

Diplomacy *World*



Issue #113 - Spring 2011

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of Diplomacy World, the first of 2011. Somehow, between luck and prayer and the combined dedication of the Diplomacy World Staff and the other contributors to this issue, we've managed to assemble another quality issue for your enjoyment. I probably deserve about 5% of the credit, if that. The only thing I seem to be REALLY good at is bugging people until they agree to write something, just to get me to shut up!

Before I go any further, I am very happy to introduce Matthew Shields as our new Club and Tournament Editor. This was a position which has been vacant since Jim O'Kelley left it a few issues ago. Jim was an exceptional C&T Editor, so Matthew has some big shoes to fill. I think his contribution this issue shows he is more than capable.

One thing which this issue is light on (*well, many issues are but this one in particular) is feedback from prior issues in the form of letters to the editor. I always find that quite disappointing, because not only does your feedback help make Diplomacy World the best it can be, but it also reminds everyone that people do read this thing! Despite each issue being downloaded thousands of times from www.diplomacyworld.net before the next issue is released (and still downloaded afterward), we simply don't hear from the readers very much.

In an effort to generate more letters, I am returning to an old practice I used in my "letters-only" zine Foolhardy decades ago: after the letter column in each issue of Diplomacy World will be at least one "discussion question" for you to think about and answer. I've included the first of such questions this issue. And if YOU have ideas for future questions, send those along as well.

Finally, I was happy to receive more convention ads than usual. The better we publicize upcoming events, the more participation everyone will see! This issue even includes an ad for the upcoming TexiCon 2011, where (gasp) yours truly will be running a Diplomacy event. Drop me an email if you want more information or have any suggestions for me. I've never tried this before, and I'd really like to see the event go well. If you're in Texas or the surrounding area, consider coming to Forth Worth! While TexiCon runs three days, this year the Diplomacy event itself is only on Saturday, May 21st. Perhaps if we can build a following, next year I'll do two days!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1st, 2011.

Remember, besides articles (which are always prized and appreciated), we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com! See you in the Summer, and happy stabbing!

Diplomacy World Staff:

Managing Lead Editor:	Douglas Kent, Email: diplomacyworld of yahoo.com
Co-Editor:	Jim Burgess, Email: burgess of world.std.com
Strategy & Tactics Editor:	Joshua Danker-Dake, Email: jadddiplomacy of gmail.com
Variant Editor:	Jack McHugh, Email: jwmchughjr of gmail.com
Interview Editor:	Jim Burgess, Email: burgess of world.std.com
Club and Tournament Editor:	Matthew Shields, Email: mchirchill of gmail.com ←NEW!!
Demo Game Editor:	Rick Desper, Email: rick_desper of yahoo.com
Technology Editor:	Chris Babcock, Email cbabcock of asciiking.com
Original Artwork	Nemanja Simic, Email: nemanja.painter of gmail.com

Contributors in 2011: Jim Burgess, Joshua Danker-Dake, Rick Desper, Thomas Haver, Alex Maslow, The Game Master, Larry Peery, Matthew Shields, Nemanja Simic, Richard Walkerdine. Add your name to the 2011 list by submitting something for the next issue!

Contributions are welcomed and will earn you accolades and infinite thanks. Persons interested in the vacant staff positions may contact the managing editor for details or to submit their candidacy or both. The same goes for anyone interested in becoming a columnist or senior writer. Diplomacy is a game invented by Allan Calhmer. It is currently manufactured by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved.

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My Life with Ulrika: Part 2 (The Simulacrum)

by Richard Walkerdine

THE STORY SO FAR. Walkerdine is in a lot of trouble. Having re-launched his zine in order to achieve total Hobby domination he has now lost Ulrika again and been captured by the madman Piggott who has just emerged from the Tardis. Is there any way to escape? It seems unlikely. Now read on...

I entered the Tardis, fearing the worst.

And I was right to do so, for it soon became clear that my situation was even worse than I feared. I was caught in some sort of Temporal Press Repeater Interface and trapped in the old 'X' game press saga from 1977, six years in the past! And the hideously deformed madman Piggott took little time in explaining his evil plan.



"So you see it's all very simple really," he giggled. "I've already used the Tardis to scan the next few years and I now know that the only three people who could thwart me will all soon be gone. You will fold your zine later this year, Sharp will drop out in 1979 and Bullock will finally retire in 1980. After that it is only a matter of re-launching a zine and, with no opposition, regain my position as Hobby Dictator!"

But I saw a flaw in his insane scheme. "But surely there will still be some people who remember the bad old days. Won't they oppose you?" I asked, hopefully.

"That's where you come in," he replied, his eyes gleaming. "You see I've thought of everything. I won't be operating under my own name. I'll be using a front-man, someone who has an established reputation. In fact it won't even be my own zine. No, in 1982 I intend to re-launch MAD POLICY, and you will be running it for me!"

I gazed at the madman in total disbelief, barely able to believe that even such a warped and twisted mind such as his could conceive of such a plot. But then I began to think more carefully and realized he might have made an enormous error. When he sent me forward to re-launch the zine I would be re-launching a zine I had already re-launched! Perhaps I could get out of this mess after all.

Alas, he must have noticed a glimmering of hope on my face, for he soon started giggling again. "Of course," he continued, "I realize I can't trust you to work on my behalf so I can't actually send you in person. All I need from you Walkerdine is a copy of your body, a simulacrum, and then nobody will be any the wiser."

The look of hope on my face turned to one of despair as I slumped back and offered no resistance as the evil Piggott began the process of generating my duplicate...

His maniacal laughter sounded shrill in my ears as I watched my simulacrum step into the transporter. In a second it was gone, and now surely all hope was lost? But that thought sparked another. Surely I had already re-launched the zine? So how could the simulacrum do the same thing? Or had it already done it, as I remembered? Was I even now caught in an endless loop of time, doomed forever to repeat this cycle of the last thirteen months? But no, that was impossible. An endless time loop would have created an infinite number of duplicates already – the world would already be knee-deep in Walkerdines! So what was happening?

I emerged in the middle of the control room and stood for a moment, dazzled by the bright lights. "Richard!" cried a voice behind me. I turned, just in time to catch Ulrika as she flew into my arms. "Oh Richard, at last," she sobbed, "we thought we'd lost you forever." I comforted her and looked around. I saw Diana Ross (with really big hair – looks good, I thought), Batman, two Roman legionnaires, Bart Simpson (what was he doing here?) and even Edi Birsan, struggling with the coffee machine. Goodness, I thought, he managed a world flight but can't even handle a coffee machine? But then I smiled as I realized what had happened – this was almost too good to be true. Instead of being transported to 1982, as Piggott had planned, I had appeared in October 1983, in the current timeframe of the real Walkerdine! Now I would be able to simply carry on his place. I could leave the real Walkerdine to his fate back in the past and, with a readymade power base, there would be nothing Piggott could do to stop me. I held Ulrika more tightly and began to laugh...

Meanwhile, back in 1977. I slumped back onto the chair with a sigh of utter despair. I had been trying for more than an hour to free myself from the mass of chains and padlocks in which Piggott had covered me, but all I had managed to do was to entangle myself even further. It was hopeless. I now realized I was doomed to spend the rest of my days in the evil clutches of this madman. I closed my eyes and let the black cloud of depression drift over me...

As quickly as I could I changed the controls of the temporal viewer. I knew I had only a few minutes – I had left Diana sleeping but she was sure to wake soon and come looking for me. But then I let out a sigh of relief as I found what I was looking for. There he was, the real Walkerdine, still trussed up in chains and trapped by Piggott in the past. And nobody knew except me!
“Richard, what are you up to?”

In a flash I switched off the screen and spun around. It was Ulrika, looking very mean – did she know?

“U-up to?” I stammered.

“Don’t play the innocent with me, liebchen. I know you too well for that. I just walked by your room and saw that Ross woman slipping out. What’s going on?”

My mouth fell open as I finally realized what she was talking about. It was no good; something would have to be done. Taking over the entire Hobby and keeping these two women apart was more than even I could manage...

I grabbed her by the shoulders and looked deep into her eyes (that often worked quite well). “No Ulrika,” I said quietly, “it’s not what you think. She’s not the real Diana Ross, just a simulacrum. I’m teaching her to be a sort of Starship Trooper and give you some backup. I’m doing it all for you.”

I saw a moment of doubt flicker across her face and realized I was on the right lines. “Backup?” she asked, “since when have I needed backup? You know I can rub out people better than anyone!”

I pulled her close and felt her heart beating furiously, certain now that I had won this battle. “Of course you can Ulrika,” I murmured, “there is nobody better than you. But I just want to be sure you are safe. If I lost you I would lose everything.”

“Oh Richard,” she sighed as she sank into my arms.



Meanwhile, back in 1977. “Pssst!”

Did my ears deceive me, or was there someone else in the room?

“Pssst...over here.”

I turned to look at the area of the room near the coffee machine (damn you Birsan, why are you never there when you’re needed? – go fly some more planes you wretch (dammit I helped build most of them)!)

“Shhh... Is anyone else here?”

I looked again and gasped in astonishment. It was Melinda Holley! “But, Melinda,” I cried, “how can this be? You don’t even enter the Hobby for another seven years. Is it really you?”

She grinned and shrugged. “Well, in a sense...no. Actually I’m The Doctor, but in a very deep disguise.”

“Deep indeed,” I muttered, “but can you get me out of this mess?”

She (he) giggled and took out a hat-pin. Within a few moments she (he) had undone the padlocks and the chains fell away. I was free!

“Oh Melinda (Doctor?),” I said, “how can I ever thank you? But can you get me back to my own timeline?”

She (he) smirked. “Of course I can,” was the reply, “as long as you know the steps.”
“Steps? What steps?”

“To the Time Warp, you idiot. Don’t they teach you anything in DW?”

I closed my eyes. This was a lot to take in all at once.

But Melinda (The Doctor) was having none of it. She (he) brushed down my shirt, looked into my eyes and said, “Right, it’s just a jump to the left!”

“I beg your pardon?”

“It’s the start of the dance you idiot. Follow my lead!”

I winced as she (he) began a sort of tuneless warble, something between the golden voice of Barbra Streisand and the rough coughing of Bob Dylan.

“It’s just a jump to the left, and then a step to the right. With your hands on your hips, you bring your knees in tight.”

I was still aching from Piggott’s chains. “Are you sure this will work?”

“Then it’s the pelvic thrust...
That really drives them insa-a-a-a-ane....”

Suddenly the door flew open and Piggott rushed in, muttering something about how simulacra could never

be trusted to follow orders. But then his voice died away as he saw his erstwhile captive swaying back and forth in front of him, while someone who looked like Melinda Holley twittered a mystical incantation.

“LET’S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN!”

And then they were gone!

I sat at the vidiscreen for several minutes, waiting for my heart to stop beating so furiously and my knees to stop shaking. When I had finally left Ulrika she seemed to be mollified but the episode had brought home to me just how thin was the ice on which I was skating. Eventually I regained some of my composure and decided to check on the prisoner again. I turned the controls to 1977 and was soon looking into the earlier Tardis control room. But what was this? The screen showed a picture of Piggott running around like a madman (well, nothing new there) but in the corner, where Walkerdine should have been, there was only a pile of chains!

Before I could react to this latest shock I heard a crash behind me, followed by a curse and a shout. I spun around to find two bodies entangled on the floor...

As they picked themselves up I realized that one of them bore a striking resemblance to Melinda Holley (but surely it was too soon for her to enter the Hobby?) and the other was a man who looked strangely familiar. I looked more closely and then froze, open-mouthed, as the truth finally hit me – it was me!

We materialized in mid air and fell to the floor. I cursed and Melinda (The Doctor) shouted as I landed on top of her (him). We disentangled ourselves and, as we rose, I realized there was someone else in room that looked

strangely familiar. I looked more closely and then froze, open-mouthed, as the truth finally hit me – it was me!

Alerted by the crash and the shout, Ulrika burst into the room, waving her blaster. Then she stopped, suddenly uncertain. “What’s going on?” she snarled, looking from Walkerdine to Walkerdine and then back again. “Which of you is Walkerdine?”

“He is,” I cried, in a vain attempt at a double bluff.

“He is,” I cried, in a vain attempt at a double bluff.

Then The Doctor intervened. “Miss Meinhof,” she (he) said, “please put down your blaster. Neither of these two men will be able to prove that the other is the simulacrum under such pressure. I suggest we hold a formal inquest, and as quickly as possible. You will of course be able to summon as many witnesses as you need from Walkerdine’s murky past in order to test them.” Ulrika looked very uncertain, her eyes still darting back and forth from Walkerdine to Walkerdine. But she could think of no other solution and, with a shrug, lowered her blaster and accepted.

I noticed my adversary was looking as uneasy as I felt myself.

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

Caution: Objects in Richard Walkerdine’s brain may be farther away than they appear.

XENOGOGIC: An Occasional Column Devoted to the World of Diplomacy

by Larry Peery

OK, I didn’t spend a lot of time (maybe 10 minutes) thinking about what I was going to call this re-birth effort. I toyed with the idea of calling it World Diplomacy (how original), or dip and Diplomacy, or even dip and Dippers, but when I tried to explain those last two even I got confused by the convoluted peeriblah. So, tradition won out, and XENOGOGIC it is. XENOGOGIC was the name of my personal Diplomacy publication dating back to 1966. Hobby old-timers may recall it. Newer hobbyists probably never have. However, even most old-timers don’t know where the name XENOGOGIC came from. Here’s a bit of really old history. I was in high school from 1963-1965. I was also a journalism student and a

staff member of the school newspaper, called The Colt. After a year of writing the usual sports stories, bios of deceased or retiring teachers, etc. my instructor/advisor and I had a discussion as to what kind of writing I really liked and would be good at. Nothing quite fit. I wasn’t detail oriented enough to be an editor. I didn’t care a hoot about sports. And social gossip wasn’t my thing. So, we decided, not knowing what else to do with me, that I would be a regular columnist.

The first two questions were: what to write about and what to call my new column. Since I was also a Latin student I thought a Latin name sounded interesting and

different, which is why I came up with a title based on two Greek words, XENO and GOGIC. As far as I know I created the word. The two words meant, in combination, "knowledge" and "all encompassing" or, put simply "know it all", which all high school students think they do, of course. Interestingly, if you do search online dictionaries you'll find another definition of Xenogogic written by some scholar based on his research in Greek. Beware, it's a fake!

So, title chosen, the question was what to write about? I don't even remember many of my subjects but I do remember two columns that were especially popular with my fellow students and equally unpopular with the school principal. One criticized a bond issue, \$23 million to build seven new schools. (By contrast the local school district where I live now is spending \$110 million to build one new high school). The other faulted the school's driver training program. The principal was upset enough to ban those issues from being distributed off campus, especially to other school journalism departments or the public media. Needless to say they were hot items in the underground press of the day. Oh, one other detail. I didn't have my name on the masthead of the column. It simply said, "TTT Publications." Nobody, but my instructor and the paper editor knew I was the one writing the column.



At the traditional end of the year class awards ceremony, all the usual awards and scholarships (42 in the sciences, none in the liberal arts, 3 in the fine arts) were read out to the assembled graduates, faculty, and staff to much applause from one and all. I had been told to sit with the award winners, but it seemed pretty obvious that I hadn't won anything since I had no ribbons, trophies, or checks to show off. Then, just as the principal (ah, my nemesis reappears) was about to close the ceremony the publisher and editor of the local newspaper (a great writer and still writing, Neil Morgan. Check him out online if you want to see some great column writing) walked on to the stage. Obviously nobody was expecting that. He told the students, etc. that he was there to present a special award on behalf of the local journalism society and national Quill and Pen organization. And then he

started in. He began with freedom of the press, the need to protect sources, and even identities of writers at critical times (with an evil look at the principal who was starting to look a bit gray). Then he turned and looked at me, and the cat was out of the bag. I got two trophies, a pen, a new typewriter (which lasted me into the 1980s), and a check for \$500! Oh, and one very pissed off principal. And that's how XENOGOGIC came to be.

So what are our plans for the new XENOGOGIC? Note I wrote "our" not "my." That's because I hope you'll become an important part of this effort, assuming you haven't already blown it off or fallen asleep! We plan to go back to XENOGOGIC's roots covering unexpected subjects from unusual angles, but adding to that a focus on both diplomacy (a la Henry Kissinger) and Diplomacy (a la Allan B. Calhamer). We'll be offering some news, features, and opinions; but not a lot of game reports or stats. That's just not us. I encourage you to send me an email with your feedback, links to items you may have read online, or your own stories of your experiences in the world of dip and Diplomacy. And, as we go forward I hope you'll realize that they are indeed one world, not two. The over-lap is pretty amazing sometimes.

Perhaps the best way to give you an idea of what we hope to do is to give you an example. So let's have it. Grab a beer or soda, and relax. Prepare to laugh and shed a few tears as we go back in time in the world of dip & Dip.

**New York Times, 3 March 2011
How to Lose a Country Gracefully
By Bill Keller**

Keller calls them "two of the greatest losers of the last century." He's writing about Mikhail Gorbachev who lost Russia, and F. W. de Klerk who lost the richest country in Africa --- and to the manner in which they lost it." It's a thought-provoking and stimulating piece. Let me know whether you agree with him or not.

**From the desks of Rev. Brian Bailey, Edi Birsan, Dr. Walter Buchanan, and Jim Burgess
Winter 2010**

Edi, Walter, and Jim shared news of the passing of John Smythe who I fondly remember as a fellow player and publisher from the 1960s and 1970s. What each mentioned and what I remember was how nice John was, even as he was planning to grab you last center!

Another old-timer is the Rev. Brian Bailey, a member of the LTA Dip group that was active for many years beginning in the mid-1960s. Brian recently reappeared in the States after spending years in PNG, where he told me the natives made superb Diplomacy players (and being only a generation or two from being real head-hunters themselves why not?). I'm sure he'd love to hear from other old-timers. Drop him a line at

bailey_brian@att.net (I hope that's right) or PO Box 865, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

From the Media

Richard C. Holbrooke and Christopher M. Warren Pass On Winter 2010

Holbrooke was a longtime US diplomat and architect of the 1995 Dayton peace accords, and was working on the same sort of task in Afghanistan and Pakistan when he passed away. He was known for being audacious, combative, and talkative, even something of a bully. The very qualities that make him successful as a diplomat kept the profession's top prize, the secretary of state job, out of his grasp. Holbrooke was 69.

Former secretary of state Warren M. Christopher was 85 at his passing. Christopher was Clinton's secretary of state from 1993-1996 and logged in 780,000 miles traveling as part of his career, a record that still stands. Two highlights of his career were the Bosnian peace agreements and negotiating the release of American hostages in Iran. Warren was known as a true statesman and one of the country's premier diplomats. He was also a man of deep roots, born in North Dakota. If Jack McHugh was our Holbrooke, then David Hood was our Warren, a quiet gentleman who spoke softly, but always got his message across. Watching Holbrooke and Christopher working together was the perfect example of "the good cop, bad cop" syndrome.

"How does this thing end? I don't know," he said last summer, talking about the overwhelming obstacles the US faces in Afghanistan and Pakistan. "It is really the toughest thing that I've ever attempted." – Richard Holbrooke

"My career, reputation, and effectiveness," he wrote in his 2001 memoir, "Chances of a Lifetime," "derived from, and depended upon, my being a private, discreet, reserved, and sometimes modest person." – Warren M. Christopher

From the New York Times, 2 February, 2011 Frank Wisner, the Diplomat Sent to Prod Mubarak By Sheryl Gay Stolberg

Seventy-two year old retired ambassador, businessman and foreign policy realist, Wisner is among the few surviving former top government officials who served when America was "the" super-power and world cop. Proving that even an old warhorse still has its uses, he served as Bush's peace negotiator in Kosovo, and then opposed the Iraqi war against Bush's wishes. No doubt he'll still be around for future missions if he lays off the martinis.

"One of the supreme American diplomats of the last 30 to 40 years." – R. Nicholas Burns

From the Media

Remembering the Last Doughboy at 110 Winter 2011

If Frank Buckles had died in his 60s or 70s, he probably would not be remembered today at all. But, he was the last surviving doughboy of WWI and lived to be 110. As such he has become a vibrant part of his country's history. Although he was an ambulance driver and a non-combatant his story is very moving, especially his last battle on behalf of the nation's District of Columbia War Memorial' which comes as close to being a national WWI memorial as any we have. The Memorial needs repairs badly and Buckles tried to cajole or shame the Congress into finding the money to repair and maintain it. Who knows, he may yet win his last victory! First there were 4.5 million. And now there are none.

From the New York Times, 5 March 2011 Father of the Cobra Passes on By the Associated Press

Mikhail Simonov, 81, designer of Soviet Air Force planes including many of the best designs of the Sukhoi Company passed on recently. Simon's Su-27 (e.g. their equivalent of the US F-15) was known for its cobra maneuver, which required a skilled pilot to bring the plane to a very slow speed and then point the nose straight up in the air, giving the impression the plane was standing still. The post-Communist Russian government sold hundreds of his planes to foreign countries, bringing in badly needed revenue.

From the Boston Globe, 3 March 2001 Gorbachev to Receive Russia's Highest Honor By the Associated Press

Mikhail Gorbachev (see first entry above) will receive Russia's highest decoration, the Order of Saint Andrew, from President Dmitry Medvedev at a Kremlin ceremony. Gorbachev, 80, presided over the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and today is far more popular abroad than he is at home. Perhaps he's best recognized recently for his appearance in an ad for Louis Vuitton luggage. If you know the ironical story behind that, let me know. I'll be impressed.

From the Daily News, 9 February 2011 Russia Celebrates Day of Diplomats By Buddhapriya Ramanayake

The date of the holiday, 10 February, is associated with the history of Russia's first foreign affairs agency, the "Posolsky Prikaz". On that day in 1549, falls its first mention and clerk Ivan Viskovaty became its first head by being "entrusted with the ambassadorial business." Today Russia has diplomatic relations with 191 countries. The Foreign Affairs Ministry has 236 embassies, consulates, and representative offices

attached to international organizations. Now that's bureaucratic growth!

**From the New York Times, 3 February 2011
As Crisis Unfolds Overseas, Diplomats Gather in Washington
By Brian Knowlton**

Nearly all the top US diplomats from around the world met here recently, summoned by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to consider new strategies to energize diplomacy and streamline development, but their arrival coincided with one of the most tumultuous moments for American diplomacy in recent memory. Suddenly focus has shifted from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq to the Mediterranean littoral. The world is in flame, and in Japan that's quite literal. Mrs. Clinton called the meeting a "first-ever in American history all-hands-on-deck ambassadorial conference." Now that's a World DipCon!

**From the New York Times, 22 March 2011
Arab Revolts Force Diplomats to Remake Lives and Careers
By Sheryl Gay Stolberg**

Job Wanted: Gainful Employment as Professional Diplomat. Prefer non-Arab location. Former Libyan ambassador to USA seeks permanent, secure position. Assets include: one ex-embassy, located on the seventh-floor of the Watergate; one Mercedes (low miles), one Audi, etc. Philippine support staff optional.

**From the Media
New Books to Watch For!
Larry Peery**

Do people still read real books? Here's a few to watch for. Donald Rumsfeld, the man I love to hate, has recently published his memoir, "Known and Unknown." Rumsfeld's book is a masterpiece --- of finding ways to avoid responsibility for his mistakes and ways to blame others for his failures.

"The harder I work, the luckier I am." – Donald Rumsfeld

"The Mozart Conspiracy" hits thrilling, suspenseful notes. Imagine if Mozart had collaborated with Tom Clancy instead of Ponty, with Dan Brown as editor. That's what this one promises to be.

"Sun Tzu at Gettysburg : Ancient Military Wisdom in the Modern World" offers a really different look at this, perhaps the most important battle in US history. I guarantee you one thing. After you read it, your opinion of Robert E. Lee will never be the same!

From the New York Times, 11 February 2011, and USA Today

**A Witness Sees History, Restaged and Rewritten
By Max Frankel**

**From USA Today, 21 March 2011
Home of 1,400 Calorie Monster Burger Shapes Up with Turkey Burger
By Bruce Horowitz**

Frankel, one of the great NY Times writers of the last century, writes about what it was like to be in Beijing for the Nixon-Mao meetings himself, and then reviews the revival of John Adam's opera "Nixon in China ." Did you know that the only time Air Force One was flown by a foreign crew was on the last leg of its flight into Beijing for that meeting? Horowitz reports that CKE Restaurants (e.g. Carl's Junior) is adding a low calorie turkey burger to its usual fat-loaded line of hamburgers, etc. I can't wait to try one. Maybe for Thanksgiving Dinner.

**From Slate, 30 November 2010
What's a "diplomatic cable"?
By Brian Palmer**

I love Slate. If you don't read it regularly you should. In light of the recent Wiki Leaks case (And what do you think of it?) Palmer examines the question, "What's the difference between a modern-day cable and an e-mail?" Do you know? It's more interesting than you might think, especially if you're a hobby publisher, editor, or writer; or just want to be a better informed reader.

**Next Time
Date TBA
By Larry Peery**

Next time, assuming there is one and that largely depends on you, I'd like to explore two topics: War Memorials and Monuments, especially those located in the countries of the classic Diplomacy board and dating from the WWI era; and second, the Dip Femme Fatale Triplets: Madeleine, Condi, and Hillary. Yes, that's what I'm thinking about. If you've visited any of the WWI memorials and monuments in Europe or North America (Canada and the USA), and have a story or picture to share, please do. And if you have any thoughts about the diplomatic careers of these three ladies, by all means to share those as well. If you do any comparisons with female Diplomacy players, by all means give it a go? Margaret Gemignani, Kathy Byrne-Caruso, Melinda Holley --- which one reminds you of whom?

That's it.

Larry Peery has long been a fixture in the Diplomacy community – sometimes more noticeable, sometimes less. He was also Lead Editor and Publisher of Diplomacy World for a sizeable period (issues #41 through #59).

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Going Clubbing

by Matthew Shields

Everything old is new again. Today, apparently that phrase refers to me.

As those of you who follow **Diplomacy World** are probably aware; we've been without a Club and Tournament editor for the last several issues. I volunteered to step into that role a few months ago, simply because I'd somehow ended up taking over Jim O'Kelley's job of riding herd on the NADF Grand Prix. I think my theory at the time was that if I was going to have to start paying attention to what was going on anyway, it shouldn't be that much more trouble to write about it now and again. That seemed a lot more reasonable at the time than it does sitting here writing this, but here we are.

I'll be doing a couple things in this column in the issues to come. One will be to use it as a "what's-new-in-FTF-Dip" forum, where I mention any bits of news regarding recent events or other goings on that I've run across. Another will be to try to use it as a forum to drum up discussion on hobby issues that need discussed, or that I simply think are kind of interesting.

So far this year...

The 2011 tournament calendar is a little more back-loaded than some years, with almost all of the big events of the year taking place in the in the summer and fall. The biggest schedule change might be that The Whipping, the major San Francisco area tournament, has moved back to its old fall schedule, as opposed to the spring schedule it's had the last few years. So no trips to California until fall.

We did see the "return" of WAC¹, the major Seattle tournament. Of course it wasn't a "return" exactly since the tournament never really went anywhere. For anyone who doesn't recall, WAC was consistently one of the larger events on the US Diplomacy calendar from 2005-2009. Officially the event was moved to Paris in 2010, where it would double as the European Championship. Of course, our esteemed hosts Mark Zoffel and Nathan Barnes still wanted to get everyone together in Seattle in 2010, so they ran a one day mini-tournament the

1 How is it possible that after 8 years, I'm still not clear on what the official name of this thing is? WACCon just sounds stupid (and most variations of it are *more* stupid, and/or non family friendly). And also it's not really a "convention". I keep using "Diplomacy at the WAC", but that sounds like something they'd serve tea at. Course the WAC *is* the kind of place they'd serve tea at, so there's that. Can just use the name of the venue and leave it at that? "WAC"? Kind of like "Wimbledon"? Someone should form a committee on this.

same weekend they usually held the major event, which kind of made it feel like nothing had changed. This brings us to 2011, when they returned to the two-day, three-round format.

I think the plan had been that this year would be a smaller low key affair. They didn't make a serious effort to get out of town folks to attend, and really didn't do much advertising. Despite that, there were quite a few new players in attendance, including a couple who drove from out of the way parts of Oregon and Washington to get there. I believe they ended up with 11 boards over 3 rounds. Not bad for a "low-key" year! The rumor is they are going to pull out all the stops in 2012, and will be shooting to get a much larger group of non-west coast folks, so that might be worth marking your calendars for now.



The other Grand Prix event earlier this year was Jim Burgess' TempleCon. If you haven't heard of it, TempleCon is a large-ish board game convention in Rhode Island. Unfortunately, the Diplomacy tournament shook out very differently than WAC did. From the reports I've heard, it was a well run and enjoyable affair, but unfortunately ended up being held following a major snow storm. It sounds like they lost at least a full board's worth of players to various travel related problems, which probably cost them two or three games over the weekend. They only managed 5 boards total, which I know was frustrating to the organizer. That said, my impression is that this really is a good event, and one that is likely to grow in the years to come.

This unfortunate development forced some of us over at the NADF to review an issue that had been discussed

before, but which had never been resolved. 2011 marks the 13th year that the NADF Grand Prix has been awarded to the player who had the best run in that year's major Diplomacy tournaments. Although I wouldn't go so far as to call the award particularly prestigious, I think it's been modestly successful in achieving what its creator intended – getting players to travel more to Diplomacy tournaments outside their immediate area.

The rules have bounced around a lot over the years, from years where it included house games to years where there were fairly rigid rules tournaments had to adhere to in order to be included. At some point, we had instituted a pretty vague rule regarding how big a tournament needed to be to “qualify” for the Grand Prix. The point at the time wasn't really to keep out small tournaments, but was just to make it clear that we were only including bona fide tournaments, not glorified house games.

The rule that was in place, though, kind of implied that TempleCon wouldn't count². This seemed both unfair and kind of counterproductive to the purpose of the Grand Prix. (Do we really want to discourage someone from traveling to a tournament because it's *small*?) Besides, small events aren't worth that many points anyway, so there's little harm. So after consulting with the previous GP administrator and a few other certified-smart-people in the hobby, we decided that, yes, TempleCon still counts for 2011. Cleaned up rules are posted at www.thenadf.org for the four people out there who are actually interested. The rules may be revised substantially for 2012, but that's a topic for another issue.

NADF Masters

The other interesting event this year, which was not a part of the Grand Prix, was the inaugural NADF Masters Tournament, held in January in Austin, Texas. The idea behind the Masters Tournament was that it would be invitational tournament, held only once every other year. To qualify to play, you had to have finished in the top 7, in at least one GP event during the prior two years. This was the brainchild of Chris Martin and, I believe, Jeremiah Peterson – though in fairness it's an idea that's been kicked around for a number of years now.

This tournament itself is worth a full write up on its own, but I'll spare you that for now. Three rounds were played, with about three games each round. There were several players who could have won going into the last game, but Edi Birsan held on to enough points in the

² Ok, fine, it flat out said it wouldn't count. But we're being up front about it! The other issue, at least in my mind, is that because Temple is so early in the year, nobody is really injured by the decision to include it. If this was the last event of the year, and if it actually affected the outcome, we might have been forced to come to a different decision.

final round for his monster 2nd round game (16 centers, should have been more) to give him the win. I will say that this was a classic Edi Birsan performance, as in: “*I could kill you, but then you wouldn't be here to reflect on your inferiority.*” Yeah, I've missed that!

There are a lot of valid arguments for and against the invitational format. I think the argument in favor is best summed up as giving good players a chance to play in an event that doesn't (so much) get skewed by who gets lucky and draws weak opponents. The counterargument is obviously that it's somewhat elitist, and that it violates the principle that we always want more people involved whenever possible.

I think there is a lot validity to both of those arguments, but at the end of the day I think I feel like there's room in the hobby for invitationals. I wouldn't want many of them, but one event every two years doesn't seem unreasonable. I kind of analogize it to professional tennis or golf or something. We hold a lot of events that are open to everyone, but we also hold some that are only open to people who we invite or who meet some objective criteria.

If anyone has any thoughts on this they want to share, email them to the address below, and I'll try to respond in the next DW issue.

Obligatory plugs

I'm going to try not to do a ton of this, but I wanted to do one quick plug for an upcoming event. 2011 will be the 25th year for DixieCon³ in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Mr. Hood has been a little coy about what he has planned, but it sounds like he's really making an effort to make this year special. If you, like me, haven't made it to DixieCon; this really might be the year to try to do it. Friday May 27th through Sunday May 29th. Monday the 30th is Memorial Day, so hopefully that the long weekend makes getting back home for work a little easier on some people. Hopefully by next issue, I'll be able to give you a firsthand report, rather than just relying on everyone else. We shall see.

I think we'll call that good enough for a first attempt. If you have any questions, comments, report, rumors, or shameless plugs you'd like me to get into in the next issue, please send them to mchirchill@gmail.com.

I don't see HOW you could not know this if you paid even the slightest bit of attention to the article, but Matthew Shields is the new Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor. If you've got a Diplomacy group, contact Matt so he can learn the details (and so he can bug you until you write an article).

³ This just in: Some of us are getting old.

The Hole in the Pouch

By Douglas Kent

Back in 1994, **Diplomacy World** was in one of its less-productive phases. Jack McHugh had reluctantly agreed to take on the Lead Editor role when David Hood stepped down, but he couldn't afford the time and money to do the actual publishing (remember that this was when **Diplomacy World** was still a printed publication, not available online). Since Jack and I had grown to be good hobby friends, and had worked together on previous projects such as **Your Zine of Zines**, he talked me into being the publisher. This move had both positive and negative aspects; my reliability and timeliness as publisher of my zine **Maniac's Paradise** suggested I would keep things moving...but anyone who was a regular reader of **MP** also knew my skills at graphic design and layout were limited. Still, nobody else was stepping forward to take over these tasks, so we figured that whatever we could do would be better than nothing.

Together two issues of **Diplomacy World** were produced in 1994 (#72 and #73). Visually they were less than appealing (and I don't just mean the widows and orphans all over the place), and typos were quite frequent. The articles were hit and miss, although some material of high quality did appear (Issue #73, Summer 1994 was the better of the two issues). And then...nothing.

Jack found himself with all sorts of personal and work issues to deal with, and the material he'd been promised wasn't coming in (this is still a problem, believe me, but at that time he had almost nothing in hand when his deadline came and went). I was reluctant to push Jack since I knew how much time and energy he was using just to keep his world in one piece. So while I looked around for a possible replacement as Lead Editor, **Diplomacy World** sat and waited.

During this period of silence, late in 1994 and into 1995, Manus Hand had realized the void which was left without a flagship publication, and took it upon himself to establish the online zine **The Diplomatic Pouch**. While the articles were sometimes shorter, in effect this was simply a transition of **Diplomacy World** to an html publication, soon to be built around with a plethora of Diplomacy material (upcoming conventions, information of electronic and postal play, etc.). His first issue, the Spring 1995 Movement Issue, would include both contributors who had appeared in **Diplomacy World** and newcomers who were spending their time in the growing internet hobby. It was a successful launch, and appealed strongest to a group of Diplomacy fans who might have found the old-style **Diplomacy World** postal format to be a bit stale (or expensive).

Just as The Diplomatic Pouch got underway, I had

decided to go ahead and take on the Lead Editor position of **Diplomacy World** myself. I was getting better at layout and design, and I was able to find enough quality material to fill an issue. Plus, since I was already the publisher, there was no hassle about finding the subscription fees or the mailing lists. It had always been my belief that as long as the issues came out on a regular schedule that the hobby could depend on, the material would follow. The last thing anybody wants to do is spend time writing an article and then wonder when it might see print (whether physical or electronic).

Diplomacy World #74 received rave reviews, and DW and DP found they were able to coexist and compliment each other rather than compete. It was easy to see that the more quality articles we could spread throughout the hobby (whether face-to-face, postal, or electronic) the better for everyone. Manus and I would frequently direct authors to the other's publication when their material would fit better there. Things were good, and we all hoped they'd stay that way.



Sometimes one publication or the other would fall on hard times. In 1998 I basically dropped from sight when my wife attempted suicide, and **Diplomacy World** obviously found itself in a bad spot. But while that mess was cleaned up, **The Diplomatic Pouch** was able to fill in a lot of the holes which would have been there otherwise. Later on, as **The Diplomatic Pouch** went through a series of Guest Editors, issues of **Diplomacy**

World were often there to keep the interest alive (although the publishing schedule had been changed to twice a year). It wasn't always the case, but most of the time it seemed one of the two zines was making up for the tardiness of the other.

When Jim Burgess talked me into taking on the Lead Editor position again in 2007, I wasn't sure what I could produce or for how long. **DW** had been missing for nearly two years; Tim Haffey had left as Lead Editor, and his replacement had never produced an issue. I was quite pleased that my ties with both the "old guard" and the newer Diplomacy fans helped produce some very strong issues. Obviously the huge anniversary issue, **Diplomacy World #100**, was a big deal, but some of the issues we've put together since then have been much stronger in my opinion. Some are large (too large it seems), some smaller, but four times a year for over four years we've been able to stay on schedule and reclaim our position as the hobby's flagship zine. The change to free distribution in pdf format has also been a major move forward. While still holding the "magazine" feel, no longer are there subscription fees, photocopy costs, or piles of envelopes waiting to be stuffed and mailed.

Sadly, it seems that **The Diplomatic Pouch** is once again experiencing problems. Charles Roburn, the current editor, has made it clear to anyone who asks him that he is no longer the man for the job. But with only one issue produced over the past two years, nobody seems to have the time or inclination to take over. Charles has twice attempted to build a new issue, fighting for time and material in the hopes that putting a few consecutive issues out on a regular schedule might reignite the fire of some previous contributors. But that has not worked out as planned.

Vol. 15 2009				NMR! (No Issue)	NMR! (No Issue)
Vol. 16 2010		NMR! (No Issue)	NMR! (No Issue)	NMR! (No Issue)	?

Even after all these years, there seem to be two schools of thought when it comes to **The Diplomatic Pouch** and **Diplomacy World**. Some Diplomacy players prefer the short, one-or-two screen articles found most frequently in **The Diplomatic Pouch**. They don't like the full magazine effect of Diplomacy World, nor do they enjoy relaxing with a longer piece of reading material. They want something brief that they can click on and whiz through.

On the other side, there are those of us who much prefer to read leisurely, often by printing a zine onto paper so we can carry it with us. For example, I spend almost my entire workday staring at multiple computer screens. The last thing I want to do is go home and read about Diplomacy on another screen. I want paper that I can mark up, carry with me, stick in my bag...I suppose I may be living in the past, but the same goes for books. I don't want a Kindle. I love the feel of printed matter in my hands, scanning the shelves for something I'd like to reread or a new discovery...I don't want an electronic copy of the latest Get Fuzzy collection. I want it on my nightstand, waiting for me. And when I finish with it, I can pass it on to someone else who might enjoy it.

So now we are left with some major questions regarding the future of **The Diplomatic Pouch**...questions that I can't answer, but only offer opinions on.

1. Does the **Diplomatic Pouch** need to be saved? Or has it outlived its usefulness? Would a few new issues make potential contributors feel like it's "safe" to submit an article?
2. If the **Pouch** is to survive, should it do so in its current form? I have long contended that if you are going to have an html-style zine like **The Diplomatic Pouch**, it might work better in the form of a blog. Every time a new article arrives and is ready for release, you post it. Maybe add a tweet to let fans know there has been an update, if they don't already subscribe via a newsfeed. If you're not producing a true zine, why limit yourself to specific deadlines and release dates?
3. Who is willing to step forward and take over stewardship of the **Pouch**? None of this can happen if nobody is willing to do the work. And preparing and releasing material is only a small part of the task. Getting hobby members to write something in the first place remains the hardest part of the project.
4. Are there other possibilities? Yes. And I'd love to hear them!

The Diplomatic Pouch has grown to be a part of this hobby that we all have a stake in (whether you read it, write for it, or do both like myself and many others). I'd love to get some letters in response to this article. What do you think should be done with the Pouch? And who do you think is the right person (or persons) for the job?

And Then there Were None

By Larry Peery

The recent passing of John Smythe once again reminds us that the hobby's Golden Age collection of "old farts" is fading away. We're getting to the point where we won't be able to fill a geriatrics division board at a DipCon anymore. It's a pity, but it's inevitable.

It's also something that those of us who are left need to be planning for and, where needed, acting on. Several years ago I gave away some 200 boxes of Diplomacy Archives and related material. I have no idea what happened to them or if they still exist or are being used to the hobby's benefit. I still have nearly another hundred boxes of my own personal archives including materials related to some of the hobby's earliest postal games, organizational attempts, mine and others' publications, photos that show an Edi Birsan with hair, tapes of David Hood speaking "real English," travel mementoes, and of course all those damned t-shirts!

I'm sure many of you have similar Diplomacy treasures collections. What's to become of them?

Perhaps more importantly, what's to become of our individual and collective memories? Who will preserve our glorious or perhaps more accurately infamous history? For years I've preached that Diplomacy was a microcosm of real world diplomacy. As I read the email telling me of John's passing I was watching CNN's coverage of the arrival of Hu Jintao at the White House. Who among us ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or forty-five years ago would have ever imagined that happening? Today it is possible for researchers to examine the intermost secrets of the history of the Communist Party and Soviet Union's leadership and history. Where? Not in the Kremlin, but in the archives of Stanford University. Again, who would ever have thought? Whatever happened to my proposal years ago for a hobby "oral history" project? Did that ever get off the ground?

We need to preserve. We need to protect. And we need to use. Individually and collectively, this is our final responsibility. This should be our final gift to the hobby which has given us so much.

Here are some suggestions for my fellow old farts.

First, gather your Diplomacy memorabilia. Second, inventory it. Third, decide what should be discarded, sold, or kept. Determine as best you can what physical items you have that are relevant or which may be unique. Guard them carefully. Duplicate items (An original copy of Graustark #1 is equal to a Gutenberg Bible, but do we really need a hundred copies of Graustark #500 in our garages?) can be discarded. Make a list of what you have and share it with others.

Leave specific instructions for how your "stuff" is to be disposed of when you're gone. The average Diplomacy widow isn't going to know what you've got, what's important, or what to do with it if you don't leave instructions. And then pray there will be someone there to carry out your wishes when needed.

This last point is a difficult one for some of us who have no family or hobby related friends close enough to deal with these things. I dread to think what would happen to my stuff if something were to happen to me. For us it's even more important to plan ahead.

As our numbers decrease perhaps we need to set up a Dip Alert or "buddies network" to keep in touch, or at least keep track of each other. The informal gossip network we have at the moment is a precarious link to the past at best. "Here today, gone tomorrow" is more than a cliché at our ages. It's a grim reality. I hadn't been in a hospital as a patient in over forty years and then in a year and a half I became closely acquainted with every hospital, emergency room, and urgent care facility in north San Diego. Today I have to use a calendar to keep track of my doctors' appointments. I take more pills than I can count. But my doctors tell me I'm in better shape than I have been in years. Tomorrow, who knows?

Recently I collected forty more boxes and three long tables to use as I begin to sort my remaining Diplomacy stuff. Hopefully the exercise I get from doing that will keep my doctor happy and stop him from complaining about that.

In the meantime, thanks for the memories; and if you know anybody interested in several hundred Diplomacy-related t-shirts sized M, L, XL, and XXL --- let me know.

POSTSCRIPT - Edi Birsan writes: "Your archives went from you to Tim Haffey, and then as his health nose dived I then stepped in and went through them and boxed them and mailed them to Doug Kent who scanned them for the archives on Diplomacy World on the Net." Doug Kent writes: "Fortunately my scanning project continues. I've got about 2,000 magazines scanned and posted to the internet so far." Walt Buchanan writes: "In addition to Edi's reply, the Hoosier Archives through 1970 is indexed and stored at Bowling Green State University in their library archives. My guess is that they might accept later stuff too if it came somewhat organized."

And, as usual, the last word comes from Jim Burgess: "Yes, I still give things to Bowling Green. They will take them if organized."

Social Networks and Diplomacy

by Alex Maslow

I'm not so sure social networking is all that great for PBEM Diplomacy. I say PBEM, because if you meet someone at a convention and befriend them (or at least buy them a brew after a ruthless stab), then obviously becoming friends on Facebook, ~~LinkedIn, Friendster or MySpace~~ (wait, let's be serious. When anyone says "social network," they really just mean Facebook) is a logical next step. We're friends with the girl at the coffee shop and the guy who typically drives the bus route we take to work. Why not be friends with someone we've actually managed to create a shared experience with, and someone we will probably see again in similar circumstances?

But PBEM is different than that. PBEM is, by its very nature, highly impersonal. You're exchanging e-mails with faceless rivals. Sure, you know their name, and sure you might actually have incredibly detailed discussions with them, and you might even talk about some more personal things: "Sorry I've been out of touch, we had some water damage." "Oh, really? I had some water damage in my old apartment, but the landlady was excellent at getting it fixed." "That's cool. Yeah, we own our house so we have to do it all ourselves which, as you might imagine, takes more time." And, of course, this conversation will evolve into a deep discussion about renting VS buying.

But generally, that isn't going to happen. You usually chat about the game, and that's about it. And when the game is over, you say your farewells and stop e-mailing. And that's fine. PBEM isn't designed to forge friendships. In fact, its inherent impersonality allows for multiple games with the same people without even really the possibility for holding a grudge. Similarly, playing with new players doesn't feel like that big of a deal. The only time I've ever even remembered playing a game twice with the same player is when he stabbed me in one game, and then was in the very next game I joined. However, we were on different sides of the board and were actually on good terms the whole game. In general, however, recalling a player's name/e-mail results in little more than: "I think we played a game or two together before..." This vague sentence helps build up trust, even if we were brutally stabbed by that person. The familiarity of the name makes us feel better about trusting them, while the lack of personal interaction or even a common board to look over allows us to conveniently (or quite inconveniently, if they are a serial stabber) forget any details about the former game.

Social networks (by which of course I mean only Facebook, which is why the movie about it as simply called "The Social Network.") threaten this. There are pictures on it: Pictures of us, pictures of our families, pictures of our kids. Those pictures are there for our

friends and family. Our REAL friends and family. Fellow dippers really have no reason to want to look at these pictures, and there's no reason to let them. But it makes us look like an upstanding citizen. Maybe it will make us seem more trustworthy? Yeah, but you're forgetting all those other pictures. Pictures of you drinking a beer, pictures of you winking as we take a flaming shot, pictures of you hanging drunkenly off your friends, pictures of you stumbling down the street, pictures of you having fallen asleep on a subway platform. Yup. I know I can count on you to support me into Belgium, you drunk.

So far, however, most attempts to use Facebook for diplomacy seem to have failed fairly dramatically. There was a group created in 2009 for Diplomaticcorp.com. There was some posting, and then it tapered off. Someone posted a question about how to make updates from the group appear on people's newsfeeds. I suggested they make a "fan page." They did, but there is nothing posted on the page. (Actually, there are 3 links posted on the sidebar. Two are get-rich schemes, and the other is (inexplicitly) a link to the fan page.) There are 42 fans of the page, and 55 members of the group. Despite dippers extraordinary abilities to make a few enemies, we are yet to have 5 million friends. Sigh.

Discussions in the group are similarly stunted. There are two in the group (fan pages cannot have discussions, courtesy of Overlord Mark Zuckerberg), one is titled "Your favorite long running press thread." There is only one post—the post that asks people to post their favorite long running press. The other one is about adjudication for mobile devices, which has four posts, which seems promising, except 3 of the posts are only a sentence or two, mostly agreeing with the first post (which is long enough that it is in paragraph form(!)) that someone should do it, oh but no one knows how to port the programs onto mobile technology. The last post was from 8 months ago

As an experiment, I posted on January 28th a question on the wall of the group, asking for input on whether I should go to CodCon or Whipping. As of March 29th there have been no responses. I wrote a note for myself here that says "[provide commentary on that]." But given there are zero posts, there isn't much to comment on.

But of course, just talking and posting (or not) is not enough. I can become friends with all these people! But what does that give me? According to Facebook, the only thing Douglas Kent and I have in common is our interest in Diplomacy. And we both liked Inception. But you know what, I didn't even like Inception that much, and I'm thinking of removing it from my profile. It was an enjoyable movie, but I think placing it under my

"favorites" was a little presumptuous of me. Dorian Love and I both like A Clockwork Orange. He doesn't even have "Diplomacy" listed as an interest. Jason Koelewyn and I like both Star Wars and Diplomacy. He also likes Mythbuster, which reminds me I should list that under my favorite TV shows, too. Dippers come in all flavors and it is silly to assume, because we both like one board game, we would benefit from much more contact.

But further, do I want these people posting on my statuses? Do I want them to comment on the silly quotes I post said by my preschoolers, or the wonderful pictures I take of the Alaskan scenery? What if they don't get my inside jokes and think I'm a little funny in the head. What if they see my political views and decide I don't understand the world and decide not to trust me in future games? What if..... good God I just don't care. We just play a board game together online!!

As I see it, Facebook, ahem, social networks, are not really good for PBEM. They aren't bad, they just seem a little pointless, and add more clutter to life without really adding anything particularly useful. I cannot fathom what Facebook has that could improve the online Diplomacy experience. Diplomaticcorp.com has 899 active members. The Player Registry on Diplom.org (Diplomatic Pouch) has over 2000 entries (though many of these, I imagine, are outdated). I cannot find a count for Dipsters.org has, but I imagine it also has a fair number of users. These sites are where players can find GMs (or judges), GMs can find replacement players, observers can watch dozens of games, and all users can discuss things on the forums. These are all the tools we need. Why add more?

I don't even know why my profile says I liked Inception. I didn't like it much at all.

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Alex Maslow –As an unabashed opponent of the American Tea Party, I must point out in hysterical laughter that Zachary Jarvie's already funny article misspells Muslims as, you guessed it, "Muslins." But while "Obama is half-breed a Muslin" used to be the only recorded thing we know about the mysterious Muslins (which makes us wonder how there can be a half-breed but not a full-blooded Muslin yet discovered), we now know "Muslins and Mormons may be a problem as a different kind of pear pressure is keeping them from the drink."

This is interesting, as it is not well known that Mormons are similar to Muslins, nor that the two apparently cannot resist the pressure of a really juicy pear. Perhaps Muslins are a sect that spun off of Mormons, agreeing with the principles of the Latter-day Fruit, but disagreeing about whether ketchup is a fruit (as it is derived from Tomatoes, a fruit) or a vegetable (as proclaimed by President Reagan, who apparently was a Muslin

devotee (further evidenced by the fact he commanded Mr. Gorbachev to "Tear (Pear?) Down This Wall." While opposing Communism was his public reason, he was really enraged that innocent potatoes were being turned en masse into Vodka, which he knew in time would be used by tricksters such as Jarvie to trick his people into drinking alcohol (prohibited, of course, by the great Lemon, who with one hand gives sharp flavor and with the other squirts directly into your eye. A LEMON, SUBSEQUENTLY TURNED INTO LEMONADE, WHICH IS SPIKED WITH VODKA!)).

Clearly I've uncovered some great conspiracy and you should all thank me with all your hearts and supply depots.

Conspiracy discussions need to be directed to the Global Diplomacy Alliance, sorry. Not my department!

Discussion Question for Next Issue:

Back in the 80's and 90's, the People's Diplomacy Organization Relief Auction (PDORA) was used as a way to raise money for needy hobby services. Hobby members would donate items, which were then sold in a mail-bid auction. The money raised would be distributed to services like the Boardman Number Custodian, Miller Number Custodian, and Orphan Services Director. These services have greatly fallen by the wayside (although I think both the BNC and MNC should be automated and used again, allowing us to track results of games and variants simply and develop theories about trends in game play). Anyway, it occurred to me that PDORA could still take place – perhaps via eBay – and the funds used to promote the hobby in some other way. Maybe the money could be used to buy Diplomacy sets which would then be donated to schools, clubs, or the like. Or perhaps the funds could be used to sponsor a player or two to travel overseas for a major Diplomacy tournament. Please write in with your thoughts.

Origins Game Fair Diplomacy Tournament

**June 23rd - 26th
Columbus, Ohio**



www.originsgamefair.com

Tournament Details

The annual Origins Diplomacy Tournament will be held for the 34th time this June featuring at one of the largest gaming conventions in the US. The tournament will be FOUR rounds running from Thursday through Saturday. Best Country Awards and a Championship plaque will be awarded on Saturday night following the fourth round. This year will feature a new scoring system and a new tournament director.

Round One – 6pm Thursday
Round Two – 6pm Friday
Round Three – 12pm Saturday
Round Four – 6pm Saturday

Scoring: Carnage

Rank: Best two out of four rounds

Convention and Hotel

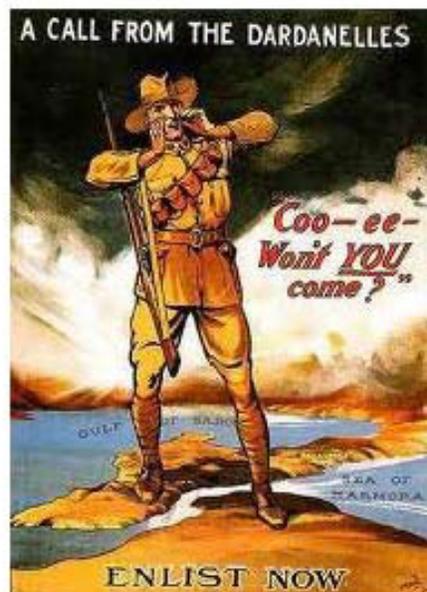
“Every year Origins offers a variety of great experiences for our attendees, some are new and some are old favorites. The CABS Board/War Room features open gaming with a library of over a thousand games provided by the Columbus Area Boardgaming Society. Last year Rio Grande Games provided FREE lunch and dinner each day of the convention. The main hall features over 60 exhibitors and literally thousands of gaming events.

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Contact Thomas Haver for further details at tjhaver@gmail.com

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The Turncoat

By Joshua Danker-Dake

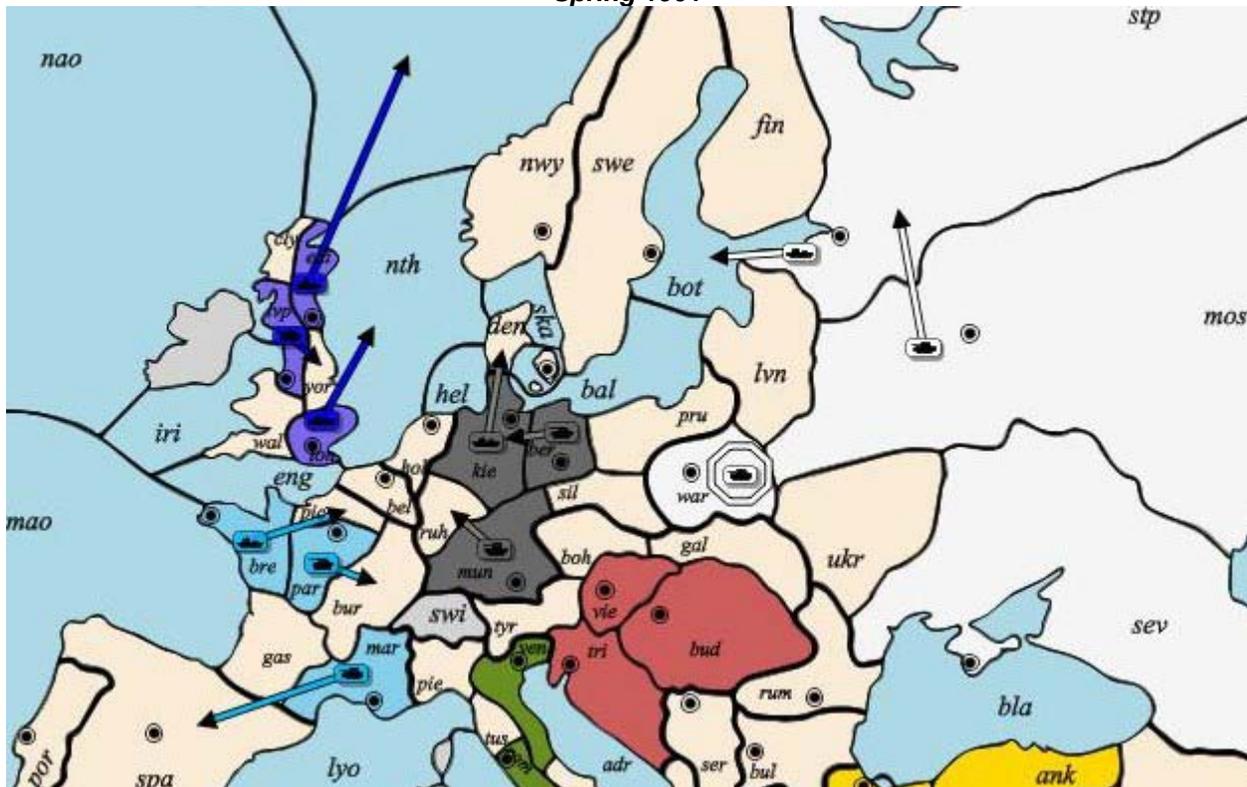
At the beginning of the game, if you could trade credibility for board position, would you? Many of us would; after all, having a tactical advantage puts you in the driver's seat – you're better able to pick your friends and dictate terms. And credibility doesn't do you a whole lot of good when you're losing home centers in 1902.

Smart tactical play and good negotiation are a vital combination for any player, but no matter your skill in these areas, what we're talking about here isn't the kind of thing you can plan for or bank on: this is about recognizing and taking advantage of unique opportunities to get a leg up on the pile. Just a little bit.

And that's all right – with a big lead, you're a target; with a slight lead, men want to be you and women want to be with you (and you can turn it into a big lead later if you play your cards right and catch a break or two).

Let's look at an example, taken from an actual game, where England obtains an immediate advantage over each of his neighbors. In the following illustrations, I have omitted the moves of units irrelevant to the scenario, whose cast of characters includes England, France, Germany, and Russia.

Spring 1901



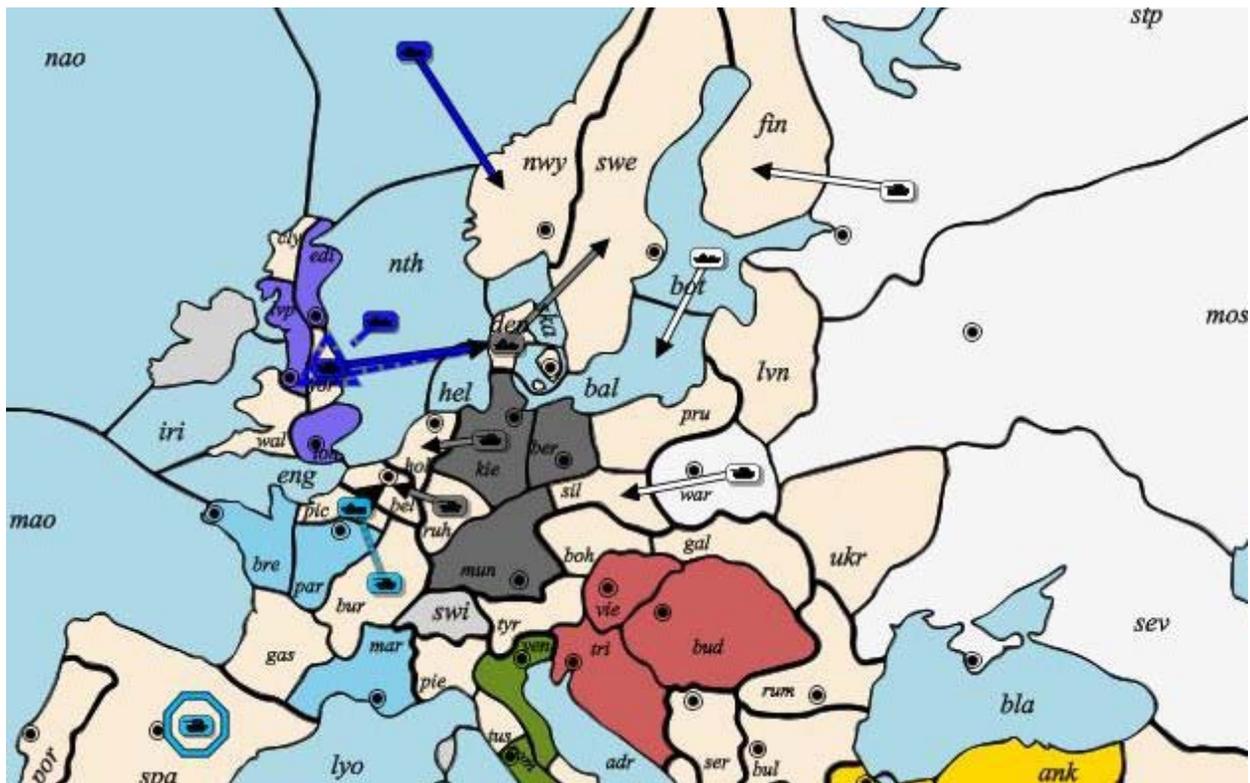
England, having agreed with France to keep the Channel clear, employs the common Northern Opening: LON-NTH, EDI-NWG, LVP-YOR. Germany opens with the popular Danish Blitzkrieg: KIE-DEN, BER-KIE, MUN-RUH, because he is afraid Russia will open north, and indeed Russia does, ordering STP-BOT and MOS-STP (he also, inexplicably, holds in WAR, and the others discuss and agree that he doesn't know what he's doing). Meanwhile, France has opened BRE-PIC, MAR-SPA, PAR-BUR.

In all, this is pretty straightforward; nothing earth shattering has happened, so let's move on.

Fall 1901

England and Germany, each wooing the other as a potential ally, discuss the usual business: England will support himself into Norway to guarantee that build against the army in STP; Germany will pick up HOL, take a shot at BEL, and stand Russia out of SWE. All very much by the numbers.

And yet, England has been scheming with Russia all the while, and the Fall moves look like this:



Germany: KIE-HOL, RUH-BEL, DEN-SWE
 Russia: STP-FIN, BOT-BAL, WAR-SIL
 England: NWG-NOR, YOR-DEN, NTH C NOR-DEN

Meanwhile, France picks up Belgium and Spain. (With no threat from Italy, why Spain and not Portugal? Maybe he doesn't know what he's doing either, everyone thinks)

Build 1901

Germany builds A MUN and F BER; England builds A LVP and F LON; France builds F BRE and a PAR; Russia builds nothing.

Spring 1902

Realizing that his situation is dire and his options limited, Germany goes to England and makes the case that five-center Germany is a better ally than four-center Russia. And here is the beautiful thing for England: he has not, strictly speaking, attacked any of his three neighbors, nor have any bridges been too severely burned, except perhaps with Germany, whom he has lied to. Yet here Germany is, perhaps not with his hat in his hand, but certainly in a position of weakness – because what other choice does he have?

This is the turning point. England is in the driver's seat. In Spring 1902, with tactical position equal or superior to that of each of his neighbors, England has his pick of friends, and no one else knows what he is considering but Germany, who needs that friendship too badly to blab to others.

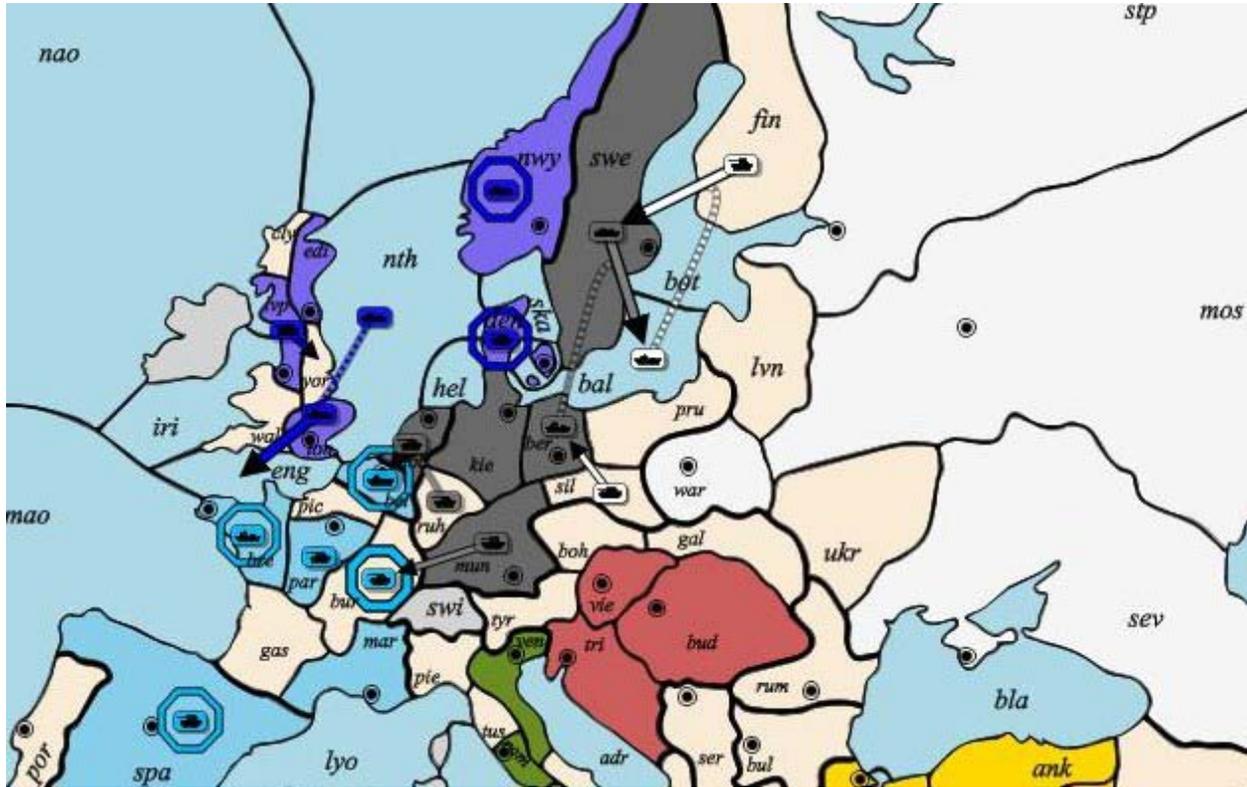
So what's happened? Germany has picked up two builds, HOL and SWE, but he is encircled by Russian and English units. England has also picked up two builds, NWY and DEN. Russia, having bounced with Turkey (who has also helped himself to Rumania) twice in the Black Sea, has picked up no builds.

England accepts Germany's proposal; they agree to swap DEN for SWE as soon as might be convenient, and England tells Germany he might as well go after France. To Germany, this is logical – he's not in a position to get builds from Russia or England, and France, who had spoken vaguely of an alliance against

England, would be unlikely to see it coming. Germany also realizes, quite rightly, that England has him over a barrel: attacking France means taking Belgium immediately and burning that diplomatic bridge to the ground. Germany is worried, naturally, that England, having not yet flagrantly antagonized France, may use this as an opportunity to form a French-English alliance

(since, after all, England is clearly unfaithful). But if he wants to stay alive, or at best, relevant, what choice does Germany have?

The orders go as follows:



Germany: SWE-BAL, BER S SWE BAL, MUN S BER, HOL-BEL, RUH S HOL-BEL

Fall 1902

Russia: SIL-BER, FIN-SWE, BAL S FIN-SWE

Germany: RUH S BEL, BEL H, BOT-STP, BER H, MUN S BER

England: NOR H, DEN H, LVP-YOR, LON-ENG, NTH S LON-ENG

Russia: SIL-BER, BAL S SIL-BER, SWE H

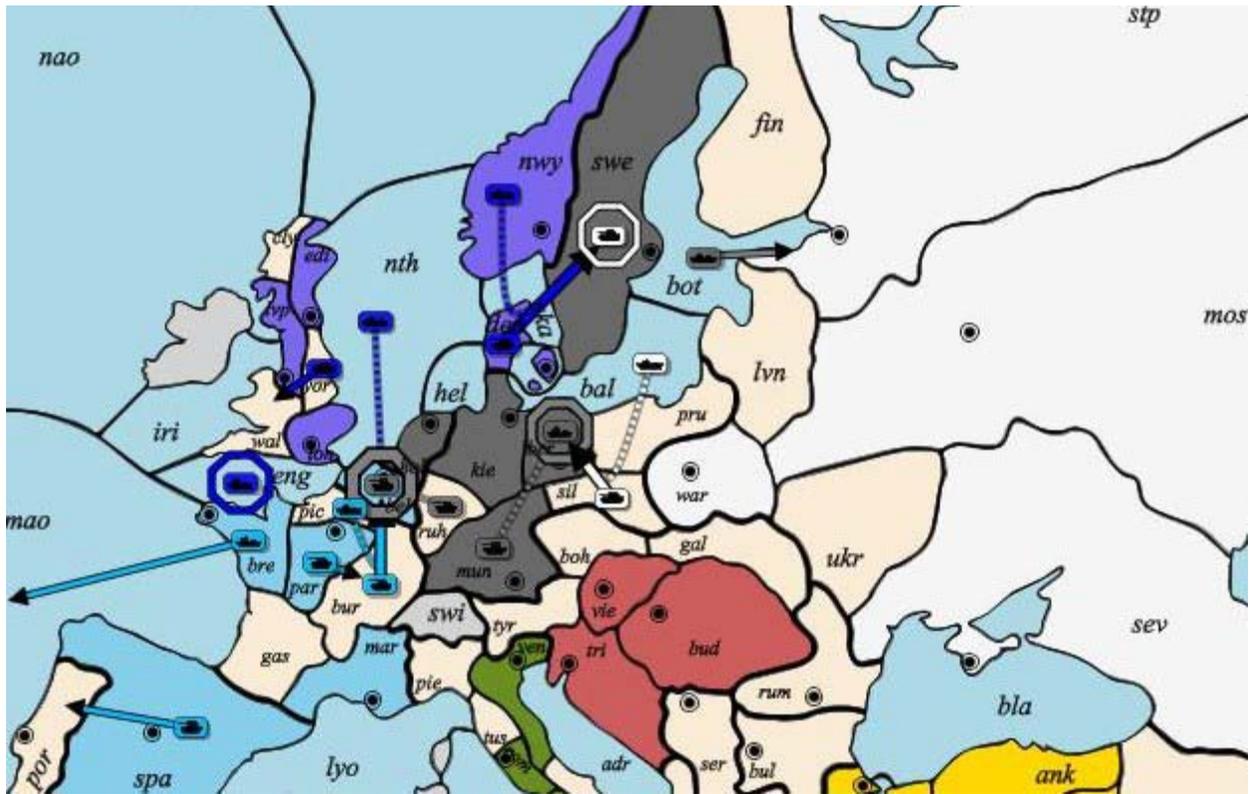
France, astonishingly, holds or supports to hold with all of his units (England realizes that France was never a viable ally, and all powers begin to wonder if maybe France doesn't know the rules or the object of the game). France is dislodged from BEL and retreats to PIC. Meanwhile, the German fleet dislodged from SWE goes to BOT since Russia shows little interest in self-preservation.

England: DEN-SWE, NOR S DEN-SWE, NTH S BEL, YOR-WAL, ENG H

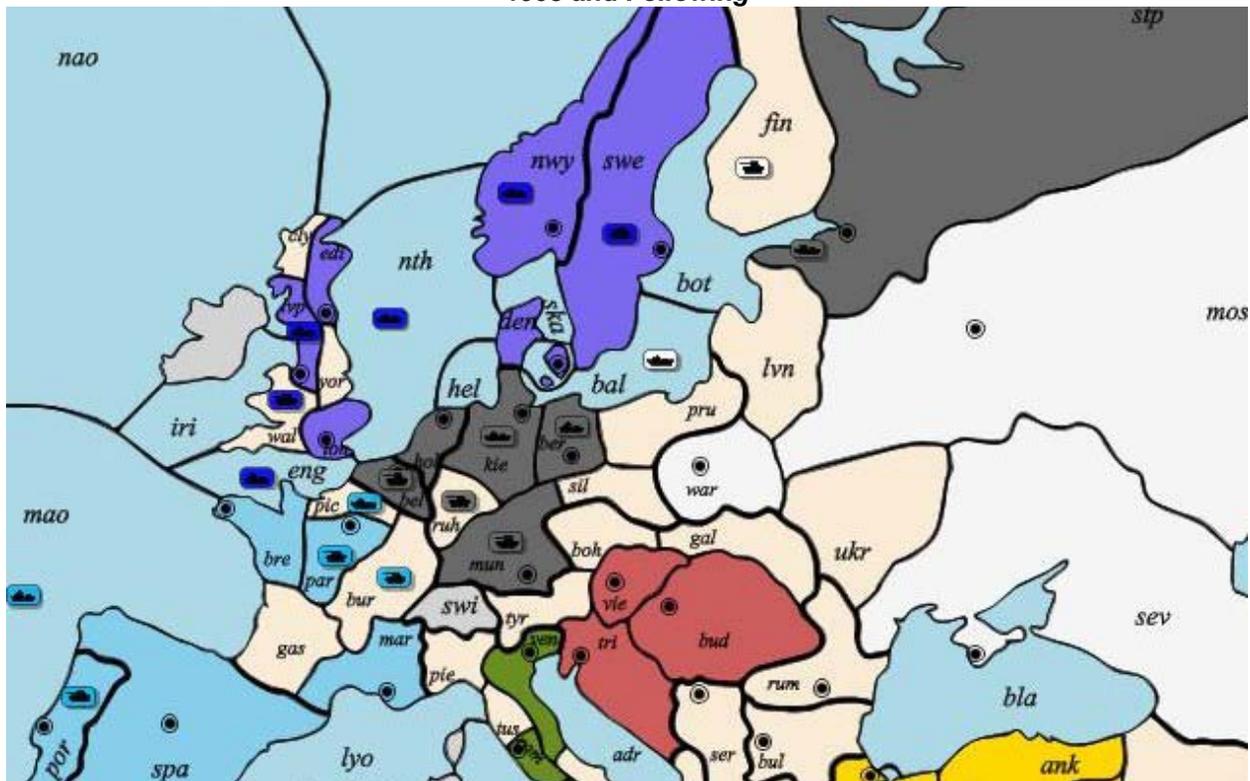
France: PAR-BUR, BRE-MAO, PIC S BUR-BEL, BUR-BEL, SPA-POR

England, with a set of ultra-conservative orders, has not gained much, but neither has he overtly antagonized anyone (although he has rather exasperated Germany).

England finally commits, supporting himself into Sweden while Germany helps himself to Saint Petersburg. The German-English alliance seems to be working nicely, although by taking Sweden from Russia and keeping Denmark, England has in essence netted one of Germany's centers with no hostilities toward him.



1903 and Following



So as 1903 begins, England has six centers, Germany has six, France has five, and Russia has three. But while England is free of entanglements and in good position to begin a powerful assault against France, Germany is unable to commit more than a few units because he has to cover his home centers from the rogue Russian fleet,

which is only interested in causing him trouble. Meanwhile, France is in position to attack Germany, but not England.

In the years that follow, England will take Iberia while Germany struggles to keep what he has, and by the end

of 1905, it will be England eight, Germany five, France four, Russia zero (Turkey will have nine at that point).

Because he was able to use Russia and then swap him out for a better ally immediately, England enters the mid-game as the leader of the strongest alliance on the board. He is, in effect, calling the shots, because Germany is still completely reliant on his friendship.

Let's stop there, before England squanders his superior position and resources. (In 1905, in order to close the ever-widening gap between them, Germany, perhaps forgetting that it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission, requests Sweden in exchange for a French center to be named later; England refuses. Germany, who at five centers feels he has no reasonable chance to win the game or be part of any draw, threatens to turn on England and drag him down. England calls what he mistakenly thinks is a bluff, and Turkey goes on to solo in 1908. For what it's worth, Germany's rebellion against his English masters is highly successful, and he finishes with eight to England's two. There's an altogether different lesson there.)



So what have we learned? For one thing, Russia should never hold in Warsaw in Spring 1901 (That's something I can imagine Wallace Shawn's character saying in *The Princess Bride*, right along with "never get involved in a

land war in Asia").

For another thing, if you make a deal, make sure you get something out of it, even it's "not getting killed." Russia didn't get anything in 1901, and he therefore ceased to be a viable ally for anyone. Consequently, he didn't build the entire game. This cuts both ways – after 1902, Germany felt he was getting nothing out of his deal with England, and he became increasingly frustrated.

If your partner is doing well and you're doing poorly, while you may still be allies, you probably aren't actually "partners" anymore. You may just be a faithful lackey. I don't mean to pick on Russia here – this point is even more valid for the England-Germany relationship. Germany chafed at his lack of progress and took it out on the only player who could have helped him succeed (and if he'd tried his revolution a year or two earlier in the game, he might have done better for himself). But who can blame England for trying to keep Germany under his thumb? There's a fine line between what's an acceptable advantage and what's too much (that's why I always look for equal-growth partnerships – they cut down on a lot of these shenanigans).

Is there ever any reason *not* to always try to make a deal? What do you have to lose? What did Germany have to lose by bringing his proposal to England? *Nothing*. I've been in too many games online where people quit at the first sign of adversity, whether because they're lazy, incompetent, or thirteen years old (there's no telling). I don't care if such a dropout benefits me or not – it drives me crazy. Put in a little effort – otherwise, why are you here wasting everybody's time? Go play Gunboat or Risk or Candyland.

In conclusion: a solid long-term alliance is vital to success – you know that already – but your first love won't always be your last love. Keep an open mind and take what other players are willing to give you – people who want something from you, whether it's help, centers, or their continued existence, are usually willing to deal. Remember that this is Diplomacy, not marriage: just because you have a good thing going doesn't mean you shouldn't be on the lookout for something better. Sometimes, changing horses in midstream is the right move.

Illustrations in this article were generated with jDip v. 1.7.

Joshua continues to be a very reliable Strategy & Tactics editor, and a positive influence on Diplomacy World...including on my morale as Lead Editor.

Diplomacy as a Turing Test Vehicle: More Musings on the Future of Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy

By Jim Burgess

David Leavitt, in a recent New York Times Book Review:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/20/books/review/book-review-the-most-human-human-by-brian-christian.html?ref=review>

describes Alan Turing's original test as "an imitation game in which an interrogator, C, interviews two players, A and B, via teleprinter, then decides on the basis of the exchange which is human and which is a computer." Turing's idea is one that I've always liked since I first encountered it in the 1970's and imagined going it one better, engaging in a game of Diplomacy (in the usual on-line fashion, though I originally imagined it postally) where on the basis of the exchange the human players decide which players were human and which were computers. This test is harder, and I would argue better. David Leavitt is writing about Brian Christian's new book, "The Most Human Human" about the status of the world regarding this test that I highly recommend. Christian describes his own search to understand the test and develop a computer program that could "win it" (or conversely to defeat humanity).



What is most fascinating about this (and reading both Leavitt's review and Christian's book for more on this regard is worthwhile) is that he actually discovers that the "problem" is that we humans are getting worse at being human!! Yes, we are letting the machines tell us how to behave.

I will come back to this point in a second relative to Diplomacy, but first let me tell you a bit more about what we might be talking about here. It is about what us economists and other academic types call the difference between tacit and explicit knowledge (we'll see if I can talk about it without boring you all to tears) and the best examples are thinking about call centers and what people do. I'll describe it the way I try to do it, you can see if you like it better than how they describe it (I also discussed this a bit in the Fall 2010 Diplomacy World). Think cookbooks, writing instructions down in a cookbook so you can replicate it by following the instructions over and over. Some things lend themselves to this. You might think call centers do. You would be wrong. Call center managers are not reading the literature (or maybe they don't care) that training their humans to do precisely what their automated answer systems do, so the humans get even more frustrated once they actually are talking to a human, results in really angry customers. The knowledge required actually is quite tacit, very hard to write in a cookbook, and the REALLY great call centers (of which there are some – Southwest Airlines for one that I know) have the automated part be the cookbook that you can write down, and then get humans who know the cookbook, but go off of it to do what actually needs to be done to meet consumer needs once someone actually reaches them. Of course, they "price the humans" appropriately so you have to wait a really long time to actually get to a human to inhibit the temptation of the human customers to bull their way to the human agent so the human agent has to do the repetitive cookbook responses.

Now what does any of that have to do with Diplomacy? Well, Diplomacy is REALLY, REALLY light on the cookbook elements. You have openings, maybe, that once you decide them, you can just execute them. But after that, everything is relative, everything is human. And this is the neat thing about the book. For the Loebner Prize Competition

<http://www.loebner.net/Prizef/loebner-prize.html>

you can design a computer program to be the most human computer OR try to be the "most human human". In Diplomacy, what you would want is four human players and three computer players, so every human faces three humans and three computers. After a Diplomacy game was played, each of the four humans would try to identify the other three humans. In Loebner terms, 30% failure would be the standard. But I would

argue that if you watch the way too many people are playing Diplomacy, they "like the call center geeks" are learning to play in ways that are too easy for the computer to replicate, yes, but more so becoming less human themselves. The Diplomacy AI project (dipai on yahoo groups) ultimately may get far enough along to test this formally.

But how do you play Diplomacy like a human? This is the next part of Christian that follows the same path I did back in the 1970's when I decided Diplomacy was going to be the game that I would play for the rest of my life. Put simply, it is by "being one self, any self" (this is attributed to Bernard Reginster from Brown here in Providence where I live and got my PhD). This is a Nietzschean philosophical idea that is not always

understood all that well, but while playing Diplomacy with Bob Olsen, Bernie Oaklyn (Buddy Tretick), Eric Ozog, and Dan Stafford, taking a Nietzschean philosophy course that emphasized this idea of being oneself as separate from the "herd mentality" really spoke to me. All computers can do is to spatter a pastiche of personality on the wall, only humans build up a tower. Where's your personality in Diplomacy?

Despite not submitting one of them in a while (perhaps during the Nixon administration?), Jim Burgess remains the Diplomacy World Interview Editor. By the way, Jim needs some volunteers to collect some of the oral histories Larry Peery mentions in his article. Get in touch with him!

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplom.org/Face/cons/index.php>

Anjou Feu VII - Saturday April 16th - Sunday April 17th - Avrillé (Maine-et-Loire), France - <http://www.18centres.com>

2011 CODCon Open - Saturday April 16th - Sunday April 17th - Glen Ellyn (West Chicago suburb), Illinois - <http://windycityweasels.org>

Brighton DipCon II - Friday May 13th 2011 - Sunday May 15th 2011 - Brighton Railway Club, 4 Belmont, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 3TF, United Kingdom - <http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

TexiCon 2011 - Friday May 20th 2011 - Sunday May 22nd 2011 (*Diplomacy event is only being held on Saturday May 21st*) - Sheraton Hotel, 1701 West Commerce St., Ft. Worth, Texas - <http://www.texicon.net>

Origins - Thursday June 23rd 2011 - Sunday 26th June 2011 - Columbus, Ohio - www.originsgamefair.com

ManorCon XXVII - Friday July 15th - Monday July 18th - Stamford Hall, Leicester University, United Kingdom - <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

GenCon - Thursday August 4th 2011 - Sunday August 7th 2011 - Indianapolis, Indiana - <http://www.gencon.com/2011/indy/default.aspx>

Weasel Moot V - Friday September 9th 2011 - Sunday September 11th 2011 - Chicago, Illinois - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org>

Auckland Diplomacy Championship - Friday September 23rd 2011 - Sunday September 25th 2011 - Auckland TBC, New Zealand - <http://www.daanz.org/dip-tournaments.htm#akl2011>

World Diplomacy Championship XXI - Saturday October 1st 2011 - Monday October 3rd 2011 - Coogee Bay Hotel, Sydney, Australia - <http://www.daanz.org.au/wdc2011/index.html>

Buckeye Game Fest XII - Thursday October 13th 2011 - Sunday October 16th 2011 - Columbus, Ohio - <http://www.buckeyegamefest.com/>

EuroDipCon XIX @ MidCon XXXIII - Friday November 11th 2011 - Sunday November 13th 2011 - Hallmark Hotel Derby, Midland Road, Derby, Derbyshire, DE1 2SQ, United Kingdom - <http://www.ukf2fdip.org>

Thoughts on Changing the Starting Builds - Part 1 of 2

By Alex Maslow

“Conventional political analysis suffers from a profound failure of imagination.”

I have heard in my time many reasons why Italy deserves a fleet in Rome instead of an army. It allows her to have more say in the Med and it makes Austria feel more secure and reduces tensions between Venice and Trieste. Actually, those are really the only two reasons given. Whether because of time constraints or a genuinely one-dimensional view, imagination is lacking in these discussions. It is therefore my goal in this article series to address changes to the starting board (beginning with the replacement of an Italian army in Rome with a fleet) and discuss, in detail and with due creativity, ramifications of those changes. I will do this in two parts – more if new ideas occur to me (or are suggested by others). This article will discuss changing the Italian army in Rome with a fleet. The second will discuss changing the Austro-Hungarian fleet in Trieste to an army.



Changing the army in Rome to a fleet is a popular view, and one initially championed by Richard Sharp. I also recall hearing that Allan Calhamer toyed with the idea as well, but clearly he ultimately decided against it. Jim Burgess also wrote an article on the matter, though I feel he overlooks the changes the fleet makes to the opening of each other Power. James Nelson appears to have written something on the idea, but page 19 of DW #70 is missing(!), so I guess we'll never know in detail.

But what would happen if Italy's army turned into a fleet? I believe such an apparently minor and local change would have a huge effect on the board, altering everyone's initial strategy (though some less than others).

The most obvious effect is it replaces a potential move from Rom to Ven or Apu with a potential move from Rom to TyS (In both cases, Rom can move to Tus and Nap).

This is a huge power shift, as an effective attack on Austria in 1901 is now hardly feasible. The best thing an Italy could do against Austria is:

Nap to Ion
Rom to TyS
Ven to Tri

Ven (if it gets into Tri) may have the option of retreating somewhere equally useful if defeated in the fall. If the move to Tri fails, Italy can order to Tri again. As for the other units:

Ion to Gre/Alb/Adr
TyS to Tun

This seems like a decent option, but we must not neglect that Austria's openings would be affected greatly by a change of starting builds in Italy as well. Protected from a concerted attack from the west, Austria would likely move Vie to Gal, Bud to Ser and Tri to Alb. If Tri is taken, Austria could easily take it back (especially if Vie was bounced in Gal). But because Italy knows it is impossible to hold Tri in the spring, he would rarely move in that season (perhaps preferring to give Austria a false sense of security and trying to nab it in the fall). Theoretically Italy could convince Germany to move to Tyr for support, but such a thing seems unlikely.

Austria could also go on the offensive against Italy, ordering Tri to Ven and Vie to Tyr. Germany may be willing to help by supporting Vie to Tyr. Such a thing brings a lot of force to bear on Venice, and the only defense for Italy is to order Nap to Apu – a move that is wholly useless if no such attack is made. Further, Italy and Austria could play a guessing game about Ven. If Ven moves to Tyr, and Austria moves as such, it all bounces (also making Nap to Apu a waste). If Ven does not move, Austria gets into Tyr. But if Italy moves to Tyr and Austria only orders Tri to Ven, Ven is lost (though Nap to Apu allow the depot to be taken back, provided there is no French unit in Pie or Austrian unit in Tri). Italy would be encouraged to talk to Germany about Tyr (perhaps arrange a bounce between the two of them) and to Russia to move to Gal (to keep the pressure up).

While the Lepanto is still a viable opening for Italy, an interesting anti-French variant could emerge, where in S02 (assuming Ven is safe and an army was built in Rom) Ven goes to Pie and Tun goes to Wes and Ion goes to TyS (or, if Ion went to Tun, TyS goes to GoL) and the army in Rom goes to Tus. A lot of pressure is on France's south, and convoys present a multitude of options. Such a thing makes France seem much weaker (given he still has E and G to deal with), but indeed such

weakness is a diplomatic strength and EGs may not form (or at least attack openly) until Italy's commitments have been made clear. Italy's fleets are much better positioned to take depots and swing into the Atlantic than Germany/England are for making equally good gains. This could encourage Germany to use Munich to support Austrian Vie to Tyr which would force Italy to remain defensive and almost certainly prevent this sort of attack.

FGs could make for interesting alliances, with Germany supporting Austria to Tyr to ensure England and Italy don't team against France. FE's seem to be a less dangerous scenario for Germany, as Italy appears better poised to move westward. If he sensed danger, Germany would be happy to bounce Italy in Tyr in S01 (though it is extremely unlikely an FE would be that obvious so early) to ensure Italy's security against Austria and allow him to move west in 1902, thus relieving pressure along the Maginot. Then again, a skillful England could talk Germany into helping Austria into Tyr, which would preserve the French south from a green invasion, only to side with France against Germany. In either case, France may have a vested interest in sending Mar to Pie and coordinating with Austria (to attack Italy) or Germany (to not bounce Tyr) to keep Italy busy. Whether Austria or Germany wants to help France is a different question.

Russia is affected by the fleet in an interesting way. The R/I alliance is now even more secure, as Italy begins with an extra fleet, and conflict upon the fall of Austria/Turkey seems less likely (Russia gets more of landlocked Austria, Italy takes the coastal provinces). Pressure on Gal now seems much more prudent to protect an exposed Italy. Italy's strength being maintained, Mos has new reasons to move to Ukr instead of StP. Italy's strength threatens France much more than Austria, and will normally affect the western triangle more significantly than the eastern. Austria is secure there will be no attack from Italy (an Italian fleet showing up in Adr is no more likely than it had been with the standard boards), which gives him an ability to grow faster than usual. The chances of RT convincing Italy to attack a strong Austria are nearly nil, partially because he may feel unthreatened by it, but also because he and Austria may have an agreement to divide theatres (more on this below), which means ART is left to itself.

Moving to Ukr is a great way to put a check on Austrian builds, and while the resolution of ART will be murky, Russia benefits greatly by siding with Turkey against Austria, because Turkey (unless he stabs Russia) would then build fleets and hit Italy (which has been keeping the western powers on their toes). Italy holds up a strong defense against Turkey, but Russia now pushes against Germany and Scandinavia, which would be less consolidated than in most standard games at the midpoint (it certainly wouldn't be MORE likely to be resolved). Allying with Austria is possible, but the same

inherent conflicts of interest existing in the standard game would exist, only Austria also benefits from a safe eastern border.

Austria may want to side with Turkey as well, because Turkey must inevitably fight Italy, and that keeps the two distracted and allows Austria to move north. And even if the two decide to attack Austria, their naval focus would hinder them significantly (and if either of them has a large army, the other would probably opt to attack him, given any attack on Austria would benefit the land-based rival). Siding with Russia means Austria may have to fight Italy, which reduces pressure on the west and gives Russia an advantage (see above). Also, invading Italy (beyond Ven) is still just as difficult for Austria as in the standard games. I suppose a crafty Austria (if he did not feel like stabbing Russia as soon as Turkey fell) could break the old conventional wisdom and move north and attack Germany. Then those builds could be turned against Russia, and Austria could depend on England to contain Russian gains in the northern seas.



Turkey of course has the most interesting choice, because in both cases he would be up against Italy (The idea that Turkey would get 18 depots without taking a single Italian depot is far-fetched, and the idea he can do it without at least briefly clashing with Italy for control of Med is absurd). He may insist Austria attack/threaten Italy in 1901, threatening otherwise to side with Russia, which at least gives him some hope of expanding after the initial fray. With Austria down, his fleets could allow him to stab Russia around Bla and then flood Russia with armies, or he could have some armies move through Austria and really give Italy a run for his money, attacking by land and sea. Alternatively, Turkey could also sit back and wait, aware attacking Italy gives Russia an advantage, but unwilling (or unable to effectively) stab Russia.

On the topic of Turkish/Italian conflicts, the Lepanto is essentially unchanged and can be done in nearly the

same way.

S01

Ven H (or a coordinated bounce with Germany in Tyr)
Rom to TyS
Apu to Apu

If there is an Austrian attack in the spring, the fleet in Apu serves the same purpose as the army, in which case one can abandon the Lepanto and protect Ven without anyone knowing what you were planning. Otherwise

F01 (Assuming Apu is not needed to support Ven)
TyS to Tun
Apu to Ion
Ven H (or really whatever)

Then build an army in Rom and:

Ven H (or whatever)
Rom to Apu
Ion to Aeg/Eas
Tun to Ion.

In the fall, convoy as normal.

In fact, the Key Lepanto is strengthened because only one Italian army means there is really no chance of an Italian stab – it's not like he has any unit to support the army in Tri with. Further, if one were truly daring (and daringly trusting), in the spring order Nap to Ion.



Assuming Turkey has still bounced with Russia in Bla (highly likely), you get your choice of entering Eas or Aeg. If he orders Ank to Con, Eas is still open and cannot be dislodged until at least F02. Of course, such a move could be ruined by an aggressive Austrian.

Though perhaps a deal could be struck to hand Ven to Austria and Italy is given Greece and all of Turkey. This solves the border issues of Austria/Italy and completes the realignment of Italy to a naval power projecting power westward. This brings me to my final conclusion....

One should expect to see an emergence of a strong AI alliance with Italian fleets and Austrian armies fighting Turkey, and then Austria moving north and Italy moving west. With Russian pressure on Gal mounting due to the threat to Italy, this seems like a reasonable fall out of several rounds of play, as Italy and Austria now see (more than ever) there is little to fear from each other and the most rational move is to move to their separate theatres. The fleet in Rome prevents Italy from attacking Austria in 1901, and so Austria may feel more comfortable DMZing the Tri/Ven/Tyr area. Further, if Turkey falls to a joint attack before Russia has a chance to do much of anything, Austria is in a shockingly strong position, and Italy would have the strength to blast into France regardless of what England or Germany do.



I believe here I have shown sufficiently the ramifications of changing the army in Rome to a fleet. I am not sure if this unbalances the game, but it certainly changes the balance by making Italy more likely (and more effectively able) to attack France. It also turns Venice into a liability and the northern depot sticks out like a sore thumb, requiring intense diplomacy or cumbersome tactics to secure it. I'm not sure how I feel about such a change being enacted (whether officially or in variant games), but at least now we can say we've considered the change with due care, and are aware of shifts it would bring to our standard board. We are also better prepared for such games, understanding our standard strategies, no matter what country we are, have been dramatically affected by this one unit change.

I look forward to reading Part 2 of Alex's contribution!

Evesham Games Day 2011

13 August 2011

Evesham Town Hall

Open 9am – 11pm - Entry fee: £5:00

Evesham Town Hall is located on the High Street/Market Place in Evesham.

The first floor venue has plenty of space for playing games.

There is a licensed bar on site and as much tea/coffee as you can drink.

There are numerous cafés, restaurants and shops nearby for when you are hungry.

Heron Games

Keith Thomasson will be there from Heron Games, with a selection of games available to buy. To reserve the game you want, contact Keith beforehand at:

<http://www.fwtwr.com/store/index.asp>

Diplomacy

There will be a two round diplomacy tournament here. Both newcomers and old hands are welcome to try out this classic game of negotiation. Visit <http://www.dsct.co.uk/> for more details.



Parking in Evesham:

There are various car parks in Evesham. The nearest all day car park is the Old Brewery, behind the fire station. From there it is easy to walk through to the Town Hall.

Getting to Evesham by Train:

Evesham is on the mainline from London Paddington to Worcester/Malvern. Leave the railway station by the main exit and you come out onto one end of the high street. Turn right and continue down the high street until you reach the town hall.



For more details, email Mark Stretch on m.a.stretch@btinternet.com or visit <http://www.ukf2fdip.org/Ad%20Hoc/Evesham%202011.html>

Australia: How Do I Love Your Dots? Let Me Count Them All!

By Larry Peery

Dedication: This effort is affectionately dedicated to the memory of Dame Joan Sutherland, whose voice and smile warmed my heart for years. For over thirty-five years I was fortunate to share her with millions of her other fans: the lady I called Madame Defarge, but never to her face.

This is written for three groups of people: 1) Those who are definitely going to WDC in Sydney later this year but would like to know more about the country they'll be visiting and, hopefully, plan to see some of it while they're there; 2) Those who are unsure whether they will be going, but might be persuaded if the trip seems worthwhile; and 3) Those New Zealanders who don't know as much about Australia as they think they do. This then is a Larrykin's peerispective on Oz; and don't worry, if you don't know what that means now by the time we're done you'll know exactly what I mean.



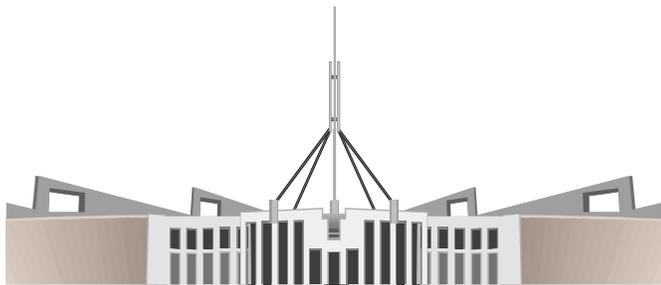
Australia has hosted two WDC events to date (III in 1990 and XII in 2002, which I attended) and will host XXI in October of this year. How time, dots and knives fly! The first two WDCs resulted in a falling off of interest in the game and hobby down under. Hopefully this third go at it will spur further growth in their hobby. The Aussies and Kiwis tried hard to keep the momentum going, but it just didn't happen. Now some of the old-hands and a lot of new ones from both countries have joined forces to prepare a truly world-class event, or so they say. However, perhaps a disinterested outside opinion may be of some interest to those in other countries considering going.

A LOOK BACK

I've done more DipCon events over the last forty-odd years (and some of them were very odd indeed), including WDC I, II, IV, and V. But the 2002 event stands out in my memory, not for the diplomacy or Diplomacy (which was, for me, rather boring) but the very real excitement of visiting Australia (not to mention Hawaii, French Polynesia, and New Zealand along the way). I hadn't really planned to attend the Canberra event, but events, some dribbles and some tsunamis, made it happen. Here's a bit of history on my first trip to Oz. I had sold the family home a couple of years before and had several CDs in the bank about to expire. A career change had sent me back to school with all expenses paid. I had decided to do a program in travel and tourism, normally a two year program. On the first day of class I told one of my professors and advisors that I planned to do the course in one year and get perfect marks doing so. A smile greeted that vow. I then said that if I achieved my goal, I would "treat myself to the trip of a lifetime." I think it was a smirk that greeted that. A few days later 9/11 happened, and our program was thrown into chaos. We lost many of foreign students who couldn't get back into the country when travel restrictions, especially to Asia, became extremely difficult. Still, we muddled on. After sixteen weeks I realized, as did my professor, that I was in fact going to achieve my goal! One day she asked me where I was planning on going on my dream trip. I hadn't really thought about it, but now the idea was fixed in my brain. She also told me that planning that trip would constitute my thesis for my program; and I'd better get to it.

As part of the program I had already taken one cruise, to the Mexican Riviera, and spent a few nights on the original Queen Mary, now a hotel permanently berthed in Long Beach. The cruise bug had bitten me. Bad. While on the Queen Mary I met a number of people who had cruised on the Queen Elizabeth 2, or QE2 as she is universally known. The QE2, even in her declining years, was still the world's premier ocean liner (not a cruise ship). She was built for distance and speed. I began to do some research on her. I discovered that each year she did an "around the world cruise", usually starting in New York and ending in Southampton, and often running over 100 days. It was hugely expensive, but that didn't deter people from doing the cruise every year, often in the same cabin or suite. And those didn't come cheap. The full cruise in the penthouse suites could easily run over a quarter-million dollars. Wow! Way beyond my budget. Was there a way to do it on the cheap? I began to apply the lessons I'd learned in my "cruising and cruise ships class." First, I discovered it was possible to

do a portion of the entire voyage as the whole cruise was divided into segments, and some segments, the less popular ones that weren't likely to sell out, were sometimes offered at a steep discount. Second, I learned that if there were still empty cabins as sailing day approached, Canard would offer additional incentives, cabin upgrades, transfers to the ship from your own town, and even return airfare from, in my case Sydney. I started by buying the cheapest outside cabin I could get three months before sailing. I forked over \$8,800; which seemed like an awful lot of money to me. Then I started watching the newspaper travel section ads like a hawk. First up, I got a two cabin upgrade, transfers from San Diego to Los Angeles airport and then coach to the ship at the harbor, and return air from Sydney to San Diego. That was worth about \$900. Somewhere along the way my professor, who is also a travel agent, dropped an email to the president of Canard, informing her that not only was I her top student, but also heading into a new career as a travel writer. All true. I'm sure it was a coincidence, but three days before the ship sailed I got a call from Canard wanting to know if I minded giving up my cabin for a group that wanted eight cabins together. I said no problem. I already had my tickets, luggage tags, etc. so I set off for the ship not knowing where I was going to end up. I needn't have worried. At the dock the steward looked at my cabin assignment, grinned at me and said, "I think there's been a bit of a change" and led me on board. Most people are happy with a one or two deck upgrade on a cruise ship. I ended up getting booted up fifteen classifications and had not only a much nice cabin, but dining in the ship's top dining room. Later I found out my \$8,800 investment was equal to a \$45,000 suite. So, while the rest of my classmates were attending the graduation I was boarding the QE2 for a trans-Pacific crossing.



By now, of course, I realized that WDC II was being held in Canberra at Easter time. Somewhere, lightning hit. Hard. Why I thought, go all the way to Sydney and then go home, missing WDC in the process. On the other hand, why take the cruise, go home, and then return? I contacted Canard and United and made arrangements to move my return flight back to after the event. That, of course, left the question of what to do in Australia for seven weeks while I waited for the WDC? By now my professor and classmates were really into planning my trip. We poured over maps, tour guidebooks, web sites,

etc. It got to the point where I knew Australia's geography better than that of the USA. After weeks of considering dozens of options, I decided to bite the bullet again. I figured if I was into the cruise part of the trip already for over \$10,000, I might as well go all the way. So I went down to my travel agent and wrote out a check for nearly \$9,000 for three ground tours in Australia; and another \$1,800 to Qantas for a fistful of flights around Australia. I had said this was going to be the trip of a lifetime, never dreaming it would also be the trip that broke the bank. I won't go into all the details of my various ground tours here. You'll get a feel for that when I discuss some ideas for your "trip of a lifetime" later. Essentially, here's the way it worked out. After landing in Sydney, I immediately flew to Tasmania, where I spent a week. From there I flew back to Sydney where I joined an APT ground tour that started in Sydney and went through the Blue Mountains, Melbourne, Adelaide, Mildura, and back to Melbourne. From there I flew up to Alice Springs and joined a tour in progress. We saw the sites around Alice Springs (actually very interesting), Uluru, before taking a ten-day coach trip all the way up the middle of the Northern Territories to Darwin. So many memories, great and tragic. I can't help but laugh and cry as I recall experiences of a dozen years ago.

From Darwin I flew to Cairns (pounced Canes) to join a two week coach tour down Brisbane. Along the way we spent three nights each on Dunk Island, Hamilton Island, and Fraser Island, so we got a good exposure to the Barrier Reef. One thing I really liked about the APT tours, besides the tour directors and drivers, was the fact that most of the other people on the tour were from outside the USA --- often Canadians, Brits, and Kiwis. We had a jolly good time, especially on the winery tours! From Brisbane I flew to Canberra to join the WDC festivities. 'nuff said about that. The trip's piece de la resistance was still to come as I headed back to Sydney. Sydney is probably the greatest city in the southern hemisphere (Only Cape Town, and Buenos Aires might rival it.), and certainly one of the great cities in the world.

My base of operations was the Swissotel and I thoroughly enjoyed it. More on all that later. My flight home was on United's William Patterson 747 to Los Angeles and when I mentioned to the stewardess that I knew who Patterson was, she didn't say much. But around dinnertime she showed up with a towel wrapped package and said it was from the captain who was impressed with my knowledge about United's history. Inside the towel was a bottle of Salmon-Billicourt Champagne (If you have to ask it would be wasted on you).

And so my trip of a lifetime ended: eighty-eight days, twenty-eight thousand miles, give or take, about the same number of dollars, and at least one memory for every star in the southern hemisphere. Oh yeah, and no wins, draws, or even boobie prizes from the Con. Was it worth it? You bet. It was, indeed, the trip of a lifetime!

A LOOK AHEAD

By now I hope you've caught some of my enthusiasm for this wonderful, wonderful country. If not, then keep reading as we begin to play your trip down under.

Before reading further I suggest you get a good, small scale map of Australia. I'm going to throw a lot of names and places at you and a map should be useful.

To give you a frame of reference think of a teeter-totter. Yelpers, a teeter-totter. At the fulcrum point is Sydney, as it will be in your travels. No matter where you go in Australia you'll probably go through Sydney multiple-times. On the left end of the bench think "NATURE" destinations: Uluru, Kankadu, the Daintree National Park, the Paroo River, etc. On the other end of the bench think "URBAN/HISTORICAL" destinations: Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Bendigo, Arrat, Ballarat, Mildura, and the Murray-Darling River, etc. Drifting overhead somewhere is Tasmania, Australia's heaven on earth!

Before we get into the itinerary planning part of our voyage, let's get a few basics out of the way.

SCHEDULE

If you're going plan to allow a minimum of a week for your trip (Not counting the two days of travel time you'll be using.), and two weeks is better, and three weeks is best. After that it's all about your endurance and what you're budget will allow.

BUDGET

Once you get there Australia's not necessarily expensive. Check around on airfares, they do vary. Qantas is not usually the cheapest carrier to and from the country (Air New Zealand or United or Virgin may be cheaper), but may be the cheapest and most convenient for internal flights. Remember Sydney has two major airports, one domestic and one international, so plan your connections accordingly, especially if you're doing multi-legged flights. I found Qantas actually held planes for me in places like Launceston and Hervey Bay when I had tight connections. The ground trip between Sydney's two airports by cab, especially with a Wacky Packy driver, can be terrifying and expensive. Be prepared.

There are lots of ways to see Australia: escorted group tours, independent travel, backpackers style, or even a cruise (Several cruise lines now offer Round Australia or Round New Zealand cruises); or, as I did, some combination thereof. Extra travel, accommodations, and eats will be your biggest budget line items. What I found useful was to come up with a daily budget (Total trip cost divided by the number of days.) For instance, for my mega trip the average per day on the cruise was about \$314 all inclusive and \$220 a day for the basics.

Shipboard laundries and a bottle of wine a day aren't cheap! For the land tours (3 for a total of five weeks, \$9,000), three weeks of independent travel, \$3,000, or about \$214 a day for basics., and another \$5,000 or so for extras (Russell Watson and Rene Fleming concerts don't come cheap. Neither do hot air balloon rides over the Barossa, 22 t-shirts, and a ton of art books from the book store at the Sydney museum.) All inclusive, I figure the entire trip cost me around \$306 per day. And not one damn black dot to show for it!!

Now, remember, I was traveling solo and that always adds to the costs. But it can also add to the fun, unless you're traveling with somebody you really like, especially for eight weeks. Keep that in mind.

You can, if you want spend less. \$200 a day shouldn't be too difficult for most "Rick Steves" types of travelers. Arthur Frommer fans will say then can do it for \$50, but you'll be unhappy when you get home, I get. Remember, plan an itinerary, but be flexible. Plan a budget and stick to it!

ITINERARY

As I said you'll begin in Sydney. Enjoy your time there. There's a huge amount to do and see. Let what you do and see be determined by what your interests are. If you're into the outdoors and nature, head for Australia's outback (e.g. suburban Sydney, which looks suspiciously like suburban San Diego). See the Blue Mountains on a day trip, perhaps the Hunter Valley for some wine tasting. Take in the Sydney Zoo (one of the best in the world). Forget the koala (DON'T CALL ME A BEAR!) show. They're dumb, they smell bad, they have bad breath, they will pee on you, etc. Sort of like some Dippers you'll meet in Coogee Bay. The Chinese garden ranks with any I've seen. The QVC, for shoppers, ranks with the Vendrome in Paris, or Galleria Umberto I in Naples (the mother of all shopping centers). If you're crazy, do the night climb on the Harbor Bridge. If you're only a bit mad, do the day climb. Do see the Sydney Opera House, inside and out, especially if you can arrange a concert.

Sydney's harbor is one of the great natural bays of the world. You could take a tour, but better yet go down to the Quay where all the ferries from the outlying beach towns dock and take one or two or all of them. You don't have to stay when you arrive at Manley or Bondi, etc. You can jump off and jump back on, or just stay on the boat for the return ride. Then do the next one. It will take most of a morning afternoon to do it, but you'll get an appreciation for the size and history of the harbor. Now, having done that, consider Darwin and its harbor. It's TWICE the size of Sydney's. On the other hand, it can often be dirty, smelly, etc. at low tide. Best seen from the land. Be sure to check out Darwin's WWII history, especially the aerial bombardment.

Melbourne is to Sydney what Chicago is to the USA, but much nicer. It's the financial capital of the country. There's lot to see in the surrounding areas, and the VAC (Victoria Arts Center) has lots to offer. Again, see a concert, ballet, or play if you can. The city, again, has a fascinating Chinese museum and just finding that can be a challenge. Forget the Penguin Parade. It's almost as bad as the koalas. Lots of good wineries in the area, though.

Adelaide is famous for two things. Chocolate is the first. The other you'll have to figure out for yourself. Lovely city, though.

Brisbane now has several claims to fame: 1) World's tallest condo built as such, 2) Population of more than a million, 3) More sharks than swimmers at most beaches, 4) A disgusting resemblance to Los Angeles from the air.

Transitioning from urban landmarks to natural ones consider cities or towns like Mildura, Arrat, Ballarat, and Bendigo; all of which hark back to a time gone by in Australia. Think God! Most Americans know about the California gold rush. Most Canadians know they had one as well. Not so many people realize that at about the same time the Aussies were also gold mad. If I remember correctly Bendigo's mines produced as much gold as California. What's fascinating to me is that most of the surface panning for gold and much of the actual gold mining was done by Chinese immigrants. At one point one-fourth of the town's population was Chinese. Two there are no local Chinese left in town. The two local Chinese restaurants are owned by an Albanian and a Pakistani. The tour guide pointed out sometime to me when I commented on the size and beauty of the key public buildings in the city center. She said, "They should be. Do they remind you of anything? I thought a moment and then it hit me. Trafalgar Square? Right on? Most of the major buildings in London at that time were paid for with gold from Bendigo. And later most of the major public buildings in Bendigo were designed by the same architects who designed the major banks, etc. of London (Sort of reminds you of Paris and Buenos Aires, huh?),

Alice Springs and Bourke are very different towns, if you can call them that. Alice Springs is the gateway to Uluru, and home to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (which is much more interesting than you'd think), a telegraph station, and various spectacular natural sites. Bourke may be the most unique place (certainly the most isolated) I visited in Oz, but when you're on a mission, you do strange things. I wanted to see Peery National Park which was soon to be part of the Paroo National Park, and eventually became part of the Murray-Paroo National Park. And keep in mind that national parks in Australia aren't really national parks at all. They come under their various state governments. But I found a bush pilot willing to take me (for a tank of gas and a case of Penfold's 55) and away we went. We finally found it.

250,000 acres of the former Kidman (Yes, that Kidman) sheep station empire. We didn't see one person, one animal, or one bird. In fact, we couldn't even find a place to land the plane. So, the pilot did a touch and go on a dry lake bed, and I'd had my ten seconds visiting Peery National Park.

For nature lovers the wonders in Australia are endless, whether you like your natural sites fixed or moving. The mountains really aren't much. The coastlines are good, but not great (The 12 Apostles now number 9, I believe.). The rivers are pretty boring unless you come up close and personal with a crocodile. I have to confess that after getting to know these creatures I developed a huge appreciation for them, and a great respect for their teeth. The Katherine Gorge was gorgeous. Think of a mini-Grand Canyon with more water. Kankadu was fascinating for its natural beauty and its aboriginal art. The crocodile shaped hotel was fun, the "natives only" bar at night less so. The Daintree area is a fascinating area, only the Everglades in Florida can even compare with it.

I could go on and on and on, and it probably seems like I have, but there's so much more to share with you. Hopefully these ideas will germinate in your head and heart and get you off your butt and onto the internet or, better yet, into a travel agency to look at some real brochures and talking to a travel agent. Remember, it doesn't have to cost you a fortune, but if you've got one to spend, go for it!

THIS AND DATA

Take with you your digital camera (or two) and lots of memory! Take photos of your family, especially kids, pets, etc. Take small gifts for the aboriginal kids you may meet: pencils, paddle balls, eraso-pads, etc. Don't take lots of t-shirts, etc. (You'll be buying them when you get there.). Save your change and somewhere along the way see that it gets to the Flying Doctors. They need the help.

Disclaimer: I wrote this, without referring to my notes approximately nine years after my own trip to Australia in a single sitting of about 4.5 hours. Therefore, for any errors, etc. I do apologize.

HOW CLOSELY HAVE YOU DONE YOUR HOMEWORK?

Identify the following individuals. You can email your answers to me at peery@ix.netcom.com. Most correct answers wins a prize. List of correct answers will appear in next issue.

Nellie Melba
Joan Sutherland
Kiri Te Kanawa
The Seekers

Olivia Newton-John
Lazy Harry
Larrykin
Giuseppe de Stefano
The Don
The Ghan
Batchelor
Kit Carson Air Base
ICAT
Matthew Flinder
Mel Gibson
Russell Crowe
Nicholas Baudin
Burley Griffin
Banjo Patterson
William Lawrence Bragg
Joern Utzon
Robert Menzies
Ned Kelley
Rev John Flynn
Charles Kingford Smith

AND FINALLY, A FEW WORDS FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T HAD THEIR FILL OF PEERIBLAH, FROM MY NEW BOOK, THE PEERY FILES: X-RATED

Yes, Australians are different. Yes, they do talk funny, especially when they've been drinking, which is most of the time, at least for the Dippers. They are proud, with good reason. They are stoic, especially about natural disasters such as floods, fires, and droughts. Yes, they are like Americans, but there are definite, if subtle differences. They're not at all like the Brits, and above all else don't confuse Kiwis and Aussies.

They think big! The Opera House, Darling-Murray Hydro Project, the Ghan, sheep stations as big as Texas. The more you know about their geography, history and culture; the more you'll enjoy your trip.

Australian Dippers lie, cheat and steal across and on the game board. In that way they are very much like Americans. However, there is one big difference. They talk funny. And if you think they talk funny, wait until you try and understand a Kiwi!

The price for attending WDC is a bargain at \$XX compared to \$145 for a ticket to Sydney's Gay Pride event!

It's hard to tell the Aussies from the Kiwis because they both wear black a lot. One easy way to tell is to look for the BBQ sauce all over the front of an Aussie's shirt. The Kiwis' shirts are usually covered with beer drippings.

Aussies are the best Dippers in the world. Just ask one. On the other hand, a Kiwi will admit to being second best, as he grabs one of your dots.

One Aussie told me that they play Dip in order to have an excuse to drink. Another told me that they drink in order to have an excuse to play Dip. A Kiwi interjected that they needed no excuse to do either or, better yet, both!

The Whites Only Law had nothing to do with keeping Asians out of Australia. It was intended to keep Catholics out of the country.

The Chung Wah Temple in Darwin and the Chinese Museum in Bendigo were two of the most moving things I saw in Australia.

I liked Australia. I fell in love with Tasmania, except for that damn wombat that ate all my chocolates at Cradle Mountain and then pooped all over the inside of my suitcase!

Australians have a saying: People from Sydney go to Melbourne for their holidays. People from Melbourne go to Adelaide for their vacations. And people from Adelaide don't go anywhere. They stay home and eat chocolates!

The big three in Australian wines are: Hunter's Valley, Barossa, and Margaret River.

The reason crocodile tastes like chicken is because most crocs are farmed raised and fed, big surprise, chicken.

AND THERE YOU HAVE IT

A bit of nostalgia, a bit of futurology, a bit of trivia, and a bit of peerisque humor: hopefully that I am indeed on the road to recovery. The last three years have not been kind of me. I've had three car accidents, a quadruple bypass, congenital heart failure, pneumonia, and other odds and ends. I'm well on my way to being an official member of Blue Cross's 2 Million Dollar Man Club! One good thing, I've lost weight, about 55 pounds. I just bought a pair of trousers that fit me, six sizes smaller than the last ones. I'm taking 13 pills a day, and fortunately I have a good PCP and cardiologist. So, things could be worse. Oh yeah, I bought a new BMW two days ago to help salve my wounds.

This story is a test to see how my creative and technical writing skills have survived all this. What you've read took me six hours, non-stop to write. I hope it was worth it. I hope you enjoy it and find it useful.

Now, get your asses to Sydney and bring home some black dots for me to drool over!

Of course, if you're going to Australia for World DipCon, you might want to play some Diplomacy while you're there too...

**Diplomacy Special
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Texicon would like to invite you to attend our second annual game convention. Be one of the first 15 people to submit this Diplomacy only flier at Texicon registration to receive \$5.00 off your entrance price.

Whether you are an experienced gamer or a novice,
we will have the right games just for you.

Miniature Games – Board Games – Role-Playing Games – Seminars – Special Guests –
Give-A-Ways and more.

Open Gaming: Bring in a game and find people to play!

If you're interested in signing up to be a Game Master, contact us at
texicon@texicon.net to receive more information.

For more information, check out our website: www.texicon.net.

Registration Prices: \$25/day or \$40 for the entire convention.

Buckeye Game Fest XII

October 13th – 16th

Columbus, Ohio



Tournament Details:

The Buckeye Game Fest will be held for the twelfth time this October featuring many Ohio Boardgame Championships. The Diplomacy Tournament will be three rounds running on Friday and Saturday. Best Country Awards and a Championship plaque will be awarded on Sunday following the third round. Each player who registers for the convention will receive at least one FREE boardgame. Registering for the convention is the only fee required to participate in the tournament!

Round One – 6pm Friday

Round Two – 10am Saturday

Round Three – 6pm Saturday

Scoring: Carnage

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Hotel: The Ramada Plaza Hotel and Conference Center (<http://ramadaplazacolumbus.com/>)

Gaming: Open Gaming will start at Noon on Thursday and run until 5pm Sunday. Scheduled events will begin at 2pm on Thursday (October 13th) and run the length of the con.

Auction: We will again feature an awesome auction on Saturday. Last's year's auction was a huge success.

Dealers: We've got commitments from RC Hobbies, GMT Games, Academy Games, Eagle/Gryphon Games, and Queen Games.

Contact Thomas Haver for further details at tjhaver@gmail.com

<http://www.buckeyegamefest.com/index.html>

Diplomacy World Demo Game

“Rotary Phones and 8-Track Tapes” – 2010B

The Players:

Austria: Steve Cooley

England: Bill Quinn

France: Buz Eddy until *after* Spring 1903. David Hood takes over after that.

Germany: Mark Fassio

Italy: Melinda Holley

Russia: Don Williams

Turkey: Vince Lutterbie

The Commentators:

Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)

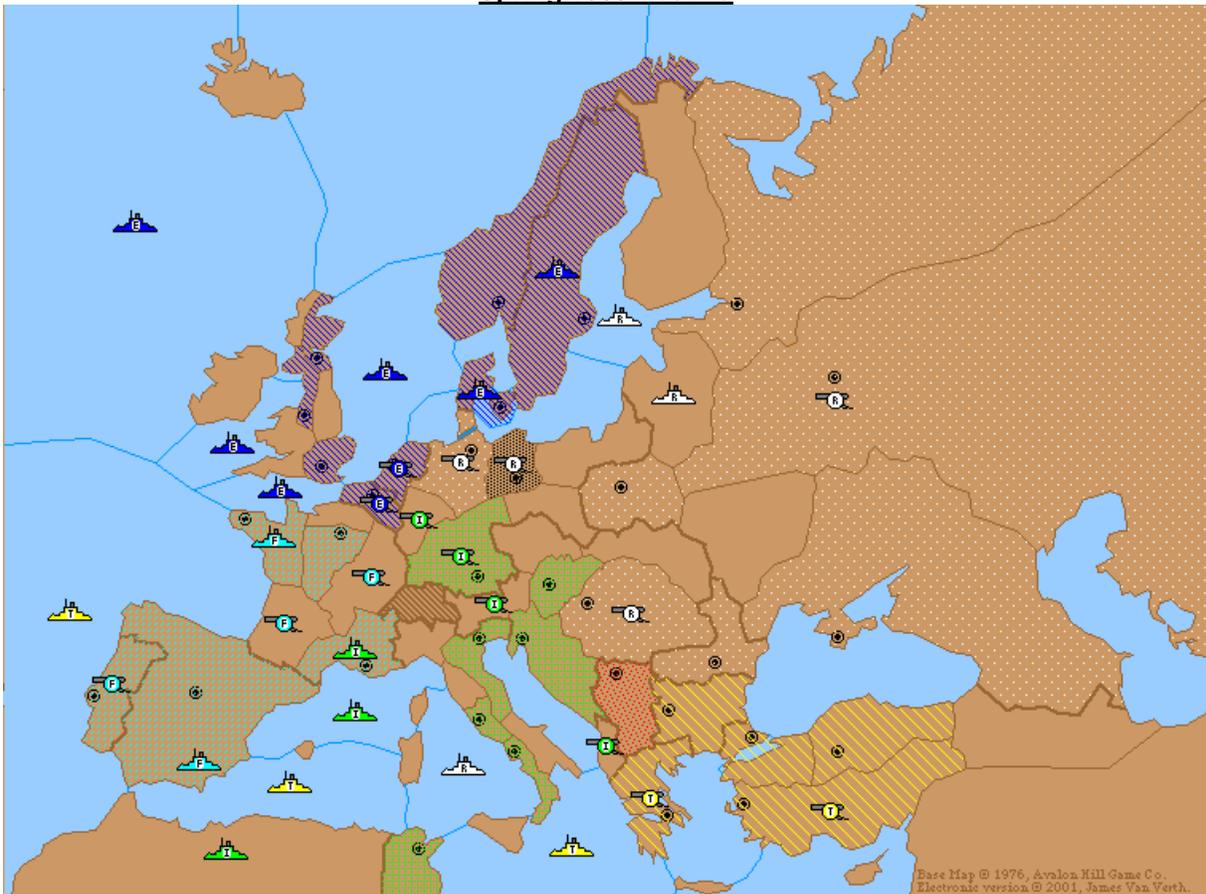
Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

The GM:

Douglas Kent

Spring 1905 Results



Austria and Germany finally let out of their misery?

Austria: A-Albania—Serbia (*Disbanded*).

England: A Belgium - Picardy (*Bounce*), F Denmark - Baltic Sea (*Bounce*), A Holland Supports A Kiel, F Irish Sea Supports F Liverpool - North Atlantic Ocean, F Liverpool - North Atlantic Ocean, F London - English Channel, F North Sea Supports F London - English Channel, F Sweden Supports F Denmark - Baltic Sea (*Cut*).

France: A Burgundy - Picardy (*Bounce*), A Gascony - Burgundy (*Fails*), F Mid-Atlantic Ocean – Brest, A Portugal Supports F Spain(sc), F Spain(sc) Supports F North Africa - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Void*).

Germany: A Ruhr—Belgium (*Disbanded*).

Italy: F Gulf of Lyon Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean, A Munich – Ruhr, F North Africa Supports F Western Mediterranean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Piedmont – Marseilles, A Trieste – Albania, A Tyrolia – Munich, A Venice - Tyrolia.

Russia: A Budapest - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Gulf of Bothnia - Sweden (*Fails*), F Ionian Sea - Tyrrhenian Sea, A Kiel Supports A Munich – Ruhr, F Livonia - Baltic Sea (*Bounce*), A Silesia – Berlin, A Warsaw - Moscow.

Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea, A Greece Supports A Trieste – Albania, A Smyrna Unordered, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Western Mediterranean, F Western Mediterranean - Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Brooklyn thought for a moment, looked down at the floor of the cavern and then looked up at Merlin. "But why me Merlin?" he asked. "Why does it have to be me?"

The old magician smiled and gripped the boy's shoulders even more tightly. "Because you are young Brooklyn, open to unlikely happenings and not yet set in your ways," he replied. "There are a few others who could do this but they are much older, and I fear they would not be able to accept what needs to be done."

A small tear trickled down the boy's face which he quickly wiped away. Merlin pretended not to notice. Brooklyn took a deep breath. "Okay Merlin," he said quietly, "so what exactly is it I have to do?"

Merlin smiled again. He knew the young boy was frightened and was determined to keep him as much at ease as he could. "Well the first part is almost complete. We are here to find a sword, as you know. That sword is known as Excalibur, the ancient sword of the kings of England and the last magical device left on Earth. It is now very close by and when we, or rather you, retrieve it I will call on an old friend of mine to take us to where it is needed."

Brooklyn gasped. "Excalibur?" he cried. "Like in King Arthur and...oh....and Merlin." He laughed. "Maybe I should have guessed that." The old magician smiled, realising that with laughter the boy's fear would quickly abate.

The boy thought for a moment and then looked up at Merlin again. "So, will there be any other things on this quest that I thought were just old stories?" he asked.

The magician's eyes sparkled. "Well I think there will be at least one more when my old friend arrives," he said quietly, chuckling as he did so.

"Why? Who is he?"

Merlin laughed. "Well most people just call him...The Doctor," he replied.

Now it was Brooklyn's turn to laugh. "Oh come on Merlin, you've just gotta be kidding me this time. I mean legends and stuff are one thing but that's just a TV show!"

The old man's face took on a serious expression. "Brooklyn," he said quietly, "I have been totally truthful with you so far on this quest and I promise that will continue to the end."

Brooklyn thought for a moment, then looked at Merlin with eyes wide in amazement. "So does that mean I get to ride in the Tardis?" he gasped.

Merlin smiled. "Yes Brooklyn," he replied, "I am sure it does."

The boy's mouth dropped open as the magician's words sank in. Then he jumped and punched the air. "Oh yeah!" he shouted. "Come on Merlin, let's find that sword!"

Merlin felt greatly relieved as he led the boy across the cavern floor.

GFL Lutterbie to Aide: Any letters from the President of France?

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: No sir.

GFL Lutterbie: Hmmmm, I got 2 letters from the previous king. I guess this one doesn't care about the Turks.

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: Perhaps a visit is in order?

GFL Lutterbie: Excellent idea. Pack my bags, and don't forget the condoms!

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: Never again sir, that was a mistake with Austria. My fault.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop...uh...noisy courtroom?) - The woman looked up at the judge and squinted. "What the -- I've got a Doogie Howser as a judge?"

The young judge bristled. "That's Judge Stone to you." He glanced at the bailiff. "What have we got, Mack?"

"Public intoxication and failure to obey an officer of the law."

"Now wait a minute," the woman protested. "I was NOT publicly intoxicated! I was inside a building!"

"Which building?" the Judge inquired.

"The First Baptist Bar & Grille."

"Are you saying you got drunk in a ..."

"I'm saying, Judge, that since I was inside a building and not in public, I was NOT publicly intoxicated!"

"And failure to obey an officer of the law?" the Judge asked.

"Are you talking about that moron who calls himself a Sheriff?" the woman asked.

"That would be me." Sheriff Kluk stepped forward, angrily glaring at the woman.

"Ah...Sheriff Yuk..."

"That's Kluk! With a 'K!'"

"He told me that he was going to perpetrate a lewd and lascivious act upon my person," the woman calmly announced.

The Judge glanced from the woman to the Sheriff then back at the woman as the entire courtroom fell silent.

"What?!" The Sheriff finally yelled.

"He said he was going to handcuff me." The woman looked at the Sheriff. "Pervert."

"She was drunk! Intoxicated!"

"But not in public, Your Honor. Therefore, I felt the need to defend my honor."

"Okay, let me get this straight." The Judge pointed at the woman. "You were at the First Baptist Bar & Grille and had a little too much to drink?"

The woman shrugged. "That depends on your definition of what constitutes a little too much."

"Uh-huh." The Judge pointed at the Sheriff. "And you came in and attempted to arrest her."

"For public intoxication!"

"That was NOT public intoxication!" the woman argued.

The Judge sat back in his chair. "You two have a history, don't you?"

"Well, he DOES seem to drive up the mountain to see me more than I think he should," the woman admitted.

"I'm the Sheriff! I'm on patrol!"

"In the First Baptist Bar & Grille?" the woman accused. "That's not your jurisdiction. That's the jurisdiction of the town police."

They all turned to look at the man sitting in the back of the courtroom. The thin man shivered then cleared his throat. "I've never had a problem with that establishment." His high-pitched voice cracked at the end of the rapidly spoken sentence.

"Thank you, Deputy Fife," the Judge shrugged. "She's right, Sheriff. The county's yours but not the town." He slammed down his gavel. "Charges dismissed. Next case, Mack."

The woman smiled politely at the Sheriff. "Have a nice day, Sheriff Schmuck."

"That's Kluk! With a 'K!'"

GFL Lutterbie to Aide: Heard anything from the Russians lately?

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: He sent you a book.

GFL Lutterbie to Aide: Really? What is it called?

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: "Great Victories by France". Actually it isn't really a book, more like a small flyer. It's a decal, actually.

(Ger to Board) Thanks, folks, it's been fun playing with you, but I have to go home. My mom's calling me. She's dead too, just like the Reich.

GFL Lutterbie to Aide: What was that cackling laugh I heard all night?

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: We now have Cooley in the dungeon, sir, and he's not afraid of us.

GFL Lutterbie: Well, by morning, that cackle was a wheeze. I don't think we are what he needs to be afraid of now.

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: I'll go change his water.

Spring 1905 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

AUSTRIA: OK, Russia, Turkey and Italy had been cooperating to keep Austria alive (and as Rick was noting, tying up a lot of units doing so). Now they cooperate to annihilate Steve's unit. So, Steve is out, or is he? Serbia is still unoccupied, with all three powers each with one unit adjacent to it. So, here's the rub, with the advantage still going to Russia, I suspect. Italy and Turkey could team up to ensure one of them gets Serbia, I suppose, but that's not what I expect. Melinda would be most

susceptible to being hit back by Don and is the eternally trusting player here. So, we're looking to see Don and Vince to work together to get Serbia if and when they stab Melinda. That MAY not happen for another game year or two though. Otherwise, expect all three to keep bouncing.

ENGLAND: I take note that England did NOT threaten Kiel (which he could have done) and even supported it with Holland. I continue to see

evidence that Don and Bill are working together, so that eventually Russia stabs one or both of Italy and Turkey. England will not really gain until that happens though, so the pressure on Don to stab now (and he only can stab Italy right away) is strong.

FRANCE: France is playing the turtle, waiting to see what happens this fall. This could pay off, but as it stands, he is about to lose Marseilles. Expect that not to stand if a stab happens this fall though. I think France wants Italy to be stabbed now too.

GERMANY: Faz almost surely is out though his disband holds a home center, so Don could move out of it. Faz signals in his press that he's glad to be gone. I'm sorry to lose him from the game as he had more than a share of the game's energy. What tends to happen when this occurs is that games move swiftly toward their ends. We'll see if that happens here.

ITALY: Melinda trusts a lot, and her trust could reach its limit now. If not, then France starts to come apart as Melinda comes into Burgundy, England marches on Brest, and Turkey and Italy surround Iberia. But will the others let this happen and let Italy get builds? We shall see, but I doubt it.

RUSSIA: Don still sits in the catbird's seat. It appears that he can stab Italy and then stab Turkey while working with England and walk to a win. Do the other players see this? Are they doing anything about it? Russia could wait, take Berlin this turn, and see what happens, but it looks like then Italy picks up a build, possibly Turkey, and that bodes poorly for the stab later. But if the others see that too, they can fight back against it. Yet, Mark Fassio is gone, does anyone care enough? We shall see.

TURKEY: Vince is spread all over the place. The Army in Smyrna can't be convoyed into a French attack. We still have to resolve who gets Serbia and Turkey has to care. If Turkey takes Serbia, then Vince is at risk for being Balkan over-extended. I think RT is the most stable for Vince, so he needs to go along with the stab on Melinda when it goes down. But he and Bill are the two tails wagging behind Don's Big Dog.

PRESS: Well, if we accept that Brooklyn is Don's tool, then Brooklyn is about to find the knife/sword right on cue. Can we be more hackneyed.... ;-) And then, a TARDIS so that Brooklyn can revisit the past if he wants to make a point at another time in the game. I think he would like to change the past and not quite make poor Mark Fassio quite so schizophrenic. Then Vince continues to allow himself to be led as we waits for David Hood to write to him, rather than initiating contact. Or at least so we gather from the press. Is anyone writing and

moving things here other than Don?? The rest of Vince's infield banter is mostly inconsequential. Mark Fassio continues to write brilliantly, if he is up "on the mountaintop" and entertain us, and I hope he continues, but I recognize this might be the end.

Well, let's see here.

Everybody is running away from Russia. Not much of a surprise here. We have some interesting questions to face.

Austria:
is dead. I'm guessing he asked somebody to be left alive at least as long as Faz was left alive, and that's why this is happening now.

England:
is not getting any more easy builds. I am not optimistic here. Because

France:
is working with Turkey and Italy. Or at least he's defending himself against England as a preference. Losing Marseilles and probably Spain, too. Though maybe the Easties will be satisfied with Marseilles and knowing that England has no line of defense he can hold.

Germany:
ist tot.

Italy:
Well, she sure is trusting, isn't she? For fun, I'm thinking of just how badly she could be stabbed by RT if they wanted to do so right now. Presuming she doesn't bother to defend herself, she could lose
Tunis
Rome
Naples
Vienna or Trieste
Munich
Marseilles (if France were in on it)
and be down to 2 SCs.

I would never play Italy (or any other power) showing this much trust. But in this case, I don't think she'll be stabbed right away. Because I think it'll be more interesting to Russia to go after England.

Russia:
I think he might move into the Baltic Sea and put another fleet in St. Pete (nc). If he were to do so, Sweden would fall right away and the beginning of the slow death would start for England. Why do I feel this way? In my experience, the last powers to join the big alliance are usually the next targets. But yeah, it isn't necessarily so.

Turkey:

if he doesn't stab Italy, what's his next dot? Serbia or Spain? Could be. He's stayed much longer with the IRT than I thought possible. I'm keen to see what happens next.

Press: I didn't read much this time.

SPRING 1905

by Richard Walkerdine

The Doctor looked at General U'til and smiled. "Believe me General," he said quietly, "I am convinced this is our best chance to save ourselves and the whole of the galaxy. Indeed, I failed to think of another plan."

The old soldier now looked even more concerned, but said nothing more. He knew The Doctor of old and realised that he was likely to be their best hope.

But then one of the trainees, the General recognised him as M'lef, raised a tentacle in the sign of Question to an Honoured Guest. U'til smiled, pleased that his charges had learned how to behave in polite society. A much needed requirement for a successful Fndili officer.

The Doctor saw him and smiled again. "Yes," he said, "you have a question?"

The young Fndili trainee looked a little embarrassed. This was the first time he had ever spoken to an alien. "Well," he said, a little hesitantly, "yes sir, I do. My speciality subject on this training mission is England and I have made a study of English legends. I have read of the sword Excalibur but the legends all claim that it can only be used by the English King. Does that mean this young boy Brooklyn is the King of England?" He looked around and waved two tentacles in a sign of apology. "I am sorry if my question was foolish sir," he added.

The Doctor shook his head. "No, it was not a foolish question," he replied. "In fact it was a very intelligent one." The young trainee looked much relieved and General U'til felt, and not for the first time, that these trainees were proving to be the best he had ever had. He made a mental note to add a few more lines to his report on young M'lef.

The Time Lord looked across at the old soldier. "General, shall I continue, or do you want to make the next time jump first? I realise you have a schedule to maintain."

"Ah, yes Doctor," replied the General, "a good point." He looked at his trainees. "We will time jump now and then conduct the next briefing before The Doctor continues his explanation, and I must confess I am intrigued to know the answer to the question from M'lef."

The young trainee felt rather pleased with himself.

The time jump was completed and the trainees assembled the next day for the briefing. The Doctor stood to one side as General U'til looked out at his young charges. "Gentlemen," he began, "we will hear from The Doctor after this briefing. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," replied the trainees.

"Well Gentlemen," began the General, "we can see that developments in Europe are moving ahead rapidly. The new English fleets are clearly headed towards France and, with Italy and Turkey in an apparently very close alliance, it would seem that France may soon follow the fate of Austria and Germany. But Russia is, as always, an enigma. It has clearly got an understanding with Turkey in the south but now seems to be preparing for an attack on England in the north. This will prove interesting. But what of Italy and Turkey? An apparently strong alliance between them with France as the obvious target, but those Turkish units are now in a perfect position for a double cross. Italy needs to be very, very careful. As usual, Gentlemen, your reports by midday ships time tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

General U'til beckoned to The Doctor, who took his place at the lectern. "The viewscreens are on throughout the ship Doctor," he said. "I am sure everyone on the 'Further Glory' will want to know what you have to say."

"Thank you General." The Time Lord looked at his audience and gave a quick smile. "This will be a lengthy explanation and I suspect there will be

several time jumps to interrupt it. But to begin with the question posed by trainee M'lef."

The young soldier looked nervously at his companions.

The Doctor continued. "I said it was a good question and it was. But the legends about Excalibur are somewhat simplified. It is not only the King who can wield it, it is actually anyone of royal blood, although the closer he is to kingship the better he can use it."

M'lef, now feeling much more confident, again raised a tentacle in the sign of Question to an Honoured Guest. The Doctor nodded to him and the General smiled. "So, sir," asked the young trainee, "are you saying this Brooklyn boy is of royal blood?"

The Doctor smiled. "I will get to that in due course. Brooklyn Beckham is the son of a famous sports star and an equally famous female singer. But I need to begin at the beginning."

Trainee M'lef bowed a sign of apology. "Of course sir, I am sorry."

The Doctor smiled again. "No, please feel free to interrupt whenever you wish, you are clearly a very bright lad." The young trainee looked delighted at the response but said nothing more. General U'til made another mental note about his report.

The Doctor gripped the lectern. "It was in Earth date 1835 that I detected some strange radiation while on

a routine survey of this part of the galaxy. It emanated from London in England and was quite inexplicable. I investigated further and discovered it was a power crystal from the 24th century - how it got there I don't know, possibly a minor defect which caused it to create a mini time warp and slip back. But it was a very powerful device and, if misused or defective, it could have destroyed half of London."

General U'til interrupted. "So I assume you retrieved it Doctor?"

The Doctor raised his hand. "It wasn't quite that simple General. The power crystal looks much like a jewel and was hanging around the neck of one of the ladies in waiting of the court of King William IV. It had presumably been given to her by one of her admirers - of which I discovered she had many. I decided the best way to retrieve it was by seduction."

The General interrupted again. "So you seduced her?"

The Time Lord laughed. "No General, I don't do that sort of thing. I took the Tardis to the early part of Earth's 20th century and recruited the services of a young and very handsome American actor who was struggling to make a success in the film industry. He had a reputation as something of a lady's man and was only too pleased to go along with my scheme. His name was Ronald Reagan."

Fall 1905

Austria: No Units.

England: A Belgium - Brest (*Fails*), F Denmark – Kiel, F English Channel Convoys A Belgium – Brest, A Holland - Belgium (*Bounce*), F Irish Sea Supports F English Channel, F North Atlantic Ocean Supports F Irish Sea, F North Sea - Belgium (*Bounce*), F Sweden Supports F Gulf of Bothnia - Baltic Sea (*Void*).

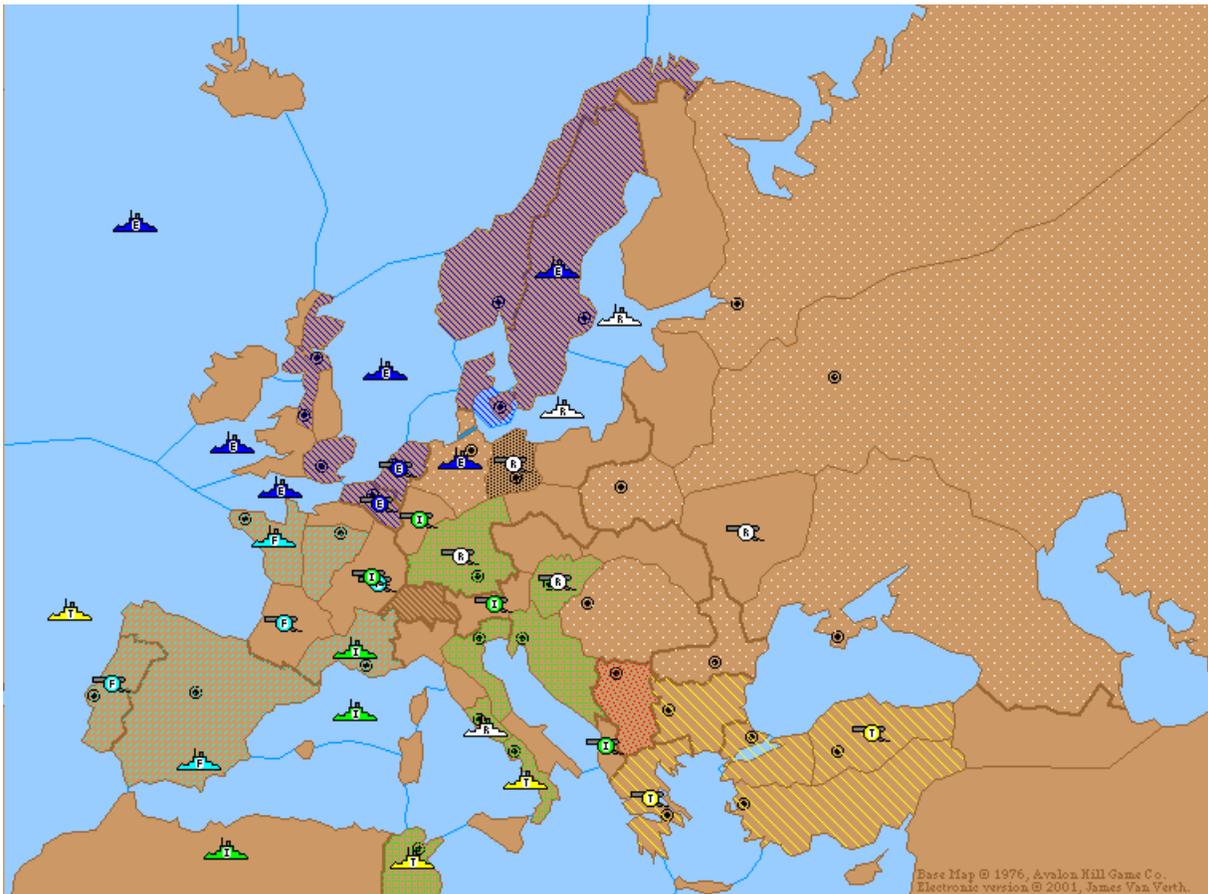
France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Burgundy - Marseilles (*Dislodged*, retreat to Picardy or Paris or OTB), A Gascony Supports F Spain(sc) (*Cut*), A Portugal Supports F Spain(sc), F Spain(sc) Supports A Burgundy - Marseilles.

Germany: No Units.

Italy: A Albania - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Gulf of Lyon Supports F Marseilles, F Marseilles Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc) (*Void*), A Munich – Burgundy, F North Africa - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Bounce*), A Ruhr Supports A Munich – Burgundy, A Tyrolia - Munich (*Fails*).

Russia: A Berlin Supports A Kiel – Munich, A Budapest – Vienna, F Gulf of Bothnia Supports F Livonia - Baltic Sea, A Kiel – Munich, F Livonia - Baltic Sea, A Moscow – Ukraine, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Rome.

Turkey: A Greece - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Ionian Sea – Naples, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Gascony (*Fails*), A Smyrna – Ankara, F Western Mediterranean - Tunis.



Now is the Winter (after the Autumn) of her discontent...

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Brooklyn's fears had now abated at the thought of taking a trip in the Tardis and he hummed some current pop song to himself as he followed Merlin across the cavern. The magician was much relieved, wanting to keep the eleven year old as relaxed as possible for as long as possible, for he knew there would be dangers ahead, and not least when they would try to seal the rift. But he kept those thoughts to himself.

Then he stopped, so suddenly that the young boy walked into him and nearly knocked him over. "Sorry Merlin," gasped Brooklyn as the old man staggered forward, "what is it?"

The old magician steadied himself and pointed with his staff. "There boy," he said quietly, "along the wall of the cavern. You see that cave entrance? In that cave we will find Excalibur."

"Oh wow," said Brooklyn, "and then I get to meet The Doctor?"

Merlin laughed. "Well, there is still the small matter of retrieving the sword, but both The Doctor and I are confident you can manage that. Come, let us conclude

the first part of this quest." He took Brooklyn's hand and the two companions walked towards the cave entrance.

As they neared the cave Brooklyn looked up at his friend. "Merlin," he asked, "why is it that I have to get the sword? Why can't you do it on your own?"

The magician smiled down at him and stopped for a moment. "The sword is magical Brooklyn, and is the ancient sword of the kings of England. It can only be retrieved by someone of royal blood, and that is not me."

The boy thought for a moment and then frowned. "But...but," he stammered, "I'm not royal, I know I've got famous parents and all that but I'm basically just a kid, so how come I can do it when you can't?"

Merlin tussled his hair and chuckled. "That I will explain later," he replied, "or perhaps The Doctor will. But for now I just ask you to trust me when I say that you can do something that I cannot."

"Oh crikey," muttered the eleven year old as they reached the cave entrance.

The old magician walked up to the cave entrance and started to step inside. Then there was a flash, a hissing sound, and he staggered back. "No, no," he cried, "not Morgana!"

T to R: More power to us.

T to E: You are still strong no matter what happens, but I am hoping to keep F MAO around as a bargaining chip.

Holland: The Irishman read the news...Il Duce is dead! "I'll drink to that! If only I could have gotten my hands around his neck first."

France to Eastern Guys: Just go around me, I certainly have no desire to stop you. Bill was silly to stab me and let you guys get over the stalemate line. So stop trying to kill me, you can do that any time, instead make sure you get all into Bill's stuff. And if my units can help just tell me what to do.

London: The Witches are close enough to shake hands or exchange blows.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The two men each groggily opened their eyes and looked around. They glared at each other for a moment then looked ahead as a figure stepped from the darkness. "Who are you?" one of the men asked.

"I'm the daughter of the Devil. The sister of the Snake. The Keeper of Souls down on Voodoo Lake."

The two men looked at each other again. One of them snorted. "Where's Voodoo Lake?"

The woman shrugged. "Beats the hell out of me. Probably down somewhere close to N'awlins." She put her hands on her hips. "Does it matter?"

"Guess not," the second man shrugged. "So what happens now?"

The woman scratched her jaw. "Not really sure. Except you're out of the game now. Sorta sorry about that."

Both men rolled their eyes.

"No, really. C'mon! I'm not as bloodthirsty as everybody makes me out to be! I'm a good person!" the women protested.

"Sure you are," one of the men grunted. "What are we supposed to do now?"

The woman shrugged. "Kick back. Relax. Wait for company to join you." She slowly smiled. "And company WILL be a-comin'." She waved a hand and a 50" plasma-screen television was turned on. "In the meantime enjoy the show."

Both men started at the screen in various degrees of horror. "What is THAT?" one of them finally demanded.

The woman paused just before disappearing in to the darkness. "Nascar's all-time 100 top races." She smiled at the screams.

T to It: If this works, you'll probably not send me a Christmas card, but I still love you like a sister.

T to F: You got into a bad spot, David, but we all appreciate to taking the spot anyway!

Aide to GFL Lutterbie: What the hell have you done?
GFL Lutterbie: I have no idea.

The dogs were rounding the far turn on their return to the straightaway. This was their penultimate lap and it was clear which dogs were tiring. In fact, the German Shepherd and the Austrian Pinscher were crossing back across the infield, which was a violation and cause for disqualification.

Bubba Joe George (3 first names being common in these parts) was laughing at the 2 wounded warriors. "They ain't as tough as they 'peared ta be. Bet that came as a surprise to them that the others didn't quit right off!"

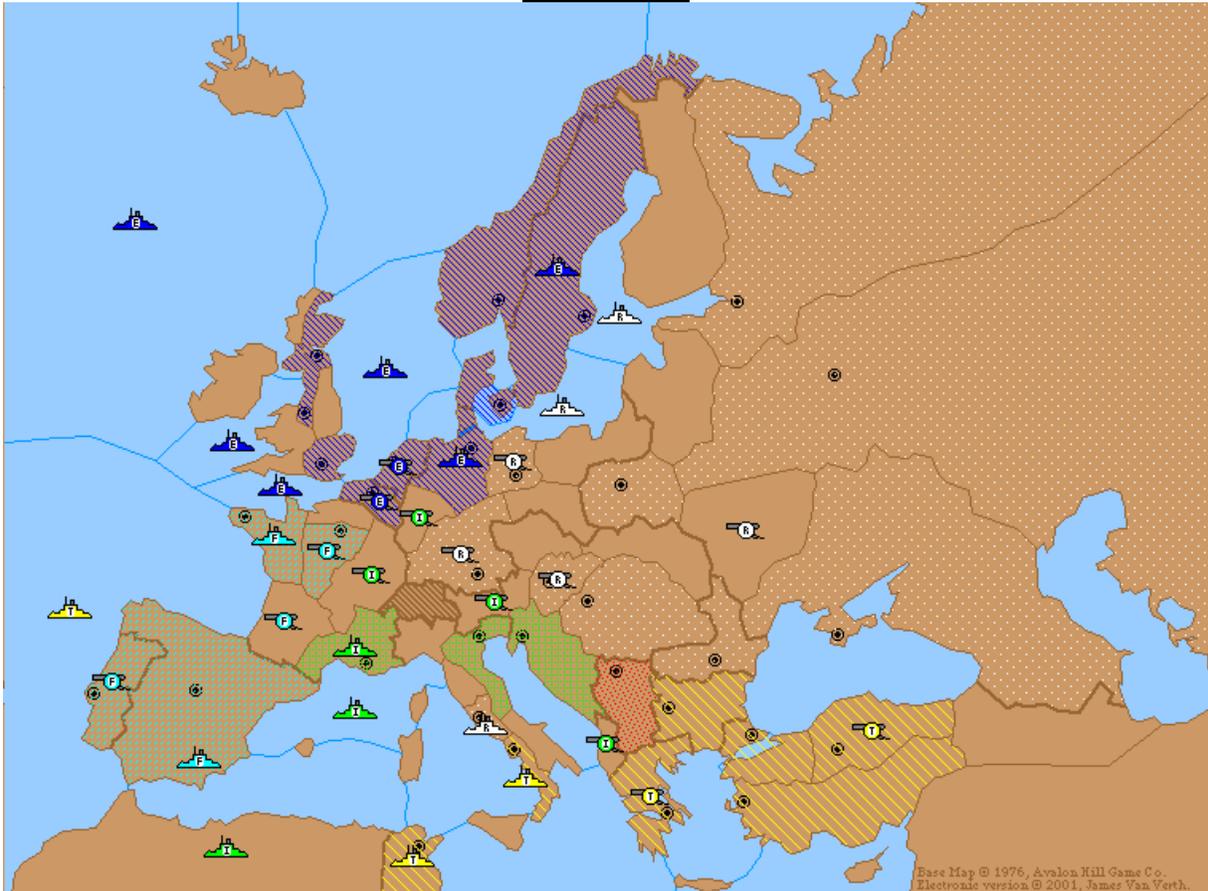
The malcontents' owners gave them sound cuffs behind their ears, then, as was their want, allowed the dogs to lap at their beers. After all, there are always more battles to be fought, and while it was appropriate to let the dogs know of your disappointment, it was a good idea to keep their spirits intact.

On to the race. The Russian Wolfhound had run in front of the Italian Greyhound and was allowing the Turkish Akbash to forge ahead. The English Setter was keeping pace, but appeared to be running its own race. The dogs thundered past the soon to be erected finish line, while the men all cheered and began betting anew.

"This is turning into something I had not foreseen", a grizzled veteran opined. I never saw the Setter and Akbash as a factor, but they seem to be coming on."

The sun continued to settle in the evening sky. For some, it appeared to be a portent.

Autumn 1905



The surprises stop, just for a moment ...

Austria: No Units.

England: Has A Belgium, F English Channel, A Holland, F Irish Sea, F Kiel, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, F Sweden.

France: Retreat A Burgundy - Paris..Has F Brest, A Gascony, A Paris, A Portugal, F Spain(sc).

Germany: No Units.

Italy: Has A Albania, A Burgundy, F Gulf of Lyon, F Marseilles, F North Africa, A Ruhr, A Tyrolia.

Russia: Has F Baltic Sea, A Berlin, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Munich, F Rome, A Ukraine, A Vienna.

Turkey: Has A Ankara, A Greece, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Naples, F Tunis.

Supply Center Chart

Austria: Serbia=1, Plays 1 Short

England: Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Kiel, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=9, Build 1

France: Brest, Paris, Portugal, Spain=4, Remove 1

Germany: None=0, OUT!

Italy: Marseilles, Trieste, Venice=3, Remove 4

Russia: Berlin, Budapest, Moscow, Munich, Rome, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Vienna, Warsaw=10, Build 3

Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Naples, Smyrna, Tunis=7, Build 2

Fall and Autumn 1905 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, the devastating stab of Italy I outlined actually happened! I thought England was a more likely target, but the stab of Italy does a lot more for Turkey, so I

understand why it happened this way.

Yes, this really was a devastating stab, set up

essentially because as we all discussed, Melinda allowed all those opposing units to line up next to her centers. Trust is an ephemeral thing. Positions and locations are hard.

Italy is down to three units and, along with France, is in terrible shape. Worse shape than France, really.

Yes, France could still survive along the stalemate line if England is trying to keep Turkey out of the Atlantic, but Melinda essentially has no chance.

Russia also moved to Baltic Sea, like I thought he might. It is hard to imagine that move being explained away. It would be one thing to have a deal letting England take Kiel, but having fleets in both inner sea spaces bordering Sweden? Don can take Sweden right away, now that the fleet in Kiel is out of position. But does he want to do that? Or should he stay friendly with England to hedge his bets vis-a-vis Turkey?

Hmm...he's got to go after one of the two fairly soon. Why waste time? Build F StP(nc), A War, A Mos and go after England.

Right, I think we are back into a Juggernaut. The Juggernaut shows great capability for success. It would be more interesting in some ways if Don attacked Vince, but I don't think he will. England has nowhere near the armies he needs to defend inland from the coast, so Don quickly pushes armies into France and given that Scandinavia also is vulnerable, there isn't much left that is safe for England.

If R/T want to roll west from this point, they can do so even without Italian help.

What can we say about Italy? If you put yourself in position to be stabbed for 6 dots at once (counting the bounce in Serbia), then there's a good chance it'll happen. I'm not as active as I used to be, but this is easily the most devastating stab I've seen in any game in (real-life) years. I literally cannot think of a stab this big - ever.

Yes, and this is a "Silver Age" commonality that we don't usually see so much these days. People had a tendency in those days to really know each other well (as this crowd does) and do some relatively outlandish alliances with high levels of trust, that then could be broken with high levels of stabs. I've seen things like this before, though maybe not anything quite THIS large.

Thoughts about builds:

England really needs another army. He's reached the limit of how far inland he can get with such a fleet-heavy group of forces. And he needs to do something more

creative than simply put up a wall of fleets, thinking that it would somehow convey invulnerability.

Right, I think this is especially true given that I don't think he holds any of the northern stalemate lines. He need to try to get some movement on the mainland and break Don and Vince so they start attacking each other.

The French disband is difficult (as disbands usually are). I suspect A Por is the least useful force. After all, he can tell Turkey that letting England into the MAO would constitute a loss of his advantage.

Agreed, I also expect to see A Por to go.

Italy is in terrible shape. Basically she gets to pick her poison, by which I mean where does she direct her wrath. With that in mind, her fleets are fairly useless. But she still has to remove at least one army.

I would not be surprised if Melinda keeps a lot of fleets, even all three of them, and tries to take them somewhere west, essentially giving up the homeland. This also is somewhat typical Silver Age play. If she does this, Don may have to attack Vince.

Russia should make a push for big growth now. Russia should not want to play for an endgame where he's next to a big England and a big Turkey. That's the last thing he should want. With that in mind, I would suggest that he go after the Scandinavian dots. Turkey isn't particularly vulnerable and Russia isn't particularly well-placed to go after him. Don's big problem is that he's in danger of being spread too thin.

This usually is the problem for Russia, he can make the big charge, fall short and anchor Vince and Bill in their alliance against him. Then Russia can implode back in. I still think Don can and will take the risk.

Turkey is nicely placed sine Don continues to work with him. Vince can drop an army in Con and take Serbia for himself. But then what? Mop up the boot for sure, but to go after France or Russia? Is he playing for a solo? If he wants to hold the MAO, he needs to add another fleet to the mix - Turkish fleets take forever to reach the front!

Unless he DOES convince Melinda to be his toady. Don't underestimate that possibility, but otherwise, I think Turkey gets stuck pretty quickly.

Right now we essentially have a 3-player game, but how things develop from here will depend largely on who manages to work best with France and/or Italy. The French position in particular is crucial.

Agreed, that's where we are. In the usual sense, the game is most fluid when there are odd numbers of

players. Four players tend to lock up in 2-2 on the stalemate line. With Three it can be 2-1 along the same lines, but that's not the situation here. The game can be fluid for awhile with stabs and back stabs. This is in some sense the BEST balance of power game to watch, I hope we go there.

I'm enjoying this game quite a lot at this point.

Here are some specific comments on where each country stands and about the Fall 1905 press.

Austria: Steve Cooley keeps Serbia with no chance to get a unit on the board. Just because it is fun, it would not shock me if they keep Cooley in the game for quite some time. We'll see if something else happens, but I wish Cooley were writing press if he's gonna be in here!

England: Bill Quinn needs to build an Army London and then see if he can push Turkey out of the Mid-Atlantic (likely unless Melinda toadies to Vince). As for Don, he is in some trouble. Where does he focus his forces? On Scandinavia? France/Germany? Or trying to do both? Part of this depends on Don's builds and if he does go F StP (NC). I think the middle of the board is the most important here.

France: David Hood probably will remove A Portugal, but then the Turkish fleet can retreat there if dislodged? Yes, but that will be in Spring, which can be reversed in Fall. David has to make peace with Bill and work together, especially if the Juggernaut is coming at them.

Germany: I think Mark Fassio is still here writing press, the Dogs on the Straightaway. A key there in identifying this is putting Steve and Mark on the same infield, while Steve technically is still in the game. Of course, at this point, Richard has revealed that he has been writing the Brooklyn story. Once he mentioned the TARDIS, I realized it couldn't have been Don Williams (as I am a huge Doctor Who fan, but Don really isn't). This is even worse that the inventive press is all from players not in the game, Richard Walkerdine and Mark Fassio.

Italy: Poor Hobby Holley (her nickname at that time). Melinda in the 1980s used to be playing in 20 or more games at the same time. She ran way too fast to pay close attention to any game, and thus tended to build strong trust relationships like she did here. If the game was overwhelmed by these alliances and she wasn't stabbed, fine. But if she was, there always was 10-20 other games to pay attention to. Melinda played like this a lot.

Russia: Don Williams is playing very aggressive these days, trying to hone his FTF play to try to win tournaments. I think it is great to watch him

elevating his game these last couple of years. This game fits in with efforts bringing him up into the expert ranks. I really do think that he will be challenged to solo, but he should go for it. The question is whether to do it blatantly and completely plainly, or more surreptitiously, more as an Edi Birsan waiting for people to hand him the solo. I expect the latter and then we'll see how BirSauron like he can be.

Turkey: Vince Lutterbie at least is writing infield banter press, but it comes across as way too lame without some counterpoint. I wish we'd get these people writing press!! Vince should try to convince Melinda to toady to him anyway. She might agree to do it. We'll see. Otherwise, Vince should try to get to the stalemate line in force. If Melinda toadies and keeps her fleets, Vince can afford to stab Don.

FALL (AUTUMN) 1905

by Richard Walkerdine

The old *General* looked a bit surprised. "And did this scheme succeed?" he asked.

The Doctor looked a bit embarrassed. "It did *General*, the lady was of easy virtue and Ronald, with his smooth southern drawl, had no difficulty at all. The power crystal was retrieved and London was again safe, but then we came up against a far more serious problem."

"More serious?" asked *General U'til*. "But what could that be?"

The Doctor looked even more embarrassed. "Well," he replied, "it was something I had not foreseen." He looked around and sighed. "The charms of the handsome young Ronald Reagan had also attracted the interest of the young Princess Victoria, the heir to the throne and she was still only sixteen! I am afraid the inevitable happened and she became pregnant. The King of course was furious and had Reagan thrown into the dungeons, demanding his execution."

General U'til laughed. "Well, similar things have been known to happen in the Fndili Empire on occasion."

"Yes *General*," replied the Time Lord, "but in nineteenth century Britain it would have caused a huge scandal. The government would have fallen and probably the Monarchy too. It had to be kept very

quiet, with no possibility of anyone discovering the truth."

The General smiled. "No doubt you came up with a plan Doctor?"

"Well, yes," he replied. "Of course the first priority was to save Ronald Reagan from execution. I persuaded the King to enter the Tardis and showed him some future Earth history. I showed him that, in the late twentieth century, Ronald Reagan would become the American president and, with assistance from the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, would bring about the end of what was known as the cold war and the downfall of the Soviet Union (a sort of empire of Russia and many other surrounding states). The King was no fool and well understood the might of Russia. With some reluctance he allowed me to take Reagan back to his own time to fulfil his destiny."

The General coughed and looked across at The Doctor. "Doctor," he said, "my apologies but we need to make the next time jump. Perhaps after the next briefing you will continue your tale?"

The Doctor smiled. "Of course General, with pleasure."

The time jump was completed and next day the trainees assembled for the briefing. The Doctor waited patiently as General U'til looked out at his audience. "Gentlemen," he began, "we will hear from The Doctor after this briefing. Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," replied the trainees.

"Well Gentlemen," continued the old soldier, "we see that England continues to make progress in the

North, albeit slowly, but now appears to be under threat from Russia in Scandinavia. That could well halt the attack on France."

"As for France, it is being hounded by both England and Italy - but is there yet hope? Italy itself seems to have even greater problems."

"For, as I have been expecting, Italy is now being attacked (and indeed invaded) by both Turkey and Russia and is in the most perilous position. I cannot see it continuing with a war with France when much of its own home territory has been taken."

"Turkey is clearly now the main Power in the Mediterranean, with of course help from Russia, and if the invasion of Italy is a success I foresee France (perhaps with English help?) as the next target."

"And Russia is also doing very well. Clearly a very strong alliance with Turkey in the South and now in a position to attack England in the North."

"In summary therefore I would say that Turkey and Russia are clearly in the strongest positions with England now less so. France is under huge pressure and Italy is in deep trouble. I wonder if the success of the Turkish/Russian alliance will force England and France back into each other's arms?"

"As usual Gentlemen, your views by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

The old General looked at The Doctor, who moved to take his place at the lectern. "The viewscreens are again on throughout the ship Doctor," he said. "I am sure we all want to know what happened about the pregnant Princess Victoria."

Winter 1905

Austria: No Units.

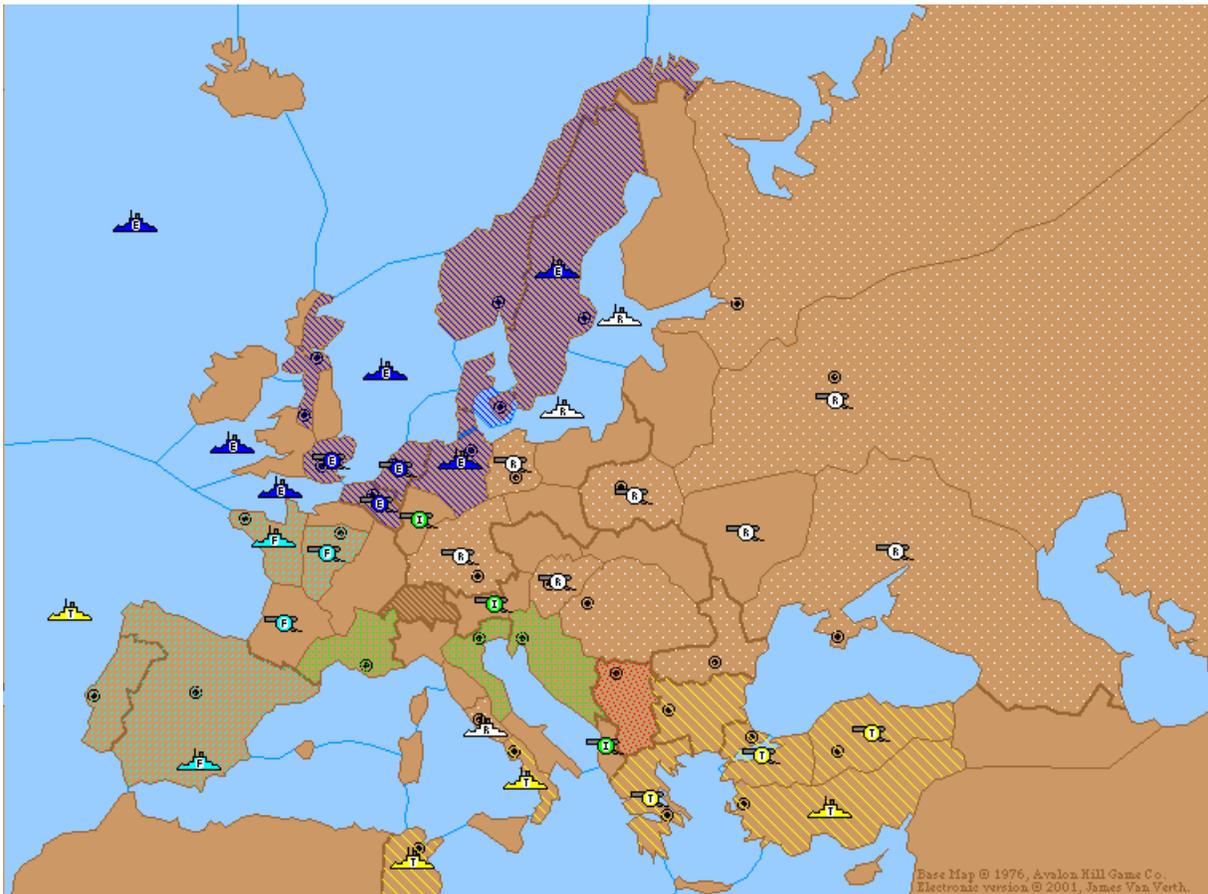
England: Build A London..Has A Belgium, F English Channel, A Holland, F Irish Sea, F Kiel, A London, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, F Sweden.

France: Remove A Portugal..Has F Brest, A Gascony, A Paris, F Spain(sc).

Italy: Remove F Marseilles, F Gulf of Lyon, F North Africa, A Burgundy..Has A Albania, A Ruhr, A Tyrolia.

Russia: Build A Warsaw, A Moscow, A Sevastopol..Has F Baltic Sea, A Berlin, F Gulf of Bothnia, A Moscow, A Munich, F Rome, A Sevastopol, A Ukraine, A Vienna, A Warsaw.

Turkey: Build A Constantinople, F Smyrna..Has A Ankara, A Constantinople, A Greece, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Naples, F Smyrna, F Tunis.



I can't *wait* to see where things go from here.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Brooklyn grabbed his old friend and held him tightly to stop him falling over. "Merlin," he cried, "what is it? What's wrong?"

The old magician leaned against the boy as he gasped for breath. Then he shook himself and moved away. "It is that evil sorceress," he whispered, "even now she tries to thwart me."

The eleven year old looked around nervously. "Wha...what do you mean?" he stammered.

"Oh don't worry boy," replied the old man, "we are in no danger. Morgana is an old enemy of mine but has long since departed this world. But alas her magic lives on."

Brooklyn relaxed a bit when he heard those words. "So what has she done Merlin?" he asked.

The old man scowled and the young boy took a step back. "She has put an enchantment on the cave entrance, targeted specifically at me. She would have guessed that it would be me accompanying the sword bearer when Excalibur was needed again." He shook his staff in fury. "Curse the evil witch!"

Brooklyn took another step back, feeling uneasy at seeing his new friend in such a state. "But Merlin," he asked, a little nervously, "can't you use one of your spells to get rid of hers?"

Merlin sighed, then looked at Brooklyn and smiled. "You are a bright lad, as I've said before. Yes I probably could break her spell in time, for although Morgana was a skilled sorceress there is no greater magician than Merlin."

But not too modest thought the boy, although he kept that thought to himself.

Then the magician sighed again. "But alas I am still weak from casting that spell of Making. It will be several days before I recover my strength." He struck his staff on the cavern floor in frustration. "Oh to have come so close!" he shouted.

But Brooklyn had been thinking. He tilted his head to one side and looked up at the old man. "But didn't you say Morgana's spell was just aimed at you?" he asked.

The old man sighed again. "I did, and it is. That evil woman was too clever by half."

The boy's eyes sparkled. "So I could go in, on my own, couldn't I?" he asked. "I mean you said it's got to be me who gets the sword anyway."

Merlin looked at him in surprise, then smiled and rested a hand on his shoulder. "You are a brave boy Brooklyn," he said quietly. "The Doctor and I have indeed chosen well." The youngster beamed with pride at the compliment.

But then the old magician frowned. "But I cannot allow it. There could be hidden dangers in that cave, more of Morgana's evil tricks, and I would not be there to protect you. If anything happened I would never forgive myself."

But Brooklyn was crafty as well as brave. While they had been talking he had moved around the old man and was now positioned between Merlin and the cave entrance. "Come on Merlin," he pleaded, not wanting to disobey his friend but determined to get the sword, "we've come all this way and we are so close. We can't give up now."

Merlin sighed again. "I cannot let you Brooklyn, it is far too dangerous."

The young boy looked at him with determination written all over his face. "Sorry Merlin," he said quietly, "but I've made up my mind. I'm going to get that sword." And as he said it he took a few steps back and entered the cave.

Merlin looked horrified but knew he could do nothing now that Brooklyn was inside the cave. "Oh Brooklyn," he murmured, "you brave and foolish boy. Very well, I can't stop you now, but please be very careful."

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "Good morning, Mr. Drucker!" the mountain woman cheerfully greeted the storekeeper. "Got any banana creme pie today?"

"Sure do," the storekeeper turned to the pie case. "Heard the news about the sheriff?"

"Can't say I have. What's he done now?"

"He resigned."

The woman slowly smiled. "The hell you say. That means the deputy's in charge?"

"No. I am."

Mr. Drucker was stunned to see the woman's face turn a ghostly white. Her hands clenched the wooden countertop for support. Slowly, almost in fear, she turned to face the uniformed man standing behind her.

"I'm Sheriff Buck. That's Buck with a 'B', you know."

"Sheriff Buck," the woman finally answered. "Thought your territory was down Trinity way."

The man easily shrugged, his blue eyes dancing with mirth. "Oh, I figure my territory's any place I want it to be." He leaned forward and lowered his voice. "There's a new sheriff in town, girl. Y'all best get used to it." He turned to the storekeeper. "You have a nice day, Mr. Drucker."

"You too, Sheriff." Mr. Drucker smiled as he put the banana creme pie on the countertop. "Nice fella, that new sheriff," he commented as the town's new sheriff gently closed the door behind him.

"If you really think that," the woman growled as she stalked across the store and opened the door. "Then I've just got two words for ya!" The woman angrily slammed the door shut behind her.

"Huh...wonder what the two words are?" Mr. Drucker shrugged and replaced the pie in the pie case.

Winter 1905 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Russia builds armies in Sev, War, and Mos. Left St. Pete empty. That would appear to indicate a desire to stay on good terms with England.

I agree, this was a chance to build the third northern fleet on the North Coast and Don passed it up. The way was clear for an attack on Scandinavia with nothing in Norway. But taking England down doesn't do what Don really needs to do in order to solo, and that is get England to side with him so he isn't left wide open to a Turkish stab while he's expediting in the far Atlantic seas.

Don's really spread thin right now and needs to hit somebody hard and quick and in a way that assures growth. I don't think he can do that by hitting Turkey. Also, I think that Melinda is going to be hostile from here.

I agree with this, I don't think he is PRESENTLY going to hit Turkey, but he is going to set up to be able to do so next. And Melinda, as I thought she would, kept the armies, so taking her out is going to be difficult for Don as well, but I think that is what he's going to focus on first.

England builds an army, which makes sense because another fleet doesn't help him at all. He's really not going to be able to make an invasion of France unless somebody helps him.

England needs to use his fleet advantages to get back into the Mid-Atlantic, which he should be able to do unless France and Turkey team up to stop him, and even then he can advance.

Turkey builds an army and a fleet. What next? A deal with England to split the French dots? Or does he make the move into the Balkans? Can he get Italy to work with him? I think Turkey has to move into the Balkans, whether by force or by charm. He absolutely has to keep Russia out of Serbia. With his builds, he can take Rome and get a fleet into the Black Sea while armies move in a northerly direction.

I'm not sure if the Austrian center can last too much longer, because Russia and Turkey are both going to move in that direction, both cannot let the other get Serbia and they have to take Trieste.

Or he could bring his fleets west. But if he does that, he's certainly not going to be able to invade England by force. Turkey needs Russia to hit England first. But if Russia isn't going to do that, he has to wonder.

Right, and Don clearly passed up that Fleet North Coast. It could be a deal, but is more likely going to be raising the level of tension.

The French position is still moderately viable, especially with David Hood in charge. But will Turkey block England for him?

I think that is a big key in what happens next.

Italy has kept her armies and can muck about in Germany, Austria, and/or the Balkans for the time being. She's got a lot of influence here.

And I expect her to use it if someone will work with her. Italy even could get back into the game at some level with no Germany/Austria. I don't expect Melinda to quit.

Press comments: We have more of the stories from people who aren't even in the game. This remains a bit of a disappointment for me. I was hoping to have someone in the game other than Faz writing some classic press. And Richard is weaving a great story, but he never was in the game. The Brooklyn story would have meant so much more coming from a player. In any case, Excalibur is about to be discovered in the spring, and I can't wait.

WINTER 1905

The Doctor smiled, although he still looked rather embarrassed. "Yes of course General," he replied. "Having saved Ronald Reagan I now had to make sure that the young Princess Victoria was taken far away from the court - as I said before, if her pregnancy had become known it would have brought down the government and probably the monarchy, and that would have been a disaster knowing what I did about future happenings in Europe."

The old general also smiled. "So what did you do Doctor?" he asked, knowing full well that any tale from The Doctor would be very worth the hearing.

The Doctor smiled back. "I took her to the late 20th Century on Earth, where medical facilities were far more advanced, and she gave birth to a daughter who she also named Victoria. A sweet child, very pretty."

General U'til smiled again, guessing that The Doctor was about to disclose the very heart of this tale. "And the little baby?" he asked. "The baby Victoria? What became of her?"

The Doctor looked at the old soldier and just shrugged. "Well, what could I do?" he replied. "The baby could not be returned to court, that would have been far too risky, and the young Princess Victoria understood that only too well. The baby had to be kept safe, but well away from the court of King William IV and, later, that of Queen Victoria."

The old soldier smiled, guessing that The Doctor had still more to add to his tale. "And so what did you do Doctor?" he asked.

The Time Lord grinned. "I gave the baby into the safe keeping of two very close friends of mine, Tony and Jackie Adams, who brought her up as their own daughter."

The General frowned. "I get the feeling there is still more to this tale Doctor," he muttered.

The Doctor just smiled and shrugged.

"But more of that later I think," said General U'til, "for we really must hold the next briefing."

The Doctor nodded and stepped to one side as the General took his place at the lectern. He looked out at the expectant faces. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response, a little louder than normal. The General paused for a moment as he realised the whole ship's company were enjoying the Time Lord's tale as much as he was.

"Gentlemen," he began, "events in Europe are indeed becoming most interesting. After the hugely effective rout of Italy by Turkey and Russia, and the continuing decline of France, we must ask ourselves three questions. Will England and France be forced into an alliance (perhaps also including the remnants of Italy) in the face of the continuing advance of their eastern foes? Will there now be conflict between Russia and England, probably beginning in Scandinavia? The raising of three new armies by Russia certainly suggests it is planning a land attack and the most likely target has to be England and the remaining few Italian units. And finally, will the

Turkish-Russian alliance continue to hold? I suspect it will, at least for a while, as it is so much in the interest of both countries. But Russia is now considerably more powerful than Turkey and the Turks need to make some major conquests to even the balance."

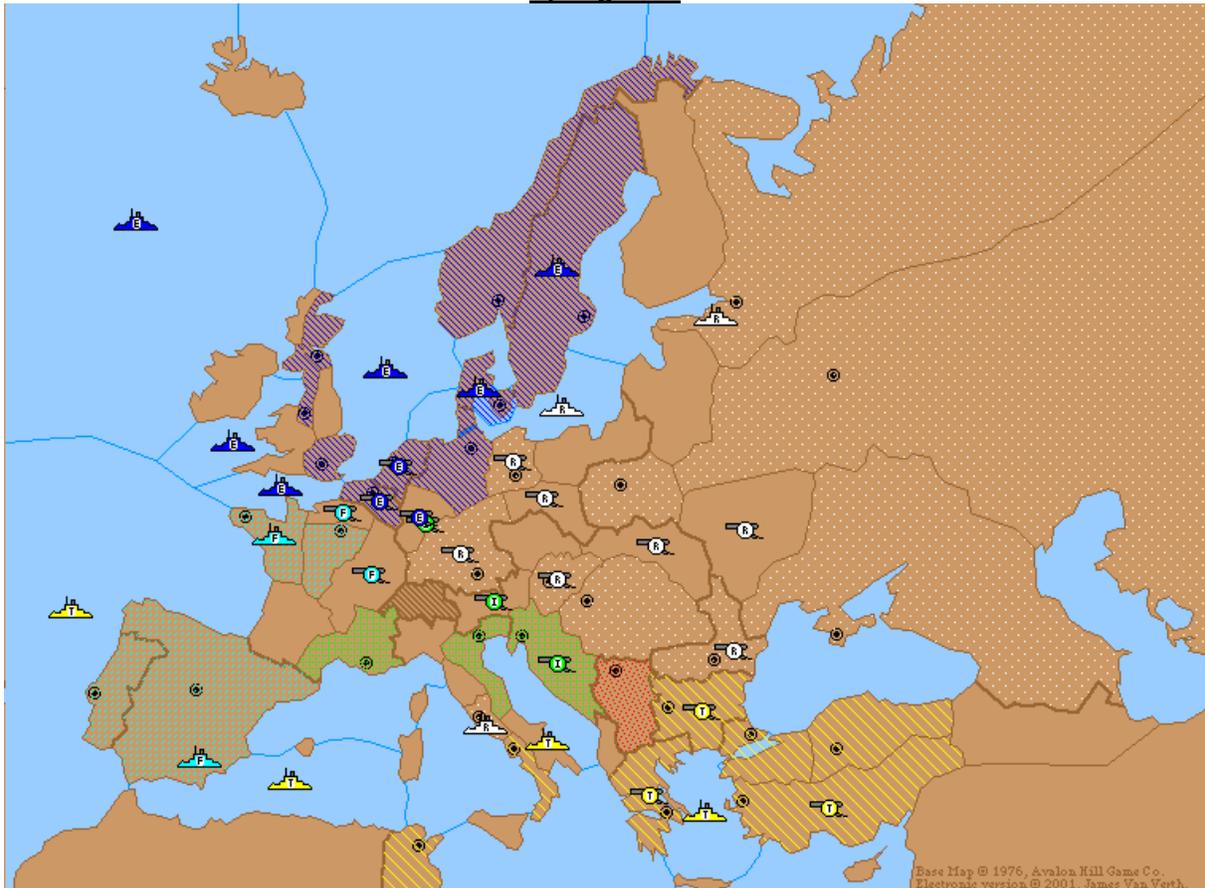
"I would predict a western alliance facing an eastern alliance, with the west doing all it can to drive a wedge between its two foes."

"As usual Gentlemen, your views by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

The old soldier looked across at The Doctor. "We will complete the next time jump tomorrow Doctor and then you can continue your tale. I admit that I, and I suspect the whole ship's company, is looking forward to it."

The Time Lord smiled and gave a little bow. "It will be my pleasure General," he replied.

Spring 1906



French fleets to the rescue?

Austria: No Units.

England: A Belgium – Ruhr, F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*), A Holland Supports A Belgium – Ruhr, F Irish Sea Supports F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Kiel – Denmark, A London – Belgium, F North Atlantic Ocean Supports F English Channel - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea Convoys A London – Belgium, F Sweden Supports F Kiel - Denmark (*Cut*).

France: F Brest Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Gascony – Burgundy, A Paris – Picardy, F Spain(sc) Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Italy: A Albania – Trieste, ~~A Ruhr – Munich~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Kiel or OTB), A Tyrolia Supports A Ruhr - Munich (*Cut*).

Russia: F Baltic Sea - Sweden (*Fails*), A Berlin Supports A Munich, F Gulf of Bothnia - St Petersburg(sc), A Moscow – Ukraine, A Munich Supports A Vienna - Tyrolia (*Cut*), F Rome - Piedmont (*Fails*), A Sevastopol – Rumania, A Ukraine – Galicia, A Vienna - Tyrolia (*Fails*), A Warsaw - Silesia.

Turkey: A Ankara – Smyrna, A Constantinople – Bulgaria, A Greece Hold, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Hold, F Naples – Apulia, F Smyrna - Aegean Sea, F Tunis - Western Mediterranean.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Brooklyn grinned as he walked deeper into the cave. “Sure Merlin,” replied the eleven year old, “I’ll be really careful, I promise.”

The old magician sighed and sank to the ground, still weak from his spell making but desperately worried for the safety of his young charge. “Curse that evil witch Morgana,” he muttered. “I hope she is burning in the fires of Hell.”

He looked into the cave and saw the young boy disappear around a rocky outcrop. “Oh Brooklyn,” he whispered.

Then there was shout. “Merlin, I’ve found it!”

Merlin gasped as he suddenly felt more hope and rose to his feet. “Take it quickly boy,” he shouted. “Bring it out as quick as you can.”

“But Merlin,” came the reply, “I can’t. It’s stuck in a great big rock!”



“No Brooklyn,” he shouted, “that doesn’t matter. It is always left that way. Just take a firm grip on the hilt and pull it out. You should be able to do it easily.”

“Well, okay,” replied the young boy, “if you think I can.” There was a short pause and Merlin held his breath. Then Brooklyn shouted again. “It came out Merlin, it came out real easy. I’ve got the sword!”

“Well done boy!” cried the old magician. “Now get out of the cave!”

“Okay Merlin,” called Brooklyn, “I’m coming right out.” But then there was silence. The young Brooklyn didn’t appear.

“Brooklyn,” called Merlin, “what’s happening?”

“Oh Merlin,” replied the boy in little more than a whisper. “There’s something in here, in between me and the cave entrance. It’s like a great big snake and it’s hissing at me. I can’t get out.”

The old magician groaned and sank to his knees. He held his head in his hands. “Morgana’s guardian serpent,” he muttered. “Oh Brooklyn, what have I done?”

Ita - GM: You can't wait to see what's next? I can't wait to see what's next!

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The woman sat on the front porch of her shack. Mournfully, she drank deeply from the bottle in her hand. The chipmunk edged closer and chattered at her.

"I don't want to hear your problems," the woman grunted. When the chipmunk chattered again, she snarled, "Does the word 'roadkill' mean anything to you?"

A deep-throated growl caused the woman to turn her head to the left. She studied the black wolf who stood at the corner of the shack.

"Guess things have been shot to hell."

The woman sighed. "Nobody asked you out here,

Buck."

"That's Sheriff Buck, to you."

The woman eyed the lawman who was leaning against the porch railing. "What do you want, SHERIFF Buck?"

The man shrugged. "What everybody wants. World Peace. A cure for the common cold. A decent affordable quarter-pounder."

"And you expect to find that here?"

"I've learned to expect everything and accept nothing."

Buck chuckled. "Or is that accept everything and expect nothing?"

The woman took another drink. "It's too damn early in the morning for philosophical debates."

"Ah, girl, I can see the wheels in that head of yours just spinnin' around." The sheriff turned and casually walked away. "C'mon, boy."

The black wolf immediately began following Buck.

The woman scowled. "Et tu, Big Guy? Et tu?" she shouted.

Spring 1906 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

So, what do we have here? Largely, we have an unresolved situation, where the further implications of various actions are unclear, and the main three players are holding back a bit.

Remember that this frequently is a strategy to avoid quickly moving up against the stalemate lines, but here it is a bit less clear even than that.

England has forced control of the Ruhr, but is being blocked by Turkey and France from taking the MAO. I'm going to presume that Italy retreats to Kiel.

Yes, that makes things interesting. For the record of the DW readers, I requested getting Summer to comment on with Spring, but was turned down. I'm going to comment as if Italy is in Kiel. If not, well, it will neither be the first nor the last time that I get egg on my face.

I do not quite understand why Russia has pulled his fleet back to St. Pete. Aside from securing the SCs he already owns, what is the plan here? He's forfeiting the advantage he had last year in Scandinavia. What's the next SC? Trieste? That's not much of a plan. He really needs to take steps now to avoid being caught between England and Turkey. If he isn't helping Turkey attack England, then he's begging to be stabbed.

Obviously, one approach here by Don is to avoid being labeled as the "board leader" to prevent precisely what he also is risking, England and Turkey ganging up on him. He could be trying to induce England and Turkey to get all their units on that side of the board, while he waits to pounce. Earlier in games I am VERY much in favor of Russian patience. Here, I'm not so sure. And England was SOOO weak in Scandinavia, the centers were there. We will see what the success is in the future on this.

Turkey can block England at the MAO while taking Serbia for himself. And if Italy works with him, he can do quite a number on Russia. He could move an army to Armenia, take Serbia, and put a fleet in the Black Sea next Spring.

Right, so either Don's pull back was intended to prevent this team-up, in which case it will be immediately clear if it works, or it could be a bit more complex. Either way, if Turkey and Italy do work closely together, that will be an accomplishment since I suspect Melinda really blames Vince for the stab. Yet, I'll bet Don was the orchestrator.

What's his alternative? He's not well positioned to go after the French dots. Blocking England is the better move there. Maybe if Russia were hitting England in the North, Turkey wouldn't have to worry about competition from England. To be frank, that's the direction I expected here.

It seems here like a clear later breaking Juggernaut play with RT driving into the Atlantic was the way this could have and should have gone. It still might.

Turkey could play more conservatively and wait for Italy to collapse before going after Russia, but I don't see any point in that. Army Tyrolia and Army Trieste are doing a good job putting pressure on Russia. If they are pulled, and if Russia advances to Trieste and Tyrolia himself, the tactical advantage becomes Russia's.

Precisely, the Fall should tell a lot here as a result.

As for France and Italy - Italy is dying, but France has an interesting position. He could even think about snagging Marseilles if he wants a build.

France always has an interesting game sitting on the line around Gibraltar. Way too many Diplomacy players do not know how to play this game. David Hood does. But will he engage his brain in the game enough to obtain the fame?

The tactical situation around the Low Countries is fascinating. But it probably won't amount to much. It would be cool if Russia supported Italy to keep control of Kiel. But I'm not thinking that will happen.

Not sure, I think Melinda can do all sorts of things here that are interesting, and I hope she does a few of them.

PRESS: Let's start with the press this time. First off, we have the Harry Potter in the world of Excalibur references pounding us in the head, if we have forgotten how the sword of Gryffindor was a lame Excalibur reference. Alas, Morgana has a serpent, what do you think our boy Harry, I mean Brooklyn, is going to do with that?? Sigh, and then where will the TARDIS take Brooklyn, once he finds the Doctor?? You just can't wait, can you?? Well, FINALLY Hobby Holley, the Royal Highness, gives us peons a bone, and it seems to follow Richard's press perfectly, or does it? But Fassio continues to entertain beautifully from his mountaintop. Who is Sheriff Buck? Ponder yonder lofty mountaintop dear readers. I will say more next time if this chain continues.

Now the countries.

Austria: Will he stay "in the game"? No, I don't think so, Vince gets the Serbian center over which so much was battled.

England: Bill gets a reprieve, what will he do with it? There is a good shot at regaining the Mid-Atlantic. But will he keep Kiel? Only if the good will of the Russian Bear continues to play in his favor. I don't know, could he have a really good arrangement with Don? Can he work with the French? Get into the Mediterranean? It seems so unlikely.

France: There is no excuse for David not to be a real player in this game. A key question is do you walk back into Marseilles and take your home center back? I say yes, unless something interesting in your favor is promoted through Italy's play somewhere else. OK, so what do you want as France? I think you want war between RT and so Italy has to be facilitating that, otherwise you take Marseilles.

Germany: I love the press, don't stop believing!!!

Italy: I think Italy should be working with Turkey, but will she?

Russia: Oh, stop it, Don, we know you want to solo this thing, just get on with it. ;-)

Turkey: Vince continues to be the chameleon in this game, seemingly doing much better than he has a right to expect. Remember that's one way to solo. Why not start now, Don is vulnerable.

SPRING 1906

The next time jump was completed and General U'til and the rest of the company and crew of the 'Further Glory' waited expectantly for The Doctor to continue his tale.

"So Doctor," began the General, "the baby daughter of Princess Victoria was entrusted to your friends the Adams?"

"She was General," replied the Time Lord. "Tony and Jackie brought her up as their own daughter, calling her Victoria Adams. As she grew older she became interested in singing and eventually joined an all girl group called 'The Spice Girls' - in fact Victoria had the nickname 'Posh Spice'. She fell in love with David Beckham, a famous sports star, and their first child was named Brooklyn."

As he spoke those words trainee M'lef jumped up, bending an upper tentacle once again in the sign of Question to an Honoured Guest.

The Time Lord smiled. "Yes trainee M'lef," he said quietly. "You have another question?"

M'lef looked a little embarrassed. "W...well," he stammered, "not so much a question, sir, but more of an observation,"

The Doctor smiled again, realizing that M'lef was indeed a very bright young Fndili trainee. "Please proceed with your observation M'lef," he replied.

The young trainee looked around a bit nervously. Then he took a deep breath. "So from what you have told us Doctor, this young boy Brooklyn is actually the grandson of Queen Victoria?"

The Doctor laughed. "Well done M'lef, you are absolutely right." The young trainee looked delighted

when he heard the Time Lord's words, and even more so when many of his colleagues waved two tentacles in the sign of a job well done. "Yes," The Doctor continued, "Brooklyn Beckham is the grandson of Queen Victoria and therefore fully capable of wielding the sword Excalibur. That is why my old friend Merlin has taken him to find it."

General U'til interrupted, having already made another mental note to add yet more praise in his final report on M'lef. "Doctor," he said, "your adventures do indeed have many twists and turns, but this must be the strangest of all."

The Time Lord smiled. "Well," he said, "perhaps one of the strangest. But I am sorry General, I have delayed you again and you need to conduct the next briefing. My apologies."

The old soldier smiled as The Doctor stepped away from the lectern. "No apologies are needed my old friend." He looked out at his trainees. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response, very nearly as loud as the previous briefing.

"Gentlemen," he began, "the situation in Europe is becoming ever more interesting. It is now England's turn to appear isolated, attacking France in the west and facing the Russian hordes in the east - not a strong position by any means."

"And as for France, there has clearly been much diplomatic activity with Turkey and support has been provided - but for how long? The Turks are now in a position to cause devastation to France if they so wish."

"Italy appears doomed and can be expected to follow in the path of Austria and Germany. The Russian forces outnumber it by two to one and, even if English assistance is forthcoming, its eventual demise seems inevitable."

"And so to Turkey. The alliance with Russia is certainly holding and the assistance given to France against England is interesting. But as I said just now, Turkey is in a position to wreak havoc among the French forces and the temptation must be very strong."

"Finally we have Russia. Still in a very strong alliance with Turkey, mopping up the last of Italy and with England clearly in its sights. But why did the fleet move to St Petersburg? There was no need for it and it reduces the defences around Scandinavia. Was it an error, or is it perhaps the first signs of a pact with England and a future attack on Turkey?"

"I believe this conflict has a few more surprises in store for us Gentlemen. As usual, I require your analyses by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

The old soldier turned and left the meeting hall.

Summer 1906

Austria: No Units.

England: Has A Belgium, F Denmark, F English Channel, A Holland, F Irish Sea, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea, A Ruhr, F Sweden.

France: Has F Brest, A Burgundy, A Picardy, F Spain(sc).

Italy: Retreat A Ruhr - Kiel. Has A Kiel, A Trieste, A Tyrolia.

Russia: Has F Baltic Sea, A Berlin, A Galicia, A Munich, F Rome, A Rumania, A Silesia, F St Petersburg(sc), A Ukraine, A Vienna.

Turkey: Has F Aegean Sea, F Apulia, A Bulgaria, A Greece, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Smyrna, F Western Mediterranean.

Fall 1906

Austria: No Units.

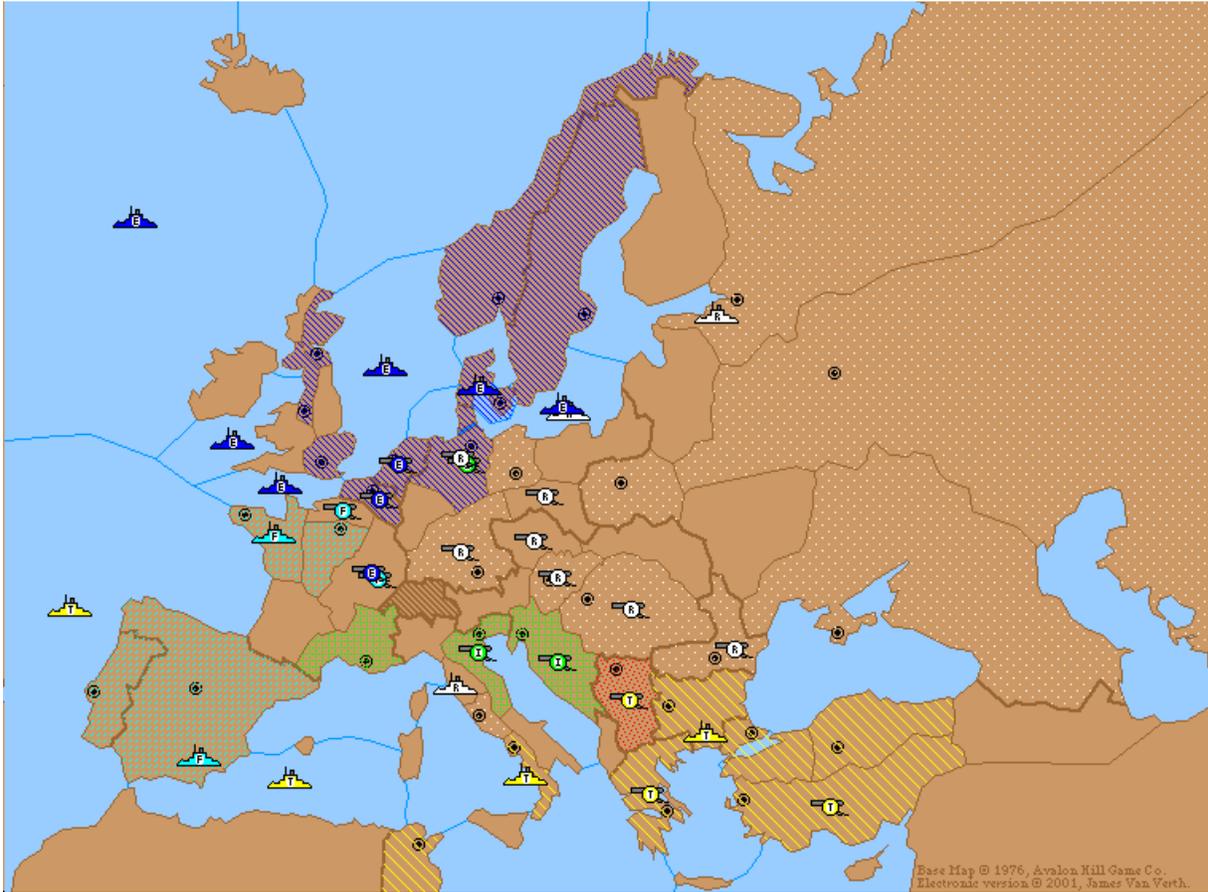
England: A Belgium Supports A Ruhr - Burgundy, F Denmark Supports F Sweden - Baltic Sea, F English Channel Supports F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Cut*), A Holland Supports A Berlin - Kiel, F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean (*Fails*), F North Atlantic Ocean Supports F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea Supports A Belgium, A Ruhr - Burgundy, F Sweden - Baltic Sea.

France: F Brest - English Channel (*Fails*), ~~A Burgundy - Belgium~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Paris or Gascony or Marseilles or OTB), A Picardy Supports A Burgundy - Belgium, F Spain(sc) Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Italy: ~~A Kiel Hold~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ruhr or OTB), A Trieste Supports A Tyrolia - Venice, A Tyrolia - Venice.

Russia: ~~F Baltic Sea Supports A Berlin - Kiel~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Gulf of Bothnia or Berlin or Prussia or Livonia or

OTB), A Berlin – Kiel, A Galicia – Bohemia, A Munich Supports A Berlin – Kiel, F Rome – Tuscany, A Rumania – Budapest, A Silesia Supports A Munich, F St Petersburg(sc) Supports F Baltic Sea (*Fails*), A Ukraine – Rumania, A Vienna Supports A Rumania - Budapest.
Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Bulgaria(sc), F Apulia – Naples, A Bulgaria – Serbia, A Greece Supports A Bulgaria – Serbia, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Hold, A Smyrna Hold, F Western Mediterranean Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean.



Austria Says Goodbye to Hollywood

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Merlin was on his knees, so fearful of what fate awaited young Brooklyn when Morgana's serpent attacked, and fearing the very worst.

He heard the hissing of the vile beast, the last evil creation of that dreadful and totally wicked old witch. He pressed his hands to his mouth, shaking with remorse as tears trickled down his face. "Oh Brooklyn," he whispered, "I will never forgive myself for this. Never!"

There was more hissing and then a shout from Brooklyn. "No, no," the young boy cried, "get back! Get away from me!"

The boy screamed and the hissing grew louder. There was the sound of some sort of fighting and a loud crash. The old magician threw himself on the rocky floor, beating his fists on the hard stone in frustration and self loathing.

Then he heard Brooklyn cry out again. "Yeah, take that you scum! And another, and another. Yeah!"

Merlin got to his knees. What was happening in there? "S...speak to me boy," he stammered. "What is going on in there?"

And then Brooklyn appeared at the cave entrance, looking rather frightened and with tears trickling down his face. "I killed it Merlin," he whispered, "I chopped it's head off with the sword." He waved Excalibur in front of him, the blade dripping with green slime from the serpent.

The eleven year old boy rushed out of the cave and threw himself into Merlin's arms, sobbing as he did so. "Oh Merlin," he cried, "it was horrible. And I've never killed anything before. I was so frightened."

The old magician sobbed as well and held the young boy tightly to his chest. "Oh Brooklyn, I was so frightened too and so terrified of what might happen to you." Then he took a deep breath, brushed away some tears and regained some composure. He held Brooklyn at arms length and looked into his eyes. "But what did you do?"

The boy was also regaining some composure now the memory of the encounter was fading slightly. He also brushed away some tears and then looked at Merlin with a glint in his eyes. "Well," he replied, "my dad bought me a toy light sabre – you know, from Star Wars. I play with it a lot. So I used the sword the same way – and I chopped its head off!" He shuddered. "It was pretty messy though."

Merlin just held him by the shoulders and gazed deep into his eyes. "Brooklyn," he said quietly, "we have indeed chosen our sword bearer wisely. That was more than I could ever have expected. Now I must contact The Doctor and tell him the sword has been retrieved."

The young Brooklyn grinned at the praise, the horrid memories of the encounter fading rapidly (as is the way with the young). Then he laughed and waved Excalibur above his head. "Yeah," he shouted, "let's get to the Tardis!"

Merlin laughed, smiled at the young boy and patted his shoulder. "That we will boy, that we will." He pressed his communicator....

After a few seconds he began to speak. "Yes Doctor, Brooklyn has done it, though not without some difficulty but I will explain that later. The sword is retrieved and we are both unharmed. I suggest you come as soon as you can."



He closed the communicator and stared intently and the eleven year old boy. "He knows our time coordinates so he should be here in seconds. Your destiny awaits you young man."

Brooklyn Beckham took a deep breath and stared back at the old magician. "I know Merlin," he replied, "and I'm ready for it."

GFL Lutterbie to Aide: What time is it?
Aide to GFL Lutterbie: I'm afraid it's later than you think.

[ЛОРД-МЭР](#) Vldimir Kikintheazz was having dinner with his latest foreign girlfriend. He had grown wealthy on other men's money, and was now getting relaxation and a lot of horizontal exercise on some of these same men's wives. Tonight, he had a fair haired beauty from Norway, by way of the British Isles. She was sipping her wine and assessing him with her eyes over the brim of her long stemmed crystal wine glass as he awaited her answer.

"Why should I sleep with you, Vlado, when you are still talking to that Italian hussy? I care not that you threw her over for me, but you are still seeing her, and writing notes.

I don't think you are serious, dahling."

"I am serious, my dear," Vlado replied silkily, while wetting his pencil thin moustache with the tip of a forefinger. "I can only deal with one female at a time, and I might add, that it is somewhat difficult to keep up with even one; when that one is as demanding as you are."

"I am not demanding, dear Vladimir, I am only stating that I want your full attention. If I am to meet you halfway, then you must stop writing to your Italian ex."

"I will do so immediately! Anything, anything at all for you, my dear." Vladimir tried to look her in the eyes, while keeping an eye on his watch. There was a raven haired ravisher from Constantinople in town. He had not seen her for several weeks, and was beginning to wonder if she might not be more worthy of his advances. She had shown no reluctance to play his silly games, but had yet to do the dirty deed with him. She had been instrumental in him ridding himself of Maria by distracting her long enough for Vlado to empty her bank account and seize most of her properties. Maria was now being wooed by a Frenchman, no less; and Vlado was sure he could win her back, if all failed with the two floozies he was stringing along.

No! He MUST get his Nordic swan out of the house quickly. Alas, he must wait to consummate their relationship, but she must never know of the dark haired girl's presence. It was bad enough that he was still stringing Maria along, but should his two pet projects ever meet, and discover that he was seeing both, well... he could only barely hope to survive with his beloved manhood intact.

"My dear, there are pressing issues in my humble town to attend to, and I must do so forthwith. It is with great sadness that I must escort you to your car. Perhaps we can continue our 'discussion' in the near future?"

"Whatever you say, Vlado, dear." She was not overly hopeful of getting anything out of Vladimir in any case. Yes, she was an opportunist herself, and she had been searching for a lever to hoist him on for some time. He was far too oily and paranoid to allow anyone too close.

"Vlado, darling," she breathed into his ear, as she pulled her scarf from her neck, and played with his hair. "I will count the minutes until you reach me again."

"As will I, as will I." the relieved politician sighed. Now, to get her out the door. He bestowed the briefest of

kisses on her neck, then glided her out the door, only to come face to face with his bewitching Turkish wench.

"BaBa!" the flaxen haired beauty cried, upon seeing her dark counterpart.

"Sissy!" the other replied.

The two embraced.

The blonde turned to Vlado and smiled, none too prettily, "This is my little sister! I knew she was coming to town, but had no idea she was visiting you. Is she the business you needed to attend to?"

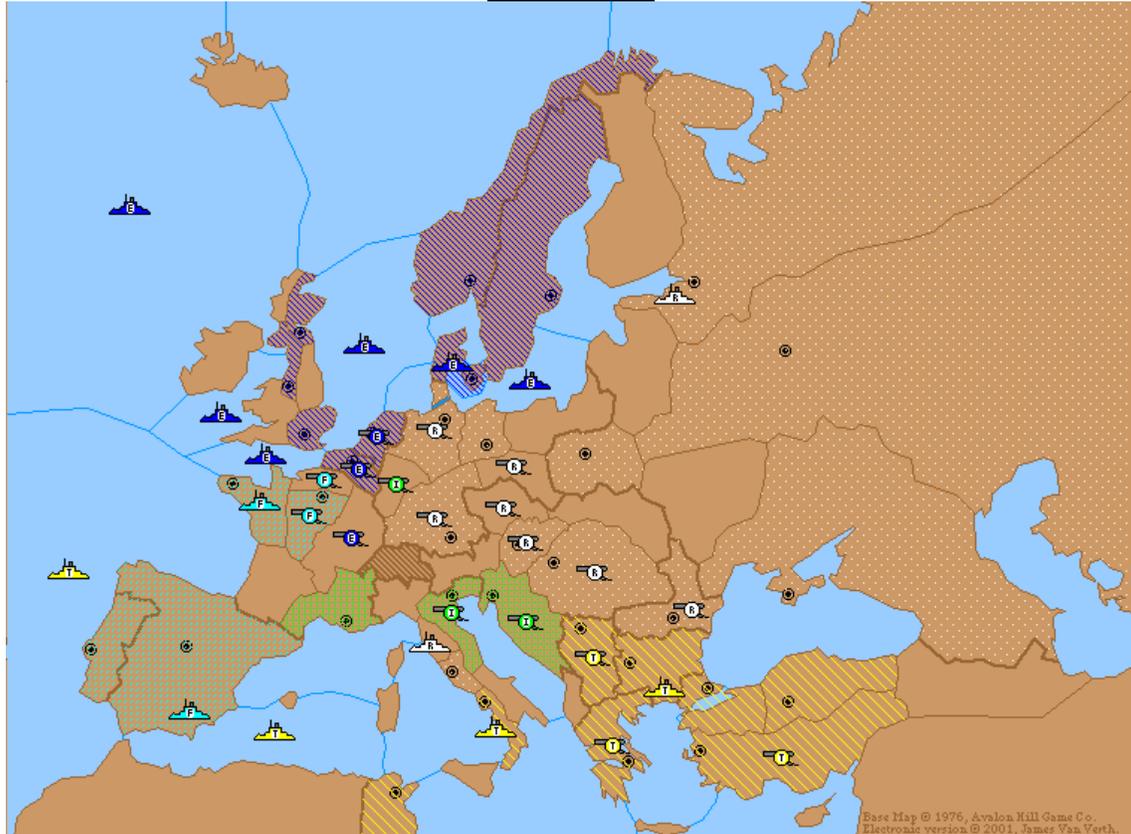
"No madame, no. It is just a coincidence. A coincidence, that's all it is."

Vlado backed into his house, already planning several retreats and excuses. However, as he closed the door, he heard the darker haired woman exclaim, "Sissy! I feel we have much to tell each other! Perhaps it is time we spoke of family, friends and fortune."

Vladimir felt the sweat on his moustache, and poured a glass of red, to calm his nerves.

Yes, there was much to do. But...where to begin?

Autumn 1906



Note to self: Say something clever next time.

Austria: No Units.

England: Has F Baltic Sea, A Belgium, A Burgundy, F Denmark, F English Channel, A Holland, F Irish Sea, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea.

France: Retreat A Burgundy - Paris..Has F Brest, A Paris, A Picardy, F Spain(sc).

Italy: Retreat A Kiel - Ruhr..Has A Ruhr, A Trieste, A Venice.

Russia: Retreat F Baltic Sea – OTB..Has A Bohemia, A Budapest, A Kiel, A Munich, A Rumania, A Silesia, F St Petersburg(sc), F Tuscany, A Vienna.

Turkey: Has F Bulgaria(sc), A Greece, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Naples, A Serbia, A Smyrna, F Western Mediterranean.

Supply Center Chart

Austria: None=0, OUT!

England: Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=8, Remove 1

France: Brest, Paris, Portugal, Spain=4, Even

Italy: Marseilles, Trieste, Venice=3, Even

Russia: Berlin, Budapest, Kiel, Moscow, Munich, Rome, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Vienna, Warsaw=11, Build 2

Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Naples, Serbia, Smyrna, Tunis=8, Build 1

PRESS

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The cool evening breeze blew the woman's long hair to and fro as she stood watching the alcoholic chipmunk guzzle the liquid from the still.

"That's illegal in SO many ways."

The woman barely smiled. "He ain't gonna be driving, Sheriff. He'll just belch a lot then fall over in a drunken stupor and sleep it off."

"And the still?"

The woman finally turned to stare at the lawman who stood several feet behind her. "Does it really matter now?" she mocked.

"You got a strange attitude for somebody in your position." Sheriff Buck rubbed his chin. He suddenly

grinned when then chipmunk belched then rolled onto his side.

"Maybe my position ain't what you think it is," the woman calmly replied.

"I can make your position whatever you want it to be." The Sheriff's blue eyes darkened in the evening light.

The woman widely smiled. "Before I dance with the Devil, He's got to play a tune I wanna hear." She glanced back towards the chipmunk then chuckled as she walked back to her shack.

"Hmmm...she acts like she knows something I don't." The Sheriff turned to look at the chipmunk. "Does she?"

The chipmunk slowly raised his head and belched.

Summer/Fall/Autumn 1906 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

PRESS: Let's start by commenting on the press first this time. Doug comments that the players suck ONLY with the Summer press that was a complete no-show, but as a Silver Age (late 1970's through the explosion of the Internet hobby around 1990-1992) press game the press basically sucks throughout. The quality of what's here actually is fine, sometimes even inspired. But a real press game in the Silver Age would have MULTIPLE press postings by every player, plus guest press of the type that Richard Walkerdine has been presenting. That's not what we have here. Nevertheless, some fun stuff this time around.

Let's start with the new item with the heading in Russian. I am not going to translate it right now, the first word everyone should be able to get. The second one linked in about how this press item is part of the Russian/English relationship. It might finally be the estimable Don Williams finally writing something substantive for our press reading enjoyment. Is his moustache really sweating? Anyway, good classic press, no matter who is writing it. Vince chimes in before that with some infield banter that would be decent if anyone else were doing it. I like infield banter and it was something of a specialty of mine. It can keep the press connected and moving. So, has Turkey ran out of time? Perhaps. He at least passed on quite a significant opportunity to pounce on Russia. Then, Fall has the next installation of Brooklyn's story. The lame Harry Potter homage was a while coming

and then we had it and it's gone. The big revelation this time is what Brooklyn's last name is.... but NO one really cares about Beckham, least of all anyone in California. Well, we'll see what comes of that. And then finally, in the Autumn we have the next installment of what we presume is Mark Fassio. I love this series, what IS the woman (and the chipmunk) hiding from Sheriff Buck? I have an idea, but I'll not tell.

Yeah, well, we have another player backing away from a good stabbing opportunity. In this case, it's Turkey.

Yeah, of course Turkey and Russia are talking, as they also seem to be to Melinda. Melinda provided a support she likely didn't need to a move that just pushed her back into Venice and Trieste. It is unclear what she does there. But Turkey and Russia didn't want her to do anything else, seemingly.

Russia picks up Kiel and disbands a fleet up North. If he doesn't go after Turkey at this point, I'll be surprised.

Turkey has made this a bit easier to do by arraying his forces in the worst possible position.

So, Turkey passed up the more offensive stance against Russia, now will Russia do the same? If I were betting, I would bet yes, but we shall see. Turkey is relatively well defended, so it isn't clear that the opportunity for Russia is THAT good.

I suspect England will remove a (useless) Northern fleet.

He can retake Kiel whenever he wants.

Right, so it is unclear where Russia advances without attacking Turkey.

David has retreated to Paris. I guess he thinks having an Italian army in Ruhr is more useful than having a French army in Burgundy.

Right, but if Melinda doesn't do anything, it is unclear why they would want her to stay around. And indeed, they may not.

Apparently Turkey didn't think that the Russian misorder was legit. (I didn't). So he defended Naples instead of going for Venice. (Not that he could have taken Venice.)

Well, perhaps, it also is possible that the RT is still jointly maneuvering fleets (next to GOL and Tyh Sea).

I don't like players with forces in useless places. But Turkey has A Gre and F Bul(sc). I suspect that he thinks a stab of Russia would not have gotten him enough. But if he doesn't stab Russia, what's the next dot? Rome? In a non-stab transfer? Seems too care-bearish.

Yes, everyone is being a bit carebearish at the moment. Turkey and Russia could split the rest of the Italian centers perhaps.

I hope somebody tries to solo, but I'm not seeing it. Russia has backed off a good stab, and now Turkey has done the same. Worse, Russia is intentionally hamstringing himself in the North to stay on good terms with England. Why oh why is this a good idea?

Yeah, I don't get it either, unless we're seeing what happens very slowly.

England cannot solo because he cannot even take the MAO. England stuck at the "Hey, I've got an invulnerable set of 8-10 SCs but cannot possibly win" phase.

I'm bumming.

I'm probably bumming slightly less, but I'd feel much happier if the press flurries increased. Here are my thoughts on where everyone is going into the builds.

Austria: Finally really out.

England: Possibly removes F North Sea (if trying to take Kiel) or the carebearish removal is F Baltic, not even threatening Berlin any more. We'll get a sense of how much REAL trust there is between Bill and Don with this one.

France: David stays on the line, stays viable, but it is unclear what he does, who he moves with next. There is a set of fiercely anti-English orders right now that would be devastating, but unlikely.

Italy: Come on, Melinda, stand up and fight a bit!

Russia: Don gets two builds and I wouldn't be shocked by A War and a waive! Does Don really think he can just pound forward on the land? Has no chance of succeeding.

Turkey: The argument against Russia waiving is that Turkey has a build too, and stayed in Smyrna, the logical fleet location. What will Vince build? Yes, it could be a fleet!

FALL 1906 by Richard Walkerdine - Another time jump was completed and the 'Further Glory' now orbited Earth in the second half of 1906. The next briefing was due in a few minutes and General U'til and The Doctor were in the General's cabin, reminiscing about past adventures.

"But are the Daleks really gone forever?" asked the General. "It seems to me they have a nasty habit of cropping up when you least expect them."

The Doctor smiled. "Yes General," he replied, "they do indeed. Creatures with that much power can often manage to escape even the most carefully laid trap. I fear we might yet encounter them again." Then he stood up. "But I have delayed you General and I apologise. I realise it is time for your next briefing."

The old soldier laughed. "Never apologise Doctor, I find your tales fascinating. But you are correct, it is time for the briefing." He also rose and made his way to the meeting hall.

General U'til entered the meeting hall and looked out at the expectant faces of the young trainees. He realised that the attack by the alien ship, and the arrival of The Doctor, had added much to the experience of his young charges and for that he was grateful. But he was still very concerned about how this would end as he knew the threat was very great indeed. But that thought he kept to himself. "Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well Gentlemen," began the General, "the situation in Europe is indeed getting most interesting. There looks to be some sort of agreement between England and Russia around Scandinavia and I cannot see how that can bode well for Turkey. At the same time we have England attacking France and Turkey coming to apparently help the French. As I said at the last briefing Turkey has a huge advantage over France should they wish to use it, but the Russian moves suggest to me that the alliance with Turkey may soon be over. When new units are raised the position should become much clearer."

"As usual, I require your analyses by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

The General left the lectern and saw The Doctor waiting for him, beckoning him closer. "Doctor," he asked, "what has happened?"

The Doctor was beaming with delight. "They've found it General," he replied. "Merlin has just contacted me. Brooklyn has retrieved Excalibur!"

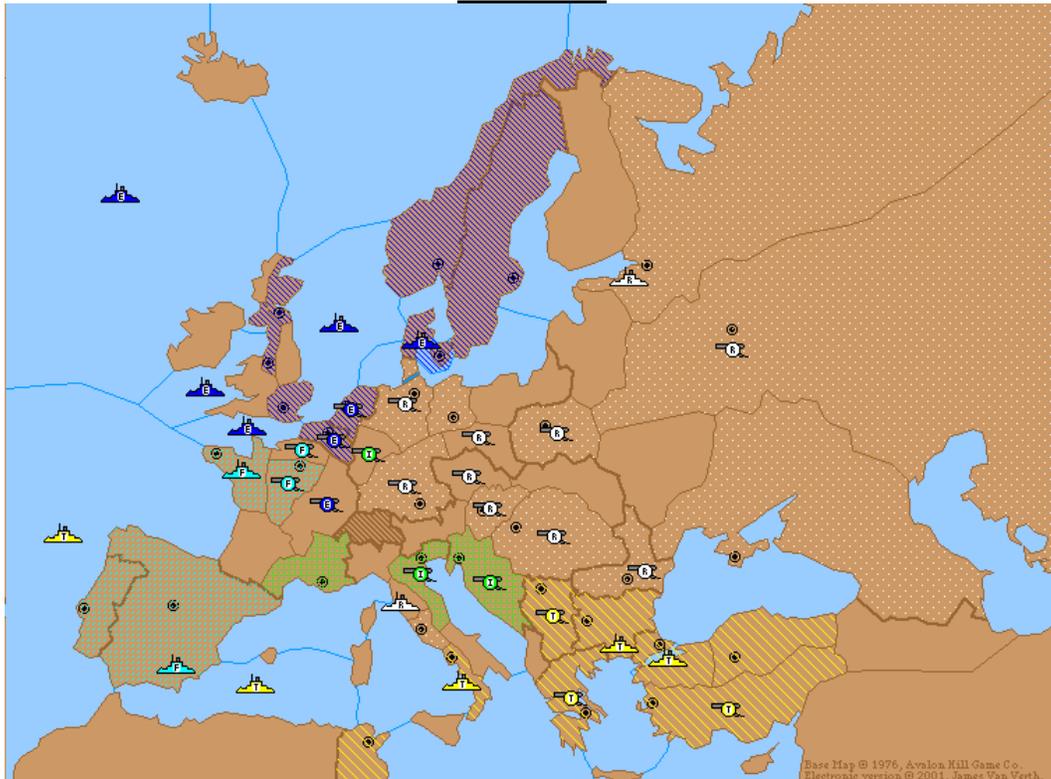
General U'til waved three tentacles in the sign of Great Pleasure. "Good news indeed Doctor," he said. "Will you now take the Tardis to bring them here?"

"I will indeed General," replied the Time Lord. "But before I leave I need to remind you that young Brooklyn is only eleven years old. He has never seen an alien, and indeed until now never knew that any existed. Your appearance is very different to his and he might be very frightened - and he still has much to do if the galaxy is to be saved. I implore you to please be very careful when I bring him here. No loud noises, no sudden movements. He is still only a child."

The old soldier raised four tentacles in the sign of Total Agreement. "I completely understand Doctor," he said, speaking quietly, "and I will brief the ship's company accordingly. Now go, get the boy and the sword here and let us save the galaxy!"

The Doctor smiled. "That I will General." Then he rushed back to the Tardis

Winter 1906



England: Remove F Baltic Sea..Has A Belgium, A Burgundy, F Denmark, F English Channel, A Holland, F Irish Sea, F North Atlantic Ocean, F North Sea.

France: Has Brest, A Paris, A Picardy, F Spain(sc).

Italy: Has A Ruhr, A Trieste, A Venice.

Russia: Build A Moscow, A Warsaw..Has A Bohemia, A Budapest, A Kiel, A Moscow, A Munich, A Rumania, A Silesia,

F St Petersburg(sc), F Tuscany, A Vienna, A Warsaw.

Turkey: Build F Constantinople..Has F Bulgaria(sc), F Constantinople, A Greece, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Naples, A Serbia, A Smyrna, F Western Mediterranean.

PRESS

CARSON, CALIFORNIA: Brooklyn beamed and waved Excalibur again. Merlin laughed, and a few more tears trickled down his face as he did so, but he quickly brushed them away. "That really was well done boy," he said quietly, "that was very well done. I just hope that was the worst moment of this quest."

The eleven year old looked up at him and grinned. "Yeah, it was pretty scary," he replied, "but I got it Merlin, I killed it!" Then he hesitated. "It was pretty nasty though, and I was really frightened. Do you think I might have to do stuff like that again?"

The old magician smiled and pulled him closer. "I hope not Brooklyn," he said, "I certainly hope not. But on a quest like this I am afraid it is impossible to say. Destiny awaits you and there is nobody who can predict the outcome."

The young boy thought for a moment and then looked up again at Merlin with a very determined look in his eye. "Yeah," he said, "I think I'm beginning to understand this destiny stuff. I guess I've got to do what I've got to do." He waved the sword again. "But now I want to meet The Doctor and travel in the Tardis. Will he get here soon?"

Merlin laughed and patted his shoulder again. "It will only take a short while."

They waited by the cave entrance and within moments heard a high pitched screeching sound. As the eleven year old's jaw dropped and his eyes grew round with amazement the familiar blue box materialised a few yards in front of them, it's light winking on the top.

Merlin waited patiently for The Doctor to emerge, his hand resting lightly on the young boy's shoulder. Brooklyn looked up at the old magician, his eyes sparkling with excitement. "Oh wow," he whispered.

The door of the Tardis opened and The Doctor emerged, his rugged face bearing just a hint of a smile. He winked at Merlin as he walked towards them, his long trenchcoat flapping around his legs. Brooklyn took a step back.

The Time Lord stopped and smiled even more broadly. "So you are Brooklyn," he said quietly as he extended his hand. "It is an honour to meet you and I promise you we are all friends here."



The young boy took a deep breath and then took a step forward and shook The Doctor's hand, though he was shaking slightly at the thought of actually meeting one of his favourite TV characters. Merlin smiled and patted his shoulder again.



"But before we leave Brooklyn, I need to tell you where we are going."

London: The Admiralty declared the Baltic Sea to be the deadliest place on Earth after walking from Sweden to Berlin on sunken Warships.

The body of water was renamed "The Anglo-Russian Enviromental Peace Reef".

Winter 1906 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

I'm wondering if we want to say anything at all about this..... yawn.

The only things I found interesting or funny were the typos in Walkerdine's press. Best of those was missing the comma in:

"But before we leave Brooklyn, I need to tell you where we are going."

Why not just stay in Brooklyn??

Well, the placement of the builds at least lets me guess what will happen next.

Turkey built his fleet in Con. Too bad Smyrna was occupied! He was forced to build a fleet where it could move to the Black Sea! Stop teasing us, Vince.

Don puts the armies down where Jim thought he would. If I were Vince, I would be thinking that none of those armies are going to be useful against England.

I'm wondering about the pace of the game. Would it be bad form for me to point out that Turkey really shouldn't want to see Russia take Venice and Trieste? Taking Trieste alone would bode poorly for Serbia.

If R/T coordinate, they can force Italy out of both Trieste and Venice this year. Don really doesn't want Melinda to back to Rome, does he? I'm going to guess that the army in Trieste will be popped in the Spring, and that Venice will fall in the, um, Fall.

The French situation involves a lot of tactical guesswork. I suspect Vince and David will continue to keep Bill out of the MAO for the time being.

That's the extent of my prognostication. Hoping that something surprising happens. But if it does, I'll be surprised. (Tautologically.)

p.s. Yeah, commas are important, aren't they!

WINTER 1906

The familiar screeching sound was heard from the cargo bay as the Tardis departed to retrieve Merlin and, more importantly, Brooklyn and Excalibur. General U'til made his way to the meeting hall, desperately hoping that the Time Lord's plan would prove successful. He had grave concerns. Never in his long years of service to the Fndili Empire had he ever come across a situation as desperate as this. But he

kept those concerns to himself as he addressed his young trainees.

"Hail Fndili," he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Gentlemen," he began, "the magical sword known as Excalibur has been retrieved and The Doctor has now departed to bring it, and Merlin and young Brooklyn, back here to the 'Further Glory' in the hope that we can defeat these magical aliens, seal the rift and save the entire galaxy. The omens so far are good but I have to remind you that there is still much danger ahead."

His audience was silent for a moment, but then they rose as one, shook their upper tentacles in the Sign of Defiance and shouted even louder: "HAIL FNDILI!"

The old soldier paused and smiled, even more proud of his young charges. "Thank you Gentlemen, with support like yours I am sure we will prevail and you will become honoured warriors of our Empire."

Then he paused again. "But I need to add a note of caution. The young Brooklyn, who is the sword-bearer, is little more than a child. He has no knowledge of aliens, and to him we are indeed that - as he is to us. We are greatly different in appearance and he will most likely be very frightened when he sees us. But he is the key to resolving this terrible danger and we must do everything we can to keep him as calm and reassured as possible. So, Gentlemen, I implore you, when the young Brooklyn arrives I wish for no sudden noises, no sudden movements and, if possible, no more than two or three of you in his presence at any one time. His destiny is to save the galaxy, and we must do all we can to support him in that endeavour."

Once more his audience was silent for a moment. But then, as before, they rose and shook their upper tentacles. "HAIL FNDILI!" they cried.

General U'til smiled. "Thank you," he said. "So, to the briefing."

"With the removal of its fleet in the Baltic England is clearly concentrating on its French campaign and I would assume has some sort of agreement with Russia concerning Scandinavia."

"The Russo-Turkish alliance is clearly still holding, though I wonder for how much longer. Russia, with two new armies, is still apparently committed to a northern campaign but its armies could still turn south very quickly. Turkey needs to be on guard."

"The new Turkish fleet shows it is intending to continue with its southern adventures against Italy and, I expect quite soon now, France."

"In summary therefore I would say that English progress depends on the real intentions of Russia, that France could soon find itself squeezed between England and Turkey, that Turkey needs to keep a wary eye on Russia and Russia will soon need to decide whether a move south is timely."

"As usual Gentlemen, your observations please by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

With the briefing concluded the old General left the briefing room, still having grave doubts about The Doctor's plan to save the galaxy with only the help of a young boy and a magical sword. He sighed quietly to himself as he returned to his cabin.

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM:

What do you think of people who pass messages that they get in a Diplomacy game?

Messages Passing

Dear Message,

Number one, you do realize that this column is based on my publishing messages sent to me, right?

Number two, I think people who pass messages should have their naught bits put in a vice until the scream like a little girl for mercy and only then, should they be stripped, tarred and feathered and run out of our hobby like the scum that they are—unless they pass messages to me....

... in that case, I will ally with them.

*Your pal,
The GM*

Dear GM,

I've taught my dog to play diplomacy but she keeps writing her orders wrong. Last week she tried to convoy an army into "wherever you are hiding my #@#^#^&) dog food you stingy SOB"

If I can get her to write her orders correctly I could enter at the next DipCon—any ideas?

Doggie Dip

Dear Doggie,

I think if you can convince your dog you will tell her where the dog food is if she can successfully write orders, you could have a DipCon winner on your hands.

*Your Pal,
The GM*

Got a question for Game Master? Send it to gamemaster "of" diplomacyworld.net and maybe it will appear in a future issue of Diplomacy World