

Civilization 97

Chapter 97 Discussing Affairs

Xiulote watched Gillim bowing in apology and immediately understood the reason behind it. This time, he did not return the bow. His heart became wary, and he was very cautious of Gillim.

Despite his vigilance towards Gillim, the young man did not glance at the head of intelligence again.

After a moment of thought, he grabbed Aweit's arm and complained with a helpless expression, "Aweit, you actually drugged me! At least give me a heads-up."

The King's smile instantly stiffened. He tilted his head slightly, looking somewhat guiltily towards the head of intelligence.

"This is just a bit of the hallucinogenic potion that the priests often use to open hearts, foster trust, relax and get intoxicated, and to make the party more enjoyable. Your Highness, rest assured, the dosage is very small and is harmless to the robust body of a samurai. This was my suggestion, and I apologize to your Highness once again!"

Gillim continued to bow in apology. His demeanor was solemn, as if dealing with state affairs, with a kind of inward frankness.

Xiulote looked at Gillim's frank expression, thought for a while, and then lowered his head to return the bow.

He smiled bitterly in his heart, thinking that Aweit's old subordinate was indeed no simple man, having knocked everyone out at their first meeting. Conducting transparent state affairs with the heart of a gentleman, yet employing any means necessary. If only he were still simple and loved his work...

The young man continued to look at Gillim's plain samurai robe and meticulous gear, suddenly feeling a sense of familiarity. After a moment, he rated the head of intelligence as the highest level of danger in his mind. He secretly marked him: a saint who could survive on just water, bread, and work.

Aweit chuckled and rose from his throne. He grabbed the two men by the arm and ordered his trusted aide to wake the soundly sleeping Acap.

Acap, still suffering from his hangover, seemed a bit dazed. He absentmindedly accepted a bowl of tomato juice to sober up, drank it in one go, then rubbed his forehead, slowly coming to his senses.

"Tonight's party was truly enjoyable! I have never been so intoxicated before. It seems that celebrating victory together with everyone is truly one of life's pleasures!"

Seeing the three people waiting for him, Acap's gentle face flushed. He continued to hold his forehead, still feeling somewhat dizzy.

Xiulote instinctively glanced at Gillim, but the latter's expression remained unchanged, solemn and dignified.

Aweit smiled lightly, "Let's go, we should discuss the follow-up plans in the side tent."

Upon entering the side tent, the bonfire had already been lit. The four men settled down around the fire pit.

The last discussion had been before the decisive battle when everyone was filled with excitement and tension. But now, everything had changed. The young man, looking at the calm faces around him, felt a surge of exhilaration from within, a confidence and anticipation for the future.

Military power is the foundation of war. Everyone first discussed the casualties of the battle and the remaining military strength.

"In the battle of the Twin Kings, over three hundred of the King's family warriors were killed, Tizoc's Tonsured Guards were reduced to eighty, neither side's nobility battle group was injured, dozens among the directly-subordinated warriors died in battle, and over four hundred suffered minor injuries. After this battle, Tizoc's thousand Eagle Warrior Battalion and seven thousand directly-subordinated surrendered, and about ten thousand militia also joined us."

Gillim respectfully reported the compiled numbers. His mathematics were excellent, and Aweit was all too happy to leave the tedious task of counting to him.

"The militaries of the peripheral city-states have surrendered one after another. However, due to lack of food and guerrilla warfare, the city-state militaries suffered severe losses and now also need to recuperate. Of the twenty thousand city-state warriors returning from the great camp of Otapan, only seventeen thousand remain. The Teotihuacan battalion suffered the most. Four thousand warriors had a difficult journey and also participated in the decisive battle, now only a little over three thousand are left."

Acap reported earnestly, glancing at Xiulote, who also looked up at him. Their eyes met, both feeling a bit distressed.

Aweit pondered for a moment, then reached out to pat Xiulote's shoulder.

"The Teotihuacan battalion exerted a great effort in this battle! Battalion Leader Xiuxoke was also wounded in the camp. I have already sent the best War Priest to treat him. I will promote Battalion Leader Xiuxoke to Third Level Honored Nobility, grant him two wealthy lakeside villages, give six thousand lengths of cloth to the three thousand warriors, and I will also replenish the lost thousand warriors for him!"

Xiulote then bowed once again in gratitude, thanking the King on behalf of his father.

Watching the two of them getting along so well, Gillim's gaze lingered on Aweit and the young man's faces, silently pondering something.

Only after the young man finished his bow did Gillim begin to report again.

"Your Majesty, we now have two thousand nobility battle groups, twenty-seven thousand directly-subordinated, twenty-five thousand city-state, a total of fifty-four thousand warriors at our disposal! Plus nearly fifty thousand militia. Three-quarters of the entire Mexica Alliance's strength is gathered in our hands, an invincible large army unmatched by any force in the world. Congratulations to Your Majesty!"

Hearing the number of fifty-four thousand warriors, Xiulote was extremely exhilarated. He looked at Aweit and Acap, whose faces were full of bold and confident smiles.

However, Gillim's face was still solemn as he performed a congratulatory bow, continuing to speak with seriousness.

"However, this war with the Otomi has already persisted for a year and a half. The warriors are mentally exhausted, and their morale has long been yearning for home."

"During the lengthy siege beneath Otapan City, we lost over four thousand Samurai, and in the standoff against the Tarasco at the banks of the Lerma River, we lost another thousand Samurai. On the retreat from Otapan City, three thousand City-State Warriors became scattered and lost, or were captured due to lack of provisions. Then in the civil war within the Royal Family, eight hundred elite Samurai perished. Adding to other scattered skirmishes, this campaign has already cost us a full nine thousand Mexica warriors!"

"Casal currently leads three thousand personal warriors encamped in the mountains to the far west, facing off against the several thousand Ottopan Warriors led by Jiowar. As for the loss of the militia, while not as significant, it surely exceeds twenty thousand."

Xiulote nodded his head. In this Otomi campaign, actually only half of the fallen warriors perished in battle. More than half of the casualties during the siege under Otapan City died from the harsh environment of the rainy season and diseases caused by the unfamiliar land and water. The dispersion of the warriors during the army's retreat was also due to the difficult mountain forest marching conditions.

Out of nine thousand warrior casualties, nearly four thousand were lost to the harsh and difficult mountain forests during the rainy season, and to starvation caused by the harsh environment. The Otomi's guerrilla tactics amplified the power of the environment. This showed how greatly the terrain and the environment could impact the army's losses.

In fact, once the two armies formed up for battle, the battle-hardened Mexica warriors were often able to win with fewer numbers. With higher training and bolder morale, they managed to achieve an impressive kill ratio with fewer losses! Just like the youth's first battle, as well as the battle at the Lerma River."

"This time heading south, I've received new information from the twenty thousand dispersed warriors. The naval forces have already retrieved six thousand militia from the banks of the Lerma River. Of the four thousand militia casualties, two thousand were killed or captured, and another two thousand are lost, scattered in the mountain forests on the north coast of the Lerma River, with their specific situation unknown.

The naval forces are now waiting at a rivermouth three days to the south for further orders."

"The Tarasco arrived at the river crossing quite late, and they did not overly pursue the retreating militia. They merely occupied the riverside camp, peering at the weakened Otapan City, waiting for news from the Mexica main army.

I think it's very likely that the Tarasco will continue the siege of Otapan. Relying on Cuitzeo Lake and the Lerma River, their supply lines are much more convenient, and now it is the dry season. Otapan's food supplies are estimated to last only three more months, and the Otomi are frantically scouring for food. The Otomi City-States further west and north must also be organizing aid."

Xiulote was reporting the latest intelligence from the Lerma River basin.

Aweit frowned in thought – whether to allow the Tarasco to besiege Otapan City was ultimately a boon or a bane? He hoped to exhaust the forces of both sides as much as possible without really letting the Tarasco pick the peaches and completely conquer the Otomi.

Now out of reach, the King did not consider for too long. He burst out laughing, encouraging his three trusted aides:

"This expedition indeed suffered heavy losses, but our enemy's losses are even greater! We have thoroughly decimated the Otomi's four states. Their warriors have fallen by over ten thousand, and the population of the villages has been halved.

For years to come, the Otomi will be plagued by famine, unable to support the current number of warriors. They will not recover for a whole two generations. They can no longer pose a threat! Similarly, the Tarasco also have not gained any advantage. They lost a good ten thousand elite militia and a thousand warriors by the river."

Hearing this, Acap laughed in agreement, and Gillim nodded seriously.

The youth's expression did not change, but a sigh resonated in his heart: "Striving for land through war, bodies fill the fields; contending for cities through war, bodies fill the cities. The war has been fought for two years, and famine has already begun. Of the original one million Otomi, definitely no more than four hundred thousand will remain."

Gillim bowed again and earnestly advanced his opinion.

"Additionally, the gathering of a large army presents a major problem of daily food supply!

The news of the Royal Family's civil war should be on its way to the capital, and this will inevitably affect the transportation of the army's food supplies. We currently have enough food for one hundred and twenty thousand people for one month. With less loss of food storage during the dry season, a little over ten percent is lost monthly, and transportation losses depend on the distance. I estimate the food can last the army for one month.

And now, to save on the consumption of provisions, I have two suggestions: first, to move the main army to the Xilotepec camp, relying on the convenient water routes for transportation. Second, to disband most of the militia and decommission the mountain camps.

At the same time, Your Majesty once promised the warriors to end the war, allowing them to return home. The King cannot easily break his promise, and disbanding some warriors is also imperative!

And the most crucial matter is for Your Majesty to quickly organize the army and head south directly to Tenochtitlan, the city in the lake. To formally ascend the throne in the capital, take control of the heart of the Alliance! Possessing the capital city means controlling the people's hearts, and possessing the capital's large granaries means controlling the army.

Once the capital is in our hands, controlling the Alliance's food supplies, the sixteen thousand warriors of the Atotztl state facing the Tlaxcala on the front line, including the four groups each of eight thousand warriors, will pledge their allegiance automatically!"

Xiulote nodded in approval and also put forward a new suggestion:

"We can negotiate with Otapan City, but Xilotepec City should be besieged.

For one, Xilotepec City is in extreme food shortage, with a maximum of only four months' worth of reserves left. Two, it has the advantage of connected water routes, which is convenient for food transport and easier for direct control by the capital. Three, by conquering this place and stationing troops, we could completely expel the Otomi back to the western mountains, while also intimidating the Vastec people in the north. And four, it would serve as punishment for Xilotepec City's betrayal of the Alliance.

If we miss this opportunity, waiting to besiege Xilotepec City again after they have replenished their food will lead to a prolonged siege, facing unpredictable changes."

Aweit nodded slightly, deep in thought. Everything awaited the King's decision.