

Ruso-Georgian War

(Modern interpretation of the Melian Dialogue)

Athenians - Russians

Melians - Georgians

Spartans - NATO / Europe / The West

Important concepts to mention:

- Realistic interpretation of International Relations (Might gives Right)
- The conception of justice as the right of the strongest
- Conflict between arguments of physical force (on the side of Athens/Russia) and of metaphysical values (on the side of Melos/Georgia)
- Draw parallelisms between this struggle and the present conflict in Ukraine

Dialogue actors:

- MS - Mikheil Saakashvili: President of Georgia
- AG - (Another Georgian minister)
- DM - Dmitry Medvedev: President of Russia
- VP - Vladimir Putin: Prime Minister of Russia

Background (Narrator):

South Ossetia and Abkhazia are the regions which were separated from Georgia in 90's by separatists with Russian support, however they were not recognized as independent even by Russia and de jure were part of Georgia.

In 2003, the "Revolution of Roses" happened, which resulted in Mikhail Saakashvili coming to power. He represented a shift away from soviet-era leadership as a pro-western president who planned to conduct anti-corruption policies, liberalization of the economy, privatization, etc. Moreover, he planned to integrate Georgia in EU and NATO. Such reforms were considered by Russian authorities as a threat to Russia's sphere of influence and Russian safety in general. During the 2008, the tension between Russia and Georgia grew.

The following discussion is what we imagine would have been the dialogue between Russian and Georgian authorities during the month of May of 2008.

Dialogue:

MS - (on the phone) Hello? President Medvedev?

VP - No, it's former president and current prime minister Putin.

MS - Umm... can I speak to the president?

DM - It may be proper that you speak to both of us. we want to negotiate the terms of a peace that will prevent conflict between our two countries.

MS - You must understand, Mr. Medvedev that negotiations are complex to achieve at this stage. You have already deployed hundreds of Russian soldiers into the territory of Abkhazia.

VP - Unarmed soldiers, that is.

DM - Who are there to repair railroads, actually.

AG - This is a threat gentlemen, you have not come here to negotiate any peace, you have come here to negotiate the terms of your invasion.

VP- Look, If we want to have productive negotiations, let's leave aside all these high speeches about international law and justice

DM- We can also start talking on your attempts to undermine South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's rights to self-determination, however it won't somehow change the conditions

MS - So, let's talk in your terms, then. The only thing we want is the integrity and safety of our country and we're ready to defend our territory, if it will be necessary

VP - We know about your plans to join NATO and the threat of placing their military base near our borders is the thing we are concerned about

AG - The reason for this it is that part of our territory is occupied

MS - Speaking your language, we don't let Russia invade to our country

VP- One way or the other, most of South Ossetians are Russian citizens, so any provocation there will be considered as aggression towards Russia.

DM - Or we can make concessions to each other.

AG - So, you want Georgia to abandon plans to join NATO, aren't you?

VP - Yes, and join the CSTO again

MS - This is impossible, we won't be your "vassals"

VP - So, it is the only way we can make concessions to you regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia

MS - We will not sacrifice the whole country to save part of it, we will resist you and moreover, our western allies will definitely support us

VP - Then good luck to you and your allies, Mr. President.

MS - Goodbye, Vladimir Vladimirovich.

Conclusion (Narrator):

After a series of bilateral provocations, the war between Russia and Georgia began, as a result of which Georgia completely lost control over the territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Russia recognized their independence. Gladly, the fate of the Georgians was not as devastating as those of the Melians, but both examples showed one thing for better or worse: the triumph of *Real Politik* and the right of the strongest.