Governor 651

Chapter 651, Only 5%?

Sidorov and his troops were not close to the center of infection at this moment. But those biological starships, capable of navigating in the starry sky, were so massive that even from such a distance, one could clearly see this breathtaking scene with the naked eye.

Sidorov felt this even more so.

His mechanical eye, enhanced with optical zoom, allowed him to see the distant situation even more clearly.

"Biological starships..."

He murmured.

The massive biological structures, if not entirely distinct in his vision, were at least discernible for what they were.

It looked like a giant monster, with a large head and a long, tentacle-like tail. Its entire body was enveloped in thick armor plating.

And there were dozens of such biological starships visible at a glance!

This was his first time seeing such things, but it didn't mean he didn't understand what they were.

The emphasis of 'biological starship' is on 'biological,' not on 'starship.' Naming it as a starship is just a definition more fitting for humans concerning its function. In essence, it's a creature, just exceedingly large, even capable of traveling through space. Inside, it has a complete environment suitable for the Terran Zerg species to survive, and depending on its use, it evolves different organs, akin to different facilities within a starship?

But why?

Logically, shouldn't it be that only the Insect Nest Mother Ship or the Queen could evolve powerful Zerg creatures through biomass?

On Qi Teru VI, one didn't even see a shadow of the Void Insect Species, so how, even with abundant biomass, could such terrifying things be born?

Sidorov's limited knowledge couldn't comprehend this point.

Though it seemed slow as it cruised through the sky, in a short while, it had already flown quite high and far.

Of course, during this time, humanity wouldn't just sit idly by.

Qi Teru Planet didn't have large-scale orbital artillery groups, but it did have a fair amount of basic anti-aircraft guns. When these began to fire fiercely at the sky, even though the firepower wasn't highly effective against its tough shell, under concentrated fire, they still managed to bring down two.

Meanwhile, Sidorov could also see fire descending from the outer orbit, bombarding these biological starships.

That was likely the Alliance destroyer that had been stationed on the orbit of Qi Teru VI, rushing over quickly.

Its M-level firepower was quite effective against the biological starships.

After the initial shock subsided, Sidorov could also see that these biological starships were not as large as imagined. Each was about a thousand meters long, dimensionally smaller than human escort ships.

Generally, the biological starships of the Zerg have much tougher armor than human ships. Internally, due to being a complete organism, they are not as easily destroyed as a regular ship. However, their

weakness is the absence of void shields/energy shields as extra protection. When attacked, they can only endure it.

The thousand-meter class biological starships seen currently could withstand S-Class firepower, but with M-level firepower from a destroyer, it wouldn't be difficult to take one down with two shots.

According to Sidorov's knowledge, the 'Wind Glint Wave Rider'—the name of that Crazy Shark-class destroyer—has two Heat Hammer macro cannons, one Sky Cleave Axe missile launcher, and an obliterating Light Spear.

Before those biological starships could break the atmosphere and leave orbit, the Wind Glint Wave Rider had already destroyed seven.

Once in space, these biological starships had no intention of battling the Wind Glint Wave Rider.

They scattered away, accelerating to escape.

As a Crazy Shark-class vessel, the Wind Glint Wave Rider, along with a Silver Sword-class escort and four patrol ships, couldn't possibly catch them all.

Days later, when sweeping the battlefield on the ground, Sidorov found out that, altogether, over twenty biological starships had been destroyed. Nearly ten managed to escape and remain whereabouts unknown.

By this time, with many allied forces, after entering the previously core infection zone, Sidorov and his warriors discovered it was empty. Supposedly, this area with hundreds of millions of infected individuals now only had very sparse, isolated presences remaining.

In this sense, the war on Qi Teru VI was over.

They achieved the initial strategic objective; the threat within the planet was eradicated.

There was no longer any need to station such a large number of ground troops, and the Defense Army, which had been summoned locally and accounted for nearly 20% of the population, could be widely dismissed to return to production. The remaining tasks included eliminating surviving infected individuals and burning away the remnants like mucus clusters, flesh mats, and digestion pools left by the infected... in simple terms, it was a step-by-step clearing of ruins and rebuilding of homes.

These tasks had nothing to do with Sidorov.

His mission was complete.

Originally, he thought it would take ten years of effort on this planet, but unexpectedly, it ended so neatly in just two years.

However, after witnessing over thirty biological starships rise into the sky, though the majority were destroyed, with about a dozen still escaping, Sidorov wasn't sure if it counted as a victory.

...

Gu Hang believed that the special battles occurring on Qi Teru and many similar planets could be considered victories.

The events on Qi Teru were certainly not isolated.

In the Alfonso Star Domain, including the Thistle Muster Star Field, Gu Hang received reports of similar occurrences.

Worlds with particularly large groups of infected seemed to have received a simultaneous command, absorbing all the biomass they could disregardlessly. Infected individuals jumped into digestion pools; plants, animals, and even large amounts of ordinary organic matter were dragged along by those infected as they leaped in.

The losses during this process were, of course, significant, just like the situation experienced on Qi Teru, where reckless biomass conversion by the infected handed the situation entirely to the Alliance.

Many were eliminated before the conversion, and during the process, many digestion pools were destroyed, pipelines were intercepted, and even core infection zones were overcome.

However, the number was too vast. In worlds severely infested with massive numbers of infected individuals, it was inevitable that some biological starships would be converted and ascend.

They were then further decimated by air defenses, orbital interceptions, and Alliance ship pursuits.

Even though quite a few biological starships eventually escaped, according to the estimates by Gu Hang's subordinates: experts, scholars, and Sect of Mechanics researchers, the biological starships authentically succeeded in absconding with no more than 5% of the total biomass they infected and controlled.

Though these biological starships appeared intimidating, their scales of about a thousand meters were comparable to patrol ships. Moreover, possessing little to no combat ability, they carried just a belly full of biomass, only knowing to flee.

Even if they regrouped elsewhere, using this biomass to recreate fleets or armies, they wouldn't form a particularly formidable force, staying within a manageable range.

But this was the case in the Alfonso and Thistle Muster Star Domains.

What about the other star domains previously controlled by Iron Armor, filled with pest infections, in the Spiderweb Domain?

And the worlds the West Line and North Line considered irrelevant, focusing on advancing and leaving unchecked behind?

Even thinking about it sent chills down Gu Hang's spine!

Within the Alliance's dominion, the actions of the infected, who recklessly riot, transform biomass, and evolve into biological ships, ultimately didn't yield any positive outcome.

That so-called less than five percent of biomass was plundered away, and the number of insect species that could be spawned wasn't terrifying, at least the Alliance isn't afraid.

The Void Insect Species have been forced to such an extent, and a considerable reason is due to the Alliance's Pest Control Office and strategies to eliminate the infected in the Thistle Muster Star Field and Alfonso Star Domain, which have been relatively successful. If the insect swarm doesn't take further actions, then in a few years, they might not even manage to consume this 5% of biomass.

The 5% of biomass controlled by the infected regions is roughly equivalent to the resources consumed on an average planet.

However, within the Alliance, two star domains equate to a planet completely consumed, which is not a major problem.

But for the few star domains on the North Line, isn't that going to be a major disaster?

Under Gu Hang's command, the Alliance's intelligence department did three things.

First, they estimated how much the Void Insect Species could consume under the current worst-case scenario.

The Alliance Intelligence Department believes they could consume at least over 50% of the controlled regions.

This is ten times that of the Alliance.

But the bigger issue is that in the Thistle Muster and Alfonso Star Domain, under the Alliance's previous fierce strikes, the planets truly controlled by the infected might not even exceed eighty; for those eighty, the average controlled area and population might only be around 30%.

But in the North Line and West Line, these numbers combined would multiply several times. The infected worlds could number eight hundred, with a higher average level of control.

All the intelligence organizations of the Alliance basically agree that under these circumstances, the biomass consumed by the insect species could total up to the equivalent of one hundred and fifty worlds entirely devoured.

This is without calculating the Princess Star Domain.

The situation in the Princess Star Domain will obviously be several times worse.

At such a level of consumption, what scale would the spawned insect swarm legion reach?

The ass on the North Line and West Line is going to be devastated!

The second thing the intelligence department did was immediately contact all intelligence personnel dispatched to the North Line and West Line, urging them to investigate local insect swarm infection reports promptly and pay close attention to similar occurrences as on Planet Weird VI.

The outcome is uncertain whether to be pleased or worried.

The optimistic aspect is: in the West Line and North Line, those star domains haven't yet seen a substantial number of biological ships evolve and rise.

The disconcerting aspect, however, is that intelligence personnel indeed discovered some digestive pools and digestive pipelines.

From this viewpoint, it seems the problem still seems resolvable? Quick action may at least minimize losses?

However, intelligence analysts believe this is merely an illusion.

Why not rush to ’consume’? Because in these worlds, the infection can still further develop; the infected can be fully digested, unlike how in Alliance-controlled planets, they need to hurry or risk having nothing left to consume.

There is ample time for the insect swarm’s instructions, allowing them to consume more and evolve biological ships to carry away what they’ve eaten.

From this angle, it certainly spells trouble without doubt.

The third task was to urgently integrate all the above intelligence, whether occurring domestically within the Alliance or gathered externally, along with analysts’ reports, and swiftly send them to the commanders of the West Line and North Line, even to Holy Terra.

Gu Hang attached his assessment to these reports, expressing with an extremely solemn tone that this is a severe, massive crisis, even far more serious than the mere Iron Armor rebellion, hoping all parties deeply consider these issues and strive to find solutions.

The reactions of the three sides warning by Gu Hang remain unknown.

He can only hope these leaders would genuinely take it seriously, rather than act muddle-headedly.

But this is all he can do.

He too has his own matters to handle.

The first task is dispatching the Alliance’s patrol fleet quickly to search for those escaping biological ships, with orders to all Alliance fleets to eliminate them upon any trace.

Taking advantage of the fact that these biological ships, born for transporting biomass, lack combat power, seize the chance to take down one at a time.

Destroying them now will be relatively easy; later, when this biomass is transformed into genuine biological warships or insect army, elimination will be much harder, requiring more sacrifices.

Additionally, there is urgent mobilization of troops and construction personnel to the areas bordering the Thistle Muster Star Field, Alfonso Star Domain, and Princess Star Domain to build defense facilities.

Even resorting to dismantling Star Fortresses from some rear worlds, using tugboats to drag them to the border to strengthen defenses.

Gu Hang is planning for the worst.

If conditions inside the Princess Star Domain become uncontrollable, and a terrifyingly massive Insect Nest Fleet emerges, then try as much as possible to intercept them at the borders.

Of course, that's assuming they can fight them off.

If the enemy power is overwhelmingly strong, Gu Hang would give up.

Although both Thistle Muster and Alfonso are within his domain now, they aren't the Alliance's core territory, and if absolutely necessary, they can be abandoned.

Even Proudclaw Cosmos can be abandoned.

But Gu Hang doesn't want to reach that point.

If the Alliance's troops can't stop the enemy in Thistle Muster and Alfonso, and they allow them in, consuming these two star domains, afterward when the swarm moves south, truly threatening his core territory, they will become stronger.

By then, how to block them?

Thinking of this makes Gu Hang extremely anxious.

Then, the responses from the West Line, North Line, and Holy Terra further aggravated him.

"All a bunch of pests!"

He cursed.

Holy Terra's reply said they acknowledged and would scrutinize the matter.

That was it.

The Sallius Warlord from the West Line said he acknowledged and would monitor the situation closely, mentioning a halt in advancement to check the situation behind them.

This seemed somewhat reasonable, although it differed from Gu Hang's hope for an immediate withdrawal to clean up before a major outbreak, but there seemed to be some hope.

In comparison, Marshal Leroux from the North Line made Gu Hang most dissatisfied.

Marshal Leroux said their main force was already close to enemy core, about to secure victory. Everything, wait until they win to discuss.

"Win? Let's see how you win!"

Chapter 653, Signs of Collapse

Did Leroux truly not know that danger was approaching?

Not necessarily.

At first, he didn't take Gu Hang's warnings seriously, for the same reasons he had criticized Gu Hang during a meeting earlier, believing that Gu Hang wasn't acting in the best interest of the Northern Line's affairs but rather that Gu Hang was exaggerating to obstruct the Northern Line's advance and claim the highest honor in this war.

However, later on, as undeniable evidence was laid out before him piece by piece, he wasn't completely oblivious. Naturally, he began to change his perspective.

Even his mindset underwent a transformation during those repeated and 'sincere' warnings.

On one hand, he came to admire Gu Hang somewhat.

Not everyone can set aside past grievances when truly important matters arise and dedicate themselves to offering reminders for the ultimate great cause.

On the other hand, he grew increasingly resolute in his determination to swiftly defeat Reiaductus and achieve final victory.

It wasn't because he disbelieved the intelligence provided by Gu Hang; on the contrary, he took it seriously, hence the need for such actions.

Words spoken in the past cannot be taken back. Even though he had shifted his thinking, he couldn't publicly change his stance as it would devastate his own prestige.

He was the Commander, the Alliance Hierarch, but he wasn't the founder or leader of this army.

At most, he could refrain from mentioning these matters further, allowing them to fade away.

Although inevitable whispers would circulate, as long as the situation didn't evolve into open opposition, it would prove that everything remained within controllable limits.

In the meantime, Leroux believed that there was no turning back now after careful consideration.

Like the Alliance, steadily addressing rear problems had become impossible. The state of the Lefo and Jianmen Star Domains was already dire due to the Insect Swarm invasion problems. Due to prior rapid advancements, they hadn't completely eradicated the Insect Swarm fleet; remnants remained, not to mention the various planet-based Swarm forces and infected individuals.

Previously, they believed all was manageable. The enemy had been dispersed, and the remaining threats were confined within Star Domain or even multiple Star Sector levels, qualifying as 'local threats.' As long as they reached the Princess Star Domain and captured Reiaductus, they could achieve campaign-level victory. As for the cleanup issues left behind, the noble Interstellar Warriors wouldn't bother—let the locally rebuilt government and Empire figure it out.

But now, there was strong evidence suggesting back-end troubles had become incredibly exaggerated in scale, and as they deepened into such territory, with Reiaductus already in sight, going back was impossible.

Even if Leroux issued such a command and his coalition forces supported his decision to return and clean up the mess, according to the intelligence provided by Gu Hang, those insects were fully capable of triggering a complete transformation of all infected individuals in the two Star Domains, just as with Gu Hang, for full conversion.

Moreover, because they merely scattered, not fully eliminated that Insect Swarm fleet earlier, the Lefo and Jianmen Star Domains might evolve into massive war quagmires. At that point, Leroux and his army would find it challenging to escape the chaos, let alone win the war!

From this angle, even if victory wasn't assured, the only way to preserve his army was to forge ahead bravely and conquer Reiaductus!

He even stopped pondering what to do if the war continued after capturing it and the coveted victory remained elusive.

He had no choice left.

He convened another internal military meeting, during which Leroux once again delivered an exceptional speech.

He didn’t mention Gu Hang even once, only emphasizing the critical moment of survival, though everything wasn’t yet at a dead end. Everyone should boost their morale, fight hard and only then carve out a path through the crisis.

However, this time his speech aimed at boosting morale wasn’t as effective as before.

Everyone could see that danger was near.

The key point was that this danger was caused by Leroux’s consistently aggressive strategy.

Eloquence had limited utility.

Leroux stopped saying much.

Actions spoke louder than words.

On the march toward Reiaductus, Leroux personally commanded, especially deploying his most loyal and reliable units—the two Black Cross fleet—as they won several brilliant annihilation battles. They eliminated two local scouting and delaying units in the Princess Star Domain and captured a well-facilitated planet to serve as the army’s backup base. Meanwhile, the entire army advanced rapidly, with Reiaductus now just two Star Realm jumps away.

The power of victory outweighed words.

Reinvigorated, the army finally reached Reiaductus one week later.

Here, they achieved a victory worthy of being called brilliant.

Using brilliance was not because they captured the target bloodlessly, quite the opposite.

The Iron Armor Battle Group in their stronghold had formidable defenses: Starports, Star Fortresses, planet-grade Void Shields, dense orbital gun forts—every necessary defense structure was there. Additionally, there was a competent mobile fleet stationed here, and the number of Ironclad Interstellar Soldiers revealed during combat exceeded a thousand, not to mention the Princess Legion played an outstanding auxiliary role comparable to renowned Star Realm Army units.

However, under Leroux's offensive, they defeated the enemy within a month.

While the planet wasn't fully occupied, the aforementioned key strategic points were under their control.

Then, Leroux eagerly spread the news of victory to all parties.

West Line, South Line, Holy Terra...

Alongside the victory news, he also pragmatically stated their intention to stay in Reiaductus for a while, to eradicate the resistance forces on the ground and fortify the planetary defense systems, particularly prioritizing the repair of the planet-grade Void Shield.

They would wait there for the victorious convergence with Mr. Gu and the Sallius Warlord.

This message was the Empire's last combat report received from the Northern Line Army.

On the third day of their conquest of Reiaductus, the sky-darkening Subspace Shadow completely sealed off the Princess Star Domain, allowing no communication to escape.

Simultaneously, Lefo, Jianmen, An Guang, White Curtain, Tanggu... these five Star Domains nominally under Northern and Western Line control within the Spiderweb Domain began to see extensive phenomena of infected individuals metabolizing and rising bio-ships.

Even in the Magrey Cosmic Domain, such situations started occurring.

Meanwhile, in the Sallius's report claiming their defeat of the Iron Armor Army's main force, this force unexpectedly appeared from the west, from Magrey Cosmic Domain, moving eastward to encircle Sallius's main force.

From the Princess Star Domain, a sizable Insect Nest Fleet moved westward to encircle Sallius.

During this time, Sallius's main force was still engaged in the cleanup of local infected and digestion pools at the border between the White Curtain Star Domain and the Princess Star Domain.

Chapter 654

When Major Akangji saw yet another landing craft crash into the defensive zone, he was already somewhat desperate.

As part of the Solar Auxiliary Army, such emotions were unwarranted.

He wasn't afraid of death, but he feared that his mission would not be completed, and he was scared of losing the "Long Qi Star" he was stationed to protect.

Akangji wasn't exactly a high-ranking officer; he was originally part of the Solar Auxiliary Army and now, along with the Otaubis Battle Group, had formed an expeditionary force to fight in the Spiderweb Domain.

And up until now, despite not knowing much about the greater scheme, from the orders he recently received, he could see some issues.

First, the rapid advancement was halted.

The content of his comrades' discussions had been about competing with the Northern Line Army to see who could take down Reiaductus, the enemy's stronghold, first. But suddenly, orders changed to hold positions and exert full force to eradicate the local insect infestation problem.

The infantry regiment he led had just taken down several digestion pools when they encountered swarming insect hordes!

The Sun Legion, among all the renowned Star Realm Army corps of the Empire, was considered top-tier. Putting aside their level of training, in terms of equipment, as the direct unit of the Holy Terra Star Realm Legion, their standards were exceptionally high.

Even though they were just an infantry regiment, they had a substantial amount of heavy artillery and heavy bomb guns. These could even be considered regular weapons. In addition to the three regular combat battalions, there was an elite combat battalion, fully equipped with exoskeletons!

Within the regiment's artillery company, there were also two formidable mobile artillery vehicles—the Petrified Lizard Cannons!

These armed forces, combined with elite training, made his unit perform exceptionally valiantly in battle.

They not only held the line but also gathered many units that had retreated from other directions. These units, recruited and armed locally, didn't even reach the level of the Star Realm Army, merely the ordinary Planetary Defense Force, so one couldn't expect too much from them.

Akangji executed military law on only a few who only thought of fleeing; the remaining troops were gathered to fill various front lines, bolstering the defensive strength.

They held out until reinforcements arrived, among which were even some Red Copper Warriors of the Otaubis.

Just as he was preparing to receive orders from above for a major counteroffensive against the detestable insect swarms, a transfer order came, moving him and his forces away from the front line, leaving just some local Defense Army troops to hold the position.

He protested this, believing that these Defense Army troops were far from sufficient for defense, which would lead to a disastrous situation.

But the superior silenced him with just a phrase.

"I know, but there’s nothing we can do; we have more important tasks to accomplish."

What was this so-called more important task?

Guarding the starport.

A fleet bearing the banner of the Iron Armor Battle Group had already entered the Long Qi Star System and was advancing towards the planet.

Planetary defense, with the starport being the utmost priority. His mission was to enter and hold the starport.

The conflict between the Space Fleet and the planet’s orbital defense system was beyond his help. However, living pods filled with insects were continually flying into the starport. The starport observation post he was guarding had been repeatedly attacked over the past two weeks.

He had to deal with not just the bugs escaping those living pods but also the infectees fighting alongside them.

These infectees were no longer the trash or scum encountered during the planet’s surface cleansing.

They were all dressed in standard Star Realm Army equipment, and under the various bodily fluids and overgrown flesh, one could still faintly discern from their gray-purple attire that they were from the "Princess Legion."

At least they used to be.

Back when the Expeditionary Force had just arrived in the Magrey Cosmic Domain, he had clashed with the Princess Legion. He had to admit, this legion was a formidable opponent—not only was their equipment, supported by the so-called Alfonso Mechanical Sect, superior, but their training level was also stronger than some of the lesser-known Star Realm Legions.

However, the "Princess Legion infectees" he was currently facing were even more formidable than he had remembered.

The difference lay in the stronger physical vitality of these infectees, who might not die even when shot. Moreover, they truly feared neither life nor death, with no cases of morale collapse or retreat.

Of course, from another perspective, they might have weakened: the overall unit's maneuvering and combat pattern changed significantly, resembling more like insect hordes rather than human troops. This often led them to adopt particularly aggressive combat strategies, resulting in unnecessary casualties.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming numbers, plus real bugs nearby, wore them down!

The most critical battle came when three Interstellar Warriors in black-gray battle armor suddenly appeared before them!

Those were from the Iron Armor Battle Group!

Akangji's elite combat battalion, which he was so proud of, suffered a brutal massacre.

Just as his defensive line was about to be irreversibly breached, an Otaubis Warrior arrived on the battlefield—bearing a round shield and a spear, clad in red copper armor with a lateral plume on the helmet, symbolizing his champion status.

Single-handedly, he killed those three Iron Armor Interstellar Warriors, at the mere cost of taking a few hits, but he seemed unharmed.

After the battle, just as Akangji went up to express his gratitude, he received new orders: counteroffensive.

It turned out that a power facility defended by a neighboring brother regiment had already been breached, and they were tasked with recapturing it.

Despite the already heavy casualties, Akangji gritted his teeth and gathered what mobile forces he had left, handing them over to the Otaubis Warrior to take along.

Then, they heard nothing further.

What came next was that his troops had hardly caught their breath, not even having replenished their ammunition,

Chapter 655: Not a Traitor?

"Report the situation, Major."

Akangji's throat tightened, a bit nervous.

In front of him was indeed an Interstellar Warrior, whom he ought to respect. However, looking at the paint job on the armor, he didn't quite know what to say.

That primarily white, with green accents, Interstellar Warrior.

From that paint job, Akangji could recognize that they were from the Dragon King's Spear Chapter.

His recognition of this Chapter was not because the Spear of the Dragon King was so famous, but because before joining the Expeditionary Force and setting out, it was mentioned in the internal officer training about the enemies they would face in the expedition. Among them, particular attention was drawn to the various Rebellion Warbands involved in the uprising.

Ironclad was the most critical, but other traitor battle groups also needed attention.

Like Bedrock Shield, Furyflame, New World Torch... Akangji had seen and studied their paint jobs to avoid mistakes on the battlefield.

This white and green painted Dragon King's Spear was indeed one of the traitor battle groups, wasn't it?

Encountering them on the battlefield, they should, in theory, be firing with full force to block these Interstellar Warriors, preventing them from entering the lines.

But... they came bearing the Alliance's banner.

From the observation post, the technical specialist under Akangji saw that ships flying the Alliance banner were cooperating with Long Qi Star's orbital defense system to strike at Ironclad's fleet, achieving quite good results. At least the originally precarious orbital defense system could finally catch a breath.

Furthermore, many landing ships emerged from the Alliance ships, entering the Starport and Star Fortress, serving as reinforcements.

Upon hearing this news, Akangji was, of course, very pleased. At that time, he was on the brink of destruction, and if some reinforcements could arrive, it would indeed be life-saving.

However, he never imagined that it would be the Dragon King's Spear arriving.

Initially, he thought not that reinforcements had arrived, but that a formidable enemy was upon them.

With only two hundred men left, Akangji felt doomed at the time. Just those three warriors of the Dragon King's Spear could wipe out his force, not to mention the two fully-equipped infantry battalions accompanying the Interstellar Warriors.

He was prepared to die on the field of battle, but the subsequent developments left him a bit surprised.

The scouts reported that the three warriors of the Dragon King's Spear, along with their troops, cleared all the bugs they encountered nearby.

There was also a crucial detail.

Although the Interstellar Warriors were fully encased in armor, making them indistinct, the regular soldiers alongside them, although also fully armored for space combat, appeared human in size, unlike those infected, who showed severely exaggerated deformities.

Because of this, when they claimed to represent the Alliance, Akangji felt somewhat inclined to believe them.

Of course, the main reason he let them in was still... he couldn’t stop them.

Might as well gamble that they were reinforcements.

Thus, he not only let these people in but also, at the request of the leading Interstellar Warrior Sergeant, reported what he knew of the situation.

Afterward, he looked at the other party nervously.

Even now, he couldn’t rule out the possibility that they were enemies. What if they came only to gather intelligence and then slaughter the remaining forces?

But he gambled correctly.

The worst-case scenario did not occur.

The Interstellar Warrior slightly nodded, then called over one of their Commanders, who, judging by the rank, was also a Major.

After a brief conversation, the Major stepped forward, saluted Akangji, and said, "I am Major Li Guojin of the 8th Regiment, 277th Division, 6th Army Group of the Alliance. We have decided, based on the intelligence you provided, to check the direction in which that Otaubis Warrior took your forces for support. However, your front lines here also look precarious. I will leave you a combat battalion, and they will follow your orders. I hope you can hold the ground."

Akangji was momentarily stunned, followed by a huge sense of joy!

He thanked them repeatedly, but the Interstellar Warriors and Major Li Guojin did not linger long for conversation. Time was tight, the tasks heavy, and they needed to move quickly for support.

Akangji watched them leave, then looked at the combat battalion left behind, which actually outnumbered his surviving subordinates, leaving him feeling at a loss.

Not only reinforcements but their style was quite different too.

With the addition of this new force, his troop strength was once again approaching a thousand.

However, he didn't dare presumptuously assume command over these friendly forces. Although their Captain Battalion Commander ranked below his, the current situation of the two parties was really quite different.

Cooperating well and securing this location was Akangji's greatest wish.

...

"Captain."

The Fourth Company Commander of the Spear of the Dragon King, striding forward, was Ricardo Lazio, the leader of this operation.

His company, aboard a fast Strike Cruiser accompanied by eight other medium and small vessels, arrived as the vanguard of the entire force. When they reached Long Qi Star, it was the planet's most critical moment.

They immediately engaged in combat. Not only did the fleet bombard from outside, supporting the orbital system against Ironclad's ships, but they also dispatched forces to the Starport to relieve internal pressure.

Oddly enough...

"The Long Qi Star side is still constantly asking us to verify our identity." The mortal liaison speaking had a tone of annoyance.

Very understandable, given the circumstances, and they were still entangled in this?

When they arrived near the star system, they worked hard to finally establish contact with the command center on Long Qi Star.

However, the general in charge of the Sun Legion's operations and an Otaubis Battle Group Sergeant were deeply suspicious of them.

On one hand, though the Spear of the Dragon King hadn't done any 'evil deeds,' they were once part of rebel elements. Now claiming to assist the Alliance warranted some skepticism, and that's quite normal, right?

On the other hand, with the Alliance being so far away, suddenly appearing in the White Curtain Star Domain was quite unbelievable.

Lazio waved it off, saying, "Their doubt is normal. After all, our operational speed was very fast. Furthermore, temporarily present are only us; the bulk of our Chapter, including Commander Matins leading the main force, is still on the way."

"We must forgive them and look forward."

As he spoke, he handed over an electronic file pad.

The liaison took it, his pupils slightly shrinking: "This is..."

"On the other side, we have already contacted Sallius Warlord. He represented the Otaubis Battle Group and the entire Western Front Army, extending a welcome to us and ordering all Imperial Army and Otaubis Warriors on Long Qi Star to cooperate with our operations."

"Now, transmit the orders and encrypted documents to Long Qi Star. Next, I will take over the battle for Long Qi Star. Let those vile Ironclad impostors go to hell!"

Chapter 656, Breakthrough

With a whole squad of the Dragon King's Spear Chapter, accompanied by their Auxiliary Army and the participation of the Alliance Army, the situation on Long Qi Star quickly turned around.

Of course, the main reason is that this is not the main battlefield; the Iron Armor Battle Group actually did not invest much power here. They also did not predict that the Alliance Army would suddenly arrive, leading them to immediately fall into a dangerous situation of being attacked from both sides.

After stabilizing the situation at Longqi Star Port, Lazio's fleet and the planetary orbital forces simultaneously attacked the invading enemies on both fronts. The Iron Armor's most crucial cruiser was heavily damaged and fled, later being pursued and destroyed in space by the Strike Cruiser commanded by Lazio.

The remaining ground issues should be resolved by the existing forces on the planet.

However, Lazio stayed a bit longer to ensure the stability of the planet. Additionally, he left some troops behind before departing.

According to the plan, Long Qi Star is on the path of the main reinforcements of the Alliance heading to the Western Front. Stabilizing the situation here will help ensure the smooth passage of the Alliance's massive western reinforcements.

After completing these tasks, he continued to lead his fleet to the next battle.

Honestly, can just one Star Warrior Trooper Squad alongside a fleet primarily consisting of a Strike Cruiser change the entire Western Front situation?

That is obviously impossible. Although their fighting power is not weak, the scale difference is too large. Compared to the scale of a war spanning hundreds of worlds, it is merely a drop in the ocean. Moreover, when both sides concentrate their main forces in a direct confrontation, the role that a single Strike Cruiser and a hundred Interstellar Warriors can play becomes minuscule.

However, their mission was never to comprehensively change the situation.

When the news of the Insect Swarm uprising, the Northern Line Army losing contact, and the Western Front Army being besieged front and back came, Matins immediately proposed to Gu Hang to initiate an operation to rescue the Western Front Army.

Gu Hang was certainly immobilized and it was too late, from the Alfonso Star Domain to the besieged White Curtain Star Domain in Salius, separated by two star domains in distance. Plus, the deployment needed to gather forces and prepare logistics. Furthermore, since Alfonso borders with the Princess, the army also had to be arranged at the border... when all of these are completed, and setting off, adding the travel time, it might be way too late.

On the contrary, it's different for another Alliance force stationing most of their power in the Thistle Muster Star Field. Matins could complete preparation, departure, and arrival fast in two months.

Actually, this is not even at maximum speed.

The two-month period refers to his main force fully reaching the core battle zone of the White Curtain Star Domain. In fact, if pursuing speed fully, dispatching a Vanguard Army that runs the fastest, they could reach in a month — after all, skipping the gathering and preparation time. Also, the Vanguard could be the fastest ship.

The unit commanded by Ricardo Lazio is such a team.

The Dragon King's Spear hasn't been with the Alliance for too long, it was peacefully assimilated, and many internal mechanisms haven't yet been reformed, maintaining significant independence.

This is certainly an issue, but at the moment it has turned into an advantage. High independence and intact internal mechanisms mean the Dragon King's Spear doesn't need much support from the Alliance, they can quickly mobilize forces and carry out tasks on their own.

Therefore, under Matins' request, Gu Hang deliberated several times and decided not to let the Western Front truly fall.

Otherwise, with no news from the Northern Line, most likely ending direly, allowing the West to collapse would leave Gu Hang alone facing immense pressure.

Iron Armor and Insect Swarm are two opponents destined to clash, with no room for negotiation between them, resulting ultimately in a battle to the death.

And since a fight is inevitable, it is certainly much better to fight with allies on others' turf than to wait until later when isolated, under active assault, entering one's own controlled territory.

He cannot go, but Matins can, so Gu Hang would not stop him.

Of course, there are still some worries.

With Gu Hang's presence here, it is a gigantic reassurance. At the same time, he himself is a formidable strategic weapon.

Without him, however, despite Matins having three Chapters with altogether three thousand troops, three combat barges, one battleship, two battle cruisers — obviously forming a very powerful force — Gu Hang still felt some concern.

Even though this force is strong, if it were to suffer losses, it would cause Gu Hang considerable headaches.

It would be the greatest loss suffered by the Alliance since its establishment.

But upon later reflection, he decided to let Matins operate independently.

Gu Hang couldn't reach there in time.

Moreover, given the immense scale the Alliance has reached currently, he can't possibly participate personally in every conflict.

Situations like this will inevitably arise.

So just let others handle it.

...

After receiving Gu Hang's approval, Matins started preparing for the advance.

The Dragon King's Spear was the vanguard, Lazio was the vanguard among vanguards.

On Long Qi Star, one week after Lazio's departure, a larger fleet arrived.

That was the main force of the Dragon King's Spear.

More Alliance Army, warriors of the Dragon King's Spear arrived on the surface to handle the remaining enemies and ensure planetary security, and additionally, more personnel for construction came in.

They unloaded more anti-aircraft and orbital firepower from the transport ships, setting them on the planet, constructing orbital cannon positions, and even rebuilding orbital cannon fortresses.

More so, there were star fortresses and armed space stations brought in by tugboats set up in the planet's orbit.

All of these will greatly strengthen Long Qi Star’s defense capabilities.

According to Matins’ orders, Long Qi Star would be built into a pivotal forward base. Subsequently, a large volume of war supplies would converge at Long Qi Star and additional reinforcements would first arrive at Long Qi Star.

It will become a stronghold.

The main force of the Dragon King’s Spear didn’t stay long on Long Qi Star. After unloading the various supplies and construction personnel, they quickly set out again, following the path cleared by Lazio, advancing into the depths of the White Curtain Star Domain, which is also the deeper area of this war.

The vanguard mission shouldered by the entire Dragon King’s Spear Chapter is to ensure a thoroughfare from Thistle Muster Star Field to the depths of the White Curtain Star Domain before the main force of the army arrives.

Following this, they performed this task quite well.

Here evidently wasn’t the direction where Iron Armor Battle Group and the Insect Race swarmed from the Princess Star Domain would launch their main attack; with the forces of an entire Chapter, the task wouldn’t be difficult to fulfill.

When the main force led by Matins constituted by Phoenix and Blood Shark reached Long Qi Star, the fastest-moving Ricardo Lazio had already met up with the Solar Expedition Army in Salius.

Chapter 657: Urgent Situation

"Thank you for coming!"

In the conversation, Salius appeared very courteous.

Matins’ response was also quite polite: "We are allies, it’s only appropriate."

But the pleasantries were limited to just that.

The situation was urgent, and there was really no time for small talk.

Afterwards, Salius detailed the situation on the western line to Matins.

After receiving Gu Hang's final and very stern warning, Salius's sense of unease reached its peak.

At that time, he indeed had the thought of competing with Leroux, to see who could first break into Reiaductus.

It was normal. As commanders involved in this grand war, who wouldn't want to claim the ultimate honor for themselves?

But in the end, his rationality prevailed.

He wasn't willing to risk the entire army for the sake of honor.

Combining Gu Hang's warning, if all were true, then clearly Reiaductus was not the end of this war. Capturing it doesn't count as a victory.

Moreover, Leroux had already seized the opportunity before him. If Princess Star Domain were easy to conquer, he certainly wouldn't outrun Leroux; if it truly had become a dangerous insect nest as Gu Hang said, stepping into it would be pure suicide.

After a whole day of deliberation, having understood much, he finally set aside his desires, pushed against the opinions of others, and followed Gu Hang's advice: halt the troops, establish a defensive line on site, clear local infected individuals, strive to build a solid base, ensure current security, and then observe the situation for further plans.

Then, he awaited the full outbreak of insect problems, the Iron Armor attacking from behind, and Leroux on the North Line never sending any news again.

At the time, he broke out in a cold sweat.

If he truly led the army recklessly into Princess Star Domain like Leroux, the outcome would probably be no different from Leroux's current uncertainty.

But even in the present situation, it already had him in a hot mess.

The insect race army emerging from Princess Star Domain was relatively manageable. Though numerous, they hadn't stepped into Princess Star Domain, adhering to the defensive line.

With fires of war igniting in over a dozen worlds, fleets supporting all around, treating planets as fortresses, the line was still held.

Though the war was fiercely contested and sacrifices great, they managed to hold the line, mutually depleting, and from the battle damage ratio there was still a significant advantage.

Of course, mentioning the battle damage ratio was inadvisable; if the ratio against the insect swarm wasn't widened, there's no point fighting, as they'd exhaust you to death. After all, in Star Sea wars, human lives are cheap, but the lives of the opposing insects are cheaper.

In the current depletion, being in an advantageous position was at least not so bad.

As long as the insect swarm numbers were reduced below a certain scale, then by employing strategies or decisive battles or daring assaults to destroy the insect swarm's core Insect Nest Fleet, the war could be won.

This was the common method of victory during the first half year of the human and Void Insect Species domination tussle in this Star Sea.

But the bigger problem lay with the Iron Armor Battle Group moving from west to east.

That was grueling.

Iron Armor had been absent for a considerable time. During Salius's eastward advance, they occasionally encountered them, achieving some results, but both sides hadn't engaged in substantial confrontation, like the Iron Armor shattered upon contact, persistently retreating amid the wars spanning hundreds or thousands of worlds.

From reports, it seemed Salius's offensive was too fierce, overwhelming Iron Armor quickly, denying them the chance to regroup, leading to their consistent retreat, causing significant losses across numerous small-scale battlefields, nearly resulting in annihilation.

But this matter, Gu Hang initially saw as implausible.

Iron Armor couldn't be so easily overcome.

Was Salius exaggerating military successes, spreading false reports from the start? Initially, he didn't believe so, thinking he truly defeated Iron Armor. But now, facts forced him to admit, he was complacent. The reports he received claimed encountering Iron Armor's teams in various battles might be true; however, claiming a total kill count exceeding four thousand was undoubtedly unreliable.

It could be in a battle, encountering ten Iron Armor, using artillery to completely annihilate them unseen, immediately reporting total destruction.

That's likely the case.

Errors in single occurrences might seem minimal, but accumulated across countless battles, they add up significantly.

And these issues accumulated to the present, exploding into a massive crisis for him.

Iron Armor Battle Group emerging from behind boasted at least eleven main warships. The force of Interstellar Warrior was still unknown, but every planet they concentrated their attack on reported suffering strikes from thousands of Interstellar Warriors, quickly falling. Meanwhile, deeper into the battlefield, Iron Armor ships and tactical teams frequently harassed.

Just like the previous Long Qi Star.

If defensive power was somewhat inadequate, they'd conquer, causing great trouble.

Losing a planet might not be crucial; however, Iron Armor directly attacking the defensive line from both sides, threatening major forces of Salius, was a much greater risk but still solvable. After all, Salius's troop strength was still considerable, capable of allocating some forces for western defense.

Yet the greatest threat lay in severed supply lines, which would spell disaster.

The entire Solar Expedition Army, such a massive fleet, Sun Legion's Star Realm Army, along with locally recruited Star Realm Army and defense forces from Magrey Cosmic Domain, totaling in billions or even tens of billions of troops, consumed an astronomical level daily.

Basic food and ammunition expenditure might still be locally provided by currently controlled planets; however, replenishing the vast quantities of advanced projectile rounds, compressed energy crystal blocks needed for ships, stored ship cannon shells, lost high-tech equipment like tanks and fighter jets locally was excessively challenging.

White Curtain Star Domain wasn't exactly a developed production area. Providing some basic assets was barely possible, yet still insufficient due to production and logistics issues. Regarding advanced military resources, they were utterly powerless, unable to produce, not to mention recovery of production capabilities in war-torn worlds was also problematic.

Under these circumstances, Matins' arrival alleviated the imminent crisis.

Chapter 658, If You're Unhappy, Hold It In

With the arrival of the Alliance, Salius's primary concern was not about the troop strength, but the issue of supplies.

The ammunition and military reserves of the larger Western Front forces, especially the stockpiles of high-end weaponry, could only sustain a month of high-intensity combat at most.

This was the overall situation.

Due to uneven distribution of materials and disrupted logistics caused by the war, some planets were already facing severe ammunition shortages. Reports indicated that, when faced with the Insect Swarm attacks, some lines had to resort to bayonets after their ammunition ran out. Courage was abundant, but in the end, they were completely submerged by the endless tide of the swarm.

Ironically, in this situation of such tight transport capacity, to ensure the operational priority of warships, the fuel supply for transport ships was substantially cut.

There was no other way.

Warships had to be prioritized; otherwise, when enemy forces pressed in, their own warships not being able to move due to fuel issues would be catastrophic.

Moreover, the insects coming from the east were still manageable, held back by the constructed defenses, but the ironclads from the west were a true menace. They not only engaged in fierce combat with Salius's troops at several key battlegrounds, overwhelmingly gaining the upper hand, making conquest only a matter of time. Furthermore, they had enough capacity to dispatch numerous small fleets and units into the interior of the Western Front Army's controlled territory to harass.

Without warship cover, relying solely on transport ships, they would just become prey for the enemy fleets to surround and kill.

The arrival of Matins directly resolved Salius's two most pressing issues.

Before setting out, he was reminded by Gu Hang and became aware that after Salius's retreat cut off, the greatest problem and risk was logistics.

Therefore, he brought an abundance of transport ships with him on his way.

The ample supplies were enough to resolve Salius's predicament.

Additionally, the power Matins had under his command was sufficient to tip the scales of victory in critical battles, not to mention that the most immediate request was for the Alliance to deliver the pertinent logistics resources in place.

After a brief discussion, Matins readily agreed to Salius's request.

Subsequently, the most critical battlefields most in jeopardy due to lack of supplies received the first round of Alliance assistance.

These locations were mainly concentrated on the Western Front of the battlefield.

Once the logistics were supplemented, they were already able to stabilize the front lines with their own strength, not to mention that with the arrival of supplies, the Alliance elite forces were also in place, paving the way for a straightforward counterattack!

Repeatedly thwarted several attacks, even with one place being considered a key battleground, Ironclad forces faced small setbacks in each battle, which collectively resulted in not insignificant losses.

At least five hundred interstellar warriors of Ironclad casualties were recorded in this phase of the battle.

A number which, compared to Ironclad's potential ten-thousand-strong army, might seem negligible. But in perspective, five hundred troops were equivalent to half a fully manned battle group.

Most critically, after multiple thwarted offensives and accumulated losses, Ironclad's assault tempo had to slow down. They no longer dared to unscrupulously dispatch troops into the interior Western Front to conduct comprehensive harassment operations.

The threats encountered by the main force of the Sun Legion were significantly reduced as a result.

Using this opportunity, a fleet under Matins split off to escort a large number of transport ships, delivering the essential supplies needed by Salius in place.

Among these, the most crucial were the ship-exclusive fuels, those compressed energy crystal blocks, which directly revitalized Salius's fleet that was on the brink of collapse.

Warships could fully mobilize now, transport ships could run and there were sufficient ammunition supplies sent by the Alliance for their usage.

It was not as if they couldn't even operate their fleets before the Alliance's arrival. However, with cut logistics, even temporary reserves, while usable, would cause significant psychological pressure. In warfare, one has to consider the future as well as the present; to persevere longer meant conservatively preserving materials which hindered fleet efficiency.

Now that these concerns were resolved, efficiency naturally improved.

Additionally, the Alliance's assistance was evident. Not only did their ships deliver vast amounts of supplies to Salius's headquarters, but they also earnestly helped transport those resources to the frontline battlefields upon coordination.

There was no doubt; the Alliance provided immense help.

Thus, in his latest report to Holy Terra, Salius expressed:

"By the Emperor, without the Alliance's assistance, we might have faced countless casualties, even the potential of total annihilation. I must say this: In this war, the Alliance led by Gu Hang played the most significant role on the Southern Line."

"Without them destroying the Alfonso Fleet, the Western and Northern lines would have faced powerful attacks from the dark Sect of Mechanics, making survival incredibly arduous; without them conquering the Thistle Muster Star Domain and forcing the surrender of Spear of the Dragon King, the pressure

during our offensive operations would have been far greater; without them conquering the entire Alfonso Star Domain, facing the combined forces of the Mechanical Sect would mean combating the Ironclad infected, the Insect Swarm, and the rebellious Mechanical Sect – a trifecta of threats. In such a case, perhaps the war might have been lost."

His remarks stirred dissatisfaction among many in Holy Terra.

The reason was simple, among the warfronts, only the Western Line represented the authority of the Terra Government. Everyone counted on the Western Line to win significant victories and secure the most crucial accolades in regular warfare. In due course, the Otaubis Battle Group being the High Lords' loyal force, the fleet as the Solar Fleet, the Star Realm Army as the Sun Legion... securing victory and noteworthy achievements would allow generals and officers to receive deserved accolades, while the directors who mobilized corps, provided logistics, made decisions, and resolutely executed them from the rear expect to reap political benefits and immense prestige.

Yet here was Salius, the Western Line Commander, attributing the greatest merit to the Alliance?

And to think, you were the Battle Group Leader of the loyalist forces!

However, regardless of the displeasure, it had to be stifled for now.

The survival of the entire Western Front Army was now in the hands of the Alliance.

Political gains and prestige could only be achieved post-war victory.

If they were defeated, or even if the Western Front Army was wiped out, all would be in vain.

It would not only be a significant blow to the prestige of the Holy Terra Government, but also a severe depletion of strength: even for rich, powerful Holy Terra, representing the Imperial Central Government, forming a force of this current Western Line Army's size was quite challenging again.

The discontented had no choice but to keep their discontent inward, and outwardly praise the Alliance, meanwhile hoping for new developments in the war.

The opinions on Holy Terra had no impact on Salius.

He had already started convening with Matins.

The two highest commanders had begun discussing the matters of a counteroffensive.

Currently, their situation had improved, their forces were now ample, and maintaining the status quo was definitely not their goal.

They undoubtedly sought further advancements to achieve victory in the war.

Chapter 659, Major Trend Linkage

The Wanzhou Star Battle has begun.

This battle is regarded as the most important campaign on the Western Front.

Among the three parties involved, the total number of Interstellar Warriors exceeds ten thousand, who fiercely battle on the surface of Wanzhou Star with elite troops numbering in the billions.

In the star system, more than twenty huge ships combined from both sides, carrying thousands of warships, attack each other.

The battle has already lasted two months.

And indeed, this is already the seventh month since Matins led the army to reach the heart of the White Curtain Star Domain to support Salius.

Solving the initial problem was just the first step. After the military council, Matins and Salius decided on a main strategy of stabilizing the East and attacking the West.

On the Eastern Front, facing the swarm pouring out from the Princess Star Domain, the main strategy is defense.

The basic strategy is to maintain the existing troop configuration with about fifteen hundred Interstellar Warriors and a fleet defending there.

Of course, all available resources for war would be fully equipped.

The core factor for this strategy's establishment is the judgment that no higher-level Insect Swarm enemy will emerge from the Eastern Front, the Princess Star Domain.

And the reason for this judgment is because Mr. Gu also took action.

On the eastern side of the Princess Star Domain, the main Alliance force led by Gu Hang advanced from the Alfonso Star Domain into the Subspace Shadow that enveloped the entire Princess Star Domain.

Of course, even after entering the Subspace Shadow, Gu Hang's main force could still maintain contact with Matins and Salius.

Gu Hang did not devise any means to penetrate the Subspace Shadow communications; instead, he used some traditional methods.

Gu Hang regularly dispatched some ships to leave the Princess Star Domain and return to the Alfonso Star Domain. Any news would be communicated to the Western Front over two Star Domains away through the Star Language Tower constructed in the Alfonso Star Domain.

After entering the Princess Star Domain, Gu Hang's actions can be described as steady and cautious.

Moreover, his methods changed from the past gentle approach to become ruthless and indifferent.

In the galaxy, the encounters between the Human Fleet and the Insect Nest Fleet were essentially steadily advancing.

Did the Insect Nest Fleet have no capability to resist? No one dared to make such a judgment, and Gu Hang himself would not make reckless statements. However, at present, it seems that at least the Insect Nest Fleet has not shown any intent to gather all its ship forces for a decisive battle across the Star Sea with Gu Hang.

This also caused the Insect Swarm to relinquish maritime dominance over many worlds.

In dealing with these worlds, Gu Hang adopted three approaches: full occupation, Extinction Order, and abandonment.

The numbers for these three situations decrease sequentially.

The worlds that will undergo full occupation are the fewest, even only in single digits.

These are captured to serve as important bases.

The method of capture is not simply sending troops down piece by piece to fight.

Stationing troops is a certainty, but Gu Hang had the Alfonso Sect, disregarding costs, rapidly expand production of virus bombs over this period. After several months of stockpiling, the quantity was considerable.

Though full use is challenging, at crucial moments, on a few planets, during key assaults, spending a bit more and bombing a bit more not only greatly reduces our casualties but also, importantly, saves battle time.

The deployment is also carried out using the most precise deployment method from the Starship: missiles.

A lot of money was certainly spent, but the effect is evident.

After the bombing comes construction.

The Alliance will leverage its own and the Alamita Sect's construction capabilities (a significant portion remaining from the Alphonso Sect) to quickly complete the deployment of orbital cannons, Star Fortresses, and similar structures. The former is easier to say; the latter is certainly not manufactured on-site, but rather, pre-built, or even originally existing on other planets and then relocated to the new location.

Once the defensive forces are established, massive supplies and reserve troops will be transported and stockpiled on these planets, providing strong support for subsequent operations.

As for the second type, those subjected to an Extinction Order, the number is considerable.

They generally have two characteristics: they are on the path of the Alliance's advance, and within the planet exists a large quantity of Insect Swarm or infected individuals.

These planets must be eradicated.

Do not underestimate that there seems to be nothing nearby that can breach the atmosphere and threaten Gu Hang's forces from space at present. However, having experienced prior turmoil, Gu Hang realized that the Insect Swarm, once gathered in sufficient numbers, could undergo self-digestion, biomass reorganization, and evolve into bio-starships.

This must be purged.

One of the reasons the Northern Line Army was doomed is because they failed to anticipate this point. Previously, in the Empire's reports on the Insect Race, similar reports never appeared. The Insect Swarm's construction of its Insect Nest Fleet typically occurred in areas it considered stable rear or directly on Insect Nest Mother Ships after absorbing enough biomass.

In collaboration with the 'cooperation' of the Iron Armor Battle Group, the Alfonso Sect, the Swarm showed a brand new ability. Currently, it is unknown whether this ability was inherent to the Swarm, just unused or unobserved in past wars, or if it's a newly developed tactic.

But since Gu Hang knows it now, he cannot leave such a huge hidden danger on his marching route.

Chapter 659, Grand Trend Collaboration_2

The Extinction Order is meant for moments like this.

As for whether there are any remaining loyalists on the planet... it's not within the scope of consideration.

However, this kind of action poses a massive challenge to the Alliance's Extinction Order weapon stockpile.

The 'Terra-Burst Star Destroyer' that Gu Hang newly acquired is still limited to just one piece and hasn't been used yet.

This single piece was even dragged out of the black box.

All used are 'Skyburn Torpedoes'.

The production line for this thing has never been fully operational. After Gu Hang got this technology, he felt its uses were quite narrow, so it wasn't mass-produced.

In most situations, this was undoubtedly the right choice.

But isn't this one of those rare situations?

The places where the Extinction Order is needed are so densely packed.

Back when Gu Hang invaded the heart of the Iron Tooth Ork Empire to clean up those green skins, he didn't use this many.

Of course, the situations are different and cannot be generalized.

But then again, even so, Gu Hang had no regrets about not mass-producing the Skyburn Torpedo back then, only establishing one production line and using a mother machine black box to gradually produce them.

That was the right decision.

Building a Skyburn Torpedo costs nearly 2 billion tax coins—excluding those drawn from the black box, which have a very low cost.

Expanding its production line is extremely costly, and its manufacturing is also very expensive. The price of building just one Skyburn Torpedo could nearly build five Lunar-Class Cruisers.

Skyburn Torpedoes only destroy, they don't have the capability to capture. What's more, they're also quite easily intercepted. Building too many is useless.

As of now, the Alliance only has under twenty Skyburn Torpedoes in hand.

But if used well, this is a weapon that can completely destroy two Star Sectors!

Of course, this amount, compared to the hundreds of worlds in the Princess Star Domain, is still very different.

However, Gu Hang never intended to use Extinction Order weapons to plant mushrooms on every planet in the Princess Star Domain.

That would be too costly, unrealistic.

Moreover, many planets' circumstances don't warrant the use of Skyburn Torpedoes.

This is Gu Hang's third line of thinking: some planets not on his advance route, that are not blocking the path, and where the swarm or the number of infectees is relatively small after rough estimation, will be passed over.

It's not completely ignored; assigning an observation post will suffice.

Just monitor one thing: to ensure a large Insect Race Fleet doesn't suddenly emerge from this planet.

The probability of this happening is actually not high. For the Insect Race to evolve large biological ships, enormous biomass is required. On planets where infectees and swarms are already small, the natural environment tends to be quite harsh. The Insect Race accumulating that much biomass is impractical. At most, some small ships might emerge, but the threat is minimal.

If it were possible to eliminate all dangers, that would be ideal. But the time and manpower costs are enormous. Truly clearing one planet after another is unsustainable, even if the Alliance has strong foundations.

Competing with the swarm in terms of wastage is a decision only the most foolish of commanders would make.

In this regard, one needs to have some level of understanding for Northern Commander Marshal Leroux. When he's thinking about ending the war as soon as possible, he can't manage as thoroughly as the Alliance the ruined worlds in the rear.

Compared to the Northern Levo and Sword Gate Star Domains, Thistle and Alfonso Star Domain were much better managed, yet Gu Hang spent more than two years tidying them up.

How long would Leroux take to clean up Levo and Sword Gate?

Four years? Six years?

He couldn’t wait any longer.

And then he was defeated.

Yet Gu Hang still couldn’t quite believe that the Northern Line Army, with its massive fleet, over four thousand Interstellar Warriors, and strong support from the Extraplanar Tribunal, was entirely wiped out.

With billions of troops, among whom were many elites, as long as they weren’t all destroyed at once when ship-bound, it would be normal for a considerable number to have survived until now.

Even killing several billion pigs isn’t that easy.

Extract some value and see how much of the Northern Line Army remains was one of Gu Hang’s secondary objectives in this campaign.

His primary goal was certainly to locate the main force of the swarm, especially to find the Queen that was once sent to the Alphonso Sect, cultivated, and then released back.

Only by resolving the Queen could this threat be considered ended.

Of course, this doesn’t prevent the complete destruction of the Princess Star Domain.

That is already a foregone conclusion.

In the dozens of worlds Gu Hang has passed through, there might still be living humans on the planets, uninfected and struggling, but their numbers are extremely small, likely less than one percent of the total population.

The entire Princess Star Domain is likely in this condition.

Even if Gu Hang ultimately wins the war and eliminates the Queen, these planets will eventually all be consumed by the Insect Race. But, without the Queen, many 'hub organisms' will lose guidance, even die; without the Queen's biological elements, the incubation pools will also cease to evolve, only mechanically operating as per the current mechanism until all biomass is consumed and they collapse.

By that time, the remaining cleanup, although still arduous, will merely be cleanup work.

The war could then be considered won.

Still, this primary goal isn't easy to accomplish.

Thus, finding the possibly remaining Northern Line Army is a secondary goal, aimed at strengthening one's forces.

Another secondary goal aligns with this: to attract the attention of the Void Insect Swarm in the Princess Star Domain as much as possible, setting the stage for a counterattack on the Western Front.

The grand scheme aligns in this way.

With Gu Hang piercing into the heart of the Princess Star Domain, even though a large-scale war hasn't yet erupted, much of the Insect Race's forces will inevitably be drawn over, and a big showdown is inevitable. Otherwise, the planets not yet 'eaten' will be 'burned' one by one by the Alliance, and that would be a great loss for the Void Insect Species.

This ensures that the Western Front will not face an additional swarm level of insects emerging from the Princess Star Domain and crashing into the defenses laid out by Salius.

Because of Gu Hang's distraction in the enemy's core area, Matins and Salius were finally able to keep the relatively small numbers in the east for defense and mass their forces for a western counterattack.

Hitting hard to eliminate the infected main forces of the Iron Armor Battle Group and clearing the logistics supply lines for the Western Front Army on one hand, on the other hand, it allows the Western Front to unleash its combat power, letting them strike into the Princess Star Domain from the west,

relatively unhindered, in coordination with Gu Hang's operations to search for the swarm's core forces and eliminate the Queen.

The Queen is hardly a unit that would sit still in one place without resistance. Once threatened, it will certainly be surrounded by a massive amount of Insect Race forces.

A final showdown is inevitable.

The stronger one's forces are at that time, the better.

Matins and Salius fully understood Gu Hang's intention.

Their counterattack on Iron Armor was resolute.

The war fought over several months yielded quite an achievement.

Though the Iron Armor Battle Group was indeed vast, still numbering in the tens of thousands, the forces in Matins and Salius's hands were not insignificant at all.

Just the main force that Matins brought from the Thistle Muster Star Field numbers over three thousand Interstellar Warriors. Salius himself has more than four thousand. Besides his Otaubis Battle Group, there are also three thousand Starfighter Battle Groups assembled from various regions during the formation of the Expeditionary Force from the Sun Star Domain and reinforcements received throughout the war.

Together, they have seven thousand Interstellar Warriors, not much less than Iron Armor.

Even with 1,500 left to block the swarms pouring out from the Princess Star Domain to the east, they still have at least over five thousand Interstellar Warriors in their hands.

Moreover, in terms of elite strength, they certainly surpass Iron Armor.

Matins is confident in his Battle Group; Blood Shark is also a powerful Battle Group; only Spear of the Dragon King is fairly ordinary.

On the other hand, Otaubis Battle Group, as the favorite of the High Lords, has an extremely exaggerated elite level, definitely among the forefront of all Battle Groups.

The quality sufficiently compensates for the quantity difference.

And the Battle for Wanzhou Star is the most critical engagement in this grand counterattack.

Chapter 660, Wanzhou Star Battle

The Wanzhou Star Campaign is a defensive battle, yet the Ironclad is the one taking the initiative to attack.

During the counterattack to the west, Salius and Matins also observed a weakness of the Ironclad—their supply issues.

Although the Iron Armor Battle Group was completely infected and transformed into insects, on the battlefield, the corpses of slain Iron Armor Soldiers had their armor stripped away, revealing their bodies that looked like a hybrid of insects and humans. Deformed skulls and chitinous structures sprouting from their bodies... Further dissection would reveal that even the superhuman organs inside them had changed.

To be honest, these changes made the Iron Armor stronger physically, combining the superior physique of the Interstellar Warrior with the biochemical weapon advantages of the Insect Race.

After insect transformation, their average strength was even higher than some regular battle group warriors.

However, because they did not completely transform into insects, they could not be as self-sufficient as proper insects, which hardly rely on supplies.

Units of the Void Insect Species also get tired, injured, hungry, and run out of 'ammunition'; but when they are hungry, they can eat their fellow species to replenish energy. Their peers do not resist—everything follows the command of node organisms, and lower-level insects have no self-will, naturally they do not oppose.

Their so-called ammunition are super-hard chitin bullets differentiated from their bodies, fired by 'guns' that are essentially organ symbiotes. They are all biological products and can be provided by themselves. When they run out of ammunition and food, they can even digest unnecessary organs within their bodies, such as decomposing the digestive system into 'bullets' when they cannot eat and are destined to be cannon fodder for death. Or they evolve by eating fellow species, enemy corpses, and utilizable parts of nature.

The soldiers, gun insects, and similar entities are not so apparent. When it comes to giant biocannons and biochemical tanks, the same logic applies.

The Swarm even has special 'scavenger units', a group of small insects with only digestive organs that sneak onto the battlefield or surrounding areas at night or during war breaks, specifically tasked with consuming corpses, whether of allies or enemies, for recycling biomass to supply the rear hatching centers.

With this, even under extreme logistical shortages, the Swarm's fighting power would not be significantly affected. In theory, the Insect Race needs logistical biomass supplies during wars, but practically it almost never reaches a point where their supplies are completely cut off.

Human and Swarm armies have fundamentally different logistical difficulties.

However, the insect transformation of the Iron Armor Battle Group is not so thorough.

Their combat patterns still resemble those of humans.

Basically, all infected are like this. After all, they were only infected by parasites, replacing the brain and modifying the body, not initially designed by the Queen as biological weapons born from hatch nests.

Iron Armor soldiers still need power armor to deliver Interstellar Warrior-level combat power; the blast bomb guns they wield still require explosives to fire; their ships are still made of steel and need fuel, unlike the Insect Race's biological ships that can fly on their own.

Thus, like human armies, they require similar logistical supplies.

Humphrey Paolo's current status is unsure, but intellectually he seems clear. Before launching, not only did he hide his troops, but he certainly stockpiled considerable war supplies.

However, fighting has been going on for so long now, much has been expended.

Especially after Matins and Salius combined forces to the west for a fierce counterattack, the intensity of the war surged significantly.

With the intensity up, the consumption of Ironclad's various war supplies also skyrocketed.

Now, the Iron Armor Battle Group is in a difficult position.

The number of Insect Race emerging from the Princess Star Domain is below expectation and hasn't exerted enough pressure on the Empire's side.

This was caused by Gu Hang entering the Princess Star Domain from the Alfonso Star Domain.

The originally intended east-west pincer attack aiming to obliterate the Empire's Western Front Army was also dismantled due to the alliance by Matins marching north.

Now, they face the most awkward situation.

Previous reserves of war supplies have been heavily expended due to prolonged half-year intense warfare.

Critically, there is no place to replenish.

In the past, how did Ironclad sustain such large-scale warfare, with massive logistical supplies depended on whom?

Firstly, relying on the Alfonso Sect—this ally is a powerful Mechanical Cult Guild possessing not only an entire Star Domain for resource extraction but also three Founding Worlds. Once the production is running, arming an army is certainly achievable.

Secondly, relying on core areas like the Princess Star Domain to provide large amounts of war supplies. After all, before the Princess Star Domain deteriorated, it was their core lair; hundreds of worlds could provide ample resources. As the war expanded, at their peak, the Ironclad nearly occupied the entire Spiderweb Domain, with resources everywhere being mobilized to supply the army.

Now, these two most crucial sources of war resources are all gone.

The war resources they accumulated during the previous hibernation phase are their last reserves.

Now, even though they have regrouped and reappeared, in the process of attacking the Western Front Army in Salius, they have regained control over many worlds. However, the supplies they can obtain from there are not enough.

There are some resources, but not many.

Insect infection has repeatedly spread over the past few years, causing enormous damage to living conditions. Moreover, the troops of Salius also need supplies, and during the previous war, they didn’t spare any effort in extracting resources from local areas.

After several rounds, there is no longer sufficient profit to extract.

They do have one option, which is to continue retreating westward, moving into the Magrey Cosmic Domain to requisition resources locally.

But if they do that, how could they exert pressure on the Imperial Army from the west side? By then, the Western Front Army won't pursue, and instead, joining forces with Matins' troops, they'll advance into the Princess Domain, forming an East-west coalition with Gu Hang to fight the main force of the Insect Race, leaving Humphrey Paolo dumbfounded.

Moreover, is retreating westward that easy?

Not necessarily.

When they appeared more than half a year ago and the Western Front Army fell into crisis, Holy Terra reacted as if on fire.

Over there, they have already started forming new troops.

For the Central Empire, they must prepare for further deterioration of the Eastern Frontier situation.

Later, when the Alliance intervened to stabilize the situation, these newly formed troops were not disbanded but instead sent to the Magrey Cosmic Domain, both to strengthen the defense against the Imperial Central Territory and to provide support to the Western Front Army.

Although the scale of this army is not particularly large or strong, when the Iron Armor retreats westward, they will inevitably become entangled with them.

There's no good choice either way.

It's as if a rope has been tightened around Iron Armor's neck. The current task is only to slowly tighten the rope and finally strangle this powerful army of infectees at the junction of the Spiderweb Domain and the Magrey Cosmic Domain.

This will be a rather lengthy process, but it is the strategy with the highest chance of victory and most stability.

While Gu Hang is still waiting for the Western Front's liberation to join him in attacking the Princess Star Domain, Matins and Salius decided, after discussions, to proceed cautiously.

They communicated this idea fully with Gu Hang, and Gu Hang had no objections.

Victory is paramount. If one insists on winning quickly and surely, the entire campaign could be jeopardized should things go awry.

At worst, Gu Hang can slow down his operations in the Princess Star Domain.

He also needs time to methodically clear his path during the advance, ensuring a secure route.

Both sides thus reached a consensus, and the overall situation is progressing in this direction—the rope around Iron Armor's neck is tightening.

At this moment, Humphrey Paolo made a shocking move: he concentrated powerful forces and launched a fierce assault on Wanzhou Star.

Wanzhou Star is the logistics supply hub for the joint forces of Salius and Matins attacking Iron Armor, where a large amount of resources are stored.

He fought this battle remarkably well.

The deployment of forces before the battle was exceptionally brilliant, almost unnoticed by the Empire; when they struck, it was with overwhelming force, making a breakthrough at a single point. When they invaded, the Imperial troops had not yet managed to mobilize.

This immediately plunged Wanzhou Star into a dire crisis.

If Iron Armor were to capture Wanzhou Star, it would not only provide them with precious supplies for themselves, but also significantly deplete the Empire's resources temporarily. Although Alliance

resources would be continually replenished from the rear, resources cost money, and the Alliance is not exceedingly wealthy. Additionally, logistics requires time.

At that point, one could expect at least a temporary halt in large-scale offensives, if not a potential collapse of the army.

The war expected to take quite some time to win might be prolonged even further.

Salius and Matins certainly cannot accept such a reversal of fortunes.

New information arrived right then.

Wanzhou Star was not conquered.

Though Iron Armor's main force surrounded the entire star system, an Otaubis regiment stationed on Wanzhou Star, along with half a Dragon King's Spear Chapter, fought back desperately.

With the cooperation of the valiant soldiers of the Sun Legion on the ground, they retained control over many crucial areas on the planet.

In this situation, the coalition forces who had been ready to reclaim Wanzhou Star accelerated their actions.

The first batch of reinforcements arrived soon.

Yet they suffered considerable losses in naval battles.

No matter—soon came the second batch, the third batch... forming into a grand army, they arrived in succession.

Both fleets tangled in the Star Sea; forces already deployed on the ground attacked each other with all their might; the Empire's reinforcements also sent troops to the ground.

Iron Armor's offensive on Wanzhou Star was just short of final success.

They were not willing to accept defeat, increasing their forces considerably.

The number of troops each side committed escalated quickly in a short time.

This surprise attack on Wanzhou Star's logistical hub by Iron Armor was heading towards a decisive battle between the two large armies.

It was understandable that the Empire would not want to relinquish its logistical hub; while the Iron Armor, though their surprise attack had essentially failed, showed no sign of letting up.

The Empire's Staff Headquarters analyzed that Iron Armor was gambling it all.

They knew fully well that continuing to fight would culminate in a life-or-death confrontation on Wanzhou Star, yet Iron Armor didn't mind exploiting their peak combat power while their resources could still support them in such a decisive battle.

The Empire would not back down either.

Having committed substantial reinforcements, they couldn't very well retreat.

Unless they were willing to hand over copious logistical resources and abandon many troops already stationed on Wanzhou Star's surface.

This, of course, was unacceptable.

Despite lacking the psychological readiness before the start of the Wanzhou Star campaign, the Empire had unified their resolve at this point.

To quote Matins: "On Wanzhou, we must, in the name of The Emperor, grant the traitors a most crushing defeat!"

...

The Wanzhou Star campaign reached its climax when the two highest commanders, Matins and Salius, arrived with their most elite troops.

The fleets continued to entangle in space, and it appeared neither could swiftly seize victory.

Combat on the ground escalated to extreme brutality.

Over seven thousand Iron Armor warriors had already landed on the ground.

Many orbital cannon systems were conquered, and the Starport fell into enemy hands, making it inconvenient for the Empire’s ships to access the planet’s orbital system. Many strategic materials were transported out, ironically supplying Iron Armor.

In this context, both Matins and Salius personally led troops to the surface.

The fleet endured strikes from a few captured orbital cannons, circled to the opposite side of the occupied Starport to land the main ground forces.

From then on, the Empire’s number of Interstellar Warriors on the ground exceeded three thousand five hundred.

On a large plain, both sides engaged in a violent battle.

On a frontline approximately three hundred kilometers long, millions of troops amassed to form a broad and deep confrontation battlefield.

The Empire initiated a pinpoint assault.

As the spearhead of the assault, the most prominent force was not Interstellar Warriors but the Alliance's 'Alliance National Knights' Regiment'!

This army, boasting a large number of Titans, aggressively attacked a defensive position of Iron Armor, supported by massive infantry and armored units.