

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Potpourri

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If you are seeing this zine for the first time, greetings. DIPLOMACY DIGEST is a readers zine, targeted to the Diplomacy purist. No games have or will ever run here. And unlike many of my most favorite zines, I don't cover general wargaming, national politics, movies presidential politics and all the rest. But when it comes to the game and hobby of Diplomacy, I cover EVERYTHING. Unlike this one, most issues are devoted to a theme: Ethics, Austria, Press, Hobby History, publishing, personalities, losing, stabbing, GMing, tournaments, alliances, variants, crossgaming, NMRing --- these are just some of the theme topics I've put out in the past 12 years.

Nearly all of this material is in the form of reprints, plus my commentary on them. For this I draw from my enormous archives of dipzines. I have hundreds of titles, with well over 7000 zines. A good deal of this material is from either the first 15 years of the hobby, or from non-american zines --- in short, difficult material, ordinarily, to come by. This means that when I assemble material for a theme issue, I can reach across the decades --- and across the ocean --- to present to you what different people have to say on a topic. This gives a broader perspective than you could ever have with just 1989 writers dealing with a subject. Every so often an issue will appear with just original material, such as a roundtable on GMing errors in 1987, and #122 in 1989.

In addition to the reprints, there is "The Zine Column", a regular feature which mixes hobby news and my commentary on it. And a letter column pops up from time to time. And the front page is usually devoted to something other than telling my regular readers what they already know!

Single issues are 11-12 pages, and the zine has appeared regularly since 1977, and is printed offset. All back issues are kept in stock, but, except for Lexicon and Son of Lexicon, you must be a subscriber to order these. To answer some common questions: The discount for ordering a full set of back issues is \$2.50, and you don't need to order #42 or any issue you got via sub or sample. So far as I'm concerned, you can reprint anything which appears here --- just credit the source and send me a copy. I do consider requests for theme issues and no, I don't know of any significant unpublished stalemate lines. Any person who is criticized, or whose actions are criticized, in this zine, has an automatic right-of-reply. I believe that a publisher who criticizes simultaneously gets the obligation to permit a reply, tho some see journalistic ethics differently.

# The Belgium Sector

((Our opening essay is by Len Lakofka, and first appeared in Spartan International Monthly, a wargaming zine not devoted particularly to Diplomacy, in Nov 1970. Its of interest not only for the strategy, but for historical interest and what it tells us of the writers' of such essays.))

In the play of live ((a term no longer used. We now say "face to face" or "in person")) or play-by-Mail Diplomacy, certain patterns of play repeat themselves over and over again. The two most common patterns see involve the initial alliance structure of countries in the Belgian and Balkan "sectors" of the Diplomacy map. A "sector" is an area where intense fighting usually occurs.

In the Belgian sector ... Briefly, each country possess a normal sphere of influence. This is an area he can develop into without running into too much military or diplomatic pressure .. where he expects to gain his first build(s) without being contested. In the Belgian sector, E, F, and G have the following spheres of influence: England: Nth, Nwg, NAO and Nwy: where no major contention will occur. The Irish Sea is a borderline case. The English Channel, Ska, Hel and Bar are all areas where immediate contention will occur. France: Iberia and the surrounding waters. Wes is a sore bone of contention with Italy, and of course Eng with England. Note Bel is again in line with normal French development. Germany: Den, Hol, and that's about all she can move to without making someone uneasy. Hel looks like an attack on E, Bal like a potential attack on Swe or Russia, and then there's Belgium. Note that France and Germany have additional problems in that they cannot move freely in their own countries without causing a little friction. G gets upset over Fre A Bur, Italy gets a little distraught over fleets in Mar ((unless France is clearly at war with England)), and Russia has cat fits over pieces in Pru or Silesia. ((Similar problems exist in Pie, Ven, Tri, Tyo, Gal and Arm, and even Boh, tho that is seen rarely in 1901)).

Thus, the province of Bel is right in the center of things. England wants it so as to gain 2 quick builds, hopefully without having to fight for it. F or G may be willing to cede it to her for her cooperation later. England wants it so as to gain two quick builds hopefully without having to fight for it. F or G may be willing to cede it to her for her cooperation later. Any other province in the area will likely mean total war with some other power. Germany wants Belgium so as to secure the lowlands. This makes her less easily attacked by England from the sea ((actually, a vacant Bel would do that too)) and gives her an important wedge to use versus Burgandy in case war with France ever begins. France wants Belgium because it presses directly on Burgandy. She may give it to an ally to take by fleet capture (since a fleet can't move or lend support inland) so as to keep the peace, but it is always a reluctant gift. Note that Bur is the hinge pin to land attack of France. It impinges on the ... key areas of France (Par, Mar and Gas) ... ((which would)) cause great defensive problems if it falls to a hostile power. ((Note the implicit bias in this discussion. England is given the bland and non-threatening reason of "two quick builds" --- coupled with explicit suggestion that F and G go along with it! This is repeated in the French section, suggesting acceptance of Eng F Bel (or G F Bel, tho this is pretty rare). Lakofka makes no mention of E ever going along with someone else taking Bel, and he makes it clear that he feels France has the least claim to Bel, especially if E or G is to take it with a fleet. We'll see echoes of this attitude later.))

...There is, of course, another very important reason why the Belgian sector ignites, other than possession of Bel itself. To not have a fight there, i.e. a GFE alliance, would produce many problems. F would have to attack I, G would have to take on A or R, or attack Italy the hard way, and E could only attack R in the north. As soon as such attacks would be made, the balance of power would be thrown into chaos! Cooperation between even two of the powers is greatly impeded by the fact that they soon find themselves tripping over each other. Each of the powers must, more or less singlehanded, attack another of the great powers.

((I've included that for historical reasons. In the 60s, EFG was considered wholly im-

practical. I don't recall a single essay from that time advocating it. But by the mid to late 70s, attitudes had changed, the alliance had been successful in some postal games, and essays touted its value. I suspect that this arose, indirectly from the increased attention given stalemate lines in the early-mid 70s, largely the work of Beshara and Verheiden. From this arose a greater appreciation of the fact that whoever (east or west) could cross the barren zone (that line from Pie to Livonia) first and great force could usually prevent the other from setting up a successful stalemate line. The EFG alliance, tho having internal problems, allows the west to cross it first, giving all three western powers an edge. The west would have resolved the Belgian sector long before the Balkans were sorted out, leaving the east unprepared for the multifront invasions from the west.)

...Now, let us analyze the three possible alliances. The best alliance((i.e. Lakofka's favorite)) is probably G-E. The reasons ... are: independent building capacity --- E builds almost all fleets while G builds almost all armies, thus neither is in a position to stab the other), greater mobility --- areas of cooperation are present not only against France but also against Russia, greater development possibility --- they can cooperate directly by giving support for each other's attacks, as opposed to having to attack an enemy from two sides, and lastly, each country can ally with another player without interfering with his primary alliance with the other. ((Whew --- talk about run-on sentences!)) E and I can ally vs F as can E and T vs R, while G can ally with A vs R, or with I or T vs A and neither gets in the other's way...The alliance is good in that a stab cannot be driven home because G can't penetrate the seas easily, but E can't penetrate inland easily. Thus, if they stab, they can make only minor progress. However, the fact that they must telegraph their punch, E building armies, G building fleets, plus the fact that they can't make deep independent inroads into that enemy makes a stab difficult. ((This paragraph demonstrates a common failing among strategic writers. Tho supposedly presenting a broad overview, Lakofka likes this alliance so much that he just can't bring himself to say anything negative about it. Having played this alliance, as E, for some length(with Francois Guerrier as G) I can tell you, it just isn't that simple. Some of these advantages disappear over time. If you are at, say, 15-15, you don't need to make "deep inroads" to win the game. E and G have such a long common border, that there are a lot of places to snatch a center suddenly (e.g. Bre) or unexpectedly slide a unit into a demilitarized area such as Scandinavia or France. The bit about builds telegraphing a stab only works for the first few years, for after that, the stab will likely occur in the fall season previous. Germany is likely to insist that Nth be left vacant. The allocation of the Turkish home centers is difficult as neither country has good access to them, and one country will be assigned two of them))

For France and Germany to ally, the problem is one of builds ((as this is a less-favored-by-Lakofka alliance, he starts right off with the disadvantages)). One or the other or both must build more fleets than normal. ((I can't quite see G, but not F, building more fleets than normal)). Thus, if he gets stabbed, his defenses have been greatly compromised. His development, his mobility and his cooperation capability are all as good as the E-G alliance. Now, by assigning values to alliance characteristics ((??)) we find that the F-G alliance is better ((than EG?? or than EG and EF?)), yet this estimate reflects a perfect alliance in which stabs will not occur.

For E and F to ally would seem to be as viable as EG. However, the situation is different. E and F can cooperate effectively only vs G. Other factors are good but builds are slightly inhibited. ((Not so. EF can cooperate well, after the fall of G, against IAR or IAT. Alternatively, RIF stomps A, and by the time G is finished off, T is on the ropes. EF will be an effective force against a westward IR.))

((And note that his favorite alliance, EG, is the one most likely to give Bel to England, which is where Lakofka seems to think it belongs))

Now, let us add the final facet to the analysis, namely the other powers. ... What would you do if you were the odd man in the sector?...As England, you can call on either I or R to form mutual aggression treaties vs F and G respectively ((R might not find an FG alliance all that threatening. It destroys E, and in midgame, after AR has killed T, a strong G will be helpful for GR vs A. Or maybe FR vs G looks nice.)) As Germany,

seek treaties with Italy and Russia ((sound familiar?)). As France, you should consider crying! F will be hardpressed to call on R vs G, and R does not want to fight both G and E in Scandinavia because she will lose. Italy can't really help you because you would have to allow Italian fleets into Mid or somehow Austria has to be persuaded to allow Italy to move to Tyo. Austria will not be too fond of that possibility. As for Austrian aid, the problem is that Austria will have to turn away from the Balkan sector and she would have to move to Tyo herself. Italy would not be fond of that. Yet France can get help because the other powers would be fools to allow Germany and England to gobble up France and then come after them.

((Lakofka is so mesmerized by the power of EG that all he can recommend for France to do is to warn everyone else about the power of EG! I think he has it backwards about Russia. If I'm Russia, and leave the personalities aside, EG is the most worrisome of the possibilities, and thus France's plea is the most likely one to get my attention, not the least. If EG stays together, R is almost certainly their next victim. Germany's builds in Mun and Ber, and EG pieces in Scandinavia, plus F Edi-Nwg-Bar mean EG are well placed for this. By contrast, France, in either EF or FG, is much more likely to want to go into the Medit right away, rather than fight Russia on the other side of the board. Indeed, Russia can watch FG vs E with equanimity. The first center will actually fall to Russia --- Nwy --- in many cases. Then FR vs G will be a tempting offer to France, since Russian growth is going to be less alarming than German growth to France.))



((No zine in hobby history has had as much reader participation as Voice of Doom. One of the formats for this was the Reader Roundtable. The editor, Bruce Linsey, would pose a series of questions grouped around a single theme, and set a deadline. People would reply as to how they would handle the situations. Bruce would group the responses by questions, and add his own comments on people's answers, and his own answer. It was a marvelous way to see different approaches to the same -- and different -- questions; you could see how some people would make some distinctions and some people, others. One of these was called "Off the Record", questioning whether confidentiality should be respected in this or that circumstance. But anything from VoD could be lampooned, as we see in this essay from #70, Jan 4, 1983. The people were all real. Readers would have known that Alex Lord was one of Bruce's students (who wrote a column for VoD), for example. Black Press is press whose "dateline" can be totally fraudulent.))

First came "Off the Record", then "On the Record", and now an all new article about the same old thing. It's beginning to sound like a...

## Broken Record

by Chuff Afflertach

### Case A:

You are Russia, at war with Turkey. You have just received a letter from Austria, in which he says that he would be happy to join you against the Turk, if only he could be sure Italy would not stab him. You have just sat down to forge a letter from Italy when the phone rings.

"Hey, Russkie," the voice says, "dis is Italy talkin'. You forgin' any letters from me?"

"Certainly not!" you reply. "That's unethical hobby conduct!"

"Das right. Anyway, don' bodder. I'm gonna hit Frenchie dis turn, so you an' Austria, youse guys got nuttin ta worry about." This is too good to be true!

"Hey, thanks for the inside dope!" you exclaim with glee.

"Don' mention it," he says, and hangs up.

Suddenly you stop dead in your tracks. Don't mention it? Don't mention it?! What did he mean by that? And what do you do now?!

After one long article and a subsequent issue devoted in its entirety to this matter, why write still another piece on the topic of hobby confidentiality? Simply because it is glaringly obvious that we have barely scratched the surface of this "Do Not Quote" discussion. No sooner is one question answered than another more insidious instance rears its convoluted head. Such as...

#### Case B:

It could happen to anyone -- you write two letters in one day and get them in the wrong envelopes. Penthouse Forum shows little interest in your negotiations with Turkey, but the Turkish player is chortling with joy over your flagrante delicto. In short, he wants you to puppet for him for the rest of your life or he'll grant exclusive rights to the letter to Diplomacy World.

As a last resort, you travel halfway across the continent and in the dead of night burglarize his home. You are ransacking his study for the purloined letter when he appears in the doorway, clutching the source of your anxiety in his hand.

"Looking for something?" he sneers at you.

"Give me my letter!" you scream at him.

"Your letter? Why, I believe it was addressed to me," he toys with you like a cat with a wounded mouse. "And now you've broken and entered my home with the intent of unfairly removing one of my diplomatic options." The venom oozes from his every pore.

"Give me my letter!!" you shriek, and he taunts back.

"Over my dead body."

In a blind rage, your fingers instinctively close around the nearest heavy, blunt instrument -- a third anniversary issue of The Voice of Doom. It speaks for you with authority as it falls once, twice, and then a third time upon his skull. At last the scoundrel's lifeless form crumples to the floor, still clutching the item in question.

Off in the distance, a police siren wails. The surge of adrenalin is gone as quickly as it came, leaving you drained. Alone, you must still make a critical decision, before the rigor mortis sets in. Whose letter is it now?

Far-fetched? Not at all. This identical episode actually happened to me during a game in Steve McLendon's now-defunct The Dragon and the Lamb. Luckily, that particular dragon survived this lamb's assault and the game eventually ended in a four-way draw. But the zine itself did not fare as well, yet another victim of a breach of diplomatic confidences. It seems that one too many classified memoes about NASA's Space Shuttle found its way into print; as for Steve, he is reportedly tracking satellites from somewhere in Antarctica. So you see, anything can happen...

#### Case C:

The practice of mailing dead skunks has spread like wildfire throughout the hobby. In fact, some players in their diplomatic haste have even mailed not-quite-dead skunks just to beat a deadline.

You are GMing a game, and the German player brags to you in his orders that he just sent Russia a real stinker. You receive a frantic call from Russia the very next day. When he opened his package, the polecat jumped up and bit him, and then got clean away! Now he has only 48 hours to track the animal down and find out whether or not it was rabid.

Here's the rub: since it is a "black" skunk game, players do not have to reveal the source of their skunks. So will you be a fair GM, stick to the rules, and doom the poor bastard to a fate too agonizing to describe?

#### Case X:

For reasons which must remain a mystery, you find yourself in a game of Celebrity Diplomacy. You ally with Pulitzer Prize winner Jake Halverstadt, because his letters will no doubt be valuable some day. On the opposite side of the board is that rising political star, Jeff PUNCHES. After six successive terms as mayor of Carlsbad, N.M. (he gave up on Carlsbad, CA), Jeff has just been appointed by the President to direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

All is going well for your team until, one night, three burly G-men come knocking at your door. Through the peephole you learn that they are armed with writs, warrants, subpoenas, and injunctions to seize all of your Diplomacy correspondence with Jake. Complicating the matter is the fact that Jake signs all his letters with his customary copyright notice, stating that "any reuse, reproduction, or retransmission of this material

without the expressed written consent of the author is strictly forbidden." Clearly, you are damned if you do and dead if you don't.

Your hand is poised, ready to flush the incriminating evidence; the bathroom door splinters under the weight of the Law. Quick, which takes precedence: National Security, the Bill of Rights, or Bruce's Houserules?

#### Case Y:

Father Marcus Berch is passing a leisurely afternoon, hearing confessions at the Cathedral. He slides back the panel; "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned..." the voice begins; and Father Marcus returns to his well-thumbed copy of Graustark #1.

But not for long -- soon he is hanging on every word! For the Padre has realized that the voice behind the partition, droning its long litany of trespasses, can belong to none other than the infamous Bernie Oaklyn! And it's all there...the misappropriated gamefees, the deception of one GM after another, the campaign of character assassination... and the Right Reverend is getting every word of it on his trust portable tape recorder. Now all that stands between Buddy/Bernie/Whatever-his-name-is and the diplomatic ignominy he deserves is the sanctity of the confessional.

Should Father Berch petition for a special dispensation from His Eminence, Pope Mark Paul II?

#### Case Z:

Alex Lord's Science Fair project is a blue-ribbon winner; from a few whiskers that she found in her backyard she has managed to clone an entirely new Bruce Linsey! The medical world is all agog, but Ig Lew is pissed.

It seems that in the Spring '58 turn of JUPITER, he voted "no" again on all draws and told Bruce to keep it under his hat. Naturally, Bruce did as instructed, but his cloned blabbed the news to everyone who showed up at TroCon.

Can ridding the world of a superfluous BRUX be construed as a crime? And which one should be done away with?

These and other outlandish cases will be cropping up more and more frequently in the pages of VD, as the hobby continues to plumb the depths of Dipdom in search of...what? An honest man? Make me laugh! Controversy? Without a doubt.

But the fact is, I happen to know the real reason for all these issues devoted to the same subject. Don't ask me how I found out, because I promised not to reveal my source. Just take my word for it that all of this off-the-record business is simply a calculated attempt by a certain publisher to get himself and his zine into the Guinness Book of World Records with the Longest Continually-Begged Question.

So what do you say, Doomes? Will you help BRUX get his Broken Record?

(Next month's installment: "Confidentiality and the Next of Kin.")

## Proxy Battles: An Alternate View of the Puppet

((Next up is John Kador, writing in St George and the Dragon #61 Feb '81))

Diplomacy can be likened to marionettes. Both involve pulling strings. In Diplomacy, one is always pulling strings or having one's strings pulled. Sometimes it's difficult to distinguish when one is being pulled. But that's a metaphysical matter we won't go into here. What's interesting is the common acceptance of the marionette metaphor by the well-known label of "puppet".

A puppet is a player who, most typically, puts such a high value on survival that he subordinates all his interests to the interests of a dominating player. The most successful puppet relationships seem to preserve the puppet's self-respect. Taking care not to bruise the puppet's ego is often difficult because, after all, the deal is nothing but a bald threat: I will refrain from taking you out so long as your units continue to move according to my instructions (generally read "suggestions" in correspondence to the puppet). It is worthy of note that many

puppets are dedicated and enthusiastic players for whom dropping out is anathema. How else can we explain why some players accept the ego-bruising role of puppet when the NMR alternative is so convenient?

A less well-documented variant of the puppet relationship might be termed the proxy. In this case, one player effectively assigns command of all or some of his units to another player. Generally, one player sends orders, or proxies, to the puppet for his signature. The puppet merely signs the orders and drops them in the mail to the GM.

What's the difference between a puppet and a proxy? As mentioned, puppets tend to be dedicated and enthusiastic players. They place a high value on participating to the end. Hence their willingness to do almost anything to ensure survival. Proxies, on the other hand, tend to be less dedicated, less enthusiastic, more prone to drop out or NMR when the situation goes against them. Indeed, a good clue to the presence of a proxy candidate is the NMR after a setback. Such players often respond to an argument like this: Listen, I know how it is. All those games. So little time. I find it hard to keep track of all those games and deadlines. Maybe I can help. If you don't have much energy for this game, let me suggest moves for you. With your permission, I will prepare a postage-paid, addressed postcard for you each season. If you like my suggestions, just sign the card and drop it in the mailbox to the GM. What do you say?

Many players find this less threatening than outright puppetry. Perhaps the proxys figure that you'll take good care of their positions, maybe even build it up. And then they can always take over. In my experience, very few players reject the proposition out of hand. Some will agree, then send in completely different orders (using your card, no doubt). But that is rare. Some modify a few of the orders, but not all of them. Most, it seems, will go along for a few seasons. Of course, you cannot order your proxy's units to do something inherently self-destructive, like conveying one of your units to his home supply center. The beauty of the proxy relationship is, however, that you want to promote the proxy's position as much as possible. A cooperative proxy's units are golden: almost better than your own. You may be effectively controlling 10 or more units. If they were all one color, they would attract a lot of attention. As it is, you can quietly build up a winning position, often without coming into direct contact with your enemies.

From my experience, it is possible to enlist the services of more than one proxy in a single game.

Recently I had a chance to take advantage of three proxies (1978HV, in Claw & Fang). Toward the end of the game, I was sending out four sets of orders every season: one for my English units, one for Italy, one for Germany, and one for a one-center Russia. Poor Austria! Until the very end of the game, Austrian units out-numbered English units, but it looked like a well-coordinated quadruple alliance against Austria. Ultimately, I won without once coming into direct contact with the enemy. All my battles were fought and won by proxies.

Is it worth it? Does the use of proxies (or puppets, for that matter) diminish the sense of victory? I think not. It's infinitely more challenging to pull the strings that pull the strings than to shove wooden pieces over painted cardboard.

((In the British style of GMing, the proxy can go a step further, and tell the GM that someone has taken over his unit, which bypasses the double mailing of orders, signing the postcard, etc. Of course, this assignment is revokable, and incidently, it can itself be assigned. In this way, France orders Italian units by proxy, and turns them over to England to move. John's proposed order can also be reversed --- the proxy sends a bunch of signed, blank postcards to the master. This is a good precaution if the proxy seems erratic, and you don't want to risk an NMR from him.))

# Letters

In the last issue, I suggested the idea of a "debatezine". In a nutshell, a "pro" writer and a "con" writer would each compose their statements, and mail them to each other at the same time. Each would then, at the same time, write a rebuttal. These 4 statements (or possibly including a second round of rebuttals) would then be packaged into a single issue of the debatezine. Readers would then see the entire topic covered at once, not stretched out over a period of time.

Mark Larzelere I tend to doubt that your debatezine concept would end up working as you envision. I think it would end up being just another lettercolumn zine because its mere presence won't cause people to organize their thought any better. Also, if you have people vote on who won a debate over a topic ... a lot of people might vote on what they think, regardless of the arguments raised in the debate. I don't think most people in the hobby know how to debate or judge debating points. But if someone tries this concept, I'd probably sub anyway!  
(Even if people aren't good, practice will help. The voting is an option, that's all. Best would be one vote on how-do-you-feel, and a second one on who-won. If the two tend to be identical, then I'd agree, the former is probably driving the latter. But giving people the outlet of the former vote may then allow them to vote honestly in the latter))

Bruce McIntyre The debatezine idea is an excellent one, to which I have a few suggestions to tack on:

1. Are we going to allow feud-type rhetoric: name calling, ad hominem and related arguments, assertion of non-facts as truth, etc? If there is to be only one rebuttal, it might be best for an editor to pre-announce that this sort of dirty pool won't be allowed --- but how to ensure this? (This is probably the hardest problem the editor will have to deal with. I would hope that the high-minded character of the zine --- if this could be achieved --- would dissuade people from taking such a tack, but it might not. The editor could edit for name calling, but that's about it. His only weapon beyond that, if the essay was unacceptable because of this problem, would be to refuse to run it, and ask another person to present that side.)
2. ... I'd seriously consider retyping everything. Some good arguments have been presented on pretty bad typewriters ... this would allow non-typists to participate. ((This is a matter of personal preference by the editor. I was looking to reduce his work)).
3. ... Maybe it would be easier to find a volunteer of the work could be farmed out --- one person to publish and mail, and a "staff" of arbiters, who would run one debate at a time and send the competed result to the publisher. ((I would have thought that with no GMing, writing or probably even any typing operations needed, this would be a fairly easy zine to put out. Indeed, but for the fact that I'm too controversial to edit such a zine, I'd have started it up myself. But sure, a team approach spreads the work, and I would be willing to publish the zine if someone else did the editing. That is, supply me with camera-ready copy, the mailing list and the requisite \$\$\$, and I'll handle the printing and mailing))
- 4... Many of your topics ... could base a future hobby action ... on the outcome --- if we can have a reasonable way of deciding one. Perhaps there might be two types of debates presented: normal, with nothing but pride at stake, and challenges, in which a mutually agreed judge could decide the outcome, with or without a vote as he sees fit.... I'm sure you



realize by now that I'm interested! Sign me up! ((What you are describing basically is two parties agreeing to binding arbitration. Its very rare in this hobby to get both disputants to agree to such a thing. And if you did, you wouldn't need a zine to hash it out in. But yes, if the issue were of broad interest, a debatezine would be a good format to "broadcast the proceedings." ))

Ed Wrobel ((Ed begins by explaining why this idea "sounds just like" Dick Martin's satirical proposal for a diporganization in HoL #20. Its so far-fetched that I don't know if he's serious, and I'll respond to that in HoL. As for the merits:)) There's nothing wrong with debating and your debatezine might well produce some enlightening exchanges. Then again, it might just be a propoganda vehicle for the Prime ((editor)) and the Supernumerary ((roughly, Berch)), who, after all, would be articulating the issues and choosing the participants. Your statement of the "problem" --- that there are too many zines repeating the same arguments over and over again --- is revealing. In short, you are complaining about disorder. ((No, its repetition I was discussing, not disorder)). Your "partial solution" is to establish the debatezine. How would this bring some semblence of order about? ((It wouldn't because it isn't designed to)). Presumably by "making the trains run on time", i.e. by being promoted as the flagship forum setting forth the last word on every hobby controversy of note, a kind of Runestone Poll of Ideas. All under the direction of the Supernumerary & Prime. Its sounds familiar. Thanks but no thanks. I prefer a little disorder. It may be messy, but there's likely to be greater freedom of thought available in it. I like a multitude of zines expressing various opinions with various influence upon hobby opinion. I don't see any use for an autocratic debate flagsh p zine overshadowing all others. Adding your voice to the din is OK, but don't complain about the noise level. ((Oh, for heavens sake, Wrobel, all I'm doing is suggesting a zine. I see that your paranoia hasn't diminished a bit over the years -- what with your mention of this zine being "autocratic" and somehow diminishing "freedom of thought". The same goes for your vision of the zine being promoted as "the last word on every hobby controversy" and "the flagship forum" --- thats just your political paranoia, not my suggestion for the zine. I'm just proposing an additional format for discussing issues. It would present both sides, and rebuttals, all at the same time, rather than spreading it out over many months. I don't see how that is "autocratic" or hampers "freedom of thought". And as for "propaganda vehicle", any zine could become that. But this debatezine would guarentee readers both sides of an issue --- something a lot of other zines don't do, and indeed, don't necessarily need to. You make a big speech about how you "like a multitude of zines", but if Berch suggests adding just one more zine to the multitude, its "thanx but no thanks", because this zine, your fears whisper to you, will be "overshadowing all others." ))

~~(Wrobel)~~ You call your proposal for a debatezine "a partial solution" to the problems you outline in your first three paragraphs, but I think your solution goes far beyond the scope of the problems. The problems you cite would be covered by any large and frequent lettercol zeen. House of Lords could fill the prescription easily if Dick and Julie suddenly were to decide that they had the time, energy and resources to publish every two weeks or so. HoL already covers all the sorts of topics you mention, and it has a large and varied group of contributors. There is one individual I know of who is excluded from the zeen, but HoL is less

one-sided than most zines which cover controversial issues. Dick and Julie don't hesitate to take sides on the major issues, but in HoL proper (i.e., not in Operable), the editorial comments are pretty neutral. If one of the editors wants to take a stand, it is done in the form of a reader-submitted letter.

((I'm less impressed with the fairness of House of Lords than I used to be. HoL ran a letter harshly critical of John Fisher's hobby actions. It asserted things that I knew first hand from my dealings with John were not true. I investigated, sent in a response, which Dick Martin, despite my repeated requests, refused to run. Instead, Dick loftily intoned, "All that "garbage" ((I had described the original description as garbage)) about John Fisher is true. At least as far as the facts are concerned --- their interpretation is open to question." But I say the facts were absolutely wrong. And the readers cannot sort this out because Dick won't run my letter. Of course, with a zine like HoL (or DD for that matter) there's no deliberate policy of presenting both sides of an issue. A debatezine would have just that.))

In addition, #122 brought a crop of letters on tournament scoring systems, and if I added those, letters would overwhelm this issue. So they will appear next issue. But I wanted to add here that there was an error lastish. Jeff McKee was listed as having been provided with an unearned windfall by the scoring system. That was true, but I failed to note that he didn't actually use those points in his total score. So even without it, his score would have been the same

Incidentally, unlike many other fine zines in the hobby, DD doesn't have an "open" letter column. Letters do have to be in response to what appeared in some previous issue of DD. Any issue --- feel free to reply in 1989 to something reprinted in 1979 (which may have first appeared 1969...). I'll bring the readers up to date, altho there are a fair number who've been with me from the start, or who ordered a full run of back issues.

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 116

# NEWS-GNUS-NOOZE

Larry Peery has announced the 1989 awards. The Rod Walker award for "outstanding literary achievement" went to the team of people (Ken Rager, Eric Lawson, Bruce Linsey and Rex Martin) for the Diplomacy feature in The General Vol 24, #1, which brought a number of people into the hobby. The Don Miller Memorial Award for hobby service went to Doug Acheson of CDO. The Koning Award for outstanding play of the game went to Marc Peters.

And now a new one: The Melinda Holley award for "outstanding female participant". At the risk of being the skunk at the picnic, I think this is a perfectly awful idea. It sends entirely the wrong message. We don't need this any more than an "outstanding male" award. If we were talking about weight-lifting, thensure, a special award for females would make sense --- or one for males in double-dutch jump rope. In those, one gender seems to be unable to compete on an even basis. But not so here. People like Joyce Singer (the 1983 DipCon champ), Kathy Caruso and Melinda Holley have long since established that women don't need the protection of a separate category just for themselves. I hope Ron Cameron, whose idea this apparently is, will drop this one.

But speaking of Melinda, her Rebel HAS appeared with issue #50, always an impressive milestone. The address list has 113 names which I assume is just players, since my name isn't on there. So far as I can recall, no other North American zine has ever had so many players. Its possible that Claw and Fang had more, but nearly all of these were guest-GMed, and played by flyer rather than in the main zine. Fittingly, she got the most votes in the Runestone GM poll. At the moment there are no game openings.

Glenn Overby (see p12) is conducting a N.A. Variant Poll. Vote for your favorite variant zines (ranked 1-6; you must have seen two 1989 issues) Best Variant GM (ranked 1-6th) Biggest variant personality (ditto, for contributions other than GMing) and Best Variant (ditto, regardless of when it was published). Vote by Dec 22, 1989.

The Cream Shall Rise! #5, with the official results of the 1989 Runestone Poll is out. Its loaded with stats of course, but there's a lot of other interesting items. Bruce McIntyre has a splendid essay called "The official scorer 1989, which attempts to translate the statistics into "plain English" discussing the "elevator effect", the impact of a preference matrix, and some interesting ways of reworking the numbers. There are some sub polls, such as which zines had the widest variation in votes received or favorite zines of pubbers, a humor item by me, a cumulative Poll of all the years (Diplomacy Digest has now reached 4th in this poll) and more. Its a singular type of snapshot of the hobby, well worth its \$5 price (Bruce Linsey Box 1334 Albany NY 12201).

Back in Diplomacy World I wrote an essay on whether a unit, ordered to move, could nonetheless be supported in place. Its not an outlandish question --- consider F Mid-Nth, F NAO S F Mid. Many GMs would indeed consider the support valid, as did the GM in my game when this arose. Despite the great simplicity of this circumstance, I think only the fabled VoD HRs ever covered this. But in the recent Dolchstoss #134, Richard Sharp has, "...If the misorder implies movement, including illegal movement, the unit cannot be supported in place." I think other GMs would be wise to adopt such a HR as well. But the "implies movement" is a bit fuzzy. "A Man is deeply moved by the plight of A Mar..." Does that qualify? "A Con has a bowel movement"? "F Mid castles" (a chess move)? "A War-Nowhere" "F Spa(sc) moves to adjourn"? "F Rum moves its ass"? "F Stp(nc)-StP(sc)" His HRs also have some rules you would never see in a North American zines, such as that in a voted draw, surviving players not showing in the draw are considered to be eliminated in the final year."

But I was discouraged to see this: " 'obvious' error in adjudication, meaning that if the orders printed are correct then the adjudication is wrong. The correct procedure here is to order from the true position including a note to say you have noticed the error. This will almost always avoid delaying the game." This is as opposed to the "Serious error that cannot be spotted e.g. order missed out, wrong orders used, etc." In my view, this is a spurious distinction in categories. It can be perfectly obvious that an error has occurred, without your knowing what the error actually is. Consider this simple SO1: Russia: F Sev-Bla Turkey: F Ank-Bla. Now, obviously, the GM just forgot to underline the Turkish order. Or did he? Maybe the Turkish order is entirely correct, but the GM should have typed "F Sev-Rum" So what is the "true position"??? If you are Austria, how are you going to be able to conduct diplomacy until you get this sorted out? You may well need, and you are entitled to, a delay of game. For virtually any "Obvious error in adjudication", there is always the possibility that the erroneous adjudication is really correct, but that some other move has been transcribed wrong. I have seen this happen, but when it does, one player (in the above case, Russia) knows exactly what has occurred, but the others do not.

In Megadiplomat #19, Carrier criticizes DW News as "the ultimate monument to hobby egotism. Who... ever heard of a zine about another zine? Not even Cuerrier is that egotistical." This is an all-to-common misconception. Egotism has always driven the publishers of this hobby and a lot of other people too, and its all to the good. Sure, that zine would put Peery in the hobby's Egotism Hall of Fame, but I and some others are there too. What else could account for me publishing a 25½ page detailed essay on how I won a demo game (1980AY)? Or Dan Stafford creating a rating system which just happened to compute to him being rated #1? Or people like Michalski or Linsey or Cuerrier publishing every 1-2 weeks for month after month? Or me printing with delight the Number of times my name had been mentioned in issues of Whitestonia and some other zines? Come to think of it, while Peery's various awards are fine, we really could use a Hobby Egotism Hall of Fame. Anyone want to organize it? Keep in mind, you can name it after yourself.....

Thank to a lot of hard work by John Caruso, the PDO auction raised and distributed \$502.77 for various hobby services --- and this isn't the first time the hobby has benefitted from John's fundraising. The \$-distributing committee has a vacancy for someone from the "Midwest". If you are interested, contact John(636 Astor Street Norristown PA 19401)

Some shorttakes here... Feuillotonist Forum and The Scribblerist have folded... Lee Keddeter Sr 4743 Benner St Phila PA 19135 seeks players for a round-robin gunboat (you'll play 7 gunboat games). Lee GMed a regular game of mine once and made not a single error the whole game... Very reliable GM Fred Hyatt has openings in his variant L. dbridge Diplomacy (60 Grandview Place Montclair NJ 07043). Fred, incidently, came in first at CANCON... Michael Legg 541 W. 15th Ave #51 Escondido CA 92025 has postcards printed with a (reduced) Diplomacy map on them 25/\$3 or 100/\$10... The Yorkshire Gallant V, #9 has a nice history essay on the IDA/UK organization, looking at whether its limited accomplishments justified the time and effort the outfit took... John Cain notes that in the past 2½ years, 10 new zines have started in Australia, 3 in New Zealand... The aforementioned Fred Hyatt is also working on a rating system for the variant Colonia. Contact him for details. Likewise (see below) for variants generally --- his system is in place... If you think your US game has been abandoned, the current head of the US Orphan service is Vince Lutterbie, 1021 Stonehaven Marshall MO 65340; phone is 1-816-886-7354.... 1989IE (in CCC) had a rarity -- an actually Russian convoy to Swe in F01.

## NEW ZINES

Heroes of Olympus Steve Nicewarner 107th PSU Box 98 Ft. Bragg NC 28307 (Dip variants and non-Dip/ games like Conquistador)  
Tragedy and Hope Greg Long POBox 7 Corryong Victoria 3707 Australia  
Ground Zero Timothy Raithel 2131 N. Lincoln St Arlington VA 22207  
The Diplomacy Tribune Gerald Todd Jr 8047 High Point Rd Baltimore MD 21226. Regular Diplomacy and a World Dip variant  
DipCon Newsletter David Hood 15-F Estes Park Carrboro NC 27510 (for 1990's)  
Annals of Rome (Mark Nelson 112 Huntley Ave Spondon Derby DE2 7DU England)  
New irregular zine on the history of the variant hobby. May be free.  
Theme and Variations Glenn Overby PO Box 36983 Grosse Pointe MI 48236. 50¢/issue. Rates various variants e.g. Youngstown.