

An Age of Air and Steam



Lords of the Earth Campaign One Turn 205 Anno Domini 1739 – 1740

TURN 205 ORDERS DUE BY 10 PM MST Friday July 13th, 2001

ANNOUNCEMENTS

All Notes, Clarifications and Announcements have been moved into their own Notes document, as have the Industrial Supplement rules.

NORTH ASIA

<i>Mercenary Troops</i>	10c, 10i, 5a, 8i (Lingsi Rifles)
<i>Mercenary AQRs</i>	c15 s22 i18 a15 w19
<i>Mercenary Leaders</i>	Saigo Tsumuguchi (M9.6.8), Bantag Yen (M 11.7.7)
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	Pacific Mercenary and Trust Corporation

TOKUGAWA JAPAN

Kii Musubu, Shogun of All Nippon, Daimyo of Manila, King of the Phillipines, The Sea-Spear, Monster-Slayer.

DIPLOMACY None

The specter of famine continued to plague the Japanese, but the largesse of the Ming saved them (again) from hollow bellies. Some of the Shogun's advisors began to point to the north again, saying the Ice was retreating from Amur and Zvorn and the deep forests – those colonies could be reclaimed and put to work to feed the teeming mouths of the home islands.

Musubu ignored them, his heart heavy with grief. His wife of thirty years had died attempting to gift him with a son. The child had been twisted and cold, even delivered from the fading warmth of the woman's body. "The touch of the Ice," the old women said, shaking their gray heads. The Shogun fell into a terrible depression, but his advisors were relentless. More than one pretty maid was sent to tend the Shogun's quarters – at last, after almost a year, one of them caught his eye – Reiko Matsugae. Within the month, they were wed, and at the end of 1740 a squalling, healthy baby boy was delivered into Musubu's grateful hands.

The fleet remained busy – dozens of new ships were added, and the *ronin* Saigo Tsumiguchi was hired to command a motley and suspicious looking rabble of pirates, free-ships and mercenary marines. The armies of Japan were off for southern seas, where the

Ice Lords (or so it seemed) raised their dreadful countenance again. The Ming ambassador had come bowing and scraping and whining, and Musugu dispatched a powerful fleet and army in response.

There was considerable confusion in Nagi, where a huge police operation to swoop down upon a secret cabal of Shikongou Dantai terrorists was spoiled by the suspects themselves reporting to the nearest civil watch house and turning themselves in. With rising dismay, the Tokugawa authorities then learned the "hidden company" had declared itself openly and – more was the pity – its papers were in perfect order.

In Ise and Kyoto, the Emperor continued to preside with great ceremony, slowly making the rounds of all the old Shinto shrines, blessing each one and reminding everyone of the ancient ways, and the gods who had lifted Nihon from the bosom of the ocean. The Buddhist priests grumbled and smirked, trying to hide their fear. Soon the people would turn away from them, and the ancient gods would hold sway once more.

PACIFIC MERCENARY AND TRUST CORPORATION

Juchen Agoi, President and Executive officer

DIPLOMACY A lot.

Quite unexpectedly, a large (previously shadowy) merchant house cautiously raised its head and opened entirely proper commercial offices throughout the Pacific and parts of the Americas. A number of letters were dispatched to various heads of state, and a staggering number of elderly men appeared in common town plazas and squares throughout Asia, each bearing a paper with a list of crimes committed against humanity and the proper gods. While bemused onlookers stared, they drew short bladed swords from their Japanese-style sashes, then committed ritual seppuku before the eyes of stunned crowds.

Investigation of the papers found they read: "In blind pursuit of power, gold and eternal life, we threatened the world with destruction. Only by the grace of the true gods were all men spared death by our folly. It is with great regret we offer a sincere apology to those we have harmed, and a faint hope our deaths will serve as small repayment for our crimes."

THE PURE REALM

Great Master Cho Hun, Abbot of the Wing Kung Temple of the Greater Vehicle of the Message of the Bodhisattva

DIPLOMACY Annam(ca¹), Khemer(ca)

Having gotten the greedy Ming off his back, Cho Hun set about rectifying the mistakes of those dissolute or confused Great Masters who had gone before. An enormous fortress (the Tower of Sighs) was planned and built hard against outskirts of sprawling, fetid Fusan. Even as those sloped, cunning walls rose under the labor of countless thousands of peasants, stonemasons and pilgrims – a great circuit was slashed around the city itself, studded with towers bristling with aero-guns and firing slits, the rooftops covered with the spines of iron spears. Even in the once-placid halls of the Temple, the monks moved with swiftness and a brisk, almost grim demeanor.

Cho Hun knew the end of one war often begot another, larger conflict. He intended to be prepared, and to win, no matter what disaster next assailed the lands of men. Even now messengers came speeding to him, bringing news from the south, where the trouble in Ming lands threatened to spill entirely out of control...

While the Great Master pondered his reports and whispers, the temple elders launched into a massive and thorough re-examination of the faith, the temple codicils, the tenets, the rules of behavior...

¹ Despite the fighting and invasions and general civil unrest. That Polu Than has some brass ones...

everything. After two years of deliberation, they produced a thickish booklet (no more than two hundred pages) which contained a fierce, aggressive distillation of the Bodisattva's faith and the teachings of the Greater and Diamond Vehicles.

The printing presses of Fusan labored day and night to produce a first edition of "Still Water," which soon found its way to every monastery, temple, stupa, hermit's hut and library of the faithful. The priests of the Pure Realm had been watching the Catholics with a discerning eye, and now they prepared to do the Western barbarians one better.

Late in '40, a single Buddhist monk arrived in Holy Fusan, bearing a request for aid from the stupas of the distant land of Caddo, where the Catholics were murdering good Buddhists and making them turn their backs to the true path, spit upon the sutras and revile the name of Sakyamuni – lest each man be tortured with hot irons, and their children be taken away to 'government school.'

THE CHAN MONGOL EMPIRE

Chan Jaki, God-Emperor of the Middle-Kingdom

DIPLOMACY Failed and covered with ash and lava.

Determined to see his realm restored to greatness, Jaki ordered the cities of Tungur and Adak expanded, and many provincial works undertaken. An enormous upsurge in building merchant hulls was subsidized by the government, in hopes of improving trade. The Emperor also took steps to name the lord Kha-ran his heir, and then both of them (and the Imperial army) marched off to remote and rugged Sikhote to negotiate with the natives.

Unfortunately for them, Sikhote was a troubled land – much given to shakes and steams and groaning in the earth. Mount Khezama proceeded to erupt violently, wrecking most of the province and killing thousands soon after the Emperor's arrival. A bad portent. Jaki himself escaped without harm, but Kha-ran was killed by a flying cinder-stone (on fire) which struck him from his horse. The Emperor, saddened, adopted the noble lords' son Wusu as his own. Perhaps, when he was older, he could marry princess Jiajiang and seal the union between the two nations.

THE KINGDOM OF PRESTER JOHN

Lewis Corrigan, Khagan of Karakocho, The Incarnated One, Wolf-Brother of the Altai, Iskander Returned!

DIPLOMACY None you're going to hear about...

Lewis' agents and lieutenants continued to labor, trying to reclaim the lands and cities lost to the Ice. The provinces of Jungaria and Beshbalik were settled to 2 GPv. Unfortunately, the city of Karakocho remains a demon-haunted ruin, tenanted only by the dead and dreadful memories. Princess Megan commanded a strong force of men (and three of the precious zeppelins) to watch over the settlers in Jungaria, while the khans of Kucha, Sinkiang and Suzhou protected those in Beshbalik.

Old John Heinrich was dispatched off to see what had happened to the outpost city of Shagonar in Ugria, but his heart gave out during the crossing into Tanu and his men brought him back to Maclan on a litter of spears.

THE DIVINE KINGDOM OF JUDAH

Yui-Yen Ben-Yair, The Hand of God, Champion of the Hosts of Christ, Celestial Emperor, huey tlaotani

DIPLOMACY Lob Nor(the usual grisly failure...),

Old Yui-Yen continued to brood in his capital at Pienching, making everyone very nervous. He summoned an ever changing array of concubines to him, though most left in tears. His favor was not easy to gain – deprived of sight, he was immune to the distractions of a pleasant figure and perfect face. He found more joy in raising fresh armies and fleets, and many men who had

expected to return in glorious victory from the Americas found themselves sailing south to bail the Ming out of another mess. The province of Kin was settled to 2 GPv.

Imperial artisans crawled over every inch of eight zeppelins delivered by the Danish Empress Oniko as a gift to her cousin. They despaired of ever learning the secret techniques required to make such finely machined components and parts, though there were plentiful supplies of bamboo and the lifting gas to be found within the Divine Realm.

Yui-Yen also amused himself by sending various potentates and ministers to 'negotiate' with the barbarians beyond the north-west frontier... and the fierce nomads there took equal delight in murdering the ambassadors by fiendish tortures and depravities. Soon the court in Pienching was well acquainted with the fruits of displeasing the Emperor. They all found great relief in a brief visit by Empress Oniko of Denmark, who gave Yui-Yen some especially dear presents, laughed at his bitter jokes and generally got along famously with her cousin. Some said the two rulers had been cut from the same cloth, for no one who had dared battle with the Ice went unscathed – yet these two were as alike as paired swords – and just as dangerous for the unwary.

No one, however, was more luckless than poor General Thandu, who was dispatched to command the garrison of distant, malarial, constantly besieged Tharbad on the Nasik coast.

THE MING CHINESE EMPIRE

Qing Yongzheng, Regent for...

Hongzhi Ying-Kwon, Emperor of China, Hammer of the Barbarians, The Redeemer, The Eternally Victorious, Divine Son of Heaven, The Merciless

DIPLOMACY Bah!

While Yongzheng waited in his camps among the green hills of Kienchou; all matter of business came to his attention and was adjudicated. Shipments of grain, cloth, oil and timber were dispatched to Japan, Persia and Java. (Java? What the...) Equally lavish gifts of gold and silver coin were sent to Nisei and Java (hey now wait a minute!) All this the regent did with great energy, for he surely intended to utterly destroy the invaders who had overwhelmed the southern provinces with their treacherous attack. But before he could begin his campaign, he waited for reinforcements – the veterans of the campaign in Alaska would soon join him. So he tarried among the lush fields.

At length, one of the juniormost of his aides, advisors, hot-drink-carriers and ministers approached the regent and asked the dubious question... "Lord of the World – if we are fighting the rascally Javans, why have you sent them so many gifts?"

Yongzheng looked down upon the boy with bristling brows and considered having his head lopped off. *Yet*, he thought, *I am Ming now, and I am not merciless.* "My son, we are not fighting the Javans. No, most surely not."

"We're not?" The boy looked around suspiciously, wondering if he could manage to run away before the great and powerful regent could snatch him up and lop off his head. "What about all the countless regiments of Javan Skull Soldiers, and their batteries of Skull Gunz and the evil, ferocious, baby-eating, iron-chewing, blood-drinking Skull Serferz? They've conquered many provinces..."

"Those invaders," the regent replied in a kindly voice, "are not the Javans. Those are the Shikongou Dantai, who are very sly and cruel and tricky. And soon..." Yongzheng's expression became fey and filled with fiendish delight. "...I will catches them and eats them, yes I will! Just like the... the Bagginses! I hates them!"

The boy did not stop running until he had reached the mountains of Guzhou, where he became a hermit and never spoke to living human being again.

A Letter Dispatched to Various and Diverse Mercenary Companies Operating on the fringes of the Middle Kingdom: "It is the Regents understanding that an organization called the 'Pacific Mercenary and Trust' has been making attempts to take over various Asian mercenary groups. You have heard of them? The Regent wishes for you to know that these men are very bad men who are in league with the force that brought us the plague of the Ice – a threat to us all, you included. They are also a front for the infamous Dantai who, you will recall, reneged on some very serious mercantile promises before vanishing. They are not to be trusted. The Regent would not presume to tell you what to do – nor would he make you a vassal unless such was your wish. However, we would offer you a unique business proposition. Ming China will pay to you and your men a sum of 50,000 cash every two years in return for you not pledging your loyalty to PM&T. You are free to take whatever contracts you wish and if Ming desires your services we will pay a fair price above what is being offered."

The appearance, therefore, of the PM&T as an open and registered business came as something of a shock. The Regent, fortunately for the PM&T stockholders, had finally gathered his armies (now numbering no less than forty thousand men) and launched a massive attack south along the highway into Lingtung.

The Javans (or could they be the nefarious Shikongou), it seemed, had ignored he demands to abandon the southern provinces and to *go home*. At the same time, an army composed of cavalymen and mercenaries (under the joint command of Foo Liao and Bantag Yen) invaded Korat.

SOUTH ASIA

Mercenary Troops	30c 25i
Mercenary AQRs	c14 i17
Mercenary Leaders	Gemish Huorn (M956)
Hiring Contact	(none)

THE KHEMER EMPIRE

Bao Dai Moldoraja, Emperor of the True Khemer

DIPLOMACY None

Moldo's administration struggled to control the lands his generals had suddenly added to his domain, so the Emperor returned to Angkor and took charge himself. Despite his cruelties and religious fanaticism, he proved a more than able administrator. Much corruption and graft was immediately stamped out, and many men who had counted upon their government offices as a sinecure found themselves begging in the streets.

The vigorous prince also undertook various works in the countryside and erected an awe-inspiring ring of fortifications around Angkor, dwarfing even the ancient temples and the ruins of the palace of Bao Dai. Now all entry in the teeming city was through long, crooked tunnels, watched by gimlet eyed guards.

The Khemer generals in India were busy – mercenaries under Gemish Huorn were expected, more regular troopers – and a deal had been struck with the Afghans. As a result, in late '39 Gemish arrived (though young Honshon had suffered a seizure and died while gathering his musketeers in Rangoon). Despite religious trouble behind them, Satreya and Almandur decided to push ahead. As a result, Setreya invaded the Yasarid domain of Kalinga in the fall of '39 with 25,000 men.

Even as Moldo's armies advanced into India, the saffron-robed priests of the Pure Realm were not far behind – extensive missionary efforts plagued the (already religiously divided) citizens of Palas, Gaur, Assam, Samatata and Arakan. A fevered melting pot of repressed Hindus, angry Moslems and now newly devout Buddhists threatened to create even more chaos in fractured, bleeding India. Closer to home, things were already becoming troublesome... the Catholics of Mon and the Moslems of Samatata

(pressed by gangs of Buddhist monks and priests) revolted outright. Efforts to preach the Way among the Arakan also yielded massacres and general fighting as the Moslems of the coastal forests took up sword, spear and musket to drive out the spiritual invaders.

Some brisk police business in Krungthep saw the seizure of a half-dozen PM&T merchantmen and the closure of their newly-opened offices there. Dashing Captain Hansajya refused to answer any questions, waving off reporters with a brusque "government business."

HOSOGAWA BORNEO

Hosogawa Shigo, Daimyo of Kozoronden

DIPLOMACY None

Unlike nearly everywhere else near them, the Hosogawans trundled along about their own business, make a lot of banging and crashing sounds in their workshops outside Kozoronden and generally kept the peace. The 'unveiling' of the PM&T (with only two offices within their domain) was viewed with alarm by the government, but no jackbooted oppression had yet occurred.

JAVA ~ WHERE IT'S WARM™

Shir'le, Great Kahuna of Java, Empress of the Maori, The Sea Spear

DIPLOMACY Pilbarra(t)

The empress was dreaming: *she was wading in the water on a northern beach, the azure sea surging warm around her feet. Golden sand stretched to the horizon. She looked up and the Shark God was rolling in the water, his gray flanks glistening with foam. Grasping his fins with her hands, she pressed her cheek against his rough, pebbly skin. He was swift in the water, faster than a trimaran, faster than the smoking, loud boats of the western ocean. They were flying in the air, high above a land cut with countless tiny terraces and rice paddies. A sprawling city of gold lay below them, filled with more people than lived in all of Javan lands. She looked down and saw a courtyard set among a palace of silver and jade. An old man was sitting stirring a pot of some black liquid. The empress took a cup from him, seeing his old eyes glittering like the shark in black water. The liquid was hot and sweet and tangy. "What is this?" She asked, and the old man only shook his head. He pointed. There was a creature crouched in the shadows at the edge of the courtyard, small and twisted, with flipper-like feet and hands and pale glowing eyes. It hissed, snarling and biting*

Shir'le woke, drenched in sweat. "The Ming are the enemy," she said to a quiet, midnight room. Her son Wili was sleeping in his crib. Outside, the moon was riding high over the city, and gleaming on the water beyond the curving breakwater of the harbor. "Java will prevail."

But Ming and her allies had gathered enormous strength against the Javans, enraged with fear of a new war against the Ice. The general Foo Liao led a powerful force of mercenaries against Korat, even as the citizens of Sarnath rose up in revolt against the Javan garrison. Puzzlingly, Foo Liao found the province abandoned and he wondered if the orders to attack had come by mistake. Regardless, he pressed on through the mountains into Annam.

At the very end of '39, Foo Liao and his army clashed with the Javans under N'then (who had fallen back into freshly prepared fortifications in the ancient Javan homeland). 13,000 Ming troops² crashed into the Javan lines, forced to fight in rugged mountains and along narrow canyons. N'then commanded some 10,000 men in defense... and Bantag Yen (the mercenary commander serving the Ming) pressed him hard, driving the Javans out of the mountains in a ferocious series of battles. Unfortunately for the Ming advance, they bled freely to buy such passage. N'then let

² Including the famous Lingsi Rifles.

them exhaust themselves, then counter-attacked and slaughtered the lot of them near Bien Phu.

Both Foo Lien and Bantag escaped, fleeing back to Sarnath, but both were sorely wounded, and did not recover until the end of '40. N'then, meanwhile, had other problems to deal with.

At sea, admiral N'dret's Skull Fleet had been prowling the waters around Hainan island for some time, waiting for likely Ming prey to wander into his nets. So, the arrival of an enormous Japanese fleet in early fall of '39 was something of a surprise... but as the Japanese maneuvered to land their army on the beaches of Annam, N'dret struck.

The Javans were outnumbered almost two to one, but a large portion of the Japanese fleet was transports packed with men and guns and horses for the invasion of Annam. A sizable portion of the rest were light scouting frigates, who could not match the guns of the Javan trimarans. Still, N'dret planned a swift, sweeping strike to try and confuse the Japanese landing. What he got instead was a vicious sea-borne brawl. As the Javans lashed in, the Japanese fleet wheeled to protect their transports and the two lines of battle collided head-on. An enormous melee, shot with flame, clouded with smoke, filled with the cataclysmic rattle of ships burning, then convulsing as powder magazines erupted, spread across the Tonkin Gulf. The Javans were fearless, plunging in among the Japanese ships, gun-decks washed with blood and seawater, cannon blazing.

By the end of two days of swirling, confused battle, N'dret watched with surprise as his fleet clawed free, substantially intact, while the Japanese armada was a shattered wreck. Nearly every Tokugawa fighting ship was burning, captured or sinking.

The Japanese transport fleet covered under Javan guns, and N'dret's captains urged him to send the entire lot to the bottom of the sea. "Oro is hungry," they exclaimed, shaking their skull pendants. "Let their white bones ornament his palace in the briny deep." The elderly admiral shook his head. "No – these men are samurai and used to fighting on land – there would be no fair contest against them, trapped in their ships." He turned, squinting into the glare of the noon sun. "We have no quarrel with Japan, only with Ming for the treachery they have shown our honest friendship. Escort them back to their islands."

So the honorable N'dret sent a messenger to the Japanese fleet commander, lord Ito, and then escorted the shame-faced Japanese back north. He intended to follow them almost to Japanese waters beyond Taiwan, but when the two fleets were approaching that island, a third armada appeared!

Admiral Falcon and the Judean navy came prowling south, looking for Shikongou Dantai pirates... immediately, lord Ito and his fleet scattered to the east, fleeing for the open ocean and escape. The Javans broke away, and Falcon ordered his fleet to give chase. N'dret's commanders sped away, satisfied with the haphazard flight of the Japanese. The Judeans beat down, cramming on sail. The chase lasted six weeks, carrying both navies back into Hainan waters. Despite cunning efforts, N'dret failed to shake the Falcon, and was forced to give battle off Yu-Lin, despite being severely outnumbered³ and out-gunned.

Another brawl erupted, and now the heavy battle cruisers of the Judean navy weighed in, smashing the Javan trimarans to kindling, scattering their squadrons, irresistible and potent. Despite such a disparity of firepower, the Javan captains fought with all their skill, taking a heavy toll of the Judeans. Admiral Hr'ee was wounded – his leg torn away by a Judean shell – as he fought the *Heart of Oro* out of a cross-fire between two Judean heavies (the *Deer Dancer* and the *Yoemé*). N'dret wheeled his fleet, trying to cut to

sea. Falcon pressed hard, trying to drive the Javans against the Hainan shore.

At last, Falcon himself was wounded and forced to abandon his flagship, the *Sword of Wudan*, which was sinking and ablaze. With his fleet mauled, the Judeans limped back north, much reduced. N'dret drew a sigh of relief – his *Spearfisher* was in no better shape, and indeed, was scuttled the next day, her crew unable to stem the flooding in her triple hulls. Yet Javan prowess at sea had won the day, again. "A poor victory," N'dret said, looking over the lists of so many ships lost and so many captains slain. "And where are the Ming?"

Ashore, there was trouble in Kwangchou, where the local nobles and populace had risen up in revolt, eager to throw off the chains of the Javans. Fierce fighting in the streets followed, before the Javan garrison suppressed the revolt.

And in Lingtung, the Javan armies were waiting patiently. They were not idle, either, for Gr'ee was wary of the hitting power of the Ming, and of Yongzheng's martial skills on the battlefield. This time, the Javan intended to gather every advantage he could. The Regent's delay aided him, giving his men time to dig and prepare. News of the fleet's victory at sea heartened him, for their supply lines home were not cut off.

Yongzheng and a truly enormous Ming army finally came boiling out of the Kienchou hills in early '40, fire in their eye and spirits up. The Javans met them with a dizzying array of fortifications across the line of march, and smashed bridges and torn up roadway. Gr'ee had not waited in idleness. **Second Lingtung** would be as hard-fought as the first engagements.

42,000 Ming stormed south into the Javan fortifications, their advance presaged by a truly enormous artillery barrage. 16,000 Javans were waiting in their trenches and gun-pits. Their own guns lay silent, weathering the storm of Ming shells, until the enemy regiments were upon them. Then a blast of gunfire answered, rolling and echoing among the dusty hills. Thousands of Ming fell, mowed down as they tried to storm the Javan entrenchments.

Things turned against the Ming within hours – the Javan fortifications covered every avenue of approach, and their guns reaped a terrible, bloody harvest as Yongzheng's regiments threw themselves again and again upon the Javan entrenchments. – Gr'ee's men held on tenaciously, refusing to abandon their positions, repelling assault after assault.

After two days of confused battle, Yongzheng ordered his army back, but due to the convoluted terrain many of his sub-commanders did not receive the orders until a third bloody day had passed. The Ming army had entirely failed to break the Javan line. They streamed back north in unfettered rout, every unit gripped by fear and horror. Yongzheng was forced to order his guards regiments to shoot down fleeing men. Restoring some cohesion to the army took three months.

While Yongzheng was licking his wounds in central China, a Ming fleet under the command of Yang Do was making good time down the Mallaca Strait, heading home from India. Though they had heard the Shikongou fleet might be nosing about, they were not prepared for the appearance of a powerful Javan Skull fleet off Singapore. Yang's captains tried to swerve towards the Sumatran side of the strait, whereupon the rest of the Javan squadrons sortied from Utaran estuaries. Suddenly the sea was black with Skull sails.

Poor Yang's fleet was smashed or captured within the day. The Javans crewed their prizes, piled their captives onto transports, and then slipped back into the mangroves, waiting for the next victims to come along...

Still determined to crush the Javans (for now even the Regent was forced to admit the Javan army was in the field against him, not some rabble of mercenaries the Shikongou had hired), Yongzheng

³ Despite the addition of many captured Japanese warships.

left Yen Li to block the highway road with a force of cavalry and artillery. Then the main army swung east into Nanling, and down into the plains. Unopposed in their crossing of the mountains, the Ming stormed into Lungtung once more.

Third Lungtung was another confused affair – N’dret had redeployed his army again, and his engineers had wasted no time while the Ming were hiking in the mountains. Again the Ming infantry found themselves advancing into prepared positions, and suffering from the withering fire of the Javan riflemen and guns. Despite Yongzheng’s exhortations and personally leading more than one assault, the Ming again failed to break the Javan lines. Battered, the Regent fell back to Shaoguan to regroup.

After taking stock of his army, the Regent shook his head in despair and ordered a retreat back into Kienchou, lest the Javans decide to strike for his capital. He was furiously angry, and with himself most of all. *I am the better general!* He thought, tasting bile rising in his throat. *Defeated by poor ground...*

The passage of a Danish fleet carrying the Empress Oniko through the Mallaca Strait in early '40 went unmolested, for the Javan sharks had no quarrel with the Pale Flame or her men.

Back in the southern seas, there was one more fray to transpire – late in '40 – a Ming fleet carrying Number Ten Ox and his cavalry force (so recently escaped from Kashmir) also essayed the Mallaca Strait. Ox was a careful fellow, keeping his scout ships well deployed and every hand on the watch. But the Javan admiral Pedregon knew these waters well, and as soon as the Ming had exited the Singapore Strait – where they thought themselves free of danger – his squadrons boiled up with a quartering wind and struck down upon the Ming fleet like a cayman lunging from the high cane.

Outnumbered, outgunned and out-sailed by the Javans, the Ming fleet shattered like rotten planking. The Javan trimarans wheeled elegantly around the lumbering Chinese junks, ripping the high-sided craft with broadside after broadside. Number Ten Ox’s marines fought furiously, storming over the side of any ship they could come to grips with – but the lighter, more maneuverable Javan frigates and battle-cruisers danced away on the waves, ripping the Ming decks with chain-shot. Pedregon had none of N’dret’s sense of honor – and these *were* Ming he was fighting. The Shark God fed well in the dark waters of the Riouw Sea, long into a night lit by the hell-fire of burning Ming ships.

THE SUPREME PRIMACY OF ORO

Mola ne Wooka, High Priest of the Shark

DIPLOMACY Iten in Nokama(ch), Camoweal(ch)

Greatly pleased with the latest crop of priests, Mola set about reorganizing his temples and sea-shrines. His emissaries spent a great deal of time in the various Oroist capitals, and found a warm welcome wherever they went. The high priest smiled toothily, reading the dispatches from the north – it was good for the Shark to eat well, and for his coreligionists to rule the waves, as they had done in the old days.

THE BORANG BAKUFU

Izuruyama Kahin, Daimyo of Borang Lord of the North, Emperor of Austral

DIPLOMACY Fukuzawa in Irith(ea)

Old Kahin’s vigor showed no signs of slowing (though his weary aides and generals might hope otherwise...): Ahar-Pacu improved to 2 GPv, a massive series of canals and catchment dams were added to Ilweah and the merchant fleet expanded. Peace, prosperity and plenty ruled the land.



Minor trouble flared in Aanx, where a Shikongou Dantai agent was killed in a gun battle with local militia, who had cornered the man (a Japanese) in a woodshed. Examination of his body revealed a variety of colorful tattoos depicting an octopus and a woman copulating. This sort of thing was apparently very common in Japan and other foreign parts.

This otherwise minor event reminded Kahin he needed to clean house, so in his usual style he hauled the entire army down to Sasaki, swamped the city with troops on every corner, in every house and under every privy – and seized the newly public offices of the Pacific Mercenary and Trust Corporation and had the lot of traitors executed.

Isnamo Minukumo – who had been assisting the Emperor – was ordered off to Boulia, but fell from his horse and cracked his fool head open on the ground. A pity – he had been a promising officer. Prince Toho, in comparison, stayed home trying to deal with the ever-increasing piles of paper his father’s brisk governing style left for him.

NANHAI WANG’GUO

Sugawara Te Anu, Daimyo of the Southern Seas

DIPLOMACY Wallaroo(t)

Minding his own business, Te Anu continued to behave like a respectable citizen. His armies remained active in Austral, where the Warrego clansmen were crushed in a two year campaign. Other, more diplomatic overtures, were undertaken as well.

Though only twenty-two, and living a steadily less public life due to illness and reduced circumstance, the prince Kugyo Moke (the exiled son of princess Jana – herself daughter of Empress Tahain – herself daughter of Kugyo Kepe, the last ‘true’ Emperor of Austral) died in 1739 of consumption in his townhouse in Kosan, Taree. His funeral was only attended by three old friends of his mother, who then went off to get very drunk in a nearby sake house.

THE MAORI IMPERIUM

Tinopai Great Tooth, Lord of the Fleet, Emperor of the Maori, Blessed of Oro, The Big Kahuna

DIPLOMACY No Effect

Tinopai was grateful for the dribs and drabs of aid coming from the Austral, though a much larger shipment of gold from Ming failed to arrive. Otherwise, the Maori sat on their cold southern island and were glad they were far from Javan seas, where so much blood was being spilt.

CENTRAL ASIA AND INDIA

<i>Mercenary Troops</i>	5c, 5i, 4a, 23ht
<i>Mercenary AQRs</i>	c15 i15 s20 a14
<i>Mercenary Leaders</i>	Vijashuram Rajah (M836), Zoloft the Calm (M821)
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	(None)

SHI’A IMAMAT

Rhemini, Ayatollah of the Shi’a, Voice of Allah

DIPLOMACY Seylan(ch), Chela(ch)

The ayatollah found his chosen path still very rough, though now he had a house and some assistants, and they had managed to open a shop where they copied the Quran by hand. Also, some of his cousins went down to Seylan and managed to secure the assistance of the imams there. A letter sent to the mullahs of Chela also drew some assistance, though mostly good advice and moral support. Still, that was better than nothing.

Then, by tremendous good luck, the Yasarid princes remembered to help out the Imam and dispatched a gaggle of clerks, scribes, learned men, copyists and workmen to help Rhemeni spread the word of the Lord of the World. He was vastly relieved to see some support from the princes of the land.

YASARID INDIA

Abdullah Al-Din, Shah of India, Prince of Basra and Amon Sûl

DIPLOMACY None

Scrambling to recover from yet another disaster, Abullah managed to muster up some more troops in Yathrib, and dispatched his daughter Tihana to gather up more fedyaaheen from the south, where they were loitering about in garrison. He considered hiring the local mercenaries, then decided to conserve his gold. The war promised to drag on for another two, three generations...

Meanwhile, there was no rest of the weary Moslems. The Khemer armies loose in the Bengal had advanced through Nadavaria (taking control of the province from the Afghans, who were withdrawing back to their mountains), and into Kalinga with a strong army, reinforced by many mercenaries. Abdullah opposed them with a freshly mustered army and the unexpected, and welcome, assistance of Abu'la the Ghulam (who had escaped from his captivity in Und).

Abdullah's 17,000 Yasarids were everything he could scrape together, and Setreya's 25,000 Khemers were looking to put a little smacky action on the Moslem dogs. However, the Shah did have the advantage of freshly constructed fortifications and a certain grim sense of destiny. "If this is our last day," he thundered to his assembled troops, "then we will die worthy in the eyes of Allah!"

A flurry of assassinations followed, and the Chinese mercenaries the Khemers had imported promptly disappeared into the night, pockets filled with Yasarid gold. Only days later, the two armies clashed vigorously at **Purancham** and Setreya found himself severely out matched by Abu'la. The Khemer army was crushed in a pincer movement, then shattered by the perfectly directed charge of the Yasarid lancers, then driven in rout by the victorious Yasarids. Abullah exulted! Allah's favor was upon him!

Setreya did escape from the debacle, and fled back to Palas, where his fellow general Almandur was garrisoning the province. Abullah wanted to pursue, but there were weightier matters afoot. A strong army of Arnori knights was rapidly approaching the Yasarid capital at Yathrib.

THE REALM OF ARNOR

Peregrin Arnorus, Rajah of India, Duke of Delhi, Grand-Duke of Aballah, Prince of the Black Tower

DIPLOMACY Jihjohti(pt). Maghada(nt)

If Abdullah of Yasar thought he was scraping the dregs of the gutters up to fill out his regiments, Peregrin had stolen and sold the gutters five years ago... only by stripping the city militias could he put more men into the field. Still, he would have victory! So the lame and crippled were given muskets and put into the field. A few scrawny Persian mercenaries were hired, too.

Schwarzkastel remained blocked by the Moslem fleet, which now preyed on all shipping passing through the Gulf of Oman if not protected by a strong escort.

The redoubtable Valerus (and his massed army, though now bereft of the Afghanis) advanced through Rajput, Janupur and into Chandela. Ahmad Durani's army withdrew as the Duke's men advanced. While Valerus marched along the Ganges, the barons of Uttar Pradesh and Gwalior launched a raid into Jihjohti. The local rajah mustered his army and marched out to meet them, but was

severely trounced by the Europeans. Cravenly, he bent his neck under Morgan Drake's boot.

In the far south, Tovar Brunson and Admiral Parachal led another force of Arnori knights into the disputed Cheran coast. After a sharp engagement with some local traitors (Hussite landowners who were paying off the Yasarids for autonomy), the Duke's rule was restored. The two scallywags then invaded Pandya itself – and the nearest Yasarid army was nearly a thousand miles away, fighting in Kalinga. Undefended, the rich province fell easily to the battle-hardened Christians (though oh, what weeping and wailing amongst the Yasar! And the hand-wringing of the Shah's treasurer...) Having secured their prize, the two nobles settled in to enjoy, and protect, the fruits of their conquest.

His army much depleted by the garrisons required for the populous river provinces, Valerus advanced cautiously into Kosala, seeking the fabled Yathrib of which so many tales had been told. His march was immediately opposed by Abu'la the Ghulam and his newly-victorious army. The Persian mercenaries dissolved, leaving Valerus facing Abu'la alone... the Arnori general did not like this one bit.

His scouts reported equal numbers, or perhaps a slight advantage to the Moslems, and the ground poor. Valerus withdrew in good order into Chandella. There he encamped, watching to see if the Moslems would come down out of the hills at him. They did not, and so '40 ended, with the two armies eyeing one another, wondering how to gain advantage.

Rumors did reach the Hussite commanders of a *Catholic* emissary from *Spain* who was traveling among the Moslem princes of the lower Ganges, attempting to get them to ally themselves with his distant master. Though the man had not yet met the headman's axe, everyone expected he would soon.

SHAHDOM OF AFGHANISTAN

Ahmad Durani, Shah of the Afghans, Lord of Kabul

DIPLOMACY None

Nearly crushed by financial pressures – and finding the devastated Indian lowlands not sufficient to recover his expenses – Ahmad abandoned his war against the Yasarids and returned to the Hindu Kush. Many of his soldiers were pensioned off, with large grants of land in Hazarajat. The Chinese bandits infesting Kashmir were allowed to leave, and they rode of dejectedly to the distant Malabar Sea port of Bhuj, where a fleet was waiting to take them home. The Afghani garrison of Parapavura rejoiced, and was quick to restore control over the countryside.⁴

A STREET, IN THE BANI HASHIM DISTRICT OF MECCA

Bent under an enormous weight, breath gasping like a dry bellows, a sun-blackened figure limped along the edge of the street. A thin verge of shadow fell from the whitewashed houses, giving the old man frail protection against the furnace-white heat of the sun high above. Late summer lay on the dusty valley of Mecca with a brazen hand. No one moved in the city streets, not even a dog or a camel. A heat-deadened stillness filled the city, save for the *tap-scrap-tap* of the man's walking stick on the stones.

He stopped at a house, wiry shoulders twisted under the weight of a small but terribly heavy parcel held to his back by ragged, dirty cloth – the remains of a kaffieyh – and his fist, twisted with scars and almost black from the sun, rapped sharply on the stone doorframe.

There was a noise inside, faint, no more than a mouse twitching his whiskers when the moon is obscured by an owl's

⁴ There were rumors of a Hindu rebellion in the offing.

flight. The burned man bent close to the heavy cloth across the doorway. "Is this the house of Fatima?"

The sound did not repeat, but a watchful tension stilled the house. Looking up and down the street, the burned man took a shuddering breath, then said: "Tell me, are you constant to the old covenant?"

The drape moved aside, and a gnarled hand grasped the man's shoulder, dragging him inside.

Blinking in sudden darkness, the withered traveler eased his burden to the ground, letting the heavy weight clank against the tiled floor. Strong hands held him up, drew back his djellaba cloak, pressed a cup with tepid water against his cracked lips. Cautiously, the traveler drank, then slumped onto a padded mat. Men crowded around him – more arriving every minute – and the exhausted man was filled with a certain pure joy to see he knew some of their faces.

"You lived!" The old warriors nodded, saying nothing. Their eyes were filled with tears, and no one could find the strength to speak what was in their hearts. "You lived..." The burned man closed his eyes, one weak hand groping for the round, heavy shape in the cloth. His fingers found the stone, then he smiled and was asleep.

Around him, the soldiers set a watch, and at the ends of the street. There were many enemies, and this joyous day was unexpected. Who had thought to see him alive again?

THE NOBLE HOUSE OF TEWFIK

Tewfik Solomon, Purveyor of some serious whoopass

DIPLOMACY Marseilles(bo), Nasiryah in Hahmar(ma), Merv in Kophat Dagh(mf)

Having recovered his equilibrium, Solomon ordered his fleet to sea. These Hussite dogs were no better than pirates and were plaguing the sea lanes – now they would pay for their dishonorable affronts! Busir and Inuma, joined by a squadron of sunburned Swedes from St. Gustavus, sortied into the Gulf of Oman with almost a hundred ships, mostly brand new, their rigging taut, their guns gleaming like the sun.

Back home in Basra, however, the sleep of the householders was rudely broken by a thundering explosion, then the sound of gunfire. A band of Hussite commandos had attacked the Tewfik shipyards, where a certain Tipo Argir lay in chains. Massacring the guards, the pirate was freed by his friends and they escaped into the night, the whistles and drums of the police filling the night.

Moments later, the fire-watch began ringing its alarm bars, for diversionary explosions set by the Hussites had blown apart a granary near the docks. Six thousand tons of wheat (recently arrived from China) ignited with a deafening explosion. An entire city block was flattened, and an enormous fire started. Thousands of Persian citizens flooded into the streets, panicked. The civil guard rushed to restore order, but found their guns, riot-control staves and other equipment locked in warehouses.

Efforts to open the doors triggered another series of explosions, killing hundreds of guardsmen. Meanwhile, the fires raged out of control, wrecking the port and devastating part of the city. In the marshy swamps along the Shaat-al-Arab, Tipo Argir looked back at the billowing clouds of black smoke over the city and bit his thumb at the House of Tewfik.

At sea, the combined Moslem fleets of Tewfik and Yasarid enjoyed a victorious '39, capturing hundreds of ships, enforcing a stiff blockade of the Arnor coast and generally doing as they pleased. Their haul was enormous in terms of ships, gold and slaves, though far smaller than it would have been in the years

before the War Against the Ice, when the Indian sea-lanes were crowded with fat merchantmen. Still, the crews and captains were exultant.

The summer of '40 was an entirely different matter. The Arnor continued to win on land, and the wind turned, blowing up from the south with a queer feeling. The Moslem pirate fleets continued to plague the approaches to Bhuj and Schwarzkastel, but now something hunted *them* from the sky. The Pale Flame rode up on a monsoon wind out of the south, her fleet's prows splitting the sea like a knife, her airships thudding overhead like lean gray phantoms.⁵

Unable to evade the Danish eyes in the sky, the Moslems swung to give battle, storming forward with their great galleys and frigates in a fleet four hundred ships strong. Even the Swedish ship-captains out of St. Gustavus were eager for a fray (though they had heard what happened to fleets of wood and canvas and cordage who faced airships in battle), for these *were* the hated Dane and their demon-Empress. Besides, their ships were some of the finest in the world, and their crews even better. They would give *nothing* to these infidels!

As it happened, they were not far wrong in their estimation. Oniko of Denmark commanded only forty airships and fifty-odd ships of the Imperial Navy. Of course, thirty-six of those vessels were brand new steam gun-boats fresh from the Venice Yards. A queer flicking blue light played across her face as the Empress signaled the order to attack.

With effortless grace, her airfleet swept down upon the Moslem ships, while Shlechter's steamships turned into the wind, cutting across the line of advance of the elegant sailing ships. The first flat *boom* snapped across the water, and the two fleets rushed together, guns blazing, smoke clouding the sky. When next the Empress could catch her breath, the sun was setting, the two fleets still tangled in a swirling, wind- and steam-driven melee.

Three of her airships were down, their burning skeletons swallowed by the waves, and another had broken off – gondolas choking with smoke – for the Arnor shore. Six of the steamships had been sunk, their boilers exploding from a lucky shell, or overheating. One foundered, taking a heavy swell wrong, and another four just smashed to ruin by the guns of the Moslem fleet. The Yasarids and Tewfik captains had bled too – losing almost two hundred ships to the relentless hammering of the Danish steamship guns, or the plunging lances of flame cast from the zeppelins.

Stunned by their losses, the Moslem fleet broke away under the cover of night, running for the safety of Al-Harkam in Carmania. But the IDN *Fiesole*, lurking in the upper air, spied their flight. Despite darkness, and the wreckage of her ships, Oniko ordered all able ships to steam in pursuit. She stripped her merchantmen for crews and her guardsmen for marines.

The next day, the Moslems were forced to battle again, within sight of the Carmanian mountains and their fleets shattered. Oniko was careful not to let one ship flying the flag of St. Gustavus escape intact, though she captured many others. In this way, the blockade of Schwarzkastel was lifted.⁶

THE SAFAVID PERSIAN EMPIRE

Safi Jehan, Khan of Khans, Shahanshah of Persia, Prince of Bukhara, Caliph of the East

DIPLOMACY None

⁵ The Judean-held city of Tharbad provided a convenient base for C out her zeppelins, refit, and top up on liftgas. Then she was ready for

⁶ But, due to the length of time the Moslems had blockaded the port, trade still apply for this turn. Next turn, they will be lifted.



Famine stalked the Persian highlands – vast camps crowded with refugees from the Ice knew the tight, burning grip of endless hunger. Thousands perished as winter clamped down on the plains and deserts. The Shahanshah labored to feed his people – but even large shipments of grain from China did not help, not enough. The destruction of the Basra granaries meant more children went hungry, in a land gripped by a quiet specter.

Withered columns of refugees wound their way north into the barren lands of Khwarizm, Bokhara, Kara-Khitai and Ferghana. The hand of the Ice had barely lifted, leaving desolate, abandoned farms and wild orchards. Strange creatures still crept in the eaves of the night-dark forests, and the Shah's army was everywhere in evidence. There was unexpectedly fierce fighting in the ruins of the old cities – where bands of creatures (had they been men, once?) laired, preying on those with warm flesh.

By enormous efforts, Khwarizm, Bokhara and Ferghana were restored to 3 GPV, and Kara-Khitai to 4. The dead cities remained empty, for the king of kings needed every man and woman in the fields, trying to scratch a harvest from the frozen soil. Everywhere, the Shah's agents and councilors were frantically busy.

Even in the port of Al'Harkam in Carmania. Transport ships from all over the empire trickled in, tying up alongside hundreds of merchant vessels hiding from the battles and piracy raging in the Gulf of Oman. Eventually, a fleet arrived from the east (having wended a cautious path through the various wars and conflicts) to report the main portion of the army was stuck, stranded on an island off the coast of Korea.

"Where?" The port commissioner asked, puzzled.

"It's near Japan," Abd 'al'Latif growled. The voyage had worn on him, as his ships threaded past two vicious wars – one of which had come perilously close to annihilating his ships under the crashing feet of titans. "You know, where they all wear those big hats..."

"Oh, of course." The port commissioner could see the admiral was dangerously on edge. "Well, in three or four years, we might have enough ships to get them back."

"In three or four years," Al'Latif snarled, "they'll be speaking Korean!"

THE KINGDOM OF GEORGIA ~ NOT SO HUMID OR STICKY AS JAVA

*Rashid Ibn-Majid, King of Georgia, Protector of Armenia
and Mesopotamia*

DIPLOMACY Quite a bit, and with the point of
a saber too.



Horns sounded in the encampment of the Al'Wahat, signaling the coming dawn and the summons to prayer. Muyaia Sayyaf Adin – the emir of the tribes, once the sultan of Egypt – stepped out of his tent. He was young, his face still round with baby-fat, but the indolence of his youth had been left behind in the wreck of his father's Egyptian dreams. The guns of the Hussites had stripped away some of his innocence.

A man was waiting in the chill darkness, a familiar lean figure. "Osman." Muyaia nodded in greeting, taking a moment to drape the corner of his kaffieyh over his shoulder, fingertips checking for the familiar presence of saber, dagger and pistol. "Are the armies ready to ride today?"

"They are, my lord." The Turk's voice was harsh – more used to battlefields than palaces – but Muyaia could see his deep-set black eyes glint in the light of the lanterns. "Come, ride with me and we will look down upon the might of Allah's army."

Muyaia grinned with delight – the great king Rashid had recently presented him with a brace of coal-black Bactrian mares, fleet of foot, strong, ready to run for a day and day without tiring.

Osman – like the Wahat – was a superb rider, and the young prince found him a gifted guide to this foreign land of hills and hidden valleys and wells surrounded by acres of plantation and farm. The deep Sahara was not such a rich domain, even with the coming of the grass and the rain.

The two men rode up into the hills around the sprawling camp, letting their horses run freely, feeling the chill snap of the night air. Soon the sun would rise and a clear, penetrating heat would fill the sky. But for now, as the east grew pink and gold and violet by turns, they rode up into the tamarisk studded hills in silence. Below them, the ranked tents of the three armies – Tuareg, Wahat and Georgia – sprawled across the flat. In the distance, the fires of heating engines pierced the gloom. Flickering, intermittent orange light played across the enormous shapes of the Sultan's airfleet. The sound of men shouting, calling commands, the ring of metal on metal carried perfectly in the still, cold air.

The sight of the Tuareg encampment brought a frown to Muyaia's face – he had expected better of the grizzled old chieftain Ibn Saleh – but at the same time, he understood. The prince was still young, his lands lost, his army and people reduced to flight. Rashid was a great king, powerful, with many gifts to give, lands to bestow, honor to be won in his service. Saleh was no fool, and he cast his lot with the stronger man.

"We will be a great weapon," he muttered. "A sword to smite the infidel and win back the lands taken from us by the Romanois."

Osman said nothing, guiding his bay mare around an outcropping of shattered white stone. The land had turned rugged, filled with ravines and pinnacles. "Careful here, my lord," the Turk said, pointing.

Muyaia wrenched his mind away from dreams of conquest and glory, and a new kind of fraternal order, of pious men devoted to the defense of Islam and all Muslims. The black mare shook her head, hooves moving gingerly on the rocky, talus-strewn slope. Muyaia let her pick her own way, his hands very light on the reins. *The horse knows what she's doing* his father's voice spoke in memory, *let her pay attention to her business.*

Beyond the narrow path, a cup opened in the hills, filled with green trees and the smell of water and heavy, thick grass underfoot. Above, the dome of the sky was washed with porcelain-pale rose and the steadily brightening dawn filled the hidden basin with a quiet, clear light.

"A wonder!" Muyaia exclaimed, looking around in surprise.

"The world is filled with hidden things," Osman said, a faint smile of satisfaction on his face. "A man should see beauty when he can – there is enough horror around us."

Muyaia nodded, lost in the moment. He saw a field of flowers, buds closed, spreading away before him. A stream – perhaps even with water exposed to the open sky – wound across the slope. Dawn touched the peaks of the sheltering ridges, turning them brilliant gold, the shadows in the lee of the hill turning dark. The young prince watched, waiting for the light to creep across the flowers. Then, he knew, they would open – a sudden blaze of color in a dreary, grim land.

A sound caught his attention and Muyaia turned, eyes narrowing. He caught sight of Osman – suddenly close, horses wither to wither – and a plunging arm. A cold shock slammed through the prince's side – there was a ripping sound – and he felt terribly weak. Choking – fluid filled his throat – he dragged at his saber, but the Turk's hand crushed his own, pinning hand to weapon. Muyaia stared, face twisted in agony, then his face became still and pale.

The prince slid heavily from his horse, a bright crimson stain soaking through his cloak and running down his leg. Osman

watched, his own face a grim mask, until the boy's legs had stopped twitching. The flesh was cold under his blunt fingers.

"Sorry, lad." The Turk wrapped the princes' desert robes around him, making a simple shroud. Without discernible effort, he slung the corpse over his shoulder, then hiked down to the edge of the ravine where the stream plunged over a steep, glassy face of water-carved limestone. "Here's tomb fit for a king," Osman said to the air and sky, "a brave boy, his patrimony stolen, his kingdom lost to the great powers. A life cut short – but blessed, for his was a clean death, and he will dwell with his god, far from this hell we inhabit."

The body plunged over the cliff, striking heavily on the lip of the waterfall, then bouncing down through thornbush and sage to disappear into the thicket far below. Osman turned away, attention turned to his knife, where the blood was already curdling on the watery steel.

When he returned to camp, he saw the assembled chiefs and headmen and elders of the Al'Wahat bowing before the elegant, slim figure of the sultan Rashid. They too, like Ibn Saleh, knew where victory lay.

Later, an Albanian agent attempting to establish a business concern in Akko, on the Levantine coast, was killed in a confused bar brawl. No one claimed responsibility for his death, and the Sultan's governor declared the boy killed "by accident."

THE EXARCHATE OF TREBIZOND

His thoughts filled with bittersweet memories, Vladimir Tuchachevsky leaned on the railing of the RSN *Porchovaka* as the cutter pulled away from the harbor of Trebizond. His family crowded the aft deck, chattering and pointing, letting the sun fall on their weary faces. Packing up an entire palace – much less their mountain estate, or the town house in Amisus – had been a long and strenuous task. But now they were done, their fleet embarking around them, the sea covered with white sails, and soon they would be in a new home.

The Exarch wondered how his so-lately-adopted land would fare under it's new governor. The crown had made Trebizond – a motley collection of restive Moslems, Yaqui Catholics, Swedish settlers, Russian refugees, bits and pieces of every nation in Euopre – from whole cloth. Vladimir wondered if the bold experiment would last, or if the tides of war lapping around the region would engulf the little state.

"No matter," he said, pushing away from the rail. He had a mountain of correspondence to review, and the clutch of cardinals inside would want to bend his ear, *again*, about the Hussite problem. He did not look back at the swiftly receding shore.

EUROPE

<i>Hussite Merc Troops</i>	32i, 28c, 26ec, 8a, 12xc, 16ht, 10xea, 8ec, 2z
<i>Merc leaders</i>	Jan Stahlsansk (M78A)
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	Albanian East India Company
<i>Catholic Merc Troops</i>	9xea (AA guns), 10hea (rocket batteries)
<i>Merc leaders</i>	Baron Von Hausen (M783).
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	Norsktrud
<i>Merc AQRs</i>	c14 i18 a16 w18

AERONAUTICAL RESEARCH AND FABRICATION (EAST)

Solyom Pasternak, Executive Officer of the Company

DIPLOMACY Kuban(mcl)

With the company coordinating so much of the resettlement effort in southern Russia and the sub-Caucasus, Pasternak arranged with the Swedish government to take over the administration of the provinces of Taman and Kuban. A great number of refugees were

immediately given lands in Taman, and Kuban was 'opened' for settlement (a program in which large sections of the province were sold to likely families or clans, allowing them to take possession as time and effort permitted).

An expedition by ARF employees into the hostile lands of Khazar was forced to retreat in a running gun-battle with the natives. They only escaped destruction when an Air Corps survey zeppelin arrived overhead and rained down explosive bombs and incendiary naphthene upon the howling mob of savages.

The citizens of the bustling port of Rostov were little surprised to learn a variety of foreign spies had attempted to enter the highly-guarded factories and workshops of the Le Fabrique. Their heads were displayed on spikes above the main gate, where the workers entered each morning for their shift.

PRINCIPATE OF KIEV

Vladimir III, Prince of Kiev, Master of the Holy Rivers

DIPLOMACY Carpathia(making trouble)

Accompanied by thousands of settlers, Vladimir returned to ancient Kiev and reclaimed the province from the ravages of the Ice. His court was restored to the ruins of Kiev the city, though hardly anyone else was actually in residence there. Soon afterwards, his wife Anna bore him a son, Boris, and the prince was well pleased. Aid flowed in from certain foreign powers, and the Prince's agents were quick to turn their attentions to possible foreign provocateurs.

Despite wading through several volumes of Diderot, Vladimir felt almost happy and took to hunting in the frost-rimed forests with great vigor. Princess Nadia (when not reading racy and enticing letters from various members of the Baklovakian senate), spent her time hunting and fishing in Dobruja, though her humor only slightly improved.

However, just to break the hearts of everyone in central Europe, young Nadia *did* accept an engagement offer from the Duke of Carpathia (who was also handsome, though no Ned I must say) and the two were wed in a furtive ceremony at Christmastime in '40. Her father's hope to lure the duke into an alliance with Kiev had, so far, failed but at least the Carpathians no longer allied themselves with the People's Republic. Then Nadia broke *everyone's* hearts by suffering a heart seizure a week later and dying entirely unexpectedly, in her lover's arms.

The queer and self-destructive fascination of the Kievian nobility with the legendary village of Stegiocavar in Transylvania claimed another victim – young Ivanovitch Kalganov – who simply disappeared from his inn and was never seen again.

THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BAKLOVAKIA

Wachowski, First Citizen, Protector of the Workers and Peasants

DIPLOMACY Carpathia(reduced to a c)

The death of old Smyslov, the First Citizen, forced general Wachowski to return to Komaro – and in turn allowed the nubile, yet treacherous Nadia to sneak into Carpathia and suborn the dim-witted (but handsome) Count. Corraling enough sober senators to elect him First Citizen occupied the rest of Wachowski's time.

Rumors out of Alfold revealed the dastardly Kievians were attempting to get the locals to convert to Eastern Orthodox – even giving out free icons and incense! "Religion – other religions than our own pure and untainted Hussitism – are the opiate of the people!" Senator Lybinski proclaimed from the vodka-soaked pulpit of the Senate House. "Hic! Alfold is a valuable source of cream for our pastries!"

Then amazing and welcome news came from the city of Marseilles, where recently some young Baklovakians had gone to attend a pastry cooking school in the bustling free-port.

ALBANIAN EAST INDIA COMPANY

Nikolas Argr, Senior Partner in the AEIC

DIPLOMACY Archolon in Morea(ma),

Despite the various reverses of the past years, the Albanians remained steadfast – and busy. A number of high profile projects were launched (including an aerial hotel and casino called the *Grand Albanian*) and a public project in the city of Alexandria to rebuild the old Library there.



Unfortunately, matters close to home were growing serious. The offices of the Company in Marseilles were destroyed in an apparent terrorist attack, though the efficiency with which the survivors were hunted down and murdered chilled the blood. Further trouble in that city followed, with the students at the local schools (riled up by Baklovakian agitators) mobbing the streets, exchanging gunfire and thrown stones with the city police, then barricading the university district. As Marseilles enjoyed special 'autonomous' status within the Danish Empire, the local Imperials refused to intervene. Within two months, the entire city had fallen to the student revolutionary brigades and their red banners flew bravely from the rooftops and gates. The sound of the Internationale rang from the steeples!

Things were even more dire in Thessaloniki, where a number of Company buildings were destroyed by a massive explosion. Hundreds of workers were killed, and more – it was later learned – died in hospital, strangled or murdered by something leaving a small, round, almost unnoticeable hole. Nikolai began to get the idea someone was out to get him...

Despite this, the Company managed to make its cartel payments, and even send re-shipped grain to the Ethiopians (who, of course, were having a famine). Efforts to hire various bands of mercenaries outside of the Mediterranean failed (busy was very good for mercenaries right now), though the companies under brokerage were available and stood ready to defend various Company installations. Unfortunately, against the sly terrorist attacks being made... they failed.

Tipo escaped from prison in Basra, with spectacular consequences, and the defeat of the Moslems in the Gulf of Oman lent everyone hope. Perhaps the sea-lanes east would be opened again soon. The wives lit a dozen candles each for the safety of the Empress Oniko and her swift homecoming. A shrine was specially constructed, dedicated to the Pale Flame, in Dalmatia, where the Company was also laying out a fine modern city to be called Tirane.

THE SWEDISH EMPIRE OF RUSSIA

Solomon, King of Sweden, Tsar of the All The Russias

Bengt Krycek, Crown Regent and Altkansler

DIPLOMACY None

A subdued election was held, with some difficulties in voting due to so many people being in refugee camps, and a Crown Loyalist senator named Krycek was selected as the new Altkansler. Resettlement programs began planning for the newly Ice-free provinces, though the Royal Army was forced to intervene when it became clear the government did not intend to resettle *this* year, and the provinces of Latvia, Livonia and Polotsk were already free of the taint. The people in the camps wanted to go home *now*.

Though as a whole the Ice did not retreat, the provinces of Saarema and Estonia did become Ice-free.

The Tsar took ship to Trebizond, where the administration of the Tuchkachevsky was being replaced by direct Imperial administration. He was greeted by cheering crowds and parades, and pressed a lot of flesh and kissed many babies. A bad case of the



flu followed, and then the depressing news old Sir Ole Botter had died while serving in Afrika.

Fueled by the trouble in Spain, and rumors the Republicans would expel the Norkstrad Company from their lands, stock in the reputable trading firm took a hammering on the Lubeck Exchange, losing almost a quarter of its value. In the Kalmar, a number of Senators expressed dismay at reports the Company would stoop to meddling in local politics, bribery, and other such shenanigans.

A spate of faddish Hussitism in Morocco was severely dealt with by bishop Stubing, who showed the impressionable youth of the rural districts exactly how one preached the word of the Lord!

THE POLISH FREE STATE

Augustus Leczinski, Duke of Poland

DIPLOMACY None

The Poles continued to live a hardscrabble life, only able to keep the troops fed and housed on Danish subsidies – but that was enough to allow Leczinski's regime to totter along. Numerous officers and enlisted men were sent on early retirement, though the Duke kept them on a new kind of oath which let him call upon them later, if there was trouble. Missionary work continued in Danzig and other provinces, where the Duke hoped to find loyal supporters (rather than Swedish agitators) in another hundred years or so...

THE KNIGHTS OF TABOR

Walter Theisman, Voice of Huss, Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Mount Tabor

DIPLOMACY Burgundy(mn) / Dijon(ch), Tuscany(mn), Warsaw in Poland(mn)

Despite great reservations about the ability of the Senate to implement anything other than a grog-drinking contest, the Knights lent the People's Republic (in Hussite solidarity) a great deal of money. Thiesman made a number of stern comments about 'sobriety' and 'building an economic base' before handing the bags of cash over to the Baklovakian ambassador. That fellow (remarkable for the size of his ears) nodded earnestly, then sloped off to discuss revolutionary politics in the local cafes and drink absinthe.

THE UNITED KINGDOMS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Oliver V Cromwell, King of England, Scotland and Wales

DIPLOMACY None

Aside from a veritable infestation of Papists (and what would old Cromwell I have thought of the Jesuits building an academy and administrative complex south of London? Turning in his grave, most like), peace reigned across green England. The bustling port of Penzance expanded, and large sums were sent to bolster the cause of the Church and the allies of Gran Bretan.

A series of queer booming sounds in the sky above Mercia and parts of Lancashire baffled the police and Royal authorities, though no cause was ever found. Reports of strange circles and signs in local fields were not substantiated.

A continuing, and aggravating shortage of local grain was alleviated by imports from Shawnee (where the rich Amerikan hinterland produced an overwhelming bounty.) The King also begrudgingly agreed to seek a bride – from some suitable family, somewhere. Anyone have a spare princess about, eh wot? He did enjoy the mysterious comings and goings of the Jesuits, and the rather kabalistic initiation rites for the Grand Master of the Order were quite fun. Then his sister Margaret died in a horse-jumping accident (put her head into the covered bridge...) and he fell into a complete blue funk, from which nothing could rouse him.

Perforce, matters of administration devolved into the hands of his Crown Ministers and the privy council, but everyone was very worried.

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Vladimir Tukhachevsky, Vicar-General of the Society of Jesus, Defender of the Faith

DIPLOMACY Sussex (of) / London(op), Andalusia(oe), Takrur (oo), Skane(oo), Lithuania(op), Morroco(op) / St. George-the-Defender(oh), Bomi(op), Mbundu(oh), Faeroes(oh), Lisbon in Portugal (oh), Granada(oh) / Cortez (oh), Malmo in Skane(oh), Nantes in Poitou(oh)

Somewhere outside of the pestilential sprawl of London, amid green fields on a vast and well-ordered country estate, a conclave gathered in rapidly falling dusk. Countless candles and torches illuminated a long procession of potentates, kings, princes, priests from every corner of the globe. A simple shrine stood under the brow of a turfed hill, a gleaming marble statue of the Risen Christ standing alone on the altar, the dark, almost invisible shape of a simple wooden cross behind him.

The ceremony was short, entirely in archaic Church latin, and the man kneeling before the old priest bowed his newly tonsured head. "Do you accept the service of Christ, his Church and his people, forever?"

"I do," Vladimir Tukhachevsky answered, rising newly anointed, a prince of the Church, and now founder of the Society of Jesus. A white brand, a keen blade, by which the Catholic nations hoped to drive back the darkness and usher in a new, golden age.

Expansive support in gold, men, arms, materials (even entire corps of clerks, priests and librarians) were provided by all the Catholic realms save that of Judea, which was rather aloof from the proceedings. The Shawnee, however, more than made up for the lack – for the faith of the western kingdom was strong, and a bulwark against all darkness, be it of the Ice, or of Huss.

THE FRANKISH COMMONWEALTH

Jacques du Maine, Archon of the Commonwealth

DIPLOMACY None

Equal prosperity and peace blessed the Franks, who saw the cities of Paris and Brest expand, while Paris herself blossomed with grand new parks, boulevards, repaired walls and cleaned up streets. Work on the huge new sewer system was completed, and everyone was able to breath a sigh of relief. The airship factories outside the urban limits were also busy as a hive of bees, turning out six new sky-ships to add to the busy Commonwealth airfleet.

Princess Margaret's attempt to return home to Paris via the Danish port of Marseilles was confounded by the student revolution in that city and the foundation of their 'Commune de Populare' which denied her fleet entry into the harbor. After considering storming the city with her army, the princess relented (the troubles of Denmark were not currently *her* problem) and the fleet spent the rest of the year sailing around to the port of Brest. Eventually, she did make her way home.

THE DANISH EMPIRE

Oniko Paleolagai, Queen of the Greeks, Empress of the Danes, Protector of Italy, Mjolnir-na-Midgaard, Rex Germanicus, Pendragon of the Isles

DIPLOMACY Illyria(ea), Thebes(ea)/Al-Hasan(f)

Regent Claudia, having dispensed with the immediate need for her husband (who was essentially exiled to the island of Capri to amuse himself among the water niads and fisherwomen), inked



orders sending a considerable amount of aid to various and sundry poorer Hussite powers. She did not grumble over-much about this, for she took a certain delight in stymieing the intrigues of the Swede and his Popish allies.

All Venice turned out in delight to watch the arrival of the massive new Albanian aerial hotel and casino, the *Grand Albanian*, which called at the Venice aerodrome on her maiden voyage. Capable of carrying a hundred passengers in something like comfort (though the cabins were very small), and providing them with meals, entertainment and a chance to wager some small sums, the *G.A.* is undoubtedly the queen of the skies.

The long-wrecked cities of Ulm in Swabia and Munich in Bavaria were resettled and the arduous task of clearing away old rubble and building new, model cities began. Imperial architects were on hand in each case to oversee the birth of the new from the ruin of the old. The provinces of Lorraine, Champagne and Nivernais were populated up to 2 GPv each. Everywhere the dank forests rang with the sound of axes, and the city streets were filled with hammering, sawing and the clamor of honest labor. Very slow work continued on the Venice to Trieste railroad.

A severe earthquake rocked Liguria, destroying hundreds of buildings in Genoa and causing widespread panic. Countless cows milk curdled, and a variety of wildlife was panicked. Moderate fires raged in the port city afterwards, but most of the damage was actually done to the port facilities, which were substantially damaged.

Claudia, having reviewed the latest reports from Egypt, and having read the personal letters from her commanders in the field there (Tiechman and Rossolimo) signed an Imperial Decree asserting the sovereignty of the Empire (by her marriage to the prince Skikda) over those provinces still controlled by the Emir of Libya and his descendants. "Order," she declared in a rather grim, irritated tone, "will be restored."⁷

The diplomatic spat with the city fathers of Copenhagen continued (they really had high expectations, being the old Danish capital) and despite the fumbling efforts of lord Pedrag, they renounced their allegiance to the Empire entirely.

At the end of '40, a battered, grimy fleet of Danish steamships and captured Moslem galleons arrived at Krak de Chevailers, the Empress firmly in command. Her men were tired and worn from the long, dangerous voyage around the world. They had fond thoughts of home, but they had not seen Venice yet.

NÖRSKTRAD

Johannes Teugen, Mäklarevalde of the Nordic Trading Company

DIPLOMACY Friesland(f), Polonarva on Seylan(mf), Brehmen in Gambia(ma), Brest in Brittany(bo)

Faced with civil insurrection in the Spanish capital, the Company ordered Malcom and Marget (Johannes' children, and able lieutenants) home with all speed. Though the Imperial Guard had promised to protect the offices of the Company, the Maklarevalde did not trust them one bit. His agents also secured the marriage of young Malcom to Lucrea of Friesland, binding his family to that duchy in a political alliance.



As it happened, Malcom and his fleet returned to Lisbon just in time. The various revolutionary and counter-revolutionary elements in the capital had gone wild, rioting in huge mobs, shouting slogans, flinging stones and burning brands at one another. A particularly vicious and well-organized crowd attacked the Offices of the Company with clubs, sledges, scaling ladders and fire. Malcom and his sailors from the fleet rushed to defend the compound and a fierce melee resulted among the warehouses and offices. Though the Company sailors (a rough lot) threw back the attack – causing thousands of casualties – hundreds of workmen, artisans, clerks and stevedores in the compound had been dragged from their offices or barracks and beaten to death.

The Maklarevalde, arriving after security had been restored, looked around with a sick, sinking expression. "Our enemies are growing bold," he muttered to his son. "What next, I wonder?"

Company possessions, holdings and warehouses in Andalusia, Aragon, Barcelona, Murcia, Madrid and Talavera were all attacked and damaged or destroyed by agitated mobs or revolutionaries.

THE REPUBLIC OF SPAIN

Largo Cabellero, Commandante of the Imperial Guard and protector of the State

DIPLOMACY None

Besieged as he was by economic chaos, sputtering rebellion and trouble at levels high and low, Largo proved to be a cunning leader – he concentrated on the business of trade. New ships were built to carry Spanish goods to foreign realms, he paid off the debts incurred by the previous regime, he invested in new works in Catalonia (a notorious hotbed of anti-Lisbon sentiment) and he raised new garrisons and regiments to secure his rule.

However – despite good intentions – the Commandante failed to actually entrust these new troops to anyone, or order his generals to take the field to restore order in the cities and repress banditry in the countryside. Instead, the Guard captains were scattered here and there to investigate conspiracies and plots and intrigues... they made arrests, they dragged people from their beds and put them to the question, they annoyed everyone high and low alike. The Church, in particular, they singled out for 'inspection.'

So revolution – and a vigorous response from the great landowners and the Church – was allowed to ferment unopposed. Largo was well thought of by both sides, and all the factions plagued him for support and aid. He did not respond, sunk in his own twisted world of conspiracies... and while he scabbled to find the *truth*, Spain burned. The great university at Seville exploded first – the students running wild, battling the city guard and the condotierri of the landowners – inspired by the commune of Marseilles. Then Aquitaine and the city of Limoges in Auvergne, Galacia, Navarre, Old Castille and Salamanca. The cities followed the revolution, the provinces fought for a return to royal rule and the privilege of the landed classes.

Efforts to arrest the great nobles (particularly Jose Sanchez de Leon of Navarre) failed, and Jose proclaimed himself king of a reborn Span, and duke of Navarre. The other nobles flocked to his banner, and the Church (fearful of the destruction wreaked upon its sanctuaries in those lands under Communal rule) pledged their support to 'restore peace and serenity.'

Trapped between now opposing powers, the provinces of Asturias and Leon immediately agreed to pay reduced taxes to both Navarre and Spain, as well as allowing free passage for Jose's armies. Emboldened by this success, the new King gathered an army in Navarre and marched on Barcelona. There, one of Largo's generals (Antonio) was muddling about in local affairs. Faced with invasion, he mustered the local garrison and barricaded himself in the strongly fortified city. Jose Sanchez was welcomed by cheering

⁷ The particulars of the edict, in fact, ordered the Imperial Army to establish direct control over those lands – in preparation for their transfer to the control of a reliable power (presumably Carthage) – save for the province of Mansura, which was declared a direct Imperial possession, to be administered by a Governor for the state.

crowds in the countryside, and by curses, insults and Republican flags waving over the walls of the city.

The noble King saw he had little chance of breaking such defenses, so he left his son Diego Alfonso to besiege the city with a quarter of his men, and then marched away south (his spies reporting the port of Tortosa had no walls or defenses). Meanwhile, in Lisbon, general Diego Tordes (one of Largo's innumerable cousins) had begged the Commandante to give him an army to suppress the rebellion of Navarre. Grudgingly, Largo gave him a few thousand men and sent him off.

Disgusted with his commander's short sightedness, Diego pushed his men in a quick march across the breadth of Spain. They entered Valencia at much the same time as Jose Sanchez and his army. After a bit of chasing one another around the countryside, Diego managed to force a battle at **Demures** between his ten thousand Republican Army troops and Jose Sanchez and 13,000 Royalists. Despite the difference in numbers, Diego's Republican troops were all veterans and well equipped, and his artillery batteries were of a particularly heavy weight.

A particularly swirling battle followed, with cavalry charges, sallies, retreats and two pitched infantry melees – but Jose Sanchez (despite being not quite as good a commander as Diego) managed to force his enemy from the field, punishing the Republicans and maintaining the valor and morale of his own men. The victory was very narrow, but for the Royalists it was a god-send. Valencia fell to them, and the port of Tortosa.

Diego fell back into Murcia to regroup. Jose Sanchez struck northwest into the mountains, ending '40 in Aragon and threatening to sweep down upon Madrid. Diego, perforce, moved into the city to prevent him. Requests for more troops, sent by courier to Largo, had failed to elicit a response.

Amid all the other troubles, rumors began to circulate of a Hussite fifth column active in Spanish cities, and (most disturbing of all) among certain of the intelligentsia and the government officers. Despite investigations by the Office of the Inquisition, no culprits were found and the rumors died down. However, a particularly hostile relationship resulted between the Republic and the Papacy – one which was acclaimed in the streets by the students and workers, who found no allies among the Black Coats.

THE DUCHY OF THE ISLES

Neya al' Raschid, Empress of the Isles, Emir of Archimedeia, Duchess of Sicily and Sardinia

DIPLOMACY None

The Islanders – more than a little shocked by the Georgian response to their missionary efforts in Palestine – huddled in the various cities, wondering if they were going to be attacked. They were not (the Georgians had different fish to fry), though old Aya finally suffered a choking fit and died. Her daughter Neya rushed home from Calabria to take the throne of the Duchess.

Church authorities in Sicily were stunned to learn a Hussite clergyman (in fact, a Knight Commander of the notorious and depraved Taboric Order) was a guest of the baron of Archimedeia. They protested, and were politely told to mind their own business. The specter of Denmark loomed too large over the Duchy to be rude to Hussite guests. Hussite priests were also seen lurking about in the hills of Morea, waylaying the peasants on the roads and in the fields. Of course, Papal missionaries were very active in Calabria, where they were making good headway among the peasantry.

The continuing trouble in Spain fed a virulent series of rumors the Norskrad would be expelled from that nation, and from all ports in Catholic nations. Given the Albanians hated the Norskrad with a passion, this left the company very few options...

THE CHURCH OF ROME

Clement VII, Pater Patrias, Pope of the Roman Church, The Vicar of Christ, The Successor To Peter, The Keeper of the Keys, The Servant of the Servants of God, Patriarch of Azteca, Soldier of Light

DIPLOMACY Sicily(mn)

Still quite irritated with Georganta's failure in Vastmark, the Pope took ship south into African waters for an official visit to the small nation. He found a lukewarm reception, but still managed to make headway in restoring normal relations between the Holy See and the prince's government.

A small delegation arrived from distant Mon, in Khemer lands, and begged the Vicar to protect them from the attacks of the Buddhist thugs employed by the notorious prince Moldo. "All we wish to do," the Monese cried, "is worship in peace! Yet they set upon us with clubs and spiked whips, scourging us while we take mass. Or they burn down our churches, or..." Clement was troubled – the situation in the Far East was tending towards a collision between the two faiths.

Quite pleased, the Vicar sent a large delegation to England to assist (and guide) the foundation of the Society of Jesus. Clement hoped the order would prove a puissant weapon against the enemies of the Church and God.



AFRIQA

<i>Mercenary Troops</i>	32i, 12a, 5c (HC/Lencolar) 5i, 23lea, 20t, 50lt (RC) 1hc, 2c, 3xc, 1hi (Coptic)
<i>Mercenary AQRs</i>	c15 i18 a14 (for all)
<i>Mercenary Leaders</i>	Bey Senghor (MB96) (SN), General Xho (M936) (RC)
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	Norsktrad (RC), (none ~ HC/Lencolar)

THE EMIRATE OF CARTHAGE

Hamilcar Barca, Emir of Augustina, Sultan of Tunisia

DIPLOMACY Al'Hauts(t), Tangiers in Zirid(a)

Work began on the long, laborious process of repairing the damage done by the Tuareg raiders – and rural life in Kabilya, Tunisia and Algeria perked up a little. Hamilcar oversaw the repair of hundreds of wells and windbreaks in Tunisia alone. The Sultan's wife Daia presented him with a son – pleasing Barca to no end – who was named for his grandfather, Isketerol.

A sternly worded note arrived from the Swedish Foreign Office, expressing the concern of the Swedish crown over missionary activity in the Exarchate of Inner Africa. A suggestion to pursue new converts in Central Asia was presented. Despite this, Carthaginian priests continued to infiltrate into the Al'Hauts highlands, bringing the word of Huss to the backcountry farmers and herders.

Papal missionaries were arrested attempting to enter Kabilya by boat. They made a bedraggled lot, all sopping wet and dragged before the municipal judge. Sixty priests were set to weeding the public parks in punishment, then expelled from the nation.

CHRISTIAN EMIRATE OF LIBYA

Beni Saida, Emir of Egypt and Lybia

DIPLOMACY None

Now secure in his suzerainty thanks to the huge Danish army encamped in Egypt, Beni Saida decided to take a vacation and poke around in the ancient tombs and ruined cities of Lower Egypt. And indeed, he and his cohort Mashir managed to get into a bit of trouble (and Mashir ended *his* days in the maw of a jackal of unusual size), while Saida escaped with some crumbling, ancient



trinkets. Unfortunately, while he was playing among the tombs, a decision had been made in distant Venice.

Without warning, the Danish troops encamped around Alexandria rushed to enter the city on a cold spring morning of April, '39. At the same moment, the Danish steam-ship squadron at Canopus chugged into position to blockade the port, and the sky was filled with the fat, gray shapes of Imperial Air Corps zeppelins. Under the command of Sir Carl Schlechter, the expeditionary force leapt to seize control of the province and the Libyan state.

General Darrah (who held command of the Libyan garrison of the port and capital) was taken entirely by surprise. Before he could react, or his men could even rush from their barracks, Danish commandoes had seized him, and the garrison was waking at gunpoint. The entire government was seized as well.

Only Beni Saida escaped – having already left for the desert. One of his servants managed to warn him away from returning, and the Emir vanished into the desert with a few boon companions. Oh, he cursed Denmark and rued the day he had ever heard of Muslama the Cleric! Swearing vengeance, he sidled away over the dunes. “I will return,” he muttered.

Under cover of darkness, a Danish squadron departed Krak de Chevaliers in the spring of '39, paddle-wheels groaning in the water, the bright flare of coal-flames leaping from the iron stacks of steamship boilers. Captain Shlechter was taking his gunboat command into southern waters, to find and meet his Empress on the far side of the world.

Teichman, now in command of the army in Egypt, spent the rest of '39 and '40 subduing the provinces of Faiyum (and taking Meroe after a bitter siege) and improving relations with the lords of Thebes (who were well pleased to have picked the winning side already.) He did not have time to deal with the tribes of Ghebel-Garib or Aswan (much less the nest of Swedes at St. Gustavus).

THE PRINCIPATE OF VASTMARK

William Casimir, Stadholder of Takrur, Prince of Vastmark

DIPLOMACY Some effects

The prince was very concerned to read a dire set of reports from certain internal ministries – but then the **Pope** showed up with about a million cardinals, guardsmen, ships, valets, chanting monks, praying nuns and all the rest of the Papal carnivale and William was forced to play host for months on end while Il Papa wandered the countryside, inspecting churches and generally being pontifical.

And while the prince and his guardsmen were entirely distracted keeping an eye on the Pope (and the Holy Father out of harm's way), someone pulled a slick little caper and stole nearly half of the gold being transferred to the Norskrtrad Brehmen Bank to pay for a substantial government loan. A broken wooden statue of Cicero was found near the crime scene, as well as discarded Scottish kilts.

THE MALI AX EMPIRE

Nine-Jaguar, ne-Axamaloa na-Tochul, King of the Mixtecs, Lord of the Niger, Captain of the Firestorm Banner, True Emperor of the Aztecs, Emperor of Mali, DarkLord of Africa

DIPLOMACY Onogui in Teke(nt), Xuicaxl in Zerma(nt), Soro(f), Gagnoa(down to t)

Entirely unconcerned about the travails of the world (for, really, there was no one nearby who could cause them harm), the Mixtecs were busy as bees – a road was started from Ife to Yoruba, new cities were built (Ax Aztlan on the Gagnoa coast, and Ax Popopoyotl in Soro on the marshy shore of Tchad). Work also



continued in every workshop, office and palace to adopt the queer, non-traditional and annoyingly Eurocentric Lisbon Conventions.

Prince Quimchettl came of age (and having passed the test of adulthood, and not having died) was declared Nine-Jaguar's heir. The counting-men in the Court of Coins were happy to learn trade with the Masai had begun again. Missionary work continued apace among the Moslem of Teke (without even a rebellion!)

After a bit of diplomatic bickering, the Sud Afriqans convinced the Mixtecs to abandon control of the province of Uige (so, presumably, the RSA to assert control over the region). Dutifully, the Mixtecs withdrew their garrison. And then waited... and waited some more. The Afriqans never showed up. The Catholics of Uige went about their own business, electing a prince to lead them and getting on with life.

THE FREE REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

Fredik, Regent for...

Saul Ashūr, President-For-Life of Ethiopia

DIPLOMACY Bah!

“I do not care,” Fredik proclaimed to his generals and advisors, “if these Axumites are holy warriors or not. They have invaded our lands and despoiled our people.” The Regent's brown finger stabbed out at the vast encampment sprawled on the dusty plain around the city of Soba. “We *will march* upon the infidel and destroy them.” So it was that sixty thousand Ethiopians picked up their kit bag and swung off south, muskets over their shoulders, to war and glory in the highland mountains.

Grain came from the Albanian merchants, and was parceled out to the starving, which alleviated a little of the suffering in this parched, desert nation.

AXUM

Eon, Nagusa Negast of the Ethiops, Favored of Jah, Protector of the Cave

DIPLOMACY None

Though crippled by drought and poverty, the Axumites were not yet dead men – the Negusa Negast had posted a wary patrol on the border with Ethiopia and they hurried back to Addis-Adaba with news of invasion. They found the city in mourning – black-masked men had set upon Ousanas as he returned from the bathing house one morning and stabbed the great leader to death. His guardsmen had rushed to his aid, but by the time they had driven off the Ethiops (for the assassins proudly bore the tattoos and signs of the Sharp Hand, a fraternal order of Ethiopian warriors) Ousanas' life had gushed out on the ground.

His younger brother Eon took command, and soon learned an army three times the size of the warriors he commanded was sweeping across the plains of Sennar. Further, he learned from panicked merchants the Regent Fredik had decided to punish the cities who had made an accommodation with the Axumites – Fashoda was already in flames, every last ducat, bolt of cloth and item of furniture looted away by the Ethiopians.

“We will go then,” the young Negusa proclaimed. “So we came, on horse and camel and donkey, so we will go.” His people rushed to gather themselves, to fill their panniers, pack up their tents, abandon the rich villas and houses they had tenanted for only six years. Eon himself led his army into the mountains athwart the path the Ethiopians must take and lay in wait, intending to buy time for the escape of his people.

Fredik, however, was well informed by his spies and rushed his men forward, hoping to catch the fleeing Axumites on the march. Eon (who was a man wise in the ways of battle) divined his intent and rode swiftly away to the south. The Ethiops entered the high valleys of Shoa unopposed, and fell upon Addis-Adaba were terrible ferocity. As Fashoda had suffered, so too did the ancient

capital, and there Fredrik found great treasure in the houses of the merchants, the churches and even the dwellings of the poor.

These baubles purchased escape for Eon and his people, who found their way down onto the coastal plain and into the lands of the Masai kings. Fredrik was pleased to see them go, and took a certain satisfaction in seeing them plague the southerners.

THE MAASAI KINGDOM

Tudar Kaii, King of the Maasai, Emperor of Ethiopia

DIPLOMACY None

Tudar was angling for a reign-name of “The Builder,” setting his engineers and a huge horde of workers on cutting a highway from the jungles of Ankolye up through the Mountains of the Moon and down to the festering, monkey-plague infested port of Kisanjani on the upper Congo. A mighty doing, and one promising to take many years – but the Masai set about the task with great energy.

The last thing anyone expected, as a result, was an invasion of the northern provinces by a huge horde of Axumite refugees and a whole pile of angry-looking religious zealots. But, prince Eon needed to go *somewhere* and the provinces of Danakil, Djibuti and Zeila where just *sitting* there. The Axumites swept in, slapped aside a paltry resistance mounted by the city police and local magistrates, and everyone got new homes! By the seaside! With a view!

King Kaii was very, very displeased.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

M'beron, Protector of the Senate and the Republic

DIPLOMACY Ujimbili in Matabele(ea)

Faced with a very tight agricultural situation, the Senate weaseled out of sending the biannual tribute to the Masai (even though they still owed a very large amount of grain to the northern kingdom for another four years), and instead set every hand to work on clearing more land, planting more fields and generally being fruitful and multiplying. As a result, the provinces of Matopos, Banhine and Matabele all increased to 2 GPv.

In other news, the well-loved mayor of Ujimbili died.

THE HONORABLE SUD AFRICA COMPANY

Kaiune, Master of the Southern House

DIPLOMACY None

Continued to quietly make money and stay out of the papers.

NORTH AMERIKA

<i>Mercenary Troops</i>	8hi, 7ha, 1xec, 28i, 24c, 5a, 1z ⁸
<i>Mercenary AQRs</i>	c14 i18 a14
<i>Mercenary Leaders</i>	Nikephen Nine-Feather (M8.6.7)
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	(none)

THE ORDER OF TLAHULLI (THE FLOWERING SUN)

Chikiel, Master of the Order, Shield of the Sun against the Ten Thousand Enemies

DIPLOMACY Tenochtitlan(of), Totnac(oe)

Plagued by constant cold, terrifying winters, frigid summers, enormous bears, constant attacks by bands of Inuit raiders and the queer dreams who come to all those who dwell where <They> have once set foot – Chikiel decided to accede to the wishes and prayers of both the Aztec Emperor and the Sisters of the Rose, and return to the sunny middle lands. The knights of the Order packed up their bags, marched down to Azoton and boarded ship for the journey back to the center of the world.

Much later, having arrived in Tenochtitlan (the fifth direction), an enormous and well-attended ceremony saw the Emperor himself place the signs and portents of the Flowering Sun into Chikiel's hands. A great palace in the island city was given over to the Order's use, as well as many lands, estates and farms in Totonac province. The Master was well pleased, his heart fortified by the faith of so many people, and warm at last upon him again from the divine Sun.

THE NISEI REPUBLIC

Tokugawa Akari, Commander of the Armies of the Republic, Protector of the Emperor of All Japan, daitoryo of the Diet

DIPLOMACY Sawtai(t)

“Restoration,” Akari declared upon the occasion of the Cherry Blossom Watching Festival in Usonomiya, “as the Sun renews the Earth, and Kwannon-Ameratsu shines down upon us all, marking the seasons, both of decay and of rebirth.”

While the daitoryo was smiling for the press, work gangs were cutting a new highway south from Yokuts to Melias in Serrano. At the same time, the northern lands were filled with countless streams of refugees moving into the desolated lands of Chehalis, Chemakum, Comox, Nez Perce and Timishian (all now resettled to 2 GPv). Work also began on translating the voluminous Lisbon Accords documents (which grew larger with each nation completing implementation) into Japanese.

The Diet composed and dispatched a letter to the Emperor of All Japan (who was making a slow, ceremonial procession through old Japan) to return to the land of the golden mountain and bless the fields now returned to the till, and the rice paddies once more flooded and filled with spring shoots.

THE HIGH KINGDOM OF COLORADO

Fredrik Grosse, King of the Ute, High King of Colorado

DIPLOMACY None

Things had settled down enough for der Grosse to think of something other than casting more cannon and placing more men under arms. An arrangement was struck with the Aztec Empire for the defense of Unita and the Holy Tower. New plantations of high-mountain cotton were started in Navajo and many men who had served under “Iron” Wilks were pensioned off.

A number of merchants petitioned the king to build a royal highway from Moache to Tiwa, but the cost seemed very high to all concerned. Der Gross thought the idea a good one, though. A rather daring experiment in regional autonomy was also launched, with direct Royal control over the provinces of Shoshoni, Hopi, Capitan and Coahuila being withdrawn. The entire province of Apache was granted as a personal fiefdom to the DuPlain family, as a reward for services rendered. Der Grosse retained garrisons and tax collectors in the cities, however.

The Sisters established one of their public schools in Unita, well within the protective embrace of the fortifications at Mesa Verde, to see to the education of the children of the soldiers stationed there, and the local ranchers.

Following the political rhetoric emanating from New Jerusalem, the High Kingdom declared a ban on all parties, contracts, embassies and merchants associated with the Catholic-devil-spawn known as the Aeronautical Research and Fabrication company.⁹



⁸ A pair of ex-Inuit Taguak airships, just looking for work, y'know?

⁹ Though Fredrik would not have minded owning a few of those clever ships of the air.

ARAPAHO TEXAS

Ugraima of the Arapaho, Great Chief of the Plains, Duke of Ayoel

DIPLOMACY None

The Scar-Eye cast about and found he held no wife worthy of the name. Displeased by this, he sent his uncle Spear-Handed down into the river delta (where there were many 'civilized' people) to acquire him a wife who might teach him these other ways. Old Nemukare found a girl of good family, and brought her back. Her name was Anna Paulain, and she went among the Arapaho with great fear¹⁰. Still, in the end, she bore Ugraima a healthy, strong son and found her own place among his people.

Grappling with his own inability to govern his vast new domain, Ugraima let the Kiowa, Mescalero and Wichita ride free. Considerable missionary activity began in Arapaho-held Caddo, as Shawnee priests went to help the plainsmen expunge the last of these Buddhist devil-dogs.

THE SHAWNEE EMPIRE

Treya Stormdragon, Queen of the Shawnee, Empress of the Iroquois

DIPLOMACY

A heavy weight lifted from Treya's old shoulders – the harvests had been good, filling the land with bounty, and the bellies of Shawnee children with corn, potatoes, chicken – she was even able to assist her allies (England, the Papacy, the ARF) with grants of grain, cloth, timber, iron ingots... all the fuel of commerce.

A massive effort to restore the public schools flowed from this, with the Empress considering making six years of education mandatory, rather than just three. The owners of workshops, family farms, the mines – everyone complained – but she had her eyes on a long road, rather than a short.

Treya signed a joint letter of understanding with the Nisei ambassador, proclaiming the westerners to have suzerainty over the provinces of Santee and Iowa. A truly staggering amount of building continued as the Stormdragon intended to throw back the ruin of the Ice and restore her realm to splendor: a highway (and glorious bridge) were built from Michigamea to Kaskinapo, then down through Chickasaw and Muskogee into Yamasee. This joined the Western Road to the Eastern at old Kolomoki town. At the same time, the postal road running through Creek, Cheraw and Monacan was upgraded to a real highway.

A bustling work-town was built in Muskogee (Tecumseh) to support all of the work. Men began to re-enter Erie and Miami, clearing the roads and cutting back growth from the fields (both became (0/3) provinces.) A petulant and very dissatisfied princess Valeria was sent to oversee this business, which she found unendingly dull.

A surprisingly large number of clerks and ministers who had (at some time or another) displeased the Stormdragon were packed up on boats and shipped off to London, where they were placed in the care of the Society of Jesus, who made them work harder than they had ever worked before in their entire lives. Back in Shawnee, their presence was not (in fact) missed at all. Admiral Kelis (who commanded the massive fleet moving all those pencil-pushers) did not survive the voyage, and the even more venerable Ambassador Sige found himself acting the admiral before '40 was out, and the fleet was home again.

AERONAUTICAL RESEARCH AND FABRICATION WEST

Jessica Orozco, Captain of Mahair, Signeur of the Indies

DIPLOMACY Foiled!

¹⁰ *My Life Among The Savages Of This New World* was later published by a Swedish publisher and became a more than minor success in European literary and scientific circles.

Jessica, aboard her flagship *Marguerite*, attempted to inspect the company holdings in Itza on the Aztec coast. Unfortunately, the Imperial government had recently issued a very stern series of edicts banning her, her ships, her agents and anything to do with her and the ARF from Aztec lands. Indeed, while Jessica was arguing with the port authorities in Itza, the company offices, funds, factories, farms and so on throughout the Empire were being seized. Disugsted and disturbed by this turn of events, the Signeur returned to Arawak to fulminate.

Upon her return, she learned the Company holdings on Ciguayo had been summarily ejected from the island.

THE AZTEC EMPIRE OF MEXICO

Trákonel "The Victorious", Emperor of Mexico, Warrior of Christ, Protector of the Faith, Smiter of the Infidel, Conqueror of the Incans, Rex Britannicus

DIPLOMACY Huastec(f), Unita(ea)

The Victorious summoned his Flower Knights to attend him again, and made them many gifts. By means of his great efforts, the Tlahulli returned to the navel of the world and established themselves in a great calpulli in the district of Glassmakers on the once-holy isle. The praises of the priests flew to heaven like thunder.

Tired of looking at the map and seeing such a tiny portion of California under his control, Trákonel established a penal colony in Mohave (making the region a 0/10 desert.) Too, this helped defend the passage along the Colorado, particularly since they also secured governance of Unita (and protection of the Tower) from the Colorado.

This settlement was only part of a larger effort by the Empire to expand into the desolate lands around the Colorado – the Smoking Sun and Jaguar Legions were fighting a campaign of suppression against the Moapa and the Paiute at the same time. Though the soldiers were hot, dusty and footsore by the time they were done, the scattered Shinto tribesmen were driven away or killed. The Eagle Legion was also busy along the coast, gathering up garrisons and marching them north.

In the east, the Sword of Empire fleet scoured the Carribean for ARF shipping in Aztec waters and shoo'ed it away if found. The Emperor's office made a statement on the matter:

"Whereas the current leaders of Aeronautical Research and Fabrication West have illegally and violently siezed control of that company from its rightful owner, the late Blake Henry; and whereas said leaders are in collusion with remnants of the vile Frost Wolf and Inuit, who so recently wreaked untold havoc and suffering upon the world: it is hereby resolved by the undersigned that all agreements between our nations and the ARF are to be considered immediately null and void. The ARF factors at work in our cities will be identified and expelled, and their offices closed. Beginning in 1741 all foreign shipping carried by the ARF will be turned away from our ports. Further, after 1740 any ship flying the ARF flag in the New World will be considered fair game for privateers. In this way the ARF will begin to make some small reparations for the deprivations of their (alleged) Frost Wolf allies."

A representative of the Company responded from offices in London:

Though some few employees of the Company may, at one time, have been in the employ of the notorious bandits called FrostWolf, none currently employed are in the service of the <Others> or their minions.

At press-time, the matter was still unresolved.



THE SISTERS OF THE ROSE

Kelly Davias, Holy Mother of the Lencolar Christian Order

DIPLOMACY Maya(mn), Tairona(ch), Brass in Ife(mn),
Ipai(ch)/Popol Vuh(ch), Ponta Grossa in
Cumangoto(ch)

Mindful of the necessity of attacking evil and the powers of the Ice in places both high and low, the Sisters gave generously to support the foundation of the Flowering Sun order in Tenochtitlan. At home, eager Caquetian volunteers crowded the churches and hostels of New Jerusalem, expanding the city to a 2 GPv.

SOUTH AMERIKA

<i>Mercenary Troops</i>	5i, 1xei, 1c, 1a, 1ea (Lencolar) 18i, 15c, 10a (RC)
<i>Mercenary AQRs</i>	c14 i18 a14
<i>Mercenary Leaders</i>	None
<i>Hiring Contact</i>	(none)

THE KINGDOM OF CAQUETIO

Gimoc of Aburra, Lord of the North

DIPLOMACY None

Always ready to help, the Sisters built a fine new hospital in Ponta Grossa to lend aid and assistance to those maimed by the tidal waves. The popularity of the Lencolar faith continued to rise and the concomitant decline in Roman Catholic influence became very noticeable. In fact, the provinces of Tairona (and Belem), Timote (and Aruba), and Aburra became openly Lencolar Christian. Gimoc was openly pleased by this.

Royal engineers continued to be gainfully employed in building fortifications all across the nation. The king intended to be prepared for war. Like numerous other nations in the trading block oriented around Aztec, Caquetio banned the ships, agents and activities of the ARF from their lands.

THE KNIGHTS OF SAINT JOHN

Samuel Mendez de Montoya, Grand-Master of the Knights of Saint John, Emperor of Caquetio, Fist of Christ, King of New Granada

DIPLOMACY None

Mindful of the wishes of his Pope, Samuel continued to send armies tramping about the northern cane-growing provinces, intending to stamp out the last of the Zionists and their Lencolar heresy. Black-Robes in abundance thronged the provinces of Terembembe and Timbira, though they made little or no progress upon converting the wayward. Otherwise, things in the southlands were very quiet.

THE PRINCIPATE OF BOLIVIA

Thome Mascate, Prince of Bolivia, Duke of Trishka

DIPLOMACY Quillaca/Gaxan(f)

More of the huge mass of troops Thome had raised for the war against the Ice were sent home, or given new farms and workshops. Work continued on the Lisbon Accords, in a sputtering, half-hearted way. There was just too much to do for messing about with standard sizes of glass canning jars. By dint of the Duke's presence (and enormous pressure) young Ramon was gotten a Quillacan wife, and that province came entirely under Thome's control.



After about a million years of debating and hemming and hawing, the French began to invest some effort in their southern provinces – in particular, a port city (Novo Ghent) was built in Mapuche (formerly the most distant, rural and unvisited part of the Empire). Another district town, Limoges, in the pampas ranching country of Poya, was also expanded into a real city.

A real highway was also built from Atuel down to Le Mans in Pueleche. There was some discussion the road should have been cut inland into Millcayac, but the baron of that land refused passage for the surveyors and engineers. "You'll scare the cows," he growled over the sights of a double-barreled shotgun.

BANK LIST

Nation	Bank	GP	Rate
Frankish Commonwealth	Banque du Lyons	483	40%
Chan Mongol Empire	Uncle Wu's	472	40%
United Kingdoms of Britain	Royal Bank of London	912	38%
Free Republic of Ethiopia	Funj Gold Reserves	265	40%
The Khemer Empire	Pronunkuram Vaults	563	40%
Principate of Kiev	Royal Bank of Khitai	142	35%
Principate of Kiev	Norsktrad Kiev Bank	182	40%
Coptic Kingdom of Maasai	M'Beya House of Credit	889	35%
The Nisei Republic	Yedo Matsuma Bank	325	40%
The Republic of Spain	Aztlan Mercantile Credit	269	25%
The Republic of Spain	Banque du Galway	320	40%
Empire of Swedish-Russia	BUX	407	45%
Duchy of the Three Isles	First Merchant of Valetia	350	40%
Principate of Vastmark	Brehmen Bank	164	30%
Java - Where It's Warm(tm)	Sunny Sunda Savings	924	40%

THE NEW FRENCH EMPIRE

Louis de'Saone, Emperor of France, Prince of Varres, Lord of the South, Smiter of the Heretic

DIPLOMACY None