OOC Some of you will already know that the Sirian team, Jurrien de Jong, has sent along a robot as one of the scientists on the 'BOLDLY GO' deep space mission. Below is the correspondence between the Earther admin [played by me at the moment] and Jurrien.

Subject: Boldly Go Science Team on IEN Odyssey - Mr A. Steel

CONFIDENTIAL

BOLDLY GO MISSION ADMINISTRATION

To The Sirian Government [citizenship law section]

From 'Boldly Go' office, Human Resources Division

Dear Sir, Madam or Robot,

'Mr Archie Steel', a robot described as a 'Sirian Citizen' on its SSR entry documentation, is to be entered by me on to the ship's books of the IEN vessel Odyssey. I wonder if you could help me clear up a few minor technical points?

1. What sex is 'Mr Steel' considered to be? Is 'he' male, having a Y-chromosome, or, as it is a machine, neuter?

2. What is considered to be Mr Steel's 'date of birth' for the purposes of calculating its age? Is it the date it was switched on? If it is switched off and on again, does its 'birth' recur?

3. If 'Mr Steel' is damaged or destroyed, rendered 'dead', whether accidentally or deliberately, what will be the legal position from the point of view of the SSR? You will understand the difficulty; [as, according to our Legal Dept.] while aboard a Solar Republic vessel where Solar Law applies, 'Mr Steel' is considered to be an object, however complex and expensive, and not a human person, nor an animal where anti-cruelty laws would apply, and therefore only the laws against criminal damage protect it.

If your understanding is different on any of these points, please let me know.

I remain, Sir, Madam or Machine,

Your Obedient Servant,

[illegible squiggle] HUMAN RESOURCES Division

Reply from SSR Citizenship Section

Dear Sir,

Mr Archibald Steel is indeed a Sirian citizen, his citizenship being granted under the Naturalisation Act, clause 23.b.27f. Mr Steel's personalia are as follows:

Archibald Sakhumvit mBebe Steel III, male, born 291-3183 at Suvorov Scientific Compound, Conqueror 7.

Mr. Steel, to all intents and purposes, is a male and should for all matters of supply and social contact be treated as a male. However, Mr Steel seems to be quite capable to speak up for himself, should he consider himself to be mistreated (but you didn't hear this from me)

We do understand your problems with the 'age' of mr Steel. 291-3183 can be taken as the date at which his keel was laid (pardon my English), as Mr. Steel himself would have it. Since then mr Steel has alway been terribly 'switched on', although at certain times his main CPU has been off line due to renovation. In all those cases the secondary CPU has been active, so mr Steel was fully conscious, to use a limited analogy.

To all intents and purposes, mr Steel is a human being, as you will understand when experiencing his proximity. It was never the choice of the SSR to have its personnel under the command of Earther officers or on Earther ships, but we have indicated at an earlier stage that the Sirian citizens on the mission would do so not under SSR authority but on their own account. Although the government of the Earther Empire has acnowledged its breach of the New London treaty and made a partial apology, the SSR sticks to this arrangement until full satisfaction on this issue has been achieved. The Sirian members of the mission are thus not protected by their Sirian citizenship. Under other conditions the SSR government would have certainly affirmed its 'property rights' on mr Steel. Mr Steel accompanies the mission on his own accord and thus should accept the conditions you set. Let me just advice you that mr Steel will react in self-defence when threatened with cruelty (both physically and orally). He leaves a trail of broken hearts...

I hope this answers your questions

regards

Aïsha Ben Hemmed IV

Senior Person Responsible

BOLDLY GO MISSION ADMINISTRATION

SIRIAN CITIZEN MR A. STEEL

Dear Mr IV,

Thank you for your prompt and helpful response. Mr Steel will be entered onto the ship's books as a Sirian male citizen, aged 19. His achievements for that age are certainly formidable. Your acceptance that Mr Steel will have only the protection of Solar Republic property law is noted and the Mission Commander will be informed.

I remain, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

[illegible squiggle]

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

The Universe, background, boldlygo, SSR, MrSteel

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Last update: **29 Nov 2010 07:19**