

SHADOWS OF
LATIN AMERICA

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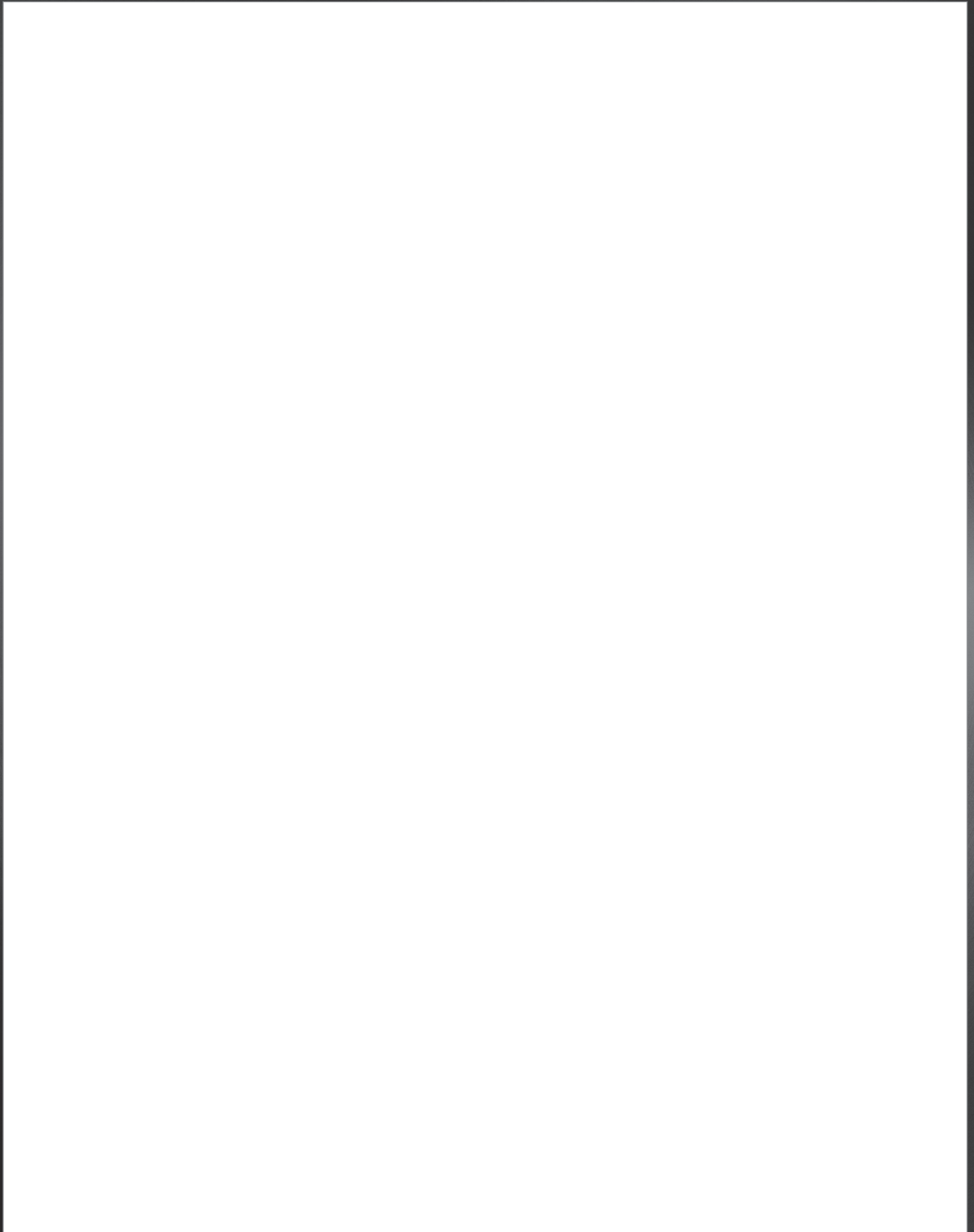
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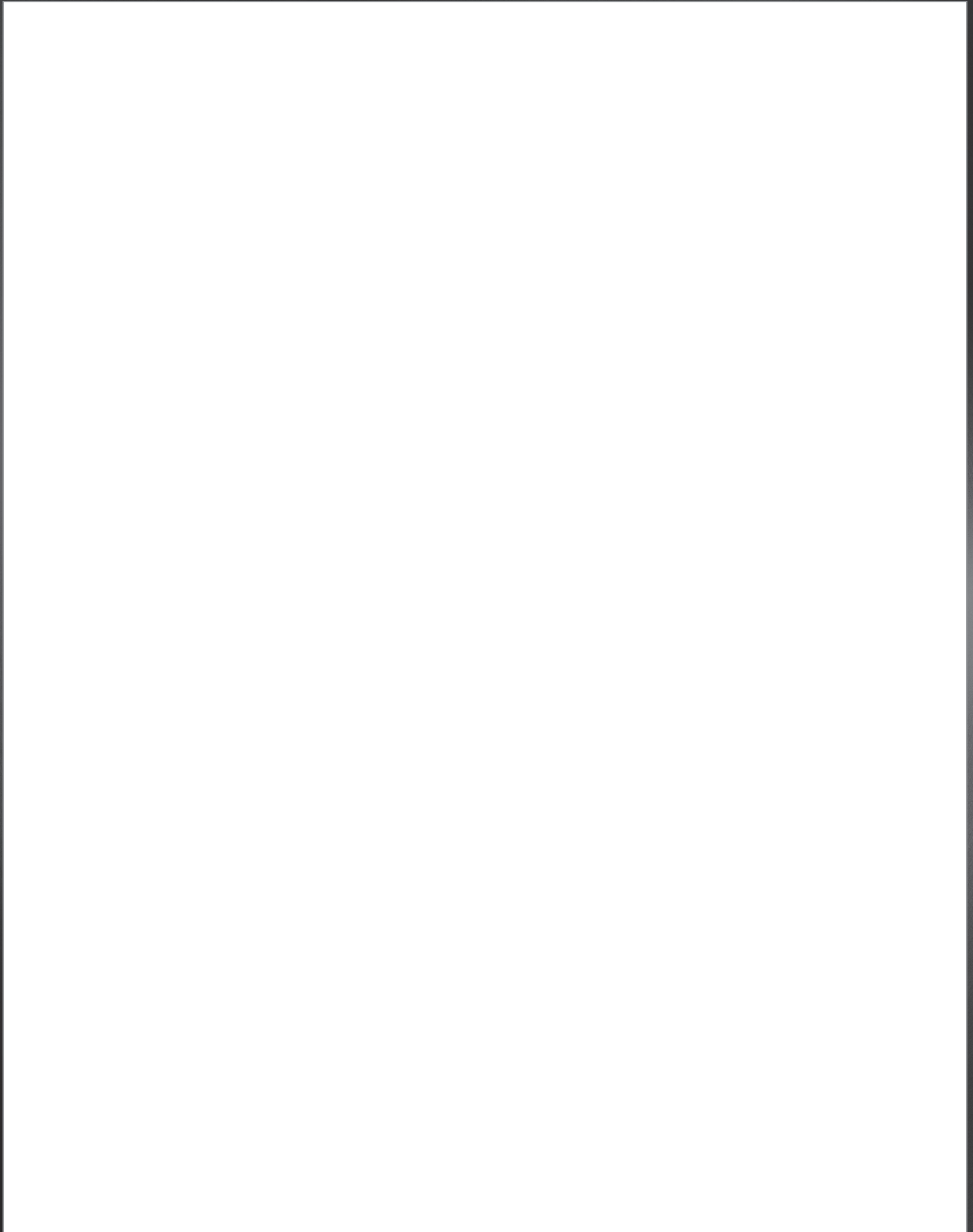
INTRODUCTION







AMAZONIA



ARGENTINA

by Quijote

◆ Compiling newsitems for last year's SOTA file, I noticed headlines on martial law invoked in Buenos Aires. I've got to admit I didn't pay much attention; like most people I was focused elsewhere. When I started digging for the current upload however, I noticed just how much attention is heaped on Amazonia and Aztlan, and how, outside merc circles, there's precious little chatter on Latin America's own third A—Argentina. After checking it out, I get the impression that is just the way the megas and the local regime want it. With all eyes up north, nobody's really been paying attention to the drek being pulled down south. For this little trip, I've arranged for Quijote, a veteran fixer of the local shadowscene, to be your guide. My sources say nothing goes down south of the Rio de La Plata that he doesn't know about.

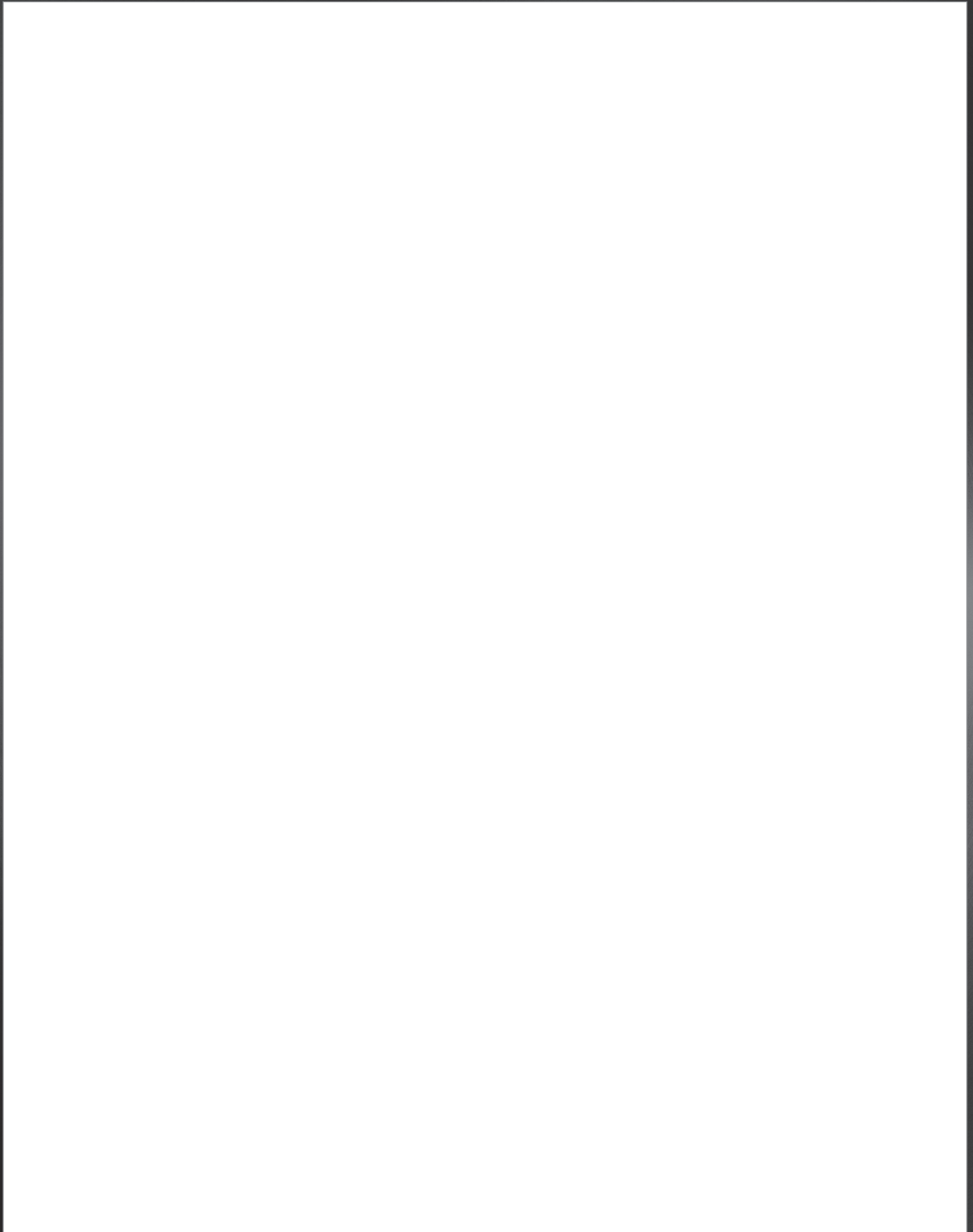
◆ Captain Chaos

Where does Argentina stand in the churning chaos of South America? Well, the answer is „on the brink.“ Of what exactly nobody really knows... the current national State of Emergency bodes ill, and I suspect times are going to get a lot worse soon enough.

FIGHTING WINDMILLS

You've probably heard the expression „climate of fear,“ but if you've lived in Argentina for any amount of time, you know exactly what it means. Fear in one form or another is pervasive: terror of the Green Goliath Amazonia (perpetually poised on the border), dread of persistent poverty (unemployment hovers around 40 percent), fear of our own government (no waves or else), and a horror of the foreseeable chaos and uncertainty that are the inevitable alternatives. You've probably heard how Argentines are a passionate people. Well, these days it seems we're reduced to being passionately terrified, frightened of imaginary foes within and without.

In many ways, our present resembles our past, but don't be fooled. The pleasant and ambitious nation in the brochures is actually nothing of the sort. To anyone stepping beyond the patrolled sectors of downtown Buenos Aires, a casual glance tells a different tale, one of the avenidas strewn with the debris of riots and the roadblocks where corpsec APCs support state troopers. Starting to get the picture? Good. Argentina is all about appearances.





Argentina is in fact a deeply troubled country, ruled by a self-perpetuating oligarchy under the guise of a populist, if authoritarian, democracy. True power here lies not in the hands of the neo-fascist Partido Popular Reformista—which governs pretty much unopposed—but in that of its corporate puppet-masters.

- ◆ Listen to the man, people. Arrojo & co. are fascists to the marrow, opportunists and sell-outs masquerading as patriots and nationalists.
- ◆ Antifa
- ◆ Say what you will, but Fernando Arrojo has kept the country going through good times and bad. How many of you can say that of your government? We've had to give up a few things. So what? Haven't you? We're independent to enjoy the things we are given. Without Arrojo, we'd be speaking Portuguese!
- ◆ Xeneize

Argentineans abide a regime that has curtailed civil rights and increased the gulf between the haves and have-nots, because all our alternatives seem worse. The popular view (until recently) has been that, unlike his predecessors, Presidente Arrojo has at least kept (some of) us employed and out of Hualpa's claws. The Amazonian threat has worn thin though, despite the State's continuous cant of remaining vigilant and defending the homeland. How did we reach this sorry state of affairs? Well, there's a tale...

- ◆ Too true. After what happened to Venezuela, Uruguay, Paraguay, and the close call two decades ago, fear of Amazonian aggression is always on people's minds. Moreover, if it wasn't, the state-biased media and awareness campaigns make sure it is.
- ◆ Allende
- ◆ Easier to rule unopposed if the people are more afraid of Awakened bogeymen than the secret police.
- ◆ Nero
- ◆ You mean all those mercs are just pulling garrison duty?
- ◆ Hickman
- ◆ No, every so often you get a flare-up, triggered by smugglers running the Rio de la Plata, a botched recon op or infiltration. The border remains heavily militarized on both sides, but Quijote is right, the promised Amazonian offensive never quite comes.
- ◆ Picador

FORGING A LEGEND

It hasn't really been the best of times or the worst of times. Well, not until recently. The jury is still out on where it will go from here. Argentina navigated the troubled first decades of the century better than most, worse than some. Like a tired old prizefighter too dumb to quit, Argentina kept climbing back on her feet. VITAS was a hard left hook and took a tragic toll, with the poor hit hardest. The Awakening sucker-punched us,

with the pope's denouncement of magic and metahumans and then the Church's about-face only causing confusion and instability. Goblinization and the Night of Rage fanned racist flames, spurred by conservative Catholics, and the Crash kicked our economy in the groin for the umpteenth time... and all that was before the body blows really started raining down.

- ◆ Move along. Nothing to see here. It is South America after all.
- ◆ Decker del Sur

Green Giant, Red Blood

The real trouble began in the mid-Forties. Gorged on conquests in the North and the easy capitulation of Uruguay, Amazonia turned its expansionist claws south to discover that, unlike its previous opponents, Argentina was not daunted or unprepared (just arrogant and naive). Awakened forces backed by the Amazonian regulars swept into the northeastern provinces, to encounter entrenched Argentine lines. Over the following weeks fierce fighting against relentless and outlandish foes exhausted the defenders and they yielded ground. A naval counterstrike against Metropole was hit by unseasonal stormy seas and forced home. Before the campaign became a total rout, the Argentine Command ordered troops to regroup in the town of Resistencia on the River Paraná.

- ◆ Despite boasting one of the foremost militaries in the region and the Amazonian great dragons being engaged elsewhere, the Argentines had their hoops handed to them. Just goes to show how conventional armies still had a hard time coping with battlefield magic in the Thirties.
- ◆ Colonel Cobra

On the brink of defeat, Colonel Fernando Arrojo, a well-liked, field-promoted tactician, rallied his men to acts of bravery and heroics, his battle cry „¡Resistencia! ¡Muerte y Gloria!“ becoming famous. When the Amazonian offensive came, the street-fighting was brutal, with blood exacted for every building lost. Arrojo employed scorched earth tactics, setting alight every quarter he had to concede. As Argentine numbers were whittled away, volunteers rushed to reinforce the ranks—at least until the city was cut off. The siege lasted 28 days; the defenders endured bombings, artillery barrages, tacti-

cal magic and hunger. As a final desperate sortie was planned, the Amazonians abandoned the field without explanation—according to the history books, out of grudging respect for Resistencia's valiant defenders—and a legend was born.

Sowing the Seeds...

So what really happened? The irony is that to preserve our freedom, our rulers sold us into bondage. You won't find the facts in the official histories, but here's what I've been able to piece together. With Resistencia about to fall and our conventional forces outmatched, our desperate government turned to the only power it thought capable of halting the Amazonian onslaught: the Corporate Court. Sure enough, Amazonia received a warning through diplomatic channels that if it didn't pull back, the Court (eager to test its clout) would put its full weight and resources behind Argentina.

- ◆ Ever wonder why Amazonia dislikes the Nipponese megas almost as much as it does the Azzies? Well, MCT, Renraku, Shiawase and Fuchi sided with Aztechnology on aiding Argentina, Yamatestu and Saeder-Krupp abstained, and Ares was overruled.
- ◆ Pyramid Watcher

- ◆ We had a leftist government back then, and the sell-out is one of the reasons today's Democracia Siempre has a hard time gathering the growing anti-establishment factions under one banner.
- ◆ Tránsito Soto

- ◆ hat and the fact many believe it's been infiltrated by Hualpa's agents.
- ◆ Pitt

- ◆ Which brings up another point. Native Indians, metahumans, and many critters suffer insidious prejudice because of a perceived association with Amazonia which doesn't really bear out. The local conservative Catholic Church would like to add the Awakened to that list, but the corps are having none of it.
- ◆ Ambassador

The price Argentina would pay for the aid would soon become clear; the discreet concessions the government had to sign for deliverance allowed the megas to loosen legislative shackles and buy up local businesses wholesale with government collusion. A latter-day Resource Rush of corporate depre-

ARGENTINA AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Authoritarian Presidential Democracy

Population: 39,144,735

Human: 72.5%

Elf: 7%

Dwarf: 4%

Ork: 14%

Troll: 2%

Other: 0.5%

Estimated SINless: 35%

Corporate Affiliation: 45%

Education:

Less Than Sixteen Years: 60 %

High School Equivalency: 27%

College Degrees: 9%

Advanced Degrees: 4%

Major Ethnic Groups:

Spanish and Italian Latin: 90%

Mestizo, Amerindian, or other ethnic groups: 10%

Major Languages Spoken:

Spanish: 90%

English: 50%

Major Religions:

Roman Catholic: 92% (<30% practicing)

Protestant: 2%

Jewish: 2%

other: 4%

Currency: Argentine Peso (ARP)

Exchange rate: ARPS 4.25 = 1 nuyen

Armed Medical Coverage

dation swept across Argentina. Political opposition was steam-rolled, corruption scandals suppressed, the government made appeasing speeches, and the megacorps helped build up the national army while plundering what they could, all the while the unrest and social divide continued to grow. Then, like now, the fear of Amazonian aggression kept things quiet—the unspoken dread of what might happen should the megas pull out.

Reaping the Whirlwind

The pressure cooker burst in '50 when now-General Arrojo and a cadre of high-ranking military officers (sponsored by old money families) deposed the corp-pandering leftist government and established a temporary junta to „return power to the people.“ Thankful for a glimmer of hope all sorts (both leftists and Peronistas) flocked to his cause and the promise of restored democracy. This lent the coup a legitimacy it didn't really possess. Publicly, Arrojo called for boycotts and strikes against all megacorps and subsidiaries, successfully urging workers to walk out and bring factories to a halt, helping restore the economy to its rightful owners—the Argentinean people.

Meanwhile, Arrojo approached the megas with a back-room deal. If they agreed to pull back into the shadows and appeared to hand power to „the people's government,“ he would protect their interests and ensure they continued to benefit from the previous arrangements. Arrojo was about to retire from military life and throw his hat into the political ring (fronting the fledgling nationalist Partido Popular Reformista)—all he asked for was the corps to hand a „symbolic“ 5% of their local assets back to the State as a sign of good faith and sponsor his candidacy. A year later, „free“ elections were held and the PPR rose to power on a platform of nationalism and economic and social stability. Of course, that much vaunted stability has come at the expense of the swollen numbers of poor and disenfranchised.

Arrojo has done his best to bolster the middle class, dependent on the megas and upper class for income and hence favorable to his policies as well as providing a convenient buffer between the ultra-rich and the ultra-poor. Meanwhile Arrojo's pandering to conservative old money, the powerful military apparatus and almighty corporate interests became ever more blatant. You could almost hear the timebomb ticking down.

FACTS ON LIFE

Despite the current martial law, Argentina isn't a police state—yet. The clean and orderly streets, numerous public events and bullish economy hide the ugly truth that the miserables are kept down by the promises of a corrupt warhero, mind-numbing media, ubiquitous drugs and chips, and the weapons of roving security vehicles and drones. The appearance of civility and calm in Buenos Aires and other sprawls still survives under the growing pressure of the teeming millions living in the villas miseria (shantytowns) and in the corporations' factory towns and ranchos.

Before foreign runners get into trouble here, there are a few local peculiarities I should highlight. For instance, while Pe-

dro Saraiman is allowed to pack a licensed automatic weapon as nod to the dangerous times we live in, Pedro Public better not be seen with anything bigger than a knife. Also gov-pol will always cede operations control and jurisdiction to corporate security (military units, on the other hand, dislike the practice). Also don't forget that a surprising number of people still buy into Arrojo's image and the PPR's agenda even in the face of the mounting evidence. The ranks of the Jóvenes Patriotas policlub are jam-packed, and most of the middle class won't think twice about turning you in to the cops if they think you're up to something subversive or anti-Argentine.

ARGENTINA TIMELINE

- 2047:** Amazonian forces invade and conquer sovereign Uruguay and advance on Argentina. Siege of Resistência.
- 2047-49:** Corporate influence pervades government, wide-scale corruption and resource rush.
- 2050:** Popular revolt followed by nationalist military coup unseats Leftist government.
- 2051:** Gen. Fernando Arrojo cabinet is first elected to power with popular and covert corporate backing.
- 2051-63:** Increasing unrest and founding of the Democracia Siempre movement. Legio secretly established.
- 2061:** Jaime Prado disappears, insurgents gain an ally in the country's biggest media group.
- 2063:** Massive general strikes and walk-outs run from October through December, brutally repressed by police forces.
- 2064:** Martial law declared in Buenos Aires after Easter processions turn into violent anti-establishment marches.

- ◆ Life would be more difficult for us shadow types if fewer of these people had dirty laundry. As it is, business is fine.
- ◆ Sepulveda
- ◆ Unless you run afoul of the secret police, the Navaja Roja. They really dislike free agents.
- ◆ Nero

The media are immensely influential in Argentine life, force-feeding apathy, resignation, and daydreams to keep people's minds off their daily misery. The regime even gets a daily one-hour primetime slot on all channels for patriotic posturing, infobulletins and recruitment drives. In return we get free broadcasting and Matrix access (it helps that the Censorship Directorate is understaffed), though I wouldn't buy a word from the nightly news at face value.

But as the saying goes, „You can only fool some of the people some of the time...“ and the miserables have had enough of the wool over their eyes. The streets are no longer orderly; massive strikes, marches and clashes with security forces have become facts of life over the past few months. Smoldering



wrecks of cars litter the side streets and the Navaja interventions are becoming more and more frequent. The pressure cooker is back on the boil and ready to blow.

- With a little push here and there from Amazonian agents, of course. Infiltration and sedition work better than bloodshed.
- Juan Solo

TANGO PARTNERS

If you believe the news, the situation on the Amazonian border has grown ever more tense. Truth be told though, the real trouble is on the homefront. The political climate in Buenos Aires has become one of turmoil and conspiracy. Nobody reads the markets like the megacorps and all the major actors are maneuvering their pawns to contain, take advantage, or simply escape the coming storm. It doesn't take much to see the Easter riots were only the first rolls of thunder from a squall that's been brewing on the horizon for a very long time.

- Things might be different if Arrojo and company were on top of their game, but the cabal is starting to show the strain of too many competing interests. A falling out is inevitable.
- Lariot

The most influential corporate players are represented on Arrojo's privy council—his Consejeros Políticos—the most powerful political force in the country, bar none. The council ensures that the economic climate remains favorable and supports Argentine independence. It counts all the Big 10 among its members, except Wuxing and Cross (who have no real local presence), and is chaired by Martim Ramalho, a Brazilian expat who handles Aztechnology's interests and hates Amazonia with a vengeance. The Consejeros work together to ensure the regime stays in power, but they have the best interests of their corps at heart and under the current tensions the cracks in the fragile alliance are starting to show.

Of the big boys, Aztechnology has always been closest to Arrojo. A not-so-secret deal to outfit Argentinean forces through Spain (ensuring Azzie deniability) is the main reason our military remains formidable, but Aztech's Televisa also backs the establishment at every turn. The biggest financial player in town, BANCOMEX has proven invaluable to finance the Legio's conspiratorial agenda (I'll be getting to them soon enough)—Arrojo knows how much he owes the Big A.

Beyond that though, Arrojo and his cronies like to play favorites. Ares and Saeder-Krupp don't seem to be getting involved and are playing their respective hands close to their



chests, while Novatech's starting to distance itself from the government. The Japanacorps, the Azzies' erstwhile allies on the council, are tired of Aztechnology getting preferential treatment and being forced to outbid one another for presidential favor. These problems go beyond boardroom and backroom politics are stirring all sorts of trouble in the shadows.

◆ I've been privy to a few covert meets and I can tell you the Japanacorps are planning to hang Arrojo out to dry. They're gonna shift their support to the more pliable Xavier Alameda, an up-and-coming „reformer“ within the PPR—regardless of whether the Prez can bring things back under control or not.

◆ Tránsito Soto

◆ Like they say: it takes two to tango. Arrojo should know better.

◆ Trueba

MCT and Renraku control much of the tech and heavy industries and share most of the retail and commerce sector with Novatech and Aztech. They're helping Aztechnology subsidize the Ministry of Defense to subcontract mercs to patrol hotspots and silence the anti-government outbreaks from the villas miseria, since they have a vested interest in quelling the unrest.. With the mounting number of strikes and riots the past couple of months, the Inspector General de Policia Delgado and Ministro de Defensa Ruiz are starting to feel their assets stretched thin.

◆ The pay is good, but most mercs hate urban police actions more than any other type of op. Personally, I wouldn't touch one of these contracts with a ten-foot pole, but there are all types out there.

◆ Picador

◆ Yes there are, my dear.

◆ METalhead

◆ Why am I not surprised?

◆ Picador

Shiawase runs a lot of facilities in the hinterland, both energy production sites (dams, fission plants) and bio-agricultural facilities. However, shadowfolk know that, like Ares's and Yamatetsu's low-key presences, many of these facilities are actually weapons development and biogenetics labs. Shiawase Biotech and Yamatetsu are particularly infamous for tinkering with South American wildlife, both native to the pampas (prairies) and that smuggled out of Amazonia. Makes you wonder if Hualpa isn't right to support GreenWar and their ilk.

◆ Unexpectedly, Ares facilities also see a lot of traffic in paracritters. Wonder what's going on?

◆ Roaming Rake

◆ Probably developing war-forms like UniOmni's doing up Salish-Shidhe way. Or maybe it's something darker. What do we know about Ares' research on paracritters?

- Rubik
- Green Globe and Transys are other corps with a couple of research labs hidden away in the backwaters. Nobody knows what GG is doing behind its high fences but Transys is working closely with the local centaur population.
- Pampero

Novatech Argentina is the engine behind the mega's success in the region and has been since the Fuchi days. While the company's shrewd Managing Director Antonio Ortega has nurtured ties with several Ministers, he's also been cultivating new friendships and expanding operations across the Rio de la Plata. Having cornered a number of lucrative grid contracts early on, Novatech has been gearing to change allegiances before Arrojo comes down. The regime's possible involvement in the disappearance of Ortega's close friend and Edimpresa CEO, Jaime Prado, has provided him with a personal excuse to back away from the establishment and cozy up with the opposition.

- Arrojo's lost a large chunk of his media platform and provided the opposition with potential allies in one swoop. Not only have the subversives been getting more airtime, but they've also started hacking into legal broadcasts with conspicuous ease. Maybe Novatech's given them some backdoor codes by way of a deal sweetener?
- Adaga Andina
- Nothing like a pirate newflash of a brutal police crackdown crashing episode 500 of Punto Caliente to grab Pedro Public's attention.
- Radiopirata

ALL THE PRESIDENTE'S MEN

President General Arrojo's future rests on how well he handles the current crisis. Corporate power is out of control and unemployment has hit the 40 percent mark. Before long, even his conservative friends (nationalists, Peronistas and hard-line Catholics) are going to be looking for suitable replacements in the Army and the Party. Fernando Arrojo has proven a wily politician, though, and he still has a couple of aces up his sleeve.

THE RAZOR'S EDGE

The Secretaría de Inteligencia del Estado (SIDE), or La Navaja Roja as it is known on the streets, is Arrojo's not-so-secret police and intelligence arm—and the primary reason why it's taken so long to mount any significant opposition to his rule. The streetname, which translates loosely to „bloody razor,“ is a tribute to their dreaded interventions: silent and precise, seeding terror among the enemies of the regime and disappearing without a trace.

SIDE is even more subtle and sophisticated than any of its twentieth century counterparts. When it isn't orchestrating health problems, traffic accidents, or having people publicly

commit suicide, La Navaja also indulges in counterintelligence activities, ingenious social engineering and turning unwitting citizens into sleeper agents. People aren't (just) vanished from their homes or dragged in for interrogation anymore, they're plagued by untraceable electronic and magical harassment until they turn themselves in! Fear doesn't come from knowing what the SIDE does, but rather from not knowing how it does it.

- The SIDE uses the gov-pol's Cuerpo de Intervención whenever heads need to be broken.
- Indigo Montoya
- Not that the Cuerpo are pushovers. They're decked out with the best the corps have to offer in cyber and gear, and are handpicked for their badassness. You do not want to be on the wrong end of one of their sorties.
- Covadonga
- Though nobody's going to fess up, besides informers in all the shantytowns, SIDE's got agents in the right-wing policlubs and organizations like the Jóvenes Patriotas and Union Nacional Peronista, which they use as shock troops to keep the leftists in line and harass any seditionists in the villas miserias.
- Eco
- SIDE also runs external intel and is tight with the ELES in southern Amazonia and particularly insurgents in Uruguay.
- Adaga Andina

All is not well behind the walls of the Palacio de las Necesidades HQ though. SIDE is in the midst of a major internal shakeup after President Arrojo tired of former director Luis Garcia's inability to bring in insurgent leaders and demoted him. Adding insult to injury Arrojo promoted Col. Emilio Torres, the former director of the magical branch, to his place.

- That's half the story. Garcia orchestrated successful raids on several opposition meets and rallies, dragging in a bunch of the original leaders, at least until the miserables really closed ranks and SIDE failed to make further inroads.
- Tango2
- Can you say inside job? They knew exactly when and where! The Cuerpo comes in guns blazing. The Navaja ran cleanup—they always let some folks get away to spread the bad news. The Cuerpo are not so forgiving.
- Rosa Alva

SIDE has long stood divided by an internal power struggle between the military intelligence faction (led by Garcia) and the magical intelligence branch (behind Torres) with the military dominating. Now the change has shaken the department deeply, but rumor has it that while newly-promoted Torres was settling old scores and ordering purges, Garcia and several of his closest allies pulled a vanishing act. Obviously Torres is thoroughly pissed and wants him brought back badly—and so

the most hated and dangerous man in Argentina becomes the most hunted.

- ◆ That tasked bastard Garcia wasn't offed! I saw him two days ago down by the docklands skulking into La Cova with a crew. He's gone to ground and he's up to something.
- ◆ Indigo Montoya
- ◆ Like joining forces with his pal Ángel, or even Democracia Siempre?
- ◆ Nero
- ◆ Doesn't sound like his style and there's too much bad blood there anyway. He's more likely to persuade Córdoba into a palace coup. Nobody really knows the devious fragger's gameplan.
- ◆ Tango2

TTHE SECRET LEGION

Although this may come as a shock, I would like to emphasize that in his way Arrojo really is a patriot. He probably believes he's doing what's best for the country in the long run, and he's never been tied to a single case of abuse of office or active corruption. To back me up, there's a secret even some of his corporate allies would be surprised to know: Arrojo is a preeminent member of the Legio, a secretive and conspiratorial anti-Amazonian fraternity that boasts members in almost all the remaining Latin American militaries.

- ◆ Quijote's blabbing about the Legio like this makes it seem almost common knowledge, when it's actually a well-kept secret, one the shadow community generally keeps to itself around here. After all, you never know when you need a friend in a high place to pull your bacon out of the fire. Of the major corps only the Azzies and Ares seem aware of Legio.
- ◆ Adaga Andina
- ◆ Which explains why Aztech is so eager to pour support into the military. Legio sounds like a perfect ally against the snakes.
- ◆ Sepherim
- ◆ It's not as if they're all in national militaries anymore either; plenty of small merc companies have hidden Legio allegiances. You'd be surprised at some of the faces that show up at the Sparta Country Club, one of the Legio's topdog hangouts.
- ◆ Picador

The Legio is strongest in Argentina and Peru, where high-ranking military officials belonging to the group run continuous low-level (and deniable) operations against Amazonia. It guarantees that the tense border situations aren't resolved and that Amazonian aggression isn't allowed to win out. The group's ethos ties together a bunch of strangely mismatched fascist ideals like pan-American patriotism, manifest destiny,

and military honor with the base fear of being subsumed by the Green Goliath and possibly even suffering an indigenous and metahuman backlash.

Legio's other top man among the local military is Colonel Jaime Córdoba, an outspoken campaigner for Argentine independence (from all outside influences). His intolerance for corporate pandering keeps him from rising further while Arrojo is in office. The president would have the upstart discreetly dealt with—if the rank and file weren't far more loyal to Córdoba than they are to him. On the other hand, Córdoba remains quiet because Legio faces the unfortunate dilemma that it can't afford to change sides and back anti-establishment sedition. Even if it wished to, the political instability that would follow would leave Argentina open to further hostile/external influences—something it cannot allow.

- ◆ So even if the military have sympathies for the insurgents, they're between a rock and a hard place. Nice.
- ◆ Romeu
- ◆ No fraggin' way. Fascist conservatives the lot of them! People forget the German „immigration" after WWII. For all its Latin-posturing, that's part of Legio's heritage too.
- ◆ Timmerman
- ◆ If worse comes to worse and a revolution seems inevitable, Cordoba and his cohorts will probably pull a coup d'etat if necessary – to provide the necessary stability for democratic transition, of course, just like Arrojo before them.
- ◆ Picador

THE FOURTH POWER

Arrojo doesn't have all the aces. His recent moves have alienated several media powerhouses, and in this country that's seriously bad news. In Argentina, the media's part of the apparatus to keep the people in line, bombarding the masses 24/7 with equal doses of nationalist grandstanding, anti-Amazonian propaganda, unending publicity and mindless daydreams. The omnipresent tridsets are complemented by colorful mediapi-lares (mediaposts) that brighten street corners with constantly updated (state-vetted) newxfaxes, corp ads and police bulletins, the megascreens lighting up the ragged skylines of the villas miseria.

For decades, Argentina's tv and later trid industry churned out endless hours of no-brainer soaps, chat and variety shows gobbled up by audiences throughout Latin America and beyond. Its production of low-brow entertainment lagging only behind Brazil's. In this respect, little has changed—only the names are new, to go with the new powerbrokers: AGE (Ares), Televisa (Aztechology), Sakura (MCT), Edimpresa (indy) and Canal Nova (Novatech). But today's intricate MPOV simsoaps, brain-numbing variety shows, inane gameshows, imported newscafés chains, and broadcast sports events serve a darker

purpose. Most media is owned by Arrojo's corporate allies and cronies and produces brain-numbing, glitzy entertainment geared specifically towards keeping the people distracted while feeding them reactionary social indoctrination through beloved chatshow hosts and million nuyen gameshows.

- Some such productions have their transmissions laced with anti-Amazonian and anti-revolutionary subliminals, or ones that suggest the two are one and the same.
- Gato Vadio
- UN investigators looked into that a couple of years back and found no evidence.
- Ambassador
- Have we forgotten who pays UN wages?
- Rapaz Z

The regime's lockdown on media was pretty much complete until '61, when media mogul Jaime Prado had a falling out with the regime. Edimpresia dropped the reactionary line almost across the board and started giving airtime to the anti-establishment movements that were starting to come together. Prado apparently died in early-'62 in a fire that consumed his La Rocca mansion. Nobody was ever recovered though.

- Most people believe it was a Navaja Roja hit but unsurprisingly nobody saw a thing.
- Juan Solo
- Actually, some people thought he might have had an extreme case of SURGE, some sort of spontaneous combustion.
- Doc Cuevas

Prado's unassuming trophy wife, Mariana, unexpectedly took over the reigns of the media group and took up her husband's agenda—both publicly and in the shadows. It's no secret she hates Arrojo with a vengeance, but it's less known she's found an ally in Novatech South Am's director António Ortega, a childhood friend of her husband. She's also showed sympathy towards the opposition movement, Democracia Siempre, giving them positive news-coverage when she can. Unwilling to order a crackdown which might reveal the cracks in his carefully built façade, Arrojo's been trying to appease Mariana Prado for the past couple of years with little success.

Just before Easter, a particularly scathing exposé on SIDE black ops in the villas miseria proved the final straw. The Ministro del Interior issued a warrant against Mariana for „suspected treason and unpatriotic behavior“. Edimpresia cameras were on hand to broadcast her arrest, making things even more uncomfortable for the regime. In response they froze Prado's assets and suspended Edimpresia's license, pulling it off the air. Cue the Easter riots...

Pirate broadcasters like Buenos Aires' La Voz del Pueblo have taken up Edimpresia's torch, trying to break through to the middle class and show some of what's been going on behind the scenes. Pirates aligned with Democracia Siempre in particular are hacking into offline Edimpresia relays and other channel's broadcasts with suspicious ease.

- Help from Novatech? Hope they haven't sold out.
- Esteban T
- Unconfirmed, but it would be disappointing. You'll appreciate other news I've heard though: the antifascist NGO International Spotlight has started calling in favors and pulling serious strings to get Prado on this year's Peace Nobel shortlist. It's an uphill battle, but several countries and some corporate sponsors have been surprisingly supportive. Wonder how Prez Arrojo's going to handle that hot potato?
- Antifa

PODER AL PUEBLO

A chaotic cocktail of grassroots groups—policlubs, labor unions, civic and militant groups—that make up the challengers to the regime evolved haphazardly in the absence of long since stifled organized political opposition. The disorganized resentment and hopelessness that's been bubbling away among the miserables erupted into civil disturbances and revolt last Easter following Mariana Prado's arrest and the gag order on Edimpresia. They're only just starting to shape up into something more. If anyone can tap into this melting pot of diverse factions, sharing little but their opposition to the corps and the regime, it's the Democracia Siempre (DS) coalition.

- Hard to make out the difference between activists and gangers in some places. In others, there's no difference at all.
- Tránsito Soto

The leftist Democracia Siempre is cobbled together with hope, bringing together the three biggest opposition factions: the remains of the left-wing political opposition and policlubs, the surviving labor unions, and the network of community groups that have developed in the villas miseria. Besides the three main groups you also get metahuman rights groups, youth communes, student groups, native rights movements and societies, and support from international policlubs and NGOs.

After SIDE's initial culling, the surviving members of the DS's ruling Comité, had a 50,000¥ prize placed on their heads—and yet in a country renowned for deprivation no one has turned them in. The current Comité triumvirate are José Hidalgo (representing the left-wingers and youth groups), Raimundo Núñez (the unions and rural workers) and Eva Alba (the villas miseria communities).

- ◆ There are rumors that the DS is getting covert help from certain megas and even elements within the Vatican, who aren't pleased with the Argentine hierarchy's toadying but the only money trails I dug up lead to anti-corp or antifa groups like Equity, Eidelweiss Pirates, and I-Spotlight.
- ◆ Severotaku

Eva Alba deserves particular attention. A former social worker turned activist, she's become known as „Santa Evita“. Most people believe she's either a spirit of some sort, or that she Awakened or SURGED in '61. I've heard that her skin glows with a light (some say saintly light) of its own, changing according to her mood when she speaks.

- ◆ There's whispers that she's Evita Peron reincarnate, here to deliver us. Eva herself has never made the claim, though she hasn't denied it either.
- ◆ Rapaz Z

IT'S A CRIME

Organized crime plays a peculiar role in Argentina's turbulent landscape. While it is the one sector of the economy that remains untroubled and prosperous, it too has its idiosyncrasies. On one hand, its drug and chip trade conveniently keep the unwashed masses and the middle class sararimen blissfully oblivious and apathic. On the other, the high-handed government inspired by ultra-nationalist ideals frowns upon underworld syndicates as dangerous loose cannons. Fortunately for the government, the problem had an easy solution.

Three syndicates have ruled the roost for the better part of this century: a blue-collar outfit called Los Lobos (after the boss Carlos Lobo) dealing in blackmarketeering, loan-sharking, illegal gambling and lotteries; the local branch of the Andes Cartel run by an ork known as Cantañeda; and, most relevantly, a multi-faceted organization run by the Buenos Aires crimelord, el Ángel. For non-locals it might come as a bit of shock to learn that Ángel is Colonel Gabriel Fernández, a career Army officer and the man responsible for Buenos Aires Civil Defense Division. You won't find his soldiers dealing on the curb—he delegates that to gangs—but they move his product, run protection scams and provide object lessons.

- ◆ Not surprising. The military here have always been hip deep in racketeering, drug trade and smuggling anyway, Ángel's just expanded his sights.
- ◆ Covadonga
- ◆ The Andes Cartel wants a bigger slice, and there's a tidy bounty on Ángel's head.
- ◆ Juan Solo

The Arrojo cabinet and SIDE have turned a blind eye towards el Ángel's activities over the years. His competitors have suffered an inordinate number of crackdowns and setbacks, while Ángel's amassed a huge amount of underworld power and official clout. Some (myself included) think there's a connection, which makes sense since Fernández was a contemporary of former-SIDE boss Luis García on the rolls of the Military Academy.

- ◆ We suspect Gabriel was a deep-cover sleeper for SIDE, whose goal is to keep the slums under control through vice.
- ◆ Rapaz Z
- ◆ Not doing a very good job, is he?
- ◆ Juan Solo
- ◆ Explains why Democracia had a couple of his chiphouses fire-bombed in La Boca and Quilmes though.
- ◆ Doc Cuevas

The twist is that Arrojo's government may have made a serious mistake building up Ángel's organization. When Arrojo pulled the carpet on García, they never expected that nasty piece of work to do what he did, so there were no plans in place when García and cohorts went to ground. Simultaneously, Ángel severed his ties with SIDE, filed for extended leave from the Army, and placed his underworld empire on red alert. Time will tell how fraggged up this will get.

- ◆ Quijote assumes Ángel has sided with García, which sets the government and SIDE in line for a world of hurt, especially if the spookmaster throws in with Democracia Siempre. But, it's equally possible Ángel could simply be preemptively reacting to Torres' expected purge and protecting himself.
- ◆ Severo
- ◆ Whatever. Biz is about to get way more interesting.
- ◆ Tango2

SOUTHERN SOLACE

Enough with the drama, time for some scenery. Colonized by the Spanish and recipient of a bewildering variety of immigrants like many Latin American nations, Argentina is home to a variety of terrains and climates almost as diverse as its cultural and ethnic heritage.

From the verdant pampas and jungles of the interior and North to the Atlantic coast and the jagged peaks of the Andes, there's something for everyone somewhere in Argentina: backwater pampero towns nestled near megacorp facilities and agricorp ranches; rough merc prefab-towns besieged by encroaching Amazonian rainforests on the banks of the Paraná and Plata; disreputable leisure towns owned by syndicates; ghost

villages deserted by those looking for better lots in the cities; and pristine Andine slopes in places like the Bariloche resort, home to best skiing in the southern hemisphere for most of the year and the perfect out-of-the-way spot for the elite to unwind. The jewels of the nation are our cities, however. All seem to have peculiarities and characters of their own, but two stand out.

BUENOS AIRES

The pride of Argentinean culture is also a living remnant of Europe in the Americas. Buenos Aires is a stronghold of corporate power and strives to be the economic and political counterweight to Metropole. Despite the corp cruisers perpetually anchored at port, no one needs reminding that the capital is within artillery range of Amazonian forces.

- The competition between the two countries goes on at all levels. Argentina may be pissed Novatech is spreading its wings across the border, but Amazonia is livid that Buenos Aires continues to get twice the traffic of any of its ports.
- JWK

Though towering glass skyscrapers and arcologies have taken over downtown, the city retains its Old World charm. You can still find vibrant memories of another age in its picturesque colonial mansions and tree-lined avenues. In fact, roadways have been elevated to avoid heavy traffic in old residential areas like Alto Palermo and La Recoleta, where many of Arrojo’s cronies and corp execs live among well-patrolled alamedas and breezy coffee-shops.

- One thing you have to give them—Argentineans know how to unwind. There’s always something going on in Buenos Aires. Even these days, there seems to be a truce in place wherever people gather to have a good time. The music and dancing helps people forget the troubles . . . and provides a nice cover to conduct all sorts of business.
- Rosa Alva

Equally colorful is the central corporate district with MCT’s Corrientes arcology (the biggest south of Tenochtitlán) towering over the Renraku Quarter (formerly Plaza de Mayo) and Aztechnology’s amazing Nuevo Azteca-style waterfront complex. Also of note is Ares’ impressive Retiro compound, which hosts the annual Buenos Aires Arms Fair (the biggest in South America).

Beyond the city core, in all directions, lies the legacy of poverty and oppression that’s the regime’s heritage. Buenos Aires is encircled by villas miseria, shantytowns of narrow streets and leaning buildings that are home to an inexhaustible supply of unskilled labor for corporate factories and mills and menial work. Each villa miseria has its own personality and lifestyle: some are governed by gangs, some by dedicated

community groups; but in all of them the resentment towards the entrenched establishment is ready to explode violently. Though not as big as the Easter uprisings, protests involving thousands of people regularly march downtown to make their voice heard—only to meet police lines with corp security and drone backup.

Some of the megas run „mercy clinics“ on the edges of the villas miserias for PR. Free basic medicare and some prescription drugs. Some of the docs even run chopshops in the back and will sew you up, no questions asked.

- Yeah, you can see the pamphlets, signs and bloodstains on the sidewalks for days after. Really puts Pedro Sarariman on edge, no matter how many times the news tells him the situation is under control. It’s getting so you can cut the tension with a monowhip.
- Salazar
- Wanna bet those prescription drugs have „unforeseen“ mood control side-effects and cause sterility?
- Doc Cuevas
- A colleague of mine vanished when he was investigating a tip that the mercy clinics might be linked to last year’s outbreaks of cholera and typhoid in the La Boca slums.
- Newshack Anonymous
- With the government looking the other way, the clinics are also where the corps run human trials for new cyber, bio and genetech on volunteers. A few hundred nuyen a month to test run unproven tech looks much more attractive when you don’t have food in your belly.
- Marcos
- Which makes them appealing targets for tech poachers and they know it. Security is tight.
- Tango2

Be careful though, in these troubled times, Buenos Aires has restricted licenses on cyber and weapons for „self-defense“ to only card-carrying corporate citizens or contract mercenaries (with ID).

RESISTENCIA

Backwater township turned national icon and rough merc haven, Resistencia still bears the scars of its history as the bloody battlefield of yesteryear—a memorial to Argentine resistance. It remains only partially restored as a living reminder of the Amazonian threat.

- Resistencia is also an unlikely tourist hotspot. The Memorial Glorioso, a cenotaph built over the mass grave used for Argentine dead during the siege gets a steady stream of visitors both local and

foreign. Good site for a discreet meet, too.

◆ Don Segundo Sombra

Resistencia has become the primary staging point for the war/defense effort in northern Argentina. It serves as a command hub for border operations along the Rio de la Plata and the North. Besides the military bases and merc company encampments, the town boasts a commercial strip and a flourishing red-light district. Both a military airstrip and one of the few civilian airstrips sit a couple of miles south of the town, but military presence makes trying to slip in that way problematic.

Life isn't easy or pleasant on the border. Real action is usually short-lived, although things can get brutal. Sometimes it's an honest mistake, like the young feathered serpent that chased a deer out of the jungle and into the river last month; other times, trigger-happy partisans or military hotheads on either side will start trouble—the result of which is blown out of proportion for public consumption by the Ministry of Communication.

◆ Surprisingly, Resistencia is also a major smuggling hub. The military governor turns a blind eye to traffic in and out of Amazonia and down the Andes route in exchange for generous kickbacks. Los Lobos are particularly strong here.

◆ Speedy Gonzo

◆ The border is far more porous than either country likes to admit. Getting small groups through in small boats and hovercraft under darkness provides a steady income to small operators in the Tri-river area.

◆ Oriental 33



AZTLAN

by xxxx

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❖ Captain Chaos

AZTLAN: HEART OF DARKNESS

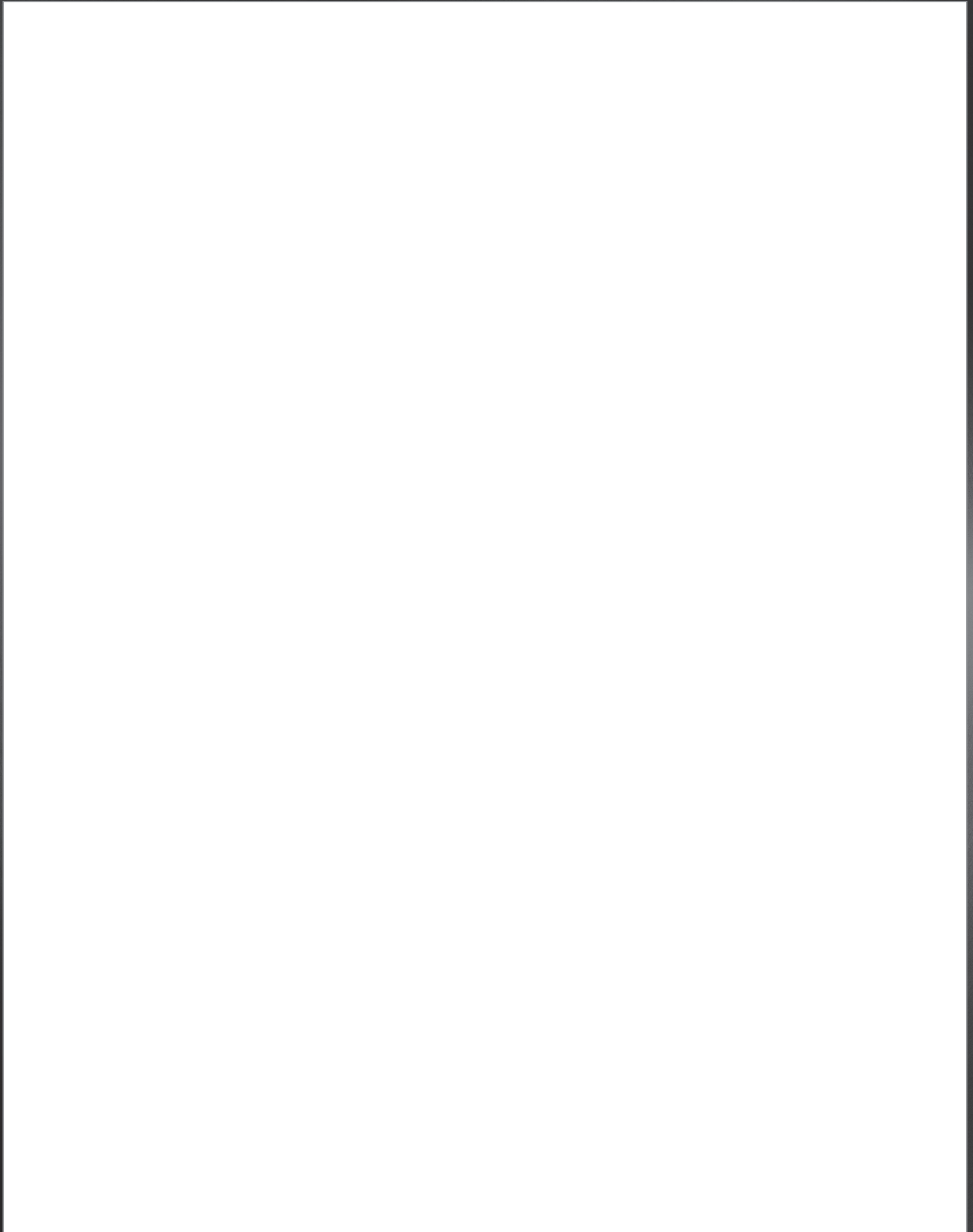
❖ In front of you is a file with a collection of perspectives on Aztlán. It is not the whole story, it is not even half the story, but going into Aztlán blind will flatline you, so what you read here could be the difference between life and death. Read up.
❖ Captain Chaos

THE COUNT OF DAYS

❖ The following is a transcript of a speech given at meeting of the Sons of the Alamo in Austin during February 2064. The speaker is Pennybacker, a long-time veteran of the South Austin resistance against the occupying Aztláner forces in that city.
❖ Captain Chaos

Welcome and I'm glad you all could make it tonight. I will try to keep my words short as I know that every second we spend together puts all of us at risk. As you all know, the meeting last month was hit by a satellite-guided bomb and we lost a lot of good people. Every effort has been made to make sure that doesn't happen again tonight.

We call ourselves the Sons of the Alamo and I see we've attracted many new fighters on that image, but it is crucial to understand that we are fighting a different enemy than was fought in 1836. Our enemy is Aztlán, not Mexico, and there is a difference. I'm going to help you understand that difference by telling you something about the history of those we fight.



- It's a subtle difference, but a powerful one. Aztlan is not Mexico, and to call an Aztlaner a Mexican is an insult, and to call a Mexican an Aztlaner could get you killed.
- Spur

Mexico, as the world once knew it, was brought down from within. Not by those who would later form the Aztlan government, but by the Catholic Church. The Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or Institutional Revolutionary Party to us gringos, had long controlled the Mexican government until a series of scandals rocked it in the early 21st century. Links surfaced that tied government officials to bribes from corporations and drug cartels, not to mention to the violent death of a popular labor activist. The PRI government collapsed and a new coalition government swept in, backed substantially by the Catholic Church.

- Even years prior, the Catholic Church was looking at South America to stage a comeback against declining followers in the rest of the world. Their own desperate straits drove them to take more direct action in Mexico.
- Holly

But a Church-backed Mexican government was not meant to be. VITAS and the Awakening swept into Mexico and proved too much for the new government to handle, especially when the Vatican alienated Mexico's newly goblinized. A coalition of business interests, keen on helping their reputations after being linked to the PRI scandals, granted assistance to the suffering population and when the Mexican government collapsed among violent protests, they formed a caretaker government that would stay in place until 2015.

- Though the Church was behind bringing the scandal to light, the truth of the matter is that many of the corporations operating in Mexico were tied to the drug cartels and both were bribing government officials. But in the Year of Chaos, that was all quickly forgotten.
- Pyramid Watcher

Spearheading this effort was a local corporation named ORO, which was formed by a coalition of Central American druglords to launder and invest their illicit money. ORO grew out of that, however, by taking advantage of two things: exclusive rights to a vast deposit of valuable molybdenum off the coast of Panama and the Central American nations' delay in signing the Business Recognition Accords, which allowed ORO to turn Central America into a software piracy hub and undercut their competition. In 2015, ORO then decided to guide Mexico's return to democratic elections by installing a new nation-wide, computerized direct-voting system through the Matrix.

- It's still widely suspected that ORO knew about the molybdenum deposit far in advance, since when it was „discovered“, ORO had already wrangled exclusive control of that offshore shelf and had managed to eliminate or buy out any possible competition.
- Strider
- Much of the bitter feelings other megacorporations hold towards

Aztechnology can still be traced to the ORO days. ORO made a fortune off of ignoring foreign software and intellectual property copyrights, pirating other corporations' work, re-packaging it, and selling it cheap worldwide through semi-legal channels. Since the corporations didn't have extraterritoriality in Central America yet and they still were just beginning to solidify their power, there wasn't much they could do until ORO was already an influential business power.

- Nuyen Nick

I don't think anyone here is surprised to learn that ORO abused their control of the voting system and used it to ensure the victory of its own puppet party, the Azatlán Party. The Azatlán Party was the brainchild of Francisco Pavón y Guetterrez and had formed in popular backlash to the failures of the Catholic Church's efforts. Pavón was one of Mexico's first known shamans and rebelled against the Vatican's proclamation against the Awakened, claiming that the foreign ways had failed Mexico and that the Awakening showed that the people should look to the old ways, when Central America was one of the most advanced empires in the world. ORO ensured that the already-popular idea became policy and a new re-imagining of the nation took root, starting with its official renaming to Aztlan, to celebrate the mythological origins of the old Aztec Empire it emulated.

- There is much more to the re-Naming than a simple honorary.
- Wordsmyth

- You would know, old man.
- The Laughing Man

- Despite ORO getting him into power, Pavón never really saw eye-to-eye with them. The increasing privatization and exploitation of Aztlan bothered him, resulting in a number of arguments behind closed doors. He died in 2033 (many believe he was poisoned), just as he was privately considering starting a new party to oppose the government.
- Corona

AZTLAN TIMELINE

2015: President Pavon renames the nation of Mexico to Aztlan.
2018: Aztlan joins the Sovereign Tribal Council of the Native American Nations.
2027: The Catholic Church is denied tax-exempt status by the Aztlan government, which then launches a series of audits and charges of fraud against the Church.
2034: Aztlan leaves the Sovereign Tribal Council, protesting its ineffectiveness.
2035: Aztlan invades southern Texas.
2036: Invasion expands to the California Free State; Aztlan occupies San Diego.
2041: A presidential order declares the Catholic Church a „revolutionary and terrorist organization“ in Aztlan.
2044: Aztlan nationalizes all foreign industry in the nation.
2045-2047: The nation is expanded to include the other nations of Mesoamerica, either through military annexation or voluntary application to the republic.
2048: The megacorporations retaliate against Aztlan’s nationalization of foreign industry with Operation Reciprocity, which then leads to the Veracruz Settlement.
2049: The CAS, California Free State, and Aztlan reach détente, and sign cease-fire agreements and lift trade sanctions.
2051: Yucatan rebels start initiating the first organized raids on Aztlan assets, a rebellion that escalates over the following years.
2061: The dragon Ghostwalker attacks and destroys Aztlan property in the jointly-occupied city of Denver.
 January 27, 2062: Ghostwalker, after declaring himself ruler of Denver, removes Aztlan participation in the city’s governance.
February 5, 2062: Aztlan launches Operation Rancho Obrero, a slash-and-burn offensive against the Yucatan rebellion. During the ongoing operation, natural disasters strike the peninsula and there are reports of strange spirit attacks.
XX, 2064: A peace summit begins to establish the Yucatan as a semi-sovereign state, but it is targeted by a bomb attack which kills Juan Atzcapotzalco and the shaman Quauhtlatoa on live trid. Aztlan implicates the feathered serpent Dzitbalchén in the attack.
XX, 2064: Dzitbalchén is turned over to Aztlan authorities by Pobre, the new feathered serpent governor of the Yucatan. Dzitbalchén is scheduled for trial and faces execution if found guilty.

Understand that when we fight Aztlan here in South Austin, we are battling this philosophy. As the United States fragmented, Aztlan prospered with the successes of local corporations such as ORO and Pemex. The nation grew wealthy and proud, backing the Native American insurgents in America and even invading the Texan land we now bleed to liberate. Proud nationalism fueled the Aztec mythological revival, and vice versa, and even ORO renamed itself Aztechnology in 2022 to

both take advantage of the image and to further popularize it. Its Central American neighbors, struggling with the transformation into 21st century economies, petitioned Aztlan for inclusion in its success and by 2050, every single Central American nation had joined the Aztlan Republic and been worked into the government and the mythological philosophy, which came to embrace elements of many Central American historical empires.

- As a result today, the Path of the Sun religion in Aztlan isn’t entirely Aztec, but a mix of Mesoamerican mythologies where Aztec religion is perhaps the most prominent. In reality, the Path of the Sun is a tailor-made belief system perfect for social control of the nation and corporation; and when the nation expanded, the religion was expanded alongside it.
- Socio Pat

Aztlan saw the rising power of the megacorporations as a threat, however, and rose to combat it in 2048 by nationalizing all businesses operating in its borders. The corporate response was Operation Reciprocity and the outcome was the Veracruz Settlement, which allowed megacorporations to conditionally operate within Aztlan and granted the Panama Canal to Corporate Court control. Aztlan shook off the sting off that compromise by moving south into Colombia and Venezuela, but they didn’t get far before being stopped by an equally-expansionist Amazonia, resulting in a Cold War border situation that still exists today.

- Pennybacker glosses over Operation Reciprocity but it’s much more than a footnote in history. Essentially, a backroom council of AAA megacorps hatched a plan to teach Aztechnology a lesson. They organized along three sites. The first site was Force Kwanto, a Japanese (read: Japanacorp) carrier group staging „exercises“ in international waters just offshore of San Diego. The second site was a private airfield in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. The third site was the Desert Range Proving Grounds airbase in Ute. A diversionary force of drones, specifically designed to look like penetrating bombers on sensors, left from site two at daybreak and put on a good show of what appeared to be an attack on targets in eastern Aztlan. Aztlan air defense forces went on alert, and in a „normal response“ to Aztlan’s heightened readiness status, the Force Kwanto carrier group put up its own jamming and turned for safer waters. But what the jamming concealed were corporate naval assault elements launching from the group while an air strike element launched from site three utilizing a protected corridor from Force Kwanto to slip into Aztlan airspace over Ensenada and bomb targets identified by the naval assault elements. Aztechnology’s corporate military assets in Ensenada were destroyed and Aztechnology got the message.
- Picador

- Both Aztlan and Amazonia claim that Colombia and Venezuela sent appeals to join their republics. While some elements in both nations did favor one side or the other, there’s no evidence that either nation ever did formally appeal to either Aztlan or Amazonia. The more likely case is that both had eyes on that land anyway, and planned to take it regardless.
- Arflight

Some of you think we’ve nearly won, that South Austin is close to liberation. You are naïve and underestimate our opposition. You look around to your chummers now, wondering how I can say this. But listen, because I’ve been fighting Aztlan

for two decades and I know better than you greenhorns. Yeah, Aztlan was kicked out of Denver two years ago by Ghostwalker, and yeah, in those same two years Aztlan appears to have been losing its war in the Yucatan. But the Aztec nationalist spirit burns brightly in their hearts, as Texan pride does in yours, but the Azzies would not hesitate to offer your hearts to their gods. You will not break the Aztlaner military occupation here until you break the Aztlaner spirit here and that is both what we fight and why our fight is not yet over."

PAYRAMID SCHEME

- This memo was „leaked“ to Shadowland by an anonymous source. I suspect the leak came from the author, Rodolfo Serraza, Cuba’s Admiral of the Navy and former Aztlan Jaguar Guard. I’ve since been able to independently verify the information, so I’m including it here. Note that the memo leaked is only a synopsis of a full document; Serraza apparently wanted us to have enough information on his former employers to hurt them, but not enough to compromise Cuban intelligence.
- Captain Chaos

FROM: Office of the Admiral of the Navy
 TO: Office of National Strategic Assessment
 SUBJECT: Synopsis of Memorandum on the Government of Aztlan for the Office of the President
 The key point of this synopsis is to stress the inseparable connection between Aztlan and Aztechnology. In fact, it would not be incorrect to describe the Aztlan government as a secret division of Aztechnology and when we interact with the nation, we must act as if we are simultaneously interacting with the corporation.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL

The government of Aztlan is a federal republic on the surface, with a three branched power structure similar to the UCAS, consisting of an executive, legislative, and judicial branch. The executive branch includes the „elected“ president and the appointed cabinet. The president serves a six year term and has no re-elected term limit. The legislative branch consists of a bicameral congress: an 80-member Senate elected from 40 legislative states (including states such as Colombia, Guatemala and the other incorporated Central American nations as well as the Federal District that contains Tenochtitlán) and a 500-member Chamber of Deputies elected by population distribution. Senators serve six year alternating terms and Deputies serve three year terms, and neither may serve two consecutive terms.

- They can, however, leave for a term and then run again. They usually spend the downtime kissing Aztechnology hoop as much as possible, so that they are sure to get back in.
- Capricorn
- As far as limited power of the Congress goes, it’s all in the Senate. If the madhouse in the Chamber of Deputies manages to get its act together long enough to pass a bill, the Senate can make it law with a simple majority. But if the Senate passes a bill, it automatically becomes law unless two-thirds the Chamber of Deputies votes against it. Since getting two-thirds of the deputies to act together is a feat

comparable to large miracles, the Senate does most of the law-making.

- Hanging Chad

- The current president, by the way, is Flavia de la Rosa, who was elected for her second term by Aztechnology in 2059. The next election is in 2065 and rumor is that de la Rosa is taking a better-paying job in Aztechnology instead.
- Webster

AZTLAN AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Democratic Republic
Population: 192,628,000
 Human: 59%
 Elf: 13%
 Dwarf: 9%
 Ork: 12%
 Troll: 3%
 Other: 4%
Per Capita Income: 15,000,000 pesos or 30,000\$
Estimated SINless: 28%
Below Poverty Level: 35%
Corporate Affiliation: 72%
Education:
 Less Than Twelve Years: 27%
 High School Equivalency: 30%
 College Degrees: 28%
 Advanced Degrees: 15%
Major Ethnic Groups:
 Mestizo: 76%
 Amerindian: 18%
 Caucasian: 6%
Major Languages Spoken:
 Aztlaner Spanish: 98%
 English: 86%
 Nahuatl: 18%
Major Religions:
 Path of the Sun: 93%
 Roman Catholic: 4%
 Other or No Affiliation: 3%
Currency: Pesos (nuyen also widely accepted)
Exchange rate: 500 pesos = 1 nuyen
Medicarro Coverage: 100%
 Guaranteed Response Time: 15 minutes

All of this structure is formality, however, because the electoral system is fully in the control of Aztechnology. ORO designed the computer system that tabulates Aztlan’s votes and Aztechnology inherited it. The private consulting firm that verifies Aztlan’s elections is owned by Aztechnology through three shell companies. And Aztlan formally does not allow United Nations inspectors to observe their voting process.

Though the people vote, essentially Aztechnology chooses the outcome of every election by tweaking the numbers however they need to as the votes are tabulated in their system.

- The control is more complete than even that. Not only does an elected official owe their success to Aztechnology, but Aztechnology makes sure they do their job the way they want. If an official acts out of line, suddenly he finds his funding vanishing, his computer network locked down, his mailbox filling up with incriminating video and his staff being threatened.

- IQ

- Usually it doesn't even require direct intimidation. Most government officials make squat for pay; they hope to get jobs for the private sector (read: Aztechnology) when they are done. So they are more than happy to do whatever the Big A wants because someday they want a corner office with a nice view.

- Hidalgo

- The Azatlán Party always wins majority control, of course, and there hasn't been a non-Azatlán president since the party's formation. The Partido de Acción Nacional did have a powerful following in the 2059 elections, but the Azzies just gave them a handful of Congressional seats and pundits claiming they suffered low voter turnout from their base.

- Pyramid Watcher

- Scan this though: on election night in 2059, half a world away in India, twenty-one top computer criminals are found dead, plugged into the decks. Now, word on the street is that they were trying to hack the Aztlan election and change the outcome...but why?

- Squeaker

- Someone hired them, but the tracks were conveniently covered when the Heart of Darkness fried their brains to ash.

- Demonseed Elite

ECONOMIC CONTROL

Aztechnology's control doesn't end with the government. Within Aztlan's borders, Aztechnology is the government, the economy, and the military. Though its experiment to nationalize all industry in Aztlan was short-lived, the Veracruz Settlement of 2048 does still ensure that in the case of all corporations operating in Aztlan (including subsidiaries owned by foreign corporations), the largest single shareholder is an Aztlaner citizen or majority-owned

Aztlaner corporation. Though this major shareholder does not necessarily have a majority share of the corporation's stock, other foreign shareholders may find their corporation's operational charter invalidated if they are not at „arm's length“ as far as ownership or voting is concerned.

- In most cases, this single largest shareholder is the Aztlan government, but sometimes it is Aztechnology, an Aztechnology subsidiary or an Aztechnology employee. Even in rare cases where it's none of these, it's still an Aztlaner citizen who is subject to Aztechn—err... Aztlan laws.

- Nuyen Nick

- The „arm's length“ clause comes into play when one of the shareholders is a shell company belonging to another shareholder. If Aztlan learns of this state and the combined share ownership makes the parent and shell companies the single largest owner, say adios to the charter. On rare occasions Aztlan has even enforced

this on voting blocs which are not technically owned by the same entity, but vote the same way repeatedly. That's resulted in some vicious Corporate Court lawsuits and lots of jobs for us.

- The Chromed Accountant

Aztechnology also employs a number of techniques to control and oversee Aztlaner currency and trade.

Their national currency, the peso, actually comes in two forms, the peso norma (standard pesos which exists as coins and paper bills as well as electronically) and the peso libre (free pesos which exists only in electronic form). Standard pesos can be used freely within Aztlan, but they can not be converted to foreign currency or corp scrip and also can not be taken outside the country. If you wish to do either of those things, you have to convert the standard pesos to free pesos, which are put on a credstick issued only by Aztechnology (usually through a number of wholly-owned „national“ banks). You may then use those as you desire; but another step is in place if you pay someone else in Aztlan with that credstick. The free pesos they just received from you will automatically convert to standard pesos the next time they sync with their bank and they are obligated by law to do so before spending them. It is a felony and easily traceable, since free pesos transactions have a very specific audit trail. This ensures that Aztechnology knows exactly where any of its currency that could leave the country or be converted is going and how it is being transacted.

As an extension of that level of economic control, Aztlan's stock market is an entirely virtual exchange, but requires any broker trading on it to complete an extensive government-licensing program (this includes computerized expert system „brokers“). Because of the complexity involved in acquiring a license, most foreign investors choose to use local brokerage houses instead of completing the process for their own in-house personnel.

- Aztlan slipped all those esoteric economic laws in under the pretense of combating drug cartels, claiming it makes it impossible for them to move cash in and out of Aztlan or launder it through investment schemes. It'd be a plausible excuse if we here didn't know better and realize Aztechnology was founded by drug cartels.

- Moneymaker

MILITARY CONTROL

Aztlan's active armed forces stands at 60,000, which you are probably surprised to learn is smaller than our own Cuban military. It is largely a defensive military with very little force projection. The Navy includes no aircraft carriers and the Air Force has few long-ranged bombers. It has only a handful of intercontinental missiles and no nuclear warheads. However, as I am sure you know, this is not the whole story.

Aztechnology maintains an active „corporate security force“ nearly three times that size. Some of this is used to guard Aztechnology extraterritorial property, but much is used to augment Aztlan military and law enforcement, providing it with the assets it lacks. Aztlan also outsources its intelligence gathering to Aztechnology, which conveniently allows one pool from which both may draw and also gives Aztechnology total infiltration into the nation's security.

- The Aztech soldiers tend to be a couple years ahead of the

SOTA, while the national military is a few years behind. This creates more than a few morale problems, especially when you have situations like the Yucatan, where mostly national army troops were used on the front-lines of the toxic zone.

- Argent

Then there are the guerreros, or warrior orders, of which I'm sure you've only heard legends. I will try to add some truth. The guerreros are Aztechnology-backed and religiously-indoctrinated initiatory groups, but their members may be assigned to work with Aztlan national forces as deemed appropriate by Aztechnology. Membership requires magical talent and an impressive military and civic background. In many cases, purity of Aztlaner blood also factors into a warrior's advancement. Contrary to foreign belief, the guerreros are trained to be less lethal than regular soldiers; taking prisoners alive is not only preferred, it's religiously significant. From these prisoners, the guerreros obtain blood tokens that make them more potent in combat. There are four orders of equal influence but in different aspects.

- The truth is slim here, but the blood tokens seem to be foci that are made from the bodies of captured prisoners.
- Silicon Mage
- Made from their bodies as they are sacrificed, you mean.
- Eli

Ocelomeh (The Jaguars)

The Jaguars are the most commonly encountered guerreros by those who engage Aztlan or Aztechnology assets. The Jaguars are exemplary fire team combat veterans and are organized in exclusive units of Jaguar Guards, elite special forces that only operate within Aztlan national borders, often protecting the most sensitive corporate and national sites. Not all Jaguar Guards are Ocelomeh, but all magical troops in the Jaguar Guards are.

Jaguars are trained to act in a role on a team and their magical abilities usually reflect this. One Ocelomeh mage might be a team's medic, trained primarily in spells of healing. Another might be fire support and be trained in physical combat magic.

The Jaguars can often be seen at national religious ceremonies in full regalia, wearing light linen tunics bedecked with feathers and flowers. Outside of ceremonial garb, however, they wear standard military uniforms, distinguishable only by a unique shoulder-flash emblem.

- Or sometimes by their blood tokens. If you see a corpsec guard with a rope of human hair tied to his belt or a finger bone around his neck, chances are he's Ocelomeh.
- Picador

Cuacuahtin (The Eagles)

Cuban military forces may have encountered Cuacuahtin warriors and never realized it, simply passing down stories of valorous individuals within an opposing unit. The Eagles are recruited, like other guerreros, from various national and corporate military units, but unlike the Jaguars, the Eagles are returned to their original units after undergoing indoctrination. The Eagles are generally put in command of normal soldiers,

bolstering their troops with their religious zeal and magical ability. Many are trained in techniques which allow them to enhance the ability of the soldiers around them or protect the soldiers from harm.

Unlike the Jaguars, the Eagles operate outside of Aztlan as their unit is ordered. Like the Jaguars, they are only distinguishable by a unique shoulder emblem.

- I heard a story from a merc friend of mine who was working down in Yucatan a few years back. He was telling me about how six Aztlaner soldiers held a valley against forty Yucatan rebels, with spirit support, for six hours. After the Aztlaner bodies were finally recovered, the rebels identified one of them as an Eagle warrior.
- ASDF

Otontin (The Brave Ones)

The Otontin are deep infiltration agents, and as such are the least likely ones you've encountered. They are primarily trained in techniques of stealth and deception and an Otontin warrior acts alone and usually behind enemy lines. It is their duty to get close to foreign targets that are the most protected, usually for extraction, but sometimes for assassination. Once recruited as an Otontin, connections to the warrior's past are erased: unit, family, and friends.

They live only for their order and for their mission and assume an identity as needed.

- Not all the Otontin are behind enemy lines. A number of them are being used to infiltrate the underground Catholic movement.
- Jerusalem

Cuachicqueh (The Shorn Ones)

The Cuachicqueh are modern shock troops, or maybe you could call them corporate-military terrorists. They operate in complimentary pairs and like the Otontin are used often deep behind enemy lines. Unlike the Otontin, they are decidedly less subtle and are trained for sabotage, terror strikes, or brute-force kidnappings. They sometimes maintain contacts with insurgents or terrorist groups in the target area but sometimes act entirely independent of those forces. Unlike those groups, they do not take credit for their actions and if the blame falls on one of these other groups, that usually only works to their advantage.

Many devout Cuachicqueh can be identified by the historical shorn head and Mohawk or single braid look, but not all undertake this tradition.

- Aztechnology keeps fresh ritual samples of every warrior, in case of their capture. In addition, each one carries a poison pill to ensure they will not reveal anything if taken alive.
- Sin Fronteras
- Poison pill? That's ancient history, chummer. The warriors carry a dose of nano-cutters now. If the need arises to use them, they consider it a holy sacrifice. That's hardcore, omgae.
- Italy

FAITH IN THE FIFTH SUN

- Sometimes the best way to get the scoop on a religion is to let the religion sell itself. This section comes from an Aztlan tourist information packet. Of course, you know me better than to believe

I'd just let the Azzies represent themselves; I've asked Socio Pat to provide inserts separating truth from fiction. He takes Aztec religion very seriously and has followed it for years and is a source I trust implicitly.

- Captain Chaos
- Don't think I'll forget about the money you owe me, Cap. ;)
- Socio Pat

OLD WONDERS, NEW WORLD: THE PATH OF THE SUN

Everywhere you go during a visit to Aztlan, the many gods of the Path of the Sun will smile down upon you.

We are a nation rich in history in faith, but to truly appreciate any visit, you should come with a basic introduction to our spiritual world.

Teocallis, Houses of the Gods

You will see them towering above the Tenochtitlán skyline and you will see them standing humbly on the sides of desert roads. Small or large, every teocalli is a temple and a house of the gods and so all are divine. You can identify a teocalli right away by its traditional four-sided, stepped-pyramid design and flattened summit which houses an image of the deity to which the teocalli is consecrated to and an altar for offerings. They are not only places of worship but also of education and participation; each teocalli, even the tiniest roadside ones, includes a subtle dataterminal which a visitor can access to learn about the local god, make donations to the priesthood, or even submit petitions to the deity, which are carried to it by the priests at the next sunrise.

>>> Socio Pat: Every visitor with a SIN, that is. Aztechnology runs the computer network the teocallis use and you can bet your ass they will tag a visitor's SIN. From it, they can build a database that tracks not which teocalli you visited, but ties your name to donations and petitions. The Azzies use this information mostly on their own citizens, building a profile of their nation and finding out who gives and who doesn't. It's an invisible social pressure in Aztlan; the faithful find themselves rewarded while the unfaithful run into glass ceilings, piles of red tape, you name it. The larger teocallis are also internally hollow and house environmentally-controlled quarters for the priesthood, as well as other civic duties, such as armories, emergency provisions, etc. Don't think for a second that they are easy targets; these temples are usually guarded by Jaguar Guards and they glow (sometimes flare) in the astral with background count, indicating some serious juju is going on.

- I haven't been able to get close enough for serious study, but I suspect the background count is aspected. To the Path of the Sun, no doubt, which means it'd be a headache for you and me, but a boon to the Azzies. My advice: don't face them down on their home ground.
- Magister

The Old Gods

One reason there are so many teocallis in Aztlan is because there are so many gods! The Path of the Sun worships dozens of deities of the old Aztec ways, as well other gods from Mesoamerican cultures that are honored in our republic.

lic. Some gods are universal (literally!), like Quetzalcóatl, the Feathered Serpent of Knowledge and Laws, while some lesser deities are significant in the lives of certain people, like Yacatecuhli, the God of Traveling Merchants and patron of international business. Holidays and festivals honoring the gods are numerous and exciting and there is always one to attend. Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead, runs from the evening of October 31st to November 2nd, and it is a time of simultaneously celebrating and mourning those who have passed. To Aztlaners, death is not a somber affair, but one of joy, because we believe that life springs from death. Another fascinating festival is Nemontemi, the five „nothing days“ between the end of one Aztec year and the start of the next. These days, which fall at the beginning of February, are considered unlucky for business and so Aztlaners spend them at religious ceremonies or gathering with family and exchanging gifts.

>>> Socio Pat: I've included a handy list of the major gods, all of which have large teocallis in Tenochtitlán and are pretty widely worshipped. The Path of the Sun's pantheon can be confusing, because in addition to the dozens of gods, many gods have multiple aspects with separate names. For instance, the god Tlaloc who is responsible for the rains and agriculture also goes by the name Epcóatl and is the patron deity of children and some small cults worship him as Oztoteotl, the god of caves.

- Images of the gods feature heavily in Aztlan iconography, even in neon-flashing digital crawls and carved into the architecture. If you're familiar with their images they can help you identify sections of the sprawl quickly, especially in cases where the iconography is used in place of textual signs.
- Demonseed Elite

MAJOR AZTLAN DEITIES

- # Deity Areas of Responsibility
- # Quetzalcóatl Sky, wind, knowledge, laws
- # Huitzilopochtli War, the sun
- # Tezcatlipoca Fate, conflict, night, death
- # Tlaloc Rain, agriculture
- # Xuihtecuhli Light, fire
- # Xipe-Totec Cycles, seasons, diseases

Those Who Serve

Serving in the priesthood is an important and honored following in Aztlan, which shows from the nearly 150,000 priests in our nation. The priests of the Path of the Sun are known as teopixque (singular: teopixqui) and are more than just religious stewards, they are civic stewards also in areas such as health care and education. The civic link is evident in the structure of the priesthood: its official head is the Huey Tlatoani („Revered Speaker“), who in past times was the emperor but these days is the elected president. Below the Huey Tlatoani, three High Priests preside over the religious observance in the nation: the High Priests of Quetzalcóatl, Tlaloc, and Huitzilopochtli. If you visit Aztlan during a high festival period, you may even see one

of them personally leading the ceremony!

>>> Socio Pat: Though the President and the Huey Tlatoani is the same person, they are two distinct roles. There is separate protocol that is used depending on which one you are addressing. The three high priest positions under the Huey Tlatoani seem to have very fast turnover, though as far as I can tell, every one of them has been magically talented. It's not mentioned here, but there is also an influential Vicar General position under the Huey Tlatoani that chooses new priests from the thousands of applicants and oversees administrative functions for the priesthood. The current Vicar General is a man named Cesar Botello, a shrewd politico without an ounce of magic. It is also important to note that the percentage of magically active teopixque sits at 24 percent and is rising; much higher than in other sectors or in other religious organizations.

- It's not just the priesthood; the percentage of magically-active population in Aztlan is higher than the world average and among the highest concentrations on the globe. Probably due to the Az-zies' aggressive system for identifying magical potential in the population.

- Mad Libbie

- If it's just a matter of identification, why does Aztlan also have one of the highest concentrations of metahuman and SURGE expression?

- Holly

The Importance of Sacrifice

You may have seen docudramas on the Ancient Wisdom Channel showing Aztecs sacrificing people to their gods under the dark of the moon. It is true that it once happened and while human sacrifice is no longer performed in Aztlan, sacrifice is still a central concept to our belief system. We believe that we live in the age of the Fifth Sun, with four previous cataclysms having destroyed prior suns and humanity. To return humanity to life and give us a new sun, the gods sacrificed themselves for us. To thank them for that sacrifice and to keep our sun rising each day, the Aztlan people make small sacrifices to the gods. But do not worry for your safety, these sacrifices are purely symbolic, such as a monetary donation to the priesthood or state charities or sometimes a drop of blood from a pricked finger onto a piece of ceremonial paper which is then burned in offering at a teocalli. Our sacrifices are not the scary scenes of the trid but a way to honor how fortunate and precious our lives all are.

>>> Socio Pat: There have been documented cases of public human sacrifice in Aztlan, though these cases involved criminals sentenced to capital punishment. When pressed, the Aztlan government claims these acts are not „cruel and unusual punishment“, because the offender is magically anesthetized just before decapitation by an obsidian blade. Witnesses from the astral do confirm that an exchange of magical energy does take place between the victim and the presiding priest, but can't say whether it is the casting of a spell or not. More significant is the link between the concept of sacrifice and Aztlan magical traditions, as can be seen in the use of blood magic. Though not officially sanctioned by the government of Aztlan, there are countless reports of Aztlaner shamans and hermetics who employ blood-letting of themselves and the sacrifice of others as a means of augmenting their magical ability.

- The Azzies will never come forward and admit it, but they use

blood magic all over the place. Where do you think the background count on their teocallis comes from? I've heard of secret rituals inside teocallis where the heart is ripped out of a metahuman victim and placed inside an offering bowl and burned while a circle of priests use the poor bastard's life energy to boost their ritual.

- Black Isabella

- The real question isn't whether or not they are using blood magic, but what are they using it for?

- Eli

- Sacrifice is noble and necessary to keep the sun rising each morning and to keep the tztzimime demons from devouring us all. You should not condemn us but thank us for preserving your lives from a far worse fate.

- Yaoxochitl

The Catholic Insurgency

>>> Socio Pat: The tourist screed doesn't mention it, of course, but in Aztlan the Catholic Church is forbidden, declared a „revolutionary organization“ in 2041. Catholic practice isn't illegal entirely and the Path of the Sun actually incorporates a lot of Catholic symbolism into its rituals to appeal to the masses. But no Catholic religious organizations are allowed to operate within Aztlan and Catholic prostelyzing is illegal. The Roman Catholic Church didn't take this lying down and simply went underground, founding secret churches and holding sponsored rites in the backlands. For a number of years there were only low level enforcement efforts against these underground churches, but with the Yucatan situation resolving, Aztlan has redoubled its efforts of late to shut down these secret Catholic operations.

- It's going to be quite the fight; the New Jesuits protect these underground churches and have used the past few years to establish themselves secretly in Aztlan.

- Decker del Sul

- I actually think it's the other way around. The underground churches are there to hide and protect the New Jesuits while they occupy themselves with something else entirely. Overthrow of the Aztlan government, maybe, but they seem to be more on the defensive than the offensive, like they are protecting something or someone other than their flock.

- Hangfire

- These New Jesuits don't mess around. They are a full-fledged paramilitary force, chromed to the gills and packing heavy ordinance. I've heard they don't use magic but they do know magic, heavily versed in the theory if not personally experienced in the application.

- Argent

- Disinformation bulldrek. I've seen these Catholic hatchetmen dish out the mojo, and serious heaping servings of it too.

- Pyramid Watcher

BRIGHT SKY, LONG SHADOWS

- The first half of this section comes from a Mexican ganger and runner named Tren. The locals didn't want to give me the scoop on their lifestyle, but I pulled some leverage and got some perspective. The second half is courtesy of Argent, covering the import shadowrunner life and the forces in the nation working against Aztlan.

- Captain Chaos

LA ONDA MAXICANA

Look, I don't know who this Captain Nemo or Captain Chaos gringo is. I don't care. But he arranged to have me busted out of an Aztech prison, so I'm paying back a debt. That's all there is to it. He wanted to know what life is really like in Aztlan, from the perspective of a Mexican. It ain't pretty, but we deal. We have our own way of doing things and our own style; we call it „la onda Mexicana.“ Don't bother to try to learn it, if you weren't born with it, you will never be one of us.

In Aztlan, we don't care if you have horns or pointy ears, what matters is your blood. You're either a

peninsular with blood that traces back to Spain, a traditional with Mesoamerind local blood, or a mestizo, who is a mixed blood. The peninsulars are the cabróns who think they run the show here, living in their corporate castillos, wearing their suits and flashing their fake smiles. Most of the mestizos struggle to pull in a few pesos cleaning toilets or working in the agricultural zones, playing up their Spanish blood and doing everything it takes to try to climb the ladder to being a corporate-affiliated worker someday. They are los muertos, already dead inside. Then you have the Mesoamerinds, most of them stuffed off in a corner of the nation, living in absolute poverty. Aztlan has never done anything for them except rip off their heritage and they have no part in the nation. Their village, their language, their traditions, that's all that matters to them.

- It's amazing the contrast in Aztlan sometimes. You can leave a near-arcology castillo in Tenochtitlán full of corporators pulling in six-figure salaries and then drive a few hours away and find Mesoamerinds living on subsistence farming who hardly even know Aztlan exists.

- Gina E

Then there's Mexicans like me and the traditionalists who are with us; mestizos and Mesoamerinds who came to the Sprawl to follow the Aztlan dream and build a better life. Ni madres. The system doesn't want us, our blood isn't Spanish enough. We choke down smog in between the shadows of the teocallis and castillos, but we've built our own world there. We have our own gangs, our own shops, our own languages and connections. We don't surf data havens or build bragsheets. Everything is word of mouth here and it's all family and you're either Mexican or you're not. And if you're not, you either prove to us you have huevos grandes or we cut yours off.

- Tren's not exaggerating. The locals have no love for the imported shadow community. They have their own gritty system of personal honor, sort of like machismo, but the chicas play the game just as well. It's gang rules down there, and the only way an outsider can get in good with them is to prove he's got more guts, but without insulting their honor. It's not an easy task and you don't get second chances.

- Cruz

- If you're in, though, you're golden. Without them, you're an import relying on Aztechnology to support you. And they will stab you in the back as soon as it suits them. But the Mexicans will take care of you like you're family; sharing their doss, their jobs, whatever you need.

- Cutter

We make our living doing the illegal dirty work for the Aztlaners or selling brainbenders to their kids. If some corporator wants to pay me to off another corporator so he can get a promotion, that's fine with me. He gets me a gig as a janitor in the castillo, arranges for some doors to be left open, I put a few rounds in the target and walk away with some shiny trinkets from his apartment and maybe even his trophy wife. La onda Mexicana. Got it?

CRACKS IN THE PYRAMID

If you're not from Aztlan, but find yourself working here, you're called an import. Doesn't matter if you're sneaking in for one gig or staying as a frequent hire, you're an outsider and you just get used to that fact. In Aztlan, locals tend to be hired for local work, meaning anything internal (Azzie vs. Azzie posturing). Imports are usually hired for jobs working for or against foreign elements, such as the foreign shareholders and managers of corporate subsidiaries here. The work pays well (in pesos norma, unless you're a one-time hire) but you have to be comfortable with the fact that we're even more expendable than the Mexicans and traditionalists. Life is pretty damn cheap south of the border.

- Frequent-hires are usually attached to one Johnson. He keeps you paid, sets you up with housing, gives you a place to lay low, and will of course leave your body in a ditch as soon as he doesn't need you anymore.

- Italy

- The imports down here tend to gather in communities, much like expatriates. They have their own imported fixers who run import bars where they hang out and talk shop.

- Tequila Max

The import runner community works almost exactly the same in Aztlan as it does in Seattle, but there's one exception to keep in mind. In Aztlan, gun laws are very lax and guns are an everyday fashion accessory. You do not even need to own a license for a pistol or submachine gun. Pretty sweet, neh? Well, also keep in mind that the reason Aztlan doesn't make a big fuss about this is because their law enforcement and Aztech sec-goons are carrying bigger, badder, and more lethal weaponry and armor than you. For them, everything is legal and used. Oh, and if an Aztlan cop inflicts collateral damage while taking out a perp, guess who is legally at fault? That's right, the perp. So, first rule: don't attract the Policía when doing biz. Second rule: if you do, make sure it doesn't end with you getting caught.

- Too many runners who got excited about packing heat in Aztlan are now packing cells in Aztechnology prisons. And that's if they are lucky; capital offenders end up as sacrifices.

- Cruz

Aztlan has recently begun a law enforcement crackdown against „terrorist groups“ operating within their borders. If you thought they were hard-hooped before, they are doubly-so now. With the Yucatan rebellion resolved, they've moved more corporate security assets towards handling these internal affairs and it shows. Independent (read: not Aztechnology-

sanctioned) organized crime was already an endangered species in Aztlan; the laws around the peso make it hard for them to operate. But now it's damn near hell. However, there are a few groups worth mentioning.

David Cartel

In 2007, three Central American drug cartels (Medellin, David, and Masaya) joined together to create ORO, the proto-corporation that became Aztechnology. Of those three, only the David Cartel, based out of the city of David in the state of Panama, still operates in its original form. In fact, after the recent crackdowns on the Mafia and the Yakuza in Aztlan, it can be considered the only traditional criminal syndicate operating in the nation.

- The cartel's boss, of course, is Domingo Ramos, son of the cartel's head in 2007, Julio Ramos. Not to mention the part about Domingo being on the Aztechnology board of directors.
- Pyramid Watcher
- After the Yucatan situation entered peace talks, Aztechnology turned around and just wiped the mobsters and yaks off the face of Aztlan. No holds barred, entirely ruthless. It was over so fast, the „War on Crime“ only lasted a few days.
- Cindy Kit

The David Cartel has its fingers in every imaginable criminal pie in Aztlan, but its specialty is organic and technological drugs (coke and beetles). Primarily for sale abroad, they make every effort to undercut the prices and exceed the quality of their competitors in the Ghost Cartels and Jamaican Posses.

- > Yeah, using Aztechnology labs to refine their product.
- > Beaker
- > This drug war was also a political war; by undercutting the Ghost Cartels, they were cutting off funding to the Yucatan rebels.
- > SWO

Nahualli

Aztechnology's control over Aztlan's currency system makes it very difficult for international criminal elements, even freelancers like us, to operate in secrecy. That is where Nahualli comes in. Traditionally, the term nahualli refers to an Aztec belief in an animal that shares a soul with each individual when they are born, becoming sort of their totem and protector. It also referred to sorcerers whose power came from control of their animal twin, among other things. In Aztlan, the Nahualli are a mysterious cult of otaku who operate throughout the regional grid and will, for a price, tweak the numbers in money transactions to get around Aztechnology's oversight of the peso.

- If you need a pesos libres transaction to look like a „first-step“ so that Aztechnology doesn't come after you, you want to find these crackpots. Totally weird but they can mess with the data like no other, so that the Big A has a helluva time figuring it out. There's a sizable bounty on their heads, but there's no way the shadow community would turn these chums in.
- Telnet
- No one knows quite where they operate from, physically or in

the Matrix. If you ask around in the right online circles, a meet can be set up. The meets are always a bit edgy; the Nahualli know Aztech is hunting for them, but they are confident on their online home turf.

- Cutter
- You'll know you've met the real deal when you're facing an extremely hi-rez icon that shifts between an image of a child and the image of an animal.
- Demonseed Elite

El Solo

This area of the world has a long history with rebels, usually leftist rebels. The Zapatistas, Sandinistas, even the Yucatan Rebellion. The lattermost group has recently scored what they consider a victory and many of the farmers-turned-warriors are returning home to try to figure out how to live off a land that has gone mad. But there were some among them who weren't merely fighting for Yucatan independence and aren't happy with the outcome.

They are anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist extremists who want nothing less than the destruction of Aztechnology and these days find themselves cut off and alone. So alone that they've made it their name, El Solo.

- These slags are so committed to toppling Latin American imperialism that they would not take any support from Amazonia during the Yucatan rebellion. They feel that the Amazonians are just another imperialist power trying to use the rebellion as pawns, and of course, they are likely right. But being a rebel group out here without Aztlan or Amazonian support ensures one hard life.
- Sin Fronteras
- They used to be one of the groups that supported Llama de la Libertad (the Flame of Freedom), but they didn't buy into Pobre's peace settlement and are very suspect of his recent behavior. Since then, they've been on their own.
- Wreckoon

El Solo is led by a man named „Liberator X“ of which very little is known. He issues manifestos on the Matrix and through pirate feeds hosted by the Round Square in the Caribbean, decrying both Aztlan and Amazonia as slavemasters. The group is a strange mix of high tech and low tech; they use private wireless networks to organize and form flash-riots that leave entire corporate complexes trashed but pursuers on their trail have been known to fall into jungle booby traps like pit spike traps that have nothing modern about them.

- They just know how to get the absolute most out of anything they use, whether it's technology or the dirt beneath their feet. Trust me, hombre, it's the only reason they are still alive.
- Cruz
- They currently act mostly against Aztechnology assets in southern Aztlan, but have also hit pan-corporate targets in the Canal Zone and north Amazonian targets. I would think they must have some sort of operation in Caracas, but if they do, it's real quiet.
- Argent

PLACE ON THE HERON

- Would you believe that Cap was thinking of putting some generic touristy datacrud in here because he couldn't get any locals

to help him out? Understandably, people are little quiet and reserved around here, ,cept me, that is. I stepped up and bailed the Cap out, volunteering to share with him some of what I know. I'm not a native of Aztlan but I've been operating here for years while ducking some heat up north and I know my way around. It's a smuggler's job to know.

> Lead Foot

Where does the name Aztlan come from, anyway? It's the name of the mythical land where the Aztec used to live, according to their own myths and translates roughly to the „Place of the Heron“ or „Place of Whiteness.“ They were forced out of that land by some catastrophe, however, and migrated south and east, to the central plateau where Tenochtitlán now is. But that's all the history I'm going to give you, time to tell you how it really is, in the here and now.

THE MEXICAN PLATEAU

The northern and western half of modern-day Aztlan is dominated by the Mexican Plateau, a large expanse of high and dry tablelands surrounded on three sides by mountain ranges: the Sierra Madre Occidental on the west, the Sierra Madre Oriental on the east, and the Sierra Madre del Sur on the south. It is mostly inhospitable savannah, but if you hug the edges, it makes primo t-bird smuggling territory. This is also the region where you'll find Aztlan's two largest cities, both of which are great destinations for work.

- Countless tiny tumbleweed towns dot the Mexican Plateau, most of them populated by down-on-their-luck Mesoamerinds pushed off the valuable land to the south. No real work to be had here, but if you need to vanish and you're stuck in Aztlan, this is as good a place as it gets.

- Black Isabella

- Many of the mountains surrounding the plateau are volcanic and Aztlan underwent a large population migration project to move towns away from dangerous flow zones after some major disasters. Recently though, the most volcanic ranges have been dotted by Aztechnology research teams and the number of eruptions are starting to lower dramatically.



- Pyramid Watcher

- Not just Aztechnology research teams. I mean Aztechnology doesn't usually employ too many wujen that I know of.

- Lo Down

Tenochtitlán

The capital of Aztlan lies in the Mexico Basin, a mountainous depression filled with shallow lakes that has been a center for civilization in the region for millennia. Two words describe Tenochtitlán best: crowded and dirty. I know the Seattle runners are rolling their eyes, but Seattle is a lush paradise compared to here. It's a snake's nest of twisting elevated roadways and super-routes and the airspace is just as packed with short-hop VTOLs, copters, and even the occasional feathered serpent. And dirty...smog doesn't even begin to describe it. The air here is so bad that breathers are a required fashion accessory and they take it very seriously.

- No kidding. Your expensive Europa EdenAir breather will get you laughed at here. Breather decoration is all handmade down in Tenochtitlán. Absolutely beautiful stuff, if you put out of your mind why they are worn.

- Rico

- Tenochtitlán is an elevated city, on average over 3,000 meters up in the mountains. And the build of the basin and the nature of the weather here just trap all the smog in. It's absolutely lethal if inhaled for even a short period of time during the warmer half of the year. The locals have a name for it, Los Humo Grande. The Big Smoke.

- Webster

The general rule of thumb is: the more central in the city you are and the higher altitude your doss is, the more pesos you are rakin' in. Ground level smog traps are the home of the SINless Mexicans. Sitting smack dab in the center is the Zócalo, the plaza that houses the Aztechnology Pyramid and the primary teocallis of the major gods.

- The Temple of Tezcalipoca is right across the street from the Great Temple of Quetzalcóatl and the difference is striking. The latter is flashy and opulent while the former is rather plain and subdued, despite being nearly as large.

But take a gander in the astral sometime, the Temple of Tezcalipoca is radiating with power, perhaps even more than its bigger brother across the way.

- Eli

San Diego/Tijuana Sprawl

The San Diego/Tijuana Sprawl is Aztlan's second largest urban center, its high-tech industrial powerhouse, and the home to most of the foreign subsidiaries that operate in Aztlan. You know all those wiz military jets, boats, and drones Aztechnology makes? They are assembled in San Diego. If it has a military application, chances are it is built here. This is also where all the high-tech agricultural machinery is assembled for shipping north to the Pyramid Operations subsidiary in CalFree. The city also has a legacy of top-notch genetic engineering and chemical engineering research, a legacy that hasn't gone away since Aztlan moved in.

- And Tijuana's infamous reputation for black clinics hasn't gone away either, and has only flourished since San Diego and Tijuana conjoined. Tijuana is definitely the bad side of this Sprawl and is literally packed with shady docs and dirty clinics willing to patch up, graft on, or sculpt over anything biological or cybernetic. Just remember: no refunds!
- Cutter

Of course, all this valuable research and military intelligence (not to mention the relatively lower smog and less crowding compared to Tenochtitlán) also draws the local branches of every AAA megacorp and dozens of smaller corporations as well. This makes San Diego a hub of corporate intrigue in Aztlan and a popular locale for import runners.

THE MAYA REGION

The southern and eastern half of Aztlan is known as the

Maya Region and is almost a polar opposite of the Mexican Plateau. This half is hot and wet tropical lowlands covered in a thick blanket of rainforest and subject to wildly rainy weather and patches of out of control jungle growth. Most of the cities down here are along the coast and the rich farmland has been taken over by Aztechnology agricorp interests. Because the coasts are well-patrolled, the jungles are thick and dangerous and the land is firmly under Azzie control, smuggling is less common down here and more of the shadowrun hiring is done through locals than imports.

- The major news item down here is the Nicaragua Canal, which Aztechnology has already broke ground on, despite protests from the Corporate Court. The canal would utilize the San Juan River in the Aztlan state of Nicaragua and would travel along the southern shore of the Lago de Nicaragua and then across the Isthmus of Rivas. The canal proposal would allow for ships four times the size of what the Panama Canal Zone currently allows and would be



augmented by a parallel high-speed cargo rail line for cargo too important to wait to pass through the locks by ship.

- 0111011001

- The Corporate Court is having a fit because it would make the pan-corporate Panama Canal Zone obsolete and really tweaks the nose of the Veracruz Settlement. However, they've been unable to block the project because it falls on Aztlan soil and is being spearheaded by Aztechnology contractors.

- The Keynesian Kid

- Aztlan has been negotiating preferential rates for Wuxing on the Nicaragua Canal. What Aztlan is getting out of the bargain, besides Wuxing's silence on the Court, I'm unsure.

- Espion

PURTO LIMON/ISLA VIVA AQUACOLOGY

Puerto Limon is a little slice of Aztlan paradise and is where all the rich and famous come to play, relax, and catch up on the latest in cosmetic enhancement. The Costa Rican port's spas and resorts double as recovery centers for the numerous cutting-edge leónization and body-sculpting clinics hosted here.

- As such, it's a popular hotspot for extraction gigs. The security here tends to be less than in the corporate enclaves up north because it would interfere with the recovery.

- Toro

- Aztech black ops and extended shadow assets also frequently end up here when they get „treated“ to new identities.

- Number Eight

Off the coast of Puerto Limon is the shallow water aquacology called Isla Viva. A number of Aztechnology subsidiaries including Maritech Enterprises, Genetique, Productos Cultivatos, and Trés Chic Cosmetics own space in this combination above- and below-water arcology. It not only houses their research staff in absolutely beautiful suites with a view to kill for, but their bio-research and aquaculture labs and farms are on-site also. The stepped-pyramid arcology rises out of the sea, and to top it all off, is covered from apex to sea level in flowering vines and lush terrace gardens.

- Which double as added security. I hear the vines are astrally sensitive and when an astral form passes through their aura, they release a pheromone into the air. Specially designed chemical sniffers built into the outer walls detect the pheromone and register a signal to on-site security riggers.

- Keymaster

- The extra astral security makes sense if the rumors about the Aztechnology cybermantic clinic being inside Isla Viva are true.

- Findler-Man

THE FRINGE

Let me tell you something, now is not the time if you're thinking about getting into the Aztlan smuggler business. Used to be that much of the Aztlan military and Aztechnology security forces were occupied in places like the Yucatan and Denver. Not anymore. A big wyrm kicked their butts out of the Mile High City and the Yucatan situation is being „peacefully resol-

ved“. What that means is that there are a lot of soldiers being reassigned, and guess where they are being moved to? That's right, the borders.

- Aztlan has always had a very sophisticated sensor array watching over their borders, but they were stretched thin on manpower to respond to problems. They relied on automated responses like surface-to-air missiles and overworked border patrols, but no longer.

- Picador

AMAZONIAN BORDER

If you ask me, this contested land is in the hands of the plants. The jungle is so insane down here that the border shifts daily and neither Aztlan nor Amazonia can really tell where it is. It's mostly defined by exploratory strikes by Aztlan into Amazonia or vice versa and because of the uncontrollable land, is mostly occupied by mobile recon forces. Most of the assets being moved down here are covert paramilitary units being used to probe into Amazonia's borders and gather intelligence (some of which is obsolete within weeks when the landscape shifts).

CAS BORDER

It's not war, but it's damn near close. The Aztlan border that cuts through what used to be Texas has always been a touchy spot, but has gotten a lot worse lately. The „Eastern Fortification Zone“ between Austin and Corpus Christi has had fresh soldiers rotated in from the Yucatan and the CAS has been forced to respond with an increase in its own troop strength. The Sons of the Alamo and their sympathizers have been pressuring the CAS government to follow through on campaign promises to liberate San Antonio and press the conflict in Austin, but the administration has been hesitant in the face of fresh Aztlan combat veterans.

- What keeps me up at night are the Sons of the Alamo leaders' threats that if the CAS doesn't grow the spine to go to war, the Sons of the Alamo will force them into a position where they have to.

- Diamondback

- Trigger fingers on both sides are extremely itchy and Aztechnology's acquisition of Atlantic Security in Miami nearly started the fireworks. Last minute negotiations prompted by the Caribbean League forestalled any military action...for now.

- Cruz

PUEBLO BORDER

Before the past year, this border was largely a quiet expanse covered in sensors on both sides with a rare dogfight or t-bird clash between the PCC and Aztlan. Pueblo shoved its military west to Los Angeles and Aztlan, as much as it wanted to, couldn't field a real response with the rebellion flaring in their backyard. Times change, omae.

Aztlan has shifted sizable military assets up to San Diego and El Paso. The PCC is starting to develop serious military strategies for responding to their nightmare scenario: an Aztlan two-pronged attack from the southeast and southwest, aiming for Los Angeles and Denver. The situation isn't quite as dire as with the CAS, but Pueblo is no longer willing to write off the possibility of war.

• If you want to see some real gears turning on this, look further north to the Ute. Aztlan diplomats (or Aztechnology lobbyists, it's all the same) have been getting chummy with Judge Utall's shaman/landowner coalition and the Native Workers' Union. If those two parties end up with a majority of the Elected Council, you can bet the first bill on the kiosks will be a declaration of war against the PCC. The Ute Nation has been eyeballing northwestern Pueblo for decades.

- Wichita Witch

```
>>>EXECUTING BEACON.SPT<<<
>>>REDIRECTING...<<<
>>>REDIRECTING...<<<
>>>CONNECTED...BEGIN FILE TRANSFER MIRROR.CHT<<<
```

- Cap, what the frag is this?
- Red Wraith

```
>>>TRANSFER COMPLETE...OPENING<<<
```

• I apologize for any panic my intrusion into this document may be causing. Do not blame your sysop, he was unaware of my tampering with his file transfer network. I have usurped this network to deliver a transcript which must be shared before it is silenced, and forces are in motion even now to make sure it never sees the light of day. You are about to glimpse a portion of the Truth. As frightening as it is, it must never be extinguished.

- Salai

- Whoever the hell that is, he cut through my security like it wasn't there. I haven't seen anything like it since the Arcology shutdown.
- Captain Chaos

THE SMOKING MIRROR

The air around me is dry and warm and somewhere distant, there are birds chirping. I imagine the sun in shining, but I can not see it. I have gouged out my own eyes and cut out my own tongue. I fear He could use them to find me. I do not even trust my own body; I type this from a chair to which I am restrained. My name is not important; my real identity was removed from my own memory thirteen years ago. What is important is that I am a member of the Otontin order, one of its most senior. I hope that by sacrificing myself to bring this knowledge to light, I have pleased Quetzalcóatl and Xuihtecuhtli and may serve them in the eastern paradise of the sun.

In the ancient days before even the Aztec empire, Quetzalcóatl the Feathered Serpent was tricked by his twin, Tezcatlipoca, who showed the Feathered Serpent a smoking mirror which reflected images of atrocities he had committed while under the influence of a potion his dark twin had made. The peaceful god fled in shame, but it has always been believed that Quetzalcóatl would return from his exile and bring a new age of enlightenment. In 1519, the Aztec king, Montezuma II, falsely believed that Cortés was the returning god and welcomed him into the empire, foolishly inviting his own downfall and that of his people. We too, of modern Aztlan, have been fooled. Maybe it is not too late for us.

- Hey guys, do you have the news on? Some big explosion just tore up a whole block of suburb south of Gallup, in Pueblo. They are saying it was a gas line rupture, but you have to wonder...
- iSpy

THE CULT OF TEZCATLIPOCA

During Quetzalcóatl's exile, his dark twin Tezcatlipoca ruled, demanding war and human sacrifices to keep the apocalypse at bay. He has gone by many names: Titlacahuan („He Whose Slaves We Are“), Moquequeloa („The Mocker“), Nahuaque („The Night Wind“), Yaotzin („The Enemy“), but the result has always been darkness, slavery, and death. The celebrations held at the Great Teocalli in Tenochtitlán today are a ruse; Quetzalcóatl has not returned and Tezcatlipoca still rules through his servants. I know, because I am one of them.

The leaders of Aztlan serve the leaders of Aztechnology and the leaders of Aztechnology serve Tezcatlipoca. Whether they are devout or not, they are his priesthood. His High Priest assumes the mantle of Aztec kings and conducts secret rituals in the Temple of Tezcatlipoca to which they attend. I attended one of these, where I was initiated into the higher mysteries and learned the truth of who I serve. Burning braziers surrounded myself and a dozen other guerreros and from them issued a smoke that when inhaled allowed me to see the astral, even though I normally can not. Around us, a circle of priests chanted while their blood flowed between them in plastic tubing and machinery connected to their necks. I recognized some of these priests as the High Priests from the temples in Tenochtitlán, and around them swarmed attendants who checked the machines and others who led young men and women to the center of the circle, where an offering bowl awaited. Bloody sacrifices followed and I could see the astral space blaze with the combined aura of the priests as they worked their magic. Then He arrived. Tezcatlipoca.

His dark serpentine form writhed in the astral above us, his spiritual flesh swirling with emptiness like the smoking mirror that is his name. His twisted body stretched and wings made of a vast void unfurled, snuffing out the fiery cast of the priests' combined aura. At each of us, the elite guerreros, he stared with abyssal eyes and forged a connection to our souls. We were unmade and remade there, and when the ritual ended and Tezcatlipoca departed, we knew our abilities were no longer bound by the limits of men but we were also now bound to Him as slaves.

BLODDY FINGERPRINTS

One of Tezcatlipoca's epithets is The Enemy on Both Sides, and he is said to encourage conflict so that the strongest will be bred and prevail. He tolerates, some might say encourages, conflict between his servants, though in the end they all serve the same agenda. The board of Aztechnology is rife with factions that have their own goals and through a custom of patronage from members of the board, most senior Aztlan and Aztechnology officials and even the guerreros serve one of these factions. The separate pull of these individual factions and the combined push of Tezcatlipoca's agenda is what guides the fate of Aztlan.

- I think you might have been onto something, iSpy. That was no gas explosion near Gallup; the Pueblo military detected the flight of a cruise missile in their airspace just before the explosion. The origin was in international waters off the Pacific coast.
- Mongwa

- How do you know that?
- Diamondback

- I have my sources.
- Mongwa

My patron was a man named Oscuro, who led the faction that controlled the blood mages and the priesthood. He aspired to bring about the end of the Fifth Sun, so that the world would crumble and only Aztlan would have the power and foresight to survive and protect humanity. His effort failed and it ruined him; I saw him shortly after, afraid for his life and aged by decades. Not long after, he vanished. Control of the priesthood fell to another on the board, the High Priest of Tezcatlipoca. I could tell he did not trust me, I was Oscuro's man. He was right, but with the wrong reasons. Under Oscuro, I saw that what I was doing was not holy and now I only hope to die a noble death.

The board, and likewise the nation, is now dominated by a faction of arrogant mages who seek power unimaginable in scope. They claim to be descendents of scholars who once served Quetzalcóatl but did not follow him into exile and chose instead to stay and cultivate what they had learned. They hunger to control every aspect of the nation and channel its resources toward vast and complex magical projects, such as the magical linking of the teocallis. They speak of taking the „long view“ and I gathered from their sneering comments that they considered Oscuro's work to be the premature graspings of a fool.

- If the background count at the teocallis is aspected, it would augment their magic similar to power sites. If those teocallis were linked...
- Jacinda

There are also those that the priests refer to as the „merchants and goldsmiths.“ They are the members of the board who do not care much for the religious trappings of the Cult but are led by selfishness, avarice and a desire to spread their influence (and that of Aztechnology's) across the globe. This group has cannily picked up presence on the board in the wake of others' failures, but they are content to follow their blind greed while the mages' lead the agenda. They may feign disinterest in Tezcatlipoca's plans, but it is their money and power that fuels and conceals the dark schemes.

Finally there are the feathered serpents, who seem focused on the past rather than the future and are guided by ancient rivalries among themselves. It is said that Tezcatlipoca favors them and sends them on missions to unearth secrets of the past, but with one of their own facing execution, I find myself wondering. I know that since Quauhtlatoa's assassination, a feathered serpent has become the overseer of Teotihuacan. I have also heard that other serpents seek the Chicomoztoc, or „Seven Caves of Origin“ in the north and that some travel covertly into Amazonia seeking something else of great power.

- The feathered serpent facing execution that he's talking about is Dzitbalchén. He's on trial for the assassination of Juan Atzcapotzalco and Quauhtlatoa at the Yucatan peace summit. Check out the Yucatan file for more information.

- Corona

- Hey, so these serpents are uncovering ancient artifacts for Aztechnology? What about the Apep Consortium? Apep, in Egyptian myth, was a giant serpent who tried to swallow the sun.
- Digger

- I don't know much about Apep, but I do know that the Chicomoztoc come from an ancient Aztec myth that says that the earliest Aztecs emerged from the earth from seven caves before migrating south towards Tenochtitlán. Oddly enough, the Hopi Amerinds share the same root language and have a similar myth, only without the migration part. They also believe in a succession of worlds that were destroyed by cataclysms before the current one, very similar to the Aztec five suns.
- Holly

- So if the Hopi have the same myth, minus the migration, and the Hopi run the Pueblo Corporate Council, one has to wonder if the caves would be somewhere there.
- Ancient History

- Certainly makes you think about all the feathered serpents with links to Aztechnology that were living in Denver until Ghostwalker showed up.
- Zaratosa

I can tell my time here is now short, He has sensed my betrayal. Even this far away from Tenochtitlán, it now takes effort to make my fingers move and type out these final words, as if I am not the only one commanding them. I hope that those I have entrusted to release this file succeed and that this information is enough to wake my people and others to the lies that have been perpetuated in Quetzalcóatl's name.

Outside, the birds are still chirping, and though I can't see it, I know the Fifth Sun is shining.

- For whatever reason, the Pueblo authorities are still floating the „gas leak“ excuse for that explosion near Gallup. Seventeen bodies were recovered from that site. I sliced my way into the medical examiner's computers; none of the bodies were marked as missing eyes or a tongue, but they may have been too mangled to tell.
- Red Wraith



BOLIVIA

by Huxley

- Most leftists think Bolivia is a workers' paradise. Maybe the Bolivians learned a few PR tricks from their former Azzie masters, because reality is quite different according to Huxley. He's an ex-left-wing militant turned runner who spent a few years in Bolivia and lived to tell the tale.
- Captain Chaos

It's remarkable how blind we can be about what we hold dear. Back when I was young and naïve, I had a soft spot for Bolivia. I thought I knew everything about the country's struggle against Imperialism, the 2050 Revolution and El Comandante Limberg Velazco. My coffee mug even bore Velazco's face in a triumphant look of defiance.

That was then, this is now.

While Bolivia seems to have undergone dramatic changes, the equation remains the same. An authoritarian government abuses its power. Another faction is unhappy with that so it wants to kick them out (to replace them with its own corrupt regime, probably). A third group is looking to make the biggest possible profit out of the crisis. Yep, it all adds up.

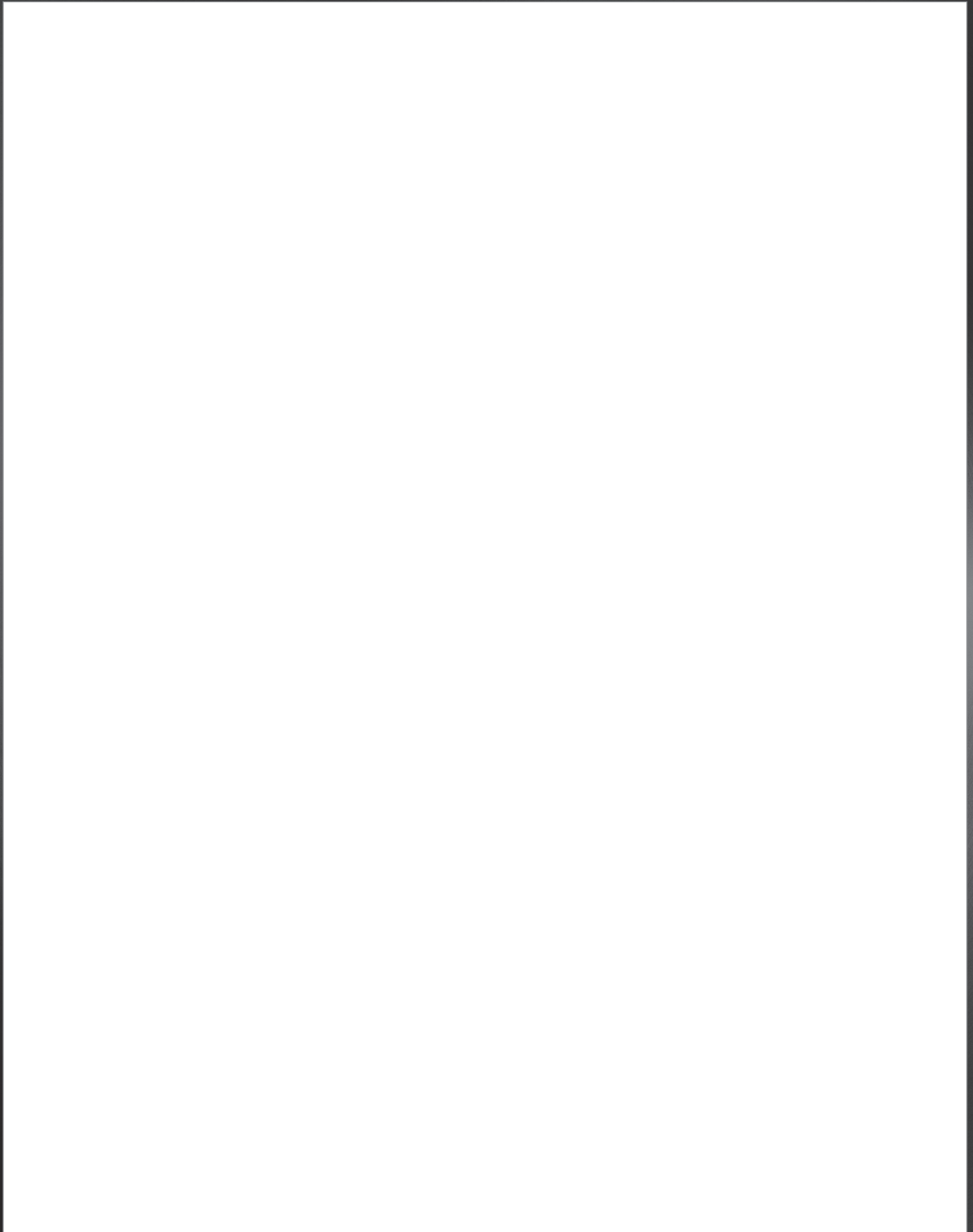
- Wow, you've described just about every other country on Earth!
- Groucho Marxist

RETURN TO THE OLD WAYS

The first years of this century were particularly difficult for Bolivia. Though the native coca-planters and left-wing nationalists succeeded in fending off early corporate predators, Bolivia remained in perpetual civil unrest having had more than two hundred presidents in less than two centuries of independence. Then in 2007 farmers and native movements were crippled when a series of landslides destroyed most coca fields and their livelihoods.

- Many Bolivians still believe the USA was behind that disaster. The War on Drugs an utter failure, the White House took off its gloves. Who cared if a few thousand Bolivians died?
- Llama Mama





- Actually, I heard the Azzies spun that story later to keep Ares out of the country. When Velazco took over, he thought it was convenient to give the masses an enemy to hate. Keeps the sheep in line, neh?
- PoliSci

The corps didn't have time to exploit the fortuitous turn of events. VITAS I and the Awakening were a fatal blow to both the rich and the poor alike. The plague wiped out more than 30 percent of La Paz's inhabitants, including a good many suits (serves 'em right). Neither the government nor the Catholic Church were able to offer any relief. The Church was frantic over the return of magic, which didn't bode well for its already diminishing power. Many Bolivians still worshipped their ancestral deities behind a thin veil of Catholicism. The Awakening only strengthened their resolve to return to the old ways. No longer seeing a need to maintain their façade, they resumed their traditional beliefs. Unlike Ecuador or Amazonia's, the Bolivian Church withered away, having no one to blame but itself.

- It didn't hurt that both Aztechnology's puppet regime and Velazco's commies were dead set against the Church from day one.
- Missionary

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

With Bolivia reeling from multiple blows, the newly formed ORO Corporation landed a knock-down punch taking over the weakened local cartels. By 2012, the corp began building its power base in the country by publicizing its generous humanitarian aid sent to the most desperate regions. ORO's shrewd manipulations firmly shoved the government into its pocket. It also enabled the corp to peacefully take over the state-owned mining and natural gas extraction companies in the name of Pan-Latin friendship. ORO succeeded in controlling just enough to make a profit without having to worry about the rest of the deteriorating country. By 2022, ORO had renamed itself the Aztechnology Corporation and was too busy taking over Aztlan's government to pay attention to its pet project.

By the 2040s, Bolivia's situation was critical, and international NGOs tried to come to the rescue. The government didn't stop them since their presence made it even easier to skim even more of the budget. The most notable result of the NGO aid was so minor it went unnoticed: Limberg Velazco, a young and impoverished Aymaran miner, received a scholarship abroad.

EL COMANDANTE

Velazco's years in the UCAS are documented elsewhere in the Matrix, I'm sure. Suffice it to say that our poor miner returned with new-found idealism. He traveled the country, delivering moving speeches about metahuman and civil rights, fostering communal organization and planting the seeds of his revolution to come. The masses, thirsty for change, drank in his words. Velazco rallied peasants, miners and other low class Aymaran workers to his Movimiento Obrero Boliviano (Bolivian Worker Movement). Under his firm leadership, the MOB (hah!) grew to a powerful force in Bolivian politics. Velazco's followers dubbed him El Comandante, the Commander. Velazco

united his armies and dangled the people's optimistic dreams for a better life as their noble cause. His crusade easily recruited the country to his banner.

- Nice to see that leftists still have political fetishes. What's next? Che Guevara's clone?
- Tricky Dick

BOLIVIA TIMELINE

- 2007:** Landslides ruin most coca fields in the tropical area near the Brazilian border.
- 2010:** VITAS I decimates Bolivia's major cities, but spares isolated settlements.
- 2011-12:** The Awakening and subsequent social upheaval shatter the Catholic Church's religious stranglehold. Most Bolivians return to their ancestral beliefs.
- 2012:** ORO Corporation starts offering humanitarian aid to Bolivia.
- 2034:** Amazonian takeover prompts thousands of refugees from Corumba and nearby areas to flee to Bolivia. This is encouraged by the lack of manpower in the deserted lands that VITAS left behind.
- 2040s:** Bolivia receives massive humanitarian aid from NGOs.
- 2043:** Aymaran miner Limberg Velazco receives a scholarship to California.
- 2046:** Velazco returns to Bolivia and forms the communist Bolivian Workers' Movement (MOB).
- 2050-51:** Revolution! The Movimiento Obrero Boliviano (MOB) topples the Aztlan-backed Quechua government, installing a communist regime with Velazco as president.
- 2063:** The rumors of Sancho Collqui and his Neolnca movement start roaming the country.

When the war in the Yucatan forced Aztechnology's attention elsewhere, El Comandante seized the perfect chance. Velazco partnered with the more than helpful Amazonians (the enemy of my enemy...), and the puppet Incan Quechua government was unable to stop the raging Aymaran revolutionaries from marching into the cities.

Aztechnology's control slowly slipped away; their Corporate Security stretched thin with tension on the Amazonian border and the Yucatan conflict. The end was inevitable: By 2051 Limberg Velazco became Bolivia's newest president.

- Not only was Aztechnology eventually banned from the country, but the other corps got to play with the Azzies' toys. This goes a long way towards explaining why the Corporate Court has never acted against Bolivia.
- Don Dinero
- I was an ACS "private contractor", possibly the worst mistake I ever made. The MOB's commanders were incredibly coordinated, and its shamans packed serious mojo. I heard that paracriffers butchered whole Azzie platoons in the mountains. I bailed out in the Aztlan embassy's last chopper. Last thing I heard about anyone left behind was that they'd been executed or sent to reeducation camps.

- Lynch

MOB MENTALITY

Velazco established a regime that combined communist ideals and Aymaran traditions. But while Velazco nationalized Bolivia's natural resources and the country held high a tightened fist against capitalism in public, we were soon to learn that the Movimiento Obrero Boliviano was as corrupt as the previous regime. Velazco allowed his pet corporations to carry on mining and gas extraction operations, and though the regime never affected the vestments of wealth and power, the only ones who didn't profit were the little people.

Another ugly aspect of the MOB's nature soon became evident. The Aymaras in power took the opportunity to "right" past injustices caused by the Incan Quechuas. On the surface, it might be a communist country, but the state has a definite Aymaran flavor to those controlling it. Bolivia's shiny reputation as a leftist haven blinds potential critics and effectively brands those who speak up, like the Empowerment Coalition, as imperialist agents.

- Nothing new here. The Cubans mastered that propaganda technique decades ago.
- Tricky Dick

The repression of the Quechua. The halting economy slipping under the table to the MOB's pet corps. Social unrest. Velazco's MOB assures Bolivia that this government is what the people want. The people's response? Find a new idealist. Much like Velazco once did with his fellow Aymarans, an unknown Quechua native, Sancho Collqui, easily rallies supporters all over the country, calling for a return to Incan traditions. Though the government squashes every group of supporters it can find, Collqui's Neolncas seem well organized and equipped.

- Ok, I'll bite. Equipped by whom? Aztechnology?
- Tutu Tango
- Aztecs and Incas together? Dream on, chummer.
- Aguari
- Some worry that Shining Path or Tupac Amaru could be expanding into Bolivia, but Amazonia is also a prime suspect. Amazonia's support of the MOB was founded on a mutual need to oppose Aztechnology. Bolivia's corporate ties, ecological mismanagement and ethnic oppression strain the precarious relationship between the two governments. I also heard a few other interesting rumors here and there, but those don't come as cheap ...
- Machiavelli

VIVA LA REVOLUCION!

Behind the cheers for Velazco's victory hides how the government actually ran this new workers' paradise. The National Congress has 150 representatives, but the MOB is the only recognized political party. The other groups were absorbed or simply outlawed for a number of (drummed up) reasons. The more widespread factions, such as the previous regime's Bolivian Socialist Phalanx, were converted. Its leader, Alberto Saucedo, was jailed until he saw the light (so to speak). Sau-

cedo then became Minister of Public Works, and suddenly the Phalanx stopped all resistance against the MOB. On the other hand, the Christian Democratic Party's leadership refused to play ball and simply vanished overnight.

Having won all elections so far (gotta love one party systems), El Comandante remains on top of the heap. Velazco built himself into an icon of resistance for Leftists worldwide, a later day Che. Did they fail to notice the country's sorry state? Internationally, Bolivia has the dubious honor of being known for hosting the training camps of groups like Attack!, the Malaysian Communist Party and the UCAS' International Progressives. They receive their indoctrination in Bolivia and return home to spread their ideology.

- You know what? The PR spin showing Velazco as a humble miner that could, reminds me of a certain farmer from Guadalajara...
- Pyramid Watcher
- Are you implying that Velazco is a Azzie-frontman zombie like Juan Atzacotalco was?
- TomTom
- You know that's not what I meant, you drekhead.
- Pyramid Watcher

Velazco established the People's Council to take care of the day-to-day policy overview and corporate relations. Most members are MOB veterans, though some simply pop up out of nowhere every time El Comandante shuffles his cabinet. The interesting part is that all infiltration attempts to find out what goes on in the Council's closed-doors meetings have failed so far. Another unusual aspect of the council is that you don't need to be Bolivian to join. Elizabeth "Gringa" Spencer, one of Velazco's Californian friends, has been on the Council since the beginning. There is plenty of speculation about her relationship with El Comandante, and word is they're secretly married.

- That would explain what I heard last month. La Gringa was heard talking to a couple militants in Cochabamba after a rally, something about retiring to raise a few kids if my sources are correct.
- Llama Mama
- Power struggles are frequent, usually ending when Velazco reshuffles his cabinet to reflect the dominant factions. The most infamous was back when the Council was setting up shop in 2051, several members attempted to overthrow Velazco. El Comandante's response was brutal—whole villages were razed in a matter of days.
- Pariwana

One of the Council members secretly leads the Revolutionary Guard. The Guard takes care of internal security, ideological purity and general repression. It also runs the reeducation camps where dissidents, especially Quechuas, are brainwashed into loyal MOB members. All in all, the Guard makes sure Bolivians remember the freedom they lost.

- Oh please, you're going to give us a speech about liberty? Liberty to be inefficient and miserable? Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole?
- Mustapha

- Commie red or corporate gray, a tyranny is a tyranny.
- PoliSci

BOLIVIA AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Communist Republic

Population: 10,527,000

- Aymara: 32%
- Quechua 30%
- Mestizo 24%
- Euro-Caucasian: 9%
- Brazilian: 3%

Racial Percentages:

- Human: 60%
- Elf: 12%
- Dwarf: 9%
- Ork: 14%
- Troll: 3%
- Other: 2%

Per Capita Income: 9,600¥

Estimated SINless: 11%

Below Poverty Level: 60%

Corporate Affiliation: 8%

Education:

- Less Than Twelve Years: 30%
- High School Equivalency: 53%
- College Degrees: 12%
- Advanced Degrees: 5%

Major Languages Spoken:

- Spanish: 68%
- Aymara: 65%
- Quechua: 43%
- Portuguese: 10%

Major Religions:

- Aymara: 45%
- Quechua: 26%
- Roman Catholic: 10%
- Path of the Sun: 1%
- Other/Atheist: 18%

Currency: Bolivian Peso,

Exchange Rate: BOP\$10 = 1¥

National Medical Coverage (unarmed): 85%

Guaranteed Response Time: None

- All I can advise is that if you work inside Bolivia, odds are you'll end up facing the Guard. They are downright scary in their zeal and efficiency, so good luck.
- Picador

• The Guard also seems to take care of undesirables. Professor Juan Navarro was a notorious dissident working at the Washington U, until someone put a bomb in his car. Lone Star suspects the Bolivians hired some of our local talent for the job.

- SPD

If you work outside in smaller cities or villages, you will deal with the local collectives. They masquerade for the visitors wearing a façade of industrious workers and diligent farmers side by side, taking care of their own life. Behind the mask, the collectives are usually inefficient and corrupt. The corporations have “business relationships” with the local collectives so they will “overlook” certain regulations in exchange for any goods they can’t get from the central government. The farther you are from the big cities, the more unpredictable it gets to deal with collectives.

- The government suspects that Inti T'ika's dealings with some collectives are far deeper than previously suspected. Who's up to some Q&A in Santa Cruz?
- Sundance Kid

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

Velazco's spin doctors would love to tell you that Bolivia is besieged by reactionary forces vying to destroy the Revolution and oppress the masses once again. All the security measures are to protect the Bolivian people from Imperialist agents. “We're from the government. We're here to help, blah blah blah ...” There is a grain of truth in their propaganda so it is still moderately effective. The people who are sick of the regime are too afraid of the Revolutionary Guard to do anything about it, so the “protection” lives on.

- No kidding. The Guards have eyes and ears everywhere, even your friends could be working for them. Better to keep quiet and hope things improve.
- Mamani
- I'm Limberg Velazco, and I approve this message.
- Bung

Any who actively oppose the communists have rallied behind the Neolncas and their leader Sancho Collqui.. Reputedly from Peru, Collqui is a full-blooded Quechua. Careful not to exclude any potential followers of other ethnicities, he likes to point out that in Tahuantinsuyo, the ancient Incan Empire, all tribes lived in harmony.

- And were ruled by a Quechua, of course.
- Mamani

The Neolncas enjoy strong support in the Quechuan and mestizo community. The liberation message is spreading even to Aymarans and is fueled by poverty, oppression and “corruption” of their traditions and faith. The Neolncas welcome them all, but some fear the movement is being infiltrated by the government. Collqui himself was almost killed last month during a government ambush near Tarija. Only the bravery of Gonzalo Cardozo, his second-in-command, saved his hoop.

- I wonder how long it will take for Collqui to become a martyr, and for a saddened Cardozo to take his mantle.
- Skeptic

Though not as visible as the Neolncas, the Old Regime is still out there. Most of its surviving members live in exile in Buenos Aires, Antofagasta or Caracas where they plot against the communists in their spare time. Collqui's revolutionaries could be useful pawns, but these people don't like the idea of Incan wannabes in power either. They've opted to muster their own forces and are waiting to step in once Velazco and Collqui have torn each other apart.

- Guillermo Zamora is the right-wingers' man in Buenos Aires. Zamora was a Colonel in the Bolivian Army before the communist revolution and has good relations with Aztechnology and Argentina's government, which suggest some link to the secretive Legio. He's been known to use runners to smuggle weapons to reactionary cells in Bolivia.
- Quijote

THE ANDEAN TREASURE CHEST

If Amazonia is the Earth's lungs, then Bolivia is Latin America's heart. The energy Bolivia provides with its oil and natural gas keeps the continent's engines running and the people warm in winter. The country has vast underground resources that are the backbone of its economy. If it's a mineral you need, you can find it in Bolivia.

Sadly, the treasure chest is running out, and reaching hands seem to be scraping bottom. The deep mineral excavations are proving to be increasingly difficult. Natural gas reserves are starting to run dry. The main drive behind Bolivia's economic growth is coming to a halt. All bad news for El Comandante, because he needs the money to stabilize the current social crisis. To his credit, Velazco has been very effective at keeping this crisis under wraps. He successfully maintains the illusion of Bolivia as a tempting treasure chest of resources.

- The way I hear it, even the corps are wary of the regime's recent moves. The MOB expropriated a mine near Potosí belonging to Andes Mining. Though Bolivia eventually compensated Tanamyre for its subsidiary's lost asset, no explanation was ever given beyond the usual "defense of our natural resources."
- Don Dinero
- Rumor is the miners found something really big, but the government wanted to keep it for itself. Don't know why Tanamyre objected so lightly, though.
- Digger

Bolivia is entirely landlocked, which hampers the country's economy by restricting the means for exporting its wealth. The country used to control the Arica port in the Pacific Ocean, but lost it in a disastrous war against Chile two centuries ago. You'd think that tempers would have calmed down by now, but the issue remains a rallying point for the nationalists and Velazco's posturing. Bolivia has tried and failed to regain the lost territory through diplomatic means.

- Interestingly enough, Velazco's regime has assigned this as a priority in the current agenda. How the commies are going to achieve this is unknown.
- Valpo Vic
- I heard a few people in Geneva talking about supporting Bolivia's next move in the UN. Of course, the Chilean lobbyists were

barking mad at the possibility and they got corporate support.

- Ambassador

CORPORATE PIRACY

Megacorps and communists are usually at odds, but not here. Though Bolivia rejects the Business Recognition Accords, El Comandante's policy has been most pragmatic. If a corp has something his regime needs, it gets carte blanche to operate in Bolivia. The government squeaks about strict regulations and supervising its "commercial partners," but that's all.

- That's not entirely true. Lord knows why, but some areas of Bolivia are a no-go for corporations and foreigners. Security is also provided by the regime, except in the Free Trade Zones. These are located in La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba.
- Don Dinero

This case-by-case system has benefited quite a few savvy corps who took the time to research Bolivia's needs. Leading the pack is Australia's Tanamyre Resources. Its subsidiaries supply the military, mine the mountains and store toxic wastes in the mines when they're empty. A good deal for the Aussies, if you ask me. Too good for rivals to ignore. Shiawase is aggressively targeting the Andes Mining's operations. The Bolivian military is being courted with alluring offers from the Shiawase Armaments, France's Esprit Industries and Canton-based Baihu Corporation.

- Tanamyre and other corps are getting plenty of flak from the Neolncas. Collqui's anger about the corps' relationship with the regime usually translates into raids against their facilities.
- Pariwana
- It could also be that other companies are simply disguising their covert ops as rebel attacks. If anyone wants names, you know how to find me...
- Machiavelli

One more notable, or more to the point, controversial corp is Inti T'ika Bioengineering. CEO Alejandro Yupanqui invested heavily in Bolivian media and biotech sectors. This puts Bolivia and the corp directly at odds with Spain's Sol Media and Meridional Agronomics. Peru has managed to hold their own thanks to some ingenious PR tactics. They've played the Andean nationalism card expertly, having all but accused the Spanish of being Pizarro's heirs, ready to loot the Incan Empire a second time.

- Yupanqui also supports the Neolncas for reasons of his own. He's met with Sancho Collqui personally several times.
- Philomitus
- One surprise project ITB is involved in is a sickly sweet soft drink called Maná Dorado. Maná is all the hit in the country and is starting to become popular elsewhere in South Am and overseas. The formula is secret and it's produced exclusively in several government licensed "collectives".
- Corp Watcher

FIELDS OF GOLD

Coca growing has been a regional staple since pre-Co-

lumbian times, its leaves traditionally used for energy-replenishing chewing and teas or even religious rituals. These days, however, cocaine is still the primary reason why coca is grown. And though many coca fields were destroyed in 2007 by landslides, they were re-grown. Too profitable to let a little mud ruin the income. Never mind what it's used for.

- Novacoke is still popular and isn't entirely synthetic.
- Dabbler

- Right, blame us for your problem. People forget that as long as there is a demand for drugs, there will be a supplier.
- Pariwana

- Our problem? Last time I was in Potosí, the slums were full of addicts. It's because of people like you that Aztechnology exists.
- Diamondback

[21 Mp deleted by SysOp]

- Yet another constructive debate between commie pinkos and imperialist pigs down the Shadowland toilet. First and last warning, chummers, can the bulldrek or I will!
- Captain Chaos

When Velazco became president, he publicly executed narcotraficantes and burned their shipments, but that was just a flashy PR show to boost his image (and besides, they were Azzie flunkies). To this day, the communists officially deny any involvement in or support of drug trade (if you believe that, I know some spammers with great offers.) Admitting to it or not, one of the MOB's first moves was to establish relations with the Ghost Cartels. Thus the Morales Cartel was born.

Arturo Vargas has led the Cartel since 2062, when an Azzie Otontin warrior geeked his predecessor. Though it wasn't the first time Aztechnology's killed the Cartel's head honcho (and it certainly won't be the last) the Bolivians seem able to shrug off their losses without affecting their operations. Vargas uses the Morales Cartel to give Bolivia a disproportionate amount of influence in Latin America's underworld. This stretches the MOB's heavy hand even into Peru.

- Peruvian authorities (excuse me, the Japanacorps) believe that Bolivia funds the Andes Ahora movement through the Morales Cartel, but have yet to find proof. When and if they do things could get nasty.
- Philomitus

- Bolivia is a mandatory stop over for smugglers on the Andes route. Its mountains provide all kinds of opportunities for skilled riggers to evade detection. Besides, the Bolivian radar coverage isn't that great to begin with.
- Air Sailor

- It doesn't need to be. Their Army supplements its forces with spirits. Very nasty ones, I might add.
- Maia

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Velazco won the masses over to his rebellion by preaching idealism. Once in power, he built his idealistic society, conveniently a culture supportive of his regime. The Aymaran beliefs

and way of life were infused throughout Bolivia to the point that other groups faced assimilation or discrimination: Aymaran is the official language and the only one taught in Bolivian education systems.

The Quechuas resisted for the most part, but minority groups like the Chiquitanos weren't so lucky. Today's Bolivian kids learn Aymaran, heavily dosed with communist propaganda, as their lifestyle. Communal work and absolute dedication to the State are a given.

- For some of us this isn't a big problem, as the government rewards people for adopting the party line.
- Warakusi

- Have you no pride in your heritage? This is cultural genocide!
- Guaraní Warrior

- I take pride in surviving and doing my job right. If that means discarding outdated traditions and replacing them with a few others, so be it.
- Warakusi

This policy is a point of contention for the Native American Nations in accepting Bolivia's request to become an associate member of the Sovereign Tribal Council. For many in North America, especially the Sioux, Velazco's regime resembles the old USA's extermination policy. On the other hand, Bolivia's natural resources are a temptation. The Neolncas has also applied to the NAN for support, asking it to cut ties with Velazco's government. The STC recently met with Florencia Quispe, one of Sancho Collqui's advisors, so maybe there's substance to the rumor.

- Chummer, the STC barely agrees on what day of the week it is. It could be years before they send Collqui a postcard.
- Black Eagle

Other than the differences between Aymaran and non-Aymarans, people in Bolivia classify one another depending on which region they live in. This is particularly valid for Kollas (highlanders) and Cambas (lowlanders), who enjoy a friendly rivalry marked by pranks and jests. I saw this firsthand when I worked in Cochabamba. My Camba friends treated our new Kolla decker in the most condescending way at first, arguing that "lack of air" probably made him a slow thinker.

FAITH

Perhaps one of the most bizarre aspects of Velazco's Bolivia is its state religion (yeah, I know, religious communists?). In his quest to be the perfect socialist man, El Comandante modified Aymaran religion "to adapt it to a workers' society," also adding some Catholic trappings and government propaganda. Yes, ritual offerings to the Pachamama (Mother Earth) and Ekeko (God of Abundance) are frequent, but their nature has changed. They have become a show of devotion and obedience, a tool for social control.

Speaking of tools, there's a small group of Bolivians who follow the Aztec Path of the Sun. They're remnants of Aztechnology's time in the country. Of course they have to keep their faith private. The Azzies still have friends in this com-

munity, always a bonus for their agents.

- Religion, the opium of the masses ... Can I have some?
- Groucho Marxist

KISS THE SKY

When most people think of Bolivia, they imagine El Altiplano. This majestic, lung-torturing plateau looms 3,600 meters above sea level, concentrating most of the country's population in cities and isolated villages. Its landmarks go from tourist-traps like Tiwanaku and Lake Titicaca to the bizarre Uyuni salt flats.

- Uyuni is choking with virgin telesma. Too bad the area is infested with rockworms and worse pests.
- Privateer
- The winds are strong and cool in the Altiplano, but breathing can be a problem for foreigners. Get used to the altitude and lack of air before doing something strenuous, or you'll exhaust yourself in no time.
- Wind Rider

Bolivia isn't just a pile of rocks. Once you go eastward, large tropical lowlands replace the highlands. This area suffered heavily when VITAS swept the country. Whole villages were transformed into empty ghost towns.

- Not so empty. I heard Shedim are becoming a problem for smugglers and rebels hiding in them.
- Picador

LA PAZ

The world's highest capital city, La Paz houses 2.5 million Bolivians who work day and night in its industries. The city's Free Trade Zone is home to a huge Novatech facility where workers assemble cheap consumer goods for South American markets. The government's Byzantine politics, the corporations' schemes and the increased rebel activity have allowed a thriving shadow community here.

- Security is tough, but not impossible. Yes, there's a zillion Revolutionary Guards patrolling the city, but tourists are so common that foreign runners shouldn't have any problems pretending to be one.
- Paquito

SANTA CRUZ

If La Paz is Velazco's mountain stronghold, then this is Collqui's tropical hideout. Santa Cruz de la Sierra's inhabitants widely favor the Neolncas movement. Anti-government protests are increasingly frequent. The communists have declared martial law several times, but the situation is only worsening. Me, I'm betting on the rebels.

- Hey Huxley, what keeps you from joining them? Is it because you're a gringo?
- Arctic White
- Not really. It's just that working pro bono isn't my style nowadays. They know how to contact me if the pay's good.
- Huxley

Santa Cruz also happens to be Bolivia's eastern economic hub. The recent discovery of uranium reserves triggered an ongoing fight between Shiawase Atomics and Andes Mining. Both companies are vying for the collectives' support in every (dirty) way they can imagine.

VIRTUAL RUINS

Bolivia's big cities are the only places where you'll find something remotely resembling the Matrix. The public RTG is so lousy and decrepit they had to stick to UMS iconography (and if you have to ask what UMS is, you'll just make me feel old). Outside the big cities all bets are off. Because corporations are using satellite uplinks to communicate with the rest of the world, decking into their hosts can prove to be difficult if not fatal.

- The government keeps a private system for itself, but it has more ice than Antarctica.
- Decker del Sur

ANCIENT RUINS

Bolivia teems with historical sites that are difficult to reach at best. Some haven't even been explored by archeologists. Standing near the southern shores of Lake Titicaca, the ancient city of Tiahuanaco (Tiwanaku) was the center of Aymaran civilization before the Incas and subsequently the Spanish conquered them. As such, it holds paramount importance to Velazco's regime. Religious ceremonies are held here at the beginning of every lunar month with thousands participating.

- The Neolncas once plotted the assassination of Velazco here, but Collqui discarded the idea at the last minute. He feared that such a move in Tiahuanaco could start a civil war.
- Llama Mama

Archeologically-minded groups like the Atlantean Foundation, Genesis' Terramater and the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research have all petitioned the government to study Tiahuanaco. So far the answer has been a big frag-off!

- Come on, Tiahuanaco's already been explored from top to bottom. It's not like they're going to steal something, right?
- Ancient History
- Maybe they know something we don't.
- Elijah

CARACAS

by Carmaux

It's like a drug, y' know? Every time I have enough nuyen, I tell myself I should get the hell outta here. Instead, I end up at the latest vice den, penniless and flying high on Ecuadorean Gold, laughing at the mere thought of it. I know it's going to kill me one day, but I just can't get enough of it.

Welcome to Caracas, chummers. Hell never looked so good.

FALL FROM GRACE

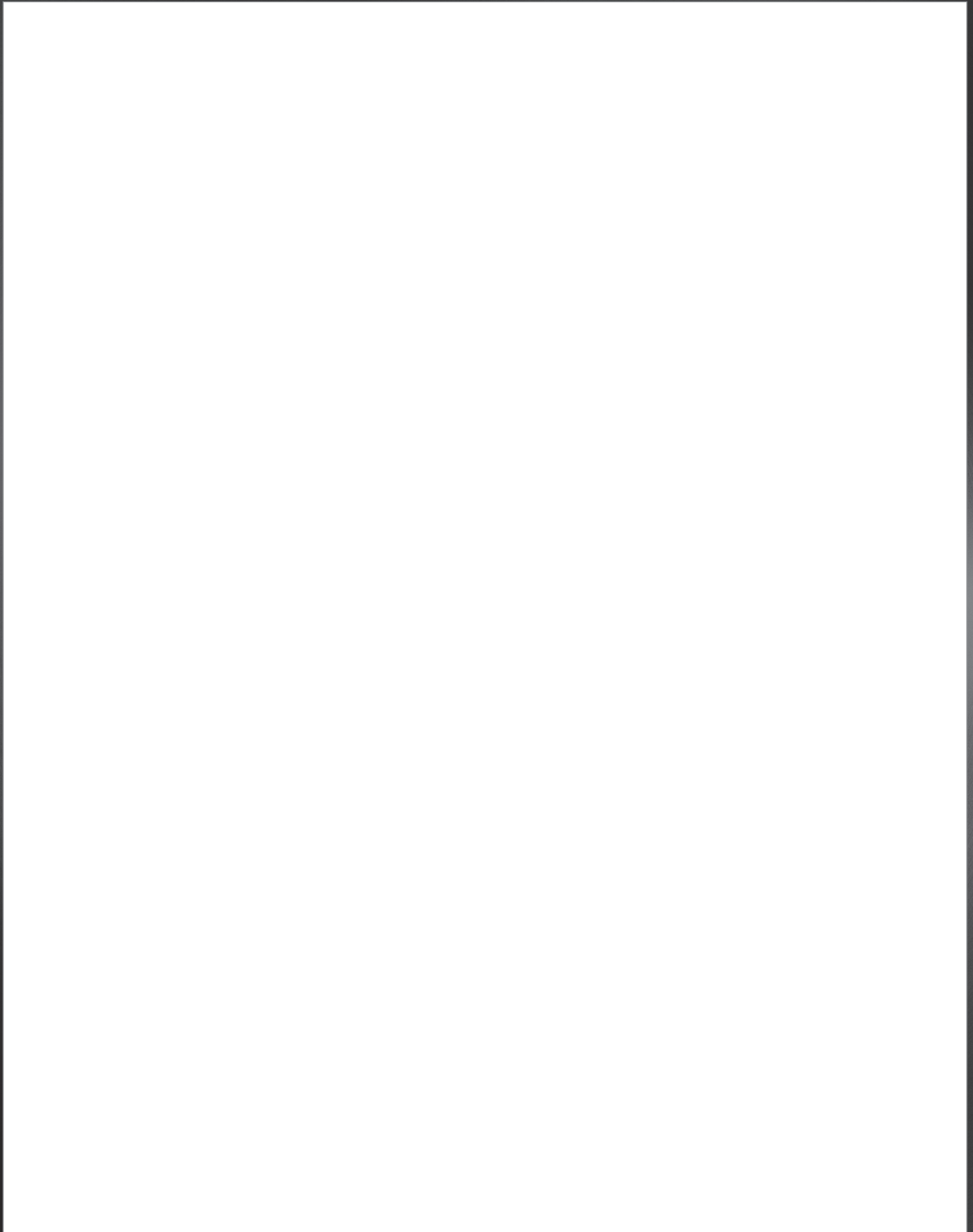
Long story short, Aztechnology had a puppet government in Venezuela ready to merge with Aztlan, but Hualpa called dibs on the country first—Amazonia's invasion caught the Azzies with their pants down and Venezuela quickly fell to the Green Goliath, though UN Blue Helmets shielded Caracas and the hordes of refugees flocking to it. Never a good loser, Aztechnology mounted a military counterstrike, but only went as far as retaking part of Lake Maracaibo's oil industry.

- ◆ Officially, the UNAF deployment was humanitarian. Off the record, we all know who the UN bows to—the megas simply secured their major investments in Caracas and drekked on the rest of the country. Belter the scraps than nothing at all.
- ◆ Don Dinero
- ◆ Not that Amazonia bothered itself with Caracas, right?
- ◆ Machiavelli

So here we are, still alive and partying like there's no tomorrow (there probably isn't, but I'm a pessimist). Congested and jampacked, crooked through and through and almost lawless at times, most of the world thinks Caracas is a tropical hellhole, a modern-day Port Royal. They're right, of course, but who cares?

SIN CITY SUR

The Cisneros, Jiménez, Carmona, Osorio and a few other rats took over the disgraced Venezuelan government after Amazonia's invasion. All of them have close (bah, carnal) relations with a higher power, be it the Cartels, the megas or Amazonia. As long as biz remains smooth, they're left alone to play in their sandbox. The patrones live la vida loca in their penthouses and nightclubs, while the masses survive in cheap towers and slums.



• There's not a single patch of green in Caracas (except for the golf clubs, of course). With so little space and so many people, every available square meter matters.

• Bauhaus

• Caracas' misery and suffering spill into the astral. Definitely not a chévere place to live if you're Awakened.

• Adriel

• There are tons of rabble-rousers in Caracas, all of them as corrupt as their enemies. For example, the old Fifth Republic Movement (MVR) is now Aztechnology's black hand in Caracas. Chávez must be spinning in his grave.

• Che

• I beg to differ, but the Catholic Church has been making a killing of late. Maybe there's still hope for Caracas.

• Missionary

• A killing, eh? Interesting choice of words ...

• Brother Data

Getting around Caracas can be a horror story and I'm not talking about the go-gangers squeezing some peajes from unwary travelers, or street peddlers jamming traffic. Chips? Useless. GridGuide? Don't make me laugh. Get a good guide, because you don't want to get lost here. Most of them know Caracas' underworld, which isn't a bad plus.

• Caracas's RTG is also drektastic. Know, though, that while the grid might have more holes than a Swiss cheese, there are an awful lot of red hosts hidden in there.

• FastJack

• The city is the perfect place to vanish or get enhancements. You can become an entirely new person in Caracas' shadow clinics. Good prices and good 'ware, but be damn sure to double-check the clinic's rep.

• Anonymous

The Caracas Stock Exchange houses some of the shadiest corporations you can think of, which would never be allowed to trade in "respectable" places like Boston or Tokyo. Charon BioMed and El Dorado Entertainment are notorious examples. Charon was once involved in a human experimentation scandal in Marseilles, so the owners relocated it here. Meanwhile, EDE is a world-leader in extreme adult entertainment. No comments please.

It's not just infamous scum that does biz in the Chacao financial district, but also famous scum. All the big R&D names are here: MCT's ParaShield, Cross Biomed, Genesis, Universal Omnitech, Yakashima, Genom ... the list goes on and on. Simply put, the corps love to test stuff in Caracas: zero regulations, zero lawsuits.

CARACAS AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Oligarchy

Population: 22,874,000

Human: 54%

Elf: 25%

Dwarf: 5%

Ork: 11%

Troll: 2%

Other: 3%

Per Capita Income: 11,000¥

Estimated SINless: 35%

Below Poverty Level: 50%

Corporate Affiliation: 23%

Education:

Less Than Twelve Years: 36%

High School Equivalency: 41%

College Degrees: 17%

Advanced Degrees: 6%

Major Ethnic Groups:

Venezuelan: 85%

Brazilian: 6%

Aztlaner: 4%

Major Languages Spoken:

Spanish: 93%

English: 28%

Portuguese: 17%

Major Religions:

Roman Catholic: 61%

(less than 30% practicing)

Santería: 13%

Path of the Sun: 2%

Unaffiliated/Other: 12%

None: 8%

Currency: Bolivar (nuyen also accepted)

Exchange Rate: \$5000 = 1¥

MediCarro Medical Coverage: 80%

Guaranteed Response Time: None.

• Genesis's Caracas complex is a real zero zone: no one gets in, no one gets out. Having heard some nasty stories, I shudder at the mere thought of what could be going on in them.

• Espion

• Fact and fiction sometimes come hand in hand.

• Mutatis Mutandis

• I hate teasers.

• Synner

Speaking of regulations, plenty of foreign companies use the city as a flag of convenience, registering their ships here to avoid their countries' own ones. Caracas proudly boasts one of

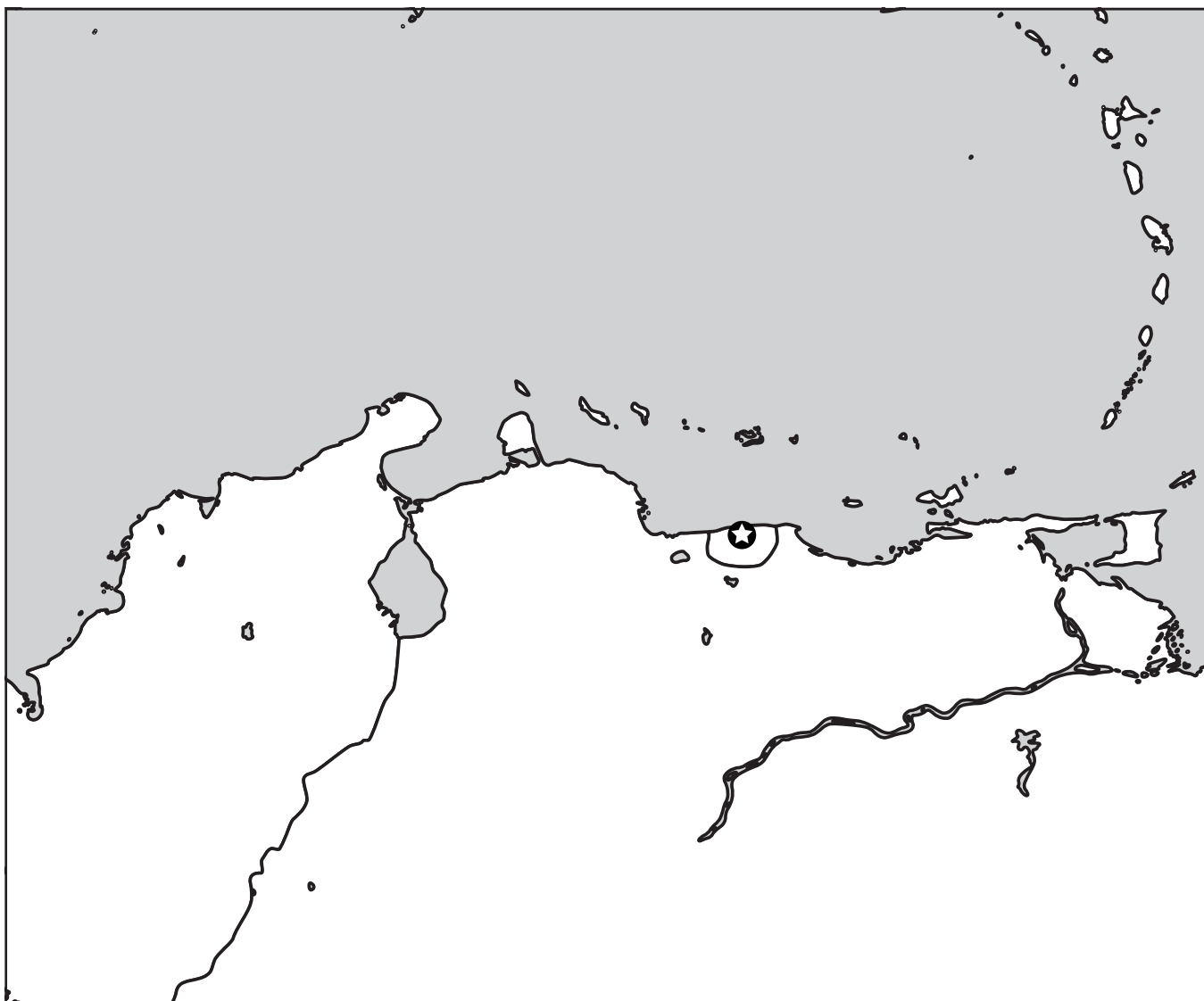
the biggest merchant fleets in the world, though you can bet most of those ships have never been here.

Entertainment is another biggie here. Venevisión and other local outfits compete with international players like Sol Media, Televisa or GloboTrid, churning out some of the worst mindless soap operas and simflicks you'll ever see. I hope it's just the subliminal propaganda and almost explicit content, but folks love that drek. Snuff films and similar niceties are also a major cash cow for the studios, though all of them will deny taking part in such illicit activities.

- Illicit outside Caracas, you mean. The city is a sex tourism hot-spot, with pervs coming to experience (sometimes buy) the latest meat dolls, straight out from surgery. Those who don't make it out end up in Tamanous' hands: recycle, reuse...
- Kink
- And I thought I was sick.
- Carmaux

The port of La Guaira is the other reason this city isn't broke. Telesma, slaves, BADs, guns, biotech samples ... I've smuggled so many things in and out that I can't remember them all. There's so much activity going on here that smugglers almost have to stand in line to pay the matraca (that's a bribe, in case you're wondering). Add in the Caribbean pirates selling their loot or the merc recruiters looking for cannon fodder, and you get one fraggin' big black market. If it's illegal, you'll find it here and at a reasonable price.

- The Cartels use La Guaira to export scores of drug shipments to Europe, North America and the Caribbean League. Rumor is they're also importing some very interesting goods...
- Juju Juan
- I'm sure Aztechnology and Amazonia will be mighty interested in that rumor.
- Corona



CARIBBEAN LEAGUE

by xxxx

- Usually, the author who sent me this info about the Carib League would need no introduction. Just about anyone who even has a trid has heard of the Gingerbread Man, the self-proclaimed pirate star of the Caribbean. But with this introduction comes a bit of a somber note: two weeks after he dropped this data my way, the Gingerbread Man and his crew vanished in the Bermuda Triangle. The rumor is that he was about to pull off a mega-heist, but whether it happened or not, no one is sure. There hasn't been a peep from his crew in two months, and that's unheard of, considering who we're talking about.

- Captain Chaos

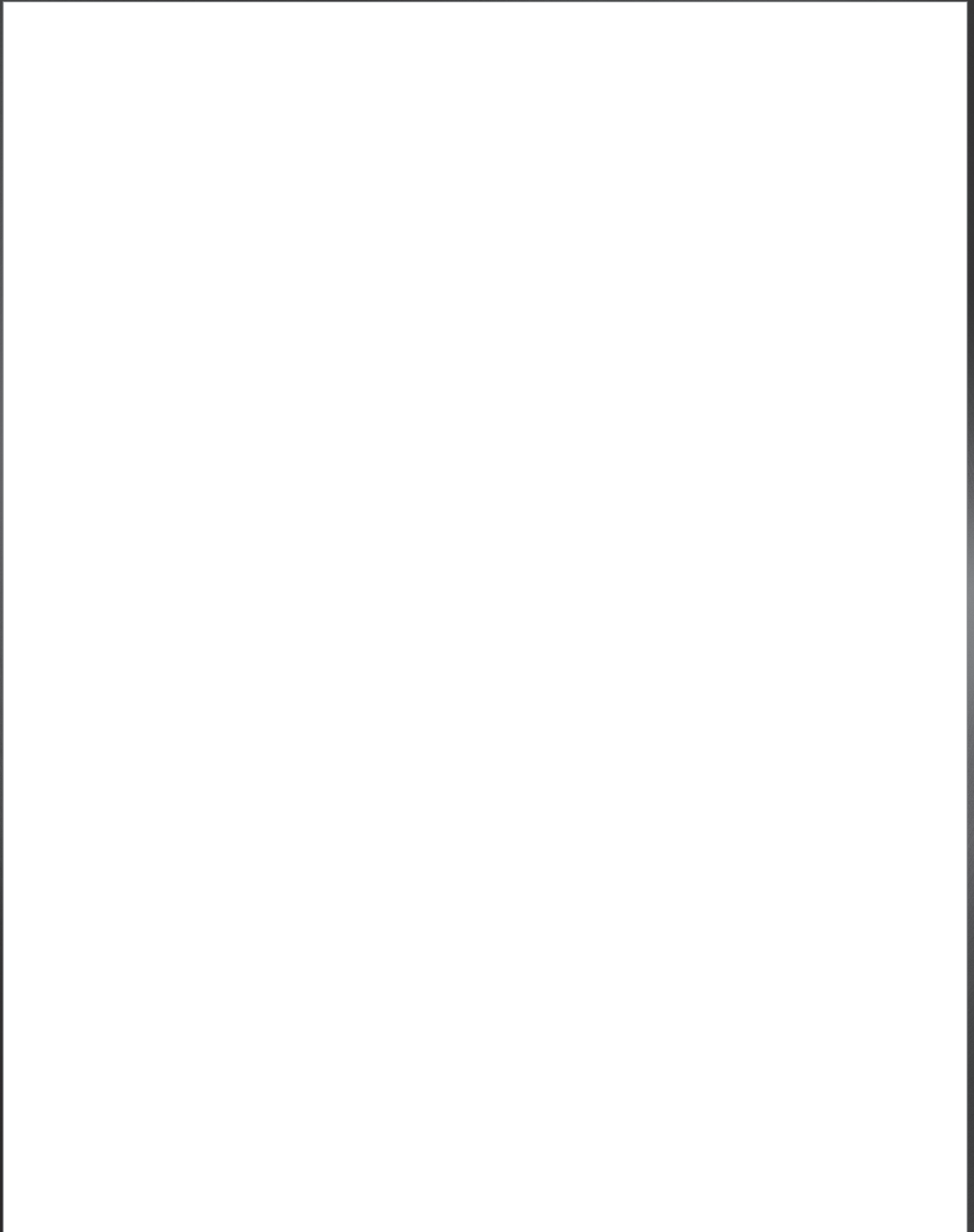
JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE BEACH

Welcome to the sunny Caribbean, chums! Har, I guess I should tell you right off the bat that „chum“ isn't a friendly nickname around these parts. Chum is shark food, and that's what you'll be if you come to the Caribbean League before you finish reading my little primer here. And who am I? If you don't already know that, you must have been living in a cave for the past decade. I'm none other than the Gingerbread Man, legendary pirate of the Seven Seas (more like nine, but who's counting?) and your gracious host to the shady underbelly of the Caribbean.

I've only got limited time before my next extravagant maritime heist, so I'll dive right in. But keep your eyes on the trid for me, and you'll see something soon, I promise. So you want to know how the Caribbean League came into being? Well, it's basically equal parts desperation and distrust that founded the League. Oh sure, it's all parties on the surface, but the undercurrent around here has always been dark and bloody. The Cap'n (what is he the captain of, anyway?) wanted me to skip straight to the twenty-first century, so let's start at the event that really set the balling rolling: VITAS.

The Caribbean nations were never known for their rock-solid governments; it was common place for them to overthrow their leaders every few years. But when VITAS swept into these largely-poor islands and took with it millions of lives, everything fell apart. And I mean everything. The tourists fled home and governments shattered under the weight of weak health care systems and shabby beauracracies. The violence that erupted in the wake of VITAS killed nearly as many as the disease itself.

- For once, GBM isn't exaggerating. If you're of strong stomach, take a look at the old footage sometime. Violent gangs shooting at each other over stretches of ghetto marked by pyres of burning VITAS-plagued bodies. A lot of smart people just got on their boats, sailed out into the blue sea, and never came back to land. Some are still out there.



◉ Darwin

CARIBBEAN LEAGUE TIMELINE

2010: Kingston, Jamaica becomes the first Caribbean city infected with VITAS I, which eventually causes the deaths of 1 in 3 Caribbeans.

2011: John Hopkins University develops the first treatment cocktails for VITAS I.

2014: Unusual weather patterns caused by the Great Ghost Dance cripple the Caribbean sugar industry.

2015: Natural Vat Food Technologies builds its first mycoprotein fungus farm in Puerto Rico.

April, 2021: Aztechnology acquires Natural Vat Food Technologies.

October, 2021: The Caribbean League is formed at the urging of Guadalupe Martinez of Cuba.

February 2022: VITAS II hits the Caribbean, but new vaccines developed by Johns Hopkins University prove valuable in curbing deaths.

June 2022: The UCAS government learns of unethical experiments committed by Johns Hopkins on metahuman research subjects. Johns Hopkins loses its university status but files for incorporation in Haiti and becomes the John Hopkins Institute of Health.

2034: South Florida secedes from the CAS and joins the Caribbean League as the Sovereign State of South Florida.

2048: The second phase of the Corporate Court's „Operation Reciprocity“ actions against Aztechnology is launched from Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

2055: The Morlocks gang in Miami starts violently attacking tourists, leading to Gunderson-led crackdown on street gangs. Casualties of the „Night of Law“, as it is later called, number in the thousands.

November, 2061: Hurricane Rebekah ravages the Dominican Territories.

The suffering Caribbeans called out for help, but with the Awakening, the world had its own problems. The only „help“ that answered the cry came from the corporations. And they were not so interested in the welfare of the people as they were in cheap, unregulated land, labor, and resources. The late twenty-teens came to be known as the „Island Grab“, as the corps came rushing into the Caribbean to snatch up anything they could get their profiteering mits on.

◉ Hah, a pirate calling the corporations profiteering! The corporations might have had their own agenda, but they did bring some stability, money, and health care to the islands when they desperately needed it.

◉ Runners Without Borders

◉ They also brought racial segregation, unregulated pollution, and human rights violating experimentation.

◉ Dr. Bones

◉ The voodooists answered the cries for help too, though quietly for the local people, as the loa instructed us. We are still in the hearts of the Caribbeans as they remember the dark times.

◉ Voodoo Lou

The Island Grab became such a rapidly spiraling situation that by 2020, the larger Caribbean islands began to fear a complete privatization of the region. Feeding off of this fear, Guadalupe Martinez's Partido De la Fundación De Cuba (Cuba Foundation Party) neo-Communists rose to power and tried to sell the other islands on an idea of a cooperative regional alliance. Rightfully so, they were skeptical of Lady Guadalupe and lukewarm to her idea...until ORO aggressively took over Natural Vat in 2021 and with it a good section of Puerto Rico's farmland. Overnight, the larger islands changed their tune and banded together to form a loose confederation named the Caribbean League.

◉ As a League, the islands were able to get better trade agreements, more regional influence, and global recognition.

The League may look like it's about to fall apart at any moment, but the individual islands know that they are all better off working together.

◉ Professional Student

◉ The League also shares one currency: the doubloon. The nuyen is also widely accepted, as is the dollar, the pesos, bars of gold, ammunition, drugs, water...you get the picture.

◉ Moneymaker

◉ The Sovereign State of South Florida joined the League later, in 2034. South Florida had long been a haven for refugees fleeing from chaos and poverty in the Caribbean, and the decades before the League's formation were no different. Miami's population became so flooded with Caribbean and metahuman refugees that it strained their relations with the central CAS government. Miami found itself getting the short end of the stick far too often in CAS policy and negotiated a better deal in the League.

◉ Tiburón

GOVERNMENT GONE WILD

Don't let the trid announcements fool you; in the Carib League, the governments and pirate crews are two sides of the same coin. The only difference is that the politicians traded in their sea legs for a larger following. The Caribbean League Legislature is quite possibly the most dysfunctional body of government on the face of the planet...but strangely enough, it works here. And the most fundamental rule to understand about the League Legislature is that „words“ and „reality“ are two vastly different things.

CARIBBEAN LEAGUE AT A GLANCE

Government Type:

Confederation of Sovereign Governments

Population: 44,136,000

- Human: 64%
- Elf: 7%
- Dwarf: 10%
- Ork: 12%
- Troll: 5%
- Other: 2%

Per Capita Income: 136,000 doubloons or 6,800€

(varies widely on individual islands)

Estimated SINless: 35%

Below Poverty Level: 39%

Corporate Affiliation: 24%

Education:

- Less Than Twelve Years: 58%
- High School Equivalency: 32%
- College Degrees: 8%
- Advanced Degrees: 2%

Major Ethnic Groups:

- Afro-Caribbean: 34%
- Hispanic: 16%
- Caucasian: 15%
- Mixed/Other: 35%

Major Languages Spoken:

- Spanish: 67%
- English: 46%
- Creole: 22%
- French: 19%

Major Religions:

- Roman Catholic: 42%
- Voodoo: 21%
- Protestant: 9%
- Other or No Affiliation: 28%

Currency: Doubloon (nuyen, dollars, pesos, and euros also widely accepted)

Exchange rate: 1 doubloon = .05 nuyen
(1 nuyen = 20 doubloons)

Medical Coverage:

varies widely on individual islands

• No kidding. The League Speaker proclaims to the United Nations every year about the ongoing war on piracy.

Hah...war on piracy my hoop; the islands of the League make too much money from piracy to ever crack down on it more than a token showing. Hell, half the politicians are pirates and the rest are crooks!

- Tin Lizzie

The League Legislature meets once every six months for a two-week stretch in the unofficial League capital, Havana. These meetings are 10 percent legislating and 90 percent social gathering and posturing. The few Leaguewide issues that come up are voted on using a one-island, one-vote policy (which is actually far from the reality, as usual) and quickly passed or discarded. These laws are mostly for show since there's no central enforcement that binds individual islands to them. You'll learn fast around here that everything is for show.

- The only thing that really binds individual islands to Legislature decisions is the threat of expulsion from the League, which has never actually happened. The League islands need each other too much to start booting people out.

Despite the empty threat, when it comes to agreements on how to deal with foreign relations, the islands tend to back whatever passes. They need to put up some image of a united front to the world, after all, to keep their influence.

- Poly Tick

- The „one island, one vote“ policy is a total joke. Essentially, anyone with enough power to get the respect of the other players can show up to the Legislature meetings and get a vote. Sometimes, that results in more than one representative per island (Hispaniola's representation has fluctuated from one to five reps, depending on the meeting) and sometimes the smaller islands don't send anyone or send one person to represent a grouping of islands. Some pirates have shown up who don't even represent an island! The „votes“ are just a fictional cover for what is basically raw influence brokering.

- Carousel

Lemme speak from experience here: these Legislature meetings are a wildly fun scene. Corp executives, mob bosses, pirates, and politicians all gathering in Havana with their respective entourages, more often than not carving out policy over bottles of rum. The list of players changes from one meeting to the next, but it's always an eclectic crowd guaranteed to entertain.

- The League Legislature used to meet every three months, but they changed it in 2060 because Havana just couldn't take these gatherings descending on the city four times a year and no other cities were willing to welcome the craziness that comes with each one.

- Salt

- Even if you're not a bigshot, it's worth it to schedule a Caribbean vacation during these meeting weeks if you can.

With all the wheeling and dealing, there are piles of shadow-work coming down the pipe as one power player tries to get a leg up over another. After one night on the town, I woke up with a dozen new leads for work and a cute young Aztlaner lawyer whose name I can't even remember.

- The Vacationer

- Chances are the „cute young lawyer“ was an Aztechnology plant sent to report back to her corporate masters about those leads for work you got.

- Kane

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

Listen up seniors and senioritas, because Bread is going to



tell you about being a criminal in the Caribbean.

Yes yes, I know you're Mr. Badass Cyberspur Sammie back in Seattle or Denver or Neo-Tokyo, but let me drop a bomb on you. It don't mean squat here. The chromed professional act will just get you tossed off the ship for the amusement of the crew as they watch your million-nuyen limbs sink you to Davy Jones' locker.

Mention the Gingerbread Man anywhere in the Caribbean, you'll get a reaction. Some will laugh and joke.

Some will swoon and giggle. Some will froth with hatred. But they all know me. And that, my friend, is everything in the Caribbean. Back in the Sprawl, you gotta hide what you do, because you're a criminal making a living in a society that pretends to be civil on the surface. In the Caribbean, we have no use for civility. It's the law of the jungle here; the badge isn't going to hunt you down because there is no badge. We're all crooks here, and the way you stay above the others is by being known and having friends.

- It's totally counter to the thinking of most shadowrunners, but to build a rep around here you often need to be as flashy as possible. Pull off the big runs with swagger and a smile and make sure you have the media video-drones rolling. It's a balance of displaying power and knowing your audience, you want to look big enough to be hard to take down while not making yourself a larger target than you can handle.

• Domino

• Also, the more you're known, the more friends you tend to make.

The more friends you have and favors you can chip in, the longer you'll live around here. Ain't that right, Scorp?

• Wake

• Keep smiling, hombre, next time you won't be so lucky.

• Scorpio

• Fortune favors the bold! Thanks for the ship, hope the raft ride home wasn't too bumpy.

• Wake

The criminal food chain in the Caribbean is why all this reputation stuff is so damned important. There's no need to look over your shoulder for the police. The law is local here and the only thing that separates the law from the criminals is that they serve the criminal who currently poses as politician. Even Interpol, the only League-wide law enforcement agency that existed, closed up shop around here when it was transformed into EuroPol recently. I knew I'd outlast those slitches.

• Most of the local ex-Interpol agents found new work in the Cuban intelligence service or Atlantic Security. A few even went pirate!

• Rasputin

Down here, you need to watch out for your fellow criminals. The shadow industry really is a self-starter industry here, from top to bottom. When you pull off a heist or a run, there are hundreds of smaller-time crooks under you looking to feed off your success any way they can. They are thieves, pure and

simple, but that's how we all start out here. Reputation is what separates you from them, but they are more than willing to rise through the ranks by stabbing you in the back if they can get away with it. Oftentimes, keeping an eye on your goods after the run is harder than the run itself.

- While it's not uncommon for Johnsons to double-cross runners back home, here you need to watch out for other runners and crooks operating freelance. A couple months ago, a guy I knew extracted a JHIH scientist for a Yamatetsu Johnson. The run went just fine, but on the way to the handover, he got jumped by Batista mobsters who geeked him and intended to ransom the scientist themselves. JHIH paid out the ransom, but the meet between the Batista and JHIH was interrupted by a freelance runner team who made off with the scientist and left a bunch of bodies behind.

- Cruz

> That was Blacktooth's crew. They filmed the hit on the mobsters and JHIH through their own cybereyes; it's a huge hit on the Round Square!

- Media Watcher

- Yeah, but a couple weeks later, Blacktooth himself was shipped to the rest of his team in four different priority mail packages, courtesy of the Batista Family. I hear the rest of them are living large though, and the scientist has a cushy new job at Shiawase Bio-tech.

- Salt

- Keep in mind that the nature of shadowrunning in the Caribbean will be alien to a lot of continental runners. There are still Johnsons and fixers down here, but most runners are „self-employed.“ They pick a lot of their own jobs and initiate them, then deal with Johnsons and fixers in the aftermath as they try to unload the goods, whether it's data, contraband, or an extracted executive.

- Picador

SWIMMING WITH THE SHARKS

The Caribbean League is a messy patchwork of dozens of islands large and small, and since so much of the action is local in the League, it's good to know what makes one island different than the other. And as the pirate who is wanted by nearly every single one of them, there's no one better than yours truly to give you the scoop on em. But keep on your toes, things have a habit of changing overnight in the League, so if you're not up to date, you may find yourself sunk.

BAHAMAS

The Bahamas are where you go to disappear, whether intentional or not. With 23 civilized islands and

literally thousands of tiny inlets and coves, the Bahamas are the haven of both corporate interests and freebooting pirates. Most of the larger islands were snatched up during the Island Grab by the wealthy and are governed by proxy through privateer governments paid off by the island's owners. The smaller inlets are where many pirate crews go to lay low and hide their goods until sale. It's all too easy to operate under the radar in the Bahamas, and that's its main attraction.

BAHAMAS

Population: 345,000

Afro-Caribbean: 80%

Caucasian: 10%

Asian: 3%

Hispanic: 7%

Major Languages:

English: 82%

Creole: 32%

Major Religions:

Protestant: 30%

Catholic: 30%

Voudoun: 14%

Other/None: 26%

- In some cases, the pirates and corps work hand in hand. The island of Eleuthera is owned by Hyatt Host Marriot, the real estate investment giant. It runs the show on its resorts, but off the resorts it has outsourced governing to Vincent Trahan's Silverfin crew, former pirates. Now they pull down a nice paycheck from HHM and get to keep whatever they take from any local troublemakers.

- Keynesian Kid

However, there are two islands to avoid unless you want to accidentally vanish. Andros is the largest island in the Bahamas, but is uncivilized and wild, overgrown with mangroves and dotted with blue holes, underwater cave systems that connect the inland lakes to the ocean. Aside from a handful of natives, the locals give the island a wide berth, because the phrase „off to Andros“ has become synonymous for vanishing off the face of the Earth.

- Andros reeks of latent power and is a tempting treasure trove for arcane poachers, but very few who head that way ever come back. If you ask me, the chickcharnies are to blame. They are awakened owls that can cause magical disorientation, which can be fatal on an uncivilized tropical island.

- Deep Blu

- It's not just the chickcharnies. There are some real back-to-nature natives on the island with some serious mojo who pay homage to Lusca, a sea serpent they say lives in the blue holes and guards great mysteries.

- Weebly

New Providence is also off-limits, but for a whole other reason. The entire island is under quarantine currently, a state enforced by the World Health Organization and a biomed outfit called Metaluxa. The authorities aren't letting anyone on or off the island, period. I know a few pirates who tried to chase the quick doubloon by running the quarantine and they were dealt with harshly and permanently. The city of Nassau lies on New Providence along with most of the Bahaman population, so the lockdown is a big deal.

- I heard Nassau is crawling with bug spirits! They locked the island

down to prevent the bugs from getting out while they figure out how to destroy the hives.

> Tomtom

• The story I heard is a bit more mundane (though no less scary). I know a pirate who has cut through the quarantine twice successfully, and he tells me the place is closed due to some new and highly infectious lethal virus. The WHO has no idea yet where it came from or exactly how it is spreading, but I bet it has Metaluxa's name all over it.

• Swash and Buckle

• That's possible. Metaluxa is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Shia-wase, a corporate research lab complex jointly operated by Shia-wase Envirotech and Shia-wase Biotech. With the relative remoteness and free-wheeling government, it'd be a great place for bioweapons research.

• The Chromed Accountant

• The Bahaman islands don't usually send a representative to the League meetings. The corporate and syndicate owners aren't terribly interested in the pseudo-policy so long as they can continue to exploit the territory. The last meeting was an exception; a very serious doctor from the WHO named Dr. Susan Bergnois attended, but just long enough to ensure the League that the situation in New Providence was contained but would need to remain under quarantine indefinitely.

• Props

• Boy does that sound fishy.

• Cruz

BORINQUEN

Now, I knew Maria Francisca had some serious brass ones, but I think we all underestimated her. When the former pirate of fifteen years declared herself La Presidenta of Borinquen (that's Puerto Rico to anyone with a seven year old map) we all figured that would last about as long as it took the corporations to care, and then they'd reassert themselves and Maria's political ambitions would be sunk, literally.

Fast forward to today, and whoever bet on Maria is cashing in the chips. Half the corporations who set up private fiefdoms on the island have left, unable to run profitable businesses under constant raiding from Maria's pirates. The other half have „re-negotiated their terms“ with La Presidenta; in other words, they have given up portions of cash and power in order to be left alone.

BORINQUEN

Population: 4,680,000

Hispanic: 80%

Afro-Caribbean: 7%

Caucasian: 5%

mixed and other: 8%

Major Languages:

Spanish: 89%

English: 64%

Creole: 12%

Major Religions:

Roman Catholic: 76%

Voudoun: 8%

Protestant: 7%

Path of the Sun: 3%

Other/None: 6%

• The corps had their chance to stop Maria back in 2057, but I'm guessing they humored her, figuring she was just another temporary power that would need to eventually beg for corporate support to survive, like all the other Puerto Rican politicians for the past few decades. Oops!

• Bluebeer

• They were so busy stabbing each other in the back that they weren't prepared for Maria's pirate raids, which were truly bloody and vicious...and popular. She became a folk hero around here with the way she'd lead the charges personally with a wave of her orichalcum-plated rapier against corporate security forces.

• Salt

A big factor in Maria Francisca's success is the way she's brought together disparate groups on the island under her anti-corporate banner. With an iron fist and promises of power, she brought the warring barrio gangs of San Juan under her heel. Popular support came with her dashing raids that appealed to the downtrodden natives.

Even the Church has given a silent nod of tacit approval; they still remember how the corporations stole power out from under them on the island.

• The Archdiocese of San Juan is very conservative compared to the Vatican. They don't entirely agree with Maria's methods, but they hate the corporations and realize that Maria's popular support contains many more Catholics than the corporate resorts do. So it's in their best interests to quietly back Maria, for now.

• Cruz

Maria regularly attends the League meetings for Borinquen and there's no one left that's powerful enough to stop her. But the one snag in her rise to power seems to be that her raids have slowed down lately. Some say she's running out of enemies and others say she's just getting fat off of political power, but I think there's something more to it. I've known Maria for a decade, and the woman has an unquenchable fire that doesn't burn out. I bet the decision to slow down the raids

isn't her own.

• Maria's support is made up of a lot of pirate crews that came flocking to Borinquen as her successes kept rolling in.

But these same pirate crews often have checkered pasts that can come back to haunt them, and Maria. Take Salvador's Saints; they are a crew that claims to have recently escaped from an Aztlan prison. That's no small baggage to drag to Borinquen.

• Jaxon

• Novilunio also moved its operations from South Florida to Borinquen. How those novacoke fiend pirates escaped being wiped off the planet by the Azzies, I have no idea.

• > Megalo Don

• It's interesting how so many of Maria's pirate allies have past links to Aztlan when you consider that she's hardly raiding the NatVat fungus farms, which are owned by Aztechnology.

• Corona

• That fact hasn't gone unnoticed. The new Archbishop of San Juan, Eli Manuel Arroyo-Lopez, is heavily tied to the Toledo-Borinquen-Aztlan route that the New Jesuits use in their operations against the Big A. Going easy on the Azzies is not part of the deal the San Juan Archdiocese had in mind when backing Maria and I doubt they'll let it go.

• Vat-Icon

CUBA

The fact that Cuba has had a stable government for the past four decades almost seems at odds with the rest of the Caribbean, until you realize that the Cuban government is just as two-faced and crooked as the rest of us.

The whole thing is run by the Partido De la Fundación De Cuba (or Cuban Foundation Party), a neo-communist regime run by the Martinez dynasty. Course, these guys are about as communist as the Corporate Court; they are actually just a totalitarian technocratic elite lining their pockets with wads of illicit cash.

CUBA	
Population:	13,334,000
	Mulatto: 42%
	Caucasian: 31%
	Afro-Caribbean: 12%
	Hispanic: 7%
	Chinese: 4%
	Other: 4%
Major Languages:	
	Spanish: 97%
	English: 45%
Major Religions:	
	No Affiliation: 54%
	Roman Catholic: 32%
	Voudoun: 10%
	Other: 4%

• Cuba actually holds free elections, but the popularity and power of the Martinez family and their pet party keeps the spotlight fixed firmly on them. It doesn't hurt that the armed guards at the polls are paid for by corporations who like the status quo.

• Poly Tick

• There's a policlub of real Communist believers in Cuba that aren't happy with Martinez. The *Fraternidad Verdadera* (True Brotherhood) is technically a political party, but they've been so frustrated facing Martinez in the polls that they've turned to sabotage, worker strikes, and riots. These guys are increasingly unpredictable, but they often hire runners and pirates for muscle.

• Groucho Marxist

Enrique „Pretty Boy“ Martinez is the head honcho now, and he has a real knack for balancing all the favors that the megacorps and mafiosos buy in Cuba while still retaining his own power. Martinez may be kneeling to the Almighty Nuyen, but he's no puppet. His suave charm, dashing Latin looks, and fiery vision for Cuba's future have made him the second most eligible bachelor in the Carib League (after yours truly, natch).

• The biannual League meetings in Havana happen to fall at the end of the Grand Tour seasons, so a lot of Grand Tour players swing by Havana for extended schmoozing. Pretty Boy Martinez is always a big hit in these circles and he's made a lot of European friends this way.

• Cindy Kit

• Claudia Romanov was recently attributed with setting up a number of meetings between Martinez and Admiral Lev Rybalkin of the Russian Pacific Fleet. The two have worked out a military partnership between Cuba and Russia that doesn't hurt Saeder-Krupp one bit.

• October Red

Martinez is focused like a hungry shark on turning Cuba into a formidable military power in the region, and he's pulling in the money, influence, and talent to make it happen. Sadly for us pirates, the Cuban Navy has grown into a considerable power, led by Almirante Rodolfo Serraza, the „Wizard of Az.“ Not to mention they have some decent marines and a nosy intelligence branch that seems to know a bit too much about the pirate trade for my liking.

• Serraza is a former Jaguar Guard from Aztlan, who had some sort of falling out. He's a good naval commander, but his real strength has been in teaching the Cubans how to integrate magic with their naval forces. Expect any sizable crew to include a hermetic, a santeros, or both.

• Megalo Don

• The Cuban General Intelligence Directorate specializes in military intelligence and counterintelligence; mainly because of the Azzies being right next door, but the disinformation campaigns tend to hurt local pirates too. Their amphibious special forces, the Tigersharks, are surprisingly well-trained, and are rumored to cross-train with Navy Seals at Ares/UCAS-controlled Guantanamo Bay.

• Picador

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Havana's thriving underworld. The big fish is the Batista family, run by Raul Batista.

They control most of the white collar crime, illegal gambling, and protection rackets in the Carib League and have close ties to the dozens of overseas banks operating here. The Batista family is infamous for indebting mages to them and exploiting them for talislegging operations or magical actions against their enemies.

- The Sixty-Six Dragons are a Chinese gang operating out of Havana's Barrio de Chino (Chinatown). They have the human trafficking trade through the Caribbean fiercely cornered and it's rumored they maintain links between Henan and the Fraternidad Verdadera communists.
- Down Lo

THE DOMINICAN TERRITORIES

The Dominican Territories are, to put it bluntly, a damned nightmare. It's a patchwork of turfs carved out in blood and chaos, peopled by metahuman refugees, criminal warlords, Haitian dissidents, and worse. What tenuous order existed here crumbled in November of '61 when Hurricane Rebekah slammed into the southeastern corner of Hispaniola (the island the Territories share with Haiti) with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse riding in on its wake.

The eastern half of the Dominican Territories is known as the Black Shallows; it's the ruined and flooded remnants left after Hurricane Rebekah. Anyone who could get out of the area did, and what remains are the truly desperate and those attracted to the death and despair that hangs here even three years later. Disease and famine are rampant and a number of apocalyptic cults have made this area their home; the largest being one known as Rebekah's Dead, who claim that they hear whispers of the coming end times in the eternal winds of the hurricane.

shedim.

- Spyder

• The Black Shallows have a frighteningly large concentration of wraiths drawn in by the constant death. It's hard to tell if the atrocities that take place daily here are homegrown or influenced by the wraiths.

- Juju B

• A number of petro voodoo cults also operate in the area; the most influential ones serve Simbi, a water snake loa who oversees the flooded marshlands and is one of the three „cosmic serpents“ who hold the secrets of just about everything. The sacrifices I've heard they offer for a glimpse at these secrets make my skin crawl.

- Monkeyboy

Surrounded by the Black Shallows is the besieged and battered city of Santo Domingo. The survivors of Rebekah huddle in this sprawl behind cobbled-together barricades built to keep out raiders, cultists and paracritters.

The strongman that keeps the city in line is Iago Garza, a very rough-around-the-edges dwarf who used to be a lieutenant under Geraldo Montenegro, the previous warlord here.

• Garza is more than a little „rough.“ He's a terrorist member of the Sons of Sauron, responsible for the murder of hundreds of people. I hope the wraiths devour what remains of his soul.

- Angelos

• Unfortunately, in Santo Domingo, they don't have the luxury to worry about those distinctions.

- Salt

The western half of the Dominican Territories is divided up between two warlords, Chocolaté in the north and Esfinge in the south. Chocolaté is an ork and former pirate who operates his criminal empire out of Santiago. He used to manufacture BTLs for the Batista mafia, but these days his „Carib Moodies“ are moving through the Jamaican Posses.

• The Batistas got burnt on the BTL biz by the Posses, literally. I hear the Jamaicans tracked down the local Batistas and burnt them alive to make a point, hanging them out as human torches in the yard of their boss.

- Fumado

• The Batistas have struck back by hiring pirates and runners to sink any ship trying to smuggle the Posses' Moodies, but a lot of runners are shying away from the work given how messy the Jamaicans are when it comes to retribution.

- Tin Lizzie

Esfinge, the elven woman who leads the eco-terrorist group Verde Manana, technically calls the city of Barahona her home turf. However, her group operates out of camps in the Enriquillo Basin and Pedernales Peninsula, among tropical beaches and dry, inland lagoons. Since the hurricane hit, her people have increasingly retreated from Barahona (which lies close to the Black Shallows) and into the wilderness.

• Esfinge has some sort of agreement with Tir Tairngire that is hard to completely understand. They supply her with money, guns, and supplies, and in exchange she supposedly lets the Ghosts and Pa-

THE DOMINICAN TERRITORIES

Population: 9,628,000

- Caucasian: 15%
- Afro-Caribbean: 12%
- Hispanic: 10%
- Mixed heritage: 58%
- Other: 5%

Major Languages:

- Spanish: 71%
- English: 21%
- Creole: 13%

Major Religions:

- Roman Catholic: 65%
- Voodoo: 22%
- Other/None: 13%

• The higher-ups in Rebekah's Dead are actually dead...they are shedim. They increase their numbers by culling the bodies of still-living followers and by raiding villages. As for what lies at the top of the cult's power structure, no one knows, though some think Rebekah might be a toxic or shadow free spirit or a powerful master

ladins train on her land and use her camps.

- Banshee

HAITI

I don't think anyone shed a tear when „Le Prof“ Barbin, Haiti's previous dictator, met a spectacular end in a magical explosion in Port-au-Prince. Isabella Fontenot, a cold-hearted slitch from Haiti's gendarmes, sure didn't, and she rose to fill the void. Around here, Fontenot is known as Kouto-La, which is Creole for „The Knife.“ She's sharp and deadly, so it's an apt moniker.

<p>HAITI</p> <p>Population: 8,574,000 Afro-Caribbean: 92% Caucasian: 4% Mulatto: 3% Other: 1%</p> <p>Major Languages: French: 92% Creole: 84% English: 34% Spanish: 15%</p> <p>Major Religions: Voudoun: 44% Roman Catholic: 31% Protestant: 10% Other/None: 15%</p>
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- And she carries on the same anti-metahuman prejudice that Haiti has fed off of for decades. The hatred for people they don't understand keeps the Haitians distracted from the misery they live in.
- MoleMan

Behind the curtain, though, the John Hopkins Institute of Health owns Haiti. They keep it on a tight leash through their patents for HIV and VITAS medications and their ownership of the hospitals and clinics that so many Haitians desperately need. Haiti would collapse without their health care and they know it and remind the dictator-dujour of that often.

- Patents obtained through unethical experimentation on metahumans. These monsters were caught in 2022 by the UCAS, who yanked their taxpayer money and university status. So they incorporated and moved to a more welcoming climate. Sick fraggers are still at it; the lucky SURGE'd left Haiti, the unlucky ones are in JHIH labs.
- Bayou Blood
- News flash for ya: JHIH is now effectively a subsidiary of Yakashima. It happened real quietly, just a shuffling around of some shares and proxy control of others; it didn't even make the news.
- The Chromed Accountant
- It might not stay quiet for long. Zeta Imp-Chem was in the pro-

cess of courting a buyout of JHIH when Yakashima pulled the rug out from under them. Expect some shadowruns coming down the pipe to rob JHIH blind.

- Espion
- The white knight act was a defensive action; the Human Nation high-ups didn't want to lose control of JHIH, so they put it in the hands of another corporation they control: Yakashima.
- Anonymous
- What's downright scary is that the JHIH is still one of the best medical schools in the world and doctors from around the world come out of their hospitals. Gotta wonder how many of them get brainwashed by JHIH's way of practicing medicine.
- Dr. Bones
- Speaking of downright scary...I was paid to raid a JHIH clinic once and while I was there I noticed some weird drek. Metahumans all lined up on tables hooked up to machines that seemed to be monitoring—I drek you not—extra organs.
- Skreed
- Living organ farms? Sick, but it wouldn't surprise me.
- Bayou Blood

If you listen to the whole Voudoun Wars affair, it comes down to Claude-Michael Flaubert versus Marcus Cross. That's right and wrong. It does come down between those two on the world stage, but Flaubert is from down south in Trinidad and Cross is from up north in Houston, and somewhere in between is the spiritual heart of voodoo, Haiti. Port-au-Prince was ground zero for the Voudoun Wars, which in turn brought Le Prof's crackdown on the houngans. There was a lot of bloodletting, but after a year the religious infighting settled down and Barbin claimed victory over the „religious warlords.“

Then a magical explosion turned Barbin into ash. There was no claim of responsibility and no manifesto, but all eyes turned to the quiet hounfours. Flaubert's frequent visits to Haiti had him pegged for the act, but I don't really see what he would get out of it. Regardless, numerous magical-tinged incidents have continued to plague the regime since Barbin's assassination and no one has come forward to be the voice of the insurgency.

- It's not Flaubert, it's local. Haiti's houngans vocally got in behind Flaubert, but while Flaubert is island-hopping, they are listening to someone else in the streets of Port-au-Prince.
- Carousel
- He calls himself Dokte Blan, which is Creole for „Dr. White.“ I can tell you it is not his real name, and he ain't a doctor of medicine, but he's a well educated, soft-spoken mulatto who always dresses in white. All he wants is the government of Haiti to represent the voodoo-practicing people.
- Sugar Cain
- He speaks for Obatala, the loa of purity and balance, and the loa calls for Haiti to be cured of her ills.
- Maman Sangre
- Enough of the juju-jive drek. Dokte Blan simply wants to replace the current regime with a voodoo regime.
- Tex-Mex

- They operate much like the Palestinian Hamas of the last century. The assassinations and terrorist strikes make the news, but the locals talk proudly of the hougans providing charity, clinics, and schools to the people. Most of the locals don't trust the institutions of JHH or the regime, but they had no alternative until the hougans provided one.

- Socio Pat

- That must be where Flaubert's backing comes in. He came to Haiti a number of times early on in his bid for power and managed to get the Haitians' pledge of support. Having Haiti in his back pocket boosts Flaubert's legitimacy and in return he must be siphoning money into Dokte Blan's local movement to put governance in the hands of the Voudoun-practicing people.

- Megalo Don

- Motivations aside, they employ some interesting tactics. Though the Barbin explosion was flashy, most of their action is subtle. Curses, ritual magic, and sympathetic magic are common, as well as planting serviteurs in the ranks of the regime for loa to possess when necessary.

- Faktè

JAMAICA

Ah, Jamaica, home sweet home. There is no possible way to describe the land that birthed yours truly except to say that it's a little bit of everything. Everybody can find a home in Jamaica regardless of race, metatype or affiliation and everything, illicit or otherwise, passes through this nation at some point or another.

JAMAICA

Population: 3,120,000

- Afro-Caribbean: 85%
- East Indian: 3%
- Caucasian: 2%
- Chinese: 2%
- Mixed/Other: 8%

Major Languages:

- Patois English: 88%
- English: 72%
- Creole: 18%

Major Religions:

- Protestant: 48%
- Voudoun: 25%
- Other and Assorted Spiritual Cults: 19%
- None: 8%

- And there's a long line of middlemen waiting to cash in on those goods through each stop on the island.
- Offred

Raj Makhija is the current representative for Jamaica at the League meetings, but he's in no way the leader of the island. Power is local in Jamaica and very often loosely defined; if you ask the average Jamaican who leads them, they will either say

„I do“ or refer to their religious higher power (which changes on a monthly basis).

- Raj is a slick customer. He was once a banker for a very successful overseas banking operation in the Bermudas, but he announced his retirement and started personally investing in Jamaica. It's hard to trace where much of his investment went but he's garnered a lot of influence through it, enough so that the many regional Jamaican powers are fine with the idea of Raj representing them for the League.

- Domino

- Before he was a banker, Raj was a decker. He was the infamous Lion of Punjab, renown for some impressive hackand-snatch hits on Renraku datastores. I have to wonder if it's a coincidence that he retired from banking right after Renraku took over that bank through four fictional front companies.

- Demonseed Elite

Aside from Raj, there are four main notable powers in Jamaica that showcase the character of the island. Ed Patterson is the de facto head honcho of Kingston, a gunrunner-turned-fixer whose network controls upwards of a third of all illicit guns and money flowing through Jamaica. He's richer than most megacorp execs, but the man still lives his life through a bottle at this favorite dive, The Sargasso.

- Don't let the drunken ex-pat act fool you (though it's not really an act). Ed has friends everywhere and damn near everyone owes him big-time for something, and that is what keeps him alive and in power.

- High Stakes

De Mon runs the Black Light Posse, the largest pirate crew in Jamaica and one of the larger ones in the League. Even I got my start with De Mon, and though I've moved on to bigger things, I don't regret a day there. If you ever see an Afro-Carib dwarf with thick dreads and red eyes leading a pack of pirates sporting lots of UV lighting, you've met De Mon. They are ferocious raiders and control Jamaica's sea ways, but they are always willing to let you do business if you pass them a cut. If you don't, they'll have a „cut“ for you.

From pirates to preachers, David Lloyd Ford is Jamaica's favorite messiah and his custom religion,

Fordianism, is still a big craze. His not-so-little cult is a sort of apocalyptic lovefest; they preach that the Awakening was a signpost to the nearing of the End Times, but that mankind, united by love and acceptance, can defeat the „legions of Hell's judgement“ and live to see the „light of Heaven's Dawn“. It sounds fruity, but the man has thousands of adherents and quite a bit of influence, even after the recent falling out he had with some members of his Hell's Teeth bodyguard.

- The fallout involved a number of HMHVV-infected that were in his inner circle, and took his acceptance for everyone to mean they had a free meal ticket to eat people. Their actions started to seriously hurt Ford's image and when he told them to curb their hedonism they threw a fit and took off, but not before leaving a bloody mess in their wake, literally.

- Fumado

- For a happy love cult, Ford has quite the fanatical freakshow

surrounding him. Faeries, SURGED metavariants, vampires...hell, some even say there are paracritters and free spirits in the Hell's Teeth that guard him. And I'm not even quite sure why he needs a special bodyguard; aside from the beating he got from Azzie guards in Tenochtitlan, there haven't been any attempts on his life that I know of.

- Kino
- Aside from the recent shakeup, there doesn't seem to be any dirt on Ford that anyone can find. In a world where everyone seems corrupt, that is one of Ford's largest draws. That and the fact that he offers haven to all those the world holds prejudice against.
- Whistler
- So did the Universal Brotherhood.
- Bung

The new faces in Jamaica's power scene are the Jamaican Posses, the loose network of criminal syndicates that have burned a swath of control in the Caribbean League through unres-trained violence and persistence. Bloody and mean, the Posses control the drug and BTL trade through the region now and have strong links to the Ghost Cartels in South America, Africa, and Portugal and are part of the Black Trade Triangle.

- The Posses are essentially large and violent gangs, often named after their most infamously gory method of enforcement. The Cut Eye Crewe is the most influential in Jamaica and is based in Kingston, led by a man called Bull Locke. They control a number of smaller posses through a pyramid of intimidation which puts them at the top of a mean criminal heap here.
- Tiburón
- These guys are not to be confused with the Kingston Machine Posse, who met their end during this syndicate's rise to power. Some wonder if Ed Patterson had a role in that, since the Machine was his main competition and others wonder if it's a coincidence that the Posses skyrocketed about the same time Raj „invested“ in Jamaica.
- Props

SOVEREIGN SOUTH FLORIDA

Have you landlubbers ever seen a shark feeding frenzy? If not, take a look at South Florida and you'll see an example. The entire fabric of South Florida was meticulously controlled by the Gunderson Corporation, and when that corporation unexpectedly imploded, all hell broke loose.

SOVEREIGN SOUTH FLORIDA

- Population:** 2,380,000
 - Hispanic: 61%
 - Caucasian: 24%
 - Black or Afro-Caribbean: 12%
 - Other: 3%
- Major Languages:**
 - English: 98%
 - Spanish: 45%
- Major Religions:**
 - Protestant: 36%
 - Roman Catholic: 35%
 - Voudoun: 18%
 - Jewish: 5%
 - Other or None: 6%

- Gingerbread Man doesn't keep up with the conspiracy theories, but Gunderson's collapse wasn't unexpected for everyone. Art Dankwalther, and his money courtesy of Dunk's will, orchestrated the whole thing, simply as an experiment before taking on Nova-tech.
- The Chromed Accountant

When Gunderson started shedding assets in a futile attempt at survival, the other corporations zeroed right in. Piracy and shadow ops peaked as the former tried to take everything not bolted down and the latter moved the pieces in the great corporate game. Crime boiled over in the region as Atlantic Security's iron grip on law enforcement slipped in the confusion. Neo-Anarchists flocked in to witness the spectacle of a corporation's death throes first-hand and Everglades eco-terrorists even blacked out Miami for a week after an attack on the Turkey Point power plant.

- Damned fools came too close to causing a meltdown, which wouldn't have been too pretty for the Everglades. I don't know what they were thinking.
- Miami Dice
- Scary thought, but maybe the „eco-terrorists“ were actually toxics and that was their intent.
- Jacare

Miami is a city in anarchy, effectively. Without Gunderson's support, the government is too weak to function and the criminal elements have taken over while the corporations settle their scores. It's a pirate's playground, with lucrative smuggling up through the Orange Curtain to the CAS, as long as you avoid getting caught in the corporate crossfire.

- Here's the corporate scorecard so far: Montclair Industries got snatched up by Global Oil, who is using them to augment their Gulf of Azlan oil rig operations and expanding into manufacturing at the same time. Wuxing bought TransSea whole, which was easy given how wrecked their fleet was. Knight-Errant swept in to take the place of the failing Atlantic Security, but then Aztechnology sur-

prised everyone by somehow convincing former Gunderson CEO and primary shareholder J.J. Harvin, Jr. to sell Atlantic to them.

- Scoop
- No one knows how the Azgies convinced Harvin to sell. The man simply would not part with his shares, which were a controlling interest in Atlantic Security. Ares, Lone Star, and MCT all tried and were denied. Threats or blackmail would be my guess, given the Azgies' modus operandi.
- Corona
- Actually, I have heard something more interesting. That in addition to being retained as Atlantic Security CEO, he was given a decent share of Aztechnology shares and a seat on the board.
- Pyramid Watcher
- Now Atlantic Security and Knight-Errant are fighting it out for law enforcement contracts. Atlantic Security, through previous contracts, was able to keep most of the Miami and shipping defense contracts, but Knight-Errant slipped in and was able to snatch many of the contracts to operate the private prisons in South Florida.
- Tex-Mex
- Knight-Errant is actually passing many of those prison contracts to their fellow Ares subsidiary, Hard Corps. I hear the KE execs are focusing on other avenues (like Havana) while arranging for shadowruns to make life as difficult as possible for Atlantic Security in Florida.
- Paddy
- Don't think for a second that the idea of Aztechnology running Atlantic Security hasn't made the Caribbean League and the CAS nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs.
- Good Ole Boy

While most of the action takes place in Miami these days, that sprawl isn't the whole of Sovereign South Florida. The Everglades make up a large and ungovernable portion of South Florida, largely occupied by SINless transient tribes, eco-action groups, and paracritters. Magic isn't my thing, but I've been told the Glades are rich in magical materials, but that the local occupants don't much care for intruders. I do know that the SINless tribes are a good method to smuggle goods up to the CAS if you want to avoid dealing with the Gambione family.

- The Gambione Mafia operates out of Miami and is the second largest mob family in the region after the Batistas. They flaunt their wealth, but they run a clean ship, taking a cut of smuggling operations and running prostitution and gambling in the tourist traps.
- Cindy Kit
- The Gambiones used to be run by an eight-person council, but in the recent upheavals, a power struggle broke out, and Bianca Gambione came out on top, with the others killed or fled. Bianca's a strange one, eccentric and superstitious, and insists on binding her criminal family together through elaborate blood rituals.
- Coral Reefer

Trapped between the Miami sprawl and the expanding Everglades is a field of dying suburban towns dating back to the turn of the century. The towns that aren't sinking into the Glades have become the homes to a major side industry in South Florida: private prison complexes. Keep this in mind if

your pirating or running down here, because the Carib League islands usually don't have their own prisons and send their undesirables to these.

- Half these fragging prisons are sinking into the swamp, which makes conditions horrible. Not that Atlantic Security cared before and Knight-Errant isn't any more sympathetic in their place.
- Caged Bird

TRINIDAD

Normally Trinidad wouldn't make the list of important places in the Caribbean League, but not only has it undergone some real growth lately, but I've also been hearing lots of strange rumors coming out of it. Trinidad is an odd place to begin with, populated by the descendants from two different indentured cultures, Africans and East Indians. The resulting culture is a bizarre mix of Asia, Africa, and South America that is unlike anything else I've seen.

It's not unusual to walk down the streets of Port-of-Spain under the neon glare of Hindi script and Chinese characters and among a constant din of Creole and English chatter. All of this less than fifty miles from the coast of Amazonia.

TRINIDAD

Population: 1,560,000
 Afro-Caribbean: 43%
 East Indian: 38%
 Mixed/Other: 19%

Major Languages:
 English: 96%
 Spanish: 18%
 French: 16%
 Hindi: 15%

Major Religions:
 Roman Catholic: 29%
 Hindu: 27%
 Protestant: 10%
 Voudoun: 10%
 Muslim: 8%
 Other/None: 16%

- The channel between Trinidad and Amazonia might seem like a great way to illegally enter Amazonia, but think again. The Amazonian government has the channel littered with so many sensors that if a fish breathes, they know it.
- Ghost on the Coast

Just five years ago, Trinidad was crippled with unemployment, corruption, and instability. Then the Trinidad United Growth (TAG) party swept the parliamentary elections on a promise of accountability and national development. The amazing part is that, so far, it's working. Through borrowed money and corporate backing, Trinidad paid for public works projects that employed its people and cleaned up the country, specifi-

cally working to maintain (and even capitalize on) their cultural diversity. Tourism is booming and some advantageous trade deals with nearby Amazonia make it a great destination for corporations that can't afford to operate in the crowded Amazonian cities.

- The current prime minister is Claire Sun, an economist of Chinese/East Indian descent who negotiated the trade deals with Amazonia. Trinidad's Carib League representative is also their Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nathalie Nieves, and she's been working very hard to increase Trinidad's influence in the League.

- Poly Tick

- Nieves also looks remarkably young for her position. She's a very dark-skinned beauty, and though anti-aging treatments can fudge the numbers significantly these days, I wouldn't peg her as over thirty.

- Don Juan

So everything sounds peachy, right? Wrong. Something about Trinidad just isn't right, and you know if you visit there. For such a beautiful, tourist-filled island thriving on a better standard of living than most of the League, the people seem haunted. The local atmosphere, once you get out of the tourist traps, is private and edgy. The locals don't talk and seem afraid. Of what, I don't know, because they won't say. But a number of governments have noted high rates of kidnappings and disappearances among tourists; not enough to kill the tourism trade, but enough to make a note. I personally have lost contact with a number of pirates I knew from the area, it's like they just dropped off the face of the Earth in the past couple of years.

- The disappearances are more than a freak occurrence. The sukuyan are behind them; the Vanished are becoming food for the Trinidad vampires.

- In the Dark

- They have their fangs sunk into the TAG party too. The power structure of the whole island is infested with them. By day, thriving success story of the Caribbean; by night, feeding orgy for the real island powers.

- Stalker

- Let's not go overboard here. Even if it were true, do you think Amazonia would put up with that so close to their shores?

- Castaway

- It's Amazonia, chummer. Have you noticed who runs the show there? Besides, word is that Amazonia has been exporting its own HMMVV problems to Trinidad in exchange for those trade favors.

- In the Dark

- And where do you think those vampires that David Lloyd Ford had his falling out with went to? That's right, down south to Trinidad. That place needs to be cleaned out.

- Stalker

- Good luck rocking the boat too much in Trinidad. The corporations like it just fine the way it is, regardless of what is causing the disappearances. Choice real estate near Amazonia with preferential trade deals doesn't appear often.

- Sarafina

- Who knows, maybe the sukuyan are even involved with the

corps. It brings a whole new meaning to „corporate bloodsucker.“ Har!

- Malefic

OPEN FORUM

- The Gingerbread Man's report was extensive, but there are still many secrets in the Caribbean League he didn't touch upon. So I've opened a forum for any other insights anyone wants to share.

- Captain Chaos

- What about the Dragon Isles?

- Deep Blu

- You must mean the Caymans? A lot of tourists call them the Dragon Isles since Dunkelzahn's will revealed they were owned by the late wymm. It's believed Dunk bought them to help establish a network of offshore banking that allowed him to shuffle his money and assets around secretly.

- Keynesian Kid

- Not to mention the old training grounds for his „special assets“ and a handy place for them to lay low and vanish after an operation.

- Prime Runner

- Grand Cayman is run by the Draco Foundation these days. The western end of the island is still a resort strip and the eastern end hosts a vast botanical garden that Dunkelzahn restored and expanded to include awakened plants.

The center of the island is off-limits to unauthorized personnel and the Foundation isn't saying much about it.

- Bluebeer

- Officially they claim it's an exclusive retreat area for Draco Foundation employees and guests, but that doesn't hold water. For one, there's far too much cargo shipping moving to the central region and too few people. Second, satellite imaging shows a few buildings that could be recreational, but it also shows what appear to be bunkers built into hillsides and underground.

- Kino

- Little Cayman Island is also held by a Dunk legacy group: the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research. The tiny island is locked up tight; it doesn't accept any sea transport and spirits patrol the waters up to a few miles out. There is one small airstrip, but good luck landing there if you're not expected. No idea what they are doing there, but it must be serious.

- ParaSci

- It's called the Magellan Project. What it is exactly I couldn't tell you. What I can tell you is that according to some patents that have come out of it related to „deep projection“, that is, astral projection for extended periods of time.

The name attached to the techniques is Dr. Edward Oden, a professor from the University of Chicago and a DIMR director.

- Marley

- I traced some funding back to the DIMR for a lobbying outfit that is pushing for laws regarding discovery rights for astral space. Curiously enough, this has pit them against the Astral Space Preservation Society, which is publicly fighting the idea of anyone privatizing sections of astral space. I have to wonder if this connected to the Magellan Project.

- The Almighty Nuyen

- The island also houses a top-notch team of psychologists who

specialize in catatonic disassociation brought on by trauma or sensory deprivation. Led by Dr. Isabella Monta, who published a number of famous research documents on this topic while under the pay of the National Security Agency back in the days of Echo Mirage. And that's just the data that the NSA allowed to reach the public.

- Syzygy
- The Draco Foundation passed Cayman Brac into the hands of Transys Neuronet. There was a line in Dunk's will that gave the island to whomever set up communication with dolphins, elephants or satyrs first. Transys had a successful program that enabled communication with dolphins through a headware rig. Now they are retrofitting the island as a research center for this technology, including a large aquatic center off the southern coast.
- DC Insider
- They aren't just chatting with the dolphins either. They are preparing to license the technology to military outfits and corporate entities who wish to use dolphins to scout and map coastal areas and rumor has it they are also researching how dolphins interpret and interact with the Matrix.
- ParaSci
- Why am I not surprised that Celedyr chose Cayman Brac as his prize? The island not only has a Welsh name, but is unique in the Caribbean League for its historically Welsh culture. Probably the dragon's home away from home.
- People Watcher
- The Caymans aren't the only dragon islands. Don't forget that Lofwyr owns Curacao in the Netherlands Antilles. The island isn't open to the public, but the personnel there are from the relatively small Saeder Krupp South America division, as a support station for the French Guiana launch site.
- Belle
- Except for the special S-K Prime extension there that keeps tabs on Aztlan and Amazonia.
- Grey Knight
- It's not technically an island, but you shouldn't forget about the Round Square. It's the Carib League's own homegrown data haven, specializing mostly in pirate media and software of all stripes, but like any haven, it tends to packrat anything valuable. To find it though, you need to get the latest address, which is passed mouth-to-mouth. Like most things in the League, this is where it pays off to have friends and a rep.
- Kino
- If the Round Square is even online tomorrow. It's been trashed by someone about a half dozen times in the past three months. I hear Mills and Siren are scrambling to keep the haven afloat. They are asking for help from the local deckhead community, but some of them are still holding a grudge over their mutiny against Double Take, the haven's founder.
- Smiley
- Some of them are even helping Double Take hack the haven. Mills and Siren should have finished him off when they had the chance.
- Cold Soup
- Chum, take the Double Take ghost stories elsewhere. The Azzies are the ones trying to take down the Square; the way the haven

keeps rubbing their faces in it by re-broadcasting uncensored pirate Aztlan newsfeed.

- Diamondback
- I dunno ,bout that scan. Word around my rock is that the Cubans are behind the whole smokescreen; using a takedown of the Round Square as a test for a new batch of military deckers they've been training. It's a good target that won't catch them much flak, since the big boys don't care much if a pirate datahaven goes down.
- Cruz
- Despite the crashes, don't worry about the juicy feeds and data. Mills and Siren learned from their own mutiny to distribute the stuff. A dozen buoys, floating out in the Caribbean in undisclosed locations in the middle of nowhere that periodically receive burst transmissions, back up the files, and go silent again. Even if the main servers are ruined, the data will be safe out there in the ocean until Mills or Siren go and pick it up.
- Dipper
- Has anyone else noticed how many resources Global Oil has been pulling into the region? Global Oil cargo stopovers in Havana and Miami are up five hundred percent. What's going on?
- Agent 68
- Look roughly three hundred kilometers northwest of Havana. They have a new project going with Sandstorm Engineering, with whom they are merging. It's called Station Deep Never, and from what I can gather from a little data mining in their hosts, it's an ultra-deep sea resource drilling and mining platform. A record-setting offshore well to be specific: 7,000 meters deep. It's using cutting-edge automated expert systems and drones; word is they got the systems cheap from Renraku. They just not selling well after the Arcology incident.
- Whistler
- There's something more to Station Deep Never. The platform is completely automated now. They moved the living personnel off the platform recently, all very hush-hush, but I heard that they've resurfaced in a Cuban mental asylum. If something they are working with caused that, it would explain why they'd rather use expert systems and state of the art drones.
- Link
- Speaking of deep water operations, the Atlantean Foundation has something going in the Puerto Rican Trench, the deepest part of the Atlantic that runs parallel to Borinquen's northern coast (yeah, the trench kept the old name). Don't know why they would be interested, but they hired a salvage team to bring something up.
- Deep Blu
- The salvage team did bring something up. However, all ten employees of the salvage team then died mysteriously over the next month. Looks like whatever they brought up was cursed.
- Capricorn
- Yeah, the curse of the Atlantean Foundation getting rid of the witnesses.
- Arclight
- That's not AF's only project in the area. They are also studying the undersea Bimini Road off the Bahamas, which the locals have said has been emitting a visible glow which can be seen from the air. The old new age theory is that the Bimini Road (which looks like a stone road underwater) was a remnant of Atlantis, and the Atlante-

ans are apparently taking it seriously enough to check it out. Both of the AF operations fall within the Bermuda Triangle.

- Digger

- Which is where the Gingerbread Man's crew vanished a couple months ago. Is there any link here?

- Curious George

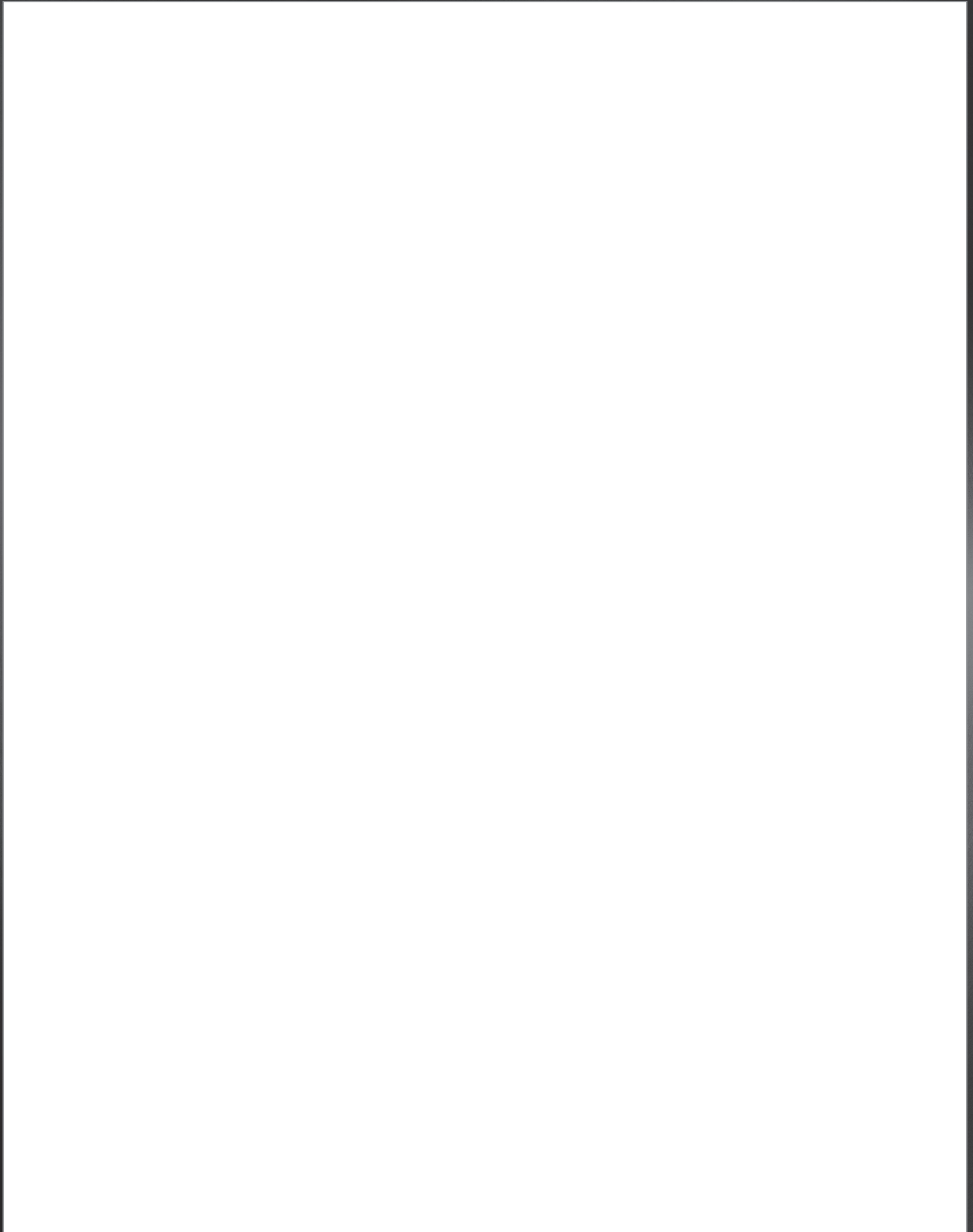
- Captain Chaos has gotten a flood of requests from people who owe GBM some favors and want to help find his crew. He asked me to share what I know. GBM hired me to watch the Matrix from the Bahamas during his operation and to arrange for pirate media crews to be in place when he sailed triumphantly home. The heist was supposed to nab a cargo ship bringing agricultural drones from Athens to Veracruz. We already had a deal to sell the goods to Borinquen and GBM was going to intercept the ship at sea. The interception went fine, from what I know, but I was called and told to scrap the media coverage. The ship was a ruse; it had no agricultural drones on it, just a few crates from the Apep Consortium and a shipping log that said something about „scales.“ They had transferred those crates to their ships and were on their way back when they mentioned unexpected fog conditions and heavy weather and then that was the last I or anyone else heard from them. That was thirty-six days ago.

- Tres

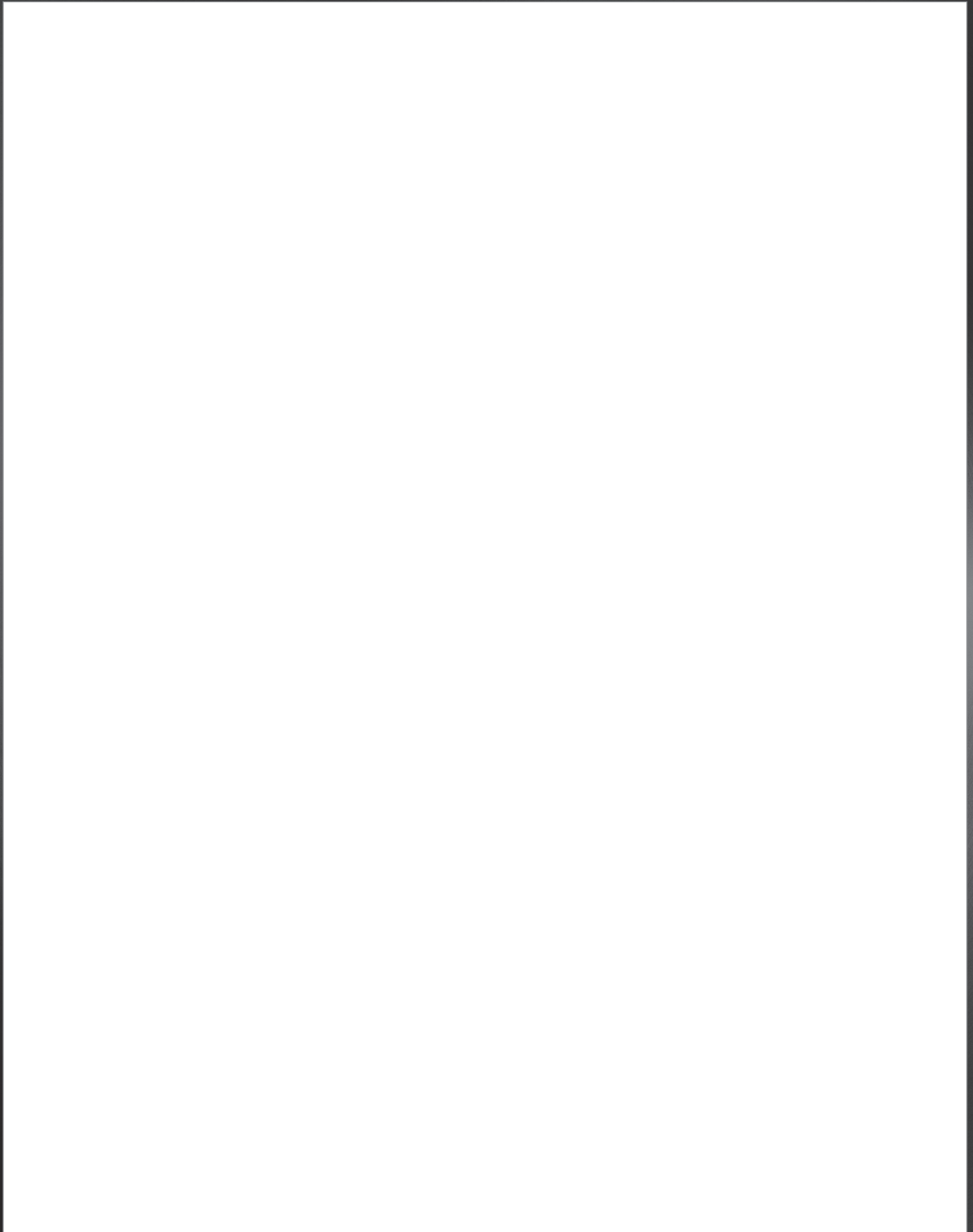


CHILE





ECUADOR



FRENCH GUIANA

by Peppermeister

- Peppermeister likes to say he's been kicked out of every decent French-speaking country in the world. I don't know about that, but while on "business" down there three years ago, he fell in love with French Guiana and hasn't come back yet, so I figured he'd do to give you the inside scoop.
- Captain Chaos

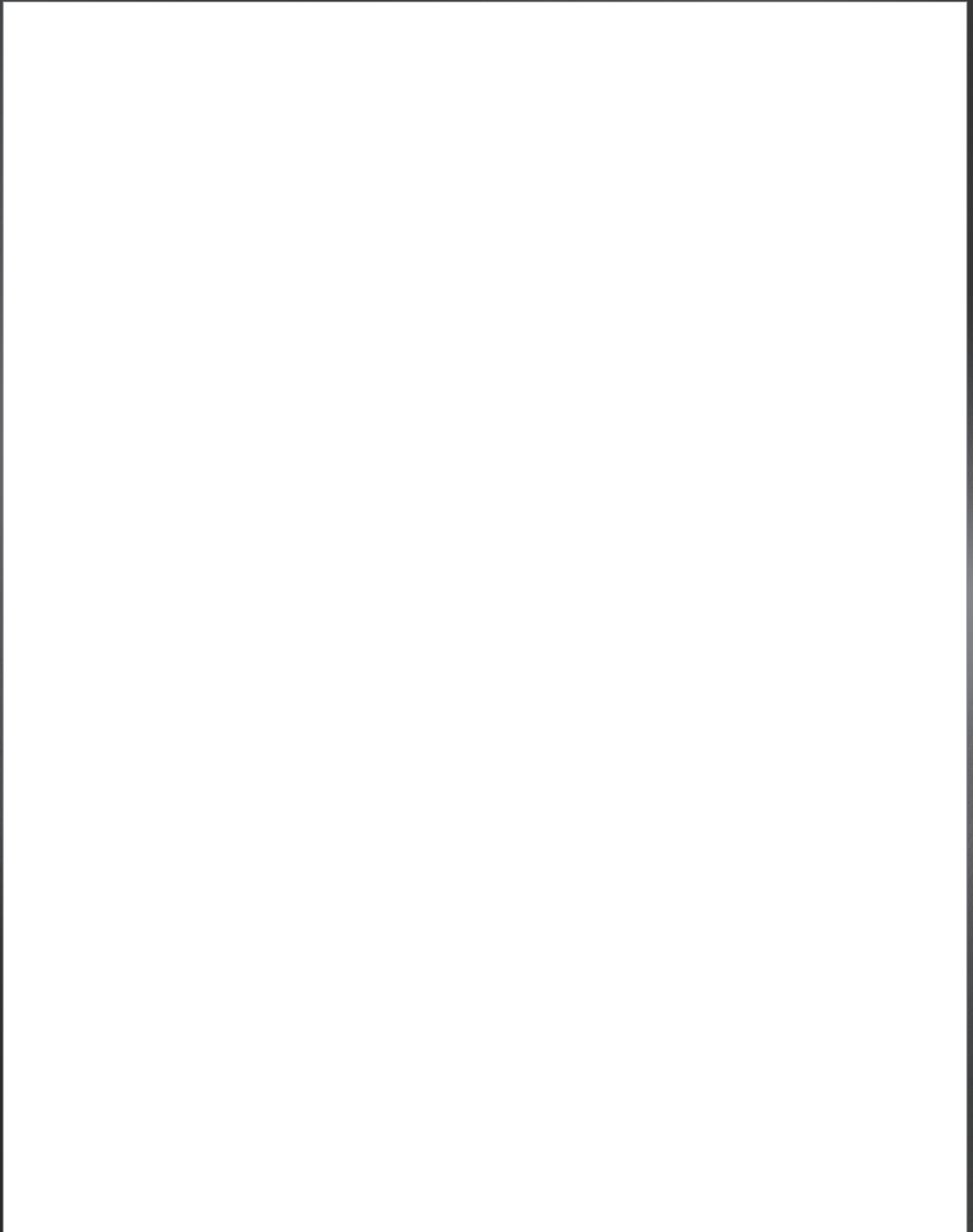
LIFE IN LITTLE FRANCE

French Guiana is a Région d'Outre Mer (or Overseas Region for you hopeless anglophones) of France. That means you need to dust off your French lingua-chips before you get here. Native French Guianese businesses accept euros and nuyen, and operate under French laws. French Guiana has its own Regional Telecommunications Grid connected to the rest of the South American Matrix, operated and maintained by Hermes Telecom, a Saeder-Krupp subsidiary.

On paper, French Guiana may maintain the same borders it did at the turn of the century, but the French Guianese have largely abandoned the interior of the country. VITAS decimated most of the small towns, and the survivors who didn't flee to the cities had to contend with increasingly aggressive para-normal animal attacks and hostile incursions by toxic shamans. The encroaching rainforest and opportunistic smugglers quickly took over abandoned townships. Almost the entire population huddles around the cities of Cayenne and Kourou on the coast.

French Guiana served as a training ground for the French Foreign Legion during the EuroWars, but was otherwise in the background of French politics until Amazonia invaded Guiana and Suriname in 2039. After a six-month arms buildup in 2040, French and Amazonian officials had a face-to-face, closed door meeting in Cayenne, after which Amazonia and France signed a truce.

- No one knows for sure why the Amazonians backed down, but rumor has it the French have a secret nuclear stockpile in French Guiana and S-K representatives were at that closed-door meeting.
- Frenchie
- Rumor also has it that the French aren't the only nuclear power in the region; Proteus AG is said to have a single device under lock and key out on Devil's Island.
- Papillon



SHADOWS OF FRENCH GUIANA

Every major syndicate in Europe and Latin America has a hand in the French Guianese underworld. The big players act through countless local gangs and ethnic mafias, trying to get a bigger share of the prize by having their proxies fight it out over shipments and territories. With all the competition, there's plenty of room for ambitious independents with connections, or for anyone who doesn't mind being a mule or muscle. I know some runners prefer being paid off in product rather than cash; the big boys are a lot happier giving you one new Ares Alpha out of a crate of fifty rather than parting with cold hard cash.

The true coin of choice in French Guiana is information. European countries wary of Amazonia's magical prowess and rabid ecological policies all have agents in place, as do corps from both Latin America and Europe looking to break into each other's markets. Industrial sabotage and data theft is the order of the day among the entrenched megacorps around the high-tech corporate enclaves and launch sites. Novatech in particular is hiring counter-espionage and freelance security types recently.

- Several gold mines are scattered throughout the abandoned interior. Too costly to maintain profitable operations. Rumors say that a few of them developed veins of orichalcum during the Year of the Comet.
- Frenchie
- I've also heard that Tamanous sold the last bunch of runners you talked into going after the lost mines for spare parts, Frenchie.
- 49er

CAYENNE: NOVAHOT

A tightly-packed urban sprawl, the regional capital of Cayenne houses most of French Guiana's population. It's a swath of shantytowns and cheap pre-fabricated tenements surrounding the docks and a modest collection of corporate and government buildings downtown. The few upscale cafes and private bars in downtown Cayenne are where movers and shakers among the corps and organized crime meet with civil servants, and where those same people turn around and hire a group of shadowrunners to eliminate the competition.

A few years ago, Novatech chose Cayenne as the site to construct its new floating orbital platform, in exchange for a series of tax breaks. The agreement has breathed new life into the local economy, but recently Novatech holdings and the launch site it-self have suffered difficulties. Local industries, which supply the raw materials and workers for the construction, have been agitated by interruptions in their suppliers and transport. Miles Lanier has taken a personal interest in security around this considerable investment, and has requested greater assistance from the local authorities.

- Sounds like Art is up to his old tricks again.
- CasaNova

FRENCH GUIANA AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Région d'Outre Mer

Population: 249,000

Asian: 12%

Creole: 65%,

Euro-Caucasian: 20%

Other: 3%

Major Languages Spoken:

French: 96%

English: 32%

Local Pidgin: 53%

Major Religions:

Roman Catholic: 72%

Santeria: 6%

Druidic: 1%

Unaffiliated/Other: 21%

Currency: Euro (nuyen also accepted)

KOUROU: CORPVILLE TROPICAL

In 2050, when Saeder-Krupp purchased the European Space Agency's launch facilities in French Guiana, it based its operations out of the small city of Kourou. Since AA corporations and national governments used S-K to launch their materials into space, they soon set up their own facilities. Today, Kourou remains smaller than Cayenne, but far more modern and affluent. Large sections of the city have become little more than corporate enclaves: self-contained living, work and entertainment areas for corporate scientists, astronauts and big-wigs. The BSC (Brigade de Sécurité Corporatiste) supplements the plethora of corporate security forces on the street.

Away from the gritty streets and rampant street crime of Cayenne, the clean corporate havens of Kourou harbor sanitized, sterilized and no less deadly intrigues. Data theft, sabotage, national and industrial espionage and corporate maneuvering are the order of the day. Because the corps keep their workers happy with drugs, BTLs and paid companion-ship, most of the local outfits specialize in smuggling contraband and people on or off launching shuttles, stealing bandwidth from satellites or extracting key personnel.

- The black market in Kourou is something else. It'll cost you, but with the right contacts you can get meteorite samples, virgin telesma from the moon, experimental cyberware, laser weapons and bleeding-edge Matrix gear. The stuff those space-boys throw away amazes me.
- Garbage Man



PANAMA PAN-CORPORATE ZONE

by Uncle Benny

- ◆ I'd never heard of Uncle Benny before, but he's been personally vouched for by FastJack. Given that it's not something he does a lot, I think we can trust the following information.
- ◆ Captain Chaos

Welcome to the Panama Canal, arguably the most valuable and corrupt strip of land in the Americas. Now, I know Caracas looks like it could give the Zone a run for its money on the latter issue, but it's like comparing a sleazy, down-on-her-luck stripper with an uppity, high class escort girl. In Panama, we do it with style.

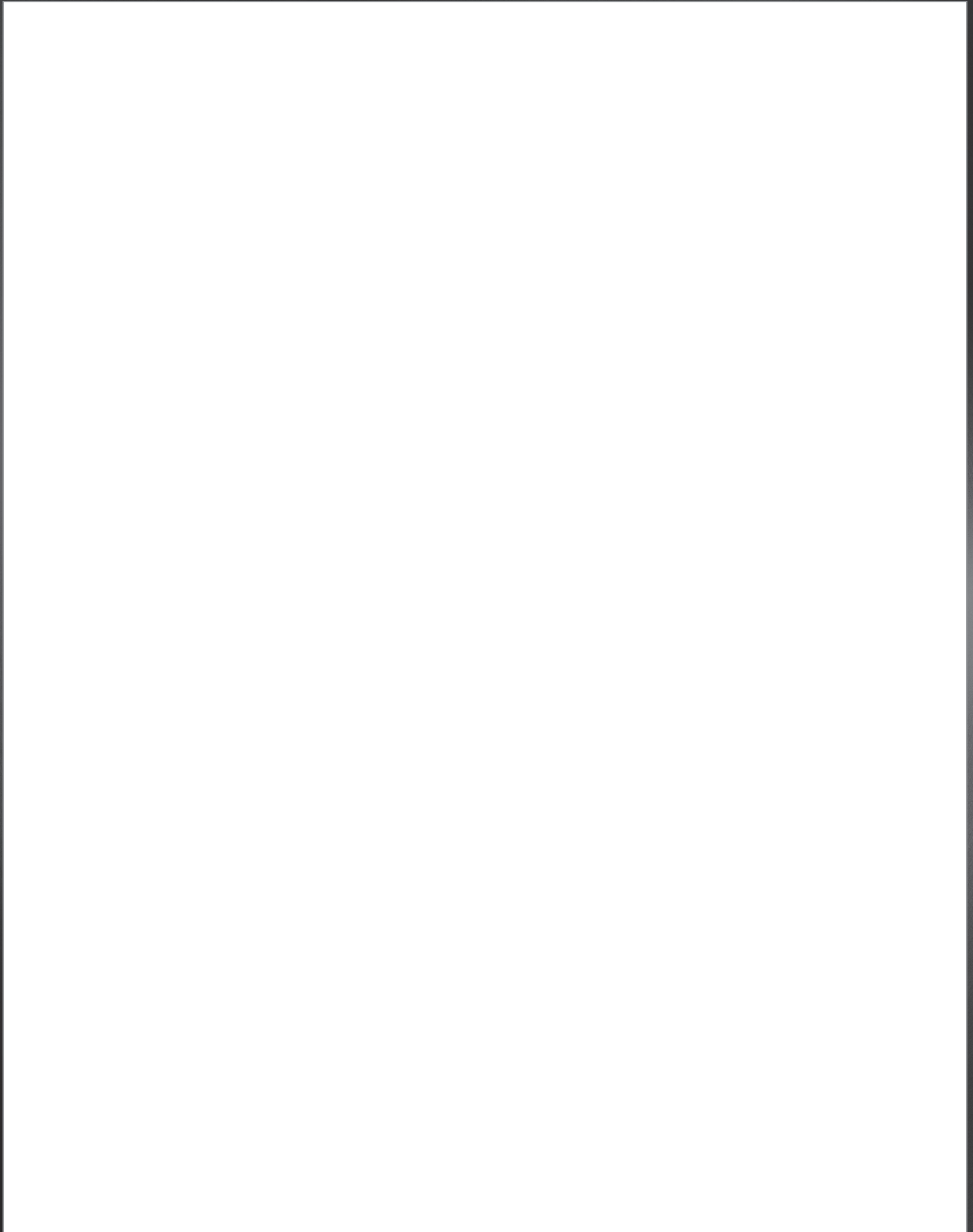
- ◆ Please Benny, you haven't been here in years. We've only gone further down the drekhole since then.
- ◆ Carmaux
- ◆ And you think we didn't?
- ◆ Uncle Benny

A TALE OF TWO CANALS

Panama's strategic position was first noticed by the Spanish, who transported countless treasures across the isthmus on their journeys to Seville. In the early 20th century, the good old USA built the Panama Canal, a feat of both human engineering and political backstabbing. The Americans managed the Canal until 1999, when they handed it over to the Panamanian government. Aztlan annexed Panama lock, stock and Canal in 2048, but didn't have a chance to enjoy its new toy. Shortly after the infamous Veracruz Settlement, the Azzies ceded it to the Corporate Court.

- ◆ With an estimated 500 trillion nuyen worth of cargo crossing it every year, the Canal plays a major role in the global economy. There was no chance in Hell that the other megacorps would let Aztechnology keep it.
- ◆ Don Dinero

For the past sixteen years, the Zone (that's what we call it around here) has been a tool for the Court's whims. Though day-to-day operations are efficiency incarnate, the big boys enjoy perks like preferential rates and priority service. Meanwhile, the smaller fish can only watch this abuse with impotent (and growing) frustration.



This situation could change overnight if Aztlan builds its Nicaragua Canal. More than a dozen shipping companies have already signed special agreements with Tenochtitlán, with rumors pointing at Wuxing as a potential ally. If they get away with it, the Azzies will control maritime traffic between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, while the Panama Canal slips into oblivion.

Interesting thought, neh?

- Not if the other megas flex their muscles ... and you know I'm not talking about legal protests.
- Abraxas

PANAMA AT A GLANCE

Government Type: Corporate Protectorate

Population: 20,000

Human: 68%

Elf: 11%

Dwarf: 6%

Ork: 10%

Troll: 3%

Other: 2%

Per Capita Income: 35,000¥

Estimated SINless: <1%

Below Poverty Level: 5%

Corporate Affiliation: 90%

Education:

Less Than Twelve Years: 11%

High School Equivalency: 29%

College Degrees: 45%

Advanced Degrees: 15%

Major Ethnic Groups:

Pan-Corporate citizenship: 80%

Panamanian Aztlaner: 20%

Major Languages Spoken:

English: 95%

Japanese: 41%

Spanish: 37%

Currency: Nuyen (corporate script also accepted)

DocWagon Medical Coverage: 100%

Guaranteed Response Time: 10 minutes.

LIFE IN THE ZONE

When people talk about the PPCZ being a corporate country, they mean it. The Panama Canal Authority has a Board of Directors with lavishly-paid delegates from all the Big Ten (except Aztechnology), who choose a Governor from its ranks every year. Predictably, the Board is a nest of vipers that shifts into overdrive when elections approach.

Except for some Panamanian wageslaves, everyone else here is an import with temporary "citizenship" status. Though this was originally an effort aimed to promote teamwork bet-

ween rival corpsters, the suits take every opportunity they can to backstab fellow Pan-Corporate citizens from other megas. Truth is, as long as it doesn't hurt the Canal and the corps' pockets, anything goes.

- Say an Ares data manager is a shoo-in for promotion, but his Renraku pal thinks she should have the position. All she needs is someone to take a few embarrassing pictures of Mr. Suit having some Novacoke-induced fun in Panama City ...
- Nisarg

- If you're talking about Joachim Larsen, he's been AWOL for a week. The only clue that Pan-Corp security has so far is a bunch of half-burnt, nonsensical notes amid a pile of ashes in his house.
- Uncle Benny

- There's more than meets the eye here. Word at the Helix is that Larsen was treading dangerous waters.
- Munin

PANAMA CITY: LIGHTS AND SHADES

Yes, it is on Azzie soil, but it's within spitting distance of the Canal so Zoners love coming here in their free time to have some fun. And boy, do they get plenty of it. From classy night-clubs and members-only country clubs to sordid brothels and fortune-telling brujas, the night never stops in Panama City. Zoners love it so much that more than a few end up here when they retire.

Though the sprawl welcomes Zoners (and their nuyen) with open arms, so does Aztechnology Corporate Security. Covert operations have increased dramatically since the Nicaragua Canal was announced, with both CS and PPCZ agents working hard to gain an edge over each other.

Despite the heavy Azzie presence, the Zone and Panama City are good places to enter Aztlan unnoticed. Just slip through with the masses crossing the Canal every day from one side to the other and you're in. You need to grease a few palms (how much "grease" depends on what you want), but it's so common that Zoners joke about their "retirement fund."

- Panama City is also a hotbed for Catholic rebels and the Great Colombia policlub. Collaboration against Aztechnology isn't unusual—rumor is that Pan-Corp reps meet with the dissidents to discuss mutual interests.
- Silent Opposition

- Hey Benny, you forgot the big one.
- FastJack

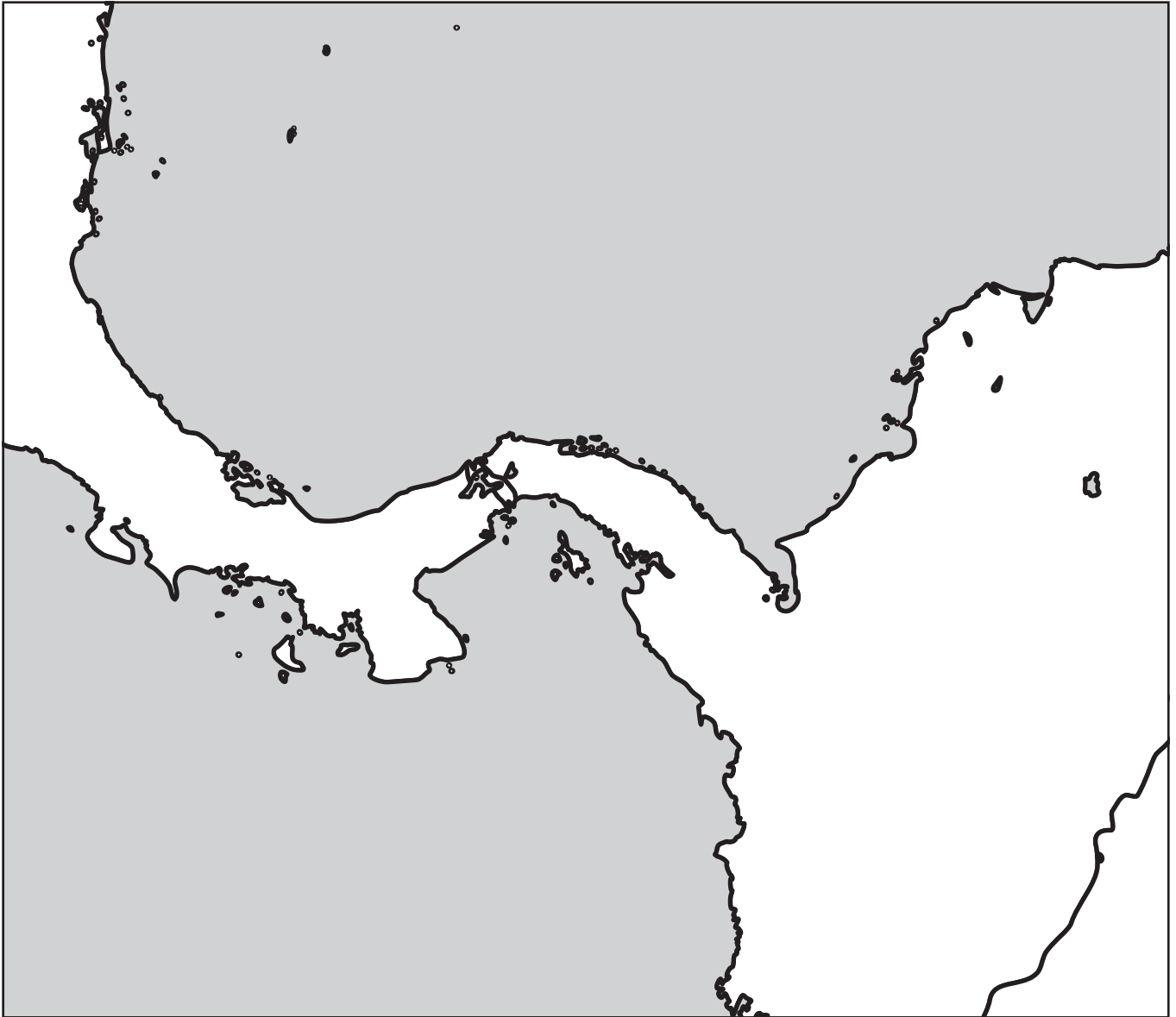
- No I didn't. I just don't want anyone's ghost hunting me after being flatlined.
- Uncle Benny

- What are you guys talking about?
- Kid Code

- There's another place you can slip into from the Panama Canal—or, more accurately, from its RTG. The system acts as backup for Zurich-Orbital's main terrestrial link in Switzerland—you know, just in case "something" (yep, that's you and me) ever happened to it. If you ever manage to find it and sneak through the best security that a group of paranoid megacorps can buy, drop me a line. I think Benny is also getting bored of being part of a two-man club. •

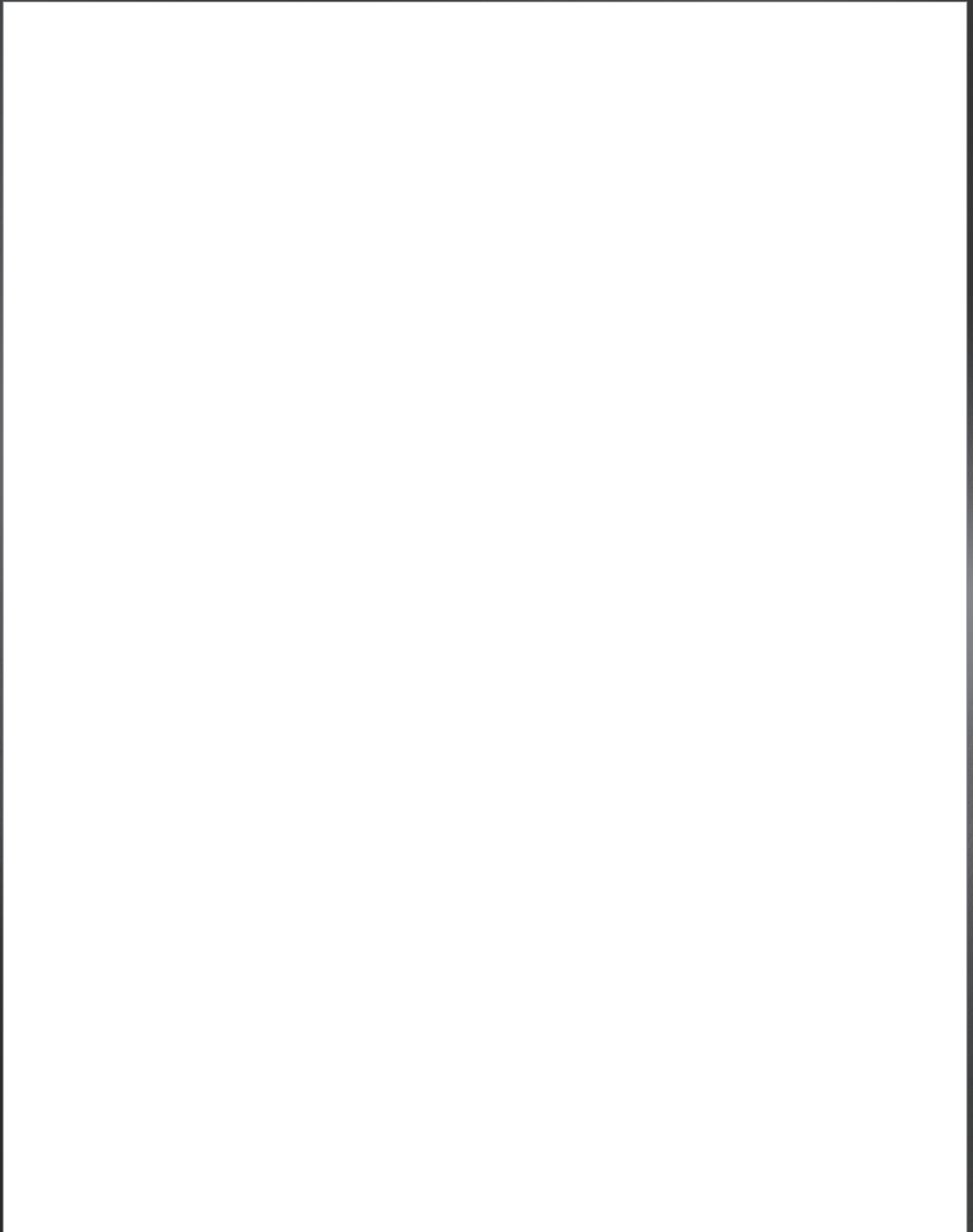


FastJack



PARAGUAY





PERU

by Quijote

- ◆ If you feel adventurous, Peru is the place to go. Make the right moves and meet the right people, and you might just make enough to retire. The country is a delicate balance between the Japanese megas and the government on one side and the rebellious groups trying to oust them on the other. Currently both sides are in need of talent to tilt the scales. Your host will be Aguarí, the Iquitos datahaven sysop, who's been gracious enough to compile this download. So read on and don't come crying to me saying Uncle Chaos didn't warn you.
- ◆ Captain Chaos

So you're interested in doing business in the Andean Paradise, omae? Think twice. Gone is the Japanacorp economic boom. Corp infighting is starting to produce copious heaps of collateral damage. The country is on the verge of balkanization. Bioware smuggling is rampant. Add a healthy dose of terrorism to the already lethal mix of Ghost Cartels and weird Awakened stuff, and you have a drek of a good time! On second thought, I think you just hit the spot. Hurry up, make as much nuyen as you can and don't forget to leave a big fat tip. It's appreciated.

CRITICAL TIMES & THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

Peru's recent history boils down to two profoundly significant dates. Granted they don't exist in a vacuum but they're the critical moments that shaped everything else. Other countries were shaken by the chaos of the Awakened world but Peru has mostly taken even these world-shaking events in stride and gone about its business.

Peru's economic loyalties shifted smoothly from the disintegrating United States of America to the Japanese Imperial State in the early decades of the century. Since Fujimori's government in the last decade of the previous century, the Japanacorps have made Peru their home away from home. Thus, when our former partner started to experience difficulties, we remained quite stable through the collapse of the USA, the VITAS crisis and the Crash.

- ◆ That's one side of the story. Very picturesque too. Really was a little darker. Along with the "stability" that kept the privileged few content, there was also brutal repression. Though things were rosy in the cities, in the Andean countryside we had to fend for ourselves against the Cartels, Shining Path and what have you. Doesn't leave much energy to take over the government, though our time will come soon enough.
- ◆ AndinoAhora



NEW YEAR'S DAY, 2035

Everything changes when an expeditionary force of Japanese Imperial Marines disembarks just weeks after the Brazilian coup, no doubt to preempt any spread of the Amazonian revolution and secure Japanese assets in their Peruvian beachhead. The government welcomed them with open arms on behalf of the Peruvian people. The Marines accepted the welcome and assured continued stability in Peru, as they comfortably settled in—an occupation force in everything but name enforcing peace, stability and the conditions for prosperity. Of course, stability was artificial since very little of it had to do with Peru or the Peruvians. It's only recently that things have become as "exciting" as our granddaddies knew them.

- The arrival of the Marines was coordinated with the government and carried out when everyone was off guard and worried about Amazonia. All those involved should be executed for treason.
- Aloha
- On their behalf you've got to grant that life in Peru had never been as prosperous and they didn't rub state corruption in your face like they do in Argentina or Ecuador.
- Naysayer Sensei

NOVEMBER 2061

The Japanese expeditionary force was recalled by the new Emperor in late 2061, leaving the government and the Japanacorps high and dry and quickly losing their grip over the rest of the country. The Ring of Fire wrought disaster on several major cities, including the proud southern city of Arequipa which was buried in lava and volcanic ash. Peru didn't begin as much of a cohesive people and when the comet disrupted the communications, it was a perfect setting for the countries stability to die in the ashes.

POWER STRUGGLE

The shakeup wrought by the Comet and its fallout have left the country in an up-for-grabs situation. The government in the capital city of Lima and its Japanese allies are desperately trying to secure their assets, regroup and retake control of the rest of the country. The Andes and the jungle bordering Amazonia hide several rebellious groups who are taking advantage of this chaos by securing as much territory as they can.

Through a few connections, I have the inside stories on this power tango between the capital and the Andeans. Meet my two chum-

mers. PowerGrabber is a fixer in Lima; who operates mainly in the political and corporative shadow scene. Greengo is veteran merc, operating in the mountains.

- Greengo is from the UCAS if I recall correctly, hence his street name. Still, I'd listen to every word he says. He's survived longer than any merc I've heard of operating in the Shining Path operation areas.
- Charly D'Fault

PERU IS LIMA

by PowerGrabber

The reawakening of the Ring of Fire incinerated more than a few cities and forced the Marines return to Nipponland, leaving the government was left with an emaciated Army to protect and patrol the country. The Peruvian military, unable to handle the situation, retreated to vital areas, extending its protection only to larger cities and the mining and agricultural interests of the megacorps in the Andean foothills. Jungle installations fell to the protection of private corporate armies or prominent families. This is where the reformist and outright hostile groups coordinated their organizations.

The Japanese megas began to reconsider the terms of their alliance with the weakened Peruvian body politic. The rumormill says the megacorps are talking to powerful local families about new alliances and the families are scheming to prove their nuyen worth.

The Japanacorps

Peru has become one of the Japanacorps foremost overseas investments. The biggest Japanese names, Mitushmama, Shiawase and Renraku have all invested heavily in Peruvian mineral mining, desert arcologies, off-shore mining and aquacologies, fish farms and agro-industrial complexes. In so doing, they've secured vital resources for Japan.

Make no mistake the Japanacorps command the respect of many Peruvians for the prosperity their presence has brought. Peru is one of the few friendly nations in an otherwise hostile continent, and despite the pullout the two countries interests remain intertwined. Thus it's not surprising that when internal strife and foreign threats make the Japanacorps uneasy they respond by taking a more active role in the running of the country.

Renraku and Mitsuhama formed a council to decide common defensive policy, the council in turn is putting a stranglehold on the Pe-

PERU AT A GLANCE

Population: 34,560,000

- Human: 62%
- Elf: 8%
- Dwarf: 10%
- Ork: 12%
- Troll: 7%
- Other: 1%

Per Capita Income: 18,500¥

Estimated SINless: 38%

Below Poverty Level: 37%

Corporate Affiliation: 52%

Education:

- Less than Twelve Years: 27%
- High School Equivalency: 52%
- College Degrees: 17%
- Advanced degrees: 4%

Major Languages Spoken:

- Spanish: 91%
- Quichua: 24%
- Aymara: 11%
- Japanese: 9%
- English: 2%

Major Religions:

- Roman Catholic: 75%
- Protestant: 20%
- Native: 5%

Currency: Nuyen

Medicarro Coverage: 75%

Guaranteed Response Time: 15 minutes

ruvian government. The only result so far is the government's public anti-Emperor stance. Yasuhito's rise polarized the corporations even in Peru. Shiawase was not allowed to participate in the council, which reduced their maneuvering capabilities. Shiawase is desperate to cut a deal with whoever will offer a solution to the Peruvian problem with minimal losses. If it finds a taker, it hopes to get even with the other Japanacorps.

- Among the Andes Ahora, I was surprised to hear that some local Japanese social clubs sometimes offer funding. Investigating further, I have found that the nuyen trail leads to Shiawase.
- Decker del Sur
- A Sonoda-san hired my team to raid several Mitsuhama-Benguet gold mines in Cajamarca guarded by Peruvian regulars. My take on why? Shiawase, besides disrupting Mitsuhama's operations, wanted to discredit the government and ease the election of Andrés Carrasco, the Andes Ahora candidate for major in Cajamarca.
- Deathwish

Yamatetsu was a late comer into the Peru foray. It found a saturated agricultural and mining market, so it concentrated on biotechnological research in the Peruvian jungle. By 2059, the Yamatetsu Board was no longer respectable enough to stay in its Peruvian Country Club, so the other three Japanacorps lobbied for a ban on all Yamatetsu operations. The government was shocked by this request since it meant paying hefty compensation to Yamatetsu. Seeing no other way around this, the Japanacorps decided to bankroll the operation, and in 2060 Yamatetsu officially closed shop in Peru.

It was also agreed that former Yamatetsu assets had to be sold to locals, not to the other Japanacorps. This move was spun by the government as an "unprecedented boost to our national economy". However, Yamatetsu made sure that its former jungle biotechnology assets were bought by fronts. So as soon as the threadbare government was unable to enforce its ban, namely when it retreated from the jungle, Yamatetsu flouted the ban and returned stronger than ever. Now their focus is only on biotechnology without the dead weight of their other assets.

- Paradoxically, Yamatetsu's publicized jungle "exile" is probably the principal reason why the Japanese are still doing business in Peru and have not been kicked back to their side of the Pacific by an Amazonian army.
- Golden Sphinx
- The unenforced ban is another reason Shiawase, Renraku and Mitsuhama have to do without their current Peruvian pals and find new ones.
- Sombrero

Peruvian Trade Families

The Japanacorps are brilliantly reinventing their powerbase, finding new allies with influence and ruling power. Perhaps their shrewdest long term move was partnering with the major local business families. The most prominent alliances included the Aparacio family allied with Shiawase, the Larcos with Mitsuhama and the Del Campos with Renraku.

The Japan megas arranged for their respective families to keep things running smoothly for them. However, the honey-

moon between these illustrious trade families and their Japanese masters has recently soured. The megas are keeping their options open for new families to hook up with and their current partners in crime are resorting to more ruthless measures to prove that they are still worthy allies and can keep the multiplying rebel factions under control.

- We're seeing bloody infighting between the families to prove which is the strongest and most reliable. Did you hear about the beach house assassination of the Chairman of the Board of the Banco de Comercio Peru Nippon, Pedro Esteban Del Campo? No rebel group had access to him there. Anyone know which family arranged it?
- 16 volt
- The Japanese live in a nice little bubble of their very own here. They haven't adapted to our erratic and amiable way of doing business. They cannot do without Peruvian liaisons.
- Pejerrey

Prop Government

Last and definitely least of these power players is the central government, which conceals itself in Lima. Peruvians love their leaders even though they are just a collection of likable figureheads that make the whims of the real powers palatable. The Japanacorps do not meddle in the administration of the country. Peru is not their colony. They are not Spaniards. The trade families are too rich and aloof to command any support or love from the masses. They also have shown no interest in running the country. Not from a Lima government office anyway.

As a result, there are no real political parties in Peru. Political campaigns are a refined blend of mind control techniques, opportunism and caudillismo – leader worship – brewed by well paid companies like Midas PR or Investigaciones Sociales.

- As useless and powerless as the government is, the people here are still very impressed if you have some connection to a politico.
- Pejerrey

Lima is a place shrouded in layers of intrigue and subtle hierarchies. If you're good enough to enjoy a precarious hold on a slice of the power, and you don't die when it's time to jump to another slice, you'll find enough nuyen to make it worth your talent.

LIMA IS NOT PERU

by Greengo

What the Japanacorps and their minions in Lima hadn't counted on was how much their absence opened a window of opportunity for several groups that used to be effectively suppressed by the government. They're all in a frenzy to become the next power players.

Shining Path

Active for more than eighty years the Shining Path (SP) is a neo-communist paramilitary terror group whose agenda is to establish a Maoist regime in Peru. It effectively adopted the guerilla warfare strategies proposed by Mao Zedong of China and has successfully adapted them to include cyber and magical warfare and modified them to difficult geography of the

Peruvian terrain.

When SP leader, Abimael Guzman aka Chairman Gonzalo, was captured in 1992 its activities died down to almost nothing. By the turn of the century the SP almost disappeared. In 2011 they used the Awakening as an excuse to resurface, blaming the government for all the chaos. Guzman died that same year under very strange circumstances.

- ◆ The government claims that Guzman died from a stroke while serving his life sentence, yet they haven't disclosed his whereabouts. Security reasons they claim.
- ◆ Monolobe
- ◆ Chairman Gonzalo's spirit guides us! Viva la Revolución!
- ◆ Toro Rojo

The SP stages its operations in the province of Ayacucho, its birthplace. They use peasant support for their actions, which they secure either by conversion or terrorizing them. It's common for the SP to storm villages and small towns and hold revolutionary tribunals against the authorities who represent the central government. These are usually found guilty (I have yet to hear about one who was found innocent) and are publicly executed in front of the local population. The SPs make their message very clear: either you're with them or against them. The peasants have little choice. They aren't willing to rebel themselves and the government isn't something they can depend on.

One amazing fact about the SP is that they have independently supported and supplied themselves. For runners, this means that if they offer you a job, don't expect much cash. On the other hand, you may can pickup a lot about operating in the Andean hinterland, which can be quite the valuable experience. The SP funds itself by extorting money from the local Ghost Cartels operating in SP controlled areas and running a few smuggling scams. The cartels find it cheaper to pay them than raising private armies to fight against them. The SP supplies itself by high-jacking and stealing armaments from the national and private military.

Before 2061, the military and Marines kept the SP contained. When the bulk of the Marines were recalled to Japan, the SP began to spread like a wildfire, and today it controls parts of Apurimac, Cuzco, Junin, Pasco and Huanuco. savagery of the SP is almost mythical. Its gruesome attacks and reputation make most armies retreat, allowing it to hold territory larger than its militia should be able to control. The only thing that has kept it from seizing the Andes foothills is the resistance mobilized by Andes Ahora. Although it has capitalized on its strengths, I predict its rapid chaotic spread will one day become its Achilles heel.

- ◆ My unit was patrolling near Liracy, Huancavelica when we received a distress call from another unit. Our mage was sent to perform an astral reconnaissance and five seconds later he blacked out. When we finally found the other unit, we didn't know whose body parts were whose. Our mage was relieved of duty for psychological reasons. Later I heard from another mage about an unbearably high background count in the area.
- ◆ Neon Puma

Tupac Amaru's Fist

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement was born from a splinter arm of the SP in disagreement with the core movements tactics. Although the TARM had always been smaller than the SP, they are notorious because they managed to capture the Japanese ambassador's residence in 1996 during an official ceremony. Although the TARM didn't earn anything from this, even losing their leadership in the rescue operation, they managed to get their 15 minutes of terrorist fame.

After losing their command, the remaining forces split into several groups with various agendas. Although each continued to use the name TARM, most of them stopped fighting for a cause and developed into loud-mouthed thugs, mercenary groups, and killing squads, all for hire. Their biggest clients have been the Cartels.

This all changed when the Japanese invaded Peru in 2035, galvanizing the old guard of the TARM with nationalism. They reorganized and resurfaced with the name of Tupac Amaru's Fist, to avoid association with the old name tainted by the mercenaries. They have been very secretive and never show their faces when addressing the public. Their leader is a woman who identifies herself only as Victoria.

- ◆ I was hired to smuggle arms from Amazonia for the TAF. We were given exact coordinates in a god-forsaken place along the Amazon to await for our contact. Before we had time to react we were boarded by a squad lead by a female ork who introduced herself as "Victoria". Later on, when watching a TAF pirate cast where of a trial of some captive corp suit for crimes against Peru and the ecosystem, I realized that the judge was a "Victoria", who although masked, didn't have the build of an ork.
- ◆ Huaquero
- ◆ I've had my share of dealing with the TAF and each time, the person in charge was a woman named Victoria. I think that the TAF is organized by a tribe of Amazon warrior women and Victoria is sort of a symbol.
- ◆ Chancatanques
- ◆ The National Directorate Against Terrorism (DINCOTE in Spanish) is the department responsible for combating terrorism. They claim there is a real Victoria, though they have no face nor name to attach to her.
- ◆ Neon Puma

The TAF's main agenda seems to be anti-capitalist and anti-corp, targeting the Japanacorp and their lackeys. Their modus operandi usually consists in kidnapping high-flying businessmen and execs for ransom. They also target companies whose activities exploit and pollute the rainforest and though they operate throughout Peru, they stage many of their actions from the jungle wilderness. Intelligence suggests they may actually be run by Amazonia's DISA, which would explain their ecofriendly agenda.

- ◆ Personal security providers are finding Lima very profitable thanks to the likes of TAF. There's a shortage of elite bodyguards; so if you are out of a job and not afraid of being killed by angry savages, consider relocating. I've heard that they throw in a nice life insurance package with most jobs, and they give you bonuses if you die "heroically" (you ate the bullet not the suit). Your loved ones will be taken care of.
- ◆ SteelPancho

• The Japanese are not playing the game of kidnap and rescue anymore since Shiawase's Shiro Akashi, a top level biological weapons engineer, was returned infected by a bacteriological weapon. Before they realized what happened, 14 employees including Akashi were dead. They had to seal off the bioresearch facility where he worked. Besides the casualties, lots of biological experiments were ruined and the company took a lot of heat because it looked like they had been negligent with their facilities.

• Romero Andino

• This wasn't a terrorist action. This was certainly a shadowrun made to look like the TAF's work. I wonder if they nabbed the ransom money in addition to their regular pay.

• Birdie

Andes Ahora

Andes Ahora is a political party that mixes Socialism and Andean Nationalism. It was founded in 2055 by Julio Calisaya, Francisco Aparicio and Benito Acahuara. They seek to change the Peruvian government and bring due recognition and respect to the plight of the Andean people.

Aparicio and Calisaya founded a small political party with little public exposure called Unidos por los Andes back in the Forties. When Acahuara joined them in 2055, he brought with him black bag funds from the Bolivian Velazco government to kickstart a Bolivian-style revolution in Peru. Calisaya assumed the role of the public face of the new party. Meanwhile Aparicio faded into the role of silent partner. He was not of Andean descent and, even worse, his surname evoked the oligarchies they were fighting against. Reputedly he was more the philosopher of the group, setting the ideals that they were fighting for.

• PowerGrabber

Since the beginning, there's been a clash of policies between Calisaya and Acahuara. The first is a pacifist, while the latter is a fan of armed revolution. Calisaya is a charismatic smooth talker and is regarded as the leader, whereas Acahuara is the administrator who always gets things done. During the first six years since Andes Ahora's founding, Calisaya has set the inspirational tone for the political party. They campaigned extensively and ran for the Presidency in 2061. The government launched a defamatory campaign that made it impossible for him to be elected.

• Calisaya is too idealistic. He doesn't realize that there is no way he can take down the Japanese controlled government peacefully. They've got all the media controlled.

• Characato

• Not all... There's Televisa, which is run by the Azzies. Of course, so far all it's done is continuously buzz in the ear of the government and the corps.

• MediaMogul

• Ignoring Calisaya's idealism, Acahuara organized a paramilitary group called the Sinchis. It pissed off Calisaya, but the Sinchis have already proven their worth by fending off multiple Shining Path attacks.

• Neon Puma

Aparicio was murdered by the Shining Path during a public rally in 2061 and Acahuara seized the opportunity. He exploited the fears of a possible Shining Path revolution and gained many adepts. He deployed the Sinchis to protect government abandoned cities and villages in the Andes from the SP. Andes Ahora has sustained its actions by securing these unprotected regions and thereby controlling their natural Orichalcum deposits during 2061-62. It still has some savings left from the rush, but the comet is long gone, and they are depleting fast. Not to mention the Bolivian government has its own problems now and is unable to provide covert aid.

• I escorted some Televisa suits on a trip to Junin, where they met with Calisaya himself. I "accidentally" happened to overhear a conversation involving the Battle Channel. I wonder if Andes Ahora is willing to sell the rights for a televised skirmishes in exchange for a little bit of help from the Azzies?

• Illapa

BIOPIRACY

Peru has always been infamous in the past for smuggling and piracy. Looking leniently on enterprising citizens getting hold of wares that were too expensive or too rare. Just as drug production could be fingered as the great savior of Peru's economy in the past, illegal biotech is no different today. All of this didn't happen overnight, however. It was a slow process that the Japanacorps spawned themselves.

For years, megas tried to entice the Brazilian government to allow them access to their jungle treasure chest for genetic and pharmacological research. They were ready to accept any of the draconian conditions (pun intended) just for the exclusivity. When the Awakened revolution swept Brazil, the corps watched their hopes vanish in smoke... almost. The answer lay just next door. The Japanese invaded Peru exploring and exploiting the natural resources and its own Awakened rainforest. A maze of flora and fauna to be studied, catalogued and profited from was right in their backyard.

The first corp to pounce on the bio market was Yakashima's Biogene in 2037. Soon thereafter the rest of the pack followed, but Biogene's headstart allowed them to lead the race in biotechnological research. A decade later an explosive exposé all but shattered Biogene when it exposed what was going behind the doors of the pristine Andean research labs accusing Biogene of performing experiments on unwilling and unwitting subjects, mainly metahumans.

Biogene's biggest research lab in the Madre de Dios' jungle was immediately attacked by the TAF. The ensuing wave of scandals forced the company to shutdown many facilities and lay off scientists and technicians who were quickly picked up by its competition.

• Fernando Salinas is the reporter who blew the whistle on Biogene. He rode the wake of his fame and continues to focus on investigating biotech and genotech scandals. Coincidentally he works for Televisa. Wonder why he's never targeted UniOmni?

• MediaMogul

Shiawase stepped into the biotech arena before Biogene's carcass had been scavenged. They schemed to secure an exclusive top slot in the field. Using the panic of involuntary

experiment patients, Shiawase successfully lobbied for new government regulations on bio experiments under the Copenhagen Accords. The law passed requiring anyone wanting to produce and research biotech products to first license with the Peruvian Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defense. The cumbersome requirements and tedious bureaucracy required resulted in a negligible number of licenses granted every year. This forced many small companies and startups to close shop. When the bill passed, Shiawase was the first megacorp certified. This bought enough time for them to corner the market. They hired most of the laid off techs and bought the assets of other bankrupt companies.

When Yamatetsu proved uninterested in the leftovers and the other Japanacorps were exploring other alternatives, the Ghost Cartels moved in to consume the leftovers. They bought the remaining companies for change and hired the remaining techs. The Cartels' businesses relocated to the northern jungle fringe, around the city of Iquitos. Their activity developed, far away from the stifling central government, concealed by geography and vegetation. When the government and corps realized what was going on, it was too late. Illegal biotech was spreading all over the country.

Mad Science and Modern Poaching

Chop shops are good. Good at their specialty. Some can even grow cultured bioware. The problem is they do not have the resources to do research be it biotech, genetech or pharmaceuticals. The shops leave that to the Japanacorps and their endless resources and steal it once it's developed. So they lose the cutting edge of new products, but they don't have to spend money coming up with any.

In 2060 Shiawase Biotech announced their plans to open the Tambopata research facility in Puerto Maldonado in Madre de Dios, a huge installation by anyone's standards complemented by mobile research labs which will allow Shiawase to investigate the different natural reserves in the area. Part of the facility is already underway and functional and it tops even the underwater facility Yakashima built off-shore and was wrecked during the Ring of Fire cataclysm.

◆ Details about Shiawase's successes are sketchy. The security around this place is paranoid and activity is 24/7. There is top nuyen being offered to get some hard data from the research and breakthroughs. Several friends of mine have disappeared trying to accomplish this.

◆ Matasanos

◆ No wonder! Besides their regular shadowrunner uninvited guests, they have to deal constantly with Tupac's attacks and the Awakened jungle. I've heard they have a big contingent of Awakened security. Just in case.

◆ Neon Puma

◆ Forget the wildside. Scan their compound, they've got paracritters patrolling that you've never even heard of!

◆ Ultimate Castro

◆ Not just any paracritters: warforms.

◆ The Smiling Bandit

One other notorious research corp delving into the Peruvian

resources is Universal Omnitech. Despite the government's ban on anything related to Aztechnology, it has taken advantage of the lack of enforcement to open up a shop. As usual rumor says it's operating an underground research facility somewhere in the jungle and are performing unspeakable experiments.

Of course, besides the corps there are plenty of independent crews and operators working the biosmuggling angle, raiding the rainforest and poaching from Amazonia. Other bio and genetech outfits like Green Globe International, Proteus and Zeta-ImpChem's Genom which the Japanacorp pressure keeps from getting appropriate licenses infiltrate their own representatives among these indies to get a piece of the big green pie. Dangerous work but plenty of cash to be made.

◆ There's even a lucrative sideline in smuggling big game hunters in land while doing some poaching. Half of them don't come back but that's not a problem if they pay you up front, so ka?

◆ Iquitos Bastard

Hack & Slash: Practical Applications

Biopoaching and smuggling are only half the picture. The other half is the medical applications of the tech developed. Legit corps, not so legit corps and illegal chop shops all battle for the same market. And believe it or not, the small ones are winning. Small shops specialize, they become very good at one thing, to the point of challenging even some of the household names in the field. What this means for the consumer, is that you can get your wetware at much lower prices. The catch is there are no guarantees of what you're getting.

◆ Although their prices put Oslo and Chiba to shame, not all chopshops are on the up and up. You never know if you are going to wake up the next morning with something you didn't want, something missing, or if you have been supplied with a machine that doesn't blip when it should.

◆ Bom Amigo

◆ Be very careful whose hands you let inside your body. Check with your local contacts before going under the knife.

◆ Matasanos

The chopshops keep both their profile and their costs low. They bring portable equipment to a customer provided location and recovery equipment is rented to the patient after the op. The profitable market which is drawing less reputable types from all over South America and beyond has prompted the corps to get in on the game. Within the past year, two high profile betaclinics have opened shop. The Iquitos crew has uncovered their attempt to obscure their ties to Shiawase and Yakashima, who use these fronts to take advantage of the absence of law by selling without permits.

Let's not forget Yamatetsu has established a branch in Iquitos even after being black balled from the country. What it is actually doing is buying the bioware produced by hundreds of small shops and reverse engineering and rebranding it as their own for the international market.

◆ Renraku's pet project is called "Clínica de Biotecnología Avanzada". And CBA business is booming. Moderately legal, passable quality control. Clients are flying in from other countries to get things plugged in. CBA asks very few questions, and the variety

of products on offer is staggering. If you have the dough, they will get you designer and cultured bioware. Problem is the line to get the first appointment where they ask you to cough and show your tongue is getting pretty long.

- SteelPancho

- What people do is relocate to Peru to work for a while. During this time they get their appointments, and a few months down the line they leave the country with a tweaked and plugged new body ready to do work somewhere else.

- Greengo

- CBA asks very few questions because they will get their later. All the 'ware they install is tagged. Even if you're just switching data-jack or upgrading your reflex enhancers they have ways to tag you and sniff out all your information later.

- Decker del Sur

PLACES IN PERU

Most anywhere you go in Peru will challenge your ability to stay alive. I will give some information on a few choice areas that may enjoy the attention of foreign runners in the coming months.

LIMA

by PowerGrabber

Lima, the most important city in the Spanish South American empire, suffered from years of obscurity until it became the pampered capital of that other empire here in South America. Even though the Japanese have lavished attention and care, investing heavily in urban renewal and other projects, the city has eluded attempts to tame its chaotic nature to Japanese sensibilities. Even though you can cross the sprawl just under twenty minutes on the bleeding edge Lima Chikatetsu (subway) and walk along San Isidro will make you think in Akihabara or Chiba, large districts remain untouched by the Japanese. This is especially true of the shanty towns in the outskirts of the city where poverty is endemic.

- To our credit, it should be mentioned that the Japanese aversion to the kawaruhito has not influenced us. Even where the Japanese influence is strongest, if you are a meta, do not expect the cold shoulder from the natives. Unless, of course, you walk into one of their corporate buildings.

- Zoociologist

- Bulldrek. Our "bleeding edge" Chikatetsu has separate wagons for the Japanese and other "respectable citizens", and we allow this to happen.

- Red Dawn

Lima's business districts are found in the heart of the city: the modern San Isidro, Miraflores and the traditional Cercado de Lima. Along the waterfront in the southern part of the city, the Japanese suits, the most important families and the fattest politicians have established their homes along 90 km of some of Peru's prime beachfront real estate. Lodged between the rich and the shanty towns on the outskirts of the sprawl are the homes and businesses of humble limeños.

- There is nothing humble about the limeños. They have always been disdainful of the rest of the country even though they can't do

without us. Where do you think their food and cheap labor come from? From the Andes and its people.

- AndinoAhora

The recall of the expeditionary force and the resurfacing of rebellious movements cast a gloomy pall over the once care-free city. Lima will have a serious facelift if any of these groups manage to take power.

- Pablo Romero is an infamous crimelord and the real power in the eastern outskirts. He's been recently forming armed groups called "Comités de Defensa Vecinal". These Neighborhood Defense Committees are comprised of people living in the shanty towns. We're all wondering who he's working for. He's certainly making it difficult to figure out if he's planning to defend the city from outside forces, or take the city for them.

- Red Dawn

- Lest we forget Lima has the biggest Yak presence on the continent with a big contingent of Nagai-gumi operating on the fringes of Japanese corporate holdings and mixing it up big time with the limeno native syndicates. Lima serves as a beachhead for many different operations and the many entry point for Japanese BTLs and skill slaves.

- Undersider

IQUITOS

Iquitos is a fluvial port on the shores of the Amazon River bordering Amazonia, Aztlan, Ecuador and Caracas, and surrounded by some of the thickest rainforest in South America. Iquitos' features have made it perfect for trading, smuggling,



drug trafficking, and recently, biotechnology smuggling and development.

- ◆ The Ghost Cartels are pretty big in the area. Not only hasn't drug trafficking slowed down but it's actually to blame for the biotech boom. Where'd you think the Cartels have been bioengineering their next-gen Awakened drugs?
- ◆ Mosca Loca

There has been little use for the government in Iquitos. The people still resent the government for ceding portions of the rainforest to Colombia and Ecuador; the locals even threatened secession then. The landing of the Japanese Marines was seen as a direct threat so once again, Iquitos threatened to secede. The Marines responded with swift brutality. This enabled the central government (and their Japanacorp puppeteers), to maintain a rigid control over the wild forest areas. When the Ring of Fire devastated the region again, forcing the Japanese retreat, and leaving the government forces to flee back to the cities, power returned to Iquitos. A parallel local government was quickly established working to support Iquitos' claim to become a de facto free city. Plans to be officially independent within five years are being developed and depend on securing corporate and international support.

Iquitos requires all corps to maintain a symbiosis by heavily investing in the city infrastructure. The corp is granted lax regulations and profit from the big bio-boom. The mutually beneficial arrangements have profited both sides. The first corp welcomed to Iquitos under the new status quo was Yamatetsu.

- ◆ In the Peruvian jungle the incidence of metatype non-human births is 4.85 times higher than the world average. Dwarfs and orks are the most common. Awakened births are estimated to be 3 times higher than average. Currently studies are being conducted to verify if the superior mana levels in the Amazonian jungle is related to these birth trends.
- ◆ The Smiling Bandit
- ◆ I assume you have noticed the beautiful Japanese villa built in the outskirts of the city. Well, it's authentic, brought from Japan piece by piece. Guess who's the owner and regular guest? Hideo Yoshida himself, playing Mikado surrounded by a court of bootlickers.
- ◆ El Tunche
- ◆ Yamatetsu is the principal investor in the Iquitos Grid Company. They vamped up the grid so they could have Matrix services up to their usual standards. In addition, the RTG is independent from the Peruvian RTG, incidentally breaking Renraku's monopoly over the local networks.
- ◆ Limbo
- ◆ The Matrix underground in Iquitos is flourishing. The Iquitos data-haven attracts all those who don't wish to waste energy dodging Japanese attacks. Did I mention there have been a lot of Otaku tribes popping up lately? They seem to be zealously aligned with the indigenous culture of the Amazon tribes.
- ◆ Decker del Sur

Iquitos is run by Mayor Alejandro del Águila. In general, the population supports him because the city seems to be prospering under his direction. Besides, he can always be replaced.

Iquitos is always changing. It houses a very volatile crowd.

- ◆ The mayor is a regular contractor of black ops, mostly intelligence gathering. I guess he's covering his bases from backstabbers.
- ◆ El Tunche
- ◆ Belisario Rodríguez, the local Ghost Cartel baron, is gunning for del Águila's position. He is certainly interested in running the place, but so far he has uncovered zilch.
- ◆ Mosca Loca

There is no official security force in the city, so the law of the jungle reigns supreme. Each must take care of their own. Foreigners may find an armed mob after them, but Iquitos is far from being a bloody chaos. When problems arise, it's the community as a whole that passes judgment. Locals tend to be civil, and issues are dealt with swiftly.

- ◆ Bodyguards and merc forces are highly sought after to fill the vacuum. You can go to Platoon City, an outpost 10 clicks from Iquitos, to find out about jobs. It's a non-partisan trade base, where available forces go for some R&R and supplies.
- ◆ Greengo

Buzz is Amazonia has approached the city's leaders. It is allegedly offering full protection if Iquitos becomes part of Amazonia. The citizens are not convinced they need to become another city under a ruling body. Unless its offer is really juicy or something happens to force Iquitos to need the protection, it will most likely be declined.

- ◆ We are already being culturally colonized by Amazonia. It's too easy to move across the border since the Marines left. Amazonians are doing business in Iquitos, and half of the population speaks both Spanish and Portuguese. Additionally, Amazonia is an Awakened state, which makes it very appealing to the increasing meta-human population. Annexation will come in time.
- ◆ Zoociologist
- ◆ Recently a couple of Aztlan fixers popped up in the scene to offer a few jobs. For safety's sake I won't go into details, but it makes sense. Iquitos may be the next toy Aztlan and Amazonia are going to fight over.
- ◆ El Tunche

CUSCO & MACCHU PICCHU

by Greengo

If Lima is the giant metroplex where deals are made and broken and Iquitos is the new frontier where a guy with biotech fever and a gun can make like the next Damian Knight, Cusco is glamorous old world charm with a mystical twist.

Cusco has been one of Peru's biggest tourist traps for almost a century. Most of the services offered in Cusco are tourist centered: five stars hotels, gourmet restaurants, tres chic Alpaca clothing lines, ten story dance clubs, you name it. This also means that the glory of the Incan capital has been transformed into a circus for the amusement of visitors.

- ◆ The most notorious example of corruption is Macchu Picchu. Usually, if you astrally perceive an Incan ruin, you're able to see subtle auras emanating from the stones. But Macchu Picchu is dead cold. The site is awash with tourists just looking for a way to spend their nuyen and gobble the drek that the guides feed them. Their vacuity has corrupted the place.

◆ Northern Shaman

◆ Next to Macchu Picchu lies Wayna Picchu Mountain where a ruin called Killawasi, or the Halls of the Moon, is located. This place was open for visitors in the past, but the steep trail was unsafe and so fewer tourists visited. Today it has been closed off since it seems that it still retains some of its magical properties. Nobody knows who is studying it, but my money is on the Japanese.

◆ Dr. Jones

◆ Wagemages in particular and foreign mages in general are not sensitive to the teachings that the Apus whisper in your ears. Nor are they respectful enough to thank them with offerings. They only come here to get what they want and leave, just like the Spaniards did. They will never going win the favor of the gods with such an attitude.

◆ Brujo

◆ Macchu Picchu has been despoiled by what looks to have been a Toxic group recently. I'm staring to think that it isn't dead after all, but tainted.

◆ Dark Blood

Nevertheless, Cusco is certainly an intriguing city. There's always need for shadow talent among the thriving corp populus visiting the city, as corps use it as neutral ground to meet and scheme and sign deals. The visiting simstars and Latin celebrities are always on the look for a good bodyguard with competent street knowledge and they pay handsomely for information, like where to nail the best BADs to allow them to astrally project for a moment and feed on the peculiar vibes of the ancient city. Finally, there is the Office of Strategic Human Resources, where you can go and sign up for a job as a merc. This usually consists of patrolling the city's surroundings and tourist archeological sites to keep them free from any terrorist threat.

◆ Hey, if you or someone under your responsibility is interested in trying meta-drugs, be careful where you go to feel your projection. Strange things can happen, especially in an ancient city like Cusco. You can encounter old and angry spirits. Projecting in a place full of despair will surely be a bad trip. People talk about places in the city where the land vengefully engulfs astral forms and prevents them from returning to their bodies.

◆ AciDreamer

◆ There is a legend about an underground network of passages that span below the city interconnecting major sites, like the Qoricancha (Temple of the Sun) and the fortress of Sacsayhuaman. There are a few alleged entry sites, but there is no confirmation if this is true or not. People who have ventured deep into these caverns are said to have never been seen again.

◆ Villac Umu

◆ It is said that the intricate network can lead to the Golden Orchard, which is a replica of a garden made all in gold of the Inka. This place holds treasures and relics salvaged from the Spaniards pillaging. At the time of the Inka return, all of this will be revealed.

◆ Inca Sun God

NAZCA

If Cusco is the preferred destination for tourists, then Nazca is the preferred destination for magic types, nutjobs and not a few runners these days. This is due to the coverage it has re-

ceived in previous shadow posts. Of course it's hard to know what to expect as currently security has been tightened. Also, some friction has arisen between Peruvian officials and the Japanese "guarding" the archeological site since they declared zero access to the area.

◆ My sources informed me this is because a clan of Andean shamans infiltrated the site and performed some ritual magic. Supposedly the ritual changed the Aspecting of the site. This has ticked off someone higher up in the chain that seems to be interested in controlling the area.

◆ Greengo

◆ I've seen some pretty weird stuff in astral space around Nazca from Eastern dragons to strange spirits. Its amazing but dead scary.

◆ Wiz Kid

◆ The Nazca lines are known to be an astral shallow, so whatever you saw doesn't mean that it was physically there. And yes, I've also seen a dragon, and it is eastern.

◆ Brujo

◆ Also beware of the magical Paracas. They are a mixture of sand and manastorm. They can be very nasty.

◆ TankBruiser

There is thaumaturgical evidence that the Nazca site is an important node where several manalines of the Ring of Fire meet. This lends us to think that it is a powersite where we can tap energy from the network. This would explain the interest of the Amazonians and the Japanese in this place. Recently, MCT's Thaumaturgical R&D department has opened up an outpost in the town of Ica, the closest city. I doubt that they will be opening the lines to the public anytime soon, if at all.

◆ I doubt that too. And I also doubt that the government will do anything to upset their Japanese masters. This means that it is up to us to do something. We have to do something to regain our heritage before the Japanese corrupt it!

◆ AndinoAhora

◆ One wonders maybe it's too little, too late?

◆ Orange Queen

◆ Never too late to reset the balance. Never.

◆ Deepest Green

GAME INFORMATION

AZTLAN

Aztlan is a nation of stark contradictions; old gods and high-tech industry, wealthy corporate executives and destitute subsistence farmers, beautiful castillos and smog-filled sprawls. It is a dangerous nation for those who aren't on Aztechnology's side and even more dangerous for those who learn of its hidden secrets.

GETTING IN/OUT

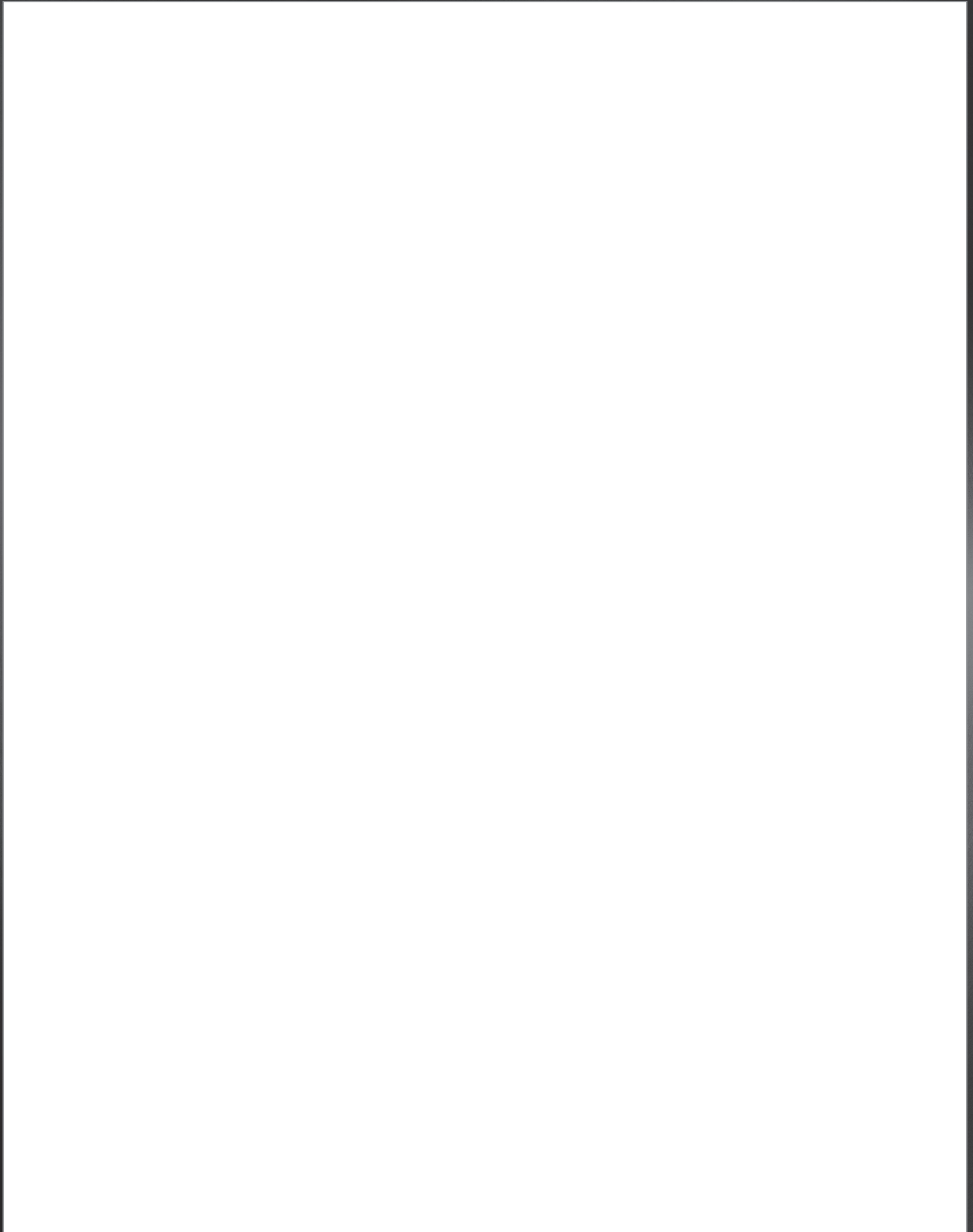
Legally, there are two ways for non-citizens to enter Aztlan: travel visa or resident alien status. Both are subject to intensive background checks before acceptance and even those that are accepted are subject to extreme amounts of surveillance while they are in the nation. Travel visas can be issued for up to 60 day periods. Resident alien status is indefinite as long as the corporation employing the non-citizen continues to employ them. Both of these methods can be revoked at any time by Aztlan without stated reason, appeal, or advanced notification. As far as the physical details of entry, Aztlan has four major international airports which handle both suborbital and semiballistic flights in Monterrey, San Antonio, San Diego, and Tenochtitlán as well as countless other ones which handle shorter flights.

Illegal entry over the nation's borders is a more common method for shadowrunners who wish to avoid Aztechnology surveillance. Aztlan's northern border with Pueblo and the CAS is a demilitarized buffer zone and the most difficult to cross secretly. The southern border with Amazonia is more sparsely patrolled and easier to sneak across due to the geography, but has its own dangers in the local flora, fauna, and Amazonian government. The most successful method of illegal entry is via the coasts, especially through cargo shipments. Aztlan doesn't possess enough manpower to fully cover every square inch of coastline nor is it able to scan every cargo crate that enters the nation, though it makes a show of trying.

RUNNING IN AZTLAN

Shadowrunning in Aztlan comes down to working for or working against Aztechnology (sometimes both).

The corporation is so tightly woven into the fabric of the nation that no matter the job, you are either favoring or hurting Aztechnology interests in some way and it is highly likely the corporation will get involved in some aspect.



The Nicaragua Canal

Aztlan has already broken ground on this ambitious project, but the Corporate Court would prefer to see that it never reaches completion. Aside from Wuxing (which has worked out preferential usage deals with Aztlan), the other corporations are working through shadow assets to sabotage the Canal's construction in various ways, either through overt physical destruction or through quieter intimidation of key personnel. Aztlan, of course, has much to gain from the Canal and Aztechnology is working overtime to protect the development.

Border Skirmishes

Activity on Aztlan's northern borders with Pueblo and the CAS is heating up and work for shadowrunners on either side of the border is increasing. The tense military situation makes the nations involved loathe to use military assets which could trace back to them, so they turn to deniable assets for missions across the border. In Austin, the Sons of the Alamo are trying to force a war between the CAS and Aztlan, a situation neither nation really wants.

Meanwhile, Aztlan has been sending agents into Pueblo to search for ancient magical artifacts or evidence of the mythical "Seven Caves of Origin" which they believe might be somewhere in the southern Rocky Mountains.

In With the Locals

Aztlan's local „Mexican“ shadow community isn't particularly friendly with the import runners and they have a near-monopoly on Aztechnology runs within the nation. Non-native runners looking for work in Aztlan are sure to butt heads with the locals at some point and will either face the trials of earning their respect or the dangers of earning their ire. Runners who make enemies with the Mexicans will find working in Aztlan difficult, if not deadly. But getting in good with the locals is a difficult process which includes proving yourself to a community built on principles of machismo.

The Cult of Tezcatlipoca

Some members take the religious emphasis seriously while others see it as little more than a form of corporate culture, but the shadowy factions in the Cult run Aztechnology's board, the Path of the Sun, and the nation of Aztlan. Runners may find themselves caught up in the internal politics of the Cult as power shifts and conflict arises between its members. The recent fall of Oscuro and the weakening of his faction of blood mages opened up a power struggle that resulted in Chavez's magical nationalists taking the lead, but the internal struggles have not gone away.

Each faction employs runners (many of them unaware of the scope of their work) to increase their power in the Cult and even within factions some elements have rivalries with others. The work is ever-present and very profitable but exceptionally dangerous.

THE PATH OF THE SUN

On the surface, the Path of the Sun is a harmless belief system that conducts national religious ceremonies and contains dozens of smaller magical groups embracing similar themes. Hidden at the top of the Path's power structure, however, are

a handful of secret and nefarious magical groups that utilize dark techniques to power their magic. The Blood Mage Gestalt (see p. 70, *Threats*) is an example of one of these secret cults, but there are others, such as the unnamed groups to which Domingo Chavez and Anna Villalobos belong and the rumored cult that counts the feathered serpents as members. These secret groups often share in common their use of blood magic (p. 133, *MitS*) and the powerful members of these groups are also taught the secrets of Shared Potency metamagic (see p. 45, *Threats 2*).

Gamemasters are free to create rules for shamans who take Aztec gods as their idols or they may adapt existing ones for this purpose (see p. 152, *Magic in the Shadows*). As a rule of thumb, Quetzalcóatl usually corresponds to the Plumed Serpent totem, Huitzilopochtli to the Sun nature totem, Tlaloc to a male version of the Great Mother idol, Xuihtecuhtli to the Fire-Bringer idol, Xipe-Totec to the Dark King idol, and Tezcatlipoca to the Adversary idol.

Teocallis

It is increasingly common for Aztlan's larger teocallis to possess a background count, ranging from 3 to 5 at the larger teocallis (the temples to Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca in Tenochtitlán have a permanent background count of 5). Smaller teocallis may find themselves host to elaborate rituals that temporarily boost their background count only to have it fade later. This background count is aspected towards use of the Path of the Sun and therefore the temples act as power sites for them while hindering the magic of others.

On rare occasions, magical rituals conducted by the most powerful members of the Path of the Sun have resulted in mana warps, or foveae. These tend to be temporary and fade back to standard background count, but at the gamemaster's discretion, there may be a few standing mana warps at areas of significant past rituals. For more information on background count, aspected power and mana warps, see pages 83-86 in *Magic in the Shadows*.

Currently under the direction of Domingo Chavez, the Blood Mage Gestalt is continuing its effort to link the background counts of numerous teocalls into an astral network. The purpose behind this effort is unknown, with rumors ranging from using the combined power for a great summoning ritual to raising the ambient mana level of the nation to building a magical shield around Aztlan.

GUERREROS

The orders of guerreros are military magical orders within the Path of the Sun. Unlike most of the magical groups in the Path of the Sun, the guerreros are made up of a majority of adepts, though full magicians are also found in each one. Only four guerreros orders exist, each with a different military role, but they all share a similar religious belief system and employ the use of blood magic like the secret Path of the Sun orders.

Also like the secret Path of the Sun orders, the most powerful guerreros in each order are taught the Shared Potency metamagic technique. During an initiatory ritual they join in a spirit pact (see p. 124, *Magic in the Shadows*) with a powerful entity they identify with the god Tezcatlipoca. This pact and the Shared Potency technique allow numerous powerful indivi-

duals to increase their Potency through their link with Tezcatlipoca (for more on Potency, see page 123 of *Magic in the Shadows*).

The exact nature and power level of Tezcatlipoca is left up to the gamemaster.

Blood Tokens

Blood tokens are a special variant of Infusion Foci (see p. 68, *State of the Art: 2064*) or Spell Category Foci currently known only to exist in Aztlan. To use a blood token, the user must know the Sacrificing metamagic technique (see p. 133, *Magic in the Shadows*) and must have been present at the first bonding of the blood token. Functionally, they work just like standard infusion foci or spell category foci, but their creation is very different.

Blood tokens are made from a body part taken from a sacrificial victim at the time of death and the type of focus is usually related to both the victim and the body part (for instance, the ear of a meddling journalist who was snooping into Aztlan affairs might be used for a Detection spell category blood token while the tongue of an anti-Aztlan activist might be used for a Commanding Voice infusion blood token). The victim must have been someone of some significance for the enchanting ritual to work; blood tokens are not made from Joe Aztlaner off the street, but usually from people specifically targeted by the geurreros orders for sacrifice.

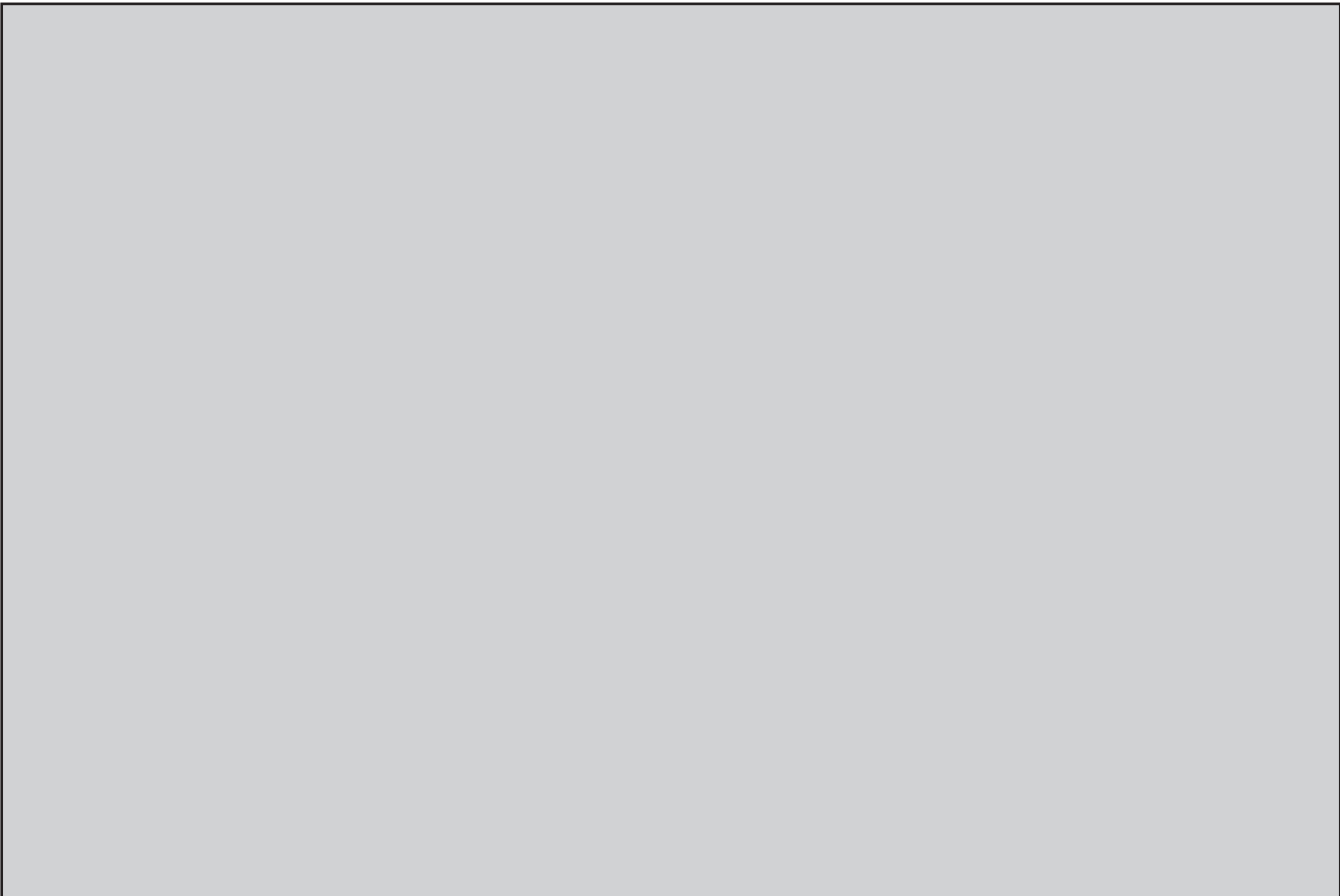
The focus formula stage of the blood token artificing works

like a standard focus and an enchanter will create the formula while studying the victim under captivity. Unlike other focus formulas, the blood token formula is unique for the focus and the victim and can never be sold or reused. The enchanting test is made at the sacrificial ritual, which unlike the standard base time for enchanting, has a base time of only six hours, divided by the enchanter's successes. For purposes of the enchanting test and the first bonding karma cost, the focus is considered to be using virgin telesma and both the test and karma cost are adjusted by the victim's Essence (or Magic Rating, if higher), as if alchemical radicals were being used. Divide the Essence or Magic Rating by two (rounding up) and subtract that number from the enchanting test target number and the first bonding karma cost.

In addition, the astral presence of a blood token is unusually strong; the Force of the blood token is considered at +2 for the purpose of astral combat or mana spell damage resistance tests.

THE BIG SMOKE

Tenochtitlán, due to its unique geography and high pollution, has different effects on visitors and residents. The high altitude of Tenochtitlán's geographical basin means thinner oxygen, and newcomers unaccustomed to it suffer penalties. They suffer a -1 to their Body attribute for all tests to resist diseases and toxins, and unaccustomed magicians suffer a -1 to Willpower for the purposes of drain resistance tests. Acclimating



to the thin air takes 12+1d6 days (rule of six does apply) and characters with extended volume bioware (see p. 66, *Man and Machine*) do not suffer these penalties.

The intensity of Tenochtitlán's pollution, which is often trapped in the valley basin, is a separate problem. On any given day, the gamemaster rolls 1d6 to determine the Power of the excessive air pollution. Those without air filters that negate the Power of the pollution with their Ratings face a toxin resistance test with the Power of air pollution that causes Moderate Stun with a speed of 30 minutes. The Stun damage heals slowly, at the rate of Physical damage (see p. 126, *Shadorun Third Edition*) and only when the character is breathing clean air.

In addition, the acid rain in Tenochtitlán is intense. All creatures not immune to toxins or corrosives are considered to have a Mild Allergy to acid rain (see p. 15, *Critters*). Normal acid rain can cause a +1 penalty to all target numbers while the character is exposed to it, and „hard“ acid rain can cause a +2 penalty and lead to permanent health damage after long-term exposure. Protective clothing eliminates this penalty.

BOLIVIA

Velazco's Bolivia is to the Sixth World what Castro's Cuba is for our own. Though many locals and foreigners still believe in El Comandante, the dream of the Revolution has turned into a nightmare. Sancho Collqui's movement shows that the op-pressed masses are finally awakening to reality, but the regime isn't going down without a fight and has quite a few tricks in store.

GETTING IN/OUT

Cyberware and weapons are subject to standard laws, but the Bolivian government keeps harsh laws regarding magic. All magical abilities must be declared when applying for a visa and even then this request might be denied. Anyone caught using unlicensed magic is treated as an enemy and usually sent to a reeducation camp. Corporate employees in the Free Trade Zones are exempt of these requirements.

Bolivia has few international airports. The two most important ones are El Alto (La Paz) and Viru Viru (Santa Cruz), though the first one does not service semiballistic or suborbital flights. Santa Cruz's economic importance makes Viru Viru a popular airport with the corporations, but it also means it's a juicy target for the rebels. Airport security is handled by the Revolutionary Guard, which also runs the military airline Transportes Aereos Militares (TAM).

The country's railroad system has been upgraded to help the corps' mining operations. The railroads connect with Argentina's own at the Villazón-La Quiaca border and with Chile's at the Avaroa-Ollagüe border. On the other hand, the lines near Amazonia are all but abandoned. Only smugglers use them to move their goods or guide themselves.

The Altiplano region belongs to the so-called Andean Highway, which goes from chilly Patagonia to Colombia's rainforests. The Ghost Cartels and independent smugglers use

it to deliver their goods all over Latin America, daring harsh weather conditions and treacherous mountains in exchange of increased surreptitiousness. Use the rules for Sensor Dead Zones (see p. 32, *Rigger 3 Revised*).

The Amazon rainforest and its rivers are another option for people wishing to illegally enter Bolivia from Perú and Amazonia. For a fee, the local cargo boats will carry anything, be it cattle or shadowrunners. This insertion method isn't without risks, however. In addition to Bolivian patrols, travelers must take care of the rainforest's dangers (see p. XX).

RUNNING IN BOLIVIA

Be it smuggling milspec weapons for them through the Andes, or hunting down their fund-raisers in North America or Europe, runs in Bolivia are increasingly linked to the Neolnca insurrection. It is perfectly possible for a character to naively support the Velazquistas, only to find out the regime is just as rotten as any capitalist country.

The megacorps also have their own game in Bolivia, fighting to earn the collectives' favor and sabotaging their competitors' operations. Tanamyre Resources is circling its wagons to defend its assets from other corps, while Inti T'ika Bioengineering is trying to gain influence over the Neolncas.

Bugs in the System

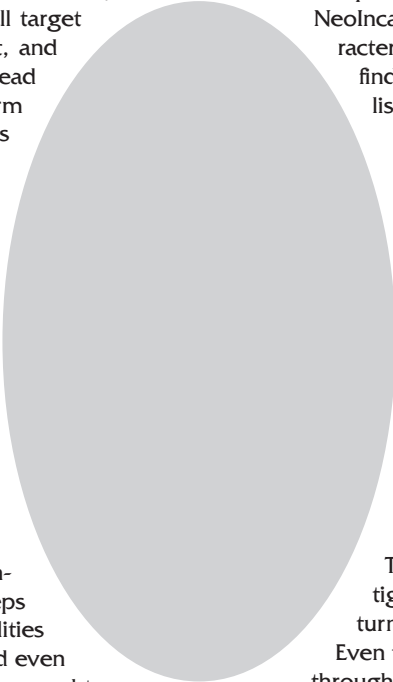
As hinted in its chapter, Bolivia is deeply infested by a cabal of insect spirits who are transforming local society for their own purposes. Limberg Velazco himself is a "good merge" flesh form, though he could also be a corrupted Yatiri (Aymaran shaman). The bugs also take advantage of Bolivia's prestige to expand their influence across the globe, turning many sympathizers into flesh-form agents. Even the Ghost Cartels are being subtly manipulated through the Morales Cartel.

The situation is probably known to several corporations, but it seems they have chosen to deal with the devil as long as they can plunder Bolivia's natural resources. Aztechology is coldly hostile towards the regime, but it hasn't taken any major actions against it except for the Morales Cartel, which threatens its own drug trade. On the other hand, Amazonia has had enough time to regret supporting Velazco's revolution and is secretly backing the Neolnca movement.

Shadowrunners could also become pawns for the bugs' internal intrigues. What the team thought was an honest hive-cleaning operation in a remote Bolivian village could well be an attempt to increase a faction's influence in the People's Council at the expense of another one.

Bolivian Oddities

The home of pre-Columbine civilizations, Lake Titicaca and Tiwanaku (also known as Tiahuanaco) are known for astral shallows and power sites (see pp. 99-100, *Target: Awakened Lands*), many of which are aspected towards Inca shamans. On the other hand, centuries of exploitation and suffering



have given Potosí a negative Background Count of 5. At the gamemaster's discretion, some areas in Bolivia might have become Toxic Zones (see pp. 155-156, *Year of the Comet*), or aspected towards insect spirits.

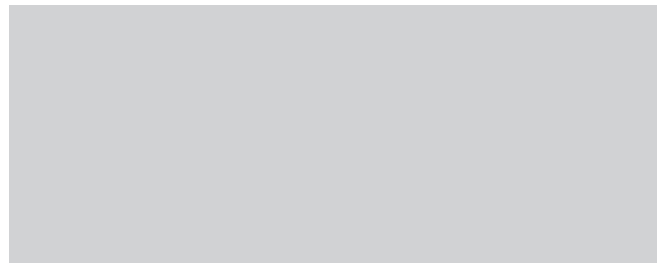
Characters arriving to the Altiplano may experience breathing difficulties. Use the High Altitude rules in p. 195 of *Shadows of North America*, except that problems last for 12 + 2d6 days and the character's effective Body and Athletics are also reduced by 1 when making tests involving physical efforts.

Yankee go Home

Ron Sanders had it all: a rich family, good friends and a bright future in father's company. He also hated it all to no end, feeling trapped in a golden birdcage from birth. Finally, after several months of bitter discussions with his father, Ron suddenly vanished.

Feeling guilty, Mr. Sanders hires the runners to track him down. All they can find in his college dorm is a scrapped note about a meeting in the Friends of the Bolivian Revolution, a radical group that supports Velazco's regime. If pressed, the FoBoR's members will admit that Ron was a frequent, passionate visitor. An online search through Ron's credit record will reveal that he bought a plane ticket to La Paz one week ago, shortly after his last clash with daddy.

If the runners inform Mr. Sanders about this, he will panic about his son being abducted by "Bolivian commie pinkos". Mr. Sanders will offer the team a substantial reward for the safe (and quick) return of his son. Should the runners hesitate, the gamemaster might decide that Mr. Sanders can use his business connections to ensure they can enter Bolivia without problems. All they have to do is to find the collective his son is and convince him to return home. How tough could this possibly be?



CARACAS

Caracas is a Caribbean siren, luring people with promises of untold wealth and sordid vices, but killing them before they see it for what it really is: a monument to human misery.

GETTING IN/OUT

Foreign visitors usually arrive through the Simon Bolivar International Airport or the port of La Guaira. Though tourists only have to show a few papers to enter Caracas and enjoy its many vices, runners can skip even those lax requirements by paying the pacos (cops) a small fee for their time.

Caracas' land borders are a much tougher option. The UNAF's Blue Helmets patrol them since 2049, watching for any sign of renewed Amazonian expansionism.

RUNNING IN CARACAS

This city is rotten to the core. Period. Most people who live in Caracas have an everyone-for-himself attitude, the result of years of neglect and having ended on the wrong end of Amazonia's and Aztlan's struggle. Gamemasters should make sure that even the most jaded runners feel disturbed by Caracas' noir bleakness.

Up ...

The ruling elite has survived everyone and everything so far, with no sign of giving up. The old money families are infested with intrigues, petty feuds and decadent vices, but they still pull the strings in the city. Foreign powers know this and are more than eager to please them if it gives them a free hand in their operations.

... and down

Crime and barely legal activities keep Caracas' economy up and running, so it's a dead given that everyone wants a piece of them. Though the Cartels lead the pack, the city's underworld is big enough to host several other players, like Tamanous' organleggers and Caribbean pirates. Alliances and turf wars come and go, but it is entirely possible that there's a "gentlemen's agreement" regarding Caracas, especially when it comes to the port of La Guaira.

Daddy's Little Girl

The runners are hired to find a VIP's missing daughter, who vanished while having "fun" in Caracas' nightclubs. A deep investigation in Caracas' sordid underground will reveal that she was taken drugged to a shadow clinic, where she was modified as a bunraku meat doll. To make things worse, the girl was sold to a member of one of Caracas' ruling families. The runner will have to discreetly find out who owns her and where she is, before someone else hears about it and decides to get some leverage against her father.

THE CARIBBEAN LEAGUE

The Caribbean League is a wild and diverse place that precariously balances itself on the line between unity and dissolution. On its thousands of islands and in the vast stretches of water between them, countless players engage in a complex game of reputation and power brokering, and if any one entity ever got the upper hand, it could completely skew the balance of power in the western hemisphere.

GETTING IN/OUT

Due to the composition of the League, getting in or out of the Caribbean is relatively easy compared to most other places on the globe. The League does maintain a network of sensors and patrol vehicles which keep an eye on its oceanic and aerial borders, and anyone who enters the League must present a destination plan. If the destination plan is approved by the island government, then responsibility for enforcing the visitor's status falls to the island. If no approval is given, the visitor is turned back at the borders by the patrols. Some islands, like Cuba, have an extremely strict immigration and visa system that attempts to account for anyone entering or leaving their island. Others, like Haiti, are notoriously easy to pass through

as long as the visitor in question isn't averse to using bribery. And many of the thousands of private islands in the League either don't account at all for who visits or leaves their shores or maintains lethal levels of security to prevent unauthorized visitors.

The islands of the Caribbean League maintain dozens of large seaports and airports. Each major island has at least one urban center with an international airport and there are hundreds of small airstrips dotting the League, many of them falling under private ownership.

RUNNING IN THE CARIBBEAN LEAGUE

Reputation and self-initiative determine a non-native runner's ability to work in the Caribbean shadows.

Particular exceptions like Haiti aside, non-native runners do not face prejudices based on origin, race, or metatype, but the pecking order of the shadows in the League comes down to those with the best reputations and the best ability to find the juiciest jobs.

Building a Reputation

Runners visiting the Caribbean League will find that their street reputations back home don't mean squat here. Building a reputation in the League is key to one's influence in the shadows and the system works differently than in most places in the world. Instead of being secretive, runners here earn reputation by being flashy and generous, pulling off the primetime gigs and spreading the wealth around. However, at the same time, they need to carefully balance their public image with the mistake of making themselves too tempting a target for other Caribbean runners to resist.

Shadowrunning Entrepreneurs

Shadowrunning in the Caribbean is a self-starting business. Runners who wait for Johnsons and fixers to hand them jobs will find themselves living on the street, as that's not how it works in the League. Runners are expected to research valuable (and illegal) avenues and proactively do the job, and then seek out fixers and Johnsons who will deal with them on turning a profit. Instead of being hired by Mr. Johnson through a fixer to extract a corporate scientist, here in the League a shadowrunning team finds out about the rising star corporate scientist and extracts him themselves, then works through their network of contacts to find a fixer or Johnson to ransom the scientist to. At the same time, the runners must watch out for other shadowrunners who see an easy route in leeching off another team's success and letting them do the hard work while they stab them in the back later.

A Cast of Thousands

The Caribbean League is full of countless influential characters representing hundreds of interests, from corporations to political parties to terrorist groups and pirate crews. Non-native shadowrunners can find lucrative work assisting one power player in their bids against others, and it is a quick way to increase one's reputation and network of friends (and enemies) in the League. Getting involved in this type of employment will pull the runners into a complex world of temporary allegiances, secret island hideaways, wild Havana nights and posh resorts,

war-torn streets and battles at the high seas. Their success and survival is tied to the success and survival of their patron which ties their lives to the politics of the League.

Smuggling and Piracy

The Caribbean League's porous borders and complex political landscape make it an ideal base of operations for smugglers and pirates. Smugglers can find lucrative work getting wanted rebels out of Aztlan, running guns up through the Orange Curtain from South Florida to the CAS, or bringing illegally-gathered telesma out of the Amazonian rain forest and into Jamaican markets. The popular sea lanes that ply through Caribbean waters make it a tempting realm for piracy, whether the crew is hijacking an ocean liner traveling to Amazonian resorts or a corporate cargo ship making its way to the Panama Canal Zone. Both the smugglers and pirates utilize the thousands of unmapped and unnamed inlets and coves as hiding places for their loot and places to lay low from pursuit.

ANDROS

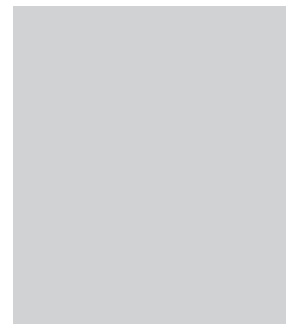
The island of Andros, despite being the largest in the Bahamas, remains uncivilized and largely off-limits.

Efforts to develop the island always suffer from terrible (and often fatal) bad luck, which can be attributed to the high population of free spirits and faerie creatures that visit or make their homes on the island. One reason for their presence are the blue holes, underwater cave systems that twist through the island and local waters, which in some cases are dotted with temporary astral rifts. More than one unfortunate visitor has gone from scuba diving in the blue holes to suddenly projecting into astral space, which is especially dangerous when you leave your body underwater and in a confusing twist of tunnels.

Chickcharnies

The chickcharnies are awakened owls that cause no limit of mischief to those who would visit Andros.

Chickcharnies appear similar to great horned owls, but with very large eyes and a prehensile tail. They are capable of short distance flights and make their homes in the branches of jungle trees deep in the island's interior. Occasionally they find their way to nearby islands, but there is a standing bounty on chickcharnies on other Bahaman islands, which keeps their populations down there. The reason for the bounty is the chickcharnies' fierce territoriality, enforced through its magical powers, which can make life very difficult for anything that lives near them.



B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
2	5x2	1	5	3/6	4	6Z	5

Initiative: 5+3d6

Attacks: 5L

Powers: Accident, Confusion, Glamour

Notes: The quickness multiplier while the Chickcharnie is flying is 5.

THE NEW PROVIDENCE VIRUS

The island of New Providence's quarantine is quite justified, because the population of the island has been host to a dangerous new magical virus. The New Providence Virus (NPV), as it is being called, causes an allergic reaction to develop in the victim's aura to the energies of astral space, which can translate to cell damage in the victim's body.

The virus is spread through physical contact, but its 48 hour incubation period makes it hard to notice in carriers before it is spread by them. After 48 hours, the victim must make an opposed Body Success Test versus the virus' Power, which is typically 5. Three or more successes from the victim means the victim's body defeats the virus and no further checks are necessary. A successful roll with fewer than three successes means the victim must make another roll in 24 hours, but no other effects manifest. If the disease achieves more successes than the victim, the victim begins to develop fatigue symptoms and headaches, and takes 1 box of Stun damage per success the diseased achieved, every 12 hours. Once the victim's stun condition monitor fills up, the unconscious victim starts to take Physical damage until death.

No vaccine yet exists for NPV, but aggressive drug treatments can allow the victim an additional roll after they begin to take damage from the virus, which if successful, can halt further damage, either temporarily (if less than 3 successes) or permanently (if 3 successes or more). NPV is very easy to identify in a victim's aura if the perceiver knows what to look for, requiring only one success on an Astral Perception Test to notice and only 3 to successfully diagnose. However, because it inte-grates itself in the victim's aura, it is difficult to cure magically, doubling its Infection Power when spells like Cure Disease or Prophylaxis are used against it.

THE BLACK SHALLOWS

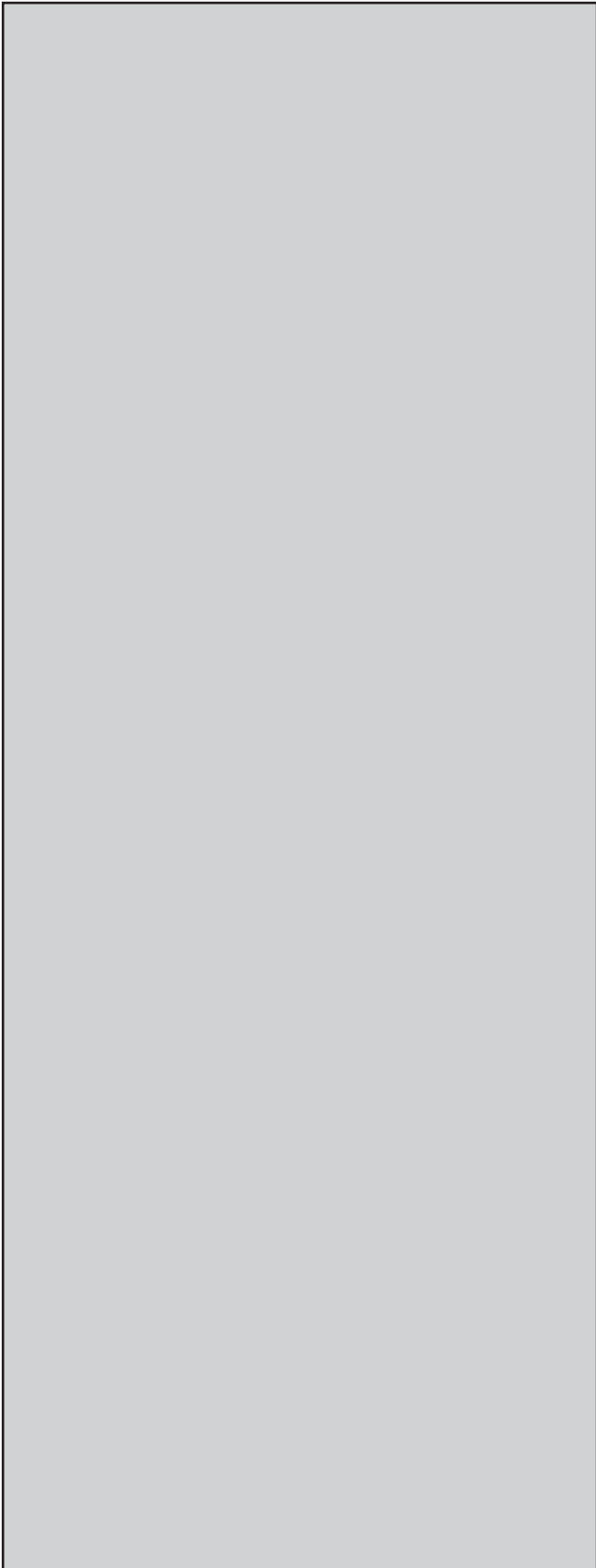
The physical land called the Black Shallows is a dire and desperate place. The debris of ruined villages pokes up through flooded plains, and disease and famine are rampant. But the effect this has had on the astral space in this region is perhaps even more dangerous. The background count in many sections of the Black Shallows reaches levels of 2 to 3, and some of it is aspected towards death magic and summoning of shedim or petro loa. In addition, on some occasions, the Black Shallows have even manifested alchera (see p. 113, *Target: Awakened Lands*) of destroyed villages...or other unknown locales.

THE ROUND SQUARE

The Round Square is a popular data haven in the Caribbean League, infamous for its collection of pirate media, from uncensored news reports to the transcripts of speeches given by Yucatan rebels. Any character who has the Round Square data haven as a contact (see p. 128, *Matrix*) receives a -2 reduction to any target numbers in information searches for archived media clips and filings. However, recently the Round Square has come under attack from entities unknown and has been suffering from periodic downtimes.

FRENCH GUINANA

A final outpost of European colonialism in a land grown strange, where every shadow holds a secret along with someone willing to sell it – or kill to keep it.



GETTING IN/OUT

Semi-ballistics from Europe and North America enter French Guiana through the Cayenne-Rochambeau International Airport, while intercontinental flights are handled by a half-dozen private corporate airports. Commercial passenger and cruise ships dock at Cayenne for supplies, sightseeing and bringing new crewmembers and passengers aboard. French Guiana's navigable rivers and twisted coastline make it a smuggler's paradise, provided boats stay away from the patrols around Kourou and Cayenne. Overland travel through the interior is nearly impossible without magical assistance.

Space travel is by far the costliest and most difficult transportation to obtain in French Guiana, but the frequency of passenger launches out of Kourou and Devil's Island is greater than anywhere else in Latin America. For the right price and with the right friends, you could go almost anywhere.

RUNNING IN FRENCH GUIANA

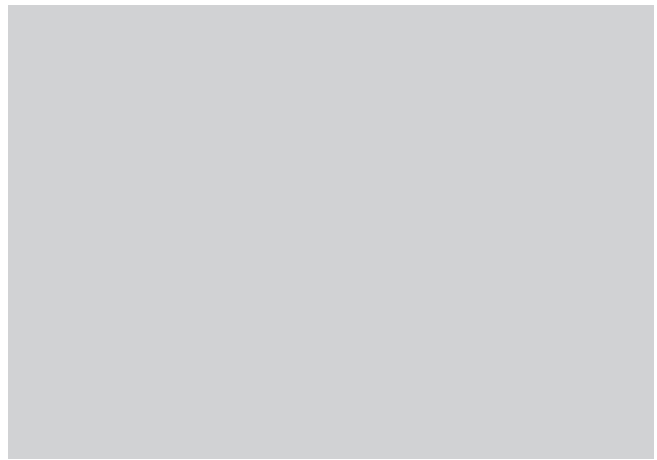
Spying. Smuggling. Time to play the game, chummers. French Guiana may be small, but there's more than enough wealth and goodies for those few who know how to get their hands it.

HIGH TECH

From Proteus AG's latest aquatech to Novatech's latest matrixware, French Guiana is a hive of postmodern technology. Corporate scientists work on mainframes to reprogram nanite factories in low-earth orbit while security riggers monitor the Ares MP Laser III emplacements. Even the spies bring their best gear, afraid of being shown up.

LOW LIFE

The space industry in Kourou consumes state-of-the-art materials in vast quantities, and all of it eventually trickles down to the street. Runners shouldn't be surprised to find shanties in Cayenne built around discarded lunar modules, or gangers sprouting cyber-ware that was delta-grade a few owners ago.



STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

The runners are hired to track down and apprehend one of CrossCorp's Seraphim agents in Kourou. The agent, code-named Anael, was supposed to extract a female astronaut from rival Saeder-Krupp but has been out of touch for over a month. The runners, after a little old-fashioned legwork and Matrix

searching, draw a bead on their quarry as he tries to quietly slip out of Kourou, along with the female astronaut, who's three months pregnant and beginning to show. As the star-crossed lovers are pinned down by a Saeder-Krupp security team, it's up to the runners to step in and save the day.

PANAMA

Though no longer as important as in the 20th century, the Panama Canal still remains an essential part of global trade.

News of Aztlan's Nicaragua Canal have thrown the Corporate Court into an outrage, as the megas know very well who's behind that project and what are its intentions.

GETTING IN/OUT

Sneaking into the Zone is very difficult. The Panama Canal is invaluable for the megacorps, who protect it heavily.

Between Aztechnology's saber-rattling and the occasional rebels, the Pan-Corporate Security Force has enough to worry about.

Ships are astrally scanned for anything suspicious before entering the Canal.

Corporate employees and tourists use the Bunau-Varilla Airport. Civilian flights are limited to HSCTs and suborbitals, as the risks of a semiballistic overshoot damaging the Canal were deemed unacceptably high. Aztlaners crossing or working at the Canal every day and Zoners visiting Panama City use specific traffic gateways, which are separated from the rest of the Canal. In an effort to reduce annoying procedures, Aztlan and the Corporate Court established a special visa for them. Runners wishing to enter Aztlan from the Panama Canal might want these visas, but they'd need to forge them or make a deal with a megacorp.

RUNNING IN PANAMA

Teamwork only gives you someone else to blame, or so believe many in the Canal. It's a small community so intrigue within its multi-corporate workforce is inevitable. Be it for personal or professional reasons, runs between rival corpsters are fairly common. Most take place in Panama City, which is also infested with Aztechnology spies, Vatican agents and Colombian rebels.

Deckers might also be tempted to deck into Zurich-Orbital through the Canal's satlink, but that is easier said than done. Matrix security is handled by the Corporate Court's infamous Grid Overwatch Division, whose deckers have a 24-7 presence in the Zone's RTG.

Cold Case

Joachim Larsen's mysterious disappearance is this Zone's topic of the week. Larsen's satellite expertise had made him a key figure in Ares Global Commsat before his transferal to Panama. Many suspect he was extracted, but no one knows who did it.

Frustrated by the inconclusive official report, Ares Macro-technology hires the runners for its own private investigation. As soon as they start digging for clues in the Zone and Panama City, the team is hounded by frenzied chipped gangers, bizarre magical attacks and surveillance drones. Perhaps Larsen wasn't involved with another corp after all ...

PERU

Peru is another nation on the verge of collapse due to internal strife among the various power groups. If the precarious balance is upset, without any doubt a war will break out. This will open opportunities, even for parties that have tried to stay one step away from Peru, like Aztlan. Whatever the outcome, it is sure to leave a deep scar on the face of South America.

GETTING IN/OUT

The retreat of the armed forces to protect the cities and Japanese interests has left much of the international border unprotected while at the same time creating virtual borders of government enclaves within the country. International border crossing is quite easy, and this has spawned some major smuggling routes that cross the continent from north to south. Though entering the country might be easy, crossing it is not: insurgent groups and the Shining Path rebels and other raiders are ready to milk hard-working smugglers who run in the area.

The security along the virtual borders is much tighter in order to prevent rebel or terrorist infiltration, though it's nothing that a bribe or a well-doctored SIN will not overcome. The main official entry points (besides a few border checkpoints) are the Jorge Chavez International Airport and the Callao Maritime Terminal. Shadowrunners' preferred entry points are through the Amazonian or Bolivian borders, followed by a cross over the virtual borders by land to reach the cities.

RUNNING IN PERU

The power vacuum left by the retreat of the Japanese Marines has left various restless power groups both eager to fill it and in need of shadowrunners to tilt the scales.

Japanacorps

The Japanacorps, though not completely trustful of their current allies in Peru (the government and the powerful local trade families), are suspicious of the intentions of other rising groups such as the Andes Ahora and are adamant in supporting anyone who opposes the Shining Path or TAF terrorists.

The greatest immediate concern of the Japanacorps is the protection of their assets from internal and external foes. This involves mainly the hiring of runners and mercenaries for the protection of their key personnel and facilities. The volatile political situation has led to greater involvement of the Japanacorps in local politics, in order to ensure that no hostile party seizes power. The Japanacorps are conducting numerous intelligence operations in order to uncover the real motives of local politicians to influence them into supporting their interests; this involves spying, blackmailing and decking.

Besides keeping an eye on the political scene, the Japanacorps still compete with each other, and this involves the usual staple of shadowrunning activity against corporate targets. The rules and recommendations in Corporate Download are applicable when running for the Japanacorps.

Trade Families

The instability of the country has also broken the tacit understanding between the trade families regarding their respective interests and spheres of influence, as well as their internal

hierarchies. The trade families are initiating runs against each other much more viciously than in previous years in order to undermine their rivals' standing with the Japanacorps. The newer opportunities have opened new ways of operating; an example of this is the Aparicio family, some of whose members have become involved with the Andes Ahora reformists.

Shining Path, TAF and Andes Ahora

Shadowrunners can contact these groups either by working for them or by obtaining their help or support if they can show that their current engagement furthers the organizations' respective goals.

Running for these groups usually involves operating in the countryside or the rainforest, raiding corporate and government facilities, as well as intelligence gathering. Working for or with these groups can be helpful in obtaining specialized Survival and Local knowledge skills.

However, working for these groups, especially the terrorist groups, can become dangerous because of the fanaticism of these organizations and the dim view that the government and the Japanacorps hold for those that work with them.

Aztlan and Amazonia

Aztlan and Amazonia have begun to consider an expansion into the Peruvian rainforest by courting the people of Iquitos into joining their respective countries. Not wishing to provoke an international incident with the Peruvian government nor draw the attention of the Japanacorps, they further their interests through covert operations or through proxies. These activities involve various courses of action, from terrain reconnaissance to counterintelligence. Most notable of the latter is the gathering of information for AmericaTrid, the Aztechnology media outlet in Peru.

Biotech and Biopiracy

The frequency with which the scene changes encourages small and independent outfits to perform the illicit activities that spur the area. Bigger entities like the Ghost Cartels, different corps or Tamanous have noticed the economic potential of this area and seek to reap the benefits of the locals' work. Shadowrunners should find this environment very stimulating to perform activities on their own initiative, like smuggling pirate bioware to the first world and selling it at several times its value, or taking the latest stolen prototype to this safe haven to start commercializing it.

The lack of regulations has allowed for the development of a booming business in biotech bootlegging, cheap bioware and cyberware. This makes wares and professional assistance in their installation readily available for shadowrunners, though, because of that, the quality of the products and services received are dubious.

Characters looking for a clinic through the appropriate channels receive a -2 modifier to Medical Search Tests (see p. 143, *Man & Machine*). These clinics have a Base Rating 2 points lower than those given in the Medical Ratings Table, and gamemasters should also subtract 2 points when determining the skill of the attending biotechnician. Any wares installed in this pirate haven are 30 percent cheaper than normal, including hospitalization costs. At the gamemaster's discretion, the

installed wares can come with stress points or nastier surprises. New equipment can be affected also, given the unknown origin of the products.



CHECKPOINT VERIFICATION TABLE

Country	Verification System Rating	Country	Verification System Rating
Amazonia	-	Ecuador	-
Argentina	-	French Guiana	-
Aztlan	-	Panama Pan-Corporate Zone	3
Bolivia	2	Paraguay	-
Caracas	2	Peru (International Ports)	6
Caribbean League	-	Peru	3
Chile	-		

UNAUTHORIZED BORDER CROSSING TABLE

Country	Sensor	Flux	ECCM	ECD	NPC/Pro. Rating
Amazonia	-	-	-	-	-
Argentina	-	-	-	-	-
Aztlan	-	-	-	-	-
Bolivia	5	7	3	-	Inferior/3
Caracas	6	7	5	3	Equal/3
Caribbean League	-	-	-	-	-
Chile	-	-	-	-	-
Ecuador	-	-	-	-	-
French Guiana	-	-	-	-	-
Panama Pan-Corporate Zone	8	10	5	5	Superior/4
Paraguay	-	-	-	-	-
Peru	6	8	4	3	Equal/2
Amazonian border	2	6	-	-	Equal/4
Bolivian border	3	6	-	-	Equal/3
Chilean border	5	8	3	2	Equal/2
Ecuadorean border	6	8	5	4	Equal
Pacific Ocean border	6	8	5	4	Equal

LATIN AMERICAN MATRIX RTGS

Country	Security	Access	Control	Index	Files	Slave
Amazonia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Argentina	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aztlan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bolivia	Blue-2	3	3	3	3	3
Caracas	Green-4	6	8	6	6	5
Caribbean League	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chile	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ecuador	-	-	-	-	-	-
French Guiana	-	-	-	-	-	-
Panama Pan-Corporate Zone	Red-6	10	12	10	10	10
Paraguay	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peru (SA/PE)	Orange-4	8	7	7	7	7
Lima	Orange-5	12	10	8	9	8



