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BELIZIAN RUST UP

An adventure for GDW's MERC:2000 By Roger Stenning

A (very) brief summary of the adventure...

The player characters, all mercenaries, are hired to rescue a team of surveyors in war-torn Belize... naturally, things aren't all that clear-cut...

WARNING:

If you are a player in this adventure, stop reading NOW. To read further will spoil your enjoyment of the adventure...

Referee's Information and preparation...

You should be in possession of the following items, minimum:

Twilight:2000 2.2 rules book.

MERC:2000 Rules supplement.

MERC:200 Gazetteer (for ORBAT & TO&E information)

The following will make your life as a referee a bit easier:

Infantry Weapons of the World,
Heavy Weapons Handbook,
NATO Combat Vehicle Handbook,
Natical/Aviation Handbook

I would recommend that you download or print this adventure in its' entirety, and read it from start to finish, so that you are completely familiar with it, prior to running the players through it - thus avoiding the "uh... oh... no, that ain't it... hang on... I'll find it in a moment..." syndrome!

Maps and other imagery...

I've included a couple of wide-coverage maps from internet sources in this adventure. Other maps should be generated using your own resources (or this adventure, using my normal style of presentation, would take up about 3mb of data!). I would advise getting a USGS 'ONC' map for the large area, and copy of the Lonely Planet travel guide 'Central America on a Shoestring', which, like all such guides, contains a hell of a lot of useful information that referees can utilise. You never know - you might start using their books like I do - for RPGs!

Preliminaries...

The Player Characters should be recruited by their normal contact, to perform a "small job" in Belize, a former British Colony, now an independent state, and member of the British Commonwealth.

The job pays normal rates (pp 48, MERC:2000 rules supplement), with a successful completion bonus of \$1,500. Apart from the 'up-front' payment, the team will be paid on completion of the mission, in the mode of the individual team members' choice, as usual.

The Job...

Belize is currently experiencing what can best be described as a brush-fire war of attrition with one of its' neighbours, Guatemala. The entire details of the war can be found in the MERC:2000 gazeteer (pp 16-19 incl.). Suffice to say, it's been going for a while, and shows no sign of stopping any time soon.

While the in-country situation tends to be relatively peaceful, with only a few fire-fights a week, the borders are a definite no-go zone, and the country is split roughly north-south at the middle, due to the encroachment of Guatemalan troops, which is where most of the fighting occurs.

The client, the President of a large petrochemical concern (Mobil Oil, if asked directly), has a problem. Recently, commercial satellite imagery suggested that the area around Dangriga, on the mid-coast of Belize, showed signs of having reasonable concentrations of Oil. So he sent a surveyor there. Mindful of not only the war, but the situation in Belize regarding the state monopoly on Oil production, he sent a security force (American Mercs) with the surveyor, who was there rather less than legally, which is why the client can't approach the authorities in Belize.

The security force didn't prevent an incident. Two days ago, the entire team were kidnapped by a bunch of bandits, who are now holding the team for ransom. According to the client, the fee demanded is "extortionate". Thus, they won't pay it. Instead, he wants the characters to rescue the surveyor and security team, and "grease" the "slimeballs" who kidnapped them. Quickly and relatively quietly.

The contract provided by the client provides all the usual features; A basic OpOrder:

Ground,
Situation,
Mission,

Execution (noted as "The planning of the mission execution is at the discretion of the contractors, with approval reserved by the Client") NOTE: The client is also responsible for inserting the team and extracting the team,
Rules of Engagement (engage anyone with hostile intent against the team and/or hostages, with lethal force)
Equipment/Clothing,

Medical, for which the client is responsible for providing trauma hospital support on extraction of the team, whether successful or not. Of course, all medical bills for the team will come out of their payments, but that's no big surprise.

Communications,

Administrative details (including methods of payment).

You get the idea.

All the Player Characters need to do now, is go away and plan the job. Which is where you, the referee, come in...!

Resources for the Player Characters...

The client is willing to supply all reasonable requests for equipment and information. He is, after all, the head of a multinational company based in the USA. All equipment that is not of a 'personal issue' nature, such as weapons, ammunition, food, medical gear, and so on, MUST be returned to him intact (if possible) - including aircraft and boats, if requested.

The player characters will have to decide on:

How to find the hostages.

How to get to them.

How to extract them.

How to get out in one piece.

Who said being a mercenary was easy?!

Referee's background information

The surveyor isn't a surveyor. And the 'Security team' isn't either. They're American mercenaries, and part of the Belizan mercenary Air-mobile Group. The 'Surveyor' is also an officer (read 'agent') of the United States Central Intelligence Agency Operations Directorate. Is this starting to sound a bit familiar?

The team, flying in a UH-60 helicopter, were performing a high altitude reconnaissance, when the Belizan forces lost contact with them. They are presumed dead by the Belizans, but not by the American mercenaries, who subscribe to the "bring 'em back, EVEN if dead" philosophy (a lot of the Air-mobile Group are just old enough to remember Vietnam, and a few were actually there in one form or another). How familiar is this now?

The story the client told is, of course, lies. The client is the agent's controller. He wants the agent back, so he can be debriefed on his mission, which sounds like it's right out of the 'X-files' from TV.... is the penny dropping yet?

The real deal...

The CIA officer's mission was to confirm or deny reports of an 'object' landing in the area of the war...

Just under a week ago, NASA tracked an object tracking into Earth Orbit at high speed. Thinking it was one of the usual meteorites that come to Earth most of the year around, and to test a new tracking system, they tracked it. And were shocked to find it SLOW into a two-orbit parking orbit, then de-orbit into west-central Belize.... NOW do you know where this is going?

The CIA were alerted by the US Military, and, after receiving the appropriate authority from the White House for a cover mission, sent their agent to investigate. To avoid suspicion, he joined the Air-mobile group as a combat helo pilot (He's qualified, too. A Captain pilot, with four operational tours in the US Marines, before being recruited into the CIA). He's managed to get the Group to start airborne recon patrols in the area, citing a recently-noticed Guatemalan build-up of forces in the area, as a potential thrust into the area. The Belizan military agreed, and the patrols were sent. The danger was supposed to be minimal - intelligence suggested (90% certainty) that the other side had no ground-to-air AAA/AAM capability. So much for that idea. The chopper went down in the tropical rain forests of west-central Belize.

That's also right smack dab between the warring troops with, on the Belizian side, British mercenaries (actually, a regiment of Regular British Army Infantry, the 2nd Regiment, the Cheshire Regiment (ORBAT NOTE: The FV432's have been replaced by FV510 'Warrior' Infantry Fighting Vehicles - see NATO Combat Vehicles, pp15), and the Guatamalan troops, whose identity has not been confirmed (suspected regular units, rather than Special Forces).

As luck would have it, the 'company' (CIA) had a satellite over the area at the time of the 'kidnapping'.

The satellite, although only equipped with an Infra-Red sensor suite, managed to see the hot-spot where the helo went down. Naturally, the client had a few fake sat-shots produced, to hide his real identity. The fake photos (actually from an earlier set of commercial SPOT satellite images) have been doctored to show a truck leaving Dangriga, the town where the team were 'kidnapped', and moving off into the area of the rain forest where the helo came down. The helo crash site is NOT shown on the fake photos.

The satellite 'shots' will pinpoint the area where the team is last known to have been to a radius of ten square miles. One wide river, and Two smaller ones, cross the area. It's also in the foothills of the Moyo Mountains, so arduous going on foot. Hopefully, therefore, the 'kidnappers' won't take them too far into the rain forest.

How the Helo was brought down...

It wasn't the Guatamalans who downed the helo. It was a very unlucky birdstrike. The bird entered the air-intake of one of the engines, which then exploded. The Pilot - the CIA guy - managed to autorotate to the rain forest floor, and kept his crew in relatively one piece, bar a couple of broken bones. Their luck was as bad on the ground, as in the air. Their helo came down right smack dab over a Guatemalan patrol, sent to investigate the strange light in the sky a few nights ago... The guatamalans provided the mercs with medical aid, and left a sentry team with them, as they left to finish their patrol.

They didn't return - about five miles later, they encountered the object, and died from massive doses of radiation poisoning. It's radioactive to heck, radiating about a thousand Rads per hour... The patrol had about ten minutes to live, once they'd seen it. Time enough to get there, look at it, and die. They're still there, naturally.

The object...

The object is a drop capsule for an extra-terrestrial form of life... yep, you guessed it...it's "Predator" all over again...!

However, it's not quite as simple as that. There's TWO of the buggers. To keep things simple, the Predators look and act pretty-much just like the one in the film. The exception to this is that they will NOT leave the bodies to be found. To all intents and purposes, the victims just disappear...

It would NOT be wise for the player characters to find the Object. They woldn't survive the experience, remember. Naturally, the predators are immune to the radioactivity.

Here are the Predator's physical statistics. They have skills as well, which are listed below.

STRENGTH	15	THROW RANGE	60m
AGILITY	14	LOAD	105kg
CONSTITUTION	20	UNARMED COMBAT DAMAGE	10
INTELLIGENCE	12	HIT CAPACITY (HEAD)	40
EDUCATION	n/a	HIT CAPACITY (CHEST)	105
CHARISMA	n/a	HIT CAPACITY (OTHER)	70

Predator skillsets...

All skills are level TEN unless otherwise noted:

Stealth (don't forget the trees, now!)

Observation (NOTE: WITHOUT the helmet, it's at 5)

Thrown

Tracking (NOTE: Without the helmet, it's at 5)

Unarmed Martial Arts

Acrobatics

Climbing

Each predator has a selection of weapons; one collapsible throwing spear, which will penetrate all known human body-armour. One self-powered throwing discus, with return mechanism ("Predator 2"), which is able to cut through up to eight human torsos at a time without stopping. Lastly, one shoulder-mounted auto-tracking and targetting fusion gun, stats below.

Weapon	Rate of Fire	Damage	Penetra-tion	Blocking value	Magazine Capacity	----Recoil---- SS/Burst	Range
Predator fusion gun	1	10	3-4-nil	1	unlimited	2/- (SS only)	Line of sight

They're on their own, now...

It's up to the player-characters to get their way out of this mess. They will be stalked one at a time, with a maximum of two victims (total) being taken per twenty-four hours by the Predators, who will return the hapless victims to their ship, where they'll be appropriately treated by the pair of Predators ('nuff said there.. ugh!)

You, as the referee, should keep the plot fast-moving, and high-tension toward the end (sic). Keep 'em guessing. DO NOT leave bodies to be found. I'd suggest having any surviving sentry mention that a unit of Guatamalan Special Forces was due at about this time in the area... although he himself won't admit that (a) he's lying, and (b) he doesn't know what's going on either... he's just putting on a show of rather good bravado for the mercs... he might scream (Hollywood-style) well, though, if a Predator comes for him...!

And finally...

Remember the war? Well, there will be patrols from both warring countries out there in the tropical rain forest, looking for each other (not that they really want to find each other...)

The encounter charts in the Twilight:2000 rules book can be used, but use caution. The MERC:2000 rules supplement discusses this, and its' advice should be followed. Remember, the global thermo-nuclear exchange never occurred, so

a lot of the damage that caused the encounters detailed in the main rules doesn't exist, and thus the requirement for those encounters doesn't exist either. A rule of thumb to use is 'if it doesn't look right, don't use it'.

Geographic material for players...

Belize is located on the southern side of the caribbean basin.



BELIZE: The United Kingdom relinquished its last colony on the mainland of the Americas in 1981. By 1994 only a handful of British troops remained in Central America's only English-speaking nation. Peace and plentiful land attract refugees from troubled neighboring countries, while ruins of the Maya civilization, wildlife such as jaguars, howler monkeys, and toucans, and the Western Hemisphere's longest barrier reef lure tourists.

--Text source: National Geographic Atlas of the World Revised Sixth Edition, 1995



Image from National Geographic Atlas of the World Revised Sixth Edition, 1995

Or did, until war broke out between Belize and Guatemala. Now, the only source of hard cash for the beleaguered country is its exports, listed below. The data is slightly out of date, coming from 1997, but accurate enough, for all that.



Image from the on-line CIA World Factbook

Location: 17°15'N, 88°45'W -- Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Guatemala and Mexico



Flag :

Description: blue with a narrow red stripe along the top and the bottom edges; centered is a large white disk bearing the coat of arms; the coat of arms features a shield flanked by two workers in front of a mahogany tree with the related motto SUB UMBRA FLOREO (I Flourish in the Shade) on a scroll at the bottom, all encircled by a green garland

Geography

Location: Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Guatemala and Mexico.

Geographic coordinates: 17°15'N, 88°45'W

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean

Area:

total area: 22,960 sq km

land area: 22,800 sq km

comparative area: slightly larger than Massachusetts

Land boundaries:

total: 516 km

border countries: Guatemala 266 km, Mexico 250 km

Coastline: 386 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm in the north, 3 nm in the south; note - from the mouth of the Sarstoon River to Ranguana Cay, Belize's territorial sea is 3 nm; according to Belize's Maritime Areas Act, 1992, the purpose of this limitation is to pro-

vide a framework for the negotiation of a definitive agreement on territorial differences with Guatemala
International disputes: border with Guatemala in dispute; talks to resolve the dispute are stalled
Climate: tropical; very hot and humid; rainy season (May to February)
Terrain: at, swampy coastal plain; low mountains in south
lowest point: Caribbean Sea 0 m
highest point: Victoria Peak 1,160 m
Natural resources: arable land potential, timber, fish
Land use:
arable land: 2%
permanent crops: 0%
meadows and pastures: 2%
forest and woodland: 44%
other: 52%
Irrigated land: 20 sq km (1989 est.)
Environment:
current issues: deforestation; water pollution from sewage, industrial effluents, agricultural runoff
natural hazards: frequent, devastating hurricanes (September to December) and coastal flooding (especially in south)
international agreements: party to - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Whaling
Geographic note: national capital moved 80 km inland from Belize City to Belmopan because of hurricanes; only country in Central America without a coastline on the North Pacific Ocean

People

Population: 219,296 (July 1996 est.)
Age structure:
0-14 years: 43% (male 48,291; female 46,451)
15-64 years: 53% (male 59,132; female 57,498)
65 years and over: 4% (male 3,881; female 4,043) (July 1996 est.)
Population growth rate: 2.42% (1996 est.)
Birth rate: 32.8 births/1,000 population (1996 est.)
Death rate: 5.73 deaths/1,000 population (1996 est.)
Net migration rate: -2.89 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1996 est.)
Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.04 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.03 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.96 male(s)/female
all ages: 1.03 male(s)/female (1996 est.)
Infant mortality rate: 33.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1996 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 68.53 years
male: 66.58 years
female: 70.58 years (1996 est.)
Total fertility rate: 4.12 children born/woman (1996 est.)
Nationality:
noun: Belizean(s)
adjective: Belizean
Ethnic divisions: mestizo 44%, Creole 30%, Maya 11%, Garifuna 7%, other 8%
Religions: Roman Catholic 62%, Protestant 30% (Anglican 12%, Methodist 6%, Mennonite 4%, Seventh-Day Adventist 3%, Pentecostal 2%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1%, other 2%), none 2%, other 6% (1980)
Languages: English (official), Spanish, Mayan, Garifuna (Carib)
Literacy: age 14 and over has ever attended school (1991 est.)
total population: 70.3%
male: 70.3%
female: 70.3%

Government

Name of country:
conventional long form: none
conventional short form: Belize
former: British Honduras
Data code: BH
Type of government: parliamentary democracy
Capital: Belmopan

Administrative divisions: 6 districts; Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Toledo

Independence: 21 September 1981 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 21 September (1981)

Constitution: 21 September 1981

Legal system: English law

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952), a hereditary monarch, is represented by Governor General Sir Colville YOUNG (since 17 November 1993), who, according to the constitution, must be a Belizean; was appointed by the queen

head of government: Prime Minister Manuel ESQUIVEL (since July 1993) was appointed by the governor general; Deputy Prime Minister Dean BARROW (since NA 1993)

cabinet: Cabinet was appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister

Legislative branch: bicameral National Assembly

Senate: consists of an eight-member appointed body; five members are appointed on the advice of the prime minister, two on the advice of the leader of the opposition, and one after consultation with the Belize Advisory Council (this council serves as an independent body to advise the governor general with respect to difficult decisions such as granting pardons, commutations, stays of execution, the removal of justices of appeal who appear to be incompetent, etc.)

National Assembly: elections last held 30 June 1993 (next to be held NA June 1998); results - percent of vote by party NA; seats - (28 total) PUP 13 UDP 15

Judicial branch: Supreme Court, the chief justice is appointed by the governor general on advice of the prime minister

Political parties and leaders: People's United Party (PUP), George PRICE, Florencio MARIN, Said MUSA; United Democratic Party (UDP), Manuel ESQUIVEL, Dean LINDO, Dean BARROW; National Alliance for Belizean Rights, Philip GOLDSON

Other political or pressure groups: Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR), Assad SHOMAN; United Workers Front, leader NA

International organization participation: ACP, C, Caricom, CDB, ECLAC, FAO, G-77, IADB, IBRD, ICAO, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Intelsat (nonsignatory user), Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), ITU, LAES, NAM, OAS, OPANAL, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIH, UPU, WCL, WHO, WMO, WTrO

Diplomatic representation in US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Dean R. LINDO

chancery: 2535 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 332-9636

FAX: [1] (202) 332-6888

consulate(s) general: Los Angeles

consulate(s): New York

US diplomatic representation:

chief of mission: Ambassador George Charles BRUNO

embassy: Gabourel Lane and Hutson Street, Belize City

mailing address: P. O. Box 286, Belize City; APO: Unit 7401, APO AA 34025

telephone: [501] (2) 77161 through 77163

FAX: [501] (2) 30802

Flag: blue with a narrow red stripe along the top and the bottom edges; centered is a large white disk bearing the coat of arms; the coat of arms features a shield flanked by two workers in front of a mahogany tree with the related motto SUB UMBRA FLOREO (I Flourish in the Shade) on a scroll at the bottom, all encircled by a green garland

Economy

Economic overview: The small, essentially private enterprise economy is based primarily on agriculture, agro-based industry, and merchandising, with tourism and construction assuming increasing importance. Agriculture accounts for about 30% of GDP and provides 75% of export earnings, while sugar, the chief crop, accounts for almost 40% of hard currency earnings. The US, Belize's main trading partner, is assisting in efforts to reduce dependency on sugar with an agricultural diversification program.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$575 million (1994 est.)

GDP real growth rate: 2% (1994 est.)

GDP per capita: \$2,750 (1994 est.)

GDP composition by sector:

agriculture: 30%

industry: NA

services: NA (1995 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 2.3% (1994 est.)

Labor force: 51,500

by occupation: agriculture 30%, services 16%, government 15.4%, commerce 11.2%, manufacturing 10.3%

note: shortage of skilled labor and all types of technical personnel (1985)

Unemployment rate: 10% (1993 est.)

The Impossible Scenarios Group

<http://the-isg.co.uk/>

Budget :

revenues: \$126.8 million

expenditures: \$123.1 million, including capital expenditures of \$44.8 million (FY90/91 est.)

Industries: garment production, food processing, tourism, construction

Industrial production growth rate: 3.7% (1990)

Electricity:

capacity: 34,532 kW

production: 110 million kWh

consumption per capita: 490 kWh (1993)

Agriculture: bananas, coca, citrus, sugarcane; lumber; fish, cultured shrimp

Illicit drugs: transshipment point for cocaine; an illicit producer of cannabis for the international drug trade; minor money-laundering center

Exports: \$115 million (f.o.b., 1993)

commodities: sugar, citrus fruits, bananas, clothing, fish products, molasses, wood

partners: US 38%, UK, other EC (1994)

Imports: \$281 million (c.i.f., 1993)

commodities: machinery and transportation equipment, food, manufactured goods, fuels, chemicals, pharmaceuticals

partners: US 53%, UK, other EC, Mexico (1994)

External debt: \$167.5 million (1992)

Economic aid:

recipient: ODA, \$NA

Currency: 1 Belizean dollar (Bz\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rates: Belizean dollars (Bz\$) per US\$1 - 2.00 (fixed rate)

Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March

Transportation

Railways: 0 km

Highways:

total: 2,560 km

paved: 336 km

unpaved: 2,224 km (1987 est.)

Waterways: 825 km river network used by shallow-draft craft; seasonally navigable

Ports: Belize City, Big Creek, Corozol, Punta Gorda

Merchant marine:

total: 89 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 311,731 GRT/470,272 DWT

ships by type: bulk 9, cargo 60, container 6, liquefied gas tanker 1, oil tanker 3, refrigerated cargo 4, roll-on/roll-off cargo 4, specialized tanker 1, vehicle carrier 1 (1995 est.)

Airports:

total: 35

with paved runways 1 524 to 2 437 m: 1

with paved runways under 914 m: 25

with unpaved runways 2 438 to 3 047 m: 1

with unpaved runways 914 to 1 523 m: 8 (1995 est.)

Communications

Telephones: 15,917 (1990 est.)

Telephone system: above-average system

domestic: trunk network depends primarily on microwave radio relay

international: satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 6, FM 5, shortwave 1

Radios: NA

Television broadcast stations: 1

Televisions: 27,048 (1993 est.)

Defense

Branches: Belize Defense Force (includes Army, Navy, Air Force, and Volunteer Guard), Belize National Police

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49: 52,290

males fit for military service: 31,086

males reach military age (18) annually: 2,390 (1996 est.)

Defense expenditures: exchange rate conversion - \$8.1 million, NA% of GDP (FY95/96)

Text above from the on-line CIA World Factbook