

THE ONLY ZINE TO RANK IN THE TOP FIVE IN BOTH THE 1978 AND 1979 LEADER POLL IS:

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Only two people have written me that they don't get DW. That means that either DIPLOMACY DIGEST has an astonishing overlap with DW, or some of you are asleep at the switch. Just in case: #27 was distributed along with DW #23. If you don't get DW, send me a postcard, and I will mail you an issue of the DD #27

A number of you have written that you really liked #25/26, and I am appreciative. I hope this will be done at DIPCON XIII, perhaps with two taperecorders to get more conversations. However, it won't be done by me, tho I'll be willing to give advice for someone who wants to try. You should be very familiar with diplomacy in general, and have some familiarity with face to face play as well.

Having said that, tho, I must confess to falling severely on my face in several aspects. The first item is the quiz. I forgot to explain it. You were supposed to answer each question as it came up, right then and there. Each was worth 1 point except as indicated. Even worse were a number of errors. I have always said that I doubt I'll make a good GM even if I tried to GM a postal game (and I assure you, that will never happen!) and boy was this good evidence! I will leave the GMing to the McLendon's and Kendters and Michalskis! Anyhow, in SO2, F por-MID was omitted; in FO2, A ven-TRI was omitted; in WO4, the removal of F Syr was omitted; in FO6 A BER S A MUN was omitted; in SO7 the move F Ank-Con should have been indicated as failing; and to complete my humiliation, I got the final positions wrong in FO7. The support of Ital A Bul was cut, so F Smy-Con did not succeed, tho it didn't really matter, S.C.-wise. In addition, there were scads of both errors and inconsistencies in underlining, and errors in capitalization too. Incidentally, I assumed (tho I should have spelled it out) that you knew that CAPS were for the units true location, so that for example A bel S A PAR-bur(ann) means that a bel is blown away, and A PAR stays put. Plus there were a few E's for F's and the like in the commentary. All my sins were lovingly detailed by Bruce Linsey (after I asked him for a list) and I'm quite appreciative. I looked in vain to find an error on his list of my errors. Bruce, the closest I could find was FO7, no retreat given for Rus A Mos. They never played it out beyond Fall 1907! One other thing. The English player writes me that A LON H in SO3 was not, as I called it, a clear tactical error, but part of his deal not to defend against France. Methinks that overdoing the roll-over-and-play-dead routine, but I suppose its not for me to say. Anyhow, for those of you who have written me over the last 2 years for articles about how the game is "really" played, that could give you something to chew on.

The Postal Diplomacy Tournament is now open for business! The Tournament Direc-

tor will be Bob Sergeant, who has lined up 14 GMs already, each of whom will run one or two games. I will be the Ombudsman in all matters pertaining to GM-player relations. It will be one round of 3 games, each starting at six week intervals. You will not play the same country twice, not will you play the same other player twice. Entrance fee is \$20, which covers all fees for the three games, plus \$5 into a fund which, after expenses, will be used to pay for prizes. Now, perhaps you are thinking: Why should I enter? I'll get clobbered by those big boys. And probably you will. After all, very few can win in any contest. On the other hand, many good players won't be in there. Bob and myself naturally won't be playing, and I understand that Dave Crockett doesn't want to risk tarnishing his stupendous record by joining any more postal games. Plus, since there will be no championship game, you may never have to compete directly with any of them. There will be more luck in these games than what you are used to, since no replacements will be used. If the leader drops out, you may have a sure win with only 8 or 9 centers. Don't laugh --- that sort of thing happens in Britain, where standbys are frequently not used.

If you do join, I strongly urge that you yank your names off any other lists, because three games is a lot of work, especially if you really want to do your best. That second and third game will start whether you are ready for it or not. If you are interested, send either \$20 or a statement that you definitely will play to Bob Sergeant, 3242 Lupine Drive Indianapolis, IN 46224, and he will send you a copy of the HRs. At present there are only enuf GMs for 63 players, so its first come, first serve. It should be an interesting experiment and a lot of fun!

You may have noticed that this is the Oct issue but its long since not Oct. I am not sure I will be able to keep putting out one issue per month. These pages are somewhat larger than the typical dipzines pages, incidently. I may occasionally skip a month, rather than slip further and further behind. This of course will not affect your subs since you pay by the issue, not by the month, and no traders will be gypped because there are none (other than with DW).

Starting on page three is the theme, Philosophies of Stabbing. You will not find discussions the mechanics of stabbing. No sly advice on how to set up the victim or arcane discussions of spring vs fall stabs or citations of preferred victims by midwestern publishers. This issue deals with people's attitudes toward stabbing, and how the practice affects the hobby as a whole. Stabbing is one of the most perplexing and emotional topics in Diplomacy. People don't even agree on just what it is. To some it is an announced attack. To others it is only an all-out surprise attack, entirely unprovoked, on a long-standing ally. Anyhow, this issue is really only a sampling of the subject, some food for thought.

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The Zine Column #19:

ZINE NOOZE

DD isn't really a nezine, but sometimes these things accumulate. In the Oct 3, 1979 issue of FLD, "Bernie Oaklyn" gave the full rules to his variant, Kriegspiel Diplomacy. As a smart touch, he included a sample game, to show people how it works, and what are the potentials for it. Anyhow, he stated that the sample moves were "actually submitted" by the player named, which, for Austria was me. I assure you that I did not give him any sample moves to be used in any sample game of any variant or regular game. The moves were, I assume, all created by Bernie. I do not know whether this was an attempt at deception or just an incredibly stupid statement --- he is certainly quite capable of either.

On a more pleasant note, Francois Guerrier (#2210, 160 Chapel Street Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1N 8P5) has restarted the zine The National, with a very fine effort. This is a semi-annual zine ostensibly for Canadian GMs, but of great value for others as well. Along with his usual meandering comments, is the Canadian census --- addresses of all those who sub to canadian zines (limited to his ability to get all sub lists). This is the first census of any sort published in N.A. I think in at least two years.

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((Starting things off will be a discussion that began in Paroxysm #27 (4-18-76) with this article by Harry Drews))

MERITORIOUS ALLIANCES PART II: You don't have to stab all the time to have fun!

Len Lakofka, in the Sprint 1976 issue of Diplomacy World, takes a oke at nice guys everywhere when he cuts up Diplomacy players who do a minimum amount of stabbing and who even will go so far as to warn their former allies ahead of time that a stab is coming. Now, I'm a sucker for helping the underdog, and in this case where Lenard is representing the "old school" of famous tournament players who have a reputation for stabbing at the faintest opportunity I can't help but oppose this nonsense. Put up your dukes, feller!

First, let's establish my philosophy. I believe in sound alliance structures as the only way to do consistantly well in postal games. This is really a way of ganging up on other plays and always playing with the odds in your favor. OK, I don't expect Len to disagree with me on that. The argument may appear when consideration is given to how long an alliance should be maintained and what it means to play "the true spirit of the game". Is there any honor or satisfaction in playing voluntarily toward a two way draw? Len and the "old school" imply that there is not. One must battle on: sly, treacherous, honest in turn until the bloodiest knife wins the ruthless contest. He who is the most crafty and nasty will merit the win. He who is soft and doesn't even attempt an extra stab ortwo is not competitive in the "spirit of the game" and is really cheating every ne else (as well as himself) of the vicarious pleasures and glories of that very masculine game.

My personal philosophy further states that one plays the game very competitively but there are other considerations besides a one man victory. Cooperation is AN equally important facet of life and of the game. I'll be damned if I've made a really good friend and ally out of a perfect stranger that I should then automatically go ahead and stab him. I may feel that the risk of failing is not really worth the attempt. Or I may feel that stabbing this ally would really be a shit thing to lay upon him. Yet the next game I may very well stab him. In fact, I consciously try to alternate in different games between befriending and attacking a particular person/ But if our alliance is really super neat, then a two way draw has an inherent beauty which I would be extrememly loathe to disrupt. Finally, I may not stab because it would have a pronounced effect on my reputation. In short, I do stab in every game, but I try to make each stab worthwhile and in many games I will stop short of stabbing the very last guy because it wouldn't seem functional or satisfying behavior.

When we analyze Len's lament about the 'good ally', that soft hearted (and I infer soft-headed) twerp, we should consider the circumstances of the writer. Lenard is one of a small number of players who have been around for quite a while and got their foot in the Diplomacy door before the big wave of 1971. They learned the game a long time ago, and now they're content like rusting and aging knights of yore to joust in special invitational games where they clash with other old sorts like themselves. They gather together, either at conventions or at select postal games, to reminisce about their past glories and to maintain the comradery of the "old boy" clique. These quaint anachronisms really haven't kept up with the times. Changes in playing attitudes and styles sweep forward but the old boys gloat about the past while their figurative paunches bloat. Oh yes, I expect the shit to rain upon me here, but isn't it all really true. Godd players of the last couple ((of years?)) or so just can't seem to break into these exclusive games. And who can really believe that there are really only a dozen or so really good players around and that they all happened to appear before 1973? When you think about it, the credibility is really strained a bit, isn't it?

Gadzooks, Lenard, you're really puffing a little <sup>too</sup> hard on the grass when you insi t: "Diplomacy is a WAR simulation on the diplomatic and the gross tactical levels." Shucks, all I want is a little fun, and amybe a nifty tactical trick here

and there, and the occasional stab on some turkey who is in my way, and you tell me this is war, man go out there and be the meanest the orniest s.o.b. that you can. And no, the real world isn't purely vicious either. A healthy mix of cooperation and competition are required to survive.

Another reason I sometimes don't stab is because of my code of ethics. After each stab I write and explain why and apologize. This may be more than good manners. Sometimes, if it doesn't compromise the effectiveness of my stab or if I have spent a lot of effort working hand in hand with my ex-ally I will notify him ahead of time that the axe is coming down on him. More than just the possibility of meeting the person again, I do it because it is sort of a compensation for doing what I am about to do. An analogy might be to state that Lenord's concept of war is straight 20th century. Myself, I prefer the romance of feudal times, when playing fair didn't mean that you were a chicken or a nut, but rather, it implied that you acted with honor. And there was just as high a percentage of winners then as now, right? No, I certainly do not feel that the draw is the unsatisfactory result of an unbreakable stalemate line formed when the players have been so tossed around by stab after stab that they are saying, in effect, the heck with this, lets end this silliness. I play toward the fulfillment of my own pleasure goals. It is with me that building up with another person can sometimes be just as rewarding as tearing down and going on a rampage. Tell you what, old school, put half of us "good allies" in a game with the same number of your "old boys". Lets see who can really play the game better.

((So much for the opening shot. In #29, Rod Walker and Len Lakofka chanked in with their responses. We'll start with Rod.))

...1. If Harry Drews thinks there is something original in what he is saying, he had better think twice. ((I don't recall Harry saying that)). Several of the "old boys" he so willingly and offhandedly castrates have said exactly the same things. It just so happens that Len Lakofka, in rebutting an article by Alan Calhmer has said them, So has Wlat Buchanan. I've been known to express similar sentiments. Its no crime to be a freshman in the hobby, but must you behave like a sophomore?

2. There is no such thing as the "old school," boy/ Every shade of playing and opinion and style which has been seen since 1971 was also seen before 1969. Some of us, like myself, don't even have the same playing style from game to game.

3. There are some old-timers in the hobby. Hary suggests that they limit themselves to "select postal games" and so little but reminisce. Bullshit ((sorry Claudine, but unlike BB, we have no standards here)). I challenge him to prove this idiotic set of statements. I want names and hard facts. What old players play only in "select postal games" and what specific games? If the "old boys" haven't kept up with the "changes in playing attitudes and styles," will Harry please provide me with some examples of the same he believes originated after 1971, and the name of who he thinks originated same? ((Again, that not quite what Harry said. Something can be a "new" attitude or playing style, and still have been invented in say 1965, but became popular later)). I submit that Drews is being very foolish and opening his mouth without thinking, or he's deliberately lying. Failure to respond to my challenge can be construed as proof of my latter submission. If it's just the former, I would think an apology would be in order .....or a very detailed set of clear, hard, cold statistics.

4. Now, why do you suppose that nearly all of the players with any reputation at all entered the game before 1973? Hary Drews obviously wants to grind an axe so he isn't going to let himself be bothered with anything like logic... The answer is simple: nobody gets too well known until he finishes several games. It takes about two years real time to finish up a postal game. Entering and finishing several postal games will take 3-4 years, real time. Players who entered the hobby in 1973 will be finishing up their several games this year! In 1980 it will appear that all the best known players entered the hobby before 1977, and some next decade version of Harry Drews will no doubt be complaining about it and attacking Drews and

the "old school" of good alliances in favor of the "brand new school" of being sly, shifty, and trecherous...

6. The whole idea of the game is to have fun. If we all did that more, and did less of inflicting everybody with the fool's creed that there is only one (my) current way of playing the game, we'd all be better off. As I've said before, shut up and deal the pieces.

((If you think that was testy, wait'll you hear from Len:))

I have seen some flights of fancy in Diplomacy Journals and I have seen many good articles on philosophy. In meritorious Alliances, Mr. Drews wants to turn Diplomacy into a parlor game and he doesn't seem to care if he steps on anyone's reputation to do so or distort the facts completely out of proportion. Mr. Drews' philosophy, to not mince words, sucks wind.

What Mr. Drews fails to understand is that Diplomacy is designed to be an intellectual game like chess or many of the AH games. The idea is to use your head to win, not to draw. When I get stabbed, I do not run and pout like Mr. Drews implies he does. It is, after all, only a game. I have formed many friendships with enemies on the playing board. I can form a friendship off of the board and still stab the guy in the back. This does not make me this person's enemy. In fact, adults are not upset about being stabbed at all. They will complement you if you accomplish the stab skillfully, AND they will not let the stab get in the way of future games. Harry makes the point of consciously trying "to alternate in different games between befriending a particular person." Harry is not playing the game! He is playing some cockeyed philosophy that has no code other than don't stab if you want the person for a friend in the first game but get him in the second --- to he;; with what the demands of the game may be!

Harry says that I am of the "old school" of famous tournament players who have a reputation for stabbing at the faintest opportunity... What a pile of bullshit! Look at 1974GCL or 1975A if Mr. Drews can see past the end of his nose. ((These are two DW demo games. But I might point out that once you are in a lot of games, you can always point to some in which you did not stabbing, either out of choice or because the opportunity did not arise)) Experienced players always have the thought of stab cross their mind every turn.. If the stab will cripple the opponent/ally and give them a good shot at a win they will stab. ((A statement with which I totally disagree. An experienced player will also look to see whether he can accomplish the same goal, albeit more slowly, without the stab)). That is not a mark of skill or experience. The game allows for stabs, it in fact makes provision for them in the rules. Mr. Drews seems too thin-skinned to play the game to win; he has to play it to save everyone's feelings. Good players do not feel that stabbing will lose a friend, if you are so small as to not be able to separate friendship from a game then don't play anything more complex than Old Maid --- you do not have the temperament for intellectual play.

((Len then summarizes Drews' accusation that the old boys play in demo games only with each other, and refutes it by naming some demo games and listing newer players who are in those games. He also says that he takes standby positions, and adds, somewhat irrelevantly, that he runs novice games and writes articles for novices. Our narrative continues.....))

The rules of Diplomacy (IV. 2) say: During periods of Diplomacy, a player may say anything he wishes. The conversations usually consist of bargaining or joint military planning, but they may include such things as exchanging information, denouncing, threatening, spreading rumors and so forth. THE RULES DO NOT BIND A PLAYER TO ANYTHING HE SAYS; DECIDING WHOM TO TRUST AS SITUATIONS ARISE IS PART OF THE GAME! (exclamation points and capitals are mine). Yet "good allies" cannot seem to pay by this rule. They must forewarn of stabs (alho Mr. Drews admits that he doesn't, always), ((but that doesn't stop Len from saying that they "must"

does it?)), they often vote draws that are not draws, when, if played out, the game might be anything but a two way draw. The long and sort of this seems to be a protection of their precious egos: "You don't hurt me and I don't hurt you." Or "I'll win this time and you win the next time" or "If you don't vote for this two way draw ... we will tell Mommy!" Watching seven "good allies" play diplomacy would be like watching seven hemophiliacs play mumble-de-peg!

Mr. Drews challenges a group of "good allies" to play the same number of "old boys". If this means no preset alliances/enemies then by all means. The only rule would be that "good allies" must announce their intentions to stab before they do so. "Old boys" do not. Only philosophies may differ; if the three "good allies" automatically attack the "old boys" you have dragged the game down to simple, tactical play. I'll play against you any time, Mr. Drews. Name the place!

((After all this abuse, Mr. Drews made his response in #31, June 13, 1976)

....While I had no intimate familiarity with Lenard's style (he refused to write me in 1975) I do recall that in the furthest recesses of my mind I had seen something semi-humorous written about various prominent people in Diplomacy ... Anyhow, Lenard, I was only poking a bit of fun at you, nothing malicious. It gives us mere mortals, humble as we are, great satisfaction to on occasion figuratively stick out our tongues at those demi-Gods of Diplomacy. Forgive my errant excesses, Lenard?

...First, let me set the record straight by saying that Meritorious Alliances Part II was not about Mr. Lakofka. My starting point happened to be the recent article in DW and Lenard was taken as an all encompassing stereotype of the "big name" player. Nothing personal in this...

My personal style is quite flexible. I have been around long enough so that I have tried most things once, and repeated interesting things a number of times. Sometimes I stab, sometimes I honor draws; in every game I try to continue correspondence with the interesting people and placate the dull so as to further my intentions. I try not to carry grudges, and that's why I try to vary my approach. With people I have played previously. My highest ambition is not to be a tireless, never stabbing "loyal ally". Flexibility and fun are my keywords when I approach any game... Engaging in the dirty business of stabbing is fun, if done to a certain extent and with good cause. I see no reason why not to account for a stab to the stabbee afterwards, though; the game is not quite that brutal and cold... Not sharing in any sort of draw is not very rewarding to me. Winning is still the most satisfying, but I evaluate a number of things carefully when I am doing well with one ally and it looks as if we can get a two way draw. First, what are my chances of pulling off the successful stab and actually getting 18 centers. It is not satisfying to stab my ally and then only find a third player exploiting the stab to force me into another draw. Second, what intangible rewards have derived from a particular alliance? Damn it, if I really enjoy the alliance, I will not stab even if there is a real chance of winning all the marbles. Diplomacy is rewarding in multiple ways. Yes, there is competition, but there is cooperation as well, and the pleasure of participating with friends in a pleasurable activity. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and I refuse to let a certain philosophy dominate my play. These philosophies were the target in the earlier article. Please, everyone, do not characterize me as a "good ally", a win only player, a friendly good ally, or any other horseshit grouping. Diplomacy is a creative pastime and creativity is not defined as mundane, orthodox, or repetitive behavior. ...I feel free to promote various lines of play at various times, and I'd like to play the devil's advocate and burst of balloons... Lets take Diplomacy seriously in a casual, non-rigorous sort of way.

Dare I comment on Rodney C.'s frothing in Paroxysm #29? Shucks, I just can't get angry tonight. Besides, what Rod says is all true and I won't deny it... Rod is engaged in just as much hyperbole as yours truly and himself is a well-known sly

fox with a practiced eye for the dramatic and a flair for slipping in the midst of any controversy that suits his fancy (nad ego)...Silly of you to even talk about hard facts and logic....

((I thought I'd include some of that to demonstate a graceful withdrawl. Getting back to the subject is Randolph Smyth from #32))

THE GREATEST GOOD

...The question of whether to stab a game-long ally developes into a multitude of side topics. Does a sucessful stab, leading to a win, improve a player's rating in the long run; i.e. is his reputation set back so far that he finishes seventh in his next five games? Is he morally right, even when permitted and encouraged by the wording of the Rulesbook; willl the stabber himself get more enjoyment out of winning at the expense of a friendship which only incidently used Diplomacy as its medium? Is the hobby as a whole best served by such opportunists: how does the frustration of the loser stack up against the interest generated for the spectators? ((ambitious, eh?))

Harry used the term "old boys" to describe those of the opposing (stabbing) school. Whatever else, these are the epople that have survived from the early days; they may argue that the positive reinforcement of absolute sucess is essential to truly long-term interest. Those who can't "take it" (the victims) are usually a bit immature and their commitment to the game and contribution to the hobby are uncertain anyhow; no loss even if they do dropout. A player satisfied with more mediocre results (that isn't a putdown --- check your dictionary) will also be less well-known and tends to drift away from the hobby with greater frequency. Besides, every kid has heard of sharks and killer whales, dolphins, squids, etc only enter the vocabulary after a few years. The core of the people who will attract others to the games they play will also be the most spectacular -- recruitment outweighs repulsion.

The "nobles" (to contrast with the "nasties") may pull out any of a dozen rebuttals. The overall style in the old days was more gory, and anyone who was attracted to the game at that time was naturally a "nasty". Small wonder that most of the old-timers seem to fall into the latter school. Or have the less aggressive players from the days of yore remained after all, but are simply less viable and vocal? Is a high profile associated with low reliability in a game situation?

To digress from the main subject temporarily, I advance (and copywrite) the "high-low" theory: Should a "noble" steer away from a novice on the basis of the latter's unusually quick involvement in the hobby (participation in hobby politics before getting enuf game experience to establish a reputation in this area)? Does a gravitation to extra-Diplomacy diplomacy imply a "nasty" propensity? How do the reputations of the newer members of the various hobby councils (one must leave the "old boys" out of this calculation) stack up against the "average" reputation of the hobby at large (which Len and others say is becoming more and more "noble" as time goes by)? Personally I think my own theory is all wet. The newer members of councils that I know fairly well all seem to conform, in general, to the developing "noble" ideal in most of their games. I am inclined to reject the possibility which started this train of thought, that hordes of "nobles" existed from the very beginning. The hobby was, initially, a "nasty" preserve.

Back to the subject: the arguments of the "nobles" are all defensive in the area of long-term comitment. Wait ten (!!) years and see how many survive. In the meantime, chalk up one for the "nasties" on the question of giving the hobby some continuity, and of attracting novices. "The greatest good" for the hobby as a whole is probably an increased ratio of nasties, or at least a halt to the present erosion of their numbers.

By the same token, tho, why are the nobles supplanting the nasties? Everyone agrees that this is so --- Len voiced it as a complaint in the original DW article. Harry's side that has an almost unanswerable counterpoint as far as game sucess

is concerned : the old style is dying because it's simply inferior in the long run. To answer one of the above questions, I don't think that player reputations are a major factor in poor results following a stab, unless the same thing happens in game after game --- then people get wise. The exercise of reasonable restraint should assure the continued respect of your fellow players in the majority of cases . The figures will bear this out, methinks.

Consider an individual game, tho. The final question in Harry's article: "pit good allies against an equal number (=??) of stabbers and see who wins" hardly requires an answer on a theoretical basis (in practice, such a game would be impossible to set up on purpose, as the very circumstances would alter normal player behavior; assuming that 7 players could be found of adequate caliber, who would be willing to label themselves as either nobles or nasties. Perhaps the question is unfair, as few people are "pure" in either camp and the old boys have several vendettas among themselves. The philosophy is right, tho, or the swing toward noble-ism would not exist. So one for the nobles in the realm of long-term success --- "survival of the fittest" applies to philosophies as well as anything else. "Success" here has other components than the number of wins, which seems to be the prevailing opinion in the hobby today. If you disagree, you'll doubtless cite the rulebook, ignore most of the rating systems in vogue, and remain a nasty --- but most of the hobby's current participants will disagree with you, and the absolute tenant of the game is that you can't ignore the majority feeling in any sphere and remain successful.'

It all seems to depend on whether you prefer the occasional photogenic win tied to a poor result, or a less spectacular but more solid record. I don't think it's the place of any article to try to change this basic preference, but only to point out the alternative. Can a general article be of any help in the ethical sphere; is it "right" to stab a game-long ally?

The author of this article ((see the lengths people will go to just to avoid using the word "I" !)) can only offer his own personal views, and leave the reader to accept or reject them. The phrase I use is "not without reason". When my opposite number is competent, I embrace Drewsian principles, even when the random actions of a third party may make a victory feasible. Several of my games have been moving in this direction recently. However, if the ally commits a "crime" (a mistake on any level), I feel no qualms about meting out "punishment" in the form of a stab or another attempt at victory.

Perhaps the views expressed so far doesn't vary much from Harry's: he also expressed a willingness to stab "a turkey that gets in his way", altho he gave the impression that this was done at an earlier stage if at all. The difference which keeps the endgame more interesting for me is that I attempt to provoke an error until the final gun sounds. A military blunder which leaves "free" centers on our common frontier without a well-thought out demilitarization agreement is fair game; so is diplomatic laxness to the point where a smaller power can be persuaded to suicide in my favor. (In the latter case, the deliberate, orchestrated preoccupation of a tiny power with a less vigorous ally must be differentiated from general shit-disturbing as mentioned above. That is, the win gives me no pleasure unless I feel I've earned it by my efforts.) Thus, my rationale for stabbing an ally may well depend on the progress of my negotiations with a nominal enemy. Since the ally may be unable to tell what's up until it's too late, perhaps in such positions you'd be best to consider me a Lakofkoid after all! ((What Randolph seems to be saying here is that he may/will stab you if he can turn around a minor ally, using the excuse that his being able to persuade the guy to turn around and ally with Randolph proves that you have made the crime of not paying enough diplomatic effort to this minor ally. Of course, this may be a totally false assumption. The guy may just decide that only by switching sides can he induce Randolph's stab and thus make the game more lively))



A note on the reaction of the stabbee: I'd love to be able to stab myself, because there would rarely be hard feelings. I prefer to be attacked successfully --- it implies that my opponent thought things out well and the mistake was mine. It's in cases like this where I'm most likely to continue to help my old ally on to the inevitable win, with admiration as an additional component of the friendship. (( I on the other hand would rather be unsuccessfully stabbed. This is because I am more likely to be able to recover from such a stab and stab the guy back, as occurred in 1976EN. It is extremely difficult to be able to get into position to stab back someone who has stabbed you, but its satisfying when it does occur.))

On the other hand, a bad stab does bother me. (That's not to say I've never made one in my time.) I first assume that my new enemy has a diplomatic surprise up his sleeve, on the premise that no one could be that dumb. If this turns out not to be the case, the "cooling off period" while I discover this leaves me with more sadness and pity than anger (which is of some help in maintaining personal relationships in most cases). The friendship may suffer, but overestimating the stabber initially helps to prevent hot words on the spur of the moment.

We still have this problem: Which style is better?

Were you expecting a resolution? Why you dolts, I wouldn't resolve it if I could: maybe this way I'll be getting some feedback to pad future issues with. The best minds of the hobby aren't unanimous, which is terrific, since the hobby is best off with a good mix of both schools. If Len's information on the progressive loss of the "nasties" is accurate, I can only echo his moans, but I'm optimistic. We'll always have a diversity, whatever is said: Why write an article on it?

Postscript: Since the above was written ... #29 has appeared with two attacks on his conclusions...It is fair to say that "nasty" play was more prevalent in the old days: the "old" boys didn't get their reputations for nothing. I still think that several of Harry's statements are valid in a statistical, tho not in a personal way. (For one thing, it is true that the "old boys" have modified their "rock-em sockem" style in recent years to keep abreast of the changes around them.) I'll withdraw my above characterizations of "Drewsian" and "Lakofkoid" players on this basis -- best to stick to "nob;es" and "nasties" as classes, while keeping hands off on assigning a given person to either group, or discussing impossible specific situations such as the "nobles vs. nasties" game.

((In the same issue, Robert Correll appended this:))

...My own playing style is very much based on Randolph's "noble" label, and I have in many games accepted draws when I guess I could have pushed on for a win, if that were my prime interest. So, to this extent, I am a traitor to the game; altho if ne judges oneself by the ratings, the payment in this case has been rather handsome...I would agree that it would be difficult to find a purist of either strain; I certainly have been known to go for the jugler when it suited my fancy...

((Some closing comments from Rod in #33, which are ~~butchered~~ heavily edited:))

((After agreeing with Barry on playing style and having fun, he continues...))  
However. It is one thing to write a turgid peroration condemning this or that; it is quite another then to shrug it off and suggest that we really should not have taken it seriously. I regard Harry's reply as a copout; not a bad copout, you understand, but a copout notwithstanding...The real old-timers in this hobby are not very numerous; they include myself, Len Lakofka, Conrad von Metzke, Hal Naus Peggy Gemignani ((of those, as of 1979 only Peggy still plays)). Some of us have very limited time, but within those limits, every one of the "old timers" will play in any game, in any zine, any time, with any other players ((the "in any zine" simply isn't true; never was)). Len joins Demo games, but he has also joined every game I have opened since 1972, and he has never known who else would be in any of those games...Peggy joins virtually anything that moves ((but Peggy is far over on

the "noble" side of the spectrum)) ((Rod them goes on to cite Alan Calhamer as wanting only the stiff competition of demo games, and John Beshara as, well, in his time, Rod never could write an article without finding some way to work in a jibe against Beshara.))

((Next, for a very different view of old-timers, here's a short tid-bit from THE VOICE VolV, #12, 22 June 1973, by Jeff Key, its editor. He is not a real old-timer, but he does go back well into the 60's, and this may give you some idea how much attitudes have changed))

A letter written by Greg Pitts was recently published in DIPLOMACY REVIEW which calls on players to band together to put players who "lie" out of postal diplomacy by simply wiping them out every time they join a game ((!!))

We would like to go on record opposing any such formal (or, for that matter any "informal" agreement) plan to drive liars out of postal diplomacy. This may seem strange coming as it does when we are well-known for wielding "honesty" as a weapon in Diplomacy and for conducting one-game feuds with those who stab us. Actually, it is not inconsistent as we feel that natural selection will weed out those players as their opponents receive stab after stab and they gradually develop a reputation for such actions. Secondly, we know that even the most skilled diplomat is occasionally backed into a corner from which there is no acceptable option out except to lie. It is regrettable but it happens. We know so, for it has even happened to us. We make every effort to avoid such a situation, but.....

Finally, who decides which liars get the liar forced out of a game? The victim is, understandably, not very objective about the whole matter. Also, too often those others who may become involved would either rather not ((become involved)) or have some other axe to grind. They cannot render an objective decision, either.

True, an argument may be made that it is neither unethical nor dishonest to resort to the lie at all. We will not get involved in this discussion for obvious reasons except to state that the rules of Diplomacy, as annotated by A.B. Calhamer in The Dispatch, state that "any tactic based on deception is legitimate."

Don't misinterpret us, we do not support the liar over the diplomat. We were the source for Greg Pitts' comment about a diplomat being one who can tell you to go to hell in such a manner that you look forward to the trip ((and send him a postcard when you get there)). And, we still believe that the liar is one who does not have the interest to devote the effort necessary to be a diplomat.....and therefore does not belong in postal Dippy. But, we will not support any attempt to legislate or force him out for, in spite of his faults, he has every bit as much right in the hobby as we do we.

.....  
(continued from page 2)

There is also an article by me on conducting draw and concession votes, with a proposed format for being sure that all topics are covered, one way or the other. But the centerpiece of the issue is a magnificent essay by Randolph Smyth on various problems that can and do occur in GMing. I would say that this is required reading for any new GM, or anyone thinking of becoming a postal GM. Indeed, I think anyone who plays postally will find it interesting and, in the sense of How-would-I-rule, very challenging. The issue is free for the asking, but a stamp would be nice.

There have been a rash of new zines from New York recently. Enchain Macha (which I think means "If so, tomorrow" or "If you agree, then we do it tomorrow" in Hebrew comes from Micheal Mills 3457 Makyes Road Nedrow, N.Y. 13120, w subs 6/\$2.50. If you are looking for a novice game, or one for people with little experience he has such openings, tho I think his five categories will start to be combined when he has trouble filling any one of them. His HRs could use a little work, tho. Seasons are combined but conditional orders are not allowed. Anyone without lots of exposure

to postal dippy is advised to work from the HRs of a really firmly established zine, esp Fol Si Fie or Graustark. Also included id a creative effort "Diary of a spy" and an article against an E-F alliance. A second effort is The Shogun's Sword by T.J. Swidler and M.P. Barno of 1183 Robinson Hill Road, Endwell, N.Y. 13760. Issue #2 advertises openings in Diplomacy, Kingmaker, Machievelli and Belter. Subs are \$5/ year. The primary interst seems to be role-playing games.

The most impressive of the lot is Bruce Linsey's The Voice of Doom (71 Hudson Terrace Apts, Newburgh, N.Y. 12550. Subs 10/\$4.50) I had the pleasure of a visit from Bruce a little while back. I carefully explained to him that someone with only a few months exposure to the hobby should wait a while before publishing. It shows how persuasive I can really be --- he waited several whole weeks before coming out with #1. He has blanketed the hobby with that issue, so there's not much point in describing the issue; #2 was also impressive, and in no time he'll pass my circulation, and I'll be very jelous. I have also received the first draft of his HRs (part of which are in #2) and I must say these are probably the most thoro HRs I have ever seen. My favorite is V, J: "If an order is conditional upon a retreat that was unsuccessfully attempted (due to a conflict with the attempted retreat of another unit), then the condition for OTB retreat will be used, as this is what will actually have taken place." I've never seen another set of HRs that covered ~~that~~ obscure circumstance. There are some HRs that I don't agree with. Bruce, like many other publishers, has opted to curtail the scope of the Rulebook's "badly written order" rule, by adding some requirements (such as the nationality of a foreign unit being supported or convoyed), despite the fact that the Rulebook makes it clear that this is optional ("...for clarity the player may wish to indicate the foreign nationality..."). Sometimes he treats mislabeling and non-labeling the same; othertimes he will overlook nonlabeling but not mislabeling. But he does spell out his position on these matters. The HRs in #2 have some confusion about how protests will be handled (A and C are in conflict) but Bruce tells me this will be cleared up. #2 has a raft of games starting, which I think breaks Runestone's most games per issue (but not most-games-per-month) record. If he puts as much care into the GMing of all these games as he has into the HRs, the VOD will become a star member of the class of 1979. There's some good writing in the issues, but that is not uncommon in early issues of a new zine.

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((Alas, there's not enuf space to run another article, so I'll just run some excerpts. The first is by Harry Drews again, from his "Ethics in Diplomacy" in #51 of Paroxysm, 4-3-77))

...One does not stab for fun, one does it to advance in the game and to consolidate power, one does it to defy another player or to gain aid or increase one's reputation. A good stab carries a valuable reputation with it and helps give one prestige. Similarly, being fiercely suicidal in opposing a player who has stabbed you will make you feared in future games ((and less likely to be stabbed))...A professional player does not vacillate back and forth and is not bothered by a weak and guilty conscience. The pro goes out and does what must be done, even if it means stabbing your weak-willed, pregnant, anemic sister in a family game...The pro Diplomacy player deliberately manipulates every other player on the board...The stabber will not be chastised if he does it with craft, because our society encourages and rewards us to be successful even if it means stepping on our former friends. The very worst thing to do, tho, is to betray your friend and bumble it...The winner (pro) is defined as the aggressive, communicative player who briskly marches thru the game. We all secretly admire this player, whether he be an Edi Pirsan, a Mike Rocamora, a Walt Buchanan or (dare we whisper it) ourself....

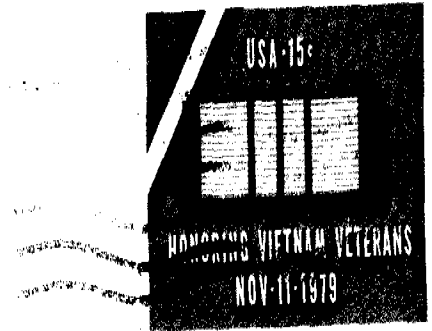
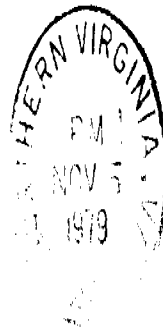
((From a letter to Len Lakofka, reprinted in Liasons Dangereuses #71, 5-26-76))

"Your stab attempt was a little belated....what I think disturbs me most about the stab attempt is the efforts at camouflage. Your request for an article for LD came at a difficult time (finals etc)...it bothers me to think that this was a mere ruse to flatter me and cover your game intentions. That kind of manipulation of me and LD carries is strongly resented...((Len flatly denied this was his intent)).

Mark L Berch  
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Alexandria, Va 22304

1. If 28 appears after your name,  
your sub is up!!!!
2. The diplomacy books have not  
yet arrived, and I'm going to  
have to find out what's gone  
awry. They should have arrived.
3. Back issues are now all in stock  
#1-9 are 35¢ each, #10 are 25¢,  
and are on sale to subbers only
4. Remember, a free issues goes out to  
anyone who brings in a new subber  
All he has to do is mention your  
name or your zine. I can do this  
because it saves me the cost of  
mailing a sample issue
5. If you got Peerless #1, be advised  
that Bills statement that "The even-  
tual winner declined to play on the  
final board..." is absolutely not  
true --- its a baseless rumor.

*Note enclosed  
More will follow*



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