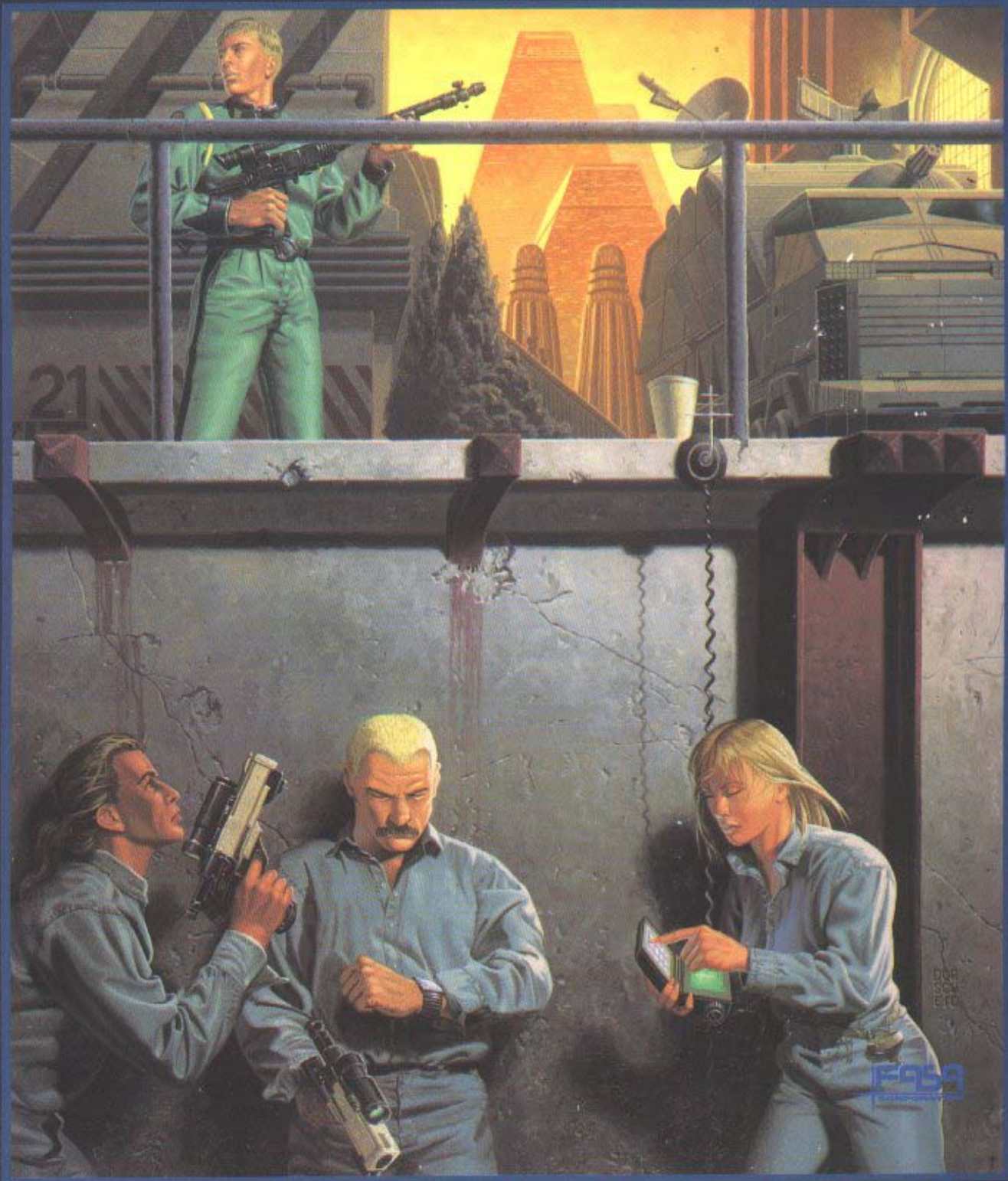


INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS HANDBOOK

1673



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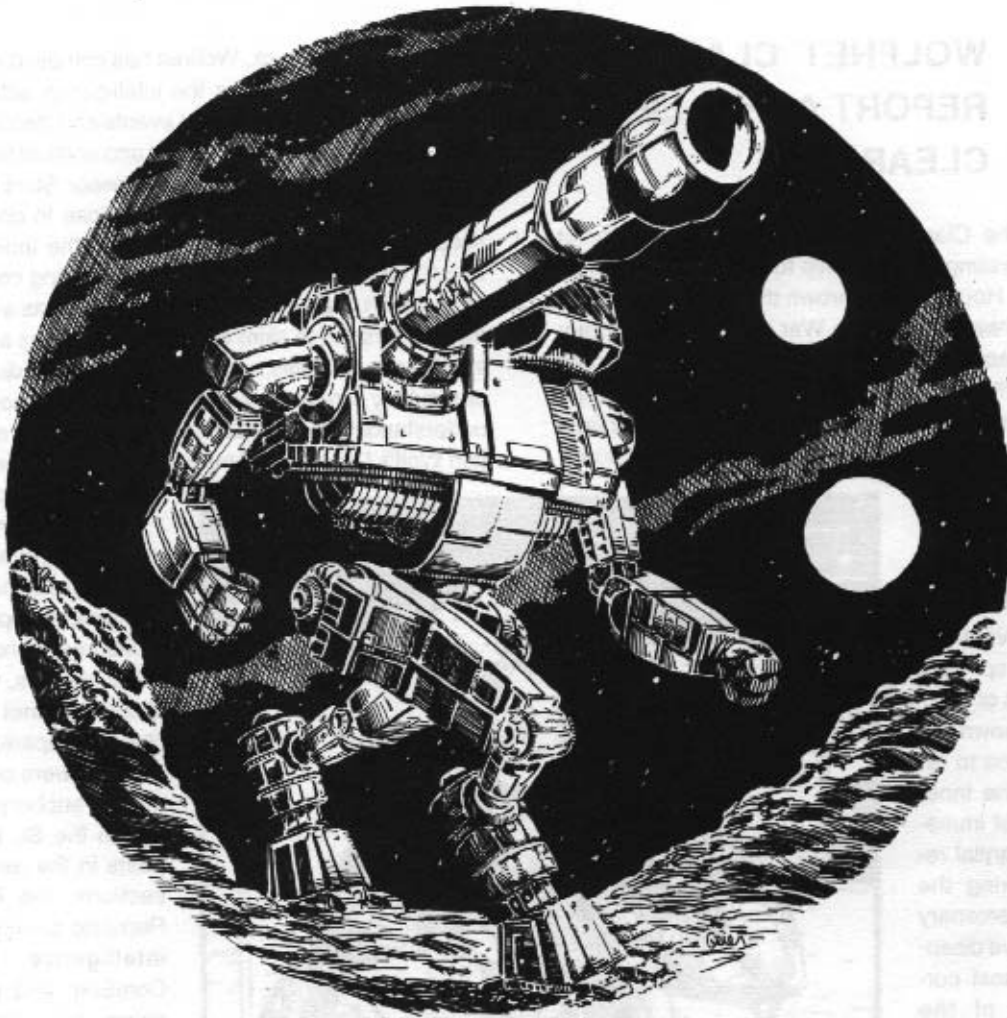




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INTRODUCTION

WOLFNET CLASSIFIED REPORT ALPHA LEVEL CLEARANCE

The shock of the Clan invasion, the stopgap victory at Tukayyid, and the passing of leadership to a new generation in four of the five Great Houses have thrown the Inner Sphere into its worst political upheaval since the War of 3039. Temporary alliances made between House leaders to face the Clan war are dissolving, and the affiliations developing in their place give rival realms cause for alarm. Far from remaining unified to better face the Clan threat, each House appears determined to pursue a private agenda. Traditionally the peacemaker and negotiator, ComStar too is caught up in an internal struggle for power, and can spare no resources to help prevent the Inner Sphere from spiraling into a new cataclysm of war.

In view of the known destructive forces poised to renew the conflict in the Inner Sphere, Wolfnet must immediately devote substantial resources to discovering the current location of mercenary units that seem to have disappeared. Even the most cursory examination of the records shows that many mercenary units did not return to Outreach to negotiate new contracts following the completion of their most recent assignments. We know that these units are not currently fighting anywhere in the Inner Sphere, which raises the disturbing possibility that one or more of the House Lords may be stockpiling mercenary troops. Aside from the unsavory rumors this situation has created regarding Wolf's Dragoons (particularly the one accusing us of eliminating our competition), the missing troops cause Wolfnet concern because they could easily shift the balance of power in the inter-House conflict that is sure to come. Wolf's Dragoons is determined to prevent this war if it can, and to reunify the Inner Sphere against the Clans once again.

To aid in this task, Wolfnet has compiled the following document, which summarizes the intelligence activities of the Inner Sphere, emphasizing current events and their implications for the near future. The recent Clan war and political turmoil has severely hampered the operations of Successor State intelligence agencies, and only Wolfnet has come close to documenting the full scope of changes sweeping through the Inner Sphere. Agents should keep in mind that even this briefing contains its share of speculation, based on the often limited facts available. For those agents tempted to skim the political sections and concentrate on intelligence activities, remember that politics dictate covert action, particularly when dealing with the Successor States. Only by understanding the volatile political landscape as fully as possible can Wolf's Dragoons hope to guard against the next explosion of violence across the Inner Sphere.

In addition to briefings on the most recent events, this document summarizes the history, current activities, and operational branches of the intelligence agencies of the Great Houses, ComStar, and the Clans. Wolfnet chose not to include a separate section for the minor powers of the Inner Sphere or the Periphery: the current situation in the St. Ives Compact appears in the related major House sections; the Free Rasalhague Republic currently receives all its intelligence briefings from ComStar; and events in the Periphery have little bearing on the current state of affairs in the Inner Sphere. Each section lists the known leaders of each agency and describes in detail each operation's command structure. The newest technology employed by each organization appears in a separate file. Wolfnet agents should familiarize themselves with all data and memorize the information on the specific agency he or she is assigned to infiltrate.

This document is Eyes Only.

Destroy after reading. Do not print.

—Major-General Margaret Tulliver
Deputy Director, Wolfnet
Outreach 14 July 3055



INTRODUCTION





ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE

Since men first began waging war, soldiers have relied on intelligence agents to learn vital information about their opponents. Even the most primitive tribal warriors realized that knowledge of their enemies could mean the difference between victory and defeat. As mankind's technology rapidly advanced, so did the destructive power of warfare. Minor skirmishes between neighboring tribes became battles between nations, then wars between worlds and finally campaigns waged among interstellar empires. The magnitude of these battles and the toll they exacted on victor and vanquished alike made the need for accurate intelligence more vital than ever.

As man's warfare became increasingly sophisticated, so did intelligence-gathering operations. In a minor skirmish, an agent simply needed to count the enemy warriors and report their number to his leader. The increasing size and scope of battles, however, forced agents to employ more subtle methods to learn the secrets of enemy nations. Each nation developed its own network of intelligence operatives, learning to defend its own secrets and uncover the enemy's. The agent's task came to encompass protecting, as well as discovering, information.

Over the centuries, the Successor States developed star-spanning intelligence services that played an integral role in the endless wars between their nations. Without their intelligence communities, the leaders and military commanders of each Successor State would remain blind to events both outside and within their borders. By the 31st century, the intelligence networks had grown so vast and powerful that no Lord could afford to neglect them, for fear they might turn on their masters. Indeed, on several past occasions intelligence operatives have used their secret, detailed knowledge to bring down governments of which they disapproved.

Despite their straightforward objectives, intelligence services use complex procedures to attain these goals. Teams of logistics operatives carefully plan every operation. Even a minor hitch can cause a mission to fail, placing its luckless operatives in the hands of the enemy's counterintelligence. A captured agent can expect little mercy, even if he reveals the secrets of his agency. Ruthless opponents may prefer to eliminate all enemy agents, leaving no loose ends. The intelligence field is a deadly and uncertain arena filled with potentially fatal pitfalls. A single, momentary slip can end an operative's life in seconds.

The role of the intelligence operative remains essential to all the governments of the Inner Sphere. Whether conducting surveillance on another Great House or sabotaging enemy operations, intelligence agents strongly influence the balance of power between the Successor States.

WOLFNET

In 3005, Wolf's Dragoons arrived in the Inner Sphere on a Wolf Clan-sponsored reconnaissance mission to assess the Inner Sphere's military strength. Once the Clans received the Dragoons' report, they planned to invade the Inner Sphere and restore the glorious Star League. The Dragoons expected to find the worlds left behind by Kerensky's Exodus force wallowing in decay and chaos. Instead they discovered the Successor States alive and well, their star empires providing a vast arena where their regiments continued waging a battle that had never ended.

The Dragoons discovered the five Great Houses were still fighting for dominion over the Inner Sphere, continuing the conflict that had prompted Aleksandr Kerensky and his fleet to flee 221 years before. Mech regiments battled over tiny parcels of land, while behind the scenes a covert war raged with as much ferocity as any physical combat. Adapting to the needs of the situation, the Dragoons created Wolfnet, an intelligence agency whose capabilities even today surpass those of any other organization in the Inner Sphere.



No single House Lord had been able to gain the upper hand in the war for dominion over the rest of the Inner Sphere, a failure that inspired many attempts to steal the prize using espionage. In fact, the clandestine-operations branch of each great power often achieved far greater successes than their military counterparts in the decades-long Succession Wars. These vast Inner Sphere intelligence agencies provided ample opportunities for Wolfnet's talented operatives to infiltrate every Successor State. Concentrating on political as well as military intelligence, Wolfnet learned the strengths and weaknesses of every realm in the Inner Sphere. Its wide-ranging network of operatives continues to provide Wolfnet with a depth and complexity of information unmatched by any other intelligence agency.

COLONEL WOLF'S REPORT

Colonel Jaime Wolf, commanding officer of Wolf's Dragoons, included the following notes in his preliminary report to his superiors. Though the assassination of Archon Melissa Steiner, the schism in ComStar, the House Liao/Marik alliance, and the nascent power of the newly united Free Worlds League have radically changed the political climate of the Inner Sphere, Colonel Wolf's summation of the events leading up to the Clan invasion provides vital insight into the present, precarious situation. Clearly, the level of intelligence activity in the Inner Sphere reached an all-time high during the first few decades of the 31st century, and those operations continue to shape unfolding events.

"The situation in the Inner Sphere was far from what we expected to find when we arrived in 3005. Instead of desolation and destruction and populations reduced to savagery, we discovered the five warring Houses had changed little since our ancestors left in the Exodus. All were still locked in mortal combat, competing for the elusive title of First Lord over a restored Star League. But the balance of power proved too equal. Worlds changed hands regularly as the forces of the Successor States fought each other in their antique BattleMechs, none able to break the centuries-old stalemate.

"Behind the scenes of this conflict the intelligence services of the Successor States conducted a secret war, apparently using the same methods common during the time of the Exodus. The Inner Sphere armies battle only when ordered to do so and only then to achieve specific goals, but the intelligence agencies wage a constant war for control of the entire Inner Sphere. Operatives from each House have infiltrated every other state, acting against their enemies in the name of their Lords. These operatives were intensifying their clandestine war at the time of our arrival, as the five Successor Lords prepared their Houses to begin another stage in the great conflict.

KURITA: RISE OF THE DRAGON

"In 3004 the Coordinator of the Draconis Combine, Hohiro Kurita, had been assassinated by one of his personal bodyguards. A year later, the Combine's Internal Security Force was still purging its ranks of those who allowed this to happen. When

the ISF informed the new Coordinator, Takashi Kurita, of rumors he had aided his father's assassin, an enraged Takashi ordered the Otomo to round up anyone suspected of spreading such 'seditious lies,' including many of his personal enemies.

"Takashi planned to implement a reform campaign that would loosen many of the strictures that his father Hohiro had imposed on Combine society. He also wanted to revamp the military, but he first needed to consolidate his power to prove his ruthlessness to any remaining potential troublemakers. When the Otomo brought their prisoners to the courtyard of Unity Palace, Takashi accused them of treason against the Combine and ordered them killed where they stood. This show of power and the covert operations conducted to purge the military of anti-Takashi factions freed him to pursue his own agenda. In following years, the Draconis Combine intelligence community seemed absorbed in efforts to control events within its own borders, especially dissuading the general public from using the modest liberalization of Combine society to rebel, even quietly, against their Coordinator. Despite these efforts, internal strife continued to plague House Kurita throughout the early 31st century. By 3024, Coordinator Takashi Kurita had been the target of nine separate assassination attempts, three of which the ISF suspected of originating within his own family.

STEINER: CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

"In the neighboring Lyran Commonwealth, a power struggle neared its final act. In 3002, a few years before we arrived, Archon Alessandro Steiner began the ill-conceived offensive against House Marik he called "Concentrated Weakness." This strategy stripped interior Commonwealth worlds of their garrisons in order to move those troops to the Marik border. He planned to discourage Marik from attacking the Commonwealth by doubling the number of Mechs defending its borders while simultaneously freeing the regular border garrisons for a planned assault against the Free Worlds League. Left unprotected, however, the interior worlds erupted in protest, forcing Steiner to use his extra manpower to suppress riots within his own borders. This strategic blunder increased the distrust most of the LCAF felt for the Archon. The Archon's niece and heir, General Katrina Steiner, well aware of this growing disaffection within the LCAF, quietly began to build personal political support among her fellow officers.

"Alessandro sent agents of the Lyran Intelligence Corp's elite terrorist unit, Loki, to assassinate Katrina in 3005. She and her two dining companions survived the attack and fled to safety aided by Heimdall, a secret organization founded to discourage Loki from abusing its power. Heimdall threw its support behind Katrina Steiner, hiding her from the Archon's assassins for much of the following year as she continued to build support for her claim to the Archonship. While traveling in the Periphery on her campaign, Katrina discovered the so-called 'black box' technology that would prove such a boon to the Lyran Commonwealth, and later the Federated Commonwealth during the Fourth Succession War.



INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

"Katrina Steiner reappeared in 3006, just as Alessandro's misguided Concentrated Weakness policy had begun to pay disastrous dividends. Following a particularly devastating series of raids by House Marik that nearly destroyed the military industries on several unprotected Commonwealth worlds, Katrina Steiner publicly announced her intention to become the next Archon. When Alessandro attempted to drum up support, he discovered he had none and accepted the inevitable. On July 22, 3007, Archon Alessandro Steiner resigned his office in favor of his niece, Katrina.

"On assuming office, Katrina revoked the policy of Concentrated Weakness and curbed the activities of Loki, which had run rampant during Alessandro's reign in a misguided effort to curb civil unrest. By the start of the Fourth Succession War in 3028, the LIC had successfully purged most of the pro-Alessandro faction, rebuilt its neglected intelligence-gathering departments and regained its status as an effective force.

MARIK: CIVIL WAR

"In 3014, I became personally involved in the civil war within the Free Worlds League, a struggle that began and ended with SAFE, the Free Worlds League's intelligence branch. Their negligence allowed the war to erupt, and their renewed vigilance ultimately crushed it. Anton Marik, Duke of Procyon, overall commander of the Capellan front, and brother of Captain-General Janos Marik, began planning a coup as early as 3003. He made a secret alliance with Chancellor Maximilian Liao of the Capellan Confederation to marry Liao's eldest daughter, the Duchess Candace, in return for intelligence information and military training.

"The conspirators bided their time for more than a decade, watching for their chance as Janos Marik grew increasingly isolated and bitter over private griefs. Having focused their attention on foreign enemies for years, SAFE missed the signs of Anton Marik's treasonous intentions. In 3014 Maximilian Liao and Anton Marik met in secret on Terra to sign a secret contract with Wolf's Dragoons, and on May 22 of that year Anton Marik made his bid for power.

"Both the Capellan Confederation's secret police, the Maskirovka, and the Federated Suns' Department of Military Intelligence realized the potential value of Anton Marik's rebellion to their own operations. A civil war in the Free Worlds League would enable both groups to freely carry out their objectives. The Maskirovka planned to ensure Capellan domination of the Free Worlds League by controlling Anton Marik, who would rule as Candace Liao's puppet husband, and the DMI hoped to take advantage of the Marik civil war to expand Davion territory at Marik's expense. Both groups encouraged Anton to attempt a coup. Maskirovka agents enacted many minor operations to divert the overpaid, underworked SAFE operatives, and the DMI sent teams of agents provocateurs into the Free Worlds League to plant rumors and inflame the hatred between Janos and Anton Marik. When Anton publicly proclaimed himself the rightful

Captain-General of the Free Worlds League and called upon the people to aid him in the overthrow of 'the mad tyrant,' roughly one-quarter of the League's provinces and a sizable portion of the Marik Militia and the Regular Hussars declared their support for Anton's rebellion.

"Captain-General Janos Marik immediately recognized the folly of allowing a full-blown conflict to develop. Threatening Parliament with the dire consequences of civil war, Janos demanded and received an amendment to the Intelligence Act of 2735, lifting the restrictions that act placed on SAFE and allowing the intelligence organization to seek out treasonous acts among the population of the Free Worlds League. Operating under fewer restraints, the Marik intelligence agency quickly crippled Anton's forces and defeated his coup attempt.

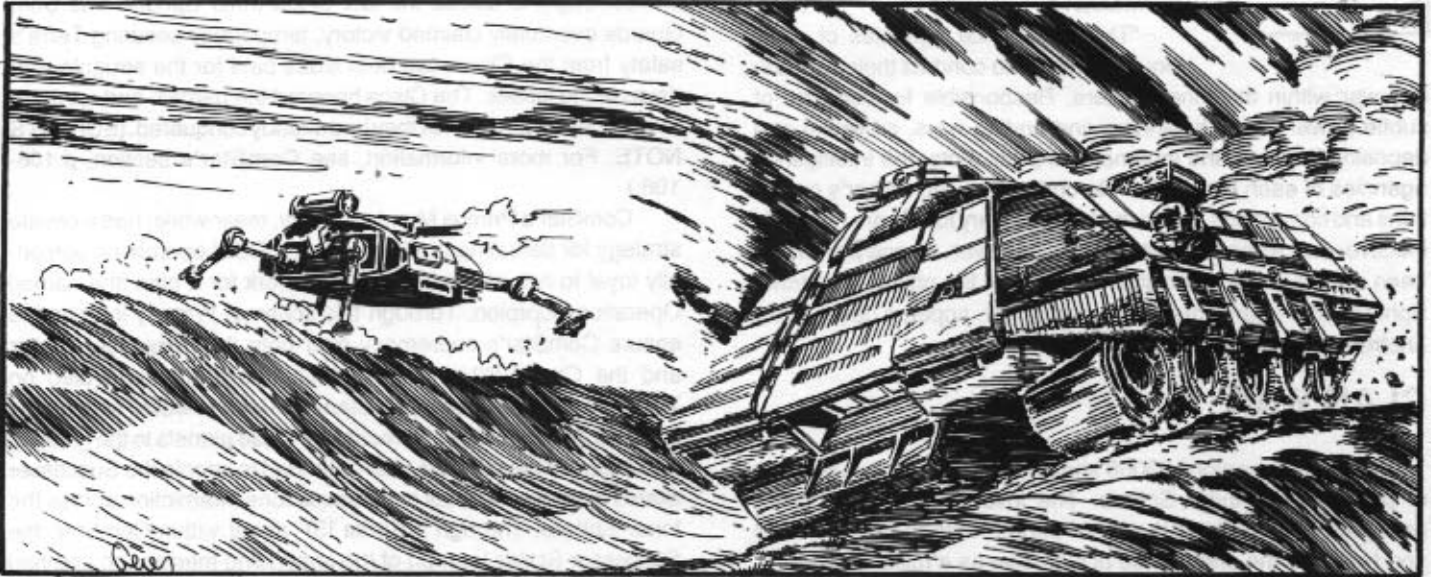
"I suffered a personal loss in the Marik civil war. In a last, desperate attempt to salvage his lost cause, Anton Marik had ordered me to break down the Dragoon regiments under contract to him into smaller units, which he planned to use as strike teams against Janos Marik's forces. Realizing that this would achieve nothing but the deaths of too many good men, I refused his order. My brother and 27 others died because a madman could not accept defeat, and murdered them in revenge.

DAVION: DUELING WITH CAPELLA

"The activities of Michael Hasek-Davion, Prince Hanse Davion's brother-in-law and the Duke of New Syrtis, occupied the Federated Suns' intelligence organization when we arrived. Right up until his death at the hands of Maximilian Liao in the first year of the Fourth Succession War, Hasek-Davion was known to be collaborating with the Capellan Confederation, providing details of troop movements and strengths within the Federated Suns to Maximilian Liao. (EDITOR'S NOTE: For complete information on Duke Michael, see **Liao** section, p. 73.)

"Between 3015 and 3027, the intelligence agencies of the Federated Suns and the Capellan Confederation intensified their covert war. House Liao's Maskirovka made the opening move, abducting seven Davion geneticists and forcing them to create a double of Prince Hanse Davion. In 3025, the Capellan chancellor put 'Operation Doppelganger' into motion, infiltrating the false Prince into the court of New Avalon. But for the timely rescue of the true Prince, the double would have succeeded in setting the mighty Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth at each other's throats. Both the Capellan attempt to destroy Hanse Davion and his realm and their wanton destruction of the life and memories of the man they transformed into his double so shocked the Prince that he wasted no time ordering his intelligence agency to prepare for a major offensive against the Capellan Confederation. (EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information, see **Liao** section, p. 73.)

"The three years prior to the Fourth Succession War represented one of the most intense periods of intelligence activity throughout the Inner Sphere. A nonaggression pact signed by the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth allowed the two realms to share military intelligence regarding the Draconis Com-



bine and set the stage for the strategically important marriage between Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner, the Archon's daughter. The agreement between the two Houses also enabled each to devote more resources to offensives against its most hated foe.

"In 3027, Davion put into motion an involved and cunning plan to punish Maximilian Liao. Justin Xiang-Allard, who would eventually become a major player in the creation of the St. Ives Compact, served as the prince's most effective tool of retaliation against Maximilian Liao. After serving in the Federated Suns military for a number of years, Xiang-Allard was chosen to infiltrate the Maskirovka.

"After a faked treason trial, Davion banished Xiang-Allard from the Federated Suns. Maximilian Liao offered him Capellan citizenship and a high-level post within the Maskirovka, which he used to misdirect Capellan operations during the Fourth Succession War. At one point, Xiang-Allard duped the Capellan Chancellor into ordering a raid on a so-called secret Davion base to steal carefully doctored technology, and later warned Hanse Davion of the one Liao strike that could have harmed the Federated Suns. An unexpected bonus of Justin Xiang-Allard's work in the Capellan Confederation was the defection of Candace Liao, the Capellan Chancellor's daughter, who brought with her the worlds of the St. Ives Commonality. Candace's first act as the ruler of her newly independent nation was to sign a mutual defense pact with the Federated Suns. The secession of the St. Ives Compact tore the Capellan Confederation in two. Forced to watch all his victories turn to dust, Maximilian Liao's mind snapped, and his younger daughter Romano took control of the Capellan throne. (EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information, see **Davion** section, p. 34-35.)

POST-FOURTH WAR

"In the aftermath of the Fourth Succession War, the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth continued to consolidate

the union of their two nations, forging them into the Federated Commonwealth. The Draconis Combine feared this alliance between its two ancient enemies and took steps, through the machinations of the Internal Security Force and the Order of Five Pillars, to safeguard its territory against the monolith.

"Subhash Indrahar, director of the ISF, was the prime mover behind the events between the end of the Fourth Succession War and the War of 3039, repeatedly thwarting the plans of his superiors for the good of his nation. At one time, he deliberately failed to discover the whereabouts of Wolf's Dragoons, believing that Coordinator Takashi Kurita's obsession with our destruction siphoned strength from the Combine. In addition, Indrahar helped Theodore Kurita keep secrets from his father, afraid the increasingly unstable Coordinator might unwisely strike out at his capable son given any pretext. Indrahar took special care to keep the Coordinator from learning of a secret meeting between Theodore Kurita and Primus Myndo Waterly of ComStar that took place in 3030. During that meeting the Primus provided Theodore with sorely needed troops in exchange for his support of the Rasalhague independence movement.

"In 3034, Theodore Kurita rotated the Coordinator's crack loyalist units off Luthien in the weeks before the Rasalhague District declared its independence. With no troops within striking distance, Takashi heeded the unassailable arguments for allowing Rasalhague's secession, and grudgingly recognized the Rasalhague District's independence. The new state, militarily and economically dependent on the Draconis Combine, created a buffer between the Combine and the Lyran Commonwealth. Rasalhague's declaration of independence also forced the Lyrans to relinquish captured Combine worlds claimed by the new Republic, creating even more space between the Steiner and Kurita Houses."



INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

SUMMARY

"The intelligence agencies of each House continue to conduct their clandestine war within the Inner Sphere. Responsible for decades of subtle power shifts, beginning and ending wars, crowning and deposing leaders, and innumerable petty plots, the intelligence agencies of each House work to undermine each other's operations and commands, even when their military forces are relatively inactive. Just as on the military front, however, no one power has been able to wrest a decisive victory from the others. The Inner Sphere, after nearly three centuries of war, appears destined for another three centuries of the same."

CLAN WAR

The Clan invasion in 3050 shattered the precarious balance of power in the Inner Sphere. The invader's superior forces prompted the nations of the Inner Sphere to form new alliances and triggered the emergence of ComStar as a military power.

The Clans' alien tactics and advanced technology caught the armed forces of the Successor States off guard. The invaders quickly tore through worlds of the Rasalhague Republic, the Lyran Commonwealth, and the Draconis Combine on a direct course for Terra. With their militaries defeated on all fronts, for the first time in history the intelligence agencies of the Inner Sphere worked together against a common enemy. Unable to stand and fight against the Clans' superior weaponry and fiercely trained fighters, the leaders of the Inner Sphere hoped their military intelligence organizations might save them.

New alliances and powers emerged from the chaos caused by the Clan invasion. The threat of the Clans prompted even the bitterest enemies to unite. In the battle of Luthien, for example, the Federated Suns, the Draconis Combine's most hated enemy since time immemorial, sent troops to help defend the Combine capital and fought a battle that gave the Inner Sphere one of its major victories against the Clans. Perhaps the most significant event triggered by the Clan invasion, however, was the emergence of ComStar as a military power. Though the Order had been building a military force since its inception, the Com Guards' crucial role in halting the invasion brought the force wide public recognition and respect.

Despite their best efforts, the intelligence agencies of the Successor States learned very little about the Clans. Captured Clan warriors proved unwilling to reveal information and highly resistant to physical or chemical persuasion. The enemy's social and military structure made infiltration impossible, forcing intelligence operatives to act as little more than information-gatherers.

The invaders might easily have captured Terra if ComStar Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht had not persuaded the Clans to meet his forces in a battle on the planet Tukayyid. If the Clans emerged victorious, Terra would be theirs. In return, the Clans agreed to halt their invasion for fifteen years if ComStar won the battle. In the fields and mountains of Tukayyid, more than ten thousand Com Guard and Clan BattleMechs met. For twenty days

armies fought to decide the fate of the Inner Sphere. The Com Guards eventually claimed victory, temporarily securing Terra's safety from the Clans, but both sides paid for the struggle with devastating losses. The Clans honored the bargain and returned to the Inner Sphere worlds they had already conquered. (EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information, see **ComStar's** section, p.106-108.)

ComStar's Primus Myndo Waterly, meanwhile, had a private strategy for defeating the Clans. Using ROM operatives personally loyal to her, she laid the groundwork for a plan she named Operation Scorpion. Through this scheme, Waterly intended to ensure ComStar's supremacy over both the Successor States and the Clans. While the Com Guards fought and died on Tukayyid, ComStar forces on Clan-held worlds would engage the occupying Clan forces and recapture those planets in the name of the Order. Primus Waterly then intended to cripple the Successor States by imposing a full communications interdiction across the Inner Sphere. Through a Kurita ISF agent within ComStar, the Successor States learned of the impending interdiction and had already seized most of the ComStar facilities within their borders when Scorpion began.

On hearing of Primus Waterly's activities, Precentor Martial Focht returned to Terra and personally executed the Primus. Precentor Dieron Sharilar Mori agreed to accept the primacy in her place. Together, Focht and Mori launched an ambitious reform of the Order, but their changes prompted a schism in ComStar. A large percentage of the Com Guard and nearly 70 percent of ROM operatives defected to the Word of Blake, a splinter of ComStar opposed to the liberal reforms favored by Focht and the new Primus. (EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information, see **ComStar** section, p.106-108.)

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Their defeat on Tukayyid shocked the Clans and forced them to take stock of their situation. Angry because the Tukayyid treaty prohibited them from venting their inbred aggression on the Inner Sphere, Clan warriors began venting frustrations on each other. InterClan raiding, as well as selected strikes on Inner Sphere worlds, began almost before the ink dried on the truce, and hit Clan Jade Falcon particularly hard. Clans Jade Falcon and Steel Viper are now building up garrisons on their occupied worlds, and recent activity suggests the Falcons intend to deal with the Steel Viper threat before moving against the Inner Sphere.

By stopping the Clan advance, the Treaty of Tukayyid deprived the Inner Sphere of the one threat strong enough to unite its leaders and people. With that threat neutralized, at least temporarily, the Successor States have begun reverting to their familiar internal squabbling. Melissa Steiner's assassination in 3055 exposed the rifts that still exist between the two halves of the Federated Commonwealth, despite their generation-old alliance. Rumors swept the streets of the Lyran capital city of Tharkad, accusing Prince Victor Steiner-Davion of arranging his mother's death. His relationship with Omi Kurita, which may be more than

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mere friendship, has only added fuel to resentment of Victor, particularly among his Lyran subjects who believe he favors his Davion heritage at their expense.

The Inner Sphere leaders have directed their intelligence agencies to refocus their attention on internal politics, especially since public acknowledgment of the alliance between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation, soon to be sealed by the marriage of Sun-Tzu Liao and Isis Marik. The Federated Commonwealth in particular shows signs of increasing concern about this situation; both the Lyran and Davion governments have earmarked large portions of their military intelligence budgets for efforts to break this alliance before it becomes final. This shift in priorities has meant a cutoff of funds for the anti-Capellan guerrilla operations run by Tormana Liao, Sun-Tzu's uncle, as the MIIO and the LIC search for ways to curb the growing power of House Marik.

Within ComStar, a new covert war has begun, as ComStar ROM agents and the Word of Blake ROM battle each other for control of the entire organization. The Word of Blake has proclaimed Thomas Marik, the Captain-General of the Free Worlds League, as the true Primus and labeled Sharilar Mori as a traitor to Jerome Blake's true will, setting the stage for a potentially long and bloody conflict. The Word of Blake's fierce loyalty to their Primus-in-exile, as well as the capabilities of their ROM agents and Com Guards, have also added considerably to Marik power. We expect the Free Worlds League to play a major role in the ongoing power shifts in the Inner Sphere.

The Draconis Combine is concentrating all the Internal Security Forces' resources on defending the Combine's borders with Clans Smoke Jaguar and Ghost Bear against the next advance of those forces. Coordinator Theodore Kurita has attempted to drum up support for an expedition to locate and strike the Clan homeworlds, but so far his fellow House Leaders have been too preoccupied with their internal troubles and fighting off Clan raids to pay his scheme much heed. No one in the Inner Sphere believes the Clans will wait the full fifteen years before renewing their attack, and so every House whose realm borders the Clan occupation zones has begun bracing for an intensified version of the original invasion. Both the ISF and the Lyran Intelligence Corps have placed operatives in the occupation zones to warn their nations of the next Clan advance in time to prepare defensive forces for battle.

It is 3055, and the 300-year-old battle for control of the Inner Sphere continues to rage. Once again, the quarreling states of the Inner Sphere stand on the edge of a major upheaval and a new crisis looms with every sunrise. Even Wolfnet cannot predict the events of the next twenty years, but they will likely be as savage as the past twenty.





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In the wake of Archon Melissa Steiner's brutal assassination, an angry tide of separatism has risen in the Lyran half of the vast Federated Commonwealth. The Commonwealth's Archon Prince, Victor Steiner-Davion, stands accused by vicious rumor of complicity in his mother's death. By speaking on her brother's behalf, his popular sister Katherine has briefly calmed the anti-Victor storm, but the tempest of secession may yet split the mighty Federated Commonwealth asunder. Should that happen, the Lyran state's survival may once again depend on its intelligence agency.

OVERVIEW

The Lyran Intelligence Corps, in addition to being one of the oldest and most well-established intelligence agencies in the Inner Sphere, is probably the most reliable secret service organization currently operating within the Successor States. Unable to rely on its military, which is well known for its general inefficiency and tendency to bungle operations, the Lyran Commonwealth depends upon its Intelligence Corps to safeguard and expand the power of the realm. The Archon's death and her son's marked preference for his Davion subjects, however, have recently cast doubt on where the LIC's loyalties lie. Some agents may heed the call for secession, and believe that the Steiner power they serve no longer rests with Archon Prince Victor.

The LIC has always represented the strongest aspects of Lyran spirit and ambition. Repeatedly forced to compensate for military inadequacies, the LIC has risen to the occasion throughout its history. No other organization in the Commonwealth can match the LIC for reliability and efficiency. In fact, no other intelligence service comes close to the LIC's record of success, except perhaps the ISF of the Draconis Combine (in particular, the Draconis Elite Strike Teams (DEST), the Combine's special forces units). Our own Wolfnet remains the only agency that surpasses it.

This superior performance must be credited to the stringent specifications by which all candidates for the service are measured. As do the intelligence organizations of the other Great Houses of the Inner Sphere, the LIC selects only those individuals whose loyalty to their nation is unassailable and who respect the highest principles that govern the Commonwealth. All LIC operatives must swear loyalty to their Commonwealth, and above all to the Archon. The Lyran Intelligence Corps pursues one principal goal: the protection of the Lyran Commonwealth and its ruling Steiner family.

The LIC keeps a low profile for an organization of its size. Even though its operations appear less spectacular than those mounted by other intelligence agencies, all House leaders consider the information gathered by the LIC the most trustworthy intelligence available. Indeed, the depth and accuracy of their

information at times rivals Wolfnet's. An excellent track record of successful missions bears powerful witness to the validity of this opinion.

The alliance between House Steiner and House Davion allowed the LIC to increase its level of sophistication. Using technology and scientific knowledge provided by Davion's Ministry of Intelligence Investigations and Operations (MIIO) and the New Avalon Institute of Science, the LIC upgraded its operations across the board. For example, the LIC information-gathering operations can now detect enemy movements and assimilate that data into the new LIC battle computers within six to twelve hours of locating troop activity. This single improvement so helped the Lyran Commonwealth Armed Forces to better coordinate their operations that the LCAF has lately begun to shed its image of a Stone Age relic commanded by incompetent, honorary officers.

BRIEFING

Like any agency in a changing universe, the Lyran Intelligence Corps has undergone many changes in the last few decades. Within the last quarter-century it has adapted to the demands of the Federated Commonwealth alliance, only to find that alliance growing shaky. The fierce onslaught of those unsuspected enemies, the Clans, struck the Lyran state much harder than the Federated Suns, fueling resentment among those inclined to distrust House Davion. The death of the Lyrans' beloved Archon has further disrupted the formerly placid alliance between the two Houses. Ordered to cooperate with its Davion allies, the

LIC was forced to adopt new attitudes and policies affecting every level of its organization, and is trying to maintain those policies in the face of renewed upheaval.

When the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth were negotiating to come together under a single banner, the LIC loudly opposed the merger of the two armed forces and intelligence agencies. Eventually recognizing that they had little choice, the High Command began to cooperate in laying the foundation for the LIC and the DMI to work as partners to defend the new nation.

The LIC agreed to meet the DMI halfway, carefully choosing only those elements offered by its opposite number that would enhance its own operations. Never flashy, but consistently successful, the Lyran Intelligence Corps absorbed the new technology and increased availability of information into already efficient systems to reaffirm their place at the top of the intelligence community. The LIC used its new capabilities against the Clan invaders, and continues to focus on the Clan-held worlds bordering the Steiner state. The killing of Melissa Steiner and the rising power of the Lyrans' ancient enemy, the Free Worlds League, have prompted the LIC to shift some of its operations toward other areas in recent months.

Immediately after her assassination, the LIC made finding Melissa's killer its first priority. Agent Curaitis of the Intelligence Secretariat, the umbrella organization coordinating the intelligence efforts of Houses Steiner and Davion, recently captured the assassin, but so far can ascertain only that neither House Kurita nor House Liao hired the killer. The Secretariat has determined that the successful attack originated from a plan created somewhere within the Federated Commonwealth, raising the frightening possibility of a separatist link to the murder.

FIELD AGENT REPORT FC 3.47

DATE: 6/30/55

REPORTING AGENT: 982361074

SECTION: FS7L—GREEN

SECURITY LEVEL: EYES ONLY

DAVION INTELLIGENCE HAS DETERMINED THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED THE ARCHON WAS PRODUCED BY A SET OF FLOWER POTS CONSTRUCTED OF SX-497, A PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE.

THE POTS WERE INFILTRATED INTO THE RECEPTION HALL BY A MAN POSING AS ONE *KARL KOLE*, AN EMPLOYEE OF A LOCAL FLORIST. ALTHOUGH THE EXPLOSIVE MATERIAL IS NOT PARTICULARLY UNCOMMON, MIIO AGENTS HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE SX-497 USED IN THE POTS WAS MANUFACTURED ON *HESPERUS II* AND HAVE TRACED IT TO A LOT REPORTED LOST DURING SHIPPING.

THE EXPLOSIVES' SOPHISTICATED TRIGGERING MECHANISMS, DEVISED TO DEFEAT DAVION SECURITY MEASURES, STRONGLY SUGGEST *KARL KOLE* WAS AN ALIAS EMPLOYED BY A PROFESSIONAL ASSASSIN, RATHER THAN THE DERANGED BOMBER PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE PORTRAYED HIM AS.

ALTHOUGH THE ASSASSIN APPARENTLY ESCAPED THARKAD SUCCESSFULLY, THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SX-497 LOT NUMBER VIRTUALLY GUARANTEES THE MIIO'S EVENTUAL CAPTURE OF THE KILLER.

POPULAR SENTIMENT HAS ATTRIBUTED THE ASSASSINATION PLOT TO PRINCE *VICTOR STEINER-DAVION*, BUT THE LACK OF EVIDENCE MAKES ANY SPECULATION REGARDING THE PLOT'S ORIGINS PREMATURE AT THIS TIME.



LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS

SEPARATISTS

Anti-alliance groups such as the Free Skye Movement still threaten the integrity of the Federated Commonwealth government. The LIC directs a large percentage of its annual budget to counter the activities of the various separatist factions. The recent rumblings of secessionist fever accompanied by anti-Victor Davion sentiments have forced the LIC to monitor the separatists even more closely.

Most separatist factions work to break apart the Federated Commonwealth alliance. Because their goals match the desires of every other Inner Sphere intelligence agency, separatist groups have become prime targets for infiltration. The LIC realizes that opposition groups receiving outside support could present a major threat to the Federated Commonwealth by forcing the alliance to divert substantial military and intelligence resources to forestall potential rebellions. Neither the LIC nor the Lyran Commonwealth Armed Forces can afford such a distraction with the Clan threat so near.

The Diplomatic Corps has increased its attempts to placate these anti-alliance factions, hoping to win their loyalty to the Federated Commonwealth and prevent their leaders from falling under the influence of rival intelligence agencies. Not all LIC agents, however, will necessarily remain immune to the rising anti-Davion feeling in the Steiner realm. Though still apparently under control, the simmering discontent could flare up if large numbers of LIC operatives choose to abandon Victor for a more sympathetic Steiner.

MONITORING SAFE OPERATIONS

The LIC's second-highest priority at present, following their operations against the Clans and the secessionists, is to monitor and control the activities of Thomas Marik's SAFE organization within the Lyran Commonwealth. Increased resources have gone into these operations since agents confirmed rumors of an alliance between Houses Marik and Liao. The Free Worlds League government under Captain-General Thomas Marik seems to have thrown off the poor organization and internal strife that so plagued it in the past, and the support of the Capellan Confederation makes the Free Worlds League stronger militarily than at any other time in that realm's history.

Kommandant-General Procknow ordered an increase in counterinsurgency activity all across the Lyran Commonwealth as soon as the High Command learned of the Marik-Liao

alliance. He hopes to prevent additional SAFE operatives from crossing the Lyran Commonwealth/Marik border by concentrating as many Molehunters along that border as is practical. Along with a general increase in the level of LIC/DMI surveillance at all DropShip facilities, this should provide additional security against Marik activities.

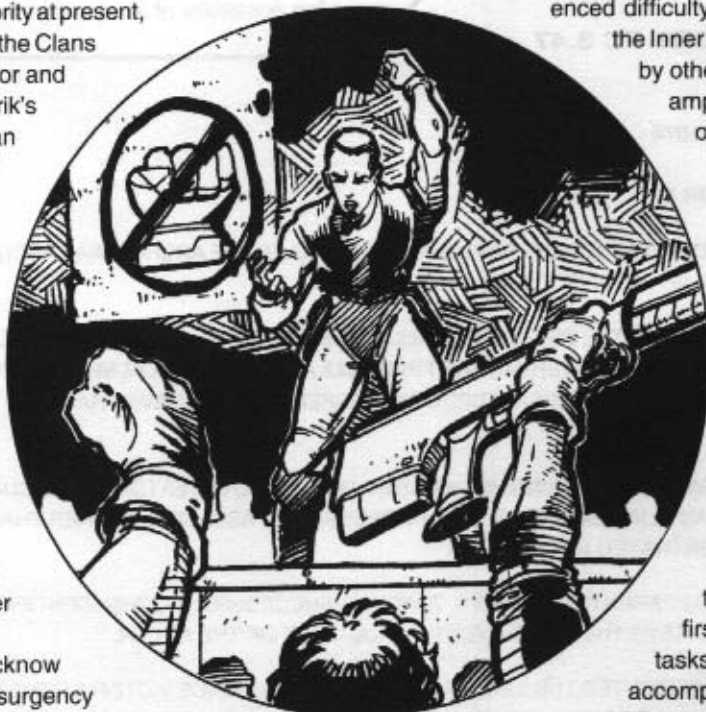
The recent split within ComStar provides the LIC an excellent opportunity to infiltrate and attempt to destabilize SAFE. The constant flow of ComStar and ROM personnel defecting to the Word of Blake faction, based in the Free Worlds League, makes it impossible for the splinter group to effectively screen every arriving refugee. The sheer volume of people forces the Word of Blake to accept every supplicant to their ranks without assessment by their own ROM branch. Because SAFE is working so closely with the renegade ComStar faction, LIC agents posing as ComStar refugees may enter the ranks of both organizations with little chance of detection.

BRIEF HISTORY

One of the oldest intelligence agencies, the LIC was formed during the reign of Katherine Steiner, the first of the Steiner dynasty to hold the title of Archon of the Lyran Commonwealth. The agency was created with the express purpose of defending the Commonwealth in general and the Steiner family in particular against all nonmilitary attacks. Because the Steiner family created the prosperity on which the Commonwealth's strength depends, the LIC acts to keep them in power.

During the LIC's early years, the organization experienced difficulty adapting to the changing face of the Inner Sphere, and was often outmatched by other organizations' expertise. An example of their early ineptitude was an operation in which, after six years of repeated attempts at infiltration, the LIC succeeded in planting only one agent inside the Terran Hegemony BattleMech plant on Hesperus II. The agent succeeded in getting only a map of the facility and a few vague observations on BattleMech construction. This incident made it obvious that the LIC had a long way to go before it could effectively protect the state and its rulers.

Its failure to gain access to the blueprints of the *Mackie*, the first BattleMech, was one of the last tasks the LIC was assigned but failed to accomplish. In 2455, a special force of 25 LCAF commandos pulled off a daring raid on the Hesperus II BattleMech installation, thus making



the Lyran Commonwealth the first state outside the Terran Hegemony to have the secret of BattleMech construction and production, in spite of the LIC's unsuccessful attempts to achieve the same goal. However, that commando raid marked the last occasion on which the Lyran military showed superior ability to the intelligence agency in strengthening the realm. Since that time, most LIC missions have ended successfully, and often produce unexpected but advantageous side effects.

GUARDIANS OF THE STEINERS

In keeping with its mission statement, the LIC historically has maintained a steady level of defense for both the ruling Steiner family and the Lyran Commonwealth itself. In one of several specific examples of their efficient operations, the LIC uncovered proof that Duke Reynolds of Fatima was innocent of any involvement in the assassination of Archon Alistair Steiner in 2467. In that incident, five youths managed to penetrate the security around the Archon's private bedchamber and stab him to death, using blades made of obsidian found only on the planet of Fatima. Following relentless interrogation, the students named Duke Reynolds as the instigator of the plot. The new Archon, Michael Steiner, refused to believe Reynolds guilty of the crime. Acting on a hunch, he dispatched a force of LIC agents to Fatima to dig out the truth. Nine weeks later, the LIC agents returned to Tharkad with irrefutable proof of Reynolds' innocence. The real culprit behind the assassination was Graf DeSimon, a Fatima nobleman with a grudge against the Duke. When Archon Steiner publicly cleared Duke Reynolds' name, the civil unrest that had flared for months between the Duke's supporters and detractors died away. The LIC had neatly helped defuse a potentially major crisis for the Steiner government.

The efforts of the LIC proved vital to the survival of the Steiner regime again in 2592, during the Star League era, when the agency's investigations revealed the mass conspiracy that prompted members of the court of Tharkad to kidnap Archon Viola Steiner's son. The Lyran Commonwealth's thriving economy and strong industrial base forced that nation to bear what its citizens saw as a disproportionate share of the costs of the Reunification War against the Periphery states. Many Lyrans, by nature reluctant to join the Star League, particularly resented the economic hardship caused by the Star League's war. Archon Viola Steiner-Dinesen left her son Kevin to govern as Archon-Designate in her absence in order to personally lead her troops against the Periphery, but the inexperienced young man proved unable to cope with the rising civil unrest. Discontent with the Commonwealth's involvement in the war soon infected members of the government, particularly the rich nobles who made up the Steering Committee. Kevin Steiner's tax increases to raise additional funds for the war effort had cost them personally, and the disgruntled nobles reacted by kidnapping Kevin, hoping to use the resulting confusion to force the Commonwealth to secede from the Star League.

LIC agents investigating the kidnapping began by making routine inquiries of known dissidents. The Steering Committee's constant calls for secession sparked suspicion in some of their

fellow members of the Estates General, however, and the representatives pressed the LIC to investigate the Committee. When they received orders from the Archon to proceed with their investigation, they quickly determined that the Steering Committee was indeed guilty. The LIC timed its roundup of the conspirators to coincide with the return of Archon Viola and her troops. They found the Archon-Designate gagged, bound, and hidden in the back of a deep closet in the Speaker of the Assembly's private quarters. Though dehydrated and weak, Kevin was able to confirm the LIC's conclusions and implicate the entire Steering Committee.

SNOW FIRE

Because the LIC appeared to be primarily concerned with internal security, many interested parties in their own and other Houses assumed they could not handle operations outside their own realm. Historically, the Lyran Commonwealth owed its power to a robust economy, and the stable rule of the Steiner family ensured continued prosperity. Therefore, the LIC concentrated its efforts on eliminating any threat to the Steiner dynasty. The general doubt that the LIC could conduct offensive intelligence operations gave rise to rumors that the LCAF intended to create a separate intelligence agency to implement operations on an interstellar level. Given the general incompetence among the Lyran armed forces, such an agency would likely have been disastrous. Fortunately for the Commonwealth, the LIC's successful execution of Operation Praying Mantis ensured that it would remain the realm's premier intelligence organization.

Operation Praying Mantis took place during the Second Succession War, and gave House Steiner revenge against House Kurita for the Combine's destruction of the LCAF's Fourth Royal Guards on the world of Caledonia in 2848. Cruel even in victory, the Coordinator's son Hugai Kurita tricked Colonel Tiber Hinders, the Fourth's commander, into killing his brother Michael in a BattleMech duel. The arrogant Hugai recorded this atrocity and sent a copy to Archon Claudius, who responded by setting Operation Praying Mantis in motion.

Accustomed to depending on cunning rather than force, the Steiners frequently struck at their enemies through deep-cover infiltration. Praying Mantis revolved around a single operative, who to this day is known only as Snow Fire. This sleeper agent lived in Unity Palace on Luthien, gathering information and awaiting orders. In 2848, Snow Fire received orders to assassinate Coordinator Yoguchi Kurita along with word of the Fourth Royal Guards' demise. The Guards' destruction gave Snow Fire a personal reason to dispatch Yoguchi Kurita; her lover had been a member of that regiment.

Snow Fire spent the next eighteen months advancing her standing in the Kurita palace until she had risen to the position of the Coordinator's favorite courtesan. On the night of Yoguchi's return from the front lines in 2850, Snow Fire slashed his throat while they lay together, then poisoned herself. To ensure that House Kurita understood that the assassination was retribution



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for the destruction of the Fourth Royal Guards, she left the insignia patch of the Fourth on the dead Coordinator's body.

SECRET POLICE

To deal with situations requiring a modified military response, the LIC maintains a terrorist secret police unit known as Loki, which operates under the umbrella of the LIC's Espionage branch. Trained in every known form of conventional and unorthodox combat, members of Loki performed a number of important missions against both the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League during the Succession Wars. The successful sabotage of seven Combine JumpShips during the Fourth Succession War by Loki agents concealed in flight-pack-equipped garbage bags provides a particularly spectacular example of the lengths to which these operatives willingly go to accomplish their missions. Many agents died during these always dangerous assignments, yet Loki never lacked volunteers for these operations.

Despite its proven effectiveness, even its supporters criticize the Lyran Intelligence Corps for failing to control the occasional outbreaks of insubordination in its ranks. One example is the infamous Loki Incident of 2488, in which Loki operatives infiltrated and raided Kurita bases on the world of Ve'ga without authorization from the Archon. This unofficial action stemmed from an overzealous LIC leader's unwillingness to deal with an Archon who he considered less than competent. A more serious offense against the Commonwealth, though not against the Archon, transpired in 3005, during the reign of Archon Alessandro Steiner.

In an attempt to suppress the rioting, civil unrest, and widespread political dissent created by the Archon's misguided military policies, Loki held much of the Lyran Commonwealth in a grip of terror and fear, conducting midnight raids to arrest ordinary citizens as "enemies of the Commonwealth." Alessandro, fearing that the turmoil might lead his ministers and generals to replace him as Archon with his popular niece Katrina, authorized a team of Loki assassins to kidnap and murder her during an inspection tour of an LCAF base on Poulso. With the help of Heimdall, a secret organization formed to combat the abuses of Loki's power unleashed by earlier, unscrupulous Archons, Katrina Steiner escaped from Poulso and spent the following year in hiding, mustering her support among the LCAF and the people until she had gained enough political strength to supplant her uncle. Once in office, Katrina took steps to end Loki's reign of terror, and has kept the secret-police force on a short leash ever since.

UNITED REALMS AND THE LIC

The LIC put those dark days behind it and now serves the good of the Commonwealth as well as the Archon. With the creation of the Federated Commonwealth and the death of Melissa Steiner-Davion, senior members of the LIC report directly to the Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. The umbrella Intelligence Secretariat coordinates LIC, DMI, and MIO operations and information, and also reports directly to the Archon Prince.

Even though direct access to the LIC would make his job

easier, Morgan Hasek-Davion, Marshal of the Armies, understands the logic behind the need for extreme secrecy and accepts that all intelligence information must come from the Secretariat. He is as loyal to Prince Victor as he was to Archon Melissa Steiner before her death, and serves him with the same trust in his judgment and abilities.

The primary priorities of the LIC today are to defend Federated Commonwealth territory against separatist forces and the incursions of Clan Jade Falcon, especially along the border the Commonwealth shares with the Clans. Most of their current activities center on organizing resistance on Clan-occupied worlds to help forestall the push expected from the Clans in the next few years. The integration of the Commonwealth and Federated Suns armed forces has allowed the Lyran military to vastly improve its efficiency, and the LCAF may yet become an equal partner with the LIC in the defense of the realm.

Despite its other concerns, the LIC maintains its vigilance over the Free Worlds League. The Commonwealth and the Free Worlds League are old enemies; in expanding its power base by allying with Liao, House Marik could make a strong push into Lyran territory. A renewal of the Marik-Steiner struggle at this time could prove disastrous, forcing the LIC to suspend their operations against the Clans to deal with this additional threat. The LIC can only hope that the League's assimilation of thousands of Word of Blake refugees may delay any aggressive moves against House Steiner.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The LIC is commanded by Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion and, along with the Department of Military Intelligence of House Davion, forms the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Command (FCIC). The two agencies work closely together, but have clearly defined theaters of operation. The DMI concentrates on keeping abreast of events in the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation, while the LIC's current operations are directed against the Free Worlds League and the Clan threat. They focus primarily on Clan Jade Falcon, who shares a border with Lyran space.

The LIC rank system is identical to that used by the Commonwealth armed forces. Cadets train at one of the LIC intelligence colleges, and graduate with the rank of lieutenant. Any operative who advances to the grade of senior officer is assigned to one of the many LIC command centers: officers skilled enough to survive field work become too valuable to the organization to be risked on active service in enemy states.

With the exception of regional command bases and the Lyran Intelligence Corps headquarters on Tharkad, the most senior officer in any command center holds the rank of colonel. These senior officers answer directly to the LIC High Command and are responsible for implementing all policy and command decisions made by their superiors. Because some bases lack HPG facilities, ranking officers spend a large percentage of their time traveling between their bases and the capital world to get new orders and

updated information. Steiner and Davion technicians are currently building a black box communication system throughout the Federated Commonwealth to eliminate much of this travel. Known as the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Command Network, this expanded system is expected to be operational within two years.

Members of Lohengrin, the LIC's riot control/anti-terrorist unit, are the only LIC operatives to wear uniforms, in their case, ballistic-armor body suits, for routine operations. The other branches of the LIC require their operatives to wear uniforms only for formal occasions. Standard LCAF officer dress includes an epaulet bearing the LIC's Steiner-fist-and-lightning-bolt insignia to denote their unit.

LIC BRANCHES

The LIC consists of six primary branches, each serving a special area of intelligence expertise. The Steiner-Davion alliance joins these branches with the equivalent branches of House Davion's DMI for certain operations, though these missions are largely limited to threats that would directly affect the combined Commonwealth and Federated Suns interests. The improved resources made possible by the alliance do not mean that the LIC has relaxed its vigilance, however. To protect its organization from infiltration by enemy agents or internal dissidents such as the Free Skye Movement, the LIC subjects potential recruits to intensive screening prior to acceptance.

Some of the earliest conversations on creating the Federated Commonwealth discussed the continuing roles of the Lyran Intelligence Corps and the Department of Military Intelligence. The idea of restructuring the two agencies into a single intelligence service was rejected almost immediately. Both organizations considered the proposal an insult to centuries of loyal and efficient service. Because each intelligence agency obviously has greater experience and understanding of the foreign and domestic political and military situations within their respective states, both leaders agreed that the most effective use of their resources was increased and continuing focus on their home territories.

NORNS



Charged with the nearly overwhelming responsibility of gathering and assimilating information from throughout the Inner Sphere, the Norns assignment is one of the most demanding within the LIC. This branch accomplishes its task with two subdivisions, one responsible for passive monitoring and the other for active monitoring.

The passive monitoring department intercepts and analyzes all communications within the Federated Commonwealth. In addition, they maintain surveillance on all ComStar transmissions sent into or from Lyran borders. They use the information gathered in this fashion to work closely with the Molehunters division of the espionage branch to whom they report all enemy activity within the Commonwealth.

The active monitoring service maintains close ties to the Commonwealth military. This department monitors all troop movements within the Inner Sphere to constantly provide the High Command with an updated version of the current logistical situation.

The Norns have access to the vast network of logistics computers manned by the electronic information-gathering division of House Davion's DMI (MI3). In the past few years, combined data from Steiner and Davion sources has increased the well-known efficiency of the Commonwealth intelligence service. Though the two information-gathering services work well together when their leaders require it, as during the Clan invasion, both branches guard their separate spheres of knowledge jealously.

The Norns' extensive knowledge of computer systems makes their branch the most obvious choice to maintain the new FCIC Network. They are taking an active part in the completion of the communications network, and will eventually take complete responsibility for operating the Lyran half of the system. Intent upon learning to maintain the black box network as quickly as possible, many Norn operatives have already studied the technology at the New Avalon Institute of Science in the Federated Suns.

Intelligence Command Network

Even before the onslaught of the Fourth Succession War, both the LIC and the DMI apparently discussed the possibility of creating a joint intelligence network. To survive and successfully navigate Inner Sphere politics, the Federated Commonwealth needed to develop an effective and secure method of monitoring and protecting the huge super-state both internally and externally. Such an enormous task was clearly beyond the capabilities of either the Davion or the Steiner intelligence agencies acting alone.

Once the Federated Commonwealth consolidated its hold over the territories gained in the war, the high commands of the Lyran Intelligence Corps and the Department of Military Intelligence set about creating a network that could relay information in a timely manner, allowing agents to act upon it with the greatest possible speed. Using "black box" fax machines, technology that Katrina Steiner brought back from the Periphery and shared with Hanse Davion during the Fourth Succession War, they created the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Command Network (FCICN). Based in the Fox's Den on New Avalon, the operation rivals the ComStar hyperpulse network for timely, secure interstellar communication. The FCICN offers the advantage of immediate transmission of individual messages, while ComStar still finds batching messages to be the most cost-effective method of operation.



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The network is based on the command circuits Hanse Davion created to maintain communications between his forces throughout the ComStar Interdiction of the Federated Suns in 3029, during the Fourth Succession War. Black box communication devices now connect each of those command circuits, creating a network of interplanetary transmitters connecting the major worlds of the entire Federated Commonwealth.

The FCICN communications channel is completely secure. Not only can information travel to any major world as efficiently as a ComStar HPG transmission, but because the system is manned exclusively by operatives of the DMI's Electronic Information Gathering department and the Norms of the Lyran Intelligence Corps, interception by enemy agents is virtually impossible. And unlike data transmitted via HPG, messages traveling over the FCICN cannot be intercepted by ROM.

In addition to this system, which serves all major Federated Commonwealth worlds, a network of JumpShips stationed at these and many other worlds carry messages to 90 percent of the remaining alliance worlds, thus providing both intelligence agencies with an almost complete overview of their entire theater of operations. This blanket coverage gives the Federated Commonwealth a distinct advantage over the other states of the Inner Sphere and the Clans.



DIPLOMATIC GUARD

The Diplomatic Guard serve as the national security force, charged to protect and maintain the general safety of all important individuals within the Lyran Commonwealth. These men and women receive intensive training in both armed and unarmed combat, as well as in the use of various vehicles. Candidates undergo exhaustive screening before induction into the Diplomatic Guard to ensure their loyalty to the Commonwealth.

Their primary responsibility is to provide security, but the Diplomatic Guard also serve as drivers or DropShip pilots when key personnel require transportation. They also perform courier services to transmit vital, high-security communications.

Diplomatic Guard personnel operate across the Federated Commonwealth, but most work on Tharkad, because most nobles and administrators keep a residence there. For the same reason, this section maintains its headquarters within the Royal Palace itself, though the rest of the LIC has its headquarters in Asgard.

Service in the Diplomatic Guard provides many opportunities for high-profile duty, but the assignment carrying the highest honor is manning one of the two *Griffin* BattleMechs that guard the

Throne Room in Tharkad City, one on either side of the throne. Teams of DG personnel take eight-hour shifts seated within the cockpits of those 'Mechs to maintain an around-the-clock state of readiness against an attack on the Archon.

The LIC recently assigned a number of DG agents to New Avalon to serve as bodyguards for Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. The Federated Suns' own security division complained about this arrangement, because they have always served as the Davion family's royal guards. Davion's Department of Military Intelligence shares the LIC's concern for protecting the Prince's person, so the issue remains nothing more than a few grumbles among the rank and file.



DIPLOMATIC CORPS

The LIC's Diplomatic Corps is the branch of the LIC most visible to the other Successor States. Members of this branch appear at all major functions in which the Lyran Commonwealth has an interest. They circulate at social events and attempt to determine the motives and plans of foreign officials by keeping up with their activities. Diplomatic Corps agents also spread necessary disinformation among the foreign ambassadors. These operatives must be experts in the fields of communication, psychology, and social etiquette.

The DC usually assigns operatives to the entourage of any Lyran noble traveling to other Successor States. While these agents also receive training to help provide protection for the noble, they often combine that assignment with information-gathering missions.

Diplomatic Corps agents can make no mistakes in matters of communication, appearance, and dress. The LIC supplies each operative with substantial expense accounts to purchase the elegant clothing appropriate for such functions. Each agent specializes in the culture and social protocol of at least one of the other Great Houses, and all speak at least one foreign language. Their work may not always be sensitive, but it is vitally important, and agents must take care never to offend a contact or potential source of information.

The DC recruits most of its operatives from the ranks of the Foreign Affairs Office, where agents receive diplomatic training. They then learn intelligence operations in special Diplomatic Corps programs. This obvious overlap in goals results in some ill will between the two agencies, particularly since the DC recently began "head-hunting" among the FAO's staff.

Many Diplomatic Corps operatives are now stationed on

Terra to serve as intermediaries between the Federated Commonwealth and ComStar, who lost many personnel to the splinter with the Word of Blake. ComStar's First Circuit seems especially anxious for support from the Commonwealth in its coming showdown against the renegade Word of Blake faction. The Federated Commonwealth sees ComStar's offer of unrestricted access to that organization's historical archives as a bribe to win the allied Successor States' favor. Regardless of whether or not the Federated Commonwealth accepts that offer, the Diplomatic Corps plans to keep a major presence on Terra. Neither the LIC nor the DMI intends to be caught napping should ComStar make a surprise move.



LOHENGRIN

Of all the branches of the LIC, the Lohengrin maintains the most specific background requirements for their candidates. Because of the kind of work Lohengrin operatives undertake, the unit accepts only orphans with no family ties as agents.

The Lohengrin comprises the LIC's anti-terrorist team and train alongside the Loki terrorist units in the arts of combat and infiltration. Their primary theater of operations is within the Lyran Commonwealth, where they work to counter the activities of various terrorist groups that oppose the government or its policies.

The Lohengrin often storms its opposition, striking quickly and violently to overwhelm the enemy. This tactic results in an unusually high mortality rate among operatives, but the number of new recruits found in orphanages on Tharkad and nearby worlds continues to keep the unit well staffed.

The Lohengrin and Loki units commonly train with and against each other to improve their performance because their missions require similar skills. This crosstraining appears to be an effective technique: the Lohengrin are unquestionably the most efficient anti-terrorist unit in the Inner Sphere.

They proved their prowess most recently against the forces of Clan Jade Falcon and Clan Steel Viper. On the world of Roadside, a single, 18-member Lohengrin unit armed with infantry weapons, including a single particle projection cannon, decimated three Stars of Elementals and stopped four OmniMechs before surrendering to the massing Clan forces.

That ruthless drive to accomplish its mission has earned the Lohengrin the respect of every Great House leader in the years since its creation. With the possible exception of the ISF's DEST units, no other Inner Sphere unit shows such fanatical patriotism and loyalty as the members of Lohengrin. Most observers credit

the intensive indoctrination program each Lohengrin recruit experiences as a child for the unit's success record, which guarantees that the LIC will continue to train Lohengrin members according to this method.

PROPAGANDA

Unlike the information agencies of other Inner Sphere states, particularly the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation, the propaganda branch of the LIC allows the media a great deal of freedom. Indeed, the propaganda branch prefers to follow a policy of non-intervention, except in cases where the information revealed might damage the government.

Like any government, the Lyran Commonwealth guards classified military data closely. In general, however, the propaganda organization hides almost nothing from the people of its realm, who enjoy nearly complete freedom of expression.

The formation of the Federated Commonwealth gave the propaganda division a new role. Certain groups within the Lyran Commonwealth vigorously oppose the Steiner/Davion union, and some wield considerable power and influence, especially Duke Ryan Steiner. As an extension of the successful efforts it has made in the past to reconcile the Lyrans to unpopular decisions made by their government, the propaganda division has put in long hours attempting to win these groups' acceptance of the Federated Commonwealth. Wisely, they base their arguments on the advantages to be gained by the alliance, gently pointing out that it is, after all, already an established fact. Most of this work goes on behind the scenes, but so far appears successful in keeping the Federated Commonwealth a unified entity.

ESPIONAGE

The espionage branch of the LIC has three divisions: the Bondians, responsible for espionage training and operations; the Molehunters, in charge of internal security; and Loki, the elite terrorist group.

Bondians

The Bondians' primary work centers on training and then assigning operatives to a mission. Their responsibilities range from the initial induction and education of new operatives to placing of deep-cover agents within other Houses.

The Bondians monitor all educational facilities within Lyran space in order to single out those children who show the potential to become operatives. Once identified, these candidates receive subtle encouragement to study areas of expertise that would make them better suited to work in the LIC. An LIC agent then recruits the candidate when he or she would normally begin advanced education. The Bondians educate the recruits in one of the six LIC colleges on Tharkad before assigning them to positions and missions.

Of all the LIC branches, the Bondians sustain the greatest amount of contact with their operatives. From the day the Bondians single out a potential candidate to the day that operative leaves the service, the Bondians monitor his or her progress and condi-



LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS

tion. Because Bondian operatives focus their careers on assignment and command, the LIC commonly assigns

Bondians to senior positions within its regional and planetary command centers across the Lyran Commonwealth. Indeed, most LIC officers who reach a senior rank are transferred to the Bondians rather than retired, so they may continue their careers training and assigning lower-grade operatives.

Many younger operatives consider assignment to the Bondians as the end of their LIC careers, even though the Bondians play the most essential role in the LIC. As they learn their new duties, however, these individuals realize that their work for the LIC and the Federated Commonwealth began with their transfer to this espionage division.

Molehunters

Another division of the espionage branch, the Molehunters act as the LIC's elite counterinsurgency team, charged to detect and eliminate all infiltrators within the Commonwealth. Their authority to do so extends to all divisions of the LCAF, the Estates General, and even the various mercenary companies the nation employs. Potential Molehunter operatives undergo careful screening by the LIC command for loyalty to the Commonwealth, and receive intensive interrogation and psychological warfare training.

During the darkest chapter of Loki's history, it held the people of the Lyran Commonwealth in a grip of terror, during the reign of Alessandro Steiner. The Molehunters were responsible for detecting and removing from Loki those members personally loyal to Alessandro in order to restore order in the realm. This event continues to be a source of tension between the two espionage divisions.

The Molehunters' current focus is on finding and removing all SAFE operatives within Commonwealth territory. The alliance between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation, to be sealed by the marriage between Isis Marik and Sun-Tzu Liao, could establish a super-state to rival the Federated Commonwealth. The LIC wants to clear all SAFE operatives out of the Commonwealth before Capellan intelligence begins an anticipated wave of infiltration in support of the Marik-Liao alliance. The Molehunters intend to keep enemy agent activity to a minimum in order to concentrate on the most prominent threat, the Clans.

Loki

The third division of the espionage branch, Loki has played an active role in Commonwealth intelligence operations over the last twenty years, but comparatively little is known about their methods or goals. The Loki serve as the Lyran terrorist elite, a secret police similar in capabilities to the "Rabid Foxes" of the DMI and House Kurita's DEST units. Because of the specialized nature of its work, Loki takes its orders directly from the head of LIC.

The reports that have reached Wolf's Dragoons describe Loki as one of the most competent fighting forces currently

operating within the Inner Sphere. They receive training in every form of combat, from unarmed fighting styles to BattleMech assault. Training lasts for six years after Loki accepts a candidate, and agents must take supplemental training at regular intervals to remain combat-ready at all times.

The limited information available does reveal that Loki acts as a special-forces unit, and evidence points to their active service in every type of espionage role, from terrorist activities within Commonwealth borders to suicide attacks during planetary assaults. Because Loki's missions so often end in death, candidates may decline to become part of the organization when recruited.

Due to their specialized role, agents of Loki enjoy the benefits of a life of luxury, and the state provides for all their needs. However, the Inner Sphere does not acknowledge their existence, no records exist proving their allegiance, and they are forbidden to form any personal relationships but those authorized by their superiors. The life of a Loki agent is a lonely one, but people who join the terrorist organization know what they are getting into and accept the disadvantages as their duty to the Steiners.

Loki has served the Commonwealth faithfully and well for hundreds of years. Archon Alessandro Steiner transformed the unit from special forces into an elite death squad during his reign over the Lyran Commonwealth, even authorizing Loki to hunt down and assassinate his niece Katrina Steiner in 3005. Loki's willingness to serve an Archon's personal ambitions, and the secrecy that surrounded the unit from its inception, gives the secret police an almost evil reputation, even within the Lyran Commonwealth itself.

Once Katrina Steiner became Archon, however, she firmly reined Loki in, using the organization to carry out top-secret state operations rather than to terrorize her own people. Melissa continued her mother's policies, and once more Loki became the crack secret intelligence unit it was created to be.

All available information indicates that Loki units are currently stationed along the border between the Federated Commonwealth and Clan Jade Falcon on full alert. These "cells" of operatives will act as guerrilla units against Clan forces in the event of a further advance. This strategic placement of elite troops could prove more dangerous than the Clans realize, as it appears that the ISF of House Kurita intends to implement the same scheme to protect Combine borders.

Heimdall

Though not part of the LIC, this shadowy group appears to have developed concurrently with Loki, in response to that organization's abuses of its fearsome power. Only its members and the fortunate few who Heimdall has aided can attest to its existence. Though some evidence supports the rumors that an organized group does exist under this name, even the rumors are only whispered fragments of secret conversations. Like its existence, Heimdall's political orientation and aims are unknown, save for its opposition to Loki. The size of the group and the influence, if any, it wields within the Federated Commonwealth today also remain a mystery. All anyone knows for certain is the origin of

Heimdall's name. From Norse mythology, it refers to the guardian who protected the fortress of Asgard from evil giants and monsters.

Public knowledge of this shadowy organization comes mostly from the romanticized tales surrounding the events leading up to Alessandro Steiner's abdication in favor of Katrina Steiner in 3007. During Alessandro's reign, he allowed Loki, the LIC's secret police, to run rampant, conducting midnight raids against his enemies and arresting innocent people in an effort to control the civil unrest spawned by his unpopular military policies. In 3005, he sent Loki to assassinate Katrina Steiner, who was taking advantage of her uncle's military bungling to consolidate support for herself in the armed forces. Katrina escaped the Loki attack on Poulso, and, as the story goes, members of Heimdall contacted her and helped her escape.

Heimdall has also been connected to Takashi Kurita's rumored attempt to kidnap Melissa Steiner prior to her marriage to Hanse Davion. It has proved impossible to document the truth of the rumors, however, much less obtain proof of Heimdall's existence or their involvement in the alleged incident. Knowing the extent to which the leaders of the Draconis Combine will go to achieve their ends, they may well have attempted to eliminate Melissa to prevent the union of the powerful Federated Suns and the prosperous Lyran Commonwealth.

Loki is no longer the threat it presented during the Alessandro era, and because no evidence exists to prove that Heimdall still survives, the intelligence community might assume that the group disbanded. However, organizations like Heimdall usually remain vigilant as long as the power they oppose exists. If Heimdall is real, we must assume it will continue its efforts in defense of the Lyran people.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 35642-SL3-10/3/32

THE FOLLOWING WAS EXCERPTED FROM *STEAL THIS DATA: A GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT ESPIONAGE IN THE 31ST CENTURY*, AN UNDERGROUND TEXT CIRCULATED ON SOLARIS VII, RAHNESHIRE, IN THE FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH. THE TEXT'S AUTHOR REMAINS UNKNOWN. THE ACCURACY OF THE EXCERPT HAS NOT BEEN CONFIRMED.

Hidden computer programs offer the free-lance spy or saboteur an almost unlimited range of possibilities. By exploiting the information-processing power of the host computer, these programs can multiply the effectiveness of a single agent a thousandfold, performing tasks that would be impossible for a human operative. Infiltrate one of these into an enemy's computer network, then relax and wait for results. They can remain buried in a target's network for months, perhaps years until triggered. They never tire, never complain, are immune to boredom and ambition. In short, they lack the weaknesses of a human operative, making them infinitely more difficult to detect or compromise.

An ingenious set of hidden programs, in fact, exposed Melissa Steiner-Davion when the then Archon-Designate attempted to travel incognito from Tharkad to New Avalon aboard the DropShip *Silver Eagle*.

The episode began when a travel agent on Tharkad entered the Archon-Designate's alias, Joana Barker, into the corporate computer of Monopole, the DropShip line operating the *Silver Eagle*. After assembling a profile of Barker/Steiner to help plan her travel accommodations, the machine forwarded the data to Lyran intelligence and immigration computers for the routine checks performed on all travelers.

As the Lyran immigration computer performed its tasks, a program planted in the machine duplicated Barker/Steiner's Monopole-generated profile, then transported it to another massive computer, which broke the profile down into its component parts and began checking the countless bits of data against its near-infinite datastore, as well as the Royal Tharkad Library system. All the details of Barker's profile checked perfectly. The records confirmed her education, the length of her current residence, her credit and medical histories.

One item, however, taxed the computer—her name. After a check of the Barker family tree failed to produce any matches, the program continued its search with a thoroughness and speed no human agent could hope to equal. The program scoured lists of ancient Catholic saints, entertainers popular at the time of her birth, historical figures, famous ships and BattleMechs. When those searches proved fruitless, the program turned to the computer's most recently added database—a complete survey of 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century fiction. There, the program found a match in a fictional character named Joana, born to Lucy and Benjamin Barker, the latter more well known as Sweeney Todd.

The program's confirmation of the full name match triggered another hidden program, which extracted a copy of the *Silver Eagle*'s passenger list from the Lyran computers. After erasing any trace of their work, the programs summarized their findings in a report, which then traveled through a series of other computers before reaching its final destination—Duke Aldo Lestrade.

The information later found its way to the Draconis Combine and prompted the Combine's attempt to kidnap the late Archon when the *Silver Eagle* was diverted to the Draconis world of Styx. The failure of the elite ISF jump infantry and the Genyosha to complete the task provides a contrast to the success of the computer programs that prompted the mission.



LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS

HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING

The primary headquarters of the Lyran Intelligence Corps is based on the planet Tharkad, the Lyran capitalworld. Built inside the military headquarters known as Asgard on the crest of Mount Wotan, the LIC complex rests some 200 feet beneath the base of the mountain. The LIC directs all operations from this hardened bunker, assigning agents to missions and monitoring the current political and military situation throughout the Inner Sphere.

Each branch maintains its own administrative department as well as barracks, training areas, and stores. The part of the complex the LIC occupies can house up to five hundred personnel, a mere fraction of the total LIC force. Operatives spend most of their time on assignment, rotating back to Tharkad for debriefing and R & R.

The command center of the LIC headquarters lies beneath the rest of the complex, protected by walls two meters thick and reinforced by a charged-steel mesh. In addition to protecting the occupants and equipment against bombardment, the walls also absorb electromagnetic pulse should an attacker resort to nuclear-attack weapons.

The New Avalon Institute of Science recently helped install several new computers in the command center. These computers are the latest version of those used by the Fox's Den on New Avalon, substantially upgrading the LIC's capability to project enemy strategy and troop movement probabilities.

Because of the stringent security surrounding the Asgard complex, little else is known about the LIC headquarters on Tharkad. Both Loki and Lohengrin maintain constant patrols around Mount Wotan to supplement those set by the LCAF, which also works from headquarters within the mountain bunker.

Though agents chosen for the DMI and LIC still train exclusively at the appropriate facilities within their own realms, those LIC agents chosen for the Norn branch undertake a substantial part of their training at the NAIS on New Avalon. This arrangement, instituted within the last four years, serves primarily to facilitate increased cooperation and decreased rivalry between the DMI and LIC, but the ultimate success of this underlying goal remains in doubt.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Up until the Clan invasion, the Lyran Intelligence Corps had one major advantage over the other Successor States' intelligence services: it could draw on the vast pool of resources offered by the strong Lyran economy to train and support its operatives. The economies of the other Houses sometimes suffered in the face of increasing military and civilian needs, but even the Fourth Succession War failed to significantly affect the industrially based Commonwealth economy. The loss of most of its Tamar Pact worlds to the Clans has cost the Lyran state a substantial part of its industrial base. For the first time in its history, the Steiner economy is sinking into a full-blown depression. The technology and materiel support available from the Federated Suns Depart-

ment of Military Intelligence has helped the LIC maintain its high success rate in its current missions, but we expect the depleted Lyran economy to severely hamper LIC operations within the next few years.

Though individual LIC branches have shown solid, successful performances, cooperation between the various branches sometimes falls prey to interdepartmental rivalries. The most famous of these rivalries is the near-feud that Loki and Molehunter carry on, stemming from the Molehunters' purge of Lokj's ranks following Archon Alessandro Steiner's abdication at the turn of the thirty-first century.

The LIC's current stumbling block in intelligence-gathering is the Clans. As with the other intelligence agencies of the Inner Sphere, infiltrating, spying, and conducting intelligence operations against other Houses of the Successor States is old hat to the LIC—these governments work in an almost predictable way. The Clans are an alien society with different principles and mores. Even the military of the Inner Sphere finds it difficult to defend against them, let alone understand them well enough to predict their behavior and thereby counter or anticipate their next move. Clan Jade Falcon, the most warlike Clan in the Inner Sphere, poses the greatest threat to Steiner space. Fortunately, they appear to be watching Clan Steel Viper at the moment, giving the LIC a little breathing room to determine the most effective way to deal with the threat on its border.

Another major difficulty the LIC must deal with is the Lyran Commonwealth's vulnerable location within the Inner Sphere. The intelligence agency must keep a sharp eye on its nation's borders with the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League, and must now also reckon with the added threat of Clan Jade Falcon. Even when the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Command Network becomes operational, both the LIC and DMI must allow at least a hundred hours before they can expect support from their opposite number in an intelligence crisis. This time lag results from the astronomical physical distance between the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns. The LIC must continue to upgrade its operations so that it can defend House Steiner against attack from any of these three fronts, and against internal attack by active separatist movements. The LIC faces a difficult assignment, especially considering the vast spaces that make up the Lyran Commonwealth's unfriendly borders.

STEINER/DAVION RELATIONS

Several decades have passed since the Federated Commonwealth officially became a single political entity. Though Duke Ryan Steiner's Free Skye Movement continues to oppose the alliance, many Lyrans still believe it was an important step toward reuniting the Inner Sphere under a single banner. Not since the days of the Star League has such a super-state existed within the sphere of human space, a fact to which many pro-Federated Commonwealth activists proudly point in their debates with those still opposed to the union. Unfortunately, false rumors of Victor Steiner-Davion's complicity in his mother's death, his public preference for his Davion heritage, and the economic hardship of propping up the Davion economy with sharply depleted re-

sources, are slowly but steadily eroding this public goodwill.

Even the preliminary discussions of a Federated Suns-Lyran Commonwealth alliance addressed the joint operations of the two militaries and intelligence agencies. The military combined fairly smoothly into an effective fighting force dubbed the AFFC, but linking the intelligence agencies presented a thornier problem. The Department of Military Intelligence and the Lyran Intelligence Corps began by maintaining separate operations within each other's borders. Those operations did not receive official sanction from the opposing House, but as these were restricted mostly to surveillance activities, tension did not arise between the agencies immediately. However, some ongoing operations and new missions created by the DMI and LIC conflicted, and hopes that the two agencies could work together were quickly dashed.

The two Houses agreed on a compromise. The office of Intelligence Secretariat was created as an umbrella organization to coordinate the two intelligence agencies. Alex Mallory serves as Intelligence Secretary, and answers directly to Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. The DMI and LIC each operate within their pre-alliance borders, joining forces only when either organization requests assistance or by direct command of Victor Steiner-Davion.

An ongoing source of conflict between the Davion and Steiner intelligence agencies is the DMI's steadfast refusal to permit Steiner operatives to train in Davion facilities. In fact, the DMI refuses even to reveal the locations of their training facilities. The LIC finds this secrecy unwarranted and irritating, but consider their facilities to be far superior to any that House Davion could offer. (The record bears out this assumption.) They continue to request clearance to DMI training facilities as a matter of pride, and use it as a slap in the face whenever the DMI challenges LIC operations.

To the extent required, the two agencies work well together. Mutual assistance has increased the DMI's effectiveness in operations conducted against the Combine's Maskirovka agents currently active in the St. Ives Compact, and has given the LIC a boost in its struggle to infiltrate and monitor the Clan Jade Falcon forces occupying former Lyran worlds. Both intelligence agencies also share training facilities and methods, thus increasing each House's insight into the efficiency of the other's operations.

The Federated Commonwealth presents an outward appearance of a firmly allied nation. However, a number of anti-alliance, separatist movements, particularly in the Lyran Commonwealth, continually threaten to bubble up and mar this veneer of solidarity. The separatist movements appear to be gathering their forces, some quietly and some not so quietly. The most obvious sign of this mobilization is that someone is hiring mercenaries through the Hiring Hall on Outreach, ostensibly for garrison duty on smaller planets in the Federated Commonwealth. All contracts investigated appear completely legal and aboveboard, yet units hired under these contracts regularly fail to show up for the agreed-upon assignment.

Particularly the LIC, but also the DMI are keeping close watch on this situation. The LIC has increased surveillance on known separatist groups in Lyran Commonwealth space, and has or-

dered all agents to be alert for signs of a potential open rebellion or subtler plots.

PERSONALITIES

GENERAL KARL HALBURG

Commander In Chief, Lyran Intelligence Corps

General Halburg embodies the physical stereotype of the military man: close-cropped hair, piercing blue eyes, and solid physique. A young man new to the ranks of the LIC when the Federated Commonwealth sealed its alliance, the General staunchly supported the union since its earliest days. He saw the consolidated state as an opportunity to help shape a new force in the Inner Sphere.



Halburg rose through the ranks of the Norms and then the Diplomatic Corps on his talent for diplomacy. He continues to use this well-honed skill to his advantage by traveling to meet personally with his counterparts in the MIO and the Department of Military Intelligence.

General Halburg is a well-respected and popular man who has managed to remain on good terms with every one of his subordinate officers. This alone is no mean feat in view of the political quagmire that characterizes the Lyran command structure.



LYRAN INTELLIGENCE CORPS

KOMMANDANT-GENERAL ALICIA SAVINSON

Commanding Officer, Loki

Descended from one of the first families of Scandinavian colonists to join the initial exodus from Terra in the 22nd century, Savinson possesses all of the beauty of that people. She ruthlessly uses her stunning good looks as an advantage; those who do not know her tend to underestimate her because of it.

Savinson commands Loki, the LIC's secret police. She advanced quickly through the ranks, achieving her current position after only ten years. General Halburg appointed her as head of the espionage division after her predecessor died in a raid against Clan Jade Falcon. At 33 years of age, she is the youngest commanding officer in the Lyran Intelligence Corps.



As did many of her predecessors (and in direct defiance of the wishes of the head of the LIC), Savinson has proved her worth many times since her appointment by leading her operatives personally on key raids. Nearly every Loki commander has used this command tactic to instill greater loyalty in his or her agents, and the method appears to be completely successful, as no Loki agent has ever been turned.

Savinson wears her sidearm at all times, a pearl-handled antique Desert Eagle pistol, presented to Savinson by Melissa Steiner-Davion on the occasion of her appointment to command of Loki.

KOMMANDANT-GENERAL GUNTHER YORDEN

Commanding Officer, Diplomatic Corps

A tall, imposing figure, Gunther Yorden's position as head of the Diplomatic Corps makes him the most well-known member of the LIC high command. His mane of thick black hair flowing over the shoulders of his dress uniform is a common sight at all major state functions held within the Federated Commonwealth.

He spends considerable time in the company of Ryan Steiner at these functions, attempting to keep the young noble in line in the presence of foreign officials. This task is made difficult by Steiner's reputation for a hot temper and compounded by his popularity and influence throughout the Federation of Skye.



The 50-year-old Yorden has headed up the Diplomatic Corps for 15 years, and rumors abound that he plans to retire soon, though he has yet to name a successor. Yorden has concentrated his efforts over the years on maintaining the stability of the Federated Commonwealth against a growing number of anti-alliance groups.

KOMMANDANT-GENERAL SASHA GORGE

Commanding Officer, Lohengrin

In his early forties, Kommandant-General Sasha Gorge is one of the LIC's most respected officers. When he was two years old, both his parents, MechWarriors with the Third Lyran Guards, died in action with their unit. LIC recruitment officers recognized his potential almost as soon as Gorge reached an orphanage in Tharkad City, and marked him for the ranks of Lohengrin, the Lyran anti-terrorist unit, by the time he turned five.



Little is known of his early career in the LIC. Our operatives only took notice of him beginning with his meteoric rise in rank, beginning with his taking command of his own Lohengrin team at the age of 29. He considers his current position within the LIC as the pinnacle of his career, and rumors say that Gorge refused promotion to the Lyran High Command as intelligence advisor, preferring to remain with the Lohengrin.

Gorge's average build hides massive strength, which he often reveals when leading training sessions. His raven-black hair is beginning to gray, but he continues to wear it in the cropped

style he has favored throughout his career. Gorge lost an eye during a siege operation on Donegal nearly five years ago and wears a steel eye-patch over the scar that remains.

Despite his stern and demanding leadership style, Gorge maintains good relations with his own unit, the commanding officers of the other LIC branches, and the Commonwealth's new allies in the Department of Military Intelligence. Gorge is deeply committed to his work as commanding officer of Lohengrin and does not plan to retire for years to come.

KOMMANDANT-GENERAL GUNTHER PROCKNOW

Commanding Officer, Molehunters

Gunther Procknow stands more than two meters tall, a fierce, imposing figure in his standard dress of black suit and mirrored eyeglasses. Once a member of the Lyran Guards, his commander transferred Procknow to the LIC after he uncovered an ISF infiltrator within his regiment. Soon after completing his LIC training, he was assigned to the Molehunters, and led a number of successful operations within the Lyran Commonwealth. His efforts helped remove a succession of enemy infiltrators that effectively set back the Lyran-based intelligence operations of both the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine some ten years each.



Procknow makes a fearsome impression upon entering a room. His violent temper shows in the permanent sneer twisting his mouth, a fearsome sight compounded when others learn that he is head of the Lyran counterinsurgency branch. Jokes circulate regularly that enemy spies break down and confess at the mere sight of him, a jest that may have some basis in truth. The fear he inspires is reinforced by occasional eruptions into streams of Teutonic curses and insults left over from his German ancestry. In this mood even his own men scurry to avoid his wrath.

Though a volatile, and some would say dangerous man, Procknow is one of the most experienced and successful leaders in the history of the Molehunters. He is a thorough professional in his work and takes very little leisure time, preferring to immerse himself in the next investigation in his free time. Currently 50 years old, Procknow will likely remain in his present position for a number of years.





DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE



Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion sits on an increasingly precarious throne. Ever-louder cries for Lyran secession have destabilized the mighty Federated Commonwealth, while Clan raids on Lyran planets add fuel to the fire. Preoccupied with keeping order in his vast realm, Victor has all but abandoned Tormana Liao's freedom fighters, leaving him with one less weapon against his Capellan enemies. Capellan Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao has stepped up Maskirovka and Death Commando guerrilla operations in the Sarna March, Davion territory captured from the Capellans during the Fourth Succession War. Aided by the rising power of the Free Worlds League, Sun-Tzu will stop at nothing to take back his lost worlds.

OVERVIEW

Aside from the Draconis Combine, the most militaristic of the Successor States throughout history has been the Federated Suns, which fields one of the most experienced and effective war machines in the Inner Sphere. Despite their claims that they use their enormous military power only to achieve noble goals, the actions of the Federated Suns on several occasions have given the lie to this claim. In the bloody years of war that mark the nearly three centuries since the fall of the Star League, the Federated Suns has survived by relying on a vast army of BattleMech and conventional regiments, and has proved as ruthless as any of its supposedly less noble neighbors.

This ruthlessness may stand the realm in good stead in the years to come. The Federated Commonwealth alliance met opposition from various separatist groups from the beginning, and some of those groups, particularly the Free Skye Movement led by Duke Ryan Steiner, continue to gain strength and supporters in the wake of Archon Melissa Steiner's horrific assassination. While Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion recognizes that this particular group is probably best dealt with by the intelligence and military efforts of House Steiner, his close working relationship with the Intelligence Secretariat keeps him abreast of this situation and other threats to the Federated Commonwealth. The Archon Prince stands ready to send to House Steiner whatever support is necessary to maintain a peaceful union.

The Department of Military Intelligence (DMI), once the primary intelligence agency of the Federated Suns, reflects its realm's historic reliance on the military. Since the reign of Prince Hanse Davion, the civilian Ministry of Information, Intelligence, and Operations (MIIO) has played an increasingly important role, principally because of the close, personal friendship between Prince Hanse and his MIIO head, Quintus Allard. The DMI, however, remains a powerful tool at the Archon Prince's disposal.

Because the Federated Suns maintains a civilian intelligence agency to deal with all internal intelligence affairs, the DMI can concentrate on espionage. From the long years of the Succession Wars, to the alliance with House Steiner, to the Clan invasion of the Inner Sphere, the Department of Military Intelligence focused

on actively disrupting the enemies of the Federated Suns (and now the Federated Commonwealth), devoting most of its time and resources to external affairs. Most other Inner Sphere intelligence agencies must spend their time defending their realm's borders: the DMI/MIO split gives the Federated Suns a jump on the competition.

The terms of the Federated Suns–Lyran Commonwealth alliance created the Intelligence Secretariat, an umbrella organization charged with coordinating the activities and operations of both Houses' intelligence agencies. The Secretariat allows the DMI to be even more effective, as the DMI need only check with one office to determine if existing operations by either MIO or the Lyran Intelligence Corps (LIC) will help, hinder, or overlap with planned or ongoing missions. The Armed Forces of the Federated Suns (AFFS) also supports the DMI's espionage efforts.

After the disastrous collapse of the Davion front during the First Succession War, the Marshals of the AFFS divided up the Draconis and Capellan Marches into Polymorphous Defensive Zones (PDZ), replacing large defensive regions that cut straight across the Marches with smaller, odd-shaped zones designed to allow troops from each zone to easily back each other up. This system allows the AFFS to immediately send in reserve units to strengthen any point along the borders of the Federated Suns as needed, rather than pulling units from elsewhere along the border.

The High Command of the combined Federated Suns and Lyran armies (the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth, or AFFC) renamed the PDZ after the Fourth Succession War. Now called Commands, the principle remained the same, a further bow to the proficient AFFS organization. In fact, the combined forces adopted many of the Davion structures and systems, only learning from the experience of the War of 3039 the value of a split command instead of centralized power.

Unlike intelligence agencies such as the ISF or the Maskirovka, the DMI dedicates its efforts to military problems and operates in a strictly military manner. This virtually eliminates political intrigues and corruption within the command structure, and creates a more cohesive and effective force.

The DMI's contribution is largely responsible for keeping the Federated Suns at the forefront of both military and political affairs for the last several hundred years. Their strength and technological advancements combined with the LIC's resources and more subtle infiltration style make the Federated Commonwealth intelligence efforts a formidable force. Their cooperative efforts would have even more impact if the two agencies were working together smoothly—as it stands, neither organization will abandon its initial reluctance to relinquish any control over its individual operations. The Intelligence Secretariat does have each agency's full cooperation in joint ventures, and both supply accurate information when required to do so, but the working relationship between the two remains strained.

BRIEFING

The recent assassination of Archon Melissa Steiner blew the lid off the rumblings of discontent in the Federated Commonwealth, particularly in Lyran space. Many Lyran citizens feel that House Davion unfairly allowed the Lyran worlds to take the brunt of the Clan invasion. The LIC continues to resent the DMI's preoccupation with safeguarding its own state's borders at the expense of the larger Federated Commonwealth. The Intelligence Secretariat has taken charge of the investigation into the identity of Melissa's assassin, one of the few missions for which all three intelligence agencies have worked together willingly and well. Wolfnet agents report that the Intelligence Secretariat captured the man they believe responsible for the late Archon's death and are holding him in isolation.

Leaving the MIO and the Intelligence Secretariat to cope with looming internal troubles, the DMI concentrates its efforts on a host of external threats. As a strictly military organization, the DMI has more clearly defined aims than those of other intelligence services. Though updated information about the military and political situation of the Inner Sphere allows the DMI Command Department to change these aims as required, the DMI continues to pursue several basic goals.

MAINTAINING FEDERATED SUNS BORDERS

Certain Lyran groups take issue with the DMI's determination to protect the existing borders of the Federated Suns, regarding it as a sign of a lack of commitment to the alliance. The DMI, however, has neither the resources nor the personnel to police the vast borders of the entire Federated Commonwealth and still maintain its standard level of external operations.

The Inner Sphere's temporary victory over the Clan invaders as a result of the battle on Tukayyid and the fifteen-year truce reduces the Clan threat to what the DMI considers a manageable level. Though the organization is said to have several partisan cells in place within Clan-occupied territory to keep an eye on the invaders' activities, no available evidence verifies this rumor. The DMI appears to depend on the AFFC and the Lyran Intelligence Corps to keep Clan raiding within bounds, thus freeing the DMI to concentrate on protecting Federated Suns worlds from attack by the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League. The slow but steady move toward a formal alliance between the latter two states reinforces the DMI's reluctance to divert any of its resources to aiding the LIC. The DMI also considers its resources better spent by taking advantage of the opportunity to finally infiltrate agents into SAFE and both the ComStar and Word of Blake ROM organizations. The current disorganization in the intelligence community caused by the ComStar–Word of Blake division provides unprecedented opportunity to gather needed information on all three agencies.



DISRUPTION OF CAPELLAN OPERATIONS

With Clan conquest no longer an immediate threat, the DMI again considers the Capellan Confederation and the efforts of the Maskirovka to be the Federated Commonwealth's most potent enemy. Sun-Tzu Liao's approaching marriage to Isis Marik, daughter of the Free Worlds League's Captain-General Thomas Marik, raises the frightening possibility that he will use the economic strength of the Free Worlds League to mount a major military offensive should Isis succeed her father. To counter this threat, covert operations has stepped up its attempts to disrupt Maskirovka activities. The Sarna March and the Tikonov region, former Liao territories that Sun-Tzu wants to reclaim for the Capellan Confederation, serve as the major Maskirovka-DMI battlegrounds. In addition to the Maskirovka, DMI covert agents must also contend with Liao Death Commando guerrillas in the Sarna March.

STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH ST IVES

Ever since the St. Ives Compact seceded from the Capellan Confederation under the leadership of Candace Liao, the DMI has assisted the fledgling state by training its intelligence agents and passing on information about Capellan activity. Several Covert Operations advisors operating within the Compact have helped the new intelligence agency shut down several Maskirovka operations. To the DMI's relief, Chancellor Sun-Tzu has apparently ceased all efforts to disrupt the St. Ives Compact, though Maskirovka agents remain active there as information-gatherers.

In other efforts to safeguard the independence of their small ally, the DMI has also bankrolled a resistance group led by Tormana Liao, the disinherited son of the late Chancellor Maximilian Liao, whose members conducted ongoing operations to harass and undermine the Capellan government throughout the reign of Chancellor Romano Liao. Though moderately successful, Tormana's small espionage network never posed a serious threat to the Capellan Confederation, and may lose even its limited effectiveness with the recent cuts in DMI funding. Wolfnet operatives report that Sun-Tzu has been monitoring his uncle's activities for some time, and we can only speculate on his motives for leaving the network intact.

LOCATE CLAN HOMEWORLDS

Every Inner Sphere intelligence agency devotes some resources to missions charged with finding the Clan home worlds. If the DMI succeeds in this mission, it would immediately share this knowledge with the LIC, and with the ISF, if the current nonaggression pact with the Combine remains in effect. The combined militaries would certainly take action soon afterward. Because many of the elite Clan forces are currently garrisoned on the various occupied Inner Sphere worlds, they would be forced to pull out to defend their home worlds or lose them in order to keep worlds in the occupied zone. Current military operations directed by the Department of Military Intelligence appear to be focused on helping the Draconis Combine defend its borders against Clan Smoke Jaguar.

Some Wolfnet agents suggest that the mercenary units going missing in the Successor States (mentioned in the Briefing) may have been sent to discover the Clan homeworlds, but this theory seems unlikely. Any such explorer force would need to cover vast sectors of unknown space, and as hired soldiers, most mercenary units have little experience with exploratory missions. If, indeed, these mysteriously untraceable units are being used as explorer corps, the chance of such inexperienced troops making a lucky find remains so remote that Wolfnet does not consider the Clan homeworlds to be at significant risk of discovery.

COMSTAR SURVEILLANCE

Enormous changes have taken place within ComStar over the past few years. During the Tukayyid campaign of 3052, ComStar's Primus Myndo Waterly used ROM agents and the open threat of an Inner Sphere-wide Interdiction in a failed attempt to bring the Inner Sphere under ComStar's control. Though her treachery cost the Primus her life, the power grab by the supposedly neutral Blessed Order of ComStar destroyed the Inner Sphere's trust in the organization.

Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht and Primus Sharilar Mori immediately moved to reform ComStar and try to repair the damage, but their actions split the order into two warring camps. The anti-reform faction, calling itself the Word of Blake, found sanctuary in the Free Worlds League under the protection of former ComStar Precentor Thomas Marik. An ultra-radical splinter group of the Word of Blake, the Toyama, have launched several terrorist attacks from the League World of Gibson on HPGs in the Federated Commonwealth. The DMI has reacted to the schism and the Toyama attacks by instituting a constant watch over ComStar and stepping up its efforts to infiltrate the Free Worlds League, tasks made easier by the confusion caused by the ComStar schism. Despite attempts by ComStar's Primus and Precentor Martial to demythologize the Order, in large part by opening ComStar's vast historical archives to the public in 3053, the DMI and other intelligence agencies still find it difficult to break the decades-old habit of mistrust, particularly since ComStar's scientific archives remain classified. Relations between Davion intelligence and ComStar degraded quickly during the time when Primus Waterly and Prince Hanse Davion engaged in a struggle for power, and it will take more than a few goodwill gestures to erase the lingering distrust between the two organizations.

BRIEF HISTORY

Lucien Davion, founder of the Federated Suns, understood the essential role of intelligence in the successful administration and defense of any nation, and thus made creating an intelligence network that would keep the government informed of the machinations of the nation's rivals a priority. A noble man, Lucien envisioned his intelligence agency as serving a noble purpose, which would justify its often questionable methods. Lucien's heirs continue to believe that the end justifies the means, and have used covert action accordingly throughout the history of the Federated Suns.

MCKENNA'S HEGEMONY

In 2319, only two years after signing the Crucis Pact, which founded the Federated Suns, Lucien assigned the task of setting up an intelligence agency to Daniel Warren, an old and trusted friend who had played an important role in forging the Crucis Pact. Warren went to work immediately, beginning by summoning a committee of experts with extensive backgrounds in the fields of criminal science and intelligence operations. He also spent many long hours examining the organization and operations of such agencies as the CIA and FBI of twentieth-century America and the NKVD of the Soviet Union. Modeling his organization on the best features of earlier agencies, he aimed to create an effective intelligence organization that would be neither feared nor resented by those it was designed to protect. His studies of the past clearly showed that too often a nation's secret service represented oppression and evil rather than the stability and strength of its government.



It was fortunate for Davion's infant state that the DMI began operating so quickly, for this period also saw the Terran Hegemony rise under Admiral James McKenna. For nearly twenty years, McKenna carried out a series of political and military campaigns to unite various independent worlds under the banner of the Terran homeworld. The Davion intelligence machine warned the Federated Suns of every attempt by McKenna to coerce their worlds into joining his new alliance. Davion agents alerted the Federated Suns government to the threat in time for the Federated Suns to fortify their border worlds against Hegemony military incursions, and bolster the populations of those worlds against pro-Hegemony propaganda.

Admiral McKenna's expansion campaign suffered a major setback with the Syrma Ambush of 2338, in which the Admiral's son Konrad led Hegemony Armed Forces troops into mined jump

points in the Syrma system. The heavy losses from this incident, coupled with the increasing strength of the Hegemony's opponents, prompted McKenna to change tactics from force to diplomacy during the last year of his life. His successor, Michael Cameron, devoted his years in office to creating the society that would eventually give birth to the Star League.

With the threat of Hegemony expansion removed, the Federated Suns could concentrate its military and espionage efforts against its neighbors, the Tikonov Union and the Capellan Hegemony. The constant war of the next few centuries proved that its outward nobility did not prevent House Davion from expanding its territory as rapaciously as any of its neighbors.

AGE OF WAR

Almost since its inception, the Federated Suns had fought territorial disputes along the Capellan frontier. This border war sputtered along for four decades, then flared up in 2363 when

Ambassador Fashir Tucas, the brother of the Capellan Prime Minister, disappeared on his way home from New Avalon. Over the next four years the Federated Suns took worlds from the Capellan Hegemony, the Tikonov Union, and the St. Ives Association. To combat Federated Suns aggression, these three states combined to form the Capellan Confederation in 2367. Desultory fighting along that frontier continued to plague the next three Davion rulers, who eventually brought House Davion into the wider conflicts known as the Age of War.

In 2398, a border dispute between the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League touched off a war that spread throughout the Inner Sphere. For the next 14 years, dozens of bloody battles were fought over frontier border worlds, culminating in the savage Tintavel campaign of 2412. Appalled by the massive losses of civilian life in the Tintavel system as a result of



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the campaign, the leaders of the Inner Sphere states agreed to the Ares Conventions, rules of civilized warfare intended to spare civilians from the horrors of unlimited war. Though Simon Davion, Prince Edward's nephew and the Federated Suns' envoy to the arms summit, signed the Ares Conventions for his realm and the High Council approved them, the tyrannical Prince Edward Davion refused to ratify the Conventions, displaying unusual disregard for upholding the Federated Suns' noble public image.

Though many of his predecessors had rationalized dishonorable acts by claiming honorable intentions, Edward Davion was the first ruler to openly flout his realm's noble ideals. Even before his accession, he had begun to build his own secret police network. Upon assuming power, he expanded both his secret police and his personal bodyguard, suborning existing civilian intelligence agents whenever possible. Before Edward could tighten his grip enough to destroy everything the Federated Suns had accomplished, however, anti-Edward agents and the High Council hatched a coup that would bring Simon Davion to power. Gathering support on a circuitous route home from military duty in the Capellan March, Simon arrived on New Avalon in 2417 to an enthusiastic reception from the High Council. Attending a Council meeting soon after arriving home, Simon grabbed a pistol from a conveniently distracted guard and shot Edward dead as the Prince entered the Council chamber. Before Edward's stunned bodyguard could react, Simon dropped his weapon and threw himself on the High Council's mercy, claiming that he had executed Edward for the good of the Federated Suns.

Simon's act and its results provide a classic example of the Davion belief that noble intent justifies ignoble acts. The judge at Simon's trial found him guilty of justifiable homicide, but suspended his sentence on the grounds that he had acted for the greater good of the realm. Absolved of wrongdoing, Simon became the new leader of the Federated Suns. One of his first acts was to purge Edward's secret police files in the Amnesty of 2418, thereby winning the loyalty of his people. Simon consolidated his power as First Prince, the first to hold that title, just in time; within months, renewed war along the Capellan border made the undivided loyalty of Davion's intelligence network vital.

In 2439, the Terran Hegemony fielded the first BattleMechs, huge humanoid war machines that made Hegemony troops invincible. As the Age of War raged on, the intelligence agencies of all the Great Houses made repeated attempts to infiltrate Terran BattleMech facilities, each hoping to be the first to steal the secrets of building these awesome metal giants. Despite the Federated Suns' efforts, House Steiner beat them to the punch. Davion's efficient foreign intelligence network got wind of the Steiner success, and Simon Davion spent the last two years of his reign negotiating with the Lyrans to buy the data. Eventually, the Commonwealth sold the data to the Federated Suns for a hefty price.

The next two Davion rulers continued to wage border wars against the Capellan Confederation and the Draconis Combine.

Unfortunately for House Davion's military ambitions, both the Combine and the Capellans acquired BattleMech technology within five years of the Federated Suns, and 'Mech production developed too slowly for Davion forces to enjoy any real military advantage. Despite all the fighting, little territory changed hands.

The death of Prince William Davion from plague in 2512 plunged the Federated Suns into civil war, and its intelligence agencies into chaos. With William's stabilizing influence gone, other members of his family openly displayed the ruthlessness that most Davions preferred to bury beneath a veneer of honor. William had appointed his two sisters, Cassandra and Laura, as Regents for his grandson and heir, Alexander; both sisters spent the next 25 years vying for majority political power. Over the years, each faction created its own network of spies in fruitless attempts to ensure victory. Wracked by factionalism and conflict, the Federated Suns' intelligence agencies were thrown into complete disarray.

Alexander's decisive victory against Cassandra Varnay's forces on Meglan in 2537 ended the Civil War. The conflict had ruined whole planets, brought the economy to a near standstill, and caused millions of deaths on more than a hundred worlds. Alexander wasted no time rebuilding his shattered realm, including its civilian and military intelligence networks. Though Alexander's reforms pointed the way toward a more autocratic society by concentrating military and political power in the First Prince, Alexander was no tyrant. A truly noble man, he encouraged free speech, and only concentrated such enormous power in his own office to free his people from the threat of another civil conflict.

RISE AND FALL OF THE STAR LEAGUE

By 2571, the Inner Sphere had taken its basic political shape as the six Great House leaders signed the Star League Accords that united all humanity under the banner of the Star League. As history shows, the wars between the interstellar empires did not cease, but became more secret and more deadly. These struggles involved military action as well as espionage. The Davion War of Succession, in which the Draconis Combine claimed the throne of the Federated Suns through the eldest son of Mary Davion and Soto Kurita, lasted from 2725 through 2729. This incident once again displayed the Davion penchant for talking one way and acting another; though a strictly fair interpretation of the Davion succession would have made Mary Davion's son the rightful heir through primogeniture, other family members preferred war to allowing a Kurita to sit on the throne of the Federated Suns. Also during this era, Davion intelligence operatives infiltrated into the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation uncovered a number of offensives planned by each House, but the Federated Suns operatives managed each time to cut those plans short.

The Davion War of Succession and Davion's Border War of 2760-62 against the Capellan Confederation signaled the beginning of the end for the Star League. Preoccupied by his troubles with House Liao and House Kurita, First Prince John Davion focused his realm's intelligence-gathering capabilities on his two

ancient enemies. He remained unfortunately oblivious to the greater enemy, Stefan Amaris of the Rim Worlds Republic. The Amaris coup and subsequent downfall of the Star League in 2766 caught the Federated Suns, and every other Inner Sphere House, by surprise. Even today, members of the DMI find their organization's failure to detect the Amaris conspiracy an uncomfortable topic of conversation.

Though John Davion avidly supported most of General Aleksandr Kerensky's policies during the years Kerensky served as Regent of the Star League for Richard Cameron, the outbreak of full-scale civil war in the Inner Sphere prompted him to secure his own realm first. Despite his public support of the high ideals of the Star League, those ideals mattered less to the Prince than the continuing power and prestige of the Federated Suns. John Davion believed that the Star League was lost, and determined that the Federated Suns would decide its own future, he refused to support either Kerensky or Amaris. The First Prince proved prescient; Kerensky's army defeated Amaris, but too late to patch the widening rifts between the Great House Lords. In 2780, the Star League ceased to exist.

SUCCESSION WARS

The five leaders of the Great Houses soon recovered from the shock of Kerensky's Exodus in 2784, in which General Kerensky disappeared into unknown space with 80 percent of the vast Star League Defense Forces. In 2786, Coordinator Minoru Kurita of the Draconis Combine declared himself First Lord of the Star League, and every other Inner Sphere leader quickly added his or her claim to the title. In 2787, Archon Jennifer Steiner declared herself First Lord of the Star League in answer to Minoru Kurita's announcement, and at the same time declared war on the Draconis Combine in retaliation for recent, destructive raids. Thus began the first of the Succession Wars, a centuries-long era of interstellar war in which the noble Davions joined with as much enthusiasm and bloodlust as any other state. The First Prince justified sending his realm to war by claiming that, as the designated Regent for Richard Cameron's daughter Amanda, he and his heirs were the rightful Lords of a new Star League.

If not for the Preparedness Act, the program of military reforms that Prince Richard Davion created after the Davion War of Succession, the Federated Suns would probably have collapsed within the first years of the Succession Wars. As it turned out, not even the vast numbers of trained reserves on call and the arms and 'Mechs stockpiled throughout Federated Suns territory could prevent the near-catastrophic failure of House Davion's military intelligence in 2786.

In one of the greatest intelligence blunders of the Succession Wars, the DMI reported to Prince John Davion that the Capellan Confederation posed a greater threat than the Draconis Combine to the Federated Suns than. Fearing attack by the Star League Army units entering the Combine's Galedon District in preparation for the Exodus in 2784, Coordinator Minoru Kurita had flooded the district with troops. Federated Suns agents, accustomed after two years to the high level of military activity in the area, missed the

signs in 2786 and early 2787 of a further massive military build-up. The few officers within the AFFS who suspected that the Combine was planning a strike were ignored. On May 1, 2787, the DMI received a rude awakening as the entire Kurita-Davion border erupted in fighting. For the next decade, the Federated Suns fought a losing battle against the Combine forces, culminating in the infamous Kentares Massacre. In a senseless act of vengeance for the assassination of Minoru Kurita on Kentares IV, the new Coordinator Jinjiro ordered his soldiers to kill every civilian on the planet. More than 52 million people died at the hands of Kurita soldiers.

The Kentares Massacre proved to be a turning point for Davion forces. Outrage turned the beaten, exhausted Davion troops into grim-faced warriors determined to give the Kurita barbarians no quarter. The sight of Davion soldiers attacking with an abandon supposedly lacking in an "inferior" race shocked the Combine soldiers, who already felt dishonored by the Kentares atrocities. Forced to regroup and reevaluate their plan of attack, the Kuritans halted their drive.

The intelligence debacle at the start of the First Succession War prompted the new First Prince, Paul Davion, to take a hard look at the DMI's operations. Taking advantage of the brief lull in the battle provided by the Draconis Combine regrouping, Prince Paul enacted sweeping internal military and political reforms. The years from 2798 to 2801, known in Federated Suns history as the Reformation, saw massive upheavals that resulted in further centralization of the Davion government.

Prince Paul considered the Federated Suns' information-gathering service completely inadequate. Since the birth of the Star League, Military Intelligence had handled all attempts to learn the secrets of other realms. The existing civilian agency had to submit requests to MI for information about military activity in foreign states, and MI officers decided whether or not to part with that intelligence. The civilian agency had never quite recovered from the fragmentation caused by the Davion Civil War, and, during the relative peace of the Star League era, had been content to leave espionage in the hands of the DMI. Though the Star League did not eliminate interstellar warfare, it did reduce the scale of infighting between the various realms. The few serious incidents that took place during the Star League era, such as the Kurita incursions into Davion space during the Davion War of Succession and the so-called bandit raids conducted between the League's member-states during Simon Cameron's reign, seemed well within the DMI's capabilities.

With the stabilizing force of the Star League Army gone and armies on the move throughout the Inner Sphere, whole worlds could be won or lost in a day based on knowing or not knowing certain information. Paul Davion recognized that this situation made it unrealistic for the Federated Suns to rely on a single intelligence agency. Not only was the DMI too understaffed to handle the flood of information requests, it also suffered from the same factionalism that plagued the rest of the AFFS, stemming from the Star League-era funding cutbacks that had forced units to stay in certain areas for years. Not surprisingly, these units



eventually felt more loyalty toward the regions they were stationed in than toward House Davion or the Federated Suns as a whole. The DMI itself was not immune to divided loyalties; the agency guarded its information so jealously that its people sometimes refused to part with knowledge out of fear of weakening their own power.

To combat these problems, Prince Paul created the Ministry of Information, Intelligence, and Operations (MIO) during the Reformation, at the same time that he strengthened other powers accorded to his position. This new Ministry was assigned to gather information through any means available and feed it back to the government as quickly as possible.

Since Prince Paul's reign, the DMI has served a number of roles, including infiltrating every rival state at some point. Because the DMI's leaders regard the preservation and expansion of the Federated Suns as a moral good outweighing any other, any means of accomplishing such infiltration and any action perpetrated by DMI agents, no matter how devious or brutal, receives official approval. The most famous of these operations took shape during the late 3020s, in response to a nearly-successful Maskirovka plot to replace Prince Hanse Davion with an impostor. Prince Hanse's retaliation, carried out jointly by the DMI and the MIO, nearly caused the collapse of the Maskirovka, the Capellan secret service.

REVENGE OF THE FOX

The operative responsible was Justin Xiang-Allard, an AFFC officer and half-Capellan son of the Davion Intelligence Minister. Justin Allard almost single-handedly reached the highest levels of the Maskirovka and used his power there to misdirect the entire Capellan strategy during the Fourth Succession War.

After serving in the Federated Suns military for a number of years, he was chosen to infiltrate the Maskirovka, the Capellan secret police. Allard was convicted of treason for leading the First Kittery Training Battalion into a Capellan ambush, and banished from the Federated Suns. He traveled to the game world of Solaris, apparently to take out his anti-Davion feelings on Federated Suns MechWarriors in the arenas. Allard's spectacular victory over Peter Armstrong, a protégé of the Federated Suns' champion Philip Capet, attracted the attention of Maskirovka agent Tsen Shang. Shang watched Allard carefully for several months to determine whether or not his apparent repudiation of the Federated Suns and all its works was genuine. Two incidents convinced Shang of Allard's hatred for Davion.

Allard took up with the famous MechWarrior Gray Noton, unaware that Noton had ambushed the Kittery training battalion and caused his downfall. Noton had a reputation for selling information to the highest bidder. He had acquired the passenger list to the *Silver Eagle*, a JumpShip carrying Lyran Archon-designate Melissa Steiner to New Avalon to visit her betrothed, Hanse Davion, and had arranged to sell the list to Tsen Shang for a hefty sum. By this time Allard was aware of Noton's part in his disgrace. To prevent the list from falling into Capellan hands,

Allard killed Gray Noton and burned the list.

This incident could easily have damaged Allard's credibility with Tsen Shang, but he managed to convince the Maskirovka agent that Noton was working for Davion, and that the passenger list was nothing but misinformation intended to provoke the Capellan Confederation into launching a fruitless attack. Three weeks after he killed Gray Noton, Allard fought and killed Philip Capet in the arena. Allard's destruction of the Federated Suns champion satisfied Tsen Shang that Allard truly hated his former Davion masters and would serve the Capellan Confederation well. That evening, he drugged Allard and transported him to Sian.

Justin met with Maximilian Liao on Sian, and the Chancellor offered Allard Capellan citizenship and a high-level post within the Maskirovka. As senior analyst of Davion intelligence, second only to Tsen Shang, Allard was able to successfully influence Capellan operations during the Fourth Succession War in directions that would do the least amount of damage. He also executed Duke Michael Hasek-Davion at Maximilian Liao's command, simultaneously removing a traitor from Prince Hanse's realm. Duke Michael had passed doctored military intelligence to House Liao for years, playing a dangerous double game. By obeying the orders of his false master Maximilian, Allard performed a valuable service for Prince Hanse.

In another example of how Allard directly affected the outcome of events, at his bidding, Liao forces raided a "secret" New Avalon Institute of Science research facility on Axton. There, they discovered a cache of documents revealing the existence of recent advances in myomer technology developed by scientists at a hidden NAIS outpost on Bethel. The data showed how the new myomer fibers could triple a 'Mech's strength. Allard himself led the Liao raid on Bethel, and the raiders "escaped" with a sample of the experimental myomer. Only Allard knew that Davion scientists had deliberately created a flaw in the super-myomer's design. The Capellan Chancellor played into House Davion's hands by outfitting his military's 'Mechs with the new fibers, and the Federated Suns had a chance to take advantage of their deception sooner than expected.

Justin Allard also warned Hanse Davion and Quintus Allard of the one Liao strike that could have harmed the Federated Suns. Capellan intelligence planned a raid on the lightly defended planet of Kathil, home of Kearny-Fuchida Yare Industries, one of the few remaining operative JumpShip repair yards in the Inner Sphere. Kathil was lightly defended; few in the Inner Sphere believed that anyone was crazy enough to deliberately destroy such irreplaceable technology. Because of Allard's timely warning, Morgan Hasek-Davion and his troops defeated the invading Capellan forces, then received orders to retrieve Justin Allard from Sian. Hasek-Davion sent a report of his own capture to Maximilian Liao as part of a false message of victory from the Liao commander, and led his troops to the Capellan capital aboard confiscated Liao DropShips to maintain the fiction.

A gloating Maximilian eagerly awaited the arrival of his "captive." To celebrate his victory, he assembled the elite 'Mechs of the Warrior House Imarra, newly outfitted with the stolen, triple-

HOUSE DAVION

strength myomer, as a guard for the illustrious prisoner. When the Liao DropShips arrived at a point 200 miles above the spaceport, they opened fire. The missiles exploded in the air above the spaceport, sending out clouds of noxious, green gas. When the gas reached the Liao 'Mechs, their brand-new myomer fibers exploded into flame. Amid the confusion of battle, Morgan Hasek-Davion and his troops spirited away Justin Allard and Candace Liao, the Capellan Chancellor's daughter. Justin Allard had successfully accomplished one of the most intricate and successful intelligence missions in Inner Sphere history.

BIRTH OF THE FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH

Announced by Hanse Davion at his wedding to Melissa Steiner, the Fourth Succession War proved a triumph for the fledgling alliance between the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth. Davion kept the Capellan Confederation on the

defensive, carving out huge chunks of Liao territory and preventing Capellan troops from menacing the Lyran Commonwealth. Steiner forces, free to concentrate on the Kurita military machine, took 53 systems from the Draconis Combine while losing only two.

The intelligence organizations of both Houses had a field day, in part because Katrina Steiner shared the secret of "black box" technology with Hanse Davion. The Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth gave each other credit for their stunning victories, and the resultant goodwill between the two Successor States strengthened the alliance.

Though Melissa Steiner and Hanse Davion originally intended to consolidate the operations of the LIC and DMI into a combined Federated Commonwealth intelligence agency, intense resistance from both the Lyran and Federated agencies forced them to scrap that plan. Both rulers recognized the need for centralized control of intelligence operations, and so created the





DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Secretariat, allowing the two agencies to continue to work as independent entities and altering their operations only enough to accommodate joint missions and information exchange. The Intelligence Secretariat, headed by Alex Mallory and answerable only to Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion, oversees the day-to-day operations and tracks information from the DMI, LIC, and MIO. However, even this compromise left room for interagency rivalry, which continues to plague both agencies. Neither intelligence organization is willing to allow the other complete access to their information-gathering methods or their sources, and so the Secretariat must continue to function as an information clearinghouse.

The recent assassination of Archon Melissa Steiner exposed the fault lines still existing in the Federated Commonwealth alliance. The small territorial conflicts to be expected between the Steiner and Davion agencies have mushroomed out of proportion, to the extent that Davion intelligence agents have resorted to planting spies in the Steiner court on Tharkad. The rising tensions between the two halves of the Commonwealth threaten to disrupt the current joint operations of the DMI and the LIC, apparently focused on winning back various Lyran worlds from the occupation forces of Clan Jade Falcon. Though the extent of the DMI's current involvement in these missions is unknown, we assume that even if they do not participate directly in a future Federated Commonwealth offensive against the Clans, operatives from their ranks will provide information and support for the attacking forces.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 637902-LC5-10/13/26

DATE: 10/12/26

REPORTING AGENT: 350600360

SECTION: LC5D—RED

SECURITY LEVEL: EYES ONLY

CONTINUING ATTEMPTS TO CONFIRM SOURCE OF THE FOLLOWING MEMO. AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

TO: Dr. Roberto Schumann
Department of Psychology, Tharkad University

11 October 3026

FROM: Simon Johnson

I have not forgotten your distaste for secrecy, Roberto, and I hope you will forgive any inconvenience the transmission of this memo may have caused you. The following information is highly sensitive, as you will undoubtedly recognize, which required that this communication adhere to our strictest security procedures.

I have recently learned—from the most highly reliable source, I might add—that the Maskirovka successfully infiltrated a double of Prince Hanse Davion into the Federated Suns' court at New Avalon. Fortunately the impostor was exposed, but not before his actions severely strained the relationship between our own Commonwealth and the Federated Suns and cost our armed forces serious losses during the Galtor campaign. In addition to extensive plastic surgery, Liao scientists blanked the impostor's mind and subjected him to extensive mental conditioning that included the forced induction of Prince Hanse's memories.

I have recounted this episode to underscore the continuing importance of our own doppelganger research. I appreciate your ethical opposition to such work, but these events clearly illustrate the value of our program, if only to aid us in combatting any such plots directed against the Lyran Commonwealth.

Shortly, you will receive additional funding to continue your research through the usual channels, and I trust you will allocate the money with the same discretion and care you have displayed in your work so far.

Davion sources have been understandably tight-lipped about the affair, but contacts have informed me the impostor has been partially rehabilitated and relocated. From what I gather, Davion medical personnel have been able to mitigate the affects of the Liao mental conditioning forced on the man, sparing him the insanity those measures undoubtedly would have produced in time. I have already requested permission for you to study the man, but do not expect our colleagues in the Federated Suns to grant it.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Even with the integration of the AFFS and the LCAF into the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth, and the consolidation of the military command structure into the FC High Command, the command structure of the Department of Military Intelligence remains closely linked to that of the AFFS. The DMI provides detailed logistical data for the Federated Commonwealth armed forces as well as carrying out espionage-related activities within the borders of the Federated Commonwealth's rival states.

Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion serves as the official commanding officer of the DMI. Until his mother's recent assassination, Victor had only moderate contact with the department. As set forth in the alliance agreement, the Archon Prince defines the DMI's major goals while leaving most of the routine command decisions to the Intelligence Secretary, who acts as the Prince's chief advisor in intelligence matters. However, the turmoil in the Federated Commonwealth in the wake of Melissa Steiner's death forced Victor to take a more active part in the command of his realm's intelligence organizations. He works primarily with the Intelligence Secretariat, the umbrella organization that coordinates intelligence and the day-to-day operations of the Davion DMI and MIO and the Steiner LIC. Because Victor serves as the combined ruler of both realms of the Federated Commonwealth, the Intelligence Secretariat reports to him.

MI1, the DMI's Command Department, holds the primary responsibility for planning and assigning all missions, including those deemed necessary by the Archon Prince himself. Under the leadership of the Intelligence Marshal, a command council composed of the heads of each DMI branch decides the specific parameters of each mission. Orders for all intelligence activities come from this department.

Though technically independent, the various DMI branches work together to carry out covert operations. Each branch has specific responsibilities, such as MI3's task of intercepting and assimilating intelligence, but each also maintains a pool of unassigned operatives who can be called up at a moment's notice. Intelligence teams usually consist of several operatives from various DMI branches, though some circumstances require a specific branch to carry out a mission on its own. The intelligence team's senior member usually commands the operation; missions of vital importance to national security are entrusted to special teams trained specifically for do-or-die operations and commanded by a member of the Command Branch.

RANK STRUCTURE

As a division of the Commonwealth military, the DMI rank system closely resembles that of its parent group, with certain modifications reflecting its specialized nature. For example, unlike the rest of the military, the DMI has no enlisted ranks. All members who complete the training enter the DMI as agents, a rank level similar to ensign or cadet. Agents serve a one-year

probationary period, then receive promotion to the rank of operative, the standard rank for all DMI field rookies.

Outstanding service in the field leads to promotion to officer level using the standard military ranks. Experienced field operatives may earn the rank of lieutenant or captain, receiving more important assignments that usually require service in foreign territory. Until an operative reaches the rank of lieutenant, he or she serves the DMI only within the borders of the Federated Commonwealth.

Officers of ranks higher than captain serve in the DMI command centers. Usually retired from active field service, their ranks range from section chiefs to the marshals commanding the DMI's eight branches. Even key personnel ranking higher than captain, however, occasionally draw assignment to foreign service. These officers serve primarily in the Covert Operations and Special Forces branches, where their experience makes them particularly valuable in the field.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Operatives of any intelligence agency present a security risk to their realm simply by operating in foreign territories. Because that risk is an essential part of gathering vital intelligence information, intelligence organizations, including the DMI, develop certain procedures to prevent security leaks to the enemies of their realms. Prompted by the present fragility of the Federated Commonwealth alliance, the DMI is currently introducing LIC agents to these procedures and training them in their use. As a secret backup to the full-disclosure policy on intelligence information supposedly now in place in the allied nations, House Davion also has placed spies in the Steiner court on Tharkad.

Transmitting intelligence to the Commonwealth while remaining hidden from the counterinsurgency agents of enemy nations is the major difficulty facing DMI agents operating within enemy territory. Prior to the Fourth Succession War, DMI agents used the neutral ComStar hyperpulse generator facilities to transmit data, then switched to the black box fax machines during the ComStar Interdiction. Even after ComStar lifted the Interdiction, the DMI continued to rely on faxes to an increasing extent, having grown accustomed to the luxury of using absolutely secure lines. In the wake of Operation Scorpion, ex-Primus Myndo Waterly's disastrous attempt to give ComStar total control of the Inner Sphere, the Successor States took control of the HPG networks within their own borders. Though the reformed, now truly neutral ComStar still maintains and operates a percentage of the HPG in most Houses, the Order's ongoing struggle with the Word of Blake faction and their uncertain position with the leaders of the Successor States makes transmitting vital intelligence information from ComStar-operated stations a risky proposition.

As a safeguard against enemy infiltrators among the ranks of HPG technicians intercepting sensitive data, the DMI maintains secure communication channels, called "deposit boxes," at several HPG stations outside Commonwealth borders. Any DMI operative who needs to transmit information from foreign lands to the DMI simply leaves his or her coded message in the box. This



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secure channel transmits only to ComStar facilities in the Federated Commonwealth monitored by MI3, the Electronic Information Gathering Department. MI3 then passes the data onto the rest of the DMI.

To ensure the integrity of these messages, the deposit box is equipped with false destination codes and origin data to throw any counterintelligence operatives who discover the system off the trail. Even these measures, however, cannot provide the DMI with complete security for its transmissions. In most cases, the DMI willingly trades a certain amount of risk for swift communication from its field agents.

One alternative, used only in cases where minimal risk is required, relies on DMI-operated merchant vessels to rendezvous with agents and pick up their reports. Though slower than the near-instantaneous HPG transmissions, the merchant-vessel network has, until recently, proved completely secure. Increased Clan raiding of worlds "above" the line drawn by the Truce of Tukayyid, however, has caused all governments to pay closer attention than usual to space traffic.

DMI BRANCHES

Though the creation of the Federated Commonwealth altered the structure of the two realms' armies by combining them into a single force, the structure of the allies' intelligence services remained largely unchanged. Early in the planning stages of the Federated Commonwealth alliance, the government and military of each state agreed that the Lyran Intelligence Corps and the



Department of Military Intelligence would remain separate entities. The strengths of each agency, based on experience with the specific internal and external problems of its home nation, offered the most efficient means for both agencies to work together in the defense of the combined realm. For example, the DMI's greater experience dealing with House Liao and the Maskirovka frees the LIC from responsibility for acting against the Capellan Confederation, while the LIC's numerous encounters with Free Worlds League intelligence balances the DMI's inexperience against SAFE. The Intelligence Secretariat, an organization answering only to the Archon Prince as ruler of the combined super-state, serves as the necessary umbrella organization coordinating the intelligence operations of the two separate agencies. The DMI's command headquarters and officers continue to operate largely within the Federated Suns, and the agency has retained its former command system and the following divisions.



MI1: COMMAND

The Command branch plays the key role in the DMI. Composed of the DMI's current commander, Marshal Lucy Miller, and the heads of all other DMI branches, the Command branch plans and assigns all DMI missions and operations. In addition to the Marshal and the eight branch heads, the Command branch can call upon an army of administrators, political advisors, and various experts on all aspects of the current political, economic, and military situation within the Inner Sphere. No matter how small the mission, the entire board of the Command branch must approve it. Those missions involving political considerations must be approved by Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. During times of crisis, a minimum of three members of the Command branch may give the go-ahead for a mission.

The following branch commanders comprise the current Command Council:

- Marshal Lucy Miller, MI1—Command
- Marshal Daniel Darwith, MI2—Analysis and Speculation
- Marshal Roxanne Hayes, MI3—Electronic Information Gathering
- Marshal Ian Cromwell, MI4—Covert Operations
- Marshal Wilson Miles, MI5—Counterinsurgency
- Marshal Stephanie Day, MI6—Special Forces
- Alex Mallory, MI7—Intelligence Secretariat



MI2: ANALYSIS AND SPECULATION

The Analysis and Speculation branch assimilates all intelligence gathered by DMI operatives. Based in the Fox's Den, a fortified complex of huge caves and tunnels deep within Mount Davion on New Avalon, Analysis and Speculation feeds all gathered information into vast banks of computers. Guided by the members of the section, the computer synthesizes the data into tactical and strategic predictions, which MI2 distributes to all DMI departments. MI2's analyses have proven correct often enough to earn this department's operatives the respect and esteem of their fellow agents.

The current head of MI2, Marshal Daniel Darwith, helped to install the computer system currently operating within LIC headquarters on the Lyran capital of Tharkad. He is said to understand the capabilities of the department's computer system better than anyone else, and reportedly has updated major portions of the system to include tactical and strategic information and analysis on the Clans.



MI3: ELECTRONIC INFORMATION GATHERING

The essential task of monitoring all foreign transmissions near the borders of the Federated Commonwealth belongs to MI3, the Electronic Information Gathering department. Armed with little more than multi-frequency radio receivers, MI3's operatives set up on worlds bordering the Federated Commonwealth to monitor all radio channels, paying particular attention to transmissions originating near military bases and other installations for hints of enemy movements. They then relay the collected data to the nearest secure ComStar installation, which beams the message to a Federated Commonwealth world. In areas of heavy enemy activity, operatives often choose to wait for a DMI merchant vessel to pick up their report.

Though the department's main responsibility is to monitor communications along the Federated Commonwealth borders, the Electronic Information Gathering department frequently coop-

erates with their civilian counterparts in the Ministry of Information, Intelligence, and Operations. Using MI3 operatives and technology, the MIIO maintains constant surveillance of Federated Commonwealth worlds for signs of enemy infiltration. Such surveillance often requires MI3 to work directly with MI5, the Counterinsurgency department.

Recently, MI3 and the Norms of the LIC have taken over responsibility for manning the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Command Network. This system of "black box" fax transmitters updates the intelligence agencies of the Federated Commonwealth on current developments long before their counterparts in other intelligence organizations can ferret out the same information. Though the black box system is slower than HPG communications, and the NAIS has yet to adapt the system to transmit pictures, it has the primary advantage of being completely secure.

In the years since Katrina Steiner brought this technology back from the Periphery and shared its secrets with House Davion, the NAIS has succeeded in reverse-engineering the black boxes. This accomplishment made possible the development of the expanded command system, the Federated Commonwealth Intelligence Command Network (FCICN), and upgraded the communication system to a fully operational C³ system—command, control, and communications.

The physical network requires regular maintenance and constant monitoring, which is provided by experts from MI3. These operatives and Norm agents also work to protect the network from the remote possibility of infiltration. According to rumor, the success of the system has prompted the High Command to order the system expanded to more Federated Commonwealth worlds. Further rumors indicate that such projects as JumpShip-mounted HPG systems are also in the works, though neither realm's current technological expertise can advance this proposal beyond the theoretical stage.



MI4: COVERT OPERATIONS

Nicknamed "The Stealthy Foxes," the Covert Operations department is the cornerstone of the Department of Military Intelligence. Its agents, the elite of the DMI, undergo rigorous screening to ensure their loyalty to the Davion family and the Davion-Steiner alliance. The DMI assesses all potential agents for possible suitability for assignment to the Covert Operations department. Those who show useful or unusual abilities that might provide an edge in the field immediately transfer to one of



the secret covert operations training facilities, where they undertake an intensive education in combat, espionage, and a variety of other skills essential to covert missions. The DMI draws the security surrounding these elite operatives so tight that both Wolfnet and ComStar's ROM have failed to learn the location of the covert operations training centers. The DMI refuses to reveal that information to the High Command of the Lyran Intelligence Corps, which places additional strain on interagency relations.

The actual role of Covert Operations varies according to the situation. Its operatives carry out missions ranging from simple information-gathering with the assistance of MI3 to aiding MI6 with commando raids and terrorist attacks. Trained to adapt their skills to any mission, Covert Operations agents make a versatile weapon in the hands of the DMI High Command.

Veteran covert operative Marshal Ian Cromwell currently heads MI4. He also served in MI6, the DMI's elite special forces unit.



MI5: COUNTERINSURGENCY

MI5 exists to counter the threat of enemy infiltrators within the DMI. This department monitors the DMI and the AFFC for signs of enemy agents within their ranks. Because the survival of the Federated Commonwealth depends on how well MI5 does its task, counterinsurgency operatives use carte blanche in choosing their methods of detecting and eliminating double agents. All operatives receive extensive training in interrogation and psychological warfare, as well as the use of weapons.

We are well aware of the counterinsurgency department's



excellent track record. They have discovered and removed several of our Wolfnet agents as well as several Maskirovka and ROM operatives, all stationed within the Capellan March region of the Federated Suns. Rumors claiming that MI5 operatives have begun monitoring the Lyran Intelligence Corps and Lyran units among the AFFC suggest that the seams joining the Federated Commonwealth alliance may be fraying in the wake of Archon Melissa Steiner's brutal assassination. Recent calls for secession from the Federated Commonwealth by Skye separatists have gained increasing support both within and outside the alliance, which may have prompted the DMI to station MI5 agents at the Lyran court on Tharkad. We have not yet determined the extent to which the Lyrans are aware of this surveillance, though the counterinsurgency department's reputation for successful deep-cover operations suggests that the Steiner court should at this point suspect little and know less. If the Lyrans discover that their erstwhile allies are spying on them, this breach of trust and confidence could serve as the straw to break the Federated Commonwealth's back.

The current head of MI5 is Marshal Wilson Miles. The size of his department is unknown.



MI6: SPECIAL FORCES

Nicknamed the "Rabid Foxes," MI6 remains one of the best-kept secrets of the DMI. Information about this unit is so strictly controlled that few outside the DMI or MIIO know of their existence. Unwilling to publicize the fact that the noble House Davion indulges in terrorist tactics to achieve some of its objectives, the intelligence community does its best to hide the fact of MI6 from outsiders.

Serving as an elite commando force, the Rabid Foxes currently maintain approximately five hundred active agents in the Federated Commonwealth. Their exact number and mission locations remain a closely guarded secret. Based on the meager evidence available to Wolfnet, we know the agents of MI6 receive training in operational skills such as sabotage, terrorism, demolition, abduction, and other, similar specializations. The DMI Command Council always sends Special Forces for missions requiring a siege or an assault, confident that the unit will do the job no matter what the cost.

Though we cannot back up our assumptions with hard data, we believe that MI6 uses its teams only when no other option exists. Sparing and careful use of this unit helps prevent discovery of its existence and unnecessary loss of personnel. Any operation

for which the Command Council wants to use the Special Forces must be personally approved by the Archon Prince.

The current operational head of MI6 is Marshal Stephanie Day.



MI7: INTELLIGENCE SECRETARIAT

Created during the formation of the Federated Commonwealth, and replacing the original MIIO Liaison, this department coordinates the day-to-day operations of the DMI, the LIC, and the MIIO. The new MI7 informs the LIC of the DMI and MIIO's planned operations and general intentions and goals, and obtains the same information from the LIC. During missions requiring operatives from both agencies, MI7 personnel coordinate actions and mediate between the two units to ensure that both groups understand and agree upon their roles.

The Intelligence Secretariat answers directly to Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. He works closely with the Intelligence Secretary, and with Agent Curaitis, the agent responsible for (we believe) apprehending Melissa Steiner's assassin. The current Intelligence Secretary is Alex Mallory, who functions both as head of MI7 and of the MIIO.

FIELD AGENT REPORT

FC 3.51

DATE: 8/27/55

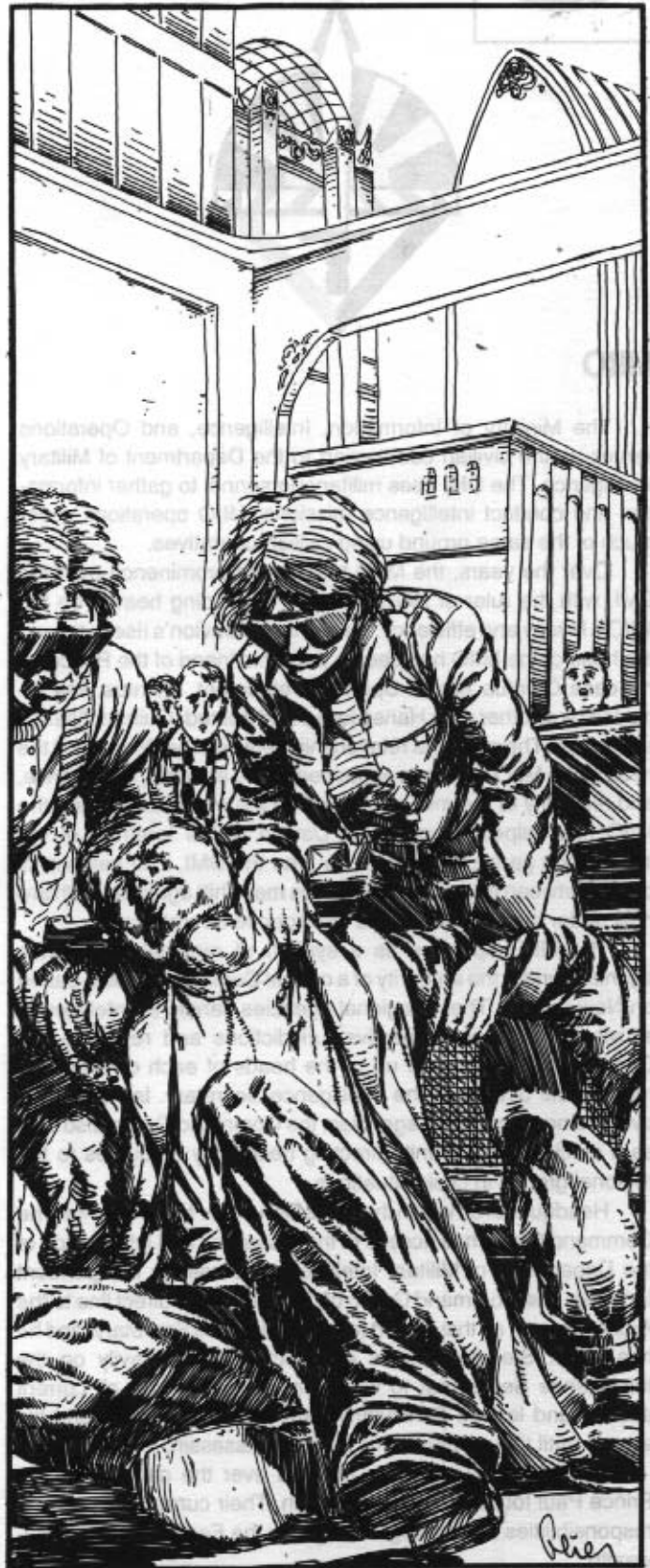
REPORTING AGENT: 982361074

SECTION: FS7L—GREEN

SECURITY LEVEL: EYES ONLY

MIIO AGENTS TOOK THE ARCHON'S ASSASSIN INTO CUSTODY TWO DAYS AGO IN CATHAY, SOLARIS VII. THE MAN, WHO ARRIVED ON SOLARIS UNDER THE NAME *CHUCK GRAYSON*, APPARENTLY FRACTURED A LEG DURING THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT STAGED TO DISGUISE THE EXTRACTION. THE TEAM SUBDUED THE TARGET WITH TRANQUILIZER DARTS, AND THE MAN APPARENTLY SUFFERED NO FURTHER INJURY. THE ASSASSIN'S CURRENT WHEREABOUTS REMAIN UNKNOWN.

AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.





DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE



MIIO

The Ministry of Information, Intelligence, and Operations serves as the civilian counterpart to the Department of Military Intelligence. The DMI uses military personnel to gather information and conduct intelligence missions; MIIO operations cover much of the same ground using civilian operatives.

Over the years, the MIIO has gained prominence over the DMI, with the ruler of House Davion depending heavily on the MIIO's loyalty and efficiency. Since Hanse Davion's rise to power, the head of the MIIO has been a personal friend of the Prince, in his case Quintus Allard. Upon his retirement, Quintus was replaced by another man Hanse loved and trusted: Quintus Allard's son Justin. The personal relationship between the Prince and the head of the MIIO has been enhanced by the strength, intelligence, and reliability of the men commanding the organization, and the MIIO has helped keep House Davion at the forefront of the intelligence game, even more so than the DMI. The balance of power between the two organizations may shift again, as both are now under the umbrella of the Intelligence Secretariat.

The MIIO operates as a system of regional intelligence agencies under the authority of a central Command Group, based on New Avalon. These regional agencies handle all intelligence activity within their respective jurisdictions and report to the Command Group, made up of the heads of each division and responsible directly to the Intelligence Secretary. In addition to overseeing the regional agencies, the Command Group also acts as a quick-response unit, directing necessary resources to the regional groups in crisis situations.

Headquartered within the Fox's Den under Mount Davion, the Command Group has access to the resources and information of the Department of Military Intelligence as well as independent facilities. The Command Group of the MIIO has a direct line to the Archon Prince, as they report to the Intelligence Secretary, and he has Victor Steiner-Davion's ear. Victor relies heavily on the Intelligence Secretariat to keep him up to date on all current events, and leaned particularly hard on the Secretary and his agents until they captured his mother's assassin.

Each MIIO division has evolved over the centuries since Prince Paul founded the organization. Their current shapes and responsibilities may change along with the Federated Commonwealth.



INFORMATION-GATHERING SERVICES

The IGS bears responsibility for gathering information from the public media of the other Successor States by monitoring open transmissions, and for intercepting private communications. They support listening posts tuned to a specific radius of nearby planets on most Federated Commonwealth border worlds.



COVERT OPERATIONS

Covert Operations agents actively gather information about other Successor States. Agents trained at the division's secret training facilities accept assignments to foreign realms to actively, and at times, aggressively, gather those states' secrets and transmit them to MIIO headquarters. Though some agents receive only vague orders to gather and transmit any information of interest, others undertake missions to ferret out specific plans, rumors, identities, and so on.



WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 19356-CS2-4/5/54

THE FOLLOWING ENTRY IS EXCERPTED FROM INTERNAL BULLETIN NO. 236185PF, BY PRECENTOR IVAN FRESTERTON, COMSTAR ARCHIVES, TERRA, 3001

Snow Fire is one of the most enigmatic figures in the history of the Inner Sphere. All we know of this beautiful woman is that she was born in the Lyran Commonwealth and trained by the Lyran Intelligence Corps. She was planted in the Rasalhague Military District of the Draconis Combine, where she spent several years as a low-grade geisha secretly winning information from her clients.

She won the eye of one of the Coordinator's closest personal advisers, who bought her contract and took her to Luthien. There, she spent about a year and a half gathering information about the inner workings of the Unity Palace, and attempting to attract the Coordinator's eye. The story of her final heroic act has been told so often that it need not be repeated here.

The question is, did the mysterious Snow Fire have help from the Federated Suns? Declassified MIIO files have yielded references to an operative known only as "The Footman," who apparently was a member of the Unity Palace staff during the time that Snow Fire was present there.

The identity of this Footman remains unknown. He might have been Talon Sergeant Donald Baines, one of the Imperial Guards entrusted with the security of the Coordinator's bedchambers. Others speculate that the Footman was Jessica Donvel, a Unity messenger whose keys allowed her access throughout the Unity Palace.

It is still impossible to prove whether the Footman, as either the guard or the messenger, knew of and aided Snow Fire's mission. An agent in either role could have discovered the courtesan's true identity, either by noting the incompleteness of her security file or by breaking the code in the messages she sent to her "mother." It is also possible that the Footman could have helped Snow Fire slip her knife past Unity Palace's security systems.

It is interesting, even romantic, to think that Snow Fire and the Footman knew one another. Until new information comes to light, however, our speculations must end there.

BUREAU OF INTERNAL INVESTIGATION

The MIIO Bureau of Internal Investigations scrutinizes the internal climate of the Federated Suns, monitoring the public media as well as gathering information about ongoing political changes and leaders. Estimated to be the largest department within the Ministry, the BII is said to have agents reporting in from every planet and colony in the Federated half of the Federated Commonwealth. Davion law makes spying on the activities of planetary governments and the private lives of nobility illegal, but, as in every other Successor State, House Davion keeps a close eye on people possessing power or the potential for power.

In only three documented cases have BII agents stepped in to end a perceived threat to the Federated Suns. On two occasions, BII agents assassinated the leaders of planetary governments who appeared to pose a direct threat to the security of the Federated Suns. In the third incident, the division's operatives blackmailed an unnamed duke to guarantee his support of certain vital policies created by Prince Ian Davion. As with the DMI, the internal affairs division of MIIO has spies in place in the Steiner court on Tharkad.

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

Counterintelligence originally served as a subdivision of the BII, but the division's success as spy hunters and anti-terrorists made its importance obvious enough for the Command Group to elevate counterintelligence to a full-fledged division of the MIIO

during the Second Succession War. The CID, nicknamed the Rat Catchers, continues to grow in power and importance, and currently vies with the Covert Operations division for the biggest chunk of the Ministry's budget. Without the CID to keep enemy activity within Federated Commonwealth borders to an absolute minimum, the realm could easily fall prey to well-placed crippling attacks from its neighbors and even lose valuable information to foreign spies.

REGIONAL OPERATIONS

A controller heads each regional intelligence agency, assigns agents to various activities within his region, and works to counter all threats within his jurisdiction. The controller reports to the Command Group, which dictates agency policy and sends extra manpower and resources to individual regions if a crisis exceeds the local controller's abilities and/or resources.

The six regional agencies of the MIIO include the Command Group based on New Avalon, and the Robinson, New Syrtis, Tikonov, Jesup, and Corridor regions.

New Avalon Region

Controller Sarah DeVile, Commanding Officer

Under the direct jurisdiction of the Command Group, the New Avalon region MIIO agency is one of the most active within the Federated Commonwealth. Because of the growing number of foreign nationals in the area, much of the MIIO activity within this

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It is interesting, even romantic, to think that Snow Fire and the Footman knew one another. Until new information comes to light, however, our speculations must end there.

BUREAU OF INTERNAL INVESTIGATION

The MIO Bureau of Internal Investigations scrutinizes the internal climate of the Federated Suns, monitoring the public media as well as gathering information about ongoing political changes and leaders. Estimated to be the largest department within the Ministry, the BII is said to have agents reporting in from every planet and colony in the Federated half of the Federated Commonwealth. Davion law makes spying on the activities of planetary governments and the private lives of nobility illegal, but, as in every other Successor State, House Davion keeps a close eye on people possessing power or the potential for power.

In only three documented cases have BII agents stepped in to end a perceived threat to the Federated Suns. On two occasions, BII agents assassinated the leaders of planetary governments who appeared to pose a direct threat to the security of the Federated Suns. In the third incident, the division's operatives blackmailed an unnamed duke to guarantee his support of certain vital policies created by Prince Ian Davion. As with the DMI, the internal affairs division of MIO has spies in place in the Steiner court on Tharkad.

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

Counterintelligence originally served as a subdivision of the BII, but the division's success as spy hunters and anti-terrorists made its importance obvious enough for the Command Group to elevate counterintelligence to a full-fledged division of the MIO

during the Second Succession War. The CID, nicknamed the Rat Catchers, continues to grow in power and importance, and currently vies with the Covert Operations division for the biggest chunk of the Ministry's budget. Without the CID to keep enemy activity within Federated Commonwealth borders to an absolute minimum, the realm could easily fall prey to well-placed crippling attacks from its neighbors and even lose valuable information to foreign spies.

REGIONAL OPERATIONS

A controller heads each regional intelligence agency, assigns agents to various activities within his region, and works to counter all threats within his jurisdiction. The controller reports to the Command Group, which dictates agency policy and sends extra manpower and resources to individual regions if a crisis exceeds the local controller's abilities and/or resources.

The six regional agencies of the MIO include the Command Group based on New Avalon, and the Robinson, New Syrtis, Tikonov, Jesup, and Corridor regions.

New Avalon Region

Controller Sarah DeVile, Commanding Officer

Under the direct jurisdiction of the Command Group, the New Avalon region MIO agency is one of the most active within the Federated Commonwealth. Because of the growing number of foreign nationals in the area, much of the MIO activity within this

rimward border, close to the Periphery states and thus far from the curious eyes and ears of the Clans and the Draconis Combine. Though unable to pinpoint the facility's location, Wolfnet agents within the DMI did manage to pick up a few facts about the DMI intelligence training facilities before being captured. We have learned other minor details by interrogating captured DMI agents.

DMI operatives spend between four and six years at the training center, undergoing an intensive program of both physical and mental training, including unarmed combat, Mech operation, and interrogation tactics. Operatives who complete this program receive assignments to probationary active service, during which they further develop their knowledge and skills through hands-on experience and additional training at the NAIS and the Federated Commonwealth's military colleges. During initial training and probation, teachers and other superiors constantly assess the fledgling agents, and only after passing the rigorous final examination may an agent become a full-fledged member of the Department of Military Intelligence.

All available intelligence indicates that the MIIO maintains separate but similar initial training facilities. Potential MIIO agents receive much the same type of intelligence education as applicants to the DMI, and the agents often learn together at the standard college-level institutions, though they rarely discover each other's vocation. The similarity in their training and the fact that a number of agents have actually met, though unknowingly, allows the two agencies to work well together when necessary.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The greatest strength of the Department of Military Intelligence lies in its highly organized structure. Unlike many other intelligence agencies, the DMI developed out of the military, rather than the civil government, resulting in a well-defined set of operational parameters set in a stratified, army-like structure. Like a unit of the armed forces, the DMI's rigid chain of command and military-style thinking predisposes its personnel to follow regulations to the letter. This iron discipline virtually precludes incidents within the DMI similar to the insubordination or outright rebellion against governmental authority that has occasionally occurred within the Draconis Combine's ISF or House Steiner's Loki units. The Loki Incident of 2488, in which the Loki commanding officer embarked on a politically sensitive series of raids against Kurita installations without informing his Archon, or the devastating Shadow War of the 2860s between opposing factions of the ISF, could never have happened within the monolithic DMI.

The New Avalon Institute of Science's ongoing resurrection of Star League-era technology, made possible by the Institute's acquisition of the Gray Death Legion memory core in the late 3020s, has also helped the DMI. Technological advances achieved by the NAIS have enabled the DMI to upgrade its operating equipment, giving them a distinct advantage over rival intelligence services.

The DMI also enjoys a positive public image, because few Federated Commonwealth citizens are aware of the organization's

more sinister activities. Ordinary citizens usually encounter the friendlier face of the civilian MIIO, which presents the popular, romantic image of spies. Leaving internal security to its sister agency, the DMI concentrates on external espionage. Unlike the often messy and inefficient operations conducted by the ISF or the Capellan Maskirovka, who control both external and internal intelligence matters, this arrangement allows the DMI to more effectively perform its duties.

With the onslaught of the Clan invasion of the Inner Sphere in 3049, the DMI followed the lead of every other military intelligence agency and shifted its priorities to dealing with the Clan juggernaut. Following the historic gathering of the House leaders hosted by Wolf's Dragoons on Outreach, Prince Hanse Davion pledged to aid his old enemy, the Draconis Combine, in battle against their common Clan enemy. The tentative nonaggression pact between the two rival states allowed the DMI to devote more resources to obtaining vital military data on Clan technology and tactics. This successful intelligence operation served AFFC forces well in their mission to help the Combine defend its capital of Luthien against Clan Smoke Jaguar.

The alliance with the Lyran Commonwealth initially provided both the DMI and the LIC with a whole new range of capabilities. The military might of the Federated Suns coupled with the economic strength of the Lyran Commonwealth created a super-state, with more available military units and intelligence operatives than any other Inner Sphere government, supported by an impressive number of JumpShips now at the union's disposal. However, the assassination of Melissa Steiner-Davion and her son Victor's subsequent ascension to the throne of the combined realm revealed the many stress fractures developing within the alliance, any one of which might sunder the combined state. Archon Prince Victor's friendship with Draconis Combine royalty Omi and Hohiro Kurita, heirs to the traditional enemy of Houses Steiner and Davion, has cost him the goodwill of many of his subjects. Omi's position as the head of the Kurita Order of Five Pillars, a virtual rival intelligence agency to the feared ISF, makes Victor's apparent interest in her particularly galling to many of his people. His seeming preference for the Davion half of the Commonwealth over the Steiner half has alienated still more citizens within the Lyran state, and provided fuel for the Skye and Tamar separatist factions who called for secession even under Steiner rule. Increasingly troubled relations between the DMI and the LIC reflect the turmoil of the times, and have already begun to rob the DMI of some of its effectiveness. Only recently, the DMI cut back its funding for Tormana Liao's resistance network, which it had been supporting since the Fourth Succession War to undermine the Capellan Confederation. Continuing political discontent within the Federated Commonwealth will force both the DMI and the LIC to spend time and energy keeping tabs on each other, instead of working against enemy states or the Clans.

Ongoing factionalism within the Lyran Commonwealth also limits the two agencies' combined effectiveness. Archon Prince Victor's rumored complicity in his mother's death has strengthened anti-Federated Commonwealth elements within the Lyran state at large, and the separatists have stepped up their strikes against the



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alliance. Though the Lyran Intelligence Corps discovered and removed several dangerous factions within its own ranks since the reign of Alessandro Steiner, the Free Skye Movement and other organized opposition groups still occasionally disrupt operations. Sympathetic agents within the LIC, some possibly in the pay of Duke Ryan Steiner, are acting to obstruct investigations into separatist activities, forcing the LIC to divert resources to reducing these sympathizers' impact on the organization or eliminating them. The LIC's preoccupation with internal affairs detracts from the agency's responsibility to cover the DMI's weak spots and play its assigned role in the common defense of the Federated Commonwealth. The alliance between the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League, both implacable enemies of the Federated Commonwealth's component states, might easily tempt the warlike Capellan Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao to strike at his distracted enemy while the time is ripe.

PERSONALITIES

ALEX MALLORY

Intelligence Secretary, MI7, and Commander of MIIO



As one of the longest-serving members of the Federated Commonwealth's current intelligence machine, Alex Mallory holds a place among the most respected individuals in active service, especially among Federated Suns agents.

Now turning fifty, Mallory's appearance reflects his long, sometimes

hard years devoted to the intelligence service. He walks with a severe limp, a relic of the torture he suffered at the hands of the Maskirovka early in the Fourth Succession War. In deep cover as Alexi Malenkov, he became a trusted Maskirovka agent and transmitted massive amounts of Capellan intelligence back to the Federated Suns. He also saved Colonel Pavel Ridzik, leader of the short-lived Tikonov Free Republic, from assassination by Maskirovka agents, thereby convincing Colonel Ridzik to conclude a peace treaty with the Federated Commonwealth that led to the Federated Commonwealth absorbing the Republic after the end of the Fourth Succession War.

After his rescue from a Maskirovka dungeon in 3029 by Justin Xiang-Allard, whom he did not know at the time was also a Davion agent, Mallory remained on New Avalon as part of Prince Hanse's personal intelligence team. When Justin Xiang-Allard took over the post of Intelligence Secretary from his father, Quintus Allard, after the intelligence failure of the War of 3039 against House

Kurita, Alex continued to work closely with Justin. Upon the assassination of Justin Xiang-Allard by Romano Liao's agents in 3052, Alex became Intelligence Secretary, and currently serves Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion as head of the Intelligence Secretariat.

Though age has grayed his hair and his once-athletic form is slowly losing its tone, Mallory remains one of the Federated Commonwealth's most talented intelligence operatives. As head of the Intelligence Secretariat, he excels at his primary job of coordinating day-to-day operations and settling differences between the LIC, the MIIO, and the DMI. At state social functions, he acts as a kind of ambassador to improve relations between members of these frequently squabbling agencies, a significant achievement given the territorial jealousy these organizations regularly exhibit. The current vicious rumors accusing the Archon Prince of complicity in his mother's death, coupled with the increasingly loud rumbles of secession from Duke Ryan Steiner and the Free Skye Movement, may have repercussions within the Federated Commonwealth's intelligence services that go beyond even Alex Mallory's ability to calm the waters.

AGENT CURATIS

Intelligence Aide to the Archon Prince

We know very little about this individual, not even his first name. A fit man approximately 40 years old, he appears to have joined the Intelligence Secretariat soon after beginning his career in the MIIO, serving as a member of Prince Hanse Davion's personal staff. Upon Archon Prince Victor's release from active military duty, Agent Curaitis became part of Victor's personal entourage. He took an active role in the recent search for Melissa Steiner Davion's assassin, and seems to act as the Archon Prince's foremost intelligence aide and general liaison to the Intelligence Secretariat.

MARSHAL STEPHANIE DAY

Commanding Officer, MI6



The appointment of Stephanie Day, at 34 one of the youngest Marshals in the DMI, as commanding officer of the elite Rabid Foxes seemed at first to be a disastrous choice in light of the precarious military situation within the Inner Sphere. Their armies exhausted from battling the Clan invaders, the Successor

States currently act as if the fifteen-year Truce of Tukayyid was a total victory over the Clans, and in the absence of a common enemy returned to making trouble for each other. Too worn down to launch another war, the Successor States are using their intelligence agencies as front-line troops in the renewed jockeying

for power, making the performance of elite units such as MI6 too vital to entrust to an inexperienced officer. In the three years since her appointment to the department, however, MI6's youngest commander has implemented several changes in the unit's organization that increased its ability to mobilize quickly. Under Marshal Day's command, MI6 continues to improve its already impressive record.

Slight of build and barely tall enough to meet the required height measurement for a combat regiment, Day does not look like the leader of one of the Inner Sphere's most ferocious commando units. Appearances are deceiving. Day is proficient in several forms of martial combat, making up in agility what she lacks in brute strength.

A highly motivated, positive thinker, she attempts and gets impressive results in almost every operation. The Intelligence Secretariat and Victor Steiner-Davion consider her to be one of the most competent leaders ever to command MI6. She appears to have little social life outside the DMI, even spending her spare time with other members of her department.

GERALDINE FARROW

MIIO Controller, Corridor Region



As controller of the Corridor region, an area in which all three Federated Commonwealth intelligence groups vie for position, Controller Farrow needs and uses every scrap of her iron will and forceful personality to do her job efficiently. Every department within the Corridor is used to seeing this handsome, fortyish woman with long, auburn

hair and an icy gaze, running her operation to the best of her ability despite constant interference from the DMI and the LIC.

Originally a member of the DMI's Covert Operations department, Farrow caught the eye of Alex Mallory soon after his appointment to Intelligence Secretary. Aware that Farrow would soon be ending her career as an active field operative, Mallory offered her the chance to put her considerable skills to work overseeing MIIO operations in the Corridor. This stern woman runs the Corridor regional agency with ruthless efficiency, insisting upon the best work from all her operatives. Much to her frustration, she must spend much of her time and energy fending off the LIC and DMI, both of which want more operatives and control in the Corridor area. Several senior LIC and DMI officers have even suggested that their agencies take over certain units currently under Farrow's command. She uniformly rejects these suggestions, convinced that her operations in their current form are accomplishing a maximum amount of work in the most efficient way possible.



MARSHAL LUCY MILLER

Intelligence Marshal, DMI

As DMI Intelligence Marshal and head of MI1, the DMI's Command Department, Marshal Miller has one of the agency's most difficult and demanding positions. She must ensure the effective operation of the entire military intelligence machine, and spends a major portion of her time in conference with Intelligence Secretary Alex Mallory and her fellow members of the Command Department.

At 47 years of age, Miller has reached what she and many others consider the pinnacle of her career. Upon her appointment, she took steps to end the bickering that seems to be a standard feature of the department, increasing the Command Department's efficiency. Satisfied in her position, Miller spends her spare time in the DMI gymnasiums maintaining her excellent physical condition. Her extraordinary fitness coupled with her peculiar eyes, one blue and the other green, make her a striking figure.



INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE



Amid the fires of the Clan invasion, a new generation has risen to power in the Draconis Combine. Theodore Kurita, a brilliant warlord dedicated heart and soul to restoring his war-torn nation, has taken the helm from his father Takashi. Determined to carry the Clan War to the enemy, he is gathering his armies to find the Clan homeworlds and raze them. Though his fellow Lords deny him the aid he seeks, Coordinator Theodore still intends to strike at the enemy's heart.

OVERVIEW

For the people of the Inner Sphere, the mere mention of the Internal Security Force calls up images of torture and oppression. The ISF are easily the most widely known and feared intelligence service currently active in the Successor States. They have been responsible for the continuing suppression of free thought and dissenting opinion among the people of the Draconis Combine, and have perpetrated the most outrageous attacks on rival states.

The propaganda machines of the other Successor States would have readers and listeners believe that the ISF is barbaric, a monstrous group hell-bent on inflicting pain and misery on any who stray from the Kurita ideals. Perhaps that vision of the organization has been true at times, but close inspection of the ISF's activities show the agency to be no worse than groups such as the Maskirovka or the Lyran Intelligence Corps, particularly the LIC's Loki secret police unit. On a very few occasions, Loki has terrorized its realm's citizens no less brutally than the ISF has treated the citizens of the Combine.

The ISF does use somewhat harsher tactics to achieve its ends than other intelligence and security forces, but this is simply a natural reflection of the severe nature of Kurita culture. The methods used by the Internal Security Force throughout the Draconis Combine's history originate with the state's founder, Shiro Kurita. This early Kurita used spies, sabotage, and brute force to create his interstellar empire, and vowed to expand it until he or his descendants ruled the stars. Taking their cue from their founder, ISF agents still believe without question that House Kurita will rule the galaxy, and its agents always act with that destiny in mind. Their behavior remains true to that vision even when doing so means betraying individual Coordinators the ISF deems unfit to rule. Their methods also owe something to the fact that of all the functioning Inner Sphere and Periphery societies, the Draconis Combine possesses the most well-defined and rigid social doctrines and conventions. These strictures require the regime to support an extensive monitoring system to ensure that the population obeys society's rules.

Though the Combine's rivals might damn the ISF's methods, none can deny that the organization remains a proficient and dangerous intelligence agency. No other group boasts the success rate of ISF missions, nor can any claim to field more loyal or highly trained operatives.

Members of the ISF accept as their credo the protection of the status quo of the Draconis Combine from all internal or external threats, and the expansion of the Combine's power. They seek to achieve these goals with ruthless efficiency, with little regard for their own lives or the lives of those they encounter.

This capability for unemotional execution of assignments arises mostly from their calm acceptance of honorable death. Every ISF agent considers a death met while fulfilling a mission in service to the Draconis Combine the most favorable occasion to meet his maker.

This belief, coupled with the ISF's unswerving loyalty to the state, makes the organization's agents among the deadliest opponents in the Inner Sphere. The ISF is a dangerous and competent foe, and those working against them underestimate or ignore them at their peril.

BRIEFING

The Clan invasion of the Inner Sphere turned the ISF's major objectives upside down, and the events since the battle of Tukayyid may change them again. Prior to the Clans' arrival, and consistent with the vision of the realm's leaders throughout the ages, the ISF concentrated its energies on the two nations responsible for most of its defeats. They were determined to break apart the Federated Commonwealth alliance and then destroy both member states, the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth. The invasion of the seemingly unstoppable Clan armies produced an unexpected unity between the Combine and its former enemies that still holds, but ComStar's victory over the Clans on Tukayyid has temporarily reduced the Clan threat. With the common enemy apparently neutralized, other voices within the Combine may persuade Coordinator Theodore to break the tentative peace with the Federated Commonwealth instead of spending his resources searching for the Clan homeworlds. The death of Coordinator Takashi Kurita only a year ago, ostensibly in his sleep, suggests that some of those other voices may be powerful indeed; though no proof exists, we suspect foul play in Takashi's sudden demise.

Though the present situation may be changing in the aftermath of Tukayyid, details of the Clan invasion provide a necessary insight into current trends. The appearance of the Clans on the rimward border of the Draconis Combine forced the ISF to shift its priorities from the conquest of old enemies to defense against a new and more powerful one. The speed and range of the Clan assault spurred a change in the ISF's strategy. As Clans Smoke Jaguar, Nova Cat, and Ghost Bear tore through the Combine, taking world after world that the DCMS could not defend, ISF agents on conquered worlds gathered and transmitted as much data on the Clans as they could before their communication was cut off, hoping that somewhere within that information lay the key to stopping the invaders. Knowledge of Clan tactics and psychology gleaned from such data led to the Combine's victory over Clan Smoke Jaguar on Wolcott, where the Coordinator's son Hohiro used the Clan custom of bidding away military strength to reduce the size of the attacking force. The ISF and its agents also tracked and monitored the tactics and equipment the Clans used in their ongoing assaults, constantly updating that information to create as current a picture as possible of what was needed to defend against their enemies.

That work helped Theodore Kurita plan his brilliant defense of Luthien, supported by troops sent by Hanse Davion.

The Clan attack on Luthien forced the ISF and all citizens of the Combine to recognize the high stakes in this new war. Worse than the possibility of conquest by their old, familiar enemies, to fall to the Clans meant submission to a fierce, alien culture against which the traditions of the Combine could not stand. The inability of both the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery and the Internal Security Force to halt the Clan advance forced both organizations to reconsider their philosophy of war. Only the combined forces of several elite DCMS regiments, the Otomo, militia units, the Kell Hounds, and Wolf's Dragoons, executing Theodore's battle strategy for the defense of Luthien, cancelled out superior Clan firepower and saved the Combine from collapse. This unprecedented battlefield alliance between DCMS troops and House Davion, through mercenary units in their employ, caused members of the DCMS and the ISF to rethink their cherished assumptions about who is the enemy.

After the battle for Luthien and Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion's brilliant rescue of Hohiro Kurita from the Clan assault on Teniente, the ISF shifted the focus of its operations to concentrate on fighting the Clans. The nonaggression pact made by Hanse Davion and Theodore Kurita during the historic meeting of all Inner Sphere leaders on the Dragoon world of Outreach continues to hold, but old habits die hard. Already, the friendship between the Coordinator's daughter Omi Kurita and Victor Steiner-Davion is causing complications for Omi. As the head of the Order of Five Pillars, which functions as a virtual domestic intelligence agency, Omi may find herself torn between friendship and duty should the nonaggression pact lapse. The recent cracks in the Federated Commonwealth, exposed by the assassination of Melissa Steiner, have prompted ISF operatives stationed in the allied territories to increase their transmission schedule, providing more frequent situation reports to the Director. Public opinion may eventually call for a return to the pre-Clan level of activity against the Federated Commonwealth. Though Theodore Kurita will honor the agreement he made with Hanse Davion, the ISF may decide to force his hand, and possesses the power to do so.

CURRENT OBJECTIVES

Wolfnet intelligence indicates that ISF agents have been ordered to pursue the following objectives.

1. To gather as much information as possible concerning all aspects of the Clan war machine for analysis and developing counter-tactics. All data concerning weapons technology, military training, military organization, general battle tactics, and location of Clan homeworlds should receive special attention.
2. In battle situations, to capture Clan MechWarriors and Elementals for interrogation. Success in this mission will allow the ISF to better determine overall Clan strategy and plans.
3. On worlds occupied by Clan forces, to arm and supply partisan units to aid in each planet's eventual liberation. Operatives on these worlds should also transmit as much information as possible on garrison troop strength and distribution, and the



INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE

location of Clan supply lines and depots. In addition, operatives on occupied worlds should disrupt Clan operations to the greatest degree possible. Recommended targets for disruption include 'Mech repair facilities, transports, and supply depots.

4. To maintain those observation networks and procedures currently in place in ComStar, the Free Worlds League, the Word of Blake, the Free Rasalhague Republic, and the Federated Commonwealth, but to take no direct action against these states or agencies unless authorized by the Director.

5. To monitor all ComStar transmissions, specifically those to or from Clan-occupied territories.

The ISF has put all of its active operations in the other Successor States temporarily on hold, in some cases trimming back to a nominal staff in order to free as many operatives as possible for the fight against the Clans. In addition, the ISF college has increased the number of new candidates accepted for training each year. Within the next three years we expect to see a 30 percent or greater increase in active agents within the Draconis Combine.

Because Luthien now lies nearer to the Clan border than ever, the Combine government has created contingency plans for evacuating the capital's inhabitants. The ISF transferred the bulk of their monitoring systems and other equipment from their Unity Palace headquarters to the New Samarkand base, and rumor suggests that several ISF-commanded JumpShips hide within the Luthien system, waiting to evacuate the Coordinator and his family. If the Clans attack Luthien again, the capital and the government will return to New Samarkand, the original capital of the Draconis Combine. Clan intelligence agents already report a marked increase in traffic between Luthien and New Samarkand, and the DCMS is devoting a small force to destroying the pirate operations using the planet as a base.

Our agents also report that the entire complex of the DEST Tactical Command Center on Pesht stands ready on twenty-four hour alert. A heavily defended fleet of JumpShips waits in-system to evacuate the facility and the planet if necessary, and the ISF believes it will be. The DEST training facility remains fully operational, and like the Internal Security College, appears to be graduating approximately 30 to 40 percent more operatives than before the attack on Luthien.

Per the wishes of Coordinator Theodore Kurita, the ISF is devoting a majority of their resources to discovering the Clan home worlds. So far, the Coordinator is satisfied with efforts toward that end being made on occupied worlds. Much to the Director's disapproval, however, Theodore has attempted to convince the other Inner Sphere Lords to join him in taking the Clan war to the invaders. With the immediate threat from the Clans ended, the Inner Sphere appears to have abandoned the spirit of cooperation that it adopted during the crisis and returned to its centuries-old bickering and squabbling. Theodore's arguments for a joint exploratory mission so far have fallen on deaf ears. This lack of response allows Director Subhash Indrahra to keep quiet about his objections to the Coordinator's plans.

Renowned for his tactical brilliance, Coordinator Theodore Kurita will fight the battle against the Clans on more than one front. Wolfnet speculates that the Combine may be hiring the disappearing mercenary units to use against the Clans in the Periphery. Given the Combine's prevailing low opinion of mercenaries, such a plan would have to be overseen directly by Theodore Kurita.

BRIEF HISTORY

Because the ISF secret service has been and remains shrouded in mystery, only the senior members of its command structure know the exact date of its inception. However, our agents have obtained evidence suggesting that the ISF first operated as an intelligence organization during the time of Shiro Kurita, the founder of the Draconis Combine.

During his crusade to unite the worlds surrounding his home planet of New Samarkand, Shiro may have recognized the necessity of creating an effective intelligence group to keep him informed of new developments and to perform certain missions his military forces could not undertake. We believe this realization prompted Shiro Kurita to create an elite force from the ranks of his existing army, providing for that force training in all forms of combat as well as in espionage activities, and access to any resources they required. Initially, they infiltrated the societies of worlds that Shiro intended to conquer, and provided information on troop movements and other military concerns before each invasion began. The rapid expansion of Shiro's territory indicates this elite unit's success in their assigned task. In 2319, Kurita's Alliance of Galedon became the Draconis Combine, and its so-called "First Citizen" looked for new areas of expansion.

In 2330, Shiro launched a campaign of conquest against the loosely knit principality of Rasalhague; by 2348 his dynasty had grown to more than 60 worlds, second in power only to the Terran Hegemony among the ten existing states of human-occupied space. During this period Shiro Kurita's fledgling intelligence agency came into its own, though not without growing pains.

Soon after the Draconis Combine was recognized as a political entity, Shiro expanded the elite intelligence unit and organized it into what is known today as the Internal Security Force. Then, as now, they existed to maintain the integrity of the Combine against the machinations of internal and external enemies of the state. Shiro Kurita's campaign to capture Rasalhague planets for the Combine tested both the ISF's power and the truth of its belief in Kurita superiority. Though their efforts helped Shiro's brother Urizen lead Combine forces to an initial four years of slow but steady victories, twice during the decades of the struggle to conquer Rasalhague they underestimated the strength of the Rasalhague citizens' resistance to Kurita rule, with disastrous results. In the most serious of these incidents, the ISF missed the warning signs of a rebellion on the captured world of New Bergen. Local rebels and a defending force combined to wipe out the occupying Kurita army, and the victors distributed a huge stockpile of captured materiel to Rasalhagian resistance forces. These supplies enabled the resistance to prolong the struggle for at least two decades.

HOUSE KURITA

Again, near the end of Coordinator Tenno Kurita's reign, and after he had declared victory over Rasalhague, the ISF failed to prevent a bloody attack on the Kurita family. Coordinator Tenno blamed himself for the resulting deaths, and, encouraged by his son Nihongi, the disgraced Coordinator committed seppuku in 2376.

VON ROHRS DYNASTY

The ISF first meddled in internal politics, showing primary loyalty to the state rather than the Coordinator, when some of its leaders gave tacit approval to a plot hatched by Tenno's grandson Robert Kurita to assassinate his father Nihongi. Nihongi Kurita, an ineffectual whiner concerned only with his own pleasures, died in a fall before his son could carry out his plan. Twenty years later, ISF leaders regretted their agency's meddling with the Combine's leadership when their machinations put the notorious Von Rohrs dynasty in power.

Believing that the cunning and ruthless Nihongi Von Rohrs, Coordinator Nihongi Kurita's bastard nephew, would lead the Draconis Combine to true glory, the ISF turned a blind eye to his conspiracy against Coordinator Robert Kurita. His first actions both reassured and alarmed the ISF. Upon assuming power, Nihongi heated up the ongoing war against the Lyran Commonwealth, and by 2445 had conquered nearly one-fifth of the Lyran Commonwealth's Tamar Pact. But he also embarked on a series of bloody purges at all levels of society, including the ISF. Von Rohrs rooted out all intelligence agents not personally loyal to him, slaughtering them in mass executions.

In 2439, the Terran Hegemony gave Nihongi something new to worry about when it deployed a fearsome new weapon, the BattleMech. Nihongi immediately ordered the ISF to infiltrate the Hegemony's BattleMech production facility on Hesperus II, but his wholesale bloodlettings had decimated the agency. Lacking the expertise of experienced agents who had been found "disloyal" and executed, and operating in a climate of constant suspicion, the ISF spent more than two decades trying unsuccessfully to steal even a scrap of relevant data. Up until 2455, only the Hegemony produced BattleMechs, giving it a significant advantage over the surrounding states. A successful Lyran commando

raid on the Hegemony's primary production facility on Hesperus II gave the Commonwealth BattleMech technology and changed this balance of power.

Upon receiving frightening reports of the Lyran Commonwealth's now-unbeatable military strength, Coordinator Kozo Von Rohrs ordered the ISF to increase its efforts to steal the BattleMech plans. Convinced by this time that their ranks simply did not contain personnel capable of accomplishing the job at hand, the ISF displayed another of their organization's strengths: a willingness to use whatever means necessary to complete the mission. They appropriated a contingent of the newly formed Draconis Elite Strike Teams, House Kurita's special forces unit.

On July 23, 2461, a DEST unit para-dropped from low orbit onto the Lyran BattleMech facility on Coventry. Five operatives, dressed in the style of ancient Japan's ninja assassins, infiltrated the facility and escaped undetected with the BattleMech plans. Fourteen years later, an elite Kurita regiment fought the first 'Mech-versus-'Mech battle against Steiner occupation forces on the world of Nox, marking a turning point in the history of armed warfare.

Despite the Von Rohrs regimes' frequent conquests, the dynasty's continual purges finally forced the ISF leaders to take action. The Von Rohrs' paranoia was crippling their agency, and they eventually chose to replace that distaff line of descent with Captain Martin McAllister, a direct descendant of the legendary Shiro Kurita. With the help of senior ISF officials and Blaine Sorenson, Lord of Rasalhague, Captain McAllister overthrew the current, corrupt Coordinator Von Rohrs and wiped out the remaining Von Rohrs family. McAllister then assumed the throne and began to undo the damage the Von Rohrs had done.

HOUSE KURITA AND THE STAR LEAGUE

Unwilling to watch the realm split apart in a power struggle after McAllister's death in 2515, the ISF manipulated events to keep his line in ascendancy. To bypass prejudice against a female leader, they arranged the marriage of McAllister's capable daughter Siriwan to Warren Kurita, a scion of the direct Kurita line, and made Warren Coordinator of the Draconis Combine. Within a year of his son Hehiro's birth, the ISF arranged Warren's death from "a mysterious illness." Siriwan McAllister-Kurita ruled for forty years





INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE

as Hehiro's regent, continuing to rebuild and strengthen all aspects of Combine society as had her father before her.

Like all members of House Kurita, Hehiro believed his family was destined to rule the stars. Unlike many of his predecessors, Hehiro envisioned a way to accomplish this without resorting to wholesale military conquest. In 2751, much to the surprise of the ISF, Hehiro agreed to join the Star League. To counteract the perception among Combine citizens that joining an interstellar union implied failure to fulfill the Combine's destiny, Hehiro directed his propagandists to portray the Combine's entry into the Star League as a magnanimous act. The inferior member-states, propaganda implied, would recognize the Draconis Combine's superiority and beg its Coordinator to become the First Lord of the Star League, thus fulfilling House Kurita's sacred destiny. This argument won converts from the ISF and the military as well as among the general population. The Combine's stellar performance in the Reunification War against the Periphery states convinced many Combine citizens that they would, indeed, rule the galaxy through the Star League as their Coordinator had promised.

The unfortunate reign of Coordinator Leonard Kurita punctured this dream. Leonard attacked First Lord Ian Cameron in a drunken, paranoiac rage, stabbed one of the First Lord's guards to death, then fled home to raise an army. A shocked Combine stood on the brink of war. The prospect of conflict on this scale appalled the ISF; however strongly they believed in the Kurita destiny, they knew that the Combine could not stand against the might of the entire Star League. For the good of the empire, the ISF quietly arranged Leonard Kurita's death from a "mysterious illness," removing the threat of war against the Star League and ensuring the Combine's survival.

The present-day ISF and much of current Combine society's form owes its existence to Coordinator Urizen Kurita II, who quadrupled the ISF's budget and gave the agency wider license. In turn, the ISF carried out Urizen's plan to restructure the Combine along feudal Japanese lines. Urizen ordered the agency's Director to cleanse the realm of those who might tarnish its honor with non-Japanese ways. For the first time, a Coordinator turned the vast resources of internal intelligence against his people, not merely to ensure their loyalty to him, but to enforce cultural conformity.

Adopting the nickname "metsuke," meaning "all-seeing eyes," the ISF went to work, often carrying out planetwide purges to weed out those citizens who did not measure up to the Combine's ideals. Enforced by terrorist tactics, Urizen's vision rigidly stratified Combine society by the end of his reign. He left behind a domain ruled by a uniform culture and a disturbing fanaticism, in which even mild political criticism brought death, and in which the powerful ISF operated almost without restraint.

FALL OF THE STAR LEAGUE

Upon the death of Simon Cameron in 2751, Coordinator Takiro Kurita doubled the ISF's funding and expanded its duties

to include surveillance of the military. With the Lords of the Star League attacking each other in so-called bandit raids and the First Lord's throne occupied by a child, Takiro quietly marshaled his forces and waited for the right moment to take control of the entire Inner Sphere. Stefan Amaris, ruler of the Rim Worlds Republic, beat him to it.

Busy watching their own military for signs of disloyalty, the ISF had no warning of the Amaris coup. The apparent collusion between Amaris and Coordinator Minoru Kurita during General Aleksandr Kerensky's campaign to retake Terra during the Amaris Civil War actually resulted from blackmail; Amaris took the Coordinator's nephew Drago Kurita and his family into "protective custody," and used his hostages to extort intelligence and Combine military aid from the ISF. In the end, Minoru's cooperation with Amaris gained him only the enmity of his fellow House Lords, for in a final act of viciousness before surrendering, Amaris ordered Drago Kurita and his family killed. Even today, Inner Sphere leaders believe the Combine's actions during the Amaris Civil War speak louder than any words said in the intervening centuries, and continue to distrust House Kurita.

Though Kerensky had ousted the usurper, the Star League ceased to exist. When a tired and saddened Kerensky gathered the bulk of his army in the Combine's Galedon district, Coordinator Minoru rushed troops to the area in response to the perceived threat, but Kerensky's followers quickly disappeared from known space in the Exodus of 2784. A relieved Minoru turned his attention to grabbing power for the Combine, and proclaimed himself First Lord of the Star League in 2786. Other House Lords followed suit, touching off the First Succession War.

In the early months of the war, the ISF pulled off an intelligence coup against the Combine's strongest foe. Having learned that the Federated Suns planned a strike against the Capellan Confederation, Minoru's son Jinjiro used the already high level of military activity in the Galedon district to camouflage a massive buildup on the Federated Suns border. Warlord Jinjiro launched a surprise assault against House Davion early in 2787. The offensive culminated in the Kentares Massacre, in which the unstable Jinjiro ordered his soldiers to kill every civilian on Kentares IV in retaliation for the murder of Coordinator Minoru Kurita by an unknown assassin on that planet.

The First Succession War ground to a halt from sheer exhaustion in 2821. The Second Succession War owes its beginning to the actions of ISF operatives loyal to Jinjiro, who informed their increasingly insane Coordinator that a medical examination during one of his crazed periods predicted the total loss of his sanity within a decade. Jinjiro studied tapes of his bouts of madness, which revealed that even when he lost the rest of his faculties, his military genius never deserted him. Unwilling to step aside in favor of a Coordinator whom the DCMS did not trust, Jinjiro decided to go back to war, striking at the Lyran Commonwealth in 2830. Jinjiro went completely mad in 2837, pushed into permanent psychosis when he received a tiny toy soldier dressed in a Star League Defense Force uniform. To this day, no one knows who gave the Coordinator the doll, though suspicion rests

on unidentified ISF agents who knew that their Coordinator was losing his grip and wished to replace him with a young, aggressive war leader. When Coordinator Yoguchi Kurita came to power, he insulted the ISF by attaching the organization to the Draconis military. The ISF considered the entire DCMS inferior to their own operation, and the resulting rift between the Coordinator and the ISF may have cost Yoguchi his life. Before long, the split developed into the disastrous power struggle between Yoguchi's brother and sister, Miyogi and Roweena Kurita, that Combine citizens dubbed the Shadow War.

SHADOW WAR AND AFTERMATH

Yoguchi was assassinated in 2850 by Snow Fire, a Lyran intelligence operative posing as a concubine. Though no definitive proof exists, rumor suggests that ISF Director Malcolm Katsuyori avenged Yoguchi's insult to the ISF by allowing Snow Fire to become the Coordinator's mistress, knowing full well that she was a spy and an assassin. Malcolm's close relationship to Roweena Kurita, head of the People's Reconstruction Effort (PRE), suggests her possible complicity in the plot.

Aware of the ISF's estrangement from the Coordinator, Roweena curried favor with the agency by giving it access to the PRE bureaucracy and thereby extending the ISF's reach throughout all levels of society. At the end of the Second Succession War, a wary Miyogi formed an ISF team headed by the fanatically loyal Rajiv Sulevani to investigate the extent of Roweena's "anti-Combine activities." Neither Miyogi nor Sulevani realized the extent to which Roweena had suborned the ISF.

The investigation split the ISF into pro-Roweena and pro-Miyogi factions. Sulevani began a secret assassination campaign among pro-Roweena agents, touching off the Shadow War that claimed the lives of more than a thousand *metsuke* by 2865. As the struggle that had seized the Combine intelligence agency escalated, it somehow became public knowledge. Shamed that his enemies had learned of his internal difficulties, Miyogi played the opening gambit in the Third Succession War by invading the Lyran Commonwealth in 2866.

Miyogi survived this ISF rebellion, but fell victim to another. Insulted at losing a coveted promotion to the Coordinator's son Jon, Miyogi's ambitious advisor Taragi Kurita enlisted Roweena's aid in overthrowing the Coordinator. Unknown to Miyogi, a few pro-Roweena ISF agents had escaped the Shadow War, and Taragi presented them with the perfect chance for revenge. Using false information produced by the treacherous agents, Taragi publicly disgraced Jon Kurita as Roweena and her accomplices spread rumors among the ISF and the DCMS that Miyogi had secretly sold out to House Davion. Acting on the rumors and on his own initiative, a young DCMS captain walked into the Audience Hall of Unity Palace and detonated a bomb, killing the Coordinator. Upon hearing of Miyogi's death, General Taragi had his ISF contacts arrest Jon Kurita, convict him of the murder in a mock trial, and execute him. Taragi then took control of the Combine.

Taragi's successor, Shinjiro Kurita, saw the importance of renewing a good, working relationship with the ISF. The agency

had spent the ten years following the Shadow War maintaining as little direct contact with the Combine government as possible, still displeased with their subordinate status to the Arm of the Dragon. In 2921, Shinjiro met with the agency's Director, Clarissa Indrahara, and the two hammered out the Davarapala Accords, granting the Director of the ISF full membership in the High Command. With the stigma of military control gone, the Director signed the Accords and pledged renewed faithful service. The first test of this new loyalty came in the reign of Hukai Kurita, when the Coordinator ordered the ISF to act against ComStar.

Necess Kurita, Coordinator Hukai's elder sister, joined ComStar in what Hukai saw as a repudiation of Kurita tradition. Acting on Hukai's orders, an ISF squad kidnapped Necess and imprisoned her in Unity Palace. Ultimately, Precentor Hendricks of Luthien forced Hukai to back down and release his sister to the Order. Hukai never fully recovered from this loss of face, and did little to expand Kurita power. The ultimate failure of the mission did not detract from the ISF's faithful completion of their assigned task. Relations between the Coordinator and the intelligence agency had returned to the status quo.

Perhaps reacting to his father's weakness, Hukai's son Hohiro began his rule by threatening to review the Davarapala Accords, citing grave doubts about its provisions. He changed his mind when faced with strong and clever opposition from the Director. Though they never acted openly against him, the ISF did not prevent Hohiro's assassination in 3004 by a member of the Otomo, his own Palace guard.

TAKASHI KURITA AND THE ISF

The ISF demonstrated their loyalty to Hohiro's successor, Takashi Kurita, by informing him of persistent rumors that he had collaborated in his father's death. An enraged Takashi ordered the Otomo to round up and execute everyone suspected of spreading such sedition, taking advantage of this opportunity to consolidate his power by eliminating former enemies. During Takashi's early reign, the ISF purged the military of anti-Takashi factions, and ensured that the general public would not take advantage of Takashi's modest reforms to rebel against him. The ISF also kept a sharp eye on Marcus Kurita, the Coordinator's overly ambitious cousin, whom they suspected of at least four attempts on Takashi's life.

Takashi Kurita appointed the ISF's current Director, the formidable Subhash Indrahara. Indrahara served Takashi well on several occasions, most notably arranging the Concord of Kapteyn in 3022. Conceived in opposition to the powerful Steiner-Davion alliance, this treaty between Houses Kurita, Marik, and Liao was made possible only through Indrahara's diplomacy and persistence. Though Indrahara and the ISF initially supported Takashi without reservation, the Coordinator's vendetta against mercenaries during and after the Fourth Succession War prompted Indrahara to subtly distance the ISF from the Coordinator for the good of the Combine. This distance increased in later years, as Indrahara struggled to balance conflicting loyalties to the Coordinator and his son Theodore, whose visions of the Combine's good often clashed.



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Takashi's feud with Wolf's Dragoons diverted valuable intelligence and military resources during and after the Fourth Succession War. In an underhanded attempt to keep the Dragoons from leaving Combine employ, Takashi allowed one of his generals to run a smear campaign against the unit. When the angry Dragoons left the Combine to serve the Federated Suns, Takashi declared a vendetta against the unit and their commander, Jaime Wolf. Takashi eventually lost the loyalty of some ISF agents by pursuing his feud with Wolf's Dragoons. Through those agents, who believed the Coordinator's vendetta betrayed the Kurita destiny of planetary expansion, Wolfnet learned of the ISF's plot to block the Federated Commonwealth alliance by abducting Archon-Designate Melissa Steiner before her marriage to Prince Hanse Davion. Apparently, upon learning through a deep-cover agent that a DropShip carrying Melissa was stranded in the Styx system of Combine space, Director Subhash Indrahar sent an elite unit of ISF jump infantry to Styx to capture the Archon-Designate. Only the timely arrival of the Kell Hounds foiled the well-executed ISF attack.

Aside from successfully placing agent Sharilar Mori within ComStar, the ISF kept a low profile throughout the 3030s and 3040s, attempting to avoid taking sides in the covert power struggle between the Coordinator and his son. However, two particular incidents characterized the ISF's leanings. In 3029, Takashi made Theodore *Gunji-*

no-Kanrei, the Combine's supreme war leader. He was unpleasantly surprised when Theodore turned the ceremonial appointment into a mandate to reorganize the DCMS. Though ordered to intensify ISF surveillance of Theodore, Indrahar had already determined that Theodore posed no threat to the Combine and kept his activities secret. This decision proved particularly significant when the ISF concealed a secret meeting between the *Kanrei* and ComStar's Primus Myndo Waterly in 3030, in which the Primus provided Theodore with needed troops and equipment in exchange for his support of Rasalhague's independence movement.

In 3039, the Federated Commonwealth launched a surprise attack against the Combine, the opening move in what would be known as the War of 3039. The ISF proved instrumental in helping

Theodore keep one step ahead of his enemy; with the help of a "black box" they stole from the Federated Suns near the end of the Fourth Succession War, Theodore tracked Davion troop movements and bluffed Hanse Davion into believing the Combine stronger than it was. By the year's end, Davion backed down.

The ISF gained much of its intelligence on the Clans through agent Sharilar Mori, who infiltrated ComStar during the Fourth Succession War and rose through the ranks from Adept to Precentor. By the time of the Clan invasion in 3049, Mori had become Precentor Dieron and principal aide to Primus Myndo Waterly. Precentor Mori rendered the ISF one of her greatest services by allowing them to warn Theodore Kurita of the impending Clan attack on Luthien. Also, during the final battle against the Clans on Tukayyid, Precentor Mori's warning enabled the Combine to resist Operation Scorpion,

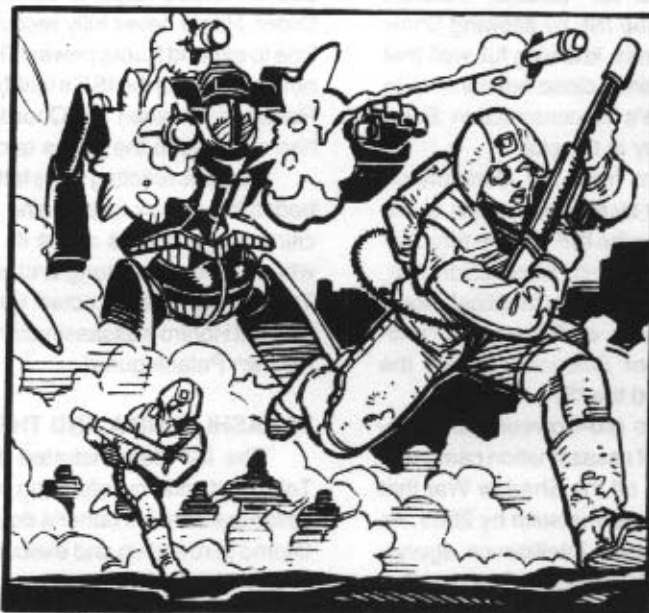
Primus Waterly's mad, unsuccessful scheme to place the entire Inner Sphere under ComStar's thumb. Before Waterly's ROM operatives could take control of the hyperpulse generators in Combine space, the ISF dispatched Draconis Elite Strike Teams to the HPGs. These teams defeated the ROM agents, maintaining interstellar communications. Acting in concert with Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht, who assassinated Waterly, Mori took her place as Primus.

A NEW GENERATION

Upon the recent death of Takashi Kurita, the ISF threw its weight solidly behind its new Coordinator, Theodore. Aware that the

Clans continue to pose a greater threat to the Combine than any rival Successor State, the ISF is concentrating its efforts on finding a way to defeat the Clans when the Truce of Tukayyid expires. The aging Director Subhash Indrahar has chosen a successor to his office, but continues to use his craft and cunning for the good of the Combine. And, as have other intelligence agencies, the ISF is taking advantage of the schism in ComStar to considerably enhance its information network by infiltrating the order, including the once-impenetrable ROM.

Though the territory lost to the Clans has weakened some areas of the ISF network, their ability to readily adapt their methods to fit any circumstances will certainly stand them in good stead in the near future.





WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 00392-IS7-3/24/6

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF SIMON CAMERON, BY PAULA CATTERSON, TERRA PRESS, 2784.

The facts surrounding Simon Cameron's death, with their many inconsistencies and gaps, have invited countless theories, most of which conclude that he was murdered. Following are some facts and speculations raised by the High Council's Panel of Investigation into the death.

1) The mining robot, a Digger 500 built by Wotan Mining Industries, had been overhauled and inspected just ten days before the incident. There was nothing in the report to indicate any unusual defects.

2) Mining Operator Charles "Mole" Dryden reported that the robot had exhibited "damned unusual control twitching" two days before the incident. The robot was pulled off-line, but a check of its control system revealed nothing.

3) Examination of the robot itself proved fruitless because the collision had split one of the hydraulic reservoirs, spilling its highly corrosive fluid all over the computer center.

4) Log-in sheets indicate that Petrovia Drewsivitch, a robot technician, worked on the robot the night before the incident. The company had no record of an employee named Petrovia Drewsivitch, however. This is not conclusive because the company had very poor bookkeeping, but investigators were unable to find the woman.

5) One hour after the death of Simon Cameron was confirmed, government agents noticed a transmission from somewhere within the colony. Investigators were never able to find the source of the transmission or to decode it.

Speculation abounds about what happened in that tunnel. Most people believe that Simon Cameron was the victim of a plot. The Draconis Combine, the Lyran Commonwealth, and the Periphery states are the three possible villains mentioned most often. The Commonwealth is probably the least likely of the three, even though the First Lord's appeal to the people had caused the Steiners some political discomfort. The Periphery, with its countless anti-Star League groups, definitely had enough reasons to wish the First Lord dead, but it is unlikely that any of the Periphery realms had the resources to pull off the feat.

If Cameron's death was not an accident, the Draconis Combine is the one that most people think was responsible. Not only was there a longstanding feud between the Camerons and the Kuritas, but the Draconis Combine was also the next destination of the First Lord's Peace Mission. The Kurita family had always placed a high priority on maintaining complete control over the Combine population, and it is reasonable to believe that the Kuritas had the First Lord killed to prevent him from entering the Combine and appealing directly to the people.

With everything we know and love collapsing around us, it is unlikely that we will ever know if the First Lord was murdered or not. Even if we did, it is unlikely that it would make any difference in what is likely to happen next.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

In most Successor States, the head of the realm is the head of the intelligence service. This is true of the Draconis Combine; the official head of the Internal Security Force is the Coordinator of the Combine, Theodore Kurita. As dictated by the laws of the Combine, the ISF must submit all proposed actions for the Coordinator's approval before carrying them out. However, the sheer size of the ISF and the number of its operations make it virtually impossible to strictly obey this hierarchy. Therefore, the day-to-day decisions concerning the organization's operations fall to the Director of the ISF.

The current Director is Subhash Indrahara, an old friend of the late Coordinator Takashi Kurita. He is without a doubt one of the most powerful people in the Draconis Combine, second only to the Coordinator himself. He makes all ISF policy decisions and authorizes all mission assignments, making the Director directly responsible for all intelligence and security in the realm; a heavy burden as well as a high honor.

No direct second-in-command exists within the ranks of the ISF. Instead, the Director maintains a trusted team of five high-level operatives capable of taking over operations. The Director chooses his successor from among these agents. Current intelligence community rumors claim that at least two of these agents are members of the Sons of the Dragon, a core of ISF agents personally loyal to Indrahara. If the Director cannot fulfill his role for any reason before designating his successor, this team of five agents has the training and authority to administrate the ISF until the Coordinator can appoint a new Director.

The five operatives who serve as the second-in-command also command the organization's five divisions, each responsible for assigning and monitoring the operatives in those divisions.

Unlike other intelligence agencies, the ISF maintains absolute secrecy about the identity of its agents, even within its own society. This policy serves a double purpose. First, it prevents enemy operatives within the Combine from identifying ISF agents. Second, it allows the ISF to successfully infiltrate all levels of Combine society without the knowledge of the general public.



INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE

One ISF operative might be assigned to work in a factory or on a farm, while another might advise the governor of an entire world. This system provides the ISF with sources of information that would normally be unavailable to them, simply because citizens revealing information do not realize the true identity of their listeners.

This policy creates problems for all invading forces, but especially those of Clan Smoke Jaguar. Even on Clan-occupied Combine worlds, where the ISF is completely cut off from their resources and the command structure, the number of sabotage attempts and guerrilla attacks on Clan garrison forces continues to confirm their presence and active status.

ISF BRANCHES

The number five plays an important part in the structure of the Internal Security Force. The intelligence agency is divided into five divisions, each concentrating on a primary focus, though all branches can serve additional roles as necessary.

One unusual feature of the organization is its lack of a central administration division. Each branch maintains its own administrative division, which works in unison with the Director's command group to assign missions and oversee agents' training, debriefing, and other peripheral duties.

COVERT OPERATIONS

The covert operations division is the active intelligence division of the Internal Security Force, carrying out espionage missions within the Draconis Combine and the other Successor States.

With the possible exception of DEST, the covert operations division gives its operatives the most intensive training. Only after undergoing two years of intelligence and combat training is an operative assigned to active service.

Covert operations works primarily outside the Draconis Combine, attempting missions against rival states ranging from assassinations to sabotage to spreading misinformation among the intelligence-gathering agencies of the various Houses.

These operatives also work within the Combine, usually assigned to operations requiring more specialized abilities than those common to the Internal Security division. For example, a member of covert operations usually serves foreign ambassadors visiting the Combine as an attaché and liaison officer for the duration of their visit. These agents assist their charges in every way possible, taking that opportunity to investigate the motives of official visitors and closely monitor their actions.

Because of the time and training the ISF devotes to developing a covert operations agent, the agency usually does not waste these operatives' talents to resolve internal matters. This policy extends even to what other organizations might consider crisis situations, with some exceptions. For example, the ISF only recalled those covert agents in nonessential operations to support

the contingent on Luthien defending against the Clans. However, rumors claim that one hundred DEST operatives were pulled from the planet Pesht and para-dropped into the capital city to help defend Unity Palace.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Doubtless the most universally feared intelligence organization at work within the Inner Sphere, the internal security division of the ISF has a fearsome reputation throughout the Successor States for its agents' brutality against even the mildest anti-government sentiment.

So far, only Wolfnet has gleaned the little information available on the general operations of the internal security division. This paucity of data stems less from that division's security measures than the reluctance of those fortunate few who return from unwilling internment in ISF facilities to discuss the nature of their stay.

Internal security plays two main roles within the Combine. First, they must detect and reeducate all citizens who do not follow accepted doctrines to the letter. Citizens unfortunate enough to be caught expressing incorrect views can expect no leniency from internal security operatives assigned to duties at the realm's numerous indoctrination centers.

Second, and more important, internal security is responsible for detecting and eliminating all foreign agents operating within the Combine. Within the paranoid, xenophobic Combine society, this task carries particular importance. ISF operatives subject captured enemy agents to ingenious and horrific interrogation methods, and show no mercy. Internal security employs the largest percentage of ISF agents, and infiltrates these agents into every level of Combine society from the boards of BattleMech companies to the assembly lines to small businesses to boarding houses. The internal security division of the ISF monitors all aspects and classes of Combine society constantly and simultaneously. In the eyes of the internal security division, no one is above suspicion.

VOICE OF THE DRAGON

The Kurita family regime rules over the people of the Draconis Combine by filling their minds with strict ideals that all citizens strive to uphold, both from a desire to conform and from fear of the consequences should the ISF discover their failure to do so. To ensure that the people continue to follow the party line, the ISF maintains the division known as the Voice of the Dragon.

In intelligence community terms, the Voice of the Dragon is the ISF's propaganda division, responsible for monitoring and censoring all transmissions and documents before their release to the general public. Unapproved, therefore illegal transmission is punishable by death. Ostensibly to help prevent inadvertent unapproved transmissions, the Voice of the Dragon places at least one "advisor" on the board of every media firm operating from within the Combine.

The Voice of the Dragon operates in a manner similar to that of the official news agencies run by the communist states on old

Terra. The media may release only approved information, which ensures that the general public will learn only what the government wishes them to.

Voice of the Dragon agents are responsible for organizing and keeping up the morale of several partisan movements operating on Clan-occupied worlds. Because of their finely-honed talent for influencing the citizens of the Combine, many operatives from this ISF branch infiltrate local populations and stir people up to form resistance groups, frequently through underground newspapers or clandestine broadcasts. The Clans occasionally capture these operatives, but Wolfnet assumes that more than one agent is active on each planet.

METSUKE

The name *metsuke*, which translates as "all-seeing eyes," was adopted by the Internal Security Force as a whole during the early years of the reign of Coordinator Urizen II. Today, the name applies only to a single division. The Metsuke serve as the primary information-gathering division of the ISF, responsible for collecting and assimilating all information passing into or out of the Draconis Combine. Their operatives monitor all communications, including ComStar transmissions, using the most advanced surveillance equipment available within the Combine. They also monitor all planetary radio and video communications for signs of enemy activity and anti-government sentiments.

In addition, the Metsuke maintain a vast network of informants on most worlds within the Combine, as well as on the major worlds of the other Successor States. Through this network they can piece together a fairly accurate record of the rumors circulating and activities taking place within their sphere of influence. Wolfnet has confirmed that Primus Sharilar Mori was, and perhaps still is, an active ISF agent. Though the rumors cannot be confirmed, many intelligence community experts suspect that the Metsuke infiltrated other operatives into the ranks of ComStar.

As with every division of the ISF, the Metsuke support a number of deep-cover agents on Clan-occupied worlds. These operatives have continued to transmit Clan troop strengths and supply-line information almost uninterrupted since the invasion began.

Another special weapon in the Metsuke's arsenal is the system the ISF calls "Eye-in-the-Sky," a fleet of specially adapted JumpShips operating as an arm of the Metsuke. These vessels are modified to carry advanced surveillance and sensor arrays for long-distance spying on worlds. A properly-equipped ship jumps into a system, then scans the system's planet with powerful sensors. At the same time, any Metsuke operatives on the target world with access to a transmitter can beam data to the vessel before it leaves the system.

So far, these vessels have escaped capture simply because the range of their sensors allows them to scan a world from the jump point and receive data from ground transmitters. By the time an interceptor flight can reach the vessel to attack, the ship already has left the system.

SPECIAL UNITS

As with every other intelligence agency in the Inner Sphere, the ISF most likely uses special forces. Officially, ISF special units do not exist, and Wolfnet operatives have not yet found definite evidence to the contrary. Given the ISF's reputation for spreading terror throughout the Inner Sphere, however, it is unlikely that they do not possess commando forces. Since the elevation of the ISF Director to the High Command, the ISF has used Draconis Elite Strike Teams on many occasions, but Wolfnet believes that the agency also operates non-military commando units.



DRACONIS ELITE STRIKE TEAMS

After the Director of the ISF became a ranking member of the Draconis High Command, equal in power to the Warlords of the military districts, use of the Draconis Elite Strike Teams (DEST) belonged exclusively to the ISF. The men and women of these units are one of the most deadly fighting forces currently active within the Inner Sphere, equal in ability to House Liao's Death Commandos, House Steiner's Loki units, and House Davion's Rabid Foxes.

To qualify for DEST, an individual must undergo an exhaustive series of physical tests, including a two-week survival course under the burning heat of the planet Kaznejov and a course of training in pain-resistance. Any candidate who passes these assessments must then complete a series of mental and ideological examinations to determine his or her suitability for DEST.

Those who succeed in these preliminaries continue on to the DEST Tactical Command Center hidden deep within the forests of the planet Pesht. Here they receive instruction in all known combat techniques, ranging from BattleMech operations to ninjitsu, the ancient art of stealth and movement. Only after completing four years of grueling training does an operative join an active DEST unit.

DEST members serve as elite commandos assigned to carry out missions of sabotage, terrorism, and other operations requiring their special skills. In the past, these units have been largely responsible for infiltrating enemy installations, and continue to serve that function among others. Every individual DEST operative knows how to pilot anything from a 'Mech to a JumpShip, and possesses expert-level skill in the use of various melee weapons and firearms.

In the mid-29th century DEST agents adopted the garb and philosophy common to the ninja of ancient Japan. They wear a heat-absorbing black jumpsuit as their uniform when on active



WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 26801-LC4-10/19/7

THE FOLLOWING ENTRY IS EXCERPTED FROM *BY THE POUND OR BY THE HOUR: MEMOIRS OF A FREELANCE CONTRACTOR*, BY JACKIE QUINN, AS TOLD TO F.L. DEPALTRIE, RED FIRE PRESS, 2932.

Well then, it was myself after all who was asked to do it in the end. This great toff from Rasalhague on his visit to the city hadn't been able to keep his hands off the wrong man's daughter. The thing had already been settled with the girl when they spoke to me. They needed this 'Hagian dead, you see, and it was nothing they wanted to do themselves. It was all right for the *mere Irish* to deal with the dirty work, but they couldn't have it done for a fee, could they, because it was a family matter. So I did it for the *honor*, and when they offered to give me the Gift of Obligation, I told them to give me the worth of it in House bills and I'd buy my own present for myself.

This Torgerson was a very *suspicious* man, for all that, and he surrounded himself in his digs with such a crowd of bad men that it was impossible to get to him while everyone was home. So once I had ensconced myself in a hovel outside his walls, he got the invitation for another trip to Luthien, but it was the kind he wasn't likely to decline. Sure enough, I'm having my sip in the morning and the whole ugly lot of them goes past the window on their way to the spaceport.

Not being one to stand on formality, I proceed into the man's compound without waiting for a further invite, with the help of a little darkness and a little piece of wire. Things are a bit slack inside, what with His Honor being gone and all. The guards are having a screaming fight in the courtyard, the kitchen help is having a feast in the pantry, and the tutor and the nursemaid are having a roll in the Big Man's bed. A cough in the dark from me and the lovers are up and out in a hurry, leaving the door ajar.

It's right inside with me, and a survey of the bedroom. I find what I thought I would, that the ceiling is false, with the pretty wood panels covering a crawl space.

I gets up inside of it, directly above the master's bed, put some raw grain in my belly with a sip of the malt to help it swell, and commence to doze for the better part of a week, waiting for the party to return.

Return they do, with all their nastiness intact. The master's Physical Force boys set a very bad tone. They survey the premises thoroughly, except, of course, for the ceilings, and once again the place is impossible of entry to anyone who means harm to the inhabitants. Unless they're already in.

Torgerson spends the first night in the bed directly below me. Inasmuch as his niece accompanies him, prudence prompts that I pass directly to the events of the second night, which are more to the point, in any case. In comes himself, then, with a bad case of the staggers, and me waiting in the ceiling with the patience of a saint. A final jolt from his flask, no pun intended. He sets the bottle on the nightstand, sits on the edge of the bed, says goodnight with a great belch, and flops back on the bedclothes. Even if I'd had it in mind to go on with my week's nap, his rumbling and snoring wouldn't have allowed it.

Wasn't he lying there, then, with his bold mouth wide open, and me looking down onto his tonsils. No need to disturb my place. A bit of a needle on the end of a string, down from above and into his mouth; seven drops of clear liquid from the vial in my shirt make their way down the string and drip off the needle into his throat. And that's the end of him.

Next morning, there's the commotion. Oh, the premises are without a master. Ain't it terrible. A great wailing goes up, and I doze for a few more days while they make his stiff self up for the final exit. Then he's gone. The servants get back into the pantry, bottles are uncorked throughout the estate, and with nightfall, the tutor and his sweetheart are back in the great man's bed.

They leave the door ajar again, and it's down and out and over the wall with me.

The thing is done. Once again, the outraged father on Luthien can sleep easy, knowing his accounts are balanced.

And so can I.

duty that provides dark camouflage and reduces the wearer's heat emissions, making the operative less visible to infrared sensors. All DEST agents practice some form of Zen Buddhism, which they usually focus through a form of unarmed combat.

No intelligence agency has been able to determine the exact number of active DEST operatives, but Wolfnet estimates the figure at approximately five or six thousand. Of this number, probably five hundred are stationed on Pesht, while another four hundred remain on Luthien to serve as a royal guard to the Coordinator and the Director of the ISF.



SONS OF THE DRAGON

Though the following information only recently came to the attention of Wolfnet, ComStar may have known of the existence of this group for a number of years, certainly since before the Clans arrived.

The ranks of the ISF contain an inner circle of agents even more mysterious and secretive than its parent organization. Known as the Sons of the Dragon, only a select few recognize its existence. Though information concerning the organization remains sparse, our sources confirm the following details.

Subhash Indrahar, Director of the ISF, created the Sons of the Dragon as an elite force completely loyal to him, above even the ISF or the Coordinator. Indrahar chooses the members of this group personally from those intelligence agents who scored within the top 5 percent of their peers during training and hold perfect career records, including honors for their services to the Dragon.

Many reasons may have prompted Indrahar to create this secret society. One logical assumption would be that he intended to establish a power base to challenge Takashi Kurita for rule of the Combine. However, no evidence, not even whispers of a rumor, have ever surfaced to indicate his desire to do so. Indrahar's fanatical devotion to the Combine was always best served by supporting and, when necessary, manipulating the ruling Kurita regime. Indrahar appears to use the group as a private unit, assigning to them missions he considers too sensitive to be carried out by other ISF operatives. He may also use the society as his personal guard (though the Director of the ISF automatically commands a substantial security team).

Intercepted communiqués known only to Wolfnet indicate that Theodore Kurita joined the ranks of the Sons as early as 3018, long before the death of his father and his own rise to the throne. His prior connection to the Sons of the Dragon and his knowledge of Indrahar's secret society gives Theodore implicit

power over the Sons and further binds the Internal Security Force to the Coordinator.

The Sons of the Dragon draws its members from all five intelligence service branches, initiating an especially high percentage from the Draconis Elite Strike Teams. In fact, the DEST unit's current commanding officer is rumored to be a member of the Sons, as are the heads of Covert Operations and Internal Security. The group's affiliation with the ISF gives it unlimited access to transport and resources, and loosely defined operational parameters. Even the smallest Sons of the Dragon mission can count on the full support of every level of the ISF, as all members of the secret society are respected members of the parent organization. And because Director Indrahar leads both organizations, the Sons of the Dragon need not obey channels to request materiel, personnel, or cooperation.

Now in his eighth decade of life and permanently bound to a wheelchair, the Director keeps the Sons of the Dragon and the ISF efficient and unified. A charismatic and intelligent leader, Indrahar helped shape the ISF into a more effective intelligence force than ever in its history. The Sons of the Dragon currently wield at least as much power as the ISF, largely because of the Director's influence. They serve as an efficient tool for Indrahar and the Combine; ready supplies and communications contribute to their record of success, but they are also a well-trained fighting force.

Even when Subhash Indrahar no longer guides the Sons of the Dragon, that group will continue to exist, and may take an interest in expanding its influence. Because Theodore is one of their number, the power and resources of the ISF will remain at their disposal, but because Theodore knows of their existence and purpose (unlike his father), he can and probably will monitor and, if necessary, direct their activities. One member of the Sons





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bears close attention; General Hohira Kiguri, commanding officer of DEST and a fanatical and ambitious man. A warrior to the core, the General's passionate desire to destroy all enemies of House Kurita by whatever means necessary, and his implacable opposition to the fragile alliance between the Combine and the Federated Commonwealth could lead to a power struggle between the general and the Coordinator. The general typifies an old-school mindset, believing that Theodore lacks the drive to fulfill the Kurita destiny of conquering and ruling the universe. If General Kiguri decides to press the issue, the Clans could use the inevitable division in the Combine intelligence agency to their advantage.



GHOST REGIMENTS

Over the past two decades, Theodore Kurita has recruited enough personnel to create several new units for the armed forces of the Draconis Combine. Because the men and women serving in these units cannot show a military pedigree, and the units have no previous combat record, Wolfnet has dubbed these forces the Ghost Regiments.

In an effort to recruit badly needed troops after the Fourth Succession War, then-Deputy for Military Affairs Theodore Kurita created the Ghost Regiments with the support of the yakuza, the criminal class of the Draconis Combine. Combine citizens generally fear and shun the yakuza, considering them the dregs of their society and completely without honor. Theodore's decision to recruit these men and women into military service created shock waves throughout the military and the government. As part of an organization devoted to discipline, rank, and honor in combat, many members of the DCMS High Command considered these units' background an intolerable disgrace. However, their sterling performance in the War of 3039 and against the Clan invasion proved their worth.

The criminal background of many of their members gives the Ghost Regiments many non-combat capabilities. Though they lack the intensive formal training of ISF operatives, simply surviving in the underworld has given them equivalent skills, which makes them efficient candidates for commando raids and other covert operations. Like all other societies in the Draconis Combine, the yakuza follow a rigid organization and stratified rules of behavior, instilling in their members the discipline vital to a good soldier.

Wolfnet sources within the Combine government report that, in his ongoing efforts to oppose the Clans, Coordinator Theodore

is supplementing other ISF resistance operations by inserting or activating members of the Ghost Regiments behind Clan lines to foment rebellion in occupied zones. Because their background is civilian rather than military, and because a yakuza network exists throughout Combine space, the yakuza operatives can blend into the general population even more effectively than ISF agents, and learn and transmit information with less risk. In addition, the yakuza own and operate several pirate vessels in and around the Draconis Combine, any of which can be used as blockade runners to arm and outfit anti-Clan partisans.

Ghost Regiments combine the advantages of espionage experience and military training, creating another force capable of carrying out missions unsuitable for standard militia units. Unhampered by the strictures of Combine society and somewhat exempt from ISF control, the Ghost Regiments are more versatile than other units, more able to adopt their tactics to their situation, as Clan forces have discovered when fighting them. And, unlike the MechWarriors of the regular army, the yakuza follow a code other than bushido, the way of the warrior. Though this code of honorable behavior forged the Draconis military into the finely honed machine it is today, other armies do not recognize the validity and necessity of bushido, and their countertactics sometimes leave the DCMS at a disadvantage. Because they exist outside the bounds of respectable society, the yakuza are not bound by its strictures, and may use any tactics they deem necessary to complete a mission.

Their action on Turtle Bay after Clan Smoke Jaguar captured the planet provides the best example of the effectiveness of the yakuza-based units. Though defended by the Fourteenth Legion of Vega rather than a Ghost Regiment, the yakuza network on the planet freed Hohiro Kurita, Coordinator Theodore's son, from a prison known across Combine space to be impregnable. The yakuza followed the standard tactic of taking their resistance underground, but used specialized knowledge to launch a mission on their own initiative, something that a standard military unit or even the ISF or DEST forces could not have done.

Theodore Kurita risked a great deal by inviting the yakuza into the military: everything that the DCMS and Combine society stood for advised against it. Theodore saw this move as an opportunity to use a valuable, honor-bound resource in a time of need, and his judgment was vindicated in full. Working from our operatives' knowledge of Combine society, however, Wolfnet suspects that the Ghost Regiments display another facet. Because a criminal business organization is unlikely to support and maintain Battle-Mech forces as a general business practice, we speculate that the Ghost Regiments contain many of the mercenary forces we have been unable to trace in the recent past. In view of Takashi Kurita's well-known hatred for mercenaries, and Theodore's desire to revamp and realign the DCMS, the Ghost Regiments make a perfect foil for hiring and hiding experienced forces. That the yakuza train MechWarriors and supply materiel to these regiments is undisputed. Whether or not only yakuza fill the ranks of the Ghost Regiments remains in doubt.

HEADQUARTERS

The Internal Security Force maintains a number of secret facilities and training bases throughout the Draconis Combine. Revealing the location of any of these facilities carries a penalty of death. The ISF maintains two primary headquarters and can run its entire operation from either of these locations.

The largest of the two headquarters is situated on New Samarkand, once the capital of the Draconis Combine. When the capital moved to Luthien, New Samarkand fell into decline. Though a few manufacturing concerns still operate here, the cities of New Samarkand mostly provide havens for pirates and thieves. The lack of commercial traffic made the world an ideal site for the ISF's primary HQ. The nearby Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy occasionally provides recruits to the intelligence agency.

The ISF HQ, a ferroconcrete bunker with reinforced walls stretching four kilometers per side, stands at the mouth of the Di-Sho Delta, a polluted river in the western portion of the planet's largest continent. In the event of a nuclear, biological, or chemical assault, the entire structure can be environmentally sealed in two minutes.

The bunker accommodates twenty thousand people, not including the two battalions of ISF BattleMechs stationed around it. If necessary, the base can survive independent of support from the rest of the universe for up to ten years. No roads lead to the bunker; a system of underground shuttle cars links it to the nearby Internal Security College and New Samarkand's spaceport. Within the ISF headquarters, huge banks of logistical battle computers work day and night to assimilate data and predict the troop movements of the other Successor States.

New Samarkand is also the home of the Internal Security College, where all ISF candidates receive training in the art of espionage. Like the ISF HQ, the ISC can only be reached by shuttle car. To guard against possible land assaults on the college, the grounds are surrounded by a sixty-kilometer circle of diacetylsilicate, a synthetic sand designed to eat through rubber, flesh, and BattleMech armor in seconds. Any unauthorized aircraft approaching to within two hundred kilometers is shot down

without warning, discouraging air-based attacks.

The ISF's secondary headquarters is located on Luthien in the Imperial City. Constructed five hundred feet below Unity Palace, this complex can withstand any assault, including the massive attack the Clans launched against Luthien in 3052. Four Stars of Clan Elementals and a company of heavy 'Mechs stumbled across the headquarters' concealed entrance thirty kilometers south of the city, and every attacker died in the concentrated fire from the multiple defense lasers and heavy weapons defending the underground complex.

The DEST Tactical Command Center on Pesht boasts security features similar to those of the ISF command centers. Originally built by the Combine military as a prototype installation based upon Star League Castle Brian designs, the project was abandoned when the

Combine capital moved to Luthien. Recognizing the base as perfect for its training needs, DEST took control of the facility.

Hidden deep within Pesht's forests, the Tactical Command Center is the central training college for the members of DEST. As with the ISF installations on New Samarkand, it can only be reached by underground shuttle car. A sophisticated motion and heat-tracking surveillance system linked to an arsenal of hidden weapons and booby traps monitors the woods surrounding the center. In addition, DEST commanders have saved the population of ferocious simian predators that originally inhabited the planet from extinction, encouraging their breeding behavior to further discourage intruders. A complex system of anti-aircraft weapons mounted on the complex's buildings and on several weapons platforms in low orbit above the site shoot down any unidentified aircraft venturing into the area.

The location of the DEST training facility offers candidates no distractions during their intense commando training. The training college is too isolated for casual visitors, and candidates have no free time. Every waking hour is considered part of their training. The candidates must wear unique, unreproducible tracer tags at all times to prevent desertions and enemy infiltration. Constantly monitored, the candidates train in carefully chosen teams of five. Each team that graduates together forms a new DEST unit whose





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members can work together with absolute trust in each other's abilities.

Save for these minor details, the internal composition of the ISF and DEST complexes remains a mystery. All appear designed for use as survival bunkers in the event of a major chemical, biological, or nuclear attack, including the Luthien complex, charged with protecting the Coordinator and his family in a similar catastrophic situation.

TRAINING

Renegade ISF operatives from as far back as the Ronin Wars, and a few Wolfnet infiltrators who managed to transmit data before capture provide what little information we have concerning the training of ISF agents.

The ISF maintains an operative at nearly every school within the Combine, constantly monitoring the pupils to choose suitable candidates for intelligence training. Upon completing their formal education, these candidates begin their ISF training program at the Internal Security College on New Samarkand. The ISF also recruits adults, who receive the same training as candidates chosen in childhood.

Their initial training is an intensive infantry combat program. Candidates must pass this course to continue with the ISF training program. This initial training is presented to the candidates as standard military instruction, so that those who fail to meet the higher standards of this program simply move to the second phase of DCMS indoctrination. Combine society recognizes the value of striving for perfection and adheres to the way of bushido, but also accepts the constant need for warriors. If candidates knew they had failed to pass an important test, honor would demand their death, and the Combine would lose valuable soldiers.

The second level of ISF training subjects all students to grueling psychological and intellectual assessment to determine their potential and place them in the appropriate ISF division. Those considered suitable for DEST immediately transfer to the Tactical Command Center on Pesht. The remaining students complete their training on New Samarkand.

In addition to specialized training tailored to each division, all candidates receive the following education.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

Grounded in a comprehensive study of human psychology, this course includes various forms of interrogation and torture techniques designed to break a subject's will as quickly as possible.

CULTURAL FAMILIARIZATION

Given the xenophobia imposed on Combine society by Coordinator Urizen II, few citizens have even the slightest knowledge of other cultures. Intelligence agents must make extensive studies of the contrasts they will encounter when working in other Successor States. This course includes a general historical

overview of each House and a detailed discussion of each state's current governmental and military policies. Candidates who show particular promise in this subject area generally proceed to the advanced class, where they study one culture in detail and receive intense instruction in that society's common language.

All candidates slated for the Covert Operations division must take the advanced class of Cultural Familiarization.

WEAPONS TRAINING

This course teaches the candidates to use weapons ranging from pistols and rifles to shipboard defense systems. Those candidates nominated for the Voice of the Dragon, the Combine's propaganda division, so rarely encounter combat situations that they complete a less intensive version of this course.

In addition to the basic curriculum, candidates may take other specialized courses covering the sciences and humanities, as well as such narrow-focus subjects as demolitions and anti-Mech infantry training.

After finishing the three-year program at the Internal Security College, or four years at the DEST Tactical Command Center on Pesht, graduates join the ranks of the ISF. Each new operative must complete five missions in partnership with a veteran agent before he or she may undertake a solo mission. This apprenticeship period is especially important to the Covert Operations division, which insists that all new agents must spend an additional six months in the division's language and culture laboratories before leaving the Draconis Combine, even in the company of an experienced operative.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The Internal Security Force's reputation among the citizens of the Draconis Combine and the other Successor States constitutes its most obvious strength. Within the Combine, the ISF can often quell potential trouble simply by making its presence known. Such subtle forms of control prove slightly less effective with the mercenary companies currently employed by the Combine. Every merc unit is assigned an ISF liaison officer, who makes the unit's members aware of his connection to the intelligence organization. Though the mere presence of an intelligence agent in the unit strikes fear into the hearts of its members, they are always aware that they only work for the Combine: they are not citizens of that realm.

When stifling dissension or dealing with traitors within their own society, ISF agents enjoy considerable latitude in interpreting the strict code of ethics and behavior that binds the civilian population. Depending on the agent involved, the same action by two different people may earn the offenders very different punishments. And though the rest of society strives to follow a narrow interpretation of the Combine's cultural conventions, the ISF's authority allows its agents greater personal freedom of action, a significant bonus in a restrictive society.

Unfortunately for the ISF, the stratified culture in which its agents grew up still binds those operatives to a certain extent



when on assignment in the other Successor States. Though expected to shed all outward signs of the Combine's social mores and other behavioral taboos, many agents still find it difficult to blend completely into the alien cultures of different realms. The Internal Security Force consistently loses a small number of agents who somehow betray their origins through an ingrained custom the operative could not forget or an inappropriate reaction to another's actions or spoken thoughts. The agents lost in this manner invariably are those recruited into the ISF after reaching adulthood, and who therefore have more years' worth of indoctrination to forget. Other Successor States try to take advantage of this minor weakness. For example, House Davion's Department of Military Intelligence conducts frequent, mandatory refresher courses for counterinsurgency operatives that teaches them a greater understanding of Kurita laws and customs. This deeper knowledge of Combine ways helps the DMI agents to identify common mistakes made by Kurita agents.

The ISF frequently loses agents to dishonor. Many agents, especially members of DEST units, consider capture so shaming that they prefer to take their own lives rather than fall into enemy hands. Though this safeguards the ISF's secrets from the intelligence agencies of the other Successor States, it also costs them talented people, forcing them to spend a large percentage of their resources to train replacements. Given the Combine's current need for effective defense against sporadic Clan Smoke Jaguar raids, and the relatively short breathing space won from the Clans at the battle for Tukayyid, the Combine would better serve its interests by devoting greater funding to prepare for renewed Clan attacks. However, because death in the face of dishonor permeates all levels of Combine society and the military, this situation is unlikely to change.

The ISF has suffered less infiltration than any other intelligence service in the Inner Sphere, and remains one of the most secret organizations currently operating.

PERSONALITIES

SUBHASH INDRAHAR Director of the ISF

Now in his mid-eighties, Subhash Indrahara has led the Internal Security Force longer and more effectively than any previous Director. Completely devoted to the good of the Combine, Indrahara used his keen intelligence and ample diplomatic abilities to steer the ISF through the years of covert struggling for power between the late Coordinator, Takashi, and his son Theodore.

Calling him the Smiling One, most members of the Imperial Court see Indrahara as an affable, pleasant man, a knowledgeable collector of fine arts and literature. Aging and wheelchair-bound, he looks far too frail to so efficiently command the most lethal intelligence organization in the Inner Sphere. This fragile, cultivated exterior conceals a ruthless schemer capable of taking any action to ensure the survival and expansion of his beloved Draconis Combine.



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At some point in the first two decades of the 31st century, Indrahah founded the Sons of the Dragon, a secret organization within the ranks of the ISF whose members are personally loyal to Indrahah and dedicated, like him, to the Combine's destiny to reunify the Inner Sphere. During Indrahah's tenure as ISF Director, this group grew considerably in power, but exactly how Indrahah uses them remains unclear. We have recently learned that Coordinator Theodore Kurita joined their ranks in 3018.

Indrahah's advanced age and slowly failing health cause concern within the ISF, though he has named his successor. He originally groomed Nakina Grandy, a highly placed ISF officer, for his position, but Grandy committed seppuku when the Director expressed displeasure over a mission Grandy failed to accomplish. Indrahah eventually chose as his replacement Ninyu Kerai-Indrahah, a battle comrade of Coordinator Theodore's. Wolfnet operatives report that Theodore has recently approved the appointment.

GENERAL HOHIRA KIGURI

Commanding Officer, DEST

An imposing individual of above-average height, Kiguri commands the DCMS elite special forces team. Kiguri bears the scars of many battles on his face and shows them as proudly as medals of service. His stiff, military bearing, eye patch, and close-cropped haircut gives him an almost menacing appearance. Except for the ISF Director, General Kiguri may be the most ruthless man in the Combine.

Born into the Kiguri clan of Sakai, young Hohira Kiguri was expected to follow the family tradition and work for the Styx Mining Corporation. The ISF recruited him after his first schooling and assigned him to DEST, forcing his family to abandon their plans but bringing them great honor. Kiguri rose quickly through the ranks by compiling an impressive record of successful missions, which brought him to the Director's attention. Indrahah recognized Kiguri's devotion to the realm and to Combine ideals, inducted him into the Sons of the Dragon, and placed him in command of DEST.

His considerable abilities and hard-line attitudes make Kiguri a dangerous man. He desires a return to the strict code of the samurai, and the swift and utter destruction of all enemies of the Dragon, through any means. He disapproves of Theodore's current focus on destroying the Clans, believing that the Coordinator should defeat his old enemies first, but will not move against the Coordinator without the Director's approval.

CONSTANCE JOJIRA

Commanding Officer, Covert Operations

An elegant and graceful woman, Constance Jojira was born into an affluent family on Luthien. She joined the ISF after her father killed her lover, a member of the yakuza. Upon graduation from the Internal Security College, she immediately returned to Luthien and executed her father.

Subhash Indrahah took notice of Jojira while she was still in training because of her brilliant performance at the college. Unwilling to lose such a promising agent to the death sentence she faced for patricide, Indrahah intervened with the court system on her behalf. He asked only that she join the Sons of the Dragon and serve him faithfully in return.

Her life torn apart by the death of her lover, Constance gave everything she had left to her career with the ISF. She fulfilled the early promise Indrahah had seen in her, and earned quick promotion through hard work. She currently serves as commanding officer of the Covert Operations division; a demanding and merciless leader, Constance expects perfection from her operatives. Because Indrahah took a special interest in Constance Jojira's meteoric career, rumors tagged the Covert Operations commander as Indrahah's successor. Indrahah's apparent appointment of Ninyu Kerai-Indrahah seems to disprove this supposition.

DANIEL RAMAKA

Commanding Officer, Internal Security

Considered both evil and malicious by all his coworkers, Ramaka's rodent-like physical appearance and his position as commanding officer of the dreaded Internal Security division have earned him the nickname "The Rat." Because this division monitors, investigates, and punishes all incorrect thought and behavior, the citizenry fears what Ramaka represents: complete power over their lives.



Born into a peasant family on the world of Altair, Daniel spent his young adulthood working for the Long Life Company, producing the corporation's famous medicinal tonics. His sadistic nature and petty cruelties toward fellow workers soon caught the attention of the company's ISF agent, who recognized in him the ruthlessness typical of the ISF organization and recruited him. His uncanny ability to find out people's deepest secrets in order to taunt them with past failures and shame made him an excellent candidate for Internal Security. Rapidly gaining rank and power by backstabbing and betraying his superiors, Ramaka specialized in organizing what amounted to witch-hunts on many worlds, purging thousands of innocents for the alleged crimes of the few. His contention that no one is innocent of wrong thoughts and actions often puts him at odds with the Director, who disapproves of cruelty for its own sake.

Because Ramaka enjoys brutality, and his ruthlessness almost always exceeds the bounds of necessity, Indrahar has not invited him to join the Sons of the Dragon.

OMI DASHANI

Commanding Officer, Metsuke

A quiet, plain-looking woman, Omi Dashani is the least recognized division leader currently serving the ISF. As commanding officer of the Metsuke, she finds her relative anonymity an advantage.

Polite and soft-spoken at all times, Omi nonetheless demands and receives top performance from her agents. She works long hours to stay on top of the task of assimilating all intelligence collected by her division. Proud to serve the Combine to the best of her ability, she thoroughly enjoys her responsibilities and demonstrates no ambition to become Director.

TAKURA MIGAKI

Commanding Officer, Voice of the Dragon

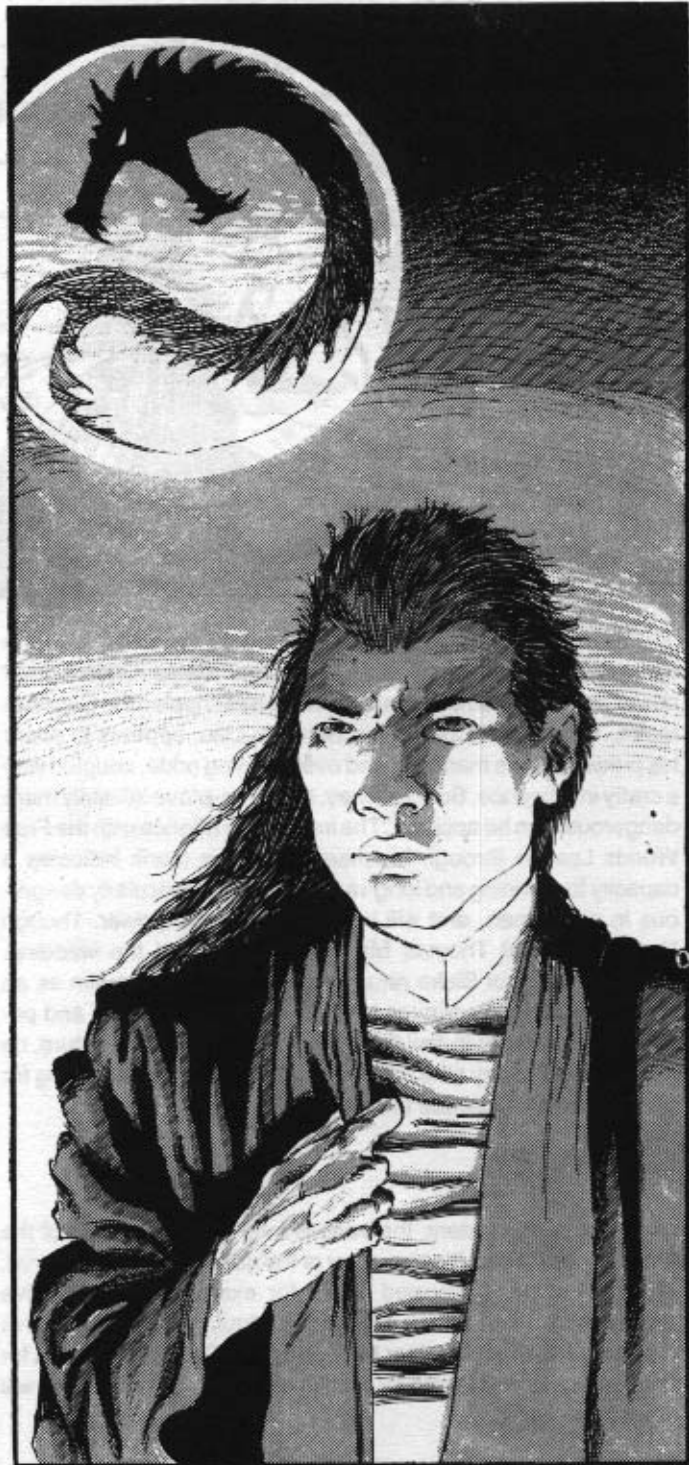
Always dressed in the latest court fashions, the slender and handsome Takura Migaki enjoys widespread popularity within the Royal Court.

As the head of the Internal Security Force's propaganda division, he is accorded great respect and unflinching courtesy at the numerous court functions that he so enjoys attending. To older members of the court, he appears too frivolous for his position, but his public foppishness is part of a deliberate plan to make people underestimate his effectiveness as head of the Voice of the Dragon. His nimble mind precisely calculates the effects of every move he makes and every word he says, and his division always gets results.

He began his career at Spreading the Glories Incorporated, directing the company's popular war movies and musicals. His successful portrayal of the Draconis Combine as a holy institution with a divine mission brought him to the attention of the ISF, who recruited him into the Voice of the Dragon division.

Several memorable propaganda campaigns, particularly a damning piece describing the leader of the Federated Suns as "the Black Knight," have enhanced Migaki's position over the

years. His brilliant directoral talents and people management skills advanced him through the ranks to his present high position. Having long ago proved his worth as an operative, and enjoying his present position a great deal, Migaki appears to be ignoring the rumors that he was under consideration for the position of Director.





THE MASKIROVKA



Even Wolfnet finds it difficult to accord to House Liao the same respect given to the other Successor States. Once a great power, a succession of unstable leaders has crippled the Capellan realm. The current Chancellor, Sun-Tzu Liao, appears to share his predecessor's madness and overweening pride, coupled with a crafty intelligence. Sun-Tzu may, however, prove infinitely more dangerous than he appears. The impending alliance with the Free Worlds League through his marriage to Isis Marik indicates a capacity for cunning and long-range planning particularly dangerous in a madman, and will vastly increase his power. Though Captain-General Thomas Marik has postponed the wedding, using the Word of Blake refugees flooding into his realm as an excuse, Sun-Tzu continues to show unusual sympathy and patience for his father-in-law to be. Given Liao's unstable nature, he may explode at any time; or worse, he may simply be waiting for the Free Worlds League to drop into his hands.

OVERVIEW

To a certain extent, the various intelligence services of the Inner Sphere reflect the character of the governments they serve. The DMI of the Federated Suns, for example, gets effective results more often by fair means than foul, while the Draconis Combine's ISF inspires fear throughout the Successor States for the fierceness with which its agents carry out the unbending will of their Coordinator.

When describing the infamous House Liao Maskirovka, even the word barbaric falls short. Since Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao took power, the intelligence organization's worst excesses have ended; but even as recently as the reign of the late Maximilian Liao, the savage tactics used to accomplish their missions surpassed even those of the ISF. The attempted assassination in 3029 of Colonel Pavel Ridzik, leader of the Tikonov Commonality, provides one of many horrifying examples; the Maskirovka detonated a bomb that devastated an entire city block in a botched effort to kill one man. Their use of torture, murder, and other terror tactics has earned them a well-deserved reputation as an oppressive and merciless group, dedicated to advancing the power of their own state regardless of the cost in civilian lives. The Clan invasion and the resultant political shakeup in the Inner Sphere may have forced the new Chancellor to rein in many of their activities, but word of Maskirovka atrocities carried out in the name of House Liao still occasionally reaches the rest of the Inner Sphere.

The name Maskirovka translates roughly as "the purposeful dissemination of misinformation," a task the agency has carried out successfully for centuries. The Maskirovka functions as both an internal security and external intelligence agency, uncovering and eliminating both foreign and domestic enemies of the Capellan Confederation and its ruling House. Though originally created for the benefit of the Capellan Armed Forces to upgrade the quality and accuracy of military intelligence, under the command of successive callous directors the Maskirovka evolved into an organization equally adept at terrorizing and oppressing the citizens of its own realm.

The Maskirovka of today uses the arts of terror, counterintelligence, and counterinsurgency to advance the interests of the Capellan state at any cost. Renowned throughout the Inner Sphere for scandalous abuses and merciless purges, the service does not hesitate to commit any heinous act deemed necessary in the name of upholding the Chancellor's claim to rule the Inner Sphere.

BRIEFING

Circumstances have forced the Maskirovka to cut its operations almost in half, concentrating its diminished resources upon a few specific targets. The loss of huge chunks of its territory to the Federated Commonwealth during the Fourth Succession War turned the once-mighty Capellan Confederation into a minor state, though the Liao-Marik alliance may reverse this loss. Sun-Tzu will certainly make regaining lost territory a priority as soon as he controls the resources needed to launch a war. The Chancellor already has set plans in motion to create an information network in the Sarna and Tikonov regions, in anticipation of reclaiming those former parts of the Confederation.

The following represents Chancellor Sun-Tzu's priorities, and therefore the current priorities of the Maskirovka.

The bulk of the Maskirovka's efforts currently center on gathering as much intelligence as possible, as quickly as possible, on every organization that might impact on the Confederation's alliance with the Free Worlds League. All agents currently in the League received standing orders to concentrate their information-gathering efforts on SAFE, House Marik, and the Word of Blake, including its military units. Major resources have been channeled toward infiltrating increasing numbers of operatives into those groups, and Sun-Tzu appears determined to be in a position to control SAFE when the alliance is finalized. He also apparently intends to undercut Marik's control over the Word of Blake; once he receives from his Maskirovka agents enough reports to give him a firm grasp on that group's activities, Sun-Tzu may replace ComStar technicians with Word of Blake personnel on Capellan HPGs after ComStar's maintenance contract expires. Wolfnet operatives believe that Sun-Tzu may also have attempted to plant Maskirovka agents in Marik's new elite military order, the Knights of the Inner Sphere, but so far no such attempts have succeeded.

Judging by available information on troop movements, the Chancellor's second priority appears to be securing his own realm against enemy attacks and infiltration by foreign agents. All military units maintain a high state of readiness, and the Maskirovka recently transferred a large number of operatives to the internal security department to reinforce efforts on that front. In support of her leader's wishes, Director Dina Ferrara has ordered an unscheduled round of personnel assessments for all Maskirovka agents, determined to enter the Marik alliance with a completely loyal force. By beefing up internal security, Sun-Tzu may also be tightening a noose around the House of the Setting Sun, a group of professional killers loosely allied with the bloodthirsty Thuggee cult. Though he has continued his mother's practice of using

Thuggees to carry out political assassinations, albeit on a limited scale, his sister Kali's close ties to the cult pose a danger to him that may outweigh their usefulness.

The Maskirovka has several minor operations under development. Though aware that his uncle, Tormana Liao, received financial support from House Davion for guerrilla actions against the Confederation until recently, years of observing his uncle's schemes has convinced Sun-Tzu that the current efforts offer no cause for concern. Victor Davion's recent troubles have led the DMI to cut off Tormana's funding, making his espionage network even less of a threat. The Maskirovka currently supports guerrilla action in the Sarna March, using a terrorist group called the *Zhanzheng de guang*, in order to keep an eye on the activities of Tormana's Free Capella organization. Rumor also has it that Sun-Tzu has a highly placed spy in Tormana's command structure. As its secondary goal in Sarna, the *Zhanzheng* constantly reminds the citizens of that area that they belong to Capella; their nations are under occupation by a foreign power. Any activities toward this end that also cause Victor Steiner-Davion embarrassment and inconvenience, or otherwise remind him that the people of Sarna still owe loyalty to the Capellan Confederation, provide an added bonus to the Chancellor's plans.

A much lower, but continuing Maskirovka priority is closely monitoring and seeking some way to discredit the Death Commandos. Their very existence continues to threaten the Maskirovka's authority and divide the Chancellor's allegiance to his primary intelligence/policing organization. Director Ferrara believes, as did her predecessor Madame Ling, that the Maskirovka possesses the agents and the resources to fulfill the Commandos' function equally efficiently.

However attractive the Chancellor may find the thought of bringing the St. Ives Compact back into the Capellan realm, he has no plans to that end. Sun-Tzu apparently struck an agreement with his aunt, Candace Liao, upon his accession to the throne of the Confederation, that he would refrain from attacking her children, and she would make no claim to the leadership of Capella. All our intelligence indicates that Chancellor Liao intends to honor this agreement—no known plans for conquest of surrounding realms even hint at an attack on St. Ives. However, we assume that the Maskirovka is making every attempt to infiltrate St. Ives, if only to provide the Chancellor with advance warning of any treachery planned by his cousins.

Unfortunately, Wolfnet failed to dig up any information at all on the terms of the impending Marik-Liao alliance. Our analysts have, however, provided a few speculations on Chancellor Liao's current strategies and feelings about the alliance. (Without more information, and keeping in mind the history of mental imbalance in the rulers of Capella, our operatives refuse to make predictions.) Clearly, Sun-Tzu is willing to wait for Thomas Marik to assimilate all the Word of Blake factions running loose in his realm and consolidate his already impressive political control before making his bid to take over. In direct proportion to that consideration, the longer Sun-Tzu waits before finalizing the alliance, the longer he has to strengthen his own realm before drawing the

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attention of the rest of the Inner Sphere. The new political axis will surely interest, if not outright threaten, the other Successor States.

Because Joshua Marik's leukemia is still in remission, his half-sister Isis may not succeed to the Captain-Generalship of the Free Worlds League; we believe Sun-Tzu will wait to be certain of his access to power before making the final commitment.

All Wolfnet agents in the Capellan sector should consider infiltration of the Maskirovka a top priority. If Sun-Tzu does plan to use the combined might of his realm and House Marik to retake former Confederation territory, our home planet of Outreach, once part of the Capellan Commonality, presents a likely target for invasion. We suspect that the Capellan Armed Forces may be hiring the missing mercenary units (those we have been unable to track from point of hire or to a new assignment) as additional forces for such an assault. Tracking any developments that might lead our agents to advance information is of utmost importance.

LIAO-MARIK RELATIONS

The marriage between Isis Marik and Sun-Tzu Liao will put the final stamp on an alliance between the Capellan Confederation and the Free Worlds League and radically alter the Inner Sphere's balance of power. The emergence of a second superpower creates the potential for a number of interesting political changes to take place over the next few decades. In one obvious (and frightening) scenario, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao may use the combined power of the allied states to launch yet another destructive war. That possibility especially concerns leaders within the Free Worlds League. Anxiety about his prospective son-in-law's aggressive tendencies is one reason Captain-General Thomas Marik continues to postpone the marriage.

Backed by the economic might of the Free Worlds League, the Capellan Confederation would certainly consider itself in an excellent position to move against the Federated Commonwealth. Currently beset by Clan raiding and massive political turmoil in the wake of Archon Melissa Steiner-Davion's assassination, the Commonwealth presents a prime target for attack. For example, the combined might of Houses Marik and Liao plus the added strength of those Com Guards loyal to ComStar's renegade Word of Blake sect, would make retaking the worlds of the Sarna March and the Tikonov region relatively easy.

To accomplish his grand designs, Sun-Tzu is cautiously strengthening diplomatic relations with the Free Worlds League, hoping to win through diplomacy what decades of war failed to accomplish. The Free Worlds League is exercising similar caution in its dealings with the Capellans. The Liao family's history of rapaciousness and paranoia makes many within the Free Worlds League reluctant to support the alliance with Sun-Tzu. That same reputation causes them to fear initiating another war between the two states by rejecting Sun-Tzu's advances. Because neither state can afford open conflict, each continues to play its assigned part in the current balancing act.

In typical fashion, Sun-Tzu is hedging his bets. Unwilling to rely solely on diplomacy, the Chancellor has given the Maskirovka's



objectives in the Free Worlds League a radical new direction. Once Sun-Tzu Liao becomes Thomas Marik's son-in-law, he will be in position to rule both his realm and the League through his wife, should Thomas' son and heir, Joshua, succumb to leukemia. The prospect of the marriage alone, regardless of any other considerations of the alliance, makes the League no longer the Confederation's enemy. All disruptive Maskirovka operations in place against the peaceful conduct of Free Worlds League business have ended. Any goals the Capellan agency hopes to achieve in that realm must now be approached through diplomatic relations with SAFE.

In what might appear as a direct contradiction of its stated aims, the Maskirovka has increased its overall operations within the Free Worlds League. All current covert missions seem concerned solely with gathering information, a legitimate goal in view of the delicate negotiations underway. However, given the Maskirovka's unsavory reputation and the history of enmity be-

tween the two groups, SAFE regards all Capellan intelligence activity as potentially dangerous, alliance or no. The Maskirovka has also stepped up its efforts to infiltrate SAFE, a much easier task than before because of the turmoil caused by the refugees from ComStar and ROM pouring into the small nation. Wolfnet assumes that Sun-Tzu Liao intends to virtually control the League intelligence agency from within before pushing Thomas Marik to finalize the terms of the alliance.

In addition to being able to use the League's economic and military resources, Sun-Tzu wants to cement the alliance in order to have access to the skills of those ROM agents and Com Guards living in the Free Worlds League as members of the Word of Blake. If Thomas Marik accepts the Primacy of the ComStar splinter group, he will control many talented and ruthless ROM agents and MechWarriors. The abilities these individuals possess would greatly enhance any offensive Sun-Tzu Liao chose to launch. Based on the fanaticism exhibited by adherents to the word of Jerome Blake, however, we believe these men and women will remain personally loyal to Marik, and will only aid Liao plans on Thomas Marik's word.

BRIEF HISTORY

Given the manipulative, power-hungry nature of their Liao founders, the Capellan secret services could hardly avoid evolving from simple information-gathering and -coordinating agencies to terrorist secret police. The original Capellan intelligence agency, the Deimos, was created to handle the Capellan census and coordinate administrative matters among client states. From these innocuous beginnings, it evolved into an efficient secret police agency charged with protecting the Capellan Hegemony against foreign and domestic enemies. The constant, low-level warring for expansion between the Capellan Hegemony and its neighboring realms eventually allowed infiltrators from the Department of Military Intelligence of the Federated Suns and operatives of the NIA, then the intelligence agency of the Free Worlds League, to undermine the Deimos. By the late 24th century, enemy agents riddled the Deimos, rendering it nearly useless to the Capellan military.

RISE OF THE MASKIROVKA

In 2396, Chancellor Kurnath Liao formed a task force to investigate the Deimos and unmask enemy spies. This force, called the Maskirovka, answered directly to the Chancellor. Kurnath assigned his new organization to infiltrate the Deimos, spread carefully constructed pieces of misleading information, and then follow that misinformation. The misinformation campaign served as bait for an effective counterintelligence trap.

The Maskirovka's actions brought about a massive purge of the Deimos; Chancellor Liao okayed the slaughter of hundreds of double agents. Anyone even suspected of treason was eliminated, often on little or no evidence. With the fate of the Capellan state at stake, the Maskirovka's fanaticism served a desirable purpose. The purges gutted the Deimos and so, having proved

both their loyalty and their deadly efficiency, the Maskirovka took over the earlier organization's military intelligence functions in addition to continuing their own domestic efforts. While providing army commanders with tactical intelligence, Maskirovka agents (known as greenbacks because they wore green uniform coats) also observed officer performance in the field, taking note of any action that appeared defeatist or cowardly. The agency became the far-reaching arm of the Chancellor, ensuring that the actions of the Capellan Confederation served as an extension of the Chancellor's will. This single-minded group tolerated no dissent, either within or outside their ranks. Those inclined to cause problems were dealt with quickly and permanently.

In contrast to the success of the Deimos purge, a number of the Maskirovka's initial operations ended in outright failure. The unit often overreached itself trying to accomplish too much using a minimum of resources. Though the Maskirovka's power and influence continued to increase, their limited manpower had the double responsibility of handling all intelligence operations as well as reorganizing the gutted Deimos units. But the organization's biggest handicap was its fanatical loyalty to the Chancellor, which made the Maskirovka as effective or inept as the Chancellor leading it.

For example, Kurnath's personal inflexibility kept him from using any military information gathered by the Maskirovka that conflicted with his battle plans. Kurnath launched the Age of War in 2398 with an attempt to retake the Andurien system from the Free Worlds League, but his refusal to alter his campaign according to updates of the changing situation kept the Confederation from victory.

Kurnath's successor, his daughter Aleisha Liao, renounced her father's policy of conquest and restored certain Chancellery powers to the House of Scions. She also allowed the Maskirovka to fall into disuse during her reign; she cared nothing for reports of military movements, and so half their responsibilities vanished. Horrified by the growing tide of militarism, culminating in the massive loss of civilian life in the Tintavel system in 2412, Aleisha convened a summit of delegates from the major ruling Houses, including the Terran Hegemony, on the Capellan world of Ares to discuss ways of limiting the destructiveness of modern warfare. The resulting Ares Conventions became the accepted rules of civilized war.

The next Chancellor, Arden Baxter, saw even less use for the Maskirovka. Hating everything connected with the Liao family, Arden manipulated his way to the Chancellorship, then set about destroying everything House Liao had built, including the Maskirovka. He demoted the agency to its original purpose of information gathering, cut its funding, and ignored news from its agents of popular movements aimed at discrediting past Liao exploits and undermining the family's popular support. As the Maskirovka later discovered, Arden Baxter was secretly backing these alleged "popular front" movements. Baxter's plan occasionally backfired, however. More than once, troops had to be called up to quell the masses of pro-Liao demonstrators reacting to the Chancellor's "revisionists."

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Still loyal to the Liao family and resenting Baxter's insulting treatment of their agency, the Maskirovka finally took matters into their own hands and led Arden Baxter into several costly political blunders. The man whose political adeptness had allowed him to take over the Capellan Confederation accepted without question false information fed to him by the Maskirovka, and acted accordingly. The Maskirovka first moved against Baxter in 2417, when Simon Davion declared himself the first ruling prince of the Federated Suns and thereby made himself the counterpart of the Capellan Chancellor. For the first time, the Chancellor had a golden opportunity to mend past differences between the two mighty states. The Maskirovka seized this opportunity to convince Baxter that the Davion envoys sent on the prince's behalf were assassins who planned to kill him on sight and take over the Confederation. Against all expectations, Baxter refused to recognize the Davion envoys, citing prior refusals on the part of Davion statesmen to recognize Capellan ambassadors. On at least two more occasions during the ensuing eight years, the Maskirovka tried to remove Baxter from office through political upheaval. Finally tiring of political games, in 2425 the agency used a more direct approach to oust the Chancellor they hated. Passing themselves off as a group of radicals, several agents hired a mentally unbalanced lieutenant of Marion's Highlanders, the least disciplined of the Capellan BattleMech units, to assassinate Baxter on his way to the House of Scions.

TIME OF TRIBULATION

Aleisha's nephew Stephen Liao became the next Capellan Chancellor. In order to redress the wrongs of the previous administration, Stephen completely reorganized the Capellan military. To reward the loyal Maskirovka for its part in bringing down the previous administration, and because he intended to use the agency's formidable abilities, Stephen increased the Maskirovka's funding, supplies, and access to him, as well as building them a new headquarters. To fund this military and intelligence build-up, he increased taxes, cut back on educational funding, imposed a universal ceiling on wages and promotions, and reduced state holidays. The people floundered, but Stephen's army and the Maskirovka prospered. By the time Stephen died of pneumonia in 2450, the military held massive power. The following year General Ral Merik, commander of the Merik's Grenadier Regiment of the Capellan Hussars, took the inexperienced young Chancellor Duncan Liao hostage and forcibly occupied the Capellan palace.

The general's junta held even the Maskirovka at bay until February of 2452, when Duncan committed suicide. On learning of the death of her younger brother, Jasmine Liao immediately proclaimed herself Chancellor and ordered the Second Hexare Lancers to attack the palace. By the first day of March, her forces had annihilated General Merik's regiment, and Jasmine ascended the Celestial Throne. She began her reign by enacting a reform bill legislating a systematic purge of the military. Jasmine used the Maskirovka to its fullest capability, ferreting out 233 traitors who were swiftly tried and convicted by special "Courts of

Inquiry" and then put to death. Jasmine's distrust of the military led her to reorganize the officer caste and place a limit on military rank: as of 2455, no officer in the Capellan armed forces could hold any rank above colonel.

Under Jasmine's rule, the Maskirovka prospered. Partly in hopes of upstaging the military, Jasmine commissioned her spies to steal the technical specifications of the Lyran Commonwealth's awesome new weapon, the BattleMech. In 2462, the Maskirovka blackmailed a Free Worlds League technician into providing them with a complete set of 'Mech blueprints, and the Confederation began to produce its own versions of these towering metal monsters. Jasmine also used the Maskirovka to undermine opposition in the House of Scions, whose indecisiveness Jasmine blamed for her brother's death. Backed by the power of the secret police, Jasmine passed an "emergency powers" act that expanded the scope of the Chancellorship at the Scions' expense. The Chancellor became a supreme autocrat, whose every wish, enforced by the ubiquitous Maskirovka, became the law of the land.

Decades of peace followed Jasmine's death from natural causes in 2477, but that peace was shattered in 2520 when the ruler known to history as "Kalvin the Devourer" turned Confederation life into a living nightmare. An undiagnosed megalomaniac, Kalvin believed himself destined to be the Inner Sphere's most renowned ruler. After his first few months in power, Kalvin decided to prove to his subjects what real power—and real terror—could be. Deciding that the state had not provided him with enough financial backing to enjoy a truly regal lifestyle, he used the Maskirovka to increase his personal wealth. Whenever he noticed a rich noble, he ordered the director of the Maskirovka to find or manufacture evidence proving that noble guilty of treason. Faced with imprisonment or worse, most nobles gladly paid a fine of 75 percent of all they owned to ensure the court's mercy.

Kalvin next used the Maskirovka to terrorize the rest of Capellan society through kangaroo Courts of Philosophical Enquiry. To set a good example for the purges that followed, Kalvin suggested that the Prefect of St. Ives denounce former Chancellor Hendrik Liao in the House of Scions. Immediately afterward, the Maskirovka produced documents "proving" Hendrik's secret intent to turn over an important military base to the Davions. Kalvin executed his uncle on November 12, 2521. Kalvin's reign lasted for nine more years, characterized by increasing paranoia, ever more brutal domestic policies, and ill-advised foreign actions. The Maskirovka played a pivotal role in all the Chancellor's affairs, acting as his enforcing arm even in his maddest schemes. A member of the Red Lancers finally assassinated the mad Chancellor in 2530.

YEARS OF PEACE

The next half century proved relatively peaceful for Capella, as Mica Liao, Kalvin's sister, took the Chancellorship and returned the state to normalcy. Using the Chancellor's expanded powers, she did what she could to heal the breach between the Confederation's rulers and ruled. Forced by the Capellan state's

technological inadequacy on the battlefield to end the Andurien War her brother had begun, Mica began her reign by signing a peace treaty with the Free Worlds League in 2531. Because Mica had grown up in hiding on New Avalon to escape her murderous brother, relations between the House Liao and House Davion became both peaceful and profitable.

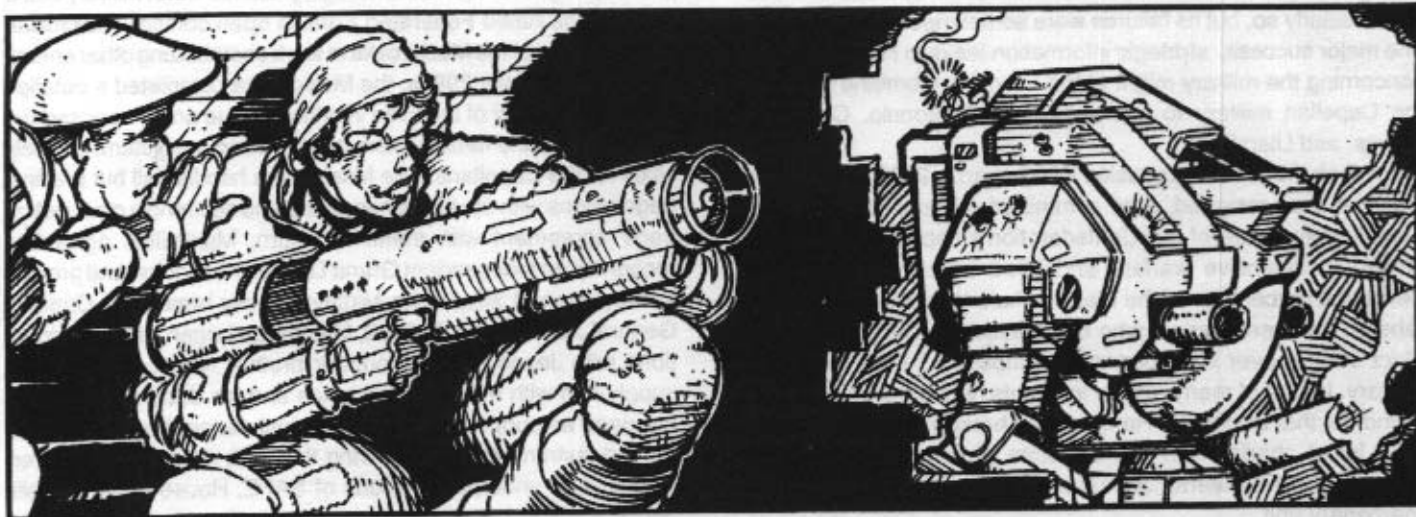
Salicia Liao, succeeding her mother in 2542, kept the peace and signed the Bell Accord, in which Houses Liao and Davion pledged no first use of atomic weapons. Chancellor Terrence Liao, Calvin's illegitimate son, started the Third Andurien War in a misguided effort to prove himself a capable leader, but fortunately accepted the Terran Hegemony's offer to mediate the conflict before the Confederation lost too much. In return for a Hegemony-negotiated peace treaty, a "favored nation" trade agreement, and new military technology, Terrence Liao agreed to join the Star League. In the years before the League's official founding in 2571, the Chancellor again used the Maskirovka for their original purpose of gathering information to gain advantages in trade agreements and BattleMech production. The intelligence organization did not conduct a strategically important operation until 2588, during Ursula Liao's reign, when the Maskirovka helped put down the Freebooters' War.

Prefecture, and the House of Scions watched.

During the next hundred and fifty years, under the peace of the Star League, the Capellan Confederation turned its energies to solving its economic problems and restructuring society along even more totalitarian lines. Though the Maskirovka kept a watchful eye on the other Star League member-states during this time, it focused much of its surveillance on the Capellan population. The brotherhood of the Star League, however, instead of ending the fighting between its member states, merely drove the old conflicts underground.

WAR RENEWED

When the Star League began to totter in the wake of First Lord Simon Cameron's unexpected death in 2751, Chancellor Warex Liao ordered the Maskirovka to begin a destabilization campaign in the Chesterton worlds, an area of Federated Suns space long claimed by the Capellan Confederation. Years of peace and enforced stability came to an end on a warm spring day in May 2760, when a nuclear explosion ripped apart a BattleMech production facility on the Davion world of Demeter. An extremist group calling itself the Chesterton Liberation Battalion claimed responsibility for the blast, but the outraged Federated Suns



Angered over the loss of the Andurien worlds to the Free Worlds League under the Hegemony-sponsored peace treaty, a group of young officers from Shepperton's Grenadiers revolted, fleeing with their BattleMechs into the Periphery. Joined there by assorted malcontents and soldiers of fortune, they began a series of devastating attacks on the Free Worlds League that threatened the tenuous peace between the League and Capella. The Maskirovka, in the area on an unrelated mission, located the raiders' base of operations near the League world of Wisconsin. A combined League-Confederation strike force assaulted the stronghold and defeated the rebels, sustaining heavy losses. The two states each took responsibility for half of the captured rebels and their BattleMechs. In August of 2588, the last of the Capellan prisoners was executed on Capella Prime as the Chancellor, the

government accused the Maskirovka of abetting the terrorists. New Chancellor Barbara Liao denied complicity and demanded adjudication from the Council Lords, confident that the Chesterton worlds would be returned to the Confederation. Unfortunately, the Amaris coup intervened.

In 2766, Stefan Amaris of the Rim Worlds Republic assassinated First Lord Richard Cameron and his family. Seizing control of the Terran Hegemony, Amaris declared himself First Lord. After thirteen years of civil war between the Star League Defense Forces and Amaris' army, General Aleksandr Kerensky and the SLDF liberated Terra and executed the murderer Amaris and his family. The five Council Lords, who had done little to aid either side in the conflict, demanded Kerensky's retirement and argued for months over who should be the next First Lord. Unable to reach



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an agreement, the Lords formally dissolved the Star League in 2781. Three years later, a disillusioned Kerensky and most of the SLDF disappeared from the skies over New Samarkand in the Exodus of 2784. Minoru Kurita of the Draconis Combine lost no time in declaring himself First Lord of the Star League. The other House leaders followed suit, fouching off the First Succession War.

The first three Succession Wars offered the Maskirovka a chance to prove their deadly efficiency in foreign affairs. Because the Capellan Confederation's level of technology lagged behind that of the other Houses, they knew that they needed information to give them an edge. The Maskirovka got it for them. In one of the greatest information coups of this period, the Maskirovka captured secret Marik military codes, enabling a twelve-brigade strike force to enter the New Delos system disguised as a supply convoy. Chancellor Barbara Liao used the invasion of New Delos to punish House Marik for attacking Capellan worlds; on her orders, her commanders suspended the Ares Conventions in their furious attack. In addition to destroying all military installations, Capellan forces massacred more than 20,000 civilians.

The Maskirovka alternately succeeded and failed in its tasks during the Succession Wars. Its successful operations were spectacularly so, but its failures were sometimes devastating. In one major success, strategic information leaks to House Davion concerning the military might of the Draconis Combine enabled the Capellan military to win back Farwell, Sonnia, Caselton, Towas, and Ulan Batar.

When the Third Succession War began in 2866, Chancellor Dainmar Liao resigned, then committed suicide. His son Otto Liao, keenly aware of the Confederation's depleted resources, shifted to defensive warfare and hired mercenary units. He devoted a percentage of the Maskirovka's resources to keeping tabs on the mercenaries, who sometimes rebelled against the strict control over their operations imposed by the Capellan military. In one of many similar incidents, when the Maskirovka found out that Brighton's Rangers had broken the conditions of their initial charter with the Capellan government, Otto dispatched the Fourteenth Aerospace Regiment to destroy the mercenary unit.

Chancellor Tarlak Liao combined his predecessor's policy of conservation of power with offensive strikes. He used the Maskirovka to find specific targets whose capture would most benefit the war effort, then allocated his scarce resources to take that objective. This approach worked well on many occasions, but had a few dramatic failures. For example, Davion counterintelligence agents uncovered plans for a Capellan attack on the planet Lee to capture Davion *Wasp* Land-Air 'Mechs undergoing repair, and made sure the *Wasps* were fully operative in time to repel the attackers. As further proof that the Maskirovka's attention was directed almost exclusively to the war effort, Tarlak Liao died in 2950, the victim of a laser blast from a Davion mole in the Maskirovka.

MAXIMILIAN THE SCHEMER

By the mid-2980s, under pressure from a dozen different quarters, the feeble Capellan military all but collapsed. Chancellor Tormax Liao overhauled the aerospace division and achieved a rough aerospace parity with the Federated Suns, but by 2990 Tormax presided over an interstellar empire consisting mainly of ruined, shattered worlds. With few exceptions, nearly every one of the Confederation's 400-plus worlds had been raided, bombed, assaulted, besieged, and otherwise viciously fought over during the last century and a half. More than one world that had once boasted a thriving population was now a wasteland, devoid of life, human or otherwise. Many worlds once proud of their industrial might could barely generate enough power to heat the homes of their starving citizens. Science and technology on many Capellan planets had become a thing of the past; like the people, another victim of war. The result of all the brilliant dreams and grandiose plans, subtle maneuvering and bold adventuring of four centuries of Liao leadership was an empire containing little left to fight with and even less worth fighting for. Yet despite all this, the dream of one day ruling over a new Star League remained very much alive in House Liao, especially in the mind of Chancellor Maximilian.

Maximilian Liao engineered a coup against his father Tormax in the spring of 2990. Acknowledging that his weak military could not face the hated Federated Suns in open combat, Maximilian immediately put the Maskirovka to work destabilizing other enemy states. In the early 2990s, the Maskirovka completed a detailed intelligence study of the Free Worlds League and pinpointed the wealthy Mintaine family, rulers of the Asuncion system, as likely allies for the Capellans. The Maskirovka handled all but the final negotiations with the Mintaines, in the end securing a clandestine trade agreement with them. In return, Maximilian agreed to recognize an independent Grand Duchy of Asuncion and provide military support should the Mintaine family break with Captain-General Janos Marik. In 3003, Maximilian began secret negotiations with Janos Marik's younger brother Anton, promising to supply him with military intelligence and his daughter's hand in marriage as support for a coup against Janos. The Maskirovka proved instrumental in furthering this plot, distracting the overworked and underpaid minions of SAFE, House Marik's intelligence agency, from a secret meeting on Terra in 3014 between Maximilian, Anton, and Jaime Wolf of Wolf's Dragoons. Backed by the Inner Sphere's best mercenary unit, Anton openly rebelled against Janos Marik in 3014. Even Wolf's Dragoons could not make up the difference in numbers and determination between the rebel forces and the Free Worlds military, and the Marik Civil War ultimately foundered. The Maskirovka neatly salvaged substantial gain from the escapade by producing the plans for Marik *Wolverines* and *BattleMasters*, acquired during the optimistic planning stages. Despite his actions against House Marik, eight years later, in response to Maskirovka reports of an alliance between the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth, Maximilian signed the Concord of Kapteyn, a mutual defense pact with the Free Worlds League and the Draconis Combine.

OPERATION DOPPELGANGER

Now ready to take action against House Davion directly, beginning in 2997, Maximilian allocated more than a million C-bills to the Maskirovka to further Capellan interests against the Federated Suns. The Maskirovka provided financial backing to pro-Liao factions at the court of New Avalon, and paid particular attention to Michael Hasek-Davion, Duke of New Syrtis, in an effort to repeat the ploy they had used with Anton Marik. For several years the Maskirovka provided Hasek-Davion with money and information, and even aided him in an attempt to assassinate Prince Hanse Davion before the prince succeeded to the throne of the Federated Suns. Ostensibly to keep up appearances of a state of war between the two realms, but in reality to fulfill a secret agenda, the Maskirovka used agents provocateurs in a series of clandestine sabotage operations against Davion scientific and military support systems crucial to the Davion war effort. The most notable of these exploits included the destruction of a Davion ore refinery on Axton in 3001 and the kidnapping of seven scientists from the Davion world Sanilac in 3015. The Chancellor coerced the scientists into aiding one of the Maskirovka's most ambitious plots, Operation Doppelganger. Under pressure from the Maskirovka, the scientists created a double of Hanse Davion, and Liao infiltrated the false Prince into the Davion Summer Palace on Argyle. Unfortunately for Maximilian, Hanse's close friend Colonel Ardan Sortek arrived before the false Prince and spirited Prince Hanse out of the palace. Capellan agents in the Prince's household caught Prince Hanse and Colonel Sortek as they attempted to escape the palace grounds; because they needed additional information to make Hanse's double completely convincing, the Liao operatives threw them into the dungeons rather than killing them. The double immediately traveled to the court of New Avalon, established himself in the true Hanse's place, and began to foment discord between the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth. If Colonel Ardan Sortek's old regiment had not rescued Davion and their commander from Argyle and returned the Prince to New Avalon, where he was able to prove his identity, the double would have succeeded in setting the mighty Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth at each other's throats.

The Capellan attempt to destroy Hanse Davion and his realm, and their wanton destruction of the impostor's life and memories so shocked the Prince that he wasted no time ordering his intelligence agency to prepare for a major offensive against the Capellan Confederation. At his wedding to Melissa Steiner, heir to the Lyran Commonwealth, Hanse Davion declared war against the Capellan Confederation in revenge upon the Maskirovka and Maximilian Liao. Though lasting only from 3028 through 3030, the Fourth Succession War cost as many lives as all the Succession Wars before it.

Hanse Davion exacted his revenge through Justin Xiang, the son of Quintus Allard, the Prince's Minister of Intelligence. Supposedly exiled from the Federated Suns for treason, Xiang traveled to Solaris, where the Maskirovka soon recruited him. The Liao intelligence organization believed Allard's show of hatred for the Federated Suns, and considered him a perfect candidate for

their ranks. All these events were part of Hanse Davion's carefully organized scheme to cripple the Maskirovka and Maximilian Liao's command structure. Allard, as a double agent, was able to supply a number of essential details to the Federated Suns regarding Capellan troop strengths and movements, in preparation for the next stage of the Prince's plan.

In the final year of the war, Duke Michael Hasek-Davion personally traveled to the Capellan Confederation to visit the Chancellor. Unaware that his cousin Hanse knew of his treachery and was using it to the Federated Suns' advantage, Michael had unknowingly leaked false Davion troop movements and numbers to the Maskirovka throughout the 3020s. He expected to be welcomed in the Capellan capital, but received only a quick death at the hands of double agent Justin Allard.

RECENT EVENTS

The aftermath of the Fourth Succession War left the Maskirovka crippled. By the time the war ended, the Capellans had lost half of their worlds to the Federated Commonwealth, including Keid and Old Kentucky, the sites of the Maskirovka's primary training facilities. In addition, Justin Allard's infiltration of the Maskirovka high command had laid bare to its enemies the entire Capellan secret service, and his subsequent rescue by Davion forces in an assault on the Capellan capital cost the lives of several other key agents. Maximilian's daughter Candace Liao escaped with Justin and brought with her the worlds of the St. Ives Commonality, which she renamed the St. Ives Compact. As his empire crumbled around him, Maximilian's mind snapped. His younger daughter, Romano, usurped the throne and ordered her insane father killed.

The paranoid Romano trusted no one. Though strong enough to rebuild the empire, she was quite insane. Through her control over her husband Tsen Shang, the Maskirovka's top agent after Justin Allard's departure, Romano turned the power of the secret police against both real and imagined enemies. Not even the Clan invasion in 3049 could pierce Romano's anger and hatred; of all the House Lords who attended Wolf's Dragoons' historic summit on the world of Outreach, she alone refused to cooperate with the other Successor States in battling the Clan threat. In 3052, Romano ordered the Maskirovka to assassinate Justin Allard and her sister, Candace, but Candace survived the assassination attempt. Five months later, Romano was shot to death. According to the official story, she shot and killed her husband in a fit of anger, then killed herself. We have reason to believe, however, that her sister Candace assassinated her in revenge for Romano's attempt on her life.

The Maskirovka have had little contact with the Clans, and are unlikely to unless Terra falls when the Truce of Tukayyid expires. In the few years since the ComStar victory on Tukayyid, the Maskirovka has curtailed many of its operations in an attempt to recover from the loss of the St. Ives Compact, the death of Tsen Shang, and the destructive results of Romano's paranoia. Sun-Tzu has yet to give the Maskirovka permission to move decisively against Tormana Liao, Romano's brother. Tormana has built his own spy network to engage in minor sabotage against the Confed-

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eration, beginning with his capture by Davion troops during the Fourth Succession War. Disinherited by his father, the resentful Tormana proved a useful weapon in Davion's hands, and a constant irritant to both Chancellor Romano and her son and successor, Sun-Tzu. Sun-Tzu shows little concern so far for his uncle's antics, and has limited his actions against him to infiltrating an agent or two into Tormana's organization.

A more restrained and intelligent leader than the Confederation is accustomed to, Sun-Tzu Liao already appears to be playing a decisive role in the Maskirovka's recovery. In the confusion created by the schism within ComStar, the Maskirovka was able to infiltrate ROM, ComStar's intelligence agency, for the first time in history. Keeping in mind the alliance with the Free Worlds

League to be cemented by his upcoming marriage to Isis Marik, Sun-Tzu is also placing agents within the renegade Word of Blake sect. In addition to infiltrating the Word of Blake, the Maskirovka are currently setting up operations within the League to monitor SAFE activities and create a power base for themselves, from which they hope to manipulate the League to the Capellan Confederation's advantage. When Chancellor Liao completes his information network and begins to exert influence on those agencies he has infiltrated, he will essentially control the combined forces of the Capellan Confederation, the Free Worlds League, and the Word of Blake ROM and Com Guards, giving Sun-Tzu an impressive power base from which to take over his new ally.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 05967-CC11-2/19/15

THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE WAS EXCERPTED FROM THE UNPUBLISHED MEMOIRS OF GORDON CHEN, A SERGEANT IN THE CAPELLAN RED LANCERS. THE PASSAGE RECOUNTS AN EVENT FROM THE LIFE OF KALVIN LIAO, THE NINTH CAPELLAN CHANCELLOR, 2527.

I recall Calvin's first visit to Kearny with horror. Not far from the spaceport, en route to the reception stands, Calvin noticed a number of crippled among the crowd cheering and waving their flags along with the rest. I remember seeing him smile at the time, though none could imagine what he had in store for us. At the reception, in the middle of his prepared speech, Calvin announced his intention to hold a gigantic banquet in honor of all the poor, the lame, the crippled, and the blind of the city's inhabitants. The announcement brought waves of applause.

Afterward, Calvin rented the largest meeting hall in town and, out of his own coffers, filled the entire facility with every type of fare imaginable...

Word got around, and by mid-evening, half the town had turned out to witness the gala event. Over 2,000 individuals (so it was later estimated) were Calvin's "guests of honor" that evening: the city's poor, disabled, blind... all ages, all walks of life. After toasting their good health, Calvin joined in and a merry time, so it seemed, was had by all. About an hour after the festivities began, Calvin left the auditorium, pleading pressing state business. All inside were urged to continue enjoying themselves as long as they wished.

No one noticed the doors being silently locked as Calvin left the room. No one noticed the flames either until the walls began to glow red hot. Panic erupted, and those who were mobile tried to jump through the windows. Those who did were cut down by Calvin's guards surrounding the building.

We heard the flames, the breaking glass, the cries of astonishment, the horrid sound of Chancellor Calvin clapping his hands in delight over the carnage.

There was nothing we could do. It was a very long night.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Though functioning as a civilian as well as a military intelligence agency, the Maskirovka's foundations stand firmly within the Capellan military. Founded to replace the corrupt Deimosis, Capella's original military intelligence agency, the Maskirovka acts as both an information-gathering service for the armed forces and a monitoring agency for the Capellan regime. In both its military and civilian spheres of influence, the Maskirovka detects and eliminates all who do not measure up to the demanding expectations of the ideal Capellan citizen.

The head of the Maskirovka, Dina Ferrara, is directly responsible to the Chancellor for the conduct and activities of her operatives. She makes herself available to the Chancellor at all times and constantly updates him on developments relating to current events in the Inner Sphere. As soon as Sun-Tzu revealed his plan to ally the Capellan Confederation with the Free Worlds League, Ferrara ordered her agents to increase their efforts to gather as much information on the League as possible, aware that Chancellor Sun-Tzu will need the information when he makes his bid for control of the allied realms.

The commanding officers of each service branch of the Maskirovka report to Ferrara, coming into direct contact with the Chancellor only upon assuming their current office. At that time, each commander must present him or herself to the realm's leader and pledge loyal service to him and to the Capellan Confederation. Department heads present all aspects of their operational plans, from authorization for a new assignment to requests for additional resources, to the branch commanders. They in turn must gain approval from Madame Ferrara. Failure on any level to comply with the director's decisions results in immediate execution.

The department heads organize, assign, and monitor the agency's rank-and-file operatives. In accordance with the blind obedience to superiors expected of all Capellan citizens, Maskirovka agents must follow mission directives to the letter. If an agent deviates from standing orders, no matter what the situation, even salvaging a brilliant victory from certain defeat may not prevent his superiors from disciplining or even killing him. These draconian measures on the part of the command staff to discourage independent thinking are intended to reduce defections by Maskirovka agents, but this rigidity serves mostly to deter agents from acting on their own initiative, and so hampers the organization's general effectiveness. The Capellan military high command also considers personal initiative a dangerous trait in a soldier.

Except when assigned to the military for observation or other missions, Maskirovka agents do not use assigned military ranks, instead referring to each other as comrade. Agents assigned to the armed forces automatically receive the rank of commander unless their experience and position within the Maskirovka suggests a higher rank. Only two groups within the Maskirovka wear official uniforms when performing their duties. The Officer Observation branch, commonly referred to as greenbacks, wear the

jade green uniform of the Capellan Armed Forces. A Maskirovka rank emblem on the right shoulder marks their observer status. The Maskirovka guardsmen wear a more utilitarian uniform of standard military issue, with the addition of an armored vest worn beneath the uniform shirt, and a helmet equipped with a mirrored faceplate that hides their features. Most often assigned to riot control, these uniformed officers are easily recognizable, and the arrival of a mere handful of guardsmen strikes fear into the heart of every Capellan citizen.

MASKIROVKA BRANCHES

Two branches of the Maskirovka carry out the intelligence agency's myriad duties. Similar to the division of labor maintained by the DMI and MIO of the Federated Commonwealth, the Capellan Operations Branch concentrates on the affairs of state and the external security of the Capellan Confederation, and the Special Services Branch deals with internal espionage and security.



CAPELLAN OPERATIONS BRANCH

The smaller of the two branches, the Capellan Operations Branch (COB) deals primarily with intelligence gathering and espionage beyond the borders of the Capellan Confederation. Much like the operations divisions of other Inner Sphere intelligence agencies, COB agents work for one of three subdivisions: Information Gathering, Misinformation, and Special Operations.

Information Gathering

The Maskirovka supports a surprising number of information-gathering agents within rival states. Because Capellan citizens possess an inbred distrust of all other cultures, many Maskirovka agents find it difficult to work with a standard network of native informers. Most agents prefer to use as contacts Maskirovka operatives infiltrated into other Successor State societies over the years. This preference only becomes problematical in those societies that consider anyone not born in their community an outsider. Maskirovka information-gathering agents generally manage to obtain the intelligence needed to fulfill their mission.

Misinformation

Though the creation and dissemination of misinformation



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has been one of the primary tools of intelligence agencies throughout history, the Maskirovka have raised the misinformation campaign to a fine art. In addition to the misinformation and propaganda that the Maskirovka spreads within its own borders, it has recently stepped up its ongoing campaigns in the St. Ives Compact, the Sama March, the Tikonov region, and on the worlds lost to the Federated Commonwealth along the Terran Corridor that runs between the Davion and Steiner states.

Though these operations have yet to show the hoped-for results, the vast amounts of carefully placed misinformation the Maskirovka produces forces the DMI to spend time they cannot afford to spare checking and authenticating all information gathered from the Confederation and all known Maskirovka agents.

Special Operations

This department runs diverse covert operations ranging from sabotage of key installations in rival realms to creating chaos on selected worlds through various methods of psychological warfare. Because the Maskirovka measure their actions by a single moral standard, the preservation and expansion of the Capellan Confederation by any means available, they recruit mainly hardened criminals and other individuals utterly lacking in conscience by all standard definitions for Special Operations. Members of this division, like every Maskirovka operative, will commit any act to complete their mission.

In the department's most infamous exploit, the Maskirovka used a Special Operations team to abduct a Capellan citizen, in order to transform him into a doppelganger of Prince Hanse Davion of the Federated Suns. Maskirovka agents wiped their captive's mind clear of his own identity, brainwashed and pro-

grammed him into becoming Prince Hanse, and substituted him for the real Prince. Unfortunately for the Confederation, the plot failed at its most critical point, giving the Prince of the Federated Suns the excuse he needed to launch the Fourth Succession War with a massive assault on Capellan space.

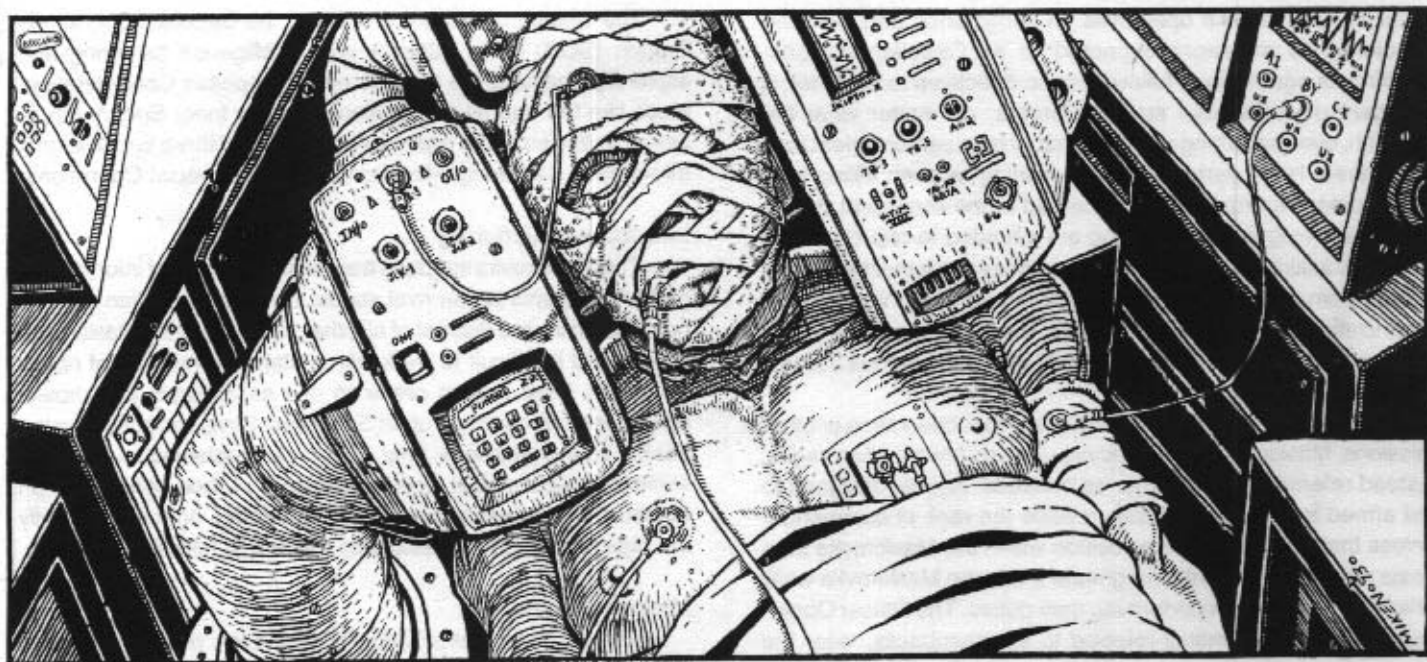
WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 23581-CC9-7/13/54

THE FOLLOWING IS A ROM INTELLIFAX FROM THE "XANTHE" DOSSIER, COMSTAR ARCHIVES, TERRA.

The exact details of the "Xanthe Operation" remain sketchy, but apparently the Capellan Maskirovka succeeded in compromising the integrity of a high-level technician working on the Free Worlds League's secret 'Mech construction project. Blackmailed into working with the Maskirovka, the technician later repented his decision and called in the League authorities.

In the confusion surrounding the final transaction, the technician's duplicity was discovered. Six of the seven members of the Maskirovka team were killed in the ensuing firefight, as were the tech and several members of the Free Worlds' special forces branch. It is suspected that the lone survivor managed to bribe his way out of League territory using the 100,000 credits the team had brought along for the defector. In any event, the Maskirovka action enabled House Liao to obtain sufficient (if not complete) specs to begin their own 'Mech production operations.





SPECIAL SERVICES BRANCH

More widely known even within the Confederation than the Capellan Operations Branch, the Special Services Branch serves as an internal security force with the authority to enforce the people's loyalty to their nation and their Chancellor by any means necessary.

The fanatically loyal SSB serves as the Confederation's secret police, using the citizens' fear of their government and the general paranoia that pervades all levels of Capellan society to accomplish its ends. This branch's reputation is its most effective tool, as nearly every Capellan family can tell a story of at least one relative or friend taken during the night by the SSB (their standard operating procedure) and never seen or heard of again.

The SSB stands ready to carry out any operation ordered by the Chancellor, but upholds the power of the Capellan government through three ongoing, priority internal assignments.

Counterinsurgency

An essential force in every Inner Sphere society, counterinsurgency agents quell internal rebellions and protect state secrets from enemy infiltrators. Of all the counterinsurgency operations within the Inner Sphere, the Maskirovka's Special Services Branch takes the swiftest and most extreme measures to detect and neutralize enemy operatives within the state it protects.

If the SSB suspects an individual of spying on the Confederation for a foreign power, they monitor the suspect for no longer than one month, gathering any evidence of the suspect's insurgent activities. Regardless of whether or not their surveillance provided any solid evidence to confirm their suspicions, the counterinsurgency department arrests the suspect at the end of that time. Every suspected counteragent undergoes SSB interrogation. All Maskirovka interrogators make full use of all known technological and psychological instruments proven useful in this type of work throughout history, and many individuals confess to crimes they did not commit simply to stop the torture.

Propaganda

The SSB creates and distributes all official reports for public consumption concerning current events within the Capellan Confederation and the rest of the Inner Sphere. The Propaganda Department disseminates these reports through a variety of Maskirovka-controlled media channels, whose slanted reporting and frequent outright lies ensure the citizens' total loyalty to the

Confederation. By appealing to emotions rather than intelligence, these reports emphasize the superiority of the Capellan people over the barbarians who constantly fight for dominance over the Inner Sphere. In the latest example of this type of reporting, the invading Clans have been portrayed as savage, dishonorable invaders akin to the Vikings of ancient Earth, ravaging the Inner Sphere and stealing its riches.

Because the SSB's efficient propaganda machine precludes anything resembling objective reporting in the Confederation, the Capellan general public believes what they hear in official reports. Between ignorance of the extent of the SSB's thought control and fear of the consequences of appearing to disbelieve the official line, the Capellan people have little incentive to question their government's assertions.



Officer Observation And Cultural Monitoring

Despite its seemingly innocuous name, cultural monitoring provides the Maskirovka's most blatant opportunity to use its power to oppress the population. Though this policy began within the ranks of the Capellan Armed Forces as a way of ensuring each soldier's loyalty and courage, the Chancellor eventually expanded the Maskirovka's power in this area to include the public, especially in the state's educational facilities.

The Maskirovka applies this policy to the military by assigning a Maskirovka observer to every unit. The agent monitors the unit in battle and notes any actions taken by the officers or, in certain cases, by the enlisted troops that might be interpreted as signs of



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disloyalty or cowardice. The observer then removes from the unit any individual guilty of such misconduct, either through reassigning the offender to a rear unit (only in those rare cases where the individual has influence within the court) or, more frequently, immediate field execution carried out by the offending officer's unit.

A similar policy applies to the civilian sector. The observers monitor such institutions as libraries, colleges, and industrial facilities, watching for any anti-establishment actions or speech. As with the military, the observer may punish offenders with anything from a severe warning to life imprisonment or summary execution.

Beginning with the reign of Maximilian Liao and continuing under his paranoid daughter Romano, the overall power of the observers has grown by leaps and bounds. Under Romano's Chancellorship, observers gained the authority to immediately strip an officer of his command and take his position within his unit until the arrival of a suitably loyal replacement. Chancellor Sun-Tzu has allowed this policy to remain in effect, despite the fact that it breeds resentment in those CAF units deprived of their commanding officers in this manner.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 21541-CC4-10/7/9

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM *BAD MEN, BAD TIMES*,
BY LILLIAN JARVIS CHUNG, SARGASSO PRESS, 2535.

There came a loud banging on the villa door. Before the servants could respond, an explosion from an energy weapon incinerated the entrance completely. Into the hall stepped four heavily armed guards. I noticed the distinct absence of any unit insignia on their shoulders; their faces were covered with black silk, and they wore black berets. Though shocked by this unparalleled intrusion, my mother came forward to demand an explanation. One of the soldiers, I supposed him to be the leader, presented a warrant for Father's arrest.

While Mother sputtered out her pleas that a terrible mistake had been made, the rest of the troopers began searching the lower floor. About that time, Father came down from above. He was still wet from his bath, his clothes clinging to him here and there. The head man checked my father's face against that of a small holo he had in his hand. Satisfied my father was indeed the man he was after, he motioned to his men, who immediately grabbed Father under each arm and pulled him toward the door. Mother began scratching at the face of the nearest man. He knocked her aside with a savage blow to the face; she later found two of her front teeth had jarred loose. Kicking, screaming, protesting, struggling, Father was hurled through the door.

That was the last time we ever saw him.

We later heard he had been shot "while attempting to escape."



THE DEATH COMMANDOS

Every Successor State maintains an elite special forces unit within their military to serve as a special operations or counterintelligence unit for the state's intelligence agency. The Capellan Confederation's elite troops, the Death Commandos, receive training in all conventional forms of combat as well as in intelligence gathering, cryptography, and other skills useful for espionage. Intended primarily as a raiding force, their most famous exploit of the Fourth Succession War was a mission to destroy the generators at the Federated Suns shipyards on Kathil. Though the raid ultimately failed, the Federated Suns paid a high price in MechWarriors for its victory.

Chancellor Tormax Liao created the Death Commandos in 2988 as his personal guard. When Maximilian took power two years later, he molded the Death Commandos into a paramilitary force. The primary mission of the Death Commandos is the elimination of all enemies of the Capellan state, wherever they exist. Other missions include infiltration and demolition, sabotage, assassination, kidnapping, and terrorist attacks. All Commandos swear personal loyalty to the Chancellor, who commands the unit. The Death Commandos carry out the Chancellor's orders without question, and may act as an internal security force independent of the Maskirovka, especially to purge anti-Liao factions from key units under the Chancellor's command.

The Maskirovka considers the Death Commandos a threat to its power within the Confederation. The intelligence agency has attempted to maintain a distance between the two organizations since the Death Commandos' creation, and a deep rift developed after the successful and devastating DMI infiltration of the Maskirovka high command (by Justin Xiang-Allard) during the Fourth Succession War.

The two units do not actively obstruct each others' missions, but rarely cooperate, preferring instead to carry out parallel assignments if necessary. The Death Commandos currently have a more active role than the Maskirovka in the Sarna and Tikonov regions.

HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING

The Maskirovka headquarters is located on Sian, the Capellan capital world. Though the agency occasionally receives attractive offers for relocation to other worlds, they so far prefer to remain on Sian. (Many of these proposals have come from the Capellan

Armed Forces and the Warrior Houses, who would prefer to see the Maskirovka moved as far as possible from their own headquarters on Sian, thus reducing the agency's ability to spy on them.)

An elaborate, pagoda-style building within the central complex of the Chancellor's palace masks the entrance to the Maskirovka headquarters. The outer beauty of the building, featuring a teak exterior and brightly-painted frescoes, contrasts horribly with the expert tortures and nefarious plans hatched in the many levels below.

The pagoda serves only to present a false front behind which the Maskirovka conceal their activities. Aside from a great deal of impressive decoration, the building's only significant feature is a heavy blast door flanked at all times by a minimum of six Maskirovka security personnel. This door guards the entrance to a lift that leads down into the agency's multi-level, underground headquarters.

Several levels of the Maskirovka headquarters are dedicated to the assimilation and distribution of information gathered by agents to the appropriate sections; more area than might be expected has been set aside for the interrogation of enemy agents. Because so few prisoners escape from the Maskirovka's cells, details of these interrogation levels remain elusive.

Our minimal information indicates that the Maskirovka continue to devote enormous time and effort to developing new and more successful interrogation techniques. One of the most recent innovations uses sensory deprivation alternated with computer-assisted neural input, usually in the form of low-frequency sound. This interrogation method reduces most victims to mindless wrecks.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Despite such setbacks as the failure of Operation Doppelganger just before the Fourth Succession War, the Maskirovka enjoys a reputation for effective and competent operations. Its terrorist methods of ensuring loyalty to the government have unfortunately robbed the general population of freedom of thought as well as action, thus depriving the Capellan Confederation of her citizens' ability to function at their fullest capabilities. Throughout most of its history, the ruling Liao family has preferred to sacrifice its citizens' individuality in order to retain its iron control. This completely centralized control also provides the Maskirovka with its greatest strength: the unshakable cohesion between its departments. Most Inner Sphere intelligence agencies suffer from some degree of infighting, but the Maskirovka acts with complete unity.

The Maskirovka uses a complex and strenuous assessment program on its operatives. Upon nomination to enter the intelligence service, all candidates undergo a meticulous examination for the psychological traits most desirable in a good operative. Maskirovka agents must pass reassessments at regular intervals throughout their careers to guarantee their continued loyalty to House Liao and ensure correct political views. Following the

embarrassment of Justin Xiang-Allard's infiltration to the Maskirovka's highest levels during the Fourth Succession War, these reassessments have become more frequent and more thorough. The Successor States have always found it extremely difficult to infiltrate the Maskirovka; since the Allard affair, it has become even more so, and no current infiltrators save our own Wolfnet operatives appear to exist.

During the reign of Maximilian Liao, the personal strength of the late Madame Chandra Ling enhanced the power and prestige of the Maskirovka. A cunning and ruthless woman, Ling recognized the Maskirovka's full potential from the first day of her appointment. In return for her aid in overthrowing his father, Maximilian expanded the power and authority of Ling's agency. Under her direction, the Maskirovka improved on its terror tactics and began to put them to better use against the rest of the Inner Sphere.

After the unfortunate execution of Chandra Ling by Romano Liao in the purge of 3036, Romano's husband Lord Tsen Shang took over as head of the Maskirovka. Though he acted as her pawn in many things, Chancellor Romano's total control over Tsen Shang paradoxically made the Maskirovka even deadlier. Romano padded the agency with operatives from the House of the Setting Sun, a guild of professional assassins, and expanded the use of assassination as a political tool. Tsen Shang's willingness to carry out Romano's every sadistic whim increased the Maskirovka's dangerous element of irrationality, and the agency's current Director uses this to her advantage.

The Maskirovka's second strength lies in the breadth of training provided to its operatives. Unlike the intelligence units of other states, the Maskirovka supports only two branches, each of which carry out the roles played by several branches within their foreign counterparts. Where a Steiner agent, for example, may be responsible only for disseminating information, a trained Maskirovka operative can perform several specialized intelligence tasks, including information gathering, misinformation, and propaganda. This greater versatility gives Capellan agents at least one advantage over their competitors and helps compensate for the Maskirovka's relatively small ranks.

The Maskirovka also draws strength from its agents' absolute right to requisition whatever resources they require for their missions. Any bureaucrat who argues with an agency request for supplies quickly finds himself in a Maskirovka reeducation facility. Maskirovka operatives also command the willing assistance of the entire Capellan population, who fear the Maskirovka too much to deny them any request.

The Maskirovka's most obvious weakness is its size in relation to rival intelligence services. The Fourth Succession War cost the Capellan Confederation half its territory. It lost the worlds that now make up the independent St. Ives Compact, and the Federated Commonwealth absorbed the entire Sarna and Tikonov regions, depriving the Confederation of its territorial link to Terra. This massive loss of territory cost the Confederation and the Maskirovka resources and manpower, severely hampering the agency's ability to operate in all areas where Capellan interests lie.



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The lack of manpower and worlds from which to operate forced the Maskirovka to cut back many of its current operations.

Most importantly, Justin Xiang-Allard's successful infiltration of the Maskirovka set the service's operations back by many years simply by exposing its working methods to Davion intelligence. Forced to invent new techniques that its enemies could not anticipate, the Maskirovka has spent nearly three decades changing and refining new procedures instead of acting with its usual force against foreign enemies. The purges ordered by Romano Liao in the mid-3030s further reduced the agency's manpower, also forcing the Maskirovka to spend more resources than before on training.

The Maskirovka suffers from other weaknesses caused by characteristics of the organization and its government. Public submission to and fear of the intelligence agency, though useful for gaining assistance from the average citizen, also breeds potentially dangerous resentment. A lone Maskirovka agent who finds himself in trouble and unable to contact his superiors may receive little or no assistance from the locals. When agents lack the power to back up their threats, they inspire more hatred than fear.

The one factor that consistently, if irregularly, hampers the effectiveness of the Maskirovka is the psychological tendency in the Liao family toward bouts of irrationality. Not every Liao leader suffers from this affliction, but Chancellors caught in the grip of one of these spells have ordered entire communities massacred, homes burned to the ground, and even entire companies executed for perceived cowardice or treachery. While this madness sometimes proves to be an advantage, giving the Capellan intelligence agency an element of unpredictability against its enemies and reinforcing the Capellan citizens' fear of their ruler, most often a given Chancellor's abrupt changes in focus make it difficult to maintain continuity in operations.

Like any organization, the Maskirovka must balance its strengths and weaknesses in order to effectively work against the intelligence agents of enemy states. The Confederation's precarious political position in the wake of the Fourth Succession War, and the events of the war itself, made a shambles of much of the Maskirovka's work. Under the aegis of Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, and thanks to aid received from the Free Worlds League in recognition of the alliance, the Capellan intelligence agency is slowly recovering its former strength. When the state marriage seals the alliance between Houses Liao and Marik, the Free Worlds League's SAFE intelligence agency may provide the Maskirovka with additional physical resources. However, the Maskirovka's rampant paranoia may prevent it from working with SAFE successfully. If the Maskirovka can control its ethnocentrism long enough to completely infiltrate, and then take control of the Free Worlds League intelligence agency, the Maskirovka may gain the power it needs to become first among the intelligence organizations of the Inner Sphere.



PERSONALITIES

DINA FERRARA

Director of the Maskirovka

The daughter of a minor noble in the Tikonov district, Dina Ferrara spent her childhood on her family's luxurious estate riding horses and learning various arts and crafts to pass the time. The opening campaigns of the Fourth Succession War shattered her life, destroying her home and family. Injuries from fragments of a shell fired by a Federated Suns BattleMech sent Dina into six months of reconstructive surgery on her arms and chest.

Upon discovering that the attack had orphaned as well as injured her, Dina swore revenge against the Federated Suns and all who supported them. To that end, she has focused her career to achieve a position from which she could strike directly at the Federated Suns and its ally, the Lyran Commonwealth. Her position as director of the Maskirovka gives her the opportunity to do so. Though pleased by the results of her meticulously planned missions, even Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao finds himself taken aback by the intensity of Dina's hatred for the Federated Commonwealth.

Her compassion burned away with her family home, Dina lives only to inflict pain upon the people of the Federated Commonwealth. She takes particular pleasure in personally interrogating and executing Commonwealth spies discovered within her organization.

COLONEL MICHAEL HYUNG-TSEI
Commanding Officer, Death Commandos



As the commanding officer of the Capellan Confederation's elite Death Commandos, Colonel Hyung-Tsei has made enemies throughout the Inner Sphere and within the Maskirovka during his career. Though well aware of this fact, he knows that his present position makes him virtually untouchable.

Originally drafted into the Capellan Armed Forces as a recruit-grade soldier, Hyung-Tsei's ferocity in battle and high kill ratio netted him a string of promotions and citations, eventually earning him an invitation to the ranks of the Death Commandos. His staunch patriotism helped him advance quickly through the Commandos' ranks, and he considers his current position as commanding officer the greatest service he can render to the Chancellor and the Confederation. He cares little for others' opinions of him or his unit; the colonel cares only for the well-being of the Chancellor and his nation. His fierce loyalty prompts him to kill those foolish enough to disparage House Liao within his hearing.

As head of the Chancellor's personal guard, he spends most of his time at the royal court. Though not particularly intelligent, Hyung-Tsei is an outstanding soldier; that quality and his incorruptible loyalty to the Chancellor and the Capellan Confederation make him frighteningly efficient in his position.

LI XIANG
Public Relations Officer, Propaganda Department

As the chief public relations officer of the propaganda department, Li Xiang ranks among the most dangerous members of the Maskirovka.

Born on Sian, Li spent her early life working as a reporter for the official Capellan news agency, providing commentary for the war reports that dominate the news in the Confederation. Her popularity with the general public brought her to the attention of the Maskirovka, who recognized her underlying ability and immediately recruited her for the propaganda department. Soon after her arrival in the Maskirovka, a series of unfortunate accidents befell those directly above Li Xiang in the chain of command. Li received a promotion in each instance, and within the past two years became chief public relations officer. Her responsibilities include presenting the Capellan Confederation's official policies at state

functions and in public broadcasts.

A brilliant manipulator, Li achieved her present position within the Maskirovka through a series of lovers, convincing each to arrange fatal accidents for her superiors and then using the lover in question as the scapegoat for the apparent breach in security. Unknown to Li, Director Dina Ferrara knows exactly how Li achieved her promotions. Ferrara admires Li for her drive and ruthlessness, and apparently is grooming her to become her personal assistant.

SUNG CHU-KAI
Commanding Officer, Special Σ Services Branch

A quiet, and apparently physically feeble individual, seventy-two-year-old Sung Chu-Kai is one of the oldest members of the Maskirovka still in active service. Though his subordinates regularly call for his resignation from his position as head of the Special Services Branch, most of those individuals disappear without a trace. In the eyes of the Capellan government, Chu-Kai remains eminently capable of carrying out his duties.

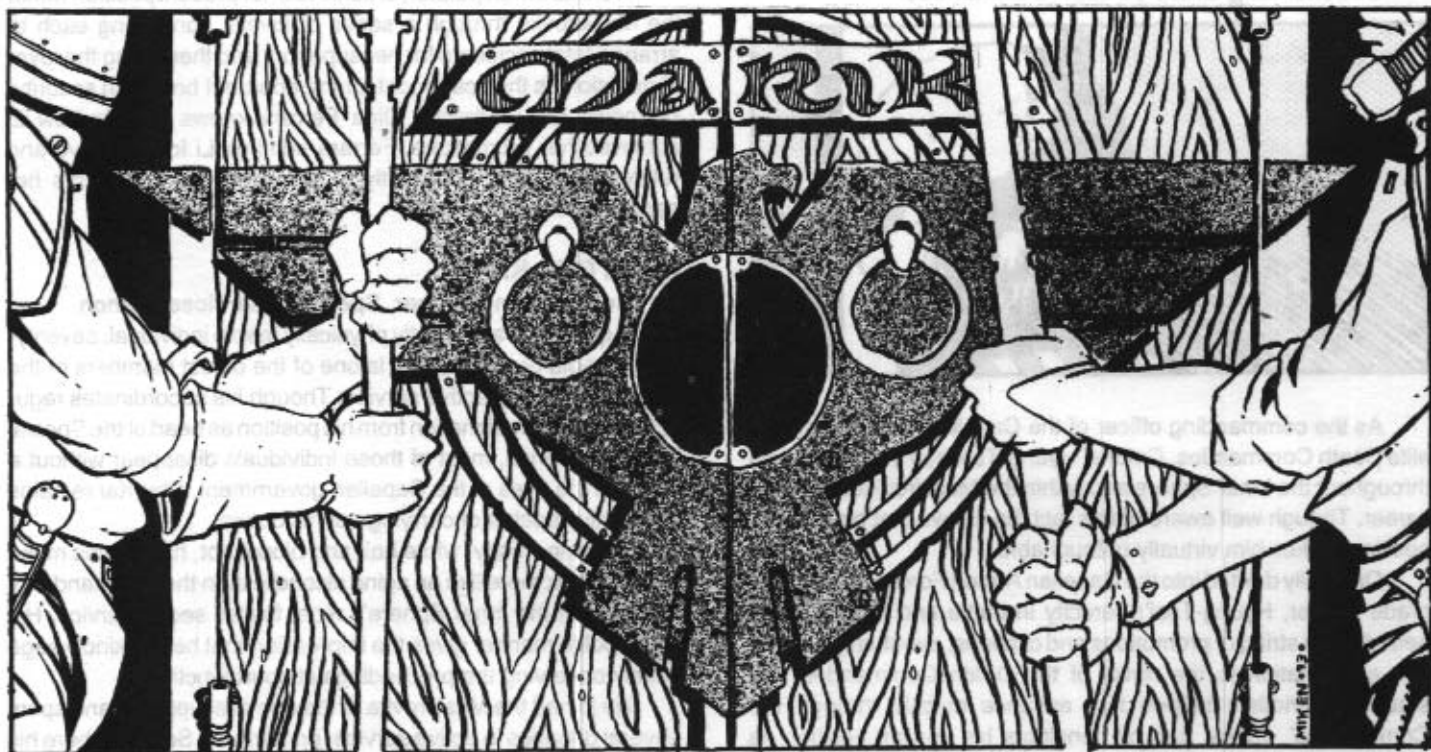
His long, wispy, white hair and bloodshot, hazel eyes make Chu-Kai look more like an aging alcoholic than the commander of a branch of the Inner Sphere's most feared secret service. His quiet, polite manner gives the impression that he is a kindly sage calmly observing the proceedings at court functions.

He joined the Maskirovka at the age of seventeen and spent several decades in active service, primarily on Solaris, where his ability to speak the languages of all the Successor States made him a valuable agent. Eventually, he earned promotion to the position of head of Cultural Monitoring, a position created recently by then-Director of the Maskirovka Chandra Ling.

Though no evidence exists to support this claim, rumors persist that Chu-Kai gained his position within the SSB through an affair with Chandra Ling. However he achieved his position, his obvious ability to carry out his tasks with ruthless efficiency validated his appointment. He became commanding officer of the entire Special Services Branch soon after his sixty-fourth birthday.

Intelligent and perceptive, Chu-Kai rarely speaks unless spoken to directly, but when moved to make an observation, those around him generally heed his words.





Once a patchwork nation of squabbling states, the Free Worlds League stands stronger today than at any other time in its history. In the centuries since founding the first of the Great Houses, the Marik state has survived civil wars, assassinations, and conflict with enemy empires to emerge under the leadership of its current Captain-General as one of the major players in the Inner Sphere.

Captain-General Thomas Marik has reshaped a perpetually quarreling and fragmented realm into a potent and efficient state by taking advantage of every opportunity to consolidate and increase his power. In a political masterstroke, he welcomed the refugees from the ComStar schism and granted Word of Blake the planet Gibson as its homeworld. By this single act, he simultaneously gained a military and intelligence force completely loyal to him, and placed his realm in the forefront of any successful power play against ComStar. Long discounted by the other Successor States, Thomas Marik and the Free Worlds League stand ready to alter forever the political map of the Inner Sphere.

OVERVIEW

As is the case with any great ruling family, the lineage of House Marik boasts many extraordinary members. In the early days of the Free Worlds League the Mariks served as military leaders for a loose confederation of principalities, each jealously guarding its own powers and rights against encroachment by a central government. The League's founding states supported

three different intelligence agencies, none of which initially shared their resources. The hereditary office of Captain-General, a Marik appointed by Parliament and designated the League's military leader during times of crisis, constituted the League's only central authority. The constant tension between Parliament and the Captain-General prompted the creation of boundaries to power that no Marik could cross without risking dismissal. The more or less constant state of war that prevailed in the Inner Sphere until the founding of the Star League in 2571 meant that Parliament rarely exercised its legal right to remove the Captain-General. Its power to do so, however, deprived House Marik of the absolute governing authority wielded by many of its fellow Inner Sphere rulers. Hampered by legal limitations and the logistical nightmare resulting from attempts to coordinate the activities of three different intelligence agencies, Marik leaders realized that they needed a single, centralized intelligence agency, responsible to them, in order to function.

The first centralized intelligence organization, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), accomplished two objectives for the Captain-Generals. Militarily, it enabled them to effectively perform their primary job of fighting battles and winning wars. Domestically, the NIA helped House Marik stay one step ahead of opposing factions in Parliament. Though technically the NIA answered to a Parliamentary oversight committee as well as to the Captain-General, almost from the beginning the service routinely lied to Parliament about its activities and falsified records of operations. The discovery of this NIA double-dealing provoked a

public scandal in the 2630s, leading Parliament to disband it and replace it with SAFE, an intelligence organization under Parliament's direct control. SAFE's fortunes and activities throughout the centuries since its formation have closely followed the power struggles between Parliament and successive Captain-Generals, with each expansion of the Captain-General's control over the agency countered by an Act of Parliament designed to curb SAFE's power.

The current Captain-General, Thomas Marik, has the opportunity to permanently remove Parliament's control of Free Worlds League intelligence by ceasing to rely solely on SAFE. The recent schism in the order of ComStar between reformers and reactionaries has gifted Thomas, a former ComStar Precentor, with a sizable number of agents defecting from ROM, ComStar's fearsome intelligence agency. Personally loyal to Thomas, these talented, experienced, and deadly individuals are currently working with SAFE while they consolidate their own strength within the Free Worlds League. According to unconfirmed rumor, Thomas has already begun to show his trust in Word of Blake ROM by using that agency, rather than SAFE, in several failed attempts to gain unbiased information about his son Joshua's condition. Joshua, currently undergoing treatment for leukemia at the New Avalon Institute of Science in the Federated Commonwealth, has lived on New Avalon for the past five years, effectively serving as a hostage for his father's continued good behavior. His death would remove a major check on Thomas' use of his nation's now-formidable power, as well as placing his volatile, soon-to-be son-in-law Sun-Tzu Liao a heartbeat away from the throne of the Free Worlds League.

BRIEFING

Three events within the last decade have propelled the Free Worlds League to unusual prominence within the Inner Sphere: the Clan War of 3049-52, the League alliance with the Capellan Confederation, and the ComStar schism. Ever since beginning his rule in 3036, Captain-General Thomas Marik has consistently changed and updated the laws of the League to consolidate power in his office, building a political consensus for his agenda that no previous Captain-General could achieve. The events of the past seven years gave Thomas the opportunity to capitalize on his more unified realm and army, and added unexpected sources of strength to his rule.

The changing realities created by the alliance with House Liao and the arrival of the ComStar refugees calling themselves the Word of Blake have forced the high command of SAFE to rethink its objectives and strategies with regard to the other Successor States. Per the agreement made between the leaders of the five Successor States in the historic meeting on Outreach at the start of the Clan invasion, the Free Worlds League continues to produce arms for every nation of the Inner Sphere to use in the fight against the Clans, fueling an economic boom in the League and making opposing armies dangerously dependent on steady output from League BattleMech factories. The League's location

far from the front lines has spared it the ravages of the invasion, allowing it to profit from the war where other realms have suffered. The seemingly unshakable Federated Commonwealth alliance, in particular, is suffering from economic depression and political dissension in the aftermath of the Clans' depredations, and SAFE has altered the priorities of its operatives in those realms to fit the new political situation.

The cooperation of the Word of Blake ROM agents, comprising the lion's share of the old ComStar's brilliant and deadly intelligence agency, has further added to SAFE's strength. Though still troubled by factionalism left over from dwindling Parliamentary control, most of SAFE's leaders and agents remain loyal to their Captain-General. Because opposing factions still exist, however, Thomas Marik increasingly relies on Word of Blake ROM agents, whose personal loyalty to him is beyond question, for both military and domestic intelligence. Currently, ROM and SAFE function as separate but allied organizations, giving Thomas Marik the advantage of two intelligence agencies where most realms have only one. The effect of adding the Capellan Maskirovka to this mix, a possibility dependent on the final form of the Liao/Marik alliance, cannot be determined at this time.

Based on reports from our agents within SAFE, the following represent the intelligence agency's primary goals and concerns.

INTERNAL MONITORING

Continuing a task begun during the reign of Thomas Marik's father Janos, SAFE monitors the activities of all members of the Free Worlds Parliament. Though Thomas enjoys the loyalty of most MPs, he uses SAFE surveillance to ensure that those loyalties remain his and to warn him of waverers. Knowing that a certain amount of factionalism still exists within SAFE, however, Thomas Marik may also be using ROM agents as watchdogs over SAFE. If this proves true, and SAFE discovers ROM's overwatch activities, this outside surveillance could increase, rather than decrease, factionalism and dissent within SAFE.

THE COMSTAR SITUATION

By harboring the Word of Blake within his borders, and apparently on the verge of accepting the title of Primus-in-exile from the renegade group, Thomas Marik has made the Free Worlds League the enemy of the reformed ComStar. This position offers advantages and disadvantages; while Captain-General Marik does not appear prepared to wage open war against ComStar, he willingly accepts and uses the expertise and advanced technology the Word of Blake faction brings to the League. ROM, in particular, provides Thomas Marik with unexpected options.

ComStar/Word of Blake Covert War

Outraged by the changes in ComStar proposed by Precentor Martial Focht and Primus Sharilar Mori following the Com Guards' victory over the Clans at Tukayyid, Precentor Demona Aziz, the Free Worlds League's representative to ComStar's First Circuit, returned to the League and requested sanctuary from Thomas

Marik for all members of ComStar who still believed in the vision of Blake's word as represented by the late Primus Myndo

Waterly. A former member of ComStar himself, and a visionary of the word of Blake, Thomas granted her request. Based on these and other reasons, the Word of Blake refugees within the Free Worlds League hail Thomas Marik as the rightful Primus of ComStar.

Though not yet openly accepting the title of Primus-in-exile, Thomas Marik's actions since the schism may indicate that he intends to fight for control of ComStar in the near future. His formation of the Knights of the Inner Sphere, a sizable corps of elite MechWarriors loyal only to him, indicates that the Captain-



General has plans for these new forces. His royal treatment of the Word of Blake refugees since their arrival in the League suggests that he may be willing to back their claim to legitimacy with his newfound military power. Various factions within the Word of Blake already are calling for him to take action against the reformed, "heretic" ComStar. Analysis of available intelligence indicates that the Word of Blake intends to destroy ComStar if it can, at the very least supplanting the reformed group, absorbing its members, and taking over its responsibilities. Using the League as a base, the renegade order has launched several vicious attacks against its former brethren. As it regains its strength, ComStar can be expected to retaliate more forcefully; when this happens, the distinction between Word of Blake and SAFE personnel may be lost. As a safeguard against this potential threat to the League created by the Word of Blake's most radical members, SAFE monitors their activities on every world where the ultra-radicals draw a significant following.

In the worst-case scenario for ComStar, should the controlled aggression between the reformers and the renegades break into open conflict, ComStar would be forced to use its contingent of Com Guards to defend the order. In addition to further eroding ComStar's moral authority to call on the Successor States to work together toward a solution to the Clan invasion, a military conflict between factions of Comstar would further deplete the Com Guards, the Inner Sphere's strongest and best equipped troops. This would make defending against renewed attacks by the Clans even more difficult.

Should the Word of Blake succeed in destroying ComStar and take its place, the Free Worlds League stands to gain enormous economic, military, and political power. The ascendancy of the fanatically conservative Word of Blake over the Inner Sphere, backed by the military and economic might of the Free Worlds League, would spell disaster for every other Great House in the Inner Sphere. They would lose the benefit of ComStar's newly granted access to their historical archives, and might even lose control over portions of the vital HPG network. The addition of the warlike, paranoid Sun-Tzu Liao to the League/Word of Blake alliance, putting the Capellan police state in a position of power in the Inner Sphere, bears consequences almost too frightening to contemplate.

Control of the Sphere-wide hyperpulse generator network alone would make the League, backed by the Word of Blake, the Inner Sphere's pre-eminent power for the foreseeable future. Such strength would give SAFE a considerable advantage over the Capellan Confederation and the Maskirovka, ensuring SAFE's status as the senior partner in any merger between the two agencies. Additionally, control over the rest of the Com Guards, most of whom remained loyal to ComStar after the schism, would give Thomas Marik control of a military force second only to that fielded by the Clans. Because the League stands to gain so much should the Word of Blake succeed in their ambitions, SAFE makes no attempt to curb the renegades' activities, preferring simply to keep the Captain-General informed of all developments.

In the absence of Thomas Marik's formal assumption of the Word of Blake primacy, Precentor Blane of Gibson has emerged as the sect's nominal leader. A long-time friend of the Captain-General, Blane's relatively moderate views enjoy the greatest support among the Word of Blake rank and file. Like Thomas, Precentor Blane has a noble, idealistic vision for his followers, and prefers leading his erring ComStar brethren gently back into the fold to exacting bloody revenge against the "heretics." If the Free Worlds League and the Word of Blake cannot be stopped from taking over the Inner Sphere in the near future, the other Houses may salvage something from the wreckage by dealing with these two men rather than less stable leaders such as Sun-Tzu Liao.

ROM Operatives

Though SAFE ostensibly works with those members of ROM who belong to Precentor Blane of Gibson's True Believer faction, the largest sub-group within the Word of Blake, more than a few Toyamas and other ultra-radicals exist among the ranks of ROM

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THE FOLLOWING IS PURPORTEDLY AN EXCERPT FROM A CLASSIFIED COMSTAR REPORT. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE DOCUMENT AND THE INFORMATION IT CONTAINS HAS NOT BEEN VERIFIED.

If guerrilla warfare is defined as perpetrating clandestine attacks on the opposition in order to wear them down, in "monkey" warfare, both sides wage a conflict of escalating, annoying pranks that, though expensive and time-consuming, cost no lives. Petty harassment of ComStar by Word of Blake members in the Free Worlds League and the Federated Commonwealth has forced our Order to retaliate in an ongoing war of one-upmanship.

As a gesture of respect for their misguided brethren, ComStar allows the Word of Blake to use the ComStar HPG network, requiring no modifications for alternate methods of transmission or additional security measures. Because ComStar holds a one-year service contract with the Free Worlds League, we also transmit through the HPG stations held by the Word of Blake. However, ComStar has only minimal control over those stations as its personnel are gradually replaced by Word of Blake technicians (as agreed in that contract), and therefore cannot guarantee that the messages sent through them will arrive at their destination unmolested. Mounting evidence suggests that Word of Blake technicians frequently tamper with ComStar message packets sent through their Class A HPGs.

For example, in June of 3054, the Draconis Combine ordered 50 Magna small pulse lasers from the Free Worlds Defense Industries, Inc. Luthien transmitted the original message via HPG, passing it through the Oriente Class A HPG station. ComStar believes, but cannot verify, that the Word of Blake technician at Oriente station changed the order before transmitting it to the Lopez HPG. When the message arrived at FWDI, the order had been expanded to 250 pulse lasers.

The company shipped the armaments, with the bill, to a shocked customer. The Combine's ambassador to ComStar rejected the overshipment, using the original message transcript as proof of the actual quantity ordered. Tracing the message through HPG stations outside the Free Worlds League, ComStar found no error. Logic dictated that an agent of the Word of Blake must have sent the altered order; lacking proof, however, ComStar had no choice but to pay for the extra stock plus legal and shipping costs.

Word of Blake technicians also delight in adding entire, unrelated messages to transmissions. Frequently, they insert recruitment information into private communiqués. ComStar internal documents bear the brunt of this abuse, often appearing at their destination padded by pages of ranting commentary from the Word of Blake renegades. Though this tampering has a fleeting impact, ComStar loses time and money when forced to re-transmit messages, sometimes several times, to ensure that at least one copy makes it through unaltered.

A more serious interception involved former Primus Myndo Waterly's body, which disappeared from Terra prior to its scheduled cremation. Primus Mori declared the theft a "morbid, callous, and heinous act against the dead." Precentor Martial Focht privately fears that the body of the former Primus may be used as a symbol of worship to enshrine Waterly as a martyr. As of this writing, no group claims responsibility for the theft, but evidence points strongly to the Word of Blake's role in the desecration.



agents. SAFE currently offers ROM its full cooperation, but even Thomas Marik accepts the wisdom of allowing the intelligence

agency to conduct covert surveillance of all ROM agents in the Free Worlds League.

Given the current state of strained tolerance between House Marik and ComStar, SAFE also gives high priority to detecting and eliminating all ComStar ROM agents currently operating within the League. Because most ROM agents abandoned ComStar to join the Word of Blake, ComStar's severely weakened intelligence organization fields far fewer agents than it once did. However, the known capabilities of all ROM operatives makes the elimination of even a few infiltrators an important objective for SAFE.

Recent rumors reported by our agents suggest that SAFE and Word of Blake ROM agents are attempting to seduce captured ComStar agents into joining the Word of Blake, rather than simply executing them. The success of these efforts could cripple ComStar's attempts to stabilize its position, first by depriving them of agents they can ill afford to lose and second by making any changes in ComStar's workings instantly available to the order's mortal enemies. Such knowledge could spell the final downfall of ComStar, paving the way for Thomas Marik to rule as both Captain-General and Primus.

MARIK-LIAO RELATIONS

From SAFE's viewpoint, the upcoming marriage of Sun-Tzu Liao to Thomas Marik's illegitimate daughter Isis, second heir to the Captain-Generalship, carries enormous risks along with its gains.

The economic power of the Free Worlds League, especially its stepped-up production of the latest BattleMech technology, has already given the Free Worlds League military a boost. The addition of Com Guard forces and the Knights of the Inner Sphere has made the League military machine stronger and more unified than at any other point in its history. Given the additional power of the Capellan military, wedded to the League by the alliance, the Liao/Marik axis could potentially take on the already troubled Federated Commonwealth. The cracks appearing between the two realms of that super-state provide the perfect weak spot for Houses Marik and Liao to exploit. With their combined forces, the Marik/Liao alliance might easily slice the Federated Commonwealth in two: urged on by Word of Blake, the allies might even attempt to take Terra before the Clans have a second chance. At least on the surface, the creation of a Marik/Liao super-state would give each nation an enormous advantage.

A closer look, however, reveals several political pitfalls for the Captain-General. The most obvious drawback is Sun-Tzu Liao, whose doubtful mental stability makes him a far greater potential threat to the Free Worlds League as an ally than as an enemy. His marriage to Isis Marik, should she inherit the Captain-Generalship, will put an apparently paranoid and certainly ruthless political manipulator one step away from control of the League. Though part of a historically emotionally unstable lineage, Sun-Tzu has shown intelligence and cunning in the marriage negotiations, as



well as displaying an uncharacteristic tolerance for the indefinite postponement of his wedding. He may believe that Thomas will not dare offend him by rescinding the offer of alliance; he may also simply be content to wait until Thomas brings all the disparate Word of Blake elements in his realm under control. The reward is certainly worth waiting for; one result of the alliance is that the League's constant production of the latest 'Mech designs will give Sun-Tzu a staggering increase in his nation's already impressive military capability, even if he fails to assume total control of the League.

The Maskirovka

A second potential trouble spot, particularly for SAFE, is the Maskirovka. The Capellan secret police is renowned throughout the Inner Sphere for the terror tactics they employ within and outside the Confederation, and the Free Worlds League has long regarded the Capellans as untrustworthy and unstable. No amount of politicking can dispel such distrust overnight. SAFE continues to regard the Maskirovka as a nasty potential enemy and is determined to closely observe its activities. Though the Maskirovka has scaled down its Free Worlds operations to basic intelligence-gathering, this apparent act of good faith has not disarmed SAFE's suspicions of the notoriously unpredictable agency. According to reports, acting on orders from Thomas Marik, SAFE has begun to subtly alter their operational structure to keep the Maskirovka guessing. The possibility that the final terms of the alliance may include combining the intelligence agencies of both states makes many SAFE operatives apprehensive.

Not the least of SAFE's worries is that merger between the two nations would give the Maskirovka easy access to SAFE's domestic intelligence network, possibly setting the stage for a Maskirovka takeover of League intelligence. Because Capellan Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao could easily decide to use the Maskirovka to attempt either a covert or overt takeover of the League, SAFE has stepped up its efforts to monitor all active Maskirovka operatives in its realm in order to forestall such a threat. Though Thomas Marik has ordered SAFE not to act openly against the Maskirovka in the interests of the alliance, he still wants his would-be son-in-law to know that SAFE has an eye on Capellan covert activities. In pursuit of this goal, SAFE has persuaded many of its Word of Blake ROM allies to operate in Marik territory near the Capellan border. By using these agents rather than SAFE operatives in those areas, SAFE hopes to convince the Capellans that the ROM agents are acting on their own behalf. Also in keeping with Thomas' directives, both the Analysis Branch and the Counterintelligence Directorate devote extensive operations to detecting and tracking the activities of the Capellan secret police.

Defense Against Liao

As an overlapping safeguard against the possibility of a Capellan takeover of the Free Worlds League, SAFE proposes an operation modeled on a traditional "stay-behind unit" strategy. This plan calls for SAFE personnel to saturate a "buffer zone" between the two states to observe Maskirovka activity within the area and send advance warning of any Capellan invasion force should Sun-Tzu Liao attempt a military coup against Thomas Marik.

Though a top-secret operation known to no one else in the Inner Sphere, Wolfnet has discovered certain data about the plan. Apparently, all Marik worlds within three jumps of the Capellan border will maintain a SAFE special operations unit supported by a Mech unit of unknown size. Upon receiving word of an impending Capellan attack, these units will relay all available information, but allow the planetary garrison to defend the world. Should the world fall to Capellan forces, the SAFE units will emerge to

organize and support the planetary resistance. Constantly wary of their ally's unpredictability and desire for power, both SAFE and the Captain-General carefully study every nuance of Sun-Tzu Liao's behavior for warning signs.

Another development that bears careful watching is Thomas Marik's recent creation of an elite order of MechWarriors from across the Free Worlds League, called the Knights of the Inner Sphere. The members of this new warrior class have broken their old loyalties and sworn personal fealty to the Marik, providing him with 150 experienced MechWarriors, in addition to the loyal men and women of the Word of Blake Militia, willing and able to fight for Thomas' noble ideals. In view of this, it is doubtful that House Marik has any connection to the mercenary units we have been unable to track; Thomas Marik certainly does not need them to beef up his own forces.

SUMMARY

Whatever form the Marik/Liao alliance finally takes, it will permanently change the balance of power in the Inner Sphere. With the Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation acting in tandem, House Liao could easily regain from the Federated Commonwealth the territories lost in the Fourth Succession War, depriving the Commonwealth of the corridor around Terra that links the Commonwealth's two member nations. The loss of this strategically vital route between the Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth, added to Skye separatist activity, Clan raids on Lyran worlds, and Victor Steiner-Davion's political difficulties with the Lyran side of his realm, would fracture the super-state. The acrimonious breakup of the Federated Commonwealth alliance can only be good news for the Clans, who will ruthlessly exploit divisions within the Inner Sphere when they renew their advance toward Terra.

Because a force mounted by the Marik/Liao union could also threaten Outreach along with the rest of the Inner Sphere, particularly if Sun-Tzu takes control of the Free Worlds League, this situation has become a top priority. Any agents with updated information should immediately transmit it through coded channels.

BRIEF HISTORY

Since ancient times nations have gathered information in order to conduct their day-to-day business. This process is especially vital in foreign affairs, where a nation's survival depends on intimate knowledge of both enemies and friends. Under the leadership of House Marik, its pre-eminent founders, the Free Worlds League developed the means to gather and analyze domestic and foreign intelligence, at first simply to survive and later as a cornerstone of its government. From the Middle Ages to the early 20th century, the Marik family ruled a mountainous Terran kingdom situated at the junction of three, and sometimes four, countries. As a result, the Mariks learned early on the politics of serving as a buffer state, and carried over the lesson to their interstellar empire. Accustomed to government as a balancing act



between disparate groups and interests, Marik leaders became and remained master politicians who used any means at their disposal, especially intelligence, to advance their agenda. Beginning with Charles Marik, founder of the Marik Commonwealth and co-founder of the Free Worlds League, these wealthy merchant princes often used blackmail and secret deals to create the Marik state and expand its power.

FORMATION OF THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

Like any politician working in a democratic system, Charles Marik was a master vote-counter. As a businessman he was no stranger to dirty tricks, willing to resort to espionage to gain advantages over his competitors. On the eve of a close vote on the Constitution that would form the Marik Commonwealth, one of Charles' spies discovered an opposition senator's involvement in questionable land deals. Using this information, Charles persuaded his opponent to join the Marik side, and the Marik Constitution passed by five votes. Thirty years later, the Marik Commonwealth became one of three founding states of the Free Worlds League, and the Marik head of state received the office of Captain-General. The new, prosperous union spent the next 20 years peacefully expanding, using networks of traveling merchants to relay information about surrounding planets. The constant movement of interplanetary trade provided the perfect cover for intelligence operations during this period, carried out by the three separate agencies belonging to the League's founding states. Eventually giving way to centralized bodies such as the NIA and SAFE, Free Worlds intelligence agencies changed considerably over the years, sometimes holding power over their leaders, at other times serving as little more than pawns in the League's complex political struggles. Through one method or another, the Free Worlds League consistently maintained its intelligence services at peak performance.

The Trade Act of 2283 provided legal approval for the services to share their resources, enabling Captain-General Juliano Marik to annex the Stewart Commonality in 2295. The Stewart War marked the first time Parliament appointed a Captain-General, and the conflict ended in total victory for the League. The Trade Act also laid the foundations for the creation of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), the League's first centralized intelligence service, in the wake of the Terran crisis in the early 24th century.

The Terran crisis of 2314-16 led Juliano Marik to find a solution to the problems caused by fragmentary information garnered from multiple intelligence services. The rise of the aggressive, expansionist Terran Hegemony under Fleet Admiral Thomas McKenna in 2314 posed a threat to League worlds lying near Terra, prompting a nervous Parliament to reappoint the Stewart War hero as Captain-General. After sifting through incomplete reports on the Hegemony from the League's various intelligence agencies, Captain-General Juliano Marik sent a special envoy to conduct clandestine negotiations with McKenna, and together they signed the secret Treaty of Terra, which preserved

the territorial integrity of Free Worlds space. Reverting to his status as a Member of Parliament after the crisis, Juliano sponsored a bill to create the National Intelligence Agency, to be overseen by the Minister of Intelligence, responsible to Parliament in peacetime and to the Captain-General during crisis. The bill passed by a narrow vote, establishing the NIA in August 2317.

POWER PLAYS

Throughout its history, events in the Free Worlds League have followed two shifting balances of power: the relative power of the MPs from each of the League's member-states, and the balance of power between Parliament and the Captain-General. The fortunes of the NIA and its successor agency, SAFE, rose and fell according to these shifts, which have sometimes favored the Captain-General and sometimes favored Parliament. In general, though not always, a powerful Parliament has checked the power of the intelligence agency, and strong Captain-Generals in turn strengthen the intelligence community. The current Captain-General, Thomas Marik, has united Parliament behind his office for the first time in the history of the Free Worlds League, putting an end to the centuries-old power struggle and setting the stage for a drastic change in SAFE's fortunes.

The first major shift in power, from Parliament to the Captain-General, came with the establishment of the Star League in 2571. This interstellar union of the Inner Sphere's feuding states owed something to the subterfuge of Albert Marik and the NIA, as well as to First Lord Ian Cameron's golden oratory and superb persuasive skill. In the Lyran Commonwealth and the Federated Suns, Albert Marik used NIA agents hidden among the ranks of Free Worlds merchants to manipulate both realms into joining the Star League, in the Commonwealth by bribing Archon Tracial Steiner's advisors and in the Suns by fomenting an economic crisis that made joining the Star League the only way to prosper. For his efforts, Albert received assurances from Cameron that the Marik Captain-General would serve as Council Lord for the Free Worlds League, a position which greatly expanded the Captain-General's power.

When the extralegal activities of the NIA erupted in scandal in 2632, Parliament took its chance to strike back. From the start, the NIA had conducted operations both within and outside the League. Outside, the NIA investigated and reported on the development of new states along the League's borders, particularly the Lyran Commonwealth, the Capellan Confederation, and the small but wealthy Duchy of Andurien. Inside the League, the NIA was charged with uncovering treason and anti-government plots. From 2588 through 2631, the NIA grew further and further beyond government control, lying more often to Parliament about its activities and even preparing a false set of accounts to fool the oversight committee. When these activities finally came to light, Parliament revoked the NIA charter and established SAFE as a replacement agency. SAFE's charter required it to receive Parliamentary approval for every domestic operation, but in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in 2668 that nearly wiped out the entire Marik family, Parliament gave SAFE virtual carte blanche to find

the killers. Having surrendered its control over the agency, Parliament found it impossible to regain its power. The next two Captain-Generals reacted to the continuing threat of terrorist activity by expanding the powers of SAFE, making the Free Worlds League a virtual police state. It took a civil war to shift the balance of power back to the Free Worlds Parliament.

Parliament did not regain its former position until 2734, when, after thirty years of civil war caused by the paranoia of Elise Marik, her rebel brother Oliver Marik and her loyalist son Bertram negotiated an end to the conflict. As the new Captain-General, Bertram Marik reconvened Parliament and restored many of its legal prerogatives. A year later, Bertram passed the Intelligence Act of 2735, cutting back SAFE's budget and manpower and focusing its operations toward gathering foreign intelligence rather than spying on the citizens of the Free Worlds League. Both these acts of good faith fulfilled terms of the negotiated peace, and marked Bertram Marik as one of the few Captain-Generals who took power from SAFE and gave it to Parliament, instead of the other way around.

SUCCESSION WARS

The swing of the power pendulum toward Parliament did not last long. In 2779, as the dying Star League's former member-states girded for war, Captain-General Kenyon Marik pushed an inexperienced and easily panicked Parliament into passing two pieces of legislation that marked a major change in the government of the Free Worlds League. The first of these, the Security Act, gave control of the few remaining independent military intelligence operations to SAFE, further adding to that agency's power and giving Kenyon an even more solid base with which to wage the First Succession War. The second bill, Resolution 288, turned the government of the League on its head by granting the Captain-General discretionary authority over the realm, including the authority to summon or disband Parliament for "the duration of the crisis." Instead of Parliament appointing and dismissing the Captain-General, the military leader of the Free Worlds League now had the legal power to dissolve his political opposition at will. The passage of Resolution 288 and the final consolidation of SAFE's powers marked the first step on the League's road from a Balkanized confederation of squabbling states to a powerful, unified nation under the authority of the Captain-General.

As always throughout League history, expansion of the Captain-General's power produced a backlash. The First and Second Succession Wars, combined with the ComStar War of the 2830s, drastically reduced the power of the Captain-General and SAFE. Shattered by the brutal, exhausting First Succession War, SAFE failed to provide Captain-General Charles Marik with the intelligence he needed to defend the League against its enemies. Having suborned Charles' sister Jeanette, a ComStar adept, the order used her to feed Charles a combination of true and false intelligence throughout the Second Succession War with the ultimate aim of making the League a ComStar puppet state. Charles confirmed his suspicions of ComStar's double game in 2837. He retaliated for the deception by destroying ComStar's

HPG installation on Oriente, precipitating the so-called ComStar War, when ComStar imposed a crippling communications interdiction against the Free Worlds League. The disastrous outcome of that action reduced the Captain-General's political capital to almost nothing. Led by a lame-duck Captain-General and receiving little funding or support from Parliament, SAFE did not regain its strength until Elisabeth Marik patched up relations with Parliament in the 2880s.

Over the centuries, Parliament made several attempts to regain the power it had lost through Resolution 288. Though it made considerable progress toward this goal by passing the Home Defense Act in the early 30th century, giving members of Parliament the right to station major contingents of troops within their home provinces at will, Free Worlds government continued to develop toward centralized control under the Captain-General. Squabbling between Parliament and the Captain-General throughout the 30th century slowed the trend toward centralization by factionalizing both the government and SAFE, until the accession of Janos Marik to power in 2991. Under Janos, the shifts in power between the disparate elements of the Marik government began to lessen, particularly after the outbreak of a civil war between Janos and his younger brother Anton graphically demonstrated to Parliament the need for a stable, central authority. The war, ironically, eliminated much of the factionalism within SAFE: most intelligence personnel threw their support solidly behind their Captain-General. Janos used this new unity to increase the scope of SAFE's activities.

JANOS MARIK

Like so many of his predecessors, up until the civil war Janos Marik had used SAFE for foreign rather than domestic intelligence. After so many decades of turning away from domestic issues, SAFE failed to recognize the treasonous intentions of the Captain-General's brother Anton, Duke of Procyon. The sudden mutiny of a portion of the Free Worlds military and the rebellion of a dozen worlds caught both SAFE and the Captain-General by surprise. Janos immediately asked Parliament to amend the Intelligence Act of 2735 to allow SAFE to seek out treason among the Free Worlds League population. A shrewd political bargainer, Janos made it clear to Parliament that SAFE currently answered to him, and that its agents would seek out and arrest traitors with or without the legal right to do so. Reluctant to accept the prospect of a protracted civil war, Parliament gave Janos his amendment, though it insisted on retaining the right to an ex post facto review of SAFE's domestic and foreign activity. Janos won the civil war, but it left him a bitter and suspicious man, prone to constantly looking over his shoulder for the next rebel or assassin.

The secession of the Duchy of Andurien in 3030 prompted yet another consolidation of power into the hands of the Captain-General. The poor performance of the Free Worlds League military during the Fourth Succession War had left Janos Marik in a precarious political position, with his many opponents in the League Parliament drafting legislation aimed at either removing him or reducing his powers. The secession crisis allowed the



embattled Captain-General to seize the initiative and weaken his opposition by equating Parliament's "unpatriotic" behavior with the Andurien defection, and to force passage of the Internal Emergency Act, stripping the League's member states of most of their sovereignty for the duration of the emergency. Like Resolution 288 before it, the Emergency Act empowered the Captain-General to decide what constituted a crisis and when it had passed.

Less than a month after the Act's passage, Janos Marik suffered a life-threatening stroke. Janos' eldest son Duggan and his nephew Duncan immediately vied for control of the League, once again splitting SAFE into opposing factions. They ceased their political games only when Thomas Marik appeared before Parliament in 3031 with documents proving his status as Heir-Designate. Parliament accepted him, temporarily ending the power struggle, but Janos' unexpected full recovery from the stroke forced the unscrupulous Duncan Marik to take drastic action. Possibly aided by elements of SAFE that supported his claim to leadership, Duncan arranged for a bomb to go off during a high-level strategy session called by Janos on June 1, 3035. The explosion killed Janos, Duggan, and apparently Thomas Marik. Only Duncan survived, having been called away from the room minutes before the blast. A quick investigation blamed Andurien agents for the killing. Duncan assumed the Captain-Generalship and immediately declared war on the secessionist duchy.

Unknown to Duncan, SAFE, and everyone else in the Free Worlds League, Thomas Marik had not died in the explosion. A ROM agent masquerading as a palace guard dragged the badly injured Thomas from the burning room and spirited him away to a ComStar hospital on Terra, where he spent the next eighteen months recovering and pondering the reason for his miraculous survival. A mystic by nature and devoted to the vision of ComStar's founder, Jerome Blake, Thomas came to believe himself destined to transform the Free Worlds League into an instrument of the Blessed Blake's divine will. Thomas would make the League a beacon of righteousness, lighting the way to the salvation of mankind. On December 5, 3036, Thomas Marik appeared before a stunned Parliament, most of whom joyfully supported him as the true Captain-General of the Free Worlds League. Thomas' apparent resurrection spawned yet another faction within SAFE, as many agents switched their loyalties to the new Captain-General.

COMSTAR'S CAPTAIN-GENERAL

Immediately upon his accession, Thomas took several historic steps to end the power struggles endemic to the Free Worlds League. He used the shock of his reappearance to pass the Addendum to the Document of Incorporation, giving him power to govern without Parliament's approval and eliminating the Home Defense Act that had paralyzed the League military for so long. He stimulated the economy with various programs and reawakened the desire of many citizens to become actively involved in the politics of the Inner Sphere. Charming, persuasive, and committed to his vision, Thomas won the backing of many older politi-

cians in Parliament despite their differing personal interests and regional prejudices. With strong support from his people and Parliament behind him, Thomas gradually and finally eclipsed the political strength of the few older provincial leaders still secretly yearning for the power they and their realms had lost.

From 3036 through 3052, the order of ComStar served as Thomas Marik's most important ally. Committed to the interpretation of Blake's will that he had learned as a ComStar adept and believed all his life, Marik saw eye to eye with Myndo-Waterly, the last Primus of a united ComStar. He allowed her to base Com Guard units in his realm, and in return Primus Waterly allowed SAFE access to carefully selected sensitive data from the intelligence agencies of the other Successor States. Because Thomas alone of all the Successor Lords complied in 3052 with Waterly's Operation Scorpion, a failed attempt by ComStar to take control of the Inner Sphere by cutting off its communications, Free Worlds League HPGs suffered no damage from fighting between resistors and ROM agents.

The failure of Scorpion provoked a schism in ComStar between Waterly loyalists and reformers, and Thomas Marik provided a haven in the Free Worlds League for those members of ComStar who could not accept the change in their beloved order. This conservative splinter faction, which calls itself the Word of Blake, includes more than two-thirds of the operatives from ROM, ComStar's efficient and deadly secret service. Marik has granted the Word of Blake a landhold on the world of Gibson, and all of its members have sworn personal loyalty to Thomas. The Word of Blake proclaims Thomas Marik as Primus-in-exile, though he apparently has yet to accept this nomination.

The invasion of the Clans in 3049 also worked in Thomas' favor. The Free Worlds League lies far from the path of the Clan military juggernaut, and so far its worlds have remained untouched. Battered by the Clans' superior military might, the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine desperately need Free Worlds' Mech factories to churn out ever-greater numbers of weapons, resulting in a Free Worlds economic boom even as rival realms have suffered the ravages of the Clan war. The fifteen-year breathing space created by the Truce of Tukayyid, signed between ComStar and the Clans when the Com Guards beat Clan forces to a standstill on that world, has provided Thomas with a unique opportunity to exploit the internal divisions and sheer exhaustion of other states with a strength and unity his nation has never before possessed.

NEW ALLIANCES

Over the past 20 years, this introspective disciple of ComStar has become the cool and confident leader of a resurgent realm. Committed to his vision of Free Worlds ascendancy according to the will of Blake, he has taken steps toward fulfilling that sacred mission by allying himself with House Liao and creating the Knights of the Inner Sphere. These MechWarriors from across the Free Worlds League who have joined this new, elite warrior class broke their old loyalties and swore personal fealty to Thomas Marik, providing him with an experienced force of MechWarriors

determined to fight to achieve Thomas' goals.

The alliance with the Capellan Confederation, by contrast, poses nearly as many risks as gains. Judging by all appearances, Thomas agreed to the alliance only as a visible counter to the enormous power of the Federated Commonwealth, not because he saw it as the best direction to achieve the goals of his realm. We have no information indicating the form this alliance will eventually take—it may consist of a loose arrangement of convenience cemented by a marriage of state, or develop as a complete union similar to that of the Federated Commonwealth. Either possibility will greatly influence the course of events in the Inner Sphere, and therefore bears watching. Thomas already has postponed the marriage of his daughter Isis to Capellan Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao more than once, most recently citing the upheaval in his realm caused by the arrival of the Word of Blake refugees as the reason. He clearly fears that should Isis ascend the throne with the warmongering Sun-Tzu at her side, the Capellan Chancellor will use his considerable political ruthlessness to take over the League. Marik sees Sun-Tzu as an emotional powder keg with a flexible conscience, likely to add the League's strength to his own realm's and plunge the Inner Sphere back into war. Self-conscious about her illegitimacy, Isis Marik appears to be attracted to Sun-Tzu for his power and the trappings of the Liao state. She is convinced that the marriage will give her control of Sun-Tzu and consolidate the Free Worlds League with his realm, thereby increasing the

power of her House. Thomas Marik's vision of events following the marriage is the more probable.

The Word of Blake's presence in his realm affords Thomas Marik certain advantages. He enjoys the personal loyalty of all Word of Blake members, and the Com Guards who defected from ComStar make a welcome addition to his armed forces. Further, the services of Word of Blake ROM agents may provide Thomas Marik with a way of bypassing the one problem in his government with the greatest potential for adversely affecting his grand design; disruptive activities by dissident factions within SAFE.

Though hailed as a virtual savior by many in Parliament upon his return, Thomas Marik could not claim the loyalty of all MPs, nor of those elements in SAFE dependent on the backing of MPs whose loyalty lay elsewhere. Duncan's death in battle in 3037 removed one potential source of rebellion, but even Thomas doubted his ability to turn all of SAFE's fractured loyalties into unquestioning, personal support. The Word of Blake ROM provides Thomas with the perfect substitute for SAFE should that agency prove unreliable. We believe that ROM is using SAFE's information network to establish itself in the Free Worlds League and to learn all it can about the League's workings. Once its agents have completed their investigations, Thomas can use both SAFE and the Word of Blake ROM with equal efficiency to carry out his objectives, ensuring that no power in the Free Worlds League—or in the Inner Sphere—will be able to stand against him.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 56431-CC3-8/12/21

THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM *CROSSED SWORDS*, BY ERNA KOCHKHOV, RAHNE PUBLISHING, 3021.

Maximilian Liao, in the guise of a free trader, arrived at Kashmir Arcology on Terra on a September day filled with monsoon rains so fierce that they nearly precluded the shuttle landing. It was not the Chancellor's first visit to the world, or the mountain city-complex, but it would doubtless be his most memorable one.

He came in the company of Jaime Wolf, the commander of the justifiably famous mercenary unit, Wolf's Dragoons. In the past few years, the Dragoons had become the scourge of the Capellan front, to the point that the Captain-General of the Free Worlds was hard pressed to coerce his battle-weary troops to enter into combat with them. Wolf was an imposing, almost frightening figure, and it would have been easy for anyone to notice that he was no trader. Still, the Maskirovka, the highly efficient intelligence service of the Capellan Confederation, had been most thorough in distracting the overworked and underpaid minions of SAFE from the events about to take place in the Himalayas.

Shortly after the Chancellor had settled himself in the penthouse suite of the Arcology, he made a vidphone call to the offices of an import-export house in the shadow of Buenos Aires Starport. It consisted of a few innocuous words: "I have come to the bank of the Rubicon." He who received the message arrived less than six hours later on a private passenger liner. He boarded a stratospheric commuter jet within an hour of making planetfall, and shortly arrived at the Liao penthouse.

The interview was short and to the point. Troop dispositions and bribing local governments were discussed. Nothing was signed, or committed to tape; nothing of this sort ever is. Just as he had arrived first, Maximilian Liao departed first, bound for his own capital of Sian, to make the appropriate arrangements.

Jaime Wolf departed with his new employer, carrying a signed mercenary contract in his vest-pocket. After three years of near-inactivity, he would finally be able to put his troops in the field, with all of the Free Worlds as possible booty.



COMMAND STRUCTURE

The difficulty of documenting the workings of the Free Worlds League intelligence community is, paradoxically, rooted in the very openness of the society. The Capellan Confederation, for example, functions as a police state that offers us few sources of information. Consequently, any leak in their intelligence provides a fountain of useful information. In a diverse, loosely knit confederation such as the Free Worlds League, though the sources of information are legion, only a trickle flows from any one source. The following sections of this report synthesize the information transmitted to us by our agents in all parts of the Free Worlds League, forming as complete a picture as possible of the inner workings of SAFE. We also included the minimal hard data we possess on the activities of the Word of Blake ROM, an important aspect of League intelligence given Captain-General Thomas Marik's increasing reliance on ROM operatives for sensitive missions.

First and always, the movers and shakers in the Free Worlds League shared a mercantile outlook. In the course of its history, whether led by diplomats, generals, or adventurers, the League's objectives remained the same: to open new markets and extend their economic influence. Though these motivations sometimes disappeared in the desire to crush the Lyran Commonwealth or thwart Terran imperialism, for example, an event or a leader always brought the League back to its true path. Free Worlds League intelligence agencies have always reflected these goals, from the first trading networks to the NIA and SAFE.

First conceived primarily as an internal intelligence service to help coordinate events between the several member states, SAFE took over military intelligence during the reign of Captain-General Kenyon Marik, who amalgamated the military's intelligence-gathering units under SAFE's umbrella in order to more effectively fight the First Succession War. Because of its initial civilian orientation, SAFE works differently from the more militarily-oriented services operating within the Inner Sphere. The Captain-General acts as the high command for the agency, serving as its de facto executive director. Immediately below the Captain-General in authority is the Minister of Intelligence, an MP to whom the Director of SAFE reports in peacetime. In times of crisis, SAFE reports directly to the Captain-General, bypassing Parliamentary control. The ongoing state of war or near-war in the Inner Sphere has meant that in practice, Parliament and its Minister of Intelligence have no say in SAFE's policies or operations, despite their legal right to ex post facto review stipulated by the revised Intelligence Act.

As head of the intelligence agency, the Captain-General primarily works with the Director of SAFE. As the service's chief executive officer, the Director implements all decisions and policy changes dictated by the Captain-General. Under the terms of the Sedition Act, SAFE need not report to Parliament any activities that the Captain-General designates as vital to the security of the Free Worlds League. This Act allows the Director of SAFE to

bypass the Minister of Intelligence, thus eluding Parliamentary review of the service when necessary. Stationed at the SAFE headquarters on Atreus unless ordered elsewhere by the Captain-General, the Director oversees all operations and ensures that any operatives acting outside the current terms of the Intelligence Act are dealt with appropriately. As part of Parliament's review of SAFE activities, the Minister of Intelligence is always present during any SAFE operative's court-martial and in certain cases may veto the verdict. The Minister retains almost no other powers; in all other respects, Thomas Marik's legal changes have reduced the Minister of Intelligence to a figurehead.

Reporting to the overall Director, various Regional Directors oversee and implement intelligence operations within the provinces and principalities of the Free Worlds League. The actual power and influence wielded by any given Regional Director varies, depending on the area of that Director's jurisdiction. Subtle jockeying for power between regions has sparked internal squabbling within SAFE on more than one occasion, and still poses a problem of sorts for the current Captain-General.

The Regional Directors, each stationed on the capital world of his or her assigned region, implement all policies as dictated by the Director of SAFE. Regional Directors hold local jurisdiction over all three branches of SAFE, and assign new operations and monitor current activities within that jurisdiction.

Each planet within the Free Worlds League whose population exceeds one hundred thousand supports a Planetary Director for each branch of the intelligence service. The three Planetary Directors for each world implement the orders and assignments dictated by the Regional Directors, to whom they answer for all operations that take place on their worlds. In any situation where internal monitoring procedures determine that legal proceedings should be taken against one Planetary Director, all three are held responsible for any illegal activities that took place.

Reporting to the Planetary Directors are the Operations Teams, consisting of the agents who carry out the missions. These teams, usually composed of two to six operatives, normally work within a single region of the League, carrying out assignments issued to them by Planetary or Regional Directors. Each region creates and supports a specified number of Operations Teams, whom it can call upon at a moment's notice to carry out an assignment.

As did each of its rival organizations, SAFE acquired enormously improved communications in the aftermath of Operation Scorpion and the resulting ComStar schism. During Operation Scorpion, ex-Primus Myndo Waterly's failed attempt to take over the Inner Sphere for ComStar through a Sphere-wide communications interdiction, the Lords of the various Successor States defied ComStar and sent troops to guard the HPGs in their respective realms against shutdown or sabotage by ROM agents. Thomas Marik, as a former ComStar Precentor, was the only Successor Lord to comply with the interdiction, and so the hyperpulse generators in his realm suffered no damage from fighting within the stations. In the subsequent split between ComStar reformers and reactionaries, the conservative Word of

Blake faction fled to sanctuary in the Free Worlds League and offered their services to Thomas Marik. Word of Blake technicians, working for the Free Worlds League, now operate the League's HPG network and provide SAFE with fast, secure communications across the entire state. Unlike other Inner Sphere intelligence agencies, SAFE enjoys the luxury of using the network to transmit gathered intelligence and mission briefs without fear of interception by enemy services.

The Word of Blake's complete control over the League's HPG network, and thus SAFE's unrestricted access to it, ends at the League border, but Word of Blake infiltrators in HPG stations operated by ComStar for other realms provide SAFE with a patchy communications network in foreign territory. Few ComStar technicians or ComStar ROM agents have managed to infiltrate the Free Worlds League, and because Inner Sphere intelligence agencies rely to some degree on contacts within ComStar for certain up-to-date information, Captain-General Thomas Marik's activities and plans remain very much a mystery.



SAFE BRANCHES

Currently, three branches of SAFE carry out the organization's intelligence activities: the Analysis Branch, the Covert Operations Branch, and the Counterintelligence Directorate. Though directly responsible to the Director of SAFE and ultimately to the Captain-General, each branch enjoys considerable independence in implementing operations. Historically, the degree of this independence varied from year to year, depending upon exactly how acrimonious was the current relationship between the Captain-General and the Free Worlds Parliament. Beginning with Janos Marik's successful repeal of the Intelligence Act's most restrictive provisions during the Marik Civil War and bolstered by Thomas Marik's extraordinary ability to win nearly unanimous Parliamentary backing, the problem of a divided government no longer troubles SAFE for the first time in Free Worlds League history. The agency's three branches operate on most League worlds with an unexpected degree of cooperation from local governments, though officials of the Principality of Regulus continue to create minor, petty problems with the few powers that Thomas Marik's legislative changes have left them.



ANALYSIS BRANCH

The largest of SAFE's three departments, the Analysis Branch receives the greatest percentage of the service's budget to help it fulfill its enormous and complex role. Divided into two sub-branches, the Analysis Branch has the unenviable task of collecting and analyzing all data and communications entering or leaving the Free Worlds League.

Information Gathering

The first sub-branch, Information Gathering, maintains operatives on every League world. These agents collect data from all potential information sources, including public and private video, text, and other communications. They operate in all media broadcasting and network facilities within the League, and also maintain listening stations on the League's borders. Their first priority is to collect all data of potential value to the League as a whole, especially information concerning enemy troop movements and the activities of enemy agents within the League. They also closely monitor the activities of the League's few anti-Marik factions. Acting on the instructions of the Captain-General, SAFE began sharing its information-gathering network and collected data with the Word of Blake ROM as soon as Thomas Marik recognized the ComStar splinter organization by granting them sanctuary in his realm. Though the organization's administration gives its full support to the Marik's decision, some lower-echelon directors and many individual agents do not agree with their high command. All gathered information eventually reaches the ROM organization as directed, but those SAFE members who recognize the potential for their rival to take their place make every effort to delay transmission to ROM as long as possible (usually until the information is no longer important).

The covert intelligence war being waged between the Word of Blake and the reformed order of ComStar may cause problems for House Marik. Preoccupied with rebuilding its shattered organization and unable so far to infiltrate many agents into the Word of Blake ROM, ComStar poses little immediate threat. As the order regains its strength, however, we expect it to focus its energies on destroying the Word of Blake, to the probable detriment of the Free Worlds League. In turn, the Word of Blake ROM's preoccupation with destroying the "heretic" ComStar already places heavy demands on the time and energy of Word of Blake personnel that Thomas Marik wishes to use. Mindful of ComStar's potential threat, SAFE and the Word of Blake ROM are keeping the Captain-General up to date on the movements of ComStar operatives in all Inner Sphere states and the order's sizable contingent of the Com Guard.



Active Analysis

The second Analysis Branch sub-branch, Active Analysis, analyzes the data gathered by the Information Gathering department to create an accurate and current picture of the activities of all groups hostile to the Free Worlds League. Active Analysis maintains offices throughout the League, where operatives scrutinize and assimilate information, creating daily reports which are sent to SAFE's primary computer banks on Atreus. The command section of the Analysis Branch then organizes all field reports into a comprehensive format. The Analysis Branch reads and analyzes the final reports, draws its conclusions, then recommends a course of action to the Captain-General.

Of the three SAFE branches, the Analysis Branch's reputation marks it as the most efficient and reliable. Historically in the Free Worlds, during those periods when a much stronger version of the Intelligence Act restricted SAFE to little more than information-gathering and analysis, the Analysis Branch frequently found itself SAFE's only working department. The relative lack of political disruption the Analysis Branch experienced compared to its sister branches allowed it to concentrate on refining its techniques rather than rebuilding the department from the ground up every time the political wind changed. Thomas Marik's accession to the Captain-Generalship has nearly ended the historic power struggle within the League government, and may signal better days for all of SAFE.



COVERT OPERATIONS

Covert Operations agents carry out missions both inside the Free Worlds League and within the other Successor States, ranging from assisting the Analysis Branch in infiltrating high-security installations to assassination and sabotage attempts. In past eras, fearing SAFE excesses in carrying out covert operations against the Captain-General's domestic opponents, Parliament frequently used its legal authority and control over the agency's purse strings to drastically scale back the Covert Operations Branch. Thomas Marik's administration allows this department a much freer hand.

In addition to domestic clandestine operations, the Covert Operations Branch funds terrorist activity in the other Successor States. Though this type of operation violates the restrictions on covert missions laid down by Parliament, this branch largely ignores those restrictions it finds inconvenient. The steady erosion of Parliament's power under Captain-General Janos Marik and his successor, Thomas Marik, has left SAFE's operations almost completely under the control of the Captain-General.

Our agents in the Free Worlds League suggest that the Covert Operations Branch maintains an elite special forces team, known only as the Eagle Corps. This unit, thought to comprise only three companies of commandos, reportedly receives the best training and equipment the League has to offer. The unit answers directly to the Captain-General, and the Free Worlds Parliament apparently does not suspect the Corps' existence.

Though Wolfnet recently discovered that the Eagle Corps headquarters are located on Atreus' moon, solid information on the training and indoctrination of its members remains in scarce supply. Our operatives have, however, identified the man who we believe commands the Eagle Corps: General Michael Kallenberg, a veteran MechWarrior and one of Thomas Marik's inner circle of military advisors. Rumors within SAFE's ranks indicate that the Eagle Corps may be working hand-in-glove with covert operations specialists from the Word of Blake ROM on select missions. If true, the ROM agents' well-honed and disciplined talents will make the Eagle Corps an even more dangerous group.



COUNTERINTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE

The historical instability of Free Worlds League politics created a need for SAFE to maintain an active counterintelligence division. Though the Counterintelligence Directorate, like the Covert Operations Branch, has frequently suffered from checks imposed by Parliament, the unprecedented power Captain-General Thomas Marik wields over the Free Worlds League government has largely ended political problems for this department, though some internal divisions may remain.

Despite Thomas Marik's tightening political control, which eliminates a source of dissent easily exploited by enemy agents, the extraordinary openness of Free Worlds society itself allows the agents of the other Successor States to infiltrate the realm quite readily. And even Thomas Marik's radical changes have failed to completely quench his political rivals. Though Thomas' accession to power has greatly reduced the number of warring factions within the nation, opposition to the Marik regime still exists for foreign agents to take advantage of, most notably in the Principality of Regulus. Stripped of much of their sovereignty by Thomas' legislative changes, but resenting it more passionately than other leaders in the realm, the Princes of Regulus continue to resort to covert attempts to curb Marik power. Our agents hint that the ruling Cameron-Jones family of Regulus may have a faction of SAFE in its pay, a situation that, if true, may push Thomas Marik to more quickly transfer control of his intelligence operations to Word of Blake ROM. Because the Word of Blake

regards Thomas Marik as ComStar's Primus-in-exile, they devote their incorruptible personal loyalty to him, whereas SAFE serves the League as much as its leader.

Aware that enemy agents may operate anywhere in their open realm, SAFE devotes a great deal of time and effort to detecting and eliminating anti-Marik infiltrators. Currently, counterintelligence officers operate on every world within the League as well as within most military regiments stationed near its borders. Counterintelligence operatives also act as security agents for the Marik family and as military police within the Free Worlds League Military. To a greater extent than at any time in Free Worlds history, counterintelligence agents monitor their assigned units for signs of enemy infiltration or anti-Marik sentiments. Having spent his entire reign building his historically fractured realm into a strong, politically unified state, Thomas Marik does not intend to allow a lack of vigilance to destroy his work.

Though the Counterintelligence Directorate has been accused several times in its history of brutality, and once or twice of using torture, no evidence of such activity has ever come to light. Interestingly enough, though the Directorate on many past occasions clearly disregarded the restrictions placed upon it by Parliament, no MP has ever challenged its actions. In the years since the Marik Civil War, Parliament debated several times whether or not to reinstate the constraints of the Intelligence Act, but the number of anti-government plots uncovered by SAFE in that period placed public opinion squarely behind then-Captain-General Janos Marik. Because Thomas' popularity won over many MPs who might once have opposed him, even fewer voices now exist within the Free Worlds League government to demand investigation into or curtailment of the Counterintelligence Directorate's activities.

In general, the members of counterintelligence have little contact with the operatives of the other two branches. The Director of SAFE prefers to focus his agents' attention on seeking out enemy infiltrators rather than investigating fellow SAFE operatives. While this attitude may seem strange to more structured agencies, the current low level of internal dissension within SAFE allows the branch to concentrate on exposing and disposing of external enemies. Those few dissident factions that may still exist pose no immediate threat to the security of SAFE or the League.

The alliance with the Capellan Confederation presents certain difficulties for counterintelligence. At the Captain-General's request, the branch scaled back their operations against the Maskirovka, the Capellan intelligence agency, though SAFE continues to monitor Capellan activities in both realms. Historically, no Successor State trusts the Capellans any farther than it can throw them, and an alliance arranged between their leaders in no way diminishes SAFE agents' mistrust of the Maskirovka. Our agents in SAFE report no actions against that agency by the Maskirovka, a situation that shows unusual restraint on the part of the normally aggressive Chancellor. Capellan Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao appears to be confining the Maskirovka's activities to gathering information about the Free Worlds League. His curtailment of destructive or disruptive missions against the League appears to be simply a natural reaction for one who may be the

realm's next leader. Though the Word of Blake and SAFE currently share facilities and information, if not missions, even Thomas Marik does not expect the League intelligence agency to cooperate with the Maskirovka until the alliance is finalized by the marriage between Isis Marik and Chancellor Liao. In fact, given the Marik's reluctance to cement the agreement between the realms, a continued state of guarded observation between the two agencies seems both inevitable and desirable.

The Counterintelligence Directorate's current domestic priority is keeping an eye on the Word of Blake, the splinter faction of ComStar based in the Gibson system of the Free Worlds League. The Word of Blake ROM has freely allied itself with SAFE, placing its considerable services at the disposal of Thomas Marik and the League. However, because the Word of Blake itself is divided into factions, SAFE's counterintelligence branch deems it necessary to spend considerable time and energy investigating each faction's true intentions and whether any faction's activities or plans present possible danger to the League.

Despite ComStar's present weakened condition and a drastic loss of its own intelligence personnel to Word of Blake ROM, the order still possesses the resources to attempt to infiltrate both the Free Worlds League and Word of Blake. In addition, enemy operatives from any other Successor State hidden within the Word of Blake stand in an ideal position to act against the League. To better defend against infiltration via the Word of Blake (made relatively easy by the confusion resulting from the torrent of refugees fleeing ComStar), the Counterintelligence Directorate serves as the liaison between the Word of Blake and the Free Worlds government.

HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING

At the insistence of the Parliament that long ago founded SAFE, all of the agency's training and command centers were built within the Atreus system. Subsequent Captain-Generals found this location convenient, and SAFE's headquarters and facilities remain on or near the League's capital planet.

The SAFE headquarters, known as the Citadel, lies within the forests thirty kilometers from Atreus City. This concrete and steel, mock-medieval castle complex serves as the nerve center for the entire SAFE organization. Eight bunkers surround the vast castle, each bunker five kilometers from the complex and connected to it by maglev cars and access tunnels huge enough to accommodate BattleMechs. Each bunker contains naval weapons for anti-vessel fireholds and a battalion of SAFE MechWarriors and pilots, all of whom use the most recent 'Mechs produced by the League's factories. Currently using designs provided by the Word of Blake Militia, SAFE boasts better BattleMech defenses than any other House intelligence agency. The bunkers serve as a ring defense around the Citadel, which itself is defended by an additional 'Mech regiment and a vast array of anti-aircraft and anti-Mech weapons.

Two maglev tunnels offer the only access to the Citadel. According to our agents, one of these leads directly to the Captain-General's summer residence and the other to a secure, mini-



spaceport built specifically to move essential personnel on and off Atreus. Within the Citadel, Analysis Branch personnel use the latest in holographic displays and computer logistics tests to simulate enemy actions and project enemy movements. Though we cannot confirm this information, speculation from field agents suggests that SAFE operates technological laboratories within the Citadel, which provide their operatives with unique equipment unavailable to other intelligence services. Our agents have not yet discovered any hard evidence proving the existence of these laboratories.

SAFE's elite Eagle Corps strike force bases their command center on Wendigo, Atreus's only moon, a lifeless and forbidding environment similar to the Terran moon's airless rock. The high-security base, known as "The Eyrie," hides beneath the peak of a long-dead volcano. Several defensive-weapons structures crown the volcano's ridge and the Eagle Corps spaceport lies in the depths of the volcano's crater. The Corps-owned DropShips and several JumpShips enter and exit the system using pirate points. The only known base of the Eagle Corps, the Eyrie serves as both command center and training college. The vacuum outside the complex provides this top-secret installation with the ultimate defense against infiltrators or deserters.

SAFE operates its own training institute on Atreus, the Atreus Intelligence Commission. The AIC occupies an island in the freezing ocean that covers the planet's north pole. A restricted, nearly self-sufficient environment, the AIC provides its candidates with all necessary resources and requirements, shipping some in via a system of VTOL cargo aircraft that regularly cross the arctic sea to the island.

Our agents have so far failed to penetrate the high level of security surrounding the AIC, and its remote location poses unique problems for infiltration. From what little we know concerning the training of SAFE operatives, AIC training takes four years, during which no candidate may contact the outside world. Until they have qualified as operatives, SAFE agents-in-training remain isolated on the AIC's polar island.

Unlike the other secret services, SAFE does not enroll experienced agents into refresher courses throughout their careers. Apparently, apart from basic training, SAFE prefers its operatives to learn on the job. Though such a method has its risks, it is common wisdom that experience in the field teaches lessons that no training course can provide. SAFE chooses to bear this risk as the price for obtaining the exceptionally talented agents who survive.

In addition to guarding their command centers outside the capital city, both the Eagle Corps and SAFE's Covert Operations Branch assign units consisting of their finest operatives as personal guards to the Marik family. Stationed within the Marik household on the world of the same name, these units have prevented several assassination attempts within their jurisdiction. Captain-General Thomas Marik recently added members of the Knights of the Inner Sphere to his personal guard.

STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES

The greatest single weakness that throughout history affected the performance of SAFE, the political power struggle between the Captain-General and the Free Worlds Parliament, has all but ceased to exist under the leadership of the current Captain-General. SAFE, once prevented from operating effectively by the Intelligence Act and other legal limits passed by Parliament, now functions as the strong arm of a Captain-General who successfully consolidated political and legal power in his office and his person to an extent never believed possible. The Addendum to the Incorporation and other legislation passed by Thomas Marik and his predecessor, Janos, robbed Parliament of much of its power to obstruct the agenda of the Captain-General's office, giving the League's leader and SAFE a freer hand to act than at any other period in the League's history. Only a small, relatively powerless remnant within the League and SAFE still opposes the Marik's plans and procedures.

The recent influx of crack ROM intelligence agents, all personally loyal to Thomas Marik, has greatly enhanced the League's intelligence capabilities while possibly threatening SAFE's continued existence. Virtually unequaled in the Inner Sphere for ruthlessness and ability, the Word of Blake ROM operatives have allied themselves with Thomas Marik, whom they regard as the true ComStar's Primus. Our agents report that he has already begun to use ROM agents for missions that, until recently, appeared to lie exclusively in the province of SAFE.

According to reports received by Wolfnet, the Word of Blake ROM currently is working closely with SAFE, and indications exist that it may intend to extend its reach throughout SAFE's entire intelligence network. Though Thomas Marik might consider disbanding SAFE in favor of ROM's unquestioningly loyal service, we expect he will maintain both organizations to bolster his power. On the other hand, Thomas may simply view the Word of Blake as an effective way to help control Chancellor Liao, in the event that the ambitious Capellan leader becomes his son-in-law, without sacrificing SAFE. However, the Word of Blake ROM's obsession with destroying ComStar may make them less effective than Thomas might wish, unless he can convince them that the ascendance of the Free Worlds League in the Inner Sphere is the best path to eclipse the "heretic" order.

The Free Worlds League remained untouched by the Clan war machine that ravaged the Inner Sphere beginning with the invasion of Rasalhague in 3049 and ending with the Com Guards' epic battle against the Clan enemy on Tukayyid in 3052. Already experiencing an economic boom as a result of supplying other Inner Sphere armies with 'Mechs during the Clan war, and because this demand kept their production facilities running at full force, the League could take maximum advantage of the cutting-edge BattleMech technology the defecting Com Guards pledged to Thomas Marik's use. SAFE has access to a second technological strength; the League's widespread HPG network, manned by Word of Blake technicians whose loyalty to their benefactor Thomas Marik makes them eager to assist SAFE in any way they can.

The alliance with the Capellan Confederation makes Thomas Marik most vulnerable at the moment, and poses the major threat to SAFE. Capella, under the leadership of the volatile Sun-Tzu Liao, makes a dangerous enemy and a dangerous friend, and the Marik/Liao alliance may not be as smooth as it appears on the surface. For example, the fact that Thomas has postponed the marriage between Sun-Tzu and Isis Marik may mean he suspects that his son-in-law may try to take over the League, given the chance. The Captain-General continues to hope that his ailing son and heir, Joshua, will recover and thus block any power grab Sun-Tzu plans. SAFE's administrators recognize the potential disaster the alliance represents for their agency: if the Maskirovka suborns enough SAFE operatives, the Capellans could immediately take over League intelligence when the alliance becomes final.

SAFE's leadership finds only slight reassurance in the existence of the Knights of the Inner Sphere, the elite MechWarrior force personally loyal to Thomas Marik. This military force may represent the one factor able to tip the balance of Liao/Marik power in favor of House Marik. We believe the Captain-General intends to use these warriors, as well as the Com Guards and Word of Blake ROM, as a buffer against Capella should Isis Marik inherit the Captain-Generalship.

PERSONALITIES

WILSON CHERENKOV

Director of SAFE

As Director of SAFE and intelligence advisor to the Captain-General, Cherenkov holds one of the most important positions within the Marik administration.

Still tall and muscular, though his flowing white hair betrays his sixty-plus years, Cherenkov's age has not affected his performance. He remains as cunning and wily as the day he assumed the Directorship. Born in the Duchy of Oriente, Cherenkov first met Thomas Marik when both joined ComStar. Their common background as Free Worlds citizens led the two to become close friends, and they worked together for many years during Thomas Marik's tenure as a Precentor in the Lyran Commonwealth.

Upon Marik's return to the League to assume the position of Captain-General, Cherenkov resigned from the order and joined SAFE. His friendship with Thomas, along with his outstanding intelligence skills, won him a position within the upper levels of SAFE's administration. Upon the death of his predecessor in a terrorist attack on Andurien, Cherenkov stepped into his current command position.

Utterly loyal to his friend Thomas Marik, Cherenkov has served with a competence and distinction not seen in the Free Worlds League for many decades. His single-minded support of all measures Thomas takes to safeguard the League gives the Captain-General a truly free hand to direct SAFE's activities, knowing that his Director will back whatever he does. To his annoyance, Cherenkov remains unable to root out the last elements of factionalism within SAFE, and continues to watch for individual dissenters within the agency.

LADY DANIELLE CAMERON-JONES

Safe Regional Director, Regulus

As Regional Director for the Principality of Regulus, Lady Cameron-Jones has the least enviable job within the SAFE organization. Even with much of its sovereignty stripped from it by Thomas Marik's Addendum to the Incorporation, Regulus remains the major voice of opposition within the Free Worlds Parliament. Because SAFE essentially belongs to the Captain-General, local Regulan officials make as much trouble for the province's Regional Director as their limited political clout allows. Whatever they can obstruct, they do.

As a minor noble of Regulus' ruling family, Lady Cameron-Jones has an intimate understanding of the area's politics. Director Cherenkov placed her within the region as a calculated risk, and that risk paid off. Over the past three years Lady Cameron-Jones has calmed a great deal of the Principality's anti-Marik resentment and dissent. Despite being a member of a traditionally dissident clan, Lady Cameron-Jones has proved both her loyalty and her worth many times over.

Well-known and liked within the Free Worlds League, in her youth Lady Cameron-Jones was a pin-up girl for several regiments within the Regulus area. She is also one of the most intelligent and charismatic of SAFE's Regional Directors, an ideal choice for a demanding position.

GENERAL MICHAEL KALLENBERG

Commanding Officer, Eagle Corps

Commanding Officer of the Eagle Corps, SAFE's elite special forces unit, Michael Kallenberg is a long-standing and respected member of the Free Worlds Military general staff. Initially a member of the Atrean Hussars, Kallenberg quickly rose through the ranks of the Free Worlds Military through sheer combat ability and his keen political and tactical judgment. Recognizing Kallenberg's talents, Thomas Marik transferred him in 3045 from the Atrean Hussars to the Eagle Corps, where he eventually became second-in-command of the unit under General Simon Walther.

Upon Walther's death in a freak accident during a training exercise, Kallenberg took temporary command of the unit. The reactor in Walther's newly acquired *Axman* had imploded, killing him instantly, but the cause of the malfunction remained a mystery. When rumors surfaced implicating ROM agents in the area, the Captain-General immediately assigned the Eagle Corps to locate and neutralize the assassins. They accomplished the mission successfully, returning to Atreus with two captive ROM operatives. Impressed by Kallenberg's performance as mission leader, the Captain-General gave him permanent command of the unit.

Kallenberg's lean, agile body rarely betrays the presence of a bionic left shoulder that he received after his own shoulder was shattered during a skirmish on Solaris in 3043. He wears his long, blonde hair tucked up under a baseball cap when on assignment, a casual affectation that prompts grumbling from some of the more conservative generals within the Free Worlds Military.



ROM



Of all the struggles currently raging in the Inner Sphere, the most pivotal is the conflict between ComStar and the splinter Word of Blake faction. As ComStar's leaders attempt to reform their organization into the true representation of its founder's vision, the splinter Word of Blake faction battles to preserve the old ways. The fight between the groups leaves the integrity and continuing existence of the HPG communications network, the lifeblood of the Inner Sphere, in doubt. If the reformed ComStar wins its bid to retain its power and position in the Inner Sphere, the welcome reforms they have begun will continue, to every House's advantage. If the Word of Blake faction, supported by a majority of the active ROM agents and drawing on the resources of the Free Worlds League, succeeds in overthrowing ComStar, that cataclysm will plunge the Successor States back into a constant state of open warfare, with the Clans poised to divide the spoils.

OVERVIEW

Created in the chaotic years immediately following the tragic collapse of the Star League, ComStar owes its existence to the vision of its founder, Jerome Blake. Appointed Minister of Communications in the last days of the Star League, Blake formed the organization that would become ComStar in a desperate attempt to save the Star League's vital, interstellar communications network from destruction in the inevitable struggle for power that would take place between the Lords of the Inner Sphere's five Successor States. Blake could not predict the extent to which his

fanatical successors would transform both ComStar and ROM, its intelligence agency, from the guardians of humanity to its oppressors. The recent reform of ComStar has brought the order closer to Blake's original vision, but at the cost of splitting ROM into two warring factions: one retaining the brutal, cruel ways the intelligence agency found most effective, and the other still finding a way to accomplish its ends without resorting to unrelenting violence.

Though from the first proclaiming its neutrality and favoring no political faction, ComStar's control over the Star League's hyperpulse generator communications network automatically made the order a major player within the Inner Sphere. Without the HPG system, capable of transmitting messages across the unimaginable distances of space, the Successor States could neither wage war nor engage in peaceful commerce. ComStar controlled a resource that every realm needed and that no one had the technical expertise to reproduce or replace. This monopoly on fast, efficient communications ensured ComStar's prominence in the nearly three centuries of power struggles between the Successor States that came to be known as the Succession Wars.

Despite its control of interstellar communications, ComStar discovered it was not completely immune to attack. After a botched attempt by the Capellan Confederation in 2811 to seize ComStar facilities within its realm, Prime Administrator Jerome Blake realized that his order's neutrality needed a physical safeguard. Shunning the idea of building an army to protect ComStar's

province and entering the Succession Wars, Blake instead created ROM, an intelligence service that would ensure ComStar's internal and external security. The new ComStar secret service recruited many of the order's most able members, and seemed a logical extension of the "secret society" mentality Blake had imposed on the order to safeguard its technological secrets from outsiders. In its first operation, ROM murdered Capellan agents plotting the assassination of the Bryant HPG administrator, sending an unmistakable warning to the rest of the Inner Sphere to leave ComStar alone. Because Blake saw ComStar as humanity's guardians, he preferred to use ROM's brute force only as a last resort. Many of his successors, however, proved unable or unwilling to keep ROM's ruthlessness in check. A succession of fanatical or corrupt Primuses transformed ROM from a defensive security force to the Inner Sphere's most feared band of cold-blooded killers.

Like other Inner Sphere intelligence agencies, ROM provides ComStar with the latest available information concerning the activities of the Inner Sphere's Successor States and protects the order against infiltration and hostile action by enemy agents. During the reign of Conrad Toyama, Blake's successor and ComStar's first Primus, ROM expanded its functions to include ensuring doctrinal purity within the order. Toyama's successors continued the process he began, each of them further transforming ComStar into a mystical sect and ROM into fanatical enforcers of its policies.

Well known for their often brutal tactics, ROM's operatives rank among the most experienced agents currently active within the Inner Sphere. ROM agents owe their effectiveness to ComStar's vast monetary resources, information archives, and sophisticated education system, advantages the organization has capitalized on. Utterly dedicated to the Primus, throughout its history ROM has undertaken operations throughout the Inner Sphere in service of the will of Blake according to each Primus' interpretation. Up until the recent schism between the reformed ComStar and the renegade Word of Blake faction, ROM's unrestricted access to the ComStar HPG network provided it with its greatest advantage over the other intelligence agencies of the Inner Sphere. The network allowed the agency to communicate almost instantaneously with any planet in the Inner Sphere on which an HPG station was maintained, a transmission capability unmatched by any of the Successor States. The ComStar schism unfortunately disrupted this universal HPG access, depriving ROM of its greatest edge over its rival intelligence agencies. Even with the rift in the order and the Successor States' subsequent control over HPG networks in each realm, no state possesses ROM's former ability to use any HPG anywhere in the galaxy.

The recent split in ComStar over the reforms enacted by Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht and Primus Sharilar Mori has drastically reduced the intelligence agency's effectiveness. A large percentage of ROM operatives defected to the reactionary Word of Blake and are currently carrying out that faction's agenda in the Free Worlds League under the protection of Captain-General Thomas Marik, whom they consider the Primus-in-exile.

The drain in manpower caused by the defections and the ongoing, so-far covert war between the defectors and ComStar ROM agents has seriously hampered ROM operations in many areas, forcing the agency to limit its activities on several fronts. As ComStar never considered the fifteen-year truce it signed with the Clans at Tukayyid anything more than a temporary stopgap, ROM feels it can ill afford to waste its resources fighting its former colleagues if the Inner Sphere hopes to beat the Clans as decisively again.

This continuing drain on personnel and resources jeopardizes ROM's ability to take an active role in the covert war against the Clans. Having effectively lost access to much of the Free Worlds League HPG network because of the schism, ROM's vital intelligence-gathering abilities have suffered a severe setback. In addition, the widespread distrust of ComStar inspired by the failure of Operation Scorpion, former Primus Myndo Waterly's ill-conceived scheme to bring the Inner Sphere under ComStar's control, has prompted the Successor States to take control of many HPG facilities in their own realms. Only the tireless negotiations of Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht and the order's still-superior technical expertise have enabled ComStar to retain access to the HPG network, largely as maintenance technicians working under contract to each realm. Public disillusionment with the order has also prevented ComStar from replenishing its thinned ranks with new converts. Virtually crippled by defections to Word of Blake and recent events, ROM appears to be recovering slowly under the guidance of its current head, Precentor ROM Victoria Parreau. Her reorganization of ROM from top to bottom seems to have temporarily halted the agency's slide and may eventually restore much of its former efficiency.

The covert war with the Word of Blake ROM, for which many Word of Blake agents receive active support from SAFE, House Marik's intelligence agency, poses the greatest threat to ROM. Demoralized by the shakeup of the order, ComStar ROM has yet to mount a successful intelligence-gathering operation within the Free Worlds League, successfully infiltrating only a handful of agents into the Word of Blake ROM. The rival service, on the other hand, has used its greater numbers and equal experience to infiltrate ComStar on several levels.

The intelligence agencies of the other Successor States are currently observing the progress of the ComStar-Word of Blake guerrilla war with interest. The destruction of its ROM service could lead to the collapse of ComStar or the Word of Blake, either of which would drastically affect the course of events within the Inner Sphere. As ComStar ROM and its Word of Blake counterpart vie for dominance, both agencies increasingly ignore their other operations, providing the Successor States with unprecedented opportunities to infiltrate and undermine the once-impregnable ROM. A weakened ROM adversely affects the entire order of ComStar; without effective intelligence to undercut enemy operations, the embattled order may simply crumble under pressure from the Houses, leaving the HPG network in the hands of the still-warring Successor States, who might yet be foolish enough to destroy it.



The Word of Blake's steady growth in power and resources brings the final conflict between the divided ComStar closer day by day. If the Word of Blake steps into the vacuum of power left by its rival's collapse, the renegade order would surely involve itself actively in the ongoing struggle for supremacy, rather than acting as a neutral guardian of Star League technology. Set against these frightening possibilities, ROM's renewal appears vital to the survival of the Inner Sphere.

One positive result of the reforms enacted within ComStar is that ensuring internal doctrinal purity represents a much smaller percentage of ROM's responsibilities, which allows the agency to focus its depleted energies against such external threats as the Word of Blake and the Clans. The Truce of Tukayyid has temporarily made the Word of Blake ComStar's greatest enemy, though the Clan threat to the Inner Sphere and to ComStar's homeworld of Terra still looms in the background.

BRIEFING

The ComStar reformation and the schism in the order have forced ROM to rethink its policies and objectives more completely than has any other intelligence agency in the Inner Sphere. The existence of the Word of Blake, the first organization opposed to ComStar's interests whose capabilities equal and may even surpass those of ROM, poses an unprecedented danger to the reformed order's existence and has forced a major restructuring of the entire intelligence agency. In addition, this overextended, embattled organization cannot afford to ignore the dire threat to the Inner Sphere posed by the Clans, the mightiest army ever faced by the Com Guards or any Successor State.



The defection of 70 percent of ROM's agents to the reactionary Word of Blake has forced the remaining operation to downgrade and restructure. Though the widespread distrust of ComStar's motives led to a sharp drop in successful recruitment among civilians, the ComStar reforms make it possible for ROM to consider candidates for their ranks who do not believe in Blake's writings but who are experienced operatives. In the spirit of this more lenient outlook, ROM is attempting to shore up its badly eroded manpower by recruiting operatives from other Successor State agencies. However, they too distrust ComStar, and many continue to regard the intelligence agency as the fearsome ROM of legend. So far, these liabilities make it difficult for ROM personnel to find agents from other services willing to join the organization. The recent reorganization of the service ordered by Precentor ROM Victoria Parardeau temporarily reduced the service's operational capabilities even further, but in the long run, the restructuring should enable the battered agency to regain its footing and its former efficiency.

Currently, the reformed ROM has adopted the following policies.

THE SCHISM

The emergence of the Word of Blake has directed much of ROM's attention toward detecting and eliminating Word of Blake infiltrators within ComStar and ROM. The most extreme measure implemented in this effort is that upon capture, all enemy infiltrators undergo extensive interrogation followed by immediate execution. (Captured agents who may prove politically valuable occasionally provide an exception to this rule.)

ROM's fear of infiltration is well-founded: despite some progress in locating Word of Blake agents through purges, ComStar still cannot determine how many of its personnel might be Word of Blake infiltrators. Precentor ROM Parardeau recommends taking more drastic measures, specifically, conducting systematic purges of every intelligence branch and HPG facility maintained by ComStar. Implementing that plan, however, requires manpower ROM currently lacks, and the agency cannot afford to lose loyal agents who might get caught in the general destruction. Though ROM considers the intelligence war a priority for action, the plan for large-scale purges suffers a second disadvantage. At present, ComStar still hopes to convince the Successor States of the sincerity of its reforms, a goal that will become virtually impossible if Precentor Parardeau's purges take place. ComStar's best interests will not be served by ROM uncovering and destroying infiltrators from the five Houses, who must certainly be in their ranks.

ROM has suspended most external operations to divert resources to its campaign against the renegade faction. Unfortunately, many of the discontinued operations centered around the Federated Commonwealth, where the worsening political situation in the wake of Melissa Steiner's assassination greatly alarms ComStar. ROM was attempting to encourage continuing unity among the Successor States against the Clans, in part by shoring up the government of Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. These

important efforts now consist mostly of passive monitoring operations as scarce resources go to the covert war with Word of Blake.

Unlike most conflicts fought within the Inner Sphere, the battle within ComStar's ranks does not use BattleMechs; the first skirmish is being fought with words for the minds and loyalty of ComStar personnel. The schism left large numbers of acolytes on each side of the split confused, doubting their loyalties and unsure where Blake's true vision lies. Each faction continually works to draw wavering members of the opposition to its side in the hope that enough defections will cause its opponent to collapse.

Sooner or later, however, the conflict must shift from minds and hearts to the battlefield. Like ROM, the schism split the Com Guards, though ComStar controls more than fifty divisions to the Word of Blake's five. If he accepts the title of Primus-in-exile, Thomas Marik will undoubtedly add his own troops to the Word of Blake Militia, most likely supplying pilots and new 'Mechs from his upgraded BattleMech factory in the Gibson system. More 'Mechs and large numbers of Free Worlds troops may enable the Blake Militia to achieve a rough parity with ComStar's forces.

In such a war, ComStar's lack of territory might cost it dearly. The Word of Blake can draw on the natural resources and economic power of the Free Worlds League to launch attacks against ComStar, most likely in an attempt to seize Terra. ComStar's Com Guards, by contrast, have access to a mere handful of planets scattered throughout the Inner Sphere to use as bases, and may find no support at all for their efforts among the Successor States. The most likely source of aid for the Com Guard is the Federated Commonwealth, whose government regards both House Marik and its ally, House Liao, as enemies. The Federated Commonwealth may have little to spare, however, assuming that it trusts ComStar enough to offer help.

ROM's initial strategy of destabilizing the Word of Blake by mass infiltration has met with mixed success. ROM successfully planted only a few deep-cover operatives within the ranks of the Word of Blake, and that fragmented organization's general paranoia and regular ROM-sponsored purges make the position of a double agent extremely precarious. ComStar ROM continues to accelerate its infiltration missions in an effort to eliminate the threat of the Word of Blake as soon as possible and concentrate on the Clans. Reports of the development of new Clan BattleMech designs from ROM agents inside the Clan occupation zones makes settling the schism even more imperative, as the First Circuit doubts that the diminished Com Guard can hold out against the Clans if its forces are divided.

Signs of what we assume is the next stage of the ComStar offensive against the Word of Blake are already appearing. ComStar and Word of Blake ROM agents have clashed in several skirmishes at HPG facilities in the Free Worlds League, and we expect many more as ComStar steps up its active operations in this fight. The coming battle will decide the future of ComStar, and its outcome will influence the rest of the 31st century more strongly than any conflict since the battle of Tukayyid. The consequences of the ComStar civil war may very well make the difference between conquest and defeat for the Clans when the Truce of Tukayyid expires.

WEAKENING THE FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

As an alternate way of striking at the Word of Blake, ROM is doubling its efforts to infiltrate and disrupt the government of the Free Worlds League. The primary target for destabilization is the Free Worlds Parliament, which for centuries has spoken as the voice of opposition to the Captain-General. If successfully agitated, the Parliament might draw Thomas Marik's attention away from the Word of Blake, perhaps even leading him to decline election as Primus-in-exile to maintain peace in his realm. Though during Thomas' reign and the administration of his father the Parliament lost much of its power and many dissenting opinions, Thomas Marik's close relationship with the Word of Blake may reunite and ignite minority opinion once again. Widespread dissent over that group's growing influence and the alliance with House Liao may lead the Free Worlds Parliament to make a violent attempt to reclaim its former power, but Thomas' daughter Isis Marik makes a more likely candidate than any Member of Parliament to step into any resulting power gap.

Especially if she marries Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, Isis Marik's accession to power would not advance ComStar's agenda: the alliance between the two Houses gives ROM great cause for concern. Even if Thomas Marik remains in power once the alliance between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation goes into effect, the combined militaries and economies would deliver immense power into the Marik's and thus Word of Blake's hands. With the Capellan government as well as the Free Worlds regime backing them with troops and funding, the Word of Blake could launch a successful all-out assault against ComStar. The Word of Blake might also support Sun-Tzu Liao, should he decide to strike at the Federated Commonwealth. However the military conflict begins, any Liao/Marik/Word of Blake alliance will push the Inner Sphere to the brink of both religious and secular war.

In response to the threat posed by the Marik/Liao alliance, Information and Analysis agents have stepped up their surveillance on the Capellan capital of Sian to keep ComStar apprised of Sun-Tzu Liao's plans. By all indications, Liao is eager to sign an agreement with Marik, most particularly to gain access to the Free Worlds HPG network and its economic resources. His recent overtures to the Word of Blake most likely represent an effort to somehow infiltrate, befriend, or suborn its leadership and so gain that organization's support for the alliance, or at least foreknowledge of its objections. Though we cannot know Sun-Tzu's motives, we assume, judging by his behavior so far and the history of his realm, that he intends to take over the Free Worlds League through his marriage to Isis Marik. Having the Word of Blake on his side may help him to accomplish this ambitious objective.

THE CLAN FRONT

Using the current truce with the Clans, ROM is strengthening civilian resistance forces within the regions currently under occupation, using the relative freedom from attack created by the truce to secretly funnel supplies to independent resistance groups. ROM strategists assume that the Clans will break the truce, and



the recent increase in Clan raiding above the truce line proves that at least some Clan factions are spoiling for a fight. Inter-Clan bickering might bring down Clan Wolf, architects of the truce, and the resulting elevation to power of a more aggressive Clan might lead the Clans to break the agreement. Anticipating this eventuality, ROM is counting on subversion and sabotage to damage the Clans behind the front lines and weaken their renewed advance toward Terra. Some ComStar ROM operatives placed on Clan-held worlds to foment rebellion during the ill-fated Operation Scorpion may still be active, both gathering information and, in certain key areas, engaging in terrorist attacks. However, many of these agents were fanatically loyal to Primus Waterly, and may have left to join the Word of Blake in the Free Worlds League. ROM is also gathering as much intelligence as possible on known and developing Clan weapons, strategy, and tactics, fully aware that only superior information will allow the Com Guards to defeat the enemy once the war begins anew.

FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

Given the threat posed to the order and the Inner Sphere by the imminent Liao-Marik marriage alliance, the First Circuit sees the support of the Federated Commonwealth as their best hope to defeat the Word of Blake and avoid another devastating conflict. Still the largest realm in the Inner Sphere, and until very recently the most economically sound, the Federated Commonwealth also recognizes the danger to itself presented by the alliance, and may prove willing to support ComStar in some concrete way against the Word of Blake. To this end, the Diplomatic Operations Branch is working hard to gain the trust of Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion. So far, the Federated Commonwealth remains lukewarm to ComStar's courtship. Past events between the Federated Commonwealth and ComStar, particularly the ComStar interdiction during the Fourth Succession War, and the apparent confirmation of ComStar's evil intentions by Operation Scorpion, makes the Federated Commonwealth wary of believing the order's claims to reform. Despite ComStar's goodwill gestures, decades of suspicion do not vanish overnight.

However, ComStar's new policy of openly distributing the information within its vast historical archives has prompted prominent persons within the Federated Commonwealth to rethink their ages-old attitude toward ComStar. We also understand that on a few occasions already, ROM has passed valuable intelligence to the MIO. If the order does nothing to destroy the faint glimmerings of renewed trust, they may yet reach an agreement with the super-state. Given the Federated Commonwealth's own internal troubles, however, any substantial support may be a long time coming.

BRIEF HISTORY

The Star League, humanity's noble experiment in interstellar unity, succumbed to civil war in 2766 when Stefan Amaris of the Rim Worlds Republic assassinated First Lord Richard Cameron and took control of the Terran Hegemony. After a thirteen-year

campaign, General Aleksandr Kerensky led his Star League Defense Forces to victory over the usurper, but the five Lords of the Star League's ruling Houses refused to proclaim any one of their number as the new First Lord. In 2780, at the last meeting of the Star League's ruling council, the quarreling Council Lords agreed on only two things: the forced retirement of General Aleksandr Kerensky and the appointment of Jerome Blake as Minister of Communications. Even as the Successor Lords geared up for all-out civil war, they realized the importance of communications in deploying their armies. Each Lord counted on Blake to maintain communications until he or she prevailed in battle to become First Lord of the Star League, at which point the victor would take control of communications throughout known space. None of them reckoned on the idealism of Jerome Blake or his ability to transform that idealism into forceful, positive action. Far from allowing his organization to become a pawn in the hands of the Successor States, Jerome Blake led ComStar to a position of power in the Inner Sphere that no state could afford to ignore.

OPERATION SILVER SHIELD

Jerome Blake created ComStar to fulfill a single, vital mission: preserving the glorious Star League's technological legacy in order to prevent a new Dark Age. Blake recognized two great responsibilities in the wake of the Star League's collapse: preserving as much of the currently available technological knowledge as possible, and preventing the Successor States from seizing the interstellar communications network and misusing it to destroy each other. As Prime Administrator of the newly re-established First Circuit of the Star League Communications Network (SLCOMNET), Blake saw the rapidly expanding armies of the Inner Sphere's Great Houses as a threat to the weak and virtually unprotected worlds of the Terran Hegemony. Blake feared that all his efforts to rebuild devastated Hegemony planets would be laid waste by the Successor Lords' lust for power. In a secret meeting with the First Circuit in the winter of 2786, just before the outbreak of the First Succession War, Blake outlined a daring plan for building a communications network that might survive the coming apocalypse. Dubbed Operation Silver Shield, the plan called for Blake to persuade the leaders of the Great Houses to agree to the neutrality of all ComStar facilities, property, and personnel. Having secured this agreement, Blake planned to seize Terra and proclaim it neutral ground belonging to ComStar as soon as the rest of the Inner Sphere was too busy fighting the war to stop him. Though shocked by the sheer audacity of the plan, the First Circuit eventually backed Blake. Meeting with each of the Successor Lords in turn, he won their consent to ComStar's neutrality by telling each one that the others had already agreed. Preoccupied with military preparations, none of the Lords questioned Blake's assertion, for by December of 2786, Minoru Kurita already had proclaimed himself First Lord of the Star League and the First Succession War had begun.

As the Great Houses joined the war one by one, Blake set the second part of his plan in motion, enlisting the help of several mercenary BattleMech regiments and the few units of the Star

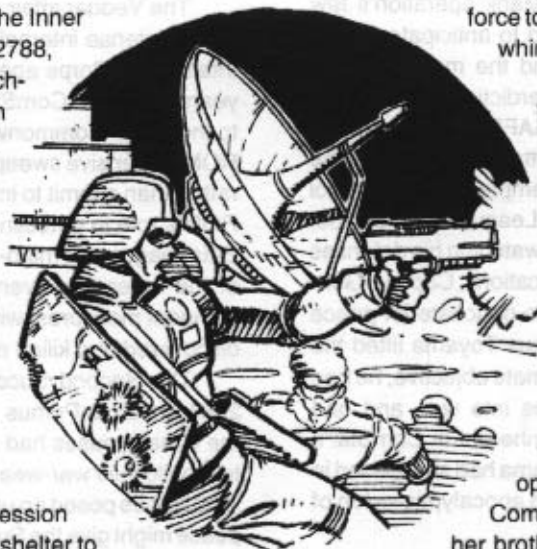
League Defense Forces that had not left the Inner Sphere in the Exodus of 2784. In June of 2788, at six o'clock in the morning, ComStar technicians shut down every HPG facility within the Inner Sphere and Blake's troops took control of Terra. While the leaders of the Successor States issued curt messages to Blake accusing him of betraying agreed-upon neutrality accords, none of them dared relocate any of their forces to move against him. In a single stroke, Blake had successfully established ComStar as a neutral power within the Inner Sphere.

FOUNDATION OF ROM

ComStar spent most of the First Succession War rebuilding Terra and offering aid and shelter to the citizens of devastated worlds. In the spring of 2811, one of the Successor States finally created an opportunity to move against the order, and by doing so prompted a new development in ComStar. Having lost a majority of her nation's technology to the war, Chancellor Ilsa Liao of the Capellan Confederation sought to restore her realm's technological base by bribing ComStar technicians to defect to the Confederation. When this approach failed, a group of "terrorists" attempted to seize control of the HPG station on the Capellan world of Nanking. The station's staff ambushed the terrorists, killing them all. The First Circuit called for an immediate investigation, and turned up proof that the Capellan government had launched the "terrorist" attack as part of a larger plot to gain control of all HPGs in the Confederation. In reaction to this assault, Jerome Blake ordered the creation of a covert intelligence agency and security force to protect ComStar's precious HPG network from both external and internal threats. This group, known as ROM, would locate threats to ComStar and neutralize them before they could damage the order.

In 2812, upon discovering a Capellan plot to assassinate the Administrator of the Bryant HPG facility, ROM launched its first major operation. Acting on orders from Jerome Blake, ROM agents executed the assassins two days before they were to act. This swift, brutal strike established ROM's reputation within the Inner Sphere as a deadly weapon for ComStar to use against its enemies. The unmasking in 2813 of Emma Gomez, assistant to the head of the Carver V HPG, as an agent of the Free Worlds League intelligence agency SAFE persuaded Jerome Blake to give ROM tighter control over internal security.

Though a visionary and an idealist who despised warfare and brutality, Blake realized that in some cases only force could answer force, and gave ROM the freedom to strike at ComStar's enemies as hard as it deemed necessary to accomplish the greater good of protecting the order and the priceless technology it safeguarded. Unfortunately, Blake's successors did not share his aversion to violence. Under successive ComStar administrations, ROM evolved from a deadly but seldom-used defensive



force to a gang of cutthroat killers who acted on the whim of the ruling Primus.

Since its formation, ROM has maintained the security of ComStar's various HPG facilities against the operations of the other intelligence agencies of the Successor States, and has also functioned as doctrinal "thought police" within the order. In several major operations over the years, ROM has used terror, assassination, and mind-control techniques to provoke wars, suppress technological development, and hasten Blake's predicted destruction of the Inner Sphere. The most famous of these operations occurred during the 2830s, when ComStar used Adept Jeanette Marik to provoke her brother, Captain-General Charles Marik of the

Free Worlds League, into entering the Second Succession War. Though the exploit failed to achieve the hoped-for result of turning the Free Worlds League into a ComStar puppet-state, ROM succeeded in suborning a member of a ruling House, and in directly provoking a war for the first time.

ROM AND THE COMSTAR WAR

In June of 2821, upon hearing that Jeanette Marik wished to join ComStar, an elated Primus Toyama personally supervised Jeanette's special indoctrination by ROM agents. Using dilcostat, a mind-control drug refined during the Star League era, ROM agents brainwashed their new convert to feed false information to Charles Marik. Acting under Toyama's instructions, Jeanette Marik met with Charles in 2830 and passed him a faked message supposedly sent from the Lyran court to the commander of the Lyran Commonwealth's Skye Rangers. The message contained plans for the invasion of the Free Worlds League. In view of the savagery of House Marik's conflict with the Lyrans during the First Succession War, Charles Marik could not believe House Steiner's denials of the planned attack; he ordered his troops to full battle readiness and worked up an attack plan of his own. More false intelligence passed by Jeanette prompted Charles to launch an assault against the Lyran Commonwealth in August of 2830, touching off warfare along the entire Steiner-Marik border. Though Charles won several impressive victories based on ComStar intelligence between 2831 and 2836, League forces suffered their share of setbacks, under circumstances that suggested an intelligence leak. After a time, Charles became convinced that the leaks came from ComStar. To test his theory, Charles met with his sister Jeanette and spun a story about a lost Star League military warehouse on the planet Cursa. Barely a month later, in March of 2837, three regiments of crack House Liao troops struck the world, proving that ComStar was playing a double game. An enraged Charles Marik ordered a fleet of his JumpShips to destroy the HPG station on Oriente, where Jeanette was stationed, and kill all ComStar personnel.



In one of the Marik operation's few failures, ROM failed to anticipate the attack on Oriente and the massacre that followed. Primus Toyama issued an interdiction of the Free Worlds League, during which ROM and SAFE squared off in a covert war of assassinations and terrorist attacks that came to be called the ComStar War. SAFE agents attempted to gain control of a number of key HPG facilities within the League's territory, but ROM repulsed their attacks. After a year of watching his defenses crumble without high-speed HPG communications, Captain-General Charles Marik sent his youngest son to negotiate for peace with ComStar. In November of 2838, Primus Toyama lifted the interdiction. Though he had failed in his ultimate objective, he had proven that ROM could manipulate states into war, and had reminded the Inner Sphere of the power inherent in ComStar's communications monopoly. Above all, Toyama had succeeded in bringing ComStar closer to meeting his own apocalyptic vision of Blake's prophecies.

WITCH HUNTS

Toyama's successor, Raymond Karpov, shared his conviction that the Inner Sphere was destined to batter itself into the Stone Age, and that the sooner this happened, the sooner ComStar could fulfill its role as humanity's technological redeemer. Also sharing his predecessor's willingness to use ROM to further his ends, Primus Karpov issued Organizational Edict 3056, in which he called for ROM's expansion in order to use it as a weapon against the technical experts of the Successor States. As the Second Succession War progressed, scientists, engineers, and industrial facilities became favored targets. By the end of the war, several specialized technologies had disappeared for lack of knowledge, and the Successor States' overall technological level had sunk to that of Terra nearly eight centuries before. Unable to build starships or other complex equipment from scratch, the leaders of the Great Houses resorted to cannibalizing existing machinery for spare parts. In the process, technicians and scientists acquired just enough knowledge of how the machines worked to become—in Karpov's mind—dangerous to ComStar. Karpov believed that all technological research carried on outside ComStar's ranks posed a direct threat to the Word of Jerome Blake, who had foreseen that the Great Houses would destroy themselves. Over the objections of Precentor ROM Michele Dupreas, who believed that blatant use of ROM's power against the Successor States violated Blake's prohibition against open interference with the affairs of the Inner Sphere, Primus Karpov passed his edict and immediately began planning Operation Holy Shroud. This operation, in which ROM agents assassinated more than three hundred key researchers and scientists across the Inner Sphere, proved to be one of ROM's most spectacular successes. ROM's efficiency and thoroughness in carrying out this operation set the Inner Sphere's technological development back severely, and established a precedent for the use of ROM as a killing force on a Sphere-wide scale.

The Veddar affair set another unsavory precedent for ROM, that of intense internal witch-hunts. Rosemary Veddar, a Lyran Intelligence Corps agent, rose to the rank of Adept during three years' service to ComStar, all the while passing secret information to the Lyran Commonwealth. She was discovered during one of ROM's intensive sweeps through its ranks, but committed suicide rather than submit to interrogation. Karpov reacted by increasing ROM's role in detecting outside agents, using lie detectors and Star League-era mind-altering drugs to test all current members of the order and every potential acolyte. As a result of these stringent measures, within a few years of the Veddar affair ROM discovered and killed more than three dozen House agents.

The Second Succession War had nearly run itself out by 2864, much to Primus Karpov's disappointment. The leaders of the Great Houses had all but abandoned the conflict in an effort to rebuild their war-weary states. Primus Karpov felt that the lapse in hostilities posed an unacceptable threat to ComStar: prolonged peace might give the Successor States the time and the resources to develop new technologies of their own, ending ComStar's monopoly on such knowledge. ROM agents in the Draconis Combine and the Federated Suns reported that despite the loss of many scientists and engineers to Holy Shroud assassins, both Houses Kurita and Davion continued work on research projects that attempted to recover some of the technology lost in the past two centuries of ongoing war. The other three Great Houses were engaged in similar research, though on a smaller scale. In his State of the Inner Sphere Report to the First Circuit in 2866, the Precentor ROM predicted that if peace continued, the Inner Sphere could conceivably recover all the lost technology within three decades. Determined to forestall this, Karpov needed to start another war, and began looking for a weakness that ROM could exploit.

ROM agents within the Draconis Combine's ISF gave Karpov the opening he needed. The ISF, caught up in a power struggle between the Combine's Coordinator Miyogi Kurita and his sister Roweena, was being torn apart by a covert assassination campaign within its ranks, dubbed the "Shadow War." By 2865, more than a thousand metsuke had died in the infighting. Karpov "shared" this and other, deceptive information with the House Lords, knowing that Coordinator Miyogi's overdeveloped sense of honor would not allow him to suffer the public airing of his realm's dirty laundry. As Karpov had predicted, to avenge his shame Miyogi attacked the Lyrans, drawing the Inner Sphere into the Third Succession War.

Karpov stepped down in 2875, naming Precentor Andrea Marteen as the next Primus. Marteen presided over one of ROM's darkest operations, turning its terrorist tactics against the Terran people. The citizens of Terra had begun to chafe under ComStar's rule, and during Primus Marteen's first few years in office, some began calling for independence from their benevolent dictators. In a diabolical plot to silence dissent, Primus Marteen used ROM agents to stage a terrorist bombing attack and falsely attributed it to a radical independence group called Black December. The visiting Precentor of New Earth and a thousand civilians died in



the bombing, but the Primus accomplished her objective. The apparent use of random violence to strike at ComStar cost Black December and other anti-ComStar groups whatever support they had enjoyed among the citizenry, and removed the threat of a Terran rebellion against the order.

After Primus Marteen died in a mysterious hovercar crash in 2901, Precentor Kurstin of Caph assumed the primacy. A paranoid who would come to be called "Kurstin the Mad," the new Primus used ROM to strike at imagined traitors within the highest levels of ComStar. After ROM agents arrested Precentor Kohler of the First Circuit and murdered him in custody, the rest of the First Circuit left Terra to escape similar deaths at the hands of ROM. A furious Kurstin ordered ROM to capture the "renegades" and burn them at the stake, and unleashed a massive internal purge during which ROM agents killed hundreds of innocent adepts and acolytes. This extreme reaction caused some members of ROM to question Kurstin's sanity, and a few joined the exiled First Circuit. One of these agents, known to history only by the code name Saber, infiltrated the ranks of Kurstin's ROM bodyguard and assassinated him in 2902. ROM then took steps to cover up the ComStar civil war, and successfully hid the entire matter until it was revealed during the ComStar Reformation 150 years later.

DANGEROUS GAMES

ROM appears to have taken the leadership of ComStar into its own hands again, during the early 30th century. Primus Hollings York, a liberal and enlightened man, took steps to curb ROM's power, in part by transferring funds from ROM to his pet project, the ComStar Guard and Militia. Founded in 2933, this militia eventually developed into the massive BattleMech force known as the Com Guards. With their missions increasingly understaffed and underfinanced, ROM operations and agents became easier targets for the intelligence agencies of the Successor States. In the Federated Suns alone, the MIIO exposed six ROM agents between 2935 and 2940. In the spring of 2947, two months after Primus York formally proposed to dissolve ROM and assign its functions to the Com Guards, an adept shot York to death during a public ceremony on Terra. Though none could prove ROM's complicity, they had obvious reasons to wish York replaced. His successor, Adrienne Sims, restored the agency's funding and enlarged its scope immediately upon assuming the primacy.

Events in the late 30th and early 31st century proved that ROM's deadly efficiency did not make it invincible. In launching Operation Holy Shroud II, an assassination campaign against Inner Sphere scientists and engineers in the 2980s, Primus Yin Takami tried and failed to duplicate the success of the earlier anti-technology operation. The Combine's ISF and House Davion's MIIO uncovered and thwarted several of the assassination plots, and the operation succeeded only in keeping ROM's involvement hidden. The ISF and the MIIO believed the killings to have been planned by other Inner Sphere Houses, never suspecting ComStar. The Jolly Roger Affair, in which Takami's successor ordered ROM



to bankroll renegade MechWarriors in the Periphery and prod them into attacking the Inner Sphere, proved an even costlier failure. Though the bandit kings initially repaid ComStar by attacking the targets ROM pointed them toward, in 3004 two of the bandits joined forces and struck out on their own. ComStar's attempt to bring the renegade bandits back into line with the order's agenda degenerated into a battle during which one of the pirates was killed. Her enraged partner laid waste to the HPG stations on two nearby planets. Suddenly Jolly Roger had gone bad, and ComStar found itself facing a military enemy. The Com Guards First Division wiped out the pirates, but the operation's failure almost cost Primus Rusenstein his office. ROM's failure a few years later to discover the origins of Wolf's Dragoons, a crack mercenary unit fielding advanced equipment who had appeared unexpectedly in the Inner Sphere in 3005, sealed Rusenstein's fate. After two ROM agents died attempting to infiltrate the Dragoons, the First Circuit forced his resignation.

Under the leadership of Primus Julian Tiepolo, ROM helped to create the conditions that would lead to the Fourth Succession War. By leaking information about the secret treaty signed between Katrina Steiner of the Lyran Commonwealth and Hanse Davion of the Federated Suns in 3020, ROM provided the impetus behind the Concord of Kapteyn, a mutual defense agreement between the Free Worlds League, the Draconis Combine, and the Capellan Confederation. Having neatly divided the Inner Sphere into two warring camps, ComStar sat back and waited for the right spark to light the fire. It came in 3028, at the wedding of Prince Hanse Davion to Katrina Steiner's daughter Melissa, when the Prince announced his army's invasion of the Capellan Confederation.

THE WATERLY ERA

The Fourth Succession War brought Primus Tiepolo's downfall, and permitted the rise of the scheming Primus Myndo Waterly. Serving as Precentor Dieron during the war, Waterly enlisted the aid of the Precentor ROM in fabricating a Davion attack on the Capellan world of Sarna, knowing that such an incident would force Primus Tiepolo to declare an interdiction on the Federated Suns. Waterly hoped to cripple the realm's war effort by depriving it of communications, but Katrina Steiner's gift of "black boxes" to her new son-in-law enabled Prince Hanse to bypass the interdiction. Discovered by Katrina during her year of exile in the Periphery more than twenty years before, the "black box" machines permitted text and crude graphics to travel over interstellar distances in fax form, and allowed Davion troops to communicate with each other in spite of ComStar's ban. Balked in one attempt to crush the Federated Suns, Waterly and the Precentor ROM ordered a battalion of Com Guards disguised as House Liao Death Commandos to attack the New Avalon Institute of Science, whose recent acquisition of a copy of a Star League library core discovered by the Gray Death Legion threatened ComStar's technological superiority. The commando raid failed to damage or destroy the core, but Precentor Waterly arranged for the blame to fall on

Primus Tiepolo. Seriously ill, the Primus died soon afterward of a heart attack, clearing the way for Waterly's elevation as Primus.

Believing that the will of Blake would be best served by splintering the Inner Sphere into as many warring factions as possible, Primus Waterly made extensive use of both ROM and the Com Guards to achieve that end. Her covert activities produced a mixture of successes and failures, culminating in the debacle of Operation Scorpion. Waterly's early reign saw the partial success of Operation Rosebud, in which she obtained the Draconis Combine's support for the independence of the Free Rasalhague Republic. She also obtained the services of Anastasius Focht, a former general with a mysterious past who could give the fledgling Com Guards the expert military leadership they needed. Among her failures was Operation Flush, a covert war against ROM instigated by Hanse Davion in 3034 in response to reports that ROM agents had infiltrated the MIIO. Between 3034 and 3044, MIIO operatives rounded up dozens of suspected ROM agents, and actually managed to capture a handful in key positions. Agents and counter-agents on both sides played a deadly game of cat-and-mouse, using firebombings, snipers, and booby traps to kill their prey. All in all, 420 operatives of both agencies had died by the time Hanse Davion called off the operation in 3044.

COMING OF THE CLANS

The Clan invasion five years later caught even ComStar by surprise. Primus Waterly, however, lost no time in turning the Clan war to ComStar's advantage. She appointed Anastasius Focht, then Precentor Martial, as ComStar's official ambassador to the Clans and signed a secret pact in which ComStar agreed to provide the Clans with military intelligence in exchange for the right to administrate Clan-conquered worlds. With this agreement, Waterly laid the groundwork for an ambitious plot to give ComStar power over the entire Inner Sphere.

Considering the Clans mere pawns under her control, Waterly planned to use them to batter the Inner Sphere into military exhaustion, then crush the Clans with the might of the Com Guards. Loyal ROM agents leaked precise information about the defenses of Luthien, the Combine capital, on the assumption that Luthien's fall to the invaders would cause the Combine to collapse. The successful defense of Luthien by a combination of Kurita, Davion, and crack mercenary troops dealt a blow to Waterly's plans, but not a severe one. They received a greater setback when she and Precentor Martial Focht secretly traveled to the Wolf Clan occupation zone soon after the failed assault on Luthien. Waterly offered to give the Wolf Clan the Lyran capital of Tharkad, by betraying its defenses to the Clans as ROM agents had done with Luthien. Khan Ulric, leader of the Wolf Clan, declined, explaining to Waterly that the Clans intended to take Terra. This revelation forced Primus Waterly to admit that ComStar could not hope to control the Clan juggernaut, and she revised her plotting accordingly. In consultation during the entire journey back to Terra, Precentor Martial Focht and Primus Waterly agreed that Focht would engage the Clans in battle with the Com Guards for

Terra as soon as he located an appropriate proxy world. Waterly concealed from Focht the other half of her scheme: using ROM agents as provocateurs, she would unleash revolts on Clan-held worlds and simultaneously interdict the entire Inner Sphere. By launching this plan, called Operation Scorpion, at the height of the battle for Terra, Waterly intended to bring both the Clans and the Inner Sphere to their knees, and forcibly unite them under a single government controlled by ComStar. Focht's army would be sacrificed to bring down the Clan military machine, making ComStar the greatest power in the Inner Sphere.

Using his knowledge of Clan honor and their tradition of bidding for the conditions of battle, Precentor Martial Focht bargained for and won Khan Ulric's agreement to a proxy battle for Terra between the Clans and the Com Guards on the sparsely populated world of Tukayyid. If the Clans won, ComStar would merge with the Clans and hand Terra over to them. If ComStar won, the Clans would halt their advance toward Terra for fifteen years. While Focht prepared for the battle that would decide the fate of the Inner Sphere, Waterly completed the preliminary stages of Operation Scorpion, with the help of her supporters and a cadre of loyal ROM agents pledged to keep the Precentor Martial and the rest of the Inner Sphere ignorant of the plot. On May 1, 3052, the Clans and the Com Guards squared off on Tukayyid. On the same day, Waterly ordered the Sphere-wide interdiction, triggering the first phase of Operation Scorpion.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 43114-CS2-9/3/29

DATE: 9/2/29

REPORTING AGENT: 827008323

SECTION: CS3G—BLUE

SECURITY LEVEL: EYES ONLY

IN EIGHT DAYS A BATTALION OF COMSTAR BATTLEMECHS AND INFANTRY TROOPS ARE SCHEDULED TO ATTACK THE NEW AVALON INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE.

THE FIRST CIRCUIT BELIEVES THE FEDERATED SUNS HAVE OBTAINED A STAR LEAGUE MEMORY CORE, WHICH IS BEING HELD AT THE INSTITUTE. THE FIRST CIRCUIT PLANS TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE CORE THEN DESTROY THE FACILITY.

THE STRIKE FORCE HAS BEEN DISGUISED AS A LIAO DEATH COMMANDO BATTALION. FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE STRIKE PLAN IS NOT AVAILABLE.

Though neither Waterly nor her ROM loyalists suspected it, Operation Scorpion was doomed from the start. Precentor Sharilar Mori, Waterly's hand-picked successor and an ISF agent, sent the complete details of the operation to Theodore Kurita of the Draconis Combine, who in turn warned the Federated Commonwealth in partial repayment for Davion help against the Clans on Luthien. The Combine and the Commonwealth took over the HPG facilities within their borders before Waterly's ROM agents could enforce the interdiction, and the Capellan Confederation responded to ComStar's action by sending troops to seize the HPG stations on its worlds. Except for the Free Worlds League, whose Captain-General (as a former ComStar Precentor) meekly obeyed the ComStar ban, Waterly's Operation Scorpion failed dismally. Returning to ComStar's Terran headquarters from a hard-won victory on the bloody soil of Tukayyid, the horrified and furious Precentor Martial shot Waterly for her duplicity, and Sharilar Mori took her place as Primus. Together, the two launched an aggressive reform campaign in an attempt to repair the damage done by Waterly's scheming, but their efforts split the order between reformers and conservatives.





THE REFORMATION

The announcement by Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht and the newly appointed Primus Sharilar Mori that ComStar would shed many of the organization's quasi-religious trappings surprised the Inner Sphere and shocked many ComStar adepts and acolytes. The pledge to turn ComStar into a clearinghouse for the dissemination of human knowledge throughout the Inner Sphere, following hard on the heels of the announced move toward secularization, delighted the Successor States and rocked the order to its foundations.

Across the Inner Sphere, members of ComStar either rejoiced at the news or called for Focht and Mori to be tried as traitors to the order. Precentor Demona Aziz of the First Circuit rebelled outright, fleeing to sanctuary within the Free Worlds League and calling for all "true disciples of Blake" to join her. Aziz's splinter group named itself the Word of Blake and named Captain-General Thomas Marik of the Free Worlds League, a former ComStar Precentor, as the rightful Primus of ComStar. Each convinced that it follows the true vision of Jerome Blake, the two orders have waged mutual guerrilla war ever since.

In an attempt to regain the Inner Sphere's trust, Primus Mori recently opened ComStar's historical archives to the public, broke ground for Blake University on Terra, and announced that the interstellar discoveries of ComStar's Explorer Corps will be made available to the Inner Sphere as of 3057. The Word of Blake, meanwhile, concentrates on building a power base within the Free Worlds League, under the protection of its Captain-General. Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao of the Capellan Confederation also recently contacted the renegade faction, and may replace his ComStar technicians with Word of Blake adepts when ComStar's maintenance contract expires. This expansion of the Word of Blake's power base poses an enormous threat to the continuing existence of ComStar.

Using its landhold in the Gibson system as a safe base, the Word of Blake continues to plot attacks against what it regards as the "heretic" ComStar. The Toyama sect, an ultra-radical fringe group, openly calls for ComStar's destruction, and, believing the Federated Commonwealth to be an ally of the reformed ComStar, demands that it be destroyed as well. The Toyama's most dangerous assault to date occurred in 3054, when ROM agents affiliated with the extremist sect attempted to smuggle a bomb into the ComStar headquarters on Hilton Head Island. Fortunately for ComStar, one of the few ROM agents to successfully infiltrate the Word of Blake ROM sent a warning that foiled the attack. As hostilities escalate between the two groups, we expect a dramatic upsurge in such incidents.



WOLFNET ARCHIVE

FILE: 26348-CS5-8/16/54

A SOURCE WITHIN ROM LEAKED THE FOLLOWING TRANSCRIPT TO WOLFNET, IDENTIFYING THE DOCUMENT AS A RECORD OF A FIRST CIRCUIT MEETING. VERACITY REMAINS UNVERIFIED, 3052.

(PRECENTOR ANASTASIUS) FOCHT: And what am I to do with you, Precentor Mori?

(PRECENTOR SHARILAR) MORI: I have done nothing that could be considered a capital crime.

FOCHT: Really? And I had always remembered treason carried with it the supreme penalty. After all, isn't spying for the Draconis Combine treason against ComStar?

MORI: What? How could you know?

FOCHT: I am the Precentor Martial. Security is very much a part of my job and discovering the leaks in ComStar's First Circuit is an important facet of maintaining my security. I had to be suspicious of a Combine agent being inside the First Circuit because of the way my presentation to the Primus by Theodore Kurita so many years ago pleased her. I was the answer to her prayers and Theodore certainly got everything he desired in return for my service to ComStar. The leaking of information to the Combine concerning the Clans and their activity, then of Operation Scorpion, suggested the spy was highly placed. Melissa confirmed a Combine connection with the warning about the Clans' return and Scorpion. The latter pointed to you, for the Primus would have sent the order out through you so she could repudiate the plan if it failed. You also had to be the one insulating her from full knowledge of its dismal failure.

MORI: Your analysis is flawless. I knew there was a risk, but I had to take it even if it put my cover in jeopardy.

FOCHT: As spies have ever done.

MORI: Indeed. So, will you shoot me because I have betrayed a dead organization?

FOCHT: That depends on you, Precentor. I, too, have a dream for ComStar. The war with the Clans has convinced me that we must not waste the resources we have, and the internecine battling between the Successor States has given me some ideas for a new direction for ComStar. I have a problem, however.

MORI: You are not a politician, nor do you have any desire to become one.

FOCHT: I do not have enough time left to become one. You, on the other hand, have negotiated the labyrinth of ComStar with enough skill to become a member of the First Circuit in a fairly short time. Have you the skill necessary to make a dream come true?

COMMAND STRUCTURE

The ComStar schism disrupted the command structures of both ROM and ComStar. Precentor ROM Victoria Parrdeau faces the enormous task of reorganizing the agency to compensate for the sudden drop in the organization's manpower and resources as well as to purge it of all Word of Blake elements.

As intelligence chief for ComStar, Precentor ROM Parrdeau ensures the agency's ability to take action against its enemies. The disruptive influence of Word of Blake ROM, whose agents took with them an intimate knowledge of ROM's workings, makes Parrdeau's task extremely difficult. On several occasions, Word of Blake ROM agents used their inside knowledge to disrupt or destroy many of ROM's operations, especially within the Free Worlds League where the Word of Blake makes its home. Word of Blake ROM operatives have so far managed to sabotage every ComStar operation launched within the Free Worlds League's borders.

Assisting the Precentor ROM are the State Administrators, one for each of the six Successor States and the four territories currently occupied by the Clans. Each of these ten administrators oversees operations within his or her respective jurisdiction and

keeps the Precentor informed of foreign agents' activities within each region. The administrators also enforce official policies to ensure the continued security of the service in each region, including the recently enacted mandate that all Word of Blake agents discovered within ROM suffer immediate execution. Many ComStar members consider this policy unnecessarily harsh, but most ROM agents believe that only such drastic measures can ensure the protection of ComStar as a whole.

Every world still containing an operational, ComStar-administered HPG facility maintains a ROM base, normally located within the HPG facility. Under the command of an administrator, ROM personnel assigned to these bases protect the facilities from enemy agents and carry out all intelligence operations on the planet. To support these planetary ROM operations, Precentor Parrdeau maintains a standing core of fast-response groups who, with the aid of a fleet of JumpShips, can respond immediately to any crisis situation.

Because so many ROM personnel defected to the Word of Blake, many ROM bases operate with a skeleton crew. A few bases have only one ROM agent remaining; because one agent does not an operation make, these operatives serve mainly to gather and transmit information. Until ROM can effectively deal



ROM

with the Word of Blake defectors and their SAFE allies, we expect little improvement to occur in current operations.

At least partly to keep the Word of Blake guessing, Precentor ROM Parrdeau has considerably reorganized the various branches of ComStar ROM. She has ordered several purges of the service, intended to eliminate Word of Blake infiltrators operating within its ranks. Her efforts in this area made it possible for ComStar ROM agents to prevent Word of Blake ROM from provoking violent altercations. Most of those attempts took place at HPG stations in the Federated Commonwealth, where the more bloodthirsty Word of Blake factions attempted to punish those individuals who defied Primus Waterly's orders during Operation Scorpion. Hoping to speed up the location and elimination of enemy infiltrators, Precentor Parrdeau now requires each HPG facility to assign at least one ROM agent to concentrate solely on counterintelligence operations. The counterintelligence contingent will prevent security breaches by ensuring the continuing loyalty of their operators, and also prevent subversion and sabotage by the Word of Blake. Already in a few cases, overzealous ROM adepts have executed fellow operatives for alleged treason whom later investigations proved innocent. Precentor Parrdeau bears responsibility for the unenviable task of finding a balance between legitimate protection against subversives and execution on mere suspicion.

The intelligence service's command staff also suffered defections after the schism, which forced ROM to restructure the chain of command. Operatives loyal to the reformed ComStar received promotions to several vacant positions within the command structure, and though these operatives possess sufficient talent to grow into their new responsibilities, the covert war may not give them time. ROM's new command structure reflects its reduced operational capabilities; many of the service's former ranks and positions have been expanded to place the duties originally assigned to three or four operatives within the purview of a single agent. By eliminating overlapping positions and unnecessary duplication of responsibilities, the reorganization creates a leaner, more efficient ROM. The tighter organization allows ComStar ROM to react to crisis situations faster, and the service's information-gathering network is slowly returning to its original level of effectiveness in every state except the Free Worlds League. The alliance with House Liao, coinciding with the expiration of ComStar's short-term maintenance contract within the Capellan Confederation, could spell trouble for ROM's intelligence network within Liao space as well.

Precentor Parrdeau intends for ComStar's restructuring of ROM to pose a serious threat to the Word of Blake, whose greater number of experienced agents have so far allowed them to match ComStar in most situations. Only the splinter group's paranoia and the distractions created by the power struggle taking place between the Word of Blake's different factions have allowed ComStar ROM to hold its own. Precentor ROM Parrdeau's goal is to create an organization that cannot be infiltrated or undermined, thereby ensuring the continued security of ComStar as a whole.

RANK STRUCTURE

ROM ranks its members according to a system similar to that of the Com Guards, using classifications based upon the Greek alphabet to identify ROM's various divisions. Each of the branches listed below also shows its operatives' standard classification.

ROM BRANCHES



Counterintelligence (Mu/Delta)

Under Precentor Parrdeau's reorganization of ROM, Counterintelligence has expanded to match the huge Information and Analysis Department, and receives an equivalent budget, which it is using to upgrade its entire operation. Currently under the command of Demi-Precentor Damien Constantine, Counterintelligence locates and eliminates infiltrators from the Word of Blake, the Successor States, and the Clans. The agents of this branch operate from the myriad HPG facilities maintained by ComStar across the Inner Sphere. At least one CI operative is posted at each A station, and presides over as large a counterintelligence force as is practical.

In the style of the pre-reformation ROM, Counterintelligence often employs brutal methods to unmask and eliminate enemy agents. The Precentor ROM justifies the continued use of such tactics as necessary to ensure ComStar's safety, which she considers paramount. Counterintelligence agents must take care to keep their strongarm tactics secret, in order not to fuel the Inner Sphere's lingering mistrust of the order. Significant public awareness of ROM brutality, even that recognized as necessary to combat the Word of Blake, would only reinforce public suspicions that ComStar has not really changed.

The Precentor ROM also uses the Counterintelligence division as a dumping ground for ROM's more volatile elements; restricting them to one division makes them easier to control. Though the worst of the old ROM's sadists and butchers defected to the Word of Blake, other unstable ROM agents accepted that the new ComStar had discovered the true gospel of Jerome Blake, and believed it their duty to support the reforms just as fanatically. Their psychological profile closely matches their opponents', a distinct advantage in counterintelligence work. This often gives them an edge in hunting down Word of Blake infiltrators and agents.

Counterintelligence has recently stepped up its activities in the Capellan Confederation, determined to destroy as many Word of Blake operatives assigned there as possible before the alliance between House Marik and House Liao solidifies. Aware that the alliance could bring the Capellan Confederation under the influence of the Word of Blake, ComStar ROM intends to shatter any budding Word of Blake power base within that state. In addition, Primus Mori and the Precentor ROM hope to install a secure intelligence network throughout the Confederation in order to keep tabs on Sun-Tzu Liao when ComStar can no longer operate openly within the Capellan Confederation.



Diplomatic Operations (Rho/Gamma)

The Diplomatic Operations Branch (DOB) presents one of ROM's more amiable faces. As representatives of ComStar, DOB personnel attend diplomatic functions within the Inner Sphere in an ongoing effort to prove the reformed order's good intentions. The actual requirements of this task vary from function to function; operatives may simply observe people and situations at public events, address a conference of historians, and so on.

The Diplomatic Operations Branch explains the official policies and beliefs of ComStar to the governments and various political factions in the Inner Sphere. At political functions, DOB operatives express ComStar's views and intentions on all subjects of interest to the order, and generally act as ComStar's public

relations officers. Like other intelligence agencies, the DOB also cultivates in its operatives skills to help them accomplish more private missions. All diplomatic operatives receive training in many less-acceptable social skills, including seduction. Operatives often carry out information-gathering missions targeted at a specific noble or diplomat who ROM considers a viable source of intelligence. The methods employed by the DOB range from seduction to outright blackmail, and even the most unorthodox approaches show a good success rate.

The current head of the DOB, Demi-Precentor Sasha Richardson, is an ex-entertainer from the game world of Solaris with a knack for getting others to talk without revealing her intentions. Based on the number of times they have met secretly with Richardson over the years, a number of important nobles within the Free Worlds Parliament may be under her influence.



Covert Operations (Rho/Rho)

Many people guessed at the existence of a ROM Covert Operations Branch, but only since the ComStar schism have those guesses been confirmed. A staggering number of Covert Operations agents defected to the Word of Blake, revealing the branch's operations and procedures to the Free Worlds League. The schism forced ComStar ROM to completely reorganize its Covert Operations Branch to keep its enemies from easily predicting its actions.

Covert Operations carries out all of ComStar's clandestine





ROM

operations. Though ComStar essentially abandoned its assassination and misinformation strategies in the Reformation,

Covert Operations agents continue to work throughout the Inner Sphere. As is true of most ComStar ROM divisions, most Covert Operations agents currently are involved in missions to counter enemy activity within the Free Worlds League. Operations against the Clans in the occupation zones have been transferred to the jurisdiction of the newly created Clan Liaison Department.

The Covert Operations Branch continues to represent the best-trained group within ROM. Though Primus Mori's reforms eliminated the doctrinal purity exams required by this division, candidates must still score within the top 4 percent on a battery of aptitude tests in order to qualify for Covert Operations. Those who pass enter an intensive training course that records show only one in five students completes. The specific training procedures for this branch remain shrouded in secrecy.

Demi-Precentor Lukas Freeman, a veteran operative who has served with the Covert Operations branch since his induction into ROM thirty years ago, currently runs the department.

Information And Analysis (Mu/Mu)

Under the new organizational structure, Information and Analysis (IA) receives the greatest percentage of ROM's budget and resources after the Counterintelligence Branch, reflecting the vital importance of its role. IA operatives stationed at every ComStar-run HPG facility screen all messages sent from and received by the stations for intelligence related to any aspect of the Inner Sphere's political and military situation. These agents send daily reports to IA headquarters on Terra, where IA experts analyze the raw data and feed their conclusions into a central processor that serves as the primary data store for the entire ROM computer network. Only by running this department at full capacity can ROM hope to keep up with, and perhaps anticipate, events.

The head of Information and Analysis, Demi-Precentor Lisa Morella, plans to upgrade the ComStar central processor using the advanced Clan computer hardware scavenged from the battlefields on Tukayyid. If installed and integrated successfully, the increased computer power will further increase ROM's ability to predict and react in a timely fashion to unfolding events throughout the Inner Sphere.

Clan Liaison (Rho/Chi)

Laboring under somewhat of a misnomer, the Clan Liaison branch maintains and supports covert operations within Clan-occupied territories. This branch controls all ROM-backed anti-Clan movements within the occupied zones, as well as supplying the various active partisan units and resistance movements among the citizens. Though the schism has cut off funding and other support for many of this branch's active sabotage operations, the department maintains the information network established in these areas and receives news of the Clans and their activities from operatives currently in place throughout the occupied zones.

Currently, the Clan Liaison Branch bases its operations on Karbala in the Free Rasalhague Republic, close enough to the Clan front lines for operatives outside the Clan borders to conveniently intercept their compatriots' transmissions. Demi-Precentor Mussad Degora, a one-time member of Wolf's Dragoons, heads up the Clan Liaison. Though a native of the Inner Sphere, Degora's long association with Jaime Wolf gave him considerable insight into Clan thinking and behavior. Immediately after the Battle of Tukayyid, he offered his services to ComStar as a liaison officer to the Clans.



Special Services (Delta/Epsilon, Delta/Xi)

As with the intelligence agencies of the Successor States, ROM occasionally takes small-scale military action as the last resort to accomplish its objectives. Precentor Martial Focht's policy of notifying the heads of Inner Sphere governments of all battalion-size or larger Com Guard troop movements makes it difficult for ROM to use those forces to carry out covert military action, and so ROM has reorganized its own commando teams into a new Special Services Branch. Made up of only two units, the Special Services Branch is an elite fighting force, reserved for critical missions and kept from public knowledge.

Blake's Wrath

Blake's Wrath, ROM's ground-based special forces units, receive training in both 'Mech combat and conventional warfare, intelligence work, and unorthodox combat. This unit functions primarily as a strike team or guerrilla unit, answering directly to the Primus. Recent reports suggest that as many as two hundred Blake's Wrath operatives may be operating behind Clan lines as resistance advisors and guerrilla fighters, creating considerable chaos for the Clan occupiers.

Valkyrie

The Special Services Branch Valkyrie unit is ROM's tactical aerospace force, comprised of the Com Guard's ace pilots and gunners. Only those Com Guards whose kill-ratings fall within the top 3 percent may be asked to serve in this unit, and its members receive certain resources, accommodations, and various luxuries not available to the rank and file.

Used both as an independent strike force and to support Blake's Wrath, the Valkyrie operate sixteen full flights of aerospace fighters, supported by several DropShips and JumpShips. This unit also answers directly to the Primus, and must receive written authorization before going into action.

Security (Mu/Iota)

ROM's Security Branch carries the responsibility for protecting important ComStar officials. These operatives serve as drivers, pilots, and bodyguards for key ComStar personnel, and are trained in a variety of armed and unarmed fighting techniques. Since the incident in 3054 when two members of the Toyama sect infiltrated the Security Branch and attempted to assassinate ComStar's entire command structure by smuggling a bomb onto Hilton Head Island, security operatives undergo frequent testing for loyalty and dedication to ComStar.

Most ROM security agents live and work in or around the major ComStar facilities on Terra, where the greatest number of high-level officials regularly congregate. The degree of protection provided has increased dramatically since the Toyama incident, which demonstrated just how far the Word of Blake was willing to carry the intelligence war.

The Word of Blake has attempted to assassinate several ComStar representatives over the past three years, including an attack against Precentor Daniel Corman of the Hesperus II HPG facility. An enemy agent attempted to ram Corman's groundcar with an ammunition truck, and only the skill of the Precentor's driver prevented a collision. The truck crashed into a bridge piling and then exploded, killing the would-be assassin, but evidence showed the driver's connections to Word of Blake.

The current head of Security is Demi-Precentor Marshall Owens, a veteran ROM officer.

HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING

ComStar ROM's missions are created and assigned by the command staff, headquartered on Terra. Since the fall of the Star League, ComStar has provided that planet's only government and defended it from depredations by the warring House armies since the beginning of the Succession Wars, both goals that ROM helped fulfill. Up until the ComStar Reformation, the location of ROM's headquarters was a closely guarded secret. ROM operatives defecting to the Word of Blake revealed its location, and any agents infiltrating Word of Blake or SAFE knows this information.

ROM headquarters lies a few kilometers south of the ancient city of Cairo in Egypt. The surrounding desert makes it impossible to approach the base without being seen. To counteract the extremes of heat and cold in the local environment, the complex lies two hundred meters beneath the sands, providing both a reprieve from the heat and cold above and protection from attack.

The complex can only be reached through one of the six tunnels that connect the headquarters to the surface. Each entry to the surface is protected by an armored bunker manned around the clock by a battalion of Com Guards. Designed to withstand direct nuclear attack, each entryway is located thirty kilometers from the complex and slopes gently downward underground to hardened blast doors. Behind this final barrier is a series of computer-controlled defensive weapons programmed to open fire on all unauthorized personnel.

The center of the complex is the ROM operations command, a vast circular chamber whose walls support row after row of computer screens and holo-generators. The screens display a constant stream of data, continually monitored by the ROM operatives stationed within the room. This data updates the ROM core processor, the vast computer system that provides the bulk of the organization's strategic information.

Aside from the operations command room, the complex contains the ROM training facility, an impressive installation boasting the most sophisticated and extensive training resources in the Inner Sphere. ROM trainees have access to the entire ComStar library, as well as a number of specialized databases compiled over the years by ROM agents.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

ROM faithfully serves the vision of Jerome Blake as interpreted by each successive Primus. With the brief exceptions of Kurstin the Mad and the anti-ROM Primus York, ROM has always followed the dictates of the Primus without question, and the agency's well-known, often murderous fanaticism prevented other members of the order from attempting to usurp the Primus' power. Nearly every Successor State's intelligence group, by contrast, has at one time or another become the tool of ambitious directors or anti-government forces, who convinced their agency's members that the true course for a given realm could only be achieved by opposing its current ruler.

ROM's major strength, in the present and the past, lies in the fact that ComStar is a religious order rather than a territorial state. The Successor States, as nations, must contend with the problems inherent in controlling vast physical territory and resources, as well as accommodating varying races and cultures. Members of ComStar, on the other hand, owe their allegiance to a philosophy rather than a national identity. The intelligence agencies of the Successor States constantly jockey for power, to be gained only by taking over hostile territory, while ROM expands its power by appealing to the human craving for an ordered existence. Having no territory to defend, save for the HPG network that no sane person would sabotage or destroy, ROM can devote its total attention to furthering ComStar's position as the guardian of technology in the Inner Sphere, without the distraction of the political battles fought by nation-states.

A second advantage ROM operatives enjoy is unrestricted access to the resources and protection offered by HPG facilities on worlds across the Inner Sphere. Whereas operatives from such groups as the Davion DMI or Kurita ISF may have no safety net in foreign territory, ROM operatives may contact any ComStar facility for support. The aftermath of the schism left ComStar without free access to the Free Worlds League stations, but its maintenance contracts with the other Great Houses and its continued authority at the smaller B stations ensure ComStar at least nominal control over the rest of the HPG network for several years. However, the Capellan Confederation may give Word of Blake technicians control over its HPG stations when that realm's



ROM

ComStar maintenance contract expires.

The HPG network historically served as ROM's greatest strength, making gathering and transmitting information almost effortless. Despite the Houses' recent appropriation of the HPGs within their respective realms, the House agencies must still rely on ComStar-operated technology to transmit intelligence to their command centers at maximum speed. This arrangement means that ROM can still intercept enemy intelligence through the ComStar network. Aware from the beginning that ComStar had access to all transmitted intelligence, House agencies devised complex codes to safeguard their messages. Since the ill-fated Operation Scorpion, the Houses take even more care when constructing their codes, and so ROM has been forced to develop ever more sophisticated codebreaking methods. Because ComStar personnel still transmit all messages, ROM operatives need only fear interception of their own transmissions by double agents, and each successive purge of its ranks reduces the likelihood of infiltration by House agencies or the Word of Blake.

Practically invincible until the schism, ROM's greatest weakness now is the massive loss of personnel to Word of Blake. The ROM operatives who defected took with them total knowledge of the operational procedures and security arrangements of the organization they left behind. Though the changes in procedure instituted by Precentor ROM Parardeau's restructuring of the agency will make some of this knowledge less useful, the Word of Blake's insight into all of ROM's inner workings may continue to give them an advantage.

The second disadvantage under which ComStar's ROM currently labors is its loss of control over the Free Worlds League HPG facilities. ROM's communications network essentially ends at the Free Worlds League border, as nearly all of that realm's HPG stations now belong to the Word of Blake, who maintains them for the benefit of their ally, House Marik. The loss of these facilities crippled many of ROM's information-gathering operations in the League and elsewhere, and now provides their deadliest enemies with a secure base from which to conduct their covert intelligence war.

Finally, the widespread mistrust of ComStar engendered by Operation Scorpion has drastically reduced the number of new converts to the order, depriving ROM of its largest traditional source of new recruits. The Word of Blake's rigid structure and single-minded purpose, by contrast, attracts many civilians uprooted by the Clan war, and the number of their recruits continues to grow.

Though the split within ComStar severely damaged ROM's capabilities, the dedication of its remaining operatives should eventually lead to its recovery. The agency's current restructuring will maximize its remaining resources and revitalize ROM with a new sense of purpose. ComStar maintains its monopoly on the knowledge necessary to operate and repair the HPGs, and will continue to provide ROM with fast, effective communications throughout most of the Inner Sphere. Access to ComStar technology alone will allow ROM to maintain its status as one of the Inner

Sphere's most effective information-gathering services, and should make it a valuable ally to the Successor States against the Clans. We expect ROM to continue to perform with the same cohesiveness as in the past, making it capable of successfully challenging the Word of Blake, especially as it regains membership. The outcome of the covert war between the two groups is still in doubt, particularly since the alliance between the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation could provide the Word of Blake with a considerable boost in resources, men, and materiel. Given the Word of Blake's avowed intention of destroying the organization they call the "heretic ComStar," a bloody confrontation between the two halves of the order seems inevitable.

PERSONALITIES

DEMI-PRECENTOR MU/DELTA I DAMIEN CONSTANTINE

Commanding Officer, Counterintelligence

As head of Counterintelligence, Demi-Precentor Constantine currently holds one of the most difficult positions within ROM, particularly in view of the serious level of infiltration by members of the Word of Blake.

Constantine was born on Terra in 3015, in the East End district of London. At the age of sixteen he joined ComStar, and, after passing a battery of tests, entered ROM at the age of twenty. The twenty years he spent as a counterintelligence agent amply demonstrated his brilliance, but a personality clash with his department head confined him to the rank of adept.

Recognizing his abilities, Victoria Parardeau put Constantine in charge of the Counterintelligence Department when she assumed the position of Precentor ROM. Over the past year, Constantine has dealt with the constant infiltration by the Word of Blake and House agencies as best he could, but even though his department has detected and removed a vast number of enemy agents, more appear every day. The staggering difficulties of his job have exacerbated Constantine's legendary bad temper, and though many of his colleagues consider him a miserable character, his loyalty to ComStar and honesty in his life and work make him a valuable member of ROM's command structure.

DEMI-PRECENTOR RHO/GAMMA V SASHA RICHARDSON

Commanding Officer, Diplomatic Operations

Born on Solaris VII, Sasha Richardson grew up in the fantasy world that surrounds the dueling arenas of Solaris City. She quit school before she graduated, eager to strike out on her own as an entertainer, but a series of scandals ruined her reputation. In each case, circumstances conspired to reveal Richardson's surprisingly skillful attempts at blackmail, and one particularly ugly event drove her from her homeworld.

ROM agents impressed by her skills at manipulation and seduction recruited her into ComStar soon after she left Solaris. She accepted their offer because she had nowhere else to go, but discovered that she enjoyed the work. Richardson gave all her efforts to her work and became a Demi-Precentor in 3050. Never more than a reluctant believer in ComStar's religious mission,

Richardson welcomed Primus Mori's reformation. Precentor ROM Pardeau recognized Richardson's devotion to her work, and appointed her head of the new Diplomatic Operations Branch in the reorganized ROM.

In the past few years, Sasha Richardson has become one of ComStar's best-known public faces. She attends all diplomatic functions held on Terra, and is rumored to have enjoyed romantic encounters with several foreign nobles. We assume she is black-mailing those nobles for information.

DEMI-PRECENTOR MU/CHI III MUSSAD DEGORA

Commanding Officer, Clan Liaison

An unusual addition to the ranks of ComStar, Mussad Degora served as a MechWarrior in Wolf's Dragoons for several years prior to the Clan invasion. During that time he became familiar with Clan customs and their way of thinking through his association with Jaime Wolf. In the spirit of cooperation that Colonel Wolf tried to inspire in the Inner Sphere leaders, he released Degora from Dragoon service in order to offer his services to ComStar as a liaison to the Clans. ROM created the Clan Liaison department in order to use Degora's specialized knowledge to ComStar's best advantage.

Degora works tirelessly to help ensure that nothing ComStar does would allow the Clans to honorably break the conditions of the Tukayyid agreement. He also keeps track of all Clan-related information gathered by ROM agents in hopes of finding something to give the Com Guards an edge against the Clans when the fighting resumes.

Though many of the First Circuit consider him no more than a grunt MechWarrior, this astute and intelligent man possesses a keen wit and the ability to think on his feet, skills that have served him well throughout his life.

DEMI-PRECENTOR MARTIAL RHO/EPSILON VI DAVID BURNSIDE

Commanding Officer, Special Services—Blake's Wrath

As commanding officer of Blake's Wrath, David Burnside has one of the most highly classified dossiers in the Inner Sphere. Our operatives spent many months proving his existence, and many more uncovering the following few significant details.

Medical records place Burnside between the ages of thirty-five and forty. According to rumor, he served with several mercenary companies and, for a brief time, with House Davion's MI6, the

Rabid Foxes. Apocryphal tales of Burnside's childhood state that he was brought up by relatives in the Federated Suns, but ran away from home in his early teens to join the AFFS. No official record of this man appears until 3039, when he served as a MechWarrior in the ranks of the Eridani Light Horse. The Eridani records list him as killed in action when his *Wolverine's* reactor exploded during maneuvers. The next official record begins in this year, when our agents within ComStar ROM identified him in his position as Demi-Precentor Martial for the Special Services unit known as Blake's Wrath.

Whatever his past, he appears to be an excellent soldier and leader. As yet, we know no details of his appearance or habits.

DEMI-PRECENTOR MARTIAL RHO/XI VII ANNABELLE FAIRBANKS

Commanding Officer, Special Services—Valkyrie

As commanding officer of Valkyrie, the Special Services Branch aerospace division, Annabelle Fairbanks has proven again and again her brilliance as a commander and pilot.

Originally from the Lyran Commonwealth, Fairbanks began her career as an aerospace pilot in the customs patrol on the world of Gladius. After spending several years chasing pirates and smugglers, she left the service and joined the first of several mercenary companies, with whom she served until 3041.

In that year, two ROM operatives seeking passage to a JumpShip waiting for them

offworld approached Fairbanks and offered her the commission. Aware that the flight was not scheduled, but willing to take the risk, when a customs flight from the planetary spaceport intercepted her craft, Fairbanks downed five fighters before safely reaching the JumpShip rendezvous point. Impressed, the ROM agents immediately offered her a position with the Com Guards.

Over the next decade, she rose through the Com Guard ranks through a combination of guts, motivation, and luck. During the battle for Tukayyid, she was shot down, but captured a Clan *Agatai* fighter, which she has flown ever since. As commanding officer of Valkyrie, she leads the Special Services aerospace into battle. Oftener than not, the mere sight of her vicious-looking, jet-black *Agatai* screaming through space terrorizes enemy pilots.

Fairbanks gets along well with her fellow pilots, in part because she trains with them on a regular basis. Her sterling record and outstanding kill-rating makes it likely that she will continue to command Valkyrie for the foreseeable future.



THE WATCH



The lengths to which the Inner Sphere was prepared to go in order to win the war against the Clans caught the invaders by surprise. Steeped in traditions of honor above all, the Clans only learned to take into account the Inner Sphere intelligence agencies' underhanded tactics through painful, unexpected defeats. Clan Wolf, its leadership half Inner Sphere already, has adapted fastest to the new rules of the game; but Clan Jade Falcon, slowly merging the intelligence game with the way of the Clans, may prove the more formidable enemy.

OVERVIEW

To the men and women who live according to the way of the Clan, which prizes honor and fair dealings above all else, the secrecy and skullduggery inherent in an effective intelligence agency is an alien concept. The Clans are primarily a warrior society, dedicated to winning glory in honorable combat. Lacking any inclination or training for the subterfuge and tedium endemic to the intelligence field, they despise the people and methods of the intelligence agencies of the Inner Sphere. Only the unexpected success of several Inner Sphere intelligence operations conducted against them convinced Clan military leaders that they might need a similar organization. Though they possess the personnel and technology on which to build such a service, cultural prejudice against the most common methods of intelligence gathering and operations prevents the Clans from effectively using their resources.

The military high command's biggest problem is how to develop its intelligence capabilities according to the way of the Clan. In fact, this problem may be the stumbling block that prevents the Clans from ever creating an intelligence agency as effective as any in the Inner Sphere. Of the six Clans leading the invasion—Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, Steel Viper, Nova Cat, Wolf, and Jade Falcon—only the latter two have, in strikingly different ways, begun to make serious progress toward developing effective intelligence networks.

Aside from military reconnaissance missions such as Wolf's Dragoons' trek to the Inner Sphere in 3005, Clan intelligence did not exist prior to the invasion of the Inner Sphere in 3049. Military leaders provided all troop-strength information requested during the ritual of bidding away combat forces; no outside threat to the Clans existed; and the outlet provided by the ritualized battles of Clan Trials defused any impulses toward large-scale, interClan warfare. Not only did the Clans have no need for intelligence operations, but the Star League Defense Forces who founded the Clans brought little intelligence expertise with them. The Star League Intelligence Command Headquarters and both training academies on Terra received direct strikes from nuclear attacks during the capture of Terra by forces loyal to the usurper Stefan Amaris, wiping out much of the SLDF's intelligence community. Few of the active intelligence operatives who survived were in a position to accompany Kerensky in his Exodus of 2784.

Successive defeats at the hands of supposedly inferior Inner Sphere forces at Wolcott, Twycross, Luthien, and finally Tukayyid,

showed the Clans that overwhelming military power alone did not assure victory on the field. In their search for an explanation for their losses, certain Clan officers pinpointed the Inner Sphere intelligence activities as the only significant difference between the battling sides, and decided that they needed similar forces to counter Inner Sphere operations. Because they lack a complete understanding of the role of intelligence, and saw only those missions involving covert, and thus dishonorable, actions, several powerful factions remained unconvinced that the Clans should emulate the Inner Sphere. These factions continue to place every possible obstacle in the way of the Clans developing a truly effective intelligence network.

As a society that has functioned without intelligence operations for nearly 300 years, the Clans retain no concept of the most fundamental work performed by these agencies. Only a small fraction of intelligence operations involves field work: at least 90 percent of intelligence requires gathering information from public records, personal documents, and electronic transmissions, then synthesizing and analyzing that information for the benefit of the government and military. Because the Clan leadership fails to grasp this distinction, the average Clan warrior finds it virtually impossible to understand the concept of intelligence operations or even think in terms of the deceit necessary to carry out effective espionage or act in such a dishonorable manner. As a result, the existing Clan intelligence service remains primitive compared to such Inner Sphere groups as SAFE or the ISF, and they get few results. Only the Jade Falcon and Wolf Clans have begun to recognize the military value of political intelligence and build their contingents of the overall Clan intelligence network into organizations that could eventually match the capabilities of the Inner Sphere agencies.

Wolfnet operatives offer the following observations on the workings of the Clan intelligence service, called the Watch. This poorly equipped, generally despised organization has the unenviable and nearly impossible task of defending the Clans against the intelligence agencies of the Successor States, ComStar, and Word of Blake. Each Clan directs a separate unit of the Watch, and the overall organization answers to the Grand Council, whose members carry the responsibility for setting policy and assigning missions.

IlKhan Ulric Kerensky appears disinterested in using his position as supreme ruler and overall commander of the Clans to streamline policy regarding the use of the Watch. A staunch member of the Warden faction, Ulric opposed the invasion of the Inner Sphere on the grounds that the Clans should only take over the Successor States if they collapsed through their own folly. Continued squabbling among the Clans about appropriate use of the Clan intelligence forces may serve his political ambitions. We also assume that anything that slows or stalls the Clan invasion of the Inner Sphere serves Ulric's purpose.

Because the Watch contingents belonging to Clans Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, Nova Cat, and Steel Viper currently operate under the same disadvantages and administrative styles, this briefing deals with those operations as a single entity. Clans Jade

Falcon and Wolf, by contrast, are developing their Watch contingents in strikingly different and ultimately more threatening ways, and are therefore considered separately.

Clan warriors consider intelligence work far beneath their exalted station in life. As a result, Clans Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, Steel Viper, and Nova Cat draw most of their agents from the dregs of the least-regarded freebirth units. This alone serves to ensure the poor reputation of the agency, even if its work was considered honorable and useful. Though individual members of the Watch retain their Clan affiliations and warrior-caste privileges upon joining the service, the lack of honor accorded to their work prevents Watch members in these Clans from exercising a warrior's legal rights. The Watch's proper place within Clan society remains undefined. Freebirth soldiers, despised though they are, possess privileges that freebirths in other Clan castes can only dream of; but the Clans consider intelligence work so dishonorable that to even consider warriors and "secret agents" as equals is an insult. The Clans most bound by tradition, generally the Crusaders, treat their intelligence agents like members of a technician subcaste at best and outcasts at worst. In what appears to be another carefully calculated political move, IlKhan Ulric has so far declined to provide guidance on this matter, leaving the question of caste to be decided by each individual Clan.

Hampered by a culture-wide attitude of disdain and the Clans' total unfamiliarity with the concept of intelligence operations, the Watch is by far the most ineffective agency within the Inner Sphere. Even within the Clan occupation zones, the Watch has yet to successfully complete a single mission assigned by the Clan Council. Smoke Jaguar, Ghost Bear, Steel Viper, and Nova Cat operatives receive only rudimentary training in intelligence techniques, leaving them poorly equipped for their role as intelligence agents and counterinsurgents for their Clan forces.





THE WATCH

CLAN WOLF

Clan Wolf draws its intelligence operatives from the ranks of technician caste freebirths and former MechWarriors who, through age or debilitating injury, no longer serve active duty. The least conservative of all the Clans, Clan Wolf recognizes talented freebirth soldiers and uses their capabilities rather than recruiting Watch operatives from the malcontents and other misfits. Clan Wolf treats its Watch operatives as a military subcaste, according them a measure of respect not found in the traditionalist Clans. As within any other Clan, however, individuals within Clan Wolf may go to great lengths to display their contempt for members of the Watch. Strong support from their Khans, particularly from junior Khan Phelan Ward, allows Clan Wolf MechWarriors who join the Watch to more easily continue to exercise their legal rights.

Not surprisingly, Clan Wolf is setting up its Watch operation using the insights into Inner Sphere politics and thinking offered by Khans Natasha Kerensky and Phelan Ward. Of all the Clans, Wolf is the most adept at using the Inner Sphere's own covert operations tactics against it. The greatest difficulty Clan Wolf faces in training its operatives is a remaining cultural prejudice against "dishonorable" activities and ignorance of effective methods.

CLAN JADE FALCON

Clan Jade Falcon recruits all members of its Watch contingent from the ranks of sibko-born MechWarriors who have tested out of active service. As with Clan Wolf, Clan Jade Falcon treats its Watch contingent with the honor due a military subcaste, and backing from Khan Chistu assures them a warrior's legal status in fact as well as rank. Though the Falcons appear to be creating an intelligence service that allows its members to honor the way of the Clan and requires no dishonorable behavior, even they must still contend with a certain amount of automatic hostility to the entire concept of the Watch.

Though its version of the Watch runs far ahead of other conservative-minded Clans' intelligence services, Jade Falcon intelligence still ranks far below the capabilities of the least successful Successor State agency. Its Watch operatives, like all the others, have so far failed to execute a single assignment received from the Grand Council. However, battlefield losses caused by lack of information on the planet Morges prompted the Jade Falcons to focus their operations on information-gathering and analysis rather than counterinsurgency, and this approach quickly earned the Watch success in an operation carried out under their own initiative.

The Jade Falcon Watch, under the command of Kael Pershaw, used information-gathering and analysis to spare its armies a military debacle on the world of Borghese. When the front lines of the Clan conflict shifted, the Federated Commonwealth pulled its garrisons off the world, making the apparently defenseless planet a tempting target for invasion. Acting on Pershaw's recommendation, which he based on reports from the Watch, Khan Chistu sent only a single DropShip to Borghese instead of the full-scale

invasion force advocated by less cautious Falcon commanders. This reconnaissance team discovered that the situation on Borghese differed drastically from what their contacts on the planet led them to believe. The planetary militia, led by a mercenary unit that the Clans' Borghese allies had assured them was destroyed, showed no inclination to surrender, and Federated Commonwealth forces from the nearby front lines were actually en route to Borghese to reinforce the garrison. Had Pershaw not insisted on conducting a reconnaissance mission before launching an invasion force, the Jade Falcons would have committed major resources to a costly military venture that might easily have failed. Successes such as the Borghese venture amply justify Khan Chistu's politically risky reshaping of the Jade Falcon Watch, and may eventually prompt Falcon commanders to reexamine their cherished prejudices against such an agency.

SUMMARY

Because the Clans had no experience in dealing with intelligence tactics, the intelligence services of the Successor States provided their respective realms with one of very few advantages in combating the Clan threat. The Clans' astute military leaders recognized the gap in their defenses, but their honor-driven culture made it impossible for them to respond in kind. Lacking any other example to draw from, the Clans modeled the Watch upon their perception of the Successor States' intelligence agencies, a viewpoint tainted by conscious and unconscious assumptions of the Inner Sphere's innate worthlessness. Convinced of their own superiority, Clan leaders refused to recognize the dangerous effectiveness of Inner Sphere intelligence operations. This attitude handicapped the Watch's feeble efforts to copy the actions of such groups as the ISF and the MIO, and left them incapable of learning enough by example to outsmart their opponents.

Posing an additional problem, many of the Grand Council Khans see little need for the services of the Watch, agreeing to its creation primarily to satisfy the demands of a few cautious military commanders within their own Clans. Of those commanders pushing for an intelligence agency, most regard the Watch more as a means of countering a nuisance than as an effective fighting tool. Only a few Clan Wolf and Jade Falcon leaders understand the military value of intelligence, and as a result take the training and assignments of the Watch more seriously. Because so few voices challenge the general Clan opinion, the Council has given the Watch's potential little thought in planning the post-truce stage of the advance to Terra. So far, the Clans have limited the Watch's activities to detecting and eliminating enemy agents operating within the occupation zones. Clan Wolf has also mounted a few, tentative covert operations against border worlds near its occupation zone, and Clan Jade Falcon is concentrating on collecting useful political information from the states outside their borders. Despite their best efforts, the Watch has made few inroads into ending enemy activity behind Clan lines, and the number of Inner Sphere partisan units and underground movements has risen steadily since the beginning of the invasion.

BRIEFING

The Watch holds primary responsibility for counteracting enemy infiltration and partisan movements in the occupied zones, which they do to the best of their meager ability. Because the Clans in general hold such opponents as enemy agents and civilian resisters in low esteem, by battling these factions the Watch performs a task that no warrior would stoop to. Except in Clan Wolf, the Watch rarely engage in covert missions. The Clans regard the Watch as little more than a glorified police force: agents do not move beyond the boundaries of the occupation zones, and concentrate their efforts in counterinsurgency, a complicated and difficult assignment even for a well-trained and disciplined intelligence service. Ill-trained and shunned by their society, the Watch finds effective counterinsurgency practically impossible.

According to recent rumor, the Clan Smoke Jaguar Watch has made some attempts to infiltrate communities on the planet Wolcott. Still smarting from their defeat on that world at the hands of Hohiro Kurita, the Smoke Jaguars suspect that their Kurita opponents are using Wolcott as a staging area for raids within the Smoke Jaguar occupied zone. The average Clansmen's utter inability to sustain a false role convincingly, coupled with the cultural rigidity of Kurita society, makes a shambles of these bungling attempts.

Among the Watch's current objectives is the capture of enemy agents for study. Even the most resistant Clan commanders have begun to recognize the deficiencies of the Watch, and hope that by learning more about the procedures and training of Inner Sphere intelligence, they can adapt this information to their own operations. Given the overriding cultural prejudice against anything not Clan, however, Wolfnet doubts that the Clans will be able to adopt Inner Sphere ways. Only Clan Jade Falcon's approach, using intelligence methods adaptable to notions of Clan honor, offers the Clans any hope of competing against the experienced Inner Sphere agencies.

The Watch's current goal is to upgrade its counterintelligence and security operations within the occupied zones. Wolfnet agents report that large numbers of ISF, LIC, and ROM (both Word of Blake and ComStar) operatives are in place within the occupation zones, acting as advisors to local partisan groups. Given the incompetence of the fledgling Watch organization, these operatives present a major threat to the overall security of the occupied zones. The best example of the need for skilled covert operatives is the world of Wolcott, controlled by House Kurita but deep within Smoke Jaguar territory. The planet makes a perfect staging area for anti-Clan activities by the Draconis Combine, and yet, bound by honor not to retake the planet but lacking agents capable of infiltrating its society, the Clans remain powerless to stop them.

CLAN WOLF

In addition to keeping its occupation zone free of harassment from enemy agents and resistance groups, the Wolf Watch uses its intelligence operatives against their counterparts in the other Clans. Through misinformation and judicious use of covert opera-

tions that can be blamed on Inner Sphere agents, Khan Phelan Ward hopes to keep his Clan one step ahead of its rivals. Wolfnet operatives speculate that Khan Ward, like the illKhan, wishes to at least slow, if not stop, the invasion of the Inner Sphere.

Though nowhere near the level of deadly competence exhibited by Successor State agencies, the Clan Wolf Watch is easily the most successful Clan agency conducting covert operations. Clan Ghost Bear has made a few attempts to sabotage the Wolves' intelligence network, with no apparent effect on Wolf Clan operations.

CLAN JADE FALCON

In its attempt to build a Clanlike, "honorable" intelligence agency, Clan Jade Falcon uses its operatives only as information-gatherers, and does not ask them to take on covert operations of any type. The Falcon Watch often assigns MechWarriors nearing the end of active service to travel to the Successor States and bring back information, thus extending their usefulness to the Clan. Such warriors receive a brief tutorial on Inner Sphere customs and politics, then travel openly as Clan MechWarriors.

In another primary intelligence-gathering tactic, Clan Jade Falcon positions Star-League-era "bug" ships in orbit around a planet and configures them to monitor all in-system communications. Naturally, this nets the Watch no military information, but provides valuable political, cultural, and economic intelligence that may prove just as important.

BRIEF HISTORY

The Clans, a regimented society bred to war, are the descendants of the long-vanished General Aleksandr Kerensky and his Star League Defense Forces. More than 250 years ago, the dying Star League's last great hero led his people into unknown space in the Exodus of 2784. Within a generation of landfall, the Star League Army itself collapsed. Out of the ashes of the civilization Kerensky's forces tried to create rose the Clans. This caste-based society glorified its warriors, elevated Clan honor to a virtual religion, and adopted as its ultimate goal the reconquest of the Inner Sphere from the "barbarians" who had dared to destroy the glorious Star League.

Near the turn of the 31st century, this guiding principle split the Clans into two factions: the Crusaders, bent on immediately invading the Inner Sphere and reclaiming it for the Star League, and the Wardens, who opposed the invasion until and unless the total collapse of the Inner Sphere compelled the Clans to intervene to save humanity. The hope of invasion prompted the Clans' first attempt at intelligence operations, when the sizable Crusader faction sent military units to the edges of Periphery space to capture solitary trading vessels and pirate ships. From the crews of these ships, the Clans wrung information about their future Inner Sphere opponents. In mistakenly believing, however, that the Periphery's low technological level existed throughout the Inner Sphere, the Clans exhibited the first symptoms of the cultural blind spot that would eventually cost them the easy conquest they expected.



THE WATCH

Utterly confident of their own superiority, the Clans believed the only necessary intelligence operations were those related to military reconnaissance and debriefing, and simply ignored any information that contradicted their fixed ideas. Aside from capturing and questioning Periphery pirates, the Clans made only three additional attempts prior to the invasion to gather the facts about their opponents. The formation and deployment of Wolf's Dragoons, the debriefing of the crew of *Outbound Light*, and the interrogation of Periphery prisoners during the first year of the invasion all failed to aid the Clan war effort because Clan leaders listened to what they wanted to hear and rejected everything else.

In the year 3000, Khan Nadia Winson of the Crusader Clan Ghost Bear forced the issue of invasion to a vote in the Grand Council. As a ploy to gain time to defeat the Crusaders, Khan Kerlin Ward of Clan Wolf, a prominent Warden Clan, suggested a compromise. Instead of immediate invasion, he proposed that the Council send a reconnaissance force, disguised as a mercenary unit, to the Inner Sphere to judge its military capability. The Grand Council agreed, and Clan Wolf mustered a collection of low-regarded, freebirth warriors into the unit dubbed "Wolf's Dragoons." The Dragoons left Clan space in 3004, and made contact with the Inner Sphere a year later. They then began their historic circuit of service through the Great Houses, gathering detailed information on the governments and militaries they served. The Dragoons reported back to the Clans that, far from being on the verge of collapse, the Inner Sphere was thriving, and might make a formidable enemy. This report contradicted all Clan expectations, and because it came from mere freebirths, most Crusaders chose to reject it.

The appearance of the ComStar exploration vessel *Outbound Light* near the Smoke Jaguar world of Huntress in 3048 gave the Clans a second opportunity to gather accurate information about the Inner Sphere. In debriefing the crew, Khan Leo Showers of Clan Smoke Jaguar learned that the union of the Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth and recent discoveries of lostech placed the Inner Sphere on the verge of restoring the Star League without the Clans' help. Khan Leo Showers used the threat of this travesty and the possibility that ComStar, whose existence the Clans had not suspected, might soon discover the Clan worlds, to tip the political balance toward invasion. Because he could fashion a persuasive argument from the information gained through the debriefing, Khan Leo Showers chose to listen to the crew of the *Outbound Light*. Had their information proved less useful, the Clans would have paid no more attention to them than they had to Wolf's Dragoons almost thirty years before.

When the Clans began cutting a swath through the Periphery in 3049, they took prisoners and occasional bondsmen from the enemy troops they crushed. They interrogated every captive, but asked only for military information: how many regiments they might face on a world, or what kind of armaments a unit might carry. The concept of using political, economic, or cultural intelligence to determine battle strategy never occurred to the

Clan leaders, and the relative ease with which their forces snuffed out Periphery resistance only confirmed the Clans' conviction that their superior strength alone would carry the day. Intelligence, even simple information-gathering, took a distant second place.

COMMAND STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Though the Watch technically answers to the Grand Council, who have overall responsibility for policy and command decisions, each occupying Clan directs a Watch unit responsible to that Clan's Khan. Known as branches, the Watches of Clans Smoke Jaguar, Ghost Bear, Steel Viper, and Nova Cat use much the same structure and methods of operation. Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon each approach the intelligence agency from a different viewpoint, and their branches are considered separately.

Because the majority of the invading Clans regard their intelligence services as lower in status than the military caste, the Watch operatives and leaders hold no power within the Clan command structure. On the rare occasions when their commanders even bother to notice them, they only wish to know how soon the Watch can guarantee an end to acts of sabotage by resistance groups and enemy agents. Each unit of the Watch has jurisdiction in its own occupation zone to handle its own Clan's problems with partisan groups and enemy operatives.

An overall commanding officer oversees each branch of the Watch, usually a veteran who has outlived his usefulness in the battlefield. The branch commander keeps the unit in line and assigns agents and group commanders to individual missions. Adhering to the strict discipline of the Clan warrior caste, in which senior commanders take responsibility for the actions of their subordinates, senior Watch operatives answer for any failed missions or crimes committed by their personnel. Understandably, each branch commander rules his agents with an iron hand.

Group commanders and operatives constitute the only ranks within the Watch. When assigning personnel to a mission, the branch commander chooses one operative to lead that mission. That operative then takes full responsibility for the unit's actions, though the branch commander shares equal blame for failure because of his poor judgment in giving a mission to incompetent operatives. The ongoing competition between the Clans, both to prove their fighting prowess and in their preparations to reach Terra first permits little cooperation between the various Watch branches, and missions undertaken by more than one branch in the same territory often degenerate into vicious skirmishes.

Though many Inner Sphere intelligence agents find the concept of Clan intelligence amusing, those who know anything of Clan interrogation tactics genuinely fear capture by the Watch. Those few agents unlucky enough to undergo interrogation by the Clans suffer a painful ordeal. Using methods borrowed from Clan police forces, an interrogation team of at least three operatives straps the captured agent to a metal table under a harsh spotlight and connects him to a biomonitor similar to those once used as

lie-detectors. The operative assigned to read the biomonitor then floods the agent's system with a psychoactive drug that enhances emotional responses and sensory perceptions, and the other two take turns questioning the enemy agent using the good/bad roles common to most interrogations. This physical and emotional hypersensitivity has two effects: it robs the agent of logical thought and the will to resist, and enables the interrogators to inflict

excruciating pain by simply touching the captive's skin, or slightly increasing the intensity of the light. Increased doses of the psychoactive chemical alone can heighten sensitivity to the point of agony, and if continued too long may drive the captured agent to madness. The biomonitor measures stress reactions to questions, allowing the interrogators to judge whether or not their captive is concealing information or resisting the effects of the drug.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE **FILE: 48431-WC7-1/17/50**

THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF A SECRETLY RECORDED INTERROGATION PASSED TO A WOLFNET OPERATIVE FROM A SOURCE WITHIN THE WOLF CLAN. THE SUBJECT OF THE INTERROGATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS AN INNER SPHERE MECHWARRIOR EMPLOYED BY THE KELL HOUNDS, CAPTURED BY ELEMENTS OF THE WOLF CLAN ON AUGUST 13, 3049, IN THE ROCK SYSTEM, OBERON CONFEDERATION.

THE IDENTITY OF THE INTERROGATORS AND THE LOCATION OF THE SESSION ARE UNKNOWN.

INTERROGATOR A: State your name.

SUBJECT: Phelan Patrick Kell.

INTERROGATOR B: Phelan, how many regiments does the Draconis Combine have?

SUBJECT: Officially the Snakes have 100 line units, but they've rebuilt the DCMS mostly in secret so it's hard to be sure exactly what's going on.

INTERROGATOR B: What about the Lyran Commonwealth? What have they under arms?

(BRIEF PAUSE)

SUBJECT: I don't know.

TECHNICIAN: Spikes right to the top of the scale, sir. He is blocking.

INTERROGATOR B: What does his SPL blood level look like?

TECHNICIAN: In the seventy-fifth percentile.

INTERROGATOR B: Go to the eightieth, but give me a clock so I only keep him there for fifteen minutes. Phelan, we are all friends here. You can trust me. How many regiments does the Lyran Commonwealth maintain?

(PAUSE)

INTERROGATOR B: Back SPL off to the seventy-seventh percentile. He has no resistance, no chemo-immunity developed in him. He has a strong will, nothing more.

INTERROGATOR B: The Federated Suns...how many regiments do they have?

(PAUSE)

TECHNICIAN: Resistance building, sir. He has linked the Federated Suns with the LyrCom.

INTERROGATOR B: If you cannot tell me about the Federated Suns, we will have to know about the Nagelring.

SUBJECT: No! No, no, no, no, no... (BRIEF PAUSE) The AFFS has 103 regiments.

TECHNICIAN: He is still resisting.

SUBJECT: The Davion and Steiner militaries have been merged into one and the whole thing is called the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth.

INTERROGATOR B: Good, very good, Phelan. How many regiments does the LCAF have? (PAUSE) Take him up to eighty and back down again immediately. (UNINTELLIGIBLE SCREAM FROM SUBJECT) How many regiments does the Lyran Commonwealth have?

(PAUSE)

SUBJECT: One-hundred fifty-three regiments. The sixty-five coming from Skye and Tamar are questionable in loyalty because the Archon has forbidden them to try to take back former Tamar Pact worlds from Rasalhague.

INTERROGATOR B: Very good, Phelan. Work with us and we will not have to hurt you again...

THE WATCH



CLAN WOLF

Though the command structure of the Clan Wolf Watch follows the same hierarchy as every other Clan but Jade Falcon, Wolf appears to use a much looser organization, allowing its agents to show more initiative. Clan Wolf also bases its primary command center in the field, from which it can react more quickly to developing situations, rather than depending on direction from the homeworld. Treated as a military subcaste, Clan Wolf Watch operatives advise the Khans based on gathered intelligence, and retain whatever military rank they held before joining the service.

Clan Wolf recognized the value of intelligence other than military very early in the invasion. Because they take captured enemy warriors as bondsmen, rather than incarcerating them as prisoners, Khan Ulric Kerensky was able to discover Phelan Kell's potential soon after his capture in the Periphery. Khan Ulric used Phelan's experience, specialized knowledge, and unorthodox thinking to the best possible advantage during the war on the Inner Sphere. On several occasions, it was Phelan's personal, cultural, or economic knowledge, rather than military intelligence, that took planets with minimal loss of life. For example, Phelan reminded Khan Ulric of the debilitating effects of the Fenris flu on the military of Rasalhague, and used his knowledge of the history of the Rasalhague rulers to give Ulric a way to neutralize that planet's aerospace forces. His intimate knowledge of Tor Miraborg, the leader of the planet Gunzburg, allowed Phelan to win that world's surrender singlehandedly. Clan Wolf's spectacular successes all through the invasion, including their victories on Tukayyid, all owed some debt to intelligence provided by Phelan Kell.

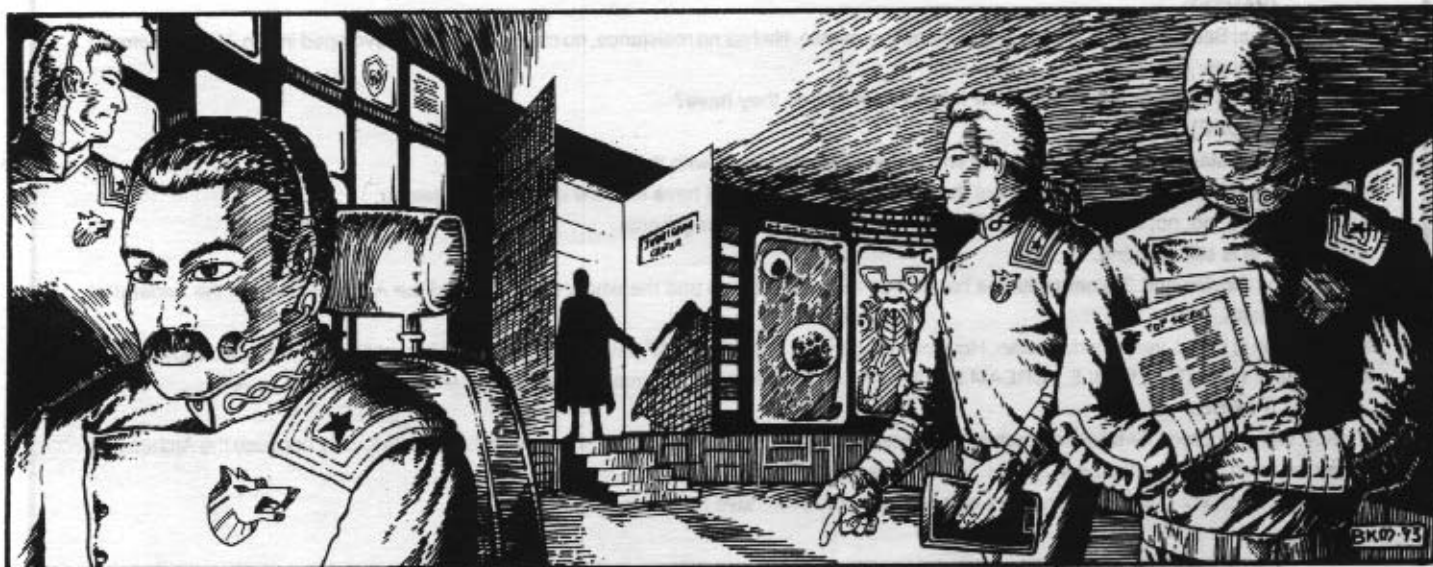
Wolf Khans Natasha Kerensky and Phelan Ward understand the value of a good intelligence agency, and treat its members' contributions to the war effort with as much respect as they can manage politically. However, because both Khans come to the intelligence game from a warrior background, they lack a true

understanding of the art of intelligence operations and are directing the Wolf Watch exclusively toward field work, particularly within the Successor States themselves. While they enjoy some success with these methods, the Watch's complete lack of analysis already makes their operations less effective than those of Clan Jade Falcon.

CLAN JADE FALCON

The Jade Falcon branch of the Watch maintains a comparatively small staff because it conducts no field operations. The chain of command and responsibility is direct: junior Khan Vandervahn Chistu gave command of the Falcon Watch to Star Colonel Kael Pershaw, who accepts responsibility for twelve operatives. Pershaw, a former MechWarrior and highly valued staff aide who has proved his worth in both capacities many times over, enjoys the Khan's complete confidence. Because Khan Chistu recognizes the value of their work, members of the Falcon Watch retain the military rank they held before induction into the intelligence service. Pershaw chose his staff from the warrior caste, selecting twelve intelligent men and women who were past their prime as warriors but open to change. As a further illustration of the importance Khan Chistu gives to this venture, two of the Watch branch are Bloodnamed.

The Falcon Watch has pinpointed perhaps the only intelligence technique that the Clans can use honorably and that might give them an edge in the renewed conflict with the Inner Sphere. Forced by battlefield losses to look for ways to conduct intelligence operations without tying up a lot of manpower, Kael Pershaw recognized the fundamental function of intelligence operations: to gather information from all possible sources, analyze that information, draw conclusions, and synthesize the results into a military and political strategy. Content to leave counterintelligence activities, including counterinsurgency, to the PGCs and proper military channels, the Falcon Watch operatives con-



concentrate all their efforts on becoming intimately familiar with the peoples, cultures, and economies of the areas to which they are assigned. They gather much information from intercepted electronic communications, supplied in part by reports transmitted from listening ships stationed above important planetary systems.

These operatives gain additional information by debriefing Falcon warriors traveling throughout the Inner Sphere. Though this type of travel remains a rare occurrence, Wolfnet recently discovered that Kai Allard-Liao invited Star Captain Taman Malthus to visit him on Solaris. This trip presents a perfect opportunity to obtain exactly the type of intelligence that will help Clan Jade Falcon better judge its enemy and thus avoid repeating the humiliating defeats suffered at the hands of the Inner Sphere.

Though loath to admit Clan Wolf's superiority in any area, Khan Chistu acknowledges that much of that Clan's success in the invasion rested directly on the specialized cultural information provided by just one Inner Sphere warrior, Phelan Kell. Khan Chistu is obviously determined to make that same type of information, especially on exploitable weaknesses, work for his Clan in the coming years.

HEADQUARTERS AND TRAINING

Though physical accommodations and resources for the Watch in all the Clans reflects their lower status in respect to the true warrior caste, training varies considerably. In keeping with their status as persona non grata within the command structures of Clans Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, Steel Viper, and Nova Cat, the Watch receive few resources and even less attention, severely restricting their training capabilities. In these four Clans, the Watch operates from a single headquarters building on each Clan's respective homeworld, planning and assigning all intelligence activities in command centers attached to military bases light-years away from the occupation zones. We can only ascribe a purely political motive to this extraordinary foolishness on the part of an otherwise astute military command. Having been pushed into creating an intelligence agency, most of the Clan commanders appear to have deliberately hamstrung the Watch with unworkable conditions to make sure it fails. Regularly scheduled Clan JumpShip circuits carry orders from the homeworlds to the occupied planets, where senior Watch operatives receive and act on them to the best of their ability.

Each Clan also maintains a small intelligence office in the main Clan compound on every occupied world. These offices, uniformly cramped and run-down, serve Watch operatives as both a base of operations and living quarters. Though the realities of life on the front lines make accommodations less than luxurious for everyone, the Watch draws the worst facilities in all the Clans, even the Jade Falcons and the Wolves. New equipment always comes last to the Watch, and the frequent lack of such basic amenities as power and water forces them to shut down their offices on a regular basis. Regarding the Watch as practically worthless, Clans Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, Steel Viper, and Nova Cat would never insult honorable warriors by providing



decent facilities for the scum of the army. A similar attitude shared by the rank and file of Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon makes according the Watch the treatment warranted by its rank politically risky; most warriors resent the very existence of the Watch, considering them an insult to every decent Clansman.

All current Watch operatives came to their position with a thorough grounding in standard infantry and close-combat skills. In addition, Clans Smoke Jaguar, Nova Cat, Ghost Bear, and Steel Viper offer a sketchy description of the few intelligence procedures they have gleaned from observations of the Successor States agencies. They place little value on these techniques, however, scorning them as fit only for "Inner Sphere barbarians;" in many cases their cultural prejudice keeps them from understanding these intelligence strategies well enough to either apply or counteract them. These Clans currently do little else in the way of training procedures. Their Watch units lack the sophisticated training facilities available within the Successor States, and the low esteem in which the Watch is held prevents instructors from maximizing the few resources available. Those Clansmen ordered to train the operatives know only a little more than their students about the ins and outs of intelligence work, lacking most of all the valuable long-term experience within the field that Inner Sphere instructors draw on. In addition, these circumstances force each instructor to teach far too many operatives at once to be effective. The most obvious solution to the problem, using captured Inner Sphere agents as intelligence instructors, may never occur to the leaders of these four Clans.

CLAN WOLF

The Clan Wolf Watch receives its orders from headquarters in the field, located on the most secure planets within the Wolves' occupied zone. The Watch's sanctioned connection to the military entitles them to somewhat better equipment and training facilities than any other Clan except Jade Falcon. Khans Natasha Kerensky and Phelan Ward are using their intimate knowledge of Inner Sphere tactics and thinking to train an intelligence force that closely resembles those of the Successor States. Assuming that the progressive elements in Clan Wolf will not succumb to the

THE WATCH



cultural pressure of a conservative backlash, Clan Wolf's branch of the Watch may rival the best intelligence agencies of the

Inner Sphere within fifteen years.

The Khans of Clan Wolf instruct selected senior officers in the intelligence techniques used by Inner Sphere agencies, and these officers in turn instruct the Clan Wolf Watch operatives. The most adaptable of all the invading Clans, the Wolves find it easier than their fellow Clansmen to overcome cultural prejudice and take advantage of "Inner Sphere barbarisms" that they find useful.

CLAN JADE FALCON

With the backing of the Jade Falcon's Khan Chistu, Kael Pershaw is building his branch of the Watch into a cohesive and perceptive analysis team. Instead of adopting Inner Sphere intelligence techniques, as Clan Wolf has done, Clan Jade Falcon's small information and analysis staff applies the observation and reporting skills generally used for battlefield reconnaissance to gathering political intelligence in the hope of giving the Clan a battlefield edge.



INTELLIGENCE SKILL PACKAGES

The function and capabilities of individual intelligence agencies may differ significantly, and so representing the diverse capabilities and backgrounds of operators is important. Through the training and battle experiences of individual MechWarriors and the life of a BEST officer, for example, will be the first of a member of the DMI's Economic Information Department. The following information will help you to understand the diversity of provided packages and with additional options for operators in a specific area.

Instructions on creating a character using the rules of the character Attributes (MechWarrior) and in this section, see MechWarrior. Second, the appropriate approval is given to the character.

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All intelligence agencies of the Inner Sphere have their own training standards in the area of intelligence and operations. Regardless of the intelligence or operational specialty, those who wish to serve in their House's intelligence service must stand out of their university. After completing initial training, each operative chooses an area of specialization. An operator will determine the service branch the operative eventually joins, a fact that should be considered when creating a character.

Every player who intends to choose one of the intelligence packages must take the basic training provided by the Intelligence University Package. Once he or she completes the initial training, the player should choose an intelligence specialty (IQS) that reflects the character's area of expertise at the university.

In both Basic Training and Specialty Training, candidates must take all required courses. Students choose two specialties from each category to complete the course study. In fact, the student chooses a double specialty major (two IQS for the same major) or a double specialty minor (two IQS for two different majors). The player may choose an extra skill from the package. In addition to these packages, intelligence university students may choose any of the standard Military Operations Specialty Packages available at the military academies. See MechWarrior, Second Edition, for details on the MOS packages.

The elite nature of the intelligence community provides the guarantee that a character who enters one of these universities will complete the course. To represent this guarantee, a character must make a test against the Mental Operations package upon entering the university. On a successful roll, the character is judged capable of continuing and may then finish the course and choose his IQS. An unsuccessful roll implies that the character failed to complete the course, and may only buy skills that are

GAMING SECTION





GAME INFORMATION

INTELLIGENCE SKILL PACKAGES

The functions and capabilities of individual intelligence agents may differ significantly, and so representing the diverse capabilities and backgrounds of operatives is important. Though the training and battle experiences of individual MechWarriors are fairly universal, the life of a DEST officer, for example, will be distinctly different than that of a member of the DMI's Electronic Information Gathering department. The following information should help create this diversity by providing players and gamemasters with additional options for characters in a **MechWarrior** campaign.

For general instructions on creating characters, using archetypes, and definitions of the character Attributes, Characteristics, and skills mentioned in this section, see **MechWarrior, Second Edition**. The following abbreviations appear in the archetype descriptions: BLD—Build, REF—Reflexes, INT—Intuition, LRN—Learn, CHA—Charisma.

NEW UNIVERSITY PACKAGES

All the intelligence agencies of the Inner Sphere operate institutions for training candidates in the arts of espionage and intelligence. Regardless of the innate intelligence or potential of a candidate, those who wish to serve in their House's intelligence service must attend one of these universities. After completing initial training, each operative chooses an area of specialization. This specialization will determine the service branch the candidate eventually joins, a fact players should consider when generating characters.

Every player who intends to choose one of the Intelligence Operative careers must take the basic training provided by the Intelligence University Package. Once he or she completes the initial training, the player should choose an Intelligence Occupation Specialty (IOS) that reflects the character's area of concentration at the university.

In both Basic Training and Specialty Training, candidates must take all required courses. Students choose two electives from each category to complete the course study in that field. If a student chooses a double specialty major (two IOS fields), overlapping classes will count toward these requirements and the player may choose an extra skill from the electives. In addition to these packages, intelligence university students may choose any of the standard Military Occupational Specialty packages available at the military academies. See **MechWarrior, Second Edition**, for details on the MOS packages.

The elitist nature of the intelligence community precludes any guarantee that a character who enters one of these universities will complete the course. To represent this possible failure, a character must make a test against his Mental Characteristic upon entering the university. On a successful roll, the character is judged capable of continuing and may then finish the course and choose his IOS. An unsuccessful roll indicates that the player failed to complete his course, and may only buy skills from the



Basic Training category. Characters who fail to finish their university term may choose only Rogue Operative from the intelligence careers.

Basic Intelligence University Package	15 pts
5 Skills at Level 2	
5 Skills at Level 1	
Advanced Intelligence University Package	21 pts
2 Skills at Level 3	
4 Skills at Level 2	
4 Skills at Level 1	

INTELLIGENCE UNIVERSITY SKILL PACKAGES

BASIC TRAINING

Required

- Perception
- Security Systems
- Streetwise

Electives (choose 2)

- Disguise
- Escape Artist
- Forgery
- Interrogation
- Small Arms
- Survival
- Unarmed Combat

INTELLIGENCE OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE IOS

Required

- Disguise
- Impersonation
- Interrogation

Electives (choose 2)

- Alternate Identity
- Cryptography
- Protocol
- Seduction
- Streetwise

COVERT OPERATIONS IOS

Required

- Cryptography
- Small Arms
- Tactics

Electives (choose 2)

- Disguise
- Escape Artist
- Impersonation





GAME INFORMATION



- Protocol
- Scrounge
- Small Arms
- Stealth
- Unarmed Combat

INFILTRATION IOS

Required

- Alternate Identity
- Disguise
- Forgery

Electives (choose 2)

- Escape Artist
- Impersonation
- Scrounge
- Special Interests
- Survival

LIAISON IOS

Required

- Bureaucracy
- Negotiation
- Protocol

Electives (choose 2)

- Administration
- Communications
- Cryptography
- Interrogation
- Seduction

SPECIAL FORCES IOS

Required

- Blade
- Small Arms
- Support Weapons

Electives (choose 2)

- Acrobatics
- Demolitions
- Quickdraw
- Stealth
- Survival

SURVEILLANCE IOS

Required

- Communications
- Cryptography
- Technician

Electives (choose 2)

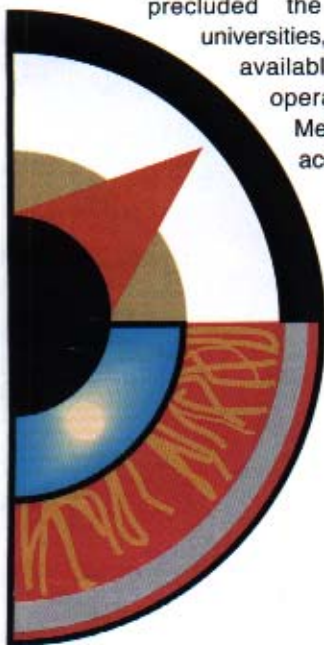
- Computer
- Engineering
- Forgery
- Tactics
- Technician

CLAN FIELD AGENT

The Clans' relative inexperience in intelligence operations and their distaste for the secretiveness of the intelligence field has left their intelligence operatives understandably among the most ineffectual and poorly trained in the Inner Sphere. Clan warriors disdain the clandestine side of war and leave the task to the overworked and undertrained Clan operatives, drawn mostly from the dregs of freebirth warriors.

Clan operatives are generally poor imitations of agents from the Successor States. Their own people treat them with contempt and the intelligence operatives of the Successor States ridicule them. Despite these difficulties, Clan intelligence operatives struggle on in the harsh world of intelligence and occasionally succeed in pulling off a mission.

The Clans' lack of respect for intelligence operations has precluded the founding of Clan intelligence universities, and so no university packages are available for such characters. A Clan operative would most likely be a MechWarrior operating with skills he acquired elsewhere.



Attributes		Characteristics	
BLD	5 (7+)	Athletic	9+
REF	4 (8+)	Physical	11+
INT	3 (9+)	Mental	12+
LRN	3 (9+)	Social	15+
CHA	2 (10+)		

Advantages

Extra Edge (1 pt)

Skills

Blade	2 (7+)
Disguise	1 (11+)
Interrogation	3 (12+)
Security System	2 (12+)
Small Arms	3 (8+)
Stealth	1 (10+)
Streetwise	2 (13+)
Survival	2 (10+)
Unarmed Combat	2 (7+)

Edge: 1

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Armored Bodysuit
Basic Field Kit
Personal Communicator
Pistol w/15 reloads
Vibro dagger



COVERT OPERATIONS OPERATIVE

Covert operatives comprise the bulk of the intelligence community. These agents perform a wide range of operations both within their own nation's borders and in the other Successor States.

Though the deep-cover operative may spend years on a single assignment in foreign territory, the covert operations agent may carry out many foreign assignments during that time, from simple information gathering to sabotage, assassination, or any other task his superiors direct him to perform.

Covert operations agents have the greatest range of abilities, reflecting their extensive knowledge of numerous intelligence specialties.

Attributes		Characteristics	
BLD	4 (8+)	Athletic	9+
REF	5 (7+)	Physical	9+
INT	4 (8+)	Mental	11+
LRN	3 (9+)	Social	10+
CHA	4 (8+)		

Advantages

Extra Edge (1 pt)

Skills

Basic Intelligence University Package:
Covert Operations IOS

Cryptography	1 (8+)
Escape Artist	2 (7+)
Interrogation	1 (9+)
Perception	3 (8+)
Security Systems	2 (9+)
Small Arms	3 (6+)
Streetwise	2 (8+)
Survival	1 (10+)
Tactics	3 (10+)
Unarmed Combat	2 (7+)

Edge: 2

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Armored Vest
Basic Field Kit
Microcommunicator
Mydron Auto-Pistol w/10 reloads
Security Bypass Kit



COUNTERINTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE

Infiltrating and neutralizing rival services is a primary objective of all the intelligence agencies. Without the men and women of the counterintelligence divisions rooting out such infiltrators, the entire intelligence field would collapse. The intelligence agencies therefore give counterintelligence high priority. Counterintelligence operatives work to eradicate enemy activity within their agencies and their nations, a difficult but essential task.

Counterintelligence operatives exist throughout the Inner Sphere in various positions, ranging from security officials at space ports to liaison officers in their nations' diplomatic corps. No matter where they are posted, these agents constantly search for signs of enemy infiltration.



Attributes		Characteristics	
BLD	4 (8+)	Athletic	11+
REF	3 (9+)	Physical	9+
INT	6 (6+)	Mental	8+
LRN	4 (8+)	Social	6+
CHA	6 (6+)		

Advantages

Extra Edge (1 pt)

Skills

Basic Intelligence University Package:
Counterintelligence IOS

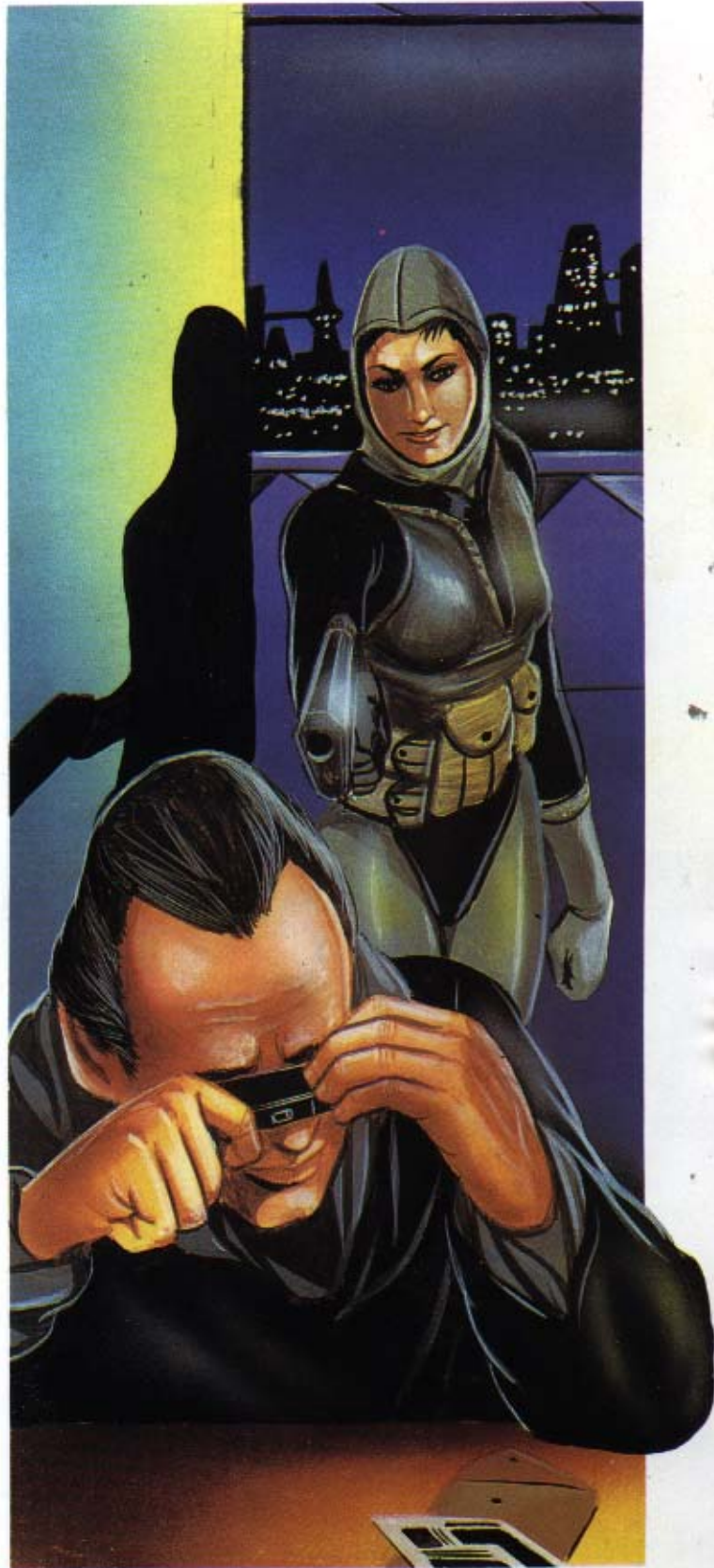
Cryptography	1 (7+)
Disguise	2 (6+)
Forgery	1 (6+)
Impersonation	1 (5+)
Interrogation	2 (4+)
Perception	3 (5+)
Protocol	1 (5+)
Security Systems	2 (6+)
Small Arms	2 (7+)
Streetwise	3 (3+)

Edge: 1

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Basic Field Kit
Disguise Kit
2 Medkits
Microcommunicator
Pistol w/15 reloads



DEEP-COVER OPERATIVE

The deep-cover operative pursues the most dangerous and potentially lethal career in the intelligence field. These agents spend months familiarizing themselves with the society and culture of a rival state, then infiltrate the nation. The operatives often remain hidden for months, sometimes years, until they emerge to carry out their missions.

The deep-cover operative must remain constantly alert during this waiting period, as the counterintelligence operatives of the rival state are always searching for his kind. Many deep-cover agents never carry out their missions, instead suffering brutal interrogation before dying in their captors' cells.

The deep-cover operative plays the most essential role within the intelligence community.

Attributes			Characteristics	
BLD	4	(8+)	Athletic	11+
REF	3	(9+)	Physical	10+
INT	5	(7+)	Mental	11+
LRN	6	(6+)	Social	8+
CHA	5	(7+)		

Advantages

Well-Equipped (3 pts)
Sixth Sense

Skills

Basic Intelligence University Package:
Covert Operations IOS
Infiltration IOS

Alternate Identity	1	(10+)
Cryptography	2	(9+)
Disguise	2	(9+)
Forgery	2	(9+)
Perception	3	(8+)
Scrounge	1	(7+)
Security Systems	2	(9+)
Small Arms	3	(7+)
Streetwise	1	(7+)
Tactics	1	(10+)

Edge: 2

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Armored Bodysuit
Dagger
Deluxe Field Kit
Disguise Kit
Microcommunicator
2 Microgrenades
Pistol w/15 reloads





ROGUE OPERATIVE

No matter how well indoctrinated agents are on entering the service of an intelligence agency, some operatives always defect from their organizations to seek more profitable operations.

Many of these rogue agents simply return home and operate as they always have, perhaps gambling or acting as go-betweens for deals on the streets. Some, however, use their newfound skills to pursue their intelligence careers privately. These individuals trade in information, with little regard for the damage they cause. Often they enjoy the disruption their actions create.

Having little regard for loyalty, rogue operatives are the bane of the intelligence agencies. Rogues will deal with anyone who can guarantee them a high price, a dangerous way to operate in an uncertain political climate.

Attributes		Characteristics	
BLD	4 (8+)	Athletic	8+
REF	6 (6+)	Physical	7+
INT	5 (7+)	Mental	10+
LRN	3 (9+)	Social	9+
CHA	4 (8+)		

Advantages

Natural Aptitude (Disguise)
Extra Edge (1 pt)

Skills

Disguise	1	(9+)
Escape Artist	1	(9+)
Forgery	1	(9+)
Interrogation	1	(8+)
Perception	2	(8+)
Security Systems	2	(8+)
Small Arms	2	(5+)
Streetwise	2	(7+)
Survival	1	(9+)
Unarmed Combat	2	(7+)

Edge: 2

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Armored Bodysuit
Dagger
Deluxe Field Kit
Disguise Kit
2 Minigrenades
Personal Communicator
Sonic Stunner
Sternsnacht Heavy Pistol w/10 reloads



SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIVE

Comparing the special forces of the Inner Sphere to the regular infantry is like comparing BattleMechs to the first tanks introduced on Terra's battlefields during the twentieth century. The elite of the armed services, the special forces operative's specialized profession links him more closely to the intelligence services than to the military.

Carrying out missions of murder, assassination, sabotage, or terrorism, the special forces are the most effective fighters in the Inner Sphere. Whether Death Commandos, DEST or Loki, all special forces operatives are infamous for their lethal combat capabilities. Regular troops are fortunate that most nations reserve special forces for missions of the greatest importance.

In the eyes of these men and women, no mission is too difficult and no enemy unstoppable. Their intensive training makes special forces operatives potentially the most dangerous and also the rarest of agents.



Attributes			Characteristics	
BLD	6	(6+)	Athletic	7+
REF	5	(7+)	Physical	9+
INT	4	(8+)	Mental	10+
LRN	4	(8+)	Social	13+
CHA	1	(11+)		

Advantages
Well-Equipped (2 pts)

Skills
Basic Intelligence University Package:
Special Forces IOS

Acrobatics	3	(4+)
Blade	2	(5+)
Escape Artist	1	(8+)
Perception	2	(8+)
Security Systs	1	(9+)
Small Arms	2	(7+)
Stealth	2	(7+)
Streetwise	1	(12+)
Support Weapons	1	(8+)
Unarmed Combat	3	(4+)

Edge: 2

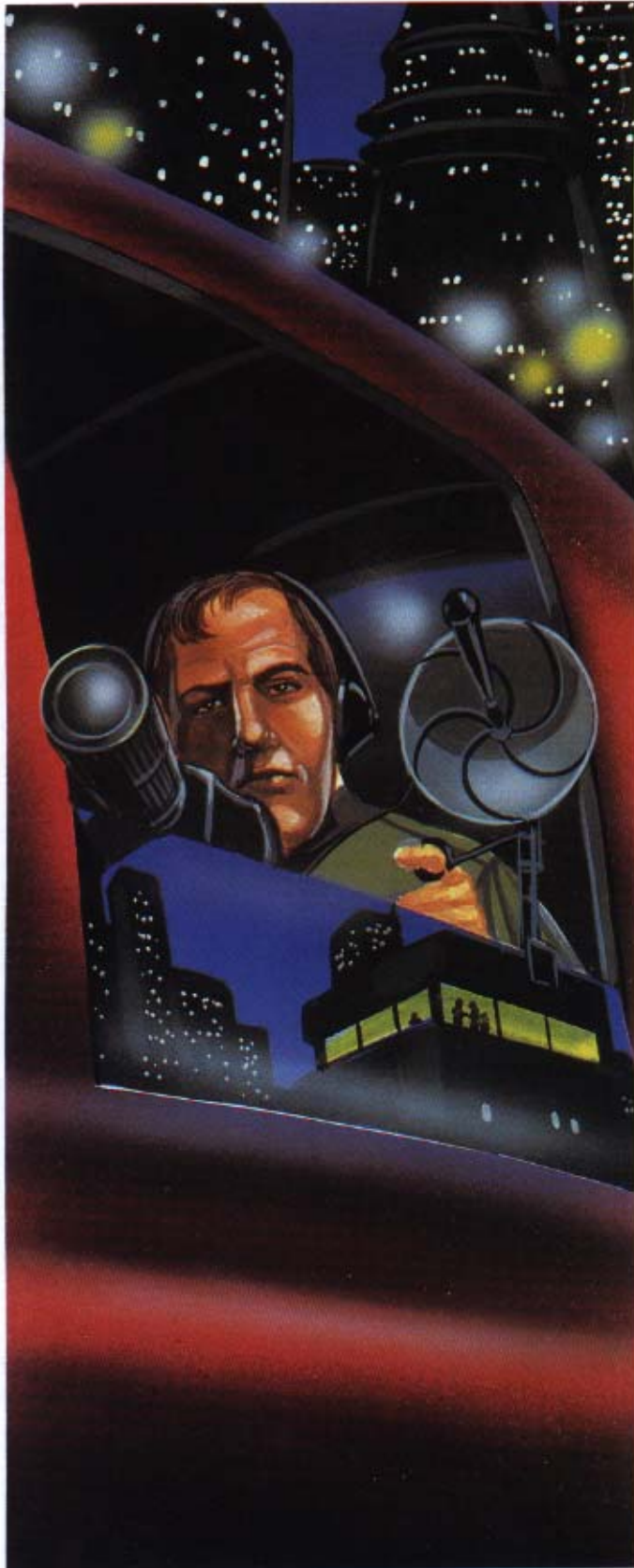
Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Armored Bodysuit	Mydron Auto-Pistol w/ 15 reloads
Deluxe Field Kit	Personal Communicator
2 Medkits	Rifle w/Sniper Scope and 10 reloads
4 Microgrenades	Vibrodragger

BattleMech: Medium





SURVEILLANCE OPERATIVE

Many consider the life of an intelligence agent a glamorous affair, filled with exotic locations and constant thrills. Such fantasies are a far cry from the work of surveillance and information-gathering operatives, who spend long hours chained to the computers and radios that make their tasks possible. The work of the surveillance operatives enables the Inner Sphere's intelligence services to keep tabs on the actions of enemies on distant worlds.

Experts with all forms of communication and surveillance equipment, surveillance operatives are spread throughout the Inner Sphere. Their tasks range from monitoring local radio transmissions to manning top-secret listening posts, where they wait for enemy communications to reveal troop locations.

Attributes

BLD	3	(9+)	Characteristics	
REF	4	(8+)	Athletic	11+
INT	6	(6+)	Physical	8+
LRN	5	(7+)	Mental	7+
CHA	4	(8+)	Social	8+

Advantages

Well-Equipped (3 pts)

Skills

Basic Intelligence University Package:
Surveillance IOS

Communications	3	(4+)
Computer	2	(5+)
Cryptography	2	(5+)
Perception	3	(4+)
Small Arms	2	(6+)
Streetwise	1	(7+)
Tactics	1	(6+)
Technician	2	(5+)
Security Systems	1	(6+)
Survival	1	(6+)

Edge: 1

Assets: 500 C-bills

Equipment

Electronics Repair Kit
IR Scanner
Laser Pistol
Personal Communicator
2 Sensor Systems, any variety
(see **Intelligence Technology** section, p. 139)



ARCHTYPES





INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY



During the 150 years that followed the end of the Reunification War in 2596, the far-flung territories of the newly consolidated Star League experienced a golden age that included a wave of scientific and technical innovation. Using technology based on the Kearny-Fuchida hyperdrive principles, Star League scientists perfected the first hyperpulse generators (HPGs) during this period, which allowed for rapid interstellar communication. New, low-cost water-purification systems opened the way for the colonization of worlds previously uninhabited, and improved myomers led to the construction of more mobile and deadly BattleMechs.

These technological advances provided the foundation for an age of prosperity and power among the Star League's member-states, who had settled more than a thousand new planets by the year 2700 and controlled a sphere roughly 540 light years in diameter.

This foundation and the golden age it supported began to crumble during the bloody and futile wars the so-called Successor States waged following Stefan Amaris' usurping of the Star League throne in 2767. The civil war triggered by the Amaris coup alone led to the deaths of more than one hundred million people and severely crippled the League's interstellar communications network.

After the leaders of the Great Houses rejected General Aleksandr Kerensky's attempts to reunite the Star League and Kerensky led the Star League Army out of known space in the Exodus of 2784, the Successor States spent the next few centu-

ries waging an almost continuous civil war. For nearly 300 years the rulers of the Great Houses battled each other for the right to sit on the Star League throne, senselessly smashing each other's cities, destroying vital industrial facilities and butchering hundreds of millions of citizens. The Inner Sphere's scientists and engineers did not escape the slaughter, and as their numbers shrank some areas of specialized knowledge and technology disappeared completely.

By the end of the Fourth Succession War in 3030, the Inner Sphere powers could no longer build advanced computers, large fusion-power plants, or even the JumpShips integral to their war-making capability. Inner Sphere mechanics found themselves reduced to cannibalizing equipment for spare parts that their industries no longer knew how to produce. This decline in technological knowledge, combined with the careful preservation of Star League technology by the children of the Exodus known as the Clans, contributed to Clan victories over the forces of the Successor States during the Clan invasion of the Inner Sphere in 3049. Evidence exists, however, that the powers of the Inner Sphere have begun to emerge from their technological dark age.

Begun in the 3030s after the lucky discovery of aged Star League BattleMechs, equipment, and an entire Star League library core on the Free Worlds League planet Helm in 3028, this recovery apparently has been hastened by the Inner Sphere's analysis of captured Clan technology and the discovery of Jerome Blake's *Technology Primer* in a Terran HPG station.

The Gray Death memory core, named in honor of the Gray Death Legion mercenary unit that found the technological treasure-trove, has proved the single most important catalyst in the Inner Sphere's recent technological renaissance. Despite repeated attempts by ComStar ROM to destroy the Gray Death core and prevent the dissemination of its information, the Federated Commonwealth's House Davion obtained a copy and sent it to the prestigious New Avalon Institute of Science for decoding. Evidence also strongly suggests that ROM attempts to destroy two copies obtained by House Kurita failed, and sources have confirmed that Duke Hassid Ricol supplied Theodore Kurita with the original memory core in 3034 in exchange for the governorship of the Alshain District. ComStar intelligence also has reported that an ISF assassin foiled an attempted transfer of a copy to a Lyran Intelligence Corps agent. Though we have been unable to positively determine which Inner Sphere powers possess copies of the Gray Death core, it seems prudent to assume several copies of the memory core exist.

The discovery of the core led directly to significant advances in holotechnology, communications, visual display, and information transfer, as well as providing House Davion with the technology it needed to make use of the Star League *Devastator* BattleMech plans its forces stumbled on in 3023.

A more recent, but perhaps equally important discovery was that of Jerome Blake's *Technology Primer* at the Hilton Head HPG station on Terra in 3052. ComStar's Precentor Martial Focht found the primer in the station's cornerstone, where it had apparently been hidden after the coup engineered by Stefan the Usurper. The discovery has demystified hyperpulse technology, aiding the spread of information throughout the Inner Sphere.

While the technological fruit of these developments has appeared most often on the battlefield, the intelligence services of the Successor States are also beginning to employ a generation of new and improved weapons and equipment, more deadly and efficient than those previously encountered by Wolfnet agents. The following report provides a sampling of these weapons.

Several of these new systems, including the Maskirovka's neural interrogation computers and Minolta 9000 Advanced Sniper System, the Draconis ISF's DEST infiltration suit and neural lash, the heavy needler employed by the intelligence operatives of the Federated Commonwealth, the Free Worlds League's extended-range laser rifle, and ComStar's ComSat surveillance system were developed specifically for individual intelligence agencies. Other systems, such as the security bypass kits and the remote sensors, are universally available.

Regardless of their origin and availability, we can be certain Wolfnet agents operating in the occupied zone will encounter these new and deadly weapons, as well as other new systems, with increasing frequency.

UNIVERSAL TECHNOLOGY

SECURITY BYPASS KITS

A number of security bypass kits exist within Inner Sphere intelligence organizations, intended for use by agents of the covert operations divisions. These tool sets enable the user to detect and deactivate electronic and mechanical security sys-

tems and to open most security locks.

Two versions of the security bypass kit are available in the Inner Sphere. The first, a basic tool kit, contains lock picks, files, pliers, and other mundane items for disabling primitive security devices. The second version, only recently acquired by most intelligence agencies, is a high-tech computer system designed to disable the most sophisticated electronic security measures. The size of a boot heel, with retractable clips that attach it to the target circuit, this easily concealed unit resembles a simple calculator.

The electronic version of the bypass kit can neutralize most electronic defenses within twenty seconds. The device also warns the user of any invisible alarms he may accidentally trip while disabling a security system, and even indicates the type of alarm activated. The kit also detects the emissions of most electronic detectors, such as motion trackers, and alerts the user to their presence.

Game Use

If a player tries to break into a mechanically based system, the basic security bypass kit gives him a -1 modifier to his base target number when making a Security Systems Skill Roll. The advanced kit gives the user a -2 modifier to his Security Systems Skill Roll target number when breaking into any electronically based security system. When actively in use, the advanced kit also senses all motion detection systems within a 30-meter radius and alerts the user by vibrating.

Basic Security Bypass Kit

Cost: 100 C-bills

Advanced Security Bypass Kit

Cost: 900 C-bills

REMOTE SENSORS

Remote sensors range from the simple trip wire attached to a can full of stones to the esoteric seismic sensor that literally listens for enemy footsteps. Remote sensors provide a distinct advantage over direct visual observation because the observer need not reveal his presence to detect a target.

Remote sensor systems normally monitor defensive perimeters or augment the intelligence-gathering activities of a scout or reconnaissance unit. Passive field sensors, such as motion and heat detectors, work especially well for the latter task. A reconnaissance unit can spread these detectors near suspected enemy travel routes and monitor an enemy column's movement without exposing itself to observation.

Most remote sensors detect one form of target signature, such as motion, heat, ground vibrations, radar profile, and so on. All remote sensors must be used with a basic field communications kit, which can monitor up to 15 individual sensors, depending on their type. (For information on the communications kit, see p. 91, *MechWarrior, Second Edition*.)

A sensor system operator must subjectively interpret the objective data provided by the sensor signal. For example, a motion sensor registers any motion within 10 meters, but cannot differentiate between the target signatures of a small animal looking for a meal and a man approaching the position. Before the operator can obtain any useful information, he must correctly interpret the signal.



Game Use

The gamemaster makes a Saving Roll against the character's Mental Characteristic to determine whether or not the character correctly interprets a signal. Reduce the base target number by the appropriate sensor modifier or increase it by any modifiers the gamemaster deems appropriate.

On a successful roll, the gamemaster should tell the character what triggered the sensor ("human crawling through the grass" or "some animal scurrying about"). If the roll is unsuccessful, the signal data provides either a false reading or no information. The gamemaster should make the Saving Rolls for the players and mix some innocent contacts with the more dangerous ones to keep the players guessing. Make only one roll for each target.

Most sensors will work underwater as well as above the surface. However, an underwater sensor (Depth 1 or more) will not work against targets on dry ground. Sensors on land may detect targets on the surface of a water hex.

Portable Radar Sensor (2/A)

A portable radar sensor is a tripod-mounted, compact radar emitter that can detect the presence of objects within a 10-kilometer radius. The unit determines the object's position relative to the sensor, as well as its speed and direction of travel. The sensor transmits its observations to a monitoring station up to 50 kilometers away. Radar sensors can also detect any fighter within range and operating at low altitude.

Radar sensors are the most effective remote sensors available. Because they actively emit radar waves, however, their targets can detect their presence almost immediately and take appropriate action. Therefore, most operatives use radar sensors when their discovery will not compromise the mission, such as defending the perimeter of a well-known installation.

Game Use

A radar unit will detect any object larger than 0.5 cubic meters within its line of sight in a 10-kilometer radius. If the target is a 'Mech, fighter, or vehicle, the gamemaster makes a Saving Roll against the operator's Mental Characteristic, with a -6 modifier, to determine if the operator correctly interprets the radar signal. For a dismounted infantry target, use a -4 modifier. If the target is wearing an ECM suit, modify the Saving Roll target number by +8.

If radar scans (but not necessarily detects) a 'Mech, vehicle, or fighter, a roll of 5+ means the target is aware of the surveillance. The alerted target must make a Saving Roll against his Mental Characteristic to locate the sensor scanning his machine.

Portable Radar Sensor (2/A)

Cost: 2,000 C-bills

Weight: 5 kilograms

Portable Motion Sensor (2/A)

Portable motion sensors detect the motion of objects within a 500-meter radius. They are normally deployed in groups of ten and tied into a central monitor. When the sensor detects an object, it transmits this information to the monitoring station.

Motion sensors detect only motion, not an image of the object

creating the motion. To successfully operate a motion detector, a character must have sufficient skill to tell the difference between a deer foraging through the forest and a commando moving in for the kill.

Game Use

Portable motion sensors must stay within ten kilometers of their monitoring stations. The sensors detect the motion of any object larger than 5 cubic centimeters within a 10-kilometer radius and transmit a signal back to the operator. To identify the motion's source, the gamemaster must make a Saving Roll against the operator's Mental Characteristic modified by -2, regardless of the source. If the roll fails, the operator misinterprets the motion.

A character may use his Stealth Skill to avoid detection by a motion sensor by making an Opposed Skill Roll against the result of the operator's Mental Characteristic Saving Roll. Note that the operator still modifies his Mental Characteristic by -2; sneaking past motion sensors can be difficult and potentially dangerous.

Portable Motion Sensor (2/A)

Cost: 100 C-bills

Weight: 10 kilograms

Portable Heat Sensor (3/A)

Portable heat sensors detect any heat source warmer than a lit match within a 1-kilometer radius. This means that these sensors will definitely detect any human intruder. Heat sensors do not provide a picture of the heat source, but do indicate its direction and distance from the sensor.

Game Use

One heat sensor monitoring station can monitor up to ten heat sensors as long as they all lie within 15 kilometers of the station. A sensor may detect any target within its range and line of sight. The gamemaster must make a Saving Roll against the operator's Mental Characteristic to determine whether or not the character correctly interprets the sensor data. Modify the Saving Roll target number by -4 when detecting 'Mechs, ground, and naval vehicles, and by -2 for infantry. If the target is an individual wearing an infrared suppression suit, modify the Saving Roll target number by +2.

Portable heat sensors will not detect aerospace fighters or VTOLs.

Portable Heat Sensor (3/A)

Cost: 200 C-bills each

Weight: 500 grams

Seismic Sensor (3/B)

A seismic sensor detects motion on the ground, such as a man walking or a moving vehicle (including hovercraft). The sensor indicates the distance, direction, and approximate size of any object detected. The smallest target a seismic sensor can detect is a man walking. Seismic sensors are passive and do not require direct lines of sight to their targets as do radar sensors. Seismic sensor targets are more easily identified than motion detector targets, but more difficult to identify than objects detected by radar or heat sensors.

Game Use

Seismic sensors must be within 20 kilometers of a monitoring station, which can coordinate up to five sensors. Regardless of the sensor's line of sight, it may detect any target within a 5-kilometer radius. The gamemaster must make a Saving Roll against the character's Mental Characteristic to determine whether or not the character correctly identifies an object detected by a seismic sensor. Modify the base target number by -4 if the detected object is a BattleMech and by -2 for ground and naval vehicles. Use no modifier for infantry.

A seismic sensor may not be used for atmospheric surveillance, though it may be used underwater. When deployed underwater, it detects all underwater units within range, regardless of line of sight or elevation, using a target number modifier of -6.

Seismic sensors cannot detect aerospace fighters and VTOLs.

Seismic Sensor (3/B)

Cost: 1,000 C-bills each

Weight: 2 kilograms

FED/COM TECHNOLOGY

"SHREDDER" HEAVY NEEDLER (3/B)

Despite the vicious wounds caused by needlers, existing needler weapons do relatively little damage to armor. The Shredder solves this problem. The weapon is a small rifle with a wide barrel like a blunderbuss, and uses several cutters to shred heavier flechettes and propel them at higher speeds than standard needlers.

Game Use

Cost: 150 C-bills

Range: 1-3/4-5/6

Shots: 5

Reload: 3 C-bills

Damage: 3D6 + 6

COMBINE TECHNOLOGY

DEST INFILTRATION COMBAT SUIT (3/D)

The Draconis Elite Strike Teams have used a version of the DEST infiltration suit design effectively in the field since the fall of the Star League. The latest modifications now incorporate the features that existed in the original design.

Based on the body suits favored by the ancient *ninja* of medieval Japan, the DEST infiltration suit is woven from synthetic fiber interlaced with ballistic kevlar for protection against shrapnel and low-velocity weaponry. The suits also incorporate a layer of thermoconductive mesh that absorbs heat from the wearer's body and bleeds it evenly into the air around him, reducing his infrared silhouette. The black fabric used in the suit also helps to hide the wearer. The most recent innovations to the suit design include insulation against extreme temperatures, and body-status monitors that constantly update the wearer on his physical condition.

The faceplate of the suit, perhaps the most impressive aspect of the design, features an infrared viewer as well as antidazzle polarization. The computer-enhanced vision system, however,

displays the design's real strength. The faceplate functions as a high-resolution video screen that displays the environment around the wearer in a compressed format, showing the 180-degree arc to the wearer's rear as a panoramic view at the top of his normal view screen. This all-around visual input makes it virtually impossible to outflank the wearer.

Game Use

DEST infiltration suits absorb 40 points of damage and reduce by half damage from slug-throwing or energy weapons. In addition, they act as IR and camo sneak suits (see p. 85, **MechWarrior, Second Edition**, for game information on sneak suits). The IR faceplate and computer-enhanced vision system modify the wearer's base target number by -3 when making a Perception Skill Roll.

Cost: 50,000 C-bills (available to DEST only)

Recharge Time: 4 hours

Recharge Cost: 60 C-bills

NEURAL LASH (3/C)

Based on the same principle as the neural whip, the neural lash delivers a jarring jolt to a victim. Easily concealed, the lash hangs from a wrist strap containing the unit's power cells. The control box sits comfortably in the palm of the hand, and a short length of cord weighted with a metal ball at the end extends from the box.

The inertia caused by swinging the weight draws additional line from a spring-loaded reel in the control box. At the end of the swing the line reels back in. By timing the swing properly, the operator can use the neural lash as a whip.

Game Use

Like the neural whip, a successful hit from a neural lash against an unarmored area forces the victim to make a Saving Roll against his Build Attribute or be knocked unconscious. A player character can also use the neural lash as an interrogation device in a pinch. When used as a torture device, the neural lash may produce a long-term loss of Attributes (gamemaster's option). Like its predecessor, the neural lash has been banned in many realms of the Inner Sphere.

Cost: 750 C-bills

Weight: 100 grams

Damage: 1D6 - 1

CAPELLAN TECHNOLOGY

NEURAL INTERROGATION COMPUTER (4/D)

One of the most terrifying devices currently used by the Capellan secret service is the neural interrogation computer. Originally designed for the treatment of battle shock and trauma, the Maskirovka soon adapted it to their own specialized needs.

The computer creates a series of subsonic signals; when introduced to a subject's mind, these signals induce spasms lasting for approximately three-tenths of a second. Though the individual fits are not particularly powerful, continual repetition of these mind-wracking spasms reduces even the most strong-willed individuals to gibbering wrecks within minutes.



Although an effective interrogation system, the neural interrogation computer induces severe psychological trauma in roughly 90 percent of its subjects. Occasionally, it inflicts permanent brain damage.

Game Use

When making an Interrogation Skill Roll, the neural interrogation computer modifies the user's base target number by -2. Once subjected to the effects of the computer, the target must make a Saving Roll against his Intuition. Subtract any margin of failure from his Intuition and adjust subsequent Characteristic and Skill Saving Rolls accordingly. The gamemaster should use this item sparingly.

Cost: 45,000 C-bills

MINOLTA 9000 ADVANCED SNIPER SYSTEM (3/C)

Specifically designed for the Death Commandos, the Minolta 9000 is one of the most sophisticated and accurate sniper weapons available to any force in the Inner Sphere. Constructed from ultralight endo-steel, the 6-kilogram weapon can be carried easily and will not hamper the user's maneuverability.

The Minolta fires a modified 7.62mm shell and features a myomer-enhanced recoil suppresser. In tests the recoil suppresser has proven effective enough to allow firing at maximum range with no loss of accuracy, an important advantage for any sniper weapon.

The weapon's sighting system provides the user with both telescopic vision and an infrared viewing system to compensate for reduced visibility.

Users of the Minolta 9000 have given the weapon excellent evaluations. Although the Death Commandos are currently the only unit equipped with the Minolta, intelligence sources expect the weapon to spread to the Maskirovka, and eventually throughout the Capellan Armed Forces.

Game Use

Cost: 1,000 C-bills

Range: 1-15/16-20/21-30

Shots: 10

Reload: 5 C-bills

Damage: 4D6

Note: The Minolta 9000's advanced sighting system allows the user to avoid the penalties normally incurred by firing in darkness or through smoke.

FREE WORLDS TECHNOLOGY

SUNBEAM "STARFIRE" ER LASER RIFLE (3/C)

Until the development of the Starfire, the Intek laser rifle held the record for the hand-held laser weapon with the longest range. The Intek's beam, however, dissipated quickly, resulting in relatively light damage to targets. Using the same technology developed for BattleMech extended range laser weapons, Sunbeam Corporation has produced the Starfire, the first of a new class of weapons capable of delivering more damage over longer ranges

than any previously produced hand-held laser.

Sunbeam Corporation designed the Starfire to be the first laser ideally suited for use as a sniper weapon. A user can quickly and easily break the rifle down into its component parts and stow them in a small space such as the armored field case or special briefcase sold as accessories. The weapon's beam is tuned to a portion of the spectrum invisible to the naked eye, eliminating flash and rendering its fire undetectable to all but infrared sensors such as those found in BattleMechs or IR binoculars.

Like extended range weapons for 'Mechs, the Starfire has problems with energy consumption and heat build-up. The rifle drains its power packs quickly, so users usually equip the weapon with receptacles to accept four extra standard power packs in addition to a standard backpack power unit.

Game Use

A user may only fire the Starfire once every two turns. More frequent use creates a rapid heat build-up that melts the plasma chamber and cracks the optics.

Cost: 2,500 C-bills

Weight: 5 kilograms

Range: 1-18/19-63/64-120

Power Use: 6

Damage: 3D6 + 3

COMSTAR TECHNOLOGY

COMSAT SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (4/D)

The ComSat system is one of ComStar ROM's most ambitious surveillance unit designs. The system can monitor troop activities and gather general intelligence data on an entire planet.

The main component of the system is the ten-ton ComSat satellite. This boxlike construction is launched by DropShip into a high orbit above the target world and activated. The ComSat then engages a number of advanced ECM packages to systematically scan the entire surface of the planet, storing all data in its memory banks for later use. The advanced sensory capabilities of the ComSat enable it to detect a single vehicle moving as much as twenty miles below it and identify the type of vehicle with an 80 percent accuracy rate.

Once the system has completed its scan, it uses several boosters around its rim to orient itself in orbit and launch toward a preset coordinate, where a DropShip can retrieve it for analysis.

The system is particularly difficult to disable, even when detected by enemy sensors. If attacked, the ComSat jettisons its computer banks in a small, missilelike device toward the ComSat's preset destination. An explosive charge in the satellite then detonates, destroying the ComSat before it can fall into enemy hands.

Game Use

The ComSat can scan an entire world and provide detailed information on troop movements and strengths within twelve hours. If endangered, the system jettisons its data banks and detonates, delivering 5 points of battlefield damage to anything within one hex of the satellite.

Cost: 1,000,000 C-bills

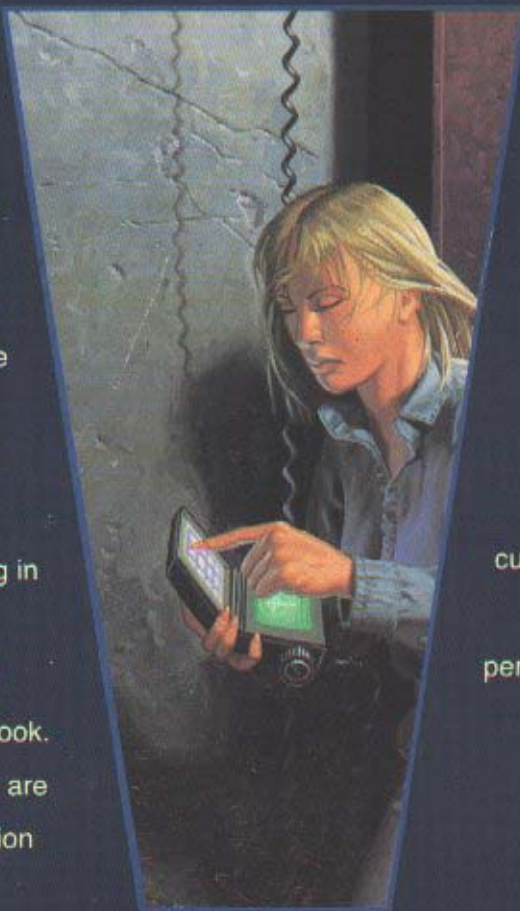




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