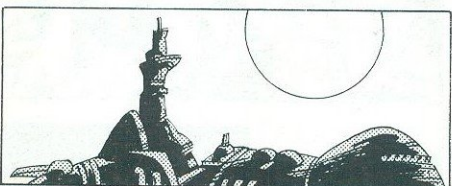
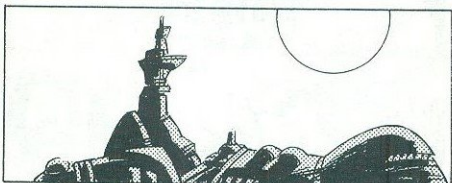


ON THE BRIGHTSIDE

by Steve Stiles



STAR

Somewhere a solar system is dying of a dread disease. A starship is diverted to a Star Base to pick up the vaccine or serum that will save it. A battle with a raider leaves a frigate with critical damage; it limps back to a Star Base's yards for repair. Back from deep-space patrol a heavy cruiser brings a Star Fleet line officer accused of a serious crime, who must face court-martial before three officers of comparable rank. The only place near where they can be found is a Star Base. Why go on?

For Star Fleet vessels the nearest Star Base is the next best thing to home port. Here a starship can be refurbished, repaired, and its crew given leave and recreation. Here medical supplies and critically important goods and personnel are sorted and directed to their intended destinations. A Star Base is often the most valuable installation the Federation has in a district of space, more vital to its interests than any other single world, no matter how industrialized or friendly.

Star Bases are the backbone of Federation civilization, more important than even Star Fleet, for without Star Bases there would be no Star Fleet. Not only would there be no repair and support facilities, but the very purpose of the Federation would be impossible to accomplish. A Star Base is more than a supply depot, it is a representation of Federation society in microcosm.

Why are There Star Bases?

When the original Federation was formed, every starfaring race had outposts in space; scientific research stations, manufacturing plants, even military bases for patrolling warships. These establishments multiplied rapidly, each race expanding and beginning to hem in all the others with large numbers of bases, stations, and colonies. These pressures compelled the response of a peaceful and co-operating Federation.

The Federation was formed basically as a cooperative interplanetary debating society. It had two aims for the future that distinguished it from every other kind of government before or since. One was the deliberate anticipation of the future, looking forward to a day when the space-faring races would work and grow together naturally instead of destructively competing. The other was the acceptance of the present and its irreversibility. The races of the Federation would not suddenly forget past animosities, or give up any of their sovereignty and dignity. Under the Federation they would not have to, but they were pledged to make the future a different and better time.

For a better future, space travel and expansion would have to continue but all these activities undertaken by the member races in space would have to eventually be consolidated under one banner. At the same time the Federation could not assume complete control over initiative. The Federation was not to be a force for

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BASES:

The Federation's Handmaiden

by Pete Rogan

dominance but for cooperation, it must restrain but not inhibit, oversee but not chaperone, be a leader in space but not the only one.

Out of this concept came the idea for Star Fleet, a force on the military model whose purposes are heuristic; Star Fleet explores space, polices, supplies, and in every way aids the people of the Federation. To complement the mobile elements and anticipate expansion of the Federation idea, Star Bases were planned and built.

Functions of Star Bases

All Star Bases raise their own food and maintain a self-sustaining industrial base to manufacture their own spare parts. Their personnel can live and even thrive on most worlds their Star Bases are built on.

The Tellarites, past masters of bureaucratic bickering, produced the surprisingly efficient operating format for all Star Bases. The original idea was for the Star Bases to be the supply and communications center for Star Fleet, but given the vastness of the spaces expected to be settled and the lack of other facilities this concept was expanded markedly. It would take too long by subspace radio, for instance, to have major decisions made by an authority in the heart of the Federation when any competent administrator with a knowledge of the Federation's goals and the tools at hand could do just as good a job locally.

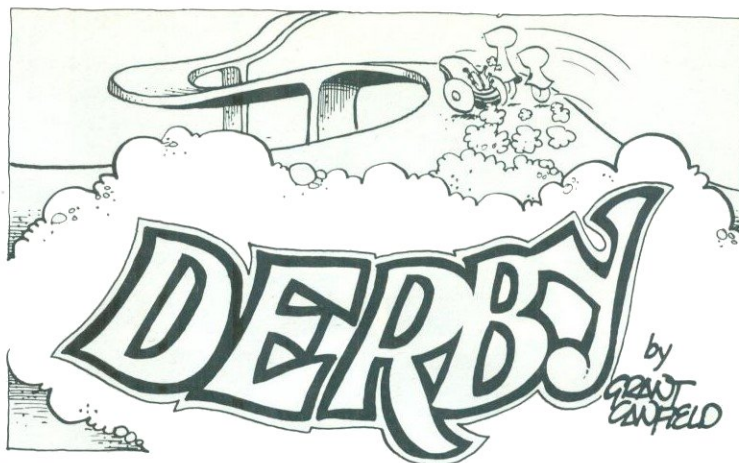
Each Star Base was thus designed

to act as an administrative clearing house for all Federation matters within its assigned region. Situations that it can handle with available resources, it does. Larger matters it can tackle and call for help. A Star Base is like a police or fire dispatcher, taking calls for help, weeding out the cranks, giving reassurance, and sending in the troops when needed. Whenever Star Fleet is credited for saving the day for someone, it's a sure bet that a Star Base is the real hero.

If a world suffers an outbreak of some previously unknown disease that can't be cured locally, it calls for Star Fleet's help. The call usually goes directly to a Star Base, unless a Star Fleet vessel is close enough and capable of helping (not as often as some people believe). At the Star Base the disease may be recognized as a known one, and medical teams with the proper medication and treatment dispatched. Once in a while the disease may be unknown in this Star Base's region but known in another, whereupon the second Star Base will send medical supplies to the first by the first available Star Fleet vessel usually diverted from other duty. The Star Fleet crew bringing the help to the afflicted planet gets all the credit, but it was the Star Bases in the background that solved the problem.

If a hostile armada is encountered, it's a Star Base that must learn where the enemy is, how large their fleet is, and direct Star Fleet forces to counter it. Should there be a serious disaster in space; a world threatened by a nova or collision with another heav-





only body, a Star Base coordinates rescue efforts and even assigns research teams to study the crisis. When space is mapped, a Star Base decides where the ships it assigns are to go, and when petitions for colonization come in a Star Base handles the choice of world, if it hasn't been made, and arranges for transportation, initial settlement, and integration into the communications net. (Not that some worlds aren't settled by private groups without Federation help and support; such settlements are not usually illegal unless the world is protected by the Prime Directive or prohibited for other reasons.) When tradeworlds are established a Star Base is obliged to police it if requested and supervise the trade flow. It's all dull work, but somebody has to do it.

Inside a Star Base

Star Base designs vary so much from world to world that a description of one may not be applicable to any other. Andorian designers, skilled in fitting machines to a task and structures to suit people, worked on each Star Base individually. Over the years,

the basic components of a Star Base have remained remarkably consistent. The original multiracial design teams planned and built well. Whether a Star Base is a hollow planetoid, an ice world, or a paradise, they all share the same individual departments and offices to serve Star Fleet and the worlds in their districts.

An old Academy saying on how to find one's way around a new duty station says, "If you're in a Star Base, just remember it's only Star Fleet in a box." All departments in Star Fleet (listed on Pg. 14 of the *Cadet's Orientation Sourcebook of ST:RPG2*) have offices in all Star Bases. They are *not* divisions of the main offices; they *are* the main offices. They make the front-line decisions. The size of these offices vary widely, depending on the population of the Star Base's district, but the average workforce in administration alone is between 5,000 and 20,000 personnel. Some offices, like the Military Operations Command and the Marine Corps Command, are almost wholly Star Fleet. Others, like the Legislative Affairs and Judge Advocate divisions, are primarily civilian. Many people unfamiliar with Federa-

tion policy are surprised to find that the Office of Star Fleet Reserve is staffed purely by civilian employees who are themselves reservists. The Federation prefers that people affected by their policies are assured of input in their making and enforcement.

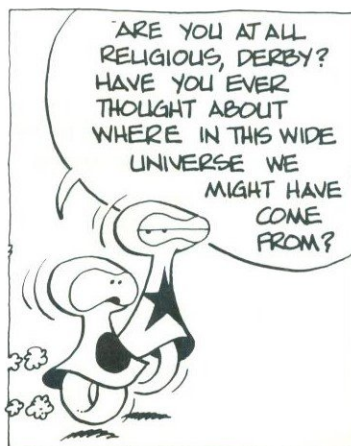
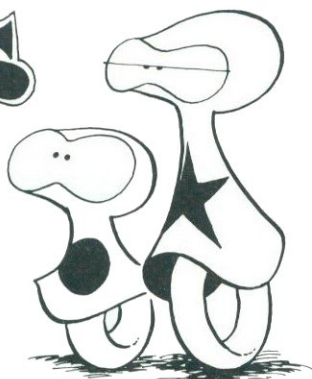
Mostly, the administrative offices are invisible, though their workforce is perhaps the largest portion of the Star Base's total personnel. More visible to casual visitors are the large arrays of services and goods available for Star Fleet and Federation bases and settlements within their service region. Every Star Base has extensive shipyards and orbital drydocks and ground shops, capable of servicing six or more vessels at a time. Star Bases also maintain a fleet of tugs and shuttlecraft equipped for in-system and deep-space recovery of vessels and personnel. The size of a Star Base shipyard workforce is supposed to be classified, but most are between 2,000 and 6,000 workers.

Star Base medical facilities are equal to any on the Federation homeworlds; perhaps better. Their hospitals, research labs, clinics

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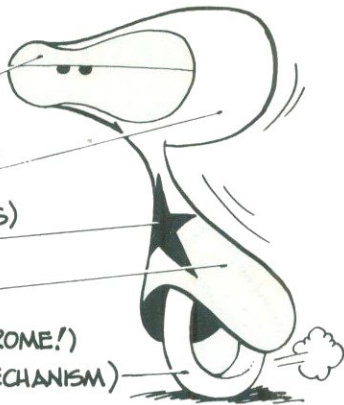
Rollers

... ARE THE MOBILE ANDROID QUASI-LIFEFORMS OF THE ARTIFICIAL PLANETOID RINK... MOSTLY, THE ROLLERS HOVER AT THE BRINK OF SELF-AWARENESS, POSSIBLY EVEN INTELLIGENCE...

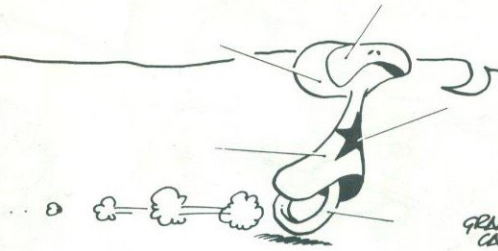


LESSON 56a "EXTERIOR PHYSIOLOGY OF THE ADULT ROLLER"

OBSERVE:
THE SENSOR PLATE
(PRIMARY INPUT INTERFACE)
THE CRANIAL HOUSING
(OPERATIONS CONTROL NEXUS)
THE IDENT-PANEL
(NO TWO ALIKE)
THE CHASSIS
(MADE OF MIRACLE DURACHROME!)
THE WHEEL (BASIC MOBILITY MECHANISM)



... AND THEY TOLD ME ACUPUNCTURE
WOULDN'T HURT A BIT...!!



FRANK CAMPBELL

Star Bases...

continued from page 34

(mobile and fixed), and emergency teams regularly confront challenges from space that do not exist elsewhere. In addition, they have unique opportunities for the study of alien life-forms and Federation personnel in alien environments. It's hardly surprising that from 2,500 to 4,500 medical personnel are attached to or work at each Star Base. Star Fleet has a large number of physicians from all worlds seeking service on Star Bases for the opportunities in education and experience they offer. The Federation tries to accommodate them all, advancing medical science as quickly as it can.

One of the more publicized functions of a Star Base is paradoxically one of the smallest: recreation. At any one time a Star Base may have up to 1,000 visitors, from starship crews to diplomatic functionaries, who must be housed, fed, and amused when not at work or on duty. Rarely does a Star Base's housing and hospitality unit number more than another 1,000 mostly-civilian workers.

Star Base quarters for all visitors, Star Fleet or not, are not at all like starship fittings: who wants to go from one curved-wall box to another? Star Base accommodations take on the ambience of the Federation homeworlds, giving Andorians their high walls and acoustic pastels, Vulcans their meditative dark, Tellerites their comfy open debate pits, Humans their massage beds and jacuzzis, and everyone gardens, pools, native music and entertainment forms. It's hard to find a Star Base without a tri-dimensional chess tournament or round-robin multiship bowling league. And, of course, Star Bases also accommodate the decor

of the major races, Federation members or not, whose worlds fall within their region. The Orion design of many of Star Base 27's interiors and exteriors has often provoked comment, not all of it printable.

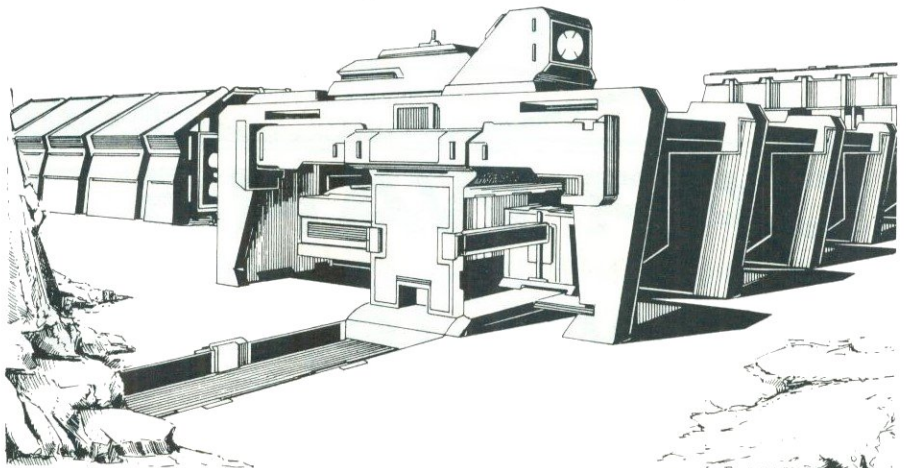
Since Star Base external environments are often quite different, the opportunities for outdoor activities vary tremendously. Nearly all Star Bases, however, have civilian offbase areas with nightclubs, bars, arcades, theaters, concert halls, and other pricey diversions which are not Star Fleet regulation.

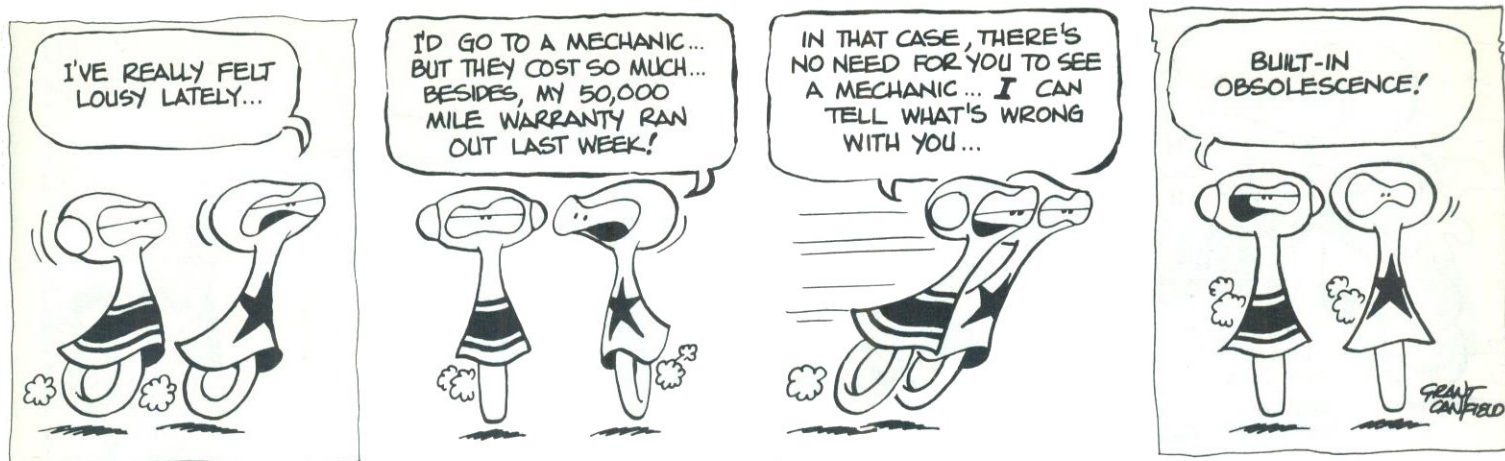
These offbase areas are features that the Star Base designers did not fully anticipate. The proliferation of mining, manufacturing, trading, and service-industry firms has been more rapid than the Federation expected. It was only natural, given the high volume of traffic through a Star Base, but the Federation has not yet decided if this is a boon or an embarrassment. Offbase entertainment areas save the Federation expense, but a lot of that saving is absorbed in expanded Security forces to patrol them.

One of the more obvious draws to a Star Base for developers has been the strong defenses, making Star

Bases the most secure worlds in their region. A Star Base, besides having a sizable Security detachment of its own, also has the central Federation Marine Corps barracks, complete with weapons and vehicles for up to brigade-sized units for protection on the ground. Against attack from space, a Star Base would rely on Star Fleet vessels primarily, but it has fixed defenses of its own on the ground, admittedly of dubious value in an era of energy bombardment from space. Still, with electronic jamming, ground-based phasers, spot-shields, and tractor-pressor beams a Star Base could prevent most of its surface structures from being slagged and enemy infantry from beaming down inside the compound. An unofficial (and disclaimed) assessment of defenses estimates that it would take the firepower of three heavy cruisers or their equivalent, minimum, *plus* a landing force of 5,000 troops with heavy weapons, vehicles, and air support to vanquish a Star Base. Aside from the Marine detachments not even estimates are available for the number of Star Fleet personnel solely concerned with defense.

In point of fact, no Star Base has





ever been taken by an enemy. The incursions into Federation space by the Romulans and Klingons did not conquer any system containing a Star Base. The Romulans were contained before they reached any, and the Klingons, though they penetrated as far as Axanar in the Four Years' War, did not destroy the Star Bases they bypassed, though they did raid them heavily.

Communications, from subspace radio to mail to parcel and cargo handling, is a major Star Base feature, absorbing another 2,000 to 5,000 personnel. Like the administrative work, everybody benefits from it, but few understand how it works. The enormous array of antennas, transmitters, control and processing centers is only the most visible evidence of a Star Base's vital role as central arbiter of its region's communications. A Star Base handles all the radio traffic for vessels in its area. Additionally, it handles all general-purpose transmissions and electronic mail for worlds without their own subspace radio capability. Newsfax, entertainment programs, personal mail, transcribed magazines, newspapers, scientific journals, and many other broadcast materials are received and retransmitted or transcribed and then shipped or beamed from Star Bases daily. An equal flow of information goes back through Star Bases to the rest of the Federation. Solid mail, mostly parcels and bulk cargo to be shipped to other destinations, may be sent through a Star Base for surer delivery and lower costs, though it often isn't as fast as direct cargo-carriers. Still, a world 500 parsecs from Terra with only a handful of colonists or scientists on it may not be able to afford a cargo ship making a single run out to them. A more common system is for shipping

requests to go through a Star Base, and then have a local cargo-handler bring the goods out. Someone once dubbed this system 'RFD,' which many suppose to mean Rapid Far Delivery. The actual origin is obscure.

Few Star Bases are sited in scientifically interesting locales, so their resident science staffs are small. Federation science teams, attached to Star Fleet vessels, in ships of their own, or in bases in promising locations, are usually found in the field. Not all science parties are Federation-funded, however, research groups from universities, member worlds, and even private corporation prospecting teams may be in a Star Base's district. The Federation commonly asks that all such groups relay their findings through the nearest Star Base, to be analyzed for free. Research in scientific literature and relay to home stations is performed in return for sharing in the information. The objective is furthering knowledge of Federation space by all means possible. Most groups comply, though they usually ask that the data not be further disseminated pending completion of their work.

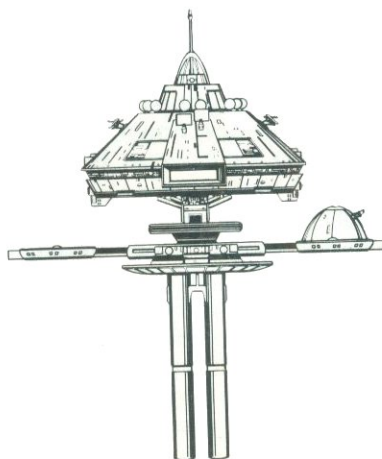
Some privately-funded research parties, interested in the proprietary

value of their work, do not report their findings back to a Star Base. This is perfectly acceptable and legal. But sometimes vessels venture where they should not, and do not tell their local Star Base where they are. The Federation does not prosecute these people unless they trespass on a protected or prohibited world, but they make a point of bringing charges against individuals who sneak around without telling Star Fleet and get themselves into trouble. It annoys and alarms Star Fleet that these people get themselves into a tight place without at least informing someone of their whereabouts. The Federation respects the right to privacy of information if asked, and has a good record of keeping such matters private, but they feel that someone investigating gravity phenomena around a collapsar should at least tell them so they know where to look for the wreckage and survivors.

Command, Control, and Authority

Many people have been surprised on visiting a Star Base to find that it is not called a seat of government. Its commander, holding the rank of Commodore, issues no decrees, signs no legislation, and kisses no babies. Yet he or she and the staff of the Star Base make decisions every day that determine the livelihood if not the very survival of millions of people in the Federation and outside it. Star Bases control large administrative and military forces, and have much to say about the flow of trade, personnel, and materials into and out of their district.

A Star Base is not expected to anticipate unusual situations or prepare for them, though it can if its Commodore finds enough reason. Officers in the field are expected to know more



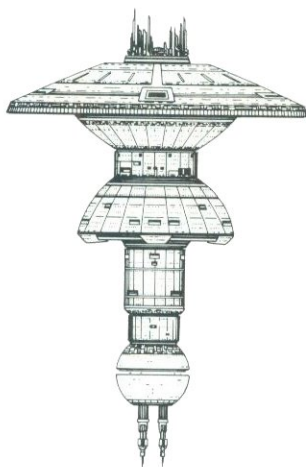


than the people behind the desks about things in the field, and their observations and recommendations are listened to most carefully. It's a Star Base's job to help them, not order them around. And superior officers of flag rank, whose personal experience is of incalculable value, have authority over Star Bases and their subsidiary bases as over any other part of Star Fleet. A Star Base is only a support system whose job is to make it possible for Star Fleet to do its job. Nothing more.

But recently pressures have been felt on the Star Base system, pressures that may cause a change. Even though Star Bases are not capitals, for their assigned regions they are effectively the same thing, and sizable populations have grown up around them on their sited worlds for the same reasons of centrality and proximity to decision-makers that affect the people of star empires. The settlements around some Star Bases are several times the size of the Star Base's own personnel, and feature all fixtures of a regular colony world: a spaceport, regular trading routes, a growing indigenous population, self-sustaining industry and agriculture, and even a recognizable separate entertainment/cultural tradition. "When a world gets populated enough to have its own movie industry," says Dr. Richter of planetary civilization study fame, "it's big enough to apply for (Federation) membership."

All this rapid growth was not fully anticipated, and has put a threefold stress on the existing Star Bases. The larger population has made the Star Bases more dependent on them, eroding the self-sufficiency that was a primary goal. The larger population, moreover, since the Star Base relies on it, must be defended. Most Star

Bases are less than 200 square kilometers in area, and their offbase regions many times this size, so the cost and complexity of defense goes up dramatically. And thirdly, while civilian enterprises have taken over many of the non-Star Fleet tasks of Star Bases, some of the vigorous care with which the Star Base conducted these tasks has been lost. Star Bases may be in transition from frontier outposts to purely administrative, inspection and licensing bodies; seeing the problem in perspective, a recent Federation Special



Commission asked a startling question: are Star Bases obsolete?

The High Council has pondered this question, and returned a firm no. There are now 31 Star Bases throughout the entire Federation. Some of these are now deeply embedded in heavily-settled space and some are in rapidly developing districts. In all these places, though civilian settlements crowd around or fail to materialize, the mission of the Star Base remains the same: support Star Fleet and the spread of Federation institutions deeper into space. Star Bases are a success, and they will remain a success.

And yet, it being the business of the Federation to build for the future, it may someday be necessary to create a new kind of installation to provide for a future Federation. Several organizations, including the Vulcan Academy of Sciences and Terra's Stanford University Institute of Space Studies, are rumored to be developing ideas now for the Star Base Successor System (SSS). No details are forthcoming, but the target date for the SSS is said to be at least a century away from the present, when the Federation's population, now about 71.8 billion, will pass the one trillion mark.

In the meantime, existing Star Bases may have to make some adjustments to keep pace with the present they were supposed to stay in front of. Star Base Three's world has applied for Federation membership. With a population approaching 100 million and planet-wide development, two major civilian starports and another building, they seem assured of acceptance. But it bothers some Council members that the world is the site of a major Star Fleet base; about as much as it bothers them that the world wants to be officially known as Star Base Three. A Councillor has compared the situation to the founding of some major Terran cities on ancient Roman army camps, an unexpected expansion of fortified sites intended to open the frontier. The Tellarites, true to form, disagree, and say that the original idea remains a separate entity with all its original powers and duties intact. The Star Bases were meant to take Federation civilization out into space. Well! There it is, right next door. Star Bases continue to work as they always have, and will into the future.

And that is a truth even a Tellerite would not long dispute. ★