

The one zine which won't say, "Eric rolled a one" is.....

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Potpourri

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For those of you new to the zine, or getting this as a sample, no games have ever been run here. This is the zine for the reader. The great majority of what appears here are reprints, drawn from my archives of over 7000 dipzines, altho there is some original writing as well. Anything connected to the hobby or game of Diplomacy can appear here. Unlike this one, most issues are arranged in themes; a list of back issues is available on request; subscribers can order any of these they like. I am somewhat of a "purist", in that I do not cover other wargames, sports, politics in DD. Occasionally, there will be accounts of my personal life, but these are very much the exception. "The Zine Column" is my format for news and commentary (the only the former appear in this issue) on what is appearing in other dipzines. And, as Scott Hanson put it in Irksome! #36, "There is hardly a hobby topic he can restrain himself from commenting on." That includes, of course, the articles that I reprint. Last issue produced some interesting letters of response, but there wasn't room for all of them here, so I have put that off until #79. So if you've any comments you'd like to see printed about what appeared lastish, or about this issue, send them in, and we'll have a lettercolumn!



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Sure are a lot of California zines on that list, and I've noticed within the last 6 months or so, a disproportionate number of my new subbers have also been from Calif. Flagship is a "prozine" designed to cover all aspects of PEM gaming, and is edited by Nicky Palmer, who has written one or two books on wargaming. Erehwon died as a dipzine proper 7 years ago with issue #99. Rod had a big bash with issue #100, which features, I'm sure, the largest collection of original articles by people no longer in the hobby ever published (John Boyer, Doug Ronson, Cal White, Len Lakofka, Robert Correll, Don Horton and others) ---- which comes from sitting on material for 7 years; that special issue is \$2.50. The appearance of E does not mean any lessening of Rod's commitment to DW. E will be a good outlet for his more "fannish" material, especially humor, which is featured extensively in the E and is what his old E was best known for. DW can then remain what it was intended to be, a hobby service project and as such somewhat different from the ordinary dipzine.

((Have you ever wondered about how the level of complexity which Diplomacy has, came about? Allan Calhamer, the inventor of the game discusses that subject below. The article first appeared in Big Brother #96 in July 1969. When it appeared in Numeror #3 in August 1970 it picked up the preface. This version appeared in Bushwacker in March 1973, as was slightly edited by Fred Davis; materials in brackets are his.

PREFACE - By Rod Walker in NUMENOR #3, 13 August 1970

One of the criticisms most frequently leveled at Diplomacy is that it is not "realistic" This generally comes from people who are overly concerned with the tactical end of the game, very often because their backgrounds are with Avalon-Hill type games, or other types in which the strategy and tactics of military movements are the most important (and usually the only) factors of play. While this is a factor in Diplomacy as well, it is hardly the most important. The player must bear in mind two things. First, as Allan Calhamer has said, Diplomacy "is a game about the relation between diplomacy and military-naval matters." Second, the scale, or mesh, in which the game takes place makes for a different reality, which the game accurately depicts....

What we see in Diplomacy is not the battlefield situation which pertains to a game which has a "mesh" fine enough to permit representation of, say, a corps of infantry or a single battleship. The order "A Sev-Arm" is not merely an order to an armed group to advance upon a single objective, but an order for a complete military campaign or, at the least, for a change of base. Just as our eyes cannot see microbes without a microscope, so the actual military movements which follow this order are invisible to us, and all we see is a single representational wooden block which does or does not make the motion ordered. Diplomacy is thus history writ large.

MESH OR SCALE AND OTHER RELATED SUBJECTS IN DIPLOMACY - By Allan B. Calhamer

A military situation may be simulated with a relatively fine mesh, say, in which individual ships or tanks are separately portrayed, or with a relatively coarse mesh, in which, say, units below the divisional level are ignored, entirely or in the main. Naturally, this does not mean that smaller units are presumed not to be present. Smaller units are simply included in the divisional designation as part of the division, or are reckoned not to be too important and to cancel each other out if they are operating on an unattached basis....

The mesh used in Diplomacy is just about as coarse as it can get without going over into complete abstraction. For example, prior to 1914 the British Navy was divided into two main fleets, the Home Fleet and the Mediterranean Fleet. In 1914 Winston S. Churchill, who was First Sea Lord, called the Mediterranean Fleet home, ostensibly for a grand review, and then did not permit it to return. Thus both fleets were available in Britain when the First World War broke out. Thus the two British fleets on the Diplomacy board are roughly the size of the Home and Mediterranean Fleets. On such a scale, it is apparent that the introduction of observation planes, PT boats, divisions, army corps, and whatnot would be out of mesh.

The peacetime Wehrmacht in Diplomacy is represented by just two blocks of wood. Even its mobilized strength, after protectorates have been assumed over Holland and Denmark, is only two to four (Army) units. Since historically only a part of the Wehrmacht was employed on the Western Front, from two to three units might be regarded as modelling the German effort on this front. The Western Front in fact is only two provinces wide, and consequently usually deadlocks, even if Germany has more than two units to devote to it. This mesh seems reasonable historically, indicating that unit size and province size are well related, at least on this part of the board.

Time has to be scaled, as well as force and area. Some games actually shift into a finer time mesh when a crisis situation occurs. This complication hardly seemed necessary in a game devoted to the First World War; although a German officer of the pre-1914 period said that he had spent his life reducing mobilization by half an hour.

Almost certainly there are points at which the time-mesh scale we are using seems a little askew. Six months to make some of the unopposed moves seems pretty long. Nevertheless, some of that time might be attributed to almost anything that occurs in the whole problem of dealing with an army, including training, planning, etc....

A proper understanding of the mesh of the game helps to rationalize the situation called "the beleaguered army." There an army stands and is attacked by two independent armies. Since these two stand each other off, nothing happens. Why, ask some players, wasn't the army in the middle disintegrated by all this action? Well, one answer is that the three armies were running around, up and down a province varying in size from Belgium to the Ukraine, fighting each other more or less equally, for all we know. As the game actually goes, you don't designate an army as your objective; you designate a province. For all we know, you want it against all comers. If you had intended an alliance against the man in the middle, you could have written other orders.

What is happening in the province during those six months? /Or, four months, if you want to consider the Winter build/removal period as a separate period. - F.C.D.] If the engagement is three-cornered, I suspect that there is a little Diplomacy going on in the field, for one thing. Two might be fighting one, in different combinations, throughout the six months. At the front itself, quite a few lower level personnel are just trying to stay out of it altogether, a practice followed even in two-party contests. Examples of multi-party contests in areas the size of Diplomacy provinces abound in Russian history from 1917 to about 1920. The same thing occurred in China in World War II.

Furthermore, it seems that the block of wood in Diplomacy really corresponds best to control of a rear area /i.e. bases/ for front-line forces, which are not themselves represented. This matter is obvious in the case of a fleet occupying a coastal province, where its associated land forces actually perform the occupation. We may just as easily for the sake of parallelism treat the "army" as a force holding a rear area for a front-line force not represented on the board. This rationale seems appropriate to the situation where a fleet and an army stand off in a coastal province. The fleet's land forces can hardly be as big as the whole army opposing them; but they may be equal to the fighting forces opposing them. In this sense, and in terms of the gross mesh we use in Diplomacy, the present action in Viet Nam is essentially a stand-off between a Chinese army and an American fleet. Thus the beleaguered army situation is one in which inconclusive fighting among the three front-line forces leaves the rear areas in status quo ante.

Why was such a coarse mesh chosen for Diplomacy? Partly because the addition of the diplomatic side of the game called for simplification somewhere else. Partly because we approached the matter somewhat from the point of view of chess or checkers. Chess has 64 spaces and 32 pieces; Diplomacy has about 80 spaces and 34 pieces. Such a fine principle as simultaneous moves, which is practically demanded in a seven person game, would be awfully unwieldy if there were many more pieces.

....There has to be a certain amount of complication to permit deception. We want it to be possible to position oneself for a surprise attack while plausibly attributing one's moves to some other objective. If the game were simplified to the point of abstraction and transparency, there would still be Diplomacy, but it would be so largely just a matter of who agreed to "get" whom that it would tend to be unpleasant and not very colorful. Also, a two-dimensional grid of about chessboard size brings us quickly to sufficient complications to guarantee indeterminacy for practical purposes.

Before settling on the present board size, I tried a larger board in which places such as Egypt and Gibraltar were treated as supply centers. The result was a game in which the players tended to ignore diplomatic considerations in favor of mere tactical play. Since too much attention was diverted away from the main point of the game, we re-

turned to the smaller board. There has also been an effort to force play into the center *italics added - ed.*, by making the spaces around the edge large, so that in effect there are no corners to get bogged down in. An exception is in Turkey, because *it* requires several provinces, being a *Great Power*....

Diplomacy is the only game I am aware of in which land and sea combat have anything like equal importance. Most games are sea games in which the land is just a border, or land games in which the sea is just a border. In Diplomacy, the division a country makes between land and sea forces is the most important single factor in assessing its future capabilities in different directions. Diplomacy is thus not on the level of a battle, a campaign, or even a single war. It is on the geopolitical level, where the division of earth-space into land and sea is a significant underlying factor. Two entirely separate international conflicts may go on on the board at once, in addition to skirmishes and confrontations elsewhere....

Diplomacy is not a game about diplomacy, and it is not a game about military or naval matters. It is a game about the relation between diplomacy and military-naval matters. Since the days of the viceroys, hardly any official below the level of president or prime minister has united these two functions so totally or equally as the Diplomacy player does in simulation. Perhaps the National Security Council unites these functions, although its members, except the President and Vice-President, come from a particular side of the mountain. We commented in HYPERMODERN that directly below the N.S.C. is "where the sword and the olive branch." The Diplomacy player is thus in the position of a Head of State or of his first minister. Furthermore, he is in an active crisis situation. Finally, he has before him the built-in objective of national expansion, an objective which is hardly required, however present it may be, in the real world.

On the other hand, a man who had been in the American consular service advised me that diplomacy in the real world is nothing like the game of Diplomacy. "At the most," he told me, "you might threaten to cut off aid." *Ah*, but our Diplomacy game is set in the period of Kaiser Bill and Czar Nikki, Allan, when men were men. As Bismarck might have put it: "Those were the days!" - F.C.D.]

((I have reprinted several other of Allan's articles about the design and playtesting of the game. If you are interested, they are in #47, #68, and #63, each of which is 35¢))



Odd Ball Games #2

## STUDIES IN ABSURDITY - 71BV

((The following appeared in *Costaguana* Vol 6, #15, 6-15-73 and was by the GM, Conrad von Metzke. I should note that at that time, the victory criteria was not in terms of SCs, but required a majority of the units on the board))

This is easily the most fantastic game end in the annals of the hobby. Never before has a player spent two real-time years and ten game years arriving at a won position, requiring only the technicality of a build to make the win formal, and then dropped out. But not only did Larry Blandin build France to that level, he then missed the build to win. So the game went on, and said party - despite a lengthy long-distance fone call - missed the following 2 moves in succession. That did it; after issuing proper warnings, I shoved in a replacement, who proceeded to play for one season, write a build, and win.

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((Diplomacy, like chess, is not a static game. Styles and preferences have changed even in the 20 years that the game has been played postally. The following article, by Edi Birsan, appeared in the 1974 Diplomacy Handbook of the I.D.A.)

## THE F-G ALLIANCE: A NEW FAD?

In looking over the history of country strengths as reflected in the rating systems, for the past 6 or 7 years, one tends to confirm that Germany has to be one of the bottom 2 or 3 powers in the board and that France is generally a mediocre power outshined by R, T, and that island bastion, E. However, country strengths in all the ratings appear very deceiving after the most shallow scan of their origin. These rankings reflect more and more the popular trends of the alliance patterns that allow certain countries to do well and others not so well.

For example, the conception of the superpowers in the early 60s was E and F in the west and R and T in the east. Combined with the inclination of Italian powers to see no alternative to attacking either A or F, you have a case for about 5 years where the first out were G and A usually followed by the Italians as the Turks ran all over the south and then a tossup for the win with E and T getting the major shares.

By the middle of the 60s, the Russian players became aware of the powers of the Turks and tended to play more aggressively thus picking up quite a few wins in cases where lax players missed moves and what not. At the same time there was the development of the E-G alliance theory based on Seapower/Landpower hopes which tended to put a crimp on French ratings at the same time as giving a boost to the English and German. Matters in the east remained about the same with Austria getting wiped out turn after turn and then Italy falling victim to a 7 center Turkey with 4 fleets.

Then, with the introduction of the Lepanto Opening and its surprising popularity a sudden change occurred in the eastern strategic setting. Suddenly people were talking about the A-I superpower and a counter was finally found that could stop the R-T giant in the east before it got off the ground. Most importantly the Lepanto article spurred consideration on the part of future Italian players that there might be something in keeping up good solid relations with the Austrians rather than marching right off into Tyrolia.

At this point in time the stage is set for a corresponding change in the West. It is to materialize as the present upswing in the popularity of the F-G alliance. E's high ratings has been supported thruout the past history of the game by domination of either the E-G or E-F alliance system which naturally gave E a great advantage over the rankings of F and G, as E was rarely the target nation in the alliance system that dominated the west. It is not the case in the F-G alliance.

In the British Diplomacy records the effect of the domination of the F-G alliance can be seen, for over there, for whatever reason, they never really got entrenched into the mystic belief in the all powerful F-E alliance or the elusive security of the G-E system. In 1901 and all that #31, Mick Bullock compiles some supporting stats which give the rankings for all the countries in British Dippy circles as being:

By Supply Centers: F G R T A E I  
By Wins and Draws: G R F T E A I

Clearly, the strength of E in the above games appears far below that usually obtained in a survey of all the games ever played. The only factor different in the British games is that they maintain the F-G alliance as both feasible and desirable whereas for the rest of the world, and the past games, that alliance was considered not only very hard to maintain but undesirable compared to the superpower myths that lured both F and G to alliance with E first and themselves rarely.

As an aside it might be interesting to note the effect of the Lepanto Opening

in the British games as it too is recently showing up in the games over there which would give us a look at country strengths as seen thru the bias of games dominated by the F-G alliance in the west and an A-I alliance in the east. One might expect French stock to soar as R and T slide down at the hands of the A-I block.

All of this goes to support what many old timers have been saying over and over again: the countries are as aboutas balanced as one can reasonably get without mirrored positions: it's the players that cause country strengths.

((Amer. An article such as this must be understood in its proper context. In this case, that would be the DW demo game, 1974CK which was well underway when this article was written. The game featured a strong FG alliance, which stood at 9-9 by FOL, with the allies deep into Austria and Italy, and the only other major power was Russia. In 1905, France stabbed his German ally. Russia allied with the victim, and the game ended in a three way draw.

Getting back to his original point, its interesting to look ahead. As it happens the above preference rakings did not last long. By August 1979, about 5 years later, the British games showed (ranking by wins and draws): R E=G T F A I, with T & F almost identical and A & I almost identical, and R with a huge lead. Thus, it would appear that France was more often the odd man out in the east after all.

I'm not sure how important trends are these days; its hard to tell. The larger number of games, and the fact that they are disbursed over a larger number of zines, probably makes it harder for trends to develop. One way to find out would be to conduct a survey of openings, which would be difficult to do. But there is always a role for education by example. If Italian players, for example, start getting away with A Tyo-Mun in Fall 1901, this is likely to embolden others to try such an approach. The role of a Demo game is harder to judge, and the influence of the DW Demo game may be less these days because they hobby has a number of "high visibility" games.))

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((Sometimes, the most simple things in life can take an unexpected turn. The following account is from Don Turnbull, editor of Albion, and appeared in Greatest Hits #45))

## AN INTERESTING OLD STORY

To fully comprehend this tale of the British Post Office, you have to know that John Piggott and Andy Davison once both went to that hive of iniquity, Jesus College in Cambridge.

1. I published Andy Davison's flat number wrongly in Albion (when he is not in Cambridge, Andy's Sale flat no. is D5, not D4, but you would expect the folkes across the corridor to know). Anyhow,
2. Rod Blackshaw wrote to Andy, enclosing with his letter a letter from John Piggott to him (Rod). He used the adress as wrongly printed by me.
3. The letter was returned to the P.O. as undeliverable. It was opened, and they found (a) Rod's letter, the only adress on which is "Styal" and (b) John's letter, with his address, 17 Monmouth Road, Oxford, but with no surname.
4. The Post Office remails the letter to "John, 17 Monmouth Road, Oxford", but by the time he has arrived, John has left for Cambridge. His mother then re-directed it to Jesus College, but forgot to add John's surname.
5. The letter arrived at Jesus College, but the letter system means that "John" could go anywhere in the College. They open it to find out to which John it refers. They find no John ((I assume he menas, they find no last name for the John, since a letter enclosed is signed by John)), but remarked ((sic? "noticed") mention of one Andy Davidson. So the letter was popped into Andy Davidson's pigeon hole, where it should have been all along. ((Now, if the letter had ever gotten to Piggott, the game might have taken an unexpected turn too, since Piggott without doubt would have found some cunning use for such a letter.))

((Surely the most celebrated romance in hobby history was that between Doug Beyerlein and Marie Cockrell. From Poictesme #13, April 1975 comes this alleged account of how they supposedly met, and I don't really know if it was written by Doug.))

## T R A P P E R

It all started innocently enuf; I was on my annual sojourn to Lebanon, Indiana, land of cow-pies and short buildings, for the DipCon (an appropriate enuf title considering some of the people I've seen there.) Being basically at heart a miser, I decided to sponge off Walt Buchanan and stay at his place. Free room and board, all just for putting up with another tour of his archives...

"...and here is my ten-ton burglar-proof safe," Walt glowed with paternal pride "The price was so good it was a steal"

"The burglar will probably say the same thing," I mumbled, yawning ferociously. I could barely keep my eyes open....

Suddenly I was out in the open air, a ratchety Schwinn ((bicycle)) between my legs. I was peddling thru a field of broken glass, jagged rocks, and deep ruts and potholes. Mercenary gas station attendents leered at me along the way, their air pumps suspiciously out-of-order. I reached down - no, mine was missing. Uh, my pump that is. Suddenly, the hair on my back rose, and I looked behind me: another rider was chasing me! Dressed in black, astride a balck 10-speed, her gender was revealed by her long flowing hear and women's lib button. A sinister gleam was in her eyes, and a malevolent smile played about her face. Somewhat disconcerted, she threw the smile aside, which flapped its wings futilely. I peddled for all I was worth, thanking the powers above me that I had wroked my way thru college as a peddler.

Strange things started to happen; the ground before me became a steep hill, a fierce wind sprang up in front of me, the pavement below turned to the consistency of a melon that had been run over by a tank, rain pelted down in my eyes, and the sun baked me unmercifully. I looked back --- she was gaining! How? How could a mere girl keep up, no, overtake, a strong man such as I? She started to pull alongside me, and reached out clawed fingers for my arm. She spoke in a melliflous voice reminiscent of the legendary harpies:

"Soon you'll be mine, mine, MINE!"

I shrieked in horror. Then Walt was there, shaking my shoulder and holding a copy of Big Brother in his hand. "Yeah, Reinsel does that to me too." ((Reinsel was the pubber of BB)) With this premonition of doom, I cycled down to Chicago, noting along the way that either they had taken to underground buildings, or that Indiana was just one big cow pasture. It certainly had that odor about it.

I was in the final game of the Tournament - I pulled Austria, and my blood changed from O to AB negative as I saw the Turkish player - thé girl in my dream! As the game began, I overheard R, G, and I plotting together: Heuer, Lipton, Neiger. God! Why did von Metzke give me the Boardman Numbers! Perhaps I could get England or France to help out ... no, Birsan and Prosnitz, they were sure to fight. A cold sweat broke out as I turned to Turkey, a sadistic smile playing about her face. No, this one was hers.

She fluttered her eyelids, then smirked cloyingly. "I hear you're an engineer." she cooed, feigning admiration admirably. Apparently she was under the delusion that engineers make money. They don't.

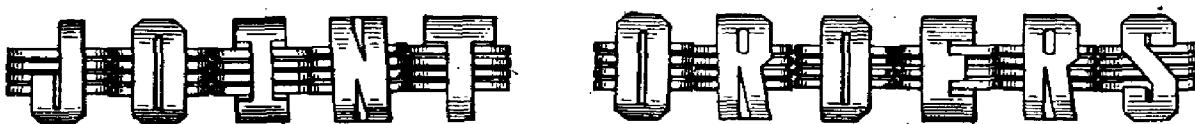
"Uh...er...well, as long as we are in this game together, would you be interested in an alliance?" I glance furtively at the other players; still plotting, punctuated by a smirk in my direction. My attention was dragged back as the girl, (Marie ....something. Something unpleasantly phallic) took my arm. "I only make one kind of alliance: long term."

Fool, that I was, I agreed. She produced a document and had me sign it. This wasn't so bad, but she made me sign it in blood. Then she revealed the fine print. It said that I had to marry her! Lipton, Neiger, and Heuer leaped forward, guffawing

and chortling, to sign the document as witnesses. Their plans were laid bare to me -- too late!

I sit here in the tower awaiting the day. She made some excuse and accompanied me to Palo Alto and immediately imprisoned me here. I am writing this in the hopes that someone will find this account and save me .... what's that? Footsteps -- she comes! Its out the window with this, I pray not too late.

((I'm never quite sure whether to reprint items such as this. They have only a very thin connection to the game or hobby, and the references to other people will be meaningless to the great majority of you. In most cases, I decide not to, but occasionally I'll make an exception. Anyhow, Doug and Marie still are in Palo Alto, and Doug still bicycles altho Marie has given racing up. An account of their climb up Mt Rainier appeared recently in EFGLART #171. Doug has signed up for his first gamestart in more than 7 years, to play a PBEM game.))



((Joint Orders are orders from two or more players submitted on the same sheet of paper. There are several ways that these can be handled by the GM. We start with John Piggott in Ethil the Frog #37, October, 1973))

This peculiar disease of so-called master diplomats has been endemic in other zines for some time. Only recently has it spread to EtF, but spread it has done, with a vengeance - 4 sets of joint orders for EtF #35, three this time. Since some of you appear to have gotten the wrong idea about these things, I thought it best to say a few words about them.

First, in order to be valid, a set of joint orders must be signed by both parties. This is essential to prevent forgery.

Second, neither party is permitted to include "escape clauses". A common mistake appears to be that people think they can have the orders invalidated if one of the parties alters his own set. This is absolutely false; saying, "If the Turkish F Ank moves anywhere but to Con, these orders are invalid; use the separate set I submitted last week" in a set of joint orders is quite obviously just as illegal as submitting an ordinary set of orders saying, "move F Sev-Rum but if T doesn't move F Ank-Con ignore this and move F Sev-Bla". In both cases, one is trying to make one's orders conditional on the same season's orders of another power, which is clearly forbidden. In the future I shall ignore any such escape clauses in joint orders.

A corollary to this is that each party to a joint order set has no guarantee whatever that the player who actually mails the set to the GM will not alter them to his advantage; and the GM has no choice but to accept the orders, even if they have been clearly tampered with by another power, as long as they bear the signature they're meant to. At least, that's the way I see it. After all, if you don't trust your ally implicitly, why organize joint orders at all?

Finally, I'll remind you to make it absolutely clear which set of orders you wish to apply, should you submit more than one set in a given season. The recommended method of distinguishing between different sets is to qualify them as "first set", "second set", etc. Failing this, I'll use the set with the latest postmark, or, lacking postmarks, the set last opened.

You are not permitted to make your orders conditional on earlier sets having arrived or not. Escape clauses such as "Use these orders only if the joint orders from Turkey haven't arrived" are quite illegal. You must specify which set you want used without qualification.

((The discussion then continued with this letter and response in EtF #40))



Richard Sharp: Your policy on joint orders interested me, as I've been doubtful about this subject ever since I started GMing. Some observations may be of passing interest:

(1) "If you don't trust your ally, why organize joint orders at all?" Because you don't trust him, I thought.

(2) Basically, I agree with your principle that one should not be able to make one's orders conditional on another country's. (I know I've been doing it ((in his role as a player, I assume he means)) but I thought it was generally allowed, and who am I to handicap myself when people want me to cheat?)

(3) If one accepts your theory, joint orders become entirely useless. In fact, if one player is allowed to fiddle the other player's orders, joint orders are less safe than ordinary ones. In effect, a player whose orders have been tampered with has signed something he's never seen.

(4) Tho the sending of "anti-stab" orders may be illegal, there's no way under the present rules rhat a GM can bar the reverse practice: that is, sending a set of orders marked "first set", and marking the second set "second set", so that if the latter arrive, they become valid.

(5) It therefore seems to me that there is a loophole in your policy which would in effect allow conditional orders to be sent. That is: A and B send in individual orders (attacking each other) marked "first set". A then prepares two copies of a set of Joint Orders marked "second Set", signs one, and sends it to the GM, leaves the other unsigned and sends it to B. B signs that, and sends it to the GM, who now has two sets of orders bearing the appropriate signatures. But if A fails to send his joint orders in, then A's signature on B's joint orders is lacking, B's second set is invalid, his first set is used, and he has protected himself against a stab. Equally, if either player changes any order, the GM will have two conflicting sets and will be unable to decide which one to use ((and thus, presumably, both players will be paralyzed))((Note that in this case, if all goes "well", the GM has two identical sheets of joint orders, save that one is signed by A alone, one is signed by B alone, rather than the more traditional situation where both signatures are on the same sheet.))

Piggott: Hang on there, you've got it wrong I'm sure. If a set of joint orders are submitted and signed only by one party, then surely the orders in that set for the signing player's units are valid, and those for the other (non-signing) player's units are invalid and not followed. This is basically the same sort of situation as sometimes happens where a player consults the wrong issue of a zine in writing his orders and requests movements for units he doesn't possess. You can't declare a player's orders totally invalid just because he orders about a couple of units that don't belong to him.

However, here's a problem: what if a set of obviously joint orders are submitted, signed by neither party? If the GM can't figure out who sent them, he'd have to declare them invalid; in fact, a strong case could be made for declaring them invalid even if one could tell who sent them on the basis of postmarks, etc.

This whole business of joint orders is a pain in the ass. It might well be simpler if we ruled that they were illegal under any circumstances. Personally, I've never had much use for them; racking my brains, I can think of only 2 instances in my career as a postal player when I've had recourse to joint orders, and in both cases this was merely a device so that I could stab the other party. It was successful once, and unsuccessful the other time.

((The first question to consider is whether or not to permit such joint orders. Aside from pragmatic considerations of whether it's worth the bother, this decision is likely to turn on your philosophy of GMing. Do you consider yourself aloof from the game, just an impartial mediator unconcerned about how the players accomplish their goals? Or do you prefer to insert yourself into the game in some ways? In the former case, you'll permit joint orders --- after all, you don't care how the players conduct their diplomacy or how the orders get to you, how many sheets of paper they appear on, etc. In the latter case, you may well ban them as a tactic you don't approve of. The same how-involved-in-the-game-do-I-want-to-get question arises in deciding on whether to write commentary, permit proxy orders, and the like. ))

((Once you've decided to permit joint orders, there's some basic decisions you'll have



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Needless to say I returned his precious article and told him that if he didn't know where to put it I could suggest a place! I've run into claptrap like this before and it has always galled the hell out of me. A game is one thing; publishing, organizations, disputes, etc are ALL TOTALLY SEPARATE. Too bad this \_\_\_\_\_ can't think like that!

((All deletions were Leds, not mine. I should point out that right after people are stabbed, they tend to get very paranoid, which might explain the whole letter. And now for a piece of elegant simplicity, we turn to Platypus Pie #16, Nov 1972 for an item entitled, "Press Release of the Day --- From an old sTab Game", by Bob Ward:))

MOSCOW: Well, we thought we had this deal with Turkey, and he sTabbed us. Then we thought we had this deal with Austria, and he sTabbed us. We were allied with Germany, then he sTabbed us, and now England holds the capital. All in all it hasn't been too good a year.

((Finally, this item comes from Ethil the Frog #21, Oct 1973. It is taken from the letter column; John Piggott is the editor))

Don Trunbull: I wonder whether you have created a rather awkward precedent by mentioning Les Pimley as a stabber incarnate to the general public. If he gets Ethil he could be righteously annoyed. Generally, I believe an editor has to be above these things when he has his editorial hat on, tho when he is a player, anything goes. However, that's up to you.

Piggott: Yes, but where does being a player stop and being an editor begin? One could argue that my blanket condemnation of Les Pimley a couple of issues ago was more in the nature of a general diplomatic statement to several Ethil readers, just as I might warn a new player, "beware of Les Pimley --- he's dangerous" in my SO1 diplomatic correspondence in a game.....

Les Pimley: In my defense, following the international warning to all and sundry against me, may I explain that the "stab" against our editor was purely a defensive move, and no subsequent action was taken or attempted against him, as he could (if he wanted) readily verify. Andy, however, has repeatedly shown himself incapable of following his own advertised moves, and the stab was surely seen to be coming 4 or 5 moves in advance.

In conclusion, I reserve the right to stab these gentlemen at any time I deem necessary, unnecessary, or both. So there.

((Lastly, a(n approximate) quote from an otherwise long forgotten in person dippy game: "I didn't want him to realize he'd been stabbed, so I didn't actually take anything."))

## THE ZINE COLUMN #71

There is no longer any need to fret about whether or not a new game will be orphaned or not. Scott Hanson 233 Oak Grove #306 Minneapolis MN 55403 has openings in a 2-week deadline game which is pretty much guaranteed to be orphaned, which takes all the uncertainty out of it. His Irkesome! will fold by the end of 1984, if not earlier, so that this game will almost surely go to a new GM. He also has openings in a "German/English game"

Magus #31 has Steve Langley's account of DafCon III, one of the most entertaining Con descriptions you'll ever read. It had an amazing collection of people, including old timers (Beyerlein, Peery, and Carol and Edi Birsan) as well as a huge roster of "newer" people, including Gary Coughlan, Pete Gaughan, Rob Wittmond, Don Williams, Terry Tallman, Mike Ehli, Mark Keller and many others. Mike Mazzar and Bob Olsen were "there" via cassette tape, with Caruso, Byrne, Linsey, Schilling and others there by telephone, and it was quite a bash. The same issue had accounts by Don Williams and Dafne as well, so those of us who, dammitall, couldn't make it, at least got a good feel for what happened. The issue also had a very curious exchange of letters between Greg Fritz's former wife Daf (now Daf Langley) and his current wife Beth. It was fascinating reading, tho you'd be hard-pressed to explain why it belongs in a Dipzine. All in all, a great issue, and a real pleasure not to have Magus so choked with press.

The new year brings news of old-timers returning to the hobby. Richard Sharp, who folded his Dolchstoss in Feb 1979 is (according to Gary Coughlan via Oxymoron) resuming publication. If true, this is very welcome nooze indeed, since Sharp is one of the best, and quite possibly the best writer the hobby has ever had. And from Xenogogic, via Scott Hanson comes the news that Conrad von Metzke may be returning to the hobby, as he has requested an orphaned game to take over. Conrad is an extremely funny writer, and if he returns to that role too, 1984 prospects would brighten further.

And speaking of comebacks, a tip of the hat goes to Pete Northcott. His Italy in a postal game was down to one center --- Greece --- by WO3. Starting in 1908, he managed to retake his home centers one by one to grow to 4 centers...Some international games seem to be getting underway recently, one in SNAFU! and the other in Watch Your Back, which show how far flung the hobby really is. The games include players in Norway, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Abu Dhabi, Greece, Venezuela and France.

Passchendaele #45 has some interesting thoughts about the role of "politics" in the hobby, as Francois points out, for example, that even the decision to give an orphan game to A rather than B is in essence, a political choice....the January Xenogogic has a nice essay on what is involved in setting up a dippy archives....and speaking of making life difficult for archivists, Midlife Crisis and Dirty Piles of Plaid Clothes have come out with another joint issue. Mark Lew's usually entertaining subzine "Benzene" has now moved to the latter, a very appropriate home. Mark is starting another game of "Deviant Dip", the most fluid variant ever created (so far as I know). Players are to submit one variant rule of their choosing every season, and the one which garners the most votes is put into effect. The game may thus feature the reversal of S.C.s and non-S.C., gross alterations of the board, half-fleets, etc. The best part is when Mark struggles to GM the game, sifting thru the havoc caused by chaotic rules. It reminds me a bit of the end of Le Guin's "The Lathe of Heaven". But I digress.

MaryCon '84 has been set for June 2-3, again at Mary Washington College, with a variant Tournament the day before ("VariMaryCon") for a 3-day con. Its the only Con I've got a chance of attending in 1984.

Voice of Doom #90 brings the nooze that I've been picked "Doomie of the Year". I am naturally very pleased. I am also vastly relieved! Free at last! Now that I've accomplished my goal, I will no longer have to suck up to Bruce Linsey. No more torturing the English language to explain away some incomprehensible remark that Brux has made. No more having to persuade Bruce that, for example, if a person sends in a Xerox of his orders that does not mean that all his units are double ordered. Yes, now I can tell the truth. That foto on the cover of #90 was doctored to make me look like Jobba the Mut. The issue appeared only 2 weeks after the previous one, and checked in at 64 pages (the postage alone on that exceeded the sub rate). He's put out more pages in Jan alone than I do in 7 months. Don't you just hate people who make the rest of us look so bad? Anyhow, thanx, Kathy, for sending in the winning essay to VOD. This issue of DD is the mention-Scott-Hanson-as-often-as-possible issue, but your turn will come nextish, OK?

Diplomacy World #36 checks in again at over 50 pages. The issue has amazing variety: John Daly on orphans, Kathy Byrne on "double ordered" pieces (well, it says "Kathy Byrne", but if she wrote it, she sure did alter her writing style), more Hobby History from Fred Davis, several items of fiction/humor, the first publishers survey in 4 years (DD is the 18th oldest, tho above it is Baltic Sea, no longer published, I think AND Buzzard's Breath, no longer a dipzine), several ratings items and much more. As, yes, Scott Hanson put it, "There seems to be more variety, better entertainment; the flagship zine is a bit higher up the flagpole now ... it's worth the high price." Indeed.

Hm. I seem to have another line or two here. Should I mention that the DW #36 has an editorial by me criticizing a virtually unanimously followed GMing practice? And another one saying, sure, go ahead and stab your ally for just one center? Nah, that would be too egotistical.