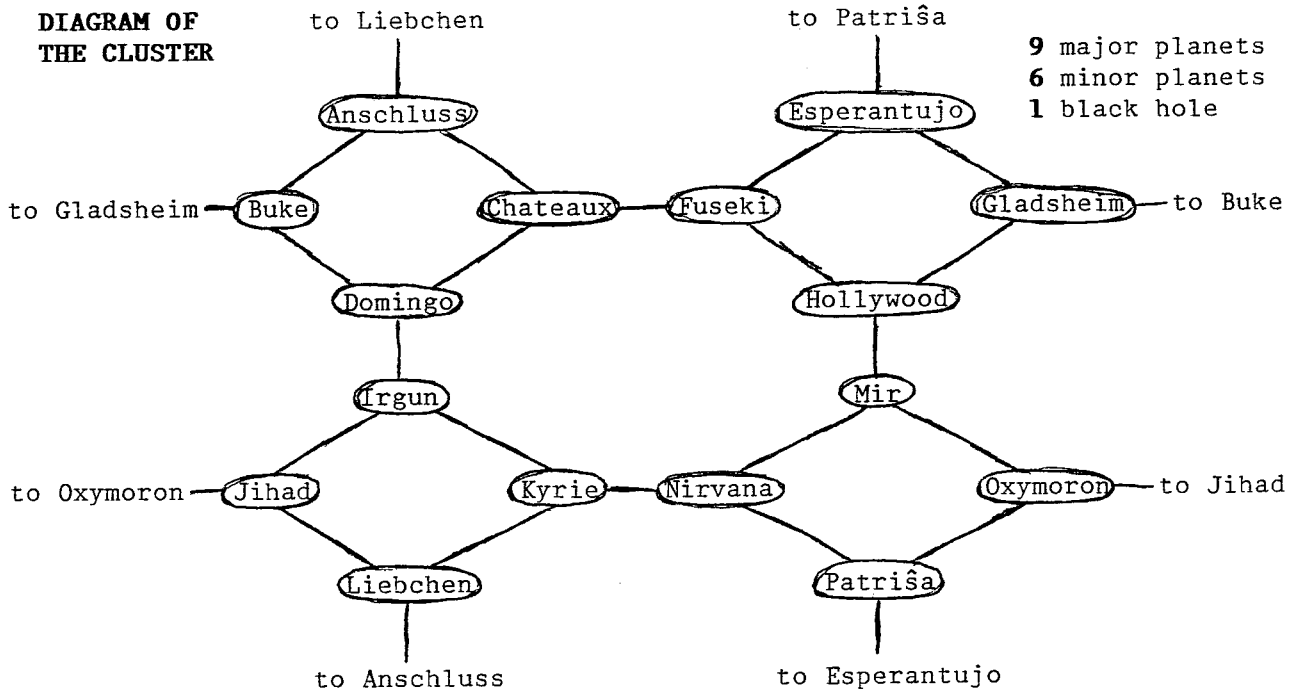


COSMIC CLUSTER, a **Diplomacy (tm)** variant  
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1. General. COSMIC CLUSTER is a science-fiction variant of Diplomacy for 2-9 players. The most recent edition of the Diplomacy rules will be used wherever it does not conflict with these variant rules.
2. The Cosmic Cluster. The board represents sixteen planetary systems. Nine are "major" systems (some or all of which are home systems for the players). Six are "minor" systems, and one is a Black Hole. Each system is connected to exactly three other systems by jump-lines, which may be used by fleets. See the diagram of the cluster for details.
3. Set-Up. A gamesmaster determines the location of the systems at random for each game. First the players' systems are distributed at random. Then the Black Hole is located randomly, but if possible it will not be adjacent to any player's home system. Finally, the six minor systems and remainder of the nine major systems are placed.
4. Planetary Systems. Each system consists of a System Box, an Orbit space within the Box, and a planet entirely within the Orbit space. The planet has three spaces and one supply center in a minor system. In a major system the planet has eight spaces and three supply centers (four if the system is a player home system). See the system diagrams for more detail. Players start with armies in home centers 1 and 4, a fleet in home center 5, and a fleet in Orbit supported by home center 8.
5. Army Movement. Armies may move from one planetary surface space to an adjacent space of the same planet. Armies may not move to Orbit spaces or System Boxes. The regular "convoy" of Diplomacy rules does not exist.
6. Fleet Movement. Fleets may move from Orbit spaces to surface spaces of that planet, and vice versa. Fleets may move from Orbit spaces to System Boxes of that planet, and vice versa. Fleets may move from a System Box to one of three other System Boxes in accordance with the diagram of the Cluster. Fleets may not move directly between two surface spaces.
7. Army/Fleet Operations. Armies may board fleets to form Army/Fleets. Army/Fleets may only exist in Orbit spaces and System Boxes. A/Fs operate in accordance with the Overby Standard Army/Fleet Module, considered a part of these rules.
8. Analogy. In general, treat planet spaces as coastal land provinces, and Orbits and System Boxes as sea spaces, within the above constraints.
9. System Boxes. Any number of Fleets or Army/Fleets, of any player(s), may occupy a System Box at once. Units may always move or retreat to a System Box regardless of occupied status.
10. Black Hole. The Black Hole system has a Box only; no Orbit or planet spaces. A Fleet or Army/Fleet may move from the Black Hole to any System Box in the Cluster. The reverse does not apply. (In effect, the Black Hole has three entrances and fifteen exits.)
11. Spring Raid. If a unit of any player occupies a center owned by a different player at the end of a Spring turn, the center becomes uncontrolled. (Ownership by a player can only be established in Fall, as usual.)
12. The first game year is 4001. The victory condition is ownership of 18 or more supply centers; if two attain this simultaneously, both win.

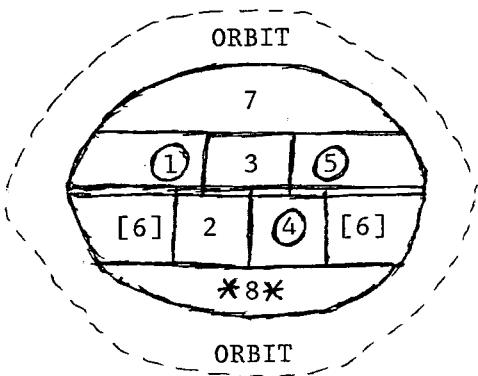
**DIAGRAM OF THE CLUSTER**



COSMIC CLUSTER, a **Diplomacy (tm)** variant  
Maps Copyright © 1989 by Glenn Overby

Major System Box:                             
                                  may jump to...

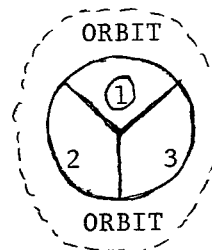
          
SYSTEM



1-4-5 are supply centers  
8 is a center only for player planet  
REMEMBER: ORBIT touches all 8 spaces  
Spaces 1 and 5 touch

Minor System Box:                             
                                  may jump to...

          
SYSTEM



1 is a supply center

OVERBY STANDARD ARMY/FLEET MODULE  
for amphibious operations in variant **Diplomacy** games

Supplement to **Mondoj #4**, July 7, 1989.

**A. Acknowledgements.** This module would not be possible without the long-term work of two other men, Fred Davis and Doug Wakefield. Mr. Davis, arguably the world's top variant designer, invented the A/F for his early designs; Mr. Wakefield, a British expatriate, polished A/F rules and ideas in his exceptional Mercator series of global variants. Both men solved certain problems in different ways. I have played their games, GMed their games, and corresponded with both men about their games. "Overby Standard" is really Davis/Wakefield in spirit.

**B. Overview.** The convoy rules of regular **Diplomacy** are a bit simplistic, on one hand, and almost impossible to use on big or "watery" variant maps, on the other. Army/Fleets (A/Fs) are an attempt to make crossing the sea more realistic; they also provide a wealth of tactical options and a lot more mobility than a bunch of fleets sitting in sea spaces to convoy. How does this happen? Well...

**C. The Four Time Scales.** When playing with A/Fs, four Time Scales are part of each turn, as opposed to the two parts in standard play:

1. Board or Land--An army may board a fleet in an adjacent sea space to create an A/F; boardings always succeed absent error (or a stab by one unit's owner). An army already part of an A/F may land in a coastal space adjacent to the A/F, if empty. An army may land in an occupied adjacent coastal space if the fleet it's on supports the landing order; this dislodges the opponent automatically. But a fleet that supports a TS1 landing may not order in TS2.

2. Standard Orders Phase--Normal **Diplomacy** orders take place in TS2. However, the "C" order of the regular game does not exist, **unless** there is only one fleet involved. Such a move is called a "Fast Ferry" (F/F). Thus, F ION C A Apu-Tun is OK (we call it F/F, though), but the traditional Lepanto move F ION + F EAS C A Tun-Syr is not legal, because multiple fleets are used.

An army which landed in TS1 may order normally; a fleet which landed an army may also order **unless** the fleet supported the army in.

3. Disembark or Embark--An army on an A/F may disembark to an adjacent empty coastal space (including one left vacant by standoff) or to a different fleet in an adjacent sea space. An army on land may embark on a fleet in an adjacent sea space to create an A/F. A fleet, or an A/F which existed at the start of TS3, may move to an adjacent empty sea space after all embark/disembark orders. (An army may not embark, and have the new A/F move, in the same turn.) No supports are possible in TS3.

4. Retreats--Units dislodged are lifted from the board until the end of TS3. Then units dislodged in TS1 have first choice of retreat space, followed by units dislodged in TS2. No retreats onto fleets! A/Fs may retreat intact, or the fleet may instead retreat its army to land and then itself separately. If the fleet in an A/F is disbanded, the army goes as well unless expressly and previously retreated.

**D. A/F Notes.** A/Fs may only exist in sea spaces. No unit may be part of both a Board and a Land in TS1; no unit may be part of both an Embark and a Disembark in TS3. An A/F acting as an A/F has a strength of only 1.

**E. Re-Embarkations.** An army trying to leave an A/F stays on as follows: In TS1, only if two A/Fs "bounced" landings in the same province; in TS2, if an attempted F/F fails a new A/F is created; in TS3, if a disembark order fails.

**F. Sample A/F Orders.** (To assist GMs, players should divide their A/F orders into TS1, TS2, and TS3.)

TS1--A Rom B F TYH

TS2--A/F TYH-WES, F ION F/F A Tun-Gre (creates A/F ION)

TS3--A WES D Spa, F WES-MID, F ION-AEG  
(assumes opposing A Gre H)

TS1--A Spa B F MID, F ION S A ION L Gre (enemy A Gre dislodged)

TS2--A/F MID-NAT, A Gre-Bul, F ION cannot order

TS3--F ION-AEG...and what about A/F NAT? Dump the A in Lpl or Cly (if empty)? Move the F later? Leave it and cream Lpl next time? How about A/F NAT-NWG, and Norway gets smashed next TS1?

**G. International A/Fs.** Mixed A/Fs add spice to a game. Normally, both players issue matching orders. But as long as both order a boarding (or imply one with a F/F order), either may attempt to modify the agreed plan to advantage. The army order takes precedence if compatible with fleet position/movement, but if the fleet makes a move that the army fails to anticipate the army order will fail. Examples:

FRANCE: German A Bel B F ENG, A/F ENG-NTH, A NTH D Nwy.

GERMANY: A Bel B French F ENG, A/F ENG-NTH, A NTH D Den.

If the move to NTH succeeds, the army winds up in Den if vacant, else Nwy if vacant, else A/F NTH remains.

FRANCE: German A Bel B F ENG, A/F ENG-MID, A MID D NAF.

GERMANY: As first example.

The army boards, but will wind up in North Africa if A/F ENG-MID succeeds, or as part of A/F ENG if the move failed.

FRANCE: As either of the first examples.

GERMANY: A Bel-Bur.

Now the fleet order fails; the A/F which was ordered does not exist.

GERMANY: English A Yor B F NTH, A/F NTH-NWG, A NWG D Cly.

ENGLAND: German F NTH F/F A Yor-Nwy.

Poor trusting England goes backwards if the A/F move works, or makes it to Nwy if A/F NTH-NWG fails. If Nwy were tenanted as well A/F NTH remains, rather tensely for both sides...

GERMANY: As above, plus A StP-Nwy, A Swe-Nwy.

ENGLAND: A Yor B German F NTH, A/F NTH H, A NTH D Nwy, F Edi-NWG.

Stab and counter-stab...Germany suspects that England will stab by trying the Nwy F/F, so he ordered a self-standoff in Nwy as well as his attempt to dump the English army. But England guessed that he would be stabbed in turn, bounced the A/F out of NWG, stands in TS2 on the F NTH that didn't get to move, and disembarks successfully in TS3. Very few A/F tricks are as tricky as this!

**H. Variance from USA PBM Custom.** Armies which are to be Fast Ferried must specify what fleet is carrying them. This isn't needed with convoy orders in standard, but is necessary in order to adjudicate possible mixed A/Fs like those above.

--by Glenn Overby