

Diplomacy World #166



Summer 2024 Issue

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Notes from the Editor

Welcome to the latest issue of **Diplomacy World**, the Summer 2024 issue. This has been a rather difficult issue to assemble and edit. Every time I thought I had the layout set and the pages numbered, something new would arrive, or revisions would appear in my inbox. As you'll see as you leaf through the pages, a good deal of material is devoted to one single subject: World DipCon. But if it's important enough to be written about, it's important enough to appear here.

One of the recent announcements regarding face-to-face play has been the 2024 European Diplomacy Championship (EDC). This will take place at Sion, Switzerland from September 13th through September 15th. There's a flyer later in this issue (on page 12), which is just one of many flyers you can look over in these pages. Maybe you can find some cooler weather nestled in the Alps?

I'm also happy to report that some major efforts are being made to jump start the UK Diplomacy hobby again. I don't mean that it has ever gone away; thankfully for all of us. But work is being done to make it like the Six Million Dollar Man: better, stronger, faster. Okay, not necessarily **faster**, but you know what I mean. You can keep up to date on all the happenings in the UK by visiting www.diplomacy.co.uk. From there you can also access their various social media pages as well. Go show your support!

Meanwhile, the dates for World DipCon 2025 in San Francisco have been finalized: April 4th through April 6th. (Yes, there's a flyer for **THAT** event elsewhere in this

issue as well, on page 14). This is being hosted by the annual Whipping tournament, which is always a good time for all - even if you're eliminated before 1903 ends. Make your travel plans early!

And on the same topic, please check later this issue for details on the World DipCon 2025 Design Contest! Those of you with some kind of creative and artistic skill (i.e., everyone but me) can design the logo for the event. The logo will be used on promotional material, the website, and on t-shirts. Give it a try; what do you have to lose?

Now, in regards to the recently concluded World DipCon 2024 in Milan...I've heard that the event itself was quite successful. Unfortunately, as happens now and then within our hobby, there was also a great deal of controversy regarding the hobby meeting. You'll find a number of articles and letters covering that topic sprinkled throughout this issue, some with opposing viewpoints. If you have an opinion or perspective you want to want to share, or if you think something you read needs to be responded to, I encourage you to send in an article or letter for next issue.

That's enough from me this time around. ***I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 1, 2024.*** 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, and happy stabbing!

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

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Where Will World Dipcon 2027 Take Place?

By David W. Hood

The short answer to this question is - we don't know yet. There is a claim out there that the 2027 site has already been determined. But that is wrong. Let me explain.

World Dipcon is the face-to-face world championship of Diplomacy. It was invented by the British, who decided to host the inaugural event in 1988 in conjunction with Manorcon, in Manchester. After involving a group of hobbyists from around the world, the decision was made to try WDC three times - the 1988 event in England, then 1990 in North America, and 1992 in Australia. The plan then was to reconvene in 1994 to decide how things had gone and to determine the WDC format going forward.

I was not, myself, involved in the initial creation of World Dipcon as an institution. However, I got pretty involved in it shortly thereafter when I was asked in 1989 to consider being the host of the 1990 event at my Dixiecon convention in North Carolina. I was asked to do so by a committee of three, one from each of the original regions in play. We decided that the best way to get input from the North American hobby about hosting the event at my Con was for me to travel to the 1989 Dipcon in San Diego to present my proposal to host both Dipcon and World Dipcon at the same location. The thinking was that hobbyists in the host region should be intimately involved in the decision about where to host a WDC in that region. The reasons are obvious - without input and buy-in from interested parties in the host region, any such event could not be successful.

The first three events went so well that the decision was made, by worldwide hobby consensus, to begin holding the event every year instead of every other year. So, the 1994 WDC in Birmingham was followed by an event in Paris (the only time the same region hosted in succession but I cannot remember the exact reason for this) and then began its storied history as a yearly rotating world championship. World Dipcon has served our hobby well, and there has been remarkably little controversy about the rotation scheme. The general rule has been that it goes back and forth between Europe and North America, with the Australia/Asian Pacific region hosting every now and then based on the strength and interest of their relatively smaller overall hobby.

At the event in 2000, which took place near Baltimore in Hunt Valley, MD, that gathering (one of the largest ever in the history of the Diplomacy hobby) adopted a Charter for World Dipcon which governed the bidding process, voting, and other issues. The goal was to make sure that the process was orderly and fair to all concerned.

The draft was then confirmed in 2001 at the Paris WDC and, I believe, in Canberra the following year.

The Charter was never revoked or amended that I recall, but its voting and bidding provisions turned out not to be needed as the years progressed and thus some of the specifics involved have not been followed to the letter. This was primarily because there was no debate or dissension between the regional hobbies about WDC location, and what little dispute there was within each regional hobby was handled by the stakeholders in that hobby having a discussion, working things out, and informing folk in the other two regions where the WDC would be located when it was that region's "turn" to do so. It has still been customary ever since 2000, though, consistent with the language of the Charter, to have an official presentation about a future WDC site two years ahead of time. This has been true even given that I do not believe there has been any competitive "bidding" per se between interested sites in decades, and thus the vote has been (up to now) just pro forma although still important as a validation of the new site. Indeed, the only time the "two year" tradition has not happened, as I recall, has been in a situation where the designated region did not have its plans set in time to present two years earlier and thus the presentation and vote did not occur until only one year ahead of time. (This was the case for the Milan WDC in 2024, which was only presented and approved at the Bangkok event in 2023 versus being presented at Carnage in 2022 as per the usual process.)

But let's be clear - since the Charter was adopted in 2000, NEVER has anyone thought that it was appropriate to try to dictate a site THREE years in advance. I know that someone will claim that Larry Peery said in an article in 2000 that Hunt Valley had been chosen for that year, Paris for 2001 and Canberra for 2002. Isn't that three years decided ahead of time? No, it wasn't. If you read the article more carefully you will note that Canberra is described as the "probable" site for 2002. It has not yet been decided because the vote for that site took place later in 2000 AT THE WORLD DIPCON like it should have. I mean, I was there after all.

Yes, sites have been discussed well in advance before, but the whole point of the Charter provision about voting two years ahead of time was to make sure that was the process going forward as it had been the unofficial process for several years at that point.

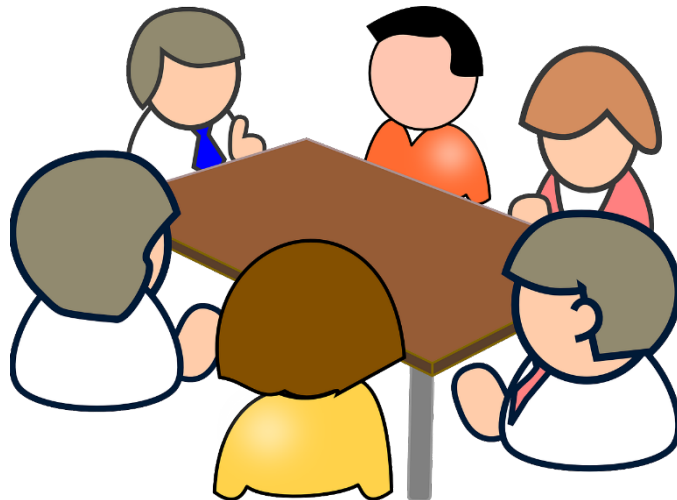


Which brings us to the hobby meeting convened at the Varedo (near Milan) WDC in 2024. A bidder proposed at that meeting that the group there in Europe vote to approve his bid to hold the 2027 WDC at an event in North America, without any notice to the North American hobby ahead of time and in contravention of the World Dipcon tradition of voting on such things two years ahead. Assuming for the sake of argument that voting three years ahead of time would be a good idea in the abstract, the unfairness of trying to achieve such a result under these circumstances is both obvious and huge:

1) There was no notice ahead of time that the hobby meeting in 2024 would be considering AND voting on plans for hosting the 2027 WDC. There was also no notice to the hobby at large, in North America or otherwise, that the Las Vegas organizer was going to present a bid with the idea that the 2024 meeting had some authority to act on the 2027 site. As explained above, it had not been customary to hold such a vote three years ahead of time, so there was no expectation in the hobby that such a vote would take place. No other interested parties from North America had any opportunity to present an alternative bid or to present reasons why the Las Vegas bid was or was not a good one. Indeed, there was no reason for anyone else to suspect it was even time to decide who might want to host the 2027 event, and where. The very definition of due process involves notice to potentially interested parties and an opportunity to be heard. Neither of these things occurred here. This absence of basic due process made the selection method inherently flawed, in addition to being contrary to the language of the Charter which, although not having been specifically referenced by the hobby in a long time since its provisions had not been needed to resolve any disputes, is still the operative document.

Consider this analogy. An election is to be held for a legislative seat. On election day voters are surprised to find out that the office of President is also up for vote at the same election, but only one Presidential candidate (and a few of his supporters) were told this ahead of

time. There was no opportunity for other potential candidates even to know the office was open for election. There was no opportunity for voters to investigate or consider the strengths and weaknesses of the one candidate on the ballot, and of course no practical opportunity to recruit a new candidate on the spot that day only. No rational person could think such a process to be fair for the election of anything, much less anything important.



2) North America has a tradition, for many years now, of the organizers talking about these issues ahead of time to achieve consensus about the best host venue for WDC to offer to the rest of the world. This is one reason why there has been no dispute about where to host WDC in North America during the 21st Century. Had the organizer of the Las Vegas event expressed an interest in hosting WDC to the other North American organizers, and with sufficient advance warning, there certainly would have been a discussion about the idea to see if consensus could have been reached (and about whether the 2024 meeting was the appropriate venue for such a decision to be made.) The Las Vegas bid suffers from some shortcomings (given that fact that there is no local hobby there and the event in question has never before been held), but it also enjoys some pluses given that the city itself would be a good draw for travelers and there could be some synergy in coordination with the fairly-newly established World Series of Boardgaming. Unfortunately, such a discussion about the pros and cons was not had - because the organizer in question failed to initiate it. Given that any World Dipcon in North America would by necessity need buy-in from the organized hobby in that region in order to maximize its chances for success, the failure to communicate here by the organizer in question was extremely unfortunate.

3) Giving the results of the 2024 meeting any credence would set a terrible precedent. Obviously, we as a hobby want the decision about where to host World

Dipcon to be based on a thorough examination of the pros and cons of any suggested site, particularly one that has not been discussed out in the open prior to the WDC hobby meeting. We would want folk to know ahead of time that the discussion is going to take place, first of all, but also know that the discussion is taking place at the meeting where a binding decision would be made. We would want all interested stakeholders to have an opportunity not just to listen to reasoned arguments for or against any proposed site, but a chance to be heard as well. There was confusion at the 2024 WDC meeting about whether, for example, one had to pay for lunch in order to be in the space where the meeting was taking place. At least one interested party who wanted to stay and vote left because he did not want to pay the lunch price. Having talked to several who were in attendance, it is not clear that a vote for the bid was even clearly taken (only a vote on whether the group had the authority to conduct such a vote.) This is no way to run a railroad, as the old saying goes. And what kind of mandate could anyone truly claim from a 10-9 or 11-9 vote (reports differ and I was not there) under these circumstances?

If we allow someone to hijack the WDC selection process in a way that prevents a full discussion to be had by all interested parties, what is to stop the next person from trying to cement all the sites four years ahead of time, or even ten? Even if one thought such a result was allowed under whatever rules thought to be applicable to the proceeding, should one truly think that to be reasonable or just, or any good for the promotion of our game and hobby?

To those who attended the meeting and voted for the Las Vegas bid, I ask you - is this the way you would yourselves like to be treated? Would you like someone to dictate to you, without any notice, warning, or opportunity for input, where in your own region the World Dipcon would be held years from now? Is "winning" this bid for your friend important enough that you would

stomp on the rights and wishes of your fellow hobbyists to get your own way, using a process that prevented anyone else from thinking a discussion about where to hold the event was even going to happen in 2024?

Obviously, I care a lot about World Dipcon as an institution, having been connected to it almost from the beginning. So do lots of other Dip folk, who are extremely disappointed to find out that any fellow hobbyists would sign on to such an unfair process and result.

Let me be clear about something. The Las Vegas bid may, indeed, be a good idea and may, indeed, be the winning proposal for where to host the 2027 WDC. But only at a meeting where the hobby knows that the 2027 site selection discussion and vote is going to take place, with the fair opportunity for anyone else to make a bid and/or to evaluate the pros and cons of the Vegas bid alongside any others which are made. You know, the way this process has been done now for many years without rancor or discord.

I would like to propose this: the folks who are claiming Vegas to have "won" some meaningful vote about where the 2027 event will be held should just stand down on this point. Instead, how about presenting the information about the Vegas event to any and all interested folks in the hobby during the next ten months, and then present the proposal at the 2025 event in San Francisco for a proper vote? Isn't this decision important enough to justify using a process that is fair and open to all?

We are all just trying to promote this game that we all love. We want the World Dipcon in 2027 and every other year to be something everyone can be proud of. Let's make that happen. If Las Vegas ends up being the winning bid (or the only bid) for World Dipcon in 2027, I will be right there in the front ranks from the beginning to encourage everyone to go and enjoy it.

Postscript to: Where Will World Dipcon 2027 Take Place?

By David W. Hood

Since I wrote the piece above, some additional facts and events have taken place that necessitate me adding an addendum to my earlier comments:

1) Some have used my name as someone who said that this hijack of the process was fine. This is incorrect. I was asked ahead of this year's WDC about the World Dipcon Charter. I said that we really have not used it (and I meant the voting provisions specifically) in a long time because we have not needed to. We have instead operated using consensus, i.e. interested

organizers and leaders talking to each other ahead of time to decide on a bid to propose at the various WDC hobby meetings. We have not had any contested bids for the event, and no one had tried to spring something on the hobby without sufficient notice since the Charter was adopted more than 20 years ago. Now that there is a contested bid without consensus ahead of time, of course the Charter is the operative document for dealing with that controversy and any argument to the contrary is clearly erroneous. World Dipcon as an institution does not belong to the current organizer of that event, or even

to the attendees of one particular WDC - instead it belongs to the hobby as a whole. Process and fairness matter if we are going to have a hobby that remains stable and whole. And as I argue above, the two year ahead-of-time tradition has been part of that process except where the bidder was not ready by then to announce the details.

I knew that Tom Haver was interested in eventually bidding to run World Dipcon in 2027 at his newly-established Vegas event, but never would I have suspected he thought he had the right to force that on folk without notice at a hobby meeting in 2024. If so, I would have told him that was ridiculous. Which, frankly, it is.

2) World Dipcon also does not belong to Renegade, with all due respect to them. Apparently Tom, through a Renegade press release, now believes he has the ability to decide where the event will be and how it will be run, presumably in perpetuity. No. Renegade's new release of the game was a spectacular thing, but Tom (through his connection to Renegade) has no more authority over World Dipcon than any other single hobbyist does. The institution belongs to the hobby at large. The fact that he now claims he has this kind of power should make you consider his actions at the WDC meeting in Italy in an even more alarming light. This was not just a coup to control the 2027 event unfairly; now he is claiming to be in charge forever to the exclusion of everyone else in the hobby. Let that sink in.

Let me be clear - I think Renegade could start their own thing and call it a "World Championship" and I don't think it would make sense to try to argue against them doing so. For most of us, this is a hobby, not some kind of life-or-death struggle. And by God, nobody wishes Renegade anything but success in everything they do to promote the game. But that is not the same thing as misappropriating the hobby's pre-existing institutions or traditions to the exclusion of those of us who have developed, nurtured, and promoted World Dipcon for decades.

3) Some have claimed, on Tom's behalf, that he has been excluded from the wider North American hobby and thus is justified in doing his hijack. That is just absolutely untrue. Tom has never been excluded from any events that I am aware of, has never been prevented from talking to the other North American organizers about World Dipcon or any other subject, and

has been repeatedly asked to stop his self-imposed isolation from the rest of us and to rejoin the hobby. On many occasions. And by me personally. Perhaps there is an exception I am not remembering, but I do not believe that Tom has gone to anyone's events in North America but his own (or those he recruited) since he won the World Dipcon I ran in 2014. This includes the many World Dipcons held in North America since then. That was his decision, but it was frankly an odd one if he had wanted influence over hobby institutions. Many times in the past year or two I have had to let prominent hobbyists know who Tom Haver even is - that was the extent of his self-isolation.

Now, he has had the right to self-isolate. But he cannot claim to have been excluded from anything.

Quite the reverse is the actual truth. Around ten or so years ago, I and another veteran player appeared at the World Boardgaming Championships to play in Tom's Diplomacy event. He told us not to - that he was trying to limit his tournaments to newcomers and relatively inexperienced players and wanted to shelter such folk from the hobby's more experienced players. I disagreed with that approach, but of course have honored his wishes in the years since because I believe that organizers should run their events the way they see fit. I know that occasionally one of the longtime hobby stars would show up and play, but it was rare and we certainly did not encourage that to happen because, frankly, that's what Tom told me he wanted.

Although Tom for years has largely refused to participate in very much of the hobby except, recently, in Diplomacy World, I have tried to include him. I have mentioned his events on my Deadline show, allowed someone on his behalf to distribute flyers at my tournament, and even had him as an interview guest on my show last year. I had hoped that he would see the light and rejoin the wider hobby, and wanted that door to remain open despite his own attempts to close it.

As I said in my original piece, let's try to move forward here. The Vegas bid should be proposed in 2025 like it should have to begin with. And now Tom also needs to walk back his recent claim that he and his team get to decide the location and format of all future World Championships. With respect to World Dipcon, that is unacceptable. No one should want this hobby to split over this issue, but I am afraid that is where we are heading otherwise.

From the DW Archive: How to Win With Germany

by Mal Arky

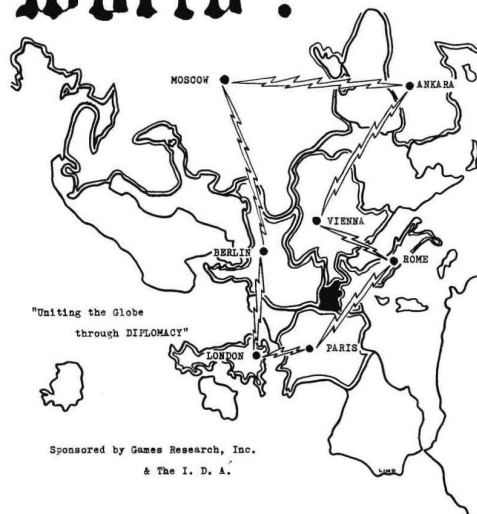
As I was scanning (or skimming – I've never really grasped the difference) down the contents of [DW#2](#) for an article to discuss for this series, three articles caught my eye.

One was called "The Gruyere Opening", written by Greg Warden. This is an opening I hadn't heard of before and, upon reading it, I can see why. Have a read of it – I think you'll agree there are a lot of holes there.

Another was Allan B Calhamer's tournament scoring system. In *DW#2* the Great and Good ABC wrote three articles; the other two were on how to seed a tournament, and using condensed notation (abbreviations to you and me) for orders. I've been trying to find his tournament scoring system for a while; it may well take me a while longer to understand it.

Given my love of strategy articles, though, I thought I'd go with Doug Beyerlein's article on playing Germany. There are a couple of other reasons for this: (1) I don't particularly like playing Germany, and (B) I like Doug's approach.

Diplomacy World!



Perhaps my thinking on the latter is flawed. I'm sure there are plenty of readers who can wave their hands in the air, without a care, to dispute it. Perhaps, after all, it's me, not you, Germany. But I think, with the many

options, and the safety of having a benign Austria-Hungary guarding the back door, Germany can find an ally easily enough at the start. Once the Early Game's over, though, the ally you've got to this point with looks at the attractive charcoal mass in the center of the board, and kicks that secondary alliance they've been preparing with another player into gear. All too easy for Germany to become the blackberry jam in the sandwich.

Doug points out that it's tough to win as Germany. I'm not sure how accurate the statistics he uses are these days, but he points out that Germany has one 'chance' to win in ten, compared to the 'average' of one in seven. I'm assuming that he means that Germany wins one game in ten; chance plays no part in Diplomacy, as we all know (and, if you don't, look up the difference between 'chance' and 'luck').

Doug analyses Germany's options based on which powers Germany can attack. There are three options, he writes: England, in alliance with France and Russia; France, in alliance with England and Italy; and Russia, apparently not in alliance with anyone (based on his opening thoughts), attacking through Scandinavia and Warsaw.

Often, when people are considering options for the Early Game, they talk about alliances, myself included. Doug's approach – considering enemies – is refreshing. They boil down to the same thing, of course: who am I attacking and who do I need onside to succeed? The thing is that, when considering allies first, it means looking at why I should ally with certain powers, and that's the wrong approach: you're not allying with a power, but with a *player*. There's a lot of advice on which power you should attack first but that's a bit of a waste of time if the player controlling that power would be the best option for an ally.

In the Early Game, you're setting yourself goals and a target. "Which SCs do I want to take?" and "Which power am I going to attack first?" The two are closely tied. If, as Germany, you move to take Denmark, Holland, Sweden and Warsaw, then wanting to attack France first doesn't fit. You're reading your compass upside-down.

An attack on England is difficult, Doug states. To do so successfully, Germany needs three builds in 1901: Denmark, Holland and Belgium. England and France

must attack each other, coming to blows in the Channel. This diverts England south, not east.

Doug says these three SC gains are traditional. I'm not sure, in the modern game, this is the case. Denmark and Holland, yes. Belgium? To do this, Germany must order F Kie-Hol, A Mun-Ruh, and A Ber-Kie. There's nothing inherently wrong with this opening, but it's much more common these days to see F Kie-Den in S01, with the option of F Den-Swe in F01. If nothing else, it keeps Russia on their toes.

Still, Doug is considering these moves in the context of what I call the 'German Ocean Triple' (GOT, or 'Gotcha') alliance¹: G/F/R. F Kie-Den doesn't fit with this grouping.

From these three SCs, Germany's builds in W01 are F(Kie), F(Ber) and A(Mun). Well, if England didn't know it before, this certainly flashes danger, with strobe lighting, just for extra impact. Germany moves on to take the North Sea and capture London and Edinburgh by the end of 1903.

And that's it. No explanation as to *how* Germany makes these rapid gains. Presumably England doesn't get Norway in 1901, remaining buildless, and England and France continue at loggerheads. What is France's pay-off for this? Just Liverpool? That's slim pickings, with Germany gaining the Low Countries as well as England's east coast SCs. It would be a remarkably dense France that goes with this alliance. Where is Germany heading next, I wonder?

For me, this is an optimistic opening. I really don't see why a France that is potentially on six SCs after England's elimination, compared to Germany's eight, would have stuck with it. And Russia, gaining Sweden and Norway, remaining onboard seems a little suspect. Yes, England's gone, which is great and means the West gets to the Mid-game pretty quickly, which is always a bonus, but Germany is the big winner. And, yes, Germany – being the only inner power in the GOT – can probably plead necessity for the sake of security, with Russia potentially making gains in the south and France able to move into the Med. But, for France, this is only possible *after* England's elimination as French fleets will be needed to take Liverpool. *Both* France and Russia should be asking where Germany expands next. If it isn't west or east, it means south... where they'll be falling over French or Russian units anyway.

Given this, I'm not sure this doesn't illustrate why Germany is tough to keep expanding in the Mid-game. With France and Russia both looking at an 8 SC Germany, what is there to stop a Franco-Russian alliance against Germany? We're at the blackberry jam sandwich point ('the BJS point'; don't say I don't bring anything new to the Hobby!).

Doug mentions this conundrum from Germany's point of view: Who to attack next? He points out, notably, that this depends on the person behind the power as much as anything else. And Germany must maintain momentum. Again, he rather hurriedly jumps to the Endgame: "Once this new attack is under way (sic), Germany and its remaining ally quickly dominate the board and make it to a two-way race to victory." Leaving the question: How?

I do like this devolving into a "two-way race to victory", though. Not for Doug – or *any* self-respecting Dippyist – the two-way draw.

Moving on.

Attacking France is easier, Doug says. The cons are that Germany doesn't gain control of a corner of the board as it does by eliminating England (does it?), and Germany is left with England watching over their shoulder. Well, quite. Is this really any different than having France and Russia looking hungrily at the blackberry munchables? I don't think so. And, by attacking England, Germany leaves one of the most successful powers on the board, France. Still...

In his opening thoughts, Doug discussed taking down France with the E/G/I alliance, what I call the 'Guillotine' alliance. However, when discussing how to do this, Doug very much concentrates on cooperation between England and Germany.

Germany needs three SCs again, and Belgium has to be one of them, to allow Germany to take Burgundy and flood France with German armies. At the same time, England is throwing fleets at the Channel, MAO and Iberia.

Alternatively, useful if Germany can't take Belgium in 1901, get England and France fighting from the start. This means French units are all aimed northwards; Germany can slip an army into Burgundy, and (Doug writes) Marseilles or Paris falls with no opposition. Honestly, I'm not sure how this is managed. Where are all these French units? Even if they're attacking England, are Paris and Marseilles *both* unoccupied and unprotected? I doubt it.

By 1903, Germany has captured Paris and Marseilles (as well as Denmark, Holland and Belgium), while England has control of Brest, Spain and Portugal; I would add Norway to England's haul but, if England and France are fighting, based on Doug's previous suggestion, perhaps not. This puts Germany on eight SCs again, with England on six. With England near Germany numbers-wise, it would be "suicidal" to break the E/G alliance, Doug tells us.

This means working together against Russia. England could continue towards the Med, but Germany has little room to use their armies in the south; Germany could attack Austria but England is useless there. Russia, then, is the only alternative if working together. German armies push east, seamlessly changing direction, and are almost unopposed in taking Warsaw and Moscow, while English fleets suddenly find themselves surrounding Scandinavia.

France and Russia both eliminated, England's fleets push into the Med (presumably England has established a mass teleportation system) while German armies slam into the center of the board. Doug points out that a counter-alliance from the East will cause problems, and so Germany needs to keep this alliance from forming. The difficulty Doug sees in this Endgame scenario is England's influence across the whole board.

Italy seems to have faded from Doug's thoughts in this process, which is a shame. The E/G/I alliance is a way to take down France quickly. With a couple of Italian units pressuring Marseilles and Spain, as well as English fleets and German armies covering the north, east and west of France, it should be a short game for France. Additionally, with Italian and English fleets facing each other in the Iberian zone, both will be relying on German support against the other. If France has been split between the three (England has Brest, Germany has Paris, and Italy has Marseilles), Germany holds the balance of power between the two hitherto allies. This does produce another BJS point, of course, with England and Italy working together against Germany, but in this form, it is more difficult to make decisive gains than in a BJS point between France and Russia.

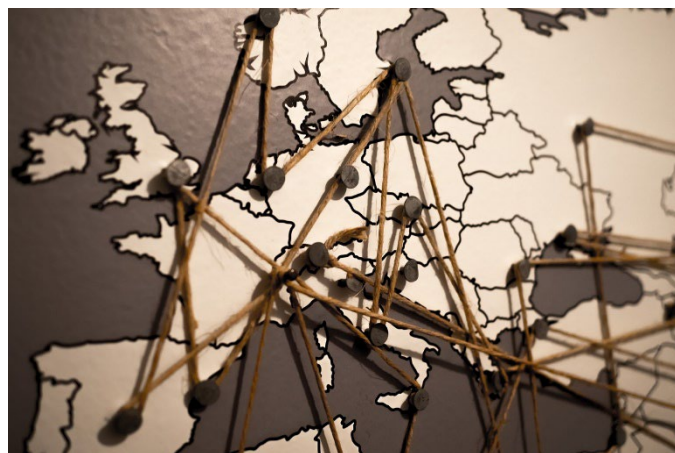
The most dangerous BJS point for Germany, though, is if there is an alliance in the East combining two powers. If things have progressed nicely for E/G, with France and Russia gone, this leaves England in control of the north and west of the board, albeit with fleets, while the south of the board is split between two powers. At this point, the three non-German powers have a chance to ally against Germany. There's no reason for England *not* to do this: German spaces form a buffer zone between England and the Eastern allies. Additionally, there is a better chance for the Eastern allies to hold England back from gaining too much of a lead and perhaps securing a 3-way Endgame (admittedly, likely a draw with an English solo as next most probable). For me, a 3-player Eastern alliance doesn't form a good BJS point: there's too much opportunity for either the Eastern alliance to eat quickly through Germany, putting England in a less advantageous position and discouraging a switch away from Germany.

An attack on Russia is the third of Germany's options. The problem with this option is that it leaves France and England to decide what happens to the west of Germany. Should an E/F alliance form, and Germany is caught pushing east, there'll be no need for a BJS point: E/F will simply use Germany to make blackberry jam (use it as you will).

Let's assume, then, that England and France go to war, and remain in conflict while Germany moves east against Russia. Doug writes that a sneak attack works best, using a convoy from Kiel to Livonia as an example (through the Baltic Sea). Doug leaves us to assume German growth prior to this attack, the clue being his use of the term "sly stab" to describe it. Germany must have gained at least three SCs before this, based on Doug's description of the moves.

The idea of an army in Livonia is obvious. Bordering three Russian SCs – St Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw – it is a strong place for a German army. Combined with "one or more German armies from Munich and/or Berlin" Russia is in trouble. Well, Warsaw is; and, if Warsaw falls, Moscow has to deal with German armies in Warsaw and Livonia.

Yes, OK, but this isn't too difficult for Russia to handle, although it ignores the fact that an Eastern power – Austria or Turkey – is going to see an advantage in this situation. Maybe this *should* be ignored, though, as, other than Sevastopol, any Eastern ally of Germany is going to find little to gain. In fact, they're more likely to gain Sevastopol and then leave Germany and Russia to it, if not help Russia. They don't want an over-powerful Germany, after all.



Germany therefore needs to also attack Scandinavia. Here, Doug says, Sweden and Norway will fall "within a year", and Germany will take St Petersburg by the end of 1905. What does this leave Germany on? Ten SCs (assuming Holland is German, too).

Well, this isn't impossible, of course, but it is, again, highly optimistic. Doug envisions England and France remaining at war, adding a successful French campaign against England to the scenario; I don't suppose it would be much different were it a successful English campaign against France. Assuming success for one at a similar rate to that of Germany, that leaves an eight or nine SC England or France at Germany's back. Germany controls the north-east of the board; the other controls the north-west.

Doug suggests that, if Germany can maintain the neutrality of the non-aggression pact (NAP) with England or France, this is the way to go. Germany's armies form a line from Munich to Moscow; central Europe is prime expansion territory, the Wild Centre. Again, though, whoever remains in the east can form a stalemate line pretty easily and we've reached a possible BJS point between them and England, or something similar (without actually being a sandwich – perhaps a Blackberry Jam on Toast point?) between them and France.

For England, though, Germany controlling the north-east corner with two or possibly three fleets in place, is a problem. If Germany *does* expand into the Wild Centre, England could face a real threat. There seems to be little incentive for England to maintain a NAP with Germany, but rather to agree to not push into the Med. The same could be said for France, who has inherited England's problem by controlling the British Isles. It is a narrow front in the Med, with slow gains; in the west it's a much bigger front with – potentially – richer treasure.

Doug recognizes this and suggests a trident attack on the remaining Western power: armies cross the Rhineland into Burgundy and beyond; fleets conveying armies across the North Sea into Britain, and more fleets sail into the Norwegian Sea and Clyde. This requires three fleets, however, as a minimum: what was England doing watching Germany build *three* fleets? And it requires a lot of armies, leaving a small remnant on the line between Germany and the Eastern alliance. Either the Eastern alliance needs to break down (with Germany encouragement, of course) or it's going to push into Germany.

This is a short article. There isn't space for Doug to cover things like how to achieve the switch from the Early Game to the Mid-game. Today, it may have been a series of articles covering the aspects of each option in more depth. Well, that's how I would've approached it, anyway. Then again, I often find myself writing too much (like now?).

Doug's article also illustrates why a lot of Diplomacy strategy focuses on the Early Game. By the Mid-game there are simply too many variables to consider completely. Articles on the Mid- and Endgame are pretty vague because of this. In the Early Game, while the variables aren't exactly 'known', they are more predictable. The more you grow as a power, the longer the game continues, the more the variables expand, at least until the Endgame, when they contract again, but the position itself is much less known.

Still, there are jumps in position that are lacking in detail. Miraculously, Germany can switch units from one front to the next, as can those of the other powers. In the example of the E/G alliance against France, once France has been eliminated and pulverized into garlic sauce (not so palatable in a sandwich, I can assure you), England's fleets are suddenly found in the Scandinavian area of the board, having been in the MAO zone. Granted, the expectation is that England will have been building fleets while France built armies, but it's still a huge logistical undertaking.

Common with a lot of writing on 'strategy', Doug concentrates mainly on what happens on the board, brushing over the off-the-board diplomatic strategy. I can't really criticize this too much; as I say, it's a common occurrence in Diplomacy articles. For me, though, it places a big, battleship-sized hole in the strategy. What *can* Germany do to forge a stable peace in the east while they confront the enemy in the west, given Germany's quick expansion? Again, perhaps this is down to the sheer number of variables, in that it all depends on who is playing which power, your relationship with them, and their relationship to their ally. Again, possibly down to lack of space.

I see nothing here that solves the problem Germany has: How to deal with the BJS (or BJoT) point? Germany is able to expand quickly (with the right diplomacy to back-up the tactics) but can all too quickly come up against an anti-German alliance (something underscored by history). This is especially the case in the modern game, where Balance of Power (BoP) play is common – as it should be, being part of Calhamer's design.

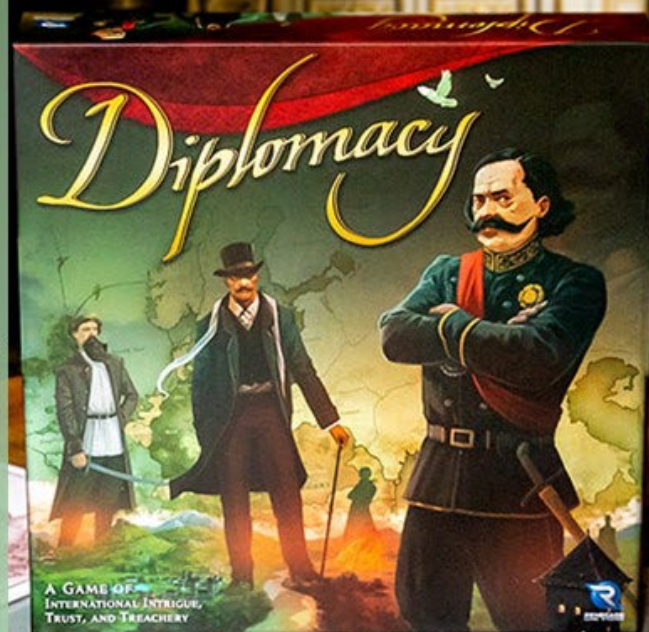
One thing any good strategy article should do is make you look at things differently, and help you consider how you play compared to how the writer thinks play should go. There is no doubt that "How to Win with Germany" does exactly that.

NOTES

1. The German Ocean is an archaic, alternative name for the North Sea.

2024 CONVENTION EVENTS

	OwlCon Feb 23-25 Houston, TX	
	PrezCon Feb 24-25 Charlottesville, VA	 
	Who's Yer Con Mar 29-31 Indianapolis, IN	
	Circle DC Apr 4-7 Washington D.C.	
	Buckeye Game Fest May 2-5 Columbus, OH	
	Gaming Hoopla May 3-5 Chicago, IL	
	BGG Spring May 23-27 Dallas, TX	
	RockyTop GameCon May 24-26 Knoxville, TN	
	ReCon May 24-26 Kernersville, NC	
	KublaCon May 24-27 Burlingame, CA	
	Origins Jun 19-23 Columbus, OH	 
	Dice Tower East Jul 3-7 Orlando, FL	
	CharCon Jul 12-14 Charleston, WV	
	WBC Jul 26-27 Seven Springs, PA	 
	US Championship Aug 1-4 Indianapolis, IN	 
	National Masters Sep 23-25 Las Vegas, NV	 
	Nuke-Con Oct 4-6 Council Bluffs, IA	
	BGG Con Nov 13-17 Dallas, TX	
	PAX Unplugged Dec 6-8 Philadelphia, PA	 
	Teaching	 Tournament





EDC 2024

European Diplomacy Championship 2024

In Sion, Switzerland
From 13th to 15th September

Sponsors



Haitian
Lunch
Saturday
15h30

Schedule

- Round 1 : Friday September 13th 18:00-22:00
- Round 2 : Saturday September 14th 10:30-14:30
- Round 3 : Saturday September 14th 18:00-22:00
- Round 4 : Sunday September 15th 10:30-14:30

TD:
Christophe
Borgeat and
Steve Personeni

Contact us

HENIGMA, rue de la
drague 43, 1950 sion

suissediplomacychampionship@gmail.com

Selected Upcoming Events

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://petermc.net/diplomacy/> and <https://www.thenadf.org/play/> and <https://www.diplomacybriefing.com/diplomacytournaments> and <https://diplobn.com/schedule/>

CharCon (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – July 12th – July 14th, 2024 - Charleston, West Virginia - <https://www.charcon.org/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – July 13th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

ARMADA Regatta – July 19th – July 21st, 2024 – Denver, Colorado - <https://armada-dip.com/>

World Boardgaming Championships (Tournament and Teaching Event) – July 26th – July 27th, 2024 - Seven Springs, Pennsylvania - <https://www.boardgamersorg/index.html>

US Diplomacy Championship at GenCon (Tournament and Teaching Event) – August 1st – August 4th, 2024 - Indianapolis, Indiana - <https://www.gencon.com/>

Boston Massacre – August 9th – August 11th, 2024 – Boston, Massachusetts - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfwK6t-y0Mc-yXOZKqvpM7dMcoXkFhT6Q4nN1tQTIPoigV5q/viewform>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – August 17th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

SkyCon 2 – August 23rd – August 25th, 2024 – Bozeman, Montana – Country Inn & Suites by Radisson - Registration form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeQ6NLGo8jxM1ZB7TDPm-nTXUCsP4u5wWJ_0uW_9r660jEJxQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0

Cane Toad Classic – August 24th – August 25th, 2024 - Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Australia - <https://discord.gg/BAZ6zQybwK>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – September 7th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

European Diplomacy Championship 2024 – September 13th – September 15th, 2024 – Sion, Switzerland – Email: suissediplomacychampionship@gmail.com – Information - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E9EWCwRvEvn0s2lqifxLIyR6McR0B1lvbVHBWwZuvijis/edit?usp=sharing>

National Diplomacy Masters at World Series of Boardgaming – September 23rd – September 25th, 2024 – Horseshow Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada - <https://wsbgvegas.com/> or Discord at <https://discord.gg/renegeadegames>

UK National Diplomacy Championship – September 27th – September 29th, 2024 - Warrington, United Kingdom – Email: Bradleygrace98@gmail.com – Link - <https://discord.gg/PHMCtKGG>

Nuke-Con (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – October 4th – October 6th, 2024 - Council Bluffs, Iowa - <https://www.nuke-con.com/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – October 19th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

Asia Pacific Diplomacy Championship – October 12th – October 13th, 2024 – Melbourne, Australia - <https://discord.gg/BAZ6zQybwK>

Carnage 27 – November 1st – November 3rd, 2024 – Killington Grand Resort, Killington, Vermont - <https://carnagecon.com/>

Canberra Open – November 1st – November 3rd, 2024 – Canberra, Australia – Email: diplomacycbr@gmail.com

Dutch Diplomacy Championship – November 2nd – November 3rd, 2024 - Groningen, Netherlands – Details: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13nUuVUCBD3R33SUTkfdDxRHgbRi3OB7/edit?usp=sharing&oid=113750156858112962108&rtpof=true&sd=true> – Registration: <https://forms.gle/XcfTzbGCRmSVrEvC7>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – November 9th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

BGG Con (Teaching Event Only – No Tournament) – November 13th – November 17th, 2024 – Dallas, Texas - https://boardgamegeek.com/wiki/page/BGG_Events

PAX Unplugged (Tournament and Teaching Event) - December 6th – December 8th, 2024 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - <https://unplugged.paxsite.com/>

Virtual Diplomacy League Event – December 14th, 2024 - <https://diplobn.com/vdl/>

World DipCon 2025 at Whipping – April 4th – April 6th, 2025 – Hotel Spero, San Francisco, California – Email: worlddipcon2025@gmail.com

Circle DC – April 4th – April 6th, 2025 – Washington, DC - Email: tjhaver@gmail.com – <https://www.fortcircle.com>

World DipCon 2025 at Whipping



**April 4-6, 2025 in San Francisco, CA
Hotel Spero**

**Four rounds of Diplomacy to crown the 2025 World
Champion!**



Want more info? Email worlddipcon2025@gmail.com and scan the QR code
to register for email updates!

Dixiecon 38 Report

by David Hood

For the 38th time (whew) I hosted a bunch of Diplomacy players and other board gamers for a weekend of fun in Chapel Hill, North Carolina over Memorial Day weekend 2024. For I believe the first time in those 38 years, we shared the venue with a martial arts competition. Which was pretty awesome, although elevators shared between folk who figuratively stab each other in the back and those with ACTUAL swords and spears slung over their backs was quite an experience.

We had a large number of Thursday arrivals this year, which meant a lot of non-Dip gaming both that night and all day on Friday. Chris Barfield and Alex Ronke helped me with airport runs those two days, which I appreciate very much. Games I saw played on Thursday night included Space Base, Terraforming Mars, Here I Stand, Sushi Go, and that perennial Dixiecon favorite Outpost. (Seriously, I think Outpost has been played at least twice at every Dixiecon since the early 90s. And in the old days when our group used to travel to Cons in my conversion van, Outpost was the game of choice to play during VanCon because I could play it while driving.)

I have to pause here and talk a little about Keith Worstell, known online as Stitches, who has become an integral part of the Dixiecon experience in just his third appearance. Keith is a Diplomacy variant enthusiast, among other things, so Thursday night he ran a game of his two-player Civil War game for two interested Dippers. He also created the Diplomacy sets we used for Dixiecon this year, featuring large mats and pieces along with color-coordinated order pads and pens for each of the seven Great Powers. Those of you who caught the DBN coverage already saw how awesome these sets were, and of course those you attended got to experience Keith's sets first-hand. Many thanks to Keith!

Friday during-the-day was for socializing, eating, and me picking up more folk from train stations and airports. There was also a great deal of gaming throughout Friday right up to shortly before the first Dip Round was to start at 6pm. Titles played included Dune Imperium (which would see more play throughout the weekend) as well as Chess, Dominion, Crisis 1914, Puerto Rico, Clans of Caledonia, and Castles of Burgundy.



The Keith Worstell Sets in Use

As the official start of the Diplomacy round approached it was time for me to don my seersucker suit for the traditional opening festivities. Oddly this year we had no awards from past years to announce, so after some introductory comments and a photo of all those who had chosen to wear the correct attire for Seersucker Round, it was time for the main event to begin with four boards of eager Dippers ready to go. The games at Dixiecon this year were all named for regions of North Carolina, so let's focus for Round 1 on the game called Outer Banks. This one went late into the next morning at the Russia of Randy Lawrence-Hurt eventually pushed for the solo against Tim Crosby's England, Liam's Stokes' Germany and Jack Craig's Italy. Due to EG conflict towards the end and some misorders, Randy almost took 18 but fell just short - and then after Dave Maletsky took over the 1-center Italian position as a replacement player, the players finally decided to end on a 2-way for Tim and Randy because Liam had (according to Tim) promised such a result if Tim would cooperate on stopping the Russian solo. Quite a start to the tournament, and that 17-center two-way result being out there likely changed the trajectory of several other games throughout the weekend as sharp players knew they would be chasing Randy's score in order to win the tourney.



The Seersucker Round



David Miller – Golden Blade Winner and 2nd Place

The Iron Man tournament is for all the games we play other than Dip throughout the weekend, and it was also in full swing on Friday night. Games included Cascadia, Outpost, Pan Am, Puerto Rico, Broom Service, Thurn and Taxis, and a mammoth game of Railways of the World using both Americas maps and four physical tables pushed together to make enough room for the six players involved. It was...a lot.

Saturday morning saw four more Diplomacy games, which also doubled at the Team Tournament. Taking center stage during this round is the game called The Triangle, which featured David Miller's Russia and Todd Craig's Italy taking their Wintergreen alliance all the way to the very rare 17-17 two-way draw. While we have seen this old-school result in several virtual games during the pandemic period, I could not tell you the last time I saw one in a face-to-face event. Obviously, the spectre of Randy's 17-center finish the night before was looming large here. Also of note was the Unifour game, in which the players really could not get anything going towards a legitimate finish under Dixiecon scoring and had to settle for the awful 6-way draw result. Rony

Mordvinov's 10-center Austria in this game just could not get him a score to keep him in contention after two rounds of place, much to his chagrin after a nice Round 1 performance.

Iron Man action during the day on Saturday saw some new games played, including Lords of Baseball, Ark Nova, and Princes of Florence along with more Dune Imperium. After the traditional BBQ dinner in the late afternoon, it was time on Saturday night for more open gaming along with play of one of Alex Ronke's Diplomacy variants. Some new names to the list of games played included Robo Rally, Magic the Gathering, Ticchu and Splendor - with old Dixiecon standard Here I Stand also seeing a second play.

Iron Man gaming continued on Sunday morning, with games of Power Grid, Titan, and Twilight Struggle adding to the games played, along with additional boards of games like Ark Nova which had already seen a lot of play. For the Iron Man event in general, 39 boards of 27 different games were played over the weekend, which was fun for all concerned. Longtime Dixiecon attendee Bruce Duewer took the prize again this year, with former Iron Man GM Dan Mathias taking second.

Going into Round Three of the Diplomacy tournament, there were several players in contention with two-way draws in the bag from previous rounds. Which of these contenders would take the 2024 championship? Answer: none-of-em. Instead, Karthik Konath achieved the very rare timed-round solo as Austria in the Crystal Coast game, beating out David Miller who achieved his second two-way of the tournament in game Blue Ridge as Germany. Peter Yeargin and Jason Bennett rounded out the action with their own two-way draw in the Great Smokies game, parlaying that into third and fourth finishes overall in the Dip tournament. A very dynamic end to an amazing event on the Diplomacy side.

After congratulating Karthik for his second Dixiecon win and bidding farewell to those players leaving after the awards ceremony, it was off to eat for all those players staying for more gaming Sunday night. And yes, there was a LOT of that. I counted games of TransEuropa, Campaign Trail, Push, Distilled, Ark Nova, Welcome To, and another Dixiecon standard of old, the train game 1830. But the highlight of Sunday night gaming has really become the board of Escape from Colditz, as various allied POWs tried to get past Nazi guard David Miller much to the delight of everyone involved. I think Tom Kobrin hiding many of David's best cards in his pocket may have helped the Allied cause, possibly.

Thanks to all for attending this year's Dixiecon! I had a blast, hope everyone else did also. I was particularly happy to see nine faces new to the event, and look

forward to seeing everyone back in Chapel Hill next May!



Karthik Konath, the Dixiecon Winner

Dixiecon 38 (2024) Results

1.	Karthik Konath (CA)	484
2.	David Miller (MD)	472
3.	Peter Yeargin (TX)	400
4.	Jason Bennett (MD)	368
5.	Timothy Crosby (FL)	364
5.	Keith Worstell (NC)	364
7.	Randy Lawrence-Hurt (NC)	304
8.	Todd Craig (NC)	300
9.	Emily Turnage (SC)	296
10.	Rony Mordvinov (Israel)	289.7
11.	Ben Kellman (MI)	285.7

12.	Benjamin Pierce (AR)	268
13.	Liam Stokes (BC)	240
14.	Cameron Higbe (MO)	216
15.	Brian Ecton (MD)	196
16.	Robert Moeller (PA)	190
17.	Tony Bilzi (NC)	180
18.	Sophie Lewis (NC)	170
19.	Tim Hubert (PA)	161
20.	Kevin Kurtz (MD)	145.7
21.	Jack Craig (NC)	116
22.	Tim Richardson (VA)	60
23.	Hal Schild (VA)	56
24.	John Darges (NC)	48
25.	Victoria Hayden (MD)	29
26.	Chris Barfield (NC)	25
27.	Edwin Turnage (NC)	20
27.	Hudson Defoe (DC)	20
29.	Alex Maslow (MA)	10
IN	David Maletksy (VA)	46
IN	Andy Bartalone (MD)	0
IN	Alex Ronke (NC)	0

Diplomacy Team Tournament

1. MAC (Stokes, Konath, Kellman)
2. Absent Buffalo (Miller, Yeargin, Bartalone)
3. Team Israel (Schild, T. Craig, Mordvinov)

Iron Man Tournament (nonDip gaming)

1. Bruce Duewer (TX)
2. Dan Mathias (MD)
3. Michael Lowrey (NC)

Best Countries

A	Karthik Konath	Solo
E	Timothy Crosby	2w, 8 centers
F	Jason Bennett	2w, 10
G	David Miller	2w, 17
I	Todd Craig	2w, 17
R	Randy Lawrence-Hurt tie	2w, 17
R	David Miller tie	2w, 17
T	David Miller	3w, 16

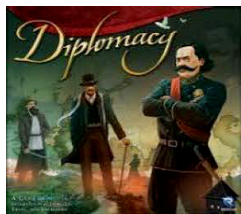
I Got Hammered - Alex Maslow

Golden Blade - David Miller

The Brick - David Hood (by default)

Players Choice - Benjamin Pierce

Death with Dignity - Alex Maslow, Tim Richardson, Sophie Lewis, Edwin Turnage, John Darges, Jack Craig, Benjamin Pierce, Tim Hubert



UK National Diplomacy Championship 2024



Date: 27th to 29th September 2024

Location: Geek Retreat Board Game Cafe, 4 Crown Parade, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 2AE

Three rounds of play, one per day, best two counts for score (One drop round). In the case of a tie for first, the third game scores will act as a tiebreaker.

How to Register

Email - Bradleygrace98@gmail.com specifying your name, which rounds you would be able to play and if you need any help in terms of making the event. I am also active on Discord if you prefer that mode of communication, and there will be a WhatsApp group chat for the event for quick communication with everyone in attendance also. Anyone from a first-time player to someone with years of experience can join, and it is not limited to players from the UK.

Scoring System

Open Tribute (Please see full explanation in the notes on Page 2)

Game Length

17 minutes per turn for the spring, 15 minutes per turn for the Fall, drop dead restrictions and a rolling clock (central clock). Rounds 1 and 2 will have a winter 1909 deadline. Round 3 will be an unknown deadline between 1907 and 1909.

Hotel Options

There are many options available within walking distance of the venue so if you need any assistance regarding this, please let me know and I can send you recommendations based on what you are looking for in this regard.

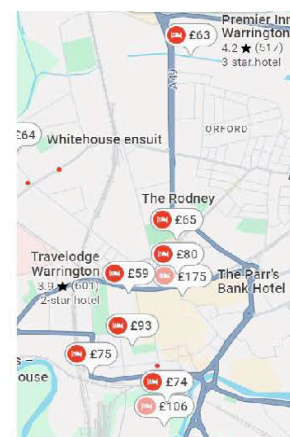
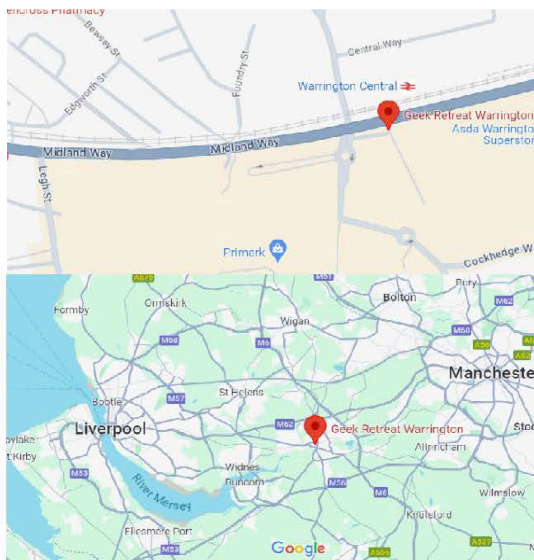
Schedule

A meal will be organised on Thursday 26th in the evening.

Game 1 - Friday 27th 2pm start.

Game 2 - Saturday 28th start at 12pm.

Game 3 - Sunday 29th start at 12pm. Awards will be immediately following round three.



Who's Yer Con 2024

by Phil Burk



an instructional game, Thomas played the role of senior diplomat admirably, dishing out minor but important lessons in the predictability and unpredictability of Diplomacy tactics.



The warmest congratulations to Scott, who emerged victorious and was rewarded with a complimentary copy of Diplomacy courtesy of our generous sponsor, Renegade Game Studios. Scott's triumph was a testament to his strategic prowess and the competitive spirit of our participants, as well as a timely stab of his kids. Scott definitely learned that being a successful Diplomat requires putting the game above family and friendship.



We were able to fill a table for the second instructional game on Saturday, March 30 with none other than Thomas Haver filling in as a handy seventh. This being



A big thank you to Thomas Haver for supplying plenty of Diplomacy swag and gaming supplies. Additional

pictures of the convention can be found at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/1Qu8rfZeDaUEUzDt7>

A Fist Full of Dollars

By Ed Sullivan

"I get the wrong idea only when it suits me"
—A Fistful of Dollars

I've made the big time. I'm writing for *Diplomacy World*. I've admired this publication for many years, but I never thought I would have something worthy of writing about ... until now.

I endeavor to do my part to improve the American Diplomacy hobby. Yes, little old me. From what I saw in Varedo, Italy, during WDC 2024, we're in a bit of trouble, and I'd like to suggest a path forward.

Let me start by saying I know nothing about Diplomacy history, feuds, or problems of the past. Nor, frankly, do I care. All I want to do is play Diplomacy with people who love this game as much as I do, and to try and give back

to the hobby all the joy I've received from it during these past five years. Yes, I'm a good person. You're welcome.

Let me tell you about what occurred at WDC 2024 for the North American hosting rights for WDC 2027. I'll start with the good news: Between the second and third rounds, the players voted on the location of WDC 2026, and unanimously approved the bid of Athens, Greece. It should be an amazing event.

And now, the controversy. We also voted on whether to approve the location of WDC 2027 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The exact resolution we were voting for was unclear to me, which is a separate story in its own right. Nevertheless, since I have seen it announced publicly, I believe that the proponent of the measure believes that players approved Las Vegas as the site of

WDC 2027. Undeniably, if this is what we voted on, most North Americans voted against the idea while most Europeans, including people who at least appeared to me to speak no English and were otherwise unengaged with the debate, voted in favor of the proposal.

Why is this a big deal? Why should you care? It comes down to what seemed to be a rigged and inequitable process.

The presentation. Players were handed out a glossy brochure pitching Las Vegas as the location for 2027. We were told that it would occur at the Horseshoe Casino as part of the Las Vegas World Series of Board Gaming. We were further told that there would be a special venue within the casino for Diplomacy, and that we would be covered by television cameras. We were also told that Renegade Game Studios, the current owner of the publishing rights to *Diplomacy* would sponsor the event and pay for a few people to travel to Las Vegas and stay at the casino.

I have to admit, it sounded good to me. I love Vegas. I can do without the Horseshoe. I'm more of a Venetian guy, but look, Vegas is undeniably a fantastic city that has a lot to offer. I am also grateful that someone in the hobby has a great relationship with Renegade. Synergy between the game's publisher and the players should be welcomed by all.

What I didn't like is the process. Well, so what? If I like the result, shouldn't the ends justify the means? The answer here is a clear no.

As John F. Kennedy said, "civility is not a sign of weakness." Let's just take a look at our society right now. We are plagued with incivility, with each side pressing every advantage it has against the other. We then blame the other side for every transgression and slight and ignore the role we play ignoring our side's actions. No one wants to surrender first. Instead, we keep testing the guardrails that hold us together, and retreat into our foxholes of self-importance.

While a 300-million-person country has a lot of ruin to go, Diplomacy is too small a hobby to carelessly light aflame. The way this went down should raise several questions. Here are just a few:

First, why was the upcoming vote not disclosed to the North American Diplomacy Federation in advance?

Second, why were we having the vote at all? There are rumors that such a vote violates the WDC Charter

because the Charter does not authorize votes for WDC locations more than two years in advance. I don't know if that's true or not, but I don't think it matters. Regardless of what the Charter says, the point is that voting three years in advance is an extremely rare event when there was no opposition. Here, there was pointed opposition, mostly by the players from North America, the very location of WDC 2027. Mostly North American players and those who travel to North America for next year's WDC should have the say on the next North American WDC location.

Third, why are a bunch of Europeans making what is, in essence, a decision that should largely be left to North American Diplomacy players?

Fourth, if Renegade wants WDC in Vegas in 2027, does that mean that we are going to have subsequent events in Vegas in perpetuity, like the World Series of Poker? As a corollary to that question, are local chapters with strong hobbies now going to be out in the cold from hosting a WDC?

Let me try and answer those questions. We were given no answer to the first question. I speculate that the reason the proponent of the 2027 Las Vegas WDC seemingly does not get along with the NADF, and feared opposition if his proposal was known to a larger audience. I am not a member of the NADF, but I have not seen widespread opposition to the idea, merely widespread opposition to the process.

As for the second question, we were told that the organizers of the World Series of Board Gaming needed an answer in the first week of June 2024, and that no delays would be accepted. I simply don't believe that answer. Las Vegas is literally a city built for conventions. I'm fairly certain that the normal two-year voting cycle of WDCs would give the Horseshoe Casino plenty of time to accommodate fewer than 100 participants. One of the players proposed that we meet online with the NADF within a few days of the tournament to discuss the matter, and the proponent rejected the compromise. He wanted the vote then and there, and one of his supporters yelled at dissenters.

Further, the proponent suggested that he had spoken with David Hood, who had suggested that the vote three years in advance would be acceptable, and implied that David was in favor of a WDC in Las Vegas in 2027. That ended up being untrue. David Hood has explicitly denied it in a public Facebook post:



David Hood Admin Top contributor

WDC for 2027 was actually not in play yet. That has traditionally been awarded at the event two years before. So, San Fran in 2025. I think it is interesting that the meeting in 2024 made that recommendation, but it will actually need to be decided at the 2025 event. That said, Las Vegas has some definite advantages that should be considered by all when the decision is made next year.

2d Like Reply Share

6



Tom Haver Author

David Hoodit was voted on for 2027. Las Vegas is WDC 2027.

2d Like Reply Share



David Hood Admin

We're not going to debate this here, but no that is not the procedure the hobby has followed in the recent past. But let's just table this for now.

2d Like Reply Share

2

As for the third question, allow me to provide a partial answer by asking a rhetorical question: Would those Europeans find it acceptable if the players at WDC 2025 in San Francisco decide where to hold WDC 2028? Yet, by ignoring the wishes of most of the North American players in Varedo, they set themselves up this exact kind of gamesmanship. I for one, would be against such retaliation, but it is not unreasonable to expect the North Americans to have a reaction.

As for the fourth question, well, it's TBD, but it's not unreasonable to think a permanent Vegas WDC is the long-term game-plan.

One would think that a reasonable process would include informing the NADF in advance so it could weigh in on the idea. One would think that North Americans should have a say on where they want a tournament located in North America to be played. One would think that hard working North American tournament directors may want the opportunity to bid for a WDC.

What happens now? As much as the proponent doesn't want to hear it, most North Americans do not accept the usurpation of the process, and do not accept the validity of the vote.

There is a path forward from here. We should vote on the proposal in the appropriate way at WDC 2025 in San

Francisco, where I hope the proponent is given a fair opportunity to make the case for Las Vegas, along with any other bidders who may wish for the event to occur in a different North American location. In all likelihood, if I get a vote, I expect to support Vegas in 2027. I do love me some TV cameras and an active sportsbook. Just don't ask me to wear a costume or funny hat unless my scotch is comped.

The World Series of Board Gaming can offer a Diplomacy tournament in 2027. It can call itself a WDC after a fair debate that respects the normal process. If not, then call it can call it something else. They can even put World in the title. It just can't put WDC in the title until it is properly voted on and the process is respected. If the proponent plows forward and labels it a WDC, then I think he'll find that a lot of North Americans won't attend, and both the tournament and hobby will be worse for wear—because North Americans by and large won't consider it a title worthy of a WDC Champion. Instead, there will be an anti-Pope champion who will never be recognized by the vast majority of North Americans. The event will be an ahistorical anomaly with a tainted asterisk.

This was a Spaghetti Western of a vote, and just like the quote above from *A Fistful of Dollars*, it was a wrong idea supported by someone who, along with a few of his supporters and a handful of Europeans, found appealing for some reason.

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Saturday Round 2 Board call at 4 PM

Sunday Timed Round 3 Board call at 8:00 AM

R3 ends between 12:30 and 1:30 PM

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or Email Craig.Mayr@gmail.com

Registration Link



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Ask the Hobby Historian: Alpha, Omega, and Everything

By David Hood

In a previous column several issues ago, I discussed the hobby services of the past and why those volunteer positions were so important to the growth and development of the Diplomacy community. Nowadays there is a great deal of data available about openings, country strength, endgame results, etc. through various websites and Diplomacy online platforms. Perhaps not enough use has been made of the data in question, for it certainly exists.

In the pre-internet days, hobbyists were definitely aware that such data could be useful, and also they really wanted to keep track of how many games were being played postally, both regular and variant, as well as who was playing in them and who was winning them. There were two individuals primarily responsible for keeping up with this info. The Boardman Number Custodian (BNC) issued identifying numbers to each gamestart of classic Dip, upon request of the GM involved, and then also accepted and published the endgame results as well. The BNC published a zine periodically called Everything in which these gamestarts and finishes were listed for the benefit of all. (In case you do not know, the name comes from longtime GM/publisher John Boardman, who is widely credited with running the very first non-in-person game of Dip, by mail starting in 1963.)

The Miller Number Custodian (MNC) performed the same function for variant gamestarts and finishes, and published the zine Alpha and Omega to provide that information to the Diplomacy public. (Similarly, the name comes from Don Miller who was a very early booster of variant play and design. His name was also added to the hobby service award given for decades for outstanding volunteer work for the benefit of Diplomacy in general.) The MNC job was a little more complicated in that each variant game number, in addition to having the gamestart year and then a letter for each such start in sequence like a Boardman Number, also included a series of letters and numbers to describe the type of variant in question. So, one that used the regular board but just altered rules had the letters "rb" in it, for example.

Now, why am I rehashing all this, you might ask? Because I was moving some things around recently in my basement, that's why! In doing so I ran across a box of old Dipzines and other material from decades ago that my longtime friend Dan Mathias gave me for safekeeping. He had received this box from Lee Kendter, Jr, who was the MNC back in the 90s and 00s, along with his dad before him. I thought you DW readers would find it interesting that some of the names

found in these zines might well be ones you would recognize. Let's see who I found.

It cannot get more coincidental than this - as I was writing the last paragraph, an email came into my inbox from British hobbyist Stephen Agar who was sending me the most recent edition of his publication God Save the Zine. Yes, Stephen is all over the documents in this box! I have included a pic of an August 2000 email in which MNC Kendter is verifying Agar's mailing address so that he can send a paper copy of Alpha and Omega to Stephen from Pennsylvania to Brighton. Stephen is a hobby historian himself, in his case of the British hobby of the past. Check out his zine to find out more. Among his other recent hobby activities are his involvement in the creation of a new website for UK Diplomacy, and in the recent resurrection of the UK National Championship coming this Fall.

Page 1 of 1

Lee Kendter

From: "Stephen Agar"
To: "Lee Kendter" <lkendter@netaxs.com>
Sent: Monday, August 07, 2000 7:01 PM
Subject: Re: A&O 35
In message <006401c000c2\$76628f40\$09050180@netaxs.com>, Lee Kendter <lkendter@netaxs.com> writes
> I don't have any address for you.
> Could you sent me you address and I will mail out your copy of A&O
> # 35.
>
>
> Yours,
>
> Lee A. Kendter, Jr.

Thanks

Stephen Agar
47 Preston Drove
BRIGHTON
BN1 6LA
UK

--
Stephen Agar, Brighton, UK
<http://www.diplomacy-archive.com>

Let me get back to my forte - North American hobby history. And a very important part of that history in the 80s and 90s was the ever-present Melinda Holley. For those who have seen my DBN monthly news show called Deadline, which as I write this is about to reach its 48th episode, you may remember that I interviewed Melinda for episode 2 back in August 2020. She has played virtual games and tournaments in the past several years, as well as in Gunboat tournaments, so she is still very much alive and kicking in the world of Dip. Back in the day she was known for the sheer

volume of games she played in, both regular and Gunboat, as well as for running the zine Rebel. I have included with this article just two of the Melinda-related documents I found, one being a handwritten note from 1994 asking the MNC to number her recently started Gunboat game called Bermuda Triangle. The other is a game report from a Gunboat game which started in the year 1991 and ended in 1994, with Melinda taking a solo as Germany in 1915 with 19 centers to Austria's 15! Take a close look at the supply center chart - the first player eliminated was Turkey and that was not until 1909. Absolutely amazing.

Dear Lee -

Enclosed is a document for a Miller #. It is a Gunboat game being run by me in Rebel. It is called Bermuda Triangle.

Also enclosed is a game finish.

BW-
Melinda

94 Feb 32

Another thing you will notice on that game report - who's the GM? Our very own Diplomacy World editor Doug Kent, when he ran the zine Maniac's Paradise. Doug has been running a successor zine called Eternal Sunshine until very recently when he finally put it to bed. I hope he does not edit this next part out - but the hobby owes a tremendous debt to Doug for plugging away both at DW and his games-running zines for so long. He has brought joy to many a player, support to many an organizer, and great written content to many a hobbyist for several decades now. Kudos to you, Doug. You are one of a kind.

PRESS

Germany - France: Ba

Germany - England: Don't snicker.

Gunboat 7, Enigmatic Ocean, 1991Qrb32, F 15

1991Qrb32, "Enigmatic Ocean", GM - Douglas Kent, Zine - Maniac's Paradise
Germany Win in Fall 1915

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Austria	05	06	07	08	09	11	11	13	16	17	16	16	16	15		Mike Scott (SURV F15)
England	04	03	04	05	05	06	05	04	02	00	00	00	00	00	00	Mickey Preston (OUT F10)
France	04	05	05	04	04	01	01	01	01	01	00	00	00	00	00	Patrick O'Brien (OUT F11)
Germany	05	06	06	06	07	08	09	12	12	13	14	15	17	19		Melinda Holley (WIN F15)
Italy	04	04	04	04	05	05	05	05	05	04	04	03	01	00		Sven Carlberg (OUT F15)
Russia	05	05	04	03	03	04	03	03	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	Charles Greger (OUT F10)
Turkey	04	04	03	03	04	02	01	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	Steven Sulzby (RES W00)
																Fred Hyatt (OUT F09)

Austria (Mike Scott): OK, this one is over! I messed it up at least twice, and Germany did what he needed to do to win it. I was impressed with his tenacious but solid and continuous onmoving assaults. The early game started with me worried about Italy, but he never attacked, and left me free to continue in other directions. Turkey became my early foe when he hit at me, tho it was a case of who would attack who first. I expected Russia to join with me or against me, but he did neither for several years. Finally Russia too tried to attack me, when I had the Turk near the end; it took me longer to get rid of the last Turkish fleet while trying to also take out the Russians. I salute the Turks for their defense in an unwinnable overmanned situation. To the Russian I would ask why he did not attack the Turk or me earlier? Just as I was wrapping up the Russian, I made the first really bad error in order writing. Germany had left open his east, while working hard against England and France; and I thought to make this surprise attack against his gamble that I wouldn't. But I rushed off orders without checking that I had them right, and they weren't. It allowed Germany to continue to grow out of the almost even GER/FRE/ENG group. I thought then that I could win if I took St. Pete, all of the Italian SC's, and Tunis. In the next moves I did take St. Pete, and for a while Munich, and to top it off, it seemed the Italian let me come into his centers unopposed. However, we then got a new Italian, or else he rethought what was happening, and then he put up some solid resistance that in fact cost me the Munich SC. Meantime I had made my second bad order writing that cost me St. Pete, so now I needed another center to replace it to win. Unfortunately, tho I got three Italian SC's and Tunis, Germany got the others. A good game I thought, and yea guys, it was me who voted no to all draws and concessions, even when someone proposed one to me half way through the game. Thanks Doug....

Germany (Melinda Holley): The win is great! Austria played superbly. Italy was a wonderful ally. I intended for him/her to survive but I miscounted my centers. I owe Italy one for that goof. This is one game where I'm looking forward to seeing who everyone is.

Italy (Sven Carlberg): I never got moving successfully in any direction in this game; this always seems to happen to me as Italy in Gunboat. After an early skirmish, Austria showed himself

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY VARIANT PACKAGE

Entire contents except QUANTUM SPACE DIPLOMACY and LUNATIC DIPLOMACY II
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DIPLOMACY is a registered trademark of Games Research Inc., Box 18N Boston, MA.
RISK is a registered trademark of Parker Brothers Inc., Springfield, MA.

I wish to thank those designers who kindly permitted their work to be reprinted here. I also thank those who helped with comments and suggestions, especially playtesters for the new variants: Jim Cooper, Doug Hansen, Scott Rich, Richard Schwall, and others.

With the exception of LUNATIC DIPLOMACY II (done by the designer), all typing, map-drawing, and dirty work by Lewis Pulsipher.

	CONTENTS	
BARSOOM		Lew Pulsipher
BETWEEN GALAXIES II		Lew Pulsipher
DOWNFALL OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS AND THE RETURN OF THE KING I		Bartley Patterson
THE DYING EARTH		Lew Pulsipher
HYBRIAN AGE DIPLOMACY II		Burt Labelle
LUNATIC DIPLOMACY II		Thomas Galloway
MIDDLE EARTH DIPLOMACY II		Don Miller
MIDDLE EARTH DIPLOMACY V (revised)		Lew Pulsipher
QUANTUM SPACE DIPLOMACY		T. A. McCloud
SIMPLE RULES FOR FANTASY/SCIENCE FICTION VARIANTS		Lew Pulsipher
THE STAR KINGS		Lew Pulsipher
TIMESTEPS		Lew Pulsipher

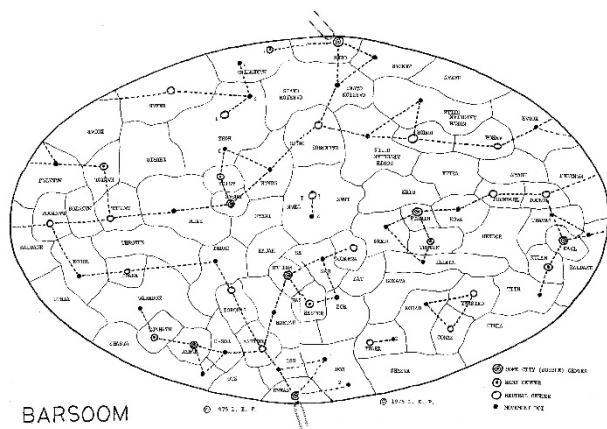
I began work on this package in the summer of 1974. The first games were printed in January 1975, and the last in December of the same year. Unfortunately I did not gain access to a carbon ribbon typewriter until several games had been printed. Nonetheless I hope the collection is of satisfactory quality, even though it is purely amateur in financial terms.

Unless otherwise stated the variants are here printed for the first time. MIDDLE EARTH V is a revision, with a much more convenient map, of ME V printed in Diplomacy World Vol. 1 #1 in early 1974. Several copies of LUNATIC DIPLOMACY II have previously been distributed by the designer.

I have tried to select a variety of game types. The maps are larger than usual for a variant in order to permit face-to-face play with RISK pieces, cardboard wargame counters, or other small tokens. It would have been prohibitively expensive to print all with full-size maps. Some maps will require trimming at the joint because overlap was allowed to account for possible printing errors.

Feel free to alter rules to your taste, but remember that even a small alteration may radically affect game length or play balance. DIPLOMACY is a marvelous game system for simple strategic-level science fiction and fantasy games. Some of the variants contained in this collection could have used entirely new game systems, but only at the cost of considerable time, effort, and confusion with a new method.

Let me tell you about the awesome find I discovered at the bottom of the very full box from Lee Kendter. I had never seen one of these before, though I knew they existed. In 1975, early variant designer and enthusiast Lewis Pulsipher created a Science Fiction and Fantasy Variant Package for the Diplomacy hobby. It included several SF/Fantasy variants and as well as general info about how to design others. In the early days of the hobby, Tolkien variants in particular were extremely popular, and the Package included several of those. Because I am such an Edgar Rice Burroughs fan, though, I have to feature the first entry in the Package instead - Barsoom, based on the John Carter novels. Included with this article is the original map of the planet. Movement does wrap around the map, like any global variants, and there are rules for combined Army/Fleet units and all sorts of other fun chrome.



Just like Agar, Holley, and Kent, Lew Pulsipher has also had recent connection to the Diplomacy hobby. Until a few years ago when he moved to Florida, Lew lived in North Carolina and attended Dixiecon often. He play-tested some of his new game designs with us, and otherwise provided a wonderful connection to our hobby's past by interacting with Dixiecon attendees. I see Lew nearly every year at Prezcon, where among other things he attends the Britannia tournament ...because after all, he did INVENT that game.

Let me just end this ramble by saying this - I know that to younger hobbyists, some of this history talk can seem a little goofy. Who cares what happened in some Gunboat game in 1994, or what rudimentary variant map someone could create in 1975? Yes, I get it. But that's not the point of the story. Just like the game of Diplomacy is about the people, not the pieces, the hobby is not really about winning a game, or a tournament. It's about the people. I find it nostalgic and fun to see this old material because I find it nostalgic and fun to remember the wonderful people with whom I have interacted in the forty years I have been involved in Diplomacy. These relationships are everything, and will mean even more to you in the future, as you mature in your Diplomacy journey. Don't just take Belgium when you play the game, but also take the time to get to know your fellow players. Stay in contact with those you meet at a Con. Volunteer to help with virtual events, or to write something for DW. In short, enjoy everything available to you in this wonderful Hobby of ours. Years later you will appreciate that you did.

Knives and Daggers - The Diplomacy World Letter Column



Davide Cleopadre - During the break between round two and round three of the WDC on the 1st of June, the hobby meeting was held. This had been announced to the players in all the official channels: website, WhatsApp group, and email.

First up was a proposal for Athens to host WDC in 2026. There were no other bids for 2026. After a short presentation, the bid was approved.

After that there was a proposal for Las Vegas, Nevada, USA to host WDC 2027. Some people were interested in knowing more about the proposal, while some others wanted to block the proposal entirely and proposed a "wait and see" position.

The discussion started to become a bit heated between some audience members. I let Thomas Haver finish his

presentation, and then called for a vote between the two options:

- 1) Accept 2027 Las Vegas, or
- 2) Wait and see

The 2027 Las Vegas has won the vote of the hobby meeting.

After the vote, some people from the NADF wanted to take away 2027 Las Vegas for precedent. This is not fair and not in keeping with history. WDC Namur determined Hunt Valley, Paris, and Canberra together. At Vermont in 2022 no future WDC host was determined. At Bangkok in 2023 San Francisco was set for 2025, but not Milan for 2024. We set WDC Milan 2024 in a WhatsApp group. There is no provision in the WDC charter to delay or

cancel a WDC but we saw 2020 and 2021 canceled. We are seeing one group, NADF, try to dictate to the world all the events. They apply rules selectively to benefit themselves. 2027 Las Vegas won the vote of the hobby meeting.



Thomas Haver - I received permission during Round One of WDC Milan to relay this information to the masses:

"There is a new Diplomacy game coming in 2025. No other details can be released at this time"



Gavin Atkinson – The Cane Toad Classic will be held Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 August at Vault Games in Brisbane, Australia. Registration will be at 10 am for a 10:30 start.

No web site or flyer as I'm still on the road after WDC Milan (France currently, off to Canada in a few days) & won't be back in Australia for 3 more weeks).

It'll be a classic style tournament with an awesome perpetual trophy for the winner (a Diplomacy themed taxidermized Cane Toad).

This will be an officially sanctioned tournament so your standings will also go towards your placement in the Diplomacy Association of Australia and New Zealand rankings.

I'm still away post World Diplomacy championships in Europe, so haven't yet got a website up/registration process in place. So just email me if you'd like to attend or have questions: amby@diplomacygames.com



Thomas Haver (second letter) - A new game called "Imperial Borders" is going live on Kickstarter in a few days. It's from Axis & Allies designer Larry Harris. The game includes simultaneous action selection and negotiation. Like many Diplomacy players have enjoyed "Here I Stand" from GMT, I think they would have interest in this beautiful game. Included are links to the game information and a YouTube preview from Board Game Nation.

<https://www.nightingale-games.com/imperial-borders>

https://youtu.be/br_xol74XkM?si=YH1yJhEJJCKTxiyL



Bob Durf - "Something is Rotten in the State of Denmark" describes what we've witnessed playing out online by an attempt to push a selection of Las Vegas as the 2027 Diplomacy World Championship site. Let me see if this scenario makes sense, which is not exactly the scenario playing out, but certainly captures the spirit of it from an outsider looking in:

A group of people in Italy decide on the spur of the moment to decide the North American host city for 2027. There are some objections, as doing so is in violation of the charter agreement that governs such selections. The proponents, not having the charter, decide that instead of consulting the charter, that they will accept the one bid present and then bullhorn it across social media as quickly as possible. Some seemingly then justify their decision by saying "well, we didn't have the rules, so we get to ignore them (and everyone else in North America are losers complaining that they didn't submit bids for a year they didn't expect to bid for at a meeting where the bid for that year was not announced beforehand)." Again, this is the feel one gets from the people pushing this decision as a done deal, because while there was some hand-waving "oh it has been done before," there is in fact no substantive arguments why they are in the right (since such arguments would require the support of the Charter, which anyone can read and understand was violated).

The sad part is, Las Vegas (sponsored by Renegade) seems like a **good and worthy venue bid**, but apparently someone was either over-excited, or terrified of the proper procedures which would have led to a competitive bidding process from all the other excellent tournament directors in North America that there has been an unseemly violation of charter rules followed by a loud attempt to try to establish the venue as settled immediately.

Can we have a fair bidding process? If Las Vegas wins, and the tournament is indeed sponsored by Renegade, that would be a potentially awesome event. But at this point, "potentially" should be the key word in the preceding sentence.



Thomas Haver (3rd letter) - Letter on the press release "Renegade Announces Official Sponsorship of Diplomacy World Championship Events!"

Some fascinating announcements from the publisher of Diplomacy for the face-to-face competitive community. I don't recall in my time or by reading past experiences of others about a publisher willing to provide so much support for the community. From my dealings with Renegade working on several game projects, I would say this is in-character for their company even though it's unprecedented for a Diplomacy publisher. We're not a large community compared to other games. It's more challenging to get a full game together and the total play time exceeds most Euro-style games that players have become accustomed to in today's market. It's welcome news. A few items to note in the announcement:

Rogue Judges is a volunteer event coordination game group. They've run hundreds of game events over a 30-year period. They directly run the Acquire World Championship and Robo Rally World Championship at Gen Con (both games are now published by Renegade). They also specialize in running "teaching events" at conventions. They're a wonderful group of people and I've been a member for almost 20 years.

Renegade's offer of sponsorship is listed as either directly running an event (like WDC 2027 in Las Vegas) or to have Rogue Judges act as a liaison for events. An event like WDC 2025 in San Francisco has multiple experienced organizers, so perhaps they only want prize support and social media cards created. Whereas WDC 2026 in Athens will be run by a first-time Diplomacy organizer, so perhaps there is additional help needed in arranging travel and accommodations for the players. Overall, the sponsorship from the publisher means a support structure is in place to ensure the world

championship is successful. That's good news for players and organizers alike. Perhaps there are organizers out there reticent to run such a large event; now they know they're not alone. The publisher is there for them.

What does this mean for 2028 and beyond? The rotation of WDC among different countries / continents is a good model to maintain. We all want Diplomacy to grow, and supporting Diplomacy in different locales will grow the player base. Renegade has distributors in multiple nations across the globe, some of which are doing language localizations for Diplomacy. It would be excellent to work with "Banana Games" in China to eventually bring a WDC there, or work with "Let's Play Games" in Australia to get WDC in a venue that can bring casual gamers into our community. Leveraging the resources from the publisher and the network of distributors makes Diplomacy a "big tent" game, and that's something everyone can get behind.

An Interview with DixieCon Champion Karthik Konath

by Randy Lawrence-Hurt

Randy

So, first question: could you give our readers a bit of background info on yourself? When did you start playing Diplomacy, how often do you play, etc.?

Karthik

I started playing Diplomacy back in 2010 when I was a freshman in high school, playing with other friends. During that game I decided to start playing online with other players on PlayDip and webDip before finally making the latter my home base for about 3 years. After the start of the pandemic, I chose to rejoin the webDip community and played actively there. On the forum, I saw a post advertising a virtual edition of Liberty Con. After some early fun there I got more and more into the virtual hobby, playing in just about every available VDL game and live tournament. Eventually when things started to open back up, I attended Carnage and truly enjoyed every second of it thanks to Dave Maletsky ensuring the newbies were well integrated into the larger hobby! After that the rest is history, and y'all still haven't found a way to get rid of me!

Randy

Despite our best efforts, too. Are you still active in the online community as well? I've typically found most players are either all-FtF or all-online, do you straddle both worlds?

Karthik

I've relaxed my online presence from peak levels, but I

still try to maintain some sort of presence, from blitz press to ODC play.

Randy

Let's talk about the game itself. You've got a lot of experience, what do you typically find to be your best powers? How would you describe your play style?

Karthik

I think my best powers recently have been England and Italy. England I've had an over 50% top share with in recent history coming into Dixie while Italy has won me many crucial boards both in face-to-face play and online! Austria used to be one of my best powers years ago, but has been one I've suffered with recently.

As for playstyle I'm a flexible loyalist. I'll have my ally and do right by them while also watching the rest of the board and responding to the movements on both my side and the other to the best of my ability. I think the board in which I soloed is perhaps the best example, given how I played everyone off of each other before soloing without taking a single dot off my Russian ally.

Randy

Oh, trust me, we'll get to that solo board, I have some thoughts as well... Let's jump right to your most recent tournament win, then. This was your first time at Dixie, right? What did you think of the overall atmosphere, structure, scoring system, etc.?

Karthik

This was my second time at Dixie in person and third time playing at it including virtual! I loved the atmosphere! Even outside of Diplomacy there were so many fun people playing fun board games! I finally got to learn Dune: Imperium which was great and had fun playing some more Terraforming Mars! The structure and scoring system are great in my opinion! I think it's good to play draw-size based scoring on occasion and is a style I'm well acquainted with.

I think it's good for the hobby to have a variety of scoring systems and structures which test different aspects of a player's skills in different ways!

Randy

Some have criticized draw-based scoring systems for dragging games out while holdouts get ground down, encouraging artificial alliances, and discouraging stabs or abrupt swings: any thoughts on those criticisms, or how draw-based compares with other scoring systems you've experienced?

Karthik

1) I think the ability to vote yourself out mitigates the dragging out part as it gets rid of the worst of whittling most of the time. 2) What's an artificial alliance? 3) David Miller and I took big swings for massive results. At DBNI with Open Tribute we saw 11/11/11s before it became winner-take-all qualifying rounds. At the end of the day, it comes down more to players and their preferences than scoring systems.

Randy

That might be a term I coined - "artificial" in the sense that, scoring systems aside, the logic of the board would suggest one power should take dots off the other, or there are significant strategic limitations to the alliance which the scoring system mitigates (e.g., Turkey and Italy).

Karthik

I just disagree with the premise. After all the original rules of the game as stated require DSS with DIAS, it could be argued that other scoring systems discourage strategically brilliant alliances like IT on account of their scoring mechanism.

Randy

Totally fair! Just getting input on a controversy as old as time. Let's talk about the rounds. What happened on your first board?

Karthik

Nothing remarkable; I trusted Peter Yeargin and I was stabbed by Peter Yeargin!

My first board started off pretty simple. It seemed clear that the dominant alliance in the West was going to feature England and either France or Germany. Therefore, I wanted either a strong Austrian to deal with the German or a strong Italian to deal with the French. This made an early AIR the natural default with a decision on whether to cut on or to move to the line ready to be made after Turkey was eliminated. Unfortunately for me, Peter Yeargin stabs me before we take a single Turkish home center and with an EG giving me no breathing room and Italy offering no assistance, Austria was able to run through me easily until I offered to help hold the line against France. Unfortunately, France was too far away from soloing which made taking me out easy enough soon after.

Randy

I take it you were Russia in that game?

Karthik

Correct.

Randy

Yeah, being any power next to Peter can be unpleasant, and Russia in particular can have a rough go of it. So, an elimination in round one - what was your mindset going into round two?

Karthik

Going into Round 2 it was "go big or go home." I knew I needed a 3-way draw at a minimum and ideally a 2-way to have a shot and I was going to do everything in my power to get there. Anything less than a three way, in my mind, would leave me out of contention to win the tournament and with little choice but to abandon Diplomacy to fight for an Iron Man title if David Hood needed me to sit out, or maybe a best country in Round 3 if he needed me to play.

Randy

So with that in mind... How did Round 2 go?

Karthik

Life started good in Round 2, working with both France and Germany in not quite a triple, but a case where everyone seemed uninterested in attacking the other. In 1902, things shifted dramatically as I repaid Emily's decision to bounce Russia out of Sweden with kindness of my own, dropping fleet London and Liverpool, committing myself fully to working with Germany. We have some tactical mistakes which slow down the EG push, but we stick together hard despite that. I end up picking up Tunis in Fall 03, which I imagine doesn't happen too often, and while a 1902 English capture of Tunis is theoretically possible, I must assume that my 1903 capture at least ties for a Dixie record. With Sweden in hand and occupied by a fleet, my position

really couldn't get much better, but unfortunately, it is from this high point that things go downhill fast. My French janissary Jack abandons me, opting to work with the Italians (an understandable decision, to be clear) and Italy and Turkey birth an unbreakable alliance. As it hits the final four powers, I try to pitch a three-way draw to either Turkey or Italy, but both were scared of a solo. I tried to offer to give away centers to ameliorate their fears but no one seemed interested in taking me up on my offer. With some missed guesses in the south causing me to be forced to choose between keeping Tunis or surrendering the MAO, I was forced to accept a draw I didn't particularly want. I considered stabbing Emily to three-way with Italy and Turkey, but at the time I thought I was out of the running given my Round 1 elimination, how hard it is to put up a good score in timed Round 3, and how well it looked like David Miller had scored in the first two rounds. Therefore, I didn't want to ruin a good alliance with a trustworthy partner for points that would likely be meaningless.

Randy

So you settled for a four-way draw, maintaining a good relationship/alliance with Emily at the cost of points. Hardly the ruthless reputation I think you may be known for, but absolutely an understandable decision. Now we arrive at round three. Obviously, we were on the board together and have talked about it at some length already. I think everyone knows this is the board you soloed on. Why don't you give us the quick summary of what happened, and then we can talk about some of the key decisions in the game?

Karthik

Sure!

So, I think the ruthless reputation I unfortunately have is more fact than fiction and a testament to the propagandist powers of one Ed Sullivan. Realistically speaking, as you saw in all of my games at Dixie, that simply isn't me.

The game begins with the East falling my way easily. Russia and Italy both agree to an AIR and I promise each of them that I'll choose the other once the Ottomans are finished. Truth be told, I didn't exactly know which way I was going to go and hoped to base it off of who was more trustworthy and easier to work with after the first three years, as that is something I really value in a partner. Unfortunately, I didn't get to have this choice as Russia tells me in the Fall of 1902 that he won't wait for me to choose and that I have to choose right now. Normally, I don't take to ultimatums well, but I could tell he was a trustworthy guy and with him building the second southern fleet I felt it was an obvious choice. I make the stab and Italy at that point was an easy kill. Fast forward, and the R/A alliance has taken over the entire south and has made progress in the North. At this

point I monopolize the Russian's negotiation time and try to predict what y'all will tell him and preempt all of those arguments in my talks with him before he gets the short time he does with y'all. Couple that with antagonism and solid defensive tactics in the North from the E/R freezing F/G in place and preventing y'all from moving South and the solo quickly became fait accompli!

Randy

Yep, no real disputes there. This was another game where, though everyone played well tactically speaking (particularly England - game might've been a very different story if Germany and I had broken through earlier), but I don't recall any real masterstrokes with the pieces. What really swung it was your ability to convince Russia that Germany and I either couldn't or wouldn't throw the solo to you if he tried to cut us out of the draw.

Still not sure how you pulled that off, honestly.

Karthik

I think the tactical masterstrokes occurred in Spring and Fall 04, moving into position to guarantee no English home center fell despite the successful convoy in the Spring, followed by the proper defense AND the guaranteed taking of the North Sea due to conceding Sweden/Denmark in order to cut any fleet bordering the North Sea, which would ensure a forward retreat, potentially into a Low Country supply center, if available, or into a defensive position if not.

This forward retreat to Holland was damning for the FG, because despite Germany taking both Denmark and Sweden off the English, they built nothing. At the same time the forward retreat occurred I realized that Munich would likely be open. I had been bouncing Germany out of Munich at his request for a few turns, but that turn I told him I couldn't because Tyrolia needed to cover Vienna against the Italian in Galicia! Originally I had planned on that genuinely being my move since I wanted to finally kill Italy. At the last moment, I realized that chances were Munich would be left open since Kevin would want to get a tactical jump given his expectation he'd be building two armies. I figured why not take advantage of Munich being open and risk the Italians surviving another year in order to a) prevent a build in Munich and b) get position to move into Burgundy.

At the time I didn't really want to stay there forever as I wanted Russia and Germany to be locked up in a bitter fight and for me not to gain too much there too quickly given how expensive it is to keep Munich against the likely offensive that would ensure to retake it. However, if I could swing it into Burgundy and collapse you, then that would be ideal. My wildest hope that Holland would be open did come true, meaning that Germany built nothing and that it would actually not only be trivial to keep Munich but it wouldn't be too hard to promise

Russia Berlin as well! I did make one mistake here, though, and I forgot Italy still had Tunis which meant the Galician army would have survived no matter what I did, which proved to be annoying the next year, but the general thrust of prioritizing taking you and Kevin down over Italy turned out to be quite wise.

To keep Russia onside, I just kept on hammering in the fact that no one in North American face-to-face tournaments had thrown a solo since before the pandemic! I made sure to point out that players like Ed Sullivan would always threaten to throw me one before deciding to abort and fight for a draw immediately after. Therefore, there was no reason Russia should fear yet another empty threat. I had no idea whether you would follow through and throw or not, but I felt there was a decent chance Kevin might, since he's an old school online player that is more willing to actually follow through on such threats and punish such play. That being said, I wasn't actually certain of that, so until I saw ironclad proof of intent to throw in the moves, I didn't even feel confident a solo would be thrown myself, which made it very easy for me to honestly pitch to Ben that a solo wouldn't happen.

Randy

I suppose that's fair, the tactics around England were good, certainly delayed Germany and myself more than we expected. I think Russia being newer to the FtF scene contributed as well - not knowing me, or how sincere I was about throwing if I was cut out, certainly played to your advantage - and unfortunately, by the time that was on the table, there was no way for me to start to throw and pull back if he got the message. I'm surprised you didn't think a solo was in the cards- there was no way I could hold you out of the Atlantic, and you and Russia could've mopped up Germany easily. Did you see a stable path to a two-way draw?

Karthik

Oh, if it were time unlimited the solo was clear as day. I just had no idea when time would be called. As for the two-way draw I figured Russia was good for his word. I don't think there was an easy tactical way to ensure no one soloed but there was always the diplomatic route as we saw with David Miller waiting for the two-way instead of taking his solo in Round Two.

Randy

Have you soloed in FtF play before? Did this solo teach

you anything new or different you might apply in the future?

Karthik

I have soloed in vFtF, but this was my first one in-person! After all, since I joined the FtF hobby post-pandemic, I haven't even *seen* an in-person solo, let alone had one!

In terms of teaching me something new, I learned I can go the entire game without ever stabbing my game-long ally and still get the coveted solo! It shows just how many different ways there are to play the game of Diplomacy and that one need not be ultra-stabby to outright win the game, since I was able to solo without taking a SINGLE DOT off my game-long Russian ally. I've never been a particularly stabby player, and even my detractors would admit I am not one to stab foolishly, but my games at Dixie were a test of just how far I could go with largely honest gameplay as I tried to merge the lessons I learned from my tour down-under from Jamal and Goffy with my own style of play. I think I managed to hold true to myself while taking in those lessons, given that known-Karthik-detractor, Ed Sullivan, described my Round 3 gameplay as "Karthik at his best!" It had all my trademark fast-moving, full-trust, high-octane positional gameplay coupled with aggressively honest diplomacy and a good deal of Australian silliness behind it! And in honor of Goffy, a classic waive of builds to forge necessary diplomatic agreements along the way!

Randy

I do love the build waive - did it myself in Round One, and it worked out well. Good reminder that the game is Diplomacy, not necessarily Tactics. So, you've won Dixie 2024 - what's next on your schedule? Where can players looking to take down a champ find you this year?

Karthik

Next on my schedule is ARMADA in Denver! That's my last guaranteed stop for the year so if you want to eliminate me that's your best bet this calendar year. I do hope to make SkyCon, which is sure to be fun!

Randy

Sounds good, see you at Armada, and good luck getting me to throw you another solo! Thanks for sitting down to chat!

Karthik

Always happy to talk!

U.S. Diplomacy Championship

We proudly bring you the annual U.S. Championship at the largest Diplomacy event in the country. Square off in one or more of the four qualifiers. The seven Best Country winners from the qualifiers advance to the Top Board on Saturday night. Our group also hosts "Introduction to Diplomacy" events concurrent with the tournament events.

August 1st - August 3rd at GenCon in Indianapolis, Indiana

Round One: 12pm-4pm Thursday
Round Two: 8pm-12am Thursday
Round Three: 12pm-4pm Friday
Round Four: 8pm-12am Friday
Championship Board: 4pm Saturday

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)
Website: <http://www.gencon.com/>



The Circle DC Teaching Event

By Thomas Haver

The Giant Diplomacy setup with walkable map and oversize pieces made a return to the Circle DC convention this past April. For those unfamiliar with the convention, Circle DC is an event hosted by "Fort Circle Games", a company based in Washington, DC. Kevin Bertram is the event host, the founder of Fort Circle, and

also the designer of "Shores of Tripoli". The convention theme is "historical and war games", with designers from all over the country descending upon DC to teach their published games and share their new designs. This is an excellent event to meet designers because the mix of designer to attendee is almost 1:1.



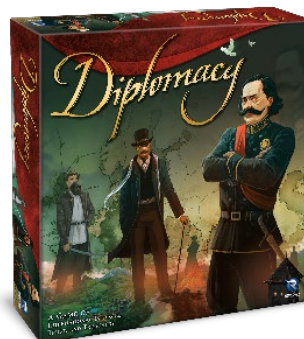
Last year's Circle DC event was held at the Masonic Lodge on Pennsylvania Avenue, which made for some fantastic Egyptian-themed visuals. It was the first year of Diplomacy at the event as well, and our hosts put us into the center of the action. For the 2024 edition of Circle DC, they changed locations to Planet Word on K Street. The museum has ample event space plus a terrace area perfect for Giant Diplomacy. We added another Diplomacy event to the convention since we sold out last year.



The purpose of Giant Diplomacy teaching event is to grow the game. The walkable map, oversized pieces, and plotter rods draw a crowd. For the players, they have a unique, fun experience that can't be replicated online or at other face-to-face events. There are many published editions of Diplomacy out there but none with the scale of this map. We supplemented the experience with plenty of Diplomacy swag. Participating players received branded Diplomacy shirts, pens, pins, keychains, magnets, stickers, and more. We also gave away two copies of the new edition.

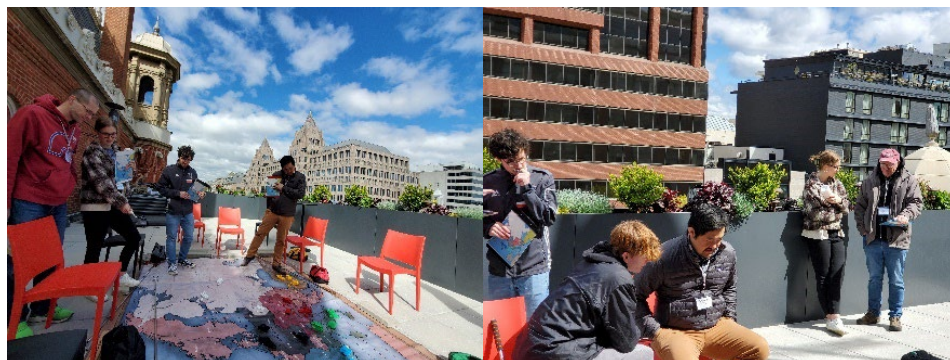


As an aside, I highly recommend my fellow Diplomacy organizers start gifting copies of the new edition from Renegade to new players at teaching events. We all have a favorite edition of the game (mine was Deluxe Diplomacy from 1992 before this new release). The latest edition will be the game that most newcomers will learn to play with and is likely to become their favorite. Using the new edition helps support the publisher (Renegade Games Studio), which in turn allows for more print runs to reach the public. This is a positive feedback loop, so please help grow the Diplomacy community by promoting the new edition.



Our Saturday morning event was held on the terrace. The location was both a blessing and a curse. The 4th floor terrace provided a fabulous view of neighboring Franklin Park and the city; however, the winds were so

strong we had to weigh down the map. The map is made from 18oz vinyl, which is heavy & strong, but not strong enough to withstand the wind without some assistance. Once we got everything locked down, we played.



We had multiple newbies for the first game and a few veterans of the game. The two veterans, Jeff Hayman (France) and Sebastian Bae (Austria), elected to play a creative game given this was an exhibition. There were prizes on the line, but that was secondary to the fun. Our new players in Italy, Germany, and Russia were given leeway in a back-and-forth game. With me there to GM the game, I had the opportunity to confirm each player's orders as they submitted them to ensure no one wrote a misorder. England and France allied from the game start, so France could put some pressure on Italy while England moved on Russia. At the same time, Turkey-Austria-Russia were trading centers in the Balkans. Sebastian Bae's Austria had to bounce Italy in Trieste from the get-go, and that stalemate kept enough units busy for Turkey to snag Greece. Unlike the strong alliance play many Americans are used to, this game had shifting alliances. Nate "Kiwi" Jaenichen's England made peace with Rachel McVicker's Russia, and they turned on Germany at the same time. England gained control of Denmark while Russia took Berlin. Seizing on the opportunity, Austria made it to Munich with the support of France. After a wild final year, Kiwi and Rachel finished with a tied board top. Congrats to both on the new game and Diplomacy tumbler.

Sebastian Bae, who played Austria, had lots of fun during the game since some of the newbies were his students at Georgetown (Sebastian is also an accomplished board game designer who speaks at multiple conferences on wargaming in the military). He added some flavor on Twitter during the game and posed for photos:

<https://twitter.com/SebastianBae/status/1776639674770981349?t=gyPbxs7JTeQWtOhXlw1NUg&s=19>



For the evening event, we shifted inside. The event space had multiple anterooms to play in, so we grabbed space there for the game.

Just like in the Saturday morning game, the Saturday evening game featured enmity between Austria and Italy from the start. Italy snuck into Trieste in Fall 1901 to pickup an extra build. England and France combined to support an English army convoy into Belgium. In the East, there was no love loss between Turkey and Russia as Russia gained the Black Sea but Turkey moved into Armenia. The trouble for Austria would continue in 1902, where he would retake Trieste but lose Vienna thanks to Russian interference. While the armies toiled in the Balkans, Italy sent his extra fleet west against France. The Anglo-French alliance was strong though. They held off Russian advances temporarily while also taking centers from Germany.



The most experienced player on the board was Jeff Hayman (Russia), who was wheeling & dealing in all corners. He looked to Budapest and Bulgaria and Denmark and Berlin for dots, jumping out to a nice center count lead. Aiming for top pick among the prizes, he proposed a draw to end the game, but was vetoed by several players. He pushed out fast but left several provinces vulnerable to other players. His gambit to top the board came up short as England took Sweden from him and Turkey regained control of Bulgaria. Ultimately it was the slow, steady growth of Gerald (Jay) Johnson's France that won the day. However, the most creative play came from Italy. He managed to sneak a fleet out to Mid-Atlantic Ocean, and rather than taking a 50-50 shot on French centers, elected to head to North Atlantic Ocean. From there, he floated the Italian Navy into Liverpool uncontested.



The game ended with France in control of all German centers as well as Tunis. Jay took home a new copy of Diplomacy for board topping and Jeff received a tumbler for his 2nd place finish. This was Jay's first game of Diplomacy in decades (we are glad you returned to the game, Jay!). Twilight Struggle designer Jason Matthews captured the game in progress:

<https://twitter.com/JasonDCMatthews/status/1776995883843715085?t=hlCp7L-QwUZv1WiuujGkIA&s=19>



The second year of Diplomacy at Fort Circle was a success. We filled out both boards and had positive feedback from players and onlookers alike. The convention director was also pleased with the Diplomacy

events and asked us to expand. At the conclusion of the event, he revealed the next location of Circle DC: the Folger Shakespeare Library (<https://www.folger.edu/>). Take a look at some pictures of the location.



The other news is Circle DC will host a Diplomacy tournament next year at the invitation of Fort Circle Games. There is significant interest from attendees and tournament Diplomacy has been absent from the DC-area for five years. With the dissolution of the Potomac Tea & Knife Society, there's been a lack of organized play in one of prime locations for Diplomacy. I accepted the offer and will host both teaching & tournament events next year. Unfortunately, I can only do so much remotely. For the Diplomacy community to be properly re-established in the DC-area, we need motivated local organizers supported by the larger Diplomacy community. Please reach out to me via email (tjhaver@gmail.com) or on the Renegade Game Studios official Discord (<https://discord.gg/PHNdvrUR>) if you want to volunteer. We'll make sure you get the material support and promotion on social media to bring Diplomacy back to DC bigger and better than ever. The original DC tournament was called "Tempest in a Teapot". Since we'll be at the Shakespeare Library next year, perhaps we should use a similar, but older phrase for the subtitle of Circle DC: "Much Ado About Nothing". Many thanks to Kevin Bertram and the entire team at Fort Circle Games for running the convention and being excellent partners in this endeavor. Details of the Diplomacy Tournament at Circle DC are in the flyer you can find later in this issue. See you next year!





National Diplomacy Masters

The World Series of Board Gaming (WSBG) and Renegade Game Studios are joining forces to host the National Diplomacy Masters in Las Vegas, Nevada. The tournament is being held in conjunction with the WSBG championship to crown the brightest star in board gaming.

Compete against our honored Diplomacy Masters:

- DipCon Champion **Katie Gray**
- US National Champion **Dan McNeill**
- Famed GMs **Robert Lacy** and **Manus Hand**

Do you have what it takes to defeat a Master?
Find out at the World Series of Board Gaming!

- September 23-25, 2024
- Horseshoe Hotel & Casino
- Round 1: Monday 4pm
- Round 2: Tuesday 4pm
- Top Board & Round 3: Wednesday 4pm
- Hotel & Tickets: <https://wsbgvegas.com/>



The Room Where It Happened

By Conrad Woodring



01 June 2024, Varedo, Italy

I was there.

It was a hot sunny afternoon in a quiet suburb outside of Milan. The scene; the concreted-over back garden of a small music school hidden away from the world amidst abandoned factories and middleclass homes, far from any hotels or commercial establishments of note.

A group is clustered under the shade of the few accessible trees tall enough to shade Rene and myself. At the center of the group is Thomas Haver, a long-time fan and advocate for Diplomacy. The group has been standing there long enough for Haver's transition lenses to go fully dark, hiding his eyes. A baseball cap pulled low over his face completes the look.

A man in a long vibrant red beard is shouting. At me? Yes. What had been an impassioned but remarkably civil discussion had just boiled over. The gentleman behind the fiery visage took my questioning of Haver's proposal as casting aspersions.

Welcome to the World DipCon Hobby meeting of 2024.

The Proposal

To the shock of all (more likely most) in attendance, Haver (USA) proposed Las Vegas to host World DipCon 2027. Half an hour earlier, a meaty packet of information about the event had been circulated and a vote hastily put forward. Objections and questions on process, not the content of the bid, immediately followed.

The Objections

For 20+ years World DipCon has been proposed two years in advance in an open meeting of the Hobby. Decisions have been non-controversial rubber-stamping

exercises. For more than two decades the event has gone back and forth between Europe and North America, with the occasional jaunt in the APAC region, decisions always made two years in advance without issue. This is the two-year rule.

This period was so smooth and peaceful that we as a hobby forgot the origin of this practice; the 2000 World DipCon Charter. At the World DipCon in 2000 in Hunt Valley, Maryland USA, the North American hobby proposed and approved the 2000 World DipCon Charter (the Charter). In 2001, the European hobby adopted the Charter in Paris, France. In 2002, the Australia-New Zealand hobby adopted the Charter at the World DipCon in Canberra, Australia. The Australia vote completed the formalization of the institution we know today as World DipCon and institutionalized the rule of voting on World DipCon two years in advance through article II limb 5 (quoted below):

"The Attendees will vote to select a WDC site two years from the year of the current WDC."

Without a need to exercise the charter, it gathered dust and faded from view as those with knowledge of it grew fewer. The Hobby meeting at the 2024 World DipCon in Varedo, Italy was the first challenge to the charter since its inception.

The objections to the proposal were completely unrelated to the proposal's content. The merits of the proposal were not questioned or examined. The objection simply was one of rules and fairness. The Charter is unambiguous that WDC votes should be two years in advance. Rules exist to create fairness, and fairness in this context has two branches.

First, a break from the rules denies other bidders the chance to propose their events and it denies the Hobby the opportunity to choose between events based on their merits. Voting for the 2027 World DipCon at the 2025 World DipCon as we have always done, gives everyone an equal opportunity to propose their events. In recent years the Diplomacy Broadcast Network and the Virtual Diplomacy League have done incredible work bringing players to the game and bringing online players into real-time play. Now more than any time in the past decade, I feel we are moving back to a growth mode in the Hobby and expect to see new events. Those events deserve a chance to bid as well.

Let's be very clear; this is not a hypothetical. It was clearly stated during the Hobby meeting in Varedo that

there is at least one other organizer planning to bid at WDC in 2025.

Second, moving the vote a year earlier not only moves the vote earlier in the calendar, it also physically moves the vote from taking place on North American soil to European soil. While the nature of the three-region rotation necessitates foreign soil voting in some cases, it was by no means necessary here. While the calendar move denies potential event organizers the opportunity to propose their events, the location move denies North American players the opportunity to choose the event their continent will host! This disenfranchises what is the most active and innovative region of the Hobby. If this vote is allowed to stand, this is a dangerous precedent set by the Europeans.

Argument in Favor

Without a debate of the merits of the event, the argument in favor was an argument of timing. Haver said that Diplomacy's current publisher, Renegade Games, had plans to provide substantial financial support to World DipCon 2027 if it were to be located at their larger event in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. Haver said that Renegade needed three years notice on this decision or the "generous support" (the details of the support were not included in the actual bid) might not be available later.

Potential loss of an undefined amount of support is the entirety of the arguments in favor of breaking the rules of the only internationally agreed document in our Hobby, and a long tradition of consensus.

Fairness is Paramount

Fairness is the cornerstone of competition. Fairness is achieved by rules. Rules and belief in fairness ensure that the outcomes of our events are based on skill, effort and strategy. Rules ensures that the decisions we make, are done so democratically and in the best interests of the Hobby. Rules lead to trust, and trust is a required ingredient if we are to have a sustainable Hobby. Rules and fairness, both on and off the board, are a necessary ingredients. Without them, things break, fall apart, and you risk losing the members of the Hobby.

Hobby standards, codes of conduct, rules, are all designed to help us resolve and move past conflict in a way that treats everyone the same. The Charter is a globally agreed document that was put in place so that the global Hobby could select a location of World DipCon in a fair, open, and transparent way, based on the merits of the proposal. Allowing the Milan hobby meeting to select the location of the 2027 World DipCon denies the Hobby the right to assess bids based on their merits and choose the best option for the greatest good of the Hobby. It also denies other organizers the opportunity to put forward their proposals.

The Decision

Haver, acting as a consultant on behalf of Renegade has done two things exceptionally well. First, he's taught a lot of people Diplomacy. Unless you are ignorant of the face-to-face diplomacy Hobby, you know this. He spends a lot of effort at his many teaching events around North America. The second thing he has done very well is to mobilize giveaways for the Hobby. Every event I have been to where Haver is present, I walk away with a pen, a hat, some stickers, a t-shirt or some other swag. If I had had a checked bag in Milan, I would now be the proud owner of a Diplomacy branded corkscrew. These are fun freebies. I like them.

If we debate the merits of breaking 20+ years of following the rules and a tradition of consensus, in favor of voting the 2027 World DipCon a year early, we essentially have two things in play. The internationally agreed rules, tradition of consensus and fairness versus a Haver's vague promise of financial support from Renegade. I suspect they will upgrade their SWAG from t-shirts and coffee cups to Yeti thermoses and hoodies.

To me that trade-off is a bleak one; if we break our long-standing rules and traditions, and sacrifice fairness, Renegade will give us better stuff. Haver's pitch in Milan was effectively asking us to ignore the one document that is accepted globally across the Hobby (even the rules of Diplomacy vary tournament to tournament because of differences in scoring systems) and to break with 20+ years of tradition and decision through consensus. In exchange some of us will get support to attend, and most of us will get some swag we use a few times.

Are we so easily bought?

As a principled person who believes in fairness, I am not willing to break rules or tradition for money, especially not ones that have served us so well for so long. While support is welcome, it can not only be on Haver's and Renegade's terms, presented and forced on the Hobby out of the blue.

Appeal from the Author

Should the Hobby meeting that took place in Italy a few weeks ago stand as a valid World DipCon vote, then the institution that is World DipCon will have fallen at its first and only challenge, and it will have fallen because no one spoke up for rules and fairness. That's tragic. To see the Hobby that I so dearly love tumble like a house of cards in the wind makes me deeply sad.

As I contemplated this on the plane home, I wanted to cry.

In 24 years as a Hobby member, many of them as a tournament and club organizer, I've seen events and

clubs come and go. To make sustainable growth in this funny Hobby we all share, you need someone who's willing to work hard, and you need fairness, kindness, and compromise.

Right now, it feels as if I blinked, and some unexpected breeze swept all those things away.

If you believe that my message is important, I encourage you to speak up for following the rules, fairness and compromise, because these things feel out of reach at the moment. We should be driving towards consensus driven decision making, and where it is not possible, we defer to the rules, which help us through a fair resolution process. If you believe that my message is important, please speak to the person next to you and explain why it's important so that we are many voices together. Standing up for rules and tradition where consensus and compromise fail, should not be controversial.

What happened in Italy a few weeks is important enough that we should all speak up.

I was there, and I am not for sale.



2025 World DipCon Design Competition

by Adam Silverman, Siobhan Nolen, Edi Birsan, and Alex Amann
(2025 WDC tournament organizers)

We are opening a contest to design a logo/graphic for WDC2025. We are looking for a great logo to use for the upcoming WDC website, promotional materials, and T-shirts, and we'd like to engage the community in this effort. The prize for winning will be free registration at WDC2025 (and if you can't make it, we'll figure something else out).

Please submit entries to worlddipcon2025@gmail.com by August 30.

Rules for the contest:

- 1) Submissions must include the following statement, "I confirm that the submitted work is my own. I give permission to the WDC2025 organizers to use the submitted work as they deem appropriate for the tournament."
- 2) The WDC2025 tournament committee will select the winner. There are no specific guidelines for judging, but we encourage participants to think about the themes of Diplomacy, world community, San Francisco, and Whipping in generating designs; of course, abstract designs and anything that looks cool are welcome as well!
- 3) We will accept up to 3 submissions per person.
- 4) Submissions must be submitted to worlddipcon2025@gmail.com by August 30 to be considered.
- 5) Feel free to reach out to worlddipcon2025@gmail.com with any questions about the contest.

World Boardgaming Championships

WBC is an annual gaming convention held at Seven Springs Mountain Resort. The best two rounds of three will count towards the final tournament score. Best Country awards and prizes will be provided by the organizer. Food and drink will be provided during each round, with a pizza party during Round Three. A teaching round will be taught on Friday with board game prizes to select competitors.

July 26th - July 27th in Seven Springs, PA

Demo - 5pm-7pm Friday

Round One - 7pm-11pm Friday

Round Two - 10am-2pm Saturday

Round Three - 7pm-11pm Saturday

Scoring: C-Diplo

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.boardgamers.org/>



Review of a Renegade Redo

By Bob Durf

The genesis of this article is from several years ago, when it was announced that Diplomacy was getting a reprint with a new publisher. Back then, without knowing much about the new edition besides the fact that it existed, there was a lot of potential for a new edition of Diplomacy to grace my shelves with my treasured 50th Edition (my first Diplomacy game purchased for Christmas one year), the Avalon Hill edition (used to raid for the monopoly metal pieces), and my homemade wooden board. Unfortunately, I believe Renegade really missed an opportunity to publish a great Diplomacy edition, and instead, released a half-baked version of the flawed (but personally beloved) 50th Anniversary version.

A good physical edition of Diplomacy should aim to achieve several goals. First, the game must be playable, that is, that the map and pieces help new players and veterans play Diplomacy without having to be confused with borders, unit types, or territory names. I would also include cost-point in this first category—we want Diplomacy in some way to be available to a decent sized audience. The game should be physically attractive, that is, as a material board game, not a computer game, it should be enjoyable to view and to handle when crowded around it physically. The second category is where you may see a higher cost point being argued for better components. Third, Diplomacy has many variants, but the main published version is about the infamous part of European history where there was a dangerous balance of power pre-WWI between seven Powers, and the board game should in some way evoke that theme.

Dear readers will notice that these three goals are listed in descending order of priority and of subjectivity. Whether a game is physically attractive will be in some way subjective between different people, but whether a game is more or less playable is much easier to ascertain from an objectively practical standpoint. Because these goals are in some ways subjective, no version of Diplomacy will be universally perfect or acclaimed. Generally, however, one can see that each edition of Diplomacy in different unique ways seeks to meet each of those three goals. Renegade Diplomacy takes much from the 50th Edition, so it is worth a brief detour to see what the 50th did well, and what it did poorly.

The 50th Edition has great success with the third goal above, with an art style that really feels thematic. The box itself is a warm red with cursive classy writing and the picture of a roaring fireplace with a big armchair and smoking cigar and wineglasses invite you into the backroom dealings of the 1900s. The map itself has

muted yet well-contrasted colors, with subtle geographical features and territory borders that differentiate but do not dominate.



Illustration 1: A square-shaped map is used in several Diplomacy editions to capture the playable space in the most economical way.

In terms of playability, the best thing that could be said about the 50th is that it was well-priced, easy for anyone from adult to enterprising teenager to scrounge up money for a copy. Unfortunately, the map, while graphically attractive, is a failure in play. Proportionally, the map is far too wide, creating an unnecessarily huge Atlantic Ocean, and a Russia that takes up literally almost half the map with a useless amount of space wasted on its side of the board. The middle of the board is crammed, with the Italian and Benelux territories being particularly cramped. Improving the board is easy enough. If the board was in more of a square shape, instead of a wide pointless rectangle, the board would be better centered on the action in the middle and give more room for the smaller territories in the middle. This could be accomplished without sacrificing the aesthetics of the 50th anniversary. Many editions of Diplomacy have smaller square shaped maps, the 50th edition takes all the extra space it was blessed with and wastes it with an awfully proportioned map.

Another failure of the 50th Edition is the playing pieces. The cardboard markers are bad, with pretty much no

redeeming qualities. They were definitely disappointing as a teenager opening up the game for the first time, and they haven't improved with age. The soft muted colors on the board become muddy and some players have found it hard to differentiate on the army cardboard markers. The cannons used to illustrate the army markers are drab on a drabbier still background, and somehow the fleet illustrations manage to make battleships dull. Worse still, while you can fit approximately a hundred pieces in the east of Russia, the cardboard markers get all gummed up in the key conflict areas in the center of the board, especially in the Benelux region. Furthermore, until the old wooden blocks or even to an extent the monopoly cannons, you cannot adjust or point them easily to quickly resolve moves. They are a failure on every front.

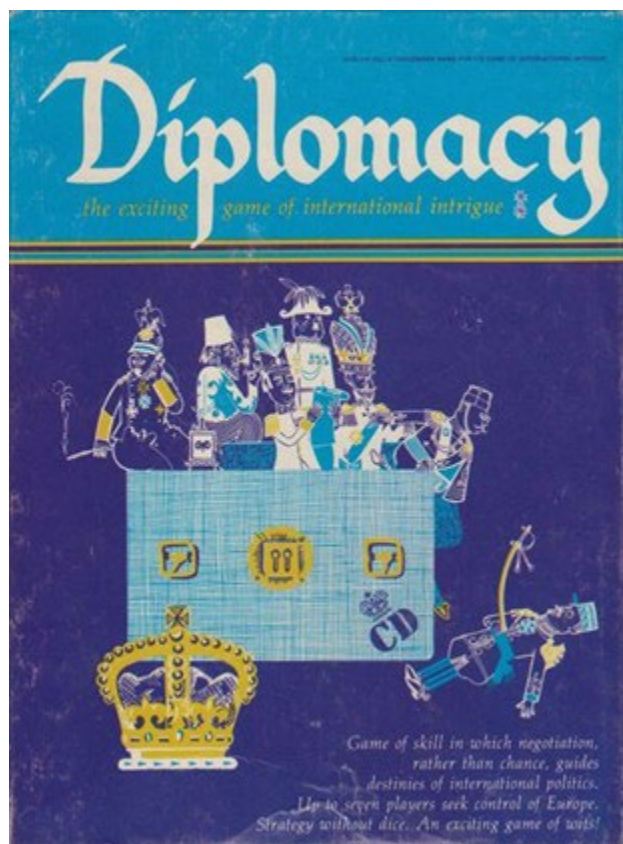
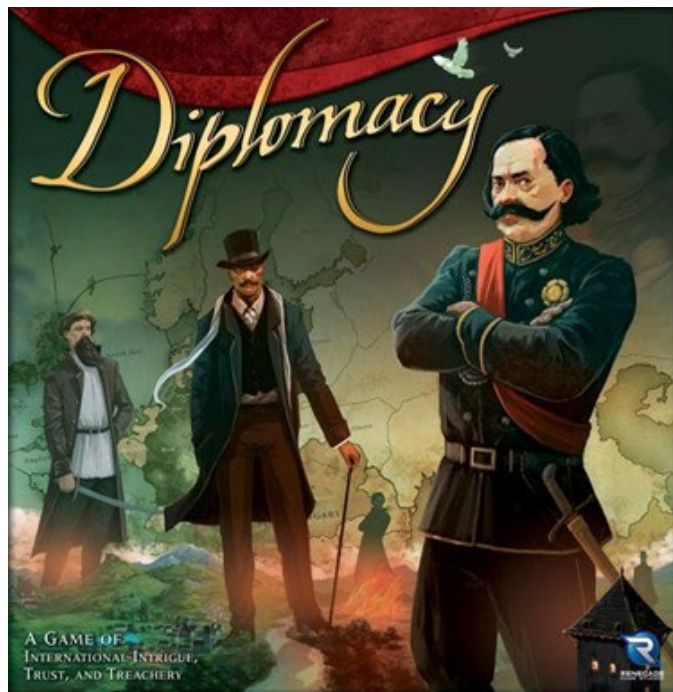


Illustration 2: This edition's box art still may be the best, even if it preceded me by at least a decade: humorous, thematic, and gets you in the right mindset for the game

In conclusion, the 50th edition in terms of play-ability is a mixed bag, while it has a great price point its playing pieces are bad and the map is a valiant failure. It is physically attractive until you get to again, the terrible pieces. Thematically, it has a consistent 'classy' style with cursive styling, an intriguing cover, and warm colors that help to sell a cohesive theme of the game. Now, let us turn to the Renegade release.

Right from the game cover we can tell this is not a

brand-new release, it is a re-skin of the 50th Anniversary edition. The cursive font, the map, and the mahogany red atop the cover all are taken from the 50th Anniversary, while a new illustration of several imposing gentlemen stand over a landscape. I think the illustration could have been pulled off, but the half-50th style with a weird semi-historic, semi-cartoonish portrayal of men without any clear country identities is jarring, and promises more jarring inside the box. Renegade should have gone full-in on a new cover with the illustration style, rather than this unfortunately muddled final image.



Inside the box was the biggest disappointment to me—the map is just the 50th Anniversary map in all its flawed glory. Nothing has been done with the obviously poor use of space on the board. No, the only really new thing inside the box is *wooden pieces*. Cue oohing and aahing.

Now, no doubt, wooden pieces are way better than the terrible cardboard pieces of the 50th Anniversary edition. But here's a case of someone making a popular move and failing to do anything in support of that popular move. The pieces themselves are charming and a success, but they don't match at all with the 50th Anniversary board. The colors are all off. Renegade even still used the control markers from the 50th, so they don't even match with the armies and fleets. The pieces themselves remind one of the earlier editions with simpler boards instead of the muted 'tasteful' 50th board. The end result is, it looks like someone bought some wooden markers off of Etsy and spruced up their 50th edition with homemade pieces. Homemade Diplomacy is great, I have an entire board homemade. A clashing

product as the official release though? Another jarring combination by Renegade.

How does the new edition's changes affect the game when measured against the three goals I laid out earlier? In terms of playability, the wooden pieces undoubtedly are superior to the cardboard markers in every way, although the price point of the game is higher than the 50th edition. These days, \$40 for a board game is not terrible still and is within reach of most consumers of board games. Physically, the wooden pieces are of course more tactile and pleasant to play with, although the rest of the 50th package is unchanged. Thematically, the changes by Renegade make the whole product jarring by mixing up the theme of the cover and clashing different playing pieces on the board with the map and with control markers.

Renegade made one big change, swapping the playing pieces, and that undoubtedly was the best change they could have made, but Renegade should have either kept the style the same or changed the board, control markers, and cover and title designs completely. As it is, it feels like a lazy re-release of the 50th Anniversary. For some of us, this was the first time in our lifetimes to get a new edition of Diplomacy with proper wooden pieces, and Renegade knew that. They gave players that one thing most wanted, and half-baked everything else.

It has to be challenging as Renegade, taking so many great properties like Diplomacy and Axis and Allies and trying to re-release them properly. This was a step in the right direction, but I think a new edition is needed to give Diplomacy fans a cohesive product that can stand with earlier releases as classic games that can sit on families' shelves for years to come.

The Variant Compendium Project

By John Darges

Ever since there has been a Diplomacy hobby, there have been variants. Variants add variety to those seeking it, but also fill another important role. If your face-to-face meetup cannot muster up seven people, or you have an extra body or two, you either have to find another game to play or play a Diplomacy variant. Many people feel that having to play a variant instead of the Classic board means settling for an inferior game play experience. This may be so for some of the most widely accessible variants, but this does not have to be the case.

The Variant Compendium aims to give the Hobby an easy way to obtain physical boards of quality variants designed for different numbers of players. This collaborative initiative involves some of the foremost variant designers in the Hobby, including W. Alex Ronke, David E. Cohen, Keith Worstell, R.J. Quinn and others. The Variant Compendium will be a box set including about a dozen quality variant game boards, game pieces, and an information packet containing information on each variant and on rules variants (such as, for example, Edi Birsan's Escalation) that can be played on any board. This box set will be available for any hobby group or collector to order and have shipped to them. Each variant board will be designed for a specific number of players, from 2 to 9. No matter how many players show up to a face-to-face meetup, the Compendium will ensure an excellent Diplomacy

experience on professionally-made boards.

The project is looking to the community for suggestions on what variants to include. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of variants that have been created. Some are held by variant archivists and some can only be found in the most remote corners of the internet. We need the help of the community to find the rare gems. Variants designed for 2 to 9 players, that are well-balanced, that are beginner-friendly, that take place in a time or location rarely depicted in variants, and whose creators can be contacted are of particular interest. We are looking for variants that give a similar experience to Classic Diplomacy. Boards designed with a very large number of supply centers are not what we are looking for, as these variants may take longer than Classic to play and have different dynamics to Classic (especially in the early game). We are considering variants that feature some minor rule changes, such as standing neutral units, unit transformation, and build anywhere. For now, we prefer to avoid rule changes that may make face-to-face play overly complicated to comprehend and adjudicate. Follow the link <https://forms.gle/N5t7PBfRfErK5XUA> to our online form to submit suggestions. There is no limit on the number of submissions for one person. We hope that this project will energize the community for face-to-face meetups and for playing variants. There will be more to come soon!

Circle DC Diplomacy Tournament 2025

Please join us in our nation's capital for Circle DC: A Conference on History, Education & Play. Registration for the three-day event is \$99.

Last year we were joined by an amazing group of game designers including Jason Matthews, Tory Brown, Volko Ruhnke, Sebastian Bae, and many more. Come join old friends and meet new friends at the friendliest game convention on the planet.

Circle DC will be hosted at the Shakespeare Folger Library (<https://www.folger.edu/>). The Folger Library is located a block from the US Capitol and is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection.

April 4th – April 6th (2025), in Washington, DC

Teaching – 1pm-5pm Friday

Round One – 7pm-11pm Friday

Round Two – 10am-2pm Saturday

Round Three – 7pm-11pm Saturday

Scoring: C-Diplo

Rank: Best two out of three rounds

Contact: Thomas Haver (tjhaver@gmail.com)

Website: <https://www.fortcircle.com/>



KublaCon 2024

by Thomas Haver and Alex Amann

In Diplomacy World #164, I provided some reflections on a year with Renegade. One of the initiatives from when Renegade licensed the game was to promote Diplomacy with convention teaching events. We ran 13 events at conventions in 2023 and the goal was to expand in 2024. It should come as no surprise that KublaCon was on the list of candidate events for 2024. The convention was once host to a Diplomacy tournament and has held teaching events in the past.

Before 2023 was over we reached out to KublaCon about running a "Giant Diplomacy" teaching game at the convention. Unlike most GM-run events at conventions, this giant version of Diplomacy requires floor space not table space. The additional coordination requires a longer lead time with convention organizers since they typically place hundreds to thousands of events. We found good partners in KublaCon. They loved the pictures of Giant Diplomacy at other events and wanted to include the event with their other giant games.

For myself, if I must fly to a Diplomacy event, I try to align the event with something from work. Fortunately, the Bay Area is crawling with techies and I was able to get a workshop scheduled on Friday of the convention. That gave me some time to stop by the famous Gamescape store in San Francisco. I found plenty of Renegade games present, including Diplomacy. I purchased a few games and some store swag. Please remember to support your local game stores -- they are one of the best locations to play Diplomacy!



The event itself was scheduled to take place in the lobby of the Hyatt. The event was a sellout with a number of waitlisted players. The day of the event, I met with Alex Amann. It had been years since I last saw him at an event, back when he was on the east coast. Alex was also looking to run Diplomacy games later in the

weekend, and so we had a live referral program as passersby came to check out Diplomacy.



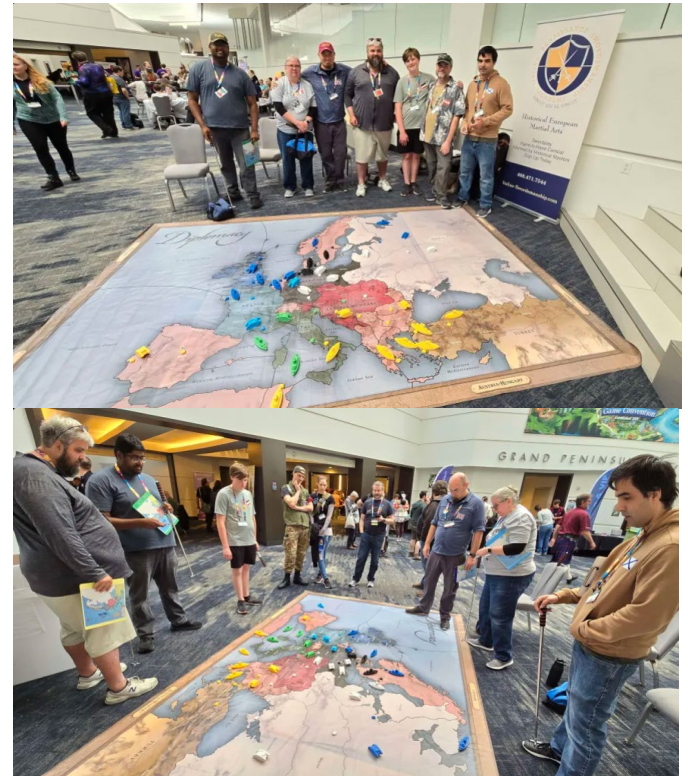
We had a few experienced players and a number of newbies at the event, so I went into teaching mode to get the players set for the game. Like most games of players with mixed experience, we had some miscues in strategy, but prevented any misorders. Since I was GM for the game, I had players turn in orders to me to check for validity. This approach is to ensure players get to order as they intended, so they don't kick themselves over an accidental misorder.



The game was quite lively. France and England allied against Germany, who was also being attacked from behind by Russia. Rather than just focus on one foe, England also moved on Russia in the north. However, the most entertaining move came from the Italian-Turkish allies. They managed to convoy Constantinople to Spain. The picture shows the aftermath on the board but not the shocked look from the French player after the convoy went through. It was great fun.



[22/update/it-s-a-trap...err-a-wrap-kublacon-2024-a-rearview](https://photos.app.goo.gl/7h4GaQsUd5pg5sQ48)



The full photo album of the event can be found here:
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/7h4GaQsUd5pg5sQ48>

Expanding upon what Thomas mentioned in his KublaCon report, I had two sessions later in the weekend: Saturday evening and Sunday morning. I GMed for Diplomacy at KublaCon last year, and had very little interest in the Saturday night session; this year was only slightly better, with four players signing up for that. Saturday night seems to be the busiest night of the convention, so I might consider changing the times or game lengths in the future.

Anyhow, of the four players who did attend the Saturday session, two were new players (a father and son combo), and two were experienced players. I joined in and we played a five-player variant, with Germany and Italy in civil disorder. I purposely placed the father and son on opposite sides of the board, as Turkey and France. The first few years of the game saw the eastern powers all decide to split the neutrals and rush towards the center of the board to capture those German and Italian centers, while France opened to the English Channel, and there never ended up being any sort of peace in the west. Russia went over the top towards England, Austria ended up gobbling up all the Italian centers, and Turkey got stymied in the Mediterranean. Austria found the opportunity to stab both Russia and



Turkey board topped with 12 centers to end the day. He really wanted that copy of Diplomacy! We also had Diplomacy hats, Diplomacy shirts, and a bunch of other swag for the players. I provided Alex with the swag for his events, which now had enough players for three total boards over two events. I couldn't stay the extra day because I needed to return home so I could fly out to Milan with WDC, so Alex will pick up from here to provide his recap of the games. I consider the promotion successful – four total boards and a host of new players contacted for more Diplomacy!

After the convention, look what game made KublaCon's recap -- Giant Diplomacy! The map for this game draws a crowd. KublaCon plans to host a Fall event in Santa Clara, California and Alex has interest in running Diplomacy there. If he arranged the event then I will make sure he has more swag for his players. Thank you, Alex for teaming up with me at KublaCon to bring more Diplomacy to the masses:

<https://tabletop.events/conventions/kublacon->

Turkey at the same time, and eventually we decided to call the game after 1906 once Russia and Turkey coordinated to contain Austria. The final center count was Austria 12, England 6, France 4, Russia 9, and Turkey 3.



The Sunday morning session saw much more interest. After a couple last-minute calls to get a couple more players, we found ourselves at 12, so I hopped in to play two boards to ensure that we would be able to get everyone playing. Overall, we had a number of repeat players from last year, which was great to see. I separated players so that each board had roughly the same number of experienced and new players so that there wasn't much of an imbalance.



Sunday board 1 began with a RAT that immediately converged on Italy in the south and Germany/England in the north. The major winner in this game was Russia, who took advantage of a west that could never get together to mount any sort of coordinated defense. Russia ended up owning all of Germany, Scandinavia,

and even managed to land an army on England. Austria and Turkey were unwilling to stab Russia at any point since they were steadily gaining in the Mediterranean, and the game was called with the final center count of Austria 5, England 1, France 6, Germany 1, Italy 0, Russia 13, and Turkey 8.

Sunday board 2 was much more of a balance of power game. The game started with RT in the east and EF in the west, but Italy managed to rally the whole board to counter the Juggernaut. Once that threat had been contained, there was a lot of alliance-switching overall, with no power ever getting past 8 centers. The final center count was Austria 7, England 8, France 6, Germany 2, Italy 4, Russia 4, and Turkey 3.



All in all, it was a rewarding weekend for me to see several players returning from last year to play again. KublaCon is expanding to have a fall convention starting this year, and I've already got my GM badge and Diplomacy sessions on the calendar. KublaCon Fall will be in Santa Clara, CA over Veterans Day weekend (November 8-11, 2024). I plan to have a teaching session on Friday night, and games on Saturday morning, Saturday evening, and Sunday morning. More information can be found at <https://tabletop.events/conventions/kublacon-fall-2024>.

I also encourage anyone in the San Francisco Bay Area to join our Meetup group (<https://www.meetup.com/SF-Bay-Area-Diplomacy-Association/>). The Meetup group has been fairly dormant for a few years, but I am hoping to get more going on there as we approach WDC at Whipping in April 2025!

The Open Letter From the Diplomacy Hobby

By Conrad Woodring

Dear fellow hobby enthusiasts,

Since the Milan 2024 WDC Hobby meeting, I have spoken to a huge range of Hobby members across the globe about what transpired at the meeting. My commitment to rules and fairness are outlined in my article "The Room Where It Happened", which I encourage you to read. I tried to lay out the debate as simply as possible, without all the noise of interesting but unimportant details.

My effort in speaking to members of the Hobby was not about my article, but rather about the "Open Letter from the Hobby" which I advocated for **[[and which you can find below, along with the World DipCon Charter itself]]**. When I set out to build support for the Open Letter, I set a goal of 100 signatories. I am pleased to have achieved that. The supporters of the letter represent a hugely diverse group of players on almost every metric. This demonstrates how broad the support is for the Letter's message.

During the Hobby meeting, I was the first voice pushing back against the effort to force a vote on Vegas 2027, and for 15-20 minutes I was the only voice. For a few minutes I was scared that I was going to be the only one willing to stand up and say "hold on a second, that's not

fair." Thankfully a raft of others joined the rules and fairness-based debate.

I was further heartened by my discussions with the wider Hobby after the event. After many phone calls, emails, Whatsapp messages, Facebook messages, Discord chats, it was abundantly clear that nearly everyone in the Hobby, regardless of whether they signed on to Open Letter, sees a significant issue. Many people, both on and off the letter, have thought deeply about the best course of action, and were polite enough to exchange views with me in an open and transparent way. No one thinks this is a non-issue. This gives me hope that we will find a way.

My optimism was further elevated when afterwards Thomas Haver said to me that he harbored no hard feelings and that he had not taken the lively debate during the Hobby meeting personally (well at least not what I said). That's a very good thing! To me this means there is room for discussion and compromise. It means that positions are not hardened.

From all my discussions it's clear that everyone that loves this Hobby is concerned. Everyone wants to find a solution. If everyone can be open and honest and transparent, then we already have all the ingredients we need.

Open Letter From Diplomacy Hobby Members

The World DipCon Charter (the Charter) was initially proposed and approved in Maryland, USA, in 2000. The charter received further endorsements from players at events in Paris, France, in 2001 and again in Canberra, Australia in 2002. We the undersigned believe that the consideration of the location of the 2027 World DipCon at the 2024 World DipCon event in Varedo, Italy, was in direct conflict with the previously approved charter. Specifically, it conflicts with the below quoted text from the Charter article II.5 which calls for WDC site selection two years from the year of the current WDC:

"The Attendees will vote to select a WDC site two years from the year of the current WDC."

It may be that there is desire, and benefit, to revisiting the content of the charter, but that is a different conversation to be had. Until the process is properly amended, we believe that all parties should abide by the process set in place by the Charter.

* = names with a star and in bold are players that attended WDC 2024 in Milan.

TD = Tournament Director

EDC = European Diplomacy Championship

WDC = World DipCon

Seq	Name	Country	Notes
1	Conrad Woodring*	UK	Former TD London Diplomacy Club co-founder
2	Dan Lester *	UK	2022 WDC Champion 2017 WDC TD

Seq	Name	Country	Notes
			2014 DipCon Champ 2014 North American Grand Prix Champ
3	Dave Simpson	UK	Organizer UK European Diplomacy Association Delegate Past EDC TD 2012 European Grand Prix Champ
4	Marvin Fried	UK	London Diplomacy Club co-founder
5	Bradley Grace *	UK	2024 UK National Championship TD and Organizer
6	Seren Kwok	UK	2x vWDC Summer Classic champion Weaselmoot champion
7	Christopher Ward	UK	Content creator
8	Peter Sullivan	UK	1988 WDC organizing committee 1994 WDC TD
9	Mikalis Kamaritis	UK	2023 DipCon Champ
10	Stephen Agar *	UK	Hobby legend Zine publisher
11	Garry Sturley	UK	Tour of Britain organizer and TD
12	Chris Woolgar	UK	Virtual tournament organizer Spirecon organizer
13	Yann Clouet *	France	2004 WDC Champion 2003 EDC Champion Former European Diplomacy Association President 2x European Grand Prix Champ
14	Gwen Maggi	France	5x EDC Champion 2x WDC Champion 8x European Grand Prix Champ
15	Patrick "Lipton" Garnier Scaron	France	EDC 2023 TD
16	Emmanuel du Pontavice	France	2008 European Grand Prix Champ
17	Laurent Joly	France	Former TD World Diplomacy Database
18	Gabriel Lecointre ¹	France	French-Speaking Diplomacy Players Association board member
19	Wes Ketchum *	Switzerland	
20	Robert Schuppe	Germany	Boston Massacre champion
21	Jean-Louis Delattre *	Belgium	1998 WDC TD and Organizer
22	Fearghal O Donnchu *	Ireland	
23	Peter McNamara *	Australia	EDC 2014 Champion DBN Invitational 2x champion
24	Sean Colman	Australia	New Zealand Champion Bismark Cup Champion
25	Melissa Call	Australia	TD, hobby organizer
26	Andrew Goff*	Australia	2018, 2011, 2009 WDC Champ

¹ Gabriel is neither against the Las Vegas tournament, nor against a change in the rules for choosing WDC locations.

Seq	Name	Country	Notes
			TD, hobby organizer 2023 WDC TD
27	Jamal Blakkarly*	Australia	2023 WDC Champion 2026 WDC TD Hobby organizer
28	Shane Armstrong	Australia	
29	Zoe Cameron	Australia	
30	Timothy Jones	Australia	
31	Brandon Austin*	Australia	
32	Sascha Heylmann	Thailand	
33	Stuart Barton	Australia	
34	Lei Saarlainen	Uganda	2018 EDC Champion 2023 WDC Organizer World Diplomacy Database French-Speaking Diplomacy Players Association board member
35	Rony Mordvinov	Israel	
36	Nicolas Sahuguet*	Canada	2021 Virtual diplomacy champion 2012 EDC Champion 2006, 2024 WDC Champion
37	Chris Brand *	Canada	Cascadia Open TD 2016 WDC Champion
38	Tanya Gill	Canada	2022 DipCon Champ VDL Champ
39	Riaz Virani	Canada	Cascadia co-organizer
40	Mike Hall	Canada	Former TD WDC 2007 Organizer
41	John Jamieson	Canada	2017 Cascadia Open Champion
42	David Hood	NC, USA	DixieCon TD 3x WDC TD 1987, 2001 Dipcon Champ
43	Siobhan Nolen	CA, USA	2025 WDC organizer Former NADF President
44	Ed Sullivan *	TX, USA	Content creator 2023 Regatta Champion
45	Bill Hackenbracht	OR, USA	PNW organizer Liberty Cup TD World Diplomacy Community organizer
46	Edi Birsan	CA, USA	Legend National treasure
47	Doc Binder	FL, USA	2012 WDC Champ 2012 NA DipCon Champ 2012 North American Grand Prix champ
48	Andy Marshall	MD, USA	Former PTKS head Former Tempest TD
49	Adam Silverman	CA, USA	Whipping TD 2025 WDC TD 2021 DipCon Champ

Seq	Name	Country	Notes
50	Katie Gray	NM, USA	DipCon Champ 2024 NADF Board
51	Matt Shields	OR, USA	Former TD multiple events WDC 2007 TD 2000 North American Grand Prix Champ
52	Alex Amann	CA, USA	Former Massacre TD KublaCon TD WDC 2025 Organizer
53	Dave Maletsky	USA	Carnage TD WDC 2022 TD
54	Robert Rousse	VT, USA	Carnage organizer
55	Justin Loar	CA, USA	Hobby organizer, Los Angeles
56	Craig Mayr	MT, USA	SkyCon TD
57	Karthik Konath	CA, USA	2x Dixiecon champion
58	Eber Condrell	CO, USA	Hobby organizer, Denver
59	Jason Mastbaum *	CA, USA	2022 DBNI Champ
60	Noam Brown	CA, USA	Developer of Facebook's Cicero AI
61	Peter Yeargin	TX, USA	Dixiecon champion
62	Graham Woodring	USA	Former Husky TD Dixiecon champion Carnage champion 2013 North American Grand Prix champ
63	Hal Schild	VA, USA	Content creator
64	Mark Franceschini	USA	Dixiecon champion
65	Adam Sigal	USA	Dixiecon champion 2009 North American Grand Prix Champ
66	Andy Bartalone	MD, USA	Dixiecon champion 2002 North American Grand Prix Champ
67	Alex Ronke	NC, USA	
68	Zachary Moore	MN, USA	NADF President
69	Dan Mathias	USA	Former TD
70	Steve Koehler	USA	Avaloncon Champion
71	David Miller	MD, USA	Dixiecon champion PTKS former vice captain
72	Alex Maslow	MA, USA	Boston Massacre TD Boston Backbiters organizer
73	Ben Kellman	USA	DBN analyst
74	Randy Lawrence-Hurt	USA	Former TD Boston Massacre Boston Backbiters organizer
75	Rick Desper	USA	2005 DipCon Champ
76	Don Delgrande	CA, USA	
77	Jason Bennett	USA	
78	Tim Crosby	USA	Tour of Britain champion
79	Keith Worstell	NC, USA	Content creator

Seq	Name	Country	Notes
80	Andrew Zick	WA, USA	
81	David E Cohen	USA	Prolific variant designer
82	Ian Rudnick	MA, USA	
83	Tim Richardson	USA	
84	Tommy Anderson	MA, USA	Liberty cup champion Cascadia champion
85	Eric Todd Craig	USA	
86	Alex Jack Craig	USA	
87	Kirk Vaughn	USA	Founder of Nashvillains Diplomacy Club
88	Mathew Crill	WA, USA	2023 Whipping Champion
89	Tom Kobrin	NC, USA	Dixiecon champion
90	Kevin O'Kelley	IL, USA	DBN content creator
91	Jeff Dwornicki	USA	Former TD
92	Eric Silverman	CA, USA	
93	Brian Ecton	USA	Dixiecon champion
94	Ben Durfee	USA	Diplomacy World variant editor
95	Lori Wheeler	USA	Former TD
96	Matt Sundstrom	IL, USA	Former Alpha Weasel in Chicago
97	Edwin Turnage	USA	
98	Brian Shelden	USA	
99	Bruce Reiff	USA	1994 DipCon Champion
100	Nathan Barnes	WA, USA	Former WAC TD
101	Eric Hunter	USA	
102	Nicholas Spencer	USA	Olympus organizer
103	Mark Zoffel	WA, USA	Former WAC TD
104	Jonathan Frank	USA	
105	Jeff Ladd	USA	Tempest in a Teapot champion
106	Ariel Mendez-Penate	CA, USA	

Appendix: WDC Charter
Adopted Baltimore, MD USA 2000
Approved Paris, France 2001
Approved Canberra, Australia 2002

WDC Charter

Adopted in 2000 at WDC in Baltimore, MD

The World DipCon Society is an organization whose purpose is the selecting, support and preparation for the hosting the World Diplomacy Convention (WDC) site starting from August 2000.

I. Participation:

A. There are two levels of participation:

- a. Attendees of the Society's annual meeting at the WDC site.
- b. Members of the Society also called the Leadership Committee

B. Attendees

- a. Attendees are people who attend the Society's Annual Meeting at the WDC site who played or are registered to play in any WDC Diplomacy event concurrent with the WDC at the site.
- b. The roles of Attendees are to
 - i. vote on the selection of the WDC sites
 - ii. vote on amendments of the Charter
 - iii. propose future amendments to members
 - iv. propose projects for the Members to work on

C. Members/Leadership Committee

- a. Members are:
 - i. any prior Tournament Director of a WDC or his/her designate
 - ii. the next two designated Tournament Directors of WDC's
 - iii. the designated representative from Diplomacy Organizations, See Appendix: Membership
 - iv. Committee chairpersons where those committee are set up by the WDS as work projects in support of the WDS.
- b. The roles of the Membership is:
 - i. run the Society Annual Meeting
 - ii. provide for support of the WDC event
 - iii. act to make a change in venue of the WDC in the event of default of the designated WDC site. See Appendix Default
 - iv. work on projects between Society meetings
 - v. write amendments and related documents to this Charter as may be needed from time to time
 - vi. Maintain timely communication with other members

II. Selection Process for WDC

- 1. Parties interested in hosting a WDC will prepare their proposals(Bids) to the Society meeting.
- 2. Bidders will be aided by the Society members in preparation of their bids by

- a. The maintenance of a suggested format for a bid
- b. The maintenance of a list of qualifications for a bid. See Appendix: Bid Structures

- 3. Bidders are encouraged to submit their bids to the Members prior to the Society meeting.
- 4. At the Society meeting the bid should be presented to the Attendees by an individual that will be involved in the hosting of the WDC event or a designated Deputy.
- 5. The Attendees will vote to select a WDC site two years from the year of the current WDC.
- 6. The method of the voting shall be detailed at the time of the WDC by the Members. See Appendix: Voting for various possible methods

III. Regions and the WDC

The world is divided into regions for purposes of aiding in the reasonable rotation of the WDC around the world. There are currently three regular regions of the WDC:

- 1. Europe/Mediterranean: All countries of Europe.
- 2. North America: Canada, United States, Mexico and all countries of the Caribbean and Central America from Panama to Mexico inclusive.
- 3. Australia/New Zealand: Australia and New Zealand.

Regions may be added or amended as needed from time to time.

IV. Regions and the WDC Selection

No region may normally be selected to host a WDC 2 years in row

Exceptions:

- 1. In the case of a default of the successful bidder for the current WDC, the Members may assign the emergency replacement WDC independent of regional restrictions.
- 2. In the event there is no bid for the WDC in a different region then two consecutive years may be in the same region.

V. Amendments to this Charter

The method of amendment to this charter is:

- 1. only a Member writes the amendment and proposes it to a Annual Society Meeting. (An Attendee who is not a Member must convince at least one Member to submit an Amendment for anything to happen).
- 2. the proposed amendment is submitted for a yes/no vote at the Annual Society Meeting

4. if passed at the Annual Society Meeting it is then held for confirmation at the next year's meeting.
5. if passed a second time at the next possible Annual Society Meeting then it is confirmed and shall become part of this Charter.

VI. Miscellaneous

1. Language: the language of the Charter is to be English and all amendments are to be maintained in English.
2. Legal conflicts are not conceivable, jurisdiction is never to be in the country of the individual who starts such a mess.

WORLD DIPCON SOCIETY CHARTER 2000 APPENDIX: VOTING

Voting in the Annual Society meeting is the traditional way to resolve issues as well as assign the next two sites of the WDC. The details of the method of the voting has always been left flexible to accommodate the local conditions relative to bids and their competition. The following are acceptable methods:

I. For Amendments to the WDC Charter:

- A. Each Attendee is allowed one vote.
- B. Options to vote are either : Yes, No or Abstain
- C. To pass an amendment proposal requires more Yes votes than No votes
- D. An amendment that is passed becomes part of the charter if it is confirmed at the following year's WDC using the same voting system again.

II. For Selection of a WDC host site

All votes are done by region with a maximum of 10 votes (if that number is reached) for each region present. Any votes within a region that are in excess of ten are prorated for the ten regional votes.

Example

8 Europeans= 8 votes
6 N. Americans= 6 votes
20 Australians=10 votes

WORLD DIPCON SOCIETY CHARTER 2000 APPENDIX: MEMBERS

I. Member Organizations

Supporting of the WDC is often best done in the backdrop of a network of regional and local organizations that can cooperate in a loose federation to

promote the Diplomacy Hobby in general and focus on the WDC as may be needed.

A. To be a Member Organization the Organization must qualify by having the following aspects:

1. have an obvious main focus on the game of Diplomacy
2. have a hobby presence either on the Internet in the form of a Web Site, or an Internationally recognized convention format such as the European DipCon
3. have a recognizable structure with an individual leader and a method to appoint a representative to the WDC
4. have functioned (hosted an event, completed hobby projects) for at least one year.
5. have at least 10 members

B. No organization shall be reasonably denied representation.

C. An organizational member shall forfeit its membership if it:

1. does not appoint a representative to the WDS by notification to the Society at its designated contact site, or
2. neither :
 - (a) participates in a Diplomacy event for a complete calendar year, nor
 - (b) updates its Internet presence for a period of 120 days.

Initial Prequalified Organizations:

Diplomatic Corps (www.DiplomaticCorps.Org)
European Diplomacy Association (annual meeting at the European DipCon)
DAANZ (Australia, New Zealand)

II. Prior WDC Tournament Directors prequalified

Jean Louis Delattre (Namur, Belgium 1999)
David Hood (Chapel Hill, USA 1998, 1990)
Leif Bergmen (Gothenburg, Sweden 1997)
Dan Mathias (Columbus, USA 1996)
Francois Rivasseau (Paris, France 1995)
Iaian Bowen (UK 1994)
John Cain (Australia 1992)
Nick Kinzett (Birmingham, UK 1988)

WORLD DIPCON SOCIETY CHARTER 2000 APPENDIX: BID STRUCTURES

The purpose of the bid structure is to provide a minimum of standards to assist bidders in forming their bid to host a World DipCon. As part of the reason for the Society's interim meeting organization is to assist in the success of bids, these requirements are what are considered to be necessary for the Bidders to host a successful World Diplomacy Convention.

1. People:

There must be an individual who is responsible for the entire bid.

There must be a 'contact point' with email access for public information and publicity.

There should be a Tournament Director who is responsible for the administration of the tournament. He need not be specified at the time of bid, but that there will be an individual responsible for appointing a Tournament Director.

These roles may be combined, but success indicates that separate responsibilities are preferred.

A bid must indicate the individuals involved and their contact addresses.

2. Place

There must be a commitment from a place to make the facility available able to hold at least as many players as attended the last WDC held in the same region.

There must be a designated accommodation location and the rates to that should be known in advance.

3. Tournament System

The hobby is very tolerant with experiments in tournament systems and it is not the role of the WDS to dictate one system over another. However the following universal features should be part of the tournament system:

a. The System must be intended to generate a single individual Standard Diplomacy Champion.

b. The system must be known and written down available for all participants prior to the start of the tournament. Preferably several months in advance.

c. In any case where there is to be a forced removal of a player to accommodate the 7 player nature of the standard Diplomacy game, that removal is not to be forced upon any non local players. A local player is a player from same country as the host and resident within 100km of the site.

d. Tournament systems may incorporate a team round as part of the computation for the resolution of a tournament champion. However, all component rounds/aspects must be from the play of Diplomacy or a recognized variant of it.

e. There is to be at least a single round of Team Play of Standard Diplomacy to determine the Team Championship.

The bidder must make a commitment that the system will be known and give at least a summary of the

methods to be employed. We understand the flexibility needed to adjust the tournament systems between bid and actual event, but the basic theory and flavor of the tournament should be known in advance with all details to be disclosed before play.

4. House Rules

There is to be a set of House Rules made available to the players by the Tournament Director.

These must be written down and may be simply the Rule Book to be used or more detailed.

Tournament Directors are encouraged to use more detailed House Rules which cover some of the various aspects of face to face tournament play.

5. After Report

The bidders must undertake to make the results of the WDC available world wide through the Internet.

WORLD DIPCON SOCIETY

CHARTER 2000

APPENDIX: BID STRUCTURES

1. In case of the resignation of the World DipCon host at least 2 months prior to the General Meeting of the immediate prior WDC, the decision of the new site will be decided at the General Meeting.

2. In the case of the resignation of the World DipCon Host within 2 months before the prior WDC up to the time of the intended WDC, the decision of the new site will be decided by the Membership Committee.

(1) In the case of their being more than one possible alternative, the location will be decided by a simple vote.

(2) Only those people who were members at the start of the WDC at which the defaulted site was selected, and who are still members at the time of the vote, may vote.

(3) The responsibility for collecting and counting the vote will be given to the TD of the most recent WDC.

The additional possibilities for the resolution of the default are:

a. to have no WDC in that year

b. to have a WDC outside of the normal rotation.

Renegade Announces Official Sponsorship of Diplomacy World Championship Events

<https://renegadegamestudios.com/blog/renegade-announces-official-sponsorship-of-diplomacy-world-championship-events/>

(Posted by Renegade Game Studios on Jun 28th 2024)



"We are thrilled to announce that starting in 2025, Renegade Game Studios will be the official sponsor of Diplomacy World Championship events!



With our official support participants can expect a premium series of events that are not only competitive but also community-focused and welcoming to all players. We have event organizers to help guarantee each tournament includes appropriate accommodations, travel support, event structure, and player conduct. The

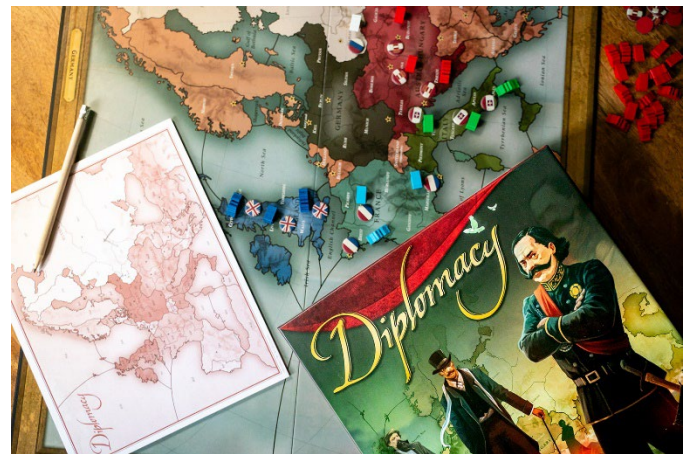
next three World Championship host cities are:

2025 – San Francisco, California

2026 – Athens, Greece

2027 – Las Vegas, Nevada at the World Series of Board Gaming

In addition to this major sponsorship announcement, we are proud to introduce Thomas Haver and his esteemed team at Rogue Judges as the official event organizers for Diplomacy World Championship events. Thomas is a well-respected figure in the board gaming community and brings a wealth of experience and passion to the role. The team at Rogue Judges is known for their meticulous planning and execution of high-caliber gaming events, ensuring that every tournament is a memorable experience for participants and spectators alike.



Starting in 2025 the group will either directly organize the Diplomacy World Championship or in the case of San Francisco and Athens act as liaison for organizers across the world. This will ensure participants enjoy an event that is welcoming to all players and adheres to Renegade's standards for event structure & player conduct

Stay tuned for more updates on future World Championship announcements and prepare to engage in the ultimate test of strategy and negotiation!"

Community and Service

By David Maletsky

I discovered the face-to-face Diplomacy hobby at an event run by Manus Hand in Denver in 2000. I went on to play for several years until I decided to start giving back to the community. At various points in time in this hobby for the past few decades, I have been a good friend to many. An emotional shoulder. A social organizer. A promoter. A financier. The head of the North American hobby. Tournament director of multiple different events, including both North American and World championships.

In a vacuum, would I have done all of these things in the name of the game of Diplomacy itself, for no other reasons? Of course not... I participated because of the community Building and maintaining a healthy community has included camaraderie between existing friends. The joy of making new friends. Sharing ideas in an open forum. Resolving conflicts in a cooperative and egalitarian manner. Service to others. Authenticity.

What community building is not about includes aloofness. Standoffishness. Vacuous politeness. Authoritarianism. Bribery. Mendacity. Megalomaniacal scheming. Narcissism.

Ideas are good or bad, true or false, independent of thinkers or actors. Hence, a good human, and by extension a good organizer, welcomes other voices without prejudice, in the interest of having a better chance at arriving at truth. Repeatedly and consistently validating and reinforcing the equal worth of all in the conversation by so doing. Be consistently and actually welcoming to all, instead of saying the words and then not performing the act itself.

What good organizers don't do is set themselves above others. Refuse to engage in critical thinking. Ignore or mock those with questions or concerns. Laud bad faith actors and needle good faith actors. Deliberately alienate large swaths of the playing community.

By the time this issue of Diplomacy World is concluded, I'm sure everyone will become aware that a divisive, unasked-for choice is being forced upon Diplomacy

players worldwide. Well, except me; I don't have much of a choice, because the lead bad faith actor in this affair decided I'm too much of a villain, and banned me from all of their events. A strange thing, indexed against how widely beloved I am among Diplomacy players, and how extensively I have served others in this hobby... but the principle of charity would say it surely couldn't have been inherent pettiness, spurred by a simple personality conflict, so there must be a valid reason, I suppose.

Anyway, my point to readers is simply this: what kind of a hobby do you want?

Do you want a singular ruler, and moreover, one who has time and again come down on the wrong side of ethical matters? One that listens only to their own council, one that will put together far reaching, subversive schemes to take and retain control, one that will treat other horribly in the name of seeing said schemes come to fruition?

Or do you want a community of equals? Do you want to collaborate to decide together how we all forward as a community? Do you want to have fun and socialize without having to worry about needless political bullshit in a boardgaming hobby?

Others I'm sure will express concerns about legalities, traditions, and so on. To my mind, all of these points are secondary. At the core of what you're going to see in this issue is a coup attempt. Mind you, I have been very open about not loving the way the hobby has conducted business in the past, either; but the solution is for everyone to speak up and come together. Not to fall in line behind any one individual or entity.

No amount of "swag" is worth selling our souls, collectively or individually. And in this case the referent of "soul" is a community chock full of good faith actors, many of whom are in selfless service to others.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the events I'm not banned from... which, again, are all events except for the ones one individual runs. The evidence speaks for itself.

NADF Statement on World DipCon 2027

Submitted by Zachary Moore



The North American Diplomacy Federation (NADF) represents over 500 hobbyists in the United States & Canada and currently supports 8 tournaments, including the longest running Diplomacy Tournament in the world (DixieCon in Chapel Hill, NC).

We are a proud and longstanding sponsor of World DipCon (WDC). While the NADF does not oversee World DipCon, we have proudly hosted the event when it comes to North America - beginning with WDC II in 1990 and more recently at:

- 2022 (Dover, VT)
- 2018 (Washington D.C.)
- 2016 (Chicago, IL)
- 2014 (Chapel Hill, NC)

Our players are privileged to participate in the community-based process that our global hobby uses to select WDC host locations in an open and transparent manner. The process by which WDC locations are voted on two years in advance was codified in the year 2000 in the WDC Charter with the assent of hobbyists from the North American, European and Australian hobbies. While in some cases, such as the COVID pandemic, adjustments have been made on the fly, those adjustments have always been made collaboratively and by the consensus of our hobby.

The next such vote will happen at WDC in San Francisco on April 4-6, 2025. We invite all of our hobbyists, not only from North America but those around the world, to attend what will be a fantastic event full of laughs, stabs and camaraderie. We encourage attendees to participate in the Hobby Society Meeting that will take place that weekend, where we will listen to proposals for the host of WDC 2027 and take an open, transparent vote.

We are aware that this past weekend in Varedo, after selecting Athens as the site for WDC 2026, the location of WDC 2027 was discussed. We believe that the statement that the site has already been chosen is incorrect as it does not respect the WDC charter. The NADF board respectfully invites all community members to present their project next year in San Francisco, where the 2027 WDC will be voted on and assigned.

Looking forward to stabbing seeing you there!

Your Friends at the NADF Board,

Zachary Moore
Johnny Gillam
Katie Gray
Nicolas Sahuguet
Liam Stokes

The Winds of Change in Airstrip One

By Jon Hills

Hello, and welcome back to Airstrip One. It's been a long time.

So, what's new in the UK? Well, by the time you're reading this, it will likely be our government.

The country is currently "gripped" - if that's the right word - by election fever as a few weeks ago the incumbent Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, called a General Election for 4th July.

That date rings a bell for some reason but I can't think why. Something about ungrateful colonists or something. Still, no matter. It probably wasn't important.

Since then, though, things have not been going well for Rishi such that, he is on course to lose that election quite emphatically – and potentially be handed the Conservative Party's worst result in over 200 years. Parallels have been drawn with the Canadian elections in 1993 which led to the virtual extinction of Canada's equivalent center-right political group.

Although that particular outcome is perhaps unlikely, at the time of writing bookmakers are offering odds of 1/100 on a Labour Party victory. That is, for every £1 staked you'd receive just 1 penny! To give you some idea, the same bet on a certain Mr. Trump to regain the White House later this year would return 61p, so much closer to call.

These betting odds are primarily driven by opinion polling and so are subject to some margin of error, typically around 5%. However, even with this taken into account, the overall outcome of the election is beyond doubt. All that changes is the margin of victory and the relative standings of the parties.

The overwhelming message is that the country is asking for a change – and that finding is consistent across all the output from the various polling companies.

Of course, I'm not passing comment on any of the individuals or political parties concerned - we Diplomats are above that sort of thing – and the reasons why Mr. Sunak is facing such a perilous electoral position are long, complex and [frankly] quite boring. I only mention it because it is potentially transformative of the UK political landscape and, as politics pervades so many different aspects of life, the knock-on effects *could* be significant. The phrase "watershed moment" springs to mind.

It's an interesting word "watershed". As the geographers among you will know, it refers to the point at which areas of drainage divide. The famous example, in the US, is of the Continental or Great Divide, an invisible line that runs through the entire Americas, from the Bering Strait in the north to the Straits of Magellan in the south. Any drop of rain that falls to the left of that line will ultimately flow into the Pacific; to the right and it reaches the Atlantic. North Two Ocean Creek in Wyoming is famous for having a stream that separates along that line and so has branches that flow into both. The clue, I guess, is in the name.

If that's the technical usage, though, the phrase is perhaps more commonly employed to mark a defining moment; a point when an individual or nation chooses a different path – and that is what brings me to *Diplomacy*.

It was my privilege a few days ago to meet Conrad Woodring for the first time. It was something of a blind date. You know the sort of thing – meet me under the clock of Grand Central Station at Noon; I'll be the one carrying a *Diplomacy* set.

As many of you know, Conrad is a giant of the game – both physically (I had not appreciated how tall he is) and metaphorically (the Woodrings having a history in the face-to-face community that is beyond legend). The reason for our meeting was to pass on a second-hand copy of the game that I'd managed to pick up in a local Charity Shop. It was great to grab a coffee, have a chat and share our common interest. As is so often said, *Diplomacy* is a game quite unlike any other in its capacity to bring people together.

As one of the leading lights in the London Diplomacy Club (along with Marvin Fried), Conrad was kind enough to share his hopes for the UK Face-to-Face community and some of the steps being taken to revitalize it.

Those of you who subscribe to The Briefing – and why wouldn't you – will have seen the link to the new UK F2F website – diplomacy.co.uk – which is hoped will be a one-stop shop for all UK in-person news and events. There you will find details for the UK NDC – set for September 27-29 in Warrington – contact details for local *Diplomacy* groups (including our little lot in Colchester, yey!) and links to other hobby resources like the Global F2F Registry and World Diplomacy Database.

Reflecting the sheer breadth and diversity of the hobby church, there are innumerable ways to get in contact –

email, Facebook, Discord, Instagram etc. All you have to do is sign up.

And that, really, is the key thing. The success or otherwise of the venture will be determined by who joins in. As we were talking, it struck us how insular the different elements of the hobby can be. There are some who strictly play online and others solely by email. Even fewer play face-to-face. How many manage even two out of those three formats? Truth be told, I'm not doing it myself at the moment.

My promise to Conrad, therefore, was to badger my limited contacts in the UK community and encourage them to get involved, even if that's just to get regular notices of what events are coming up. If you're reading this in the UK then consider yourself told – but I will be reaching out through other channels too. If you want to

save me the job and contact me, you can do so at jon.airstip1@gmail.com.

Conrad also tipped me off that this edition of *Diplomacy World* could include some spicy fallout from the most recent WDC – hopefully it won't disappoint. Most especially, the UK is pushing to host a WDC within the next three years – the first since Oxford in 2017 – and that very much depends on support from us locals.

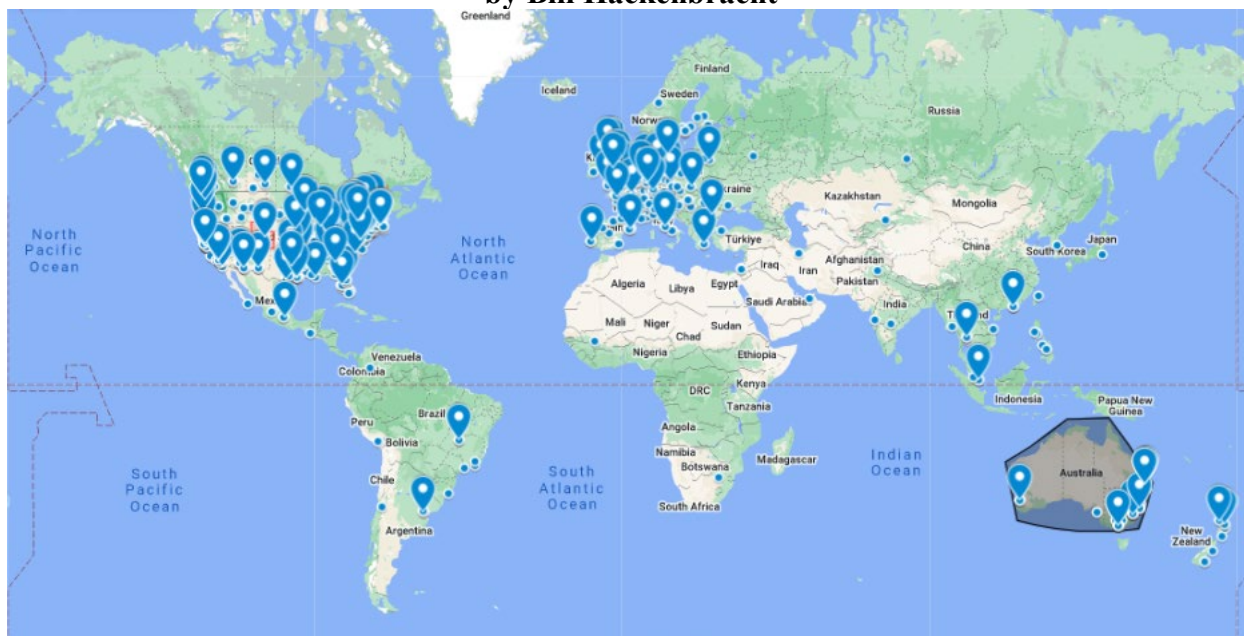
So, UK Dippers, we face our own watershed moment. Will we stay stuck in our usual mire or are we prepared to cross the divide and get involved?

Just like the General Election, the choice is ours - but I know which one I'll be rooting for.

Happy stabbing.

The Diplomacy Face-to-Face Registry – Bringing the Global Hobby Together!

by Bill Hackenbracht



The Diplomacy Face-to-Face Registry was established in January, 2021, in order to assist the global hobby to emerge from Covid-19 restrictions stronger than ever. Since its launch, over 1150 Diplomacy players have joined the face-to-face registry – providing the community with an invaluable tool for making announcements and connecting local players to each other. And in the last three years, I've built customized contact lists for over a dozen organizers from Boston to Berlin and from Britain to Bucharest. If you'd like to request a list of local players in your area, please email me at William.hackenbracht@gmail.com - Bill Hackenbracht

If you'd like to be added to the registry, please sign up here: <https://forms.gle/3b41kYG1j6nipSmSA>
To view the current map, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/43mr46xc>

Origins 2024 Tournament Report

by Thomas Haver

Diplomacy at Origins Game Fair returned for a special event this year. Origins has a special place in the Diplomacy community, with only DipCon hosting more events all-time. Origins was the original tournament to give out Best Country awards. It was also the first tournament to feature a woman champion. Following that grand tradition, Origins was first this year to capture a complete Diplomacy game with multi-camera setup (courtesy of Board Game Nation).



We kicked off with the Thursday evening teaching round. Since the pandemic, Rogue Judges has been adding a board per year for this event slot. This year we had three boards of new players learning the game. Typically, we teach these players on the giant map, then assign them to the various special setups. One group played on the giant map, one on the LEGO board, and the last group on the large fabric map. Giving players a special setup and Diplomacy prizes helps make their first experience with the game a special one: all players received a Diplomacy gift bag and Diplomacy shirt.



The tournament was unique this year because Board Game Nation (BGN) has partnered with Renegade Game Studios to provide Diplomacy content for their YouTube channel. In a world-first, BGN piloted a four-camera setup at Origins. Three cameras were setup around the giant map to capture player conversations. The final camera was placed around the board to capture orders and game state. We can't wait to see the final product!



Befitting the special setup, we also had a first for Origins: a high school student won the championship! Local student Andrew Boyd piloted England to a board top during the recorded session to beat out Rob Lacy of Texas by just 2.5 points for the title of "Midwest Diplomacy Champion". Congrats to Andrew and to the rest of our prize winners!



The following is a recounting of the recorded board by player Phil Burk:

"There's nothing like drawing Austria on the final board of the last two cons I've attended. But this write-up isn't about my ongoing torture at the hands of the Diplomacy Gods; it's about the terrific time the Diplomacy Tournament was at this year's Origins Game Fair in Columbus, Ohio. If you haven't had a chance to see Thomas Haver's latest Lego board incarnation, let me tell you, it's quite a sight. Supposedly containing over 21,000 Lego pieces, I think I like it better than the more well-known wooden masterpieces. Maybe.

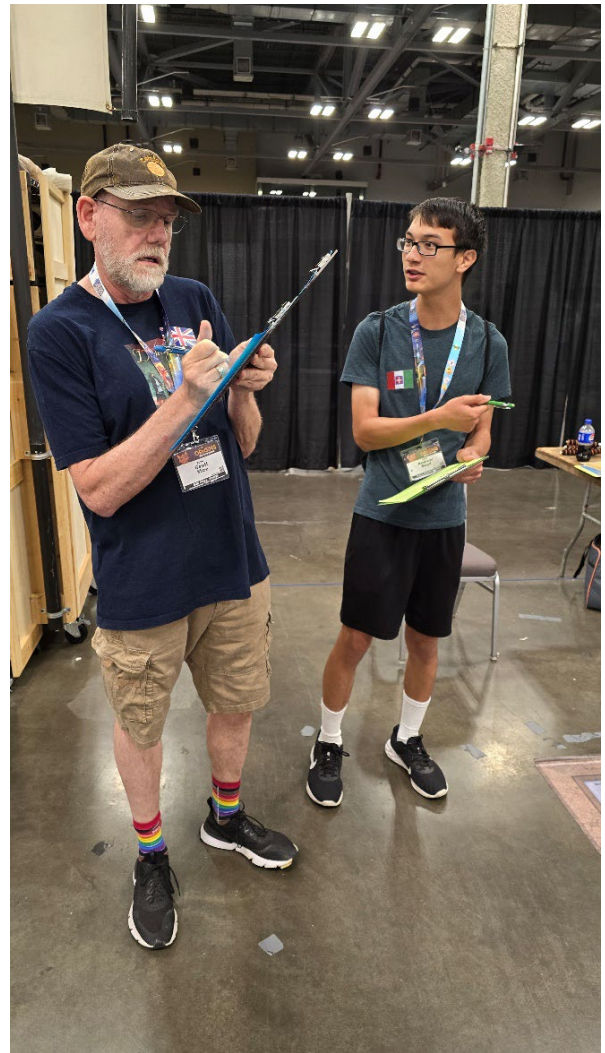
Multiple repeat offenders attended this year's Tournament. I'll name drop a few: Rob Lacy, Rob Zahn, and Geoff Mize, who was affectionately called "Mr. Mize" by this year's tournament winner, Andrew Boyd. Many of us don't need reminders of the passing years like this. Still, it's both endearing and hope-engendering to see new and, um, YOUNGER players partaking in FTF Diplomacy, let alone earning their name on the championship placard.

The competition was stiff, as it should be. Congrats to all who took home awards, especially to Andrew Boyd, the overall champion. I hope to stab you all soon."



Top Board (Top 7)

1. Andrew Boyd
2. Robert Lacy
3. Jack Wilsbach
4. Robert Zahn
5. Geoff Mize
6. Kyle King
7. Phil Burk



"This tournament was a lot of fun and I really hope that I can play in more tournaments" – Andrew Boyd

"Andrew Boyd Westerville Central class of 2024 is now the youngest Midwest diplomacy champion ever after winning the title at the Origins Game Fair in Columbus, Ohio. The title has been awarded every year since 1975. Andrew won the title in his first year playing in a field that included several former Midwest and US Champions." – Geoff Mize, Andrew's High School Teacher

Best Countries

Austria - Kyle King
England - Andrew Boyd
France - Jack Wilsbach
Germany - Robert Zahn
Italy - Phil Burk
Russia - Geoff Mize
Turkey - Robert Lacy

Final thoughts by Robert Zahn, Origins Diplomacy player since 2000:

"This tournament has seasoned players that come back year after year so we know a lot about each other and the chance for deceit is a little harder. This makes the tournament more interesting and a little more challenging, and you truly have to watch your back. Each round had winners and losers, of course, and those will be reported, but what we started in this tournament many, many years ago is that after each round in the evening, we usually try to get most of the players to go out for some food and a beverage of their choice. This is what truly makes our tournament special: the camaraderie and the ability to reminisce about the games (and to complain about moves). All the Diplomacy questions you can think of as you play in a tournament, but over food and a beverage -- it brings us

closer together, even though we all know we're competing for the top prize."



More photos of the event can be found at:
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/832YnizsEBx9GSKa6>

Of Ghosts, Flame Outs, and the Future

by Russ Dennis

Behind every Diplomacy hobbyists now alive stand thirty ghosts, for that is the ratio by which the dead outnumber the living...or something like that. The phrase "we stand on the shoulders of giants" is a truism in science and other disciplines, but my experience as publisher of [the Briefing](#) has lead me to believe this isn't widely the case for the Diplomacy hobby.

I've seen countless projects get started and peter out or come crashing down in one fowl swoop. Clubs, tournaments, whole gaming platforms, blogs, and many other initiatives have come and gone in just these last five years. Stretch it back 6 decades and there were dramatic flame outs and break ups in the hobby. Many projects have been started with great intentions and even much excitement but didn't last. Why? Because everything in our hobby is a passion project and will only last as long as people are enthusiastic for what they are doing or alternatively are willing to grind it out year after year. I of course speak of Doug Kent...just kidding...maybe.

More seriously though, Diplomacy World is remarkable in that it has survived over 50 years. Some hand-offs have been smooth, and others...well, the back issues are there for you to read if you're so inclined. Diplomacy World has weathered the ups and downs and great changes in the hobby which is commendable for all who have been involved.

Perhaps it was a little ambitious and naive to want this, but my goal for the Briefing was that it would become a hobby institution in much the same way. The Briefing fulfills a unique role in the hobby in that every week we try our best to include all the announcements of what is going on in the hobby and also a strategy article. We have published over 240 weekly issues and amassed over 1,000 subscribers and followers. I am proud of the work our team has done in trying to connect the hobby together.

Now, is the Briefing folding? No! Thankfully, there are still three editors plugging away at turning out content. With that being said, I am stepping down as publisher. Lady Razor (Matthew) has been an editor with the

Briefing since 2020 and is moving into that chair. Over the last two months, he has stepped up and done well. I am confident that under his leadership the Briefing will continue on and become a true hobby institution.

I would also like to request that our hobby come together and support the team during this transition. There are a few ways that I know would encourage them:

1. [Subscribe!](#) Of course, you already are right...RIGHT?
2. Help supply content. The main purpose of the Briefing is connecting the hobby and one way we do that is by announcing new hobby initiatives and tournament results. Please keep the team in the loop with what you are working on.
3. Write strategy articles. I am very proud to say that almost without exception, the champions of online and in person tournaments write an article for us. Thank you so much! We also always have need for more strategy content so please don't be shy with sending us your articles.
4. [Financial Support](#) – There are platform costs, website fees, and also our intention is always to give the copy editor a small amount for each issue they work on. We thankfully still have 15 people who support the Briefing on a monthly basis but could use another \$20-\$30 a month in support.
5. We also have a few positions we need to fill.
 - [Content Editor](#) – Helps gather content and plan out future issues as well as connect with hobby leaders.
 - [Copy Editor](#) – Writes the copy for each issue.
 - Graphic Design – We need a person who knows how to work in Photoshop for our weekly issue thumbnail on social media.

Founding the Briefing was a ton of work and also a lot of fun. I got a birds-eye view of hobby happenings and saw how people branched out to other platforms or went to tournaments for the first time just because they read about it in the Briefing. The greatest joy though was getting to know some truly wonderful people who enriched my life in many ways. You can blame them that you won't get to throw a good riddance party for me. I plan to stick around.

The mission of the Briefing has always been to connect the hobby. We try to be a unifying place that focuses on what is best in Diplomacy. While there will always be venues for hobby politics to be discussed, my hope is what was said of the zine *Vienna* will always be said of the Briefing:

“Our ethos was that the hobby was a fun place to be. It was about playing games, writing letters and having fun. Hobby politics, real life disputes or anything else which might prevent someone else having fun were out.”

Thanks again for your support.

Your Ally,

Russ Dennis (umbletheheap)

Addendum from Lady Razor

It's a time of change at the Briefing offices. As the dust settles and the last of the motivational "Remain Umble" posters are torn off the walls, and that jewel-encrusted eyesore of a statue is melted down, a new leader emerges. A kinder, gentler, and altogether more handsome leader. A tyrant, obviously, but, y'know, a different tyrant. This one draws silly pictures!

The Briefing is a Diplomacy hobby institution. It strives to keep an often disparate and disjointed hobby updated on the significant events in the Diplomacy world. I still talk to players on various platforms who can't believe there's enough going on to fill a weekly newsletter, but the truth is there is often far too much. You just have to know the right places to look, and if you're a Briefing subscriber, we do it for you!

As I move into the big chair, I first want to thank all of the Briefing staff, past and present (and future - we're hiring!) for the huge amount of extracurricular work they do. But most of all I want to offer a collective thanks from all of us - editors, subscribers, and the hobby at large - to our 'umble founder Russ. Thank you!

...But even more most of all, thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Briefing! The Champions Corner; strategy articles; even a quick heads up about upcoming events - it's the voices of you lot, talking about this absurdly interpersonal game, that justifies the Briefing's existence. Don't stop talking!