

## Astral America II Setting

I shall not cease from mental fight  
No politics will see me right  
No man in space; no space in man  
A God shaped hole in a God shaped land

Use up your body; sister sublimate  
Burnt up my brain to an Empire State  
Liberate me me me domine  
Blow me away like J.F.K.  
-- Apollo 440, Astral America



*US Empowerment  
Agency*

## Current Situation

It is summer 2006. Founded just a year ago, the US Empowerment Agency has quickly grown to one of the most high-profile federal agencies.

Director William E. Hemming has so far proven a solid link between the agency and the White House, despite several political run-ins with Senator McCain. Vice director Beasley is respected by both congress and the White House for her ability to deal with unexpected crises. Former director Frederick Chandra is in jail for a long list of crimes.

Agent Gore and Onyx are well known faces of USEA, while Elsie in her electric form, Nurse, Vortex and Reader are somewhat known to the public.

The USEA now possess around 50 emps, as well as several Syuit teams. There are some tensions between the emps – powerful and unpredictable – and the efficient but creepy Syuit agents. The first emps are these days team leaders of the different teams. Some run operations teams, others analysis or research teams.

In an earth shattering speech president George W. Bush revealed to the world the existence of parallel worlds and how an incursion from one of them had caused the Big Sheep Mountains incident and several rouge novas. Assuring the world about the US intentions to maintain peace and freedom he declared that that threat was now dealt with, and that the US would not use its powers against other nations. Some information about Gravelworld and UNA have been revealed to the public.

USEA now maintains project Goodwill Tannoy II, opening superspace portals to certain other worlds. A permanent portal has been established for contact with UNA. There are also regular visits to Suyitworld.

While General Velasquez has never admitted being an invader, Cuba officially maintains a "parallel link". He is clearly playing a game to curry favour with the US, EU, China and Russia about information and access.

Venezuela is now called Gran Colombia and president de Lafayette its undisputed ruler. Worldwide suspicion that he is an invader are fairly common. Leftist groups resist him across

Latin America. He is also bringing in significant revenues from special materials such as industrial diamond laminates only his factories can produce.

## **Locations**

USEA has inaugurated its new headquarters “The Cube” west of Washington DC. Located in Virginia near Lake Audubon it is a new landmark (and controversial as an eye-sore). Designed by Luigi di Franconi it is an imposing modern office building shaped like a cube standing on one corner that has sunk into the ground. Although officially opened in June 2006, not all parts of the building are finished yet.

USEA also has other facilities. It keeps office and conference facilities in the Watergate building and on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington. An installation on Staten Island (“The Tent”) holds a superspace gate to UNA. There are also small local offices in Miami, Houston, Chicago, and San Francisco. The Testing Grounds are located in the United States Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia together with the FBI and DEA academy campus. The Testing Grounds include shared training areas, as well as a number of laboratories studying empowerment-related issues. The main superspace gateway installation (“Janus Lab”) is located here. “Undisclosed Location” is a research outpost for testing new technology and powers well away from civilization. It is run together with the US Department of Defence and located in the Nevada desert within a military test range.

USEA has a permanent facility in Gravelworld, the Harris-Kaplan Memorial Outpost. This is used as a holding facility for potentially dangerous emps and persons.

## **Power Color Codes**

To simplify classification of agents and putting together efficient teams, USEA managers have come up with a color coding system:

<b>Red</b>	Offensive capabilities – energy beams, fire control, explosions
<b>Orange</b>	Body capabilities – superstrength, superspeed, flexibility, shapeshifting
<b>Yellow</b>	Intelligence capabilities – megaperception, new senses, remote sight
<b>Green</b>	Environmental capabilities – control matter, produce objects, animal control
<b>Blue</b>	Defensive capabilities – megastamina, forcefields, regeneration
<b>Indigo</b>	Transportation capabilities- flying, teleportation, gating
<b>Violet</b>	Human capabilities – megacharisma, telepathy, emotion control
<b>White</b>	Quantum capabilities – drain quantum, steal powers, enhance powers
<b>Black</b>	Unspecified capabilities

Ratings are measured in stars: one star represents a capability, two stars a significant and three a very high level. A question mark can be used for uncertain levels. Agent Gore for example is Orange\*\*\*/Blue\*\*\*/Indigo\* or O3B3I1. Nurse is R2Y3B2I3 and Reader was Y3V3B?.

Using these codes it becomes easier to put together a team. Ideally all colors except white and black should be included.

## ***Standard equipment***

The normal USEA uniform is a simple dark suit with a USEA lapel pin. Emps and ordinary agents are dressed similarly. During operations where they are present as advisors or in the field agents wear USEA jackets similar to the FBI jackets, marking their agency. During active operations they wear light body armour (unless better protected by their powers).

Some emps use nanofiber clothing provided by the Technology Bureau. Although very flexible and useful, there are some concerns about its security.

Field agents are equipped with secure satellite phones.

USEA takes computer security extremely seriously and does not allow any internet connections whatsoever from secured systems: information has to be transported using validated, encrypted hard drives.

For more special projects USEA often uses New Jersey-based Safian Tech as supplier of exotic or on-the-fly designed equipment.

## ***Classified Background***

The Trapdoor Hammer case is officially closed. It revealed an old network of Mafia-CIA connections, the Argus Network, which is still being unravelled – it is old, very dirty laundry that requires quite a bit of diplomacy to handle. Worse, it revealed at least one additional source of emps, the sinister Dr. Thomas A. Olds. Dr Olds is believed to be dead – but nobody ever saw the body. Of the emps he empowered at least one is likely at large, the drug baron "Casa Grande".

The CIA is fighting a losing battle – the pursuit of Argus is wrecking the organisation, leaving the field open for DHS, USEA and other agencies to take its turf. Many in the intelligence world view USEA as outsiders and loose cannons. Meanwhile top-secret projects related to empowerment are obviously going on within the Department of Defence, making many at USEA worry about the military emps.

The fallout from the Chandra and Olds affairs has resulted in many high Washington people avoiding or distrusting emps. They can be dangerous manipulators best kept in their place.

There have been several incidents of espionage attempts against USEA, from various nations. China is believed to have hired emps belonging to Lafayette's team, and there might be an influx of new emps from UNA arriving through Cuba.

*Twin Beacons of Remembrance*



*We Will Not Be So Easily Surprised Again*