

Unto Dame Brionna, Chief of the Archducal Guard and Chief Military Advisor to His Grace, the Archduke

From Clarence Strawberry, Director of Military Security

Re: Remnants in the South and the Great Mountain, also the Western Provinces

Commander,

I write to bring together the details of the consummation of the military campaigns in the South and West and initial scouting reports from the Great Mountain of Corruption that has arisen in the Southern ocean, offshore, as well.

The South. Ultimately, despite the carnage and enormous casualties, the army of the North was finally shattered. The Spicelands and Seachan will not be the same for generations and arguably the power of the Rakshasa nobles who controlled much of the defense has been broken for all time.

By final count about 4/5ths of the spice plantations were destroyed or badly damaged, the armies of the various potentates who were not Rakshasa reduced by 75% and the forces of the Rakshasa reduced by 80%. Of the small cities and walled towns, over 50% were damaged, burned, or had their populations slaughtered out of hand during the exchange. The Seachan were damaged the least, but we estimate that it will take 3 generations for them to return to their former strength. They have also become even more reclusive, shutting their borders to all. It remains to be seen if they will continue trade in any amount. If they do not, increase the loss of available product from the region by another 10%, or 90% total.

It is also estimated that much of the Northern Army was obliterated (we are using that name because of the varied nature of the force and its engagements). However, strong reconnaissance parties, reserves, and harrying forces, along with a small number of stragglers and units that were until that point guarding supplies in the rear escaped the devastation entirely. Those groups have melted away into the countryside. It is our estimate that some will take to banditry, either near the remains of the Spice Lands or further north; some (particularly orcish types) will return to a clan structure and try to rebuild tribes and some will melt away entirely and attempt to return to their homelands. We estimate the total number of survivors at between 2000 and 3000 out of a force that ultimately was, counting irregulars, over 35,000 by our final revised estimates. But we caution, those include not just irregulars used to guard sutters (who they slaughtered while fleeing) but also at least 25 Hill and Mountain trolls and at least some hundreds of hardened and disciplined moderate to high strength orcan fighters, a small handful of priests and magic users, and at least some few Hanalian calvary. As an irregular force they are not to be totally underestimated. We are not sure how many, if any undead survived the arcane display that effectively ended so many of the attacking force.

West. Pulling together the various reports that I have received and that have made their way back from various commanders, the devastation in our Western provinces was considerably

worse than we initially estimated. I do not have new estimates on the total number of the dead yet, but I do know that an assistant minister of population was sent to make estimates and to report to the Crown.

We do estimate that a moderate band of deserters and survivors from destroyed humanoid clans responsible for the raids (that's a euphemism given the cost in lives) have also drawn off to the West, perhaps numbering as much as 1500 total between them. We estimate that a strong military presence should be maintained for one to two years in the Western provinces to back up local knights and constables and to what degree it can be done, prevent raiding by these presently disorganized humanoids, particularly if they still have some handful of the "catmen" that were seen with their chief prior.

I believe that the strength of this force, until more local communities are walled should be a field army, but I recognize that 2 legions is more realistic. We have now seen the danger of unwalled communities within but near our borders, as most of them were in the West and many were wiped out.

Speaking frankly, I also do not think that this force should be funded by the local Great House, but rather by others within the Archduchy. It is not my place to suggest policy, but I know that the Archduke hears you, and I think the enormous toll on our citizenry was largely the responsibility of a lack of competency on the part of that house. While the competency is repaired (which I have complete faith the Archduke will see to, may he live forever), I would hate to see more civilian deaths and so bring the suggestion that the forces assigned to guard the area not be under their control.

My most profound apologies if I have overreached with this suggestion.

The Great Mountain. We have scant scouting reports from our own people, and also from two vessels out of Hanal (which are of the "Red") regarding the Mountain that arose in the sea. Those reports indicate that the inhabitants, of a variety of unknown and vaguely disturbing races have taken to fortifying the island since the failure of the Army of the North. In fact, the fortification began within the hour, as if they were somehow linked.

The Hanalian vessels, together with two Paranswarmian ships from Tang are endeavoring to coordinate efforts in order to interdict the island. They have sank two small boats, captured cultists of a human cult dedicated to "She of the Pale Bone and the One Other" and turned them over to the Inquisition (a Voller with an Inquisitor has landed near the shore and set up a stockade) as well as rescuing 7 prisoners, whom are also at the Inquisition camp (this inquisitor does not seem to be a fanatic, he is serious, but no danger to innocents as best we can tell.)

If we had a navy, I would say it behooved us to add to the blockade, as we do not, I wonder if we could resuscitate one of the ports at the edge of the former Confederacy of the South Kingdoms as a base and at least lay the keels of a couple of warships, or perhaps purchase

such ships ready made from a ported ally? Even if they were only schooners, it seems like it would be both a gesture of good will and a play to say that we must not be ignored, in any theater.

I remain as always, faithfully yours. Victory to the Archduchy, life to the Archduke!