"If the Olympics happened on the Moon and you couldn't see them, did they actually happen?"

-George Berkeley 1685-1753 (Paraphrased)

Bad Moon Rising – Hybrid Game 9th June 2022

Bad Moon Rising is set in an alternative 1970s where Moon colonisation is underway. Many Moons ago I was involved in an early playtest of the lunar half of the game, but this was my first involvement on the Earth side. This was also my first SW Megagame, and like the rest of the Earth Players was joining the game via Discord. My role as Space Project Director was to get items up to the Moon, so our team there was able to expand their operations.

"We can't hear you! It's very loud here." – British Technical Advisor

It should take 2 minutes to get radio messages to Earth from the moon, but we immediately started suffering technical glitches. Although I could communicate perfectly with my Foreign Minister, the Moon (Swindon) was just too noisy, so we immediately moved to typed messaging. To compound issues the online part of the game didn't know Turn 1 had started, but this was quickly rectified by control declaring when phases were beginning.

We desperately wanted to get up to speed with science, and with only our Technical Director being aware of the technicalities of space research we frantically tried to hammer out a plan, whilst also improving mining facilities and claiming territory.

I very much enjoyed the communication effort. It made perfect sense I could talk to other people on Earth freely and only those on the Moon by text. Also, I really didn't want our Technical Director having to shout out every discovery to every other team present.

Photograph of the [REDACTED]'s [REDACTED] showing a fully operational [REDACTED].

"I proposed a cricket match to show good intentions." – Lunar Military Commander

One unique element of the game was that we were not in charge of our own governments. Proposals had to be sent up to Control as a chain of command for final approval. Turn one involved discussion on science and rocket cooperation, and banning nukes on the Moon, but after this framework was established, there seemed little else to do in terms of policy other than defining territorial boundaries.

So, I proposed the Moon Olympics. I think I've proposed this in every Megagame involving the moon I've played, but this time, I had a logo.
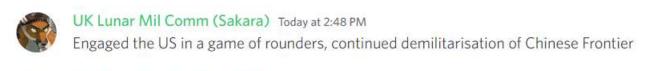

It may surprise you, but I am not a professional artist.

This was wildly popular and the international community were happy to support the venture. With hindsight we should have told our Moon base we were planning it in advance, but they took it with great enthusiasm…

Maybe?

The problem with this, is we had no idea if the Games ever happened! Our Military player proposed Cricket with the Russians, and this led to my favourite exchange of the game.

UK Lunar Mil Comm (Sakara) Today at 2:48 PM
Engaged the US in a game of rounders, continued demilitarisation of Chinese Frontier

UK Space Proj Dir (Ross) Today at 2:49 PM
Please move onto Hopscotch and Tiddlywinks. Find large crater for cheese rolling.

But in spite of our sporting successes, militarily things were getting serious.

"After this I'm going to Prison" – British Foreign Minister

About turn three, our Moon team was getting worried about being boxed in to a small area of territory, and we agreed to send up an additional moon base. With our pitiful rocket capacity, this would take up our full lift capability for three turns. The principal part of my role for almost an hour was agreed to in a one sentence message. I had time to do some dusting, which is a first for a Megagame.

My main part of the game became the summarising part of the team. Conferring with the Moon and summarising it for the Foreign Minister, who would always come out of the International Meetings with barely seconds to go before he had to make a propaganda speech. Its an interesting challenge to be talking to one person, whilst typing messages to a second, and trying to coordinate both in real time.

We moved onto trying to organise refining cooperation with the Americans. We kept on being asked for Government approval and we kept on asking for it, but we didn't get straight answers.

So, we just said that the Government hadn't stopped us, which was true. I had my press statement already. Luckily there was no press team to expose us.

Inverted Commas are important.

I assisted on the world military map, where the Turkey situation was raising tensions. The UK Earth team decided at this point to try to increase paranoia just a little bit, in order to improve our funding. A couple of fiery speeches from the Foreign Minister led to an increase in funding, and very few people died. (Mainly Soviet backed Turkish Insurgents.)

We also looked to sell our rocket tech to the Japanese and spare rocket space to commercial companies. The government asked us to expand on our idea, but we ran out of time.

Then the Prime Minister heard about our plans to share technology with the Americans and hit the roof, threatening to recall our moon team. This led to me having to deliver the bad news to the Americans and strain our relationship with our only ally. Our Moon team were accused of stealing refined materials, but they dismissed this as 'Fake News.'

"We had no idea what was happening on Earth." – Lunar Base Commander

Then the game ended. The UK were the greatest scientific power in the solar system, there was a 50 meter statue of Churchill on the moon and the world was not a smoking radioactive wasteland.

The UK Moon team had worked wonders and it was a real shame that I couldn't buy them a drink. The UK government was organised, efficient and competent, which was a very pleasant surprise.

A big thanks to John Mizon and his control team for organising this, for Jim Wallman for creating the game, and all the players for bringing it to life, especially the Moona Lisa.

As a Hybrid game it was only the first step, but for Megagames it could be a giant leap to me attending even more.