
Welcome to PLATYPUS PIE # 9, a Journal of Postal Diplomacy. It carries the postal games of 1971EH (The Winner's Game), 1972AR (The Newcomer's Game), and 1972BT (The Open Game), along with various and assorted trivia having to do with rating lists, pornography, law exam questions and answers, general riff-raff, and, sometimes, even something to do with Diplomacy itself, which is a game invented by Allan B. Calhamer, and marketed by Games Research, Inc., Boston, MASS.

THE GAMESMASTER: Brenton Ver Ploeg; 520 Parker Ave., # 202; San Francisco, CA 94118. Phone: (415) 668-9218, but I'm sometimes hard to reach. The best time to call is during the afternoon these days, but it changes--I shall try to keep you posted. Moreover, I promise to be in on Monday evenings before the deadline. In the rare event that I would miss that, I will be in on the morning of the deadline. That's a Tuesday.

REPLACEMENT POSITIONS: These have been slightly updated and altered since the last issue. I still need players for 1972BT & 1971EH. Particularly the latter. Positions are free, provided that you still get PP otherwise--through being a player in another game or subscribing.

COSTS: There are no games open in PP, and the magazine will either fold when these end, or charge some heinously high fee. Subscriptions are currently eight for a dollar, but they will, on August First, go up to six for a dollar, 13 for \$2.00. However, all present subscribers may continue to receive the magazine at current rates, provided that their subs do not lapse.

ADDRESS CHANGE FOR THE GAMESMASTER: I take my final exam in Trade Regulation (Anti-Trust) on Saturday, the 22d of July--just a few days from now. The following day, I am leaving for Colorado, where I will spend two to three weeks. MOVES SHOULD BE SENT TO SAN FRANCISCO, however, I recommend that you also send a copy to: General Delivery, Breckenridge, Colorado 80420. There is no phone. Mail should go to Colorado until about the 2d of August when, to be safe, it should be sent here to SF. Again, let me remind you--mail should be sent here if it contains moves. But I won't be here. It is now apparent that I will be staying at the present address during the next school year, and through the Bar Exam next Summer.

1971EH

THE "WINNER'S GAME"

HAITUS/1903

G A M E D E A L S O N E D O W N !
GAMESMASTER MUFFS IT--POS ALL

DEADLINE FOR FALL/WINTER 1903 DELAYED TWO WEEKS UNTIL AUGUST FIRST: Send moves to Breckenridge address mentioned above, and I shall then mail out results to all concerned, or call if there might be a problem. Of course, I PREFER that Winter 1903 builds be made conditional

1972BTT H I N G S S T A R T O F F W I L D ! SPRING 1901

KEY'S ITALY IS IN TRIESTE IN 1901!!

RUSSIA MOVES TWO UNITS TO THE NORTH

AUSTRIA (McCallum): A Bud-Ser; F Tri-Alb; A Vie Parades on the Ring
 [Ring too slippery, Army falls on its ass; Holds].

ENGLAND (Osmanson): F Edi-Nrg; F Lon-Nth; A Liv-Yor.

FRANCE (Rocamora): F Bre-Mid; A Par-Pic; A Mar-Spa.

GERMANY (Soong): A Mun-Ruh; A Ber-Kie; F Kie-Den.

ITALY (Key): F Nap-Ion; A Ven-Tri; A Rom-Ven.

RUSSIA (Lipson): F StP(sc)-Bot; F Sev-Bla; A Mos-Stp; A War-Ukr.

TURKEY (John LePire): A Con-Bul; A Smy-Con; F Ank-Bla.

DEADLINE FOR FALL 1901 MOVES IS NOON, TUESDAY, AUGUST 8TH 1972. Phone Calls are due by the previous evening, but, I guess, can still be made the next morning before the deadline. Copies may be sent to Colorado.

STAND-BY LIST IS QUITE BRIEF: John Hendry. I need several more-- is anyone there?

PRESS RELEASES:

Athens: The violent earthquakes which ripped the Northern provinces the past week are becoming more and more infrequent, but the damage done to the entire area has been immense. The death toll will probably run to 5,000 and the health authorities fear an outbreak of cholera epidemic. King George has requested the help of neighboring nations for medical assistance to prevent the spreading of the disease to their borders.

Constantinople: The Turkish Minister of foreign affairs, Tewfik Pacha, today announced that Medical teams of the Turkish Army were being sent to help fight the cholera epidemic now spreading in Northern Greece.

London (F Lon-North Sea)(A Mar-Spa): Waldeck Rousseau, Prime Minister of France, prepared to leave London today to return to Paris after a week of consultations with the Prime Minister, the Marquis of Salisbury, and the first Sea Lord, the Earl of Selbourne. In a joint communique issued last night, both countries expressed dismay at the huge military buildup being conducted by the German Army along the Belgian and Dutch borders. "In as much as both countries have many English and French speaking nationals residing there, and because of the vast economic ties between the four countries, any act of aggression against Holland or Belgium by Germany will be considered as an act of aggression against England and France and handled accordingly."

Madrid: The Marquis de Aguelar de Campos, Minister of Foreign Affairs, threatened today to break off Diplomatic relations with France, in the wake of what the Marquis called dealings with the Protestant enemy by France; referring to the recent Franco-English agreement on Belgium and Holland.

Naples: Tunisian pirates again attacked and sank three British Merchant ships in the Mediterranean Sea some 75 miles SE of Sicily yesterday, bringing the total of vessels now sunk by the mauraders to 22, including ships of practically every nation. The latest incident was reported by the Commanding Officer of the Italian Frigate Cyreno. The Captain stated that they arrived on the scene shortly after the fighting had ended and observed the Tunisians sailing away. No survivors were found.

Stockholm: The foreign minister left Constantinople today after securing the agreement of the Sultan that Turkey would honor Swedish neutrality. The next stop on Mr. Lagerheim's trip will be Italy, where he is scheduled to meet with the Marquis Visconti Venosta, the Italian minister of foreign affairs. It is hoped that the foreign minister will be able to secure pacts with all seven major powers for "the Dark years ahead."

THE RATINGS-I // BEYERLEIN PLAYER POLL # 4

<u>TOP BOARD</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>SECOND BOARD</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>
1 Edi Birsan(7)	261	17	8 Randy Bytwerk (1)	71	7
2 John Smythe (1)	170	13	9 Walt Buchanan	68	10
3 Tom Eller (1)	165	14	10 Conrad von Metzke	67	9
4 Rod Walker (2)	164	17	11 Gene Prosnitz	66	9
5 Doug Beyerlein (1)	140	12	12 Rick Brooks (1)	63	7
6 Crazy Dutchman	131	12	13 Hal Naus	63	9
7 Andy Phillips	109	15	14 John Beshara	61	6

Players with 20 points or more: Chan (1), Cordes (1), Lakofka, Lasky (1), McCallum, Mebane, Peery, Pulsipher (1), Rocamora, Thomson(1), Tretick, J. White (1), and Winter (1).

"S" is the total score, and "N" is the number of ballots on which the rated individual was mentioned on a total of 21--an all time high in player participation polls since BPP #1. Since BPP #3, Doug tells us on the ballot result, John Beshara and Ed Halle have become active again.

Doug's fifth Poll will be conducted this coming Winter, and ballots will be distributed through all interested magazines. All questions and comments should be sent to Doug Beyerlein; 3934 S.W. Southern; Seattle, Washington 98136. For # 4, Doug received ballots in the following quantities from various magazines: EREHWON (11), HOOSIER ARCHIVES (3), XENOLOGIC (2), IMPASSABLE (2), Other (3).

Edi Birsan has left into a substantial lead with this edition, perhaps on the strength of his performance in the HA "Grudge Game." Meanwhile, the Crazy Dutchman has continued his well deserved plunge to the bottom of the listing, and soon is to be bested by the late greats of Bernie Kling and Eric Blake.

MINI-SYMPOSIUM ON DIPLOMACY PLAY IN GENERAL
-- AND STARTING OUT THE GAME IN PARTICULAR

I'm going to begin by re-printing sections of an article written by Doug Beyerlein for John Boyer's IMPASSABLE--the best of the new magazines. Then I'd like to add a few thoughts of my own.

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS. . . . By Doug Beyerlein

"People play Postal Diplomacy for many reasons. In order to understand the opposition a player must communicate with the other players in the game. This, in fact, is the one axiom upon which the game of Diplomacy is based--all else in the game is merely a colorful backdrop to keep the players interested in the game. Strategies and tactics are appendages which can be added only after the diplomacy has been conducted. Therefore, diplomatic negotiations are the key to the whole game.

"In postal Diplomacy most negotiations between players are done through the postal service because of the relative inexpense. There are many various techniques and methods of conducting diplomacy through the mail. I will briefly cover a few techniques which I use in correspondence with other players.

"(1) When the game arrives from the gamesmaster--Winter 1900--immediately (that very day if possible) write to the other players, all six of them. Even if you do not plan to ally or are not in the same sphere of influence as another player write to that and all other

players. An initial enemy may become a very valuable ally later in the game.

"(2) Try to correspond with all other players (friend and enemy) as often as feasible. In your letters discuss things which have nothing to do with the game. Feel out the other players' interests and ideas on various things. Together with the physical events of the game correspondence should give you a mental image of other players. Correct use of this method, added to a little psychology, should mean that negotiations will be a lot more successful and back stab s or double-crosses fewer.

"(3) If you cannot instantly remember every game you are playing in, all the other players and their countries, the game season, coming deadline, and the positions of all your units, then you are playing in too many games. Many players join a large number of games hoping to do well in a few. This, however, is the wrong attitude in playing Diplomacy. To be a good player you must be completely familiar and ready to act in all of your games. Only then will you be actually competing in the games.

"(4) Keep in good spirits with the Postal Diplomacy community. Join in Diplomacy related affairs if you think that you will contribute to the good of postal Diplomacy. This will involve extra work outside of your games, but is an excellent form of good public relations and extra stature. And, above all else, keep out of fueds. You will get more than enough enemies from the games. Extra enemies mean extra trouble, and no one ever really wins a fued.

"The above four techniques are just a few of the ones I use. As any good player knows, these techniques are really just good common sense. Good use of Diplomatic negotiations is the key to good play of Diplomacy. In other words, Diplomacy is what you make of it."

Doug's article seems to me to be an excellent starting point for a generalized, if short, discussion of playing techniques in general. PP has just started three new games, and one of them is for newcomers. My comments will assume, arguendo, that all readers are newcomers to the game, and discuss the material in that context. But, as Doug says, it really makes very little difference. Good players are probably at their very best in the first few games they enter--interest is high, as so is the spirit. Experience is beneficial, I suppose, to the extent that you pick up some tactics along the way. Then too, one never stops learning new forms of general strategy, both in watching games and in reading Diplomacy-related articles in the hobby press. As you read, I ask that you keep in basic perspective a few facts which relate to my prejudices in the game: (1) Diplomacy is not just the most important aspect of the game, it is all important, when done well enough. Quite honestly, I don't know what any stalemate position looks like, though I might be able to figure it out if I managed to get into either end of one. Doubtless, such total disregard for the tactical elements is foolhardy, but its always been my position that the Diplomatic aspects were the only important element, not to mention that aspect which was most enjoyable. Now that the years have passed, though, I admit to enjoying a good even tactical battle now and again. (2) Once you accept that the game is, in fact, only a game, you have to also concede, from my prejudicial point of view, that it IS indeed a game. That is, it is a contest among seven people, and it is to be won. Failing that, the best position possible should be attained. To say that it is a game, however, is to say that there are things which it is not, to this point of view at least: it is not a simulation, and it is not a druggery (so write some clever press releases).

Now, the scope of this article is limited to whatever happened to pop into my mind in the three minutes I spent outlining the thing, so you are limited to that. Granted that limitation, however, I would like to discuss two general aspects of play--General Principles of Negotiating, and Initial Negotiations.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF NEGOTIATION, OR, HOW TO AT LEAST
GO DOWN IN STYLE, IF YOU GOTTA GO DOWN**

First, MAKE A DECISION! If you equivocate through too many years of play, if you play the neutral, first and foremost friendly to all powers, a couple things may happen to you: you may simply not get the initiative that you need to win, or you may find that all the cooperation that the other players have done while working together makes them rather more prone to continue working together than to split the alliance for you. Initiative, of course, is all essential, because no matter how fragmented the other half of the board, you have to be at about 8 or 9 pieces when their war starts to show a clear winner. If you don't commit yourself to an ally, the chances are rather greater that you will be several pieces smaller.

Once you have made the decision concerning your ally and direction of expansion (a more extensive discussion of this issue follows in Part II of the article, "Initial Negotiations"), stick with it! You will, it happens, often find yourself in slow going in tactical terms. Often, in fact, you get completely bogged down. Now, since your ally often is fighting alongside you, the tendency is for his or her lines to be most open, and you can often garner a couple of extra centers simply by stabbing the former ally. Barring very unique circumstances--don't do it. The gain in centers will often be compromised by a loss in credibility in general, and specific antipathy in the game where the attack occurs.

Along the same lines, try to avoid directly lying to your intended enemy. It is possible that he will be equally offended when you attack anyway, but he may not. Moreover, once you explain to others what happened, they may understand too. Recall that a single Diplomacy game does not stand by itself. This doesn't mean that you should get into 40 games so that you can make cross-game deals--it DOES mean that reputations spread very quickly. Enemies, as Doug says, often crop up simply because you attack them in a game. If you can avoid it, soften the blow by not making an iron-clad alliance with him with full intentions of breaking it later. You will note, of course, that this is often tactically expensive. Maybe he will suspect something, and come after you. Maybe you will lose a season in time, or maybe even a year.

Its thus at this juncture that you must balance in your own mind the basic tenent of keeping the initiative, discussed above, with some other basic principles. I suggest that its often worth the cost, in extra time needed to subdue an enemy, to avoid the sort of truly "dirty" stab that many players seem to think the true beauty of Diplomacy. Its a decision you must make for yourself, and I don't pretend that my views are any better than anyone elses, but you should at least weigh the alternatives before plunging the dagger.

Along those lines, there is room in Diplomacy for a "Silence is Golden" rule, if applied judiciously. Doug says in his article, and its generally true, that you should write absolutely everyone involved. Thats almost always a good idea, but there are cases in which it might not be, and they almost always involve a case where you have decided to attack X player. This may be for reasons of country position, or for reasons of player structure, but the reason is imaterial--the point is that you have not promised this player anything, and thus,

when the attack comes, you cannot justifiably be condemned for duplicity. The lessening of your Diplomatic option is the disadvantage, but you may even get that back sometime later, in the following situation: suppose that the battle lines and alliances change rapidly while you are still fighting the player you initially attacked. If, for reasons your own (remember that this should be done rarely) you decide that you want to switch sides and ally with your former enemy, you are in much better position to do so than you might have been otherwise. You can say to him "Look, we have been honest with each other. We have never lied to each other, and, in fact, we haven't even corresponded much with each other because we were fighting. We have illustrated our good faith to each other, but that damned X, in country Y, has made promises to the both of us. We should, thus, combine the good faith elements in this game and wipe the bastard out."

Nothing so inelegantly worded, however, is recommended.

There is a possible variation to this which might appeal to the intended enemy's sense of humor, in case, once again, you want to keep your options open in the future, which is always a good idea. You can write him a facetious alliance offer. The only time I have done this was in a game where I was playing Austria, and had a Russian alliance to attack Turkey. I wrote Turkey asking an alliance, but specifying the 'customary' terms--I got Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria in 1901, with Greece to be traded for Ankara in 1902. Turkey would, naturally, build nothing but fleets in Smyrna, but, to show good faith, would not build more than two units in the first six game years, regardless of how many centers he happened to take, and, well, you get the idea.

So, I agree utterly with Doug's wisdom--keep your options open. But I suggest to you that there are other alternatives to writing even enemy players all the time. Of course, there are many situations where you would want to correspond at all times. All I can recommend is that you use your best judgment. Diplomacy is 5% tactics (though in some cases, of course, games become 99% tactics), 45% Diplomacy, and 50% intuition (in which category I include lady luck).

Second, don't make a foolish BLUNDER when you write letters--avoid the TEMPORARY PLAYER SYNDROME. Its a basic fact of life that many Diplomacy players come and go. Consequently, when decisions are arrived at concerning the allies one will choose in a game, little things may make a difference.

There is, for instance, no rule that says that a player who signs himself "The Duke of Luxembourg," and emblazons his letter with all sorts of embossed royal seals, may not be a very excellent player. Many times, in fact, this is the case, and, many times, other players in the game tend to want to free themselves of the potential inexperience that this practice often indicates. (I do not say that this is done with justification, just that it is done). So, you gain nothing from using this technique. Write to the potential ally not as if he or she were a head of state, unless its tied into your press, but as if they were exactly what they are--players in a board game in which you both have designs on success.

Another thing to avoid, as Doug says, is the "Bare Bones Diplomac Letter." This is acceptable after you know the player and have an alliance, I suppose, but its better not to do it even then. At the start of the game, however, its a disaster. Again, many players who have a tendency to drop out write five line letters. This categorises you right away in none too favorable a light. Moreover, the person you might intend to ally with could assume that you would never write him a letter like that if you intended to do anything other than attack him (see the 2d full paragraph on this page for an analogous situation), and that isn't exactly to your benefit either. More

importantly, however, you needn't be so cynical as this analysis in order to write longer letters. You might find, and indeed are likely to find, that the player you are corresponding with is an interesting person, and you may broaden your horizons.

The final aspect of the "short" letter is this: as Doug says, a major aspect of Diplomacy is being able to discern the personalities of your opponents simply through the mail, and, sometimes, over the phone. If you receive a letter which just makes a brief proposal, and nothing else, that person isn't really giving you a chance to see what their thought processes are like, unless the letter is long and contains a lot of analysis concerning the game (there is nothing that says you have to be intimate). In short, they aren't giving you a fair break, and there doesn't seem to be much of a reason why you should give THEM one, does there? So, lengthen those initial letters, and discuss something more substantial than "Lets attack Germany--he's a dirty ass."

Then too, don't do anything stupid. If you are in a fued--thats stupid.

Third, manage your double-crosses well--STAB ELEGANTLY. There are two aspects to this, the first one of which is the oft-repeated tactical distate that you should never, never stab unless its going to really hurt your opponent, and unless the momentum you gain is enough to counteract any adverse effect it may have elsewhere on the board (AND, I might add, elsewhere in the whole field, where your reputation might suffer. There is no reason why you should have to really sTab someone more than once every two or three games).

To this, I add a second necessity, though its hardly particularly original with me: always write a letter to the person you have sTabbed, and try to make certain that it arrives after the deadline date (that is, of course, obvious) and before the magazine arrives. This last is less obvious, but equally as persuasive, if in a more subtle sense. There is always a shock when you see in the magazine that you have been sTabbed. No press release can possibly explain all the reasons you might have, and, in any case, a press release can't be very persuasive. It sometimes helps to add a humorous press release (besides which--its FUN) at the time of the attack, but you should not allow such an important matter as this to apply to public channels.

Note well that writing the person you attack, during the season of initial attack, does not only apply to people with whom you have had a close alliance (where it should be obvious) but also to EVERY-ONE you attack, save those people you attack early in the game that you have chosen not to write at all. (Parenthetically, I might add that you should NEVER use the 'silent' treatment on anyone other than someone you plan to attack at the start of the game). If you have not promised them anything of real value, if you have let the correspondence between the two of you grow cold...these are things which you should tell the person you attack. You should, in fact, be able to point to several indications you gave the person that you were, in fact, planning to attack him. The big catch--these should be TRUE.

If you're still reading at this point, you see a flaw: if you can correctly claim that you wanted him, however covertly, HE should be able to see it too. That is of course accurate, but doesn't mean a great deal as far as disadvantages go. This is so because all you have done, in effect, is made your deals with this person in the same manner in which he has made deals with you. In fact, the way 95% of all Diplomacy players make deals with each other. The truth= of the matter is that you don't have to attack a person simply because you leave that option open. In fact, as often as not, you may not attack them at all. Omission doesn't mean antipathy, and anyone that

thinks so is being foolish. More, it is suggesting a situation which I consider absurd, though it happens in perhaps the large majority of Diplomacy games: everyone allies closely with everyone else, and we find out what's REALLY happening in the Fall of 1901 and the Spring of 1902. There is no reason in the world that games cannot proceed to their end without ever having made a "firm" alliance.

It is, of course, a value judgment. Doubtless, it's possible to suffer at the hands of someone that things you plan to attack simply because you don't ally until 1920 with him, but you have to weigh these issues for yourself--it may be worse to ally with that person and then attack him. But keep one thing forever in mind--there are large numbers of Diplomacy players that operate on amoral principles entirely, and you must be aware of that. NO system operates well in isolation, and meeting other players, and other systems of approach, is not only refreshing, but challenging.

The balancing act becomes acute, and if you reason that this article does nothing to point out just how you should lean, then you have correctly analyzed it. I haven't really regarded it as an attempt to do so. But this is a philosophical difficulty that everyone solves for themselves, and recall that it's only the third part of the general heading--General Principles. If you want to double-cross at will, feel free. But expect some repercussions in both the short term and long term senses.

INITIAL NEGOTIATIONS--COMMIT YOURSELF AND GO!

There is clearly not going to be space for this part of the article. Christ! I am truly long-winded. What I wanted to discuss here was the difficulty of making that initial commitment, and the manner in which it should be made: contingent upon other players, or the country you have? There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods, and distinctions are to be made between a position in which you know none of the people on the board, and one in which you know them all, either through past contact or through reputation (I know an excellent player who once studied all the games of his opponents, and, you can believe, was much stronger as a result). However, there isn't time for this now, and I don't even have time to review the exam question I placed in the last issue.

However, that will come next time--both of those topics, in fact. PP has now wound to ten pages, and I simply have no taste for a longer edition this time. Maybe sometime later. I have several answers from the question, and a comment or two from John Boardman on his three-front question posed in issue #8. These will have to keep.

THANKS, KEMO-SABE

Until last week, I spent 12.5¢ each for dittoes, and \$3.75 per ream of paper. Finally, I took the word of Edi Birsan and Rod Walker, and tripped over to Sears for some material. Not only was it about half as expensive, but, so help me, the quality is better! Why didn't I try this before?

LATE PRESS FOR 1972BT:

Moscow, April 10, 1901: The 9th Imperial Army embarked for a northern trian journey last night. Fog lights have been mounted on the cavalry's horses for eventual use on some unnamed island.

Rome, Easter Sunday: The Pope today announced the IXth Crusade to drive the Heathen Turks from the Holy Land.

-coitus interruptus-