RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

With the exception of the start and end points, it is not absolutely necessary to run any of the episodes of the *Pirates of Drinax* campaign, nor do they have to be presented in order. The campaign is a sandbox for the Referee as well as the Travellers; additional adventures can be inserted, others left out and the timing of any adventure is up to the Referee. Some of the episodes, as noted above, have a limited duration so the Referee should consider carefully before triggering one of these.

In short, *Pirates of Drinax* has a start and an ending but how the Travellers get from one end to the other depends very much upon their own choices. The scripted episodes are all stories in their own right but only part of the journey. Much of the time the Travellers will be working at their plan to create an empire – or some equivalent interstellar state – for Drinax. See *How to Build an Empire* for ideas on how they might go about that.

At the beginning of the campaign the Travellers may well be at a loss for how to proceed and might make mistakes that derail the storyline. For example, if they interpret piracy as meaning they should leave no witnesses or start attacking ships belonging to powerful and influential factions they will quickly end up facing overwhelming forces dedicated to hunting them down and killing them.

The Referee should consider providing some guidance on how the Travellers' actions will affect the wider universe and what the results might be – not all Travellers will immediately grasp that their actions could bring down inevitable doom, whilst others might be too worried about consequences to act at all. The short adventure *First Prize*, presented in this book, can be used as a tutorial for Travellers at the beginning of the campaign.

As the campaign unfolds, the Travellers are most likely to be successful – and to stay alive – if they observe the following rules:

- Observe the Code of the Stars. Robbers will be pursued according to how much of a nuisance they become; wanton murderers will attract attention far more quickly and it will be persistent.

- Do not constantly raid close to Drinax. This will make the Travellers' base obvious to anyone who can put dots on a map.

- Do not constantly attack in the same places. This will make an intercept very easy to arrange.

- Vary your targets. Installations and starports can be raided as well as ships.

- Vary tempo and timings of attacks. A group of raids then a period of silence might cause pirate hunters to assume the corsairs have moved on or retired.

- Create ambiguity. Ideally, use different ships to make the attacks or create confusion about the identity of vessels. Plant false rumours about bases, ship numbers and allegiances.

- Cultivate contacts and friends, and build an intelligence network.

- Be willing to pass up targets. Having a shipload of witnesses from a juicy vulnerable merchant testify how you flew right past with a cheery greeting and "did not attack them even though you could have got away with it" might be sufficient to sway a trial or allay suspicions.

- Always have an eye on the long-term goal and another on the opportunities in front of you. If escort duty, mercenary work or trading offers a viable and safer alternative, be willing to do it. Again, occasions where you were seen engaging in legitimate trade or other lawful activities can throw pursuers off the scent or be used as evidence that you are not the pirate band currently pillaging the Dustbelt.

- Be creative. Repetition leads to predictability and predictability leads to a short walk out of the airlock.

The Referee should give the Travellers the chance to learn these rules, perhaps from a grizzled old ex-pirate who is willing to trade them advice and the odd piece of useful information for a favour or two. The adventure *First Prize* contains just such an opportunity to learn from someone who lived the pirate life… and got away with it.

HOW TO BUILD
AN EMPIRE

King Oleb does not give the Travellers much guidance about how he expects them to proceed. This is largely because he wants them to use their initiative and seize opportunities but there are some factors that will be the same no matter how the Travellers start.

Oleb's plan, in very general terms, is to engineer a situation where the cheapest and easiest option for the Imperium (and probably the Aslan Hierate too) is to recognise a resurgent Kingdom of Drinax as the protector of its trade through the region. That means creating sufficient threat to trade that protection is necessary and at the same time increasing the power of Drinax to the point that it is more useful to co-opt and recognise it than to swat the upstarts and return to the previous status quo.

It must be recognised that the Imperium and/or Hierate will, sooner or later, find out that Drinax is behind the upsurge in piracy and raiding. By the time that happens the kingdom needs to have sufficient protection – which can take many forms – that recognition is the most cost-effective solution. Similarly, the fledging kingdom needs to be a hard target for Aslan clans that might decide to conquer or just obliterate it.

This is no simple task. Drinax needs ships and allies, and both of those require money to acquire and maintain them. Oleb's plan to use piracy to get what he needs is workable but risky. Given the present circumstances of his kingdom, Oleb really has no better options. Piracy can also be used to manipulate the political situation but this is even more delicate than making money without getting caught or killed.

If the Travellers decide to be blatant about their attacks, their best political choice is intimidation. They can offer a straight deal; join us and stay loyal or we cut off your trade and shoot up your cities. This approach was used, with success for *most* of its history, by the old Sindalian Empire. However, loyalty is not born of fear. Oleb and his successors will face rebellion at the slightest sign of weakness and will forever be considered a pale and petty shadow of the old and brutal empire. Negotiations with outsiders will be affected by this consideration.

A more subtle approach has long-term benefits but is tricky and requires greater attention to detail. If the local worlds and shipping operators do not know who is behind the pirate attacks, Drinax can present itself as a saviour and win the admiration of those it seeks to rule. However, word gets around. If the distinctive ship that has been reported attacking local traffic keeps being spotted in port at Drinax, and the crew are carousing merrily at the court of King Oleb when seen by a merchant captain they robbed, their allegiance is soon going to be known.

One way to avoid this is to obtain a less distinctive ship as soon as possible and use that for raiding, then only raid with the *Harrier* in distant systems. It might be possible to create a pretext for overt raids, such as 'dealing with suspected pirates' or 'extracting the due tribute to King Oleb from recalcitrant and ungrateful shipping operators'. The latter works better once Drinax has established at least a small powerbase and can pretend to be a legitimate interstellar state. Of course, the Travellers might decide to leave no witnesses or evidence but this is a very hard-nosed approach that will alienate most potential allies, if discovered.

The Travellers will need to gain support in the starports of the region so they have safe havens to rest, make repairs and sell cargoes. However, this is only a small part of the overall plan. They need ships, political allies or supporters, information and, above all else, money.

GETTING MONEY

The most direct method of getting money quickly is piracy. However, there are many options beyond simply raiding ships for their cargo. Planetary raiding is an option with similar risks and political considerations to piracy but often with a different payoff. Attacking a well-defended world in a little gunboat like the *Harrier* is unlikely to yield more than a conversion into debris, however outposts and small settlements can be attacked by ground troops or held to ransom with a ship's guns. It is unlikely that there will be stacks of money or shipping containers full of saleable items lying around but a small settlement may have useful machinery, spares and equipment that can be sold or used.

The converse of raiding is protection. This can take the form of a protection racket, in which the Travellers demand regular payments in return for not trashing the place, however a better long-term option is to establish a deniable threat then offer to protect local ships, settlements and ports from it. This might even be the beginnings of a political alliance but until the mutual-protection alliance is well established it will need an external threat to keep members interested. This might not be actual attacks, of course. Rumours and false datafeed entries can create an atmosphere of fear and paranoia out of all proportion to the real level of attack.

Wealth can be generated in other ways. Industry can be used to support the Travellers' operations with spares and supplies, as well as to produce goods for the Travellers to sell. In the longer term Drinax will need access to a diversified industrial base – although this could be on some other world or worlds, with Drinax acting as paymaster and political controller. In the shorter term the Travellers might commission the construction of goods they know will be necessary.

There are various ways the Travellers might come to know what goods are going to be in demand. One obvious example is to sell guns to factions fighting a civil war the Travellers helped start or aerospace defence weapons to people they just raided. The Travellers might also find a way to interrupt the flow of particular necessary goods, before stepping in as a reliable supplier at a just-slightly-inflated price. Another option appears as the Travellers begin to build a network of Contacts and Allies. They might influence or direct local factions to begin a project then supply the necessary materials and components, which might be stolen or produced in the Travellers' own factories.

Old-fashioned trade and commerce is always an option and of course the Travellers' ships (or those of their allies) are unlikely to fall victim to piracy. It might be that the Travellers end up building a mercantile empire rather than pirating their way to prosperity but money can be made off commercial traffic in a variety of ways. Political power will allow the Travellers to implement regulations that funnel cash to them. This might take the form of tariffs or inflated fuel prices, outrageous docking fees or other methods of 'legitimately' milking the passing traffic without shooting it up.

The Travellers have many options to make money beyond simple piracy and providing their activities remain within tolerable limits, the larger powers will accept the situation and pay the fees rather than going to the trouble of dealing with uppity Drinaxians. A useful model for the Travellers is that of the ancient Norsemen – the so-called Vikings – of old Earth. Norsemen were notorious for raiding but they were entrepreneurs, not destroyers. If a trading expedition seemed more likely to produce a good profit-to-risk ratio than a raid, then the same 'Vikings' would trade that year.

At the height of their power the Norsemen ran what amounts to an industrial scale protection racket. They would raid an area until its rulers agreed to pay Danegeld, which was essentially a bribe to halt the raids for a while. Whilst this was in place the ships were free to raid or trade elsewhere. The Danegeld system essentially multiplied the earning power of the Norse fleets – their threat produced money from some areas whilst the reality of raids generated profit elsewhere and persuaded the local rulers they should think about paying the Norsemen to stay away. The Travellers can learn much from this model.

OBTAINING ADDITIONAL SHIPS

The simplest option for increasing the size of the Travellers' fleet is to steal ships. This is not as simple as it sounds, however. A ship known to have been pirated is likely to be unwelcome in most ports, so will have to operate out of Drinax itself or a hidden base until the Travellers build up enough support that their pirate fleet can land openly. Stolen ships will typically require a lot of work and components to repair damage and may have to be overhauled to get rid of pesky electronic and physical security devices.

Ships can be salvaged with varying degrees of legitimacy. Clever Travellers might cripple a vessel in a pirate attack then send an apparently independent salvage tug to claim the wreck. Done with finesse, this approach can avoid suspicion altogether, although it is likely the best a typical band of Travellers can hope for is semi-plausible deniability.

There are other ways to get ships. Alliances with other pirate groups or legitimate shipping operators can add vessels to a raid or project on a short or long-term basis and even a simple charter arrangement can be useful if the Travellers want to take advantage of local economic conditions or move a lot of materials quickly. The Travellers have been ordered to become pirates but that does not mean they cannot work both sides of the fence – and in the long term Drinax needs legitimate interstellar trade to prosper.

REMOVING SECURITY DEVICES

Removing security devices from a ship is an expensive and time-consuming business. Most constructors build in a variety of fuel cutoffs, electrical switches and similar

devices, which will function if the main security system in the ship's computer is deactivated. Some devices will operate immediately; others are timed or will activate at random intervals. It is possible that a missed security device might suddenly halve the fuel flow to the power plant a year after the ship re-enters service.

The simplest way to avoid this is to gut the ship of all such devices. This will take 2D person-work-hours (PWH) per 10 tons of hull and requires a minimum of Engineer (any) or Mechanic at level 1. A ship that has been gutted in this manner will have no security devices, which will be very obvious on any inspection and may lead to awkward questions. The ship will also lack its usual security system, making it easy for someone else to steal it.

A more sophisticated solution is to replace the security devices. This is a huge job; there are hundreds of devices located at wiring junctions and built into fittings. Each and every one must be located and replaced, and the new network must then be properly integrated and reprogrammed. This requires personnel getting into all manner of awkward spaces to remove devices, although the job can be performed more quickly if small robots designed for the purposes are used. Replacement and reprogramming takes 2D PWH per 10 tons of hull but leaves the user with a properly secured ship that will not attract attention by having an obviously disabled security system.

At the end of the job the most skilled member of the team gutting the ship, or a designated inspector, must make a Difficult (10+) Engineer or Mechanic check to ensure that all devices have been depowered, jammed or ripped out. If the check is failed the operators may be in for a nasty surprise at some point.

It is not usually possible to shut down the security system using the ship's computer. Many of the security devices are incapable of being controlled from the main computer and will trigger alerts if they are trying to communicate with other devices that have been disabled. The same happens if any devices are overlooked when removing or replacing them, rendering the whole project ineffective.

FIT-AND-REPLACE UNITS

Specialised robotic fit-and-replace units permit an operator to control several small robotic maintenance units. Each hour of operation, a single unit produces 1D PWH per point of Effect on a Routine (6+) Electronics (remote ops) check. The bots are small enough that there is no real limit to how many can operate at once, although they are expensive and difficult to get hold of without the proper clearnaces. Licenses to buy and operate these units are normally granted only to licensed repair yards and unlicensed possession is generally taken as evidence of collusion in piracy. Nominal value is Cr 1 million per unit, if they can be bought at all.

Example:
The Travellers have captured a 400 ton Patrol Corvette. They want to be able to operate it as quickly as possible so one of their number starts crawling around the trunking and opening up fittings to remove the cleverly concealed secucrity devices. He soon realises this will take to long – 40D hours of work, averaging at 140 hours. This is 17.5 eight-hour shifts or over a fortnight of work. The time required is hardly surprising, since the Traveller will have to find and manually remove dozens or even hundreds of devices from awkward places throughout the ship. Fortunately the Travellers have a friend who has access to a robotic unit. In the first hour of work the operator gets an Effect of 3 on his Electronics (remote ops) check. The robots produce 1D PWH per Effect; in this case the roll comes up a total of 14. This is 10% of the job done in the first hour. It is still a major undertaking but starship security – and its removal – is a serious business.

ASSETS AND FACTIONS

Planetside contacts and informants within shipping organisations, pirate bands or the courts of local rulers can be invaluable. Pirates who hang around the shipping routes waiting for a suitable prize can be successful but this is a hit-or-miss prospect. Those who know where the prize is going to be ahead of time – or arrange for it to be there – will prosper. Informants can also provide advance warning of anti-pirate measures.

The Travellers will make all manner of casual contacts but if they are wise they will cultivate the loyalty or friendship of key figures in ports and spacelanes, and perhaps governments and corporations too. Some of these people may wield sufficient power that they are useful allies but most will only be sources of information or occasional low-level assistance. They are termed Assets in this

Security Deactivation

Measure	Time (PWH)	Required Skill and Level
Gut the ship of all security devices	1D per 10 tons of hull	Engineer (any) or Mechanic 1
Replace security devices	2D per 10 tons of hull	Engineer (any) or Mechanic 2

Starships are sufficiently large that one person can work simultaneously on these tasks per 25 tons of hull.

context. An Asset might have some people or equipment that can be brought to bear on a problem but their power is local and very limited.

For example, a planetside merchant might have a lot of information and a fair amount of money, plus a few guards, and could be willing to place these at the Travellers' disposal for a while. This makes her an Asset. The crew of a small merchant starship might also be considered an Asset, whereas someone who owns several ships would be considered a Faction because they are capable of influencing wider events. Faction leaders can be courted the same way as Assets and may eventually become staunch allies of Drinax or even a formal part of its power structure. Until then they are important players in the spacelanes of the Reach, aligned with Drinax but pursuing their own agenda. Individual members of a Faction can be made into Assets by the Travellers.

When the Travellers ask something of an Asset, the Asset will decide whether to help or not. This takes the form of an AC check with the difficulty based upon the level of risk inherent in the request. The Travellers may use any appropriate skill to influence the check, normally Diplomat or Persuade, depending on the nature of the Asset but they might also use Carouse, Deception or Leadership if circumstances allow.

Requests for assistance will always be refused unless the Asset's AC is higher than the Min. AC Value on the Assistance table. For example, passing along a piece of readily available and non-sensitive information is not much to ask, and most Assets would do it as a matter of course. Sheltering the Travellers when they are on the run from pretty much everyone in the Reach is a big risk which will be declined by all but the most loyal of Assets.

The Asset's nature will alter their position on certain undertakings. For example, a criminal Asset might have doubts about trying to obtain Imperial Navy dispositions for the Travellers due to the risk involved but would probably not have moral reservations. A serving Imperial Navy officer might be much more reluctant to perform this task, as it is a betrayal of her position and may place comrades at risk. Such considerations will alter the difficulty of the check at the Referee's discretion.

COURTING ASSETS

Courting an Asset or suborning someone to become one is usually a long-term process, although low-level, low-risk cooperation might be obtained fairly quickly. Finding a potential Asset requires a successful Average (8+) Streetwise check. The Referee may impose a DM for very low population areas or settlements where the community is very close-knit. DM-2 applies if the Law Level is 4+, increasing to DM-4 if the Law Level is 8+.

A successful check produces an Asset with AC 0. This is essentially someone who is known to the Travellers as a potential source of information and assistance, not much more. To create an Asset willing to undertake risky or involved missions the Travellers must develop their relationship. This is easy at first but requires considerable work if the Travellers want a totally reliable Asset who will look out for their interests no matter what.

One attempt to increase the AC of an Asset can be made each week and the Travellers can use the same method more than once unless otherwise noted. Checks to increase the AC of the Asset can be made using Carouse, Deception, Diplomat, Leadership or Persuade. Which skill is used depends on how the Travellers play

Assistance

Request	Min. AC Value	Difficulty
Routine, non-sensitive information such as names and types of ship passing through a port	0	Simple (2+)
Slightly sensitive information, such as cargoes carried by particular ships passing through a particular port	2	Easy (4+)
Mildly risky undertaking, such as stealing a minor item from a non-secure location	4	Routine (6+)
Sensitive information, such as navy deployments for the next three months	6	Average (8+)
Risky undertaking, such as providing a safehouse for a wounded Traveller being pursued by his enemies	8	Difficult (10+)
Very risky undertaking, such as smuggling the Travellers offworld during a major manhunt	10	Very Difficult (12+)
Open declaration of allegiance	12	Formidable (14+)

the encounter out. For example, an Asset might be recruited by convincing him there is a vast conspiracy and the Travellers are seeking to unravel it – this would be Deception. Another Asset might be won over just by paying friendly visits every time the Travellers are in port – this might use Carousing. A case might be made for other skills from time-to-time. For example, the Travellers might use Medic to help the children of a poor dock labourer and quietly tell him that he now owes them the occasional favour.

All attempts to increase Asset Value (AV) have a cost associated with them unless otherwise noted. This cost is based on the Asset's AV, which in turn is determined by their current AC multiplied by their SOC.

Establish Relationship: When the Travellers first encounter a potential Asset, they have AC 0 and are as willing to help the Travellers as any other person they meet on the street. To establish an initial relationship, the Travellers must make an Average (8+) Streetwise or SOC check. The Asset's starting AC is equal to the Effect of this check. A relationship can (obviously) only be established once.

Schmooze: Just being friendly can improve the relationship between the Travellers and their Asset. Paying a visit for dinner and drinks, or turning up with unexpected offworld gadgets and toys for the Asset's kids can help build a friendship. Alternatively, the Travellers might simply want to renew the threats and intimidation they had in place. Either way, the cost in Credits is equal to the Asset's AV. A successful Schmooze attempt increases AC by +1.

Bribe: A one-off payment in cash or goods equal to 10 times the Asset's AV allows an attempt to increase the Asset's AC by +1, up to a maximum of 4.

Big Bribe: A one-off payment in cash or goods equal to 100 times the Asset's AV allows an attempt to increase the Asset's AC by +1, up to a maximum of 8.

Very Big Bribe: A one-off payment in cash or goods equal to 1,000 times the Asset's AV allows an attempt to increase the Asset's AC by +1, up to a maximum of 12.

Habit of Association: Each time the Travellers ask something of the Asset (subject to the one-increase-per-week limit) and behave honourably – in other words, they do not expect the Asset to take huge risks and then abandon him – the Travellers have a chance to increase AC at no cost.

Make A Deal: Here, the Travellers enter into a deal with the Asset, for example an agreement to help them whenever needed in return for a retainer paid each month. Making a formal arrangement of this sort increases AC by +D3 if successful. The deal will cost the Travellers five times the Asset's AV each month, either in direct payments or services, goods and needed items.

Other Options: Whenever the Travellers interact with an Asset they have an opportunity to develop the relationship. For example, the Travellers might discover that a family member of the Asset is in need of a particular medication only available offworld and arrange to bring some next time they visit. They might also undertake a task that could lead to an adventure.

The maximum increase in AC from any one interaction is +D3 points and more commonly it will be just +1. A party of mercenaries who undertakes a task for fair pay can be considered to have encountered a potential Asset and established a relationship, or can increase AC +1 if they were already familiar with their client. On the other hand, a band of heroes who help people out for a paltry reward or none at all have a chance to add AC +D3. This mechanic can be used by the Referee to reward heroic behaviour on the part of the Travellers – those who do good deeds gain support among the people they help.

ONE-OFF INCIDENTS

If the Travellers just need a one-off piece of information or assistance with a mission they might try to find someone on the fly. The process for establishing a relationship is the same as when courting an Asset but rather than a lengthy development process the Travellers simply need to coerce, persuade or bribe the individual into carrying out the task. As a general rule, the cost of obtaining this help begins at Cr1Dx1000 multiplied by the minimum AC required to get an Asset to carry out the task and will normally be much higher in the case of dangerous actions. Usually some sort of persuasion or leverage is required as well.

The Travellers may need an Asset to carry out an action above his AC threshold. Again, persuasion or coercion can work but in most cases the Asset is 'out' afterwards and will not help the Travellers again.

THIRD-PARTY ACTIONS

If the Travellers want to build an intelligence network they can do so through the actions of trusted agents. Any Asset with AC 12+ can establish contact with other potential Assets and develop relations with them. The Travellers might end up with a number of agents moving

Asset Network

Network	Network Note	Name	Description	Location	AC	SOC	Mission
Drinax	Reports Direct to Travellers	Erech	Portside Technician	Drinax	6	4	Intel Gathering
Pournew	Reports Direct to Travellers	Vrine Karmalli	Merchant Broker	Pourne Highport	12	9	Build Network
Pourne	Reports to Vrine Karmalli	Aix Leto	Citizen	Pourne Planetside	4	6	Intel Gathering
Mobile	Reports Direct to Travellers	Felix Carmaichel	Free Trader Crewmember	Free Trader Alledandi	6	6	Intel Gathering
Felix' Contacts	Reports to Felix Carmaichel	That guy on Marduk	Citizen	Marduk Downport	2	5	Intel Gathering

around the Reach setting up a network of informants, safehouses and potential assistance. The Travellers will need to keep track of their growing intelligence network and the location of the agents who build and maintain it. This will, of course, become expensive but the benefits outweigh the expense in terms of knowing what is going on and where could make the difference between success and failure in their bid to build a pirate kingdom.

An Asset operating in this manner can make the same once-per-week attempt to increase the AC of other Assets. This could result in quite a lot of bookkeeping, especially if one Asset runs others who are out making yet more contacts. The simplest way to deal with this is to keep an Asset Network table as shown here, nesting the Assets run by the Travellers and showing their attempts to build a network on a monthly basis.

FACTIONS AND WORLD GOVERNMENTS

The *Pirates of Drinax* campaign deals with the process of winning over world governments so they might eventually align themselves with Drinax. However, there are many powerful groups that fall somewhere between an Asset and a world government. These are referred to as Factions, although they can vary considerably in terms of size and power.

Winning over a Faction will provide Drinax with powerful allies but it is not a simple or quick process. Working relationships are built over time and should not be determined by a simple skill check or task chain. The same applies to world governments. Committing to an alliance or choosing to work with professional robbers and raiders is a big decision, which can have consequences for years to come. No government or merchant ship operator rushes into such a thing.

This system represents ongoing political and economic influences and is applicable in a wider context than a pirates campaign. Indeed, if the Travellers have come up

with a better way of building an empire in the Reach than Oleb's rather hazardous 'pirate our way to respectability' plan then courting Factions and governments may be the best way forward.

The Referee can develop as many Factions as seems appropriate, which can appear in the game as rivals or enemies as well as potential friends. Engineering a policy shift from opposition to support will take some doing but clever Travellers will be able to pull it off if they are persistent and determined.

Factions of interest to the Travellers might include:

- A world government or outpost administration where the Population code is 4 (thousands) or less
- A group within a larger world government that does not have complete control over the administrative process
- A shipping line or major mercantile organisation
- A company or corporation
- A mercenary force
- A rebel group
- A crime syndicate
- A religious organisation
- A pirate band
- A more unusual interest group, such as a psionics institute

Factions may also 'create themselves' during play, as the Travellers decide to explore their relations with a group they have encountered. A chance encounter with a merchant broker, local politician or mercenary commander could lead to a long-term alliance if the Travellers manage their interactions well.

Where the values of Assets are measured in Credits, Factions operate on a larger scale and involve costs in thousands or millions of Credits for almost any transaction. The base value of a Faction is determined by its size, in terms of workforce, deployable personnel, or world citizens who can be counted on to back the Faction's agenda.

Faction Size

Faction Size Code	Notes
1	This might be assigned to a single powerful or rich individual who has few supporters or staff, although they would more commonly be considered an Asset.
2	Barely a faction at all, just a handful of people.
3	Equivalent to a military platoon, a single small Starship or a minor leader with a few dozen supporters.
4	Equivalent to a military company, a small colony, an outpost with a population under 100 or a multi-small-ship trading group.
5	Equivalent to a military battalion, a colony or independent settlement with a population of up to 1,000, a very small interstellar shipping line, or a small pirate band with a handful of small ships.
6	Equivalent to a brigade-sized military force, a settlement of up to 10,000 people or a medium-sized pirate band with up to a dozen ships.
7	Equivalent to a division-sized military force, a city of up to 100,000 people or a large pirate band.
8	A major popular uprising or segment of the population numbering up to a million people.
9	A large cultural or ethnic group, or political bloc with up to 10 million members.
10	A very large social or ethnic group numbering up to 100 million people.

Faction Cost

Faction Type	Example	Cost Modifier
Social/Political	A cultural or social group with little direct power but the ability to influence affairs through strikes, market boycotts or similar agitation.	1
Military	An armed group set up for planetside combat, such as mercenaries, armed revolutionaries or law enforcement personnel.	3
Economic/Industrial	A company or corporation either producing goods or making money by buying and selling them.	4
Installation	An installation or colony such as an orbital starport or mining settlement on a distant moon.	6
Spacer	A faction that operates starships of any kind, such as a starmerc or pirate force, merchant shipping company or a salvage corporation.	10

Faction Size uses a code system similar to world Population codes.

The base cost of interacting with a Faction is also affected by the nature of the group. Only the highest modifier associated with a group is applied.

The base cost of any interaction with a Faction is determined by the cube of its Faction Size code (that is, its size code multiplied by itself and then by itself again) times its multiplier, in thousands of Credits. Thus a mining outpost on a distant moon with a population of 76 people (Faction Size 4, Installation Cost Modifier of 6) costs 4 x 4 x 4 = 64 multiplied by 6 for a total Cr384,000 per interaction. On the other hand, the Popular Front for An Independent Tobia, with its membership of 9 people, has Faction Size 2 and a Social/Political Cost Modifier of 1 and thus costs Cr8,000 to mobilise. A Faction with Faction Size 0 is treated as an Asset for the purposes of determining interaction cost.

INTERACTING
WITH A FACTION

Any time the Travellers want the Faction to do something is termed an 'interaction'. Costs might be bribes, salaries, running costs or other expenses incurred in the activity. Interactions might be used to improve the Travellers' relationship with the Faction or reduce hostility. Alternatively, the Travellers might request specific actions on the part of the Faction. There are all manner of possibilities here, depending on the nature of the group.

- A social group might be asked to vote a particular way or influence the marketplace by favouring or boycotting certain goods. They might be asked to destabilise an area with strikes and political agitation.
- A military group might be asked to launch an uprising or attack a specific target.
- An economic group might be asked to apply pressure on a world government.
- A shipping operator might be asked to favour certain routes or be seen to employ certain ships as escorts in order to make them look legitimate.
- An installation might be asked to allow pirate ships to refuel and refit without inquiring into their business.

There are many ways a group of Travellers can make use of Factions, most of which are relatively subtle. Clever Travellers might ask a friendly Faction for assistance when trying to get a government to align itself with Drinax. However, Faction activities should not be used to significantly alter the political landscape without some involvement from the Travellers.

FACTION ALIGNMENT

How closely a Faction aligns with the Travellers' agenda dictates what the Faction will do for them. A Faction will, of course, always follow its own agenda – wild-eyed revolutionaries intent on collapsing their world government will proceed towards this goal regardless of the Travellers' intentions and an interaction might be necessary to ask them to postpone the great uprising for a while. Likewise, a Faction will always fulfil its normal function without requiring an interaction cost. So, if the Travellers visit a mining outpost whose population they are courting as an allied Faction, they do not need to pay an interaction cost just to refuel unless the installation is closed to traffic.

Obtaining cooperation from a Faction normally requires an Average (8+) check using Leadership, Diplomat or Persuade as appropriate. This is subject to the DMs shown on the Faction Modifiers table.

A Faction will refuse to even consider requests above its Alignment. Asking a neutral Faction to launch a coup in order to install a more pirate-friendly regime is highly unlikely to succeed, unless the Travellers find some way to persuade the Faction leaders. Activities that generate adventures or roleplayed out should always trump mere dice-based decisions.

Example of Faction Use and Misuse

The government of a particular world is Neutral towards the Travellers and they want to nudge it to a Tolerant stance. The Travellers' first idea is to tell their friends in the Starport Workers Union (considered to be an economic group since they do not run the port itself but can influence what goes on there) to make it happen. They are hoping to just roll some dice and get a safe port. This is a misuse of the Faction system: Factions are not meta-game assets allowing the Travellers to bypass obstacles or reduce the campaign to a few dice rolls.

Instead the Travellers come up with a scheme whereby they start selling a lot of goods in the port at discount prices, hoping to create demand and a habit of not asking too many questions. They ask their friends in the Starport Workers Union to ensure their goods are not too rigorously inspected in case their origins are questionable. This requires a bit of work on the Travellers' part and thus is a valid action. After paying the interaction cost the Travellers have the cooperation of the port workers and can carry out their scheme. The Referee even gives the Travellers a positive DM when it is time to roll for attitude shift on the part of the target world, thanks to the vocal support of the union foremen and a vague threat of strikes if the new suppliers of must-have discount goods are not given preferential treatment.

Faction Alignment

Faction Alignment	Actions Possible	Request DM
Hostile	Improve relations or just begging not to be shot at	–6
Unfriendly	Improve relations	–4
Suspicious	Improve relations	–2
Neutral	Minor information requests and small favours such as allowing refuelling at an otherwise closed installation	0
Tolerant	Minor illegal activity such as ignoring a cargo's origins or not reporting suspicious damage to a ship	+2
Friendly	Major illegal activity such as knowingly receiving pirated goods, supplying illegal weaponry or engaging in conflict	+4
Allied (Haven)	Open support or declaration of allegiance	+6

Faction Modifiers

Factor	DM
Action has no real consequences, such as improving relations without undertaking any activities	+2
Action is illegal but the risk is slight	–1
Action is illegal and involves significant risk	–3
Action has serious repercussions, such as making an armed attack on an installation or government forces	–5
Action has extremely serious consequences, such as becoming an active pirate or making a coup attempt	–8

FACTIONS AS WORLD GOVERNMENTS

The government of a world with a Population code of 4 can be considered a Faction for the purposes of these rules. Larger planetary populations are too complex to be considered a single Faction. However, a Faction could be installed as a new world government if the Travellers play their cards right. As already noted, Faction activities should never be viewed as a simple dice mechanic for bypassing the difficult parts of the Travellers' task, but if they make a good plan and carry it out, a coup or other takeover could be launched.

A coup does not have to be military in nature. The Travellers might play local politics to the point where economic disruption and loss of confidence in the government causes an emergency election or even a popularly-installed undemocratic government. A struggling world might even end up requesting Drinax send them a governor and some administrators to sort out an emergency… purely on a temporary basis of course.

Clever Travellers can build relationships with local Factions and then advance them into positions of power, such that when the day comes for Drinax to call for allies there are economic, social and political groups on a dozen worlds all clamouring for their government to join the new interstellar kingdom. The Travellers might build quite an empire this way, perhaps without anyone (including King Oleb!) knowing just how much power they wield.

Of course, revolutions do not always make good governments and the Travellers' allies might turn their backs once they have what they want. Equally, the Travellers might build up a Faction until it can take control of its homeworld precisely because it will not produce a good government. In the wake of revolution, heroes from Drinax swoop in to save the day and restore the rightful rulers… and they have a proposal for an interstellar alliance that would prevent this sort of instability from recurring. Suddenly membership of Drinax' emerging alliance seems desirable and the Travellers have gained a staunch ally whilst looking like the good guys.

TORPOL CLUSTER

TORPOL CLUSTER

The Torpol Cluster is the name given to three worlds in Tlaiowaha subsector that all lie within jump-1 of one another. Three worlds is a small cluster but these three are important as they provide a link between the Wildeman Cluster and the Sindalian Main (by way of Marduk), which permits jump-2 traffic to transit from Imperial space to the territory of the Florian League. Traffic bound for the Aslan Hierate also comes through these systems as an alternative to the Wildeman Cluster/Borderland Cluster transit.

These three worlds are therefore of strategic importance to both the Imperium and Aslan Hierate, just as they were to the old Sindalian Empire. That importance was a double-edged sword; the wars that wracked the empire in its last days caused enormous damage on Clarke in particular. The scars of orbital bombardment can still be seen and there are lingering psychological effects too. The strange society of Clarke was born in nuclear fire and, while Torpol and Blue have gone in different directions, there is still a cultural memory of what happened and could happen again.

At the present time the border of the Aslan Hierate is stable, not least due to the jump-3 or jump-4 gap between the worlds at the outer edge and those deeper in. Eventually, expansion will occur and when it does it is likely to come rapidly. A more powerful Drinax could be a barrier to such expansion, at least for a time. Not only would Drinax prevent the annexation of its own system but presumably those surrounding it too. That would buy the Torpol Cluster some time, though in the long term an Aslan explosion up and along the Sindalian Main is probably inevitable.
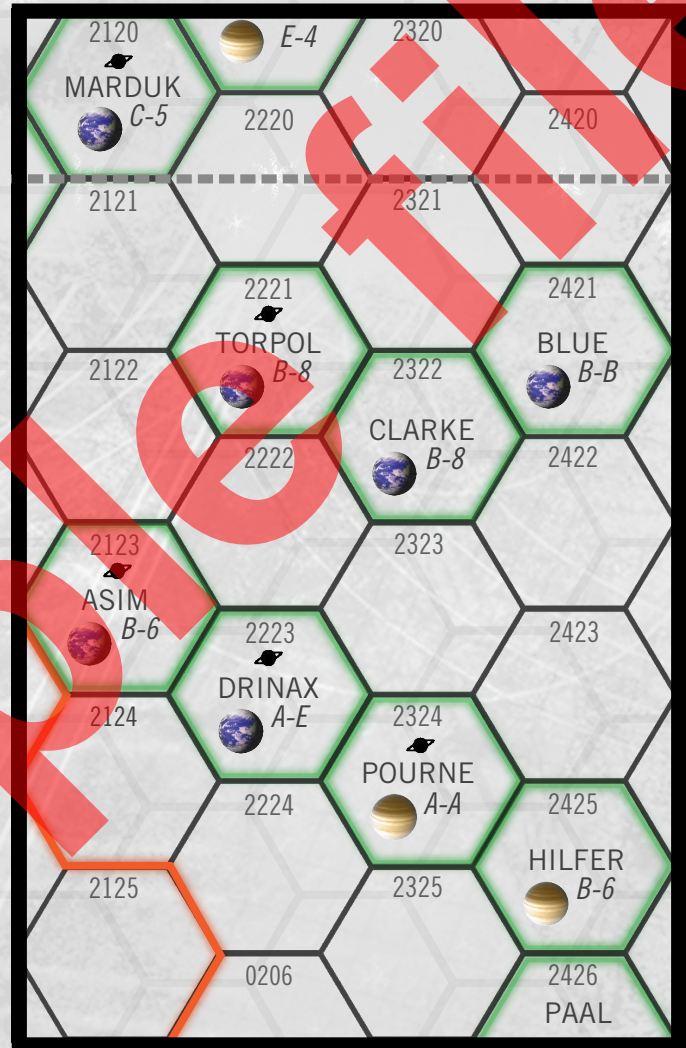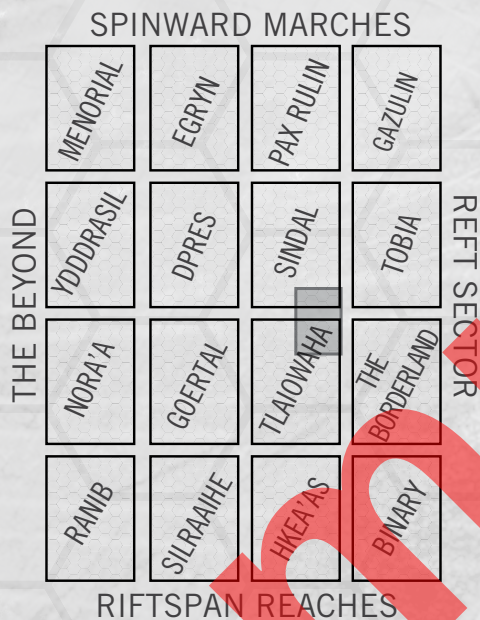
This is most definitely not in the interests of the Third Imperium, since it would not only move the Aslan border much closer to Imperial territory but also cut off the Imperial-Florian trade route or at least force it to run through foreign territory. This is one of a great many strategic concerns for the Imperium, whose resources are spread thin. As a result there is a small Imperial presence in the cluster, mainly in the form of intelligence-gathering agents and local assets. These are typically people and organisations unconnected with the Imperium but willing to take Imperial Credits in return for furthering the Imperium's agenda.

The Imperium sends naval ships through the cluster on a semi-regular basis. Some are escorts for particularly important trade ships or convoys; others are warships showing the flag. Old destroyer escorts and fleet destroyers are the most common vessels sighted in the cluster, often spending a week or two in the Torpol system and a shorter period around Clarke or Blue. The Imperial Navy has no official jurisdiction in this area but the principle that the Imperium is powerful enough to do as it pleases applies here; Imperial ships will hunt pirates or search suspect vessels if there is need, although they usually request (and receive) permission from local world governments.

The cluster sees a fair amount of internal trade, with ships plying between ports in the same system or jumping within the cluster. Through-trade is extensive, with Torpol acting as a stopover and liberty port for many ships that come through. The cluster might thus offer rich pickings for pirates, although the presence of an Imperial trade route makes this a potentially hazardous undertaking.

PARTIAL MAP OF THE
SINDAL & TLAIOWAHA SUBSECTORS

TROJAN REACH SECTOR

SPINWARD MARCHES

MENORIAL	EGRYN	PAX RULIN	GAZULIN
YDDDRASIL	DPRES	SINDAL	TOBIA
NORA'A	GOERTAL	TLAIOWAHA	THE BORDERLAND
RANIB	SILRAAIHE	HKEA'AS	BINARY

THE BEYOND — **REFT SECTOR**

RIFTSPAN REACHES

Map hexes:

- 2120 MARDUK C-5
- E-4 (2220)
- 2320
- 2420
- 2121 / 2321
- 2221 TORPOL B-8
- 2421 BLUE B-B
- 2122 / 2322
- 2222 CLARKE B-8
- 2422
- 2123 ASIM B-6
- 2323
- 2223 DRINAX A-E
- 2423
- 2124 / 2324 POURNE A-A
- 2224 / 2425 HILFER B-6
- 2125 / 2325
- 0206 / 2426 PAAL

Legend:

- Gas Giant
- *B-6* Starport Class & Tech Lvl
- Secure System
- Aslan Colonies
- Planet (Dry)
- Planet (Water Present)