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EDITORIAL

"A gamezine is a work of art" claimed Mick Bullock in a recent issue of 1901aet. I don't entirely agree with him and would be the last person to classify FOE as a work of art, however the cover of this issue most definitely is. Dave Perkins voluntarily offered to provide a cover design and when he first showed me the results of his labours I was very impressed.

Dave explains that the overall design denotes the seal of office of the diplomat. The four heraldic designs on the shield represent (top left) the question of alliances, should I ally - can I trust my ally etc.; (top right) the six vanquished powers; (bottom left) the daggers with which to perpetrate the necessary stabs; (bottom right) the actual diplomacy units. Roughly translated the motto is "Don't put too much hope into tomorrow" I believe. No doubt there are some Latin scholars amongst you who will correct me!

Profuse thanks Dave. I know you insisted on no recompense but I trust you will not object to zine credit sufficient for three free issues. Long may the cover grace FOE. Great Dave, bloody great.

Now for the sad news. I've recently heard of two zines that are folding - Norman Williams Caissa and John Coombe's Pendulum. Surely FOE is not proving to be such tough opposition already!!! I only saw one issue of Caissa and that was last summer when it carried some of the Bruce games for one season while Paul Simpkins was on holiday. Norman has asked if I would take over the game he was running and I have agreed so players in this game will find the latest moves reprinted somewhere in this issue. I hope you all enjoy playing in FOE and you have the satisfaction of being quickly rehoused. I remember waiting a year for a game that I was playing in in Shelobs Lair to be found a new home.

Pendulum has reached issue 52 and has always been one of the most reliable NGC zines. It was frequently criticised for the poor standard of duplication, spelling errors and unreliable G.M'ing but it had a charm of its own and I for one am sorry to see it fold. I have offered to rehouse the one non-NGC Dip. game that it is running and John has agreed so this will be included in issue 4 ( I hope).

I hope that a regular feature of FOE will be articles on almost any aspect of the regular game and plan allocating a couple of pages each issue for this. This issue contains an article by Nicky 'scatter theory' Palmer and I have a couple of ideas myself which may be printed in future issues. However the success or failure of this venture depends entirely on YOU. Suitable articles are hereby solicited which I will pay for by giving credit of three free zine issues.

Finally, I have asked for NGC affiliation. For those of you that do not know of all the hobby politics behind this, it will simply mean that should FOE fold then the games will be rehoused in other



THE DIPLOMACY ARTICLE This is a feature that I hope becomes a regular part of FOE. I like to read articles on all aspects of the regular game and I know that many of you share the same opinion. To start the ball rolling we have an article that was first published in the now defunct Fifth Column issue 35 and is reproduced by kind permission of the author plus a few free issues of FOE.

Middle game tactics in Diplomacy

by Nicky Palmer

Having achieved a certain  ~~fame~~ notoriety for the Scatter Theory, which deals with middle-game strategy, the institute for strange Diplomacy ideas hereby offers a companion piece on middle-game tactics. By middle-game I'm referring to the situations which you reach after you've tried out the Legaspo opening or the Caspian Sea gambit or whatever brilliant opening plan you decided on, and have got past the stage where the moves are determined by the opening. You are allied with X, at war with Y and wondering how to outguess Y (militarily and diplomatically). The following devices may prove useful from time to time.

The planned retreat

The easiest way to grasp the idea is an example. You are Austria and have F(ION); you are allied to Turkey who has F(Gre) F(AEG) (the other Balkans being satisfactorily and peacefully divided), and propose to attack Italy, who controls Tun and Nap and has F(TYR). It's Autumn and a build is urgently needed. A straight toss-up which of the Italian centres to go for? No - what you should do is order F(ION)-AEG !!!!! Get Turkey to order F(Gre) S F(AEG)-ION and pre-order your retreat to whichever of the Italian centres Italy did not defend. There is no way Italy can defend against this, even if he guesses what you'll do; he can't even support you in place (frustrating the retreat) as you have 'attacked' AEG. You are using the fact that retreats after moves can discover centres that are undefended.

Another use for the planned retreat is to do two things at once! Suppose you are England, with F(NTH) and control of Nor, and allied to France, with F(Hol) and F(Bel), with Germany no problem and these fleets available; Russia has just built F(Stpnc) and is clearly about to go for Nor; probably he doesn't expect to get in but he hopes to delay your fleet moving round to NWG and BAR. You can't afford to let him in, but you'd like to move your F(NTH) round to get at him and you'd like France, who is a reliable ally, to deploy his F(Bel) more usefully in NTH. You order F(NTH)-Nor and France orders F(Hol) S F(Bel)-NTH. You stand Russia out of Nor and then retreat to NWG; France gains NTH and in a couple of turns your alliance will be in Nor and BAR as you want. Thus your F(NTH) has both protected your province and shifted to a better position, by using the move and retreat possibilities. I have used this on a couple of occasions, in fact, and it generally has the useful by-product of creating the impression that your ally has stabbed you. In the above example, of course, you'd better be very sure indeed that he is reliable!

Finally, you can use the planned retreat as insurance; if you have a unit which is certain to come under supported attack, you can inform an ally of dubious loyalty ((particularly N. Palmer)) that if he stabs you on his move then you will stab him back with the direction of your retreat.

The time for the jäckal

Suppose that for reasons that you deem to be good and sufficient, you decide to stab someone with whom you have been working. Unlike many players, you should devote at least as much thought to deciding the most appropriate moment to do so as to the 'political' reasons which make you want to do it (that you will be able to go for a solo win, or will be pleasing a potentially better ally, or whatever). If the alliance has been on the usual lines, most of the centres of the 'stabee' (call him X) ((I prefer Palmer)) will be out of reach in one move

