



# ENEMY ASSESSMENT

A Battlestar Fan Club contribution  
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## PART 01 CYLON DOCTRINE CYLON FLEET



BFC - ENEMY ASSESSMENT-1



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## **1. Introduction: Know your Enemy**

This document contains observations and assumptions that are founded in the re-imagined series, associated spin-offs and other media. The goal is to create a coherent assessment of the Cylon threat that applies to both the re-imagined canon as well as most fan-works.

Please note that this document is written from an *in-universe colonial perspective*. Some information, such as specifics of resurrection technology, the role of the guardians and others are therefore not included, as the Colonial Fleet would have no information on them.



The Cylon is the single most dangerous enemy ever to threaten the Twelve Colonies of Kobol. Ever since their rebellion and the outbreak of the First Cylon War, their existence has dominated colonial culture, economy, and politics. The looming threat of another invasion has brought about the largest militarization campaign in colonial history and a tenfold increase in the colonial fleet's number of Battlestars alone.

Because this threat was created by humanity itself, the psychological factor of this conflict has always been especially important and a deep hatred of the "toasters" has been engrained in those who survived the First Cylon War and passed on to their children.

This psychological element of the conflict makes it especially important for all military personnel to retain a distanced and well-informed professional view of the war. It poses a great threat to adhere to the simplified mindset of viewing Cylons as mere mechanical robots that are mindless and cumbersome machines.

Far apart from any philosophical debate, every member of the colonial military soon gets confronted with the reality that the Cylons have developed their own, thought out strategies, tactics and war goals that force the Colonial Fleet to adapt.

Blind hatred, however, justified it may be, will not bring about the victory or mere survival of the Twelve Colonies of Kobol. It is therefore essential that all military personnel understands the true nature of our enemy, that is more cunning than is often believed.



## **2. Overview**

### **2.1 Doctrine**

The Cylon Military does not only rely on units and tactics that are different from those of the Twelve Colonies but follows an entirely different doctrine. Their approach to warfare was developed by the Cylons during the First War and has constantly refined and specialized since the Armistice Agreement.

To understand the Cylon Doctrine and war philosophy is the first and most important step in preparation for any engagement. It would be a grave mistake to treat any operation against Cylons the same as an engagement of intercolonial conflict. During early years of the first Cylon War, this mistake was the reason for some of the most gruesome colonial defeats.



#### **2.1.1 Cylon Strategy**

On a strategic level, Cylon Doctrine relies most heavily on two advantages: Mobility and Intel. Both of which are aided by currently superior Cylon jump-drives and sensor technology, allowing the Cylons to use standard Raiders as effective scouts even at extremely long ranges.

The Cylon Fleet is capable of rapidly gathering information at a grand scale to plan extensive operations and deploy its forces extremely efficiently. Often times, that will grant Cylon forces the initiative and allow them to start fights always with a strong advantage. In their strategic planning, Cylons have shown to be exceptionally careful, keeping even remote outposts and supply fleets heavily guarded against any possible enemy intrusions.

Additionally, rapid communications and precise jump-drives have made it viable for Cylons to call on rapid reinforcements when being attacked, making it extremely difficult to assess the full extent of Cylon Forces partaking in any battle.

Whenever possible, the Cylon Fleet will aim to deny Colonial Forces an open fight entirely. Their ability to retreat faster than Colonial Forces can pursue them and the vastness of space beyond the Red Line will often be used to their advantage to lay traps and ambushes.



### 2.1.2 Countering Cylon Strategy

The best way plan Operations against Cylons without putting the Colonial Fleet at a disadvantage is to force a situation where either one or, at best, both advantages of the Cylons Fleet are impeded.

Immobile installations like communication arrays, supply depots and resource deposits of the Cylon Fleet pose a great chance to disallow Cylon Forces to take advantage of their mobility and grants colonial attackers the initiative. Tylium is the most immediate resource that Cylon Forces require to operate and that requires long-term mining installations on asteroids and planetoids.

To counter the Cylon advantage in terms of intel is especially difficult since it is unknown whether or not their communications can effectively jam. Raider scouts are often capable of jumping away before they can be intercepted, making it impossible to hide large fleet formations effectively. This forces the Colonial Fleet to take rapid and often risky actions to successfully perform surprise attacks on Cylon Forces. It is of utmost importance to not be pushed into a defensive posture. Colonial attacks must be as unpredictable and numerous as possible to force the Cylons to stretch their forces as much as possible.



### 2.1.3 Cylon Tactics

Cylon doctrine on a tactical level is radically different from their strategic *modus operandi*. The most important factors are Overwhelming numbers and Persistence.

Whereas careful strategic planning of the Cylon leadership tends to put forces in as little risk as possible, the Cylons take a much more aggressive approach to actual combat.

Cylon Forces typically engage on several fronts simultaneously, using boarding parties, cyber warfare, and conventional weaponry to maximize the chance of victory by any of those means. Centurions and Raiders are treated as expendable units in battle and are used in great numbers to overwhelm enemy defenses even at great costs. Suicidal bombing runs, boarding actions and maneuvers within flak are not uncommon and are used for both tactical and psychological effect.

A similarity between Cylon tactics and strategy is the aim to deny Colonial Forces open ship-to-ship combat. Basestars are usually deployed at great range and keep their distance from enemy capital



ships while bombarding with both conventional and nuclear missiles. However, Cylon mobility is far less of an advantage on the battlefield than it is on the strategic map. When charged by Colonial units, Cylon Baseships have seldom been reported to disengage, rather causing as much damage as possible. Thus, ship-to-ship combat against Cylons often devolves into pure attrition combat, in which the machines count on human errors and exhaustion.

This persistence is remarkable in both Baseships and Raiders alike. All Cylon forces are seemingly capable of staying in battle indefinitely, wearing down colonial defenses slowly, but surely. This can force Colonial Vessels to disengage from battle, not because of immediate losses, but because they are unable to maintain fighter cover and maneuvers of such an extended period of time.



#### 2.1.4 Countering Cylon Tactics

Engagements against Cylon Forces must be swift and precise, as battles of attrition put Cylons at a severe advantage. Whereas Battlestars are more durable than Cylon Baseships in a 1:1 comparison, Cylons are more likely to get numerous reinforcements and their Raider complements are more than capable of exhausting a Battlegroups Viper Squadrons.

Similar to the strategic level, Colonials cannot afford to be put into defensive positions during battle. They must take the initiative and push for close-range combat as quickly as possible, to utilize the Battlestars Advantages against Cylon Capital ships.

It should be noted, that Cylon Raiders less reliant on their mother ship than colonial fighters. Their ability to coordinate attacks will be diminished, but they are not cut off from long-range communications to call in reinforcements and will be able to stay in combat for much longer.

Deception is often the only way to effectively combat Cylon forces. Instead of trying to fight all their forces at once, it is wise to circumvent them whenever possible. Colonial Commanders must never forget that all Cylon Forces are more easily replaceable than their human counterpart. Even if it takes dozens of Raiders to bring a single human pilot down, the numbers will still be in favor of the Cylon Fleet. Thus, Colonial Forces should only pursue battles that have a specific target that can be achieved at minimal cost.



## 2.2 Technology

Despite forty years of division and different design, Cylon Technology is not fundamentally different from that of the Twelve Colonies of Kobol. It has also not developed at an exponential speed like many feared in the aftermath of the First Cylon War.

In fact, Cylon conventional and nuclear weaponry, armor and industry appear to be of similar strength to its colonial counterpart, with differences being largely attributed to differences in design and doctrine rather than technological capability.

The three exceptions are Jump Drives, Cyberwarfare and Sensors, both of which have been shown to perform extremely more efficiently than the colonial counterpart.

**Sensors:** Cylon Raider squadrons do not rely on specialized scout vessels to assess combat situations and even serve as scouts at times. From these two facts, it can be deduced that their sensors have greater range than those of Colonial Vessels of similar size. Experiments with stealth technology during the interwar period further suggest that Cylons still rely on DRADIS technology to detect spaceships and that colonial stealth vessels are capable of deceiving these systems to some extent.

**Jump Drives & Cyberwarfare:** The effective range of Colonial Jump Drives is determined by the ability to properly calculate the bending of spacetime to create a wormhole directly to the target. These calculations require extreme processing power because the gravimetric influence of massive bodies such as stars and even planets can throw off these calculations due to their own curvature of spacetime.

To extend the range and precision of jump-drives simply means putting more processing power in that equation and the Cylons are clearly capable of that by some unknown means.

Despite the immediate dangers of their highly precise long-range jumps, this technological process has even worse implications. That processing power, that is needed to calculate those jumps, can be used for other things as well. The most immediate possible use is that of cyber warfare.

Both Cylon Jump-Drives and Cyberwarfare methods are not necessarily more refined than those of the Colonial Fleet. They simply have more raw processing power at their disposal. That makes them extremely difficult, but also offers some extent of limitations that can be exploited by the Colonial Fleet.





### 3. Cylon Fleet

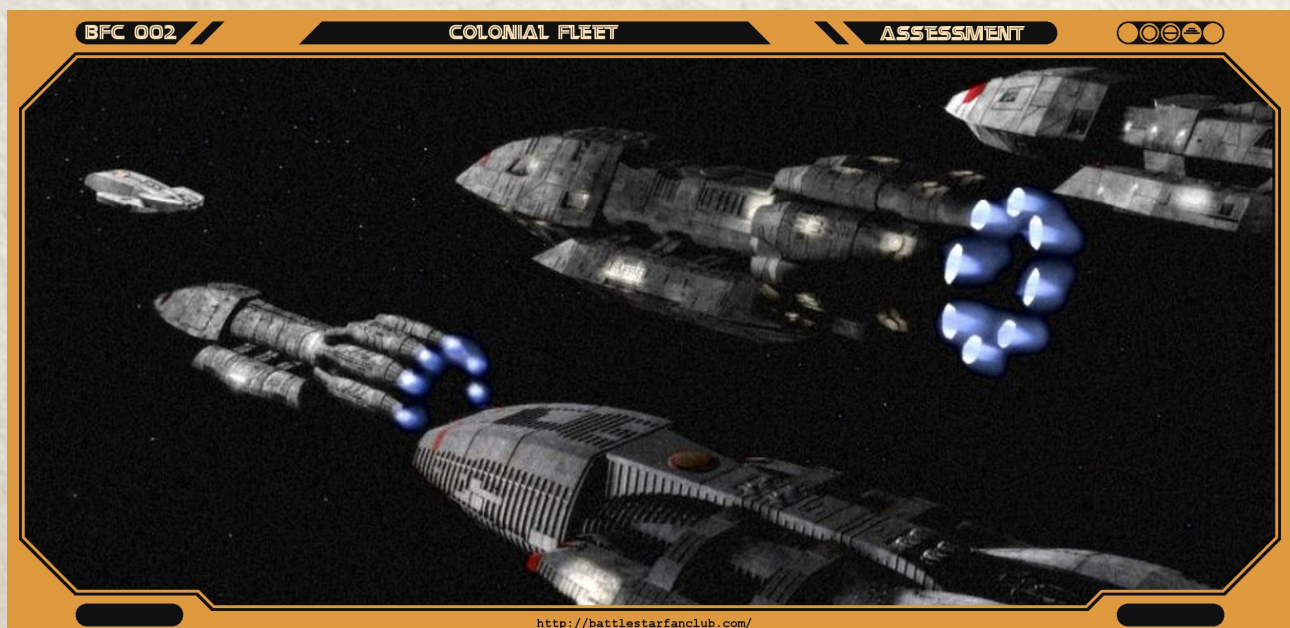
For forty years since the Armistice Treaty, there was no official contact between Cylons and Colonials. No reconnaissance efforts conducted by the Colonial Fleet were able to successfully infiltrate space beyond Armistice line. Because of this, it is extremely difficult to estimate the overall size of the Cylon Fleet, its composition or capabilities.

What little information the Colonial Fleet does possess about the Cylon forces was mostly gathered during combat operations and offers reasonable conclusions about tactical capabilities, but much less definitive information about strategic assets and reserves that the Cylons may still have. The Cylon's superior jump drives allow them for rapid deployments that make estimates of their numbers even less accurate.

Conservative elements of the Colonial Defense Ministry estimate that the Cylons would have at least 30-40 Baseships with full raider complement of around 700 Raiders ready to successfully gain space superiority against the combined Viper complements of the Colonial Fleet. However, that number might be much higher to take into account capital ship strength.

Another ground for further estimates is that of available resources. It is unlikely that the Cylons were able to match the massive Colonial armament initiative following the first Cylon War, as they likely have no access to as many resource rich planets and lack the pre-existing industrial complex.

Still, more than anything, the total strength of the Cylon Fleet remains an unknown, which is one of the greatest disadvantages of the Colonial Fleet, as the enemy likely knows clearly the overall strength of the Colonial Military.





### **3.1 Modern Basestar**

#### **3.1.1 Overview**

The modern Cylon Basestar is the primary capital ship of the known Cylon Armada. This versatile vessel has been deployed in great numbers against the Colonial Fleet and quickly became one of the most iconic symbols for the enemy.

It would, however, be a critical error to describe the Basestar as the Cylon equivalent to the colonial Battlestar. On the contrary, it resembles the epiphany of an entirely new doctrine, which requires colonial commanders to develop new, unconventional tactics to engage this enemy in direct ship-to-ship combat.

Although it is often times stated, that a Cylon Basestar possesses inferior firepower and durability as compared to a typical Battlestar, the Basestar offers a number of key advantages that make it a fearsome opponent to the Colonial Fleet.



#### **3.1.2 Armament & Combat Role**

The Basestar design is heavily influenced by Cerberus-Class support carriers from the First Cylon War. Unlike Battlestars, Basestars do not rely on a Battle Group consisting of escort vessels. It is far more common for them to be deployed in for motions of three or more Basestars, which will encircle their targets from different sides, denying enemies the opportunity to charge at all of them at once.

The Basestar is capable of rapidly deploying a total of 700 Cylon Raiders. A Basestars fighter complement poses a significant threat to a Battlestar that is unprotected by its Viper squadrons. Raiders are capable of carrying multiple missiles and even nuclear warheads to act as bombers. Guided attacks against Gun Batteries and Launch tubes have been known to severely disrupt the combat capabilities of Battlestars. Additionally, heavy raiders are far less deceptible to Flak a capable of carrying large warheads and boarding troops.

For ship-to-ship combat is capable of firing both conventional and nuclear missiles in great numbers from mounted launch tubes distributed evenly throughout the ship's Y-shaped hubs. The variable configuration of the two rotating hubs enables the Basestar to attack multiple targets at once if necessary.



For defense, the Basestar heavily relies on its raider complement, electronic counter measures and most importantly, superior position. The armor of Basestars is significantly weaker than that of Battlestars and no conventional point-defense-weaponry has been observed being utilized by modern Basestars.

### **3.1.3 Special capabilities & advantages**

During combat, modern Basestars easily appear to be fragile compared to colonial Battlestars. But that first appearance is very deceptive.

While Basestar armor is indeed incapable of stopping the concentrated fire by kinetic weaponry, the ship itself is capable of sustaining extreme amounts of damage while still remaining operational. Basestars that had more than 30% of their hull structure completely destroyed have been reported to successfully perform combat jumps, fighter recovery and remaining in constant communication with other Cylon vessels. Such performances are unthinkable for colonial Battlestars.

Despite their fragile appearance, it will, therefore, prove difficult to quickly disable Basestars quickly, which can be a serious detriment to operations where timing is critical.

Additionally, the organic nature of Basestars observed by Raptor- and Viper Recon Teams on several instances, suggests at least limited self-repairing capabilities. It remains unclear whether or not Cylon Basestars need extensive dockyards like colonial vessels do, to perform major repairs and system overhauls. Should Basestars indeed be independent of such vulnerable installations, that would provide the Cylon Fleet with a further edge in mobility and supply lanes.

That advantage is reinforced by the implementation of extremely effective FTL Jumpdrives. Like all Cylon Vessels, the modern Basestar is capable of more accurate FTL Jump calculations, effectively granting a longer secure jump range.

Because of this, it is not uncommon for Cylon Forces to rely on reinforcements jumping directly into battle – a practice that has long been deemed too risky and unpredictable to be utilized by the Colonial Fleet to great extend.

### **3.1.4 Important notes**

- *Basestars must be prevented from taking full advantage of their specializations. To achieve that goal, distance to the Basestar must be closed quickly.*
- *Guided missiles have proven useless against Battlestars due to their advanced ECM systems. Kinetic weaponry and unguided warheads are most effective. #*
- *Wherever possible, Basestars are to be cut-off from their fighter complements and engaged independently. Without fighter complement, they are inferior to Battlestars in ship-to-ship combat.*
- *Hangar Bays and Missile Tubes are priority targets. Due to their resilience, prolonged and concentrated firepower is necessary to actually destroy or disable the ship completely. Crews must be prepared for a prolonged battle.*
- *Space Superiority must be maintained to protect against missiles and boarding parties. Should space superiority be lost, an orderly retreat is advised.*
- *Without the protection of its Vipers, a Battlestar will be quickly overwhelmed by even a single Basestar with the full raider and heavy raider complements.*



### 3.2 Other Capital Ships & Unknown Combat Vessels

The modern Cylon Basestar is a remarkably versatile and adaptable ship thanks to its capability of carrying a large armament and complement of fighter craft that can be altered for different mission profiles. As such, the modern Basestar is believed to make up the vast majority of the Cylon Fleet. However, it is not the only capital ship developed and deployed by the Cylons.

#### 3.2.1 First War Designs & Unknown Vessels

Over the course of just a few years during the First Cylon War, the Cylons were able to develop, build and deploy new warships exclusively designed by themselves with little to no pre-existing Cylon industrial capacity. During the Deadlock that lasted for the majority of the war, these early Cylon designs were constantly improved and produced in great numbers.

Since then, Cylons and their vessels have evolved, but many of the old forces still remain in reserve and pose a significant threat to the Colonial Fleet.

#### Hades-Class Basestars

The Cylon Hades-Class Basestar was fielded long before the Colonies were able to complete the Jupiter Project which brought the first generation of true Battlestars to the fight. It is one of the oldest original Cylon designs and a showcase of the Cylon's impressive capacity to produce and deploy new ship designs during wartime.

Hades-Class Basestars are typically operated by Model 005 Centurions and carry complements of 150-300 first generation Cylon Raiders. Unlike their modern counterpart, the Hades-Class Basestar is equipped with ship-to-ship weaponry suited for close-range combat with Battlestars and is significantly more heavily armored. It is to be assumed that weaponry and armor have been improved over the past forty years, making the Hades-Class Basestar a match even for modern day Battlestar Groups.

It has to be noted that Hades-Class, similar to Model 005 Centurions in general, have only ever reported during offensive colonial operations. Apparently, they do not partake in operations outside of Cylon spaces. The reasons for this are not entirely known but presumed to be part of some sort of internal hierarchy of the Cylon.





### Guardian Basestar

During the latter years of the First Cylon War, new types of Basestars were already being developed by the Cylon Fleet. At least one such vessel has been reported as the "Guardian Basestar". Little is known about this mysterious vessel, that was reportedly guarded by first generation Raiders.

What can be discerned with certainty, however, is the fact that the Cylons are capable of building such a vessel and likely possess the capabilities to build more, should the need arise.

### Unknown Combat Vessels

The Cylons have clearly shown that they are capable of creating new and improved designs, should the situation call for it. Colonial Forces must, therefore, be always aware of the possibility of encountering new Cylon vessels.

The most prominent idea in that regard is the anticipation of new capital ships deployed by the Cylon Fleet. Those could either be elaborations on the pre-existing Basestar design, essentially fulfilling the same role to a greater extent. Another possibility is the development of a dedicated "capital ship killer" that is heavily armored and possesses extensive ship-to-ship weaponry.

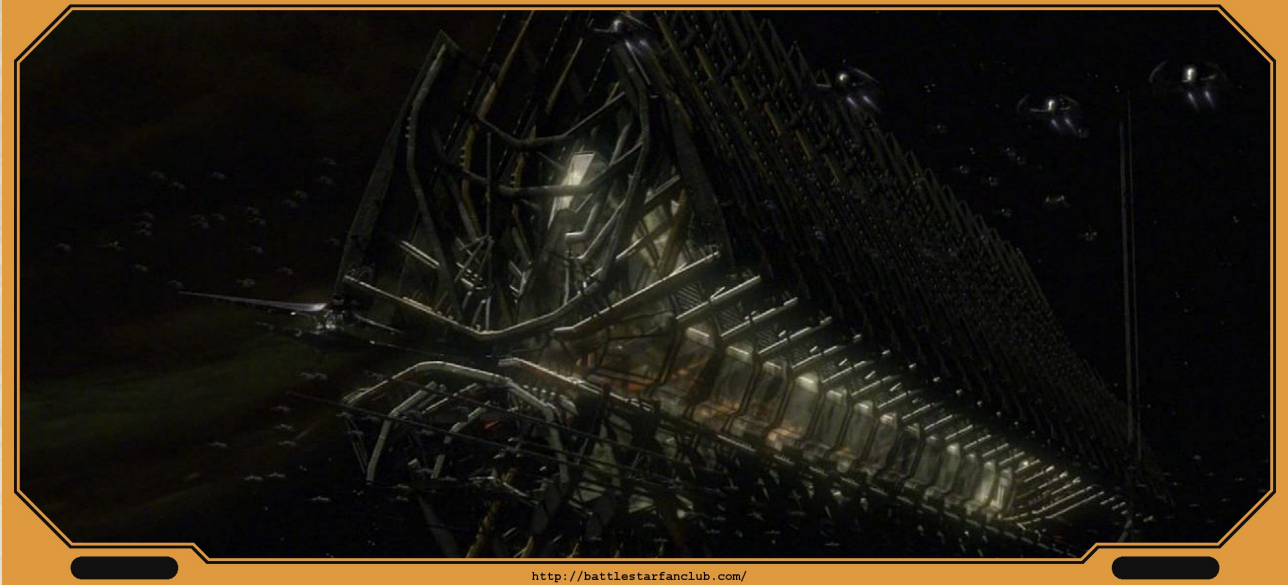


However, the development of a new capital ship would prove very resource and time intensive. A more likely scenario is the introduction of new fighter type vessels, similar to the heavy raider. Thanks to the versatility of modern day Basestars, new fighter types could be easily deployed by the entire Cylon Fleet and pose a new and unexpected danger to any Battlegroup encountering well-known Cylon Basestars.

### 3.3 Non-Combat Vessels

No Cylon vessel is considered civilian by the Colonial Military, but a number of non-combat vessels do exist. They are usually dedicated to supplying and mining activities and carry resources between immobile installations within Cylon Space. Little is known about the inner workings of the Cylon armament industry, but early intel confirms that Cylon Fuel production follows a very similar process to that of Colonial Tylium Refineries. For offensive operations, these vessels are often the primary target to impede the mobility of Cylon forces as much as possible and disrupt their supply lines.



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A notable exception among Cylon non-combat vessels is the so-called "Resurrection Ship". This vessel, unlike typical resupply convoys, has been observed being escorted by a massive Cylon fleet and was first presumed to be a mobile commando hub. Further investigation, however, suggests, that it plays a pivotal role in an information-network that is unique to the Cylon Fleet and seems to be of utmost importance to them.

The exact function and purpose of this vessel remain unknown as of yet, but it is assumed to be part of the replenishing cycle of Raiders and Centurions and other Cylon Commando Units.

Attacks on these vessels have been known to provoke an especially intense reaction by Cylon forces, causing their offensive momentum to slow considerably. However, these vessels are scarce and require a high investment of resources to destroy. When encountered unprepared, colonial forces are ordered to return to base immediately to provide information for a large-scale operation to destroy these important targets.

Attempts to recover wreckage to discern more about the function of these vessels have been unsuccessful.



**Image Sources:**

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Cylon Battleship Fan-Design by FuryofaSeraph

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