

Cover Note

For the eyes of Sylvia Cabreyra di Tassato

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Enclosed documents

Report from Agent Couros, Nemoria (Asavean Archipelago)

Report from Agent Umshalla, Sarcophan Delves (Sarcophan)

Report from Agent Vassa, Zemeh (Sumaah Republic)

Report from Agent Scorrero, City of Jarm (Jarmish Principalities)

Report from Agent Gancio, Port-city of Leerdam (Commonwealth)

Additional report from Estéban i Feducci i Riqueza regarding potential courses of actions with regard to piracy

In each case, reports are compiled by local agent-handler (per code name) and dispatched by winged messenger.

Report from Civil Service

For the eyes of Sylvia Cabreyra di Tassato

Following the Summer 378YE for the decision of the Senate to assign Civil Service observers to all vessels sailing from Imperial ports, there has been a complete cessation of piracy against foreign nations, and on trade with barbarian nations.

While the reduction in piracy has had a positive effect, it has simply made it easier for several nations to focus on their unhappiness with the lack of recognition by the Imperial senate. The Sumaah Republic and the Commonwealth in particular appear to be on the verge of severing ties with the Empire, or at least imposing trade sanctions on our trading fleets.

Further, Imperial involment in the politics of the magician-princes of Jarm has had both positive and negative effects, as can be seen in the report from Agent Scorrero

Report compiled by Estéban i Feducci i Riqueza

Spring 379YE

Report from Asavean agents

Trading and Piracy comparisons, 378YE

After Spring equinox 378- 5 pirates, 7 traders.

After Summer solstice 378 – 4 pirates, 8 traders

After Autumn equinox 378 – 16 traders.

After Winter solstice 378 – 6 traders.

Synopsis: Following Senate motion, piracy by Imperial nations has declined completely. Completion of Asavean Embassy in Sarvos has led to improved trade from the Archipelago and improved standing of captains visiting Nemoria.

Result: The Plenum has received several laudatory dispatches from the Ambassador to the Empire. There is a great deal of interest in stronger political and economic ties with the Senate.

Commentary: Asavea has domestic problems that may be of interest to the Senate. They make light of situation on the floor of the Plenum, but there are signs that at least one of their satrapies (subject countries) is on the verge of open rebellion.

There is a strong feeling among some of the more reactionary Plenum households that the source of their problems is the increasing popularity of the Way among those who seek to object traditional Asavean society. While Nemoria itself has been largely untouched, there have been several attacks against significant individuals most especially to attempts on the life of Lady Madriannia of the Blue Stones. Visitors from the Empire who demonstrate strong religious feelings are often watched, and in some cases have been subtly encouraged to leave the Archipelago entirely.

The priests of Asavea, especially those dedicated to “Bahlo” (their “god of gentle winds” who they believe oversees sea trade in some esoteric fashion) have been actively discouraging captains from travelling to the “heathenistic” Empire. While it may seem foolish to us, these captains take the admonitions of the priests very seriously – a captain who is believed to have offended Bahlo is likely to be ruined as only the most desperate sailors will agree to travel with them. There is no concrete evidence, but it seems likely that the anti-Empire faction is influencing the priests in some ways.

The Plenum as a body, however, is very happy with the Empire. More liberal Plenum families are discussing many ways in which they might take advantage of the opportunities presented by the central location of the Empire. There has also been increased interest among some Plenum families in sending junior members to live and work in the Empire.

The same cannot be said for their relations with the Sumaah Republic, which appears to be deteriorating monthly. If things continue on their current path there is likely to be war within the year. The Sumaah are openly supporting numerous groups of rebels, as well as regularly raiding and sinking Asavean vessels.

Report compiled by Agent Couros Nemoria Asavean Archipelago 379 YE

Report from Sumaah agents

- Sumaah livid; no embassy, embassy with Asavea and Jarm, decision by Senate actively opposes embassy with Sumaah, no real communication with Empire
- Assmption seems to be that the Empire wants no contact, and that they intend to side with Asavean Archipelago against them

Weather remains awful. Morale is worse than usual – the situation is deteiorating badly. The House of the People has passed several more laws relating to farm surpluses and issued another condemnation of Asavean militarism. More relevant they have also issued a condemnation of the Empire's exchange of ambassadors with Asavea; a condemnation of all those who treat with slavers; a condemnation of the practice of idolatory; and of course a severe condemnation of the Senate's recent refusal to establish an embassy with Sumaah.

Meanwhile, the Pride Assembly continues slow conquest of everything within marching distance.

To be clear, the situation is deteriorating by the day. I've included a rough breakdow of Imperial ships in Sumaah waters but I'm not sure it is going to be relevant for much longer. As always, the breakdown of Imperial ships in Sumaah waters follows which will help illustrate the problem. Numbers represent estimates of fleets. Figures from the Assemblies of Prosperity, Wisdom and Vigilance are easy to get hold of, a matter of public record. They are also reasonably reliable - whenever an agent has found a discrepancy it has always turned out to be a genuine error rather than an attempt at misrepresentation.

Spring 378YE - 4 merchants, 7 thieves.

Summer 378YE – 3 merchants, 7 thieves

Autumn 378YE – 14 merchants

Winter 378YE – 10 merchants

Recommendations

Sort out Imperial relations with Sumaah or else they are going to expel Imperial citizens and close Zemeh to our ships. Anything after that is anyone's guess.

That's all I've got.

Request

The Assembly of Vigilance has stopped even pretending they aren't watching me. They're staying at arm's length but there is no doubt that every Imperial citizen is being watched.

On the plus side, I might be home soon. If the House of the People decides to throw Imperial citizens out of Zemeh I'd quite like a reposting somewhere peaceful like Spiral or Reikos.

Report compiled by Agent Vassa Zemeh, Republic of Sumaah
379YE

Report from Sarcophan

Trading and Piracy Report

378YE Spring eight trading fleets, four pirate fleets in Sarcophan waters

378YE Summer five trading fleets six pirate fleets in Sarcophan waters

378YE Autumn ten trading fleets in Sarcophan waters

378YE Winter ten trading fleets in Sarcophan waters

As always, the Bedelaar Huisbaas tolerate a degree of 'rough and tumble' among fleets in Sarcophan waters. They appreciate the fact that the Imperials aren't raiding their ships, but on the whole seem largely unconcerned about it. They certainly appreciate the influx of Imperial trade. I would like to reiterate my last report however; the time to worry about the Sarcophan is when the pirates exceed the traders - then they take a *great deal of notice*.

Bedelaar Huisbaas Annike, who advises the Great Table on matters of foreign trade has continued to express her opinion that the Empire considers Sarcophan beneath their notice, and some of the seats at the Beggar's Banquet share her opinion. There is some talk of granting more preferred trading options to the enemies of the Empire – specifically the orcs of the Broken Shore.

If lack of contact continues, the situation is going to get worse. I don't think the rapacious Bedelaar Huisbaas will close the Delves to *anyone* – it's not in their interests – but angry sailors can make reaching the port difficult. The Sarcophan are very accomplished pirates and raiders and while they do not usually shit where they eat, an informal nod from one of the larger families will be all they need to start actively attacking Imperial ships in their waters. Plus, markets full of angry merchants will make any sort of profit from dealing in Sarcophan very difficult.

I don't know how important it is, but the Axou have their feet well under the table here. I am not certain if this is a problem as I am unclear as to our relations with them, but there are regular fleets of black sailed ships now from all three (?) of the eastern citadels of Axos, trading in herbs and grave goods and beggar's lye. There is an Axou ambassador now who is a regular guest at the great feasts. The woman in question does little to disguise her dislike for the Empire's arrogant attitude to other nations that did not cast our diplomats in a good light.

Without contact, the situation here can only deteriorate. At the moment there is a reasonable amount of trade, which keeps all save the most proud reasonably happy. It would be a good idea not to let that situation change.

Report compiled by agent Umshalla The Delves Sarcophan 379YE

Emergency Report from Principalities of Jarm

The Magician-Princes are notoriously fractious, but there is nothing like interference from outside forces to cause the Northern and Southern Factions to find a common ground albeit temporarily. The Senate's wise decision to monitor and prevent piracy against Jarm has been well received, as has their establishment of an embassy. The problems began when the Empire was tardy in choosing where their reciprocal embassy was to be built.

It would be naïve to believe that this was anything more than another maneuver between Kavor and Vezak ... but both factions were taken by surprise when the magician-princes of the east, lead by the powerful House Radz, threw their hat into the ring. Rumour suggests a Radz agent has been operating in the Empire for some time laying the groundwork for Imperials to attempt to manipulate Jarmish politics.

Refusal to pick a side - and worse a refusal to pick an *appropriate* side - has lead to bad feeling. When the Empire finally chose to pick the Eastern city of Rigia as the location of their embassy, the cat was well and truly among the pigeons. High-level negotiations between representatives of the Northern and Southern factions lead to a low-key suggestion that the Empire's "favoured status" as trading partners is about to come to an end, at least for a little while. I can't estimate what effect this will have on Imperial trade with Kavor and Vezak at this time, but it will be noticeable.

Worse yet, I have just learned that the Prince of Kavor has placed a resolution before the House of Princes calling for a ban on all sale of crystal mana to Imperial merchants. This is almost certainly a strategem aimed at the Eastern Alliance, and has the tacit support of the Southern princes. While it is likely that both ports will suffer a little from reduced Imperial trade, they have deep vaults. The Eastern alliance - and the newly prominent port of Rigia - have no such luxury. If it passes, then it will have significant implications.

I must stress that this is not really about us - it is about internal Jarmish politics. Lord-Magister Anton Trescher who advises the house on trade has repeatedly counselled against this move - he remains ruthlessly neutral in the rivalries between the various factions here. So far his advice is being ignored. It is entirely possible that, in spite of their alliances, the Empire is about to suffer a potentially significant problem with trade with Kavor and Vezak - and quite possibly Rigia as well.

A complicating factor is that there is still a vociferous faction of Princes who are unhappy that the Empire sank their ships and attacked their foreign trade interests before the Senate approved it's excellent plan of putting civil servants on ships. They occasionally demand reparation - they're mostly ignored but their voices are heard and help poison Jarmish attitudes to the Empire even more.

Piracy and Trading figures for 378YE

Spring 378YE

Southern Principalities, port of Vezak - three confirmed pirates, seven trading fleets
Northern Principalities, port of Kavor - two confirmed pirates, three trading fleets

Summer 378YE

Southern Principalities, port of Vezak - 7 confirmed pirates, 4 trading fleets
Northern Principalities, port of Kavor - 3 confirmed pirates, 12 trading fleets

Autumn 378YE

Southern Principalities, port of Vezak - 18 trading fleets
Northern Principalities, port of Kavor - 20 trading fleets

Winter 378YE

Southern Principalities, port of Vezak - 26 trading fleets

Northern Principalities, port of Kavor - 18 trading fleets

I would like to remind you of a Jarmish saying that sums up the problems of dealing with the Principalities: "Jesli nie jestes moim przyjacielem, moze i nie jestes moim wrogiem - ale wiem na pewno ze nie jestes moim przyjacielem." Or, roughly: *If you are not my friend, you may not be my enemy - but I know for sure you are not my friend.*"

Report compiled by Agent Scorrero, City of Jarm, Jarmish Principalities 378YE

Postscript: If I might be so bold, there is an opportunity here to influence the situation. The House of Princes has recently voted to begin a campaign of "public works" designed to increase the ability of the Principalities to harvest crystal mana. The details are irrelevant - but an appropriate gift of mithril from the Ambassador to the House of Princes might go a long way towards mollifying the more anti-Imperial faction - the Princes are *nothing* if not pragmatic.

Commonwealth Report

Breakdown

As the breakdown of the previous year's figures shows, the piracy problem has disappeared due to the diligence of Imperial civil servants. This initially went some way towards improving Commonwealth-Imperial relations. I am confident the numbers represented here are reasonably constant based on observations of our agents and documents from die Ratgeberin der Handelsbotschaft.

Port of Leerdam

Following Spring Equinox 378YE cautiously estimate four trading fleets and only one confirmed incident of an Imperial pirate. Circumstantial evidence suggested this piratical fleet most likely hailed from a Freeborn port, though further identification proved impossible.

Following Summer Solstice 378YE, one estimated pirate, four confirmed traders

Following Autumn Equinox 378YE, twelve confirmed traders

Following Winter Solstice 378YE, twenty-four confirmed traders.

Port of Volkavaar

Following Spring Equinox 378YE estimate twenty-one trading fleets and six incidents of confirmed piracy by Imperial vessels. Commonwealth observers are a little unclear on the differences between nations but it seemed that around half the attacks came from fleets of Marcher, Wintermark or possibly Varushkan origin.

Following Summer Solstice 378YE, twenty-four confirmed traders, five estimated pirates

Following Autumn Equinox 378YE, thirty-two confirmed traders

Following Winter Solstice 378YE, thirty-four confirmed traders

Summary

While the decline in piracy was initially a win for the Empire, our Senate failed to capitalize on it. The decision to create official embassies not only with the tyrannical, idolatrous, slave-trading nation of Asavea but more importantly with the Commonwealth's primary rival, the Principalities of Jarm – who are seen as sharing all the negative qualities of the Asaveans but in a nation that is much closer they are greatly magnified.

The real problem here is less the Empire's diplomacy with nations that are found distasteful, but the continued refusal of the Empire to offer the Commonwealth its own Embassy. It is seen as an active snub against the people of this great nation.

This situation is about to become critical. The laws of the Commonwealth are nearly as complex as our own, but we are potentially looking at trade sanctions that will see the ability of Imperial ships to operate in Leerdam and Volkavaar curtailed. These sanctions appear inevitable – the only thing being discussed at this time is how severe they will be. It is likely that if sanctions are imposed they are a prelude to closing Commonwealth waters to the Empire. While they do not have a great naval power, their ability to protect their own territory should not be underestimated – they are a military force that rivals and perhaps even exceeds our own.

I strongly advise that someone from the senate contacts Advisor Erda Elessa, Ministerial Advisor to the Commission of Foreign Trade, at Leerdam as soon as humanly possible.

Report compiled by Agent Gancio,
Port-city of Leerdam
Commonwealth