

Diplomacy World #138



Summer 2017 Issue

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Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, which I bring to you with a heavy heart and more than one tear on my face. I lost a good friend, as did so many of us, a few days ago.

James Burgess, who has served as Co-Editor of Diplomacy World for the last ten years, and....well, to even begin to list all the things he did within the Diplomacy hobby is nearly impossible without sitting down and thinking it through. On June 27th Jim finally lost his long battle with cancer. Those of us who corresponded with him on a regular basis, or who read *The Abyssinian Prince*, knew about the ups and downs he had been through. Things looked bad, then good, then better...and then a few setbacks later he was confined to a bed, unable to walk. Yet even then, Jim-Bob maintained a positive attitude. He was sure he would beat this and be able to walk again.

Sadly it was not to be. He fought long, hard, and valiantly. But the end comes for us all.

It will surprise no one who knew him well that through all of this, Jim continued to be the same joking, thoughtful, loving, and caring person he always has been. I can't count the number of times in the last 18 months he showed more concern for me and the problems I've been going through than he did for his own illness.

It was Jim who convinced me to get back into zine publishing, offering to run *Eternal Sunshine* as a subzine in *The Abyssinian Prince*. Eventually it grew large enough to move out on its own, to the point that as *The Abyssinian Prince* slowed down he asked that *I* run *his* zine as a subzine in order to give him more motivation to stay on a tight schedule. And now that *Eternal Sunshine* is down to one game and almost over, I'll still be publishing a zine, as I had agreed that should the worst come to pass I would take over his remaining games from *The Abyssinian Prince*

It was also Jim who ~~badgered~~ talked me into returning for my second stint as Diplomacy World Lead Editor. And as anyone on the DW Staff can tell you, it has been Jim's enthusiasm and encouragement that kept this zine going as strongly as it has been. When I wanted to quit, he'd talk me into staying. When I felt Diplomacy World wasn't serving much of a purpose any longer, it is Jim who was able to show me how I was wrong.

I honestly can't tell you where I'll find that encouragement and enthusiasm now. Not to mention Jim was the one who proofread the issues and uncovered many of the countless typos. But in his honor

Diplomacy World will carry on. Somehow we'll pull together and make it work.

With that in mind, those of you who would like to contribute a letter, a column, a tribute, or a memory about James Burgess for the next issue (of any length, short or long), are encouraged to do so. Please send it to me. I expect that issue to be overflowing with examples of how Jim-Bob Burgess touched the hobby at large and people's lives individually.

So while I will be accumulating those comments and columns for the next issue, I'll include here an off-the-cuff note from Larry Peery, to give you an idea of what to expect in three months:

In the nearly third-of-a-century I knew Jim-Bob Burgess I came to admire him greatly. That was not because he was a particularly good Diplomacy player; which he wasn't. Or because he was a fine publisher and editor of hobby press; which he was. Or because he perfected a unique style in the art of Diplomacy cartography; which he did. Or because he was a tireless hard-worker for the hobby's improvement; which he was. No, the reason I admired him was because he did all these things at the same time he managed to keep focused on what really matters: his family, his career, and his friends, of which he had many.

I don't even remember when I met him the first time. It might have been at one of the early DipCons or other gaming events, or perhaps it was at WDC IV in Birmingham in 1994, one of the few occasions when he ventured out into the international FTF Diplomacy hobby. Although most of his hobby activities were centered in the USA he had hobby contacts and friends all over and his wise counsel was valued by all. Whenever there was a feud or a problem to be solved, we knew Jim-Bob would be working to resolve it with the best interests of the hobby in mind.

Over the years I depended on him many times for help in a wide variety of projects, some of which he was enthused about and some of which he thought (and told me) were crazy. Still, he was always there when needed. And now he's not. I still find that hard to accept.

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 1st, 2017.

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

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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



Paul Milewski - There should have been no reason for the analyses in the last issue of DW of the paradox from the issue before that one. The game has been around long enough so that, however unlikely a convoy problem such as the one described may be, the rules have been through enough revisions that any possible convoy problem, no matter how unlikely, should have been addressed long before now.

As I tried to point out in my analysis of the paradox, the rewording of rule XII.5 in the "2nd Edition/Feb. '82" version of the rules, if construed as broadly as the way it was worded permits, notwithstanding that the example following it was unchanged from the 1976 rule XII.5, would have gotten rid of the paradox Mr. Haffey and I were addressing, but although that rewording was kept in the "3rd Edition – 1992" rules, the "4th Edition 2000" rules, on page 16, went back to the 1976 rule XII.5—the exact same wording, but the exact same meaning as the 1976 rule.

Apparent inconsistencies abound. For instance, "an order by one country which supports an attack by another country against a space occupied by one of the

first country's units does not permit a move dislodging that unit," but I feel safe in saying that a country may convoy an attack against a space occupied by one of its own units, even if that attack dislodges that unit. Why? Because the rules don't say it can't. Does that "make sense?" Does it have to?

No, a rule is a rule, and you follow the rule. If a rule, as it is worded, admits to more than one meaning, it's a crappy rule. If there is no rule to cover a situation that might arise, however unlikely that situation might be, the rules are crappy. If we all don't follow the same rules, we're not playing the same game.



Conrad Woodring - Whatever happened to the European Diplomacy Association, North American Diplomacy Association, and the World Diplomacy Database rankings that used to be kept current? Who maintains those rankings and how are events submitted?

[[I was going to ask Jim Burgess to answer this. Sigh. Perhaps someone else can provide the best answer?]]

Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplomacy.world/>

I am trying to locate additional sources for Upcoming Conventions. PLEASE, if you have an event coming up, notify me, and why not make up a one page flyer for inclusion in Diplomacy World?

WorldDipCon - Friday July 7th 2017 – Sunday July 9th 2017 – St. John's College, Oxford, U.K. - <http://wdc2017.com>

Remember to send in your Jim Burgess memories, thoughts, and tributes for the next issue. Try to reach out to hobby members who knew him – including those who have since left the hobby – in case my efforts have failed to find them. Obviously, ALL material is welcomed for that issue; Jim-Bob would never have allowed a "tribute issue" without the usual range of quality articles included.

Get Out of the Box: 10 Ways to Take Your Game to the Next Level

By Jacob Trotta

First, I should introduce myself. I'm Jake Trotta, a new member of the hobby and the Minister of Public Information (or "Speaky Weasel") for the Windy City Weasels. Our club goals are to grow the hobby and develop championship caliber players. Both objectives require players to learn and develop their game, so I'd like to share a bit about my own development in the hopes that it may help other future players (and Weasels) with theirs.

After winning my first tournament, I went through a very difficult 6-month plateau in the hobby. I wanted to get better and tried to improve at the 3 aspects of the game (negotiation, strategy, tactics). I was reading articles, playing gunboat games, getting a lot of games in. But the results weren't matching my effort level. I lost the league lead, got slammed at WDC, wasn't enjoying the game as much, and was certainly less fun to play with. After getting eliminated first in our club title game, the Weasel Royale, I asked another player on the board where I was going wrong. "You're just not having fun anymore," he told me.

That moment made me realize something—a fourth (and perhaps most important) dimension to the game. Attitude. What mentality am I bringing to the board? How is that impacting my negotiation? Strategy? Tactics? If I don't establish a defined, constructive relationship between myself and the board, it is, by necessity, going to be very difficult to establish constructive relationships with my boardmates. That realization changed the way I evaluate the board, my game, and myself, sparking a rapid period of growth. The following are a set of 10 insights that helped break me out of that mental box.



1) You are the only common thread on every board you'll ever play

Let's start with a blindingly obvious one. There's so much that is out of your control in a Diplomacy game—openings alone have thousands of possible combinations—but the one thing you do control is yourself. Fortunately, you are also going to be involved in every board you'll ever play.

This means your focus should always be on you, developing yourself for future games. On every board,

your primary objective should obviously be to win. But after that, your goal should be to LEARN—what may feel like defeat today is the bedrock of tomorrow's victory.

2) It's Always Your Fault

There is a danger when we do not share the same opinion as someone to blame them for our troubles. If they don't do it my way, they must be wrong. But that is a cop out. Wishing someone else was better at Diplomacy will never make me better at Diplomacy. Diplomacy is a game of collaboration. In order to collaborate, we need to win others over to our way of thinking, or find a means to make their way of thinking work for us. Therefore, no matter which route we tried to take, the failure is our fault.

So blame yourself! If you weren't able to get on the same page with another player, evaluate your own responsibility in that after the game. You can always improve your negotiation, but you'll never get the chance if you're not willing to meet the other person where they are. Don't reject their stance—move yours to take advantage of it.

3) But, don't blame yourself if you don't win, cause Dip ain't fair and winning ain't everything

Diplomacy does not always, or perhaps not even often, reward the player who performed best. You can't force a victory in a Diplomacy board. Even solos involve someone else messing up. So in the majority of games, the rest of the board has to agree on who the victor is. Since it is impossible to control the result of the game, there will be times where you played better than anyone on the board and don't top, and times you top when your play didn't merit victory. Your objective is to play well enough to win and improve. Better to commend yourself for strong play that gave you a shot to win than to celebrate a win you didn't really earn.

4) Get to the Dance

Right before I left Tempest (and just before my hot streak started), I overheard a conversation between Chris Martin, former World Champ and one of the world's best players, and Brandon Fogel, another Chicago up and comer. Brandon asked Chris how he was so dominant, and Chris's response was very insightful about his attitudinal approach to Diplomacy. "If I make it out of my theater, I expect to get first or second on every board."

Here's what I gleaned from that comment about how to evaluate your Diplomacy game. The first benchmark is to evaluate whether you got out of the gate, or, as I say in my negotiation, "get to the dance." (No relation to Chris's 'Dancing Queen' nickname.) That shifted my thinking from "I need to be ahead going into the midgame" to "I need to be in the midgame, hopefully with decent position." There's also an element of self-trust: I don't need to shark my way to a win by 03, I just need to believe that if I'm viable in 06, I've got a great chance.

Early in my career, I felt the need to win all the time, both on each board and in each season. By shifting my mentality to simply getting to the dance, I'm less threatening and easier to play with... and I've made more dances.



5) Quitting is for quitters

You're going to have games when things go wrong and prospects of victory are minimal. Sometimes, you're going to be a 1 or 2 center country in a world of 8 center powers. Your primary goal-victory- is likely out the window. The bar (or sleep) will be calling you, and it may feel like the time to throw in the towel. But giving up will only prevent you from accomplishing your secondary objective- developing your game. The truth is, while major powers contend for victory, minor powers often decide who wins. In most games, support of a dying power will be a necessary condition to your victory- so being a dying power is a tremendous opportunity to learn how to work with them in games where you are a contender.

So don't quit—play your heart out! Try out different secondary goals that you've seen other smaller powers play. By doing so, you'll gain a better empathy for the minor power, and be better able to leverage them in future games. Plus, if the board breaks the right way, you have a chance for a comeback. Quitters never come back.

6) No one gives a damn about you or your plans... but everyone needs a best man

One of the most common, but also pedantic, pieces of advice Diplomacy players give each other is "try to think of it from my perspective." As a Diplomacy player, it is quite easy to get stuck in your own head. You're going to develop a philosophy of the game, motivation for why you play, what you want out of each board. It is crucial for you to understand these things about yourself, but frankly, your ally won't give a damn about your perspective. Don't bother sharing it unless it helps develop your relationship.

When people tell you "think of it from my perspective," what you may hear is "talk about my goals and board dynamics to make them happen." That may even be what they think they're saying. But what they really mean is "I want to feel heard." Five other players are going to be speaking to their functional needs—tactics, strategy, what have you. If you can identify your opponent's *emotional* desires for the game and cater to them, they will feel they've got a friend on the board that understands and appreciates them. Players want a winner who made them feel good and enjoy themselves (if they cannot win themselves).

So don't talk only about yourself or logistics—be their best man. Which is to say, provide whatever emotional support they need to make the right choices.

7) Mold yourself to the culture

Every location you play in (and, to a degree, every board you play) will have a different culture to it. Some of this is scoring system based—if the broader incentives are to reduce draw size, people will play differently than in a center-based system. It doesn't matter if you think draw-based scoring is a relic of a bygone era that should be eradicated or that 1902 is a little early to be thinking about the stalemate line. The culture won't change to fit you—you need to move to meet the board/club/tournament/league where it is at.

In our club, this can be particularly difficult. We play Sum of Squares, which some new players aren't familiar with. To compound that challenge, half our games are timed bar games with a preset end time. This makes for a crazy, frantic, stabby final year in nearly every game. Some new Weasels struggle to adapt to this more fluid, less alliance based style of play. Conversely, some Weasels are excellent in the bar games, but struggle in our untimed house games. Instead of stewing over why your fastball isn't working, try adding the changeup or a curve to your arsenal. The strongest players are able to play different styles based on the scoring system and culture around them.



8) Paint with all the colors of the wind

Something I've noticed about the world's best players is that their statistics are remarkably similar across all 7 countries. Even if they have a favorite, it won't be too much stronger than the remaining 6. What this means is that the best players are adaptable. They can play any power, take any board situation, and make beautiful music to maximize their shot at winning.

The reason most Diplomacy players stall out is because they only want/know how to play one or two notes. They know how to act under certain board dynamics, perhaps only as certain countries. These players tend to be boom or bust. When they play as their favorite country, or when board dynamics fit their style, look out. But in games where they can't follow their script, they get eliminated. These players can take advantage when things break the right way, but can't make things happen on any board.

So step outside your comfort zone. If you know you're weak at a certain country, ask to play it. If you always open to Armenia as Turkey, try playing patient. If you've never allied with a certain player, give them a shot. You can only expect to thrive in situations you've prepared for. You can only prepare for situations you're open to considering.

9) Steel sharpens steel

It is easy to be bitter or envious when someone else wins (especially if they win frequently). But if we fail to

recognize *why* they won and what about their game is superior, we fail to grow our own games. By admiring and emulating the competition, we can best become better players.

To be fair, that can be a big emotional ask. Not only is Diplomacy a zero-sum game, it is also a game of personality. When we see our competitors select another player as the winner, it can easily lead to some resentment. In our club, we complain about other players being "dot-grabbing bastards," but our club mascot is the Weasel: cunning, slimy, endlessly deceptive. Complaining about a Weasel out-Weaseling you is both counterproductive and against the spirit of the hobby.

Instead of being bitter (okay, maybe give yourself a minute to be bitter), diagnose exactly how the other person bested you—and either seek to emulate it, or create a strategy to counter that in your next game. Competitors are not obstacles to victory, but the grindstone through which we sharpen our own abilities.

10) The pen is mightier than the stab

If you are serious about improving your Diplomacy game, write AARs. It is much more difficult to improve your game if you don't analyze it. I've written an AAR for every game I've played in the past year or so. My longest was about four pages, my shortest was one sentence ("Don't order Naples-Ion-Naples in 1901.") Without them, I may not have discovered the prior 9 insights.

Before I wrote AARs, I would learn something new every 4-5 games. Now, I learn something new every board and have a recorded history of all those learnings. Through AARs, you can really get a read on how your game is developing from tactics, strategy, negotiation, and attitude. It gives you an opportunity to diagnose what went wrong and correct it. Even if you don't have time to write a year-by-year analysis, listing what the key moments and learnings from each game will improve your game faster than anything.

11) Learn the ways of the Weasel

If you've made it this far, you must have enjoyed our 10 attitudinal ideas to get your game out of the box. Rightly, you deserve a bonus tip! If you're looking for resources on how to be a better strategist, tactician, or just overall Diplomacy player, hop over to windycityweasels.com. We've got AARs, articles, and worksheets designed to help you evaluate and improve your game.

Xenogogic Summer 2017 – Turkey’s on the Fly

By Larry Peery

Turkey has been in the hobby and world news a lot recently. Here's a report.

TURKEY IN DIPLOMACY



The Old Well is a small, neoclassical rotunda located on the UNC at Chapel Hill campus in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The current structure was modeled after the Temple of Love in the Gardens of Versailles and was completed in 1897. It is the most enduring symbol of UNC. The Old Well also plays an important role in the history of DIXIECON (see below). The winner of the first DIXIECON in 1987, Morgan Gurley, began a tradition --- as the first event winner and two best country award winners (Russia and Turkey) --- of filling the drinking fountain on the last night of the event with local Carolina Bourbon and drinking it dry. The following year David Hood tried filling the fountain on Saturday night with very iced sweetened tea but nobody would drink it. Never one to give up, the following year David filled the fountain with local barbeque sauce and everyone pronounced it “finger lickin’ good”! And Mama Dip’s Kitchen in Chapel Hill regularly features an “All You Can Eat Turkey Wings BBQ” for the Memorial Day weekend. Can you guess who ate the most wings this year and how many it was?

In recognition of his outstanding participation in and loyalty to DixieCon we would like to salute Steve Wilcox with “The Most Consistent Diplomacy Player Ever” award. In support of that award we offer the following evidence: at DixieCon I in 1987 Steve came in at 20th place in the con results. At DixieCon XXXI in 2017, thirty-one years later, Steve came in 22nd place in the con results, highlighted by elimination as Turkey in the last game of the event. What more can be said? Well, here's what David Hood said, "Steve has been around so long because he was part of the CADs games for years before we even started Dixiecon. So I started playing Dip with him in probably 1985, the year before we all joined the wider hobby in 1986.. A nice guy, absolutely, and loves to play the game even though he does not always do all that well. He has come to Dixie off and on over the whole 31 year history - this year I was thrilled to meet his relatively new wife, who joined him in Chapel Hill although she stayed as far away from the gamin as possible..."

Hopefully a lot by David Hood is to follow.

For more about this year’s event you can check the official DixieCon web site, various Diplomacy-related Facebook pages, relevant issues of Diplomacy World and The Diplomatic Pouch and, of course, the Diplomacy Database site. Here are just some of the “Turkey in Diplomacy” items.

In Diplomacy Turkey has always done well. Whether it was in FTF, postal, convention & tournament, or PBEM play; Turkey has consistently been at or near the top in end-of-game performance ratings. It was no different at this year’s XXXI DIPCON in Chapel Hill.

David Hood reported the results of the event’s ten games of regular Diplomacy for Turkey as follows:

Game 1A: AFG Draw in 1908; Claude Worell, 0 centers
Game 1B: EGIT Draw in 1907, Doc Binder, 15 centers
Game 1C: ERT Draw in 1906, Tim Richardson, 9 centers.
Game 1D: EGR Draw in 1905, Graham Woodring, 0 centers
Game 2A: E Win in 1907, Bill Hackenbracht, 16 centers
Game 2B: EGT Draw in 1909, Peter Yeargin, 15 centers
Game 2C: EFT Draw in 1909, Tom Kobrin, 17 centers
Game 3A: EGIT Draw in 1909, David Miller, 10 centers
Game 3B: EFTR Draw in 1908, Brian Shelden, 11 centers
Game 3C: EGI Draw in 1908, Steve Wilcox, 0 centers

In summary, Turkey did well in seven of the ten games and terribly in three. As always, it was a case of feast or famine for Turkey; which seems appropriate enough.

DIPLOMACY IN TURKEY

The Hagia Sophia was originally built as a Christian Church over a five hundred year period beginning in 537. In 1054 it was converted to a Greek Orthodox Cathedral. In 1204 it became a Roman Catholic Cathedral for a brief period and then, in 1261, it once again became a Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Then, with the arrival of the Ottomans in 1453, it became an Imperial Mosque. But wait, we're not through! In 1931 the new "modern" Turkish government closed the mosque before reopening in 1935 as a sectarian Museum. But the story may not be finished yet as Turkey's current leader, President Erdogan, who sees himself as an Ottoman Suleiman "the Magnificent" successor, has talked of reconverting the Museum back into a Mosque. And one thing we've learned, when Erdogan talks people listen --- or else!!



In the real time, real world Turkey has also been flying high lately as President Erdogan continues his campaign on all fronts to turn back the clock in the modern Turkish republic and recreate a traditional Ottoman empire with himself cast in the role of Sultan-in-Chief as Erdogan the Magnificent.

Since I last wrote about what's going on in Turkey there have been many developments on both the domestic and international news fronts in the Middle East and much of it centers around Turkey's strategy, tactics and diplomacy for winning the latest diplomacy game in the Near and Middle East. In fact, many of these developments could be described in terms right out of a Dipper's order writing handbook. It's all there: moves, attacks, holds, supports, convoys, etc. Dare I mention stabs?

At Home:

Crushing the revolt: whether it was a real coup or revolt, or one created by Erdogan and his followers as an excuse to wipe out their opposition; only time will tell. In

the meantime the construction of new mosques goes ahead frantically, construction of new secular schools of all kinds has stopped, and old schools have been converted to prisons and detention centers for thousands of Erdogan critics.

Crushing the coup: It's difficult to tell from the fragmentary news reports and the You Tube videos if a real coup was underway when Erdogan began his force-based campaign to crush it. We do know that thousands of members of the military, including many of the nation's highest generals, were detained, questioned and either released or held for trial. The trials are going on, now that larger courtrooms have been built to hold the hundreds of defendants.

Crushing the opposition: Erdogan and his allies have moved to crush any real, imagined or potential opposition in the government, political parties, military, judiciary, and educational system.

Ottomaning the Country: from the first bridge under the Bosphorus to a huge new presidential complex-palace with 1200 rooms built at a cost of \$1.2B (in comparison, the White House has 132 rooms and is worth about \$250M; and the new German chancellery is ten times the size of the White House and cost over \$300M). To what is claimed will be the world's largest airport, Turkey has been building bigger and better, or at least more expensive, toys for its presidential sultan.

Building the Warfare State: To keep the military close to him Erdogan has pushed a massive weapons building program created by a new domestic military-industrial complex that is or soon will be producing almost all the country's need for the latest weapons of all kinds including battle tanks, jet fighters, etc. Everything isn't going smoothly however. A reliable engine for its new MBT has proven elusive. The F-35 assembly and repair facility that Turkey badly wanted to build (the only one outside of the USA) went to Italy instead.

Abroad:

At War with the EU and NATO: Turkey, for all practical purposes is engaged in a war with Germany in both the EU and NATO. Turkey has an army of some 2M workers living in Germany, a vital source of foreign exchange to the Turks and workers to the Germans for everything from pizza shops to BMW and MB factories. On the other hand, Germany is moving a few hundred of its soldiers from the air base at Incirlik to Jordan after Turkey refused to let German parliamentarians visit their troops in Turkey. In comparison imagine what would happen if South Korea refused to allow Sen. John McCain to visit Camp Humphreys in Korea?

Enemies of the past become Allies of the moment as opportunities arise and needs and wants change: The situation in the Near and Middle East is constantly in a state of flux and the Turks love it that way. It gives them

a chance to change their position constantly to take advantage of the latest opportunities and shifting developments. Russia may be a foe in the Crimea where Turkey supports the tartars, but that doesn't stop them from being good buddies elsewhere. Turkey may not like the Iranians much (its largest army is now the one facing the Iranian border, not the one facing NATO) but that doesn't keep them from working together to support Qatar.

Turkey in Syria and Iraq: I have a giant (six foot by six foot) map of the Holy Lands that the National Geographic put out in the 1980s. I used to use it to follow the various wars going on in the area until it became easier to use Google maps and such. Even that doesn't help much today when things can change overnight or in a few hours as planes, missiles and now drones roam over the area. Turkey's goals in the area are fairly simple and clear: it wants to keep the PKK down and out of Turkey; it wants to prevent an independent Kurdistan; it wants to prevent anybody (except itself) from gaining control of Iraq's oil resources. Oh, and you can be sure it isn't happy with the newly expanding Russian bases in Syria, especially the naval base.

Turkey –Iranian Relations: Wiki says peaceful, Al Jazeera says hostile. Who do you believe? Both! The best situation is when both countries are engulfed by domestic turmoil and power struggles. That keeps them out of each other's hair. The problem comes when one calms things down at home and the other doesn't. Even bigger problems come when both have unstable situations and home and start looking for a foreign adventure to take their peoples' minds off their domestic problems. Both Turkey and Iran fall into that quagmire at the moment.

Turkey-Saudi Arabia: Turkey offers to build a base in Saudi Arabia. Saudis say NIMBY! The arms build-up continues. Today we have a shake-up in the royal family. Conflict between these two is almost a forgone conclusion. As in so many Near and Middle East rivalries the reason can be traced back to its Islamic past. Turkey claims to be the legitimate caliphate based on its Ottoman and earlier links. The Saudis claim to be the legitimate defenders of the holy cities of Islam. Yes, it really is that simple --- even if they won't admit it.

Qatar: Saudis and UAE vs. Turkey and Iran while Qatar continues to play "Let's Make a Deal." As usual, the USA is clueless; and Israel keeps its head low Why did the Saudis and its allies suddenly go after Qatar? First, because they thought they could get it done quickly and easily at little cost. Second, because they thought they had Trump's tacit OK after his visit and that over-hyped arms deal worth \$110B --- except that it isn't. Most of the components of the deal were in place under Obama but the Saudis delayed signing off on them in the hopes of getting something more out of Trump. Most of the

deals are "intent to purchase" not firm sale orders. Most of the weapons involved are destined for use in the Saudis war in Yemen, not for use against Israel, etc. The fact is that if the USA really wanted to change the military balance in the area quickly they could by just transfer military equipment and munitions we have stockpiled in Israel or Saudi Arabia already. But no, that wouldn't create jobs for American defense contractors or at least let the White House say it does. In the meantime things are not going the way the Saudis expected. Stay tuned. It's not over yet.

Late-breaking News: This morning it was announced that the King of Saudi Arabia had replaced his former Crown Prince, interior minister, nephew and friend of Qatar with his 31-year-old son who currently serves as defense minister. Combined with other changes being made the King has, in effect, shifted power in the country not to the next generation but to the one after it. It's a huge game changer that will see men in their 60s or older giving way to men in their 30s. As for Qatar, the Saudis will squeeze it but not too much for fear of sending the Qatari and their natural gas reserves straight into the arms of the Iranians.

Oman: The sole voice of moderation in Arabia. Can it survive?

While thinking and writing all this I've been desperately looking for a voice of reason and a rational actor in the area. It was hard finding one but I think I have, the Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said of Oman and Muscat. He's been Sultan and head of state since overthrowing his father, Said bin Timor, in a palace coup in the 1970s. If anybody can resolve some of these regional conflicts he can. If he can't do it nobody can. I know two things: first, Erdogan is not going to bring peace to the area. He doesn't want to. Second, Trump isn't going to bring peace to the area either. He doesn't know how.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand and appreciate what is going on in the area today is to re-watch The Godfather trilogy. If you recast the Arab tribes as the Mafia gangs, and the various presidents, monarchs, caliphs and sultans as criminal syndicate and family members; you'll have a highly simplified version of today's happenings.

For those looking for something more I've put together a reading list of some basic and a few esoteric works on Ottoman-Turkish history. This partial list will be greatly expanded upon for a forthcoming article exploring the works of Kinross, Lawrence and Rogan pertaining to Turkey and the Near and Middle East. For the most part they are historical works, not current events analysis, and basically cover the period of the game Diplomacy and WWI. Some of them were published in only one edition. Others have gone through many printings, various editions, translations of varying worth, and even become paperbacks to the trade and textbooks. Most

can be found, often at discounted prices on Amazon.com, eBay or Craig's List. Most of the reviews and comments are drawn from the book jackets, publisher's promotional materials, or book reviews published in the media. However, newer works by other authors have increased our knowledge of their subjects and made the books listed here more of a curiosity than a state of the art depository of the latest archival information. For example, Kinross's biography of Atatürk was the definitive work on its subject for nearly thirty years. However, in 1999 Andrew Mango's new biography in English based on Turkish sources, quickly became the definitive work on Atatürk.

WHETHER BY CAMEL OR HUMMER: A CRASH COURSE IN OTTOMAN-TURKISH HISTORY

Suggested Sequential Reading Order

1. **Ottoman Centuries (Kinross)**
2. **Hagia Sophia (Kinross)**
3. **The Arabs (Rogan)**
4. **Between Two Seas (Kinross)**
5. **The Fall of the Ottomans (Rogan)**
6. **Seven Pillars of Wisdom (Lawrence)**
7. **Atatürk (Kinross)**

By Lord Kinross

***Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London. 1964)**

Still the best biography of the founder of modern Turkey. I reread this because Erdogan and the AKP party are trying to undo most of the reforms introduced by Atatürk and revert Turkey to an Islamic, neo-Ottoman, mediocrity. I spent three years in Izmir as an exchange officer with the Turkish Air Force and grew to love Turkey and the Turkish peoples. I grieve that Westernized Izmir is now referred to as "Infidel Izmir" and a recent survey indicated that 73 percent of Turks were now anti-American.

(Reading this brought back memories, for me, of reading letters from Rod Walker written while he was a USAF officer stationed in Turkey and listening to his stories about his experiences there during the Second Diplomacy Golden Age. --- Larry Peery)

***Atatürk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey* (New York. 1965)**

The recent events in the Persian Gulf have made it clearer than ever that understanding the history of the Middle East is essential if a solution is to be found for its problems today. The story of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is an important and enthralling part of that history. 6 maps.

***Between Two Seas: The Creation of the Suez Canal* (1968)**

***Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (1977)**

The Ottoman Empire began in 1300 under the almost legendary Osman I, reached its apogee in the sixteenth century under Suleiman the Magnificent, whose forces threatened the gates of Vienna, and gradually diminished thereafter until Mehmed VI was sent into exile by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk).

In this definitive history of the Ottoman Empire, Lord Kinross, painstaking historian and superb writer, never loses sight of the larger issues, economic, political, and social. At the same time he delineates his characters with obvious zest, displaying them in all their extravagance, audacity and, sometimes, ruthlessness.

The Ottoman Empire - Lord Kinross (Slip Case Hardcover – January 1, 2003 (Folio Edition) by Norman Stone (Author)

"...the Ottoman Empire outlived all the other Turkic empires, the empires of the steppe that so fascinated Western travelers, from the precursors of Marco Polo to those ladies immortalized in Lesley Blanch's 'Wilder Shore of Love' (1954), a classic, more antiseptic than its title. Among the many, and sometimes extremely good, English-language memoirs and works of history, Patrick Kinross's magnificently deserves its place."--Introduction By T. E. Lawrence

***Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922-1926)**

As Angus Calder states in his introduction to this edition, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is one of the major statements about the fighting experience of the First World War'. Lawrence's younger brothers, Frank and Will, had been killed on the Western Front in 1915. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, written between 1919 and 1926, tells of the vastly different campaign against the Turks in the Middle East - one which encompasses gross acts of cruelty and revenge and ends in a welter of stink and corpses in the disgusting 'hospital' in Damascus. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is no 'Boys Own Paper' tale of Imperial triumph, but a complex work of high literary aspiration which stands in the tradition of Melville and Dostoevsky, and alongside the writings of Yeats, Eliot and Joyce.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom & The Evolution of a Revolt (2 Books) Paperback – February 22, 2017

This volume contains the extraordinary book "*Seven Pillars of Wisdom*", as well as an amazing article titled *THE EVOLUTION OF A REVOLT* in which T. E. Lawrence explains his Arab campaigns. The *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is T. E. Lawrence's -better known as *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA*- major work, an account of his war experiences, edited by none other than *GEORGE BERNARD SHAW*. The story has inspired several movies, turning Lawrence of Arabia into a character of

legend. During the war, Lawrence fought alongside Arab irregular troops under the command of Emir Faisal, a son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, in extended guerrilla operations against the armed forces of the Ottoman Empire (Turkey). Lawrence obtained assistance from the Royal Navy to turn back an Ottoman attack on Yanbu in December 1916. His major contribution to the revolt was convincing the Arab leaders (Faisal and Abdullah) to coordinate their actions in support of British strategy. He persuaded the Arabs not to make a frontal assault on the Ottoman stronghold in Medina but to allow the Turkish army to tie up troops in the city garrison. The Arabs were then free to direct most of their attention to the Turks' weak point, the Hejaz railway that supplied the garrison. This vastly expanded the battlefield and tied up even more Ottoman troops, who were then forced to protect the railway and repair the constant damage. Lawrence developed a close relationship with Faisal, whose Arab Northern Army was to become the main beneficiary of British aid.

By Eugene L. Rogan

The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948 (Cambridge Middle East Studies) (1st ed. 2001)

It is a fascinating [story], and exceedingly well told. Mr. Rogan maneuvers with skillful assurance, maintaining a steady pace through time, and keeping the wider horizon in view even as he makes use of a broad range of judiciously chosen primary sources to enrich the narrative. – The Economist

A rich, galloping narrative that spans the Arab world...outstanding, gripping and exuberant...full of flamboyant character sketches, witty asides and magisterial scholarship, that explains much of what we need to know about the world today -- Simon Sebag Montefiore Financial Times

Engrossing and capacious... compulsively readable -- Robert Irwin Guardian

Rogan gives a lucid account of political developments throughout the Arab lands, unpicking messy tangles such as the Lebanese civil war or the fragmentation of Palestinian political movements... One of the special features of this book is that it draws on Arab writings (by memoirists, journalists and others) to give an idea of how the Arabs have experienced their own history...one

senses Rogan's underlying sympathy with his subject -- Noel Malcolm Sunday Telegraph

The Arabs : a history. New York : Basic Books, 2009.

In this definitive history of the modern Arab world, award-winning historian Eugene Rogan draws extensively on five centuries of Arab sources to place the Arab experience in its crucial historical context. In this updated and expanded edition, Rogan untangles the latest geopolitical developments of the region to offer a groundbreaking and comprehensive account of the Middle East. *The Arabs* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the modern Arab world.

"Deeply erudite and distinctly humane."-*Atlantic*

The fall of the Ottomans : the Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920. London : Allen Lane, 2015

By 1914 the powers of Europe were sliding inexorably toward war, and they pulled the Middle East along with them into one of the most destructive conflicts in human history. In *The Fall of the Ottomans*, award-winning historian Eugene Rogan brings the First World War and its immediate aftermath in the Middle East to vivid life, uncovering the often ignored story of the region's crucial role in the conflict. Unlike the static killing fields of the Western Front, the war in the Middle East was fast-moving and unpredictable, with the Turks inflicting decisive defeats on the Entente in Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, and Gaza before the tide of battle turned in the Allies' favor. The postwar settlement led to the partition of Ottoman lands, laying the groundwork for the ongoing conflicts that continue to plague the modern Arab world. A sweeping narrative of battles and political intrigue from Gallipoli to Arabia, *The Fall of the Ottomans* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the Great War and the making of the modern Middle East.

Great reviews, prize winner, and best seller: this is Rogan's best work yet.

CONCLUSION

And there you have it: a look back at DixieCon XXXI, a look at the current diplomatic contra temps in the Near and Middle East, and, for those of you still looking for a good read for this summer, a list of readings on Turkey. See you again, come Thanksgiving time.

The Return of UK Diplomacy

By Conrad Woodring

The UK has been a big part of the Diplomacy story. It was in 1988 that Richard Walkerdine convinced the late Allan Calhmer (and with him a flock from the US and Australia) to fly to Birmingham for what became WDC 1. Since then it has hosted WDC IV in 1994, WDC XIV in 2004 and in a few short weeks the UK will host WDC XXVII.



Recently, the UK hobby has been struggling. Toby Harris, David Norman and a few others have tried to keep it alive, but somewhere along the way people fell off, and interest was lost. I recently chatted with a frustrated Graeme Murphy about a failed event in Hull. ManorCon, the birthplace of WDC, has struggled to host boards in recent years. In my three years living in London, there has hardly been an opportunity to sit down to a seven-player game.

Face-to-face Diplomacy is an obscure and niche hobby. As such pursuits go, it takes a very committed and driven person or group of people to get things moving. Individuals can, through brute force, create something. DixieCon, one of the bastions of American Diplomacy is David Hood. The event has been built for 20+ years off his effort and commitment to the game we love. Christine Pedone has brought Diplomacy to Philadelphia by sharing the game with year after year of his students. I'll stick a feather in my own cap and that of my brother's for the 10 years that HuskyCon ran in New York. Laurent Jolly has made tremendous efforts in France. Davide Cleopadre in Italy. Maletsky, the Pitkissers, Mark and Nathan, Diplomacy Cast... I could go on. There are many such heroes and to try to name them all will leave some people sore with me.

Then there are those that transcend the accomplishments of one person. By the sound of it Richard Walkerdine was one such individual. Jim O'Kelly's efforts to build a sustainable organization in Chicago ought to be a case study at business schools let alone one for aspiring hobby builders. David Webster; who can forget the man who had nearly 50% of Bangor,

Maine playing face-to-face Diplomacy with tournament turnouts consistently in the hundreds of thousands? And of course, it is impossible to overstate the contributions to the hobby of Edi Birsan.

On the eve of WDC XXVII things are surprisingly sunny in the UK. In the past 18 months, there have been 11 Diplomacy sessions organized by the London Diplomacy Club (three of those sessions had two boards). The club boasts over 100 people in its contact list. It has been steadily accelerating the rate at which it organizes games since the start of the year. Dan Lester (WDC's organizer) has even attended some games.

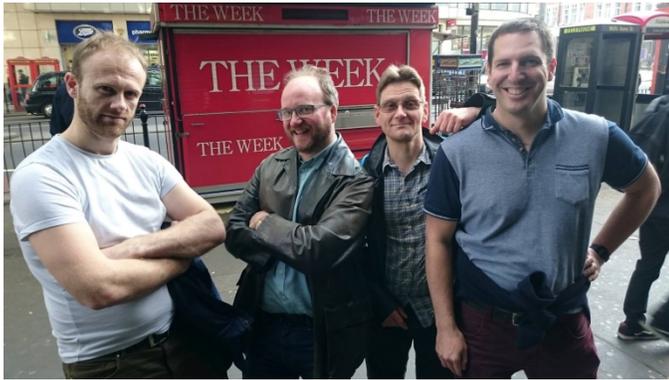


Who is the hero behind this charge? Marvin Fried. Marvin is an Austrian expat with a suspiciously American accent who seems to have made his long-term home here in London. Having seen other Hobby Heroes and their efforts before, I can say that Marvin has built some significant momentum in London. He has successfully networked with gaming organizers, online players, face-to-face players and beginners to build a player base and a brand for the club. He is a patient and skilled teacher of the game (something possible lacking amongst those with my last name).

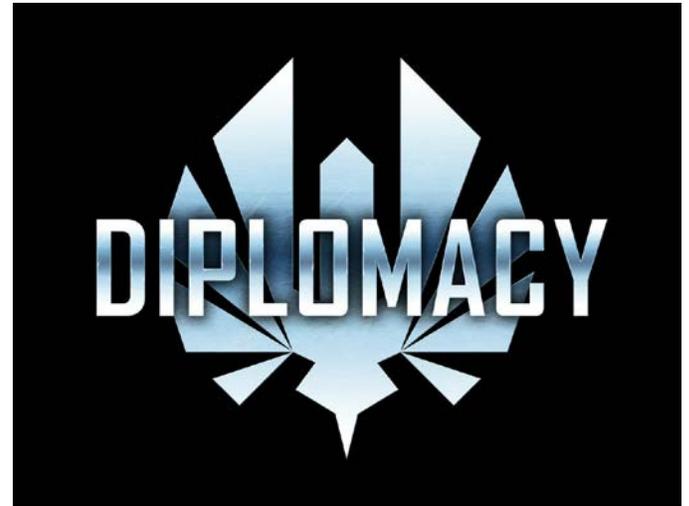


Seeing two boards on a Sunday afternoon is proof enough of success in a city that has not had a face-to-face game in more than 10 years!

I hope that one day Marvin will write about what he has done to successfully bring the Hobby back to the pubs of London, but at the moment he is too busy teaching and building. Maybe it is too early to sing his praise, but he definitely has the determination to build something great for London.



Marvin, myself, and some of the other members of the London Diplomacy Club will see y'all at WDC in a few weeks.



If you'd like to join us in London for a game or a pint, search London Diplomacy Club on Facebook.

Harmony and the Kludge in Game Design

By Lewis Pulsipher

[[Editor's Note: While not specifically about Diplomacy, as usual readers will discover how Lewis' points offer very insightful tips for variant design efforts (not to mention any other attempts at game design).]]

Harmony and its opposite, the kludge, are fundamental to good game design. Games that lack harmony or have in-harmonious aspects have a handicap, though some succeed. Fortunately, most of the in-harmonious games are never published, or only self published. Players don't always recognize the in-harmony but its existence still affects the game. Designers may not recognize in-harmony if they think of the game as "My Baby." But designers need to recognize it and get it out of the game.

So what is harmony? This is hard to pin down. It's like harmony in music, something you can hear and can recognize when harmony is not present. Here is a long quote from a 1997 lecture where this concept of harmony comes from:

Brian Moriarty: <http://ludix.com/moriarty/listen.html>

"It's something you feel. How do you achieve this feeling that everything works together? Where do you get this harmony stuff? Well, I'm here to tell you that it doesn't come from design committees. It doesn't come from focus groups or market surveys. It doesn't come from cool technology or expensive marketing. And it never

happens by accident or by luck. Games with harmony emerge from a fundamental note of clear intention."

I think Moriarty moves into the touchy-feely as he goes on, but you can look it up and see what he has to say. I'm using a simpler definition: "everything in the game feels as though it belongs there and contributes to the purpose and feeling of the game as a whole." That's harmony. It's important because games are not just collections of mechanics. Not just data. Not just metrics. Games make intellectual and emotional impressions on players, and lack of harmony is noticeable, sometimes clearly, sometimes in subtle ways. The effect is not good for the intellectual and emotional impression. Harmony is not the same thing as "elegance," in fact I hesitate to use the word elegance because it's used by fans of certain kinds of tabletop games as a bludgeon to attack fans of other kinds tabletop games, who in turn react very negatively to the word. "Elegant" is often used in much the same sense as "clever." It's usually used in relation to abstract games or practically abstract games, games that are not models of some reality.

Harmony isn't cleverness, it's something that affects the game as a whole. It's about appropriate fit. Now what's appropriate fit depends on what standards people are using, and those standards have changed and very much loosened over the years. Think about movies and TV shows over the years. What makes sense? The screen has always required a heavy "suspension of

disbelief”, but those entertainments have consistently become less believable. People will accept all kinds of foolishness and huge plot-holes because the program is otherwise entertaining. and we’re getting the same thing in games.

I love Star Wars for the adventure, but when I first watched the original Star Wars I came out of the theater and said “this is dumb” and “that is a big plot-hole” but I (in the long run) accepted it because “it’s a movie.”

I still have SOME standards even for movies. The Starship Troopers movie (monsters in outer space) had us travel 80,000 light years and then forget that we can use tanks or helicopters! Monsters farted unguided missiles, yet the human fleet stayed tightly packed together in space to make itself a good target! It’s just ludicrous. Yet it was a popular movie that begetted a couple sequels.

The same kind of loosening of standards of disbelief has happened in game design. People often treat games more as time killers or something mildly engaging to do while they socialize, than as actual entertainment or something worth *focusing* on. So they let things go by that would not have been accepted many years ago.

All right. What’s the opposite of harmony? The Kludge. I borrow this term from software (“kludgy” is the adjective that’s used.) A kludge is a tacked-on solution to a particular problem, or a solution that works but isn’t consistent with the rest of the program. In software though not in games it’s also hard to understand and modify.

The Kludge is hard to define in game design because one man’s kludge is another man’s “nothing wrong with that.” How do you notice the kludges if the game is a model of something? The kludge will usually be inconsistent with the rest of the model, and may have nothing at all to do with what’s being modeled. It may be there to fix some design flaw. When I play games I sometimes ask, why am I doing this particular thing? If the only answer I can find is “because it fixes a design flaw,” or “because the designer liked it,” or “I have no clue why it’s here,” then it is probably a kludge.

What about kludges in abstract games? A kludge is less obvious because the game doesn’t represent anything (other than “a game”). Abstracts are collections of mechanics, different from a model where the context should help people play the game, and the mechanics are expected to represent something that happens in a real world. Nonetheless, in abstracts you can have a mechanic that doesn’t fit with the rest, that doesn’t mix well or doesn’t seem to have a useful function, or clearly should’ve been replaced with something else, or simply should have been removed from the game.

Where do kludges come from? Often they are added to games to solve a problem that appeared in testing. Or

perhaps the designer realized it would be a problem, and added it before the testing. Most of the time it’s added to fix a demonstrated flaw, but at other times, it’s in the game because the designer liked it, even though it doesn’t fit with what he ended up with. (Remember, games often end up some “distance” from where the designer originally intended.) He or she isn’t willing to take it out, isn’t willing to “shoot their baby”. It could be the original idea itself, yet the game has developed in another direction. At that point, the designer should shoot the original, get it out of there, but it’s emotionally hard for a designer to do.

Now some examples. These are from well-known, successful games, so that you’ll be able to relate to what I’m explaining. Games can succeed despite kludges; but the more you have, the less likely that the game will be good.

Catan, which used to be known as Settlers of Catan: both the robber and the monopoly cards. Keep in mind there’s not a lot of interaction in Catan between the players except for the trading, and there’s little you can do to actually hinder another player after the initial setup.

I think the designer saw the difficulty of hindrance, and decided to add the Robber, which has *nothing* to do with the rest of the game. It doesn’t fit at all in any way, shape, or form, but was added to provide a way for a player to hinder another player or at least have the potential to hinder other players. It has nothing to do with the settling model. If it represented mere bandits, a player’s soldiers would be able to do something about it, nor do bandits affect a budding newly-settled region the way they can an old, over-populated region.

Catan is supposed to be a game about trading, but I’ve seen many players who don’t trade much. The monopoly card takes all of a particular resource from all the other players and puts them into the hand of the player who played the monopoly card. Then others are forced to trade if they want to get that resource, or wait a long time for more of that resource to be produced. Perhaps someone can come up with an explanation (not excuse) of how this would happen in the real world, I cannot. I think the designer added that card to make people trade, thinking of the groups where there’s otherwise not much trading.

Catan is very popular and is a decent design that was in the right place at the right time, although technically speaking it has these kludges.

How about Risk, the US pre-2008 version, not the newer version based on missions? Some of those earlier versions had mission cards, but they didn’t work well. In 2008 Risk was revised with missions to make it quite a different game. In old Risk, the territory cards are kludges in two senses. First, they were an artificial method, and by artificial I mean there’s no

correspondence with reality, of encouraging players to attack. You have to conquer a territory to get a card; it was something to try to discourage turtling, which is nonetheless quite common in Risk.

Second, you turn in the cards for armies. That's there to bring the game to a conclusion, because you have an increasing number of armies that can get very large. The game is pretty long as is, but it's very long without increasing numbers of armies, which I have played a number of times. Instead of going up to 50 armies and more I used 4-6-8-4-6-8-4-6-8, but that makes it a very long game.

Two kludges to solve (or at least mitigate) a fundamental problem in the game: the game didn't naturally come to a conclusion. The game didn't naturally encourage people to attack. So the cards were added for those purposes.

Let's consider the online video games World of Tanks and World of Warships. In big video games like these both harmony and the kludge become obscured. We could probably say that it's easier to make a harmonious game that's relatively small and focused rather than one quite big.

In World of Tanks the entire idea of 15 versus 15 randomly assigned teams is a kludge, in the sense that it has nothing to do with real warfare, but it's necessary to make the online game practical for a very large audience. In World of Warships the overall kludge is to play in a small area, usually amongst lots of islands, places where real world battleships and aircraft carriers virtually never went. In both games we have the bizarre mix of nationalities of equipment: German and French and English and Russian tanks or ships on the same side, and possibly 15 different tanks or 12 different ships on a team. It's also a necessary kludge but has nothing to do with reality. So both games break down as models of reality, and the kludges are obvious.

But in video games there are many conventions, normal modes of design, that are ridiculous kludges but necessary to make a game of it. (Consider the ammo and medpacks sitting all over the place in shooters, or even respawning itself - awful kludges.) When is a kludge no longer a kludge? When almost everyone accepts it as necessary, I guess.

Let's take a tabletop game such as Eclipse, which is ostensibly a Euro-fied 4X space game. It's almost a wargame, almost an exploration game, almost this, almost that, but ultimately unsatisfactory (for me). The

major kludge in the game is that players are awarded hidden-value victory points for fighting, and fighting early on tends to give you higher value points because you draw a number of VP pieces and throw some back into the supply. You're encouraged to fight repeatedly as you can draw again whenever you fight. I think this was added when the rest of the game resulted in little fighting, because people didn't gain enough from fighting. What they were likely to lose in assets was more than they were willing to risk for the possible gain. So the victory points were added well.

Rewards for fighting make no sense in the 4X model, or any reasonable model. Your surviving units gain experience when you fight, yes, but you lose a lot of ships and people, and that experience in the overall context should not be worth a lot (if any) of victory points. Military forces are a means to an end, not an end in itself. In a game I watched, about half of the overall points for five of the six players came from fighting, which is ridiculous. They were roughly equal to the points for holding the solar systems that had been discovered. In the long run what do you think is more important? Wars are economic, after all.

There are other flaws in the game. For example, the results of exploration are that space is mostly impassable. I think that's deliberate, to avoid an out-and-out wargame, but it doesn't fit one's idea of space as wide-open territory. That makes the extermination part of 4X (Explore, Expand, Exploit, Exterminate) ineffective even with the fighting points.

Again, how do you recognize a kludge? I'd say it's easier to find things you think are kludges in a game you don't like than ones you do like. Also we have the limitation that some designers of puzzle-like games, whether they're single player video games or solo tabletop games or cooperative games, tend to add things to make the puzzle solution more difficult. I come in heavily on the side of this motto: "A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away." I think that's an alternative definition of harmony. Given that motto, I see many of those puzzle-maker additions as kludges.

This is not something you can rigidly define or easily pin down, it requires self-critical thinking. It doesn't matter what specific mechanics you use, whether already very popular or brand new (the latter very rare). What matters is how they work together as a whole. Designers need to recognize the in-harmonious, and excise it!

Why I Hate Two-Player Alliances

By Jack McHugh

After having played several Diplomacy games recently, I have come to the conclusion that I do not care for two-way alliances, either to participate in them or to play against them.

I believe a good game of Diplomacy should involve players actively negotiating throughout the entire game. This means that you should be open to alliances throughout the game and not just in the first few years when splitting up the neutral centers around the board.



The problem with most players is they tend to be lazy, and two way alliances are the lazy Diplomacy player's crutch. Instead of negotiating, they simply get carried along by inertia with their current alliance partner and refuse to consider any offers.

I have even had players turn down offers that were clearly one sided and in their favor. Why? It was easier to stay with their "partner" in their current two-way alliance.

This is terrible Diplomacy. The whole point of the game is to be willing to back stab people for a better deal. You have to be willing to always have an ear open for a better offer. If you are not going to do this then you might as well not even play the game.

So here are some rules of conduct that all players should adhere to avoid becoming a lazy Diplomacy player and depending on your roommate for help.

- When you're playing make sure you write everyone in the game with more than a couple of centers at least once a year. This way you ensure the lines of communication are open.
- Don't ally with people just because you've done it in the past—that leads to very boring Diplomacy and predictable alliances.
- Don't ally with or against people because of considerations outside of the game. Every Diplomacy player I know has a "roommate" story where they were in a game and got attacked by someone and the roommate. The whole point of Diplomacy is to be open to alliance with anyone. A great stab should be worth an awkward car ride home from the game and you get a great Diplomacy story you can bore your friends with for years, if not decades.
- Always be aware of what is going on throughout the board. Even something on the other side of the board which does not directly affect your position can be used to leverage a favorable settlement on your country's behalf. In fact, those are the best kinds of leverage since your inability to stab your new ally makes you even more valuable.
- Above all, keep writing to people. In today's world of email there is no reason you can't have an in-depth conversation relatively quickly since e-mail is virtually instantaneous—you can easily send several emails a day or over a few days—this allows for you to pivot to new allies much easier than the old days of postal mail.

Just don't confuse your early game alliances with a marriage. In Diplomacy no alliance, no matter how well it is working, should be considered permanent. You should always be willing to listen, as well as make offers, to the other players.

When Drow Thief Backstabs the Barbarian

Based on a True story from China Dip Con I

By Fang Zhang

It's been a while since I cooperated with the barbarian, whose code name was Russia. The guy had a quick upgrade to level 8. Considering my own security, I decided to get rid of him when he's still not immunized from backstab. This is what we Drow do and it couldn't be more normal.

As always, the barbarian's hp was surprisingly high. Not even a 2d6 damage could give him a knockout blow. Hmm...looks like I need some assistant. After a quick glance I picked two, a level 5 monk codenamed Italy and a level 6 mage codenamed Germany. It won't take long to kill the barbarian if we three attack simultaneously. As for the already crippled witch of the north, England, was struggling to be alive.

I gave a pat on the barbarian's shoulder, made a few witty remarks, looking at the smile on his face, and disappeared in the dark.

Assistants came. The barbarian, who promised more than once to kick the Torak's ass, glowered at the mage. Hided in the mage's sleeve was a scroll. It's a Melf's Acid Arrow I gave him.

I turned my attention to the monk, and the expression on my face froze. The monk just upgraded, serving concurrently as Paladins!

"This is no good", the thought flashed in my mind. Without any hesitation, the dagger was raised high. I made my stab.

In a loud voice France was warning. But it was too late. The feeling in my hand told me the hit was successfully.

Sneak attack dice—5! Shit! I was unexpectedly fooled by the gray dwarves with an inferior!

The barbarian threw out his sharp axe on hand snarlingly.

A ray of green light came. The mage took his action. Sizzling...the acid arrow penetrated the barbarian's right leg and hit a stone near me.

Blood spraying-up from his back and leg, the barbarian couldn't bear such great pains and fell onto the ground with dust stirring up around.

I stared coldly at him, my formal ally, prepared to accept his violent and revenge. He turned around, said gently, "Bro, we have been such perfect partners. You have made your choice and I've made mine. A well-organized stab and I forgive you".

I stood still speechless, blood dripping from the dagger. The barbarian struggled, trying to stand up. The mage walked slowly to him. In the dark, no one knew when, the dying witch who hated barbarian, sneak around stealthily.

[Note] This article is based on a true story of the first China Dip Con Round2/Game2. Edi was there playing Russia. He had a dream start, managed to get eight dots in 1903. But that's not the best part, in the following couple of years, he was stabbed by all of his neighbors (T/G//E) and was eliminated from that game in 1905. The story was told in the angle of view of Turkey, who got the best stabber award from it. I want to thank Mei Zhouhu, Hu Yan and Lv Luo, this article could not be done without their help.



Photo from the 1st China Dip Con

Cast:

Barbarian: Russia, Edi Birsan (3rd row, first from the left)
Drow Thief: Turkey, Micky (First row, first from the left)
Mage: Germany, Lv Luo (Second row, third from the left)
Monk: Italy, Hu Yan (Second row, first from right)
Witch: England, Ri Luo (Third row, third from the left)

In Diplomacy Can Greatness be Defined, Measured, or Only Described? And Are Those Measured Differently By Each National Hobby?

By Larry Peery and Fang Zhang

First do this. Take a piece of paper and a pen and print or write on it two lists: 1) First a list of five achievements that you think a great Diplomacy player should accomplish during his hobby career; 2) Second a list of fifteen personal characteristics (adjectives or adverbs or words used as such) that you think a great Dipper should have during his hobby career. Sign and date it. Keep it at hand as you read this article and then slip it into your Diplomacy game box and forget about it. Someday, far in the future I hope, you or a Diplomacy friend will find it and decide how you did.

Now read on.

He was a great Dipper. --- a man's characteristics.

He was a great Diplomacy player --- a man's accomplishments.

In all honesty I would say most Dippers are neither of these, perhaps 5% are great players, 3% are hobbyists of great character, and 2% are both at the same time.

After many years of playing Diplomacy in many places with Dippers of all kinds from all over and nearly as many years of working on all kinds of Diplomacy projects with hobbyists of all kinds from all over I've learned this: We have much in common but we also have our differences and that is what makes this a small but truly international hobby. What may be seen as a good achievement or accomplishment in one hobby may not be that big a deal in another. The example that immediately comes to mind is the relative importance of a "team" event in France when compared with the US or UK.

I'm not going to try and evaluate the playing skills or hobby accomplishments of American, Canadian, British, French, Dutch, Italian or Australian Dippers. They can do that for themselves. Instead I'm going to share some insights with you, urge you to read Fang's comments on Chinese players elsewhere in this issue, and then wait for my piece on one of the greatest Chinese diplomats in recent memory, Qian Qichen. Here again, the importance of personal characteristics in one hobby may be very different in one hobby when compared to another. For instance, "keeping one's word" may be the most important thing in one hobby whereas "lying for profit" is tolerated or even admired in another. I'll let you pick your own examples on that one.

Last May I asked Papa Zhang 爸爸張 what he thought some of the essential characteristics of the "perfect" Chinese Diplomacy player would be. Here's the dream list he sent me. Note that I did not ask nor did he offer to tell which of them he had ☺ Same goes for me.

1. 平易近人 as common as an old shoe, Aussi commun qu'un vieux chausson
2. 有城府的 sophisticated, sophistique
3. 真诚 frank and honest, Franche et honnête
4. 装傻 humorous and be able to play the fool, Humoristique et capable de jouer le fou
5. 有魅力 personality charm, personnalité charmante
6. 理性 reasonable, raisonnable
7. 谦虚 humble, modest, modeste
8. 精力充沛 energetic, énergique
9. 有号召力感染力 appealing, attirant
10. 有教养 good manner, bonne manière
11. 高智商 high IQ (smart), bonne manière
12. 高情商 high EQ (easy to get along with, emotion under control), Facile de s'entendre avec
13. 有大局观 have a good sense of grand alliance play, Avoir un bon sens de grand jeu d'alliance
14. 独胜主义者 soloist, soliste, individualiste
15. 运气好 lucky :-),

He went on to write: "Here is a quote I like much,

"There is no right or wrong in Diplomacy games, but there is karma."

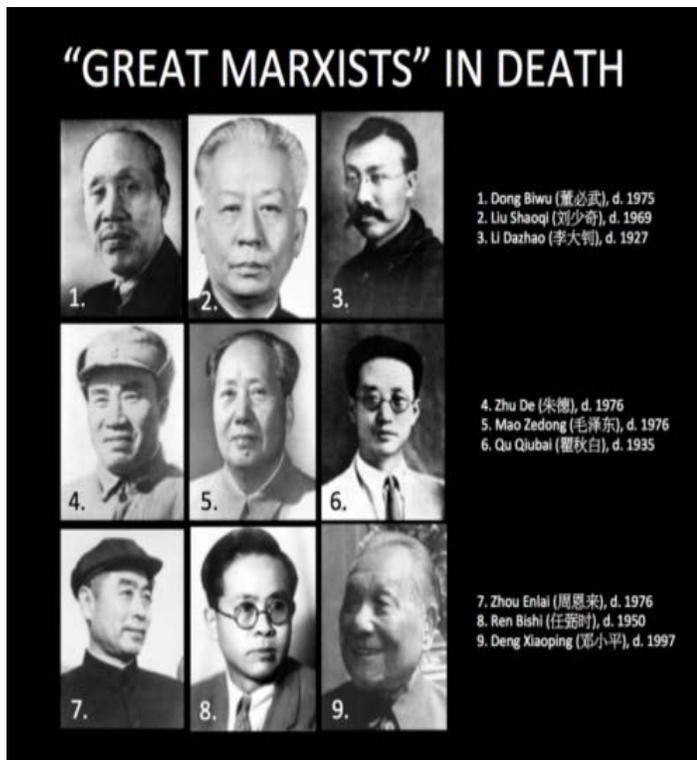
Now that you've had a chance to see his list why not compare it with yours and see how your characteristics compare within our hypothetical Chinese Dipper's? Now imagine Edi, Toby, Jean-Louis, Cyrille or Yann doing this? It boggles your mind, right? Speaking of Cyrille, everybody knows he dabbles in helicopters for a living, right? But did you know he has an alt-life as well? In it he pours a part of himself that you never knew existed out of a bottle and into our lives. More about that here: http://www.maisondesvinsdecheverny.fr/fr/30_sevin-cyrille (Hey, this is how I find out who really reads this stuff ☺)

Moving on, how about measuring a Dipper's achievements? How do we do that? Do we try to quantify it by measuring the number of games played, games won, best country awards, tournament placing, etc. etc. Or do we try to find a subjective way to measure

the quantitative achievement's quality?

It's a bit early to be measuring career greatest in the Chinese Diplomacy hobby but perhaps we can find a substitute example that will serve our needs. I actually found one while doing some research on Qian Qichen and I'll be discussing it and him in an article this fall, probably in The Diplomatic Pouch.

Now you need to go to this site <http://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw132.pdf> and check out the photo of participants and event for the First China Diplomacy Convention. (Note there was no doubt from the beginning --- unlike the first North American DipCon, the first WDC and the first EDC --- that there would be a second such event at some point in the future. And then look at Fang's new article for a photo from the latest event.



These nine men have the greatest honorific that China can bestow: that of "Great Marxists".

What is interesting is that although they all had different backgrounds, accomplished different things and, in some cases, may have had a hand in each other's deaths; when their deaths became a matter of public

record in the official obituaries published in the nation's important records and papers they were all described in almost exactly the same way in the same words. The honorific had been reduced to a word game.

Thus, these nine were all firstly described as "great Marxists. Next lower were "outstanding Marxist", "staunch Marxist", "faithful Marxist" and at the bottom just plain-Jane "Marxist". That took care of the Party ranking for the top 2,000 leaders. Similar systems were applied for government position rankings, military rankings, academic rankings, honors rankings, etc. all according to the same carefully thought-out formula. Anyone who understood the system could read the obituary of someone that'd never met and immediately determine how important they had been in life.



More on all this when I next discuss the man I consider China's greatest diplomat. In the meantime you might try adapting this formula to our hobby using some of the categories I mentioned above such as gaming events (wins, rankings, awards), publishing, projects, etc. and the level of achievement in each (win, tie, draw, survivor, etc.). If we all worked industriously on it and sent the results to Laurent Joly I'm sure he could have it all entered and online by the 100th anniversary of Allan B. Calhamer's birth. Right, Laurent? By the way, when you've written as many obituaries and eulogies as I have in the last few years the appeal of a system like this becomes obvious. On the other hand, being a "cookie cutter Great Dipper" doesn't sound all that great does it?

A TRUISM

It's as true for Dippers as it is for diplomats. What they say about you after you're gone is often more revealing than what they say about you while you're still around. That's especially true of obituaries.

Dixiecon 31 (2017) Report

By David Hood

For the 31st year in a row, a bunch of gamers appeared in Chapel Hill, North Carolina for the Dixiecon tournament for Diplomacy and other games. As usual, the fun started the Thursday night before the Con officially kicked off on Friday evening. The open gaming consisted of 10 folk playing a game of Nations with the Dynasties expansion and several boards of Terraforming Mars. By my count, there were at least 15 boards of Terraforming played over the weekend, and I may well have missed a few. So yeah, for the non-Diplomacy action, that was the Con Game for 2017, clearly. Even Buffalo Bartalone, who sometimes resists the non-Dip gaming call, got into some Terraforming action.



Perhaps that focused him for the rest of the weekend to come. (Yes, people, that is foreshadowing.)

Friday morning saw the appearance of a special guest for the weekend – Lew Pulsipher, prolific game designer perhaps best known for his Britannia game and, in Diplomacy circles, for being quite the Hobby Variant Master back in the 70s and 80s. Lew decided he ought to make a Dixiecon before his projected move to Florida took him too far away from the event. His presence through Saturday evening was great fun for all involved, we got to play-test a number of games he has in production. These included God's Will, Mandate of Heaven, and Age of Expansion. Other Non-Pulsipher gaming during the day Friday included Paperback, Vye, Splendor, and another bevy of Terraforming Mars games.

Once the Diplomacy crowd began to assemble for the six o'clock start, it dawned on me that in addition to the normal, recurring crowd we actually had an entire board of seven Dixiecon newcomers, most of whom were new to face-to-face tournament play entirely! We recognized them to begin with, took a group photo, and generally enjoyed our new players very much throughout the whole weekend. Pretty awesome really, and we only

lost one after the Friday night round (who sent me an email saying FTF was just NOT for him, which obviously we all understand.)

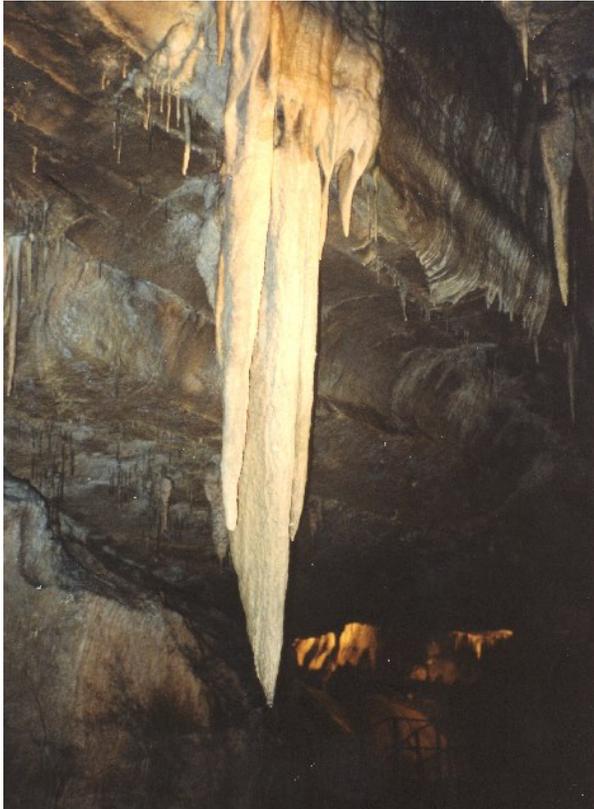
Round One of the Dip tournament included four boards. Game 1B is of note simply because former World Champ Doc Binder was able to get his Turkey up to 15 centers before the others stymied him into a four-way draw. I also paid attention to Game 1A, where Hudson Defoe shared a three-way draw at 11 centers each with David Miller and Tom Kobrin. Longtime attendee Defoe is an absolute blast to play with (he and I shared a game negotiation one time that ended up in the Washington Post believe it or not) but he had not broken into the Dixiecon Hall of Fame with a top-three finish until this weekend of gaming. (Yes, more foreshadowing.)

For our non-Diplomacy gamers, Friday night also began the Iron Man tournament, where the results from all other titles are scored in a secret-sauce type system that allows us to crown an overall non-dip winner for the weekend. So the fourteen folk not in a Diplomacy game that evening tried their skills at Family Business, Outpost, Railroad Tycoon, more Terraforming, and Ticket to Ride.

Saturday morning saw another five new folks show up for the Iron Man tournament (bringing total tournament attendance to 47) and the titles played during the day included Nations, Amazing Labyrinth, Battlestar Galactica, Splendor, Seven Wonders Duel, Ticket to Ride, Finstere Flure, Castles of Burgundy, and lotta Chess matches, and even more lotta Terraforming. Round Two of Diplomacy started then as well, with three boards and the coinciding Team Tournament. Obviously the most significant event was Andy Bartalone's English win in Game 2A over Bill Hackenbract's Turkey – you just don't see many 18-16 results any more in today's hobby. It was something to behold. Two other Turkeys in Round Two, Tom Kobrin and Peter Yeargin, each pushed towards 18 as well but were stopped at 17 and 15, respectively

Saturday at 5pm rolled around, and at Dixiecon that means one thing – Barbeque. After we all ate, like, a lot, there was more gaming that evening in the Iron Man tournament since there is no Saturday night round at a normal Dixiecon. That old favorite from the early years of Dixiecon, Dune, was brought out of mothballs to the great delight of my twin brother John, who was ALSO brought out of mothballs to win as the Harkonnens. There was also an epic, and I actually mean EPIC ten-player game of Twilight Imperium which from what I can tell lasted like 30 hours or some

such. Also fun was a teaching game of Britannia being played within several feet of Lew Pulsipher, who designed that classic game in the 80s. Rounding out Saturday night fun were games of Plague and Pestilence, Family Business, CarWars card game, Splendor, Ticket to Ride, Bang, Dresden Files, and, you guessed it, Mars had apparently not been Terrformed enough already. In addition, of course, to the annual Poker game where I am positive the chips are just for fun, not for profit.



Going into the Sunday Diplomacy round, the tournament was obviously Buffalo's to lose. And he didn't, sharing as four-way draw as Russia in Game 3B. The other two games threatened to be decided by the time limit, but in each case draws were passed before the Sword of Damocles was to fall and declare draw-include-all-survivors results. The full Dip results are below. One other item to mention is relatively new player David Miller breaking into the top seven for the first time at Dixiecon. Kobrin coming in second at a Dip tourney is old news, although he comes in first a lot too!

The Iron Man tournament ends at 2pm on Sunday, but several more games were completed prior to the deadline, including more Outpost, Terraforming Mars, and Dresden Files, along with games of Navagador and Roborally. After the award ceremony, some left, some stayed to play games, and some went to eat pizza and then came back for more games. I think we all had a pretty good time – and yes, Terraforming Mars was played on into Sunday night, including the last game of

the Con starting at about 2:30am and ending about 5am. Absolutely and completely nuts.

Thanks to all for coming, and I hope to see y'all back next year!

Diplomacy Tournament Results:

1. Andy Bartalone 464
2. Tom Kobrin 372
3. Hudson Defoe 360
4. Joe Wheeler 336
5. Tim Richardson 328
6. Peter Yeargin 324
7. David Miller 320
7. Brian Shelden 320
9. Michael "Doc" Binder 316
10. Clem Jayne 308
11. Bill Hackenbracht 304
12. Andrew Katcher 220
13. Chris Martin 197
14. Jeff Ladd 180
15. Ken Mathias 176
16. Michael Ambinder 172
17. Todd Craig 168.7
17. Brian Ecton 168.7
19. Eric Tilberg 38
19. Zach Yost 38
21. Greg Myers 30
22. Steve Wilcox 25
23. Claude Worrell 20
24. Stephen Mondak 15
- IN Dave Maletsky 162
- IN Alex Ronke 28
- IN Daniel Casey 0
- IN Graham Woodring 0

Best Countries:

- Austria David Miller 3w-11
 England Andy Bartalone Win
 France Hudson Defoe 3w-11
 Germany Tom Kobrin 3w-11
 Italy Hudson Defoe 3w-14
 Russia Chris Martin 3w-12
 Turkey Tom Kobrin 3w-17

Team Tournament:

Deplorable Me's – Wheeler/Bartalone/Yeargin

- Golden Blade – Andy Bartalone
 I Got Hammered – Stephen Mondak
 The Brick – Bill Hackenbracht
 Death With Dignity - Claude Worrell, Greg Myers, Zach Yost, Ken Mathias
 Players Choice – Clem Jayne

Iron Man Tournament:

1. Bruce Duewer 49
2. Dan Mathias 26
3. Adam Sigal / Chris Martin 22

47 players overall, 28 played in the Diplomacy tournament and 43 played in the Iron Man (which featured 20 different game titles played.)

Game 1A - AFG Draw - 1908

A David Miller 11
E Daniel Cody 0
F Hudson Defoe 11
G Tom Kobrin 11
I Greg Myers 0
R Zach Yost 1
T Claude Worrell 0

Game 1B - EGIT Draw - 1907

A Todd Craig 0
E Brian Ecton 7
F Eric Tillberg 2
G Clem Jayne 7
I Peter Yeargin 3
R Jeff Ladd 0
T Doc Binder 15

Game 1C - ERT Draw - 1906

A Andy Bartalone 0
E Joe Wheeler 11
F Stephen Mondak 0
G Steve Wilcox 0
I Michael Ambinder 2
R Chris Martin 12
T Tim Richardson 9

Game 1D EGR Draw - 1905

A Brian Shelden 0
E Dave Maletsky 8
F Alex Ronke 2
G Bill Hackenbracht 10
I Andrew Katcher 5
R Ken Mathias 9
T Graham Woodring 0

Game 2A E Win - 1907

A Zach Yost 0
E Andy Bartalone 18
F Todd Craig 0

G Andrew Katcher 0
I Brian Ecton 0
R Greg Myers 0
T Bill Hackenbracht 16

Game 2B EGT Draw - 1909

A Ken Mathias 0
E Brian Shelden 10
F David Miller 1
G Tim Richardson 8
I Doc Binder 0
R Stephen Mondak 0
T Peter Yeargin 15

Game 2C EFT Draw - 1909

A Claude Worrell 0
E Clem Jayne 9
F Joe Wheeler 8
G Hudson Defoe 0
I Jeff Ladd 0
R Michael Ambinder 0
T Tom Kobrin 17

Game 3A EGIT Draw - 1909

A Chris Martin 1
E Michael Ambinder 6
F Zach Yost 0
G Todd Craig 7
I Clem Jayne 9
R Bill Hackenbracht 1
T David Miller 10

Game 3B EFTR Draw - 1908

A Stephen Mondak 0
E Jeff Ladd 10
F Peter Yeargin 7
G Greg Myers 0
I Tom Kobrin 2
R Andy Bartalone 4
T Brian Shelden 11

Game 3C EGI Draw 1908

A Joe Wheeler 0
E Andrew Katcher 9
F Brian Ecton 1
G Doc Binder 5
I Hudson Defoe 14
R Tim Richardson 5
T Steve Wilcox 0

Diplomacy World Cup - Take 2!

By Dorian Love

I have always considered the Diplomacy World Cup my baby. The idea of the World Cup of Diplomacy, similar to the Soccer World Cup, was a child that I nurtured over many years. There was much initial resistance to the idea of a team based tournament where all players on a team came from the same nation, many players telling me they considered it went against the grain. The main advantage of Internet Diplomacy, they told me, was that an American could play on the same team as a Frenchman or Scot! Why on earth have teams only of Americans, Frenchmen or Scots? At that time there were large Internet tournaments such as the World Masters, but these were essentially individual tournaments with teams tagged on as an afterthought, and it seemed to me that there was a place for a team tournament where players could represent their country across the board to see which country had the best Diplomacy players. With no interest in my idea I had to shelve it for a few years.

But eventually enough support emerged and two very successful tournaments were staged. The first (2007-2009) was won by France, the second (2010-2012) by Ireland. I was proud to be associated with these tournaments, for the second of which I acted as Tournament Director. The custodians of the DWC were the World Cup Council. The intention was to stage World Cup tournaments every two years. Indeed the third world cup was started in 2013, but stuttered during the qualifying rounds and never completed despite a waiting list of players. An attempt to start a fourth world cup has just failed to clear the starting blocks after too few entries were received.

I have my own thoughts as to why the third world cup collapsed despite a level of enthusiasm and an interesting change of rules, and as to why the fourth iteration followed suit even though it tried to return to the certainty of the rules used in the first two. We may look at oddities in the rules and dissatisfaction with the interfaces used, or a failure to publicize effectively, but I suspect there is not today the same level of support for large online tournaments based on email or web interfaces where human adjudicators are used. Tournaments on automated web interfaces seem to be thriving. Perhaps this is a generational divide that tastes have changed. Perhaps the hobby is in decline. Perhaps it is time to let the idea die a more or less graceful death.

But having nurtured the idea for almost two decades now, it is not an idea I am prepared to give up on quite so soon. It seems to me that there are certain things which might be done to re-energize the tournament and help foster a revival. As part of the World Cup bidding system I had proposed a radically different approach, but had failed to win the bid, so as DWC IV collapsed, still-

born, I proposed that that idea I had proposed be accepted as the official successor to the Diplomacy World Cup Series, not as a follow-up tournament, but as a replacement platform. So what is this approach?

It is my belief that one of the main hurdles to large tournaments today is the time commitment that needs to be made. For a tournament played in two rounds, and games lasting till at least 1909 or 1911, with a move per week, any tournament could last, with delays, well over a year in play! I believe this is why platforms like webDiplomacy with daily move games the norm doing so much better these days. With a move every 24 hours, games can be completed within a month. I also believe that players are no longer particularly fond of the kind of lengthy negotiations that were in favor in previous decades. Even in DWC I and II, I noticed a tendency for a week to pass before a few fevered email exchanges just before deadline. Long silences are the norm these days in week deadline games. Sadly, because the art of email Diplomacy is all in the correspondence. Perhaps we are seeing the shrinking of communication to tweet sized bytes, to text-sized chunks of exchange rather than the purple prose, and even role-playing that was prevalent some years ago. Whatever one may think of this trend, it is something that needs to be taken into account.

In designing an alternative to the World Cup Tournament, it seemed to me essential that play be on an automated interface where deadlines process on time and there are no delays for any reason, and where game turns can be very short, and communication pared down if necessary. Many may see this as disastrous a move as the move from five day test cricket to the one day, or twenty over game, but we need to remember that five day cricket replaced the timeless test and these days the majority of nay-sayers are enthusiastic followers of the shortened form of the game.

Another problem with a team tournament lies in many players' suspicion of, or dislike of metagaming. While cross-board alliances would seem to be the life-blood of a team tournament, the World Cup Council was constantly trying to find a way of balancing good team play with good individual play aimed at the rule-book win. It therefore seemed to me that it would be better to have a tournament which combined individual with team play in more nuanced ways. What Ireland's victory in DWC II clearly showed was that a determined team reading the rules properly could find a way of seeking a win by understanding the tournament dynamics better than any other team. This level of professionalism was very good for the idea of the tournament although it may in the short term have harmed tournament entries.

I therefore, in designing an alternative, tried to conceive of a tournament that would be both an individual and a team tournament in equal measure. The idea is therefore to have a qualifying phase in which players play purely as individuals trying to maximize their own score in order to qualify for a team. There would then be a second round in which teams qualify for top board finals by being among the top seven teams in the tournament. However, players would continue to compete individually for the top player position. This model draws on the metaphor of cycling which is a team sport, but where the winner is an individual.

The third problem, it seemed to me, was an uncertainty over the platform. The Diplomacy World Cup lacks identity by being hosted on different interfaces, and it seemed to me that a permanent site would work better at preserving the ideals and identity of the tournament. Hence the third innovation, a permanent site for hosting the tournament. This website should be able to house records of play in successive world cups, rank players for qualification purposes, and allow game moves to be entered on a friendly, automated interface without lengthy delays. The identity of the site itself should encourage the growth of the hobby through providing a locus for serious tournament play both at an individual and team level. A permanent site would also remove an obstacle to previous world cups, a lack of continuity.

So, how will it work?

A website is currently being designed, and will be hosted at <http://diplomacyworldcup.co.za/>. It will use a MySQL database and PHP scripting. The idea is that anyone will be able to register an account as a player and declare their national affiliation based on nationality of birth, naturalization or residence status. Once declared a player may change, but not in mid-tournament cycle and not without good reason being given.

Players may then register for any particular World Cup Cycle, and will be assigned to qualifying games as they register. They play this game as an individual, seeking to maximize their score. As a game finishes they may play a second and third game, and they are awarded a ranking based on the three games played. This forms the initial qualifying Round of the Tournament. Qualifying rounds for the next World Cup begin as soon as the Team round has commenced, so there is constantly a qualification element in progress.

Teams for the Team Round are formed from the top ranked qualifying players from each nation. There is no restriction on the number of national teams, but each team must consist of at least seven players, but may include a non-playing captain and a substitute. Team Rounds start as soon as seven teams have qualified. So each team places a player in one of seven games. This

forms a Pool of teams, who compete to maximize their team score. Individual results also count, however, so a team may play to place their members as high as possible in the individual rankings, or to score highest as a team in the team tournament.

There is no restriction on the number of Pools that may be staged as this is dependent upon the number of entrants. Teams can be formed on the basis of single national affiliation, e.g. France, Italy, USA A, USA B, etc or upon supra-national affiliation if not enough players enter for particular nations, e.g. South America, European Union, Africa, Rest of the World. Wherever possible all registered players will be offered an opportunity to play for a team, but qualification will tend to ensure that USA A should be better than USA B, etc.

At a certain point the Tournament Director will declare the Pool Stages closed for entries, so further qualification shifts to the subsequent World Cup Cycle. Pool Stages are completed and the Final Round will be fought out between the top seven scoring teams from the Pool Stages. Thus, if there are only two Pools, the top three from each Pool and the next highest from either will go through. If there are three Pools then the top two from each and the next highest from all three, and so on. If there are not enough teams to make up a full Pool, a repechage system will apply.

However, any nation will only be allowed one team in the finals. The Finals are decided in the same way as any Pool Stage. Teams will be allowed to substitute up to one additional player going into the Finals. The top scoring team will be declared the winners of the World Cup. However, the top ranked player will also be declared the Victor Ludorum based on their score in the Pool Stages and Final Round.

The game interface used will be a PHPDiplomacy installation and all games moves will be 24 hours. The scoring system will be a simple C-Diplo and all games must finish by 1911. Player rankings will be based on average score. If a player cannot continue, the team must draft a substitute from unallocated players. No deadline extensions are possible.

I know that there will be many who will poke holes in this schema, and it is certainly open to criticism, but I believe it offers a workable tournament structure, simple and flexible enough to work, with enough rigidity to provide for a pleasant playing experience..

How soon until the launch date? I am hoping that the site will be operational by the end of the year, but registrations will begin as soon as the site is launched in August. The Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1398526636903701/> will be used for announcements and sneak-previews.