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RIM OF FIRE

The Solomani Rim Sourcebook



By Jon F. Zeigler

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

WHERE EMPIRES COLLIDE . . .

The Solomani Rim stands at the center of Human and Imperial history. It is home to the Solomani Confederation, an aggressive empire of Human supremacists eager to back their beliefs with force. Adventurers entering the Solomani Rim will discover some of the Imperium's oldest and most developed worlds – and some of its greatest dangers.

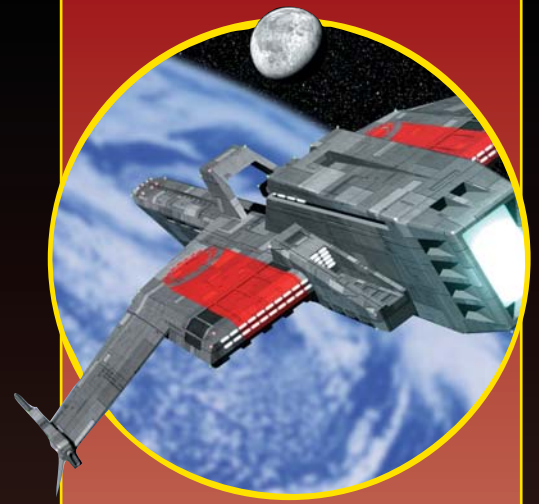
Rim of Fire describes more than 400 worlds and star systems . . . Imperial, Solomani, Vegan and rebellious. It also describes:

- The Solomani Confederation, and the iron-fisted SolSec that keeps the populace in line.
- Rules for Solomani characters and sample Solomani Confederation starships.
- The great clashes between the First Imperium and the Earth-bred founders of the Second, as well as between the Third Imperium and the Solomani descendants of the Second.
- Life on Terra, birthplace of all Humanity . . . a shrine to the Solomani, now held by the Imperium.
- The Vegans and the Vegan Polity, an economic powerhouse that plays an important role in past and present Solomani Rim politics.

The Solomani Rim contains more history, honor, and horrors than any other part of Charted Space. Explore it today!



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FIRST EDITION
PUBLISHED JULY 2000

ISBN 1-55634-436-8

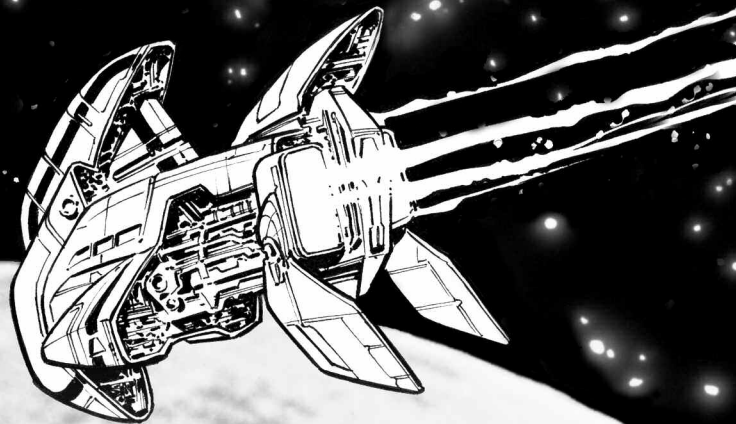


SJG02095 **6615**

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ISBN 1-55634-436-8

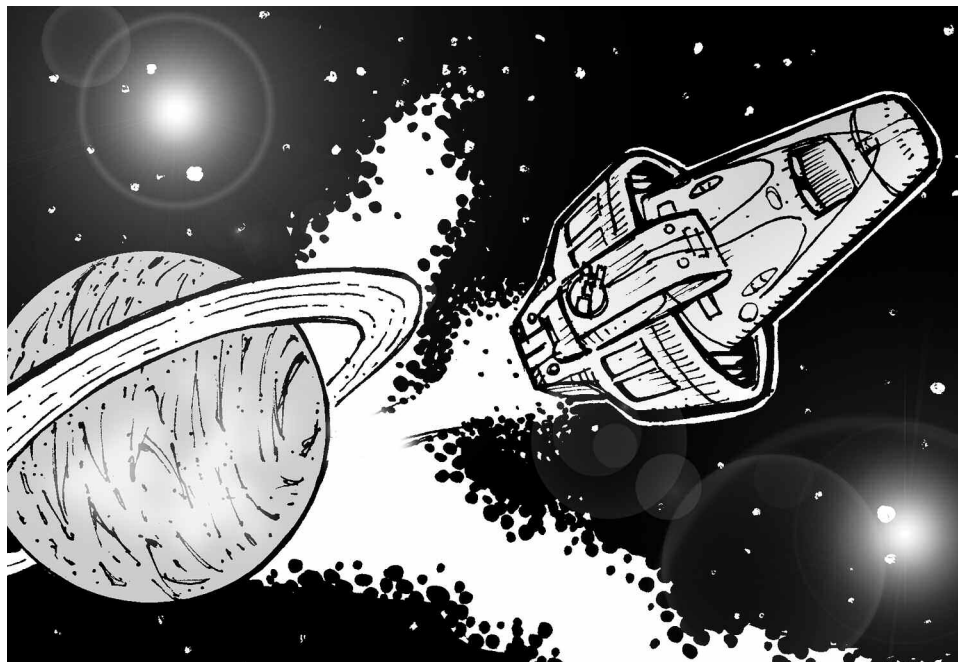
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Contents



INTRODUCTION	4	<i>A Solomani Rebuttal</i>	26	RISE OF THE TERRANS	39
About the Author	4	Solomani Security (SolSec)	27	<i>Human Taxonomy</i>	39
About the Line Editor	4	<i>Solomani Factions</i>	28	The Interstellar Wars	40
<i>Journal of the</i>		<i>The Two Confederations</i>	29	<i>First Contact?</i>	40
<i>Travellers' Aid Society</i>	4	<i>Elias Treleven</i>	30	<i>Lorette Strider</i>	
About GURPS	4	THE VEGAN WORLDS	31	(-2468 to -2408)	41
Page References	4	Vegans	31	<i>Yukio Hasegawa</i>	
1. THE DOMAIN		<i>Vegans and Humaniti</i>	31	(-2466 to -2381)	42
OF SOL	5	<i>Vegan Racial Template</i>	32	Technologies of	
IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT	5	MINOR RACES	33	<i>the Interstellar Wars</i>	42
<i>Being Solomani</i>	5	Dolphins	33	<i>Shana Likushan</i>	
The Archduke of Sol	6	<i>Dolphin Racial Template</i>	33	(-2460 to -2378)	44
<i>How to Become a Noble</i>	6	Other Uplifted Species	34	<i>The Secret of My Success</i>	44
Nobility of the Rim	7	Gurungan	34	<i>Kadur Erasharshi</i>	
<i>Historical Societies</i>	8	<i>Gurungan Racial Template</i>	34	(-2425 to -2363?)	45
Military Rule	9	<i>Encounter With the Gurungan</i>	35	<i>Umar bin-Abdallah</i>	
<i>Mercenary Units of the Rim</i>	10	STARSHIPS	36	<i>al-Ghazali (-2438 to -2340)</i> ...	46
CORPORATIONS OF THE RIM	11	Uriel-class 200-ton Escort	36	<i>Terran Biowarfare?</i>	47
Megacorporations	11	Columbus-class		THE RULE OF MAN	49
<i>Vilani Business Practices</i>	12	200-ton Fleet Courier	36	<i>Sharik Yangila</i>	
1102	13	Adam Smith-class		(-2411 to -2333?)	49
1103	13	400-ton Free Trader	37	THE LONG NIGHT	50
1104	13	Independence-class		<i>Manuel Albadawi</i>	
1105	14	1,000-ton Patrol Cruiser	37	(-2339 to -2267)	50
1106	14	3. HISTORY	38	<i>The Imperial Collapse</i>	51
1107	14	THE FIRST IMPERIUM	38	<i>Hiroshi Estigarribia</i>	
1108	15	<i>Astrographic Slang</i>	38	(-2261 to -2182)	52
1109	15				
1110	16				
1111	16				
1112	16				
Major Corporations	17				
1113	17				
1114	18				
1115	18				
1116	18				
Minor Corporations	19				
1117	20				
1118	20				
1119	21				
1120	21				
2. THE RIM STATES	22				
THE SOLOMANI CONFEDERATION	22				
Central Government	22				
The Solomani Party	23				
<i>The Solomani Cause</i>	23				
<i>Solomani Characters</i>	23				
The Solomani Military	25				
<i>Straight Man</i>	26				



THE THIRD IMPERIUM	53
<i>The Sword Worlds Expedition</i>	53
<i>The Solomani Hypothesis</i>	54
THE SOLOMANI MOVEMENT	55
<i>Birth of the Solomani Movement</i>	55
THE SOLOMANI RIM WAR	56
<i>Fate of the Aristocracy</i>	57
<i>Solomani Imperialism</i>	58
COLD WAR	59
<i>Margaret Speaks</i>	59
<i>Solomani Terrorism</i>	59
<i>The Authentic Movement</i>	60
4. WORLDS	62
ULTIMA SUBSECTOR	63
Ultima Subsector Worlds	63
Ultima Subsector Map	64
Ultima Subsector Navigational Data	65
SULEIMAN SUBSECTOR	68
Suleiman Subsector Worlds	68
Suleiman Subsector Map	69
Suleiman Subsector Navigational Data	71
CONCORD SUBSECTOR	73
Concord Subsector Map	73
Concord Subsector Worlds	74
Concord Subsector Navigational Data	75
HARLEQUIN SUBSECTOR	78
Harlequin Subsector Worlds	78
Harlequin Subsector Map	79
Harlequin Subsector Navigational Data	81
ALDERAMIN SUBSECTOR	82
Alderamin Subsector Map	82
Alderamin Subsector Worlds	83
Alderamin Subsector Navigational Data	84
ESPERANCE SUBSECTOR	86
Esperance Subsector Worlds	86
Esperance Subsector Map	87
Esperance Subsector Navigational Data	88
VEGA SUBSECTOR	91
Vega Subsector Worlds	91
Vega Subsector Navigational Data	92
Vega Subsector Map	93
BANASDAN SUBSECTOR	95
Banasdan Subsector Worlds	95
Banasdan Subsector Map	96
Banasdan Subsector Navigational Data	97
ALBADAWI SUBSECTOR	98
Albadawi Subsector Worlds	98
Albadawi Subsector Map	99
Albadawi Subsector Navigational Data	100
DINGIR SUBSECTOR	101
Dingir Subsector Worlds	101



NORTHCOTT 2000

Dingir Subsector Map	102
Dingir Subsector Navigational Data	103
SOL SUBSECTOR	105
Sol Subsector Map	105
Sol Subsector Worlds	106
Sol Subsector Navigational Data	106
ARCTURUS SUBSECTOR	111
Arcturus Subsector Worlds	111
Arcturus Subsector Navigational Data	112
Arcturus Subsector Map	113
JARDIN SUBSECTOR	115
Jardin Subsector Worlds	115
Jardin Subsector Map	116
Jardin Subsector Navigational Data	117
CAPELLA SUBSECTOR	118
Capella Subsector Worlds	118
Capella Subsector Map	119
Capella Subsector Navigational Data	121
GEMINI SUBSECTOR	123
Gemini Subsector Worlds	123
Gemini Subsector Map	124
Gemini Subsector Navigational Data	124
KUKULCAN SUBSECTOR	126
Kukulcan Subsector Worlds	127
Kukulcan Subsector Map	128
Kukulcan Subsector Navigational Data	130

5. GATHERING STORMS	131
IMPERIAL POLITICS	131
Exiles and Resisters	131
<i>The Empress' Visit</i>	131
Corporate Competition	132
<i>The Terran Psionics Institute</i>	132
SOLOMANI POLITICS	133
Federal Crisis	133
<i>Ancient Sites</i>	133
SolSec Rising	134
<i>Using Star Mercs on the Rim</i>	134
Nationalism	135
General Congress	135
TERRORISM	135
Brotherhood of Orion	135
<i>Using Far Trader on the Rim</i>	135
<i>Using First In on the Rim</i>	135
Rule of Terra	136
CULTURE WARS	137
<i>Virus?</i>	137
The Authentic Movement	138
HUMANS AND OTHERS	138
Aslan	138
Droyne	139
Hivers	139
<i>Adventure Seeds</i>	139
K'kree	140
Vargr	140
Vegans	140
SOLOMANI RIM SECTOR MAP	142
INDEX	143

About *GURPS*

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GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, mail majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the message body, or point your web browser to gurpsnet.sjgames.com/.

The *GURPS Traveller Rim of Fire* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/solomanirim/.

Page References

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium I*, GT to *Traveller, Second Edition*, T:AI to *Traveller Alien Races I*, T:BC to *Traveller Behind the Claw*, T:FT to *Traveller Far Trader*, T:SM to *Traveller Star Mercs*, and VE to *Vehicles, Second Edition*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Introduction

In 1982, GDW published *Supplement 10, The Solomani Rim*, for classic *Traveller*. This gave the game a second "official" setting, but the effect was greater than a simple expansion. The Spinward Marches were a frontier region, still under development in some areas, only loosely tied to the history of the Imperium as a whole. The Solomani Rim was an ancient, densely populated region, its historical roots stretching back to Humaniti's beginnings. It was a place of revolutions, epic wars, and the clash of great ideologies. In a sense, *Traveller* was born in the Marches, but it grew up on the Rim.

A lot has changed in the real world since the first time we saw the Solomani Rim. Even so, many of the issues that drove the Rim setting are still with us: the evils of intolerance, the balance between public law and private freedom, the rightful place of Humaniti in the universe. The Rim can offer us not only rousing adventure, but also the chance to think about things that truly matter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon F. Zeigler has been a science-fiction fan since the cradle (literally). He has been playing *Traveller* since about 1980. In 1988, he discovered *GURPS* and hasn't looked back since, although he is thoroughly pleased to be able to contribute to the *Traveller* legend while writing for his favorite game system. He and his wife and son live in Maryland, where he works for the U.S. government as a mathematician. In his spare time, he reads history and the occasional science-fiction or fantasy novel. He is the author of *GURPS Greece* and *GURPS Traveller First In*, and has also done freelance work for FASA's *Shadowrun* and *Earthdawn* product lines.



ABOUT THE LINE EDITOR

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publishers of *Traveller*, and spent more than 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced for a time, and then came to SJ Games, where he is *Traveller* line editor and expert-in-residence.

JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

The long-running *Traveller* magazine is now online at www.sjgames.com/jtas/, edited by Loren Wiseman. It supports all versions of *Traveller* with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are \$15/year for 52 weekly updates and full access to archives.

The *Traveller News Service* is updated weekly, chronicling the life and times of the Imperium, and is viewable free at www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html. The SJ Games *Traveller* page (www.sjgames.com/traveller/) links to the *Traveller* Web Ring, which includes most of the major *Traveller*-oriented websites. For information on subscribing to the *Traveller* mailing list, contact traveller-owner@mpgn.com.

The Secretariat

The supreme governing body in the Solomani Confederation is the Secretariat. This is an assembly of representatives from each member world or state within the Confederation. Representatives are technically “elected,” although the method of election is different for each world. Some representatives are chosen by majority vote, others are appointed by local government officials, others hold hereditary seats, and so on. Representation is based on the gross domestic product of each electoral district, so that districts making a greater contribution to the Confederation’s economy have more delegates. Some worlds with small economic bases are below the threshold that would bring them a single delegate. These worlds are normally grouped into local districts which co-operate to choose delegates. The only requirement for delegates to the Secretariat is that each must be a member in good standing of the Solomani Party.

The Secretariat’s primary power is to set the budget for various institutions of the central government, including SolSec and the Confederation military. Aside from this, the Secretariat’s power to pass laws is strictly limited. Laws and resolutions require the supporting vote of a super-majority of all delegates. Even when laws are passed, they are not automatically binding on the member worlds of the Confederation. The Secretariat’s power is limited to interstellar events, and it cannot interfere in the internal affairs of member worlds. Further, the Secretariat’s directives have sometimes been ignored by member worlds or alliances within the Confederation.

The Secretary-General

One of the Secretariat’s functions is to elect the Secretary-General from among its members. Elections are held every four years, or whenever the office falls vacant for any reason. The Secretary-General can hold office for any number of terms, but is subject to recall if the Secretariat can muster the needed super-majority. Since he is also a Delegate to the Secretariat, he can also be recalled by his home district according to local procedures.

The Secretary-General is the foremost executive official in the Solomani Confederation, but in practice his power has strict limits. In particular, he shares power with the other members of the High Council (see p. 24). The council runs the civilian ministries of the Confederation government, and also acts as supreme command over the Solomani Grand Fleet and Army. The Secretary-General is the titular head of the High Council – he presides over its meetings, and he has the strongest voice in choosing new members for it. However, he has no ministerial portfolio of his own and cannot always command the loyalty of other Council members. His power derives from the fact that the Secretariat chose him and supposedly supports him, but this is a very unsteady base.

THE SOLOMANI PARTY

The Solomani Party is the sole organization under which all official political and governmental activity takes place. No other political party is permitted to exist within the Confederation. It also exists (sometimes illegally) on almost every world with a significant Solomani population within about 20 parsecs of the Confederation border.

In theory, any Human of Solomani descent is automatically a member of the Solomani Party. Every Confederate citizen who is eligible for membership will have been exposed to the Party’s principles by the time he completes his basic education. Due to apathy, a lack of time or energy, or a disagreement with the Party’s basic principles, many Solomani choose not to participate in Party activities that are not mandatory.

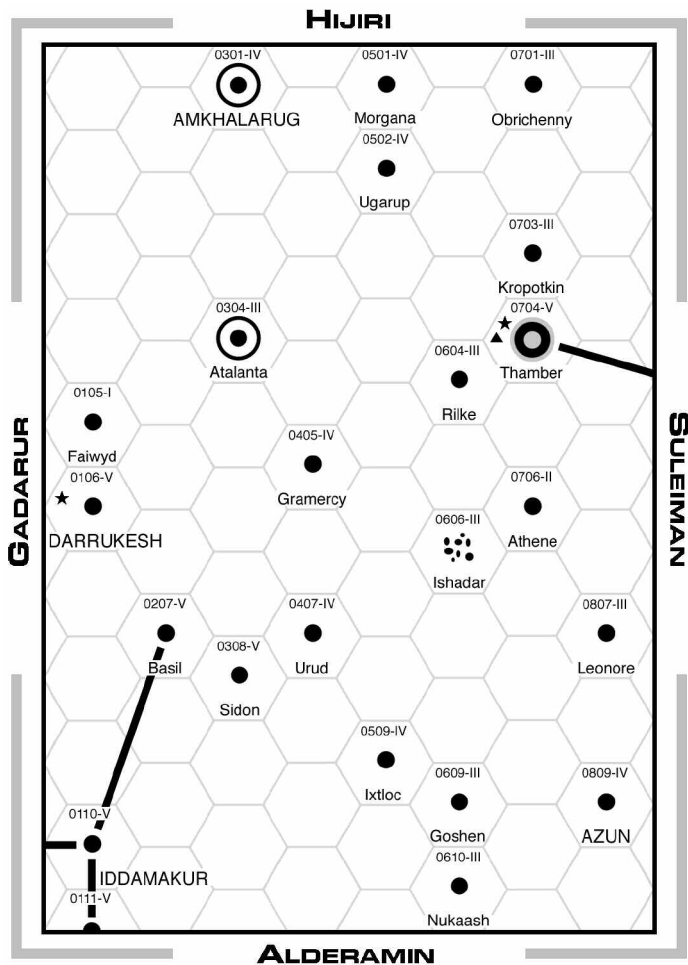
The Solomani Cause

The Solomani Cause is the dominant ideology of the Solomani Confederation. In the simplest terms, adherents of the Cause believe that Humans are superior to all non-Human sentient species, and that Humans of Solomani descent are superior to all other Humaniti. This superiority implies that Solomani are best fit to rule the Imperium, or any other interstellar state. Every being has his natural place in the scheme of things, and Solomani superiority means that their natural place is in the highest positions of power and responsibility. Indeed, other races and species would be more content if allowed to pursue their own natural purposes, leaving the heavy responsibility of government in Solomani hands. Solomani ideologues believe no sane society would organize itself in any other way.

Adherents to the Cause advance many historical arguments to “prove” Solomani superiority. Terrans developed advanced technology with extreme rapidity, overtaking the Vilani technological standard within mere decades after contact. The Terran Confederation conquered the entire Vilani Imperium, despite starting with only a tiny fraction of the population and industrial base. In the Rule of Man, the “decadent” Vilani Imperium enjoyed centuries of prolonged existence under Solomani guidance. The Third Imperium expanded rapidly while Solomani held every position of leadership, but expansion ceased once Vilani and others began to share power.

Discovery of the Ancients, and their role in propagating Humaniti, has led to a set of arguments for Solomani biological superiority. It is clear that some of the offshoot races were subjected to genetic tinkering during the Ancient period. Solomani advocates claim that these modifications were intended to make the transplanted Humaniti more subservient and better *tools* for the Ancients. In short, “tamed” animals. According to this view, the unmodified Solomani are naturally wild creatures, with all the original Human dynamism.

One aspect of Solomani political theory addresses the question of the legitimacy of interstellar government. The Third Imperium traces its claim to legitimate authority back through the Sylean Confederation and the Rule of Man, all the way to the First Imperium. Adherents of the Cause, however, reject the authority of the First Imperium. Since the Rule of Man retained the Vilani bureaucracy and renounced the preeminence of Terra, it too was unacceptable as a source of legitimate authority. Indeed, the Terrans who established the Rule of Man were “traitors to their race” for trying to integrate, rather than dominate, the conquered Vilani territory. Radical Solomani claim that they inherit the mantle of the old Terran Confederation, that being the only polity ever to unite all Solomani under an exclusive banner.



0106 DARRUKESH (IMPERIAL)

Darrukesh was first settled late in the First Imperium, after a long period of terraforming which gave the planet a breathable atmosphere and wide (but shallow) seas. Its population and culture are still mostly Vilani. During Solomani rule, the population was kept under the control of a police state for the benefit of a small Solomani elite. The Rim War brought about a popular revolution, which was supported by the Imperial Navy. A Vilani junta seized control and imposed wide-ranging reforms, trying to return Darrukesh to the political and cultural traditions of the First Imperium. Today, Darrukesh is governed like the ancient Vilani Empire in miniature. An Emperor holds nominal sovereignty over the star system, while real power is in the hands of an *Igsiirdi* controlled by the planet's largest corporations.

The government of Darrukesh levies very high taxes and is extremely intrusive, stamping out any deviation from a strictly defined Vilani norm. Despite this, the people enthusiastically support their government. Nonconformists, including those Solomani who did not flee the revolution, have a very difficult time on Darrukesh. Some of these have settled (not always voluntarily) in the system's rich outer planetoid belt. Conditions are harsh there, but settlers can make a good living, and the system government tolerates greater social diversity in the asteroid colonies.

The rulers of Darrukesh are loyal to the Imperium, but they also have a clear long-range agenda of their own. The Darrukeshi remember the Long Night, and even worse, the

“betrayal” of Empress Margaret I which delivered their world into Solomani hands. Privately, they have resolved never again to be wholly dependent upon the Imperium. They have built up a powerful military force of their own, ostensibly for “system defense.” They have also created an economic sphere of influence stretching several parsecs in all directions. Darrukeshi interests have often hired mercenaries to intervene in the affairs of other worlds. As a result, the Duke of Ultima regards Darrukesh as the most serious challenge to his plans for developing the subsector.

Since the Rim War, Imperial planetographers have expressed concern about the long-term viability of Darrukesh as an inhabited world. During the terraforming phase, the Vilani gave the planet a very thick atmosphere to offset its naturally cold climate. It now appears possible that this was overdone. Darrukesh may be slowly sliding into a runaway-greenhouse state, which would render the planet completely uninhabitable. The *Igsiirdi* has firmly refused to cooperate with Scout Service attempts to study the planet's long-term climate.

0110 IDDAMAKUR (IMPERIAL)

Iddamakur is a marginally habitable world. The high oxygen content of the atmosphere causes lung irritation and metabolic problems. Even those native to the world must wear reducing respirators if they plan on strenuous outdoor activity. Local conditions also make natural fire an almost constant problem. Even in moist climates, flammable materials will burn merrily at the slightest spark. As a result, the planet's land life is scattered and primitive, mostly consisting of plant species which use the frequent wildfires as part of their life cycle. On the other hand, the oceans teem with life, some of which is edible by Humans. Civilization on Iddamakur tends to cling to islands and shorelines, relying on fishing and aquaculture for survival.

Iddamakur was uninhabited until the Solomani era, when it came into use as a prison planet. Non-Humans, Vilani, even



Gathering Storms

In recent years, the informal detente between the Imperium and the Confederation has shown signs of severe strain. Both states have growing internal factions that favor a renewed confrontation, and the Confederation itself seems to be careening toward a major internal crisis. These events may have repercussions that affect all of charted space. This chapter is intended to summarize “current events” in the Solomani Rim from the Game Master’s perspective. Players should not read this material without their GM’s permission.

IMPERIAL POLITICS

In the current game of power politics, the Imperium appears to have the advantage. It has a strong leader in the Archduke, and its internal divisions are not at the crisis point. Still, there is plenty of conflict among opposing interests in the Imperial portion of the sector.

EXILES AND RESISTERS

The nobles of the Solomani Rim are a bit different from those of, say, the Spinward Marches. Nobles of the Marches have their arguments and feuds, but in times of crisis they usually swing into action behind Archduke Norris and set aside disputes until later. On the Rim, things are more contentious.

The Archduke of Sol is pursuing a strategy of economic development and reconciliation. His theory is that careful diplomacy and general prosperity will do more than any amount of confrontation to bring the Solomani back into the Imperial fold. Most moderates of the Resistance and New Houses (see pp. 8-9) follow his lead in this. The Exile Houses are another matter. To them, economic development is all very well, but only insofar as it supports developing Imperial power and making certain the Solomani can never threaten anyone again.

The grand prize in the current contest is the position of sector duke. Most of the Rim’s dukes are moderates, who have consciously refrained from competing for seniority so that Archduke Adair can assume the *de facto* role of Sector Duke himself. The Exile Houses, however, observe that this situation has no basis in law or tradition. Unfortunately for them, there are no Exiles of sufficient influence or seniority among the ranks of subsector dukes. This has not prevented them from agitating for the position, using both fair means and foul.

The Exiles do not (usually) challenge the Archduke’s authority directly, but they are not above attacking his loyal supporters by whatever means come to hand. Rumor and scandal, economic manipulation, influence over the Imperial military, hired mercenaries, and various regional duelling ethics have all been used to undermine moderate nobles. In the Imperial system, every noble rests on the support of his subordinates. Eliminate that support, and the man on top finds himself with an empty title. Thus if the Exiles can’t challenge Archduke Adair, they can attack one of the moderate dukes, or a count in a crucial position, or even a planetary noble. Even a baron of the Rim is not too low to be a target, if he turns out to be the weak link in the power structure of one of his superiors.

The Empress’ Visit

Empress Iolanthe’s visit to the Solomani Rim in 1121 will doubtless be a pivotal event in local history. Even if nobody tries to assassinate her.

Popular speculation about the reason for her event is accurate: The Empress has long been known for her support for the preservation of distinctive cultures throughout the Imperium. This makes her a natural supporter of the Authenticist Movement (see sidebar, pp. 60-61), but since the Movement has little political importance on Capital she has rarely had the opportunity to express her support. On the Rim, however, her voice can give the Movement a boost in popularity and increased influence in sector politics.

Another reason for her visit is to support the effort to reconcile the Solomani with the Imperium. Her itinerary is a closely guarded secret, but it is known that she will spend some time on Terra itself, visiting historical sites and meeting with local cultural and political leaders. Apparently, the Imperium’s seniormost *Vilani* noble plans to publicly pay her respects to Terran history and culture, the first time such a thing has happened in 10,000 years of interstellar civilization. The Emperor and the Archduke both hope that this will bolster Solomani pride in a way that actually *reduces* bigotry and leaves a positive impression of the Imperium.

Finally, the Empress is due to announce several policy changes, the sum of which will give Archduke Adair more discretion when dealing with the Solomani Movement. The details are currently known only to the Emperor and his closest associates, although presumably the Archduke has been consulted ahead of time.

Index

A

Acreidiat Lines, 19.
Ad Astra, 19.
Adam Smith-class 400-ton Free Trader, 37.
Administrative Rank advantage, 24.
Agents, 29.
Agidda, 43, 59.
Akhamin, 99.
Akimasi, 70.
Albadawi, Fleet Admiral Manuel, 47-50.
Albadawi subsector, 98-101; *map*, 99; *navigational data*, 100; *worlds*, 98.
Alderamin subsector, 82-85; *map*, 82; *navigational data*, 84; *worlds*, 83.
al-Ghazali, Umar bin-Abdallah, 46.
Alsatia, 102.
Altiplano, 97.
Anacreon, 86-87.
Ancients, 123, 133.
Anenerkuk, 113.
Aosta, 79.
APS&V, 19.
Aquitaine, 15, 19, 120-121.
Archduke Adair, 6-7, 13, 17, 88, 92, 131.
Arcturus, 113-114.
Arcturus subsector, 111-114; *map*, 113; *navigational data*, 112; *worlds*, 111.
Arisia, 117.
Arkiirkii, 49, 80.
Arukhur, 84.
Ascalon, 20, 70-71.
Aslan, 53, 72-73, 82, 84, 100-101, 138-139.
Aster Tyui, 92-93.
Atalanta, 65.
Athene, 67.
Aushenyo, the, 9, 93.
Authentic Movement, 21, 60-61, 67, 72, 84, 99, 110, 131, 138.
Azaremiid, 71-72.
Azun, 67.

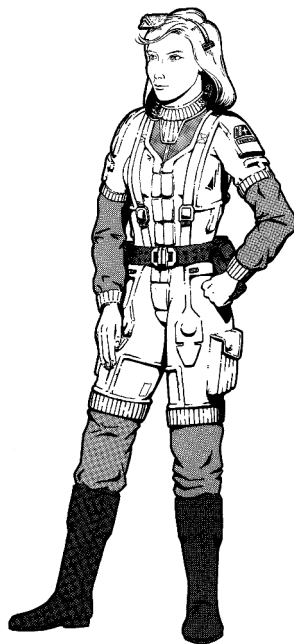
B

Banasdan, 96-97.
Banasdan subsector, 95-97; *map*, 96; *navigational data*, 97; *worlds*, 95.
Barnard's Star, 40-42.
Barsoom, 116-117.
Bellerophon, 15, 90.
Biggles, 70.
Biowarfare, 47-48.
Boôtean League, 20, 118, 121.
Boqueron, 90.
Boskone, 18, 89.

Brotherhood of Orion, 59, 135-136, 140.
Business practices, 12, 135.

C

Capella subsector, 118-122; *map*, 119; *navigational data*, 121; *worlds*, 118.
Caprice, 128, 129-130.
Carchemish, 126.
Carlyle, 81.
Castor, 125-126.
Cathay, 92, 93-94.
Catseye, 72.
Characters, *Dolphin*, 33; *Gurungan*, 34; *Solomani*, 24-26; *Vegan*, 32.
Chernozem, 124-125.
Chips, 137-138.
Chronology, 13-21.
Chrysolite, 118.
Cloud cities, 122.
Columbus-class 200-ton Fleet Courier, 36.
Concord subsector, 73-77; *map*, 73; *navigational data*, 75; *worlds*, 74.
Confederation, *see Solomani*.
ConTech, 20, 117.
Corporations, 11-21, 132-133.
Corridor, 38.
Crown Lines, 20, 128.
Current events, 13-21.
Cyan, 128.
Cymbeline, 16, 111-112, 137-138.



Cyprian, 128.

D

Darrukesh, 64.
Delgado, 12.
Demeter, 126.
Depot, 92.
Dingir, 43, 47, 59, 103-104.
Dingir subsector, 17, 101-105; *map*, 102; *navigational data*, 103; *worlds*, 101.
Diseases, 47-48.
Dismal, 16.
Dolphins, 33-34; *racial template*, 33.
Droyne, 82, 139.
Duelling, 76.
Duriim, 48.

E

Earth, *see Terra*.
Easter, 74-75.
Eleusis, 76-77.
Empress' visit, 21, 131.
Enki Kalamma, 104.
Erasharshi, Kadur, 43-45, 49.
Esperance, 14, 87-88.
Esperance subsector, 86-90; *map*, 87; *navigational data*, 88; *worlds*, 86.
Estigarribia, Hiroshi, 50, 52.
Ewm Shao Gwi, 20.
Exile Houses, 9, 111, 131.
Factions in Solomani Cause, 28, 115, 133-137.

F

Fafhrd, 86.
Faiwyd, 63.
Farmines, 20-21.
Fenris, 13, 14, 45, 109.
Fifth Interstellar War, 44-46.
First contact, 40.
First Imperium, 38-49.
First Interstellar War, 42.
Flanders, 90.
Fomalhaut, 102-103.
Forlorn, 125.
Fourth Interstellar War, 44-46.

G

Gaea, 48, 99-100.
Galactic Arbitrations, 17.
Ganesh, 94.
Gashidda, 103.
Gemini subsector, 123-126; *map*, 124; *navigational data*, 124; *worlds*, 123.
General Products, 12, 76.
Generation ships, 39-40.
Government, *Imperial*, 5-11, 131-132; *Solomani*, 22-30, 135.
GSbAG, 13.

Gurungan, 20, 34-35, 65-66; *racial template*, 34.
Gwynedd, 125.

H

Haddad, 119.
Hades, 110.
Hamicar, 15, 123-124.
Harappa, 114.
Harlequin, 16.
Harlequin subsector, 78-82; *map*, 79; *navigational data*, 81; *worlds*, 78.
Hasegawa, Yukio, 42.
Heironymus, 90.
Hephaistos, 125.
Hibernia, 119.
High nobles, 6.
Hiroshi, 75.
Historical societies, 8-9.
History, 38-61.
Hivers, 51, 82, 136, 139-140.
Hoatzin, 84-85.
Home Guard, 27.
Honor nobles, 7.
Hortelez et Cie, 13.
Hsuishlesh, 88-89.
Human taxonomy, 39.
Huy Braseal, 80-81.

I

Ichiban Interstellar, 17.
Iddamakur, 64-65.
Ilike, 46, 104-105.
Ikaakur, 77.
Imperial research stations, *see Research Station*.
Imperium, *First*, 38-49; *government*, 5-11, 131-132; *nobility*, 6-11, 131; *Second*, 49-50; *Third*, 53-55.
Independence-class 1,000-ton Patrol Cruiser, 37.
Inidu, 77.
Instellarms, 13-14.
Interstellar Wars, 40-49, 51.
Irashdaa, 98-99.
Ishadar, 66.

J

Jael, 113.
Jardin, 115-116.
Jardin subsector, 115-117; *map*, 116; *navigational data*, 117; *worlds*, 115.
Jump drives, 40-43, 48.

K

K'kree, 140.
Khalikkam, 94.
Khedish, 68-69.
Khirshag, 75-76, 92.
Kidashi, 99.

Kilennur, 21, 81-82.
 Kukulcan, 20-21, 127, 128, 130, 133-134.
 Kukulcan subsector, 126-130; *map*, 128; *navigational data*, 130; *worlds*, 127.

L

Labrys, 119.
 Lagash, 52, 110.
 Lagrange, 16.
 Lamarck Minerals, 21, 133.
 Langren Center, 21.
 Laputa, 126-127, 128.
 Letters of patent, 7.
Leyden trees, 114.
 Likushan, Shana, 42-45.
 Ling-Standard Products, 14, 18, 133.
 Lodges, 14, 109.
 Long Night, 50-53.
 Ludmilla, 13, 18, 89.
 Lysander Production, 19, 21.

M

Makhidkarun, 14, 67.
 Maps, *Albadawi*, 99; *Alderamin*, 82; *Arcturus*, 113; *Banasdan*, 96; *Capella*, 119; *Concord*, 73; *Dingir*, 102; *Esperance*, 87; *Gemini*, 124; *Harlequin*, 79; *Jardin*, 116; *Kukulcan*, 128; *Sol*, 105; *Solomani Rim*, 142; *Suleiman*, 69; *Ultima*, 64; *Vega*, 93.
 Markhashi, 46.
 Mashaddun, 88.
 Megacorporations, 11-16, 132-133.
 Membrane planet, 123-124.
 Mercenaries, 10, 27, 134.
 Merganser, 93.
 Meson weapons, 48-49.
 Military Rank advantage, 24.
 Military rule, 9-11.
 Mirabilis, 18, 44, 52.
 Miskatonic, 79.
 Monitors, 28-29.
 Morgana, 65.
 Muan Gwi, 17, 18, 32, 38, 58, 91-92.
 Mudge, 73, 74.

N

Naasirka, 14-15, 18.
 Nasu, 77.
 New Houses, 9, 131.
 Newcomb, 15, 96.
 Nisinasha, 95-96.
 Nobility, 6-11, 57, 131-132.
 Nonsuch, 117.
 Noricum, 96.
 Nusku, 44, 45, 47, 106-107.
 Nyarlahotep, 95.

O

Ochre, 126.
 Okefenokee, 73.
 Opar, 81.
 Oudh, 47.
 Outback, the, 38, 44.

P

Pagliacci, 14, 82.
 Party (Administrative) Rank advantage, 24.
 Pilgham, 117.
 Player characters, *see Characters*.
 Pollux, 125.

Polyphemus, 19, 118, 121-122.
 Poseidon, 68.
 Probable Technologies, 21.
 Procyon, 43, 45.
 Prometheus, 44, 110.
 Psionics Institute, 132.
 Psionics Suppressions, 90.
 Ptolemy, 117.
 Purdishi, 82.
 Purges, 21.

Q

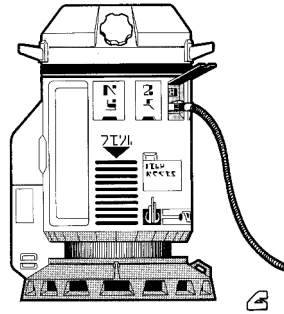
Quaver, 68, 69.

R

Rant nobles, 6.
 Recent events, 13-21.
 Reinhardt Foundation, 8, 18.
 Reputation advantage, 25.
 Research Station Alpha, 81.
 Research Station Epsilon, 16, 112.
 Research Station Gamma, 93.
 Resistance Houses, 9, 131.
 Rilke, 66.
 Rim Main, 38.
 Rim states, *see Solomani Confederation and Vegan worlds*.
 Rimward Gap, 38.
 Rule of Man, 49-50.
 Rule of Terra, 18, 136-137.

S

Sand dollars, 118.
 Santorini, 128-129.
 Sarmaty, 84.
 Sashingun, 97.
 Saxe Transport, 17, 19.
 Saxe, 20.
 Scandia, 16, 112.
 Scaramouche, 78-79.
 Scipio, 130.
 Second Imperium, 49-50.
 Second Interstellar War, 42-43.
 Secret disadvantage, 25.
 Sector map, 142.
 Sequoyah, 119-120.
 Seventh Interstellar War, 46-47.
 Shapam, 81.
 Sharurshid, 15, 133.
 Shazam, 74.
 Shulgiasu, 94.
 Shululsish, 83-84.
 Shuruppak, 46, 47.
 Silicon life, 137-138.
 Silk Road Factors, 21.
 Sionnach, 117.
 Sirius, 105.
 Sirius Gap, 38, 45, 46.
 Six-Star Services, 21.
 Sixth Interstellar War, 46.
 Social Status advantage, 25.
 Social Stigma disadvantage, 25.
 Sol subsector, 105-110; *map*, 105; *navigational data*, 106; *worlds*, 106.
 Solar Shipping, 17-18, 132-133.
 Solomani Rim, *history*, 38-61; *map*, 142; *military rule*, 9-11; *noble factions*, 8-9, 131-132; *politics*, 131-141; *statistics*, 5; *subsectors*, 62-130; *War*, 10, 31, 56-61.
 Solomani Shipping, 18.
 Solomani, *Army*, 27, 28; *Autonomous Region*, 55-56; *Cause*, 23, 29, 55, 135; *characters*, 24-26;



Confederation, 22-30; *government*, 22-23, 135; *Home Guard*, 27; *Hypothesis*, 54; *Military*, 25-27; *Movement*, 55-56, 61, 131; *Navy*, 21, 26, 28, 57-59; *Party*, 23-25; *political factions*, 28, 115, 133-137; *Security (SolSec)*, 21, 27-30, 112, 117, 119, 127, 134, 135, 137; *society*, 30; *Sphere*, 55, 61; *starships*, 36-37; *terrorism*, 59, 61, 135-137.
 SolSec, *see Solomani Security*.
 Soma, 103.
 Starships, 36-37; *Adam Smith-class 400-ton Free Trader*, 37; *Columbus-class 200-ton Fleet Courier*, 36; *Independence-class 1,000-ton Patrol Cruiser*, 37; *Uriel-class 200-ton Escort*, 36.
 Sternmetal Horizons, 16, 70, 133.
 Stralsund, 85.
 Strider, Lorette, 41.
 Subsector maps, *see Maps*.
 Suleiman, 72-73.
 Suleiman subsector, 68-73; *map*, 69; *navigational data*, 71; *worlds*, 68.
 SuSAG, 15, 77, 88.
 Sword Worlds expedition, 53.

T

Tables, *Albadawi Subsector Navigational Data*, 100; *Albadawi Subsector Worlds*, 98; *Alderamin Subsector Navigational Data*, 84; *Alderamin Subsector Worlds*, 83; *Arcturus Subsector Navigational Data*, 112; *Arcturus Subsector Worlds*, 111; *Banasdan Subsector Navigational Data*, 97; *Banasdan Subsector Worlds*, 95; *Capella Subsector Navigational Data*, 121; *Capella Subsector Worlds*, 118; *Concord Subsector Navigational Data*, 75; *Concord Subsector Worlds*, 74; *Dingir Subsector Navigational Data*, 103; *Dingir Subsector Worlds*, 101; *Esperance Subsector Navigational Data*, 88; *Esperance Subsector Worlds*, 86; *Gemini Subsector Navigational Data*, 124; *Gemini Subsector Worlds*, 123; *Harlequin Subsector Navigational Data*, 81; *Harlequin Subsector Worlds*, 78; *Jardin Subsector Navigational Data*, 117; *Jardin Subsector Worlds*, 115; *Kukulcan Subsector Navi-*

gational Data, 130; *Kukulcan Subsector Worlds*, 127; *Sol Subsector Navigational Data*, 106; *Sol Subsector Worlds*, 106; *Suleiman Subsector Navigational Data*, 71; *Suleiman Subsector Worlds*, 68; *Ultima Subsector Navigational Data*, 65; *Ultima Subsector Worlds*, 63; *Vega Subsector Navigational Data*, 92; *Vega Subsector Worlds*, 91.

Tarsus, 119.
 Technology, 42-43.
 Terra, 11, 16, 19, 38, 39-54, 105, 107-109.
 Terran, *Confederation*, 42-50; *Mercantile Community*, 51-53; *Psionics Institute*, 132.
 Terrorism, 59, 61, 135-137.
 Teucer, 120.
 Thamber, 66-67.
 Third Interstellar War, 43-44.
 Thorwald, 114.
 Timeline, 13-21.
 Tlaloc, 126.
 Tonopah, 48, 99, 100-101.
 Transstar, 18.
 Treleven, Elias, 21, 30, 134.
 Triple-G Resources, 21.
 Tsyasha Kwa, 21.
Tuhuir, 32-33, 38, 94, 141.
 Tukera Lines, 16, 18, 73, 132-133.
 Twylo, 15, 118-119.

U

Ugarup, 20, 65-66.
 Ultima subsector, 63-67; *map*, 64; *navigational data*, 65; *worlds*, 63.
 Umber, 79.
 Upirzanu, 85.
 Uplifted species, 34.
Uriel-class 200-ton Escort, 36.

V

Vantage, 122.
 Vargr, 140.
 Vega subsector, 91-94; *map*, 93; *navigational data*, 92; *worlds*, 91.
 Vegans, 15, 38, 58, 87-92, 94, 140-141; *corporations*, 20, 21; *Humanity and*, 31, 140-141; *physiology*, 31; *politics*, 32-33; *psychology*, 31-32; *racial template*, 32; *worlds*, 31-33.
 Vilani, *expansion*, 38; *First Imperium*, 38-49; *governors*, 41, 42, 44, 45, 49; *Imperium and the Solomani Cause*, 23; *tensions with Solomani*, 55-56.
 Virus, 137-138.
 Visit of the Empress, 21, 131.

W

Waothan, 15, 88.
 Worlds, 62-130.

X

Xantippe, 130.
 Xiwa, 77.

Y

Yangila, Sharik, 45-46, 49.
 York, 99.

Z

Zirunkariish, 16-17, 70