Empire. The paper recommends that leaders in the contemporary international system should learn from the mistakes of Athenian and Spartan leaders and work collaboratively for the peace and stability of the international system; that nations should eschew the use of force in the pursuit of national interests and allow their actions to be moderated by the desire for world peace; that states and non-states actors should guide against inordinate pursuit of unenlightened self-interests, geopolitical rivalry and hegemonic drive for power that can lead to escalation of conflict. The paper recommends strategic communication approach to international conflicts to prevent war that may occur as a result of miscommunication, misjudgment, miscalculations, and misinformation.

**Keywords:** Imperialist Aspiration, Commercial Rivalry, Geostrategic Struggle, International System, Constructive Engagement, National Interest, Political Institution and Strategic Communication Approach.

## I. Introduction

### Background to the Study

#### The Origin of the Peloponnesian War

*“Make up your minds that happiness depends on being free, and freedom depends on being courageous. Therefore, do not take lightly the perils of war”–Pericles funeral oration for the Athenian city war dead’.*

This powerful oration by Pericles, the General of Athenian Army and the first citizen of democratic Athens, and an Athenian innovative leader underscores the anguishing dilemma of Athenian City-States during the Peloponnesian war. It has become an inestimable lesion of the Peloponnesian war for the contemporary international system. In 431 BCE, Pericles, the esteemed Athenian statesman delivered one of the most influential speeches of all times, in his funeral oration on the occasion of the remembrance of the first Athenian soldiers to lose their lives in the Peloponnesian War (Gresham.ac.uk, 2026). According to the Thucydides, this oration was part of a public funeral ceremony honoring the Athenian soldiers who had fallen in the early battles of the prolonged Peloponnesian War (BC 431–404) and conflict between Athens and Sparta (Wikipedia, 2026c). The oration was part of the annual public funeral for the war dead (Macgregor, 2026. Thucydides, 2010).

Pericles's Funeral Oration is a significant speech from Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War. In his address, Pericles extols the virtues of Athenian democracy, cultural superiority, and the sacrifices made by the deceased, positioning Athens as a model for other city-

states. He contrasts Athenian ideals with the militarized society of Sparta, highlighting the freedom and civic pride inherent in Athens' way of life (Wikipedia, 2026c). The speech serves to bolster Athenian morale and patriotism during a challenging time, framing their struggle as noble and worthy of sacrifice. Importantly, Thucydides' account of the oration reflects his perspective as an Athenian historian, blending memory with his interpretations of the speech's significance. Even in the contemporary era in history and international relations, Pericles' words remains a powerful testament to Athenian identity and values during one of history's most notable conflicts (Wikipedia, 2026c).

The Peloponnesian war was the longest and most destructive war fought by the two leading League of Powers, and the most powerful City-States in Ancient Greece (431-404 B.C.). On one side was Athens with her Empire; the Delian League, on the other Sparta with her allies from the Peloponnesian League (New Caxton, 1969). Athens and Sparta each stood at the head of the alliances between them (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). One of the greatest ancient historians, Thucydides, a former soldier who lived between 460 B.C.– 400 B.C and served in the Peloponnesian war, in his work "History of the Peloponnesian War" chronicled nearly 30 years of war and tension between Athens and Sparta. Haven wrote as a participant–observer, Thucydides had impeccable analytic credential. He relied most exclusively on the testimony of eyewitnesses and his own experiences as Athenian General and regarded the war as a great war and more worthy to be chronicled than any that had preceded it (Thucydides cited in History.com, 2020).

The formation of the Delian League in one hand, and the Peloponnesian league in the other, gave birth to a community of people, who stood together, fought side by side, shared common tradition and were ready, at a peach, to sacrifice their private interests for common end (Thompson, 1956). The fighting engulfed virtually the entire Greek world included nearly every Greek City-State (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). At the beginning of the war, Athenian military competitive advantage was in naval superiority. It was a great sea power with democratic political system and innovative leadership style that made it a formidable force. Also Sparta, located in the southern peninsula of mainland Greece known as the Peloponnesian was most powerful as a land force. Its system of government was based on the philosophy of austere militarism and strict adherence to tradition (History.com, 2020).

Thucydides (1910) forcefully argues it was the Spartans' fear of Athens that led them to make their first preemptive attack in 430 B.C. Also Kagan (1980) citing Thucydides opines that the situation that made the war inevitable was that the Peloponnesian League consisting of Sparta and its harmony of City-States attacked the Athenian Empire because they feared the growing power of Athens.

Conversely, contemporary military historians and scholars of strategic studies divides the Peloponnesian war into three parts; the first stage of the war was the Archidamian war (431-432BC) named for Archidamus, the Spartan king who led annual repeated attacks on Athens without doing any real damage. (New Caxton, 1969), the Spartan slogan for that period was "Freedom for the Greeks," and its stated aim was to liberate the states under Athenian rule by destroying its defenses and dismantling its political structure (History.com, 2020). Archidamus hoped to force the Athenians to surrender, but the Athenian navy and walls successfully defended the city (Kagan, 1980).

Pericles the Athenian leader was an Ancient Greek statesman of Athenian origin. He was leader of Athens from 460–429 BC, he ordered and organized the construction of the Parthenon (Vocabulary.com, 2026), and developed a democracy based on majority model (Biography, 2024). He changed the lives of Athenians by reforming the city's constitution and government. Under his leadership Athenian democracy and the Athenian Empire flourished, making Athens the political and cultural focus/ center of the world (Britannica, 2025). His leadership contributed to Athens' political and cultural supremacy in Greece. Pericles, as the Athenian leader insisted on the strategy of Athenian naval superiority by blocking enemy's coasts and shipping, a strategy that frustrated Spartan and its allies (History .com, 2019; New Caxton, 1969). He was prominent and influential in Ancient Athenian politics, particularly between the Greco-Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, and was acclaimed by Thucydides, a contemporary historian, as "the first citizen of democratic Athens (Thucydides, 2010). Equally, General Pericles organized immediate construction of a third Long Wall to improve the defenses of Athens and the port of Piraeus.

Accordingly, some of Pericles facts and accomplishments include the establishment of democracy in Athens, the creation of the Athenian Empire and ushering in the beginning of what would be called the Athenian Golden Age. The Athenian Golden Age was a period of Athenian political hegemony (the power of one state over another), economic growth, and cultural flourishing (Ancient Greece and the Golden Age of Athens, 2023) which saw Athens quickly become a leading power in the Greek world by its position as the leader of the powerful Dalian League.

The Greek Golden Age was an era of Greek peace, prosperity, and happiness, and which occurred when Greek cultural activities such as art or writing reach a peak (Fiveable 2026). In that era of Greeks economic Prosperity, there was financial success, growth in production, employment, and wealth generation, which made Greek to be outstanding. Nevertheless, the Athenians experienced a major setback when a plague broke out in 430 B.C., raged through the crowded Athenian cities, killing between one-third and two-thirds of the Athenian population, including the prominent General Pericles who died in 427 BC, and two of his legitimate sons who died few months earlier (History.com, 2019).

In fact; it was the great plague at Athens in 430 BC that was the telling blow on the Athenian forces. Pericles himself was one of the victims of the plague that swept across Athens. According to the historian Thucydides the plague seized Pericles, not with sharp and violent fits, but with a dull lingering distemper, wasting the strength of his body and undermining his noble soul (PBS.Org, nd). The death of Pericles, the Athenian leader, left a vivid account of its impact on Athenian morale and badly affected their war efforts (New Caxton, 1969; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). His death fractured the Athenian leadership. It was a major setback for the nation. According to Thucydides (1910, as cited in History.com, 2019) the death of Pericles was disastrous for Athens because the leaders who followed lacked Pericles' foresight and forbearance. Nevertheless, Thucydides survived the attack of the plague, hence he wrote influential account of the war which in the contemporary times is considered to be among the world's finest works of history (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020; Britannica's Guardians of History 2019, Amy, 2020).

The Golden Age of Athenian culture flourished under the leadership of Pericles (495-429 BC) the first citizen of democratic Athens. During his heydays as Athenian leader, he transformed his city's alliances into an Empire. A brilliant General and Master orator, his policies and strategies of ultra-nationalism and regional hegemonies set the stage for the devastating Peloponnesian War (History.com, 2019; Britannica's Guardians of History, 2019., New Caxton, 1969). The Greek Golden Age was an era of Greek peace, prosperity, and happiness, and which occurred when Greek cultural activities such as art or writing reach a peak (Fiveable, 2026). In that era of Greeks economic Prosperity, there was financial success, growth in production, employment, and wealth generation, which made Greek to be outstanding.

However, after the indecisive battles, both sides were economically exhausted, and in 421 BC the peace of Nicias brought a temporary halt to the war (New Caxton, 1969). The second part of the Peloponnesian war is named the Peace of Nicias (421-413 BC), for the Peace arranged by Nicias an Athenian diplomat and politician (Kagan.1980). In 422 BC, the Athenians under their emergent leader, demagogue Cleon, the war monger, made unsuccessful attempts to retake Amphiboles (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). In the decisive battle both Generals Brasidas the Spartan war hero, and Cleon, the Athenian war monger was killed (Encyclopedia Britannica., 2020; Britannica's Guardians of History, 2019., New Caxton, 1969). This set the stage for Cleon's rival Nicias to persuade the Athenians to accept the Spartans' offer of peace (Amy, 2020). An uneasy peace followed and the treaty of the Peace of Nicias was signed by both sides, and it lasted for only six years. It was a period in which diplomatic maneuvers gradually gave way to small-scale military operations (Amy, 2020).

In any case, the peace of Nicias was broken when Athenian commander Alcibiades persuaded Athenians to attack the Peloponnesian League in 418BC and Sicily in 415BC (Kagan, 1980). The great sea borne expedition against Spartan ally Syracuse, and in Sicily proved disastrous, as disaster accompanied the Athenian forces from the beginning and in 413 BC it ended in complete annihilation (New Caxton, 1969). Thucydides (1956) writes "they were destroyed, as the saying is, with a total destruction, their fleet, their army, everything was destroyed, and few out of many returned home".

Following the defeat of the Athenian forces Sparta occupied permanent post in Attica which was very strategic to Athenian interests. The occupation of Attica gave the Sparta army strategic advantage over Athens.

The Delian or Ionian war (413-403 BC) as it is often called is the last stage of the Peloponnesian war. It ended in victory for Sparta. Sparta sought and gained monetary and weapons support from the Persian Empire (History.com, August 22, 2019). Sparta helped subjects of Athens revolt (Kagan, 1980) and under the Spartan General Lysander, the war raged for another decade. By 405 B.C. Lysander decimated the Athenian fleet in battle and then held Athens under siege, forcing it to surrender to Sparta in 404 B.C. (History.com, August 22, 2019; Kagan, 1980).

## **The Dalian League and the Peloponnesian League**

### **The Dalian League**

The Dalian League otherwise known as Athenian League was an alliance of Greek city-states led by Athens. The name Delian League is a modern one, in the ancient times it is referred to as 'the alliance' or 'Athens and its allies'. It was infect the Athenian alliance. The name is appropriate because the treasury of the alliance was located on the sacred island of Delos in the Cyclades ([https://www.worldhistory.org/membership/?utm\\_source=whe&utm\\_medium=remove\\_ads\\_button\\_en&utm\\_campaign=membership](https://www.worldhistory.org/membership/?utm_source=whe&utm_medium=remove_ads_button_en&utm_campaign=membership)). The Delian League of the Athenian Empire was formed in 478BC by Pericles to liberate eastern Greek cities from Persian rule. As a military alliance it was supposedly to guard against reprisal attacks from the Persian Empire. The recorded number of members of the League changed over time, and was around 330 members. The majority of states were from Ionia and the islands but most parts of Greece were represented and later there were even some non-Greek members such as the Carian city-states ([https://www.worldhistory.org/membership/?utm\\_source=whe&utm\\_medium=remove\\_ads\\_button\\_en&utm\\_campaign=membership](https://www.worldhistory.org/membership/?utm_source=whe&utm_medium=remove_ads_button_en&utm_campaign=membership)).

According to world History.org the prominent members of Dalian League included: Aegina, Byzantium, Chios, Lesbos, Lindos, Naxos, Paros, Samos, Thasos and many other cities states across the Aegean, in Ionia, the Hellespont, and Propontis ([https://www.worldhistory.org/membership/?utm\\_source=whe&utm\\_medium=remove\\_ads\\_button\\_en&utm\\_campaign=membership](https://www.worldhistory.org/membership/?utm_source=whe&utm_medium=remove_ads_button_en&utm_campaign=membership)). These City-States were powerful political and self-governing entities, and their collective strength as military frontiers made them formidable. The diplomatic and military strategy of Pericles, the Athenian leader and the leader of the Delian league brought fear and jealousy to the enemies of the Delian League. As a state policy, members of the Delian league swore to hold the same enemies and allies by taking an oath. Each city-state had an equal vote in meetings of members of the League. Members were expected to give tribute 460 talents, raised in 425 BCE to 1,500 talents to the treasury controlled by Athens, which was used to build and maintain the naval fleet of the Dalian League. However, an alternative to providing money was to give ships and/or materials (especially timber) and grain.

Table 1: The map of the Dalian League



Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/948/the-delian-league-part-2-from-eurymedon-to-the-thi/>

The Delian League from Eurymedon to the Thirty Years Peace (465/4-445/4 BCE) was used as a defense against possible revenge attacks from Persia following the Greek victories at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea in the early 5th century BCE (Cartwright, 2016). Hence, after the second Persian invasion of Greece in 479BC, Athens and its allies throughout the Aegean formed the Delian League, a military alliance focused on the Persian threat (History.com, 2019, Amy, 2020).

The Athenian Empire, though based in the peninsula of Attica included most of the islands and coastal states around the Northern and Eastern shores of the Aegean Sea (Britannica Guardians of History, 2020; New Caxton, 1969). Both Kagan (2003) and Amy (2020) maintains that Athens was a major naval power at the time of the Peloponnesian war and was better prepared financially than its enemies owing to the large war chest they had amassed from the regular tribute they received from their Empire. Hence through large resources they amassed from the regular tributes from their Empire, they were able to maintain a large fleet of navy. By the time Pericles was elected Chief Strategos (commander in Chief), the league was well on its way to becoming an Athenian Empire (History.com, 2019b). Pericles was a prominent Athenian statesman and general, born around 495 BCE into a wealthy aristocratic family. He received a well-rounded education. Pericles, the first democratic citizen of Athens, helmed the Athenian golden age. Through his policies and leadership, he guided and improved Athenian democracy (TheCollector, 2022). Pericles, leader of Athens from 460–429 BC, was an Ancient Greek statesman. Pericles developed a democracy based on majority rule (Biography, 2024). As Athenian statesman, his leadership contributed to Athens' political and cultural supremacy in Greece (Vocabulary.com, 2026).

Under Pericles, Athens was indeed, an experiment in multilateral diplomacy. The Delian League amalgamated numerous Greek City-States. It enhanced the political and economic power, and prestige of Athens the leader of the League (Britannica Guardians of History, 2020., New Caxton, 1969). His family's nobility and wealth allowed him to fully pursue his inclination toward education (Wikipedia, 2026). According to Britannica, Pericles is remembered today for his legacies; remembered by the generations after him for his political leadership, personal charisma and most importantly his unparalleled oratorical power (Britannica, 2021). The alliance was made of over 300 City-States. It was eventually dominated by Athens that it later evolved into an Athenian empire. Athens became increasingly more aggressive in its control of the alliance and, on occasion, constrained membership by military force and compelled continued tribute which was in the form of money, ships or materials (Cartwright,2016) However, the League was dissolved following Athens' defeat at the hands of Sparta in the Peloponnesian War in 404 BCE. After 30 years of grueling and resource-draining conflicts, Athens capitulated, leading to the death and dissolution of the Delian League. The glories of the glamorous and mighty Athenian Empire were gone and, the Delian League disintegrated.

### **The Peloponnesina League**

The Peloponnesian League was a military coalition of Greek city-states that existed from c. 550 to 366 BC. The name of the League was derived from the geographical location of its member states. The Peloponnesian League was geographically located in the peninsular region of Southern Greece, and lies between the Ionian Sea in the west and Aegean Sea in the east (New Caxton, 1969). Paul Anthony Cartledge a British ancient historian and academic, and a professor of Greeks culture at the University of Cambridge posits that the ancient name of the Peloponnesian League was, "the Lacedaemonians and their allies (Paul, 1997). Even the Greeks themselves referred to the association as 'the Lakedaimonians and their allies. Sparta was leader of the Peloponnesian League, an alliance of independent states that was formed to provide mutual defense and cooperation, allowing Sparta to extend its influence throughout the Peloponnese and into mainland Greece (Cartwright, 2016).

The League operated without a central government or written constitution enabling Sparta to dominate its major political and military affairs for over a century. It was a loose confederation of city-states, each having negotiated their own terms with Sparta, and was known for its requirement of members to swear to hold common 'friends and enemies' and promise reciprocal assistance (Wikipedia, 2026d) There was no collective treaty between all the members of the League. Sparta as hegemonic leader of the Peloponnesian League, concluded a separate treaty with each member

(Wikipedia, 2026d) which therefore entered the League upon its conclusion. Each member swore the same oath with Sparta: "to have the same friends and enemies as the Spartans, (Wikipedia, 2026d) and to follow them whithersoever they may lead". Peloponnesian League members were consequently not bound together, only to Sparta, and could even wage war on each other (Ste. Croix, 1972).

Sparta and its allies, with exception of Corinth, were almost exclusively land based powers, able to summon large land armies which were very nearly unbeatable (Kagan, 2003, Amy, 2020). It included most of the major powers that had strong and imposing land armies of the Peloponnesian and central Greece, as well as the Corinth which at that time was a major sea power. Agriculture was the mainstay of Peloponnesian economy (New Caxton, 1969). In its early history, before the formation of the Peloponnesian League, Sparta made attempt to conquer other city states and to reduce their population into mere slavery but failed. Its failure in the subjugation of Tegea on its northern border at the battle of the Fetters (Paul, 1979, p12) made it to abandon its military conquests and overt hegemonic plans to dominate other city-states and adopted a diplomatic strategy, known as the "bones policy", by appropriating the relics of mythical heroes worshipped in the Peloponnesian, starting with Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, whose bones were transferred from Tegea to Sparta. This new found diplomacy was sponsored by Chilon, ephor. According to Paul (1979) Chilon, ephor enabled Sparta to present itself as the natural successor of the mythical Achaean kingdom of Agamemnon as described. The signing of the alliance treaty between Tegea and Sparta marked the starting point of the subsequent Peloponnesian League (Ste.Croix, 1972). Accordingly, in 378 BC the League made a decision to forbid internal wars if the League was operating an army outside of the Peloponnesian, but perhaps this disposition had already been in place from much earlier and was a part of the constitution of the League. (Ste. Croix, p106). According to L. H. Jefery the constitution of the Peloponnesian League was circle centered on Sparta, with the spokes of a wheel but not necessarily with the added cross-links of a web (Jefery 1988 p. 352). Sparta manipulated other city-state to achieve political and economic ascendancy over them. Its dominance over other members of the Peloponnesian was revealed in the League treaties which contained defensive obligation and gave Sparta right over their military, commercial and economic resources.

The defensive obligation of the League treaties stated that Sparta had to assist an ally attacked by a non-League member, and conversely the allies had to help Sparta in case of an attack (Paul, 1987.). The League treaties equally contained a special clause providing that allies had to assist Sparta in case of a slave revolt and must not offer citizenship to Messenians, because the Arcadians assisted the latter during the Spartan conquest of Messenia (Wickert, 1961). The treaties between Sparta and the allies were also permanent, with a clause forbidding secession (Larsen, 2018,,pp259.260). It was an unequal treaties and unreliable alliance and oligarchic rooted on fear, suspicion and mistrust. Despite their loss of autonomy and sovereignty to Sparta over lordship, the League was sustained by oligarchs that ruled most of the member's city-states who relied on Sparta for continued political relevance and to retain their respective position in their cities.

Again, the Spartan king Agesilaus II (r. c. 400 – c. 360) had a legacy of personal friendship and was well known for his guest friendships among his allies (Wikipedia, 2026d). Many of them had friendship ties with Spartan citizens, or even the kings (Wikipedia, 2026d; Stephen, p. 1917,47). Owing to these friendships, leading oligarchs sent their sons to Spartan for education where they further developed their attachment to Sparta (Paul 1987 p. 10; Wikipedia, 2026d). The Sparta dominance of the Peloponnesian League was evidence in the procedure to admit new members. Only Sparta could either decide alone, or request the approval from their allies in the subsequent League congress (Ste. Croix 1972).

Table 2: The map of Peloponnesian League



Source: G. E. M. de Ste. Croix (1972),

According to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix (1972), the Table 2 shows the first members of the Peloponnesian League before 506 BC. The prominent members of the League include: Tegea, Megara, parts of Attica, cities in Phocis and Boeotia, Phleious, Mantinea, Corinth and others. Not only that the Peloponnesian League was a loose confederation of Greek city-states, the League was the oldest and longest-lasting political association in the Ancient Greek world. For Sparta, the League gave it protection from uprisings within its own borders and eventually secured its dominance in the region and later, following victory in the Peloponnesian War in 404 BCE, the whole of Greece (Cartwright, 2016). Unlike the Dalian League of City-States the members of Peloponnesian League were free to wage war against each other. Common features of the members of the Peloponnesian League were the requirement of members to swear to hold common 'friends and enemies', promise reciprocal assistance, and follow the hegemonic military ambition of Sparta the leader of the Association (Ojinnaka 2022).

The Peloponnesian League was a dominant power in Greece for over 50 years (Thucydides; 1956, 2.9). In the Peloponnesian League meetings each city-State held one vote and the assembly was led by an ephor and decisions about such matters as military campaigns were taken by majority. Unlike in the Dalian League where Athens compelled members to pay a tribute under any circumstances, the members of the Peloponnesian League had only to contribute militarily when required and the exact number of troops demanded from each city was decided by Sparta (Cartwright, 2016).

Sparta utmost strategy was to ensure hegemonic control and domination of the Peloponnesian League. While, Peloponnesian League had the largest and most formidable army, Spartan ensured its domination of the League's military force by having either one of the two Spartan kings or a senior Spartan commander heading the military forces. Equally, Sparta also directly interfered in the domestic affairs of member states, often promoting rule by an oligarchy favorable to Spartan policies. Essentially, this was how Sparta held an even tighter grip on the member states of the Peloponnesian League (Ojinnaka 2022). However, Sparta's greatest undoing was its continued policy of interfering in the government of League members with their heavy-handed treatment of City-States like Mantinea and Phleious. Also, the League tribute was required in money, not just arms and men as Sparta became ever more ambitious and influential (Thucydides, 1998.). When the Spartans lost the crucial Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE, against the brilliant Theban general Epaminondas the League began to decline and, with the treaties formed between Corinth, Phleious and Thebes, the Peloponnesian League was, in effect, dissolved by c. 366 BCE.

### **Conceptualizing War**

Michael Sheehan in his Paper on the changing nature of War contends that War is a fluid concept that have generated a large number of sometimes contradictory definitions which are not helpful in the understanding of war in the context of the contemporary international system (Michael,

2008;213). Throughout recorded history, particularly, in the modern times wars have occurred as a form of social behavior and prominent feature of human existence. However, in order to understand the real meaning of War and factors that makes for escalation of conflicts to a violent level we need to understand the contexts of War at both the domestic and international levels. Wars encompass various conflicts; nature, types and forms of conflicts that escalate beyond control of the initiators. Against the background of these long historical time frames, many frontline scholars and War theorists have offered both qualitative and quantitative definitions of war.

Scholars and Strategic thinkers like Carl Von Clausewitz (1832), Aron (1966), Eccles (1965), Barbera (1973), Blainey (1973), Schwartzberger (1950), Eagleton (1948), Ojinnaka (2021, 2023, 2024), Brodie (1973) Michael Sheehan (2008) and host of others has contributed greatly to the intellectual and normative development of the concept of War. Michael Sheehan, a prominent scholar of International Relations at Swansea University states that War has been one of the key institutions of the practice of international relations, and has been a central focus of the study of international relations. The scholar states that in the past two centuries, the modern era of history, War has traditionally, been seen as a brutal form of politics, a way in which states sought to resolve certain issues in international relations, and an outcome of their willingness to amass military power for defense and for deterrence, and to project it in support of their foreign and defense policies. Michael contends that the two wars of the twentieth Century typified this approach to the instrumentality of war.

Michael further states that since the Post-Cold War period, the nature of War is undergoing fundamental changes. He contends that due to advancement of economic interdependence through globalization and the spread of democracy some group of states seem to have formed security communities where war between them is no longer a possibility. He further states that the use of advanced technology by the United States to achieve dramatic victory against conventional armies has led to the suggestions that revolution in military affairs is imminent. Michael notes that some parts of the world have been characterized by warfare in which non-state actors have been prominent. He maintains that such new wars are direct results of the process of globalization (Michael, 2008; 211).

Basil liddel Hart, a British strategic thinker (as cited in Michael, 2008), and Marxist Leon Trotsky made valuable contributions in the contemporary study and understanding of war. Basil forcefully argues that if you want peace, you must understand war. Basil means that if you desire peace, you must be prepared for war. Also, Trotsky states that you may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you. In the same vein, the Ancient Greek thinker, Heraclitus posits that war was the father of all, and the king of all (Basil; Trotsky; Heraclitus as cited in Michael 2008). Throughout history, and modern times this has been prominent feature of Wars. This partly informed Baylis (2017, 225) definition of War as organized violence among groups, It changes with historical and social context, in the minds of those who wage it, It is fought for some purpose, according to some strategy or plan. Baylis contends that the two most common forms of Warfare are the high-intensity conflict and Low intensity conflict. High intensity conflict is consistent with linear Warfare, symmetric combat, and combined arms maneuver and unified action through multiple demines.

Accordingly, it involves the use of all available military forces and means, including weapons of mass destruction, and is characterized by widespread and intense violence across many parts of the country. They are typically associated with high levels of conflict deaths relative to the population and a rapid deterioration of the security situation (Jstor, 2023)). While Low-intensity conflicts are characterized by limited objectives and involve the state's use of military forces applied selectively and with restraint to enforce compliance with its policies or objectives. They often involve protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies and can range from subversion to the use of the armed forces (Wikipedia, 2025).

In the same vein, the United States Army officially defined Low-intensity conflict as a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low-intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of the armed forces. According to the United States Department of the Army ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department\\_of\\_the\\_Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_the_Army)), Low-intensity conflict is waged by a combination of means,

employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low-intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications (United States Department of the Army, 1990; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department\\_of\\_the\\_Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_the_Army)).

Equally, Brandolini (2002:16) assert that Low-intensity operations consist of the deployment and use of soldiers in situations other than war. For states, the scholar notes that these operations are usually conducted against non-state actors and are given terms like counter-insurgency, anti-subversion, and peacekeeping (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peacekeeping>). Also Wikipedia (2025) notes states that violent non-state actors often conduct low-intensity operations against states, often in insurgencies.

Ojinnaka (2021) acknowledges that the concept of war is one of the keystones in the study of both domestic and international politics, and Contemporary Strategic Studies. The scholar states that this is why in Social Sciences, the level of analysis of war and its contemporary interdisciplinary communication centers on the causes of War, the means of acquisition, use and retentions of Political Power. He further states that this has been problematic in conceptualization of War due to the growing number of and prevalence of Wars: civil war, insurgency, violent conflicts by both States and Non-state actors. Ojinnaka argues that weather war takes place in domestic space in form of Civil War or between sovereign political entities- the States; it is most fundamentally a means for resolving differences of political, social or economic nature. The scholar further argues that War as a socio-political phenomenon can be resolved peacefully.

Over time, scholars that offer state-centric conception of War have tried to view war in an international context, as Aron, Raymond in his 1966 book: 'Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations' argues authoritatively, that when War take place in international context, the stakes of war may be the life and death of States. It is on this regards that both Lider (1977), and Nobel (1977) as cited in Ojinnaka (2021) consciously states that nation-States can only realize their national interests by demonstrating their willingness to fight wars and by making use of wars of various degrees of magnitude as an instrument of national policy to achieve legitimate ends. This fact was recently demonstrated by the United States of America under Donald J. Trump in its recent 3ard January, 2026 armed invasion of Venezuela and arrest of President Nicolas Madura. Accordingly, Ojinnaka points that some military analysts maintains that States that relays of the utility of Military Power are often great violators of International Law.

Lider (1977) in his book on the nature of War explored the dispute on the nature of war in the West and in the Soviet Union. After a brief description of the Clausewitzian philosophy and his concepts of absolute and real war, he explored the three Western schools of thought the militaristic school, political realism and pacifism, as well as the Soviet concept of war. Lider notes that the differences between the Western and Soviet philosophies of war are in the depth of analysis. According to Lider the difference consist in the interpretations of the politics of war with emphasis on foreign policy in the West and internal war in the Soviet approach. Again, on the notion of war, with focus on interstate war in the West and Soviet primacy of civil war, as well as in different perspectives on the future of war: unclear and unspecific future in the West and the Soviet notion about the total disappearance of war after the inevitable world-wide victory of socialism. Lider maintains that the interpretation and understanding of the Clausewitzian politics of war and its utility is useful for conceptualizing the basic differences and similarities between the Soviet and Western understanding of socio-political reality of the causes of war and the beat approach to the prevention of war.

Carl Von Clausewitz the most influential 19th Century German politico-military strategic thinker in his 1832 book, "On War", has overtime dominated the intellectual discursions of War and its utility. Clausewitz states that the fundamental nature of war is immutable. He argues that the forms and character of war in any particular age might change but its fundamental or essential nature will not. Clausewitz maintains that the novel characteristics of war were not the result of new inventions, but of new ideas and social conditions.

However, in the contemporary international system, particularly since the end of the Cold War, the Changing forms of warfare have been due to the changing perception of threat. Thus war is

not the primary agent of change, but the changes in the form of warfare are due to the changes in the international system in the post-Cold War period. This is in concert with Michael view that wars are socially constructed form of large scale human group behavior and must be understood within the wider contexts of their political and cultural environment. In the same vein, Michael contends that in an era of unprecedented Information and Communication Technology new fields of warfare have emerged. The non-state actors in the post-Cold War period have transformed both the cyberspace and global media into critical battle ground alongside terrestrial military and terrorist operations, so that war is now fought on a number of different plane of reality simultaneously, and reality itself is subverted in the cause of war through sophisticated strategies of information and electronics deception (Michael, 2008). However, war as a common feature of human history has since the end of the Cold War seen sharp decline both in frequency and lethality due to the dynamic changes in the international system which have also brought changes in the character and forms of warfare.

Clausewitz strongly argues that war is an act of force intended to compel our opponents to comply to or fulfill our will and a continuation of political intercourse with mixture of other means or expressively policy by other means which is an expression of the continuity of hot competition and power tussle among actors who use violent and coercive means to achieve strategically planned goals to compel opponents to accept their terms and condition in a crisis situation that represents conflict of interests. Thus, Clausewitz emphasized the continuity of violence with other political methods: hence his formulation refers to large scale military confrontation between state actors.

The western understanding of war following Clausewitz sees it as instrumental, as a means to an end. Wars in this perspective are not random violence. They reflect a conscious decision to engage in them for a rational political purpose. They are rationalized by those who initiated them by appeal to belief and value system. Michael firmly holds that wars are fought for reasons. Michael further states that the political nature of war has been evolving in recent decades under the impact of globalization which has increasingly eroded the economic, political and cultural autonomy of states. Michael argues that contemporary warfare takes place in a local context, but it also play-out in the wider fields and influenced by non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations, regional and global media and users of internet. The scholar argues that in many ways, contemporary wars are fought on television and media. Thus both have powerful role in providing a framework of understanding for viewers of conflict.

In a similar state centric conception of war the Third New International Webster Dictionary (1961) of English Language define war as a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations. This definition do not significantly explain war in the contemporary context as it ignores the non-state actors or groups which have become prominent actor in the contemporary international system and act of warfare. Nevertheless, Webster's state centric conception of War reinforces Clausewitz argument that each age has its own dominant characteristics form of war which reflects the era in which it occurs. Ojinnaka (2021) gave sociological definition of War. He defines War as a social activity that results from the quest for power, and conflict of interests. Ojinnaka argues that War is the crystallization of a system of power politics that is by character and nature brutal, wasteful, destructive and often unfair and ruthless in its method of execution.

In the same vein, Johnson (1935) in his article on War in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines war as armed conflict between population groups' conceived of as organic unities, such as races or tribes, states or lesser geographic units, religious or political parties, economic classes. However, many political realists like Bernard (1944) in his book 'War and its causes' seen Johnson definition of War as too general and reflecting sociological perspective because it does not limit the armed conflict to political units, but includes any type of population units which is capable of resorting to arms as a method of settling disputes. Bernard contends that Johnson definition of war does not specify the duration of the conflict or the magnitude of the conflicting parties, hence, as this definition according to Bernard could be made to include riots.

In the same vein, Quincy Wright, in his study of war, gave instrumental definition of war. Wright defines war as a conflict among political groups, especially sovereign states carried on by armed forces of considerable magnitude for considerable period of time (Wright, 1942:453). Also, Hedley Bull in his book the Anarchical society: A study of order in world politics, states that war is an

organized violence carried on by political units against each other. Bull further notes that violence is not war unless it is carried out by political units against other political units (Hedley, 2012).

Emeka Odimegwu Ojukwu, an Oxford trained historian, the former Biafra Head of State and, a General of Biafra People Army, in his book *Selected Speeches and Random Thought* argues that War is a biological necessity of life, without which there will be no remarkable evolution in History (Ojukwu, 1969). In line with Ojukwu's argument, Michael (2008:216) posits that war, both in terms of preparation for it and its actual conduct may be powerful catalysts for change, but technological or even political modernization does not necessarily imply moral progress. Michael maintains that evolution in war, including its contemporary form, may involve change that is morally problematic, as indeed is the case with the forces of globalization. Nevertheless, the scholar contends that war is profound agent of historical change, but it is not the fundamental driving force of history. According to him there are a wide variety of factors that can contribute to outbreak of war, such as nationalism, class conflict, human nature and so on. These are the main drivers of change rather than war itself. Michael argues forcefully, that war is not something imposed by an outside force; hence the willingness to go to war comes from within states and societies.

Nevertheless, war may be unable to resolve the problems that caused it. Ojukwu agreed that Nigeria-Biafra War was unable to resolve the socio-political, economic, cultural and religious problems that led to the war. Today, the problems that led to the Nigeria-Biafra War has escalated and threatening the disintegration of the Nigeria state along ethno-cultural, religious-lines. This by implications points to the fact that Wars is not really effective in addressing the problems that led to it. In the context of the Peloponnesian war, the problems of political, economic power, commercial rivalry, prestige and greed that led to the war was never resolved at the end of the war. Sparta the leader of the Peloponnesian League of independent States rather than restoring peace and the construction of new international environment were driven by the desire to dominate others. After the Peloponnesian war, Sparta leaders unfairly took control of the Athenian Empire and exploited its resources for its own advantages and kept all of its tribute revenues for itself.

Equally, in a State-centric conception of War, Sorel (1912) as cited in Ojinnaka (2021) defined war as a political act by means of which states, unable to adjust a dispute regarding their obligations, rights or interests, resort to armed force to decide which is the stronger and may therefore impose its will on the other. Kallen in his 1939 article entitled "of war and peace" published in *Social Research Journal*, disagreed with von Clausewitz' definition of war as "an act of violence for the purpose of compelling the enemy to do what we will". Kallen contends that von Clausewitz's definition is too general and indefinite and might apply to anybody's act of violence, whenever it occurs. Kallen notes that as limited to war, it applies to pre-Napoleonic and pre-industrial times and intentions, when war was a castle enterprise, and a gentleman's game. Kallen rather offered political definition of war and defined it as an armed contest between two or more sovereign institutions employing organized military forces in the pursuit of specific ends. Kallen used two value loaded terms in his definition: sovereign institutions and organized military forces which made his definition to be state centric. Kallen argues further that this organization of the contending armed forces extends back behind the battle lines and tends in modern wars to embrace all civilian activities, such as the industrial, productive, and commercial, and also the social interests and individual attitudes. However, Kallen's definition failed to account for the role of non-state actors like armed groups, Freedom fighters, Terrorist Organization and Jihadists movements, Machinery groups in the contemporary wars.

In the same vein, Edward Hallett Carr (1892–1982) in his intellectual provoking work on *International Relations 'The Twenty Years Crisis'* first published in 1939, argues that the position of the idealist about War is "utopianism.". The idealists has argued that War is an aberration in the course of normal life and the way to prevent it is to educate people for peace, and to build systems of collective security such as the League of Nations or today's United Nations. The idealist's notion has been challenged by Carr and other realist scholars who questioned the notion of moral universalism and concept of universal harmony of interests. Carr states that politicians pursue their country's interests to create negative images of other people to justify acts of aggression.

Michael (2008) argues that another feature of warfare in the contemporary times is that conflict between developed states was governed by rules. An entire body of international law was developed to constrain and regulate use of violence in war time. Again, Quincy Wright contends that wars always involve legal relationship which distinguishes it from mere fighting, even organized fighting. Wright notes that this rule regulates violence between the governments and or governments and non-state actors. Michael also, posits that wars often escalate numerous forces for change; transforming industrial society and government in a ways that are fundamental and permanent. The scholar contends that by weakening or destroying traditional structures or by compelling internal reforms, war may create condition conducive for social change and political modernization (Wright, 1942).

Equally, in the spirit of the time, some sophisticated thinkers argues that the American invasion of Libya under Mommar Gaddafi in 2011, American invasion of Iraq under Saddam Hussein (2003–2011), American invasion of Granada on 32rd October, 1983, the US intervention in Chile on September 11, 1973, , American invasion of Cuba under Castro 1961, American invasion of Guatemala in 1954, Venezuela in 2026, and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Russia invasion of Ukraine, and Soviet Satellitization of the countries of Easter Europe during the Cold War was based on interests and morally discrediting the leadership of these countries to justify their actions (Ojinnaka, 2022). Ojinnaka further states that it is indeed, conflict of interests in a highly tensed international environment that leads to war among nations and unjustified reasons why nations prepare for war, as naked struggle for power makes war possible both in the domestic and international system. Also, Ojinnaka (2021) argues that selfishness, rivalry and power-lust are at the center of many Wars in the world. The insatiable human lust for power is timeless and universal; hence the desire to dominate others is the main causes of War among nations, tribes and Groups.

The Hamburg University Working Group for Research on the Causes of War (2025), and Istvan Kende (1917–1988), a Hungarian peace researcher as cited in Ojinnaka (2021) argues that “war” is act of “violent mass conflict” and it has the following characteristics: Two or more armed forces are participating in the fighting, at least one of which are regular fighting forces (military, paramilitary units, police) of the government; There must be a minimum of central control of the fighters on both sides, even if this manifests itself as organized armed defense or planned assaults (guerrilla operations, partisan war); Armed operations continue and are not occasional, spontaneous clashes; i.e. both sides operate according to a planned strategy regardless of whether fighting takes place on the territory of one or more societies and of how long they take.

Accordingly, the Hamburg University Research Working Group on the Causes of War (HUWGRCW), made qualitative differentiations between wars and armed conflicts. The later are “violent conflicts that do not entirely fulfill the criteria of a war due to its comparatively degree of openness. The Groups gave a qualitative definition of war as the continuing and systematic use of collective physical violence between at least two organized groups. HUWGRCW posits that this qualitative definition has its weaknesses. On the one hand, due to the first criterion, it remains a state-centric perspective. As the current manifestation of war as a collective use of violence beyond state actors and indeed borders is not taken into account. Kende (1917–1988) as cited in Ojinnaka (2021) in his quantitative definitions of war, states that war is understood as a determinable status quo, nevertheless, he did not offer any definite criteria for an analytically valuable differentiation between wars and violent conflicts. Kende’s definition is open end and based on the impression that the phenomenon “war” is a distinctive state of societal interaction.

In his wisdom and understanding of the danger of war, nevertheless, nuclear conflagration, the former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in the heat of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, wrote President J.F Kennedy arguing thus:

*‘if indeed, war breaks out, then it would not be in our powers to stop it, such is the Logic of war. I have participated in two wars, and I know that war only ends after it has rolled through cities and villages, sowing death and destruction everywhere’* (Khrushchev cited in Ojinnaka 2025b).

Momah (1995) states that Khrushchev in his wisdom knew that crisis must be guarded against war, because war once started, generally erode the power of its initiators to stop it. Writing on to use

force and increase of wars in the contemporary international system, Professor Aja Akpuru Aja, an erudite scholar of International Relations, Contemporary Strategic Studies in his widely read book ‘Policy and strategic studies: Uncharted waters of war & peace in international relations’ maintains that the limitation of the use of force by states in the crisis situation is predicated on mutual perception of assured destruction by the giant powers (Aja, 1998). Professor Aja argues that during potential escalation of international crisis this have helped in de-escalation of the crisis situation from total war, as crisis decision management approach in a nuclear age have saved human civilization from mindless self-extinction (Aja, 2009, as cited in Ojinnaka, 2025b). Professor Aja further argues that there is more gain in peace approach than in war effort. The erudite scholar maintains that peace brings prosperity, progress and development, while war ensures destruction. Aja strongly maintains that in reality, war is an ill wind that does no one good, hence should be averted by all means possible.

The Hamburg University Working Group for Research on the Causes of War (HUWGRCW), as part of the University of Hamburg's research initiatives that focuses on investigating global war events since the Second World War and provides a comprehensive overview of current war events across the World. The group is involved in research on political, economic, and social developments in various regions, including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the transcontinental region of Near East, and Middle East (<https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/the-giga>). Equally, important is the role of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies in offering a wide range of research and analysis on international security, wars and conflicts in the international system.

The Hamburg University Working Group for Research on the causes of war in their qualitative definitions of war argues that there are two types of War and their differentiations is based on the object of the conflict and the goals of the conflicting parties. The Group differentiates between anti-regime wars”, “wars about the overthrow of the ruling party or the change or maintenance of the political system, wars about autonomy and secession, decolonization wars or “wars about the liberation from colonial rule, ethnic wars and politically motivated revolutionary wars. All these wars are characterized by violent conflict whether parties to the conflict are state or non-state actors.

Basically, Hamburg University Working Group reorganized two types of Wars: symmetric, intra-state wars which are violent conflicts between two states; and asymmetric wars, which is War between one state and one non-state party. The Group further categorized asymmetric wars and divided it into two sub-categories: Intra-state violent conflict, which is wars between one non-state actor and a state actor within the existing state's borders; Extra-state or extra-systemic violent conflict between one non-state and one state actor outside of the existing state's borders, for instance, the war of NATO states against the Taliban in Afghanistan and American War against the ISIS in Syria, and Iraq.

In the same vein, Sven Chojnacki the highly celebrated German political scientist known for his research on armed conflicts, interstate/intrastate wars, borders, territory, migration, and the privatization of security in areas of limited statehood, in his collaborative research projects funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), Chojnacki adopted interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of conflict and its implications (<https://www.conflict-data.org/index.html>). Accordingly, Sven Chojnacki's work is a reflection of the growing consensus in conflict research that the traditional state-centered conception of war is no longer sufficient to capture a large number of armed conflicts worldwide, which have been due to changes in forms of violence in the international system (<https://www.conflict-data.org/index.html>).

In the light of this observation, Chojnacki and his team of researchers developed a new typology of war, which takes into account both the political status of the actors and territorial aspects. Chojnacki (2025) contends that violent conflicts which lead to War can be grouped under “sub-state wars”, which are four “core types of armed violence”: Inter-state violent conflicts which are between two or more sovereigns states like the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine; Intra-state violent conflicts within state often between ethnic groups or non-state actors. In this, non-state actors within existing borders like the war between the Liberian government under Samuel Doe and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPLF) led by Charles Taylor; the war between the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) led by Corporal Fonday Sankoh and the Sierra Leone government. The war between the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) and the Armed

Forces of the government of Sierra Leone became complex following the criminalization of the RUF insurgency, and on 25 May, 1997, a faction of the Sierra Leone Army led by Major Jonny Paul Koromah collaborated with the Foday Sankoh's RUF to overthrow the democratically elected government of Alhaji Tejan Kabbah. Also, the war between the Ugandan government and the rebel National Resistance Movement (NRM) and its armed wing, the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni, that overthrew the Okello's government in January 1986. Also, from 1986 to 1994, after Yoweri Museveni came to power, a variety of rebel groups waged a civil war against the Ugandan government of President Yoweri Museveni. The most important insurgent factions were the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), the Uganda People's Army (UPA), Alice Auma's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), and Joseph Kony's army (which later became the Lord's Resistance Army) (Wikipedia, 2026b). This and more are the examples of Intra-state violent conflicts within state, and between state and non-state actors within existing borders; Extra-state violent conflicts (between state and non-state actors beyond existing borders ISIS, Al-Qaida Network in Iran, Iraq); Sub-state violent conflicts (between non-state actors independent of existing borders. The Fulani terrorist Groups in Nigeria are an example of the sub-state violent actors.

Sven Chojnacki in his Consolidated List of Wars (CoLoW), proposed that the integration of a sub-state war category reflects the debate about the changing patterns of warfare in the post-Second World War period and follows the underlying rule that a classification of war is best arranged according to the political status of the protagonists ([http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp\\_non-state\\_conflict\\_dataset/](http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_non-state_conflict_dataset/)); Such wars like wars between private armed groups, intra-state and inter-state wars, military interventions by external state actors has fundamentally changed the dynamics of modern wars in terms of the occurrences, duration, complexities and application of modern technology-electronics warfare and cyber warfare.

### **The Causes of Peloponnesian War**

Like many other war both in the present and past history of wars in the international system, the Peloponnesian Wars was a war of prestige, interests and power motivated by greed, commercial rivalry and desire to dominate others. Notwithstanding the seeming detailed and revealing accounts of the Peloponnesian war by some ancient historians, and scholars of international relations, and contemporary strategic studies, it is incumbent on us to continue to deliberate on the genesis and causes of the Peloponnesian war in particular and Wars in general.

The formation of the Delian League, or Athenian League, in 478 B.C. united several Greek City-States in a military alliance, ostensibly to guard against revenge attacks from the Persian Empire. In reality, the league also granted increased power and prestige to Athens. (History.com, August 22, 2019). Meanwhile, Spartans were the leader of the Peloponnesian League (550 BC- 366 B.C.) of City-States. It was only a matter of time before the two powerful leagues collided (History.com, August 22, 2019). The feud and rivalry between the two leagues of powers which led to the war, started as ambitious designs and political intrigues devoid of morality. Thucydides (1996) as a participant-observer and a famous Greek historian of that era in his book, "The History of the Peloponnesian War" posits:

*"The real cause I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable"*

Thucydides accounts of the war tend to justify and rationalize the hegemonic agenda, greed and excesses of the Athens under Pericles, and its dictatorships in its relations with other Greek City-States. Similarly, The New Caxton scholars, (1969) maintains that the underlying cause of the war was the increasing rivalry between Athens and Sparta, and the growth of imperialist aspirations of Athens as furthered by Pericles. However, it should be noted that at this time in reference, the Athenian diplomacy knew no morality and the relations between the two power blocs (Dellian League and Peloponnesian League) was marred by mutual suspicion, political intrigues, commercial rivalry and inordinate desire to dominate, which was clinically raised to the level of philosophy of government (Ojinnaka, 2023). Further still, balance of power was a natural consequence of struggle between the two powers, but the fear of possible Spartans encirclement by Athens made the

Peloponnesian League allies to choose war as a viable option to overturn the perceived Athenian hegemony and to turn the balance of Power in Greece to their favor.

Sealey (1975), Kagan (2003), and Gill (2019) shared four (4) thoughtful opine on the main reasons for the Peloponnesian war as:

*Sparta was jealous of other powers and desired more power for itself.*

*Sparta was unhappy at no longer having all the military glory.*

*Athens bullied its allies and neutral Cities.*

*There was a conflict among City-States between competing political ideologies.*

Historian Kagan (2003) provides a collaborative and detailed account of the politics, alliances system and events that led to the Peloponnesian war. According to him, the previous Persian wars, as a contributing factor led to the formation of Delian League. Athens had to be rebuilt and it came to dominate its group of allies politically and economically. Kagan opines that the Athenian empire started with the Dalian League, which had been formed to allow Athens to take the lead in the war against Persia (Kagan, 2003; <https://www.thoughtco.com/delian-league-111927>), and empowered Athens with access to what was supposed to be a communal treasury. But Athens used these communal funds to build up its navy and, with it, its importance and power (Kagan, 2003).

The particular events that started the war were the intervention of Athens in relations to dispute between Corinth and Corcyra (New Caxton, 1969). The complicated, partially ideological and political conflict between Spartan-ally Corinth and her natural daughter City and strong naval power Corcyra led to Athenian involvement in Sparta's realm (Kagan, 2003). Corcyra appealed to Athens for help, offering to Athens the use of its navy. Corinth urged Athens to remain neutral (Gill, 2019). But since Corcyra's navy was powerful and it was a very strategic city, Athens was concerned that it would fall into Spartan hands and disrupts whatever fragile balance of power the city-states were maintaining, hence it consented to Corcyra's request (Gill, 2019).

As a result of the unfolding events, Corinthians condemned Sparta inactivity and unwillingness to join the war, warning the Spartans that if they continued to remain passive, while the Athenians were energetically active they would soon find themselves outflanked and without allies (Thucydides, 1996). After consultations and meetings with the Athenian people, Pericles their leader advised that Athens sign defense-only treaty with Corcyra, and sent a fleet to Corcyra. Fighting ensued and Corcyra, with Athens' aid, won the Battle of Sybota against Corinth in 433 BC. Angered by the role of Athens in its conflict with Corcyra, Corinth incited and aided the revolt of Athens of Potidaea against the Athenian empire (New Caxton, 1969). Potidaea was part of the Athenian empire, but also a colony of Corinth. Athens of Potidaea had secretly acquired a promise of Spartan support, to invade Athens, in violation of the 30 years treaty (Gill, 2019). Consequently, Athens instructed Potidaea to tear down its walls, send hostages to Athens, dismiss Corinthian magistrates from office and refuse the magistrate the city will send in future (Thucydides, 1910). Provoked by the Athenian aggressive actions, the Corinth secretly sent its army to Potidaea to defend it. This action was indeed, a contravention of the terms of Thirty Years Peace Treaty which required the parties to respect each other's sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs.

Furthermore, contemporary economic historians consider the Megarian Decree promulgated in 433-432 BC by Athenian authorities, as a major source of aggravation and a significant issue that led to the Peloponnesian war. Athens' former partner, The Polis Megara, had allied with Corinth the adversary of Athens. This led to breakdown in diplomatic relations between Athens and Megara. And made Athens to put a peacetime embargo and economic sanctions against Megara by enacting "Megarian Decree" which imposed strict trade sanctions on Megarian citizens, and banned Megarian merchants from trading with any Athenian held towns (New Caxton, 1969). Fine (1983), Encyclopedia Britannica (2020, May 14), and History.Com (2019b) contends that modern economic historians are of the view that forbidden Megara to trade with the prosperous Athenian empire would have been disastrous for the Megarians, and Megarians have accordingly, considered the decree to be contributing factor in bringing about the war. The embargo's effects made Megara very uncomfortable and set it on the brink of starvation. It was considered as an act of war, and Corinth took the opportunity to urge all allies disaffected with Athens to pressure Sparta to invade Athens (Gill, 2019). Sparta and its allies accused Athens of aggression and threatened war and in a pre-emptive attack in

430 BC invaded Attica, hence fighting started between the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League.

### **The Termination of the Peloponnesian War**

The last ten years of the Peloponnesian war is often known as Deceleian or Ionian War (413-404 BC). It ended in victory for Sparta and her allies (Kagan, 2003). This decisive battle took place during the period of Athenian national political and economic crisis. At this time, the Athenian army was undisciplined and unwarlike. Admiral Lysander, Spartan's military tactician and strategic thinker took advantage of Athenian dissensions at home, political turmoil that made its political institutions weak and vulnerable, lack of military cohesion and military incompetence to attack and destroy the Athenian navy at Aegospotami in 405 BC. (New Caxton, 1969). Spartan was helped by Persia money in equipping and maintaining large fleets and weapons. Starved by an impenetrable blockade, Athens capitulated (Britannica's Guardians of History, 2020). Obviously exhausted and frustrated, as New Caxton scholars (1969) put it, Athenian forces were compelled to surrender in the spring of 404 BC. Her defensive walls were pulled down and her empire disbanded. Democracy was replaced by a reactionary and Oligarchic government that was set up by Sparta under 30 "tyrants" (Thucydides work completed by Xenophon in 410-404 BC, cited in New Caxton, 1969). However, in 403 BC, the Oligarchic tyrants were overthrown by Thrasybulus and democracy was restored.

The Peloponnesian War marked a significant power shift in ancient Greece in favor of Sparta, and also ushered in a period of regional decline that signaled the end of what is considered the Golden Age of Ancient Greece (History.com, 2019a). After the defeat of Athens, its power was broken; nevertheless, it continued to play an active part in Greek politics (Roisman, & Worthington, 2010). The defeat of Athens was perhaps the beginning of endless political crisis in Greek political history. There-after all the Greece was impoverished and lived from one crisis to another (New Caxton, 1969). The war crippled Greek military strength, and thus the most culturally advanced Greek city- state was brought into final eclipse (Britannica's Guardians of History, 2020).

Not only that the war undermined the most critical and influential period of Greek history, it slowed Greek political life and weakened her political institutions. For example, the Peloponnesian war was a major factor in the failure of Greek system of city-states. In particular, the experiment in unification which had been the chief advantage of the Delian League was defeated and discredited (New Caxton, 1969). Thus the Spartan empire was built upon the wreckage of Athenian empire. Sparta took over the Athenian empire, disbanded it and kept all of its tribute revenues for itself, and Sparta's allies, who made greater sacrifices for the war effort than Sparta, got nothing (Bary & Meigs, 1956).

The Peloponnesian war lasted for nearly 30 years because of the totally different resources of the two sides; Athens was supreme at sea and could not be starved out, and Sparta was supreme on land and could not safely be challenged to battle (New Caxton, 1969). The end of the war paved the way for the Macedonian takeover of Greece. Few decades after the war, Macedon under Philip 11 conquered, subjugated and dominated all of Greece except Sparta, which was later conquered by Alexander, the son of Philip 11, in 331BC (Roisman & Worthington, 2010, History .com, 2019a). This finally led to the eclipse of the Greece civilization of that era.

### **Drivable Lesions from the Peloponnesian War for the Contemporary International System**

The Peloponnesian War is a source of significant lessons necessary for peaceful co-existence and the stability of the international system (Ojinnaka, 2025b). The importance of international diplomacy and crisis management approach, as a component of military strategy provides us with valuable insights into the management of international conflicts (Ojinnaka, 2023). The contemporary international system in an era of rapid globalization of the world and calls for the end of hostility among nations in the international system. During the era of Greek City-States, developments in the relations among the City-States were determined by conflicts between two opposing imperial and mutual antagonistic power blocs; the Delian League, and the Peloponnesian League. Consequently, the ancient Greek world lived in an uneasy peace, a situation that made the Peloponnesian war inevitable.

Before the war, Athens was a leading, prosperous and prestigious Greek power. Its foundation leader Pericles, the first citizen of democratic Athens had agenda for political and economic

ascendancy. His policies and strategies of ultra-nationalism and regional hegemony were in part responsible for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war (Ojinnaka, 2023). Due to his proven capability, he transformed his City's alliances into an Empire. The Golden Age of Athenian culture flourished under his leadership and watch (495-427 BC).

Nevertheless, his policies as a statesman and his carrier as a General of the Army of the Democratic Athens left indelible marks of lesions to statesmen and policy elites in the contemporary international system. Incontrovertibly, Pericles brought honors and glory to his country. but his adventurisms, expansionist tendencies, indeed, his unlimited ambition and inordinate desire to dominate other City-States in the region marked the beginning of the unfolded evil phenomenon which made the Peloponnesian war inevitable, and in final analysis destroyed the rich Greek civilization, impoverished its people, destroyed its political institutions (City-State system), and finally disbanded the Athenian empire (Ojinnaka, 2021a).

In the opinion of this Paper, a pragmatic understanding of Athenian politics and pattern of warfare in the both Pericles and post Pericles era, indicates that the defeat of Athenians was a logical outcome of poor leadership, poor Statesmanship and poor strategic thinking, and ethical decline of the Athenian society in the post Pericles era. Indeed, the escalation of the war and its devastating horrors on the entire Greek world throws a curious light on the danger of strong arm geo-political competition. It is a prime lesson for statesmen, policy elites and world leaders in the contemporary international system (Ojinnaka, 2021a).

The history of the contemporary international system is replant with instances of warfare. However, since the end of the Cold War, the number of wars in the international system has declined sharply compared with the Cold War period (Michael, 2008). According to the University of British Columbia Human Security Center (UBCHSC)( 2005;17) report between 1989 and 1999 nearly one hundred wars came to an end, and in terms of battle death, the 1990s were the least violent decade since the end of the World War II. Nevertheless, the Post-cold War era and the special effects of globalization on economies and societies have created great impacts on the contemporary international system, which have significantly affected political and social changes (Michael, 2008). And have consequently influenced the beliefs of people regarding the utility and instrumentality of war, its forms and function in policy making.

In reality, war is an ill wind that does no one good. According to Professor Aja Akpuru Aja, an erudite scholar of international relations, contemporary strategic studies, there is more gain in peace approach than in war effort, and during potential escalation of international crisis, crisis decision management approach can save human civilization from mindless self-extinction (Aja, 2009). As Woodrow Wilson put it "to jaw, jaw is better than to war, war" (Aja, 2009).

In the contemporary international system, the world leaders should learn from the mistakes of Pericles, the leader of the Athenian Empire in one hand, and Sparta and its allied states in the other. Leaders of the contemporary international system should think more strategically and work to engender peaceful coexistence and dismantle the force that makes for war. Obviously, Peace brings prosperity, progress and development and harmonious co-existence, while war ensures destruction and anarchy. The dynamics of the globalized world requires active participation of all nations in the reconstruction of the international system. This calls for strategic re-orientation of States in the contemporary international system by cautiously restraining the use of force as an instrument of State policy. Nations should renounce armed hegemonies and futile attempts to dominate others through militaristic blandishment of offensive weapons. In particular, hegemonic powers like Russia, China, and America and her NATO harmony of nations should keep away from exploiting global and regional conflicts for unilateral advantage (Ojinnaka, 2025). America and her NATO harmony of nations tried to gain unilateral advantage in Iraq in 1991, and Syria under Assad, Yugoslavia in 1991, and in US-NATO intervention in Libya under Ghadaffi, on 19 March, 2011.

Equally, the United States and a coalition of Caribbean countries invaded the island nation of Grenada at dawn on 25 October 1983. Codenamed Operation Urgent Fury by the U.S. military, resulting in military occupation within a few days (Wikipedia, 2026b). Again, the United States invasion of Panama on December 20, 1989, in an attempt to overthrow military dictator Manuel Noriega who had been indicted in the United States on drug trafficking charges and was accused of

suppressing democracy in Panama and endangering U.S. nationals (History, 2010). In the same vein, the US government supported, sponsored and aided the Contras rebels which were a group US government of rightwing resistance fighters who fought against the leftwing government of Nicaragua during the 1980s. The Contras rebels' fighter wished to topple the Sandinista leadership /government in Nicaragua. The Contra rebellion was part of the American broader Cold War strategy (E-International Relations, 2025; Joseph, 2026). The U.S failed invasion of Cuba (Operation bay of Pig) in 17 April, 1961 (Ojinnaka, 2025a), and American 2026 invasion of Venezuela and kidnapping of President Nicolas Mundera. The American unilateral actions against these sovereign States have no justification in international law.

In these cases, the world leaders, international statesmen, men and women of goodwill largely condemned the actions of these hegemonic powers (Russia, and America and her NATO harmony of nations), as a grave affront to sovereignty of these countries, gross violation of international Law and extremely dangerous precedent for the entire international system, and a historic breach in the in rules, norms, and international institutions that are opposed to the use of force as tool of foreign policy.

According to some geo-political experts and scholars of strategic studies, the potential implications of this brazen and illegal operations and acts of armed aggression would have long-term stakes for the stability of the international system. These illegal actions may be seen as a norm in the international system and strong powers like China may try to adopt such strategy in solving its problem with Taiwan. Indeed, the US and Russia unilateral military actions against countries are manifestation of a lawless international system where the mighty have a joyride in violating international laws, as rules are trodden and victors rejoice over booty like when the Spartans and its Peloponnesian League defeated the Athenian Empire and its allies in the Peloponnesian war.

In essence, the conduct of foreign policies of nations in the contemporary international system should reflect global security concerns and values of internationalism. This would mark a departure from mutual suspicions, commercial rivalry, greed, aggressive diplomacy and selfish competitions that characterize the relations that existed among Greek City-States in the era of the "Greek Golden Age and has been high-flying feature of relations among nations in the contemporary international system. Since the peace and security of the international system is a moral responsibility of all, nations of the world should go beyond military affairs, to coordination of diplomacy in order to ease tensions in the international system. This needs reactivation of the existing institutional mechanism to tackle more effectively the problems of international conflicts, and other re-occurring global issues that causes war among nations and, has undermined and continued to undermine international peace and stability. If effective and efficient international institutional regulatory mechanism where in place before the outbreak of Peloponnesian war, it may not have been possible for both Athenians and Spartans and her allies to breach the Thirty Years Treaty, hence, the huge material and Human resources wasted in the war efforts may have been averted.

Again, in line with the Democratic Peace theory (DPT), this Paper strongly argues that the Peloponnesian war would have been averted if Sparta were a democratic state like Athens. This is based on the intellectual argument that states that has democratic institutions are unlikely to go to war against each other (Ojinnaka, 2025a). In reality, democratic states are less likely to go to war because doing so requires the consent of the people who would actually be fighting the war. Governments chosen by the people take the decision of declaration of war more seriously than a dictatorship ([https://www.thoughtco.com/kantian-ethic-moral-philosophy-immanuel-kant-4045\\_398](https://www.thoughtco.com/kantian-ethic-moral-philosophy-immanuel-kant-4045_398)). Democratic Peace thesis contains the seed of core liberal ideas and holds that reason could deliver freedom and justice in international relations (Dunne, 2008; 112).

In the same vein, in Monroe Doctrine of 1823, as a historic international policy document, the United States has argued that democracies are fundamentally unique and special; hence they don't go to war with each other. The democratic governments and nations behave distinctly different than non-democratic ones (<https://study.com/pages/working-scholarsoverview.html>, as cited in Ojinnaka, 2025a). Monroe Doctrine is anchored on the fact that declaring war in democratic countries requires citizen's support and legislative approval (Longley, 2019). Woodrow Wilson, a scholar of high repute and the 28th president of the United States (1913–21), in his 1917 World War 1 message to the United States Congress remarked that "The world must be made safe for democracy"(Encyclopedia

Britannica, 2025). The speech added vigor to the propagations of the democratic peace thesis and has remained a valued asset of liberal democratic scholars.

The Athenian case study proves Prof. Aja's (2009) thesis that over confidence in power is paralytic. It would be recalled that before the Peloponnesian war, Athens was a towering military and economic giant. Because of over confidence in its military and economic power, the Athenian leaders rather than employing direct diplomacy and crisis decision management approach as supreme strategy of conflict resolution, embarked on ambitious war that has no moral justification in Greece history. Thus the crisis that resulted in Peloponnesian war could have been averted and the conflict resolved amicably before its potential escalation. Consequently, as it were, the miscalculation of Athenian leaders, and the ideological and doctrinal implications of the power tussle between Athens, and Spartan and its allies is an indication of how political calculations / miscalculations can elevate or poison a society. This gives us an enriching insight into the politics of war as active agent of history, and the changing dynamics and complexities of human nature. Though the Athenian leaders may have acted to protect their national interest, but Leaders of the contemporary international system should learn from the fact that national interests are better protected under atmosphere of international peace and security (Ojinnaka, 2021).

Again, the danger of geo-power politics and mindless strong arm geo-strategic competitions in its historical validity is another passable lesion of the Peloponnesian war for the contemporary international system. This expresses the necessity for mutual co-existence and bringing ideological conflict into constructive engagement. Though it is certain there will be divergence of interests in a highly complex international environment, however, regardless how enlightened national interests is, it should not be an excuse for nations to fish in troubled waters (Ojinnaka, 2022).

Dialogue and diplomatic engagements should be a condition for finding common solution to international conflicts. It is the view of this Paper that it makes an immense appeal to say that a permanent settlement of international conflict can only be achieved through an honorable peace. And on this premise, it is pertinent to call for radical restructuring of the present day international system. The restructuring of the contemporary international system has more than ever before become appropriate to enhance efficient and effective management of emerging global crisis (Ojinnaka, 2022). The new restructured international system would reactivate and reenergize the UN crisis management mechanism and enable nations to cooperate against armed hegemonies and emergent violent non-states and terrorist groups likes ISIS, Boko Haram, El-shaba, ISWAP etc. This would enable the international community to adapt to emerging security challenges in a globalized and highly complex International environment (Ojinnaka, 2022).

Wars do not only create many sufferings, but it also generates high but usually unfulfilled expectations. At the end of every conflagration many hope for improved new social order that would ensure justice, economic possibilities and peace, but that is not always the case. For instance, the termination of the Peloponnesian war was perhaps the beginning of endless political and economic crisis in Greek history. The devastating socio-economic impacts of the war became a catalyst for chronic instability in the post-conflict Greece. The Greek was impoverished and lived from one crisis to another. The war crippled its glorious military strength, eclipsed its advanced culture and thus undermined the most critical and influential period of its history.

The statesmen who were faced with the challenges of restoring peace and the construction of new order were driven by the desire to protect their narrow interests rather than to protect or secure the international system from further disturbances and destruction (Cox, 2008). This was the case after the Peloponnesian war when Sparta leaders solely took over the Athenian Empire and kept all of its tribute revenues for itself, and rather than preserving for posterity the Greek advanced cultural, political and economic achievements they supervised its destruction. A situation that enabled the Macedonian to conquer subjugated and dominated Greece few decades later. Beyond these facts, significant developments that; lead to the Peloponnesian war brought major changes in power relations between the contesting powers: the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League.

After the Peloponnesian war, Sparta leaders and its Peloponnesian League of independent States unfairly took control of the Athenian Empire and could not preserve the Greek civilization for posterity. Regrettably, the Greek advanced cultural, political and economic achievements were totally

destroyed. This tragedy of Post-Peloponnesian war was followed by the successive Nigeria governments after the Nigeria-Biafra War. The necessities of the Biafra war efforts led to indigenous technological breakthrough and development in different fields like telecommunication, military technology, manufacturing, transportation and general industrial development. Biafra as an emergent African republic, 1967-1970 had tradition of technology and military industrial complex. The Biafra technological achievements under the war conditions made waves across the globe. Unfortunately, rather than growing this technology and military industrial complex, and building it into Nigeria national development planning projects, Nigeria State supervised its destruction after the war. In this vein, the disintegration of Athenian Empire after the Peloponnesian war is not an exception in history. The strains involved in the preparation for and engaging in war can weaken state or lead to its disintegration as it happened in Biafra in 1970, South Vietnam in 1975, in Yugoslavia in 1992, and to some extent in Soviet Union 1991 (Michael, 2008). In the opinion of this Paper, it will likely happen to Ukraine at the end of its ongoing war with Russia.

In the opinion of this Paper, a realistic grasp of Athenian politics and pattern of warfare indicates that its defeat was a logical outcome of poor leadership and poor strategic thinking, and ethical decline of the Athenian society in the post Pericles era. Indeed, the escalation of the war and its devastating horrors on the entire Greek world throws a curious light on the danger of strong arm geo-political competition and naked power struggle in the international system. It is a prime lesson for statesmen, policy elites and world leaders in the contemporary international system (Ojinnaka, 2021).

In reality, war is an ill wind that does no one good. According to Professor Aja Akpuru Aja there is more gain in peace approach than in war effort, and during potential escalation of international crisis, crisis decision management approach can save human civilization from mindless self-extinction (Aja, 2009). Again, as Woodrow Wilson put it, “to jaw jaw is better than to war war” (Aja, 2009).

In the contemporary international system, the world leaders should learn from the mistakes of Pericles, the leader of the Athenian Empire in one hand, and Sparta and its allied states in the other. Leaders of the contemporary international system should think more strategically and work to engender peaceful coexistence and dismantle the forces that make for war. The application of crisis management approach in the resolution of the international crisis demonstrates the needs to seek and prioritized diplomatic options over military actions in resolving international crisis (Ojinnaka 2024). The catastrophic defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War and the abrupt end of that glorious Empire demonstrated the futility of military adventurism and its doctrinal and ideological consequences in the contemporary international system (Ojinnaka, 2024). The lessons derived from the war highlights the viability of international diplomacy and crisis management approach in the management and resolution of international crisis (Ojinnaka 2024). This provides us with valuable insights into the utility of preventive diplomacy and effective communication between key actors during crisis (Ojinnaka 2024).

Again, the Peloponnesian War brought to light the importance of effective diplomatic communication channels in the management of international conflicts. Accordingly, the importance of direct communication channels to prevent misunderstandings that can lead to escalation underscores importance of the establishment of diplomatic communication channels as a critical measure for improving dialogue among states during tense situations (Ojinnaka, 2025b). Thus the needs for Confidence Building Measures that can deescalated tension and enhanced the understanding between states actors and improve dialogue and constructive engagements between them (Ojinnaka, 2025b) can help to speedy resolution of the crisis. It underscores the viability of direct communication channels between world leaders in moments of international tension. Time has proved that effective communication can help policy makers to consider the potential consequences of their decisions more carefully (Ojinnaka, 2025b), hence the importance of weighing options and understanding the adversary’s perspective became a fundamental aspect of strategic policy making in the post-Cold War international system (Ojinnaka,2023; Ojinnaka, 2025b; Total Military Insight, 2024). Multifaceted communication strategy approach is essential for maintaining public trust, regional and international credibility during international crisis (Ojinnaka, 2023).

Lessons from the Peloponnesian War, and elsewhere in the international system has shown that the establishment of direct diplomatic communication channels helps to improve dialogue between states in a period of crisis. This underscores the importance of direct diplomatic communication channels between world leaders in moments of international tension. The thorough understanding of this is valuable for the contemporary policy makers in navigating global tensions effectively (Ojinnaka, 2025b). As lessons derivable from the management of crisis in the present times, it emphasizes the importance of diplomacy and communication in averting conflicts of potential magnitude (Ojinnaka, 2023, & Total Military Insight, 2024, as cited in Ojinnaka, 2025b).

At the moments of tension in the world history; indeed, the legacy of the 1&11, World Wars serves as a reminder of the thin line between peace and catastrophe. In an era of globalization defined by conflicting inter-states interests, active non-state actors role, commercial rivalry and hegemonic tendencies, the importance of strategic decision-making, diplomatic engagements and international dialogue aimed at finding common ground to avert catastrophic outcomes of international crisis cannot be overstated (Total Military Insight, 2024, as cited in Ojinnaka, 2025b). The peaceful resolution of the crisis has become a prelude to fostering dialogue in future relations among nations which can shape military and diplomatic policies of the world powers (Total Military Insight, 2024 as cited in Ojinnaka, 2025b).

In this Paper, some clarity has been made concerning the origin, causes and termination of Peloponnesian war. Most political scientists, Strategists, tacticians and military historians has in recent years focused on the drivable lesions of the War for the contemporary international system. Therefore, it is noted that violent conflicts like civil wars, insurgencies, inter-state wars or wars initiated by non-state actors do not solve international or domestic problems. Rather violent conflicts and Wars as we have seen in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan,, Liberia, Sierra Lone, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia etc has in the recent past led to state failures, insecurity, criminality and humanitarian disaster which have posed serious challenges to the peace and stability of the international system. In reality wars are the symptom of the numerous unresolved socio-economic and political problems confronting humanity, which can only be permanently resolved through dialogue and constructive engagements.

## **II. Recommendations**

Based on the drivable lesions from the Peloponnesian war, for the contemporary international system, the Paper makes the following recommendations:

To ensure the peace and stability of the international system, the Paper recommends that nations should stem the proliferation of war and eschew strong arm geo-political competition. This requires both the sovereign states and non-state actors to moderate their actions and work collaboratively to forestall wars, rising scale of insurgency, violent terrorism, banditry and other acts of war. This suggests that states should avoid unilateral actions that could hurt others interests.

Also, the Paper recommends that States should adopt constructive diplomacy and collective rationality approach in the resolution and management of international crisis. The Paper posits that the adoption of collective rationality approach by the leaders signifies superiority of diplomatic approach to international conflicts. It argues for the establishment of mechanism for fostering a new era of dialogue in the foreign policy of states. Thus both state and none-state actors should adopt peaceful, cautious and collective rationality approach or dual diplomatic maneuverings in the resolution of conflicts.

The Paper recommends that both the states and non-states actors should guide against inordinate pursuit of unenlightened self-interests, geopolitical rivalry and hegemonic drive for power and domination that can lead to potential increase in conflict situation. The Paper argues for actors to pursue their interests without endangering the peace and stability of the international system.

Again, the paper recommends that leaders and policy elites in the contemporary international system should learn from mistakes of Athenian and Spartan leaders, The paper advise that states should avoid the use of force in the pursuit of national interests, and allow constructive engagement and durable peace as a viable approach in the management of international conflicts.

The Paper notes that the danger of geo-power politics and mindless strong arm geo-strategic competitions is a lesion from the Peloponnesian war for the contemporary international system. This

expresses the necessity for mutual co-existence and bringing ideological conflicts and self-interests into constructive engagement in a highly complex international environment. The Paper states that regardless how enlightened national interests is, it should not be an excuse for nations to fish in troubled waters, hence the needs for rationality in the actions of both states and non-state actors, as a penance for peace and stability of the contemporary international system.

In addition, the Paper recommends strategic communication approach to international conflicts to ensure multifaceted communication strategy which is essential for maintaining public trust and confidence, regional and international credibility during crisis. Since international crisis is often characterized by a complex decision making process, it is necessary to balanced military options with diplomatic negotiations which would allow government officials to consult key stakeholders and leaders to prevent war that might occur in error of very high miscommunication, misjudgment, miscalculations, and misinformation. Thus this Paper posits that in modern diplomacy, peaceful and rational resolution of the conflicts in the international system underscores the immutable importance of open communication among world leaders, particularly during international crisis (Ojinnaka, 2025b). In the same vein, effective communication approach should be complemented by vigorous media outreach strategy to educate the curious public on the real situation as it unfolds in a conflict situation.

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