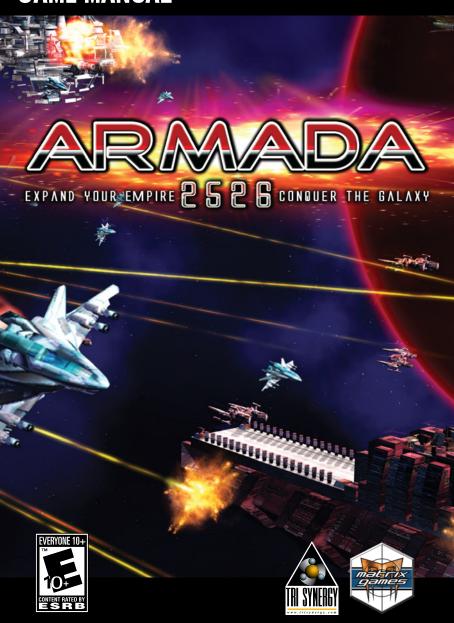
GAME MANUAL



EPILEPSY WARNING

PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE BEFORE PLAYING THIS GAME OR BEFORE ALLOWING YOUR CHILDREN TO PLAY.

Certain individuals may experience epileptic seizures or loss of consciousness when subjected to strong, flashing lights for long periods of time. Such individuals may therefore experience a seizure while operating computer or video games. This can also affect individuals who have no prior medical record of epilepsy or have never previously experienced a seizure.

If you or any family member has ever experienced epilepsy symptoms (seizures or loss of consciousness) after exposure to flashing lights, please consult your doctor before playing this game.

Parental guidance is always suggested when children are using a computer and video games. Should you or your child experience dizziness, poor eyesight, eye or muscle twitching, loss of consciousness, feelings of disorientation or any type of involuntary movements or cramps while playing this game, turn it off immediately and consult your doctor before playing again.

PRECAUTIONS DURING USE:

- Do not sit too close to the monitor. Sit as far as comfortably possible.
- Use as small a monitor as possible.
- Do not play when tired or short on sleep.
- Take care that there is sufficient lighting in the room.
- Be sure to take a break of 10-15 minutes every hour.

X-COM FANS REJOICE!





Year 2023: The planet Esperanza has been colonized by the spaceship Magelhaes. A squad was brought together by the Esperanza government

to defend the planet from any Deep Space threats. Year 2025: Esperanza's aircraft and spacecraft have come under attack form alien ships and machines.

Combine global strategy with small squad based tactical combat against the alien invasion. Repelling the alien invasion requires taking full advantage of the terrain and surrounding environments.

Control a squad of soldiers, light and heavy support combat vehicles, robots and air units to repel the alien invasion.

- * Advanced artificial intelligence
- Destructible environment Can't get into a building? Use a heavy weapon to make your own entrance
- * Weapon and technology advancement accomplished by global research and base building
- * Hire and allocate scientists for various research projects
- Examine aliens, developer better weapons, armor, grenades, medikits, stimpacks, cannons, vehicles (tanks hovercrafts), energy shields and air/space craft
- Allocate resources for the development of new defenses.
- Prepare and equip your team and base to handle the various alien threats and incursions
- * Build hangars, medical sections, detection systems, labs, workshops, stores and SAM sites



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1. INTRODUCTION TO ARMADA 2526

1.1. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

1.1.1. MINIMUM

OS: Windows® XP / Windows® Vista / Windows® 7

CPU: 1 GHz RAM: 1 GB

Graphics Card: 3D Video Card with 128 MB RAM, DirectX 9 Compatible

Sound Card: DirectX 9 Compatible

HD free space: 2 GB DVD/CD-ROM: Yes

Other: DirectX 9.0c+, .NET Framework 2.0+, Visual C Runtimes (all included in installer)

1.1.2. RECOMMENDED

OS: Windows® XP / Windows® Vista / Windows® 7

CPU: 2 GHz Single core or equivalent

RAM: 2 GB

Graphics Card: 3D Video Card with 128 MB RAM, DirectX 9 Compatible

Sound Card: DirectX 9 Compatible

HD free space: 2 GB DVD/CD-ROM: Yes

Other: DirectX 9.0c+, .NET Framework 2.0+, Visual C Runtimes (all included in installer)

1.2. INSTALLATION

Please ensure your system meets the minimum requirements listed below. To install the game, either double click on the installation file you downloaded or insert the Armada 2526 CD into your CD-ROM drive. If you have disabled the autorun function on your CD-ROM or if you are installing from a digital download, double-click on the installation archive file, then double click on the file that is shown inside the archive. Follow all on-screen prompts to complete installation.

1.3. UNINSTALLING THE GAME

Please use the Add/Remove Programs option from the Windows Control Panel or the Uninstall shortcut in the games Windows START menu folder to uninstall the game. Uninstalling through any other method will not properly uninstall the game.



1.4. PRODUCT UPDATES

In order to maintain our product excellence, Matrix Games releases updates containing new features, enhancements, and corrections to any known issues. All our updates are available free on our website and can also be downloaded quickly and easily by clicking on the "Update" link in your Game Menu or by using the "Update Game" shortcut in your Windows START menu folder for the game.

We also periodically make beta (preview) updates and other content available to registered owners. Keeping up with these special updates is made easy and is free by signing up for a Matrix Games Member account. When you are signed up, you can then register your Matrix Games products in order to receive access to these game-related materials. Doing so is a simple two step process:

Sign Up for a Matrix Games Member account - THIS IS A ONE TIME PROCEDURE; once you have signed up for a Matrix account, you are in the system and will not need to sign up again. Go to www.matrixgames.com and click the Members hyperlink at the top. In the new window, select Register NOW and follow the on-screen instructions. When you're finished, click the Please Create My New Account button, and a confirmation e-mail will be sent to your specified e-mail account.

Register a New Game Purchase - Once you have signed up for a Matrix Games Member account, you can then register any Matrix Games title you own in your new account. To do so, log in to your account on the Matrix Games website (www.matrixgames.com). Click Register Game near the top to register your new Matrix Games purchase.

We strongly recommend registering your game as it will give you a backup location for your serial number should you lose it in the future. Once you've registered your game, when you log in to the Members section you can view your list of registered titles by clicking My Games. Each game title is a hyperlink that will take you to an information page on the game (including all the latest news on that title). Also on this list is a Downloads hyperlink that takes you to a page that has all the latest public and registered downloads, including patches, for that particular title.

You can also access patches and updates via our "Games Section" (http://www.matrixgames.com/games), once there select the game you wish to check updates for, then check the "downloads" link. Certain value content and additional downloads will be restricted to "Members Area" members. so it is always worthwhile to sign up there.

Remember, once you have signed up for a Matrix Games Member account, you do not have to sign up again at that point you are free to register for any Matrix Games product you purchase.

Thank you and enjoy your game!



1.5. GAME FORUMS

Our forums are one of the best things about Matrix Games. Every game has its own forum with our designers, developers and the gamers playing the game. If you are experiencing a problem, have a question or just an idea on how to make the game better, post a message there. Go to http://www.matrixgames.com and click on the Forums hyperlink.

1.6. NEED HELP?

The best way to contact us if you are having a problem with one of our games is through our Help Desk. Our Help Desk has FAQs as well as a dedicated support staff that answer questions within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. Support questions sent in on Saturday and Sunday may wait 48 hours for a reply. You can get to our Help Desk by going to http://www.matrixgames.com/helpdesk.

1.7. WELCOME TO ARMADA 2526!

Greetings, Commander. Welcome to Armada 2526. Armada 2526 is a game of epic space conquest combining turn-based strategy with real-time tactical combat. Armada 2526 places you, the player, in the role of the leader of a space-faring civilization. You are tasked with ensuring the survival of your civilization and its eventual victory through diplomatic, economic and military means.. You can currently play in single player mode or hotseat with other players. The game is organized into two different modes:

- A turn-based strategic mode where players can create and manage colonies, create and deploy fleets, conduct negotiations with other races, research powerful new technologies, and more.
- A real time battle mode where players wage war against their enemies in 3D. Here, the player will command a fleet of starships built and maneuvered to the battlefield via the strategic mode. The outcome of these battles will impact the strategic situation in the turn-based mode.

Armada 2526 requires you to be both a prudent planner and a courageous leader to be victorious. A general who can best any opponent in battle but who can't plan will ultimately fall victim to logistics and unrest. A prudent planner who cannot adequately lead his forces to victory at the crucial point will see his best-laid plans laid to waste.

Don't worry; there will be plenty of help to get even the novice gamer conquering galaxies in no time. And don't forget diplomacy – a strong ally and some diplomatic goodwill can save even the veteran player in a pinch!



1.8. HOW TO WIN

The methods by which a player can achieve victory vary widely depending on the type of player and the particular race the player is leading. First off, the player's ultimate goal is to climb to the top of the race ranking and stay there until the game ends. Generally, a game will end when the pre-determined number of turns is expended — so the player that holds the top rank at that point will be declared the winner. Player ranking is determined by the number of Victory Points each player has. The more victory points, the higher the player is ranked.

The best way to go about obtaining victory points, however, varies substantially from race to race. When selecting a race in the game creation screens the Victory Points conditions will be displayed. Note these closely! Each race will have a special focus that gives bonuses (or in one case, penalties) in obtaining victory points. Some races will get a multiplier bonus for Glorious Victories, Technological Advancement, Population Happiness, or a variety of other things.

2. MAIN MENU

2.1. NEW GAME

Click on the New Game button to begin a new game of Armada 2526. The New Game screen has two scenarios to choose from: the Tutorial and Twelve Races. Both of these scenarios are intended to teach the player the basics of the game. The Tutorial is a guided tour through the major components of the game while the Twelve Races scenario gives the player a chance to run their own empire but with some assistance. It is recommended that new players play both the Tutorial and Twelve Races scenario before attempting larger, more complicated Custom Games.

2.1.1. CUSTOM GAME

At the bottom of the screen next to the OK button is the Custom Game button. Clicking this button will display the Create Custom Game screen. From here the player can configure a variety of factors for a custom game. Configurable factors in

Number of Players Specify the number of players in the game

Number of Turns The number of turns each player will have to climb to the top of the point ranking to win

Difficulty Level The level of Al difficulty for the human players

Player and Race Selection

This large box allows the player to select which race they would like to be and also allows the player to configure what other races will be included in the game. If the Hot Seat box is checked, multiple human players can be created.



Map Both the Tutorial and the Twelve Races scenarios have pre-designed maps which can be used in a custom game

as well. Otherwise a random map will be generated.

Star Density

The density at which stars will be generated in the map.
The denser the selection the more stars that will be

available (and accordingly more habitable planets).

Size The number of squares that will make up the game map.

Smaller maps mean less space to expand and generally more conflict, larger maps take longer to make contact with other players and generally mean slower gameplay.

Map Type The overall design of the map: Uniform indicates

that the density of stars will be uniform throughout the map, dense center concentrates most stars in the center of the map and very dense center

does the same except to a further extent.

Width and Height If a custom size map is desired it can be created here. Note that if custom values are inputted, this

will overwrite the selection in the "Size" box.

Important Note: Selecting a very large map may result in tedious gameplay, and selecting many players may result in long waits for A.I. players to perform their turns on slower systems, and may result in running out of memory on lower end systems. Players are advised to stick to small maps and a reasonable number of players until they are familiar with the game and the limits of their hardware.

2.1.2. TUTORIAL

Click on the Tutorial button to immediately begin the tutorial. We **strongly recommend playing through the entire tutorial**, especially if you don't plan to read through the entire manual before playing.

2.1.3. **LOAD GAME**

Click on the Load Game button to view a list of previously saved games. From this list, the player can load saved games.

2.1.4. OPTIONS

The Options menu allows the player to modify the graphics, sound, and game settings.

GRAPHICS

Adjust the five sliders in the Graphics Settings screen to determine video quality versus performance. Bear in mind that higher graphical quality sometimes translates to worse game



performance depending on system specifications. Click the Default button to return all settings to their original values.

SOUND

Adjust the master volume in addition to a number of other types of sounds like music, effects, and interface. Players with high quality sound cards can adjust the Sound Quality for better sound. Additionally, players with multiple video output options can select which Sound Provider they desire. Click the Default button to return all settings to their original values.

GAME

Adjust a variety of gameplay settings

Star and Battle Map Scroll Rate Adjust the speed at which the WASD keys or

mouse will scroll across each respective map.

Auto Unload Options Toggle whether the cargo of transport ships will automatically unload their cargo at their destination by cargo type

(Ground Units, Defences, Population).

Negotiation Balance Toggle whether the balance of a particular

deal under negotiation is displayed.

Deactivating this option will make negotiations more difficult to judge and balance.

Fast Fleet Animation Toggle whether animations played for fleets moving across the star map are

fast to cut back on waiting time.

MAP DESIGNER

The Map Designer allows players to create their own custom scenarios and maps.

CREDITS

Roll the credits behind the development and publication of Armada 2526.

2.1.5. QUIT

Click on the Quit button to exit Armada 2526 back to Windows.



3. TURN-BASED STRATEGIC MODE

3.1. STAR MAP

The Star Map is the main screen from which the strategic mode is played. The player can move ships, build and manage colonies, and much more from this screen. Although there are ancillary screens in addition to this one for the strategic portion of the game, the vast majority of time will be spent making decisions here.

3.1.1. INTERFACE OVERVIEW



This is the main screen of the Star Map. Notice the various interface aids on the edges of the screen.

- A Minimap See Below
- B Star Systems These are the main components of the Star Map. Mousing over a star will display a brief description of the system. If you control the system and have a colony, that information will be displayed along with the population of the colony. If you do not control the star you will see a brief description of it along with some relevant information such as the likelihood of life existing there or the possibility of valuable minerals. Double clicking on a star you own will bring up the colony management screen.
- C Zoom View The Zoom View gives the player an enhanced view of whatever square they are mousing over. When mousing over stars, the player can learn additional details about the star like the condition of the planets there, the number of fleets there, and more.
- D **Turn Display** The turn display both indicates the number of turns played and it houses the end turn button.
- E Control Console The control console houses the buttons to access the ancillary Star Map screens like the Technology Screen and Diplomacy Screen. This screen can be closed by clicking the white arrow pointing to it, located just to the left of the orb displaying the player's race symbol.
- F Technology Screen Clicking this button will open up the Technology Screen.

 More information on the technology screen is available at Section 3.5.
- G **Diplomacy Screen** Clicking this button will open up the Diplomacy Screen. More information on the technology screen is available at Section 3.4.
- H Reports Screen Clicking this button will open up the Reports Screen.

 More information on the technology screen is available at Section 3.3.
- Current Treasury This number indicates the amount of money in the player's treasury.
- J List View This box lists all of the ships, colonies, or events depending on which filter is activated. The list view is very useful in tracking the status of everything going on in a large empire.
- K View Colonies See below
- L View Fleets See below
- M View Messages See below
- N Advisor See below
- Mouseover Help Nearly every icon and button in the Star Map is named by mousing to and remaining over it. To be reminded what a specific button does, simply leave the cursor over the button for a few seconds and its name will appear.



3.1.2. MINIMAP

The minimap allows the player to quickly navigate across the expansive galaxy while also displaying major features of the galaxy like gas clouds and stars. The minimap also includes two toolbars with several buttons:



- A Show the regions of the star map that current scanning technology at the player's colonies allows to be scanned. As your technological research progresses, colonies can build increasingly sophisticated scanning equipment to monitor activities in deep space.
- B Toggle displaying the move limits of ships. Limitations on technology generally lead to a maximum range any ship can travel from the colony. This button will toggle displaying that range.
- C Toggle displaying a box grid over the Star Map. Ship movement is tracked via this box grid whether it is displayed or not.
- D Toggle displaying the minimap. Closing the minimap will offer more viewing space for the Star Map itself.
- A Toggle displaying stars on the minimap.
- B Toggle displaying colonies on the minimap.
- C Toggle displaying empires. When on, a special pattern specific to each empire the player has discovered will be shown over the minimap.
- D Toggle displaying wormholes on the minimap.



3.1.3. LIST VIEWER

This box lists all of the ships, colonies, or events depending on which filter is activated. The list view is very useful in tracking the status of everything going on in a large empire.



Clicking a fleet, colony or message on the list will center the map on the square for that item. Double clicking will open panel for that item, or display additional information depending on the message type.

3.1.4. VIEW COLONIES

Clicking this filter will display all of the colonies currently under the player's control and some basic information about each colony.





- A These four icons always appear at the top of the colony list. They are sorting aids which, in order from left to right, sort by population, income, ship production free meaning which colonies have space available for more ship production, and other production free meaning which colonies have space available for more miscellaneous production.
- B The colony's population.
- C Colony building production status. If this icon is shaded grey, the colony is not using any of its building production capacity, if yellow, the colony is only using part of its capacity, if green, the colony is using all of its building production capacity.
- D Colony ship production status. This icon follows the same color coding as building production (grey, yellow and green).
- E The size of the fleet present at the colony.

3.1.5. VIEW FLEETS

Clicking this filter will display all of the fleets under the player's control and some basic information about each fleet.



- A These four icons always appear at the top of the fleets list. They are sorting aids which, in order from left to right, sort by number of ships in the fleet, active fleets, fleet destination, and fleet combat power.
- B The top line of each fleet listed displays the number of ships in the fleet and its current order status.
- C The second line displays the location of the fleet.



3.1.6. VIEW MESSAGES

Clicking this filter will display all of the events that took place since ending the previous turn. This list is very important for larger empires with a lot going on. This list will display everything from riots to production completion to fleet movement.

- A The top of each message always displays the event which took place.
- B The bottom line of the message always displays the location at which the event took place.
- C If the event involved a change of status for the production of a colony, the new status of the colony will appear. In the above image the Comet Mines at Lyonesse have been completed and so the production capacity at that colony is idle (denoted by the grey production icon in the message).



3.1.7. ADVISOR

The advisor box will provide text boxes containing contextual help for a variety of gameplay elements.



- A Open up the Save / Load / Quit menu.
- B View the Advisor help history or read the entire list of Advisor tips.
- C Close this tip text box.
- D Do not display this type of tip again.
- E Center the Star Map to the location mentioned in the tip.



3.1.8. HOTKEYS

Left Click Select Square

Left Click and Drag On the map, moves the map

Right Click Move Ships

Double Click Open Info Panel

Double Right Click Move All Ships

F1 Show Controls

F2 Show / Hide Advisor

F12 Mute Sound

Esc Load / Save / Quit Menu

Arrow Keys Pan Map

Tip: Hold down the shift key to scroll faster

WASD Keys Pan Map

Shift Pan Faster

Home Goto Home Colony
R Reports Screen

N Diplomacy Screen
T Technology Screen
F Financial Summary

L Load Ships
U Unload Ships
Enter Open Tab Panel

Toggle Scanned Area

Ctrl + G Toggle Grid
F4 Show Console

C

3.2. MOVING FLEETS, EXPANDING, AND ATTACKING

Moving ships and founding colonies are the two most integral components of the game. New colonies are created by sending ships to foreign star systems and every colony's primary line of defence is its empire's fleet which must constantly be on the lookout for threats.

3.2.1. MOVING FLEETS

To move a fleet first select its location by left clicking once. To set the fleet's destination, right click on the desired location. A screen will pop up which will allow for the selection of which ships are to embark on this trip along with a few other options:



- A Select all eligible ships for the trip.
- B Left click to add or subtract one ship of this type.
- C Right click to add or subtract all ships of this type.
- D Number of ships of a particular ship type scheduled to make the trip.
- E Number of eligible ships of a particular ship type for the trip.
- F Ship type.
- G The number of times a trip will take place in a row. If more than one, the group of ships will automatically return to its starting point and then repeat the trip.
- H Check this box to repeat the trip forever or until manually told to stop.
- Toggle whether this fleet will serve as a rally point for all ships created at its original location. If the fleet began its trip from Earth and landed on Proxis, then all subsequent ships produced on Earth would follow the fleet to Proxis (or any subsequent destination).



J	Speed at which the fleet will travel. A fleet can
	only travel as fast as its slowest ship.

- K Toggle allowing travel by wormholes.
 - L Toggle allowing travel by unstable wormholes.
- M Load cargo on to transports or assault ships.
- N Offload cargo from transports or assault ships.
- O Select all ships eligible for the trip.
- P Closes the panel and doesn't move any ships.
- Q Once all settings are configured, hit the OK button to launch the trip.

SHUTTLING AND PATROLLING

You can order a fleet to perform a move several times, or for ever. One important use for this is for moving around large amounts of population. For instance, suppose you want to move 20 population from planet X to planet Y. Left click Planet X, and right click Planet Y to open the ship selection screen in the usual way. Then load up your Transports with population (or whatever item you'd like to move), and select the number to move. Then in box G near the bottom of the panel, select 4, and your 5 transports will make the trip 4 times, loading more population each time they arrive back at Planet X. You can select other ships to go with the transport as escorts. You can patrol between X and Y in the same way, just select non transport ships. Cancel a shuttle order from the fleet tab, or just by ordering them to do something else.

3.2.2. MOVE LIMITS

All ships when first starting a game will have a maximum range that they can travel from the player's colonies. This move limit is marked on the Star Map as a dark blue line. This means that the player's ships can't just travel to any system in the galaxy, in order to expand one's empire it must be done slowly and methodically.

Technology can augment and eventually overcome this range limitation but until the appropriate technologies are discovered, players can increase the range their ships can travel by colonizing further and further from their home world. As players found new colonies, the range limit on their ships is pushed deeper into the galaxy but only in the general vicinity of the new colony. For instance, if the player only builds colonies that extend down or to the left of their home world, the player's ability to travel to stars that are up and to the right of their home world will expand very little or not at all.

There is also an additional step required to expand one's move limit when capturing an enemy colony. Players will have to build a Relay Station in the newly claimed enemy colony before the move limit will expand.

3.2.3. WORMHOLES

Wormholes are powerful and dangerous anomalies strewn about space that can grant the player passage to far corners of the galaxy very quickly. Wormholes are always in fixed locations around the galaxy, but to discover them the player must have the technology to find them and a scanner built close enough to a wormhole to detect it. Most of the time, wormholes will allow the player access to a portion of the galaxy that their move limit prevents them from getting to. However, some wormholes, while useful, are very unstable so there's a chance the player could lose their entire fleet while moving through the wormhole.

On the Star Map, stable wormholes look static and calm whereas unstable wormholes frequently and erratically change in size.

3.2.4. FOUNDING COLONIES

All colonies are founded by specialized ships called Ark Ships which transport population and serve as the initial structure for the colony. Thus, when founding a new colony, the colony ship is consumed. The basic colony ship when starting a scenario out can only serve as a rudimentary structure and cannot provide much support in hostile environments, and so the number of stars that can be colonized is limited to only very habitable and barren planets. However, as the player's technology progresses new and more powerful Ark Ships will allow the player to colonize a variety of different planets including irradiated planets, barren planets, even systems without planets..

Tip: Rich systems have two or three small planets around the star. These systems give bonuses to tax and mining income and discounts on production. Poor systems with no orbiting planets are much more costly to develop and give penalties to income and production costs.

To found a colony, first move an Ark Ship to an eligible star and then double left click the star. A box will appear listing the fleet makeup at that star along with a button called Found Colony in the bottom left corner. Now left click the Found Colony button and a new colony is formed.



3.2.5. ATTACKING AND CONQUERING ENEMY COLONIES

Any time a turn ends with fleets from two different races in the same square there is a possibility for conflict (even if the two races are allies). Thus, to attack another race or to attempt to conquer a colony, the player needs only direct a fleet to the desired enemy colony and end the turn. Conflict can also arise when surprise contact is made with another fleet. This can mean another race's fleet has arrived at the player's colony or that two opposing fleets have met somewhere in space when in transit. When surprise contact takes place or the player ends a turn in the same square as another race, the resolution box appears.

From the resolution box the player can ignore the coexistence and continue with the turn resolution or choose to declare war (if this hasn't been done so already) and resolve the battle. Once war is declared and a battle is possible, the player will then have the



opportunity to fight the battle on the real time 3D battle map or to auto-resolve the conflict and only see the results. Two races that are already at war with one another can not ignore each other's presence; they must always fight when making contact.

Tip: If you have several encounters with neutral players, but no battles, you can ignore them all by just closing the panel.

To conquer an enemy colony the player will need superiority in both space and ground combat. When engaging in a battle for an enemy colony, the player will not only need to achieve space superiority, but they will need to orchestrate a well-timed and coordinated strike on the planet's forces and defensive emplacements. If the player can both rout the enemy fleet and destroy all defences in the colony, the player will then have conquered the colony.



There are a variety of things a player can do with a conquered colony:



Subjugate Take control over the colony.

Exterminate A large portion of the population will be exterminated.

Devastate The colony will be ransacked and anything of worth will be taken and sold. This is highly lucrative and

very destructive to the colony's infrastructure.

Contaminate If ships which can spread plaque are present

in the player's fleet, they will be deployed

to infect the population with plague.

Additionally, players who wish to auto-resolve the battle for the colony but still want to infect the planet can do so here instead of in the Real Time Battle Mode. The Al will never carry out a contamination

operation when the battle is resolved automatically.

Obliterate If ships which can hurl asteroids are present in the player's

fleet, an asteroid will be shot at the planet, inflicting massive damage to both the population and the colony's structures.

Additionally, players who wish to auto-resolve the battle for the colony but still want to hurl an asteroid at the planet can do so here instead of in the Real Time Battle Mode. The Al will never carry out an asteroid attack when the battle is resolved automatically.

attack when the battle is resolved automatic

Take no Action Do nothing to the colony.



3.3. COLONY MANAGEMENT

The colony management screen allows the player to build new structures, construct new ships, manage different aspects of governance, and view the overall situation in a colony. Colonies provide the player with income, population, ships, defences, and more. Although some races to not require a large, happy population in all of their colonies, strong and vibrant cities are the lifeblood of any successful empire.

3.3.1. INTERFACE OVERVIEW

The Colony Management Screen is separated into three tabs: Colony, Detail, and Fleets.

COLONY TAB





Α These two arrows will cycle through all colonies under player control. B This button will allow the player to rename the colony. C: This small table shows the income and expenses of the colony. Colonies on resource barren planets will have more trouble running positive cash flow than colonies on rich planets. D This box shows the current population, the maximum population, and the colony's growth rate. A tall green arrow means that current conditions are conducive for rapid growth. Good growth conditions include low taxes, a hospitable planet, etc. A short red arrow means that there are adverse conditions for growth due to things like unhappiness, high taxes, plagues, etc. Ε This box displays all the buildings built in the colony. The buildings shown at the top of the box are ancillary structures and add intrinsic value to the colony (like research points, income or population happiness). The structures at the bottom of the box are production structures and can actually produce ships or more structures. (See below.) Additionally, the small black and white icon at the top right corner of this box allows players to scrap a selected structure. F This box displays all of the defences available to the player in case of an enemy attack. Additionally, the small black and white icon at the top right corner of this box allows players to scrap a selected defence component. G This box displays a summary of all ships currently stationed at that colony. Н This box displays all of the ships or buildings currently being constructed at this colony. These buttons allow the player to load or offload cargo on and off transport ships. J This button deactivates a rally point set by a fleet. (See section 3.2.1) K Have the Al auto manage the colony. (See below.) Set the tax rate for the colony. Bear in mind that high taxes will reduce ı population growth and unrest and it may take an extended period of time to recover a colony from the negative effects of high taxes.



DETAIL TAB

The Detail Tab displays the deep details of a colony's status. The cash flow of a colony, happiness calculation, security situation, growth factors and infections are all detailed here.



The Details Tab gives the player only a bottom line indication of a colony's status, but there are many factors which go into the final calculations displayed in the Details Tab:

The four factors governing the overall condition of the population in a colony are happiness, popularity, public order, and security. Each factor is related in many ways to the others and when all four of these things reach a low enough threshold in a colony, rioting or even full on rebellion can flare up.

Happiness – Happiness is a major factor in determining the governing power's popularity and a colony's public order, which is ultimately how well the population will function from turn to turn. A colony's happiness is largely contingent on the environment of the planet the colony is in. Colonies that are on inhospitable places like irradiated or barren planets are less happy



than colonies founded in more hospitable environments. As technology advances, the player will have opportunities to artificially enhance the environment on a plane through terraforming. This, in turn, will increase population happiness as terraforming changes a planet's environment more to its population's liking. Advances in technology can also harm happiness in the form of heavy industry and mining. Colonies that have a large amount of heavy industry or mines, particularly core mines, will become polluted which will reduce happiness even on hospitable planets. As colonies grow in size, overpopulation will increasingly become a factor in a colony's happiness. As a colony's population approaches 70% capacity and above overpopulation will begin to negatively affect happiness. This negative effect will become increasingly severe as the planet reaches 100% capacity at which point it will be very difficult to keep a population happy enough to be fully functional.

Popularity – Although similar to happiness, popularity is another distinct factor in determining a colony's happiness public order. As one might expect, generally unhappy populations do not find their leaders particularly popular. However, popularity is calculated by a number of factors that are quite different from the factors that determine happiness. Perhaps the most important factor in determining popularity is whether the ruling power is the same race as its population. The population of vanquished colonies do not generally view their conquerors in a particularly positive light, so the ruling power in a newly won colony will have to be careful, especially when they first take control of the foreign colony. Tax rates are also a factor in determining popularity. Taxing colonies can become a stubborn enemy of popularity because colony populations apply a "memory factor" to their tax rate. If taxes are raised and kept high for a long time, naturally the ruling power's popularity will decline as a result. However, quickly lowering taxes will not immediately solve the problem as a population will remain angry over the previously high tax rate for some time afterwards. A third important factor in determining popularity is the ruling power's bureaucracy level. As a race's empire grows in size (i.e. the number of planets they control), their bureaucracy grows with it. Large empires will find that their bureaucracy can become bloated in which case a ruling power's popularity will suffer. As empires become massive, the bureaucracy factor will make maintaining huge numbers of colonies a difficult affair.

Security – Security is much like the last line of defence for public order in the event that a colony becomes deeply unhappy and its leadership egregiously unpopular. Given enough security, even an enraged and rambunctious colony can be kept orderly for a time. The degree to which security can affect public order is based on the amount of security forces present in the colony. Marines and tanks are a helpful presence to maintain public order, as are orbiting ships with high ground attack values. In addition, security centers can offer a cheap and quick way to increase security in foreign colonies where recruiting marines isn't an option.

Public Order – Public order determines how well a colony functions on a daily basis. Unhappy colonies can still function at full efficiency as long as public order remains steady. However, if the ruling power's popularity drops low enough and there isn't enough security present, a colony's public order will degrade. If the situation continues to deteriorate, the situation in a colony can worsen from general unrest, to rioting (which interferes with production and output



at the colony), to full on rebellion where the controlling power is expelled from the colony altogether.

FLEETS TAB

The Fleets Tab displays in detail all ships present at this colony. Right click the ship icon for details on that ship type. You may cancel orders for moving fleets and scrap ships from fleets at your colony here.



3.3.2. STRUCTURES AND PRODUCTION

The structures in a colony are what make it valuable. Although technology is important for building advanced structures, a colony will also need a large population of works to staff the various facilities.



Structures can be classified into two basic types: production structures which can build more buildings or ships; and ancillary structures which enhance the colony's value in a variety of ways.

PRODUCTION STRUCTURES

There are only two production structures: industry and dockyards. Industry structures are the backbone of every colony because they build literally every structure on the planet. They can even build additional industry structures to increase the speed at which the colony expands its infrastructure. Industry structures start out as small workshops but can be upgraded into industrial behemoths capable of putting together massive structures with huge bonuses. Dockyards function in much the same way. Multiple dockyards can be constructed and after the initial stage of constructing a dockyard they can be upgraded into massive orbital metropolises where mega capital ships are built.

To build new structures, click on an industry structure (generally a yellow and silver building with smoke stacks). A production menu will appear below it and all structures eligible to be built will be listed here. Left click on a structure to add it to the production queue. Note that the icon of the structure will show up on the production queue. To cancel building the structure, right click the icon needing cancellation on the production queue. Ships can be built in the exact same way by clicking on a dock yard or cancelled by selecting the dock yard and them right clicking the ship on the production queue.

ANCILLARY STRUCTURES

Unlike production structures, ancillary structures do not bring up any additional menus when clicked nor do they produce new concrete items. Instead, ancillary structures augment the worth and usefulness of one's colony in various ways. Some of the ways ancillary structures help colonies include:

- Increase income (mining facilities)
- Increase research output (research facilities and labs)
- Increase population happiness (entertainment facilities)
- ➤ Increase public order (security HQs)
- ➤ Increase defence (missile silos, shield generators)

Tip: Asteroid Mines give a discount to constructing ships but can only be built in systems with asteroid belts.

Much like production structures, ancillary structures can be upgraded as a colony grows in population and technology advances.

3.3.3. DEFENCES

There are a variety of defensive structures available to the player, especially as technology advances. Overall, defences are a crucial component to frontier colonies that may be small



but are strategically important. Luckily, some defensive structures like missile silos can be uprooted from their planet of origin and relocated to another planet. Some defensive structures available to the player as time goes on include:

Shield generators – These generators will protect ground units from enemy ships looking to soften them up from orbit.

Orbital Platforms – These floating weapons decks will make trouble for ships that get too close to a planet. Some of the more advanced Orbital Platforms can even trade blows with capital ships.

Missile Silos – These weapons positions will fire massive rockets at any enemy ships in range, helping friendly ships with slow, but heavy fire.

Additionally, offensive units can be used as defence in a pinch. Tanks and marines are particularly useful against enemy soldiers, but a colony will also automatically train militia units which can be called upon in the event of an invasion. The number of militia units available to the player is proportional to the size of the population in that colony.

Another vital function tanks and marines play is in quelling unrest in conquered colonies. Generally when conquering colonies that were founded and expanded by another race, unrest will be particularly high especially when first occupying the colony. Having a healthy supply of Marines on the ground can go a long way in preventing rioting and dissent.

Tip: Marines are a more cost effective means of suppressing public discontent than security centers, but security centers are quicker to build, and, unlike marines, can be built on conquered planets.

3.3.4. AUTO MANAGE

With the possibility of playing in massive galaxies with dozens of stars, it is also possible to have hundreds of colonies in an empire. For players who do not want to manage several hundred or even several dozen colonies at once, the Auto Manage feature allows them to set general directives for an Al manager and then leave the colony to itself.



Apart from toggling whether or not to have a colony auto managed, the player can also stipulate whether the Al manager can build defences, ground units, ships, and structures. The



player can also set the general goal of the colony which the auto manage Al will intelligently strive for. A player can ask the Al to pursue a balanced development track, improve income, improve defences, or improve the offensive military capabilities of the colony. Additionally, the player can also set the tax rate for the colony.

3.4. REPORTS

The reports screen displays important information about both the player's race and the other races vying for victory. Apart from displaying the player's victory point rank relative to all other opponents, the player can use the Charts tab to gather detailed information about who is powerful and where they are concentrating their power.

3.4.1. PLAYER SUMMARY

The Player Summary tab provides an overview of the race the player is currently playing as in addition to their overall rank in the game and the number of victory points they have earned. The victory point box also shows the player how many victory points they've won in each victory condition.





3.4.2. CHARTS

The Charts tab provides comprehensive data on both the player's performance and the performance of the player's opponents. Data can be displayed in line, stacked, or histogram chart and data which can be displayed ranges from population happiness to expenditure to enemy units destroyed and more. Additionally, there are a variety of race filter options so the player can view statistics for only allies, enemies, top ranked players and more.





3.4.3. FINANCE



The Finance tab displays the overall cash flow for the player's race. The player can view the projected cash flow for the next turn, the cash flow from the previous turn and the summary of cash flow for the whole game. Additionally, the player can set the auto manage Al's overall spending philosophy. This setting will affect all colonies that are managed by the Al and the player can choose whether the Al should spend all of the money in the treasury in the pursuit of their directives, none at all, or anywhere in between.

3.5. DIPLOMACY

Even the strongest empire could use a few friends when disaster strikes, but diplomacy is more than simply declaring who is an ally or an enemy. An agile statesman can obtain riches, advanced research, and even ships or colonies through carefully building relationships and wisely negotiating.



3.5.1. DIPLOMACY OVERVIEW SCREEN



Apart from knowing who to welcome and who to attack, it is also important to know what other races are doing too. The Diplomacy Overview screen displays all the races the player has encountered and their current alignments or wars. Clicking on the tablet in each races' box will open up a list of the current agreements the player has with that race. By clicking the icon of the two individuals communicating, the player can open up a new negotiation with that race the negotiation screen will appear.





3.5.2. NEGOTIATION SCREEN

The Negotiation screen is the main way the player interfaces with other races. From here the player can request or give a variety of assets in an effort to further their ultimate goals with that particular race. The format of a negotiation unfolds in stages. First, the party which initiated the negotiations makes an offer. The second party can then accept the offer, make a counter offer, or reject the notion all together and end the negotiation. In the case of a counter offer, the first party now has the option to accept, counter offer, or reject and the negotiation continues in this format until a resolution. Most amiable negotiations continue until both sides are reasonably happy with that they are getting.

It is generally considered rude and hostile to flat out reject a proposal and offer no effort to try to reach an accord. While a few instances of stonewalling negotiations aren't necessarily bad, two races that never communicate will not build a very strong relationship and can very easily collapse into war.



Tip: If another player has a building such as a trade mission or relay station on your colony, they can spy on you and see full details of your defences.

Additionally, it is not always wise to try to get the better of the other party in a negotiation. Friendly relationships sometimes demand lopsided deals to keep the relationships friendly. Players who always seek to tip the offer balance in their favor may gain much in negotiations but they will not gain strong allies.



- A The items the player wishes to offer to the opposing side.
- B The items the player is demanding from the opposing side.
- C The dialogue response of the opposing side.
- D The current terms of the negotiation. These change as offers and counter offers are made.
- E Give or demand an item as a gift (i.e. no reciprocating item from the other side).
- F Ask the other party to agree as a special favor. In some cases allies with a close relationship can ask extraordinary things of their friends and, as a special favor, get them.
- G Threaten trouble if the other party does not accept the terms of the deal.
- H Declare war on the other party if they do not accept the terms of the deal.



- I The balance of the offer. Depending on what each side is getting in the deal, the offer may favor one side or the other.
- J View the existing agreements between the two parties in the negotiation.
- K Ask the other party their opinion of another race.

3.6. TECHNOLOGY

To remain competitive with one's adversaries, the player must constantly be developing and deploying new technologies. The right technological breakthrough at the right time can change the course of the game so players should always dedicate a substantial portion of their resources to creating and upgrading research labs.

3.6.1. RESEARCH

Research is divided into 7 different fields each with specific projects that can be selected for focus. Each project has a number in the top right corner which indicates how many turns it will take to complete research on the project and to receive the benefits from the new technology. The number in the top right corner is dynamically calculated based on the amount of resources dedicated to that particular field of research.



The amount of resources available for each field is dependent on a number of things: First, generic research labs contribute a few overall resource points to all fields. These overall points



can be allocated to different fields by using the slider bars located at the edge of each field's research box. Each slider bar represents a rough percentage that each field will receive in generic research points. Second, specialized labs, or even more specialized research "centers," can be built at larger colonies which contribute a large amount of resource points to the specific field the player specialized the facility in. Thus, players can concentrate their efforts on specific fields of research by reassigning several generic research centers into the desired fields. To build a specialized research lab, players must first build a generic lab. Then, when the colony is large enough, a generic lab can develop a specialty. Later, as the colony becomes very large, specialized labs can be further upgraded to contribute even more resource points to their field.

Additionally, the button the bottom left corner of the Research screen will display the technology browser. The Technology Browser displays the technology tree for each field of research in addition to which technologies the player has already researched, can currently research, or is waiting to unlock. The Technology Browser is helpful in planning an overall research strategy since there are many different technologies but only a finite amount of resources available for each field. By right clicking on any of the project icons a description of the project will appear.



SKUNKWORKS

The eighth field displayed in the Research screen is not a group of technologies but rather a special team of brilliant researchers that can put their minds to any of the other seven fields



with astounding effectiveness. In essence, any resource points dedicated towards Skunkworks are thrown blindly at super geniuses who only reveal what they are working on just as the project is coming to fruition. The upside to this is that the Skunkworks team can complete research projects much faster than their colleagues who have knowledge of only one field.

Players who don't mind being kept in the dark until the closing stages of a project, but want to try to get a leg up on their opponents technologically should try their luck at Skunkworks. Skunkworks can give players an advantage in a specific field for a brief window of time due to how quickly they can research a project. Monitor this team closely though, they don't care if another field is also researching the same project while they are. It's very possible that the Skunkworks team reveals that they are working on the same thing as a specialized team in which case the efforts of one of these two groups will be wasted.

4. REAL TIME BATTLE MODE

Real Time Battle Mode is where the rubber meets the road (or rather where the Cruiser hull meets the nebula). When two fleets meet in combat, Real Time Battle Mode will allow the superior tactician to seize the upper hand strategically by affecting a victory in battle. Battles in deep space are simple enough, the side that takes the field or destroys the enemy wins. When a colony is at stake, the combatants must wage two wars at once: one in space and one on the surface of the planet in question. The attacker has the added challenge of orchestrating a land invasion while under fire from both enemy forces in space and any defences on the ground.

Although the strategic portion of Armada 2526 will probably require more time and attention, Battle Mode is often the exciting and (hopefully) gratifying culmination of carefully laid strategic plans!



4.1. INTERFACE OVERVIEW

The Battle Mode interface is comprised of two components: the actual battle interface and the Advisor interface. The Advisor interface functions exactly the same as in the Star Map.

- A **Start / End Battle** Use this button to start the battle when in deployment mode or, when the main battle has ended, allow the AI to mop up the end of a battle in compressed time.
- B **Turbo Mode** Hold this button down to speed up time.
- C Pause Use this button to pause the battle. Order can still be issued to units when the battle is paused.
- D **Time** The amount of time remaining in the battle.
- E **Force List** The list and number of ships in the player's fleet and their grouping.
- F Sorting Four sorting options which are (from right to left): sort by left to right, sort by top to bottom, sort by ship type, and sort by selection key.
- G Group Units Combing multiple ships into the same group.
- H **Al Control** Give the friendly Al control over the selected group of ships.
- Retreat The selected unit will retreat through the nearest hyperspace portal.
- J Launch Special Operation The selected unit will launch a special operation it is capable of doing such as deploying ground forces, infecting a planet with plague, etc.
- K Increase/Decrease Lines Increase or decrease the number of lines the group formation consists of.
- Open/Close Spacing Make the group formation tighter or looser.
- M Formation Choose the type of formation the group will operate in.



4.2. SPACE COMBAT

In large battles, before battle begins, the player will have the ability to deploy their forces within a certain deployment area. In small battles the battle begins right away, but you can hit the pause button to make adjustments at the start. Although the area isn't explicitly outlined, players generally must keep their ships in the vicinity of the side on which they entered the battle from. To move units in the deployment phase, left click to select a group of units and then right click the location the units are to be redeployed to. If you right-click and hold down the button, you can use the mouse to change the orientation of the new formation as well as its location. The player can also alter other aspects of their each squadron of ships like ship grouping, formations, and spacing. When all forces have been deployed in a desirable way, the player can then click the Start Battle button in the bottom right corner of the screen. Right-clicking on an enemy group will tell your group to target it. You cannot target individual enemy ships, only groups.

At this point the real time battle will begin, the timer will start to count down, and the enemy will begin to close on the player's position. The player can order their units to move by left clicking on a group and then right clicking a destination for the unit to move to. Units will automatically fire their weapons at enemies in range. Ships with multiple types of weapons will choose the best tool for the job and automatically manage what ordinance to use.

As ships take damage their shields will go from invisible to an increasingly darker shade of purple. The more purple and visible a ships shield, the closer it is to failure. When a ship's shield fails it only needs minimal damage to be completely destroyed. Shields can recover to full strength over time.

4.2.1. FORMATIONS

The player has a variety of formation options to choose from to custom tune their fleet. Formations are useful in honing strategies for particular groups of ships. For instance, some formations are more conducive to surviving under heavy fire in the center of battle, whereas other formations are more vulnerable to attack but can concentrate a large amount of firepower.



Line Abreast – This is the default formation for all ship groups. It is a simple line across the battlefield. The advantage of this formation is that it allows for a concentration of firepower from all ships in the group. The disadvantage is that it also leaves all ships in the formation equally vulnerable to enemy fire.



Caracole – When in the caracole formation, ships will form a vertical ring and continually rotate around. The advantage of this is that the enemy can not concentrate its fire on any one ship and any damage from shooting at ships in a caracole will be spread out over the entire group. Each of your ships in turn fires from the same point, and if the enemy is not in a circulating formation, most likely at the same enemy ship. It is often best when several caracoles are used side by side, as it allows a lot of firepower to be concentrated. If used individually, enemy in line can concentrate their fire on front ship. The disadvantage to this formation is that only one ship in the formation can fire at the enemy at any one time. This formation is best for very fast but weak ships.



Circle – This formation functions much like a caracole except that the ring formed is horizontal (or on the plane of the battlefield). Also like the caracole, ships in this formation rotate which spreads damage even across all ships but it also limits the firepower of the group. The circle is primarily a defensive formation.

Apart from a formation type, player's can also specify the spacing of units in a group. Like formations, ship spacing helps fine tune groups to meet specific strategic goals. Groups with tight spacing can concentrate their fire on targets much more effectively, but are vulnerable to missile attacks which do splash damage. Concordantly, loose spacing protects against splash damage but diminishes the group's firepower concentration.



In addition, players can specify the number of lines a group will consist of when in the Line Abreast formation. This option allows players to keep ships with lots of firepower and range but weak defences towards the rear of the battle while keeping the strong and agile ships designed for the front lines in harms way. In addition, multiple lines of ships can provide flank security if the player anticipates the enemy attempting to flank the player's ship line.



4.2.2. RETREATING

Any unit can retreat at any time, but in most cases an entire fleet will retreat when the battle is clearly lost. When a unit or entire fleet is given the order to retreat, three hyperspace gates will form at the rear of the side the retreating force started the battle on. These three hyperspace gates are the only method of escape for the routed forces. In the event of a large number of ships retreating at once, a bottleneck can easily form



leaving the ships in the retreat queue vulnerable. For this reason it is generally a good idea to orchestrate a controlled and slow retreat from the battlefield rather than a mass exodus. The enemy can inflict heavy casualties in the dash for the hyperspace gates so it is important to monitor the tide of battle carefully and anticipate defeat so one's forces still have enough strength and time to withdraw effectively. Similarly, a player who can anticipate defeating their enemy can take steps to capitalize on their inevitable withdrawal and inflict maximum damage as the enemy waits to use the hyperspace gates.

4.3. GROUND COMBAT

To first initiate ground combat, the attacking player will need to load assault ships with marines and tanks before the battle. Although transports can move marines from place to place, they can not serve as assault craft and so any marines loaded on to transports for the battle can not be used. At any point in the battle, the attacker can select an assault ship loaded with ground forces then press the Launch Ground Units button. At this point the friendly Al will take



over command of the ship and begin a landing operation. Timing is important here. Assault ships are not always well defended and they are vulnerable for a few moments when they are dropping their marines and tanks. While not required, it is generally wise to wait until the attacking fleet has superiority in the skies above or at least an advantage in battle. However, ground forces are also the most effective way to take out ground-based defenses, so sometimes it may be better to commit them early.

Issuing orders to units and carrying out the battle takes place in the same way as space combat: left click to select a group of units and right click to move them. Also like space combat, ground units will automatically engage enemy forces that are in range. One important factor to keep in mind for ground combat is that although militia, marines, and tanks can't take part in the battle for space above them, some types of space ships can attack ground units. As a result, some assault and support ships can provide fire support for their ground units which can be increasingly powerful should superiority in space be achieved. Apart from engaging other militia, marines, and tanks, the attacking ground force can also destroy defensive structures like missile silos to aid in the space battle above.

If the attacker can successfully destroy all defending forces on the planet's surface and conquer the space around the planet, they will be victorious and the planet will be at their mercy. If the attacker does not destroy all the surface defences but wins the space battle, they will have a number of options to decide the fate of the colony but they will not be able to occupy it.

Given the circumstances of battles taking place on a planet surface, there is no retreat for the attacking or defending forces so both sides must fight to the death.

4.4. HOTKEY

Left Click Select Group

Double Click Select Single Unit

Right Click Move / Attack

F1 Show Controls

F2 Show / Hide Advisor
Enter Unit Information

Esc Al Finish Battle

P or Pause Pause

F8 Toggle Turbo Mode

Arrow Keys

Arrow Keys

Pan Map

WASD Keys

Pan Map

Shift

Pan Faster

Home

Center View

F5

Unit Eye View

F6

Orbit Unit View

Middle Moue Button

Mouse Look

G Group Items
Ctrl + Click Add to Selection

Shift + Double Click Select All of Type
0-9 Select Numbered Group
Shift + 0-9 Assign Group Number

Ctrl + C Circle Formation
Ctrl + V Caracole Formation
Ctrl + B Line Abreast Formation
Alt + 1-4 Set Number of Lines

Ctrl + I Set Al to Control Group

 Ctrl + R
 Retreat

 Ctrl + L
 Launch

 Ctrl + A
 Select All

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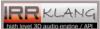
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OUR STRENGTH

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