

Diplomacy World



Winter 2011 Issue - #116

www.diplomacyworld.net

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of Diplomacy World, #116. The world keeps turning and the issues keep churning out.

This is Jim-Bob Burgess, our Co-Editor, guest writing the "Notes from the Editor" column this issue. Even more than usual, Doug really needs to hear from people this issue has he's been going through a bit of a tough time. He really does need to know that people actually read what HE mostly produces. I am a Co-Editor in the classic sense, that I edit and read through everything correcting the mistakes (especially people's names, which always seem to get misspelled by authors in draft), but this really is Doug's baby. We think it is very important to have a Diplomacy World that tries as hard as it can to represent ALL of the strands of the hobby, but it can only do that if you contribute. If nothing else, Zhang Fang has contributed two GREAT discussion questions, look at them and drop us some answers. I know I'm going to answer them!!!

World DipCon: Richard Walkerdine gives us an article about the beginning of World DipCon, I wasn't at that one, but I've been to four of them, two in the US and two in Europe, and they are amongst my most memorable experiences in the Diplomacy hobby, especially the World DipCons I went to in France and England. It is really time for this World DipCon in Chicago this summer to hearken back to the heady and exciting days of the early DipCons. Can we overwhelm Jim O'Kelley and the Weasels with 330 attendees? Why not?? We hope to see you all there. We need to get more Diplomacy players going back and forth across the Atlantic again at least.

This issue has a number of other thoughts, articles, and information on the FtF Diplomacy hobby, and in particular trying to convince players presently playing on the Internet to give the FtF pleasures a try. Seven upcoming conventions with listings on the upcoming Diplomacy Conventions webpages are listed in here, including an extended ad from the San Marino convention. Note there are three other US conventions and three other European conventions (and those are NOT the only ones that have been announced). As the person running TempleCon in Providence, RI, the first weekend in February, I will note that my tournament is one of the most "first FtF tournament" friendly tournaments out there. Contact me or check out the website at <http://templecon.org/12/> for all the details of the whole gaming convention.

If you're skimming through the issue, in addition to Richard Walkerdine's history and the upcoming tournament pages, let me call your attention to Chris Brand's recap of the most recent World DipCon 2011 in Australia; Jim O'Kelley's tweets from North American DipCon at Carnage in Vermont in November; a pseudonymous discussion of Chris Martin's solo at Carnage (which I also observed and think the discussion is well worth reading – I sat down with Chris Mazza and Marguerite Mazza after that one and we went over what happened and how Chris Martin did it. We also have the endgame statement article in here from Alex Maslow, we need more of these types of articles that help people understand how things happen – I saw Chris' solo coming well before Brent and Marguerite did and Chris even had to shush me from a kibitz comment); and especially a plea from Dirk Knemeyer to think about having tournaments played with variants. Dirk ran this one by me last year and I was one of the people he mentions who initially was against the idea (for a variety of reasons). But I'm not quite as against it now. I'm thinking maybe of trying this at TempleCon some year (maybe next year). BUT, one of my problems with this is how to run the FtF games, having the quality maps that would be needed to run, say, 1900. But I'm going to ask Dirk, and maybe he'll be able to help me put this together if he's really committed to the idea!

What else is exciting in this issue? I hope we get endgame statements from our Demo Game when it finally ends, Rotary Phones and 8 Track Tapes, as the behind the scenes thinking heats up in that one. Rick Desper and I continue to add our regular commentaries that we hope help you follow the game. Rick and I continue to disagree about various aspects of what is happening, I would bet the game will go on through a few more issues here. Larry Peery is a former Diplomacy World editor, and he writes about his passion on the intersections between the world of Diplomacy the hobby and the world of diplomats. We also have the usual array of strategy and tactics articles. Remember that I'm the Interview Editor (supposedly) and I need to find good people to interview if I'm going to warrant keeping that title. Give me ideas!!

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is April 1st, 2012.

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

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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 Calhamer. It is currently manufactured by Hasbro and the name is their trademark with all rights reserved.

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Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Inge Davis: Doug, to get Diplomacy World is something that means so much to Fred. We both look forward to the next issue, #115. I keep hoping to get him to write and send an article, any contribution, but he has not been able to. He does spend hours and days reading the Diplomacy World issues and we discuss what he reads, it interests him and keeps him feeling connected. Thank you so much for keeping him on your list.



Larry Peery: Good job last issue. I actually read most of it. A nice balance of content. As I was typing XENOGOGIC yesterday I was thinking about your discussion question.

The lament you have is not unique to DW. I see and hear the same kind of complaint from editors and publishers all over in every media there is. A look at newspaper or magazines in print shows a scary lack of reader feedback. A look at website feedback is even more frightening. Just look at some of the garbage that appears on the websites of pubs like USA Today, the major networks, CNN, etc. not to mention all the fanatical websites and blogs spilling their vitrol across the Ethernet. It's a universal epidemic I'm afraid.

There are, I think, two driving forces here. First, the generation gap. Basically there are three generations out there: old-timers, middle-aged folks, and the younger generation (50+, 30-49, 15-29). These divisions apply to the Diplomacy hobby as well as the world at large. Second, there is the technological gap. Here again I think we can divide technology into three groups: those who learned to write by hand or using a typewriter, those who learned to do word processing on early computers, and those who have moved beyond computers into hand-held devices of one kind or another. Show me an article from DW and tell me nothing about the author. I would bet that nine times out of ten I can identify the author's age (literarily if not chronologically) by size of words, length of sentences, or use of paragraphs. Just the appearance of a ";" semi-colon is a dead giveaway

Discussion Questions for Next Issue:

This month both questions are from reader Zhang Fang. The first topic is that "What do you usually smell in the air before a stab?" It came to my mind because I was just playing a game and I read one of my teammate's diplomatic messages. I did smell something from the message but I did not tell this to my teammate, because I was not sure about it. Then guess what happened next? Germany stabbed. I regreted that I should have told my teammate what I suspected from Germany's message. So I want to bring it up here in DW zine, to start a discussion on the topic. Readers can participate either by stating what they will say/do before they plan a stab next turn or by sharing their experiences about how to identify a stab (better with real case study). I just am curious to know. ☺. The second question I want to ask is that what does it take to hold a successful f2f game or tournament, especially when there are more newbies?

as to an author's age.

I work with a number of college age students. Most of them are quite intelligent, or at least intelligent enough to make it into good schools. However, most of them are functionally illiterate. Their hand-writing, spelling, and grammar are terrible, if not non-existent. Give them a pen, typewriter, or telephone and they don't know what to do with them. But give them a hand-held device and they come to life. Communications flow back and forth, at least when they're chatting or messaging each other. But let an older person try to read and understand what they've said and the fog rolls in. Every generation has its own slang, catch phrases, and cute spellings, but this group has developed a whole language and culture devoted to them. Take away their hand-held, Twitter, and 140 characters and they are unable to communicate. Give them a writing assignment of 140 words or 140 pages and they'd be totally lost.

As we all know people change, technologies change, and time moves on. Hopefully, as the hobby evolves it will change with these things. Doing so is the only way we can survive. At the moment we're dealing with Twitter and the 140 characters as the communications instrument of choice. Well, it could be worse. What if the younger generation had gone the route of cans of spray paint and graffiti?

Whether it's talking or writing or some hybrid combination of both at least the generations are communicating with each other. Well, at least partially. Now, if we could just engage them to think we'd be in for a true technosance.



Richard Walkerdine: A REPLY TO ALFRED NICOL: Nice letter, and thank you. As one of the organisers of Manorcon for ten years or more it is great to know that new players are still attending and enjoying it. The games players are lovely people and will always greet you with open arms - but of course they will stab you rotten when they get the chance. You just need to get your stab in first! Nice to see new names.

WDC 2011

By Chris Brand

I'd like to start by saying that it wasn't my fault. I didn't actually play a single game against Goffy during the tournament. I guess there's always something you could have done differently, but who would have thought that the Australians wouldn't recognize that the one person you're supposed to kill off on the top board is the former world champion? Maybe he really is just that good.

But that's really the end of the story. The beginning, I guess, was two years earlier, in Columbus, Ohio, where Sean Colman, I believe, successfully bid to host the 2012 WDC in Sydney. Columbus was my third WDC, and I was already planning to plan my vacations around them for the next few years, so my thoughts at the time were along the lines of "better start saving if I'm going to The Hague next year and Sydney the year after". And so it got penciled in on the calendar, and eventually flight prices got checked and the decision was put off a bit because the saving never really happened. Eventually, it got to the point where I really needed to make a decision one way or the other. I checked flight prices again and saw direct flights from Vancouver to Sydney for about two thirds what they'd been before. I booked them immediately. Fly out on the Friday before (landing on Sunday), a week exploring Sydney and getting over the jetlag, a weekend of WDC, and back to Canada on the Tuesday (landing a couple of hours before I took off).

Then it was a matter of finding accommodation. Hotels in Coogee Bay (the suburb where WDC was to be held) aren't cheap. But the website suggested a number of options and at one point there was even an email offer of free accommodation for travelers. I eventually settled on a backpackers', having had a good experience in Den Haag, and booked that. With only a week, I figured that it made sense to stay in the one place, which turned out to be a reasonable decision. In the run-up to travelling, Thorin made a point of arranging a get-together for the travelers (those from New Zealand apparently not really counting) on the Wednesday, as well as pre-tournament drinks for everyone the evening before the tournament itself. It soon became clear that there were only four of us from the northern hemisphere – myself, Michael "Doc" Binder, Don Del Grande, and Dan Burgess. Oh, and Peter McNamara, but he was counted as Australian (It's not clear to me whether this is based on his passport, him not having lived in the US for very long, still having the accent, or what, but he was definitely counted as a local). I also read some reviews of the backpackers' online, which were...not flattering. With a couple of weeks to go, I was reminded to check whether I needed any inoculations (no) or visas (yes). Fortunately, Canadians can get the equivalent of a visitor's visa online pretty much instantly for \$20 or so. And so I was all set. Then I got a new job, but fortunately

they were ok with me working for 4 days and then heading off for 8 or so. Clearly this was meant to be.

And so I arrived in Australia with my girlfriend. The backpackers' turned out to be...not as bad as the online reviews had led me to believe. An older building, but with no creepy-crawlies evident. And just across the road from a really nice beach. Well, really nice by Vancouver standards, anyway (we don't really do sand around here). I duly did my quota of touristy stuff – walked the coast up to Bondi beach, toured the Blue Mountains, explored downtown Sydney, took the ferry to Manly, and spent a day learning to surf. You know how on the TV it's always sunny in Australia? Not in Sydney in September. We did see the sun. In fact we managed to get a bit of sunburn on our first day. But mostly it was overcast and windy, with occasional rain, sometimes heavy enough to make even people from Vancouver turn around and say "perhaps we should just stay in and play cards". Unfortunately the only day we could get a surfing lesson was Wednesday. Unfortunate because (a) the forecast wasn't good and (b) that was the day that the meeting of out-of-towners was scheduled for. So while they were presumably in a bar by the famous Opera House, I was shivering in the ocean at yet another huge sandy beach, trying to stand up on a surfboard. I do take some satisfaction in being one of only four of our class that actually went back into the water after lunch – and I did manage to stand on the surfboard. Kind of.

Sydney is a nice place, for sure. Downtown felt a lot like London to me. Similar architecture, and layout, plus they conveniently appropriated a lot of the names for parts of the city. Australians are very friendly and casual. Very fond of abbreviations – our tour guide for the Blue Mountains trip drank "cap" and lived in "Van" for a while before returning to "Oz". We were speculating on the name of "Circular Quay", which seemed to us more of a rectangle than anything, so figured it was probably short for "Not-Even-Close-To-Circular Quay" or something similar. We eventually learned that it was originally a slightly different shape and called "Semi-Circular Quay" "but that was too long".

Friday rolled around, and so we ventured to the bar in the hotel, trying to spot a bunch of Diplomacy players. Not as easy as you might think, but fortunately I spotted Doc and was soon introduced to the rest. I recognized a number of faces from previous WDCs, and had the usual (for me) experience of having people know me when I couldn't remember their names. Food was eaten, beer was drunk, and stories exchanged. It was definitely useful to have the chance to meet most of the other players before sitting down round a board, and it was also nice to be able to put a face to a couple of the

names from games I was playing online.

We had a single room for the tournament itself, with a lobby-like area, a balcony, and a corridor providing plenty of room for private discussion. The décor was impressive – camouflage netting around the doors and on the walls, jerry cans, helmets, and other military paraphernalia gave a great feel to the place. A projector and screen made it easy to follow the central timer. The trophies were the nicest I've seen at any Diplomacy event. The tournament was played over 5 rounds, with a top board in the final round, with a few interesting twists. There was a sort-of-time-limit – games had a 25% chance of ending after 1910, and then a 50% chance in 1911, and a 75% chance every year after that. Meal breaks were scheduled during the games (orders put in the box but not read for an hour or so). Due to some people wanting to watch some sporting events that were happening that same weekend, everyone had to take a bye at some point. There was some sort of seeding system in use to decide who would play who, but I'm not entirely clear on how this worked. Also, the winner would be calculated on points after the final round, so the winner of the top board might not win the title.



And so we played. I played Turkey on Saturday morning and Austria in the afternoon. I have a terrible memory for the specifics of games, but I do remember that the stronger players seemed to be clustered in the east on board of those boards. The afternoon game saw me in an unholy alliance with Peter McNamara's Russia and Grant Steel's Turkey. Chait Nimmagadda was unlucky enough to be Italy. I'm not sure how, but we managed to conceal the RAT alliance until very late in the game. I did reasonably on both games. In fact, my 11-center Austria was the best Austria right up until the final round. I took my bye on Sunday morning (the team round) to take a final look around Sydney, and then drew England on

Sunday afternoon. That game I remember better. Thorin Munro in Germany was straight with me early on, while Graham Allen in France misled me a bit. So when the time came to pick one, I stabbed Germany at the same time as France stabbed me. So I had to defend England, which led me into a position I've never actually seen before – 5 English units in England at the same time. It worked - the EG alliance realized that it was going to take too long to kill me off, and they spared me. The game ended as a 6-way draw in 1910, but we agreed that there was an awful lot of play left. I ended up on 4 centers – probably the hardest 4 centers I've ever earned. Going into the final round on Monday morning, I was in 8th position, which several people pointed out was possibly the best position to actually win from. I got to play against the people in 9th to 15th, though (Craig Purcell being unable to play the last round), a number of whom were also in the running. In fact it's worth mentioning that the scoring really was very tight. You can see that from the final score – 3rd place was decided by a tie-breaker, for example. I believe that 3 of the players on the top board went in with the same score. I drew Russia for the last game, and played a solid RAI alliance with Steve Lytton in Austria and Will Black in Italy (Dan Burgess was the unlucky Turk this time around). We got to the stalemate line before the western powers but not quite quickly enough. We blew the vital 50/50 guess and got stuck there. The position stagnated, but there was still a lot of diplomacy going on. No stabs resulted, though, so that game ended as another 6-way draw. Meanwhile, the top board was busy giving Andrew Goff not only his second world championship but also the Best Austria medal.

Overall, the whole thing went very smoothly. Rob Schone, as TD, dealt very well with the few minor things that I was aware of. The standard of play was excellent. The four games I played were all very good games of Diplomacy. The Aussie's made the visitors feel very welcome. Thorin and his helpers did a great job with the facilities, prizes, website, apparel, etc. The turnout was lower than I would have liked – it feels wrong to have a world championship with just three boards in most of the rounds. In particular, the lack of Europeans was noted (I believe the exact words were "I'd like to thank the French for not coming"). I can say without a doubt, though, that the winner of that tournament thoroughly deserves the title of World Diplomacy Champion. Overall, I had a great time, and look forward to the next time WDC is held in the southern hemisphere. They should have recovered by 2020 or so.

[[Skeptics continue to marvel at how in the world Andrew Goff continues to win these tournaments, instead of everybody on the board jumping on him from Spring 1901.]]

Spring Cruises in the Adriatic

By Joshua Danker-Dake



If you play Diplomacy long enough, you're probably going to develop a preferred opening for most if not all

the powers. Now, I'm not talking about a set of orders you hand in every time regardless of who you're playing with or how the opening negotiations go; rather, I mean your first-choice set of orders should things seem like they're going to shake out more or less the way you'd choose them to. Put simply, we're just talking about the opening you like the best for each power.

I certainly have mine: the Bohemian Crusher with Italy, a Southern Opening with England, the Danish Blitzkrieg with Germany, for examples (none of these, obviously, work every time, and they are, to varying degrees, quite dependent on negotiations – this is Diplomacy, after all). That is, I have a preferred opening for every power *except* Austria.

Austria is trickier because of its unique situation. Since it must think defense first, Austria is by far the most reliant on opening negotiations; Austria usually has to beg, borrow, and steal just for the chance to get going. That can make picking an opening a challenge.

If you're like me, you've played a game (or maybe a few) as Austria and, after going through your opening negotiations, chosen your Spring 1901 orders by asking yourself, "What's going to get me screwed the least?" Then you pick your poison.

In fairness, Diplomacy tacticians throughout the ages have shown this to be a legitimate mindset with which to play Austria. I tend to agree, although certainly some openings have a better likelihood of success than others.

I'm not looking for an opening that's a panacea for Austria's problems; that's like Ponce de León looking for the Fountain of Youth. No, I'm just hoping to find an opening I *like*.

That possibly-futile search continues this issue with a look at the Blue Water family of openings.

Blue Water Openings

A Blue Water opening is any set of Austrian Spring 1901 orders that includes F TRI-ADR. These openings are not commonly seen, and not without reason. The obvious

question for those who have never tried such a thing is, "Why on earth would I do this instead of the clearly superior F TRI-ALB?" Indeed, such a move, which forfeits much of Austria's influence over Greece, could be construed as Turkish appeasement, overt hostility toward Italy, or just plain incompetence. Yet whether you're one of those impulsive web players that just wants to grab Venice in 1901 or an old Diplomacy soul who's planning for 1902, 1903, and beyond, a Blue Water opening might be worth considering.

The thing that's so appealing about a Blue Water opening is that it can be taken in two completely different strategic directions: you can either stick it to Italy with everything you've got, or you can parlay it into an alliance with Italy against Turkey. Let's take a look.

The von Metzke Blitz and other folly



I came across the von Metzke Blitz (also known as the Italian Attack) when I was looking for ways that Austria could effectively counter Italy's Bohemian Crusher opening (F NAP-ION, A ROM-VEN, A VEN-TYR, then F ION-TUN, A TYR-BOH, A VEN-TYR in the Fall, then build A VEN) and trying to determine whether Austria could mount a suitably devastating attack of its own.

In the von Metzke Blitz, Austria opens F TRI-ADR, A BUD-TRI, A VIE-TYR. Should all these moves succeed, Austria can attack Venice with all three units in the Fall, and is guaranteed to take it. This is the strongest attack that Austria can make against Italy in 1901.

The downside of this opening is obvious, as is the high

likelihood of disaster. By sending everything west, Austria forfeits the Balkans entirely to Turkey, who can take Serbia, Greece, whatever he wants. And if Russia has gotten into Galicia, he can take a shot at Vienna or Budapest. For what does it profit a man to gain Venice but lose his home centers?

It should go without saying that negotiations are crucial here (Conrad von Metzke is reported to have used this opening extensively regardless of a general lack of success). You need a friendly Turkey at the very least; an alliance with him works considerably better. An allied Russia may also prevent ruin, although taking out Turkey may prove slow going once he jumps out to a big lead in the Balkans. An alliance with either Russia or Turkey can be hard for Austria to come by under any circumstances; here, it's the bare minimum. Order accordingly.



Yet just because throwing everything but the kitchen sink at Italy in Spring 1901 is almost always a really dumb idea doesn't mean that F TRI-ADR is equally dumb, or that you need to go whole-hog to keep Italy in check.

With the Bohemian Crusher in mind, the Spring 1901 move A VIE-TYR, much like any Austrian Hedgehog move to Galicia, works better when it doesn't succeed. If you're looking to stop the Bohemian Crusher in its tracks, A VIE-TYR is the only move you need (and it really doesn't matter whether you move F TRI-ADR or F TRI-ALB). At this point, as I've written before, Italy and Austria need to call an immediate truce, and then kiss and make up before they get rolled by Russia and Turkey.

Additionally, if Austria feels reasonably confident about Italy's intentions (e.g., that he will not try to sneak into Trieste or that he will open with A ROM-NAP), the pair of moves A VIE-TYR and F TRI-ADR can be used to put good pressure on Italy (or even take Venice in 1901, given A ROM-NAP) without A BUD, which is free to fend off Russia in Galicia or move into Serbia, whichever seems most necessary. This works better if Italy can be

encouraged to move A VEN-PIE, as otherwise Austria has to worry about A VEN slipping into Trieste on a forward retreat (A VIE-TRI rather than A VIE-TYR also solves this problem, but leaves room for the Bohemian Crusher to develop).

Venice does not have to be the only target of an anti-Italian Blue Water opening. Consider again the case of the von Metzke Blitz where all moves succeed. Now, if Italy has moved A ROM-NAP rather than A ROM-APU, Austria can take Venice with the two armies in the Fall and potentially use the fleet to occupy the Ionian Sea (should Italy use his own fleet to pick up Tunisia, which is likelier given the threat to his home centers). In such a case, Italy doesn't build, and if Austria has weathered the storm in the Balkans, is in a decent position. (Obviously, Austria also has the option to move into the Ionian with the more conventional F TRI-ALB, so there's no advantage in that respect other than Austria's aforementioned option to attack Venice with three units.)

It may seem that a Blue Water opening can only be anti-Italian. However, this is not at all the case, and indeed, what we've discussed to this point is, tactically, small beer in comparison, as the fact that such an opening is likely to be universally construed as anti-Italian by the other players can be a distinct tactical advantage.

The Blue Water Lepanto



For Austria, the mere mention of the word "Lepanto" may cause involuntary eye-rolling and snorts of derision. Any Lepanto opening is ostensibly the beginning of an Italian-Austrian alliance; however, at best, they tend to put Italy in the driver's seat, as he obtains superior positioning over Austria; at worst (the Key), Austria rolls out the red carpet for Italy to take advantage of the easiest 1901 stab opportunity in the game.

The Blue Water Lepanto is somewhat different in this respect. In the first place, it's an Austrian opening rather than an Italian one, and it gives Austria a little more leverage in the alliance with Italy. For the detail-oriented, [Manus Hand's original article](#) is required reading, and [Derek Pillie has written a worthwhile follow-up](#).

Yet some in this Internet generation will say, "Too long; didn't read." Very well, I shall summarize the tactics, but don't expect to get very far with that attitude.

In Spring 1901, Austria encourages Italy to open with a Lepanto (not a Key Lepanto), then moves F TRI-ADR, A VIE-TRI, A BUD-SER, which forces Italy to cover and limits his Fall options, which is useful if Italy has not yet bought in. In the Fall, Italy picks up Tunisia with the fleet while Austria moves F ADR-ION and A SER-GRE.



The apparent tension between Italy and Austria is to be marketed to other countries as genuine deceit and conflict. Hand goes as far as to suggest that Italy be strong-armed by Austria and not let in on the plan until after the first build, but that can be risky. Pillie prefers a situation where Italy and Austria conspire together at the beginning and then feign discord throughout 1901 and into 1902; I tend to agree with this friendlier, more trust-centered approach.

In any case, Italy ends up on board, builds a second fleet in Naples, then dislodges F ION, which retreats either to the Aegean or the Eastern Mediterranean, thus establishing a convoy chain into Turkey.

This arrangement gives Austria more security against an Italian stab and a more active role in the invasion of Turkey than a standard Lepanto, and therefore more influence in the relationship. It also directs Italy to develop his naval power, making him somewhat less of a threat to Austria. Even better, if things turn sour or Austria has misjudged one or more of his neighbors, the Blue Water Lepanto can be redirected against Italy without a great deal of wasted momentum.

The Blue Water Lepanto is a diplomacy-heavy opening, and as such cannot be banked on irrespective of the other players' temperaments; indeed, these temperaments must be considered very carefully. But if I am Austria and Italy brings up the Lepanto, this is my Lepanto of choice, as the risk to me is minimized and the Spring 1901 moves give me a satisfactory range of options (Hand hints at this but does not develop the concept).

And that's the great thing about the Blue Water Lepanto. It's designed to be played through to the end of 1902, but anti-Italian deviation from the plan is viable for Austria at a number of stages. The Spring 1901 moves set up a supported attack on Venice in the Fall. Spring 1902 may offer the same, or a chance to put more pressure on Venice. While following the prescribed pro-Italian course, Austria remains flexible through Spring 1902, until F ION is dislodged and the die must be cast.

Conclusion

The long and short of it is that any opening involving F TRI-ADR will avoid courting disaster only if Turkey is friendly in 1901. If he isn't, make nice with Italy and then go F TRI-ALB like you usually do and keep Turkey out of Greece.

But a friendly Turkey allows Austria to stick it to Italy early, and a Blue Water opening is one of the best ways to do that. Yet, in delightful contrast, the Blue Water Lepanto can be an excellent opportunity to get the drop on Turkey.

Some Blue Water openings, particularly the von Metzke Blitz, are going to be practical in only rare cases. However, the Blue Water Lepanto is an exciting, versatile opening that probably deserves more play than it gets these days (negotiations permitting, of course). That's an opening that belongs in your toolbox.

[[Joshua is the Diplomacy World Strategy and Tactics editor. Don't agree with what he has to say? Write something yourself!]]

My Life with Ulrika: Part 5 (The Day the Music Died)

by Richard Walkerdine

THE STORY SO FAR. Walkerdine has finally been rescued (again) by Ulrika and all his main rivals have been eliminated. Now at last there can surely be no further impediments to his dream of total Hobby domination. But alas tales such as this inevitably contain a twist... Now read on...

We quickly got back to the repaired Tardis and returned to my own timeframe. On entering my mansion in the Cotswold Hills I immediately checked the dozens of computers in the main control room, each one quietly humming to itself as all the Diplomacy statistics in the world were secretly recorded. I breathed a sigh of relief as I realised all was well.

But then I paused as I remembered all was not well. On the journey home Diana Ross seemed to have accepted the presence of Ulrika but the opposite was certainly not true. She had become more and more quiet, morose even, hardly speaking a word to me (and none at all to Diana). "Look Diana," I said quietly when Ulrika went to the shower room, "we've got to do something to break her out of this, but what?"

At that moment the shower room door opened and Ulrika emerged, wrapped in a towel and drying her hair.

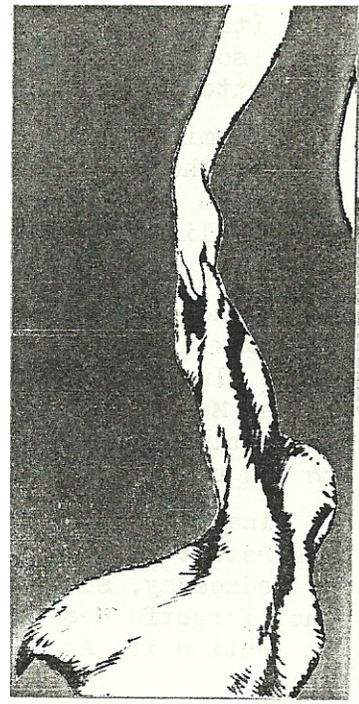


I moved across to her. "Ulrika," I said gently, "please, let's just talk this through."

But my voice died away when I realised she wasn't even listening. She walked past me, eyes downcast, and leaned on a control panel.



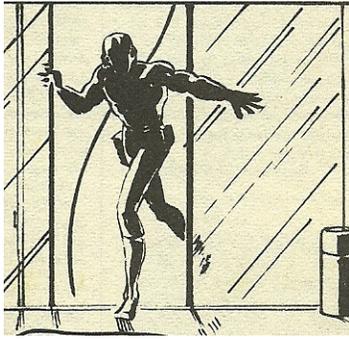
"Look, I never asked for all this hassle," she murmured, half to herself. "I mean, why is it such a big deal? So I rub out a few guys, so what?" She stood up again and walked across the room. "I wonder, is it all worth the bother?" Then she pulled off the towel and let it fall to the floor. "Ah the hell with it, I'm going to bed."



As she walked into the bedroom Diana and I just looked at each other, our faces showing a mixture of worry and confusion. But neither of us could think of a single word to say...

The bedroom door closed and Diana and I continued just staring at each other, each of us waiting for the other to speak first.

But, mere minutes later, in the room where Ulrika lies sleeping, a ghostly figure glides through an open window...



...a blaster is raised...



...a trigger is pulled...



Weeks later the frantic activity was almost over. The final act of the tragedy was underway...

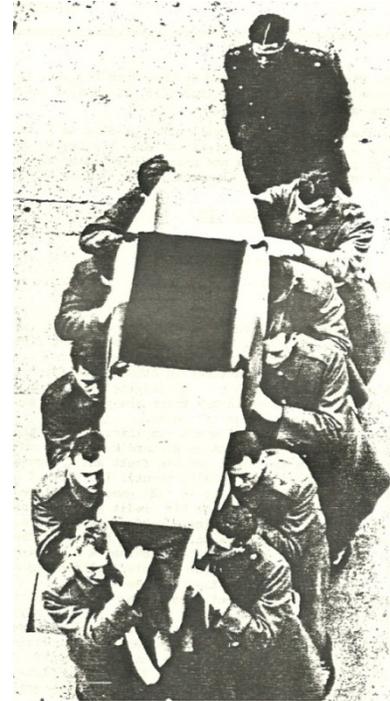
The crowds had been gathering since before dawn, many hours before the first guests arrived, and had already witnessed the unloading of the coffin. The gilt coach that had delivered it would now never be used for a lesser purpose, and was already in the cargo bay of an old Shuttle on a course for the heart of the sun.

At midday the mile-long procession began. First came the entertainers; jugglers, acrobats and minstrels, their bright costumes sparkling as they leapt and played in the sunlight. Next came the mounted troops, the cavalry resplendent in full dress uniform mounted on pure white chargers, the warriors from the eastern lands atop

massive elephants festooned with silks and rare jewels, then the mercenaries from the outer worlds on strange beasts never before seen on Earth.

Next were the massed bands, row upon row of brass and percussion all marching in perfect slow-time as they played, over and over, 'Sad Eyed Lady Of The Lowlands'.

Finally came the coffin, draped with a single black square and borne by ten pall-bearers who were my dearest friends. I walked closely behind, head bowed, eyes half closed, scarcely aware of the noise and ceremony around me.



Two hours later the coffin finally reached the burial site and was lowered to its last resting place. The crowd was still now, not a sound could be heard. I looked down at the coffin and threw a single red rose into the grave. "Farewell, sweet Ulrika," I murmured and then turned and departed.

With Ulrika gone my ambitions of Hobby domination were at an end and only the life of a virtual recluse lay before me now. None but my closest friends would ever see me again.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

[[Is this really the end? Or just the beginning?]]

Diplomacy Treaty Variant

By Hugh Polley

Diplomacy Treaty Variant

Players are encouraged to make written treaties with other players in the game.

A How Treaties are established

a.1 A treaty sent to The Game Master by email from each party to the treaty will be assigned to a Supply Centre on the board and named with a consecutive number, SC abbreviation, and expiration year, and added to a press list of treaties. Observers will only know that a treaty named #01Ber04 which ends in Winter 1904 now exists, they will not know the Parties to the treaty. Generally Treaties will first be assigned to Supply Centres without attached Treaties. Yes, if the GM feels like stirring the pot he may assign treaties however he wishes.

a.2 Treaties with the games neutral power are allowed, but can not require the Neutral's unit to make any military order. You can not make the treaty with the clause -if a Neutral power's unit is adjacent to Ber it will move away-; however the reverse is allowed. The GM controls the Neutral power and can declare a treaty violation.

a.3 A Treaty must have at least one military clause to be valid. Eg. -German units will not enter Pru from Ber-. Only two types of military clauses are allowed: a Country to Country, will not enter A/Area from B/Area clause; or a Country to Country, A/Area's Army(s)/Navy(s) will not attack B/Areas Army(s)/Navy(s). Clauses must be Area specific, things like my Navies will support your Navies will be ruled invalid.

a.4 If an SC assigned to one or more treaties changes Ownership. The new owner may tell the GM to publish all treaties assigned to his new SC. The GM will do so even if the new owner is a party to one of the Treaties. It is all treaties published or none, selective publication is not allowed.

B How Treaties become invalid!

b.5 Treaties must end on a Winter Season and have a maximum life of 3 Game years, starting with the games next season.

b.6 A player may ask for a treaty to be ended do to a violation by one or more of the other parties to the treaty. A Player can not ask for a treaty to be ended because he; himself, has violated the treaty!

b.7 Any treaties in existence at the end of the game are invalid! Any clause outside the purview's of the Diplomacy Rules such as - if you win, you pay me \$100- is dead and of course the player has no legal right to the \$100.

b.8 At the end of the game all treaties are published.

C How Treaties are enforced!

c.9 A military action, or non military action which violates a treaty will not be interfered with by the GM in the season of the violation!

C.10 A player must notify the GM after a movement phase, and before the next movement season deadline, that a military or other violation has occurred!

c.11 The only penalty for a non-military clause violation is publication of the Treaty. Without mentioning the Countries involved, the GM will ask the World Court [which consists of all players] for a yes or no opinion on the non-military violation, if the majority by one vote is yes for a violation; then the Treaty will be published.

c.12 The GM is the sole judge for military clause violations. If he rules that a violation has occurred the GM will take two actions!

c.13 First Action: The treaty will be published in the press section of the results, and the Treaty will be declared null and void, it will be removed from the active treaty list.

C.14 Second Action: In the next move season all parties to the treaty, except for the Player who is the injured party, will have all their units ordering unit movement placed in Civil Disorder by the GM. Any support orders for these units will behave as if cut. All involved units will be given CD[Ber-Sil] record in movement results.

D How Game will be organized!

d.15 The game starts out gunboat style, to get the name and email of a player you must have a treaty with him.

d.16 Send as email attachments proposed treaties to the GM.

d.17 Proposed Treaties attachments must have a text name using the involved countries first four letter names; [GermFranRuss.txt]. The GM will then add a SC name to the treaty, record it and send a copy to all the named players using the BCC function; [SpBer04GermFranRuss.txt]. If all parties send in acceptance of a treaty then the GM will check the treaty. If it does not contain at least one valid military clause he will send it out as [deniedSpBer04GermFranRuss.txt] by BCC. If it is a valid treaty; it is accepted and players are notified using the CC function.

d.18 Yes, Press is welcome and these are Black Press games.

[[Hugh Polley has been working on a number of variants and rule changes recently.]]

The Winter War Octopus

Can you use Finland for a strong Finnish?

By Alex Maslow

So Russia is a country I feel I have trouble with. The south is not my problem – the south is simply enough a diplomatic game between you and Austria and Turkey and getting the two at each other's throat or at least convincing Italy to attack them if you can't prevent them from teaming up (Italy is usually psyched that someone came with him with a plan that isn't "Go away for a few years, will ya?"). The north, however, is more intriguing.

If you merely send StP to GoB, you simply need to discuss with the German how you can get Sweden, and then that fleet generally sits around and hopes England and Germany don't band together against it. If you decide to back that unit up by moving Mos to StP, this tends to create more problems. Your south is weaker and England is now very specifically irritated at you, because of the threat to Norway. Now England and Germany have a reason to kick you out of Scandinavia all together.



I am not advertising an opening, but rather a possibility given a unique set of diplomatic circumstances. This advice may not always be useful and in some cases may – in fact – be the reason for your demise. It begins like the Octopus:

War to Ukr
Sev to Bla or Rum
StP to GoB
Mos to StP

Diplomatically, you need to make sure Austria and Turkey are not friends. Ideally, you have an RT in the works, with the idea not being to steamroll but rather to become tentacles (conquer the board by surrounding it). He focuses on the Med and southern Balkans while you focus on Scandinavia and England/Germany. But an AR

is also fine. It's also entirely fine if it's a free for all. Just make sure there isn't an early AT. If there is, and you can't break it up diplomatically, don't do this plan.

Any Western 2-on-1 is beneficial to you, as an EG means you can count on France (tactically very defensible) to hold his ground for a long time, and an FG or FE means you simply need to help the odd G or E unit and you'll surely get the OK to be in (if not dominate) Scandinavia. Italy should be kept in the loop, either to attack Austria (which he ought to want to do because your moves will show you aren't steamrolling and thus plotting against him (it is Turkey, after all, who would be threatening him)). Try to keep Turkey and Austria friendly to you and mad at each other. Having Italy keep a unit in Ven or Tyr is a good way to keep Austria distracted, which may tempt Turkey to go that way and not against you.

Once your south is diplomatically secure, you can focus northward. If you find yourself being attacked by an AT, then I'd advise bailing and trying to salvage the rest of the game. No use provoking the north when the south is already hell-bent against you. But assuming you've read the board right, let's move on.

The north is where you need to focus your attention, because England will not be happy with you, and Germany may not want to give you Swe, especially if there is an EG. An EG is the worst scenario, for while France will hold their ground, you may find a concerted defense against you in Scandinavia. As we will get to, this plan may yet tear an EG apart. Either way, whether England opens to the Channel and the North Sea or to the North Sea and the Norwegian Sea (Or, mayhaps, the Channel and the Norwegian Sea), England can hit Norway and block your Mos unit. Germany, of course, can block you in Swe if he went to Den (Which happens, what, 80% of the time?). Potentially, you will get no builds from the north. Worse, your army in StP will block you from building another fleet, so even if you get a build in the south, you can't apply it north, and you'll have two units in the north incapable of doing really anything.

So what's a diplomat to do? I think the best solution is to move that army to Finland. Let me explain.

First we'll discuss the diplomatic implications of having moved Mos to StP in S'01. It certainly appears as if you will bounce StP in Nwy and possibly GoB to Swe, as well as need to fight for Rum, as well. You can use this to your advantage to get some sympathy builds where you otherwise would not. Assuming England and Germany

have not sworn blood oaths, you tell Germany letting your fleet into Swe will eventually allow you to help him into Nth, be that the next year as he and France attack England or when Germany decides to stab his English friend after France has been mopped up. Further, since he assumes you will bounce England in Nwy, StP will be blocked and you cannot betray him by building a fleet on StP SC to overwhelm him from the northeast. You say you will use the build from Swe to strengthen your southern flank.



England of course will be moving for Nwy anyway. Since you threaten this build, you can pressure him to not convoy his army there. Certainly bouncing a convoy is a terrible risk, as two units are used when only one is (and in this case, those two units are 66% of his whole force!).

Or perhaps he will be in Nwg and Nth and he will support himself, which again will be wasteful as you are, in fact, going to Finland. Even if he convoys his army with support, now he uses all his units to get one depot.

Austria and Turkey may be convinced to let you have Rum as it appears you are stuck up north. Handing you Rumania may then be in their interest – but be sure to

keep in mind they will always be ready to plot against you, hoping your south will crumble while you keep strong in the north, protecting them from England and Germany.

Once the moves are out and you are in Finland, you of course will have to deal with those repercussions, which are basically as follows.

First and most obvious, it opens StP up. If you got Swe or Rum, you can build a fleet there.



England looks either very foolish (if it uses all its units to support itself into Nwy) or very tricky (as if there was some double dealing where you two only feigned conflict). An EF or EG may collapse if F or G supports England into Bel to ensure he gets a build, and suddenly England ends up with two. You can rightly say you had no plan to go into Nwy and make it look like England stirred up the commotion for a sympathy build. Similarly, if he throws all his efforts into Nwy, his ally may wonder at his priorities and an FG may form in response.

Meanwhile, your army in Finland acts something like a catapult in Scandinavia. It is the muscle that moves units around that area, able to support moves between StP and Nwy and Swe, as well as being able to defend all those areas. England and Germany will have a very difficult time destroying that unit, and therefore you.

The rest of the game, of course, is up to you (starting, of course, with whether to build a fleet on the north or south coast of StP). But this plan is one I think is powerful when executed. But, as I said earlier, it is not an opening tactic, but a diplomatic strategy to be used under certain board conditions. Good luck using it!

[[Don't just watch your back when you go up against Alex. Watch your front too...and beware of a kick in the groin.]]

Variants: The Next Evolution in Tournament Diplomacy

by Dirk Knemeyer

Diplomacy is my favourite game. Face-to-face play is my passion, while online play is my lifestyle. I've only been playing for about 2.5 years, but in that time I've played about 30 games, 75% or so being online. If you're reading this you've also been bitten by the bug so I'm not going to belabour all the things we addicts like about this beautiful game.

Perhaps the biggest disconnect in the Diplomacy community is the great degree of segregation between the offline and online players. Many of the best players in each community do not play in the other. It is a shame, because each community suffers for the lack of the other's unique spirit, and the player suffers for missing out on another very engaging part of the hobby. While the pros and cons of both offline and online play are fairly well-known, there is one big advantage to online play that is essentially absent from face-to-face that rarely gets talked about: playing with map and rules variants of the game.

So-called "Standard" Diplomacy, the set of rules and map devised by Allan Calhamer in 1959, has evolved to be a "chess-like" experience. The best players, along with being excellent diplomatic players, have an intimate knowledge of the course and flow of the standard game: the early 2-on-1 in the west; the power of the juggernaut; the Lepanto; the various stalemate lines - among so many others. The game has been written about, studied and discussed to death. This is not a bad thing. However, the fact that major face-to-face tournaments all use this same vanilla approach to the game limits the potential and even ability of the players. Memorizing patterns and responding within well-established frameworks is a certain kind of challenge. However it is bereft of the opportunity offered by new ways of playing the game: having to explore things that are fresh, which do not inherently confer advantages to the best-studied, and relying on new problem solving absent the gravitas of the past.

I've talked to top face-to-face tournament players about variants before, and almost universally they quickly turn their nose up to the idea. Words like "random", "goofy", "unbalanced", "broken", "unnatural" and "inauthentic" are among the responses I've gotten. Yes, like any community-created game or assets, Diplomacy variants run the gamut of quality. Some are terrible. Many are pedestrian. But some are pure magic. Here are some qualities that go into making a good Diplomacy variant, along with some exemplars of those in practice:

1. Balanced. Some variants have been played many times by expert people, and are indeed balanced and fair. This is generally accomplished in two ways. I'm

going to use two wonderful designs by variant designer Baron Powell to illustrate my examples. The first is symmetrical balance, presenting players with positions that are, on their face, almost equal in their chances for success. Powell designed his "1900" variant as an explicit attempt to take Calhamer's classic Standard version of the game and make it more balanced. Any experienced player knows how terribly unbalanced Standard is. Even allowing for the classic "play the players, not the position" approach, France and Russia are significantly better draws than Austria and Italy. That is why many face-to-face tournaments try to even out the "good" and "bad" draws players take over the course of a tournament.

Using Standard as a starting point, Powell made gentle changes to the map and position, including changing some territories, altering the location or existence of SC's, and even having other powers besides Russia start the game with more than 3 centers. In his lengthy Gamer's Guide on the variant, Powell goes to great lengths to illustrate the problems in Standard and what he's done to correct them. The development of 1900 took years and was iterated multiple times, based on playtests. It is highly evocative of Standard but simply a better, more balanced variant in every respect. It should be the de facto variant for any "Standard" tournament at this point. But most face-to-face players have never even heard of it.

The other way to build a balanced variant is through asymmetrical positions that, together, create a balanced whole. As an example of this we will use Powell (along with Jeff Kase)'s "Ambition & Empire" variant, set after the Seven Years' War (1763). Ambition & Empire is a 10 player variant with significant asymmetry. On one extreme you have Great Britain and Austria, both with a plum 4 SC and starting units in the north and the south. They are in the best position, and need to be talking with everyone from the word "go". On the other extreme you have Poland-Saxony and Denmark-Norway, both 2 SC powers with tenuous positions. And every flavour in between. While, for example, Poland-Saxony has the worst record in Ambition & Empire it is no worse than Austria in Standard. However, unlike Standard which suggests an equality that doesn't really exist, Ambition & Empire is unabashedly asymmetrical. Each power has different and interesting problems, yet statistics from the game show that every position can and does thrive. This is due to the design skill of Powell and his willingness to iterate the game based on significant playtests. The result is a balanced system with positions of lack and plenty.

Whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, the issue of balance is crucial to a good variant. There are a number

of variants that have it, and they should not be ignored because of the many home brews that do not.

2. Thematic. Personally, I like variants based on historical themes. The ones that are done well teach me something about the operating dynamics of the time, and evoke a living history in the context of the game. Powell is very good at this, but so are other designers like Charles Feaux de la Croix and Benjamin Hester. Other variants focus on more fun themes, ranging from Tolkien to Star Trek to Lost among many others. Even the variants among these that are not properly balanced - and thus, for my money, not particularly good - provide something for the uninitiated that is often missing from the dry veneer of Standard: a fun story. Playing, for example, Mike Sims' "Haven" variant - which actually seems fairly balanced despite being massive - players were happily building narratives around their leprechauns, gnomes, knights and goblins. Crucial to a skillful variant is strong execution of theme, picking something for explicit reasons - of learning, fun or both - and making that a selling point of the game you are presenting. It is what will draw people to the game and, if executed well, keep them coming back for more.

3. Mechanically Engaging. Some variants stick with the same rules as Standard, simply using a different map. Other variants introduce new mechanics. This is the trickiest part of variant design. After all, what makes Diplomacy so magical is the elegant simplicity of the rules. Once you learn the basics everything fades away except your diplomacy, strategy and tactics. That's a glorious feature of a game. Some variants gently introduce just one or two similarly simple rules to attempt to enhance the experience. One example is the use of alternate units such as planes and aircraft carriers in designs by people like Nick Higgins. Others are "chaos" builds, allowing the player to build in any SC that they control. My favourite simple rule is from Powell and Kase's "Ambition & Empire", the introduction of "Diplomacy Points".

In a game using Diplomacy Points, rather than simply leave neutrals SC's ungarrisoned and open to be freely taken, every SC on the board is manned with a fleet or army. In the case of neutrals, these can only hold or support another unit's action, not move or convoy. What order they receive is based on how players spend "Diplomacy Points" (DP's). In "Ambition & Empire", you have 1 DP for each SC you own, up to a maximum of 3. You can spend each of those DP on an order for a neutral unit. All DP spends are added up during the adjudication, and whichever order had the most points spent on it is what the neutral does. If no points are spent, or in the case of a tie, the unit holds.

So, pretending this rule was in use in Standard, let's

imagine that it is fall 1901 and Sweden and Norway are both garrisoned with fleets. Russia wants to pursue a northern strategy and sits with F BOT, A StP. England, working a western triple, sits A Edi, F NRG, F NTH. Both want Norway, but England has the upper hand. However, with DPs, Norway remains very much in play. After all, each DP put on F Sweden by ALL seven players around the board counts toward determining what order Sweden makes. The range of possible results are extensive: maybe Germany promises to support Russia into Sweden, so Russia orders BOT - Swe and simply supports Norway with St. Pete to keep it out of English hands. Or, perhaps Germany consents to tap NTH and break the support, compelling Russia to try and get enough DP together to have Swe S StP - Nwy rule the day. Or maybe it's a double-cross, as Germany is committed to the western triple. Or, or, or. But the bottom line is, rather than having neutrals sit there unrealistically waiting to be taken without any effort, now they have limited self-defense and, again realistically, players can influence how they behave by spending their precious diplomacy points. Best of all DP spends are secret. You will never know if the person you made a deal with spent the way you wanted them to; it becomes another elegant layer of playing the other players.

Now, on the other extreme, there are a variety of variants that try and throw "kitchen sink" rule changes at the game. Many of these are creative and range from allowing natural disasters that change the topology of the map, to having a litany of different special abilities units can perform, to having the ability to transport from certain spots on the map to far away spots. For me these more intricate variants are less interesting. I play Diplomacy for the elegance. But I suspect, for some of you, that would be enjoyable too.

I find the best of variants to be a superior playing experience to the tried-and-true Standard. They are better balanced, more interesting, deeper and more fun. The fact that most face-to-face tournament players look down on variants and, in most cases, have never played the best of them, frankly undermines their potential for greatness as complete players. As bright and brilliant as the top tournament players I've opposed might be, until they can prove their mettle in top variants of Diplomacy for which they do not have decades of practice, they are like the chess champion who has reached grand master status playing comfortably within WCF events but, if asked to play the hustlers in Washington Square Park, would be left looking silly. For my money, the best players in the world would be those who can excel playing face-to-face with a myriad of different variants, forcing all participants to rely on creative skills as well as strategic, and overwhelm all comers in familiar and unfamiliar alike. If someone were to host a face-to-face tournament of that nature I would be on the first plane in.

DipCon: a Bird's-Eye View

By Jim O'Kelley

Unless you're one of our 25 followers, you missed my Tweets from the 2011 DipCon at the Carnage Accords in Fairlee, Vt. I covered the event for @WindyCityWeasel, my club's Twitter account. I'm nothing if not inclusive, however. For your benefit, I've reproduced my Tweets here. Here's my take on DipCon 2011, in short bursts of 148 characters or less.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 12:01 a.m.

Leaving for Carnage in eight hours. Alarm goes off in five. Yuck.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 5:36 a.m.

Meghan¹ is driving us to the airport. Maybe Celeste² HASN'T locked up top s.o. honors!

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 5:41 a.m.

Kevin's³ train is delayed. The extra e stands for "waiting on him."

@krokelly, Nov. 4, 5:45 a.m.

@WindyCityWeasel There is no E in waiting on him.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 6:30 a.m.

And then there were three. C-Mac bailed on us last night, so it's just me, Kevin and Yeargin. Rendezvous in Manchester in 4.5 hours.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 7:46 a.m.

Jason O'Donnell on seat in front of me.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 11:13 a.m.

On ground. Waiting for my stomach to land and Yeargin. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 11:37 a.m.

20 oz beers at airport bar. Prodigal Weasel is on the ground. #dipcon



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 11:38 a.m.**

One half of your WCW DipCon delegation.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 12:06

1 Meghan is my wife of six months.

2 Celeste Levitz-Jones is Weasel John Gramila's girlfriend. We thought she had locked up top significant-other honors when she not only played on a board in September to help us fill it, but also topped it.

3 Kevin O'Kelly (no relation), my traveling mate. According to him, the second e in O'Kelley stands for evil.

p.m.

My wife's parting advice: "if you play like a pussy, you'll lose like a pussy."

@coeus5594, Nov. 4, 12:15 p.m.

@WindyCityWeasel I'm going to be watching to make sure you follow your wife's advice. #dipcon

@FTFDiplomacy5, Nov. 4, 12:40 p.m.

Im out if whiskey and need to pee. Thankfully New Hampshire has liquor stores at rest areas... #dipcon #wtf



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 12:42 p.m.**
Looking for lunch. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 12:43 p.m.
@FtFDiplomacy where are you eating lunch?

@FTFDiplomacy, Nov. 4, 12:45 p.m.

@WindyCityWeasel Stopped at a tapas place in Concord. By the capital.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 1:42 p.m.

Wrapping up lunch at the Foot Hills of Warner. Back on the road in 10. #dipcon



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 2:01 p.m.**

We could use one of these signs at every board this weekend. #dipcon

@krokelly, Nov. 4, 2:10 p.m.

This song represents my hope in the tournament this weekend," says Jim @WindyCityWeasel as Livin' on a Prayer started on the radio.



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 2:52 p.m.**
The view from our terrace.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 4:32 p.m.
Spent half of the rules explanation catching up with Mike Hall, Jon Hill

4 Tournament Director Alex Amann.

5 Matt Shields covered the event for @FTFDiplomacy.

and Matt Shields. How do you play Navegador? #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 4:52 p.m.

My minion, @FtFDiplomacy, is playing for me.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 5:38 p.m.

Just made weight. Round starts in 80 minutes. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 6:19 p.m.

"If it will get me Belgium, I'll lick anybody."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 6:51 p.m.

LARPer just arrived. Most of them failed their saving throw vs Dork. #dipcon



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 8:13 p.m.**

Post-Fall 1902. I'm Italy. Four boards.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 8:22 p.m.

Buffalo melting down on board 3.

Can you hear it?

@JohnnyWax, Nov. 4, 8:30 p.m.

@WindyCityWeasel Oh dear. Tell us more about #Buffalo #meltdown.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 4, 10:03 p.m.

7 to 5 in 1905. Sigh. #dipcon

@wabbott9, Nov. 4, 10:05 p.m.

@WindyCityWeasel I know how you feel.

@JohnnyWax, Nov. 4, 10:10 p.m.

@WindyCityWeasel What #Buffalomeltdown #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 12:23 a.m.

Game ends in spring 1910. I finished fourth with 5 centers. Blech. Aussie Peter McNamara tops with 14 as England.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 12:25 a.m.

Adam Sigal: "I was afraid you were going to do something stupid."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 2:03 a.m.

Traded stories for a couple of hours. Now going to bed. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 8:03 a.m.

Sleep or shower? Sleep or shower? Sleep or shower? #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 8:59 a.m.

Sleep, shower and a quick breakfast. Round 2 starts soon. #dipcon

@FTFDiplomacy, Nov. 5, 9:05 a.m.

Doesn't sound like there were any huge results last night. Couple 11 center tops I think. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 9:07 a.m.

@FtFDiplomacy Peter McNamara topped my board with 14. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 9:09 a.m.

Five boards this morning. Yeehaw! #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 9:19 a.m.

Board 2 A Adam Sigal, E Chris Campbell, F Jimmy Rousseau, G Mike Hall, I John Fitzpatrick, R Carl Ellis, T Me.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 12:32 p.m.

Draw voted down spring 1906. Huh.



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 1:18 p.m.**

Game over in Spring 1908. Shared board top for me at 10 centers. I'm Turkey in the pic.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5,

2:42 p.m.

Chris Martin just soloed to take the tournament lead and an apparent lock on the Grand Prix. Bastard. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 2:44 p.m.

"Carl, it's always better to work with me than Adam Sigal."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 3:58 p.m.

Pretty good cheeseburger at the Hungry Bear in Bradford. With Sigal, who just ordered the lava cake. #dipcon



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 4:03 p.m.**

Behold, the lava cake.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 4:06 p.m.

Sigal: "I don't know how I got chocolate all over myself. I feel like a toddler." #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 5:01 p.m.

"Chris Martin is the 1 percent." #dipcon



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 5:09 p.m.**
Gonna stab this guy. England to my France.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 5:10 p.m.
Round 3, board 3: a Maletsky, e shields, f me, g houser, i o'kelly, r Cooley, t wheeler. #dipcon

@FTFDiplomacy6, Nov. 5,

5:15 p.m.

The PTKS thought Buffalo was too big to fail
@WindyCityWeasel "Chris Martin is the 1 percent." #dipcon

@FTFDiplomacy7, Nov. 5, 5:17 p.m.
Occupy Fairlee wants you to forgive all unsecured loans and Matt Shields' DipCon performance
@WindyCityWeasel #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 7:28 p.m.
Wahoo! Game ended in Spring 1905. Board top at 8 centers. #dipcon

@FTFDiplomacy, Nov. 5, 7:30 p.m.
Accidentally took a crappy draw.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 7:35 p.m.
Kevin O'Kelly: "I trusted Jim O'Kelley, and look where it got me." #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 8:38 p.m.
Former NADF President Dave Maletsky: "I will rub my balls across the face of the hobby." #dipcon

@skyblueshu8, Nov. 5, 8:40 p.m.
Still at work.

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 8:58 p.m.
Brent: "In my mind, Graham is older." Jim: "That's because Graham is the better player." #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 9:20 p.m.
Brent9: "We need a better scoring system." Jim: "Recall." #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 9:37 p.m.

6 Guest Tweet from Thomas Haver.

7 Ditto

8 NADF President Conrad Woodring, who missed DipCon this year.

9 Brent Waddington, who was recently voted onto the NADF DipCon Committee.

Three large pizzas. Those other guys are still playing. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 11:44 p.m.
"If your goal is to teach Sideshow Jon a lesson, you've already lost." #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 5, 11:45 p.m.
One board still going. Yeargin pushing for a solo and the DipCon championship. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 12:41 a.m.
It's late. We all need some of Dave's sausage. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 1:21 a.m.
And the final board ends with Yeargin at 13. Martin wins DipCon and the Grand Prix. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 1:26 a.m.
Sigal: "Everything is better with more zeros."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 1:30 a.m.
Jon Hill: "I was the only person who was writing orders that made any f#@&ing sense." #dipcon

@krokelly, Nov. 6, 2:06 a.m.
Yeargin to **@WindyCityWeasel** "Some people play to win best countries, some people play to win tournaments."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 2:07 a.m.
@krokelly Me: "Some people succeed, and some people fail."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 2:36 a.m.
2nd cigar and it's below freezing. Brrr. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 2:43 a.m.
Jon Hill: "It always happens. There's always a mother f&\$@er next to me."

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 2:56 a.m.
Giving up the ghost at 3 am. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 9:55 a.m.
Heading down to the awards ceremony. #dipcon



◀ **@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 10:13 a.m.**
First-place award. Carnage always has great prizes.
@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 10:22 a.m.

13 boards, 36 players. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 10:25 a.m.
A Jason O'Donnell, E Buffalo, F Jim O'Kelley, G Chris Martin, I Chris Barfield, R David Cheng, T Dave

Maletsky. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 10:28 a.m.

Tied 6 Jim O'Kelley and Mike Hall, 5 Roland Cooke, 4 Dave Maletsky, 3 Peter McNamara, 2 Peter Yeargin, 1 Chris Martin. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 11:12 a.m.

"But yah, takes less care of their appearance than I do." #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 11:59 a.m.

Indian buffet in Hanover. Awesome. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 3:27 p.m.Waiting on

flights at Manchester Airport. #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 5:15 p.m.

Last night, I waved goodbye Now it seems years... #dipcon

@WindyCityWeasel, Nov. 6, 7:06 p.m.

...I'm back in the city, Where nothing seems clear but thoughts of DipCon 2012, Aug 10-12 in Chicago. windycityweasels.org/wdc. C U there.

[[Jim O'Kelley's appearances in Diplomacy World have been too few and far between lately. Look for him at DipCon in Chicago in 2012.]]

Brent Stephen Henry Waddington Shocked, Shocked when Chris Martin Stabs for Solo

By Dan Qing Kwin

"We really had a good thing going, you know?" offered Brent Waddington after the second round of diplomacy at the Carnage Accords, the site of this year's North American Diplomacy Championship, known as 'Dipcon.' The event was held at the Lake Morey Resort in Vermont, approximately 90 minutes from Manchester, NH. Brent, Chris and thirty-four other diplomacy players had travelled from around the country to attend the event, where over three rounds on Friday, Saturday morning, and Saturday evening, thirteen games of diplomacy were played.



Playing in the bar of the Lake Morey resort was not the distraction it might have been for Brent, as the bar would remain closed until several hours after the game ended. "As England, I didn't mind that Chris's Germany was ahead of me in dots – at one point I had five, he had ten - but I caught up quickly and he even gave me Brest, so we were even at nine apiece. After we killed Buffalo's (Andy Bartalone) France, and I got my fleets into the Med, I thought we had everything sewn up," Brent recalled. In a different game, Brent's analysis might have been more accurate, but in this case he neglected to consider the fact that the German/English alliance faced a 14-center Turkey played by the daughter of Central USA's strongest non-

Chicago based player, Chris Mazza. Marguerite Mazza, playing in her second tournament, had eliminated Austria and Italy, and it was not long before Russia's last center was taken as well. "All along, Chris told me that we would go for a 1st/2nd place draw, which would be a great result for me. We just needed to take a few more centers from Marguerite to make that happen . . ."

The stunning view offered to the Diplomacy players from the bay windows overlooking the lake in no way distracted Brent from focusing on the task at hand. With 6 fleets in the med, a fleet in St. Petersburg (nc) and armies in Moscow and London, he felt secure. He concluded that no stab from Martin's 9 center Germany could stick – Martin only had two German fleets, safely in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea, and his armies were in Russia and the Galicia/ Bohemia/ Tyrolia line. Waddington owned England, Spain, Portugal, Marseilles, Norway, St.Pete, and Moscow – with Tunis assured to fall. But when Germany acquired Vienna and took Moscow, *and* Marguerite successfully defended Tunis, Brent was suddenly looking at two more German Fleets, and no builds of his own.

"In hindsight, maybe that should have been the moment that I started to suspect Chris's motives. On the other hand, you have to remember that he told me we were going to take a draw!" With nothing stopping the German fleet now in Denmark from moving to the North Sea that spring, Brent approached the former World Champion and asked him what was going on. "I'm just making sure you stick with the plan and that I get first place," Chris replied. "You're going to be able to grow a lot faster than me from the Italian dots, and we agreed I was going to have the most centers. Don't worry; I'll just

sit there in the North Sea.”



In the fall, after taking Edinburgh, StPete, Norway, and Trieste, Brent once again approached his game-long partner. “Chris! Seriously?” He began. “What happened to ‘she’s only playing in her second tournament, we want her to have a good experience?’ What about the draw? I’ll take

third place – you have fifteen centers now, you’re topping the board, we can just end it now.”

“You know, Brent, you’re right, we could do that.” Chris considered the situation. “But I think I am going to have to try to take the solo.”

“That’s so dirty. I can’t believe it. Really?” Brent was completely nonplussed.

“Yes, I know. Dirty. It is true, and I feel bad about it, but there it is – I thought we’d both be growing pretty equally, but now . . . it just doesn’t make sense any more to take the draw. If you had captured Tunis and built another unit at home, well, I wouldn’t be able to do this, right? It was just a bad break that she defended that way, and you didn’t make sure of it by attacking from the Western Mediterranean instead of the Tyrrhenian Sea.”

They walked back to the board, and orders were read, and Chris got to 18. Hands were shaken, and congratulations offered. It was to be the only solo victory of the weekend, though Peter Yeargin and Andy Bartalone both looked for chances to develop in their Saturday night games. Afterwards, Brent reflected:



“I just didn’t think that was the game we were playing. She, I mean, come on! It was only her second tournament. He, it was, I mean. Dirty. It was just dirty.” Asked for comment, Chris Martin noted that “Brent actually played a very good game – in the past he’s had a tendency to get yanked around by other people’s diplomacy, and in this case he stayed focused and got to a really strong position. At the end of the game, he only made a few minor mistakes that allowed me to get the one step I needed on him. His failing to take Tunis was pretty key – you use the TYS to cut the Ionian, and it’s a lock, right? Then he builds another unit at home, and it doesn’t matter that I took Moscow so much. But that’s just a minor part of what was a very strong game on Brent’s part. Ninety percent of the time that kind of patience and strong alliance play is going to get you a good result.”

Alex Amann ran a strong tournament, and the central clock ensured that all games moved at a good clip. The Carnage staff were unfailingly gracious to the diplomacy players, and host a top-notch event which was extremely well suited to hosting a major diplomacy event. In the end, the solo victory netted Martin the North American Championship, the Nor’easter circuit, and ensured that no one could pass him in points for the 2011 Grand Prix.

[[Dan Qing Kwin? Not really familiar with this chap. But he writes well, and provides some insightful reporting into a hotly-contested ftf event.]]

The Birth of World DipCon

by Richard Walkerdine

It wasn't my idea, honestly. I am really not to blame for it. But I will name the guilty men!

By the mid 1980s I had been helping to organise the annual 'Manorcon' games convention for several years and seen it grow into the largest face to face games convention in the UK with well over 200 participants. Then a British editor, Simon Billenness, who at that time was working in the USA and writing a regular 'From our American Correspondent' column for MAD POLICY about American zines suggested that maybe the UK (via Manorcon) could bid for the annual Dipcon tournament, which was the USA's premier Diplomacy convention.

A debate raged in the letter columns of MAD POLICY for several months. But then in March 1987 I received a letter from Fred C. Davis Jr., one of the leading lights of the American hobby at the time, pointing out that Dipcon was a traditional American event but why not try to organise a 'World Con' in 1988? The debate continued for several more months but eventually it was agreed that Manorcon 1988 would become World Dip Con 1.

So Simon and Fred are the real culprits!

The Manorcon Organising Committee got down to work – and there was a lot to do as we were anticipating far more participants than we had ever had before. Of course we also had to organise the 1987 event, but by then that was pretty much routine. But I think it was me who first suggested that if we were to host World Dip Con 1 we needed to have a Guest Of Honour, and it needed to be someone who would be known by everyone. Many names were suggested (and Conrad came close) but eventually we all agreed that there was only one possible candidate – Allan B. Calhamer, the inventor of the game.

I wrote to him (no email in those days of course) and invited him over, at our expense naturally. It wasn't a very clever letter (starting I think with something like 'Dear Allan, you don't know me but I know you') – sheesh! But it did the trick. He wrote back, agreed to attend and added that he would also bring his wife Hilda with him (at his expense) as neither of them had ever visited the UK before.

Simon of course had an American bank account so I took some of the Manorcon funds and sent some money off to him (yes, we could send funds electronically overseas even back then – but don't try it with Canada!) so he could buy Allan's air ticket, which of course he did.

Allan and Hilda turned up at our place the day before the event and stayed overnight (and of course I made the

mistake of offering them alcohol not knowing they didn't drink it for religious reasons, but we easily got over that – they really were a very nice couple and both Claire and I enjoyed their visit hugely). And hey, I was playing host to the inventor of the damn game! But we had a good night's sleep (the last I was to get for the next five days – but what the heck?)

The next day, 15th July 1988, we drove up to Birmingham. We had taken hundreds of bookings before the event but the final total was 330 – the largest games convention ever held in the UK and including visitors from all over Europe, the USA (I particularly remember Larry Peery and Fred Davis – nice guys) and even Australia. We were well pleased.

I got there early as there was a lot of work to do with registrations and room allocations (greatly helped by my fellow organisers, for whom I will always be thankful) but in fact at least 20 people had already arrived when I turned up. In a way this was helpful as it meant there weren't too many comments about my hair having been permed (long story – tell you another time). But soon after that the flood gates opened.

All sorts of games were played over the next few days and all sorts of tournaments were organised (we even initiated the idea of printing a daily results bulletin which was handed out the following morning – and typing and printing at 4am is one reason why I didn't get much sleep). But of course the main focus was Diplomacy. A total of 34 games were played, including 24 on the Saturday (more than Allan had ever seen before at one time - and he was also well pleased!)

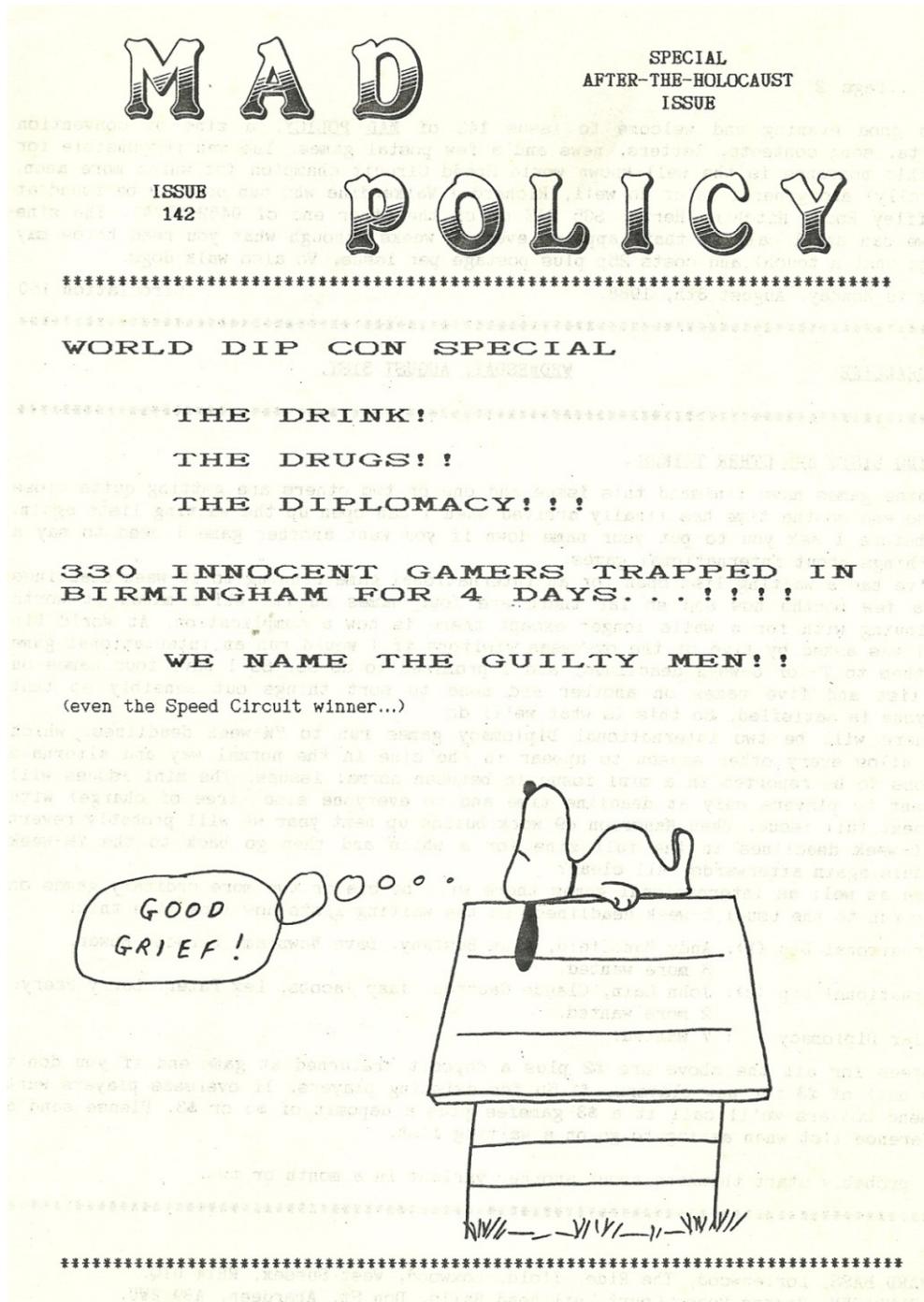
Allan chatted with most of the people there and also gave a couple of talks about the invention of Diplomacy. He had even brought a copy of the first ever Diplomacy set which he had constructed in 1954! He had also persuaded Avalon Hill (who at that time were distributing the game) to donate \$250 to the winners of the Dip tournaments – a very nice gesture.

But perhaps the most memorable incident was when Richard Egan (a British zine editor at the time) turned up a bit late while Allan was on stage giving his first talk. He looked at the stage, turned to me and said, 'Who's the guy with the beard?' Oh boy did he get some stick from every zine in the hobby! Good fun though.

But I must add that I won the Speed Circuit tournament and therefore became World Speed Circuit Champion for 1988 – and I still have the trophy. But hey, would you really expect me to ignore the opportunity of bragging rights?

But it was a great success and everyone went away very happy. I, and all my fellow organisers, were totally exhausted at the end but World Dip Con had been established and I am so proud that it lasts to this very day.

In the next issue of MAD POLICY I included a long account of all that had happened and of course made up a suitable cover for my zine. This is it.



A month or so later I got a letter from Allan giving his account of their visit – he and Hilda had actually arranged a three week vacation so they could 'see the sights' of the UK as well as attend WDC. I won't repeat it all here (it ran to four pages and I had to spread it over two issues of MAD POLICY) but it was a delightful read

of a first time American visitor to my country – and hey, it was written by Allan! His letter is in quote marks, interspersed with some comments of my own.

"We flew nonstop from Chicago O'Hare to London Heathrow. Since there is a six

hour time difference the day leaving was effectively 18 hours long and the day returning was 30 hours. Neither of us experienced any jet lag."

I so wish I could do that, but I never can – east or west I still take a day to recover.

"I discovered that if you fly from Chicago to London you don't need to reset your watch. All you do is look at it upside down and read time off the hour hand. If you want more accuracy you then turn the watch right side up and read the minutes."

Oh boy, that is so typically Allan. That man has a brain and a half.

"It rained almost all the time we were there, and was so cool I had to buy a wool cap. Since Chicago was in the middle of its record hottest summer, with 7 days over 100F and 47 days over 90F, this trip was a welcome way to break up the summer."

Our pleasure Allan – and welcome to summer in the UK (though we did have some near record high temperatures and a lot of dry weather (which my beans and beetroot didn't like at all) earlier this year).

Allan's letter goes on to describe his and Hilda's trip around the UK visiting many of our ancient monuments including castles, monasteries, manor houses and Roman remains (and even the home of Isaac Newton). They both loved it all, but I am getting a bit off topic here so I will cut to his account of the convention.

"Time for the convention was now at hand so we puzzled our way through to Hitchin and met Richard at his place, where we had a delightful evening of conversation with him and his lovely and sparkling wife Claire. Richard is six feet tall and about twelve inches wide at the shoulders, but I presented him with the inevitable Chicago Bears sweatshirt anyway. He seems to be a prehistorian, cricket fan, economist and young man on the way up of the kind that Maggie Thatcher likes."

Actually I am 22 inches wide (I just measured myself) and the sweatshirt fitted just fine. I still have it to this day in a drawer in the bedroom – thanks Allan. And I must admit there was no greater fan of Maggie than me. But let's get on to the con.

"The Diplomacy tournament was run with a firm fist around a mug by Nick Kinzett and the tournament plan seemed excellent. The first day was devoted to team play and the second to individual. Seven-player teams competed with each member playing one of each of the seven countries, of course at different boards. The next day the players played for the individual title, which was decided by their best score from both days.

There appeared to be several advantages to this scheme. If pals got together to form a team they ended up at different tables, reducing pre-game conniving. A pre-game alliance between two teams would involve fourteen people, making it hard to work up and harder to keep secret. A player who fell behind was less likely to throw the game as he would be letting his team down. So it seemed there was a lot of encouragement to compete vigorously and fairly."

We used this format for all of the Manorcon conventions and it did seem to work very well (and the Mad Policy All Stars won it twice (gloat!)). But of course you do need at least 49 players to make it work – perhaps not so easy today? But now let's get back to Allan.

"I gave a speech about the invention of Diplomacy, events and experiences along the way, strategy in the game and in general, MacKinder's geopolitics and so on. Their eyes glazed over after about an hour and a half but I made the most of a rare opportunity to talk with people who knew just what I was talking about. I also put the original Diplomacy set on display; it has armies 2.5 inches high and fleets 3 inches long in original flag colours and a large map to match."

Allan, our eyes most certainly did NOT glaze over. Here we were listening to a talk by the inventor of the game that we had all come to love for so many years. It was absolutely brilliant.

"The convention was excellently run and deserved the splendid 200 player turnout for the Dip tournament. Both Larry Peery, in a Diplomacy World Staff tractor cap, and Fred Davis were there. It was a memorable trip in which everything went well. The convention

was great, the Diplomacy people were great and Britain is great."

And Allan YOU were great. It was an absolute honour to play host to you and your lovely wife and to hear all that you had to say.

But perhaps (with no disrespect intended at all) the proudest aspect for me was that World Dip Con had been established and continues to this day. I regard that as my (and my colleagues) legacy to The One True Hobby. Thanks Allan.

Heh, and you thought the game was over...

By Alex Maslow

Hey you – yeah you! Did you just finish an online Diplomacy game? You did? Well, there's congratulations in order – it is no small feat to be dedicated to an online game, whether you survived for all 5 months, or were killed off by 1903. You played till the end. So now you can wash your hands of this game and be done with it forever, right? No grudges, of course.

But you aren't done yet. There's still one more step – end of game statements. For newer players, it is important to read all that get sent. For experienced players, it is imperative that you write them for all of your games, with all details possible.

What? But that's so much WORK! I'm done with the game, I played till 1909 without any NMRs. Why do I need to do more?

Two reasons. First, Diplomacy is actually a board game designed to be played in a few tense hours. Not really by design or even tradition, but merely per human nature, at the end of the game everyone spends some time telling the game from their point of view. Diplomacy is, of course, a game of deception and relationships (in that order). But deceptions kept to yourself are merely deceptions. But if you share them, why they become master plans your fellows can praise you for! Ever wonder how those memoirs from criminals get written? Or why Bond villains detail their plans before being killed? Their caught, but they want to show how brilliant they were. Well, for us Dippers, "the game is up!" is more literal and more common. Sharing your plans makes you feel good, and also lets others comment on your play. It lets you hone your skill, and lets you air out concerns you had privately during the game. They are no longer personal paranoias, but become topics of conversation. Just how likely was it that Italy would jump for Greece with Austria in Albania. The Italian player can now tell you!

But the other reason for sharing post game thoughts is

to help newer players. New players tend to see the game one-dimensionally. They may not understand that, as Germany, they have a vested interest in Austria, nor that France doesn't, long term, want to see a strong Turkey. As experienced players, it is our duty to share our knowledge about the game to the newer players so that they might improve. And end of game statements are the perfect time to do it. Sending bragging stories to new players will intimidate them (and also make us look like pricks), and strategy articles are only so useful – each and every game is different. But a detailed explanation on one's strategy in a game a new player participated in – ah! – that makes all the difference.

An example: While I have been playing for a very long time, only recently have I really decided to hone my skill. I was content to play and be a general wildcard, and just hoping to win. This is obviously not how to win Diplomacy, you don't fall into solos. But then I started attending tournaments and enjoyed talking to the older and stronger players after the games, and began learning about the larger view. Then, by chance, I played on a board with Eric Mead of DiplomacyCast at WeaselMoot. After the game was over, I had to go to catch a train to get back to my friend's apartment, so I could not talk to anyone about the game. On the next episode of DiplomacyCast, however, Eric broke down the game bit by bit, pointing out trends I had glossed over. I learned an awful lot from listening to his point of view.

So let's do our hobby a large favor and keep those EOGs coming, so we can open ourselves to constructive criticism as well as imparting wisdom to new players. Everyone wins! And that's awful rare in Diplomacy.....

[[I admit I am not always the most reliable when it comes to writing my own EOG's, but a well-written one can be a real joy to read, providing entertainment, insight, and education...not to mention helping you get to know the playing styles of others around you!]]

The Long Walk

By Jim Green



wins the "Grand Prize" which is to offer the satisfaction of any wish for the survivor. The book is about a particular relationship between two of these boys. Specifically, about the dynamic of survival at the expense of another, even an ally and friend's demise.

Maybe you've picked up on the connection to Diplomacy. Enjoy!

[[Aside from The Long Walk being a terrific read, it also bears some resemblance to the more recent series Hunger Games...so if you enjoy that series, you owe it to yourself to find The Long Walk. It is easiest located in the collection "The Bachman Books" along with ANOTHER fantastic early King novel "The Running Man" (which has nearly no resemblance to the goofy film by the same name). There are parallels to Diplomacy in both novels. I'd love to hear some thoughts on that. Or, how about a full article on the Diplomacy lessons found in the works of King/Bachman? I personally love articles that tie in to literary works, whether they're classics, modern, horror, science fiction, or anything else!]]

I would like to submit for Dipper's consideration a comparison of book and game. The book is "The Long Walk", written by Stephen King, although published originally under his pseudonym Richard Bachman. It is a story about an annual event in some future world. The event is a sort of reality game show where 100 strong young males, (I think they have to be under 21), start out on a non-stop marathon walking trek through the backroads of Maine. Only one can finish. As the walk continues (with the eager Reality TV crowd thrilled to be first person witnesses) those who cannot keep up are shot. Walkers are given three warnings if they slow their pace; after the third they are shot by the reality soldiers in half-tracks that follow along. The walk goes on for days. They have only the water and food that they can carry. As the walk continues, small alliances, even friendships develop. More than once, a walker is saved by another walker from certain death. As the walk continues, however, the survivors begin to resent that those who falter are saved by their friends. For in saving someone, you are yourself a greater risk. There are multiple group alliances, some clear bad guys, some kinda good guys, and the grey area in between. Finally they all agree that it is forbidden to provide assistance to anyone, that people have to die. And on they go, falling off, being shot, sometimes rebelling against the soldiers or trying to run off. They are all shot. One survives and



SAN MARINO CONVENTION 2012

Convention Internazionale dedicata ai GIOCHI DA TAVOLO, in particolare ai giochi di simulazione storica, sportiva e finanziaria (board-wargames, boardgames e wargames). May 11 – May 13



San Marino
11-12-13
Maggio

Giancarlo Ceccoli

5/12/2011

SAN MARINO CONVENTION 2012

International Convention devoted to table games, especially the historical simulation games, sports and financial (board-wargames, boardgames and wargames).



After the success of the SMC 2011, see above, ASGS is being organized for the next convention of 2012. Numerous innovations in the program, for the 4 main Sections: - Board games; - Historical wargames; - Static model ; - Tavolieri (chess, checkers, Go, etc..)

Section games (board-wargames) hosts, as always, the tournament of Diplomacy. By partnering with AID, an Italian Dip association, and its President Luca

Pazzaglia, and friends Alex Lebedev and Francesco Conte, our association will have the honor and responsibility to organize the European Diplomacy Convention XX!

After the EDC XI, organized in 2003, for the first time in Italy and San Marino, the ASGS is really pleased to be able to arrange a second appunatemnto so important for all fans of the game!

The Convention

EuroDipCon XX takes place as part of **San Marino Convention 2012**, in the comfortable **Best Western Palace Hotel**** in San Marino**. **SMC 2012** runs May 11 to May 13 from Friday morning (14 pm) to Sunday evening (6 pm).

EuroDipCon XX will consist of three qualifying rounds (Friday afternoon, Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon) with a final round on Sunday morning, which will feature the top board. The winner of the top board will be European Champion. Additionally, the Saturday afternoon round will be the team round for teams of 4. Prize giving will follow the final round on Sunday afternoon and should be completed before 5pm. **SMC** traditionally hosts the **CISD Diplomacy Championship**.

There will be many awards to play for! Running on a central clock, games will be played in the European Style, finishing after winter 1907.

1- Admission to EuroDipCon XX also provides full access to SMC 2012, so visitors will be able to...

- play any games people bring with them;
- buy from the game shops

2- Attendance at SMC costs only 8 € for the whole tournament on Diplomacy and accommodation is available in the Palace Hotel or others establishment. Hotels have dedicated, free, car parks.

3- Travel

http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page_id=6

4- Registration

If you would like to join us at EuroDipCon XX and SMC 2012, please write an e-mail to:

Giancarlo Ceccoli, gceccoli@omniway.sm
Luca Pazzaglia, lucapazzaglia@alice.it

The names of players are published on this page:
http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page_id=9

5- The Republic of San Marino State

http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page_id=11

Thanks, Giancarlo ceccoli

Presidente A.S.G.S. - www.asgs.sm

XENOLOGIC: An Occasional Column Devoted to the World of Diplomacy

by Larry Peery

Only time will tell if the last quarter of 2011 will go down in history as one of those decisive periods when epochs end and ages begin, but there's much to look back on and much to speculate on about the future. In both cases two actors are the focus of our attention, the USA and China. The teeter-totter goes up and down and it's unclear yet where it will finally stop. But it is clear that these two powers are engaged in a struggle of titanic proportions in many areas: political, diplomatic and economic struggles are already underway, and the possibility of military conflict seems increasingly possible if not yet probable.

In addition to our review of the US-China confrontation we'll consider the state of the art of spycraft, both at home and abroad. Our Diplomacy section covers everything from Gunboat Diplomacy to the Ottoman Empire, WWI Paris, an up-to-the-minute real world Dip variant, thoughts on WDC 2011, and the usual pearls of wisdom and Peeriblah.

I've grouped most of the book reviews together for ease of reference. I've done a huge amount of reading in the last quarter, most of it scholarly, some of it a waste of printer's ink. Books about China, Condi Rice's look at her years in the State Department, and some stuff that would make James Bond blush are offered for your education and amusement. :-)

We'll stop by Foggy Bottom for a couple of social events, and a look at how Hillary's been doing as secretary of state. Oh, and the State Department has a new website that might even be useful. Perhaps. Well, maybe.

Some other actors in our diplomatic passion play exited the stage last quarter and we'll look at the best and worst of them.

Finally, a look at what I considered the best of 2011's dip and Dip. You'll be surprised.

From New York Times, 21 November 2011
How China Can Defeat America
Yan Xuetong

From New York Times, 29 November 2011
The Future of China
Joseph A. Bosco

The opening salvo in our US-China discussion comes from a Chinese professor of political science. The almost immediate response comes from a "Top Secret America" alumni who raises the interesting question, "Is the

current US-China contra temps just another zero-sum game?"

From The Daily Mail, UK, 26 November 2011
Will World War III be between the US and China?
Max Hastings

From WantChinaTimes.com, Taiwan, 26 October 2011
Six issues could lead to US-China military conflict:
RAND study
Staff Reporter (unidentified)

Leave it to the Brits to get right to the point, and then spend pages and pages discussing it. Actually, the Hastings article is a tabloid approach to the more pragmatic RAND study referred to in the second article. Note, however, that that article comes from Taiwan and the author is unidentified. The six explosive issues are: North Korea, Taiwan, cyber warfare, the South China Sea, Japan and India.

From Global Security Newswire, USA, 30 October 2011
US-China Nuclear Posture Dialogue Stymied by
Miscommunication, Experts Say
Rachel Oswald

Interestingly, the US contributor to this article is a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists, while the Chinese contributor comes from the same Chinese university as Yan (see above article). It's a good, but basic discussion of the similarities and differences of the US and Chinese attitudes toward nuclear weapons.

From New York Times, 3 October 2011
Savior of the World, Heal Thyself: Prescription for
America's Ailments
Walter Russell Mead

Mead reviews THAT USED TO BE US: HOW AMERICA FELL BEHIND IN THE WORLD IT INVENTED AND HOW IT CAN COME BACK by Thomas L. Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum. Anything Friedman writes immediately goes to the top of the best seller lists (especially the New York Times). Here the authors discuss how America's weakened domestic situation hampers its Great Power role-playing.

From New York Times, 23 October 2011
US Scales Back Diplomacy in Iraq Amid Fiscal and
Security Concerns
Tim Arango and Michael S. Schmidt

A case study of what Friedman and Mandelbaum wrote

about.

From The Diplomat, Taiwan, 22 December 2011
A Two-Ocean Navy No More?
James R. Holmes

In by-gone days the US policy was to have a Navy equal in power to any two other world navies. Then, as a result of WWII, the US policy became one of having a navy that could fight two major wars at the same time. Now, the author suggests, we face the reality that the US Navy can barely handle its numerous regional responsibilities, let alone a worldwide naval conflict. What to do in the days of a rapidly diminishing fleet?

From Time Global Spin blog, 21 November 2011
As US Pivots Toward Asia, China Looks to Strengthen Itself
Austin Ramzy

Will the South China Sea be to WWII what the North Sea was to WWI? Stay tuned.

From BBC News, London, 7 December 2011
Hu Jintao tells China navy: Prepare for warfare
author unidentified

Within hours after this story first broke the Chinese Foreign Ministry was back-peddling, saying that the western media got it all wrong. That "that" wasn't what Hu said, or at least what he meant. Judge for yourself.

From The Diplomat, Taiwan, 3 December 2011
China's "Cult of the Military"
Le Hong Hiep

From The Diplomat, Taiwan, 3 December 2011
China's Military Spending
Belinda Helmke

Yes, the PLA (Peoples' Liberation Army) is the largest single employer in China. Yes, its share of China's government spending is growing. But in terms of firepower and real spending it's far behind the US, until you realize that China can keep 50 soldiers in uniform for what it costs the US to keep one. Read this story and then the one on North Korea's generals below. Hmmmm. Oh, and keep in mind that all fit men in Taiwan must serve in the military for 21 months. If they refuse to do so they spend 18 months in jail.

From Gizmodo.com, 14 November 2011
Why Is China Building These Gigantic Structures In the Middle of the Desert? (Update 2)
author unidentified

From Washington Post, 30 November 2011
Digging into China's nuclear tunnels
William Wan

From Seattle Times, 2 December 2011
US students dig up China's nuclear secrets: Arsenal could be huge
William Wan

Must be budget approval time, and the US military is desperate to puff up China's strength to head-off that 10% cut in military funding the Congress keeps talking about. It's the biggest boondoggle since the "missile gap" of the Nixon-Kennedy years.

From The Envoy, 20 December 2011
Moscow, eyeing US missile defense plans, announces work on 100-ton "monster" missile
Laura Rozen

From Los Angeles Times, 21 November 2011
Boeing delivers first batch of 30,000-pound bombs to Air Force
W. J. Hennigan

If they weren't dealing with such a deadly subject these two articles together would be worthy of a Mozart comic opera libretto. The Russian "monster" missile is nicknamed "Satan," but the article doesn't explain if the 100-tons refers to the weight of the missile, the payload (KT or MT, if you please), etc. The Russians current effort deterrent force is based on submarine launched missiles which are so deadly that the Russians can barely keep one of their six subs at sea, and test launches have already cost them a sub. The USAF bomb on the other hand, is a relative bargain at USD15M each. Read these in conjunction with STOCKPILE.

From USA Today, 4 November 2011 (from The Associated Press)
CIA's 'vengeful librarians' monitor Twitter, Facebook posts
author unidentified

In his worst nightmares George Orwell could never have imagined this. "In an anonymous industrial park in Virginia, in an unassuming brick building, the CIA is following tweets --- up to 5 million a day." And so it goes. Read this after you read TOP SECRET AMERICA (available on the Washington Post website or in book form).

From New York Times, 12 December 2011
China's Spies Are Catching Up
David Wise

A puff piece hyping Wise's new book TIGER TRAP.

From Gulf Today, Abu Dhabi, 10 December 2011
New magazine seeks to promote diplomacy
author unidentified

The UAE has launched a new publication devoted to international diplomacy called The International Diplomat. :-) How original.

From New York Times, 12 November 2011
A New Era of Gunboat Diplomacy
Mark Landler

The South China Sea has gotten a fair amount of attention from the media recently, but this article points out that the Eastern Mediterranean (oil deposits?) and Arctic (trade routes?) are also potential gunboat diplomacy hotbeds.

From Today's Zaman, Istanbul, 2 October 2011
Sophistication of Ottoman diplomacy brought to light
author unidentified

SULTANA 101 MEKTUP is a book that contains 101 letters written to the Ottoman sultans from world leaders in the 18th and 19th centuries. It's actually rather fascinating and a great resource for Turkey Diplomacy players who don't have a clue about what was going on in those days.

From Yahoo News, The Upshot blog, 11 November 2011
During WWI, France built a fake Paris to fool Germany
Mike Krumboltz

Well, after all it was Armistice Day and original stories on WWI are hard to come by these days.

From wtop blog, 9 October 2011
A role-playing game for nation building
Evan Haning

Reports on the IDS International "Culture Shock: Afghanistan," a role-playing game that teaches soldiers how to walk a virtual mile in the shoes of local Afghan leaders. It's not a first-person shooter. It's more like Sim City, Civilization or Diplomacy.

From Thorin Munro, 4 October 2011
WDC 2011 Final Results

It's a pity more foreigners couldn't attend last year's WDC event in Sydney. Still, the Aussies put on a very good event. Michael Binder, Dan Burgess, and Don Del Grande represented the USA. Binder took best France and came in fifth over-all. Well done! Andrew Goff is the new world champion. Congrats. Good to see Brendan Whyte's name on the roster.

From China Daily, Beijing, 30 October 2011
Diplomatic words of wisdom
Yang Wenchang

The author is president of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs and proves that the Chinese have mastered the art of writing Peeriblah.

From Reuters, 16 October 2011
Budget battle hobbles Clinton as clock ticks down
Andrew Quinn and Arshad Mohammed

From New York Times, 9 October 2011
No Time to Get Stingy
Carol Giacomo

Looking back at the last four years it seems to me that things in Washington are backwards. Obama, who most pundits thought would be strong in domestic affairs and weak in international relations, has been the opposite. Clinton, who many thought would be a strong domestic affairs-oriented president, has turned out to be surprisingly effective as secretary of state. Her biggest fight still lays ahead, getting Congress to maintain funding for diplomacy and foreign aid in view of the looming budget cuts. If she can win that one (and her experience as a senator makes it more likely than some think), she'll indeed join the ranks of truly great secretaries of state.

From Foreign Policy, 30 October 2011
Four secretaries convene to celebrate State's Diplomatic Reception Rooms
Josh Rogin

From US Department of State web site, 30 October 2011
Closing Remarks at the Gala Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms and the Completion of the Patrons of Diplomacy Endowment Fund
Hillary Clinton

From DC Performing Arts Examiner, 2 November 2011
Soprano Jessye Norman sings for the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Rooms
Patrick McCoy

From Bizbash.com website, 2 November 2011
State Department Dinner Reels in Rafanelli, Andres, and Four Secretaries of State
Walter Nicholls

Unless you've seen them, you can't appreciate these rooms located in the Department of State's Foggy Bottom headquarters. There are 41 meeting rooms in all, but only a half-dozen or so are really remarkable. Those contain a USD100M collection of Americana history and art; and are used for important State Department events. Tours for the public are available by reservation. Ranks right up there with the tours of the White House and Capitol. Among the evening's highlights were Ms. Norman's "America the Beautiful" which blew out candles on tables fifty feet from her position by the grand

piano, and Dr. Henry Kissinger's comment that "I never knew these rooms were so beautiful; since they didn't exist when I was secretary of state."

From US Department of State website, 16 October 2011
US Department of State Announces Launch of New Website
Office of the Spokesperson

<http://diplomacy.state.gov/discoverdiplomacy>

From New York Times magazine, 2 December 2011
The Secret to Hillary Clinton's Diplomatic Success
Noreen Malone

If a picture is worth a thousand words, this is a book!

From CNN, 3 December 2011
Clinton visit to Myanmar raises hopes
Frida Ghitis

A stunning surprise, but whose idea was it? And she pulled it off. Events since her trip suggest a bettering of US-Myanmar relations. After all, any improvement is better than nothing.

From Time, 7 November 2011
Hillary Clinton and the Rise of Smart Power (cover story)
Massimo Calabresi

Even in all the make-up and faux pearls she still looks more presidential than any Republican running for the presidency. Maybe she and Obama should swap jobs. If it worked for the Russians, why not?

From Los Angeles Times, 20 December 2011
Kim Jong Il's death creates diplomatic uncertainty for US
Paul Richter

From Chicago Tribune, 24 December 2011
North Korea is a tough target for US intelligence agencies
Ken Dilanian

From New York Times, 20 December 2011
Kim's Death Inspires Worries and Anxiety
Alan Cowell

From Time, 24 December 2011
The Generals Who Will Really Rule North Korea
Bill Powell

Richter writes this report from Washington, DC, which may be part of the explanation for why that uncertainty exists. Suffice is to say that the Chinese apparently knew of Kim's death days before the US did. Dilanian points out that "the lack of modern communications in secretive North Korea makes it hard for the CIA to get information. At the same time, Pyongyang is sophisticated enough to wage cyber warfare." Cowell

writes from London and offers some worldwide insights into Kim's passing. How many and which North Korean generals will be pulling Kim Jong Un's strings and for how long is an interesting question.

From CNN, 18 December 2011
Vaclav Havel, Czech dissident, playwright, politician dead at 75
Richard Allan Greene

From CNN, 23 December 2011
World bids farewell to Vaclav Havel
Richard Allan Greene

Not since the people's princess memorial outside Buckingham Palace have I seen so many flowers, candles, and tributes as those for Vaclav Havel. But there was a huge difference in the reasons for the tributes. People mourned the loss of Diana. People thanked Havel. His was a glorious life and no doubt he sits with Dubcek, Svoda, and the others in heaven.

From The Atlantic, 15 November 2011
How Walmart Is Changing China
Orville Schell

"The world's biggest corporation and the world's most populous nation have launched a bold experiment in consumer behaviour and environmental stewardship: to set green standards for 20,000 suppliers making several hundred thousand items sold to billions of shoppers worldwide. Will that effort take hold, or will it unravel in a recrimination tangle of misguided expectations and broken promises?"

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/12/how-walmart-is-changing-china/8709/>

When I finished first reading this story I took a deep breath and then went back and read it again. I can't remember the last time I did that. For that reason alone I have picked this as the best dip and Dip story of the year.

DIPLOMACY'S DREAM GAME OF 2011

US players board: Condi Rice, John Negroponte, Colin Powell, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Hillary Clinton, Paul Wolfowitz, and George Bush as GM.

International board: Cancelled due to lack of qualified players.

READING LIST

5 stars is great, 0 stars is a bomb.

ATLAS OF CHINA***1/2
National Geographic, 2008

UNDERSTANDING CHINA****1/2

John Bryan Starr
Hill and Wang, 2010 ed.

DENG XIAOPING AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF
CHINA*****

Ezra F. Vogel
Belknap Harvard, 2011

TIGER TRAP AMERICA'S SECRET SPY WAR WITH
CHINA**

David Wise
HMH, 2011

NO HIGHER HONOR***

Condoleezza Rice
Crown, 2011

HOW THE END BEGINS THE ROAD TO A NUCLEAR
WORLD WAR III**

Ron Rosenbaum
Simon & Schuster, 2011

STOCKPILE THE STORY BEHIND 10,000 STRATEGIC
NUCLEAR WEAPONS*

Jerry Miller
Naval Institute Press, 2010

TOP SECRET AMERICA THE RISE OF THE NEW
AMERICAN SECURITY STATE***

Dana Priest and William M. Arkin
Little, Brown, 2011

AREA 51 AN UNCENSORED HISTORY OF
AMERICA'S TOP SECRET MILITARY BASE**

Annie Jacobsen
Little, Brown, 2011

THE PRIZE THE EPIC QUEST FOR OIL, MONEY AND
POWER*****

Daniel Yergin
Free Press, 2009

NEXT TIME: RUSSIA: FROM VLADIMIR TO
CATHERINE TO GEORGE TO VLADIMIR

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

TempleCon TempleCon 2012 - Friday February 3rd 2012 - Sunday February 5th 2012 - Providence, RI - Contact: Jim-Bob Burgess - Website: <http://templecon.org/12/>

Ve Coppa Garibaldi - Sunday February 19th 2012 - Palais des Festivals et des Congrès à Cannes, France - Contact: Gwen Maggi

Ville Anjou Feu - Saturday April 14th 2012 - Sunday April 15th 2012 - Ferme de la Chesnaie à Avrillé en Maine-et-Loire, France - Contact: [Gabriel Lecointre](#) - Website: <http://www.18centres.com>

2012 CODCon Open - Saturday April 21st 2012 - Sunday April 22nd 2012 - Glen Ellyn, IL - Contact: Jim OKelley - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/codcon6>

San Marino Con 2012 - EDC XX - Friday May 11th 2012 - Sunday May 13th 2012 - Hotel Palace **** - San Marino, San Marino - Contact: [Giancarlo Ceccoli](#) - Website: <http://www.asgs.sm>

ManorCon XXX - Friday July 20th 2012 - Monday July 23rd 2012 - Stamford Hall, University of Leicester, United Kingdom - Contact: [Dave Simpson](#) - Website: <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

World Dip Con at Weasel Moot VI - Friday August 10th 2012 - Sunday August 12th 2012 - Chicago, IL - Contact: [Jim OKelley](#) - Website: <http://windycityweasels.org/wdc>

Diplomacy World Demo Game

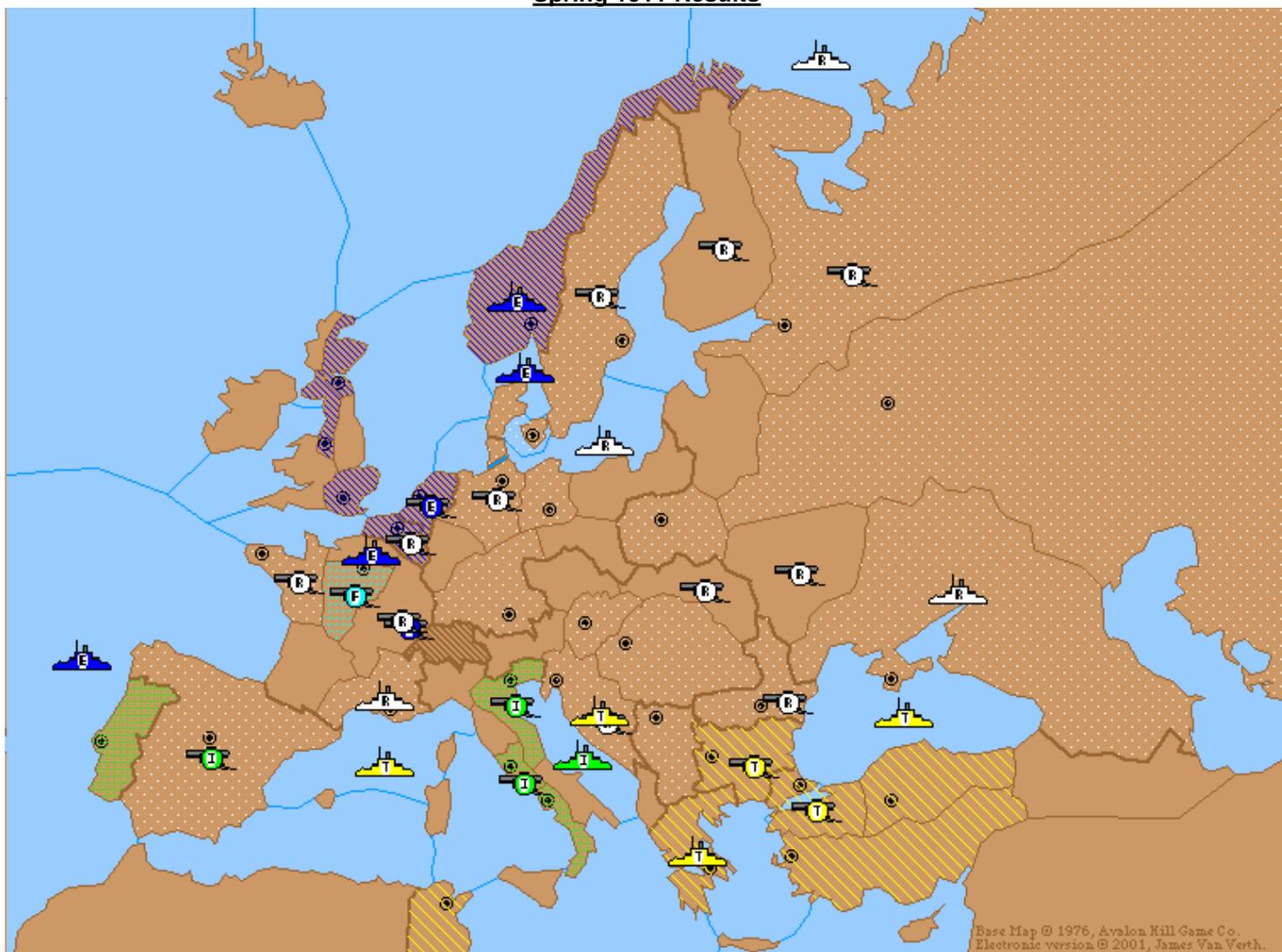
“Rotary Phones and 8-Track Tapes” – 2010B

The Players:
Austria: Steve Cooley
England: Bill Quinn
France: David Hood
Germany: Mark Fassio
Italy: Melinda Holley
Russia: Don Williams
Turkey: Gary Behnen

The Commentators:
 Jim Burgess (**BOLD**)
 Rick Desper (Normal Font)
 Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

The GM:
 Douglas Kent

Spring 1911 Results



Is this the Alamo, or the attack on the Death Star?

England: A Belgium – Holland, A Burgundy – Marseilles (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ruhr or OTB),
 F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports A Portugal – Spain, F Norway - Sweden (*Fails*), F Picardy - Brest (*Fails*),
 F Skagerrak - Denmark (*Bounce*).

France: A Paris Supports A Munich - Burgundy.

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports F Albania – Trieste, A Naples – Rome, A Portugal – Spain, A Rome - Venice.

Russia: F Baltic Sea - Denmark (*Bounce*), A Brest - Gascony (*Bounce*), A Denmark – Kiel,

A Finland Supports A Sweden, F Marseilles - Spain(sc) (*Fails*), A Moscow – St. Petersburg, A Munich – Burgundy, A Ruhr – Belgium, A Rumania - Serbia (*Bounce*), F Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine - Rumania (*Cut*), A Spain – Gascony (*Disbanded*), F St Petersburg(nc) - Barents Sea, A Sweden Supports F Baltic Sea - Denmark (*Cut*), A Trieste Supports A Rumania – Serbia (*Dislodged*, retreat to Budapest or Vienna or Tyrolia or OTB), A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*), A Warsaw - Galicia.
Turkey: F Albania – Trieste, F Black Sea - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Bulgaria - Serbia (*Bounce*), A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*), F Greece Supports A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*), F Tyrrhenian Sea - Gulf of Lyon.

Concession to Russia Fails

PRESS

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The woman looked up in confusion from her hot fudge sundae. She watched the angry crowd surround the sheriff who had an equally confused look on his face. She reached out and grabbed the arm of an angry-looking man who was waiting on traffic before crossing the street to the jail.
 "What's going on?"

"Didn't you hear? The concert's cancelled!"

"What concert? Skynyrd coming to town?"

"Who?"

"TSO coming to town?"

"Who?"

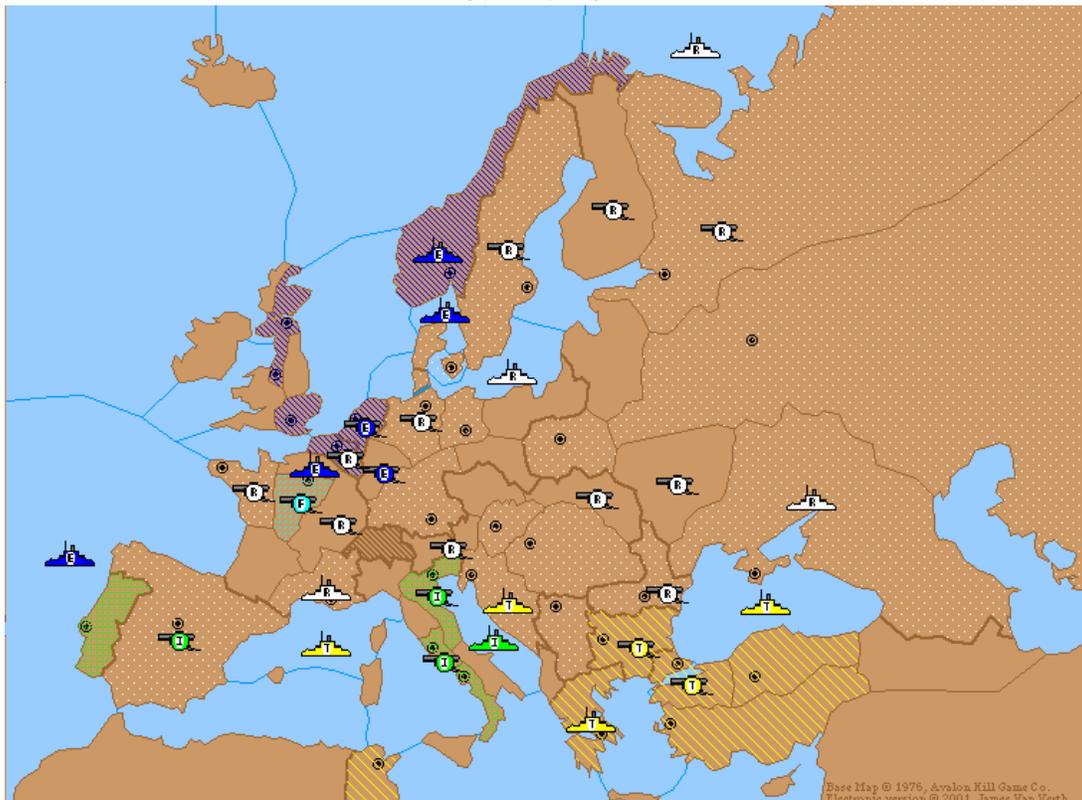
The woman shook her head. "Philistine," she muttered. "What concert?!" she yelled.

"The Fat Woman." The man's voice held a great deal of reverence. "She was going to sing but..." He furiously shook his head. "The Sheriff's gotta do something about this!" He pulled away and ran across the street.

"Well, the Sheriff can try," the woman muttered. She looked down at her melting sundae. "Well, fudge."

Ankara: Something wicked this way comes.

Summer 1911



Looking forward to the changing leaves, the blood on the battlefields...

England: Retreat A Burgundy - Ruhr..Has A Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Norway, F Picardy, A Ruhr, F Skagerrak.
France: Has A Paris.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, A Rome, A Spain, A Venice.

Russia: Retreat A Trieste - Tyrolia..Has F Baltic Sea, F Barents Sea, A Belgium, A Brest, A Burgundy, A Finland, A Galicia, A Kiel, F Marseilles, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A St Petersburg, A Sweden, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Greece, F Gulf of Lyon, F Trieste.

PRESS

None.

Spring/Summer 1911 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, this is an interesting development. Italy appears to have joined Turkey and England in the anti-Russia coalition. If true, I have to scratch my head at the chain of events. How did Don stab Italy without actually soloing? I still wonder why he didn't go for Venice in 1910.

But France did support Don's army as it moved to Burgundy. Is this something Russia wanted? A retreat to Ruhr is problematic, but it can only net one SC for the anti-Russia forces. Either Munich or Belgium or Kiel or Marseilles.

Russia should lose Spain and Portugal in addition to Trieste, but he'll pick up Norway and one of Belgium or Holland. He'll be down 1 SC, but England will be down 2. If Brest falls, Russia will be down 2.

There are some aspects of the Russian tactics I don't like here. He's sent a lot of armies North but since he won't be getting another fleet build, Russia won't be able to knock England back further from the North Sea/Norwegian Sea line. But what's more problematic is his weak approach to the Black Sea. He should have long ago moved his fleet to Armenia and built a second fleet to take the Black Sea. (I think he should have done this before stabbing England.)

He's got five forces up North dedicated to taking one more SC. If he'd sent these forces South, he would be in far better shape vis-a-vis Turkey and Italy. And what the point of A Tri S A Rum - Ser? He had to know he was facing a dislodgement in Trieste. With that in mind, he'd have been better off ordering Tri - Ser to bounce the Turk while shuffling Rum - Bud and Ukr - Rum. An army in Bud would be far more useful right now than A Ukr is.

Well, we'll see what happens with the Fall. If Russia suffers setbacks, I hope that doesn't mean the game ends immediately.

General Comment: The worm has turned, the fat lady has not sung, and yes, something wicked this way

comes!!! We seem to have quite a game here, and it could go on quite a long time since no one is on a line of any sort.

England: Bill continues to make Russia work hard to take Norway. They don't take Brest yet, but England's two fleets can take a fall crack at that. Retreating to Ruhr gives a 50-50 chance at cutting the right support of an attack on Holland.

France: David is still supporting Don actively. That is interesting that he is Don's last remaining ally, at least for the moment.

Italy: Well, well, well, we wondered if Melinda had it in her? And yes, she did. The moves were good and open lots of possibilities for more.

Russia: Don was somewhat out of position before, and now he is REALLY out of position. That big void in the Balkans now looks like a complete disaster and he can get knocked down very quickly. I should note, as most players are surprised when this happens, but Russia is THE very worst country on the whole board to reach 16 or 17 centers and not solo with. You ALWAYS get completely knocked on your butt with amazing speed. It is just part of where you are on the board and what centers you usually have when you get near victory.

Turkey: Gary has been patient, well, not really.... but he has been rewarded nonetheless. He COULD get up as much as three this turn, though one or two is more likely.

Press: The point of the Mountaintop press this time is about whether we're going to let the "fat lady sing", but her fudge sundae is melting, melting, melting. I'm melting!

What's Next: Like Rick, I hope this doesn't mean an end to the game, since there is so much more play in it. But Russia really could be crippled by the end of this flurry. It should be a very exciting Fall turn!

Brooklyn stared in horror at the creature he saw.



It was a Velociraptor, and he knew they only ate meat. It looked down at the young boy as he covered away from it and slowly approached him.

Brooklyn was shaking with fear but still managed to raise that mean looking weapon from the timebox. It certainly wasn't Excalibur but it would just have to do. He pointed the barrel at the dinosaur's head and pulled the trigger.

A red light emerged from the weapon and the Velociraptor fell to the ground, howling as it did so. The young boy waited for a minute to make sure it was dead and then sank to his knees, sobbing with relief. "Oh Doctor, please come soon."

But then he heard that familiar screeching sound as the Tardis materialised behind him. The door opened and he rushed into the arms of the Time Lord. "Oh Doctor," he cried, "I was so scared."

"I know," he replied as he held him close, "but you did so very well and I am so glad you are safe." Then he pulled away and took out his sonic screwdriver. "But that timebox has got to go."



He pressed the trigger, the timebox exploded, and they entered the Tardis again.

"Right young man," said the Time Lord, "I think that is quite enough dangers for you. Back to the 'Further Glory' to say goodbye to the General and the crew, perhaps a few more sights of the safer parts of the Solar System, and then I need to take you home."

The young boy was shaking slightly as he watched The Doctor pressing buttons on the console. He took a deep breath. "Okay Doctor, I think I've had enough adventures for a while. But it has been really exciting."

The Time Lord smiled. "Indeed it has Brooklyn, and perhaps there is more to come."

The eleven year old, feeling much safer now, looked at him and grinned. "You mean I really might get to play soccer for those big clubs, like my dad did?"

The Doctor laughed and patted his shoulder. "Oh Brooklyn, you really are priceless." Then he pressed a few more buttons on the console and the Tardis began its return to the Fndili ship.

Aboard the 'Further Glory' General U'til was about to begin the next briefing. With the danger from the rift now eliminated he felt much more relaxed and smiled as he looked out at the trainees. "Hail Fndili!" he cried.

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

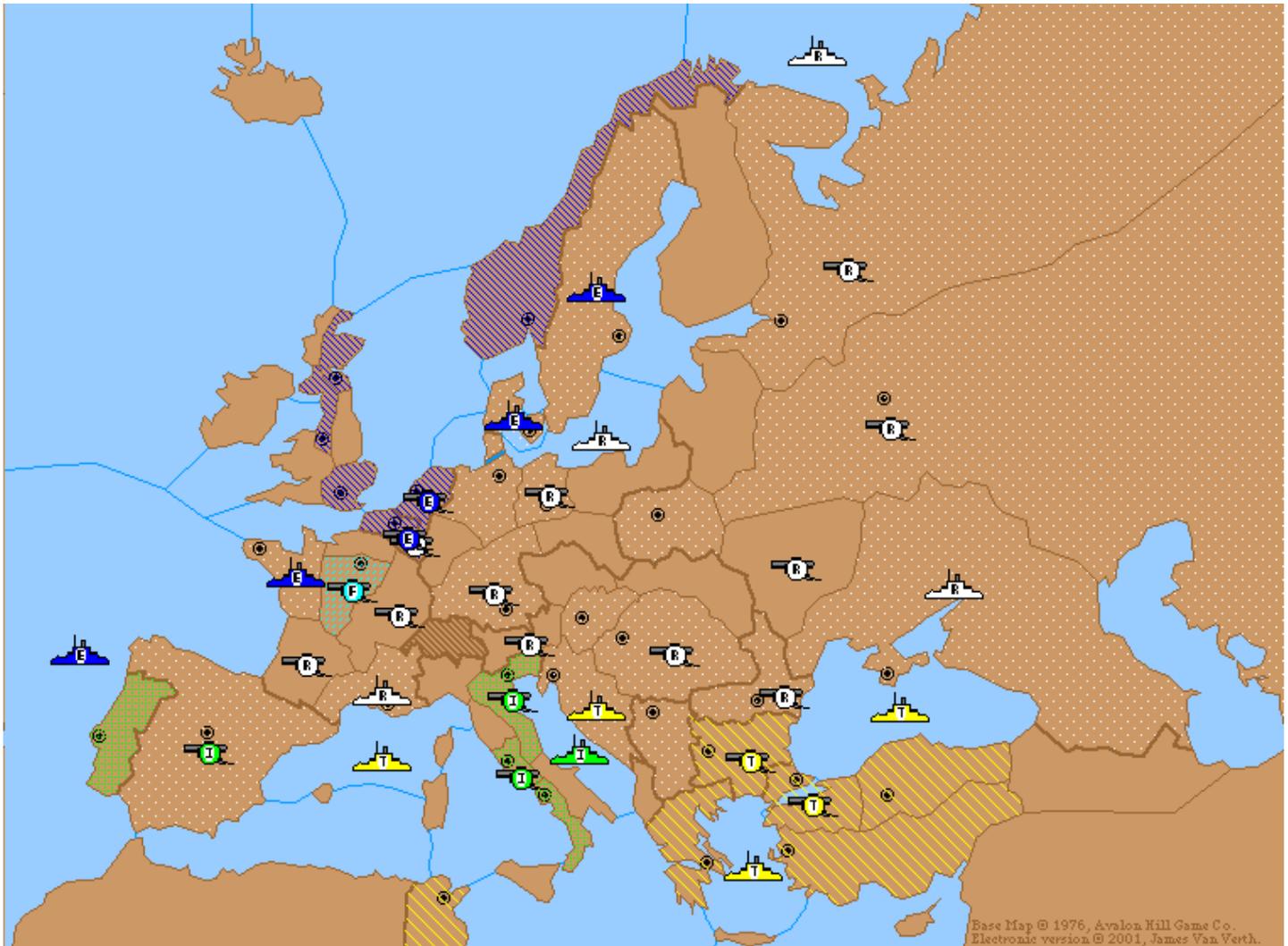
He paused for a moment to collect his thoughts.

"Well gentlemen, the situation in Europe continues to favour Russia. England is now vulnerable to a Russian

attack in Scandinavia and the Russian forces continue to move west. The Russian and Turkish defences seem to be secure, Italy is merely hanging on and France is all but eliminated. I believe there is only one possible outcome to this war. But as usual I require your observations by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili!"

He returned to his quarters to await the return of The Doctor and Brooklyn.

Fall 1911



What do you think each nation will be wearing for Halloween?

England: A Holland Supports A Ruhr – Belgium, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean Supports F Picardy – Brest, F Norway – Sweden, F Picardy – Brest, A Ruhr – Belgium, F Skagerrak - Denmark.

France: A Paris Supports A Brest (*Ordered to Move*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports A Rome - Venice (*Fails*), A Rome - Venice (*Fails*),

A Spain Supports F Gulf of Lyon – Marseilles, A Venice - Piedmont (*Bounce*).

Russia: F Baltic Sea Convoys A Sweden – Berlin, F Barents Sea Hold,

A ~~Belgium – Ruhr~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Picardy or OTB), A Brest – Gascony, A Burgundy Supports F Marseilles,

A Finland - St Petersburg, A Galicia – Budapest, A Kiel – Munich,

F Marseilles Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc) (*Void*), A Rumania - Serbia (*Bounce*),
F Sevastopol Supports A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*), A St Petersburg – Moscow, A Sweden – Berlin,
A Tyrolia - Piedmont (*Bounce*), A Ukraine - Rumania (*Fails*).

Turkey: F Black Sea Supports A Rumania - Sevastopol (*Void*), A Bulgaria - Serbia (*Bounce*),
A Constantinople - Bulgaria (*Fails*), F Greece - Aegean Sea, F Gulf of Lyon - Marseilles (*Fails*),
 F Trieste Supports A Rome - Venice.

PRESS

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "So you decided to dance with the Devil."

The woman looked over her sunglasses and up at the scowling Sheriff. "Dance with the Devil or Dance with the Saints...as long as I dance." She frowned. "Did I just quote Billy Joel?"

"No, you didn't." The Sheriff huffed.

"Good. I like to think I still have SOME principles left."
 The woman returned her attention to the latest edition of TV Guide.

"This isn't going to work out for you," the Sheriff warned.

"Sheriff...snookums...nothing much has worked out for me lately." The woman looked up again. "You remember how that happened, don't you?" She chuckled under her breath as the man stomped away. "Yeah, there's a storm a-comin'," she muttered as she returned her attention to the TV Guide. "Ooo! Survivor's on tonight! Sheriff might get a few pointers from that if he'd watch."

RUSSIA to ITALY: Turnabout is fair play, or so they say. My turn to say ... you got me. Nicely done. Let the battle begin in earnest. I expect you won't survive it. In fact, I will seek to guarantee it. ☺

RUSSIA to TURKEY: You'll recall that each time we sparred over the last three-four years you cast aspersions on my good name and lineage, accuse me of molesting kittens and generally said I was a lying scumbag. (Diplomacy players lie? Shock! Awe!) Each time I'd merely cut a support here or shaved a move there ... or helped my (former) Italian ally back into her home centers as she'd bargained for and generally tried to not dishonor myself too much. You'll further note that you've hurt the Russian position far more than ever I hurt yours, and yet I did not write you nasty or denigrating notes. In fact, I don't think we wrote to each other last season. Just wanted to point out that I expect you to lie, cheat and steal in this game because that's what the rules of engagement call for, and so when you do, I don't feel the need to make nasty comments about past games and history and all the rest. I'd appreciate if you would keep those kinds of remarks to yourself from now on. It's a game and should be played that way, and the nastiness is really unnecessary, especially among such old acquaintances and colleagues as we have here. And now that you guys have finally drawn some of that Russian blood, let the slaughter begin in earnest! War to the outermost, my old friend!!!

DON – DAVID: Just stay put and this may yet see you standing at the end.

Autumn 1911

England: Has A Belgium, F Brest, F Denmark, A Holland, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Sweden.

France: Has A Paris.

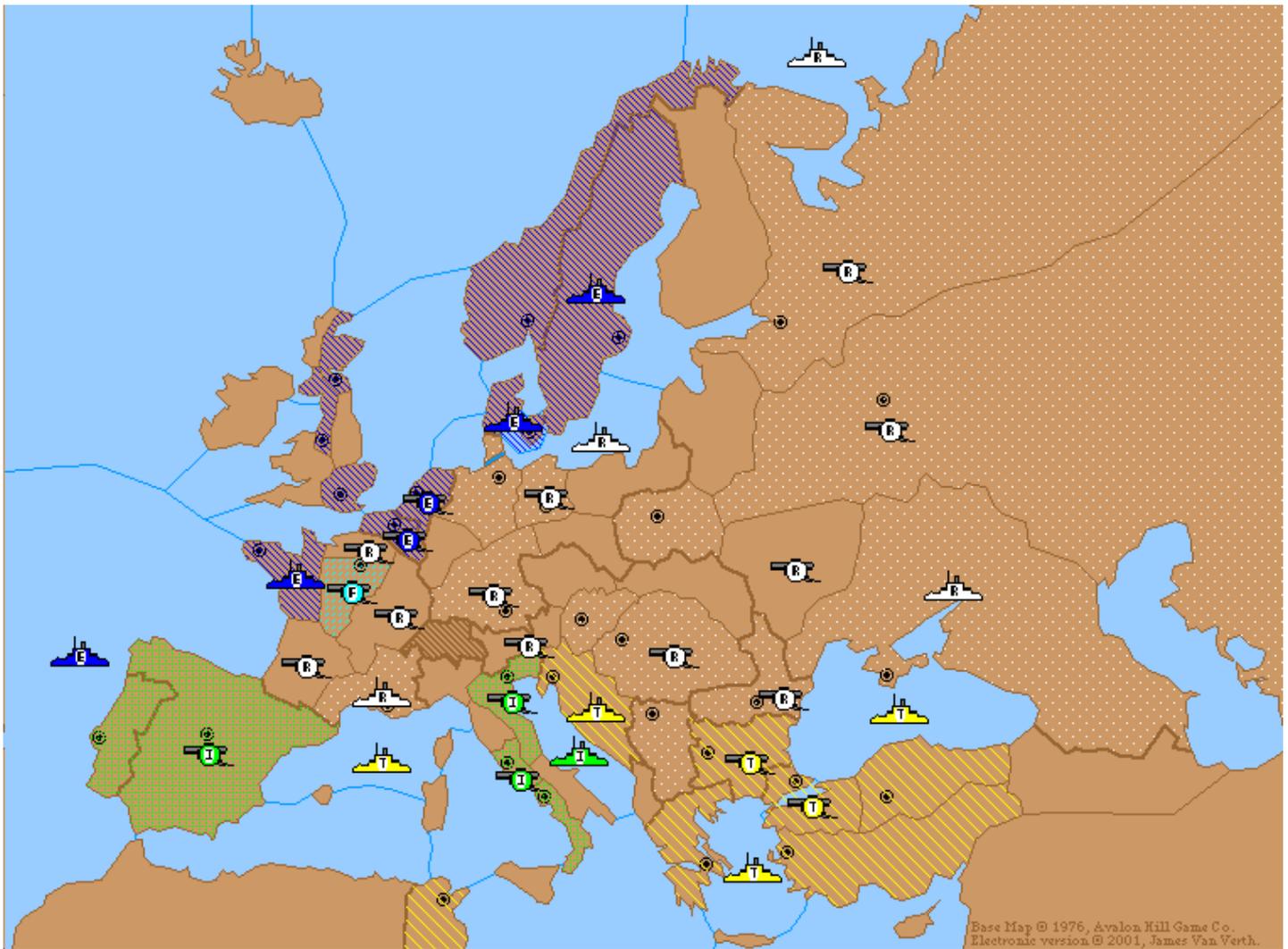
Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, A Rome, A Spain, A Venice.

Russia: Retreat A Belgium - Picardy..Has F Baltic Sea, F Barents Sea, A Berlin, A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Gascony, F Marseilles, A Moscow, A Munich, A Picardy, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A St Petersburg, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Has F Aegean Sea, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Gulf of Lyon, F Trieste.

Supply Center Chart

England:	Belgium, Brest, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Sweden=9, Build 3
France:	Paris=1, Even
Italy:	Naples, Portugal, Rome, Spain, Venice=5, Build 1
Russia:	Berlin, Budapest, Kiel, Marseilles, Moscow, Munich, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Vienna, Warsaw=12, Remove 3
Turkey:	Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna, Trieste, Tunis=7, Build 1



Now is the Winter of Russia's discontent

Fall/Autumn 1911 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, this is a disappointing turn of events.

Don could have held onto Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, and Brest, but has instead let England take all of them. Apparently he's become unhinged. This has all the feel of an emotional reaction to Italy working with Turkey - but Italy's decision was entirely predictable after Don went for the solo.

I'm sorry - I don't like seeing a power that is more than twice as large as it deserves to be.

Anyway, there's a lot of play left in this game, so let's hope for more!

Press: I've long, long thought that Mark Fassio was writing the Mountaintop press, surely it was slanted

Fassio like earlier. The last few seasons are suggesting that this really is Don Williams, trying to channel Faz. The VERY clear undertone message of this press seems to match the identified press from Don that follows. Hmmm, the pundit may be hauled up short again.... ;-)

England: As Rick notes, Bill Quinn hasn't really done anything to get these gifts, BUT Don means it, giving up these units and northern position allows England to build fleets and help him take out Melinda. This will ultimately be the lesson it needs to be in games upon games upon games to illustrate to all of you masses out there how Diplomacy games can go. The question is: does Bill go along? Let's take a look. What centers can England get first other than Iberia? Kiel? Yes, I suppose? St.Pete? Possibly,

especially given what I expect Don's removals will be (see below). But there are two more centers. Turkey has just the ONE fleet in the western part of the Med, and Melinda's fleet (possibly augmented by a build in Naples, but what will she and Gary do with each other now?) is out of position too. If I were Bill, I'd go with it. In fact, I think given the moves and press this fall, the deal is almost agreed. Yes, he ensured that he took Brest first and didn't take the support to Spain, but not this year. Iberia will fall pretty quickly while the F Lvp, F Lon move up.

France: Why not stick around? The deal is there.

Italy: Melinda did the right thing in stabbing, and seems to be working with Turkey as she should do, but why didn't she get Gary to do the obvious move of F GOL S A Ven-Pie, they needed to make that move work. Maybe they expected A Tyo-Pie with support of Marseilles, but Spain could have cut that. Maybe they'll do it right in the Spring. Melinda has to build a fleet, I think to oppose England, but needs an army if they are to get

FALL 1911

The return to the 'Further Glory' was uneventful. The Tardis settled into the familiar cargo bay and when The Doctor and Brooklyn emerged General U'til was there to greet them.

"Good to see you both again," smiled the old soldier. "Did the trip go well?"

The two companions exchanged glances. "Well," replied the Time Lord, "we did have a bit of an adventure along the way." Then he smiled and patted the eleven year old on the shoulder. "I'm sure Brooklyn would like to tell you all about it."

The young boy just looked up and grinned.

"Come to my cabin Brooklyn," said the General, "I want to hear all about it before I give the next briefing." They walked away and The Doctor smiled as he watched them leave. Then he went in search of Merlin.

He found him in the weapons bay, discussing possible improvements to some of the weapons with Lieutenant R'lok. He waited in the doorway until the

unstuck into central Europe. I bet on the fleet.

Russia: Rick doesn't get it, but I do, this is a rebalancing intended to bring England back into the game against Turkey. Clearly it would have been theoretically possible to reform an RT to attack Italy, but not practically. That wasn't what Gary wanted to do. Bill Quinn was easier to deal with. This game is nowhere near over. Oh yes, you'll know I'm right if F Bar, maybe even F Bal and/or A Stp are among the units Russia pulls. I suppose A Pic will be the third one, though he did retreat there, why not off the board??

Turkey: What does Gary do now? He finally got through to Melinda, they just need better tactics than this fall exhibited. I'm a fan of figuring out what you need (A Pie) and then figuring out how to make it happen! Two tactical choices revealed by the builds. One option is Army, goes to Armenia, convoy A Con-Gre, and attack with armies north. Other option is Fleet, hold and move fleets west as quickly as possible. Knowing Gary, I suspect the Fleet, but the army will be more interesting.

two had finished their discussions and then walked across.

"They have good weapons Doctor," said the old magician, "but any weapon can be improved."

The Time Lord laughed. "I'm sure it can old friend, and none would know better than you". But then he paused, and his face took on a more serious expression. "But Merlin, we have to think about Brooklyn."

"I'll tell you the details later Merlin, but we had another adventure along the way which ended with Brooklyn using an ancient weapon to kill a rather nasty dinosaur. But for a boy of his age I really think he has had enough frights and adventures for now and it's probably time to take him home."

Merlin thought for a moment and then smiled. "You are right Doctor, as usual. Is he with the General?"

The Time Lord laughed. "Where else? Telling him all about what happened on his latest adventure."

Now it was Merlin's turn to laugh. "I think I could have guessed that Doctor, they do seem to have become good friends."

The Doctor smiled. "That they have Merlin, and that bodes well not just for Brooklyn but for the entire human race. Come, let us wait for the General's briefing and then we must break the news to the boy."

They walked to the briefing room, where the trainees were gathering, and sat at the side. It was a full half hour before General U'til and Brooklyn appeared and the old soldier walked straight across to them. "My goodness gentlemen, you have picked a brave lad here. He has told me everything and I am very impressed." Then he paused for a moment and looked at them again. "Would that he could be a warrior for the Fndili - he would win so many honours."

The Time Lord smiled again. "I don't think that is possible old friend, and we think it is soon time to take him home. But please, conduct your next briefing and then Merlin and I need to break the news to the boy."

The old soldier sighed. "You are right of course Doctor," he said. "But I will miss the lad." He walked to the podium to address the trainees. "Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the reply.

"Gentlemen," the General began, "the events in Europe seem to have taken a surprising turn. Russia seemed to be on the point of winning this war but

clearly England has been working on its diplomacy behind the scenes, not least with Italy. I would say there is now a united front against Russia, although whether that includes France remains to be seen. But Russia has suffered major reversals and England in particular has gained much territory and could quite possibly gain more. The position of Turkey however remains unclear - is it trying to expand further or merely holding on to what it has? I am sure we will find out in due course. As usual I require your comments by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

General U'til left the room and The Doctor and Merlin walked over to Brooklyn. "Brooklyn," said the Time Lord, "Merlin and I, and indeed the General, think it's time for you to go home. At your age you have had more than enough of adventure and you have done so much better than any of us could have expected. We did indeed choose the right sword-bearer and I am very proud of you."

Merlin just smiled, but Brooklyn looked crestfallen. "But Doctor," he said, "it's been so exciting. I know it was pretty scary at times but I've never had an adventure like this. Can't I stay with you guys just a bit longer?"

Both The Doctor and Merlin saw tears in the young boy's eyes and felt their hearts leap (both hearts in the case of The Doctor). "Well," replied the Time Lord, "we'll see. But we must return Excalibur before anything else."

Brooklyn brushed away a tear and looked up at The Doctor in surprise. "You mean I don't get to keep it?"

Winter 1911

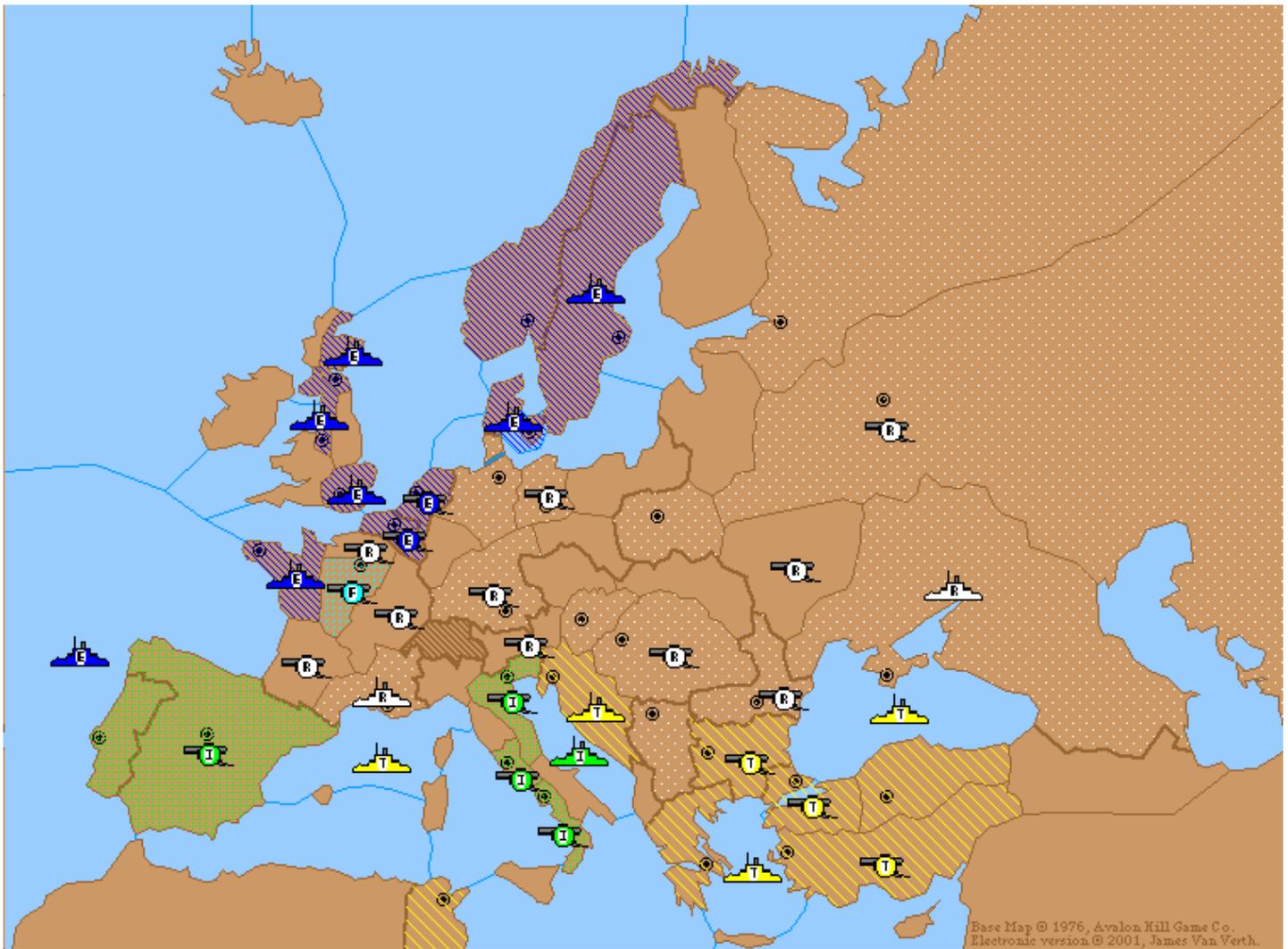
England: Build F Edinburgh, F Liverpool, F London..Has A Belgium, F Brest, F Denmark, F Edinburgh, A Holland, F Liverpool, F London, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Sweden.

France: Has A Paris.

Italy: Build A Naples..Has F Adriatic Sea, A Naples, A Rome, A Spain, A Venice.

Russia: Remove F Barents Sea, A St Petersburg, F Baltic Sea..Has A Berlin, A Budapest, A Burgundy, A Gascony, F Marseilles, A Moscow, A Munich, A Picardy, A Rumania, F Sevastopol, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Build A Smyrna..Has F Aegean Sea, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Constantinople, F Gulf of Lyon, A Smyrna, F Trieste.



With Spring come new opportunities

PRESS

Turkey to Russia: You protest way too much for someone (s) benefit...and you have a selective memory, too! Aspersions cast? Really? What did I say about your lineage? As far as the kittens, well, take that up with the county court, but I believe you when you say they weren't dead when you left them...and as far as the lying part, well you admitted as much. :) But, that's right, all's fair as you say. But tell me, what color is the sky there? (By the way, I have lost Serbia and you own it. You, sir, have done my position more harm than I did yours, unless you are blaming me for the moves of that unit you built?)

RUSSIA to ITALY: Play on, Ms. Kitty ... it'll be interesting to see how you try to squirm out of the mess you're in this time. You'll find that being at the tender mercy of the Grand Vizier is a lot like being at the mercy of the Grand Inquisitor. I was always more a gentleman, even when thieving your dots like a cad. As you've said,

it'll be interesting to see how long "X" finds you useful.

MOSCOW to LONDON: Let's see, I think that's almost everything that was ... uh, misplaced. Yes, yes indeed ... all the silver is back where we found it ... er, back where it belongs. Right.

MOSCOW to KIBITZERS: When you speak about this in the future – and you will – please be kind.

MOSCOW to CONSTANTINOPLE: You remain one of the great ones, Mr. Behnen, that can't be overstated. Well done and well played. What more devilry are you up to ... that's what I want to know. An army to stretch the Russian defense? Or a fleet to shore up that thin fleet line ... it'll be interesting.

WILLIAMS to LUTTERBIE: Got any more ideas for me, old friend? That last one worked oh-so-well!

Winter 1911 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well, well, OK, so we keep all the armies, do they all head east? Methinks so.

Press: The angst increases. I guess we are the kibitzers? Be kind, why should we be kind?? The kibitzers are here to first and foremost increase your fun for watching the game. I know Rick and I are hardly Laurel and Hardy, but we do try to entertain you. Secondly, we try to give you insight into the negotiations and tactics where we can. Since I know these lyin' cads better than Rick, I generally have had some insight into what is going on, though I've certainly missed a lot of twists and turns. Methinks Don talks too much.... and not enough.

England: Three fleets indicates to me that the deal is on, and I expect them all to head to the Mediterranean as quickly as possible.

France: As all this happens, does David just sit there? I suppose so.

Italy: Melinda went with the army, I think that may prove to be a mistake, we'll see.

Russia: Since he kept A Picardy, I think the plan for spring is a grand slide east (Pic-Bur-Mun-Boh and

WINTER 1911

The Doctor smiled. "No Brooklyn, I'm sorry but Excalibur must be returned to its guardian." He looked across at Merlin. "Isn't that right old friend?" he asked.

Merlin looked serious for a moment and then patted Brooklyn on the shoulder. "I'm sorry Brooklyn," he said, "but The Doctor is correct. Excalibur has served its purpose but must now be kept safe until it is needed again. We must return to England and put it in the safe keeping of The Lady."

There were more tears in the young boy's eyes. "So you mean I'll never see it again?" he asked.

The old magician smiled down at him. "Well, who can say? Remember what I told you about destiny?"

Ber-Sil) and then put the pressure on Melinda as quickly as possible.

Turkey: Since we see the army, expect the convoy to Greece, which again I think is a mistake, though Adr-Ion, mutual support Tri-Ven, and starting to slide the other armies up the boot should be the plan.

Well, England gets his fleets and can sail into the Med. Presumably Don now wants the game to end in a TER three-way. I suppose that could happen.

Or England could go for a solo.

Or E&T could work to squeeze out Russia.

One of my main axioms of Russian play is that you have to do something about the Witches. It's just too easy for either of them to attack Russia. And here Don is setting up an end game where he's between both of them.

That's all I've got for now.

That really is the "all we have". Later as we see how this develops it will be a classic in the long list of "if Russia almost gets the win, but doesn't, look out below!!!!" games.

Brooklyn brushed away a tear and then smiled back. "So you mean I might get to use it again if I am called on?"

Merlin laughed and tussled the young boy's head. "You are wise beyond your years young man. Yes, there is no knowing what destiny has in store."

The Time Lord smiled again. "Let us wait for the General to give his next briefing and then you can say your farewells. But we really must take you home."

Brooklyn shrugged. "Yeah, I guess this had to end at some time. But I sure want to say goodbye - I'm going to miss those guys, and you as well of course."

They both smiled at the boy, for they had come to both admire and respect him in their brief time with him. But then General U'til appeared, on his way to

the next briefing session. "Ah, my friends," he said, "will you join us?" They all followed him into the briefing room.

The trainees were already assembled. The Time Lord, Merlin and Brooklyn stood to one side as the old soldier moved to the podium to begin his address. "Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well gentlemen," he began, "you will see that England has built more fleets and Russia has all but abandoned Scandinavia and the north in preference to trying to hold on in the west and south. Italy has gained a little ground and Turkey is getting ever better poised for an attack on Russia. From a position of almost winning this war Russia has slipped badly. I

think we shall see further gains for England in the coming months. As usual I require your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

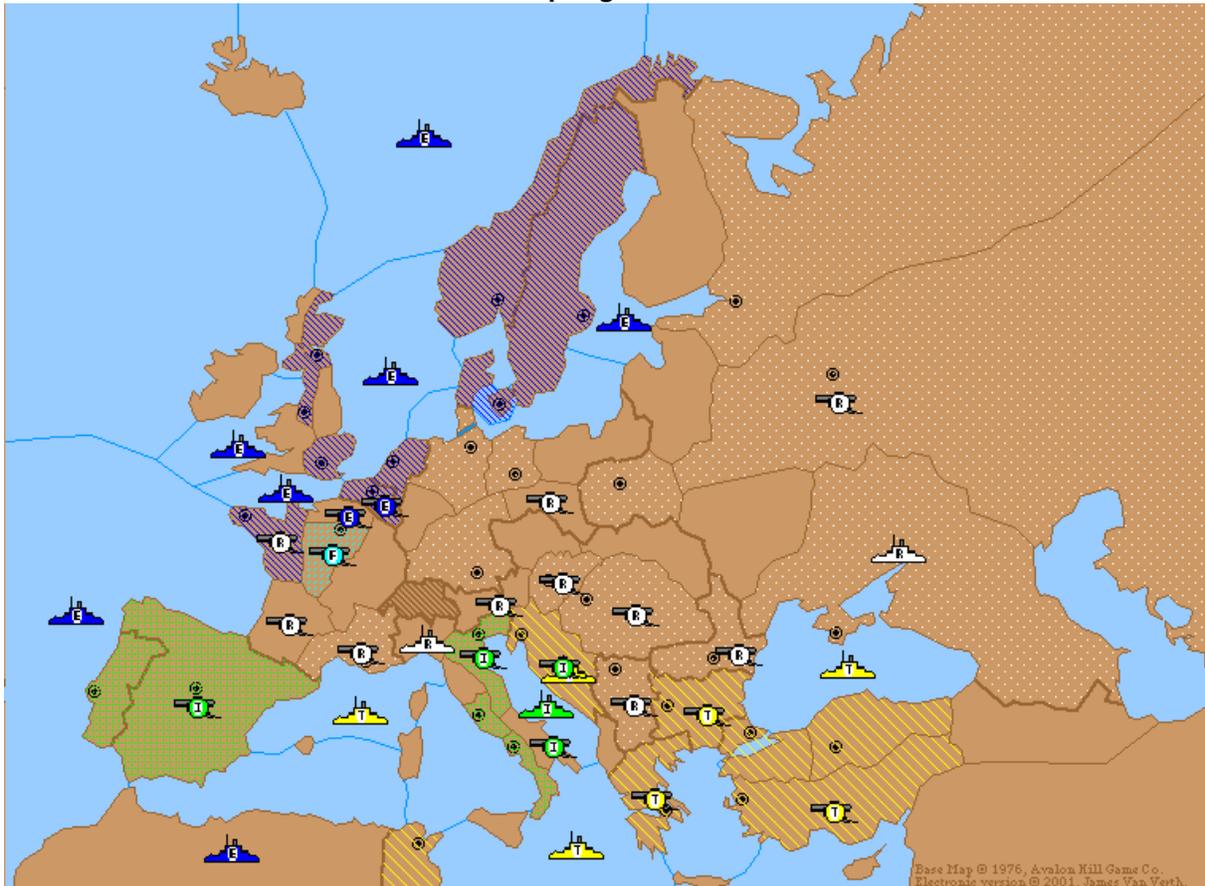
The General walked over to the three companions and laid a tentacle on Brooklyn's shoulder. "So, it is time to say our farewells? I will miss you all, but especially this brave young man."

Brooklyn looked up at him and smiled. "Is it okay if I go and say goodbye to the rest of the crew?"

They all laughed. "Of course Brooklyn," said The Doctor, "take as long as you wish."

The eleven year old smiled again and then ran off to say his farewells.

Spring 1912



If I knew what was going on, I'd have something witty to say. Very witty, Wilde.

England: A Belgium – Picardy, F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Denmark - North Sea, F Edinburgh - Norwegian Sea, A Holland – Belgium, F Liverpool - Irish Sea, F London - English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Africa, F Sweden - Gulf of Bothnia.

France: A Paris - Gascony (*Fails*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Supports A Venice – Trieste, A Naples – Apulia, A Rome – Venice, A Spain Hold, A Venice - Trieste.

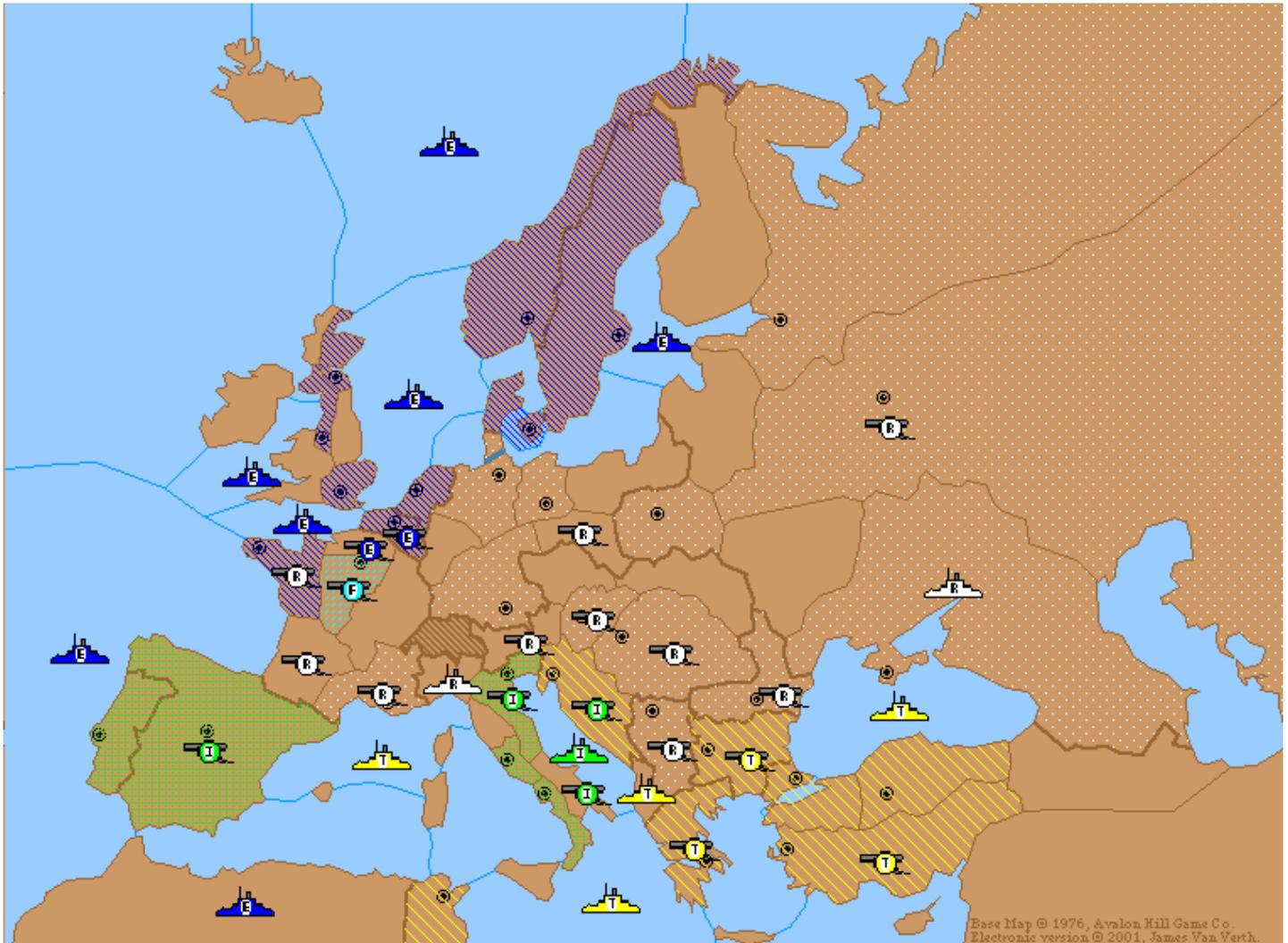
Russia: A Berlin – Silesia, A Budapest Supports A Ukraine – Rumania, A Burgundy – Marseilles, A Gascony Supports A Burgundy - Marseilles (*Cut*), F Marseilles – Piedmont, A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Fails*), A Munich – Tyrolia, A Picardy – Brest, A Rumania – Serbia, F Sevastopol - Armenia (*Bounce*), A Tyrolia – Vienna, A Ukraine - Rumania

Turkey: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea, F Black Sea Supports A Constantinople – Bulgaria, A Bulgaria – Greece, A Constantinople – Bulgaria, F Gulf of Lyon Supports A Spain, A Smyrna - Armenia (*Bounce*), F Trieste Supports A Rome – Venice (*Dislodged*, retreat to Albania or OTB).

PRESS

LUTTERBIE TO WILLIAMS: I never saw that coming, I really didn't think the Brit could be turned away from hi madness. Did Winston kill Neville?

Summer 1912



England: Has A Belgium, F English Channel, F Gulf of Bothnia, F Irish Sea, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F North Sea, F Norwegian Sea, A Picardy.

France: Has A Paris.

Italy: Has F Adriatic Sea, A Apulia, A Spain, A Trieste, A Venice.

Russia: Has A Brest, A Budapest, A Gascony, A Marseilles, A Moscow, F Piedmont, A Rumania, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Silesia, A Tyrolia, A Vienna.

Turkey: Retreat F Trieste - Albania..Has F Albania, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Greece,

Spring and Summer 1912 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

OK, press first, always press first.

It is interesting that Vince is continuing to follow this and even more interesting that he is confused, and yet even more interesting that he thinks this was about England. It really was all about Melinda, wasn't it, and Don's messing around rather than nailing down the solo? It seems to me that Bill Quinn has mostly been along for the ride. Of course, maybe we will discover later, once you get commentary on who said what in the negotiations, that Bill's discussions with Melinda were key in getting a turn.

For the countries, let's start with France. Very interesting, France always needs to worry about "who is in Gascony?" It is the province that is adjacent to all three French home centers plus Spain. So, why not try to move there? It's the only way France will get to grow to two centers and maybe get back into the game. BUT, it cuts a Russian support? Didn't Don say in his press that David was the only player he has been honest with? Is David biting the hand that fed him?? Isn't that hand sitting in two of his home centers??? The cut support didn't matter this time, but it may signal something for fall. Or it may not. England and Turkey otherwise look awfully coordinated. The Brest fleet set up the next step in the line into the Mediterranean and Russia follows in. Unless France helps England, it is likely that is a center trade. Maybe it was just a miscommunication about which unit was following into Marseilles, when the Russian fleet went to Piedmont.

Then let's go to Turkey. This really looks VERY suspiciously like the other players have worked up an IRE against Turkey!!! Turkey supported Melinda in two places, both of which she nominally accepted, but A Venice did NOT attack Don, it attacked Trieste and pushed Gary back to Albania. Again, Melinda completely changes the equation if that's what is happening here. Don and Gary otherwise are locked up around the Balkans. Last turn, Gary supported his Balkan armies forward, this turn he supports into Armenia, and then unless I'm missing something, that doesn't move. However, English fleets are coming, and once Italy keeps pushing forward as well, then the Turkish position collapses. I think that's what we have.

There really isn't anything more to say, Let's see if

they leave Melinda alone in Iberia and whether David Hood is finally making the last stand around the Arc de Triomphe.

OK, we've reached another point where I have no idea what's going on.

Russia: I'm not sold on the idea that he's working with Italy against Turkey. So Turkey lost Trieste in the Spring? So what? If Russia is hostile to Italy, then the Italian army in Trieste is about to be popped. I have no idea what dots Don thinks he can get and hold here. He's in Brest, but so what? I suppose he could hold it if the French wanted him to, but this smells more like a temporary arrangement. After all, England could ignore Brest and easily take St. Pete and Kiel.

England: the English strategy is clear from here. Lots of fleets, he's going into the Med. I strongly suspect somebody is about to take Spain from the Italian. Wouldn't be surprised to see the Russian army convoyed in from Brest. If England could get four more SCs including Tunis, he could make a solo run of his own.

France: I suspect that David will be left alone in Paris for the rest of the game, as a sign of respect.

Italy: is Melinda working with Gary or not? She was given support in Spain, but she took Trieste by force. I don't know but it won't affect the action in Iberia. She's about to lose Spain, and Portugal will be next.

Turkey: I don't think there's a big alliance against Turkey partly because Turkey really isn't terribly vulnerable. Also, once Italy collapses, Russia will need Turkey to prevent an English solo. Turkey still hasn't made many gains in terms of supply centers. He's got fleets here and there but where is he getting SCs? I'm also not convinced that he should want Italy to collapse.

Fall 1912 should be interesting.

SPRING 1912

The young Brooklyn started his walk around the 'Further Glory' saying goodbye to each member of the crew. There were more tears in his eyes because he knew he would likely never see them again, but there were also a lot of tentacles and hugs and he enjoyed

that. Eventually he joined The Doctor and Merlin for General U'til's next briefing.

The trainees were already assembled. The Time Lord, Merlin and Brooklyn stood to one side as the old soldier moved to the podium to begin his address. "Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well gentlemen," he began, "you will see that an English fightback has begun, although the alliance with Russia still seems to be in place. There is clearly still some agreement between Russia and Turkey and Italy is still battling and will probably survive. But

France I fear is now in desperate trouble. As usual I require your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

The General crossed to the three companions and smiled. "So, Brooklyn, have you said your goodbyes?"

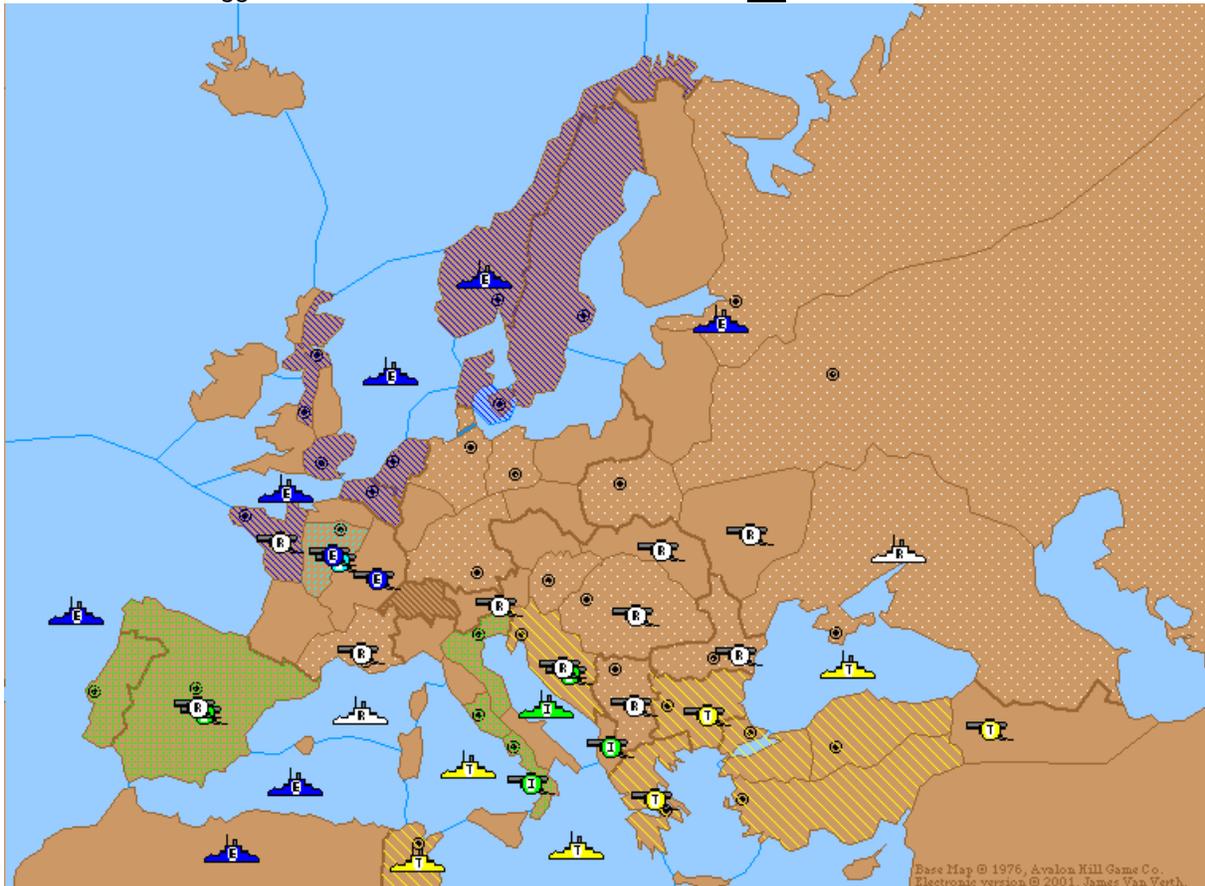
Brooklyn brushed away another tear. "Not quite General, there are still a few of the guys I need to see." He looked The Doctor. "And I guess then it's time to finally leave?"

The Time Lord smiled. "Yes Brooklyn, I'm afraid it is."

"Okay Doctor," replied the eleven year old. Merlin just smiled as the young boy went off to seek out the remaining crew members.

Fall 1912

*I suggest a concession to Mark Fassio. At least **his** moves I understood!*



England: A Belgium – Burgundy, F English Channel Unordered, F Gulf of Bothnia - St Petersburg(sc), F Irish Sea - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Western Mediterranean, F North Africa Supports F Mid-Atlantic Ocean – Western Mediterranean, F North Sea Unordered, F Norwegian Sea – Norway, A Picardy - Paris.

France: A Paris Supports A Brest (*Dislodged*, retreat to Gascony or OTB).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea Convoys A Venice – Albania, A Apulia – Naples, A Spain Hold (*Dislodged*,

retreat to Portugal or OTB), ~~A Trieste Supports A Venice~~ - Albania (*Dislodged*, retreat to Venice or OTB), A Venice - Albania.

Russia: A Brest Supports A Picardy - Paris, A Budapest Supports A Serbia, A Gascony - Spain, A Marseilles Supports A Gascony - Spain, A Moscow - Ukraine, F Piedmont - Gulf of Lyon, A Rumania Supports A Serbia (*Cut*), A Serbia Supports A Vienna - Trieste (*Cut*), F Sevastopol Supports A Rumania, A Silesia - Galicia, A Tyrolia Supports A Vienna - Trieste, A Vienna - Trieste.

Turkey: F Albania - Ionian Sea, F Black Sea - Rumania (*Fails*), A Bulgaria Supports A Greece - Serbia, A Greece - Serbia (*Fails*), F Gulf of Lyon - Tyrrhenian Sea, F Ionian Sea - Tunis, A Smyrna - Armenia.

PRESS

London: This is de'ja vu all over again.

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - The woman entered the General Store and looked around. "Where's Mr. Drucker?"

The young girl behind the counter smiled. "Uncle's out sick today. His lumbago's acting up." She pushed a clipboard across the counter towards the woman. "Sign my petition?"

"What's it for?"

"It's a petition against Starbucks opening a store in town."

"I don't know." The woman rubbed her jaw. "Ever since Mama Rosalita's Chinese Restaurant and Farooq's Genuine French Cafe closed, there hasn't been a place in town to get a decent cup of coffee. We've got lattes, frappes, and crappes...but no decent coffee."

The girl sighed. "A lot of people aren't signing. Apparently the Sheriff likes Starbucks."

"Oh really?" The woman grabbed the clipboard. "Give me that petition." As she signed her name and address, she added, "You should go down to the corner of LaVesque and Higgenbotham. You'll get plenty of names there."

"Really?" The young girl smiled. "Is that an apartment building?"

"Cemetery." The woman handed the clipboard back and smiled. "The people there are very civic minded. They vote in every election."

Occupy Armenia: Where's the guys from the tractor factory?

Somewhere in the Ionian: Green Lady down or just a genuflection?

Benghazi: Anybody see a Limey?

Autumn 1912

Autumn passes like a thief in the night.

England: Has A Burgundy, F English Channel, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F North Sea, F Norway, A Paris, F St Petersburg(sc), F Western Mediterranean.

France: A Paris - Gascony. Has A Gascony.

Italy: Retreat A Spain - Portugal, A Trieste - Venice..Has F Adriatic Sea, A Albania, A Naples, A Portugal, A Venice.

Russia: Has A Brest, A Budapest, A Galicia, F Gulf of Lyon, A Marseilles, A Rumania, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Spain, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine.

Turkey: Has A Armenia, F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, F Tunis, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

Supply Center Chart

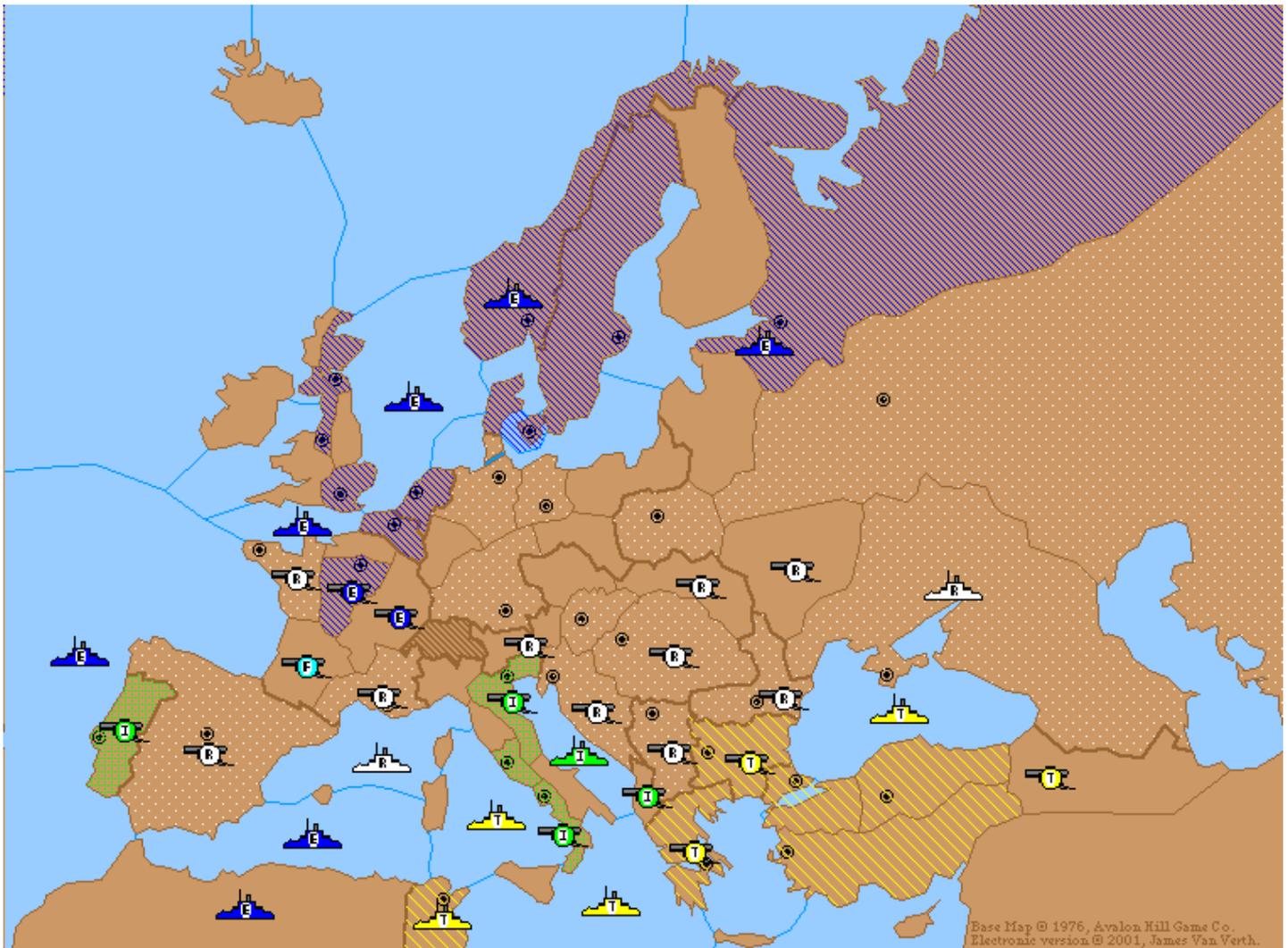
England: Belgium, Denmark, Edinburgh, Holland, Liverpool, London, Norway, Paris, St Petersburg, Sweden=10, Build 1

France: None=0, OUT!!

Italy: Naples, Portugal, Rome, Venice=4, Remove 1

Russia: Berlin, Brest, Budapest, Kiel, Marseilles, Moscow, Munich, Rumania, Serbia, Sevastopol, Spain, Trieste, Vienna, Warsaw=14, Build 2

Turkey: Ankara, Bulgaria, Constantinople, Greece, Smyrna, Tunis=6, Remove 1



Now Proposed – Concession to Russia
Please vote by the Winter deadline. NVR=No

PRESS

(Somewhere on a foggy mountaintop) - "I hear you've been a bad girl."

The woman looked up and blinked in the bright sunshine. "Who? Me?"

The Sheriff nodded. "Encouraging that young girl to have the dead sign her petition." He tsk'd and shook his head. "Naughty girl."

The woman shrugged. "Prove that they're NOT voting."

Ita - GM: I vote yes for the concession to Fassio. Might as well. And, by the way, are you suggesting that we're supposed to understand our orders?

Fall and Autumn 1912 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Well that wraps things up for David Hood. Thanks, David, for stepping in to help us keep the game running.

Yes, David did a fine job of keeping the game going. It does appear though that Don's comment on not wanting to stab David as the only player he hadn't shared lies with, in the end, didn't mean very much. I think the real question is whether Russia can still solo. I think he can, more on that in a bit.

The only thing left that resembles an alliance is E/R. Turkey and Italy do not appear to be coordinating any kind of defense.

I would agree, Italy is just playing out the string, Melinda isn't exactly a tactical expert, but Gary is, they SHOULD work together. But it surely doesn't seem as if they are.

I do not understand Italy's convoy to Albania. Was she expecting Russia to leave Trieste un-attacked?

I read it as either that Don lied to Melinda yet again (we're way beyond three times now) or Melinda said to Don that she would go for that attack on Turkey and would see what Don would do. At this point, I think Don is maneuvering toward the solo.

Let's assume that Melinda removes A Por. With the removal of the French army, that will leave England in a dominant position in the West.

I think E/R will have deals going about Brest and Portugal, it might be that Don gives up Brest in order to get Portugal. Melinda might just remove it, as you note.

Does Don think he'll be able to invade Turkey? Or Italy? He had plenty of chances to get into Asia Minor, but not now. Does he think Bill will help him invade Italy?

I think that an English/Russia ending is most probable, either English solo, 17-17, or Russia solo, and I actually would put my bet on Russia still... interesting that....

Is this going to end in an English solo? I know he's four SCs behind Russia, but there are a lot of undefended and poorly defended in France and Germany.

Rick suggests the opposite. That's what's fun about our back and forth. Do remember, though, that Don has long promised Melinda ONLY her home centers plus what she gets from Turkey, so removing Portugal and sticking with the attack from Albania on Turkey ensures that Turkey begins to collapse this game year.... now to the usual commentary, beginning of course with the press...

Press: we seem to have some one liners from Gary, from Bill, and maybe from Melinda with the Fall orders, I enjoyed them, though I know I'm an easy mark. The deja vu thing is exactly what I see rebuilding with Don from Bill's point of view. We'll see what Don's point of view is (see how easy A Tyo-Mun, built A War-Sil starts resolving things along with Italian help in the Balkans. And maybe there's some hot sex going on at the Armenian tractor factory? And, here come the limeys (everyone see what happens when Turkey removes a unit?). Then, going across Fall and Autumn, I think this is still the best press this side of Mayberry from the mountaintop. I'd vote for the concession to Mark Fassio on that basis.

England: I think Bill is trying to get at Turkey with those fleets and will push the fleets. Turkey can remove one of the fleets and if he does, advances are assured. If he removes something else, then Russia advances. I think in the first case, we see some status quo. If Turkey removes one of the other units (say A Arm?) then someone needs to avert a Russian solo....

France: Sorry to see David Hood go, really. But now the center counts are everything as Turkey is down next.

Italy: I think Melinda went back to the former deal. They are surely lying to her, but it will hand over Portugal and if Albania assists then the Balkans fall.

Russia: Don is still showing us the brilliance and excitement of the back and forth alliance games. Maybe it's not textbook, maybe it annoys Rick, but I like to see how it goes.

Turkey: I don't think Gary has much of a choice, but trying to break the structure might remove A Gre and retreat A Bul-Con.

FALL 1912

After fifteen or twenty minutes the young boy returned. The old General was delighted to see that the Orb of the Goddess was now around his neck. He opened his tentacles and they embraced for over a minute. "I will miss you Brooklyn," he said quietly. "You have done all of us such a great service. And keep the Orb safe, there are only a few in existence."

"I will General," replied the eleven year old. "And it's been so great meeting you all."

General U'til just chuckled and patted Brooklyn's shoulders. Then the three companions headed for the cargo bay and the Tardis as the old soldier prepared for the next briefing.

The trainees were already assembled. The General moved to the podium to begin his address. "Hail Fndili."

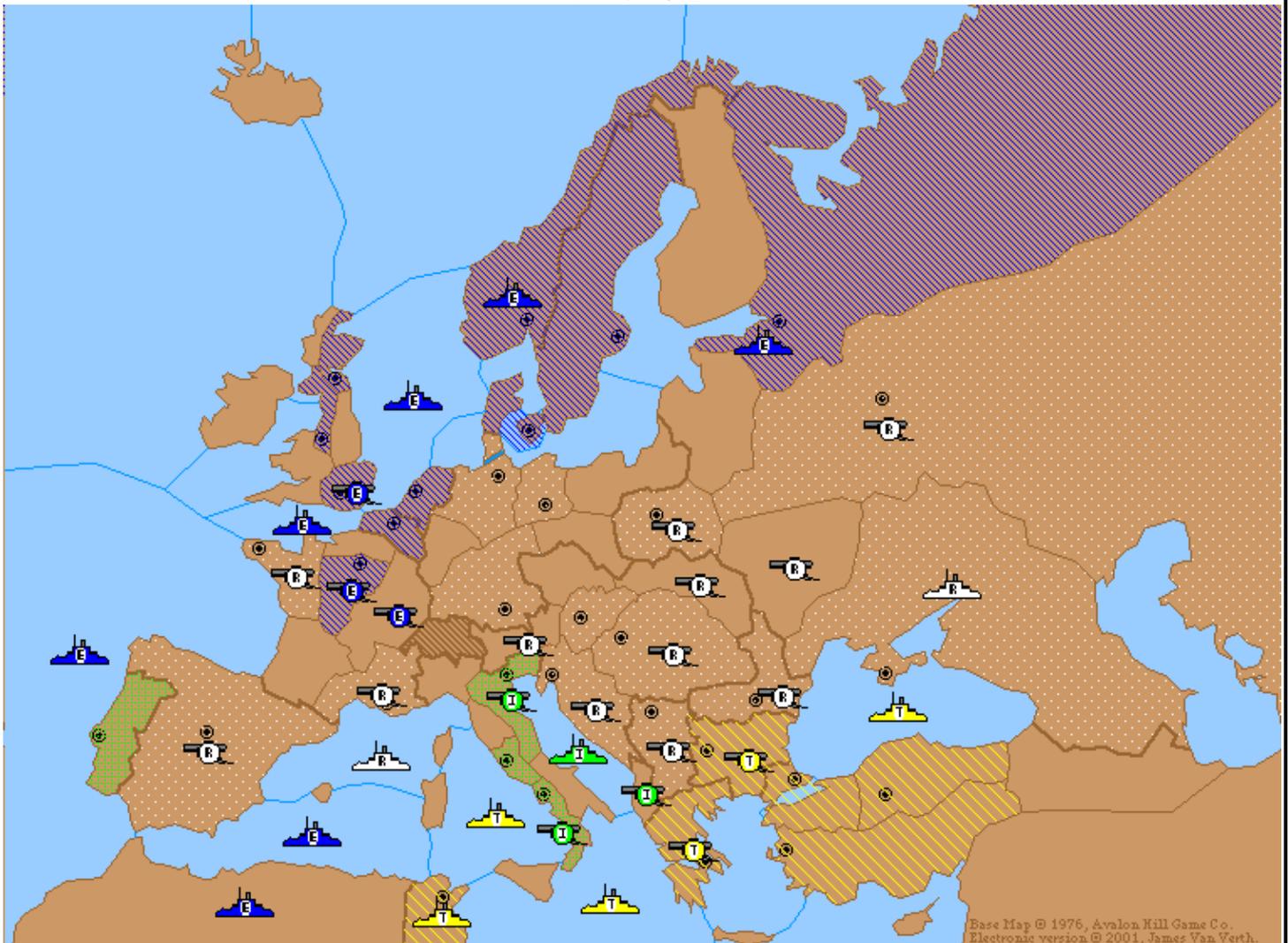
"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well gentlemen," he began, "we have all said goodbye to that brave young human but now we must get back

to the purpose of this training mission. You will see that England has now attacked Russia, so presumably that alliance is now over. But the Russian moves seem very strange, concentrating almost entirely on the south and west. Turkey is going nowhere, Italy is still merely hanging on and France has finally been defeated. A strange war indeed. As usual I require your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

As he finished his address the entire ship's crew heard the familiar screeching sound as the Tardis departed.

Winter 1912



My neck hurts. Okay, admittedly, nothing to do with the game.

England: Build A London..Has A Burgundy, F English Channel, A London, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean, F North Africa, F North Sea, F Norway, A Paris, F St Petersburg(sc), F Western Mediterranean.

Italy: Remove A Portugal..Has F Adriatic Sea, A Albania, A Naples, A Venice.

Russia: Build A Moscow, A Warsaw..Has A Brest, A Budapest, A Galicia, F Gulf of Lyon,

A Marseilles, A Moscow, A Rumania, A Serbia, F Sevastopol, A Spain, A Trieste, A Tyrolia, A Ukraine, A Warsaw.
Turkey: Remove A Armenia..Has F Black Sea, A Bulgaria, A Greece, F Ionian Sea, F Tunis, F Tyrrhenian Sea.

Concession to Russia Fails. Reproposed – Concession to Russia, NVR=No

PRESS

England - France: I regret the way this played out. The die was already cast. You simply stepped in front of a bullet. I greatly admire your knowledge and fine play. Your spirited defense was almost enough to award the game to Russia.

Turkey: Dear Bill, Why did you vote no? Italy just wants to survive, I'm bored and more than frustrated by your senseless play and willingness to run back to being the lackey and junior partner in an E/R after you were stabbed by Russia, then turn your back on the I/T that supported you when you were stabbed. Indeed, if at the

junction where you ran dutifully back into your kennel for the juicy bone of Russia giving you a few centers you simply accepted the gesture, took the centers and followed through with a few key moves then you sir could've taken Russia down a few more centers and won the game or at least dictated where it would go next. Even so, in that winter you only build fleets to appease the player that stabbed you and is sitting within reach of the centers he needs to win while you row your boat to Morocco??? Now? You make Chamberlain look like William Wallace, indeed, that e-mail with the 2-way guarantee...priceless!

Winter 1912 Commentary

Jim Burgess (BOLD)

Rick Desper (Normal Font)

Richard Walkerdine (Comic Sans MS)

Press: Bill seems to think that David Hood's defense mattered. I don't think it mattered anywhere near that much, and it wasn't completely a defense, David did a lot of Don's bidding at various times. This does indicate what the other press item suggests.... that there are some really different views around the board as to what has happened and been happening. We haven't even seen the negotiation press, and I think we get what has been happening better than this. But maybe we don't get it either. But will that stop your intrepid commenters? No way, hosea! Charge!! Anyway, Gary seems to think that Bill is the only one voting against a concession to Russia. As I commented last season, before seeing this very detailed layout from Gary, I think there is active ER discussion of a 17-17 draw, and we're headed toward something close to that. Why would Bill concede to Russia when he thinks he could do that, or win. Do I think he can get there? Well, there always is the possibility that Don will agree to a 17-17, but I wouldn't bet the farm on it. I do believe Don wrote an E-Mail guaranteeing it. This will be fun. Now to the positions with the adjustments:

England: Gary berated Bill for not building armies that could be occupying Germany last turn, but he does build one this turn. I think Don has to move Warsaw toward Germany and Tyrolia to Munich unless there is a REALLY strong deal on that 17-17. One piece of evidence on that would be if that army is convoyed straight to Tuscany!!! The complete other direction would be convoying the army to Holland and moving A Bur-Mun. Let's see which one

we see.

Italy: Yes, A Portugal went away, I think Melinda helps in the Balkans, I do, I do. F Adr-Ion cuts support and Don may well support Melinda to Greece now. The Balkans are now in collapse if Russia and Italy work together.

Russia: I would expect the attack on Bulgaria, but as noted above, maybe Don supports Melinda to Greece first. Either way, Turkey's mood will surely get more surly.

Turkey: Yeah, Gary, I think we shouldn't have had to call on you, would the game have been different at this point if we had the dentist drilling teeth rather than the poker player getting frustrated? I think it might have been different in tone, but probably not in reality.

In sum, I think this will take a long time to get to the Russian victory, but maybe it will be a 17-17. I like the idea of it getting down nearer to the nitty gritty of the endgame. It will be fun to watch, I think.

Interesting thoughts by Jim.

I think at this point we presume an agreement to a 17/17 split and go from there. Of course, any such agreement would be very hard to enforce, given the reality of the fleet situation in the Med.

If I/T wanted to throw the game to Russia, they should have done so a while back. I'm not sure it could be done now.

Russia has many SCs that he cannot hope to defend against an English attack. Brest and Kiel are going to England whenever he wants them.

If the game continues on this path, I think there's a high likelihood of a solo, and England's position is likely to be better than Russia's for that purpose.

WINTER 1912

As the sound of the Tardis departing gradually faded the 'Further Glory' took its next time jump and General U'til prepared for the next briefing.

There was a tear in his eye as he prepared but he didn't let the trainees see.

The trainees were assembled. The General moved to the podium to begin his address. "Hail Fndili."

"Hail Fndili," came the response.

"Well gentlemen," he began, "we have an even more interesting situation. Both England and Russia are in resurgence, Turkey is clearly in decline and Italy is still just hanging on. But Russia seems to have vacated its northern territories which are now open to English attack. I wonder if there is a plan for a joint England/Russia win in this war? Time will of course tell. As usual I require your reports by midday tomorrow. Hail Fndili."

Aboard the Tardis the companions returned to Earth in Brooklyn's timeframe and the craft settled next to a large lake. "Where's this Doctor?" asked Brooklyn.

The Time Lord smiled. "It's the lake just south of Carson. Time to return Excalibur to its guardian."

"Oh, yeah," replied the young boy, "I remember you and Merlin saying that."

They left the craft and walked to the lake edge. Merlin put a hand on Brooklyn's shoulder. "Now boy, I want you to take careful hold of the sword and throw it out as hard as you can over the lake."

Brooklyn looked horrified, "But Merlin," he gasped, "then it will be lost forever!"

The old magician just smiled. "No Brooklyn, it will be back in the safe keeping of The Lady of the Lake. She will guard it until it is needed again. Trust me Brooklyn, I've done this before, several times in fact."

The young boy took a deep breath. "Are you really sure about this?" he asked.

"I am," came the reply.

Brooklyn took another deep breath, drew back his arm and with all his strength threw Excalibur out over the lake. It turned over and over, glinting in the dim light before finally plunging towards the still water.

But just before it hit the water an arm appeared, a woman's arm encased in silver armour, which grasped the sword by its hilt, held it for a moment and then took it below the surface.



Merlin sighed with relief. "That was well done Brooklyn. The Lady will keep it safe until it is needed again."