

An ancient strategy for a current war

The Ukrainian War has dragged on for more than four years. Is there a strategy that can bring Ukraine a quick victory?

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Yes, there is. A strategy employed by the Greeks in the Battle of Marathon (490 BC) might accomplish this goal.

In 490 BC, Persia landed an invasion force near the plains of Marathon and planned to march 25 miles and then lay siege to Athens. The situation looked bleak for the Greeks. Persia had never lost a battle against the Greeks. The flat surface of the plains was an ideal surface for the Persian cavalry. The Greeks did not even have a cavalry. To make matters worse, the Persian army greatly outnumbered the Athenian army.

Once Athens heard that Persia was going to invade, its generals marched their army to the high ground above the plains of Marathon, high ground that also contained the road to Athens. The Persians did not want to attack

the Athenians, who were occupying a superior defensive position. To make matters worse for the Persians, they learned that Sparta was sending troops to reinforce the Athenians. It would take the Spartans several days to reach the battlefield and the Persians wanted to get the battle over with before the Spartans arrived.

In the hope of achieving a quick victory, the Persians put half of their army on boats and landed on the other side of the Athenian army. Persia then planned to attack the Athenians from two sides. The half of the army that got on the boats included the Persian cavalry. Now that the Persian cavalry had left the plains of Marathon, the Athenians could cross the flat field and attack the Persians without the fear of being wiped out by the Persian cavalry. The Athenians marched across the plains and routed the Persian army.

In short, the Persians knew the Spartans were coming and the Spartans were the most capable Greek army of the time. To avoid having to face the Spartans, the Persians tried to win the battle quickly and this haste put the

Persian army to jeopardy.

Flash forward to the current year. The same technique that defeated the Persians can be used to defeat the Russians. Western Europe and the U.S. can play the role of Sparta by committing to provide Ukraine with massive amounts of missiles and other military equipment. This commitment will cause Russia to try to end the war quickly by launching a large offensive. But Russian offensives will run into the Ukrainian death zone where Ukrainian drones can easily decimate the attacking troops.

Russia, no doubt, hopes that a long, protracted war will result in its victory. Russia also believes that either Ukraine or its Western allies will lose interest in fighting the war. Making the Russians feel a sense of urgency will force them to make military moves that allow the Ukrainians to capitalize on their strength (drone warfare) and eliminate Russia's best chance for success (a long conflict where Russia just wears down Ukraine).

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