

Warring Factions: The Novus Initium Saga
Episode II: The Star to the North



PART 1

*Bridge, R.N.S. Grange, Paladin-Class Battleship
Planet DP-42-C, Defense Perimeter-42 System, 2 Jumps East of Viridis System, Eastern Region
10:16am, June 2, 5433 A.D.*

“Watch our left flank!”

Rear Admiral Nora, flag officer of the Paladin-class Battleship R.N.S. *Grange*, had only been assigned to the DP-Forty-Two System for a week before forces that belong to the Royal Lykan Kingdom appeared and opened fire. The DP-Forty-Two System, which was short for Defense Perimeter Forty-Two, is one of several systems that lined the eastern border of the Novus Initium Republic in order to protect the inhabited systems from Kingdom forces. It was thought that it would take a long time before Kingdom forces would find the eastern border of the Republic. This would allow the Republic forces the time they needed to build up better defenses in the DP zone. Somehow, the Kingdom knew where the border was a lot sooner than expected and investigations were underway to determine how they found out where the border was located in a short amount of time.

Kingdom forces had already appeared in other DP systems moving north, most likely to test the defenses of the Republic across the entire border. This particular enemy battle group consisted of a Thrasher-class Battleship, ten Impaler-class Cruisers, and twenty Stabber-class Destroyers, only slightly outnumbered Nora’s forces by four ships. The Kingdom fleet immediately came into close combat to start using their autocannons, forcing the Republic ships to use their laser turrets in pulse mode, a mode that allows for better tracking and quicker rate of fire but was a bit weaker and short-range. However, unlike the Kingdom ships, all the turrets on the Republic ships can switch from long-range to short-range. While the Lykans can still use their long range artillery cannons at close-range, the tracking of their artillery against ships the

same size is bad at close-range and instead are used against larger vessels. However, that means that the Republic destroyers are only getting hit with the autocannons of the enemy destroyers, the Republic cruisers are taking fire from the artillery cannons enemy destroyers and autocannons of enemy cruisers, and the *Grange* was taking fire from enemy artillery cannons from their cruisers and autocannons from the enemy battleship. The enemy battleship also used its artillery cannons but that was due to the fact the Republic fleet was holding their positions.

Unfortunately, due to the close proximity of the enemy fleet, the Republic ships could not concentrate their fire on the same ships, so they coordinated their fire when possible. Thankfully, the enemy fleet was in the same position. The Republic ships continued to use their shield boosters to help buffer the incoming fire but some ships are starting to lose their shields and would have to resort to their thick armor and the nanomachine-driven armor repairer systems as their last line of defense. This would also allow the enemy ships to start targeting the weapons of those ships that no longer have shields though, the armor repairer might be able to keep up with that amount of incoming damage to keep the turrets operational. The United Vitam State had expressed an interest in the shield booster technology in order to reduce the number of shield systems their ships used, but right now those particular talks are still in the works. Thankfully, no Republic ships were lost yet but the Kingdom fleet's slightly larger numbers and their dual-shield systems combined with the lack of coordinating their entire firepower on a single target at a time made this battle go on for much longer than they expected. However, it has been determined that the Lykans have not developed the means to boost their shield power nor their armor should their shields fail on their destroyers and cruisers. Once their shields were gone, those ships are usually burned to a crisp by laser fire.

However, the enemy battleship was a different story. According to the information from the United Vitam State, the Kingdom battleship also has a dual shield system but because the ship is fully crewed by Lykans unlike the other ships, the armor of the battleship is far thicker and designed to protect the battleship while it retreated once those shields were gone. However, if the battleship leaves, it will order the other ships to keep fighting till they are destroyed. This is the reason Nora's fleet ordered the destruction of the destroyers and cruisers first. If they can destroy those ships first and be able to focus their firepower on the battleship, they could destroy it and make the Lykans rethink committing those ships to future engagements. To date, only one enemy battleship has been destroyed and that was by the State. If the Republic can destroy a Kingdom battleship, it could effectively demoralize the enemy forces. To that end, Grand Admiral Mikey has authorized the use of the primary weapon of any Paladin Battleship: the Dual Giga Beam Laser Cannon. This weapon could theoretically burn a massive hole straight through the armor of the enemy battleship once the shields are down. Nora had already ordered the weapon primed but still hidden behind the retractable armor plates. This weapon is still not known to either the Kingdom or the State. Nora was hoping she would be the first to try it out, provided her forces could hold out long enough.

Three of the Kingdom's destroyers suddenly exploded, followed by an enemy cruiser that was too close to the blast radius of one of the destroyers. However, two of the Republic destroyers' armor repairer systems were being overwhelmed by the incoming fire. Nora activated her fleet communications panel on her chair.

"Destroyers Seven-Eight-One and Eight-Two-Nine," Nora said, "fall back and allow your armor repairer systems to repair the damage. To all surrounding ships, cover their withdrawal until they are out of the enemies' weapons range. Continue to focus your fire on the nearest enemy ships."

The DP-Forty-Two System only had a makeshift repair facility located near the only star gate that was in the system. Both were slightly rushed but fully functional facilities. Four destroyers were assigned to each location to protect those assets. However, Nora figured the enemy forces were not aware of those structures yet and wanted to make sure none of her ships withdrew in that direction, lest they reveal where they were located in the system. If the incoming fire on the two destroyers were lessened to the point the armor repairer can catch up, the destroyers may be able to get their shields back online.

Some of the surrounding destroyers attempted to move into the line of fire between the enemy destroyers and the retreating Republic destroyers. However, the enemy destroyers moved to maintain their fire with the retreating destroyers, keen on taking those ships out. To date, there has not been one Republic ship lost to Lykan forces and Nora wanted to make sure she was not the first. Eventually, a couple of Republic cruisers moved out of formation to take the blunt of the fire from the enemy destroyers, allowing the retreating destroyers to fall back to the rear to repair their armor. The enemy destroyers soon changed their targets to other Republic destroyers but not before two more enemy destroyers exploded. Nora would normally be upset that the cruiser moved out of formation without authorization, but decided that their need to protect their retreating comrades was acceptable.

Nora soon turned her attention to the Thrasher battleship that has kept its distance using the enemy cruisers and destroyers as a shield to keep Republic ships from breaking through.

“Captain Dennise,” Nora said turning to the *Grange’s* commanding officer in front of her to the left, “has that battleship advanced at all since the enemy fleet arrived?”

“No, it hasn’t,” Dennise said. “It appears to want to keep its distance. It is currently outside our range if we use our multispectrum lenses in pulse mode, unlike the destroyers and cruisers which are in close combat with the rest of enemy ships. If we switch to beam mode, they would be within range easily with those lenses. We are currently using ultraviolet lenses to compensate for their range on the large guns but they are not taking much damage to their shields. We are using the same lenses on the anti-cruiser guns to conserve on power to keep the shield boosters active. We are also trying to keep our primary weapon charged.”

“We need to end this battle quickly. Our ships are taking too much damage and I don’t want to be the first flag officer to lose any ships against the Kingdom.”

“I know this is hard to accept but eventually that will happen. It does not matter whether it happens to our fleet or someone else’s.”

“I’m aware of that but I would like to see us prolong that reality as long as possible.”

“So what do you want to do? If we destroy the battleship, the other enemy ships may continue to fight until ordered to do otherwise.”

“Right now, that battleship is able to engage all sizes of ships. I hate to say this but if we can remove their command vessel, this will not only significantly reduce incoming fire but it may make it harder for the enemy ships to coordinate their firepower.”

“What if we attempt to disable it instead?”

“Disable it? What do you mean?”

“If we can disable its weapons and engines, we can attempt to board the enemy battleship. This will allow us to take hostages and get useful information on their communications systems that they use to control their destroyers and cruisers. If we can get control of that system, we may be able to not only issue a ‘cease-fire’ command to the fleet here, but also to the rest of the ships in the Kingdom’s fleet if we are lucky!”

“Do we have enough SAGATs on board for that purpose?”

“We have three companies on board ready to go. If done correctly, that is all we need.”

Nora thought about that proposition for a moment. Dennise was right. This was too good of an opportunity to pass up on!

“Alright,” Nora said, “let’s see how well this works. Tactical officer, deactivate the anti-cruiser guns and switch the large guns to beam mode with multispectrum lenses. Redirect power to shields and anti-battleship guns but keep our main cannon powered just in case. Communications, inform the SAGATs to prepare themselves to board the enemy battleship.”

Nora activated her fleet communications panel.

“Fleet command to all ships,” she said. “Change in tactics. Switch to beam mode and direct all available firepower towards the enemy battleship with your most optimal range lenses. We need to disable that ship in an attempt for SAGATs to board her and stop the other ships!”

Nora turned off the fleet communications panel.

“Tactical, do we have a reading on the enemy battleship’s shield strength?”

“Their first shield is down to forty-one percent, ma’am,” the tactical officer. “The fleet is now firing on the battleship with lenses from ultraviolet to multispectrum along with our own anti-battleship guns. Enemy battleship shield strength is depleting rapidly.”

Nora looked on the screen at the different colors of lasers being fired from the other ships including from the *Grange*. There were purple beams from the ultraviolet lenses for those at the furthest from the battleship, green beams from the x-ray lenses, blue from the gammas, and white from the multispectrum lenses for those at the closest. The shields of the battleship were starting to show signs of weakening as the impacts against the shields started going dimmer. The other enemy ships started to fire on the closest Republic ships, but they were still not focusing their firepower like they should. Either they were commanded to take out the closest targets or they were reacting to the attack on their command ship. Either way, this allowed the Republic ships to handle the incoming enemy fire with their shield boosters active.

Nora suddenly noticed that the shields on the enemy ship had suddenly gone up to full strength.

“They have activated their secondary shield system,” the tactical officer said.

“Then let’s see how their shields handle our primary weapon,” Nora said. “Captain Dennise, you have the activation codes for the weapon.”

“Understood,” Dennise said. “Computer, retract primary weapon plating. Unlock safety on primary weapon, voice authorization gamma-zero-niner-two-three-alpha-epsilon.”

The speakers on the bridge came to life.

“*Activation code verified,*” a male computerized voice said over the speakers.

“*Retracting primary weapon plating. Primary weapon safety removed.*”

From outside in the front of the battleship between the upper and lower sections, gray metal plates separated from the front and started to retract backwards along the edge into the hull. Soon a large double-barrel laser cannon larger than the size of a Republic destroyer emerged and was already filled with energy. The weapon was only fitted with standard lenses for the sake of range but the power output alone of the weapon is greater than the combined firepower of ten battleships.

“*Target of primary weapon?*” the computer asked.

“Target is the Thrasher-class battleship,” Nora said.

The ship started to turn slightly to bring the weapon to bear on the battleship. The Kingdom ships suddenly switched their targets to the *Grange* once the weapon began pointing at the Kingdom battleship.

“Shields are taking a beating,” the tactical officer said. “We can’t take this for too long.”

“Hopefully we won’t have to,” Dennise said as the computer confirmed the primary weapon’s target lock. “Computer, fire primary weapon!”

As soon as she said that, two large yellow laser beams fired from the massive laser cannon and impacted on the shields of the enemy battleship. The Thrasher’s shields buckled instantly, and some amount of the laser beams impacted the front of the battleship to the port side. The shots nearly melted through the thick armor, but the port side hangar bay was no longer going to be accessible to the SAGATs that were to board the ship. They would have to go through the starboard bay instead. However, the battleship’s weapons were still active.

Nora activated her fleet communications panel once more.

“All ships,” she said, “target the battleship’s weapons and engines if you can. Disable that ship!”

As the Republic fleet focused on the weapons of the battleship, alarms started going off at the tactical station.

“Our shields are down to twenty-five percent!” the tactical officer said. “We have the entire enemy fleet bearing down on us right now! We have to hold our fire in order to have enough power for the shield boosters to compensate and recharge our shield strength!”

“Do it,” Dennise said. “We’re not about to go down here when we are this close.”

“Agreed,” Nora said. “Communications, make sure the SAGATs are ready for departure. They may be flying through the hot zone.”

“Aye-aye, ma’am,” the communications officer said.

“Admiral,” the tactical officer said, “the enemy battleship has lost all of its anti-battleship and anti-cruiser turrets as well as half of its anti-destroyer guns. However, none of the ships have a clear line of fire to the battleship’s engines.”

“That will have to do,” Nora said. “They won’t risk turning around if they know we will aim for their engines. Communications, have the SAGATs launch. The boarding craft should be small and fast enough to avoid being hit by enemy fire.”

“Aye-aye, ma’am,” the communications officer said. “They are asking if we know where the bridge and communications systems are located to pinpoint their breach.”

That was a very good question. The Republic’s knowledge of the internals of the enemy battleship is still unknown. The only complete scan of one of their ships was of the Kingdom destroyer done by Vice Admiral Trent’s fleet in Tranquillus a few weeks ago thanks to an RCIA agent on board. However, since the battleship’s shields are down, this was a good opportunity to scan the battleship to get the internal details and layout.

“Tactical,” Nora said, “perform a detailed scan of the battleship. We need to give the SAGATs some information on the layout of the enemy battleship.”

“Understood,” the tactical officer said. “This will take a few minutes. Also, all of the battleship’s weapons are now gone. The fleet is now targeting the closest ships again.”

“That’s fine. Hopefully they can get some of that incoming fire off of us.”

“Wait a minute. Ma’am, I’m getting a reading from the battleship. The ship is starting to turn away from the battle.”

As Nora looked, the battleship was beginning to turn towards its starboard. With no weapons and shields, the Lykans no doubt feared the *Grange* was going to use its primary weapon again to destroy their battleship and were trying to flee. Nora wanted to make sure that did not happen as she activated her fleet communications panel again.

“This is fleet command,” she said. “Switch your targets towards the enemy battleship’s

engines and disable them. We need to keep that ship from leaving.”

With that order, every Republic ship that could do so began to fire at the Thrasher’s engines once they could be targeted. The Thrasher had seven main engines arranged in a hexagonal pattern with the seventh engine in the center. Since the battleship was turning to its right, the left side engines were now being targeted. Just like the rest of the battleship, the armor around the engines was just as thick and tough but the thermal heat from all of the concentrated laser fire began to make the armor melt, warp, and glow. After several volleys, the closest engine jettisoned from the main hull of the enemy battleship and exploded.

“Clever,” Nora said. “This keeps the engines from destroying each other and the back of the ship.”

“I wonder though,” Dennise said, “how many engines do you think they need to make the jump?”

“For now it does not matter. If we have to take out all of the enemy battleship’s engines, we will. What is the power level of our main cannon?”

“There is no power in the main cannon. I was not aware you wanted it to be powered up again. However, if we start powering it up, our shield boosters will not be as effective and the rest of the enemy fleet is still firing on us.”

“I understand. Go ahead and use the anti-battleship guns as much as we can without drawing too much power from the shield boosters.”

“Understood. Tactical?”

“I’m on it, ma’am,” the tactical officer said

The Thrasher continued attempting to turn to its right while the Republic fleet fired on its engines. With the *Grange* now firing its anti-battleship turrets, the engines were not lasting long against the Republic fleet’s combined firepower. As each engine ejected and exploded, the Thrasher slowed its turn as the ship had to rely more on its thrusters to turn. By the time the battleship managed to turn halfway, four of its seven engines were gone with the fifth one about ready to explode.

“Not much longer now,” Nora said. “Just a little bit more and...”

Before she could finish that sentence, alarms started going off on the bridge.

“Admiral! Captain!” the tactical officer yelled. “The enemy destroyers and cruisers are approaching our ship at ramming speed!”

“Are you kidding me?!” Dennise said.

“Looks like they are trying to take us out while we are attempting to disable their battleship,” Nora said as she pressed the fleet communications button. “All ships, take out the destroyers and cruisers as fast as you can.”

Nora turned off the panel and looked at the tactical officer.

“Tactical,” she said, “turn off the shield booster and redirect all available power to primary weapon. We need to take out the battleship’s engines now.”

“Yes, ma’am,” the tactical officer said.

“We will only have one shot at this,” Dennise said. “I hope this works.”

“You and me both,” Nora said. A gauge appeared showing the main cannon’s energy level as it quickly rose. By this point every Republic ship focused their fire using multispectrum lenses with everything they had at the Lykan ships. The Lykan ships had stopped firing and devoted all of their available power to their engines in order to maximize their speed. The enemy destroyers and cruisers also lost a lot of their shield strength. Whatever command they were given, it was clear the intention was to direct the fire of the Republic ships towards the enemy

destroyers and cruisers and away from the Thrasher. Unfortunately for the enemy battleship, the *Grange* was the only ship not falling for the ploy.

With the shield booster turned off and no other weapons firing, the capacitors of the main cannon were quickly recharging but they had only reached fifty percent by this point, and the Thrasher had almost got itself turned around in order to jump.

Nora turned on her fleet communications panel once more.

“This is fleet command,” Nora said. “Their shields are down so use your tractor beams and hold the enemy ships as long as you can.”

As soon as she turned off the fleet communications panel, she could see the tractor beams from all the Republic ships holding as many of the enemy ships as they could. This presented an opening for the *Grange* to deal with the enemy Thrasher.

“Captain,” Nora said, “order the main cannon to fire.”

“What?” Dennise said. “It’s not even at full strength.”

“It is more than enough to destroy the remaining engines. That ship has almost turned completely around.”

“Understood. Computer, target the main engines and fire the main cannon.”

“Warning,” the computer said. “*Primary weapon is not fully charged. Do you wish to proceed?*”

“Confirmed,” Dennise said. “Fire primary weapon.”

The large double-barreled cannon fired again at the closest of the three remaining engines of the enemy battleship. While the weapon was not at full strength, it was still powerful enough to completely blow through the armor and hit the engine directly. The engine exploded immediately before it could be ejected from the main body, damaging the last two engines to the point they no longer worked and causing structural damage to the back of the battleship. The Thrasher began to drift without its engines. The rest of the enemy fleet kept trying to break free of the Republic ships’ tractor beams but to no avail regardless of how much thrust they used.

“Looks like we got them,” Nora said. “Tactical, do we have a layout of the Thrasher?”

“Yes, ma’am,” the tactical officer said. “I’m transmitting it to the SAGATs right now.”

“Very good. Order the SAGATs to...”

Before Nora could finish her order, alarms started going off.

“Admiral! Captain!” the tactical officer yelled. “I’m reading a buildup of energy in EVERY Kingdom ship from their reactors! They are going to self-destruct!”

“What?!” Dennise yelled.

Nora quickly activated her fleet communications panel.

“All ships,” Nora said, “use your tractor beams to repel the enemy ships away immediately! Divert all power to your forward shields!”

The Lykan ships except for the battleship were all suddenly pushed away closer to the enemy battleship. The Thrasher suddenly exploded and was soon followed by the destroyers and cruisers of the rest of the Lykan fleet. Nora pounded the left arm of her chair.

“Crud!” she yelled. “They KNEW what we were trying to do and chose to destroy themselves rather than risk us having their command codes! Tactical, scan the remains of the battleship! Please tell me there is something left, namely their communications system?”

The tactical officer pressed a few buttons to scan the remains of the enemy battleship. After about a minute or so, the tactical officer looked at Nora.

“There are no lifesigns,” the tactical officer said. “The communications system is completely slagged. There is nothing left at all on the ship to salvage.”

Nora sighed heavily with a hint of borderline frustration. They may have repelled the enemy fleet, but she was hoping that they could get the communications system to try and find a way to disable the Kingdom forces before they attempt any major assault. At this point they can take any victory they can get.

“Damage report,” Nora said.

“Most of the ships report no structural damage,” the communications officer said.

“Armor repairers have managed to repair the damage.”

“You said ‘most’ just now,” Dennise said. “What ship or ships are having trouble?”

“Destroyer Eight-Two-Nine, one of the two destroyers that fell back for their armor repairer system to kick in, reports that one of the shells that struck did not detonate upon impact. They scanned the shell and it appears to be empty, most likely a dud. The armor repairer system has stopped short of the shell and the backup force fields are in place to prevent any further air from escaping.”

“Can’t they get the shell dislodged?” Nora asked.

“It’s dug in too deep for them to simply push it out. They are requesting for one of the other ships to pull it out by tractor beam so that their armor repairer systems can seal the damage.”

“Very well. Have the closest ship use its tractor beam to pull the shell out. The other ships will investigate the wreckage for anything we can salvage that will get us information of the Lykans and how they are communicating with the ‘slaved’ ships.”

Dennise turned towards Nora.

“That is a very interesting term to call them,” Dennise said.

“It was the only thing I came up with,” Nora said. “I could not think of another term for a ship that is not completely automated.”

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Damaged Hallway, Deck Five Section D, Destroyer-829

*Planet DP-42-C, Defense Perimeter-42 System, 2 Jumps East of Viridis System, Eastern Region
11:03am, June 2, 5433 A.D.*

“There it goes.”

Two of the ship engineers, both male, were present to see the shell that had logged itself into the hull start to get pulled out by one of the other Republic ships using their tractor beam. Even though the shell was a dud, it was still too heavy for anyone on board to simply push it out without specialized equipment. As the shell passed beyond the external force field that was keeping the air and pressure from leaving the ship, the armor repairer system picked back up and started sealing the hole that was left behind.

The two engineers surveyed the structure around the impact and there was some structural damage that will require some repair work.

“Looks like we will be putting in some time to repair this,” the older engineer said. “If that round wasn’t a dud, this whole section would have been destroyed.”

“Do we know if that is the case for the other sections?” the other engineer said.

“So far, there are at least five sections that need repair work. Those areas were hit the hardest. We will have to put in for repair time at the makeshift dock. The armor repairer can fix the armor but now I’m beginning to wish they had a similar system for the ship structure.”

“I believe that would have been more data than they could incorporate into those nanomachines when it comes to the layout of the structure. My guess is they also never figured the armor would be compromised to this point.”

“Just goes to show that those ship building companies need to start rethinking our defenses after situations such as this. On the other hand, if they did, people like us would not have a job like this.”

“True enough, sir. Shall we inspect those other sections?”

As the two engineers walked away from the damaged hallway, a male Humanoid figure in a dark gray and bronze EVA suit looked around the corner of the adjacent hallway. His helmet screen was tinted to the point that one could not see his face. He surveyed the area and found a storage room he could hide out in until the moment was right. He took off the glove on his right hand, revealing a Human hand and pressed his index finger on the panel. The panel accepted his fingerprint showing a name and opened the storage unit. After he entered the room and the door close, no one would have noticed the name on the panel after the disappeared.

The name on the panel was “Vice Admiral Trent.”

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*Office of Grand Admiral Mikey, Novus Initium Navy Fleet Headquarters
Planet Luminaire Orbit, Lumen (“Light”) System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic
11:25am, June 2, 5433 A.D.*

“The news could have been better.”

Grand Admiral Mikey sat in his office looking over reports from some of the fleets in the Defensive Perimeter systems, the latest report coming in from Rear Admiral Nora’s fleet. A few weeks ago military analysts had predicted that it would take months for the Royal Lykan Kingdom fleet to search and find the eastern perimeter of the Novus Initium Republic. This was to allow enough time for the Republic fleet to fortify the DP Zone and be able to repel any Royal Navy attacks. Then the first attack on one of the DP systems occurred a few days ago and the analysts were stumped as were members of the United Vitam State. The State provided a map of the known systems controlled by the Kingdom and the closest system to the Republic was several jumps away. It would have taken a while for the Kingdom to search and secure their routes as they would not know how far the Republic’s borders were.

On a hunch, earlier today Mikey requested for Vice Admiral Trent to check their computer systems for information accessed when the Lykan ambassador was on board the R.N.S. *Renaldo*. He has been waiting for a response from Trent while reading Rear Admiral Nora’s report.

A video call from Trent on Mikey’s terminal suddenly came in, ending that wait as Mikey pressed a button on his terminal answering the call.

“Vice Admiral Trent,” Mikey said. “I’m assuming you found something to give me a call, correct?”

“Yes, sir, we did,” Trent said. “We analyzed our computer system and found that a map of Republic space was accessed and downloaded from the same terminal Ambassador Forneido was using to read our history.”

“I saw the video of the meeting after it took place. How did he get the information? I did not see his hand or a device being used to access that information.”

“We wondered about that too, so we went back to our initial scans of Forneido when he first came aboard. The scans were done to make sure he did not have any weapons. According to the scan report, the ambassador did not possess any weapons but there was a tool that was discovered on him underneath his robes. The scans could not determine what the function of the tool was, only that it was not a weapon from its internals.”

“The system did not signal the person escorting the ambassador of the tool?”

“Colonel Blair who escorted him was alerted to the tool and asked the ambassador. Forneido informed him that it was a recording device for the meeting. It would appear it was not just audio portion of the meeting it was recording. We are still investigating if there was any other piece of information that was accessed. So far, aside from our history that we were providing and the map of the Republic that the ambassador accessed, we have not found any other bit of information that was accessed.”

“Alright. As long as they were not able to access any sensitive information, we should be okay.”

“I must apologize for letting this happen.”

“There is no need. There was no way for you all to know what that device was truly designed for or what it accessed during that time. We were caught by surprise by the fact they found our DP Zone so quickly but at least we now know why this happened. Don’t blame yourself for what has happened.”

“Then I have to ask, what is the next step? I have heard reports of engagements with enemy fleets in the DP Zone.”

“So far those battles have successfully held the line but just barely. Rear Admiral Nora’s fleet was the most recent one to engage them which occurred earlier today. They were hoping to board the enemy battleship and acquire the enemy communications system in order to find a way to shut down their remote control systems. However, the battleship self-destructed along with the rest of the enemy fleet before they could do so.”

“The fact they knew what we were after so quickly and took measures to prevent our efforts is surprising. Have we suffered any losses yet?”

“So far there are only injuries and no loss of life or ships.”

“That might change at some point.”

“I know and I’m concerned for those in the fleet when that happens. I have to ask though how the defense of the new international star gate is coming along?”

“So far there have not been any problems on this end of things. The Lykans have left Tranquillus alone, though this could be due to the DP Zone nearby. So far, logistical ships have come and gone through the gate but hardly any other civilian traffic than those. I can only assume it is due to the war with the Kingdom right now.”

“Actually, you may not have heard but civilian traffic except for logistical ships is under restrictions right now for systems near the Eastern Region. This is to allow high priority vessels such as military and logistical vessels through the star gates with little to no problems. Civilians can still go places but in bulk at specified times in order not to interfere with military and logistical vessels.”

“I see. My information on international affairs is limited to what NBS News has put out there. Are there any developments in this area or with the State?”

“Let’s see. You know we sent ambassadors to New Vita but they were not named. It was Wade and Autumn, the two that assisted in your initial meeting with the Lykan and Vitam representatives.”

“I wondered about that.”

“Our Senate and their Representatives Parliament are still working out the details involving immigration but they already have laws in place involving visitors and tourists. The currency exchange though was a little rough.”

“I can imagine. I assume it was based on the common value of select items?”

“Correct. Apparently a single credit to us is worth five ‘Virons’ as they call them. They don’t have much in terms of exports that we can’t get in the Republic, but they are definitely looking into the imports that we have to offer. This ranges from the shield booster technology to general consumer products. They also seem to have an expressed interest in our current forms of entertainment. I guess despite the fact that they have their own culture, it may still be in its infancy after so many years of slavery.”

“Part of me wonders if they are interested in our weapons. They were highly impressed with the notion of weapons that don’t theoretically have a limit on ammo.”

“They do and I’ve heard they want to test some modules that have our laser weaponry on their smaller ships first but these are still in the initial stages of negotiation so there may not be a rollout for a while. With our shield booster technology, they are looking into more powerful shield systems. Their armor however is not good for the armor repairer systems due to their construction so their shields will still be their primary defense.”

“I see. It’s good that this will help strengthen their forces provided the negotiations go well. Hopefully it will be enough to keep the Lykans at bay.”

“We can only hope. By the way, how is the wife? I see her on the news often but I guess she is not happy that you are so far away for so long.”

“She’s not which reminds me. I have been meaning to ask but wasn’t there supposed to be another fleet assigned to Tranquillus? I was told another fleet would arrive here just after the Lykans declared war on the Republic.”

“That fleet was Rear Admiral Nora’s who got reassigned to the DP Zone. I thought you were notified but it sounds like you were not. I must apologize for that lack of communication.”

“It is fine, but it would have been good to know. What should I tell my wife?”

“I’ll see about having another fleet switch out with you in the next week or so. Your assignment there was only to be short term anyway so we will send a fleet that will be stationed there for the long term. You can let your wife know that much. Is there anything else?”

“Not that I can think of, sir. Thank you.”

“No problem. I’ll contact you soon about any changes. Mikey, out.”

Mikey ended the call and leaned back in his chair. At least he knows now how the Lykans figured out the border of the Republic. However, since the Lykans have a map, it allows them to know where the most densely populated areas and systems are. This means it was even more imperative to prevent the Kingdom forces from breaking through the DP Zone.

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*Office of Anchorwoman Laura, National Broadcasting System Building, City of Luminous Planet Luminaire, Lumen ("Light") System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic
12:38pm, June 2, 5433 A.D.*

"Well that's some good news at least."

Laura had finished the midday broadcast of NBS News a few minutes ago and headed back to her office from the broadcasting studio. She saw that she had a message from her husband Trent, telling her that the Grand Admiral would see about switching his fleet at Tranquillus for another in the next week or so. This made her rather happy.

However, he also informed her that the Lykan ambassador three weeks ago had managed to download a map of Republic space and this was how they found out about the eastern border of the Republic. Not only that, but the Lykans know where the most highly populated areas were including the capital. While Laura worried at first, he made it clear that the military will make sure the Lykans never get past the DP Zone to get to those worlds.

Laura leaned back in her chair for a moment to ponder this news when her fellow anchorman, Matt, knocked on her doorframe. This startled her.

"Geez, Matt!" she said looking at him.

"Sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to scare you. I wondered if you'd like to go to that taco place I mentioned to you about for lunch, unless you're going to lunch with Amarria today?"

"She's busy at the Central Library," Laura said calming down, "so I can go with you."

"Is everything alright?"

"I was reading a message from my husband. It appears his fleet should be back here in the next week or so."

Laura figured it was best for Matt not to know about the part where the Lykans have a map of the Republic. Such knowledge leaking out may result in a panic.

"I see," Matt continued. "What about from that idol friend of yours?"

"Sheryl? I have not heard from her in a while. She tends to keep rather busy as of late and that is understandable. Why do you ask?"

"I was curious. I figured you two kept it touch often but I guess I was wrong."

"It happens. Anyway, let me get a couple of things and I will meet you there. What was it called again?"

"The place is called 'Dos Rios Grande.' I'll see you there."

As Matt walked away from her office door, Laura somewhat laughed. While the primary language in the Republic is English, certain words and terms in other languages are still used for authenticity and sometimes due to lack of a better translation such as the word "tacos." The name of the restaurant was from the old Spanish language translated as the "Two Large Rivers," a nod to the two rivers that run along the eastern and western side of the downtown area of Luminous. While the words would have the same meaning in English, using the Spanish words makes the place sound both exotic as well as authentic as the food is Mexican in origin.

Laura got up from her seat and grabbed her phone. As she was walking out of her office, she suddenly got a call on her phone. She looked at the caller identification and it showed it was Brenda who was the NBS News field reporter in the Serenus System. The Serenus system is located near the Northern Region and is also the local military headquarters for Republic forces in the area. Laura can think of one good reason Brenda would be calling her.

“This is Laura speaking,” Laura said as she answered the call. “What is going on, Brenda?”

“Hey, Laura,” Brenda said. “*I was wondering if I can ask you something?*”

Laura knew this was coming.

“What is it, Brenda?”

“*I was wondering if I could please get transferred to the Viridis System to cover the war in the DP Zone?*”

Laura knew it.

“Why do you want to be transferred there?” Laura asked. “Christina is already there and she is doing a fine job covering the action in the DP Zone.”

“*There really isn't anything going on near the Northern Region. Both myself and the journalist who is also assigned here would like to report something that is exciting than some random events.*”

“First and foremost, it is usually up to the Chief to determine any transfers or reassignments to other areas. All I can do is make suggestions. Second, you may want to stay there for a very good reason.”

“*Why is that?*”

“As most people are aware, there is a nation in the Northern Region that the Republic will look at contacting in the next couple of weeks.”

“*You're talking about the Camino Star Empire, aren't you?*”

“Yes, I am. The Republic is waiting till relations are stabilized with the United Vitam State before attempting contact with the Empire. The Senate is hoping to establish peaceful relations with the Empire, though that might be difficult considering that the Empire's first encounter with an alien nation resulted in a battle.”

“*Oh, right. That battle...*”

By this point, almost everyone in the Republic were aware of the Kingdom's first encounter with the Empire and the resulting battle that occurred due to the Kingdom's “need” to conquer the entire cluster. From what they could tell based on the records provided by the State, the Empire has been isolated since then and even the Kingdom's ships that are defending their border with the Empire have not seen Imperial ships within scanner range. It is not known if the Empire's fleet has changed in designs and/or technology since then, but the Republic was not about to underestimate the Empire nor try to provoke it if it can avoid doing so.

“That being said, the Chief will most likely have you remain there to cover any potential meeting that occurs between the Republic and the Empire in the next few weeks.”

“*I see. I understand.*”

“By the way, you mentioned about a journalist being there? Who is this journalist you are speaking of?”

“*Oh, right! Her name is Marina and she is a journalist for Illuminated Times.*”

“Illuminated Times? You mean the top journalistic reporting agency in the Republic? I'm surprised they would have anyone out there from their agency.”

“*Apparently they have reporters in select areas of the Republic and Marina covers a lot of the areas near the Northern Region. However, she wants to go towards the Eastern Region to cover the war as well, but most likely they already have someone there doing that, too.*”

“If they are anything like our agency, I would say so. I would tell her the same thing I told you. This may make her rethink relocating for the time being.”

“Maybe so, but it’s still boring out here. There isn’t really anything to do.”

“What do you mean?”

“The star systems out here may have been inhabited centuries ago, but when it comes to things to do in relation to entertainment, there is not much that is appealing.”

“Oh, come on. There has to be a lot of things that you can do out there to help pass the time when you are not working. There are millions if not billions of people out there right now. Surely there are ways to entertain you if they have worked for all of them this whole time?”

“Maybe, but I guess I’m just picky when it comes to what entertains me.”

“Sounds more like a personal problem. Actually, you are in a better position to go to places where you are now than near the Eastern Region.”

“Huh? What do you mean by that?”

“You mean you don’t know? Civilian traffic for systems near the Eastern Region have been highly restricted in order for logistical and military vessels to have priority travel with as little civilian traffic interference as possible. If you were transferred to Viridis, you would be stuck in that system for a while.”

“Whoa. I was not aware of that fact.”

“I’m guessing you’re changing your mind about traveling out there now, huh?”

“I guess it does. I’ll let Marina know about the situation there, and I guess we will have to find a means to entertain ourselves here. Right now, we are at the military headquarters hoping to catch any news from local forces.”

“Who gave you that assignment?”

“The Chief did, actually. I guess the Chief wanted to make sure we were actually working and not loafing around.”

“That doesn’t surprise me. Did you find any interesting tidbits?”

“No, not yet. The military out here is duller than finding something to do.”

“Well, keep at it and be patient. Both of you will have something to do soon.”

“Alright. I will talk to you later.”

“Talk to you later. Bye-Bye.”

Laura hung up the phone and realized she walked all the way to the restaurant that Matt was inviting her to that entire time. She could smell the Mexican food from outside the restaurant and she could not wait to give it a try.

“Let’s see what this place is like and tell Amarria later,” Laura said as she went inside.

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*Office of the Supreme Chancellor, Republic Parliament Building, Capital City of Luminous Planet Luminaire, Lumen System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic
12:59pm, June 2, 5433 A.D.*

“So that is how they got it.”

Supreme Chancellor Drew looked over the report he was given by Grand Admiral Mikey. He read how the Lykan ambassador managed to download the map of the Republic while he was reading up on their history. This information was dangerous in the Lykans’ hands as they would

have a clear picture where key targets within the Republic were located including Luminaire. The ships in the DP Zone will have to make sure that not a single Lykan ship gets through that zone. Drew knew he would have to report this to the Senate to make them aware of any future deployments of the military.

Drew's terminal suddenly buzzed.

"*Supreme Chancellor*," his secretary said, "*the State Ambassador is here for his one o'clock appointment?*"

"Send him in," Drew said as he sat up in his seat.

One of the doors opened and in the doorway was a Vitam male dressed in something close to a business suit holding what appeared to be a tablet in his left hand. Drew was still trying to get used to the foxlike features of the Vitams along with how the other races within the State look. Thankfully the Vitams are nowhere near as imposing as the Lykans who were bipedal wolves. According to reports, the Vitams, as well as the other members of the State, wear a rather minimalistic form of fashion. Their taste for extravagance in attire has been numbed by the Lykans. They're working to correct this style as well as their cultures to what they had before, but resources are being rationed considering the war with the Lykans. However, the rich culture of the Republic was very alluring that many of the State civilians have taken a vested interest. The ambassador was likely here concerning that matter as well as other topics of interest.

Drew pulled out his translation device and put it in his ear. He could see the ambassador already had his on in his ear.

"Good afternoon, Supreme Chancellor Drew," the Lykan said via the translator. "I am Ambassador Drino representing the United Vitam State."

"Greetings, Ambassador Drino," Drew said as he motioned the ambassador to take a seat in front of him. "What brings you to my office today?"

The ambassador sat down in front of Drew in one of the chairs placing the data tablet in his lap.

"I have come to discuss a few matters with you, Chancellor," Drino said.

"Very well. What matters do you and the State need to discuss?"

"First and foremost, the war effort," Drino said as he brought up the data tablet and looked at it. "My government has received word that your forces have engaged against the Lykans in what you call the Defensive Perimeter Zone. Obviously, this was far sooner than both of our nations' analysts had anticipated. Have you managed to find out any details involving this matter?"

"Actually, I found out how that happened just before you arrived."

"Really? Then I have good timing. What did you find out?"

"Apparently what had occurred was when Vice Admiral Bridneo of your nation and Ambassador Forneido of the Royal Lykan Kingdom met with our representatives on the *Renaldo*, Forneido had on him a recording device in which we were told when scanners picked it up that it was to record our conversation. We did not know that the device also functioned in downloading a map of the Republic while he was reading our history."

"So that is how they started attacking your border so soon."

"The worst part of it is the fact that we were hoping to have built up our DP Zone by the time the Lykans found our border. We're currently in the process of assigning fleets to that zone

but the fact that our forces are already engaging in those areas is forcing us to speed up the process. I have to bring this up with the Senate to explain the need for rapid deployment to protect our citizens from harm. The fact that they are in possession of the map means they could attempt to strike our major population centers should they get around or through the DP Zone.”

“In other words, it is imperative that no Lykan ships get through the DP Zone lest they attack your civilian population locations. Even the State is aware of such facts as we have established our own defensive line. However, now that the Lykans can put more ships against us, we are having a hard time defending ourselves.”

“I am assuming that this also leads to another one of the topics you had wanted to talk about?”

“Yes, it does. As you know, my government has expressed interest in both your nation’s laser weaponry to help reduce the need of munitions and the shield booster technology to reduce the need for excess shield generators. However, part of the problem has been the companies within the Republic that make those pieces of technology. They want to be the only ones to make them and they want an amount of money that is rather excessive for the State to actually spend.”

“This is the first time in a few millennia where products have to go across national lines so they are being rather protective of their property and creations.”

“What do you mean by national lines? I thought you all were of one nation even before your kind came to the star cluster?”

“Back on our planet of origin called Earth, our race was rather territorial between select groups and this caused nations to be formed based on those differences. When our ancestors came to the cluster, we could no longer be separated by such things as we needed to survive.”

“I see. The question is how do we go about then getting the technology without paying such excessive fees?”

“That is difficult. Have the companies in the State that wish to build or implement these pieces of technology spoken directly with the companies in the Republic?”

“The companies that build our ships are nationally owned by the State so our government has to directly speak on their behalf for that purpose.”

“I see. It doesn’t help that right now the State does not have much of exports to offer...wait a minute. I might have a better solution that might bring down the cost for both parties.”

“Oh? What would that be?”

“Tell me, what kind of warheads do you all use against the Lykans?”

“They are namely kinetic-types of warheads. They are hard hitting weapons.”

“However, against shields they might not be as powerful. You noticed that our laser weapons seem to bring down shields a lot faster than your missiles, right?”

“I noticed this based on the footage of the battle that occurred in the Tranquillus System from our forces there. What are you suggesting?”

“Has the State ever developed weapons that use an electromagnetic pulse?”

“No, we have not. We have not developed the technology to use such weapons. Are you suggesting a possible partnership of some sorts?”

“Our military R & D department could work with your nation’s R & D to help develop those weapons. If I can get our Senate to approve, we can also see about a ‘trade’ of sorts.”

“A trade?”

“If I can get the Senate to approve, we can draft up a mutual technology development contract that involve the exchange of one or two vessels from each nation’s fleet, namely of the destroyer class with the intent to understand and improve those vessels. The companies that built the ships and technology don’t have a say in the reselling of the same merchandise after the fact.”

“Reselling? Wait, are you saying that if my government purchases one or two of your destroyers and you do the same for ours that we will be free to reverse engineer the technology?”

“Right now, we have not come up with any international copyright laws so I don’t think there will be any problems.”

“Copyright laws? What are those?”

“What? Your kind has never had such laws?”

“I’ve never heard of a copyright before. What is that?”

“In short, a copyright is documentation designed to protect the intellectual work or creation of a company or individual from unauthorized duplication.”

“I see. We will have to look into that sort of thing at some point.”

“That being said, there will not be any problems in that regards. If I can get the Senate to approve of the transaction as well as your Representatives Parliament, you all can analyze the weapons and shield systems of our ships while we use your ships as test beds for EMP equipped warheads.”

“That sounds like a good deal though it sounds more like it benefits the State more than it does the Republic.”

“Maybe so, but right now we are fighting a war with the Kingdom and if there are ways we can help each other out, the better we will be to accomplish this. I will present this offer to the Senate tomorrow during our next session. Was there anything else you needed to cover?”

“Actually, yes, and this one is a bit difficult. It has to do with the idea of introducing Republic culture into the State.”

“Is there a problem?”

“It depends on who you ask. As you know, much of our culture and the cultures of the other races within the State were lost when we were conquered by the Lykans. In the years during our enslavement, the Lykans would only allow for the most basic of education to do our jobs while drilling their religion into us to morally bring our kind down. Some of our culture was saved and hidden away from the Lykans and was brought to the State during the Slave Revolt. However, with as much of our culture lost, many have wondered about adopting the culture of the Republic when we first made contact. There has been a great deal of allure in all aspects of your culture from entertainment to fashion to the arts. This appeal is most dominant among our younger generations as of late who have been reading up about it.”

“So, what does your government want to do?”

“Right now there are two factions that have started to develop in the government. One of the factions is known as the Traditionalists. They are the ones who want to see our races continue to develop our existing culture into our own without the influence of outside cultures. A lot of their motivation was the forced introduction of the Lykan culture onto our races.”

“I can understand the reason for not wanting to be influenced by other cultures because of what your races have gone through, but what about the other faction?”

“The other faction is known as the Reformists. They are the ones who want to accept the cultural influence of the Republic and add it to their own. They see the culture of the Republic as more of an enlightenment of sorts.”

“More like a cultural renaissance from the sounds of it.”

“Again, another word I am not familiar with.”

“A renaissance was a term that is defined as like a rebirth or revival of culture, skills, or learning something that was once forgotten.”

“Hmm, it actually is a rather nice word. Has this sort of thing happened in your culture once before for there to be a term such as that?”

“It happen more than four millennia ago. Back to the topic at hand, the big question is which of those two has the most influence and what does your government want to do in relation to the import of Republic culture.”

“They know that a conflict between the two factions is best to be avoided so they want to try to limit the import of Republic culture for the time being. They are willing to allow for a few fashion and clothing stores, one or two entertainment stations as well as parks, a couple of online music stores, and a movie theater, all on New Vita to test how citizens there take to it first.”

“Hmm, this might be a little bit of a challenge. The clothing stores would have to take into account the different physiology of the five races in the State as well as the parks and the movie theater. Music may also be a bit of a challenge due to the language barrier involved if there are lyrics.”

“We can start with songs without lyrics first and see if they like the music for just the instrumentation. Shirts are not an issue considering the different sizes available within your culture including what your kind calls ‘big and tall’ for the larger build members of the state. I can see an issue with the pants though due to the tails we all have but maybe that can be worked out by whichever stores and companies wish to sell to the State.”

“That leads me to ask if your government had any particular names in mind when it comes to stores, fashion, and entertainment.”

“We wanted to put the proposal out there first before we started listing off any names.”

“Very well then. It would seem that I have a lot to present to the Senate tomorrow. Do you have a draft of the items you wish for me to discuss with them that I can modify with my ideas of how to implement them?”

Drino punched a few things into his tablet and transmitted the points he wanted to make to Drew’s tablet on his desk. Drew picked up the tablet and looked it over.

“Alright,” Drew said. “I will work on these points and present them tomorrow. By the way, I have a question for you, Ambassador.”

“What is it?”

“The Lykans have a map of our space and know where our capital is but does the State know by chance where the capital world is for the Lykans?”

“While we know it is on the edge of the star cluster in what you call the Eastern Region, we do not know the exact location of their home world.”

“None of the people in the State know? With your older generations being former slaves, I would have figured that someone had served on the Lykan home world.”

“A reasonable deduction but that is not the case. It may surprise you to know but the Lykans do not allow for anyone outside of their own race to set foot in their home system.”

“You’re joking? Why? What about the remedial work that would have to be done within their home star system?”

“First and foremost, I am not joking. The reason the Lykans have never allowed a foreign race to set foot in their star system is that they consider their home system and home world to be ‘holy ground.’ For anyone other than a Lykan to set foot there would be a desecration of their ‘holy ground’ and they would take measures to ‘purify’ their home. Don’t ask me how as no outsider has ever been in their home star system.”

“Well that explains the ‘why?’ However, what about the remedial work? If there are no slave races on their planet, how do things such as manual labor get done?”

“Not all Lykans are born into nobility. They have commoners among their people who can do such work in light of the fact they don’t allow slaves in their home system. The same can be said for their military. The military may have power but they are still subjects to those of noble birth who have the means of control of their ships. When Ambassador Forneido went to that battleship in Tranquillus, the battleship fled rather than take part in combatting Republic and State forces because there was someone of royal birth on board.”

“Then let me ask this question: if someone of royal birth dies because of the actions or lack thereof involving a commoner or a member of the military, what are the consequences?”

“Last I heard, the punishment is the death of that person and their immediate family including parents and children. Any siblings the offender had would have their families black marked for up to five generations from doing anything relating to government, military, or even the basic retail work. Those generations would only be allowed to do utility or custodial work for the rest of their lives in order to repay the mistake their relative had made.”

“Good grief! That’s harsh!”

“I know. The fate is worse for slaves by comparison, but now that is a moot point considering what the Lykans are doing to their slaves now.”

“I know. I was hoping that you or someone within the State knew where their home planet was. If we could figure that out, we could make a surgical strike against their capital and force them to rethink their conflict with both of our nations.”

“Let me ask this then. While my nation has not developed the technology, I read in the report by Vice Admiral Bridneo that your nation had the means to cloak a small drone and keep it from being detected by Lykan forces. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” Drew said grudgingly. “That technology though is in the hands of the Republic Central Intelligence Agency or the RCIA for short. However, the Lykans are aware of this capability and may do detailed scans on every ship that returns to their space to prevent such drones from transmitting their positions including base locations.”

“What about a recon ship of sorts that can traverse their space in stealth without the need of jump gates?”

“If you are talking about it using the crystals to jump from point to point on its own, it would need a large supply and would also limit its operational range.”

“Is there a way to develop a craft that can traverse their space without using the crystals or jump gates?”

Drew thought about it for a while for a thought came to mind.

“The warp drive,” he said.

“What?” Drino said.

“The warp drive on our ships was designed to traverse quickly on an interplanetary level but it has never been used to traverse on an interstellar level. If we could design a ship to do that instead of using the gates, they could traverse the Kingdom without getting locked out of using the gates.”

“The only problem with that as your engineers have no doubt figured out is that the capacitors on board our ships are not able to recharge themselves fast enough to keep the warp drive active for that long.”

“What about taking out the ‘middle man’ of the equation?”

“What do you mean?”

“Instead of the capacitors feeding the warp drive, why not the antimatter reactor directly?”

Drino gave Drew a look of shock on his face.

“Are you serious?!” Drino said. “That is a lot of energy to suddenly feed those engines! What if there is an overload?”

“Then what our engineers will need to figure out is how to limit the power flow to keep the warp drive active continuously without overloading them or develop more efficient high-capacity capacitors. I’m sure they could figure it out if they were given such a challenge.”

“I’m sure they would but that would take some time to develop it, whether it was the State, the Republic, or both in a joint venture.”

“It may take time but it will be well worth it if we can figure out how to strike against the Kingdom to prevent them from further engaging our forces.”

“So the purpose of such a vessel is strictly recon?”

“That will be up to how the ship is designed. I will bring this proposal up to the Senate who has to approve the budgeting of such a project and we will go from there.”

“I must say, Chancellor, your position sounds a bit more limited from what I originally thought.”

“It’s a system of what we call ‘checks and balances’ laid out in the foundation of the Republic. Not one branch of our government is more powerful than the others.”

“I see. I will have to research your government further then to understand it better. For now, though, my business is concluded.”

Drino stood up and bowed to Drew. Drew stood up and did the same out of respect.

“Until tomorrow,” Drino said as he turned and headed out the door.

After Drino left, Drew sat back down and looked at the points that Drino wanted Drew to present to the Senate. Drew would have to review and forward these to the senators prior to the meeting to look them over but now he has to add the stealth recon ship idea to the agenda.

It was going to be a very interesting day tomorrow for the Senate.

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