

... and Supplies to the name of ... (January 21st being ...) ... published with ... of ... the new play-by-mail ... by Peoples Clay ... Toronto, Canada

If you have any questions about play-by-mail Diplomacy, that are not covered by this newsletter, or about the International Diplomacy Association Rules Committee, we encourage you to write one of the following committee members.

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We hope that the enclosed material will be of help to you, and that you will contact us if you have any questions, suggestions, or special problems.

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SOME BASICS by Joe Klein, IDA Rules Committee Chairman.

Postal Diplomacy is not new, games have been conducted by mail since 1880. I have approximated that there are over 1000 postal players throughout the world. While the core is in North America, postal games are conducted throughout the world.

Let's look at some definitions of Postal Diplomacy.

The Game Master (or GM) He is the authority in the game. It is his function to adjudicate and publish the results of each game with impartiality, speed, promptness, and consistency. The important thing to remember is that the tobby consists primarily of several things: a) playing on the same time. As you know, other things, like a clock, or finding a good master who strikes you as fair, variable, or possibly will give you the results with no commentary, while others add bits of humor and articles to the game. Usually you can't go wrong by choosing an established games-master or a game insured by IDA (explanation later), which for a small fee, will insure that if your GM and magazine should disappear, (yes it does happen) you will continue.

Deadlines: Most publishers have a "dead line" (determined by said publisher's postal subscription) for orders for the next issue. For example, if the publisher's deadline is 15th of the month, you must place your orders for the next issue by the 15th of the month. This is not always true, and is frequently a matter for negotiation.

Game Fees: It is in your interest to pay promptly, and every fee is of some interest. The fee is necessary for the publisher to offset his costs of printing and mailing. Most publishers operate at a loss; in fact I cannot think of a single publisher who breaks even.

Fees range from about \$2. to \$10., depending on the magazine. There are several basic methods of charging the fee to the player:

- a) a flat fee, say \$5. for which you will enter a game and receive all issues required to complete that game
- b) or, you may be required to pay \$2. or so to enter the game, and you maintain a subscription throughout the length of the game. This works out to a reasonable fee, and it does cover a publisher for a rise in costs, such as postage, which looks to rise with each new postal contract.
- c) some times, in addition to a gamefee (this is usually the case where the gamefee is small) you may be required to also send a deposit from \$1-\$5. This deposit is forfeited should you drop out the of the game prior to its completion without notice. Deposits are returned at the end of your participation in a game, or usually if you provide notice that you wish to not continue playing (this is known as resigning a position).

If you have any doubts about what you are getting when you pay your gamefee, be sure to ask the publisher.

Deadlines: Games are basically run on 3 or 4 week deadlines. That is, orders are called for on a certain date and the next deadline is 3 or 4 weeks away. (depending on the GM). This allows 2-3 weeks for communication.

There are 2 basic ways in which orders are called for by GM's. Let's look at each separately:

1. 3 Season System: With this system there are 3 separate deadlines in each gameyear. The first deadline is for Spring orders. For the second deadline, you must submit your summer retreats and your fall orders. The third deadline is for autumn retreats and Winter builds. This is the system most frequently used in North America.
2. The Conditional System: Here there are only 2 separate deadlines per year. Your "spring" orders include last year's Fall retreats, plus your winter (which can be made conditional on everyone else's retreats) and your spring orders (which can be made conditional on the fall and winter deadlines of the other players).

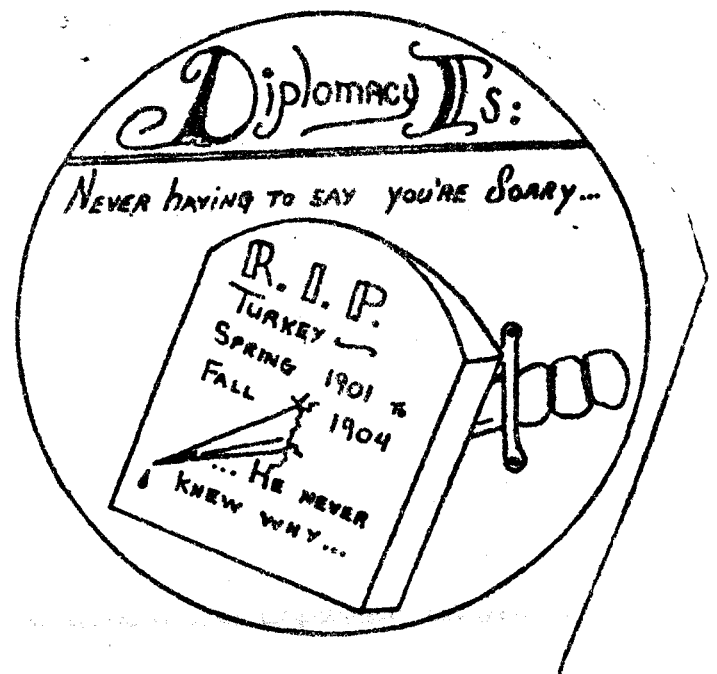
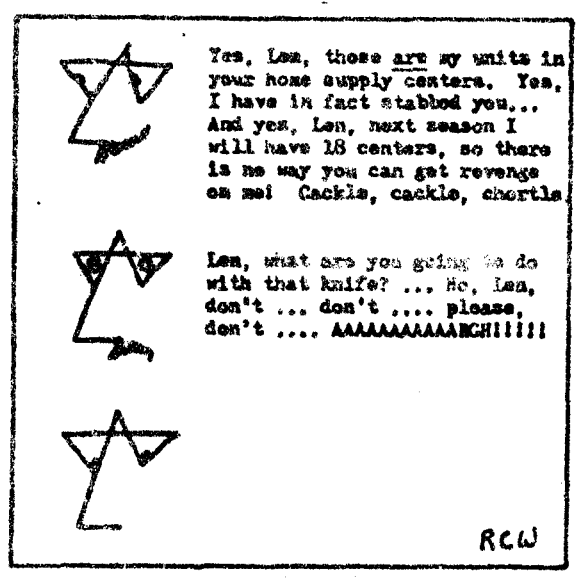
Although this system requires more advance planning, it speeds a game along much more rapidly. Oh, yes, the second move season each game-year is for Fall orders, which may be made conditional on the summer retreats.

Again, it's always wise to check with the GM to be sure you understand his system.

Press: (Propaganda) One major difference between postal [play-by-mail] Dippy, as opposed to face-to-face [FTF] play is the matter of press releases. They are generally submitted with orders, sometimes intended to supplement them (i.e. referring to the moves) or as a separate entity (a story). Most times carry press releases. They vary from dull policy statements to short stories, humor, character assassination, and range from one shot affairs to lengthy series with a thread running through. Occasionally, press will overshadow game, and in some cases, the reason for a game's following among non-players. Some people can write good press; others cannot (but consistently do write bad press to say). Further extensions of propaganda is out of the scope of this document.

Zines (or zine for short). This term encompasses any amateur publication dealing with Diplomacy. They range from carbon-copy affairs (usually more printouts with no press) to full fledged magazines (sometimes running 20 pages or more with games, press, articles, and occasional editorializing by the publisher.) It is a matter of personal taste as to which is superior. You will probably pay less for straight game printouts, but not necessarily. Further distinctions are: gamezine: carries games (for the most part this is what has been referred to up to now). genzine: carries no games and deals with general articles on Diplomacy. warehouse zine: carries a large number of games with no press or other frills. propagandazine: carries propaganda from one or more players in a specific game.

Boardman Numbers: These are used to identify postal Diplomacy games. They are in the form 19##-X, in which the ## refers to the year in which the game was started, and the X refers to the specific game. So, the first game started in 1976 is called 1976-A. The next would be 1976-B, 1976-C,, 1976-Z, 1976-AA, 1976-AB...etc. The present BNC (Boardman Number Custodian), the person who keeps track of all games and assigns numbers to new games is Doug Bayerlein for the United States; and Doug Ronson for Canada.



House Rules: Well written though the Diplomacy rulebook is, it is certainly not all-inclusive and questions do arise over certain rulings. As a result, some, though not all, publishers print house rules. Besides stating policy as per deadlines, fees and the like, they often include a listing of rule adjudications on what may be considered dubious points. When entering a game, you will be furnished with a copy of your GM's house rules (if he has any, of course) which will clear most foul-ups before they occur. If you are also new to Diplomacy in general, these will provide some help.

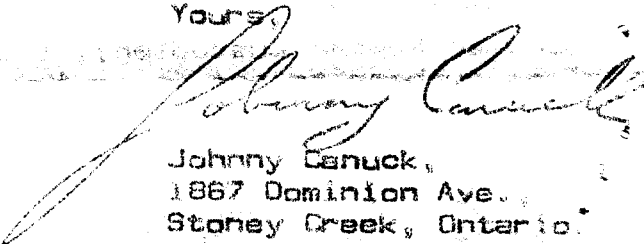
Playing time: The amount of time spent on any one game varies. However, one should roughly figure on an hour or two when the game starts (to write everyone if possible, your neighbours otherwise). Then there is the time spent reading and replying to letters you receive, as well as posting orders regularly (a set should preferably be sent in immediately on receipt of the zine. The way you have time to revise them if you wish, but are still assured of not being caught without orders.) The amount of time spent on any one game (let another writing, setting up the board, planning, etc. varies substantially. One full hour each deadline is a good guideline). There is usually

Spring 1901 Game: 1978-LM
Orders For: ITALY

Italy's page: July 1978

A Ven-H
A Rom-Apu
F Nap-Ion

Yours,


Johnny Canuck,
1867 Dominion Ave.,
Stoney Creek, Ontario,
Canada. M4P 2M9

It would be well to warn newcomers not to overload themselves. It would be a good idea to enter only one game to start with, perhaps two. Play these for a few months, and then set a limit as to how many games you feel you can handle. You should have a rough idea of this by then. I would advise entering only a few games, building up slowly and preventing any conceivable overload. Remember, it takes two years basically to finish a game of postal Diplomacy. If you start entering games too often, you might at sometime find yourself overcommitted. In addition, we offer another mild warning: GM's are people, and for them as for most of us, most of everything else we do is more important than Diplomacy. This will result in the occasional delay, and occasional player difficulties. For most of us then, it is a labour of love.

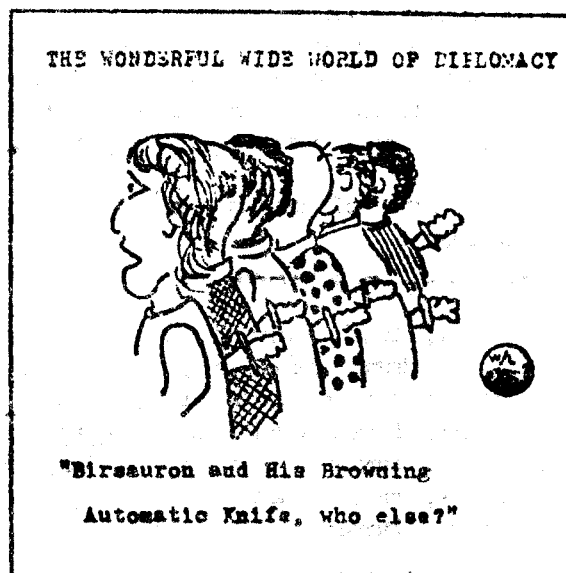
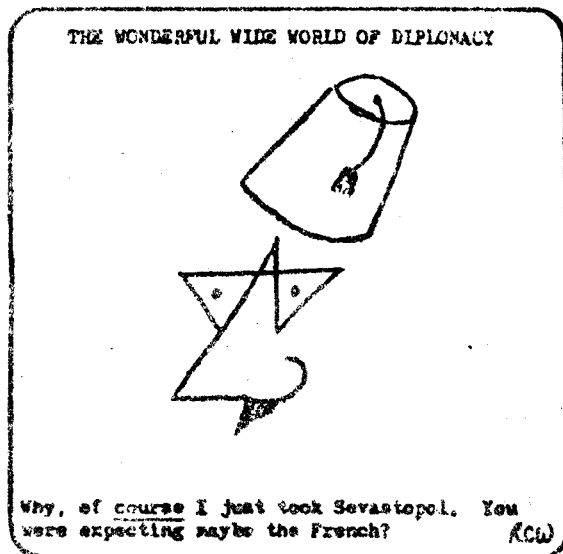
When a player resigns or disappears from a game, a replacement is assigned. Most GM's maintain a list of "standbys", people willing to enter a game in progress if needed. Usually a GM will ask for standby orders after a player misses a turn. Standby orders are a set of Conditional orders submitted by the person named by the GM. These standby orders are conditional on the current player missing a second move. Usually, if the present player misses again, and the standby orders are used, the standby player then takes over the position. In most cases, the cost to standby is only the cost of subscribing to the zine in which you are standing by.

Being a standby is a reasonable way to join games, and one can build up experience as well as good ratings by entering games as a standby. Several player rating systems are maintained and some of them do not penalize players for a poor standby finish, especially if the original position was a poor one. These positions provide valuable experience, often in middle and end game stages. Replacement policy varies among GM's check it out.

A note should be made of the fact that our Diplomacy zine is not necessarily since this is often a requirement by the group. It is an organization of players for the purpose of having a zine and organizing and furnishing such a zine. The zine is published by the organization as a whole, since the GM's are not necessarily the only ones who can contribute to the zine.

...to express my appreciation to Bert Labelle, as he helped me out with some ideas from his Andromeda Chronicle which was in turn originally derived from Rod Walker's Contravention.

If you have any questions about play-by-mail Diplomacy, please write me or any of the members of the Review Committee. (see page 1 for our addresses)



A SAMPLE ADJUDICATION WITH EXPLANATION by Robert Correll

Although postal Diplomacy has no "standard" approach to the publication of results, the following adjudication is typical of the reporting of Diplomacy results:

1975-8 GOOD OLE FRANCE JUST KEEPS ON ROLLIN' ALONG. WILL FRENCH REINFORCEMENTS RESOLVE IONIAN JAM???

Summer 1904: Austria a mun retreats to ruh
English f nth retreats to hel, and f nwy to ska.

Fall 1904:

Austria (John Stevens): a ruh-bur; a war-ukr; a ser-rum; a tri-bud /a/;
a vie s a tri-bud /d/ (may retreat to boh); f tyh-ion.

England (Jim Lawson): f hel-den e by f ska;

France (Pat Efron): a lvp-edi; f eng-mao; f lon-eng; a mer-pie; f lyo-tyh;
a tyl s russian e gal-vie; a mun e german e bel-ruh /nso/;
f bre-gas /nsu/;

Germany (Terry Knowles): a hol-kis; a bel-hol; f kie-bar; f nth-den;

Italy (Steve Hall): f tun/ou; a rom-nap; a ven-tri; s by f adr;

Russia (Donald Wilson): a mos h; a stp-lvn; a gal-vie; a mos h;

Turkey (Bruce Schlickbernd): f ion-alb s by f gre; a con-bul; a rum-bud;
a ukr s russian e mos-war /nso/; a sev-rum;
f bla-con;

Abbreviation of Symbols: The three letter abbreviations are those listed in the Diplomacy rulebook with a few exceptions for clarity. For example: lvp-see, nwy-norway, lvp-liverpool, lvn-livonia, tyh-tyrrhenian sea,

tyl-tyroila, mac-mid atlantic ocean. Whenever an order is underlined, it means that it is unsuccessful. Whenever an order is followed by a "d", this means that the unit has been dislodged and must retreat. Possible retreats are usually listed after the dislodgement sign or at the bottom of the adjudication. "/a/" means that the unit has been dislodged, but it also has been annihilated because it has no place to retreat. "/nso/" means no such order, and is usually indicated where you are supporting an ally's move and he doesn't make that move. "/nsu/" is indicated where you have ordered a piece that doesn't exist--it means: no such unit. Other possible shortforms are: NMR--No Moves Received (in this case a player's units automatically hold, as per the Civil Disorder rules in the rulebook), and /imp/--which means impossible, and is used in the case where you are trying an impossible order, ie: a mos-ber./imp/.

At the end of each year, a supply centre chart, much like the one below is published:

Supply Centres for 1904:

- A: 3 centres; bud, ser, war, ~~tyl~~, ~~tyroila~~, ~~mac~~. remove 2
- E: 1 centre; den, ~~edl~~, ~~edv~~, remove 1.
- F: 9 centres; home, por, spa, lon, lvp, edi, mun, build 2
- G: 4 centres; kie, hol, bel, ber, ~~ber~~, even.
- I: 5 centres; home, tun, tri, build 1.
- R: 5 centres; mos, swe, stp, vie, nwy, ~~ber~~, build 1.
- T: 7 centres; home, bul, sev, gre, rum. even.

A supply centre chart such as the one above allows the reader to see which supply centres have changed hands during the past year. Note that underlined centres have been acquired in the past year by the player in question; and centres that have "///" through them have been lost by the party in question. The abbreviation "home" simply notes that the country holds all of it's home centres.

Finally a GM will print deadline information such as follows below:

DEADLINE FOR WINTER 1904 AND SPRING 1905 IS NOON TUESDAY FEB. 3, 1976. SEND ALL ORDERS TO HARRY DREWS.

This GM is using the conditional system, and thus requires Winter builds to be submitted with Spring orders. A time during the day is also usually mentioned so that people who phone in orders at the last minute will know exactly when the deadline is. Note however that the GM does not guarantee in most cases to be in the evening of the deadline.

Although the above is a rather standard way of reporting results, GM's tend to be individualistic--so expect variations. Most GM's are always happy to explain their system's differences to the novice.

* * * *

The following article was published in Cepheids #3, and has in the meantime received much praise from novices who read it. So, although we don't normally publish reprints over and over again, we are going with this excellent piece by Brenton Ver Ploeg. This article originally appeared in Brenton's Platypus Pie, and was later printed in the 1973 IDA Player Handbook.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF NEGOTIATION, OR, HOW TO AT
 LEAST GO DOWN IN STYLE, IF YOU GOTTA GO DOWN
 By Brenton Van Ploeg

First, MAKE A DECISION! If you equivocate through too many years of play, if you play the neutral, first and foremost friendly to all powers, a couple of things may happen to you: you may simply not get the initiative that you need to win, or you may find that all the cooperation that the other players have done while working together makes them rather more prone to continue working together than to split the alliance for you. Initiative, of course, is all essential, because no matter how fragmented the other half of the board, you have to be at about 8 or 9 pieces when their war starts to show a clear winner. If you don't commit yourself to an ally, the chances are rather greater that you will be several pieces smaller.

Once you have made the decision concerning your ally and direction of expansion (a more extensive discussion follows), stick with it! You will, it happens, often find yourself in slow going in tactical terms. Often, in fact, you get completely bogged down. Now, since your ally is often fighting alongside you, the tendency is for his or her lines to be most open, and you can often garner a couple of extra centres simply by stabbing the former ally. Barring very unique circumstances--don't do it. The gain in centres will often be compromised by a loss in credibility in general, and specific antipathy in the game where the attack occurs.

Along the same lines, try to avoid directly lying to your intended enemy. It is possible that he will be equally offended when you attack him anyway, but he may not. Moreover, once you explain to others what happened, they may understand too. Recall that a single Diplomacy game does not stand by itself. This doesn't mean that you should get into 40 games so that you can make cross-game deals; it does mean that reputations spread quickly. Enemies, as Doug [Doug Beyerlein] says, often crop up simply because you attack them in a game. If you can avoid it, soften the blow by not making an iron-clad alliance with him with full intentions of breaking it later. You will note, of course, that this is often tactically expensive. Maybe he will suspect something, and come after you. Maybe you will lose a season in time, or maybe even a year.

It's thus at this juncture that you must balance in your own mind the basic tenet of keeping the initiative, discussed above, with some other basic principles. I suggest that it's often worth the cost, in extra time needed to subdue an enemy, to avoid the sort of truly "dirty" stab that many players seem to think the true beauty of Diplomacy. It's a decision you must make for yourself, and I don't pretend that my views are any better than anyone else's, but you should at least weigh the alternatives before plunging the dagger.

Along those lines, there is room in Diplomacy for a "Silence is Golden" rule, if applied judiciously. Doug says in his article, and it's generally true, that you should write absolutely everyone involved. That's almost always a good idea, but there are cases in which it might not be, and they almost always involve a case where you have decided to attack X player.

This may be for reasons of country position, or for reasons of player structure, but the reason is immaterial--the point is that you have not promised this player anything, and thus, when the attack comes, you cannot justifiably be condemned for duplicity. The lessening of your Diplomatic option is the

disadvantage but you may even get that back sometime later, in the following situation: suppose that the battle lines and alliances change rapidly while you are fighting the player you initially attacked. If, for reasons of your own (remember that this should be done rarely) you decide that you want to

switch sides and ally with your former enemy, you are in a much better position to do so than you might have been otherwise. You can say to him "Look, we have been honest with each other. We have never lied to each other, and, in fact, we haven't even corresponded much with each other because we were fighting. We have illustrated our good faith to each other, but that country X, in country Y, has made promises to the both of us. We should, thus,

combining the good faith elements in this game and wipe the board out. Nothing so inelegantly worked, however, is recommended. There is a possible variation to this which might appeal to the insouciant enemy's sense of humour, in case, once again, you want to keep your options open in the future, which is always a good idea. You can write him a facetious alliance offer. The only time I have done this was in a game where I was playing Austria, and had a Russian alliance to attack Turkey. I wrote Turkey asking an alliance, but specifying the "customary" terms--I got Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria in 1901, with Greece to be traded for Ankara in 1902. Turkey would naturally build nothing but fleets in Smyrna, but, to show good faith, would not build more than two units in the first six game years, regardless of how many centres he happened to take, and, well you get the idea.

So, I agree utterly with Doug's wisdom--keep your options open. But I suggest to you that there are other alternatives to writing even enemy players all the time. Of course, there are many situations where you would want to correspond at all times. All I can recommend is that you use your best judgement. Diplomacy is 5% tactics (though in some cases, of course, games become 99% tactics), 45% Diplomacy, and 50% intuition (in which category I include Lady Luck).

Second, don't make a foolish BLUNDER when you write letters--avoid the TEMPORARY PLAYER SYNDROME. It's a basic fact of life that many Diplomacy players come and go. Consequently, when decisions are arrived at concerning the allies, one will choose in a game, little things make a difference.

There is, for instance, no rule that says that a player who signs himself "The Duke of Luxembourg", and emblazons his letters with all sorts of embossed royal seals, may not be a very excellent player. Many times, in fact, this is the case, and many times, other players in the game tend to want to free themselves of the potential inexperience that this practise indicates. (I don't say it is done with justification, just that it is done.) So, you gain nothing from using this technique. Write to the potential ally as if they were exactly what they are--players in a board game in which you both have designs on success, not as if he or she were a head of state, unless it's tied to your press.

Another thing to avoid, as Doug says, is the "Bare Bones Diplomacy Letter". This is acceptable after you know the player and you have an alliance, I suppose, but it's better not to do it even then. At the start of the game, however, it's a disaster. Again, many players have a tendency to drop out five line letters. This categorizes you right away in none to favourable light. Moreover, the person you might intend to ally with could assume that you would never write him a letter like that if you intended to do anything other than attack him, (see the 2nd full paragraph on this page for an analogous situation) and that isn't exactly to your benefit either. More importantly, however, you needn't be so cynical as this analysis in order to write longer letters. You might find, and indeed are likely to find that the person you are corresponding with is an interesting person, and you may broaden your horizons.

The final aspect of the "short" letter is this as Doug says, a major aspect of Diplomacy is being able to discern the personalities of your opponents simply through the mail, and sometimes, over the phone. If you receive a letter which just makes a brief proposal, and nothing else, that person isn't really giving you a chance to see what their thought processes are like, unless the letter is long and contains a lot of analysis concerning the game (there is nothing that says you have to be intimate). In short, they aren't giving you a fair break, and there doesn't seem to be much of a reason why you should give them one, does there? So, lengthen those initial letters, and discuss something more substantial than "Let's attack Germany--he's a dirty sea".

Then too, don't do anything stupid. If you are in a feud--that's a good thing, because your double crosses will--STAY ELEGANTLY. There are a few things to do in this, the first one of which is the oft-expected tactical advice to "stay out of the middle" unless you really want to be there.

the momentum you gain is enough to counteract any adverse effect they have elsewhere on the board (AND, I might add, elsewhere in the whole field, where your reputation might suffer. There is no reason why you should have to stab someone more than one every two or three games.)

To this, I add a second necessity, though it's hardly particularly original with me: always write a letter to the person you have stabbed, and try to make certain that it arrives after the deadline date (that is, of course, obvious) and before the magazine arrives. This last is less obvious, but equally as persuasive, if in a more subtle sense. There is always a shock when you see in the magazine that you have been stabbed. No press releases can possibly explain all the reasons you might have, and, in any case, a press release can't be very persuasive. It sometimes helps to add a humorous press release (besides which--it's FUN) at the time of the attack, but you should not allow such an important letter as this to apply to public channels.

Note well that writing the person you attack, during the season of initial attack, does not only apply to people with whom you have had a close alliance (where it should be obvious) but also to EVERYONE you attack, save those people you attack early in the game that you have chosen not to write at all. (Parenthetically, I might add that you should NEVER use the "silent" treatment on anyone other than someone you plan to attack at the start of the game.) If you have not promised them anything of real value, if you have let the correspondence between the two of you grow cold...these are things which you should tell the person you attack. You should, in fact, be able to point to several indications you gave the person that you were, in fact, planning to attack him. The big catch--these should be TRUE.

If you're still reading at this point, you see a flaw: if you can correctly claim that you warned him, however covertly, HE should be able to see it too. That is of course accurate, but it doesn't mean a great deal as far as disadvantages go. This is so because all you have done, in effect, is made your deals with this person in the same manner in which he has made deals with you. In fact, the way 95% of all Diplomacy players make deals with each other. The truth of the matter is that you don't have to attack a person simply because you leave that option open. In fact, as often as not, you may not attack them at all. Omission doesn't mean antipathy, and anyone that thinks' so is being foolish. More, it is suggesting a situation I consider absurd, though it happens in perhaps the large majority of Diplomacy games; everyone allies closely with everyone else, and we find out what's really happening in the Fall of 1901 and the Spring of 1902. There is no reason in the world that games cannot proceed to their end without ever having made a "firm" alliance.

It is, of course, a value judgement. Doubtless, it's possible to suffer at the hands of someone who thinks you plan to attack simply because you don't ally with him until 1920, but you have to weigh these issues for yourself--it may be worse to ally with that person and then attack him. But keep one thing in mind forever--there are large numbers of Diplomacy players that operate on amoral principles entirely, and you must be aware of that. No system operates well in isolation, and meeting other players, and other systems of approach, is not only refreshing, but challenging.

The balancing act becomes acute, and if you reason that this article does nothing to point out just how you should lean, then you have correctly analyzed it. I haven't really regarded it as an attempt to do so. But this is a philosophical difficulty that everyone solves for themselves, and recall that it's only the third part of the general heading--General Principles. If you want to double cross at will, feel free. But expect some repercussions in both the short term and the long term senses.

PART II--The Initial Negotiations:

It's clear enough, as I said before, that you have to reach a clear commitment with a certain group of allies, and then push as quickly and aggressively as possible towards that goal. But, as the years go on, it is apparent to me

that to precipitate a commitment is as bad as none at all. Most initial negotiations periods are never over a month, and often actually use much less time than that. 90% of the first moves I have received in the three games I have run have been received weeks in advance of the deadlines. Sometimes, this is all you need, but sometimes I think you need twice that long, if only to correctly analyze your enemy. My worst error in a Diplomacy game was in assuming that the grand strategy of the game was the most important, and that people could be moulded to that end. Unfortunately, I inverted friends and enemies, and was stabbed by the player who was to be the long-term ally, and befriended my intended worst enemy. All too late for me to react with any degree of flexibility, naturally, and the game was hopelessly and irrevocably lost.

This implied at the time that all games should be run on the basis of the personalities involved. That sounds perfectly simple, I agree, but it involves disadvantages. The most irritating possible letter to receive early in a game is one that absolutely refuses to be committal in any way or form. He is waiting to see what YOU offer, which, by some strange coincidence, is just what YOU are waiting for. You'll probably end up fighting. At best, you'll end up with a very neutral agreement. It's for that reason that it is often best to try to get some idea of what the players may be like BEFORE you write them. The best way to do this is to know them in advance of course, but, until someone does the very valuable work of preparing game records for certain players, you have to dig through all the records yourself, or pay Rod [Rod Walker] or someone else with the records to do it on their time. [They might do it gratis for someone with a few games, but after that you probably should give them something for their time].

Alternately, or perhaps supplementally, you can call them on the phone. Diplomacy ought not to be influenced by costs, but the simple fact is that Diplomacy IS so influenced. It is for that reason that players in the same geographic area have an advantage, because communication between them is so much more sure, or, at worst, cheaper. But there's the other side of the coin there too, because it's certainly a worthwhile Diplomatic weapon to claim that X & Y, residents of the same area, will therefore ally, so that they should BOTH be cleaned out before that happens. Naturally, it's not necessarily [or even often] the case that these people DO ally, but the burden is now on them to convince your potential ally that they are in fact mortal enemies, one with another.

If you can do this sort of initial groundwork, or get some sort of reasonably reliable hearsay evidence concerning the player whom you might want to influence, it's time to get to work. If the player is trustworthy, I suggest that you commit yourself to a specific initial line of attack, and ALSO COMMIT YOURSELF TO A GRAND TACTICAL SCHEME. Andy Phillips, in regard to 1 the first article, has written me that there should be better reasons to ally with someone than that he or she is a "Great Person". I of course agree 100%, and in addition to being reliable, you should doubtless be able to convince a potential and desired ally that you are both willing and able to fulfill your portion of the alliance. The Grand Tactical-Strategic proposal is of this nature. Here you would describe the middle and end games, as you see them, in terms of what powers will be battling what other powers. After the initial round, if your alliance is accepted in a manner which you think is sincere, your alliance should be cemented into somewhat more detailed terms. Specific plans should be formulated concerning what is to be done with various other countries, and consideration should be given to how the situation might change. The ideal situation, which is actually not too hard to attain unless you have some real close-lipped people dragging down the game, is one in which you will not be surprised by anything that happens on the board. Allowing for a reasonable amount of breakdown, no massive strategic shifts should manage to perpetrate themselves without your knowledge, or at least some sort of idea that they might take place. Ideally.

And that, dear friends, is why it is next to impossible to "teach" Diplomacy. You can "teach" the tactics element, I suppose, and there are a large number of

articles by those much more skilled than myself in that regard which you should read before attempting prolonged play of the game. But the rest of it is by "inference". You must, on the basis of what is often nothing more than intuition alone, decide whom you can trust and for how long. If you think that you are about to be attacked, please try to think compromise. That is--offer the attacker a centre or two in order for him to go away and bother someone else.

This is winding down right now, I can tell. It's really almost next to impossible to get down in print all the myriad little things that run through anyone's head when they play a game of Diplomacy. I have played only four years now, which isn't very long time compared to some of the real "old-timers" but I have seen some very clever tricks perpetrated. Reading can do something, but watching does more. Most of all, however is interest. A player who doesn't give a shit is going to lose, 9 times out of 10. A player that is interesting and challenging will, much more often than not, do well. Perhaps he or she will even win the game. Not only is interest contagious, it tells your potential allies that you are not about to become a negotiating drop-out, and makes you a very valuable friend, and very dangerous enemy. Sometimes things go poorly, of course, but it's then when you can earn the MOST respect of your enemies. I have never eliminated a player who has written at length while being attacked, and kept attempting to change my mind. Furthermore, I have always endeavored to ally with them in future games, because I know that if they fought hard when they were losing, they will fight doubly when they are winning.

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The following article, although well known in the Diplomacy hobby, gives a good example of the type of thinking that wins Diplomacy games. Edi Birsen, the author, is certainly among the hobby's most successful players. He is presently the president of the International Diplomacy Association. This article originally appeared in Hoosier Archives #43, it is reprinted with permission from Walt Buchanan.

THE LEPANTO OPENING by Edi Birsen

By most means of statistical analysis, Italy is the weakest power on the Diplomacy board. This could be attributed to several factors: poor players, a weak position between Austria and France, or the inability of effective trust development between the Austrians and the Italians due to the unusual situation of adjacent home supply centres. More often than not, the Italians are unable to overcome the Turkish position quickly and fall prey to a combination of Turkish resistance and back stabbing by a western power.

A possible reversal of the Turkish domination of the southeast is an alliance between Austria and Italy which uses an unusual opening by the Italians to quickly secure the fall of the Turks. The principal problem in attacking Turkey is that players find its corner position very difficult to crack. Italian initiative combined with Austrian pressure can remove the Turks from the corner advantage by the emplacement of an Army deep behind the Turkish position in Syria! While it may be an unusual position for an Italian army, it is the most effective manner to turn the Turkish flank and to threaten the Turkish mainland. The trick then becomes to get there before the Turks block you.

The Spring 1901 moves for Italy should not reveal an open bias toward Austria and should indicate instead a kind of calm wait-and-see attitude. Thus, the Spring should see the Italians moving Fleet Naples to the Ionian Sea, Army Rome to Apulia, and Army Venice holding. Hopefully, the French will be involved in the West and the Austrians will be moving to Albania with their fleet and occupying Serbia.

In the fall of 1901, the Italians make the initial set-up for the drive to the East. This is done by conveying the army in Apulia to Tunis. This leaves the Austrian-Italian alliance with two Fleets that can threaten the Aegean as well as the flexibility provided by the army in Tunis which can be

convoyed back to Italy or to Albania if plans go wrong. The Italian army in Venice holds and is thus able to provide some security in the North. Note that should the Russians and the Turks combine, the Austrians will be in desperate need of an extra army to fend off Russian attacks.

After a winter build of a Fleet in Naples, the traditional build of Italy in the first winter, the Italians order the following for the Spring: Fleet Ionian to the Eastern Med., Fleet Naples to the Ionian, Army Tunis and Army Venice hold. This secures the convoy route, for in the Fall, the Italians are clear to convoy Army Tunis straight to Syria. The fall of the Turks is now a certainty. The positional advantage of moving to the Eastern Med. is enhanced by the existence of the Austrian fleet in Greece. When the Italians make their move to the Eastern Med., the Austrians should attempt to force the Aegean, more to keep the Turks out than to gain it for themselves. In the Spring of 1903, the Austrian-Italian alliance will have three fleets that can come to bear on the Aegean as well as an army that can threaten Smyrna. For those who wish to fantasize, visions of the Italians moving on Sevastopol can be conjured up by the movement of the Eastern army to Armenia. As if the Austrians are to be stabbed, the army could be used to very effectively turn any Austrian position in Constantinople.

While this opening is very effective in crushing the Turks caught unaware, it is futile to attempt if the Turks move their fleet to Constantinople in the Spring of 1901, for they will surely move it to the Aegean in the Fall and build a fleet in Smyrna in the Winter, with Spring orders bringing it to the Eastern Med. Here we see the flexibility of the opening moves, as the army in Apulia could be used for other things, as such as Turkish opening usually means that the Austrians are in for a lot of trouble w from the Russians, but then that is another battle and another article.

Law Puleipher has always been helpful in introducing novices to the world of Variant Diplomacy. Law wrote the following article specifically for publication here, we hope that you will find it of interest, and that you will at some time look into the Variant Diplomacy scene.

INTRODUCTION TO DIPLOMACY VARIANTS

by Law Puleipher

Variants are games more or less based on standard (regular) Diplomacy which are played by over half of all postal players. One quarter of all postal Diplomacy type games begun in 1973 were bar variants. Some variants use a new or altered board and situation, and some retain almost all of the rules; others retain the board and change one or more of the rules; still others change board and rules extensively. Some closely resemble the standard game, while others bear little in common with it. There are even variants of variants. The games included in the rulebook for other than 7 players are variants with "altered board" (new starting positions and different [because fewer] player countries).

Some zines are devoted solely to variants, and a few players play only variants, but a mixture of standard and variant is more common.

Almost any subject you come to name has been used for at least one variant, though more are being produced each month. Among these are science fiction and fantasy (eg: Hyborian Age, Foundation), historical (1721, Diodochi, Napoleonic), extension of the standard board and scenario (Youngstown, Abstraction), hypothetical (Lost Continents), and abstract (Anarchy, Black Hole). There are over 200 Variants with new boards and hundreds using the standard board.

Why do people play variants? Some like new scenarios for press release purposes or simply for a change. Others like a greater challenge than the simple standard rules provide. Some become bored with standard Diplomacy after repeated plays. Many variants require different skills and a different type of thinking than is needed for standard Diplomacy, and many are more realistic. Some variants offer better play balance than those in the rulebook for numbers of players other than 7, and there are variants which can be played by more than 7

people. Finally, an inexperienced player has a better chance because experienced players cannot depend on memorized lines of play--all the players must analyze the new situation.

Variants are not often designed for general popularity. Usually they are aimed at a smaller group which is attracted by elements particular to that variant; most variants are played only a few times by mail, if at all.

Variants are usually available from individual publishers (who are often also designers) for 15-30¢ each. Available variant packages: 1001 to 1005. A general collection of variants is available from Paul Wood, 24613 Harmon Ct., St. Clair Shores, MI 48080 for \$1.75. A package of variants related to science-fiction and fantasy can be obtained from Lew Pulsipher, Box 1021, Grad Centre, Durham, NC 27706 for \$2.25 (see below for summer address).

The following people handle special variant projects: Robert Sacks, 4861 Broadway, 5-V, New York, NY 10034 is the Variant Postal Dip. Designation ("Miller Number") Custodian. He assigns a unique identifying symbol to each postal game in the same manner as the "Boardman Number" in Diplomacy.

Dan Gallagher, 6425 King Louis Dr., Alexandria, VA 22312 is the Director of of the North American Variant Bank. Most Variants are now avail. from him.

Lewis Pulsipher, Box 1021 Grad Centre, Durham, NC 27706 is the Diplomacy World Variants Editor. All newly published variants are reviewed-described in Diplomacy World. (Note that Lew's summer address is: 423 Main St., Bellevue, MI 49021).

Where would we be to have an issue with of the Cepheids without an article by Rod Walker? I don't know, but Rod certainly is one of Diplomacy's most prolific article writers. Well, here are a few more ideas to mill over before you start that first Diplomacy game. Reprinted from Hoosier Archives #55, with the kind permission of Walt Buchanan.

RUSSIA'S NORTHERN OFFENSIVE BY Rod Walker

Russia has two fronts, distinctly separated, and symbolized by her two distinct naval frontages, Baltic/Barents and Black Sea. Allen Calhamer gave Russia four units because of this, and there is a Russian fleet on each front. There are times when Russia may wish to concentrate initially on one front or the other. This article deals with concentration on the north. I want to preface it with some observations of a general nature:

1. I believe that early concentration may unnecessarily antagonize its object. Concentration in the north is usually anti-English, but choosing your enemies before you know which enemies have chosen you is not too bright.
2. Concentrating in the north means ignoring the south. There is then no protection against a Turkish or Austrian stab. It also means an abandonment of the right to sway events in the south, at least immediately.

The decision to concentrate in the north is a weighty one. It should not be made except for compelling reasons. If it needs to be done, however, then "twere best 'twere done quickly", to use the words of Lady Macbeth.

The most common "northern intervention" move is F StP(sc)-both, A Mos-StP, followed in Fall by F Both-Swe, A StP-Nwy (hopefully keeping the English out), or A StP-Fin, making things hot for England in 302, even though he will take Norway in 1901. The other army is then used in the south, or if Russia has no immediate ambitions there, hangs around wondering what to do.

But is if you are going to intervene in the north, Russia, and abandon your interests in the south for the nonce, then you may as well do so quickly. There is therefore another sequence which offers interesting possibilities.

This sequence is:

Spring 1901
 F StP(sc)-Bot
 A Mos-StP
 A War-Lvn

Fall 1901
 F Bot C A Lvn-Swe
 A StP-Fin
 A Lvn-Swe

Winter 1901
 Build F StP (nc)

This is accompanied, of course, with suitable Diplomacy, hopefully inducing both France and Germany to attack the Wicked Witch of the North, England. At the end of 1901, Russia has 4 units poised in Scandinavia. Norway should fall in 1902.

The importance of this position lies, however, not in the fall of Norway, but in its aftermath. Taking Norway from England is one thing; taking anything else is another. If Russian diplomacy has been successful, England may be glad to recognize the fait accompli in return for Russian non-aggression in the future. In turn, Russia should be glad to grant this. In Spring 1902, he should have moved F Bot-Bal (on the excuse that he needs to get the fleet out for use against England, a real need if he continues the naval war to the west). He is then in position to launch an attack on Germany. A strong advance into central Europe is far more important to Russian victory than the side show against England [Russia needs to weaken, not destroy, England, at this stage in the game].

By the end of 1902 (Russia will probably build A War in W02), the Russian position is good in the north. He dominates Scandinavia, holding a strong defensive position, anchoring his offensive there. He has taken, or is threatening, Denmark. He has armies poised to the east and north of Germany.

Again I emphasize, however, that this is possible only when Russia's diplomatic position in the south is so secure that he can afford to devote very minimal attention to that theatre. His very weakness in that area, combined with successes in the north, may undermine his position. He must be careful, therefore, to engage in strong and aggressive diplomacy with his southern neighbours, so that while he seeks to dominate the north, he does not lose the south.

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Diplomacy World

Diplomacy World is a quarterly magazine on Diplomacy, it is owned by Games Research Inc. Its purpose is to present a broad overview of the hobby. Diplomacy hobby by printing articles on the Diplomacy hobby scene and on good play, carrying the Hoosier Archives Demonstration Game with expert analysis, listing rating systems, publishing letters to the editor and listing game-openings and zine news. In short anything of general interest to the Diplomacy community is fair game for DIPLOMACY WORLD. Subscriptions sell for \$4. per year. Walt will be happy to send novices a sample of DW for a couple of stamps to cover postage. Write: Walt Buchanan, R.R.#3, Box 324, Lebanon, IN 46052. Thanks to Walt also for the cartoons in this issue, they are from Diplomacy World.

IDA Player Handbook

Each year the International Diplomacy Association issues a collection of original articles, and well renowned reprints in a mimeographed publication. There are articles on every subject of Diplomacy from ratings to strategy. This handbook is issued every year at the annual summer Diplomacy convention. It has gained much respect in the hobby and is a best seller each year. The handbook is available in the US from: Edi Birsan, 35-35 75th Ave., Apt. 302, Jackson Heights, NY 11372. In Canada; Robert Correll, P.O. Box 642, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario. The price is \$2.

MT 2N4

Prepared by the IDA Novice Committee

This sheet is prepared as a supplement to the Capheids, in order to provide an up-to-date listing of game openings in the Diplomacy Hobby. The bulletin is prepared irregularly, updated when ever we hear of sufficient new openings to make the previous sheet dated. Included are current subscription prices, and gamefees where applicable. Most publishers will send a sample copy of their zine for a stamp.

DIPLOMACY OPENINGS

Len Lakofka has openings for novice players only in his zine BRONTOSAURUS. These games will be played out on 4 wk deadlines, please note that players will not receive a zine as such, but only 1 page sheets carrying the game reports. The price is \$4.50. Len's address is: 644 West Briar Place, Chicago, IL 60657.

Randolph Smyth has a few openings left in games that will form a part of the Postal Diplomacy Tournament. The price to join is \$2. plus maintenance of a subscription to FOL SI FIE where the games will be carried. Subs are 1/2¢ per page plus postage. Randolph Smyth, 249 First Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. K1S 2G5

Ernie Demanalis has openings in AUSTERLITZ, with deadlines 8 wks. apart, gamefee \$3, which includes subscription to his zine until the game's conclusion. Please send a preference list--that is list your country's in order of pref. Ernie Demanalis, 106 Wilson Ave., Morgantown, West Virginia. 26505

Ben Grossman (29 E 9 St., #9, New York, NY 10009) has openings in THE PREDAWN LEFTIST at \$2. + sub, or the alternative of \$6. for the whole game, sub included. Sub rate is 8/\$2.

Calvin White (1 Turnberry Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M6P 1P6) has openings in JANUS. Gamefees are \$2.50 (50¢ discount to IDA members) plus a subscription. Subs are 10¢ per page plus postage, send a lump sum and Cal will keep the books. Articles and games.

Michael Homer (239 N. Bowling Green Way, Los Angeles, CA 90043) has openings in the MASTER MACHIAVELLIAN. Gamefees are \$1 plus sub. Subs are 10/\$2.

DIPLOMACY PUBLICATIONS

DIPLOMACY WORLD (c/o Walt Buchanan, R.R.#3, Box 324, Lebanon, IN 46052) is a non-game zine devoted to presenting articles on play, ratings systems, and general information to the hobby's players. This professionally printed zine also includes a demonstration game. Sub rate is \$4. per year. (4 issues per year) Each issue is over 40 pages and Walt will send a sample if you will send him a couple of stamps. Photo-offset.

Len Lakofka offers an introductory zine for novices called KALEIDOSCOPE. For a free copy write Len at 644 W. Briar Place, Chicago IL 60657. A stamp to pay for postage would be appreciated.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY ASSOCIATION'S DIPLOMACY HANDBOOK released at this past summer's Diplomacy convention is now available for sale. This is a mimeo production which includes articles from many of the hobby's renowned writers; "Famous Stebs in Postal Diplomacy" by Edi Birren, "The Making of an Alliance" by Len Lakofka, "Getting Started" by John Terray and the results of Lew Pulsipher's Second North American Diplomacy Survey. The price is \$2. for IDA members and \$2.50 for non-members. Write: Edi Birren, 35-35 75th Ave., Apt. 302, Jackson Heights, NY 11372. In Canada: Robert Correll, 44 Rawlinson Av., Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M4P 2M9.

Incidentally, if you are not a member of the International Diplomacy Association, you should consider joining. The IDA publishes a bi-monthly newsletter (12 plus pgs.) to its members called DIPLOMACY REVIEW. Your dues contribute to the financial support of such worthwhile projects as the Boardmen Numbers, the IDA Novice Packet, the Gameopenings Project, and the International Subscription Exchange. Dues are \$2. per year. Write the Vice President/Treasurer: Len Lakofka, 644 W. Briar Place, Chicago, IL 60657.

Can't find what you want? A more complete listing of openings, both regular and variant is maintained by Stephen Tihor, 122 Henry, Princeton U., Princeton, NJ 08540. This listing is called GO "BY NA and is available for a stamped-self-addressed envelope. This is an excellent service and is frequently updated. I recommend that you write for a copy if you are in the market for gameopenings. Computed updated.

DIPLOMACY VARIANT OPENINGS

Fred C. Davis Jr. (3012 Oak Green Ct., Ellipton City, MO 21643) has openings in the variants of Abstraction and Atlantica II-R. Abstraction is played on a slightly extended map of Europe, but each regular Power begins with 4 Supply Centres and 8 provinces. Russia has 10 provinces and 5 centres. Atlantica II-R includes the 4 Western European Powers and 3 North American Powers, USA, CSA and Canada, set in the year 1870. Both games use army/Plants for crossing more than one sea space. Games are \$7. or you may want standby for \$3.50. The games will be carried in BUSWACKER, which Fred Davis has regularly published for 50 issues. Sub fees are \$2.50 for 12 issues in N.A.

Robert Sacks, [4961 Broadway, 5-V, New York, NY 10034] has openings in LORD OF THE HOSTS for the variants of Downfall II, Parliament. The price is \$3. plus sub to the zine. Write for further details.

R. Chappell [15170 Columbus, San Martin, CA 95048] has openings in his zine, THE DEMONS GAME. Youngest variant is the opening, price \$1.50 plus sub. subs are 10/\$1.

If you have any problems, or questions, please don't hesitate to write any members of the IDA Novice Committee. Our addresses are on page 1 of the Cepheids. Thankyou.

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