

GURPS[®] Supers[™]

I.S.T.[™]

INTERNATIONAL SUPER TEAMS

A Complete World Background for Super Roleplaying



By Robert M. Schroeck

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

PEACE ON EARTH...?

Welcome to the super-powered world of the U.N. International Super Teams! Charged with enforcing the 1982 edicts banning strategic nuclear weapons and military super-squads, the ISTs are the U.N.'s premier peace-keeping forces — well-funded and well-equipped elite troops composed of the best and brightest metahumans. *GURPS International Super Teams* tells you all you need to know to play members of the U.N.'s super-police force.

GURPS International Super Teams is a world-book for the *GURPS Supers* sourcebook. It contains all the background necessary to survive in the world of the International Super Teams. Match wits with Qaddafi of non-U.N. Libya; investigate the disturbing secrets of South Africa; cope with international politics in the General Assembly; or defend civilian targets from the elusive neo-Nazi Kristallnacht and other members of the deadly PLO superteam.

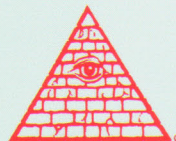
GURPS International Super Teams includes:

- ★ Complete historical timeline, from 60,000,000 B.C. to today.
- ★ Supers in the 1940s and the 1960s.
- ★ Concise geopolitical and social summaries of the world of the ISTs.
- ★ Fringe groups, radical movements and cults.
- ★ Over two dozen fully-developed super characters, heroes and villains from around the world — and outer space.
- ★ Three sample IST embassies, fully detailed.
- ★ Guidelines for establishing your own International Super Team.

And much, much more!



Written by Bob Schroeck
Edited by Chris McCubbin
Cover by John Zeleznik
Illustrated by Doug Shuler



ISBN 1-55634-192-X

SJG01695 6506

Made in the U.S.A.

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS[®] Supers[™]

I.S.T.[™]

A Heroic World for Super-Powered Roleplaying

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Brian Stricklin, **A.J. Tomlenson**, **Brain Webb**, **Todd A. Woods**, **Steven T. Zeiger** and everyone in the various
Warriors' World campaigns, but mainly Warriors Alpha: **Helen Allen**, **Joseph Avins**, **Kat Avins**, **John Freiler**,
Jeff Johnson, **Ronni Katz**, **Frank Lazar**, **Eric Mee**, **Peggy U.V. Schroeck** and **Jeffrey Ventemilia**.



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ISBN 1-55634-192-X

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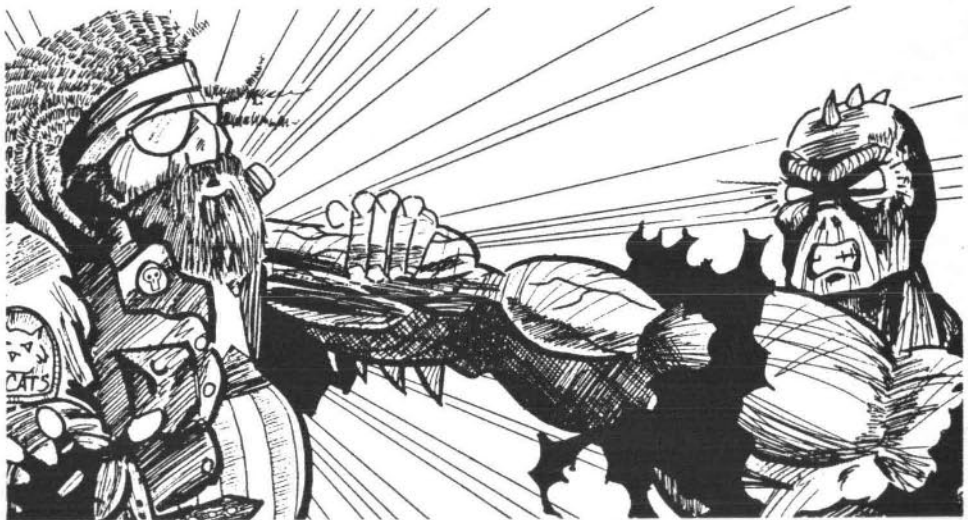
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INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly newsletter includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us — but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. An SU reference refers to *GURPS Supers*, a UT to *GURPS Ultra Tech*, and an S to *GURPS Space*.

About the Author

Robert M. Schroeck works as a Systems Analyst in New York City. Trained as a writer in college, he of course took a job in the computer field upon graduation. An avid gamer and SF fan for over 15 years and 20 years, respectively, he is also a fanatic comics collector. *GURPS IST* is his attempt to reconcile the real world with what he thinks it should be. Bob lives in New Brunswick, NJ, with his wife Peggy, his second-best friend from high school, and the obligatory cat.

If superbeings or metahumans really existed, what would the world be like? How would history have been different? How would science have progressed? How would society have evolved?

The backgrounds of many comic books often seem far too familiar — too like the “real world” to make their super inhabitants ring true. Despite all their uncanny powers and stupendous technological leaps, the superhuman heroes of most comic books seem to have no impact on their world except the capture of a few petty crooks. Their actions exactly cancel the world-destroying schemes of their super-foes, leaving the world effectively untouched by their presence.

This kind of background does not suit the spirit of the *GURPS* system. *GURPS* is committed to the principle of realism. The typical comic book world, where supers seem to exist untouched by the society that they serve (or exploit), does not fulfill the obligation imposed by that principle.

GURPS IST is an attempt to define a history and a global society that have been realistically affected by the existence of metahumans since the start of World War II, while still preserving the flavor of four-color comics. The history is close enough to our own to allow players to feel immediately comfortable and familiar with it, yet different enough to lend an air of excitement and uncertainty about the future. As members of an International Super Team, or IST, players will also have the thrill of directly affecting important global events: saving lives, stopping wars, protecting the environment . . . not just on a local scale but on an international one. And the advantage to a GM is that adventure ideas are no further away than the headlines of the daily paper.

So brush up on your (new) history, find out where this week's trouble spots are, and get ready to dive into the turbulent world of *GURPS International Super Teams!*

— Robert M. Schroeck



What Is the IST?

In the alternate present of *GURPS International Super Teams* superbeings walk the earth. Like everybody else, some are good, some are evil and most are just trying to get by.

The most important metahuman organization in this world is the United Nations' International Super Teams, a global network of supers that keeps one or more embassies in every member nation, staffed with a highly-trained cadre of powerful heroes. Under the leadership of the Greek heroine Argurous Astraph — whose cosmic energy powers are matched only by her tactical genius — the ISTs stand ready at any moment to protect the lives and freedom of innocent people the world over, and to defend the U.N.'s overriding goal of lasting world peace.

A *GURPS IST* campaign can be set in the modern-day world of the IST organization (established 1982) or in earlier decades of this century, particularly the turbulent '60s and World War II — the dawn of the metahuman era.

GURPS International Super Teams is the official worldbook of the *GURPS Supers* roleplaying game, but can be used as the background for super-powered campaigns using any roleplaying system.

THE IST WORLD

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Though the threat of global nuclear war was abated by the Edicts, the world of the ISTs is by no means peaceful. The existence of supers has only added to the turmoil felt throughout the world, or at the very least, emphasized the turmoil that was already there.



The World and Supers

The status and treatment of supers varies widely. Unless they are members of an IST, they are bound by local laws and customs, and in some areas these can be harsh. Islamic countries, for example, have managed only in the last decade to convince their populations not to slay supers outright as “creatures of Satan.” The Israeli ambassador to the U.N. once remarked, “There are only three kinds of metahumans in the Arab countries: young ones, dead ones, and very, very powerful ones.” Until recently, her remark was all too true; only the most awesome supers avoided death at the hands of angry mobs. To this day, the population of even the most Westernized Arab nations look upon their supers with distrust.

The opposite is true in India and other Hindu nations. Metahuman powers are seen as gifts from the gods. Supers are brought before the priests and welcomed into the Brahmin caste, no matter what their previous station in life. They are showered with gifts and supported by the people around them, in exchange for blessing the populace with their presence and service. No small number of

International IST Adventure Seeds

That Old Black Magic. The team assigned to an Arabian sheikhdom is ordered not to take sides when a relative of the King launches his own bid for the throne. Then they learn that the insurgent Prince is himself a metahuman, with infernal powers. Will they break the rules and act covertly to stop the revolution — or let him win and deal with his demonic masters later?

No Bull! John Bull is the metahuman commander of the Buckingham Palace guards. He is one of the toughest men in the world; in 1944, he airdropped into occupied France without a parachute, and he looks perhaps half his true age of 70. Now he’s vanished. IST London is asked to investigate.

Color Bar. In Africa, an IST group must deal with a super-refugee from South Africa. He was a member of the white ruling class, with Transformation power, flight, and blaster abilities — very powerful. The catch? His flight and blasting powers only work in his Transformed state . . . which is black . . . and he was eventually unmasked and chased out of the country. He’s basically a good person, which some real psychological problems and a South African super-assassin on his trail.

Out of the Deeps. Something seems to be eating the Danish and Norwegian fishing fleets. The ISTs of both nations are asked to investigate.

U.N., Go Home! The dictator of Paraguay, himself a metahuman, has announced that he is pulling out of the U.N. He has given the IST one week to get out of Asunción. The supers of the team are ordered to take that week to find out what the dictator is up to!

Sucker Punch. Tonga, an island kingdom, is the site of the newest U.N. super-team: IST Nuku’alofa. Two days before its official opening, the embassy building is destroyed by a tactical nuke! Many lives are lost. Who has the illegal nuclear devices, and why did they attack a peaceful and out-of-the-way site like Tonga?

Combat Realism

The world of the ISTs is intended to be a fusion between the "typical" comic book milieu and the real world. "Real" scientific curiosity, politics and social developments must be maintained to counterbalance the comic book aspects. To this end, it is suggested that none of the optional rules limiting combat deadliness be used in an IST campaign. The role of the IST member is more diplomat than soldier, until all alternatives have been tried. In keeping with the long-standing beliefs of the U.N., military action is the absolute last resort, used only when all else has failed, because it is deadly and destructive. Thus, combat should be realistically deadly, else the U.N.'s stand against violent solutions becomes a sham.

Other Realism

The GM should be prepared to alter the game world drastically if required. Technological innovation can transform the planet, as can social and political factors. Take for example the complete restructuring of Eastern Europe in late 1989 and early 1990. The good GM will allow the game world to grow and change as a result of actions on both his part and that of the players. A stagnant background will reduce the players' enjoyment in time, while one which evolves will constantly surprise and challenge them.

National Sovereignty

Although the U.N. wields considerable power and influence, and can enact wide-ranging resolutions that affect nations the world over, it is actually somewhat less than the sum of its parts. Yes, it is a world power, but not an all-encompassing one. Its member nations are sovereign and may ignore U.N. resolutions or leave the organization at will. The U.N. encourages compliance with its edicts and resolutions by offering advanced technologies and economic aid to members in good standing, but does not force member nations to yield to it. Even the IST, although viewed as an occupying army by many nations, is more of a police force, with dozens of national precincts. Only the Edicts of 1982 are unconditional, as the continued existence of the world hinges on compliance with them.

For all practical purposes, the U.N. is a world power the equal of, but not superior to, the United States and the Soviet Union. The past decade can be seen as a careful dance of influence and power involving all three. With the advent of Gorbachev and *glasnost*, the United Nations has begun to help heal the long enmity between the U.S. and the USSR. And just in time; with the worsening conditions in China, three super-powers allied against the most populous nation in the world may yet stave off disaster.

them also work for the stupendous Indian film industry, providing both protagonists and special effects for the movie-mills.

Before the fall of the Iron Curtain, those supers who were not conscripted for the U.N. were officially distributed to collective farms and towns across the Soviet Union. With the liberalization of the Eastern Bloc, supers have more choice in their assignments and lives. The government still requires newly manifested supers to register with the government.

Red China, on the other hand, regiments its supers drastically. Intelligence collected since the Tiananmen Square affair has revealed that, since its founding, the Peoples' Republic of China has been breeding supers. However, until 1989 and its crackdown on internal dissent, China presented the image of being in exemplary compliance with the Edicts.

In South America, there are several metarchies — governments run entirely by metahuman dictators — three of which withdrew from the U.N. in 1982. These repressive regimes either incorporate new metahumans into their power structures, or kill them if they seem to be growing too powerful to be controlled.

In Africa, conditions vary greatly. Outside South Africa and its satellite states, metahumans are regarded with awe by the population, and as either a resource or a threat by governments. African U.N. members must maintain at least tacit support of metahumans, but it is not uncommon, as in Latin America, for the most powerful to be killed if they cannot be made to serve.

South Africa and its history are detailed on pp. 78-79.

Japan has incorporated supers into its highly-structured society with great success. As with normal crime, the number of Japanese super-criminals is very, very low. Most supers are given places in the high-status corporate super-teams. Others go into the entertainment industry — the Japanese are famous (or infamous) for capitalizing on their metahumans. Television shows, movies, and *manga* (Japanese comic books) are produced in floods, all about real supers. More than a few Western supers, with dreams of fame, have come to Japan to get parts in productions there.

In Europe, the super is currently the epitome of *chic*, and has been for nearly a decade. Fashions based upon the clothing of costumed heroes are popular, and light capes (occasionally with cowls) are a fashion trend which began to make its appearance in the U.S. in 1989. Whole gossip pages in newspapers are dedicated to the doings of metahumans, and an unexpected appearance by one is grounds for a mob scene rivalled only by those at soccer games.

The European public loves its heroes — and sometimes even its villains, if they show style. Some criminals, such as le Chat Noir of France, are cult figures for their flamboyance and their refusal to cause serious harm to either persons or property. Others, like Poprock (see p. 123), are despised for their insensitivity to human life and are doggedly hunted. The public support and acclaim given to the so-called "gentle" metavillains is such that more than one young person with minor powers has used crime as a springboard into an entertainment career after "going straight." London tabloids have featured voluptuous metavillain lovelies as their Page 3 girls, staunchly defending their models' secret identities against the police.

The governments of Europe appear almost as entranced with supers as their populations are. Heroes are given as much government backing as the U.N. will allow, and paranormal research is flooded with grants. Damage from super-battles is taken care of by the government. Most of this official enthusiasm is a holdover from the days of nuclear threat, when the EEC superteam was seen to be the last hope Europe had of surviving any conflict. Even with the team disbanded under the Edicts of 1982, and the threat of nuclear destruction virtually gone, the various governments still vie for the goodwill of as many metahumans (both public and private) as they can.

8

IST TIMELINE



ca. 60,000,000 BC

The Seeder fleet enters the Sol System, modifies Earth's climate slightly, and wipes out the dinosaurs to allow mammals to evolve.

ca. 500,000 BC

Seeders return and perform genetic modification on *Homo erectus*, the ancestor of mankind.

ca. 495,000 BC

A series of solar flares alters the Seeders' implanted gene structure, suppressing the power traits in *Homo erectus*.

ca. 400,000 BC

Early *Homo sapiens* appears.

ca. 35,000 BC

First true modern humans appear.

7,000 BC to 1924 AD

The suppressed Seeder power genes are slowly consolidated as the human population

base spreads and intermingles across the centuries. Occasional rare individuals during this period do manage to combine enough recessives to gain metahuman abilities and demonstrate "holy" or "magical" powers. Suspected metahumans from this time include Moses, Alexander the Great, Albertus Magnus, Kaspar Hauser, Rasputin, Christ, Hitler, da Vinci and Joseph Smith.

1924

The wavefront from a stellar explosion hundreds of light-years away reaches Earth. Although it is undetected by astronomers, it includes a high quantity of gamma rays, which reactivate the Seeder genes in many humans.

First mutant born in France (Destructeur).

1934

Black Moon Society founded.

1939

WWII starts in Europe.

1941

Stresses of military training reveal the first metahumans: Kalibanos, the Stalker, Hunter, and other "Mystery Man" heroes. The first reliable psis appear as well: Minder, Mist.

Hitler's *Übermenschen* make first battlefield appearance in France. The team also includes Blitzen, a low-power lightning-thrower; he is believed to be the first publicly-known "accidental" metahuman. Unopposed, the *Übermenschen* lead the German army across France.

U.S. joins war in Europe and Pacific.

1942

Newsreel footage of the *Übermenschen* confiscated by the U.S. Government prompts the founding of the "Los Angeles Project" to find and train metahumans for use in the war effort. Similarly, other teams are formed by nations involved in the war.

1943

The Los Angeles Project fields its "Strike Force A" (nicknamed "The Psycho Squad") — consisting of Hunter, Lucifer, Sgt. Strike and the Gadgeteer — in the beginning of the year. Shortly thereafter, the USSR's "Glorious People's Metahuman Defense Collective" is unveiled: Star, Bolshoi, the first Red Knight, and the mysterious Mikhail.

British superteam appears: John Bull, Union Jack, Silver and Mist. French underground is rumored to be aided by a quartet of metahumans.

1943 to 1945

All in all, nearly 50 metahumans appear publicly on all sides of the war. Their efforts



mostly cancel out, as they spend much time battling each other and acting as cover for normal troops. Of these metahumans, 37 die in action. More effective (and having a higher survival rate) are those who remain undercover during the war, such as Hitler's personal metahuman bodyguard and the French Resistance heroes.

1945

Germany surrenders. German rocket scientists, metahuman biologists, and metahumans are divided between the U.S. and USSR.

French Resistance metahumans Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité and Jongleur make first public appearances, and are awarded medals by the reinstated French government.

U.N. formed, charter signed June 26 in San Francisco. Charter (written by Elsergany and Kupelian) outlines a moderately strong organization (in the slightly paranoid spirit of the time) intended solely to maintain international peace. The U.N. is given the power to organize and deploy "police forces" as necessary to ensure global peace.

German powered infantry armor project discovered near Berlin, and genetics experiments designed to create more metahumans (and their results) found at Dachau and Auschwitz. The technologies in both these cases are embryonic. They are confiscated and studied by the Allied governments.

U.S.' "Manhattan Project" perfects the atom bomb; Hiroshima and Nagasaki destroyed.

ARGUROUS ASTRAPH

Assignment: IST New York (Supreme Commander, IST)
ST 16 (80 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Speed:** 9.25
DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 11 (10 points) **Move:** 9 ground,
288 flying

Damage: Thrust 1d+1; Swing 2d+2; +2 on punches and kicks; Lightning 13d

Appearance: Female human, Greek, age 41, 6'3", 180 lbs., black hair and eyes (normal form)/silver hair, eyes, and skin (transformed).

Point Total: 1,075

Advantages

IST Member Rank 8 (105 points)
Charisma +4 (20 points)
Reputation +3, everywhere, all the time (15 points)
Status 5 (15 points, 2 levels free from Rank)
Unusual Background: Super (50 points)

Disadvantages

Enemy: U.N.-hostile countries on 9 or less (-60 points)
Sense of Duty to Teammates (-5 points)
Sense of Duty to the U.N. and the IST forces (-15 points)
Vow: Serve and defend the U.N. and its ideals (-10)

Super Advantages

Body of Metal-18 (162 points, PD 6, DR 18)
DR +22 (66 points)
Flight (40 points)
Increased Speed +3 (75 points)
Super Flight×4 (80 points)
Transformation (15 points)

Super-Powers

Lighting-18(13) (Skill Cost: 24 points; Accuracy +8, +80%; Instantaneous +20%; Rapid Fire×2, +80%; Power cost: 219 points)

Skills

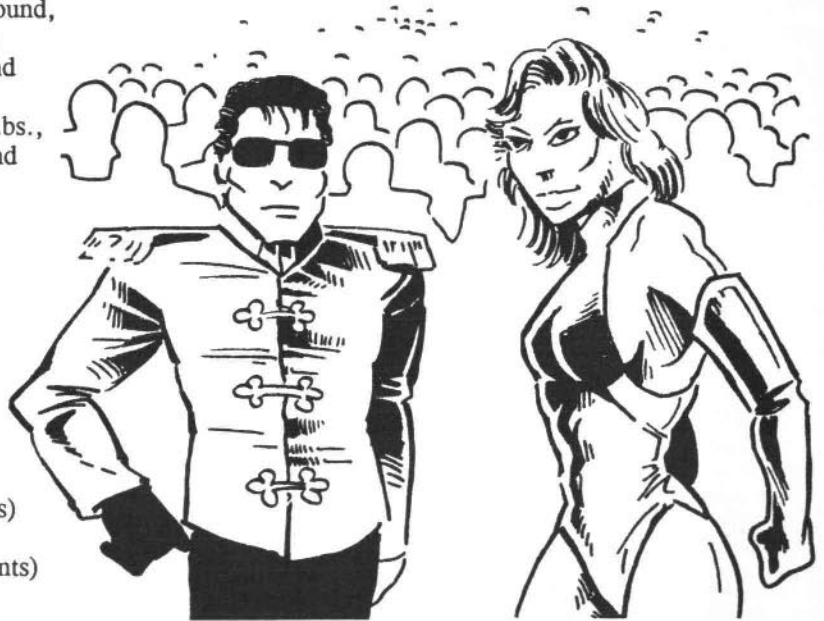
Agronomy-13 (1 point); Administration-14 (2 points); Area Knowledge (Greece)-14 (1 point); Area Knowledge (NYC)-18 (8 points); Area Knowledge (world)-17 (6 points); Bard-15 (4 points); Computer Operations/TL8-16 (4 points); Diplomacy-14 (4 points); English-14 (2 points); Greek-14 (0, native tongue); History (Int'l., UN)-14 (4 points); Intelligence Analysis-14 (4 points); Interrogation-15 (4 points); Judo-15 (8 points); Karate-15 (8 points); Leadership-16 (6 points); Russian-14 (2 points); Savoir-Faire-16 (default); Strategy-17 (10 points); Swimming-15 (2 points); Tactics-16 (8 points); Throwing-15 (8 points); Writing-17 (8 points).

Quirks

Tries to be emotionless while on duty.
Fights *very* dirty when necessary.
Always interested in recruiting new talent, from *any* source.
Visits her family every time she has leave.
Hates her American nickname, "the Silverbolt."

Story

Dimitra Poulis was born to a poor Greek farming family. In her late teens, she awoke from a nightmare to find her body



turned into shining, silvery metal. She screamed and fainted. When she awoke she found her family around her and her body back to normal. They had seen it too . . . and had watched her transform back.

The next day, the town doctor proclaimed her a metahuman. He notified government agents, who immediately recruited her into the Greek army. There she discovered her flight and lightning powers under the tutelage of specialized instructors. Staying with the military, she took the super name "Argurous Astraph" ("Silver Lightning" in Greek) and soon grew in both power and prestige. She was personally responsible for the defeat of Col. George Papadopoulos' attempted coup in 1967, and was awarded a medal of honor from Greece's King Constantine for her service. By the time she was 25, she was one of the highest-ranking metahumans in the Greek army. At 30, she commanded the entire metahuman division of that army.

In 1981, when Greece joined the European Common Market, Dimitra and the metahumans she commanded were merged with the EEC superteam. Within a year, she was leading that team. With the Edicts of 1982 and the disbanding of the EEC super-team, she resigned her commission in the Greek army and offered her services to the U.N. Three days later she was installed, amid great publicity, as the commander in chief of all IST forces. She promptly moved into her office in the temporary New York IST embassy and has remained on the job ever since.

Dimitra is almost a split personality. With friends (and she tries to be a friend first, and a commander second, to everyone serving under her), she is open and available, a sympathetic ear. But when she has to be, she becomes as hard as her transformed body. With over 20 years of experience, she is an efficient and successful military leader. She considers each of her teammates an irreplaceable resource; she will reduce any plan to the minimum risk that will accomplish the mission. She ruthlessly disregards ignores dollar costs and *opposition* casualties! Her teammates have always given her their complete loyalty.

Typical Dialogue: "Nobody ever said we had to fight *fair*."

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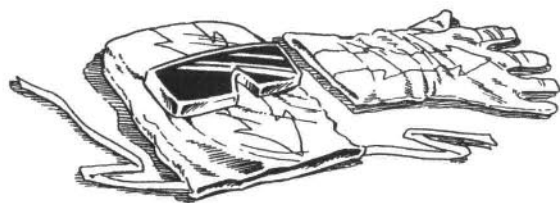
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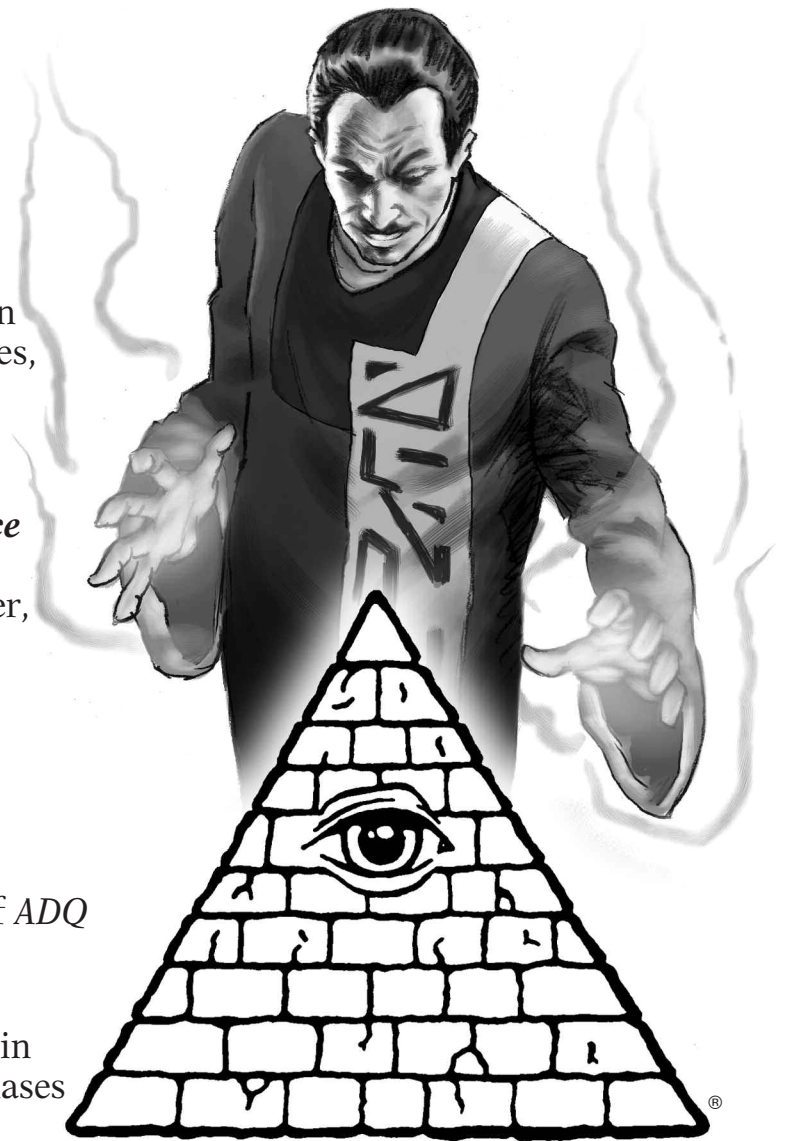
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