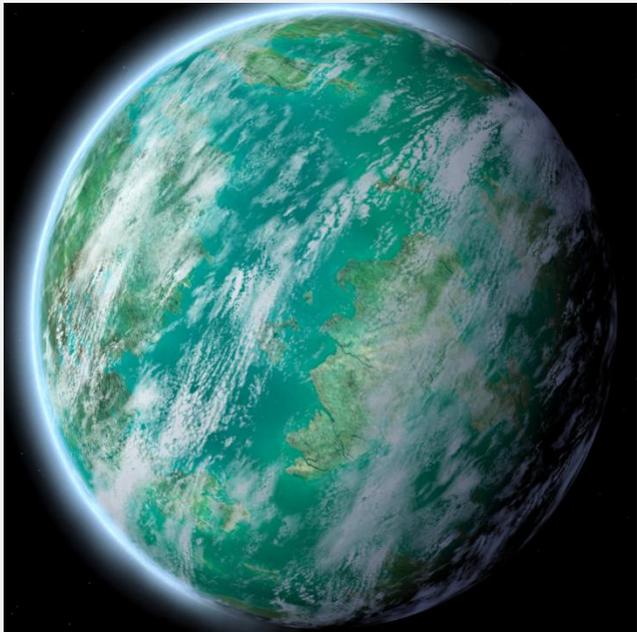




The Blockade of Naboo, 32 BBY



Message from Under-Secretary General:

I would like to welcome you all to the inaugural SSICsim Conference. Our team has worked hard to provide our delegates with a realistic Model United Nations experience dealing with the Star Wars universe. We hope that you will enjoy your roles at the Star Wars Committee of SSICsim 2012!

Sincerely,

Shahryar Pasandideh

Under-Secretary-General, SSICsim 2012

Under-Secretary-General: Shahryar Pasandideh

Committee Director: Robert Boissonneault

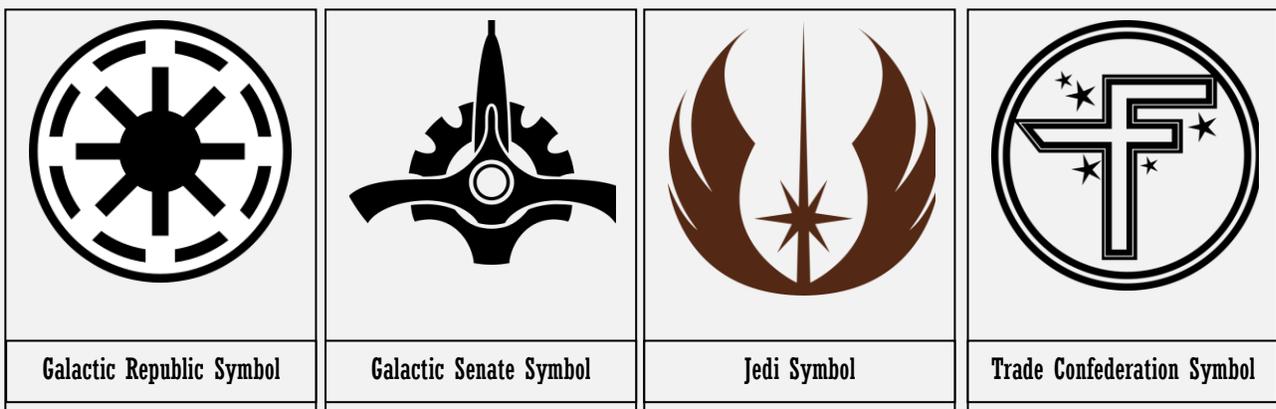
Crisis Manager: Misha Boutilier

Background Guide Author: Robert Boissonneault



In order to make this committee work, we've had to do away with some of the more supernatural elements of the Star Wars universe. There will be no Force in the committee room, but that doesn't mean that it won't play a role in the crisis. If you've seen the movies (and you should have), you'll know far more than your character does. Only Rune Haako is aware of Darth Sidious' existence, and he definitely won't be revealing it to the committee. Essentially, the Sith conspiracy won't play much of a role in this committee. One final note: there is a great deal of Star Wars material, and you're free to do independent "research" if you want to. This committee takes place exactly one day before the beginning of Episode I, and things need not play out as they do in the movie. Who knows, maybe Qui-Gon won't die this time?

Introduction: What is the Galactic Republic?



It is helpful to think of the Galactic Republic as the United Nations with more power. While the UN has the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Republic has the Galactic Senate, which can pass binding resolutions. In theory, the Republic is led by a chancellor, who is elected by the Senate. In practice, however, the chancellor has very little power (much like the UN secretary-general) and is more of a mediator than a chief executive. The Republic does have an expansive civil service, including a justice ministry and an intelligence agency, but it depends on member planets to enforce its laws. Finally, the Republic lacks a military.

The speaker of the Galactic Senate is extremely powerful, more so than the chancellor. The Senate's rules of order give him effective control over the legislative process, ensuring that it is extremely difficult to pass legislation to which the speaker is personally opposed.

Representatives

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Amidala | Queen of Naboo |
| Mas Amedda | Speaker of the Galactic Senate |
| Nute Gunray | Viceroy of the Trade Federation |
| Rugor Nass | Boss of Otoh Gunga |
| Polo Se'lab | Chairman of the Galactic Senate Committee on Trade |
| Finis Valorum | Chancellor of the Galactic Republic |
| Yoda | Grand Master of the Jedi Order |

Recent History

The planet Naboo, located in the Mid-Rim region of the galaxy, is home to 600 million people. The indigenous Gungan people, a species of reptilian humanoid, comprise 72% of the population. The remaining 28% is human, descended from human colonists who arrived 3,900 years ago. Politically, the human and Gungan states are co-sovereign. The former, based in the city of Theed, is an elective absolute monarchy. The latter, whose capital is the underwater city of Otoh Gunga, is a directorial republic governed by a five-member High Council. The council is chaired by the elected governor of Otoh Gunga, titled “boss.” Relations between the two are poor. The isolationist Gungans abandoned the surface world long ago and now rarely leave their underwater cities. As such, the Gungans are not represented in the Galactic Senate.

The two super-hyperlanes to which Naboo has access—the Corellian Run and the Hydian Way—are effectively controlled by the Trade Federation, a powerful cartel headquartered on the planet Neimoidia. The federation has come to dominate the regional economy to the extent that it now functions as a sovereign state. It was originally governed by a multi-species directorate, but six of the directorate’s seven members were killed by defective security droids at a trade summit last year. The sole survivor was the chairman, a Neimoidian named Nute Gunray. The six vacancies have since been filled by Neimoidians close to Gunray. While this apparent favouritism was initially controversial, the subsequent revelation that the defective droids had been tampered with by the anti-corporate Nebula Front soon shifted the media spotlight elsewhere.

The Nebula Front is classified as a terrorist organisation by the Republic. Its founder, Eru Matalis, believed that the Republic has failed to protect the people of the Mid- and Outer rims from predatory cartels like the Trade Federation. The federation, he argued, has been allowed to operate above the law because the Republic is neither able nor willing to bring it to heel. Dozens of planets and billions of people are now effectively ruled by the federation, which is accountable only to its shareholders. The implication is that the Senate has refused to act because many senators stand to profit from the federation’s success. In the past year, the Nebula Front has blown up a Trade Federation freighter and attempted to kill Finis Valorum, the Republic’s chancellor. The murder of the six federation directors was the front’s most recent attack, and Matalis himself was killed by a mercenary shortly thereafter.

There is very little support for the Nebula Front itself, but the belief that the Trade Federation has gone too far is widespread. However, commerce and free trade are regarded as pillars of galactic civilisation, and the political establishment remains wary of any attempt to restrict economic freedom.



The Current Crisis

Three months ago, the Galactic Senate passed the Hyperlane Toll Act, imposing a usage fee on the five hyperlanes: the Corellian Run, the Corellian Trade Spine, the Hydian Way, the Perlemian Trade Route and the Rimma Trade Route. The act was sponsored by a group of senators from the Core region, where the cartels are weakest. Its purpose is to ensure that interplanetary trade does not only benefit the wealthy elite. Additionally, the toll will be a valuable source of revenue for the heavily indebted Galactic Republic. The cartels, led by the Trade Federation, protest loudly that the act punishes successful businesses and discourages interplanetary trade. Senators opposed to the act argue that it will deny billions of people access to imported products at affordable prices. Senator Lott Dod of Neimoidia argued that the Republic does not have the legal authority to impose a toll in a designated Free Trade Zone (FTZ):

“We submit that the Senate does not have the right or the authority to enact taxation of the outlying trade zones. This is nothing more than a ploy to break up our consortium. It was the Trade Federation who opened the hyperlanes to the outlying systems, who risked the lives of its space-faring captains to bring formerly primitive worlds into the Republic, and new resources to the Core. Now we learn that we are expected to defend ourselves against the mercenaries and pirates who masquerade as freedom fighters, merely to enrich themselves at our expense. We come before you asking for aid, and instead become the victim of an indirect attack.”

While the factual accuracy of Dod’s speech is not in dispute—the Trade Federation did indeed play an essential role in the expansion of the Republic—the act was passed despite his vociferous objections. It should be noted that many regard the Neimoidian government as the political arm of the Trade Federation. Dod dismissed the claim as a “malicious conspiracy theory” but did not deny that the Neimoidian people are “very proud” of the federation’s accomplishments. Finally, the original bill was amended to prohibit the chancellor from asking the Jedi Order to enforce Republic law without the consent of the Senate.

Two months ago, the Trade Federation announced that it had upgraded its fleet of *Lucrehulk*-class freighters in response to increased pirate activity along the super-hyperlanes. The freighters are now heavily armed and carry hundreds of thousands of B1 infantry droids, thousands of AAT-1 armoured combat vehicles and multiple squadrons of unmanned *Vulture* starfighters. Weapons inspectors from the Republic were invited to tour the upgraded freighters, and Dod has repeatedly assured the Senate that the new weapons are for defensive purposes only. Senator Polo Se’lab of Bothawui motioned for Neimoidia and the Trade Federation to be investigated for contravention of the Chandrila Convention on the Use of Force by Non-State Actors but was voted down.

One month ago, a lobby group called the Association of Free Trade Worlds submitted a petition to the Galactic Senate calling for the repeal of the Hyperlane Toll Act. Spearheaded by the Trade Federation, the petition was signed by the Free Trade Association of Naboo on behalf of Queen Amidala’s government. The signatories agreed to pay the hyperlane toll for the Trade Federation and other cartels. Amidala’s chief minister, Sio Bibble, denied that the Free Trade Association of Naboo represents the government and dismissed its signing of the petition as nothing more than a publicity stunt. The Trade Federation, however, insists that the petition is a binding contract.

Last week, Naboo refused for the third time to pay the hyperlane toll for the Trade Federation. The federation accused Naboo of breach of contract but rejected the Republic’s offer to mediate. Deputy Viceroy Rune Haako told the *Coruscant Business Report* that “the Republic has done more than enough damage already. I cannot think of anything less helpful than yet more political interference in the federation’s business.”

Two days ago, the Trade Federation moved six *Lucrehulk*-class freighters into Naboo's orbit. They are carrying 1 million soldiers (infantry droids), 19,000 tanks and 4,500 starfighters between them. Viceroy Nute Gunray addressed shareholders late that day:

For the past month, the government of Naboo has attempted to bully the Trade Federation into submission. It believed—falsely—that signing the Free Trade Petition indirectly would allow it to accuse the federation of blackmail in public while tacitly supporting its cause in private. As such, the government has refused repeatedly to reimburse the federation for the cost of this grossly unjust tax on economic activity. The executive board has therefore voted to impose a blockade on the planet of Naboo, enforced by the Trade Defence Fleet. Travel to and from the planet will be restricted to federation vessels until the contract is honoured by the government.

Additional Information



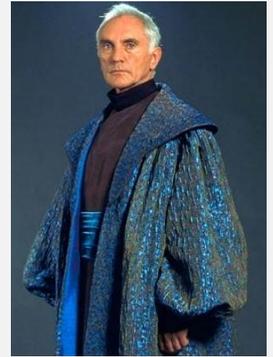
Mas Amedda is the current speaker of the Galactic Senate. He was elected eight years ago with the support of the conservative Rim faction, a group of senators from the Mid- and Outer rims. The Rim faction believes that the Republic, encouraged by liberal senators from the Core, is interfering unnecessarily in the galactic economy. It seeks the gradual deregulation of interplanetary trade and the “rollback” of the Republic’s jurisdiction. Amedda was unable to prevent the passage of the Hyperlane Toll Act, but he was able to have it amended to the point of unenforceability. Amedda is ultimately interested in preserving free trade, not in strengthening the cartels. He supports the Trade Federation because he believes that the Hyperlane Toll Act is harming the galactic economy, but he was privately rattled when the federation blockaded Naboo. He will support the federation to the brink of war, but not beyond it. War, after all, is bad for business.

The senator for Bothawui, **Polo Se’lab**, was elected chairman of the Galactic Senate Committee on Trade last month after his predecessor was charged with fraud. It is rumoured that Se’lab, a former spy, had a hand in exposing this corruption. As chairman, Se’lab has investigated the Commerce Guild, the Corporate Alliance and the Trade Federation for corruption. He believes that only a strong Republic can defend the free market from the cartels. Se’lab is also a prominent supporter of the proposed Republic Rapid Deployment Force. Finally, as a former agent of the Bothan Spynet—the most feared intelligence agency in the galaxy—Se’lab has access to the best intelligence available.



As boss of Otoh Gunga, **Rugor Nass** is the leader of the Gungan people. Like his predecessors, Nass is uninterested in Naboo’s human polity and discourages contact with the surface. Theed’s dispute with the Trade Federation is not immediately a Gungan problem, but Nass would consider taking a side if doing so would help his people. He could, in theory, raise a Grand Army in defence of Naboo and its natural resources, about which the Gungans care deeply.

Finis Valorum is a good, honourable man. He loves the Republic, but he knows that he has been outmanoeuvred by Amedda and the Rim faction. Valorum is supported by the liberal Core, where support for a strengthened Republic is high. He is wary of the Trade Federation, believing that it has become far too powerful. In public, however, he will be impartial. Valorum still believes that the chancellor can and should be a unifying figure, and he will do his best to negotiate a settlement that is acceptable to both Naboo and the Trade Federation. He has the civil service at his disposal, and he is still able to call on the Jedi Order for assistance.



Yoda is the grand master of the Jedi Order. In the past, the Jedi have served the Republic as peacekeepers and—unofficially—as covert operatives. The Jedi do not take orders from the Republic, but they share its interest in galactic peace and stability. Normally, Yoda would not involve the Jedi in a trade dispute, but Valorum has requested their aid. The Rim faction-sponsored amendment to the Hyperlane Toll Act is clear: the chancellor cannot ask the Jedi to enforce Republic law without the consent of the Senate. Ultimately, however, the Jedi serve only the Force, and it is theoretically possible that this duty to the Force could require Windu to ignore the law. Finally, Yoda and the Jedi Council are deeply unsettled by the current crisis, and not even Yoda himself can explain why.



STAR WARS THE GALAXY

