



# SUPERNOVA



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## Introduction to the Game

### *Welcome*

Cast aside that set of moral values upon which you have based your entire life. You are about to enter a new world: a society whose most respected citizens are noted for their devious lying; a society in which a good turn is frequently rewarded with a stab in the back; a society in which the “nice guy who wouldn’t hurt a mosquito” is destined by his very nature to be trampled. You are about to enter the world of postal Diplomacy.

And what is my role in helping you descend to these immoral depths? Any who *am* I, anyhow? The Devil? Well, some of my Diplomacy friends might think that, but actually I am Bruce Linsey, a member of the postal Diplomacy hobby since the spring of 1979. After buying a set and studying the board and rulebook, I rapidly fell in love with the game. So intrigued was I, and eager to play despite a lack of potential opponents, that as fast as I could, I inquired about and joined a postal game. Over a year later, my initial conviction has strengthened – Diplomacy, in my book, is about the most fascinating way to spend an afternoon, a year, or, well, a lifetime.

In any event, I started out with two postal games. Not long after that, I began publishing *The Voice Of Doom*, a magazine dedicated to the play of the game. Shortly after my first issue was published, I decided that I would like to play a more active part in helping other newcomers join the hobby which has given me so much pleasure. This publication is the result of that decision, and of some good fortune, such as being “in the right place” just when a product like this was urgently needed. What you are reading is known as a Novice Packet – a magazine whose purpose is to introduce you to Diplomacy, especially Diplomacy by mail. Within these pages, you will find a gold mine full of advance and information, starting with such basics as how to enter your first game and what to do once it begins, then moving to some questions you might ask about the game and their answers, to a series of brief articles on the play of each country, and finally several articles covering a broad range of topics – subtleties of the game’s mechanics, philosophies of success, the importance of good negotiating, the effect of having a “good reputation” and much more. The authors represented here are in many cases very well-known publishers and/or players in this hobby; most of them have been around for years. This work, then, although published and edited by me, is the culmination of over seven months of planning, coordinating, debating, writing, and editing; and I hope that it is successful in its purpose of facilitating your introduction to a wonderful pastime.

Ideally, this publication will be only a beginning to what may be years of fun for you. As good as all of the advice here is, you will learn far more by playing the game. As

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*Supernova* is a Novice Packet of postal Diplomacy, published by Bruce Linsey. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhamer and copyrighted by Avalon Hill. The name of this publication, *Supernova*, also means a star which explodes with such intensity that it outshines its entire galaxy. The description fits Diplomacy perfectly, for it outshines the entire galaxy of games!

complete as this handbook is, or seems to be, there will always be more questions to ask and more skills to learn. Diplomacy, simple to learn and easy to play, is an art usually mastered only by years of experience. But you are far from alone. You will find many people in our little “society” who like nothing better than helping out a newcomer. My function as North American’s Novice Project Director is fulfilled only in part by sending you this package – it is also my duty and desire to assist you further in any way I can. And should you have any questions after reading this, or should you just want to “talk it over”, I am a mere letter or phone call away.

And so, friend, on behalf of the postal Diplomacy hobby, I extend to you a warm, heartfelt WELCOME!

And now, on with the show.

### ***How to Get Into a Game***

This, to many of you, will be the most important part of the Packet. The reason you requested this handbook to be with is probably because you’re eager to play. Well, then, I have good news for you. It is very easy to get into a game of postal Diplomacy.

On a separate sheet enclosed with this Packet, you will find listed several of postal Diplomacy’s most reliable magazines (“zines” for short). Each of these zines carries several games. What you should do is write to several of the publishers listed and ask for a sample of his zine. It is a good idea to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) with your request. As the publisher for his current fees, and mention that you would like to get into a game. To help increase support for this project, I would appreciate it if you would also mention that you heard about his zine from the Novice Packet.

Within two or three weeks, you will (if you have written for several samples) have copies of a few zines to look at. Read through them and decide for yourself which ones seem interesting enough to subscribe to. If you have mentioned your desire to play, the publisher will usually tell you whether he has game openings. Decide on which zine you will play in, and send in your sub and game fees! It may take a month or two for your game to start – be patient. You may also wish to subscribe to some other zones for either reading material, or maybe to sign up for more than one game.

That’s all there is to it!

### ***The War Begins***

What do you do when you wake up one sunny day and find that you’re in a game of postal Diplomacy?

First things first. You ought to be familiar with the rules of the game, and any special rules (known as “house rules”) being used by your gamesmaster (GM). Ask the GM any questions you like about the rules – he’s there to help you. You should NOT ask the GM what to do in your particular game – that’s up to you. But questions such as, “Is this order legal?” or “Why did this move not succeed?” are OK.

When you receive your game start announcement, write a letter to each of the other six players. Offer some of your neighbors an alliance or a non-aggression treaty, and see who responds with the best deal or sounds the most sincere. Don't ignore countries that are far away, because they might be your allies in a few game years. Write not only about the game, but include a few personal facts as well. You might find that both you and another player share a common interest you can discuss, such as skydiving, camping, doorknob-polishing, or whatever.

Don't every totally stop writing to the other players. Of course, you will write to your allies the most, but you can influence faraway countries to do what you want them to do. And sometimes you can talk an attacker into getting off your back by offering him a better deal. Similarly, if you attack someone, keep writing because you may find it necessary later on to kiss and make up. Answer every letter you get.

Many players not only save all incoming correspondence, but also make copies of everything they send. This is a good idea because it will help you keep track of your own promises, lies, and other statements.

If you don't do well (and in your first game you probably won't) don't just give up. Offer to puppet for another power. "I'll do everything you say if you let me survive" is a rather common line. Often if you drop out, you will lose an "NMR deposit", required by some GMs at the game's beginning to discourage dropouts. Additionally, leaving the game due to a weak position is generally considered to be an act of poor sportsmanship. And trying to survive as a one-center power *can* be very exciting.

When you write your orders, include the Boardman Number of the game, or the name assigned to the game by the GM. (A Boardman Number is simply an identification number – more on this later.) Also include the country you are playing, the season for which you are submitting orders, the date you are writing the orders, and your signature. It is a good idea to include all of these when you write to another player, too.

Send your orders in well ahead of time. If you want to make doubly sure that they get to the GM before the deadline date, send a duplicate set or call the GM. You can always change your orders later, as long as the deadline hasn't passed.

You may deceive the other players with fake letters, lies, impersonations, or anything else you dream up. But NEVER attempt to deceive the GM – this is absolutely taboo.

Most of the topics above will be discussed in more detail later in the Packet. This is just a summary of general advice to help you get started. Good luck!

### ***Some Questions, Answers, and Definitions***

A discussion of Diplomacy is impossible without knowing the meaning of certain terms used in the game. The postal game, in particular, has a vocabulary of its own that rivals that of bridge or chess. Even in the first two pages of this Packet, I found it hard to avoid flinging a few terms at you such as "NMR Deposit", "gamesmaster", "zine" and "Boardman Number". It's time to step back and define a few terms, then, and also to answer a few questions that you may already be asking about the game. So here goes.

1. What is a zine? A zine (pronounced "zeen") is short for "magazine". It's a term we borrowed from other fan circles, meaning any amateur publication. In postal

Diplomacy, a zine is usually published at regular intervals and carries several games. Additionally, a zine will often have articles, letters to the editor, hobby news, humor, and an assortment of other material. The hobby's zines are its main mode of communications; publishers agree to trade their zines with each other, and other players can communicate with the hobby by writing letters or articles and submitting them to a zine.

2. What is a gamesmaster? The gamesmaster (GM) is the eighth party in a postal game. He is the person who collects the orders from the players, makes up a report showing the orders and results for each season, interprets the rules, sets deadlines for the next season, and so on. He may also, but not necessarily, be the editor of the zine that carries the games he is GMing.
3. What is a Boardman Number? A Boardman Number is a unique identification number assigned to a postal game. This system makes it easy for players and GMs to keep track of their games. It works like this: The first game starting in, say, 1980 will have the Boardman Number 1980A. The second will be 1980B. After 1980Z will come 1980AA, 1980AB, and so on. The numbers are named after their inventor, John Boardman.
4. What is an NMR? NMR stands for No Moves Received. Now and then, a player will for some reason or other fail to get his moves to the GM before the deadline. When this happens, he is said to have NMR'd, and all of his units merely hold in place. NMRing is the surest way to destroy your position, and you should take steps to ensure that you never do it.

Some GMs require that you submit a small "NMR Deposit" at the beginning of the game. This is refunded to you when you are wiped out, or when the game ends. It is forfeited if you drop out of the game, which in most cases means if you NMR twice in a row. NMRs are very disrupting; the player who does it often is not going to do well.

5. What is a standby? When a player NMRs, the GM will often call on a second person to submit orders for the country in question. If the first player NMRs a second time consecutively, the second player's orders are used and he takes over the position for good. The second player is known as a standby. Standbys are almost essential in postal Diplomacy; the games take so long to complete that many games lose three or four of their original players by the end. Some GMs run games without standbys, and there are varying opinions on the merits of this system, but in North America most of the players and GMs prefer to fill abandoned positions with standbys.
6. What is a standby list? A GM cannot just pluck a standby out of mid-air whenever he needs to call on one. Most GMs maintain a list of potential standbys known as a standby list. All you have to do to get on a standby list is mention to the GM that you'd like to stand by. There are advantages and disadvantages to this. First, the disadvantages. You usually have no idea when you will be called upon to enter a game as standby. The abandoned position is a poor one more often than not, and the other players have often made up their minds to attack your country no matter what. On the plus side, you usually play for free as a standby, and frequently less

negotiation is required for a standby position than for a starting position. GMs will love you if you offer to be on their standby lists, because many GMs have trouble finding standbys.

**WARNING:** Usually a GM will print the name and address of a standby before he submits any orders, so that the other players have a chance to negotiate with him beforehand. Some GMs, however, insert replacement players with no advance notice. This is obviously bad for the players and bad for the game. You should avoid GMs who operate in this fashion and protest vigorously if it happens in your game.

7. What are House Rules? House rules (HRs) are rules that a particular GM uses in running his game. The Rulebook was not written for postal play, and so there are a lot of areas that need to be clarified. A good GM will have a good set of house rules to cover situations like NMRs, deadlines, acceptable ways of writing orders, and so on. There are a few GMs who run games with no house rules at all; this merely serves to indicate that the GM has not carefully thought out in advance how he will handle his games, and it is wise to avoid such GMs, in my opinion.

When you enter a game, you should ask the GM for a copy of his house rules, and study them before the game begins. If you have any questions, ask the GM. It is your right to know the exact set of rules you are playing by.

8. Is postal play expensive? Yes. Game fees normally range from \$2 to \$5, plus there will often be an NMR deposit of about the same amount, plus you must keep up a subscription to the zine you are playing in. Additionally, you will spend several dollars on postage for negotiations and sending in orders. If you use long-distance phone calls, your expenses will increase still further. On the average, a player might expect to spend about \$20 to \$40 for a game. Of course, this figure becomes much less formidable when you realize that the expenditure is spread out over more than a year of real time.
9. Is it time-consuming? Yes, if played properly. You will need to spend a few hours each month writing letters of negotiation and planning your orders. A good letter may take half an hour or more to prepare. It is for this reason that it is wise to avoid joining more than one or two games at first. Later, you made decide for yourself whether you can take on more games.

It is also wise, by the way, to avoid joining more than two games in any one zine. Nothing is worse than having all your orders for all your games due at the same deadline. Avoid over-extending yourself.

10. How long does a game take? Most postal games take 1½ to 3 real years to complete. This figure is dependent on how often moves are due, and on how many game-years are played. The average game lasts until about 1907 to 1911, but I've seen them go into the 1920's.
11. How often do I submit orders? The GM sets the deadlines. Usually they will be anywhere from two to five weeks apart, with four weeks being the most common interval.

12. Are all the zines equally good? The quality of a zine is purely subjective. Some people will love a given zine, and others will hate it. The purpose of writing to several publishers for samples is to see for yourself which zines look good to you. Undoubtedly, you will find the content of some zines more to your liking than others.
13. Are all GMs equally good? Definitely NOT! Some, in fact most, GMs are very conscientious about adjudicating the games accurately and in a timely fashion. Since this is a hobby, any GM will occasionally make an error or mail his zine a few days late. But those listed in the enclosure with this packet generally have good track records, and although I personally can take responsibility only for my own zine, I do feel that those I've listed will give you a good, solid game for your money.
14. What if the GM quits? This happens occasionally. A reliable GM who loses interest or finds himself unable to go on will refund your money and try to find another GM willing to take over his games. Once in a while, though, a GM will just vanish without a trace – it's a risk you take. The games he was running are called "orphaned games", and there is a hobby group which will help you out if this happens to one of your games. Should your GM disappear (unlikely with those listed on the Packet enclosure), write to one of the following people for help: John Daly, R2. 2 Box 136-M5, Rockwell NC 28138; or Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way North, Rockville, MD 20854. These gentlemen may not be able to get the old GM to refund your money, but they will work to find a new home for your game. I should stress that it is rare for a GM to just disappear with your money; the vast majority are honest.
15. What is press? Press, or propaganda, is written material submitted with a player's orders, to be printed up with the game report. It is written by players who wish to make the game more interesting to both participants and outsiders. An article about press appears later in this Packet.
16. How are retreats, builds and removals handled? A postal press game would take forever if each of these activities was done separately. Therefore, retreats are usually due at the same deadline as the following season's moves, and some GMs also combine builds/removals with the subsequent spring moves. The players may use "conditional orders", that is, they may make their moves dependent upon the actions of other countries that technically take place before the season in question. Example: England could say, "If France builds a fleet in Brest, use set A of orders for my spring moves; if he builds an army in Marseilles, use set B; and in all other cases, use set C." He would then write three sets of orders: A, B, and C. The GM would use the set that corresponded to the French build. Please note that you cannot make orders conditional upon other countries' actions of the same season.

If the GM sees that the board situation is very complex, he will usually call for a separation of seasons, thus simplifying matters for the players. Also a good set of house rules should provide for a separation if, say, two or more players request it.

17. How many games should a newcomer join? I've already touched on this, but let me discuss it in a little more detail. Generally, it is wise to restrict yourself to two games at first, and possibly join one or two standby lists. The amount of negotiating is usually the greatest in the 1903 to 1903 time frame of a game, and even one game will



keep you busy at the start. After you have played for a couple of months, you may decide that you can handle another game or two and sign up for more. As I am typing this, I am playing in four games, and that is two too many!

There are those in the hobby who are (in my opinion) in a ridiculous number of games, like 40 or 50. I have yet to meet up with one of these poor souls who has enough time for each one, however, and the result is that such a player usually does poorly in most if not all of his games. Start with one or two, and join new games only when you are sure you have time for more.

18. Is it better to stick with older, more established GMs? Not necessarily. New GMs deserve their chance too, and are more likely to give you and your game the “personalized” attention that is deserved. A more experienced GM may be less likely to fold up on you, and he may make fewer mistakes, but I have found that newer GMs tend to care more about the players as individuals. Again, I do recommend all of the GMs listed on the sheet enclosed with this Packet.
19. What are “novice games”? Some GMs organize games just for novices, which can be helpful if you have a tender ego and don’t want to feel completely outclassed. The level of correspondence in these games can be quite high, as all seven players struggle to make a good start in the hobby. There are drawbacks, though. Diplomacy, with its one-winner-in-seven ration, is an inherently cruel game; the sooner you are exposed to that, the better. Also, the best way to learn how to write a persuasive letter is to receive one from an experience player, and be persuaded by it. Then go back and see how he did it! Learning is quite important in your early games, and you will learn the most by being exposed to a variety of skill levels. Novice games are OK, then, but you should not restrict yourself to them.
20. Should I reveal the fact that I am a novice? In general, no. Some experienced players may attack you for that reason alone. If you are asked point blanks, however, you probably should not deny it. Some other players will be able to judget your level of experience anyhow, and lying about it will only decrease your credibility. As a rule of thumb, then, don’t going out of your way to tell others that you are new to the game, but don’t actively hide the fact.
21. What is a miswritten order? A player who does not wish to make a move that he has promised to make may intentionally miswrite the order. While the others may realize that the error is probably deliberate, there still may be some doubt. Care must be taken that the order will not be corrected by the GM under the “badly written order” sentence in the rulebook, or by the GM’s house rules.

On very rare occasions, one may induce this error in another, by asking a careless enemy *not* to make a certain (miswritten) order, in the hope that he’ll copy the order directly from your letter. There is a risk that when a genuine error occurs, it may be thought deliberate.

22. Why am I going on and on with these silly questions? I don’t know. Let’s proceed to the next part of this Packet.

So much for the introductory material, and the questions and answers. Now let us proceed to several articles designed to help you further your skills and understanding of the game.

## **A Sample Order Sheet**

*by Randolph Smyth*

To remind you of the required game information, the following is a sample of writing orders which lists all the normally required information:

Game Date: Spring 1901  
Game: 1975LM  
Orders For: ITALY

Today's Date: July 1, 1975

A Ven H  
 A Rom-Apu  
 F Nap-Ion

1867 Dominion Ave.  
 Stoney Creek, Ontario  
 Canada M4P 2M9

Thank you,  
 Johnny Canuck

*Editor's Note: The information above is usually all that is required with your orders. The address, though, is extraneous; most GMs do not ask you to write it. Other items occasionally required are any press that you want the GM to print from your country, any change of address you happen to have, and your votes on game-ending proposals such as "a concession to Russia" or "a France/Germany/Turkey draw", or any such proposals you wish to make.*

## **A Sample Adjudication with Explanation**

*by Robert Correll*

Although postal Diplomacy has no "standard" approach to the publication of results, the following adjudication is typical:

1975R GOOD OLD FRANCE JUST KEEPS ROLLING ALONG, WILL FRENCH REINFORCEMENTS RESOLVE IONIAN JAM?

Summer 1904: Austrian A Mun retreats to Ruh.  
 English F Nth retreats to Hel, and F New to Ska.

Fall 1904:  
 Austria (John Stevens): A Ruh-Bur, A War-Ukr, A Ser-Rum, A Tri-Bud /a/,  
 A Vie S A Tri-Bud /d/ (may retreat to Boh), F Tyh-Ion.

England (Jim Lawson): F Hel-Den S by F Ska.

France (Pat Efron): A Lvp-Edi, F Eng-Mao, F Lon-Eng, A Mar-Pie, F Lyo-Tyh, F Bre-Gas /NSU/,  
 A Tyl S Russian A Gal-Vie, A Mun S German A Bel-Ruh /NSO/.

Germany (Terry Knowles): A Hol-Kie, A Bel-Hol, F Kie-Ber, F Nth-Den.

Italy (Steve Hall): F Tun-lon, A Rom-Nap, A Ven-Tri S by F Adr.

Russia (Don Wileman): F Nwy H, A Stp-Lvn, A Gal-Vie, A Mos H.

Turkey (Bruce Schlickbernd): F lon-Alb S by F Gre, A Con-Bul, A Rum-Bud, A Sev-Rum,  
A Ukr S Russian A Mos-War /NSO/, F Bla-Con.

*Explanation of Symbols:* The three-letter abbreviations are those listed in the Diplomacy rulebook with a few exceptions for clarity. For example, Nth = North Sea, Nwy = Norway, Lvp = Liverpool, Lvn = Livonia, Thy = Tyrrhenian Sea, Tyl = Tyrolia, Mao = Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Whenever an order is underlined, this means that the order was unsuccessful. Whenever an order is followed by a /d/, this means that the unit was dislodged and must retreat. Possible retreats are usually listed after the dislodgement sign or at the bottom of the adjudication. “/a/” means the unit has been dislodged and annihilated since it has no place to retreat. “/NSO/” means no such order, and is usually indicated when you are supporting an ally’s move and he doesn’t make that move. “/NSU” is indicated when you have ordered a piece which doesn’t exist: no such unit. Other possible abbreviations are: NMR – no moves received (in this case a player’s units automatically hold, as per the Civil Disorder rules in the rulebook), and /imp/: impossible, used when you are trying an impossible order, e.g. A Mos-Ber /imp/.

At the end of each year, a supply center chart like the one below is published:

|    |            |   |
|----|------------|---|
| A: | 3 centers: | Bud, Ser, War, <u>Tri</u> , <u>Vie</u> , <u>Mun</u> , remove 2. |
| E: | 1 center:  | Den, <u>Edi</u> , <u>Nwy</u> , remove 1.                        |
| F: | 9 centers: | Home, Por, Spa, Lon, Lvp, <u>Edi</u> , <u>Mun</u> , build 2     |
| G: | 4 centers: | Kie, Hol, Bel, <u>Ber</u> , <u>Den</u> , even.                  |
| I: | 5 centers: | Home, Tun, <u>Tri</u> , build 1.                                |
| R: | 5 centers: | Mos, Swe, Stp, <u>Vie</u> , <u>Nwy</u> , Ber build 1.           |
| T: | 7 centers: | Home, Bul, Gre, Rum, Sev, even.                                 |

The reader may review which centers changed hands during the year from this chart. Underlined centers have been acquired this year by the player in question, and centers that are ~~stricken out~~ have been lost this year by the party in question. The abbreviation “Home” simply notes that the country holds all of its home centers.

Finally, the GM will print deadline information such as follows below:

Deadline for winter 1904 and spring 1906 is noon Tuesday, February 5, 1976. Send all orders to Harry Drews.

This GM uses the conditional system and thus requires winter builds to be submitted with the spring orders. A time in the day may also be mentioned so that people who phone in orders at the last minute will know exactly when the deadline is. Note, however, that GMs often do not guarantee to be home at any time for such phoned-in orders.

Although the above is a rather standard way of reporting results, GMs tend to be individualistic, so expect variations. Most GMs are always happy to explain their systems to novices when asked.

## ***More Abbreviations***

*by Bruce Linsey*

The abbreviations listed in the above article are not nearly all of those in use in postal Diplomacy today. Preferred abbreviations vary from GM to GM, and few are universal. However, the house rules used in *The Voice of Doom* (my zine) set forth a rather comprehensive group, so I shall reprint them here:

|                       |                            |                     |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Gulf of Bothnia – Bot | Livonia – Lvn              | Norway – Nwy        |
| Gulf of Lyon – Lyo    | North Africa – Naf         | Norwegian Sea – Nwg |
| Helgoland Bight – Hlg | North Atlantic Ocean – Nat | Tyrolia – Tyo       |
| Liverpool – Lvp       | North Sea – Nth            |                     |

The abbreviations Nor and North are very strongly discouraged; they will often be thrown out by the GM as ambiguous.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| GM – gamesmaster       | NSU – no such unit                     |
| A – army               | NSO – no such order                    |
| F – fleet              | OTM – ordered to move                  |
| H – holds              | ec – east coast                        |
| S – supports           | nc – north coast                       |
| C – convoys            | sc – south coast                       |
| U – unordered          | NMR – no moves received                |
| d – dislodged          | NBR – no builds (or removals) received |
| r or ret – retreat to  | NRR – no retreats received             |
| OTB – off the board    | NVR – no vote received                 |
| a or ann – annihilated | COA – change of address                |
| imp – impossible       | SASE – self-addressed stamped envelope |
| CD – civil disorder    | HRs – house rules                      |
| amb – ambiguous        | MS – mutual support                    |

The above list is not universal, but will make a handy reference guide anyway.

## The Great Powers

### *England*

*by Bob Sargeant*

England has three basic openings.

The first is F Lon-Nth, F Edi-Nwg, A Lvp-Yor. This is the most noncommittal of your openings; it allows you to keep your options open, while still guarding yourself against a stab. A Yor can cover Lon if France goes into the Channel or be convoyed to Belgium if a deal is arranged with France or Germany. If Russia goes A Mos-Stp, A Yor can be convoyed to Norway by F Nth and supported by F Nwg. This opening is safe.

The second basic opening varies by having A Lvp-Edi. This is generally considered to be an anti-Russian opening since its primary function is to allow A Edi to be convoyed by F Nwg, leaving F Nth to move in action to Ska, to allow an early support against Swe in 1902. Sometimes you can persuade Germany or France to allow you Belgium, but they insist on your taking it with a fleet. This opening allows you to do that without wasting the use of the army, which would be the case if you were taking Belgium with a fleet and had used opening #1. *Warning:* A convoy of an army to Norway is usually going to mean war with Russia, whether you want it or not. Be sure to tie Russia down by trying to get one or more of his southern neighbors to attack him. Be on good terms with Germany if you are going to attack Russia immediately.

The third basic opening is F Lon-Eng, F Edi-Nth, and A Lvp-Yor or Wal. This is an anti-French opening. It should be used if you really believe France is going to the Channel, in which case use A Lvp-Yor, since there will be a bounce and A Wal is useless if you are not in the Channel. Or use it if you really want to attack France immediately, in which case A Lvp-Wal is useful since it allows you to convoy to Brest, Belgium, or Picardy in the fall, and still take Norway with your other fleet.

Negotiations: You should try for an alliance with either Germany or France. A three-way alliance with both is also possible. In the three-way, England and Germany attack Russia while France attacks Italy. If you alliance is with only one, you will probably want to attack the other. Attacking Russia should be done only with Germany in alliance. Never attack Russia unless you know what France is doing, or at least have some idea.

If you are attacking Russia, encourage Turkey or Austria to attack him. If you are attacking France, enlist Italy's help. If Germany and France are allied against you, persuade Russia to help against Germany and Italy to help against France. Austria would be helpful against Germany but is usually too busy with his own problems. Develop communications with Italy, Austria and Turkey early in addition to your letters to France, Germany and Russia. You may want to stab your ally later, while one of the countries across the board stabs his. This gives you a chance to win, sometimes. He probably won't stab his ally unless he has reason to believe you are stabbing yours. Early and frequent letters talking to him as if he is already your ally will build a relationship you can use later. Dropping him a letter in the middle of the game is usually too late to help.

Remember, option three gives up your traditional stance of not revealing your intentions early. If you use it, be sure of your ally. But if you find you have made a bad choice of an ally, write the guy you stabbed and admit your error. No one gets anywhere by giving up while he still has pieces.

## ***Turkey***

*by Bruce Linsey*

Turkey is a country with limited offensive options and a superb defensive position. It is frequently touted as the easiest power to play, and I agree.

There are three basic openings:

1. A Con-Bul, F Ank-Bla, A Smy-Arm
2. A Con-Bul, F Ank-Con, A Smy H
3. A Con-Bul, F Ank-Bla, A Smy-Con (or A Smy H)

The first set is an attack on Russia and is usually done in conjunction with Austria (A Vie-Gal) and possibly western help. Germany should be encouraged to open F Kie-Den and to stand Russia out of Sweden in the fall. If you sucker Russia into allowing your fleet to enter the Black Sea, he is already in trouble. If not, your position against him is still reasonable. The drawback of this opening is that it commits you to war right away. If is best used, then, when you are you are reasonably sure of an Austrian ally.

The second set is very pro-Russian, you be had been be damn sure he is on your side. For if he attacks you, your outlook is poor. If Russia is loyal, however, this set of moves allows you to move your fleet into the Mediterranean area quickly. The army in Smyrna should hold rather than move to Ank simply because this allows for a slightly stronger defense against treachery on the part of Russia. F Aeg will discourage a Lepanto Opening by Italy, permit an early drive on the Ionian Sea, or prepare for a convoy into Greece in S '02, particularly if A Bul-Gre has kept Austria out in F '01.

The third set is the most neutral of the bunch, particularly say A Smy H. This opening does not commit you to war with Russia, but keeps him out of Bla. Often, the move to the Black Sea will be part of a pre-arranged standoff with the Russian fleet. This ensures that neither of you can destroy the other right away. If you do enter the Black Sea, the lack of A Arm may persuade Russia that you are not hostile, regardless of your true intentions.

So much for the opening moves. These are determined for the most part by your relations with your three neighbors, particularly Austria and Russia, but it is also crucial to establish a good correspondence with the west. It is of the utmost importance to you that Italy avoids attacking you in 1902. You may offer him an alliance against Austria, or encourage him to attack France. And be convincing! You do *not* want an early war with Italy, except in the unlikely circumstance that you're allied with both Austria and Russia.

In the mid-game, you can ally with almost anyone. Russia/Turkey is powerful once it gets rolling. Austria/Turkey can also go places but requires far more trust. Italy/Turkey can be workable but is sometimes difficult to manage because it leaves your fleets bottled up in the east, forcing you to be the tiger to his shark.

An alliance with a western power can be very strong as well. So don't ignore the far away countries, because you will need one of them to keep a stalemate line from forming against you in the Atlantic or in eastern Germany.

Finally, a bit of general advice. Turkey usually expands slowly. Be patient and don't try to explode fast. If you are the victim of an early Austria/Russia alliance, don't lose heart, as a stubborn defense often discourages the attackers. Always keep writing Italy and whoever of England and Germany has the freest hand. Try to ally either Russia or Austria at first, and with any country later on. *Always* open with A Con-Bul. And, as always, enjoy yourself!

## ***Italy***

***by Mark Berch***

Italy begins with a dismaying disarray of disadvantages. Although usually more a naval than army power, she starts with just one fleet, which is needed to take Tunis, and her principle sea areas (Ion and Tyh) lack wide scope. The movement of her armies into Europe is partially blocked by Switzerland. The build of a second army (in Rome) is far from the front lines – it takes one year just to get it out of Italy. You are more dependent on the assistance of allies than any other country.

On the other hand, there are advantages. Italy is uniquely equipped to go either east or west, and can thus take the best offer from either sector, and may be able to participate in both. Most people are unafraid to ally with Italy, feeling that if need be, they can finish off Italy all by themselves. The narrowness of the approaches to Italy can give you considerable defensive strength. Indeed, Italy is rarely blitzed early in the game. Your diplomacy must seek to nullify the drawbacks and make best use of your resources.

Attacking Austria is a popular option, either by a direct grab for Tri, or by moving A Ven-Tyo, A Rom-Ven in S '01. This gives you the option of a supported attack on Tri in the fall, or going for Vie. This is probably Italy's best shot for quick builds. However, Russia and Turkey will want some of the spoils, and when Austria is gone, you may have to face the R/T alliance alone. Alternatively, attacking Turkey is promising, as she is your most serious early game naval rival. In this, move A Rom-Apu, and then convoy it to Tunis via F Ion in F '01. This puts your fleet in immediate position to move into Turkish waters. In S '02, move F Ion-Eas, and move your new F Nap into Ion, preparing for a F '02 convoy to Syr or Smy. This is the "Lepanto" opening, and requires an alliance with Austria. Your other army's use depends on how much you trust Austria. It can go towards the west, or can be moved A Ven-Tyo-Boh, and then to help against Russia, even as the Austrian fleet helps you against the Turks. Or it can hold.

Otherwise, you can turn west. Attacking France means movement into Pie. Either take Tun with the fleet or convoy via F Tyh to Tun. This allows direct entry into French waters in S '02. Such an attack requires help from one or both of Germany and England, plus a solid alliance with Austria (ideally he is fending off Turkey/Russia) but can easily net you Mar and Spa by W '03. Finally, there is the attack on Germany via A Ven-Tyo-Mun. This will require coordination with France, and a trusting Austria, who may not like all this armies marching through Tyo.

Regardless of your first victim, as soon as you get a firm upper hand, you must start on an ally for your second victim, because in most cases you cannot dispatch him quickly without help. And also, by then you will be strong enough that others will view you as worth attacking. If you have two allies in that first attack (e.g., England/Germany vs. France, or Russia/Turkey vs. Austria), you must gently unhinge their alliance, or *they* will quickly relieve you of your new gains. If the alliance looks too strong, do not hesitate to break off the attack, ally with what's left of your first victim, and look to the other side of the board for fresh gains, or for an ally to help you against them.

## **France**

*by Eric Verheiden*

France in Diplomacy is uniquely blessed with two virtually uncontested supply centers for early expansion (Spain and Portugal), reasonably defensible borders and the ability to build and swing fleets from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and vice versa.

As a result, France is probably the second best country to play in Diplomacy (the first being Russia, with an extra home center and easier inland access).

Generally speaking, the French player should usually concern himself with his neighbors to the north, England and Germany, usually allying with one against the other. Italy should be persuaded to move east initially, a task made easier by the glacial speed of an opening Italian attack on France. The choice of allies between England and Germany is not a clear one; it depends on the circumstances.

An English ally against Germany is likely to be faster moving and more profitable initially. Furthermore, an early breakthrough of French armies to the east can be crucial in obtaining an eventual winning advantage. On the negative side, England almost always ends up with quite a few fleets, fleets which have nowhere to go but south after Germany and Scandinavia have been cleaned up. So if allied with England initially, count on fighting her sooner or later. One of the best attacks is a fleet move to North Atlantic followed by a convoy to Clyde (or Liverpool) while the home island is relatively undefended.

A German ally against England can eliminate some of the mid-game problems described above. France, swinging fleets against Italy in the Mediterranean at first opportunity; and Germany, moving armies into Austria and Russia, can expand in the mid-game in a quite complimentary fashion for some time. Furthermore, if France leaves a fleet or two in the north, a certain advantage may be maintained for eventual conclusive battle which must be fought. On the negative side, England is not that rich a prize to begin with and units must generally be turned around to attack other targets of opportunity.

For initial orders, a very standard set is F Bre-Mid, A Par-Bur, A Mar S A Par-Bur (or A Mar-Spa). The key points of a possible attack are Eng (by England), Bur (by Germany) and Pie (by Italy). This opening gives options to cover any or all of them and still pick up a build (from Spain). Under less dramatic circumstances, it should be possible to take both Spain and Portugal and with favorable conditions, a shot at Belgium (or Munich) may be considered as well.



## ***Russia***

*by Randolph Smyth*

Drawing Russia for your first game is a mixed blessing. No other power has such good possibilities for rapid and continuous growth; you have 4 units to everyone else's 3, and 4 home centers which give you great influence on the northern *and* southern battles. Rum and Swe are your "traditional" gains for 1901, so if you can lay low and avoid contract with any of your neighbors, you'll have 6 centers by 1902. Then, four neighbors give you a wide selection of allies and targets.

But no other power is so vulnerable in the opening. Your units are dispersed; in particular, the two fleets have no hope of aiding each other. After 1901, Russian-held centers are the favorite target of both England and Turkey; unless you can forge a strong alliance with them, or someone else attacks them, you will have to dig in for a two-front war... which will make you unable to defend against Austria or Germany. The Russian position is a house of cards; a powerful image will have most of your neighbors clamoring to be allies, but if your units are bogged down against more than one enemy, everyone will move in for a piece of the action. A confident, someone aggressive attitude is therefore necessary for success, and you must obtain neutrality pacts with several neighbors.

F Sev will go to Bla or Rum depending on your agreements with Turkey; a spring standoff in Bla is the most common result, but the unit usually ends up in Rum in the fall whether the Turk is friendly or not.

F StP(sc)-Bot-Swe is the line adopted by the huge majority of the Russian players; the only common alternative is if Germany is a confirmed enemy (normally determined by a spring occupation of Pru/Sil). If his fleet has gone to Den, F Den-Swe usually follows in the fall; it may then be better for the Russian to order F Bot-Bal, setting himself up for some 1902 revenge.

The armies have more options. A Mos-StP is used if you're determined to fight England. This unit may go A StP-Nwy if you think you can deny him the center, or A StP-Fin, with a winter build in StP and heavy 1902 pressure on Nwy. If you've selected Germany as an enemy, A War-Sil is indicated, though as discussed above, if he moves to Den you can kiss Swe goodbye in 1901.

The usual Russian policy is to nail down the south before dealing with the north. If both armies go south, you must often choose between Turkey and Austria. A War-Gal, A Mos-Ukr will probably antagonize Austria unless you can convince him that A Gal is headed for Rum in the fall. If you are expecting F Sev to move successfully in the spring, then A War-Ukr, A Mos-Sev is a good possibility... but the shift will probably worry the Turks. Army movement is the first indicator of Russian intentions.

Germany and Austria can usually be persuaded to demilitarize Pru, Sil, and Gal if that's what you want... they have more important problems in the west and south, and will welcome your offer. But this will seriously restrict the scope of your own armies if you abide by the agreements.

You have one advantage as Russia: its successes or failures are usually spectacular enough to permit a novice to draw a lesson from either result.

## ***Austria***

*from the Playboy Guide to Board Games, edited by Ron Brown*

Barring immediate attack against an opposing country (or an immediate attack on you from your neighbors), each country has access in the first game-year to some of the board's twelve unoccupied supply centers. Austria's traditional share consists of Serbia and Greece, which are often occupied by sending the fleet in Trieste to Albania and the Budapest army to Serbia, which the Vienna army defending against either Italy or Russia if hostile moves are suspected from one of those powers. This takes place in the spring 1901 moves. Fall '01 sees the fleet moving into Greece with the support from the army in Serbia, while against the northern army is used to fend off attacking foreign units, or make an offensive move against another country. This opening sequence is in fact the most common for Austria.

The above opening moves are usually safe if no one has actively moved against you. If someone does, there may arise the need to make necessary adjustments. Who, then, must Austria fear at the beginning of the game?

Not Germany. Austria and Germany have no business fighting each other in the early stages of the game. An active alliance against Russia is possible with Germany, but if this is not in the cards then the two should enter into a nonaggression pact. Tyrolia and Bohemia are agreed as a neutral buffer zone, and Italy is usually included in the agreement to demilitarize Tyrolia. It is very obviously in the interests of both Austria and Germany to avoid early conflict – there are simply too many other potential enemies.

Germany aside, Austria has three possible enemies at the game's outset: Italy in the west, Turkey in the Southeast, and Russia in the northeast. Italy is the most immediate threat because its army in Venice borders directly on Trieste. If Italy manages to slip across the border, it can be a devastating blow. An Austro-Italian war is often the result of a failure of diplomacy because neither player trusts the other. If war develops with Italy, Austria should try to enlist some French aid, and if this happens Italy can often be defeated, adding a couple of supply centers to the Austrian total and enabling further expansion of Austrian sea power into the Mediterranean region.

The only thing wrong with this otherwise favorable development is Turkey, which has a very narrow choice of openings: fight Austria or fight Russia. If Turkey tries to get Austria to join him in an attack on Russia, and Austria refuses, then he (Turkey) will surely be trying to talk Russia into helping out with an anti-Austria campaign.

An alliance against Russia will keep Turkey off Austria's back, but the relief may only be temporary. If they successfully defeat Russia, Turkey gains the most – especially in terms of position. Division of the spoils in the center-rich Balkans often leads to problems and leaves Turkey with only one logical direction to expand: straight through Austria. In the resulting war between the two, Turkey has all the advantages. Trying to pry it loose from the Black Sea is like trying to pull a tiger's abscess tooth: very difficult and *very* dangerous. Turkey cannot be assailed from the rear and can devote all its

resources to the war, whereas Austria must be careful of Italy and whoever took over northern Russia.

An alliance with Russia against Turkey can be a highly workable option. Italy may even be persuaded to help with a Lepanto opening. If all goes according to plan, Austria and Russia eliminate a dangerous antagonist and Russia expands north and west while Austria can turn on Italy or Germany. Alternatively, Russia can be stabbed after the demise of the Turk.

The primary goals of Austria, then, are to make sure Turkey and Russia go to war with each other, and to persuade Italy to look elsewhere for his first target. If Austria survives the first few game-years, and this is not always easy, its winning prospects are better than those of most countries.

There are some less frequently used openings which can be briefly outlined. The Southern Hedgehog (F Tri-Ven, A Vie-Gal, A Bud-Ser) provides a defense against both Italy and Russia and need not be viewed as an attack by either if Austria's intentions are made clear beforehand. If all-out war with Italy is desired (a very unusual circumstance), move A Vie-Tyo, A Bud-Tri, F Tri-Adr.

Austria is one of the most challenging positions to play in Diplomacy. The delicate balance involved by beginning the game completely surrounded by potentially hostile neighbors will require Austria's full diplomatic talents. Contact must be made and maintained with all the players in the game if any real hope of success is to be entertained. I don't know of anyone who ever claimed Austria was an easy country to play.

## **Germany**

*by Konrad Baumeister*

Germany is the most interesting country to play, I find. This is because unlike some other countries, Germany can try most anything once, and can succeed. Its strategic position in the middle of the board makes it seem vulnerable; after all, every country save Turkey could grab a Germany home center in fall 1901. However, being surrounded by potential enemies can also translate into Germany's greatest string, viz being surrounded by potential *allies*. Germany's forte lies completely in the ability of the Germany player to use these neighbors to his advantage. The trick comes in when all of these neighbors have different interests and ideas about the game. Your job is to channel all of these conflicting interests in the right direction, and pick up another 15 centers on the side. It's not easy. Germany does *not* have the best record as far as wins and draws go. But it's possible.

More than perhaps any other country, Germany must be able to direct every move on the board. The player absolutely *must* correspond with each and every other player at least once a season; in general, a detailed analysis of the past and future moves is necessary. (You should be "accessible" to all, including your enemies, just in case a quick switch of sides is needed. Too many players never leave themselves an escape hatch.) The idea is to move the other countries strategically (rather than tactically); by the time they do all your dirty work for you, they should think that it was their idea all along. That is the key

to being a successful diplomat, by the way. Other countries can win if they can pull it off. Germany couldn't land in a six-way draw if it doesn't. The question isn't really *where* to go, but *how* to do it once the potential target has been picked out. Besides striking south immediately, you have three potential enemies: France, England, and Russia. But first, the south.

German Army Munich could conceivably play a part in the action in the Balkans. That one army has enormous power, but that strength is usually overlooked by most German players, many of whom won't even write Austria, Italy or Turkey! While it's normally wiser just to have Austria and Italy make a DMZ out of Boh and/or Tyo, if you have the entire board in the palm of your hand, you might want to consider attacking Austria with Italian support, keeping in mind that you are 95% dependent on unproven allies in the venture, while baring yourself against your most natural enemies. The risk is enormous. On the other hand, if it pays off you are in the most superb strategic position Germany could possibly be in by fall, 1901. But if you are not completely sure of yourself, and don't know every detail of the board beforehand, try a more conventional strategy.

France is normally an easy target. If you can gain Bur in spring 1901, great; if he sounds like he's going to move A Par-Bur supported by A Mar, then obviously an attempt to stop him is stupid and the move to Ruh is far superior. In any case, England is asked to move F Lon-Eng and Italy A Ven-Pie. Thus, looking over the entire board, Russia must be occupied in the south so that it has no time to threaten the English; also, if a later Austro-Italian conflict can be stirred up, then Italy will only bother France, leaving the centers for you and England. As long as the battle in the Balkans is even, a 2 to 1 in the west will succeed. France must have lost his home centers by 1904 at the latest to make any attack worthwhile. At this point, attacking England is usually foolish (but not always) since you have few fleets and England has tons. On the other hand, Russia should be embroiled in his southern wars, and Italy will be pointed straight at Austria. The course of action is obvious. Germany's armies and England's fleets can blow away any Russian defense in two years, and the Italian coast is a natural for the British fleets. The remaining centers are picked up from the Balkans, though Germany must avoid allowing a stalemate line to form in that area of the board. And never forget that England is there at the back door.

Attacking England is not so easy, but is worthwhile. Germany-French alliances are stable, and anti-stab precautions can easily be put to use. A strategic area of the board is covered and Germany can go either way after England is gone; toward France or Russia. The trick here, of course, is timing. Germany will probably be caught between large French and Russian blocks – not a good place to be. With luck, Russia will be involved in the south, and then all you need is to stir up a fight between the French and the Italians. Planning ahead is the key here. Russia is slightly more vulnerable at this point than France is, but it really does depend on the current position. It is most likely that you will eventually take on both France and Russia. For any attack on England to work at least two German fleets will be needed by 1902. If England is not totally crippled by 1903, then you have wasted valuable time.

Lastly, there is the possibility of an attack on Russia. Here it would be best for France to keep England occupied while you take on Russia single-handedly. This sounds like a monumental task, but really isn't that difficult, especially if the initial attack is through a

sly stab. The infamous convoy of A Kie-Lvn through Bal is effective since it is so rarely expected and immediately threatens the Russian heartland, thus throwing Germany the initiative. Two or three fleets will be needed to take Sweden and to assist the English *out* of Norway. If skillfully done, Russia will be crushed by 1904.

Any of these avenues of attack can eventually lead to victory. It is entirely up to the player which to choose, since, with a country like Germany, virtually anything is possible. Good luck.

## Strategy and Tactics

### ***“I’m OK Charlie”: Involving the Sheltered Power***

*by Randolph Smyth*

One of the reasons that a large and growing central power finds it so much more difficult to win a game than a corresponding corner power is that, due to his central position, he threatens almost every other surviving nation in a way that seems to both most players the most: through their centers. A surprising number of players will calmly watch a power at the other end of the board reach 18 centers, and as long as *theirs* aren’t being challenged, they won’t lift a finger. A corner power can count on at least one fellow at the opposite end of the board who will do nothing to resist his growth – and in fact will often disrupt the resistance of the other players for his short-term ends. This attitude of “I’m OK Charlie, don’t bother me with your problems” is responsible for a lot of “easy” wins by players who are lucky and clever enough to keep out of the way of one or two self-serving players.

As a member of an alliance which is trying to halt a winning bid by another nation, what can you do about this attitude from a “sheltered” player at the other end of the board? We assume here that a toe-to-toe punch-up with both the winning and the sheltered players won’t do the trick, that is, you *need* some form of cooperation from the sheltered player in order to stop the win. We’ll assume further that the winning power is close enough to success that the problem is clear to everyone; that is, there’s no need to convince anyone that he’s really out to win, only to persuade them to do something about it.

A crude approach, but perhaps the best to use against a less-experienced player, is a simple threat. “If you don’t join us in stopping so-and-so, resistance is hopeless... but we’ll make sure we take you down first!” This threatens his centers, which are near-and-dear to every stripe of player, so you may be able to force compliance. The trouble is that the “main” alliance will have to maintain enough force in your rear areas to make the threat a credible one; pressed into service in this way, your reluctant new “ally” will always be looking for a way to get back at you safely. The cure may be worse than the disease – but if a guy screws you up and all is truly lost, it may give the alliance some satisfaction to carry out the threat before the game ends. If at all possible, try to get a “sheltered” power unsheltered in some way. If you must give ground to the winning power, give it away preferable in an area which brings him toward the sphere of influence of the sheltered guy. Once there is a frontier between them, it’s much easier to convince the sheltered guy to concentrate on it. However, if the winning player is really any good, he’ll probably be able to sidestep this trap while convincing his opposite number of his undying friendship.

Another way is to invite the sheltered units forward to the battle lines, where they can take an active part in the decision. Most players are willing to try and stop a winner if they have something to *do*; it’s a request to back off and sit with his thumb up his rear that really frustrates a sheltered power (whether the alliance is successful and makes profits that he doesn’t share in, or whether it fails and someone else is able to hang on for

second place while he watches). However, this involves trust on the part of the main alliance – the sheltered power’s centers are safe, while his units are sitting next to the centers of the rest of the alliance. If things go wrong, the sheltered power will probably stab for second, with no retaliation possible. It all depends on how much of a risk the alliance is prepared to accept in exchange for the chance of stopping the win. Obviously, too, this strategy is incompatible with the threat option above.

Sometimes a diplomatic motivation is enough to nudge someone in the right direction. *Lie* to the sheltered player (horrors!); tell him that the winning player is laughing at him and describing him publicly as a fool for allowing him to continue making gains. You have to be a bit subtle about this, though, since you can hardly hide that you have your own axe to grind in telling him this. As always, your lies have to be believable – but in fact, such a lie probably is not far off the truth; in a sense, every winning player despises his puppets and other helpers if they have any other option.

Still in the dirty trick category, you may be able to win by guile where you would lose by brute force. If you’d prefer to remove the sheltered player from the game, get him started by whatever means against the winning power, then stab him. This must be quick and complete, for any remnants will be firmly allied to the winning cause. Unless he’s an unreliable NMRing player (one of the best reasons for discarding his help in the first place) you’ll be in for a rough ride from his remaining desperado units behind the lines. If the sheltered power is a fair size, you may be better off by counting on him to drop out entirely and be replaced by a competent Calhamerian (“win-or-draw-only”) player.

A smart winning player will naturally try to frustrate all these played, by playing attention to his grand strategy and keeping in close, friendly communication with the sheltered player. He can afford to offer anything reasonable for a power of his size – second player or whatever – and if they go together, it should be no trouble to finish off the opposition, despite the above advice.

## ***Life after the Knife***

*by Bruce Linsey*

Youch! That hurt! You’ve been stabbed right in the back by your former ally – the last thing on Earth that you expected. What are you going to do now?

Well, first let me relate what *not* to do. Number one: do not lose sight of the fact that you are in a *game*. If you are personal friends with your attacker, you would be childish if you allow the stab to destroy that friendship. If you find the experience so traumatic that you begin to “hate” the other guy, then it’s time to look for a different hobby.

Another reaction to avoid is that of becoming sour to the point of quitting the game in disgust. The prospect of playing out a losing position for a year or more may seem less than exciting, but a poor position can offer a lot of challenge; besides, Dippy is not a game for those who feel they must always win. And dropping out messes up the game for the others. Somebody who quits because of a poor board position is not conducting himself in a sportsmanlike manner.

So what *do* you do? Sit down and think, to start with! Think about *why* it happened, and you will learn how to decrease the chances of becoming a victim in your future play. Did

you trust him too far? Did you stop writing to him? Were your centers blocking his only path of expansion? Did you neglect to leave a unit or two in a defensive position? These are a few of the many possible explanations for a stab. It may be that even after thinking it over, you may not figure it out. In this case, maybe your ex-ally will be kind enough to shed some light on the subject – at least after the game is over.

The next step is to start writing. Wait until any undue anger has died down, then write to him and offer a truce that might be acceptable to both of you. You may well have to swallow your pride and agree to play a lesser role in your partnership. But point out to him in a way in which the two of you can still proceed profitably as allies. Maybe he will bite, more likely he won't. But if he sees you opening the door for future cooperation, especially if he is a good player, he may well change his mind later on if the situation demands it and call off the attack.

Then write to the other players. Cries for help may work if you are friendly with them. You will also do well to show them why it is to their advantage to offer you their assistance. Here is where you will see a big payoff for establishing a good relationship with one or more other players besides your ally early on. Will other countries respond to your please now that you need them? Maybe yes, maybe no. But you can count on one thing: If you didn't establish reasonably good correspondence with them *before* the stab, you are extremely unlikely to draw their attention now.

Finally, if all goes wrong and you cannot persuade your attacker to stop or other countries to help, offer your services as a puppet to your ex-ally. Point out how you can help him sweep the board with the few units you have left, rather than hindering his effort by being forced to fight and defend yourself. But if all efforts continue to fail, keep writing and fighting until you are no longer in the game and, at the end, compliment the swine on his brilliant play. The game can turn around at *any* point if you work towards that end; and if it doesn't, well, everybody appreciates a good sport.

So being a stab victim presents both a challenge to your diplomatic abilities and an opportunity to show what you are made of. In fact, the player who has *never* been stabbed is to be pitied because he has missed out on a vital Diplomacy experience. Live through it, make the most of your position afterwards, and learn from it. You will improve as a Diplomacy player and, if you handle it properly, as a human being.

## ***Game-End Philosophies***

*by Francois Cuerrier*

“As soon as one Great Power controls 18 supply centers, it is said to have ‘gained control of Europe’, and the player representing that Great Power is the winner.”

So says the Rulebook. From this you'd assume that every player's goal in this game would be to grab 18 supply centers and win. It often doesn't work that way. Every player has his *own* philosophy of what constitutes success in this game.

Some are known as win-only players; their philosophy is quite close to the Rulebook's. They believe the supreme achievement in this game is winning, or at least preventing others from winning. For this reason anything but a win (and possibly a draw) is worthless in their view.



The next group of players are the “as best as you can” players. While their views are quite close to the “win-only” players, they differ in that they think a player should try and win or do as well as he can *rank*-wise. Thus, they think third place is better than a piece of a four-way draw, etc.

Yet there are also draw-only players who’d rather tick to a game-long alliance and draw than to stab and go for the win.

Finally, another group could be classified as “strong-second” players, who believe sticking with their game-long ally for better or worse. They’d much rather take second play (behind their ally) than stab him, as they feel that their alliance is still victorious (since one member of the alliance won). Race-for-the-victory alliances are typical (albeit not the sole expression) of this philosophy; the two allies agree never to attack or support an attack on each other, but whoever reaches 18 centers first wins.

BUT...

There is also the “fun-only” category. “Fun-only” players pay little more than lip service to the game’s conclusion. The only rational behind this erratic “strategy” is (generally) to get as much fun from the game as possible. Thus, they will stab their best ally or give their enemies all their centers, etc., for no other reason than to have fun.

The above list probably isn’t all-inclusive, and is not designed to classify all groups by order of importance. In fact, it is seldom easy to draw a sharp line and say player A is purely a “win-only” player while player B is a “fun-only” player and nothing else.

But those philosophies play an important part in shaping player interactions in a particular game. For instance, “win-only” players will stab rationally whereas “fun-only” players will often stab someone’s back for no other reason than “because it was there”. Also, “win-only” players will often seek to ally with “strong-second” players as they believe they can be persuaded to let them win more easily. And the list goes on and on.

You should attempt to determine broadly everyone’s philosophy from your initial contacts in the game and then ally with those players whose feelings are most compatible with the success of your aims. For instance, do not ally with “fun-only” players if what you want is a stable game-long alliance or you will get nasty surprises.

Unfortunately, I’m afraid there is no magic formula; you will probably develop your own methods of determining who believes what with time and experience. In fact, subscribing to several zines will often give you reading material on the most well-known player’s philosophies. And since some of them play in many games, this already is a bonus hint. Let’s just hope this is useful in your first postal game!

## ***An Introduction to Tactics***

***by Mark Berch***

Tactics are not Diplomacy’s strong suit. There are, after all, only two types of pieces, and only four things that they can be ordered to do. Allan Calhamer, the game’s inventor, deliberately kept it simple so that success would depend mostly on your diplomatic skills.

Nonetheless, tactics are an essential component of the game, since they are the *expression* of your intentions, the end result of your diplomacy. Good tactics will allow your attacks to go quicker and more decisively. A stubborn defense may give your diplomacy more time to work, or may persuade an attacker trying to clobber you will take more time than it's worth. But if your tactics are poor, others may not want to ally with you. If you rely on your ally to spot the errors in your proposals, he may decide not to catch them at all.

The first thing you must understand is the rulebook. Play out the examples to make sure. Be warned that postal GMs interpret the rulebook rather strictly, make very limited use of the "badly written order" rule, and often *add* requirements not in the Rulebook (e.g., must specify nationality when supporting another country's units). Second, *always* triple-check your orders – miswriting orders is amazingly easy. Third, avoid overusing the "hold" order. For example, suppose your A Vie must guard Vie and Bud against the enemy's A Gal, A Ukr. If you decide to support Vienna, don't do A Vie H, do A Vie-Gal. That way, if you guess wrong and he takes Budapest, you'll at least block A Ukr-Gal, delaying the supported attack on Vienna. And if you must sit still, see if you can't support some other move. If not, try supporting an enemy against his ally – this may arouse suspicion in the ally. These three points account for the majority of tactical errors made by beginners.

Next, arm yourself with some basic tactical procedures. The *self-standoff* keeps pieces in place but keeps an opponent out of a third province. Thus, in fall '01 France may order A Bur-Mar, A Spa-Mar. This tries to 1) keep Spain for the gain of a supply center, and 2) keep Mar protected and vacant for a build. Italy may try to foil this with an *unwanted support*, e.g. A Pie S FRENCH A Spa-Mar, which partially foils the tactic because then A Spa-Mar will go. You might counter that possibility by asking an ally to move A Tyo-Pie, to cut the unwanted support if you suspect Italy will use it. A related tactic is the *arranged standoff*, e.g. S '01: F Ank-Bla, F Sev-Bla. This assures both parties the safety of an open sea, and obscures the Russia-Turkey alliance from others, if there is one. Of course, you don't get to do anything useful with the pieces. *Indirect support* allows you to retain a space while ordering the piece there to move, even if that space is attacked with support. Thus, if you want to do F Nth-Den (e.g. to cut a support) back this up with F Nwg-Nth, F Yor S F Nwg-Nth to foil a possible F Hol-Nth, F Bel S F Hol-Nth. Remember, you can't dislodge your own unit. There are other, obscure tactical plays like the loop, the schizophrenic support, the unwanted convoy, etc., but you will pick these up later.

The one tactical procedure than has the most profound effect on the strategy of the game is the *stalemate line*. This is a linkage of units supporting each other which cannot be broken by a frontal assault. Suppose country or alliance X has F Por and F Iri S F Mid. A Mediterranean alliance Y can only do F Naf and F Wes S F Spa(sc)-Mid, which won't take Mid. Even if Y overruns all of Europe with their armies, they cannot take Mid so they can't reach the British Isles to wipe X out. There are dozens of such lines, most of which run through Switzerland from one board edge to another. To hold this line, you must have the right units – note that A Port in the above example would be useless. And they must be in the right places. A player might ignore War, for instance, just to take Ukr – because Ukr might be essential for the line, even though it is not a supply center. After being stalled, the members of Y may start fighting among themselves, since they can't

progress against X. And X may take some big tactical risks, secure in the knowledge that they have a “safe” wall. If a line covers enough territory, no win is possible. This can destabilize alliances, since all the players have left to do is wipe out minor powers – *if* they can do it without serious risk to the line. Tactical play, particularly by late mid-game, can be heavily shadowed by the implications of these lines.

## **Belgium**

*by Bob Sergeant*

So you’ve just received your new issue of the game zine, and you find you’re assigned to England. You don’t know either the French or the German player, so you go purely by position. You decide to ally with the German and wipe out France and Russia. Wrong.

More than any other country, England can afford to wait a while to decide on an ally. If he decides to ally with France against Germany, what does he do about a 1901 build of F Brest? Or what if he allies with the German, who then builds F Kiel? A good France will have demanded that England build F Edi, not F Lon – whether he is allied with England or not. And if England has build F Lon anyway, irritating France, it is difficult for him to recover if Germany turns out to be hostile after all. And it would be a little late to start enlisting the help of Russia or Italy since they already have made plans of their own.

But there is a way to find out whom you can trust. Ask for Belgium. Write France and tell him that you want Belgium because your army there can give immediate support to an attack by him into Ruhr whereas if he takes Belgium, he will have an isolated army there. You would have to use F North Sea to support his army in spring, 1902, virtually eliminating any movement on your part and also spending 1902 in a holding action, not in progress.

Now, also write to Germany asking for Belgium. Point out to him that if you have an army in Belgium, he will be in the Ruhr. When he builds in Munich there will be three armies which can be used to get him into Burgundy.

The English army, which otherwise is usually committed to home defense, is extremely useful in Belgium to either an Anglo-French alliance OR an Anglo-Prussian alliance. In fact, it is far more useful than a French or German army would be. The added advantage of an additional unit might be enough to persuade one of your neighbors into alliance.

And, you don’t need to keep Belgium. You can promise to turn the center over to your ally as soon as it is convenient, and you can do so with little risk. If France is your ally, when you turn Belgium over you will be in Holland and the North Sea, so there is little risk he can use that center as a base for stabbing you. Likewise, if Germany is your ally, that center will be the only one within his reach, so again the risk of stabbing is minimized.

However, you don’t *have* to turn over Belgium. You can provide your ally with other centers to compensate.

The real advantage is that you discover early on who wants alliance with you. If France supports you into Belgium, you can build F Edi and A Lon with little or no risk. If Germany supports you build F Lon. If neither? Then get busy talking with Italy and

Russia before they build; see if you can't promote F StP(nc) or A War. And if both? Then you should have no problem – everybody loves you.

In the absence of information about the other players, deciding on an alliance on the basis of board position is the best you can do. But if there is a way to tell who is reliable, use it. Diplomacy is a game of personalities and needs to be played that way for full advantage.

## ***Stabbing and Revenge***

*by Francois Cuerrier*

Stabs (or surprise attacks) are an essential feature of the game of Diplomacy. Rarely will a player win a game without stabbing, as the alternative often entails giving your soon-to-be victim prior warning (thus frequently allowing him to set up his defenses in most cases, and helping a smarter guy take the lead).

But stabbing is a technique that should be used carefully. Your reputation and the very success of the stab often depend on the timing, the execution, and the benefits you will reap from the stab.

The success of your stab will often depend on one overriding consideration: après-stab revenge. The only time you may ignore the possibility of revenge altogether is when the stab will give you a clear-cut win. This seldom being the case, let's focus our attention on the more "ordinary" stabs.

Will your victim retaliate? More important, will your victim damage your position substantially after your stab if he wishes? If the answer to both questions is "yes", it may be better to let your blade rust a little longer yet.

Most victims usually retaliate. It's the best way to discourage other stabs. So you should always consider it a fact that the victim will (or will attempt to) make you pay for your treason.

Therefore, the overriding consideration is preventing your victim from over harming your position later. Here is a list of the most current actions your victim is likely to undertake in reaction to your stab:

- 1) Diplomatic action: including the transfer of compromising material to third parties, trying to scare your remaining allies away from you (by showing what an outrageous stabber you are, or convincing them their interests lie with his winning the battle), or allying with your enemies. This will have less importance if you have few enemies and if your alliances with other players are quite strong.
- 2) Punitive military expeditions: including conquering you, attrition (i.e. resisting you for so long that another player or alliance will take an insurmountable lead – this is known as "dragging you down with him"), and guerilla (i.e. sending some of his units into lightly defended strategic provinces, from which he they will be hard to get rid of without tremendous costs and from which he may raid several centers). This course of action is likely to occur, and usually can be guarded against if you guard your strategic provinces and your stab dealt him such a cruel blow that he can be discarded as a major fighting power. Annihilating several

- units in a spring season or taking several centers in the fall usually will take care of the job.
- 3) Throwing the game away: this occurs most frequently in mid-game and end-game, where two alliances often confront for board supremacy. Thus, he may be of strategic importance to you, and his revenge will probably be to give away his centers to your foes and help them capture strategic provinces. Giving your victim a crippling blow and using diplomatic muscle to break up the opposing alliance generally are the only ways to deal with this factor.
  - 4) Cross-game feuding: i.e. attacking you in every game you're in with him and interfering with your other games. This can be devastating at times, though more often that not, considered quite unethical. The best way to deal with this is to air the whole business and get public opinion to condemn the cross-feuder. *Editor's Note: The author understates the case here. Cross-game considerations of ANY sort are despised by many hobby people and the player who uses them will quickly earn a poor reputation. It is never a good idea to allow actions in one game to affect your actions in another.*

Note that in several cases the stabbee will not even *need* to take revenge to ensure that you realize no profit from your stab – often stabbing your ally will guarantee the win for your enemies.

Sometimes the victim will drop out; this doesn't eliminate the possibility that the standby will "revenge" (i.e. his objective may be to retake what his position has just lost, for instance).

Also, I do not wish to convey the impression that the stabbee will *always* want revenge. At times he will accept the fair accompi and be willing to enter a new alliance (under modified terms) with you. However, this only happens in the most compelling of circumstances in most cases.

There are several other aspects of stabbing, few of them dealing with revenge. The above really boils down to this, however: do not stab unless you can get away with it with at least a minimum of safety; also, I'd tell you not to stab unless it will improve your position substantially, and to consider the ensuring dip in credibility that usually will follow, but that is the subject of another article...

## ***The Lepanto Opening***

*by Edi Birsan*

By most means of statistical analysis, Italy is the weakest power on the board. This could be attributed to several factors: poor players, a weak position between Austria and France, or the inability of effective trust development between the Austrians and the Italians due to the unusual situation of adjacent home supply centers. More often than not, the Italians are unable to overcome the Turkish position quickly, and fall prey to a combination of Turkish resistance and backstabbing by a western power.

A possible reversal of the Turkish domination of the southeast is an alliance between Austria and Italy which uses an unusual opening by the Italians to quickly secure the fall of the Turks. The principal problem in attacking Turkey is that the players find its corner position very difficult to crack. Italian initiative combined with Austrian pressure can remove the Turks from the corner advantage by the emplacement of an army deep behind the Turkish position in Syria! While it may be an unusual position for an Italian army, it is the most effective manner to turn the flank and to threaten the Turkish mainland. The trick then becomes to get there before the Turks block you.

The spring 1901 moves for Italy should not reveal an open bias towards Austria and should indicate a kind of calm wait-and-see attitude. Thus, the spring should see the Italians moving Fleet Naples to the Ionian Sea, Army Rome to Apulia, and Army Venice holding. Hopefully, the French will be involved in the west and the Austrians will be moving to Albania with their fleet and occupying Serbia.

In the fall of 1901, the Italians make the initial set-up for the drive to the east. This is done by convoying the army in Apulia to Tunis. This leaves the Austrian-Italian alliance with two fleets that can threaten the Aegean as well as the flexibility provided by the army in Tunis which can be convoyed back to Italy or to Albania if plans go wrong. The Italian army in Venice holds and is able to provide some security in the north. Note that should the Russians and Turks combine, the Austrians will be in desperate need of another army to fend off Russian attacks.

After a winter build of a fleet in Naples, the traditional build of Italy in the first winter, the Italians order the following for the spring: Fleet Ionian to the Eastern Med, Fleet Naples to the Ionian, Army Tunis and Army Venice hold. This secures the convoy route, for in the fall, the Italians are clear to convoy Army Tunis straight to Syria. The fall of the Turks is now a certainty. The positional advantage of moving to the Eastern Med is enhanced by the existence of the Austrian fleet in Greece. When the Italians make their move to the Eastern Med, the Austrians should attempt to force the Aegean, more to keep the Turks out than to gain it for themselves.

In the spring of 1903 the Austrian-Italian alliance will have three fleets that can come to bear on the Aegean as well as an army that can threaten Smyrna. For those who wish to fantasize, visions of the Italians moving on Sevastopol can be conjured. Austrians are to be stabbed, and the army could be used very effectively to turn any Austrian position in Constantinople.

While this opening is very effective in crushing the Turks caught unaware, it is futile to attempt it if the Turks move their fleet to Constantinople in the spring of 1901, for they will surely go to the Aegean in the fall and build a fleet in Smyrna in the winter, with spring orders bringing it to the Eastern Med. Here we see the flexibility of the opening moves, as the army in Apulia could be used for other things. Such a Turkish opening usually means that the Austrians are in for a lot of trouble from the Russians, but then that is another battle and another article.

## The Art of Diplomacy

### *First Impressions*

*by Randolph Smyth*

Some time ago I received a letter from a fellow player in a new game. In reply to the first letter I sent him as part of pre-Spring 1901 negotiations, he wrote: “In the year or so I have been playing Diplomacy I have only started 5 games... I have never received a litter like yours. All of the players I talked to spoke only of the game until about game year 4 or 5 when personal facts started creeping into the letters.” As I was also the first Canadian player he’d come in contact with (this was in a U.S. zine), he went on to wonder whether Canadians in general were more friendly than their U.S. counterparts in the hobby.

While I find experience Canadian players do produce a more friendly and casual atmosphere in the course of negotiations, I put it down to the fact that I already know almost all of the “experienced Canadian players” so that the “old boy” mentality creates a natural entrée whenever we meet in a game. It was only after some thought that I realized that the style of my initial letters *is* quite different from almost every other player I’ve come in contact with. I believe that the percentage of sincere offers of alliance that I receive as a result is well above average, so it may help others to list the methods which I’ve been able to identify as unusual.

- (1) Write at length without babbling. This is the basic rule, the execution of which is described in all subsequent ones. Some people wonder, “But what can I write *about* – I don’t even know the guy!” My answer: Precisely. Read on.
- (2) Introduce yourself. How old are you, what do you do, what are your other interests? The fact that you have blue eyes and brown hair won’t turn the other guy’s crank, but more basic information about the type of person you are will certainly mean something. If you work for the Post Office and are the least bit sensitive about it, your fellow players may take the hint and hold their tongues about terrible service, etc., if you tell them now in an offhand manner. (Of course, writing for a general audience I can dump all over the posties without giving personal offense. Plttth! You guys give terrible service!!!)

Unless you’re a boring person, a good introduction will take up at least half a page in your first letter before you even mention Diplomacy seriously. Keep it short rather than fleshing it out with a lot of peripheral pseudo-interests you don’t really have much knowledge of, though. 90% of the time the other guy will come back with an unpredictable common interest which he’s likely to refer to from time to time. This can become the basis of a personal friendship outside the strictures of a possible alliance – or a fair amount of unwritten scorn if you can’t hold up your end of the conversation.

- (3) Mention gaming interests in particular; here is where you’re most likely to find common ground. I concluded a very strong alliance a while back, and I’m convinced it was largely on the basis of a mutual interest in Go, a 4000-year-old

- game which still hasn't caught on outside the Orient. (In Japan, I'm told, it has the same general fascination as baseball in the U.S., but I think that must be a bit exaggerated.) These days I informally sound out potential war-gaming opponents in this manner as well.
- (4) One thing you may find it useful to lie about is your previous experience in postal Diplomacy. I can't get away with this any more, so I just mention that I'm a GM/publisher (wanna sub?) with a fair amount of experience and several wins. If the other guy isn't interested in a competent ally, I'm outa luck anyway. But for the average player, it may be a useful prevarication depending on the impression you want to create.
  - (5) At last, you can sneak in something about the game. I find that this takes up on 30-40% of the text of my first letters (the percentage actually increases later on), and it's still 2 to 3 times as detailed as the average that I receive on the matter. You should probably not commit yourself to anything before getting a letter from the other guy – at least, that's my personal style. He might turn out to be a novice, an average player, a shark, or a hole of silence. It's not impossible to work with any of these types (even the last can be used for a while if he's the same with everyone), but no unilateral agreement decided in advance can work with all of them. Nevertheless, there's no need to be wishy-washy!
  - (6) Be positive about your chances of alliance. With most neighbors, you can throw out 3 or 4 plans for common action for his response; though I usually make clear they can only be put into action after an agreement which can only be concluded after the exchange of a couple of letters. Negotiations are thus began right away, rather than wasting a stamp and precious time on "Well, I can't commit anything to you just now, so I'm just writing to say, 'Hi, I'm friendly'. I'll probably ally with you if Mr. X doesn't write to me soon." Half the first letters I receive may say no more; that's taking noncommittal a bit too far, and is inexcusable in a player of any experience (don't write off the novices, though – they're still freaked by the whole situation, and need a bit of consideration and time). The response you get to your proposals will quickly tell you whether the guy is suspicious or easily led, competent or otherwise; your best diplomatic course is usually clear quite early.
  - (7) Don't be afraid to mention possible problems. If you're the Italian wooing Turkey, there's no point in simply avoiding all references to possible conflict. Again, you can be positive in about ways to work around difficulties – if you can be at all specific about how to smooth over potential rough spots, you're thinking ahead. The other guy at least knows that you're not trying to snow him, nor are you living in a fool's paradise yourself.
  - (8) Last but not least, be genuine. If you've never heard of the other player before, a friendly attitude in correspondence is partially a social ploy, but no more so than acting pleasant during a personal introduction. Both are acquired skills; the former is less common, apparently, but easy enough to learn and of great help when looking for allies – yet it need not, should not, and cannot become a matter for cold calculation.



It's a poor player that rules out an alliance or strategical option before he even hears from the other player. As the English player, you have the (erroneous!) impression that the Russian alliance is necessarily a poor one – but that's no reason to give your initial letter and his reply any less honest consideration than the ones with France and Germany. Don't even bother making a proposal if you've already set your mind against it (unless you have a definite plan of how to sucker the other guy). Every lie you tell should serve a purpose – and before the diplomatic situation has been defined, any lie is both purposeless and usually dangerous.

The first letter is usually the most important of the entire game. Give me one letter from each player, and I know who I'll be trying hardest to ally with, and how I'd like to see the game go for the next four game years. Subsequent correspondence before spring 1901 is just diplomatic and tactical confirmations.

## **WRITE!**

by *Dan Isaacs*

### **I. Why write?**

Ask any good player what the most important rule of mail Diplomacy is and he will tell you – “WRITE!”

Playing postal Diplomacy without writing is like playing face-to-face (FTF) Diplomacy without talking. Besides detracting from the fun of the game, you kill all your chances for winning. This is an essentially pessimistic game and unless you tell your neighbors of your good intentions they will assume that you have miserable ones. You will find yourself surrounded by hostile forces, and once these negative strategies are initiated against you you'll find it hard to get people to change their plans.

### **II. What to Write**

As I wrote above, writing is to postal Dip what talking is to FTF Dip, with a few important exceptions:

- 1) Be creative: you're not under much time pressure. Even in a 2-week deadline game you will still have time to write someone and respond to his (prompt) response before you send in your moves. Flavor your letters with personality; be funny, devious, deep, anything. You catch more flies with honeyed letters...
- 2) Be specific: most people like you to have some kind of plan of action to present for mutual gain. “Let's attack Germany” is OK but “I'll support you into the North Sea, if you'll support me into Kiel in the spring” is better. Remember, the moves you are telling him you'll do may or may not be the ones you *really* do.
- 3) Truth vs. fiction: to win you'll have to make some allies sometime and you'll inevitably make enemies on the road to victory. Don't lie to your allies until you're about to backstab them; they'll wonder about you – never to your benefit. In the same vein, why expose your ability/willingness to deceive before it does you any good?

- 4) Other people's plans: it depends on the situation. Remember, *you* want to gain. If betraying information will get you something, consider it. Realize that info you receive may be false and that info you give out may be considered false. Didn't I tell you this is a pessimistic game? One thing that's *not* OK is to mail other people's letters or copies thereof. This is considered a low breach of etiquette and most players will tend to hold the act of mailing it against *you*!

*Editor's Note: This is true in the opinion of the writer; however, there are many players who see nothing wrong with passing someone else's letters, or other dirty tricks such as forging a letter. There are several different views as to what is acceptable behavior in this regard.*

### III. Who to Write

Everyone! Especially your neighbors and your neighbors' neighbors. Sometimes France *can* induce Russia to go against Germany... or Turkey and Italy against Austria.

It never hurts to introduce yourself to everyone in S '01, especially if you're a new player, since some players may know each other from before. That won't bias them, but it can only help you to contact them and get their views. Once you've met Turkey, if you're England, you may not have to write him again till you meet somewhere or you want to have a common offensive. Then you'll be glad you don't have to start from ground zero.

Write your GM (gamesmaster)! You may have a winning strategy but if you don't mail your moves in you are guaranteed tactical (and later strategical) difficulties. Don't be afraid to mail tentative moves to him even before you've negotiated; he'll only use the ones he's received latest *before the deadline*, and some moves are usually better than none. Don't be afraid to write your GM with questions of rules that seem vague in the manual; better safe than sorry!

### IV. Two More Points

- 1) You'll save 33% of your mailing expenses by buying pre-stamped post cards from the post office. They're a dime apiece (as of May, 1980) including the card and the stamp. They afford plenty of room (I regularly get between 75 and 120 words on them) for a serious letter and more than enough for moves; even if you have 14 armies!

*Editor's Note: Many players do use post cards for their negotiations and orders; some, however, prefer to keep copies of all correspondence, forcing them to use regular paper and envelopes.*

- 2) *Always* use a heading. A typical heading might look like this:

1979IT S '03 England to France 2/24/80

In other words, give the letter receiver all the information he needs to quickly ascertain who sent the letter, for which game, and when.

Enjoy your game!

## **Press**

*by Dick Martin*

The press release plays four important roles in Diplomacy: entertainment, providing a creative outlet, relaying “public” information, and releasing frustrations. The most frequent use of press is to relay public messages, often in a humorous manner. For example, “The Tsar invites the Pope to join him in his dinner of roast Turkey” is common and simple. For those with more time and creative energy, though, this is not enough. A few lines can blossom into poetry or prose, describing anything from a seduction to fighting in the trenches to an “interview” with one of the players. The GM/publisher is often grateful for these press releases, as they show him some of the player’s personality and give the game an individualized tone. Besides that, it indicates the general energy and activity of the game better than just turning in orders can.

Another use of press is to release frustrations. Only in press releases does a 2-center power have a fair chance of whipping a 16-center power! Done with wit, the underdog can let out all the stops. If the bigger powers exercise even *greater* wit, they can strike back. After all, gloating may be considered to be in poor taste.

Black press removes all restraints, though, because all press is unidentified as to source. For instance, France can insult Germany but sign the press release as from Italy. Both the best and the worst press can be found here. The worst because your name need not be attached to it, so the “quality control” goes way down; the best because anybody can write about *anything*. Normally, you wouldn’t write nasty things about your ally’s eating habits, but why not? After all, only his enemy would say such things... A greater range of possibilities yields potentially superior press. One complaint about black press is that it does tend to be less relevant to the actual happenings in the game, and fairly useless as a conveyor of real information.

So, write the players in your games, but keep the GM and his subbers entertained too. You never know; you might just be spared because your worst enemy likes your press releases!

*Editor’s Note: I have played in games where the wards going on in the press were as exciting as the wars in progress on the board!*

## **Psychological Diplomacy**

*by Randolph Smyth*

It’s a relatively simple task to convince a fellow player to take a certain action if you can demonstrate that it’s in his interest to do so. If you show that an alliance between you can easily clean up the rest of the board; that he can capture all the centers of your worst enemy; that he can get out of a tight spot – the player is rare indeed who won’t follow your advice. In general, because it *is* so easy and relatively predictable, most of your negotiations should lean heavily on suggesting strategies which benefit the other guy as much as yourself; this is the stuff of which firm alliances are made. One of the greatest

challenges and pleasures of the game, however, lies in trying to convince someone to do something which may very well *not* be in his best long-term interest. The approach in these cases can't be "logical"; it must be psychological.

What sort of techniques are useful here? Every player knows about a barefaced lie; most use it themselves at appropriate times. If Austria can convince Russia that Turkey intends to attack him and vice versa, his statements can become self-fulfilling, leaving him with an enviable choice of allies and targets. The range of lies is so broad, though, that it's can't be treated adequately here. Suffice it to say that the lie must be made believable – if discovered, the disadvantages usually outweigh the hoped-for profit. Clumsiness is heavily punished here.

Misdirection is sometimes a better choice. Suppose Russia has moved A Mos-StP in spring 1901, and he has had no unpleasant surprises in the south. He naturally intends to fight for a larger-than-normal chunk of Scandinavia, but doesn't want to antagonize England before the fall moves appear. He may write to the English player, "I've reconsidered my Northern strategy and won't attack Nwy this fall." If he orders A StP-Nwy anyhow, he's lied; but if he goes A StP-Fin, builds in StP, and puts a stranglehold on Norway in 1902 he's only misdirected. You should note that the *English* reaction will probably be identical in either case: the war is on, independent of quaint legalities. The difference is that England can't pass the letter around as proof of Russian untrustworthiness. A letter full of clever misdirection will make the other players wary, but will also provide a grudging admiration rather than the outrage caused by a lot of irresponsible outright lies.

Another use of the lying/misdirection option is *not* to use it. Using the above example, suppose England didn't believe the Russian and supported himself into Norway; meanwhile, the Russia, biding his time, returned A StP-Mos? The English player may look overcautious to the other players (if Russia has given his commitment wide publicity), "wasting" a unit in unneeded support that could have been used in Bel/Hol. England may have rejected French *and* German proposals to meet a Russian threat... which never materialized. Now he looks foolish to other potential allies, while he has a tendency to accept future Russia statements uncritically, since Russia has struck by an unlikely-looking commitment. If you want to provoke this sort of thing as Russia, keep in mind, as you write your letter to England, that you *don't* want him to believe you.

Even more interesting plays show up when all the cards are on the table, and the task is to put a desired interpretation on well-known facts. How should you approach a player you've just stabbed? Out of common courtesy you should send a letter of apology and explanation, but if you want to take it further to extract even *more* profit, a few choices are available. You can offer the brutal alternative of puppet-hood or elimination; sometimes the future relationship is best brought out in the open like this, but the success of a threat depends more on the tactical necessities of the position than on psychology.

Often it's best to let the underdog make his own appeals. Don't underestimate the value of a letter which is businesslike, receptive to further communications, but somewhat *vague* when it comes to details. In touchy situations, the prospective puppet will have to make a very personal decision between going for his best remaining deal (as your puppet) and attempting revenge (as your suicidal enemy). It's useless to try and push this; if you

restrict yourself to mentioning the possibilities, most players will take the ball from there. If the puppet arrangement is to be long-term, the puppet also feels better about it if he was the first one to bring up the possibility seriously.

Sometimes a more aggressive stance is warranted to persuade a wavering neighbor. Variations on the theme of “So-and-so has approached me to be *his* ally, if *you’re* not interested” “Put up or shut up!” “To keep me happy, you’ll have to offer me more than *that!*” “This will only work if we get busy and do it *now*” (in more diplomatic terms, of course!) can be used to stampede someone into a commitment that will be hard to back out of later.

Once you’ve made your *own* commitment to an alliance, it’s important not to let your work and investment go down the drain – you have to *keep* the other guy on your side. Even if you have secret plans afoot to stab him later, you must still make him trust you and value your friendship, up to and including the season you hit him. Nothing is more unsatisfactory than an unsuccessful stab, and the most common reason is that the stabbee wasn’t fully confident that the stabber *wouldn’t*.

Apart of the logical mutual benefits of an alliance, bonds can be strengthened psychologically. Much has been made of the need to write, write, and write again, but many players find themselves at a loss for a subject. Extra-Diplomacy interests can be compared and, if compatible, can lead to a genuine friendship beyond the scope of the game’s alliance. It may be cynical to say that such relationships inhibit stabs; and both players should be mature enough to continue a friendship based on other things, even if a stab *does* take place; but the fact is that stabs *are* less likely if the overall atmosphere of communications is warm. *Most* players would not attack an ally who is also a good friend, even if it would guarantee them a victory. You shouldn’t discount this, even if there were no ulterior motives *per se* behind the development of the friendship. Why *not* be friendly? The game becomes more enjoyable to play, and if you’re less vulnerable to a stab as well, what’s the harm in that?

A more game-oriented case of “exploitation” lies in the use of reputations. If you have enough experience to have developed one of your own, it’s only natural to make use of it. If you’ve played ten games to completion, never NMRed, and never stabbed anyone, this is well worth mentioning if your ally is the nervous type, worried about your reliability. If you’ve played ten games and won them all [*Editor’s Note: Ha! There isn’t a player alive who is **that** good!*], your reputation will be quite different; but again you can use whatever skill and cusses are important to your ally. The nature of the situation will determine how much emphasis you put on your reputation: naturally, you wish to appear to be the “right” type of player for whatever is necessary.

Most players haven’t been around long enough to develop a track record which impresses others, though. These guys can still make use of reputations: *other* people’s. If the prospective enemy is a novice or notoriously poor player, the thrust is, “He’ll be easy meat for the two of us.” If he’s exceptionally good, it’s “We *gotta* work together or we’ll both get crushed.” Or, to ally with the best player in the game, a bit of ego-boosting never hurts your chances: “Gee, I’d love the opportunity to learn something in an alliance with you!” A novice can be attracted by an offer to teach him everything you know. This is a good alliance building method if you have any experience at all, but few players

seem to remember that a newcomer may have a good grasp of the rulebook but is still hungry for other tips which will only come after experience. You can often “own” a novice if you’re willing to put in a bit of extra time to help educate him, simply because so few others will bother. For his part, he’s quite right to accept the best “teaching contract” even if you wipe him out later (this, too, may be part of his “education” if your reasons for the stab are sound) – he’ll take a large step forward in his next game. The instruction is not itself psychological, but the initial *offer* to teach certainly is.

If all fails and you have a permanent enemy to deal with, it’s sometimes possible to accelerate his collapse with abuse or taunts, making him so angry that he attacks all-out (and therefore, somewhat predictably). This is particularly useful if you’re willing to sit in a defensive shell while your ally encounters no resistance in moving in from another direction. The best place for a goad is probably in the press, for all to see. I think that most players will pass up this resource as incompatible with a “friendly” game, but many games will feature it at one time or another and you should at least be aware of it.

This has been a very quick run-through of some of the more common psychological methods of pushing other players where you want them. In general they should be used as an aid to more “logical” negotiations, not as a substitute for them. These resources are much easier to apply in face-to-face games; but in the postal hobby where you may never meet your fellow players, it’s often hard to tell just what is influencing them. Still, the better postal players use psychological methods frequently: as strictly “logical” player will build a solid reputation and turn in respectable games, but only rarely will be able to make the kind of progress necessary to win.

## ***The Forged Letter***

***by Konrad-the-Stabber Baumeister***

As has been discussed ad infinitum in several Diplomacy zines for decades, the question of ethics plays a major role in the game and in the style of players. Opinions and standards range from the George Washington (“I cannot tell a lie”) approach to the Machiavellian (i.e. do anything if it means a profit later one; the end justifies the means) approach, while most players hover somewhere in between. (I prefer the Machiavellian myself, but that’s another article.) Those players on the George Washington end of the spectrum have absolutely no methods of deception open to them for use in the game, and this is, of course, a direct result of their refusal to lie in a game specifically designed for lying. On the other hand, players that *do* fib a little bit when the situation favors said untruth have an almost infinite number of devices open to them for their use towards their assumed and natural goal – the winning of the game. One of these little tricks is the forged letter.

At this point any players that find that this practice is anathema can overlook this article and go on to some other section in *Eggnog*. On the other hand, those that want to win the game and are not afraid to use simply another angle can go on. Good. Glad to have you with me.

First of all, I should say that many players view a forged letter as underhanded play, even some that view a stab as acceptable. Actually, these things have to be handled with the utmost care and discretion. I know of a player whose reputation has been completely

ruined because of his indiscreet handling of the decision to forge a letter. (Reputation really matters little to me anyway – it can't get much worse!)

Second, one shouldn't go around faking letters every season or two. Forging a letter is a pretty serious and drastic move, and should only be done once in a game (if it's needed at all), and then only if the situation is such that no other method of repairing the problem will do. (Now that's *my* opinion – others may say that every season or two is OK!)

Third, consider the other players' reactions to finding out what a conniving little guy you really are; although usually these things can be kept secret, occasionally the word leaks out and you may wind up having egg on your face, with a lot of explaining to do. The chances are, in any case, fairly large that your country will need some help after enraging much of the board (should you get found out, you dirty forger!).

Fourth, luck plays a part; some people's letters are easy to fake and some aren't. Typing the letter normally works as long as the typewriters match. Don't, for instance, use a typewrite with pica to match one with elite! Also, people that *print* are setting themselves up, since it's easy to copy print; on the other hand, someone with handwriting (?) such as mine is usually safe. All of these things should be taken into account before making such a weighty and important decision.

*So, The Whole Story:* As we all know, passing letters is a common element of the game. Germany xeroxes a letter received from Austria suggesting hostile moves against Russia, and Germany sends it on to Russia, hoping to embroil the Balkans in bitter conflict while he moves on to control Scandinavia and the north. (Some people even frown on *this* – Ghod, tell me what's wrong with it!) *Editor's Note:* See Dan Isaac's article elsewhere in this Packet for a different point of view on letter-passing. Obviously, the passing of someone else's letters can be greatly beneficial to the passer's cause, and nobody is at a distinct disadvantage since it is fairly safe to say that everybody (except Dave Crockett) that communicates in the game does so primarily by mail. And so nobody is "safe" from having his communiqués fall into the wrong hands. (Of course, should this practice get out of hand, one does this won't be receiving too many letters anyway – not after the rest of the board, infuriated, attacks him.)

Sometimes, however, two or three powers are very closely allied, more than likely against you. From your point of view this isn't always the best way of conquering the board, so you try to get them to separate and fight each other, leaving you with the balance of power. All attempts to convince them fail, and your only available option is to have them get mad at each other for what they once said about each other, or about possible future plans regarding their ally, and how his centers would look better under their column in the winter. Alas, as it happens, there are occasions when you can find nothing which even resembles a black mark on their records, as you peruse the past game correspondence. It is now left up to you to put one there.

Assuming that faking the typing or writing is no real problem, you now get to decide exactly what to say. Generally, insulting one or the other player outright is much too obvious to be effective. In fact, as an over-the-thumb rule, emotion should be kept to a minimum – unless, of course, the person you are claiming the letter originated from is deemed by you to be a very emotional person. It would be best to use simple logic; something like "Ever since Spring 1901 I've wanted to attack Turkey, cuz he's a dirty

sonofabitch!” will not do. Rather, something the likes of “If I let Turkey grow too much longer, he may present a great threat to my back door, more so than you do now. If we were both to attack him now, we can eliminate this mutual threat while safely staying out of each other’s hair,” is more likely to succeed. Try to assume the aura that the person you are trying to imitate usually had in his letters to you.

After the letter is written/typed, xerox off a couple of copies, and make sure you keep a copy of it yourself – you may need it later, to refer back to. Send the letter to the person verbally attacked in the fake, and other appropriate person(s): *never, ever, ever* to the person from whom it was supposed to have come from in the first place.

What happens after the stuff is out of the house? Sometimes nothing, sometimes too much, and every so often you get the desired result. If the countries fighting you fall out amongst themselves and you can pick up the pieces, great. However, there is a fair(?) chance that the person you send the fake to will eventually send it on to the person that allegedly wrote it in the first place, thus earning you first place on the latter’s shit list, permanently. The real problem is then to try to persuade the target that the letter is “real” while living down your new-found reputation and the enraged accusations of the person being framed. Sometimes it works, sometimes not.

So, while there are several distinct advantages to trying a forged letter in the correct situation, there are also risks one occasionally takes, and these must be taken into account. If the risks run too high against the possible gains, don’t do it. On the other hand, if you feel that you can chance it, go ahead and try it sometimes.

Lastly, I’d like to show just one instance where I, humble Konrad, forged a letter in an unnamed game, and it backfired. Names were omitted to protect *me* – there were no innocents. Countries are the same. (On the other hand, let’s change the countries, too. Who knows who’ll read this article, anyway? So here goes.) I was Germany in a game, and was being attacked by Russia, England, and France, and even Austria was looking for a new victim to follow Turkey. (Don’t laugh, I’m serious!) Anyway, I believe that the situation was pretty critical. Russia was the only country of those named that showed any signs at all of wavering, and that was because he was justifiably worried by Austria’s quick growth. I figured that Russia was thus weaker than the others, and he would be the one to receive the fake letter. I would try to persuade Russia to move against England with me, and take some of the pressure off my read. So, what did I do?

I took out all the letters England had written me and looked for as many words in them that I wanted in my fake letter. In other places, I used individual letters. (He printed, the fool...) Then I traced them, and then copied that onto a piece of regular typing paper, the kind he used at the time. I then xeroxed that and sent it on to Russia. In my cover letter I told Russia that I hadn’t gotten back the letters from England which I had sent previously, and in the meanwhile, here was England’s latest letter. Now, in reality, I had never sent Russia any of England’s letters, and he wrote back saying they must have gotten lost in the mails; but this way I tried to give him the impression that I had send actual letters, and this would lessen suspicion of the xerox. (Sometimes the poor performance of the USP”S” really does have a silver lining.) Frankly, I don’t know if Russia bought the story, but for a while he did help me against England. As it turned out Russia was allied with France all along and attacking England was the perfect plan for him, and I later fell



prey to much stronger French and Russian players than I wanted to. Late in the game Russia mentioned the letter to an already-eliminated English player, who went through the roof. And now the Englander insists on telling everyone in the games we're currently in about this dirty trick. While I deserve it and don't really care now that I'm not playing as much, it didn't make me a new friend in that case. Beware.

## ***Reach Out and Stab Someone***

*by Gary Coughlan*

You are awakened on a Saturday morning by a ringing telephone. A voice you don't know asks to speak with you. You reply, "That's me." ("Oh no. Not another insurance salesman.") Then it dawns on you: this person is in a Diplomacy game with you, and you have now become part of phone Diplomacy – postal Diplomacy's often-hidden twin sister.

Phone calls are a common occurrence in many Diplomacy games. Maybe, even yours. In the majority of my seven games, I have either called, or heard about calls between others.

Allan B. Calhamer in *Diplomacy World #2* mentions that one player spent \$300 on phone charges. He won. Clearly the phone plays a large part in many, if not most Diplomacy games. This article will examine why and how you can handle it.

First, why do some people go to the expense of using the telephone with a 15¢ letter or 10¢ post card is so much cheaper?

A telephone call is expensive, but sometimes the expense is outweighed by its excellent advantages for the Dippy player who uses it.

A phone call is instantaneous contact; no long wait is involved as with a letter.

Confusion about certain points can be cleared up immediately, difficulties smoothed out and plans made.

You can often ferret out the true emotions and real feelings of an opponent by his tone and attitude, something a letter can conceal from you.

Probably the phone's best feature is that it leaves no trace, thus there is nothing written down to prove that player A said a certain thing to player B, except player B's word.

Second, how do you handle a phone-calling diplomat? Let's return to our sleepy-head at the start of the article to see some of the problems that can arise.

Frantically, you try to remember what you wrote to uh—uh— Turkey. (That's right, he's Turkey to my Russia. Now lets see, I told Turkey I was attacking Germany but I'm really going after England and Turkey.) Your mind goes off on tangents and it is especially important at this point to beware what you say and how you say it.

Many people aren't careful and make mistakes based on false assumptions. One of these assumptions is that the person who is calling is who he says he is. He may not be at all. This could be Germany saying that he's Turkey. Ask for some proof. It will aos give you time to collect your thoughts.

Example: I once called a player in a game and got his girlfriend instead. She knew the right procedure. She said, "Tell me something that only Russia would know!" I described items from a recent letter I had written to them and established my identity.

Incidentally, she said that she had urged her player-boyfriend to call up the other players and find out their intentions by disguising his identity. So always ask for some proof.

Another misguided assumption is that a phone call denotes sincerity. It doesn't. The reasoning is that since a player is calling at such expense, he would be a fool to lie so expensively.

In fact, the caller may be using a WATS line, which are supposed to be used only for company business, but Diplomacy players are unscrupulous.

In the above example, I was the sleepy Russian and I was called by the Turkish player on three consecutive Saturdays, each call averaging about half an hour. Needless to say, I was impressed and he wore down my initial reserve to having a Russo-Turkish alliance in that game.

So, I trusted him and moved accordingly. The result was a stab and the Turks in Sevastopol in Fall 1901. So three phone calls (California to Tennessee) resulted in more centers, but 1901?! So, I learned the hard way about phone Diplomacy.

(And I also learned that most people outside the South have accents. They don't talk lak us'n down heah in Memphis.)

In conclusion, treat a phone call like you would treat a letter. Don't reveal any information that you would not put in a letter. And always remember, you owe the caller nothing. It was he or she who called and put you in the hot seat, so to speak. Trust a phone-caller in much the same way you would trust a FTF Diplomacy player. Both will not bat an eyelash in deciding to reach out and stab you.

## The Flow of the Game

### *A Mittish Musing, by D.B. Platypus*

*actually by Steve McLendon*

Well, another game has started. Let's see what I drew this time... Italy! Oh, no! Why do I all of a sudden feel three inches shorter, just because I don't know how to play this stupid country?

Shall I go to Tyrolia and hit Austria or march into Piedmont to hassle France? Gee, I don't know either of these guys! Wait... a letter from Russia. Glad to see that somebody knows I'm alive. OK, I'll go along.

Now one from Austria. (Sorry chump, but my hand is already won.) Yes, France, I'll stay out...

Fantastic! I'm now in Tyrolia and Austria is being smashed. Things are going alright!

Aha! Trieste is mine! Two builds! Now we're really rolling. Watch France... no, no fleet in Marseilles. Yessir, now we're really gonna... Turkey! What's he gonna do with that fleet? I'll have to teach him a lesson... hey, Russia ol' buddy, how about...

Wow! Nine units in 1904! Who said this country was tuff to play? Guess it was never played by a player of my caliber before. I guess I'd better start moving west now. They are almost through with England. But what... a letter from Germany. Hmm. Yes, you have a point. The Russian *is* ripe for a stab. But he has been my game-long ally. Well, true conquerors *must* be ruthless at times. Yes, I agree you owe France nothing. Very well. Let us join forces and sweep the swine from the board!

Ya-hah! Boy, I really nailed that Russian good. He never knew what hit him. Tough luck, chum, but I gotta world to conquer. Hold it. Yes... Germany is sitting there in Burgundy pretty as you please. Now that man's got class. Attaboy! We is rol-l-lin' now!

Let's see. That stupid Russian will lose 3 to me and 2 to the German... yeah, he's out of it now. France can still fight but he's not long for this game either. I'll give him time to pull back his forces for use against the German, then Whammo! I'll let him have it.

At last! The GM is a week late, but now... WHAT! How could France afford to take Tunis, he has to protect against... NO! Germany withdraws from Burgundy! Moves into Tyrolia and Bohemia! Takes Galicia with Russian sup... RUSSIAN SUPPORT? How could he... a PUP-P-P-E-T-T-T!!

OK, creeps. I've got 13 units. Try to pull a fast one on *me*, huh? Well, ya'll just bit off a bit more than you can chew... don't know who you're up against. Yessir! I'll teach all three of 'em...

OK, they got two centers from me but that's just because they guessed lucky. I can still deliver a knockout to one and then they'll *all*...

They got four more that time. The GM must be giving them my moves! Why that cheap...! Well, I won't give the Russian the satisfaction of seeing me... HE'S OUT! GERMANY... TOOK... HIS... LAST... CENTER! Wa-a-ah-h!

...Down to two lousy centers. Hey guys, what say we call this a 3-way draw? After all, I don't even know how to play this stupid country and...

## **Sample End-Game Chart and Statements**

*by the participants of 1979E*

*Editor's Note: It is customary, at the conclusion of a game of postal Diplomacy, for the game's GM to print a game-end chart showing the total number of supply centers held by each power at the end of each game-year. Additionally, some of the players will usually send in their end-game comments, which help interested readers and perhaps the other players recap the action with some degree of insight.*

*Once in a while a game is so exciting that it generates an enormous amount of post-game commentary. One such game was 1979E, carried in The Brutus Bulletin and GMed by John Michalski. This game was perhaps the most thrilling I have ever witnessed as an outsider. Part of this excitement was that this game was run on ten-day deadlines, but the diplomatic activity was fascinating as well. I regret that there is not room here to reprint the entire history of the game; the game-end chart will have to suffice. And, of course, the statements by the players.*

*Much can be learned about the history of the game merely by reading the chart and statements which follow. Note how deeply affected this game was by the various types of personalities involved in it.*

Game-end Chart:

|         | <u>01</u> | <u>02</u> | <u>03</u> | <u>04</u> | <u>05</u> | <u>06</u> | <u>06</u> | <u>08</u> |       |                       |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|
| Austria | 6         | 8         | 9         | 10        | 10        | 11        | 15        | 18        | WINS! | Game: 1979E           |
| England | 4         | 5         | 5         | 5         | 6         | 10        | 7         | 7         |       | Zine: Brutus Bulletin |
| France  | 5         | 6         | 5         | 3         | 2         | 2         | 0         | -         |       | GM: John Michalski    |
| Germany | 5         | 6         | 7         | 8         | 8         | 5         | 6         | 6         |       |                       |
| Italy   | 4         | 4         | 4         | 3         | 3         | 2         | 3         | 2         |       |                       |
| Russia  | 3         | 1         | 0         | -         | -         | -         | -         | -         |       |                       |
| Turkey  | 5         | 4         | 4         | 5         | 5         | 4         | 3         | 1         |       |                       |

Cast of players: AUSTRIA: Jack Frost, winner; ENGLAND: Wild Bill Shaffer;  
FRANCE: Randy Christopher, dropped S '05; March Berch, out F '07;  
GERMANY: John Kador; ITALY: David Pilant; RUSSIA: Dave Grabar, out F '03;  
TURKEY: Uli Baumeister

Endgame Comments:

**Dave Grabar, Russia:** I don't have a lot to say. I never trusted Turkey from the start. Thus, I was ready for his stab. The thing that killed me was Austria. I never expected him to come after Russia. Thus I attribute the downfall of Russia to Austria. That's about all I have to say on the game.

**Dave Pilant, Italy:** First, I suppose this means the concession to Italy failed.

Second, I survived, beating out or maybe not losing as quickly as 3 other players, which isn't too bad for my *first Dip game ever*, face-to-face or otherwise.

Third, having once committed to attacking France, any move at Frost would have been tell telegraphed and anyway, I was having fun driving France (Christopher) nuts.

Congrats, Jack. Maybe we'll meet in another game.

PS: Anyone can lose his home centers *once*.

**Uli Baumeister, Turkey:** A Nwy-Edi. Could that have been my next set of orders had this game not ended last turn? That would have been hilarious. I say this to Jack Frost: "Ha, ha, ha! I survived!" He never did catch up to me.

When one looks at the game, one sees that *Jack* didn't win the game, Bill Shaffer won. Not the game, but the International Asswipe Award. He simply doesn't know how to play this game, and I'm not talking about conflicting personalities. Look at his stab. What was he, four short? AT least have two home centers open! He hurt himself with that stab as can be seen by his immediately decline of three centers. Jack and Bill are the only players that I have real gripes about.

Randy Christopher (France), Dave Pilant (Italy), and Dave Grabar (Russia) never really knew what they were doing. I'm not sure of Pilant ever looked around his country to see what was happening.

I have nothing but compliments to say about John Kador (Germany), ~~and myself~~. John was as cooperative as one can get and always very courteous. Always talking or writing sensible plans which was highly unusual when it came to Shaffer and Frost. For a time, Kador was stronger than Frost even though Frost always had the center lead. John and I worked out intricate plans to oust Frost from the game and it almost succeeded. Not once did Frost submit a *good* set of orders. He always relied on overpowering his opponents with twice as many supports as he actually needed. I think that Kador's only mistake was that he moved on Austria too late. In the end it didn't matter.

There were extremely few stabs. Only one really hurt and that was Shaffer's. When Austria stabbed me, I figured that I'd be done in 2 or 3 years but he just sat there and waited for another fleet for two years. A good stab should cripple or kill. In 1904, I went on the offensive! I think that rattled him a bit.

A really bad factor in this game was the press. Frost and Shaffer kept on insulting anybody they could. It's only a game, folks! So towards the end, I regressed and did the same thing. What really got me pissed was when Frost began insulting me even though he stabbed me! So excuse me, John (Michalski) while I quote from the great poet Alice Cooper. Jack, "Go to Hell." That goes for you too, Bill.

I still think that it was a great game. Maybe we can pull it off next time, eh John?

**Mark Berch, standby for France:** There's not much to say about my play in this game. I came in with F '05 moves for a three-center country with no home centers, and defenseless Edi was picked off right away. At this point, the game was a 10-center Austria versus Germany, Turkey and England. I heard promptly from Turkey and Germany, urging me to join in. Austria did not write until much later. So I threw in with the allies. Life is so simple when you're a standby!

I didn't last long, being attacked by both Austria, and of all people, Italy. Germany and Turkey conducted diplomacy, but Turkey kept urging me to "coordinate" with the people who weren't writing, so it didn't amount to much.

While there was plenty of fireworks before I entered, the most dramatic move, and clearly the "talk of the game" was the English stab of Germany in Fall 1906. I'd suggest you dig out your *Brutus Bulletin* #39 because Shaffer's stab is an absolute classic example of over-stabbing. It represents a grievous waste of a fine position. Although he was in third place, with only six centers, his position was actually quite strong! Germany and Turkey, and to a minor extent myself, were taking the brunt of the effort to contain Austria. England need only to work the edges: stiffening things up around StP, applying some naval muscle in the Med, where Austria was weak. Nor did England need worry about where the builds would be coming from. With two English home centers held by Germany, these could be picked off one at a time. Plus there would always be the Italian holdings in Iberia to liquidate. The key here is to relieve Germany of his British holdings no faster than Germany can take them from Austria. This assures that Germany will have the strength to continue fighting Austria, but that success there will never allow Germany to become a rival to England. By nibbling at Germany, and by taking those British centers which are "rightfully English", Germany will not be tempted to switch sides. If a big stab is called for, this can wait until 1) Austria is no longer a very serious threat and 2) England has accumulated some smaller gains to be added to those big gains and 3) English home centers would be open for fast builds and the final drive to victory.

Instead, Shaffer grabbed Bel, Lvp and Edi all at once from Germany, and Spa from Italy. This ASSURED Austria VICTORY. Germany didn't have the strength to stop the Austrians even if he had the will, which he certainly didn't, nor would I. English units were of course too far away to stop the Austrians either. Two years later he won.

So what do you have to show for your big stab, Shaffer? You had 6 centers before it, and at games end two years later you had 7. Big deal. You spent the last two years of the game just swapping centers with Germany. What's the glory in that????

**John Kador, Germany:** Let me record for posterity what I really found great about the game: the personalities. Remember, I was Germany.

First, about the English player, Bill Shaffer: I'm sorry that I wrote such bitter press attacking his genetic heritage. It's true that because I didn't understand his orders I automatically assumed he was stupid. I'm sorry I made that assumption automatically. I suppose I was suffering from the same defect of reason that led our ancestors to Africa to discharge the "White Man's Burden." It was a misguided if well-intentioned principle and I found myself its victim. I judged Shaffer too harshly. I though myself better than

Shaffer. And at the same time, I condescended, expecting no better of him. I know better now. I know, for example, that he's probably a decent human being. It's just in the limited area of Diplomacy that he sucks to high heaven.

A few words about Uli Baumeister. I trusted him and never had reason to regret it. (Oh, there was a little incident early on with Uli quoted from a letter he got from Russia. When I asked to see the letter, Uli had all sorts of reasons why he couldn't produce it. But that's nothing. There really wasn't a letter, was there, Uli?) Throughout the game he kept in close touch by mail and phone. I think that the close phone communication game us an advantage. Toward the end, Germany and Turkey coordinated well and constantly caught Jack Frost off guard.

What can I say about Frost? He got three builds in 1901 and the rest of us weren't savvy enough to catch him in time. I put some blame on myself for waiting too long. But mostly I assign responsibility to Italy. The world moves in mysterious ways. Frost never lied to me and I don't blame him for cashing in my undefended centers late in the game. At that stage, all bets are off.

Dave Pilant made a commitment to take France and that's what he did. He says it was fun. Who am I to argue?

Of the Russian player I have but a dim memory. The first French player let me down by dropping out. I guess they also serve who drop out when the going gets rough. Thanks to Mark Berch for accepting my plea to standby.

A ten-day deadline game has some real thrills. Its intensity never stops. Communications skills are rewarded. Thanks to the *Brutus Bulletin* for running it and starting another series.

**Jack Frost, Austria (Winner):** I was waiting to see what everyone else's opinion of me was before writing.

To begin with, I must give credit to two people for "inspiring" me to the victory. Those unlikely individuals are Dave Crockett and Ron Kelly. The pure disgust I feel for Dave's telephone tactics almost found its equal in the upheaval I felt in my stomach when Uli started calling me 'round the clock. I recognized my game-long target by those sour-sounding proposals he was feeding me. I credit Kelly since my respect for his narrow-minded stubbornness forced me to pick up the pace to finish the game before he could get into it.

I am well aware that my reputation is that of an "unsettled" player. However, I did have an overall plan. Basically, I wanted Turkey out badly. But perhaps a country by country breakdown might be better.

First, Russia. From Turkey's constant phone calls, I knew Russia was going to take some first round licks. I was somewhat instrumental in setting him up for some of the better ones. (After all, Dave, you must admit that I did get you to leave only two units in the south.) Once Russia was forced to ally with me (right after spring '01), it got to the point of relying on him to send in "my" orders or take over his centers myself. Nothing personal, but it was a lot easier to order my own units than to rely on Grabar to order his the way I wanted him to.

I never did much negotiating with Christopher in France. After he got involved with Italy, there was a certain amount of security on my eastern frontier. With Mark Berch as France, the country finally got pointed in the right direction. Mark was correct in pointing out that where I was weakest was in the Med. If Turkey and Italy had cooperated with him, he could have been very instrumental in my demise. And that, I think, was Italy's biggest mistake. In 1904 he should have covered himself. And certainly by 1905 he should have thrown in with the anti-Austrian coalition. I was extremely worried about the possibility of Turkish-Italian fleet operation. You might have telegraphed your intentions, Dave, but I think you would have had the edge in the Med. Although I built fleets at every opportunity, I had too much territory to cover.

Which brings me to the leader of the opposition, Uli. Even in S '01 I was determined that Uli must go. I've played in a couple of games with Dave Crockett. Uli's use of the phone approaches that of Crockett, which is notorious. I wasn't interested in running up a phone bill, so I went for Uli's throat in '01. Unfortunately, I'm not such a good shot and missed. I actually came close to losing control in the south a couple of times with I was unable to quickly put him away. I still maintain I'm a very poor Diplomacy player. I think Uli missed a very good chance in 1904 when he retreated F Con off the board. If he would have gone to the Black Sea and removed Tunis instead, he would probably have been able to tie up 5 or 6 of my units and really go on the offensive. As it was, it only allowed me access to the Sea myself. As this was the key place in my assault of Turkey, I bring to his attention that he blew it, and my failure to write "good orders" was more than made up for by his own inability to carry a concerted campaign. That fifth place finish sure must sit well with him, or maybe he's just over-rationalizing his impotent strategy.

Yes, it is true that I wanted Germany to finish second, and why not? John Kador played very well, and would no doubt have been the winner had Uli and Bill "switched" in the draw for countries. John mentioned that by fall '04 he was after me. I must confess that if I hadn't fluffed by S '04 orders I would have been at him then. At more than one point, I sincerely offered John plans for a 2-way draw, out of respect for his tactics and position. Well played, John. Sorry I couldn't get you back into second.

I'm surprised that none of the analyses gave me credit for the diplomatic coup of the game. Perhaps none of you were aware of it, but now it can be told. In 1903 I sent England a letter telling him what an idiot he was for not sounding me out to attack Germany. Yes, that's right, I pushed England into your anti-Austrian camp deliberately. I knew he was way too unstable to ally with anyone for more than a season or two. How simple then just to push him over to you and wait for him to fulfill his predestined role as the viper on your bosom. If nothing else, this game should be remembered for that. After all, isn't this the game that made Shaffer the "World's Worst Diplomacy Player"?

*Editor's Note: I dare say that this has been a rather long section, and yet in some ways it may be the most useful of the articles in the Packet. For while the bulk of this publication deals with theory, the statements above pertain to real people in a real game. 1979E was not in fact a very well-played game – it was merely a very exciting one to watch, especially because the press got delightful at times.*



*If nothing else, the reader ought to be impressed with the heavy impact various personalities and playing styles had on this game. Again, I regret that it is impossible to present the entire history of this classic game here.*

## The Diplomacy Hobby

### ***A Brief History of Postal Diplomacy***

*by Rod Walker*

The history of the postal hobby has been colorful, full of the feuds and personal rivalries which always arise in fannish activities. Recounting such things now would take more space than is available, but any “old-timer” would probably be glad to keep you up all night with his versions of what happened.

The earliest known proposal for a postal game was made by Conrad von Metzke of San Diego in 1962. The first actual postal game was organized by John Boardman of Brooklyn in 1963, and John is justly regarded as the father of the postal hobby. His gamezine *Graustark* is still being printed, the oldest publication in the hobby. John also created the Boardman Numbers, the oldest hobby institution.

The earliest postal zines were normally named after fictional countries or places: *Graustark*, *Erewhon*, *Costaguana*, *Barad-Dur*, *Fredonia*, *Brobdingnag*, *Trantor*, *Miskatonic University*, *Orthanc* and many others. This tradition is mostly forgotten today, and zine names range from the prosaic to the weird.

Efforts to organize the hobby have given rise to postal Diplomacy’s own unique blend of alphabet soups: since 1966 we have seen a bewildering array of IDA, IDF, TIDA, CDO, NADF and others. During most of this time, the bulk of the hobby’s real work was done by independent agencies; the custodians of the hobby service projects and a few private individuals.

In 1965 it was possible to list the names of all postal Diplomacy players on a single sheet of paper. Today, several thousand fans in North America, Europe, South Africa and Australia play the game by mail. Two books on the game are in circulation. Authorized editions of the game exist in several languages and at least one pirated edition (“1914”, in Portuguese) exists in Brazil.

The centerpiece of today’s hobby is *Diplomacy World*, which goes back to 1974. Newcomers to the hobby would be well advised to subscribe to that publication.

### ***The Runestone Poll***

*by Bruce Linsey*

The Runestone Poll is an annual, hobby-wide poll founded in 1977 by John Leeder, publisher of the former zine *Runestone*. Also known as the North American Diplomacy Zine and GM Poll, it is conducted in the spring of each year. The Poll’s purpose is to determine the hobby’s opinions of all North American publications and gamesmasters. Voters rate zines, subzines, and GMs on a scale of 0 (horrible) to 10 (excellent), and all the votes are tabulated and analyzed. In 1985 this was done by computer for the first time. The official publication of the Runestone Pollster is called *The Cream Shall Rise!*; it is sent out each July with the final results and a great deal of statistical analysis.

Participation in the Poll is of course optional; it's not as essential a project as, say, the novice packets or the Orphan Service. Nonetheless, I strongly urge you, as a new hobby member, to support and vote in this poll. Every person's input is important. The Runestone is the oldest, best-known and most highly regarded of all the North American hobby's polls. Many hobbyists take a lot of stock in the results, and with considerable justification. The standings don't "prove" anything on a scientific basis, but participation in recent years has been large enough (441 voters in 1987, for example) to give the final scores a great deal of statistical validity. This is further evidenced by the consistently high ranking of the zines generally regarded as the hobby's finest: *Costaguana* and *Praxis*, for example, generally seem to finish quite well.

On top of all that, the Runestone Poll is fun for a lot of people, and we're here to have fun! Please, if you would, support this project by voting and urging your friends to vote.

## **Variants**

*by Fred C. Davis, Jr.*

There have been Diplomacy variants almost from the beginning of the hobby. Strictly speaking, *any* game in which the letter of the rulebook is not followed precisely is a variant, such as a game permitting the "coastal crawl", or permitting units to move directly between Spain and North Africa. *Editor's Note: The "coastal crawl" referred to is an exchange of fleets involving opposite coasts of a two-coasted province. For instance, F Spa(sc)-Por, F Por-Spa(nc) is an example of this. The rulebook specifically prohibits it.*

The first deliberately designed variant was created by the Youngstown University Diplomacy Club in the mid-1960's. They frequently had more than seven people present who wanted to play, so they created a ten-man game called the Youngstown Variant by adding China, India and Japan to the right side of the regular board. Subsequent changes added the rest of Africa, and later the rest of the world, to the Youngstown map. Transvaal and U.S.A have been added as Great Powers to the final version.

Other early variants included several based on the Tolkien books, which were reaching the height of their popularity around 1968. There were several 5-man and 3x3 team games, based upon suggestions in the 1961 rulebook, and some economic games, mostly designed by Don Miller. Miller decided to issue special numbers for postal variant games, based on the Boardman Number concept. He began with the letter "a" for the first variant on his list and went down the line in order of receipt of information on the games. Thus, any variant having but a single letter designation or starting with an "a", will be one of the older designs. The most recent designs bear designators beginning with h, i or j. In his honor, these numbers were named Miller numbers.

Variants can be divided into several classes: games using the regular board, but different rules; games using new scenarios, but the regular rules; and games using both new or expanded maps and changes in the rules. Among the different scenarios are designs where merely extend the map of Europe; designs with use entirely different areas such as England, North America or the Roman Empire; and global versions. There are even games based on interstellar space. Among the rule changes are rules permitting fleets to carry armies piggy-back (army/fleets); rules allotting economic values to every province,

with associated treasuries used for construction of new units, lend/lease, and bribery; and rules giving special characteristics to certain units, such as aircraft, submarines, double armies, units moving at double speed, and units lead by heroes or wizards. At last count, there were about 550 known Diplomacy variants. While most variants continue to have between 7 and 9 Great Powers, some have as many as 14 or 15, and one, using the regular board, can be played by either 11 people with 3 units, 17 with 2, or 24 with one unit apiece.

While a novice player probably ought to enter a regular game for his first postal experience, many players will enjoy the variety found in the variant games. You will have to read the game openings listed in *Diplomacy World* and elsewhere to locate the currently offered variants. As of early 1980, variants were being offered in Konrad Baumeister's *Politician*, Fred Davis' *Bushwhacker*, Steve McLendon's *Dragon and the Lamb*, John Leeder's *Runestone*, and Robert Sacks' *Lord of Hosts*, to mention some of the better-run zines.

A complete catalog of variant games available from stock in the North American Variant Back is available for \$1.10 from Red Walker, 1273 Crest Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024. Ask for the ARDA Catalog. You will usually receive a conference-map sized board, suitable for postal play, but you can always draw a full-size map from this for face-to-face play. Some of the variants come with full-sized maps. Many of the designs listed in the ARDA Catalog are also available for Canadian currency from the NAVB-North Custodian, John Lipscomb, 1201 Osler St., Saskatoon, Sask., Canada S7N 0T6. A back-up bank of about 100 variants is maintained by Fred Davis, 1427 Clairidge Rd., Baltimore, MD 21207.

## ***Gloom and Doom***

*by Randolph Smyth*

... in which several good reasons are given for leaving the hobby before you enter it, and how to avoid them.

It's not unusual for any established group of people, whether Diplomacy hobbyists, wargamers in general, or your next door neighbors in a new town, to look on a stranger with a bit of suspicion. A Diplomacy novice therefore has more than his share of problems in securing a fruitful alliance and having an enjoyable game his first time around.

One way to get around this is to observe and contribute material to a zine for six months or so before entering a game. The old hands will then at least know something about you (and vice versa, if you've been watching). The only catch is that there are a limited number of topics excluding straight humor which don't depend on some playing experience. Also, you've probably joined the hobby to *play*, and most people are understandingly impatient to get started. This leads to a high dropout rate among novices who find that the game doesn't live up to their expectations. This can't be helped, but if the hobby is no longer interesting to you, it's only common courtesy to end the relationship properly. Inform the GM that you do not wish to continue; give your allies extra warning if possible so they can handle your disappearance as well as possible. The next novice they meet will have a better chance to get decent treatment; the tendency of

many novices to drift off like ships in the night is the main reason for the “hands off” attitude of experienced players. A vicious circle is created when experienced players *know* that the average novice is a bad risk as an ally.

In general, don’t be afraid to ask questions and make mistakes when suggesting courses of action to your neighbors as the game begins. In fact, this will often give you a good idea of who will make your best ally; the guy that takes the time to answer will perhaps stab you after three game years, but at least he’s sympathetic to the problems of a newcomer and will certainly teach you a good deal about the game in the meantime.

It’s hard to judge how many new players leave the hobby because their negotiations have been unsuccessful, since none are available for comment after the fact. The number must be considerable – and it’s unfortunate, because they stick with it just long enough to get discouraged, and leave before developing the expertise necessary to win a few! Try again, and again (but one at a time; over commitment is a common cause of failure), as long as you’re learning something each time, you’re improving. Of course, if you’re wiped out six times in a row, people are trying to tell you something, but I’ve never heard of such a case. You win a few, you lose a few – the early going may be rough, but the law of averages catches up to those who wait it out.

The golden rule while playing Diplomacy is never to take stabs personally, particularly in your first game. On the average, every nation is attacked three times in the course of a game, often for no better reason than “being in the way”. You can also expect to be stabbed *at least* once per game before learning the ins and outs of self-protection (which are never foolproof anyhow). An expected stab is more depressing than a simple declaration of war, but there is *less* chance of the former being due to any personal reasons. After all, the stabber must have valued your input to ally with you in the first place, and (if he’s competent) had very good reasons to break off the relationship. Much of the ill feeling will disappear once you can answer the question “why?”

A final word: it’s only a game. Be philosophical about attacks: everyone likes to win, but the average player will only be top dog one time in seven. The odds may seem poor, but believe me – when you make it, it’s worth the trouble.

## ***Face to Face vs. Postal***

*by Jack Brawner*

Basically, I think there are three major differences in the postal play of the Grand Game as compared to face-to-face Diplomacy. Immediately they may come to mind – winning strategy, secret alliances, and the limits imposed by the lack of back and forth banter during negotiations. In high school, our group played as many as ten or twelve games a week during the summers and three or four games a week during school season. At one point, there was a game being played one year at a time during lunch. What follows are the things I immediately noticed (well, maybe not *immediately*) when I entered my first postal game.

In our local games, we would play until the leaders became obvious, and then we’d usually either conceded victory to a player with 11 or 12 centers, or conceded to a strong alliance, or, more often, the stronger powers in two evenly-matched alliances would each

stab their ally and call it a two-way draw. In postal play, it usually takes 18 centers to win, or it must be obvious that you can easily reach 18 centers. Therefore, in postal play, it is my belief that the big strike for 18 or a winning position must be timed, and carefully at that. The other players in the game are not going to conceded merely because you have 11 or 12 centers. (Of course, there are exceptions, but they are rare.) In general, I would rather have 8 centers and an 8-center ally than to have 12 centers without an ally. Very different from a party-type face-to-face game.

When one plays in a face-to-face game, it's obvious who's talking with whom. While it is possible for two non-adjacent countries to exchange a few words and affect the game balance, it would be next to impossible to coordinate, for example, the international supports that may be necessary to eliminate or successfully reduce one members of a three-way alliance, or to stab your ally in coordination with the country that you and he had been attacking up until that season. Your ally would be naturally be curious as to why you and his enemy are bent over a conference map. Postally, these things are easy, for it is possible to communicate with every country in the game – every season. And you should. A long-range secret alliance can be as powerful as a normal let's-you-and-I-gang-up-on-him agreement. When I play Russia, I try to do a lot of negotiating with France. Avoiding an England-Germany alliance can be accomplished by sheer diplomatic pressure and rumor-spreading. This is only one example, but there are many. And I'm convinced that the best postal players are masters of the geographically separated alliance as well as the alliances with their neighbors.

When negotiating with another player in a face-to-face game, as many as five proposals and counter-proposals may be made, in just a couple of minutes. But when writing a letter in a postal game, several considerations must be made. What does the other player consider a fair split of centers? If I think it is better that I take the next center, from a tactical standpoint, will he look upon this view as an indication of greed? (Or if you're a greedy sort...) How much can I get? It is often impossible, postally, to sound out an opponent. While I have been known to cheerfully tell someone to go to hell without passing go in a face-to-face game, I've been able to do this without causing any hard feelings. Once, in a postal game, I tried to smooth out a refused offer by saying, after all, this IS Diplomacy, right? Why don't we do such-and-such instead? It may not be as strong as your moves, but it won't leave me a nervous wreck for the next few seasons, either... I was stabbed on the next move, and was prepared for it, too. This probably wouldn't have happened if we'd been able to talk and I could have made a joke out of refusing his suggestions. The point is that writing letters is just not the same.

Postal play is very different from face-to-face play, but I honestly can't say which I prefer. My patient alliance style of play seems more suited for postal play, but I do miss using those friendly jokes as part of my negotiations. Whichever you prefer, enjoy! I do.

## ***The Boardman Numbers***

*by Steve Heinowski*

The Boardman Number Custodian (BNC) commenced recording games in 1963 with a game run by John Boardman in his zine *Graustark*. Records have been kept from that time forward. In a few short years, the number of games recorded rose to over 100 per

year, or well over 2,000 recorded games to date. The listings consist of who started for posterity. The BNC is responsible for recording game starts and game finishes, and for reporting them quarterly in his (her) zine. Everything. The BNC is also responsible for determining where the games were 'local' and whether they were played in a 'regular' manner.

The general criteria for the determination of a regular/irregular game are as follows ((the following describe irregular games)):

1. Local game: three or more people live within 50 miles of one another or have local phone access. Note: computer network games are considered a special class of game, not local.
2. Family members in a game: two of the eight people involved in the game (the GM is the eighth) are related (parents, siblings, spouses, etc.).
3. Gross GM Violations: (for example) the GM is discriminating against one or more players. The GM is violating the Rulebook to such an extent that the game is a variant. The GMing was so poor that the game was unplayable. Some examples of 'poor' are: inconsistent rulings on similar situations, cheating, making major mid-game house rule changes without player consent, violating player confidentiality...
4. Illegal player Removal: the GM forcibly removes someone from a game without due cause. Some examples of due cause are: failure to submit moves and failure to meet financial obligations.
5. Inconsistent or Anonymous Standby Policy: the GM must not change his standby policy (use or non-use) during a game, and if standbys are used they must be identified to the active players.
6. Playing more than one position: obvious.
7. GM is or becomes a player in the game.
8. Other... as circumstances present themselves.

The bottom line here is use some common sense – put yourself in the player's position and ask you you'd feel if it happened to you. You may also find that some people get caught up in the regularity/ratings thing. Again, the bottom line here is the quality of the GM, not the ratibility of the game. The criteria established above are not restrictive or all-inclusive, and a GM who cannot run a regular game (whether through irresponsibility, ineptitude, or perhaps downright stubbornness) hurts both the players and the hobby as a whole. Such GMs should be avoided like the plague.

Acquiring a Boardman Number is a very simple task. You need to submit you name and zine name (if any), the names and addresses of your players, and the list of who's playing what. There is no fee for acquiring a BN, though you may contribute to the BNC fund at this (or any other) time. Mail the above information to me ((the BNC)) and I will mail a BN to you. You do not have to be a GM to register a game: any player may do so – so you players reading this make sure your game has a BN or know the reason why not. Also, there are provisions for registering a game which may have begun before a number

was requested, in cases where a new GM didn't know about BNs, or in which an old GM forgot or had a hard-case against the BNC and refused, etc.

Reporting an ended game is also a simple matter. You need but to list the supply center count for each ended Fall season, the people (including standbys) who played each country, and what happened to them (win, draw, drop, resign, out). For example:

|         | <u>1901</u> | <u>02</u> | <u>03</u> | <u>04</u> |  |
|---------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| Austria | 4           | 2         | 0         |           | Bob Smith (drop W01), Bill Smith (out W03) |
| England | 5           | 8         | 10        | 12        | John Jones (win by concession)             |

...

The BNC's zine, *Everything*, publishes the above information along with hobby-related writings, and is available through trade or subscription. (The BNC will trade *Everything* for any published Dip zine.)

Always remember that if you have any questions, do feel free to write and ask. That's one of the reasons the BNC is here.

### ***For Your Bookshelf***

Diplomacy is a game best learned by playing, but there are several useful publications which you may find valuable. You will find names and addresses for the publishers of the items listed below on the insert sheet with this Packet.

First and foremost, [Diplomacy World](#) is almost a must for anyone seriously interested in the hobby. It is our most widely-read publication, and contains not only strategy articles but also hobby news, reviews of gaming conventions, ratings and much, much more. As this is being typed, Larry Perry is its publisher.

*Diplomacy Digest* is a zine devoted to reprinting articles, and is very frequently a gold mine of information for players looking to improve their game. It is published by Mark Berch.

The Lexicon of Diplomacy, actually an issue of *Diplomacy Digest*, is available from Mark Berch for \$1.25. This publication contains definitions and descriptions of practically all of the Diplomacy terminology you will encounter, and in addition is a fascinating read.

For a more complete listing of zines than you will find here, obtain a copy of the *Zine Register*. This quarterly publication contains a capsule summary of most or all of the hobby's publications, and is an extremely useful reference guide.

Should you become interested in publishing, you may wish to purchase a copy of *Once Upon a Deadline*, the hobby's handbook for publishers and gamemasters. This 200+ page project contains articles by dozens of our most respected and successful publishers, GMs, custodians and writers. It is available from me for \$3.00.

The results of the hobby's annual Runestone Poll are summarized in *The Cream Shall Rise!* Want to find out which zines and GMs are the most highly regarded? This is the place!



There are two books on Diplomacy in existence. One is Richard Sharp's *The Game Of Diplomacy*. Alas, as this is being typed, it is out of print so I can't help you get a copy. Perhaps some day it will make a comeback...

*The Gamer's Guide to Diplomacy*, by Rod Walker, is a tremendous read, and is available from The Avalon Hill Game Company, 4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214. Inquire first to get a current price.

For further information about variant Diplomacy games, the best person to contact is Fred Davis, whose address appears with the *Bushwhacker* listing on the Packet insert.

## Some Closing Notes

### *A Diplomacy Player:*

He changes sides more often than a windshield wiper.

When he pats you on the back, he's figuring out where to stick the knife.

When he says, "Good Morning," better call the Weather Bureau to make sure.

He can put the screws on you faster than an undertaker.

All in all, I dare say this has been a long-winded, if ambitious, collection of written pieces designed to help you enter the postal Diplomacy hobby. Some of the material here will be useful to you at the outset, while other pieces might not make any sense to you until you are actually in a game. In any event, I hope you'll give postal Diplomacy a try.

One of the major observations that can be made from the material herein is that there are almost as many different points of view about the game as there are players. Note, for instance, the directly opposing points of view of Konrad Baumeister and Dan Isaacs concerning letter-passing. Or look at the widely varying personalities in 1979E. The hobby is made up of its participants, but it is enlivened and enriched greatly by their differing beliefs and philosophies. As you get into playing the game, you'll likely develop your own opinions on ethics, strategies, press writing, and so on.

To repeat what I said on page 1, it is my wish (and my job!) to help you in any way I can. Please let me hear from you, and HAPPY GAMING!

### **Credits**

First and foremost, thanks to Mark Berch for his help, time and advice. Mark had the initial run of this thing printed for me, and did much of the legwork himself.

Thanks to Jeff Albrecht for originally putting the idea into my head to do this project.

Thanks to all the authors who contributed articles to the Packet, especially Randolph Smyth and Francois Cuerrier, who were quite generous in this regard.

Thanks to other hobby players and publishers too numerous to name here, for all the help, publicity and encouragement.

And thanks sincerely to myself, without who this whole thing would have been nonexistent.

*Original text retyped, reformatted and rearranged in 2007 by Barry Johnson.*