

# Owls Diplomacy News



DECEMBER 2006

## ... a little controversy!

"Now this looks like a job for me  
So everybody just follow me  
'Cos we need a little controversy  
'Cos it feels so empty without me." - Eminem

With 10/13 games in the final round of the Owls Open Tourney now completed, the inaugural event is drawing to a close. But what would life be without a little controversy to get the emotions stirred and blood pumping! Fortunately the top board has delivered an incredible game, an intriguing two-way draw and some controversy. I'll leave it to keen Diplomats to review the game and the EOG debate and form your own views...

This issue we meet John Pomeranz, reflect on the art of communication with Jeremy Edwards and explore an exchange between myself and Brandon Clarke who is a long time stalwart of the hobby.

The first two articles contain a wealth of tips and provocative ideas and I am grateful for both contributions. The last article completely changed a view I've held for a long while about the differences between anonymous and face to face Diplomacy.

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## Interview with John Pomeranz

by Thorin Munro

TM) Thanks for accepting the invite! Firstly what is your background, profession, family, interests, politics, reading preferences, etc!

JP) I was destined to enjoy Diplomacy. I'm a lawyer (and son of a lawyer) who was born, grew up, and spent most of my life in the

Washington, D.C. area. Where I now represent non-profit groups ("non governmental organisations" seems to be the more common term outside the U.S.) that are engaged in lobbying and political activity. I've been surrounded and involved in political tactics and the tools of persuasion all my life.

I think (based on my anecdotal personal contact with Dip players in person) that I'm somewhat unusual among people in the hobby in that my politics lean decidedly to the left. Perhaps it's not so odd as I think. Surely there are others on this side of the ideological spectrum who have found a "war game" that they can love because it's more about persuasion than pure force.

In terms of my obsessions, I'm actually a bigger science fiction fan than I am a Diplomacy fan. I've been reading SF since I was a tot and attending and working on SF conventions for nearly thirty years. My wife and I actually met in 1978 in our high school science fiction club. (At this point your readers are no doubt thinking to themselves, "What a pitiful geek." Ah well, they're probably right.)

TM) Any formative experiences that you think shaped your playing style?

JP) Hmm... Tough question. So many parts of my life connect to my enjoyment of the game and the way I play it. If I had to pick one, I'd say it was a childhood as the nerdy kid who learned to talk his way out of trouble. I sure wasn't going to win any schoolyard fights, and I wasn't going to win any popularity contests for my sporting prowess or good looks. So I learned to talk to people.

TM) How did you first discover the game of Diplomacy and start playing on the internet?

JP) Nearly thirty years ago, a number of my friends (and my two younger brothers) played war games (and, later, Dungeons and Dragons, which was just about to take off). We'd all "graduated" from playing Risk and were trying various strategy games from Avalon Hill and SPI - all those games with

hundreds of little cardboard pieces with tiny printing, hexagonally grided playing boards, and rulebooks the size of the Manhattan telephone directory. We tried Dip, and I loved it. There was just so much more depth to the game, belying its relative simplicity in terms of rules. Nonetheless, it was then, as ever, hard to find the time and players, and I let it drop for years.

Then, in the 1990s, I was doing a lot of fiddling around with the then relatively new Internet, and it occurred to me that there was almost certainly a Diplomacy community online and I might be able to connect with some people for a live game. To my great pleasure and amazement, I found PBEM Diplomacy (before the sophisticated graphical interfaces of today, alas) and enjoyed several games before dropping out again to pursue law school and other life-consuming activities. Returning to the hobby in the last few years has been a real pleasure.

TM) Have you ever played FTF and Tournament Diplomacy?

JP) I've played FTF every so often over the past thirty years, but it's always hard to find seven people who share an interest in the game who all have the same uninterrupted stretch of hours available. If we didn't know better, we might have assumed that Diplomacy had been designed for PBM and PBEM. Certainly I think that PBEM has assured the game's survival by making it possible for hundreds (thousands?) of more players across the world to play.

I'd like to try tournament Diplomacy at some point. The World Diplomacy Convention was in Washington, D.C. last year, but the timing was terrible for me, and I didn't get to go. I probably would have washed out quickly. My strengths as a player are my carefully phrased press and the tactics that I agonize over, and I don't do either of those well quickly.

TM) What aspects of the game do you most enjoy?

JP) I love the intricate tactics combined with interpersonal relations all wrapped up in rules of surprising and beautiful simplicity. It is chess and poker rolled into one. There's something of this in professional bicycling. There you not only need the power to accomplish your goals but also the persuasive ability to convince your allies to help you and convince your opponents that there is no need

to counter your threat until it is too late for them to do so. In Diplomacy, fortunately, nobody's figured out a way to spoil the whole thing with blood doping yet (unless you count my caffeine addiction).

TM) Is there anything you find limited or frustrating about the game?

JP) The difficulty of finding seven good players willing to commit to fully participate all the way until the end of the game. PBM and PBEM solved the near impossibility of getting a FTF game together, but even in the PBEM games its hard to get people to play hard all the way through.

It's also a shame that the powers aren't more evenly matched (although that "problem" has its pleasures too when you take a weak power to victory). One of these days, I'll try Chromatic or another variant designed to address this problem.

TM) Do you have a favourite power / opening / alliance? Why?

JP) Not really. I certainly recognize when I've gotten a "good" power, like France or England or a "bad" power like Italy, but I like playing all of them. As for openings and alliances, I tend to be driven more by my assessment of my fellow players in the initial press.

Sometimes the "weak" powers can be more fun to play because the other players underestimate the threat you pose and skilful diplomacy can take you farther. For example, in the first two rounds of the recent Owls Tournament, I ended up with Austria in both of my first two games, and had a great time (although I was ultimately eliminated in both). In the second of those, OwlsOpen06\_2f, Italy – always scorned as the "weak" power - took a solo victory through terrific play and successful manipulation of all of the rest of us.

TM) How do you describe your playing style?

JP) Try to put yourself in the position of everyone with whom you talk. When approaching a power you'd like to ally with, try to see through their eyes the advantages of allying with someone else and the disadvantages of accepting your offer. Acknowledge the problems with your proposals and try to demonstrate how those problems can be surmounted (or could even be "spun" as strengths).

Having made your best guess at what they're likely to do (and understanding that they're doing the same), do the unexpected. Don't use your Fall move to take the center if you can make an unexpected play that improves your overall position on the board. (Plan as far ahead as you can!) Use the unexpected moves that the Diplomacy rules have to offer, such as the convoy order. (Players too often see the convoy as a mere trucking service, and not as a strategic tool.) My favourite unexpected order is the support order for my opponent's forces. I just finished *OwlsOpen06\_3m* as England and was able to take Moscow by getting Turkey to order support for Russia that spoiled a planned bounce in Sevastopol and let me take Moscow. (If I'd had the sense to hold on to Moscow, that game might have ended in a solo for me, but it ended with me holding seventeen centers instead because I let a Russia-Turkey-Italy alliance push me back into a stalemate line.)

Meanwhile, try to maintain a cordial relationship, even with (especially with) your enemies. Talk with everyone, every turn (at least in the early years). Keep up the small talk, perhaps making joking references to real-world history, events, or popular culture that seem applicable to the flow of the game. Applaud a skilful play, even if you're the victim (not gratuitously, though – save it for play that deserves it). Talk to the player that nobody else is talking to. Occasionally send press to players who have been eliminated (because they may be talking to players who haven't been or they may offer you useful insights into your own position). If you see a strategy that might help a player on the far side of the board, suggest it. If someone has just stabbed you, get over it, and try to explain why it makes sense for him or her to work with you now (while demonstrating that you don't hold a grudge that would prevent a revived alliance from working). In general, make them happy to see press from you in their mailbox, even if they know they're not going to accept any substantive proposal you make.

Part of that is trying not to be jerk. Of course I sometimes feel anger or frustration in the course of a game when my allies attack me or players make foolish choices that harm me, but allowing that emotion to drive your play or appear in your press is self-defeating. I've played with players who call their opponents names and heap abuse on them, either in comments to third parties or directly in communications with the targets of their anger. Unless that discourtesy is part of your

calculated strategy to make the other players think you're a loose cannon – a strategy that is sometimes, if rarely, called for – it only harms you. I've had many players, faced with certain elimination, decide, as their dying act, to assist me rather than another player simply because they don't like another player who has been consistently abusive.

TM) Do you ever role-play through the game?

JP) I sometimes do a little bit, but it's the least interesting part of the game to me – a distant third after the negotiation and the strategy.

You have to be sensitive to the other players' preferences in that regard. When it's clear that another player has adopted a persona, I try to play along. For other players that want to be all business, I've dropped roles in my press to them. In *OwlsOpen06\_3m*, I was playing England in the role of Edward VII, and I really infuriated the self-proclaimed (and rather short-tempered) "Czar" of Russia by referring to the real-world relation between Edward and Nicholas II (Edward's nephew). People get mad about the oddest things.

TM) Brad Basden highlighted your tenacity in tough positions, why not just give up and start a new game?

JP) The only sin in Diplomacy is giving up!

Treachery and occasional poor play are part of the game, and you can be ready for them – by preparing for the stab, by helping your weaker ally plan a better strategy, by urging your enemies into their own follies.

Withdrawing from a game without actually resigning, however, disrupts the flow of the game for everyone at once. It is as rude as one dancer leaving the dance floor in the midst of a complicated pattern dance.

Furthermore, folding in the face of a tough position means that you lose the chance of the greatest joy in Diplomacy – coming back to win when everyone had counted you out. In an early PBEM (I can't remember the name), I took over a two-unit Austria and took it to a solo victory. I played Germany in *Owls\_Hemingway* and was down to three centers, none of them in Germany. With some luck and a terrific ally in England, the game ended in a rare two-way draw between England and I (because neither of us could bear the thought of ruining such an alliance with a stab).

Besides, even if you are eliminated (and you will be in most tough spots), you can still enjoy the game after you're eliminated. I don't disrupt the game with much press from "beyond the grave" after my elimination, but I do watch it and chime in the occasional comment.

I guess the bottom line is that I put too much into any given game. I don't have the time or energy to play more than one at once, and I'm loathe to leave a game that I've put so much work into until absolutely forced to.

TM) Are there any world class leaders alive today whose Diplomacy talents inspire you?

JP) Archbishop Desmond Tutu, perhaps. A brilliant and eloquent man; always courteous, yet unbending in his principles. A man of quiet grace and power. He's as much – and probably more – responsible for South Africa's peaceful transition from apartheid to majority rule as Nelson Mandela.

TM) I know it's still in progress and I don't want to jinx your 3rd round game, but do you have any comments about the Owls Tournament?

JP) Well, I've taken so long to respond to you that I've just finished my last game in the Tournament...

I've generally quite enjoyed it, although I haven't done very well. (Of course, I landed Austria in my first two games, so it was uphill all the way.) It's nice to have a structure for a series of games. I'll be curious to see who comes out on top.

TM) Will there ever be a Diplomacy World Series (like Poker) where we play for millions of dollars?

JP) No. It takes too long to play and too much of it happens below the surface to make good popular entertainment, so the money won't be there to support such a thing. The only way I could see something like this is if Diplomacy were to become the hobby of people rich enough to afford such purses – as golf or horse racing has. I think Diplomacy – mercifully – will remain the peculiar hobby of people who enjoy its quirky charms.

TM) Is Diplomacy ultimately a game best played by ruthless and selfish people?

JP) Certainly not. Such people tend to reveal themselves, and those who demonstrate such

traits tend not to attract the necessary support of allies.

With that said, a player needs to be able to occasionally get in touch with his or her inner ruthless and selfish self. I know there are players who take it as a matter of pride that they never lie to another player and never stab first. I don't know how they ever win a game of Diplomacy.

TM) Do you have a favourite quote to close?

JP) Tough call... Probably the oft-quoted line from Lincoln's second inaugural address:

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Not a bad thought for a bunch of selfish and ruthless war gamers... <grin>

TM) I agree, thanks John!

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## The Art of Communication

by Jeremy Edwards

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." This is a Biblical passage from which Pete Seeger wrote a song called "Turn, Turn, Turn!" in 1962. The Byrds popularized it in 1964 as a war protest. In this article I'll be focusing on communication, and as the song continued, there is "a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak. The ability of a player to choose the proper method of communication is an important truth that cannot be ignored.

Some people communicate through diplomatic press; some people communicate through raging, heated press; some people communicate by not speaking at all. Each of these forms of communication are valid tools within the game of Diplomacy, but each should be used wisely and in the proper context.

The most popular form of communication is the standard, friendly press. This form of communication will serve you best throughout

most of your games. It's important not to take the game personally and to remember that lies and stabs are all a part of the game. If you are stabbed, take it all in stride and talk to your opponent peacefully at first, in an attempt to dissuade him from further incursions into your territory. It is said that 'a soft answer turns away wrath' and that 'it's easier to catch a fly with honey, rather than vinegar'. These truths are self-evident and no less true in Diplomacy.

For example, in a recent game, a player sent such vile, hate-filled press, that the Italian chose to throw the game to me, rather than allow that player a decent score. Never allow your emotions to cloud your judgment. Before you write a heated press, consider the long-term effects that press will have on your game.

In some cases, however, heated-press is necessary to turn aside an attack. This form of communication is known as "Chainsaw Diplomacy" and is such a powerful tool it should be used only in greatest need and with the utmost care. Mastering the art of Chainsaw Diplomacy can take a long time, so don't be surprised if it backfires on you at first. The Diplomacy Archives contain an entire article dedicated to this form of communication, so I won't go into too much depth on the subject, but I will explain the basics of this tool.

Let's say you've been stabbed repeatedly and your opponent shows no signs of backing down. You've tried being nice; you've tried being diplomatic, but your opponent is bent on eliminating you. It's time to break out the chainsaw. Chainsaw Diplomacy is not an explosion of hate and vile threats, but rather a press showing controlled fury. You want your opponent to be so frightened by you, that he reconsiders continuing to attack you. Sometimes, threatening to throw the game to another person or threatening to blockade your opponent, regardless of the outcome are effective methods. Other times, you have to become heated, but you should never allow your emotion to spill into your press, although you can make it seem like it has.

In Owlsopen06\_3A, I drew Germany and began the game with the ODN suggestion of an Axis alliance in mind. Russia tipped me off that Austria planned to stab me in 1902, so I brought this up prior to the moves and Austria swore vehemently that he did not intend to stab me. When he proved to be lying, I jumped right into chainsaw diplomacy, making sure he would be caught off-guard by my reaction. After a few angry presses, I then backed down

and apologised profusely; giving him the impression, I would work with him. This allowed me to work against him without causing undo suspicion until it was too late. In this case, a mix of honey and vinegar worked very well, but I had to be sure not to push him so far that he rallied other powers against me.

Not communicating is also an effective method of communication, but again, it must be used in the proper context. When you cut off communication with another player, make sure it is strategic and not simply because you're angry with the player for some reason. Some people stop communicating because they know their press is being shared across the board, but in a case like this, you can use this to your advantage. In television and movies, if a person knows that a neighbour is a gossip, they will tell that neighbour something to make sure it spreads all over town. The same can be true in Diplomacy. If you want people to think you are moving a certain direction, then be sure to tell the game gossip and it will eventually fall into the right ears.

Another poor reason to cut off communication is after a stab. As mentioned earlier, sometimes elimination can be turned around with the proper amount of diplomacy. Now, sometimes there is no hope, but it's still common courtesy to keep talking to the other players, if for no other reason than to pass along information and try to trip up your opponent or rally the other nations to your cause.

For example, I played England in Owls\_Goethe, and pulled every diplomatic trick I could think of to get France to stop his assault on me, but to no avail. Finally, I was reduced to two centers and I knew my doom was near. However, I still had a fleet and an army deep within Germany that would be useful to France if he wanted a solo. I decided to help France take a solo, since the other players either slit my throat or refused to stop France. I successfully convinced France to push me forward towards Russia, trading me center for center until his solo was near. This bought me two more years in the game and France didn't get a solo, so even in elimination, I received more points than if I had simply stopped talking to France.

In a more recent game, Owls\_Euripides, I played France and England took advantage of my unprotected rear when I advanced on Italy. I broke out my chainsaw immediately and verbally tore him to shreds. Although it shook

him, he was resilient and continued his advances on me, so I changed tactics, using logic and game theory instead. I sent a 3-page press detailing his options and showing how attacking Germany would offer him more long-term gains. In this case, England ceased his attacks and we were able to hammer out an alliance. Diplomacy with my enemy turned my game around and saved me from elimination. Another factor in England's decision was the lack of communication from the other players. Some ignored him, while others only sent short messages. No one actually *communicated* with him, except for me.

However, I have seen times when NOT communicating is the best method of communicating. Here we get into the psychology of your opponents. Jonty Klassnik mentions in his article on the *Belgian Gambit*, that if France moves to BUR in the spring and offers silence in the fall, Germany will worry about the loss of MUN and allow you to take Belgium uncontested. In another article, entitled the *Alpine Chicken*, Jonty mentions a spring move of VEN – PIE when playing Italy, followed by silence in the fall. In this scenario, France worries about the loss of MAR and moves to cover that territory. This not only limits France's initial builds, but also ensures that no fleet can be raised in MAR that year.

Whatever method of communication you employ within a game, always consider the future ramifications of your actions, and weigh them against the potential gains. Communicate in a manner best befitting your long-term strategy. Remember "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak."

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### **Diplomacy never stops.**

by Thorin Munro / Brandon Clarke

As context, this exchange occurred in September during a game from the Anzac Cup. The Anzac Cup is an email tournament hosted on Redscape for Australian and New Zealand players. I had scored a solo in my first game and the tournament score table had me openly listed as leading. After a few years of play in the second game I broadcast the following message, partly from frustration, partly to break open an issue and partly as a desperate diplomatic tactic. The response from Brandon made me reconsider what it really takes to excel at Diplomacy.

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Dear Anzacs, One of you has mentioned an 'elephant in the room' and so I'll take the risk of sour grapes accusations to muse a little...but I'll leave the player who sent this un-named so he is not expelled from the brotherhood!

*"Hi Thorin, Sorry for not replying sooner. Lucky you being in Adelaide. Game-wise, I guess it was a pretty good time not to think about it. I would say most of the board is in agreement about your 18 in the other game. If you can keep up the great defence, that suits me down to the ground:) You are doing well so far. Also doesn't hurt that France is hard to take down when you know what you are doing... Regards"*

My inadequate diplomacy has obviously landed me into my current position. But clearly from the above it's not the only factor. Open knowledge of my solo in The Nek, plus drawing a neighbour here (England) whom I took centres from in that final solo push, have also contributed. As have astute players around me who know that keeping tournament aspirations alive means my necessary execution... hence some of the stonewall diplomacy I've encountered?!

Now I confess that this is my thinking too when I am in a game and know who around me has a big score or who is dangerous. It's an obvious and easy negotiating angle. And why not, all's fair in the meta-dip game, which is a tournament (or even in the wider hobby). So I'm not surprised or (very:) bitter about my predicament here. [Plus I acknowledge that at the end of the day, it is simply my problem, and that ultimately I have lacked the experience or diplomatic skill to overcome these factors....]

The thing it really highlights to me however, is the limitations of tournament dip (ftf or email) in this format (open progress scores and open knowledge of players). I understand more and more why Manus Hand designed the dpjudge for anonymous play. That's where I play and master most of my Dip games, and to my mind it solves the issues of busting newbies / targeting name players / early leaders. Playing anonymously brings it back to truer negotiating skill, strategy, etc

Anyway, I'll take me medicine:) And if you have a counter view, or helpful wisdom, or even a tirade, I'd be glad to hear it. Cheers, Thorin.

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Thorin, I sympathise. Nevertheless, I would like to note, for the record, that I genuinely opened negotiations with you, and YOU chose to snub my offer of a strong alliance from the get go. I don't mind allying with strong players, in fact I prefer it, and your progress in the other games had absolutely no bearing on my Diplomacy in this game. (I accept I am likely to be in the minority here). With regards to the stonewall Diplomacy you have encountered from me, it is entirely due to your chosen path of action (not committing to a Sea Lion opening against England with me). Had you jumped my way, the stone wall would be presented to England, not you, as I am extremely loyal to people who commit to working with me early on.

I also agree with you that this sort of symptom is (often) the effect of open tournament structures. Having said that, as you note, we all knew this was the case coming in and part of the challenge is how we adapt to that environment. Because of this fact, **I actually completely disagree with your assertion that "Playing anonymously brings it back to truer negotiating skill, strategy, etc."**

I find that the complete opposite is the case. Playing anonymously just makes it easier. It's a much TRUER test of your negotiating skill when you are Rob Stephenson and everyone KNOWS how good/ dangerous you are and to STILL be able to weave your magic.

The greatest lesson I ever learned years ago was when Rob said, **"Diplomacy never stops."** This truism is the cornerstone of advanced Diplomacy play. What he means by it is that after the game stops, and you are socialising, relaxing, having fun with your Diplomacy friends, the true master of Diplomacy is still observing, still pushing people's buttons to see how they react when they are tired/drunk/totally at ease. Filing away what you find out about people in these moments is part of the art of being a top Diplomacy player. You can use this knowledge in games at later dates.

Being a REALLY top Diplomacy player is incredibly difficult. Being good when it is anonymous is for the intermediate players. Being good when there are targets on your back - like Yann Clouet's recent performance coming third at WorldDipCon... that is what marks you as a true master. Have you read:

<http://www.diplom.org/Zine/S1999M/Windsor/paint.html>?

If you haven't, I urge you to. And if you enjoy it go to <http://www.diplom.org/Zine/list.html> and search the page for "Windsor" and read Paul's other articles. He's the best Diplomacy strategy writer ever, in my opinion.

In "What's your point?" he identifies what it takes to be really good at this game. Being able to lie straight faced, being able to read people's body language, intonation, eyes, and read between the lines in their emails, being able to tactically analyse the board better than your opponents. Take a look at:

<http://devel.diplom.org/Zine/S2000M/Clarke/BiggerPicture.html>

and:

<http://www.diplom.org/Zine/F2000M/Clarke/growingup.html>

are all assumed to be things that you have mastered....

... and THEN you need to be able to play each of the Classicist, the Romantic, the Club Player and the Deviate (and combinations thereof) on demand, as different games warrant...

... and later still being able to play two or more of them simultaneously in the same game to different opponents...

... and later still being able to play two of them to different opponents in a game and THEN be able to talk to both of those players at the same time in a 3 way discussion and yet keep up your split personalities to both of them...!!!!

THAT is when you're really good. THAT is when your heart pounds in your chest like NEVER before... that is the biggest thrill in Diplomacy.

On a similar vein, there's no such thing as a 50 - 50 guess in Diplomacy. There are always things you know about the players dispositions, moods, preferences etc. that make it more or less than 50 - 50.

Finally, nice of you to quote Goffy's email. BC

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**Anonymity on the dpjudge:** One of the important realisations I have taken from this exchange and the controversy on the top board of the Owls Open tournament is that regular players will begin to recognise each other. I am very careful in general Owls games to ensure any collusion is addressed and anonymity is maintained per the house rules.

However in the Owls Invitational games and Tournament games I now better understand the importance of setting them up as Private games. Regular players begin to recognise styles and tone and it becomes impossible to maintain complete anonymity. I think this is a natural outgrowth of a community of players and is probably a good thing. In fact the thesis presented above suggests it will actually improve and sharpen our playing abilities!

The key is to be up-front with players joining Private games that the headline: ***"This is a private game including specific players; it may include players who know each other."*** Means exactly what it says and each player joins those games in the full knowledge and acceptance of this.

Food for thought...

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### Owls Player Feedback

Hi Thorin, The Newsletter is looking sharp! Getting pretty classy. I'm starting to think you should get some money from Frank Rivers for all the advertising you've been doing about his book!

The content was pretty interesting (as usual!). Power Diplomacy . . . I'd never really thought about that before. Does the 'Expertise power base' count as a power base even if it's fake expertise? Before I joined owls\_119, I had never played Germany before (in a game with press), but I managed to fake my lack of German experience and got a few allies. Of course I blew it all by blindly stabbing at France, but that's another story.

Now we get to the reason I am taking up your time. Last Saturday I managed to throw together a little article about no-press games, but I didn't want to send it to you because I figured you would already have the Newsletter all laid out and wouldn't want to put something new in at the last minute. I figured I would wait until after the November issue came out, but upon reading it, I see two more articles are being written! It seems the Newsletter has created quite the splash in the Diplomatic pool (excuse the metaphor).

My article is rather long, so I doubt you would want to put it in a Newsletter that already has a lot of articles. I don't even know if mine is good enough. Okay, I lied, personally I think it's good enough, but there's always some way to make

it better. Anyway, it's rather long, so it'd be fine with me if you waited until the following month (or whenever it was suitable) or split the article into two parts, which was what I was thinking.

If you recall, I told you a while back that I wouldn't write anything Diplomacy related until I had played all the powers at least once. Well, I'm happy to say that I have completed or am playing games as all the powers. Please, hold your applause.

- Chris Zepf

**[Thanks Chris and congrats on the milestone. Now to solo with each power☺ This issue has ballooned out to 8 pages so I've held the No Press article over to next issue ... some Christmas reading for everyone to look forward to. Please keep the ideas and articles flowing...]**

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"Whosoever knows how to fight well is not angry.

Whosoever knows how to conquer enemies does not fight them." - Lao Tzu

**Thorin Munro  
Sydney, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2006.**