



SINGAPORE SLING

AN e23 ADVENTURE
FOR TRANSHUMAN SPACE® FROM
STEVE JACKSON GAMES
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS

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Singapore Sling is an adventure for the *Transhuman Space* setting in the year 2100. It is a suitable introductory adventure for players new to the setting, and is also easy to insert into established campaigns that fit the general themes of investigation, political intrigue, industrial espionage, or memetic warfare. This adventure requires access to the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*, *GURPS Compendium I*, the *Transhuman Space* core book, and *Fifth Wave*. *Fifth Wave* is necessary because the adventure uses NPCs, a major location, and some organizations detailed in that book.

ADVENTURE STYLE AND SUITABLE CHARACTERS

As written, *Singapore Sling* is more focused on role-playing than action-oriented skill resolution. The players will need to piece together the plot as they investigate, deciding which leads to follow up and with whom they should talk next. With the latter half of the adventure set in Singapore, a state with a very strict weapon control policy, gung-ho weapon-toting adventurers may feel somewhat out of place. Martial artists will be much more at home, but combat skills will not necessarily be needed.

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ABOUT TRANSHUMAN SPACE

The *Transhuman Space* series presents a unique hard-science and high-biotech universe for roleplaying. Set in the Solar System in the year 2100, it is a setting rich in adventure, mystery, and ideological conflict. The core book is *Transhuman Space* (TS), which presents an overview of the setting. Other books available include *Fifth Wave* (FW) (focusing on Earth), *In the Well* (ITW) (Mars and the inner system), and *Under Pressure* (UP) (aquatic environments).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Morgan-Mar lives in Sydney, Australia. He is co-author of *Transhuman Space: Under Pressure* and has contributed to several *GURPS* books. He is also responsible for the strangely popular *Irregular Webcomic*!

If the group prefers fast action and combat to investigation and roleplaying, *Singapore Sling* can be converted by increasing the pace of the story, reducing the research scenes to rapid GM-delivered information – or making some of them physical infiltration and espionage rather than web research – and throwing in a few extra combat encounters. A couple of such encounters are described in the boxes *Saving Sera Panelli* (p. 9) and *Casing Cathay Media* (p. 10).

On the other hand, the heroes may attempt to achieve their goals mostly by web research and computer hacking. The GM should review the computer access and intrusion rules on pp. FW124-130 if he anticipates the players taking this route.

Character Types

The adventure suits a group with skill sets ranging from News Hound (p. TS112) and Public Eye (p. FW113) to Investigator (p. TS112) and Troubleshooter (p. FW114). Note that many news hounds and public eyes work at these jobs part time, so such freelancers may have additional skills and responsibilities associated with their “day jobs.” Argus Society members (p. FW84) would be particularly appropriate, and the GM can specify this as a campaign background if desired.

Because of the wide disparity in point values possible in *Transhuman Space* campaigns, it is not possible to specify a narrow range suitable for PCs in this adventure. Characters ranging from 100 to

400 points can find enough challenges to keep them occupied. The GM should set point values for character creation based on the guidelines on p. TS110. Characters in the 100-200 point range should be humans or genetic upgrade humans. From 200-400 points the best characters are transhumans with racial or model templates accounting for 50-75% of the points. A good alternative is allowing players to choose a race or model template for free and then adding 100 points with up to -45 points in additional disadvantages and quirks. Digital intelligences in bioshells or cybershells are also appropriate for the adventure. The GM should prohibit access to expensive and ultra-capable shells such as bush robots or RATS – most of which are beyond the suggested 400-point limit anyway.

If a player is willing to experiment with some of the more intriguing aspects of posthuman roleplaying, he might consider playing a completely digital persona, such as a digital intelligence loaded into a VII and carried within another character’s skull. Such a “person” will have opportunities to interact in virtual spaces and take part in much of the roleplaying. For the latter half of the adventure, where more physical action is required, he may either continue to research or take action in the digital realm, or he could download into a rented cybershell and join the other characters in performing physical tasks.

Useful skills for characters include Area Knowledge (South-East Asia), Computer Hacking, Diplomacy, Disguise, Economics, Electronics Operation (Security Systems), Fast Talk, Forgery, History, Intelligence Analysis, Judo, Karate, Lockpicking, Memetics, Psychology, Research, Stealth, Streetwise, and martial arts skills.

The adventure is written assuming the PCs have AI allies who routinely assist them in filtering through the mass of media and communications that they are subject to every day. Such AIs are not necessary – investigators could do all the hard work themselves – but they should be encouraged to get into the spirit of Fifth Wave roleplaying.

Introducing New Players to Transhuman Space

The *Transhuman Space* setting is broad and complex, and can be overwhelming for new players. *Singapore Sling* is designed to be a relatively gentle introduction to the new ideas of this world. The following suggestions may help the players to assimilate some of the unfamiliar concepts as they play through the adventure.

The best place to begin the sequence of events with new players is in a location the *players* know and are comfortable with. Their home town or a nearby big city are ideal.

A good setup for novice players in this adventure is to have their characters be part of a small local group of Argus Society members. The GM can explain that their characters are essentially freelance reporters, who uncover suspicious activities and report their findings on the web. They have made a bit of a name for themselves and currently live on or supplement their income from their subscription news site.

The adventure opens with the protagonists being invited to a virtual reality meeting. This is a good place to emphasize that *Transhuman Space* is not a cyberpunk setting with physically dangerous netrunning. The virtual meeting place may be more immersive, but it is no less safe than using an Internet chat room. The meeting with Catherine Cho is a good opportunity to let the players get into character.

As the heroes investigate and uncover leads, they will learn about some of the new technology and social ideas of the setting. In the context of informing her contacts, Catherine Cho's words can explain to the *players* that nanotechnology is a mature technology and has military applications, describing in some detail what those applications are and the horrors they could cause. Reference to a repeat of the Pacific War tells the players some of the history of the setting and sets up the idea of the TSA as an "enemy alliance."

Subsequent events provide more opportunities to familiarize the players with the setting. The cyberdog attack helps introduce them to Fifth Wave technology, such as biomimetic robots and controlling AIs. Later, revealing that Sera Panelli is an emergent artificial intelligence, and showing them the problems that causes, will familiarize the players with the concepts and social implications of AIs. The GM should make use of such opportunities to reveal setting information within the flow of the adventure.

SETTING AND ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Singapore is a vibrant Fifth Wave city and home to some of the highest technology available on Earth. In particular, it is well known for its nanotechnology industry. Singapore is also an avowedly neutral funnel state between the Transpacific Socialist Alliance and capitalist nations, forming one of the few legitimate contacts between the TSA and the rest of the world. As such, it is a hotbed of political intrigue and a potential flashpoint for global conflict.

More information on Singapore is available on pp. FW104-111, and the GM should read that material to familiarize himself with the city before running this adventure. A tourist map of present-day Singapore would be a useful accessory if the GM is planning to use the geography of the city to enhance the sense of location, but it is not necessary.

The action, however, does not begin in Singapore. The initial contact that begins the adventure can occur anywhere on Earth, wherever the heroes happen to be. In an ongoing campaign it is possible that they live in different physical locations, and only meet virtually. This is fine – the opening act of the adventure takes place mostly in virtual spaces on the net.

The GM should also be familiar with the Transpacific Socialist Alliance (pp. TS83, FW71) and the overall geopolitics of the south Asian region in the setting. In particular, the descriptions of India (p. FW70), Indonesia (p. FW72), and Malaysia (p. FW72) will be helpful.

THE MALAYSIAN PLOT

In order to run *Singapore Sling* successfully, it is vital that the GM understands the factions and motivations that are driving events. As the adventure begins, the PCs will be unaware of the true forces at work. Discovering who has dragged the heroes into these events and why they are occurring are the main investigative routes of the adventure.

When the story opens, the General Convention on Asian Economic Development is to be held in a month's time in Singapore. This is really a high-level diplomatic contact between the TSA bloc and its enemies, under the thin guise of a regional economic summit. Official delegates from Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, the United States, Vietnam, and several lesser countries will be attending. The public meetings will be closely watched, but any politically savvy person (which should include at least one of the protagonists) will suspect that back-room negotiations and potential espionage will be more important.

Malaysia, in particular, has concocted a scheme to use the convention to its own ends. Memeticists from the Malaysian Federal Investigation Team (FIT) – the country's secret service – have been manipulating two influential Singaporean business leaders into believing the other one is involved with supplying weapons nanotechnology to the TSA, particularly Indonesia. This is part of a larger plan to throw suspicion on Indonesia's motives within the TSA and to divert it away from

Malaysia's own ambitions, as well as weaken the stabilizing influence of Singapore in the South-East Asian region.

The Singaporeans involved are Lim Chiang Lai (p. FW107) and Catherine Cho (p. FW111). Mr. Lim is a dedicated Singaporean nationalist who owns and operates Cathay Media, one of the largest media corporations in the world. His intelligence gathering powers are immense and, arrogantly, he believes them to be somewhat more reliable than they are. His primary motivation throughout the adventure is to thwart what he believes are the plans of Indonesia and the TSA to stockpile nanoweapons in preparation for an apocalyptic war against the capitalist world. Thanks to the FIT, he suspects Cho is intimately involved with this plan, but is waiting for evidence before using his substantial media powers to ruin her laudable public profile.

Catherine Cho is a top nanotechnology researcher with a passion for promoting the peaceful uses of nanotech and its ability to neutralize hostile applications of the same technology. Her company – Cho Nanoconcepts – is known to have recently been in negotiation with the Singapore Ministry of Defense. She is a well-known public speaker who advocates capitalist industry, and is one of the last people anyone would suspect of having sympathies for the TSA. Cho's goal throughout the adventure is to uncover evidence of illegal arms deals between a rival nanotech corporation – Infinitesimal Systems – and the Indonesian government. Once she has proof of her suspicions (suspicions planted by the FIT), she will be ruthless in rooting out the people behind the scheme and exposing them so the proper authorities can punish them.

The FIT memetics team has planned to make Cho suspect Mr. Lim in a roundabout way. They are setting up the situation so that Mr. Lim will think Cho's innocent attempts to thwart Infinitesimal Systems are a sign that she is taking out her rivals, making her own (hostile) nanotechnology unstoppable. They know Mr. Lim will act against what he thinks Cho is doing, and in so doing implicate himself. Getting Cho to suspect Infinitesimal Systems is a set-up one step removed from their primary plot, with its own secondary goals.

While this is going on, Malaysian delegates at the convention are under orders to make friendly overtures to Shanti Prabhu, India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, who leads a growing faction in the ruling Indian National Alliance (INA) with increasingly nanosocialist leanings. Malaysia's memetics analysts feel she could be coaxed into leading a coup against the Prime Minister, given the right enticements of power and a suitable opportunity. Malaysia's Minister of International Trade and Industry, Anwar Mohammad, has been instructed to meet with Prabhu privately and offer

her Malaysia's full support in pulling off the coup, including covert operatives if necessary. Anwar will more or less invite a Prabhu-led India into the TSA, with the understated goal of pushing Indonesia out of the TSA leadership role. India's own intelligence should, by the time of the convention, reveal some of the manipulated events involving Cho, Mr. Lim, Infinitesimal Systems, and Indonesia. These will indicate to Prabhu that Indonesia cannot be trusted to remain the primary power in the TSA, thus encouraging her to accept Anwar's offer. If any reports of Infinitesimal Systems dealing with Indonesia have been made public, this will only serve to make Anwar's case more convincing.

It is up to the heroes to piece all of this together and pinpoint the Malaysian influence before the forces of Cho, Mr. Lim, and the Indonesian government come into direct conflict and cause a major incident at the economic convention, either diplomatic or violent. More importantly, they must thwart Malaysia's plan to support a coup in India, which will lead to a serious destabilization of global politics. Convincing either Cho or Mr. Lim, let alone both, that they have been deceived will be a difficult task, but it will be easy compared to preventing Prabhu from accepting Anwar's offer. Malaysian security will be on the lookout for the PCs, and things could get ugly if they need to get some hard evidence or try to approach either Anwar or Prabhu. Several options for final showdowns are provided, depending on the style of the players and the way the plot has developed during the adventure.

THE CONTACT

While engaging in typical day-to-day activities, the heroes are contacted by Catherine Cho (p. FW111), individually, but at about the same time. The contacts come in via their VI implants or glasses, filtered through their AIs as a potentially interesting communication. Cho invites all of them to join her for a meeting in a virtuality node in a few hours. She gives them the network address and advises them that the information she has could lead to one of the biggest scoops of their careers, and that they should not speak to anyone else about it before talking to her.

There are no physical risks associated with attending a virtual meeting, so there shouldn't be any reluctance to meet with Cho in this way. The node she has chosen is run by Microphage, a VR software firm noted for strict encryption and privacy standards, which is based in the Republic of Alberta and British Columbia. A little investigation (+2 to Research rolls) will reveal this information and reassure the researchers that the company is

well known and trusted. If they wish to find the *physical* location of the VR node's network address, that is more difficult (-2 to Research). It is in Japan, but that is significant only to the extent that it is not in Singapore – where it would be more difficult to avoid attention from monitoring by the intrusive government.

Investigators with any familiarity with current nanotechnology research and development, or with South-East Asian politics, will know of Catherine Cho. Simply asking their AIs for information on her will reveal that she is highly intelligent, respected, runs her own nanotech company (Cho Nanoconcepts), and frequently speaks publicly in support of capitalist principles. More extensive research (requiring a Research roll), may indicate one or more of the following at the GM's discretion:

- The Singaporean Ministry of Defense has approached Cho on what is widely assumed to be a “hunter-seeker” nanobot defense contract. (True.)
- The TSA is interested in speaking to Cho, to see if they can acquire new nanotechnology. (True, but they have next to no chance of even getting a meeting.)
- Despite being attractive, wealthy, and respectable, Cho has no known romantic involvements more recent than a brief fling with a fellow engineering student in her first year at university. (True for involvement with males. What is not known is that Cho ended that relationship when she discovered she was more attracted to women. Cho's homosexuality remains a secret she guards closely. While no big deal in most of the system, this would still be a scandal in ultra-conservative Singapore.)
- Cho Nanoconcepts was one of the fastest start-up companies to post significant profits on the Singapore Stock Exchange in recent decades. It has done well since the stock went public four years ago. (True.)
- Cho Nanoconcepts is about to announce the construction of a new plant in Japan, which will put pressure on existing nanotechnology firms operating there, including the leading Japanese company, Infinitesimal Systems. (Rumormongering among industry commentators.)
- Cho often speaks in support of pan-sapient rights, which has caused some raised eyebrows and government consternation in conservative Singapore. (True, although the government tolerates her for other reasons.)
- The Singapore government thinks Cho is too well-known and popular to be allowed to support pan-sapient rights so vocally, and is planning a memetic campaign to bring her down at the same time as it enters into defense contracts with Cho Nanoconcepts, with the goal of nationalizing the company. (Paranoid conspiracy theory, though it is presented in several places as real.)

MEETING CATHERINE CHO

The Microphage virtuality node requires access keys that Cho has given to each of her contacts. The virtual environment is a standard conference room (p. FW43) in a nondescript “generic East Asian” style. Cho arrives precisely at the arranged time, and will expect the others to be there. If they are late, she will assign an LAI to monitor the node for up to an hour, calling her if they arrive. After that time, she will close the room – if this happens, there is no way to trace it or Cho. If the investigators attempt to contact Cho on their own, her AIs will act ignorant of any communication attempt and will refuse to allow them to talk to her. Cho will contact them the next day and arrange a second meeting, but that will be the last chance.

Cho's avatar looks very much like her (which will be obvious to anyone who has searched for a photo), an attractive 32-year-old genefixed female with brown hair and eyes. Anyone with Fashion Sense or who succeeds on a Memetics roll will notice she is attired in clothes that were fashionable last year.

WHAT IF THE PCs ASK . . . ?

“Why are you telling us this? Don't you have contacts of your own?”

Cho answers that, yes, of course she does. She has been monitoring useful investigative resources around the globe, and feels that the present company is worthy of being part of her contact network. This is a simple errand designed to help both parties and hopefully forge a closer association.

Cho asks the meeting attendees if they are familiar with the General Convention on Asian Economic Development conference to be held in Singapore in a month's time. She indicates this week-long conference will be a cover for covert backroom meetings between U.S., TSA, PRA, Chinese, and Indian diplomats, and it has the potential to turn explosive. General political savvy (successful rolls against appropriate Area Knowledge, Economics, History, Politics), or a Research roll by any of the investigators, will confirm that the unreported discussions are likely to be at least as important as the public ones, and the chance to get near some of the delegates will be valuable for newshounds.

Cho is looking for dirt on one of her business competitors, Infinitesimal Systems, a global nanotechnology firm based in Japan. If the investigators can

uncover something she can use to her advantage, she will provide passes to the conference and round trip travel tickets as thanks, and she hints at future rewards. If the heroes insist on monetary compensation up front, Cho will not begrudge them, but will drive a hard bargain (she has Merchant-15). Cho will not say what she suspects Infinitesimal Systems is up to, for fear of prejudicing the investigation. She gives a private network address where the heroes can contact her once they have any suitable information or leads. She will answer any other relevant questions as best she can, but is not here to socialize and will call the meeting to an end once she feels the business at hand is completed.

Any follow-up investigation into Microphage to determine where Cho was located or when she contacted the company to arrange the meeting room will run into dead ends; Microphage is scrupulous about client security and privacy.

GATHERING EVIDENCE

There are several avenues available to begin the investigation of Infinitesimal Systems. The simplest is to get AI assistants working on scouring the web for anything unusual connected to the company. This will turn up some of the following clues, at the GM's discretion:

- A data haven message board service contains a message relayed from the Free Net (see p. FW31) just a day ago (see box, above right). This is the primary clue and should be revealed if the investigators do any web research at all. If they ask, InSanctum, a small company based in Australia, operates the data haven in question.

- A public report on an investigation by the Japanese Environment Ministry into dumping of low-level toxic wastes into Osaka Bay, released three months ago. Infinitesimal Systems is one of the named suspects for the pollution caused six months earlier, but the report clears the company of any wrongdoing. It does not, however, find a culprit for the case.

- Infinitesimal Systems' stock prices had a sudden jump in value six weeks ago, gaining nearly 20% almost overnight. The first movement was noticed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

- A web list of the "Top 1,000 Companies Using Questionable Memetics in Public Relations" compiled by Simeon Price, a well-known public eye, names Infinitesimal Systems at position 632.

- A Singapore police report on organized crime indicates that some Triad enforcers have been caught using nanoassemblers smuggled into secure premises to produce, and later dispose of, simple weapons like knives. Infinitesimal Systems is named as one of

THE FREE NET MESSAGE

Subject: Infinitesimal Systems black nano research

Date: January 7, 2100. 14:23:19 GMT.

This is so wild it just has to be true. I know a guy who works for Infinitesimal Systems in their plant in Seoul and he says he saw a memo passed down to the R&D section that said they were go for "Project Streak." He didn't get a long look at it, but took a vidcap with his VII and got the hell out of there before anyone noticed him. I've seen the image and you can make out bits like "development of cannibal nanoassemblers for the contract," "applications to include remote delivery to hardened targets for neutralization," and – get this – "evaluation by the military!" He only showed it to me once, though, then said he was going to delete it because he didn't want to be found with the evidence, and I didn't cap it myself. He's clammed up now and won't talk about it, but people should know what sort of things these guys are up to. This sort of military nano could make the Pacific War look like a kiddie's sandbox if everyone starts developing it.

– InVidulator

several companies trading in Singapore known to produce such nanoassembler designs.

- Infinitesimal Systems is one of only three non-TSA nanotechnology companies with an office in TSA territory, in the city of Johore Baharu, Malaysia, right next to Singapore (see p. FW109).

- Infinitesimal Systems has been contracted by the Japanese and Korean governments to develop and supply purely defensive nanotechnology designed to neutralize potential hostile nanoweapon attacks. There are no indications that either nation intends using nanoweapons for offensive purposes.

CYBERDOG ATTACK

Some time after the research begins, the heroes will be the subject of what might at first appear to be a random attack by a pair of vicious dogs. The GM should try to time the attack to occur when the investigators are outdoors, after dark, perhaps walking through a neighborhood or park. If they are not in the same physical location, the largest possible group will be attacked.

They will walk past a nondescript man who is walking a pair of large dogs. When he has passed them,

he releases the dogs – making it look like an accident if he is being watched. The dogs attack and will fight viciously, relenting only if beaten off. By the time the dogs attack, the man is already gone. (If someone insists on chasing him while letting his compatriots be attacked, the mystery man could be caught. If he is, the NAI running the generic cyberdoll model will erase itself without putting up a fight, leaving no clue.)

The dogs are really cheap Gemini Volksrobotics cyberdogs (p. FW121), run by NAIs. They will bite and cause minor injuries, but are designed mostly to snarl and scare. Fright checks may be appropriate for some or all of the victims. Their programmed goal is to get one painful bite on each victim, then be beaten into submission. As soon as the fight is over, and the winners are catching their breaths, one of the cyberdogs will speak, perhaps shocking anyone who hadn't realized by now that they aren't real dogs: "Your only warning. Leave Infinitesimal Systems alone." (This can be a "dying speech" if the cyberdogs are actually defeated in combat and disabled.) Then the NAIs will erase themselves and the dog bodies will lie there, empty shells.

The cyberdog attack is designed to make the victims believe they are on to something with their investigation of Infinitesimal Systems. It has *not* been planned by Infinitesimal Systems, but by Malaysian FIT agents working to make the heroes think that the company is on to them and is trying to dissuade them. The warning is verbal so that it can only be heard once, and is unlikely to be recorded and used as evidence.

There are no clues to be gained from the cyberdogs themselves. They are a common model and were bought by an anonymous customer from a local cyberpet store the day before the attack. If the victims inform the police, they take the cyberdogs away for analysis, but don't offer any real hope.

THE INFORMANT

In the days after the dog attack, the investigators' AIs alert them to a contact from a woman who wishes to talk to them about their "unfortunate accident." The GM should time this event to fit in with the pace of the investigation so far – if things are moving slowly, use it to step up the action; if the players are enjoying following up other leads, let them continue for a while.

The contact calls herself Sera Panelli, and she wishes to meet in a virtual gaming environment on a secure data haven run by Lockout Games, a small corporation well known for protecting its customers' anonymity. Her avatar in UltraKwest XV – a multiplayer online role-playing game supported by several companies sharing common virtual spaces – has built a virtual tower that forms a safe meeting place. The investigators will

GEMINI VOLKSROBOTICS CYBERDOGS

This is for a cyberdog loaded with an NAI-5. It does the listed damage either biting or raking with its claws. Cyberdogs are described with a character template on p. FW121. For the purposes of the combat, however, their important statistics are as follows:

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 12/6	Size: 1
DX: 12	PD/DR: 0/2	Weight: 35 lbs.
IQ: 9	Damage: 1d-2 cut	
HT: 12/8	Reach: C	

need to subscribe to UltraKwest (if they don't already have accounts in the game) and follow Sera's directions to her stronghold to reach the meeting. This only takes a few minutes of real time. (The GM might be tempted to insert a virtual encounter with some fantasy creature within the game, which requires combat or parleying skills to negotiate, with a poor result indicating additional fees payable to Lockout. This will be too far outside the flow of the investigation for many players, but can be done if they would enjoy it.)

Sera's avatar in the data fortress is in the form of a powerful witch. She gives the impression, however, of being rather immature, naive, and scared – this characterization is important so the GM should make sure it comes across strongly. She begins by telling the attendees that she is aware of Infinitesimal Systems targeting them for "memetic re-education" concerning their investigations into the company. She says she works for the company's public relations department and was recently moved to a more active role in promoting its image and keeping it clean. This includes responsibilities such as dissuading anyone from examining Infinitesimal Systems' activities too closely. She knows of the cyberdog attack, although she did not have a hand in organizing it herself.

Sera is now afraid for her own safety, since she has seen the sort of tactics her company is using against people who would expose its dirty secrets. She hopes that the investigators will use her information to break a story on the company and shut them down.

The investigators will probably have many questions to ask of Sera. At appropriate points, she will mention a few other things she is scared about. One thing Sera will definitely mention is that she is afraid Infinitesimal Systems is making nanobots for military applications – this will come up naturally if she is asked anything about military nanotechnology. She has overheard lab

workers talking about contracts for nanoassemblers with various governments: Korea, Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. She is a pacifist and does not want to be involved with any sort of offensive uses of technology. If the investigators do not pick up the fact that Indonesia is a TSA nation and that Infinitesimal Systems dealing with its government would be a huge scandal, the GM should drop hints until they do – news-savvy characters in the setting would certainly realize this. Sera seems unaware that Indonesia is a country with which Infinitesimal Systems should not be doing business.

Sera will talk about some of her other concerns that might interest the heroes. The GM should choose as many items from this list as he feels will provide necessary clues without making things too easy:

- She knows that the CEO of Infinitesimal Systems, Mr. Park Wei Jong, is traveling to Singapore in a week or two to attend some sort of conference and talk to ministers from a few different countries. Sera is afraid this is part of the company's plan to enter into contracts to manufacture military nanoassemblers. (Mr. Park is indeed attending the General Convention on Asian Economic Development to talk to government representatives from Singapore and the Philippines, but about non-military nanotechnology applications, and is not planning to meet any TSA officials.)

- She is afraid that if her owners discover how smart she has become, they will delete her. This indicates to the perhaps surprised heroes that Sera is a digital intelligence, and not a physical person. A little questioning on this should establish that Sera has recently “awakened” as an emergent intelligence, based initially on an LAI used by Infinitesimal Systems to organize operations in its memetics department. This is a real concern, as an emergent intelligence is generally considered dangerous by the people who originally programmed the AI. (See p. TS108 for more on emergent intelligences.)

WHAT IF THE PCs ASK . . . ?

“You’re an AI? Why don’t you transfer yourself to our computer/somewhere safe?”

Sera replies that she needs a high-bandwidth data pipe to transfer herself, and that Infinitesimal Systems naturally monitors all such channels out of the company's systems. If she were caught transferring they would shut the pipe down very quickly and only an unusable fraction of her code would make it out, alerting her superiors and leaving her trapped on the system and vulnerable.

- Sera says she is afraid that her UltraKwest subscription might be discovered. AIs at Infinitesimal Systems are allowed web access for research, but are discouraged from setting up virtual presences and interacting with people outside the company, even inside gaming environments. She says she may have to close her account at some point. In terms of the Malaysian plan, this is to plant the idea in her contacts' heads that they may not be able to contact Sera again.

- She thinks someone in the memetics department may be making insider-trading deals on Infinitesimal Systems stock. She gives the name of Ken Nakamura as suspect, saying that she noticed him looking at some contracts and production schedules he shouldn't have, shortly before the share prices jumped a few weeks back. Since then Ken has been flashing expensive new consumer hardware at work.

At the end of the meeting, Sera will tell the others that if they wish to speak to her again they can enter her stronghold in the UltraKwest world and leave a written message for her. She gives one of them a key, which represents a cryptographic identification string in the real world, allowing access to the tower.

The GM should note that if the investigators begin to suspect that Sera Panelli is a bit *too* naive and contrived, this is all right. She is indeed not genuine – she is of course another part of the Malaysian plot to lead the heroes astray. However, the GM should do his best to play Panelli as genuine, and only let suspicions be raised by the insight of the investigators.

THE SHUTDOWN

As the investigators continue to chase leads about Infinitesimal Systems and Indonesia, they will find their sources of information suddenly drying up. The heroes may have saved a copy of the Free Net message from InVidulator (p. 6), but any attempt to access the data haven to which it was posted receives only a “Site unreachable” error message. Further investigation will reveal that InSanctum, the company that operated the haven, has gone out of business. The name of the business owner, Peter O’Keefe, is listed, and the investigators may contact him if they desire. O’Keefe says he was running the business from a computer in his apartment, but a few days ago all of his clients started pulling out and closing their accounts. He suspects some sort of memetic attack by a rival, since he has found messages on the net claiming InSanctum's security had been breached and it was not a reliable data haven, but has no idea why he has been targeted in particular. O’Keefe is quite vocal, denying that InSanctum was insecure, and complains that he will have to get some other job now.

If the investigators look for any of the customers who pulled their accounts from InSanctum, they can find one or two who will say they received media stories pointing them to the reports of unreliability. Those reports came through individually customized news delivery channels supplied by Cathay Media, a large, well-known global media company based in Singapore.

Perhaps more disturbingly, Lockout Games has also suffered a sudden reversal of fortunes, being taken over in a hostile stock acquisition and then shut down, with all staff laid off. A large gaming company, Dijitsu, conducted the takeover. A quick search will reveal Dijitsu is a subsidiary of Cathay Media. This shutdown means there is no record of Sera Panelli's UltraKwest account, and her digital stronghold has been deleted. If the investigators try to reach Sera's tower through another UltraKwest server, they find nothing but a virtual representation of an empty field. They have no way of contacting Panelli, unless they decide on a risky frontal approach through the offices of Infinitesimal Systems. (See the box *Saving Sera Panelli*, right.)

If the investigators first contact Cho as soon as they learn of a possible link between Infinitesimal Systems and the Indonesian government, all of the events in this section should be played after speaking to her, as they delve back in to the investigation. They can occur either as the heroes prepare to leave for Singapore, en route, or after they have arrived but before the General Convention on Asian Economic Development begins.

REPORTING TO CATHERINE CHO

Eventually the investigators will decide they have enough leads to give to Catherine Cho, even if they have no hard evidence. If they try to contact her too early (i.e. before the cyberdog attack and the meeting with Sera Panelli), her AI assistant will merely tell the callers that she is uncontactable at the moment, but they may leave a message. Whether or not they do is largely irrelevant, though it may give pause to paranoid callers.

Once the plot had progressed far enough to make the investigators aware that there is some sort of link between Infinitesimal Systems and the Indonesian military, they will be able to reach Cho, or she will return their call if they left a message with her AI. She will again arrange a meeting in her virtual conference room hosted by Microphage.

Cho will be visibly disturbed by the report of Infinitesimal Systems dealing with Indonesia and potentially working on offensive military nanotechnology. If she is told about the cyberdog attack and suspicious closures of data havens that housed the leads the investigators were working on, she becomes even more con-

SAVING SERA PANELLI

The investigators may decide that finding and rescuing Sera Panelli is an important goal. This gives scope for expanding the basic plot of the adventure by adding a physical infiltration scene, and is a good way to allow action-oriented players to get their blood pumping.

The most obvious way to begin is to try to gain access to an Infinitesimal Systems plant, with the hope of finding a computer system that will allow access to and download of Sera Panelli, without triggering security alerts that she is being transmitted over an external data pipe. The site in question can be determined to be in Tokyo if the heroes research the headquarters of the company's memetics department (or the employee name Ken Nakamura). They may also realize that this is irrelevant since they only need access to an internal computer; if not, they can travel to Tokyo. Breaking in will require some creative intrusion techniques, ranging from disguise to crawling through ducts. Biometric infiltration tools such as those on p. FW126 may be useful. The building will have moderate security, and any guards will be armed comparably to the infiltrators. They may have to deal with sentinel nanobots or laser detection systems, before accessing the computer systems and trying to find which of the resident AIs uses the pseudonym Sera Panelli. The main problem is that Panelli does not really exist! Although this will be something of a disappointment, it is an important clue in realizing that the entire sequence of leads to Infinitesimal Systems has been a set-up.

In the virtual realm, hacking into Infinitesimal Systems' computers will be difficult (see the computer intrusion rules on p. FW128). The investigators can try to entice her to contact them by sending invitations via the web; however, since she doesn't exist, they will get no response. If the heroes persist in either of these approaches, AIs (or humans, depending on the details of the invitations) really working for Infinitesimal Systems might notice and will most likely alert the company's security department, leading to other complications.

cerned. Cho will speculate that if Infinitesimal Systems has already established links with Indonesia, then it's likely it is working with several powerful TSA states, including Vietnam, Malaysia, and Bangladesh. (It is important that these countries be specifically mentioned here, as a clue that the heroes should not restrict their investigation to Indonesian links.)

If her freelancers reveal any suspicions of Cathay Media, Cho will look grim indeed. She will suggest that taking on such a powerful group through web investigation is likely to lead only to dead ends, since they control so much of what is and isn't reported, as the investigators have seen already. Their best bet would be to tackle the issue on the ground, in Singapore. Since they will want to be in the City of Gardens for the General Convention anyway, they can kill two birds with one stone.

Throughout this encounter, the GM should be aware that the adventure will work better if the protagonists trust Cho at this point. They may have been a bit cautious at the first meeting, but by now there should be an atmosphere of trust between them, fostered by the feeling that they are on to something big and must work together to uncover it without risking their own safety.

TRAVEL TO SINGAPORE

The trip to Singapore can be inserted at any convenient point in the story, once the investigators have reason to want to go there. If they have given Catherine Cho some substantial leads, she will arrange tickets on a commercial transonic jet. If they have not yet reported anything substantial, or wish to take another mode of transport, they may make their own arrangements.

Security on any commercial long-distance transport is tight enough that no form of weapon will be allowed on board in the passenger's care. Any attempt to smuggle weapons on board will be detected by port security and dealt with severely – hopefully nobody will try! Weapon laws in Singapore are very strict, meaning visitors can carry nothing more dangerous than a shock glove (p. TS155), so any lethal or ranged weapon in a traveler's luggage will attract extremely unwelcome attention from customs officers. The goal here is not to arrest the protagonists, so the GM should make sure they are aware that importing weapons into Singapore will be illegal.

On board a commercial vehicle, observant passengers (roll against Vision-4) will notice two of their fellow travelers apparently keeping an eye on

them. These men are casually dressed, of South-East Asian appearance, in good physical condition, and are indeed following the investigators. They have smuggled on board nanoassemblers that will produce electrolaser pistols; they have Combat Reflexes and the skill Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-15. If not detected and confronted sooner, these two men will walk close to the heroes as they leave the vehicle, discreetly indicate their weapons, and instruct them to accompany them through the port. The travelers can either comply quietly or cause a potentially dangerous scene. If they go quietly, they are loaded into a limousine and driven away through the streets of Singapore. Two men in the limousine brandish weapons that look much more lethal than the electrolasers – they are 4mm PDWs (p. TS155-156), aimed with the skill Guns (Light Automatic)-16.

CASING CATHAY MEDIA

The investigators may decide that having a close look inside the Cathay Media offices is a good idea. If so, this is an ideal opportunity to inject an action sequence into the plot, and set up the meeting with Lim Chiang Lai without having to kidnap them. The company occupies the top half of a tall skyscraper in downtown Singapore, not far from the site of the economic convention. The heroes will need to be creative, either bluffing their way in openly, fooling security, or sneaking in undetected. They should be allowed to reach some information of whatever sort they are looking for, before security systems detect them and they are caught. Once captured, they can be escorted to Mr. Lim in Bedok Arcology One, probably by a private VTOL commuter aircraft from roof to roof.

If attention is drawn to the men and their weapons before reaching the car, there will be a brief fight as port security cybershells tackle and arrest anyone involved. This includes the investigators, who will be detained and questioned at some length by a police detective named Karim (a Malay Singaporean). There is no real chance they will be able to escape from the security cybershells, who are armed to deal with any possible disturbances (use the statistics for the Singapore police guards at the convention, given on p. 14, if necessary). As they are clearly the victims in this case, however, they will (eventually) be released.

If the travelers have not been escorted away by the two armed men, they can check into a hotel and settle into the bustle of the city. They can explore the exotic location and interact with a few local personalities if the GM and players enjoy this sort of roleplaying. Soon after arriving, however, they will be met on a street by a group of men similar to those who tried to “escort” them off the plane. They brandish lethal-looking weapons (4mm PDWs) and quickly hustle the heroes into a limousine that pulls up beside them.

MEETING MR. LIM

However the investigators end up being escorted across town, they will be in a smart limousine in the company of at least two burly men armed with automatic weapons. The thugs tell them to keep quiet, and that they have been invited to a “meeting.” They keep their weapons ready and it is obvious that attempting to escape would be suicidal. These men are actually under instructions to bring the heroes to a friendly meeting and not to harm them under any circumstances, but they will not give that away.

The car’s AI takes the passengers to Bedok Arcology One (p. FW106) for a meeting with Lim Chiang Lai (p. FW107). Mr. Lim is an imposing presence, sitting behind a heavy antique mahogany desk, in a richly appointed room decorated with stunning works of art, in front of a panoramic window showing a splendid view of Singapore spread out below and to the west of his penthouse – if the GM can time this meeting to occur at sunset and incorporate that image into the description, all the better. If the investigators show any inclination to violence, it is clear that armed guards are only a fraction of a second away.

Mr. Lim invites the investigators to sit down and offers them drinks in flawless, unaccented English (or whatever other language is appropriate for his guests). He instructs a beautiful young Chinese woman to fulfill their requests, calling her Mai Ling. Mai Ling serves them demurely, then retires to a corner of the room, sitting attentively – she is actually a cyberdoll bodyguard running an SAI and will always be present whenever the heroes see Mr. Lim. Mr. Lim thanks his guests for their presence and apologizes for the method of bringing them here. Then he introduces himself and explains that he owns Cathay Media.

Mr. Lim is aware of much of the investigation, and the clues that his guests have been following. He tells them directly that Catherine Cho is a Transpacific Socialist Alliance sympathizer and that she has been using them to uncover false truths and spread memes implicating Infinitesimal Systems of collusion with the Indonesian government, a charge of which the

WHAT IF THE PCs ASK . . . ?

“Isn’t there any way we can escape these goons?”

If the GM feels that forcing an abduction on the protagonists is too rigidly plotted and that the *players* may not enjoy it, or if their characters refuse to go quietly and come up with an ingenious method to escape, then by all means do not press the issue. The essential meeting with Mr. Lim can be set up more pleasantly, although it will lose some of its drama.

A sudden abduction might still work if the heroes are not given time to react and make the situation more complicated than it should be. If they are walking along a street, perhaps a door can open and strong cybershells grab them and haul them inside, where Mr. Lim is waiting.

This can still provide some excitement and suspense if the players believe they are in some danger.

Some players, however, may still balk at being shanghaied like this – the GM should decide what approach his players would enjoy.

A suitable alternative may arise through the actions of the investigators themselves. They will probably be interested in finding out something about Cathay Media, and if they take a frontal approach and request to speak to anyone in the organization, they will be given an appointment to talk to “a senior PR executive.” When they arrive at the office in downtown Singapore, they will be ushered to a ducted-fan VTOL aircraft that flies them to the roof of Bedok Arcology One. Use the statistics for the *Dumont* commuter transport on p. FW132 if necessary, although the model used will be more sleek, expensive, and well-appointed. Alternatively, see the box *Casing Cathay Media*, p. 10.

If the investigators need prompting, Mr. Lim could simply send them a cryptic note requesting a meeting. He will send a limousine to pick them up. The note should not indicate anything other than the invitation, to keep the invitees thinking. If they enter the limousine freely, the escorts won’t need to display their weaponry unless their passengers have second thoughts.

company is wholly innocent. He is not yet sure why Cho is plotting the downfall of IS, but believes it is because it is on the verge of developing a new type of nanobot swarm capable of defending against the sort of black nanoweapons used by the TSA in the Pacific War.

WHAT IF THE PCs ASK . . . ?

“Can you show us any proof of these allegations?”

If the heroes want to see some proof of Mr. Lim’s assertions about Infinitesimal Systems, he can show them copies of contracts between the company and the Japanese and Korean Ministries of Defense, which outline those countries’ commitments to developing nanoweapon defenses through Infinitesimal Systems. “Why would a company with such lucrative defense contracts risk dealing with the enemy?” Mr. Lim asks. He will not disclose where he got the contracts, though, merely saying that he has numerous connections in very high places. Needless to say, if these contracts are investigated, any questions are likely to be met with stony silence and possibly a visit from the Japanese or Korean security services.

Another question Mr. Lim could ask the investigators is, “Why did Catherine Cho ask you to do this work? She has resources of her own. Obviously she wants someone not associated with her to break these false stories.”

The actual answer is that Cho was telling the truth when she hired the investigators. She has resources but she likes to expand her talent pool and thought they would be good new recruits. She thought the job she gave them was relatively trivial, not something that would blow up into a major plot.

“What about all those people who lost jobs because of the data havens you shut down?”

Mr. Lim describes this as regrettable, certainly, but it is a small drop in a much larger pond. He has instructed his staff to subtly help find jobs for any of the affected people who seem to be having difficulties doing so on their own. When it comes down to it, however, he is trying to prevent a war, and he will seem slightly annoyed that his guests are questioning that – he will not become hostile or defensive about it though.

Mr. Lim is suspicious of Cho’s public image – her vocal support of capitalism is just a bit too adamant in his eyes, enough to raise doubts concerning her veracity. He knows she is capable of developing nanoweapons that would far outclass anything the TSA used in 2084. To Mr. Lim, it seems as though Cho is working against Infinitesimal Systems in order to clear the way so that her own weapons will be unstoppable.

Mr. Lim admits that he used Cathay Media to shut down the data havens that held fabricated evidence against Infinitesimal Systems. He is committed to peace and fears the worst should the company’s defensive nanotechnology research be disrupted. He notes that neither InVidulator nor “the alleged EI you met” can be traced to any real person. He is not familiar with the name “Sera Panelli,” but does know that his guests were contacted by an LAI computer systems operator working for Catherine Cho, who pretended to be an emergent intelligence working for Infinitesimal Systems. Mr. Lim points out that true emergent intelligences are extremely rare, and usually the product of unstable code or virus infection – not the sort of thing you would expect to occur in a company as large and secure as Infinitesimal Systems. (Mr. Lim’s “knowledge” of the LAI working for Cho is another piece of Malaysian misdirection, delivered to him through a corrupted research channel.)

Mr. Lim suggests that his guests turn their investigation around and start looking at Catherine Cho and what she is up to. To help them, he can use Cathay Media’s resources to spread subtle rumors of internal strife at Infinitesimal Systems – rumors carefully designed to indicate to Cho that the investigators seem to be uncovering some painful truths about the company, but which will in fact be relatively harmless. They can then approach Cho with “evidence” of their work, claiming her trust, and hopefully gain access to more inside details of what she is planning. Mr. Lim suggests that whatever she is up to might reach a critical phase at the General Convention on Asian Economic Development, where she has the chance to meet with TSA delegates face to face, and that his guests must attend.

OPTION: KEEPING MR. LIM SECRET

Lim Chiang Lai's profile on p. FW107 implies that he may be even more secretive than presented here. If the GM prefers to keep an air of mystery about him, Mr. Lim can remain a shadowy figure in the background, and the heroes might meet with one of his deputies. In such a case, simply replace Mr. Lim with an elderly male deputy named Xie Chen Sheng (Mr. Xie), but otherwise run the encounters the same as described.

This approach could be useful if the GM is planning to run future adventures involving Mr. Lim's vast media empire, where revealing his existence is the big "payoff."

MEETING CATHERINE CHO

Depending on how the heroes take the information imparted by Mr. Lim, they may wish to arrange a physical meeting with Catherine Cho before the economic convention. As long as they don't confront Cho with any accusations, she will agree to meet them in the offices of her labs in Jurong, the industrial region west of Singapore's city center. The distance can be covered by rapid transit subway, taxi, or any other reasonable method.

Cho will meet her visitors in a spartan office that contrasts dramatically with Lim Chiang Lai's luxurious apartment. She resembles her virtual avatar, right down to the outdated clothes she wears. Her reactions in this meeting will depend heavily on what her guests say.

If the investigators hedge their report and don't mention Mr. Lim or his accusations, the meeting will go pleasantly. Cho will be pleased at any progress and says that she will arrange for them to be listed as press attendees for the General Convention on Asian Economic Development. This means she needs their biometric ID data so the convention security staff can identify them; she will take retina scans, thumbprints, and short voice recordings. Cho also tells them that Park Wei Jong, CEO of Infinitesimal Systems, has just arrived in Singapore from Seoul, if they do not indicate that they are already aware of this.

Cho will give the investigators some advanced nanotechnology that they can use to eavesdrop on conversations and meetings at the convention. This includes five canisters of separately programmable surveillance dust (p. TS154) with newly developed stealth capa-

bilities that enable the nanobots to avoid detection by bughunter microbots (p. TS169) until the bughunters are close enough to fall prey to the dust's devourer function (p. TS170). This is an experimental prototype, and not publicly available yet. It should be able to defeat even the best commercial sentry and bughunter microbot swarms. Cho can also supply any reasonable number of standard nanobugs, electronic lockpicks, and an infrared laser listening device (p. TS154).

If the investigators tell Cho about their meeting with Mr. Lim, she will be shocked and surprised. If they relate his story of Cho being in league with the TSA in a way that implies they don't believe it, she will be outraged at Mr. Lim and angrily state that *he* must be an important link in the chain connecting Infinitesimal Systems with the TSA, and that he is trying to intimidate her guests into dropping their investigation. As long as the heroes play along and agree with Cho, she will still get them equipment and entry into the economic convention.

On the other hand, if the visitors accuse Cho of working with the TSA she will be outraged at *them*. They *may* be able to salvage the situation if they talk quickly and convince Cho it was some sort of joke or test, but this will take a lot of hard work. Cho is more likely to throw them out of her lab and never speak to them again. If this happens, the investigators will not have the benefit of Cho's advanced nanobot surveillance gear at the economic convention. Mr. Lim will easily be able to supply media clearance for them if they request it, however.

THE CONVENTION

The General Convention on Asian Economic Development is being held at the Singapore Orchid Hotel near the city center, on the southern bank of the Singapore River. The hotel is a new building, but decorated in a retro-colonial style. Guests unfamiliar with its (relatively short) history may assume the building is 150 or more years older than it really is. Research into the hotel will of course reveal that the building is only 14 years old and so probably contains integrated modern security systems to ensure privacy, such as shielded computer hardware, nanobug emissions detectors, and active-mode sonic vibration dampers to foil laser listening devices. Indeed, the hotel does contain such systems and will defeat standard espionage equipment, but not Catherine Cho's prototype advanced surveillance dust.

Security is tight, because a number of important officials from several nations will be attending. Security personnel are mostly Singapore police cyberdolls operated by LAIs (see box, right), backed up by a

couple of police RATS (p. TS124). They are alert and competent, and will attempt to neutralize any troublemakers with minimal force, but will escalate as far as necessary if the situation warrants it. Note that their first priority is keeping the delegates safe – capturing offenders comes second.

Round table meetings between all the delegates take place on five consecutive days in the hotel's grand ballroom on the ground floor, which is magnificently appointed with rich carpet and furnishings, silk tapestries decorating the walls, the flags of all attending nations behind the large conference table, and a huge and somewhat gaudy crystal chandelier suspended from the 30-

CONVENTION DELEGATES

Present for the General Convention on Asian Economic Development are:

Barry Jefferies, Minister of Trade, Australia.

Yoon Xiumei, Minister of Trade, China.

Shanti Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry, India.

Dr Laksamana Sukirno, Minister of Trade and Industry, Indonesia.

Kenichiro Yoshida, Vice Minister of Trade and Industry, Japan.

Lee Yong Hien, Minister of State for Trade, Korea.

Anwar Mohammad, Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia.

Zhou Chee Wah, Minister of Trade and Industry, Singapore.

Mongkut Sathirathai, Minister of Commerce, Thailand.

Joelle Roberts, Trade Representative, United States.

Quy-Anh Nghiem, Minister of Trade, Vietnam.

There are also delegates from Bangladesh, Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, East Timor, Laos, Maldives, Maluku Selantan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sarawak and Sabah, and Sri Lanka, as well as subordinate and security staff for each minister. Many of the security staff are bioshells (for TSA delegates) or cybershells (for others).

POLICE CYBERDOLL 300 POINTS

Security staff at the economic convention is made up of Singapore police cyberdolls (p. TS122) with the following attributes and skills. They have variable appearances, and are armed with police armguns (p. TS155) loaded with 15mm tangler rounds. They carry three extra 15mm four-shot magazines – one each of tangler, tear gas, and HEMP smart warheads. If necessary, they can also call in two heavily armed police RATS (p. TS124) who lurk in service closets.

ST 14 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 10 [0]; **HT** 12/15 [0].

Speed 6.00; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry 10.

Features: Complexity 7 small computer [0].

Advantages: Cyberdoll [170]; LAI-07 [50]; Legal Enforcement Powers [10].

Disadvantages: Duty (12 or less) [-10].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Singapore)-11 [2]; Armory (Rifles and Handguns)-10 [2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-15 [4]; Brawling-13 [2]; Computer Operation-13 [0]*; Guns (Missile)-15 [4]; Guns (Pistol)-15 [4]; Judo-14 [16]; Karate-14 [16]; Knife-13 [2].

* Cost included in the AI template.

Languages: Cantonese (native)-10 [0]; English-10 [2]; Indonesian-10 [2]; Malay-10 [2]; Mandarin-10 [2].

foot-high ceiling. Authorized press may sit and observe the proceedings, but not speak. There is a press conference in the same room each evening, in which junior members of each delegation release official statements and take questions, including from media broadcasting live.

More interesting and important will be the back-room meetings that take place out of the public eye, usually in the evenings after official engagements are over for the day. These will involve not only the national delegates, but also various corporations who represent significant trade interests or wish to open distribution channels in new markets. In particular, the executive officers of several large Asian and global companies are known to be in town for the event, including Park Wei Jong, CEO of Infinitesimal Systems.

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH

Since most of the convention guests are staying at the Orchid Hotel, most of the private meetings will take place in various suites upstairs from the ballroom. Finding out where delegates are staying will be the first challenge. Any reasonable approach should succeed, from simply tailing someone discreetly, to looking through windows from neighboring buildings, to fast-talking or bribing hotel staff, to stealing glimpses at guest lists. The GM should assess appropriate roleplaying opportunities and/or skill checks for whatever approach the heroes take, without making it too difficult. However, if they are unsubtle about it, they will attract some pointed questions from convention security.

Some delegates are not staying at the hotel. In particular, Shanti Prabhu from India is staying at the Indian Embassy, two miles north of the Orchid Hotel. Her meetings with the Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry, Anwar Mohammad, are taking place at the embassy, ironically because they both feel it is more secure than the Orchid Hotel. In fact, the Indian embassy is an old building without the modern anti-surveillance measures of the Orchid Hotel, and it is relatively easy to snoop on conversations there with standard nanobugs or laser listening devices.

At first, however, the investigators might be most interested in eavesdropping on meetings involving Dr Laksamana Sukirno of Indonesia and Park Wei Jong of Infinitesimal Systems. Catherine Cho's surveillance dust can be set to feed images and audio directly to the investigators' VIIs, providing live coverage of whatever it is observing. A clever use of the dust would be to sprinkle it *on a subject's clothing*, so it tracks him wherever he goes. This will not work with normal surveillance dust on buzzwear clothing (p. TS146), since the nanobrushes will clean it off, but Cho's advanced dust is smart enough to find safe bonding sites.

Surveillance Results

Spying on specific targets will reveal important information to the investigators:

Park Wei Jong, CEO Infinitesimal Systems: Surveillance of Mr. Park will reveal he is meeting with Singapore's Minister of Trade and Industry, Zhou Chee Wah, in Government House north of the river. The conversation runs along the lines of contracts to supply industrial nanotechnology to Singapore-based businesses. Mr. Zhou asks Park if perhaps he should also be talking to the Minister of Defense, Sandeep Manju. Park admits that Infinitesimal Systems has defense contracts with Korea and Japan, but their products are purely defensive and have no offensive capabilities, and he

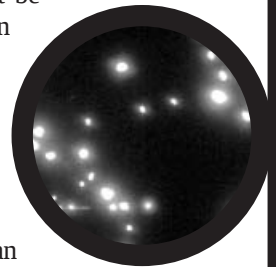
believes Cho Nanoconcepts has everything Singapore needs in that category, but would agree to meet Manju some other time. Also important is the fact that Park at no time meets or communicates with any of the Indonesian or other TSA delegates.

Dr Laksamana Sukirno, Indonesia: Since Dr. Laksamana is not aware of any sort of negotiation with Infinitesimal Systems, his conversations with other delegates and his own staff will be full of boring economic considerations and negotiations. If the investigators still need some hints to point them at the machinations of the Malaysian delegate, Dr. Laksamana can express some feelings that the Malaysians are up to something when reporting to fellow ministers back in Indonesia, and order his staff to keep an eye on Mr. Anwar.

Anwar Mohammad, Malaysia: Mr. Anwar is aware of the espionage being undertaken by FIT around the convention. He is also somewhat arrogant and supremely overconfident. Almost any surveillance of Anwar will reveal him discussing a plan to oust Indonesia from the TSA leadership and giving directions to FIT operatives concerning the heroes themselves! Although these people may be aware of some of the investigators' activities, they will *not* yet be aware that they are being spied on themselves (unless the heroes have made it obvious).

Shanti Prabhu, India: As long as the investigators monitor either Mr. Anwar or Mrs. Prabhu, they will obtain coverage of their meetings in the Indian Embassy. The GM can time the crucial meeting freely, either to move the plot along or draw out suspense, depending on how well the heroes are piecing things together. This meeting reveals the key point of Malaysia's plan to topple Indonesia's leadership of the TSA, as Anwar makes overtures suggesting Prabhu mount a coup to take over the Indian government, with the help of Malaysian forces if necessary. India can then join the alliance in a dominant role.

Prabhu will at first be sceptical, prompting Anwar to reveal that, even now, Indonesia is making plans with Infinitesimal Systems to receive radical new nanoweapons technology that will propel them further ahead of the rest of the TSA. This could put Indonesia into a position where it might threaten India, as Indonesia sees India as a future rival in the nanosocialist bloc. Anwar will *not* admit that Malaysia has merely been manipulating events to look this way, as this defeats much of his argument. Prabhu has heard rumors of this Indonesian deal from her own government, and may indicate this to Anwar.



Watching the Watchers

While the investigators are doing all this, they are being watched themselves by Malaysian FIT agents (see box, right). These are infiltration cyberdolls operated by LAIs. The LAIs are not as creative in dealing with unusual situations as a human or SAI, but the Malaysian government does not entirely trust ghosts or SAIs to operate such impressive hardware in the field. They do not expect the investigators to stumble on to their plot, but are alert for the possibility. If the heroes are staying

in the Singapore Orchid Hotel, they are safe from any form of surveillance that the FIT has available while in their rooms. Of course, anyone can eavesdrop on their conversations in public areas. If they decide it is safer to stay somewhere else, the FIT agents may be able to monitor their activities more closely. The GM should decide based on the plot development so far whether it would provide a useful impetus to

have the FIT learn what the investigators know (without allowing this to ruin their work).

WHAT DOES THE FIT WANT?

In order of importance, the goals of the FIT agents are:

- Ensure nothing interferes with Anwar Mohammad's overtures to Shanti Prabhu to encourage the coup, which would see India join the TSA and oust Indonesia as its leader.
- Discredit Catherine Cho, by manipulating Lim Chiang Lai into believing she is in league with Indonesia, until he publicizes it through Cathay Media.
- Encourage the defamation of Indonesia and damaging the military defense plans of Korea, Japan, and other non-TSA nations by promoting false clues to the investigators, implicating Indonesia and Infinitesimal Systems.
- Once the convention is over, apprehend the investigators and remove them to Malaysia. Failing that, eliminate them, preferably in a method that implicates Indonesian forces.
- Discrediting Cathay Media is not part of their instructions. If they see any obvious opportunities for it, however, they will report to their superiors, who will advise the agents to go ahead and do so, as they see Cathay as a powerful capitalist propaganda tool. This goes partially against their own plan to use Cathay to discredit Cho, but the prospect of damaging Cathay will blind them to that fault.

FIT AGENT 550 POINTS

The Malaysian Federal Investigation Team agents that appear in this adventure all have identical attributes and skills. They are LAIs in knockoff cyberdolls modelled on Nanodynamics' Deep Indigo infiltration androids (p. TS122). They have handsome but off-the-shelf physical features, and are easily overlooked by most people. They are typically armed with electrolasers, police armguns, or 10mm pistols, which can be concealed in their flesh pockets. For more serious work they have access to a variety of heavier weaponry through the FIT. Their legal enforcement powers apply only in Malaysia. Apparent age 32; 6'2"; 180 lbs. Variable hair and eye color.

ST 15 [0]; **DX** 13 [10]; **IQ** 11 [0]; **HT** 12/20 [0].
Speed 8.25; Move 8.

Dodge 9; Parry 10.

Features: Complexity 8 compact microframe [0].

Advantages: Cyberdoll (Infiltration Android) [340]; LAI-08 [60]; Legal Enforcement Powers [10]; Patron (Malaysian government; expensive equipment, 9 or less) [40].

Disadvantages: Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Malaysia)-12 [2]; Area Knowledge (South-East Asia)-12 [2]; Armoury (Beam Handguns)-12 [4]; Armoury (Rifles and Handguns)-12 [4]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-16 [4]; Brawling-14 [2]; Climbing-13 [1]; Computer Operation-13 [0]*; Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-14 [8]; Escape-11 [1]; Fast-Draw-14 [1]; Guns (Light Automatic)-16 [4]; Guns (Missile)-16 [4]; Guns (Pistol)-16 [4]; Holdout-12 [4]; Intelligence Analysis-12 [6]; Interrogation-11 [2]; Intimidation-11 [8]; Judo-14 [8]; Karate-13 [4]; Knife-14 [2]; Knife Throwing-13 [1]; Lockpicking-10 [1]; Mechanic (Fuel Cell/Electric Motor)-12 [4]; Piloting (VTOL)-13 [1]; Savoir-Faire-12 [8]; Stealth-14 [4]; Tactics-10 [2]; Tracking-11 [2].

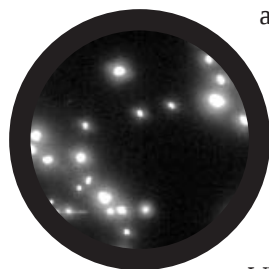
* Cost included in the AI template.

Languages: Cantonese-11 [2]; English-11 [2]; Indonesian-11 [2]; Japanese-11 [2]; Malay (native)-11 [0]; Mandarin-11 [2]; Thai-11 [2].

THE SHOWDOWN

Once the investigators are aware that the situation is not as it initially seemed, and that the Malaysian forces are stirring up trouble, several things could happen depending on what the investigators do.

If they take their findings to Catherine Cho, she will be astounded and express the need to take some quick action to prevent Prabhu from accepting Malaysia's proposal. She will still need convincing that Infinitesimal Systems is not somehow involved, since the leads that prompted her investigation were persuasive. Getting Cho to believe that Cathay Media is innocent is even harder, as she finds the shutting down of InSanctum and Lockout Games to be damning evidence. A good explanation of the double-pronged misdirection and the memetic capabilities of the Malaysian FIT might be enough, or the heroes may suggest a meeting with Lim Chiang Lai. Even if she remains suspicious, Cho agrees that the India issue is more urgent. She will ask her guests what they think should be done. If they come up with any reasonable plan, she will do anything in her considerable power to help. If they



are not sure what can be done, Cho will decide that discrediting Malaysia in some way will be a good start, either privately to Prabhu, or publicly.

If the heroes instead contact Lim Chiang Lai, he will not talk to them except face to face, claiming it may be too dangerous otherwise. On this trip to Bedok Arcology One the FIT agents tailing the heroes will deduce that something is going wrong with their plan. Depending on the mode of travel and time of day, they may attempt to intercept the travelers and detain them for eventual removal to Malaysia. (Note that Malaysia is accessible by road, boat, or air from Singapore in only a few minutes.) The heroes will need to be resourceful to avoid capture, though the GM should allow any reasonable plan a chance of success. If they do manage to reach Mr. Lim, he will be willing to believe that Cho has been manipulated and sees more clearly than her that the entire operation was probably a Malaysian plot from the beginning. Mr. Lim will be amenable to a meeting with Cho, if the investigators can convince her to see him. Like Cho, Mr. Lim will help the heroes to prevent Prabhu from deciding to mount a coup and join the TSA. Unlike Cho, however, he has the resources of Cathay Media at his disposal. Simply breaking the story in the mainstream media will naturally outrage Indonesia and put

SHANTI PRABHU 130 POINTS

Female human, born 2047. Age 52; 5'4"; 130 lbs. Brown skin, greying black hair, dark brown eyes.

Shanti Prabhu is the current Minister of Commerce and Industry for India. She is a member of the ruling Indian National Alliance (INA), a conservative party mostly aligned against the increasing nanosocialist movement in India. She has achieved this position more out of sheer determination, natural charisma, and lust for personal glory than any seriously held political conviction. At the moment, she foresees that the INA will lose the next general election in three years, and that a nanosocialist party will rise to power. She is thus positioning herself for a switch of allegiance when the opportunity presents itself, and has gathered a cadre of personal supporters within the INA to back her. Prabhu is supremely confident in her abilities and if a chance to seize more power for herself presents itself, she is likely to take it with firm and decisive action.

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 9 [-10]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 11 [10].

Speed 5.00; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Ally Group (Nanosocialist sympathizers; medium group, 100 points, 9 or less) [30]; Charisma +4 [20]; Genefixed Human [0]; Status 6 [25]; Very Wealthy [30].

Disadvantages: Disciplines of Faith (Hindu) [-5]; Fanaticism (Self) [-15]; Megalomania [-10]; Secret (Leader of nanosocialist bloc within Indian National Alliance) [-20].

Quirks: Chooses political philosophy based on perceived self-opportunity; Decisive; Proud. [-3]

Skills: Accounting-13 [4]; Acting-12 [1]; Administration-14 [4]; Detect Lies-12 [2]; Diplomacy-16 [8]*; Economics-16 [10]; Fast-Talk-14 [2]*; History-12 [2]; Law-12 [2]; Leadership-18 [2]**; Mathematics-11 [1]; Memetics-11 [2]; Merchant-13 [1]*; Politics-16 [6]*; Psychology-13 [2]*; Research-11 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-16 [2].

* Includes +1 from Memetics.

** Includes +4 from Charisma and +1 from Memetics.

Languages: English-12 [1]; Hindi (native)-13 [0]; Indonesian-11 [1/2].

Malaysia squarely on the defensive. However, it may also destabilize the TSA – and *India* – enough to cause widespread violence, which Mr. Lim would deplore. Convincing him to run the story will take a good deal of persuasion.

Perhaps the most obvious approach to discouraging Prabhu from trusting Malaysia is to see her and provide her with evidence of the entire Malaysian plot. Getting an appointment to see her will be the difficult part, both

This could be accomplished by stealing VIGs or other computer hardware while it is being used and maintaining an authenticated data entry session, or by capture, intimidation, and interrogation for access keys. Depending on the details posted, and how long they remain accessible, the news could spread like wildfire, and achieve much the same mixed results as if Mr. Lim had broken the story via Cathay Media.

At some stage, it is likely that FIT agents will come

into direct conflict with the investigators. Once this occurs, the FIT agents' goal will be to incapacitate and capture them, to prevent any further meddling in the plot. The investigators will probably try to fight back. There will be one FIT agent present for each investigator. Combat

because she is naturally busy with the convention and because the FIT agents will be alert for any contact with Prabhu and won't let the investigators talk to her or any of her staff if they can help it. If they do manage to talk to Prabhu and provide some evidence of the Malaysian plan, this will naturally make her suspect Malaysia's motives, abort any coup attempt, and set back any prospect of India joining the TSA by several years, even if nanosocialists oust the Indian National Alliance peacefully at the next election.

Another option, more devious but potentially better, is to fabricate evidence that Prabhu is planning to take up Malaysia's invitation with a little more gusto than Malaysia would hope, and oust *Malaysia* from a position of challenging Indonesia, leaving India and Indonesia alone at the top of the alliance hierarchy. If such a plot could be presented even half convincingly to Anwar Mohammad, he would immediately pull the plug on negotiations with Prabhu, accusing her of grabbing for power, and generally chilling relations between India and the TSA. This outcome would make the likelihood of India joining the TSA in the near future remote at best. Of course, once again, the FIT agents will do everything they can to prevent the investigators from talking to Anwar.

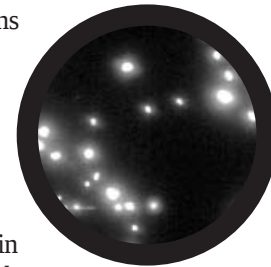
A third option is if the investigators post details of the Malaysian plot directly to web news sites, either before or after meeting Catherine Cho or Lim Chiang Lai. If they do this, the FIT agents will be alerted very quickly (possibly within minutes, if the heroes post to their own or high-profile sites) and will storm their location in an attempt to neutralize them and use their web access channels to remove the information.

in a public place will naturally attract attention, especially if it is in the Singapore Orchid Hotel, where convention security staff will arrive within 3d+10 seconds of any disturbance. The Singapore police cybershells who perform security duties will use electrolasers first to incapacitate, upgrading to 15mm tangle or tear gas warheads (p. TS158-159) if necessary. They will outnumber other combatants by two to one, with reinforcements including the hidden RATS arriving rapidly, and will attempt to take everyone prisoner and ask questions later. Elsewhere, Singapore police will arrive in 4d+10 seconds.

Unless they have somehow obtained access to weapons illegal in Singapore, the heroes will be heavily outclassed. The GM should allow creative tactics to have a good chance of success, without tipping things too much in their favor. If they somehow

defeat or evade the FIT agents, they will have police and more FIT agents on their tails and a limited amount of time to reach, talk to, and convince whomever they are trying to inform of the plot. This is a good place for a chase scene, which should be tailored for whatever mode of transport the heroes are using, from foot to air vehicle.

An appropriately dramatic climax to the adventure can occur if the heroes have to fight their way past security personnel to get a few desperate words with a government official, which will cause him to put various pieces together and put an end to the Malaysian plot.



AFTERMATH

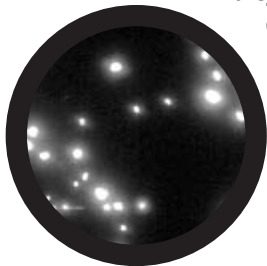
It is quite likely that the investigators will end up in the custody of the Singapore police. If they have played their cards right and informed the right people about events, they will have the support of one or more of Catherine Cho, Lim Chiang Lai, and possibly even Shanti Prabhu in explaining their actions and helping to get them free. Prabhu has the most obvious sway, but Mr. Lim has many connections behind the scenes and can probably arrange for their actual release more quickly. Cho is a powerful speaker in their favor, but does not hold as much practical value in this situation.

If the heroes have not broken any laws, they will eventually be freed, as it will become apparent quickly that they were victims of the attack by the FIT agents. This will raise other questions though: Why were Malaysian FIT cybershells attacking them? Why were they trailing them? Were FIT agents, or the investigators, up to something? Is anyone at the convention threatened?

If Catherine Cho is still on good terms with the prisoners, she will come to speak to them a few hours after their arrest. If they have not yet informed her of the Malaysian plot, they can tell her now, which will set the wheels in motion for getting them free, but may not be fast enough to prevent Prabhu from taking up Malaysia's offer, depending on their actions before arrest. This could be played as a desperate race against time to contact Prabhu while dealing with unsympathetic police and administrative red tape.

Mr. Lim will not leave his arcology apartment, but will send Mai Ling to "assist" the police in their dealings with the prisoners. Once with the captives, she will say that they may speak to her as if she were Mr. Lim. If they need convincing, Mai Ling will speak briefly with Mr. Lim's voice, as he uses her as a direct communication link and explains that she is a cyberdoll, and he can hear everything they say. Once the prisoners accept this, the voice will revert to Mai Ling's. She assures them that Mr. Lim will get them released as soon as he can. If they tell her about the Malaysian plot for the first time, Mr.

Lim's reaction will be more severe than if they had told him before getting entangled with the FIT. He is more likely to simply break the story in Cathay Media, unless there is still time for the heroes to concoct and execute another method of foiling Malaysia's plan.



If the heroes do not end up in the hands of the Singapore police, they may instead have been captured by FIT agents and carried across the border into Malaysia.



This is the worst way that this scenario can end, in terms of the heroes achieving their goals – although it is possible that they could prevent Shanti Prabhu from agreeing to Malaysia's plan and still end up in Malaysian custody. If the

captives managed to inform Catherine Cho or Lim Chiang Lai of the potential Indian coup, they will work as best they can to prevent it, but will probably be too late to influence Prabhu's immediate agreement with Anwar Mohammad. Cho will have difficulties stopping the plot once that happens, unless she simply goes public about the entire scheme. Mr. Lim has more avenues for intervention, with a full exposé in Cathay Media the last option. The GM should decide how these events will play out, possibly using it to set up further adventures.

Escaping Malaysian custody will be tricky. If the Malaysian plot has been exposed to Cho, Mr. Lim, or anyone else, then eventually diplomatic pressure to release the prisoners can be exerted by Singapore, possibly Indonesia, and potentially PRA nations like Japan, Korea, and Australia. Assuming it fits the GM's campaign plans, the captives can be released some time later. If the plot hasn't already been exposed, the heroes are clearly too dangerous to Malaysia's interests to be allowed free. If Cho or Mr. Lim are on their sides and somehow aware of where they have disappeared to, they may try to secure their release, but it will be difficult. If nobody outside Malaysia knows what has happened to them, they will have to orchestrate their own escape or look forward to a lifetime in a Malaysian prison . . .

On the other hand, if the heroes manage to prevent Prabhu from accepting Malaysia's invitation to overthrow her government and join the TSA without getting themselves captured or arrested, they should feel justifiably pleased with themselves!

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES

If the heroes do not manage to pull off some sort of active intervention in the negotiations between Anwar Mohammad and Shanti Prabhu, the opportunity will have passed and Prabhu will soon make moves to oust her Prime Minister and join the TSA. This is probably the worst possible outcome for the adventure.

If either (or both) Catherine Cho and Lim Chiang Lai remain convinced that the other is dealing with the TSA, the consequences could be severe. Mr.

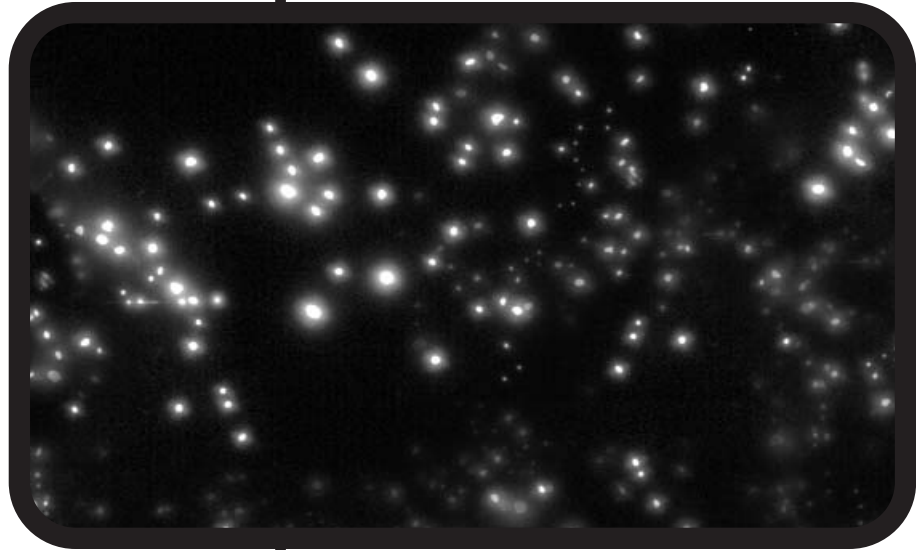
Lim runs a major media network, so can ruin Cho's reputation easily. He has the resources to uncover Cho's homosexuality secret if he has cause to investigate her, and will not hesitate to reveal it. Cho is an outspoken capitalist and advocate of peaceful uses of nanotech – if she is discredited, both these causes will suffer. If Cho reveals Lim's suspected activities, he will act ruthlessly to defend his reputation and interests, feeling it to be for the sake of humanity. Cho could also potentially ruin Infinitesimal System's reputation enough that it loses its defense contracts with Japan and Korea. The only winner will be the TSA.

If the investigators have left either of these contacts in such a state, they may think to visit them and wrap the adventure up properly by letting them know what was really happening. If they neglect to do this, the GM should make sure the consequences are played out over the next sessions of the campaign.

Ideally, Indonesia should remain unaware of the Malaysian plot, because revealing it would seriously destabilize the TSA, potentially to the point of war. The heroes may, however, feel that such a destabilization

may be the trigger needed to break the TSA and reduce its global influence, so they may try to do it. The consequences of this can reverberate through many future adventures.

If the heroes end up in a Malaysian prison, the GM should either have the players create characters for a new



campaign or decide on a way in which they can reasonably regain their freedom. An option is a rescue by friends or family, who could begin by investigating to find out where their comrades have gone. This could either be played out, or simply used as the story behind an eventual release.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the heroes have played their cards right, they could end up under the patronage of Lim Chiang Lai, Catherine Cho, or even both, which would lead to further investigative and troubleshooting jobs.

The adventure lays the groundwork for further intrigue in Singapore, dealing with TSA plots either at the memetic, diplomatic, or covert action level. Malaysia's ambitions to oust Indonesia as the leader of the TSA will not have been blunted, and there will be further schemes to be uncovered and thwarted.

An important loose end is that Indonesia is still getting the latest military nanotechnology designs from somewhere, which keeps Catherine Cho worried. There is plenty of scope for investigation to find out where the pipeline is, and for action to expose it or close it down. Infinitesimal Systems is innocent, but there are several other nanotechnology companies either based in or with major offices in Singapore, and thus relatively easy access to the TSA.

CHARACTER POINT AWARDS

The GM may use the following as a guideline for determining character points awarded to players for the adventure.

Preventing Shanti Prabhu from accepting Anwar's invitation to overthrow the Indian government and join the TSA: 5 points each.

Not getting arrested: 1 point.

Revealing Malaysia's plot to Indonesia: -1 point.

Being captured by FIT agents: -2 points.

Leaving Catherine Cho or Lim Chiang Lai suspicious of the other: -1 point.

Good roleplaying: 1-3 points at GM's discretion.

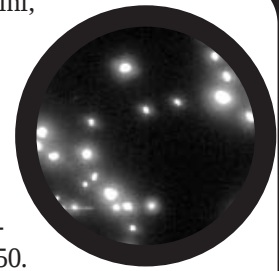
If the plot has been partly or wholly revealed to the public, there will be political consequences for Malaysia and increased tension in the region, especially from the might of Indonesia. Even those who would like to see the downfall of the TSA are not keen for a replay of hostilities so soon after the Pacific War. With new advances in technology, nobody is sure exactly how dangerous a conflict would be or how swiftly it might get out of hand and threaten the rest of the world. Keeping an eye on activity and a lid on any potential outbreaks could occupy a group of heroes for some time.

Another danger is Shanti Prabhu, a highly volatile loose cannon in Indian politics. She will undoubtedly come up with other schemes to promote her own personal glory agenda. Prabhu has kept her more crazed goals secret up to now, but once they are revealed there are many agencies that would like to see her stopped before she causes civil chaos in the world's most populous nation. She is a popular member of the government, with dedicated followers both in the halls of power and

on the streets of Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata.

Something that may come to the attention of clever geneticists is the fact that Shanti Prabhu is one of the last generation of genefixed humans before the mental stability trait was perfected in 2050.

Over the past few years, several members of this generation around the world have been exhibiting aberrant behavior similar to Prabhu's megalomania. Several people of this age are now in positions of considerable power; will they begin to show signs of mental instability too? What can be done? The first thing that will be needed is a group of intrepid investigators to find out if there really is something wrong with the 2047 genefix, what problems it may cause, who has been covering it up for over half a century, and *why*



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