

THE EARTHMAN'S BURDEN

Background

It is the not-too-distant future – next Sunday, AD – and Earth has been on the brink of war for decades. The Secretary-General uses the military and economic clout of the UN to enforce a fragile peace as best he can. This delicate balance is shattered by the invention of a functional, efficient and powerful Bussard ramjet engine capable of 1g throughout the Solar System. Within a few short years, and with the Outer Space Treaty quickly forgotten, the superpowers of Earth expand outward to claim, colonise, exploit and perhaps even invade the other worlds of the system.

It will take a clever commander to strike just the right balance between rushing to build an unstoppable armada and husbanding his resources for the war to come, to know whether to join the stampede for the quick, easily-accessible inner system or to play the longer game in the less-accessible outer worlds and to know just when to turn on the greatest treasure of all – Earth itself.

The Board and Terminology

The board shows the Solar Disc, which represents locations and travel through the system.

- There are ten **worlds** around the outside of the Solar Disc; each world has a **locale** adjacent to the world's icon and between two and seven **regions** within the icon.
- There are ten **trajectories** within the Solar Disc, representing not locations but the predictability and timescale of a ship's course.
- Worlds and trajectories are connected by lines of arrows. Travelling between two connected areas outward, down a line of arrows and with its flow is one move **worldward**; travelling between two connected areas inward, up a line of arrows and against its flow is one move **skyward**.
- The board will have upon it **units**, which (identified by colour) belong either to a player or to the UN; each player is a **faction**, as is the UN.
- Units occupying a region on any world are **developments**, are **on** that world and **claiming** that region.
- Units within a world's locale are **fleets**, are **planetside** and **on** that world.
- Units within a trajectory are also **fleets** and are **spaceborne**.
- When called upon to **group** a given set of units, each of your units in that set may be (but need not be) assigned to at most one group. No group may contain units on two or more different worlds or trajectories; no unit may be a member of more than one group in the same phase or extraordinary action. If a group is called upon to move, all its members must start said move in the same location and end said move in the same location.

Setup

In order:

- Each player places one development to claim one region on Earth. All remaining regions are claimed by the UN.
- Starting with a randomly-determined player and proceeding anticlockwise around the board, each player places one fleet either on Earth or any number of moves directly skyward of Earth until each player has placed five fleets. Ten UN fleets are then placed on Earth.
- Turns commence with the last player to place a fleet and proceed clockwise around the board.

The Turn

Your turn has four phases, detailed below, which are taken in strict order each turn; there are also extraordinary actions listed at the end of this section, which may be taken at any time.

<< phase 1: movement >>

- Each of your fleets starting the phase planetside **may** make any number of moves skyward.
- Each of your fleets starting the phase spaceborne **must** make one move worldward.

<< phase 2: combat >>

On each world:

- Group your planetside fleets; each group may open fire on another faction with units on that world. Resolve each group's fire using the rules in the Combat section below.
- Group your developments; each group may attempt overthrow of another faction with developments on that world. Resolve each group's coup using the rules in the Combat section below.

The UN attempts to maintain economic and military stability on Earth as follows. So long as there are still any UN units at all on Earth:

- *Any faction defending against an overthrow on Earth may re-roll their saving throws (see the Combat rules) as the UN provides economic aid.*
- *Should you have started any sort of combat on Earth in your combat phase, the UN will at the end of that combat phase open fire on you with all their fleets as if it were their turn, representing both military reprisals and confiscation of resources.*

<< phase 3: construction >>

On each world:

- Group your developments; the bigger a group, the more the economic load is spread and the less likely you are to burn out an area's resource or manpower.
- For each group, you may place one fleet on its world; if you do so, roll as many dice as there are developments in the group. Should any show 3 or more, the economic load was adequately spread. Should **none** show 3 or more, you have over-exploited your materiel and you must lose one development from that world.

The UN will assist struggling nations if they can. Should the UN still have any developments, you may re-roll one construction die per turn on Earth.

<< phase 4: development >>

On each world:

- You may attempt a development as long as you have a fleet on the world. Development attempts are made sequentially, not in parallel. It is, of course, much easier to stake a valuable claim on a world that is mostly unspoilt than it is to squabble over the last little resource vein or last tiny patch of arable land.
- Remove one fleet from the world and roll as many dice as there are unclaimed regions on that world. Should **any** show 3 or more, you have gained a foothold and may claim a region with a new development; should **none** show 3 or more, the colony could not take root and the fleet is wasted.

The UN will use its reserves to maintain both economic and ecological stability. Should there be any unclaimed developments on Earth at the end of this phase, the UN will claim them for itself.

<< extraordinary actions >>

At any time, whether in your turn or not, you may perform any of the following actions.

- Emergency construction / Evacuation: Immediately place one fleet on any world upon which you have a development. Remove the development automatically; even if you wanted to, there is no way to preserve an economy or an infrastructure in the face of such a project.
- Gifts / Trade: You may exchange any of your developments or planetside fleets for one in another faction's colour, so long the unit was not in any taskforce assigned to attack another faction during your most recent combat phase.
- Decommissioning: You may remove any of your developments or planetside fleets from the board.

Combat

For each combat, you have **A** units in a group attacking **D** units – always counting both all fleets and all developments – belonging to another faction on the same world; military threats are a valid counter to attempted political or economic overthrow, whilst a good infrastructure and contingency setup, as well as fixed defensive turrets, can assist the military's task when defending against an invasion. To resolve the combat:

- Roll **A** dice. Each 5 generates one victory; each 6 generates two victories. The target player may roll one save against each victory, as follows:
 - Normally: nothing saves against fire; 5+ saves against coups.
 - If **D** > **A**: 6 saves against fire; 4+ saves against coups.
 - If **D** ≥ **2A**: 5+ saves against fire; 3+ saves against coups.Each successful save cancels out one victory.
- Against fire, each victory which was not saved causes the target player to lose a unit from that world. Fleets are lost first, then developments. Should that player have no more units to lose, any remaining victories have no further benefit.
- Against a coup, each victory which was not saved causes the target player to exchange one of his developments on that world for one of yours. Should that player have no more developments to give, any remaining victories have no further benefit.

Victory

A player shall be declared victorious when all players who have units remaining on the board agree that he has won.