

# TRAVELLER

MERCENARY ADVENTURE 0: TRIAL BY FIRE



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

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MERCENARY ADVENTURE 0: TRIAL BY FIRE

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# INTRODUCTION

*Trial by Fire* is different to the typical *Traveller* adventure, as it concerns the activities of a mercenary unit rather than a band of adventurers. The events that form the backdrop to this adventure could provide opportunities for intrepid Travellers but this will mean operating in a war zone. It might be interesting to run standard adventures alongside this one, with the Travellers encountering the mercenaries or perhaps even being the cause of some of their troubles. However, *Trial by Fire* focuses on the military aspects of the situation and is appropriate for a small mercenary unit with considerably more firepower than the average Traveller band.

In *Trial by Fire*, the Travellers will raise and field a small mercenary formation to participate in the conflict on New Moscow. In addition to completing their missions and defeating enemies, the Travellers will need to navigate the treacherous waters of local politics to ensure their force is kept supplied and supported. A mis-step in the corridors of power can be as deadly as any foe on the battlefield and it may be that the New Moscow conflict is won in the field but lost at the negotiating table.

## INVOLVING THE TRAVELLERS

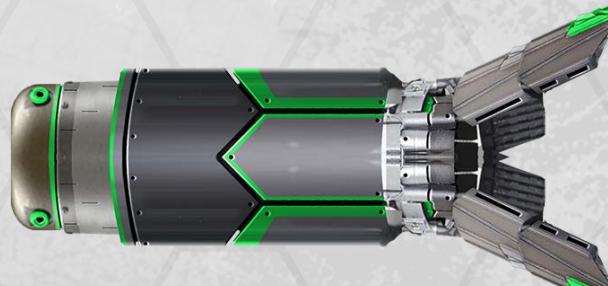
The adventure begins when the Travellers accept a contract from the government of New Moscow. Their remit is to help regain control of a complex situation in which multiple factions are fighting for dominance over the world's agricultural exports. Their motivations might vary; all that matters is that they are on New Moscow, armed and ready for action.

The Travellers might get involved in the New Moscow situation for purely financial reasons – they want to form a mercenary unit and a suitable source of employment is available. They might also have a personal stake in the conflict. Perhaps one of their number has relatives or friends on New Moscow. If so, the Traveller might have sold their friends on the idea of assisting in the conflict. Afterward, the mercenary unit might move on to new employment, with or without the Traveller, or might be sold to a new commander.

This happens sometimes and is more common than being amalgamated within a larger force. The sort of people who raise and lead a military unit tend not to like subordinating themselves but if they can agree the sale with their personnel they may be able to sell the unit as a going concern and effectively retire from the mercenary marketplace. There are even a few commanders who have raised, established, then sold a series of effective units, although this is rare.

The Travellers' involvement might not be entirely freelance. There are several interested parties who cannot intervene directly for various reasons and any of them might be willing to act through a supposedly independent mercenary force. This permits them to maintain distance from the conflict and act impartially, despite them having put up the money to raise the force and to hire it – through different agents, of course. This is a common gambit where politics or treaties make direct action impossible or where an Imperial noble expects to be made the arbiter of any negotiations. Provable involvement will make the noble ineligible for such a role but carefully managed catspaws can create a situation where the negotiations are already biased in favour of the noble's desired outcome when they begin... and they control the process as well.

The Referee can make the Travellers agents of one of the involved parties – knowingly or otherwise – if this seems desirable. It does limit some of the choices the Travellers will make but also allows the Referee to nudge the Travellers in the right direction if they lose focus or cannot decide how to proceed.



## Administering Trial by Fire

*Trial By Fire* guides the Travellers through the process of raising, equipping and fielding their mercenary force and might be considered a tutorial for a mercenary campaign. The stages are all important, so even if the Travellers are desperate to get out and start fighting they should progress through these actions first. The formation process will allow the Travellers to organise their force the way they want it and will also serve to familiarise the less military-minded of them with the concepts and terms in use.

Once the unit is formed, it will begin serving in the field. Whilst it can be convenient to pace developments of the campaign alongside the actions of the Travellers, the factions and the conflict will not stand still whilst the Travellers faff about. If they insist on halting operations for two months because they want additional training or are waiting for their mail-order grav tank... or they have decided to do side missions to make money for more weapons... then events will move forward without them. Time does not stand still just because the Travellers want to do so.



# THE WORLD OF NEW MOSCOW



New Moscow (B76779A-7) lies at the very edge of Imperial space, in the Tobia subsector of the Trojan Reaches. The subsector capital, seat of the Duke of Tobia, lies just four parsecs away but New Moscow is separated from it by more than distance. The majority of the subsector is dominated by the Tobia Cluster, which has jump-1 links sprawling away into the Usher subsector. Jump-1 trade is confined to the cluster, whilst those vessels with higher capabilities have few reasons to visit New Moscow. There are much better opportunities in other directions.

To rimward-trailing of New Moscow is the Great Rift, a significant barrier to navigation. The neighbouring world of Batav is administered directly from Tobia and, whilst not officially restricted, is subject to enhanced travel regulations as a result of an Ancients site being found there. New Moscow itself was colonised in what is sometimes referred to as the ‘rush to the edge’, in which several worlds were rapidly settled along the fringe of the Great Rift. There seems to have been no overall reason for this pattern of colonisation, other than perhaps the attraction of natural frontiers.

Once settled, New Moscow expanded steadily into a breadbasket world, supplying the Tobia Cluster with bulk and quality foodstuffs. A port capable of handling bulk grain ships was necessary and funded using loans from the banks of Tobia. The investment was a good one and for many years New Moscow enjoyed stable prosperity. It was never a rich world in the sense of huge industrial output and large-scale commercial activity but was a decent place to live and work.

Other than the starport/capital, New Moscow’s cities never expanded beyond the local hub level. Each was the centre of a hinterland characterised by farming towns and luxury-foods plantations. Most businesses were independently owned and operated in a spirit of generally healthy competition. Industrial farms existed

but the majority of produce came from modest-sized holdings. Society was based on a gentleman-farmer model, with towns and cities operating supporting businesses. Government was minimal, with most regions providing their own emergency and security services to a standardised model.

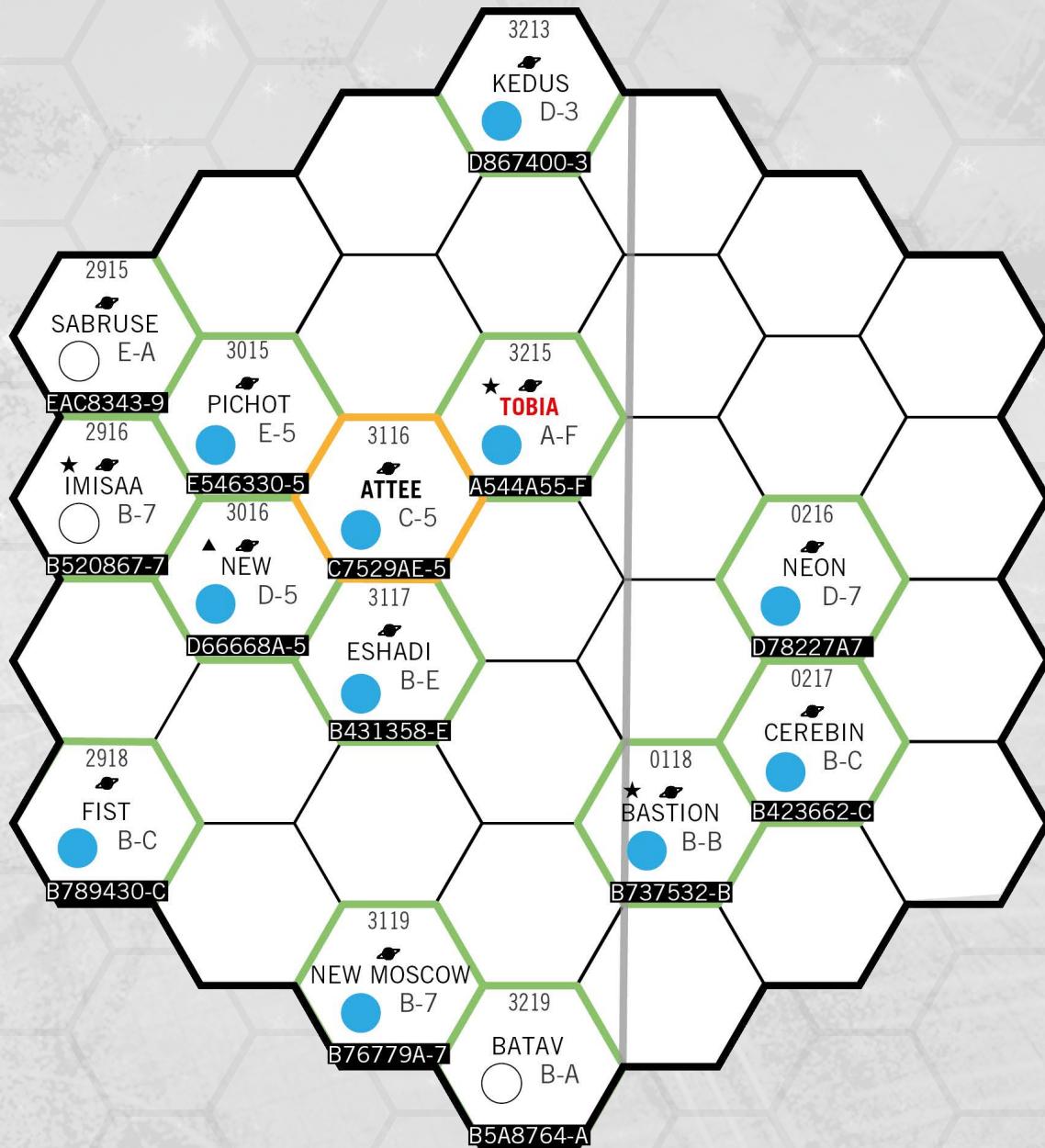
New Moscow’s technological base never really developed. With a decentralised population and few large cities there was never the critical mass of industrial activity to push technological advancement and little need. The world’s TL7 industrial base produced most of what was needed, with higher-tech items imported as standalone equipment or black-boxed to interoperate with locally produced gear.

The situation remained stable for many years, during which imports of higher-tech items gradually increased. These were mainly luxury goods or quality-of-life purchases and were not restricted to the elite. A significant proportion of the population began spending more than they should on consumer goods, often trying to outdo one another with status symbols or this season’s must-haves. Lavish spending became overspending, straining the economy. This might not have had too much impact but for events elsewhere.

Turbulence in the markets of the Tobia Cluster and trends for certain foods not produced on New Moscow resulted in a sudden downturn in profits. Unconcerned at first, the people of New Moscow continued to spend and to borrow. By the time the markets recovered, the local situation was dangerously unstable and society began to undergo irreversible changes. Wealth, once distributed relatively evenly, began to concentrate. Those with the reserves to buy out their competitors began to build agricultural empires and it was not uncommon for rivals to be undermined by financial shenanigans until they were in a position to be acquired.

## TOBIA SUBSECTOR

## USHER SUBSECTOR



— Secure System  
— Amber Zone  
- - - Imperial Border  
— Subsector Border  
— X-boat route

█ Gas Giant  
▲ Imperial Scout Base  
★ Imperial Naval Base

○ Planet (dry)  
● Planet (water present)

The process continued until what had been a world of highly productive individual businesses became characterised by corporate-style agrobusiness groups, all of which were engaged in a struggle for supremacy and market dominance. Efficiency actually increased, in terms of overall productivity but this was offset by the costs of keeping rivals at bay and bribing the ineffectual central government.

Trade wars were perhaps inevitable and given the lack of significance of New Moscow the first conflicts to break out were deemed 'internal matters' by the Imperial authorities. Even disruption to the world's economy elicited little interest – the Tobia Cluster was not short of food and little else of use came out of New Moscow. Conflict has since intensified, with Imperial reactions limited to diplomatic pressure and the establishment of a 'no-fight zone' around the starport.

## WORLD DATA

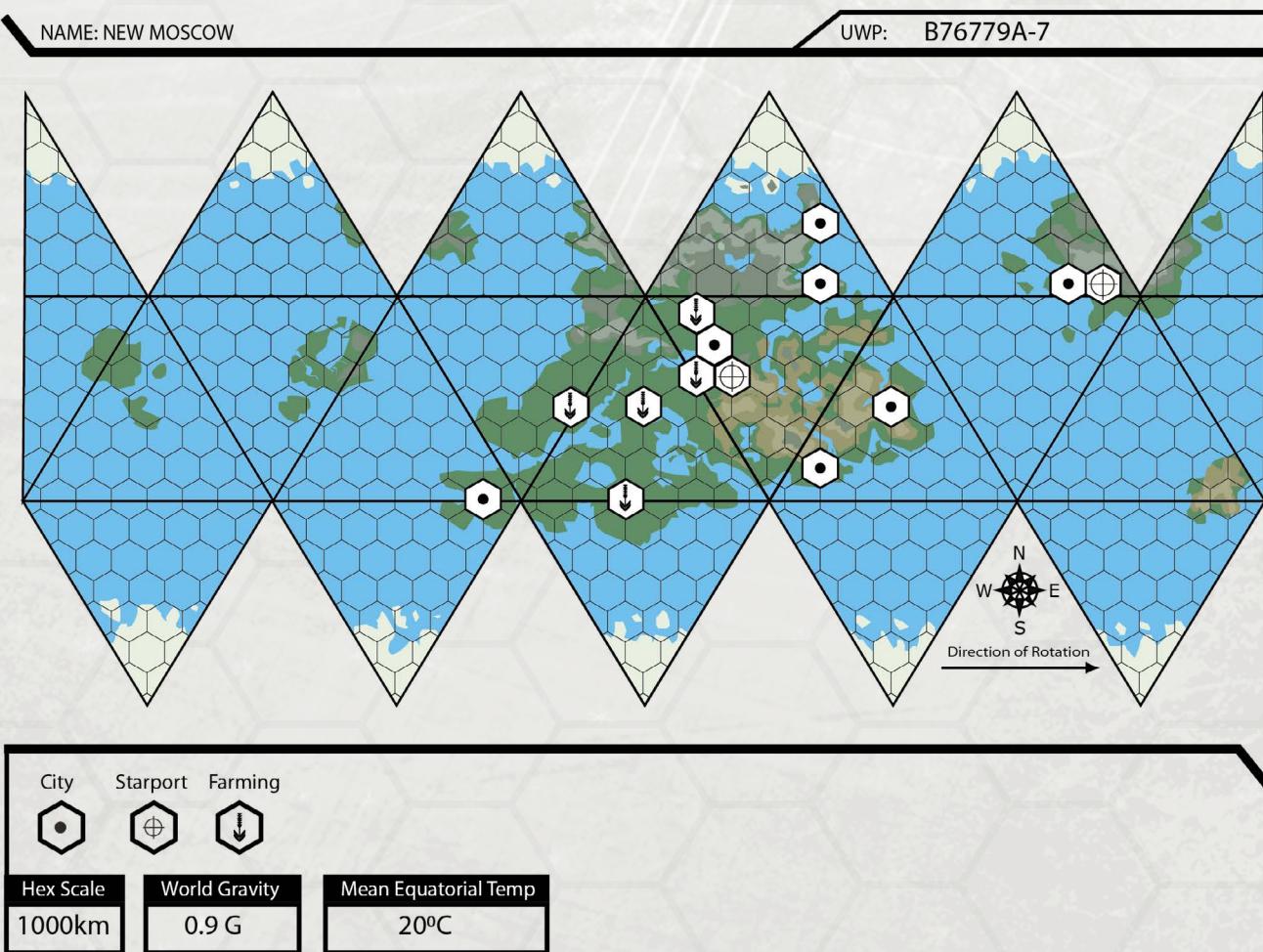
New Moscow is a quintessential garden world – 70% water coverage, average gravity, a good atmosphere and acceptable surface temperatures. Had it been located somewhere else it might have seen heavy colonisation

but lying on the fringe of the Great Rift it was on the road to nowhere. As a result its population reached and became stable at just over 50 million. Regions and cities enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy, with the central government mainly overseeing trade with the wider universe.

Today, the situation is quite different. Some regions have coalesced into factions; others are a battleground in ideological and sometimes literal terms as the factions try to win over settlements and cities. The central government has issued a series of ever-tighter laws but cannot enforce them outside a small region around the capital. Even there, it is propped up by an Imperial peacekeeping force without which the capital and starport would become fair game for the factions.

## New Moscow City

The capital, New Moscow City, is located more or less in the centre of the world's main continent. It is surrounded by a nominally 200 kilometre 'no fight zone'. In practice this distance varies as it is based on landmarks and terrain features rather than map lines. One such landmark is the bridge at Tobol Crossing.



Anyone setting foot – wheel or relative airspace location marker – on the bridge is in ‘no fight’ territory and attacks on the bridge are treated as attacks on the peacekeeping force. This will have detrimental results for the guilty party and has been avoided thus far. The approaches to the bridge have seen running battles, which the peacekeeping force has been ordered not to become involved in, to prevent a convoy from reaching the capital. This situation is typical of New Moscow today, with politics and legal brinkmanship mixed in with the fighting.

The city itself is surrounded by farmland, like most cities on New Moscow. It is built to mature TL7 levels but with many features of higher-tech cities. Buildings are usually large and tall, widely spaced, with open areas in between. Landing platforms for grav vehicles are in evidence almost everywhere. Larger structures are connected by light railways and served by internal electric vehicle networks. Although the technology in use is limited, the concepts are very much those of an advanced starfaring society.

The city and its hinterland are subject to strict laws, many of them new and sometimes rather confusing. Enforcement is by an expanded police force, which is still coming to terms with its changed role. One consequence of this is a great many arrests for actions that turn out not to be illegal and this is creating resentment among the populace. The Imperial peacekeeping force is based at the city, sending out patrols to observe conditions elsewhere on the planet but mostly restricting itself to securing the no-fight zone.

This peacekeeping force was originally intended to be much larger but diplomatic efforts to create a peace for it to keep came to nothing. Currently the force consists of a composite lift-infantry battlegroup in reinforced brigade-size, plus an aerospace defence contingent and a detachment of Imperial Marines. The latter are not peacekeepers; they are responsible for protecting the starport – which is Imperial territory – and will not operate outside it.

The peacekeeping force is sometimes augmented by mercenary units, who typically provide capabilities the Imperial forces lack. It is formed from regular army units and whilst its personnel do their best they are not trained for intelligence work or small-scale raids to capture those who attack off-limits targets. Besides, the Imperial authorities are trying to avoid conflict between their forces and those of local factions since officially the conflict is still an ‘internal matter’. Mercenaries are preferable for small-scale operations whilst the brigade remains concentrated and highly

visible as a deterrent. Cynics point out that this means all the casualties fall on mercenary forces whilst the so-called peacekeepers have an easy ride.

The capital is used as a base and safe-zone for rest and refitting by mercenary forces deployed elsewhere on the planet. This sometimes leads to personnel from units that have been fighting one another finding themselves in the same bar. Results can vary, from shared reminiscence of events from both perspectives to a down-and-dirty bar fight. For the most part, mercenaries stay in the parts of town that cater best to them, creating a small financial boom there and troubling the rest of the population little.

## **The Eastern Plains**

The Eastern Plains are one of the drier parts of the main continent, with some areas being little more than semi-desert. The region is characterised by widely spaced small cities, mostly on watercourses or atop large natural aquifers. There is a more densely populated region along the coast, with several cities specialising in aquaculture. These have, for the most part, remained separate from the conflict elsewhere and are quietly emerging as the main economic force on continent. This is not least due to lower military expenses and little destruction of resources. In the long term these coastal cities will either emerge as the winners in the conflict – due to not taking part – or they will have to face the winning faction as it consolidates.

## **The Amur-Vilyuy Basin**

Lying to the west of the capital, the Amur-Vilyuy Basin is a well-watered region home to the world’s most productive farmland. It was in this rich river system that the conflict started and it remains the most disputed area. Conflict is sporadic here, just as everywhere, but there is more at stake for the winners and losers, and destruction has a greater effect on the world’s economy.

## **The Northern Mainland**

The Northern Mainland is characterised by steep mountains in the east, running in an unbroken chain almost to the tip of the continent. The cities on the eastern side of these mountains are small and concerned mostly with aquaculture, whilst the wide plains on the western side are good cattle country. A variety of animals are raised, some of them native to New Moscow. Herds range from bulk meat and leather to high-value luxury food and goods. The Northern Mainland is gradually coming under the sway of the Real Future faction but is by no means unified nor likely to become so in the next few years.

# THE NEW MOSCOW CONFLICT

The New Moscow conflict is a multi-way not-quite civil war. No formal state of war exists, although the government has declared an emergency and requested assistance from the Imperium. The state of emergency has allowed a raft of new and tighter laws to be pushed through but has not done much to control the conflict.

The overall situation is one of what might be termed 'lukewarm war'. A state of armed tension exists across most of the planet but actual fighting is uncommon. When there is an outbreak of violence it tends to be either low-intensity or of very short duration. Desultory skirmishing is the norm in some areas, whilst in others there is a pretence of business as usual until a strike or other military operation suddenly materialises. In both cases the fighting is in support of a political-economic agenda, with all factions having the same ultimate goal.

The decentralised agricultural businesses of New Moscow are coalescing – whether they like it or not – into large business groups, which are willing to absorb their competitors by force if necessary. Since such activities are illegal, pretexts and justifications must be in place before any military operation intended to take territory or assets change hands. Afterward, legal wrangling and outright bribery of the government's investigators will be necessary to ensure gains are kept.

In addition to the main factions, each region has small local defence associations or insurgent movements fighting against them. Most of these are alliances of necessity, formed by people who would prefer to be independent but need some form of collective defence against the more organised forces of the large factions. These defensive or insurgent forces are mostly armed with civilian weapons such as hunting rifles and shotguns, and have little or no military equipment or vehicles.

## THE FACTIONS

The most powerful faction on New Moscow is still the government, which officially controls the whole planet and does not recognise any of the other factions as a political entity. This works to the benefit

of the government as well as the factions, since the government would have to respond to armed force used by a recognised political entity. Failure to do so is an acknowledgement that the government cannot control its own territory and is likely to have serious consequences. The pretence that nothing out of the ordinary is occurring allows the factions to do as they please but keeps the government out of a civil war it cannot win.

Despite officially being in charge, the government cannot control any territory outside the no-fight zone, other than around a few bases. Its small and underfunded forces have withdrawn from most other regions but continue to mount patrols there from time-to-time. These are conducted with great solemnity and a certain amount of pomp but they are for show only. The factions typically refrain from engaging government forces and the government does not try too hard to locate them.

When conflict in a region gets out of hand, the government makes a big show of sending its troops to restore order – and they are backed up by a rather more assertive Imperial peacekeeping force. Government officials will typically stall for as long as possible to avoid having to intervene and the factions have learned to play along with this face-saving exercise. Thus intervention in a troubled region is something of a 'clock' for operations there. If a faction can make gains cleanly then calm the situation down sufficiently there will be no governmental intervention. If not, operations may have to be aborted. The day may come when a faction is confident of being able to defeat the government and take control but with Imperial forces propping up the planetary army this is a no-win situation for the present.

Governmental forces are typical of this kind of world. Mostly equipped with locally produced equipment they are organised as battalions that are sometimes grouped into temporary brigades. Wheeled vehicles are almost exclusively used for ground transport, with a handful of old grav gunships deployed as air support. New Moscow does not have an air force as such.

Battalions use a standardised three-and-one model, with three rifle companies and a support company. The latter contains a light self-propelled artillery platoon, an aerospace defence platoon, an armoured reconnaissance platoon and the battalion headquarters platoon. Rifle companies have four platoons; three are composed of infantry riding in six-wheeled APCs and one is a headquarters platoon, which has a command vehicle, aerospace defence vehicle and two APCs carrying infantry.

Infantry personnel are equipped with TL7 small arms and light support weapons and are supported by 25mm autocannon on their vehicles. Armoured reconnaissance vehicles carry a 75mm cannon as their main armament. Equipment is of reasonable quality but is old, with some items in short supply and morale is low. Nevertheless, a governmental infantry battalion is quite capable of crushing most opposition the factions might mount.

The government also controls a number of static emplacements and bases, some of which mount heavy artillery weapons capable of dominating the surrounding countryside. The loss of such an installation would be a severe blow to the government's credibility but would also trigger a large-scale response that would certainly pull in Imperial troops to assist.

### Government Motor Rifle Battalion

The most likely government force the Travellers will encounter is a motor rifle battalion, or a company detached from one. Combat equipment is considered to be Basic, with most other items provided at a Sparse or Minimal level.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Governmental Motor Rifle Battalion	—
Unit Size	Battalion	—
Unit Type	Motorised Infantry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Motorised	+4
Combat	5	-1
Bombardment	1	-2
Aerospace	1	-2
Support	2	-2
CEI or DEI	6	-1
Morale	5	-1
Reputation	6	0

### Imperial Peacekeeping Force

Although the Imperial peacekeeping force is organised as a full brigade with supports, it is unlikely ever to operate as a single unit. More commonly, smaller battlegroups are detached. These might be in reinforced battalion strength but most operations require only a company. Some additional forces might be attached if necessary, but on New Moscow the aerospace threat is minimal and armoured vehicles are vulnerable to infantry support weapons. A grav-mobile lift infantry company is more than enough to deal with most situations.

A lift infantry company consists of three platoons of infantry equipped with combat armour and TL12 small arms, riding in grav APCs. These are fitted with either a direct-fire plasma gun for support or a laser anti-missile/aerospace defence mount. The fourth platoon in each company has a headquarters vehicle, a grav APC carrying an infantry section, an aerospace defence vehicle and a light grav tank. Given the technological disparity between the peacekeeping force and the factions' combat assets, a rapid high-firepower assault could eliminate most threats before the APCs even touch down. Infantry need to dismount only to mop up

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Imperial Army Peacekeeping Force	—
Unit Size	Company	—
Unit Type	Lift Infantry	—
Unit TL	12	+2
Mobility Type	Grav	+8
Combat	10	+1
Bombardment	0	0
Aerospace	3	-1
Support	7	0
CEI or DEI	8	0
Morale	10	+2
Reputation	10	+2



## Real Future

Real Future is the largest of the on-planet factions. It is active in all areas but strongest on the Northern Mainland. The faction's mission statement proclaims that it will 'give the people of New Moscow a real future' by unifying the 'inefficient and reactionary economic sector to create an agrobusiness powerhouse'. Real Future loudly proclaims its loyalty to the central government and provides considerable funding above and beyond its normal taxation. It is quite possible this funding is all that is propping up the near-bankrupt central administration and it may be curtailed at some point to cause a collapse. In the meantime Real Future exerts considerable interest over the government and can usually get its actions rubber-stamped without difficulty. This position has the effect of forcing Real Future to move slowly and cautiously, swallowing up rivals one by one in a string of 'mergers' and 'debt-resolution' annexations.

Real Future has the nearest thing to an organised military on New Moscow and makes use of mercenary forces mainly as a cadre to train its own personnel. It typically fields company-sized 'security groups' equipped with similar weaponry to the governmental forces. Indeed, Real Future has somehow acquired some equipment identical to that used by the planetary army and in similarly distressed condition. A security group typically consists of around 120 personnel with TL7 small arms, supported by one or two wheeled APCs or armoured cars identical to those used by the planetary armed forces. Additional transportation is provided by civilian trucks, most of which are rugged designs well suited to operations in the outback. Real Future's paramilitary security units are likely to be more effective than the planetary army; they are better led and more motivated to win.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Real Future Mobile Security Group	—
Unit Size	Company	—
Unit Type	Motorised Infantry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Motorised	+4
Combat	6	0
Bombardment	0	—
Aerospace	0	—
Support	2	-2
CEI or DEI	6	-1
Morale	8	0
Reputation	7	0

## Alliance of the Western Rivers

The AWR is concentrated mainly in the Amur-Vilyuy Basin. It is in many ways the polar opposite to Real Future. Where RF proclaims its actions as being made on behalf of the central government, AWR loudly condemns the government's lack of decisive action as a reason for its own 'necessary self-defence measures'. AWR is also much more loosely organised than Real Future and has a history of rather bitter internal disputes. This has curtailed its growth and may ultimately lead to a breakup. For now, the alliance has a real chance of gaining full control of the western basin.

AWR uses small mercenary formations for most of its offensive operations. These are portrayed as retaliation for attacks by other factions, which the central government should have prevented or as elimination of threats created by others. Local security is provided by a 'citizens militia' equipped for the most part with imported small arms but lacking in essential support equipment such as communications gear and battlefield sensors. Large-scale operations are chaotic in nature due to internal rivalries but AWR forces are competent enough at the platoon level.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	AWR Local Defence Militia	—
Unit Size	Platoon	—
Unit Type	Infantry	—
Unit TL	10	+1
Mobility Type	Infantry	0
Combat	9	+1
Bombardment	0	—
Aerospace	0	—
Support	1	-2
CEI or DEI	5	-1
Morale	6	0
Reputation	4	-1

## Eastern Loyalist Collective

The ELC is mostly concentrated, if that is the right word, on the Eastern Plains but has small enclaves elsewhere. It is loosely organised around influential and charismatic figures and has managed to create an effective semi-military force. This is based around the Eastern Plains Security Initiative, an illegal but tacitly accepted paramilitary raised to reduce lawlessness in regions the planetary army tended to neglect. The initiative raised and trained its forces in defiance of the law but they were effective in doing what the government could not and had been an institution for decades before the present conflict.

The EPSI is equipped with locally available small arms, favouring powerful marksman rifles over light automatics. Its grey-uniformed personnel are a mix of professional marshals and volunteers who serve when the need arises. Originally formed to deal with thieves and bandits, the force uses a mix of civilian off-road vehicles and horses for mobility. Organisation is very loose, with combat forces pulled together from whomever is available. A few support weapons are in use, mostly machineguns and mortars fitted to pickup trucks. Personnel are individually skilful and motivated by loyalty to friends, neighbours and fellow members.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	ELC Mounted Infantry Band	—
Unit Size	Platoon	—
Unit Type	Cavalry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Mounted	+2
Combat	6	0
Bombardment	0	—
Aerospace	0	—
Support	1	-2
CEI or DEI	9	+1
Morale	11	+2
Reputation	8	0



# THE NEW MOSCOW TICKET



At the beginning of the adventure the Travellers will know little about the situation they are getting involved in beyond what they are presented with in the ticket. Whilst this information is generally true it is partial and biased. This is a common situation for mercenaries and successful commanders have a habit of doing some research before they deploy a force.

## **Security, Section to Company. Standard Rate plus bonus. Ongoing.**

The world of New Moscow is an agricultural garden world on the edge of Imperial space. Recent economic troubles have severely disrupted some regions, resulting in insurgent activity. The planetary government seeks mercenary forces to assist in pacifying the troubled regions.

The planetary government of New Moscow requires one or more mercenary forces, of section to company strength, for ongoing security operations. Unit must be capable of relocation over significant distances but full tactical mobility is not required. Standard rates are payable, calculated as double the salary budget for a typical unit per month plus significant support and basing. A bonus equivalent to two payments is offered for satisfactory completion of the mission.

Opposition is expected to be light. Insurgent groups are armed with TL7 small arms and have few vehicles or artillery. Aerospace threat is negligible.

## **REFEREE'S NOTES**

The ticket's particulars are more or less accurate, although the 'insurgent' activity is more complex than represented. The Travellers will be based out of the starport, at least at first, and can expect full resupply with TL7 items. If they require more advanced equipment such as ammunition for higher-tech small arms they will have to source this through their usual channels.

The mercenaries will be expected to make sure they do not make the government look bad and must behave with restraint wherever possible. When they do fight the government expects victory, of course, and although support is theoretically available from the peacekeeping force and planetary army, calling upon it will create problems for the Travellers.

What the planetary government has not mentioned is that it is in a terrible economic state. Its exports are greatly reduced by the factional politics and disruption of logistics caused by the conflict. The army is demoralised and inefficient, and most of the planet is beyond governmental control. Highlighting this situation will displease any officials the Travellers have to deal with, so diplomacy is necessary when dealing with the issues.

This unfortunate situation will impact the Travellers' activities in various ways. It will become apparent to them that some government officials have developed a siege mentality and just want to plod through another day without having to confront problems they cannot solve. Others are trying to break the cycle of decline but becoming desperate. There are also some who seem unconcerned. Either they are enormously in denial or something else is afoot – which is the case with most of them. Those officials with connections to the factions or who are profiting from the situation are generally more hopeful and less stressed than the others, except when something goes wrong for their faction.

The Travellers' task is to raise a military force if they do not already have one and to carry out a series of missions for the planetary government. At the beginning of the ticket the client does not have a specific set of tasks laid out for the Travellers. This is partly because the situation keeps changing and partly due to cross-cutting agendas within the government. The Travellers' unit will be a response force initially, until it has proven its effectiveness. This means its actions will be directed according to what is happening in the three major conflict areas.

The first mission given to the Travellers is quite simple. They are ordered into the Eastern Plains, to escort government investigators tasked with determining whether a recent clash between factions was legal and justified. From there, the Travellers are redeployed to the Amur-Vilyuy Basin to support a government force that has got itself into trouble.

Payment for a ticket is usually based on a multiple of the standard salaries for a unit of the type. Since the Travellers might be fielding anything from a section to a company the ticket does not specify the amount. The Referee should determine the pay offer based on the closest parallel unit. For example, standard salaries for an infantry platoon would be Cr40000 per month, so if the Travellers' force is in the 20–40 personnel range this would be appropriate. The Referee can amend the figure as necessary.

A security mission is typically two months' standard salaries per month of the ticket, plus a bonus. It would be reasonable to offer an additional month's salaries as a hiring bonus and a bonus for successful completion of the mission. Completion bonuses can vary considerably but 10–25% of the total amount paid in the course of the ticket is not uncommon depending on the degree of success.

Payment is received immediately upon signature of the contract in the case of the hiring bonus, then monthly thereafter. Completion bonus is payable when the unit stands down from its deployment. All payments are lodged with the licensing agency so will be paid even if the government collapses. However, at the discretion of the licensing agency some or all of the fee can be withheld or, if already paid, imposed as a fine. The licensing agency makes this decision, not the client, but the client can make a case for withholding fees if the mercenaries default on their contract.

*For example, the Travellers have raised an understrength platoon with a few transport vehicles, sufficient to count as an infantry platoon for the purposes of salaries. Standard rate is two months' salaries per month in the field, which would be Cr80000. The Referee rounds this down to Cr75000 as a comfortable figure. The hiring bonus is calculated based on a month's salaries – Cr40000 – but the referee modifies this to Cr50000.*

*The unit will receive Cr50000 immediately upon signing the contract and Cr75000 at the end of every month. This is normally in the form of a bank transfer to the unit's account but other arrangements can be made. A partial month may or may not be considered completed. Sometimes a client will pay the mercenaries to the end of a partial month, whilst others calculate the fee down to the minute. A common compromise is for the*

*mercenaries to remain on-contract to the end of the final month and be paid for it, using the time for recreation and maintenance. An agreement is usually in place so the unit can be deployed in an emergency but the client would have to justify this to the licencing agency. Occasionally a client tries to pull a fast one by running a unit around doing odd jobs in this period, a practice vigorously opposed by most licensing agencies.*

Bonuses for success will be based on the degree of success achieved – as perceived by the client and agreed by the licensing agency – and the time served. So, if the Travellers' unit deploys for two months, earning Cr75000 per month, and received a Cr50000 hiring bonus its success bonus would be based on Cr 200000. A bonus of 15% would be Cr30000. Some units distribute some or all of this kind of bonus among the personnel of the unit or award it to deserving members. A guideline on the level of success bonus payable is found on page 30.

## Ticket Success Indicators

The Travellers will not know ahead of time what they are expected to do, so cannot predict the Ticket Success Indicators at the beginning of the mission. However, once events begin to unfold it will become apparent that certain actions are necessary if the Travellers mission to New Moscow is to be considered a success.

- Critical:** Disprove the allegations in Courtroom Drama.
- Important:** Behave with restraint and present the government in a positive light.
- Routine:** Complete the investigation and uncover the truth in Jine the Cavalry.
- Routine:** Salvage the situation in Reinforcing Defeat.
- Routine:** Get the convoy through in Home Run.

The maximum TSI for this ticket is 13. For the ticket to be considered any sort of success, the planetary government has to survive. The mercenaries might come out looking quite good even if this does not happen but their contracts will be terminated and they will not receive their bonus. If an Imperial intervention against the planetary government takes place the Travellers will not be prosecuted for defending their client against forces other than the Imperial military but certainly will be investigated if they fire upon Imperial personnel. This can still be judged a 'lawful mercenary operation' if circumstances seemed to require it but the Travellers will have some explaining to do. Otherwise, even if the planetary government collapses the mercenary marketplace will judge the Travellers on what they did rather than what happened beyond their control. Thus it is possible to come out of this ticket with a positive TSI and a good reputation despite bonuses not being paid because the client ceased to exist.

# INTO THE FIELD

The Travellers will need a mercenary force of some kind to take part in the conflict on New Moscow. If the Travellers are being created for this adventure they can substitute some of their Benefit rolls for equipment, personnel and other necessities as described in *Book 2*. An existing band of Travellers can also participate in the adventure by using their resources to put a unit together. If neither of these conditions apply, the Travellers will be provided with resources to raise a unit. This should only be done if the Travellers cannot create a force of their own, no matter how small.

If the Travellers lack the resources to raise a force, they will be assigned a contingent of personnel sufficient to put together an infantry section 8–10 personnel strong, including the Travellers, equipped with standard TL9 small arms and personal equipment. They are volunteers from the planetary armed forces and are a little more motivated than most of their peers but of equivalent training standard. Their starting CEI is 6. If this method is used the Travellers will have at their disposal a section-sized force but that does not mean it has to be organised as a standard infantry section. The Travellers can set up their unit any way they see fit, following the process on page 6 of *Book 2* to rate it.

If the Travellers are raising a unit using their own resources, they do not receive personnel from the planetary army. As always they can organise their force as they see fit and buy whatever equipment they can get. The planetary armed forces of New Moscow will provide the Travellers with TL7 small arms and personal kit if they cannot get anything better but they will benefit from obtaining higher-tech gear. Even TL9 equipment is sufficiently far ahead of what the locals have as to give a significant advantage. A Traveller with a TL9 missile launcher is a match for any armoured vehicle they are likely to encounter.

After following the process of raising a mercenary unit, the Travellers must complete a Force Capability Record.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Travellers' Mercenary Unit	
Unit Size		
Unit Type		
Unit TL		
Mobility Type		
Combat		
Bombardment		
Aerospace		
Support		
CEI or DEI		
Morale		
Reputation		

## DEPLOYING

The mercenaries arrive (or perhaps the unit is raised) at New Moscow Downport. The Travellers will notice the temporary forward base set up by the Imperial peacekeeping force – they can hardly miss the presence of a full lift infantry brigade – and the rather less impressive elements of the planetary army at the port. This is a small security contingent; the rest of the army is based elsewhere. There may also be other mercenary units based at the port or members of them enjoying some rest time.

The Travellers' point of contact is Assistant Minister Edhuart Alvarez, who is responsible for overseeing the mercenary force. Alvarez is an honest man and has resisted the temptation to align himself with one of the factions despite the amount of money coming in by way of Real Future in particular. He is dispirited however; astute Travellers will notice he is merely going through the motions and does not seem to have any real hope of success.



Nevertheless, Alvarez welcomes the Travellers to New Moscow and ensures their force has suitable billets at the port. They will be given an enclosure suitable for their unit size, with prefabricated buildings as accommodation and workshops. Troops will be granted the freedom of the port and vouchers that can be redeemed in entertainment and recreation venues. These are not especially generous and it is obvious the world government hopes to recoup some of their investment in terms of stimulating local businesses. With a brigade of Imperial troops in town, some establishments are experiencing a boom period.

Alvarez explains the situation in general terms. There are three primary regions, each with a dominant faction. He stresses there is no war here; the factions are engaged in very hostile business activities but these are aimed at one another. Nobody is shooting at the planetary army and nobody should be shooting at the mercenaries either. However, the factions are gradually consolidating their dominance, by force if necessary, and at times have escalated the situation beyond what is acceptable. Put simply, Alvarez says, if two farmers' collectives want to fight over a field of grain, they are welcome. If they start murdering innocent people there will have to be an investigation and in such a tense situation a heavily armed neutral party is the best way to ensure escalation does not occur.

He delicately tiptoes around the question of why the planetary army cannot be that neutral party, quickly moving on to the mercenaries' first task. It is not complex and should not be dangerous, he says. All the mercenaries have to do is to escort a party of government investigators out into the Eastern Plains to collect evidence about a recent incident. Apparently the dominant local faction, the Eastern Loyalist Collective, intercepted a strike launched at one of its grain terminals. The resulting running battle was nothing out of the ordinary but the faction has requested an investigation. It is claiming the attackers were 'obviously not bandits' and may have been in the pay of one of the other factions.

The attackers were driven to ground in a nearby town where they took hostages. Several people were killed in an attempt to free them, allegations are being thrown around at random and the government needs to find out what actually happened. The mercenaries will protect the investigators and ensure they have access to crime scenes and evidence. They must be seen to be impartial and fair, and Alvarez stresses again that this is not a war zone. There is some violence on-planet but the mercenaries may shoot only in self-defence or to protect their charges.



# JINE THE CAVALRY

The mercenaries' first assignment is in the Eastern Plains. They are to escort a party of eight investigators to visit the site of a recent attack and ensure they have access to all necessary sites and information. The Travellers can assign as much or as little of their force as they like to this mission and might undertake it with a portion of their force before the remainder is finished forming.

If the Travellers have their own transport, the client would prefer they use it. If not, road vehicles will be provided. There is a rail link to the Eastern Plains but it would not be wise to depend on the people who are being investigated to provide vehicles. The initial base of operations is the city of Isikhraal, close to where the incident took place.

Upon arriving, the mercenaries will find the local authorities and the officials of the Eastern Loyalist Collective friendly and welcoming – on the surface at least – and well-prepared for the arrival of the investigators. They have been given rooms in the city's administrative centre to work from, along with accommodation in local hotels. The city is not capable of accommodating more than about 20 people all in the same place and there are eight investigators, so the Travellers may have to decide whether to accept being split up.

There is no ill-will on the part of the ELC. Indeed, its leaders are confident the investigators will uncover the truth about the incident, which is to their advantage. There is some tension, since the ELC could be seen as technically being in rebellion against the central government but overall the ELC wants the investigators to complete their mission unhindered. The same cannot be said, unfortunately, for the investigators themselves. They were selected by a panel heavily influenced by the Real Future faction and are extremely biased. Indeed, they have been instructed to 'discover' that the attackers really were just random bandits with no connection to any other faction.

## THE INVESTIGATION

There are two main sites that have to be investigated. One is the village of Tanshaddar, where the gunmen took refuge. The other is the grain plant that was the original target. The investigators plan to deal with both simultaneously, with two or three personnel at each site and a couple at their base in Isikhraal. Information will be fed back to them in real time and processed. The mercenaries are expected to provide security for all three groups simultaneously, although it is not expected there will be much of a threat.

Additional security has been assigned in the form of several marshals of the Eastern Plains Security Initiative (ESPI), who are more commonly referred to simply as 'the cavalry'. Some of their number do indeed ride horses and all are capable of it even if using SUVs to get around. The presence of the marshals might cause friction, or even alarm, but the mercenaries will not find anything suspicious about their behaviour. They are genuinely there to protect the investigators and facilitate their work, and if they do point out leads the investigators have missed this is a secondary consideration.

However, whilst the mercenaries are likely to find the marshals agreeable, the investigators do not. They will accuse the marshals of being overbearing and intrusive, and of trying to guide the investigation to a conclusion in their favour. There is some truth in this but the marshals are nothing like as difficult as the investigators portray them. Nonetheless, the mercenaries will be requested to keep the ESPI marshals at a distance. They might at some point become suspicious that they, too, are being kept busy and away from the investigation.

The grain processing centre is centrally located for the surrounding farms, which means it is not in a city. It has its own rail link and a rather poorly surfaced road and other than the two dozen staff who are assigned there in week-long rotations, there are no residents. Most of the staff are volunteers with ESPI and participated in the defence of the plant. Along with the handful of marshals and active-duty volunteers who led the interception of the approaching force, they tell the same story.

The attackers were well equipped by the standards of New Moscow. They were armed with assault rifles and had a machinegun or two. They also operated in a disciplined fashion. When the intercepting ESPI force approached the attackers dismounted from their vehicles and carried out a fire-and-manoeuvre attack, which failed largely due to the ESPI's tactics. Keeping horses and vehicles close to the rear, the ESPI force made a fighting retreat, keeping the range long where their rifles and superior standards of marksmanship outmatched the attackers' assault weapons. Ultimately the attackers retired but were intercepted by ESPI reinforcements and took refuge in the village of Tanshaddar. Despite taking hostages they were eventually dislodged, with most of their number escaping in vehicles. Some of the attackers were captured at the village or picked up, wounded, from the combat zone.

The investigators seem to believe the attackers were simply well-organised bandits, perhaps supplied with weaponry by one of the other factions in the hope they would cause trouble. The witnesses who fought against them say they were far too well coordinated to be mere bandits and suspect they may be mercenaries or paid insurgents serving one of the other factions.

Witnesses at the village were mostly too frightened or confused to remember many details about their ordeal, although most consider the attackers to have seemed 'military' in the way they communicated and followed orders. Their equipment was also highly uniform, with matching body armour, magazine holders and weapons. Clothing was similar too. Not quite a uniform as such but it did seem that the attackers had obtained coveralls from the same source.





The investigators are reluctant to allow the mercenaries to interview witnesses, if they express a desire to do so, arguing that they should be left alone to do their jobs whilst the mercenaries do what they are paid for. The investigators can only put up so much resistance if the Travellers insist but will throw obstacles in the way. Their favoured gambit is inventing spurious errands and things to check on for the mercenaries. This will be over-used to the point where it is obvious the investigative team are trying to prevent the mercenaries from conducting their own investigation.

If the Travellers arrange it, they can interview the handful of 'bandits' captured by the ESPI forces. The 'bandits' all tell the same story. They are members of a local defence association who were responding to a report of bandits in the area and the ESPI force opened fire on them without warning. If pushed on this story the captives will try to bluster or refuse to answer questions but eventually they will have to admit they are 'not from round here' and were recruited as sort-of-mercenaries by an unnamed client who wanted to help protect the region.

This story is close to the truth but the fact is the attackers were recruited by Real Future to cause trouble as a pretext to sending a force to 'help protect' the region. Essentially, the bandit raids were a precursor to a large-scale military operation that would take over

a significant part of the Eastern Plains. The attackers have been assured they will be protected and have an incentive to keep their mouths shut about the real situation. Their protection, at least in part, has been provided for by influencing the investigators.

If the Travellers do not penetrate the wall of obfuscation the investigators will conclude the incident was an unfortunate result of trigger-happy elements within the ESPI opening fire without confirming the situation. They will lament the fact that there is a real problem with banditry in the region, which is escalating beyond the control of the central government and the EPL. This will lead to offers from Real Future to assist and a gradual movement towards large-scale intervention in the Eastern Plains.

## IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A GOOD TIME, JINE THE CAVALRY...

Whilst the investigation is wrapping up, a senior marshal from the ESPI force approaches the Travellers. She has received word that the survivors of the attack on the grain facility are holed up in the hills not very far away. A request for assistance in apprehending them met with the usual response from central government; vaguely interested noises and multiple requests for clarification.

The marshal wants to short-circuit the process and capture the ‘bandits’ herself. She has a couple of dozen ESPI personnel available but would very much like the Travellers to assist.

This is outside the remit of the contract, unless the Travellers want to engage in some legal fiction. Arguably, capturing some of the attackers might assist the investigation and the presence of an armed gang just a few kilometres away might be taken as a threat to the investigators. This is a bit thin but sufficient to keep objections at bay. The investigators will flat-out forbid it if they get wind of what the Travellers have been asked to do. They argue that the mercenaries are present to protect them and facilitate the investigation, not to chase around the countryside after people who are probably not bad guys anyway. Of course, the investigators are not in the mercenaries’ chain of command and can be ignored, and cannot stop the Travellers if they proceed. There will be questions to answer when they return to the starport, however.

If the Travellers do agree to assist the ESPI marshals, they are shown maps of the area indicating a force of maybe 20 hostiles in the vicinity of an old cattle station in the hills. The marshals think the mercenaries’ firepower and neutral status might be sufficient to induce the hostiles to surrender peacefully. There is a real chance of this if the Travellers can get into a good position but there are problems.

The hostiles will know the marshals are coming, as they will be informed by the investigators as soon as one of them is able to send a message unobserved. If the marshals are not accompanied by the Travellers, they will be ambushed and driven off with casualties and the hostiles will slip away before reinforcements arrive. If the Travellers are present the ambush will still be attempted but the Travellers may spot it before it is sprung. Either way it will be fairly obvious the hostiles knew exactly where the ESPI force was heading and when it would arrive. The investigators will deny all knowledge, vow to find out who leaked the information and go through the motions of trying to ascertain who betrayed the ESPI force. Naturally, they will fail to do so.

It is possible the mercenaries might be able to persuade the ‘bandits’ to surrender. If not, they will have to deal with the ambush attempt or try to corner the hostiles near the cattle station. Either way, the hostiles will not fight to the end but will attempt to break contact and escape into rough country. The Travellers may find themselves pursuing part or all of the enemy force, possibly in conjunction with EPL mounted cavalry.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Eastern Plains ‘Bandits’	—
Unit Size	Understrength Platoon	—
Unit Type	Infantry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Motorised	+4
Combat	5	-1
Bombardment	0	—
Aerospace	0	—
Support	1	-2
CEI or DEI	6	-1
Morale	8	0
Reputation	5	-1

## CONCLUDING THE MISSION

This initial mission concludes when the Travellers escort the investigators back to the capital. If the mercenaries simply protected their charges as contracted, the investigators present their bogus conclusions and nobody will be any the wiser. The plans of the Real Future faction will be advanced. On the plus side, the mercenaries will have pleased the world government. The government receives a lot of money from Real Future and considerable bribes and influence were brought to bear over this matter. By either missing the clues or keeping quiet about them the mercenaries will have allowed the situation to develop as desired.

If the mercenaries have come to the conclusion that the investigators were wrong, they will find it difficult to get anyone to listen to them. They will be able to present their case if they are persistent. This will greatly displease Real Future and the officials it has in its pocket. There is nothing they can do overtly but the mercenaries will be given a subtle hint when their local supply line becomes impossibly snarled up. Supplies are redirected or short stopped by needy local units and when they do arrive they are not what was requisitioned. Personnel taking recreation at the starport will find themselves hassled by local law enforcement far more often than before and the government will begin passing spurious complaints to the unit’s commanders. The Travellers will find themselves bogged down in endless meetings to discuss a complaint from local residents or military units. Sooner or later they will realise they have offended someone with influence but at this point it will not be possible to find out who this is.

# REINFORCING DEFEAT

The next mission is necessitated by circumstances or so it appears. A planetary army formation has been sent into the Western Basin to ‘demonstrate sovereignty and overlordship’ and has run into trouble. The mercenaries are requested to assist this force in gaining control over the local area or withdrawing if necessary. If the mercenaries have disputed the findings of the investigation in the last mission, this request – which is phrased politely but a contractual requirement – comes whilst they are presenting their case. How they deal with this is up to them.

The mercenaries might wonder why this task has not been given to the rest of the planetary army or even the peacekeeping force. This is a very valid question, which will elicit the reply that there are complex circumstances, which will delay a response to an urgent situation. The mercenaries are informed that since they are in a position to do something right now, they have been tasked with the mission. This is all a bit vague but the government cannot admit the real reason it wants the mercenaries out of the capital. In addition to contesting the findings of the recent investigation (if they did) the mercenaries might become aware of a ‘reorganisation’ of weapons and ammunition, which is a cover for a transfer to the Real Future faction.

The transfer is by way of third parties and ‘loyalist local defence associations’ but it would not be difficult to figure out what is really happening if someone were inclined to try. Thus the faction’s sympathisers within the government are keen to keep the Travellers out of the loop and in addition they really do need help extracting their force.

## THE EXPEDITION

The governmental expedition was typical of the sort. Announced well ahead of time it was to be a pompous tour of several small towns under the guise of sweeping for insurgents and reassuring the populace by way of a highly visible military presence. The force selected was a composite battlegroup in company strength, with armoured reconnaissance vehicles, infantry in armoured transports and a platoon of light self-propelled artillery. In theory this is a potent force for the region but few had any illusions about its intent to fight.

Sweeps of this sort are advertised for the political capital gained by being seen to mount them but also to allow the factions to get out of the way. A brush with armed criminals taking advantage of the situation is acceptable and even desirable but the government desperately wants to avoid clashes with faction forces. Those with an interest in such things may notice that sweeps of this sort tend to take place soon after Real Future has annexed and ‘pacified’ an area and upon finding little evidence of ongoing conflict the government has an excuse not to take further interest.

This expedition has gone a little differently. The usual half-hearted attempt to make contact with forces skirmishing in the region led to the pursuit of a small group, which is in and of itself not uncommon. What has changed is that the battlegroup remained in contact and fought a sharp action at a small village located on a river crossing. Laagering for the night in a mood of self-congratulation that was wholly unwarranted, the force celebrated chasing a couple of dozen lightly armed insurgents out of the area. It says much about the state of the planetary forces that this seemed like an achievement. The fact that the battlegroup got itself trapped is another indicator of how inept and apathetic many formations have become.

The battlegroup failed to post suitable pickets and was surprised the following morning to find a significant force deployed to its front. This was a ‘provisional security battalion’ fielded by the Alliance of the Western Rivers. Its commander curtly informed the government battlegroup that the bridge forming its line of retreat had been rigged with explosives during the night and was zeroed for artillery fire. A standoff began, which is still ongoing.

## THE STANDOFF

The situation represents an escalation of the tensions between the Alliance of the Western Rivers and the central government. The AWR has tired of inaction or pretend-action on the part of the government and is aware of the increasing influence of Real Future. Its leaders – or at least, some of them – have decided to take direct action. The encounter with insurgents was real enough but it has provided an opportunity the AWR intends to exploit.

The commander of the ‘provisional security battalion’ is a self-appointed colonel by the name of Alexander Wishart. Wishart is one of the harshest critics of the government, not without reason, and also a proponent of radical action. His plan is to coerce the government force into handing over their armoured vehicles and artillery, which will greatly enhance the combat capabilities of the local elements of the AWR. Ideally this will be done without bloodshed, in which case it should be possible to get the government to retroactively recognise the transfer as some kind of local security enhancement program.

The government might actually agree to this, as the alternative is to fight the AWR. Real Future would be very happy to see that happen as it is sure to create additional opportunities for the faction to exploit. There are thus several ways this situation could play out, some of them quite detrimental to the AWR. Not surprisingly many of its leaders are horrified at the actions being taken in their name but Colonel Wishart firmly believes that his actions will strengthen both the AWR as a whole and his position within it.

Wishart’s ‘battalion’ is one of the premier fighting formations of the AWR but that does not equate to formal organisation. The force is made up of seven small ‘companies’ commanded by captains Wishart has appointed. Total strength is a little over 300 personnel, loosely organised as a militia. Personnel are competent and experienced but have gaps in their knowledge as they have never received a full training package.

**Company A** is under Wishart’s direct command. It contains about 40 personnel, most of whom are assigned as three person crews of converted pickup trucks and SUVs, most of which mount a support weapon such as a light machinegun on a pintle mount. Vehicles operate in pairs, with Wishart commanding from the turret of an armoured car somehow obtained from the government. Company A is normally used as a mobile reserve or striking force and is quite adept at hit-and-run skirmishing using its vehicles.

**Company B** is the battalion’s artillery contingent... such as it is. The force possesses three 100mm mortars mounted on the beds of converted trucks, a towed 120mm howitzer and some excitingly inaccurate home-made multiple rocket launchers mounted on pickup trucks. Ammunition is always in short supply but the force can put down artillery fire if Wishart has to carry out his threat.

**Company C** is a sort of reconnaissance formation formed of self-styled sharpshooters using SUVs, pickup trucks and motorcycles. It is the most unruly part of a very loosely run force and its personnel are the most likely to start shooting. There is more ego than military competence about this unit, which is about 30 strong and considers itself to be the elite of the entire AWR ground forces.

**Company D, E and F** are infantry formations mostly made up of experienced militia fighters. The companies are about 60 strong, with a mix of civilian and military small arms and very few support weapons. Personnel ride in converted farm trucks and dismount to fight. There are no internal sub-units as such but typically groups of friends fight together and are capable of supporting other groups in a rudimentary fashion.

**Company G** is about 25 strong and represents an attempt to create a close-assault formation. This unit has a high proportion of light automatic weapons along with handguns, shotguns and home-made satchel charges. Some of the personnel in this unit are experienced at handling explosives, although mainly to clear obstructions on a farm rather than demolishing solid structures.

The ‘battalion’ styles itself as a formal military force and tries to interact with regular army units using proper protocol and military courtesy. The results are rather mixed, especially since some elements of Wishart’s force are more playing at being an army than committed to their cause. Pretentiousness is inevitable and can get out of hand at times.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Wishart’s ‘Security Battalion’	—
Unit Size	Understrength Battalion	—
Unit Type	Infantry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Motorised	+4
Combat	6	0
Bombardment	3	-1
Aerospace	1	-2
Support	1	-2
CEI or DEI	6	-1
Morale	7	0
Reputation	6	0

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

Wishart has assaulted the government battlegroup commander with a barrage of accusations about overstepping authority – which the Travellers might find hilarious given the circumstances – and at the same time launched into a tirade about the ineffectual nature of government operations. His solution is for the government force to hand over its heavy weapons and accept escort out of a region it – according to Wishart – clearly cannot control. The last part is right but that does not change the fact that the battlegroup is effectively being robbed at gunpoint.

The standoff has allowed both forces to dig in and in this at least the government battlegroup has done a good job. Its commander has requested assistance and instructions and has been told to find a negotiated settlement to the situation without surrendering any weapons or being seen to be run off by a band of militia. This is an unrealistic demand and communications from the central government have been unhelpfully contradictory. As usual, the government is not willing or able to take decisive action but wants a positive outcome to somehow materialise. The only hope for that is the Travellers.

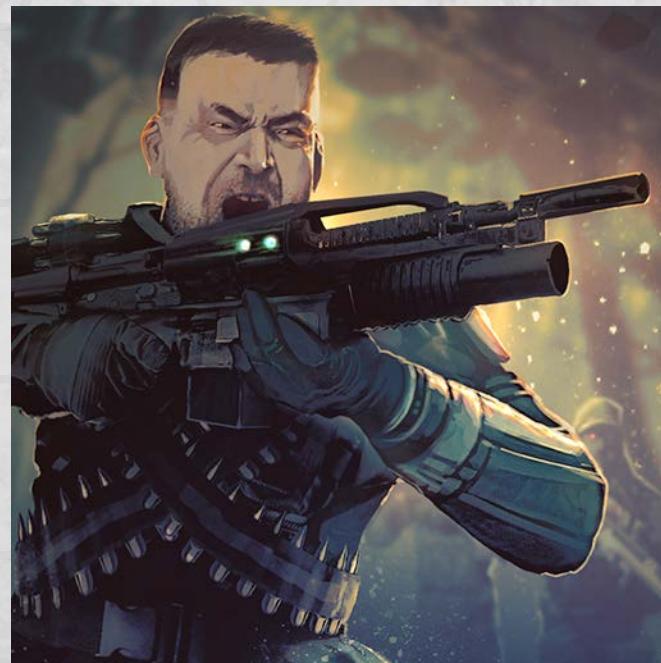
## RESOLUTION

If the Travellers cannot create a resolution of some kind, it is inevitable that fighting will break out between the battlegroup and Wishart's force. It might be possible to step back from a brief and inconclusive exchange of gunfire but there is a real chance the battlegroup will attempt a surprise breakout that will bring about a full-scale battle. The bridge will be blown as soon as the government force moves in that direction and a hail of rocket and artillery fire will be directed at any force trying to make a crossing. This might not be very effective but there will be casualties all the same. Attempting to crash through the field fortifications of Wishart's force is a better option but it still leaves the government battlegroup on the wrong side of the river and vulnerable to harassment as it tries to find an alternative crossing point.

The Travellers have many options in this situation. They might try to negotiate with either or both sides and broker an agreement or they might take more robust actions. Their remit is rather vague, requiring them to assist the government force and this can be interpreted more than one way. Getting the force's personnel out of the trap they find themselves in might constitute effective assistance, although it will be hard to sell the battlegroup commander on the idea of surrendering weaponry.

Wishart is equally difficult to persuade. Where the battlegroup commander knows a court-martial is inevitable if weaponry is surrendered, Wishart has big ambitions that will be thwarted if he is forced to back down. He sees the acquisition of heavy weaponry as the only way to forestall a takeover by Real Future and his plans to eventually be sole leader of the AWR revolve around preventing this. The Travellers might have to broker a compromise or negotiate from a position of strength. This might be real or perceived; a good bluff could work. One possibility would be to fake assurances that the peacekeeping force will intervene or convince the opposing commanders that the Travellers wield far more power than they do. A position of strength might also be obtained by seizing something of value such as Wishart's artillery.

Other options include removing the demolition charges from the bridge and either stalling Wishart's response as the government battlegroup mounts up to charge across it or somehow protecting the battlegroup from artillery and direct attack. An inconclusive engagement might not result in open hostilities between the government and the AWR, whereas if the Travellers and the battlegroup simply fight it out with Wishart's battalion it is inevitable the AWR will be declared an illegal organisation and an enemy of the national government. This will be pushed by Real Future sympathisers in the government and is likely to spell the doom of the Alliance of the Western Rivers. The Travellers may or may not care about that and might be quite happy to see Real Future use the government to fight its opponents then roll in and take over. Mercenaries see this sort of thing happen all the time and are prone to shrug and collect their fee.



# COURTROOM DRAMA



By this point in the mission the Travellers are likely to be aware of just how ineffectual their client is and where the real power on New Moscow lies. They are still on contract to the government, however, and the reputation of their unit would be harmed if they pulled out. If the Travellers decide to do this at any point, they will face tough questions from the licencing agency they are working with. See *Pulling Out* on page 29 for more information.

The Referee should make sure the Travellers are aware of the long-term consequences of not fulfilling their contract. It is one thing to try and fail – that happens to most units from time-to-time – but to wilfully abandon a contract demonstrates the unit is unreliable and finding clients willing to pay for its services will be more difficult thereafter. The Travellers do have causes for concern, however. The ‘limited support’ promised by the contract was always very limited but as time goes on it begins to dry up entirely. Sometimes this is characterised by the unexplained non-arrival of supplies, sometimes by petty obstructions. The Travellers should be able to figure out that someone is trying to interfere in their business.

If the Travellers think to investigate they may be able to uncover some useful facts. Something as simple as collating causal observations will provide anecdotal evidence, which may be useful to the Travellers’ intelligence specialists – or whoever gets the job of filling in if the unit does not have them. If the Travellers carry out an intelligence mission of some kind this will have to be played out but will provide much more solid data.

An intelligence mission is an action connected with intelligence gathering or analysis, or both. There are two likely missions, although the Travellers might come up with something else. If the Travellers can gain access to the government’s internal financial records they will be able to see exactly how much money comes in from Real Future and where it goes. Public records are not

sufficient for this, so the Travellers will need to hack a government computer or obtain physical copies of accounts. This is not permitted by their remit and asking directly will both raise suspicions and result in refusal. Covert action is necessary, either directly or through a sympathetic or coerced local official.

The alternative is to get multiple officials to admit where money comes from and goes. This could be done by intimidation, coercion, persuasion or deception... or a combination of all of these methods. Given the complex internal political situation at the capital it is unlikely anyone will want to go on record speaking out against the financial misconduct of others unless they have something to gain from it, which is not the case here. However, the Travellers may gain insight into the situation and an idea of what is about to happen.

The intelligence operation, if it happens at all, should be resolved as an Intelligence Event. If the Travellers do not carry out any action before the legal problem begins to unfold they will be able to throw together what they know as an Intelligence Event but will have little to work with. If they do carry out one or both of the actions noted above or some other meaningful intelligence work the Referee must resolve this either in abstract as an Operation or as a detailed mini-adventure.

The Intelligence Event is resolved as an Investigate check on the part of the Travellers’ designated representative or intelligence officer, with DMs applying as noted below.

If the Travellers did no intelligence work: DM-4  
 If the Travellers collated casual observations and analysed them but did no other intelligence work: DM-2  
 If the Travellers attempted one or more intelligence operations but did not achieve much success: DM+0.  
 If the Travellers successfully carried out one intelligence operation: DM+2  
 If the Travellers carried out extensive successful intelligence work such as two successful operations: DM+4

## Intelligence Event Outcome

Effect + DMs	Result
-6 or worse	The Travellers learned nothing of use, caused suspicion among their opponents and ultimately confused themselves about what is going on. DM-6 applies to the legal case, below.
-4 to -5	The Travellers obtained information that seems useful but which leads to false conclusions. DM-4 applies to the legal case, below.
-3 to -1	The Travellers obtained information that might be useful in figuring out what is about to happen, but which is easily dismissed during the legal case. DM-2 applies resolution of the case.
0	The Travellers gained some useful information and will have a little warning before the legal case is launched, but gain no DM to resolve it.
1-3	The Travellers learned some facts that are awkward for the opponents. DM +1 applies to resolving the legal case.
3-5	The Travellers have evidence or witnesses who can disprove at least some of the allegations. DM+2 applies to resolving the legal case.
6 or better	The Travellers have solid evidence that could demolish the legal case. DM +4 applies.

## A COURTROOM COUP

If the Travellers have not been paying attention the next move on the part of Real Future might come as a complete surprise. If they have been a bit more careful about observing their immediate political surroundings they may have some warning or even some good evidence.

Real Future's trump card in its bid for de facto control of the world of New Moscow is the Imperial peacekeeping force. There is little prospect of bribing the force to become involved and Real Future has no political influence offworld to coerce its leaders but there is a possibility of triggering an intervention against the world government by presenting evidence of corruption and collusion with the other factions. This is perhaps a bit of a long shot but the faction senses an opportunity and does not believe there is anything to lose from trying.

The legal challenge is based upon the rather hypocritical idea that the world government is in the pocket of the other factions and has committed war crimes. The latter is nonsense; the government's troops have been avoiding contact with anyone who can shoot back and have fought only a handful of skirmishes in the past months. Nevertheless, Real Future intends to present fabricated evidence that secret government operations have targeted its non-combatant personnel. They will go so far as to claim that the Travellers' unit carried out some of the strikes. In addition, Real Future has fabricated evidence that money it has been paying to the government in good faith, in an effort to shore up the regime, has been funnelled into the hands of 'warlords and renegades' – by which Real Future means the other factions.

If the Travellers learned that something was afoot as a result of their intelligence work they have a little time to prepare. If not, the first they know of the legal case is when a summons arrives to a hearing to be held the very next day. Whilst this is irregular, there is a state of emergency in place and an Imperial intervention may be on the cards. Time is of the essence.

## The Case For Intervention

The legal case heard by a tribunal headed by the Imperial Knight assigned to the world. The commander of the Imperial intervention force and the assigned negotiator fill the other two places. The Travellers may find this reassuring – at least these individuals are not directly involved in local politics.

A supposedly independent legal team, acting on behalf of 'the people of New Moscow' presents the allegations. There is a fair amount of rhetoric about the corrupt and dictatorial government, which plays on the fact that a great many new laws have been passed in recent months. The allegations are then laid out.

1. The government of New Moscow has been funding warlords and renegades using money taxed from its people and donated in good faith by the loyal members of the New Future business group.
2. The government of New Moscow has been using its mercenaries to conduct covert strikes, assassinating opponents of the government and destroying their assets.

The first set of allegations is backed up by a lot of claims about the real intentions behind new laws and their implications for the people of New Moscow. Much

of this comes down to the idea that the government is enriching itself by oppressing the people. Accounts are presented, which look authentic and show large sums passed to the Western Rivers and Eastern Plains factions along with various government cronies and some unspecified third parties. These are claimed to be warlords, bandit gangs and illicit arms dealers – all of whom are working with the government to create a new, oppressive regime that will turn the world of New Moscow into a cash-cow for a few top officials.

There is actually some truth in some of this; cash has been diverted to projects without proper oversight and some embezzlement has taken place. However, the accounts are distorted or outright falsified and the witnesses are not telling the truth. The Travellers may know this if they have conducted good intelligence work and may even be able to prove it. They will get their chance once the prosecution is finished presenting its case.

The second allegation rests on grainy gun-camera footage, eyewitness accounts and emotive pictures of bodies and damaged installations that have no context. This is accompanied by lurid accusations of war crimes and atrocities that the Travellers know they had nothing to do with – if they happened at all – but may have to prove otherwise. The legal team ends with an impassioned plea to the tribunal to authorise an intervention. The people of New Moscow need help and protection from the government and its hired thugs...

### **The Case Against Intervention**

A suspiciously large number of government officials are unavailable to take part in proceedings and for a time it seems the case – thin as it is – might succeed for lack of opposition. Minister Alvarez, the Travellers' liaison and direct contact on New Moscow, takes it

upon himself to fight the government's case – or more accurately to rebut the allegations and prevent Real Future from toppling a government that seems to want this to happen.

Alvarez is no lawyer but has found some advisors and is cobbling together a case for non-intervention. He will request assistance from the Travellers. If they decline, Alvarez and his team can be treated as having DM+1 in legal matters and will do their best. The Travellers have it in their power to win here and can use their own best Advocate DM if they take part. They should be invited to present a defence or to attempt to demolish the Real Future arguments. Simple denial will not be enough; they will have to demonstrate that evidence is false or at least inconclusive.

The Travellers must make two Average (8+) Advocate checks, one for each set of allegations. A good, eloquent and persuasive argument is worth DM+1, as is some evidence such as a detailed analysis of observations. Solid evidence such as proof the Travellers were somewhere else when an alleged atrocity took place or a real set of accounts is worth DM+2. The Travellers might have to admit where they got their information but the tribunal is likely to consider such methods justified if they contradict obviously falsified data.

The Effect of these two Advocate checks is totalled and used as a DM when the final statements are made. The legal team representing 'the people' makes an impassioned plea for intervention and Minister Alvarez attempts to persuade the tribunal that it is spurious. The Referee should throw 2D and add the DMs thus far accrued.

If the Travellers fail to refute the court case their contract may end at this point. If they manage to prevent the courtroom coup they have one last task to perform.

### **The Case for Intervention On New Moscow**

<b>2D + DMs</b>	<b>Result</b>
3–	The case is considered proven and Imperial intervention is formally requested by the chair of the tribunal. The mercenaries' contract is terminated and they are ordered to surrender to the intervention force.
4–6	The case is considered part-proven. The mercenaries are ordered to stand down and prepare for repatriation. Intervention is not requested but a 'pre-intervention study' is begun that will almost certainly lead to full intervention in due course.
5–7	Guilty, with some mitigating factors. DM+2 is applied to the Punishment table.
7–9	After much debate and some requests for additional investigation of the case if found not proven. No intervention is ordered.
10–12	The case is thrown out and the legal team are subjected to some scathing remarks from the chair.
13+	A different sort of intervention takes place, with several corrupt local officials arrested by the peacekeeping force for misfeasance in public office. Real Future is exposed as the architect of the situation and an investigation by the Ministry of Justice is requested.

# HOME RUN



Within hours of the intervention hearing, a flurry of encrypted communications begins flying around between the factions and some elements of the world government. Minister Alvarez urgently requests the Travellers' attendance at a briefing. It seems that an investigation into the government's corruption and the level of influence wielded by Real Future is certain to go ahead, which will have drastic ramifications for the faction as well as many government officials. The government has already begun a purge of 'corrupt' individuals, although it appears that what is really happening is that junior personnel are being thrown to the wolves as scapegoats. Meanwhile, Real Future has unilaterally offered to stand down its armed forces and surrender them along with all its assets to the central government.

It is quite obvious that this is another gambit, one that will put Real Future's assets in the hands of its chosen government officials and place them at the starport where they are protected by the no-fight agreement. Investigation may or may not produce a result that breaks Real Future but in the meantime (and permanently, if the Ministry of Justice does not find sufficient evidence to dismantle the faction) it will give control of New Moscow to Real Future. This is something of a gamble on the part of the faction but at the present time it can take advantage of the rules and laws in place and exploit them to give itself a real shot at an economic coup.

Real Future is forming a gigantic convoy with physical assets, hard currency and its military forces, and obviously planning to move the whole lot into the no-fight zone. If it gets there, in all probability the gambit will work – at least in the short term. However, if the convoy can be prevented from reaching the no-fight zone it can be worn down. Both the Western Rivers and Eastern Plains factions have pledged forces to do so and to stand down afterwards if the government requests offworld mediation. Both have small forces able to intercept the convoy and more readying for a long move.

The planetary army has been ordered not to intervene and will remain in place to enforce the no-fight zone. Alvarez requests that the mercenaries find a suitable defensive location and rendezvous with their new allied forces. If the convoy can be stalled for two days it is likely enough additional units will arrive to force a surrender. It will be up to the mercenaries to select a spot and lead the defence.

## AVAILABLE FORCES

The convoy is proceeding along one of the few suitable roads, at a speed limited by its size and composition. Elements of the Real Future forces are arrayed along the route flanking the convoy, leapfrogging forward to maintain an escort posture. A battalion-sized spearhead is proceeding down the road to clear a path. If this force can be stalled for long enough the whole convoy will have to stop. The spearhead is the best force the faction can put together and is equipped with armoured cars from the government's own arsenal as well as more support weapons than any force previously seen.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	Real Future Spearhead	—
Unit Size	Battalion	—
Unit Type	Composite Armoured/ Infantry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Motorised	+4
Combat	8	+1
Bombardment	2	-2
Aerospace	1	-2
Support	2	-2
CEI or DEI	7	0
Morale	9	+1
Reputation	7	0

The Alliance of the Western Rivers has contributed a significant number of militia fighters organised as three provisional companies. They have good small arms imported from offworld but little transport. This force will have to be conveyed to the battle area in relays using trucks or some other form of transport arranged by the Travellers and has little tactical mobility. Dug in, its personnel can put up a good fight but they will be outmanoeuvred in the open.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	AWR Local Defence Militia	—
Unit Size	Company	—
Unit Type	Infantry	—
Unit TL	10	+1
Mobility Type	Infantry	0
Combat	9	+1
Bombardment	0	—
Aerospace	0	—
Support	1	-2
CEI or DEI	5	-1
Morale	6	0
Reputation	4	-1

The Eastern Loyalist Collective has rushed two company-equivalents of volunteers to the area. They are equipped with a mix of horses and some light vehicles. Whilst mobile, this force is not resilient in the face of armoured vehicles.

Characteristic	Value	DM
Force Name	ELC Mounted Infantry Band	—
Unit Size	Company	—
Unit Type	Cavalry	—
Unit TL	7	0
Mobility Type	Mounted	+2
Combat	6	0
Bombardment	0	—
Aerospace	0	—
Support	1	-2
CEI or DEI	9	+1
Morale	11	+2
Reputation	8	0

## HALTING THE CONVOY

In order to halt the convoy spearhead the Travellers will need to organise their forces. They have some militia with good small arms and mounted cavalry who excel at long-range skirmishing. Their opponents have an organised force with armoured cars in support. There are problems to be solved here. One option is just to dig in across the road and fight it out. The Real Future spearhead can go around but the convoy cannot, so they will have to do so. However they will probably manage it unless the Travellers find a way to nullify the firepower and armour of the Real Future force. Similarly, an elastic defence is problematic due to lack of mobility. The militia will be caught and massacred in the open or simply bypassed.

The brute force solution to the problem is to create a defence in depth with obstacles and fallback positions and perhaps obtain anti-armour weapons from somewhere. If the defenders can cling to their positions for long enough the convoy will be attacked from other directions and will either have to retire or be overwhelmed. This approach will require holding the defending force together in the face of heavy attack and the Real Future spearhead may be reinforced with units pulled from the escort.



An alternative is to not actually block the road as such but create defended positions where they can harass any vehicle using it. This will force the spearhead to remove these positions one-by-one, allowing the Travellers to make use of their superior fighting power at each small fight in turn. The militia and cavalry can act as a backstop or as mobile skirmishers and can send detachments with the Travellers if they have enough vehicles. This approach may leave the road open for the spearhead force but create a situation where the convoy will take unacceptable casualties – which in turn bogs down the spearhead in unsuitable terrain, trying to clear strongpoints which are abandoned as they become unviable. The battle may come to resemble a caterpillar inching down the road.

Adventurous Travellers might try other methods. A couple of sharp stands by the mercenaries and a few sharpshooters will teach the spearhead force the need for caution, to the point where the spearhead might be held up for an hour trying to locate a suspected ambush, when the lone sniper who got their attention is long gone. Fake positions, ambushes, even a

sneaky raid into the spearhead force's rear using grav vehicles, can all impose delay. Smart Travellers will realise they do not have to defeat the spearhead; they just have to prevent it clearing the way for the convoy.

## WINNING AND LOSING

Success here is very clear-cut; either the Travellers stop the convoy or they do not. If it gets through, Real Future will be more or less in control of the government although it will not publicly assume control. Unless something changes, Real Future will continue to expand its power base through a series of small acquisitions and mergers, and develop increasing control over the central government. Eventually the only factor preventing collapse of the central government will be funds provided by the faction and when they are 'urgently reassigned to deal with crises elsewhere' the government will be unable to cope. After a brief period of disorder a new government, generously funded by Real Future, will be formed. If the Travellers stall the convoy for long enough the gambit will fail and Real Future will lose a significant portion of its assets.



# AFTERMATH

One way or another the Travellers have come to the end of their contract. It is to be hoped they completed their missions satisfactorily and are now due to stand down for a rest but it is possible the Travellers will have been forced to terminate their contract early or have chosen to do so.

## SHUTTING THE DOOR

However they do it, if the Travellers can hold up the spearhead they will halt the convoy. With pressure increasing on its flanks its rear elements will turn around and head for home, and the mass relocation of assets will be prevented. The effects of this on Real Future may not immediately be apparent but with its assets cut off from the capital and many of its supporters compromised it will no longer be able to control the central government by threatening to cut funding. This will lead to a crisis that can be alleviated by a loan from the Imperial banks... but that comes at the price of outlawing Real Future. The other factions will stand down in return for guarantees and minor concessions and gradually the situation on New Moscow will stabilise.

The long-term situation remains nebulous but the government will be in a stronger position than it has been for years and has to accept Imperial oversight. This situation can be considered a win for the mercenaries – they have done what they were paid to do despite the client not really wanting them to do so. The Referee should proceed to the post-contract debrief. See Determining Success Level and Bonuses on page 30.

## PULLING OUT

Most mercenary contacts have a few terms under which the unit can withdraw from a contact without penalty. This requires proving to the licencing agency that the client was indeed in default, which can be difficult. Even if the licensing authority is willing to accept a no-default withdrawal the unit's reputation can be damaged by rumours and suspicions.

The Travellers can still withdraw at any time if they feel the need. The client will not pay for repatriation of the unit, which means the Travellers must locate and pay for transportation offworld. In addition, the unit will be called upon to justify its actions. If the Travellers decide to simply pack up and move out, there is little the government can do to stop them. They will not receive any payment for that month and no bonuses even if the parts of the contract they have managed to complete are judged to be a success. A unilateral decision to withdraw will result in an inquiry by the licensing agency, which can be resolved using the Legal Proceedings rules on page 46 of *Book 2*.

If the Travellers instead want to negotiate an early end to their contract, they can put their case to the planetary government or ask the peacekeeping force to make a ruling. The Travellers will then make an Average (8+) Diplomat or Persuade check. The Effect of this check is applied to the initial Situation Indicator for the proposal, which begins at 7. For every three points of TSI the mercenaries have accrued from completing parts of the mission, DM+1 applies. If the result is refusal to release the mercenaries from their contract the Situation Indicator is retained as a running total. Once the Travellers have accrued more TSI they may make another Diplomat or Persuade check and add the result to their running total. Once the result indicates the government is willing to release the unit from its contract the Travellers may withdraw without penalty and the government will pay for their repatriation. The Travellers could instead hold the agreement in hand and carry out more parts of the contract, perhaps in the hope of getting a better deal or even receiving their bonuses.



## Contract Release Negotiations

Situation Indicator Situation  
+ Effect

0 or less	<b>Rejection:</b> The proposal is angrily rejected. DM-2 applies on checks dealing with interaction between the mercenaries and the local government due to resentment and mistrust.
1–3	<b>Hostility:</b> The government is hostile to the idea of early release from contract. DM-4 applies to Diplomat or Persuade checks regarding this matter until the situation becomes 'Stalled' or better.
4–5	<b>Quibbles:</b> The government raises all manner of quibbles over minor points, demands clarification of everything, and rephrases what has been said in a way that changes its meaning. DM-2 applies to Diplomat or Persuade checks until the situation becomes 'Stalled' or better.
6–7	<b>Stalled:</b> Talks are ongoing.
8–9	<b>Penalised Withdrawal:</b> The unit will be released from contract subject to repayment of 25% of all fees received.
10–11	<b>Withdrawal:</b> The unit will be released from contract and permitted to leave without penalty. The licensing agency may have awkward questions for the Travellers.
12–14	<b>Contract Declared Complete:</b> The government is willing to consider the contract satisfactorily completed and will pay the Travellers up to the point they cease operations.
15+	<b>Bonus Payable:</b> The Travellers somehow convince the government to consider the contract satisfactorily completed and to pay any bonus earned through a good TSI on parts already completed.

The Travellers might find something a little suspicious about the higher results on this table. It is almost as if their withdrawal suits the purposes of the planetary government. This is not quite the case; it is the Real Future faction whose agenda is furthered. The faction is willing to put up the money to pay the Travellers to depart and considers the deal a bargain if it clears the way for further expansion.

## DETERMINING SUCCESS LEVEL AND BONUSES

At the end of the mission the Travellers will face a debrief. This may be conducted by the client government, if it still exists, but could be handled by a representative of the licensing agency or the Imperial peacekeeping force. The Travellers will have to answer Three Tough Questions imposed by the Referee. These will be suggested by the Travellers' actions during the ticket. For example, if the Travellers chose to ignore orders or to deceive their client, they will be asked to explain their reasoning. If they failed to complete an objective they will be required to furnish an explanation. The Referee might also ask about some incredibly trivial detail, just to keep the Travellers guessing. After all, not everyone agrees on which are the obviously significant parts of the ticket.

Each Traveller can answer only one Tough Question unless there are insufficient Travellers to answer all questions. The unit commander will usually be able to choose who answers unless it is specifically directed at someone. The Traveller answering a Tough Question must make a Difficult (10+) Leadership check with a bonus or penalty based on the Referee's appraisal of their answer. At the Referee's discretion Admin, Diplomat or Persuade can be used instead of Leadership, depending on the officer's position in the unit and their presentation style.

At the end of the debriefing the unit commander will make their summary comments, abstracted as an Average (8+) Leadership check (this one must be done with the Leadership skill). The total Effect of these four checks is added to the TSI to determine the client's reaction to the mission, as indicated on the Ticket Outcome table.



*For example, one of the Travellers ignored orders to secure a location and instead pursued hostiles from the area, so has been asked to explain. The Traveller offers a politely phrased and non-patronising analysis of the situation, which comes down to; 'I was on the spot and my orders were based on a situation that was not what was unfolding. I decided the best way to secure the area was to make an aggressive pursuit and clear hostiles rather than passively holding and perhaps taking long-range fire. I was successful in my effort and the site remained secure.' This may or may not be a true and accurate account of what happened but it is plausible. The Referee decides the explanation is worth DM+2 on the Traveller's Leadership check and the end result is an Effect of +1. This is added to the mission TSI to determine the client's reaction.*

## TICKET OUTCOME GUIDELINES

The Travellers' unit may be eligible for a bonus if the contract is completed to the satisfaction of the client and might be penalised if it is a disaster. The table on the previous page gives an indication of the client's reaction based on the final TSI score. The client's reaction is based on the TSI score at the end of the mission and the total Effect from checks made during the debriefing. Thus a perfectly executed mission can produce a TSI of 13 but this can be increased (or decreased) by a good presentation of the unit's performance. The client's reaction is based on their perception of the outcome, not necessarily what actually happened.



