

DIPLOMAG

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This is the bimonthly newsletter of the American Mensa Postal Diplomacy SIG, bringing hobby and SIG news to Mensans interested in postal Diplomacy, the board game produced in the USA by Avalon Hill. For SIG game openings, make inquiries to the Chairman. Membership dues for 1984 will be \$3.00 (US) for all members. If joining in mid-year, please pro-rate dues payments.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

WELCOME TO 1984! Thank you George Orwell; this is the last mention of George Orwell in DIPLOMAG this year. I promise. I'm already sick of reading articles about it; this is one place you won't see one.

NEW SIG GAME STARTS TO FILL...PUBLISHER OF MANIFEST DESTINY CLAIMS THE RIGHT TO GM IT.

Turns out that my predecessor promised Keith Sesler the honor of being the Games Master of the next SIG game. There are also one or two players signed up at this time. Thanks also for the other offer to GM the game.

Discussion of SIG dues:

Your chairman has received a number of inquiries in regard to who is subject to payment of SIG dues. I should have known that Diplomacy players would seek out and find all the little subtleties in what was intended very innocently. What I really meant by all members was to forget that there ever was a different rate for Canadians or anybody else getting theirs (their DIPLOMAG, I mean...filthy mind!) by regular mail. Yes, I know theirs have to go into envelopes. More of a nuisance than an expense...when was the last time you bought envelopes?

Anyhow, back to who's exempt: SIG officers (those four of us with our names at the top of this page) and also the GM's who are running SIG games. I include in this category GM's who habitually support the SIG, even if not presently running a game. Those GM's are expected to forward copies of their zines to the chairman, for the SIG Game News. One exception is Ron Brown of Ottawa, Ontario, who gets his free, since he really has been functioning as a Contributing Editor. (See his article "Sea Powers" elsewhere in this issue.)

Psychology Today magazine defines soft-shelled crabs as user-friendly, and lobster as non-user-friendly.

SIG GAMES NEWS

Mensa #14 (1981 AQ) GM: Keith Sesler zine: Manifest Destiny

RUSSIA TAKING A LICKING FROM THE WEST!
PLAYERS RESPOND QUICKLY TO DIPLOMAG COMMENTS TO MAKE MONKEY OUT OF CHAIRMAN!

Well, shut my mouth! Just when I see some good copy and comment on the lopsidedness of the game's two major alliances, well, things changed around faster than you can say Allan B. Calhamer. So much for my meddling.

Eric Strand (France) at 11 units supported his English buddy (Craig Reges) into Sweden, letting Reges build up to 6 units (from 4).

And in the East, Ralph Baty's Russia did indeed take a pasting...he lost St. Pete to the English, Sweden to the combined efforts of England and France, and gave up Trieste to his Turkish ally (Ken Hager), having taken Vienna from Italy in the Spring. The Chairman is gratified to see that this alliance (R & T) is now squared up at 7 and 6 units respectively.

I did manage to call one right, though. Rick Young's Italy still has no friends, and did lose Vienna to Russia. He's now down to four units (and counting). It would make sense for the E-F alliance to come to his aid, especially those French fleets in TYR and W.MED.

Why won't anybody in this game write any press?

Mensa #16 (1982 I) GM: Ron Brown zine: SNAFU!

"RUSSIA POISED ON BRINK OF WORLD CONQUEST. ENGLAND GONE."
FRANCE TAKES MAO AND HOLDS IT, WHILE ENGLAND ORDERS F LONDON - PROMISED LAND

Paula Dodge's Turkey picked up Naples from the Russians (Dave Lincoln) to deny him an immediate win. But things look bleak as Russia owns 17 (count 'em) centers, and is threatening in a number of places. One lone German unit is on the frontier, and GM Ron Brown has said that if Germany NMR's again, he will put Germany into civil disorder.

A tip of the hat goes to Mike Mazzer (England) who held out against the Russian bear with one unit in London, and ordered it "Says Cheerio!" at the final opportunity. Good show, old chap!

Mensa #17 (1983 V) GM: Steve Hutton zine: No Fixed Address

With Fall of '03 completed...

"France is immobilized, and GM is disgusted by latest coup d'etat!"
SIG CHAIRMAN COMPLAINS THAT HE CAN'T TELL WHAT'S GOING, NOR DOES ANY OF IT MAKE ANY SENSE.

England (Randal Husk) has grabbed Brest from the new French leader (John Ellis) who is heading the other way, toward Italy (Errol Platt) who is making war against Austria-Hungary (Mike Ehli). About the only thing I can understand here is the rest of the stuff in NFA, giving the Mensa status of one player and the pronunciation of Ehli (EE-LIE).

Ron Brown's Germany is heading into Scandinavia, while Keith Sesler's Turkey is holding in southern Russia, while Dave Lincoln's Russia is scrambling to recover home territory.....None of the seven has more than seven units.

SEA POWERS

by Ronald Brown

All but seven supply centres are available to attack from the sea, yet many players see Diplomacy as a land battle between armies. True, the land is important and should never be ignored, but control of the sea spaces often gives a country greater flexibility. For example, he can move further, faster. And he can convoy.

England, of course, naturally opts for sea, as opposed to land, power more often than not. It is extremely rare to see an England content with two or three fleets devoted to convoying armies to the mainland. Italy is a natural as a sea power as well, being able to develop control of the Mediterranean quickly. Turkey has the option of developing as either a sea or land power, and has done well as both. France does need considerable land forces, but can develop as a sea power in either the Atlantic or Mediterranean, though rarely both. Russia's often develop a strong northern sea force, sweeping over the top of Scandinavia.

That leaves Austria and Germany, both of which have difficulty in growing into the seas because of their limited quick access. Austrian fleets are slow to develop and Germany's can get locked into the Baltic. However, there have been games with strong Austrian fleets controlling the Mediterranean, and Germany's have gained control of the North Sea.

Calhamer deliberately designed the game so that the outer edges were large spaces and the central ones small. That means most of the seas cover greater areas than land areas do. Look how quickly France can get a fleet into the Irish Sea, or Italy can get a fleet into the Eastern Mediterranean. A fleet can get from the Norwegian Sea to the Western Mediterranean in three moves. Compare how long it takes an army to move from St. Petersburg to Budapest!

It would take an army seven moves to get from Brest to Greece if he went by land; one move if he went by sea. Armies have moved from Greece to Liverpool in one move and there is a case of a convoy from Syria to St. Petersburg. Long convoys are rare, but can be extremely effective when they occur. But even short convoys give you greater flexibility than none at all. A short hop from Berlin to Livonia might be the deciding factor in a battle.

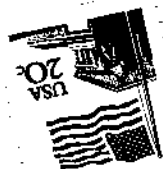
The difference between land powers and sea powers can be illustrated thus: suppose you are Germany fighting Russia when France attacks. How long will it take you to break off the Russian engagement and get back to defend yourself? On the other hand, England can switch from a battle in northern Russia to an attack on France with much greater ease. Italy's are often "switch-hitters" swinging between engaging Turkey and France. Austria, on the other hand, might discover problems if he tried swinging between attacks on two powers.

Consider the sea option carefully. It could make for a more exciting and open game.

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SIG GAME NEWS CARRIES ON, SOME MORE

Mensa #18 (1983 AV) GM: Scott Hanson zine: Irksome!

SIG CHAIRMAN DENOUNCES GM FOR LACK OF HEADLINES TO REPRINT.
GM RESPONDS BY ANNOUNCING DEMISE OF ZINE IN THE FACE OF COMPLIMENTARY REVIEW
Scott, if I promise not to give you a good review, will you revive
Irksome? Gut, ich liebe auch schnelle Entschlüsse. Dank.

With the Spring of 1903 just ended, Ron Brown seems to be completing his conquest of England. He's at seven units now and certainly seems like a going concern (he's France). Craig Reges (Germany) is the apparent next enemy of the French, as Ron supported the Austrian move into Munich. However, it would appear that the experienced German will hold up a little while, at least long enough for the Italian counterattack which seems to be forming up in the western Mediterranean....Italy is played by Keller, but I'm not to sure which Keller is which. (There's one playing Turkey, also....Mark and Mike - at least they could be nice enough to different first initials.

Oh, before I forget, the Austrian who is siding with Brown is Paula Dodge.

I should mention (in case he goes through with the fold of Irksome!) that Scott has written that all of his current games will be finished in Irksome! and that he won't cease issuance until later in 1984. He even has openings in a 2 week game and in a German/English game that will continue after publication stops. All this even if we can't talk him out of it.

COMING UP NEXT MONTH IN DIPLOMAG:

An analysis of Ron Brown's playing style--or how come he seems to win so much.

More SIG Game News

SIG membership list

FLASH! -- Rod Walker (Editor of Diplomacy World) has announced a special offer for SIG members good until Feb 14th. Take a new subscription to DW and get a full year (4 issues) for \$7, saving \$1 off the newstand price. Write to Rod at 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas. Ca. 92024