

## THE DIPLOMACY CHRONICLE?

This is the September 4, 1980 issue of The Diplomacy Chronicle, an organ 'zine intending to foster and multiply contacts among North American (?) regular Diplomacy (?) ombudsmen and to carry their deliberations on ombudsman- and ethics-related issues. The editor is François Guerrier, Box 32, Station A, Ottawa, Ont. K1N 0Y9 (the GDC Ombudsman) for the time being. This is Tethausaurus Presses Publication 89.

### Loose ends...

1. Allow me to apologize for a bad misprint on p. 3 of the previous issue (where "DFA" was mistyped repeatedly as "GPA") and for the generally poor reproduction. Come to think of it, the grammar was nothing to be proud of, either...
2. Yes, I know, the "deadline" was to have been September 15, so this issue may be a bit premature. However, seven persons have already reacted to the idea (in their 'zine, or in personal letters), which is more than I had anticipated originally; further, I don't expect to get much more input before the fifteenth (I'd be surprised if people like Kelley and Baker respond...), and there's enough material for a second issue, so here it is.
3. I would like to extend very special thanks to Fred Davis, Rod Walker, John Leeder, Elmer Hinton, and Mark Berch for their kind words on behalf of this project.
4. Copies of the first two issues are being sent to Randolph Smyth, whom I am told will soon be--in all likelihood--the NADP Ombudsman. Kindly allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Randolph in advance (conditional on his being elected, of course!). Also, copies of this issue go to Jerry Jones as well as those most likely to be accepted as members in the near future (assuming they'll want to participate): John Leeder, Lee Kendler Sr., and Rod Walker.

### The Issues:

Virtually all respondents were favourable to this project, and indicated their willingness to support it, though some declined to participate actively due to other commitments. There seems to be no opposition to the 'zine, so The Diplomacy Chronicle is here to stay. In addition to all the habitual compliments, three persons have offered extensive suggestions. I will print Mark Berch's letter only, however, as his letter covered most of the arguments presented by the other two persons. I have taken the liberty of printing the relevant passages, annotating them at the same time for ease of reference, with my own comments following:

1. "The idea of the 'zine is great. Though there are other possible forums..., it is best to have all this material gathered in one place rather than either scattered, or placed in a zine where it is not the center of attention. Further, it is best to have this material centralized for easy access. Indeed, I visualize the day when a new but conscientious GM will, as part of his preparation, routinely order all back issues of TDC as are available.
2. "One thing that will have to be considered is how far from pure ombudsmaning the 'zine should cover. You mentioned "ethical issues in general". How broad do you intend that to cover? Does it include ethical questions that do not relate to games per se (e.g. the ethics of threatening to sue someone, the ethics of publishing a DNQ letter)?
3. "Under your purposes, the jurisdiction question will likely be a one time question, (2) may not be needed; it is (3) that is the heart of the proposal.
4. "It's when we get to the organization (NAOC) that I start to have some questions. All the above goals can be accomplished by having a 'zine. What additional things would be done, or same things done more easily, by having an organization? You say that "this body's purpose is to discuss matters, not to decide on solutions". But discussion does not require an organization, just a forum. It's making and implementing decisions that one needs an

organization for

"This is directly pertinent to the question of membership. Unless members can/are-obliged-to do something that non-members cannot, what is the point of distinguishing between members and non-members? The only place where I can see you making a distinction is where former ombudsmen can "present their views only", whereas only others will be "carrying the final discussions" --- a rather fine line. You're going to be hard put to explain to someone that they've presented their views, now "Please shut up".

"I am not hostile to the idea of an organization. But unless it has some function beyond being the house for which TDC is the house organ, I don't see the point of it. I agree that it can't be an appeal body. You have the OAC for that, PDF-O decisions are not appealable, and RS can make his own decision on that matter.

5. "Assuming that there is some value for having an association and not just the TDC forum, who are the members to be? Here we have the problem that the rating people have. There aren't many of us. I would suggest that you drop the North American. While some projects are best not done globally, others, like this one, could be, since we are primarily/exclusively for debating. I might add that this is somewhat academic, since there is no such thing as an ombudsman in England --- they use a different system. The original membership would then be you, me, and RS, plus whomever we also pick. This I feel should be on a case-by-case basis... Baker and Kelley I think are out of the hobby. Walker, Leeder, and, to a lesser extent, Davis, are fine...

6. "One question is to whether or not the NAOC will be making "pronouncements" or some such, i.e. trying to give some position/opinion the weight of NAOC. If yes, then a well-defined membership is needed, so that a vote can be taken. And if yes, there is a possible turf conflict with OAC.

7. "Another possible role is to advise the ENC on whether a given game is or is not irregular, if he seeks such advice. Of course, he could go to an individual ombudsman just as well on this point.

"If NAOC is solely for debating, then I see no need for members, UNLESS you plan to say that others may not contribute (e.g. on a letter-to-the-letter-of-TDC basis).

8. "Incidentally, I stand ready to publish an issue of TDC when the time comes. It was a report to the ENC on whether or not a given game should be treated as ratable. It's already typed up, just needs to be xeroxed.

9. "With regard to the DPA, you may know more about this than I do. But so far as I am presently aware, it is only an IDEA at this point, not a functioning outfit. Once it gets going, I could see giving it a seat on the NAOC as a player representative. Similarly, if the GM/P arm of the NADF ... ever gets organized, a strictly GM representative would for the same reasons be a good idea.

"Well, what should arise but Rod's letter. Rod does have a valid point about not letting the outfit get too big, but then again that depends on what they are going to have to do. If it's just debate, then size is not really a problem."

((The contents of Rod's letter which Mark refers to should be obvious from the above. In addition, Rod has proposed a notion very similar in principle to that of Mark in regard to membership. I'll cover that later, along with Mark's point.

((Mark has set forth several useful notions above, which I readily accept. My rejoinders: (1. To expand on my original idea, it might be best if we started thinking about reprinting past arbitrations, statements, and advisory opinions (preferably in chronological order?) now, though I suspect that the reprinting per se will have to wait until we have decided on the other structures and functions. However, discussing it now might help, though there might be a good argument to the contrary. Anyhow, since Rod and Mark probably have more documentation on the subject, one of them could publish those issues. For my part, I will try to convince the appropriate persons to allow me to release up-to-now confidential material.

((It might also be a good idea to indicate some alternate sources in those reprint issues as well. For instance, the fact that Mark reprinted the 1975 GM Affair in DD 30 could be noted. This would allow the novice GMs receiving TDC to further investigate some topics if

they wish.

((Any ideas on any of the above?)

((2. Personally, I'd rather have the Commission cover any and all ethical-related issues. This is a forum for and by ombudsmen (and related officers), and they generally have to deal with more than just game-related issues.

((3. Yes, though discussing ethical issues will hopefully be important as well...)

((4. Note that NAOC would be a Commission, much like the PDRC and the OAC, rather than an organization... Your questions could apply to these (PDRC, OAC) as well, as all they really are is a house for Vanilla Fudge and Bear Ghost respectively, though they sometimes do make decisions.

((The first advantage of a commission/committee is that it is tangible. That is, saying "The NAOC has come to the conclusion that..." is more likely to have a greater impact on the hobby (as an ombudsmen's commission) than, "Debates in TDC have led to the conclusion that..." But that wouldn't be a sufficient justification for having a commission, alone.

((But I feel there are other advantages. The NAOC will provide a structure by which (and through which) members are selected. Yes, I think that membership should be closed; only a very definite category of people should be eligible for membership (More on this later.) And, in a sense, the NAOC would make one type of decision in regard to jurisdictions, though that would be agreed upon freely by all ombudsmen (i.e. thus, no "implementing" of the decision).)

((Also, don't forget that, in practice, we are going to be doing committee work when we discuss issues, whether we call ourselves a commission or not.

((Allow me to do a bit of backtracking on the membership question. The notion you set forth in 5 is considerably better than the solution I had originally thought of. Since NAOC is to be a forum for ombudsmen (and related) positions, then it is best to define membership in terms of all-ombudsmen-plus-whomever-we-pick.

((So, our original membership is you, me, and probably Randolph. I suggest that we treat Randolph as though he had already been elected as NADP Ombudsman. In the unlikely case that he should be beaten, we can always do the necessary backtracking on the decisions we might have taken with the approval of Randolph, and put the question before the actual NADP-O. I am also going to propose the following additional members, if they want the job: John Leeder, Lee Kendter Sr., and Rod Walker (as an aside, Davis has already declined membership, as he has other commitments.). If there are no objections, they will be members if they wish.

((I also agree that whomever-we-pick should be on a case-by-case basis. Questions: are additional members to be accepted by majority agreement? Would additional members have equal say on the admission of future candidates once accepted? May a member be removed from the Commission? I think that "yes" is the most appropriate answer in all cases but the last one. Any ideas?

((5. I am willing to drop the "North American"--could you suggest another name for the Commission? But is there any point in doing this?

((6. Why not? If we are to discuss issues, it is only logical that we should reach conclusions. I see no possible turf conflict with the OAC: first, the OAC represents CDO, whereas NAOC would represent the hobby ombudsmen; there's nothing intrinsically wrong with two bodies representing different institutions discussing the same issues, though I doubt this would happen frequently, if at all. Second, the OAC tends to discuss ethical legislation and recommendations, whereas I think we should discuss (and draw conclusions on, when appropriate) ethical issues. Finally, the OAC tends to discuss matters of rather local concern (with a few exceptions), whereas the NAOC would not. In any case, this is open for discussion...

((7. I agree.

((8. Great! Feel free to publish TDC 3 if you wish, if you can do it before October 1 (as I'm planning an issue myself shortly after this date; if you can't, please let me know as soon as possible...).

((To expand from a particular idea to a general principle: why don't we publish TDC in a more or less rotational fashion (e.g. one issue from Berch; one from Guerrier; one from Smyth, etc.)? This would allow a given ombudsman to print his relevant statements

and arbitrations in his issues; further, it would split the costs more or less equally among ourselves, which methinks is the way it should be; and the hobby would perhaps benefit from the variety of editorial styles (as always having the same old editor can occasionally be boring for the readers), though that is quite minor. Of course, the system need not be perfectly rotational. And this would require a minimum of coordination, to avoid getting two TDC 5's if nothing else... but the system could work. Any ideas?

((9. OK. I thought that allowing 2 or 3 DPA representatives would allow for a more sizeable NAOC membership, and more importantly, would somewhat ensure that the NAOC maintain a favourable player-oriented bias, but in the end I favour any solution that works. Inviting a GM/P representative is also a spiffy idea. As you point out, however, we will have to wait until these outfits get going before putting the question to them.))

#### Wrap-ups:

So, a lot of topics have been discussed, and I'm quite pleased to see that the consensus is that TDC is a good idea. The second step, of course, is to finalize our structure, our membership, and our basic rules, which I hope can be all done away with by December 1980. As I visualize it, the issues above should be resolved shortly.

Two matters mentioned in TDC I haven't been fully discussed: the circulation and the "constitution". I suspect that we start working on a short document establishing a definition for the membership as well as procedural rules, which may loosely be called a "constitution". I think our aim here should be a clear, simple, and concise document.

Hopefully we will not allow procedural wrangles to outweigh common sense and efficiency, and the latter, to outweigh fairness and common decency.

I will conclude with a few off-hand predictions: I suspect that TDC and the NAOC will become somewhat episodic in nature once we are past discussing the structure and the functions, and reprinting what we have set about to reprint. Nevertheless, there are plenty of ethical issues in this hobby begging that they be discussed, so TDC should prove to be a fairly regular 'zine, if perhaps episodic. I share Mark's hope that, in the not-too-distant-future, all conscientious GMs (not only novice GMs...) and players-aspiring-to-be-GM-one-day will routinely order all TDC back issues.

Oh well, time to stop preaching; let's get back to the drawing board...!

François.

François Guerrier,  
Box 32, Station A,  
Ottawa, Ont.  
K1N 0T9.