

SHADOW OF CEGAL

PLANET SOURCEBOOK



FROM DREAM POD 9

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★ JOVIAN

CHRONICLES





► DREAM POD 9

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▼ PRODUCED AND PUBLISHED BY:



Dream Pod 9
 5000 Iberville, # 332
 Montreal, QC
 Canada
 H2H 2S6

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 and
rec.games.frp.misc newsgroups for
 support and information about the
 Jovian Chronicles.

Stock # DP9-320

Legal Deposit: March 2001

Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec
 National Library of Canada

ISBN 1-894578-48-1

Printed in Canada



INTRODUCTION

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“I think that if the beast who sleeps in man could be held down by threats of any kind, whether of jail or retribution, then the highest emblem of humanity would be the lion tamer, not the prophet who sacrificed himself.”

— Boris Pasternak

WELCOME TO EARTH ◀

Few among the people of the Solar nations pay the Earth much attention, regarding it as a poor and primitive place, beneath their notice. Yet, it is the stubborn resistance of the non-aligned nations of Earth that has truly checked CEGA's expansion. The Solar settlements overlook the ever-growing force that CEGA has been able to bring to bear, the technology and resources of the Orbital and Lunar colonies fueling an ever-growing threat. Alone, but unbowed, the non-aligned states resist despite their isolation, working to restore their shattered planet and ensure their children's freedom from both CEGA and Solar domination. Despite being less advanced than the Solar nations, the non-aligned states of Earth make up half of Humankind. The choices they make will help define history.

Earth's people are extremely diverse in culture and background, a difficult concept for the internally homogenous Solar nations to grasp. From Mercury to Jupiter, people had to put aside their differences and work together during the Fall or perish, slowly creating highly integrated communities. On Earth, however, it was the people who fought the hardest that survived. Even within the new nations, people have retained a fierce sense of self-identity, every cultural group striving to maintain its individuality out of pride and a carefully nurtured unwillingness to give an inch of moral ground. Divided and divisive, the non-aligned states are incomprehensible to the Solar nations, who cannot understand why their offers of aid are scorned or why, in the face of the CEGA threat, the free Earth remains beset by internal rivalries.

From the glittering cylinders of the Jovian Confederation to the slick arcologies of the coasts, Humankind seems to have awoken from a long nightmare. For the free peoples of Earth, however, living under the looming menace of CEGA, struggling for edible food and clean water, lacking the technology and resources available to the rest of the Solar System, there is no bright future. The non-aligned states are resigned to the fact that even greater struggles are ahead. Such melancholy defines the independent peoples of Earth, often making them as harsh and bitter as their planet. It is, as outsiders note with some irony, their one truly unifying aspect.



WHAT LIES WITHIN? ▣

Unlike the rest of the Planet Sourcebooks for Jovian Chronicles, **In the Shadow of CEGA** deals with multiple nations spread over half a planet. As a result this makes the information included on each nation slightly less detailed, while covering a much wider selection of societies. Despite the wider focus, no other material besides the core Jovian books is required to run a campaign on the Free Earth. Being so much closer to present-day Earth than the Solar nations, the non-aligned states will be much easier for Gamemasters and Players to identify with and expand to suit any particular campaign.

In the Shadow of CEGA is divided in six chapters. Chapter One is a short introduction, a general overview of the free Earth in 2112, while Chapter Two outlines the history of the non-aligned states. Chapter Three provides gaming information about the nations and people of Asia; Chapter Four does the same for the nations and people of Africa; and Chapter Five covers South America. Chapter Six is primarily a game tool: it provides Gamemaster with immediately useful resources such as details on hazards, animals, and the technology used to live in the Earth's polluted environment. It also provides a detailed view of the City of Marajo, gateway to the seamier side of Free Earth and the shadowy intrigues of CEGA-non-aligned diplomacy. Finally, the last chapter gives game descriptions of people and organizations that Gamemasters can use in their campaigns.

▶ GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.2

The looming presence of CEGA, unified, driven, and purposeful in the pursuit of Solar and Earthbound conquest, is the dominant political force at play on Earth. Even as Solar diplomats write off the non-aligned states as minor players sure to be swallowed by CEGA, the non-aligned leaders write off the Solar nations as upstarts to be dealt with after CEGA has been defeated. While they might deny it, the non-aligned states' parochialism is driven by CEGA's domination of Earth politics. There is peace only when CEGA wants it, there is uninterrupted trade only when CEGA allows it, and CEGA never lets the non-aligned states forget that it controls the skies above them, disabling their satellites and spaceborne facilities at will.

In the years of peace since the end of the Unification Wars, the non-aligned nations have managed to avoid being completely paralyzed by their well-founded wariness of CEGA. Though they may have a negligible space presence, some nations are as advanced as CEGA and many have restored their environments, rebuilt their industries and reconstructed their societies until their strength is unmistakable, even if overshadowed by CEGA's military and economic dominance. Ironically, it is this common enemy's presence alone that gives the diverse non-aligned states any unity at all. CEGA's military preparedness, environmental failings and militaristic imperialism are the primary issues for the peoples of Free Earth. This is highly unpalatable for many, but the situation in 2210 revolves around the non-aligned states' efforts to deal with what CEGA is planning.

▼ POLITICO-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1.2.1

Whereas CEGA must divide its attention between planetary and Solar politics, the non-aligned states exhibit little concern for what goes on outside Earth's atmosphere. Anything not to do with Earth is generally considered unimportant. Even the disastrous setbacks suffered by CEGA during the Odyssey Affair and Martian War have not aroused the majority of the non-aligned states from their indifference to Solar affairs.

For a few states, the realization that CEGA faces possible defeat at the hands of the Jovian Confederation has raised the bogeyman of Jovian or Venusian domination and led them to reevaluate the benefits and drawbacks of CEGA membership. South Africa and China have done just the opposite and quietly started looking into the potential of recruiting Solar allies in the fight against CEGA imperialism. As yet, however, the leaders of these states remain secretive, afraid of negative public opinion and CEGA military retaliation.

Other states have hunkered down behind their defenses, afraid that the Martian conflict will lead to the resurrection of the Unification Wars. Observers note that such disunity is exactly why the non-aligned states could not and cannot defeat CEGA. CEGA has much experience in dealing with the divergent tendencies of the non-aligned states and, even in its weakened state, the Administration is trying to stimulate the differences to woo potential new members as well as to prevent an alliance between the non-aligned.

A serious and continuing political problem is the popularly-held expectation that there will be another war. No one on Earth views the Jerusalem Accords as a permanent settlement. The USE and NAA saw peace as a short transitory period until they had conquered the Orbital Colonies, never envisioning that some non-aligned states would be willing to destroy the Earth rather than surrender. Following the Unification Wars, the Administration dismissed the possibility that Free Earth might become a threat to their new power. The CEGA Council therefore refused to offer equal membership to Free Earth nations within the Council and Joint Service. It took the shock of the Odyssey Affair to jolt the Council out of its complacency.

When the CEGA Council turned its attention back to Earth in the wake of the Odyssey in 2210, it found a deteriorating strategic situation. While their dominance remained unchallenged, CEGA was no closer to controlling the entire planet, and many non-aligned states had deployed advanced anti-orbital weaponry and a few were even beginning to become active in the USN. The possibility of a Jovian-Free Earth alliance, however unlikely, drove the CEGA Council into extreme paranoia. Looking for a cheap and positive response, the Council found one in the increasingly successful South American and East African diplomatic initiatives sponsored by Ignatius Chang.

Eager to maintain the status quo on Earth while they rebuild the 5th fleet, the CEGA Council has given formal support to efforts at peaceful integration for the first time. This has infuriated Imperialists within the Joint Service who have begun unauthorized military actions along the contested fronts and flooded the non-aligned states with agents. The result is a flurry of diplomacy, border wars, terrorism, assassination and intrigue, which all serves to further destabilize Free Earth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS ▼

1.2.2

The economy of Free Earth is healthy and shows signs that it will continue to undergo sustainable expansion for the foreseeable future. The non-aligned states have, for the most part, built a solid economic foundation through careful eco-restoration, moderate defense spending and free trade. It is one of Earth's great ironies that the divided non-aligned nations have far freer trade between them than the supposedly united CEGA nations. The Asia Trading Sphere is a complete free trade area, so much so that to all intents and purposes it is a single economy. Nor has the ATS tried to become an exclusive economic region; instead, trade agreements are in place with not just the Azanian Compact and ANZAC, but many small independent nations as well. The same positives can be found in the Azanian Compact and ANZAC, though in both cases there is more of a socialist-style intervention in the economy. Despite this, both the southern powers have maintained a healthy balance between central control, welfare and free enterprise, so their growth rates have not been far behind that of the ATS.

Interestingly, this economic cooperation extends even to the more isolationist and backward non-aligned states, including Persia and Ethiopia. In Free Earth there is a history of trade dating back to the South African and Australian trade missions during the Long Winter. These missions brought not just trade, but also business skills and commercial expectations, to the peoples of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Once the people developed a taste for the benefits of trade, it became very hard to stop it. In the interactions between the non-aligned, a trading nation's internal economic structures must be relatively sound or else it will fail to compete successfully. Thus, most non-aligned states have remarkably good domestic economic policies.

There is little trade with CEGA, because the Administration insists that any dealings must favor its interests in all aspects. While presently not a serious problem, it means that to sustain their economic growth the non-aligned states must look to Solar trade. With minimal orbital lift capacity, total CEGA domination of orbit, virtually no contacts even in the Earth subsystem and a basic prejudice against all colonials, this option raises a whole host of political and strategic problems. A wrong decision could mean war and great economic damage to Free Earth. This puts the non-aligned states into an invidious position where they must risk losing all they have built, let CEGA slowly ruin them, or trade with CEGA at its exorbitant terms.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS ▼

1.2.3

Environmental conditions across Earth are highly varied, but it is true to say that the majority of Asian and African nations have put significant effort into eco-restoration. These efforts are backed by the considerable technical skills and money available due to restrained defense spending, though the non-aligned nations do not have access to Solar resources to aid their eco-restoration attempts. Regional cooperation in Africa and Asia has also worked successfully to contain many of the larger environmental problems. While many ecological hazards continue to exist, the most of serious hazards have been contained in Asia and Africa, meaning that the majority of people do not face regular contamination risks. However, rising tensions with CEGA are likely to lead to increased military production and thus decreased eco-restoration budgets.

South America's ongoing instability and general poverty have prevented eco-restoration from achieving much of anything. Various nations, including CEGA, have tried to offer assistance, but all such attempts have been frustrated by the rampant corruption and constant violence. A growing worry is that if problems in South America go unchecked, especially in the Mato Grosso Biohazard Zone, they could pose significant dangers to the recovering South Atlantic Ocean. Few in Free Earth see CEGA's interest as anything other than self-serving, however, because the list of uncontained major ecological hazards within CEGA is significant and almost all of these have a serious and deleterious effect on the environmental condition of surrounding nations. After memories of the Unification Wars, CEGA's generally poor environmental record is the most common cause of anger in the non-aligned states, since they do not believe that the North Americans and Europeans are pulling their weight to repair the planet.

CEGA's most notorious problems are the Great Lakes, the Ruhr, Russia and the Southern Counties, which between them are mostly responsible for the ongoing deterioration of the North Atlantic. Contaminants from these toxic regions also get into the upper atmosphere and can affect areas thousands of kilometers away. Yet if CEGA's environmental inaction causes anger, its aggressive industrialization is creating hatred. According to the non-aligned states, CEGA's desire for Solar conquest is leading it to ignore the early warning signs of another ecological collapse. Already, the Maritime League has reduced the North American east coast to a polluted wasteland once again and other industrial regions are on the edge. If CEGA does not desist and the planet begins to collapse again, there will be an unbelievably bloody war of survival.

▼ SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS

Generally speaking, the non-aligned states have relatively limited scientific research programs. Despite the CEGA threat, the non-aligned states do not have the resources to maintain the absolute focus CEGA can on military research. Their limited scientific resources are scattered across a wide variety of fields, of which eco-restoration is the most important. Most of this research is backward by Solar standards, except in the biological sciences, where the non-aligned states are highly advanced and highly secretive. This secrecy is related to resistance to the USN-imposed Edicts as well as constant CEGA espionage. Dislike for the Edicts is a sentiment common all over Earth, and few non-aligned states pay the Edicts anything but lip service, claiming the Earth's environmental recovery overrides any other consideration.

This same attitude applies to other research as well. Military research in the non-aligned states is very specifically focused on the needs of planetary warfare and as a result they have almost kept in step with CEGA's developments in this area. As part of this push, research into chemical and biological warfare is widespread, as is work towards more efficient fusion warheads and stealthier delivery systems. Scientific resistance to the Edicts is all the stronger because CEGA has taken to encouraging SolaPol to raid facilities in Free Earth looking for breaches, activities the poor and politically weak non-aligned states have difficulty objecting to or defending themselves from. A few states, however, have broken with the Edicts altogether, refusing all contact with the USN; fears are running high about what nightmares may be developing in their unchecked labs, and SolaPol's efforts to maintain intelligence about such research are among its most strenuous.

▼ ORBITAL DEVELOPMENTS

While non-aligned states popularly dislike the Solar nations for much the same historical reasons as CEGA, there has never been an effort to officially demonize them for propaganda purposes; that degree of loathing is mostly reserved for CEGA. At best, the people of Free Earth are indifferent to the Solar nations; at worst the resentment is almost strong enough to make CEGA a bearable option. For the majority, however, the feeling tends to be that the Earth's ungrateful colonies and CEGA fully deserve each other.

Two recent events have provided signs of movement away from these attitudes among the Free Earth's political elite. The first is the Jovian Confederation's growing power, made all too clear by the Odyssey Affair and the Battle of Kurtzenheim. The second is the need in the next decade or so for the non-aligned states to find new export markets. Only the Asian Trading Sphere (ATS) and Azanian Compact have the orbital lift capacity to even think of trading off-planet, and, not surprisingly, it is they who are making the first delicate moves toward greater Solar participation. CEGA watches warily, hoping to sabotage non-aligned off-planet diplomacy; it needs to keep Free Earth bottled up in order to have any hope of eventually incorporating it into the Administration.

★ THE FORGOTTEN FALLEN

There are far fewer nations in the Free Earth of 2214 than there were in the 20th century. This may seem surprising given the talk of division or conflict that pervades discussions about the non-aligned states. Indeed, before the Collapse the United Nations had over two hundred member nations, whereas in 2210, the number of nations on Earth is a tenth of that. Relatively speaking, therefore, the Earth is actually less divided than it was before the Collapse. However, this consolidation during the Long Winter was due to the genocide of numerous ethnic groups all across the planet. As civilization collapsed and people reverted back to older forms of social organization, they also breathed life into ancient animosities as they fought over the few remaining resources that meant the difference between life and death.

Some groups such as the Germans, Tutsi, Sri Lankans and Sundanese were totally exterminated, while others such as the Italians, Afrikaners, Pathans, Koreans and Canadians were simply absorbed into more powerful communities and all but lost their separate identities. This same bloodthirsty nationalism has made relations between the remaining groups more strained than ever before in Earth's history, perhaps a result of the continuing struggle for survival and limited resources. The Earth therefore, is as divided as ever; it is just that there are now fewer groups doing the dividing. Politically, this has the benefit that far fewer states on Earth suffer from internal ethnic or religious problems than was historically the case; they all have their hands full with international disputes.

A black and white illustration of a mecha in a jungle setting. The mecha is a large, complex machine with multiple eyes and a bright light emanating from its chest. It is surrounded by dense foliage and flying creatures in the background.

The New American States desperately wants vast amounts of rich marine silt for eco-restoration work in the Midwest. Deep-sea dredging also allows them to mine very valuable mineral deposits cheaply and easily, making the whole process attractive and cost-effective. Dredging is highly polluting, however, and badly affect the sea-farms of both the ANZAC and Takeda Corporation, farms that both nations are dependent on for large percentages of their national protein supplies. On top of this issue, the Imperialist faction within the CEGA Council and Joint Service dominates the Pacific FDA. Its senior officers are pushing for deep-sea dredging to begin, knowing it will provoke a confrontation which they hope they can turn into a war and thus begin the final "liberation" of Earth. ANZAC has once again started arming the restive populations in CEGA's Southern Occupied Territories, as well as beefing up its military forces in the Pacific and in Low Earth Orbit.

SWAHILI CONFEDERACY ▼

009



HISTORY

P ♄ ♂ ♀ ♁ ♂ ♀ ♀



"This embattled shore, portal of freedom, is forever hallowed by the ideas, valor and sacrifice of our fellow countrymen."

— Anonymous, monument on the Normandy coast

RESISTANCE AND RENAISSANCE ◀

The history of the Superpower Age, the Fall and the Long Winter is the history of Earth itself, not just CEGA. What differs is the perspective that the nations of Asia, Africa and South America have of these periods. As is typical of Earth, the non-aligned states reflect on recent events as part of a historical process that goes back before space flight, into what Solar historians casually dismiss as the Earth Age. Yet, those same Solar historians then puzzle at the complexity and depth of the animosity that separates CEGA and the non-aligned states, never realizing that those nations see the present struggle as part of a conflict that has been going on for seven centuries.

In the history books of the non-aligned states, Europe and North America stand condemned for centuries of bloody conquest and brutal oppression. From the seventeenth century onward, they see the history of Earth as one long saga of European, and later North American, imperialism. De Gama, Columbus, Cortez, Van Dieman, Cook, Clive, Perry, Rhodes, MacArthur, Westmoreland; to CEGA citizens these are people who brought civilization to a planet. In the non-aligned states these are the names of some of history's greatest villains. Few of the factual details differ between CEGA and Free Earth, but the judgments made on the events of past centuries could not be more opposed.



FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD ▼

CEGA texts talk of all the good done by the Europeans and North Americans in the rest of the world; modern medicine, technology and perhaps most important of all, education in the ideas of modern economics, science and democracy. The non-aligned states do not deny that some good was done, but counter that democracy was never introduced and that improvements in education and health were about cultural and religious imperialism more than social good, and that only enough technology was introduced for the colonies to become profitable. They also note a litany of horrendous abuses; the deaths of thousands as slave labor, the theft of priceless artworks, the extermination of entire cultures and economic exploitation that lasted for generations, leaving the poor poorer and rich richer.

Eventually the hold of Europe and North America over the rest of the world was weakened by the two world wars, giving their colonies a chance for freedom. It took the entire twentieth century and the deaths of millions for the colonial empires to finally collapse. Even then, more subtle control and influence continued to be exerted, some western nations seeking to undermine the new states, while others, seeing the wrongs they had done in the past, worked toward a new world order. This idealism is what gave birth to the United Nations, forerunner of the USN, a place where all nations were equal.

ALLIES OR OPPRESSORS? ★

The position of China and Japan among the non-aligned states is something of a balancing act. While both were among the oppressed during the First Age of Colonialism, they successfully fought their way to the top, becoming dominating superpowers in their own right by the end of the twentieth century. With such a conflicting history, many non-aligned states chose to simplify the issue, ignoring the role of China and Japan and preferring to concentrate almost entirely on the roles of Europe and North America. For cultural, social, political and economic reasons, the Western nations were openly stereotyped in schools and the media as evil exploiters.

This created a problem with Australia-New Zealand and Greater South Africa however, both of which had quite obvious European connections. Given the importance of these two countries to the rebirth of the non-aligned states, their racial and cultural backgrounds are conveniently overlooked in much the same fashion as China and Japan's beneficial contributions, but the tensions remain. This same tension also crops up occasionally within the ATS; the Takeda Corporation and China are occasionally reminded of past wrongs by the other ATS members, usually to press home the point that the ATS is run on the consensus of all members, no matter how small.

► AN ALTERNATE HISTORY

To the non-aligned states, history is even more Earth-centric than it is for CEGA. Every historical period is viewed through the lens of the present conflict with Europe and North America. While this produces distortions, it is in many ways a more honest view of history than CEGA's, as the more liberal social and political systems of the non-aligned states make for a dynamic view of history, with proponents of differing ideas allowed to air their opinions in the face of the accepted orthodoxy. Nor does Free Earth adhere to any single view of any historical event. Each state pursues its own set of historical truths, according to its own culture and political beliefs.

▼ 2000-2060: RISE FROM OBSCURITY

Having thrown off the shackles of colonialism, the nations of Africa, South America and Asia became the pawns of superpower competition. Europe, America and Russia exploited the ex-colonial states for natural resources and used them as battlefields in proxy wars. Yet despite the hardships and occasional disasters, the general trend throughout the twentieth century was edging slowly upward. Japan and China achieved parity through aggressive industrialization and became superpowers themselves. With multiple superpowers contending for superiority many thought that a major war was coming, but technological development revealed a new field of competition.

Where for decades space had been seen simply as another area of military competition, great leaps in technology of the early twenty-first century opened up the Solar System as a massive source of natural resources. Eager to reap as much benefit for themselves as possible, the superpowers turned from military confrontation to Solar exploration. This period became known as the Second Space Race and it stands out as one of the wealthiest and most dynamic periods of human history. The boom was such that it did not just benefit the Big Five superpowers, but also assisted the rapid modernization of the Earth's developing nations.

Perhaps the most important benefit of the Second Space Race to the long disparaged Third World was peace. Distracted by their Solar endeavors, the Superpowers left the rest of the world to its own devices for the first time in half a century. No longer fighting external interference as well as poverty and backwardness, the rest of Earth made rapid advances. Famine, illiteracy, corruption, ethnic and religious enmities, as well as many other problems left by colonialism, were overcome in a matter of decades.

These political and social successes were helped by a global economic boom driven by the huge sums invested by the superpowers in new industries and technology. China and Japan were especially active in spreading the economic good times, as both states had long sought to build a network of loyal allies among the other non-Western states. The economic boom brought massive investment in industry and science throughout the developing world, enough that by 2050, India, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, South Africa and Indonesia were so advanced and influential that together they almost matched the superpowers. Behind these larger states, a host of smaller nations had become prosperous middle powers, their people as well educated and well fed as the citizens of the Big Five.

▼ 2060-2085: THE PRICE OF HUBRIS

The middle of the twenty-first century was a time of great enthusiasm and hope; science and exploration seemed destined to lead man into a new golden age of peace and prosperity. Yet it was the great successes of this period that created the conditions for the Fall. While the superpowers had concentrated their resources off-planet and smaller states concentrated on equaling the superpowers in terms of economic wealth and scientific advancement, no one except a few concerned scientists paid much attention to the Earth's environment.

Concern about sustainable development dated back to the mid-twentieth century, but the nations of the Third World decried such concerns as attempts to keep them poor and backward, while the developed world ignored them out of greed and self-interest. So despite a growing litany of environmental problems during the early twenty-first century, the nations of Earth put development first, comfortably believing that technological advancement would solve all the problems before they became too serious. By 2060, the world's population had reached thirteen billion, and though scientific advances like fusion power helped the Earth cope, technology had its limits.

▷ 2060-2085: THE PRICE OF HUBRIS (CONT.)

Ecologists point to the death of the Niger River in Africa in 2058 as the beginning of the end, with desertification, rising sea levels, ozone layer depletion, endemic pollution and dramatic and violent climate change bringing the Earth's environment to the brink of collapse. There was no sudden onset; the signs had been there for all to see if they had but chosen to look.

The superpowers took decisive action, using diplomatic muscle to force the re-engineering of the United Nations into the Provisional Terran Government in 2067. The purpose of the PTG was to coordinate the response of member nations to the growing environmental problems and to prevent the collapse of any state into anarchy. If the PTG had carried through with this bold plan, the Fall would have been avoided. The problem, however, was that the PTG was used by the superpowers to protect their own economies; nothing was done about the wider problems.

The environment collapsed in a wave that washed over the entire planet. Smaller nations were the first to suffer, their economic and food reserves exhausted. Eventually civil society broke down as people panicked; even the military forces of the PTG could not hold back the tide, and by 2082 two dozen states had collapsed into total anarchy. Local wars broke out throughout Asia, Africa and South America, and the gains of the first half of the century were dramatically undone. Millions died and many more fled into space, robbing the non-aligned states of their best and brightest just when they were needed the most.

2088-2099: THE RESOURCE WARS ▼

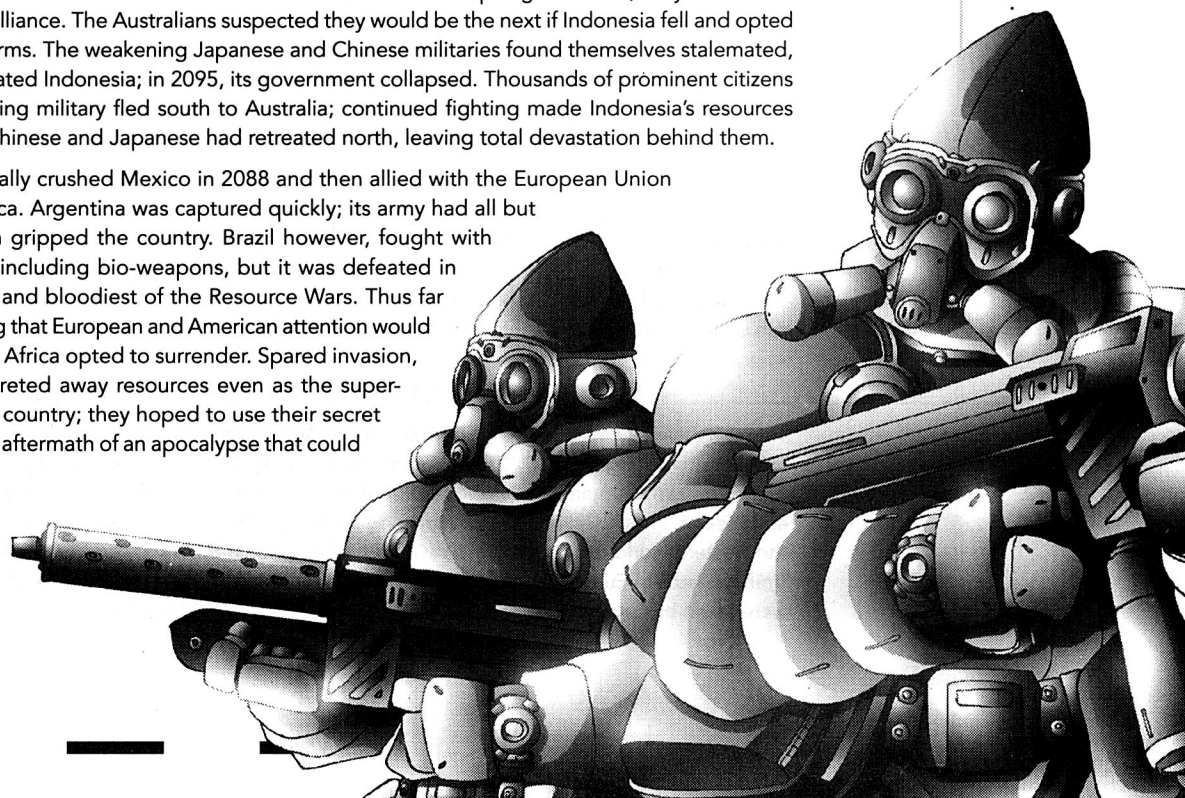
Middle powers such as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico and South Africa were in bad shape, but no worse off than the superpowers themselves. They had used their substantial resources to defend themselves, and it was these that attracted the superpowers once those mighty nations had stripped the world of useable resource. At first, they negotiated for access, but when they failed to get what they wanted through diplomacy, they turned to brute force. Facing collapse themselves, the superpowers had few qualms about violence.

Desperate and struggling, the remaining non-aligned states fell one by one. Russia and Europe invaded Iran, whose government ordered the cities abandoned; the population retreated into the mountains, leaving scorched earth behind them. With nothing to show for their invasion but an intractable guerilla war, the Russians and Europeans evacuated their troops in 2089. Russia and China then invaded India in 2090, but the well-prepared Indians fought with great ferocity, bleeding the Chinese and Russian forces dry. Eventually the pressure was too great and India fragmented, though numerous guerilla armies continued to fight the invaders.

China and Japan sent an NAA invasion force into the Indonesian Archipelago in 2089, only to face an Australian-Indonesian alliance. The Australians suspected they would be the next if Indonesia fell and opted to fight on their own terms. The weakening Japanese and Chinese militaries found themselves stalemated, but the fighting devastated Indonesia; in 2095, its government collapsed. Thousands of prominent citizens and Indonesia's remaining military fled south to Australia; continued fighting made Indonesia's resources useless. By 2096, the Chinese and Japanese had retreated north, leaving total devastation behind them.

The United States brutally crushed Mexico in 2088 and then allied with the European Union to invade South America. Argentina was captured quickly; its army had all but crumbled as starvation gripped the country. Brazil however, fought with every resource it had, including bio-weapons, but it was defeated in 2098 after the longest and bloodiest of the Resource Wars. Thus far untouched, but knowing that European and American attention would now turn its way, South Africa opted to surrender. Spared invasion, the South Africans secreted away resources even as the superpowers exploited their country; they hoped to use their secret caches to rebuild in the aftermath of an apocalypse that could no longer be avoided.

2-2-2





▼ 2100-2119: THIRD WORLD WAR

The non-aligned states, already too downtrodden and chaotic to be militarily important, were largely passed over by the Third World War. The main exceptions to this disinterest, apart from China and Japan (who, as superpowers, were active participants), were the bitter nations of Central and South America. While the rest of the non-aligned states either ignored the war as best they could or sent as few troops to fight for their superpower masters as possible, the South American nations plotted vengeance on their northern neighbor.

In 2100, after the crash of the North American Information Grid, an occurrence that the South and Central Americans have never been proven to be responsible for, a force of South and Central American troops invaded Texas. While this was a laughable threat, the USA overreacted to the invasion, blaming the invaders for the Grid's crash. The violent military reaction roused the anger of the Europeans, who were using substantial numbers of South American "volunteers" in Siberia. Soon the United States was also at war, and the last pillar of civilization was brought down.

The use of weapons of mass destruction, starting in 2105, brought even more misery to the non-aligned states. The main targets were resource extraction facilities being used by the opposing nations, with nuclear detonations and biological and chemical contamination destroying what was left of civilization over much of the planet. South and Central America were singled out for particular treatment by the United States, as it sought to secure its southern border by dropping hundreds of bio-weapons. India and China received much the same treatment from Russia, though Chinese nuclear weapons took a terrible revenge. Both South Africa and Australia managed to avoid being badly hit, trading to all sides as they could manage it; when the war petered out in 2119, these nations were the most advanced political entities left on Earth.

▼ 2119-2163: THE LONG WINTER

The mild nuclear winter that presaged the darkest days of the Fall hit the non-aligned states more lightly than Europe and North America. Seven decades of famine and the effects of bio-warfare had already reduced their populations to more manageable levels, and they were better able to support themselves, their ecological situation not as exacerbated by the aftereffects of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. So while it is true that Asia and Africa were much quicker to start showing signs of recovery than Europe or North America, they had also not sunk quite so far into anarchy. The exceptions to this were South and Central America; the former showed no signs of improvement until the Unification Wars and the latter never showed the slightest sign of rebuilding a modern civilization before CEGA occupation.

The main stimulant to reconstruction in the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions were the Australian and South African traders who slowly reconnected the disparate peoples of these regions and reintroduced technologies that other nations had lost. They brought not only technology, however; the merchants also reintroduced democracy, capitalism and environmentalism, refusing to trade with any community that did not accede to their ideological views. By the 2140s, the beginnings of the major non-aligned states had emerged. The remains of the Russian Far East combined into the Siberian Republic, Japan and the Philippines merged as the Takeda Corporate Zone, the innumerable Chinese city-states began forming a loose confederation, and Australia and South Africa gathered the remnants of nearby nations into popular democratic states.

Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East and the rest of Africa, lacking the unifying forces of the other regions or shattered by ongoing ecological problems left by the Fall, remained a maze of small nations. In general, South African and Australian influence removed the unifying effect that competition for scarce resources had created in Europe and North America. The various states concentrated on rebuilding, realizing it was much easier to trade for what they needed than to fight; in addition, the two more advanced states prevented the rise of any nation which might upset this peaceful situation.

▼ 2163-2184: UNIFICATION WARS

Through their network of traders, South Africa and Australia became aware of developments in North America and Europe during the early 2150s. Given the generally undemocratic and aggressive nature of these regions, the two southern states opted to do their trading through the West Indies and keep their own existence secret. From this time, despite growing warnings from the West Indies, the non-aligned states ignored the western world, believing it too divided to ever pose a threat. When the North American Alliance and United States of Europe emerged, displaying imperialistic and aggressive behavior, the non-aligned states were taken by complete surprise.



▷ 2163-2184: UNIFICATION WARS (CONT.)

The growing threat was not initially serious enough to pull the diverse states together. Australia, acting as the Australia-New Zealand Allied Commonwealth, tried to get China and the Takeda Corporation to agree to an alliance in 2169, but failed and was forced to turn inward. The South Africans transformed their trade and defense treaties with the other southern African states into the Azanian Compact in 2173, following the USE's invasion of North Africa. No other states turned to alliance-building, however, and besides Persia and Siberia, none even diverted significant resources into a military buildup. For too many people it was impossible to believe that any nation would repeat the mistakes that led to the Fall; unfortunately, the NAA and USE saw matters differently.

When the NAA attacked the West Indies and invaded Central America, the ANZAC, Takeda Corporation and Azanian Compact acted alone. The Azanians sent enormous quantities of supplies and "volunteer" military units to the West Indies, while the ANZAC and the Takeda Corporation took an equally proactive hand in Central America, providing the supplies and training needed for the locals to fight an effective guerilla war. It was the discovery of this that prompted a massive naval build up by the NAA and eventually culminated in the invasion of Hawaii in 2176. Takeda and ANZAC intelligence did not discover the buildup until it was too late, and the NAA's capture of Hawaii, a division of the Takeda Corporation, won it the strategic initiative.

In Africa, the Azanians labored and prepared as they watched the USE's slow march southward. They formed an alliance with the independent nations of East Africa, and when a USE taskforce entered the Congo basin, they acted. Mobile armored formations struck north along the Nile, and units of Kommandos backed by precision air strikes crushed the USE taskforce. Many Azanian troops were veterans of the fighting in the West Indies and their weaponry was noticeably superior to the USE's; as a result the USE was put onto the defensive and never recovered the initiative.

On the Eurasian plains, the Siberian Republic had abandoned its western provinces, aware they could not defend them. Using the time this sacrifice gained them, the Siberians built a series of interlocking fortifications along the River Ob and tried futilely to form an alliance with the Chinese. The Republic waited until the USE's forces were strung out across central Siberia before launching a preemptive strike. The Siberians then fought a dogged rearguard action as they slowly retreated to the Ob. The Siberians had no technological advantage over the USE and substantially fewer soldiers, but the front line soon became a bleeding wound to the Europeans as they tried to force a way through the Republic's defenses. Assaults gained at most only a few hundred meters, which were often lost only a few days later in Siberian counterattacks. Attempts to flank the Ob defenses were frustrated by the hostile Turkic tribesmen of the Kazakh Hills, who used Chinese-supplied modern weapons and the barren, mountainous terrain of their homeland to great effect.

Within two years, the USE and NAA were bogged down across the globe. In Central America, guerilla warfare was endemic, while the West Indies' technological advantage at sea ensured that they could attack the NAA with near-impunity. In Africa the Azanians stopped the USE cold on all fronts, stalemating enemy forces in the jungles of the Congo and pushing armored strike units deep into North Africa. It was all the USE could do to hold its ground, especially with the majority of its forces committed to the Siberian Front. A similar situation existed on the Zagross front with Persia, where lack of numbers and inhospitable terrain cost the USE any chance of victory. Surprisingly, the USE had also been stopped by the tiny nation of Judea-Samaria, where the initial USE attack was butchered and subsequent assaults fared no better. Eventually, the USE settled for laying ineffectual siege to Judea's borders and diverted resources elsewhere.

Along the River Ob, four million soldiers had died in two years of bitter fighting; more than two-thirds of the casualties were European. However, the USE had exhausted the Siberian army and stood poised to finally break through the Ob fortifications. To the south, the Turkic tribes still held the Kazakh Hills despite a genocidal European strategy aimed at depopulating the entire region. European attempts to push into the Indian Subcontinent had been halted by logistic difficulties and guerilla activity in the Himalayan passes, while naval convoys were intercepted by an allied Persian-Azanian-Indian taskforce in the Arabian Sea.

In the Pacific, the NAA had had great success. They had taken the war to the western Pacific, expelling the Takeda Corporation from most of the Marshall Islands and the ANZAC from the Gilbert and Ellice Island chains. Takeda and ANZAC losses had been horrendous; their underwater arcologies had been easy targets for NAA depth charges and the loss of the massive central Pacific aquafarming installations had created major food shortages in both nations. Despite a substantial technological edge, they had small militaries and were hugely outnumbered, and were thus forced into a defensive strategy of trying to bleed the NAA advance while pouring any available resources into a military buildup.

◇ LAST GASPS

By early 2178, the USE and NAA were reinforcing their forces with captured technology, and they decided to concentrate on the fronts where they had the best chance of victory. Redeploying all available forces to Siberia and the Pacific was a sound strategic move, but unfortunately BOSS, the Azanian Intelligence service, discovered the plan and passed the information on to the other non-aligned states. For Siberia and the ANZAC it was a death knell. Finally, however, the emergence of a direct threat to its borders brought the Chinese Federation out of its isolationist attitude. Throughout summer 2178, Chinese diplomats worked feverishly to build an alliance against the USE and NAA. Rejected by the South Americans, Africans and Indians, they did build a loose Asian alliance, which they called the Asian Trading Sphere as a ruse to throw off European agents. The Takeda Corporation and ANZAC were invited to join, the former reluctantly agreeing in the face of imminent NAA naval victory, while the ANZAC refused, bitter that the Chinese had come so late to the fight and fearing that the Chinese had imperialistic designs of their own.

The ATS remained a secret from the USE and NAA until August 2178, when the Europeans launched their long-awaited assault through the last of the Ob defenses and into the heart of the Siberian Republic. As soon as the USE committed its forces, the Chinese struck from the flank, even as South-east Asian troops reinforced the weakened Siberians. The result was the single greatest defeat of the Unification Wars, as the ATS crushed two combined USE armies in a massive pincer attack and drove them back beyond the Ob. In the Pacific, the allied ATS fleets launched a series of assaults on the NAA, reclaiming half the Ralik chain in the Marshall Islands and the important atolls of Marcus and Wake. Seeing the NAA weakening the ANZAC also launched a renewed assault, but was too weak to do more than blunt the planned NAA invasion of Polynesia.

◇ STALEMATE

The great battles of 2178 were the start of the most costly and brutal period in the Unification Wars. Stalemated at all fronts, the NAA and USE threw immense resources into technical development to gain an edge over their enemies, which drove both sides into a technological arms race. On the battlefronts, the fighting continued with increasing intensity. Millions more died and some territory changed hands, but the overall strategic situation never truly altered, as both sides were too well matched. The fighting brought the planet back to the brink of ecological ruin, before the redevelopment of shuttle technology by France and the Maritime League in 2183. Space flight offered the possibility of alliance with the Orbitals, whose technology and resources would ensure a USE and NAA victory on Earth. The USE and NAA quickly set about concluding an armistice with the non-aligned states so they could redirect their efforts into space. While suspicious about the sudden change of heart, every non-aligned state signed the Jerusalem Accords to end the Unification Wars in 2184, eager for peace and desperate to avoid another Fall.

★ ONE STEP FROM OBLIVION

Never suffering conquest or direct targeting during World War Three, Australia maintained some technical skills that much of the planet lacked. The most secret of these capabilities was a small nuclear arsenal and ICBM capacity. Though they never bothered with developing a significant planetary military, the Australians had maintained their weapons of mass destruction due to a paranoid fear of imperialistic aggression by the Orbital colonies. During the desperate fighting against the NAA in 2178, Australia came very close to nuclear release. Only the successful formation of the ATS and subsequent naval setbacks suffered by the NAA prevented another Armageddon.

The Australians later provided technical details on delivery systems and warhead design to the ATS and Azanians following the formation of CEGA and its alliance with the Orbitals. The ANZAC has continued to advance their nuclear weapons technology as their last defense against CEGA aggression and probably have the most advanced nuclear weapons on Earth. The ANZAC Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO) refuses to submit to Edicts Enforcement Bureau inspection; paranoia over exactly what the bitter Australians have prepared remains a serious check on CEGA, which has no desire to control a devastated planet.

2184-2110 RECONSTRUCTION AND COLD WAR ▼

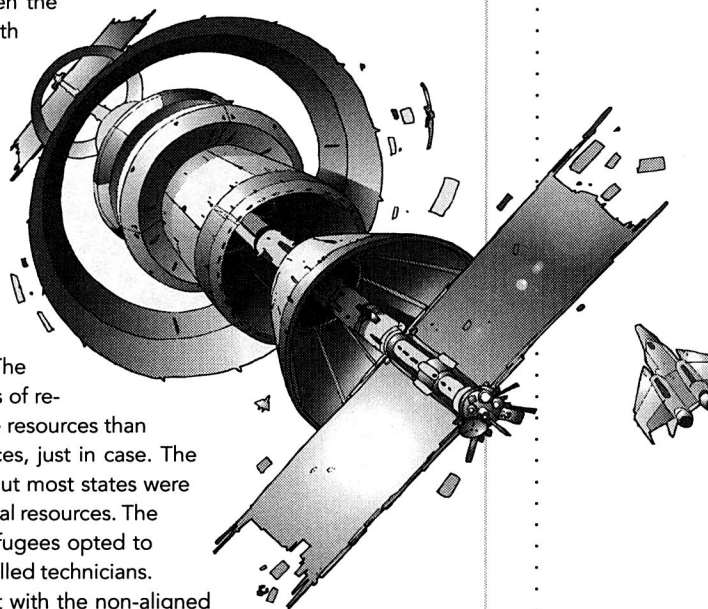
The founding of the Central Earth Government Administration on January 1st, 2184 did not unduly disturb the non-aligned states; a formalized alliance between the NAA and USE had been long expected. What spread fear across Free Earth was the fleet of shuttles that left Earth on July 20th, 2184, resulting in the enrollment of the Orbital stations a CEGA member state. It did not take long for CEGA and the newly-confident Orbitals to start making threats based on the advantages they had gained, demonstrating their ability to make orbital strikes against major population centers, and a new war seemed to be in the making. Just two months later, however, the Azanians, Chinese, Takeda Corporation and ANZAC all test-detonated high-yield fusion weapons and demonstrated stealth cruise missiles capable of reaching into CEGA's heartlands and into high orbit. There was nothing subtle about their threats and CEGA backed off.

The following decades were nervous ones for the non-aligned states. The damage done by the Unification Wars was repaired and the long process of re-building the damage left by the Fall resumed. Yet every state spent more resources than they wanted on military development and maintaining large armed forces, just in case. The need to divert valuable technical resources into the military was costly, but most states were desperate to redress the technological lead CEGA had gained using Orbital resources. The ATS was the best off in this regard because large numbers of Orbital refugees opted to seek asylum in its member nations, including many scientists and other skilled technicians. It took a number of years for fear of imminent CEGA attack to fade, but with the non-aligned states trapped on Earth, the Administration felt that Free Earth could be safely ignored until CEGA's domination of the entire Solar System forced the non-aligned states to acknowledge its supremacy. At the same time, the Europeans and North Americans were also aware of the perilous state of the planet's ecology and were thus willing to pursue their ambitions elsewhere for the time being.

As time progressed and CEGA grew stronger, three differing diplomatic approaches became obvious among the non-aligned states. The largest powers, the ANZAC, ATS and Azanians, remained implacably opposed to compromise. Within these states, CEGA and its ideas aroused vitriolic public emotion. The great majority of non-aligned states opted for neutrality, especially South America and India. CEGA failed to engage these neutrals; heavy-handed diplomacy and overly greedy trade demands prevented the development of mutual trade and other contacts that could have won them over to the Administration. Finally, a few individuals argued that it would be better to join CEGA and to try to win an equal place (like the West Indies, which joined CEGA in 2185) rather than risk a war against Orbital technology. The most notorious supporter of this view was the highly decorated ATS General, Ignatius Chang, who went so far as to seek CEGA citizenship in his pursuit of peace between CEGA and Free Earth.

CEGA had ceased to really care about Free Earth by 2190, focusing on its Solar ambitions and relegating Earth to secondary importance. The Unificationist faction on the CEGA Council pushed for negotiations to bring the non-aligned states into line, but outside of South America, CEGA seemed content to fight border skirmishes and stir up internal dissent. This complacency was briefly disturbed in 2196, when the ATS launched six space planes and began construction of their first orbital station. The Azanian Compact and the ANZAC soon followed the ATS into space, and the Administration was gripped by paranoia about their intentions. However, the non-aligned states were so obviously behind in space technology and so clearly dismissive of the Solar nations that CEGA soon returned to its former state of condescending disinterest.

The Odyssey Affair was as a big a shock to Free Earth as it was to CEGA's member nations. None of the non-aligned states had ever believed that any Solar Nation possessed the power to inflict such a defeat on CEGA's Space Navy. The non-aligned states were both tempted by the dent the Odyssey made in the perception of CEGA as an unstoppable juggernaut and appalled that the Jovian Confederation possessed superior technology and military forces. The opportunity to push a few issues with CEGA was not ignored and many border wars ignited in the aftermath of the Odyssey, but most non-aligned states were wary of pushing CEGA into a corner. At the same time the Free Earth, always somewhat jealous of the Solar nations, now began to worry about what CEGA's adventurism might mean for the entire planet, their fears being played on by CEGA propaganda that painted images of Jovian ships bombarding the Earth.





Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
 No keener hunter after glory breathes.
 — Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King:*
Lancelot and Elaine

THE ASIAN NATIONS ◀

Home to two major alliances, numerous independent countries, and a multitude of ethnic and religious groups in spite of the genocide during the Fall, Asia is the most dynamic region in Free Earth. In politics, culture, economics and science, the region is undergoing a renaissance fueled by free trade, democracy and a general improvement in morale that has survived the tensions created by the Odyssey Affair. Even the threat of war entering their lives again has not stopped Asia's clamoring residents from producing an intellectual ferment unknown elsewhere on a planet that has for decades been bogged in gloomy reminiscences of the Fall and Unification Wars. Why this region in particular, with its diversity and history of conflict, has remained peaceful and forward-looking in the face the CEGA threat will likely be one of the great imponderables of history. Whatever the reason, Asia's joyful diversity stands in stark contrast to CEGA's gray totalitarianism.

Yet the diversity that produces this flourishing environment is also the region's major weakness. While the peoples of Asia squabble and bicker, the shadow of CEGA looms ever larger over them. Attempts to forge a more united front keep collapsing, and even the alliances that do exist are riddled by internal rivalries and contradictions. Yet, aside from the never-ending turmoil in India, the region has avoided wars or conflicts, the horror of the Fall being enough to keep even the most bitter enemies at the negotiating table. Given time, Asia may yet provide an alternative to the military domination of CEGA, demonstrating a better path to human unity. All it will take is one strong and dynamic leader to take the goodwill that has been forged from the shared experience of the Unification Wars and build it into a popular movement. Unfortunately, the most likely leader to do that, Ignatius Chang, chose to side with CEGA.



THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY ★

Not only are Asians affected by the same jealousies and resentments that drive the anger against the Earth's former colonies in CEGA, but their feelings are further compounded by the huge outflow of skilled people they suffered just before the Fall. Asians deride these desperate colonists as traitors, even as the Solar nations praise them as brave visionaries. The situation is further complicated by the Orbital colonies' willing alliance with CEGA; arguments about the vulnerability of the stations get short shrift from people who lost hundreds of thousands resisting CEGA and who are well aware of the effectiveness of orbital weapon platforms.

Venus, home of many corporations that pulled out of their operations on Earth to fund their escape, is even less popular. Many Venusian corporations sent their representatives with copies of deeds and other legal documents laying claim to businesses, resources and properties throughout Asia. Needless to say, such arrogance was not well received, nor were their appeals to CEGA courts to get orders insisting that Asian nations return the Venusians' "rightful" property. Many in Asia suspect that Venus' support for CEGA is wholly and solely based on the desire to regain Venusian possessions in the region; most earthbound Asians do not understand how vastly wealthy Venus has become and how much larger its rulers' ambitions are.

Solar citizens visiting Asia are not welcome, often not safe, and will have a hard time moving around anywhere without a locally-respected native host or escort. Even CEGA citizens bring less attention and paranoia. Characters visiting Asia are going to find themselves on the end of continual hostile treatment and constant police observation. Even the slightest illegal activity will bring retribution; Asian authorities are eager for a chance to lock up arrogant colonials. While most Asian courts are fair enough, juries are likely to be highly unsympathetic. Since most Asian nations do not even recognize the USN, let alone the Solar nations, it is unlikely there will be diplomatic avenues for accused Characters to pursue.

▼ POLITICO-ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

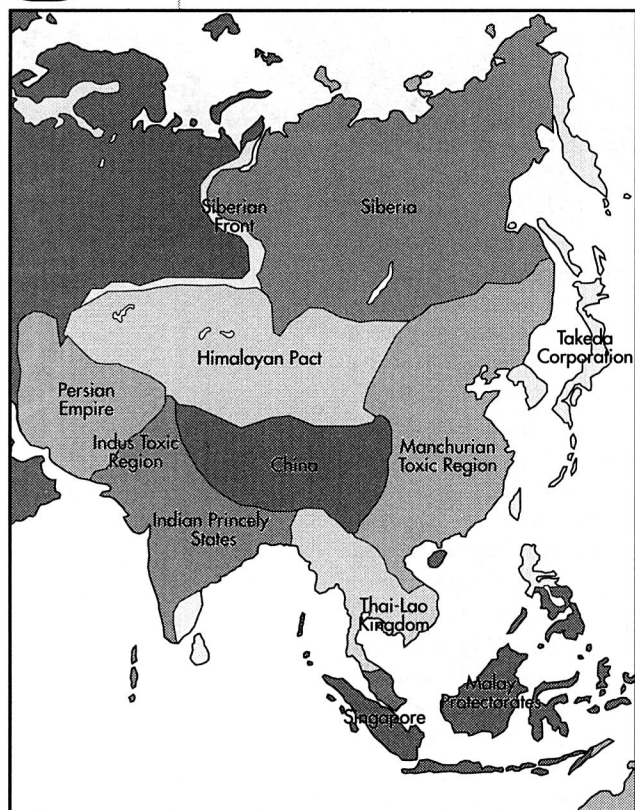
Asia's internal political disputes are both its best defense and biggest danger. As long as CEGA believes that Asia is incapable of uniting against its domination, then there will be no great desire or need for immediate military action. However, a disunited Asia makes itself a target, encouraging thoughts of an easy victory among the troops in CEGA's Joint Military Service. This is especially so at present, when internal turmoil from the Odyssey and Martian debacle are increasing the attractiveness of starting a local war to distract public attention from CEGA's other problems. A central problem for CEGA's intelligence operatives is that they are having problem interpreting the signs coming out of Asia. The frenetic pace of politics in the region makes it difficult for the Administration to be entirely certain what is going on; paranoia is a common CEGA reaction to events in the east.

Politically, Asia remains much like twenty-first century Earth; while its varied nations may compete, this does not indicate a growing antipathy; a CEGA assault would certainly galvanize them into united action. Asia may not be not united, and its nations may bicker incessantly, but Asia also lacks any great divisions among its more developed nations. There is no NAS, UK or Swahili Confederacy in Asia, no rogue state whose actions could imperil peace and stability. Also, beneath the apparent infighting there is a move to increasing cooperation on a region-wide basis, though one built at a non-governmental and informal level. It is in such areas, as well as in medicine, business and education, that the peoples of Asia are showing that they can work together towards a single goal even if their political leaders cannot.

The Asian economy is dominated by capitalistic industrial and industrializing states that welcome trade. Economic growth rates are respectable, but future growth is very much dependent on new export markets, as local consumption, while growing, will not provide the necessary impetus to sustain the present growth rates. Since the region as a whole refuses to trade with CEGA and there are limits to the expansion of trade with Africa and South America, the Solar nations are the only remaining option. At the moment, however, only China is pursuing this option with any vigor.

▼ ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

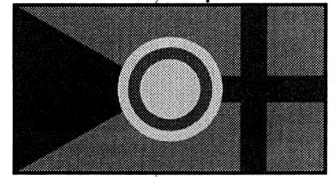
When a CEGA citizen is asked to point out the clearest sign of the Earth's rise from the darkness of the Fall, they will likely point to the mighty ships of the Space Navy. An Asian, asked the same question, will likely point to the fact that they can drink the water and breathe the air in most places in their given nation. The focus on eco-restoration is a central feature of how the Asian nations approach the challenges thrown at them by their battered planet. Even in the midst of a frightening cold war, the average person in Asia still believes that eco-restoration remains the most important task faced by their nations.





ASIAN TRADING SPHERE ◀

The Solar nations often view the situation on Earth as a state of constant confrontation between massive alliances bent on each other's destruction, but this is only half right. CEGA does seek global domination, but the other alliances have no such goals. The Asian Trading Sphere is a perfect example of Free Earth's attempt to persist with a normal life in the face of constant CEGA threats and aggression. Even though forged during the darkest days of the Unification Wars, the ATS speaks more about trade and scientific cooperation than about military coordination. This is not weakness, as CEGA portrays it in propaganda, but rather a heartfelt desire to have a peaceful life and recognition that, apart from trade and a dislike of CEGA, little holds the members of the ATS together. This does not mean, however, that the military aspect of the alliance is ignored. All members recognize the importance of martial matters, if only because CEGA's hostility is unrelenting.



POLITICAL AIMS ▼

Given the increased hostility of the Solar nations (particularly the Jovians) to CEGA in recent years, the ATS is in the process of discussing substantial revisions to its approach to CEGA and the Solar nations. All members sense the potential benefits and substantial risks arising from CEGA's difficulties, but are undecided on how to politically to maximize the gains and minimize the dangers. The prime concern is the apparent independence exhibited by CEGA's Joint Military Service and the possibility that Imperialist officers within the Pacific FDA may try to start a war in the Pacific to distract attention from their bungling comrades in space. Beyond this, the discovery that the CEGA Council, whose basic rationality they trust, is not as in control as was believed, has thrown all the ATS' intelligence estimates out the window. As a result, tensions are high as fears of a surprise attack by a rogue CEGA officer steadily increase. Given the greater control the USE exerts over the Siberian Front, there are few worries about the Eurasian FDA. However, in the Pacific, the ATS is again making overtures to the ANZAC to join the ATS, thus doubling the forces facing the Pacific FDA and its notoriously fanatic commander, Lt. General Jennifer Alkins.

A few within the ATS, notably the Takeda Corporation (which is still smarting from the losses of the its eastern Pacific assets, particularly Hawaii) are arguing that the Odyssey is a potential opportunity to drive CEGA back to the North American west coast. More conservative members believe this to be the sheerest folly and have so far headed off any move to military action. This debate is leading to a further deterioration in relations between China and the Takeda Corporation, and the Japanese divisions within the corporation have even threatened to take unilateral action in the Pacific in alliance with the ANZAC. This would represent the most serious breakdown of the ATS' consensus approach since its formation, and could possibly destroy the alliance. To distract the Takeda Corporation from what it believes is a certain path to war, China is proposing instead that the ATS take advantage of the sudden weakness of CEGA's Space Navy to lift their orbital presence to a new level, hoping the economic opportunities may prove too tempting an alternative.

China has not clearly defined what this "new level" entails, but various controversial options include the ATS trying to join the USN as a full member, trying to secure a trade agreement with the Mercurian Guild to represent ATS exports to the Solar system, or even launching the ATS' first true space combat vessels. Two corvette-sized vessels, provisionally designated the Ki-lin and the Feng-huang, have been designed by the Chinese Federation and partially completed, but have not been launched for fear of prompting a CEGA military response. Now, with the Joint Service weakened, the Chinese are considering that it may be a good time to force the issue. Only the possibility that they are badly misreading CEGA's level of paranoia has stopped the unveiling of the two vessels; some Chinese diplomats argue that revealing the ships now might actually lead to war if CEGA overreacts. Less potentially dangerous measures to improve the ATS' position in orbit are on the agenda for the next ATS summit at Unity Towers. The various policies proposed deal with prosaic issues such as increased research and development, additional orbital stations and further industrial concessions for orbital development. None address the difficult issue of diplomatic relations with the Solar nations, as none of the ATS members, except perhaps China, has the popular support to go that far.

1-2-E



▼ TRADE & DEVELOPMENT

The ATS possesses a planetary manufacturing capacity second to none on Earth, but unlike CEGA it has no orbital facilities; environmental concerns keep the ATS' production level below their potential maximum. Limited natural resources prevent the ATS from dominating the non-aligned states economically, and make it dependent on resource imports from the ANZAC and South America. As it is, the ATS is Free Earth's major trading power, with the industrial production of the Takeda Corporation, China and Singapore going out and the raw materials of the other ATS member states and non-member non-aligned states coming in. This necessity for external trade has prevented any of the protectionist measures that hamstringing CEGA's economy, and even with extensive subsidies for eco-restoration, activity growth rates are high.

The ATS economy has one serious structural problem: the sheer size and power of the Takeda Corporation. Considering that this company is a nation in its own right, such influence is hardly surprising. Problems arise because the power of this corporation is unbalancing trade relations within the ATS, since no other company from any other nation has the resources to compete with it. The monopolistic potential of the Takeda Corporation is presently more of a political problem than an economic one, but it is only a matter of time before it starts destabilizing the economic structures of the other member nations. The monopolies thus created would never provide the economic benefits of the present free market, and a solution to this issue was a key task on the ATS' agenda before the distraction of the Odyssey Affair in 2210.

Given the internal dynamics of ATS trade and the desire by the resource-producing members, like the Thai-Lao Kingdom and Siberia, to become more fully industrialized, the ATS must drastically expand its markets over the coming decade. The alternative is stagnation or growing economic inequality within the alliance. Trade with other non-aligned states is already robust, but there are limits to how much further such links can be expanded. The most potentially profitable option, that of pursuing Solar trade prospects, is the one the ATS is refusing to even acknowledge. While such trade would be limited by the fact that the areas in which the ATS produces cutting-edge technology have little application in space, the ATS does produce a wide variety of cheap imitations of Orbital technology which could be profitably sold to the poorer communities in the Solar nations. Public sensitivities make this an unlikely approach; the average Asian wants nothing to do with the colonies. In an attempt to get around this conundrum, the ATS is putting massive resources into South America, the Indian subcontinent and the independent states of Central Asia, hoping to build new markets for itself. Yet they are reluctant to become politically involved in these areas for fear of entering into a political confrontation with CEGA. Whether economics can succeed without political involvement remains to be seen, but if not, analysts predict that the ATS economy will be at risk of stagnation by 2225.

★ ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

It's hard for me to say what's happening. The ATS is so diverse that sometimes I think we're nothing but a free trade agreement masquerading as a military alliance. I do believe, however, that if it weren't for CEGA breathing down our necks that none of the key member states would have ties beyond the economic. We don't have all that many problems dividing us; thankfully, no Asian nation seems to feel the need to interfere in its neighbor's affairs, but as CEGA gets bigger we don't change. If we stagnate and get left behind, we're doomed in the long run and no one in the ATS really seems to understand that. I think the Azanians and ANZAC do, but not the ATS.

I suppose we in the Federation are the major problem. We've always favored stability. We like to say it's part of our national character. Anyway, no one in their right mind wants to repeat the bloodbath of the Unification Wars, yet if we don't lead the ATS toward greater integration and a stronger military and diplomatic position, then who will? The Takeda Corporation? Ha! They're too narrowly focused and inward looking. They see the ATS purely in trade terms most of the time and would not have joined except that the NAA had them backed into a corner. Then there's Siberia. They see what's coming, but their approach is to arm up and prepare to die fighting. Singapore, perhaps? They have the knowledge and the technology, everybody likes them, and they are doing their best to make the ATS more unified politically, but I doubt they can overcome the basic immobility of China.

The rest of Southeast Asia doesn't really have any sway. They're too backward, too poor and too concerned with trying to solve those problems to take much notice of CEGA. Notice how much I keep referring to CEGA? Sometimes I think the ATS is like a puppet on a string, a string that ends in the hands of the CEGA Council. The ATS exists to resist CEGA, and so mirrors it in every action. If CEGA does nothing on Earth, we do nothing. If CEGA is dynamic, we are dynamic. It's all very depressing, because when you let your enemy dictate the action, you will eventually lose the war.

Source: audio transcript, Pyrea Station: Ambassador Sun Ping & Director Janus O'Grady, January 2210

TAKEDA CORPORATE ZONE ▼

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▼ CHINESE FEDERATION

Democratic and multicultural, the Chinese Federation is a bastion of peace and normality in the Earth's turbulent politics. Rebuilding from the devastation of the Third World War, the scattered communities of China came together in cooperation rather than conflict, creating an abiding sense of national identity that transcends religious, political and ethnic differences. As they sought to build a happy and prosperous nation for themselves, the Chinese worked to avoid conflict with any power and even today, after the bitterness of the Unification Wars, the Federation seeks nothing more than the right to pursue its dreams in peace.

Unfortunately, the Federation is at the heart of the ATS' main internal dispute. The problem is the aggressive economic policies of the Takeda Corporation. China did not sustain a high level of technology in the Fall, and the Federation is reliant on the Takeda Corporation for many high-tech goods. Attempts to lessen this dependence by trading with Singapore, the ANZAC and Azanians have helped, but only the Takeda Corporation has the surplus production to fully supply a nation the size of the Federation. Knowing this, the Corporation is misusing the ATS's free trade provisions to slowly take control of the Federation economy, as much by default as by design.

While the Corporation is trying this with all its ATS allies, in China the problem has become a heated political issue, especially since the open-minded Federation sees the Corporate social system as abhorrent. The Takeda Corporation feels somewhat the same way, seeing the Federation as barely contained anarchy. The present Federal government is trying diplomacy, but an election is due in twelve months and unless the Takeda Corporation stops its more obviously domineering activities, the nationalistic and populist opposition parties are threatening to withdraw from the ATS. The Federation is not unwilling to trade with the Takeda Corporation; indeed, the Federation is a very mercantile nation and believes strongly in free trade. At the moment, however, it feels that it is being used.

One reason for this encroaching domination is that the Takeda Corporation loves doing business in the Federation. The Chinese, Uighers, Koreans, Manchus and Vietnamese of the Federation love to wheel and deal. They may not have the economic and technical resources of the Corporation, but they are probably better businesspeople, and as a result the Federation economy is the most dynamic in Free Earth. This means it represents big profits, thus attracting the Takeda Corporation. Federation citizens do not like interference in their business affairs; every person is a billionaire in the making, which is why they do not get on well with the Corporate system.

In line with its mercantilist approach, the Federation has no innate objections to trade with CEGA, though it does so only indirectly, for political reasons. In the same manner, the Federation is trying to expand trade with the Solar nations, operating its orbital stations as free trade zones. Its economy is productive, if somewhat backward, and the Federation sees strong trade possibilities in basic manufactured goods and handcrafted luxury products like furniture and clothing. As a further incentive, cheap lift rates are maintained on the Federation's skyhooks and visas are easy to obtain, although the populace is no more welcoming of "colonials" than any other country in Free Earth. That said, Federation citizens, while not enamored politically of the either the Venusians or Jovians, are a polite people and tend not to be as personally hostile as is common elsewhere on Earth.

Despite its large population, the Federation has a low population density. This is one reason they are nervous about fighting wars; there are insufficient citizens to defend what are, in truth, very long borders. Population growth remains low because of strict environmental laws that make the decision to have a child a bureaucratic nightmare. The average citizen believes that the results are worth it, with the Federation possessing open cities, clean water and enough food for even its poorest inhabitants. Continued problems along the Siberian Front exacerbate insecurities about the borders, and as a result the Federation is very reluctant to pressure CEGA on any issue. CEGA interprets this as weakness, not realizing that the internal legitimacy, popularity and stability of the Federation make conquest the only way CEGA will ever bring the Federation's united peoples to heel.

None of the old cities within the Federation survived the Third World War. However, the new cities the Federation has built are masterpieces of environmental and civil engineering. Private vehicles are outlawed, massive public spaces separate the living, industrial and business districts, and each city is carefully located to be the hub for a wide swathe of the surrounding region. As a result, the cities have boomed without any one metropolis dominating, and the benefits of economic growth have been fairly evenly spread across the whole Federation. This approach also ensures that every city is surrounded by enough farmland to feed its population no matter what happens elsewhere.

SIBERIAN REPUBLIC ▼

This vast land is one of the least populated on Earth, and its sweeping pine forests and tundra seem pristine and almost primeval, though two generations of eco-restoration were necessary to get them to this stage again. The ratio of land to people allowed the hardy inhabitants of Siberia to survive the Fall in relatively good order, though the Third World War devastated what few cities and industrial sites the region possessed. Among the large number of refugees who came east during the Long Winter, however, were many engineers and scientists who helped the Siberians build a rough but ready nation out of the wilderness during the 2140s.

The Siberians slowly expanded until all the communities from the Pacific Ocean to the Urals were part of a loose republic. Before the basics of a national infrastructure were in place, refugees again began to come east, fleeing the onslaught of the Turks and Poles in western Russia. Realizing it was only a matter of time before these new and hostile powers also came east, the Siberians began a slow relocation of their communities to the far east of the Republic. While these preparations for war stalled Siberia's development, they were responsible for preserving the Republic's independence during the Unification Wars.

Despite just managing to survive the Unification Wars, the Republic is the weakest point in the ATS' defenses against CEGA. The Siberians have so militarized their society to try and maintain their freedom that some say they have lost sight of what freedom means. Republican cities are built like small fortresses, seven years of compulsory military service cuts the heart out of their younger generation, and Siberia's industrial and technical development is entirely designed around military production. Given the enormous losses of land and citizens the Republic suffered during the Unification Wars this is part of an understandable paranoia, but from a human perspective there is little point in being independent if the result is living in a constant state of readiness for war.

The demoralizing effect of this situation is affecting more and more young Siberians, creating social problems and leading to a brain drain to the Federation's more hospitable society. As a result, there is a steady population decline. The situation is not helped by a falling birth rate, mostly due to the Siberians' lack of hope for the future. Most Siberians realize their Republic is dying, creating a general air of despondency which manifests as alcoholism and a general disinterest, both of which are widespread among the populace.



THAI-LAO KINGDOM ▼

This nation of jungle-clad hills and paddy-covered lowlands is in a constant state of turmoil as its fractious peoples constantly hover on the verge of civil war. From the Irrawaddy River to the South China Sea, Queen Trinh Linh works relentlessly to overcome the Kingdom's bloody history and forge a sense of national identity among the Burmese, Thai, Laotian, Malayan, Khmer and Vietnamese villagers who make up the bulk of the population. Her task is made near-impossible by the unfortunate legacy of her grandfather, King Trinh Ninh, a murdering and sadistic warlord who arose during the Fall and who used his bandit army to forcibly and bloodily build the Kingdom between 2133 and 2141.

Despite the brutal methods employed, Ninh brought much needed stability to mainland Southeast Asia and even generated some small measure of prosperity. The Royal government, based in Vientiane, worked to rebuild some measure of civilization and proved willing to sign deals with the Takeda Corporation and various Singaporean interests looking for cheap and unregulated sites for legally dubious factories. By accepting any investment, no matter how dangerous or illegal, as well as making the best use of the fact that the Kingdom was untroubled by the Unification Wars until 2176 and is positioned on the major east-west trade routes, Ninh and his son Vinh did well for themselves and their loyal followers. Today, the occasional gleaming arcologies of the elite stand in stark contrast to the primitive farming villages in which most people live.

Queen Trinh Linh has, since coming to power in 2202, tried to modernize the Kingdom and has introduced measures to alleviate the lot of the poor and downtrodden. In doing so, she has pleased no one, with the corrupt and powerful allies of her father and grandfather objecting to the lessening of their influence and the poor demanding more than she can deliver in the short term. Adding to this the fact that the Kingdom's governmental system remains almost feudal, with provincial governors virtually independent of the Queen, only the ATS' ongoing and open support has prevented the disintegration of Royal control.

CEGA has not been slow to capitalize on the problems; for every rebel or dissident noble there is a CEGA agent manipulating matters from behind the scenes. Agents from the more advanced ATS nation are fighting a losing battle to prevent the Kingdom's breakup. Assassinations and various black ops are becoming a staple of the Kingdom's politics for all factions.

A.N.Z.A.C. ◀

A backwater in Earth politics because of its small population, geographic remoteness and isolationism, the ANZAC manages to go its own way much of the time and be left alone, as it prefers. Its resource wealth and western culture is attracting CEGA's attention, however, and war looms on the horizon. The ANZAC has no real friends apart from the Takeda Corporation. Its armed forces are too small to defend the Commonwealth's far-flung possessions, and it is having increasing problems keeping up technologically with the larger alliances. On top of everything else, a large pro-CEGA fifth column has developed among the racist remnants of the old White Australia, undermining political stability just when it is needed most.



POLITICAL AIMS ▼

Survival best sums up both the long and short term political goals of the ANZAC; to achieve that, it is willing to use any tool that comes to hand. Since the Odyssey Affair, the main debate within the ANZAC has been whether or not it should use CEGA's temporary weakness to retake the Pacific islands it lost to the NAA during the Unification Wars. While this may seem at odds with the idea that survival is the ANZAC's main goal, it is typical of the problem facing the Commonwealth. In the long run they know that CEGA will overwhelm them, and they are desperately looking for any option that will buy them more time.

The idea of reversing the Commonwealth's losses in the Unification Wars is a delicate business, involving not just the prospect of war with CEGA, but also very dubious research projects that are borderline Edicts violations. The only other options are an alliance with the ATS, which seems logical to everyone except the ANZAC itself, or voluntarily joining CEGA, an option that will start a fight in any local pub. The ANZAC is backing itself into a corner, as it did during the Unification Wars, and another defeat is the likely result.

TRADE & DEVELOPMENT ▼

The ANZAC economy is productive but lacks strong growth, as it remains highly focused on eco-restoration. The influence of the Green Party, which has been a member of the ruling coalition government for seventy years, has meant that economic policy always takes secondary importance to environmental welfare. As a result, the Commonwealth remains a resource-exporter and manufactured goods importer, though as the main supplier of raw materials to the ATS and the world's biggest agricultural producer, it has immense economic influence. The importance of its role in Free Earth trade is further highlighted by the value CEGA and the Venusians place on taking control of the ANZAC. If they succeed, they will be able to hold the ATS economy for ransom. As yet, the ATS is not sure how to respond, especially since the Commonwealth seems intent on ignoring its offers of aid, acting as if it is unaware of its economic importance.

INDIVIDUALISM ★

Of course I know it's stupid. The whole bloody country's got CEGA on the flamin' brain. Nor do you have to remind me I'm meant to be the Prime Minster of the whole bloody mess. CEGA killed too many people, way too many people. The incendiary bombing of Brisbane alone cost us half a million casualties. People don't forget that, and they also don't forget the heroic stories of our military past — we do have one, you know. Taken together, that adds up to a desire for revenge, to get back the islands they stole from us. I know damn well that CEGA will eat us alive if we start a war, but what do you want me to do? Hand the government over to those redneck, rightwing scumbags in the Development Party? They'd kill democracy down here and then start in on the people, have themselves a contest to see whose death camps get better quotas.

No, I'm not being funny. Do you really think that the Commonwealth would ever be allowed within CEGA without some serious "reeducation," to use that wonderful NAA euphemism? That's where I disagree with you. There's nothing good about CEGA or even about the idea of uniting Mankind. Majorities are not always right, bigger is not always better and I'll burn this planet down to the bedrock before I bend my knee to those fascist pigs. We have a history of gallant military defeats, Janus. In a way, I think we're looking forward to losing. It would be a vindication of our rather arrogant belief that what we've built down here is too good for this sorry planet. The simple fact is that we don't want to be part of a gloriously reunified humanity. What we want is to be left alone. I don't like people looking into my affairs, and my country doesn't like other countries poking their noses in. Maybe it's all those cramped arcologies and space stations that most of humanity lives in, but sometimes it seems like no-one values individuality any more.

Source: audio transcript, personal recorder, Ringo Nguyen, ANZAC Prime Minister, and Janus O'Grady, SolaPol Director, Fishing Sloop off Waihi, February 2211.

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3.E.2

HISTORICAL FACTS

▼ AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND

Australia-New Zealand is the only nation on Earth to have survived the Fall and Long Winter intact. Originally two separate nations with close historical ties, Australia and New Zealand joined together during the twenty-first century for economic and political advantage. The environment in both states had always been harsh, but climate change and ozone depletion during the Fall destroyed most farming regions and famine hit the highly urbanized population very hard. Only newly developed sea-farming installations allowed Australia to survive as a political entity despite the millions of deaths. These historical hardships, along with their near-defeat in the Unification Wars, have left Australians suspicious and reclusive. They have rebuilt their nation as a defensive bastion, warily keeping watch on both CEGA and the ATS.

Australia-New Zealand dominates the ANZAC completely, and the Australian Prime Minister is always Secretary General of the Commonwealth. However, the political compromises necessary to make the Commonwealth structure work are causing lingering domestic political problems. The main issues are the economic subsidies provided by Australia and numerous favorable policies designed to keep the smaller states under control. Apart from the obvious complaints about minorities dictating to the majority, there is also a racial element involved. Though Australia has been a multi-racial and multi-cultural nation for more than two centuries, certain groups among the dominant European-descended population remain unhappy with this situation. While a small minority, they have become politically influential by championing many populist causes like cutting aid to other Commonwealth members.

Australia is extremely concerned for its environment and has extended this interest to all other nations within the ANZAC. The enormous effort put into ecologically-friendly development is wholly responsible for the plentiful resources that CEGA now covets. Ecological concern is behind one of the recent problems with CEGA, that of the Administration's unsustainable mining in the Pacific Occupied Territories. Reliant on sea farming for food supplies, the Australians and other ANZAC members are furious that CEGA is risking polluting their main food source in the pursuit of minerals.

Australian paranoia makes them almost as difficult to deal with as the Venusians; this has more to do with a national persecution complex rather than any deeper conspiracy. Australian technology has not kept up with that of the rest of the Earth, and they are highly reliant on technology imports from the Takeda Corporation except in the areas of marine science, nuclear engineering and biotechnology, where they are self-sufficient and at least as advanced as the ATS. Australia's extreme secrecy over their biotechnology has made them a prime target for concern about Edicts violation. While for the most part the secrecy is related to a fear of CEGA espionage, they do have a few labs researching advanced biological weapons; however, few of these are actually located in Australia proper. The Australians are very open about their vast nuclear arsenal and it is an acknowledged fact in the CEGA Council that they are quite prepared to destroy the planet rather than surrender.

Needing a non-military option, CEGA's Joint Service Intelligence has penetrated the right-wing Australian Development Party in the hope of using it to stage a coup. As a result, they are fully aware of the potential for military action in the Pacific and are even encouraging it in the hopes of carrying out their political takeover in the aftermath of an ANZAC defeat. The nature of the Australian political system does present some problems for CEGA, however. Australia has always been a constitutional monarchy, though following the Fall, the extinct British Royal Family was replaced by the Tupou, the royal house of Tonga, in 2149. The Tupou have proved an excellent choice, providing popular and legitimate figureheads for the often-fragile coalition governments that are the norm for post-Fall Australian politics. Given the wide-ranging powers built into the constitution, the monarch also plays a significant political role, ensuring that no matter how bad the political infighting gets, political stability and the proper checks and balances are maintained. This of course makes CEGA's proposed coup somewhat problematic, and the Council is divided over whether or not to proceed.

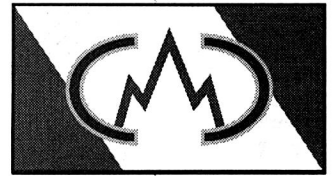
Australia and the Takeda Corporation are the strangest allies in Free Earth. Though no formal treaty binds either nation, their cooperation spans a whole range of fields from exo research to military coordination, despite the cultural differences between the two nations. In direct opposition to Corporate culture, Australian society thrives on a frank openness in which people speak their minds and express their irreverence for everything official. Cooperation, therefore, between the two nations is a source of constant amazement to the ATS and CEGA. The relationship goes beyond political and economic convenience, with the Takeda family marrying into the Australian Royal Family. What this relationship holds for the future of Free Earth is something that gives CEGA serious pause as it decides whether to proceed against either state.

UNITED ANTARCTICA ▼

The once shimmering white expanse of Antarctica now shows huge brown stains when viewed from orbit, the legacy of nuclear demolition charges used to tear open its surface for mining during the last days of the Fall. American mining corporations backed by the US Navy carried out these operations over Australian objections; the matter remains a source of anguish for the ecologically minded southerners and is often thrown into the teeth of CEGA negotiators pushing for greater access to ANZAC resources.

During the Long Winter, the Australians built extensive resource extraction facilities themselves, making use of the damage already done, as well as establishing significant sea farms in the rich, frigid waters of the Antarctic Ocean. The mining and sea farming proved very productive, and numerous arcologies were built to house the growing workforce these operations required. Eco-restoration stations were also established, though the environmental damage is so great that progress has been very slow. Best estimates maintain that full restoration is possible no sooner than 2301. By 2150, however, a fully-fledged society had been created in the Antarctic wastes, and it was given statehood within ANZAC a year later.

While Australians are anti-social with foreigners, Antarcticans take it to extremes, having developed a culture as cold and bleak as the land they inhabit. This may be isolation or the endless snow and cold, but whatever the reason, no one breaks through their national arrogance, a clannish belief in their superiority because of the harsh place in which they survive. This has made their membership in the ANZAC tenuous at best; if United Antarctica is offered the opportunity of alliance with the People's Republic of Antarctica without having to join the Azanian Compact, they may take it up. What this would mean for their relations with CEGA remains a potentially explosive political threat to the quickly eroding stability of Free Earth.



PAPUAN FEDERATION ▼

Papua is a mountainous, jungle-clad island where mining facilities using the latest technology overlook Stone Age villages. This strange juxtaposition is not recent; ever since Europeans colonized Papua, its native peoples have been surrounded by technology far more advanced than their native culture. This gap was never really overcome; even during the twenty-first century, the best the island achieved was a local technological elite who controlled the government and the army while growing wealthy off the vast resources of the mountainous interior. The local people saw little of this wealth, but suffered the consequences as logging and mining destroyed the environment. Pent-up resentment caused by this inequity resulted in the complete destruction of modern Papuan civilization, such as it was, during the Fall, as the poor went on a rampage against those they saw as responsible for the devastation of their lands. The island then languished until the Australians began re-exploring in the 2130s. Desperate for resources, they established a number of mining facilities over the objections of the locals. This caused some political discord in Australia as people objected to the mistakes of the past being repeated.

This debate went on for decades, Australian operations exploiting Papua's mineral all the while. Eco-restoration, schools and medical facilities were established and a percentage of the revenue generated by the mines was placed in trust for the Papuan people. The eventual result of this long-term process was that Papua achieved independent statehood in 2201. While still the most backward state in the ANZAC, Papua is also the most dynamic, with a new generation of local Papuan leaders determined to see their homeland rise to be something more than a primitive mining camp. For the moment, though, the division between educated elite and tribal citizen remains a monumental divide that must be overcome.

Despite the damage done by unsound mining practices during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Papua remains one of the ecological wonders of Earth and is a popular destination for Solar nationals wishing to touch the true experience of Humanity's home planet. Untouched tropical rainforest can still be found in the deepest recesses of the Owen Stanley Range, offering a trekking experience unmatched in the Solar System. Unfortunately, these same mountains hide Australian military bases involved in Edicts-breaking bio-weapons research. Left over from the previous period of Australian rule, the bases are supposedly there for Papua's defense and by treaty will be handed over to the Papuan military by 2225. In isolated valleys, teams supposedly working on the ongoing and significant eco-restoration projects operated by the Papuan government have gathered bacteria and viruses previously unknown. With this material as a base, Australian researchers are busily trying to create a new generation of weapons that will be able to get past the biological defensive measures of modern arcologies. If the Papuan government becomes aware of this research, it would precipitate a split in the ANZAC and potentially draw Australia into a very damaging fight with the Edicts Enforcement Bureau.

▼ PACIFIC ISLANDS STATES ZONE

Seabed mining, sea farming and tidal power generation brought the island nations of the South Pacific great wealth during the twenty-first century, a sudden influx of money and influence not unlike the effect of oil on the Middle East during the twentieth century. The Islands' burgeoning populations were housed in floating and underwater arcologies, the first settlements of their kind in the world, which later proved vital as the Fall brought rising sea levels and incredibly violent cyclones which devastated island after island. With power and natural resources to draw upon the arcologies weathered the Long Winter relatively unscathed, and were quick to welcome Australian traders during the 2120s.

Relations with Australia evolved into foundation of the ANZAC, an arrangement that provided the Islands States with a stronger economic position. Reconstruction and development were brought to an abrupt halt by the disastrous NAA invasion of 2176, especially as the unprepared ANZAC military was powerless to stop the onslaught. Not only did the ANZAC lose almost half the territory of its Pacific Islands States, but hundreds of thousands were killed as NAA depth charges and torpedoes wrought havoc with the marine arcologies that housed the majority of the population.

Since 2184, the ANZAC has put enormous effort into rebuilding the Pacific Islands, but has not been able to rebuild the Islanders' trust in ANZAC's ability to defend them. As a result, the Islands are now home to various radical political forces. To placate them, the ANZAC has spent a fortune on fortifications and given Pacific politicians prominent roles in strategic policy. The result is that these idyllic tropical Islands seethe with anti-CEGA sentiment, feelings that are forcing the ANZAC to adopt a much more aggressive stance than it otherwise would. The idea of war is popular with many Islanders, who look forward to avenging their losses in the Unification Wars, despite the very non-Earthlike culture they have developed by spending the majority of their working lives deep under the Pacific in deep-sea arcologies.

Life in an undersea arcologies is much like life in an orbital station. An improperly sealed airlock, accidental damage to a support strut, or a badly cleaned filtration system are all potentially deadly. In many ways, life on or under the ocean is even more hazardous than life in space because the ocean environment is so changeable. Even something as seemingly innocuous as temperature changes must be factored into the design and construction of an undersea arcology. Nor are the arcologies designed with the comfort of their citizens in mind; most are industrial facilities, supporting deep-sea mining, geothermal power, or high-pressure industrial production. Habitat-orientated arcologies tend to be island-based or floating arcologies, though some extend beneath the surface. As a result of the tightly controlled and disciplined lifestyle under which many Islanders live, they are generally a calm and careful people, not given to impatience or ill-considered actions — except, as noted, where CEGA is concerned.

▼ DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR

The island of Timor is an anomaly within the ANZAC, belonging geographically to the ATS' Malay Pacification Zone. When the ATS and the Commonwealth were negotiating the status of the archipelago in 2186, the ANZAC insisted on being granted oversight of this rough and rather barren island. The reasons given were obscure, but apparently relate to a historic debt that the ANZAC Prime Minister of the time felt was owed to the primitive inhabitants of this remote island.

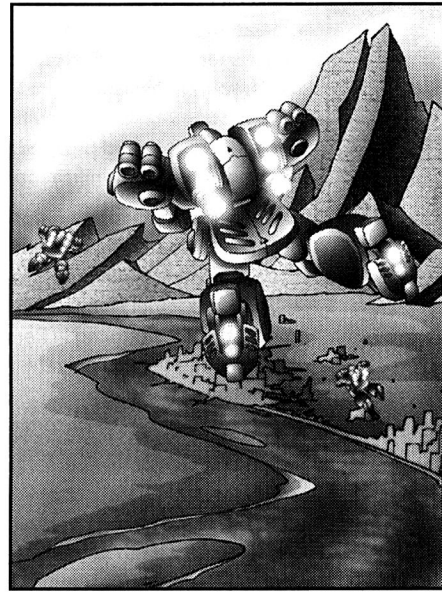
Large sums of development aid were poured in, enough that the basic infrastructure for a modern economy is now in place, and Timor achieved statehood in 2209. Due to the development of significant trade ties with Singapore, Timor is also financially independent, acting as the northern conduit of ANZAC trade. Timor is also the site of the ANZAC's first commercial space port; this isolated state was specifically chosen to allow Commonwealth authorities to tightly monitor who and what comes in and goes out, especially if new technology can be seized for "examination."

The Timorese government, on the other hand, doesn't take its responsibilities particularly seriously where smuggling is concerned. Trade has become the Island's economic lifeline, and authorities tend to turn a blind eye to illegal activities as long as the money flows in. Despite being open only a few years, Timor is becoming a focus of the Earth-Orbital smuggling business, while piously denying they have any knowledge of it. So far the ANZAC has not done much to stop the trade, merely making sure that dangerous items do not find their way south into the ANZAC proper. With the ANZAC's hostility to CEGA, many dissident groups, including STRIKE, make heavy use of the Timor Spaceport and only the most basic precautions are required to slip past the lax Timorese customs agents.

INDEPENDENT STATES ◀

Remoteness, problems with internal cohesion and intense paranoia are the primary reasons why a large number of states within the Asian region remain unallied. These states are prime targets for CEGA subversion, and as a result ATS and Azanian agents are also numerous, each side seeking to gain allies while denying them to the enemy. Economic benefits have therefore flowed into these mainly backward states, part of the competing alliances' attempts to woo these nations. So far no state has succumbed to either side, much to the frustration of CEGA, since they see every rejection as a denial of their manifest destiny to represent all Humankind.

Most of the independent states hold to peculiar racial, religious, or political beliefs that play a significant role in the inability of any alliance to offer them satisfactory terms, especially in CEGA's culturally elitist and politically restrictive regime. The Azanians and ATS seem quite happy to simply stop CEGA and pursue trade relations with the independents. With the exception of Persia and Judea, none of the independents has a hope of resisting CEGA militarily; they exist in the stalemate of the Earth's cold war and would likely fall on the first day of any new war.



REPUBLIC OF JUDEA-SAMARIA ▼

Before the Fall the region now known as Judea-Samaria was essentially two states, Palestine and Israel, nations not known for their friendly relations. A nasty localized nuclear war in 2095 was the last notice history took of the area. It was not until the Turkish Empire began its consolidation that anyone noticed that a new nation had sprung into existence along the eastern Mediterranean coast. Technologically advanced and arcology-based, the Judeans notified the Empire of the exact location of their borders and threatened violent retribution if the Turks trespassed. Put off by the level of nuclear contamination across the region, the Turks didn't bother with the Judeans until the Unification Wars, when they lost each and every battle they fought, suffering huge losses to the advanced Judean armored forces.

At the end of the Unification Wars, the Judeans hosted the armistice talks at their capital, the magnificent Jerusalem arcology, but managed to give away little about their society and immediately returned to complete seclusion. Judea-Samaria does not maintain political relations with any other nation. They do not import any goods, even though the area is not known for its natural resources. They have successfully rehabilitated large tracts of land, which they farm intensively. The Judeans speak Hebrew and the Samaritans speak Arabic, though both peoples are multilingual. The list of half-known facts disturbs every intelligence agency operating on Earth, but despite their best efforts, the region remains one of the biggest mysteries on Earth.

The fact is that Judea-Samaria is a dual theocracy, with Judean Rabbis and Samaritan Imams occupying all political and judicial positions and leading their people in a life of religious seclusion isolated from exterior temptations. Diligent application of the ancient and ascetic practices of both Judaism and Islam have allowed the people of the region to survive through the Fall and then prosper. Totally uncaring about the Edicts and having maintained a completely operable industrial-technical base through the Fall, the Judeans and Samaritans are highly advanced in areas such as high energy physics and nanotechnology.

Judea-Samaria is also violating the Jerusalem Accords by working to destabilize CEGA's African Union puppet state. So far, CEGA only suspects, but JSI is working to find hard evidence. The Judea-Samaria security force (retaining the centuries-old title of Mossad) is very good, with centuries of experience; it has so far kept one step ahead of the JSI while penetrating the Turkish Empire and African Union to the highest levels. Luckily for CEGA, all the Judeans and Samaritans want is to be left alone to follow the rites and laws of their faiths, and their actions are all defensive in intent.

▼ PERSIAN EMPIRE



Home to a truly ancient culture, this rugged land of deserts and mountains has a sense of its history, of its glories and disasters, its beauty and treachery, that makes the relatively new nation that now calls itself Persia seem much older than it actually is. The Persians were one of the few peoples to hold their traditional lands without loss during the Fall and manage the incredible feat of rebuilding the old state anew. The new Persian state is a vibrant, multicultural society that has readily absorbed the many smaller ethnic groups that fled to the safety and prosperity it offered during the early years of reconstruction. However, having opened its arms before the Unification Wars, the Persian Empire has become isolationist in its aftermath.

Exactly what long-term goals the Persians have is a matter for some debate for the rest of Earth. They have no close ties with any other non-aligned nation and steadfastly refuse to deal with CEGA, while all Persian trade proceeds via Singaporean intermediaries. Persia's isolationism, however, is not driven by paranoia or any other external factor; rather, it is a reflection of the closed nature of the Persian monarchy and the narrow mindset it has produced in Persia's aristocracy. No one who is not a member of the aristocracy is allowed into the royal palace, and only the most senior are allowed to actually meet the king. The reason for this hermit-like behavior has to do with the Emperor's religious function as the descendant of the prophet Mohammed, and has a number of historical precedents. The problem is that the kings and queens become imposed recluses, completely unaware of the real world and often manipulated into decisions that suit the more worldly senior aristocrats.

It has suited the aristocracy to have their hold on power within Persia secured via trade cartels (which concentrate wealth in their hands) and bans (which prevent foreign ideas that may provoke revolt among the lower classes from entering the country). Persia is a wealthy nation — modern extraction techniques have made its old oil fields productive once again, and advanced plastics and material technology industries have been developed to take advantage of the petrochemicals. The rest of the economy revolves around urban service industries, farming and eco-restoration, all of which have a purely domestic focus and tend to be outside the control of the nobility because the money involved is not worth the effort.

The aristocracy does have a serious stake in eco-restoration, however, because Persia still suffers from the aftereffects of a combination of mass industrialization in the twenty-first century, climate change, nuclear, biological and chemical warfare. Extensive eco-restoration work has been carried out in the mountains and highlands, though most lowland settlements are arcologies because of residual problems with contamination. This adds substantial expense to the government budget, and dips into the profits of the lowlands-based oil industry. The Caspian Sea, for instance, remains a biological dead zone, making oil extraction from its polluted waters substantially more expensive than it could be if the waters were less toxic. Despite the economic usefulness of eco-restoration, it has not progressed as fast as the government would like, because much of the damage was deliberate. The damage left by the scorched earth tactics Persia used during the Resource Wars is proving extremely difficult to rectify, much to the chagrin of the aristocracy who are footing most of the cost.

◇ ZAGROSS FRONT

Another ongoing cost is the Zagross Front, the hottest border zone on Earth, with the yearly death toll reaching into the thousands for each side. The raiding and shelling across the border by Persian forces are in blatant disregard of the Jerusalem Accords, but as expensive as it is, the aristocrats know that the religious fervor and repressed anger of their people requires an outlet and constant border wars with CEGA are the easiest, if not safest, option. While the average Persian soldier is a relatively ill-equipped infantryman, trade is allowing the purchase of the latest ATS and Azanian military systems, like exo-suits and air-defense laser systems.

Higher authorities in CEGA tend to ignore or write off the fighting along the Zagross Front because the Persians, like other, smaller non-aligned nations, lack any space capacity and are generally backward. This does not make their artillery and special-forces units any less effective in the mountains, where space reconnaissance is of little use and CEGA's heavier vehicles and aircraft are much less useful, to the point of being a hindrance in many cases. The southern corps of the Eurasian FDA desperately needs more troops, more exos and more specialist air support, but the funds are not available. Meanwhile, the Persian aristocracy has virtually no end of commoners willing to die for God and king.



HIMALAYAN PACT ▼

CEGA

The Long Winter depopulated the Himalayas, a region already suffering from serious overpopulation, despite strict environmental laws through most of last century. The drop in temperature also left all but the lowest slopes uninhabitable for most of the year. The population movement caused by this momentous change was one of the factors that prevented any quick recovery in India after the end of the Third World War, as hundreds of thousands of refugees flooded into the Gangetic valley seeking food and shelter. The result was a series of ethnic and religious conflicts, many of which are still continuing across northern India today.

Some ethnic communities, including the warlike Gurkha tribal groups, moved back to their mountain homes when the Long Winter ended. This move was partially to escape the constant fighting on the Indian plains and, more importantly, to reestablish long-held religious ties to their traditional lands. The new Himalayan nations that resulted are among the most backward on Earth, but they share a unity unknown to the rest of the subcontinent and their peaceful existence stands in stark contrast to the bickering of the rest of India.

Beyond peace, however, nothing separates the Himalayan monarchs from any of the other dozen or so petty sultans and rajas that constitute the Indian Princely States. Dictatorial, backward, oppressive and religiously and racially intolerant, the nations of the Himalayan Pact tend not to fight with each other only because they have very little worth fighting over. Also, their armies, especially the ancient and legendary Gurkha regiments, are their main form of income. The Pact rents out their soldiers to serve the various Indian princelings, both for export income and to keep their warlike subjects distracted and occupied far from home. Even CEGA has tried to hire Pact units, especially Gurkhas, but the ATS continues to succeed in persuading the Pact to turn the offers down.

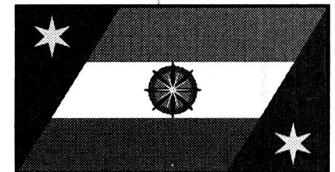
INDIAN PRINCELY STATES ▼

Nowhere on Earth is a land with so much potential frittered away by a group of people so little deserving of the positions they occupy. Ruined by the Resource Wars and sent spiraling into utter desolation by the Third World War and innumerable local conflicts and harvest failures, India fell from being a near-superpower to nothing at all. Yet it still possessed reasonable resources, not including the vast riches of the Indian Ocean, and the people who survived the great epidemics and famines that tore across the subcontinent were dynamic, hardy and possessed of a significant technological base.

As a result of superpower occupation, numerous petty tyrants were left in control of various regions for no other reason than their willingness to do as their foreign masters ordered. Little more than bandit chiefs, these regional warlords turned to fighting each other as soon as the superpowers abandoned India, further compounding the problems besetting the subcontinent. This unfortunate situation still continues, with no one leader having been able to gather enough power to successfully unite the warring states. Support from CEGA, the ATS, and Azanians for particular states in the years since the Unification Wars has only further exacerbated matters and left the subcontinent's people and environment beleaguered and no better off than they were before the Wars.

Politically, India remains a mess of competing petty states, none of them viable in the long term and none led by leaders with anything resembling vision. The princelings fight a neverending series of wars, allying and betraying each other with monotonous regularity. With little wealth, many of the armies fight with antiquated firearms that date from before the Fall, though increasing CEGA-ATS-Azanian competition for client states is sending a steady stream of modern weapons into the subcontinent. As the average Indian soldier is too poorly educated to use modern weaponry, a market for mercenaries is quickly developing and bringing a new level of professionalism and suffering to an already battered land.

For the most part, the local peasants don't care about the fighting; one ruler is much like another, and in the past, the peasants have gotten by relatively unaffected by the constant battles. The petty rulers traditionally try not to hurt people or buildings; after all, there is no point in conquering one's neighbors if one destroys the very resources one wished to gain. Even with the CEGA, Azanian and ATS development funds now flowing in, however, the lot of the common Indian is deteriorating. It was bad enough when their rulers robbed them blind and made off with whatever aid became available, but now modern weapons and mercenaries are turning the dozens of small wars into brutal and bloody affairs of a sort not seen since the Third World War. As a result, whole villages are being destroyed and thousands of people uprooted. Despite the growing death tolls and negative environmental effects, India's multitudinous rulers seem not to care, their egos supported by foreign money and glib-tongued advisors.



▼ TAMIL FEDERATION

Located in the southeast corner of the Indian Subcontinent and on the island of Sri Lanka, the Tamil Federation is a haven of peace and prosperity. While the continental portions of the Federation were left as badly splintered as the rest of India, the island of Sri Lanka escaped occupation because it lacked useable resources and was deeply enmeshed in a brutal civil war. Old ethnic and religious divisions on the island, amicably settled during the twenty-first century, were re-ignited during the Fall. The result was a bloody war of genocide that was won by the Tamils in 2136; the appalling butchery of this victory was lost in the chaos of the Third World War. The Tamils gradually expanded their borders to include their traditional lands in India, building a prosperous, stable and moderately advanced state. The ATS, Azanians and ANZAC have proven reluctant to deal with a state whose beginnings are so bloody, especially since the present democratically-elected government is dominated by the political party that ordered the cold-blooded murder of millions of Sri Lankans. The Tamils admit that the genocide was a terrible act, but claim it was merely one of many and that they are being unfairly judged. So far, the Federation has been unwilling to deal with CEGA, not wishing to give up any of its hard-won independence, but this may be changing in the face of negative opinions from its neighbors.

▼ TURKIC ALLIANCE

The sweeping plains, rough mountains and stony highlands of Central Asia became a major industrial center during the twenty-first century, building on their long established space facilities and extensive natural resources. Massive population growth led to over-farming and then dependence on food imports, especially after industrial pollution further limited the available farmland. The Fall hit Central Asia early, as marginal land became desert and a thirty-year drought drove many to flee to orbit or Russia and China. Famine followed drought and war destroyed what remained, leaving Central Asia a semi-deserted wilderness by 2116. Like in many other badly damaged areas, the few remaining local peoples fell back into a tribal society, pulling together what was left of their communities. The new tribes sought the resources to survive and expanded into new areas, including western China and northern Afghanistan, but it was a peaceful process of migration and intermarriage rather than conquest.

Trade with China, Persia and Siberia brought some technology back to the primitive region, but the land could not support a large enough population to re-establish an industrial society. A few Persian and Chinese mining facilities were all the modern civilization the region possessed until the USE invaded in 2170. Soon Central Asia was awash in modern weapons, the more advanced non-aligned nations providing training, supplies and even some troops to bog the Europeans down in a vicious guerilla war. Unable to win by conventional means, the USE employed biological weapons in an attempt to break the wily tribesmen, but in the end, the Unification Wars ended before either side could claim victory. In the Jerusalem Accords, the USE was forced to accept the newly christened Turkic Alliance as a signatory by the ATS, thus protecting the region from their direct interference and safeguarding the ATS' southwestern flank. Attempts to help the locals to build a more modern society have been less than successful and the "Alliance" remains a fiction.

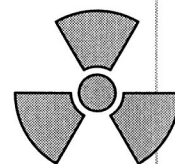
▼ YEMENI DUALITY

The devastation of Arabia had little effect on most of the southern coast, the Asir Mountains protecting the verdant valleys and rocky plains from contamination. Climate change favored the region, with increased rainfall improving crop yields and providing greater certainty to the yearly harvests. The nations along this shore, Oman and Yemen, came together to survive; with enough food and no resources worth taking, they managed to eke out an existence, though refugees from the rest of Arabia proved a great burden. Many refugees settled in the north, among the arid hills of Oman and adopted a very traditional lifestyle, rejecting most things modern. The more cosmopolitan refugees remained in the Yemeni urban centers in the south and worked to rebuild a modern, technological state, even as the north turned into a pastoral village society.

In the south, elected mayors ruled the scattered towns, and in the north, the Omani sultan became a true ruler once again. Rather than letting these differences become the source of conflict, the region's leaders instead used them as the foundation for a strong and prosperous nation. Both north and south came together through negotiation in 2149 to form the Yemeni Duality on the basis of mutual respect for their differences. The new state, with the Omani Sultan as head of state over a democratic assembly, proved strong enough to stare down CEGA's threats and intimidation in the 2170s, and it was spared invasion because of continued fighting in Africa and around Judea-Samaria.

ZONES OF CONFLICT & DISRUPTION ◀

Asia has a large number of contaminated or contested areas, but for the most part the former are within nations and undergoing eco-restoration. The few unclaimed areas are extremely hostile, a situation that parallels the two military fronts in Asia, both of which are also renowned for their severity. Most of the damage in the Asian toxic lands are the direct consequences of human activities; chemical toxins and war germs have provided an enduring legacy of pain. They can be found anywhere, often lying dormant in soil, underground water table or in ruins. Some have ingrained in the environment, harbored by animals and plants, and in many cases are only discovered when too late. The task of making an area safe for people to inhabit is often beyond the resources available.



3.5

INDUS TOXIC REGION ▼

After the Fifth Arab-Israeli War, the worst regional dispute during the early Fall was the Third Indo-Pakistan conflict of 2178. Though the ancient enmities between India and Pakistan had long been resolved, a sudden scarcity of water brought renewed conflict over the Indus watershed. Desperation led to war, and Indian forces swept over the border. Knowing that her nation was doomed, the Pakistani Premier, whose name history has forgotten, destroyed India's prize. From all over Pakistan, toxic material was transported to the headwaters of the Indus system and dumped into the river's headwaters. Fusion reactors and explosives planted in industrial waste facilities were detonated as well, and Pakistan ceased to exist in an instant. The wider ecological consequences so damaged India that the aftereffects contributed to its collapse during the Resource Wars.

Outside the historical impact of the Indus Toxic Region, the area remains critical to the dysfunction of the Indian Subcontinent today. The various warring states of both northern and southern India are seriously weakened by the toxic storms that roll out of the region, as well as suffering from the water-borne pollutants that have ruined the Arabian Sea and which, during major monsoons, flood into the Gangetic watershed as well. The weaknesses caused by this ongoing pollution problem, aside from the human suffering, severely limits the chances of any state building enough of a power base to reunite the subcontinent. Yet without such unification, it is unlikely that any state will ever have the resources to fund the huge eco-restoration projects required to make the Indus safe.

3.5.1

PACIFIC FRONT ▼

Spread out over thousands of square kilometers of ocean and the barest few of coral atolls and islands, the Pacific Front remains tense and dangerous. Naval or aerial confrontations are a weekly occurrence, as the Takeda Corporation and ANZAC forces contend with those of CEGA's Pacific FDA. While these confrontations rarely result in anything more than the occasional downed aircraft or damaged ship, the potential and hatred are there for something much worse. The main problem in this regard for the Free Earth forces is that CEGA has complete control of orbit, forcing them to deploy more and more submersible assets or be forced to operate in an environment where CEGA knows where they are every hour of the day.

Complicating matters are the extensive naval mine fields laid by both sides during the Unification Wars, few of which were properly mapped and which now present threats to the shipping of every nation. More than one accidental sinking has been the cause for a minor border war, though the paranoia of the Earth's political climate is such that there are always rumors that such accidents are anything but, despite all the evidence to the contrary. Raids and piracy add to the unsavory and nervous environment that pervades the Front.

3.5.2

YALU-MANCHURIAN TOXIC REGION ▼

Manchuria was a key industrial region for both China and Russia during the twenty-first century because of its convenience to the both the natural resources of Siberia and labor force of China. Unfortunately, that convenience became a liability in the Third World War, and the area was extensively fought over, exacerbating preexisting pollution problems and leaving it so contaminated that no nation in the ATS has operated there beyond running minor salvage operations. This neglect is a heated political issue within the Chinese Federation, but until military expenditures are reduced, there are no resources to spare. The very vocal ethnic Korean minority within the Federation is particularly adamant about the toxicity problems, because their remaining lands mostly border the contaminated area. Making matters worse, the overflow from the region contaminates what would otherwise be major sea resource areas for all three northern ATS members, but even a cooperative eco-restoration effort has been ruled too expensive to justify while tensions with CEGA remain.

3.5.3

end of section 3.5 zones of conflict & disruption



3.6

► THE ASIAN CHARACTER

Two centuries of modernization moderated the cultural diversity of twentieth-century Asia and the genocides and famines of the Fall further compacted Asia's ethnic mix. However, there are still over a dozen cultural groups of significant influence, more than enough to daze and confuse Solar nationals unused to a multitude of languages, religions, and customs. This diversity makes generalizations somewhat hard to make, but in all the decades since the end of the First Colonial Period something approximating an "Asian" culture has arisen, though with strong local variations. Religion and technology have caused many changes in common, and in more recent years, the shared experiences of the Fall and the Unification Wars have wrought similar unifying cultural changes.

CEGA propaganda paints Asians as termite-like workers laboring in vast and crowded arcologies, with no thought but to serve the state. While true to some extent of the citizen-employees of the Takeda Corporation, the diligence and motivation of most Asians owes to traits common to all humanity. Love of family is the central tenet of most Asian cultures, and it is the strong extended families that this creates that are responsible for Asia's teeming cities. A focus on family, on supporting parents, siblings and children, and on working toward communal goals with relatives and friends, also translates to the wider community. Thus Asians tend to be community-focused, but not in the state-sponsored and propaganda-inspired way common to many CEGA states.

Arcologies and cities in Asia are frenetic places, with a preference toward communal living, eating and drinking publicly on a regular basis, and living as much of life in public spaces as is possible. The cold impersonalism and obsessive privacy of some arcology- or space-station-based societies is abhorrent to the average Asian. People are expected to drop in, to gossip and to take an interest in anything and everything affecting their family, their community and their nation. The absence of privacy is handled through strict concepts of politeness and personal honor, which keep tension-creating actions to a minimum and ensure that all people can keep the inner space required for their own peace of mind.

A concern for the environment has become intertwined with the Asian concept of inner peace and even the most industrialized arcology will have space for meditation gardens and allow for voluntary participation in eco-restoration projects. This focus on the outdoors and nature is responsible for minimizing problems with claustrophobia in Asian arcologies. Indeed, Asians tend toward good mental health, with the only the Takeda Corporation exhibiting the stress- and enclosed-environment-related mental problems so common in other twenty-third century human societies.

★ DINING IN ASIA

There are few, if any, small tables or booths in an Asian restaurant; people eat and drink together at bars or communal tables. Total strangers will share a meal, regardless of rank or station, and few excuses will be accepted for not mingling and sharing food and drink with other patrons. In communal eating or drinking establishments, everyone is equal, and the rules of social interaction are relaxed, especially in bars and public houses. Those who do not wish to mix, for whatever reason, should book private rooms or risk offending many other people. Even in private, it is considered rude and anti-social not to share food with the rest of the household. Eating out is very popular, with public food courts (a development of the old bazaar hawker stands) being both plentiful and cheap. In some arcologies, kitchens are not built into family residences and instead communal dining areas are provided. Such places fill with noisy crowds for every meal except breakfast and remain such until late, as entire families eat and socialize.

★ UNITY TOWERS

Built by the Takeda Corporation as a boost to Asian unity, Arcology SCS12 (Natuna) is located on the island of Greater Natuna in the South China Sea. Home to some five million people, the arcology operates on a mixed industrial-tourism-based economy that adds a healthy amount to the Takeda Corporation's bottom line. In this it is no different from the many other arcology investments of the Takeda Corporate Zone, but a higher purpose was built into the very basic structures of the city. Just as the CEGA Council Tower rises in orbital-alloy-sheathed splendor out of the Berlin Arcology, so do the twin Unity Towers rise majestically out of the tropical elegance of SCS12; however, the Unity Towers are entirely constructed using Asian materials, owing nothing to the colonial upstarts. With embassies from every Asian nation and numerous think tanks, the Towers are a ferment of diplomacy and confidence-building measures. The Takeda Corporation covers all costs, hoping one day that the Towers will house a unified Asian government.

HISTORICAL FACTS

HISTORICAL FACTS

CUSTOMS ▼

With their highly organized and ancient cultures, it is little surprise that Asians tend to follow numerous customs and rituals. Their respect is not mindless, however, and only rituals that could be adapted have survived the massive changes that have swept Asia since the nineteenth century. After the Unification Wars, renewed national pride has led to a cultural renaissance, and many old traditions have been revived. While seeking to further express their own character, the Asian nations have not undermined their modern societies, however, with most changes affecting such minor areas as clothing design and other personal matters.

An Asian's life revolves around the family, including a whole array of cousins, other distant relatives and close friends who have become adopted family members. Nothing is too good for a fellow family member and gift-giving and nepotism are common. To be told that someone is a brother, niece, cousin or the like is a signal of complete trust. Such webs of family connection are important in public and business life. The right family connections bring success and wealth, while the wrong ones brand a person with his family's reputation. Because the actions of one reflect back on the many, families tend to be very interested in the actions of each and every family member. Thus communal living, either in the same house or unit or at least nearby, and regular social get-togethers are a common part of daily life.

In more personal terms, Asians tend to be highly orderly and organized, a cultural legacy of Chinese Confucianism that has spread region-wide. Dress, once highly Westernized, has become much less so in recent decades. New fashions developed off ancient patterns, but modernized for life in arcologies and a toxic environment, have become popular. Dressing well and dressing in fashion is also highly important; it shows that a person is successful both monetarily and socially. Such status is important because of family ties, but also because in Asia, to be successful one must be seen and remembered.

BIGOTRY AND DISCRIMINATION ▼

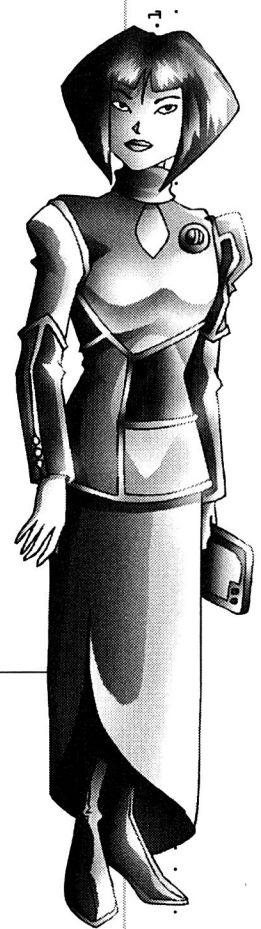
Despite the ethnic and religious contraction of Asia during the Fall, tensions and hatreds based on such ephemeral concepts are still all too common. Most racial stereotypes in the region go back centuries and as such have become highly ingrained in people's thought patterns. Thus the Japanese are widely regarded as overly aggressive and racially arrogant, the Chinese as overly mercantile, ambitious and untrustworthy, and the Malays as lazy, impolite and unpredictably violent. While none of these derogatory views are without a grain of truth, all are so distorted as to bear no resemblance to people of these nationalities in Asia today.

Within the Takeda Corporation, citizen-employees of Japanese background are seen as better management material, while those of Malay background can expect closer supervision because of their supposed tendency to slack off. In Siberia, citizens of Chinese extraction dominate business, for historical reasons completely unrelated to race, but as a result are widely perceived by Siberians of Russian extraction to be moneygrubbers with doubtful loyalties. While Asian nations are mostly advanced enough to attempt to educate people out of harmful stereotypes, in times of stress and tension they can show through. Such incidents undermine national solidarity and weaken the state at those times when unity is needed most. CEGA is more than aware of these underlying problems and does everything it can to exacerbate them.

LAW & ORDER ▼

Asians tend to regard crime both more harshly and more tolerantly than the CEGAn cultures. While looking down on criminals as a disgrace to themselves and their families, Asians also understand that every society will have its dregs and that criminal organizations perform a valuable social task by keeping order among the rabble. This apparently dysfunctional view of hating the criminal but tolerating organized crime means that some industries and activities are accepted as criminal enterprises, while the police then rely on the criminal gangs to keep unacceptable criminal behavior under control. Ironically, the rules and restrictions of criminality are far stricter than those of wider society, often being highly traditional and representative of the more tyrannical social structures of Asian history.

This semi-official status afforded to organized criminality has afforded Asia one great bonus; it has made CEGA infiltration substantially harder. Every attempt to use the underworld to smuggle agents into Asia or generally cause problems has been an abject failure, though the JSI doesn't realize that many of these operations have been compromised. The criminals are milking CEGA for every coin while various Asian intelligence agencies are feeding CEGA all the misinformation they can get away with. In the true Asian way, through compromise everyone benefits.



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0039



► TECHNOLOGY

Only Asia has kept pace with the technological advancements achieved by CEGA since it allied with the Orbitals, and even then it has had to continually play catch-up and deal with a highly uneven level of development across the region. Yet despite the threats and obvious focus on military technology by CEGA, Asia retains a more balanced approach to research and development. This is not altruism, however; Asia lives in fear that CEGA will cause another Fall and works to develop the technologies that will allow it to survive or prevent another such catastrophe entirely.

▼ GOVERNMENT FUNDED RESEARCH

Asian governments take a very interventionist approach to research and development, funding numerous think tanks, research institutes and university programs. Almost without exception, this government-sponsored research is either military or environmental. The latter is not narrowly focused on the biological sciences however, because clean power, water and air filtration and other such technologies are also held to be environmental in Asia. Asians support development and much of their research is looking for ways to allow the Earth to recover while allowing humankind to rebuild and develop at the same time.

The biggest R&D spenders in Asia are quite clearly the Takeda Corporation and the Chinese Federation, with Australia and Siberia just a step behind. In certain competitive fields, achievements over and above those of their neighbors are a source of great national pride. Science is a highly respected profession and achieving a position of authority in a government-sponsored research organization, above the petty profit orientation of private industry, is seen as the high point of a scientist's life. This means that the government tends to recruit better staff and therefore produce better results sooner, reinforcing its reputation and making recruitment even more difficult for private industry.

▼ CORPORATE FUNDED RESEARCH

Despite the heavy presence of governments in R&D in Asia, private citizens and corporations still make an important contribution, not in the least because they have a much wider focus than government-sponsored researchers. With profits firmly in their sights, corporate researchers have been responsible for many advances that have improved the living conditions of the average citizen. Developments such as hardy scented plants that will survive inside an arcology, improved vat-grown seafood, more comfortable public transport systems and self-maintaining agricultural machinery have all had positive effects on daily life, but would never have been given government funding.

Despite their relatively limited participation in military research, many large Asian corporations persist with some efforts in this regard. At one level this is because of the big profits that military contracts bring, but at another it is also motivated by national pride and a corporate desire to be doing their part to help defend their community. This non-monetary focus has stymied a number of attempts by Venus to use Asian corporations as an intelligence source about Asian military preparedness. Espionage and research aimed at reverse-engineering CEGA and Orbital technology are very popular with Asian corporations.

★ THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

One of our tourists within the ANZAC Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (ASIRO) reported a strange disease outbreak in eastern Australia. On investigation, a serious outbreak of Black Point in the wheat farming districts of the Darling Downs was discovered. A sample was collected for lab analysis following estimates that this new strain was some ten times more virulent than Black Point variants previously recorded. Lab analysis indicated that the causal fungus showed definite signs of genetic engineering. A full investigation and assault team was dispatched eighteen hours later.

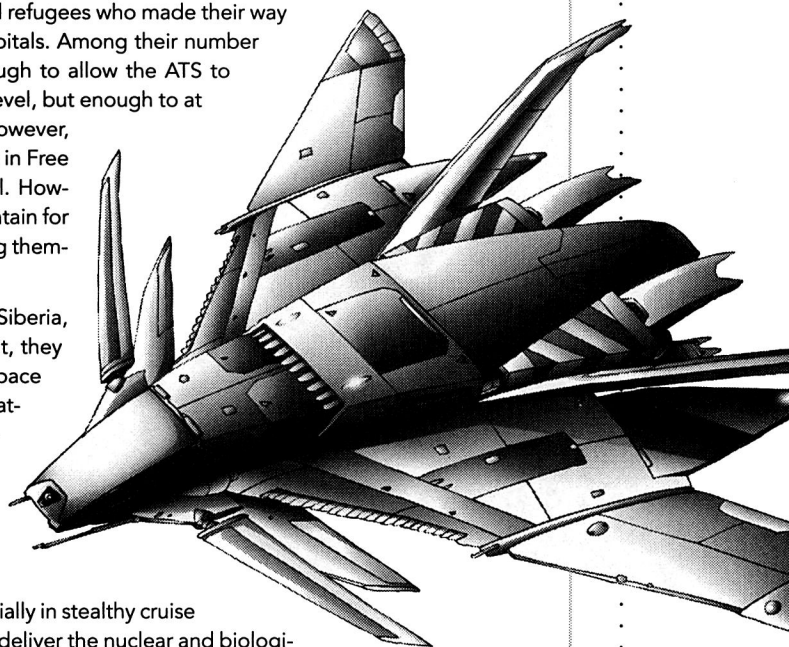
When confronted by the prospect of a full Bureau investigation, ANZAC authorities admitted that the variant had been accidentally released from one of their own research facilities. The lab was immediately raided, but they had obviously been busily preparing for a visit. While ANZAC officials claim the new Black Point fungus was developed as part of countermeasure research, counter-analysis deems this to be doubtful. Given the virulence, the strain is much more likely to have been developed as bio-weapon, but unfortunately, this cannot be conclusively proven at this time. Under the discretionary rules relating to Edicts enforcement, the Toowomba facility has been shut down, and all staff remain under observation.

Source: excerpt from text report, Edicts Enforcement Bureau, Investigation GTS1105, Centerpoint Archives.

AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY ▼

Allying with the Orbitals gave CEGA an immense lead in the highly important field of aerospace technology, and Asian states spend vast sums annually, trying to catch up. Only the Chinese Federation and Takeda Corporation have managed this, extending their reach in orbit to face off with CEGA above the planet. Both nations benefit from the presence of a few thousand refugees who made their way to Free Earth in the years following CEGA's alliance with the Orbitals. Among their number were a number of highly trained engineers and scientists, enough to allow the ATS to jump several generations of development; not as far as CEGA's level, but enough to at least remain competitive. Unbeknownst to the Solar System, however, Judea-Samaria is actually the most aeronautically advanced state in Free Earth, having maintained orbital flight capacity through the Fall. However, apart from the squadrons of stealthy delta fighters they maintain for defense, the Judeans and Samaritans aren't interested in involving themselves outside their own borders.

The rest of Asia, especially the ANZAC and to a lesser extent Siberia, have struggled to do more than simply achieve orbit. As a result, they have not bothered with orbital stations or even fully functional space craft, making do instead with battle satellites, manned weapons platforms, delta fighters, and ground- and atmosphere-based anti-orbital weapons. The military focus on aeronautical technology is quite telling in Asia. CEGA has militarized Earth orbit and Asian nations are trying to find ways to protect themselves; they do not have the luxury of R&D for its own sake, as they do in some areas. The desire for a fallback has led Asia to maintain near parity in atmospheric missile systems, especially in stealthy cruise missile technology, as it is this type of weapons platform that will deliver the nuclear and biological weapons Asia would use to respond to any orbital bombardment.



3.9.3

BIOTECHNOLOGY ▼

Constant effort and hefty budgets have ensured that Asia maintains a strong lead over CEGA and the Solar nations in most areas of the biological sciences. While ecological engineering has certainly formed the greater part of this emphasis, other areas have also benefited greatly from spin-off research, including biochemistry, biophysics, genetics, virology and biological engineering. From new chemical-absorbent bacteria and radiation-tolerant plants to living machines that filter heavy metals out of water and medical cloning technology capable of saving the people with catastrophic biological or radiation sickness, Asian biotechnology stands on the cutting edge of human knowledge and ingenuity.

For some, it is too close to this cutting edge; the Edicts Enforcement Bureau keeps a close eye on developments in the region's major states, and CEGA constantly complains that many genetic and bioengineering advances made by Asia in the last decade are outside the spirit if not the exact letter of the Edicts. The ATS and ANZAC representatives in the Free Earth delegation to the USN defend their research and development while limiting their cooperation with the EEB as far as they can get away with. This reluctance is based on both the fact that every Asian nation with a credible technological base is breaching the Edicts with regard to bioweapons research and because they do not trust the EEB, SolaPol or the USN, regarding them all as lackeys of the Solar colonies and therefore as untrustworthy as CEGA, though less of an immediate threat. The constant attempts by CEGA and Venusian agents to steal biotechnology just reinforce this paranoia.

Both CEGA and Venus have a lot to gain from Asian biotechnology, faced as they are by their own eco-restoration and terraforming challenges. Asian bacteriology is of particular interest because of the number of transformer bacteria that have been developed in ATS and ANZAC labs over the last decade. From aerial strains that break down carbon dioxide or ozone, to a whole family of bacteria that bind heavy metals and other toxic chemicals at the molecular level and transform them into a soupy sludge that can be easily removed from the environment, these bacteria offer huge leaps on what CEGA or Venus can presently achieve. Biotechnology espionage has its risks, however, and in at least one instance a virulent bacterium that ate human flesh was deliberately allowed to fall into Venusian hands. None of the agents or researchers survived the deception and their ship very likely still drifts somewhere out beyond Lunar orbit.

3.9.4

end of section 3.9 technology



“...each thing is of like form from everlasting and comes round again in its cycle, and that it signifies not whether a man shall look upon the same things for a hundred years or two hundred, or for an infinity of time...”

— Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*. ii. 14.

THE AFRICAN NATIONS ◀

The great contrasts of post-Fall Earth are nowhere more evident than in Africa. Here, modern technological society is clearly juxtaposed with primitive traditionalism and people make very definite choices as to which model of existence best suits them. For many Africans, the concept of modern society retains a stigma related to the destruction of the Earth's ecology. Even for those who have chosen modern over traditional life, a desire to remain close to their land and to the traditional ways of their people remains strong. This inner strength and commitment shows through in the forward momentum the continent has developed. Whether in science, eco-restoration, industry or sport, Africans compete not only to succeed, but also to overcome the problems of the past. In Africa, the unity of humanity is as important as the renewal of the planet, but for Africans it must be a unity forged of equality and recognition of the richness and validity of diversity, the two values that so define Africa in the twenty-third century. In this regard, the Azanian Compact is a living example of African idealism, but so too are the Ethiopian Empire and Free Tribes Zone, all multi-racial, multi-religious and peaceful societies based on unity and cooperation.

Africa is not without its problems. In some places, traditionalism has led to tribalism and conflict, while in others, primitivism is merely a new label for poverty and backwardness. There is no doubt that generally Africa has been left behind technologically since the end of the Unification Wars, lacking the human resources available to Asia or the influx of Orbital technology that boosted CEGA. Yet modern Africa has persevered and managed despite its technological deficit; the absence of direct military confrontation with CEGA has helped, allowing more resources to be devoted to civilian purposes than elsewhere in Free Earth.



RACE, TRIBE AND IDENTITY ★

If nothing else, the Fall solved the tribal problems so problematic for Africa throughout much of the twentieth century. When the Fall began, tribal divisions reappeared overnight. The extermination of many tribal groups during the ethnic and religious wars that followed bloodily solved many problems, and intermixing for survival and reconstruction ended those tensions that remained. By the twenty-third century, very few people could claim ancestry from a particular tribal group without significant links to at least one or two other tribes. Yet just as it would be expected for the social bonds of tribal culture to be weakening, the opposite has happened in a new and dynamic way. As the general level of education improved, increasing numbers of people started building their own multi-tribal identities by drawing on their various ethnic and tribal ancestors for inspiration, regardless of previous antagonisms. These new bonds provided the strength and the unity that has allowed Africa to hold together through the Unification Wars, and they continue to play a dynamic and positive social role.

Some ethnic groups managed to maintain their racial and cultural identity, or "purity," as they would have it, through tenacity and ferocity. The Swahilis, Afrikaners and Zulus are the largest and most significant examples of this phenomenon, and they exhibit most of the negative attitudes such groups tend to develop. Racism is the worst habit, their pride in their survival and identity taken one step further to despise those whose ancestors were not so lucky or well prepared. Refusal to allow intermarriage outside their respective tribes simply perpetuates the differences and modernization is only just beginning to break these barriers down.

These tribes did far better during the Fall because of their unity and organization, which also means they have powerful positions within the new African states. Abuses of their power have taken place; though within the Azanian Compact, democratic pressure has led to reforms, this has not happened in the Swahili Confederacy. The latter remains a strictly segregated state, with wealth and political power reserved solely for one tribe and with serious human rights abuses a fact of life for the other tribes living within the Confederacy.

4.1.1

▼ POLITICO-ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

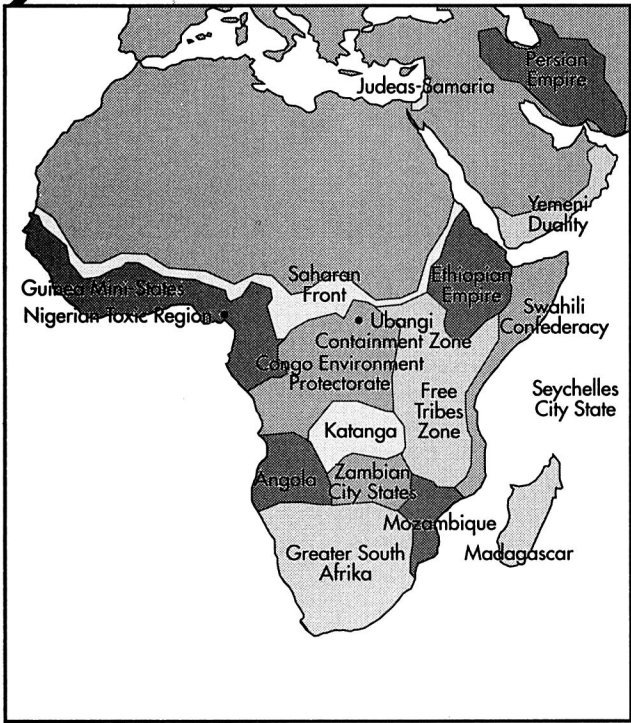
Africa has been peaceful for so long that the sudden tensions between the Azanian Compact and Swahili Confederacy have been a surprise to most observers. The tension goes against the trend in Africa since the Unification Wars, which has up to now been for slow, steady development marked by consensus and negotiation. While the rest of Earth fought wars of conquest and consolidation during the Long Winter, no one in Africa, even the Swahilis, used force of arms to get their way. Even the revolts that led to the Free Tribal Zone did not lead to war. As soon as the fighting erupted, negotiations were started and a peaceful solution was found.

After years of fruitless threats, CEGA has realized that negotiation is the only path (short of all-out war) for political dialogue and change in Africa, and they have increased the size of their African diplomatic corps tenfold in the last two years. This change was mainly due to the influence of the Unificationist faction on the CEGA Council. While this new approach has worked with the Swahilis, it may actually precipitate the war the Unificationists seek to avoid by upsetting Africa's strategic balance and tradition of consensual change.

Despite the excellent economic performance of the Azanian Compact, Africa as a whole has performed well below any region in Free Earth except South America. The reason is that those states with a global- and trade-oriented culture joined the Compact, while those nations with an inward-looking or local focus remained independent. Thus there is a growing divide between the Compact and the rest of Africa in terms of living standards and quality of life. Only the trade-oriented Swahili Confederacy has achieved performances similar to the Compact, but its corrupt government has wasted most of the gains.

▼ ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

Dependence on resource extraction industries to fund their development meant that most African nations were badly affected by pollution and ecological degradation early on in the twenty-first century. Modern attempts to blame these problems on European and American corporations ignore the reality of local complicity, and are merely a reflection of anti-CEGA bias. In the decades since the Unification Wars, the South African fixation with eco-restoration has spread to the rest of the continent and only in the worst-affected regions are personal protective measures still required; by the next decade Africa is likely to have solved or contained all outstanding pollution problems.



end of section 4.1

AZANIAN COMPACT ◀

Though born as prelude to war with the USE, the Compact avoided direct fighting along its borders and has maintained a strong focus on the other aspects of political cooperation, especially those related to economics, cultural exchange and science. The Compact is noted for its vision and drive, attributes notably lacking in the ATS and ANZAC. This strength of purpose derives from the fact that the Compact is dominated by Greater South Africa, which gives it a single, unified focus. This strong central direction is balanced by careful South African diplomacy, which has succeeded in building a harmonious series of relationships that allows the Compact to act with a unity of purpose while still accommodating the range of member views. The sense of community among members is such that for all intents and purposes, the Compact is becoming a single nation with a federal government and subsidiary state governments.

POLITICAL AIMS ▼

Like the rest of the Free Earth, the Azanian Compact and its member nations are reassessing their strategic position in the face of CEGA's internal and external woes. The main difference is that the Azanians seem relatively unconcerned about possible CEGA military action, a benefit of their geographic separation from CEGA. The only strategic issue concerning the Compact directly is the likelihood that the Swahili Confederacy will seek to join CEGA. Before this happens, the Compact will likely find a convenient excuse for military action, though the Swahilis have lost some of their enthusiasm since CEGA's aura of invincibility was so graphically destroyed at Elysee and Mars. Never keen on military action, the Compact is using the Confederacy's new indecision to join with the ATS to persuade the Swahilis that alliance with CEGA would lead to economic sanctions and then military action that would destroy the Confederacy.

The Azanians are planning to take advantage of CEGA's present weakness in other ways as well, but ones that do not require military confrontation. Since the Unification Wars, the Azanians learned that CEGA's paranoid focus on military threats makes it vulnerable to diplomatic initiatives that dramatically redraw the strategic situation. So while CEGA is weak, the Compact intends to change its position vis-à-vis the Solar nations and seriously weaken the Administration's strategic position. To this end, the Azanians are planning a major economic initiative to integrate themselves in Solar trade through a trade treaty with Mercury and thus open up their economy to the entire Solar System long before they have the capacity for high-volume off-planet trade themselves.

Already, Mercurian Merchant Guild representatives have been meeting with the Compact's Ministers' Committee to move towards enacting a free trade agreement that would give the Guild control of all trade between the Compact and the Solar nations. If the Azanians can establish themselves in the Solar economy before CEGA recovers, it will make any war with them a Solar issue, as well as officially debunking the idea that the Administration controls all of Earth. As a result, any CEGA move against Southern Africa or the Compact's orbital stations will have a much higher political price, one CEGA may not be prepared to pay.

The Azanians are also making diplomatic moves in South America, trying to counter West Indian initiatives to recruit the poor nations of that continent into CEGA. The Compact is trying to offer an alternative to CEGA for those nations scared by the Argentine Empire, but short of providing the sort of direct military assistance they have always detested for ideological reasons, the best the Azanians can do is hold up CEGA for a few years. However, they are exploring the possibility of instigating a war between themselves and the Argentines.

If the Compact can get the Argentine Emperor to invade Azanian territory in the Antarctic, then they can crush him without political problems at home or any risk that CEGA will try to intervene. While this seems highly convoluted, it is the nature of the Azanian political system to resist unethical actions (such as invading a state that does not threaten them) to achieve a wider political goal. Making themselves appear an easy target to trick a potential aggressor into a military confrontation, on the other hand, offers no such ethical dilemmas. Despite the ideological contortions, however, removing the Argentine Emperor would drastically restructure the strategic environment in South America, removing the threat that is currently driving a number of states toward CEGA membership. That this would also improve the Compact's diplomatic position regarding free trade pacts with these same states would be an added benefit, for the Azanians are not averse to further expanding their alliance, even to non-African nations.



▼ TRADE & DEVELOPMENT

The Azanian economy is of remarkable importance to the Earth. While not as large as that of the ATS, it is the engine that drives much of the Free Earth's economic growth. The importance of the Compact in Free Earth trade has been established since the Long Winter when South African traders helped recreate trade and industry over half the planet. Furthermore, even though they will not trade directly with CEGA, the Compact trades extensively with intermediaries in the Free City of Marajo and behind the scenes has strong economic ties to the West Indies, Maritime League and Kingdom of France. These planetary links and growing orbital trade mesh with the Compact's importance as the Free Earth's premiere financial center, creating a situation where twenty percent of all the planet's trade in one form or other passes through Azanian hands.

This performance and influence is based on the dynamic free-market economies of the Compact's members. Even the poorer states like Madagascar run surplus budgets, while a general restraint from excessive military spending and close attention to the economic benefits of eco-restoration and immigration have given the Compact an economy that is unmatched on Earth for its robust stability and wealth generation. This means that the Compact generates a great deal of excess capital that it uses for purchasing luxury imports, overseas investment and development aid. The dominance of the Azanian financial system among non-aligned states is based on their substantial monetary reserves and purchasing power. Even the CEGA stock market in New Ghent pays careful attention to the fluctuations of the Compact's currency, the Greater Rand.

The future for this most important of economies is bright. The success of free trade means that the Compact is operating without the political problems afflicting the ATS and increasingly cheap access to orbit is opening up entirely new markets for potential exploitation. The only serious problem is the refusal of CEGA to trade directly with Free Earth except in arrangements overwhelmingly favorable to itself. While Marajo allows significant trade to exist, there is always the risk that the Imperialist faction on the CEGA Council will succeed in its repeated attempts to put a stop to this back-door trade route. The Azanians are not unprepared for such a contingency; the number of smugglers who base themselves in the Compact grows every year. Especially now, the Azanians have proved willing to deal with the Solar nations where trade is concerned, and the Compact has direct access to orbit. While this access is still highly expensive because of the Compact's technological limitations, it is only a matter of time before espionage, Mercurian aid, or simple hard work in R&D overcomes these limitations and gives Azanian trade yet another boost.

★ BLOODY EXPECTATIONS

I don't know how you can live in that miserable orbital station. No matter how big it is, it is still just a tube floating in the sky. Down here on the Earth you can smell the life — with every breath you draw you taste the richness of the land. Perhaps that is overly poetic, but much of the planet has lost its poetry and I doubt it will regain it without a further purification in blood. I can't disagree with the assessments you've forwarded me, my friend. The war between CEGA and Jupiter can only worsen, but I can add that when that day comes there will be war on Earth as well. Just because the Compact doesn't actively seek a war doesn't mean we don't expect one. CEGA makes the same mistake. They ignore us, taking us for greedy fools concerned only with money. They could not be more wrong.

Much of the development we're praised for is directed at that the day CEGA tries to finish what it started. It is not our way to go headlong into war. We understand that war will come to us if it is destined. We build new houses and farms, store food and weapons, train our youths and prepare for the day when we will face CEGA on a field of battle once more. Sorry to disappoint you, Janus, but the Compact will not join CEGA, even under Ignatius Chang. We do appreciate the need for planetary unity. You may forget that we have long worked toward it, ever since the days of Mandela, long before the Fall. CEGA is too corrupt for such a sacred mission. It pollutes everything it touches and its member states, even those like the West Indies, who were once good people, are becoming corrupt like it. They see solutions in violence, wealth in conquest and superiority in their willingness to kill.

The Compact will go on, following the ways of our ancestors, returning our land to health, building and trading, living our lives and preparing for war. Don't get me wrong. I hope CEGA will become a force for good, but look me in the eye and say that you see that happening. The Compact is about rebirth, about rebuilding what has been lost in a way that prevents another Fall; but birth involves blood and pain. My people have come to see CEGA as a final challenge, a last hurdle thrown into our path by our ancestors. If we overcome them, then we will be ready to move beyond the mistakes of history. We will have purified the planet of the crimes of all the centuries gone by. We will be able to live again.

Source: audio transcript, personal recorder, Ntshingwayo Khoza, BOSS Commander, Janus O'Grady, SolaPol Director, Okavango Delta National Park, December 2211.

GREATER SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC ▼

E-2-4

Vision and perseverance have brought post-Fall South Africa to a position of greatness that justifies its new name. Before CEGA's alliance with the Orbitals, no single nation stood higher and no other nation has put so much effort into helping humanity as a whole. Not everything is perfect in Greater South Africa, but even though there are still pockets of poverty and pollution, they are insignificant compared to the chaos that was left by the Fall and no worse than what existed before it. Great sacrifices made this possible, sacrifices that South Africans believe have blessed their land.

Foreseeing the inevitable result of the Resource Wars, the pre-Fall South African government created a series of repositories toward the day that civilization would have to be rebuilt. In deep mines, thousands of tons of supplies, including weapons, computers, technical manuals and machine tools, were carefully stored and the mines then sealed. In the hill country of Natal and the Cape, a number of heavily fortified communities were specifically constructed and populated with trained soldiers, engineers and scientists. All this was done against the day when South Africa would be occupied by the superpowers, its central government eliminated and its people subjugated. All over South Africa there are historical monuments to these heroes who maintained civilization and became part of South Africa's grand tradition of resisting oppressors.

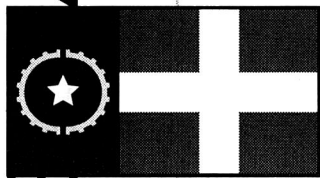
Every young South African has this history religiously drilled into them and democratic elections are taken very seriously because of these beliefs. Voting is compulsory and the fines for failing to vote are hefty. There are a multitude of small parties, a reflection of the provincial structure of the nation, where each province also has a parliament and prime minister; though the Federal parliament and president can overrule any province, they rarely do so because the divisions are minor compared to the shared beliefs that pull the nation together. Even a military victory by CEGA would not be able to crush the spirit of this nation. Service in the citizen Kommandos, which is voluntary, is highly popular; almost eighty percent of the eligible population is armed and trained, ready to take to the hills for a guerilla war in event of any invasion. Neither wealth nor ease have dimmed this nationalist enthusiasm; if anything, success, especially in eco-restoration, has increased the popular will to fight for the nation.

Long a mineral exporting and heavy industrial nation, South Africa has its share of environmental problems, but has made significant headway at alleviating them. What is more, it has also worked extensively with other African nations and the USN in the Congo to clean up problems beyond its own borders. Naturally, this has helped prevent any problems overflowing into South Africa and establish sustainable ecosystem over a wider area than anywhere else on Earth. The Republic has also sunk large sums into developing mining and industrial systems that are ecologically sustainable. This has allowed them to remain as highly productive as other industrial states, like the Maritime League, while also achieving environmental gains.

This balanced approach has hurt South African technological development. Despite coming out of the Fall with a strong knowledge base, they have not maintained their position of superiority, preferring to build a strong and self-sustaining industrial, economic and environmental base. As a result of this decision, the Republic has developed enormously in terms of trade and development, which means the South Africans have the wealth to buy technology from the ATS, if necessary. Even though this has left South Africa behind militarily, the position of wealth and influence it has created for itself makes the Republic a politically more difficult target for CEGA to attack, while at the same time providing the resources to allow South Africa to fight a long war, one beyond the endurance of CEGA, at least while CEGA also faces opposition from the Solar nations.

Few nations on Earth are as adept at such diplomatic and political maneuvering as the South Africans. They have more friends and fewer enemies than any other major nation. The Compact is the only major alliance not wracked by internal dissension, and is so widely popular in member states that no amount of political chicanery by CEGA will undermine it. During the Long Winter, for instance, South Africa decided not to absorb their neighbors. No occupation meant no resistance, and the assistance to rebuild civilization in these regions probably cost less than a military invasion. Instead of resentment and resistance, there was cooperation and appreciation. Instead of restive provinces, there were valued allies. The move to have the Congo set aside as an environmental protectorate during the Jerusalem Accords was another moment of South African diplomatic genius, for it stalemated CEGA indefinitely in central Africa and was the pretext for the Amazonian Environmental Protectorate as well, which likewise stalemated CEGA in South America.

▼ POPULAR NATIONAL REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA



One of the first African nations to overcome the legacy of ethnic and political conflict left by the First Age of Colonialism, Angola became an industrial center during the twenty-first century. Extensive petrochemical resources built a substantial chemical and plastics industry, later supplemented by other refining industries and heavy industry relocating from the more environmentally restrictive South Africa. While the economic results were excellent, the cost was high and pollution turned those regions of lowland Angola not engulfed by the encroaching Namib Desert into little more than a series of chemical swamps during the Fall.

Not until South African intervention in 2129 did any organization above the village level return to the region. Despite extensive eco-restoration, much of this nation is safe only due to ongoing environmental engineering work. All manner of tools, from chemical-eating bacteria sown in the soil to organic filtration systems built into rivers, are deployed; still, heavy rainfalls bring glittering pools of chemicals to the surface. Generations of chemical pollution also have had a disastrous effect on the Angolan people, and mutation rates are high. Azanian Compact assistance is all that holds this nation together, though significant profits are now being made from refining the toxic chemicals into saleable products.

Angola is also the one place in the Compact where its function as a military alliance is obvious. Not much is heard or seen of the military anywhere in southern Africa; the media and politicians tend to concentrate on scientific and economic achievements rather than military prowess. Northern Angola, however, is the closest thing to a front line the Compact possesses; it was from here that they launched their assault on the USE and NAA forces in the Congo and it is from here that they still keep a careful eye on the chaotic and violent Guinea Mini-States and look out for potential CEGA infiltration of the Congo. There are soldiers and military equipment everywhere, and security measures are strict and highly visible. The Compact is so security-conscious because from Angola's northern borders, Compact forces launch expeditionary forces from border forts, like M'banza and Feshi, into the Congo Environmental Protectorate. Adroit diplomacy has created an understanding with the USN Guards, ensuring they don't report these large-scale violations of the Jerusalem Accords; this allows Compact forces to carry out close reconnaissance of the Mini-States and CEGA's African FDA in exchange for detailed reports to the USN.

▼ PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANTARCTICA



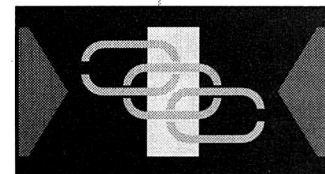
A deal between Greater South Africa and Australia-New Zealand in 2125 split Antarctica between them, with forty percent of the defiled continent coming under South African control. The development of extensive mining, sea farming and eco-restoration projects created a burgeoning population and by popular demand, Antarctica was granted member status of the Compact in 2184. While the People's Republic is the Compact's least populous state, it is also among the richest, the mineral resources it possesses making it a key player in the Azanian economy. Considering the great ecological damage done to Antarctica, the Compact did try to have the status of the continent changed in 2183. It was proposed to the ANZAC that Antarctica should be declared a demilitarized Environmental Protectorate and under the oversight of the USN. The ANZAC refused the proposal outright and it was also opposed by CEGA, who apparently feared the move was another Azanian diplomatic coup in the making. So Antarctica remains militarized and eco-restoration takes second place to the needs of the Earth's bitter cold war.

Relations with United Antarctica are good. Sporting matches between the two sides, mostly ice hockey and cross-country skiing, are common, and when disasters like earthquakes and mine accidents happen, each nation rushes to the other's aid. While the Azanians and ANZAC have friendly relations, the Antarctic states take it one step further. On both sides there is a small but growing movement for unification, the new Antarctic nation to be separate from but allied with both the ANZAC and Compact. It is likely this movement will become increasingly influential, as both nations share so much in common, including the same arrogant belief in their own superiority. While the ANZAC would be reluctant to lose an important member, the Compact would welcome the new nation with open arms whether it joined the Compact or not.

Almost completely isolated from the military threat of CEGA, even more so than the rest of the Compact, the People's Republic has the luxury of deciding its own future almost completely free from external threats. The one small problem is the claim by the Argentine Emperor to a significant slice of Antarctic territory. As the Compact is deliberately doing nothing, thus encouraging Argentina to try its hand at aggression, it is likely that war will break out as soon as the Argentines recover from their failed war with the Incan City-States. This is a war that the Compact will win easily, but being used as bait may not appeal to the citizens of the People's Republic when they discover the ploy underway.

UNITED PROVINCES OF KATANGA ▼

When the Azanians pushed for the creation of the Congo Environmental Protectorate, they kept the southern region around the Mitumba Mountains. During the twenty-first century, this region, known as Katanga, was the industrial heart of modernized Africa. Pollution had ruined much of the arable land and only a few small tribes lived in the area, but South African sponsorship saw large numbers of migrants flocking to the region, working in the massive eco-restoration projects set up by the Compact or in salvage or mining operations. The new migrants overwhelmed the backward locals, and bitterness led to a brief outbreak of fighting in 2190, which was quickly crushed by Compact troops. Despite efforts to win over the locals by bettering their standard of living, a sporadic guerilla movement continues to this day. While they have limited popular support, there is no doubt that native Katanganese remain disadvantaged. Where the guerillas are getting their military support from is a mystery to the Compact and Katanganese officials. Accusations against CEGA have never been substantiated, and the violence did not prevent Katanga from achieving independence and Compact membership in 2200, with special laws to protect the rights and culture of the original inhabitants.

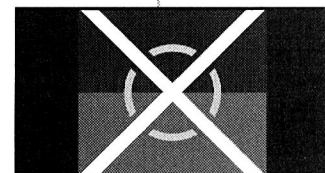


The Katanganese Peoples Liberation Army (KPLA) are not supported by CEGA; the KPLA sensibly realizes that CEGA is no more likely to grant Katanga true independence than the Compact. That the KPLA has almost no popular support among the wider Katanganese community has not stopped them from carrying out terror attacks and sabotage operations indiscriminately throughout the Provinces. If it were not for the primitive tribes in the back valleys of the Mitumba Mountains, it is unlikely the KPLA could have sustained its numbers over the years, though it has at least become self-funding since it lost its popular support.

The KPLA runs secret diamond mines in the Congo Basin, which, despite their age, still provide a small but lucrative stream of gems. The KPLA also does a roaring business in the illegal trade in rare species. By selling gems, plants and animals in the Mini-States, the KPLA generates enough money to buy large quantities of weapons, including the advanced Orbital models that cause such difficulties for Compact soldiers. So far, the KPLA have managed to keep their operation secret from both the USN Guards and the Compact's deep reconnaissance expeditions, but their recent violent rejection of advances by Joint Service Intelligence may actually lead to bloody reprisals by CEGA agents in the Mini-States.

MADAGASCAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC ▼

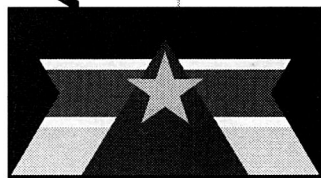
This barren island is an oddity in that it was ecologically ruined for many decades before the Fall. Over-farming and deforestation had left Madagascar an economic ruin by the late twentieth century, and only development as a tourist destination saved it from becoming a failed state; the Fall quickly overwhelmed what remained. Those Madagascans who survived the famines returned to fishing and subsistence farming until, in 2127, they encountered the Swahili Confederacy. Trade followed, and while there is no evidence to back their claims, the Madagascans believe that Swahili merchants were soon kidnapping and selling locals into slavery in India and South America. The Madagascans appealed to Greater South Africa for aid, resulting in the deployment of naval patrols in 2138. This was the beginning of a long and friendly relationship, and though Madagascar had little to offer, Greater South Africa was generous with aid. Eventually, sea farming and mining facilities were jointly established, and when the Azanian Compact was formed, Madagascar was the first nation to sign. Though still relatively poor, living standards have improved so dramatically within living memory that the locals are fanatically loyal to the Compact.



Bucolic is an excellent description of modern Madagascar. Foreigners quickly discover that absolutely nothing happens on Madagascar proper; every major industry is maritime-based and the locals not living in the numerous floating and underwater arcologies are content to retain a village-based society. Even security is negligible; the JSI found that its agents were able to penetrate the Prime Minister's office, the Defense Force headquarters and the main police computer without any trouble at all. Rather than accepting that the Compact and not the local government runs everything important, CEGA has launched a major operation in Madagascar to penetrate whatever the Compact is hiding.

CEGA's concerns are justified in the case of only one facility on the entire island, though it was the Swahili Confederacy that alerted them to it. At the highest point on Madagascar, Maromokotro Mountain, the Compact has built an enormous research and development facility that stretches deep underground. Supposedly a weather research station, the Maromokotro facility is actually researching high energy physics, looking to develop an energy weapon that will allow the Compact to assault the Orbital stations with impunity. The research violates the Edicts, and if discovered, the Compact would be highly embarrassed and find itself under much greater scrutiny by CEGA as a military threat.

▼ MOZAMBIQUE COMMONWEALTH

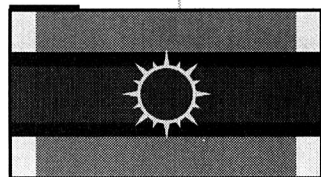


A land of river plains and coastal swamps, Mozambique survived the Fall in relatively good order, climatic change bringing ferocious storms and flooding, but also increased harvests. Long within South Africa's sphere of influence, Mozambique had not seriously industrialized during the twenty-first century, remaining an agricultural and labor provider to the bigger nation's burgeoning industries. Bypassed by the worst effects of the Fall, even pollution was only a problem in the rivers flowing down from the Katangan and Zambian industrial centers. Mozambique sank into a genteel disrepair as people fled from the cities to rural areas and returned to the agricultural ways of their forefathers. The polluted river valleys were abandoned, and for the most part, Mozambiquen life was uncomplicated and peaceful.

Raiders and refugees from the disintegrating nations to the north and west occupied much of northern Mozambique, but the great coastal plains and their many swamps remained untouched. The rebirth of South Africa and emergence of the Swahili Confederacy brought trade and economic life back to Mozambique, while disputes with the Swahilis caused a rapid consolidation of the Mozambique village communities into a proto-nation by the late 2130s. South Africa soon stepped in to negotiate a compromise, and Mozambique returned to its former state as an ally and supplier nation to its large neighbor. In return, South Africa invested heavily in sea farms and in updating the Mozambique fishing fleet. Since joining the Compact, Mozambique has also become the center of the alliance's naval forces and merchant marine, with the relaxed and fun-loving Mozambiquens continuing with their ancestors' close relationship with the sea.

The Commonwealth's relaxed state of mind has been severely disrupted by the Swahilis' negotiations with CEGA. Both nations still harbor grudges from the territorial disputes during the Long Winter and relations have always been cool. More importantly for the Compact, Mozambique is only a loose nation at best; most people are still more loyal to their local village than to some remote president. Their armed forces are more provincial defense units than a modern military force. In event of a serious military confrontation, the Swahilis would roll over Mozambique's forces in a matter of days. Just in case, South African combat units are being moved into northern Mozambiquen bases, and negotiations are underway to integrate the entire Commonwealth military structure into the South African armed forces, as was done during the Unification Wars.

▼ ZAMBIAN CITY STATE ALLIANCE



Great natural riches helped Zambia heavily industrialize during the twenty-first century and the population flourished, becoming one of Africa's great success stories. However, too many environmental corners were cut on the way. A massive drought hit the region in 2061, the first sign of the Fall, and Zambia soon exhausted its non-polluted water supplies. In 2163, it invaded Malawi to acquire Lake Nyasa, and the war quickly spread throughout central Africa. The fighting was stopped by the intervention of the Earth Patrol Force in 2065, after which the superpowers took over Zambia's natural resources. They stayed until they exhausted the resources and then abandoned the region, leaving ninety percent of the population to die from famine, thirst, or disease.

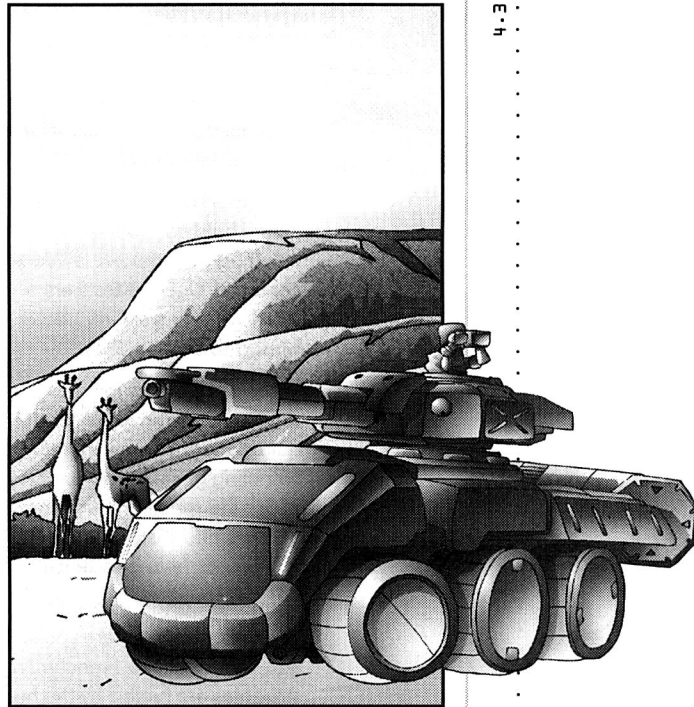
Zambia remained a wasteland until Greater South Africa re-explored the region in the 2130s. At the time, South Africa was dealing with an influx of northern refugees seeking a better life and in 2142, it decided to resettle Zambia. Life in the new state was difficult, but significant development aid and hard work built a viable and self-sustaining nation. Eco-restoration, advanced mineral extraction techniques and a reborn industrial sector have made Zambia increasingly wealthy and second only to South Africa in terms of size and influence within the Compact. The Alliance, like Angola, is arcology-based and is still the main destination for refugees entering the Compact in search of a better life. Despite the problems this constant influx of poor and backward people creates, Zambians remain tolerant, aware of their history as a nation of migrants.

Zambia has been at the forefront of the Compact's move into orbit. The pending completion of three new skyhooks gives them the opportunity to further diversify their export markets, and Zambian diplomats are leading negotiations with the Mercurian Merchant Guild. While their industrial production is not yet to the same standard as South Africa's, Zambia has strong economic advantages in a number of niche markets with strong Solar prospects. In the aerospace components, electrical wiring and heat shielding industries they look to have good prospects at securing a reasonable share of the Solar market for these goods. The other reason for Zambia taking the lead in the Compact's Solar trade endeavors is that the Zambian population, being multicultural and migrant-based, has exhibited less resistance to dealing with the Solar nations than any other state in the Compact.

INDEPENDENT STATES ◀

Central Africa remains un-unified because the Jerusalem Accords left the region in limbo; the Berber Kingdom of Cordoba was driven from its dominant position in the west, the Congo was reduced to a protectorate in the center, and the eastern nations lost the immediate threat that drove them out of their ethnic and religious isolation. The result has been chaos in West Africa that denies any faction a chance of controlling the region, while in East Africa CEGA has slowly made headway through adroit diplomacy, making many promises about respecting local cultures and power structures. Finally, in Central Africa, the USN has taken responsibility for the near-empty lands there, the hardened mercenaries of the USN Guards forming a thin line between a rampant CEGA and patient Compact.

Barring conflict over the Swahili Confederacy's possible CEGA membership, Africa is likely to remain peaceful for many decades because so far every faction feels that diplomacy is getting it closer to achieving its chosen agenda. As a result, no nation has been backed into a political corner, and military preparedness is at relatively low levels. Numerous diplomats move through the diverse power centers of independent Africa, seeking to shift the balance toward the goals of their nation and the entire region has become a haven for spies and traitors, each seeking to make their fortunes from the chaos and ambition that stimulates Central Africa's instability.

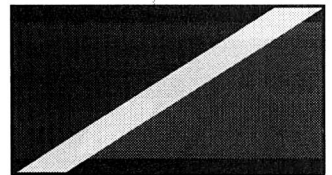


CONGO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTORATE ▼

In the aftermath of the Unification Wars, the Azanians persuaded the other delegates attending the peace talks in Jerusalem that the ecological importance of the Congo Basin should be placed above petty national politics. Therefore, the Congo was declared a neutral Environmental Protectorate and an international committee was established to oversee its eco-restoration. Later, the committee's powers were handed to the USN by popular demand. Work on restoring the Congo has been slow, but has been helped by investment from both the USN's Solar and planetary members, and the USN has achieved significant successes toward its long term goal of restoring the Basin to its former glory as one of the two great equatorial ecosystems on Earth.

However, in reality, the high-minded talk of the Congo's environmental importance was merely politically convenient. The Protectorate exists because the Compact didn't want it, except for the Katanga Plateau, which they kept, and didn't want CEGA to be south of the Sahara. The best solution as far as the Compact was concerned was to make it neutral ground. The Unification Wars depopulated the Congo or left so few locals that they could be conveniently ignored. The Azanians decided on the concept of an environmental restoration project because of the critical perception of the Earth's environment in the last days the Unification Wars; the Azanians felt that this tactic had the best chance of success. All this said, the USN is doing significant work in the basin, and the lasting effects of what is achieved will benefit the entire continent. However, since the Protectorate is a politically useful tool, when it ceases to be useful in this regard, somebody will almost certainly invade it.

The USN's main problem is that the Congo Security Force is just one demi-brigade; its 1600 men do not count for much in a region that is more than 4.1 million square kilometers of basin, plateaus and mountains. In the north the river valleys are clogged with jungle, to the south the plains are all open terrain, while the surrounding mountains are jungle-covered and rise as high as five thousand meters, including a half-dozen active volcanoes. Adding in about 15,000 kilometers of navigable rivers, it becomes obvious why the USN is stretched. The Guards do not find working in the Protectorate too hard, however. Most local tribes are friendly; they remember the Unification War, and what the USN offers is preferable by far. The biggest problem is that of the well-armed raiders coming out of the Mini-States after rare animal and plant species that bring big prices from wealthy people in orbit and elsewhere on Earth. While not a serious threat to the heavily-armed Guards, the raiders are simply too hard to find in difficult terrain.



▼ GUINEA MINI-STATES

The Berber Kingdom of Cordoba conquered the majority of western Africa during the late 2150s. West Africa had always been a patchwork of tribal and religious groups, and during the Fall the ethnic and sectarian fighting was extremely fierce, with less than twenty percent of the population surviving the fighting and the resulting famine and diseases. When the Berbers arrived, they found the region divided into a number of what can only be called bandit kingdoms, each one dominated by one of the surviving tribal-religious groups.

For expediency's sake, the Berbers allied themselves with a number of the larger Muslim tribal groups, not just to help conquer the area, but also to provide an instant ruling class. The conquest was bloody, and the resulting government owed little to concepts of human rights or the rule of law. Riots and rebellions were constant, but the Berbers and their allies had superior equipment, training and coordination. Restive tribal groups were repeatedly butchered, so much so that eventually something resembling peace returned to the region.

When the Berbers joined the fighting against the Azanian Compact in 2177, the savage guerilla fighting in the Congo Basin drew off the majority of their regular troops from West Africa. Eventually their losses required them to draw in many of their local African allies as well. At the same time, the Compact was busily funneling guns and agitators into West Africa; as a result, a massive series of rebellions broke out in 2183. By 2186, the rebellions were so advanced that the Compact was able to force the USE to concede that the Berbers had lost effective control of West Africa south of the Sahara; as a consequence the region was granted its "independence" under the Jerusalem Accords.

From the Congo to the Sahara, there are now about two hundred bandit states, some big, many small. The major warlords are Louise George in Dakar, Muhammad Bedouaram in Tillabery, Abdulsalami in Lokoja and the Rene the Frenchman in Kango, but the balance of power can change overnight. Their violent struggles are fueled by the huge quantities of weapons left in the region after the Unification Wars, ethnic and religious hatreds inflamed by the brutal Berber occupation, and the dominion of various criminal groups. Crime brings enough money to keep the fighting going, as well as adding to the disputes dividing the region. Most criminal activity is transnational in character, with the Mini-States simply being a convenient base of operations for various foreign organizations. Despite this chaos, neither CEGA nor the Compact bother much with the region. Both know they have little to gain from intervention, because apart from being poor and violent, the Mini-States are really only useful as a no-man's-land. A few Berber groups, those aligned against the USE mostly, have ties to their former allies, but they do not have enough power to make a difference.

There is no viable economy in the Mini-States; subsistence farming is the main economic activity and barter is the norm outside urban centers. The black economy however, is very profitable. The smuggling and production of various illegal goods, especially drugs and the flesh trade, bring significant amounts of money into the region from CEGA, Free Earth and the Orbitals. The local warlords do not usually control this criminal activity themselves, but rather impose "taxes" on the mostly foreign-run factories, labs and slaver gangs. The local rulers do not limit themselves to only criminal activity, however; everything from running a food stall to a medical clinic requires protection money or is actually run directly by a criminal gang that answers to the local warlord. Until the flagrant criminality and violence that truly rules the Mini-States is solved, there is little likelihood that any development can take place, be it political, economic, or eco-restorative.

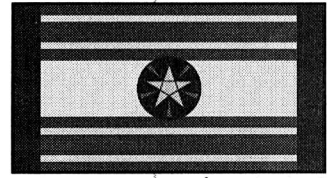
Relations between the various warlords are never settled, and raids and assassinations are a constant part of life. The violence can be as minor as a bar fight, up to something as destructive as battalion-sized infantry battles with light armor and artillery support. While only the most successful warlords can operate such forces (and then only for very brief periods), the lower-level violence never really stops. Every so often, one warlord, more intelligent or simply luckier than most, manages to consolidate a large number of states under their rule and looks set to unite the region. Unfortunately, every time this has happened someone has assassinated him or an alliance of other warlords has brought him down. The fighting is never about religion or tribe; most Guineans couldn't say what tribe they come from, and are too busy staying alive to worry overmuch about divine observation. In the north, things are different; those tribes who allied with the Berbers keep to the old ways, but without their allies, they aren't powerful enough to be an influence.

ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE ▼

The Horn of Africa, long gripped by droughts and famines, pulled itself into the twenty-first century through the sheer force of will of its diverse peoples. With relatively few resources, the nations of the region became labor providers to the rest of Africa and the Middle East. As the twenty-first century progressed, the region was one of the few to actually see a significant decline in population, but at the same time, living standards slowly rose and small but viable modern societies grew to make the best of their harsh lands. Climate changes during the Fall turned the semi-arid plains to desert throughout the Horn, but it also brought abundant rain to the Ethiopian Highlands. Already the most fertile lands in the region, the Highlands became a magnet for a starving and destitute population.

Initially this migration was troubled by growing ethnic and religious conflicts, with fighting breaking out along the still flowing rivers, as people fought over the only remaining source of sustenance. In the Highlands themselves, a single warlord, Tafari Makonnen, a former policeman, seized control in 2081 through determined fighting, clever politics and by winning the support of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Tafari put a stop to the growing fighting, settling each ethnic group in a specific territory and creating local nobility who had to answer for the actions of their people. Isolated from the travails besetting the wider world, the Ethiopian Empire was formed in 2094 under Tafari, who took the name Emperor Yacob Selassie.

When the Unification Wars started and the USE invaded, they never expected serious resistance, as the majority of people were barely-literate farmers and the industrial zones established along the coast with Azanian and Yemeni aid didn't really give the Empire a credible industrial base. Politically, the Empire was feudal and the army was divided along ethnic and religious lines, hardly a recipe for stability. Yet Emperor Amha Selassie the Second and the nobility stood united and their people stood behind them. Reinforced with Azanian arms and special forces, the Empire's ragged irregular infantry and Imperial Armored Cavalry regiments held against the USE despite the enormous cost. Since the wars' end nothing has changed, and Ethiopia has returned to its backward isolation. The only thing that the Empire wants is a guarantee as to the sovereignty and dignity of Ethiopia; if given such a concession, they might even join CEGA to save themselves the trouble of having their simple lifestyle disrupted.



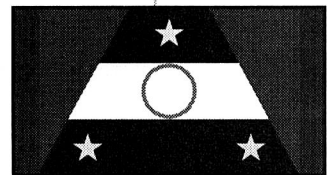
SWAHILI CONFEDERACY ▼

The ethnic wars that broke out along the East coast of Africa during the Fall had a definite winner, the Swahili tribal group. Long the best educated and wealthiest of the many tribal groups, the Swahilis had significant political power and used this to their best advantage when the Fall sent civilization spiraling into chaos. When the situation stabilized in the 2130s, the Swahilis found themselves controlling 1600 kilometers of coast from Nacala to Mogadishu and much of the inland as well. Over the next decade, the Swahili settlements, including the few undersea and floating arcologies that survived the Third World War, coalesced into a loose confederation linked by mutual interest in trade.

This trading focus and a disdain for other ethnic groups eventually cost the Swahilis much of their inland territory, in a series of revolts that led to the formation of the Free Tribes Zone. The Swahilis reputation for intimidation and racism followed them in their dealings throughout the Indian Ocean and had not been for the untimely arrival of the USE, it is likely their depredations would have had to have been militarily checked by the ANZAC, ATS or Azanian Compact.

One problem for the Swahilis is that their government is really just a merchant's guild. Long-term goals are always based on money and as a result, significant errors are made. Many senior merchants, for instance, think they made the wrong decision in 2176 when they allied with the rest of Africa against the USE. At the time, the Europeans didn't bother with negotiations, so there wasn't much choice, but the Swahilis are still bitter about the facts that the Compact and ATS refuse to trade them the high technology they want and that they are no longer allowed to use their naval power to "help" with business negotiations or deal in indentured laborers (which the Compact calls slaving).

CEGA diplomats have been able to win over the Confederacy by promising unlimited access to all the technology they can afford and trade access to Europe and North America as well. Even though the Swahilis realize that once they join CEGA they will lose their present markets, the potential wealth has won over the Confederacy's senior merchants despite CEGA's less than sterling track record in honoring its promises and the Azanians' unsubtle hints about military intervention. Like most corporate executives however, the Swahili merchants are only willing to go if it's a sure thing, and CEGA's latest setbacks are being closely watched.





▼ NEUTRAL ARCOLOGY OF THE SEYCHELLES

In the early twenty-first century, the Seychelles was devastated by a massive oil spill after a supertanker broke apart on a reef in the Amirantes Islands. The Seychelles' two main industries, fishing and tourism, were destroyed overnight, and despite a huge insurance payout, the island nation seemed destined for oblivion. The Seychelles's president at the time, Charlotte Salrei, came up with a vision, however, to use the money to position the country as the pleasure capital of the new century. The centerpiece was to be a vast arcology, the first large-scale development of its type on Earth. Opened in 2028, the Mahe Arcology proved a huge success, a policy of total privacy for those wealthy enough to pay for the privilege guaranteeing the Seychelles a profitable service economy.

By the 2060s, nearly all the islands had tourist developments; all the main islands were covered by arcology-like structures and many of the shallower and more sheltered reefs had floating or underwater structures as well. When tourism died before the Fall, those inhabitants who didn't flee used the many gardens and ponds to feed themselves, surviving within their concrete habitats. The entire island chain was ignored as worthless throughout the Fall and remained a backwater until the Unification Wars, when a USE naval taskforce tried to seize the Seychelles as an advance base in 2179. An African and Persian fleet defeated the taskforce and non-aligned forces occupied the islands. The occupation proved to be the Seychelles' savior, as it repopularized the islands' pleasures and now, with international tourism reborn, the islands once again play host to the Earth's wealthy, regardless of politics or background. Needless to say, this has made the arcologies into hotbeds of politics and intrigue, but the generous Venusian investors who paid for the islands' renovation have also secretly provided security forces to protect their investment and secure the safety of the guests.

▼ FREE TRIBES ZONE

Running in a long strip from Greater South Africa to the edge of the Saharan Front, the Free Tribes Zone is a stronghold of traditionally-minded ethnic groups who refuse to return to the western ways they see as responsible for the Fall. The Swahili Confederacy initially seized much of the region during the 2130's, but their heavy taxes and drives to force the locals to produce cash crops led to a series of rebellions called the Tribal Wars. The fighting was brief; the Swahilis saw little profit in holding the region once the rebels received South African recognition.

South African mediation brought about the declaration of the Free Tribes Zone in 2145, a non-political territory where each tribe remained completely independent. Despite occasional flare-ups of inter-ethnic violence, Swahili machinations and a determined invasion of the northern portion of the zone by the USE in 2180, the Zone has managed to maintain its integrity ever since. The Nilotic tribal groups in the north proved dangerous guerilla fighters in the harsh terrain of the Zone and, true to their obligation to help defend the Zone, the Bantu tribes of the south sent tribal forces north as well. This shared war has reinforced unity among the tribes and plans are underway to create a cooperative government under the aegis of the chiefs' council.

Despite lacking a central authority, the Zone is peaceful and the various tribes keep their lands very well policed despite their primitive lifestyles. Despite the very large quantities of modern weapons left in the area after the Unification Wars, the tribes are very traditional and prefer to settle their internal disputes in the time-honored manner, which is usually a mock combat with traditional weapons. While over a hundred tribes exist in the Zone, the most important ones are the Luhya, Lomwe, Kangali, Gujurati, Ganda and Nandi. Almost all smaller tribes look to one of these bigger tribes for protection and guidance. The bigger tribes also tend to be less strict in their enforcement of the technology bans that are the basis for the Zone, though they still regard technology as abhorrent and send only a few of their children to South Africa for a modern education.

While generally a cipher in African politics, the Zone tries to keep good relations with every state, including CEGA. A CEGA ambassador has been appointed to each of the major tribes, but so far the Administration is finding it hard to find anything that the tribal chieftains are interested in order to persuade them to join CEGA. Also, unbeknownst to CEGA, the northern Gosha tribe have discovered a military convoy route running between the Saharan Front and Swahili territory deep in the inhospitable Lotikipi Plain on the edge of Ethiopian territory. So far, the Gosha have done nothing but dig up their caches of modern weapons and inform the Ganda of the problem.

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► THE AFRICAN CHARACTER

Africa's ancient patchwork of tribes created an almost instinctive distrust between groups. The abuses of colonialism and foreign religions added further divisions, as did the turmoil and disasters of early independence. Yet after all the suffering, Africa emerged more vibrant than ever in the twenty-first century, the dynamism of its peoples breaking forth in a united flowering of culture and science that propelled Africa from poverty and obscurity to wealth and respect. Even the Fall and the bitter struggles for survival that wracked the continent could not overcome the effects of this period of hope, and today Africa is close to developing a single unified culture that respects every tribe's roots.

In an appalling show of inappropriate stereotyping, CEGA propaganda about Africa uniformly concentrates on the anti-technology Free Tribes Zone and bandit-ridden Guinea Mini-States. The depiction of Africans as backward primitives divided in warring tribes suits CEGA, since it allows them to proclaim how their rule would immeasurably advance the condition of the poor benighted Africans. That these two regions are home to less than fifteen percent of Free Africa's population is conveniently ignored, as is the fact that in general the rest of Africa has better overall standards of living than any other region on Earth. Quality of life has remained at the center of what Africans try to achieve for themselves and their children, a consequence of South Africa preserving an accurate history of the continent's past turmoil, the emergence of neo-Tribalism and a focus on education and rebuilding ahead of imperialism and technological grandstanding.

South Africa has had a far-reaching influence on post-Fall sub-Saharan Africa. Through education, the South Africans spread their strongly held principles of national unity, personal liberty, respect for the past tempered by modern education and a composite culture built as much on the ideal of tribal life as reality. The destruction of old tribal ties during the Fall provided fertile ground for inclusive ideology, and as a result, many of the new tribal groupings that developed everywhere the South Africans went were highly idealized, taking the best of the local cultures but abandoning elements unsuited to modern society. Even in backward and chaotic regions, the new cultures that developed left much of the worst of the past behind. In this, the new Africa shares a kinship with the Solar nations, although most Africans would be loathe to admit this.

★ NATURAL LIVING IN AFRICA

Africa has fewer arcologies than any other developed region in Free Earth. From the very beginning of reconstruction, Africans have worked to return to a way of living as close to nature as possible. This is not some holdover from traditional life or inherent primitivism as CEGA portrays it, but rather a realization that a healthy society is far easier to achieve in a healthy and natural environment where humans feel instinctively comfortable. Daily life and living arrangements reflect this accommodation with the natural world. Gardens, retreats into the wilderness, family camping holidays, hunting with traditional weapons, trekking and voluntary eco-restoration work are all highly popular in the continent's advanced states. Any diversion that is nature-related and out of doors has a strong following and usually receives significant government assistance. Failure to take part in a form of outdoors activity is seen as highly strange and for children often means remedial counseling. Obviously, the Free Tribes Zone takes this attitude to an extreme, while in Ethiopia and the Mini-States, the poor have little choice but to live closer to the natural world. Despite being driven by necessity, the poor in these states show much the same reverence and appreciation of nature as their more advanced neighbors.

★ YAKUZA IN AFRICA

For the Orbital Yakuza, Free Earth has been somewhat of a problematic investment. The descendants of the original Yakuza and Triads control crime in Asia, resisting the Orbital descendants of their former brothers and sisters with bloody competency. South America has nothing worth investing in. That has left Africa as the best possible alternative, and the opportunities have not been wanting. The petty and criminal rulers of the Guinea Mini-States have been very welcoming, allowing the Orbital Yakuza to set up all manner of illegal labs and factories, producing illegally cloned body parts, weapons and more mundane items like pirated software. The toxic wastes and deserts of the Mini-States have likewise provided excellent landing areas for orbital smugglers to hide their vessels from SolaPol Commercial Security patrol deltas. Despite the problems, SolaPol has been cracking down, especially after the Edicts Enforcement Bureau discovered a lab belonging to the Matsushita-Gumi producing Edicts-violating genetically engineered human muscle tissue. The EEB has thrown its significant weight around without restriction in the Mini-States and hurt the orbital smugglers quite badly even if the labs themselves have been harder to find. This has led the Yakuza to turn to the Compact's fledgling space launch capabilities to smuggle goods into orbit and some recent Azanian technical advances have come as a result of secret Yakuza aid.

CUSTOMS ▼

Neo-tribal customs, formed either by chance or through deliberate purpose, form the basis of life for most Africans and are well adapted to modern living. Even the minority groups that maintained their tribal identity unadulterated through the Fall have customary traditions that owe more to the highly modernized Africa of the mid-twenty-first century than they do to the primitive past that Africans hold in high esteem. The result is that African culture and habits seem as artificial in many ways as those of the much more recent Solar nations, as if distilled by nameless sociologists from African history and textbooks on modern living.

Modern African families tend to be compact, consisting of a father, mother and a single child. Even in the more backward states, it is rare that a family would exceed three children; in the Mini-States, this is often due to the appallingly high child mortality rate, with fewer than one in ten children surviving their first year. Keeping a tight control on population levels is almost a mantra for Africans. The population burden in the twenty-first century was substantially responsible for the over-farming that helped precipitate the Fall. With the small families, children have become extremely important and parents go to great lengths to ensure their children are given every chance to achieve success. One thing children do not usually have however, is close day-to-day contact with their parents. Even with automation, Africa's low population means that it cannot afford to have one person caring for one child on a full-time basis. As a result crèches are highly popular. Run by government, social, and religious groups, the crèches provide a loving and nurturing environment for children who often only see their parents on weekends.

It is common for parents to only see each other sparingly during the week as well, though working hard is married to relaxing and enjoying life in Africa. During the week, however, it is friends and workmates that people tend to see, leaving weekends for family and very close friends. The focus of enjoyment of life over work often means other cultures portray Africans as lazy, but in their lives Africans believe that hard work is only the means by which one achieves the leisure and free time to pursue personal dreams. As a result, art, music and post-graduate education are highly popular, giving African society a highly literate and cultured tone that is at odds with the often harsh and fixated views of other societies on post-Fall Earth.

BIGOTRY AND DISCRIMINATION ▼

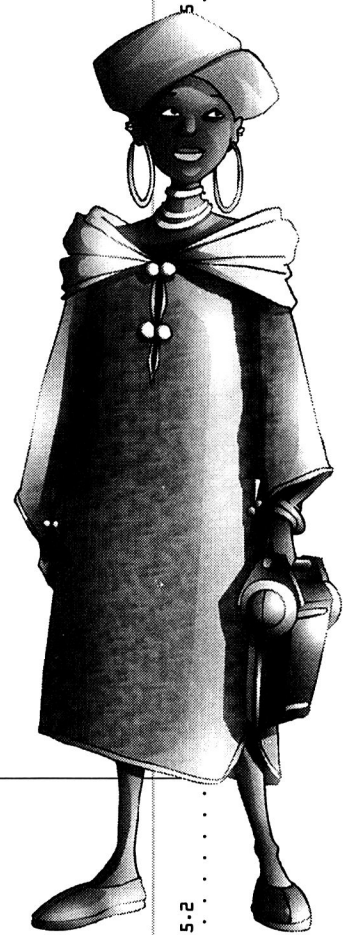
Within neo-tribal Africa, bigotry is almost nonexistent, ethnic differences being marginal at best and religious groups having striven for inter-religious peace and harmony since the Fall. Where bigotry does exist is in the common views and opinions of some members of the tribal groups that did survive the Fall, most especially the Swahilis and the Afrikaners. The latter, however, joined with the Zulus to become a linchpin of reemerging South Africa, and the negative views of some Afrikaners were contained within a state structured on the principles of equality and multiculturalism. What is more, strict laws were put in place to deal with the recidivist views of both Afrikaners and Zulus who would not accept their equal place alongside one another.

The Swahilis, on the other hand, have raised bigotry to an art form, enshrined it in the laws of their Confederacy, and developed a complex semi-scientific eugenics program where they carefully maintain their supposedly superior gene pool. Sexual relations with non-Swahilis are forbidden and all children undergo strict genetic testing to ensure that they are not carrying non-Swahili genes. The rest of Africa regards this behavior with a mix of horror and amusement and offers substantial aid to radical groups within the Confederacy arguing for reform and the rights of the non-Swahilis, who live as second class citizens.

LAW & ORDER ▼

Outside of the Mini-States, where criminals are the law, Africa is a remarkably safe continent. The reasons for this are manifold, but most importantly, Africa lacks the long and hostile borders that so undermine security in Asia. Indeed, in many ways the peace and security of Africa is guaranteed by the USN Guards in the Congo who protect Southern Africa from the chaos and criminality of the Mini-States. With their small populations, however, African states have a relatively loose hold over much of their territories and their police forces often deploy aerial forces to keep a presence outside the urban centers.

With their strongly held ideas on personal independence and responsibility, Africans tend to take security very seriously. Most Africans learn how to handle weapons, and isolated kraals and settlements will have secure and well stocked armories, as well as well-planned and strongly built defenses. The local Kommandos are also quite willing to take to the hills to hunt down bandits, and people in cities will quite likely defend themselves and their property against thieves. African law will almost always side with the victim and a would-be thief must risk the use of lethal force as a matter of course.



4.5.2

end of section 4.5 the african character

4.5.3



► LIFESTYLE

Relaxed, comfortable, and fulfilling are the three goals most Africans have for their lives. Professional success, public acclaim, and other personal goals all tend to be considered in terms of these lifestyle goals. Success is of no use, Africans believe, if it does not allow for a fulfilling life. Balance and happiness are the key to fulfillment, and lifestyle counselors, psychologists, and other personal therapists are popular to ensure that the normal trials of life do not get a person down. Drug treatments are rarely used, however, since a natural life is also a highly desired goal and artificial sources of contentment, including illegal drugs, are not popular.

▼ EDUCATION

Education in the Mini-States and for the majority of citizens in nations such as Ethiopia and the Swahili Confederacy is non-existent, with illiteracy rates well over eighty percent. For the vast majority of Africans, however, education is freely available and of extremely high level. In the Compact and in the Free Tribes Zone (aided with Compact funding), every child who wishes to has the opportunity to go to university and to receive ongoing training throughout their working lives. This forward-thinking attitude is responsible for the highly regarded capabilities of African industry and research, and African people are justifiably proud of the Compact's education system.

This system is based entirely on crèches, with boarding being a popular option with many families. Education bears little resemblance to the structure- and class-based curriculums of most Earth schools; instead, students are encouraged to pursue their own interests, with teachers acting as mentors and directing the young minds in their journey toward the learning they need to pursue their dreams. Field trips, sports and volunteer work are regarded as highly important, as is military training, which prepares students for their own military service and ensures that all young people have the martial skills to defend themselves and their country.

▼ ARCHITECTURE AND HOUSING

In backward areas, houses and villages tend to be constructed from the cheapest and most commonly available materials that can be found. Thus in the Mini-States, rural Ethiopia, and the Free Tribes Zone houses are made from brick or roughly hewn stone, with woven plant fibers providing roofs and other enhancements. Such simple abodes do have the benefit of minimizing ecological impact, though they offer little protection from toxic weather or the violence that commonly sweeps through communities there.

In more advanced states, housing runs from the heavily reinforced concrete and steel houses of the rural Compact to the glittering seaside cities of the Swahilis. Africans consider outside space a necessity and in the Compact it is common for families to maintain only small apartments and then travel on weekends to rural homes. These homes, commonly called kraals because of their fortress-like construction, are the center of dispersed provincial communities that most Africans regard as their homes in favor of the larger urban areas they work in. Crèches are commonly designed like large kraals, as they are always in rural areas to ensure that young people are not crowded by the necessities of city living.

▼ FOOD AND DRINK

Africans favor natural produce over vat- or hydroponically-grown varieties, and only the poor or desperate subsist on yeast or algae products. Dependence on natural food sources was one reason for the devastating famines that wracked Africa during the Fall, but rather than rely on artificial food sources, Africans have chosen instead to limit their populations to what the land can ecologically sustain. Thus, fresh beef, wheat and other grains, fresh fruit and all-natural spices combine to produce an exiting and exotic mélange of food and drink that forms an integral part of the easy lifestyle Africans enjoy.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ◀

Given their preferences, it is no surprise that Africans are great lovers of art and entertainment and spend a higher proportion of their incomes on such than any other people on Earth. Even in poor regions, parties, dances and other small enjoyments are a key part of everyday life. Success as an artist or entertainer is highly regarded, and more than one Guinean or Ethiopian has risen from poverty to wealth virtually overnight on the basis of their artistic or sporting achievements. Relying on this artistic ferment, the Compact is second only to France as an exporter of films, artwork, and artists to the rest of Humanity, and has even started to make limited inroads to the Solar market through Marajian contacts.



THE PRESS ▼

Press freedom exists only in the Compact; the Swahilis and Ethiopians exercise total control over their local journalists, while the Mini-States have no organized press whatsoever. In the Compact, therefore, the press is highly individualistic and resists any form of governmental interference, even to the point of being needlessly provocative or refusing to carry programs that have a political message. Given the strong nationalist streak of citizens in the Compact, this does not detract from political stability, but it does make life difficult for politicians. This strong and watchful press, ever ready to defend the individuality of the average citizen from government encroachment is, as in Asia, the heart of democratic freedom in Africa.

In the Swahili Confederacy and Ethiopian Empire, with their low levels of education, controlling the press is not hard since only those the régime trusts are literate. The press exists, therefore, purely as a propaganda tool and is shamelessly used as such. In the Swahili Confederacy, however, with its bigoted and oppressive regime, there are numerous illegal papers and pirate radio channels fighting to bring the truth to the masses. Naturally enough, CEGA vocally approves of the Swahili and Ethiopian attitude to the press, though the Maritime League and West Indies individually join with the Compact in decrying the nature of the Swahili regime.

LIVE PERFORMANCE ▼

While they enjoy live performance, most Africans' habit of living very independent lives tends to reduce the times and venues available. Thus, while traditional dances at a provincial fete or performances by the Joberg Philharmonic Orchestra are popular and well attended, the number of such events is substantially lower than in the more crowded and communal societies of Asia. The broadcast of live performances, ironically, is the most popular form of entertainment with the Compact. Music, dance and theater are also popular pastimes, but amateur performances are usually private affairs.

Performances adapted from traditional African culture are the most popular events, although given the culture loss during the Fall, "traditional" has a very flexible definition. While western-inspired arts like ballet are not ignored, they are slowly losing popularity as CEGA's cultural imperialism makes people resistant to showing an interest. The most popular elements of western art forms are slowly being adopted into "traditional" performances, however, showing another sign of Africa's ever malleable sense of itself.

SPORT ▼

Given their nature and individuality, it is not surprising that most Africans are extremely keen on sports. Not only do they enjoy watching them, they are even more enthusiastic about playing them, especially individually competitive sports such as athletics and equestrian activities. At the same time, the seemingly contradictory sense of unity that comes through so strongly in Africa reveals itself in a number of immensely popular team sports, especially soccer and cricket. From inter-crèche to international competitions, both these sports are widely followed and matches between the Swahilis and other African states produce national emotions of a level only matched by the outbreak of war. Like Asia, Africa has not forsworn sporting contacts with CEGA, believing that sport can help bring people together through healthy competition. Beyond propaganda and the vicarious pleasure of beating various CEGA states at cricket or soccer, these exchanges have so far achieved little, however.

4.7

4.7.1

4.7.2

4.7.3

end of section 4.7 arts & entertainment



► TECHNOLOGY

Africa, like the whole of Earth, is closely divided between those with high technology and those without. In Africa it is the Compact who has the technology, while the Swahili Confederacy has enough to manage and the rest of Africa is backward outside of isolated pockets of privilege. The Compact, despite having had a substantial technical lead throughout the Long Winter, is at least a generation behind the ATS because of its deliberate policy to grow and strengthen every aspect of society, not just its technology base. This long view is typical of Africa, and while it might produce immediate limitations, the long-term outlook is very bright.

▼ GOVERNMENT FUNDED RESEARCH

Only the Azanian Compact and Swahilis have the resources to fund research, though only the Compact actually does so. The Swahilis believe that research is rightfully left to private concerns. The Azanians fund research at a distance by providing resources to universities and subsidizing private research that shows great promise. This hands-off approach is based on the African belief that individuals are better placed to make decisions than governments, even in an area as important as scientific research. In terms of driving forward the Compact's technology levels, this has been a failure, but it has achieved the goal of deeply embedding technological research into the Azanian community.

This dispersed research community is very much part of the Compact's desire to avoid another Fall by ensuring that multiple communities have the resources to survive and prosper. In many ways, therefore, governmental involvement in research in the Compact is about preserving the knowledge of the race from calamity and ensuring that society and industry don't have to be rebuilt from scratch again. It has meant that the Compact stands behind CEGA and the ATS, but it is far more stable and evenly developed. With this strong base, the Compact expects to catch up within twenty years, assuming it can't buy equality through trade with the Solar nations.

▼ CORPORATE FUNDED RESEARCH

Despite having the lion's share of research funding in Africa, private corporations are not powerhouses of R&D. Low levels of military spending and the ability to buy technology from the ATS has encouraged African (and especially Azanian) business to concentrate on what they know. As a result, Africa is a net technology importer and is unfazed by being in this position. What private research that is done is often done by non-profit organizations such as universities or by companies on specific contract to the government. Lacking strong central direction or profit motive, African R&D tends to be very diffuse, with no one area receiving any particular attention.

African university researchers have made numerous advances in theoretical sciences and various esoteric areas of knowledge such as chaos theory and sub-atomic physics. Such interest in knowledge for knowledge's sake is a consequence of the African faith in the individual and reliance on academic researchers. Military research has benefited from a slightly more direct approach, with numerous researchers dedicating some time to military-related projects in the name of helping to defend their nation. The Swahilis take this further, with many companies trying to concentrate on military research, but so far they have had no great success.

★ WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE

Our investigation of Professor Marie Tshombe has been concluded and I believe we have stumbled on a fundamental flaw in the laws covering Edicts Enforcement. Professor Tshombe is a pure theorist; our investigations of the Gwelo University Campus and her home reveal no sign of attempts to translate her theoretical work into an actual device. This being said, it is hardly in keeping with the spirit of the Edicts for theories about the application of High Energy Density Physics to creating more effective microwave lasers by extending their range by enabling them to create their own plasma conduit. We accept that Professor Tshombe's interest was purely theoretical, an interesting aside to the research she was already undertaking, but nevertheless something clearly needs to be done about preventing academics even thinking about theories that breach the Edicts.

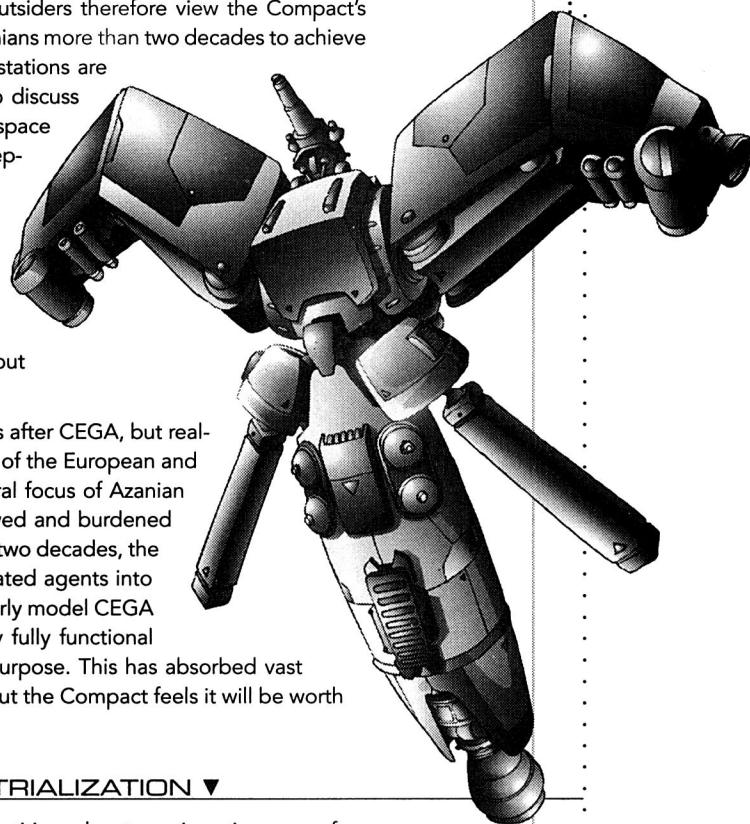
In this particular case, the Azanian Council of Ministers agreed with us wholeheartedly that this sort of technology is not an acceptable area for theorizing. They have revoked the professor's tenure at Gwelo University and transferred her to an isolated meteorological facility on the peak of Maromokotro Mountain in Madagascar. Furthermore, we have retrieved, with Azanian assistance, all copies of the Professor's papers and disposed of them. For the future, however, we should push the USN to reconsider research control laws.

Source: excerpt from text report, Edicts Enforcement Bureau, Investigation HEM0908, Centerpoint Archives.

AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY ▼

The Azanian Council of Ministers was determined to gain a foothold in space as soon as they realized what CEGA was up to, and have spent billions to achieve their goal. Outsiders therefore view the Compact's aerospace industry as an utter failure, noting that it has taken the Azanians more than two decades to achieve a permanent presence in orbit and that even now its three orbital stations are primitive by Solar standards. Azanian government officials refuse to discuss the supposed waste of resources that most observers consider their space program to be and in return most observers fail to note certain discrepancies about the Azanian space program's achievements. The Compact was the most advanced nation on Earth before CEGA's alliance with the Orbitals put the Administration decades in front of every other state. The reason for Azanian advancement was knowledge preserved through the Fall. Considering that South Africa had a relatively advanced aerospace industry in the twenty-first century, the Compact has worked hard to keep people from being suspicious about their seemingly poor record in redeveloping aerospace technology.

The reality is that the Compact achieved space flight only six months after CEGA, but realized that there was little they could do to halt the military expansion of the European and North American colossus. Stealth and espionage became the central focus of Azanian aerospace development, with the public program deliberately slowed and burdened with incompetents to throw off CEGA and Solar attention. In the last two decades, the Compact has deployed a number of secret orbital bases and infiltrated agents into most Orbital stations. They have even stolen and replicated some early model CEGA exo-armors, and their supposedly second-rate stations are actually fully functional space vessels encased in jerrybuilt systems to disguise their true purpose. This has absorbed vast resources and limited the Compact's developments in other areas, but the Compact feels it will be worth it if and when CEGA goes to war against Africa.



INDUSTRIALIZATION ▼

The Compact's diffuse research efforts have given it significant competitive advantages in various manufacturing, farming, and trading technologies. None by themselves are particularly groundbreaking, but when taken as a whole these advances explain how the Compact has maintained such an important economic role despite its low population and otherwise average technological advancement. This focus on industry is typical of the Azanian desire to avoid another Fall, with each and every new process being judged as to its ecological sustainability and ability to function autonomously in case of war or the collapse of civilization. Apart from the labor saving functions of such automation, the Compact is now assured that its many secret manufacturing and energy plants will work for centuries without human intervention, supplying its descendants with the basic requirements of an advanced civilization no matter what.

In line with this integrated approach to development, high tech is far less important in Africa than resiliency and reliability. Thus, many technologies long since passed over by other nations are still in day-to-day use, like copper wire for telecommunications or silicon-based microprocessors. Yet despite supposedly being dead-end technologies, African researchers have developed new applications for them and vastly more efficient manufacturing processes. Thus, the same results that CEGA or the ATS achieve with microwaves and polymers are produced in Africa at a fraction of the cost by copper and silicon. The result is greater sustainability and an industrial base that is far more widely understood than would be the case if more advanced technology was used. The benefit Africans see in this is that everyday citizens can maintain their local infrastructure while the government makes significant cost savings.

The ability to adapt technology to create something more advanced than the individual components is another aspect of the African desire to do more with less. The use of standard heavy engineering principles, combined with long experience in marine architecture, has allowed the Compact and Swahilis to equal CEGA and Asia in the exploitation of marine resources without having to develop advanced pressure resistant materials and environmental systems. While this means that African underwater and floating arcologies are far more cumbersome than their Asia or CEGA counterparts, they function just as well and during the Unification Wars proved far more resistant to CEGA attacks than the delicate and high tech Asian systems.

4.9.5

end of section 4.8 technology



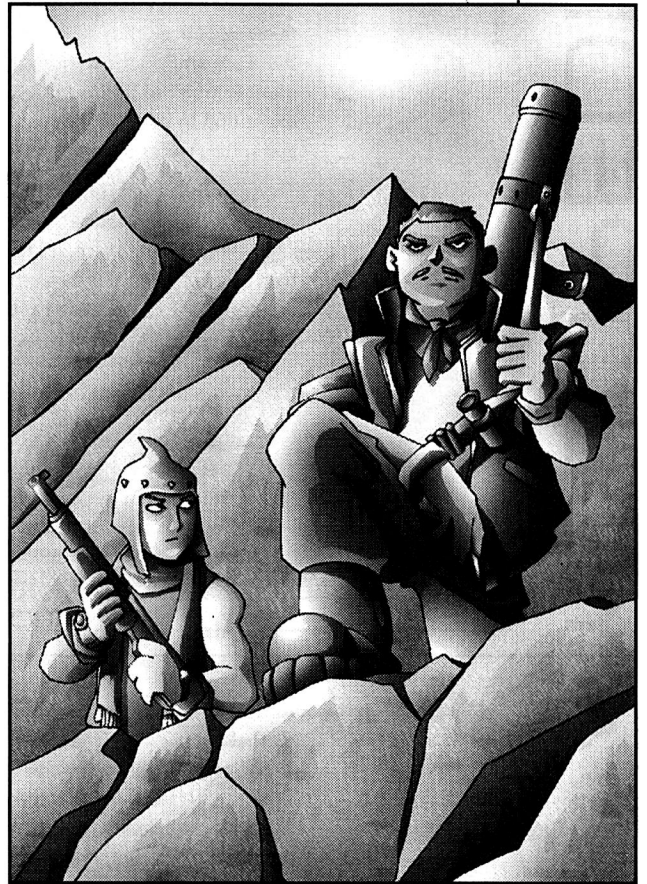
"When freedom does not have a purpose, when it does not wish to know anything about the rule of law engraved in the hearts of men and women, when it does not listen to the voice of conscience, it turns against humanity and society."

— Pope John Paul II

THE SOUTH AMERICAN NATIONS ◀

This benighted continent has yet to be able to leave the aftereffects of the Fall behind. While many on Earth and in the Orbitals express their distaste for the nasty and brutish behavior of so much of South America, they are conveniently forgetting that during the Long Winter, the whole of Earth was as this region remains. It was the violent consolidation under leaders who were little more than bandits that saw the birth of more than a few now well-respected and accepted nations. It is South America's misfortune that it suffered more than other regions during the Fall, thus requiring longer to recover. It was further bad luck that the Unification Wars came about before South America had had a chance to achieve even a modicum of stability, and as a result, it now finds itself a pawn in Earth's cold war.

Competition between Free Earth and CEGA for influence has meant that aid to South America has been significant but nowhere near sufficient, and most aid has had so many political strings attached as to be almost more trouble than it's worth. If development and eco-restoration assistance has been somewhat problematic, the same cannot be said of military advisors, weapons and agents provocateur. The result is that the Jerusalem Accords have protected South America's neutrality but not its people. In their misery, the South Americans have grown bitter, and even the small ruling class tends to be extremely hostile to the citizens of other regions. For the vast majority of South Americans survival remains a harsh chore, and ignorance and oppression are a fact of life. How long before this continent begins to move forward is unknown, and it may take an outside force, such as CEGA, to provide the necessary organization and military forces to overcome the crippling legacies of the Fall and bitter squabbles motivated by the current cold war.



CASUAL VIOLENCE ★

The common Solar conception of Earth as hopelessly diseased, both environmentally and humanly, has its basis of truth in the harsh and dangerous conditions found in South America. From bandits marauding in the countryside to murderous street gangs in what passes for cities, the whole region is as unsafe as an area can be, short of war. Whether this is the sadistic and megalomaniac rule of the Argentine Emperor or internecine civil wars among the Inca City-states, the result is still the same: rampant murder, rape and pillage. People protect themselves and their friends, or suffer under the harsh rule of those that they think will save them from a violent and unpleasant death.

Violence has become so commonplace and ingrained in South American culture that it is a part of daily life. Vigilantism and lynch mobs often take the place of police and courts, and dueling is an acceptable solution to personal disputes in many areas. Wider disputes often become feuds, which can range from assault and petty arson to wholesale massacres akin to small wars. Tensions, therefore, are often found simmering beneath apparently peaceful situations, and a wrong word or unthinking action can lead to riot and mayhem in an eyeblink. Seldom are deaths amid such chaos investigated with any care. A shallow grave is the best a person can expect unless they have friends or family to avenge them.

The chance of dying unexpectedly has made South Americans incredibly suspicious and much of their legendary dislike of strangers is a natural reaction to this ever-present threat. In most places, a stranger is a possible bandit and is treated as such until proven otherwise. Considering that the constant violence has also made South Americans the most heavily armed people on Earth, this makes travel a rather difficult proposition, which has hindered reconstruction, which in turn has prevented a decrease in the violence. This vicious circle has condemned the entire continent to decades of terror, and despite hopes that a South American equivalent to Napoleon would arise to forcibly bring peace to the fractious and divided regions, wishes for a military savior have foundered under the reality of the Argentine Emperor's insane barbarism.



▼ POLITICO-ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

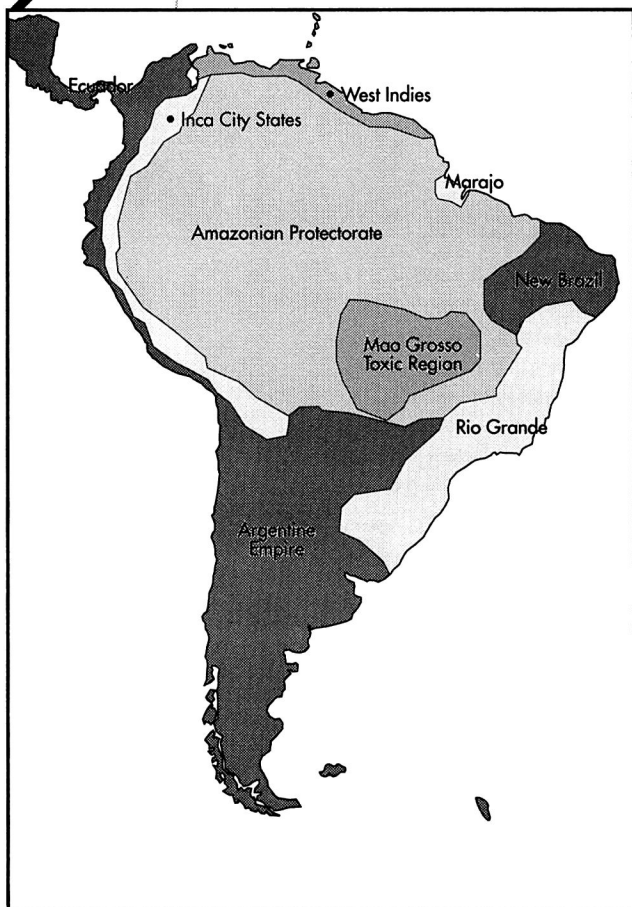
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Trying to analyze South American politics is futile, as the majority of the continent's communities are relatively apolitical; they have to focus almost entirely on the day-to-day necessities of life. What machinations there are among the bandits, criminals, powerful rural families and small town councils that pass for government in most of South America are rarely of interest to anyone but their neighbors. Nuevo Ecuador is the exception to this rule, but separated as it is by the Andes from the rest of the continent, it is not demonstrative of the wider trends.

Those communities unfortunate enough to border the Argentine Empire are presently focused, out of sheer necessity, on that state's bloody path of conquest. This is also true of the Ecuadrians, for though the Argentines are not a direct threat, they see the issue as a plot by CEGA to put political pressure on them. East of the Andes, the threat posed by Argentina is very real and to some an opportunity to be exploited, as the continent is too poor for the Argentine Emperor to be a threat to anyone but himself in the long term and the conquest could at least bring about necessary consolidation of resources.

About the only products that can be found in abundance in South America are cattle, contaminated water and poor quality chemical slugthrowers. Nuevo Ecuador is a lonely bastion of capitalism and modernization in what is otherwise an economic wilderness. Ecuador makes a good profit trading the basic manufactured goods needed by the rest of the continent and through more advanced trade with the ATS and secretly with the West Indians. Despite the lack of strong central authorities of any type in South America, there has been little attempt to make fast money. The Guinea Mini-States are a far better proposition for illegal industry because of their relative advancement compared to South America.

▼ ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW



South America's rapid industrialization during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century left a legacy of pollution and ecological damage, but it was no worse off than any other continent. One single catastrophe however, the bombing of the Mato Grosso conurbation, placed a shattering burden on the entire continent. From this contaminated wasteland two-thirds of South America receives water laced with chemical and biological toxins. While the level of toxicity has fallen over time, it will take decades more for the toxins to completely pass out of the food chain and the mutations, depopulations and extinctions caused by this great ecological disaster will never truly be rectified.

end

INDEPENDENT STATES ◀

No great alliance has been created in South America; the majority of what nations there are remain loose collections of autonomous fiefdoms and towns. The reason is simple: even after benefiting from CEGA and Azanian aid for over two decades, the continent still rests on a knife-edge. A bad harvest can shatter national stability, and a bandit leader can gather the strength to storm a capital in the space of just a few seasons. Not even the threat of NAA invasion in 2183 was able to lift the South American nations above their parochial focus, and given the harshness of their existence, few observers fault them for this.

There is a problem beyond these everyday concerns, however; there is a fundamental divisiveness in the relations among South American communities that leads cooperation to self-destruct. Whether internally between the various communities that make up nations or externally between the nations themselves, issues revolving around past grievances and pride take a terribly destructive toll. Perhaps the land itself is responsible, for with South America's major watersheds poisoned by disease and the chemical bombing of the Mato Grosso, something seems to have likewise poisoned the hearts of those who live alongside the bitter waters.



AMAZONIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTORATE ▼

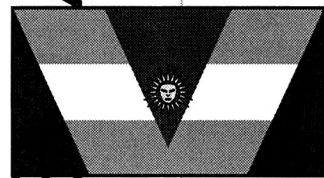
When the USN took over the Congo Environmental Protectorate in 2090, Secretary General Seamus Bhari asked the nations of Earth to go one step further and give the USN authority over the Amazon Basin as well. The arguments that great benefits that would accrue to the damaged lands of South America, especially from major eco-restoration work on the global danger posed by the Mato Grosso Biohazard Territory, were popular with all members except CEGA, and the project was given the go-ahead. Resistance by local nations was overcome with monetary compensation and diplomatic threats, and in 2193 the Amazonian Environmental Protectorate was formed. In the decades since, the USN has worked toward restoring the Amazon and surrounding areas, trying to rebuild the Earth's greatest and most recognized ecological habitat.

Much to the irritation and outright anger of South Americans, popular coverage of the Amazon puts the blame for the damage squarely on the locals, ignoring the efforts of the Brazilian government during the twenty-first century to repair the damage done by previous generations. The popular conception that the massive damage in the Mato Grosso is a sign of pre-Fall South American neglect, and thus a justification for USN governance, is quite false. By developing the uplands in an environmentally sensitive way, the Brazilian government dealt with its overpopulation problem and minimized the ecological impact. That CEGA, whose members launched the Resource and Third World Wars that destroyed and poisoned the Mato Grosso, resisted the declaration of the Protectorate is only of limited consolation for locals.

One problem is that despite the constant USN propaganda about buying off the locals to get their approval for the Protectorate, there is actually more bullying than compensation involved. As a result, New Brazil, Nuevo Ecuador, and the Rio Grande still regard the Protectorate as belonging to them, their own overlapping land claims put on hold by the presence of heavily armed USN Guardsmen. All three countries are still bitter about the loss of valuable resources and sponsor numerous "independent" bandits to make the USN's hold on the Protectorate as difficult as possible. The Guards average three to four minor firefights a day, unless the "bandits" are especially well prepared, in which case there have been running battles lasting a week or more. Recently, CEGA's support has seen the operations become less discreet, with "bandits" caught wearing what passes in South American for uniforms and operating out of military camps set up just outside the Protectorate, complete with CEGA advisors.



A



SOUTH AM CYCLOPE

▼ ARGENTINE EMPIRE

Arturo Madaraga, the self-proclaimed Emperor of the Argentines, started his career as a successful bandit warlord in the Cuchilla Grande region north of the River Plat. While only moderately successful, he was clever enough to form an alliance with various Texas-based arms smugglers, providing safe storage and landing in return for a cut of the weapons. The money and weapons he acquired were responsible for his successful conquest of the township of Montevideo in 2203. It is at this point, controlling a town possessing some primitive industrial capacity and an excellent deep-water harbor, that Arturo Madaraga's career took off.

With great rapidity, Madaraga then reformed his bandit army into a highly efficient and disciplined military force. The proof of his success is that his army conquered the southeastern corner of South America around the Rio de la Plata, including the prized ruins of Buenos Aires, in just two years. This reform is ascribed in Argentine propaganda to Madaraga's military genius. The reality is that his Texan friends provided him with a substantial number of advisors and technical personnel, as well as money to employ a significant number of experienced mercenaries. They would have provided troops as well, but were endeavoring to keep Texan involvement secret from the rest of CEGA. The great hope in Houston was that they could bring South America into CEGA as their loyal and obedient ally, increasing their global political power enormously.

With their pawn's success, the Texans directed more resources toward Madaraga's campaigns, ignoring his growing insanity. After moving his capital from Montevideo to Buenos Aires and taking the title Emperor of the Argentines in 2205, Madaraga was provided with a stash of Third-World-War-vintage military equipment, including a few tanks and enough spares to make the equipment militarily operable. With this equipment, the increasingly erratic Emperor extended his rule throughout southern South America. Then, in a bout of paranoia, he turned on his backers and butchered every Texan in his Empire.

With his Texan advisors out of the way, the Emperor proceeded to solidify his new Empire by laying waste to any community that resisted, and looting every one that surrendered. Various despotic bandit chiefs were appointed as "Imperial Governors" and put in control of newly conquered regions with just one duty, to provide tribute to the Emperor. No governmental structures were set up, unless one counts forced labor units and looting squads, and for the most part the Governors extorted what they wanted out of the local inhabitants. Today, it is not uncommon to see starvation in villages that have had bumper harvests or for entire communities to be made homeless for slight infractions of what passes for Imperial law.

This sort of bandit nation was common all over Earth during the Long Winter, but normally the bandits came and went as greed, violence and vicious feuds ripped alliances apart. This has not happened in Argentina, because Madaraga has been sensible enough to keep his own army well paid and well supplied. This has given him the ability to crush dissent of any type and reinforce the rule of his governors when necessary. Even the recently stalemated attack on the southernmost Inca City-States, which cost thousands of lives and tons of equipment, has not set the Emperor back significantly. Most of the dead were poorly trained conscripts and the Empire now generates enough wealth to purchase the weapons it needs from the Guinea Mini-States.

Initially, few worried about Madaraga, expecting someone to assassinate him and bring about the collapse of his empire before he became a problem. Certainly the Texans and others have tried numerous times, but in his few lucid moments the Emperor has ensured that he is well protected. When he is not lucid, Madaraga is even safer because his extreme paranoia, constant purges and habit of shooting people who look at him sideways make him a hard man to kill. There is also the fact that his more intelligent followers, a small class of immoral cronies who actually make the Empire function, realize that Madaraga's death would bring an end to the good times they have been enjoying. So while they have no great loyalty to the lunatic they follow, they are very attached to the wealth and power he has brought them and work to keep him alive.

Another dangerous development is that the organized criminals who presently utilize the turbulent Guinea Mini-States, especially the Orbital Yakuza, have started to bankroll the Empire in return for concessions allowing them to run illegal enterprises within Imperial territory. While he has resisted any external involvement in his Empire following his massacre of the Texans, Madaraga is desperate for high-tech weapons that would give him an edge over the mountain infantry of the Incas. Once he has those weapons, however, the various criminal gangs are likely to find themselves on the wrong side of the Emperor's firing squads.

ALLIED CANTONS OF THE RIO GRANDE ▼

The Long Winter made conditions in the southern regions of Southern America, Patagonia and the Pampas especially hard, and there was a general drift northward. This migration displaced many other survivors, as communities competed for land and clean water. Constricted by the Andes and the impassable dangers of the Mato Grosso, the migration eventually pushed into the Brazilian Highlands. The Portuguese-speaking locals, shattered by decades of tragedy, were soon suffering again, this time driven from their lands by Spanish-speaking southern refugees.

The end of the Long Winter reversed the northward push, but not before Spanish-speaking peoples had occupied all the Highlands south of the Sao Francisco River, renamed the San Francisco by the new owners. In 2179, a series of communities in the central southern Highlands created a loose alliance of autonomous provincial cantons, naming their new state after the Rio Grande River that flowed through the center of their territory, and founding a capital in the ruins of San Paulo (Sao Paulo). The alliance expanded northward to the borders of New Brazil, westward to the borders of the Amazonian Protectorate, and continued to expand slowly southward until the recent emergence of the Argentine Empire.

Despite the formation of the Allied Cantons, there has been little real development, with each canton remaining stubbornly independent. This resistance to the establishment of a true state is because the powerful landed families that control life in the cantons distrust each other and are unwilling to give up one iota of their power. The only thing that ever brought them together was the wheeling and dealing of the powerful Villacarillo family, especially Victoria Anna-Marie, one of many powerful and intelligent matriarchs that the family has produced. The main weapon binding the alliance together was fear of a resurgent Brazil trying to reclaim the land lost during the Long Winter. While this was a distant threat, the Villacarillos managed to make enough of it to form the Cantons.

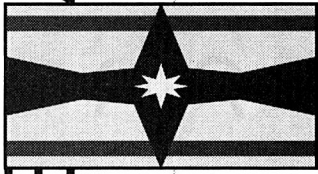
Since then there have been some desultory attempts at eco-restoration (using assistance from CEGA and the Azanian Compact) and at creating a single currency, but for the most part, the Allied Cantons have had their work cut out for them just keeping the peace between the Hundred Families who rule the individual cantons. That each family has a representative on the Alliance Committee makes getting anything done difficult, especially considering the simmering feuds between many families. Nor is there a central military force to deal with feuds or peon revolts that get out of hand. Each canton raises a militia, which the Alliance helps equip but otherwise has no control over. Thus, the militia has merely formalized the existence of the Hundred Families' military retainers, called gauchos. With the Alliance's ability to cut better deals, the gauchos are better equipped and the infighting between families is bloodier than ever.

Still, the Alliance has persisted; the development aid it receives is too lucrative for any of the Hundred Families to want to leave. Another benefit, especially for the smaller families, is that no one family has been able to dominate the others by forging an individual deal with CEGA or the Azanian Compact. All families know that trying such a move would see the other families unite to crush the upstart, but a few of the more forward-looking families have used their share of the development aid to substantially increase their power. While most of the Hundred Families have used the aid money to extravagantly outfit their gauchos and haciendas, throw lavish parties and very occasionally improve the lot of their peons, a small minority led by the Villacarillo Family has invested in industry. Over the last decade, a series of small port towns have been rebuilt with Azanian and CEGA aid and a number of basic industries established. Wealth, economic influence and political power are already starting to flow to this industrializing clique, their first step in a secret plan to form the Alliance into a true nation.

The Villacarillo clique faces two immediate problems however, both of which threaten the very existence of the Alliance: the Argentine Emperor and CEGA. The troops of the former already raid and harass the Rio Grande's southern border, while the latter has been applying pressure on the Alliance to seek admission into the Administration, though since the Odyssey Affair CEGA's threats of military action have ceased. None of the Hundred Families is enamored of the idea of joining CEGA; maintaining their independence is central to everything they have been trying to achieve, but faced with a war with the heavily armed Imperial Argentine Army, they may not have much choice. Still, the Villacarillos have not ceased their clever politicking, hoping to play off CEGA and the Azanian Compact to gain the weapons that the Alliance requires to put down the Argentine Emperor and occupy the territory he controls.



▼ FREE CITY OF MARAJO

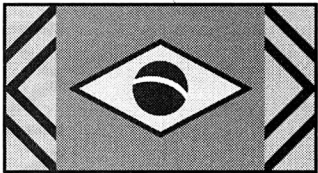


During the wars and disasters that destroyed Brazil, Marajo Island, which dominates the mouth of the Amazon River, became a haven for refugees. Historically a haven for escaped slaves, Marajo's relative backwardness and thick bushland hid refugee communities from the calamities afflicting Brazil. After the end of the Third World War, the refugees gradually developed Marajo into a community of farmers and fishermen. Eventually, salvage from Brazil's ruined cities, trade with Greater South Africa, the West Indies and the small communities springing up along the Amazon made Marajo an important economic center. After the Unification Wars, it continued to play a central role in trade between the West Indies and South Africa, becoming the unofficial trade link between CEGA and the Free Earth.

The island was a natural choice for USN headquarters in the Amazonian Protectorate, and as part of the massive facilities they constructed, the USN built fusion power systems, a major spaceport and an array of industrial facilities to support their eco-restoration initiatives. These developments caused an economic boom as Marajo became enmeshed in Solar trade. In the space of a single year, Marajo developed the basic infrastructure required for an industrialized society, a huge boon to further growth. The creation of the Protectorate also created a population boom, as the USN cleared all the settlements out of the Amazon Basin. The booming economy and USN development paid for massive arcology developments and by 2200, the city of Marajo filled the majority of the island.

Marajo's economy has continued to grow strongly in the decades since, despite periodic attempts by the Imperialist faction in CEGA to put an end to its lucrative two-way trade. With direct trade prevented by the cold war, Marajo fills an important economic role by allowing the movement of goods between hostile states. By doing so, the island free-port reduces the inefficiencies caused by the lack of direct trade, and thus minimizes the negative ecological impact of uneconomic production. The Democratic Council and Mayor of Marajo do everything they can to keep the good times rolling, and this means keeping costs low and making sure nothing gets in the way of trade. This includes doing nothing about the fact that half of the city's population lives in the crippling poverty of Marajo's slum arcologies.

▼ NEW BRAZIL



In a narrow strip of land on the far eastern tip of South America, the remains of one Earth's great cultures struggles to survive. Brazil was an influential and powerful country, proud and determined, with a joyful, colorful and dynamic culture that gave much to the planet at large. Unfortunately, national pride led to their doomed but heroic resistance during the Resource Wars and to a leading role in the futile attack on the USA during the Third World War. Brazil bore the worst of the biological and chemical retaliation inflicted on South America, and this once-powerful nation was decimated. The human migrations of the Long Winter saw the population pushed out of their southern lands until, by 2163, the region known as Caatingas was the only fully inhabitable region left, mainly because it was so resource-poor and undesirable that no one else wanted it.

Caatingas was always a hard land, made all the harder by climatic change, and nothing approximating a central government has ever arisen despite strident claims to the contrary. A few of the larger towns have democratically-elected mayors, and the more prosperous farming districts are controlled by strong local families, but the rest of the region is under the sway of a half-dozen bandit chiefs who never last more than a year or two before being overthrown. The various leaders meet once a year as the Congress of New Brazil, but to no real end. In this environment little reconstruction has taken place and CEGA aid seems to disappear into thin air for all the good that it does. New Brazil has no trade with the Rio Grande to the south; indeed, they regard themselves at war with their Spanish-speaking neighbors, while their trade with the Portuguese-speaking but multicultural Marajians is limited to basic agricultural products.

Despite the disunity, the region does proclaim itself the successor of pre-Fall Brazil, including all the territory of that once-mighty nation. The populace cannot decide on a new system of government, however, so New Brazil remains a fantasy. The main money earner is raiding for rare species into the Amazonian Protectorate; everything else is purely local, little despots fighting over the scraps of a nation that has been dead for more than a century. The towns and land-owning families are no better than the bandits. Feuding, lying and treachery seem to be national traits, and cattle rustling and looting raids over the Sao Francisco River into the Rio Grande are extremely common. New Brazilians don't have the peonage system of rural Rio Grande; in Caatingas there is slavery with only the most brittle veneer of indentured servitude to give it any decency at all. New Brazil is about as bitter a place as can be found on Earth. Brutality is the rule, not the exception, and ideas about fairness and justice take second place to revenge and violence.

UNIFIED INCA CITY-STATES ▼

The Indian and Mestizo peoples of the Andean uplands and high valleys suffered relatively little from the Fall. Issues such as the pollution from old resource extraction sites and Long Winter, which drove them temporarily down to the warmer climate of the coastal plains and Amazonian basin, were dealt with by their strong community spirit and hard work. When the weather warmed they returned to the mountains, bringing with them significant technological salvage and a level of organization unseen elsewhere in South America.

In the decades following, the Incas, as this mixed people choose to call themselves, slowly built a technological nation. Successful eco-restoration projects cleaned up the remains of the twenty-first century's mistakes and new mining techniques made them notable resource exporters. Their cities, built using arcology techniques, occupy important locations within the mountains and are connected by a complicated series of suspended monorails. The majority of citizens live in the cities, but a significant minority still live in the farming villages that have dominated the mountains for centuries, though they now use modern farming techniques. Isolated and isolationist, the city-states cooperate only loosely, fight each other in pointless but relatively bloodless disputes, and deal with the outside world almost exclusively through Nuevo Ecuador.

Apart from isolated bandit raids, the Incas remained uninvolved with the wider world until the recent Argentine invasion. The fighting was vicious and ended in a decisive Argentine defeat, the Incas proving superior in both training and technology. The Imperial army has retreated back to the coastal and inland plains, a position from where they can still threaten the City-States, but where the Incas would have to emerge onto the plains to engage them. The City-States have no armored forces, and while they dislike having the Argentines anywhere near their borders, they are not willing to fight in open terrain where their infantry is at a disadvantage. The Council of City Elders, a rather fancy name for the City-States' council of mayors, is now considering their options. The Incas are technologically twenty years behind the major Free Earth states and what advanced weaponry they deploy is all of ATS or CEGA manufacture. The City-states are now considering whether they should expand their military posture from defensive to offensive through further arms purchases.

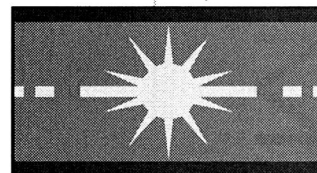
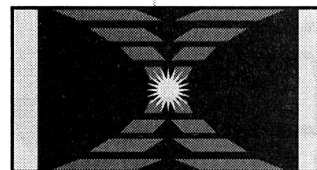
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF NUEVO ECUADOR ▼

This land of mountain valleys and narrow coastal plains owes much to the outstanding endurance and hard work of its people. The states of the northwest were as badly hit by the Fall as the rest of South America, dissolving into feuding villages and struggling to maintain the most basic technological infrastructure. Fate favored them, however, as the Andes stood between them and the ongoing water contamination problems that fatally undermined reconstruction efforts in eastern South America.

Not having to contend with inexplicable plagues and astronomical infant mortality rates allowed the west coast to begin reconstruction relatively quickly. Development made the area a favored target for raiders and the constant pressure from bandits, especially from the eastern side of the Andes, led, in 2156, to the formation of Nuevo Ecuador. A series of growing and prosperous coastal and mountain towns, stretching from the Caribbean to the Gulf Guayaquil, came together to better fund a military force to fight off the bandits. Cooperation in trade and eco-restoration were added benefits, and the new nation became a solid and popular democracy, a shining example to their fellow South Americans.

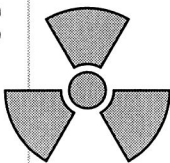
Nuevo Ecuador is a high priority on the Unificationist agenda to bring nations under the umbrella of CEGA by peaceful means. Trade with California and the West Indies once dominated the Ecuadorian economy, and they have had the sobering experience of watching the NAA invasion force that massed in Panama in 2183. The danger of the marauding Argentine Empire is negligible, since the Ecuadorians are advanced enough to deal with any threat by bandits, however well trained and equipped. Despite this, they see the Argentine threat as a CEGA creation, a counterpoint to the promises of renewed trade and development aid being made by the Unificationists.

Isolated from the rest of Free Earth and with only the Inca City-States as reliable allies, Nuevo Ecuador's government realizes that sooner or later they must join CEGA or face invasion. Unfortunately, popular dislike for North Americans is extensive; the memory of the Resource and Third World Wars is still strong, as is anger over CEGA's post-2184 trade embargo and its ongoing actions in Central America. This opposition is the only thing holding back Nuevo Ecuador's membership application, which would ensure that the Inca City-States would follow soon after, and probably the rest of South America within no more than a decade.



► ZONES OF CONFLICT AND DISRUPTION

5.3



Trying to isolate specific areas of conflict and disruption in South America is difficult, because the entire continent would be classed as one or the other anywhere else on the Earth. The chance of violent death or toxic shock is high almost everywhere in the region, and only exceptionally dangerous or chaotic areas stand out from the general malaise. In such places, chemical weapons reacted with the industrial compounds that leached into the environment over the centuries of industrialization. In some cases, this resulted in deadly toxins that poisoned entire rivers or killed off whole forests. Many of the various biological agents used, ranging from genetically engineered viruses to natural bacteria, found niches where they continued to exist; others mutated due to radiation, chemical pollution, or simply poor genetic engineering, often becoming more lethal and virulent than before.

▼ SAN FRANCISCO RIVER

5.3.1

Though they coexisted peacefully for generations and are ethnically and religiously indistinguishable, Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking South Americans are today at each other's throats along the San/Sao Francisco River. The Spanish-speaking Rio Grandians on the Southern side of the river treat the raiding by the Portuguese-speaking New Brazilians as a blood sport, one well suited to the idle sons and daughters of the Hundred Families who dominate the Rio Grande Cantons. The New Brazilians harbor hopes of reconquering the southern portions of pre-Fall Brazil, but all they are achieving is to make the border a bloody and brutal mess. The only limiting factor at present is that neither side has significant modern weaponry, and no one seems inclined to sell them any at this point.

▼ MATO GROSSO BIO-HAZARD TERRITORY

5.3.2

In the early twenty-first century, this high plateau region was chosen by the Brazilian government for high-density industrial and urban development. Backed by billions in UN grants and incentives, the Brazilians created or vastly improved a series of massive cities. The development was built with the latest green technology, with a focus toward trade with the new space colonies; in 2149, the region became the largest conurbation on Earth. Though a golden place in a golden age, the Mato Grosso fell with the age that created it.

When Brazil crumpled during the savagery of the Resource Wars, the fighting shattered the cities in the eastern half of the Mato Grosso and left a legacy of famine, pollution and homelessness that dragged the western Mato Grosso into a cycle of accelerated urban decay. The plague and chemical strikes by the USA in 2106 depopulated the Mato Grosso, killing tens of millions. The consequences of these attacks were terrible, not just for the cost in human lives, but because the fall of this vast city generated the ecological equivalent of a tidal wave; the Mato Grosso sits astride the headwaters of almost every major river in South America.

Chemicals and radioactive materials from decaying or destroyed industrial sites ran into the headwaters of the Amazon River's many southern tributaries, as well as the Paraguay, Parana and Araguaia Rivers. Worse still, the biological and chemical war agents used in the region leached into the environment and a very high percentage mutated or reacted after contact with industrial pollutants. These diseases and toxins became part of the ecology and still contaminate the entire plateau, though in the decades since the Platina, Pantanal and Amazonian ecosystems have acted as very effective biological filters, and now the worst of the biochemical contaminants no longer flow so far. Many are surprised that these areas seem to remain so rich with life, but much of what remains is a poisonous shadow of its previous glory.

Unfortunately, the ruins and upper reaches of the Amazon and Platina Basins, as well as the entire Pantanal, remain extremely toxic, with huge areas reduced to sludgy wastelands. Various biological and chemical poisons usually kill interlopers quickly, but if an unprotected visitor does manage to survive for a while, one of a dozen diseases will no doubt finish him off. These biological contaminants have become so intertwined with the natural ecology that it is possible that parts of these regions will never be restored. On a human level, there is now some chance of solving the multitude of medical problems recorded all over eastern South America. At the very least, there is hope for some decrease in the plague outbreaks that hit downstream areas, and a reduction in the rate of birth defects and infant mortality.

ARGENTINE BORDERLANDS ▼

The only border claimed by the Argentine Emperor is the Panama Front, but in actuality, the effective borders of the Empire are along the Inca City-states, Nuevo Ecuador and the Rio Grande. Despite having a long, open border and few formal military forces, the Rio Grande has so far been spared assault by the Argentineans with substantial tribute, mainly in livestock and other foodstuffs. This has bought the Emperor off for now, although the Grandians are aware that this is only a temporary measure. The Incas have repulsed the Argentine assault on their aerie cities and, following this disaster, the Emperor has ordered unceasing raids on the City-States as a form of revenge. The raids' only purpose is wanton destruction, though so far they are achieving little but allowing the Incas to blood new troops.

So long as he cannot go through the Incas, the Emperor is reduced to only the narrowest of borders with Nuevo Ecuador, a strip of land no more than two hundred kilometers wide. Despite his insanity, the Emperor is not about to fight on a narrow front where his supply lines are bordered by hostile Inca territory for a thousand kilometers. Once he has recovered from the Incan debacle, it is likely that the Empire will turn south, the lure of the old Chilean and Argentine claims on Antarctica drawing the Emperor's attention. That an invasion of People's Republic of Antarctica would bring him into conflict with the Azanian Compact does not seem to faze the Argentine Emperor; Madaraga's insanity may prove to be the end of him yet.

5.3.3

BLEAK TIDE ★

Yes, I know about that damned foolish Orbital girl they found floating in the Jacuipe. What do you want me to do, Janus? Those that killed her probably haven't even heard of your USN and if they had, I doubt they would care that this girl worked for it. She had no sense coming down here to stir up trouble among the peons. You Orbitals are like the rest of Earth, safe in your wealth and privilege. You look down on poor South America, feeling the need to come down here and help us rebuild civilization, as if we were ignorant savages living in grass huts! As for the girl, I have sent some of my gauchos to try and find the killers, but this I do for you, not her. She was interfering in the supression of a peon revolt and that is simply asking for trouble.

Terrible things happen here every day. Existence is as hard as it can get; the very water that gives life to the fields and the cattle brings death, and we do not have the technology to do more than survive. Yet we are still here! Despite everything that we have suffered, we are still here! You complain about peonage, but without it every field would have gone fallow and none would have lived through the Long Winter. In South America survival still comes first. The rights of Humanity, you say? Well, I say Humanity's highest right is to be able to eat and drink enough to live. It will be many decades, my well-fed friend, before that ceases to be a struggle.

Source: audio transcript, Marajo Solapo HQ: Stella Maria Villacarillo, & Director Janus O'Grady, August 2210.

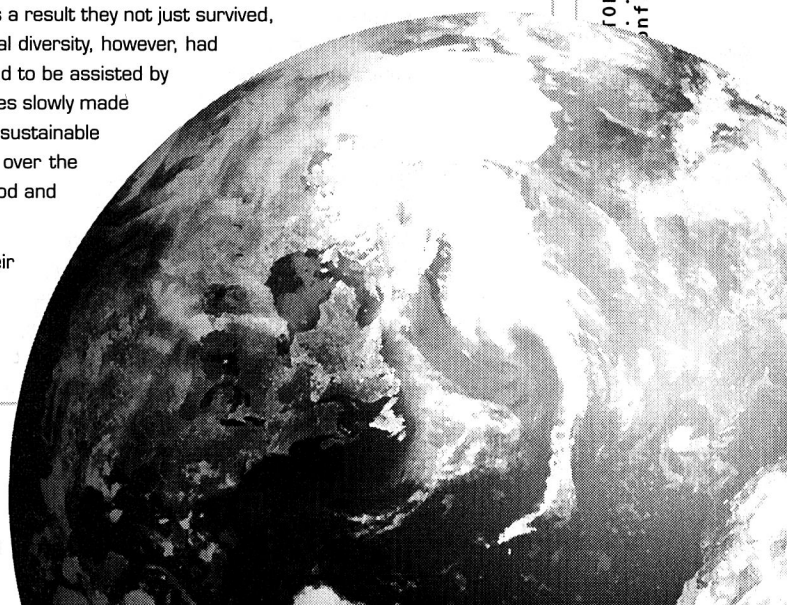
HISTORICAL FACTS

SHATTERED BIOSPHERE ★

While none of the doomsday predictions of the Earth's ecological destruction proved true during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, humanity's burgeoning population put ever-increasing pressure on the planet. No single factor can be blamed, be it global warming, deforestation, over-population, pollution or anything else. Many factors, especially social and economic issues, worked together to undermine the Earth's natural resilience until, finally, it could take no more. By the time of the Collapse, the Earth's population had reached a staggering 13 billion. Human technological innovation had kept pace with population growth and as a result they not just survived, but lived at a standard unmatched by previous generations. Biological diversity, however, had become a distant memory, and in many places natural processes had to be assisted by technology. The combined effect of desertification and climate changes slowly made the agricultural and water systems needed by humanity's billions unsustainable without large investments in time and money. It pushed the planet over the edge in the 2060s as the poorer states began to fight over clean food and water supplies.

On Post-Fall Earth, Humanity still struggles with the legacy left by their ancestors. Any community that impact the surrounding environment without careful research can destroy the fertility of their cattle, de-grade the soil, intensify local weather patterns or cause any number of other harmful effects.

HISTORICAL FACTS
Conflict and disruption





5.4

5.4.1

5.4.2

HISTORICAL FACTS

HISTORICAL FACTS

► THE SOUTH AMERICAN CHARACTER

Few other groups of people on Earth suffer from the level of misconception and prejudice that the South Americans do. The almost universal view of them is as a brutish, ignorant, treacherous and violently anti-social set of peoples. This is very far from the truth. Certainly, formal education is almost non-existent and illiteracy is rife, but there are few other people in the Solar System so well trained to survive in such a hostile and unforgiving environment. So focused are South Americans on survival that all else has been sacrificed for that one overwhelming goal; in this, they are perhaps the most successful human society that ever existed.

In direct contrast to the widely held view of them as savage loners, South Americans are intensely communal. This is hardly surprising; the level of communalism on Earth, as in the Solar nations, is a natural response to the difficulties of living in a harsh environment where everyone must work together to survive. In South America, however, this force is much stronger because of the lack of technological aids to survival. The drive to survive and the strength of communalism that allowed so many South Americans to survive the Fall and Long Winter are so extreme, however, that they have become a negative trait. While there is nothing that South Americans won't do for a fellow villager or clansman, there is also nothing they won't do to a stranger if it helps their own people to survive.

Among themselves, therefore, South Americans are extremely selfless, especially toward the young. The effects of the Fall and toxic contamination made the child mortality rate over eighty percent in some places, making children so precious that there are stories of parents starving themselves to death to ensure their children's survival. It is notable that even in the most bitter feuding, the killing of children is considered anathema, and captured child killers suffer very painful deaths.

Another aspect of this widespread trait of giving themselves to something greater can also be found in the widespread institution of peonage. The concept that some people are little more than animals to be owned is widely reviled in Free Earth, though this is not so in CEGA, with its strong European noble states. Yet many peons regard themselves as fulfilling an important and necessary role: they feed the community and even though they suffer the most, their suffering allows others to live. Religious and communal leaders encourage this selfless view, though resentment and exploitation are also present if leaders do not honor their side of the bargain and work toward the good of all.

★ WORSE THAN DEATH

One reason that the rest of Earth despises South America so greatly is that so many of the horrors there bear a striking resemblance to their own experiences during the Fall and Long Winter, raising memories of inhumanities that these other nations would rather forget. Human beings are capable of committing any atrocity if the alternative is death, as the history of the Fall and Long Winter shows all too graphically, and as South America still demonstrates. The desire to survive is responsible for the habit of feuding and raiding that undermines relations between communities in South America today.

Food, clean water, arable land, able bodies and anything else that can help a community to survive are fair game to raiders. For some, raiding is a way of life; entire communities have become nomadic scavengers and bandits, moving like locusts from one source of sustenance to another. The one common principle is that strangers must die so that the community might live; it is survival of the fittest at a very basic level. Simple raiding, however, is often not the greatest of the evils committed. Cannibalism and the keeping of humans as livestock, while far less popular today than it was during the Fall and Long Winter, still exists in isolated pockets, and torture and mutilation as public entertainment remain widespread.

★ THE COMFORT OF STRONG LEADERS

Solar Nationals often express surprise at the number of monarchies and aristocracies still in power on Earth. Straightforward dictatorships seem not to bother them as much, but when a dictator claims legitimacy based on noble antecedence outrage is widespread. Yet the return to monarchical systems made perfect sense during the Fall, as all preceding systems had thoroughly discredited themselves by letting the Fall happen. Monarchical systems on the other hand offered stability, recalled the glory days of ancient Earth history, and suited the small technical elites who founded the new nations that sprang amongst the ruins. Having established their popularity and competence by seeing their nations safely through the Long Winter and Unification Wars, the legitimacy of the monarchs and aristocrats is challenged by few of their subjects.

5.4.3

In many ways, death is as much a part of life as living. With infant mortality rates so high, the near-constant risk of violence, and with cancer and other diseases lowering life expectancy to little more than fifty years for most, death is something that every South American has an intimate and close relationship with. To cope with this, they turn to their faith and to their families, treating every day as a blessing no matter how hard it is or how little joy it brings. Thus, they find what joy they can, even in funerals, celebrating the life that was and thanking God that they are still here.

5.4.4

This village-level prejudice extends to the larger communities that have formed since the end of the Long Winter. Thus, the Incas are afraid that the Ecuadorians want their resources, and the Ecuadorians hate the Incas for their abundance of resources. The Grandians and New Brazilians hate and fear each other over land, language and a history of savagery that still continues. Internally, the same processes are at work. Peons and landholders hold each other in mutual contempt, fear and hatred, while different families worry about attempts to unseat them by rivals. The result is not simply the violence South America is so well known for, but also the atrocities and massacres that are all too prevalent. With fear and hatred motivating them, South Americans are all too often willing to inflict terrible suffering on those they label as outsiders.

5.4.5 end of section 5.4 the south american character

5.4.5

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT ◀

The slight bettering of conditions since the end of the Long Winter has led to a very limited artistic renaissance in South America. There is no market for media products from overseas; a village may have only one radio or even none at all, let alone vision players or other modern entertainment systems. For the most part, artistic endeavors remain focused at a local level in the form of a few carvings for a new house, or performances during a village fiesta. Only in the area of religious artwork and music has a wider trend developed, mostly because both are an essential part of the communal life of the small settlements. Villagers make their own simple instruments and icons and use them to create religious-themed odes and deep, soulful folk music. Due to the difficulty of traveling, contact between villages and settlements are sporadic at best, and very distinct local styles tend to emerge rapidly.



THE PRESS ▼

Outside of Marajo, Nuevo Ecuador and the Inca City-States, there is no press in South America. Where it exists, the press is militantly independent, owing more to the frontier newspapers of the nineteenth century than the vast media conglomerates of the Pre-Fall period. The Marajan press is perhaps the most adventurous, for its papers also sell to the few literate people of the Rio Grande and New Brazil and their journalists can be found as far afield as the Argentine Empire and CEGA's Southern Occupied Territories. Wherever they go, South American journalists can be guaranteed to be causing trouble, pushing for reform, education, democracy and eco-restoration.

5.6.1

LIVE PERFORMANCE ▼

With limited access to electricity, entertainment is naturally something that the majority of South Americans have to make for themselves. Illiteracy necessarily makes this entertainment oral and musical, except for that small part of the population who can read and have access to a book beyond the Bible. Singing and guitar playing are the two most common forms of entertainment, closely followed by choir singing and passion plays on religious feast days. The only real difference between single-family farmsteads, small villages and large towns in this regard is the elaborateness of the performances and the fact that the larger towns are visited occasionally by wandering bands of players who make their living entertaining at feast days and fiestas. Religion plays a major role in most entertainment, with only tragic folk songs achieving anywhere near the same popularity. Even in the more advanced states, canned entertainment is seen as second-rate, and public and familial performances are held up as superior. Indeed, in Marajo, thousands of poor make their living as entertainers, from buskers and actors in smalltime playhouses to the South American equivalent of superstars who earn thousands of CEGA dollars for a performance.

5.6.2

SPORT ▼

Blood dominates the South American concept of sport. From various forms of hunting to bullfighting and even gladiatorial contests, South Americans eagerly shed blood in the name of pleasure. This focus is not surprising; after all, most of the blood sports are in and of themselves excellent training for everyday life. Knowing how to feed oneself, defend oneself, or herd and cull cattle are all valuable skills, and the popularity of the blood sports is innately tied to the fact that so many South Americans practice such skills themselves on a regular basis.

The only other sport to rate a mention in the South American psyche is soccer. Pre-Fall, this sport was a near religion, so hugely popular that even the needs of survival during the Fall and Long Winter were not able to erase its hold on South American society. Before the end of the Long Winter, soccer remained a local sport, played between young boys and girls within villages, but as soon as wider communication resumed, soccer matches between competing teams became widespread again. The Catholic Church played a significant role in this, encouraging healthy sporting competition in place of blood sports and feuding.

end of section 5.6 arts & entertainment

► TECHNOLOGY

Nowhere on Earth is the divide between those who have technology and those who do not so stark as in South America. There is a tiny minority that has access to technology, and the wealth and opulence of their lives is in harsh contrast to the millions who live in conditions so primitive that they could have existed a thousand years ago. More obviously than anywhere else, technology is what defines power in South America; when a single armored vehicle can mean the difference between defeat and victory, or a water filtration system can guarantee a bumper harvest, even limited technology becomes the ticket to vast power.

▼ GOVERNMENT FUNDED RESEARCH

Against what might be expected, South America actually has a relatively well-funded government research effort, though this is limited to the Amazonian Protectorates, Nuevo Ecuador and the Inca City-States, with the lion's share of the research performed by the USN in the Protectorates. The two local governments focus almost entirely on eco-restoration and ecologically sound industrial development; they are not wasting money trying to develop better weapons. The USN concentrates entirely on medical and eco-restoration work; the SHO and Protectorate Environmental Services maintain vast labs in Marajo and in isolated research stations throughout the Amazon and Platina Basins and the Pantanal. These labs, along with the more limited ones in the Congo, are unique on Earth in that they combine the best of Solar and Earth technology, though their funding is always inadequate to the huge task that they face. In keeping with the USN's charter, all research done by the Protectorate's labs is freely available to all, which attracts many corporate researchers to Marajo as well, although to work in the Protectorates, they must operate under strict USN supervision.

▼ CORPORATE FUNDED RESEARCH

South America, outside of Marajo, did not really feature in the investment plans of any corporation before about 2208. It was around this time that the Villacarillo clique in the Rio Grande began to solicit investment in their newly industrializing towns along the east coast; at the same time, Nuevo Ecuador finally opened its economy up to outside investment. In both cases, the investment is a 60/40 split between CEGA and other nations in Free Earth, mainly the Takeda Corporation in Nuevo Ecuador and Azanian Compact in the Rio Grande. The research involved remains small-scale, mainly investigating ecologically sustainable industrialization and low-cost infrastructure systems. Outside possible criminal investment in Edict-violating laboratories in the Argentine Empire, the only area likely to experience significant corporate scientific investment for the foreseeable future is Marajo. It is not merely the USN presence that attracts the corporate research dollar, however; the Marajian government is also incredibly lax in enforcing environmental or ethical standards, and the USN can do little to improve security due to local obstruction and the sheer chaos of the city. Nothing grossly illegal is going on, but enough dubious research is carried out to make it profitable for the law-abiding and well-respected firms that operate the "gray" labs to ensure investment continues to grow.

■ AN OLD FOE

Following the drug seizure by authorities on Athena Station, we conducted an extensive survey of the areas that historical records indicated to us were previously the natural habitat for the coca plant. Most of these areas are now part of Nuevo Ecuador, and even after half a century, USN analyses indicate that the genetic herbicides released by the United States of America in the early twenty-first century preclude the growth of coca plants. We then pursued investigations within Marajo city, the source of the shipment, and were eventually able to purchase a quantity of the drug ourselves. After arresting the dealer, we then raided the premises of his supplier, a local trader who dealt extensively with New Brazil. Unfortunately, the trader resisted arrest and was killed in the ensuing gun battle, but his records indicated he was importing up to half a ton of cocaine a month from a number of different Brazilian sources.

How the coca plant can grow in the environs of Caatingas was difficult to explain, until we found a supply of genetically modified coca seeds in one of the trader's warehouses. The plants produced by these seeds are specifically designed to grow in dry, lowland tropical environments, and are even resistant to most common toxins found in Caatingas. Brazilian peons and poor farmers must love this plant; it not only grows with virtually no help, but Marajian traders pay for it in hard cash. We have done some preliminary investigations and we think that the plant may have been distributed throughout New Brazil. If so, production could potentially run into the hundreds of tons. The one break we have is that the plant cannot reproduce. If we can find the lab, we can shut down the problem at the source, as well as find out exactly who is behind what must have been an expensive operation to set up.

Source: excerpt from text report, Commercial Security Bureau, Investigation SPZO110, Centerpoint Archives.

ENVIROTECH ▼

Simple solutions to complex environmental problems are a hallmark of South American technology, a legacy to the work of the engineers and scientists who survived the Fall and passed their knowledge down by word of mouth during the Long Winter. Through trial and error, and research under the most primitive of conditions, South Americans have developed cost-effective and robust solutions to numerous ecological problems, especially in relation to water pollution. Whether this is the use of carefully chosen non-genetically modified plants to leach heavy metals out of the soil or a revival of the ancient practice of salt ponds to remove chemicals from water, South Americans have not let their lack of high technology stop them from trying to better their ecological situation.

Such simple processes are not as effective as the high-tech options, but they are much cheaper and are easily put into practice by otherwise illiterate peasants. While low-tech ecology may not make much difference to the overall environmental problems facing South America, it is responsible for the level of organization and development the continent has been able to achieve. In small areas or regions where the basic technology level is very low, the low-tech approach actually makes more economic sense as well. CEGA has taken this lesson onboard, and is now recruiting South American experts to set up eco-restoration projects in backward regions like Texas. From this strong base of local knowledge, the more advanced states and regions close to the Amazonian Protectorate have developed or deployed more advanced solutions that still have a relatively low-tech base, even if the science behind them is more advanced than was previously the case. These new methods promise a new era in South American environmentalism, a stepping stone between the low-tech of the past and the high-tech needed to finally solve all the problems.

ADAPTATION ▼

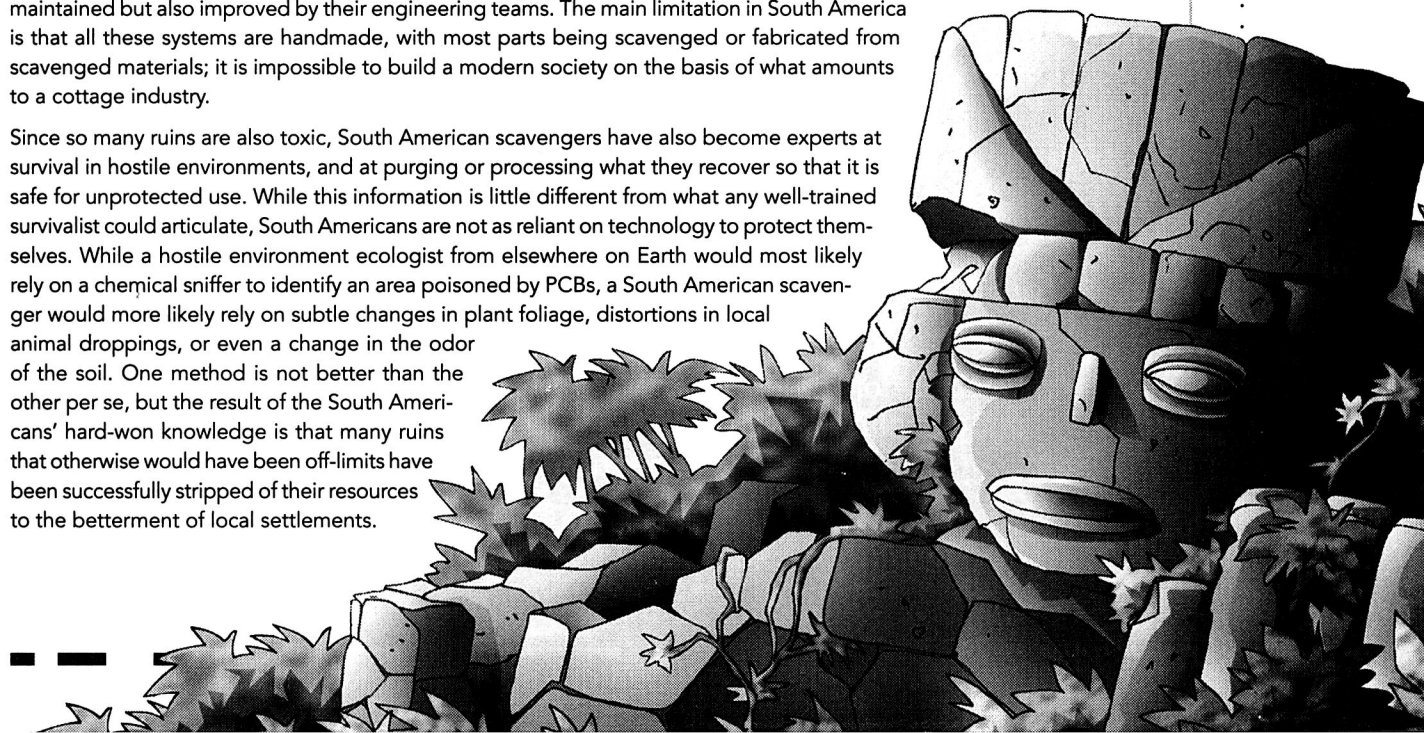
With their shortages of everything and desperate need for advanced materials and technology, South Americans have become highly adept scavengers and restorers. Engines more than a century old still power pumps high in the Andes, while entire villages are built from prefab plastic slabs from pre-Fall high-rises. Nothing has been allowed to go to waste in the fight for survival. South American ingenuity has extended far beyond recovering ancient spares and recycling building materials, however, to the fabrication of resilient and inexpensive mechanical and electrical systems. Internal lighting systems for primitive bunkers and arcologies have been fashioned from salvaged optic fiber, for instance, and methods have been developed to render down advanced materials in primitive ovens and stills to reclaim rare elements and chemicals like mercury and lithium that would otherwise be unobtainable.

The ability to build primitive mechanical and electronic systems from what amounts to scrap is a skill that South Americans have become renowned for and South American engineers, while almost certainly self-trained, are well regarded. A number of fusion systems were rebuilt by Inca engineers during the Long Winter and most of South America's coastal trade is plied on pre-Fall vessels that have not just been maintained but also improved by their engineering teams. The main limitation in South America is that all these systems are handmade, with most parts being scavenged or fabricated from scavenged materials; it is impossible to build a modern society on the basis of what amounts to a cottage industry.

Since so many ruins are also toxic, South American scavengers have also become experts at survival in hostile environments, and at purging or processing what they recover so that it is safe for unprotected use. While this information is little different from what any well-trained survivalist could articulate, South Americans are not as reliant on technology to protect themselves. While a hostile environment ecologist from elsewhere on Earth would most likely rely on a chemical sniffer to identify an area poisoned by PCBs, a South American scavenger would more likely rely on subtle changes in plant foliage, distortions in local animal droppings, or even a change in the odor of the soil. One method is not better than the other per se, but the result of the South Americans' hard-won knowledge is that many ruins that otherwise would have been off-limits have been successfully stripped of their resources to the betterment of local settlements.

5.7.2

5.7.3





"It is one of the universe's great jests that the happiness and satisfaction of humans is predicated on the unhappiness and dissatisfaction of other humans."

— Ignatius Chang

JOVIAN CHRONICLES ON EARTH ◀

A campaign set on Earth, whether within CEGA or the non-aligned States, is at once very different from a standard Jovian Chronicles game while still being quite familiar. The differences relate to the much lower technology level, the vast range of languages and cultures, the disinterest in events wracking the rest of the Solar System and the absence of the dangers and restrictions of life in space. An Earth-based Jovian game is familiar, however, because at its heart, it is a post-apocalyptic environment; thus, Gamemasters can draw on the huge collection of movies and literature in this genre. The key to a successful Jovian game on Earth is for the Gamemaster to pick a few of the many and varied threads within Jovian Earth to tie a post-apocalyptic vision together. The purpose of this section is to detail the general mood and main issues that Earth-based Jovian Chronicles games are likely to deal with.

For an existing campaign coming to Earth, where a group made up of Solar Nationals, Gamemasters may need to take a more liberal approach to ensure that Players are not frustrated by minor problems. A credible way around this problem is to encourage Players to disguise their backgrounds (though this is easier said than done, considering the peculiarity of life on modern Earth).



INFLUENCES ON JOVIAN EARTH CAMPAIGNS ▼

The entire spectrum of campaign options is available on Earth: exploratory, mercenary, commercial, journalistic, military, espionage, scientific and humanitarian-style games can all be accommodated with ease, given the diverse setting that Jovian Earth provides. There are, however, a few influences that will affect most games set on Earth, adding a unique flavor that sets apart the Earth from other parts of the Solar System.

The first defining feature for Jovian Earth campaigns is intrigue. While some campaign ideas seem very straightforward at first glance, the very nature of life on Earth means that duplicity and underhandedness will affect all games. Simply put, no one is neutral on Earth; Players must either take a clear side or many people will automatically judge them to be potential enemies. Thus, even if a campaign is based on a police investigation or a business venture, people around the Players will assess them in terms of their commitment to CEGA, Free Earth, Venus or Jupiter. Intriguing and plotting will inevitably follow the Players, as deadly or harmless as a Gamemaster desires. Those who get frustrated by the constant monitoring and accusations can easily find themselves in legal trouble or a firefight, if their responses are excessive.

The second defining influence is violence. Unlike the Solar nations, whose fragile pressurized environments require understandable restrictions on firearms and violent behavior, the Earth is awash with guns and people quite happy to use them. All over Earth, people resort to violence very easily, and weapons of all sorts are readily available to those who desire them. Any campaign will have to take the prevalence of weapons and one's readiness to use them into account. Players used to lording it over NPCs because of the firepower they carry will be unpleasantly surprised on Earth, because such behavior will start a deadly fight. Given the extreme nature of much of the local violence, GMs will need to ensure that their Players realize that starting a communal riot or border skirmish will lead to repercussions outside what they normally deal with; on Earth, even minor fights can bring out companies of heavily armed troops with permission to use lethal force.

The third defining influence on post-Fall Earth is diversity. As on Earth today, travel will take a person to places where languages are different, the food is strange and the customs incomprehensible. Emphasizing this fact can easily and quickly change the Players' awareness, bringing home to them how alien and different from the Solar nations the Earth is. Beyond language alone, it is differing customs that will drive home the new dangers and realities to Players. As discussed in the following pages, the Earth's environment and recent history has drastically changed the nature of Earth communities, mostly for the worse. A good technique in this regard is to take a custom that Players may be familiar with and twist it by applying a harsher, less forgiving viewpoint to it; euthanasia may be widespread, dinner might be served in small portions with no second helpings, and an accidentally dropped wallet may be snatched up by an elderly lady.

b.1.1

b.1.1

end of section 6.1 jovian chronicles on earth

▼ LIFE IN A POLLUTED LAND

The main impediment to life on Earth is the toxic remnants of the Fall, and everything from architecture to fashion has been heavily influenced by this fact. The land itself has become an enemy, and in their typically belligerent way, the Earthers fight back, their lives dedicated to winning the struggle against their planet.

No structure on Earth, no matter how insignificant, is built without thought to its environmental impact. Any building intended for use for human habitation needs to be sealable, preferably with an air filtration system. Even primitive buildings are roughly sealed with pitch or mud and have rudimentary filtration systems, often just a few layers of water-soaked hessian sack over a pipe. Residences always have an emergency supply of food and water, enough to last months if need be. The common foods eaten by Earthers tend toward those that can be kept for long periods, be they freeze dried, smoked, canned or pickled. Unsurprisingly, Earth cuisine is considered little more than slop by most Solar nationals. Although the algae and yeast dishes of the best French chefs are culinary masterpieces, only the wealthiest Earthers can afford to eat that well.

Clothing is likewise designed for protection and defense, with few concessions to good looks. An air-permeable skinsuit, protected against chemicals and bacteria, is the underwear of choice for those who can afford it. Overalls made of armored fabrics, with slots for armored inserts, are very popular. Styles differ according to climate and wealth; the more expensive overalls usually double as a pressure suit to protect against germs and chemicals. The poor often wear nothing more than heavy denim or linen, though war-relic bullet-proof vests and NBC suits are widely used as emergency backups. Even in wealthy arcologies, where clothing has regained some fashion sense, it is unusual for any set of clothes to not be treated against toxins in some way.

▼ HUMAN RELATIONS

A lot of the survivors of the Fall developed a distaste for reliance on anyone but close family and an even powerful dislike of political change. Mistrust of technology and an almost paranoid suspicion of strangers hinder development in many places. The more rural and backward a region, the more work and responsibility a child is expected to take on. In urban setting, education is more likely, though few children will complete what the Solar Nations regard as high school. In many cases, what little schooling they receive is merely to ensure that they can work productively in a factory environment. While the hardened and unforgiving attitude horrifies more than one space visitor, on Earth such an attitude is called merely being realistic.

Most children on Earth, except those of the wealthy and powerful, never experience the joys of childhood, at least not as the Solar nations consider them. Outside urban centers, education is virtually unknown, and even where it is available, the cost places it out of the reach of many. This cost is not just in books and uniforms, but families must also factor in the loss of another set of hands on the farm or in the factory. No matter a child's age, they have to take responsibility for themselves and pull their weight; life is too hard for families to carry anybody. Thus, despite Solar outrage, child labor is both common and accepted on Earth. Indeed, childhood itself has been cut short, with some nations accepting a person as an adult at ages as low as twelve. The average Earther does not resent this situation, however; on the contrary, they believe that given the Earth's continuing state of turmoil, children are too important a resource to give up.

■ FEAR OF THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

Beyond the paranoia and suspicion that became part of the Earther psyche during the struggle for survival in the Fall, another, much darker, fear lurks. With any new area potentially being a plague zone, communities became incredibly fearful of anything that was new and different. New farmlands would only be opened up after much discussion and testing, strangers coming into town were almost always unwelcome, and any rediscovered technology was carefully assessed to see if its impact would disturb the environment and stir up some legacy of the Fall that was best forgotten.

Given the level of toxicity and contamination still found on Earth, such fears have not diminished and all Earth societies have long lists of taboos and customs developed to protect themselves from accidental infection or poisoning. Anyone breaking these customs and taboos faces not just scorn but also a real threat of violence. Breaching a community's clean zone areas or stirring up the soil in terrain known to be toxic can result in swift and merciless justice against locals and visitors alike. In the more isolated and backward communities this fear goes to extremes, and strangers are sometimes killed on sight, simply because they might be carrying some new plague.

TRAVELING IN A POLLUTED LAND ▼

The most primitive forms of land transport are the most widespread on Earth. Horses and donkeys are the most popular low-tech transport, closely followed by the bicycles so ubiquitous in Earth cities. Naturally, none of these systems work particularly well over long distances, or when freight needs to be transported. In cases where marine transport systems are not available, railways are heavily used. Railways dominate land transport on Earth because of the many benefits they offer; they can carry huge quantities of cargo, can be heavily armed and armored and are easily sealed against environmental conditions. Finally, train engines can use coal or recycled cellulose fuel, reducing fuel costs.

Within urban centers, subways, monorails and trams vie with the bicycle as the most used form of transport. In the cities that can afford modern railways the bicycle loses out, because of its lack of environmental protection. One form of transport rare in Earth cities is private motorized transport. In the modern metropolises of the Maritime League or China high-tech electric vehicles are widespread, but in more backward nations, electric vehicles are too expensive both to buy and to build. Given the high population density of most urban areas on Earth, walking is also a viable way to get around for many citizens.

SAILING THE OPEN SEAS ◇

Given the expense of high-tech equipment and total destruction of important infrastructure during the Fall, ships are the most important transport system on the Earth. From the USN's hovercraft on the Amazon and Congo to the horse-drawn wooden barges used by New America on the shallow remnants of the Mississippi, no nation on Earth could survive economically without using the rivers, lakes and oceans to facilitate trade and travel. Marine systems need little expensive infrastructure development compared to rail or road, are much easier to protect, and for any given vessel carry much more cargo than other forms of transport. The shortfalls, such as the violent storms that constantly sweep the Earth and vulnerability to hostile interdiction, have not been enough to stop watercraft from being the Earth's main transport system.

Apart from equipping vessels against pirate attack, which also gives them a measure of protection in wartime, modern vessels are specifically equipped to survive toxic fogs, keep out foreign bacteria and survive the vicious post-Fall storms. Yet there are also many older vessels, including a fair number of sailing ships, which also take to the water. The crews of such vessels take the risks this entails because of the necessity of marine trade to their communities, as well as the riches that a successful voyage can bring. Passenger services run on all types of ships, from the most modern to the most primitive. Only the rich and influential can fly, so all levels of Earth society can be found traveling by sea. As a consequence, passenger lines have become a source of national pride and nations compete to build the biggest, fastest and most luxurious liners afloat.

MEMORIES OF HOME ▼

In the wider Solar System, despite all the documentaries and news shows, the popular imagination still holds an image of the Earth as it was before the Fall. This is not surprising; most people in the Solar nations are descended from the refugees who fled the Fall and who took with them in their hearts and libraries images and movies of the Earth as it was, rather than as it would become. There is also, despite all the years, an emotional attachment to the mother planet evoked by these images; the perception of Earth as a lost Eden is widespread throughout the Solar nations. Thus, the reality of post-Fall Earth is often a shock to Solar visitors. The resulting strong emotions are often negatively directed at the Earthers, who are seen by many Solar nationals as being responsible for the destruction of the planet. Many nasty fights have started due to accusations over the Fall, and it remains a serious impediment to better relations between Earthers and Solar nationals.

► THE NEW ARKS

The word "arcology" is an amalgam of "architecture" and "ecology;" it defines a space that is designed as a perfect human environment in every aspect. At the most basic level, an arcology provides for the necessary social interaction of humanity by mitigating the negative consequences of modern human civilization, that being the dislocation of traditional society by modernity.

The Italian-born architect and visionary Paolo Soleri developed the idea of the arcology in the 1950s. Arcologies were to be the solution to the varied problems of crowding, urban decay, urban sprawl, pollution and the decreasing communal and personal living standards found in modern metropolises. The initial thrust of Soleri's idea was that the human environment, the city, had not kept pace with the other developments driving humanity's progress. He believed that the key to evolutionary success in any organism was miniaturization. In other words, as something evolved and became more complex, it also became smaller. In this sense, human habitation was an aberration because as Humankind's urban activities had become more complex, cities had grown larger and more unwieldy.

To shrink the city, Soleri believed that the urban environment had to be made as complex as existing human society. He described this complexity as the creation of a truly human environment, where architecture became so complex, compact, flexible and durable that it mimicked natural ecology. By creating a natural human ecology, a place where positive social and economic interaction was encouraged by the architecture of the city, Soleri believed that the living experience could be improved and communal life returned to its place of prime importance. As Soleri's ideas progressed, he also added many "green" developments to the idea of the arcology, and it became not just a way to solve the negative effects of the urban sprawl on humanity, but also to minimize the effects of urbanization on the natural environment as well.

▼ STRUCTURE OF AN ARCOLOGY

Arcologies obey quite different standards compared to the traditional suburban city. The most important idea is that an arcology is one building, a vast single structure. This means each and every part of the city works together, a situation that creates maximum efficiency, whether in regard to energy, water, transport or entertainment facilities. Because an arcology is one building, the vertical is as important as the horizontal; arcologies spread as high above and deep below the surface as they do across it. By moving to a truly three-dimensional city, population density is increased enormously, thus providing further efficiency. An average Soleri-designed arcology has a density of around 70,000 people per square kilometer, as compared to twentieth-century Manhattan's density of only 34,000 people per square kilometer.

With all these people in such a small space, it becomes economical to put huge effort into engineering works to provide for the population's needs in the cheapest, most renewable way. To achieve this outcome, banks of high-tech greenhouses surround all arcologies, providing not just food, but also air filtration, water recycling and solar energy. The greenhouses are combined with vast reservoirs to create a system of heat sinks and exchangers that allows the interior to be kept at a comfortable temperature without human intervention. The greenhouses cannot provide all the necessary food, but the space saved by the increased population density can be turned over to farming, and arcologies are designed with integrated external transport systems to allow for high volume transit of goods into and out of the city.

Within an arcology itself, there are no automobiles. Public transport systems are extensive, but more importantly still, arcologies are structured so that the vast majority of people are within walking distance of everything that they need. This requires that residential and industrial spaces be mixed together, something enabled by the vertical nature of the arcology. No effort is made to hide industrial areas; instead, they are regarded as an integral part of the life of the city and it is not unusual for residential units to look out into factory spaces. Apart from saving energy and time, this concentration of residential and industrial also allows for the development of a close community as people walk, work and live among their neighbors. To help this communal spirit, huge public entertainment spaces are integral to every arcology.

All of this integration and miniaturization adds enormously to the degree of complexity inherent in an arcology, making it difficult to design and build. To overcome this problem, Soleri foresaw the development of prefabricated arcology designs, with just a few minimal changes made depending on the each building site's particular environmental conditions. This does not, however, overcome the inherent difficulty for strangers finding their way around such complex structures; for those born within arcologies, however, three-dimensional navigation becomes second nature.



THE MODERN EARTH ARCOLOGY ▼

In a tribute to the fundamental soundness of Soleri's concept, few changes were made to the arcology during the twenty-first century, when it became the most common home design of the Earth's thirteen billion inhabitants. The biggest change was the addition of fusion power systems, which made arcologies almost completely self-sufficient, and more modern building materials. During the Fall, however, arcologies proved susceptible to rioting and attack, and much of the initial death toll stemmed from greenhouses not proving strong enough to resist the disasters that hit the planet. During reconstruction, these deficiencies were recognized and a huge effort was put into rectifying them.

Rings of defensive bunkers, armored panels, automated air defences, internal anti-rioting systems and a general strengthening of all essential systems have turned the twenty-third century Earth arcology into a city-fortress vulnerable to little short of nuclear weapons. Military-grade filtration and alarm systems protect against chem and bioweapons, while strict quarantine procedures defend against the more prosaic threats of the Earth's damaged environment. Barracks, training centers and specialist eco-restoration systems are the final addition to Soleri's vision, fitting the arcology neatly within the paranoid, militaristic and isolationist creed of twenty-third century Earth society.

In the poorer and more backward areas, many arcologies are twenty-first century ruins that have been rehabilitated or second-rate structures built without the necessary engineering skills to work correctly. The poorer arcologies are not all hellholes, however; by their very nature, arcologies can be self-sufficient and thus provide a better standard of living than traditional habitation. Arcology engineers are therefore among some of the most sought after professionals on Earth, and it is only the arcology's environmentally harmonious functionality that has allowed the Earth's population to rise again without causing another Fall.

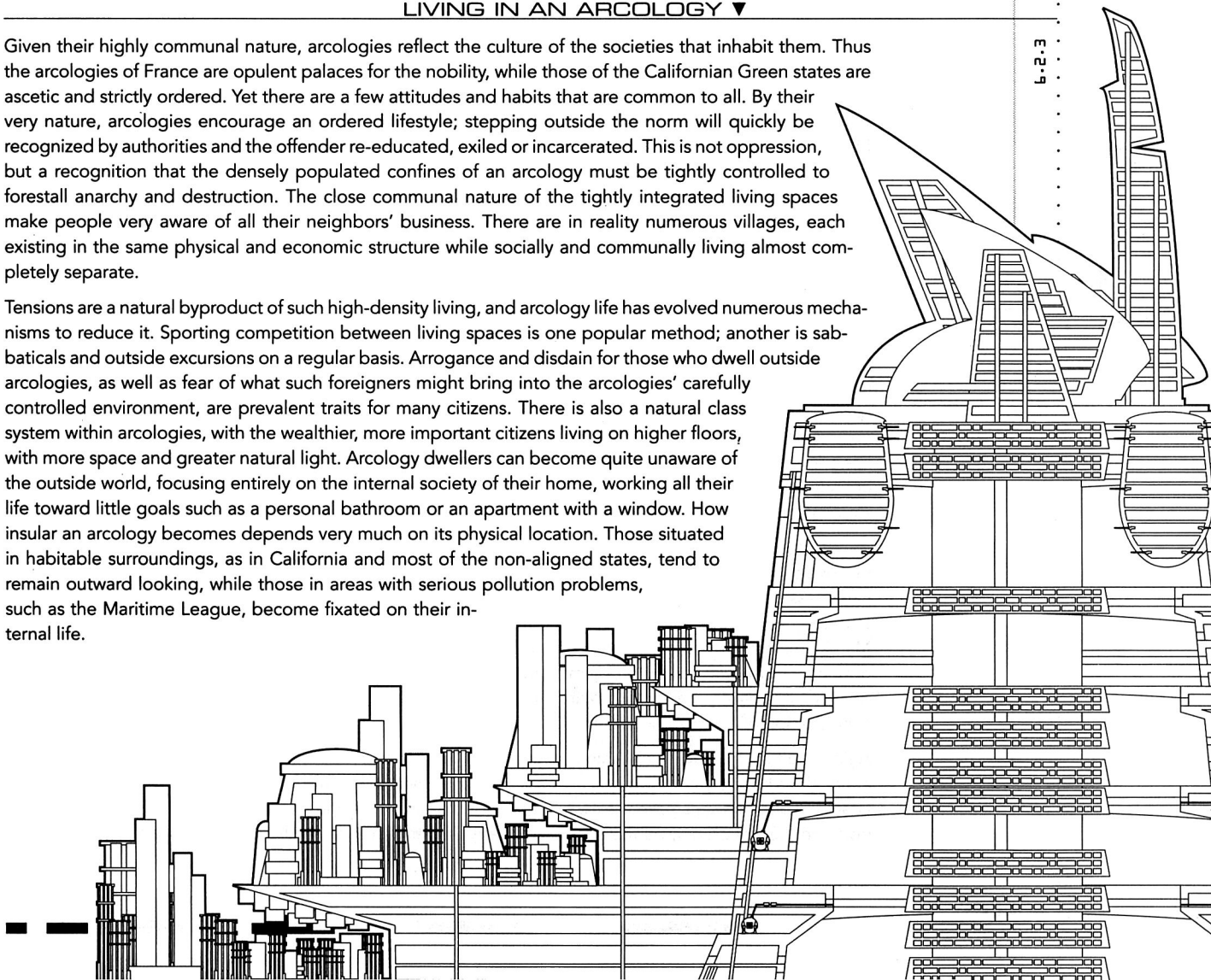
LIVING IN AN ARCOLOGY ▼

Given their highly communal nature, arcologies reflect the culture of the societies that inhabit them. Thus the arcologies of France are opulent palaces for the nobility, while those of the Californian Green states are ascetic and strictly ordered. Yet there are a few attitudes and habits that are common to all. By their very nature, arcologies encourage an ordered lifestyle; stepping outside the norm will quickly be recognized by authorities and the offender re-educated, exiled or incarcerated. This is not oppression, but a recognition that the densely populated confines of an arcology must be tightly controlled to forestall anarchy and destruction. The close communal nature of the tightly integrated living spaces make people very aware of all their neighbors' business. There are in reality numerous villages, each existing in the same physical and economic structure while socially and communally living almost completely separate.

Tensions are a natural byproduct of such high-density living, and arcology life has evolved numerous mechanisms to reduce it. Sporting competition between living spaces is one popular method; another is sabbaticals and outside excursions on a regular basis. Arrogance and disdain for those who dwell outside arcologies, as well as fear of what such foreigners might bring into the arcologies' carefully controlled environment, are prevalent traits for many citizens. There is also a natural class system within arcologies, with the wealthier, more important citizens living on higher floors, with more space and greater natural light. Arcology dwellers can become quite unaware of the outside world, focusing entirely on the internal society of their home, working all their life toward little goals such as a personal bathroom or an apartment with a window. How insular an arcology becomes depends very much on its physical location. Those situated in habitable surroundings, as in California and most of the non-aligned states, tend to remain outward looking, while those in areas with serious pollution problems, such as the Maritime League, become fixated on their internal life.

b.2.2

b.2.3





► THE INDEPENDANT CITY OF MARAJO

Unless a person wishes to subject themselves to the stringent customs procedures of CEGA, the Compact or the ATS, Marajo is the only legitimate entry point to Earth with regular service to and from orbit. More than just being an entry point for Solar travellers, Marajo is also the most important neutral port and marketplace on Earth. Economically, the city is booming, trading anything to anyone as long as there is profit to be made. Everyone can be found here, from CEGA diplomats and agents to Jovian businessmen, making for a dynamic, treacherous and exciting social scene.

Like almost everything in Marajo, exactly who runs the city is somewhat murky and ill-defined. Technically, the city is an independent, democratic city-state run by an elected council and mayor. The reality is that the merchant-criminal Cartel families own the democratic system through bribery and blackmail, while the USN administration of the Amazonian Protectorate heavily impinges on the duties of the government. Less influential but still important are the West Indian and Greater South African ambassadors, because they represent CEGA and the Compact and have the ability to cause serious commercial, political, or physical difficulties to anyone who crosses them.

The current Marajian Mayor is Eddie Fernandez, a successful merchant with strong links to the Villacarillo Family of the Rio Grande Allied Cantons. With their support, he has become the first non-Cartel mayor in a decade, and is fighting constant battles with the Cartel-controlled Democratic Council. Indeed, he has survived half a dozen assassination attempts to date. The two leading Cartels, the Farol and Barra, believe that Eddie is part of a Villacarillo conspiracy to take power in Marajo. While they are correct, what none of the Cartels have noticed is that every violent action and disruption to the management of the city plays right into the hands of Nadia Brujic, the USN Administrator.

A citizen of the Martian Federation, Nadia finds the chaotic and corrupt infighting of the Marajian government galling in the extreme. As a result, she has used the ongoing infighting since Eddie Fernandez became Mayor to gradually assume direct responsibility for more and more of the city's day-to-day administration. While she has no legal power within Marajo itself, since it lies outside the Amazonian Protectorate, her control over the fusion reactors, local SolaPol Office and USN Guards means she has more concrete power than anyone else in the city. So far, Nadia's attempts to get her mandate expanded to officially include Marajo are being stymied by the diplomatic efforts of CEGA and the Compact. Their main worry is that Nadia's strict and legalistic approach to her job will undermine the necessarily shadowy way that Marajo works as a neutral meeting ground and marketplace for CEGA and the Free Earth. To this end, they have been undermining her attempts to use SolaPol to bring increased law and order to the streets, adding to the violence and tensions increasingly wracking the city.

▼ GETTING THERE

There are four different paths to Marajo, depending on where one is coming from. From the Solar nations, Marajo is accessible via any major Orbital colony; most of the CEGA airlines that operate delta services have regular flights to and from the island city. This is permitted by CEGA because, technically speaking, the spaceport is actually USN territory, something that infuriates the Imperialist faction which opposes any Solar commerce with the Free Earth. Other air services from CEGA are relatively limited, operating only from the West Indies in the face of ongoing pressure from the Imperialist faction for the flights to be cancelled entirely. From Free Earth, there are no such political concerns, and flights are available from every major state in Asia and Africa, as well as from Nuevo Ecuador and the Inca City-States.

A more popular method of transport for many is by sea. From all over Free Earth and from the West Indies, massive cargo ships carry thousands of tons of merchandise into Marajo every day. Most of these ships also have passenger capacity, and those with limited budgets or a desire to be inconspicuous are likely to be able to find discreet passage to Marajo from any major port. Many minor ships also work the routes to Marajo, mainly from poorer areas like the Mini-States or Argentina. These smaller vessels are an even better option for those with serious problems with officialdom, be it SolaPol, CEGA, or anyone else. The number of smaller ships plying the lanes to Marajo is simply so large that no one has the manpower to cover even a small portion of the incoming traffic.

A final method for travel to Marajo is over land. While travel by motor vehicle or animal strikes most Solar nationals as bizarrely primitive, it is the easiest method available to the poor people of New Brazil or the Rio Grande. Long convoys make their way regularly into Marajo, though they often have to wait days for transport into the city proper, via the overworked ferry barges that connect the city to the mainland.

PLACES TO STAY ▼

From dives without power or running water to the five-star luxury of the best Solar hotel chains, Marajo has accommodations to suit every budget and every need. There is however, a noticeable cultural divide in the city's hotels and pensiones. The poorer the establishment, the more locals and less spoken English will be found. The more expensive the establishment, the more foreigners (especially Solar nationals) and less spoken Spanish will be found. This divide is important if visitors have limited language skills (often a problem for Solar visitors) or wish to hide themselves away from watchful eyes.

Big hotels are limited to the New Marajo Spaceport, for cheap modular accommodation, or Orchid Road, for expensive five-star luxury. However, these areas are also heavily patrolled and lacking in any of the real zest that otherwise characterizes Marajo. Nor are the local inns and pensiones necessarily down at heel. Those that cater for the Great Families of the city, New Brazil and the Rio Grande are the very epitome of decadence. Of course, for those too poor or too notorious to stay anywhere else, the streets of Marajo are home to a vast number of homeless; with the city's ever-balmy weather, sleeping in an alley or park is an option for those willing to risk the many terrors that haunt the back streets.

THINGS TO BUY ▼

Though most of the cargo that comes into Marajo is actually transhipped, a sufficient percentage is stolen to ensure that the markets of the city are well stocked with almost anything that one could desire. This includes highly illegal items as well, since the city is also the favored marketplace for goods produced by illegal labs in the Mini-States or Argentina. With this huge range of goods from all over Earth and the Solar system flooding in, it is no surprise that a multitude of potential buyers also flood the city, all looking for bargains or that "certain something." It is a given in Marajo, however, that that "certain something" is most likely to be illegal in the customer's place of origin.

There are plenty of legitimate goods on sale, though these tend not to attract the interest of Solar nationals, who are not interested in prosaic items such as bulk foodstuffs and low-tech manufactured goods. While of little wider interest, the trade in these basic goods is the key to Marajo's role in Earth trade and both CEGA and the Compact are far more interested in making sure this unexciting and unglamorous trade goes ahead than in any of the more high-tech and illegal activities that Marajo is famous for.

Naturally, the ability to buy or sell high-tech and illegal merchandise is what attracts many to the city. Whether these are Orbital citizens looking for drugs or a good time, revolutionaries after guns or perverts after the latest genetically engineered sex toy, there is something to satisfy all wants. However, what is high-tech is not necessarily illegal. Many high-tech items can be found in Marajo at a fraction of their normal cost because they are either black-market copies or are stolen. At the same time, terrorists are quite happy with the primitive explosives produced by plants in the Rio Grande, and many drug addicts are satisfied with the opiates still grown in hillside terraces in the Thai-Lao Kingdom.

Increasingly, goods manufactured in Marajo are also available in the city's marketplaces. Many Orbital corporations are overcoming their lack of suitably cheap products for sale on Earth by setting up factories in the city, which offers cheap labor, zero tax and the existing infrastructure to export to both CEGA and Free Earth. Venusian Corporations seeking entry into the Free Earth market are also looking to Marajo, though so far none have actually invested in the city.

WELCOME ONE, WELCOME ALL ★

Hot, dark and fetid are the three defining features of the Marajian slums, though I suppose you could add "haunt of the most wanted" to that list. In the last twelve months, I have had verifiable reports of four of the most wanted fugitives in the Solar System passing through the city. Charlene Strauss treats Marajo as a home away from home and we have seen her in town on at least three occasions this year. In two cases, she was obviously here negotiating contracts, while the third was merely a case of using the Marajian Space Port and its lax procedures to get into orbit.

The freelance spy known as Gina was seen in late January meeting with unknown parties, then left via space plane. Next to visit town was the Venusian renegade Charles Hanford, who dropped in on us in May, only to leave town after he apparently got wind that we were onto him. No idea where he went or what he was doing. Finally, we've just had Mikal Novak in town. I lost four agents before he left and I'm only just out of rehab myself. You have to give me more agents; every criminal in the Solar System seems to think Marajo is a holiday resort.

Source: audio transcript, message from Agent Samara Balashov, Special Investigations Bureau, June 2211.



▼ ENTERTAINMENT

Bars, brothels, casinos and strip clubs are the core of Marajo's nightlife. This is purely for economic reasons; sailors and locals have little time for more salubrious entertainment, and visitors from the Orbital colonies are inevitably looking for a little rough trade and are the main customers of Marajo's thriving sex industry. Nor is all entertainment legal, even by Marajian law. Drug dens, sex parlors specializing in the degrading and inhuman, illegal gladiatorial contests and almost any other vice a visitor cares to indulge are all to be found with a minimum of difficulty.

For merchants and the well-to-do, the best entertainment to be found in the city are the various clubs along Orchid Road. Ranging from members-only establishments to little more than watering holes, the clubs offer a range of entertainments, private rooms, food and a level of security unknown to the rest of the city's drinking establishments. Each club tends to be controlled by a particular Cartel Family or individual associated with one powerful faction or another. Only one, Café Jovian, is free of this factional divide; it maintains a strict security policy to ensure that no one brings disputes into the club.

▼ GETTING AROUND

Marajo lacks any form of public transport and has a poorly developed road system compared to the number of people who live in the city. The USN maintains a monorail system to connect its compounds and facilities, and the city has developed a rail system for the docks and industrial complexes, but for the general populace, there is nothing. Naturally, the wealthy have private motor vehicles, but unless they wish to walk, the vast majority of the population must use the huge number of bicycles, scooters, primitive buses and tricycle taxis. Having all these small vehicles on what are already inadequate roads makes for appalling gridlock.

For the truly rich, paranoid or well-connected, the easiest and safest way to get around Marajo is by air. Each arcology, no matter how run-down, has at least one air landing platform, though some poorer facilities lack lights or navigation aids. The controllers at the spaceport also monitor the city's airspace and USN patrol aircraft will respond to any hostile aerial actions to ensure that nothing interferes with delta services, making local airspace the safest place in the city.

▼ SECURITY

There are three main forces for law and order in Marajo. First and foremost are the forces of the USN: SolaPol and the USN Guards. While technically restricted to the USN facilities within the city, this does not stop them intervening when and where they feel it necessary in order to ensure the safety and security of USN citizens. Crimes involving USN personnel or facilities, anything involving the USN spaceport, or any matter the USN is asked to investigate by a member state comes under their purview. Generally, the Guards and SolaPol are respected and well liked within the city by the average citizens, their honesty and integrity standing them apart from the other security forces in the city.

The city also maintains its own police force, but it is hopelessly corrupt and as faction-ridden as the Democratic Council itself. Unless it is something that affects the making of money in the city, the police are on the side of the highest bidder. When a crime like a dock strike or attempt to unionize a factory happens, it is guaranteed that the police will crack down with excessive violence and numerous human-rights abuses. Needless to say, the police are very unpopular with most Marajians, whether they have the money to pay for police protection or not. Relations between the police and the USN are also very poor, and on a number of occasions firefights have broken out between SolaPol agents raiding drug labs and the Marajian police protecting the criminals.

The most numerous security forces in the city are the innumerable private security firms that operate within the city. Some are no more than fronts for the Cartel Families' gangster armies, while others are high-quality paramilitary organizations capable of operating anywhere in the Solar System. The majority, however, are simple security-guard firms working to protect the assets and persons of their employers from the numerous threats that lurk in Marajo's unruly streets. From bodyguards to aerial surveillance, patrolmen to hostage rescue teams, at least one private security firm is going to be able to provide what is needed in any given situation — for a price.

THINGS TO SEE ▼

The Marajian cityscape has all the aesthetic appeal of an architectural theory paper by a first year student. This is the unfortunate result of most of the city either having been put up by the cheapest contractors the USN could find or by private developers using purloined plans and vastly out-of-date technology. Although the USN structures are soundly built, much of the rest of the city suffers from poor quality materials, design and construction. As a result, structural failures in buildings are not uncommon, and even relatively new structures often do not have properly working plumbing or electrical wiring.

Generally, Marajian buildings are built around two basic requirements: defense against the tropical heat and the need to maximize living space and minimize ecological impact. Thus, most buildings are designed with very thick walls and high ceilings, as well as other features such as water fountains and garden terraces that serve to cut the heat, utilize waste products and provide food and clean air. These features are often present even in poorer arcologies, since the integrity of one's shelter it can be a matter of life and death.

In the vast and rambling warrens of Marajo, a few districts and places stand out for special mention. These are not necessarily the most important places in the city, but are rather those of most interest either to visitors or to those individuals who really matter in Marajo's treacherous and intrigue-ridden social scene.

DOCKS DISTRICT ◇

The Marajo docks, which are among the busiest on the planet, show what happens when industrial automation meets third-world labor standards. In a site quite unlike anywhere else on Earth, vast automated cargo cranes unload huge container ships while swarms of laborers manhandle sacks at their bases. This strange situation is necessary because of the wide variety of trade that Marajo is home to: it is not economical for the smaller ships that carry out trade with the poorer areas of Earth to use automated facilities, yet the huge vessels necessary for the transshipment of goods between CEGA and the Free Earth could not be handled in any other way. The docks are therefore a strange and often frightening place, where robotic behemoths thunder twenty-four hours a day and groups of rough and ready dockworkers linger in the shade between jobs. Smugglers also use the docks; the shadows between the container piles often hide illegal deals, and death is a not-uncommon occurrence, be it from simple muggings or turf wars between rival dockworkers.

ORCHID ROAD ◇

Only a kilometer long, Orchid Road is one of the most famous shopping districts on Earth. While it lacks the glittering malls that adorn the more affluent cities, Orchid Road is packed with multilevel stores offering an unparalleled range of goods. It also boasts a number of towering luxury shopping centers dedicated to serving the wealthy of CEGA, Free Earth and the Orbital Colonies. For the true bargain hunter, however, the real delights of the area are the hundreds of multilevel marketplaces where thousands of small store-owners sell anything that one can imagine. Innumerable hotels, restaurants, clubs and bars cater to the shoppers, especially the well-heeled who fly in for one-day shopping sprees. The eager hordes of customers are seldom prey to the same dangers that affect the rest of the city; knowing that their livelihoods depend on a continuing throng of tourists, the various shop owners, from the biggest mall director to the smallest street seller, all contribute to a fund that pays for excellent security. For the moment, life is good on Orchid Road, and people from all over Earth mingle in the pursuit of just the right bargain.

USN COMPOUND ◇

The largest section of the city is taken up by the vast compound of the USN's Amazonian Protectorate. Made up of four interlocked arcologies, with the Marajian Spaceport as an adjunct on the seaward side of the complex, the Compound is home to almost forty thousand people. Not all of these are employees of the USN, however; many are family members of USN workers, while others are Orbital-recruited support staff that man the shops, schools and other facilities that provide the USN staff with every service they require. The only locals found in the Compound are those who fill the menial positions that Orbital citizens refuse to occupy. Naturally, the Compound and its separation from the life of the city proper are a cause for dissension and resentment in the rest of the city's populace. Given that Compound security is run by the USN Guards and SolaPol, however, very few people have bothered to make their disagreement with the USN's exclusivist policies more outspoken. Not all Compound facilities are off limits; the Hospital often provides what care it can for those people too sick to be treated by Marajo's own relatively antiquated medical services.

◇ CAFÉ JOVIAN

Ricky Tragob came to Earth as a member of the first USN Guards party to enter Marajo prior to the setup of the Amazonian Protectorate in 2193. She is a native of the Jovian Confederation who ventured to the Martian Free Republic as a member of the Jovian Development Corps. She became embroiled in one of the many minor wars between the Republic and the Federation, and after committing a number of acts which she would rather forget, Ricky joined the USN Guards to escape both Jovian justice as well as her own memories. Mustered out in Marajo in 2195, she decided to remain in the city; using her discharge pay, she opened Café Jovian. Ricky has no tolerance for any faction in the Solar System, believing one as bad as any other, and she enforces strict neutrality within her club. Former Guardsmen are employed as security, and the café projects a relaxed, tropical ambiance where everyone can feel safe. Over the years, Ricky has become one of the most influential information brokers in a city known for its access to the secrets of the entire planet. Many people come to Café Jovian needing something, hoping Ricky can put them in touch with the right people. While her knowledge doesn't usually come cheap, Ricky doesn't always charge for it either; it is one of the few remaining traces of her Jovian idealism.

◇ MARAJO SPACEPORT

As spaceports go, Marajo's orbital transit station is quite small compared to the huge facilities operated by CEGA. It is one of the most advanced and up-to-date facilities found on Earth, however, a legacy of the USN's preference for Orbital technology. Built upon a series of floating platforms off the coast of Marajo, the spaceport is not just one of the city's most important facilities, but also its most contentious. While paid for by the USN and technically USN territory, by treaty the spaceport is under the administration of the city; thus, it is the local police who enforce the law and city officials who run customs and air traffic control. While they cooperate closely with SolaPol and the USN Guards in their duties at the spaceport, nothing can be done to alleviate the basic corruption of the poorly paid city officials. While they do not actually disrupt the spaceport's operation, customs and clearance procedures are so sloppy that anyone who has sufficient bribe money can use the facility without fear of detection. Attempts by SolaPol to bring the spaceport under its sway have been bitterly resisted, to the point where SolaPol agents have been forcibly detained after arresting wanted criminals within the confines of the spaceport.

◇ CARIBBEAN QUARTER

The West Indies has been trading with Marajo since the beginning of the Long Winter; as a result, there are strong ties between the city and that nation. The most obvious result is the dynamic, friendly and picturesque Caribbean Quarter. A district composed of low-rise houses rather than arcologies, the Quarter has become the financial heart of the city. Rather than meeting in vast offices complexes, Marajan businesspeople come together in private homes in the Caribbean Quarter to do business over lunch and dinner. This informal mode of business is well-suited to the unofficial way that Marajo operates within the Earth economy. The Quarter is a hotbed of intrigue, and vast sums of money trade hands there.

As many South Africans as West Indians live in the quarter, and the two ambassadors from those nations informally run the place. Their decisions are enforced by the fact that the security detachments for their embassies provide security for the Quarter. Of course, their informal roles as de facto trade ministers for CEGA and Free Earth, respectively, helps ensure that all local businesspeople, as well as the city government, listen closely to what they say.

◇ MARAJIAN CATHEDRAL

A huge structure visible from almost anywhere, the Marajan Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Marajo. Given the Church's power and influence in South and Central America, the Cathedral sees more politicking and deal-making than many of the buildings in the Caribbean Quarter. The Cathedral Complex abounds with examples of the Church's dedication to good works, such as the huge hospital and medical school, which accept any who ask for treatment and ask for little in return. There is also South America's largest orphanage, a seminary/university and research institutes dedicated to finding new ways for the simple people of South America to overcome the legacy of the Fall. The Cathedral itself is not Earth's largest or most decorative, but it is the perhaps the most human. At all hours of the day, average Marajians can be found inside praying and escaping from the heat, while the massive public gardens, which grow enough food for all the complex' inhabitants and the Church's many food centers, are run purely with voluntary labor.

PEOPLE OF MARAJO ▼

Home to tens of millions, Marajo has the most eclectic population in the Solar System. Nowhere else will one find Mercurian Guildsmen, CEGA officials, Orbital tourists, traders from every part of Free Earth, a fair number of Martians and the even occasional Jovian, all mixing and socializing together. Of course, the vast majority of citizens speak Portuguese, but even they have taken on a degree on internationalism. It is not unusual to see the well-to-do wearing cheap copies of West Indian fashions, reading French novels while eating in a Venusian-style restaurant. For the poor, on the other hand, existence is pretty much as it is in every other part of Earth: harsh and unforgiving.

CARTEL FAMILIES ◇

The dozen or so families that have traditionally controlled Marajo trace their origins back to the bandit lords who took control over the island during the Long Winter. The brighter ones soon realized there was more money to be had by trade than banditry, and thus the city of Marajo was born. The fortunes of these families have grown proportionally with the city's amazing success, and they live lives of luxury and excess. While they give their children Orbital educations and are among the most successful businesspeople in a city of success, the families still feud and fight among themselves like their bandit ancestors. While the riots between their junior members rarely devolve into gunfire, stabbings and other "quiet" methods of murder are common.

The disputes between the families are what allowed the Villacarillos to get a foothold in the city. Despised for their Spanish background and feared for their insidious influence, the Villacarillos have united the Cartel families in a way never before seen. While disputes between the families have not stopped, they have been put on hold until the southern interlopers are expelled. How this battle for control will end is difficult to tell; both sides are well matched. The likely decider is going to be the USN, which may well step in as the fighting escalates.

FOREIGNERS ◇

Apart from the huge population of transients always found in Marajo, a large number of foreigners have also taken up permanent residence in the city. Their reasons are varied, from merchants seeking tax relief to political dissidents needing refuge. Many are also down-and-outs that have simply ended up in the city without the money needed to leave again. There is no differentiation between locals and foreigners except for the fact that a larger percentage of foreigners have the money to live in the better districts of the city.

Despite the generally friendly relations, there are still some tensions beneath the surface. The most noticeable is between the Portuguese-speaking locals and the increasing numbers of Spanish speakers moving up from the south, which occasionally result in minor riots. There are also tensions between CEGA citizens and those of Free Earth and the Solar nations, though in general most of these people treat Marajo as neutral ground and are warily friendly as they socialize and do business together. While bodies do sometimes turn up in the alleys and bloody shadow wars occasionally break out, they are unusual and always limited in scope.

THE POOR ◇

The largest and least influential of the city's many inhabitants, the poor are nevertheless essential to the economic life of Marajo. Not only do they provide the manpower for the city's many sweatshops, docks and legitimate factories, but they are also integral to the USN's eco-restoration work, much of which is manpower-intensive by its very nature. Nor are Marajo's poor all that badly off by South American standards; the vast majority have places to live, thanks to the USN's arcology building program, and although street violence and industrial accidents take many lives, life in Marajo is still safer than the lot of a rural peon.

More importantly, there is also a great deal of hope in Marajo. Church- or USN-sponsored schools are widely available, and the city's current boom means that for those with sufficient ambition and savvy, there is the possibility of raising oneself out of poverty. The present mayor, for instance, is the son of a vegetable seller; he went to a church school and rose rapidly through the ranks of a West Indian trading firm. As long as the possibility of a better life exists, most of Marajo's poor will remain content with their lot.

► GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The brutal environment of post-Fall Earth has produced a world order that is well-suited to intrigue, power-brokering and alliance-making. Wherever a visitor goes, he'll find a bewildering array of causes and banners for people to flock to. Given the current political climate on Earth, it is not surprising that many of these organizations are focused toward military or economic gain, but amid the calls for violence and increased wealth, there can also be found the occasional noble agenda. Even within the realm of military operations, every individual force has distinctive traits and attitudes which set it apart from the others and which also define how that unit will behave in certain situations.

This section provides brief introductions to several of the most important organizations found in Free Earth, and also provides some suggestions as to how these groups might react to Player Characters in their midst.

▼ WARRIOR CULTURES

The Earth is producing an ever-growing class of wealthy and educated citizens separate from and yet not quite at the economic or political level of the tiny elites that dominate so many states. In many cases, especially in CEGA, this is not through altruism; instead, many people are breaking out of poverty through military service. Although factories can be automated to the point that a small cadre of educated supervisors can run them efficiently, the Earth's militaries need thousands of well-trained, well-educated individuals to man and maintain their high-tech weapon arsenal. These soldiers eventually return to civilian life as skilled workers and managers, demanding and receiving more money and influence than their nonmilitary counterparts.

The dynamism that these middle-class soldiers are bringing to Earth is opening up the planet enormously, much to the ire of the planet's non-democratic states. The rising middle class is a serious challenge to the narrow elites that rule many Earth nations, while at the same time they are also proving a political and economic boon to the planet's democracies. The dictatorial elites fear the middle class will lead a revolt against them; indeed some feel that CEGA has become the tool of the middle class soldiers and that its push for centralization is merely revolution by another means. Yet it is also readily obvious that the Earth's future prosperity depends on the innovations and businesses being created by these young men and women. It remains to be seen if CEGA can harness the potential of its ex-soldiers, or if narrow-minded and fearful members of the upper classes will succeed in cracking down on them.

STRANGERS IN STRANGE LANDS

Whether PCs are Earthers or Solar nationals is a major distinction in an Earth-based Jovian Chronicles game. Both present their own unique problems. Earthers are divided between those who support CEGA and those who oppose it, while Solar nationals will find themselves disliked and discriminated against all over the planet. Taking into account the bitterness and hatred that exist on Earth, having the wrong background can be a serious limitation. Gamemasters should be aware that Players trying to run disadvantaged characters (CEGA characters in the ANZAC, for instance) will have never-ending trouble with the local authorities. This sort of continuing hassle can kill a Player's enjoyment of the game if not handled correctly, and Gamemasters should think carefully about which Players they allow to take certain backgrounds.

In the case of an existing campaign coming to Earth, where the group will mostly be made up of Solar nationals, Gamemasters may need to take a more liberal approach to ensure that Players are not frustrated by minor problems. One way to do this is to casually remind them of the discrimination via obviously inflated prices, muttered insults or refusal of service in some places. Minor irritants such as these keep the Players aware of their position in local society without interrupting enjoyable game play. Another way around this problem is to encourage Players (especially those indulging in less than legal activity) to disguise their characters' backgrounds; this in and of itself keeps the idea of discrimination and alienation in the forefront of a game without getting in the way.

CHINESE MOUNTED POLICE ▼

2.4.9

Throughout the non-aligned states, one law enforcement organization stands above all others, possessing a local reputation that exceeds even that of SolaPol: the Chinese Mounties. On Earth, the green tunics of the Mounties can be found in the most surprising places, from the Andes to Zanzibar, and wherever they are any person who meets them can be assured that they are absolutely trustworthy. That is, of course, so long as what is going on is legal; if not, the Mounties will enforce both Chinese and international law without fear or favor. If this means dying in a foreign land in order to reinstate justice, then they're quite willing to do that as well.

In the aftermath of the Third World War, the chaos in China surpassed that suffered by almost anywhere else on Earth, as its tremendous population died by the hundreds of millions from disease, famine and localized wars. In 2120, a group of bandits assaulted and left for dead a young woman called Kyai Ying, from the town of Yantai. Rather than die, Kyai survived and hunted down the bandits. One by one she caught them, but rather than killing them, Kyai dragged the bandits back to Yantai and had them condemned by the Town Elders before seeing them hanged. When she was done the elders approached her about forming a police force to protect the town. Thus did the Yantai Mounted Police come into being in 2125.

From this humblest of beginnings, the Mounties grew by stages, from patrolling one town to patrolling a district, to patrolling a province, until by 2134 they were patrolling most of central China, operating with the permission of the local towns and villages. They built a solid reputation for fearless bravery and honesty, so much so that some say that the Chinese Federation was built on the trust that the Mounties had created and the trade that flourished under their dedicated protection.

PRESENT ACTIVITIES ◇

Within the Chinese Federation, the Mounties are responsible for all federal law enforcement, including counter-espionage and border patrol. With the creation of the ATS, the Mounties took on wider duties as the Federation offered their skills to other members; as a result, Mounties can be found operating on secondment in all ATS member nations. Under the auspices of the ATS' Mutual Security program, the Mounties are also available to help other non-aligned nations and work hard to improve security liaison between all of Free Earth. A Mounted Police liaison officer can even be found on Pyrea Station, forming a permanent connection between SolaPol and the Mounted Police.

The Mounties have a tradition of operating in pairs or small autonomous units called Patrols, a structure they still maintain. In any situation that their highly trained and well-armed troopers can't handle, the Mounted Police have the ability to call in and command local police and military units. This allows them to remain a relatively small organization and keep focused on investigation and surveillance operations. This may seem at odds with their paramilitary reputation, but though superbly equipped for combat, the Mounties generally prefer quiet, simple operations where the suspect is taken into custody without a shot being fired.

PERSONNEL ◇

The Mounted Police only recruit Chinese citizens, preferring young graduates without previous experience. While this often means new Mounties are highly inexperienced, it allows for their indoctrination to be more complete, as the mystique and honor of the Mounted Police is relentlessly drilled into recruits; even the slightest sign of moral turpitude warrants expulsion. Upon graduation from the Mounted Police Academy in Yantai, a new probationary officer will be assigned to a veteran partner in a mentoring process considered to be more important than the academy training. If at any time during the two-year probationary period the veteran thinks the young officer is unsuitable, the probationary officer is dismissed.

Those officers who survive to wear the full green tunic of a Mounted Police Officer are people of significant skill and undoubted courage and loyalty. Their abilities place them among the best law enforcement officials in the Solar System and the Mounted Police have an enviable record of not just success, but also internal integrity. The Mounties keep the nature of their internal affairs unit a closely held secret, though the truth is that every senior veteran is also an internal affairs officer. This system is extremely effective; in the last twenty years, there have been only three cases of corruption.

▼ SOUTH AFRICAN B.O.S.S.

The South African Bureau of Security and Safety (BOSS) is not in any way a law enforcement organization; although they often like to come across as law enforcers, BOSS agents are actually secret intelligence operatives, and dangerous ones at that. South African diplomacy is legendary, and a great deal of that reputation is due to BOSS' skills and behind-the-scenes influence. While BOSS has maintained a reasonable relationship with other non-CEGA agencies, it has little respect for the law, the Edicts or anything else when it comes to the safety of their nation, and they employ a large number of very competent assassins.

BOSS goes back as far as 1952 and has a highly spotted history, having undergone numerous name changes over the years. The Bureau was chosen by the South African government to supervise the secret installations and repositories that were set aside in the late 2080s against the collapse of civilization. When South Africa re-emerged in 2122, BOSS was initially running the nation, but quickly handed control over to a democratic council and returned to its original brief of protecting South Africa's interests, externally and internally. In this regard it is notable that many famous Greater South African traders and explorers from the Long Winter were BOSS agents; BOSS even had agents in North America and Europe by 2145.

During and since the Unification Wars, BOSS has fought a bloody shadow war with the nations that became CEGA. It still funds guerrilla movements, carries out assassinations and pursues highly successful espionage campaigns against all the CEGA regimes. BOSS is regarded as one of CEGA's most formidable opponents, especially since their agents have continuously penetrated CEGA's Joint Service Intelligence. The most notorious case was the revelation in 2208 that Commodore Jerri Sebastian, JSI commander for the Eurasian FDA, was actually a South African agent and had been for twenty years.

◇ PRESENT ACTIVITIES

As of 2214, BOSS is busier and better funded than ever. It has followed CEGA into space, being centrally involved in the Compact's secret space development program, and BOSS agents are closely involved with anti-CEGA groups throughout the Orbital and Lunar colonies. This new focus has not distracted them from planetary operations, however, and there has been a further increase in BOSS operations since the Odyssey Affair, especially ones that are technical violations of the Jerusalem Accords. It is also worth noting that BOSS also operates as the default intelligence service for the Compact as whole, with other members contributing both agents and funding; it alone among the major intelligence organizations in the solar system is not fighting bureaucratic wars with other competing services.

The independence that its Compact-wide orientation has brought is raising some problems, however. BOSS regards itself as the ultimate protector of southern Africa and has an agenda above and beyond that of the Azanian Compact. Exactly what this agenda entails is not yet fully understood outside the organization, but in the pursuit of the security of Africa, BOSS will go to any lengths. Perhaps its most disturbing activity is its association with the terrorist group known as STRIKE. While the non-aligned nations have all funded this group at times, BOSS is close to actually supplying not just funds but major weapons systems, intelligence and training. In turn, STRIKE is providing technical data regarding the CEGA Space Navy, which is fed directly into the Compact's secret space program and is one reason for the Compact's great success in keeping up with CEGA's own developments.

◇ PERSONNEL

BOSS agents can be anywhere on Earth or in the Orbitals. They are well trained, aggressive if uncovered and near fanatical in their dedication to duty. It is not unusual, for instance, for undercover agents who finish their mission to kill the entourage they formed as part of their cover to avoid loose ends. This illustrates the degree of ruthlessness that BOSS conditioning brings out in its agents. Spotting agents is also hard because BOSS recruits widely, often specifically seeking out people with capabilities that suit a particular mission.

Having joined BOSS, new agents receive the best training and equipment that the Compact can afford, and the Bureau is notorious for never abandoning an agent, as well as for avenging their deaths. This loyalty is repaid in kind, and hostile agencies have had extreme difficulty in penetrating BOSS, with three JSI agents caught in the last two years. It is notable that BOSS is quite anachronistic in that it is one of the few Azanian organizations that respects the ancient and obsolete tribal distinctions among its personnel. This is actually a deliberate cultural exercise to emphasize both BOSS' separation from the normal world and pro-African political focus.

AMAZON SECURITY FORCE ▼

Amid the turmoil and violence of South America, a USN-member-state citizen in trouble is not completely alone. If the person can reach anywhere that is within the range of the air transports of the USN Guards based in the Amazon, it is almost guaranteed that that person will return to their home nation alive. As much as many in the Solar System like to make jokes about the soldiers in the blue helmets, when the going gets tough it is nice to know that heavily armed and well-trained soldiers are there to help, and the Guards don't get better than those assigned to the Amazon.

Two centuries ago, the Guards were called the French Foreign Legion. Then they became the Earth Patrol Force, trying to keep order in a world going mad. After the Collapse, they became the USN Guards, holders of a fierce martial tradition and defenders of the highest ideals of man. Through the years the Guards have jealously maintained their mercenary structure, ensuring not just their neutrality, but also their effectiveness. In a tradition going back to the French Foreign Legion, the Guards give a new identity to every recruit, giving desperate men and women a refuge from either the law, their pasts, or lives that had gotten too hard. Desperate people are what the Guards need, for they only ever see the hardest duty, in the most hazardous and lonely places, far from help and always outnumbered.

Since 2186, the Guards have seen numerous deployments on Earth, their most enduring of these being to protect the two Environmental Protectorates that exist under the auspices of the USN. The Amazon quickly became the more difficult of the two, as the chaos of South America and resentment of the locals has led to constant fighting and raiding. The two demi-brigades of the Amazon Security Force have become the toughest assignment in the Guards and even battle-scarred veterans regard a transfer there with trepidation. The Amazon Security Force has become known as one of the toughest military units in the Solar System, the constant fighting and patrolling making veterans out of even the greenest Guardsmen in six months — if they live that long.

PRESENT ACTIVITIES ◇

Despite the fact that it has been almost two decades since the creation of the Amazonian Protectorate, resentment among the South Americans is as great today as it ever was. Needless to say, the rulers of Argentina, New Brazil and the Rio Grande make good use of this resentment to keep their peoples looking elsewhere for someone to blame. Of course the Guards don't help matters by regularly assaulting trespassing peasants with batons, stun grenades, and tear gas. The Guards' response to the "bandits" that the local countries send over the border is less merciful; the casualty rate among the raiders is over ninety percent. The Guards' brutality in the face of the constant guerrilla warfare has led to highly believable rumors of atrocities, but no official complaints have been made.

Attempts by the USN to mediate a solution always fail, and SolaPol's attempt to locate ringleaders just aggravates matters further. The present commander of the Security Force, Commandant Hassim Chitorgarh, was a rather notorious Indian mercenary general before joining the Guards ten years ago, and he is creating a potentially explosive situation. For the first time, the Guards are not just crossing out of the Protectorate in hot pursuit, but are also launching pre-emptive raids on bandit strongholds. Unfortunately, most of these strongholds are also regular military bases owned by one of the surrounding nations. If Chitorgarh persists with this activity, he may cause a full-scale war. This is a deliberate attempt on his part to break the cycle of guerrilla war, but the results could be catastrophic.

PERSONNEL ◇

The Guard is a truly multi-national force, with personnel from all the Solar and Earth nations represented in the ranks. Through its grueling training program at Dome de Camerone on the Moon, the Guard ruthlessly welds its diverse recruits into a solid unit. All recruits are taught the French language and the traditions and history of the Guards, part of an indoctrination process that instills great loyalty in individual Guardsmen. They are a motley bunch, Martian farmboys and Jovian con men, Venusian renegades and runaway European peasants, but once they have been trained to become Guardsmen, it is impossible to insult one without insulting them all; their solidarity is legendary throughout the Solar System. Their military training is just as good, and since they serve a twenty-five year hitch, older Guardsmen have seen a lot of action and are experienced and wily soldiers. Only in equipment are the Guards ever deficient, though they have proven remarkably capable of "acquiring" what they need.

▼ VILLACARILLO FAMILY

South America is a turbulent and treacherous place, and no one has managed to hold onto power and influence in this snakepit longer than the Villacarillo family. Through a mixture of technology, unmerciful violence and cunning diplomacy, they have built for themselves a position of power and influence unmatched by any other power center on the continent. They have kept much of their ability hidden, playing a waiting game toward their long-term goal of uniting South America under their own rule. Toward this end, they are one of the most ruthless forces at work in Free Earth, willing to commit any action that furthers their ambition.

Antoinette-Christine Villacarillo was the founder of one of pre-Fall Argentina's most prosperous and successful technology companies, Aerostar Enterprises. A clever and forward-thinking woman, she saw the Fall coming and moved most of the family's wealth into orbit while also preparing a refuge at the family ranch in Uruguay. Despite the planning, however, most of the Villacarillos were killed in the sudden EU/USA attack on Argentina during the Resource Wars. Stuck on Earth, the survivors made their way to the family ranch and took control of the surrounding region through force of arms, taking everything they needed to survive, using the ranch's store of weapons and technology.

Many of Aerostar's best and brightest employees had been invited to take refuge at the ranch and as a result, the Villacarillos managed to keep a significant technological base. With this edge, the family maintained and expanded its lands north into former Brazilian territory. As civilization reformed, the Villacarillos became increasingly influential. Opponents were ruthlessly crushed, while the family also carefully hid its technology from outsiders, not wanting to give its enemies cause to unite. Survival was always put ahead of ambition, the family taking the long view and often making plans decades in advance.

◇ PRESENT ACTIVITIES

The slow growth of Villacarillo power that culminated in the creation of the Allied Cantons of the Rio Grande has never ceased. They actually have the power to break every other family in the Cantons and make themselves the unrivalled rulers of the Rio Grande, but prefer to build a ruling coalition that does not reveal their true power. The restoration of contact with the Orbital colonies has further increased Villacarillo power, since the family had carefully maintained the records of its Orbital assets and was able to reclaim most of them. With the Villacarillo's low profile, few realize this fact, giving them yet another ace. This also allows them to sink large sums into their new industrial developments; no one outside of the family realizes that these are being used to create a self-supporting manufacturing base capable of weapons production.

The long-term plan laid out by the present family matriarch, Stella-Maria, is to rule all of eastern South America by reconstituting Aerostar Enterprises and taking political power in the South the way the Takeda Corporation did in Japan. Rather than waste resources, Stella manipulates her enemies into fighting each other; she plans to keep her strength hidden until the day when the family will step in and take control with a short and swift campaign. Over the last decade, the Villacarillos have slowly built up the Argentine Emperor, who they are relying on to unite the south; when his usefulness expires, he will be killed. There are already Villacarillo agents in place, both to carry out the killing and to step in and take over the Emperor's organization. The question the family is now considering is when to let the Emperor destroy the Rio Grande. The reason for the delay is that Stella-Maria perceives a threat of CEGA intervention, which she is only willing to countenance after the Family has such an unassailable hold that they will be welcomed into the Administration as a full member.

◇ PERSONNEL

The Villacarillo family is divided into three levels: the inner family, who know the entire plan; the outer family, who know the public story; and the family followers, who do as they are told. The inner family is well educated, highly talented, and ruthlessly dedicated to the goal of Villacarillo power, but with only a few dozen members, they have to rely on the rest of the family for all but the most important of missions. Most of the outer family is descended from key employees of Aerostar Enterprises. Their level of education is extremely high by South American standards, a fact especially true of the Villacarillo gauchos, who are trained soldiers, not the thugs used by most families. Their loyalty to the inner family is very strong; memories of how the Villacarillos saved their ancestors from the Fall combined with the family's continuing favor and protection make for powerful emotions. The family followers are peons and mercenaries, slightly better-paid and treated but ultimately no different from the rest of the Rio Grande's commoners.

DAKAR GANG ▼

Among the gangs and bandit armies that run riot in the Guinea Mini-States, the gang run by Louise George stands out. Ruling over the shanties and half-rebuilt ruins of Dakar, Louise has created an organization of unparalleled competence, profitability and cunning. While not numerically the largest or the most violent of the Mini-States' many criminals, the Dakar Gang are by far the most effective and thus have managed to garner a certain amount of grudging respect and acknowledgement from outsiders. As Louise proves that her success is not a fluke, the Dakar Gang is gathering more outside contacts and thus more profit and power.

Louise George created the Dakar Gang during the late 2190s, starting off in the slum where she was born and building her group primarily on profits from control of the local drug trade. Through adroit negotiations with foreign criminal gangs and pinpoint attacks against competing groups, Louise brought the slums and ruins of Dakar under her effective control in 2198. At this point, she worked strongly to reorganize the gang along more functional lines, creating an almost corporate structure with divisions based on activity or geographical region, further split into teams responsible for the gang's day-to-day activities. With her better organization, Louise quickly consolidated her control of Dakar; the lower level of violence attracted more foreign groups to set up illegal activities in the city, leading to a rejuvenation of Dakar and increased wealth and power for Louise's gang. This success naturally attracted raiders and bandits, but again the Dakar Gang proved itself a step above the competing gangs. Rather than deploy the gang's own forces, which amounted to little more than barely trained street thugs, Louise dug deeply into her coffers and hired professional mercenaries. As a result, bandits have barely bothered Dakar since, and the increasing stability has led to ever-increasing levels of criminal investment.

PRESENT ACTIVITIES ◇

Besides overseeing and providing protection to the Mini-States' most productive, lucrative, and advanced illegal industries, the Dakar Gang is also making an increasing effort to garner legitimate development. Through clever cooperation with the USN, CEGA and the Azanian Compact, Louise has even negotiated some limited aid, though for the most part, the low-tech factories that have opened up are investments by the gang. The new desire for legitimacy is something that has occurred to the gang on the basis of their reading of the outside forces at work in the Mini-States; it is obvious that everyone would like consolidation, but no power is willing to do it alone. The obvious option is for the other nations to back a local group, but to garner support from the USN, Compact, or CEGA, that group cannot be seen as just another criminal gang. Louise saw the opportunity and is busily trying to remake the Dakar gang into an acceptable partner, hoping to get enough aid to take over all of Guinea.

Most of this is just smoke and mirrors; the illegal labs are hidden and well-known criminals are asked to not visit Dakar anymore, at least not openly. The Dakar Gang, despite its success in holding onto Dakar, does not have the resources to expand into the countryside, let alone displace other major criminal gangs. However, Louise is in negotiation with some of the more reliable gang bosses about an alliance to bring the whole Mini-States under their joint rule. The main difficulty is resources, an issue that backing from CEGA or the Compact, or both, would solve. Given the level of suspicion and treachery prevalent in the Mini-States, these negotiations are taking time, but the Dakar Gang has proved itself to be patient over the years. It is proceeding as slowly as necessary, always working to build up its own resources, and keeping up the façade of a developing state in what is, in truth, a criminal fiefdom.

PERSONNEL ◇

There are two types of gang members, made and paid. Paid members are just that: mercenaries who are never given any significant control or influence. Made members are all from the original slum from which the gang developed, or are past paid members of very long service and demonstrated loyalty. The vast majority of members are illiterate and involved in fairly basic protection and production operations. In another demonstration of Louise's ability to think beyond her rivals, the gang has made significant use of a series of missionary schools founded by the Kingdom of France. Promising members are sent to the school to learn to read and write. While only the most basic education, it is more than what the vast majority of the Mini-States' criminals receive, and it puts the gang in a much better position to deal with the external criminals who are their main source of income, as well as encouraging loyalty to the organization that helped lift them up from the gutter.

▼ AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT PARTY

Not everyone within Australia-New Zealand believes that the ANZAC is a good idea. A strong minority within both countries has developed a belief that they would be better off within CEGA. These imperialists are widely decried and have only limited support, but through adroit politics and populist grandstanding, they have achieved a degree of influence far out of proportion to the support for their more extreme views. The Development party is not merely satisfied with influence, however; they want power, and are prepared to go to any lengths to ensure that they get both it and the rewards that they believe Australia deserves.

Despite centuries of open migration, a strong minority of Australians retreated into racism and prejudice as a result of the turmoil and hardship of the Fall. While every country went through similar developments, in Australia such views managed to stay politically current. While widely despised by the majority of the population, the inclusion of many smaller peoples as equal members with the ANZAC kept a strong undercurrent of racism present in the community. Political opportunism and a desire by some Australian corporations to turn the South Pacific and Malay Archipelago into economic colonies gave this undercurrent continuing support.

Those proponents of such views remained unorganized until the aftermath of the Unification Wars. Many felt justified by the Unification Wars, especially when none of Australia's neighbors came to its aid and the non-Australian portions of the ANZAC proved to be strategic liabilities. So motivated, various groups came together and formed the Development party, though no one leader ever enunciated a specific ideology. Dislike for the ANZAC, a desire for unrestricted industrial growth, a dislike for non-Australians and a feeling that CEGA was a more natural partner became a loose platform that allowed the party to become the voice of minority dissent within Australia's democratic system.

◇ PRESENT ACTIVITIES

In the last decade, the Development party has worked steadily at expanding its political base, supporting any conservative or fringe issue that can bring it even a modicum of extra support. Thus, it supports issues as diverse as free trade with CEGA, greater independence for Antarctica, sale of eco-restored land for private agricultural development, income tax cuts, calls for a republic to replace the constitutional monarchy, for higher levels of support for working parents and singing of the Australian national anthem in schools. As a result, few people take the party seriously, the ten percent of the national vote it receives being mostly attributed to donkey votes or a small minority of rabble. This underestimation is a grave mistake, because within the Development Party is a strong underground movement that believes it has the moral right to take any steps necessary to take power and remove the foreign influences taking over the country.

This movement is numerically quite small, but it controls the Party absolutely and has worked hard to recruit like-minded individuals in influential positions. Thus, quite a number of politicians, military officers, businessmen and bureaucrats are members or supporters. Given their lack of public support, the Party's inner clique has determined that its only chance for success is to stage a coup and then get CEGA support to put down the elements of the ANZAC's integrated military, which would remain loyal to the democratic government. To this end, they have made contact with the JSI, and a number of CEGA agents are now working within the Party to help them achieve their goal of a white, capitalist and aggressive Australia. To prepare the way for their coup, clique members are encouraging tensions in the South Pacific and belligerent responses by the ANZAC to any CEGA move. In the event of a war, the Party's inner circle believe that their chances of staging a coup are greatly increased.

◇ PERSONNEL

The Development Party will openly recruit anyone who wishes to join and as a result has an incredibly mixed bag of bigots, radicals, fools, and weirdoes. Given this, the party is almost continually wracked by internal schisms and a multitude of other public disputes. The inner circle encourages and stimulates such behavior because it puts the ANZAC and Australian authorities off guard. To the government and intelligence services, the Development is a collection of noisome but harmless crackpots. The members of the inner circle are recruited quite separately; only about a fifth have ever been official members of the Development Party. All are sought out specifically because another member feels they have views in accord with the Party and have skills or influence useful to the cause. As mistakes could not be afforded, past recruitment was slow, but with the skills of the JSI agents on hand, recruitment has now sped up, with unsuitable recruits being disposed of in a discreet manner.

ANZAC EXO-COMMANDOS ▼

From the jungles of Central America to the depths of the Pacific, the point units in the ANZAC's ongoing skirmishes with CEGA are the Exo-Commando Regiments. Called the "black berets" for their traditional headgear, the Commandos' traditions date all the way back to the Second World War, and service with them is regarded as a great honor. By raiding the Californian coast a number of times, they won great distinction as the only military unit to invade North America during the Unification Wars. In 2199, the regiments were re-equipped with the then brand-new Kokoda exo-suit. Equipped for jungle, amphibious and submerged warfare, the Kokoda was designed to spearhead ANZAC assaults on the CEGA-held islands in the South Pacific. In the hands of the aggressive and highly trained commando units, it has proved remarkably effective. The Kokoda is now considered out of date and is mostly used by reserve units, having been replaced in frontline service by the Goanna exo-suit and Mokoi exo-armor, the first military exo-armor deployed by ANZAC forces. Trained for deep-penetration raids and assaults against high-value targets, the Commandos have made good use of this equipment, despite the fact that it is at least a generation behind standard Joint Service issue.

Commandos tend to be young people with exceptional physical skills; all are still trained in standard special-forces techniques. They are heavily indoctrinated and subsequently have high morale. Their experience in combined operations (infantry, exo-suits and armored units) is second to none, and they have proven very effective against standard OCU and FDA units. Commandos are often called on to carry out other dangerous duties by the ANZAC government, and are well represented in the intelligence services and Royal Guard. CEGA rates these units as among the most dangerous on Earth, but rests easy on the belief that the Commandos' technological deficiencies are so great that the Pacific FDA is capable of holding them off while crushing the rest of the ANZAC military.

The Commandos represent of the best and worst of the ANZAC military. They have a good reputation for respecting the rules of war and human rights in general, but are considered less than outstanding in regard to looting and theft. The units also excel at independent missions, a standard ANZAC military tactic being to land a company in a region and let them wreak what havoc they deem fit. Combined with exceptional morale and a willingness to fight against the odds, this makes the Commandos very difficult opponents. This is especially true for the stratified and rule-bound Pacific FDA. It also makes the Commandos the ANZAC government's first choice for "assisting" foreign political groups in resisting CEGA aggression.

ETHIOPIAN ARMORED CAVALRY ▼

In their flashing gold breastplates and high, purple-plumed helms, many think the Ethiopian Imperial Armored Cavalry, also known as the Guards, are anachronistic units only suited to parade duty in Addis Alam. The European veterans of the Saharan Front would disagree, for the Guards played an enormous role in defeating the USE in the Unification Wars. As opposed to the majority of the Ethiopian Army, which is composed of effective but militia-grade infantry, the Guards regiments are the professional and technological core of the army. Founded by Emperor Yacob Selassie soon after he took the throne in 2094, the Guards were designed as fast-reaction forces meant to keep the troublesome nobility and their local militia under control; over the decades, they became the Empire's primary defenders as well.

Before trade began with Greater South Africa and Australia-New Zealand, the Guards actually did fight on horseback, but from 2140 onward, Ethiopia imported various armored vehicles; by 2146, the Guards were restructured into combined tank and armored grenadier formations. They proved their worth during the Unification Wars by breaking two USE thrusts into Ethiopia, while their raiding columns played havoc with supply convoys as far west as the Congo Basin. While the USE never deployed its best troops on this front, nothing can diminish the audacious courage of the Guards. The Guards' equipment is unsophisticated by Solar standards, but rather than being a weakness, this frees them of the overly cumbersome logistics systems that often slow down more technologically advanced forces.

Just recently, the Imperial Armored Cavalry has being reequipped with new Azanian systems, including exo-suits. The majority of the Guards remain deployed along the Saharan Front, their role being to hold off any CEGA attack until the rest of the Ethiopian Army can be raised. With most Guards officers being sons and daughters of the nobility, many former officers have risen to prominent positions in the Imperial government, including the present Empress, Colonel Ophelia Selassie. Many Guardsmen are recruited for sensitive diplomatic and intelligence missions, a factor of the rather informal structure of the Ethiopian government, and despite their somewhat flamboyant and often explosive activities, the habit continues.

▼ TAKEDA EXO-MARINES

In a corporate nation lacking any depth of history or national mythology, the Takeda Exo-Marines have become one of the company's great national emblems and perhaps the only one not originally created by the corporate marketing department. Originally created to act as security for the Corporation's ocean-based investments, the Marines' performance during the Unification Wars went beyond what any nation could expect of their soldiers. In the long retreat before the Combine's furious assault across the Pacific, the Marines were always the last to retreat, buying time for the evacuation of civilians at costs that would have crippled the morale of most other units. Naturally, such bravery made them heroes, and their status as the best of the best (along with a carefully cultivated warrior mystique) brought them the best recruits and significant funding. For the rest of the war, they were the Corporation's point unit and continued to take extremely heavy casualties, especially as the Corporation lost its initial technological edge.

Following the war, the Marines' mystique reached near-mystical levels. They replaced the mediocre Corporate Guard as the Board's bodyguard troops, and when the Corporation produced its first exo-suit, the Fudo, in 2194, the Marines were the first unit to be equipped with it. When the possibilities that the 'suits offered became clear, about half the Marines were immediately converted over to exo-only units. Today the Marines are the largest dedicated exo-suit unit in Free Earth, deploying over three thousand Fudo Mark II, Hachiman and Tsuyu suits, along with a handful of Oho-Yama exo-armors for heavy support tasks. With the best equipment the Corporation can provide, the Marines are the biggest threat to CEGA along the Pacific Front.

In the increasingly tense climate of the South Pacific, the Marines are always on the front line. Serving and former Marines are also finding new careers within Corporate and Compact intelligence and police services, since they usually possess the same selfless devotion and martial skill that characterizes the unit as a whole. Marines usually possess excellent education and are often some of the brightest young people in the Corporation. They have a reputation for a degree of eccentricity; being regarded as one of the signature traits of the best exo-suit pilots, this not just tolerated but even encouraged. It is important not to underestimate the Takeda Marines. They are not over-disciplined, under-educated thugs, as is typical of many Free Earth soldiers. In intelligence work, for instance, ex-marines show a remarkable ability to adapt and respond imaginatively to changing circumstances, which makes them unpredictable and dangerous opponents.

▼ PERSIAN IMMORTALS BRIGADE

While created to give the new monarchical regime in Dahrán a feeling of historical legitimacy, the Immortal Brigade has proven itself to be one of the most dangerous and fanatical units on Earth. Exactly ten thousand strong, a number directly drawn from ancient Persian history, the Brigade is the only military unit allowed in the Imperial Palace, though only a thousand are on guard duty at any one time. The rest of the Immortals are tasked with holding the most difficult and exposed positions along the Zagross Front, where their continual raiding and probing is slowly picking apart the Eurasian FDA. The constant fighting also ensures that the Brigade remains one of the most battle-hardened units on Earth, with a reputation for mercilessness and terror tactics.

The Immortals first came to the attention of the outside world during the Unification Wars, when they were used to break USE thrusts through the mountains. SolaPol investigations were not able to prove their involvement in the widespread killing of prisoners, nor in the raids into Turkish territory between 2178 and 2183 that resulted in the deliberate deaths of close to a hundred thousand civilians. The Immortals take no prisoners, leave no survivors and are seldom accused of subtlety in their activities. The Immortals' behavior since the war continues to demonstrate their willingness to breach Solar standards in the conduct of military operations, with regular instances of atrocities, including torture and chemical weapons use. Constant complaints by CEGA to SolaPol have yet to produce any convictions, due to Persian diplomatic intransigence.

In the last twelve months, the Immortals have been equipped with initial production models of the first exo-suit to come into service with Persian forces, the Dahaka, a mountain warfare variant of the of the popular Japanese Fudo Mark II, and the Yezidi, which is a desert warfare model of the ANZAC Goanna. How well the Brigade adapts to this new technology is dubious, given the Empire's poor technology level, but it will potentially make them far more dangerous and extend their reach much deeper into CEGA territory. The Immortals, like most special forces, can also be found filling a wide variety of other roles within and without the Persian Empire. They are common in the Turkic Alliance and some have also been dispatched into the African Union to aid and train anti-CEGA resistance movements.

SIBERIAN OMSK DIVISION ▼

In early spring 2176, the Siberians became aware that the rate of the USE advance was such that the enemy would reach the Ob River Defensive Belt before it was complete. To buy themselves time, the Republic recruited a division of volunteers from its armed forces and left them to defend the otherwise deserted city of Omsk. For three months, the units in Omsk disrupted the USE's advance and when they eventually received the signal to retreat, less than ten percent of the force escaped alive. With their experience at defending fortified positions, the units from Omsk were rebuilt into their own division and tasked with holding the most difficult parts of the Ob defenses. The long, grinding battle along the Ob during the Unification Wars built an immense reputation for the Omsk Division, and they have remained the most lauded and respected unit in Siberia.

Forward-deployed in the most exposed positions in the Ob Defensive Belt, especially in the areas bordering the Kazakh Hills, the Omsk Division is constantly involved in the skirmishes along the Siberian Front. They also play a large role in supporting the Turkic tribesmen in Central Asia and Cossack Guerrillas in CEGA's Russian Protectorates, even supplying advisors and "volunteer" troops to aid their irregular allies in the fighting. Given this focus, the Division has developed into an airmobile unit in the years since the Unification Wars, allowing its superbly trained shock troops to respond to CEGA intrusions quickly, regardless of the terrain. As soon as the Takeda Corporation made their exo-suits available for export, the Omsk Division equipped a battalion with Fudo Mark I 'suits as a heavy strike force. In recent years, the original battalion has been expanded to a full brigade, equipped with a range of locally produced versions of the Takeda Corporation's Fudo Mark II and Hachiman exo-suits.

With their narrow focus on the defense of the Ob Defensive Belt, members of the Omsk Division are rarely deployed anywhere else, especially as they are one of the few professional units in the Siberian army. Many of the best conscripts are encouraged to sign on for a ten-year hitch in order that they can serve in Siberia's most illustrious unit. Ex-Omsk personnel can be found almost anywhere, however, their infantry focus making them perfect for mercenary operations. Many are also employed by ATS intelligence services, their skills in infiltration and guerilla war making them useful in furthering ATS goals in India and further afield.

1ST GURKHA RIFLES ▼

Part of an old pre-Fall mercenary tradition, the Gurkha peoples of the Himalayas have been hiring out as mercenary soldiers since the early nineteenth century. Recruited from just four tribes, the Magar, Limbu, Gurung and Sunwar, the Gurkha never changed their mercenary ways, working eventually for both the UN and later the Earth Patrol Force in the twenty-first century. Later, they fought to defend their homes during the Resource and Third World Wars, and then during the Fall, they led the invasion of the warmer and richer plains of India. It was also the Gurkhas who led the return to the high valleys of the Himalayas, seeking to return to the traditions of their ancestors. When the Himalayan Pact formed, it is not surprising that the Gurkhas returned to another of their ancient traditions, turning to mercenary fighting to support the fragile economies of their new states.

Given the Earth's ongoing turmoil, there was a ready market for the Gurkhas' skills, and no regiment made more of an impression during the Unification Wars than the oldest and most celebrated of all the Gurkha regiments, the First Rifles. Fighting at the behest of the Chinese Federation, the First deployed to the Kazakh Hills, Zagross Mountains and later to the Siberian Front. The Gurkhas confirmed their reputation as infantrymen of exceptional courage and bloodcurdling ferocity. Following the war, many different employers, including corporations, the Compact, the ATS and various Indian Princelings, have hired the Ghorkas. The notable exception is that they have, under ATS pressure, refused to hire out to CEGA, though they have no particular problems working for anyone and the Joint Service would positively love to have them for use against the Persians in the Zagross Mountains.

Despite the chance to purchase high-tech systems like exo-suits or armored vehicles, the Gurkhas have chosen to remain an exclusively infantry unit. This is somewhat necessitated by the low level of education that their recruits tend to have. While most are literate in Nepali, they do come from extremely low-tech communities. Without high-tech weapons, the Gurkhas rely on their bush skills, fighting prowess (especially their willingness to go hand-to-hand) and exceptional morale. Much better-equipped units often fail when confronted by an enemy willing to charge and close. However, it is unusual to find Gurkhas serving outside their mercenary units, since most prefer to save the money necessary to add some modern luxuries to their lives and then return to their high mountain villages.

b.4.12

b.4.13



► CHARACTERS

This section contains profiles and game stats for several interesting personalities from the non-aligned nations of the Earth. Depending on the Players' attitudes, allegiance and behavior, these characters may be friends, enemies or something nebulous in between, whose actions will depend greatly on the situation. Despite their Free Earth allegiances, many of these peoples' lives are controlled or at least influenced to some degree by the actions and responses of the Central Earth Government and Administration; thus, this section also includes some notes about CEGA's ever-present role in **Jovian Chronicles** games set on Earth.

▼ UNFRIENDLY NATIVES

Suspicion and paranoia are often seen by Solar nationals as the single defining trait common to all the peoples of the Earth. Every Earther seems to suspect that ultimately they stand alone against the challenges of their hostile planet, an attitude quite alien to the community-minded Solar nations. The difference lies in the fact that the Solar colonies survived and thrived during the Fall through cooperation against the inhospitable environment of space, while Earth communities survived by savage, merciless fighting over resources. This fighting and the huge death toll it caused is reflected in the Earther belief that survival in and of itself is the only goal that matters and that anything is acceptable in its pursuit.

People may sacrifice themselves for their family or close community, but everyone else is often regarded as the enemy. As a result, strangers are not welcome in most places on Earth; even in many big cities, the suburbs and arcology blocks exhibit the same clannishness one might expect of a small rural community. This attitude is reflected at all levels of Earther society and is partly responsible for the tense relations between the Earth's many nations. In cases where negotiation would have solved disputes between nations, such as the Unification Wars, fear, loathing and paranoia instead led to further bloodshed. CEGA's ability to rise above this petty, narrow-minded parochialism is the source of its power and is likely to ensure its success in the long term — so long as it can keep these negative forces at bay.

■ GOOD GUYS AND BAD GUYS

How campaigns on Earth are run will depend primarily on how the Gamemaster has cast CEGA. If it has been cast in the role of unmitigated villain, then CEGA's agents and soldiers make the perfect jackbooted storm troopers for Players to fight against in the name of freedom and democracy. In this case, the Free Earth becomes the planetary good guys, with a few shady characters (such as the Argentines and Swahilis) thrown in to add a little spice and tension. This is the easiest option, since CEGA is fundamentally unpleasant, as most militaristic imperialists are, and it allows campaigns to focus on action and high adventure rather than deal with moral and political ambiguities.

Of course, if Players all choose to run CEGA characters, then the Free Earth will be cast in the role of villain. That these selfish and unworthy upstarts are daring to resist the manifest destiny of mankind under the worthy and generous leadership of the CEGA Council will no doubt fire the Players' hearts with determination and zeal. While a gung-ho campaign of this nature is fun, the Gamemaster will have to be careful with his representation of CEGA and the Free Earth, since the published material, including this book, tends to cast CEGA in a negative light. A subtle variation of this theme is to start Players with CEGA's righteousness as their motivating force and then to slowly introduce doubts and questions by presenting a much more balanced view when they venture into the Free Earth and Occupied Territories.

On post-Fall Earth there are not really any villains or heroes. The aggressive and untrustworthy nature of CEGA is as valid a response to the Earth's woes as the ANZAC or Chinese Federation's passive and inward-looking behavior. The former may be less palatable to other nations and be tilted in the direction of a small elite in many CEGA states, but there is no doubt that CEGA does a lot of good. For a campaign to be successfully set in the murky and two-faced world that Earth has become, significant preparation is required and the Players must be genuinely interested in approaching and dealing with issues that have no simple answer.

AHMED AL-DUIN ◀

Born in 2162 in the Sufi arcology of Bethlehem, Ahmed grew up with first the ever-present threat of war and then the constant fighting once the Unification Wars started. When he was seventeen, he joined the Samaritan Militia and fought for his nation for four years. Following the Jerusalem Accords, Ahmed was offered a place in Mossad, a tribute to both the bravery he had shown on the field (especially when carrying out intelligence-gathering operations) as well as his own obvious intelligence. In the twenty-six years since, Ahmed has become one of Mossad's most accomplished and effective agents. He has repeatedly penetrated the Turkish Empire and Kingdom of France, at one point even acquiring a position in the French Court. With the Odyssey Affair, Martian War and growing problems in CEGA's North African Union, he has been dispatched with a small team of agents to foment a revolution.

VITAL STATISTICS ▢

Age:	48	Height:	165cm	Weight:	80kg	Hair Color:	Blk/Grey	Eye Color:	Green
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ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	0	APP	-1	BUI	+1	CRE	+2	FIT	0
INF	+1	KND	+1	PER	+2	PSY	0	WIL	+1
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	30	UD	6	AD	6

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Bureaucracy	2	+1	Combat Sense	3	+2	Disguise	2	+2	Theatrics	3	+1
Dodge	2	0	Drive	1	0	Haggling	1	+1	Streetwise	4	+1
Hand-to-Hand	2	0	Human Per.	3	0	Interrogation	3	+2	Stealth	3	0
Investigation	2	+2	Language (French)	3	+1	Language (Turkish)	3	+1	Small Arms	2	0
Leadership	1	+1	Melee	2	0	Notice	3	+2	Security	3	+1

PROFESSION ◇

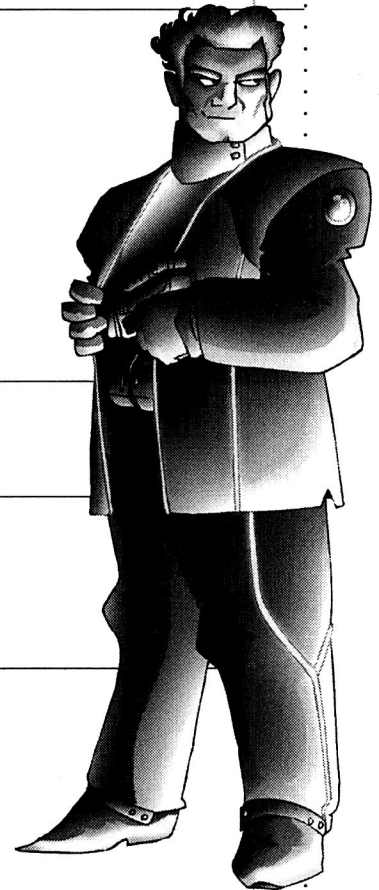
Ahmed is a spy; his personal life, his religious beliefs and his future goals have all been sublimated to the requirements of disguising his true self and moving unhindered among the enemies of his people. In pursuit of his deceptions Ahmed is willing to do anything to anyone as long as it helps him make Judea-Samaria more secure. He has contacts throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and Ahmed's knowledge of the underworld in these regions is encyclopedic. Ahmed's preference is for what he calls "elegant" missions, where the enemy never realizes they have been penetrated. His own suave and unruffled behavior under even the closest questioning and suspicion is one of Ahmed's greatest strengths.

ATTITUDES ◇

In many ways, Ahmed the man is as much a created persona as any cover he has adopted over the years; only his undying devotion to his country and to the surviving members of his own family give any depth to a man who exists to deceive. He has never married, believing his life would make a family life impossible. As a substitute, he has become very attached to many of the young agents he has trained over the years. Yet Ahmed always retains a certain degree of detachment from his comrades and few friends, as if he is always on mission and must be ready to flee at the slightest notice.

COMBAT REACTIONS ◇

A former soldier and highly trained agent in his own right, Ahmed is superbly equipped to be an assassin when the need arises. He prefers non-violent operations, however, though not in the sense that there is no killing. Rather, he prefers to manipulate CEGA's own internal tensions to create the violence his mission requires. If confronted by the need for violence, however, Ahmed's first concern will always be for his mission, his cover, and then himself. Not leaving incriminating evidence that will undermine the mission will make him hesitate before firing first, but when he does fight, Ahmed will kill without mercy.





► LUCAS GUSMADO

The youngest son of a landed New Brazilian family, Lucas was sent to Marajo in 2193 when he was fifteen, to study for the priesthood. The lights of the big city soon tempted the young novice away from his studies, however, and Lucas was soon spending long hours gambling and drinking in sleazy clubs. His skill with cards soon brought him the attention of gang of professional gamblers who wanted to recruit his skills. This was just as well, as the seminary was just about to expel Lucas for his misbehavior; his family disowned him as a result. With education and social skills well beyond most of his peers, Lucas rose swiftly, starting his own gang at the young age of twenty-one. In the years since, Lucas has slowly expanded his reach throughout Marajo, co-opting other gangs rather than fighting and investing heavily in legitimate businesses until his wealth and influence have made him first among equals in Marajo's underworld.

▣ VITAL STATISTICS

Age:	32	Height:	188cm	Weight:	86kg	Hair Color:	Blonde	Eye Color:	Grey
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▣ ATTRIBUTES

AGI	0	APP	+2	BUI	0	CRE	+1	FIT	-1
INF	+2	KNO	0	PER	+1	PSY	+1	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	3	AD	3

▣ SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Bureaucracy	1	0	Business	3	0	Computer	1	0	Small Arms	1	0
Dance	2	0	Dodge	1	0	Drive	1	0	Streetwise	3	+2
Etiquette	2	+2	Gambling	4	+1	Grooming	2	+2	Notice	1	+1
Haggling	1	+2	Human Per.	2	+1	Intimidate	1	0	Seduction	2	+2
Language (Anglic)	2	0	Language (Spanish)	3	0	Law	1	0	Leadership	2	+2

◇ PROFESSION

Still looking like the suave and dashing professional gambler he was, Lucas breaks the violent stereotypes of South American organized crime. Despite his criminality, he has never personally killed anyone and regards having to commit acts of violence as a personal failure. Lucas is, however, quite satisfied with existence as a crime boss, having developed both a talent for and love of manipulating people. Lucas' prominence as a criminal is due almost wholly to his ability to organize, cut deals and find opportunities for graft and corruption. His more violent rivals have not attempted to cut him down because his activities and alliance-building have brought them all greater wealth and influence than they could have achieved individually.

◇ ATTITUDES

Like the wayward young seminarian he once was, Lucas still lives for a good time. He loves to throw parties, sleep with beautiful people, buy gorgeous artwork and boost his ego by being a patron of the arts. Lucas has little compassion for the poor or needy; he regards life as a battle where some win and reap the rewards and others lose and are ground underfoot. His noted reputation for peaceful operations has more to do with a desire not to be assassinated rather than any innate compassion for human life. Lucas wants to enjoy his wealth; not spend it on more bodyguards.

◇ COMBAT REACTIONS

Never a fighter and becoming quite protective of his own skin as he gets older, Lucas is never without his bodyguards. If faced with violence he will keep his head down until he cannot avoid being involved, in which case he will fight effectively in his own defense. If alone and faced by a direct threat, he will use his considerable charm and wealth to try and bribe and cajole his attackers into letting him walk free. If that were to fail, Lucas would most likely break down like the child that he still is in many ways; however, no one has yet succeeded in bringing such an occurrence to pass.

PROFESSOR MARA SUAREZ ◀

Every since her childhood on Rivaldo Station, Mara's greatest wish has been to return to the planet of her forefathers that she could see so far below her. Her grandmother was a noted biologist, and Mara followed in her footsteps, her fixation with Earth leading her to specialize in ecological regeneration. Graduating with her doctorate in 2153 at the age of twenty-five, Mara took an academic position and her work remained purely laboratory-based until 2186, when the USN took over the Congo Environmental Protectorate. With her distinguished academic credentials, Mara was approached about becoming the head of the USN's scientific operations, a position she accepted with alacrity despite her being almost sixty. Mara is now in her twenty-fifth year as Chief Researcher, and is easily the most influential person in the Congo Environmental Protectorate, as well as having established a planet-wide scientific reputation.

VITAL STATISTICS ▢

Age:	82	Height:	175cm	Weight:	45kg	Hair Color:	Grey	Eye Color:	Brown
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ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	-2	APP	0	BUI	-2	CRE	+1	FIT	-1
INF	+1	KNO	+3	PER	0	PSY	+2	WIL	+2
STR	-2	HEA	+2	STA	25	UD	1	AD	1

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Bureaucracy	2	+3	Computer	1	+3	Drive	1	-2	Teaching	2	+1
Earth Sciences	3	+3	Etiquette	1	+1	Human Per	2	+2	Survival	2	+1
Language (Bantu)	1	+3	Leadership	2	+1	Life Sciences	4	+3	Phys. Sciences	3	+3
First Aid	2	+3									

PROFESSION ◇

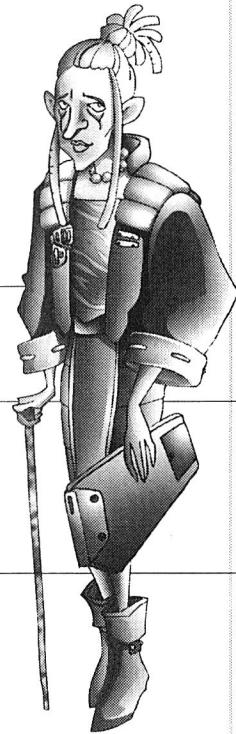
Mara is a scientist and an environmentalist. She believes that what technology once destroyed can be regenerated using better technology, and that the cause of eco-restoration is Humanity's greatest concern. To her, the Solar colonies are being selfish and foolish in the extreme by not supporting the need to repair the mother planet. Thus, Mara is an open supporter of CEGA's wider goals, though she feels the methods employed by the Imperialist faction are self-defeating. In the Congo, she will not tolerate anything that disrupts her restoration projects. Despite her matronly appearance and apparent pacifism, Mara is quite willing to use the USN Guards at her disposal to eliminate problems from the new Garden of Eden she is building for future generations.

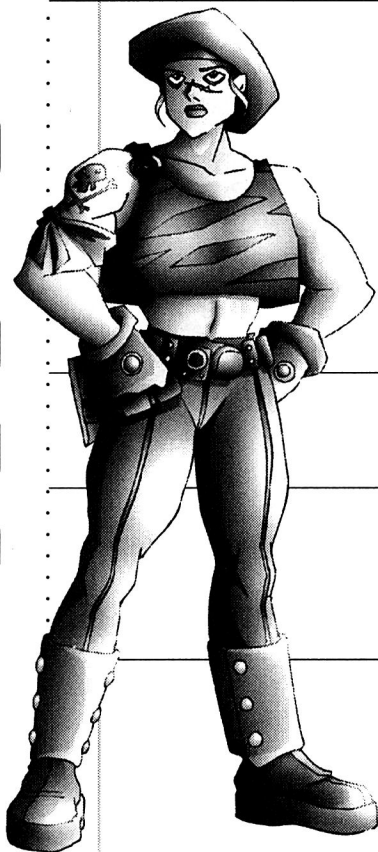
ATTITUDES ◇

Mara loves nature; it is her life's one true love and she has sacrificed everything toward the goal of restoring Earth to a pristine state. She has let her marriage die, become estranged from her son, and even in her early eighties does not allow herself any rest. This devotion to the planet sometimes obscures other issues, and she is willing to allow herself to be politically manipulated if the payoff is extra funding or something else that will help her toward her greater goal. For this reason, she has been playing a dangerous game of cooperation with the Azanians, allowing them passage through the Protectorate in return for clean water and soil from Antarctica.

COMBAT REACTIONS ◇

A quarter of a century in the Congo has inured Mara to the dangers that are so common on Earth, but she has not developed any great combat skills herself. Instead, she is accompanied by a dedicated team of highly trained USN Guards and assistants. Indeed, Mara's fanatical dedication to her cause has transferred to many of the staff that work with her, including otherwise cynical veteran Guardsmen, and would-be attackers are likely to face fierce resistance. Beyond her physical defenses, Mara is so dedicated that no threat will deter her from her work, her fanaticism making her quite unnerving at times.





► GENERAL ROSA BOLIVARO

For the first thirty years of her life, Rosa lived happily in the town of Santiago, on the outskirts of the great pre-Fall metropolis of the same name. She had a loving husband and fine children. Their farm fed them all, and while life wasn't easy, it was also not without its simple pleasures. Then in 2205, the Argentines came. Santiago made the mistake of resisting the Emperor's demands, and as a result a slaughter ensued. Rosa lost her family to the bloodshed, and was raped and left for dead. Escaping to the hills with a few survivors, Rosa was filled with hatred and soon became involved with one of the small bands of survivors fighting a guerrilla war against the invaders. In the years since, Rosa has risen to command the largest band of resistance fighters in the southern Andes, her passion and fervor drawing both new recruits as well as a huge bounty on her head from the Emperor.

▣ VITAL STATISTICS

Age:	35	Height:	200cm	Weight:	90kg	Hair Color:	Brown	Eye Color:	Blue
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▣ ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	APP	-1	BUI	+3	CRE	+1	FIT	+2
INF	-1	KNO	-2	PER	+1	PSY	-2	WIL	+2
STR	3	HEA	1	STA	45	UD	11	AD	11

▣ SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Animal Handling	2	+1	Athletics	1	+2	Camouflage	1	+1	Tactics	1	+1
Combat Sense	2	+1	Cooking	1	+1	Craft (Farming)	1	+1	Survival	2	+1
Demolitions	1	-2	Dodge	2	+1	First Aid	1	-2	Stealth	1	+1
Hand-to-Hand	2	+1	Heavy Weapons	1	+1	Human Per	1	-2	Small Arms	2	+1
Leadership	3	-1	Melee	2	+1	Notice	2	+1	Riding	3	+1

◇ PROFESSION

Like all South Americans, Rosa grew up knowing how to use weapons, but in the last five years she has developed into a hardened veteran. Her abilities as a guerrilla leader are self-taught for the most part, though she has had informal training from a variety of Ecuadorian and Inca advisors. When fighting, Rosa becomes a bloodthirsty maniac, but when leading her people she is both calculating and cunning, realizing that her puny forces could never survive a face-to-face battle. Through guerrilla tactics and careful exploitation of the fundamental corruption of the Emperor's governors and troops, Rosa has secured a mountainous stronghold in which she is building a strong support base, ready to fight a long war until the Emperor is overthrown.

◇ ATTITUDES

Rosa only thinks of the war she is fighting. She does not have any wider goals, no understanding of the bigger issues, nor does she care to know. What will happen after the Empire is destroyed interests her only marginally; her furious anger at what happened to her family blots out any rational consideration of what consequences her actions will bring. Once the war is over, Rosa knows it will be impossible to continue to hide from her grief, except through her love for her troops and supporters. Rosa treats them like her new family and her mountainous support base is well on the way to developing into a small nation.

◇ COMBAT REACTIONS

Against anyone involved with the Argentine Empire, Rosa is actually much like her opponents, ruthless and bloodthirsty. As an individual, she is very dangerous, preferring to lead from the front when she can enjoy seeing the deaths of as many Imperials as she can kill. When faced by combat on a wider scale, Rosa will think first and foremost about keeping her limited forces intact, retreating if necessary to fight another day. She has also become very adept at setting ambushes, though when faced by the Empire's trained mercenaries, Rosa has suffered a number of defeats and is now much more wary about overly clever stratagems.

MOISE TSHOMBE ◀

Born in the crowded arcologies of Zambia, Moise decided early on that he wanted more from life than the cramped corporate life endured by his parents. In 2193, Moise joined the Compact Air Force and with his above-average reflexes and keen mind he became a top fighter pilot. In 2200, his skills were enough for him to become one of the Compact's best of the best, a delta pilot defending Azanian orbital assets against CEGA attack. Moise still wanted more from life, however, and started carrying small packages to Earth for a smuggling cartel. In 2205, his contacts tipped him off that BOSS was onto him, and Moise staged his own death in fiery crash into the Congo. After making his way to the Mini-States, he found employment as a delta pilot for a larger cartel with its own craft. In 2208, Moise was able to buy his own delta and go independent, running anything for anyone into almost anywhere.

VITAL STATISTICS ▢

Age:	33	Height:	170cm	Weight:	80kg	Hair Color:	Bald	Eye Color:	Olive
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ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	+2	APP	+1	BUI	+1	CRE	0	FIT	0
INF	-2	KNO	0	PER	+1	PSY	0	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	30	UD	4	AD	4

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Aircraft Pilot	2	+2	Combat Sense	3	+1	Communications	1	0	Streetwise	1	-2
Computer	1	0	Delta Pilot	3	+2	Drive	1	+2	Small Arms	1	+2
Elec. Warfare	2	0	Electronics	1	0	Etiquette	1	-2	Parachute	1	+2
G-Handling	2	0	Gunnery (Delta)	3	+1	Mechanics	1	0	Seduction	2	+1
Navigation (Air)	1	0	Navigation (Space)	2	0	Notice	2	+1			

PROFESSION ◇

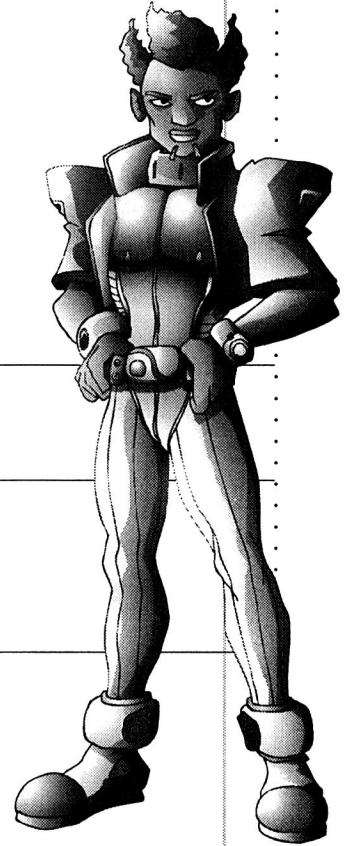
Moise loves to fly deltas and he loves to be adored. The main reason he took up smuggling was to enjoy the high life and flaunt his superiority to the small-minded fools who insist on trying to bind him up with rules. Now that Moise has his own delta, the Fiery Flair, he swings between wealth and poverty depending on what work has to be done to keep the delta flying and how much trouble he has had with CEGA customs craft on his runs to and from the Orbitals. BOSS has not forgotten him either; following a visit by some dangerous and shadowy agents, Moise is now also running packages for BOSS — and not being paid for it, much to his disgust.

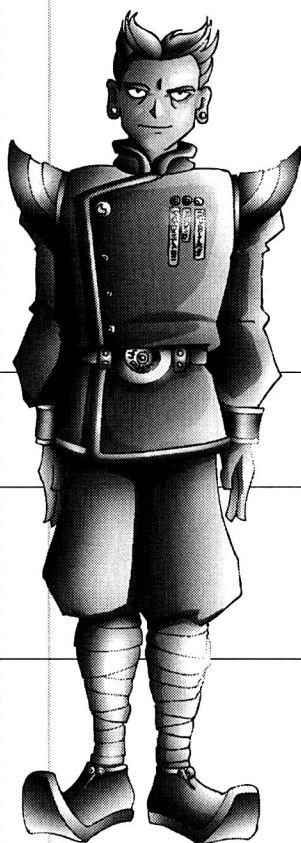
ATTITUDES ◇

As Moise sees it, there are big people and little people and he has spent his entire life trying to avoid being a little person. He wants people to know who he is, know what he does and be in awe of him. Moise is a major egotist and willing to take on very risky missions just for the bragging rights alone, though his big mouth has gotten him into trouble more than once. With his self-centered ways, Moise has few friends. Sooner or later, the fact he has no support network will come back to haunt him, for he has nowhere to run if things go wrong.

COMBAT REACTIONS ◇

One reason Moise is one of the most wanted orbital smugglers is that that he actively enjoys tussling with CEGA customs. He is very proud of the fact that by standard measures he is an ace, having shot down seven CEGA customs boats, a mixture of Wraiths and Wights. CEGA wants Moise quite badly; if the Fiery Flair is identified, customs officers will muster what forces they can to try and bring him in, though the pilots involved are more likely to try for a kill than a capture. In hand-to-hand combat, Moise is much less effective, but will prefer to fight than surrender, since he has no desire to again become a little person.





► CAPTAIN LIM CHEEM-PIM

A third generation Mounted Policeman, Cheem-Pim (known by all as CP) is a proud and resolute officer of the Chinese Mounted Police. Tall and fit, CP cuts a dashing figure and has an enviable record that got him a captaincy at the young age of thirty-two. Unfortunately CP's poster-boy image has been fatally compromised by his idealistic fervor. Three years ago, after taking charge of the CMP's Internal Security Section, CP was made aware of the various diplomatic overtures that the Federation's government was making to CEGA. Outraged to his core, CP recruited a few like-minded officers of pure heart and spirit to ensure that the dreams of liberty, eternity and equality would not perish from the Earth. Through careful blackmail, bribery and assassination, CP and his loyalist faction are working to ensure that the Federation chooses to fight to the last bullet rather than surrender. He cleverly disguises his attacks as STRIKE operations, so that he often ends up in charge of investigating his own actions.

▣ VITAL STATISTICS

Age:	35	Height:		Weight:		Hair Color:	Red-Brown	Eye Color:	Blue
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▣ ATTRIBUTES

AGI	+1	APP	+1	BUI	+1	CRE	+1	FIT	+2
INF	+1	KNO	0	PER	+1	PSY	-1	WIL	+1
STR	+1	HEA	+1	STA	35	UD	8	AD	6

▣ SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Athletics	1	+2	Dodge	2	+1	Interrogation	2	+1	Notice	2	+1
Bureaucracy	1	0	Drive	2	+1	Investigation	3	+1	Security	3	0
Combat Sense	2	+1	First Aid	1	0	Law	2	0	Small Arms	2	+1
Demolitions	2	0	Hand-to-Hand	3	+1	Leadership	2	+1	Stealth	2	+1
Disguise	1	+1	Human Per	2	-1	Melee	1	+1	Streetwise	2	+1

◇ PROFESSION

CP lives a double life. Most of the time, he is a resourceful and just policeman, living up to the highest ideals of the CMP. In the name of the Federation's ideals he has also become a terrorist, a bloody and violent fanatic with a ready excuse for each and every innocent bystander who is killed in his "cleansing" operations. CP is a brilliant officer and an even more cunning terrorist, knowing both sides of the game of cat and mouse played by the forces of law and the proponents of anarchy. His dual life has, if anything, improved his skills as a policeman, giving him a firsthand understanding of what goes on in the mind of the sociopath and criminal.

◇ ATTITUDES

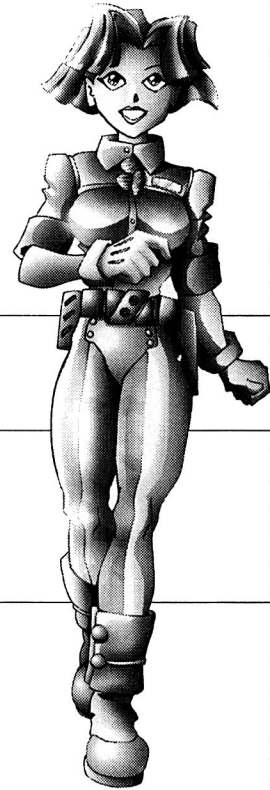
Behind CP's stern image lies a heartless and avid fanatic, a man whose service to the ideals of democracy, law, and order has led him to violate all those ideals for the so-called greater good. So far, the hypocrisy of his actions has not yet undermined CP's vision, though not all his companions have been so strong and a number have had to be eliminated for developing unorthodox views, like helping themselves to the secret slush fund that pays for the operations. The killings and the double-dealing are slowly eroding more and more of CP's ethics, however; soon, he will just be another terrorist.

◇ COMBAT REACTIONS

As a policeman, CP will only use force as a last resort, but when he does, he will be deadly. As a terrorist, CP will resort to deadly force without hesitation, especially to keep his cover intact. The line between the two personas is becoming more blurred however, and the number of STRIKE terrorists killed while resisting arrest is starting to raise eyebrows in CMP High Command, although so far, CP's reputation has prevented a formal investigation. In his terrorist operations, the body counts are also getting higher, with success now placed at a higher premium than the people CP and his cohorts are supposedly trying to protect.

COMMANDER RACHEL TUPOU ◀

With her friendly face and an athletic build, most people think Rachel is probably a young school-teacher or nurse. No one would guess that she is the ANZAC's top espionage agent. A niece of the King, Rachel was picked directly from officers' training in 2203 to join the ANZAC's Special Research Command because of her intelligence, impeccable credentials and a profile that indicated a strong latent potential for intelligence work. In the seven years since, she has operated on every continent on Earth and in the Orbitals, gaining a reputation for daring and a certain savoir-faire that has led to dazzling successes. Rachel is also a stone-cold killer, assassinating the enemies of the crown without compunction. She is a highly talented exo-suit and delta pilot, skills that she uses to disguise her actual duties. Most observers are tricked into seeing her as just a spoiled young Royal with a lackluster military career and a penchant for handsome athletes and actors.



VITAL STATISTICS ▢

Age:	27	Height:	185cm	Weight:	64kg	Hair:	Color:	Tawny Brown	Eye Color:	Green
------	----	---------	-------	---------	------	-------	--------	-------------	------------	-------

ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	+2	APP	+2	BUI	+1	CRE	+2	FIT	+2
INF	+1	KNO	+1	PER	+2	PSY	0	WIL	+1
STR	+1	HEA	+2	STA	40	UD	8	AD	6

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Athletics	1	+2	Combat Sense	2	+2	Delta Pilot	1	+2	Small Arms	3	+2
Disguise	3	+2	Dodge	2	+2	Drive	2	+2	Tactics	2	+2
Exo-Pilot	2	+2	Gunnery (Exo)	2	+2	Gunnery (Delta)	1	+2	Stealth	3	+2
Hand-to-Hand	3	+2	Human Per	3	0	Language (French)	3	+1	Security	2	+1
Language (Spanish)	3	+1	Melee	1	+2	Notice	2	+2	Seduction	2	+2

PROFESSION ◇

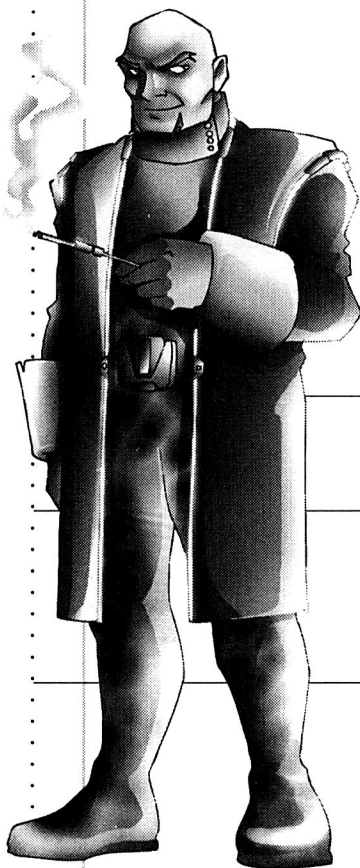
As a naval officer, Rachel is competent though not particularly talented outside her exo-suit. As a spy, however, she comes alive and seems instinctively to be able to pick the right course of action no matter what kind of stress she is under. At the same time, her ability to manipulate people and judge their intentions allows her to often be a step ahead of her opposition. Finally, she has also mastered the art of disguise and is quite capable of assuming another person's identity given enough time; she can also manage an off-the-cuff imitation for short periods of time. More than anything else, Rachel enjoys her duties; they are far removed from the mundane life she would have otherwise been destined for.

ATTITUDES ◇

Both a patriot and a dilettante, Rachel seems to be a contradiction in terms. On the one hand she will often seem to put a mission at risk by a casual dalliance or diversion to enjoy her passions for gambling and fast vehicles, but she also has the scars to prove how hard she works and the risks she is prepared to take for her country. Rachel is the child of the Australian Royal Family; to her, the toys and diversions of the rich and beautiful are a normal part of everyday life, yet she also feels duty-bound to do her family, station and country proud and be victorious or die trying.

COMBAT REACTIONS ◇

Quick and deadly, Rachel is prone to use lethal force even when it might not seem appropriate. Her first concern is always for her cover and her mission. Rachel has avoided becoming a hardened killer, however. Her overwhelming concern for her nation allows her to do things she would otherwise be revolted by, and increasingly, her dilettante ways are becoming a way to drown her sorrows and regrets. In her exo-suit, Rachel finds matters much easier; the combat becomes more remote and she can unleash her full capabilities without being inhibited by knowledge of the inhumanity of her actions.



► ENRIQUE OLO

Arriving in the Mini-States three years ago with a suitcase full of cash and a hunted expression, Enrique was a fairly typical new arrival. Then, in less than a year, he displaced a less successful gang from the town of Porto Novo and got in tight with a number of Orbital smugglers. The speed of his rise caused some discussion, but when Enrique soon settled down to only a moderately successful career as a gang boss, most observers put his rapid rise down to luck. This was exactly what Captain Enrique Gonzales, formerly of CEGA Joint Service Intelligence, wanted them to think. On the run from a politically motivated purge of the JSI, he simply wanted a quiet life. However, with the massive purges that have followed the Odyssey, the forty-seven-year-old gang boss has found himself using his smuggling contacts to operate an escape route for other falsely accused officers. He knows he will get caught eventually, but his honor demands that he help his old comrades and their families.

▣ VITAL STATISTICS

Age:	47	Height:	183cm	Weight:	64kg	Hair Color:	Balding	Eye Color:	Brown
------	----	---------	-------	---------	------	-------------	---------	------------	-------

▣ ATTRIBUTES

AGI	0	APP	0	BUI	+1	CRE	+1	FIT	-1
INF	+2	KNO	+1	PER	+1	PSY	+1	WIL	+1
STR	0	HEA	+1	STA	35	UD	4	AD	4

▣ SKILLS

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Bureaucracy	1	+1	Business	2	+1	Combat Sense	1	+1	Haggling	1	+2
Communications	1	+1	Computer	1	+1	Drive	1	0	Language (French)	1	+1
Etiquette	1	+2	Forgery	2	+1	Small Arms	2	0	Security	1	+1
Human Per	2	+1	Interrogation	1	+1	Tactics	2	+1	Streetwise	2	+2
Notice	2	+1	Psychology	2	+1	Sleight-of-Hand	1	0			

◇ PROFESSION

As a full trained and experienced intelligence officer, Enrique finds his second career as a gang boss lamentably easy and often distasteful, though it does provide him with a reasonable standard of living. With a modicum of modern technology he liberated from the JSI before he fled and other tools he has purchased from his smuggling contacts, Enrique has made himself one of the best-informed people in the Mini-States. His development of an escape route for purged officers and their families has finally allowed him to use his skills to their fullest extent once again, manipulating criminals and bureaucrats alike, as well as setting up multiple lines of misinformation and organizing the assassination of anyone who gets too close to his secrets.

◇ ATTITUDES

Enrique feels full of vigor and purpose for the first time in years. While running a gang was lucrative, it didn't satisfy him. He had originally joined the Joint Service after his childhood in California to bring order to the Earth and help humanity. Becoming part of the criminal class he had always despised wasn't a pleasant prospect, but the only alternative was STRIKE, and he wasn't prepared to go that low. Now that he is doing something worthwhile again, Enrique is a much happier man, even though he is placing himself at greater and greater risk.

◇ COMBAT REACTIONS

A few years of indulgence have lost Enrique the razor-sharp reflexes he enjoyed as a JSI Officer, but he is still highly skilled. Beyond his proficiency at arms however, Enrique is a plotter and planner of great talent, and he much prefers to have an escape route or backup plan than fight it out. He has trained the members of his gang in basic security techniques to provide one layer of security and has a few ex-JSI people on hand for extra support. If faced by the prospect of capture by CEGA, Enrique will try to fight to the death, not wanting to return to the fate he narrowly escaped.

SHAABAN MWEWE ◀

Those looking at this successful Swahili sea captain from Mombasa would be highly surprised to discover that Shaaban was born as far from that thriving coastal city as it possible to get and still be in the inhabited Solar System. The great-grandson of refugee engineers from Zanzibar, Shaaban was born in 2175 on 28 Gap at the Newhome Trojan of the Jovian Confederation. Working as an actor in that tourist haven, Shaaban was recruited by the Jovian Intelligence Service because he spoke halting but workable Swahili, a legacy of his grandmother's fond memories of her youngest days. Working for the Verdandi Division of the JIS looked much more attractive than spending his days as a poorly paid actor, and in 2203, Shaaban found himself deposited in the Swahili Confederacy by a Corvus shuttle. Starting work as sailor, Shaaban has slowly worked his way up the Swahili social structure, creating a string of agents around the Indian Ocean.

VITAL STATISTICS ▢

Age:	35	Height:	193cm	Weight:	59kg	Hair Color:	Black	Eye Color:	Olive
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ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	0	APP	0	BUI	0	CRE	+1	FIT	-1
INF	+2	KNO	+2	PER	0	PSY	+1	WIL	0
STR	0	HEA	0	STA	25	UD	4	AD	3

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Bureaucracy	1	+2	Small Arms	1	0	Naval Pilot	2	0	Language (Swahili)	4	+2
Etiquette	2	+2	Business	3	+2	Streetwise	1	+2	Navigation (Naval)	2	+2
Human Per.	1	+1	Haggling	2	+2	Computer	1	+2	Theatrics	2	+2
Law	1	+2	Investigation	1	0	Hand-to Hand	1	0			

PROFESSION ◇

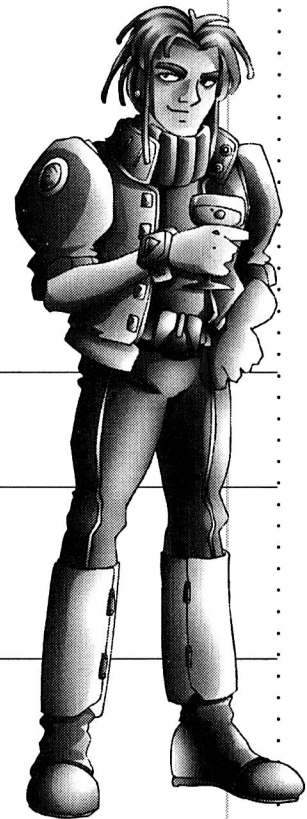
Shaaban is a mediocre spy, but the lackadaisical methods of the Swahili Confederacy have allowed him to pass without notice. The agents he has recruited in every country bordering the Indian Ocean have no idea he is anything other than just another Swahili merchant on the take, an ingenious cover that has protected him even when his agents have been uncovered. What Shaaban has discovered however, is that he is a very good sailor and an excellent businessman, his success only partially attributable to the seed capital that Verdandi provided him. Given his success and wide purview, Shaaban is regarded as the best agent Jupiter has in Free Earth and his willingness to stay is seen as a sign of his dedication.

ATTITUDES ◇

The problem for Shaaban is that his loyalties to Jupiter are becoming clouded by the life he has made for himself on Earth. So far, Verdandi hasn't noticed this, since he is too far away for regular contact and rarely deals with the same agent twice. However, Shaaban finds himself with a house that could house twenty families back home on 28 Gap, a view of the harbor where his ships bring him wealth and influence and a happy family that loves him. While still loyal to Jupiter in an impersonal way, Shaaban is finding it difficult to keep risking what he has achieved.

COMBAT REACTIONS ◇

Trained as a watcher rather than a fighter, Shaaban surrounds himself with the bodyguards common to successful Swahili merchants. He does know some basic self-defense, but if faced by an attack, he will rely on his bodyguards or attempt to flee. The one exception is if he is at risk of being exposed, in which case Shaaban will do anything to protect the life he has built. If left with no other resort he will even engage in personal combat, preferring death to the claustrophobic world of 28 Gap or a prison cell.



► WILDLIFE

While the Fall wiped out a vast number of the Earth's species (both flora and fauna), the planet is still the only one in the Solar System that supports a notable variety of wild plants and animals. Earthers like to regale off-world tourists with stories of unwary Solar nationals being eaten, gored or poisoned by this or that native animal or plant, whether the organism is dangerous or not. To Earthers, wildlife is both just another risk in the daily struggle for survival and something to admire, emulate and protect. Those plants and animals that survived the Fall are the hardiest and wildest that the Earth has produced and are often held up to young Earthers as good examples of how to survive in the face of a savage planet.

As a result of the Fall, many plants and animals now harbor diseases or have bonded in parasitic dependence with humans and human-related species of animals and plants, such as wheat and farm animals. Though they cause major problems, they cannot simply be rid of: after all, they are also remnants of the Earth's once rich ecosystems; Earthers are highly protective of any remaining wildlife, since it represents a link to a past diversity that they hope to regain.

▼ BACTERIA AND VIRUSES

Beyond the natural microbiological flora and fauna, three other types of plague are now found on Earth, many of them the result of direct or indirect human intervention. The most dangerous ones are the lurking remnants of the Third World War, known colloquially as warganisms. Not quite so virulent as the warganisms but often harder to treat, the mutated descendants of bio-weapons and the natural diseases warped by radiation or chemicals during the Fall represent no less of a danger to the unwary person. They are flanked by the killers that Humanity has been familiar with for centuries which have, with the collapse of modern medical infrastructures, returned to haunt the Earth. Considering all this, it is unsurprising that every Orbital station and planet-based arcology works hard to ensure that they remain free from infection.

Natural plagues are more likely to be picked up in the poorer and more backward parts of the planet, since those who cannot afford to eat properly or get proper medical care often carry them. Mutant plagues mostly enter society through animal or plant hosts, though occasionally an unwittingly immune human can act as a plague carrier. The war plagues can devastate entire cities in a single outbreak, though thankfully they tend to only be found in isolated areas, old ruins or in unexploded ordnance.

Fast-Burn Warganism: Various, but death usually occurs within 48 hours of onset (a successful Health test means that the victim has gotten lucky and the disease has expired before killing them). Engineered countermeasures are usually available, but must be found, prepared and administered in a timely fashion. Fast-burn diseases are designed to kill specific populations in a local area in a short period of time and then die out, leaving the area totally sterilized of the target population. They are very difficult to treat, but relatively easy to contain.

Slow-Burn Warganism: A successful Health test means that the victim is unharmed except for minor to moderate discomfort. A failed test means that the victim remains an infective carrier, and also may suffer permanent damage. A Fumbled test almost always results in the victim's death following a brief period of intense infectivity. Such diseases are designed to spread over a wide area and debilitate a population without necessarily killing them. They are treatable, but very hard to contain.

Mutated Disease: Caused by anything from accidentally-altered prions to radiation-mutated amoebas, these diseases can have every imaginable symptom and outcome. There are medical records of diseases that can kill in mere minutes, and there are just as many records of near-harmless afflictions (such as the strange Amazonian fungal growth whose only notable effect, aside from minor parasitism, was a dramatic change in the victim's fingernail color). These diseases pop up quickly in an area and usually vanish just as quickly, replaced by newer — but not necessarily better — mutations. Gamemasters are encouraged to use their imagination.

▣ PLAGUE STATS

Type	Contagion	Method	Onset Time	Virulence
Fast-Burn Warganism	8	Usually airborne	15 minutes to 24 hours	8
Slow-Burn Warganism	9	Skin or bodily fluid contact, or airborne	24 hours to 2 weeks	5
Mutated Disease	0-4	Any	minutes to months	1d6+1d3

FERAL DOG ◀

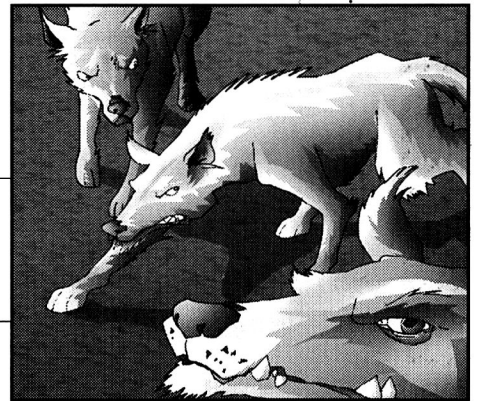
Canines were one of the few ecological winners from the Fall. The inbred and pampered dogs of human domesticity died out, but their feral and natural counterparts survived and flourished in an environment devoid of other large carnivores. Thus, while few big cats and bears survive, the feral dogs' pack nature and capacity to scavenge for scraps ensured that they have risen to the top of the food chain on every continent. Large and aggressive, feral dogs are often attracted to human settlements when food is scarce. They are an ongoing problem in the few areas where grazing animals are raised.

ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	1	BUI	-4	FIT	2	INS	3	PER	3
WIL	0	STR	-2	HEA	0	STA	10	UD3 (rabies on a 1 in 6)	

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Combat Sense	2	3	Hand-to-Hand	2	1	Survival	3	3	Dodge	1	1



SEWER SHARKS ◀

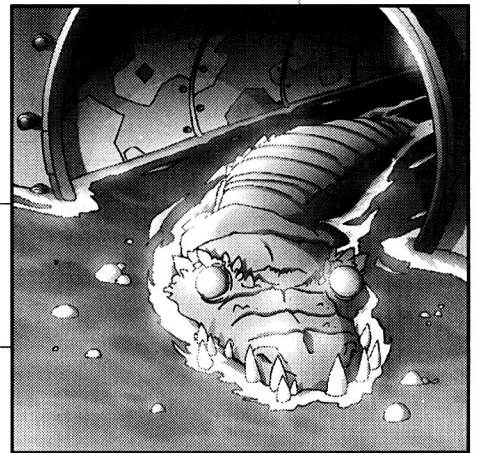
Not really sharks and indeed not even a single species, sewer sharks are mutated reptiles and amphibians that have become common to human habitations the world over. Their origin dates back to the vast urbanization of the twenty-first century, when alligators, crocodiles and other wild reptilians slowly made themselves at home in tropical urban environments as their own natural habitat was destroyed. Pollution and the Fall resulted in mutations like albinism, blindness and bioluminescence. While sewer sharks are not really a threat except to those who choose to travel in the sewer and water systems of subtropical and tropical cities, attacks still happen, and there have even been occasional arcology infestations.

ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	2	BUI	1	FIT	1	INS	1	PER	1
WIL	2	STR	1	HEA	1	STA	20	UD	6

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Athletics	1	2	Combat Sense	3	1	Hand-to-Hand	3	2	Survival	2	1
Swim	3	2	Dodge	1	2						



TUBE RATS ◀

Rats, like most vermin, survived the Fall because of their ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. This was especially true of a variety that started becoming prevalent in the arcologies of the twenty-first century. Within these carefully controlled environments, life was more difficult and only the smartest and wildest survived. Size was a limitation in the tight confines, so tube rats grew smaller. Infesting food stores, shredding hydroponics labs and poisoning water stores, tube rats are a major nuisance. However, it is their ability to carry disease that makes them truly unwelcome; they are a serious breach of the environmental controls designed to protect arcology dwellers from outside influences.

ATTRIBUTES ▢

AGI	2	BUI	-6	FIT	3	INS	3	PER	3
WIL	1	STR	-4	HEA	0	STA	10	UD	1

SKILLS ▢

Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr	Skill	Level	Attr
Athletics	2	2	Combat Sense	2	3	Hand-to-Hand	1	2	Survival	2	3
Swim	1	2	Dodge	3	2						



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★ JOVIAN CHRONICLES



In the Shadow of CEGA is a Silhouette sourcebook for Dream Pod 9's exciting Jovian Chronicles science fiction game! Many in the Solar System see the half of Earth that is not controlled by CEGA as poor and primitive, completely unworthy of their attention. They could not be more wrong; these are proud people, with their own strengths and traditions, forging futures for themselves irrespective of the arrogance of CEGA and the Solar Nations.

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- Stats and biographies of the important personalities of non-CEGA Earth.

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ISBN: 1-894578-48-1



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