

The New York Times

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Cyberian Edition



Above: Signing the agreement.

Historic Ceasefire

*After months of bickering and years of fighting
Brynanian and PFLZ reach a deal*

Republika (NYT) 1 October 2017. After years of bitter fighting, the government of Brynanian (including the Free People's Army) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Zaharia signed a formal ceasefire last month. The agreement endorses the August 2017 Republika Accords, requires military disengagement of combatants, and calls for the deployment of a Ruritania (later, UN) peacekeeping force. The US, Russia, China, and Ruritania formally guaranteed the arrangements.

In the capital, the deal is viewed by many as a major victory for President Cook, given that it achieves a full lifting of the siege of McGilldishu. In the south, Zaharians are rather more divided. Some complain that the deal surrenders the PFLZ's main military bargaining chip for very little in return—no definitive timetable for permanent status negotiations, no participation in government, and no change in the status of Zaharian-controlled areas. Others hope that this very ambiguity might enable Zaharians to hold a referendum and declare independence, while protected by UN peacekeepers and outside guarantees. Still others no longer care about the politics of it all, but simply hope that it might mean that someone would, at last, address the devastating famine in the south.

It is not clear how the ZPF and EIFM—both excluded from negotiations—feel about the deal. Many Brynanian civil society groups are worried too. Members of the Civic Table for Peace fear the ceasefire and earlier Republika Accord represent a simple *de facto* division of the country among rival warlords with no commitment to democratic reform. The European Union appears to have similar concerns, and in a private letter to President Cook have warned that no European funds will be available for reconstruction unless Brynanian addresses past human rights abuses and commits itself to democracy. Many have noted that this is far from an actual peace deal, but instead just a ceasefire and hence a first step.

From War to Profit?

*As the guns fall silent, everyone
is looking for a great deal*

Republika (NYT) 1 October 2017. The ink was barely dry on the Republika deal when several new announcements came in quick succession. Chinese companies were interested in pipeline construction, the mining sector, and other economic opportunities. Brynanian would soon resume the sale of diamonds with Kimberley Process certification. A major Chinese jewelry company would buy those same diamonds. US President Trump indicated that he would like to see American companies also get a major share of new business opportunities in Brynanian.

The World Bank is soon to release a major study on development options in Brynanian. In the meantime, however, President Cook and her government are desperate for money. The IMF again warned today that the government may soon be unable to pay its own workers. Are we seeing a fire sale, a great time to make a deal with a desperate regime? Perhaps. But there has yet to be any resolution of the fundamental issues dividing the country. As Brynanian has so often demonstrated, a ceasefire lasts only until someone decides to start shooting again.

Inside Today's New York Times:

- Brynanian breaks diplomatic relations with Udem in spat over BHRG asylum.
- Dalai Lama said to be sad and hurt: "I thought Alessandra was my friend"



Above: Southern Brynania.

A Nightmare Continues

Southern Alpha province (Reuters) 1 October 2017. The ceasefire celebrated with much fanfare in the Brynania capital meant very little to 6-year-old Zedrick Zolcomb. A few minutes after it was signed he died in his sobbing mother's arms, an emaciated reminder of how grave the humanitarian crisis remains in southern Brynania.

"It's not like they didn't know," angrily said a local employee of the few aid groups present here. "OCHA publicly warned in February that the situation was severe. However, aid agencies have preferred to work in places like Camp 8, which are near the airport, and the luxury hotels and nightclubs of the capital."

In fact, in recent months almost twice as much aid money has been lavished on the 80,000 people of IDP Camp 8 than has been spent for the almost 3 million starving people of south Alpha and west Beta. Seven aid groups operate in Camp 8, which is chock-a-block with sometimes redundant projects. There are only two groups active in all of south Alpha, and a few months ago there were none.

As she turned to console Zedrick's grieving mother, the aid worker bitterly noted "ten times more people are dying in the south than in the rest of the country combined. But we don't have wifi, or Starbucks, or malls. So no one cares."

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Tropical Cyclone "Leia" Wrecks Havoc

Alpha, Beta Most Affected

Mcgilldishu (AFP) 1 October 2017. Monsoon season hit Brynania particularly hard this past month, in the form of "Leia," a Category 2 tropical cyclone.

Both Alpha and Beta province suffered significant flood damage. Washed-out roads in many areas hampered the distribution of much-needed relief supplies.

Mcgilldishu, which lay right in the path of the storm, was spared all but minor damage, although flooding did affect nearby Camp 10.

Further to the north, there was significant flooding in many parts of the Ste.-Catherine river valley, including in the capital Republika. Some criticized the government for failing to take adequate precautions. Lahra al-Zahra, a prominent opponent of the government, wryly noted "In fairness, it's not like Brynania has monsoons every year in September. Oh wait, yes it does..."

CPM Abuse Growing

Youth gangs move from users to suppliers

Biku (Reuters) 1 October 2017. The streets of Brynania are increasingly facing several interrelated problems: high youth unemployment, weak rule of law, the absence of reintegration programs for demobilized combatants, and the alarming spread of CPM—Cyberian Psychedelic Mushroom, or "ceepmee" as it is popularly known here.

A jungle fungus typically found in hilly terrain, CPM used to be the drug of rich and middle class urbanites, popular at raves and late-night study sessions alike. "CPM abuse can lead to sleeplessness, anxiety, and dreams

about civil war," warned a recent report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "as well as an unhealthy codependency on Twitter and caffeine."



Above: CPM.

A steep drop in prices in recent months has seen demand skyrocket. Many youth gangs thus find the sale and distribution of CPM to be a lucrative activity in an economy that offers little else. This risks fuelling an explosion of both criminality and abuse.

Grudge Match?

Icasia to face Brynania in championship match

Hamraville (Reuters) 1 October 2017. A few short months ago Brynania and Icasia faced each other on the battlefield—or would have, if the latter actually had an army worth deploying to its borders. Now the rivals will face each other in this year's Cyberian Premier League championship match.

For the Brynanian squad, neatly kitted out in new Chinese uniforms, it was an easy 4-0 victory over Udem that got them to this point. For Icasia, however, it was a nail-biting contest against Concordia. This was only decided in the final minutes when Icasian team captain Felony Koruptshun headed the ball past Concordian keeper Rufus Blackop.

The championship game will be played in Hamraville on November 12, amid what is likely to be tight security.