

GEMINI SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW

By Lieutenant Gabriel Quentin, Exploratory Services

Gemini is still a newborn sector struggling to find her feet. It has only been 30 years since the military set out to contain Mesakan expansion by entrenching along the border. It was during this early entrenching period that the Exploratory Services (ES) were first called in to map out available resources, including habitable planets, mineral-rich asteroids and jump tunnels.

Within the first five years of exploration two major factors contributed to the opening of Gemini to public enterprise. The first was the rapid entrenchment of military forces far from established supply lines and support services — they needed access to local resources. The second factor was the tremendous wealth of resources discovered by the ES in Gemini. This was essential in boosting the Confederation's gross worth. As developers and entrepreneurs moved in to exploit the discoveries made by the ES, several standard base types evolved (see below). As the populations grew, Gemini was divided into four political/cartographic quadrants — Potter, Humboldt, Fariss and Clarke, clockwise from bottom right on a standard Gunther projection.

QUADRANTS

Clarke

Clarke is the fortress, the heart of the military entrenchment begun 30 years ago. Today, the seat of all Gemini's naval forces. Perry Naval Base, is in Clarke. This is the front line, dotted with jump points into Mesakan territory. In this area, ships must constantly be ready to engage in border skirmishes. However, because of our strength, there has not been a full scale battle in Gemini for 11 years. The whole sector owes its existence to the strength of our naval forces, forces that have blossomed under Admiral Terrell's capable leadership.

Fariss

Asteroids. That one word sums up any traveler's experience of Fariss. Here are more mining bases than in the surrounding five sectors combined. There are agricultural planets and refineries, to be sure, but the most prevalent industry is the extraction of minerals from the many large asteroids that clutter Fariss' attractive vistas.

Humboldt

Humboldt is the sparsest of the quadrants. The central hub of Humboldt is Junction, a system with three habitable planets and six jump points. The quadrant is limited in natural resources, but Junction earns its name as one of the most essential nodes in Gemini's web of jump-ways. Aside from Junction, Humboldt offers few mining and refining opportunities and a lot of empty space.

Potter

Potter is the heart of what little civilization Gemini has. The capital, New Constantinople, is located here, as are many other large population centers. The most important of these, New Detroit, is renowned for the wealth of work and opportunity to be had there, not to mention the high quality of alcohol imported from Centauri and

Ceti Prime. Potter is the only quadrant that has more than one Pleasure planet, built entirely on rabid consumerism and providing R&R for the military types. Reports of Mesakan and pirate attacks in Potter have dropped to the lowest rate of any border sector.

BASE TYPES

As mankind has settled the stars, several types of bases appear wherever we go. As you travel throughout the quadrants you will certainly encounter each of these. Below, you will find a thumbnail sketch of each base type to help you set your expectations and goals before landing at any given locale. Also listed are four of Gemini's most significant places: Perry, Oxford, New Constantinople and New Detroit. Be advised that not every base will buy what you have to sell — for example, it is obviously futile to try to sell unrefined plutonium to an agricultural planet. Trade can be very lucrative if you don't get discouraged and keep your wits about you. Enjoy your stay — may it be full of adventure and profit!

Agricultural

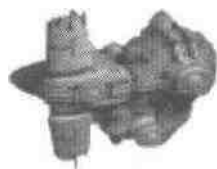
General Notes. These are planets whose primary industry is farming. They are usually large, with a high land-to-ocean ratio. Terraforming is in progress on most of these worlds, but domed cities are still the rule. Life here is a lot of work, and Gemini is trying to encourage colonists to have more children and settle down.



Trading Tips. Furs, lumber, pets, grain and foodstuffs are available here. They have a great need for more equipment and workers, as well as housing for their growing population.

Mining

General Notes. Mining bases are affixed to and carved into large asteroids. This means that flying through an asteroid field is usually mandatory for getting there. Mines are most prevalent in Fariss Quadrant, though they are also found, less frequently, throughout the sector. The bars are generally Spartan and all drinks have been imported (and are therefore expensive).



Trading Tips. Mining bases need food. They have plenty of minerals and not much interest in luxury goods. Mining bases also seek ways to distract their lonely workers. Issues of *Plaything*, games or other entertainment are in high demand.

Pirate

General Notes. With the population boom has come a piracy boom. At times, entire bases have been taken over. These hostile takeovers have been mostly limited to Fariss Quadrant and, therefore, to backwater mining bases, especially those left abandoned due to depleted resources. Pirate bases are a hazard to aboveboard shippers and a boon to unscrupulous dealers in illicit goods. Due to the nature of this type of base, no guild offices are ever available here.

Trading Tips. While I would rather say that it is not possible to trade with pirates, that is not the case. These bases need food and trade in weapons. They deal in drugs such as Brilliance, and continue to trade slaves as if we were living in the 23rd century. Please note that persons known to attack merchants and trade in contraband are considered saboteurs of the war effort and are attacked on sight by Confederation forces.

Pleasure

General Notes. Pleasure planets are the result of high demand, a sudden population explosion and a few lucky prospectors coming into too much wealth too soon in their lives. These are places of hedonistic games, a *tromp l'oeil* of culture. They are also important pressure valves during these tense times.

Trading Tips. Pleasure planets are hotbeds of consumerism. The population is interested in buying drugs, art, furs, games and anything fun or exciting. Unfortunately, they produce little besides movies.

Refinery

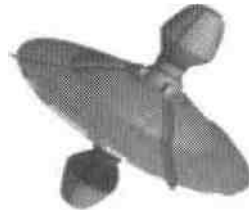
General Notes. Refineries are platform-based space stations whose primary purpose is to turn the natural resources of Gemini's asteroids and planets into advanced fuels, durable goods, etc. They are a major employer of skilled labor and are found throughout all four quadrants.



Trading Tips. Like mining bases, refineries have a great need for food and entertainment. They also need natural resources shipped in for processing.

New Constantinople

General Notes. New Constantinople is the capital of Gemini Sector. It is a major population center, with representatives of every major industry. It is located in central Potter and receives fairly heavy traffic. Confederation and militia patrols have a high chance of being around the base to protect it and to police the merchants, preventing the movement of contraband on or off base.



Trading Tips. Almost all art to be found in the area is produced here. New Constantinople is the hub of all political and cultural events. Due to its importance, people come from all over to buy and sell nearly everything. It is a good place to do business.

New Detroit

General Notes. New Detroit is one of the most fascinating of Gemini's urban centers. It is our industrial heart and it beats with the rhythms of heavy machinery. Even from orbit, the pervasive gray of buildings and smog are visible. Before there were refineries in Gemini's space, there was New Detroit. For three decades the central metropolis has been expanding to cover the planet's enormous land masses. Its bars and other businesses sit at the bottom of skyscrapers like the little hunched prophets at the bottom of Hadrian's Gorge. Definitely a place to visit and an even better place to do business.



Trading Tips. Competition is stiff here. There is a glut of manufactured goods. If it's man-made, you can bet New Detroit's got it. They need natural resources and are willing to pay the price to get them. New Detroit's mixture of highbrow and sleaze industry means that there's a nook, out of the incessant drizzle, for any goods you wish to buy or sell.

Oxford

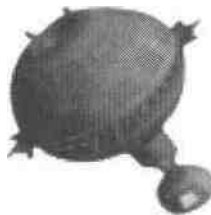
General Notes. The intellectual seat of the sector, Oxford is a university planet, well known for its research facilities. It has been built out to resemble Old Earth, specifically the old English college town. This makes the place a fantastic draw for tourism. It is located far from the front in Potter Quadrant and was one of the first planets terraformed in Gemini. Its library is renowned beyond Gemini's horizons, drawing scholars from distant suns to visit its hardwood halls and well-tended quadrangles.



Trading Tips. They will definitely sell books and other intellectual properties. Aside from that they have the same trading needs as any heavily populated agricultural planet.

Perry

General Notes. Perry, the military center of Gemini, is located in Clarke, not far from the Mesakan border. Many military patrols originate here and you have a high chance of encountering these forces. Admiral Terrell runs his corner of the war from here. Perry is a model of efficiency and does a lively business in all industries. It is a fine example of starbase architecture as well.



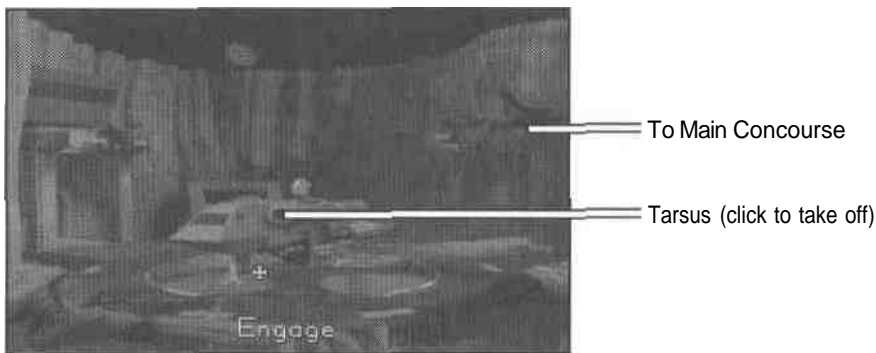
Trading Tips. As the core of all local military operations, many supply lines come into Perry. They need food, medical supplies and the like. They sell lots of out-of-date weaponry here — a good start for a gun-runner. With so many merchants coming here, there is always a chance to pick up whatever you're looking to buy.

COMMON BASE LOCATIONS

As a pilot and an entrepreneur, you need to use all the resources of the bases you frequent. I will profile each of the major industries that will attempt to exploit you as a customer but are essential to your survival. Each of these places has been selected for its usefulness. Some are places that broker for employers while others — like hangars with docking fees — are necessary evils. These private sector businesses are not as convenient or efficient as their Naval equivalent but they sure are more interesting, and they're all we've got.

Hangar

The first impression you get of any base is its hangar. Hangar protection and services are provided by the base in order to avoid racketeering and crowded conditions. They do charge a landing fee that covers the cost of loading ships with jump fuel, staff, equipment and other costs, as well as a small part serving as a tax to pay for the base's maintenance. This fee, while a flat rate, is allowed to drop so as to never charge you more than you can afford. Hangars have always been important to the economy of a base. They employ a large number of people to maintain the automatic docking equipment, as radio personnel, administrators, and cargo loaders and unloaders. Many pilots assume that the hangar is just a place to park one's ship, when in fact it is an industry as thriving as any other — except perhaps more important to spacefarers. Imagine the chaos if the hangars all shut down ...

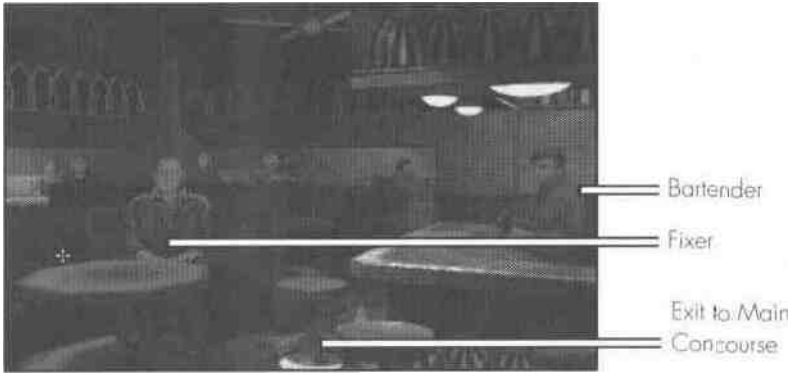


Bar

Nearly every place in the human universe has a bar. Gemini is no exception. Bars are not only one of the most prolific industries in our sector but are useful to the ambitious privateer. Businessmen in need of pilots to undertake especially lucrative (read "dangerous") missions often solicit them over a drink. Large urban areas are more likely to produce these *fixers* because of the huge number of bureaucrats and middlemen there. Be warned that most employers met this way bind their contracts with only a handshake and often prove not to be legit. Sandoval, in New Detroit, nearly always has something of interest.

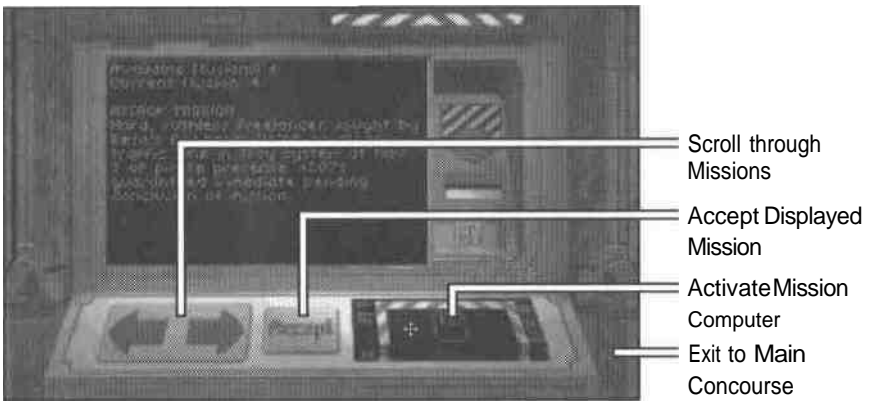
Also of interest in our bars are the staff members. It has been my professional experience that a good bartender knows more about the war than military intelligence types do, and

more about trading than the Merchants' Guild ever will. Learning from bartenders has always been an important part of doing business in Gemini, a part of our culture.



Mission Computer

Mission Computers are ubiquitous. These are the most popular forum for hiring pilots. They are quick and typically built into the base itself. Many pilots rely upon their convenience for work. This automated system offers a variety of missions for widely varying pay. The military also uses this service to solicit mercenaries, a practice they are continuing due to its cost efficiency and the high mission success rate. Whether your ship is a cargo vessel or a killing machine, you can find work here.

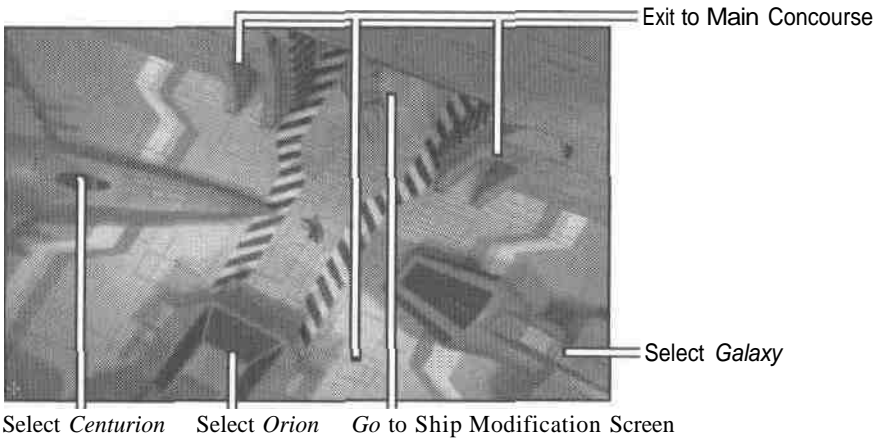


The interface is friendly. After a palm print identification you may scroll through the available listings. If you accept a mission, you may use the arrows to continue scrolling through them. The Mission Computers follow the Guild standard that you probably ought not to take more than three missions at a time. This is for two reasons. First, pilots who regularly accept more than three missions usually end up dropping one and either losing someone money or causing massive casualties due to undelivered supplies or undefended civilians. Second, limiting the number of missions is an attempt to prevent mobsters and shady characters from accepting all the work and doling it out for a cut to flunkies and desperates, cornering the market.

Ship Dealer

The last common location is the ship dealer. These privately held dealerships are where you can buy the latest model ship. Indicating the ship you would like will undoubtedly lead to a sales pitch. Be forewarned — there are hitches that they do not mention in their pitch. Here are a few things you should know before dealing with these shysters:

- When trading-in a ship you also get trade-in value for your upgrades. If you have a turret, two meson blasters, shields and a cargo expansion, your trade-in value is the Joan's Index Value of your old ship, minus wear and tear, plus the current selling price for each upgrade.
- Dealerships refuse to deal with transferring cargo unless it easy on them. You must have less cargo than the capacity of your new ship. If you trade in a fully loaded *Galaxy* for a *Centurion*, the salesman will turn you away until your cargo is less than the capacity of the *Centurion*.
- There's no financing. Unfortunately, the life span of a pilot in Gemini is short enough that they are unwilling to take a risk on you making payments. Not surprisingly, no insurance is available for freelancers. This means saving up a lot of cash before buying much of anything. While inconvenient, the businesses have little choice.

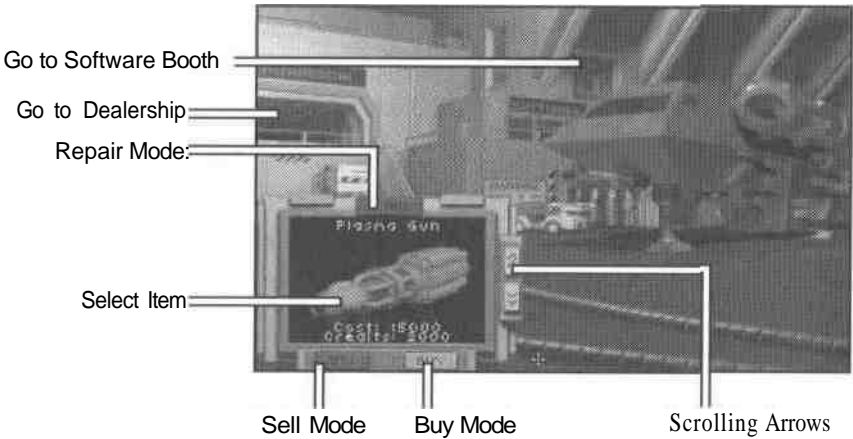


Ship Modification

This is where you buy, sell or repair options. Options include armor, guns, turrets, cargo expansions and anything else that adds to the performance or longevity of your vehicle.

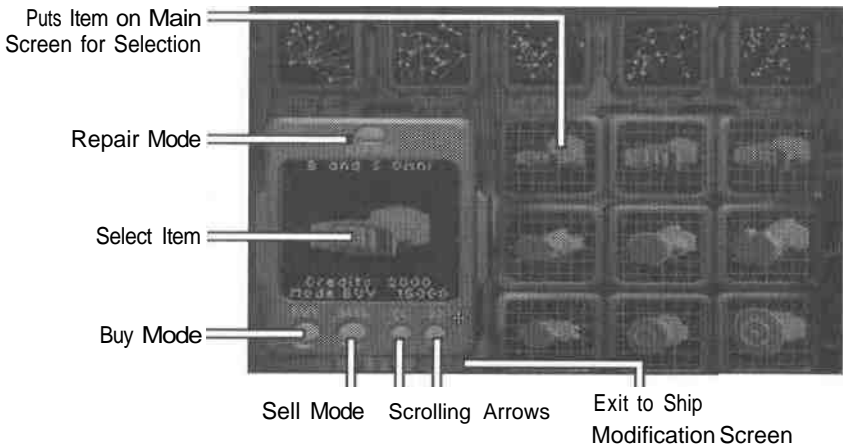
Interfacing with Ship Modification is as simple as using a monitor. Use the buttons at the bottom of the screen to select Buy or Sell mode. Using the arrows at the sides, you can scroll through the available items. When you find an item you are interested in, simply touch the screen to indicate your selection. When you have indicated a gun or other such item, you are asked to pick the location on your ship where you would like it placed.

Please note: You are not allowed to purchase missiles or torpedoes without a launcher. This constitutes intent to sell and is strictly prohibited. Should you decide to sell a launcher that still has missiles or torpedoes allocated to it, the ammunition automatically sells at the going rate. Always buy ammunition last and sell it first.



Software Booth

The other useful department in a dealership is the Software Booth. This is where you acquire such essential equipment as maps and scanners. Both are imperative. It seems that this is one of the areas that was too rapidly deregulated. Without a map you may as well be flying blind. In over seven hundred years of space travel this is only the second time we have allowed pilots to fly about with no navigational software. While the manufacture of scanners is competitive (there are three brands each with their own high and low end models), maps are not. Scanners are important, maps are essential. Spend your money wisely.



This listing should give you some sense of the recovery Gemini is making since the lifting of martial law. We are on the economic upswing. This is a sector of opportunity, a frontier for the risk takers of the Confederation. Your contribution is an important part of making us an immovable fortress on the Mesakan border and a growth-oriented, prosperous community.

Mercenaries' Guild

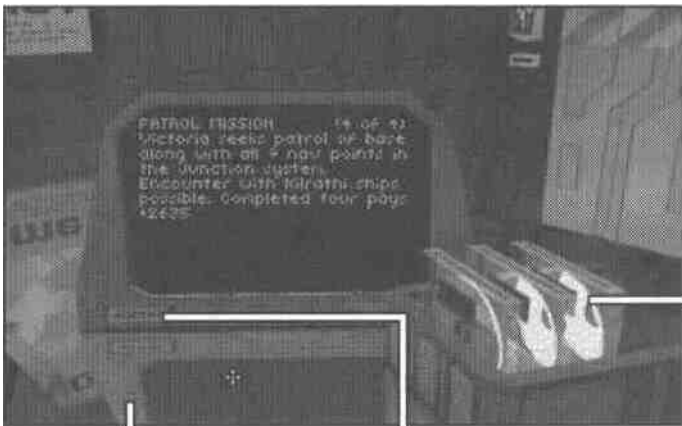
As a long-time associate of this proud organization, I can personally speak for their integrity and usefulness. For a reasonable membership fee, pilots are able to take a variety of jobs cleared by the Guild. This means no missions are illegal and payment is guaranteed. They also guarantee their clients that all guildmen are registered and can therefore be tracked and penalized for indiscretions. Any one individual may not have more than three missions accepted at any one time in order to prevent racketeering or simply over-committing out of ambition. All members have access to mission listings at any Guild office and are paid as soon as mission requirements are fulfilled. Reporting to an office is not necessary. The Mercenaries' Guild is an honorable society and does not allow maintenance of offices on pirate bases.



View Mercenaries' Mission Computer

Speak to Guild Officer

Exit to Main Concourse



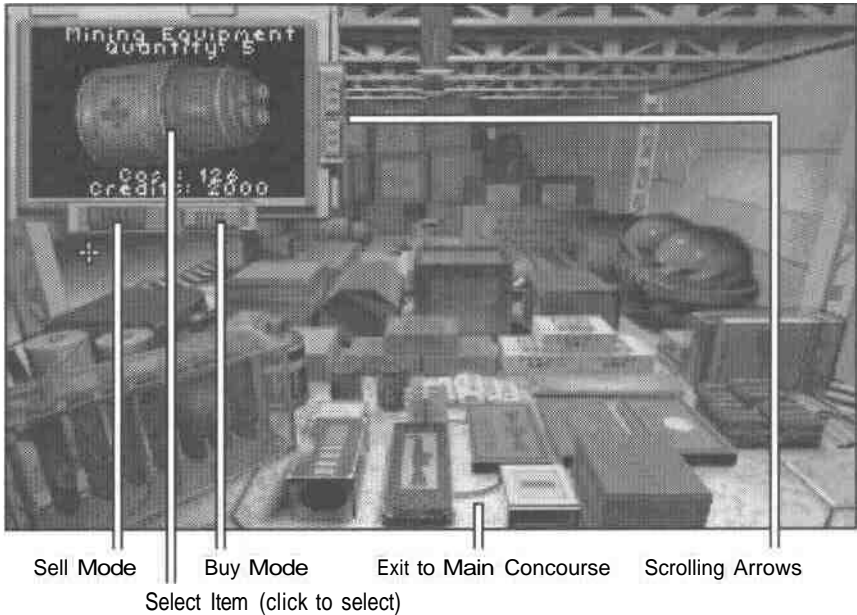
Exit to Mercenaries' Guild

Accept Displayed Mission

Select Mission

Commodity Exchange

These are automated centers of trade scattered throughout the sector. They are state run and standardized, although prices are set locally by demand. Using the Exchange is as easy as interfacing with the monitor provided. You select whether you are in buy or sell mode and scroll through the available cargo. Purchasing or selling is as easy as touching the screen when the desired goods are being displayed. Finances are handled automatically. This lack of human supervision has both advantages and disadvantages.



When the Exchange was first standardized, 15 years ago, it was heavily regulated under Governor Meshach's orders. Costs were standardized and all transactions required Merchants' Guild approval. The guild was a part of the Commerce Department at that time. Then changes came ... the Meshach administration fell due to the sale of *Talons* to the Church of Man. In the ensuing political vacuum, base leaders did away with the regulations and fully automated the Exchange. Now, a decade and half later, prices have come down and profit is had trading from base to base. The only caveat is that, while you may be able to buy and sell slaves or drugs, they are not legal. If militia or Confeds scan your ship en route and discover contraband, you will be considered a trafficker and summarily attacked. Also, New Constantinople and Perry Naval Base forbid the sale of contraband through their Commodity Exchange.

There are many ways to make a profit through trade. Buying grain at an agricultural planet, selling it at a mining base, buying ore at the base, selling it to a refinery, buying the refinery's plastics, and selling them back at the agricultural world is just one obvious example of a lucrative trade route. The expansion of privatized trade also opens up private interest in keeping the trade routes clear of pirates and Kilrathi. An active and healthy Commodity Exchange spells profit for you more mercenary types as well as for the haulers of cargo.