

Joint Report to the Privy Imperial Council

From: Clarence Strawberry, Director of Military Intelligence; and
"The Brains"

To the Imperial Privy Council

Re: Hanal and the North

Council Eyes Only, destroy all copies after reading

Sources providing information -

Operatives of military intelligence in Hanal and its surrounds

Operatives of the "Body" in Hanal (dated, recent reports are not available to us) and the surrounds (up to date)

Information shared privately by the Grand Inquisitor of Northern Drucien for the Temple of Paranswarm

Information provided by the Kov of Snanurkazz via his Director of Intelligence and Analysis - Strom Pallenvale

Intelligence shared privately by the Grand Fleet Admiral of House Curini'rim and his general staff from aerial observation

Intelligence shared privately by the Tor Lord of the Canberry City Tor (our name)

Intelligence shared privately by the Commander of Forward Observation Posts from Singing Leaves

Interviews with refugees in and among the various ancient crystal city-states

Field Interviews with deserters

After considerable observation and analysis, we wish to provide the Council with our information and opinion.

Historically: Hanal has always commanded the most potent human military force on Drucien. The Iron Legions of Hanal were justly feared, and their gradual, steady expansion was a cause for concern, even on this side of the Barrier Mountains. Conventional wisdom held that the Empire of Masque was a stop on them, as Masque's troops outnumbered theirs, though they lacked the discipline, it was felt that their additional magical "punch" (Order of the Serpent primarily) and the use of Flame Lances, despite their unstable nature, probably would enable them to hold them in check. Both sides were steadily expanding toward one another, and the assumption was that when they collided the war would continue almost indefinitely, leaving the rest of the north intact.

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Recently: Hanal is too far to the north and too heavily populated to provide for a large chivalry, and most of that chivalry rode south and perished in the fields near the Spice Lands. The vast majority of Hanal's strength always lay in the other military forces however -- the highly disciplined Iron Legions (note they do not regularly utilize the field army structure that all other nations use, internally, although external observers routinely put their forces in such terms, as we shall here) are the core, but they are backed by what is by far the largest and most powerful military flight wing in the world, by a reputable and powerful sea navy, and by substantive artillery units.

Now: The rebellion of the Kov of Snanurkazz and his allies, in support of the legitimate heir, and the attempt by the Holy Inquisition of Paranswarm to contain the contagion of heresy and recover the land for the heir has reduced the power of the Queen-Empress outside of her own lands, BUT the recovery remains unlikely in our judgement.

Committed forces:

The Inquisition has committed a total of 2 field armies of foot and 1 field army of calvary with appropriate artillery and magical support, a small volder cover and exceptional clerical support, including (without judgement) a cadre of clerical diabolists and a resulting small unit of Bearded devils commanded by a Pitfiend. Inquisition forces hold a slice of territory on the eastern and southeastern border of the Empire.

Analysis: Further land recovery by the Inquisition troops is unlikely, without additional forces. To attempt further land recovery without additional forces will overstretch the Grand Inquisitor's forces and probably result in the loss of what they have gained, and the butchery of the forces. We believe that the Inquisition can hold what it has taken indefinitely. As half of the total Inquisition troops available to the whole Church of Darkness is now committed in Hanal, additional forces are unlikely.

Kov of Snanurkazz and allies have between them approximately 21 field armies of foot (including auxiliaries) with moderate volder cover and strong artillery in defensive positions in the case of Snanurkazz himself - he holds 14 of the aforementioned field armies and most of the volder cover. His allies hold the remaining field armies and some light volder cover. All have artillery.

Analysis: As long as Snaurkazz can remain supplied for his people, he can last for a very long time. The Queen Empress could probably throw enough troops at him to

overcome his defenses, but only at the cost of so many of her troops she would become vulnerable to other rebels and Inquisition in a unified push.

The allies that are not geographically connected to Snanurkazz however are at risk, they cannot stop the Queen Empress if she turns her attention on them. There is really very little way to protect them. The strategy of the Kov of Snanurkazz is to keep the Queen's attention on his territory because he understands the vulnerability of the other "rebels." So far it seems to be working.

Neutral Kovnates have, in toto, about 14 field armies (counting auxiliaries), strong fortifications, powerful artillery emplacements and very light volder cover - they are also well positioned to be able to self-supply food and supplies for their people.

The Queen Empress fields approximately 74 field armies of foot and 5 field armies of auxiliaries. She fields approximately 600 ships of the line in the air (having called back all vollers from foreign missions) which is approximately 7 times the Kov's fleet. Additionally she commands approximately 340 other assorted ships - including scout vessels, water carriers, fire ships and so forth. All are fully manned by professionals. This compares to about 50 such vessels with the Kov, many crewed by volunteers. Lastly the Queen Empress fields 360 naval vessels of man of war size or greater. A fair number of the larger ships being triremes and some biremes. Additionally she commands a few dozen specialty ships under "special commands" about which we have little data. The Kov has a small sea fleet - perhaps 60 ships total. These stay close to controlled ports, as do most vollers, to combine their fire with defensive batteries in case of an attack. Both land and air ships continue to be built by all sides.

The number of merchant vessels and cargo ships both water and air exceed two thousand that fly under the Imperial flag. The Kov has an indeterminate number of air and sea merchant and cargo ships, as most fly neutral colors. It is difficult to separate his partisans "in disguise" from the actual neutrals. The total ship count between the two approaches 800.

Strategic note: The blending of the two makes it more difficult for the Queen Empress to order attacks against the Kov's ships without very strong intelligence. Attacking an actual neutral merchant thinking it was "in disguise" could tip one of the neutral provinces into supporting the Kov.

Strategic note: Pirates, both air and sea, and some privateers, have appeared. About a dozen privateers have been given letters of marque by the Kov of Snanurkazz and are

preying on Imperial shipping, most are schooners (air or sea), and one is a converted merchant vessel. Pirates, we think, number about 40 and prey on everyone without regard to side.

Analysis: While the Queen Empress has overwhelming force in numbers, and can keep them supplied, possibly at the cost of some deaths among the citizenry, most of them innocent - she also has more territory to protect, which makes attack by her forces, beyond siege, almost impossible. Her cities and inner territories are the most heavily fortified of anything north of the Barrier Mountains, with the exception of two of the Crystal cities, and three of the Enclaves, particularly Northern Aereleon and Zaploni-Moriquendi'rim. Taking her central territories, or any of her cities, would be hellaciously expensive in terms of casualties. Even sieging them seems unlikely given the level of preparation and the need of the Kov and his allies to protect what they hold.

Conclusion: We believe that a stalemate now exists. It is unlikely that the Queen Empress can reasonably expect to take Snanurkazz, even if the neutrals ultimately side with her. It is unlikely that Snanurkazz and allies, in service to the government-in-exile, can appreciably damage the Queen Empress' holdings. At the same time, it is unlikely that the Kov and his allies, even if ultimately the neutrals side with them can displace the Queen Empress or her regime or capture any significant additional amount of land.

Further Conclusion: Neither we nor the General Staff agree with the analysis made by the Holy Inquisition of Paranswarm that a two year time frame is either likely or even feasible. We see a possibility of some sort of solution in 5 to 10 years but the more likely conclusion the effective dissolution of the Empire of Hanal for generations, with its replacements by either 2 or 3 power groups struggling for control.

Wild Card: the Reds. Despite centuries of crushing discrimination, the Red Faction, almost entirely in hiding, still exists. Kov Snanurkazz is now offering recognition and equality to them, hoping to bring them out of hiding in support of him. The Red Faction were worshipers of the Light and we think that as many as 8% of the nobility and 12% of the common folk may still be of the Red Faction, despite brutal purges and social punishment. This may lead to "resistance" fighters striking the Queen Empress from within strongly held lands.

Wild Card: the Ram. We know that followers of the Ram were well established in Hanal prior to the event, and that many of them went south, and were destroyed. We do NOT think all of them did, and the additional question is - are there small "hybrids" either present or soon to be born in the creches of the capital city. This could lead to a small

but potent cadre of young half-demons. Possibly as many as two thousands. Fortunately, the Ram's breeding capabilities do not carry forward to hybrids, though they are very fecund, it is within normal parameters.

Wild Card: Refugees. Hanal is heavily populated. The soil is adequate and Hanal's historical leaders put a premium on specialized farming techniques, irrigation, even the use of innovative techniques to maximize output of food and supplies. While in her lands it is possible that the Queen Empress can maintain such production, it is less likely in the land of Snanurkazz's allies that they can maintain it. It is definite that there will be either millions of casualties (starvation) or at least a million to two million refugees fleeing Hanal in the next two years, even with outside aid, more without it. This will dwarf the prior refugee situation with peoples fleeing Hanal's forces.

Suggestions: We recommend that your Imperial Majesty supply as much as is possible, either through the Church of Paranswarm or separately, to the people of Hanal. This will be well remembered and will at least mitigate a flow of refugees that could turn the entire north into a virtual living hell level. This will lead to significant stress for Canberry over the period that we foresee prior to stabilization (at least 5 years, possibly more) but it will pay tremendous dividends in the long run.

We do NOT suggest military intervention. While it might be tempting to use the Reds as an excuse to attempt a military adventure, such a direct act risks tipping the neutrals into the Queen Empress' hand and putting internal pressure on the Kov of Snanurkazz, most of whose major allies are Greens. They may and do tolerate the Reds, which is an improvement for them, but they will be very leery of "outside intervention." It also risks "concerning" other powers, such as Masque, or even powers that are otherwise well disposed toward us, because it might appear that we are attempting to prepare a foothold in the north as well.

The use of agents and special teams to target particularly dangerous forces within the Queen Empress' regime, particularly if they have plausible deniability, is strongly recommended.

Rebuilding the body in Hanal is essentially (we ALL agree on that, and yes, I know that stresses have existed between the two organizations in the past due to "one pie" funding.)

In unity, for the Empire