**A Practical Guide to Imperialism**

Disclaimer: I alas do not own Star Wars or A Practical Guide to Evil. I am convinced I would have done a better job on the former, and I am absolutely sure I would have failed to do justice to the idea of the latter.

“*I imagine the High Lords would be inclined to protest the mind control, if I hadn’t seized controlled of their minds, which just goes to show it was the right decision all along*,” Dread Emperor Imperious, shortly before being torn apart by an Ater mob.

**Thirty-two years before the Battle of Yavin**

**Coruscant**

**The Senate**

Had it not been absolutely vital to keep his mask of honest politician upon his face, Darth Sidious would have had a good laugh at the atmosphere of chaos reigning in the Senate.

Alas, if he began to giggle or show any sign of joy, his fellow Senators, not to mention these never-cursed-enough Jedi or the young Queen sitting behind him, were going to think he was insane. His ‘beloved homeworld’ had been blockaded and invaded by the Trade Federation. Presenting an image of frivolity and happiness wouldn’t do anything good for the purposes of the Great Plan.

Somehow, the Sith Lord hiding under the identity of Sheev Palpatine didn’t think his ‘Master’ Plagueis would be very amused to learn he had compromised himself where a millennium of preparations were entering into their final stage.

It was a pain to maintain this mask of affability and patient mentorship at every hour of day. Just for that, Sidious felt the urge to reach out to the Force and crush the throats of a few Senators. There were so many of them, surely the Galactic Republic wouldn’t mourn the loss of one or two?

“The Chancellorship gives speaking rights to the representative of the sovereign word of Naboo.”

Abandoning for the moment his dreams of murder, Sheev Palpatine placed his hand upon his holo-console and his repulsorpod moved to position itself in front of the seat of the Supreme Chancellor.

“Your Supreme Excellency, my fellow Senators,” his voice was calm, steady, with a hint of worry but far stronger resolution. “A tragedy is taking place. It is a tragedy which has begun in this very Convocation Chamber when taxation of trade hyperlanes was debated. And it is a tragedy which now submerges our planet, invaded and oppressed by the droid armies of the Trade Federation.”

Supreme Chancellor Finis Valorum stared at Palpatine with the expression the man reserved to the very bad days. As well he should, for this was a crisis that his office had never had the power to solve when he was elected, and the Coruscanti politician had only shreds of it now available to it.

Sidious knew the Jedi complained about seeing one of their staunchest allies being thrown into the pools of excrements. Yet in typical fashion, they had done nothing, choosing to remain in their ivory towers of the Temple while he tore apart the very foundations of the Republic.

If there weren’t Jedi, the Sith Lord would thank for them for their stupidity.

But it was fitting in a way. A Supreme Chancellor called Valorum had used all his power and influence to make sure the Ruusan reforms which made what the Galactic Republic was today were voted and implemented across millions of worlds. The Order of Bane – and himself in particular – had little to no problem guaranteeing the last Supreme Chancellor before Sith rule was a Valorum.

Debts had to be paid and all of that, and if it was possible, Sidious would love imprison Finis Valorum into a carbonite prison and let him out once complete victory was his.

The idiot had been naive enough to believe the Jedi were the answer to everything in the galaxy; let him contemplate the multitude of disasters this confidence had engineered.

“This is preposterous slander!” And here arrived the brainless and sycophantic Neimodians of the Trade Federation. Palpatine had to admit he was pleasantly surprised; it had not been five seconds he had made a pause in his speech. “I protest vigorously against the allegations of the Senator of Naboo!”

It was all against the rules, of course. The Senator had not asked the permission to speak, never mind received it; something which was violating at least a few dozen rules in the Republic Constitution and could be punished by heavy fines at the discretion of the Supreme Chancellor.

Of course, with Chancellor Valorum in charge...

“The Chancellorship has not given the Senator of the Trade Federation speaking rights,” Sheev almost raised an eyebrow as the voice of the Coruscanti had taken a louder, darker edge. “Since it is the sixth time this week your conduct is unbecoming of a Senator of this noble Chamber, you will be fined ten million Credits.”

Well, this was a surprise. Maybe this doddering old fool had grown half a spine or realised a tiny part of the political catastrophe which was waiting for him.

In the meanwhile, the Neimodian proved once more they were unable to shut up even when they were in the wrong and the drawbacks outweighed the advantages.

“I protest! This fine is completely unjust!”

“Accusation against the Chancellorship when the evidence is overwhelmingly against you?” Finis Valorum shrugged. “I stand corrected. Let’s raise your fine to twenty million Galactic Credits, then.”

“This is outrageous!”

“Forty million.”

“We will seize the Judicial Courts!”

“The same which are examining your blatantly illegal acts in the Outer Rim?” The last of the Valorum replied tartly. “Eighty million.”

Sidious had to admit, he was incredibly amused. This was absolutely not the plan he had envisioned this Senatorial session would go, but at least it was entertaining. It seemed the taxation of the Trade Federation was going to be enforced, if in a very different manner everyone including him had thought of.

“Your administration will not survive!”

There was quite a ruckus at the last sentence across the different delegations of Senators.

Unfortunately for the Trade Federation, it utterly failed in its aims to cower Valorum.

“The threat has been noted and added to the list of outrages to the Chancellorship the Trade Federation has grown so used to in these very halls.” One of the Supreme Chancellor’s assistants transferred some holo-data on the main panel and the reaction was not long in coming. “The total fine the Trade Federation will have to transfer to the Treasury Department is of two hundred million Credits. **Now thank me for the valuable lesson you have been imparted**.”

Sheev Palpatine shivered. There had been power behind those words. How? Finis Valorum wasn’t a Jedi. In fact, there were billions of people on Coruscant who were more sensitive to the Force than this nullity, not something really difficult as the Coruscanti Chancellor was barely a finger or two more sensitive than the blank Jango Fett.

“Thank you...for the valuable lesson...Supreme Chancellor.” The Neimodian clutched his throat like the words had been uttered against his will. And given the evidence Sidious had, they certainly were. By all the torture chambers of Korriban, what madness had taken hold of this chamber?

“Good, good.” The nominal head of the Galactic Republic made a slight move of his hand and the group of bureaucrats which had been on the brink of ‘advising’ him stopped. “Now let’s return to the problem of the millions of battle-droids you have invaded Naboo with.”

“There is no invasion and our blockade is perfectly legal!”

“**Stop wasting my time Senator. I want the truth and nothing but the truth**.”

This was not part of the plan, and with growing dismay, Sidious realised he had not any contingencies ready for Valorum suddenly manifesting Force abilities.

Fortunately for the Order of Bane and the Rule of Two, this Neimodian was not aware of his existence, and was not the most intelligent being of the Senate.

“It is Viceroy Gunray’s fault! He has invaded Naboo with six of our Lucrehulks-modified freighters and three million battle-droids!”

The next couple of minutes were a deplorable display of cowardice, half-apologies, mumblings, and countless attempts to make his superior the chief mastermind behind the entire crisis.

When the stupid creature finally stopped babbling, Sheev Palpatine knew there was going to be a lot of clean up the moment he could get out of view and give orders to his agent. Except the Sith Lords, everybody was expendable; the only question was ‘how much’. And with these little revelations, Gunray and all the Neimodians were very, very expendable. Any doubt on the subject was removed by the shouts of anger and the accusations coming from plenty of Senators, including some which were in service.

Under most circumstances, the Senators would have deliberately ignored any salacious ‘revelations’, but with no one sensing the power used by Valorum, the Neimodian’s words were taken as the confession of someone breaking under the pressure.

“The Chancellorship recognises the Senator of the Techno Union.”

Sidious internally winced. He knew the solidarity of the megacorporations was real, but could said Senator have waited a bit, like a day or two, before plunging into the arena?

“These divagations from the Honourable Senator of the Trade Federation are pure imagination!”

“Excuse me Senator,” Valorum appeared more and more amused by the situation unfolding. “**How much did Nute Gunray offered for your full cooperation in this affair**?”

“Thirty...” the emissary of Wat Tambor tried to resist the implacable injunction, only to fail. “Thirty...billion...Credits.”

A chorus of accusations, shrieks of outrage, offended humans and non-humans screaming at each other immediately erupted in the heart of the Senate, with the more corrupt representatives leading the accusers as in the hope of hiding their own crimes and sins.

“Senators,” Finis Valorum spoke again, and was blatantly ignored as the Senate feuds were brought into light in one of the most obvious manners possible. “**Senators**! **BELIEVE**!”

The second word was a beacon of darkness, and it pulsed across the tens of thousands of sentient forms present today.

Sidious parried it by reflex; after the hellish training Plagueis had inflicted to his flesh and mind when the time came to claim the mantle of Apprenticeship, this compulsion was nothing really new. It was powerful, that much the Nabooian Sith was ready to acknowledge, but it was unsubtle and crude.

“It is my **belief** the Trade Federation has become nothing more than a tool for illegal Neimodian actions!” Finis Valorum thundered in a voice Palpatine had never heard him use before today. The effect was quite unlike any of his previous interventions. “It is my **belief** Viceroy Nute Gunray orders and violates the law of the Republic **like he is the Senate**!”

Normally, Darth Sidious would have felt confident that the moment Valorum finished his first sentence, he would have been booed and thrown out of office the minutes it took to count the votes for the motion of no confidence. But impossibly, disabused and corrupt Senators he had known for decades were applauding, gleeful and dreamy expressions on their faces.

“The Trade Federation has **failed** to uphold its own trade chart and has become nothing more than a **Trade Dictatorship** in the service of Neimodia!” The Sith Lord was getting unhappier with every minute. The damage the Supreme Chancellor was doing to his plans was going to require a very thorough clean-up in the months to come. “Kuat, Balmorra, and Kilve should have representatives to ensure impartial oversight over the Federation. And yet more than a year after the tragedy of the assassinations on Eriadu, Viceroy Nute Gunray **lies** to us! He **lies** to you! He **lies** to the entire Galactic Republic!”

Sidious was disgusted, but far from surprised that Risi Lenoan, representing Kuat and the Kuat Sector, was one of the loudest voices shouting in approval of Valorum. The removal of Kuat from the Trade Federation had been an important foundation pillar of the Great Plan, Kuat Drive Yards being destined to become the arsenal of the new Republic Navy, and the Trade Federation a core force of the Separatist fleets. The Noble Houses of Kuat were not going to oppose anything which gave them back the power they had considered theirs two years ago.

“I humbly propose that the Trade Federation is to be returned to **its legitimate owners**! The tyranny of Nute Gunray will end, I swear! And the Chancellorship will ensure that **never again** a blockade or an invasion will be made by the Trade Federation! As **Supreme Chancellor**, I will not rest until Gunray is brought to justice and **replaced**!”

Sheev Palpatine felt the mental compulsion rising in power anew, and while he rid of it again, it was far from simple. Still, it was for the best. He had only to turn his head and watch the young face of Queen Padme Amidala to know the mind-control was strong and spreading across the entire Senate. The young Nabooian monarch was watching the Supreme Chancellor like one looked at a deity; worship and love had bloomed in her eyes and on her cheeks.

As if it was not worrying enough, the last word give him the urge to grit his teeth. Given how strong the inflexion was, the new Viceroy may be Valorum or one of his puppets.

“I will lead you to a new Age, Senators! **An Age of Order, Prosperity, and Imperialism**!”

And the bastard was stealing his lines now. Darth Sidious began to count to one hundred and mentally wondered how long it was going to take these damned Jedi to come and arrest Valorum.

Surely these fools were capable of noticing when the Galactic Senate was mind-controlled, no?

**Author’s note**: Darth Sidious is a masterful politician, and is able to make the Senate dance to his tune while other parties remain unaware of his crimes. Alas for him, his control is not absolute, not when there is a Dread Emperor specialised in mind-control targeting his powerbase...