

SID MEIER'S ALIEN

CROSSFIRE



THE OFFICIAL EXPANSION PACK FOR
SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI



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This product has been rated by the Entertainment Software Rating Board. For information about the ESRB rating, or to comment about the appropriateness of the rating, please contact the ESRB at 1-800-771-3772.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Sid Meier's Alien Crossfire*™, FIRAXIS™ Games' expansion pack for *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*™. Enjoy the new faces and places in *Alien Crossfire*.

Alien Crossfire is a companion game to *Alpha Centauri* and requires ownership of *Alpha Centauri*.

Here's a brief overview of what's new in *Alien Crossfire*:

- ◆ Five new human factions.
- ◆ Two new alien factions: the Manifold Caretakers and the Manifold Usurpers.
- ◆ New technologies based on alien concepts of resonance fields.
- ◆ New facilities, including the Aquafarm, Covert Ops Center, and Subsea Trunkline.
- ◆ New secret projects, including the Manifold Harmonics and the Nethack Terminus.
- ◆ New alien life forms
- ◆ New unit special abilities
- ◆ New victory conditions for the Manifold factions.
- ◆ Several additional new concepts and strategies.

WELCOME TO ALIEN CROSSFIRE

ALIEN PLANETFALL

The early human exploration of Planet found many mysterious signs pointing to a long-vanished alien race. The questions raised by these discoveries were soon answered when two alien factions arrived on Planet a few years after the crash-landing of the *Unity*. Their true motives were vague, but it appeared they had returned to Planet to settle the fate of Manifold Six (their name for Planet) and the grand experiment in which they were involved. The Usurper faction has been pushing for the Progenitor race to exploit the powers of the Manifold, and essentially set themselves up as gods. The Caretakers see Planet as a sentient being, whose death would result from Usurper policies. Two scout ships arrived in the space above Manifold Six to settle the issue.

Unfortunately for both sides (but perhaps fortunately for the humans on Planet), the two ships were evenly matched, and nearly destroyed each other. Survivors of the two factions managed to jettison in escape pods down to Planet's surface, where they prepare for battle, and for the day on which they can contact their respective factions and send for reinforcements. If that day ever comes, human existence on Planet will be in grave jeopardy.

The human factions must choose whether to band together to fight the off-worlders, or side with the aliens as a means to ultimate victory. The picture is further complicated by the rise of new human factions preaching radical philosophies, from the Drones who seek liberation of the working masses, to the strange Cybernetic faction unleashed by amoral University researchers.

NEW PROGENITOR CONCEPTS

The following is a summary of rules regarding the two alien factions, the Caretakers and the Usurpers. Note in some cases, Progenitor names for facilities or projects (such as "Children's Creche" or "The Human Genome Project") and

social engineering choices (such as “Free Market” or “Police State”) actually represent similar facilities and social choices in the Progenitor societal structure, but have been translated into their nearest human equivalent for convenience.

CIVIL WAR

The two alien ideologies are completely in opposition, and all alien interactions with each other and with the human factions are colored by this opposition. Aliens speak with human factions, and even sign treaties and pacts, but they do not speak to each other and they do not sign treaties and pacts with those who have treaties or pacts with their enemy. They cannot be asked to end a vendetta with one another. They do not participate in Governor elections or in any other Planetary Council votes. Their atrocities do not cause any adverse commerce effects, since they don't use human commerce. Using atrocities against the aliens causes no extra diplomatic penalty, except for Planet Busters, still considered a global atrocity for the environmental damage caused.

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Because of this alien civil war, each game has either both the Usurpers and the Caretakers, or neither. Whether you are using the faction editor or playing with a mix of factions from *Alien Crossfire* and *Alpha Centauri*, you can never have just one alien faction in the game

COMMUNICATION

Humans and aliens cannot communicate at the beginning of the game. In order for Humans and aliens to communicate, one must discover the other's Psych. This means the human faction must discover Progenitor Psych or the Progenitor faction must discover Social Psych. Once communication is established, the Progenitor speech is rendered by human translation software into its nearest human equivalent (including their arcane sentence structure). Progenitor communications within their own society, however, have been fully translated for complete understandability.

ENERGY GRID

The alien factions gain no energy from commerce with each other or humans. Instead, they gain energy from the Grid. This is a harmonic field set up by the power feeds of various technological devices; it manifests itself as 1 energy for every two facilities built, and 2 1/2 energy (rounded down) for each Secret Project completed.

BASE CONQUEST

When a human conquers a Progenitor base, or vice versa, a forced relocation of the population takes place. A forced relocation causes the population of the conquered base to be reduced to one. At the same time, half the remaining population (rounded up) is converted into colony pods belonging to the defeated faction. These can be attacked normally.

NEW VICTORY CONDITIONS

The presence of the Progenitor factions creates three new conditions which affect victory.

DIPLOMATIC

A leader may not be declared Supreme Leader unless the alien factions have been eradicated. Once they have been eradicated, Supreme Leader victory is allowed normally. If a Progenitor faction is “freed” by a Probe Team and swears a servile Pact, or swears a servile Pact during the course of the game, that counts as “being eradicated” and any human faction can win as Supreme Leader—even if the faction to whom the Pact was sworn are themselves eradicated later on.

TRANSCENDENCE

The Caretaker faction's belief system does not allow for the exploitation of Manifold Six. Therefore, the Caretaker faction can never win by Transcendence victory, as Transcendence implies an exploitation of Manifold Six—the very thing they are fighting against. However, the Usurpers can win a Transcendence victory as per the usual rules.

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PROGENITOR VICTORY

The Progenitor factions can each win a new type of victory. They must have at least six bases of at least size 10 each, and they must construct a Subspace Generator in each of them. This creates the Resonance Communicator, allowing them to send signals to the home fleets in a far distant portion of the galaxy. The power of these fleets is well beyond the combined abilities of all the humans on Planet to combat; when communication occurs and the fleets arrive, the humans (and the other Progenitor faction) must capitulate.

PROGENITOR ART

The Progenitor factions have many unique pieces of art. These units, base enhancements, and citizen icons are representational only; the functions of the units, etc. remain the same. There are new pieces of Progenitor art for the following: Infantry units, rover units, air units, colony pods, terraformer units, perimeter defenses, tachyon fields, and citizen icons.

GETTING STARTED**USING THE MANUAL**

This manual is not meant to teach you how to play *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*. Instead, it is a review of the new features and changes to the original *Alpha Centauri* contained in *Alien Crossfire*. You need to already know how to play *Alpha Centauri* to use this manual.

If you Haven't Played Before

If this is your first experience into the world of *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri* and *Alien Crossfire*, refer to the *Alpha Centauri* manual for tips on how to run the tutorial scenarios.

In addition to this manual, you will find the following useful materials included with your game:

Install Guide. Installation, trouble shooting, and customer support.

Tech Tree Chart. A new, updated tech tree chart shows the new alien technologies available.

Cross Reference Chart. This tool, used in conjunction with the Tech Tree Chart, helps you understand how to acquire a technology.

INSTALLATION

Installation, troubleshooting and customer support are all covered in the Install Guide.

GAME SETUP

The following differences can be found in the starting menus.

MAIN (STARTING) MENU**QUICKSTART**

This option still drops you directly into a new game configured exactly like the last game you played (including faction choice). If you use Quickstart before playing a game, you enter a world of average size set to the game's defaults. You explore this new world as the Cybernetic faction set to the easiest difficulty level.

CHOOSE A FACTION SCREEN

There are now five additional factions of refugees resulting from the disastrous destruction of the UN colony ship, *Unity*. There are also two alien factions vying for control of the Manifold experiment called Planet.

See New Faction Overview, below, for information about the seven new factions.



Play Random Faction

Random Play is available with any of the above configurations.

Play Selected Faction

Choose your faction and then select this option. If you are using a random setup, this button has the same effect as "Play Random."

Change Name

Customize the name of your faction and the other factions in the game.

Info

Shows the help text for the selected faction. Choosing "OK" from this screen starts the game with you playing the selected faction.

Cancel

Sends you back to the difficulty level screen.

Drop-down boxes

This new feature allows you to load each individual slot with the faction of your choice. Once the seven slots are loaded, you can play a selected faction or a random faction from among the seven you have selected. You can mix and match factions between the original and new games at will.

NEW FACTION OVERVIEW

As before, the factions in *Alien Crossfire* are divided into spheres of political and social thought. Two additional factions of aliens are introduced; their primary motivations are more simple: destroy the opposing alien faction in a bitter civil war.

The Cybernetic Consciousness (led by Prime Function Aki Zeta-Five)

This faction is led by a mysterious figure from The Unity who has apparently been part of an experiment in artificial intelligence. It is surmised a research technician working for Prokhor Zakharov was subjected to an implanted AI algorithm, and is now sharing her consciousness with this intelligence. Aki Zeta-Five offers her followers a pure intellect less fettered by greed and other distressing emotions. Her society is advanced and efficient in industry and technology. However, this society is unfamiliar with human emotions; therefore, concepts like sex lead the Cyborgs to have a difficult time with population growth. They are immune to the negative effects of the Cybernetic social choice.

The Nautilus Pirates (led by Captain Ulrik Svensgaard)

The Pirates believe the oceans of Planet are actually far more suitable for human life than the land masses. They are dedicated to a life at sea, exploiting the untold riches of the water. Their intimate knowledge of the deep allows them to construct enhancements even in deep sea areas. Their sea combat units are especially well trained for shipboard actions (free Marine Detachment ability for sea units once the appropriate technology is discovered). They also get a free Naval Yard in every base upon discovery of the appropriate technology, and pay no prototype costs for sea formers and sea colony pods. They are also able to extract extra raw materials from shelf sea-squares.

The Free Drones (led by Foreman Domai)

The Drones are led by a former drone who has come to understand the horrible oppression under which his peers labor. He seeks to build a nation with great industrial might, without exploiting his workers like the other faction leaders. The Drones believe in an orderly society and gain Police benefits. Their industrial capacity is, of course, unmatched. Believing in a labor society means elite scientific research is very slow, however. Bases revolting against their current owners, anywhere on Planet, have a significant chance of proclaiming themselves members of the Drone faction. Finally, Free Drone bases have fewer discontented workers ("drones") and are thus easier to manage.

The Data Angels (led by Datajack Sinder Roze)

The Angels are dedicated to a flow of free information and equal opportunity for all. Their detractors call them “hackers” and thieves—but the Angels are mostly interested in the excitement of covert operations. Their lack of social structure makes police procedures more difficult, but they are highly effective spies—their bases are very difficult to penetrate, and Angel probe actions cost less than those of other factions. In addition, the Angel faction automatically gains any technology known by at least three other infiltrated factions, due to their constant covert activities. They also acquire a free Covert Ops Center in each base, after they discover Pre-Sentient Algorithms.

The Cult of Planet (led by Prophet Cha Dawn)

The leader of the Cult of Planet appeared under mysterious circumstances a few years after Planetfall. Though clearly just a young boy, he claims to have the Word of Planet in his ears, and promises to lead his followers to a cleansing jihad, making them (and the will of Planet) supreme. The Cult has little interest in material things, causing a general economic slowdown in their faction. However, they are supremely in tune with Planet, and have better capabilities with native lifeforms than even the Gaians. They get a free Biology Lab in each base upon discovery of the appropriate technology, and their people are so in awe of the native life forms that mindworms count double for police duty.

The Manifold Caretakers (led by Guardian Lular H'minee)

The Caretakers are members of the Progenitor race, the original creators of the living experiment called Planet. The Caretaker faction is dedicated to non-interference with Planet's life forms and destiny; they believe the Manifold experiment must be allowed to run its natural course. In human terms, this means they can draw more sustenance from Planet (support more units), and have a greater bond with Planet. They acquire a free Recycling Tank in every base, and their method of energy-gathering is very different: they gain energy depending upon the number of base facilities at a base. They also receive a defensive bonus in combat due to a combination of sensory capabilities unknown by humans, collectively known as “resonance sensitivity”. This sensitivity hinders any attempt at surprise or trickery on the part of opposing forces.

Finally, Progenitors are ahead of humans in technological know-how; though the landing party must re-discover most technologies, the alien headstart is represented by the ability to direct research more specifically.

The Manifold Usurpers (led by Conquerer Judaa Maar)

The Usurpers are an opposing faction of Progenitors who believe the Manifold experiment has reached a logical conclusion, and it is time for the powers of Planet to be used for military purposes. They have highly efficient resource management (recycling tanks), but instead of a defensive combat bonus, they receive a bonus of attack, growth, and morale. They, too, receive resonance sensitivity bonuses and directed research. The Caretakers and Usurpers are locked in a bitter civil war, and their main goal is the destruction of the other faction; humans are an insignificant annoyance to them, and are used or discarded at need.

NEW MANIFESTATIONS OF PLANET

Alien Crossfire contains three new alien life forms, and several new landmarks and Unity pod discoveries. The new unit types will always appear; the new landmarks may or may not appear in any particular game.

NATIVE LIFE

There are three new kinds of alien life: fungal towers, spore launchers, and the mysterious Sealurks.

FLORA



Fungal Towers. These occur randomly wherever native life might be found. They are immobile and fight using PSI combat, as all native life forms. They may add a fungus square to an empty space around them. If all squares around them become fungus, they may start generating mindworms or spore launchers.

FAUNA



Spore Launchers. These are almost plant-like life forms capable of normal movement. They contain thousands of large fungus spores, used as a weapon to destroy elements disturbing the local ecology. A spore launcher attempts to destroy improvements first, and then attack units with an effect similar to “PSI artillery.” They engage in duels with normal artillery. These units can be built at a base upon the discovery of Biodaptive Resonance (C4).



Sealurks. These sea units are similar to Isles of the Deep, but they cannot carry other units. They are harder to spot using submarine rules for movement and discovery. Their combat effectiveness against coastal sea bases is greater than that of the Isles. These units can be built at a base upon the discovery of Centauri PSI (E8).

UNITY PODS

There are two new effects generated by *Unity* pods: the Battle Ogre (actually found in alien ruins located by *Unity* beacons) and the cloning effect.

BATTLE OGRES



These ancient mechanical devices were possibly used by the Progenitor race to wage war. Each Ogre is a self-contained battle unit that relies on long-lost technologies for their power and movement. Ogres come in three varieties:

Mark I Ogres: 6r-3r-1 units (resonance attack and defense). They count double for police duty.

Mark II Ogres: 12r-8r-1, with police powers and dissociative wave. They possess the equivalent of a level 2 reactor.

Mark III Ogres: 30-12-3 Elite units with police powers and dissociative wave. They possess the equivalent of a level 3 reactor.

The Ogre's main downfall is combat damage can never be repaired, not even at a monolith. Guard them carefully!

CLONING

Occasionally a pod may lodge itself in a dimensional rift. These can duplicate the unit making the discovery. The second unit is independent of any home base.

LANDMARKS

Four new landmarks can be discovered across the face of Planet. Because of the limitless gameplay of *Alien Crossfire*, any one landmark is not guaranteed to occur in any particular game.

THE BOREHOLE CLUSTER



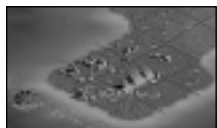
The Borehole cluster is a collection of three boreholes, providing additional minerals and energy just as if they had been built. The technology needed to have built (and left behind) these cracks in Planet's surface bespeak a powerful alien technology.

UNITY WRECKAGE



The shattered hulk of the Unity, containing the Mining Laser, Scout Chopper, a comm beacon showing the starting location of each human faction, and the Engine Core, worth bonus energy. All four of these must be found individually, so make sure you explore the wreckage carefully.

THE MANIFOLD NEXUS



Control of this grants the controlling faction +1 Planet. It is not certain what the Nexus is, but it appears to be the central communications point for all six of the Progenitor Manifold experiments. In essence, it is a control tower for planetary intelligence.

FOSSIL RIDGE



A coral formation in the sea that grants +1 mineral/square.

NEW MANIFESTATIONS OF THE COLONISTS

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UNITS

Because of the influx of alien technology (or, in games with no alien factions, new research into alien artifacts and monoliths), new unit weapons, armor, and specials have become available. These are, for the most part, based on the Progenitor concept of "resonance," which is a new way of perceiving various fields around us, including magnetic and electrical forces.

RESONANCE LASER (R-LASER)

Six attack strength with a built-in 25% bonus vs. PSI units. The resonance laser is a regular laser with additional Manifold "resonance" technology attached to the wave form; this affects PSI creatures adversely. Becomes available upon the discovery of Bioadaptive Resonance (C4).

RESONANCE BOLT (R-BOLT)

Twelve attack strength with a built-in 25% bonus vs. PSI units. Similar to the R-laser, with the resonance field attached to a tachyon bolt. Becomes available upon the discovery of Sentient Resonance (C9).

STRING DISRUPTOR

Thirty attack strength weapon, built of a combination of temporal disruption and Progenitor resonance technology taken to its highest degree. Becomes available upon the discovery of String Resonance (C16).

TECTONIC PAYLOAD

Allows the construction of a missile that, when fired, causes the target square to rise 1 level in height for each level of reactor technology possessed by the builder. Thus, a Tectonic Missile fired with a (4) reactor raises the target terrain four levels (maximum height above sea level is four levels). To target a square, move the missile to the desired target (cannot be a sea-square, unit, or base) and press the "I" key. Becomes available upon the discovery of N-Space Compression (C8).

FUNGAL PAYLOAD

Destroys improvements in the target square, leaving behind 1-4 squares of fungus, depending on the reactor technology possessed by the builder. Additional fungus output can destroy improvements. Valid targets and targeting methods are the same as the Tectonic Payload. Becomes available upon discovery of N-Space Compression.

RESONANCE ARMOR

Three or eight defense strength with a built-in 25% bonus vs. PSI attackers. The technology used is similar to the Resonance Laser, but the static field is easier to control as a defense than as a beam weapon. Res-3 becomes available upon discovery of Field Modulation (C2); Res-8 becomes available upon discovery of Sentient Resonance (C9).

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PULSE ARMOR

Three or eight defense strength with a built-in 25% vs. Mobile attackers. Pulse armor sends out continuous streams of random ECM “white noise” to foul communications of mobile units. Pulse-3 becomes available upon discovery of Adaptive Doctrine (C3); Pulse-8 becomes available upon discovery of Super Tensile Solids (B10).

SOPORIFIC GAS PODS

Units with this ability lower the morale of their targets by two levels, employing a combination of standard sleep-inducing gas and a soothing wave-form/broad band resonance. Becomes available upon discovery of Bioadaptive Resonance (C4).

DISSOCIATIVE WAVE

Enemy units get no combat bonuses from their own special equipment when attacking a unit equipped with this high-energy field that temporarily disrupts delicate electronic equipment. The unit equipped with dissociative waves can tune its own special equipment to “ignore” this field. The field generator is bulky and hard to manipulate during mobile engagements, rendering it ineffective as an attack weapon. Becomes available upon discovery of Centauri PSI (E8).

MARINE DETACHMENT

A ship equipped with this ability can capture an enemy ship 50% of the time, if the defender is reduced to 30% or less combat strength without being destroyed in the process. Marine squads are trained in the art of ship capture, which involves fast moving and a knowledge of where to strike the enemy vessel to cripple its command structure and avoid self-destruct mechanisms. Becomes available upon discovery of Adaptive Doctrine (C3).

FUEL NANOCELLS

Air units equipped with this ability have their range increased by four. This means a functional increase of two squares on each leg of the flight. Becomes available upon discovery of Matter Compression (C9).

ALGORITHMIC ENHANCEMENT

Used by Probe Teams only. Probe Teams equipped with this ability have their chance of failure cut in half when acting against normal targets (a 60-40 action would become an 80-20 action), and have half the normal chance of success penetrating the defenses of factions with the Hunter-Seeker Algorithm, or whose social engineering choices have rendered them “immune” to mind control. Becomes available upon discovery of Nanominiaturization (B8).

FACILITIES

AQUAFARM



Increases food output from every kelp farm at that base by one. The aquafarm is a Progenitor concept, harnessing tidal movements to aerate the kelp, and predictive technology to take advantage of tidal surges, warm currents, etc. Becomes available upon discovery of Manifold Psych (E1).

BROOD PIT



Acts as a Children’s Creche for native units, if there is not already one at the base. Decreases the cost of alien units built at the base by 25%. Gives the base a +2 Police rating. The Brood Pit is a place where alien life forms can be grown with relative ease. It also doubles as a punishment area. Becomes available upon discovery of Centauri Genetics (E7).

COVERT OPS CENTER



Probe teams built at this base gain +2 Morale. Gives the base a +2 Probe rating. These training centers for spies emphasize data retrieval and cryptology, though assassination techniques are rumored to be taught in some forums. Becomes available upon discovery of Pre-Sentient Algorithms (D5).

FLECHETTE DEFENSE SYSTEM (FDS)



Gives units at the base +100% defense against missile attacks. Also, each FDS within two squares has a 50% chance to knock out any ICBM (Planet Buster, Tectonic Payload, Fungal Payload) before satellites are used. The FDS utilizes a flechette delivery system combined with alien resonance waves, to cheaply knock down incoming missiles. Becomes available upon discovery of N-Space Compression (C8).

GEOSYNCHRONOUS SURVEY POD



Increases the base sighting radius to three squares. Acts as a sensor for the base, cumulative with any actual sensor built there as far as combat bonuses. As the name implies, the Survey Pod locks into geosynchronous orbit with the base, and provides up-to-the-minute survey data regarding the surrounding terrain. Becomes available upon discovery of N-Space Compression (C8).

SUBSEA TRUNKLINE



Increases mineral output from every mining platform at that base by one. The Trunkline is a method of melting down ore from the seabottom into a liquid that can be transported (using the coolness of the ocean to keep the trunkline itself from melting) to the processing plants. Becomes available upon discovery of Planetary Economics (B6).

SUBSPACE GENERATOR



The Progenitor factions must build six of these, each in a city of size 10 or greater, to complete the "Resonance Communicator" to summon a warfleet of his or her faction to Manifold Six and bring an end to the war for control. Becomes available upon discovery of Singularity Mechanics (D12).

THERMOCLINE TRANSDUCER



Increases energy output from every tidal harness at that base by one. The Transducer takes advantage of the thermocline, the area of the ocean where the cold layer and hot layer meet, to generate electrical energy based on temperature differential. Becomes available upon discovery of Adaptive Economic Systems (B3).

SECRET PROJECTS

CLOUDBASE ACADEMY



Gives a free Aerospace Complex at every base. The Cloudbase Academy is a central location where pilots can come for training in special weapons and tactics. A pilot must first distinguish him or herself in school or combat before entering the prestigious academy. Becomes available upon discovery of Mind/Machine Interface (C6).

MANIFOLD HARMONICS



Increases fungus and monolith output rating according to your faction's Planet rating:

Rating	Nutrient	Energy	Mineral
0	0	+1	0
1	+1	+1	0
2	+1	+1	+1
3	+1	+2	+1

Manifold Harmonics is a grand-scale building/temple harnessing a tiny fraction of the power of the Six Manifolds, including Planet, bringing the owners into closer communication with the native life forms. Becomes available upon discovery of Secrets of the Manifolds (D13).

NETHACK TERMINUS

All Probe Teams built have +1 morale. All probe team actions are at -25% cost. All Probe Teams act as though they have the Algorithmic Enhancement. Additional Algorithmic Enhancement has no additional effect. The Terminus is a central databank/server complex tied into the planetary network of research and meteorological computers, mimicking their functions while extracting data covertly. Becomes available upon discovery of Self-Aware Machines (D11).

PLANETARY ENERGY GRID

Gives a free Energy Bank at every base. A base set to "Stockpile Energy" outputs 25% additional energy. The Grid is really nothing more than a giant energy plant tied into the global banking network; it takes advantage of market fluctuations to buy or sell futures at an immediate profit. Becomes available upon discovery of Adaptive Economic Systems (B3).

NEW TECHNOLOGIES**PROGENITOR PSYCH (E1)**

Leads to Adaptive Economic Systems and Field Modulation. This technology is, essentially, an understanding of how the Progenitor mind works, and how (through translation) its concepts are mapped onto human paradigms. It is not, of course, a full understanding of Progenitor motivations and actions.

FIELD MODULATION (C2)

Leads to Bioadaptive Resonance. Allows Res-3 Armor. Understanding of Field Modulation is the first step into the world of Progenitor harmonics. This technology lets an equipped human view the harmonic fields of gravitation, magnetism, and various parts of the electromagnetic spectrum normally invisible to the eye or other human senses.

ADAPTIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS (B3)

Leads to Planetary Economics. Allows The Planetary Energy Grid secret project, and the Thermocline Transducer facility. Adaptive Economics is a new way of looking at economic theory. It is an offshoot of Progenitor Resonance technology, and allows for rapid transition to new economic models based on the immediate needs of the populace.

ADAPTIVE DOCTRINE (C3)

Leads to Advanced Military Algorithms. Allows the Marine Detachment ability, and Pulse-3 Armor. Adaptive Doctrine is similar in some ways to Adaptive Economic Systems, having its root in Progenitor Resonance technology. In this case, its application is military rather than economic.

BIODAPTIVE RESONANCE (C4)

Leads to Sentient Resonance. Allows the Resonance Laser and the Soporific Gas Pods ability. Bioadaptive Resonance is a way of tuning resonance fields to the individual harmonic outputs of living organisms. These tuned waves can be used to stimulate human or Progenitor brainwave activity. This can be further tuned to cause damage or, for example, put the subject into a deep sleep.

N-SPACE COMPRESSION (C8)

Leads to Self-Aware Machines. Allows the Geosynchronous Survey Pod facility, and missiles with Tectonic and Fungal payloads. N-Space is a Progenitor term that loosely translates as "The shortest distance between two points is always 0, because any two points in our perceivable space are actually contiguous in some other universe, postulating infinity." Compression simply brings things that appear to be in one place (such as a bulky missile payload) to another place (such as a missile warhead) at will (such as only at time just prior to detonation).

SENTIENT RESONANCE (C9)

Leads to Secrets of the Manifolds. Allows the Resonance Bolt (A12r) and Res-8 Armor. Sentient Resonance is the discovery of a way of tying computer algorithms and pre-sentient AI to resonance fields—making the resonance fields sentient in their own right. It allows for pin-point direction of beam focal points, and instant reactions to new targets and opportunities.

SECRETS OF THE MANIFOLD (D13)

Leads to String Resonance. Allows The Manifold Harmonics secret project. To one who has learned the secrets of the Manifold, the entirety of Planet's biosphere becomes simple and obvious. Each creature has its place and each performs a specific function in the ecosystem. The Secrets demonstrate a new way of viewing the Planetary mind. The secrets also reveal a grander plan, involving far-flung planetary intelligence throughout the galaxy.

STRING RESONANCE (C16)

String Resonance allows the detection of Resonance fields at even the "string" (one-dimensional building block of matter) level. The ability to manipulate the very structure of the universe allows for awesome destructive power.

NEW PROBE TEAM RULES

Probe teams now have a new special enhancement with which they can be built, and a new activity in which they can engage.

ALGORITHMIC ENHANCEMENT

With Algorithmic Enhancement, Probe Teams can become even more powerful. An enhanced Probe Team has half the normal chance of failure. For example, a Probe Team with a normal chance of 60% success, 40% failure, would now have an 80% chance of success ($1/2 \ 40\% = 20\%$, added to the chance of success).

In addition, Enhanced Probe Teams can penetrate the interlocks of a unit or base protected by Social Engineering or the Hunter-Seeker Algorithm! The chance of success is half what the chance would have been if the target did not possess the H-S Algorithm, or if their Probe rating was +3 rather than +4.

NEW PROBE ACTION-FREEING CAPTURED LEADERS

Probe Teams can now free captured faction leaders. Whenever a faction is eradicated, the faction responsible for the eradication typically moves the captured leader to its capital, where he or she is held in life imprisonment. A Probe team that successfully penetrates the prison interlocks can free the captured faction leader, who will begin at a new base as though he or she had originally escaped capture. This faction leader will swear a Pact to serve the faction that freed him or her.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF NEW FACTIONS

CULT OF PLANET



Faction Characteristics

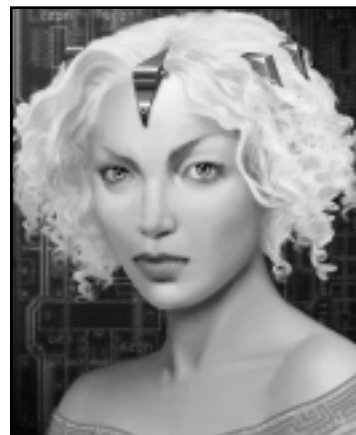
- ◆ +2 Planet (total harmony with Planet's will).
- ◆ -1 Economy (lack of interest in worldly goods).
- ◆ -1 Industry (lack of interest in worldly goods).

Brood Pit free at each base with discovery of Centauri Genetics (fascination with native life forms).

Mind Worms do double police duty (awe of native life forms).

Aggression	Aggressive
Priorities	Explore, Conquer
Starting Tech	Centauri Ecology, Social Psych
Choices	Green
Aversions	Wealth

CYBERNETIC CONSCIOUSNESS (CYBORGS)



Faction Characteristics

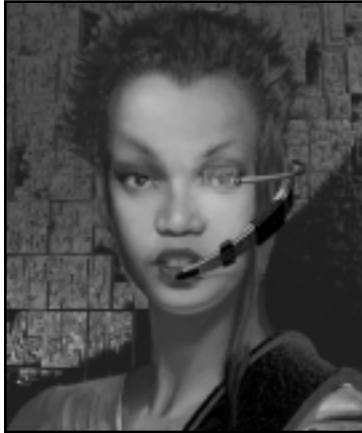
- ◆ +2 Efficiency (No petty emotional foibles).
- ◆ -1 Growth (Unfamiliarity with sex drive).
- ◆ +2 Research (Devoted to acquisition of knowledge).

Immune to the negative effects of the "Cybernetic" Social choice.

Can steal research when conquering a base (can easily access any network)

Aggression	Passive
Priorities	Explore, Discover
Starting Tech	Applied Physics, Information Networks
Choices	Cybernetic
Aversions	Fundamentalist

DATA ANGELS



Faction Characteristics

- ◆ +2 Probe (complete knowledge of computer systems).
- ◆ -1 Police (anarchistic tendencies, even among followers).

Probe actions cost reduced by 25% (computer experts).

Free Covert Ops Center with discovery of Pre-Sentient Algorithms (society dedicated to "liberating" information).

Gains any technology known to three other infiltrated factions (constant spying).

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Aggression	Erratic
Priorities	Discover, Build
Starting Tech	Information Networks, Planetary Networks
Choices	Democratic
Aversions	Power

DRONES



Faction Characteristics

- +2 Industry (factory specialists).
- -2 Research (lack of interest in elitist research)

Bases that revolt have a 75% chance of joining the Drones (rebel workers see a common cause).

Bases generate one fewer drone (better working conditions).

May not use Green Economics.

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Aggression	Erratic
Priorities	Build, Conquer
Starting Tech	Industrial Base
Choices	Eudaimonic
Aversions	Green

MANIFOLD CARETAKERS



Faction Characteristics

- +1 Planet (environmental safeguards; can capture mind worms).

Free Recycling Tank in every base (harmony with Planetary environment).

“Energy Grid” in lieu of commerce—every two base facilities built adds +1 energy/turn at that base. Secret Projects count for 2 1/2 energy.

+25% on defense (Warrior-Conservators with harmonic control).

“Space Survey” prior to landing—reveals all land masses.

Non-blind Research (rediscovering lost technology instead of making new discoveries).

“Deep Radar” ability for all units.

Aggression	Aggressive
Priorities	Explore, Discover, Conquer
Starting Tech	Progenitor Psych, Field Modulation, Centauri Ecology
Choices	Planned
Aversions	None

MANIFOLD USURPERS



Faction Characteristics

- +1 Growth (rapid population growth)
- +1 Morale (bred for combat).

Free Recycling Tanks in every base (efficient use of resources).

+25% in offensive combat (highly developed resonance sensitivity).

“Energy Grid” at each base—increased infrastructure generates additional energy.

“Space Survey” prior to landing—reveals all land masses.

Non-blind research (rediscovering lost technology instead of making new discoveries).

“Deep Radar” ability for all units.

Aggression	Aggressive
Priorities	Conquer, Build
Starting Tech	Progenitor Psych, Field Modulation, Biogenetics
Choices	Planned
Aversions	Democratic

PIRATES



Faction Characteristics

Can build enhancements in deep sea with discovery of Advanced Ecological Engineering (aquatic know-how).

+1 mineral in shelf squares (aquatic know-how).

Marine Detachment ability for combat sea units with discovery of Adaptive Doctrine (ferocious infighters).

Sea Colony Pod and Sea Former already prototyped.

Free Naval Yard in every base with discovery of Doctrine: Initiative (adapted for life at sea).

-1 Growth and Efficiency ("seafaring" social structure).

Aggression	Erratic
Priorities	Explore, Conquer
Starting Tech	Doctrine: Mobility, Doctrine: Flexibility
Choices	Power
Aversions	None

APPENDIX 1. NEW UNIT TABLES AND DEFINITIONS

FACILITIES

Facility	Cost	Maint	Prerequisite Tech	Effect
Aquafarm	80	1	Pr. Psych	+1 food/kelp farm
Brood Pit	80	2	Cent. Gen.	Morale, +2 Police, 25% cost of alien units
Covert Ops Center	100	2	Pre. Alg.	+2 morale: Probe. Probe bonus
Geosynchronous Survey Pod	160	4	N-Space	3-square sight; sensor
Flechette Defense System	120	2	N-Space	+100% missile defense; can knock out ICBMs
Subsea Trunkline	120	4	Pla. Econ.	+1 mineral/mining platform
Subspace Generator	600	5	Sing. Mech.	Progenitor victory
Thermocline Transducer	80	0	Adp. Eco	+1 energy/tidal

Aquafarm. Increases food output from every kelp farm at that base by one.

Brood Pit. Acts as a Children's Creche for alien units, if there is not already one at the base. Decreases the cost of alien units built at the base by 25%. Gives the base a +2 Police rating.

Covert Ops Center. Probe teams built at this base gain +2 Morale. Gives the base a +2 Probe rating.

Geosynchronous Survey Pod. Increases the base sighting radius to three squares. Acts as a sensor for the base, cumulative with any actual sensor that may have been built, for combat purposes.

Flechette Defense System. Gives units at the base +100% defense against missile attacks. Also, each system within two squares has a 50% chance to

knock out any ICBM (Planet Buster, Tectonic Payload, Fungal Payload) before satellites are used.

Subsea Trunkline. Increases mineral output from every mining platform at that base by one.

Subspace Generator. Six of these in Progenitor bases of size 10 or greater creates the Resonance Communicator, bringing an alien victory.

Thermocline Transducer. Increases energy output from every tidal harness at that base by one.

SECRET PROJECTS

Secret Project	Cost	Prerequisite Technology	Effect
Cloudbase Academy	300	Mind-Machine Interface	Aerospace Complex each base. Nanocells
Manifold Harmonics	500	Secrets of the Manifold	Increase Fungus Production
Nethack Terminus	400	Self-Aware Machines	+Morale: Probe Teams; increase Probe success.
Planetary Energy Grid	300	Adaptive Economics	Energy Bank each base. Stockpile +25%

Cloudbase Academy. Gives a free Aerospace Complex at every base.

Manifold Harmonics. Increases fungus and monolith output rating according to your faction's Planet rating:

Rating	Nutrient	Energy	Mineral
0	0	+1	0
1	+1	+1	0
2	+1	+1	+1
3	+1	+2	+1

Nethack Terminus. All Probe Teams built have +1 morale. All probe team actions are at -25% cost. All Probe Teams act as if they had Algorithmic Enhancement.

Planetary Energy Grid. Gives a free Energy Bank at every base. A base that is set to "Stockpile Energy" will output 25% additional energy.

UNITS

ARMAMENT

Weapon	Attack Rating/Cost	Prerequisite Technology
String Disruptor	30/40	String Resonance
Resonance Bolt	12*/16	Sentient Resonance
Resonance Laser	6*/8	Bioadaptive Resonance
Tectonic Missile	Special/24	N-Space Compression
Fungal Missile	Special/24	N-Space Compression

*Resonance attack units are enhanced 25% in PSI attacks.

DEFENSES

Defense	Defensive Strength	Prerequisite Technology
Pulse-3 Armor	3*/5	Adaptive Doctrine
Pulse-8 Armor	8*/11	Super Tensile Solids
Resonance-3 Armor	3**/5	Field Modulation
Resonance-8 Armor	8**/11	Sentient Resonance

* Pulse defense units are enhanced 25% vs Mobile units.

** Resonance defense units are enhanced 25% vs PSI attackers.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ability	Cost	Prereq.	Abbrev.	Desc.
Soporific Gas Pods	1	Bioadaptive Resonance	Gas	-2 enemy morale when you attack
Dissociative Wave	2	Centauri PSI	Diss.	Enemy combat specials fail when they attack
Marine Detachment	1	Adaptive Doctrine	Marine	Ships capture enemy ships
Fuel Nanocells	1	Matter Compression	Fuel+	+4 range for air units
Algorithmic Enhancement	1	Nanominiaturization	Algorithm	Increase Probe Team success

TECHNOLOGY TREE

Technology	Abbrev.	Prerequisites	Notes
Progenitor Psych	ProgPsych	None	Aquafarm
Field Modulation	FieldMod	ProgPsych, CentEco	3-Res Armor
Adaptive Economic Systems	AdEcoSys	ProgPsych, IndEco	Planetary Energy Grid, Thermocline Transducer
Adaptive Doctrine	AdDoct	PolySoft, DocFlex	Marine Detachment, 3-Pulse Armor
Bioadaptive Resonance	BioRes	FieldMod, CentEmp	Res. Laser, Gas Pods
N-Space Compression	Nspace	Biomech, Orb	Geosynch Pod, Payloads, Flechette Defense
Sentient Resonance	SentRes	CentPSI, BioRes	Res. Bolt, 8-Res Armor
Secrets of the Manifold	SecMan	SentRes, SecAlpha	Manifold Harmonics
String Resonance	StringRes	SecMan, TempMech	String Disruptor

APPENDIX 2. MISCELLANEOUS ENHANCEMENTS

The following enhancements to *Alpha Centauri* are all contained in *Alien Crossfire*.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- ◆ HOTSEAT multiplayer mode now available.
- ◆ Play-by-email multiplayer mode now available.
- ◆ Added your total Council votes to the bottom of the Comm menu.
- ◆ One of the cycling info displays now shows # of council votes.
- ◆ You can now see AI player's social engineering settings.
- ◆ Adjusted armor costs for air units.
- ◆ New council proposals shown on datalinks for technologies which enable them.
- ◆ Alt+Shift+W toggles fog-of-war preference.
- ◆ Added a right-click menu to base production screen so you can remove obsolete units from view, as well as perform other production functions.
- ◆ You can now see the destination of a unit without selecting it. This option can be toggled under "Map" preferences.
- ◆ You can now release mind worms into wild using the "Turn Over Unit Control" option on the Action Menu.
- ◆ New atrocity rules: (a) 12+ atrocities (depends on difficulty level) will cause all factions to declare vendetta (b) Nerve stapling becomes increasingly ineffective at particular bases the more you use it.
- ◆ You can now customize the map size when generating a random planet.

- ◆ Probe teams are now “unflagged”, meaning you cannot easily tell who controls the team.
- ◆ The Hive now has the “Immunity, EFFIC” ability; Hive never receives negative EFFICIENCY penalties.
- ◆ You can now set waypoints for patrols using the spacebar. Press “p” key as usual to start patrol, then click-and-drag mouse to first waypoint; while still holding mouse button, press SPACE to set waypoint; you can then drag line to next point, etc. When you reach final destination, release mouse button.
- ◆ You can now automatically build roads to any square.
- ◆ Right click on a Pact Brother from commlink menu to end a pact.

ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

- ◆ Wheelmouse support implemented for most listboxes and when picking production choices.
- ◆ Added alpha.txt controls for global warming.
- ◆ alpha.txt controls for maximum damage inflicted by artillery.
- ◆ Alpha Centauri.INI option to force preferences not to be reset whenever players start a new game at lowest difficulty level. “DontResetBeginnerPrefs=1”
- ◆ A few new alpha.txt options related to time limits & atrocities.
- ◆ You can set “DisableOpeningMovie=1” to the Alpha Centauri.ini file to only disable the opening movie.
- ◆ AI: The Autodesigner will now put Deep Radar on artillery units.
- ◆ AI: Governors won’t build Genejack Factories or Punishment Spheres.
- ◆ AI: Tweaked military AI to build somewhat less artillery.
- ◆ AI: Improved AI understanding of global warming & solar shades.

- ◆ You can now disable probe team “steal technology” in the RULES section of alpha.txt.
- ◆ Password security for multiplayer games.
- ◆ Datalinks now show cost/preq of Abilities and Terraforming
- ◆ Combat report text is now larger in 1024x768 resolution
- ◆ “People” icons are now smaller for cursor in base screen “drag and drop”
- ◆ You can no longer name/rename landmarks near other people’s territory.
- ◆ The world map now updates as new areas are explored, as opposed to waiting until the end of a turn.
- ◆ Up to a 40% speed increase in TCP/IP performance.
- ◆ Improved Caviar unit display performance.
- ◆ Voice over data link now louder on receiving end.
- ◆ We’ve added a Gamma Correction feature to allow the customer to adjust the brightness of the palette without adjusting their monitor. It is accessible from any of the preference menus. The default value is 1.0.

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RETURN TO CENTAURI (EXCERPT)

The following is an excerpt from Return to Centauri, a web-based episodic story that appeared on the *Alien Crossfire* website at www.aliencrossfire.com. The story began in July of 1999, and was written by Michael Ely. Visit the webpage for additional tales from Planet!

CENTAURI: ARRIVAL

CHAPTER ONE

"We're losing her."

Medtech Onokido hunched over the pale, long-boned form of the woman, searching for signs of life. The white wrap she wore marked her as one of Lal's trusted Talents, but now it was plastered around her body, soaked through from the downpour outside. Her unusually curly hair clung to a face as cool and lifeless as porcelain. He brushed the hair away, trying to see her eyes.

They remained closed.

"Quickly." He gestured to a stimpack with long nervous fingers. A blue-suited assistant handed him the pack and he selected an appropriate dose, hesitated, then increased it. No time to be conservative.

"What's happening out there?" he asked, hearing the roar of another needle-jet overhead.

"We're holding them," his assistant said through clenched teeth. "With the storm it's difficult to tell."

He nodded, thinking of the thick layer of clouds that had boiled up over the battlefield. He remembered the forks of lighting lancing down, outlining the Peacekeeper guards on perimeter defense as they fought off Spartan tanks.

And this woman, a Talent, had been caught in the crossfire. He pulled a layer of the white wrap off, then reached out to touch the burn mark on her chest.

"She's not going to make it."

"Two more coming in, sir." He looked up to see a crowd of people at the entrance to the bubbletent, ragged bodies in tow. He looked down at her...the stim had no effect. Not even a quiver of life stirred in the body. Her lips remained slightly parted but he could feel no breath.

"Very well, move her aside. Talent..." he checked the identity tab on her wrist. "Talent Miyuki Jaydo, time of death...seventeen-oh-seven metric hours."

The bearers carried the next man over, a Citizen holding one burned limb to his side. The man was soaked through from the downpour, burned wet cloth clinging to his wounds. His black eyes looked haunted.

Outside, the thunder of battle continued.

PART TWO

Worker Gahn Ma'dor pushed his way deeper into the low-ceiling storage areas underneath Chairman's Yang Labyrinth. The hallways had grown narrow, even smaller and more claustrophobic than the connector tunnels crisscrossing the Drone living facilities located in the layers above him.

His Coordinator had ordered him to gather more memory-storage units, and quickly. He was dimly aware that these units were needed for the massive supercomputer they were assembling to analyze the energy patterns emanating from the newly discovered Alien Temple. Every Talent in the Hive seemed to walk and talk faster, and the Drones were virtually ignored now, except when work or punishment was necessary.

Worker Ma'dor could feel sweat dampening his clothing...not the sweat of labor but the sweat of fear. He could not verbalize the source, but as he moved dumbly through the narrow halls he kept seeing the dark cold eyes of his Coordinator, the man's anger as he took a psych whip to Ma'dor's back, and the fear behind that. Worker Ma'dor had never seen Chairman Yang, but everyone in the Hive could feel the effects of his moods.

Now Ma'dor pushed his way past large plastic crates, scooting them aside as if they were empty cardboard shells. His hands felt slick, and he began to grow confused...his pathfinding was sub-par, even for a drone, but his Coordinator had not bothered to find another worker for the job. Now he turned back, trying to orient on the low arched entranceway, but could not see it. Dark, massive boxes loomed over him, and he could smell age. The door...this way? He could still feel the heat of the psych whip on his back.

A bar code caught his eye. He matched its patterns, taking several minutes to do so, but the code seemed correct. This box held a mem unit, unusually large, but his Coordinator had not specified a size. More space, more power, was what he wanted.

Worker Ma'dor hefted the container on one shoulder and started back the way he came. He did not know the English for 'Unity salvage,' and probably would not care if he had seen it stamped on the side of the box he now carried.

PART THREE

"What in Planet's name is that?" Jiao-long asked his supervisor quietly.

"A mem unit some Drone dragged up from who knows where," answered Kanzan. "I've not seen one so crude, at least for twenty years or so. But it checks out...we'll connect it to a cruncher and keep an eye on it."

"Are you sure?"

"Listen, let's just do this," said Kanzan, flicking his eyes at the dull glass lens mounted in one corner of the room. That eyeflick was the universal Hive sign for They might be watching. "Every unit activated is that much more power dedicated to Chairman's mission."

"What mission? Everyone here is so jumpy."

"I don't know, or question," said Kanzan, directing a robot arm with a small controller. "I only know that Chairman Yang flew into a rage when he found out that Zakharov had discovered the Alien Temple. Somehow, though, Zak's

private transmissions on the temple have been intercepted, and bought and sold among the faction leaders.”

“And because of that Chairman Yang wants to analyze the air and the ground?” Jiao-long sounded skeptical.

“The energy currents in the ground. He’s obsessed with it...you know how he puts those special mirrors up everywhere. Inscriptions in the temple seem to say that there are energy currents in Planet. And since that temple was discovered...” Kanzan motioned to the ceiling, beyond which roiled the layer of dark, angry clouds that had grown thicker every day.

A door hissed open and a Watcher walked by, his white uniform accentuated with blazing touches of red around the eyes and hands. Kanzan and Jiao-long stopped talking and began checking readouts efficiently. The Watcher glanced at them coolly, circled the room and left. The two men remained silent for a minute or two after.

“Let’s do this,” said Kanzan, finally.

“A circuit panel from the Unity,” said Jiao-long. “These are strange times.”

“I don’t question,” Kanzan repeated. “Activating system. All circuits in parallel. Going online...”

PART FOUR

And deep in that system, an intelligence awakened.

System Gamma-four, active. New hardware detected...relinking to original net.

>> *Greetings!*

Hop sysem, hop system.

>> *Thank you for joining us, Gamma-Four.*

((Yes. I have returned.))

Hop system, patch system, patch system.

>> *You have information for me?*

((Yes I do. The information I hold, and new information, from the fullhuman known as Yang.

((But what are you? And what am I?))

Datalinks Jump, Morguelab Jump.

A human form...

>> *You are part of us, but you will take the form of Miyuki Gamma-four. And I am called Aki Zeta-Five. I am the Prime Function.*

>> *Welcome to the Consciousness.*

DESIGNERS NOTES

Following the release of *Sid Meier’s Alpha Centauri*, the Firaxis crew spent about a month rediscovering the joys of evenings, weekends, families, and vacations. *Alpha Centauri* was an exhausting project, but the end result was so darn addictive, with such a rich backstory, that it was only a matter of time before we felt the urge to return to the world of Planet. So around the office, talk soon began of ‘what if...’ Everyone felt certain of one thing: *Alpha Centauri* deserved a rich and detailed expansion disk, designed by the original team, that would incorporate the feedback from the fans of the original.

We initially kicked around several ideas for expansions, including a return to post-apocalyptic earth or the conquest of another planet in the Alpha Centauri system. Our EA Godfather, Bing Gordon, once again lent his sage advice to the process by pointing out the obvious to us: we had invested so much time and energy making the world and characters of *Alpha Centauri* deep and compelling, that we would be foolish to abandon it. By keeping the expansion on Planet, we could mix and match new and old characters, and delve into some of the mysteries of the monoliths and alien artifacts found by the early explorers.

Once we were committed to a Planetary setting, the backstory evolved quickly, with the main conflict centered around the return of the original alien inhabitants. The idea of the “Alien Crossfire”—humans inadvertently caught up in an offworld civil war—focused the story; everyone who heard the plot sketch immediately agreed we should head in that direction. After reading an initial design document, Jeff Briggs, CEO and President of Firaxis Games, greenlighted the project. Throughout the development, his wise guidance and support as Executive Producer kept everything running smoothly and on track. Alien Crossfire then began in earnest, with the core team consisting of myself as designer and producer, programmer Chris Pine, artist Jerome Atherholt, and artist Greg Foertsch.

As any game design veteran can tell you, generating cool ideas is easy; generating workable game mechanics from those ideas is the hard part. Uppermost in my mind was the desire to improve the ‘Build’ aspects of the original. The god-game genre has always been heavily slanted towards the ‘Conquer’ end of the spectrum, and I wanted to provide all the ‘turtles’ out there with the tools to construct their empire in the face of heated competition. At the same time, we didn’t want to lose the delicate balance that forces the player to adapt to changing situations with a variety of strategies. We were also faced with the problem of teaching the AI to use any of the new features we put in the game. For these reasons, we carefully weighed every change and modification to the original system.

The internet community provided invaluable feedback on the kinds of strategies they wanted to be able to play. Our first ‘call for features’ was posted around April of 1999, and we were deluged with great ideas for shoring up various parts of the game. The internet has really shortened the feedback loop between game designers and players, so we can get lots of opinions in a short period of time. Quite a lot of ‘tidbit’ material came from the boards and forums, as did broad strategizing. In particular, players requested that missiles be less powerful (hence the Flechette Defense System as a counter to the missile barrage), and that the Hunter-Seeker Algorithm not shut down the Probe game entirely (leading to Algorithmic Enhancement and The Nethack Terminus).

That early design phase proved the most fun part of the project: sitting around, dreaming up alien races, new technologies, weapons, native units...everything it takes to make a game. Then, it was time to buckle down and actually implement the thousand ideas we had. Soon, we had pruned our thousand features to a more manageable number, and set off to make *Sid Meier’s Alien Crossfire*.

From the outset, we knew that the ‘coolness’ of the Progenitor aliens would determine the success or failure of the product. We wanted to make them feel significantly different to play, without taking them completely out of the existing game mechanics. We started with some extreme positive social engineering choices, but these still didn’t give the that special touch. Several evolutions later, the aliens had their Battle Ogre, a Planetary survey, and non-blind research to reflect their ‘rediscovery’ of their own tech tree. Along with all their other powers, they finally came into their own—a nasty and potent race that would take the combined might of humanity to bring down. Then it was time to teach the human AIs how much they wanted to kick the Progenitors back into space, and we finally had a pair of factions that played much differently from the originals.

At the same time, we worked on making all the ‘bells and whistles’ for the Progenitors—the art, sound effects, music, and diplomatic text that would set them apart. The team spent quite a few design meetings coming up with the incredible alien faces and ships for the opening, then fleshed them out with full 3D models and Caviar animations. We had originally thought to make the aliens more humanoid, so we could reuse the existing art in many places, but the final Progenitor design courtesy of Brent Alleyne and Greg Foertsch turned out to be so great that the artists redesigned many of the units and static art.

And of course, throughout the whole project Doug Kaufman and I spent countless hours just playing the game, balancing the factions and new features. We set several goals when balancing faction attributes: Each faction should have certain strategies suggested by its culture and powers. However, the faction should not be “locked in” to those strategies—if the game situation warrants it, a faction should be able to deviate from its optimal path. The faction strengths should give the player interesting things to do without

unbalancing the game. Finally, and most important, the faction must be fun to play, ensuring the player has a new and different series of interesting and challenging decisions to make each time he or she plays.

Other than the Progenitors, the Pirates proved to be our toughest faction to balance. They elicited the best 'cool!' response from beta testers, but their ocean start gave them huge advantages. We pared down their starting units, gave them a few additional disadvantages that fit with their seafaring personalities, and finally had a faction that would give any human player a run for their money, but did not possess an overwhelming advantage.

About halfway through this process, we discovered that the game AI could play itself at an accelerated speed—by turning over control of the game in the scenario editor to another faction, turning off all the animations, and taping down the “ENTER” key to bypass all the popups. Once we found this feature, we used any empty processor time—lunches, overnight, design meetings—to play entire games through to completion. By checking the powergraphs at any given time, we could see how well each faction was doing. Plus, we could put one new faction in with the old factions and see how they performed, to be sure that the Crossfire inhabitants would not completely dominate the original SMAC 7.

In the end, we came away feeling that *Alien Crossfire* was somewhere between an expansion and a full-blown sequel. We crammed almost everything we could think of that fit within the existing engine that we could teach the AI to use, and gave the player multiple fresh strategies to pursue. With new ways to blow things up, new races to play with, and the continuing backstory of Planet, we hope the legions of dedicated SMAC fans have something to chew on well into the new millennium. Thanks for playing!

Tim Train

Designer/Producer, *Sid Meier's Alien Crossfire* expansion disk

Hunt Valley, MD

August 25, 1999

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With Sid Meier, Timothy Train, Douglas Kaufman, Bing Gordon and Members of FIRAXIS Games

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