

**hegemony**  
a massive multiplayer tabletop experience

submitted for the Game Chef competition  
by Hobert Roward

Using the theme: 10 sessions of 1 hour each  
And the ingredients: ACTOR. TEAM. STEEL.

## introduction

Space, like the **Hegemony of Human Worlds**, is vast.

It was not always this way. Before the Hegemony was formed, there was a less enlightened age of factionalism, wars, and deceit. However, one faction stepped forward and united all the people in all the known worlds into one united, enlightened government. The Hegemony is the Law in the universe. This is the story of its founding.

This social experiment (hereafter known as “the game”) will demonstrate the conditions that existed before the formation of the Hegemony. You’ll get a taste of history, and as an actor take a role within that history as one of the leaders of the emergent factions that were struggling for unity.

The game plays out in four parts, each session of play lasting about an hour: The first three parts with the individual factions, the fourth part with the “winning faction” from the third session as they form the first council of the Hegemony:



\* Each faction is comprised of four to seven Actors.

\* Each faction has a Faction Leader.

\* Each faction has a Faction Scribe-Organizer, who is often the same as the Faction Leader..

The Scribe-Organizer is a duty role required to communicate with the other factions between sessions. While it is a lot of work, it is considered a “minor role”: The actor playing the

Scribe-Organizer holds a second, more political, role in the Faction.

\* The other actors take on the parts of the members of that Faction's political officers.

Together, all of the actors in the factions form a Team: They work with each other to thwart the other teams' attempts to become the true leading faction of the Hegemony.

At the end of the game, there will be the following:

**The winning faction:** The faction that controls the Hegemony.

**The winning player:** The player from any faction that was able to meet their role and hidden goals.

**The winning player in each faction:** The player that was able to do the best at meeting their goals within their own faction.

## history

Hundreds of years ago, mankind took to the stars.

Settling into new worlds scattered across the known universe, the tribe of humanity split apart from each other, separated from each other by profound distances.

Communication between groups was rare or unheard of. In the next few hundred years, each group formed its own laws and culture, which developed in isolation. Those factions never expected to rejoin the others, and all was well with that.

Then the Watun-Gaji came, and with them the technology and understanding of navigating Underspace.

The Watun-Gaji faction found every known enclave of humanity, and shared the gift of the technology to rejoin their peers. Then they disappeared, and would not be heard from again for a long time.

The Factions found each other, and realized how much they had changed; physically, psychologically and culturally. The first encounters were disastrous or unhelpful at best. It soon became clear that one faction would have to step up as the leaders of a new universal order.

This is the path to Hegemony.

## setup

**Hegemony** requires three groups of people to play, each group being composed of 4-7 players.

### STEP ONE

#### The Scribe-Organizer

Each group requires a **Scribe-Organizer** to organize their team for play as a faction. The best way to get organized is for one Scribe-Organizer to contact other potential Scribe-Organizers through the internet: Expressing interest on RPG web forums, posting recruitment messages on their blogs or livejournals, and coordinating via email. To function, the game requires three groups that are interested and can meet regularly every 1-3 weeks for at least an hour, as every session takes but one hour to complete.

The first phase is pre-planning. This is the equivalent of laying the groundwork for the game. In a normal tabletop gaming session, this is the equivalent of calling your friends to meet on a certain time and date, dividing up food or drink responsibilities, etc. However, this takes a little bit more administration, as every group is in a different physical location, and each group has to coordinate results with each other.

The **Scribe-Organizer** is responsible for keeping their Faction together, motivated to play, on the ball, and organizing sessions and the like. They are also responsible for sharing and posting results to the other factions online between sessions.

Two other teams have been found, and the Scribe-Organizers agree upon which one will be Faction A (usually the S-O who originated the request to play the game), Faction B and Faction C. This designation is important in the second and third sessions, when the Crisis Cards are overturned.

### STEP TWO

#### Time Organization

Once two other teams have agreed to play the game, the next thing to do is to coordinate a schedule. Ask the other groups for a rough idea of when they think they can get together: Weekly, Bi-weekly, etc. For the purposes of this game, we highly recommend weekly sessions (or shorter), so as not to drag the other factions down.

The next thing to organize is when to post results. The results from the session can be posted anytime after all three sessions have met, but it's recommended to post them shortly before the

next round of sessions will begin rather than right after the last of the previous sessions. There is a window for posting results of thirty minutes, to prevent people from editing their results. After the results are reviewed, the next sessions can begin. The results after the third session can be posted anytime, and from there the scores are tallied, and the winning faction goes on to play the final session, the First Council of the Hegemony.

Here is a sample schedule that three Scribe-Organizers might work out before the first session. Note that posting of the results of the third session can happen anytime after the third Faction has played their session. Also, the scheduling of the last session, the Hegemony, will depend on the winning faction, so it is always tentative. The final results can be posted anytime after that.

|            | SUN | MON | TUES                         | WED                          | THURS                              | FRI  | SAT                       |
|------------|-----|-----|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| WEEK ONE   |     |     |                              | Faction One                  | Faction Two                        |  | Faction Three             |
| WEEK TWO   |     |     | Results posted<br>8:00pm PST | Faction One<br>Faction Three | Faction Two                        |  |                           |
| WEEK THREE |     |     | Results posted<br>8:00pm PST | Faction One                  | Faction Two                        | Faction Three                                | Results posted<br>Anytime |
| WEEK FOUR  |     |     |                              |                              | HEGEMONY<br>SESSION<br>(TENTATIVE) | HEGEMONY<br>RESULTS<br>POSTED<br>(TENTATIVE) |                           |

When the schedules have been set, the game can be played! Each Faction will meet, discuss their unique qualities, define their government, and address how they will react to the other emerging Factions.

Note that there are also penalties imposed for:

- \* Not being able to get your Faction together for a session on time, and
  - \* Not being able to post your results within the time allotted
- ...but these will be addressed later in the text.

## session one: the factions

When everyone is gathered to play, the Scribe-Organizer should remind everyone that the session will only last one hour, to keep everyone focused. Then, make a timer available to make sure that the hour limit is met.

**history recap** Play begins by reading the History opening on page four of this document. Then the members of the faction define their factions culture and resources, as well as take on the roles they will be performing for their faction. They will effectively become actors then, speaking as if they were that faction member addressing their leader at a forum of political discussion.

**faction leader** First, the actors decide who will take the role of the Faction Leader. The Faction Leader is like the “President” or “Prime Minister” of their faction. It is recommended that the Scribe-Organizer take on the role of the Faction Leader for everyone’s first session: That way she can explain the rules and processes to everyone else involved, and at the same time be outside the realm of politics and in a more objective role.

**setting the faction** After that is decided, the concept of the faction has to be decided. This starts with the Faction Leader: She suggests, as briefly as possible (in one sentence) an idea for what their Faction. From that point on, for the next few minutes, the members of the faction decide on what their faction should look and act like, what their society looks like, etc. Remember that these factions *used* to be normal people, but evolved in isolation over a few hundred years. They aren’t “True Alien Species”. They will always be able to relate to the other factions in some way.

Here are some quick examples:

“We are a race of relatively peaceful people. We are all originally Egyptians and Amish. We also use technology to build robotics and cyber-interfaces into our systems.”

“We are a race of xenophobic technologists, who spend most of the day neurally-shunted into a pan-global neural network holographic experience. We are warlike.”

“We are a people who believe in total nonviolence, descended from Jainists from ancient India. We have a slave-caste, though, that serves as a cabal of elite spies.”

“We are a faction of humans who technologically and genetically modified their bodies to breathe hydrogen and float in a near-space-vacuum environment. We appear peaceful, but act a little crazy at times, because our psychology is so different.”

“We are a pure genetic human race descended from old Africa, and desire nothing but the total annihilation of all the other subservient factions in the universe.”

“We are a religious faction of many varied peoples and cultures who have the same outlook in

life. We are peaceful, but will stop at nothing to have all the other factions under the fold of our beliefs.”

The faction description should be written in one or two sentences/lines, no more. Just enough to give the other factions an idea of who they’re talking to.

**filling out the outward faction form** The next step is to pull out and fill out the Outward Faction Form that is printed near the back of this document. The Scribe-Organizer will update this information to the other factions in the next Exchange. This is where you set the names and roles of the faction leaders. Informally, this is also usually where the players decide which roles they want to take. Never reveal to the other factions, though, which player “in real life” plays which Faction Member. Always refer to them by their Title or Name, not by the player who plays them.

This should last just a few minutes. Just put minor details down, no need to go into too much depth.

If someone has a laptop, the Scribe-Organizer might take this opportunity to fill out this form by simple text, so that it doesn’t need to be transcribed later. Type quickly, there’s more work to be done.

**filling out the inward faction form** After that, the inward faction form is filled out. This form is never revealed to the other factions until after the game, and it is used to keep track of internal politics, resources and the like. It is at this point that the Faction Leader draws three **Faction Resource Cards** and shares them with the group. One of these cards is discarded, and the other two become permanent resources throughout the game. It is important to decide the nature of your culture first before drawing these cards, because the resources could make for interesting play: How did your peaceful culture get their hands on the Omega Death Virus, and will they keep that resource “just in case”? Will the warlike Kutfaller faction keep the Peace-Healers resource, perhaps representing an underground influence in their culture? The players may argue over which resources to keep, but the Faction Leader has final say.

**officer assignment and secret agendas** After the above is done, the players should already be assigned a role as one of the faction officers. Make note of your victory conditions for that role. Each leader also takes a Secret Agenda card, which represents special conditions for achieving personal victory, special things that can be done in-game, and possibly even special endgame conditions. If the players are experienced with the game, they can feel free to choose their own secret agenda from the list of known agendas, but for the first session a random card is suggested. If the secret agenda card doesn’t make any sense because of your



leadership role, then AWESOME: Your leader will have some personal issues to deal with.

**small factions, big factions** Small factions of four players may want to combine leader assignments. For factions of four players, each player is allowed to take up to two roles: This means that the faction's government works in a way where these two traditionally separate roles exist within the same person. They can gain points based on the goals of one or both of their assigned roles. Distribution and division of roles should be decided together.

**steel** The above represents defining the factions and the leaders within it. Once that is wrapped up, resources are assigned. There is one word that all Factions have kept through the ages to represent pure power: Steel. Steel represents resources, drives, and potential on the extreme macroscopic level. Each unit of Steel could represent trillions of earth dollars: the citizens' undying loyalty to the leadership of the faction: a fleet of 10 imperator-battleships: the genetic manipulation techniques that the faction developed over hundreds of years: chutzpah: cultural dominance.

Each faction starts off with **15 units of Steel** in the first session. Soon the faction leaders will argue over how that Steel will best be spent.

**All of the above should take approximately forty minutes to decide.** The next step happens for the next 15 minutes.

**the first crisis and the first faction planning session** Just when the leaders of the faction sit down to discuss how they are going to address the other emerging factors, a small crisis occurs! The Faction Leader turns over one of the Crisis cards and reads it to the group. Everyone listens intently. Afterwards, the Faction Leader opens up the floor to debate to choose the best course of action. The players, acting in their faction role, suggests a best course of action that serves the best interests of their faction. That is, **they argue**. See the **Crisis** section for possible resource allocation, and what they do for your faction.

Everyone should go around the table and briefly state their suggestions, including how much Steel to spend and for which areas. After everyone has briefly stated their suggestions, the Faction Leader will ask for a discussion. At this point, like a political government cabinet, each actor discusses their best strategy, adjusting their numbers in the process.

After ten minutes, the Faction Leader calls for a final restatement of the positions of the Faction Officers (including resource expenditure). Then the leader chooses one of the plans to go with wholesale. The Faction Leader cannot "edit" the final position, rather whichever plan is chosen must be implemented wholesale. The officer whose plan is chosen gets a point of personal victory.

The session is then at a close. In the few remaining minutes of the hour the faction officers can discuss future strategy and the like. They can also compose a message to the other factions. The message should be a simple statement towards the leadership of that Faction.

After the session is at a close, the Scribe-Organizer can upload information to the other factions that is on the factions Outward Faction Form, however the Crisis, result and resource expenditures, plus anything else that was discussed outside the Outward Faction Form, can only be revealed in the first Exchange.

**stale faction** When the Scribe-Organizers hammer out the meeting plan, they should set a time-limit for sessions to meet, in two steps. If this is not discussed, the default is ONE WEEK--TWO WEEKS. That means that if a faction cannot meet at the requested time, the Scribe-Organizer must tell the other factions immediately so that everyone can adjust schedules. The group has one more week to meet for their first session. If they cannot meet within the first week after their scheduled meeting, they are declared a **Late Faction**. That faction loses 1/5 of its Steel points for that session (2 for the first Session). The other factions are obviously two steps ahead, and this represents their initiative.

After the second deadline has passed, that faction is declared a **Stale Faction**: It is obvious that there are domestic problems within that faction that prevent it from participating in intergalactic politics: A revolution? Cultural crisis? Bio-plague? Complete destruction at the hands of the malicious Replicators? Once the winning faction is decided, the leader of the Hegemony decides what caused the Stale Faction, and whether or not that faction ever returns to the fold of humanity.

If one faction goes Stale, then the other factions must go forth and post their results as intended: They cannot reduce the numbers of resources allocated against that Faction. However, any point of steel that would count towards getting one point of Control from that faction still means that your faction gains those Control points: The majesty of your faction is still acknowledged by all the remaining factions, even if your peers start dropping off like flies.

**stale report** Resource allocation is a tricky deal, and a lot of it might be changed if one faction knew the results ahead of time. Once the time and location for posting results has been decided, it's time to upload the faction resource reports. The Scribe-Organizer should record all the information well in advance so that only uploading is required. Also, life happens: The Scribe-Organizer might want to elect 1-2 other people in the faction to post results as well at the same time, just in case something prevents the Scribe-Organizer from posting (emergency, broken email or internet connection, etc). Blasting the same report three times 'just in case' is better than no one posting in time.

The window for posting results, time and time zone decided ahead of time, is usually THIRTY MINUTES. Here's how posting works:

If your faction posts its results in the first five minutes of that decided time (measured by time stamps, etc), then your faction will be awarded two extra Steel for the Second session, or four extra Steel for the third Session. This is the benefit of taking your faction taking the initiative.

If your faction posts its results in the next twenty-five minutes, then congrats! Your effort is not wasted, and the results happen as planned.

If it takes longer than thirty minutes to post your results, then you're being left behind! This represents your faction dawdling while their peers are expanding their influence in the universe. Once you finally post your results, only the highest allocation of Steel is acknowledged, and that expenditure is reduced down to 2 Steel: All of the other allocations are reduced to zero. *Your faction does not regain those wasted Steel points!*

If two or more actions had the same number of steel points allocated, then one allocation is reduced to one in those areas, and all other areas are reduced to zero.

## the crisis process

Crises are the heart of the game: They represent the sessions of government that the faction officers participate in, where they determine resource allocation to deal with dangers from within and outside the Faction. In the first Session, there is a small crisis. In the second and third sessions, the crises range from minor to potentially devastating. In the last session, a crisis emerges that can threaten the very existence of the emerging Hegemony.

**brief overview** During the Crisis Play, the faction leader draws a crisis card, reads the scenario off to the actors playing the roles of Faction Officers, and play, the debate, begins.

Usually there is a timeline: 20-30 minutes overall for the entire debate. During the debate, the Faction Officers will be arguing for their positions, both for public office and private agenda. They will propose a course of action, follow it up with a bit of background, then give an indication of how much Steel they intend to spend and for what goal(s). They don't have to have a full tally of how much they want to spend until the Faction Leader calls for a "wrap up" (usually two or three minutes before the timer ends), however as the debate continues, each Faction Officer should start thinking not only of the area that they want to focus spending on, but start to get an idea of what to suggest for other areas of spending for when the wrap up comes.

During the debate, several crises have a trigger event. What happens is that, after "x" minutes of debate (as specified by the crisis), the Faction Leader draws another card, and the crisis evolves somehow: Perhaps the crisis resolves itself. More often than not, though, the crisis changes for the worse: Becomes more complicated, becomes more involved or costly, or becomes more urgent. From this point, some of the arguments put forth by the Faction Officers will change due to how the crisis evolves.

The Faction Leader listens to everyone's arguments, and often acts as a catalyst for discussion and debate, drawing the players into more conflict: The Faction Leader's job is to make sure that the Faction Officers don't always agree with each other. In the end, though, a plan must be decided, and they choose one of their officer's plans wholesale. The faction leader is not allowed to change, edit, or reform any submitted plans (though there are a few resources which allow the Leader to edit the plan, but it's not the norm).

The Scribe-Organizer takes note of the expenditure of resources, and writes them down on the Session Sheet (to later upload and share with the other factions). After that, the players total any player points won in that crisis (either for their Office or their Agenda: Ex: All Officers get "one point" if the Faction Leader chooses their plan). They write the points they gained down

on their sheet, as well as a quick narration of how they got them. Then the session moves forward to the next event.

**spending steel** # There are a few ways to spend the resource, Steel, in this game. There are six resources total:

### **aggressive spending**

#

These resources are called Aggressive because you use them to gain Control points from other factions.

#

**military** Military spending represents doing research on new weapons, raising and maintaining a galactic fleet, and engaging in military operations across the known universe. Peaceful factions still spend on the military for protection (defense networks), police/keepers of order, and founding/organizing space exploration (think “Starfleet”), even if they don’t use the military to attack other factions. Foreign Affairs attacks Military, and Military attacks Domestic, but more on that later.

**foreign affairs** Foreign affairs spending represents staffing and maintaining ambassadors, offering money as tribute to other factions, or doing works like building or maintaining inter-faction trade and supply routes, hospitals, peacekeeping, or other forms of helping out the smaller represented or unrepresented factions. Domestic attacks Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Affairs attacks Military, but more on that later.

**domestic** Domestic spending includes expanding and reinforcing the faction’s own economy and culture. Subsidies, entertainment, cultural cohesion and cultural activities, cultural dominance and imperialism (McCulture), developing and maintaining new colonies and the like are all domestic expenditures. Military attacks Domestic, and Domestic trumps Foreign Affairs, but more on that later.

### **passive spending**

#

These resources are called Passive spending because they don’t immediately grant you Control points. #

#

**research** Spending steel on research gives you access to Research Cards, which can be used to gain radical advancements which give you an edge on the other factions.

#

**espionage** Espionage allows you to set up spies in other factions’ realms. This allows you to sabotage another faction’s research or bonuses, and even assassinate other Faction Leaders.

#

**economics** Not spending all your money is also an option. Some factions will spend all their steel each session, while others will invest it or simply remain mindful of the budget.

Effectively, every single point of steel that remains at the end of one round gains an additional point of steel in the next round. Ex: If Faction A decides to end this session with 3 steel points in the bank, then at the beginning of the next session they start with 6 steel points in the bank. #

Each one of these areas should be addressed when making a final (wrap-up) spending proposal. Use the Spending Proposal sheets to keep track of your decision.

### **an in-depth look at crises**

**what is a crisis** A crisis is nothing more than “an event in the proceedings of the session”. A crisis card is pulled and acted upon by the faction, dialogue and arguments commence, steel allocations are decided and the Leader chooses an Officer’s plan. That’s the basics of a crisis. Note that most Sessions start with a “Reaction Phase”, where the officers decide how to react against the other factions’ spending against them. The first three faction sessions end with a “Planning Phase”, where the officers decide how to allocate resources in relation to the other factions. These are simply other forms of Crisis, but without actually drawing a crisis card. Debate is had and decisions are made.

**secret goals** The Faction Leader and all the Faction Officers have public goals that come with their station: For example, the Head of Science gets an extra point anytime a plan that focuses on Research is adopted, and the Faction Leader gets an extra point for simply being present in a session. However, everyone also has secret goals, which more often than not conflict with their public office or the overall goals of the Faction in general (“winning”).

There’s a delicate balance: The winning faction gets to go on to form the Hegemony, and plays out the final session. So there may be a drive by the Officers to subdue their personal goals for the betterment of the Faction. However, personal goals always pay off more, and being the player in the faction with the most points pays off in the end: If your Faction founds the Hegemony, the officers with more points keep their positions, while the officers with fewer points are replaced by representatives of the other factions: The actors taking on the roles of those lower-scored officers have to give up that role and take on the role of one of the leaders of one of the other factions. Finally, if your faction does not found the Hegemony, the officer in the faction with the highest score goes on to represent their faction to the Hegemony and “makes history”.

**debate** When the Reaction Phase, Crisis Phase or Planning Phase occurs, a debate begins between the Faction Officers. Each Faction Officer should briefly embellish on their take on

the situation, dropping background information that fills out the culture a little more, and makes a suggestion on expenditures, perhaps with actual numbers of steel. Here's an example of a Military advisor's opening debate in the Planning Phase in Session three:

“It is well known that the other factions have already surpassed us in military spending, and there is no way to catch up. Our marines are desperately undertrained, and the Plasma accelerators of the Garguld Faction can tear through any of our high end Battlerazer Cruisers. There's simply no use in putting any more steel into the military, and for that I will probably soon resign my post. But before I do, I want to see us succeed: And the only way to do that is to focus our spending on Foreign Affairs, our historic strong suit. This will disrupt the other factions' military intentions against us. I say we spend 10 Steel on Foreign Affairs!” After that, most likely the next advisor will object or come up with a counter-proposal, etc.

After the first officer (whomever begins speaking first) puts down her plan for spending, the other officers can debate the points of that expenditure, or perhaps suggest their own plans. The Faction Leader can request that an officer put their example expenditures into steel numbers (“Be specific, Lord Terminator-X: When you say you want to see “More Hospitals to help the citizens of the Garguld Faction”, just how much steel were you thinking?”)

Remember to act the part when playing the role of Faction Advisor: Affect an accent or speech/gesture pattern if you wish. Argue and debate not over just the numbers, but the intentions and backgrounds behind the numbers (“The Garguld need no more hospitals: They are an inferior faction and thus deserve no more further funds from us!”). As a player, you should never take the debate personally, even when you are “losing” your argument or if your plan is not chosen. If it helps, close your eyes and imagine yourself, a humanoid politician of several hundred years in the future, and you're not arguing with your friends, but rather other political conspirators with their own public and secret agendas. Also, cut the Faction Leader some slack: His job is to be the catalyst for your debate. She might say some things that set everyone back a few steps in a debate, but roll with it, and NEVER take it out on that player.

The Faction Leader has a special role: Her role is to egg on the other officers. If people start agreeing too much with each other, she should try to say things to get people thinking about their own agendas more. She shouldn't always be throwing monkeywrenches, though: You can also say some positive things to get people on track or working with each other. She may give a hint as to whose plan she may choose in the end, but she shouldn't come outright and tell people ahead of time whose plan will be chosen (though she can openly favor a plan).

Here are some examples:

Example things to say to create debate:

“Merchant Prince, the Diplomatic Advisor's plan contradicts yours in several areas. What do you think we should do?”

“I don’t think we’ve explored the possibility of Military Action far enough. Our enhanced marine clusters are ready for action on moons Betas Three and Four. What do you think we should do on that front?”

“I can’t help but feel that we’re neglecting the treasury. Can’t we try to be more frugal in our decisions?”

“We’re losing the war for cultural supremacy here. I don’t think I’ll be satisfied until I’ve seen more thought on that matter.”

Example things to say to increase tension:

“We’re running out of time here, gentlemen. We need an answer in the next two minutes.”

“I am not willing to compromise the integrity of our fleet.”

Example things to say to increase cooperation:

“I hold you all as valuable advisors, else I wouldn’t have you sitting here on my council. Isn’t there anything we can try to agree on?”

“We’re moving in different directions, folks. Let me say that I favor a plan here that involves more attention to our diplomatic relations with other factions. What can you give me that will work with those goals?”

“I like the way you are all thinking on this matter, however we need to come to some consensus here. It sounds like the Secretary of Foreign Affairs’ plan is the middle ground between all your plans. What do you all think of that plan?”

**faction story development through debate** One of the interesting things that happens during debate is that your faction’s culture, organization, resources, and backstory get developed further in debate. Debate isn’t just about bringing up and reviewing “steel expenditures” (although that is what you end with), it’s also saying things that give your faction a little more “meat”. Since you don’t spend time sitting down writing long stories about the history or organization of your culture, you will use the debate times to bring in little tidbits and minutiae that will explain your culture in further detail. Don’t go too far off the deep end, or the other players will have a hard time swallowing those details.

Example of good (albeit perhaps too much, depending on how intense the debate is) story development-in-debate for a race of cyborgs, in a debate during a Planning Phase:

“Military Minister Jason-4365: I do not believe we need to accelerate our spending on military matters any further here. With the 2 steel that we expended earlier, plus the fact that our Exetor-class warships are the finest of all the factions, there is no need for overkill. Our zero-gravity marine robots that we’ve been researching have the situation with the Gargul faction under control. Let’s instead focus on domestic matters. We have the opportunity to introduce the great sport of Robot Deathball to the other factions if we spend more resources



on media and marketing. Spending six steel on domestic spending would be a great opportunity to not only keep our own people happy, but perhaps start Robo Deathball tournaments with other factions as well.”

**steel allocation** Through the process of debate, steel allocations will be suggested. The officers should start thinking of their own suggested spendings throughout the debate. They might write them down (keep an eraser handy, because most officers will change their opinions several times over the course of a debate). At the beginning of the debate, you should at least have a rough idea of around how much you’d like to allocate to one or more resources. When the time to make a decision is at hand, the Faction Leader will ask for their officers’ final plans on allocation. Do not wait, dally or delay or the faction leader will have cause to pass over your proposal. Instead, fill in the rest of the numbers quickly. If you can’t think of how much to spend for a given resource, then just leave it blank: There’s no need to consider every resource, just fill in the ones that are important to you, and leave the rest: Some other officer will take care of those resources if they need attention in the next Crisis!

The Faction Leader should feel free to ask the officers how much steel they think should be spent on a resource, or a basic idea of how they plan to allocate their steel.

**choosing a plan** A few minutes before the phase ends (2-4 minutes depending on the size of the faction), the Faction Leader will call for a final summary of the officers’ plans. Each officer should very briefly reveal their ideas for allocation of steel amongst the resources. There is no need to actually write these down, though it often helps the officer if they write their allocations down so they can concentrate when debating. Once all plans have been revealed, the Faction Leader decides whose plan will be implemented. The Faction Leader shouldn’t sweat this decision too hard: There’s lots of decisions to make, there’s no need to stop the game to ponder each one; simply point a finger, call on an officer’s plan, and move on. From that point, everyone may react to that decision, and the Scribe-Organizer jots down the tallies for that phase. The next phase starts shortly afterwards.

**scoring** Each Faction Officer and Leader should then record on their personal secret sheets the number of victory points they received for their actions, which role they were for, and a very brief narrative of why they got those points. This is particularly important, because you need to keep very close track of why you received secret agenda points. Later in the game, you may have to tell people why you received a huge amount of points for a move related to your secret agenda, and saying “I forgot why” won’t cut it. Be brief. Some points won’t be scored until you see the effects of point allocations on the other clans during the between-session **Exchanges**.

## how steel works: planning phase

Two or three times each session, the officers will be negotiating the expenditure of steel for various resources in play. This is a complete description of the nuts and bolts of how spending works for the Planning Phase, the phase where you work to get Control points from the other factions. Everything below assumes that a plan has been selected by the Faction Leader, it's been posted by the Scribe-Organizer, and the players are comparing the faction plans and looking at results. The rules for the other phases are very similar to the Planning Phase with minor changes. Becoming familiar with how the rules work for the Planning Phase will help you understand the rules for the other phases:

### aggressive spending

#### #

The descriptions of the three resources under the aggressive spending category (Military, Foreign Affairs and Domestic) have been given already. They are essentially used against the other factions to gain Control during the Planning phase. Here's how they work in detail:

When allocating aggressive spending against other factions, you must allocate points towards each faction. Aggressive spending means that you're leveraging a resource against another faction.

Aggressive spending works a little like Rock-Scissors-Paper (or "JanKen"), but with slight modification: First, when comparing factions, **take the difference of like resources** and remove them down until one faction has zero left. Domestic cancels Domestic, Military cancels Military and Foreign Affairs cancels Foreign Affairs.

Here is a situation between three factions, the Garguld, the X-274, and the Gemini. We are the Gemini, and we are competing with the Garguld and the X-274. In the previous session, we decided our allocation against the other factions in the Planning Phase. Now, our Scribe-Organizer has posted the results and we have to do the math to see how effective we were.

Here was our (Gemini) allocation towards the Garguld, vs the allocation of the Garguld towards the Gemini:

| GEMINI          |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Military        | 0 |
| Foreign Affairs | 3 |
| Domestic        | 5 |

| GARGULD         |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Military        | 2 |
| Foreign Affairs | 3 |
| Domestic        | 2 |

Comparing the resources, we subtract like-resources from each other to come up with the following: The Garguld have 2 Military, the Gemini have None: This doesn't change. Since the Gemini and Garguld each have 3 Foreign Affairs, these are cancelled down to zero each. Finally, after comparing and canceling out Domestic spending, we see that the Gemini will end up with 3 Domestic, and the Garguld with 0. Here's what the totals look like now after canceling out like resources:

| GEMINI          |   | GARGULD         |   |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Military        | 0 | Military        | 2 |
| Foreign Affairs | 0 | Foreign Affairs | 0 |
| Domestic        | 3 | Domestic        | 0 |

Now that we've completed the first step, we move on to the second step which looks like Rock-Scissors-Paper. Remember that:

**first: military attacks domestic**  
**second: foreign affairs attacks military**  
**third: domestic attacks foreign affairs**

#

Let's take a look at those final numbers above, then: The only numbers left of significance are the Gemini's 3 Domestic and the Gargould's 2 Military. The Garguld Military (2) attacks the Gemini Domestic (3), reducing its score to 1, but it doesn't get through, so the Garguld gain no points of Control. I have one point of Domestic left, so that gets through the Garguld defenses. The Gemini get One point of control in this conflict!

Let's take a look at the Gemini vs the X-274, the other half of the conflict:

| GEMINI          |   | X-274           |   |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Military        | 0 | Military        | 1 |
| Foreign Affairs | 1 | Foreign Affairs | 4 |
| Domestic        | 1 | Domestic        | 0 |

Oh crap, that doesn't look good. Let's cancel out like-resources from the above and see what we're left with:

| GEMINI          |   | X-274           |   |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Military        | 0 | Military        | 1 |
| Foreign Affairs | 0 | Foreign Affairs | 3 |
| Domestic        | 1 | Domestic        | 0 |

Now that we've zeroed out some resources, the resources start attacking. The X-274's one point

of Military cancels the Gemini's one point of Domestic. Then the X-274's 3 points of Foreign Affairs, having nothing blocking it, becomes 3 points of Control against the Gemini!

That explains how aggressive resources work. There are several gifts of technology that assist with improving or defending against aggressive resources which may prove useful.

### **passive spending**

There are three types of passive spending: Research, Espionage and Economics. They do not often directly result in gaining Control points, but they are helpful in meeting goals.

### **economics**

**Economics** is nothing more than "saving leftover steel for later". Any steel that is not spent and left in the bank after one session doubles before the next session. Often in the next session you will receive additional steel: This steel is NOT doubled, but added in after the doubling. Also, when making plans for the Faction Leader, the officers do not have to specifically write in how much steel will be spent for Economics: ALL unallocated steel automatically is used for economic improvement.

There are some technological and factional gifts that aid with improving the Faction's economic rate of return.

When posting results to other factions during Exchanges, you do not post the steel that's spent towards economics.

### **research**

**Research** has two components: Researching new technologies, and Activating existing technologies that the faction owns.

**Researching new technologies** can be spent at any phase (including Crisis and Reaction) to gain new technologies. There are three levels of technology, Minor (2 points), Major (6 points) and Supreme (12 points). You may buy as many different levels of technology as you want each phase. Also, you can buy one level of technology more than once (up to three times) to give yourself a better chance of making a breakthrough that is useful.

The Science Officer makes the final decisions on any research points that are allocated. If the Faction Leader goes with a plan to allocate 12 steel to Research, the Science Officer can choose to buy three Minor techs (keeping one) and one Major tech, or two Major techs (keeping one),

or one Supreme tech, or six Minor techs (keeping two). The science officer also gets to pull the technology cards and decide which technologies to keep.

In the case where the Science Officer pulls more than one technology card, he decides which technology to keep. Each technology has a “Science Rating” attached to it, which means the number of points the Science Officer will receive if he decides to implement that technology. After choosing the technology to implement from the cards pulled, he must reveal his choice to the faction, as well as show them what the other choices were. The science officer’s choice comes first, and cannot be repealed, even if the science officer quickly decides (after menacing looks from the others) that one of the other techs should have been implemented instead. What’s done is done.

Some of the Supreme Technologies are virtually unique: Once one faction has one, the other factions cannot later (in a future Session) implement it unless they just happened to implement the same tech at the same time. If another faction later pulls a card of the same unique technology once another faction has already implemented it, they discard that card and draw again.

New technologies gained in the technology phase can be implemented immediately if the technology doesn’t require activations points. If the technology does require activation points, then most likely the faction didn’t allocate any extra points to research “just in case”: But if they did allocate enough steel to activate a technology, thinking that they would uncover a helpful technology that they could activate, they may activate that technology. However, extra research allocation that doesn’t go towards technology allocation is simply discarded: Researchers use it to buy Aeron chairs and fly to expensive conferences so that they can golf with their friends.

**Activating an existing technology** is another thing that research can be spent on anytime. Some faction gifts and technologies have an “activation cost”, which must be spent to get the full benefit of that technology. Many technologies are simply one-use, and are thrown away once used.

When reporting in the Exchange, research expenditures must be reported.

## **espionage**

**Espionage** is dangerous, but it is also fucking wicked. Some factions will tend to use espionage a lot, other factions will not use it at all.

First off, when reporting espionage expenditures in the Exchange, you are allowed to LIE

about this number, with a +/- factor of 5. That is, if the Faction Leader chooses a plan that has zero steel allocated to espionage, the Scribe-Organizer (and only that person) can lie about true espionage expenses, saying “0” or “5” or anything in between. If the faction has a plan that involved spending 5 on espionage, it can be reported as any number between “0” and “10”. When spending 10 points on espionage, the Scribe-Organizer can report anywhere from “5” to “15” points.

The faction must keep a record of how many points of Espionage have been allocated to which Factions. Espionage can be allocated in any phase. These espionage points represent spies, specifically “sleeper agents”. They stay “asleep” until the faction decides to make them active (only the Minister of Information, Secretary of Defense or Head Ambassador can activate spies). When they “go live”, the Scribe-Organizer records what damage is done to which faction in the next round.

Here is a chart of effects, and how many sleeper agents have to be “activated” and thus spent to make that effect happen. Once spent, those agents are removed from play:

| Agents Spent | Effect   |
|--------------|--|
| 2            | Fortify an Aggressive Resource by one point      |
| 4            | Assassinate a Faction Officer                    |
| 8            | Spy War: Remove 10 enemy spies from your Faction |
| 10           | Assassinate a Faction Officer without a Trace    |
| 15           | Ultimate Sabotage                                |
| 30           | Assassinate all Faction Officers without a Trace |

**Fortify an Aggressive Resource** means that out of all the aggressive resource points you spend for one category (Military, Foreign Affairs or Domestic), you have spies doing a lot of dirty work for you. You specify which resource is being fortified, and by how many points (2 points per 1 point of 1 resource).

In play, when you activate these agents, when comparing aggressive resources during the Exchange, those fortified points translate to “points that can’t be wiped out by like-resource canceling”. If your faction activates 4 Spies, and uses them to fortify 2 points of Domestic, the following happens:

- 1) You spend 10 points of Domestic (2 fortified), your opponent spends 5 points of Domestic: You end up with 5 points of Domestic, and fortification doesn’t even come up. But those spies are still lost.
- 2) You spend 10 points of Domestic (2 fortified), your opponent spends 10 points of Domestic (none fortified): You end up with 2 points of Domestic, and they end up with 0.
- 3) You spend 5 points of Domestic (2 fortified), your opponent spends 10 points of

Domestic (2 fortified). You end up with 2 points of Domestic, and they end up with 5.

**Assassinate a Faction Officer** allows you to choose one of the officers (but not the Leader) in another faction and assassinate them: But everyone knows that you did it, so you don't gain anything from it. However, the assassinated Officer is "retired": That player reduces all received personal victory points until that time by half. They can then simply rewrite their name and keep their same secret agenda (as another officer was elected to their position), or choose a new secret agenda, but in that case the old agenda should be revealed to the other players on your Faction as "their dark secrets" came to light.

Note: Assassination can also mean "defection" for more peaceful Factions. In that case, the exact same game effects occur, but their Officer defects to your faction and becomes a normal citizen (she doesn't join their new faction's Faction Officers).

**A Spy War** simply means that up to and including 10 of that faction's spies that have infiltrated your Faction simply disappear. If that faction revealed that they were doing some sort of espionage against your faction (assassinations, fortifying resources, etc), then those actions fail unless that faction has more than 10 spies needed to perform that action (the two Scribe-Organizers should communicate this before the start of the next session). After a spy war, the number of infiltrated spies from that faction is revealed to you (again, through the Scribe-Organizers). If the faction has enough points, two or more spy wars can be declared at once against a single faction if they suspect a faction has a lot of spies operating against them. It's a good opportunity to "clean house".

**Assassinate a Faction Officer without a Trace** means the same as an assassination, but no one knows which faction did it (they pretend not to know). Plus, their faction loses one Control point, and your faction gains one Control point.

**Ultimate Sabotage** allows you to remove from play a piece of technology or faction gift that has been revealed. If the nature of the tech or faction gift seems like it would seem 'weird' to nullify it (like "genetic enhancement"), then it's still sabotaged; It just means that its benefits were effectively nullified: Perhaps the spies revealed that tech or gift to everyone, so that everyone effectively has it, and thus nobody has any benefit from it.

**Assassinate all Faction Officers without a Trace** is bad, bad stuff. It's like the above Assassinate a Faction Officer without a Trace, but it happens to ALL of the Officers, including the Leader. They up and disappear. Also, 1/2 of all Control points are lost by that Faction, and the faction that coordinated the espionage gets five Control points. They have effectively incited a revolution within that faction, accepted the defection of the entire government, or else just sent in a bomb/killer to take them all out.

The rules for the other phases are much like this Planning Phase, with minor changes. Please review the following pages to see how those phases differ from the planning phase.



## how steel works: reaction phase

The Reaction Phase is the phase of discussion and planning that happens at the beginning of phases two and three. It's an important step to recognize the actions taken against your faction, and react to them. It's done mostly to reduce the damage done against your faction, and reduce the amount of Control points that other factions can claim from your faction.

All in all, the reaction phase shouldn't take too long: About 10 minutes total, including voting and implementing a plan.

**review damages** First, the Scribe-Organizer reviews the data collected during the exchange with the rest of the group: The damages are tallied, and your faction finds out how much potential Control gained from the other factions, as well as how much potential Control other factions gained from your faction. A quick summary of the actions is all that is needed before debate begins.

**discussion** Next, the Faction Leader opens up the discussion, and the Faction Officers should put forth plans for spending. The Faction Officers should be aware, though, that there remains a Crisis as well as a Planning Phase left in the session, so if too much steel is spent in this phase, there will be less steel left for later phases. A few minutes before the end of the phase, the leader should again call for a final spending summary and choose an Officer's plan to implement.

## rules adjustments for the reaction phase

Here are the differences for this phase:

You only fight with like-resources. You compare the resource that the enemy faction used to take a control point from your faction, and fight back with the same resource:

**Spending three points of steel in Military removes one Control point taken from your faction by an opponent's Military.**

**Spending three points of steel in Foreign Affaires removes one Control point taken from your faction by an opponent's Foreign Affairs.**

**Spending three points of steel in Domestic removes one Control point taken from your faction by an opponent's Domestic.**

No additional points of steel spent can be used to attack other factions. It is only used for the removal of Control points against your faction.

Espionage points can be spent in the reaction phase, however Spies cannot be activated and espionage actions taken until the next Planning Phase. Your faction can use this phase to “sneak in spies” to be activated later. Also, your faction will never know the real amount of other faction’s spies that have infiltrated your faction, so you cannot remove spies put against your faction save for calling a Spy War during the next Planning Phase.

Research points can be spent to activate existing technology that requires research points to activate.

Research points can also be spent to research and receive new new technologies. However, that technology cannot be activated in this reaction phase, rather it can only be activated in the following Crisis Phase or later.

In the end, it’s always better to gamble with steel and push resources in the planning phase, than to play catch-up by removing all the Control points in the Reaction Phase because of the cost difference, but it is a good opportunity to reduce the other factions’ flow of Control points. gained from your faction.

## **how steel works: crisis phase**

The Crisis Phase involves an event which threatens the livelihood, culture or control of the factions. Each faction will face a different crisis during their crisis phase, chosen from the list of crisis cards.

The crisis phase requires the Leader to have a timer, because the events in the crisis will change over time. Each crisis involves a different set of events, and each crisis will have a turning point where the nature of the crisis changes, either slightly or dramatically.

The Faction Leader will choose one of the crisis cards and read it off to the Officers. From that point, the Faction Leader will start the timer and call for a discussion. Like the other phases, the discussion progresses forth.

At a certain time (determined by the crisis), the Faction Leader will need to roll a six-sided dice to determine how the crisis changes at its turning point. The Faction Leader reads off the next part of the Crisis, and the Faction Officers must react from there, adjusting (or sticking with) their original plans from there until the leader calls for the wrap up and final plans. The Faction Leader should never reveal the possible turning point events for an event before the turning point comes.

When allocating steel towards aggressive attributes, they do not affect the other factions as they do in the Planning phase unless the crisis card says that they do.

Research points can be allocated to research new technologies, but those new technologies cannot be implemented or activated until the next phase. Research points can be allocated to activate existing technologies. This is the same behavior as the Reaction Phase.

Espionage allocations work exactly as they do during the Reaction Phase.

Often, a crisis event must be treated with special care: Depending on how the crisis unveils, it may set off a chain reaction that will cause special consideration to be made during the following Planning Phase. Ex: A crisis may develop into a situation where you won't be able to spend steel on Foreign Affairs or Espionage, or where you may get a bigger payoff for Steel invested in Military or Research.

## session one, redux

The first session has already been described in detail. Here is how the session flows:

**40 Minutes:** Introduction and Setup, as explained in the “Session One” section.

**0 Minutes:** Faction Receives 15 Steel in its bank. The Faction Leader decides which faction will be Faction A and which will be Faction B.

**15 Minutes:** First Crisis Phase and Planning Phase, rolled into one Event Phase.

For this phase, the Faction Leader reads one of the standard crisis cards, and the faction officers jump right in. The rules are a little different, in that the rules for this phase are exactly like a Planning Phase, so allocating Steel to resources absolutely affects the other factions, and can count towards the goal of the crisis. Technologies that require no activation cost may be immediately implemented once discovered.

The other difference is that this is just a Minor Crisis: The Crisis DOES NOT EVOLVE, and there is no Turning Point for this Crisis. Just the basics of the crisis have to be dealt with, and the other factions addressed at the same time.

**Last Five Minutes:** Future strategies are discussed. A Message to each faction can be decided (by the Faction Leader, but they can get advice from their Officers).

When everything is done, the Scribe-Organizer takes notes on the session and prepares to upload it at the next Exchange.

After the Exchange, the Scribe Organizer records how much Control was potentially gained from which factions, how much Control was potentially received by other Factions, and the effects of Espionage, Research and other things. The Scribe-Organizer can calculate the numbers of Control and the like out, but should not reveal the findings with the rest of the group until the next Session.

## session two

In the second session the faction has a firm grasp of their actions, has more knowledge of the other factions, and plans to cooperate with them or work against them accordingly.

**0 Minutes:** Faction Receives. 15 Steel in its bank. The Faction Leader decides which faction will be Faction A and which will be Faction B.

**5 Minutes:** The Scribe-Organizer relays the status of its standing to the Officers and Leader.

**10 Minutes:** Reaction Phase.

**25 Minutes:** Crisis Phase.

**15 Minutes:** Planning Phase.

**Last Five Minutes:** Future strategies are discussed. A Message to each faction can be decided (by the Faction Leader, but they can get advice from their Officers).

The following Exchange works much like the previous Exchange.

## session three

This is it. In this last Faction Session, the faction sets in motion the final events that will decide if they become the hegemony or not.

**0 Minutes:** Faction Receives. 20 Steel in its bank. The Faction Leader decides which faction will be Faction A and which will be Faction B.

**5 Minutes:** The Scribe-Organizer relays the status of its standing to the Officers and Leader.

**10 Minutes:** Reaction Phase.

**25 Minutes:** Crisis Phase.

**15 Minutes:** Planning Phase. Note that in this Planning Phase, you'll be tempted to go "all in" on steel spending to aim at Control points from the other factions. However, this can backfire: The Final Crisis that the Hegemony faces requires a lot of resources to overcome, and if all factional steel is spent by that time and then they become the Hegemony, there is very little chance that the Hegemony will survive the Final Crisis.

**Last Five Minutes:** Special: All of the Faction Members reveal their Secret Agendas, as well as how many points that they personally accumulated. The Officer with the highest amount of points will be chosen by the People to represent their faction in the Hegemony, were they not to become the Hegemony themselves. A Message to each faction can be decided (by the Faction Leader, but they can get advice from their Officers). Everyone says their prayers.

The final Exchange is where the Scribe-Organizers tally the effects of Espionage and Aggression (as it can't be reacted against this time around), and discover which faction has the most control and thus becomes the Hegemony.

## hegemony

This is the final session of the game, played solely by the faction that had the most Control as a result of the actions revealed in the final Exchange.

**0 Minutes:** Hegemony Receives. 15 Steel in its bank, plus all the steel remaining in the banks of the other two factions. The two Officers with the lowest amount of points are removed as officers, and are replaced with representatives from the other Factions.

**5 Minutes:** First Proclamation: The Hegemony Leader gives a speech in relation to the Hegemony: Its foundation, its goals, and how the Leader intends the Hegemony to exist from this point on. The Faction Leader then decides the fate of the other two factions in any way they see fit: Do they join the Hegemony? Are they exiled? Are they annihilated? This is entirely up to the Faction Leader. Note: If a faction is somehow removed from the Hegemony, the Hegemony does not receive their excess Steel.

**40 Minutes:** The Final Crisis. The Final Crisis works a little differently, in that the requirements for resource expenditure are not spelled out. However, when all plans have been finalized and the Hegemony Leader picks a plan and implements it, the Final Crisis Difficulty is revealed after rolling a six-sided die: If the Hegemony overcomes the Difficulty of the crisis because of good thought and planning, then they succeed and carry on through eons. If they meet some of the Crisis Difficulties, then the Hegemony is hurt and may fall, but will enjoy several generations of prosperity first. If they meet few or none of the Crisis Difficulty numbers, then the faction is shattered, devastated, and falls immediately; factions again rule the stars and humanity remains stunted and in the dark ages for several hundred more years.

Note that most Final Crisis Difficulties usually require 12-18 Steel to completely overcome.

**15 Minutes:** Last Proclamation: The Officers and the Leader narrate the historic course of the Hegemony in relation to the Last Crisis (if it was overcome).

After the above, the Scribe-Organizer can share the results of the First Hegemony Council with the other Scribe-Organizers and players whenever they wish. But do it soon, as they're probably very interested in how their Hegemony turned out.

## officer roles

These are the roles and standard point awards for the various roles in the game. Each player takes only one role, any role they wish. If there are only four players, then each player can choose two roles.

The officer and leader should also choose the Factional Title of this role (because they might have a special word for it in their own language: “Minister of Information” might be called “Handwarden of the Axe of Fate” or “Espionage and Secrecy Protocol Unit 76-3W”. They also should choose a SHORT name for how they should be addressed when talking to the other officers: “Mister President”, “Lord High Executioner”, “Master Sergeant”, “Supreme Exalted Ruler”, etc. Please be brief, any time wasted on titles (including remembering them) detracts from time that could be spent coming to a decision on a crisis.

The format of the following list is:

*Faction Role – Default Title (can be changed) – Default Address (can be changed) – Brief Description – Point Rewards*

**Faction Leader** – The President – Mister President – This is the single usually elected role that puts all their energy into furthering the goals of the faction by acting as its single supreme ruler. 1 points for every Session present. 2 points for every decision made. 5 points at the end of every Reaction Phase if the Control points taken from the other factions are erased.

**Military Officer** – Secretary of Defense – Secretary, Sir/Ma’am – This officer is in charge of the military defense of the faction.

2 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every unit of steel allocated to Military spending in a Planning Phase (whether it’s your plan or not). 1 point for every Espionage Action taken. 1 point for every point of Control erased from another faction that was gained through Military actions.

**Foreign Affairs Officer** – Secretary of State – Secretary, Sir/Ma’am – This officer is in charge of Foreign Affairs with other factions.

2 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every unit of steel allocated to Foreign Affairs spending in a Planning Phase (whether it’s your plan or not). 2 points for every Crisis resolved through spending a majority of resources on Foreign Affairs. 1 point for every point of Control erased from another faction that was gained through Foreign Affairs actions.

**Domestic Officer** – Secretary of Commerce/Interior – Secretary, Sir/Ma’am – This officer is in charge of domestic improvements.



2 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every unit of steel allocated to Domestic spending in a Planning Phase (whether it's your plan or not). 2 points for every Crisis resolved through spending a majority of resources on Domestic actions. 1 point for every point of Control erased from another faction that was gained through Domestic actions.

**Science Officer** - Surgeon General – Doctor – This officer is in charge of technological improvements for the faction.

2 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every unit of steel allocated to Research spending in ANY Phase (whether it's your plan or not). They also get the points that a technology is worth when implemented.

**Espionage Officer** – Minister of Information/Head of National Security – Minister, Sir/Ma'am – This officer is in charge of spying programs, espionage and counter-espionage, and the protection of their faction from information and spy warfare.

3 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every unit of steel allocated to Espionage spending in ANY Phase (whether it's your plan or not). 1 points for every Spy Action taken to Fortify a Resource, 3 points for every other spy action taken. 3 additional points if a Spy War results in the elimination of 6 or more enemy spies.

**Treasury Officer** – Secretary of the Treasury – Secretary, Sir/Ma'am – This officer is responsible for keeping money in the treasury and encouraging economic growth and frugal spending.

4 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every unit of steel left over at the end of any Planning Phase (ie "left in the bank"). 5 points for having your faction become the Hegemony.

**Assistant to the Faction Leader** – Vice President – Mister Vice President, Sir – The officer is in charge of... er... keeping the person in charge looking good.

6 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 2 points for every Session that they attend.

**Labor Officer** – Secretary of Labor – Secretary, Sir/Ma'am – This officer is in responsible for the health and well-being of its workers.

4 points each time their plan is chosen by the Leader. 1 point for every point of Control gained AGAINST your faction by another faction when they gained it with Foreign Affairs or Domestic. 2 points every time a chosen plan in ANY phase (your plan or another officer's) spends 5 or less points total on Military, Foreign Affairs, Domestic and Research combined.

## **cards**

This game requires having several sets of homemade cards. However, since that was not possible to complete for the Game Chef project, we will require the players to draw playing cards to find the card results.

**cheating sucks** There's nothing stopping a Faction Leader from picking out a crisis card, then returning it to the "deck" to pick another one that would be easier for the faction to overcome. Same with Technologies and the like. But cheating sucks, so don't do it. If one of the Officers sees one of the other faction members cheating with cards, then they can report a narrative of the incident to the other factions' Scribe-Organizers. If they do so, their faction loses all of the results of their Planning that phase (it will be as if they wrote in "all zeroes" for steel spending, though that steel spending is lost), and the snitch gets 20 Player points, a ridiculously huge sum.

It's a ridiculous rule, but the meaning behind it is genuine and should be enforced: It's a game, so don't cheat.

## **cards redux**

Well, on 11:16PM on the last day to submit, I'm throwing in the towel somewhat on cards. The game, without the cards, is more or less unfinished. Too busy a week to finish it out. I will give a few example cards for each area, and offer the lame rule that "the Scribe-Organizers should together make up and decide the cards that will be used across the board beforehand, using the example cards below as base cards". Lame, lame, lame. I'll finish it up later, though.

## **examples of cards**

### **#**

Determine cards received by pulling from a playing card deck and looking below.

### **Factional Gifts:**

**1-3** Natural Military Genius: Spend 2 points of Military, get a 3<sup>rd</sup> point added for free

**4-6** Natural Charisma/Grace: Spend 2 points of Foreign Affairs, get a 3<sup>rd</sup> point added for free

**7-9** Trust of the Citizens: Spend 2 points of Domestic, get a 3<sup>rd</sup> point added for free

**10** Camouflage Skin: Spend 2 points of Espionage, get a 3<sup>rd</sup> point added for free

**J** Big Giant Brains: Spend 2 points of Research, get a 3<sup>rd</sup> point added for free

**Q** Economic Aggression: Every steel saved in the bank at the end of this Session becomes three steel in the next session. Plus, 3 extra steel are added at the beginning of each Session.

**K** ESP/Hivemind: At the end of the third session, the Leader chooses one Officer: That officer's total points received for their Office (not personal points) gets added as Control to that faction's total Control pool.

**A** Code of Mastery: This faction gains an additional two Control points for each session "Just because".

### **Technology:**

Simple Technology (2 research points)

**1-2** Bug Guns: Activation Cost 1, then Discarded: Every point of Military spent grants an additional free point of Military. Worth 1 Science point.

**3-4** Big Mouth: Activation Cost 1, then Discarded: Every point of Foreign Affairs spent grants an additional free point of Foreign Affairs. Worth 1 Science point.

**5-6** Big Roads: Activation Cost 1, then Discarded: Every point of Domestic spent grants an additional free point of Domestic. Worth 1 Science point.

**7-8** Big Computers: Activation Cost 1, then Discarded: Every point of Research spent grants an additional free point of Research. Worth 1 Science point.

**9-10** Big Secrets: Activation Cost 1, then Discarded: Every point of Espionage spent grants an additional free point of Domestic. Worth 1 Science point.

J-Q Big Money: Activation Cost 1, then Discarded: At the end of this phase, every point of Steel left in the bank doubles.

K: Draw again.

A: Take one from Advanced Tech.

Advanced Technology (6 research points)

1-4 Duralloy Armor: Activation Cost 2: Used in a Reaction Phase, it causes all Control points taken from other factions via Military to be nullified. Worth 2 Science points.

5-8 Cyborg Colin Powell: Activation Cost 2: Used in a Reaction Phase, it causes all Control points taken from other factions via Foreign Affairs to be nullified. Worth 3 Science points.

9-Q McAwesome: Activation Cost 2: Used in a Reaction Phase, it causes all Control points taken from other factions via Domestic to be nullified. Worth 3 Science points.

K-A Lesser Tech, but Something We Needed: Activation Cost 0: The Science Officer can immediately discard this tech and choose one tech from the Simple Technology List, and may implement it immediately. Worth 6 Science points..

Mastery Technology (12 research points)

1-10: Choose one resource. For 5 Activation Points, for the rest of that Session every point in that resource spent is tripled. This card is not discarded.

J-A: Choose one aggressive resource: For 5 Activation Points on the Reaction Phase, for that Reaction Phase; or for 5 Activation Points on the Final Planning Phase, for that resource no other faction can take Control from you for that Resource.

### **Officer Secret Agenda:**

Spy for Faction A: Gain 5 points for every plan chosen (yours or someone else's) during the Planning Phase that puts less than 5 points of Steel into Aggressive Resources against Faction A.

Spy for Faction B: Gain 5 points for every plan chosen (yours or someone else's) during the Planning Phase that puts less than 5 points of Steel into Aggressive Resources against Faction B.

Really Like Your Job: Double the benefit of all office goal points.

Really wanted to be a \_\_\_\_\_. Choose one single other Officer, and take their office goals as your personal goals.

Rivalry with \_\_\_\_\_. Choose one other Officer. Every time their plan isn't chosen, you get 3 points. Every time it is chosen, you lose 6 points.

Radical Politico: At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session, you automatically get 15 personal points. If that makes you the lead, you go to the Hegemony with bombs strapped to you, and after the Crisis phase you blow up the hegemony and humanity's chance at unification. You suck.

Viva La Lesser Faction: You really are a spy for a lesser faction unrepresented in the game. If

your faction does not become the Hegemony faction, you gain 20 personal points.

**Leader Secret Agenda:**

Choose one single person's plan for at least two of three Planning Phases to get 10 personal points.

Choose the most radical spending plan for the Planning Phase to get 3 personal points.

Choose the plan for any phase that leaves the most steel left in the bank to get 2 personal points.

Choose at least each leader's plan once in any phase to get 10 personal points.

Choose the plan to spend the least on Military in the Planning Phase to get 5 personal points.

**Crisis:**

Something happens, and requires you to spend 1 Domestic or be destroyed as a Faction.

15 minutes later, it's revealed that if you don't spend at least 2 Foreign Affairs as well, then you won't be able to use Military at all in the next Planning Phase. Stuff like that.

**Final Crisis:**

Something happens, and we need to spend "a lot" of Domestic to thwart it.

Later, after all plans are decided, it's revealed that:

If 5 points of Domestic are spent, then the crisis is somewhat, but not totally, averted.

If 8 points of Domestic, 2 points of Foreign Affairs, 2 points of Research and 3 points of Espionage were spent, then the crisis is completely resolved.

## **sheets**

The game requires the following sheets to play:

**Officer/Leader Sheets:** These record the name and title of the officers, as well as a history of all office and personal points that were gained in play, as well as a brief description of how those points were gained for auditing purposes.

**Resource Planning Sheets:** These are very small sheets, about the size of two business cards, that the players print en masse to use to record their thoughts on resource spending. That way, when their plan is chosen, they can just hand their plan in to the Scribe-Organizer so that play can continue uninterrupted.

**Scribe-Organizer Sheets:** These sheets record the results of each Session, including the faction messages, so that they can share the results with the other factions' Scribe-Organizers during the Exchange. The second half of the sheet is for computing Control gain of all factions so that it can be addressed in the next Reaction Phase.

**Inward Faction Sheet/Outward Faction Sheet:** Two sheets, side by side, which show which player is acting as which officer, which roles that officer fulfills, as well as technology records, factional gifts, and other gains. The Outward Faction Sheet does not reveal which player is acting in which role, but does show the outline of the government to the other factions (the title-names of the faction officers), and general information on alignment (Peaceful, warlike, etc) and simple information about the history and background of the faction.

The sheets are currently available for purchase for \$39.99 for a complete set. Details to follow. OK, not really, didn't have time to make them, yuck.

## afterward

Man, I'm on page 38 or so and still needed to write down more (cards and sheets only, really, but they are a lot of work), but I've got a solid framework here, so I'm submitting it.

As for the ingredients I choose, I thought Steel was a cool name for a universal resource, something representing trillions of dollars worth of resources and labor. Team refers to each Faction, because there really is no GM, and every faction of players works as a team and plays against the other teams, as if it were a distributed roleplaying-boardgame. Finally, Actor: Normally it'd be lame to call a Player an "Actor", but here I really think it fits: In this game you don't use any dice or cards to resolve conflicts, but everything is resolved ENTIRELY through acting in character. Sure, there's resource spending and the like, but the implementation of those resources happens entirely through acting.

I really liked writing this game: I loved the way that the different elements fit together: From the balance between personal and office goals, the balance between resource allocations. I think I took some serious steps towards creating a game that I'd love to play.

Anyway, this was my first Game-Chef entry ever. If I do it again next year, I definitely need to take a day off of work to give it the attention I want to give it. It's been really fun, and I appreciate any feedback you have to give to me. Thanks for reading!