1 Committee On East-Realm Cooperative Endeavors

You are a member of COERCE, a small but vocal group of political activists who have been trying for several years to convince the leaders of both countries to listen to reason and end the Great War. Now, it seems, you may actually have accomplished that goal! Through your actions, the leaders of the Clans and the Realm are here, on the Castle, together, *talking* about their difficulties rather than fighting them out!!! You almost didn't believe it was possible.

Your committee had a lot of things going against it at first. For one thing, you were mostly political neophytes, with very little knowledge of how governments work behind the scenes. For another, you were *very* different people, and often your different outlooks on things made agreement difficult. After all, you number among your members Hyacinth Goldenfield, a Clan farmgirl; Benhadad Zachariah and Abimael Eve, Realm Counsels; and ???? ???? ????? But in that diversity also lay your greatest strength -- the practice you had in working together despite your backgrounds was crucial in convincing national leaders to do the same.

So okay, you were a bit sneaky about it. Still, nobody but you four have to know that you lied a little bit, telling each of the Clan Heads and each of the Peers that the others had already agreed to a peace summit. You didn't believe such a ridiculously simple notion could work, but somehow it did! Leave it to Hyacinth to come up with it.

Kalerege's agreeing to open the Castle came as something of a surprise to you, but it was a quite welcome surprise, coming as it did at a time when it seemed all of your efforts would be wasted by the lack of a neutral meeting place. You still aren't sure what his reasons were, but you, and perhaps all of the peace loving people of the World, owe him a tremendous debt. Maybe you should get together and throw a party for him or something -- on the other hand, who knows what his real motivations are?

Besides, it's looking like the Castle may have been the wrong choice after all. You all seem to be trapped on the Castle amidst no small amount of chaos: armed soldiers, dead bodies, racial tension, and the disappearance of the Wizard Kalerege. It's probably a good thing that the wild beasts from the menagerie have occupied everyone's time; so long as they continue fighting for their survival they'll have no time to fight amongst themselves. But things are beginning to wind down, and you are beginning to worry -- sooner or later someone is going to do something illegal and the Peers and Clasp are going to start arguing about who has jurisdiction.

Your job has only just begun. If you really want to see the war end, you'll have to keep on top of the Peers and the Clasp. Perhaps you can put yourselves in a position where you can mediate disputes between them. You'll also have to keep an eye on Lance Bluemist, the "Senator Prime." While the Clasp realizes that the post is nothing more than a figurehead, the Table of Peers may not, and a warmonger like Lance could easily destroy everything you're working towards. Marshall Brightwind and Malachai Jonah both seem to be candidates to watch carefully, as well. And of course, there's the Guard of the Realm and the Iron Gauntlet, both of whom are bound to have itchy sword-hands -- keeping them in line isn't going to be an easy job.

Meanwhile, you will have to continue what you have been doing all along as political activists. There are three bills currently before the Table of Peers that have the ability to make or break these peace talks; the four of you have to ensure that the right ones get through.

- **Internal Security Act Repeal** - As far as most of you are concerned, the ISA was the single most harmful move the Realm could have made in relations with the Clans. In essence, it deprived all Clansmen in the Realm of any civil rights, allowing them to be arrested and convicted of a crime with practically no evidence and little or no chance of defence. If this act remains in force, there is no doubt that the Clansmen will be unwilling to negotiate any further, and with good reason.

- **Free Trade Ammendment** - This bill is not nearly as crucial as the ISA repeal, but is still important. If passed, it will allow Eastern merchants to engage in commerce with the Realm without need of a license from the House of Guilds. This is necessary to avoid discrimination, and hopefully will result in thriving trade between the two nations, making it unprofitable to ever again engage in war.
- **Extradition Act** - Another bill designed to encourage cooperation and trade between the two nations, the Extradition Act would ensure that any crimes performed by national emissaries on foreign soil will be tried by a court from their native country. While this sort of freedom will undoubtedly be abused on occasion, it would be far easier, and far more damaging, to abuse the power to arrest Clansmen on your soil. Indeed, such abuse is already taking place.

In short, then, you have an incredibly busy week ahead of you. To make your job on the Castle easier, you have amassed as much information as you could about the national leaders you'll be dealing with, some of it fairly private knowledge.

The Table of Peers

- **Arpachshad Seth:** At first, you had considered Seth among your strongest allies, being among the oldest and most experienced of the Peers. Both his votes and his speeches have indicated a strong belief in minimizing government interference in people's affairs, and he had often come forth in favor of Nisaku rights. However, given his behavior over the last three weeks, it seems that you may have to write him off completely. He appears to have succumbed to either senility or insanity; it's hard to tell which, but either makes him entirely unpredictable. He's been abstaining on many of his votes, and giving long, rambling, incoherent speeches in front of the Table. In other words, he is not of prime importance in the political future of the World.

  On the other hand, his son Chaim seems to be a straight-shooter. He was one of the first Ambassadors to the Clans before the war, and also one of the first to return there after the cease-fire was called. In fact, you had invited him some time ago to join your Committee, but he declined, claiming he could do more good through normal channels and maintaining his political credibility. He's probably right. And his arrival on the Castle with a Clanswoman as his assistant is a good sign (unless, of course, the rumours that he keeps her in reality as a servant are true...)
- **Zannanim Iared:** You've been unable to find out very much about Iared. His mother was one of the first Peers, and he became Realm Executioner shortly after coming of age. He remained on the job until his son, Ristad, was found guilty of treason to the Realm and sentenced to death, a sentence Iared was forced to administer. Shortly thereafter, he disappeared; little was seen of him until he returned to take his mother's place at the Table.

  And then of course there's the story of Benjamin, his father, who was also accused of treason to the Realm. He disappeared decades ago, and hasn't been heard of since. An interesting family. What all this has to do with Iared, you can't be certain -- the only unusual thing he's ever done as a Peer is pretty much ram a bill prohibiting capital punishment through the Table.
- **Malachai Jonah:** In addition to his work with the Peers, Jonah is Master of the Jeweler's Guild, a fairly lucrative position. His voting record is strange -- at first, he seemed strongly in favor of another set of bills coming up before the Table, concerning the prohibition of controlled substances and the placing of magical affairs under Guild jurisdiction, but lately he has been vacillating on these issues. This may be related to his frequent arguments with Havilah Jacob, the Guildmaster, in recent weeks. In any case, his position with the Guild makes it almost certain he'll oppose the Free Trade Ammendment.

  Jonah has also been having family troubles. Six months ago, his two sons Noah and David disappeared in a hunting accident, and two months later Noah (a young Guard of the Realm) returned with Hyacinth as his betrothed. Jonah seems to have trouble (to put it mildly) with the notion of his son marrying a Clanswomen, he might cause problems during the summit with that attitude. To further complicate issues, David returned to the Realm about two weeks ago, and turned up dead at Noah's doorstep a few days ago. Jonah has accused his son of the murder, as well as of treason to the Realm, and Goddess only knows what else. Rumour has it that he's trying to remove Noah from the line of Peerage descent, but that's highly unlikely.
- **Haggai Nahum:** Surprisingly enough, the Justiciar of the Guard of the Realm has been among the most consistent supporters of Nisaku rights. Unfortunately, he is not currently in a position to do a great deal about it, until the war is over and the Guard returns to being mostly a law-enforcement agency. He obtained his position

when his predecessor was slain, although the details of Job’s death are still somewhat murky. Since his position on the Table is due to his title as Justiciar, rather than his parentage or his political activities, he has been less active in Realm politics than most of his colleagues. Still, he has been fairly receptive to your attempts to bring the Clans and the Realm closer together politically and economically, and appears to be a decent man.

- **Havilah Jacob:** Of Jacob, also, little of great importance is known. In general, though, he seems to be on your side, even when the Guild he heads is not. He has supported, at least in words, many of COERCE’s proposals; however, rumour has it he’s under a lot of pressure from the Guilds to reverse those positions. What his votes will actually be remains to be seen; perhaps it will be necessary for COERCE to give him some incentive.

The Clansman’s Clasp

- **Heather Goldenfield:** Heather is a Clan Head you would do well to cultivate. She was eager to hold the summit meeting, and was a strong voice in favor of it in the Clasp. She has also been lobbying for years now to end the war. This is not surprising, since the war has largely been held on her lands, but your general impression of her is that she is genuinely concerned about the future of Clan-Realm relations.

- **Lance Bluemist:** Rarely has a name so aptly described its bearer. Lance is a warmonger, the loudest and the shrillest of them in the Clasp. It was Lance who pushed the hardest for a declaration of war when the Realm started defacing Mishael’s Shrine. His actions since then have indicated that he wants to become the military coordinator for the Clanlands, taking the job away from the Brightwind, for reasons you aren’t certain of but which can’t bode well for your goals.

  Lance was one of the original Fist, the fighting force that defended the Clans during the first Clan-Realm war. He is a highly-placed official within the Iron Gauntlet, probably their functioning commander on the Castle. And of course, he’s "Senator Prime," although that’s not truly good for anything but a laugh. Still, Lance is someone to watch out for.

- **Marshall Brightwind:** Marshall is the Clan’s military coordinator, which isn’t particularly surprising -- the Brightwinds have always bred warriors. Given that, it also isn’t surprising that Marshall is in favor of continuing the war, and that he probably always will be. Wartime is a strong economic and political boost for the Brightwind Clan. On the other hand, Marshall is not as rabid as Lance, and seems willing to listen to reason; if you could find a way for the Brightwinds to maintain their position of relative power even in peacetime, perhaps he would be more amenable to changing his position. If nothing else, perhaps his rivalry with Lance over the military coordinatorship could be used against both of them.

- **Victor Greystone:** Though far more moderate than the Brightwind and the Bluemist, Victor has placed himself fairly consistently in their camp. Although he claims economic reasons, his is one of the few Clans that can survive equally well in times of peace and of war; it is far more likely that he has simply fallen under the spell of Marshall and Lance’s charisma, or perhaps that he has decided to ally himself with the men of the Clasp.

  Victor’s niece, Joy, has recently begun involving herself in political affairs, much to her uncle’s discomfiture. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to speak to her; she might be able to help you swing Victor over to the side of reason.

- **Rosemary Sweetwater:** Despite her general pattern of political activity, which seems to place her on the neutral side of moderate, Rosemary was one of the strongest voices in favor of utilizing the witchcraft, long since illegalized, of the Left Hand in the war effort. It isn’t a bad idea, and in fact was probably necessary for the Clan’s survival -- after all, it is difficult to fight an enemy who uses magic when you yourself do not. Still, it shocked many within the Clans, and in a way was largely responsible for the war’s continuation. What exactly to make of that, you aren’t certain.

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