

Secret Masters

a game for exactly three players by David Brain

Everyone knows that the world is controlled by the Secret Masters. But they are just as driven by rivalry as anyone else. The alleged Leaders of the various factions meet together and plot to place agents in positions of power across the globe, hoping to outsmart their rivals. But it's not so easy to rule the world...

COMPONENTS

The game comprises the following:

- 3 Mapboard cards
- 4 Faction cards
- 9 Region cards
- 1 Redeploy card
- 20 Agents (5 meeples in blue, green, red & yellow)
- 15 Vote markers (6 red, 6 white, 3 orange cubes)
- 1 Grand Master marker
- An opaque bag for voting

SETUP

The 3 Map cards are laid out on the table to form the board. The Agents are placed in a pool above the board. Take one Agent of each colour and randomly place them in each of the four 1 point regions (Russia, Africa, Oceania, India/Middle East.) The four Faction cards are now shuffled and one dealt face down to each player – these are kept hidden but a player may look at their own Faction card at any time. The remaining Faction card is be removed from the game without any player seeing it. Each player gets 2 red, 2 white and 1 orange vote marker. Vote markers should be kept secret at all times (*e.g. hide them under your Faction card.*) The Grand Master is the most recent person to attend a Freemasons meeting (or choose at random); they are the first Active player. They should shuffle the 9 Region cards, deal out 3 face down, add the Redeploy card face-up and then add the other six Region cards face-down on top.

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Playtest and development thanks to Paul Mansfield, Keith Rapley, Bez Shahriari, Dave Weeks and the London Playtest Meetup Group

GAMEPLAY

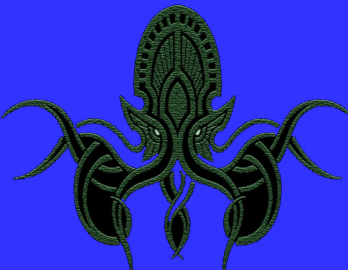
The game consists of a series of rounds. In a round, each player takes a turn as described below, beginning with the Active player.

1. ***If the Active player controls five or more points then they reveal their Faction card and wins the game immediately.*** A faction controls a region (and hence those points) if they have the most Agents (or are tied for the most Agents) in that region. A win ***must*** be claimed before any other action is taken in a turn.
2. The Active player reveals the top Region card from the deck and places it on the left side of the map (the Red border.) They then reveal the next card and place it on the right side of the map (the White border.)
3. The Active player now chooses an Agent from the pool and place it on one of the Region cards. (If there are only two Agents left in the pool, return all Agents in Antarctica to the pool before selecting Agents.) The next player clockwise then chooses an Agent of a ***different*** colour from the pool and places it on the other Region card. The second player may choose an Agent already on the board in a different Region and move it onto the card, but only if that Region has an equal or lower value to the Region on the card. Note that Antarctica does not have a value so Agents cannot be moved from there as part of this action.
4. Each player chooses ***exactly three*** Vote markers from their stock and secretly places them in the bag. Once all the players have voted, the markers are removed from the bag, revealed, and counted by the current Active player. The Agent on the Region card with the most votes is placed on the board in their indicated region and the other is placed in Antarctica (the area below the board.) If there is a tie, both Agents are placed in their respective regions. Orange votes count for neither Agent. [*Note: if one of the Region cards is Antarctica then it is possible for both Agents to end up there!*]

The Vote markers are now put back into the bag and, starting with the Active player, each player secretly takes three Vote markers from the bag. Players should keep their Vote markers secret at all times. The two Region cards are discarded and the next player clockwise now becomes the Active player.

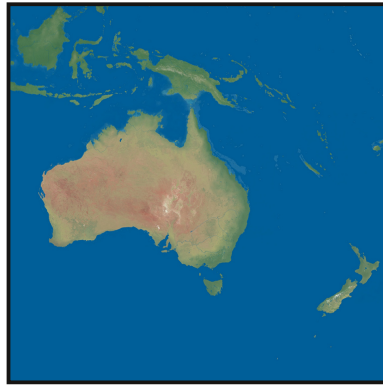
Redeploy: Assuming that no-one has won the game, then after all three players have been the Active player, the *Redeploy* card is activated. The Grand Master may move any Agent from a region into a different region with a lower point value. They then pass the Grand Master marker to the next player clockwise and a new round begins, with the new Grand Master taking the nine Region cards and shuffling them again.

Variant: For a longer game, play until someone controls six or more points.

 NORTH AMERICA	 EUROPE	 RUSSIA	
		 INDIA / MIDDLE EAST	 CHINA & JAPAN
 SOUTH AMERICA	 AFRICA		 OCEANIA
		 ANTARCTICA	
 ILLUMINATI	 ALIEN INVADERS	 TIME TRAVELLERS	
 CULT OF CTHULHU	REDEPLOY Move any one Agent from one Region to a Region with a lower value (Antarctica does not have a value so Agents may not be moved there.)		



AFRICA



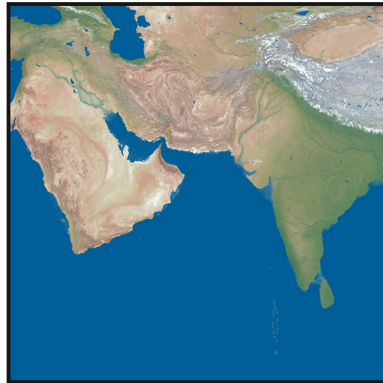
OCEANIA



CHINA & JAPAN



EUROPE



***INDIA &
MIDDLE EAST***



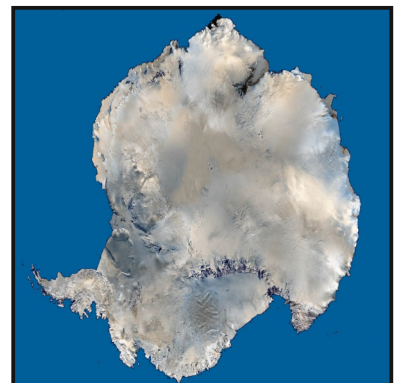
***NORTH
AMERICA***



***SOUTH
AMERICA***



RUSSIA



ANTARCTICA