

TECHNOCRACY

RELOADED

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview 2.0



Unit 2: Targets, Assets, Tactics, and Plans

Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Anomaly 2018-42F - Mission communications transcript

Command frequency

SGT Nunez: Perimeter established. Be advised, an unknown number of civilians in the target building are contaminated.

SAC Kim: No shit. That's why we're here.

Nunez: Sir, no. I mean, the detectors don't work. We have no idea who's contaminated and who's not. The only way to achieve containment is to order in better sensors and beanbag everyone who tries to escape in the meantime.

Kim: That's going to start a fucking riot. (unintelligible) Do it.

Level 3.42 biological explosion detected.

Bravo Squad frequency

CPL Silva-Ogunwande: Was that a fucking tentacle?

Command frequency

Silva-Ogunwande: Contamination just escaped our containment zone. Building 2 now infected.

Nunez: I'm out of squads. How are we going to secure this, Sir?

Kim: We can't.

Nunez: Wait. What are you...

Kim: Pull your squads back to Phase Line Karloff. Now. I'm Striking the whole AO.

Silva-Ogunwande: Oh, fuck.

Nunez: I thought we couldn't do that! I thought we don't dust civvies!

Kim: You don't. I do. This blood is on my hands. Get your people back. They have 45 seconds to get to Karloff. I'm not taking the risk of another pseudopod spreading the infection further.

City-wide frequency

Kim: Guidons! Strike on the OBJ in 30 seconds. Get covered.

PSYOPS frequency

Kim: Spread whichever story covers the entire development going up.

LT Cushing: Kilo Golf Five Three?

Kim: On my VDAS. Gas leak? That's the best we got? Fuck. Get it to the bloggers and social media after the strike hits.

City-wide frequency

Kim: If you can hear this, get to my position under a fire and rescue cover. Any survivors get taken to one of our facilities. Strike in 10.

Nunez: There's no way anyone could survive a Strike.

Kim: Not if they're human. Which is why we can't let civilian rescuers be first on the scene. 5 seconds. 3. 2. 1.

Orbital strike detected.

End transcript

Why We Fight: A Briefing for All Operatives

All right, sweet agents, you know the *Six Precepts of Damian*. You could recite them while knocking out pushups as I regulate your adrenal gland into overdrive. But what do they *mean*? Don't just spit the words back or paraphrase. We both know the words, but that wasn't the question. How do you take *the very mission statement of our organization* and stick it in your heart as well as your head? More importantly, fellow operatives of our mighty and magnificent Union, how do we turn principles into action and let both those precious principles and our precious hides survive repeated contact with the enemy?

And make no mistake, kiddies — the entire world is our enemy. Most of them just don't know that. We can't afford to forget it.

I know too much about this subject for this to be both brief and as informative as it needs to be. Really, I need to sit you down in front of a stack of field manuals, technical manuals, and other junk that's taller than you. But that's going to take too long, so let's do this the hard way. Ears on, fuckers. Buckle up.

Six Precepts: Theory and Practice

What, as the not-so-good Doctor put it, is the law? Well, we spill plenty of blood, and we *are* men, women, nonbinary, and other sundry beings, so the fictional Moreau — who, as you've probably heard, lent his name to one of our Union's less-admirable ventures — doesn't really apply in our case. For agents of the Technocratic Union, our law consists of six Precepts; and as any cop or politician can tell you, laws can be mighty flexible when push comes to shove and someone's getting their head kicked in.

Article One

Bring stasis and order to the universe. Predictability brings safety. Once all is discovered and all is known, Unity will be won.

When the Masses look at the world and think they know what's going on, they don't panic. When they're not panicking, they can look at the world and see a tomorrow. They *build* to that tomorrow. They eat, drink, and dream that future. The more stable reality is, the more we can teach them without their unEnlightened asses losing their shit.

Article Two

Convince the Masses of the benevolence of science, commerce and politics, and of the power of rationality. Conflict and suffering will be eliminated in our Utopia.

We're not the only game in town. We've *never* been the only game in town. The fucking Dark Ages are just waiting to make a comeback. Witches are on the rise, both Reality Deviants and run of the mill weirdos. Organized religion makes up the vast majority of powerbases out there. Beating them? Never going to happen. The only way to accomplish Scientific Belief is to make Belief palatable.

Contrary to popular belief, religion and science are completely compatible — once we've made some adjustments to the weirder elements of religious doctrine. Modern science began in Catholic monasteries, after all, so once you purge faith healers, jihadis, fundie televangelists and snake-handler nonsense there's no reason you can't mix religious creeds with scientific facts.

Article Three

Preserve the Gauntlet and the Horizon. Chaotic individuals who open gateways with impunity threaten the stability of our world. Uncontrolled portals also allow outside forces, such as Nephandi, access to our world. This must never happen.

This goes back to Article One. We know stability's important, but what endangers the stability? Threats, inside and outside. The Gauntlet sits between our world and the rest of them. The only thing keeping fucking aliens from breaching through is us. Unauthorized portals cannot be allowed to exist; the only thing that can possibly come through them is chaos. Authorized portals and ones we can't shut down must be monitored at all times. What comes out must be known, controlled, contained, and — when necessary — destroyed.

Article Four

Define the nature of the universe. Knowledge must be absolute, or chaos will envelop all. The elemental forces of the universe must not be left to the caprices of the unknown.

You're a fucking *scientist*. I don't care if you think of yourself as a door kicker. If you're here, you're more than just boots on ground; you're a fucking expert in some damn field or another. You do *not* know it all, nor will you ever; and that fact had better give you a raging fucking hard-on. Metaphorically speaking. Or literally. Whatever. I don't know what genitalia you keep in your locker, and I don't fucking care.

Knowing that, from the time you brush your teeth to the time that your head hits your pillow, you are acquiring new knowledge needs to be better than sex for you. I don't care if you bang the world in your off-time or if you never have a single intimate urge. When you're on duty, you'd better be a fucking slut for information. If you're not learning, you're fucking dying and you're taking the Technocracy with you.

When we know what's out there, we can control the dissemination of that data to the Masses. We can control what they know and when. If *we're* in the fucking dark, shit will go sideways in a horrific way. Unknown situations are inherently unpredictable. You want to go into a firefight with a bag over your head? Fuck, no. Be a floodlight of information. Learn.

Article Five

Destroy Reality Deviants. Their recklessness threatens our security and our progress toward Unity.

PAY! SPECIAL! ATTENTION! TO THE WORDING! It's not "kill" RDs; it's *destroy* RDs. Some threats can be ended by bopping them on the nose and telling them to fuck off. Other threats

aren't over just because there's a body on the ground. You *neutralize* those fucks. You don't just cross them off; you erase the threat that they pose to security.

Article Six

Shepherd the Masses; protect them from themselves and others.

Remember: the Masses are *people*, and people are stupid. When provided a solid direction, they'll bring about a Neon-Damned Utopia on Earth. When left to their own devices, they'll squabble over whether or not it's okay to eat pineapple on pizza while snorting human ashes. And that's just the *regular* threats. Don't get me started about the bigger ones.

The crazy shit is our business, too. And business has never been better.

Targets and Assets

So, what *kinds* of crazy shit are we dealing with? I mean, in general terms, not the mouthfuls of acronym gibberish that make your eyes glaze over when it scrawls across your VDAS feed. Yeah, it's useful at times to know a HE467-5 from a TE986-2, but it's a lot easier to talk about general strategies without losing your mind if you just say, "a vampire sorcerer" and "a homeless werewolf who stinks like garbage."

General categories, then, to keep things easy here:

UCs / BRQs / PRAs: Unenlightened Citizens

Our customers *and* our product. If you need to change their minds, do it. Just don't go overboard; we need them in working shape. All of them. For the most part, they know very little about the world around them, which makes it easy for us to shape how they view it. Never forget that every single one of us used to be like them. As easy as it is for us to think of them as mindless drones (and that Superstitionist phrase "sleeper" says pretty much everything you need to know about where *they're* coming from!), it's impossible for us to ignore the possibility that any one of them might have an aptitude for technology.

In high-muckity-muckspeak, the Masses are what we call *Baseline Reality Quantum*s or *Potential Reality Assets*. What does that shit mean? The first term reminds us that each unEnlightened human consciousness represents one measure of Consensus belief, and the second reminds us that we want that belief on *our* side, not on the side of our enemies. To keep it simple, think of things this way: each BRQ is a brick in the wall of Consensus, so you PRA that most of the bricks stay on your side of that wall. Don't break BRQs if you can help it, or no amount of PRAing will save you from getting your ass chewed off by your CO.

Make sense? Good. I'm glad we had this little chat.

"*But, Lee,*" I hear from some of you, "*what if they get in the way or draw on me?*" What part of Rules 1-3 were confusing? If you get shot by a civilian, you fucking deserved it. This isn't the CRASH unit of the LAPD. If you wanted to bust un-Enlighted heads, you shouldn't have signed on the dotted fucking line. De-escalate. Adjust. KO. Those are your *only* options.

We clear? Okay. Here's the flipside: Never forget that the worst shit you'll ever face comes from human stupidity. Aliens are bad, but they've got nothing on the damage an anti-vaxxer cult can do. World Wars don't start when some werewolf gets a wild hair up his ass, and it's not vampires who are cutting funds to science programs. Creatures of the night are parasites, and their host-

body is the stupidity of “just plain folks.” Our job is to protect the Masses, uplift them, and protect them from their own mistakes.

Disputed Data: Collateral Impact

The “hard rule” detailed nearby is, of course, more what you’d call “guidelines” than actual rules. Technocratic agents can and do kill innocent bystanders with nauseating regularity, especially if the Nephandic infiltration and/or purge of the Crafts metaplots are in play. Even so, it’s bad form, and the Union’s leadership officially forbids fatal carelessness among the Masses. Incidents with high levels of Collateral Impact (CI) are punished with escalating degrees of severity, depending upon the relative value of the offender to the Technocratic cause and the amount of CI involved. For details, see the **Book of Secrets** entries for “Technocratic Infractions” (pp. 224-226) and “Technocratic Punishments” (pp. 227-230).

CLEs: Civilian Law Enforcement

Don’t assume that authority figures all get their marching orders from us. If you find yourself in a situation with a local cop, keep cool. The last thing we need is to degrade local law enforcement because one of us was impatient or sloppy. Remember, beat cops are the backbone of the System. Every cop who “dies in a gangland shootout” is another one that we don’t get to depend on to keep the Masses in line. If you thought I was a hardass about recycling, what do you think I’ll do to you if you waste human assets?

Should you run into a cop who’s being difficult, Attune them. Keep your damn finger off the trigger. If they need more of an Attunement than you’re rated to provide, get the fuck out of there and request follow-up. We can delete police reports more easily than we can replace smart cops.

VHS: Amateur Monster Hunters

Yes, they exist. I don’t know why, but they do. And, they range the whole gamut of possible motivations for wanting to hunt ETs: vengeance, harvesting organs, long-standing feuds, money, and wanting to fuck a vampire or whatever. (I’m not kidding. People are really goddamn weird.) It’s usually vengeance or money, though. The official acronym means “Van HelsingS,” and if you get the rest of that joke you’ve got more sense of history than most jackoffs who come my way these days.

Fun fact: These annoying shit-for-brains are still humans and still civilians. You’re not allowed to just kill them because they’re in the way or actively interfering with the mission at hand. Now, the rules are a whole lot fuzzier when it comes to the matter of letting some dumbass VHS get eaten, and then dropping the monster while it’s picking its teeth. I’m not saying that you should create a trap for them, but if they happen to create a situation where they’re unlikely to live, and their death benefits the mission... well hey, they knew the risks.

HEs: Hemophagic Entities

Yeah. These are vampires. I mean, call it whatever your boss wants you to, but they’re old, drink blood, and don’t like the light. Let’s not overthink the naming shit. That said, it’s not fucking *possible* to overthink the kinds of threats these things can pose. Some are really fucking fast. Some are really fucking strong. Some kinda turn into fucking werewolves. Some go invisible. Some write shitty poetry. Some can do all of the above. If your agent-sense ever kicks in, and it

tells you “vampire,” start gathering data because there’s no telling what these leechy fucks will do, aside from go nuts over a phone app that lets them call victims to their location 24/7. Which is a thing that exists, by the way.

On the plus side, they seem to be mostly clannish, forming networks of street level gangs loosely organized around seniority. Their belief in a hierarchal structure means that they’re more likely to get in each other’s way than into ours. Additionally, it gives them something to lose. As long as they want to cling to territory, we have leverage. Similarly, it behooves them to clean up their own messes, using their resources and abilities to convince the Masses that they’re not real. Under the right circumstances, that makes them useful assets to us. They mostly police their own kind while keeping an eye on the other weird shit too. As long as you never — and I repeat, *N-E-V-E-R* — make the mistake of thinking some bloodbag regards you as anything other than an especially spicy Meals-on-Wheels, the right HE can do half your job for you.

However, if a vampire is actively interfering with the mission at hand, you’re clear to incapacitate them. This does not mean setting them on fire or blowing their head off. Word to the wise: It’s virtually impossible to beat a vampire to death with a baton. Do not, repeat, do not kill one of them without authorization... unless you have to, anyway. We *will* win the ensuing street war, but that’s a shitload of resources that we could have put to better use.

TEs: Therianthropes Entities

Werewolves, werespiders, werecats, and other shit that’s just as scary. Fuck. There’s probably a wercockroach gang out there. Do you have enough backup? The answer will always be *no*. When facing TEs, cheat. Cheat your fucking ass off or you won’t make it home. TEs are some sort of enhanced human mutation. Like vampires, they also end up forming small gangs, but the mean physical power of any random TE far exceeds the mean physical power of vampires. Like, they aren’t “off the charts”-level powerful, but they’re definitely on the “Oh, shit” side.

You’re absolutely cleared to engage on these fuckers on sight unless otherwise informed. You absolutely *should not*, though. The only time you should get into a fight with a therianthrope is in a carefully planned operation.

Now that I’ve scared the shit out of you, I’m going to let you in on an important detail. Therianthropes can be Attuned. That’s right. You can pull your badge out, put the fear of Lee into them, and make them put their hackles down. To make this more official, your escalation of force goes like this: If they’re hostile or otherwise an impediment to operations, Attune them. If that fails, repeat Attunement protocols while retreating. If force proves necessary, use the *maximum possible force* possible. Your best weapon is your brain when dealing with these things, and most operatives who try using brawn against them instead wind up getting licked off some RD’s claws afterward.

TBEs: Faeries

I don’t even want to *try* to figure out why faeries still exist. We did everything we could to turn the dangerous soul-sucking *things* from the Bad Old Days into cute little tales for nursery kids, but there’s a stubborn streak in the human soul that *wants* to keep believing in Tinkerbell no matter how much of a bitch she really was in that goddamned story. I mean, c’mon — she kept trying to get Wendy killed, and yet people still clap their hands and shit to make sure that flying psychopath sticks around.

I blame those Victorian pedos and their redhead-fucking Pre-Raphaelite friends. Oh, and Uncle Walter, too. Fuck that frozen dead bastard, anyhow.

That's what TBes *are*, too: reality-bending psychopaths. Never forget that. They eat human sanity; I mean really, that's what they do. People around them go crazy, and sometimes never come back from those breakdowns. TinkerBell Entities (yeah, that's what the acronym means) might seem cute, but they're mean and parasitical and way too full of themselves. Fortunately, they're also rare as fuck, but if you ever *do* see some crazy-ass goat-dude dancing with naked nymphos on a hill or some such shit, just nuke him from orbit and sweep up the ashes when you leave.

I'm kidding. Sort of. Violence usually isn't necessary. As it turns out, these things curl up in a sobbing ball before we even touch them. Research indicates that the presence of Enlightened operatives is like Kryptonite for TBes. And so, slapping a pair of cuffs on Goat Boy and hauling him off to the nearest psych facility is usually enough to shut him down for good. Some decent meds and 48-hour psych hold is usually enough to make him forget he ever existed. Clap your hands *now*, you furry fuck, and see how much good that gets you!

TAMURDs, NAMURDs, CMURDs, REMURDs, PTMURDs, and HSKINs: So-called "Mages"

Our rivals in this long, bloody, stupid fucking war over who will and will not determine humanity's Consensus have been designated with an alphabet soup of official acronyms. Most, but not all, of them include the designation *MURD: Magic-Using Reality Deviant*.

TAMURD stands for *Tradition Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant*. Obvious enough.

NAMURD stands for *Non-Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant* — what our Tradition buddies call "orphans."

CMURD stands for *Craft-Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant* — that is, some fucking Gandalf who belongs to a large, organized group that isn't one of the Traditions but has a certain history and distinct culture around it. Theoretically, these idiots are pretty rare. I'm not sure I really believe that.

REMURD stands for *Random Element Magic-Using Reality Deviant* — someone who clearly knows how to use magic but doesn't match any of our intel for the larger organized groups. Also used to designate freshly Enlightened RDs with wild talent and no apparent understanding of how to use it... or how *not* to use it. In short, a fucking dangerous loose cannon.

PTMURD stands for *Potentially Talented Magic-Using Reality Deviant* — a potential mage who hasn't "awakened" yet but who shows every indication of doing so soon. Recruit it or shoot it, but don't let one get away!

HSKIN stands for *Holy Shit Kill It Now*. That's the official designation for Marauders, Nephandi, and other "mages" who seem just too dangerous to live. If you get a HSKIN in your sights, do not under any circumstances let it leave under its own power. Unless specifically ordered otherwise by a superior of Manager rank or higher, do not let it survive the fight at all.

Officially, every one of these RDs is an enemy combatant. In real life, we can negotiate with some of them if they seem reasonable and serve a greater role in the Union's agenda.

NAMURDs, REMURDs and PTMURDs are potential recruits, and can usually be won over to

the Technocratic cause when given enough incentives and Social Processing. HSKINs are to be killed on sight. Really fucking seriously. With sugar on top. Kill the motherfucking thing.

JMARDs, PDEs, and Just Plain Aliens

Saying “There’s some really weird shit out there” is the understatement of the century. When it comes to JMARDs (*Juxtapositional Manifestation Paraconsciousness Reality Deviants* — that is, “ghosts”), PDEs (*Pan-Dimensional Entities*), and other shit that defies any classification other than “alien,” the weirdness factor is unmeasurable. The alphabet doesn’t hold enough acronyms for the stuff that exists outside our material reality, and human Consensus is so screwed up that stuff that should always have been impossible can be spotted in temple carvings and on dorm-room walls all over the world; which, of course, means these things have a clawhold in Consensus that no amount of rationality or firepower can shake loose.

Whoever thought it was a good idea to make cute plushies of Cthulhu and shit should fucking die. He probably *did* die, come to think of it, but the damage is already done.

JMARDs are composed of the psychic residue of a living person. The acronym comes from their ability to manifest in several dimensions of reality at once, and their tendency to fuck shit up when they do. We’re not really sure why one person becomes a ghost when most other people don’t, and frankly the scientific experiments required to find out the answer to that are immoral as fuck, so let’s just stop pondering it. Generally speaking, JMARDs aren’t too harmful, but because they’re as unique as living humans are, don’t assume that you can predict what they’re going to do. Research suggests they stick around because of unfinished business among the living, and that business usually involves a grudge of some kind. Most ghosts aren’t dangerous, but if you cross paths with one that *is*, a few Ectoplasmic Disruption Rounds tend to disperse the problem for a while. Trouble is, EDRs are freaking expensive, so if you can puzzle out why the JMARD’s hanging around Ghost Place Central, and then resolve that problem, you might be able to send Caspar back to the Phantom Zone forever.

Word to the wise: Don’t try nuking them. That tends to go poorly.

PDEs are so diverse that we gave up trying to categorize them all. The second someone thought they’d nailed down a concise taxonomy of these tricky fuckers, some entity no one’d ever heard of before popped up and went “*Fooled ya!*” Let’s put it this way: Hermetic wizards and clergy-monk types have spent thousands of years filling big-ass books with lists of PDEs and those lists don’t even scratch the surface of what’s really out there. *Alien* sums them up just fine: That word, in Latin, means “other,” that’s what PDEs are: *Others*. Don’t try thinking about it too much. You’ll break your brain. I’ve seen it happen. Literally.

Certain operatives, especially Voids, use JMARDs and PDEs as potential assets. Sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn’t. Most of us just do the contain-and-deny dance when these things show up. There’s a reason popular mythology connects “Men in Black” to alien encounters. Either way, if you feel like ghostbusting, you’re cleared to do so. There’s no escalation of force protocol here; if you have a weapon that can hurt these things, go nuts and just make sure there’s a good cleanup crew waiting when the smoke clears.

PEE: Paradox-Effect Entities

The wiseass behind this acronym probably also coined the field op saying: “*First you see one then you do the other.*” Technically, Paradox-Effect Entities are just another kind of JMARD. Thing is, we know from lengthy analysis and centuries’ worth of documentation that PEEs are

not your everyday garden-variety JMARDS — as if such a thing existed to begin with. No, they're a whole other thing, and that thing is nasty.

Y'know that old drawing where a bunch of bats and shit come flying up behind a dude who's trying to catch a nap? Those are Paradox Entities — bad dreams of the Masses. We've known for centuries that psychic energy has physical effects; that's not woo-woo shit, that's science, though I'll admit it's not something we share much yet with Joe Sleeper because... well, he's trying to catch a nap and our job involves letting him rest peacefully. When Reality Deviants show up and start kicking up nightmares for him, Joe Sleeper's dreams shape psychic energy into Paradox Entities. Yes, Joe PEEs in his sleep. Yes, that's a joke and you're authorized to laugh.

In the old days, PEEs manifested as demons and angels and the sort of shit. Sometimes they still do. More often, though, they show up like something out of Batman's basement — weird-ass supervillains and crap like that. People watch too many fucking movies, and we end up dealing with the results: mirror-clowns and flying trout and old guys dressed in wrinkled white suits — it's nuts. Stay away from that shit if you can avoid it. Let Gandalf get sucked into some extradimensional hell. Better him than you.

Which leads me to a little tactical secret: If you can goad Gandalf into setting off the Paradox Effect then Joe's bad dreams can do your job for you. Just stay calm, remain subtle, use just enough force to piss off the wizard while keeping your own hands clean, and chances are good that Ol' Spellbook gets careless enough to bring out the big guns. PEE shows up, you're over there in the corner acting innocent, and Gandalf goes for a little ride down Paradox Lane. It's quick, it's easy, and it involves a lot less paperwork. Those assholes think we created the Paradox Effect to begin with, so their own paranoia handles the heavy lifting. Just remember: That door swings both ways, and if *you're* the one kicking up nightmares Joe's PEE might come for you instead.

Special Assets

The Big T is huge. Massive. But that doesn't mean our ability to put boots on ground is limitless. Take a look at any of the steps of mission planning. Any one of those could get outsourced if we need it to. Why? Tons of reasons, but let's get practical here. We want to hit a group of werewolves to provoke a response and find out where the main body of their pack is. Do we want to use a team of badass RD stompers? No. We don't want a complete success, so why bother risking *any* of our agents? Outsource the hit. What about sanitizing an area of blood and bodies during a hit with a highly mobile enemy force? Fuck cleanup; we need to be ready to chase those RDs. Outsource it.

For us, every potential outsource party could become an asset. Assets are to be nurtured, protected, shielded from the truth as much as possible, monitored carefully, and disposed of when necessary. Yes, I said *when*. Don't get attached. An asset is only as valuable as its potential use to us. Don't throw those resources away without a reason and a backup plan, but never, *ever* forget that an asset is just that: a resource to be employed toward the greater good.

Cleanup Crews

The smallest piece of evidence could cause a breach of Consensus or attract attention, but that doesn't mean that we have to do it all. Cleaning contractors come in a variety of shapes and sizes, all of them weird. While the Technocracy might not enjoy doing business with vampires or ghouls, their ability to dispose of corpses is too valuable to ignore. And, if they're eating the

bodies we point out, they're not eating civvies. That's why sanctioned cleaning crews are automatically granted Amendable Coexistence status. Unless a particular group takes direct action against the Technocratic Union, they are to be regarded as off-limits, even if they injure civilians during feeding. Unnecessary violence should be documented. Unnecessary murder is to be immediately reported for potential status revocation.

Expendable Assets

Amateur monster hunters, white supremacists, street gangs, whatever. They all fall in here; they like dealing out violence, and we don't actually care if they die in the process so long as it can't be traced back to us. This means information about missions and payments needs to be clean. Cash. Burner phones.

RD Assets

Yeah, I know what the *Precepts* say about palling around with Deviants. I also know that Damien was talking out of both sides of his mouth. We've been making alliances-of-convenience with Reality Deviants since the Craftmasons kicked that bird-bitch out of the White Tower and set up shop where she left off. Note the part where I said, "of *convenience*." These things are not your friends. Never were, never will be, never fucking are. Sure, that fat leech has useful contacts and significant pull in places where a Black Suit never goes. He's still using you, you're still using him, and you'd best fucking remember that fact because I guarantee you that he's never forgetting it. Secure those assets when you can, use them for whatever they're worth, and set their fucking coffins on fire when they've outlived their usefulness to us.

Employable Assets

Here's your baseline for paycheck-based assets: everyday citizens whose work advances our cause. The accountant, the receptionist, the programmer, the motor-pool mechanic — you name it; the Union has a job for it. These assets have no idea who they're working for, of course, and it's not in their best interests to find out. It's not in *your* best interests, either, if they do. Things get ugly when the wrong person opens the wrong door at the wrong moment, so if you want to avoid an unscheduled cleanup (and a chewing-out from your immediate supervisor) then it's best to avoid flashy operations and weird behavior around employable assets. They're not quite as expendable as the people we send into the meat grinder, so it behooves the fuck out of you to play nice and be careful when you're around them. Unlike expendable assets, these people tend to be missed if they don't come home at night.

Deployable Assets

These assets have a high attrition rate, and we take that into account when managing them. SWAT teams, military personnel, truckers, minor bodyguards, First Responders, HAZMAT disposal crews — the sorts of people who get paid to risk their lives are the ones you call in when you need backup for a low-level containment situation. It's still not a good idea to let these assets see too much of the Big Picture, if you know what I'm saying here, and dropping your pants around some poor kid who needs to be scrubbed after seeing too much is still a bad idea if you want to get ahead in the Technocracy. Sure, these assets go to work expecting a Very Bad Night someday, but that doesn't mean we can afford to take their lives too lightly. The paperwork alone is a fucking nightmare, and those death-benefits packages are not cheap.

Extraordinary Assets

These assets know the score. They've been trained and Processed, passed a lot of tests to get ahead of the pack, and have earned a certain low-level security clearance before we consider them "extraordinary." It's not entirely accurate to call these agents "assets" because they're really part of our Big Happy Technocratic Family. Lots of them go on to become Enlightened operatives in their own right, but don't shit on the ones who never do. All the usual operative protocols are in force when you deal with extraordinary citizens, so treating these "little siblings" like you would treat any other asset is a fast track to a shit post in the worst Construct your Manager can find.

Hardcore Assets / True Believers

Certain assets have been part of the Technocracy's foundations since Day Fucking One. Scientists, professors, archivists and librarians, military lifers and true-blue law-enforcement types — the builders, the shapers, the guardians of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Some are extraordinary citizens who've been trained to hang with us when the shit gets thick. Most are just doing their jobs because they *believe* in the good they can do. And that, my friends, is the most valuable kind of asset: the one who believes in us because we're working toward the same goals they are. A rent-a-cop will bolt and run, and your werewolf so-called pal will turn you into dog food if he thinks you're a worm or something stupid like that. A dedicated cop, though, will follow you into an actual hell if she believes you're both fighting for a better tomorrow. *Those* are the assets we protect at any cost: the hardcore true believers. Not only will those people turn their useful skills in our direction, they help enforce the reality we strive to build, protect, and eventually advance for the collective benefit of all.

HOAR: The Hierarchy of Assets & Resources

This acronym is Technocracy-speak for "How valuable certain people are and are not in terms of Technocratic protocol." Jokes about HOARing are unmutual, but people make them anyway. An even more clandestine nickname for this Hierarchy is the *SAMETO Protocol* (Some Animals More Equal Than Others). This is not a phrase used anywhere where a Manager might be listening — unless, of course, a Manager's using it.

Basically, HOAR appraises the relative expendability of Technocratic personnel, from most-expendable to least-expendable. They don't phrase it that way, of course. Iteration X has done a lot of work to assure that HOAR ratings are based on the finest mathematical calculations and asset-management data. Unlike the basic ranks (described in **Mage 20**, p. 172), the HOAR bases the value of personnel on their proved value to the Union. Thus, a blind, unEnlightened receptionist in a wheelchair might have a higher HOAR ranking than a freshly-crafted cyborg field agent because that receptionist has done a lot of things that have benefitted the Union's goals, and thus has a higher appraisal-rank when compared to the uncertain prospects of that field agent.

HOAR provides a potential guide for disciplinary issues regarding Technocracy operatives (an operative's HOAR rating slips down with repeated and/or serious infractions), and it helps the Union (and, in game terms, the Storytellers and players) determine target selection and asset-protection. Protect and provide for high-value assets, while low-value assets are considered increasingly expendable.

HOAR also explains why Secret Agent John Courage still exists. Despite his antics, he's simply too valuable to terminate. Every time some Manager tries to have Courage demoted or destroyed, someone else raises his HOAR rating in the data archives, thus offsetting the punishment he would otherwise have received.

[BEGIN CHART]

HOAR Ratings

0 Active Detriment — A party whose continued activity is dangerous or highly obstructive (Degree 6 Technocracy agent, dangerous enemy, destructive un-Awakened criminal, hostile alien, turncoat Technocrat with damaging power, etc.).

1 Passive Determent — A party whose costs outweigh their benefits (Degree 5 or 6 Technocrat, a useful enemy who's outliving their usefulness, the average criminal among the Masses, an alien invader with potential usefulness, a Technocratic turncoat who's still of use to the Union).

2 Potential Asset — A neutral party, as far as their usefulness to the Technocracy is concerned (most people among the Masses, a Reality Deviant or alien whose continued existence and placement benefits the Union).

3 Problematic Asset / Operative — A party who provides services, data or resources, but at a noteworthy cost to the Union (Degree 4 Technocrat, an extraordinary citizen who's become costly to maintain, a Reality Deviant whose existence and placement has proved to be useful to the Technocracy).

4 Tertiary Asset / Operative — A party whose existence and placement benefits the Technocracy at minimal cost (average extraordinary citizen, a useful Sleeper, a well-placed allied alien or RD that continues to provide benefits to the Union's plans and personnel).

5 Established Asset / Operative — A party who provides reliable, if minor, support for Technocratic operatives and plans (typical Degree 3 Technocratic operative, an experienced and loyal extraordinary citizen, a repeatedly helpful Sleeper, a reliable RD that provides extremely useful resources to the Technocratic cause without interfering with its agenda).

6 Secondary Asset / Operative — A party whose value to the Union is trustworthy and verified (skilled and seasoned Degree 2 or 3 Technocratic operative, exceptionally skillful and loyal extraordinary citizen, valuable Sleeper who provides reliable resources to the Union, allied RD who maintains a low profile and aids the Technocratic cause).

7 Notable Asset / Operative — A party whose loyalty and skill have been repeatedly tested under adverse conditions (an exceptional Degree 2 Technocratic operative, a typical upper-level Enlightened Manager or other high-ranking personnel, an extraordinary citizen with tenacious loyalty and invaluable skills, a high-placed Sleeper whose influence and activities greatly benefit the Technocracy; no Reality Deviants qualify for this level or above).

8 Precious Asset / Operative — A party whose activities and influence greatly benefit the Technocracy, and whose loss would damage the Union's goals (a Degree 1 Technocrat of exceptional benefit to the Union, a high-ranking

Manager or extraordinary field operative, an invaluable extraordinary citizen; no Sleepers or RDs qualify for this rank).

9 Primary Asset / Operative — One of the most valuable Enlightened operatives within the Technocracy's ranks; only Enlightened personnel qualify for this rating.

10 Irreplaceable Asset / Operative — a theoretical rating, as nobody's really "irreplaceable" as far as the Technocracy is concerned. Rank 10 personnel and allies are expected to consider *themselves* to be expendable in pursuit of the greater good.

[END CHART]

Molding Consensus

The Masses out there want things to be simple, neat, to all fit together into an easy-to-parse package. We do, too. So why the fuck do we get so much pushback? Because we don't want the Masses to just roll over for us. If they're a bunch of well-folded origami shapes, we haven't saved humanity; we've ended it. The Masses *have to* believe. They *have to* know. And that means fighting for the truth. They need to fight their way to the answers, so that once each person reaches the end of their path, they'll cling to it like a life raft.

So, provoke the fight. Be ready for it. We need thinkers, even if they're asleep. Just remember where you are. People fight in different ways. Being overt and aggressive to a salaryman in Japan might get you a lot of nods and murmured agreements, but he's not going to be a believer. Likewise, playing it cool and subtle with a Swiss blogger is going to be about as effective as a screen door on a submarine.

Where conflict already exists, exploit it. Seed the Masses with information while wearing a friendly mask then put on a different mask and refute it. Make them double down on the beliefs you've delivered. True believers are never born; they're *reborn*. There is no stronger believer than a born-again. There is no strength in maintaining a belief from childhood. The strongest opinions are forged by rejecting a family's teachings. Converts are the key to the future but proselytizing only gets us so far.

It's all the scientific method. It's progress. Only by identifying errors in belief can we move humanity forward. So, pick the errors. Start the fights. We're in a war for these people's minds, for the very heart of humanity. Let's get fucking going.

What the Masses Know

We can't just throw the Masses into the deep end. It's messy, chaotic, and not fit for human consumption. No, we have to make Adjustments. Without these Adjustments, everyone still living their oldlife would have their world messed with in very bad ways. Article Six. Shepherd them. Let's get into it.

The Masses know what we allow them to discover. We don't simply tell them what's happening; not only is that not scientific, it's just plain insulting to the Masses. Sure, they're not awake in the sense that we are, but that's not because they're stupid; it's simply because they're not ready to know the full truth yet. *Yet* is the key word there.

If you spoon-feed a populace, they'll sense the bullshit and rebel. It's a basic rule of hyper-sociology. That's not exactly the way someone with a degree in h-sociology would phrase it, but it's close enough that they wouldn't argue too much. So, we don't spoon feed; we regulate. We Adjust. Conventional scientists find everything eventually; all we need to do is give progress a push here, a pull there, and a "not-quite-yet" over there.

The Masses have over ten million scientists at the PhD level. Over fifty million at the master level. *Who-the-fuck-knows?* how many without a terminal degree. Someone will make the discoveries we need them to make. It's just a matter of predicting who's most likely to find what we need them to find, and then to fund them (or *not* to fund them, as the case might be). Are the Masses ready to know that life on other planets is possible? Great, call up Media Control and get them to give a little more airtime to the Mars missions. Is there too much progress on the microbiological front? Sounds like time for another E coli outbreak. Once that hits the news, any virologist looking at something else gets treated like a war criminal.

Control of the narrative is key. Some folks are going to fall outside of our desired parameters; that's just how parameters and sample sizes work. Ask any statistician. Some folks believe in spooky shit that's real, and some fall on the other side of that distribution and believe in shit that's not. The goal is to always keep the extreme cases marginalized. There's an effect known as the *Overton Window*, where the consensus held by the center of a population becomes what's considered "normal." There are always things to the left and right of the center, as well as things that exist outside of the window. The center pretty much takes care of itself; it takes a monumental effort of decades to shape that. The edges of the window are where PSYOPs live. Giving attention and respect to sources we control and heaping FUD on those that we don't. In fact, we can even cast sources that we *do* control in a negative light from time to time, in order to give the edges of the Overton Window a little more definition. By defining that center, we project our Consensus into the Masses and solidify what we need them to accept as "real."

Disputed Data: Running the Show

Technocratic PSYOPS have been dropping the ball lately. It's not politic to admit as much (although, as this book's Introduction shows, some higher-ups admit it anyway), but the Technocracy's much-vaunted control of the reality narrative has slipped significantly in recent years. *Irrationality* is the watchword of the new millennium, and behind their ice-cold mirrorshades any Technocrat not in a state of terminal denial realizes that they lost control of the human narrative at least 20 years ago.

How? Well, that's a matter of dispute. For **Mage 20** Storytellers, one (or more) of the following factors might be to blame:

- **The Nephandi:** As revealed in **The Book of the Fallen**, the Fallen pulled a fast one on both the Traditions and the Technocracy. While their rivals searched for bloody-handed Black Metal rejects, Nephandic pawns and mages slid into the cracks of the modern era and began tearing it apart. It's a big stretch to say that *everything* wrong today can be traced to the Nephandi, but with groups like A Better Sandal and the Heralds of Basilisk eyeballs-deep in the Information Age, the Technocratic narrative got hijacked in the early days of the World Wide Web.
- **The Dimensional Anomaly:** Turns out that losing a huge portion of your personnel and resources to an Otherworldly screw-up tends to put a cramp in your

ability to command global reality. When the Anomaly decked the Union's capabilities, Technocratic control slipped more than anyone was willing to admit.

- **Religious Fundamentalism:** The Technocracy believed it could win the Masses over with the promise of technological Utopia, but the rush of cultural transformation, geopolitical upheavals, and the acceleration of uncanny events toward the end of the 20th century drove hundreds of millions of people to embrace religious millennialism and End Times fascination. As the third decade of the 21st century dawns, most humans (Enlightened and otherwise) manage the conceptual balancing act of using high tech in everyday situations while embracing ancient scriptures and all the irrationality contained therein. This was not what the Technocracy expected, and so their calculated future projections failed.

- **People are Irrational:** Whether it's boy wizards, flat-earthers, or Rapturous Savior narratives, the Masses resist the sterile visions that guided the Technocracy. Even within the Union, logic-industrial futurist ideals have surrendered to unpredictability, mythology, and the growing realization that human existence is too messy and irrational to conform to clockwork precision. The cognitive dissonance that allows people to argue the literal truth of Iron Age scriptures over the internet (in *English*, no less!) has displaced the massthink ideology that formed the Technocracy's version of reality. People *do* believe in magic after all, and so the Technocratic narrative fell before the collective weight of human absurdities.

- **The Traditions:** Because people *want* to believe in magic, the Nine Traditions and their various allies have finally managed to tilt the balance of faith in their direction. By balancing futuristic pleasures with appeals to... um, *tradition*... the Council has secretly but decisively captured the popular imagination, expanding their influence by employing their old Arts in new and exciting ways.

Terranorming

An essential part of shaping the Overton Window is understanding that Reality isn't about the world. It isn't even about countries. Regions have their own understandings of the world. What's true in the CBD of Beijing isn't what's true in Shunyi District. Or to Americanize that for you, Atlanta ain't the South; Atlanta's its own thing. And that's fine. We don't have to, don't want to, and straight up *can't* homogenize the world.

Instead, make those regions obey internally consistent rules. Shape them to be predictable. We don't need to make every region friendly, or even non-hostile, to us; we just need to know what they're going to do so that we can be one step ahead when shit goes down. You think Black Suits got their rep by sheer force of will? Fuck no. It's about shaping the battlefield; normalizing the terrain. Black Suits kicked the shit out of easy targets in order to establish themselves as badasses. The regions where they would have had a rough time of it? In and out before anyone knew they were there. Now people think they're unstoppable ghosts. Narrative established. But, that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to *Terranorming*.

So, how do you Terranorm? First up, you have to establish the desired parameters. What do you want the region to do and believe? What's outside that but okay? What's *not* okay? The resultant Overton Window is your goal. Next, identify where the current beliefs and practices are. What needs to change in order to realize the target condition? Now, do it. Remember, you don't need to be 100% successful — you just need the unacceptable to be marginalized. This is a lot like

those so-called “Reality Challenges,” except that you don’t necessarily have to care about beneficence or being in charge; your goal involves establishing predictable behavior within the target region.

An additional benefit of terranorming? By creating a stable society, you create space for stable leadership. Feed the residents info and tech, and, little by little, the society as a whole gets on board with the big T’s plan.

Attunement

You’ve heard a lot about “Attunement” here and there. Here’s the skinny: *Attunement* means “to bring into harmony.” That’s what we do — bring someone else’s perceptions into harmony with our desired goals. A big-A Attunement refers to the direct application of psychological conditioning and sensory alterations to a single subject. This could involve editing the subject’s memories, convincing them everything’s fine, or warping their sensory perceptions to the point of capitulation. Any tool on the table is still called “Attunement.” Audio Protocols, hyper-psychological Procedures, good ole fashioned ass-kickings, whatever it takes to get the subject to believe what we want them to believe.

Here are a few examples:

- A pack of werewolves are out of control, wrecking a night club. Black Suits on the scene can’t fight that battle, but they can Attune the therianthropes. That fabled lupine superhearing? Deaf in one ear. Rick Astley on repeat in the other. Scent? Everything smells like Mom. Sight? They can’t see each other. Colors are muddy. Everything’s blurry, except the Black Suits. They’re in high contrast, super-HD. Sit. Stay. Attunement.
- Got a “hedge wizard” trying to clue his neighbors in about the weird shit of this world? Talk to the neighbor and ask her if she knows anything about some weird dude in the area who’s selling hallucinogens. *“Anyone behaving strangely around the neighborhood? Seeing things that aren’t there? Here’s my card.”* Given the right psychological nudge or two, that hedgehog’s rep drops from “the interesting guy with strange ideas” to “get that fucking lunatic away from my kids.” Bonus points if you also rearrange the hedgehog’s furniture to make him lose his shit in front of the neighbor.
- A veteran cop just saw some Void Engineers throw down with some aliens. She’s even got body-cam footage. *Knock-knock: “FBI. We know what you saw. We want to break this wide open but there’s a conspiracy to keep the whole thing under wraps. People are going to come asking to see your video. They’re going to discredit you and make it look like a movie publicity stunt. We’re the only ones you can trust.”* Be sure to refuse obvious control of the situation. You don’t need a copy of the video; you just need to prevent it from getting out. A badge, some fast talk, maybe some alien slime, and that cop isn’t talking to anyone.

Attunement, done properly, is subtle. A good Attunement uses only as much force as is absolutely necessary, and the effects remain inside the target’s head. Black Suits live for this sort of strategy, but any smart and skillful operative can use it. Attunement is all about messing with someone’s mind; and getting the job done with a minimum of fuss is the mark of a damn fine operative.

Speaking of Black Suits and Attunement, here’s a little secret, just between us: The black suit is a weapon. I’m not talking about the skills and technologies Black Suit agents possess, although

it's pretty fucking true that those agents *are* living weapons in their own right. I mean, the suits themselves, even without the built-in Q Division mojo, are weapons. How? Well, they can be pretty fucking intimidating, for starters. The average person recognizes that suit as a symbol of authority and starts sweating bullets before they even say a word. That's especially true because Men in Black have become such legends in popular mythology. The mystique adds to the effect.

The *real* killer, though, is the calm sense of confidence a Black Suit agent exudes just by wearing that damn suit. Someone all decked out like Rambo and hauling a big-ass gun? Folks expect trouble from a guy like that, but in a sense he's kinda trying too hard, if you get my drift. A Black Suit, though, just standing there deadpan, mirrorshades reflecting your face back at you? That's fucking *creepy*.

Add to that what I call, "the Master's Edge": That sense that the Master can kick your ass without breaking a sweat. He doesn't come at you hard because *he doesn't fucking have to*. You lunge, he moves, and the next thing you know, you're 12 feet away, picking teeth up off the ground. He's still standing there, calm, in that fucking black suit. Sure, a Black Suit field op *can* do that, easily. He doesn't usually have to, though. The suit does it for him. Lots of targets see the suit and fold without taking a shot. The psychological impact is that strong. Now, *that*, kids, is a fucking *Attunement* — the kind you can do just by walking in the door in the right suit with the proper attitude.

Syndicate ops can do that too, although they tend to go for something a bit flashier. The mind-game uses the same principles to the same effect: To make your target cave with minimal effort on your part.

Sometimes, though, you can't skate by with an Attunement or three. For those situations... well, we've got...

The Doctrine of Necessary Force

Article Five, kiddos. We destroy threats to Consensus. Sometimes that means parking a non-descript van across the street from a target until they get the message. Sometimes that means giving their brains lead poisoning. For those of you who only recently got introduced to the art of violence, yes — lethal force is often necessary.

To paraphrase Miyamoto Musashi, don't do useless shit. Why waste the time it takes to put together an operation when you could get the same result with a mean look? Requisitioning gear, scouting out infil and exfil routes, conducting rehearsals, and getting the op approved takes time, and that's not even counting the post-op cleanup, debriefings, and paperwork. I wouldn't tell you to drop someone if there were an easier way to do it. Violence is but one tool in our kit, but it's a damn important one.

Here, lemme give you a not-entirely hypothetical situation that may or may not have happened in the past 48 hours: Parahuman situation. Two HEs in the process of forcibly "recruiting" three young people to be their Capri Sun pouches at night and their hands in the daylight. What's talking to them going to get me? They need blood. They can't operate in the day. Having human slaves is incredibly beneficial for them. Could I get them to back down? Sure. That day. But, if they've already accepted that owning slaves is morally acceptable, they're going to try again. And again. Am I going to be there every time? Fuck no. I've got more important shit to do. Fucking socks to crochet and shit. So, I didn't talk to them. I disappeared their asses. Then, I

made these socks. Check out this ribbed stitching. You think I'd have time for that if I had to keep visiting those fuckers to make sure that they hadn't taken any slaves today?

Here's the bare-bones truth: There's more out there than we have time to deal with. We pick our fights. We intervene *once*. If we have to intervene twice then we fucked up the first time. Most vampires know better than to fuck around and make noise. If they grab some type O from a blood bank, who gives a fuck? If they get a human partner and let Stockholm Syndrome kick in to get their fix, well, they're no worse than millions of humans. Fuck it. But the ones that make waves? Nah. Fuck them. They become examples. They become the bloody line that the rest of them know not to cross. You know Japanese idioms? "Nails that stick out get hammered down." We're the fucking hammer.

Six Thresholds of Targets and Force

Just like we have Six Degrees of tolerable loyalty, we have six *Designated Target Force Thresholds* (DTFTs) and six *Acceptable Force Escalation Thresholds* (AFET). They're similar, but don't get them mixed up and don't get put on the wrong scale.

DTFT reflects the degree to which you anticipate using force with the target you expect to face. If you expect to maybe run across one of those HEs in the wild then Drac Junior is probably DTFL 4; if you've set up a meet with Count Doodoo in his personal chalet, and our intel marks him as a HOAR 6 asset... well, then, agent, your target is DTFT 2 unless the Count decides to get stupid.

If he *does* decide to get stupid, the next threshold kicks in.

AFET reflects the degree to which you can beat the shit out of someone without too much trouble from the folks upstairs. Yeah, it's useful to have our enemies thinking we'll send in HIT Marks every time some kid picks up a Ouija Board, but even in an organization like ours, resources are limited, collateral damage is a headache, and people get steamed if their neighborhood goes *boom*. The more force you use, the bigger mess you make and the more we wind up having to clean up after it. If you don't wanna get on your Manager's shit list and wind up wiping space goo off some alien's orifices, stick within your AFET unless absolutely necessary.

Yes, terms like "substantial," "considerable," "reasonable" and "necessary" are open to interpretation, depending on the operatives, their supervisors, the targets involved, and the ultimate success or failure of the conflict. If a rookie op smokes a family dog during an otherwise unproductive mission, that agent is in more trouble than a valued field op team would be in for blowing up three houses full of people while wiping out a werewolf pack. As the saying goes, less is more. The Union gives you all these goodies and training for a reason. Unless you're dealing with serious threats, overkill is Amateur Hour.

That said, only a moron expects FOs to walk into a vampire's den with one hand tied behind their backs. As a general parameter, your supervisor will authorize an AFET one Threshold higher than you expect to receive when confronting a mission's target. There's no point drawing your artillery when Billy Joe Methhead gets bent out of shape — but if he decides to play Sovereign Citizen, you have permission to waste his ass.

[BEGIN TABLE]

Designated Target Force Thresholds (DTFLs)

- 1 **Amendable Coexistence:** The entity in question is at least somewhat beneficial to the Union and exhibits behavior that can be predicted by probabilistic models. We don't trust them but it's better for everyone if we leave them alone.
- 2 **Assumed Benign:** They're beneficial but unpredictable yet present no appreciable threat to the Union or the Masses. Either way, we don't need to worry about them. *Examples:* an RD who avoids violating Consensus, an RD operating a charity.
- 3 **Acceptable Risk:** They may present a threat, but the scale of damage they're capable of is minor enough that virtually everything else has priority over dealing with them. *Examples:* A small vampire gang that sticks to libraries or art galleries, a werewolf pack deep in the woods, a group of amateur hunters yet to make a mistake.
- 4 **Target of Opportunity:** The entity is proven to be dangerous but is not considered a high enough priority to dedicate a mission to deal with them. If encountered in the field, the entity's fate is left to the commanding agent's discretion. Elimination is authorized if it is convenient. *Examples:* Lone vampires who harm humans, Deviants engaged in subversive activities, Deviants conducting nonviolent operations against the Union, hunters who have spilled human blood.
- 5 **Designated Target:** These are targets that represent a threat to the Masses. Elimination operations are authorized. *Examples:* Vampire gangs abducting large groups of humans, Deviants involved in open warfare with other supernatural elements, werewolves actively hunting humans, Deviants openly attacking agents.
- 6 **Priority Target:** Existential threats to the Technocracy, humanity, or both. One or more operations to eliminate the target are in progress, removing them from history, if possible. *Examples:* Deviants conducting violent operations against the Union, extra-dimensional manifestations in populated areas.

[END TABLE]

[BEGIN TABLE]

Acceptable Force Escalation Thresholds (AFETs)

- 1 **No Force:** Social pressure, emotional seduction or intimidation, psychic influence, and/or touchless Attunements authorized. No physical applications of force unless the target escalates to the next Threshold. Seldom used except in the case of the most sensitive targets, this is the default acceptable level for operatives in conflict with one another.
- 2 **Minimal Force:** Minor physical force is authorized: unarmed contact, nonlethal subdual techniques, minor collateral damage to non-human things (doors, walls, pets, etc.). Weapons may be employed for intimidation purposes only unless the target escalates to the next Threshold. This is the default authorized conflict mode for non-hostile unEnlightened citizens and conflicts with extraordinary citizens within the Technocratic ranks, and the preferred mode when dealing with Reality Deviants of DTFL 1 or 2.
- 3 **Significant Force:** All methods of non-lethal force are authorized, with potentially lethal weapons and tactics employed if need be. Substantial degrees of non-human collateral damage are acceptable so long as cleanup and compensation resources are available afterward. This is the default mode for dealing with RDs of DTFL 3 or higher.

4 **Lethal Force:** Killing force and methods, and/or considerable non-human collateral damage, are authorized, so long as the situation and after-effects of the conflict can be CCC'd with reasonable ease. This is the default mode authorized for RDs of DTFL 4 or higher.

5 **Extraordinary Force:** Substantial living and non-living collateral damage are authorized, with the expectation that the operatives will succeed. Advanced and obvious hypertechnology may be employed among the Masses if need be. This threshold is reserved for high-threat situations, as the resulting CCC is an expensive pain in the ass.

6 **Maximum Force:** Whatever you need to do, you do. The Union will figure the rest out afterward. Reserved only for immediate and godlike threats, this is the Threshold of last resort, and it leaves a gigantic mess behind. Our enemies think we *always* operate at this level. Let them think that. We don't.

[END TABLE]

Rules of Engagement

If you're new to RoE, here's your primer; if you have a few combat deployments under your belt, stick around — you haven't seen shit yet.

Rules of Engagement, or *RoE*, are what separate you from those racist shitbags out there who can't tell the difference between a werewolf and a hairy kid with brown skin. Anyone with some cash can strap on a weapon, some tacti-cool gear, and call themselves an "operator" or a "hunter." We professionals have rules. RoE spell out what lines you can and cannot cross. Back in the civilian military world, you can't drop someone just for having an AK slung across their back. Same idea here, except we're talking about things far deadlier than Kalashnikov's pride and joy.

We're talking about worlds on top of our world; and there are things in those worlds that can cross over and eat your face. In fact, some of those things actually evolved to eat nothing but faces. That's now a thing you know. Congratulations. You're at the Cool Kids table now. You actually get to know the names of things that are going to try to kill you from the shadows. Vampires, werewolves, demons, wizards, et cetera. Don't let the higher-ups hear you call them that stuff, though; generations of higher-ups have wasted considerable effort in defining exactly what these creatures are, in precise terms, so that you can shout "*There's a Class V Hemophagic Entity behind you!*" or some other officer bullshit.

The Hard Rules

There are forces at work that want to send the world to hell. Sometimes literally. It's our job to stop it. We're here to keep shit in order. And guess what that means? No smoking civvies! Yes, they're annoying and in the fucking way all the time, but civilians are our customers. Without them, we have no society to safeguard.

Rule 1: No Smoking Civvies

Yeah. I know. I shouldn't have to say it, but if I don't say it then one of you fucking *heroes* are going to come back to HQ with a body bag, whining about how some nun in a wheelchair or some homeless kid with scoliosis was "just there" and "it was an accident." Collateral Impact is a real thing, and that real thing is to be avoided at all costs to you. Keep your CI record clean, Rambo. No excuses. No accidents. Or the next one to have a fucking accident is gonna be you.

Rule 2: When in Doubt, Knock it Out

If you liked Rule 1, you're gonna love this one. Sometimes, it's hard to tell the difference between an unmedicated schizophrenic and something serious. So, put them under. We issued you the tech to do it. We expect you to fucking do it. That's why you get paid the big bucks. If you wanted to stay in the minor league, you should have stayed on whatever SWAT team or infantry unit we got you out of. We're saving the world here.

Rule 3: Civvies Don't See Shit

This one is a little more flexible, but we damn well expect you to try — *and to report it if you fuck up and can't fix it!* Civvies aren't ready to see our tech or the crazy critters out there. They're not. Seeing this shit can literally break their brains. I'm going to say that again because some of you think the word "literally" is just a comma. Witnessing hypertechnology or "monsters" can literally destroy civilians. As you might recall, civilians make up *the world that we're saving!* So, a) keep shit quiet, and b) cover your tracks. If someone saw something, it's your damn job to convince them that they didn't. You wanna use a flashy thing to do it, I don't care. Just come up with something better than "swamp gas" and "weather balloons." That shit doesn't work anymore. We have cleanup crews for a reason, and they're equipped and trained for all sorts of operations. Still, we'd rather save those mop-ups for no-good-option situations. Whenever possible, remember the Secure Scene Protocols: *Secure/Stabilize/Contain/Deny*.

RDI: Reality Deviant Incidents

Whether we're sitting behind a desk, working in a lab, or putting our asses on the line on the field, our job comes with a ton of responsibilities. And all of those responsibilities come to a head during an *RDI: A Reality Deviant Incident*. Also called *Reality Deviant Incursions*, *Invasions*, *Insurgencies*, or occasionally (with the designation *RDE*) *Episodes*, an RDI involves some asshole getting his freak on at the Masses' expense. Rampaging were-thing? RDI. Blood-eating corpse chowing down in an alley? RDI. Dimensional breach with fucked-up aliens coming through? RDI. Whether it's Gandalf the Grey getting his rocks off with a thunderstorm, or a slinking imp eating the neighborhood kitty-cats, RDIs are all-hands alerts for the local Construct. Field ops swing into action to contain the damn thing, while desk ops make with the mojo to keep the situation as under wraps as possible. At all costs, the locals have to be kept safe, sane, and, if possible, stupid with regards to the monsters in their midst. It's not good business to have them knowing too much about just *how* nasty our big ol' world really is.

Here's a weird fact that makes our job a lot easier than it could be otherwise: Most RDs know it's not in *their* best interests, either, to put themselves in the spotlight. When one pack of fuzzies hits the streets in full fangs-and-fur regalia, the other local fuzzies usually slap 'em back into line. Vamps like to keep low profiles, so if one starts going all *Queen of the Damned* on us, the others tend to stake her out in the sun not long afterward. My guess is that too many of their elders remember the days of torches and pitchforks then multiply that by AR-15s and Molotov cocktails and decide, "Oh, *fuck* no!" Whatever the reason, the greatest area of common ground we find with HEs, TEs, and every other E that's out there is that the Masses *really* need to not be putting werewolf attacks on YouTube and shit. I mean, y'know, more than they already do anyway. So, when an RDI goes down, one of the first steps we take after outright containment involves touching base with the local RD elders and coming to an agreement about what is to be done about it. It's rare we don't come to some sort of consensus, so to speak, about how to handle the offenders in the aftermath of their little shit fit.

S&C: Secure & Contain

When we receive notice about an RDI, field-ops teams scramble to *S&C* (*Secure and Contain*) the incident and all parties involved. Generally, this involves:

- *Securing* the area, if possible, and preventing offenders and witnesses from leaving before we're finished mopping up.
- *Stabilizing* the situation by neutralizing the threat (typically by kicking its ass).
- *Containing* the damage in whatever *physical* (putting out fires, repairing damage, etc.), *social* (limiting social-media leaks, fleeing witnesses, etc.), *paraphysical* (closing dimensional gateways, shutting down magic, that sort of thing), and *psychological* (calming witnesses, gathering intel, "revising" people's memories, and so forth) arenas need containment.
- *Denying* that anything weird has gone wrong at all. This last step doesn't always work, especially not in large-scale situations, but that doesn't mean we won't try to do it anyway.

The Masses *really* do not benefit from knowing too much about what we do. Even in the Information Age, some information is not worth learning about unless you're prepared to handle it — and the Masses are not that kind of "prepared."

Ideally, S&C protocol dispatches one-to-three combat operative teams to deal with the threat, two containment teams to deal with the perimeter, and two cleanup teams to deal with the damage — one to handle the physical damage, the other to handle the social and psychological fallout in the area.

That's the ideal. Things don't always work out that way. When the shit hits the fan (or the *were* hits the *wolf*, as the case might be), you work with what you have. Most Constructs have enough agents, backup and firepower to handle the average RDI, but once you've had a few go-rounds with these assholes, you'll realize there's no such thing as "average" when RDs are involved.

CCC: Cleanup, Containment, and Compensation

When you pop off in citizen territory, you soon get acquainted with *CCC: Cleanup, Containment, and Compensation*. That's what kicks in when houses get blown up, bystanders get hurt or killed, obvious hypertechnology shows up on YouTube, and so forth. *Cleanup* means a specialized team goes in behind you to deal with the physical and social aftermath of your little party; *containment* means keeping the Masses in the dark about stuff like killer cyborgs and worldwide conspiracies of reality-bending supermen; and *compensation* means paying for the stuff (and people) you broke in the course of your mission. After all, it's not helpful to our ultimate mission if the Masses wind up homeless, broke and traumatized every time some Witchie-Poo needs to get smacked back into the shadows — but it *is* helpful if we pay for the damage and our rivals cannot. Joe Sleeper is less likely to demand justice if the old Ford we blew up while chasing down a death-cultist gets replaced by a nice new Lexus, courtesy of the insurance-policy rider he didn't know he had before then.

CCC is the price of doing business. Shit happens in this line of work, and the Big T plans ahead for that. You'd best believe, though, that it is *fucking expensive as shit* to maintain, and some things — like, say, Joe Sleeper's now-dead kid — can't be CCC'd away. An operative or team whose CCC tag goes into the red too often is gonna meet the sharp end of their Manager's tongue, slide down the Six Degrees, and maybe find themselves cut off in the field or removed from it entirely if they prove to be a bigger liability than their track record for success is worth.

So, play nice when you can, kiddies. There are only so many toys you can break before the next thing broken is you.

Supplementary Data: RDI Teams and Technocratic Cleanup

Because the Technocracy is organized to a fault, team sizes and configurations are standardized throughout the Union, depending on the size and location of a given Construct, its local RD population, the state of hostilities with the locals, the specifics of the metaplot, and so forth. Because of all the variables — as well as the variables involved in your particular **Mage** chronicle — we leave the specific numbers to each Storyteller to determine, based on the needs of that Storyteller's chronicle and the stories you wish to tell.

As a rough guideline, assume that a Technocratic Construct deploys the following number of agents in each RDI response team. Smaller Constructs use the smaller number, while larger and/or more embattled ones deploy the larger numbers:

[BEGIN CHART]

RDI Team Personnel

Combat Operative Team 5-15 extraordinary field agents, 3-9 Black Suits and/or other Enlightened field operatives, 1-3 cyborgs, 0-3 Alanson-equipped agents, 0-3 Victors or HIT Marks

Containment Team 10-20 extraordinary field agents, 3-9 Black Suits

Cleanup Team 1-10 unEnlightened cleaners, 2-6 extraordinary field agents, 1-3 Enlightened field agents

[END CHART]

For details surrounding extraordinary operatives, see that entry in **Mage 20** (pp. 623-626); the Alanson R-25 Hardsuit entry in **Mage 20** (pp. 656-657); and the PDC Aberration Hunter entry in **Gods & Monsters** (pp. 56-57).

For data regarding cleanup crews and Procedures, see the **Mage 20** Technocratic Procedures **Sanitize Evidence** and **Secure the Scene** (pp. 603-605), the **Gods & Monsters** entry “Cleaners” (pp. 37-39), and the **Book of Secrets** entry for “Collateral Impact” (p. 225).

Mission Planning

Time is our enemy. There are millions of Reality Deviants, Pandimensional Entities, and other weirdoes out there, and billions of people who want to believe in them, no matter what it costs. We are always fighting an uphill battle. Getting missions done quickly is the only way we can protect humankind. The pressure is on to get our *operational tempo* (OPTEMPO) up high and keep it there. The White Suits and everyone between you and them will be turning the screws on you to make sure you get that OPTEMPO up.

Fuck them.

Fun fact: Your OPTEMPO drops to zero if you're dead. Paper-pushers always think of OPTEMPO as the number of missions that get accomplished per fiscal quarter, but it's more than

just that; it's the support that goes into each mission. It's making sure your teams have enough time to avoid burnout. It's cycling between clones to keep operatives fresh. It's ordering enough beans and bullets to get shit done.

Don't skimp on the "easy" shit. Plan your op right. If your director is on your ass, just suck it up and deal with it. It's better to have a pissy boss than to have a fucked-up plan. Once you're in the field, it's just you and the monsters. All the *hoorah-moto* shit in the world can't save your ass from a mission with fucked up intel. This doesn't mean run around with your middle fingers out, though; there's a big difference between being an asshole and not letting red tape get you killed.

With that in mind, we deliberately split all missions into two broad categories: *Intelligence Gathering* (IG) and *Field Operations* (FO). There's some crossover between IGs and FOs, but it'll take a few hundred pages to iron that out, so don't sweat it for now.

IGs: Intelligence-Gathering Operations

Every mission starts off with intel of some kind. Generally, something suspicious trips algorithmic analysis of data, or a tip comes in and your superiors filter that tip-off to you. Now, it's up to your team to do the serious IG. There's no way around it; you *have* to know more about your target, surroundings, circumstances, goals for success, and exit strategies before you go charging off into the field and getting yourself smeared across some werecritter's wallpaper. IG is a prerequisite of FOs — that is, of *Field Operations*. Sorry, kids, no dessert until you finish your supper.

Thankfully, there are ton of ways to do IG. They basically boil down to four steps:

Step 1 — TI: Target Identification

First, you lock the target. Figure out what you need to know about whom, and why you need to know it. Until you know who or what you need more data about, you simply can't do the mission.

TI is simple on the surface but gets involved if you want to be thorough about it. There's always something more you need to know. As long as the likely intel gathered by investigating that target advances your operational goals, though, you're golden. Here's the trick: Go for the fast, easy targets first. That way, if it turns out that you have to head out into the field and shake someone down, you're not going in totally blind. You can always acquire more intel after that if and when you need it.

Here's an example: You get word that a shipment of blood destined for a Progenitor-front hospital didn't arrive at its destination. Not usually a big deal, but some of that blood involved experimental protocols. So, what's your target? The hospital? The courier? The courier's route? The agency that sent it? No wrong answers here — they're all good starting points. Hell, you might need to target all of them. Once you know where you're starting the search, TI usually presents further targets that you hadn't even known about at first.

Step 2 — AW: Asset Weaponization

Now that you know what you're looking at, choose how you're going to approach it and which assets might be involved. This step should be a product of the type of information that you need, as well as the environment you're IG'ing and the potential assets you have in place around that situation.

In our theoretical blood heist, electronic investigation of the courier sounds like a good place to start. It's cheap, lets us know if they're a bent asset, and it's better than blasting the hospital's block with sonar waves looking subterranean anomalies. If you don't have an electronic warfare expert on your team, requisition one. That's an asset you can use.

Step 3 — TE: Target Exploitation

We know what we're looking at and we know how. Hit 'em.

We take a look at the courier's finances and emails. No unusual financial flow, but they have a ton of deleted and 'purged' emails regarding their exact delivery route and vague threats. Sounds like courier was compromised and got robbed en route.

Step 4 — RAN: Repeat as Needed

It's rare that a single IG pass is going to crack the case; so much so that you should be suspicious if it does. Generally speaking, go electronic first as that's the fastest IG method. Searching a non-secure location or canvassing witnesses ends up being a solid number two. Surveillance, searching secure locations, and target interrogation are all threes on this list. Why? Surveillance takes too long, and the other two are technically Field Ops. I told you there was bleedover. Still, you gotta do what you gotta do.

IG Pass #2: We tail the courier for a bit. Analysis confirms that he's a baseline human. Our prior IG got us his work schedule, so...

IG Pass #3: We show up right after a long shift, and we flash badges. The driver cracks instantly and spills the beans. A memory-jogging Procedure gets us a visual of the blood bandits: vampire bikers. A quick Attunement means he doesn't remember the Procedure or the vampires.

IG Pass #4: Requisitioning a trip to the *eXtraordinary Material Distribution Database*, we cross-reference our bikers with local weirdoes. The XMDD has their address and lists them as unaffiliated HEs.

IG Pass #5: We stakeout the address. They're heavily armed, twitchy, right-handed, and litterbugs. Now we have enough data for a Field Op. Time to shut down their little den.

FOs: Field Operations

"*Fos go on FOs.*" There's another snappy little saying for you from the grunt-level ranks of the glorious Union, and if there's anyone who deserves to take a rhetorical tinkle on formality now and then, it's the people who leave a cushy spot behind their computers and go face three-meter-tall killing machines with bulletproof fur and attitude problems. If you don't wanna come back in a bag to be reused for spare parts, and FOs are your beat, then you plan your shit out and you stick to that plan while also realizing in your little heart of hearts that no plan survives contact with the enemy, especially not when that enemy can throw lightning or live centuries off other people's blood supplies.

If you *are* a field operative then the following little pep-talk might keep you alive long enough to build up some status and skill. If you are *not* a field operative, knowing this shit will at least help you understand a little bit more about what those numbers and names on your mission plans and intel data have to go through to get you that intel, and to keep your ass alive in that lab while you plumb the secrets of the universe, enjoying the view from the safe side of your monitor screen.

FO Intel

We've already covered the nuts and bolts of IG, so now we're talking about the minimum data threshold for planning an op. There are two big checkboxes to take care of here: *Target Intel*, and *Area of Operations Intel*.

TI: Target Intel

What are you after? If it's an entity, what are their capabilities? Limitations? Resources? If your goal is to snatch a civilian, the middle of a mission is the wrong time to learn about their heart condition. Enemies? Allies? Who could they call for backup? Who will come looking for them if they go missing? What bystanders might be in the way when you go in? If it's an object you're after, what hazards might it pose? Does it have a unique signature that might act as a built-in tracker? Are there other interested parties, and what might they do to secure that object from you if there are?

This is all stuff you've gotta know before you go in. Soft or hard, a smooth mission demands good intel.

It's not enough to just say "We're hunting vampires" and then call it a day. How *many* HEs? Two. Three? A dozen? What abilities do they have? Let's say we haven't seen them in action yet, and they're unaffiliated, so that's a big Unknown. When you go in, then, be prepared for speed, strength, and other shenanigans. Our vampires don't seem to have any friends nearby, but sonar scans picked up a shit-ton of guns in their lair. The blood-eaters didn't react to the sonar, either, so cross "super-hearing" off the list of their possible abilities.

AOI: Area of Operations Intel

Where's the *AO* (*Area of Operations*)? Who are the neighbors? Who's on site? Who might respond to a disturbance? What kind of physical, electronic, metaphysical, and social security does the site have? We're talking about walls, gates, locks, keypads, wireless networks, wired devices, occultist crap, civilians, guards, patrols, etc.

Our vampires are the only ones in their house, which is *huge* for two people and not registered in either of their names, which all suggests that they stole it or are squatting in it. The scared and dirty looks their neighbors give them make it look like no one's coming to their aid, but surveillance also picked up monster-hunter wannabes roaming the area. If we go in loud, those assholes might assume that it's their time to shine and come in hard, with civilians in the crossfire and probably us, as well.

Mission Paradigms

Within a world of infinite potential missions, there's no way to possibly categorize all of them ahead of time. Not that Managers haven't *tried*, of course, but the resulting code-blizzards got in the way a hell of a lot more than they helped anyone out in the field. These days, we keep those categories simple:

Ambush / Raid

Ambushes and raids are the same basic idea, but with opposite origins and related ends. With ambushes, the target determines what time they get engaged and the Technocracy picks the location. In raids, Big T picks the time and the target picks the place. Ambushes involve learning your target's likely travel plans, positioning yourself along their route, and giving the target a

little surprise. Once they show up, engage them. This engagement need not be violent. An ambush could be as simple as waiting for a college professor outside of their office. With raids, you go to them. Again, this could mean blowing out a wall and charging in, or it could mean knocking on their front door and having a chat.

Both ambushes and raids have a “soft” designation and a “hard” designation. In a soft operation, you avoid violence unless circumstances demand escalation of force. Soft-force weapons include intimidation, Attunements, and all manner of non-physical mind-fuckery. That requires more finesse than, say, shooting someone with a big-ass gun, but that’s kind of the point. An op who needs to swing dick in order to make his point is a fucking sad excuse for a Technocrat.

In a hard operation, you plan for violence, and go in at least one level higher on the AFET than you expect from your target — up to AFET 5, anyway. You need specific authorization to go in at AFET 6, because that level of force leaves one hell of a collateral imprint and demands hardcore CCC afterward. Even then, minimal force is better than ultimate force unless you’re trying to take out a major threat before it brings the neighborhood down. Shock-and-awe is a useful strategy under certain circumstances, but most times out you’ll be better off leaving yourself someplace to go than to wade in firing all your guns at once and then get stuck at the ceiling of your AFET and firepower once the trap has been sprung.

It should go without saying that you head into a raid or ambush having already made plans for an exit strategy and subsequent CCC, but I’ll say it anyway. Going into those operations *without* clearly defined goals, exit plans, and mop-up capability is a good way to earn hard consequences and possibly — if you’re unlucky — a one-way trip to the spare-parts vat.

Elimination

Destroy a specific target. Don’t get hung up on the name; purging data from a server is also an elimination — just ask any Iterator. Elimination missions are an “extreme prejudice” sort of thing, and the amount of firepower and prejudice involved depends on who and what you’re there to eliminate and how much resistance to said elimination you expect to receive. Homework is your friend on elimination missions; the more you know about the territory and obstacles involved, the easier it is to get in, get done, and get the fuck out.

Extraction

Seize *Precious Cargo* (PC) then get out of the mission site with it. PC could be anything from data to a person to a nuclear reactor. Make sure you go in with whatever gear you need to contain the PC for transport. If it’s an unfriendly person, bring cuffs. If it’s data, bring a drive. And for fuck’s sake, plan several exit routes. Getting into a place and then improvising your escape afterward might work fine in movies but it’s a great way to get killed in real life.

Installation

Essentially the opposite of extraction. Find a specific site within the AO and leave something behind. This requires a more careful touch, as installations are almost always secretive, requiring a thorough clean-up phase. If clean-up is not conducted by the primary team, the secondary team must have full information as to every possible problem.

Misdirection

Most missions depend on not being noticed until you’re ready to act. In a misdirection mission, getting noticed is the whole point. While the mission team distracts the target, a different team

performs a different but related mission. If all the pieces run smoothly, the targets never realize they've been had — and they blame someone else entirely if and when they find out about it.

Misdirection missions usually involve disguise as well as deception. You want the target looking for someone who is not you. Holograms, clones, and good old-fashioned makeup-costumes-and-acting usually do the trick. After all, people don't usually expect agents of a hypertechnology global conspiracy network unless they're part of such a group themselves. In that case, it's fun to set up vampires, werethings, or some bunch of Witchie-Poos to take the fall for your mission. Hell, those fucksticks are so fucking paranoid that they'll turn on each other if you even halfway suggest that their supposed allies are screwing them over for shits and giggles. Take it from one who knows, few missions are more satisfying than ones where you can get RDs cutting each other's throats over something you did to them. Now, *that's* entertainment!

Patrol

Patrol missions involve going from Point A to Point X, probably with a bunch of other Points along the way. The parameters depend upon whether the patrol is a standard security protocol, a reconnaissance mission for intel and planning, a covert or combat run through hostile territory, an investigation for security breaches... you get the picture. In a patrol mission, the designated operatives follow a predetermined route and address the features and encounters along the way with whatever responses seem most appropriate. A quick, routine sweep of apparently secured territory is pretty straightforward unless someone's decided to pay an unauthorized visit to the premises; a covert patrol through TE-controlled woodlands is an entirely different story.

Psychological Operations

In boss-speak, PSYOPS "induce or reinforce behavior favorable to Technocracy objectives." Why is PSYOP in all caps? Who the fuck knows! There are tons of different types of PSYOPs, ranging from subtle nudges of influence, false intelligence, media propaganda, and diversionary tactics to brutal displays of force designed to intimidate the fuck out of people. All PSYOPS really boil down to one thing: *Make someone not want to fuck with you.* This sort of mission could be something friendly, like buying a target a beer so that they like you, or hostile, like taking that same beer bottle, smashing it, and taking the shards to their throat. Either way, you get the mission accomplished.

Although PSYOPS are obvious NWO territory, any Convention can conduct a PSYOP mission. Progenitors can dose water supplies with chemicals that render the locals compliant. Voids can get folks fired up about "Space Force" or some such nonsense designed to aim popular Consensus upward and outward. Everything the Syndicate does is one big PSYOP mission called *Money is your fucking god*, and if you don't see Iteration X's hand behind smart phones and social media and other everyday cybernetics then I'd say they fucking *succeeded*, wouldn't you?

Secure and Contain

We covered this already, but it's worth repeating here. An S&C mission involves securing the area around an RDI so that citizens can't get in and RDs can't get out. After the immediate threat is dealt with, the containment phase gathers evidence, sidetracks cops and cock-blocks them in the name of "national security," and deals with whatever collateral damage the incident caused. We *do* have special crews for this sort of thing, but since you might end up on one of them someday, or get stuck on cleanup duty if the job is too big for a normal crew to handle, I figured I would mention S&C missions here while we're handling the topic as a whole.

Surveillance

The most boring mission type of all: Get eyes and ears in the field, sit on your ass, and gather intel by paying attention to what's going on with and around your mission's target. Those eyes and ears don't have to be human; cameras and microphones are great, uplifted animals are awesome, and the success of drones, data tracking, face-recognition software and other tools of supervision among the Consensus is a fucking wet dream come true. Decades ago, most people were paranoid about being watched; now, they'll dump all their personal data online for a fucking laugh and not think twice about how vulnerable that makes them if someone (like, say, us) decides to keep a hairy eyeball on their lives. Hell, people *expect* to be monitored now. Lots of 'em even *want* to be seen and accessible 24/7. If you'd have told that to a Black Suit back in 1993, he'd have thought you were insane.

So sure, we have all the data we could possibly want, but unless you have a badass algorithm to dig through all that data, though, you're gonna need someone to review it. Hell, even when you *do* have a badass algorithm, there's no substitute for a living set of eyes to notice what a data crunch can't spot. So, when you're on a surveillance mission, sleep in shifts; drink coffee; don't fuck with your phone, because nine times out of ten, you'll miss something because you were on social media or taking a leak. You can't really fix the latter, but the former is 100% preventable.

Surveillance missions suck. They *do*. Sorry 'bout that, kids. It can't *all* be no-knock raids, now can it? You ever see a police stakeout in a movie? Did that ever look like they were having fun? There's a reason for that: It's *not* fun. It's necessary, though. Intel missions make all other missions possible.

Stealth

When you need to get something accomplished right under your enemy's nose, a stealth mission is probably in order. Where most missions require a straightforward approach, stealth missions require moving in (and probably out again) under some sort of concealment. Like *misdirection* missions, stealth ops depend on fooling anyone who happens to see you. However, where a misdirect fools observers into seeing someone you want them to see, a stealth mission usually fools them into not seeing you at all.

"Seeing," of course, is relative. Some ops depend on full-spectrum invisibility, while others cloak the operatives in local color so they can move right out in the open without being noticed. Lots of people, for example, don't want to notice the homeless, so a surveillance mission disguised as a homeless encampment provides a great way to stealth out in plain sight. Our enemies are always looking for mutants, back sedans, and cybernetic killing machines; show 'em a bearded hipster in an Amazon delivery van, though, and they won't look twice until they're staring down the barrel of whatever gun you need to use to get that job done.

Mission Steps

Okay, hotshots — let's go! You've secured your IG, you've nailed down the FO. Now what? Well, unless you're a fucking idiot, you follow these quick and not-so-easy steps to get squared away, get in, get done, get out, and get lost.

Planning

First off, you figure out exactly what you're trying to do then you plan for how you want things to go. At each step of your plan, acknowledge what might go wrong. Figure out a way to

mitigate that risk and/or deal with it if happens. Your plan should look like a flowchart from hell. By forecasting problems, you reduce surprises. Your goal here is to give hostiles a split second to make choices, while you're already three steps ahead of them when they do.

Only a few mission types involve breaking things down unless there's no other choice. Those missions call for different tactics, gear, and prep, and it's not always clear which options present the best method for accomplishing a particular objective. Both ambushes and raids, for example, involve putting holes in people (or whatever); if the objective is to put *bodies* in *holes* then both ambushes and raids are viable solutions. It's up to you to figure out what needs to happen, and those decisions involve intel, planning, and a reasonable sense of discretion and fallout. Reality Deviants out in the sticks? You can do pretty much anything, from PSYOPs to big-scale CI. A pack of hostage-taking werewolves in a city center? That's pretty much guaranteed to be a raid, and although you're gonna be hard-pressed to contain the Collateral Impact involved in that one, it's your ass if a lot of civvies get smoked.

Let's say we're going in to deal with a pair of asshole unaffiliated vampires. To the best of our knowledge, they haven't been killing anyone, but they stole from us. Let's go in soft, Attune them, and see where we're at then. If the Attunement takes, great! We might just have a new cleaner asset we can outsource jobs to. As a bonus, keeping things quiet should keep the civilian hunters from getting in on the action. And hey, if the Attunement doesn't take, the HEs are unaffiliated anyway, which limits the possible blowback if we have to X them out.

Outfitting

What are your objectives? What are your limitations? It's probably not going to do a whole lot of good to bring antitank rockets to a surveillance mission; Q Division's getting better and better about making everything fit in a rucksack, but don't carry anything you don't need, and don't leave behind anything you need. This is some Miyamoto Musashi *Book of Five Rings* shit: Don't do anything useless. Observe, prepare, execute, done.

Let's say our theoretical vamps have guns all over the house; if Attunement fails, we're in a fire fight. Plan to drown out gunshots with noise, or just drop a quiet cone over the site and silence everything. Time permitting, you could wait for them to leave then steal all the guns, hide all the ammo, trap them, or do something equally hilarious. When it comes to the actual meetup, we'll want to keep any potential retaliation from other HEs off of us, so we req some octopus suits. They're mainly designed for stealth, but they can look like anything we want — like maybe, say, a few amateur monster hunters.

Infiltration

Infiltration (*infil*, for short) describes how you get to the AO. How are you going to get there? How much time do you have? How much do you care about getting spotted? If you have no time, and you don't care if anyone sees you, getting dropped on top of the objective by helicopter might be an option. In practice, it almost never is, but a girl can dream, right? If the AO is surrounded by prying eyes, how are you going to get past them? Go invisible? Distract them? Disguise yourself? Go around them? Come up under them? Consider any possible approach as a viable infil and/or exfil point.

Whatever infil and exfil routes you choose, avoid direct in-and-out trajectories. Instead, dogleg your entry and exit paths, in order to confuse observers and hide your point of origin. Whenever

possible, use cloaking and cover. Surprise, as any Black Suit can tell you, is one of the most effective weapons ever.

AOO: Actions on the Objective

Actions on the Objective are the steps you take once you're in position and the real fun begins. Those steps vary wildly, depending on what the mission is. The basic steps, though, go like this: *establish Rally Point, make contact, maneuver, break contact, and consolidate forces.*

- **Rally Points (RPs)** are where you transition between infil and AOO, as well as how you get from AOO to exfil; most of the time, vehicles serve as Rally Points because they can maneuver independently, and if need be, they can go to you. All the shit that you thought you might need but didn't want to carry gets left at the RP. If it turns out you need that gear, it's close by and relatively secure. If not, the gear's not slowing you down. Vehicular Rally Points can also serve as MEDEVAC vehicles, which makes them pretty great if someone gets hurt.

It should go without saying that Rally Points should be guarded somehow if there's anything present that you'd regret losing. It *should* go without saying, but it won't. Protect your shit.

- **Making contact** is the first time your target is aware of your presence. Now, it's time to get in someone's face. Maybe you're just going to ask them some questions. Maybe you're going to stuff them in a suitcase. Whatever the mission might be, your approach, attitude, and initial defense posture need to be established before you make contact.
- **Maneuvering** probably only matters if you're in a fight, but complex social situations might call for you to shift positions or postures, too. If your current conversational tact has gotten you everything it's going to get you, change it up. Move around. Shift positions. Did your initial volley get all the bad guys running for cover? Maneuver to a new position while they're looking at the dirt, before they can get a bead on you again.

Pro tip: The *contact* and *maneuver* steps work best when two different teams are doing them. Get support from a fire team to lay down suppressive fire, sniper shots, mortars, whatever, and then no one will even notice your maneuver team doing their thing.

- At this point, you should be able to do whatever you want with the target, which means it's time to do it and then **break contact**. If you're in conversation, make your polite exit. If lead's flying, this is the point when your volume of fire picks up again. Everyone else puts their heads down — then everything goes quiet. When they look up again, you're gone.
- **Consolidate forces** at the Rally Point. Anyone hurt? Start First Aid. Anyone missing? Anything important missing? You might have to start AOOs all over again to fix that situation. This step should be just a box check, but it's here for a reason. Check your people and gear before you take the next step.

Cleanup

We covered this already under CCC, but I'm gonna cover it again because you do *not* skip this step, *ever*. It's not fine if the AO looks like a fucking crime scene when you're done, but it could be acceptable *if and only if* there is nothing left that could lead the CLEs back to us or send some VHS off on a monster hunt. Check bodies for weird wounds. Dispose of weird bodies. No, arson isn't effective; civilian CSI teams are getting too good for that shit, plus fires spread far too easily and present too much risk. Pressed for time? You might be able to outsource it to a

contractor. Whenever possible, though, bring your cleanup crew with you and stash ‘em nearby until the fireworks end.

Exfiltration

You have to get out somehow, so you’d better have a plan. Actually, you’d better have a *stack* of plans. Plenty of issues can complicate or compromise an exfil route: hostiles, panicked civilians, an unexpected wall, fire, aliens. Have other exfil routes out of the hot zone.

Plan for casualties. There’ll probably be some. What happens to operatives who get wounded or get dead? Is there a MEDEVAC team standing by? Can you get exfiltrated by vehicles? If so, which ones? Driven by whom? Traveling in by what route, and out by what route? Since you presumably maneuvered before the shit went down, the start of your exfil route will probably be different than the end of your infil route. Whether it is or not, take a different route out anyways. Be circuitous. Avoid tails. Spot ‘em and shake ‘em if you end up with one anyways. Do *not* bring trouble back to the Construct with you unless you want a fast track to the worst post your Manager can imagine.

Hot Wash

As soon as everyone is out and headed back to safety, talk amongst your team. What went wrong? What went right? This is not a bitch session, nor is it a finger-pointing buddy-fucking. This is so you and your team can improve. Doing this immediately is important so that you can identify strengths and weaknesses while the op is still fresh in your minds.

AARs: After-Actions Review

If your team was the only team in the AO, skip this step. AARs are like hot washes, but bigger. As soon as everyone who participated in the op is back at base, start the AAR. Unless someone was MEDEVACed out, they should be present at the AAR. This is where we find out how things went on a holistic level, as all teams involved explain how things looked from their vantage. Did we get all the targets? Did something get away? Do the door kickers need to be faster? Slower? VDAS data and sensory feeds help, but as much as Iteration X hates to admit it, nothing beats organic brains processing the incident, collating the data, discussing the results, and consolidating their impressions of the events from each point of view involved. Sure, Black Suits share a hive-mind, but every op experiences things a little bit differently and processes those sensations through a matrix of their own experiences before that.

Report

This final step is left to the mission’s operations leader. If that’s you then you type it up, send it in, attach all the data you have from video feeds to consciousness replays, and log all assets acquired or lost. The op isn’t over until Control has their copy.

Unit 3: Theatres of Operation

“People are sheep. They’re do what they’re told, once they see that the world is not as they always assumed it was.”

— James Reed, from Seanan McGuire’s *Middlegame*

The group gathered around the table in the conference room wasn’t large; a dozen at most — operatives, mostly, with a few managers and a couple higher-level support staff who had, surprisingly, been one of the driving forces behind this meeting. They sat stiffly in chairs ergonomically designed to be blissfully comfortable; Stephen fidgeted with the tablet he’d brought with him, drinking from the water glass in front of him to relieve his suddenly dry throat. When the door opened to reveal not only the senior manager, whose time they had requested, but also the Senior Vice President three levels above her, Stephen swallowed and turned a little pale. The big wigs, on the other hand, seemed entirely comfortable as they sat down at the head of the table.

“Gentlemen, ladies, I want you to know that I appreciate your initiative identifying a problem and working to find a potential solution. As you know, we have been working to eliminate waste across our organization. I and my colleagues have reviewed the data you collected and the reports you have written. While there is not consensus among us regarding what this data indicates, we have agreed that it makes sense to make some attempt to eliminate this particular source of waste. As a result, we are authorizing your Community Relationship and Recruitment Quality Improvement Initiative as an official trial, to last twenty years, starting now. There will be some strict limitations in what you are allowed to do, of course, and you will be making regular reports to us.” He paused just long enough to let the full implication of his next words sink in, unsaid but understood: “If there are significant problems, the trial will be terminated immediately.”

The Senior VP looked at each of them, then nodded as if satisfied. “This is going to be complicated and difficult, but I trust each of you to do your best to make it work.” He nodded again, this time to the senior manager next to him. “Sybil will go over the details with you, and you will make your reports to her. I’d love to stay and work them out with you myself, but I have another meeting I need to get to. I’m looking forward to seeing your results.” He stood up, nodded to them once more, and was gone.

As he left the room, Sybil stood and activated the screen behind her. Stephen allowed himself a quiet sigh of relief. It was a small start — only a few new recruits would be allowed to keep their family and community connections at first, and they would be watched very carefully — but if the data projections were correct, their Initiative should be successful enough to be adopted throughout the Organization.

Hope gave his heart a sudden, painful squeeze.

A Mad World Under Fair Control

It’s a mad, mad world, and the Technocratic Union is not the only party of significance within it. They do, however, have a fairly generous reach and so keep their hands on as many centers of potentiality as they can while keeping their eyes on most of the rest. Whether your adventures take you to your nearest metropolitan crossroads or to a dusty little, backwater, forgotten nugget

of curiosity, you should have a bit of an idea of what you're getting yourself into, and that sort of question is what we should review.

The following chapter provides something of a primer to help you get the look and feel of the rest of the globe (note: *globe*, not some flat planet!) so that you know what to expect. Each entry contains an exceedingly brief overview of the general area, and a snapshot of the operations the Technocracy is concerned with in the area.

Supplemental Data: Influence Among the Masses

The following chapter is, by necessity, concise. For more information about the social dimensions of Technocratic influence, see that entry in **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 230-233).

The Global Outlook: Dim

It's an odd time to be a Technocratic operative.

The third decade of the 21st century should be a paradise. Our ancestors could not have possibly envisioned the world three centuries of rapid, unprecedented technological advances has given us. Within slightly over a hundred years, humanity has gone from gaslights and telegraphs to mobile computers that fit in a pocket, interlinked worldwide and capable of watching movies, taking photos, and accessing infinite reams of data in real time *all at once*. Scientists shoot cameras into the depths of space, revealing wonders that make old-time visions of infinity seem tame. Sublime graces of technology allow people to connect more deeply, more quickly, and across greater distances than ever before.

And yet, the world burns.

What should be a golden age might be the end of humanity. Radical shifts of climate and politics bring daily disasters and the threat of worse to come. Grand experiments of democratic freedoms collapse under shouting hatred and depthless ignorance. The Technocratic dream of a world united by technology is being torn apart by the realities of human behavior. No mathematical model could predict the deranged upheavals of the current age, and so the Technocracy finds itself throwing away outmoded Time Tables and accepting new protocols that address the current situation.

Perhaps the most disconcerting element of this era — for Technocrats, at least — involves the Masses' gleeful embrace of irrationality. It's not failures of democratic ideals that bother the Union's membership; the Technocracy is anti-democratic to begin with, so a global movement toward authoritarianism fits perfectly within the Technocratic plan. It's the *chaos* of it that bothers many Technocrats — the willful *stupidity* of it all. The junking of reason, the spread of disease, the slashing of science programs even as science facilitates every other aspect of this age. Instead of compliance and control, the Technocracy sees selfishness, whim, and ruin. Although a Fallen Technocracy might celebrate such things (and *does*, if that metaplot's in play), Technocracy idealists look at this world with despair. Is *this* the world they've worked so hard to achieve? And how can the Union save humanity from itself when humanity seems to crave self-annihilation?

Across the world, even in its strongholds, that's the challenge faced by this era's Technocrats: Not the whims of wizards (although superstitionism's certainly on the rise), the depredations of

werebeasts, or the endless thirst of undead monsters, but irrational Masses and a crumbling world order.

The Technocracy is vast, wealthy, and possessed of hypertech that does impossible things. Thousands of Enlightened operatives command millions of associates worldwide. Their combined influence is without precedence in human history. And yet, in the face of nearly eight billion irrational souls, it seems impossible to reach a true Consensus and bring humanity out of its own shadow.

Uplifting humanity from this mess is a task for heroes. But can heroism be enough, even with all the power of the Union at those heroes' command?

Current projections don't look good.

But that's never stopped the Technocracy before...

Colonization and the Technocratic Union

The information in this chapter is presented from the in-character point of view of a loyal member of the Technocratic Union who believes the best about their org. The reality of the situation is that the Technocratic Union (and the Order of Reason before it) often traveled alongside colonizers. The Union not only claimed a portion of the plunder for their own coffers, but frequently subsumed, eradicated, and subsequently claimed credit for the Enlightened Science they encountered during their imperialist expansion.

This problem was exacerbated in the Victorian Age with the Technocratic Union assuming a blatant attitude of Eurocentric superiority and has been further aggravated in recent years through faulty beliefs in American exceptionalism and white supremacy. Though the Union prides itself on self-proclaimed Enlightenment, the leadership has been far too human in its failings when it comes to issues of race, culture, colonialism, and war. Depending on the metaplot elements you choose, the Technocracy may have been actively involved in genocide in recent memory in the process of purging the Crafts (see **Mage 20** p. 196-201)

This book assumes that the Technocracy has in recent memory seen the error of its ways regarding issues of diversity. This is framed as a practical policy shift, and, in fairness, it is – shunning valuable allies due to bigotry is a major waste of resources. As such, the Technocracy has learned the value of trying to work with other cultures, following the lead of those hailing from a region rather than walking in blindly and dictating best practices about situations they do not comprehend.

Sphere of Influence: Africa

Africa is the second largest landmass on Earth in terms of area as well as population; fifty-four nations, a handful of territories and independent states and over 1.2 billion people. For over half a millennium, Africa has been plundered by the rest of the world; now, while much of that world slides further into chaos, the nations and people of Africa strive to recover from that legacy and assert a new and powerful role in the future.

The Technocracy is working alongside local entrepreneurs, extraordinary citizens, and Enlightened to enable revitalization initiatives, technological expansion and implementation of 21st century solutions to the challenges left in the wake of 500 years of colonialism.

Central Africa

The majority of Technocratic activity in Central Africa is based in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with satellite operations tied to Congolese initiatives in Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. Roughly 157 million people live within this region.

Current Initiatives

The Technocracy is mainly concerned with gaining footholds in the area and starting up new initiatives.

Iteration X/Progenitors (MedNet, Kinshasa, DRC)

With the challenges of combating virulent disease outbreaks such as Ebola in areas with low internet connectivity, Iteration X and the Progenitors are working to create a medical emergency response network reliant on USSD application technology.

NWO (USSD Social Integration Research, Ngaliema, DRC)

As the use of USSD application technology increases throughout Africa, the NWO seeks to seize control of emerging social media and news outlets utilizing the platform. For many in the DRC, radio and television are the primary sources of information but as USSD apps grow more robust, news services are seeking ways to capitalize on this tech. The NWO wants to guide social media via USSD, seeing the opportunity to shape the platforms from inception.

Coordinating USSD access to the VDAS also falls within the purview of this initiative. This serves the purpose of giving African Technocrats access to vital tools, but also increases the effectiveness and reach of the Data Sphere on the continent.

The Syndicate (Congolese Incubation, Ngaliema, DRC)

Drawing on existing wealth within the Congo the CI project provides tools to internal investors looking to grow the Congolese economy and facilitate entrepreneurship among the DRC populace. By providing (and manipulating) this framework, the Syndicate hopes to create a network of new business ventures that can be integrated into the overall goal of the CETF (See North Africa, below) seamlessly.

Void Engineers (Absent)

The Void Engineers have no official operations within Central Africa and have not since the Victorian Age. While attaches from the BCD may be assigned to amalgams and Constructs maintained by other Conventions, these assignments are generally perceived as punishment. Some Technocrats of the other Conventions theorize that this may be due to the foothold superstitionist mages hold in the area, particularly those with transdimensional alliances. Sharing such opinions is generally considered unmutual.

East Africa

Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya are just a sampling of the nations of Technocratic interest in the East African region. Rich histories and cultures support

these nations, with trading populations recorded back to centuries BC. Fossil records date early hominids in this region to more than two million years ago. This region and the islands off the coast are home to over half a billion people.

Current Initiatives

The Union has a number of initiatives and programs in effect throughout this area, many of which are generated in overlap from, or coordination with, the surrounding regions, including those in Australia/New Zealand.

Iteration X (Industrialization Guidance Initiative, Mtwara Tanzania)

The IGI has a mandate to guide the development of East African industrialization, specifically to increase efficiency and provide controls that were not applied among the Masses during the Industrial Revolution. With the existential threat of climate change this is considered the number one priority for Iteration X on the continent.

NWO/Progenitors (Nutritional Outreach Women's Program (NOW), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

In an effort to assist with hunger and malnutrition challenges facing the East African population, the Progenitors have begun work on the Nutritional Outreach Women's Program, which is, on the surface, focused on promoting breastfeeding. While the Progenitors are pushing GMO foods and high-nutrient load superfoods, the NWO is utilizing the program to test drive some basic reeducation principles aimed at encouraging normalization of what is internally referred to as Basic Function Parameters. (Referring to such as "common fucking sense," while accurate, is considered unmutual.) With hope, outreach programs regarding other BFPs, such as immunizations and climate change, may be adapted by the lessons gained by observing this program's progress.

The Syndicate (EAC Normalization, Nairobi, Kenya)

The Syndicate operatives assigned to the Nairobi office are faced with one of the most challenging mandates of the convention. The higher ups in the Syndicate expect all of Africa to achieve the goals laid out by the CTEF, as outlined by the Casablanca office, by 2050. The East African Community economy has a long way to go, but by coordinating internal resources within the Kenyan economy while pouring in external, international seed money, the Nairobi office hopes to meet the standard laid out for CTEF participation.

Void Engineers (IO Aquatic Exploration Initiative, Mogadishu, Somalia)

The Void Engineers are deeply invested in mapping the Indian Ocean. The IO Aquatic Exploration Initiative is the premier VE exploratory Construct on the Front Lines at this time. In addition to mapping the ocean and cataloguing the biodiversity that exists in the region, the IO has begun targeting species for relocation to extraplanetary colonies ahead of extinction level climate shifts projected to occur within the next decade.

North Africa

North Africa consists of the nations of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the two autonomous city-states Ceuta and Melilla. These nations boast a combined population of approximately one hundred and ninety million people.

Current Initiatives

Each Convention has a role to fill in North Africa. Most initiatives focus on utilizing the native Masses, either integrating them into the Technocracy, or studying their activities.

Iteration X/Progenitors (Integrated Technologies Pilot, Marrakesh, Morocco)

The Challenge Fate Foundation is a joint effort between Iteration X and the Progenitors to improve quality of life, foster Enlightenment, and find creative solutions to existential threats facing humanity. Among the few initiatives operating under the Challenge Fate Foundation is the Integrated Technologies Pilot, led by Dr. Ree Samadi (see Unit 6.) Through this initiative, the Union is testing a hypothesis that operatives recruited from a local population, as Dr. Samadi was, have a greater net positive when allowed to return to their oldlife and interact with the population than a newlife agent brought in to attempt to improve an area. The people in Dr. Samedi's village followed her instructions to create small solar batteries, efficient micro-greenhouse construction, and other utilitarian technologies that can be inexpensively replicated. Not only has the program shown quality of life increases throughout the region and a marked shift in thought toward the Technocratic paradigm among the Masses, but it has led to identification of extraordinary citizens within the population at 150% the global average.

NWO (Benghazi Research and Data Assessment, Benghazi, Libya)

The NWO has maintained a fascination with the situation in Libya for the past decade. In many ways, the reaction of the Masses and the press to the 2012 attack on the American diplomatic compound was a watershed moment in data manipulation by organizations among the Masses. Though the NWO officially lists the loss of control of the narrative as an "unfortunate result of socio-political variable," the truth is that a few experienced and dedicated spin doctors of the Masses wrestled control of the narrative from the Feed. In the aftermath, the NWO sunk a disproportionate amount of resources into the regional Construct to try to sort out what went wrong and why, all the while failing to intervene in the growing crisis in Libya.

The Syndicate (Continental Exchange Traded Fund, Casablanca, Morocco)

This initiative involves exploration into new methods of tracking, exchanging, and growing finances in a cash-free society. Many Syndicate Managers see the 21st Century economies of Africa as a perfect place to institute cashless transactions and experiment with methods of wealth growth tied to concepts of economy rather than the movement of hard assets. Reacting to a number of innovations brought to fruition by the ADB, the ADF, and the NTF as well as private companies outside the traditional financial sector, the Syndicate intends to guide African economies to a unified, stable, cashless economic homogeny with steady growth by 2050.

Void Engineers (Sekhem Guardpost-1, Giza, Egypt)

Sekhem Guardpost-1 is a Void Engineer Border Corps Division outpost specifically trained to deal with Reality Deviants such as mummies, REMURD drawing upon ancient Egyptian mysticism and belief, and HEs worshipping old Egyptian deities. Sekhem Guardpost-1 also acts as a supply gate for a number of Deep Universe Constructs through an advanced Dimensional Gateway located in a sub-basement of the headquarters.

West Africa

The former heart of the Mali Empire, West Africa has seen substantial changes since the days of Mansa Musa. Conquests, wars, famines, and the plunder of human, animals, and natural "resources" have badly depleted the region once known as "Africa's Rome." Even so, West

Africa is still an economic powerhouse, with 360 million residents, 17 nations, numerous ports, and abundant natural resources.

Current Initiatives

Technocratic initiatives in West Africa lean towards total terranorming on the Syndicate and NWO side of things, while Iteration X and the Progenitors work on helping the Masses improve their situations through terranorming.

Iteration X (West African Lighting and Electricity, Lagos, Nigeria)

Iteration X is working to provide affordable, accessible solar power to tens of millions of homes across Africa. Moving to solar power and away from power grids and diesel fuel helps Iteration X meet the IGI's pollution reduction goals while promoting safe, clean energy. The Solar batteries provided by Iteration X can also be accessed via the Data Sphere, drastically increasing the effectiveness of the Data Sphere throughout the region.

NWO (West Africa Soil Index, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)

Revitalization of agricultural processes is a major initiative in West Africa. By cataloguing samples of the soil, the seeds used within it, nutrient loads, and rainfall, the NWO is able to generate a reliable virtual model of the entire region. The agricultural data is fed to the Progenitors to aid in the Seed Engineering Project while the topographical data is fed into the VDAS and cross-referenced with data gathered through Iteration X's WALE program. This allows NWO operatives to use the Data sphere as readily in the mapped rural areas as in the largest cities.

Progenitors (Seed Engineering Project, Niamey, Niger)

Working from data compiled by the NWO, the Progenitors of the SEP are engineering a number of crops designed specifically to thrive in the soil of West Africa. These crops are also indexed against the needs of the NOW program in Addis Ababa and adjusted accordingly to aid in the function of that sister effort.

The Syndicate (Common Currency Initiative, Accra, Ghana)

The Syndicate operatives assigned to the Accra office hope to achieve and implement a unified West African currency. Considering the mandate was initially assigned in the 1990s, the CCI office is drastically behind schedule. Now, the CCI's mandate includes an end goal of integration to the overall cashless initiative of the Convention's view of the continent's economy.

Void Engineers (NASDRA Overwatch and Recruitment Program, Abuja, Nigeria)

The Void Engineers have become enamored with the National Space Research and Development Agency in Nigeria. The determination, will, and creativity of this burgeoning space program has captured the attentions of the Convention who see it as a wonderful opportunity to provide a training ground, test new theories and expand the influence of Dimensional Science. The current goal is to either implant or recruit at least 60% of the agency's personnel prior to their first planned spacewalk in 2030.

Southern Africa

At the southern end of the African continent lie the neighboring nations of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, the enclaved nation of Lesotho and, of course, South Africa. This region is home to a population of nearly 70 million people.

Current Initiatives

Efforts in Southern Africa are as diverse as the cultures and nations found there. Technocrats spend a lot of time responding to situations and forming initiatives to meet the current needs of the area.

Iteration X/NWO (Construct HTR 1138, Johannesburg, South Africa)

This joint effort between Iteration X and the NWO is the largest tactical Construct in Africa. All personnel at HTR 1138 are trained in urban combat, crowd suppression, and counterterrorism. Founded in the late 1990s, this Construct has been focused on pursuit and elimination of RD threats to the exclusion of all else. While other Technocratic operations in the region may see HTR 1138 as archaic or even brutal in their methods, none can argue that this is the Construct to call for backup when in need for RD suppression.

Progenitors (Genetics, Biophysics, and Neurology Associates, Cape Town, South Africa)

South Africa has long been a world leader in medical technology and innovation. From CAT scans and heart transplants to retinal cryoprobes and induced pluripotent stem cells, South African medical innovation has been at the cutting edge for nearly a century. Medical innovation is so pronounced in the region that there is an observable variance in acceptable Progenitor Procedures in Johannesburg and Cape Town compared to the rest of the continent. Naturally, the Progenitors take advantage of this, recruiting students from throughout the region to study in the area. Those attaining Enlightenment join the ranks of the Union.

The Syndicate (Southern African Synchronicity Project, Johannesburg, South Africa)

While the Southern African nations represent the most stable economies on the continent, the Syndicate is working to reduce reliance on international trade and integrate the Southern Nations into a more cohesive whole with the rest of the Syndicate initiatives guided by the CETF. There is some resistance to this initiative in the field in Johannesburg, as experts in the region fear that rushing this transition could jeopardize the stability of the South without appreciable improvements in the other regions.

Void Engineers (Border Defense Outpost Sigma Alpha)

Situated near the MeerKAT telescope array, beneath the quiet town of Carnavron is a subterranean barracks housing a platoon of BDC Marines. This force, combined with the Black Suit contingent at Johannesburg, represents the major Technocratic threat response force on the continent.

Sphere of Influence: The Americas

The Americas present an interesting conundrum for the Union. Over the past three centuries the people of these continents have achieved successes beyond the Union's most optimistic projections and hosted utter and complete failures of Union experiments.

North America

Over 20 countries and as many dependent territories make up the North American continent. Nearly 600 million people live here, with over half of that population within the United States of America. Heading into the third decade of the 21st century, North America is a land in political turmoil. In the eyes of many Technocrats, North America is a failed experiment in the Union's goals, the lessons of which can be applied more effectively in other regions.

Current Initiatives

Technocratic initiatives in North America revolve around maintenance and research. Conventions introduce small changes or study the changes happening throughout the continent.

Iteration X (Maquiladora Management Initiative, Mexico City, Mexico)

One of the largest Iteration X initiatives in the world, the Maquiladora Management Initiative is tasked with improving productivity, reducing environmental strain, and directing acceptable advances in the manufacturing industry throughout Mexico and Central America. In terms of production efficiency, the project is largely considered a success. By every other metric, the MMI is considered one of the Union's most spectacular failures. Corporate and government corruption are rampant within the areas overseen by the MMI's mandate. Conditions for workers are positively dystopian. Wages are insufficient, gender inequality is a major issue. Sexual harassment and discrimination are rampant throughout the industry. Some progress has been made regarding environmental concerns, but not nearly enough to be within acceptable tolerances. Aspiring Iterators looking to make a name for themselves flock to the MMI in the hopes of being on the team that turns it all around.

NWO (American Masses Assessment Project, El Paso, Texas, USA)

The NWO in North America is strained to breaking point. The last half decade has seen every aim, goal, and ideal of the NWO's work turned on its ear by reckless and incompetent members of the Masses. The NWO sees the current sociopolitical situation in the USA as a twisted reflection of the Convention's goals, and none of the analysts of the Ivory Tower can make sense of what has happened. Many Black Suits see this as more evidence of the gap between theory and application in the Union's operations. The official mandate of the AMAP is to collect and collate data that allows analysts to identify what has gone amiss and formulate a new plan. Unofficially, many of the Black Suits in the region see the necessity for immediate action. Some have gone as far as to use media contacts to stir anti-government sentiment and to funnel black market resources to antifa and anti-ICE protesters. These agents are acutely aware of the role the Union played in WWII Germany and have no intention of allowing history to repeat itself on their watch.

Progenitors (Dr. Sara Reid Memorial Research Center, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA)

The Reid Memorial Research Center is an R&D construct that focuses on filtering cutting edge Progenitor designs and innovations to the Masses through a number of connections to the public clinics and research centers throughout Minnesota. Proximity to the Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota give the Progenitors ample resources for recruiting locally. Much like the GPNA in South Africa, the Reid Center benefits from a Reality Zone that is exceptionally permissive to Progenitor procedures.

The Syndicate (Western Currency Adjustment Initiative, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

Obviously, the Syndicate has a number of hotspots of activity scattered across North America, but the current highlight of the Syndicate profile is the WCAI in Vancouver. With the proliferation of online commerce, the Syndicate's long-term goal of a cashless society is well on its way to fruition, though there are a number of obstacles still in the way. The WCAI is leading the initiative in North America. Placing itself in proximity to leaders in online commerce, this Syndicate operation is concerned with insinuating itself into leading corporations and platforms in the virtual space so that it might manipulate those assets from within.

Void Engineers (Atlantis Station, Key West, Florida, USA)

Atlantis Station is the centralized hub of Void Engineer activity on the Western Hemisphere. The location on Key West allows for easily coordinated communication and deployment of BDC Marines as well as Voidship launches and Aquatic exploration focused on the Atlantic Ocean. Proximity to the Kennedy Space Center allows Void Engineers to keep an eye on emerging technologies and look out for potential recruits.

South America

If North America is an example of Technocratic failures, South America stands as an example of the worst consequences of those failures. Home to the Amazon rainforest, South America is arguably the single most important location in the battle to combat climate change. If the Amazon falls to industrialization, pollution, and destruction, human life has a near zero chance of successful adaptation or survival. As such the Technocratic Union is thrust into a very different role in South America headed into the next decade. Here, the Technocracy must stand to repress and undo the damage done by industrialization and colonization at any cost.

Current Initiatives

Many Technocratic initiatives in South America revolve around the Amazon and its current state of deforestation and destruction.

Iteration X/Progenitors (Amazon Basin Damage Control, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil)

As one of the most hardline Constructs on the Front Lines, the Amazon Basin Damage Control's mandate is simple: use the most aggressive, violent, and complete deterrents available to suppress further damage to the rainforest. To this end, Iteration X and the Progenitors are now working on rolling out new and improved natural and semi-natural defenses for deployment in the forest. These include, but are not limited to, clonal weaponry, custom biological agents including bacteria and viruses engineered to rapidly destroy their direct target without spreading into the larger ecosystem, cybernetically enhanced operatives customized for maximum survivability and stealth in the rainforest climate, and a rather impressive detachment of cyber-tooth tigers. While operating within the confines of the Amazon Preservation Zone, agents of the ABDC are granted authority to utilize Procedures at their discretion. This has led other Technocrats in the region to nickname the APZ the "dox box," though the term is officially considered unmutual.

NWO (Sudamerican Psyop Ohm, Brasília, Federal District, Brazil)

The NWO's unexpected mandate in South America seeks to foment revolution and resistance against destruction of the rainforest, deforestation, and fires. Utilizing the various crowd control Adjustments, propaganda, and Mind Procedures developed throughout the past century and a half, the NWO now works to guide the energy of an uprising to desirable ends for the

Technocratic Union — an extremely delicate task with a virtually nonexistent margin for error. Proceeding with anything less than extreme caution may wind up raising a spirit of revolution in the South American population that the NWO cannot put down. The energies of these protests, organizations, and activities must be focused entirely on environmental issues in order to fulfil the goal of rainforest preservation without undermining the past two centuries of the Technocracy's work in the region. It's a dangerous game, but NWO analysts hope that achieving success here means the same techniques can be applied to right the ship in North America.

Covering up the most egregious displays of power caused by ABDC activity causes some resentment amongst the Psyop Ohm operatives given the task as the Black Suits on the ground find it ever harder to clean up after the Iterators and Progenitors.

Progenitors/Void Engineers (Amazon Biosphere Cataloguing and Preservation Effort, Mobile, Amazon Basin)

The Amazon Biosphere Cataloguing and Preservation Effort is a joint venture between the Progenitors and the Void Engineers to catalogue all life within the Amazon Basin to create a wholly accurate map of the area with detailed elevation, biosphere, projected threat and research utility information. This small unit is incredibly well equipped for its size and capable of repelling almost any threat they encounter, which is fortunate given the frequency they run across Reality Deviants deep in the rainforest.

The Syndicate (South American Stabilization Management, Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Agents of the Syndicate are tasked with achieving and maintaining stability of South American economies while the Technocracy turns its efforts to saving the rainforest. This is an incredibly challenging task given the amount of money flooding into the continent that funds anti-Amazonian activity.

The Syndicate (Special Projects Division Home Office, Brasília, Federal District, Brazil)

If you are using the Fallen Technocracy metaplot involving Special Projects Division (see Unit 8 p. xx), the corrupt Convention has its hands (and various other appendages) deep in the deforestation of the Amazon. A chronicle drawing on this metaplot element could easily include elements from **Werewolf 20** as a result of SPD's relationship with Pentex.

Sphere of Influence: Antarctica

For six months out of the year, around four thousand of the world's top scientists live here studying everything from climate change to the breeding patterns of penguins. Accompanied by family members and non-research support staff such as cooks and medics, these research outposts represent the majority of the Antarctic population.

Isolation from the Masses, unique climate, and proximity to the hole in the Ozone Layer makes Antarctica a unique and vital location for Technocratic research and development.

Iteration X (PMM Generation Project X-14, Cosgrove Ice Shelf, Antarctica)

Taking advantage of Antarctica's isolation, Iteration X Time-Motion Managers at this research facility work toward the development of a perpetual motion machine. Though progress on the

principal research effort is slow, Iterators are making great leaps in generator power, climate control, and winterization of existing tech.

NWO (Utopia South, Abbot Ice Shelf, Antarctica)

Utopia South is a climate-controlled, isolated subterranean colony utilized for hypersociological experimentation. Residents of Utopia South are raised fluent in newspeak, adhere to a 36 hour day, and engage in rigidly scheduled activity. Experimental Procedures are tried out on splinters of the population to examine the effects of those Procedures against the general control population. That data is then fed to VDAS for processing and dissemination among field agents seeking to refine their own Mind Procedures and Adjustments in the field.

Progenitors/Void Engineers (Ultima Thule, Queen Maud Land, Antarctica)

This joint research outpost focuses on creating and adapting life for survival in extreme environments. Progenitors expose cloned agents and genetically modified operatives to the extremes of Antarctica, collecting data and adjusting the test subjects Life patterns accordingly. The Void Engineers here assist this research further by applying the results found in Antarctic tests to transdimensional locations, allowing both Conventions to collate the data and create workable models for biomodifications that will aid Void Engineers in space exploration.

Sphere of Influence: Asia

Asia is the largest continent on Earth in terms of landmass and population with over 4.5 billion people living in over 50 countries. To many Technocrats, Asia represents the greatest hope for the future, with several nations already practicing socioeconomic and cultural norms in line with Technocratic goals. The following sections illustrate a mere fraction of the Technocratic Union's activity in Asia.

Disputed Data: An Asian Technocrat Addresses the Myth of "Five Elemental Dragons"

I fucking hate that I have to address this, but thanks to some Nephandic piece of shit poisoning some of our historical documents, I have to say *something*.

First off, the Technocracy of the East isn't a separate arm or faction. The Technocracy is global. East, West, whatever. We're all working in the same lanes. The Five Elemental Dragons are Methodologies that are largely active within Asia, but they're certainly not hiding. That's just a stupid, racist notion that needs to die. First of all, how the fuck would Asian Technocrats hide among their Western counterparts? There are three of us for every one of you. Check my math. I fucking dare you.

Secondly, ignore the "proper" names. No one calls the Water Dragons "Taiping Tianguo." You know why? Because that's the name of a Christian rebellion in 19th Century China. Surprise! Nephandic garbage is all over the place in the historical records. Even if we went with a more reasonable name, like "Ren Chen," guess what? No one anywhere besides Mandarin-speaking regions would call them that! Asia is not one thing. Hell, "Chinese" isn't even one thing. Some countries refer to the so-called "Dragons" by their element, others by their color, others call them serpents or naga. Asia's big, and these ideas don't fit in a goddamned Western-sized box.

So, anyways...

- **Black Water Dragons:** They're part of the Syndicate, which means you can find them everywhere, even outside of Asia. Need to do business in a Chinatown, Little Saigon, or whatever? They've got their fingers in those pies. They piss the NWO off like you wouldn't believe. Turns out that criminal organizations with deep ties to the local communities fucks up policing. Who knew?
- **Green Wood Dragons:** Part of the Progenitors. They go way back. Their results with acupuncture and Taoist herbs confuse the shit out of their Western research partners. They take their craft personally, not just professionally. It's not uncommon to have a doctor of the Green Dragons dedicate their lives to the first problem that they can't figure out. You know the stereotype of Asian kids who getting beaten until they earn straight As and become doctors? They're real.
- **Red Fire Dragons:** The busiest bees in the Void Engineers, the Fire Dragons have the majority of the world's manufacturing plants in their backyard. If you thought the Research and Execution division was wild, the Fire Dragons will blow your mind.
- **Spirit Dragons:** Aren't a thing.
- **White Metal Dragons:** Iteration X's forerunners in a lot of ways. Agriculture? Pottery? Gunpowder? They did it first, and if you listen to them tell it, they did it best. Their Western counterparts made them drink a hubris smoothie during the Industrial Revolution, but the Great Leap Forward has evened things out. The Metal Dragons tend to be pretty buddy-buddy with the Fire Dragons, as you might expect from two heavy industry factions.
- **Yellow Earth Dragons:** The element of Earth is all about moderation and transition, and the legendary Yellow Dragon is the Dragon King, which is why the Earth Dragons are a big part of the NWO. They have a long history of encouraging and enforcing collectivism throughout Asia. Unlike their Western counterparts who linger in the corner of the public's eye, the Earth Dragons make their presence felt through absence.

East Asia

The home of so-called "Five Elemental Dragons," East Asia is a major seat of Technocratic influence, with our various factions maintaining strong influence over the markets, governments, and people. Over 1.6 billion people live in this region within the nations of China, Macau, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan. Despite superstitiousists maintaining heavy presence throughout the region, those throwbacks wield very little power here anymore except in rural areas. Korean Christian sects continue to gain political clout, reducing the power base of the Traditional superstitiousists, albeit at the increased risk of presence. Operatives in Korea don't get to relax.

Current Initiatives

Initiatives in East Asia range from research and development to maintaining important terranorming activities.

Iteration X (Arcology X Project, Sejong, South Korea)

Sejong smart city stands as a monument to cutting edge Internet of Things (IoT) technology implemented on a citywide basis to facilitate maximum efficiency in civic operations. Through a vast network of connected devices governing everything from automated waste disposal to traffic flows, to management of the solar powered skyscrapers, digital signage, and mass transit, Sejong runs with a clockwork efficiency that is the realization of many of Iteration X's goals. That is all before getting into the Enlightened Science at work in the Arcology X project. Iteration X plans to expand and increase the IoT network within the city to create an environment that is not only automated but is autonomous and one hundred percent self-sufficient. The Macrotechnicians working on the Arcology X Project hope to roll out a full, sealed system arcology structure by 2040. The current proposal includes full environmental control that can withstand temperature variances of +/- 200 degrees Celsius with no effect on internal temperatures or air quality. If the Archology X Project works as intended, Sejong may provide a key opportunity to aid humanity in adapting to the threat of climate change.

NWO (Social Credit Observation and Implementation, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China)

The PRC government is a remarkably innovative force in the fields of propaganda, socio-political control and population management. While there are a number of Social Credit Systems operating in pilot status across China, the process has yet to be successfully centralized and is fairly limited in scope...

...At least on the mundane level.

The NWO is working round the clock in a number of Chinese cities to craft a truly comprehensive Social Credit System that tracks every purchase, crime, meal, and movement of every citizen under the database's purview. This detailed collation of Data profiles on the Masses could have staggering implications for surveillance and social engineering in the years to come. While the Masses are running into a number of stumbling blocks in implementing this innovation, the NWO is seeing resounding success. If the pilot programs, operating under the cover of official government works, are successful, the NWO hopes to integrate Social Credit scores throughout the Front Lines. This is intended to provide all pertinent personal data for every individual, so much as using a credit card or cell phone, instant access via VDAS. The NWO targets 2025 as the launch date in Asia, with ongoing expansion beyond progressing on a yearly basis.

Progenitors (Advanced Biotech Rollout Initiative, Shanghai, China)

Shanghai is home to one of the most advanced Progenitor research initiatives in the field of biotech. Focused on antiretroviral development, smart chemotherapy, and nanotech hormone regulation, Progenitors at ABRI are working to rapidly push the consensus to accept new antimicrobial therapies and treatments for diseases thought to be effectively incurable. This initiative is driven by two factors. Firstly, the Progenitors seek to undo damage done via the antivaxxer movement with easily deployable cures to diseases that would be more easily prevented. The second focus is tackling the big problem diseases — AIDS, Ebola, and cancer — by attacking them on a cellular level. Much of the research done here is designed to close the gap between what the Progenitors are capable of and what is accepted by the Masses.

The Syndicate (Eastern Resilience Compensation Initiative, Honk Kong)

The Syndicate in Hong Kong is charged with not only regulating the East Asian economic presence, but with building in shadow controls in preparation for potential economic crises

brought about by the African CCI, economic crashes brought about by climate change, and potential political upheavals in North and South America. Asian prosperity is the basis for global stability in the current economic climate, and the Syndicate aims to keep it that way by any means necessary. Ruthless efficiency and masterful manipulation of Primal Utility keep the Hong Kong office in control of the world's largest markets.

North Asia

Largely taken up by Russia and Mongolia, the North Asian sector also features the underestimated Kazakhstan. International NWO misinformation campaigns continue to play into this, allowing continued expansion of the North Asian Defense Institute (CAKИ/SAQI) with virtually no fear of superstitious interference.

Current Initiatives

North Asia is such an important region to the Technocracy that many of its operations are undertaken by cross-Convention Imperatives, though some Conventions have independent operations.

Iteration X/NWO (Russian Underground Extraction and Elimination, Russia)

When the Russian Underground first started up, the NWO monitored them only to prevent incursions into the Digital Web, but with the rapid growth of cybercrimes attributed to the network of hackers and programmers, the Masses have started to fear the use of technology, growing timid in places they used to be more fluent. It isn't a total loss, as plenty of other nations across the world support their very own cybercriminals, which means some are being fully inspired by these actions, but the more cybercriminals there are, the more the rest of the Masses turn away. Now a joint task force, the RUEE, headed up by the NWO, but utilizing Iteration X Statisticians are searching out Russian Underground hubs and quietly eliminating them, or recruiting the best for better purposes. Sometimes it's hard to tell.

Iteration X/NWO/Progenitor (Unified Terranorming Initiative, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)

The Mongolian Revolution of 1990 sparked a massive resurgence in religious practices, especially Buddhism and shamanism. As a result, Traditions have never been more popular there. As one of the world's largest countries by landmass, Mongolian superstitiousists can conduct their reality deviance around crowds that entirely favor them, bolstering their legitimacy and strength. The Technocracy's presence in Mongolia has always been minimal, but now the need for terranorming is more dire than ever. The Virtual Adepts control the technology in the area, and as Iteration X attempts to wrest control back from them, the NWO has set up terranorming procedures while the Progenitors attempt to take over the medical sectors. Continued fighting with the Reality Deviants makes this area an uphill battle with personnel is still low.

NWO/The Syndicate (Russian Intelligence Initiative, Moscow, Russia)

H-soc predictions for Russia continue to march towards the fabled 1.0 certainty, although that has as much to do with our terranorming practices as it does Russia's government's desire to control their own society. It turns out that putting spymasters in charge of countries produces effective, if disturbing, results. The NWO is monitoring the situation, certain they know enough about the internal thought processes of the nation's leader that they can predict his behavior and

the effects thereof with accuracy. While Iteration X Statisticians would laugh at such a claim, the whole of the Technocracy has yet to realize how wrong they are.

The NWO's overconfidence coupled with the Syndicate's rampant meddling with financial affairs, coupled with the slow movement on the RUEE has led to the Technocracy largely missing Reality Deviant incursions. Russia proves to be fertile ground for organizations that tap into the disaffected, such as the Hollow Ones. Even more disturbing, a homegrown splinter faction of the Templar Knights terrorist group has adapted Crusader ideology to Russian Orthodox practices, creating a powerful recruiting platform. The cellular nature of the Templars turns stamping out this threat into a terrible game of whack-a-mole.

Void Engineers (North Asian Defense Institute (CAKH/SAQI), Kazakhstan)

The SAQI rests atop a nexus that served as the incursion point of the extradimensional forces in the Kazakh Crisis of 1907. Despite the nexus being a potential source of great danger, the Void Engineers have maintained almost-excessively firm control over the site. Although the Border Corps Division has the largest presence at the SAQI, Research and Execution has been regularly tapping into the anomaly, super-charging technological development for the past century. The RAE's efforts have led to both Iteration X and NWO facilities built in the area. While these facilities are not part of SAQI, they comprise the rest of the core of the North Asian Defense Institute for the Technocracy.

South Asia

South Asia comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. While India is by far the largest nation dominating this region, other nations in the region are major points of concern for the Technocracy and their activities.

Current Initiatives

The Technocracy's largest concerns in South Asia revolve around harnessing the strong economic sectors to promote positive terranorming practices and crushing superstitionists. While also diverting harmful technological activities into ones that are more productive for the Masses.

Iteration X (Calculations and Digital Web Division, Karachi, Pakistan)

While Pakistan may be a military state, dominated by its status as a nuclear-weapons state, troubled with overpopulation, terrorism, poverty, and corruption, terranorming efforts there seem to be advancing rapidly. While the other Conventions work diligently to increase the quality of life in the nation, Iteration X has found an unexpected issue that has served as a strange windfall. Within Karachi, a small start-up tech center opened a portal to the Digital Web. The Void Engineers moved in, expecting the BPD to need to deal with incursions, but the portal was stable and unblemished from invaders. Taking the opportunity to use the portal for their own purposes, Iteration X recruited the entire tech firm, and now use it as a base of operations for advanced computing, pulling in freelance programmers from the area as grunts. While the BPD keeps a small unit there for safety's sake, the Digital Web remains stable in the area.

NWO/The Syndicate (Economic Stimulus Terranorming Project, Mumbai, India)

The Syndicate has worked hard over the past few decades to supplant the constraints of foreign governance and its effects on the average *Mumbaikar* until it now stands as a fiscally potent gem among the nation's crown. Enormous sums fed into its national economy by international corporations have led to an impressive number of millionaires and billionaires among its citizens.

Of course, the Syndicate takes its cut, but most of that wealth has been re-invested into the city's infrastructure. Transportation, internet, communications, and so forth have been laid out with great deliberation, creating the foundation for growth and expansion yet to come.

Choosing media as the best form of terranorming, the NWO took indirect control of UTV Motion Pictures, utilizing the wildly popular Bollywood programming to introduce depictions of science, technology, and science fiction to the Masses with ease. Despite Syndicate money making such efforts smoother, the continued desire for fantastical epics proves a stumbling block.

Progenitors (Genetic Preservation Initiative, Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka has the highest biodiversity density in Asia. While the nation is interesting for its economic growth following the Sri Lanka Civil War, and its rapid adaptation to terranorming efforts by both the Syndicate and NWO, the Progenitors are interested in the area for its unique biodiversity and genetic profile. The GPI is stationed in the Sinharaja biosphere, openly disguised as a biological research station for cataloguing and studying the diverse life growing there. Manned by both FACADE and Genengineers, the group's joint project is to map the genetic sequences of the life forms in the area as well as utilize them for their unique properties in various cloning and genetic splicing projects.

Void Engineers (Extradimensional Space Station, Sriharikota, India)

When India started its mission to space, the Void Engineers took notice. They would like to take the credit for building or at least guiding the Masses in the construction of their launch sites, but honestly, they were too busy trying to reinvigorate space travel in the US and other places that had lost interest and it slipped their attention. That was until Chandrayaan-1 made its way to the moon. Within quick order, a BDE group established an outpost in the area, piggy backing off the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. Now one of the biggest extradimensional launch points in the world, the location acts as a storage area for technologies and biologicals returned from such missions.

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia contains eleven countries with a wide cultural and ethnic diversity. There are many good reasons behind the constant rise and fall of regimes in this part of the world. A pattern of strong and undeniable leadership for generations, followed by invasion after invasion. The power drives deep into the foundation of the planet with myths abound of sleeping dragons throughout the area. The roots of philosophical giants rest in plain sight in some of the most untouched centers of energy on the planet. The Technocracy treads lightly here, as Reality Deviant artifacts abound, superstitionist activity is high, and terranorming efforts only work in the populated city centers, leaving the rural areas unsafe.

Current Initiatives

Terranorming is an ongoing project in Southeast Asia, though the efforts have yielded some wildly successful results in many nations. The various landscapes and biodiversity attract the Progenitors and the rest of the Technocracy has found footholds for lucrative activity throughout.

Iteration X/The Syndicate (Economics and Manufacturing Initiative, Hanoi, Vietnam)

Vietnam is a prime example of the Technocracy's successes in urban centers while leaving the Masses in rural areas lacking. Terranorming practices have increased acceptance of science,

industry, and fast economic growth in many sectors, alleviating poverty in major city centers. All the while, malnutrition and poverty run rampant in the rural areas. The concerted efforts of the Syndicate and Iteration X have bolstered technological and economic growth, and Iteration X is using this boon to base an extensive R&D base there.

Iteration X (Reality Deviant Artifact Containment Division, Yangon, Myanmar)

Myanmar has traditionally been a successful link between the east and west for thousands of years. A dumping ground for superstitionist artifacts, knowledge, power, organizations, and literally anything else one could think of, these artifacts are not only derived of deviancy but often have reality deviance effects all their own. Not to mention that these items attract superstitionists. Iteration X has been attempting to locate and lock down such items in the nation for some time, though has made little headway. Whatever secrets the nation holds, their efforts to infiltrate and retrieve these artifacts has been thwarted by what lies within.

NWO (Data Collection and Dissemination Project, Singapore)

For years, the NWO monitored the government of Singapore looking for a single crack or break in its meritocratic rule and fall to full totalitarian dictatorship. They've long looked at the Singapore Model as a proof of concept for limited freedoms, government held security, and strict rules to create unprecedented economic growth and stability. Unfortunately, when applied elsewhere, the model doesn't seem to hold up under duress. While the NWO would love to claim ownership over the model and its success, the Masses have pulled it off on their own, and the NWO simply collects and disseminates the data.

Progenitors/Void Engineers (Genetic Preparation and Testing Zone, Indonesia)

The idea of setting up a single base of operations on a nation comprised of thousands of islands covering hundreds of thousands of square miles is ludicrous. While each Convention has a terranorming plan they are attempting to enact, the real draw of Indonesia is its location within the Ring of Fire. Void Engineer PDC scientists have likened some of the environments to alien landscapes, and the idea of surviving a deep dive into a volcano sparked some interest in the EFD. Working closely with FACADE and Genengineers within the Progenitors, they created an initiative to create constructs capable of doing just that. The PDC hopes it will have some application for their Cadets and Scientists heading out to extradimensional spaces, and FACADE scientists are just happy to have such extreme environments for testing.

West Asia (aka the Middle East)

The nations of the Middle East mark one of the oldest civilizations in the world, dating back some four millennia. Here, scholars founded many of the mathematic principles that have survived the ages and on which the Technocracy builds so much of its logical functions. While the Technocracy did not start here, they are drawn to the area for all its rich history and cultural influence.

Current Initiatives

While the Technocracy may wish to make inroads into the Middle East, they find some areas more resistant to their efforts than others. Pushback seems to come in the form of Reality Deviants, and when the Technocracy can actively use terranorming procedures, the response seems to be overwhelmingly positive.

Iteration X/The Syndicate (Emergency Terranorming Operations, Dubai, UAE)

The Syndicate will tell you that Dubai is a shining star of achievement for all their hard work over the years. The history certainly tracks as exporting crude oil throughout much of the 20th century led to unprecedented economic growth. Some say there's more money in this city alone than in all the rest of the world; and the apparent terranorming activities have led to a city that lives as a high-tech reality zone. All in a day's work for the Technocracy. What they won't tell you is that the glittering skyscrapers, man-made floating neighborhoods, and jetpack propelled citizenry are as much a fault of the Taftáni's artistic endeavors as the Technocracy's terranorming efforts.

Iteration X has been attempting to predict and locate these Reality Deviants and crush their magical interventions in the city, but their loose organization and wandering ways makes them hard to track. The Syndicate's best efforts have led not to a Technocratic paradise but a battleground between high-tech viewed as science versus magick and art that only appears high-tech to the Masses.

NWO (Infiltration and Data Collection, Tehran, Iran)

Iran prioritizes independence and freedom, and though a powerful sectarian leadership rules in many ways alongside the presidential republic, politics and faith are strong and enduring forces in their nation. The Ahl-i-Batin have a khanate in Tehran. Their secrecy makes it impossible for Technocratic members trying to make inroads into the nation to know who or what is pushing back against them. The NWO has been trying for years to infiltrate and acquire a toehold in this region, but so far, the Ahl-i-Batin's influence has stumped them.

Progenitors (Humanitarian Aid and Research Mission, Syria)

Syria has been at the center of a vicious civil war for nearly a decade. While the Technocracy claims no part of the war itself, their technologies have fallen into the hands of parties on all sides. Ostensibly, the Technocracy would like to end the war, as the Masses killing one another is antithetical to their goals; but logistically, interference could have devastating consequences based on Statistician reports. The Progenitors have set up a field aid program, which has been providing medical aid and supplies to those caring for the injured in the fighting. The mission's real purpose is to research effective ways to treat people exposed to chemical weapon attacks and possibly develop a safeguard or immunity that would allow them to pretreat the Masses.

Void Engineers (West Asian Defense Center, Baghdad, Iraq)

Baghdad has had a long and storied history as both a major cultural center in the Middle East, the largest city in Iraq, and rounds of destruction and rehabilitation. While the political atmosphere might be interesting to the NWO or Iteration X Statisticians, the Void Engineers care about the city for an entirely different reason. In the past year, reconstruction efforts unearthed a previously unknown portal in the city. A crater thought to have been buried as long ago as the thirteen century, released extradimensional entities into the world when uncovered, causing a major incident for both the BCD and NSC personnel. Now, a hastily constructed defense center sits near the site, monitoring it for incursions while BCD scientists attempt to spin reasons why the Masses cannot enter the area.

Sphere of Influence: Europe

Europe comprises over fifty sovereign states, all crammed into about 2% of the world's surface. Europe is historically one of the most important locations for the Technocracy. Not only the

birthplace of Western civilization, but also the Order of Reason; the Technocracy has its origins here and has long been its stronghold in the Western world. The Technocracy has a foothold in each nation, spending most of its formative years molding and shaping their development. In recent years, the Technocracy has grown complacent about their efforts in Europe, devoting most of their attention to more interesting projects in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, this lack of attention has led to a downturn in their influence and hold on the nations in the area, leading to some crisis areas.

Western Europe

Centuries ago, each nation kept much of its culture and language selfishly guarded, with what little bleedover did occur happening between the merchant and ruling classes. However, signing treaty after treaty, and with the rising technologies of communication and transportation, nations kept their own flavors mostly identifiable by cuisine and architecture.

In present-day Europe, centuries of interactions have laid the groundwork for treaties, networks and interdependencies too numerable to track. Though the nations of the European continent and islands are astonishingly diverse, they but beads of dew on a great garden spider's web. A movement here spreads vibrations there, and before you know it, you're caught and someone's meal.

Current Initiatives

Many of the Technocracy's initiatives in Western Europe are ones of maintenance, as they have long held the area in a firm grip. However, lack of attention has caused some unfortunate backslides, and some emergency measures are being put into place to understand and respond to these crises.

NWO/Syndicate (Emergency Globalization Response Team, London, UK)

The United Kingdom (and its sister nations for that matter) has always been a bit of a battleground between the march of Technocratic terranorming and progress, and Reality Deviants who don't understand when they are outmatched. For years, the Technocracy never questioned their success in one of the most globalized nations in the world. Imperialism has a way of binding the Masses together. In the past few years though, right under the Technocracy's nose, the nation has slipped away from globalization to isolationism. Before they knew it, they were in crisis management mode instead of maintaining their terranorming status quo. Boots on the ground are NWO Operatives and Syndicate Media Control as they both try to understand what happened and figure out how to fix it.

The Syndicate (World Economic Research Facility, Berlin, Germany)

While parts of Western Europe may be in precarious conditions, Germany is anything but. The Syndicate's work post-WWII has led to one of the single strongest economies in the world. While maybe not on the order of Dubai as far as technological advancements, Germany is well on its way to be the most successful Syndicate project in the world. Unlike Russia, the Syndicate's pleasure at this success isn't just a case of overconfidence. Unfortunately, success in this case breeds complacency, leaving room for Reality Deviants to move in under the Technocracy's radar and gain a firm foothold. Most notably are the Hollow Ones, who held to the shadows and cracks until the wall fell, then began networking and acting in earnest during

Germany's economic growth. The Syndicate only barely realizes they are there, and do not yet classify them as a problem, though that might be to their detriment.

Progenitors (Pharmaceutical Research and Development, Geneva, Switzerland)

For centuries, the Progenitors have made their home-base high in the mountains of the Swiss Alps. Switzerland's famous neutrality allowed them to keep their noses down in their work without too much jostling from political strife. In doing so, they have built some of the largest and most extensive pharmaceutical research centers in the world. Through clever use of pharmaceutical tech espionage that they gladly allow their competitors to steal, they feed the results of their studies to the Masses. The Progenitors pushed for housing the World Health Organization in Geneva, and they use its reach throughout the world to integrate research and data with their own.

Progenitors (Chemical Substance Ethnographic Survey, Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Quite beyond their notice or control, Amsterdam became a case study in legalized mood-altering substances. While not technically legal, the government monitors and licenses special shops for selling cannabis, and, until recently, psilocybins. Before the Progenitors could get there for a real research effort, Reality Deviants showed up to take advantage, namely the Cult of Ecstasy and Children of Knowledge. Instead of a true research station, the Progenitors have been relegated to a small ethnographic team to study the effects of the looser laws on the health of the population. That is, while the NWO spends time and effort rooting out the Reality Deviants so the Progenitors can fully move into the city.

Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe is loosely described as "former Soviet nations" by some, and everything east of the Ural and Caucasus mountains by others, and any other form of differentiation by various bodies throughout. In short, the differentiation is muddy at best, but the Technocracy doesn't care that much.

Current Initiatives

Most of the Eastern European initiatives are in maintenance mode, with the Syndicate and NWO promoting most of their efforts in building stable economies in democratic nations.

Iteration X/Syndicate (Economic Expansion and Development, Sofia, Bulgaria)

The Syndicate has been working in Bulgaria for years, and despite its rampant government corruption has somehow managed to keep it economically stable. With help from Iteration X research and development teams, terranorming the nation has proved rather successful. While the Syndicate tries media influence, they could really use some help from the NWO to deal with the money they make and create actually staying with the Masses, but it seems the NWO is more interested in Russian assets than anything in Eastern Europe.

Progenitors (Nuclear Materials and Genetic Testing, Pripyat, Ukraine)

After the Soviet Union declared the Chernobyl nuclear energy site an exclusion zone, the Progenitors set up a small shop nearby to collect and test organisms saturated with nuclear material. Although simply there to monitor the effects of irradiation on the flora and fauna, that small station's reports have given rise to a number of Genengineer experiments and successful products. Over the years, the station has grown into a full research facility, as FAÇADE and

Pharmacopoeists have moved in to run their own studies. However, as the location evolves, curious people have sent drones and even visited the city, putting the Progenitors there in a precarious situation as they try to keep their experiments out of view of the Masses.

Void Engineers (Battlefield Response Team, Various)

The Battlefield Response Team (BRT) formed in the early twentieth century following World War I. With the sole purpose to enter areas of massive battles and deal with the inevitable JMARDs that showed up there, the task force of mostly NSC Marines and Scientists was re-activated at the end of World War II, and spent over fifty years cleaning up and putting to rest JMARDs in areas of Germany, Poland, Austria, and Hungary, and other locations of German Death Camps. The team was supposed to retire after that, but were tasked to Bosnia, Croatia and other former Yugoslavian nations. With the state of the world now, the BRT suspects they will never be disbanded.

Sphere of Influence: The Pacific Region

The Technocracy's Pacific Region starts in the southwest with Australia and stretches up all the way to the Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska. This region covers thousands of islands and mostly water, though there's no lack of things to accomplish in the region.

Current Initiatives

Most initiatives in this region center around research, study, and development. While the Syndicate and NWO have their hands in national politics in places like Australia and New Zealand, the rest of the region acts as a platform for deep research or developmental actions.

Iteration X (Multinational Military Development Site, Australia)

Nestled in the Northern Territory of Australia, the Multinational Military Development Site (MMDS) houses the largest technological research and fabrication facility in the world. Although technically an Iteration X site, personnel at the MMDS come from all over the world and from all the Conventions. Although the site's original function to design and fabricate new weapons technologies, projects have grown over time to serve every kind of research and development, incorporating RAE personnel from the Void Engineers, Q Division from the NWO, and even FACADE Engineers and Pharmacopoeists from the Progenitors. The site is as cross-disciplinary as things get at the Technocracy, with any rivalries emerging between project lines, rather than Convention or Methodology.

Iteration X/Progenitors (Experimental Terranorming, Polynesian Islands)

Polynesia consists of over a thousand islands encompassing essentially everything east of the Philippines and Australia, including New Guinea, New Zealand, Guam, and Hawai'i. The Ryukyuan Islands are over a hundred islands clustered around (and including) Japan's island of Okinawa. Excepting the US military-controlled areas of Hawai'i, Guam, and Okinawa, the local superstitionists and non-human inhabitants maintain control, making it hard to operate in these areas. Nevertheless, Progenitor ethnographers are monitoring local and uncontacted islanders as control populations, and Iteration X is introducing terranorming practices in places like Tuvalu, which now makes nearly 10% of their GDP from outsourcing their top-level internet domain. Technocrats need to be careful in the area though, as the Kopa Loei do not take kindly to their presence.

Progenitors (Pacific Climate Research Institute, North Pacific Sea)

The Locker, located in the North Pacific Sea, has proven a roaring success. Officially named the Pacific Climate Research Institute (PCRI), the Locker is a 200 square mile research station near the sea floor, staffed almost entirely by uplifted cetacean Technocrats, with a few Extraordinary Citizens and uplifted cephalopods to provide fine detail work. Although the dolphins and whales do not seem thrilled by the presence of 'lesser' races, they can't deny the usefulness of humans, octopuses, and squids. The researchers there have multiple promising techniques to reverse the impacts of climate change.

Void Engineers (Deep Sea Exploration Zone, Mariana Trench)

One of the few places on Earth that has not been thoroughly researched, mapped, and charted remains under the ocean. Members of the EFD spend most of their time in an underwater station located on the West Mariana Basin as a jump point for dives and exploration into Challenger Deep and other unexplored areas of the trench. They have a fully outfitted BDC Marine contingent with them, as they have found several strange and unprecedented life forms living in the crushing depth. Some of them so alien as to rival anything found out in the Void.