

Winds of Ruin: Volume 10: New Order

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Winds of Ruin Volume 10: New Order **Â ~1~** I retired early that evening into my modest but comfortable room, a refreshing change from the lavish flat in which I had been living in Samargand's Gargantuan. There was a wooden nightstand with a lantern, a small closet, a nice bed. There was a carpet of heavy build with faded colors and rigid patterns and plain paintings of snowy landscapes. The wooden walls reminded me of home, the home I had lived in as a child and I slept better than I had for some time before. We picked up the meeting where we had left off the previous day and it went from morning to sunset with a few breaks over its course to eat and drink wine and smoke. The first issue we tackled was foreign affairs. Ullugan suggested that the foreign affairs committees from Canaanbul and Samargand be merged into one when dealing with foreign nations. Thus, Oslam and a man from Canaanbul named Cemal, who had been the chief of staff from Canaanbul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs years before, and had apparently proven quite effective at it, were to lead the Joint Foreign Affairs Committee as it was to be called. The duty of this arm of government was to initiate and maintain peaceful relations with friendly neighbors and to keep track of what was going on in aggressive nations. The Joint Foreign Affairs Committee was therefore in charge of diplomacy and espionage and was to work in close conjunction with the Military, the arm of government that I had absolute control of. The first order of business following this meeting would be to contact the nations to the North and the West, including Scythia and Mangarstun. I was excited at the prospect of speaking with these people again as I often remembered my old friends with fondness. We spent the rest of the day discussing the third matter on our list, which was to establish the rights of individuals, local and regional governments, and the central government. This took hours and hours, for there were so many things to discuss therein. We began with the rights of individuals. Every citizen, regardless of class or nationality, every citizen who spoke the Turquoise language, was to be guaranteed equal rights under the law. Each had the right to vote, the right to speak, the right to privacy, and the right to a fair trial. They also had the right to property, freedom from arbitrary arrest and searches and seizures, the right to congregate in trade guild for security purposes, as well as many other essential human rights. Torture was outlawed under all circumstances. One important right given to all citizens was what we deemed freedom from economic abuse. Thus no citizen could be subjected to slavery in any form, nor would he be subjected to work in miserable conditions for wages at or below subsistence level. Debtors could not be subjected to imprisonment or forced servitude. Furthermore, no industry could be monopolized, nor could any individual gain excessive wealth at the expense of livable economic conditions for others. No right of a citizen could be circumvented or infringed upon by any government. Local and regional governments were to be given some autonomy from the central government. They would be structured in the same way, however. We would call our system the "Four Corners to Governmental Power," each of which was afforded only as much influence as the others. The first was the Corner of Enforcement, in charge of executing laws and policy. Institutions such as fire and police departments and the sanitary committee would go out and work to realize laws, rights, and promises to citizens. They would have the right to refuse to carry out any order that was given provided the majority of members in a particular enforcement vote to do so and file a

petition to the Corner of Establishment to be review by the Corner of Judgment. Enforcement would only execute laws and policy written by the Corner of Establishment. The Corner of Establishment was to be a council of several hundred citizens voted in by their peers. Citizens of each region or locale would elect their Members of Establishment. They could pass legislation with a majority vote of seventy percent. If the majority was less than seventy percent in favor of a piece of legislation, the members who turned it down would have to file a report on why they disapproved of it. After a law or policy became instituted by the Corner of Establishment it would be conveyed to the Corner of Judgment to be ratified or vetoed. The Corner of Judgment was a committee of fourteen that was to be chosen by representative Members of Enforcement. The duty of the Corner of Judgment was to review legislation written by Establishment and ascertain whether it was a step toward tyranny and corruption or freedom and justice. If Judgment decided that a law or policy should be neither ratified nor vetoed, but rather revised, it could make suggestions and send the legislation back to Establishment to be resubmitted after further debate. Each Corner of Government mentioned thus far was thereby given influence over the others that could not be revoked. This system was designed to keep any one Corner from usurping the power of the others, a mechanism designed to promote freedom from oppression and tyranny. The fourth and final Corner of Governmental Power was the Corner of Bureaucracy, which was to be established to address matters presented by citizens and convey them to the other Corners. These matters concerned education, nationalization, infrastructure, and authorizing citizenship amongst other things. Bureaucracies would be structured like governments themselves, with corners of establishment, enforcement, and judgment and in some cases bureaucracy. Therefore a bureaucracy could stem from another bureaucracy like a tributary from a river. As I have stated, governmental structure was to be the same on all levels, local, regional, and central. However, these different levels of government would have jurisdiction over different spheres of influence. Local governments would rule on matters such as law enforcement, tax collection, and environmental protection. The two regional governments, Afghanstun and Maavernaaver, would have jurisdiction over education, the construction of roads, criminal prosecution, and settling civil disputes. And within the jurisdiction of the national government were such matters as nationalization, border control, licensing and many others, far too many things mentioned to discuss them all here. We took a break and had some wine before discussing the final two matters. In fact, by unanimous vote we decided to leave our discussion on finances in all realms for the next day. I was pleased to have an excuse to stay at the inn one more night, for the nights were growing warmer, and the bare wooden walls of my room let the warmth in. I had dreamed about the summers I had spent as a boy in the Whitherland the night before and was hoping I would again. After drinking a few glasses of wine we dispersed. Some went back to their rooms, others went elsewhere. Akhun, Raffi, Trevelyan and I went outside and down the thoroughfare to a tavern that looked over the small lagoon fed by a tributary to the delta. As the sun set there were still mothers who watched as their children played in the shallow water, dimples on its brilliant sparkling surface. Beyond, the tree spotted land went on for leagues uninterrupted. This was a great thing that we were creating here. We would keep this land sacred and pure. The righteous inhabitants of it would place it upon the throne of the Earth and keep it sacred and pure and beyond the reach of the hands of the corrupt. The four of us sat and drank until long after sunset but said very little. We just watched the sun go down over the horizon, bathing in its final glow. After it was gone and the stars speckled the velvet sky there was at last some talk between us. "You know," began Akhun in a soft and contented tone, "I think if we can survive the first few years, we will live forever." Raffi and Trevelyan did not look so happy. They stared down at the table desultorily, cleared their throats every once in a while, and spoke softly. "It will be a long time," said Trevelyan. "There will always be battles and war, and I think they will be back for us, in greater numbers, with greater force than we've ever seen from them." "But we won't be alone," I said. "There are others, and they are part of this world too. They will join us." After an hour or so longer I went back to my room and lay in bed with the candle lit for a long while thinking about the times when I was a boy and how this room was like my bedroom when I

was a child. I thought about how I used to lay in the sands of the cove until after dark and how I would often swim out to the tree that grew from its waters. I fell asleep with these memories in my thoughts and my dreams were sweet and comforting, though later I could not recall them in great detail. When I awoke the candle had burned out and the sun had been up for about an hour. I rolled out of bed and dressed and headed for the conference room where about half of the people were already present. When nearly all had arrived we were served tea and a light breakfast of eggs and fruit before continuing our discussion. Our discussion of finances in all realms required much organization and detangling, though it required quite a bit less overall talk than our previous discussions. We decided first that taxes would be collected at different rates dependent upon income. The richest would pay upwards of thirty five percent while the poorest would pay only about eighteen percent. This was to be the case nationwide with no exceptions. There would be local, regional, and national treasuries, and our currency, the Nugget, was to be backed by jade. Of all the taxes collected in the entire population, a third was to go to local treasuries, a third to regional treasuries, and a third to the national treasury. In all realms – local, regional, and national – committees were to be set up to decide on the distribution of monthly tax revenues. However, there were certain areas to which a minimal amount of money would always have to be allocated like social welfare, sanitation, education and healthcare for all citizens, and payment of government workers. Other areas where money could be spent were infrastructure, public works, the growth and development of industry and many others. There had been businesses, some of them large and some small, that existed in the dominions of Maavernaaver and Afghanstun for decades and probably centuries before the arrival of my compatriots and I. It seemed that the peoples' feelings towards these businesses were bittersweet, for while they provided jobs the quest for profits above all else could be damaging. For instance, many people of Canaanbul and Samarqand were upset by the shady business practice in local firms engaging with the forces of the Yisir and Shyna. It was clear some government intervention and guidance would be necessary to regulate these businesses and hold them accountable for their actions. However, economic experts argued that too much government intervention would be harmful to the economy. So, in pursuit of balancing economic and social wellbeing, of freedom and security, we established a doctrine known as the Edict of Trade that outlined the rules of running a business.

On his deathbed a brutal warlord recalls his life in great detail, from his youth as part of a clan of vagabonds living along trade routes, to his ascent to the throne of a new nation. Winds of Ruin chronicles the Timur's journeys through the perilous lands he will one day come to rule from a first person perspective that is at once confessional and hubristic. His narrative focuses on the landscapes and the people he encounters; beautiful and vile, villainous and heroic. His quest for revenge against nameless and terrible foes will lead him to discover the mysteries of his murky past and make readers wonder if the things he remembers in his dying moments could actually occur.

With threats from the East subdued, the Timur and his administration begin to forge a new nation centered around Samarkand and its sister city, Canaanbul. The Turquoise Union becomes a bastion of disgruntled refugees and who forge alliances with people of lands from which they fled. However, this period of respite is but a fleeting moment in time, for on the horizon to the West lurk the Marauders and Legionnaires, Kojash's sworn enemies, at whose expense the new nation will expand, or at whose hands it will perish.

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