



CRISIS[UNKNOWN]

Crisis: Unknown is a team-based political megagame set in a stylized, near-future earth. Players will assume the roles of national governments and international mega-corporations vying for control and advancement in a new world order. Political leaders work together to complete national objectives and expand their nation's global influence. Corporations make deals to expand into new markets, develop technology, and secure government contracts. Finally, all players must collaborate to resolve a game-changing crisis.

ON THIS RULESET (OR: WHERE ARE THE NUMBERS?)

This ruleset is intended to provide a general overview of game systems and ideas. You may notice that it includes few concrete numbers. Rest assured, the numbers exist. (In fact, large parts of Crisis: Unknown are managed using spreadsheets.) We have not included all of the numbers here for a few reasons.

The starting values of various mechanisms can change based on the total player count. Additionally, player actions during the game may cause certain numbers to change. Since we won't all be sitting face-to-face around the same table, we don't want players referencing a suddenly out-of-date rulebook. Instead, players will be given reference sheets for their modules at the start of the game. These are laminated, allowing us to update values with dry-erase markers during the game.

PLAYER ROLES

Within each team, each player assumes a different role. Each round, most players will alternate between spending time with their team (during the planning phase) and spending time with players on other teams who share their role — playing a game module unique to that role (during the play phase).

While players may plan as a team during the planning phase, each player is the ultimate decision-maker within their module during the play phase.

Additionally, the movement of players is limited depending on their role and which phase it is.

ROUND STRUCTURE

We will play between 5 and 8 rounds. Given the nature of megagames, it is difficult to time the rounds perfectly. So we will play as many as we can in 3 hours. Each round has 2 phases, each lasting 10-15 minutes: the Planning Phase and the Play Phase.

★ **PLANNING PHASE.** During the planning phase teams must stay at their tables, sharing information, discussing strategy, and allocating resources.

During the planning phase, one player from each team (based on their role) may move freely between tables.

★ **PLAY PHASE.** During the play phase, players separate by role and participate in the various game modules.

The first round may be extended to allow for rules tutorials in certain modules. The last round will be abbreviated, since players don't need to plan as far ahead. Additionally, at the end of the game we allocate 10-15 minutes to tally objectives and provide a narrative epilogue.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are intended to drive gameplay and may serve as a measure of performance (for players who are into that).

Every team has a unique set of objectives to complete by the end of the game. These represent accomplishments or end-game states in each module.

Some objectives are all-or-nothing, others can may be completed in degrees throughout the game. Some objectives can be completed largely without interference from other teams. However, all teams will have objectives that are directly opposed to those of other teams. Finally, certain objectives simply represent a choice that a team must make by the end of the game.

Strictly speaking, there are no 'winners' or 'losers'. However, teams that have achieved most or all of their objectives can consider themselves to have won, more or less.

How the objectives (and the crisis) shake out will let us tell a story of what the world looks like by the end of the game, including which nations and corporations may have the strongest influence over the future.



TRADING & NEGOTIATION

Trading and negotiation defines the relationship between nations and corporations. As a rule, nations and corporations do not use the same resources. Financial Capital — used by corporations — is of no use to nations; and Political Support — used by nations — is of no use to corporations. Of course, nations have access to Capital and corporations have access to Support, which they can trade directly or for favors and other in-game items.



THE NATIONS

Note: Each nation will receive a more detailed introductory document when they arrive on game day. This will include their objectives, thematic background, and strategy tips.

National governments must choose to allocate limited resources between a variety of geopolitical objectives while looking after their stability at home. Here is a brief thematic overview of each nation's background, abilities, and goals:



RUSSIA. Russia seeks a return to its glory days as a pre-eminent global power. This includes expanding diplomatically and, if necessary, militarily into eastern Europe, as well as establishing bases outside of Europe. While economically weak, Russia can make effective use of espionage and diplomacy to destabilize unwitting rivals.



CHINA. China seeks to become the undisputed power in the Pacific and East Asia, building diplomatic ties with neutral nations, expanding its network of bases, asserting control over the seas, and stymying rival alliances. China's strong economy is balanced by its need to maintain internal stability.



THE EUROPEAN UNION. The European Union seeks to expand global diplomatic relations, develop alternative energy sources, and stand firm against Russian influence in Europe. The EU would also be happy to bring the United Kingdom back into the fold.



THE UNITED KINGDOM. The United Kingdom seeks to maintain global peace and order in both east and west. Like the EU, it must be wary of Russian interference. It must also make difficult decisions regarding its economic and diplomatic relationship with the EU.



JAPAN. Japan seeks a better future through technological breakthroughs. But it must work closely with other nations as well as global corporations for its innovations to see reality.



SOUTH KOREA. The unification of the Korean peninsula is a longstanding goal. Though possible, the unification process is dangerous and difficult, especially since China prefers the status quo.



AUSTRALIA. The environmentally conscious Australian government is deeply interested in protecting endangered environments and expanding the use of renewable energy (especially given Australia's technologically advanced solar fields).

In addition to their individual aims, Japan, Australia, and South Korea share an interest in pushing back against Chinese expansion in the Pacific. To that end, they have formed PATO — the Pacific Treaty Organization. They must work together to expand PATO's membership among neutral nations in the Pacific, possibly even bringing the United States into the alliance.



THE UNITED STATES. The sole superpower starts with exceptional resources but also exceptional obligations. The US must carefully manage its time and energy to avoid being stretched too thin abroad. It must also be wary of its domestic stability, which is precarious at best, and is the target of rivals old and new.

NATIONS PLAYER ROLES

- ★ **UNSC REPRESENTATIVE.** The UNSC Representative speaks for their team at the UNSC module during each round's play phase. They propose resolutions and vote on them using vote cards gained via the diplomacy resource.
- ★ **INTELLIGENCE OFFICER.** The Intelligence Officer is the team's 'floater'. They have nowhere to be during the play phase. However, during both the play and planning phases, they may go wherever they like.
The Intelligence Officer is the only team member who can approach facilitators to attempt special operations (Details will be provided on game day.)
- ★ **MILITARY COMMANDER.** The Military Commander goes to the world map during the play phase. They move their nation's military units on the map and allocate power among their units. They also allocate available air power cards to the different theaters. For nations so armed, the Military Commander is also tasked with the use of nuclear weapons.
- ★ **CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER.** During the play phase, each state's Corporate Partnerships Officer meets with a player from one of the corporations (that corporation's Government Partnerships Officer) to play a cooperative 2-player card game. Each pair is attempting to negotiate a deal to complete a joint-project for mutual benefit.

POLITICAL SUPPORT

Political Support (or Support) is the resource used by nations. During the planning phase, each nation decides as a team how to allocate their Political Support into four areas. Support allocated to each area can itself be spent on different things.

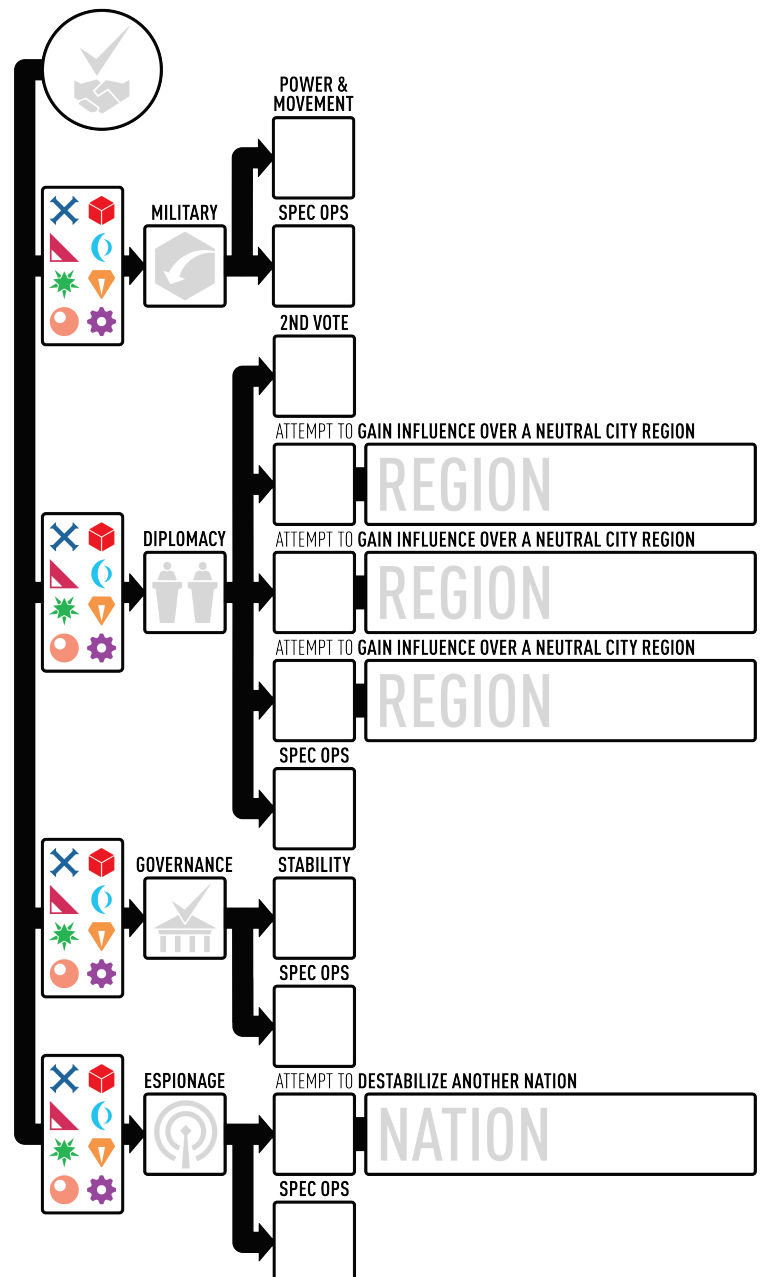


- ★ **MILITARY.** During the play phase, the Military Commander may divide this among individual units on the world map to increase the combat power of those units. Military is also used to move units on the world map.
- ★ **DIPLOMACY.** Used to influence neutral city regions in order to gain their vote in the UNSC. Also used to buy one additional vote in the UNSC.
- ★ **GOVERNMENT.** Used to boost a nation's own stability, acting as a defense against espionage by other nations.
- ★ **ESPIONAGE.** Used to destabilize other nations.

Additionally, nations may allocate a portion of their military, diplomacy, governance, and espionage to special operations.

Political Support does not carry over from round to round. This includes Political Support cards received from corporations.

Most resources are not represented by physical components. Instead, nations record their choices using dry-erase markers on laminated sheets, which facilitators collect at the end of each planning phase.



GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Each area has a 'contract' associated with it. Nations must choose to give each of these contracts one of the eight corporations.

Nations gain no inherent benefit by choosing one corporation over another. However, contracts are critically important to corporations. So, nations can expect visits from corporate Lobbyists ready to trade resources, cards, and favors in exchange for them.

Nations may only choose one corporation per area.

DIPLOMACY

Nations decide how to allocate diplomacy as a team during the planning phase. In addition to spending some on special operations, they may use diplomacy to gain a second UNSC vote, and gain influence over neutral cities, which may provide additional UNSC votes.

SECOND UNSC VOTE

By default, each nation receives one vote per round in the UNSC. Nations may allocate a specific amount of diplomacy to 'buy' a second vote each round. (For more detail on how votes work, see the UNSC section.)

DIPLOMACY & NEUTRAL CITIES

There are 34 neutral city regions on the map. These cities represent other nations with votes in the UNSC.

Each nation may allocate diplomacy to up to three of these cities. This diplomacy acts as a bid for influence over those cities. Each round, facilitators will tally the total amount of diplomacy bid on each city by all nations. The nation with the highest total will have influence over that city and gains their UNSC vote.

Diplomacy allocated to neutral cities is cumulative from round to round. A nation with influence over a city will keep that city's vote until another nation surpasses in total diplomacy bid on that city.

In addition to providing UNSC votes, maintaining influence over specific cities are a key geopolitical objective for many nations.



STABILITY & POLITICAL SUPPORT INCOME

Each Nation has a base amount of Political Support that they receive at the start of each round. Each nation also has a Stability score that can fluctuate from round to round. Stability can be either a positive or negative number (with zero being neutral).

A nation's stability score modifies the base amount of support it receives each round. Thus, a nation with negative stability will receive slightly less support than its base amount, while a nation with positive stability will receive slightly more.

Nations that become extremely unstable won't lose all of their support income. However, they may face other ramifications. *For example: authoritarian regimes such as China or Russia may see widespread social unrest, while federated states such as the United States or the United Kingdom may find regions threatening to separate into their own nations.*

GOVERNMENT & ESPIONAGE

Government and Espionage are used to directly affect a nation's stability. Nations may allocate political support to government to improve their own stability and/or protect themselves from espionage attacks by other nations. Nations allocate espionage to directly attack the stability of one other nation each round.

Each round, the total amount of government and espionage applied to each nation is tallied. Each nation's government is subtracted from the total espionage applied to it that round. The difference between these two amounts (which may be positive or negative) is how much that nation's stability will

change that round. Stability scores carry over from round to round. So, the difference is added to the nation's current stability to get that nation's new stability score.

For example: On the same round, the EU and Japan each allocated 4 Support to Espionage targeting China. That same round, China allocated 3 Support to Government. The total amount of Espionage targeting China this round is 8. China's 3 Government is subtracted from that, resulting in -5. This is added to China's Stability Score from the previous round, which in this example is 3, resulting in -2. China lost 5 Stability, going from a Stability Score of 3 to -2.

THE UNSC (NATIONS MODULE)

At the UNSC, representatives from each nation meet to shape international policy and tackle global crises through security resolutions, humanitarian operations, and international sanctions.

At the start of the play phase, each nation's UNSC Representative receives one or more vote cards. By default, each nation receives one vote card each round. They may gain one additional vote per round by allocating diplomacy during the planning phase (see the Diplomacy section). Finally, they may receive additional votes from neutral city regions they have influence over.

Each round, various resolutions may be voted on. Some will be provided by facilitators, others may be brought to a vote by players. Multiple resolutions may be considered in a single round, with vote cards from all players being distributed among them until a majority or, in some cases, a lower threshold of votes is met.

THE WORLD MAP (NATIONS MODULE)

On the world map, military commanders move army and navy units and, if necessary, enter into combat with other players, neutral forces, and possibly other things. Markets are also represented on or near the world map.

The World Map is divided (both mechanically and physically) into five theaters: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Theaters are divided into numerous land and sea regions.

Certain areas of the map are particularly rugged and underdeveloped, making movement, combat, and other actions difficult. These are: the Congo in Africa, the Amazon in South America, the Darien Gap in Central America (a small region south of Panama City), Borneo in Asia, the Sahara in Africa, and the Arctic Ice Shelf.

MILITARY UNITS

Military commanders may allocate Military to individual units, increasing their combat power, though each unit can only have a limited amount of power. Support allocated to Military is also used to move military units, with the cost based on the number and type of regions moved into.

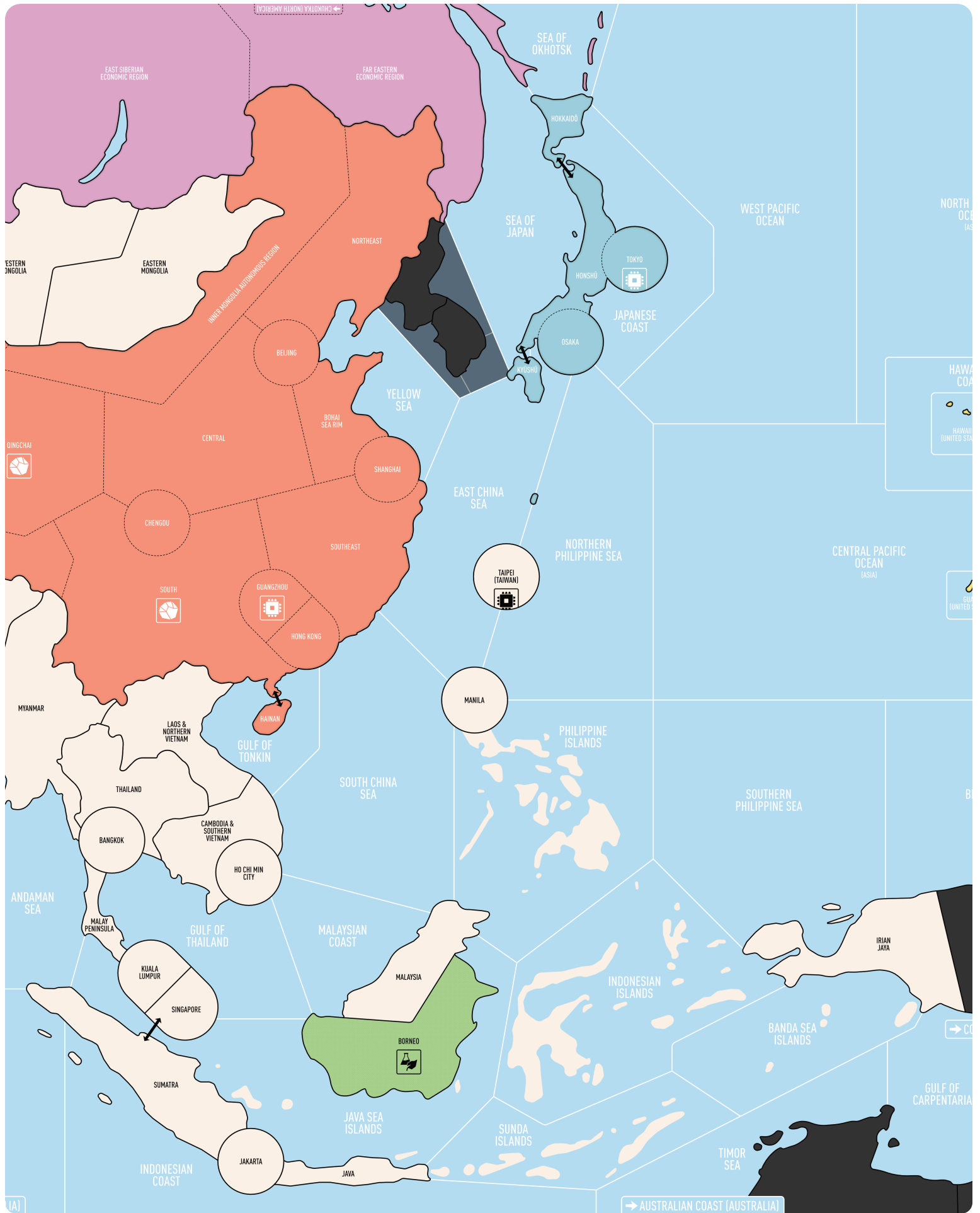
There are three types of military unit: armies, cruisers, and carriers.

- ★ Armies are the basic (and only) land combat unit.
- ★ Cruisers are the basic naval combat unit.
- ★ Carriers are identical to cruisers, with two exceptions: 1) carriers also count as an airbases (which are required to deploy air power), 2) as the pinnacle of their nation's military might; if a carrier is defeated in combat, that nation will lose a small amount of stability.

Both cruisers and carriers can act as bridges between land regions divided by a single sea space. (Multiple navy units cannot bridge multiple sea regions.) Both cruisers and carriers can ferry armies across the sea. However, their movement speed is reduced for each army being ferried. (The naval unit is in fact escorting a larger, slower flotilla of transports.)

COMBAT

Military combat, including air power, nuclear weapons, and other things, will be introduced in detail to military commanders on game day.



THE CORPORATIONS

Crisis: Unknown's corporations don't have real world analogues. Corporate teams may name their own company at the start of the game. Teams may even wish to think of themselves as something other than an international super-corporation. For example: a non-governmental organization, international hedge fund, political interest group, or a shadowy cabal.

For ease of identification, each corporation is represented on game materials by a unique logo.

CORPORATIONS PLAYER ROLES

- ★ **MARKETS OFFICER.** The Markets Officer goes to the world map during the play phase. They choose what markets to expand their corp's holdings into, spending capital to do so.
- ★ **LOBBYIST.** The Lobbyist's primary responsibility is convincing nations to select their corporation for government contracts during the planning phase. The Lobbyist is the team's 'floater'. They have nowhere to be during the play phase. However, during both the play and planning phases, they can go wherever they like, whenever they like.
- ★ **GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER.** During the play phase, each corporation's Government Partnerships Officer meets with a player from one of the nations (that nation's Corporate Partnerships Officer) to play a cooperative 2-player card game. Each pair is attempting to negotiate a deal to complete a joint-project for mutual benefit.

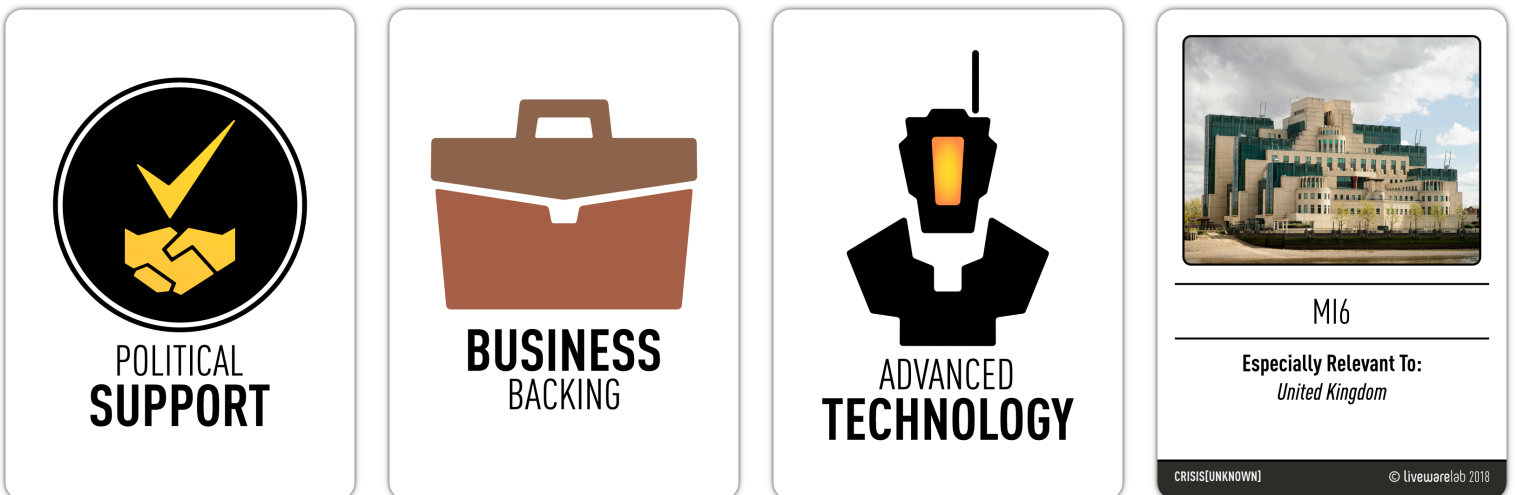


FINANCIAL CAPITAL & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Financial Capital (or Capital) is the resource used by corporations.

The majority of a corporation's capital comes from government contracts. At the start of each round, each corporation receives an amount of capital based on the number of contracts they received in the previous round. (For details about how contracts work see the Government Contracts section.)

In addition to their capital income, at the start of each round, each corporation receives a number of political support cards, event cards, and possibly other useful items. Each corporation's Lobbyist may trade these items with nations in exchange for government contracts. (As a rule, political support cards are useless to corporations except as trade items. Event cards can be used by both nations and corps. But, as many of these cards have specific applications, they can prove extremely valuable to certain nations.)



CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

Many corporate objectives center around gaining and holding shares in specific combinations of markets (see below). Other objectives invite corporations to 'bet on' other nations and corporations being able to complete certain objectives of their own. In other words, corporations can tie fate, in part, to that of other teams.

MARKETS (CORPORATIONS MODULE)

This module is the primary responsibility of each corporation's Markets Officer.

The corporations are trying to gain shares in new markets, which represent trade between various nations around the world. Space in each market is limited, so corporations must carefully manage their financial capital each round in order to end the game with shares in the markets that are most valuable to them.

There is only enough room in each market for a limited number of corporations. Each market is divided into a limited number of shares, and each share can only be held by one corporation at a time.

GAINING MARKET SHARES

To gain a market share, a corporation's Markets Officer must spend financial capital. The cost of a share follows the same structure across all markets.

- ★ The base cost of a market share differs from market to market, and may change over the course of the game based on other world events.
For example: the base cost for one of the 8 shares in the African Market costs 2 Capital.
- ★ Additionally, the more corporations in a market, the more expensive it is to gain a share of that market. For each other corporation occupying at least one share of the market, the cost to enter that market increases by one. (Only the number of different corps is counted, not the number of shares.)
For example: Cube Corp holds 2 shares of the African Market and Crescent Corp holds 3 shares. Since there are 2 other corporations in the market, Star Corp must pay 4 Capital to gain one of the remaining empty shares.
- ★ It is harder still to kick a rival corporation out of a market share. To take over another corporation's market share, it costs one additional capital, on top of all other costs.
For example: If instead of gaining one of the empty shares, Star Corp wanted to take over one of Cube Corp's shares in the African Market, Star Corp would have to pay 5 Capital.

A corporation may gain as many shares in a single market as they can afford. However, all share purchases by one player in a single market at once simultaneously. So, a player cannot pay to replace another corporation, and then buy additional shares at a reduced price.

TURN ORDER

Corporations bid capital to determine turn order. After the bid, each player chooses their own position in the order, with those who bid most choosing last. They will have the most control over how early or late in the round they go.

After turn order is chosen, each Markets Officer approaches the facilitator one at a time and makes all of their purchases. (The other Markets Officers are free to watch.)

THE PARTNERSHIPS GAME (NATIONS & CORPORATIONS MODULE)

Each round, Government Partnerships Officers from the corporations and Corporate Partnerships Officers from the nations will meet one-on-one and attempt to 'negotiate' a deal to advance a major project. Each time their negotiations are successful, both sides will come one step closer to completing their project. Each pair of players 'negotiate' by playing a short cooperative card game — the Partnerships Game.

The game played with a deck of 16 cards, each containing a different combination of the game's 4 types and 4 actions. The types represent different powerful groups whose backing may be required for the project to move forward. The actions represent different ways the players can 'negotiate' with one another.

At the start of the game, each player is given a secret requirement — one of the 4 different types. This is the type of backing that player needs in order for the project to move forward (Political, Media, Business, or Expert). 4 cards are then placed in a face down row in the play area. These 4 cards are referred to as the 'negotiation'.

The players win if, at the end of the game, 2 of the cards in the negotiation match one player's requirement, and the other 2 match the other player's requirement.

Players manipulate the cards in the negotiation using the actions on cards in their hands.

THE FOUR ACTIONS

- ★ **Inside & Out.** Look at two cards in the negotiation.
- ★ **Feeling Confident.** Exchange the card in your hand with a card either from the negotiation or the top of the deck.
- ★ **Let Me Look Into That...** Exchange a card from the negotiation with any card from any discard pile (face up or face down). (You may not look at any face down cards, even if you exchange them.)
- ★ **Won't You Reconsider?** Look at a card in the negotiation. You may discard it and replace it with the top card of the deck.

SETUP

Shuffle the 4 requirement cards. Then, secretly deal one to each player. Put the remaining 2 requirement cards aside without looking at them.

Shuffle the 16 action cards into a deck and place it face down in the play area. Draw 4 cards and, without looking at them, place them face down in a row near the deck. These 4 cards are the negotiation. Finally, each player draws one card from the deck as their starting hand.

The corporation player goes first.



**BUSINESS
BACKING**

Inside & Out
Look at two cards in the Negotiation.

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**POLITICAL
BACKING**

Won't You Reconsider?
Exchange a card from the Negotiation with any card from the discard pile (face up or face down).

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**MEDIA
BACKING**

Let Me Look Into That...
Look at a card in the Negotiation. You may discard it and replace it with the top card of the deck.

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**EXPERT
BACKING**

Feeling Confident
Exchange the card in your hand with a card either from the Negotiation or the top of the deck.

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GAMEPLAY

On a player's turn, they first draw one card from the deck, and then choose one card from their hand to play face up into the discard pile, taking the action written on the card. Play then passes to their partner.

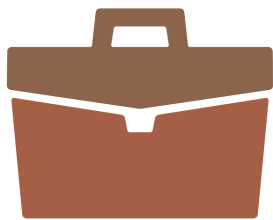
The game ends when only one card is left in the deck, ***after the current player finishes their turn.***

IMPORTANT NOTES

- ★ While playing, you and your partner may not talk about the game.
- ★ The 4 cards in the negotiation are ALWAYS face down.
- ★ If a face down card is moved to the discard pile it remains face down.
- ★ If a face up card is moved from the discard pile to the negotiation it is turned face down.
- ★ You may NEVER LOOK at face down cards unless you are performing an action that lets you do so.
- ★ On your turn, you should have 2 cards in your hand (until you play one). During your partner's turn, you should have one card in your hand.

REWARDS

If the players win, they will each receive a backing card matching their secret requirement. These backing cards represent an additional resource that can be useful in other areas of the game. Additional rewards may be given from round to round, such as Political Support, Financial Capital, and event cards, among other things.



BUSINESS
BACKING



POLITICAL
BACKING



MEDIA
BACKING



EXPERT
BACKING