



DIPLOMACY WORLD



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DIPLOMACY WORLD was founded in 1974 by Walt Buchanan as a service to the Diplomacy hobby at large and as a publication of record for hobby statistics and other data. DW is dedicated to the goals of covering the entire spectrum of hobby affairs and to printing the best original materials on the game and hobby which are available. DW is an Institute for Diplomatic Studies publication.

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NOTICE

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The deadline for submission of materials for issue 50 is 1 April, 1988.

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REMEMBER: THE DEADLINE FOR MATERIALS FOR
ISSUE NUMBER 50 IS 1 APRIL, 1988; AND FOR
NUMBER 51 IT IS 20 JUNE, 1988 FOR FEATURE
MATERIAL AND 25 JULY, 1988 FOR NEWS ITEMS.

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL TO SEE WHEN YOUR
SUB EXPIRES...

INTRODUCTION

As you read this some 70,000 football fans, 10,000 members of the press, the millions of more football fans world-wide are focusing their attention just about a mile from here where SUPER BOWL XX will be played between the Denver Broncos and Washington Redskins. I confess, I'm rooting for Washington. I also confess my attention is elsewhere as this issue will show.

This is an issue that looks back and forward; which is appropriate at this time of year. There's a lot about computer Diplomacy and if you haven't tried it you should. Frank Cunliffe's article is, I think, the most important DW's published in a long time. Our International Demo Game is off and running and it will be interesting to see what happens in the seasons ahead. We hope we've managed to stimulate your interest in this summer's DIPCON and WORLD DIP CON and I hope many of you will be able to go one or both of these events. They should be fun. We'll look at the hobby's most popular variant, lazy-man's Diplomacy; and discuss variants in general. You'll note some regular features are missing. That seems to be a problem each winter. And considering what it's been like here I can't blame those who stayed by their fires instead of their typewriters.

Our spring issue is number 50 and if you're appreciative of the staff's efforts I hope you'll contribute something to that issue. We want it to be a celebration and we want you to be a part of it.

Since I plan to be away for most of July I'm going to need your help as well in preparing the summer issue or, God forbid, there may not be a summer issue!

As I type this some of the country is celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. For many people is just another day off, or a day on which to disguise the prejudices and bigotry that fill their lives the other 364 days of the year. But, for a few, it is a day to pause and reflect. I hope you did and although I have no appropriate quotation from Dr. King I do have a thought to share with you.

"This is a time for young men to dream dreams, and old men to see visions."

Prof. Manning Clark
on the 200th birthday of Australia

EDITORIALS

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY, AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Life, even in Diplomacy, is filled with the good, the bad, the ugly and the beautiful. Unfortunately, we so often focus on the bad and the ugly we forget to pause to enjoy the good and appreciate the beautiful. That's one of the purposes of DW's editorials, to get you to pause long enough in your hobby travels to help preserve and protect that which is beautiful in our hobby.

It's that time of year again when we begin to think in terms of polls and awards. Enclosed with this issue is a form for the Games People Play Poll 1987 and we encourage your participation in that project. It's also time to think about who should receive the 1988 Don Miller, Rod Walker, and John Koning Awards for hobby service, literary achievement, and skill in play of the game (respectively) during the 1987 year. The Awards are screened by committees and then decided by vote of the hobby. Nominations for the Miller or Koning Awards may be sent to me (include the name of the person you are nominating and a brief explanation of why). Nominations for the Walker Award may be sent to me or to Alan Stewart, 702-25 St. Mary St., Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M4Y 1R2. Be sure to enclose a copy of the article you are nominating along with the zine it appeared in, the publisher's name and address, etc. The deadline is 1 April, 1988. Entries may also be submitted for the (first) Congress of Diplomacy which is explained in the WORLD DIPLOMACY CON announcement. Both of these projects are part of our efforts to encourage people to write about the game, and history, of Diplomacy.

Good causes always abound in the hobby and there never seems to be enough people to do all that needs to be done. Perhaps one of these efforts will appeal to you. Steven Heinowski, our BNC, is looking for help in tracking down game records for some of our early and/or abandoned games. If you can lend him a hand in his search contact him. More info on that in his article in this issue. And that reminds me that Fred Hyatt, the MNC for variant games, is doing the same kind of detective work. So if you are or were a variant game GM get in touch with him at 60 Grandview Pl., Upper Montclair, NJ 07043. And, while you're at it, check out the new NAVB Catalog (reviewed in this issue) and see if it contains any of your variant designs. If your efforts are missing, or you've done something new recently send a copy of the rules and maps along to Fred Davis, 3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043. Most of the hobby's services are provided by volunteer custodians who donate their time and often their money to cover the costs of their efforts. One way they get help is through the PDO Relief Auction. A flyer for that is enclosed in this issue and I hope you'll all take part. There are some very rare items in there this time thanks to the donation by Doug Beyerlein of a number of old games. There's even a copy of my book on Diplomacy for those of you who don't believe I actually wrote such a thing. And, while we're talking about things financial, please note my comments in the State of the Hobby Report on a proposal for a hobby wide minimum gamefee. Your comments on that are welcome. If you hated the DIP TAX you're going to be wild about this one.

For the record let me note that there wasn't any feedback on Ken Woodruff's complaint about my ruling at last summer PEERICON's. Since I'm sure not everyone would have agreed with me I can only conclude that few read his comments. Too bad. If you didn't, I suggest you do.

Again, I encourage your feedback on my comments on how the hobby should respond to the return of gamemasters or publishers who resume their careers after a messy fold. If you have any thoughts on this you can pass them on to me, Steve Heinowski, or John Caruso, 29-10 164th St., Flushing, NY 11353, who offers the hobby an ombudsman service. I think most of us would agree that these people deserve a second chance. The question is under what, if any, restrictions?

Finally, for those of you who have been wondering why I haven't responded to your mail in the past few months I have the pleasure to report the end of the First DW-ATT War! I won't bore you with the whole story; which would fill an issue the size of this one; but I'll fill in a few of the highlights. Last fall the ATT typewriter I bought a year before went on the blink. When I bought it I was told that service was available locally for competitive rates and within 2-3 days. Well, it wasn't like that at all.

It took five weeks, cost me \$90 per hour, and required over 20 phone calls to ^{15/}over a dozen different ATT people to get my machine done. While waiting I had to buy another machine to use for the last issue of DW while the first one was being repaired because there were no loaner or rental machines available. When I did get my original machine back I was so disgusted I sent off a 10 page memo to all of the ATT people I had dealt with, right up to corporate headquarters on Madison Ave., in New York. Well, that got some action. ATT's policy has been changed to the benefit of the consumer. I ought to know because the second machine I bought also went on the fritz, two months after I bought it. This time it took one phone call and 15 minutes and they traded it for a brand new, upgraded machine. It took a lot of effort and caused a lot of aggravation but it demonstrated that you can fight a big corporation and win. Anyway, as a result of that battle I have a 3 month backlog of mail to attend to.

Finally, to those of you who attended any of our Diplomacy events at our Kansas St. apartment I must report the passing of Helen Wells, our next door neighbor. Helen started her career as a hat-check girl at the old Trocadero (the original one) and eventually moved on to become secretary to Otto Preminger before marrying Lee Wells, the well known mystery and western writer. Her contributions to my own zine, XENOGOGIC, and her input when I was getting DW going again were major. My only regret is that she never got a chance to play the game, although she certainly understood its finer points.

But let's not end on a downbeat. I'm pleased to pass on to you word that Dave and Lori Kleiman are the proud parents of a new baby girl, born December 21st. Amanda Grace came in at just over 7 pounds; And that's beautiful.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

If you bothered to read the Staff listings on the inside front cover you'll notice that we have eliminated the positions of Regional Editors. The reason for that was quite simple: it just didn't work.

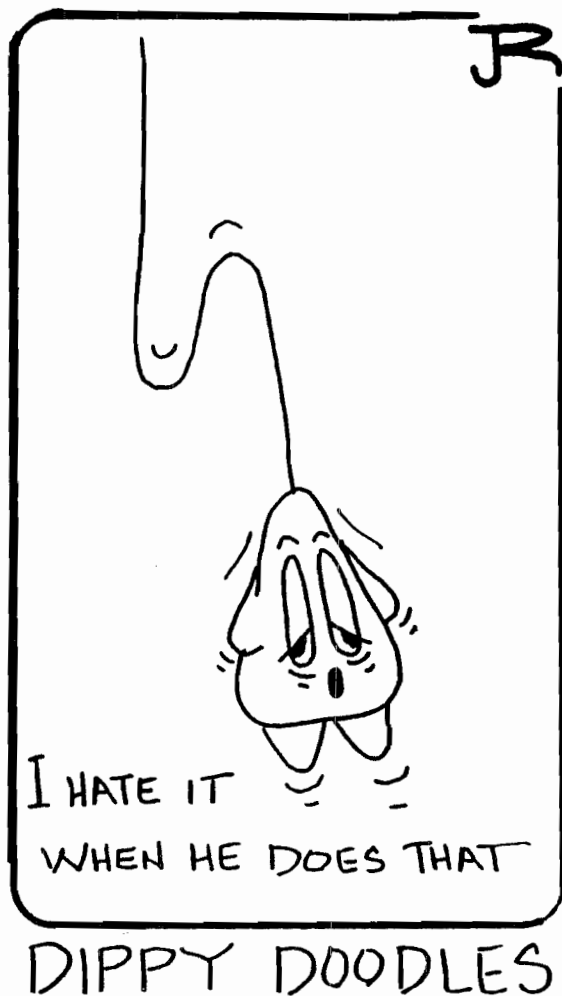
On the other hand we have added a new editor to handle PBEM Diplomacy, Les Casey. So if you have questions or info about that aspect of the hobby contact him.

If space allows we'll be including a special flyer in this issue offering some special prices on various DW publications in conjunction with our 50th issue celebration.

If you aren't interested please pass it on to a friend. If you are a pubber we'd appreciate it if you'd copy the flyer and distribute it with your own publication.

Our next issue will be number 50 and we hope to make it a special one. All of you are welcome to contribute to that issue. We need articles, artwork, etc. by 1 April dealing with any aspect of the game or hobby. For more info contact me, but do it soon. Time is getting short.

And, believe it or not, I need articles for issue 51, due in July, because if you don't write them (and soon) there won't be a July issue. Keep in mind that I'll be away almost the whole month of July at DIPCON and WORLD DIP CON so that issue will have to be done in late June and early August. A word to the wise, right?



STATE OF THE HOBBY REPORT: 1987

The Winter of Our Discontent

By Larry Peery

Like most years 1987 had its good and its bad points. Certainly 1987 was a better year than some we've experienced recently. Feuding was way down. The hobby custodians performed their jobs well. The number of postal game starts was up. New players found it easier to enter the hobby than ever before. A number of major new publications made significant contributions to the hobby's literature. And face to face Diplomacy continued to be a popular favorite at both casual and formal gaming events everywhere. All of these helped make 1987 a good year for the hobby.

On the debit side the list is shorter, but no less important. Particularly disturbing to me was the continuing decline in both the quality and quantity of hobby publications, particularly in our game and genzines. Last year's Runestone Poll; which itself attracted a record number of participants; only high-lighted the trend I have mentioned. Consider the plight of the top five finishers in last year's Poll: COSTAGUANA, last year's favorite, had a very traumatic year and may well fold. BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, last year's shining new star, is gone, leaving a bad taste in many peoples's mouth. PRAXIS seems to be in good shape. EUROPA EXPRESS is, of course, gone and its very mention in the Poll aroused debate. Even DIPLOMACY WORLD, the hobby's flagship publication, has had its share of problems. And there are others, no doubt. Some I am aware of. Some I am not. I do know that the Orphan Games people are going to have their hands full if all the zines rumored to be folding actually do.

We've always had zins folding. Certainly that's nothing new. And when it takes an average of 3 years to play a postal Diplomacy game and the average gamezine only lasts two years you're going to have problems. We've managed, more or less, to cope with those in the past and I'm sure we will continue to do so in the future. Unfortunately, coping with the past does not lend itself to preparing for the future. What bothers me particularly about this year's crop of folds (and the related issue of what to do about certain gamemaster and publishers who are returning to the hobby after previous folds) is the cavalier attitude shown by some of those involved. In years goneby when a publication folded the gamemaster or publisher usually had the grace to admit he had bitten off more than he could handle, that the fault was his, and that restitution to the players and subbers was the right thing, even if it was impossible. Now we see publishers and gamemasters walking away from their obligations and commitments and laying the blame on anyone handy, except themselves. Instead of accepting the responsibility for their failure they cast about for a scapegoat on which to place the blame. That people supposedly so intelligent can be so immature is a matter of amazement to me. I think the lesson is clear: a fancy computer, sophisticated graphics and expensive software (usually obtained by means other than hard work), a big vocabulary, and a superlative ego do not make for a good magazine or gamemaster. It requires dedication and hard work to do a good job at either publishing or gamemastering. Unfortunately, of late the hobby seems to have attracted a whole stable of "wunderkinden" who are determined to do to the hobby what their brothers did to Wall Street last fall. I hope you'll keep this in mind when it comes time to vote in this year's Runestone Poll. There are people out there pluggin away on their old manual typewriters, who can't always spell so good, and may not have that special intellectual appeal that seems only to belong to BMW drivers. But their doing their best and a damn good job and I think it's time they knew we appreciated it.

Still, I don't think we should let our discontent with their performance spoil what has been a good year for us. As I mentioned the number of new players and game starts in all type of Diplomacy is up significantly this year. And, as the impact of the new flyer in A-H Diplomacy sets hits us we'll be adding new players as well. Still, adding to the hobby's roster is mainly a matter of one-on-one recruitment and we all need to be a part of that effort. New zines and new publications oriented to the special needs of novice players continue to appear. Supernova, Masters of Deceit, the Zine Register are all making it easier for us.

For the first time in a long time we had no major problems with any of the hobby's various service providers and custodians. They all did their jobs efficiently and to the betterment of the hobby as a whole. Indeed, a number of hobby custodians were working hand in hand with their counterparts in other countries, helping them to get going.

The popularity of face-to-face Diplomacy continued to rise and for the first time in recent years Los Angeles has established and maintained a large local Diplomacy group including some of the best players in the hobby. Last year's convention and tournament circuit was busy and the DIPCON held in Madison, WI was an apparently successful event. This year's event in San Antonio, TX promises even more and should, if current indications are correct, be a major national event. Two weeks later the first real international Diplomacy event will be held in Great Britain and that also promises to be an exciting event. If the dollar stops declining, anyway.

PBEM and Computer Diplomacy continued to attract new followers and, as you'll see in this issue, much attention is being devoted to the pros and cons of the computer game. Those of you who were around to remember the debates over the original rules of Diplomacy will recognize many of the arguments.

Variant Diplomacy seems to be heading for a new renaissance with the publication of its Variants Catalog and the work being done by Miller Number Custodians and Variant Bank operators around the world.

When we published our "World Diplomacy" theme issue of DW last winter I never realized it would turn out to be so prophetic. While the hobby seems to be relatively quiet here in North America it is going like gang busters overseas. The vitality of the British hobby, demonstrated by tremendous variety of quality publications; the successes of MANORCON and MIDCON; and the growth and development of their institutions; bodes well for the future of Diplomacy in the UK. Even the Australian hobby seems to be booming with more magazines and more game starts each passing year.

This year's PDORA should raise a considerable amount of money to help the hobby's service providers and custodians with their expenses. And while this is a good effort that we support it is not a sound vehicle for financing the hobby's existence. Some time back I proposed the creation of a hobby DIP TAX to help subsidize its costs. The idea was shouted down, although on reflection many hobby leaders felt that something similar was sooner or later going to be necessary. In conjunction with the DIP TAX idea I suggest the hobby consider the establishment of a minimum gamefee to make sure that adequate funds are available to cover game-related expenses. Some current and would be gamemasters need that money. Others could, if they wish, donate it to the hobby's custodians. I think it is time that the players stopped getting a free ride.

I would also like to propose that we hold a Congress of Diplomacy in conjunction with this year's DIPCON and the WORLD DIPCON. This would allow those unable to physically be present at those events to still be a part of them and, equally important, provide somekind of permanent record of what went on, as well as a contribution to the hobby's knowledge and development.

Finally, I am concerned about the question of how the hobby should deal with the return of gamemasters and publishers who have folded in the past under less than honorable conditions. I was recently asked to publicize the return of one former hobby publisher and gamemaster who dropped out of the hobby some years ago, leaving many games orphaned, and subscribers hanging. Although he says all wrongs have been or will be righted I would still feel better if the hobby had some common policy toward dealing with such situations. Perhaps the BNC, Orphans Project people, and the Ombudsmen in the hobby could give us their thoughts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have helped me with our work at DW in the past year. While our performance hasn't been a perfect one I think we can say that we have made a contribution to the betterment of our hobby in the past year. And, all things considered, that's not too bad.

With luck, and hard work, we'll be able to accomplish even more this year. On behalf of the entire DW staff I wish you a productive and healthful 1988.

DIPLOMACY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Frank Cunliffe

Issue 29 of the wargame review magazine THE GRENADEER contained a controversially titled article "Shit From Shinola" by Greg Costikyan. The premise of his article was that, to quote, "90% of published games are garbage, but the vast majority of reviews are favorable — proving...that reviewers are sissies." Since Greg is a professional game designer whose credits include "Bug Eyed Monsters - They Want Our Women" I won't challenge his remark about most games being garbage. As one who reads many game reviews I can confirm that most reviews are favorable.

This brings me to the subject of this article. The Shinola Joe in question is Ken Hill's article on computer Diplomacy in DIPLOMACY WORLD #46. Ken favorably and correctly praises Computer Diplomacy's graphics and administrative capabilities. Where we disagree is over the program's ability to play the game. While Ken acknowledges "the computer player tactics are a bit on the strange side" and that "the computer opponents will be little match for an experienced Diplomacy tactician," he also states:

"[Computer Diplomacy] provides the novice with computer opponents which can provide him with the practice needed to learn the game's tactical intricacies."

"Much can be learned from watching the playing of the computer opponents."

"Computer Diplomacy can teach strategy."

"The experienced Diplomacy player can use Computer Diplomacy to sharpen their (sic) tactical skills."

Shinola! I have found Computer Diplomacy to play not only "strangely," but completely incompetently as well. It has no knowledge of openings. Each country has roughly two sets of Spring 1901 moves, and even this limited repertoire is frequently nonsensical. The biggest flaw of the computer player, however, is its consistent inability to do anything. Units hold for no reason. Units don't move into empty supply centers for no reason. Units retreat for no reason. I will go into more detail concerning these and other flaws in Computer Diplomacy.

First, though, I will give a simplified overview of how most computer game playing programs work. The heart of any game playing program is a move generation function, which computes all the legal moves in a position. These are called candidate moves. I estimate that in a typical Diplomacy position the average piece has about eight possible moves (counting moves, supports, convoys, and holds). After generating the moves for a piece, the program will use a move evaluation function which will rate the quality of each move. For example, a move which improves a player's position will be highly rated, and a move which gains a supply center probably even more highly rated. Next the move selection function prunes away the weaker candidate moves and examines the remainder, checking to see how each interacts with the country's other pieces, the country's enemy's pieces, and how well each unit will be positioned for the country's subsequent moves. The move that is evaluated as best is then played. If several possibilities are ranked equally best, then the computer can randomly select one of them.

This difficult procedure is ordinarily not, however, followed in the opening of a game. If a game has a standard initial position, such as Chess or Diplomacy, usually there exists a wealth of analysis of the opening. This analysis, called the opening book, can be built into a program so that it does not have to spend time generating and (possibly incorrectly) evaluating the first moves of a game. Again, if multiple moves are rated equally best, the computer can randomly select one of them.

Because Germany's principal openings and both of Italy's openings are so abysmal, it is unfortunately apparent that Computer Diplomacy makes no use of book openings. How easy it would have been for programmer Ron Sutherland to have Computer Diplomacy randomly choose among the openings listed in Rod Walker's "The Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy" (Published by The Avalon Hill Game Company). A better solution, though one requiring

considerable effort, would be to examine the openings played in postal games, figure the percentage of games in which each opening is played, and have the computer play each opening the same percent of the time. This way the computer would play a great variety of openings, but the better openings would be played with greatest frequency. As it is now written, Computer Diplomacy at least has the ability to randomly choose between several equally evaluated options. Too bad the options it evaluates highly are in reality inferior. I will now examine the opening moves of each country.

Italy plays the worst opening of any of the Great Powers. Of the approximately twenty times I have watched Computer Diplomacy play through the 1901 year, only twice has Italy captured a supply center. Italy's normal Spring 1901 opening is Fleet Naples-Tyrrhenian, Army Venice-Tuscany, and Army Rome Hold. This is followed in Fall 1901 by Fleet Tyrrhenian-Gulf of Lyon, Army Tuscany-Hold, and Army Rome-Naples, and in Spring 1902 by Fleet Gulf of Lyon Convoy Army Tuscany-Spain. Of course since France always has a unit in Spain the convoy fails and Italy doesn't get a build in 1902 either. Also the Army in Naples blocks that home center should Italy ever gain a supply center and want to build a fleet there, not to mention that the unit is as far from the front lines as possible. About 25% of the time Italy instead plays a more sensible set of Spring 1901 moves, Fleet Naples-Ionian, Army Venice-Apulia, and Army Rome-Naples. Admittedly the Army in Naples is as poorly placed as it was in the main variation. In Fall 1901 the computer uses this position to convoy the Army from Apulia. One would expect the Army to be convoyed to Tunis, thereby gaining a center. Unfortunately I have only seen this twice, because ordinarily the Army is convoyed to Albania. This would be a reasonable (though unusual) move if an attack on Austria is planned. But with the other Army being in Naples it is hard to attack Austria (and easy for Austria to attack Italy, since Venice is indefensible). The computer follows this up with the surprise Spring 1902 move of Fleet Ionian Convoy Army Apulia-Venice, finally occupying Tunis! In Fall 1902 the Computer then ineptly convoys the Army from Tunis back to Albania, forgetting that supply centers only change ownership after the fall turn. Kathy Byrne the computer is not!

Germany plays the second worst opening of the computer controlled countries. Germany's main opening is Fleet Kiel-Baltic, Army Munich-Kiel, and Army Berlin Hold. This is followed in Fall 1901 by Fleet Baltic Convoy Army Berlin-Sweden and usually Army Kiel-Holland. Needless to say, unless Russia is asleep Germany will not take Sweden. When Germany has ordered Army Kiel-Holland it has always succeeded, since the British Fleet in the North Sea always moves to either Norway, Denmark, or the Channel. The one time I witnessed Germany instead order Army Kiel-Denmark, the British ordered Fleet North Sea-Denmark, and the Germans gained no centers in 1901. Twice I have seen Germany play a different set of Spring 1901 orders. Both times these were the reasonable Fleet Kiel-Denmark, Army Berlin-Kiel, and Army Munich-Ruhr, and were followed by Fleet Denmark-Sweden, Army Kiel-Denmark, and Army Ruhr-Holland. My only objection to that is that the Fall 1901 1901 Army Kiel-Denmark was doomed to fail since Russia would obviously bounce the Germans out of Sweden.

England and France have two sets of orders, one for when they are at war (which is most of the time), and one for when they aren't. When they are at war they bounce in the Channel in Spring 1901. Curiously I have never seen only one of the two go to the Channel. Their other orders are invariably Army Liverpool-Yorkshire, Fleet Edinburgh-North Sea, Army Marseilles-Spain, and Army Paris-Picardy. In Fall 1901 France will then play Army Picardy-Belgium (which never fails), Army Spain Holds (Taking Portugal is a little better), and inexplicably Fleet Brest Holds, abandoning the Channel to the English. England has two sets of Fall 1901 orders. One set is Fleet London-English Channel, Army Yorkshire-London (Blocking the space England will want to use to build a fleet.) and Fleet North Sea-Denmark. Trying for Denmark almost always works against Computer Germany, but against intelligent opposition it would be safer to move to Norway. England has a second set of Fall 1901 orders to use against hostile France, which is Fleet London Support Fleet North-English Channel. While not even trying for a supply center is bad enough, this is also positionally inferior to Fleet North Sea Support Fleet London-English Channel.

When at peace England and France surprisingly play well. England orders Fleet Edinburgh-Norwegian, Fleet London-North Sea, Army Liverpool-Yorkshire and in Fall 1901 orders Fleet Norwegian-Norway, Fleet North Sea Supports Fleet Norwegian-Norway (Even if the support is unnecessary), Army Yorkshire-Hold. In Spring 1901 France orders Fleet Brest-Mid Atlantic Ocean, Army Paris-Picardy, Army Marseilles-Spain; and in Fall 1901 Fleet Mid Atlantic Ocean-Portugal, Army Picardy-Belgium, and Army Spain-Holds. As when humans play, the countries are better off when they remain at peace.

Austria is the least flexible country, invariably playing Fleet Trieste-Albania, Army Budapest-Serbia, and Army Vienna-Budapest in Spring 1901. Certainly nothing is wrong with these orders, but some variety would be nice; a human Italy would capture Trieste so fast it would make the red blocks spin. In Fall 1901 Austria plays a variety of moves, usually including Fleet Albania-Greece (Though the fleet has been known to hold.). Rarely Serbia will support the Fleet to Greece, which is the best option. Austria will also play the insipid combination of Army Budapest-Rumania and Army Serbia-Bulgaria, gaining nothing. A third move Austria plays is Army Budapest Supports Army Serbia-Rumania, which usually succeeds in bouncing the Russians out of Rumania. Occasionally the Computer additionally succeeds in capturing Rumania, at which point you wish it had emotions so it could feel stupid for not playing Army Serbia Supports Army Budapest-Rumania, gaining both Serbia and Rumania instead of trading one for the other.

Russia's main opening (Played 75% of the time) is Fleet St.Petersburg (s.c.)-Gulf of Bothnia, Army Moscow-Livonia, Army Warsaw-Ukraine, and Fleet Sevastapol-Black Sea. Somewhat standard, though the Army in Livonia, awaiting a convoy to Sweden, might be questioned in view of Computer Germany always blocking Sweden in Fall 1901. Russia's second most common opening is Army Moscow-Sevastapol, Army Warsaw-Ukraine, Fleet Sevastapol and inexplicably Fleet St.Petersburg (s.c.) Hold. Russia also has a third opening, the only country I have observed this of. It is Fleet Sevastapol-Rumania, Army Warsaw-Ukraine, Fleet St.Petersburg (s.c.)-Gulf of Bothnia, and the creative Army Moscow-St.Petersburg. Unfortunately I have only seen this third opening played once.

Turkey plays two openings. Most of the time she plays Army Constantinople-Bulgaria, Army Smyrna-Constantinople, and Fleet Ankara-Black Sea; and 25% of the time she plays Army Constantinople-Bulgaria, Army Smyrna-Hold, and Fleet Ankara-Constantinople. Since we have seen that Russia orders Fleet Sevastapol-Black Sea 95% of the time, Turkey would probably be better off always ordering the Fleet to the Black Sea, and sometimes Army Smyrna-Armenia, but the moves chosen can't be faulted.

I will now turn to a discussion of builds. First, as I have already mentioned, the Computer cannot plan ahead to leave home centers vacant to build in. This includes blocking key centers (England's leaving an army in London or Italy's leaving an army in Naples) as well as blocking all home centers making any build impossible. If this were all the Computer did wrong concerning builds it would be bad enough, but it isn't. The worst thing the Computer does is choosing what to build. For example Germany, having one build in Winter 1901, sometimes builds a second fleet. Or Turkey, having one build in Winter 1901 and no inclination to attack Russia, builds a third army. Or Austria's first build is a fleet. An intelligent player knows that there are no absolutes in Diplomacy, for as renowned Chess player and theorist Richard Reti once said "We are not interested in the rules, only the exceptions to them." The Computer, however, would play much better if it were programmed to always make England's first build a fleet, Germany's an army, Italy's a fleet, Austria's an army, and Turkey's a fleet. Note that this still gives the Computer powers flexibility if one gets two 1901 builds, as the second build can still be nonconventional.

The greatest problem the Computer players have is their inability to do anything aggressive, or even anything at all. Ken abbreviates "Computer Diplomacy" as "C.D." I have always used "C.D." to abbreviate "Civil Disorder." There is a strong relationship between Computer Diplomacy and Civil Disorder as frequently units in Computer Diplomacy are not ordered. Sometimes a country will order none of its units! Who would have expected the Computer to NMR? A unit could be adjacent to an unoccupied supply center and not move in. On the rare occasion when the Computer player does move in I am reminded of the saying "even a blind pig sometimes finds a supply center." If this inability to go forward is exasperating, the Computer's tendency to retreat is infuriating.

A Computer country will be itching along (perhaps I should say millimetering along) making very slow but still steady progress when suddenly all of its units will retreat. If a Computer owned supply center is threatened, frequently the threat is ignored. Of course if that threat is from a Computer controlled country, it is probably safe to ignore. The Computer, to sum up, is too passive to be worth watching play itself, and too passive to be worth including in a game with some human players.

The Computer also fails when it comes to international interaction. It cannot form alliances with other countries, and hence cannot support or convoy units belonging to another power. Thus if you have a unit being attacked by two enemy units of different nationalities your unit is safe, the enemies cannot support one another and the worst that can happen is for your unit to be a beleaguered garrison. The Computer moreover has no sense of "Calhamerian Diplomacy," that is, that the players should gang up on the leader to prevent his winning. (Allan Calhamer, Diplomacy's inventor, theorizes that the perfectly played Diplomacy game will never end, because when a leader emerges as a threat to win, the other players should attack him until he is no longer a threat to win, this process being repeated ad infinitum.)

Obviously Computer Diplomacy cannot play an outstanding game of Diplomacy. Compare computerized Diplomacy to computerized Chess, where many man-centuries have been devoted to developing better programs, none of which are rated in the world's top 5,000 players. There is, however, no reason why Computer Diplomacy cannot play competently. I have already suggested some ways the program could be improved: book openings, forced first builds, and ganging up on the leading countries. To those suggestions I add two more. First, enable two countries to make meaningful alliances so their units can work together. This could be done by having the units of two powers treated as if they belonged to one power. Allied powers could randomly stab each other, weighing the likeliness of the stab by the expected gain of the stab. For example, if a stab will gain one center stab 20% of the time. If it will gain two centers stab 60% of the time. If it will gain three centers automatically stab. The likeliness of stabbing could also be increased as the allied power approaches the winning number of centers. But no matter how alliances and their consequent stabs are implemented, the important thing is that they be implemented. My final suggestion is to do something to get Computer controlled units to move. At the minimum a unit doing nothing should move randomly to a space not occupied by another of that power's units. Better, and still a trivial programming task, would be to give preference to moving outward from that power's center. England would try to move units away from the North Atlantic Ocean, France from Portugal, Germany from Berlin, Italy from Rome, Austria from Vienna, Russia from Moscow, and Turkey from Syria. This would minimize the number of units that aimlessly sit still or aimlessly retreat. If all of my suggestions were implemented I'm not sure that the program would play what I would call a competent game, but it would play a significantly better game than it does now. The saddest thing is that none of these suggestions would have been difficult to implement.

Ken states that he has played when the Computer has controlled the other six countries and found trouble winning only with Russia, when he has never won in less than nineteen years. I have the following advice for Ken, all of which can be summarized as "exploit your knowledge of the computer's ineptitude!" First, use the opening Fleet St.Petersburg (s.c.)-Gulf of Bothnia, Army Moscow-St.Petersburg, Army Warsaw-Galicia, and Fleet Sevastapol-Rumania. True the Fleet in Bothnia will get bounced out of Sweden, but what else can it do? The Army from Moscow threatens Norway, and since England only moves to Norway 25% of the time, Russia has a good chance to take it. The Army in Galicia threatens Vienna, which the Computer Austrians are too stupid to defend. The Fleet in Rumania abandons the Black Sea, but it stakes a claim to Rumania. Even if the Computer Turks take the Black Sea, they probably won't be assertive enough to take your home center Sevastapol. Similarly your claim to Rumania will probably intimidate the Computer Austrians (and Computer Turks) into not supporting themselves into Rumania. The time I tried this opening all gambles succeeded and I gained three supply centers in 1901. (Of course the program then got PO'ed at my audacity and refused to accept my builds, halting the game.) My second strategy tip is applicable against humans too. It is to remember that supply center ownership only changes after the fall moves, so maneuver in spring to set up conquests in the fall (And sometimes maneuver in the fall to set

up conquests the next year.) My third tip is to remember that a Computer country cannot support units belonging to another country. My last tip is to strive for "Flying Dutchman" units that get behind enemy lines. They are even harder for the Computer to deal with than for an intelligent player. To summarize my tips: Gamble, Gamble, and Gamble Somemore human aggression will crush the machine's passivity.

I'm sure that no reader has yet realized what the content of this article has to do with its title, "Diplomacy In the Twenty-First Century." Perhaps the reader expects me to conclude that I expect a better Computer Diplomacy game to be available by the year 2001. While I do expect this to be true, it is not the purpose of this article. The purpose of this article is instead to describe the first, last, and only game of Computer Diplomacy I have watched, permitting the Computer to play all seven countries. Even this pessimist was amazed that the Computer players were so inept that a conclusion had not been reached after 101 years of game time. The Computer players were so loath to do anything that it took until 1941 for a country, Germany, to be eliminated. Italy followed in 1942 and Turkey in 1968. In 1985 the four remaining powers reached a position that they incredibly couldn't break out of, and in Spring 2002 I couldn't stand it any more, and turned the monotony off (But not before saving the game in case masochistic desire should ever assail me.) I have included a map of the final somnambular position. In it you will see that England has grown to sixteen centers, including Scandinavia, Germany, and Tunis; yet her units have retreated to the line running Spain-Gascony-Paris-Picardy-Belgium-Holland-Helgoland Bight. Except for Spain supporting Gascony to the French held Marseilles (Which is supported by the French Army in Piedmont.), the other fourteen British units were unordered for seventeen years. Russia, with twelve centers, had her own problems getting her units to move. Army Bohemia could have waltzed into English Munich unopposed at any time. Even before the final position absurd things happened. For instance when the Austrians had armies in Rome and Apulia facing a lone Italian Army in Naples. The Austrians could easily have supported themselves into Naples, but instead chose to retreat, giving back Rome and Venice. I have also included a supply center chart for the game, which will show that the early leader was Italy, being in sole possession of first place from 1912-1923. Interestingly, after Italy's demise every other power held sole possession of first place at least once during the game!

I am interested in learning if other players have experienced these problems with the game, or if I am the only one to have had to halt a game due to the Computer's inability to make progress. Furthermore, I'm curious to know if my dates are records (1985 for the last constructive move, 2002 for when I halted the game.) Those readers interested in more details about this lengthy game will be pleased to learn that I made a printout of the moves (I certainly did not expect more than a twenty year game when I turned the printer on.). The printout is seventy pages long, and would be longer if the printer hadn't malfunctioned, losing the years 1903 through 1908. Any archivists or others who are motivated to see the score of history's longest Diplomacy game can send me five dollars within one month of this article's publication, and I will send them a photocopy of the printout. My name and address: Frank Cunliffe, 295 Parkway Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15228-2127.

NO FIXED ADDRESS FINALLY SETTLES DOWN

The New Year brought a pleasant surprise with the arrival of the last promised issue of Steve Hutton's popular zine NO FIXED ADDRESS. Issue 39 contained 56 pages of typical Hutton humor and contributions from Chris Carrier and others, all equally infected with Steve's myoptic view of things. If you were a NFA fan it makes you long for the good old days when it appeared regularly. If you never had a chance to see NFA you don't know what you missed.

Although he didn't mention it if you send him US\$1 you can probably still get a copy. Steve Hutton, 1175 Broadview Ave., #711, Toronto, Ontario, M4K 2S9, CANADA.

Note that some of the data is missing due to problems I was having with the printer.

Note that the year indicates the year when spring and fall moves were played, not the post-winter adjustments.

YEAR	ENGLAND	GERMANY	RUSSIA	TURKEY	AUSTRIA	ITALY	FRANCE
1901	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
1902	4	4	5	4	5	4	6
1903	4	6	5	4	5	4	6
1904	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910	5	1	8	7	2	8	3
1911	8	1	7	6	2	7	3
1912	9	2	7	5	2	8	1
1913	7	3	7	4	3	9	1
1914	8	4	6	3	3	9	1
1915	8	4	4	4	3	9	2
1916	8	4	3	6	2	9	2
1917	6	5	3	6	3	8	3
1918	5	5	4	6	3	8	3
1919	5	5	4	6	2	8	4
1920	4	6	4	5	2	9	4
1921	4	7	3	5	2	10	3
1922	5	7	2	5	3	10	2
1923	5	7	2	6	2	9	3
1924	5	7	2	7	2	8	3
1925	5	6	2	8	2	6	5
1926	5	7	1	9	3	5	4
1927	5	8	1	7	3	5	5
1928	7	6	1	6	4	5	5
1929	7	5	1	6	6	2	7
1930	9	3	2	6	6	2	6
1931	9	2	3	7	6	2	%
1932	8	2	4	6	5	3	6
1932	7	2	5	6	6	2	6
1933	7	2	5	6	6	2	6
1934	6	2	5	7	5	2	7
1935	8	2	4	6	6	1	7
1936	7	3	4	6	7	1	6
1937	6	4	4	5	7	1	7
1938	6	3	4	4	8	1	8
1939	7	2	3	5	7	2	8
1940	7	2	4	4	8	1	8
1941	8	2	4	4	7	1	8
1942	8	0	4	4	7	1	10
1943	8	0	4	4	7	0	11
1944	7	0	6	4	6	0	11
1945	6	0	6	5	5	0	12
1946	7	0	5	5	6	0	11
1947	8	0	5	4	6	0	11

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YEAR	ENGLAND	GERMANY	RUSSIA	TURKEY	AUSTRIA	ITALY	FRANCE
1948	9	0	4	5	7	0	9
1949	9	0	4	5	8	0	8
1950	9	0	3	6	7	0	9
1951	9	0	4	6	6	0	9
1952	7	9	5	7	6	0	9
1953	7	0	5	7	7	0	8
1954	7	0	6	5	6	0	10
1955	8	0	6	5	6	0	9
1956	8	0	7	4	6	0	9
1957	8	0	6	5	5	0	10
1958	8	0	7	5	5	0	9
1959	9	0	6	5	6	0	8
1960	8	0	7	6	5	0	8
1961	9	0	6	5	5	0	9
1962	9	0	5	6	5	0	9
1963	9	0	5	6	5	0	9
1964	9	0	4	6	5	0	10
1965	10	0	4	5	5	0	10
1967	10	0	4	4	5	0	11
1968	10	0	5	2	5	0	12
1969	11	0	7	0	4	0	12
1970	12	0	8	0	4	0	10
1971	11	0	10	0	4	0	9
1972	10	0	11	0	4	0	9
1973	11	0	10	0	3	0	10
1974	11	0	10	0	4	0	9
1975	11	0	11	0	4	0	8
1976	13		11		4		6
1977	12		12		4		6
1978	14		12		4		4
1979	14		12		4		4
1980	14		12		4		4
1981	15		12		4		3
1982	16		12		4		2
1983	16		12		4		2
1984	16		12		4		2
1985	16		12		4		2
1986	16		12		4		2
1987	16		12		4		2
1988	16		12		4		2
1989	16		12		4		2
1990	16		12		4		2
1991	16		12		4		2
1992	16		12		4		2
1993	16		12		4		2
1994	16		12		4		2
1995	16		12		4		2
1996	16		12		4		2
1997	16		12		4		2
1998	16		12		4		2
1999	16		12		4		2
2000	16		12		4		2
2001	16		12		4		2
2002	16		12		4		2

[illegible]

COMPUTER DIPLOMACY: A NOVICE PERSPECTIVE

By Mike Maston

For me, as a novice player, the Avalon Hill computer game of Diplomacy has proven to be a useful tool in the learning of the game's tactics and strategies. This is because the game exhibits poor strategy when you play it or it plays itself in a seven player game. The adjudication program seems to be very good, but then I'm not a seasoned gamemaster either. In fact I would really rather play Chess than Diplomacy. But consider the effort put forth by Avalon Hill, it's not bad. Now for some specifics on their endeavor.

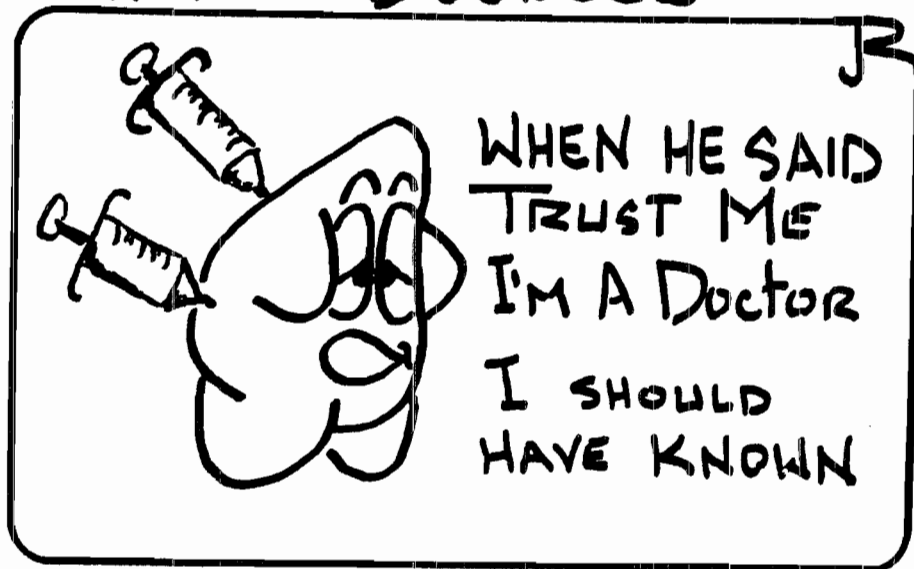
The loading of the program and the beginning of the game present no real problems to anybody familiar with the IBM system. However, I'm color blind, so the first thing I noticed was that the colors of the units (i.e. fleets and armies) have a flag or national symbol. In the case of Russia, the flag is the Cross of St. Andrew. The flag is white, with the Cross in blue. The problem for me is that all I can see is the white field and not the Cross at all. Now I use a RGB, or color, monitor. When I play the game on the green screen monitor, I see all of the symbols, but of course not the colors. Before you start to play your game, you must first set the parameters of play. You indicate whether you want the other powers in Civil Disorder, or if the computer is to play one or more powers, or a real live player will do all the button pushing! Then you set the diplomacy timer, decide whether you want secret retreat orders, if you want everything printed out, and under what format the print out will be. There are other things to consider, but as you can see, the beginning part is very much in depth.

During the play of the game, you will not be allowed to write "bad" orders. In other words, you can't order Fleet Brest-Hold, or Army Liverpool-Eats Lunch. You don't write hold orders at all, and you can't write cornball orders. Also, you must use the exact province or space names that are used on the game map. No other forms of abbreviation are allowed. Period! This takes some getting used to. So the technical fundamentals of the game are quite easy to learn. The interaction of the computer and the players is something else. The main thrust of this article is not how smart or dumb the computer is in the play of the game, but to realize that the computer is merely a tool for the recording of the play of the game. For that purpose, it's very good. I don't think that the machine version of the game was designed to out wit you in tactics or strategy as, say, a computerized version of Chess. The algorithms of a Chess program are precisely programmed into the software. In Chess, each of the pieces has a move that only that piece is allowed, such as the bishop is only allowed to move in diagonals on its color. Black bishops only move on their color, never white. There is a precise mathematical relationship in the way the Chess pieces can move, so each move has a measured response. Not so in the Diplomacy game. Diplomacy is based on the ability of the player to convince or cajole the other players into doing something that one player wants him to do. In other words, it's not possible to program emotion into computer Diplomacy. So the programmer had a working knowledge of the game, but didn't know, or deliberately didn't program difficult responses to each other. Also the permutations would be more than the 16 bit machine could handle. If you are looking for something that will out wit some 15 year old precocious kid; then the Avalon Hill version of Diplomacy is not going to do it!

I have found that the computer Diplomacy game is fun to play, but also it is very forgiving, and for a beginner that's not so bad an idea. Remember that the game is being played on a machine that cannot deal with emotion or greed. For me, it was interesting that I could try different tactics for each of the powers, and then observe the results of my handiwork. Even though the machine was not a good player, it still offered enough of a challenge to learn basic tactics and strategies. For a solitaire gunboat game of Diplomacy, I found it fun. Also the machine was consistent in its

play or mistakes. For example, I played Italy and put the rest of the powers on the computer; that is the machine played the rest of Europe, except Italy. In the Spring of 1901, Italy would play Army Venice-Tyrolia, Army Rome-Venice, and Fleet Naples-Ionian. France would move to the south, toward Spain; while Austria would move Fleet Trieste-Albania, Army Budapest-Serbia, and Army Vienna-Budapest. Now I'm sure what an opportunistic type of Italian player would want to do. In a normal situation, Italy only gets one build in the Fall of 1901. But what I did in Fall 1901 was the following: Army Tyrolia-Vienna, Army Venice-Trieste, and Fleet Ionian-Tunis. Viola! Italy has three builds and Austria did not oppose him at all because Austria's computer moves were Fleet Albania-Greece, Army Serbia Supports Albania-Greece, and Army Budapest-Holds! Now the machine did this every time that I made those moves as Italy in 1901. However, the next year, Austria would try to regain Trieste, but that could be nullified by supporting from Vienna and cutting any support from Greece. The computer seems to be programmed not to attack you first, except those attacks necessary to expand, but not in 1901, unless you attack it first. The retaliation mechanism is weak, but on the other hand if you forget to order a unit correctly, the machine will rip you to shreds! So the beauty of the computerized style of Diplomacy playing is that it keeps track of all of the moves, adjudicates the moves made, provides a printed record of the game if desired, and allows you to practice some strategy and tactics. If you are looking for a computerized Kathy Byrne Caruso; then the Avalon Hill version of Diplomacy is not for you. That type of game would require a 32 bit main frame system with hard drives and programming that would cover any and all tactics encountered by a real live player, and even that would only be close to the real live throat cutting, lying to your neighbor type of Diplomacy all precocious 15 year olds want.

DIPPY DOODLES



SPRING 1901

/18/

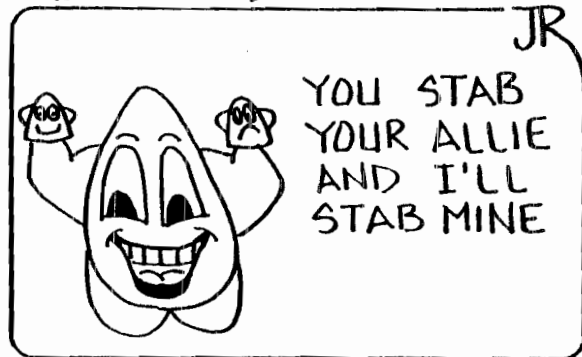
ENGLAND: Centers> EDI,LVP,LON; Units> EDI-F LVP-A LON-F
GERMANY: Centers> BER,KIE,MUN; Units> BER-A KIE-F MUN-A
RUSSIA: Centers> MOS,SEV,STP,WAR; Units> MOS-A SEV-F STP-F(S) WAR-A
TURKEY: Centers> ANK,CON,SMY; Units> ANK-F CON-A SMY-A
AUSTRIA: Centers> BUD,TRI,VIE; Units> BUD-A TRI-F VIE-A
ITALY: Centers> NAP,ROM,VEN; Units> NAP-F ROM-A VEN-A
FRANCE: Centers> BRE,MAR,PAR; Units> BRE-F MAR-A PAR-A

ENGLAND: LVP-YOR*, LON-ECH, EDI-NTS*
GERMANY: KIE-DEN*, BER-KIE*, MUN-RUH*
RUSSIA: SEV-BLA*, MOS-SEV*, WAR-UKR*
TURKEY: CON-BUL*, ANK-CON*
AUSTRIA: TRI-ALE*, BUD-SER*, VIE-BUD*
ITALY: VEN-TYR*, ROM-VEN*, NAP-ION*
FRANCE: MAR-SPA*, FAR-PIC*, BRE-ECH

ARMY at LVP moves to YOR
FLEET at EDI moves to NTS
FLEET at KIE moves to DEN
ARMY at BER moves to KIE
ARMY at MUN moves to RUH
FLEET at SEV moves to BLA
ARMY at MOS moves to SEV
ARMY at WAR moves to UKR
ARMY at CON moves to BUL
FLEET at ANK moves to CON
FLEET at TRI moves to ALB
ARMY at BUD moves to SER
ARMY at VIE moves to BUD
ARMY at VEN moves to TYR
ARMY at ROM moves to VEN
FLEET at NAP moves to ION
ARMY at MAR moves to SPA
ARMY at PAR moves to PIC

NOTE: What you see here is the computer print out for the first three game years of the computer (6 powers) vs. Maston (Italy) game.

DIPPY DOODLES

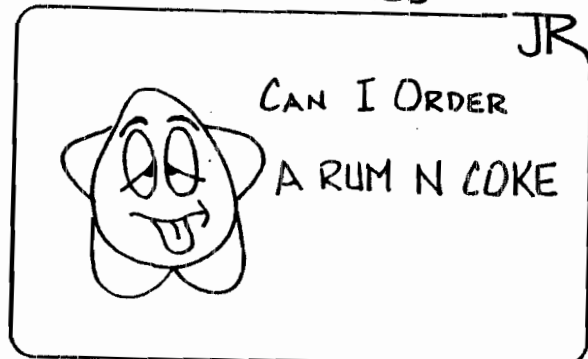


FALL 1901

ENGLAND: YOR-LON*, NTS-DEN, LON-ECH*
GERMANY: DEN-SWE*, KIE-DEN, RUH-HOL*
RUSSIA: BLA C SEV-BUL, UKR-RUM*
TURKEY: CON-AEG*, SMY-CON*, BUL S SMY-CON
AUSTRIA: SER-GRE*, ALB S SER-GRE*, BUD-SER*
ITALY: TYR-VIE*, VEN-TRI*, ION-TUN*
FRANCE: PIC-BEL*

ARMY at YOR moves to LON
FLEET at LON moves to ECH
FLEET at DEN moves to SWE
ARMY at RUH moves to HOL
ARMY at UKR moves to RUM
FLEET at CON moves to AEG
ARMY at SMY moves to CON
ARMY at SER moves to GRE
ARMY at BUD moves to SER
ARMY at TYR moves to VIE
ARMY at VEN moves to TRI
FLEET at ION moves to TUN
ARMY at PIC moves to BEL
GERMANY BUILDS ARMY at BER
GERMANY BUILDS ARMY at MUN
RUSSIA BUILDS ARMY at MOS
TURKEY BUILDS FLEET at SMY
ITALY BUILDS ARMY at VEN
ITALY BUILDS ARMY at ROM
ITALY BUILDS FLEET at NAP
FRANCE BUILDS FLEET at MAR

DIPPY DOODLES



FRANCE BUILDS ARMY at PAR

RING 1902

GLAND: Centers> EDI,LVP,LON; Units> ECH-F LON-A NTS-F
RMANY: Centers> BER,HOL,KIE,MUN,SWE; Units> BER-A HOL-A KIE-A MUN-A S
WE-F
SSIA: Centers> MOS,RUM,SEV,STP,WAR; Units> BLA-F MOS-A RUM-A SEV-A S
TP-F(S)
RKEY: Centers> ANK,BUL,CON,SMY; Units> AEG-F BUL-A CON-A SMY-F
STRIA: Centers> BUD,GRE,SER; Units> ALB-F GRE-A SER-A
ALY: Centers> NAP,ROM,TRI,TUN,VEN,VIE; Units> NAP-F ROM-A TRI-A TUN
-F VEN-A VIE-A
ANCE: Centers> BEL,BRE,MAR,PAR,SPA; Units> BEL-A BRE-F MAR-F PAR-A S
PA-A

/19/

GLAND: NTS C LON-HOL
RMANY: KIE-DEN*, SWE S KIE-DEN*
SSIA: SEV S RUM-RUM*
RKEY: CON S BUL-BUL*, AEG S BUL-BUL*
STRIA: ALB-TRI*, SER S ALB-TRI*, GRE S SER-SER*
ALY: VIE-BUD*, TRI S VIE-BUD, VEN-TYR*, ROM-VEN*, NAP-ION*, TUN-WME*
ANCE: BRE-ECH, SPA-FOR*

ARMY at KIE moves to DEN
FLEET at ALB moves to TRI
ARMY at VIE moves to BUD
ARMY at VEN moves to TYR
ARMY at ROM moves to VEN
FLEET at NAP moves to ION
FLEET at TUN moves to WME
ARMY at SPA moves to FOR
ARMY at TRI RETREATS to VIE

DIPPY DOODLES ★ JR



LL 1902

GLAND: NTS C LON-NOR
RMANY: SWE-NOR
SSIA: SEV S RUM-RUM*, BLA S RUM-RUM*
RKEY: CON S BUL-BUL*, AEG S BUL-BUL*
STRIA: SER S TRI-TRI, GRE S SER-SER
ALY: VEN-TRI*, TYR S VEN-TRI*, VIE S VEN-TRI*, BUD-SER, ION-GRE, WME
-SPA*

ARMY at VEN moves to TRI
FLEET at WME moves to SPA
FLEET at TRI RETREATS to ADR
GERMANY BUILDS ARMY at KIE
AUSTRIA DISBANDS FLEET at ADR
ITALY BUILDS ARMY at VEN
ITALY BUILDS FLEET at NAP

RING 1903

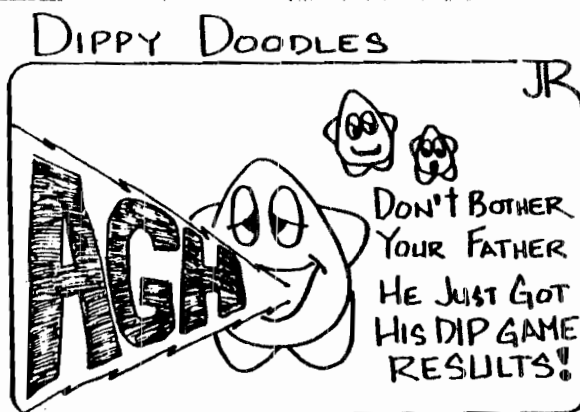
GLAND: Centers> EDI,LVP,LON; Units> ECH-F LON-A NTS-F
RMANY: Centers> BER,DEN,HOL,KIE,MUN,SWE; Units> BER-A DEN-A HOL-A KIE
-A MUN-A SWE-F
SSIA: Centers> MOS,RUM,SEV,STP,WAR; Units> BLA-F MOS-A RUM-A SEV-A S
TP-F(S)
RKEY: Centers> ANK,BUL,CON,SMY; Units> AEG-F BUL-A CON-A SMY-F
STRIA: Centers> GRE,SER; Units> GRE-A SER-A
ALY: Centers> BUD,NAP,ROM,SPA,TRI,TUN,VEN,VIE; Units> BUD-A ION-F N
AP-F SPA-F(S) TRI-A TYR-A VEN-A VIE-A
ANCE: Centers> BEL,BRE,MAR,PAR,FOR; Units> BEL-A BRE-F MAR-F PAR-A P
OR-A

GLAND: NTS C LON-NOR, ECH-PIC*
RMANY: SWE-NOR, BER-SIL*, MUN-BOH*, KIE-MUN*, HOL-RUH*, DEN-KIE*RUSSIA: SEV S
IM-RUM*, BLA S RUM-RUM*, MOS-UKR*, STP-LIV*
RKEY: AEG-ION, SMY-EME*, BUL-SER, CON-BUL
STRIA: SER-ALB*, GRE S SER-ALB
ALY: ION-GRE, TRI-SER*, BUD S TRI-SER*, VEN-TRI*, NAP-TYS*, VIE-GAL*

FRANCE: BRE-ECH*, MAR-SPA*, FOR S MAR-SPA*, PAR-BUR*, BEL S PAR-BUR*

/20/

FLEET at ECH moves to PIC
ARMY at BER moves to SIL
ARMY at MUN moves to BOH
ARMY at KIE moves to MUN
ARMY at HOL moves to RUH
ARMY at DEN moves to KIE
ARMY at MOS moves to UKR
FLEET at STP moves to LIV
FLEET at SMY moves to EME
ARMY at SER moves to ALB
ARMY at TRI moves to SER
ARMY at VEN moves to TRI
FLEET at NAP moves to TYS
ARMY at VIE moves to GAL
FLEET at BRE moves to ECH
FLEET at MAR moves to SPA
ARMY at PAR moves to BUR
FLEET at SPA RETREATS to GOL



FALL 1903

ENGLAND: NTS C LON-NOR, PIC-BEL

GERMANY: SWE-NOR, BOH-VIE, SIL-BOH, MUN S SIL-BOH*, KIE-BER*, RUH S MUN-MUN*

RUSSIA: UKR S RUM-RUM*, SEV S RUM-RUM*, BLA S RUM-RUM*, LIV-BAL*

TURKEY: AEG-ION*, EME S AEG-ION*, BUL-SER

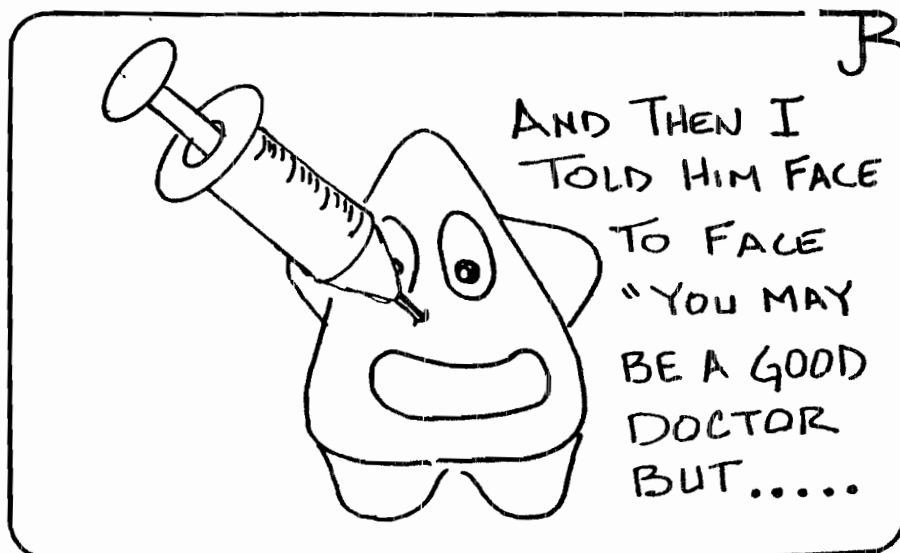
AUSTRIA: ALB-TRI, GRE-SER

ITALY: TYR-VIE, GAL-WAR*, TRI S SER-SER, BUD S SER-SER*, ION-GRE, TYS-GOL*, GOL-MAR*, SER S BUD-BUD

FRANCE: BUR S BEL-BEL*, ECH S BEL-BEL*, BEL S BUR-BUR

ARMY at KIE moves to BER
FLEET at LIV moves to BAL
FLEET at AEG moves to ION
ARMY at GAL moves to WAR
FLEET at TYS moves to GOL
FLEET at GOL moves to MAR
FLEET at ION RETREATS to TYS
RUSSIA DISBANDS ARMY at BAL
AUSTRIA DISBANDS FLEET at ALB
ITALY BUILDS FLEET at NAP
ITALY BUILDS ARMY at VEN

DIPPY DOODLES



PLAY BY ELECTRONIC MAIL,
OR DIPLOMACY BY BBS

By Les Casey

GENESIS:

In the beginning, there was face-to-face. Upon seeing his work, the creator said, "...and let there be PBM..." And so it was. Then on the seventh day, after a great football game and interesting session of '60 Minutes', the creator said, "...let there be e-mail Diplomacy..."

Such is the history of the founding of p-b-e-m.

DW E-MAIL EDITOR:

The PBEM aspect of the hobby is in its infancy. This latest form of communication is particularly well suited for a game like Diplomacy. Instantaneous receipt of mail, ease of access and computerized GM'ing all provide the basis for a new wave of Dippy participants and 'zine providers. Thus, I have volunteered myself as the E-Mail Editor for DIPLOMACY WORLD, and will look forward to your notes, comments, and questions on this subject. My address can be gleaned from the inside cover of DW. I am hoping to have sufficient new material to allow a new article in every issue of DW. As issue #50 approaches, I am planning to write an extensive dissertation on the state of the e-mail aspect of the hobby, including names and numbers of e-mail BBS's, judging software, and other new developments.

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT:

It was but 12 months ago, that I had considered entering the publishing aspect of the hobby. First drafts were created, re-writes and editing too. I even went so far as delivering sample copies to a dozen or so experienced GM's to solicit their opinions about my intentions. My new 'zine was named 'Gentlemen's Agreement'—a reflection of my belief of the style of play needed to be a success in the hobby. Many responded with their kind words, and suggestions for improvements. One GM insisted I read ONCE UPON A DEADLINE. I did. It stopped my publishing career dead. Once I became clear as to the difficulties of PBM GM'ing and tardy Canadian postal system, it dawned on me that my contribution to the hobby would best be done via an avenue which I knew best...computers. Thus was born Diplomacy Online. (I will donate \$5.00 to the PLO for every person who returns to me their copy of 'Gentlemen's Agreement'!!!!).

DIPLOMACY ONLINE:

I am currently the sysop of the only BBS in the world catering solely to the e-mail play of Diplomacy. I invite those of you who wish to bear the LD costs to let your modem do the walking...With 25 active players, two of which are long-distance players, there are always 3-4 games at any one time, with a gamestart just around the corner. New users are welcome to log in using the GUEST account, to view the system and download the house-rules.

DON'T FORGET: THE PDORA AUCTION DEADLINE IS 12 FEBRUARY, 1988

BE A PART OF IT

VARIANT DIPLOMACY: A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME IS STILL A ROSE

A roundtable discussion of the relative worth of the North American vs. European systems for handling winter adjustments with comments by Jacques-Henri Strauss, France; Pierre Tuloup, France; Bob Howard, Australia; Malc Smith, Belgium; Larry Peery, USA; all carefully orchestrated by David McCrumb.

This wonderful game that we play was originally designed to be played by seven people who could interact with each other in one meeting. Early in its history, a few people realized that this game could be played by mail with only a few minor rule changes. These changes have taken two major directions. Both deal with the order in which the game is played.

The first version, commonly known as the North American style, plays in the following manner: turn a) spring moves; turn b) retreats from spring moves plus fall moves possibly made contingent on retreats from spring; and turn c) retreats from fall moves, winter adjustments possibly made contingent on retreats from fall, and the next spring moves possibly made contingent on retreats from fall and/or winter adjustments.

The second version, commonly known as the European or International Style, plays in the following manner: turn a) spring moves and retreats from spring moves possibly made contingent on spring moves; turn b) fall moves, retreats from fall moves possibly made contingent on fall moves, and winter adjustments possibly made contingent on fall moves and/or retreats from fall.

Which version is better? Both are better, and neither is worse. The major factor which you use to decide this issue is your own basic philosophy. Part of this comes from yourself, but most of it is the culture in which you were raised. That, I believe, is why the two systems are so geographically distinct.

Personally, I like the North American version (NAV) because that is what I have always played. I could play using the International Version (IV), but would find it a little confusing. The tactics used are different. For example, a retreat is handled very differently in each system. In the NAV, you can see the whole board before you make your retreat and possibly respond to a situation that is developing. In the IV, you must make your retreat before seeing the board, thus restricting your possible options. I realize that contingency retreats can be used, but they cannot be as fine tuned as if you could see the board and respond to a possible threat and choke it off before it materializes.

All of this talk finally brings me to the title of this article, Variant Diplomacy. That is what we are playing. According to Webster's (all I have handy), a variant is "something that is different in some way." Both versions, by their reliance on using contingency orders for either retreats or moves, fit this definition when compared to the original face to face version. Based on this, I guess we should be getting Miller Numbers for all these games instead of Boardman Numbers.

Now, for some comments made by several of the players.

JACQUES-HENRI STRAUSS; Paris, France:

You said, you believe the North American system to be better than the European. Let me say that I disagree strongly with your point of view. First, retreats are part of the moves, so why should they be played with the next?

Then, usually each player has to write conditional retreats for a few of his units since most of them either cannot retreat, or cannot be forced to retreat. That means that with each set of moves, the player takes a little look to what may happen to his units (which he will do anyway if he is a good player), and make the relevant decision.

Third, houserules such as the one we dictated at Vortigern provide for an automatic road-to retreat, avoiding that way the disastrous effect that might otherwise happen (i.e.: removal). What is it? The units retreat to the adjoining province, where it can legally move, closest to his (her) home centers in his (her) possession. To avoid tedious counting, we even provide a list of all provinces and the distances to home supply centers. Quite easy.

them for their moves. And on an international setting, this is not only impossible but very expensive.))

PIERRE TULOUP; Venissieux, France:

...I prefer European rules...because I feel that they are better than North American rules. With European rules you always know where the enemy is, and the ally, and I think the diplomacy can be better.

((Dave: Yes, the diplomacy is easier, but making the actual retreat is difficult. I like to have all the facts before I do attempt to do something. This probably has something to do with my being a scientist. Knowing all the units positions are the facts in this case.))

BOB HOWARD; Leeming, West Australia:

Your comments regarding which PEM standard is used intrigued me greatly. Australia is behind the rest of the world in most things, but this is more often an advantage than not. By that, I mean we can pick and choose the best of what is happening overseas for our domestic use. Take for example TV Standards. Most of Europe uses PAL, while North America has NTSC which is vastly inferior. Hence, we adopted the PAL system.

With music too, America has what we would find an anathema here - funk, soul, disco, West Coast schultz, etc.; while in Europe (especially the UK) it doesn't matter what you sound like or how good you are, but rather it is the image that counts. Australian contemporary music draws on the best qualities of each to produce a vibrant, original and dynamic mixture.

The point I'm leading up to is that the European method is considered far superior here! Retreats and builds sent in with the seasonal moves adds an extra dash of excitement to the game as well as shortening the somewhat tedious waiting periods. With respect to yourself, those who prefer the U.S. system are generally "purists: who believe the European system introduces a luck element." They (e.g. Larry Peery) think that Diplomacy is 100% skill and no luck — which is patently absurd. You could write like Joyce, negotiate like Kissinger, and marshall ones units like Rommel, and it still wouldn't guarantee success in this game (it would help though!).

((Dave: I agree, there is a problem with being on the cutting edge of technology. You find or discover something wonderful and start implementing it nationally, then five years later it is improved. Unfortunately it is too late to destroy the already started project and start over because of the cost. Americans are usually quick too quick in matters such as this.

However, we are starting to loose this edge. Most of the problem is our government. It is sad to think that the cost of ONE Stinger missile would allow our research lab to buy supplies and new equipment, pay the tuition and living expenses for four graduate students, and hire two technicians for a year. The whole budget for the National Institute of Health could be supported by 200 F-15 fighters.

Don't get me started on music. I love our variation. I have never had more fun than at a jazz concert by B.B. King; but good classical music can either calm or excite me. Country music is my favorite, but I also enjoy rock though I dislike most of that of the 1980s. An interesting note; when listening to BBC-Scotland last Christmas I noticed that all the popular Country songs there were about five years out of date here in the U.S.

Back to Diplomacy. I can see where retreats with moves would add more excitement. But it also decreases the skill factor. All of Diplomacy is not skill, no matter what some people may think. Who your neighbor is is a big factor, but there are others. The state of mind when a correspondence letter is written or received can dramatically affect a game. Two letters received the same day could have an affect depending on what order they are opened in. And lost correspondence, or worse yet moves, could have a dramatic affect on the outcome.

So Larry is a "purist." Have anything to say about that Larry? Personally, I don't think I am what you would call a purist. That is one reason I am so heavily into variants, and why I am exploring the international hobby.))

Fourth, with the North American System all the players (and the GM, when time comes to referee) have to keep track of the possible retreats of all the other players, not only when ordering, but also when negotiating. While taking it into account when writing is more cumbersome than when you've got to figure out what to do with your own units (that you should know!) (and a default setting that's neutral is easy to provide), when it comes to the second half, I just cannot see how to negotiate properly.

Still unconvinced? Take a look at this example, Fall 19XX:

AUSTRIA: Army Galicia and Army Serbia Support RUSSIAN Army Ukraine-Rumania;

RUSSIA: Army Ukraine-Rumania;

TURKEY: Army Rumania Hold, Army Bulgaria Supports Army Rumania Hold; Army Rumania has to retreat;

Sevastapol and Budapest unoccupied.

If Turkey retreats into Budapest, he keeps his unit, and Austria has to defend his own supply centers which is going to be difficult since he will lose another unit. If Turkey retreats into Sevastapol, he keeps his unit, and Russia has to defend his own supply center which is going to be difficult since he will lose another unit. How could you conceivably, as either Russia or Austria, discuss with each other, or with anybody else but Turkey? From asking anybody's help against Turkey, to being a good ally of Turkey against the other, anything goes in between! And you just don't know! Having a retreating unit might appear the ultimate weapon, no matter how unrealistic and contrary to the rules.

But the implications should not be limited to those countries. As England you just don't know whether Russia will be vulnerable, making it an easy prey, or if on the contrary, it will prove a hard nut to crack...; and so on.

Next, retreats are supposed to be done immediately after the moves without further negotiations. This is clearly impossible if orders are not supplied along with the moves, as any delay can be used to negotiate by phone.

((Dave: Did I say that the North American system is better? Actually, as I said above, it is a preference based on how I learned to play as much as anything else.

Your point about making contingency orders for retreats is correct. Not all of your units can not be forced to retreat, but also all of your units that can be forced to retreat will not have to. For example, if I am forced to retreat from Munich, would it be better for me to retreat to Burgundy towards my home centers in France or to Silesia if Russia moved his only army from Moscow to Sevastapol to guarantee me Warsaw next season. This retreat would be based on what my ally England did, what Austria and possibly Turkey did, whether Italy attacked me, and how threatened I am by Germany. Contingency orders for retreats could not handle all of this information without getting very complicated, even for one unit.

On the other hand, using the same retreat, all three eastern powers could probably submit orders based on only two contingencies, a retreat to Silesia or any other possibility England, Italy, and Germany would probably want to cover the three contingencies, but that is not difficult. It must also be remembered that not all units will have different moves in the contingencies. English Fleet North Sea may move to Denmark no matter what the French retreat is.

Your house rule, must this be used or can contingency retreats still be submitted by the player?

Negotiations are a problem, but when are they not? This problem is a matter of practice and style. As a player, I like it because it helps separate the good players from the average players. As a GM, I can see how the IV would be easier.

Is a retreating unit the ultimate weapon? No, but it has saved me from elimination more than once. It is surprising how much one unit retreated behind somebodies lines will psychologically upset their play balance. No matter how unrealistic this may be in the real world (squads maybe, but not armies), it is not contrary to the FTF rules.

Once again, this is a variant. In the FTF setting, you see the board before your retreats and you see the retreats before fall moves and winter adjustments. This can not be done in PBM. There is always the possibility of negotiations by phone. After Turkey received Austria's builds, they could have called Turkey by the time I called

MALCOLM SMITH; Antwerp, Belgium:

...Europeans don't like the idea of separate winter moves, and even worse, spring moves dependent on winter builds... The amount of work involved for a player in [North American] rules which put winter into the spring season is incredible. I'm playing [and doing quite well, thank you] in such a game and the orders I have to write take up three sheets of [paper], all depending on my neighbors adjustments!!!

In FTF Diplomacy, before each season (i.e. Spring and Autumn) the players know which pieces are where before the diplomacy starts. And [there is] a certain [rule that states] NO DIPLOMACY CAN BE DONE BEFORE THE ADJUSTMENTS. [Why do you have a house rule] that blatantly breaks that rule? Are we playing Diplomacy or some kind of variant?

((Dave: AH HA! Somebody agrees with me. This is a variant that we are playing. Miller Number Custodians beware, you will soon be swamped with requests for Numbers. Or if you wish, I suppose you could take the Boardman Number Custodian under your wing as an assistant and allow them to give out numbers for this special and very popular type of variant.

Three sheets of paper?! Either you are much more careful than I am at submitting orders (which is very hard to believe, you should see some of my order sheets), or else you write very big. The amount of work for the player is relative. Do you give several retreats for units depending on up to hundreds of possible contingency possibilities for unit positions (after all you have to worry about the other 33 units on the board), or have six players give a couple of contingency order sets each turn. Everybody does the work in the first case, only some do the work in the second case.

Your quotation of the rule dealing with ADJUSTMENTS is correct but the RETREAT rule states, "After all the orders have been read (i.e. received), the conflicts resolved, and the moves made, any dislodged unit makes its retreat." Notice that this is after the successful moves have been made and the dislodged player has seen the outlay of the board. Actually, it seems like half-a-dozen of one, six of the other. It depends on which you object to the most.))

((The areas in "[]" in Malc's text are areas where I could not accurately read it. I tried to paraphrase what I thought he was saying. I hope I was correct.))

LARRY PEERY: San Diego, USA:

Remember, you guys dragged me into this discussion. I've heard all these arguments way back when; first when certain publishers in North America started putting out versions of the Bible in modern English (Did Jesus really speak in Shakespearian English?) it was condemned by conservative Protestants, until they could get their own "approved" modern language version out. Today everybody uses whichever one they feel comfortable with. More recently there has been much ado in the scientific world about who should get credit for first identifying the AIDS virus, American or French doctors. The point which they seem to overlook is that while they quibbled over terminologies and patent rights thousands died and tens of thousands more were infected. The question is really simple: Do you prefer your apples a natural, sauced, or in a pie? Each has its own merits. And cooks and gourmards will argue about it forever.

I don't happen to agree with Jacques-Henri that retreats are part of the moves, but much of his argument has merit, even though I think I agree with Dave's philosophical argument. I do disagree with Pierre, however, and I question whether anyone can say that either system is "better" than the other. That calls for a value judgement none of us are qualified to make. I will be interested to see if anyone asks Allan Calhamer his views at WORLDCON and what his answer is. Based on knowing him for some twenty years I'll bet his response will prove unsatisfactory to either side of the current argument. But I am very concerned about having North American players participating in a WORLDCON Diplomacy tournament without being aware of the differences between the two systems. They are going to have enough problems as it is without worrying about a substantive procedural change in the way the game is played. Elsewhere in this issue you will note that I've asked people familiar with the European system to submit some articles on it for the next issue of DW. Perhaps they will help prepare those of us who are going to WORLDCON. I'm only a little less concerned about the idea of playing in a tournament where the games end at fixed time. That is a very strange system to me. At PEERICON Diplomacy games go on until they reach their logical (or player decided) end even if

that takes 15 game years or 15 hours of real time. Clocks do not decide when the game ends. But again, it's a question of custom and habit, and one's willingness to adapt to new environments. Some people can. Some people can't.

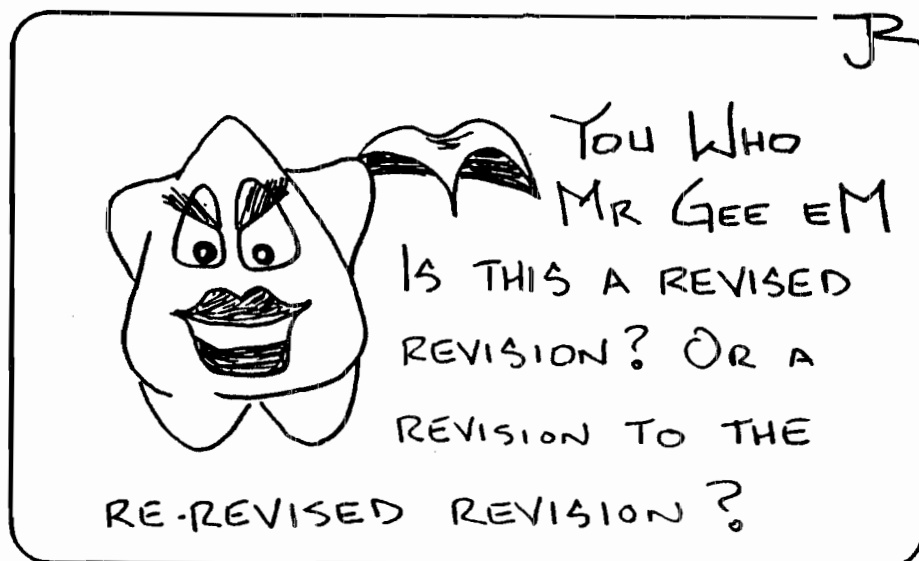
I noticed something in reading Malc's comments. He and Kathy Byrne are the only two people in the hobby I know of who both use triple exclamation points!!! Have you ever noticed that? Perhaps that has something to do with the way they play Diplomacy?!

I don't agree with Howard about the concept of waiting for the best in technological improvements to come along and then picking one. If we did that we'd still be talking with tin cans and string. The European phone system(s) are a good case study of that. What I find interesting is that for years certain American plane manufacturers have advocated that we adopt the piecemeal improvement system the Soviets use in their military aircraft; and yet every indication is that the Soviets have adopted our system of creating a completely new aircraft from scratch. As for Australian music (a subject I know nothing about); you are welcome to it as long as you keep sending us singers like Joan Sutherland and Kiri Te Kanawa.

A Purist, heh? I don't necessarily see the connection between the European system and luck. And I'm sure I've never said that Diplomacy is a game of 100% skill. Chance and/or luck are a factor in the game although in the long run skill counts for far more. I've played just about every form of Diplomacy under just about every imaginable circumstance and enjoyed, or hated, all of them depending on a wide variety of factors. I suspect, although I don't know for sure yet, that there are other differences between the various national schools of Diplomacy playing. I've heard enough rumors about the differences between the British, French, Dutch, and German (and no doubt Australian) styles of play to suspect that is so. I'll let you know what I learn.

Anyway, thanx to all of you for your comments. It was interesting.

DIPPY DOODLES



At Right: Real Gunboat Diplomacy! The USS Panay steamed up the Yangtze River to escape the besieged city of Nanking. After one nasty encounter with the Japanese Army, the passengers relaxed to enjoy cigarettes on the upper deck. It was then that they met the Japanese Navy. Photo courtesy of U.S. Naval Institute.

GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY

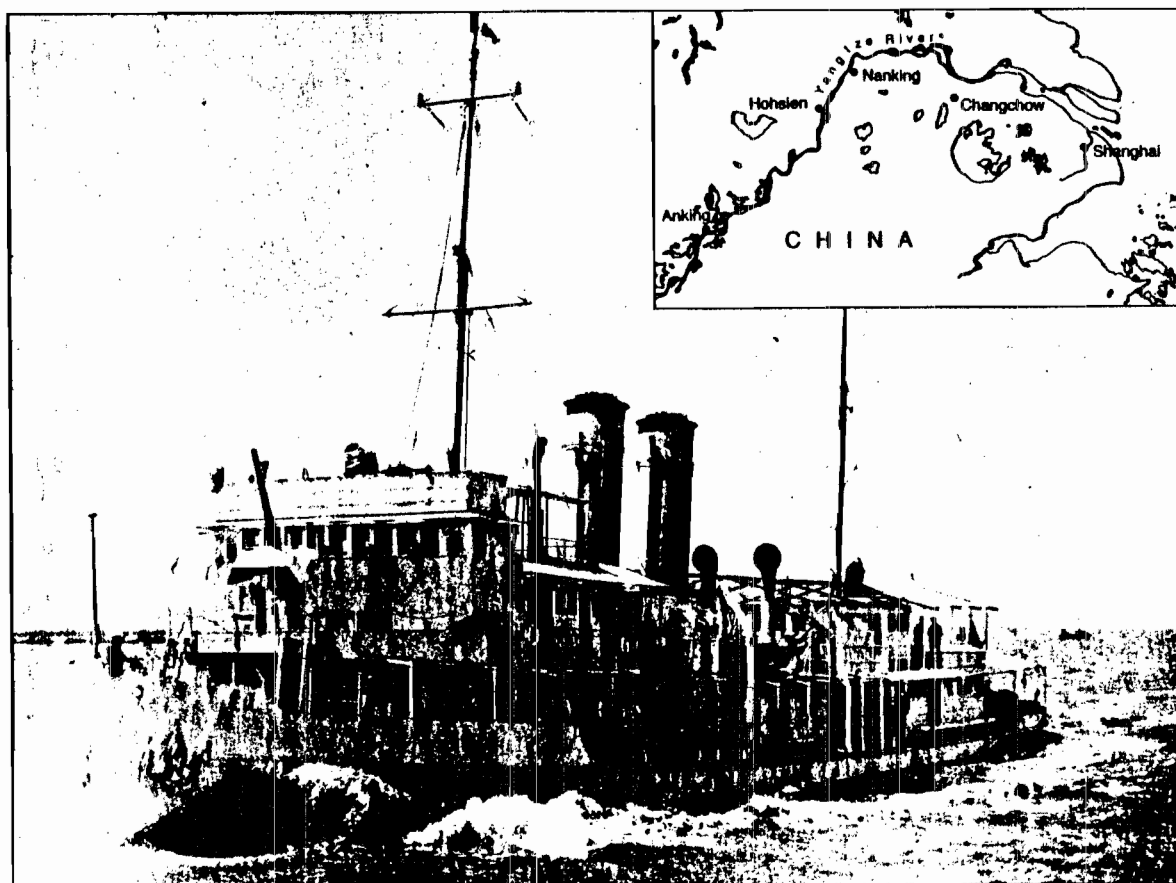
David McCrumb

Gunboat Diplomacy is the most popular variant being played in North America today. There are over 50 games currently being played postally, with many more openings available. The popularity continues to grow as more players discover how easy it is.

What is Gunboat Diplomacy? I have been asked this question numerous times over the past year. When variants are offered in most Diplomacy zines, players usually ignore them because they either do not understand them or are just not interested. However, Gunboat Diplomacy is so prevalent and so similar to Diplomacy that many of these players are now beginning to inquire about it.

Gunboat Diplomacy is the easiest Diplomacy variant to play. The same map that is used in Diplomacy is used, as well as the same movement rules. There are only two changes in the game: there is no private diplomacy allowed between the players, and only the GM knows their identities. You are required to play the position and not the other players. This helps to reduce the time required to arrive at a set of orders since you do not have to write letters and wait for a reply. Likewise, it gives you more time to think about the moves that you want to make.

The game is so simple that the North American Variant Bank does not keep a written copy of the rules on file, even though it has been assigned a Catalogue Number (rb32). Some games allow press, which can be used for negotiation purposes. Most of these allow Black Press (press that is not required to be written by the supposed author) so that everything written must be taken at risk. Anything that might give an indication of the author must be deleted by the GM. For this reason, many GM's do not permit any press in Gunboat Games.



One scenario of Gunboat Diplomacy is known as 7X7 Gunboat. This involves the seven players participating in seven different games, playing each country once. Since everyone has the same starting position, an overall rating can then be achieved and the best player identified. This was a popular fad several years ago, and is now starting again. Currently there are three sets being played with at least three more being offered.

One advantage to Gunboat is that it can be played using almost any game. Diplomacy is used almost exclusively, but Gunboat games have been played using Colonia VI, SkinnyDip, and Youngstown IV. It has the same advantages that Gunboat Diplomacy enjoys in addition to the challenge that the new game will give you.

Gunboat Diplomacy can also be played face-to-face. This is becoming a popular addition to Diplomacy Conventions to allow the players to unwind from the intense negotiations. The major difficulty with this is that the players know who their opponents are and can usually guess what country they are playing by the end of the game. This game still takes several hours to play, and so an experiment using Gunboat SkinnyDip will be tried at the 1988 DIXIECON.

With the popularity of Gunboat Diplomacy, a rating system is now becoming statistically possible. With this in mind, I have started ranking Gunboat games using the Dragonstooth Rating System, thanks to Stephen Wilcox, which I call The Gray Ghost Rating System. By using this system, it will be possible to compare how well each country and player does in each game.

While the statistics are not as accurate as I had hoped when I started this project (the Miller Number Custodian records are not very complete), they show promise for the future based on the number of games currently being played. The order of the Great Powers using the statistics I have are: Italy, Germany, Russia, Austria, France, England, and Turkey. This is almost a complete switch from the Diplomacy rankings of England, France, Turkey, Russia, Germany, Italy, and finally Austria. The reasons behind this witch will be the topic of future articles. The top two boards in TGGRS are:

Top Board

1. Robert Addison
George Martin
D.S. Palter
4. Neill Goltz
5. Conrad Minshall
6. Dan Stafford
7. Ron Spitzer
8. James Wall

Second Board

- . Tie, See Top Board
9. Kathy Caruso
10. Rick Dorsey
11. Tom Swider
12. Chris Mattern
13. Mark Leudi
14. Steve Cartier
James Early

These rankings are based on any number of games played. Once I have a total of 50 final game stats on file, only players with two games will be ranked. At the same time, I will rank Best Country Standings and Standby Players (It is interesting to note that Dan Stafford, the top Diplomacy player according to the Dragoonstooth Rating System, is the only person on the top two boards in both lists.)

CORRECTION

Note: There was a typographical error in the variant 273 B.C. by Fred Davis, Jr. which was published in DW #48. Please amend the following rule: (the correction is underlined)

6. Special Movements:

- a. Fleets may move, but not support, directly between the Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean, or between the Central Mediterranean and South Adriatic, following the special channel markings on the map. These channels may not be used for conventional convoys, but if the A/F Convoy method is used, they may be used by Army/Fleets.

THE FEUD THAT ALMOST WAS...1986H

Larry Peery

The Stellar Cast DW Demo Game generated as much heat off the playing board as it did on it; perhaps more. Prior to the game's start there was a lot of controversy about who should be and who shouldn't be playing in the game (See Mark Berch's comments.). Once the game got under way I hoped things would settle down and we'd all enjoy a good game. Still, there always seemed to be something to keep the players in an uproar. Finally, when the game was over I thought it would fade away and become another faded memory. Last issue we published the final statements of the players and commentators and I closed the file on the game.

Imagine my surprise when several weeks later I got a letter from Mark Berch enclosing a copy of a page from Randolph Smyth's zine FOL SI FIE #184 in which Smyth criticized me (if that's not too mild a word) for failing to print the second page of his end game statement. He also dragged out some old saws about DW's past, my previous mistreatment of him as an author, etc. In brief he did a real hatchet job on me and DW.

My first reaction was shock. I didn't know what he was writing about. So I dragged out the game file and, sure enough; there it was, a second page to his end game statement. Of course he had printed it (on a computer) on the back of the same sheet as the first page of his end game statement. There was no indication on page 1 that there was more on the back of the sheet of paper and like so many other computer buffs Smyth tries to squeeze every possible letter out of ribbon so the ink type on the back side of the paper sheet was so faint it didn't even suggest it was there when reading the front side (and that's faint indeed). So, in going through the hundreds of sheets of paper I deal with in doing each issue I missed it. And so came the bombshell from Canada.

My second reaction was anger, real anger. I don't very often get mad about things related to the hobby but in this case I was hot. I immediately sat down and drafted a nastygram to Smyth. It was too hot, even for me. So I rewrote it and it wasn't much better. Now some people would have mailed that off and said to hell with Smyth, etc. I don't work that way. Instead I sent a copy of my second letter off to Mark Berch to get his input, since he had been kind enough to send me a copy of what Smyth had published. If he hadn't I might never have heard about it. Then things began to get funny. Mark got my note and the copy of the letter to Smyth and after reading it assumed I had mailed the original to Smyth. He sent me a note asking how I could write such a nasty letter, etc. etc. He also sent a letter off to Smyth trying to explain what had happened, etc. He was doing his best to make peace and I salute him for that. Naturally Smyth hadn't gotten my letter and didn't know what Mark was talking about. In fact all Smyth had heard from me was a short note on something saying, "I'm trying to be nice," or words to that affect. I had still heard nothing first hand from Smyth.

Then I received FOL SI FIE #185 in which Smyth once again racked me and DW over the coals with echoes from Ron "Snafu" Brown about my horrible treatment of the Canadian language, the Canadian hobby, him personally, etc. etc. All was seconded by somebody who, to the best of my knowledge, has never even seen DW. Certainly he wasn't a paid subber. Needless to say, I was even more furious than after his first attack in FOL SI FIE #184. Maybe I'm just dumb but I couldn't figure out why he hadn't written me first to ask what happened to page two of his comments before making a big thing out of it in his zine. And, of course, I certainly couldn't understand why he hadn't had the courtesy to send me a copy of his first blast. But, maybe that's the way they do things in Canada. I sat down and wrote another response to what he had published in FOL SI FIE #185. This time I put it aside without sending a copy of it to anyone. I wasn't pleased with it because it wasn't the kind of thing I like to write.

After thinking it over I decided to respond as I have, here in the pages of DW. I am still curious to know why Randolph attacked me as he did and why he didn't send me a copy of his first attack. As for the comments of the others I can only point to my record and DW's attempts to get members of the Canadian hobby to participate

in our efforts in a meaningful and positive manner. Perhaps Smyth and Brown should have addressed their comments to J.C. Hodgins and Bruce McIntyre.

Had it been simply a matter of responding to Randolph's comments I probably wouldn't have brought up this matter in DW. I don't like to waste space in the magazine on that kind of thing. However, after reading Bruce Geryk's comments in the last issue of BLUNT INSTRUMENTS I realized that we are beset with an epidemic within the hobby that rivals AIDS. If you read much of the hobby press you've probably already been exposed to some of it so I won't bother you with all the nitty-gritty details. The main features of the epidemic seem to be two-fold: first, an appalling lack of good manners; and second, an inability to admit responsibility for one's failures. The first is disgusting. The second, for anyone in this hobby, is ridiculous. The hobby does not need and it should not tolerate such conduct or such an attitude. Constructive criticism is one thing. Crass behaviour is quite another.

As you can see there are all the classic ingredients here for a feud: two parties absolutely convinced of their own self-righteousness and the cupability of the other; a well-meaning, if misguided, soul trying to set things right; and a couple of interfering busybodies willing to put their two cents worth in. The original reason for the dispute is no longer important. 'nuff mud has been slung and enough flags waved to give everyone something to rant and rave about. Communications are non-existent except for one-sided broadsides and certainly negotiations and diplomacy never played a major role in this comedy of errors. In fact, if it wasn't so pathetic it would all be very funny. I'm sure a lot of people will enjoy seeing one of the game's top players romping in the mud with the publisher of DW.

Fortunately, it isn't going to happen because I don't intend to let it happen. And I don't think Randolph will either. My hope is that you will learn from this example and avoid getting yourself into similar situations. If that happens then all the aggravation this game has generated will have been worth it. So, if you find yourself in a situation like this be sure to maintain contact with the other party directly, and discourage third parties—no matter how well intentioned—from getting involved. Communicate and, if needed, take action immediately to get the matter resolved. And try, especially when it is difficult, to see the humor in it all. And, above all, be sure to read the backside of any computer print outs you get. Otherwise you just might end up making an ass of yourself.

Here's the rest of Randolph's comments. You might want to review the first part in the last issue before you read them.

Edi sweetened the pot, saying that he wasn't even interested in winning, that he found the game a bore, just wanted to get it over with, and offered to throw it to me. Kathy didn't protest. Finally, Edi offered to support me from Piedmont to Venice with his Army Tyrolia, but wouldn't hear of giving the support from Trieste instead—and that's when the alarm bells really went off. How would we "walk down the boot" with him still in Tyrolia? What was wrong with my Army Tyrolia-Trieste in the Spring if it would give the same position after the Fall? These questions were on the tip of my tongue, when Kathy jumped in with some arm-twisting respecting her options in the Black Sea.

So I agreed to their plan but went with my own, and the rest is history. I lost a bit of sleep—not much—over Edi's subsequent protestations about how sincere he was. Did I really throw away a chance to cut myself in with the dominant alliance? Edi's and Kathy's endgame comments should be interesting...but as of now, I still think the only thing I passed up was a chance to look like an ass. There were, and are, too many unanswered questions:

(1) Why did Edi have such a fixation about destroying Italy in the first place? Stafford was at the top of the ratings, but Edi was allying with other players who weren't exactly slouches, so jealousy seemed out. Possibly a personal dislike, but sufficient to warp his entire game plan? In fact, Dan seemed likeable enough, and even on the phone to Edi, I wondered if the anti-Stafford paranoia was "the real thing."

(2) Why the absolute insistence on a plan which put me so far out on a limb and which I was obviously unhappy with? My tactical analysis after the phone conversation was over showed that there were other options if he'd been sincere, but that nothing less would really set me up for a stab. So he HAD to "push it"—pretty brash, I thought, but OK, we don't really know each other, maybe he thinks I am a slouch at this and can't see a set-up coming. The attempt didn't bother me—all part of the game—but I framed a deliberate reaction in my next few letters to make it clear that I did see through it. Even then, I was still trying to ally with them (though Kathy had attacked from Galicia that Spring), but Kathy thought I was "talking down" to her and Edi seemed to regard my letters as obnoxious. Well, maybe they were. The message they contained was deliberate, though perhaps I'd have been further ahead if I'd played it dumber.

(3) Can you imagine Birsan and Byrne BOTH indicating a positive disinterest in winning a game of postal Diplomacy??? Do you think either of them did it with a straight face? (They sounded serious: good for them.) I still grin when I think of it. Maybe one of them as on drugs, but both at once? Heck, maybe it was true—anything is possible—but all the same, isn't it a tad insulting to try and convince anyone of such a thing? As I said, I switched off when the assertions got that bizarre.

Perhaps we were all prisoners of our records and reputations. If Edi's ideas had come from Joe Novice, I would have applauded his imagination without doubting his sincerity and gently steered him to a more conservative and equitable plan. One assumes that Birsan and Byrne—and Smyth, for that matter—have the experience to put themselves in the other guy's shoes and avoid the outrageous stuff in high-level negotiations. Maybe that's wrong. Certainly I failed to "click" with either of them.

Anyhow, I have a very strong results-oriented attitude about my games. Whatever I did here was obviously "wrong," though I'm not sure there was a better way under the circumstances. As I write this, the Russo-German strategy looks very "right"...and they deserve congratulations for kicking my ass in the process, stealing away a succession of potential allies. I only hope they're prepared to counterpoint this by babbling about their motives for as long as I have!

And here's one final thought from Mark Berch:

In Kathy Byrne's endgame statement for 1986H, she says, "The idea that one person can decide who the seven best players in the hobby are is absurd! How can anyone decide someone is a good player unless they have played against that person." I'm the "anyone" there; I picked the initial line-up. Kathy raised the same argument more than once at the time the game was being organized. At the time, I said that I was not, repeat NOT trying to select the seven best players. I don't understand why Kathy is continuing to try to torch the same straw horse. Of course, no one (even someone who has played with every person in the hobby) can decide who the "best" players are — there's no objective standard for what is best. What I looked for were seven of the MOST SUCCESSFUL players. For this I relied mostly on the two main ratings lists that were being kept current at the time. So there was not a lot that I had to "decide."

As you can see there's a lot more to playing in a DW Demo Game than just sending in orders. If you're interested in playing in, gamemastering, or being a commentator on our next Demo Game I suggest you write Mark Berch, 11713 Stonington Pl., Silver Spring, MD 20902 and let him know of your interest. First preference goes to DW subbers, although there is no specific requirement that you have to sub to DW in order to play in a DW Demo Game. Gamemasters set their own own gamefees, use their own house rules, and usually run the game by flyer with a copy of the results to me and the commentators. Players are expected to provide an endgame statement at the end of the game or upon their elimination. So, if you're interested let us know.

1986Q: LAST THOUGHTS

Eric Verheiden

1908 was the final year of the game, in which lack of interest seems to have been the deciding factor (in any event, a draw excluding the largest player will probably cause the game to be declared irregular for rating purposes).

The only event of significance in Spring 1908 was the extermination of the last minor power (O'Donnell's Russia). If the game had gone on, what were the prospects for Crosby's Turkey? Not great, on a purely tactical basis; a sustained three-way alliance would eventually win out. However, the diplomatic prospects were somewhat less bleak. Boben's England had basically run out of room to expand in the north; the temptation to swing south was exploitable. Walker's France, as the diplomatic leader but center tail-end Charlie, would likewise be tempted to swing up north before England gets the same idea. This is especially attractive given continued English stagnation as France gains new centers. Finally, Christie's Austria, the man-in-the-middle as noted last time, could not be eternally comfortable with becoming increasingly surrounded by English and France forces. A quick deal with the Turk, expulsion of the west followed by a four-way draw might not sound too unattractive.

So much for supposition, how did the game rate overall, as compared with, say, "expert player" games? In terms of openings a little sub-par; some rather strange 1901 moves can only be accounted for by unfamiliarity with the game. However, the tactics picked up somewhat from there and were on at least an average, if not exceptional, level for most of the game. NMR's were about average, curiously affecting the larger powers more often than the smaller ones. Diplomatically, there were a few shining stars and a lot of lesser lights. France (Bruce Walker) and Turkey (Vince Springer until Spring 1906) appeared to control much of the action diplomatically throughout much of the game. Springer's departure appeared to lessen the diplomatic content considerably. Hugh Christie's Austria should get some sort of prize, however, for rescuing Austria from a very rocky early start in 1901 and bringing it up to parity with the major powers late in the game. Rarely does Austria get second chances, and good diplomacy must be credited with this one.

Of the others, Randy Karmolinski deserves recognition for persistent play with an initially hopeless position with Germany. Robert O'Donnell likewise never gave up (until the very end) with a Russian position which quickly deteriorated after losing the alliance sweepstakes.

What are the lessons to be learned for those following this game?

1) Maintain diplomatic communications and try to control the alliance structure. The best diplomats fared best (as usual) in 1986Q: France got into trouble by taking England for granted (always try to have your ally think he has input, even if he really doesn't) and made up for it by exploiting Turkish diplomatic weakness to reform a favorable alliance structure.

2) Try to look at your alliances from a long-term perspective to anticipate future problems. This is very hard. In the heat of the moment, but I was able to predict the English stab of Russia by looking at the situation dispassionately. Russia would have benefited if he had done the same and, for instance, put up better defenses while working on cutting a deal with France.

3) Know your openings and be very careful about NMRs early in the game. Austria's mess up in Spring 1901 followed by an NMR was very nearly fatal and recovered from only with several game years of intense diplomatic action.

4) Tactics are usually not all that important. Everyone, even novices, can play a fairly good tactical game and nuances such as stalemate lines become important only when everything else is neutralized (i.e. no alliance shifts, no NMRs, etc.) As in this game, the other factors are usually not stable long enough for tactics above general competence to make much difference.

Best wishes until the next conflict...

1987U/Spring 1901/The Results

ITALY MOVES WEST!

BURGUNDY FLOWS RED IN BLOOD,
RUSSO-TURKISH CONFLICT LOOMS...

AUSTRIA (Jacques-Henri Strauss, FRANCE)

- 1A Budapest-Serbia
- 2A Vienna-Galicia
- 1F Trieste-Albania

ENGLAND (John Crosby, USA)

- 1A Liverpool-Edinburgh
- 1F Edinburgh-Norwegian
- 2F London-North

FRANCE (Frederic Rideau, FRANCE)

- 1A Marseilles-Gascony
- 2A Paris-Burgundy
- 1F Brest-Mid Atlantic

GERMANY (Pete Chalmers, AUSTRALIA)

- 1A Berlin-Kiel
- 2A Munich-Burgundy
- 1F Kiel-Denmark

ITALY (Pierre Tuloup, FRANCE)

- 1A Rome-Tuscany
- 2A Venice-Piedmont
- 1F Naples-Tyrrhenian

RUSSIA (Bob Howard, AUSTRALIA)

- 1A Moscow-Ukraine
- 2A Warsaw-Silesia
- 1F Sevastapol-Black Sea
- 2F St.Petersburg (south coast)-Bothnia

TURKEY (Pedro Prieto, MEXICO)

- 1A Constantinople-Bulgaria
- 2A Smyrna-Ankara
- 1F Ankara-Constantinople

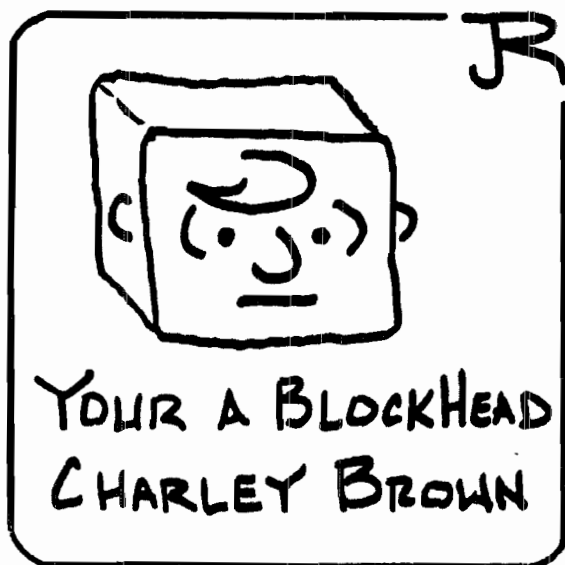
Commentary (Hu, Christie)

INTRODUCTION

The first OW International Demo Game begins with three players from France, two from Australia, and one each from Mexico and the United States. This will also be my first attempt at writing a commentary. In that I am only familiar with the North American style of play, a system using Spring/Summer-Fall/Winter moves, my approach to commentary will follow this pattern. Also, I wish to preserve the diplomatic aspects of the game, thus this commentary will be published long after the fact, but before I have seen any results of the upcoming season. This is done in an attempt to not influence the thoughts or actions of any player. The GM has wisely lengthened the time between moves for this game. I believe this was a necessary procedure in that alliances might otherwise boil down to the simple aspect of reliability and timeliness of the mail services. I'm sure that some would automatically assume that the Australians might tend to communicate more often with one another than someone that resides in another country. The same for the Frenchmen and for the North American continent players, too. I don't believe that this will be a factor in the game because of the precautions that were taken by the GM. I'm sure that the players are also aware of this possible perception, so I'll go out on a limb and state that I feel that the opposite would be more likely to occur. On with the game.

SPRING 1901

Many players perceive the opening moves of a game as rather routine and not likely to reveal many future actions. I am not of this school of thought, as I consider the three 1901 seasons as the most important of the game. Mid-Game and end-game situations cause great changes in one's perspective of the game, but the opening alliances and agreements are the heart of where the game will eventually lead. Based upon this belief, I will attempt to look for moves which might indicate agreements reached and promises broken. Spring 1901 definitely gives this first time commentator much to speculate about.



I'll begin my focus on the game by considering the three Central Powers of Austria, Germany, and Italy. Obviously, the German/French diplomatic efforts were not satisfactorily resolved by either party; witness the bounce of Munich and Paris in Burgundy. Though this is not indicative of eventual warfare, it does point-out the need for further negotiations by both parties. The German fleet moving from Kiel to Denmark demonstrates that the Russian and German probably have failed to reach a solid agreement, though not necessarily an act of war. Berlin ordering to Kiel is a safe move for the German enabling him to gain a position in the west and go for two builds, providing his diplomacy with England and France is successful. Overall, Germany demonstrates that he is not firmly allied at this point with either France or Russia, England remains a question mark as to its agreements with Germany. The Russian Army in Silesia should be the major concern of Germany for these Fall moves. In that Germany has a sure build from Denmark, I'll guess that Kiel will order to Holland for another build and hope that Silesia falls back to Warsaw to protect against the possible Austrian attack. This approach will enable Germany to again order Munich to Burgundy for another bounce with France. Berlin could fall to the Russian, but it is a good percentage guess for the German player as Russia must decide between Warsaw-Munich-Berlin. If the German perceives the Russian order to Silesia to be in conjunction with the French move to Burgundy attempt, then he must again order to Burgundy. If Berlin falls it can be retaken fairly easily in 1902 unless England convoys to Holland and prevents Germany from receiving a build.

The Italian moves are far more indicative of its active diplomacy with its neighbors. The complete absence of neutral, and/or eastern, moves may be strictly defensive concerning France because of lack of satisfactory negotiations between the two powers. It might also indicate an actual all-out attack on France as a result of understandings with Austria, Germany and possibly Turkey. The Austrian/Italian moves definitely indicate that they have reached an agreement of at least demilitarization between them.

The question remains as to whether or not it also involves an alliance, though probably such is the case. The possibility of an Italian/Turkish alliance must also be considered in that Italy has basically committed themselves to a French war. Obviously, one must consider future negotiations but with the Italian committing all three units to the west with Austria vacating their common border, it would tend to indicate that the Italian is looking at western expansion at the expense of the French. Considering that the German also ordered to Burgundy, one would logically conclude that the German/Italian agreement against France exists. The key to deciphering the Italian situation will be the Fall moves. Three strong options are available for his use. The western Lepanto of army Tuscany to Tunis can be used as a powerful deception against both the Austrian and the Turk. The placement of an army in Tunis with a fleet built in Naples with which to move to the Ionian Sea in the coming year would definitely give Austria and Turkey cause for concern. This also allows Italy to pursue a war against France with his fleet Tyrrhenian and army Marseilles or Piedmont. If the northern armies make eastern moves to Tyrolia and Piedmont then the Austrian must weigh the defensive position which the Italian has established for himself with the potential for an Italian/Turkish and even Russian assault upon the Dual Monarchy. Personally, I feel that Italy has shown his friendly intentions towards Austria with his move into Tuscany. The third strong option at this point is to take Tunis for the guaranteed build with his fleet Tyrrhenian Sea while pursuing his western attack upon France by outguessing the Frenchman on whether or not he will cover Marseilles with army Gascony. Because France is guaranteed Spain and Portugal in the Fall, I believe that the Italian will probably order Piedmont to Marseilles. The question becomes whether or not to follow with Tuscany to Piedmont, or the convoy to Tunis. The Tunis convoy will keep the board guessing, the order to Piedmont necessarily causing a French War; but one which gives the Italian tremendous map advantage if both armies are side by side. I believe that Italy will probably follow the last option, based upon the

alliance structures that are beginning to show. However, the option of convoy to Tunis without attack on Marseilles would really keep the world in the dark as to what the true Italian intentions will be in the future.

Austria clearly demonstrates that Russia is a potential target and that all is well in the Austrian/Italian diplomatic efforts. The vacating of borders with Italy was clearly pre-arranged. Austria is also guaranteed two builds if he supports himself into Greece. The excitement will come in the Fall when we will be able to see if either Austria or Turkey orders to Rumania with support of the other. Russia might be facing a triple alliance of Austria/Germany/Turkey with the intended outcome of denying a build to Russia in 1901. If the Turks are a party to this open hostility towards Russia then the Russian Diplomatic Machine better get into overdrive quickly! Not likely, but a consideration to ponder.

The east may not be as clear as it appears, but I'd bet on the Russian/Turkish beginning alliance. The Russian claimed the Black Sea unopposed while ordering only Moscow to Ukraine in the south; nor did he attempt to attain or bounce in Galicia. This would appear to be a pre-arranged agreement between Russia and Turkey to guarantee Russian occupation of Rumania while enabling the Turkish Fleet to quickly command the Aegean in the Fall of 1901. The Russian order of Warsaw to Silesia demonstrates that the Russian is quite confident of its Turkish arrangements and is intent on forcing a position for itself in Scandinavia and eastern Germany. The conclusion is that Russia must feel that it has an honorable ally in the Turk and an agreement with the English as to a quick German War.

The absence of army Moscow to St. Petersburg would lead one to believe that friendly relations were expected with England.

My guess is that Silesia will order to Berlin, leaving Warsaw unprotected. A unit will definitely order to Rumania supported by the other (most likely fleet Black Sea to dispel any Turkish fears) or Ukraine will order to Warsaw while Turkish Army Bulgaria supports Russian Fleet Black Sea to Rumania. However, one must not completely dismiss the possibility

of those three powers trying to hold Russia to zero builds in 1901. I believe the Turkish position has shown the unlikeliness of such an event, but I'm sure that it is one of Russia's concerns as he plans his Fall moves. I sincerely doubt that Turkey would seriously consider the possibility of seeing a three build Austria in 1901.

The western portion of the map seems to show that France was unsure of its English neighbor and the Hun to the east.

Paris to Burgundy was, at least, defensive against an unsure situation, possibly hostile. Marseilles to Gascony allows for coverage of Brest against a possible English Channel opening by the English. Brest to the Mid Atlantic Ocean guarantees a build with either MAO or Gascony unless there exists an English/German/Italian opening alliance against the French. Obviously, France is a cautious player who is not satisfied with the diplomatic efforts to date. I'm sure that the French were most relieved not to find an English Fleet in the English Channel to accompany the German and Italian anti-French openings.

The English opening moves should be quite reassuring to the French, but not so for the Russian. Army Liverpool to Edinburgh should force the Russian to consider the possibility of seeing an English army in Norway in the Fall. However, one must always be aware of the fact that the North Sea is capable of conveying the English Army Edinburgh to Holland or Belgium. The order to Holland would indicate that the Russian was correct in feeling that he and the Englishman had reached an accord for a mutual German War. A convoy to Belgium would be less indicative of England's true alliance structure. In that England cannot be denied Norway, I will assume that Norwegian Sea will order to Norway. The question is whether England convoys to Belgium for the sure build or to Holland to hold Germany to a single build in 1901. To further add to the potential fluctuating position of England, please note that a two build England would be very capable of carrying a war to any of its three potential adversaries. Since England seems to have a working arrangement with both Russia and France, I will hazard a guess that the army will convoy to Belgium but be anti-German in future use.

Concluding thoughts for Spring 1901 are that the following arrangements exists at this point in time; note, I did not say alliances, and all are subject to change. RUSSIA WITH TURKEY and England; TURKEY WITH RUSSIA and Italy; AUSTRIA WITH ITALY; ITALY WITH AUSTRIA AND GERMANY and Turkey; GERMANY WITH ITALY; FRANCE WITH ENGLAND and Russia; ENGLAND WITH FRANCE and Russia. Warfare exists between Russia and Germany; Italy and Germany versus France; and the probability of England joining with the aggressors in one of these two wars.

My opinion is that the four corners have demonstrated a great potential at an effective alliance against the central powers of the map. If the central powers have not already joined in some type of agreement they need to do so now. Russia and England seem to be the big gainers in opening positions and diplomacy, France and Germany the weakest in opening positions, with Austria and Turkey both showing great potential for early growth. Italy remains the key to success for all the potential alliances mentioned above, as they can prop up any ally or cause their downfall according to his potential areas of expansion or aid. The balance of power aspect seems to have been thrown out the window for an early attack on France; if successful, Italy may have the commanding voice in future areas of warfare for the game. Fall 1901 will be very indicative of the alliance structures that exist, but the Winter builds should truly tell the story and quickly make a fool out of me and all that I've written above!

FALL 1901

Fall 1901 appears to show that the Spring 1901 moves were all made in anticipation of the alliances made. Turkey made very unorthodox and debilitating moves at first appearance. However, it is my opinion that the Ankara hold was an oversight on the part of the Turk. No longer confident of his alliance with Russia, I believe that the Turk meant to bounce armies Bulgaria and Ankara in Constantinople. The unordering of Army Ankara has resulted in a no build situation for the Turk; probably an early indicator that Turkey will be the first

TURKS MAKE MAJOR MISTAKE;
FRANCE SURROUNDED;

AUSTRIA (Jacques-Henri Strauss, FRANCE)
1F Albania-Greece
1A Serbia Supports 1F Albania-Greece
2A Galicia-Rumania
Home, Serbia, Greece 3/5 Builds 3A Budapest and 2F Trieste.

ENGLAND (John Crosby, USA)
1A Edinburgh-Belgium
2F North Sea Convoys Edinburgh-Belgium
1F Norwegian-Norway
Home, Belgium, Norway 3/5 Builds 2A Edinburgh and 3F London.

FRANCE (Frederic Rideau, FRANCE)
1A Gascony-Spain
2A Paris-Burgundy
1F Mid Atlantic-Portugal
Brest, ~~Marseilles~~, Paris, Portugal, Spain
3/4 Builds 3A Brest.

GERMANY (Peter Chalmers, AUSTRALIA)
1A Kiel-Holland
2A Munich-Burgundy
1F Denmark-Sweden
Home, Denmark, Holland 3/5 Builds 3A Berlin and 2F Kiel.

ITALY (Pierre Tuloup, FRANCE)
1A Tuscany-Piedmont
2A Piedmont-Marseilles
1F Tyrrhenian-Tunis
Home, Marseilles, Tunis 3/5 Builds 2F Naples and 3F Rome.

RUSSIA (Bob Howard, AUSTRALIA)
1A Ukraine-Rumania
2A Silesia-Munich
1F Black Sea Supports Ukraine-Rumania
2F Gulf of Bothnia-Sweden
Home, Rumania 4/5 Builds 3A Moscow.

TURKEY (Pedro Prieto, MEXICO)
1A Bulgaria-Constantinople
2A Ankara-Hold (Not Ordered)
1F Constantinople-Aegean
Home, Constant.

Bulgaria and Sweden are still neutral.

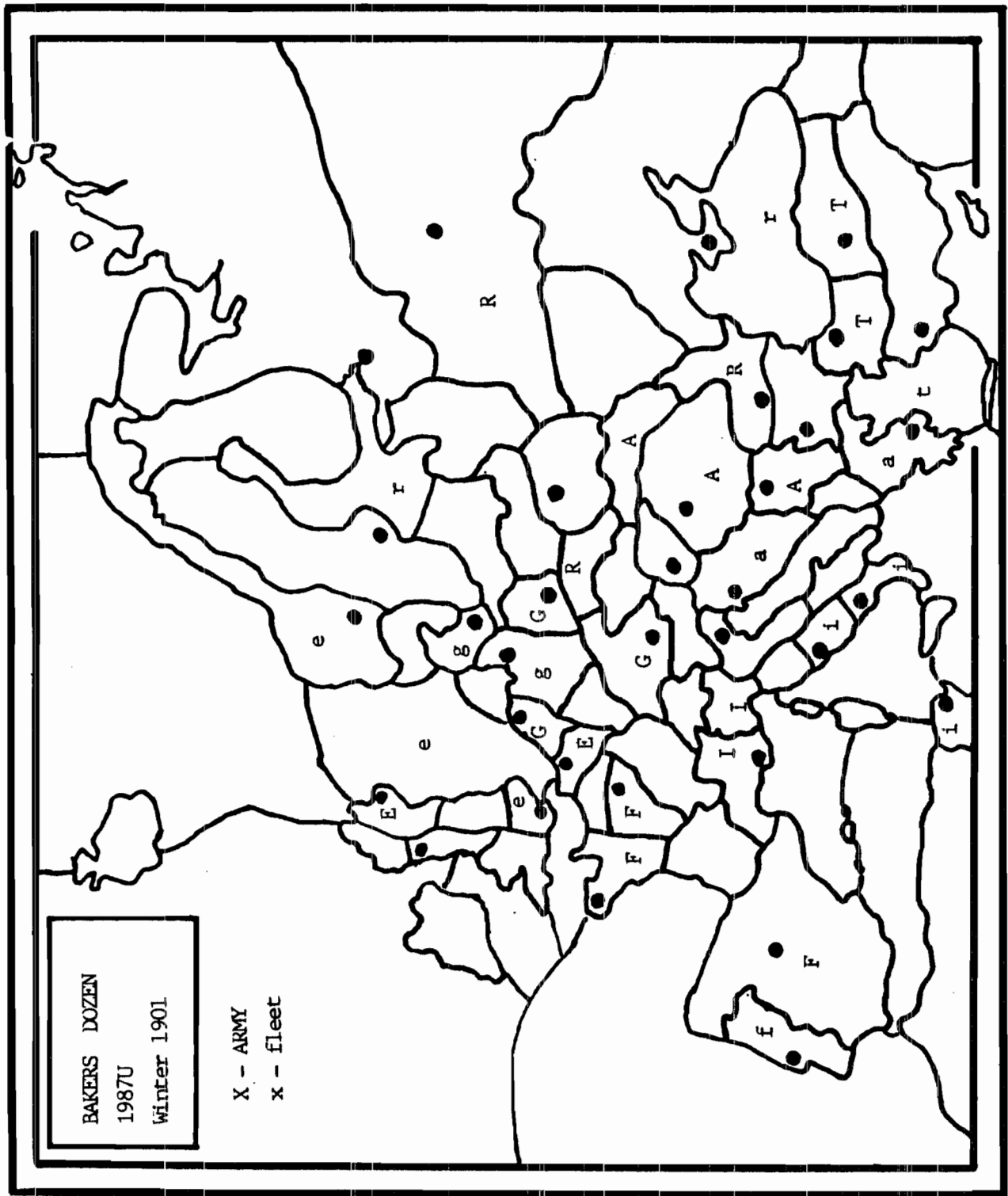
casualty in this game. The Russian probably expected support into Rumania from the Turkish army in Bulgaria, but was able to support his own unit, thus the Turkish support order was not needed. The Austrians, predictably, supported themselves into Greece to guarantee themselves two builds.

The west was far more interesting as England did make the killer convoy to Belgium. England's two builds gives him the excellent positioning of being able to continue the French alliance or quickly join with the German/Italian Alliance in a quick defeat of France. Germany's two builds look powerful, but only on the surface. Germany needs to establish an alliance structure with either England, France or Russia, none of which seems to be present at the moment. Italy continued to work with the Austrian and Germany in his moves against France and now finds himself with two builds and an exceptionally strong position, particularly if the Italian/Austrian alliance continues into the future. Austria could benefit from a quick alliance with Russia as he gets Bulgaria and moves against Italy, but the better choice is to continue the Italian Alliance. France has been limited to one build and has lost a home supply center to the Italian. French worry stones are in place unless he is able to turn the Austrian against the Italian...unlikely.

The builds will be very indicative of future plans, but expect an attempt by Russia and Germany to confuse the picture by building in a manner to give them diplomatic leverage and to give them as many options as possible. I'll predict the following builds — some quite obvious, others a guessing game. Austria must build an army in Budapest, the second build is the question. Italy is threatened by any second Austrian build, but is allied with Austria and will probably accept any build made. Russia will diplomacize against an army in Vienna and will probably push for a second fleet to use against the Turk while also appeasing the Russian. Turkey, not being able to build, should diplomacize very heavily for the Austrian to build an army in Vienna, this will probably all on deaf ears! The Russian looks as if he must choose between several

needed builds in Warsaw, Sevastapol, and St.Petersburg. His decision will most likely be none of the ones mentioned, and he should build an Army Moscow. His defense and ability to negotiate rests on the proper build of an army Moscow. The French position can only be defended with an army built in Brest. Seeing that France must risk trusting the English and building to secure his homeland. The English are sitting in the best overall position as they may still target any of three potential enemies. The best builds allowing for the most options are a fleet in London and either a fleet or an army in Edinburgh. My personal choice would be a fleet Edinburgh, but an army is quite potent at this point. Germany must build an army Berlin and should build a fleet in Kiel. Diplomatic maneuvers require the second fleet and its placement in Kiel, but England should lobby hard for the second army. The Italian builds fall into two categories, attack the French 100% or defend the Austrian border while continuing to pursue the French attack. Two fleets in Naples and Rome indicate the all-out attack against France and complete trust in the Austrian alliance; army Venice is a safeguard against an Austrian stab, but Naples with a fleet is almost a sure thing. The Italian seems quite content to gamble on the Austrian and German allies and will probably build the two western fleets. Central Powers Triple?

Germany and Russia have confronted each other to a point that it will be difficult to ever establish trust between them. Austria and Italy look like they're allied until at least the mid-game. England will probably be France's knight in shining armor while Germany will find any future growth quite difficult and should become a prolific writer. The Turk must convince the Russian to work together against Austria, but Austria will work just as hard on the Russian to combine their forces to eliminate the Turk. Long term predictions are that the mid-game should find a strong Austro/Italian position with a strong northern wicked witch in England. Russia will have a bargaining position from which to diplomacize and Germany/France and Turkey should be the minor powers of the game...if they aren't eliminated by then.





FORGET WASHINGTON,...FORGET DENVER,...FORGET THE SUPER BOWL!!!

But do remember to come back to San Diego for PEERICON VIII !!

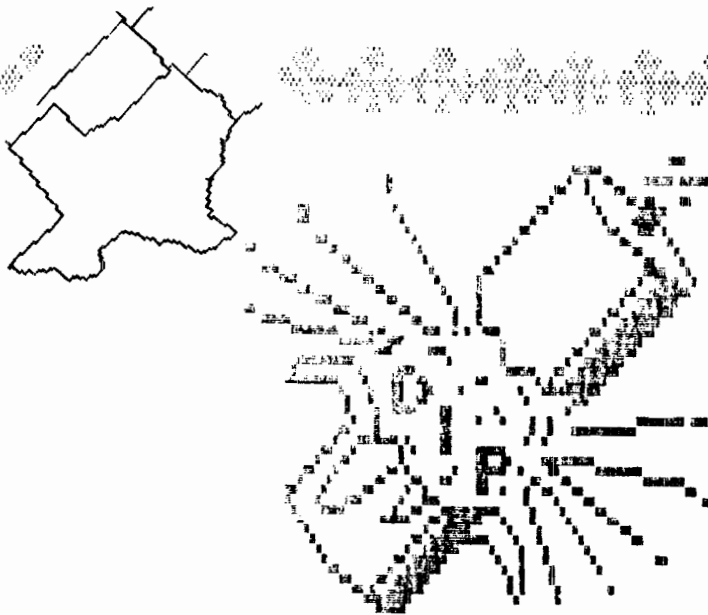
July 29-31, 1988
San Diego, CA

DIPCON XXI

July 1-4, 1988
San Antonio, TX

For further information:

*Pete Gaughan
3121 E. Park Row, #165
Arlington, TX 76010
*Greg Ellis
700 Rio Grande
Austin, TX 78701
*Stephen Wilcox
5033 Libbey
Houston, TX 77092



According to Greg Ellis the members of this year's DIPCON Committee are hard at work planning this summer's national Diplomacy championship event. Current plans are for the event to be held at one of San Antonio's better hotels with plenty of Diplomacy for players and hobby fans and lots of other activities for family and friends.

The DOTIS group are determined to make this one of the best DIPCONS ever and every indication is that it will be just that. Besides all the traditional Diplomacy events the Committee is planning some special surprises and we'll have details on those in our spring DIPCON preview.

But if you're looking for a fun place to spend your Fourth of July weekend next summer I don't think you can do better than San Antonio. Besides the Alamo there's a lot to see and do in one of America's fastest growing Sun Belt cities. And there's no doubt about it, San Antonio is no longer just a sleepy little military town. There's Brackenridge Park, the Hemisphere, Market Square, a whole string of missions and parks, military bases and museums, and even a new Sea World.

Getting to San Antonio shouldn't be hard either. There's plenty of airline service through either Houston or Dallas-Ft. Worth and the rates aren't too bad if you plan and buy your tickets ahead. From almost anywhere in the US it will run you around \$300RT, tops, and there are cheaper fares if you're in the south and southwest. Check around with the different airlines and find a good deal.

I plan to arrive in San Antonio sometime in the late afternoon of the 1st and then leave on the 5th for London by way of Houston, DFW, or STL; depending on which airline I use. I hope to see a lot of DW family members at San Antonio. Who knows, maybe we can out show DIPCON XIX; which attracted some 50 DW subbers. And perhaps we can arrange somekind of special get together just for DW folks.

If you plan to attend please let one of the Committee members know and if you have any suggestions for events you'd like to see drop them a line as well. Now is the time to provide your input and help make it a great event. After all, would we settle for less?

1987 BRITISH ZINE POLL RESULTS

Special to DIPLOMACY WORLD from Alan Parr, HOPSCOTCH

A traditional highlight of November's MIDCON in Birmingham is the announcement by John Piggott of the results of the annual British Zine Poll. As in previous years John produced a marvelous analysis of the results, along with pages and pages and pages of stats about the whole thing. But here's the highlights for those interested:

<u>Rank '87</u>	<u>Rank '86</u>	<u>Rank '85</u>	<u>Title (Publisher/Editor)</u>
1	17	8	War & Peace (Derek Caws)
2	6	5	Zine to be Believed (Nick Kinzett)
3	16	10	Cut & Thrust (Derek Wilson & Glyn Palmer)
4	5	6	Denver Gloat (Glover Rogerson)
5	9	23	Prisoners of War (W. Nicoll & Doug Rowling)
6	8	17	Vienna
7			Scorpio
8	4	25	Take That You Fiend! (Kevin Warne)
9	12	24	NMR! (Brian Creese)
10	2	2	Dolchstoss (Richard Sharp)
11	28		Ode (John Marsden)
12			Smal Furry Creatures Press
13	7	1	Mad Policy (Richard Walkerdine)
14	10	13	Dib Dib Dib (Tom Tweety)
15	21	19	Morrigan (Alan Kennedy)
16	3	11	Thing on the Mat (Pete Doubleday)
17	1	3	Home of the Brave (Geoff Challinger)
18	29		Gallimaufry
19			Tumbling Dice
20	15	37	Diversions (Rip Gooch)



Congratulations to Derek Caws, whose victory will be widely popular, and will no doubt reopen all the old arguments about the place of Diplomacy in the hobby. WAR AND PEACE is just about the nearest thing we have to a traditional Diplomacy zine and has been widely respected for several years now. Indeed, it's very striking just how well-established most of the zines on the list are; hardly any of them are less than a couple of years old, and the average age must be well over five years. An incredible 339 people voted (which will swell the results of the cancer charity appeal made by Derek; and 46 zines (up from 43 last year) were ranked while a further 74 received too few votes to be included.

There is one other aspect of the results that I want to highlight. Every editor expects to pick up a couple of very low scores, or "grudge" votes. Since it's unlikely that a subscriber would fork out hard-earned cash to buy a zine he doesn't actually like, the normal explanation is that such votes come from traders who are dissatisfied in some way. Interestingly enough, some of the most controversial zines picked up very few such votes this year - ODE, THING, and DENVER GLOAT had not one between them. However, the most widely respected of all zines, MAD POLICY received nine grudge votes, and even though it had a pretty quiet year by MP standards it still offered an excellent service throughout that time. Even worse are two more cases. Ten out of 61 votes for C'EST MAGNIFIQUE and 12 out of 99 for the favourite, VIENNA, were in the lowest category. These numbers are so out of line with the normal figures that I find it hard to explain them as simple coincidence. Perhaps these figures represent somekind of "joke" that is too subtle for me to comprehend, but to my mind the whole Poll is undermined and devalued; it is a disgrace that any editor can work all hours of the day and night to provide an entertaining and efficient service and then receive the lowest possible score from one in eight voters.

Editor's Note:

First, let me add our congratulations to Derek for the fine showing WAR & PEACE made in this year's Poll. There's no doubt in my mind that it is one of the British hobby's top zines and the fact that it is a Dippy zine more than anything else speaks well not only for WAR & PEACE but also the state of the British Diplomacy hobby. As I've written elsewhere in this issue the American Diplomacy publishing hobby seems to be in a bit of disarray (that's about as politely as I can put it) at the moment. Perhaps we can learn something from our British cousins. And, no doubt, Derek learned a few tricks from Bruce Linsey and his Runestone Poll to help him get out the vote in this year's Poll.

I concur whole heartedly with Alan's comments about "grudge" votes and I think we saw a bit of that in last year's voting. In fact I can't recall a year when we haven't seen a bit of it. Fortunately it doesn't seem to be as prevalent over here as it is over there. And now I'm going to really put my foot in it. Based on my exposure to some of the zines listed in this year's British Zine Poll during the past two years I have to say that on the whole I think the British hobby's publications are better than ours. That's a value judgment and a personal opinion. Take it for what it is worth.

MORE THOUGHTS ON THE BRITISH ZINE POLL RESULTS

For some more insights into the results of this year's BZP check out Simon Billenness and his zine EXCITEMENT CITY UNLIMITED issue #5 which is available for 50¢ from him at 630 Victory Blvd., Apt. 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301. Simon's also the American contact for the WORLD DIPCON and various other schemes secretly intended to restore the States to British domination.

MILE STONE: THE BOOB REPORT #50

THE BOOB REPORT, along with Jim Burgess's other publications, THE ABYSSINIAN PRINCE and YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS, are acquired tastes just like escargot, truffles, and salsa. You have to wade through pages and pages of pseudo-Peeribleah to get to the meat in Jim's zines but it's worth it.

Jim produces his zines on a fancy computer and, considering the quality of his hand-writing, that's probably a good thing. But, unlike some computer generated zines, you get the feeling when reading THE BOOB REPORT that Jim really thinks about what he's writing and that it is he, not the computer, that is the creative genius present. Included in each issue is a lot of verbal give and take in letter/monologue format, usually filled with references to various recordings that no one has ever listened to more than once; just enough in the way of games to justify calling it a Dippy zine, and whatnots of various kinds. Jim offers Spy Diplomacy, a regular game or two, and manages to attract some of the hobby's more interesting characters for players. It's a nice zine but you wouldn't want your mother to know you were fooling around in it.

We're delighted that THE BOOB REPORT made it to #50 and we're looking forward to many more reviews of records we've never heard of. By the way, Jim-Bob, I've finished my review of 1987's classical recordings. It only ran 45 pages. Do you still want it?

RAISIN' KANE KON

The Table Gaming Club of the University of Maine in Farming has planned what they call UMF-CON for 13 March, 1988. They're planning a wargame, role-playing, murder-mystery party, and DIPLOMACY event. For more info: Tom Kane, Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, 5 South St., Farmington, ME, 04938.

MANORCON - SUMMER IN BIRMINGHAM

Martin Lewis

MANORCON is the United Kingdom's largest annual gaming convention, and takes place over a weekend in July on the Birmingham University campus. From comparatively small beginnings in 1983, the convention this year (1987) attracted around 250 assorted gaming enthusiasts, and hosted 16 different tournaments, from darts to American football. Oh, and Diplomacy of course.

The success of the Con is due to several reasons. First, the location is excellent; central enough for people to reach easily from all parts of the country - Birmingham is well connected by railway and motorway - with accommodation cheap enough to attract even those (like students) who might not otherwise be able to afford it. Second, the timing of the Con during the summer means that students have less problem attending, and there's no other major convention during the summer anyway. Third, the variety of tournaments and activities offered means that there is plenty to interest those who might find the face-to-face Diplomacy too arduous a way to spend a weekend. Finally, the organizing committee are experienced hobby figures, and do their jobs marvellously; and I can assure you that it's no easy task coordinating something as large as MANORCON. The result is a Con with a large student element and an awful lot of enthusiasm.

The action starts early Friday evening, and the bar, overlooking the main gaming hall, fills rapidly as gamers seek refreshment/bribes/generous editors. The drain on the bar's liquid resources is considerable, though fortunately this year we didn't see a repeat of 1986 when the bar literally ran dry! While the more active gamers already have games off and running, the more thirsty, or tired, are catching up with hobby news, talking about their latest victories or generally getting to know new friends. Most people, mindful of their responsibilities in the next day's Team Diplomacy Tournament go off to bed early, but a night owl would be certain to find a dedicated knot of players giving the Civilization board a bashing through the small hours until breakfast.

The central Tournament is the Saturday Team Diplomacy Tournament. This was originally intended for the flourishing University Diplomacy Societies as a chance to prove themselves in real competition, though now, teams comprised of subscribers to various zines outnumber the University teams by a considerable margin. The games are played between 1000 and 1700 (with a break for lunch) and those players unlucky (or bad) enough to be eliminated early have the chance to go back to bed, console themselves in the bar, or round up a group of similarly unfortunate diplomats to play a different game. This year, all previous records were smashed as 154 would-be diplomats from 22 teams arranged themselves around the boards: these included six teams from various Universities, and four teams from one zine, VIENNA, one of which was lucky enough to have me playing Italy (my favorite country). Despite the chaos you might expect, the organization was first class: Nick Kinzett had brought along a whistle which he blew when the Diplomacy period was ended; armed with this and a strong table to stand on, he and his band of helpers ensured that the Tournament ran smoothly until the last players lay down their armies and fleets. Liverpool University emerged from the scattered boards to claim the title with seven good draws from their team members - it is most unusual for anyone to achieve an outright win in the Tournament. I managed an eight centre four-way draw with the greens and saw my team place fourth.

While all the Diplomacy is going on, in smaller halls nearby, the other Tournaments are taking place. In these, a competent gamer can become the champion at Railway Rivals, Acquire, Kingmaker, Speed Circuit, or Darts, depending on his skill on the day.

Saturday evening, once the boards have been cleared away, is reserved for post-mortems as team members discuss the rat/ally/wally who stabbed/helped/ruined each person's performance. With Birmingham City Centre only a few minutes away, some will sally forth to the nearest Indian Restaurant or Pizza House; but, some spurn food and get down instead to the sports field for the American Football Tournament. Interest in

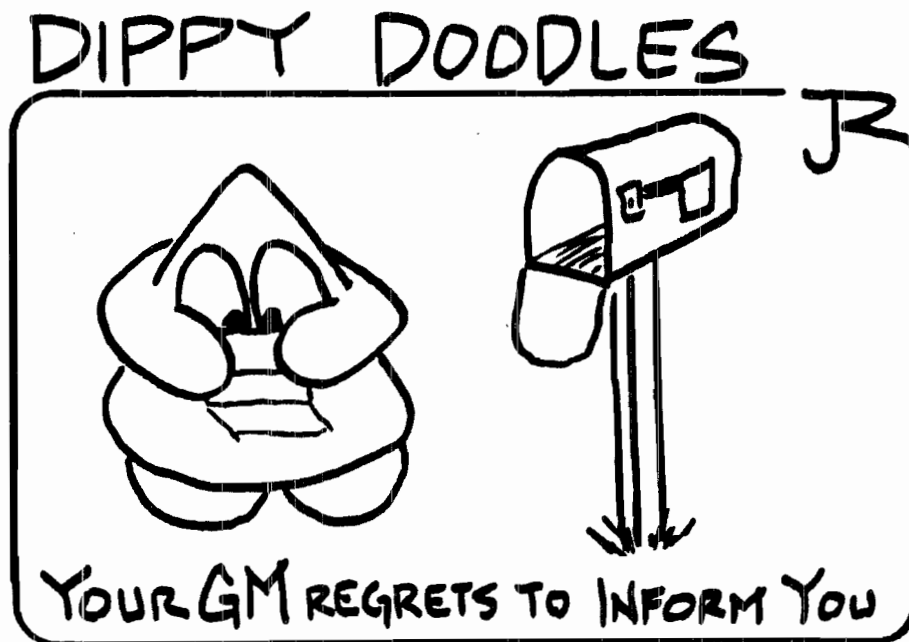
this sport is growing in Britain, and this year, we had four teams turn up for a series of flag-football games. They weren't up to NFL standard of course (so CBS didn't turn up to film us) but in the somewhat defense-dominated games, everyone appeared to enjoy themselves. Will we see a real American team at next year's Con I wonder?

With so many people attending, there is an immense number of games to be played; anyone looking remotely unoccupied will be approached at least half a dozen times to make up the number for a game of Junta/Brittania/Pass the Pigs/Pit or whatever. This year we managed to organize a face-to-face game of Chaos II (this is the Diplomacy variant for 34 players, each of whom takes one centre on the standard board at the start). The game is well-named, and worked very well; imagine 34 people milling around a table trying to find just who it is who's playing the neighbouring province, all in the ten minute diplomacy period. I am hoping a similar game can become a regular feature of the Con.

On Sunday, the Diplomacy continues for some people with the "second round" for the Individual Tournament. This Tournament is decided by taking the single best result of the convention, and this year, Dave Race won it with a seventeen centre Austria. Such games quickly attract an audience, all muttering "will he make it?!" Also on Sunday, for those not exhausted from the American Football of the previous day, is a five-a-side soccer tournament, won by the team from QUARTZ for the second year running.

By 1700 the results are in, and there is the traditional Awarding of the Trophies to the champions of the respective Tournaments. With this, and the cheers for the organizers' efforts, over, the Con is deemed to be at an end - though several players carry on until the bar opens. People drift away, ready to face the real world again. Until the next year.

And next year will be the WORLD DIPLOMACY CON I. Same place, same time, but enriched with attendees from the USA and hopefully a number of other countries. Be there - it's worth it.



WORLD DIP CON

/45/

(MANORCON 88)

FRIDAY 15th to TUESDAY 19th JULY, 1988

at High Hall, Birmingham University

Great Britain

THE VENUE: A modern university hall of residence, used to house Manorcons in 1985 and 1987. A bar and several common rooms will be available and both single and twin bedrooms may be booked.

THE ATTRACTIONS: The following events are certain to take place. Many other things are planned - watch out for announcements in future progress reports!

Guest of Honour: Allan B. Calhamer will attend as Guest of Honour and will be available for discussions about himself and the game. Come and meet the man who made the hobby possible!

Diplomacy Tournaments: As with previous Manorcons there will both a team and an individual Tournament, which will find the first ever World Diplomacy Champion!

Other Tournaments: David Watts, the inventor of Railway Rivals, will be running a Railway Rivals tournament. Francis Tresham, the inventor of such games as 1829 and Civilisation, will be running several tournaments. There will also be contests organised for Acquire, American Football, Croquet, Darts, 5-a-side soccer, Formula One, Judge Dredd, Kingmaker, Sopwith and Speed Circuit.

Other Games: As well as the organised events there will of course be dozens of other games being played throughout the convention. You don't have to play in any of the tournaments. If you just want to play a few sessions of your favourite games you'll have plenty of opportunity to do so.

Entertainment: A magic show and revue are planned and we are open to offers from hobbyists who want to do their own thing.

Famous Names: As well as Allan, David and Francis we expect most of the best known names in the hobby, past and present, British and overseas, to be attending.

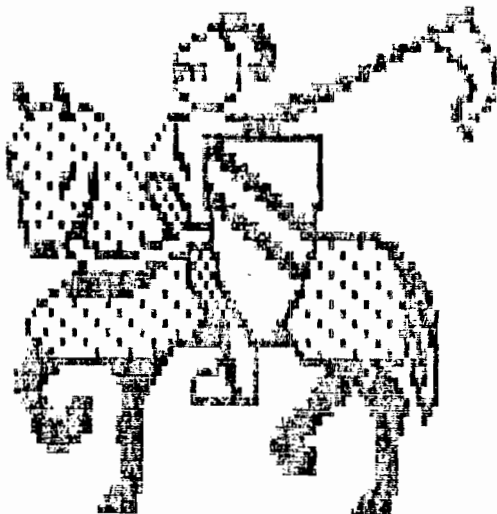
THE HARD SELL: With all this on offer and the promise of still more to come can you afford to miss out on this unique hobby event? Write now to ensure your place at one of the biggest hobby events of all time! As a special offer to North Americans, registration will cost \$10 until the end of January and \$15 from February 1st. Single room costs are £13 a night, £24 for a twin. Brits have to pay the balance by April but visitors from the USA and Canada merely have to pay the balance on arrival at the convention. Registration entitles you to receive regular Progress Reports giving details of timetables, extra attractions, where to eat in Birmingham and so forth. Remember though, there is a lot of interest in the convention but only a limited number of rooms. You must register to ensure your place at the convention!

THE PROVISIO: If we don't get enough support to justify continuing into Tuesday we reserve the right to finish on Monday - in which case we will of course refund any monies paid for a room on Monday night.

ADOPT-A-YANK: There is talk in Britain of hobbyists offering to put up their American cousins for a few days before or after the con. If you are interested in "Adopt-a-Yank", let me know. There is also the possibility of reduced group travel if enough people are interested.

Please write to and send all registration fees to:

Simon Billenness, 630 Victory Blvd. Apt 6F, Staten Island, NY 10301, USA



WORLD DIP CON

aka MANORCON 88

July 15-19, 1988
Birmingham, England

For further info:
Simon Billenness
630 Victory Blvd., #6F
Staten Island, NY 10301

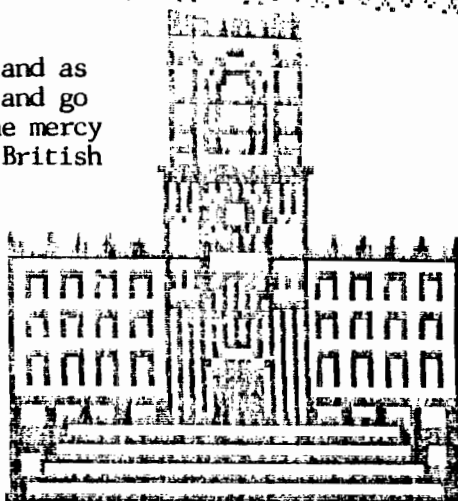
Now that the Brits have finally decided what they are going to call their "world" Diplomacy event it is up to the rest of us to make it a reality. You can get a feel for what this year's event will be like by reading Martin Lewis's report on last year's event. I don't expect anything radically different from that except that the quality of the American football will no doubt improve with my presence. If that doesn't work I'll just offer a few SUPER BOWL goodies until I can put together a winning team. The Diplomacy end of it I'll leave to Allan B. Calhamer since he'll be there in person. And, hopefully, we'll have others joining us. Why not, it's just a few hours away.

Most of the details as of now are in Simon's announcement on the previous page. If you are planning on going I urge you to let him (and me) know as soon as possible. Planning now will save you a lot of time, money, and aggravation later. Believe me, I've been researching this thoroughly. In fact, I'll share some of what I've learned so far. Perhaps it will help you in your planning.

First, if you can possibly swing it plan to go to both DIPCON XXI in San Antonio, TX and WORLD DIP CON in Birmingham, England. Getting from anywhere in the US to San Antonio is easy and getting from there to Birmingham (via Houston, DFW, or STL/London) is also easy. Your total airfare should amount to around \$1,000, perhaps less if you want to mess with charters and such. I suggest you use a major American airline and one that avoids any changes of airline or planes if possible. Plan to spend the 5th (Tuesday) travelling since it takes about 11 hours to get from San Antonio to London. You'll lose a day going over but make it up coming back. If you are really brave you can go on a bit further and start the European part of your trip in Paris or Amsterdam and work your way back to Birmingham.

If you go direct to London from San Antonio you'll probably arrive on Wednesday morning the 6th and then you have a couple of choices. You can try to find a tour to fill the next week or so before you have

to be in Birmingham and see as much of England as you can that way, you can settle in London and go from there, or you can throw yourself on the mercy of your present (or future) friends in the British hobby and trust them to see that you see what you want—or they think you should see. It's up to you. I've talked to a few of the travel agencies and they have lots of trips in all price ranges. The primary factor price-wise is the quality of the hotel you want. If you can avoid staying in hotels you can save a lot of money and as the dollar slides more and more that is something to think about.

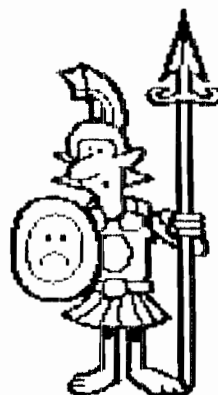


It's really a question of how much you want to do and what you can afford. If you are a student, or Y member, there are other options to consider. Go talk to a travel agent and check out the promotional materials they offer. You'll learn a lot. Then check your library or bookstore. They've got all kinds of books on both the travel and land tour parts of your trip. The Auto Club has a good European guide, good maps, and good advice. Consumer Reports offers a couple of good books: GUIDE TO GREATER LONDON and FLY/RIDE EUROPE 1987. You'll find there is plenty of info available and they all want you to come visit—and spend your money.

If you've never been to England it's probably the best place to start, especially if you've never travelled overseas. If you don't want to travel alone try to find somebody to go with. If anyone wants to join me they are welcome to contact me. But don't let fear of travel stop you. Who knows, this might be a once in a life-time opportunity.

Next Spring we're going to take a preview look at England and places you might go and things you might do as part of your trip. If any of you have been there and have input along those lines please share them with us.

Now I want to consider some ways we may be able to make both DIPCON and WORLD DIP CON better by making it possible for those not even present to still be a part of both events. Again, your input is sought.



A PROPOSAL: CONGRESS OF DIPLOMACY

Because of some fortunate circumstances this summer we, as a hobby, will have a unique opportunity to advance the state of our game and hobby. We should make the most of it because we may not get another such chance.

A lot of Americans will make it to DIPCON in San Antonio this year for a variety of reasons. The same applies to WORLD DIP CON in the UK which will draw players from all over Europe and even America. With luck we may even be able to attract a few players from Australia. Besides all the opportunities this offers for Diplomacy, socializing, and miscellaneous merry-making it also offers us a chance to meet together on a face-to-face basis to learn from each other about the game and hobby. This kind of exchange has always gone on via personal encounters, through by letter exchange, and through the exchange of magazines but now we have a chance to speed up the process through the face-to-face exchange of ideas and information. While I don't expect such an exchange to solve all our problems I do believe a constructive dialogue would be useful to all of us.

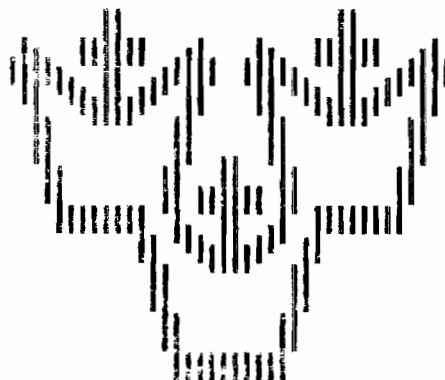
Therefore I would propose we hold, in conjunction with DIPCON and WORLD DIP CON a Congress of Diplomacy. This would be a time (perhaps a half-day) set aside for the serious study of the game and hobby. Through the presentation of papers, informal talks, round table or panel discussions on various topics involving both those present and those unable to be physically present I believe we could significantly extend our knowledge of Diplomacy. And, by publishing such materials in a Con report or in DIPLOMACY WORLD, the knowledge gained could be shared.

First, we have to find out if the appropriate event hosts are interested in hosting such an event. Second, we need to find out if those attending would be willing to participate in it. Third, we need to determine what subjects would be of interest and how they might be most effectively addressed. That means getting people to write papers (or articles), prepare talks or panel discussions, etc.

Frankly, I'm not sure the hobby in either America or Britain is ready for this kind of step but I believe it is a logical one to consider at this point. If you agree, or if you disagree, I'd like to hear from you. I'd also like to hear from those in charge of DIPCON and WORLD

If you'd like to participate in an event like this I'd like to hear from you and see your ideas on paper.

For instance, would somebody please write an article explaining the difference between the British and American way of handling retreats and adjustments? I, for one, am not familiar with the European system and while I don't expect to do very well in their tournament I'd at least like to know what's going on. Oh yea, and what's the difference between lager and ale and which is better? And what's a loo, anyway? And why are double beds so small over there?



THE BOARDMAN NUMBERS

By Steve Heinowski

The Boardman Number Custodian (BNC) commenced recording games in 1963 with a game run by John Boardman in his zine GRAUSTARK. Records have been kept from that time forward. In a few short years, the number of games recorded rose to over 100 per year, or well over 2,000 recorded games to date. The listings consist of who started the game, who played in the game, and how the game ended; and they are recorded for...posterity. The BNC is responsible for recording game starts, game finishes and reporting them quarterly in his (her) zine, EVERYTHING. The BNC is also responsible for determining whether the games were 'local' and whether they were played in a 'regular' manner. The general criteria for the determination of a regular/irregular game are as follows:

1) Local game: 3 and/or more people live within 50 miles of one another or have local phone access. Note: computer network games are considered a special class of game, not local.

2) Family members in a game: Two of the eight people involved in the game (the GM is the eighth) are related, parents, siblings, spouses, etc.

3) Gross GM violations: (for example) The GM is discriminating against one or more players. The GM is violating the Rulebook to such an extent that the game is a variant. The GMing was so poor the game was unplayable. Some examples of "poor" are: inconsistent rulings in similar situations, cheating, making major mid-game House Rule changes without player consent, violating player confidentiality...

4) Illegal player removal: The GM forcibly removes someone from a game without due cause. Some examples of due cause are: failure to submit moves, failure to meet financial obligations.

5) Inconsistent/Anonymous standby policy: The GM must not change his standby policy (use or non-use) during a game and if standbys are used they must be known to the active players.

6) Playing more than one position: obvious?

7) GM is or becomes a player in the game.

8) Other...as circumstances present themselves.

The bottom line here is to use some common sense; put yourself in the player's position and ask how you'd feel if it happened to you. You may also find that some people get caught up in the regularity-ratings thing. Again, the bottom line here is the quality of the GM, not the ratability of the game. The criteria established above are not restrictive or all-inclusive, and a GM who cannot; whether through irresponsibility, ineptitude, or perhaps just outright stubbornness; run a regular game hurts both the players and the hobby as a whole. They should be avoided like the plague.

Acquiring a Boardman Number is a very simple task. The GM needs to submit his name and the zine name (if any), the names of the players and their addresses, and the list of who's playing what. There is no fee for acquiring a Boardman Number, though you may contribute to the BNC at this (or any other) time. Mail the above information to me and I will mail a Boardman Number to you. You do not have to be a GM to register a game, any player may do so, so you players reading this make sure your game has a Boardman Number or know the reason why. Also, there are provisions for registering a game that may have started before a number was requested, in cases where a new GM didn't know about Boardman Numbers, or an old one forgot, had a hard-case against the current BNC and refused, etc.

Reporting an ended game is also a simple matter. You need but list the supply center count for each ended fall season, the people, including standbys, who played each country, and what happened to them (win, draw, drop, resign, out). For example:

	01	02	03	04	
A	4	2	0	-	Bob Smith (drop W01), Bill Smith (out W03)
E	5	8	10	12	John Jones (won by concession)

...

The BNC's zine, EVERYTHING, publishes the above information along with hobby-related writings and is available through trade or subscription. (The BNC will trade EVERYTHING for any published Diplomacy zine.)

Always remember that if you ever have any questions, do feel free to write and ask, that's one of the reasons the BNC is here.

Editor's Note:

The job of BNC is one of the most difficult, time consuming, and thankless in the hobby. It is also, by far, the most important job in the hobby. Fortunately, for the most part, we've been very lucky to have some high quality people in that position. Steve and his publisher, Melinda Ann Holley, have done a commendable job.

One thing the BNC job should not be is a financial burden on its holder. For that reason, if no other, I urge, in the strongest possible way, each GM to include a \$2 or \$3 donation with each request for a Boardman Number. That should help defray the expenses involved in record keeping and publishing EVERYTHING. It won't make any BNC rich but it may keep him solvent.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The Black and Blue Book: The 1988 edition of the BBB has progressed to the data entry stage and Mike Maston is busy putting all the info we have gathered on disk. If you are a pubber, or have an extensive Diplomacy mailing list we'd appreciate it if you'd send a copy along. The more lists we have the more complete and accurate ours will be. We especially request that you include telephone area codes and numbers if possible. Also, if for any reason you don't want your name (or phone number) listed in the BBB please let us know now. With luck we should go to press in early spring.

The Archives: If you need a good screw contact Mike Maston (Busy guy, isn't he?). Mike's been assembling the twenty bookcases and cabinets we recently acquired to hold The Archives. Thirteen down and seven to go at the moment. I did 3 of them myself using a hand screw-driver. It's a lot easier with a power one. When we finish getting the storage units done we're going to have a WORKCON to get all Archives material out of their boxes and stored away. We'll keep you posted on the date for that.

A Chicken's Guide to Diplomacy: Yes, I wasn't kidding. As soon as this issue is in the mail and some of the mail caught up I plan to start typing the manuscript for my second Diplomacy cookbook. I've gathered hundreds of recipes using the hobby's favorite bird and a lot goodies for what I hope will be a tasty experience for every hobby gourmet. Since I had over 700 recipes to pick from I've limited myself to those from the area covered by the Diplomacy gameboard and featured period recipes.

DIPLOMACY WORLD #50: Quite a few contributions have been promised and some even delivered for next Spring's 50th issue. Naturally I'm hoping for a lot more and if you'd like to contribute something I hope you will. Otherwise you are faced with the grim task of reading pages and pages and pages of Peeribleah. If you've got an idea pass it along. If you don't have an idea let me know and I'll share some of mine.

NIXED: DW's regions are no more and the editorial staff will be organized strictly along subject lines, not geographical areas, from now on. This doesn't affect our overseas projects. The Annotated DW Project of J.C. Hodgins has been abandoned since J.C. has found new interests. We wish him great happiness with her. Since nobody has sent us any IPCs for any of the paper products we mentioned a while back we've abandoned the collection of those. I'm not surprised, however. I couldn't find any of those products at any of the stores I shop at. I still hope to acquire a set of windsocks eventually (and the way the wind is blowing outside right now I could use them).

MENSA'S DIPLOMACY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP:

NOW THERE'S A BRIGHT IDEA

By Fred Davis & Larry Peery

One of the hobby's oldest and most successful groups keeps a low profile. It seems to work. MENSA, the national high-IQ group, founded its Postal Diplomacy SIG ("Special Interest Group") back in 1974 under the leadership of Fred Davis and Don Horton. Fred took care of the paperwork, and Don ran all of the early games in his top-rated zine, CLAW & FANG. Since C&F folded, the group has been spreading the games around in zines and flyers produced by other MENSA members. Don left the hobby in 1983, making Fred the oldest SIG member in point of time. Two other Charter members (those who joined by November 1974) still belong, Robert Stimmel of California and Bill Young of Pennsylvania.

Among those M's who joined the SIG after it became operational, our longest-term member is Craig Reges of Illinois, who joined in December 1976. Only Fred and Bob Stimmel have been members continuously since the SIG's official founding, as both Bill and Craig let their memberships lapse for a couple of years.

Fred was SIG Chairman and DIPLOMAG editor from 1974 to 1981. Prior to July 1976, DIPLOMAG was called the "Diplomacy SIG News." It appeared on an irregular basis, usually as a one or two page flyer. It has usually appeared on a bimonthly basis since issue #12 in July 1976, and has gradually expanded to fill first three, later four, and more recently six pages. Fred's last issue was Vol. II, No. 6 in August 1981, which broke all records with 7 pages of material.

Ron (Canada) Brown edited the next 9 issues from Quebec. Roy Smith printed and mailed some copies from his home in New Jersey. Bruce Poppe became our third Editor in April 1983, as Volume III began. The posts of Editor and Chairman were again combined when Bruce became Chairman in November 1983. Bruce added some feature articles for the 15 issues he produced. Fred Davis again became Chairman and Editor in November 1985. Since the newsletter was running a month late, he skipped a month in the counting, and started a new series with Vol. IV, No. 1 (67) in January 1986.

Glen Overby was Chairman briefly after Fred stepped down, but after just 7 months he resigned. Ed Bapple of Illinois served the remainder of his two-year term, but declined to run for re-election. Bruce Poppe then agreed to hold both the Chairman's and Editor's posts for two years, with the clear understanding that Fred would again take over upon his retirement from Social Security. Thus, with no objections, Bruce turned the SIG over to Fred in November 1985.

Bill Young and Chip Charnley have also served over the years as Committeemen on the three-man team that governs the SIG.

When the SIG was founded, our wildest hope was that we might gain a total of 14 members so we could play more than one Postal game. Some of the early SIG records have been lost, but it is documented that when Fred Davis stepped down the first time as Chairman in 1981, the SIG had 70 members. Because of some unfortunate events and the rapid turnover of Postal Diplomacy hobbyists, the SIG fell to only 38 members by 1983. However, we have been slowly recovering ever since, rising to 45 members in December 1986, and 53 by November 1987.

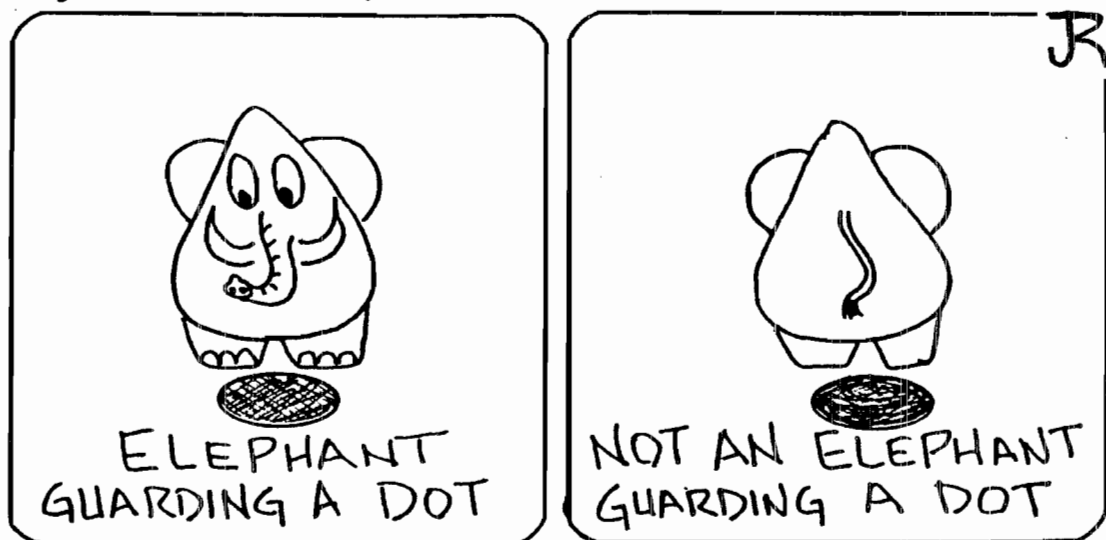
Since its beginning MENSA has run or is running no less than 29 different Postal Diplomacy games, some in hobby publications and some by flyer. Among the hobby publishers currently running SIG games are: Fred Davis in BUSHWACKER, Scott Hanson in BIG HITS OF MID-AMERICA, and Kate Robison in THE DIPLOMATIC RAG. Other MENSA game GMS include: Bruce Poppe, John Barnes, Ralph Baty, Tony Dousette, and John Galt.

If you are a member of MENSA and interested in joining the Postal Diplomacy SIG send \$3.00 for a year's membership to Fred Davis, 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD, 21043. If you are interested in joining MENSA itself you might also contact Fred for information about that.

DIPPY DOODLES



DIPPY DOODLES



ASK THE HOBBY HISTORIAN #9: THE FAGELSON NUMBERS

By Mark Berch

Aside from the well known Boardman and Miller Numbers (for standard and variant games) there have been two others. In the last issue I wrote of the origin of the Dexter Numbers. There, Dexter deliberately set out to create a different game. These arose quite differently.

Ann Fagelson had been wanting very much to run an orphaned game. When the opportunity arose, she received a game from the defunct zine *READING BETWEEN THE LINES*, got everything in place, and set a new deadline.

A week later, the GM of *READING BETWEEN THE LINES* resurfaced, begging for a second chance. He cited extreme family difficulties which had caused the fold, but which were now largely resolved. He offered to repay Ann all her expenses. The players had their gamefees returned, and were offered free subs to *READING BETWEEN THE LINES* for as long as the game lasted. He swore all results would go out by special flyer the morning after the deadline. He pleaded with the players to take into account the fine job he had done before the default. The players voted to give him a second chance, leaving Ann with no orphan to run.

Writing in number 47 of her *DIRECTORY OF DECEIT*, she vented her frustration: "I WANT AN ORPHAN THAT'S DEAD, DEAD, DEAD! I want one that's rotting away in an unmarked grave, that has no chance of revival. I want one where, if the GM should reappear, the players would hack him into tiny pieces without further ado. I want..."

She went on at some length. But the postal strike of the previous year had shaken out all the weaker zines, and there was nothing available.

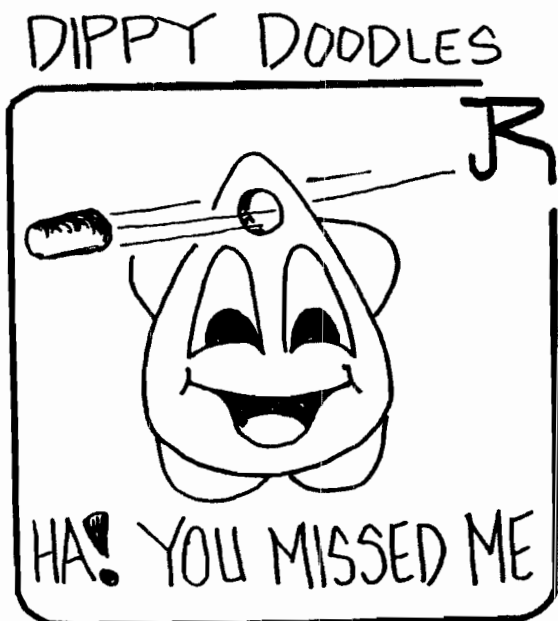
Mark Berch, the archivist of the Berch Archives, suggested that she revive one of the games abandoned when *LONELY MOUNTAIN* failed in 1969. One of the games had a particularly interesting board set up. The GM and all the original players had long since left the hobby. Why not give the game a decent burial, she thought?

The revival was announced in *DIRECTORY OF DECEIT* #48 and several other zines gave her quixotic project some publicity. There were five countries left, three major powers with 8-9 supply centers each, and two minor powers with 4 each, but very strategically placed. Players were encouraged to supply a country preference list. She hoped to fill the game without too much delay.

The response was astounding. By the deadline date for #49, she had 33 requests for the game. A few quick phone calls brought her to an even 35.

"What the hell," she wrote in #49, "Everyone can play. I'll set up 7 boards, 7 versions, 7 realities; call it what you will. I'm probably breaking some obscure rule promulgated before I was born, but so what? Nineteen of these requests came from outside my zine, and if you think I'm going to turn down 19 subs, you're squeezing the wrong tomato. I'm sending this info off to the BNC—let him sort it out."

The BNC was not at all amused. "Reviving a game without a request from one of the players is pointless and unprecedented—and for good reason. However, I will lean over backwards to accommodate you. Just specify which section is the revival, and ask



for the Miller Number Custodian to give you a Miller Number for the other games."

Her tart reply came in #50: "When I'm being accommodated, Diplomacy is the last thing on my mind. Who cares whether you think what I'm doing is pointless? Since when is running a game that so many people want to play, pointless? I don't see why they can't all be viewed as replays. They all have "exactly" equal validity, so it seems totally arbitrary to pick one as legit, and the others as variants. You're asking me to make a distinction without any real difference."

So she gave them all "Fagelson Numbers"—which consisted of the original Boardman Number, followed by a Greek letter—alpha, beta, etc.

In the hobby discussion that followed, the Miller Number Custodian revealed that she had asked him for his views, and he had largely agreed with the BNC. It was pointed out that this game bears some relationship to "compositions" in Chess.

But these games didn't have much of an impact, other than confusing the issue as to what was or was not a variant. Ann found that suddenly adding 7 games to her regular game load was quite a burden. One of the games turned out to be a real aggravation. Three of the players asked her to designate their game as the official one—arguing that they should be chosen since they were the first (and it turned out, only) people to ask. She didn't think that was much of a reason, and hardly bothered to reply. Perhaps stung, the players formed a "Game That Would Not Die" pact (arguing that "creature which leave the grave do not return"). They took turns pushing each other almost to the wall for over four years, until one of the players dropped. Another GM created a completely fictitious midgame for five players, but perhaps the novelty had worn off by then, since he was unable to fill the game. And so the Fagelson Numbers became a footnote in hobby history.

(Editor's Note: Like all the other stories of the "Hobby Historian" series, this is sheer fiction. However, there actually was a zine LONELY MOUNTAIN which folded in 1969, with all of its games abandoned.)



THE DIPLOMACY LIBRARY

Here's three new publications that belong in any serious Diplomacy player's library.

MASTERS OF DECEIT (3rd edition): This introductory publication contains contributions from 17 different hobby members, all put together in a nicely done computer generated package with illustrations by JR Baker and others. Included are essays for new players, specific articles on each of the Great Powers, as well as general strategy and tactics essays and some insights into the hobby's unique features: press, variants, publishing, humor, etc. Among the contributors are many famous hobby names: Langley, Byrne, Wrobel, Stafford, Olsen, Arnawoodian, Holley, and Ken Peel. An annotated game and list of useful publications are included in the 43 pages. Available from Woody Arnawoodian, 602 Hemlock Circle, Lansdale, PA 19446 for US\$2.00.



DIPLOMACY DIGEST #107-108-109 (a triple issue) contains an informative and thought-provoking roundtable discussion on various aspects of gamemastering from Ron (Canada) Brown, Alan Stewart, Randolph Smyth, Elmer Hinton, Don Del Grande, Bruce Linsey, Conrad von Metzke, Scott Hanson, Mark Larzalere, Rod Walker, Jeff Briedenstein, and Ron Kelly; all carefully orchestrated by Mark Berch. Each of these individuals responds to a series of questions (The same questions that appeared in the last issue of DW by the way.). What's amazing is not the wide variety of answers to the questions but the fact that after some 25 years of postal gamemastering experimentation there is still so little agreement on so many different aspects of postal gamemastering. Gamemasters and players will enjoy and learn from this one. From Mark Berch, 11713 Stonington Pl., Silver Spring, MD 20902, for US\$1.50.

THE NORTH AMERICAN VARIANT BANK 1987-1988 CATALOG is now available from the NAVB Custodian, Fred Davis, 3210K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043 for US\$4.00 and US\$4.50 overseas. Bruce Geryk, late of BLUNT INSTRUMENTS, did the computer data entry, formatting, and layout. Once again the computer has helped to create a major new hobby resource; this time a nearly complete listing of the hobby's variant games. This 32 page booklet includes introductory material, a categorical listing, and an alphabetical listing of most of the major variants available to hobby members through the NAVB. Details on the classification system, info on how to order copies of games from the NAVB (or other sources) and more are included. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of games covering almost every imaginable time and geographical subject known to man. And, equally amazing, there are still games missing from the Catalog. So, check it out and if you are an old-time variant designer or an aspiring new one make sure your creations are included in the next edition. For example I noticed that neither my BRAVE NEW WORLD nor DIPLOMATIC MONOPOLY were included. Still, it's amazing to see what Calhamer's game has spawned.

DO SOMETHING POSITIVE: NOMINATE SOMEONE FOR THE MILLER, WALKER OR KONING AWARDS

THEIR MOTHER WILL THANK YOU

YOU BE THE GM --- A NEW DW SERIES

Mark Berch

Beginning with this issue DW has a new series: YOU BE THE GM. Every other issue I will pose a gamemastering question. In the alternate issues, I'll run some of the responses we get, along with my own comments.

The questions will not be straight adjudication questions (such as convoy paradoxes). Nor will they be generalized questions, such as whether or not GMs should require that all survivors be in a draw. They will be specific questions, where something, somehow, has gone wrong, and the GM has to decide what to do about it. I will be trying to frame questions where there will be at least three, and preferably at least four, "sensible" positions that a GM could take. This I'll generally do with subsidiary questions which vary the facts slightly. Any DW reader may participate — you do not need to have ever gamemastered a game. If you believe that the question could not have happened to you, just pretend it happened to a friend, and he or she has come to you for advice. Try to be concise in your response, but take as much space as you think you need to explain or defend your position. I would prefer (but do not require) that your responses be typed double-spaced. And now for our first puzzle.

I. Along with the French build orders, you get the following note: "Dear GM. Actually, you were part of how I got this build, from the seizure of Tunis. In Spring 1908, I agonized at great length on whether to do Fleet Mid Atlantic-North Atlantic or Fleet Mid Atlantic-North Africa, changing my mind numerous times. By the time the Spring 1908 adjudications had arrived, I had completely forgotten which choice I had finally settled on. In retrospect, Fleet Mid Atlantic-North Africa looked very good, as Italy left Tunis undefendable for Fall 1908, and England didn't move against me after all. But in getting the files to this game in order, I've just noticed today that I actually did order Fleet Mid Atlantic-North Atlantic Ocean! You misread my order, and that's how I got Tunis!" You recheck — he's right, he did order Fleet Mid Atlantic-North Atlantic in Spring 1908. In gamemastering jargon, this is called a "cloaked error" — Only the GM and the player involved know that an error was even made.

What do you do? Do you reveal to the other players that you made this error? If so, do you go back and alter the Spring 1908 order? If you do, is Fall 1908 then replayed? Keep in mind that a great deal may have happened in Fall 1908 as a result of France 1) Moving to North Africa and 2) Not moving to the North Atlantic Ocean.

Also, suppose the timing was slightly different. Suppose the player had written you "I discovered this error shortly before the Fall 1908 orders were due. I decided not to mention this to you then, because correcting it at that point would have ruined all the diplomatic work I had just done after Spring 1908 (cementing my alliance with England by showing I had never attacked him in the first place, and finally persuading Turkey that I had been sincere in saying I would attack Italy before I attacked England).

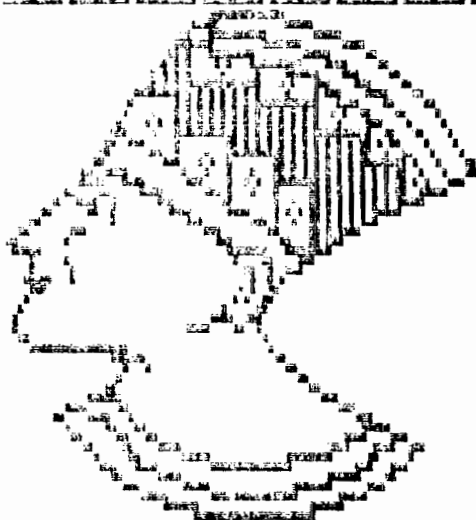
Finally, if you had decided not to mention this at all, suppose you also got a note from Italy, saying "France has sent me the strangest note, claiming that he never intended to attack me in the first place, but that you altered his orders. Is this true?" Keeping in mind that it is not your job to comment on what one player tells another in his diplomacy," what do you do?

Send your response to Mark Berch, 11713 Stonington Pl., Silver Spring, MD 20904 by 17 March, 1988.

HELP ELIMINATE PEERIBLEAH: WRITE FOR DW!!

EGYPTDIPOLGY: THE MISSING SCIENCE

When I first looked through the new NAVB Catalog I was amazed at the number of games it included. It was as if all of human history, in every place and through all time, had been covered by some amateur (or professional) Diplomacy variant designer. From South America to North America, from Europe to Africa, from Asia to Australia it was all there. And from darkest pre-historical days to the farthest of our fantastic times the designers had been there. Was there nothing left to challenge the newcomer I wondered?



And then I noticed something, a glaring omission that seemed impossible because it was obvious. There were no games dealing with the subject of Ancient Egypt. Oh, a few of the games had map parts that represented Egypt and in some cases Egypt was a Power, albeit usually a minor one. But there were no games that focused on Egypt as the central subject and certainly none that examined its geography or history in any detail. It was amazing to me in light of the attention our culture has focused on the Ancient Egyptians. Hollywood's movies: The Egyptian, Land of the Pharaohs, two versions of The Ten Commandments; Classical music: Saint-Saen's Egyptian Concerto, Verdi's Aida and Philip Glass's current hit Akhanaten; popular literature like Allan Drury's trilogy on Akhanaten; and even a classical gaming favor, Senet; have made the Egypt of Rameses II, Akhanaten, Nefretti, and Cleopatra as familiar and real to us as our own. And yet we have nothing in our literature. Perhaps, I thought, it was the lack of the accurate maps and detailed information on which to base maps and rules for a game. And yet there are such books. National Geographic's ANCIENT EGYPT and Facts on File's ATLAS OF ANCIENT EGYPT contain all the information any game designer could need. Or perhaps it was the lack of challenge presented by a geographical environment that included only two main elements, the Nile and sand. It couldn't be the lack of other powers to maintain the balance of power aspect of the game I'm sure, because Egypt came up against and over came some of the greatest empires of her time.

Whatever it has been in the past that has kept us from this subject (perhaps it was the curse of Tut's tomb?) I hope we'll soon see it rectified. It is time for the black dots to appear along the banks of the Nile. Otherwise my Ka is going to get upset.

And, who knows, perhaps I've inspired you to give a try at this subject. If so, contact David McCrumb, our Variants Editor, and let him know.

REVIEWS: YOUR VIEWS AS WELL AS MINE

By Larry Peery

Like many of you I got a lot of books, records, and games for Christmas. I had planned to review many of them in this issue but, like you again I suppose, I haven't yet gotten around to reading, listening to, or playing them all. Still, I've made a start and I imagine you have also. I invite you to send along a brief review of any book (or other reading material), record, or game you got for Christmas. If you've come across something that is very, very good please share it with us. If you've been so misfortunate as to come upon a bomb, let us know about that as well. And, well, as for the rest use your own judgment.

In the meantime here are a few items I found stimulating:

AND THE BAND PLAYED ON: POLITICS, PEOPLE, AND THE AIDS EPIDEMIC by Randy Shilts. If it weren't for the controversial subject involved this book would get a Pulitzer prize. Period. Unfortunately it will have to settle for a place on the best seller list. If you've any unanswered questions about AIDS you'll find the answers here, along with one of the best pieces of investigative journalism I've ever read. It's not a book for those with a weak stomach. It's brutal and graphic and utterly truthful. And, if you wish, you can read it as an allegory about the Diplomacy hobby.

THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB by Richard Rhodes was published back in 1986 but it is now available in paperback. It's another monumental work on a monumental subject, the atomic bomb. It's THE comprehensive history of the bomb—and also a work of literature. There's 886 pages here and it isn't light reading but it is a fascinating story, combining a high-tech mystery thriller with biographies of some of the most interesting people of this century. And, once again, you can read the whole thing as an allegory about the Diplomacy hobby.

SEX IN HISTORY by Reay Tannahill was originally published in 1982 and caused a sensation then. It still does and it is now available in paperback. It's informative, provocative, and entertaining. Whether you think you know everything about the subject or don't know anything but want to learn; this book will teach you more than any high school or college sex class (and most real-life experiences) ever did. And no, it's not an allegory about the Diplomacy hobby.

GAMES OF THE WORLD also originally appeared in 1982 as a UNICEF project. It's coffee table art book about games (there are several of them) but it is interesting because it not only tells you how to make them, how to play them, but also how they came to be. There are hundreds of games of all kinds: board and table games, street and playground games, field and forest games, party and festival games, and puzzles, tricks, and stunts. The illustrations alone are worth the price of the book and, in its own way, it's a history of human culture through one of its most universal activities.

GLOBAL PURSUIT, published by The National Geographic Society will probably be the biggest seller of 1987 (and possibly 1988), simply because of the huge quantity of material the NGS moves. If they didn't sell at least 100,000 copies (at \$20 a set) I'll be surprised. The game includes 48 map cards (4 sets of 12) which are pentagon shaped and can be put together in almost endless combos to create unique world maps; a thousand or so trivia pursuit type questions of various difficulties (and some of them are hard!); 200 tokens; a 12-sided die; rulebook; and a map of the world. It's a fun game for all ages and intellectual types. It's also a good learning tool but be warned: play it on a floor or big table or you are going to be sorry.

SENET is a game of Ancient Egypt that still remains with us. The Boston Museum of Art put this one (based on an original) together and it is a fun game for two players. Not complicated at all, if you remember watching Yul Bryner in The 10 Commandments throw those funny dice around this is your chance to see what it was all about.

BY JOVE deals with an ancient subject, mythology, but it is quite new. It's an adventure game for ages 10 and up, and includes a mapboard, dices, pawns for the players, gold coins, hero images, and various cards that do various things. It's an easy game to learn and a nice substitute for a classics class or reading Bullfinch. The enclosed

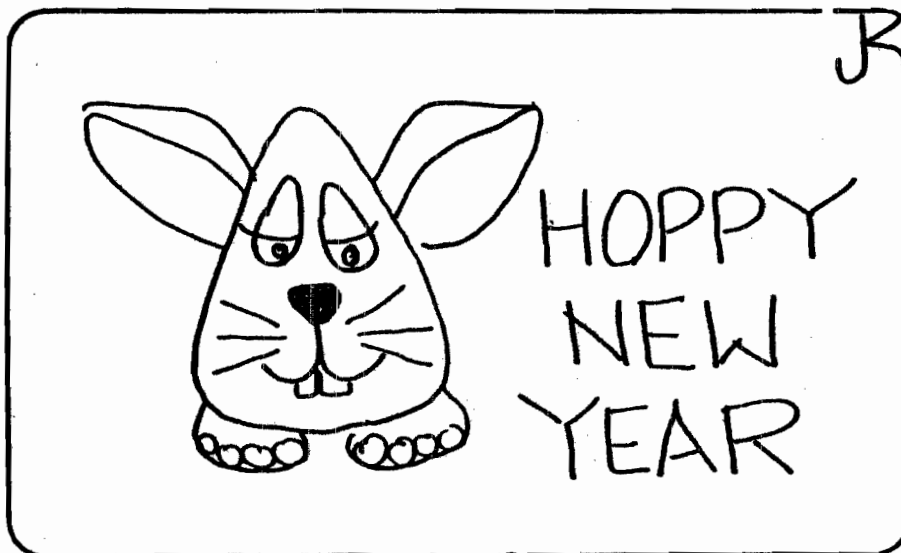
booklet, BY JOVE STORIES, features retellings of various classical myths and it is very well done. It helps if you already know the stories but if you don't it will teach you the basics.

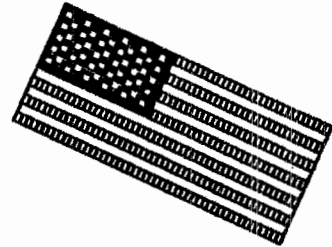
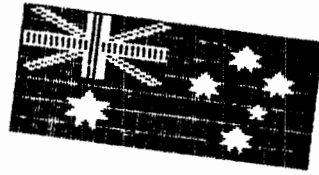
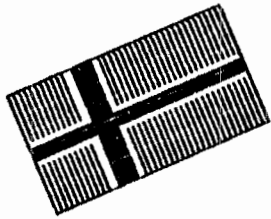
FACTS ON FILE ATLAS OF ... SERIES: The Metropolitan Museum of Art offered this 11 volume series (at \$35.00 per) in their Christmas Catalog this year and I indulged myself for once and bought it. I'm not disappointed. It is a variant player or designer's dream. Each volume is devoted to a particular place and historical period and tells its history from a geographical perspective. The artwork is excellent, the maps are superb, the narrations first rate, and the physical product (all printed overseas) is well done. The volumes cover Ancient Egypt, Africa, the Greek World, the Roman World, the Islamic World Since 1500, Medieval Europe, China, Jewish World, the Bible, and Ancient America. Some of the volumes are mainly physical and some are cultural. Each volume includes a word text, captions in detail, chronological tables, bibliography, gazetteer, index, a variety of maps, color and B&W illustrations. All were written by experts on the subject. It's expensive but it's worth it. There's enough material in this set to keep a variant designer busy for the rest of his or her life. And what a way to go!

RECORDS VS. CDS: Like most music lovers I'm caught in the conflict between records and compact discs. Fortunately tapes don't appeal to me so I don't have to worry about them. I wouldn't even have considered CDs last fall but when I bought a new stereo I found it was impossible to get one without a CD player. So....the question is what do you buy and in what form? Most CDs, and I'm speaking only of classical stuff since that is about all I buy, are either reissues of oldies but goodies or brand new recordings often featuring unknown performers and orchestras. That's a problem. And then there is the question of how much music has to be on a CD to justify it's higher price? Theoretically a CD will hold 80 minutes or so of music, usually allowing a disc to hold two major works in some form. But already some CD manufacturers are trying to get by with putting no more on a disc than they would on a record. Considering the fact that CD prices run 50-100% higher than records that's a real rip-off. I decided that I would start out by buying a sampling of different discs from different manufacturers to see what they sounded like. In all cases the sound was better and so far I've only run into one defective disc out of some 25 or so I've bought. So what I've been doing is checking out the lower-priced labels and looking for reissues of the best recordings that I never bought in record form (or which I've worn out in some cases) and I'm sticking to the basic classic library. Hopefully by the time I've worked my way through that the prices of CDs will have come down and I can start in on the more recent literature.

That's it. Let's hear what you've discovered.

DIPPY DOODLES





WORLD DIPCON

15-19 JULY 1988

BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

Your nation's honor
might depend on it.