

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Potpourri

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Welcome Dipcon Attendees, and anyone else seeing this zine for the first time. DIPLOMACY DIGEST is a most unusual postal dipzine: No games have ever been run, nor will there ever be. And I don't discuss world politics, music, beer, science fiction and a host of other topics which enliven other dipzines and which I enjoy reading there. You can even go for years around here with no mention of my personal life. This is a "purist" zine --- when it comes to the game and hobby of Diplomacy, I cover it all. Unlike this one, most issues center around a theme, such as Gding, Germany, press, face to face, ethics, stabbing, hobby history, personalities, large scale alliances --- to name just a few of the theme issues. These essays are mostly reprints, drawn from my enormous archives, with thousands of zines, going back to the beginning of the hobby in the early sixties, and including a fair amount of British material. This allows me to assemble related material from different times and different locales. There is also "The Zine Column" (abnormally short this issue) in which I discuss (and comment on) what appears in the hobby's zines. A letter column appears occasionally, discussing (only) what has appeared in previous issues of DD. (Any issue, I might add. Feel free to discuss something that I reprinted 10 years ago) DD is printed offset, and has been published for 13 years without interruption. All single issues are 11-12 pages, doubles are 23. All back issues are kept in stock, but except for Lexicon and Son of Lexicon, you must subscribe in order to buy these. If you order a complete run (some people do), there is a \$2.50 discount.

One final reminder: Please vote in the Runestone Poll. Unlike so many other things in the hobby, where publishers have disproportionate influence, this is strictly one-man-one-vote. This allows the hobby to express its collective view on the zines which, after all, comprise the heart of the hobby. Here's our way of expressing what we particularly like --- and didn't like --- in the way of GMs, zines, and subzines, so don't pass it up. In the ~~past~~ few years, the RP has established itself as the hobby practice that the most people directly participate in. Send your vote by June 30 to Eric Brosius, 41 Hayward St Milford MA 01757.

It seems I have a few lines left here... Bruce Linsey Box 1334 Albany NY 12201 is running a six player game called "Campaign Trail", a simulation of a US Presidential election. The zine is up to 6 games already despite a \$25 Game fee (no sub charge), and this is only issue #5. And the game appeals to a lot of dippy players, I see by the roster. His excellent rep as a GM has doubtless helped fill the games. Bruce also sells the superb Supernova, an intro to the game and hobby of Diplomacy (\$1, 36 pages) and OUAD, the 204-page guide to GM/pubbing (\$3 -- such a bargain!)

((DIPLOMACY DIGEST has from time to time discussed unusual formats for playing the game, including dippy by cassettes, all-alias PBEM games and dippy by fax. This suggestion comes from the fabulous 270 page Voice of Doom #100, October 1984, and is by John MacFarlane, KA5TUC))

DIPPY BY HAM RADIO

"The situation was critical. I had to get Italy to help the coalition against France, or his victory would be inevitable. Reaching for my key, I called twice on 21 MHz, but as I thought, the band was out. I switched to 7 MHz, and adjusted the amplifier for maximum gain, then called once...twice. Nothing. Just a faint rasping sound. But wait. It was a very faint code --- with all of my energy put into simply hearing his signals, I copied ... N5AYK DE K3TUU AR. He heard me! I quickly sent my message, knowing that the shifting ionosphere would not allow this contact for long: K3TUU DE N5ARK HRD FRA ON 14 -- UR HIS NXT TRGT --- PSE HLP COALITION -- PROMISE U IBERIA -- BK. He came back, BK OK U CNFRM SUSPICN -- WILL DO... The rest of his signal faded into the summer QRN, but what I'd heard was enough. I could rest easy now. The fall of France was assured."

----endgame statement 1985HR

Possibility or pipedream? I asked that question a year ago in VoD, and now, having an Amateur Radio License of my own, I feel I'm in a good position to show how Amateur Radio ("AR") could benefit postal Diplomacy. Slow mails would be replaced by (or supplemented with) light-speed radio waves. Week-long intervals between question and reply could be changed to seconds. The advantages are obvious.

First, a word about AR. Basically, it's a hobby just like dippy, with many facets, including equipment building...((etc)). The FCC issues AR licenses to those passing Morse Code proficiency and knowledge of radio theory. Different licenses have different privileges... The Novice license allows only Morse Code on the higher Frequency bands. A higher class... allows, voice, radioteletype, and other modes in addition to Morse Code, and allows communication on the Very High Frequency and higher bands in addition to the HF bands.

Well, how can AR be applied to Dippy? There are two basic ways... The direct contact message involves simply calling another player on the radio (at a set time and frequency) and negotiating. This has several drawbacks. First, radio communication at the power levels allowed amateurs (up to 1000 watts) is not completely reliable. Atmospheric noise and interference both limit communications, as well as poor ionospheric conditions.... With experience (knowing the right band to use, for example), most of these obstacles can be overcome, however. Secondly, getting a license requires some time investment, and getting a station set up can be costly (...from \$15 to \$1500). It might be easier to teach Hams radio than to teach dippy players radio. Thirdly, every communication you send will probably be heard by quite a few other amateurs, and possibly an FCC monitoring station as well. They might wonder when you say, "Lets attack Russia; I can put a fleet into the Barents Sea by spring..." Your opponents also might hear you, necessitating a system of changing calling frequencies or some other methods (Codes over the air are illegal). ((On the other hand, you might let this work in your favor. At a time when you

expect to be overheard, you agree on a phoney plan, having prearranged that the real plan will be the one not decided on at that session. This is analogous to such postal ploys as putting the wrong letter in the envelope, or passing along a letter which was never legit, but written just to be passed.)) Nevertheless, the direct contact method would speed up a dippy game and probably make it quite a bit more interesting.

The radiogram method is simpler and does not require a license or a rig. There is a group of amateurs throughout the country which dedicates itself to handling messages for the public. This service is free of charge. All you have to do is find a ham in your town, and ask if he knows anyone who "handles traffic". Then find that person, and tell him you'd like to send a radiogram. He'll ask you for the text (you should keep it fairly short, like a telegram), and he'll send the message thru a network of relay stations to its destination. The receiving ham will deliver it, probably by phone to the player you are negotiating with and give him a chance to respond. A message takes anywhere from 1 to 3 days and is not guaranteed (however, 99% of the messages get thru). ((I seem to recall USP'S claiming a 99.4% delivery rate within two weeks on properly addressed first class mail.)) So not only is this cheaper than a letter, it is also faster. Additionally, it may convey a sense of importance to the message that it might not have carried in mundane letter form. This method, too, could sid postal diplomacy, and I'm sure the more zealous players will start using it immediately to supplement their letters in normal games.

((Believe it or not, such a game was indeed run a year or two later, by Jim Bumpas, publisher of Liberterranean. As I recall, the BNC refused to give him a BN, saying that the game was a variant. Such a view is mistaken. This is normal dippy, tho it possibly could have been flagged as "irregular" since it used a communication method which could not give a guarantee of secrecy. But I don't really see the problem, and would not hesitate to include it in a rating system. So players all agree to trade absolute secrecy for probable secrecy. So what?))

((~~What~~what-would-others-make-of-this reminds me of the following incident. This is from #60 of the British zine Fall of Eagles, Sept 1981. He had run a contest, asking for "greatest coup/achievement in a game of postal Diplomacy":))

Andy Streeter mentions the true story of some years ago. "A player who lived in Northern Ireland sent a telegram to a fellow player saying "Attack Liverpool". He had the police and army on his doorstep in less than two hours and all possible security forces in Liverpool alerted!" ((And I remember an endgame statement from long ago. The player had just moved in with a girlfriend, and had been out of the apartment when a fellow player phoned with a message. This included "You agreed to go back to Marseilles, and I expect you to do it immediately" (or words to that effect. I read this long ago.) Anyhow, it happened that he had just broken up with a woman named Marcy, which sounds awfully similar to Marseilles. When our hero returned, he found all his stuff in the hall, and the door locked and barricaded. They had a shouting match thru the door, and she repeated the message, using "Marcy" of course, so he was unable to figure out what had actually happened. A few days later he called his ally, and it suddenly dawned on his what had happened. As it happened, he went back to Mar, but not to his girlfriend, who he figured was too short-tempered to live with.))

((Its extremely rare for me to reprint myself here, but I think I'll make an exception for this piece. It doesn't really fit easily into any regular category, so it'll be fine in a potpourri issue. It comes from Dolchstoss #66, August 1978, just a few issues before "The Pause"))

POETRY IN MOTION

Mark L. Berch

There have been occasional moments in postal Diplomacy of surpassing aesthetic beauty. These please not only the diplomatic mind, but the eye as well. One such situation occurred in Autumn '06 of 1972-CR, the second Hoosier Archives demo game, which featured the cream of the American hobby at that time: Hal Naus (A), John McCallum (E), Edi Birsan (F), Eugene Prosnitz (G), Doug Beyerlein (I), Brenton ver Ploeg (R) and Len Lakofka (T). First, though, some background on what transpired previously.

In 1901 Russia got off to a shaky start as Turkey attacked, supporting Austria into Rum. The West was unsettled, as England convoyed to Bel via ENG and France tried unsuccessfully to grab Munich. In Winter 01, while Austria bloated with three new armies, Russia coolly took his build as A(StP). The action in Spring 02 centred on Austria, as he grabbed Bul, supported Russia into Rum, and supported himself into Tyr, offending I, T and G. Italy broke off the Lepanto and convoyed defensively into Apu. In the West, both the E-F and the G-R alliances firmed up. Autumn 02 saw I-R-T fall on Austria while F and R each took a centre from England. In 1903 Austria was relieved of his remaining centres, with R getting two and I-T one each, while France snatched London. Russia emerged by Winter 1903 as the strongest country, as he held an unassailable position in the northern F-G-R alliance, and was positioned to move at his leisure against T, as Italy had already begun his attack, moving into the Aegean. He also collected a 17-17 agreement with Italy, and a willingness to accept 2nd from Germany. The momentum gathered in 1904 as R took Bul and Ank, betrayed France in the north with the aid of his German puppet, and doubtless watched with satisfaction as his Italian ally attacked France. In 1905 Italy picked up Mar, Con and Bul, Russia giving up Bul and picking up Smy as Turkey was eliminated. In Spring 1906 France continued to fend off the I-G attacks, while Russia positioned himself against Germany. This gave the following position before the Autumn 06 moves:

ENGLAND Owns: Edi. Has: A(Wal) (1)
GERMANY Owns: Ber, Mun, Kie, Den, Hol, Bel, Lon. Has: As(Kie), (Bur), (Pic), (Ruh), (Mun); Fs(Den), (Lon) (7)
RUSSIA Owns: StP, Mos, War, Sev, Swe, Nor, Bud, Vie, Rum, Ank, Smy. Has: As(Cly), (War), (Vie), (Sev), (Smy), (Bud); Fs(NAO), (NWG), (NTH), (Nor), (Ank) (11)
TURKEY Owns: Nothing.
AUSTRIA Owns: Nothing.
ITALY Owns: Rom, Nap, Ven, Tun, Tri, Ser, Gre, Bul, Con, Mar. Has: As(COn), (Mar), (Ven), (Tri), (Ser); Fs(AEG), (ION), (TYS), (WES), (GOL)
FRANCE Owns: Par, Bre, Spa, Por, Lpl. Has: As(Yor), (Spa), (Par), (Gas); F(MAO)

I do strongly urge that you actually drag out the board and set up the pieces. I know you can do it in your head, but it's more dramatic this way.... Had a good look, then?

E: A(Wal)-Lpl
F: A(Yor) S RUSSIAN F(NTH)-Lon F(MAO) C & A(Par) S A(Spa)-Bre A(Gas) S A(Par)
R: F(NAO) S A(Cly)-Lpl F(NWG)-Edi F(NTH)-Lon F(Nor)-Swe A(War)-Pru
A(Vie)-Boh A(Bud) stands A(Sev)-Ukr F(Ank)-BLA A(Smy)-Ank
I: F(AEG), F(ION), F(TYS) & F(WES) C A(Con)-Spa S by A(Mar) & F(GOL) A(Tri)-Tyr
A(Ven)-Pie A(Ser)-Tri

G: A(Mun) S A(Ruh)-Bur A(Pic) S A(Bur)-Par F(Den)-NTH A(Kie)-Hol
F(Lon)-Yor*

Retreats: GERMAN F(Lon)-ENG

Adjustments: E loses Edi for 0, out; G loses Lon for 6; R gains Edi, Lpl and Lon for 14; I gains Spa for 11; F loses Spa and Lpl for 3.

With pleasing symmetry Russia seizes one centre from each of the three western powers. England is vanquished, and in his place is a ghostly remnant: Russian units in the familiar A(Lpl), F(Edi), F(Lon) placement. The contrast between the Spring positions (all potential, no centres) and the Autumn positions (all targets taken) is total. Even Beyerlein's spectacular but ill fated trans-Mediterranean Con-Spa convoy (which used 7 units) is overshadowed. It was truly, as the Italian player later wrote, 'poetry in motion'.

For those interested in how it all turned out, by the end of 1906 Russia had stabbed every player except Italy. In 1907 he corrected that oversight, taking Con and Ser from Italy and Ber and Kie from Germany, giving him one of the most glorious victories in postal Diplomacy.

((This appeared in a British zine, so the "ghostly remnant" wouldn't have been exactly white --- the British pieces for Russia are light purple. Still, I was taken with the image of England being eliminated in the very season that there appeared a white A Lpl, F Lon, F Edi.))

((I might add that if you'd like to have a look at the first eight HA Demo games, complete with commentary, they are available as the DW Anthology, Volume 4. It includes a fair amount of maps, and this is a good way to get a grasp of how an entire game runs ---- rather than folling it in slow motion with a regular dipzine --- and the commentary will give you additional insights. Volume 3 is an enormous collection of variants, plus essays on their design and history, and on the variant hobby itself. Volume 2 is a collection of all the essays I wrote for DW thru #39, plus later commentary that I wrote on these especially for the Anthology. No such anthology of the work of a single writer has ever existed in the hobby. Volume 1 is the "best" essay from each of the first 39 issues of DW, quote a variety. These are \$15 each, or 4/\$48. Add \$2.50 postage/handling per order (US\$5 canada/overseas) and order from Larry Peery, Box 620399 San Diego CA 92162). He also has some individual back issues of DW for sale.))

((Next, we reach back to June 1976, when this essay by Randolph Smyth appeared in Fol Si Fie #53))

Player Psychology, part II

...in which the reader is called upon to participate, and be embarrassed/outraged/instructed in the privacy of his own home (or wherever):

Central to the science of modern psychology is the idea of the test. This installment in the continuing story of ~~Payton Place~~ Player Psychology will therefore concern itself with a series of questions, in an attempt to compare apples and oranges under conditions of minimum experimental rigor and maximum scientific unacceptability. Be that as it may...

Read the following question carefully before answering. While the basic problem is intended to be simple, the wording is not; no trickery is being attempted, but the ramifications of the question require a clear grasp of what I'm getting at. Otherwise the evaluation loses whatever meaning it may have had in the first place (000z000e000r000o000).

You have been given a standby position of ten centers. The other players are your equals in basic ability, but their outlook and philosophy vary, as one would expect in a normal mix of opponents. If no solid allies or bitter enemies exist at present, would you rather see the remaining 24 centers divided equally among (1) two players, 12 centers each; (2) three players, 8 centers each; (3) four players, 6 centers each; or (4) six players, 4 centers each. The GMing is excellent. Look at each possibility in terms of alliance structures, and once you've made up your mind, read on:

((Really, don't just go zipping by. You'll get a lot more out of this essay if you stop now and sort out your preference order for these 4 positions. Figure out clearly why you like or dislike the positions. This will then give you a chance to compare his with yours, without his comments influencing your thought process. And that will give you a chance to see how people think alike or differently))

I suspect that very few players chose option #1. You people get full points for discounting the absolute number of supply centers and recognizing that the balance of power is the important factor in such a game. Being last is no disadvantage if you are only last "on paper": being the least dangerous player may make you "first among equals".

However, such a game is almost over, and should end in a three-way draw within a couple of game years, as soon as you demonstrate your reliability to the original players. This may suit you best if (1) you're so committed elsewhere that the game didn't interest you anyhow, or (2) you're jumping at the chance for an "easy" three-way split because your previous record has been so poor. In either case, I don't feel you're really playing the game, just arranging the quickest way out of it.

((I don't buy this at all. A lot of 12-12-10 games are not over at all. And a game with a replacement player is less likely than normal to be just about at a three way draw. True, this might be the victorious 3-way alliance, where one player has dropped out exactly at, or just after the last of the opposition was wiped out. If so, you're hardly going to be treated as the long term ally --- you just got here. I didn't want this position in part because it would be hard to persuade the others to treat me like the long time ally of the three-way board-sweeping alliance. And one of the 12s might have a stalemate line. But even then, unless they both do, I have a reasonable shot at persuading him to try to shorten this to a two-way draw. And if no one does, there's plenty of play in the game. I didn't like this one, not because I see the game as almost certainly in its last year or two, but because my diplomatic options would be so restricted. If I liked three person games, I wouldn't have taken up dippy in the first place.))

#2 is my own choice, so perhaps you should discount some of my comments regarding it. A single ally among your three opponents will give you 18 centers and a good shot at a two-way draw in time. There is always the chance that your opponents will get lucky handling their 16; that your ally will surpass you in gains and win the game; or that you will face a three-power coalition. However, as long as there is play left, the biggest power has the best shot at whatever he's after; and for the present, the biggest power is you.

((Actually, I see this choice as being more likely to be stalemated than the first. There's several different 18-16 splits possible, and the board is full of lines that divide it 18-16. Sure, a single ally will give you 18, but the other two are probably pretty good players, as they have gotten up to 6 centers without permitting anyone else to get to more than 10. They don't have to get "lucky" to stop you having 16. And even if they can't, they could easily decide to throw the game to one of the originals))

If you picked #3, you're quite a gambler. Unless you're willing to give up your status as the front runner, your allies will have to assume a semi-puppet role. Among four opponents, you may well be able to find one who is willing to act as such, but to expect two is overoptimistic (remember, you can't fool these guys---they're as competent as you are). A single ally leaves you with 16 centers, generally a losing proposition when vigorously opposed by 18. You're counting on miscues and lack of cooperation among your enemies; but if you do manage to break through, a win in fairly short order is quite likely.

((This was my choice. My lead is enuf that I can be quite "generous" in letting my ally take the first and second fruits of our new alliance, and I may pick up two allies. With more players, there are more diplomatic options. This is also a preference on a more personal basis. Its a clean midgame, where I tend to excell.))

My objection to #4 is purely personal, as I dislike to be too obviously in front. Such a game has barely beginning: to have reached ten centers implies that your predecessor has been treading on people's toes. While your own slate is clean, potential allies are likely to be unreceptive as long as you continue to occupy their traditional holdings---and to give them up risks that your "ally" will come right on coming for more. You can count on one opponent being at the other end of the board and pursuing his own course: but unless you can find two active allies, a "stop-the-leader" movement is likely to prevail.

((A 10-4-4-4-4-4-4 SC distribution is pretty weird. How did your predecessor get to 10 centers with no one being reduced below four? One is that you've nibbled on three fronts without serious damage, something that really only Russia can pull off, something like Home, Swe, Nwy, Den, Rum, Bul and Serbia --- that's about the only way I could see this configuration. Alternatively you've swallowed someone entirely, but he's survived as your puppet in fragmented areas. E swallows France, perhaps leaving him Mar, while E has Nwy and Stp and Bel. France as your front-edge puppet is in Mar, Tun, Swe and Den. Germany could pull a similar number on Russia, who could be holed up in places in Turkey and the Balkans. In the second scenario you've got an ally if you can step into your predecessors shoes. But you might not be able to, since there may have been a special personal relationship that allowed him to set up a puppet so early in the game. But if you can, you're not all that far from winning the game. To stop you, someone will have to assemble a 4 way alliance with no "natural" leader, something very hard to do --- and even then, it might not work. But I'd find that an unnatural position to work from. The first scenario is much more problematic, and that may have been what Randolph had in mind with his comments. That kind of 10 SC position isn't all that commanding either.))

Let's change the original question a bit. If your new opponents were not your equals in ability, but just an average bunch of joes as found in any normal game (some good, some not), would your feelings change?

I'd suggest that if you've changed your mind in favour of fewer players, you have a very poor opinion of yourself (justified or not). If the idea of an average group of players sends you scuttling for a less complex game, you're not likely to be very stimulating. Most players in my experience are egomaniacs: my own choice would switch to #4 in hopes of an easy win against a couple of novices, two more with little ability, a fifth without the time to negotiate, and one who knows what he's doing---but with only four centers/units to work with. Even if two competent (by my standards) players happen to be present, their eight centers will generally be no match for my ten.

((The better players are much more likely to have that killer-instinct than your average joes, and hence are going to be much more dangerous with 12 centers than they will with 6. Your average joes, however, may be so pleased to get that far that a three-way draw

will seem more delightful. This is a realistic appraisal that is independent of your own self-opinion. And it doesn't turn so much on the complexity of the game as with risks involved. Another factor has to do with "natural selection." In the original 12-12-10 setup, the opponenets are strong-like-me, and thats normal: Only the strong survived. But if the two 12s are both average joes then I have to wonder --- how did this come about? It seems likely that these guys had eliminated fairly weak competition. If there had been someone really strong, that person should not have been eliminated by the average guys. So they may be unprepared for the likes of me, and may not have formed all that powerful an alliance. Thats another reason for me to prefer a smaller game against weaker opponents.))

Turning the problem end-over-end: as one of the equal powers facing this ten-center newcomer, how many centers would you want, with the appropriate number of fellow-players of average ability?

I'd go for 12 and the likely three-way draw. To take 8 marks you as confident of your tactical and/or diplomatic expertise (to the point of recklessness, unless your record bears out your opinion). Any less than 8 definitely excludes you from the "good ally" class. [You initially need at least two firm allies to prevail in these cases; you must be counting on whittling the big man down, and eventually stabbing one or more allies in the confusion, to get a better result than the three-way draw available with 12 centers.]

((This is somewhat colored by how you view dropouts. One school says, "Its a shame, the damage that drpouts do, so we should try to minimize the harm. If the game was headed for a three way draw, and the guy drops out, we can minimize the harm by letting the standby just assume the same role. Getting the three-way then mostly negates the impact of the dropout. Similarly, if it was 12-12 versus 10. In other words, if you want to keep thing the way they were, the more centers you have, the more power you'll have to keep the game on its old track, whatever that was. On the other hand, if you are looking to win, then you want the game shaken up, because none of these positions, whethr 12, 8 6 or 4 puts you in a strong poosition to win))

~~XX~~

((N ext we turn to Coat of Arms #11, June 1982))

THE ROCKY ROAD TO BECOMING AN ACE GM

by Scott Hanson (a kid called Phydoux)

Remembering back to when I entered the world of Dipdom I see how far I have come in such a short period. Even back then I knew there were only two ways to be an important and respected member of Dipdom. One entailed playing in over 16 Dip games. The other was to become a GM. Since I could not find cheap xeroxing I decided to go the route of super player.

Immediately I quadrupled the number of zines which I was subbing. Before I knew it I was enter in 18 games! Sure it was time consuming but what else did I have to do?! Afterall my girlfriend, Frauke, the only girl to ever kiss me (other than my mother) lived in Germany. Come to think of it she is also the only girl to ever converse with me, perhaps that is because she only speaks German and I only converse in a butchered version of English. Suddenly my name was synonymous with the word Dipdom itself. The next thing I remember is that 16 of the games ended for me rather abruptly, some in '02 and some in '04.

Obviously playing Dip was not my Forte, I always did have a tendency to make enemies rather than friends. I knew GM's were more important to Dipdom anyway. At this time

I was receiving a paltry zine called Brutus Bulletin (now defunct). The zine had potential but it lacked imagination, afterall how much can a red neck contribute. I wrote to the publisher, John Michalski and asked if I could write a subzine in Brutus Bulletin and run a few games. Not surprisingly the man did flips at the suggestion of my rescuing him.

Here I was on my way! I knew GMing was no carefree task, but I could handle it. Remember Life in Minnesota is no bed of roses, so my upbringing would be suited to the life of a 10 star GM. Why I did not even fear some of the notorious cantankerous players like Bruce Linsey, Kathy Byrne, Gary Coughlan and Bob Olsen. I was tough like the Minnesota winters and as a GM I knew I would ALWAYS be right and I was ready to put the screws to anyone questioning me. Why I did not even need a hundred one house rules to hide behind like Bruce Linsey.

Well my game began and with my subzine John Michalski's rag became famous and was now worth the money charged. Now I was a real bigshot, people were even sending me money! Instead of working a five day week I found it was only necessary to make big Macs three times a week. Immediately I began to work on the outcome of my first game, which I was GMing. My stragedy was to have any southerner fall fast. Damn rebels never felt the rath of old man winter but they were sure going to feel thewrath of young GM Hanson. The shit positions went to those whom I consider the scourge of Dipdom- Michiganers...

There are many other methods of GMing, with my method the GM leaves nothing to the players except paying the game fee. I remember some of the other GM techniques. One of my favorites is the Mike Mills theory. In this one the GM takes and keeps all players orders for all his games in one folder. Now come deadline day Mike randomly pulls out 7 sets of orders, one from each country. Quite often you will notice in Euhain Macha a player misordering or a country with 4 units may try to order 9 units. That is all part of The Mills T.S. theory of GMing. The next part of Mike's method is what scares me. He will NOT print a supply chart after the fall turn! He waits for the players to tell him what they own! I remember in one particular game, it was just after fall '02. Woody wrote Mills claiming 18 centers, Mills who is Irish and quite cowardly did not wish to disagree with Woody, who is twice Mike's size, awarded Woody an Austrian win in '02! ...

The Coughlan technique is one I like to watch but would never dare to try. I am not mean like Gary and cannot dictate like this southerner. Playing in Gary's Europa Express means the week before the deadline Gary will call you on the phone and tell you what to write in the press and how you are to compliment him and EE. Gary really does not mind if you don't comply. He simply sees to it that your country dies, very rapidly and you never get another gamestart in EE as long as you live and maybe even longer. Another major part of the Coughlan style is to change languages every season, that way the players will never find their game and Gary will certainly not tell them if they have a habit of not doing as they are told. I remember one month when Bruce Linsey forgot to let Gary know how much he enjoyed EE. Instead Brux complained about the postal service, which employs Gary and which Gary is very proud of. Do you know Brux's entire copy of EE was written in Korean that month! Now Brux calls Gary each month asking how he can be of service to the mighty southerner.

Perhaps one of best techniques is used by Glenn Overby. It is the least time consuming for the GM and also is the most profitable for the GM. Once the game begins and the announcement is made the GM never gets back in touch with the players. It is up to the players to guess or read the GM's mind as to where there units are. After several months of guessing the GM will tell you how you are progressing in the game. If and only if you call his house 3 times a day on 3 consecutive days.

As you can see there are many various techniques and styles for GMing. Few however rate you to be a 10 star GM as I am. I'm waiting for Mark Berch to put the finishing touches on his 'The Berch Way to be a Happy and Healthy GM'. Mark has been working on this idea for years, that is why he hasn't GMed a game yet. But he will and I bet he have some classy way of deciding which orders fail and which succeed. My guess is that Berch will toss all the units in the air and the ones that fall to the ground will fail...

((That last crack refers to the fact that no one has written as much about GMing as I have without actually doing any GMing. The people and zines in the above essay are all real, but things have been exaggerated a tad here and there. Scott's subzine was Irksome!, and after Brutus Bulletin folded with issue #109, he went independent. Not long afterwards, John Michalski, the erstwhile publisher of DD put out a subzine which appeared in Irksome!, thus reversing their former relationship, and so far as I know, that was the time this had happened in the hobby. Scott later recast I as Greatest Hits of Mid America, which had a nice run primarily as a game zine, and he also married Frauke Petersen... Coat of Arms, incidently, had a very curious structure. Other than the colophon and miscel material to fill out that page, there really wasn't a zine per se. The rest was all subzines. It was published by Steve "Woody" Arnawoodian who stuck to the concept so far as to put his own material in "Diplomatic Immunity", one of CoA's subzines. In that issue, for example, was "The Magus" (which Langely would later make an independent zine), "Exoletive Deleted" (which Swider would later turn into a full time zine The Shogun's Sword, which was later reborn as the current Comrad in Arms), "Bersaglieri" (which Mainardi would later make an independent zine) and "Blarney Stone" a curious item since Mike Mills had a regular zine then. I apologize for this digression, but hobby history is one of my strongest interests, and I wanted to show how fecund CoA turned out to be. Of course, I do this by memcry, so there might be an error or two!))



((We turn next to SNAFU! #30 where the GM, Ron (Canada) Brown had the following comments following the FOH adjudication in 1982I:))

Regarding the "forged orders" I was so upset about last month, I think I can piece together the story now. Part of it was learned from a letter from Windy Windblad, and part from a "not for print" letter, so lets call him Player X.

Last month, Windy send three players cards with his orders, or parts of them already signed, inviting him to fill in blanks he had left for them. This is OK, and occasionally happens. However, the set Windy sent to player X was set up in such a way that Windy knew I would be suspicious and reject them. Player X was unaware of this; presumably he has not seen Windy's "regular" format for orders. The differences were glaring to me --- and Windy was counting on that. Player X naturally took advantage of his good fortune, scribbled in a few changes, and remailed the card.

The only "error" X made was in not counter-signing the orders or indicating to me how he came to be in possession of an odd-looking ((to Ron)) set of orders from Windy. Otherwise, what he did was quite acceptable --- and I'm satisfied that he was an innocent dupe of a hoax Windy had set up.

Which brings up the problem of what to do about Windy. He writes "To make

it more explicit, to take full blame for myself, thereby exonerating any other culpable parties, I instigated the false set of orders. No one else is to blame. I didn't realize it was such a serious act. Back in the 60's such things (with my little contact with Dippy) seemed relatively commonplace.... Hope I will be forgiven any indiscretion, and all suspicion will be removed from others."

Well, it could have been serious. What if I had accepted that set of orders? Or what if I had found out who sent them by some other means? In light of Windy's honesty in trying to clear up the confusion, I conclude that there was no sinister intent and that what Windy did amounted to "confusion of the GM" rather than "deception". I've given Windy a new player code and strongly urged him not to reveal it to anyone. I hope this ends the matter and that there will be no further attempts to involve me in the play of the game.

((Insofar as 82I was concerned, it did end the matter, but this is a reprint zine, so anything can be disinterred, eh? I don't see that Windy did anything wrong, tho as a matter of courtesy, he should have tipped the GM off as to what he was doing. And I think that Ron should have accepted the mailed-from-X orders (since they carried his signature, and presumably his player code), unless Windy had arranged for the orders he himself sent to arrive later. I don't view the plan itself as an attempt to confuse the GM, but as a plan to dupe the fellow player. And so long as the scheme does not prevent Ron from doing his job, deception of another player is really none of his business. And the scheme clearly should not interfere with Ron doing his GMing. He just takes the last set of signed orders and uses them. If he thinks the signature is itself a forgery, then he does have a problem, but apparently here, Windy signed the card himself, so there was no forgery. I might add that 1) Some British zines ask or require the player to inform the GM when some particularly scurvy plot is afoot 2) Windy was, I'm fairly sure, still in prison at the time he was in the game. Anyhow, this discussion should show how two people can view the same set of facts so very differently!))

((Lets try another such case from 1983. Here is John Marsden, writing in his Ode #48. As is common in British zines, there are no replacements, but rather than a new player is immediately put in and the deadline is reset. Sounds simple but there can be complications....))

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(a.k.a. "Abiatha" gamestart further delay teething troubles)

I'm beginning to wonder whether this game ever will start... I refuse to accept spring 1901 NMR's. In the event, the player is replaced. And guess what, floks (folke, even), I've got no orders from Russia. Now apparently Ron Rayner suffers from amnesia so I gather it's not his fault that he's forgotten, but as this game can't hang on much longer, I'll have to call in a standby.

And would you believe it, Graham Staplehurst (who was replaced as Austria by June Fogg last issue) has written apologising profusely for his lapse in concentration (finals and holidays) and wishes to be placed once more on the waiting list. Can do better, Graham - I'll put you back into the game! AS RUSSIA

ABDATHA GAMESTART (for the third time of asking) -----

((In case you didn't follow that, in the first round, Graham as Austria, and the Russian player failed to send in orders. For the second start, June was brought in for A, and Ron for R, with Ron MMRing. For the 3rd start, Graham was brought back --- as Russia. Now, technically, Graham never was Austria because the game never got underway. But this seems to me very very unwise. Who know what mail Graham got as Austria. Even tho this is, in a sense, a different game, things could have been revealed. Graham may have a good idea what Italy and Turkey wrote June because he may have seen such a letter himself when he was first Austria. A very poor idea, me thinks --- yet it didn't bother Marsden at all!))

THE ZINE COLUMN #18

No big news items here, so I'll make do with some smaller ones. Excelsior #35 has a very thoro essay on how he (Bruce McIntyre) uses some relatively old hardware (e.g. A commodore 64 and some good software (e.g. Paperclip III) to put out the zine, including running the games, setting up the maps, typefaces, reductions, etc. This is a well-written "how to" and, while of course people would have to adjust for their own setup, it would be very helpful for someone not wanting to reinvent the wheel. Incidentally, the letter column had 4 people addressing the topic of "which are the ten top zines of the 80s". Interestingly, 4 zines were on all 4 lists: Voice of Doom, Europa Express, DD and Costaguana. Eric Brosius also tackled the question statistically, using Runestone Poll results --- I was tickled to see DD ranked 5th!

Steve Cooley, a subber here, has been picked by GAMA (the organization of game manufacturers) as its gamer of the year, which Larry Peery sez is the first time someone from Dippy has gotten that honor.

Lawrence Cronin (5855 North Kolb #6207, Tucson AZ 85715) puts out Perestroika, and if you want to discuss central European politics this is the place to do it. He also runs a game "Perestroika", which follows the old hobby tradition of taking the basic game, and grafting an economic component onto it. He has three sections of this running, so it has some obvious appeal. There appears not to be a charge for this, but instead he asks for donations.... For those of you who just couldn't get enuf of rating, scoring, etc systems, after the last DD, The MetaDiplomat #15 has a thoughtful essay by Paul Milewski, drawing nicely from several sources. And after all the discussion, DipCon XXIII will use a Scoring System remarkably similar to the one I created for DipCon XII in 1979: All points to the winner, or divided evenly among drawers. I used SC holding just for tie-breaker scale points; DipCon XXIII has them scaled somewhat higher, but its fairly similar... Northern Flame #21 has an exceptionally varied lettercol. Most people's personal life isn't all that interesting, but this issue recounts his delivery van being stolen by Jamaican drug smugglers for use in moving cocaine from Dorval Airport at the same time the company his was delivering for was slipping into bankruptcy, while his fiance is in the hospital as an In Vitro egg donor. But, first things first, so Cal puts out a nice 43 page issue.... Steve Futton who used to publish the superb and weighty No Fixed Address seems to be returning, with a subzine "Exploding TV Sets" in MegaDiplomat #22 (I under-score zines, but put quotes on subzines; there is no standard hobby convention on the latter). He's writing about Eastern Europe, with a first hand account of a Feb trip to Rumania... DD #58 has an essay dealing in large part with Germany coping with an F/F alliance.... That's all!!!