A note, from Agran to Kiralyf:

Prince, I write to you as I pursue a venture that may benefit us both. I shall detail this later. First: the details of our partnership. At first glance, there seems there is but one item on the table; the city of Crystal and Secrets. There is but one way, in my eyes, that two parties can deliberate on a city in such a shape as Arear: in true realization that neither of our reveries for the city could be realized without the assistance of the other party; for without your powers over death, I have not the capability to rebuild the infrastructure or enforce a new dogma, and without myself you do not have the corpses to exercise your power over death upon. Neither of us can survive without the other. Here plays our current deal: I provide with you corpses for your exercise in the trust that a number of these corpses numbering no less than seventy-five-percent should aid in the control of Arear. You provide me with one-and-one-half chips credit per two corpses as well. Currently, approximately 2000 corpses have been counted. My prospects believe that number will rise to over 5000 in a number of weeks. They will be preserved in the sewers until your re-arrival to the City. Yet we reach further than we know. To talk of bargaining over the city of Arear we talk of talking unto ourselves one-third of The State as a whole. We take the agriculture outside the city, the weapons and vehicle factories and refineries within. Without Arear, the State loses its refined metals and much of its munitions. It loses any hope of expansion, for northward is but fire and wastes and the Grey City is locked upon its island. The State will not let go of Arear lightly, and thus we now introduce a new variable: in any case, we must consider our relations with The State.

Should we allow for War? We could control the expansive munitions facilities of The State, and nine of the ten battalions of Office 7 now head West-ward towards Gaunt. Only 200 soldiers stand defending Arear. If there is a time to raise a new flag over Arear, now would be that time. We could use your powers over death to create a legion strong enough to usurp Office 7’s presence in Arear and comandeer all the military equipment of the District and of the Airfield. This would be the swiftest route towards independence, though then we would draw the gaze of the twenty-five battalions of Ordeto. Our limited military would struggle without bolstering. A new infrastructure or new allies would need to be found. Or we build ourselves as a necessity to The State, for now. We establish economic mastery and force the hand of The State towards accepting our policies and our exports. We continue to refine the metals imported from the Grey City and we continue to export the weapons that The State expects. This is all a facade. In the background, we create for ourselves the most successful industrial infrastructure in Rusva for our own gains. We play the slow game, assuring ourselves a strong city in the long-con but risking the boot of The State during the process. As you consider these possibilities, I now inform you of a new venture in which I pursue. It seems your compatriots are traveling towards the old kingdom of Gaunt to recover one Chalice of Areth. I wish to myself recover that Chalice. You see, in my experiences, I have found that if there is demand for a certain object then there are parties willing to pay for the possession of said object. Should I recover the Chalice and return it to Arear, we may gain a significant bargaining chip in the eyes of both the State and the Faithful Company. The trick, however, is in the recovering. I hope our business will be fruitful. Message back to me with your thoughts on the proceedings.

Signed, Agran

The reply:

Kornam Agran, I suggest that we take one of the paths that you have suggested, building ourselves as a necessity to the State. Our guise should be as such: We are the survivors of a terrorist attack. I, an Office 9 officer, have taken control of the chaos and am beginning to rebuild the city to ensure that the State never falters. When I am trusted by the State, I shall tell them that the destruction was almost complete and the manufacturing of weapons, munitions, and other goods will take months to years to rebuild. In reality, the industrial heart of Arear is almost untouched by the explosion. We shall produce weapons and munitions and reap the economic benefits while sending false reports and small shipments back to the Grey City. Behind the wall of shadows and dark clouds, we will build our city into a citadel. We will wait until the timing is right and then we shall announce ourselves as a new state, the state of Vóndaz with our great city of Város. Our forces will number in the thousands and our power will be mighty. Few will dare to oppose us.

Your Prince, Kiralyf

Hîrkal so Vóndaz