



GREATEST HITS VOLUME TWENTY-ONE is produced by Pege Birks, who, for the next two issues, is back at 39 Handforth Road, London, SW9 0LL, for the purposes of both orders and trades. Greatest Hits runs the following games of regular Diplomacy:- NGC 90, NGC 98, NGC 103, NGC 115, NGC 123, NGC 153, NGC 159, NGC 53, NGC 66, and DK 74/7. Today's date is Friday the 27th of February, and circulation is somewhere around 95, including Dave Tant, who I seem to have missed off my mailing list recently.

WHATS ON. (Reprinted from UH, available from Roger Kitchener, Stoneyard Lane, Poplar High St, London, E14, asking 1/2p per side plus postage.)

Roy Taylor of 63A St Nicolas Park Drive, Nuneaton, Warwicks, will be holding a Con at Easter; it will be a long weekend affair with plenty of room for the various games one is likely to be playing. For details write or phone (Nuneaton 329837) Roy.

Mike Roberts, of 56 ~~XXXXXX~~ Willowfield Drive, Marple Gardens, Kidderminster, Worcs, is holding a weekend Con which starts tomorrow (the 28th Feb) so there's no point in me mentioning it, since it's already finished.

Barry McManus, of 54 Overton Road, Sutton, Surrey, will soon be commencing his Sunday Dungeons and Dragons. If you want to play D. & D in a really good dungeon then drop Barry a line.

If you live in London and like the idea of regular weekend meets then get in touch with Mark Batchelor of 18 Tant Avenue, Canning Town, London, E 16.

Tadek Jarski, of 27 Quintin Ave, London, maybe holding a Con in the not too distant future. Tadek has space to cope with about twenty or so of us, so if you bombard him with requests, Tadek would take out the 'maybe' and confirm a date.

Last issue or so I said, jokingly, that the next Committee meeting would be public, and that Dave Allen would be holding it, allowing for the attendance of 600 people! How anybody could take this any other way but as a dig at Dave Allen's demands that Committee meetings be 'public' when it is up to the host who he invites, I do not know. However, it seems as even Dave took me seriously, and is now thinking of holding a con at sometime! His address is 11 Alma Heights, Off Cavendish Way, Mickleover, Derby, if you want to obtain some probably non-existent details.

The Gods Themselves is being included as a supplement to this issue of Greatest Hits. I will assume that any GH subscriber will wish to receive TGT unless he specifies otherwise. I do hope that all of you will wish to receive it, though, especially since it will only be appearing every other issue.

I have recently purchased a copy of "Win Place And Show", which is 3M's version of Totopoly, with the important difference that it is eminently playable. It also struck me that postal play is a distinct possibility, with possibilities for all sorts of nasty occurrences being written in the rules. If enough interest is shown following publication, I may run a game. By the way "Win, Place And Show" is recommended as the best 3M game apart from Speed Circuit and Thinking Man's Golf, both of which are classics.

At the moment, I have literally no idea how large this issue is going to become. There's a lot that I want to put in - I feel that a Poker article is long overdue for a start - but time, cash, and effort may not be forthcoming. After the disaster of last time, though (I had everything typed up by the Saturday, they were duplicated only on the following Friday, and then I didn't send them until the following Friday, mainly due to my not having a minute to spare) I intend to make as sure as possible that this is sent promptly (I mean promptly)

It so happens that the duplicating costs, plus stamps, for a 22 page issue (which is the smallest that this can be, including TGT, are £8.50 (stamps) + £7.00 (duplicating) + £1.50 (stencils) which comes to £17.00. I do recoup about £9.60 for subs, though, leaving a substantial loss of £7.40 - £3.00 (trades) equals £4.40 a month. And, surprise surprise, this does not mean that I am going to put the price up. In fact, I think that £1 a week is a reasonable expenditure on a hobby that I enjoy very much. But please, dispel that image that any Diplomacy publisher is a rip-off artist!

The number of NGC GMs is slowly coming down - Ken Jones has apparently finished; Richard Scott has folded Fifth Column (see obituary column), and another NGC zine looks as though it could soon be folding. This means that the game allocations will soon be such that each and every NGC GM can have enough NGC games to fill his zine. Already Bruce has told me that it can take only a couple of games more for the moment, while Trojan Horse only wants one more game. It shouldn't, with luck, be more than a couple of months before Gummiballs, TOTS, and Jigsaw are full, and then we can get down to the pleasant task of simply replacing games in established zines. Excellent!

FIFTH COLUMN

Back in the Summer of 1973, Richard Sharp realised that the NGC was providing too many games to be run in just Dolchstoss and OJ. He asked for volunteer GMs, and out of the many offers he selected John Coombe and Richard Scott to run games from BDC 30 onwards. Thus Pendulum and Fifth Columnist (as the first few issues were called) were born. My first variant was BDC 33v, having Umbar in a game of Third Age which gains my vote as the best Press game I have ever seen. With Sherrad as Mordor (remember him?), Sharp as Eriador, Piggott as Gondor, Walkerdine as a standby Rohan, and Andy Holt as Rhovanion, the game reached a bizarre conclusion when Mike (who had offered me a two-way draw, an impossibility according to the rules!) misordered his Triple Army, thus getting it annihilated, and ending the game! What was even funnier that the two players who got together to annihilate this unit didn't even win - Sharp did, having pursued a policy of quiet expansion while Mordor ravaged the rest of Middle Earth.

As Fifth Column grew, its reputation as a prompt, regular zine grew, and its placings in the Mad Policy zine polls showed that many players prefer the fast game that rarely dies through lack of interest. Articles during the first half of its life were not infrequent, and always interesting, and although it became clear that Richard was fast losing interest in running a zine, he had the decency and politeness to fold in the most elegant manner, providing for all the games in FC, and making sure that the changeover of GMs was as simple as possible. If all zines folded like this, "drop-out" would take on a respectable meaning.

South, game all, you dealt.

	South	West	North	East
♥ 9753	NB	10	20	20
♦ Jxxxx	NB	30	40	NB
♠ 10 xx				

This is a Sharp problem, shown to me at last Saturday's Poker game. I got to the right contract in the wrong way. What is south's bid?

Accl systems, both side.

And now, as a special offer, for the first time, the GH mailing list, in no order at all.

Richard Sharp:	27 Elm Close, Amersham, Bucks.	C
Gordon Bell:	"Midtown", Easton, Nr Wigton, Cumbria.	C
Richard Scott:	"Desscot", Kingswood Common, Henley-On-Thames, Oxon.	T
Mick Bullock:	14 Nursery Ave, Halifax, West Yorks.	T
Walt Buchanan:	Box 324, R/R No. 3, Lebanon, Indiana, 46052, U.S.A.	T
Adrien Baird:	"Bridleside", Hazel Grove, Orpington, Kent. OR	S
	St Peter's College, Oxford.	
John Coombe:	Luney Barton Farm, Sticker, St Austell, Cornwall.	T
Peter Greig:	82 Blake Road, London, N.11.	S
Mike Roberts:	56 Willowfield Drive, Marple Gardens, Kidderminster, Worcs	S
Malcolm McCulloch:	34 Union St, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire.	S
Andrew Waldie:	Moorcroft Auchterhouse, Dundee, Angus, DD3 0QS. OR	S
	University College, Oxford.	
Greg Hawes:	16 Crescent Road, Sidcup, Kent. OR	T
	Corpus Christi College, Oxford.	
Gus Ferguson:	37 Inch Crescent, Bathgate, East Lothian, Scotland.	S
Malcolm Shaw:	74 Aggborough Cres, Kidderminster, Worcs.	S
Tim Spanton:	6 Willow Close, Liphook, Hants.	S
Chris Brann:	43 Richmond Place, Beacon Hill, Landsdown, Bath, Somerset	S
Roy Taylor:	63A St Nicolas Park Drive, Nuneaton, Warwicks.	T
Duncan Rigden:	25 Grove Road, Finchley, London, N.12.	S
John Boyer:	117 Garland Drive, Carlisle, Pa 17013, U.S.A.	T
Hal Naus:	1011 Barrett Ave, Chula Vista, Cal 92011, U.S.A.	T
Glyn Palmer:	1 Derby Road, Hinckley, Leics.	S
Horst John:	D 7760 Radolfzell, Hohehewenstrasse 17, West Germany.	S
Ian Jones:	50 Vesper Road, Kirkstall, Leeds, LS5 3MX.	S
Steve Doubleday:	Stanwell Library, Hadrien Way, Stanwell, Staines, Middx	C
Al & Tom Burkacki:	13201 Dwyer, Detroit, MI 48212, U.S.A.	T
Peter Berggren:	Davistown Schoolhouse Road, Orford, NH 03777, U.S.A.	T
Don Horton:	16 Jordan Ct, Sacramento, CAL 95826, U.S.A.	T
Tony Kniaz:	3975 Haverhill, Detroit, MI 48224, U.S.A.	T
Jon Lovibond:	1 Oak Lea Avenue, Fulshaw Park, Wilmslow, Cheshire.	T
Lawrence Parrott:	33 Wellwood Road, Goodmayes, Ilford, Essex.	S
Tony Crouch:	35 Melbourne Ave, West Ealing, London, W.13.	S
Victor Logan:	148 Grove Road, Hitchin, Herts.	S
Gary Brittain:	45 Waddington Ave, Great Barr, Birmingham.	S
Martin Rundle:	37 Park Hill Road, Croydon, Surrey, OR	S
	63 Wheeley's Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2LL	
Kim Bailey:	33 Radburn Way, Jackman's Estate, Letchworth, Herts.	S
David March:	13 Lynholmes Road, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3DW.	S
Antony Taylor:	48 Baron's Court Road, Pen-Y-Lan, Cardiff, OR	S
	112 Cher Steep, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 5EW.	
Pete Swanson:	6 Welford Place, Wimbledon, London, SW19.	S
Chris Side:	146 Watergale, Bretton, Peterborough.	S
Phil Murphy:	41/43 Park Avenue, Belfast, BT1 4PU, N. Ireland.	T
Edi Birsan:	Apt 302, 35-35 75th St, Jackson Heights, NY 11372, U.S.A.	S
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Dave Allen:	11 Alma Heights, Off Cavendish Way, Micklegate, Derby.	S
Walter Luc Haas:	Postfach 7, CH 4024, Basel 24, Switzerland.	T
Dave Ross:	Poste Restante, Cordoba, Spain.	T
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Roland Prevot:	14 Av Theophile Gautier, 75016, Paris, France.	S
Kevin Stephens:	41 Sandhill, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 3JF.	S
Bill Orr:	52 Burnthill Crescent, Glengormley, Newton Abbey, N. Ireland.	S
John Piggott:	8 Hillcroft Crescent, London, W.5.	C
Andrew Wright:	15 St John's Road, Gillingham, Kent.	S
Dave Johnson:	22 Cauldwell Ave, West Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear.	S
David Noble:	2 Durban Road, Beckenham, Kent.	T
Robin Allen:	Family Ration Issue Section, GATOW; BFPO 45.	S
Doug Beyerlein:	240 Hawthorn, Apt F, Palo Alto, CA 94301, U.S.A.	T
Roger Kitchener:	74 Stoneyard Lane, Poplar High St, London, E.14.	T
Clive Booth:	71 Clara Mount Road, Langley, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE7 7HS.	S

Mailing List (cont)

Mike Raffell:	33 Ashfield Road, Aigburth Vale, Liverpool, L.17.	S
Wink Thompson:	15 Lineside Walk, Rhu, Dumbartonshire.	S
Harry Drews:	P.O. Box 282, Kithener, Ontario, N2G 3X9, Canada.	T
Dave Pengelly:	3/859, New South Head Road, Rose Bay, N.S.W. 2029, Australia.	S
John Baker:	General Delivery, Gradyville, KY 42742, U.S.A.	S
Mike Kenrick:	47 Pembroke, Hanworth, Bracknell, Berks.	S
Jim Lawson:	Room 556, Henday Hall, Listerhall, 116th St & 87th Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.	S
Marcus Watney:	Flat 36, 5 Elm Park Gardens, London, SW19W.	S
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David Yule:	14 Encombe, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent.	S
Peter Nunn:	Greenridges, New Barn, Lyminge, Folkestone, Kent.	S
Andy Evans:	36 Brynmill Terrace, Brynmill, Swansea, SA2 0BA.	S
Paul Simpkins:	404 Comb Hill, Thornhill, Dewsbury West Yorks	T
Alan Sedgwick:	8 Hampton Gardens, Prittlewell, Southend.	S*
Michael Groom:	28 Kiteley's Green, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.	S
Nick Morris:	Orchard House, Mount Voew Road, Claygate, Surrey.	S
Barry Rudkin:	158 Cricklewood Lane, London, N.W.2.	S*
Hans Swift:	13 Severn Drive, Esher, Surrey, KT10 OAJ.	S
Stephen Lunn:	1 Norstead Gardens, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.	S
Phil Stutt:	10 Muller Road, Horfield, Bristol.	T
David Tant:	32 Nursery Ave, Bexleyheath, Kent.	S
Richard Sargent:	610 Main St, Sutton, W.Va, 26601, U.S.A.	S
Rob Stephens:	Chemical Pilot Plant, Beecham Laboratories, Brockham Park, Betchworth, Surrey.	S
Phil Stimpson:	Victoria House, West Ashby, Horncastle, Lincs.	S
Norman Nathan:	3 Erooke Close, Bushey, Herts.	S

And that is it. Total is 87, plus copies that I give to about five people at college. 28 Trades, 4 Complimentary, and 55 subscribers. We've lost Stephen Asserson and Anthony Woodrow this issue, and gained Norman Nathan, who seems to be re-entering the hobby after a slight lull.

15 copies go to the U.S.A, 2 to Canada, 1 to West Germany, 1 to Switzerland, 1 to France, 2 to N. Ireland, 2 to Wales, 3 to Scotland, 1 to Spain, and 59 to England.

STOP PRESS: Add on:- Peter Mearns: 10 Moy Terrace, Inverness. T
and also:- John Leeder: 208 Haysboro Cres, SW, Calgary Alta, Canada. T

SCIENCE FICTION:

Ward Moore. "Bring The Jubilee"

Fritz Leiber said, in his review article on books in Fantastic Science Fiction and Fantasy, July 1973 - that "Bring The Jubilee (is) one of the ten greatest Science Fiction novels ever written.....profound and brilliantly novel treatment of the American Civil War." (p 113). But that is not to say that it is just about the nature of the two sides in the American Civil War; it is also about the nature of time. The story opens with a young man in the Confederate States of America (The Union lost the War, and is now a backwater, rather like Sweden after the Great Northern War) who goes to town and learns about history. He then joins a 'haven', a scientific community with an eccentric woman genius. She creates the "HX-1", a time machine. One of the best pieces of irony is where the inventor goes back to the year 1900. An observing professor states that she goes back in her mind, and that all the people viewing hallucinate. The professor seems to exist (or does he?) when Hodgins B. Backmaker goes back in time to a period in a battle (that of Gettysburg), but he appears in a position that changes the outcome.

The whole novel is fully ironic, and personally tragic (Hodgins had only just been married). The underlying viewpoint of history is interesting. The view of history is a little jumbled, but it is basically what Tom Shippey would call Whig. That is to say that personal actions are the determinants of the future world rather than social groups and trends in the mass. The latter, Malthusian viewpoint is tacitly adhered to though, in that other excursions didn't have the same effect.

The nature of the Confederacy and the people of it comes out well. The Science Fictional treatment of such themes, however, allows a much greater freedom of thought, and, at best, the questions so often ducked by historians are answered.

Steve Doubleday.

THE GREAT DEBATE

By Lots of People.

((Way back in 1973, a great zine called Hoosier Archives carried an intermittent debate amongst various people. It has always struck me as one of the most interesting arguments ever to have taken place in postal Diplomacy, and we have had no equivalent over here. There is no "answer" to the argument, since the argument is based on value judgements. However, one cannot play postal Diplomacy without taking one side or the other. Where do you stand?))

((The first letter was from a relative newcomer to the hobby, David Forte...))

"In any game of postal Diplomacy, postal or face-to-face, there is always a danger of playing the game by personalities. Although I find a ratings system admirable, it increases the chances of people playing the game against some person with high ratings, rather than playing position and situation. Perhaps a way round this would be to play against opponents "blind". One would not know who one's opponents were and all communications would be routed through the gamesmaster.

In any games, there are not only rules of play, but also a playing of roles. If one does not play the role, one is not playing "rationally" and the point of the game breaks down. In Monopoly, everyone plays a money-grubbing capitalist. A social worker spending all his time in jail on prison reform simply wouldn't be playing the game rationally. In Diplomacy, the rules give great leeway in how a player conducts himself, but basically the role he takes on is one of head of state. Consequently, the rational diplomat seeks first of all his nation's survival, and the extension of its security through power acquisition and advantageous ~~xxxx~~ relationships with other players. A player out to get "Jim Smith" simply because he won his last game is frankly violating one of the implicit rules of rationality in Diplomacy. To be sure, nations, especially democracies, have frequently made commitments or gone to war just on the basis of personality, but here too the results have often been disastrous.

Consequently, I think Len Lakoika has it backwards when he says "A novice must learn that Diplomacy is best played as a test to see if you can win. (So far so good) If you cannot, you must draw the game. (a non-sequitur) You should not do as well as you can if you can't win." (THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT A RATIONAL DIPLOMAT MUST DO) The first objective is survival. If survival must be had as a satellite status, then at least one survives. Compare the diplomacy of Finland and Poland just before, and during the Second World War and you see the result: Finland, compromising in time, maintains an independence throughout the ~~Sovial~~ sphere. Poland in point of fact lost all independence for twenty years.

True, when one nation approaches hegemony, all other nations would be wise to pool their resources and in classic balance of power tactics reduce the threat of world domination. However, one should never sacrifice the existence of one's own country for the "noble cause" unless such a threat of self-destruction can rationally carry some deterrence with it to the major power. Even so, a diplomat must always place himself in a position where such a bluff is not likely to be called. If it is, the defeat is ultimate and total.

Beyond this basic commitment to rationality, I have found a few glosses to the game, though not necessarily which make it more interesting. To begin with, I look upon Diplomacy as a situational problem, and consequently, I usually do not define victory purely by the number of supply centres one has gathered. Sometimes, when one has fought all game long against two or three opponents in an ironclad alliance, survival is the sweetest victory of all. In addition, realising that the game is "diplomacy" and that, in historical terms, ironclad alliances among the major powers at the turn of the century had much to do with thrusting Europe to the brink and over of a World War. I like to get into a game where players eschew these iron alliances which are formed to annihilate some other country. In games where there is a gentlemen's agreement to keep agreements limited in time and scope, the playing of "diplomacy" rather than "war" becomes deliciously sophisticated. I have been in games where the players winding up with the largest amount of supply centres never had to break an agreement. The winner, or winners, were those who made a series of mutually advantageous agreements with the other players, each agreement building upon the other as their country expanded. The plan of an annihilative alliance or of setting someone else up for a stab never entered into the play. Players on the losing side of a contest made a public announcement of suing for peace, and the rest of the world joined together in forcing the victor to limit his gains. Thus, over-extended positions could be successfully liquidated, and one could still come back elsewhere. After all, this is the way most Diplomacy is carried out. Most treaties are kept. Few, except those made by Hitler or Stalin, or a few modern examples, were made with the prior intention of breaking them. Few were actually broken. They faded away by mutual agreement.

((After this letter, published on 30 June 1973, no further word was heard until 13 August. Then three storming replies came from various players. One of them quotes the demonstration game going on in Hoosier Archives at that time, in which Edi Birsan was attacked as England.))

Tom Hubbard:

Dear David, I enjoyed reading your letter in HA 116 very much. It was well-organised, interesting, and you raised a valid point, with which I disagree.

You stated your disapproval of public rating systems, on the grounds that they can facilitate a player's wish to attack the biggest shot on the board, rather than giving first consideration to the strategic-tactical situations. This is quite true. We see a classic example of this as the newer Lions, Rocamora, Rozamilia, and apparently Bytwerk, appear to have begun a three-way attack on Edi Birsan.

And yet, would they have been anywhere near as willing to do this were Edi playing Italy to Mike's France, or Austria to Randy's Germany? I think not. Furthermore, to my limited experience, I've yet to come across a rating system that measures a player's ability as a function of the opposition. No, a player advances his own rating by winning games, which can only be accomplished by primary consideration of the tactics and strategies available. True, a player is justified in attacking the "better" opponent, if all the other options are equal, but he who attacks the highest rated player out of hand will never rate high enough to worry lest others do the same as him.

Now, as to role-playing. I really think David misses the point with his definition of survival. I agree with Len Lakofka that a draw is superior to acting as a puppet for the winner for this reason: the criterion for victory in Diplomacy is, of course, for a player to control over half of the available military resources. At this point, there is virtually no hope for his opponents to turn the tide, and recognition is given to a player's inevitable conquest over the entire board. The game ends at this point because there is no further purpose in play, but the player who has enabled the victor to win has certainly not "survived". A head of state, to further David's analogy, would certainly recognise this and consider the alternative, a "draw" or cessation of all conflict, as a far better alternative for his nations. Besides, the great drawback in acting as a puppet is that the puppeteer has absolute control over the degree of the puppet's expansion and usually limits the puppet to less than five units or insists on controlling some of his home centres.

And you'll rate higher. The game rules state that "all players left on the board share equally in a draw." The CPCL ((Calhamer Point Count League, a rating system that rates only wins, a second being as bad as a seventh)) as does the Brobdingnag rating system. I'm not familiar with the other systems, but these and the ODD, are probably the most widely considered. The Rogues Gallery too.

I do agree with your view of Diplomacy as a situational problem. I fell in love with it after having been addicted to Risk for many years, and upon reading the line about selection of countries being the only element of chance involved, I joyfully smashed my dice with a hammer. It is possible to be caught on the receiving end of an "ironclad alliance" and I would dearly love to experiment with the "gentlemen's agreements" such as you describe. If you're ever in L.A. get in touch.

((As we can see, Tom Hubbard places himself firmly in the "win-only" school, the school of Alan Calhamer, Edi Birsan, Walt Buchanan, Eric Verheiden, and, over here, Nicky Palmer, Duncan Morris, Richard Sharp, and Doug Wakefield. The difference lies in when you consider the game to be over. Does war "cease" when a player gains 18 centres, thus leaving survivors, or does it continue (in the imagination) until one country dominates all of Europe. Calhamer probably meant the latter to be the case, but he doesn't allow for stalemates. The most ridiculous of these is England versus Austria. England has four centres, Lon, Lpl, Edi, and Por. Austria has all other centres (i.e., by normal methods, the game would be over, with Austria being accredited a victory, and, according to the "win-only" rating systems, everyone else last) Yet Austria has not been able to get a fleet into MAO, and England's orders are: F (NAO), F (ENG), & F (Por) all support F (MAO), thus setting up a stalemate that Austria cannot break. Is it a draw, or does Austria win, according to the "win-only school?))

Andrew Phillips:

Regarding David Forte's letter in HA 116, I don't think he quite has the hand of interpreting historical events correctly, or rather, diplomatically. Nor is he correctly interpreting Len Lakofka's words.

It's not his fault. The problem in both cases is the cock-eyed semantics of Diplomacy, compounded by the fact that its screwiness is neither universally recognised nor understood.

(cont over)

(Andy Phillips, cont)

For example, in the outside worlds, a "draw" is a synonym for a "tie", and it may be reliably inferred of two contestants who drew that they scored equally well. Thus, the natural inference (witness the Calhamer Point Count) to be drawn from the information that two or players "draw" a Diplomacy game is that they did do equally well - never mind the fact that one had 17 units and the other was making do with a singleton. Naturally, if you're trying to play your country "rationally" - in the role playing sense advocated by Lakofka and Forte - the legalitarianism of one unit and seventeen unit countries is a pain in the head.

The other Diplomatic terms are nearly all bad. For example, Forte presents Finland as a country which did better to cooperate and "survive" rather than attempt a "draw" and be eliminated. The problem here is that he takes "survive" at face value..... and "survive" doesn't mean survive! It doesn't have anything to do with cooperation, but merely means still having armed force and territory under your control when someone else, enemy or ally, wins.

And therefore Finland couldn't have "survived" World War II, simply because no other country "won" that conflict. Oh, Germany and Japan lost alright - the Nazi and Samurai types lost control of their territory and that's essentially the type of thing we are talking about when a country is "eliminated" (the necessity in a nationalistic age of non-puppet ((at least not entirely)) governments for conquered territories must, I think, be assumed to be one of those things that don't make it through the "mesh", in recognisable form, but which exist nonetheless ((at least in a "non-win" situation, a totally dormant power might be able to afford to do without)). However, none of the allies get "18 units on the board"; i.e. the capability to dismiss all rivals, including allies. (well, ...the U.S. might have had that capability, but the democratic weltanschauung ((that forbade Patton heading for Moscow)) and the technology of the atomic bomb have no place in our Machiavellian game).

And finally, even doing "well" may have a peculiar meaning in Diplomatic circles, if the context is right. Hence, Forte's misunderstanding of Lakofka. He wasn't saying a player shouldn't try to do well; he was saying you shouldn't try to do "well". Since he left out the quotation marks, a novice - an expert, even, for that matter - can easily be forgiven a misunderstanding. What he meant, of course, was that to gain units and lose when you can draw is to do "well" ((having more units but failing to share in a win. pjb)) at the expense of doing well ((participating in a draw whilst controlling very little actual territory)). (I must admit I can't square this sentiment with Len's pet "Rogue's Gallery" Rating system. Said system encourages playing for centres rather than draws. Len's argument, that to do otherwise than give credit for "second place" would be to deny hard-working players their just reward, doesn't hold water. Too often it's the stooge who comes second, not the primary opponent. Giving credit only for results largely avoids this difficulty in the long run.)

What's needed, I think, is a new vocabulary. But that's not easy. "Stalemate" is better than "draw", but it isn't always applicable. "Survival", which is what it is, and what survival really isn't, is already taken. And "cessation of hostilities" is cumbersome. Suggestions, anyone?

((So, yet another rebuttal of the "Strong Second" argument. Although slightly overbearing, and difficult to follow at times, one can perhaps see that Andy thinks nomenclature in Diplomacy is up the creek. The next letter in reply to David Forte looked more at the psychological aspects of playing Diplomacy, but once again, the problem of different definitions was noted.))

Len&Scensny: Dave Forte's Letter in Hoosier Archives 116 contained a few points on gaming psychology with which I must take issue. Perhaps the root of our disagreement lies in differing definitions, and in particular, our understanding of the word "rationality". Dave seems to take "rational" as proper role playing. I feel this definition is inappropriate. What Dave is really talking about when he uses the word "rational play" is "playing fair". In other words, a player who does not play the real world role of head of state is somehow cheating the others, who do. I think it is a mistake to expect the reality we perceive in the outside world (e.g. the "real" role of a head of state) to influence a game which has little connection with it.

The goals and rules of Diplomacy are determined by two things. Its internal structure (rules) require expansion. By logical extension, this means winning or tying, since anything less means absorption by the winner, during the game or after. It is a hypothetical extension of play. The other, and I think more important, determinant of the course of play is the players themselves. When the players sit down to a game, they are in effect saying "While we are participating in the game we will suspend the factors which govern behaviour in real-life in order to choose new "rules" of behaviour to operate with for our amusement, education, or whatever." Along with the creator of the game, the players are the only connection it has with reality; and their connection lies in the slices of personal reality each of them brings to the game. Since a player has the right to suspend reality, he also has the right to create whatever new reality he wishes, even if this means deliberately