

The Secret War design document

Version 0.11

Introduction

The Secret War is a game of conspiracies and of a desperate war against alien menaces which have infiltrated society. As sources of inspiration, it credits **Conspiracy X**, **GURPS Black Ops**, **UFO: Enemy Unknown** (also known as **X-COM: UFO Defense**), **X-Com: Apocalypse**, the freeware game **Singularity**, **King of Dragon Pass**, and **Star Wars: Rebellion** (also known as **Star Wars: Supremacy**).

Basic premise

Humanity is at war, though it does not know it yet. Numerous supernatural and non-Earthly menaces have infiltrated the world, and are conducting nefarious operations of their own, for unknown purposes. After this was discovered by a small group of high-ranking US officials, they decided to pool their resources and form a secret organization in order to combat it.

Gameplay

Basic concepts: **agents**, **recruitment**, **training**, **facilities**, **groups of note**, **enemy groups**, **suspicion**, **suspicion levels**, **money**, **missions**, **research**, **infiltration**, **infiltration levels**.

Agents are the ones who carry out your missions. There are three main kinds of **agents**: **social agents**, **combat agents**, and **science agents**, each with a varying number of **subskills**. Everyone can be made to do anything, but they are best at the fields they're trained at.

Recruitment is the means by which **agents** are obtained. There are two ways of carrying out **recruitment**: through **direct recruitment**, by which prospective **agents** are sought out and given a chance to join, which is a relatively easy, fast route. The starting skills and capabilities of the **agents** vary according to the **group of note** they were recruited from. The other is **long-term recruitment**, which involves raising children from a young age to become future **agents**. It is expensive, takes a long time and is not guaranteed to produce **agents** that are better than those obtained through **direct recruitment**. It is, however, the only way to produce genetically modified **superhuman agents**. Both methods of **recruitment** are **missions**.

Once an **agent** has been **recruited**, he needs **training**. **Agents** may be sent back to **training** at any time during their careers, if deemed necessary. Each **training program** is a pre-generated template of different **subskills**, and **agents** may be given any number of **training programs**. The **training program** templates can be customized to build entirely new templates. **Training** requires **facilities** to carry out.

There are two kinds of **facilities**: controlled and influenced. **Controlled facilities** are controlled entirely by the Organization: they have their own staff and require a steady amount of upkeep to keep running. A **mission** is required to gain control of them. **Influenced facilities** are owned and run by outsiders – they are cheaper to use and only require expenditure of **money** when they're used, but using them generates **suspicion points**. In order to reduce the amount of **suspicion points** generated, or to even make some kinds of **influenced facilities** available at all, a **mission** is required.

Groups of note are organizations like criminal groups, different intelligence agencies, large corporations, and so forth. Most are not actively hostile, but may have an interest in reducing the Organization's **sphere of influence** as a routine part of their operations. They are relatively neutral, being too preoccupied with their standard missions to notice the conspiracies spinning their webs around them. They are prime targets for **infiltration**, both by the Organization and by **enemy**

groups.

Infiltration is a type of **mission** where the Organization attempts to achieve influence in different **groups of note**. Via **infiltration**, **agents** may attempt to increase their overall **infiltration** level, reduce the group's **suspicion points** or even their **level of suspicion**, divert **money**, obtain use of **influenced facilities**, combat **infiltration by enemy groups**, obtain **information**, or ultimately **take control** the group. Should an **agent** be exposed while carrying out his **infiltration mission**, it will rack up a large amount of **suspicion points**. Either a **rescue mission** or a **liquidation mission** may be necessary if the agent becomes captured, in order to prevent him from revealing more.

There are several different **infiltration levels**, depending on how well **agents** have succeeded in penetrating the **group of note**. The **infiltration levels** are: **observing**, **influencing**, **manipulating**, and **in control**. A level of **observing** will give you minor access to the group's information; **influencing** allows recruitment and the use of **influenced facilities**; **manipulating** allows direct use of the group's resources to attack other groups and the capability to shift the **suspicion level**; and being **in control** allows a complete purge of any **enemy groups**. Each **infiltration level** improves the chances of all **missions** relating to that group.

Suspicion comes in two forms: **suspicion points** and **suspicion levels**. **Missions** conducted within a **group of note** generate **suspicion points**. Each outside **group of note** maintains a **suspicion level**: **unaware**, **cautious**, **intrigued**, and **alert**. **Missions** and other activity generates **suspicion points**, each one increasing the chance that the group has its **suspicion level** elevated. If no **suspicion points** are generated, a group's **suspicion level** may even go down. A high **suspicion level** will make it harder to conduct **missions** within that group, both for the Organization and for any **enemy groups**.

Enemy groups are other conspiracies, actively attempting world dominion. They maintain different **relations** between each other and are actively occupied in battling each other. They are not initially aware of the Organization, but may become so through **enemy suspicion**. If they have achieved **infiltration levels** in **groups of note**, then they'll receive part of the **suspicion points** generated within that group, depending on their **infiltration level**. These contribute to their **suspicion level** towards the Organization. In addition to the normal levels of **unaware**, **cautious**, **intrigued**, and **alert**, an **enemy group** may achieve the **suspicion level** of **aware**, making them directly aware of the Organization's existence.

Money may be generated through a variety of **missions** – from diverting money from **infiltrated** organizations to sales of **researched** technology via front companies.

All **missions** require that **agents** with the proper skills are assigned to them. There are two kinds of **missions**: **one-time** and **persistent**. **One-time missions** are carried out until a certain objective is reached, after which the **agent** becomes free for reassignment. **Persistent missions** run until terminated or discovered. All **missions** generate more or less **suspicion points**. **Missions** function by selecting the **agents** involved, defining their **mission guidelines** and allocating them **money**, after which they begin to carry out their tasks. If something unexpected happens (a **dilemma**), the **agents** will report their situation and request instructions on how to proceed (represented by a description of the situation and a number of choices), which will influence the final fate of the **mission**.

Research ranges from examination of dead or living representatives of **enemy groups**, to study of their **technology**, to independent development of new devices. **Research** is always a form of a **mission**, and requires **facilities**.