

# DIPLOMACY WORLD

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## Subscriptions

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North American subs should be sent to David Partridge, 15 Woodland Drive, Brookline, NH 03033, USA. Email: [rebhuhn@rocketmail.com](mailto:rebhuhn@rocketmail.com)

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**Diplomacy World** is available free on the Internet, as a web zine or as a PDF file. Go to <http://www.diplomacyworld.org>

## Editorial: *Diplomacy World* Returns

by Jim Burgess

*“Observe good faith and justice towards all Nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all (Paragraph 31)... In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential, than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular Nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The Nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the Government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The Government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of Nations has been the victim (Paragraph 32).*

*“So likewise, a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite Nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite Nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained; and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (who devote themselves to the favorite nation,) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; gilding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation (Paragraph 33)... Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter (Paragraph 34).”*

*Excerpts from George Washington’s Farewell Address  
September 19, 1796.*

Greetings. I choose to welcome everyone to this new regime of *Diplomacy World* with this quote from over 200 years ago for a few different reasons, some of which I will get into a bit and others which I leave to the reader. The proximate cause for me picking up Washington’s Farewell Address (his announcement that he would NOT be running for a third term as President of the United States) was a recent quiz given to US college students showing how ignorant they were of civics. The overall performance of these college students on this quiz was horrendous, some of you undoubtedly spotted the headlines. I sat down and took the quiz (which was reprinted in its entirety in a recent *NY Times*). I thought all of the 50 or so questions were trivially easy (the questions had four multiple choice answers, but I didn’t need the prompting so you can see how easy they really were), except for the one question I missed concerning this Farewell Address. I then realized that I had never read this Address. The entire address is worth reading though as other parts of it clearly show the influence of Alexander Hamilton, who augmented the diplomatic excerpt above with thoughts on the need for commercial interests to dominate over diplomatic interests to maintain the peace.

However, more germane is the advice to Americans to cultivate peace and harmony without showing overt preferences for one over another. This is the philosophy that Stephen and I plan to stick to in

*Diplomacy World* – a productive and entertaining mix of articles that will not allow antipathies (petty or severe) to mar its pages. Secondly, of course, we really mean *Diplomacy World* in this incarnation truly to be worldwide in scope, limited only by the choice of English as the language of publication. One signal is in taking on Stephen Agar as a co-editor (and we hope other Brits and people from other countries climb onto the Editorial Board), so for the first time the top of the masthead gets out of the North American continent. Let us all agree from the start that this will not be an issue, *DW* belongs to the entire worldwide hobby and the entire hobby belongs to it. If something is missing, it is because YOU have not written about it for print.

I believe that Diplomacy is “The Game” in the purest sense. The concept has been copied or adapted but never superceded. One essential aspect of it is that it engages strategy at the same level that George Washington was thinking on in this address. Another is that it challenges us to consider the panoply of ethical issues mentioned above and more, but yet it still is a game and as a game is played for fun. We shall try to have fun balanced with serious study of all aspects that touch on the game of Diplomacy. And to find that balance, we will be relying on each and every one of you to keep us on track. But I implore you from the start to do so in the spirit of peace and harmony. The way to accomplish this is by correcting problems through your own influence and actions. If you don’t think there are enough “tactics articles” appearing, then write your own or entice someone whose tactics you respect to write for us. If you think my interviews are too light or I’m not interviewing diverse enough people, then suggest more serious questions, subjects, or objectives. If you think the Editorial Board needs augmenting in any particular direction, then help us out by volunteering or making suggestions. We desire, no even demand, your input. But make it positive and constructive.

Next, I want to thank Doug Kent for allowing and encouraging Stephen and I to take this step forward. We are NOT going to bog down the restart of *Diplomacy World* with the commitments of the past; however, Doug is going to attempt to make good on all financial obligations. He still has all those records, not Stephen or I. We all agreed that part of the difficulty in getting *DW* started again was this albatross. Similarly to what was done once before by Larry Peery, we are starting off on a new foot. We will attempt to reconcile records at some point, in which case future credit will be awarded. We have financial volunteers to assist though if anyone wishes to insist that they have credit coming and want it now. Please CC Doug Kent on any communications by E-Mail or post that you make on this issue (addresses for Doug and the Editors appear together elsewhere). As Stephen discusses in the Subscriptions section, though, the primary intent of the new *DW* is to make it into a freely available webszine, primarily in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. This commitment extends back to the very beginning of *DW* in the early 1970’s. We will be putting the entire catalog of *DW* from its beginning to the present on the *DW* web page. Stephen already has begun this task and my thanks go to him for this effort. Of course, *DW* also will be available by post as well for those who are willing to pay and prefer that format. Next, regarding articles on hand or previously submitted that have not yet been published: Doug Kent has passed the paper originals of submitted articles to me. Our preferred format for article submission is electronic, via E-Mail or floppy disk. Reading through all of this material (no correspondence more recent than a year and a half ago), I decided to go ahead and publish this restart issue totally with new and recent material. This seemed to be the best way to look forward. If anyone has an article that they believe was in the pipeline and they still want published in *DW*, then by all means contact me ASAP. We can talk about it for the next or subsequent issues.

People also may ask about relationships with [The Diplomatic Pouch](#) or [The Diplomatic Corps](#). Stephen Agar and myself are still on the Board of *The Diplomatic Pouch* in our roles for co-ordinating the postal information and the publication of *The Abyssinian Prince* (my szine) on the web. We informed that board of our intentions before we started. And we view these entirely as complementary productive efforts. Quite naturally, the *Pouch* is likely to spend more time focusing on the Judge hobby, rec.games.diplomacy, and other parts of its historic strengths. We will undoubtedly tend to focus on other things, but students of the game and hobby members will want to keep reading both and both will be made better (we believe) through the friendly competition. The relationship with [The Diplomatic Corps](#) will be similar (though that is primarily an organization with a web page and not a magazine) but tending to be even stronger because of the synergies already obvious between the

efforts (more on that elsewhere in this issue). The *Corps* has had an advertisement on our return on their web page for some time.

Please, if you have any questions or concerns whatsoever, do not hesitate to discuss them with any member of the *Diplomacy World* Editorial Board. We have lots of exciting plans for the future which we will be sharing with you in due course. First, the contents of this issue. Since we will be announcing and distributing first copies of the new *DW* at the combined World DipCon/DipCon in Baltimore at the beginning of August, a brief history of the beginnings of DipCon by Edi Birsan (with help from Fred Davis and others) seemed to be very appropriate. Edi also happens to be the first target (oops, I mean subject!) of my Interview Series. We also have an article from longtime *DW* contributor Mark Fassio on aggressive “SWAT” tactics for obliterating your opponents, a fun article from former Co-Editors/Publishers Doug Kent and Jack McHugh on “higher order” strategies, and an article on “guessing” by current fellow Co-Editor Stephen Agar. It also is highly appropriate to mention the “founder of the feast” Allan Calhamer and his new book, so we have Conrad von Metzke reviewing *Calhamer on Diplomacy*. New variants editor Scott Morris has his own introduction to what he plans to do, along with an article on 1900 by B.M. Powell and rules for “Warlock Diplomacy” by Scott himself. In its new incarnation as both a webszine and a postal szine, it will be important to have material to help people cross over between hobbies, so we have some announcements on major FTF conventions and a discussion and review of some great Diplomacy oriented Websites out there by Tim Miller. We’ve made a start at efforts to bring some color and graphics into *Diplomacy World* that I hope are pleasing, including photographs – now you will know what I look like – so future authors are asked to think about form as well as content in coming up with article ideas.

Now to harken back to George Washington, let’s observe good faith and justice towards all people and organizations in the Diplomacy Hobby; cultivate peace and harmony with all. See you all next issue!

Jim Burgess  
Co-Editor, *Diplomacy World*

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## **Diplomacy World Interview**

### **Jim Burgess Discusses Hobby History with Edi Birsan**



This is the first interview in a series that we expect will appear in each issue of the new *Diplomacy World*. I decided to begin with Edi Birsan for a number of reasons: (1) He is one of a few people fully active in the hobby from its beginnings in the mid-1960’s to date; (2) He also is active not just in the postal world, but more importantly the wider Web based hobby of today; and (3) He has been actively involved with Hasbro in its takeover of the copyright for the game. He also is one of the hobby’s very best Diplomacy players, but as Edi says himself, he has written extensively on tactics before,

especially in *Diplomacy World*. Thus, we will only lightly touch on the play of the Game in this interview itself, though we will catalog Edi's achievements in the background. Others who would like to be interviewed in future issues should contact me at [burgess@world.std.com](mailto:burgess@world.std.com) and I will be attempting to alternate interviewing US hobby figures and non-US people.

Background: Edi Birsan's first period of fame in the Diplomacy hobby was as a player in the mid sixties when he was considered the first juvenile delinquent in the hobby and then increased his skill and reputation throughout the sixties by becoming the first person to win postal games with all 7 countries. With his victory in the first champions game -- 71BC in *Diplomacy World's* precursor, *Hoosier Archives* -- he was recognized as the postal hobby's first world champion. He would eventually be a perennial invitee into *Diplomacy World's* invitational games, finally winning the first and only *Diplomacy World* Trophy for his second win. He also has a string of draws in the invitational games as well as a few eliminations. The *Diplomacy World* archives of all back issues will soon be part of the *Diplomacy World* web page we are putting together, so these historic demo games can be studied by everyone.

As a player he is probably best known for the Lepanto Opening, the most widely known of the named openings which were published in the early 70's, but Edi first used it in FTF play in NY in 1966. He was also the author of several other opening articles including the more current revival of the Sea Lion opening for France and Germany against England. He pioneered writing up articles on the play of the Game and popularized tactical discussions in a hobby that in the sixties was mostly involved in press releases and story development.

Through the early 1970's he ran two major zines (*Arena* for 60 issues and *Dune* for 83 issues from 1972 to 1975) and was heavily involved in the IDA (International Diplomacy Association) as its first and most successful President -- leading the charge in the publishing of the 1975 IDA Handbooks for Players and GMs. He also was on the organizing committee for the 1976 DipCon IX in Baltimore, running that tournament with Mike Rocamora. To this day it is the largest tournament ever held in North America with 29 boards played on the first round. Edi writes more about this and early DipCon's in another article elsewhere in this issue. At the time living near New York City, he also was a major organizer of local FTF events. Not only that, but he also was the inventor of the International Subscription Exchange with Dave Johnson in the UK and the first USA representative (a position I now hold) from 1974 to 1976.

After moving to Europe in the late 1970's, Edi went into semi-retirement. The IDA faded away under subsequent leaders. He concentrated his play in the yearly DipCon tournaments after returning to the States in 1980 and being hounded by Larry Peery to get back to the hobby in some form. He still played in a few postal games here and there, but recently, after I invited him to play in the Demo Game Ghodstoo, his postal/email Diplomacy hobby involvement has grown tremendously and he was a major liaison with Hasbro (the current holder of the Diplomacy game copyright) and organized the Diplomatic Corps which is currently one of the hobby's major international organizations with a comprehensive web site [www.DiplomaticCorps.org](http://www.DiplomaticCorps.org).

Now to the interview, my questions are headed by my initials (JB) and his answers with his (EB):

JB: I'd like ask you about your many transitions in hobby involvements, as well as your view of the future. But first, I don't want to dwell too long on the past, yet a few questions about the 1970's may be helpful as background. Much of this is before my active involvement in the hobby too. First, tell us about your two major szines, *Arena* and *Dune*. What were they like?

EB: First they are `zines. Where this `s' came from I have no idea.

JB: I suspect I might continually throw people off with my peculiar spelling, so I don't get asked this every time, we'll call them zines. OK, what about your zines?

EB: *The Arena* was a zine which had the bulk of the zine devoted to articles on play of the game and my own egotistical blah. *The Dune* was a subzine of sorts where I used to run abandoned games from others and to move games from *The Arena* to it once the decision was made to close *The Arena* down. The zine was run on ditto paper and had a circulation of 100 which was quite large back then. Amongst the other things I did in *The Arena* was to keep a detailed running breakdown of the cost of the zine so that new publishers would know what they were getting into. These were the days before spell checkers and the like so that the written quality was not up to the editorial quality of today's zines but, the content was pretty good. Currently an entire set of *The Arena* is in the Swedish Archives of Fandom, having been requested by Leif Bergman.

JB: If you were young today (the same age as you were when you ran *Arena* and *Dune*), do you think you would still try to run something in a similar way, what changes would there be?

EB: No way would I run a hobby magazine with GM gaming. I was trying to fill a need in myself and the hobby at the time for a regular tri-weekly zine which discussed the hobby and the game. Now I would be a regular writer and contributor to one of the web sites and be a much better writer for it.

JB: People reading this interview probably have wildly varying degrees of knowledge about the IDA. As someone at the periphery of the hobby at that time and having heard all of the "stories", what I would like to ask you is to reflect on the lessons of the IDA for the hobby today. The Diplomacy Hobby is more "international" now than it has ever been and we would like to make *Diplomacy World* truly an international flagship zine (sorry, zine) for the hobby. What is your current view of the future of international hobby organizations, illuminated by your IDA experience?

EB: In 1972 there was an effort to form a hobby group called The Diplomacy Association. The effort was spearheaded by John Boardman, John Beshara and myself. Shortly after starting, a major feud broke out and there were unacceptable policies in the TDA in the formation level. I then joined with Larry Peery, Len Lakofka, Doug Beyerlein, John Boyer and others to form the IDA and this was one of the major political issues of DipCon V in Chicago, 1972. I was very much then, and am now, an Internationalist when it comes to the hobby. I see it as one hobby with different regions and supporting cultures.

JB: I completely agree with you, and this is a major factor in the way we are planning to approach the new *Diplomacy World*. We also plan to avoid feuding at all costs.

EB: I saw a reason to be for the organization and put a lot of energy into getting it going. For the last several years I have been making the rounds of the International events in Europe and North America and with Hasbro going for a revival of Diplomacy I decided to make another mass effort last summer to see if I could get the Europeans on board. This was accomplished and the Diplomatic Corps was launched last August to create a hobby wide organization to provide services as needed throughout the hobby. One of the failings of the old IDA was that it became too wedded to the politics and the egos of the time, including my own. When I pulled back my activities because of a combination of burnout and moving to Europe, the remaining leaders were not able to keep it going. What I hope to be leading in the Diplomatic Corps now is to get through the minefield of egos and feuds to create a world wide leadership composed of regional organizations and supported by a membership with a focus on doing things that matter in a non exclusive, non-competitive manner. In this regard I am very happy with the acceptance and the direction of the Diplomatic Corps and its support from organizations in Australia, Europe and North America.

JB: The new *Diplomacy World* fits right into this vision of non-competitive non-exclusivity on a worldwide scale. At some point after you drifted to the sidelines in the Diplomacy hobby, you became heavily involved in the professional gaming which has evolved into your current position at Midnight Games. Would you compare and contrast Diplomacy as a game with the professional games you also work on? Historically there has been a great deal of cross fertilization between the two hobbies.

EB: I have always been a gamer. As such paying for a good game was never an obstacle either emotionally and luckily financially. As my father always said: concentrate your vices. I fooled around with Star Web and Moebius in the 80's and then through another player found out about Legends, a fantasy game system run by Midnight Games out of Oregon. I started to play and loved it. I designed a module for the company and invested in the company. Due to a string of bizarre and rather costly financial decisions I wound up owning Midnight Games and have developed the game system substantially along with new modules since 1992. Diplomacy has always had a semi `free' support from Gamesmasters. I say semi free because the postal hobby was built on paying customers....a shocking concept to nearly all Email players these days. However, in the golden age of the postal hobby people paid a subscription or a game fee to play in the games. This money was used to offset the cost of paper and production as well as postage, the most expensive item for a publisher. Email play started and players on the various Nets got use to playing for free. Because of the total lack of financial support the hobby has remained an amateur effort. One of the problems the hobby has is the financial support of itself. It operates in an economic model that does not inspire investment and advancement from an outside source. For example, I doubt that more than 15% of the email players will buy the Hasbro FTF or computer set partly because they see no reason for it. Yet, if Hasbro has bad sales, the likelihood of a second variant production is nil.

JB: This may be editorial hubris (and please correct me if it is), but my perception has been that inviting you to play in the Ghodstoo game with the likes of Mark Fassio, Hohn Cho, Jamie Dreier, Cal White, John Barkdull, and Pitt Crandlemire played a major role in bringing you back into the Diplomacy hobby. Would you comment on that transition?

EB: My re-entry into the hobby is really to the credit or fault of Larry Peery who constantly kept sending me stuff when I moved to California in 1980-81. It was Larry who convinced me to go to the Dipcon's again and Larry who convinced me to go to the first World DipCon in Europe that I hit (1997). The Ghodstoo game was more of a revival of playing postally or by email. It is also the only time I have used a judge and I must say I am not a judge fan. Of the players in the game, Hohn Cho, Cal and Pitt I had played against numerous times face to face in the DipCons in the years before. One of the things that Ghodstoo did bring out in me was the love of a well played game. Even though my results in the game were poor, it was one of the better played games that I have played. Then again you will generally always find that experienced players talk of their best or most fun games as those that they did not win.

JB: You have evolved into a central role for the relationship of the hobby to Hasbro's new products. Not wanting to put you in a difficult position, but also asking the hard question, it appears that Hasbro Interactive didn't put the "A Team" on the efforts to design the Computer Diplomacy game. The worst part is the AI computer player, which is laughably incompetent at even making basic moves. Now, my belief is that designing an AI for Diplomacy is incredibly difficult, so I would have tried to put some "canned openings" into the package. At least then it would be playable at a basic level, if a bit predictable. Would you comment on Hasbro Interactive's future with the Diplomacy product in general and the likelihood of a revised AI program?

EB: I contacted Hasbro and made myself available to help on rules, variants, and openings. In the beginning things were rather awkward and I was rather forward. However, I was able to contribute to correcting some substantial errors in the board game version before it was finalized. As for the computer version: Diplomacy is a difficult game for a computer to play. They asked me to develop several openings for each country and to script them. I provided about 10 different openings for each country with extensive `trees' that is the sort of thing that says: you are in the English Channel, Russia has an Army in St. Petersburg, Germany has a Fleet in Denmark with the Black Sea unoccupied, then do this...It was quite a lot of work. After all the work, it appears that they did something basically very wrong with the A/I since it plays so grossly that it is silly. Clearly they never made use of the openings. There was also a lot of frustration between the board game division and the computer division whose interactions with each other could have been greatly improved. Which is one reason



that the Unwanted Convoy is in the Computer version but not the board game. There has been a lot of changes in Hasbro since the project started and I have backed off from a lot of the contacts.

JB: You, with assistance from Mike Barno and others, have done an excellent job in making the Diplomatic Corps web site an easily navigable information source for the Diplomacy hobby. Do you have any exciting future plans for the development of this site?

EB: The Diplomatic Corps is not just a web site it is an international organization that is trying to help the hobby. What we are planning is to establish a leadership function such that the organization rotates around with local and regional organizations. We want it to be the focus for hobby wide services and try to avoid duplications of efforts by bringing people who provide the services together.

JB: Lastly, I still consider you one of the hobby's greatest pure players of the game, so I would be remiss if I did not ask you a few questions about the play of The Game. You were renown in the postal days for your adept use of the telephone to seal deals, raise the level of communication, and to assess the honesty of your opponents by listening to their voices. In these days of E-Mail, which is a wonderful tool for conducting Diplomacy communications, do you still see a strong role for telephone calls and voice communication (which also is increasingly possible via the web)? Tell us a little about this from both a practical/technical view and a psychological/personal one.

EB: I was probably one of the first big time phone players. I found very early that if you talked to someone you can find out a lot more about what is going on in a shorter period of time. Further, being in the 60's, it was well before spell check and the like so mail was more like so much more English homework. In the Ghodstoo game I came up against email players and was somewhat shocked. I called John Barkdull (I believe) and he had played the game for 3 years by email. He had NEVER talked to a single human being about the game ever. This blew me away. I also played in another email game in which there was a giant debate over whether phone calls would be allowed! How silly. E-Mail players often are too reluctant to talk on the phone. Diplomacy is at its best as a social game of interaction with people. This can be accomplished best by face to face or by phone. Email players seem to be much more hesitant on the phone and clearly not used to the instant on your feet thinking and talking that comes with years of face to face play. Therefore, you can often tell when some one is lying to you on the phone especially when you have a player who is not used to verbal cues. I like to talk to players on the phone in each of my games. If players say that they do not want to talk on the phone, then I know that they probably will not build up interpersonal relations with other players, and if there is a critical stage in the game they will lose out on the quick back and forth that is such a beautiful part of the game. On the other hand, email games have done wonders for my speed typing. Email players have to come out of their shells and play more face to face to remember that the purpose of the game is to have fun and make it fun for others. It is a social game, pick up the phone and touch someone.

JB: Clearly, Diplomacy as a hobby is growing by leaps and bounds on a worldwide basis. This is a very exciting time to be part of it. But all of this growth has made it even harder to some degree for players to hone their skills to prepare for top competition. What advice do you have to younger and less experienced players to assist them in mastering The Game?

EB: There is a pretty large gap in tactical skills for the newcomer and the old hands. I learned the game tactically by first inventing and then playing one on one Escalation. This a variant where you start with the board blank and each of you place a certain number of pieces down one at time, typically 12 each in one on one games, then you play the game from that position declaring 3 centers as your home at the end of 1901. This is the best 2 player variant of the game and the best way to learn what relationships are out there as the game develops and is played. However, the most important pieces in the game are the 7 pieces around the board. Learning how to play those players is something of an art. However, first you have to learn how to play your `self'. By this I mean try to look at yourself as a player.

The most common faults of new players are: (1) silly stupid lies; (2) lack of a plan; (3) lack of follow through; (4) failing to make and keep contacts in the game; (5) giving up.

The hardest things to learn are: (1) how to read the board; (2) how to read people; (3) to know what you really want; (4) to explain to someone else that there is a mutual benefit to a course of action; (5) to discipline yourself to avoid trashing your own image and reliability.

I can, and actually have, written a lot on all these areas so I will not get into it further here.

JB: No problem, Edi, thank you very much for helping us to start the new *Diplomacy World* off with such a wide ranging interview. I hope everyone enjoys reading it as much as I enjoyed asking the questions. As I said at the top, volunteers or suggestions for future interview subjects are more than welcome.

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## **The DipCon Story - The Early Years**

**By Edi Birsan and Friends**

For over 33 years there has been a single Diplomacy Convention that has had universal hobby recognition as the DipCon. The place in the history of gaming conventions as a whole as well as the stories of its development and experiments have often been forgotten, this essay is an attempt to recall some of those times before they fade away.

In the Beginning: In 1967 the postal Diplomacy hobby was only three years old and it supported some three dozen active magazines or 'zines. The centers of the hobby were Southern California, New York, Ohio and Chicago. John Koning of Youngstown, Ohio was one of the more popular publisher/GM's, and in 1967 called for an open house game in his backyard and announced it throughout the magazines. It was the first attempt at a hobby wide gathering. It netted Derek Nelson down from Canada, Rod Walker travelling from Illinois, John Smythe coming from Nebraska plus Stan Wrobel and John Koning for a grand total of 5 players. Five player variants, as well as board games were played with everyone claiming to win something, but no one recording anything in detail by tacit agreement. A great time was had by all and it was duly noted in various articles in the zines. The critical elements of the DipCon story were all there: 1. players gathering from far and wide This would be critical to convention organizers as Diplomacy players, as the travellers, would provide future support for the commitments to hotels and the like as the DipCon grew. 2. advertisement from the postal hobby. Prior to the postal hobby conventioners had no real way to reach out to gamers. 3. an emphasis on the social gathering of the postal hobby so as to put a real person behind the print.

Two summers later, in 1969 John would repeat the offering. This time the hobby was larger and once again a great time was had by all. One of the purposes of the '69 gathering was to get Rod Walker (from the mid west at that time) and Charlie Reinsel (Pennsylvania) together in the same room. The hobby was riddled with feuds and the Vietnam war was not helping one bit. This time the gathering netted 10, including Jeff Key and myself travelling from New York, Derek Nelson again from Canada (the Canadians have always provided special support for the DipCon and have made the North American experience richer by their perspectives, Chuck Liebenaur and Tony Pandin from Cleveland and a few other locals including Stan Wrobel and John Smythe, who had moved to the Youngstown area. The day started with a standard 7 man Diplomacy game but as more people arrived the game was stopped and a Youngstown variant game was played, which once again everyone claimed to have won or at least to not have lost. The night and the next day also saw multiplayer games including an hysterical game of Blitzkrieg in which the forces were divided up including within the main countries so there was an Air Force commander and an infantry etc. Diplomacy players once again showed their

inclination towards chaos when the game was 'won' by a combination of Walker's Red Air Force and Birsan's Blue Armor and artillery units combining to stab their respective allies.

For the record, the feud settling goal had a mixed result, for the duration of the DipCon the feuders got along quite well even allying with one another. A general agreement not to discuss Vietnam helped tremendously, however, as soon as the convention was history and players were back in print their feud faces were back on.

Several critical hobby wide decisions were made here. First it was decided that this was THE DipCon and that 1967 was the first one, therefore this was to be DipCon II. Second, it was also decided that there should be a hobby wide gathering every year somewhere. Jeff Key, who was moving to Oklahoma City volunteered to host the next one. Thus, it became hobby tradition that the selection of the next DipCon was made at a general meeting at the current one.

DipCon III in Oklahoma City, OK, 1970 was a major step up in the development of the DipCon. We moved from the back yard to a college campus. The numbers jumped dramatically with over 100 people showing up over three days. The DipCon also featured other games, including introductions to new games. At this particular DipCon, Duke Siegfried introduced Fletcher Pratt naval games with 1:1200 models and it became quite a rage in the hobby. Once again in typical hobby fashion when the hobby stars divided up for a Jutland Battle Cruiser actions, some of the German rear end commanders cut a deal with the British Front commanders to concentrate their fire on the player with the Derflinger who was committing some team offense. The ship was vaporized by all sides and then the battle was declared won by all and stopped.

The most major development for the hobby at DipCon III was the first official Diplomacy Tournament. A multi-round affair in which the Winner (John Smythe) was judged by overall performance. There was no rating 'system' per se just a general consensus that he had done better than everyone else. And there was no argument about it. There was also awards (plaques) for other gaming events, including Avalon Hill games won for the accomplishment of defeating the French at Waterloo as the Prussians and then turning on the British to beat them. Again typical for Diplomacy players to turn a two sided game into a multiplayer game.

From the Gaming hobby as a whole, the melding of board games, miniatures, naval gaming and Diplomacy became the standard for the development of game conventions to this day.

DipCon IV was in San Diego, CA 1971 organized by Larry Peery and was another campus affair. While there was multi rounds of gaming there was no tournament structure of any kind.

DipCon V was in Chicago, IL 1972 and was another major paradigm shift in the Hobby and gaming. Len Lakofka took the DipCon and made it part of a general gaming convention and placed it inside a major hotel. With Diplomacy players as the core of the travelers, and with the zines as advertisements support Lakofka put forward an excellent venue for gaming. It would also be at this convention that Gary Gygax (a long time Diplomacy player) introduced that other game system: Dungeon and Dragons that would sweep the country.

DipCon V also provided the first structured tournament with a first round of 49 players with the best of each table going to a final round of a single game. The winner of the tournament was a local face to face player that no one in the postal hobby had heard of (Richard Ackerley). This triggered the first of many endless discussions on whether there should be seeding or separation of postal players from others so as to keep the focus of the DipCon on postal players. While kicked around for many different times and ways, the results have always been that the DipCon is an open convention to all comers and is not reserved for one branch of the Diplomacy hobby.

The shift to the hotel setting also triggered another long debate that can not be resolved and that is the 'feel' for a convention being focused on Diplomacy only and general large scale gaming conventions.

Over the course of decades the Diplomacy hobby shifts back and forth between big venue game conventions such as Origins or BPA and the smaller scale greater focus on Diplomacy such as is common in DixieCon. The advantages of the large scale venue always remains the access to more players, more games, while the smaller scale advantages is 'closeness, comradery and more of a feel' and recognition of the winner within the hobby as a whole.

Chicago became a major focus for the DipCon starting in 1973 and almost became the permanent home until the local convention was taken over by an organization run by Gordon Anderson, who subsequently went into financial difficulties, including defaulting on prizes to the DipCon winners. This combined with a political fight over the copyright of the name DipCon caused the hobby to go back to an older idea, sponsored by Larry Perry, that the convention should rotate around North America. The Tournament in 74 in Chicago had another unique outcome: the first meeting and the subsequent marriage of Doug and Marie Beyerlein who remain married through the time of this writing (2000).

The 1976 Tournament at Origins II in Baltimore was a high mark in the history of the DipCons with 29 boards registered in the first round and about 230 players over all playing in the largest tournament ever held in North America. The system also saw the introduction of the new concepts of Best Country awards introduced by the tournament directors: Edi Birsan and Mike Rocamora as an incentive for players who did poorly in their first round to play extra hard in their second round game so as to get a trophy. The scoring system also had a variation on the concept of top board in that the games in the second round were seeded based on the first round with extra points awarded to those that played in the 'tougher' board in the second round.

The DipCon Society, basically those who showed up for a Sunday hobby meeting at each DipCon, formed a charter after about 6 years of back and forth hobby politics in the mid 70's. The charter can be amended by the vote of two sequential DipCon meetings and established a formal rotation of the DipCon around North America which has seen remained divided into the West, Central and East sections containing America and Canada.

The selection process of the DipCon has remained a matter of a simple vote of majority at the hobby meeting scheduled at each DipCon. Twice in the last 33 years for various reasons there was no bid for the next DipCon and thus there was no decision on the selection of the DipCon (1980 and 1981). In both cases a three player panel was chosen to make a selection for the hobby as a whole, a system that worked quite well to the surprise of everyone including the members of the panel.

The DipCon, which at one point was called the DiploCon, has provided over the years the best backdrop to the gathering of the Hobby elite and new comers. It has seen the experimentation of all sorts of different scoring systems, administration styles, as well a forum for a face to face discussion of hobby issues and views. Now with the development of the World DipCon (WDC) rotating around the world, the North American DipCon still remains as the place where it all started. Going strong after 33 years, it has a special place in the hobby and our hearts.

## **Records of the DipCons**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Players</b>	<b>Winner</b>
1	1967	Youngstown, OH	5	no tournament concept
2	1969	Youngstown, OH	10	no tournament concept
3	1970	Oklahoma City, OK	40	John Smythe
4	1971	San Diego, CA	40	no tournament concept

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Players</b>	<b>Winner</b>
5	1972	Chicago, IL	49	Richard Ackerlay
6	1973	Chicago, IL	63	Conrad Von Metzke/John Smythe
7	1974	Chicago, IL	77	Mike Rocamora
8	1975	Chicago, IL	51	??
9	1976	Baltimore, MD	230	Thomas Reape
10	1977	Lake Geneva, WI	180	Mike Rocamora
11	1978	Los Angeles, CA	??	??
12	1979	Chester, PA	110	Ben Zablocki
13	1980	Detroit, MI	56	Carl Echelberger
14	1981	San Francisco, CA	77	Ron Brown
15	1982	Baltimore, MD	161	Konrad Baumeister
16	1983	Detroit, MI	118	Joyce Singer
17	1984	Dallas, TX	91	Jeff Key
18	1985	Seattle, WA	60	J.R. Baker
19	1986	Fredericksburg, VA	75	Malcolm Smith
20	1987	Madison, WI	51	David Hood
21	1988	San Antonio, TX	77	Dan Sellers
22	1989	San Diego, CA	120	Edi Birsan
23	1990	Chapel Hill, NC	94	Jason Bergmann (WDC II)
24	1991	Scarborough, ONT	67	Gary Behnen
25	1992	Kansas City, KS	42	Marc Peters
26	1993	San Mateo, CA	77	Hohn Cho
27	1994	Chapel Hill, NC	70	Bruce Reiff
28	1995	Baltimore, MD	70	Sylvain Larose
29	1996	Columbus, OH	56	Pitt Crandlemire
30	1997	Seattle, WA	31	Chris Mazza
31	1998	Chapel Hill, NC	49	Chris Martin
32	1999	Columbus, OH	35	Chris Mazza
33	2000	Baltimore, MD		

# **The SWAT Approach in Diplomacy**

**By Mark Fassio<sup>1</sup>**

Like many of my fellow military members, I share an appreciation for the destructive firepower wielded by our armed forces. The "massing of fires" on a target creates mayhem and demoralization and, in some cases, allows a walkover of the position. The same approach can and should be used for your Dip game... in this case I've decided to take another "massed firepower" analogy - the SWAT team - and change the acronym. Let's talk about Simultaneous Warfare Against a Target.

There are numerous approaches to fighting your foe, or planning same with your neighbors: you can take the rapier approach (finesse, diplomacy, subterfuge, triple-cross, etc) or the sledgehammer approach (drop any pretense or niceties and just wade in and start slugging). The goal of a "diplomacy SWAT" is a Maximum Version of the sledgehammer approach. In a SWAT approach you ideally want to kick in the door and swing a bloody scythe against your immediate target(s) before they even can raise their sword arm. Then burn down their house. Utterly.

How best to do such a SWAT? Well, a real police SWAT goes in with pre-planning, coordination, cover and mass of attack. You and your fellow greedy scheming rat bastard\*\*, oops, I mean "your fellow honest neighbors" should be doing the same type of approach. A good SWAT should enlist three attackers, although four folks involved in a vaporization is equally good...but three allow you to "play one off the other" later on without a convenient balancer from the start.

WHY do such a thing? Heck, even the novices in "Diplomacy 101" know the answer to that! For one thing, 28% of the board (your two partners-in-crime) are NOT going after you. That's a nice feeling for 1901 or beyond. Secondly, it "thins out the herd:" dead men tell no tales, and all that. Third, working a SWAT allows you to play off one partner against the other as you work toward mid-game -- the old "who's the creme filling of the Oreo?" topic. You can cross and double-cross folks to your benefit if there's initial goodwill and trust. Finally, a SWAT approach in 1901 catches the conservatives by surprise. Rarely will a concerted response dissuade you, IF your initial attack is done with skill and speed. After all, if you jump, say, Austria's bones with a three-way R/T/I, what the heck is England or France gonna do?! It's "Poland, 1939" all over again.

First off, pick your immediate target wisely. Ideally it will be easily accessible by all the SWATters, so the defender can't cover the entire line with any great strength. England and Turkey aren't good targets, but France, Germany and Austria are. (Italy and Russia fall into the middle category; not the greatest to hit, but do-able with some effort.) The optimum goal is for The Three (the SWAT attackers) to trust each other with pre-planned objectives (and yes, even tentative division of spoils, to ensure motivation). With trust and a target set, it then becomes a matter of superior firepower. (In this case, it doesn't matter if your opponent is Dip Ace Supreme, like Heinz Guderian with 10 Tiger tanks. If you and your buds are the Allies with 10 times the materiel, even the great aces eventually die.) In this instance, let's pick Germany as our unfortunate target.

Second, ensure non-interference for at least the first year by any potential saviors of your enemy. If you're after Germany, a super-unexpected alliance is AIR, although any three could work: FRI, EFR, EFI, etc. If you try this, then ensure that F and G are not allied...work toward keeping the rumor mills flying. And above all, work your Psychological Operations (PsyOps) plan to spoof France...through England. Get on chummy terms with both E and F, you AIRheads. Get the German "in bed" with the Tsar on paper, then two of you (I and A) telegraph that to France. (The Tsar merely "confirms" this in a later note to England, as they discuss mutual gains, what "my friend Germany" is entitled to, etc etc.) France now hears of German perfidy from two "friends" (one of whom -- Austria -- has no reason to

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<sup>1</sup> This article was first published at [http://www.geocities.com/diplomacy\\_world/journal/swat.htm](http://www.geocities.com/diplomacy_world/journal/swat.htm)

lie), and England merely confirms it. This way, when 1901 hits, France isn't thinking anything at all about saving a rapacious Hun.

I know, I know; right about now you're slapping your forehead with your palm and wondering just how much I've had to drink. "Faz, come on: AIR? WHAT are you thinkin' here!?" Hear me out. This is, after all, just a thinkpiece.

Why not an AIR? Such a plan does a variety of things. It ensures Russia and Austria don't tussle over Galicia, thus allowing them to maximize unit utility. It also isolates Turkey, the NEXT victim of a SWAT-threesome, from all succor. It also helps ensure the solid, logical A/I, just in case Russia strays, gets greedy, etc. And it allows the AIR to get past any stalemate line in the West through swift action. Imagine this as your 1901 opening.

Germany: "the usual" Mun-Ruh, Kie-Den, Ber-Kie

Russia: War-Sil, StP-Bot, Sev-Bla, Mos-Ukr

Austria: Vie-Boh, Bud-Ser, Tri-Alb

Italy: Ven-Tyo, Nap-Ion, Rom-Apu

If France moved to BUR, more's the better! If he didn't, look at where you're at: Munich falls (3 on 2), or you force Germany to guess: does he defend Ber against a solo Russian thrust of Sil-Ber? Regardless, the Hun loses a home center in Fall 1901. Even if he lands two (Hol/Den) he only has one place to build.

So, who gets this "windfall?" In my mind it should be Italy. Italy always gets the short end of the stick when it comes to 1901 gains, and this shot-in-the-arm is exactly what's needed to ensure a good SWAT.

Here are some F'01 move ideas:

Italy: Tyo-Mun, Apu-Tun (Nap C) Build 2 (Fleets Rom, Nap)

Austria: Boh S Tyo-Mun, Ser S Alb-Gre Build 2 (F Tri, A Bud)

Russia: Sil S Boh-Mun, Bot-Swe (maybe), Ukr-Rum (Sev S) Build 1-2 (Mos& StP)

Others: Germany should be Even (gains Den, loses Mun)...maybe gets HOL, but your jobs are to prevent that by urging on E and/or F. England and France get "the usual" Scandy and Iberian gains. (Would be REALLY nice to have E and F fighting amongst themselves, but let's not push our luck here.)

OK, let's take a breather and assess the board.

In the eyes of all the SWATters, England and France have "their share" and are mollified. Each of the AIR, in varying degrees (and at varying times) should be continually reassuring the E/F players that "the SWAT isn't permanent" and "I'll help you (vs. my other two partners) as the time arises." Russia in particular needs to offer England goodies to keep things cool up North: Denmark in 1902 (your call if you actually do it, permanently or not), consideration of Kiel, etc. And what else?:

- ITALY is encouraged, equal to his allies, and ready for his next target: FRANCE. (Yup; you heard right.)
- AUSTRIA is given most of the Balkans and a lion's share of Turkey. He has the potential to exploit a beautiful A/I and turn on the Tsar later, or can be divvied up by a heavy R/I at the right time. (That's for The Three to scheme at a later date.) For now, Target 1 is Turkey.

- RUSSIA has cast-iron genitalia at this point. The Tsar is allowing his neighbors to gain at his benevolence, risking bad ju-ju with the Hun and Turk, etc. But wait! Remember that PsyOps thing I mentioned earlier? Of the three, Russia's job is to drive this train and, in the end, emerge just as strong or stronger.

So how does the Tsar do it? Easy - he "recants" to the German even while playing The Logical Assessor to the Turk. In summer 1901 Russia tells the German that he sees he was rash to make the move he did, as "the other two are cutting me out." Russia tells the Hun that he will work to "sway" his partners into putting only two on Mun while asking to go for BER solo. (A/I can reinforce this view in notes to E and F, knowing they'll get to the Kaiser.) If the Hun will just give Sweden to Russia to consummate this deal, says the Tsar, the chastened Russkie will order Sil-Gal and allow the Hun to use his two armies to defend Mun against A/I, thus saving his beer halls from an early putsch. Of course the Russian won't do this. But if the German hears hostility from A/I ("the three of us are going to pound you") and Russia appears to be the weak link (Trojan Horse is a better name!), then any logical German might just take his chances...what's the alternative? Assured homeland loss! Russia might thus get SWE as well as RUM, putting him in a position for HIS next target: England.

As for the Turk, here comes the Diplomatic Tsar again. He tells the Sultan that this misunderstanding in BLA is useless for them both: witness the tight A/I cooperation and "their" (A/I) ultimate intent to "drive a wedge between R and T, leaving us both weak to be picked on by A/I and the others once Germany is gone." The Tsar tells the Turk the same thing he told the German, i.e., he's going to make peace with the Kaiser and withdraw to Gal. Russia then tells the Sultan he only wants RUM as part of his "two-unit attack on Austria" for 1902, and that he'll be using Sev S Ukr-Rum, giving him Gal and Rum for 1902 vs Budapest. What the Tsar should be doing is convincing the Sultan that (a) he's sincere, (b) there's an A/I out there, and (c) Turkey needs to position himself to help crush A/I right out of the gate. He, ahem, "could" show good faith with F Ank-Con, thus clearing out the Black Sea as a DMZ and getting set to sortie to Aegean. Of course, this generally works only with a novice or a VERY pliable Turk. But it never hurts to ask. Or just tell him you're supporting to RUM and if he takes Black, well, fine, but he better move it in 1902. Remember, friends: it's all a lie for 1902 anyway, to condition G and R for one turn that "Russia is good."

If this PsyOps works, the Hun should be willing to cede Sweden to Russia. Boom! The Tsar goes up two and German supports for internal defense are even more wrecked for 1902. As for the Turk, well, if he's in Bla, so what? Russia and Austria are in Ser, Gre, Rum and Sev. Bulgaria is dead meat (3 vs 2), and Italy's F Ion can go to Aegean to finish him off....or it can head west for the French Connection.

There's your 1901 opening:

- Two centers for probably all of the AIR-buds.
- Turkey hemmed in, unsupported, and about to lose BUL and then a slow strangulation.
- Germany pushed into a "1945" scenario, with three foes to his front and potential vultures to his rear.
- England and France wary, but "not much so," if reassured by the SWATters.

I'll end the main discussion here, except to say that in 1902, board dynamics and the SWATers builds will guide tactics and strategy. You definitely want to crush Germany and Turkey, so you can't pick too much of a fight -- yet -- with the others. But SPEED is of the essence for circumventing stalemate lines, so if you're REALLY daring:

- Italy can play with a move to Ruh, or supporting Russia to Berlin, even as her fleets speed west.



- Austria moves the builds south, as he/she is the Great Convoyer and Reducer of the Turk. Bohemia can move in behind Sil-Ber, or into Mun as Italy vacates.
- Russia takes Berlin and moves Mos-Sev, Sev-Arm. He either helps take BUL or takes it himself. He plays defense in the North and hopefully steers England away from StP.

If the SWATters hold true, Turkey is doomed. And the attack on Germany will see Berlin taken in 1902, and the Hun slowly running out of compensatory centers and space. Italy's move westward is logical and will cause France to look south, reducing any potential support for Germany. England remains the trump card and the Balancer, as she was for centuries. Cajole and pacify England, and natural E/F fleet jealousies will allow you to SWAT the Hun and begin your next set of moves...against your next set of targets.

Wacky? Zany? Ever been done? Don't know. I can tell you that I proposed it during Round 4 of DipCon XXXI in May 1998. My Russia did indeed invade Germany, but Italy stabbed Austria right out of the gate (the fool) and wrecked the plan. Even so, as a renegade Russian I managed to lie my way into Berlin and Sweden in 1901 (must be my angelic face) and that encouraged France to establish "hegemony and a puppet" over the rest of Germany. That was so-so until the Englishman was encouraged to join us vs F/G and then we had one fluid game.

This isn't a sure-fire guarantee for instant death of a nation in one turn. But its audacity, unexpectedness, and potential to gain equally while reducing your immediate neighbors makes for a nice opening idea. Victory goes to the biggest spinners of lies and believable credibility. Break in the front doors of France, Germany, and/or Austria, then see where you are...and hey! it's only 1902!

Now if you'll excuse me, I have to sell a few air conditioners to some Eskimos.

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## **How To Lose Friends and Irritate People**

**By Doug Kent and Jack "The Sack" McHugh**

(Doug's comments appear in **boldface**, Jack's appear in *italics*.)

**This is the first article in a series by Jack and myself on macro-diplomacy: using the hobby and your activities in it as a tool in Diplomacy negotiation. By this we don't mean to imply the much maligned practice of crossgaming where a specific quid-pro-quo exists between two players; for example, you let me take Bul in Palestra and I will attack Germany in Arrival. Instead, the purpose of this series is to help teach you how to manipulate your opponents by exploiting the social circle we know as the Diplomacy hobby. With luck, we will be able to educate and entertain you in the process (as well as set you up as our hobby toadies for future use and abuse). As an added bonus we will be conducting this seminar in our world-famous, award-winning tag team style first popularized in the hobby favorite Your Zine of Zines.**

*Dougie has a real hard on for this style. He can't wait to start generating hate mail from some of the hobby dinosaurs. Given the complete lack of any feuding and the consequent dullness of the hobby, I agree with our boy Doug on this one.*

**To begin with, let us examine the makeup of the Diplomacy hobby. Much like the US government, the hobby is populated by people who can be classified as members of various factions. Most diplomats are members of multiple factions, and split their allegiance between them as circumstances direct. For example, we have the play-by-mail faction, the play-by-email**

**faction, and the face-to-face faction. And each of those factions have multiple subsubfactions. A given individual may be a member of all three factions, or just one, as well as various sub-factions. Your mission Jim, should you decide to accept it, is to learn all you can about your opponents so you can use their faction allegiance against them.**

**For example, let's say you are Russia to Fred C. Davis, Jr.'s Turkey. Before you write your opening letter, you need to find out all about Fred. You can hire a private investigator, drive to Maryland and rummage through his trash, or ask your hobby toadies to sell you information in exchange for later favors. Or you can send Jack and I money and we'll tell you everything you ever wanted to know, and then some.**

**Okay, you've conducted your initial recon on Fred. Now put it to use. Write him a long letter, putting it in large-size type. Mention that you did so because you've heard he has had eye problems in the past. Talk about some boring trip you took to downtown Camden, New Jersey last year. Tell him you are an Orioles fan. Ask if he's ever been to Europe. Then, and only then, can you casually mention the game and ask him to leave the Black Sea vacant. Of course, you might also inform Fred that Garret Schenck, who is playing Austria-Hungary, is in favor of eliminating all Social Security benefits, is a Yankee fan and wants to cut funding for glaucoma research. Oh, and by the way, perhaps Fred would like to support you into Serbia next year?**

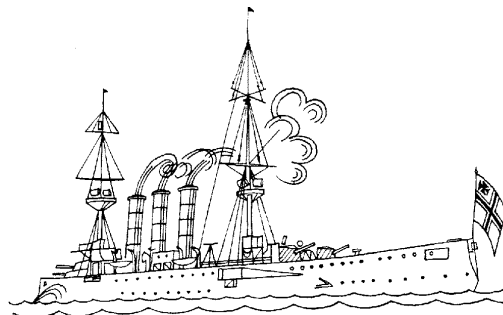
**You could even go so far as to send Fred a brief letter just before the new issue comes out warning him that you've been told Hasbro is going to force all play-by-mail zines to shut down, but that they will allow all play-by-email games to continue. Knowing that Fred does not play by email, and is easily excited, a letter such as this will throw him into such a frenzy that he probably won't notice when you move F Sev-BLA in Spring '01.**

**You should also NOT mention to Fred that you are not an elitist, have sympathies for Robert Sacks or John Boardman, or mention that any law that is popular in Western Europe should not be immediately enacted here. Fred is also a big fan of MENSA and variants, you should try and work them into any buttering up as well.**

*Okay, so you've got into the Black Sea, Fred's not too happy but you've caught a break as you casually mention you're organizing a MENSA day at Camden Yards. Now Fred is in a real quandary, as he knows better than to trust your lying ass about F BLA being a "defensive" move. How does Fred know this? He doesn't, but being an old and grizzled Diplomacy player he is completely paranoid and trusts no one. Give Fred a free ticket and some soda and hot dogs at the game. See if you can arrange to have the O's win the game, preferably against some hated rival like the Yankees or the Red Sox.*

*Don't neglect Garret over in Austria-Hungry. You can get on his good side by quoting Das Kapital in the original German. You could join Garret at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia and help him throw tear gas grenades back at the police. You can admire Garret's framed copies of his old zine Upstart. Make sure you go on and on and on about the maps.*

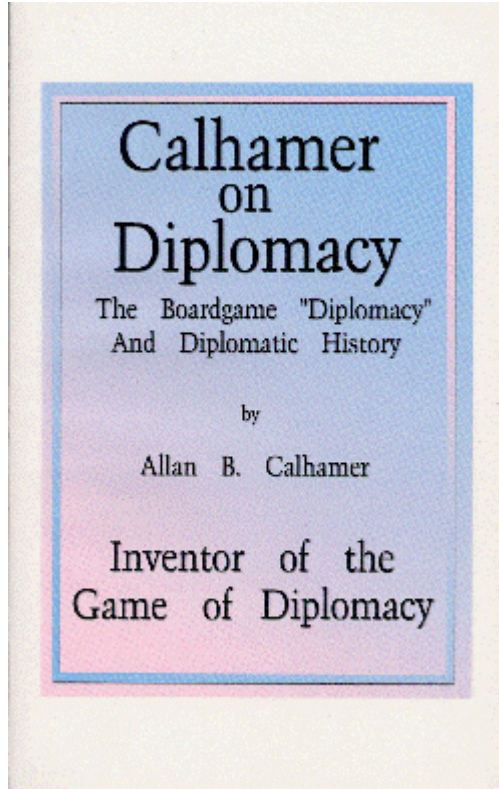
Next issue – how to get on the nerves of online Dippers



# Calhamer On Diplomacy<sup>2</sup>

by Allan B. Calhamer

Reviewed by Conrad von Metzke



Much-heralded in the amateur press over the past several months, Allan Calhamer's book about his wonderful invention that has kept so many of us entranced for so many years is now in full release. I will tell you up front that, whatever criticisms I may have to offer, I consider the book an essential purchase for any reader who loves the game even a tenth as much as I do. It can be taken as required reading, or as pleasurable reading - it will prove to be both - but in any case it is imperative reading. I find it difficult to imagine myself wanting an on-line version - I couldn't possibly read it on the screen, and to print out its 252 pages (including a long introduction) would take much time and two or three inkjet cartridges, which would push the price well above even amazon.com's quote - but I am fortunate to have received an inscribed review copy, and I assure both the author and the hobby that I shall treasure it indeed.

The game "Diplomacy" has inspired one previous book, many years ago in England, authored by Richard Sharp and unfortunately long out of print. (A second "pseudo-book" about the game, in the form of a photocopy collection of a series of turgid, wandering articles by Larry Peery, was also on offer at one time.) But the present volume is very different. It is of course obviously so because its author is the inventor of the game, but even disregarding that the focus - in fact, the entire purpose - exists on a completely different level. Mr. Sharp wrote a book about a game. Mr. Calhamer has written a book about an era in history, and about the events which shaped that era, and then - and only then - about a game that was inspired by the possibilities represented by those events. Mr. Calhamer's subtitle is "The Boardgame *Diplomacy* and Diplomatic History," and although discussion of the game plays a major part, I suggest that the two elements of the subtitle really ought to be reversed.

Players of the game will know that it is loosely based on the European theatre in World War One, but they will also know that it is not a military simulation. I, and many others, have long asserted that it really isn't a military game at all, save in an incidental sense; rather, it's a game of communication and human psychology. As such, the formal rules are comparatively simple, but the possibilities they unleash are as complicated and varied as the human mind itself. In a nutshell, this is the special brilliance of the game, and what makes it so singular among board games of all varieties.

Calhamer discusses in his book the unbelievable complexities that made up the diplomatic and political situation immediately before and during the 1914-1918 War, and offers extensive factual surveys of things that actually occurred as well as things that almost occurred, or were proposed but averted, or might have occurred but for a different confluence of prior events. He points out that World War One is perhaps the best-documented of all the major wars, particularly in terms of its

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<sup>2</sup> 1999/2000, 1st Books Library. This book can be had either on-line ([www.1stbooks.com](http://www.1stbooks.com)), downloaded to your hard drive for a price of \$4.95, or in paperback bound form from 1st Books for \$10.95 plus about \$4.00 shipping, or from amazon.com for \$17.10 plus whatever their shipping charge is.

behind-the-scenes activity, because soon after the Armistice the new Soviet government opened its archives in an effort to show the corrupt and degraded nature of the Tsarist regime, and most other combatants followed suit in order to offset the Russian action. (Further, unlike in World War Two, there was no mass destruction of material either by the governments facing defeat or by the massive aerial bombardments.) But he is also very careful, and telling, in a section discussing the idea of inevitability in analyzing past events; it is, for instance, a common perception that some sort of major European war would have occurred eventually anyway even if a Serb had not shot an Archduke. Calhamer points out the serious problems with such reasoning, by stressing a wide variety of real events that almost ignited a flash but didn't, and then were followed by another shift in alliances that led somewhere else entirely. As he says, "Events transpire in just one way, and no one will ever know whether that was the predetermined way or not." A couple of sentences later: "Historical inevitability seems to be...a belief that overwhelming causes will sooner or later produce a particular result... (h)owever, in many cases the causes are not overwhelming, and, when they are, flukish results are still possible." It is well worth noting that, in exploring concepts such as this, Calhamer does not confine himself to World War One; very often he draws his examples from more recent events, right up to and including our most recent incursions into Iraq. Very often he traces threads of similarity; equally often he points up contrasts. In part this is to allow the reader to draw on fresher knowledge, but it is also valuable to expand his illustrations of historic patterns and their malleability. Of all the finely-tuned ideas Mr. Calhamer gives us, this is the best and the strongest by far.

Calhamer makes the point, several times, that the play of his game is never as complex as the real world, and he provides myriad examples. In many ways I agree with him, particularly in the sense that there are far more definable components to any real-world event than to any board game. But in one important sense I beg to differ. Real-world events, apart from random things such as meteor showers and volcanic eruptions, are the products of the workings and intertwinings of human minds. So is the play of the game "Diplomacy." And, if it is true that the imperatives in the game are rarely as intense as in real life (e.g., no matter what happens in a game, there are not going to be any dead people), I suggest nevertheless that there is no definable difference between the extravagant meanderings possible to "real" diplomats and those offered to "pretend" ones. The distinction is degree and result, not process. And in fact, in a microcosmic way, even the results may be mirrored; I am well aware of friendships (however tenuous they may have been) ruptured by the results of games, and in many cases what really is the fundamental distinction between that and an expansion to a national scope?

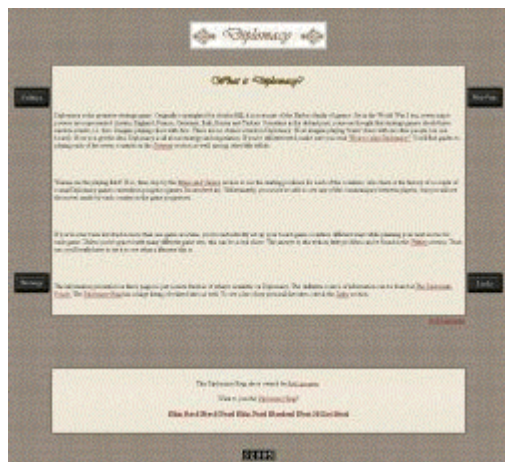
But a mere interpretive quibble does not make any statement about the book. A more substantive point concerns the book's smooth readability. At the outset we learn that the book grew from a lecture which Mr. Calhamer delivered at a symposium in Japan in 1997. It is absurd to suggest that this volume is nothing more than an expansion, or padding, of his lecture notes; there are, however, significant parts which have that distinct feel. The problem is not in the content; it is rather that they have not been "smoothed," i.e. converted to steady prose. Repeatedly, the "prose" text is a series of events or examples, merely transcribed from numbered-list form to sentences or short paragraphs. The effect, when so often used, is jagged; it stutters and interrupts the progress of the reader. As it is not the content in question - the information needs to be there to make the points involved - it must therefore be the format. In lieu of repetitive use of the same structure over and over, I would rather have seen Mr. Calhamer vary his methods and scatter the varieties around a bit: Here a formal list, there a "prose" list in expanded form, and somewhere else a full prose narration into which the list elements are neatly woven. Preference, of course, would be given to the latter despite the clear expansion of text that it entails, simply because facts and concepts are easier to absorb when the reader has the sense that they are being meshed into a greater whole rather than merely "announced."

In sum, it is flawed, but not fatally nor even painfully. And even with its difficulties, it stands as a monument for anyone - gamer or not - with more than a passing interest in diplomacy (the political interaction) or Diplomacy (the cross-board interaction). If I have any sense of my readership, most of you will put aside my 'zine immediately you finish this review and arrange to order a copy. It will be a wise action.

## Selected Diplomacy Web Sites

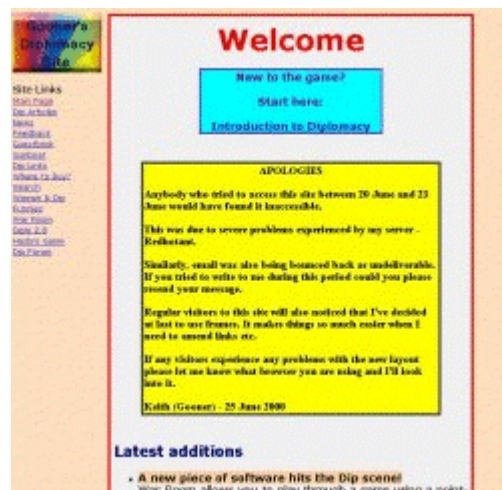
by Tim Miller

Diplomacy has fully entrenched itself on the World Wide Web. By my estimation (based on the number of sites on the Diplomacy Web Ring and the number of sites that each other site links to) there are between one hundred and one hundred and forty websites -- with more being added every day -- of various sizes, stripes, and contents. I am currently in the process of compiling a comprehensive listing of every Diplomacy site for Stephen Agar's own Diplomacy Archive page (<http://www.diplomacy-archive.com>). I am also creating my own personal web page, a substantial portion of the content of which will be devoted to Diplomacy. So with that in mind, Stephen has asked me to pen an article detailing some of the more interesting sites I've discovered on my journey through the Web so far. But of course everyone knows about such old standbys as the Diplomatic Pouch site (<http://www.devel.diplom.org>) so I will concentrate on some of the less well known, yet still very worthwhile, sites. I've presented three below, with my notes on what makes them so unique.



The first site is Rob Lancaster's offering, *Diplomacy: The Premiere Strategy Game* (<http://www.gate.net/~lancast/diplomacy/>). This site is primarily aimed at the new player to the Game, but a certified old fart might also enjoy browsing through its contents. What really makes this site unique is the introductory strategy guide, the content of which is based somewhat on the "Supernova" packets made available for newbies to the postal Diplomacy hobby. The quick synopsis of the rules given should help make the key concepts more clear to a beginning player. I particularly like the strategy articles for each great power because they list all the possible courses of action each power can take, without endorsing any one as always unquestionably better than all the rest. This reminds newbies that it is the negotiations, not just the raw tactics, that makes Diplomacy the great game that it is. There are also some helpful negotiating hints. There's also a little bit of stuff here for oldbies, most of which is connected to play over the Internet. There's a nice page that lists many of the mapping utilities available for Internet games, and the links page has some links.

The second site is *Gooner's Diplomacy Page* (<http://www.gooner.redhotant.com>), which is maintained by Keith Hazelton. I like this site because there is a lot of content here, most of which is very interesting and engaging. There is a fully played out gunboat (no press) game here, which should provide a great deal of instruction to people who want to see how the raw nuts and bolts strategy behind a game can work out. There is also an "Introduction to Diplomacy" page which features a good basic exposition of the principles of Diplomacy, as well as links to Don Turnbull's strategy articles from the now defunct "Games and Puzzles" magazine which have now found a new home on this site. More experienced players will enjoy the "Funnies" section, detailing humorous things that have happened to players in the course of playing a game, which is small but promises to grow. There is some other miscellaneous content, including a page detailing where to buy the game and a not terribly often used forum. Still, I highly recommend this page for both newbie and old fart alike.





The final site that I'd like to share with you is one for those of you who enjoy or would like to enjoy Colonial Diplomacy. *The Old Moulmein Pagoda* (<http://www.outhouse.demon.co.uk/diplomacy.htm>) is simply the best Colonial Diplomacy website out there. For people considering purchasing Colonial, it has an introduction to the variant and several maps, as well as a page detailing where one can buy this game (which is a good thing, since it is currently out of print and as far as I know Hasbro has no plans to reissue it). New players will find use for the strategy articles, written by the staff at the Pagoda, that are very comprehensive. There isn't too much literature on Colonial Diplomacy out there on the web, so this is something that is pretty unique. More experienced players might enjoy trying out the Moulmein Convention in games that they play, which adds a land bridge between Akita and Otaru to prevent Japan from being able to force an indefinite stalemate with just two units in Otaru and Sakhalin. Players of all levels will enjoy perusing the game histories, the timelines of actual events during the colonization of Asia, and the literary

selections in the officers' club. In short, this is a site well worth checking out, even if you've never even heard of the Colonial variant. You might just find a new arena in which to sharpen your knife!

That's all the space we have for today. I hope you've enjoyed this little romp through the web. There is a lot of stuff out there. I hope to be able to bring you more of the best of Diplomacy on the web. Until then, may your knife be sharp and your wits even sharper!

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## **Diplomacy For Fewer Than Seven Players**

**by Allan Calhamer**

**Taken from the pre-1971 Rulebook**

With six players, eliminate Turkey and Bulgaria. Players may not move to these spaces. Fleets may move directly from the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea.

With five, eliminate Russia and Rumania as well.

With four, drop Greece and Serbia and the following parts of Austria-Hungary: Budapest and Galicia. Trieste and Vienna are considered neutral supply bases the same as Holland, Belgium, etc.

With three, drop out the rest of Austria-Hungary and Italy and Tunis.

If a player leaves during the game, it is assumed that civil government in his country has collapsed. His units stand in position and defend themselves, but do not support each other. If they have to retreat, they are routed and removed from the board. No new units are raised for this country. If the country has to remove units because it has lost supply centres, the unit farthest from home comes off first, and the fleet before the army.

# What Do You Do When You Have To Guess?

By Stephen Agar

Sometimes in all goes horribly wrong, even in 1901. You've made your strategy, agreed suitable DMZ's, trusted in the good intentions of your neighbours and – POW – the surprise punch before the game has hardly even started. You know the sort of thing – maybe a Turkish fleet in the Black Sea, an Italian army in Tyrolia, a German army in Burgundy or a French fleet in the Channel. Or even worse, the big co-ordinated attack - an Austria with Italian armies in Tyrolia and Venice and a Russian army in Galicia after Spring 1901. Or maybe a Russia with a Turkish fleet in the Black Sea and an Austrian army in Galicia. The sort of opening which makes your heart sink and the will to fight fade.

Difficult situations in autumn 1901 can arise for all the Major Powers in Diplomacy, but life-threatening ones are rarer. Essentially you have two options in this sort of situation – defend or gamble. I have to admit that I am predisposed to gambling on the grounds that mere defence usually just prolongs the inevitable and makes for a depressing game, but even I have been known to play safe from time to time.

## Awkward Choices

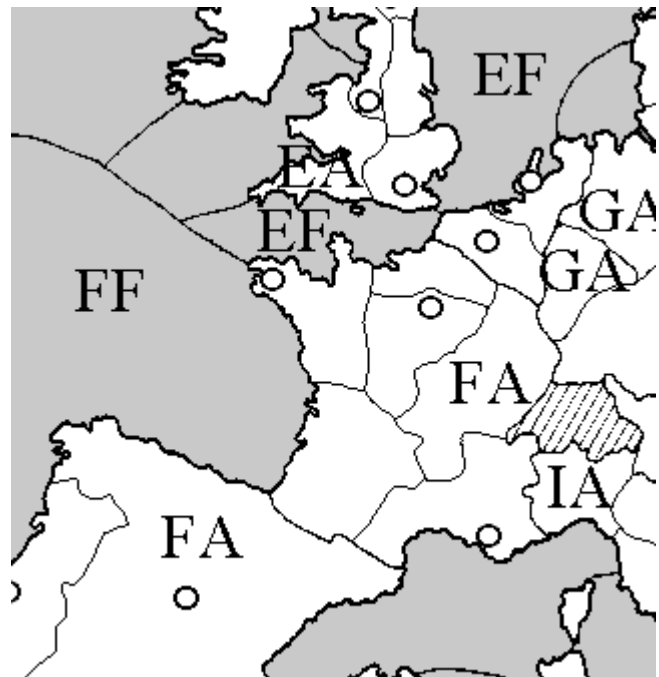
Leaving aside for one moment the problems of an Austria who fails to defend in S01 and pays the price, a more common situation is a single enemy unit that challenges a home centre after S01. In this situation you always have the option of moving your unit back in A01 and thus protecting the centre – but only at the expense of foregoing a neutral or leverage on a neutral. France is often in the position if England moves a fleet in to ENG or Italy moves into Pie – for example:

FRANCE: A(Mar)-Spa; A(Par)-Bur; F(Bre)-MAO

ENGLAND F(Edi)-NTH; A(Lpl)-Wal; F(Lon)-ENG

ITALY: A(Ven)-Pie

GERMANY A(Mun)-Ruh; F(Kie)-Den; A(Ber)-Kie



Does France order A(Spa)-Mar in Autumn 1901 and risk not taking Spain? Or does she stand in Spain and risk losing Marseilles? Does France cover Brest and therefore fail to use F(MAO) to take a neutral? Does France try for Munich or Belgium, or cover Picardy? These are all very difficult questions. However, I would suggest that they are not really the 50/50 guesses they may appear.

The first question is to determine whether or not you want to approach the issue for maximum safety – protect home centres at all cost – or risk all to maximise growth. My view is that it is always better to maximise growth in the very early stages of a game, because in 1902 the difference between a five-centre power and a three-centre Power is immense. On the other hand, if everyone thought the same as I do, then the choice for the aggressor is made all the more easy – always go for it.

One way to help formulate a response is to make judgments as to what key moves you think the opposition will do and then consider all possible outcomes – for example, looking at the dilemma over Brest (though a similar sort of analysis can be applied to other equivalent situations).

	<i>F(MAO)-Bre</i>	<i>F(MAO)-Por</i>
<i>English move to Bre</i>	France 0 England 0	France 0 England +1
<i>English don't move to Bre</i>	France 0 England 0	France +1 England 0

It is clear that the only opportunity for France to gain out of this situation is by ordering *F(MAO)-Por* as any other combination results in no growth at all (but no overall loss).

However, the situation is not as clear cut over Marseilles (assuming you don't want to use *A(Bur)* to stand-off *A(Spa)* over Mar):

<i>Assume French A(Bur) doesn't go to Mar</i>	<i>A(Spa)-Mar</i>	<i>A(Spa) Std</i>
<i>A(Pie)-Mar</i>	France +1 Italy 0	France 0 Italy +1
<i>A(Pie) doesn't move to Mar</i>	France 0 Italy 0	France +1 Italy 0

Here France can grow via either move, depending on what Italy does, so there is no early indication of what to do to maximise growth. Personally, I would assume that Italy will move to Marseilles to maximise his growth potential and therefore cover it.

And what of Germany's predicament in whether or not to defend Munich?

	<i>A(Ruh)-Mun</i>	<i>A(Ruh)-Bel</i>	<i>A(Ruh) S A(Kie)-Hol</i>
<i>A(Bur)-Mun</i>	France 0 Germany 0	France +1 Germany -1/2	France +1 Germany -1
<i>A(Bur)-Bel</i>	France +1/2 Germany 0	France 0 Germany 0	France +1/2 Germany 0
<i>A(Bur)-Mar</i>	France 0 Germany 0	France 0 Germany +1/2	France 0 Germany 0

I have put moves to Belgium as having a 50/50 chance of succeeding as they could be prevented by *F(ENG)-Bel*. Of course, knowledge of the prevailing Diplomacy may make *F(ENG)-Bel* unlikely. This suggests that Germany will only have a positive outcome if France doesn't move to Bel or Mun, and that failing that a move to Bel by *A(Ruh)* is probably worse than covering Mun (as all things being equal it is probably better not to lose a home centre when you can have no chance of an advantage by taking a risk).

### **Death or Glory?**

Now this is all very well as an aide for difficult one-off guesses – but what if the situation is more complex?



Consider a game I have recently started where I am playing Austria. I thought I had a firm alliance with Russia, but didn't trust Italy's protestations of good faith. However, in spring 1901 I was fairly stitched up:

AUSTRIA: F(Tri)-Alb; A(Vie)-Tri; A(Bud)-Ser

ITALY: A(Ven)-Tyr; A(Rom)-Ven; F(Nap)-ION

RUSSIA: A(War)-Gal; F(Sev)-BLA; A(Mos)-Ukr

TURKEY: F(Ank)-BLA; A(Von)-Bul; A(Smy)-Con



Looks terrible, doesn't it? On the Diplomacy front I immediately denounced Russia and said I would cede centres to Italy rather than let Russia have a single centre. I also offered Turkey support into Rumania – pointing out that I intended to move F(Alb)-Gre, so moving there wouldn't accompany anything other than help Italy.

The best outcome for Austria is 2 builds and no loss of home centres. The only way that can happen is for A(Ser) to stay there and F(Alb) to get into Greece. That leaves the problem of how to defend three home centres with A(Tri) and A(Ser).

So what do you do? There are so many variables that here that you have to start making some assumptions. First, I decided to assume that F(Alb)-Gre would succeed – I could see no reason why Turkey should try to prevent it. To make sure of this I confirmed to Turkey that I was moving to Greece and pointed out that if he stood me out of Greece the only result would be that Italy would get my centres quicker. Then I considered what the results would be for combinations of Russian, Austrian and Italian orders. For example:

<i>Assume Russian A(Gal)-Bud</i>	<i>A(Tri)-Vie; A(Ser)-Tri</i>	<i>A(Ser) S A(Tri)</i>	<i>A(Tri)-Vie; A(Ser) –Bud</i>	<i>A(Tri)Std; A(Ser)-Bud</i>
<i>A(Tyr) S A(Ven)-Tri</i>	Italy +1 Austria 0	Italy 0 Austria +1	Italy +1 Austria +1	Italy +1 Austria +1
<i>A(Tyr)-Vie; A(Ven)-Tri</i>	Italy 0 Austria +1	Italy +1 Austria 0	Italy 0 Austria +2	Italy +1 Austria +1

<i>Assume Russian A(Gal)-Vie</i>	<i>A(Tri)-Vie; A(Ser)-Tri</i>	<i>A(Ser) S A(Tri)</i>	<i>A(Tri)-Vie; A(Ser) –Bud</i>	<i>A(Tri)Std; A(Ser)-Bud</i>
<i>A(Tyr) S A(Ven)-Tri</i>	Italy +1 Austria +1	Italy 0 Austria +1;	Italy +1 Austria 0	Italy +1 Austria +1
<i>A(Tyr)-Vie; A(Ven)-Tri</i>	Italy 0 Austria +2	Italy 0 Austria +1	Italy 0 Austria +1	Italy +1 Austria +1

<i>Assume Russian A(Gal) S A(Ukr)-Rum</i>	<i>A(Tri)-Vie; A(Ser)-Tri</i>	<i>A(Ser) S A(Tri)</i>	<i>A(Tri)-Vie; A(Ser)-Bud</i>	<i>A(Tri)Std; A(Ser)-Bud</i>
<i>A(Tyr) S A(Ven)-Tri</i>	Italy +1 Austria +1	Italy 0 Austria +2	Italy +1 Austria 0	Italy +1 Austria 0
<i>A(Tyr)-Vie; A(Ven)-Tri</i>	Italy 0 Austria +2	Italy +1 Austria +1	Italy 0 Austria +1	Italy +1 Austria 0

Obviously I needed to take a view as to what Russia would do with A(Gal). A priority for Russia would undoubtedly be the certainty of getting a build – so he would want to guarantee Rumania. To absolutely guarantee it he would need to use A(Gal) to support either A(Ukr) or F(Sev) into Rum – but this ran the risk of Turkey moving to BLA. Therefore, I calculated that if I were Russia I would be more likely to use Gal to get leverage on Rum than have a speculative bid to seize an Austrian centre. I dismissed a thought that Russia would support the Italian A(Tyr)-Vie (the only combination of moves which would guarantee I lost a centre) as it seemed unlikely that Russia would be so selfless.

Taking the Russian A(Gal) out of the equation, and given my wish to have the possibility of two builds, narrowed down the options to either A(Tri)-Vie, A(Ser)-Tri or A(Ser) S A(Tri) Std – a choice which depended on whether I thought Italy would go for one build or two. My judgement was that he would go a supported attack, as he would not want to risk me successfully defending both centres with a single unit. If Russian told Italy he was using Gal to help take Rumania, then the above table suggests that two outcomes would result in no gain for Italy, with the supported attack on Trieste only failing if I guessed 100% correct. I tried to use diplomacy to increase the likelihood that he would go for a supported attack by promising to order A(Ser) S A(Tri)-Bud – on the grounds that I was making sure that Russia would not profit from his treachery. I reckoned that this open invitation to go for two centres would convince him I was trying something sneaky and therefore his natural suspicion would push him in the direction of a supported attack on Trieste.

So I sent off my orders for Autumn 1901 – A(Ser) S A(Tri); A(Tri)Std.; F(Alb)-Gre

And the result?

AUSTRIA: F(Alb)-Gre;  
A(Ser) S A(Tri)Std.

ITALY: A(Ven)-Tyr; A(Tyr)-  
Vie; F(ION)-Tun

RUSSIA: A(Gal) S ITALIAN  
A(Tyr)-Vie; A(Ukr) S F(Sev)-  
Rum

TURKEY: F(Ank)-BLA;  
A(Con)-Bul; A(Bul)-Gre

Which just goes to show that  
articles like this are a complete  
waste of time!

MORAL: The virtues of the  
Southern Hedgehog are  
sometimes underrated.



**Variant** (*var' e ant*) *adj.* 1. *Having or exhibiting variation; differing.* 2. *Tending or liable to vary; variable.* 3. *Deviating from a standard, usually by only a slightly difference. N. Something that differs in from only slightly from something else, as a different spelling or pronunciation of the same word.*

## Variants

**Scott Morris**

We have all done it. Ok most of us have done it. You play some Diplomacy, you have your thrills then you get the itch. The itch to tinker. You stare at the board you've been staring at for hours upon hours. You could call off the provinces in your sleep. And you begin to want to change it. You want to walk through the looking glass.

Anyone who used to read the "What if" comic books knows exactly what I'm talking about. The comic books that said what if Superman was evil? What if Spiderman married the Invisible Girl? Then you read about a world that is so warped from the regular one it is fascinating, mesmerizing, and brand new! The same thing happens in Diplomacy. What if Italy had a nuclear bomb? What if the board started to slowly get flooded turn by turn? What if I used a different map?

Variants can be summed up into two distinct groups. First you have the map variations. The Diplomacy rules stay the same but the map is completely different. Some players try to make the game 100% fair like Migraine, others use a new area of the globe like Colonial. Still others use the whole globe like Colonia. Then you have the rules variants. Here the map is the same as the original but the countries can have super human powers, or they can build in different places, you can nuke the GM, or you don't know who the hell you are playing. I love them all.

Each issue as Variants editor I am going to try to offer you one of each. A rules variant and a map variant. Occasionally they may be both! If you have ever thought up a wild, crazy Diplomacy variant send it in. As Monty Python used to say, "And now for something completely different." Don't be shy, make that variant up, have some fun, shake up the rules. Screw the world. Give the Turks super harem powers!

In this issue I am going to have an interesting map variant where Baron Powell tries to undo the perceived inequity of regular Diplomacy with a more fair but still historically accurate map. Also, I will print up a Warlock Diplomacy game that is a rules variant. I have run it a few times and the players seemed to like it. The only rule in this column is that the rules must be broken. Twist, strain, pull and smash is our motto.

Next issue I will begin a Variant Demo game. Send in your name and the variant you most love to play and I will run the game in these pages. If I get more than 7 responses to one particular variant I will do a random draw.

FINALLY – I will publish any variant idea I get. Or any strategic article on how best to play a variant. If you are the master of a particular variant fill in the rest of us. But I can't do so if you don't send it in. I am talking to YOU. It may not be in the very next issue if things go well for me, but you can take it to the bank that I will publish them all or my name is not CAPTAIN VARIANT MAN OF THE NETHER WORLD.

Scott Morris  
[Scottm221@aol.com](mailto:Scottm221@aol.com)

# 1900: a Diplomacy Variant

by B.M. Powell

I was positively delighted when Scott Morris contacted me recently and asked if I would like to write something about my variant, **1900**, for the new *Diplomacy World*. Of course I said yes! I absolutely LOVE to talk (and talk, and talk, and talk...) about this variant. **1900** is my attempt to take our favorite game, conventional **Diplomacy**, and make it better. In my humble opinion, I succeeded. :) Since the new *Diplomacy World* has a readership of over 100 million people world-wide (isn't that what you told me Scott?), I now have my chance to tell everyone why I feel this way. My ultimate goal is to get people interested in this variant so that they will contact me (at [VonPowell@aol.com](mailto:VonPowell@aol.com)) and ask to play. If you do ever give **1900** a try, I think you'll agree that it is well worth your time. In fact, I expect you'll be so impressed with **1900** that you may have a tough time going back to **Diplomacy**!

So where to start? I guess the seed for **1900** was planted after I read an article by Stephen Agar in issue #80 of *Diplomacy World*. The article was entitled "New Improved Diplomacy?" and it suggested a number of ideas to improve the basic game. Some of Stephen's ideas I thought were very good. Others...hmmm...let's be kind and say that they didn't appeal to me much. I also wasn't entirely convinced that Stephen's suggestions were sufficient to make the game "better," which was his stated goal. What would make the game better? I thought any solutions needed to address three items: play balance, player interaction, and historical accuracy.

Play Balance. **Diplomacy** does not have a level playing field. Consider the following numbers:

GREAT POWER	GAMES	POINTS	GPR	SOLO	2- WAY	3- WAY	4- WAY	5- WAY	6- WAY	7- WAY	LOSS
AUSTRIA- HUNGARY	3621	80856	22.33	278	122	173	156	56	14	4	2818
ENGLAND	3621	95799	26.46	294	177	267	189	54	16	4	2620
FRANCE	3621	107253	29.62	355	168	275	195	68	17	4	2539
GERMANY	3621	92634	25.58	322	147	207	134	69	17	4	2721
ITALY	3621	69066	19.07	217	118	166	146	66	16	4	2888
RUSSIA	3621	109875	30.34	440	132	178	123	60	14	4	2670
TURKEY	3621	95577	26.40	319	146	261	153	57	14	4	2667

Game results come from three sources: an excellent study of 3,485 games that appeared in issue #81 of *Diplomacy World* ("The Strongest Country on the Diplomacy Map" by Thaddeus Black), my records of 122 games played on America Online, and 14 games played in Tim Richardson's *The Old Republic*. The GPR, short for Great Power Rating, is based on a simple formula. Basically, I divide 180 points by the number of Great Powers that participated in a win or draw. Simply surviving does not earn a Great Power any points. The GPR is the number of points each Great Power earned divided by the number of games played.

If **Diplomacy** was perfectly balanced, the GPR for each Great Power would be approximately 25.71 (i.e., 180 divided by 7). While we should expect some degree of variation from this figure, the

numbers clearly show that some Great Powers are more equal than others are. France and Russia are heads and shoulders above the pack, while Austria-Hungary and Italy are scraping the proverbial barrel bottom. It's true that if we wanted total equality between positions we would play Steve Koehler's **Migraine** variant. The "personality" each Great Power has is one of charms of **Diplomacy**. Even so, I couldn't help but believe that each of the Great Powers could be given a more equal chance of doing well without sacrificing those aspects of **Diplomacy** that make it appealing. In fact, as I'll discuss shortly, I believed I could enhance the quirkiness of each Great Power along historical lines while leveling the playing field at the same time.

Player Interaction. While the good diplomat ensures he contacts all of the other players on a regular basis, the truth is that certain Great Powers demand more attention than others do when the game starts. The typical Prime Minister is likely to write at length to the President and Kaiser, but odds are that his missives to the Archduke and Sultan will tend to be shorter and less substantive. Why? Because there is really little that Austria-Hungary and Turkey can do for England when the game begins. If this situation could be changed so that it truly is in the best interests of each Great Power to negotiate in earnest with all of the other Great Powers, something good would be accomplished.

Historical Accuracy. This one may need some explaining. I firmly believe that a game based on historical events should create situations where the historical outcomes can occur, but don't necessarily have to occur. **Diplomacy** does attempt, in a satisfyingly abstract way, to replicate the "Balance of Power" that existed in Europe at the start of WWI. Some things are done, however, that remove the "feel" of the period. As I saw it, the challenge was to give the variant some historical flavor without adding complexity (i.e., minimize new or special rules) or destroying the delicate balance of play as mentioned above.

I was inspired enough by these thoughts to write a letter to Douglas Kent, then the editor of *Diplomacy World*. This letter discussed a variant proposal that combined my own ideas with those ideas from Stephen Agar's article that I liked. Most significantly, my proposal was based on a map of Europe at the turn of the century. After all, **Diplomacy** is supposed to start in 1901, but the map is of Europe around 1913. Douglas, ever desperate for material, turned my letter into a full-fledged article ("Improving New Improved Diplomacy") and printed it in issue #81 of *Diplomacy World*.

I figured that was pretty much the end of it. I was quite surprised then when I received a letter from Steve Reul saying that he thought the variant had merit and suggesting that we actually playtest it. If I would serve as Gamemaster (GM), he would round up the players. I responded to this proposal with an enthusiastic yes and the ball started rolling.

I soon found out how much work was needed to turn a rough proposal into a game that could be played over the internet. A suitable map had to be drawn, variant rules had to be finalized, and house rules had to be determined. As soon as I set out to do these things, I realized my variant needed a name. Since the map was of Europe at the turn of the century, I decided on **1900** (pretty clever, don't you think?). Each of my tasks took some time, but the most effort by far was invested in the map. When I finished everything and was ready to start the playtest, I'll admit I was quite pleased with the various products. All in all, I thought I had a pretty decent variant.

Sadly, reality intruded on my visions of grandeur. Playtesting the original concept showed me that not all of my "brilliant" innovations were particularly good. In fact, a few were spectacularly bad (e.g., making Iceland a supply center (SC)). The truth is that Britain, ably played by Scott Morris, won the first playtest in a rout of epic proportions. I had no recourse but to go back to the drawing board. A second playtest was soon organized and the revised variant was put through its paces. This time the results were much more encouraging. Only one apparent deficiency was discovered and it was easily fixed. **1900** appeared to be ready for primetime. Since that second playtest (which was won by John Fitzgerald playing Austria-Hungary), I've continued to GM **1900** games and I've been satisfied with the results (though the map continued to be tweaked on occasion). Still, it's far too early and too few games have been played for me to categorically state that all of **Diplomacy's** ills, real or imagined,

have been fixed. I am optimistic, though, that **1900** has what it takes to be an interesting and fun game to play.

It seems appropriate at this time to thank the people who helped me get **1900** off of the drawing board by participating in the two playtests. In particular, I want to mention Tim Frankovich, Eric Grenoux, Bob Hannon, and Eric Scheid. Their encouragement and/or contributions to the overall game design were invaluable. I especially want to express my appreciation for the support that I received from Steve Reul and Scott Morris. I doubt **1900** would have ever made it to where it is now without them.

So what makes **1900** different from **Diplomacy**? The changes can be broken down into three categories: map changes, unit changes, and rule changes. I'll briefly discuss each of these in turn.

## MAP CHANGES

As I alluded to earlier, something that has always bothered me about **Diplomacy** is the fact that the game begins in 1901, but the map is of Europe after 1912. I'm sure each of you has lost some sleep over this transgression as well. So much for historical accuracy! I thought using a map of Europe at the turn of the century would be a significant step towards correcting this "deficiency." I also believed a revised map could help establish the conditions for a more balanced game.

If you look carefully at the map at the end of this article, you'll notice the following changes:

- There are now 39 SCs. The Great Powers control 25 at game-start: Britain, France, Germany, and Russia have 4 SCs each and Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Turkey have 3 SCs each. The remaining 14 SCs are neutral at game-start. Note that only 18 SCs are needed to win, just as in **Diplomacy**. The motive behind this was to encourage solo victories and preclude stalemates.
- Morocco is separated from North Africa and is a neutral SC. This reflects the fact that Morocco was independent in 1900 and also a tremendous source of friction between the Great Powers.
- What's left of North Africa is split into two spaces: Algeria and Southern Algeria. Algeria is a French SC. This represents France's dominant presence in the area.
- The Tyrrhenian Sea touches Algeria (where it doesn't touch North Africa in **Diplomacy**). This makes it easier for Italy to stake a claim on French territory.
- Tunisia is no longer a SC. It is now simply a buffer between two SCs, French Algeria and neutral Tripolitania.
- Libya appears on the map and is represented by two spaces: Tripolitania, a neutral SC, and Cyrenacia, which serves as a buffer between Tripolitania and British Egypt. Though Turkey controlled Tripolitania and Cyrenacia in 1900, the fact that the former is a neutral SC rather than Turkish reflects the Ottoman Empire's increasingly loose hold on the area.
- Egypt appears on the map and is a British SC. The British undeniably felt Egypt was a key territory in their vast empire. Never mind that the Turks felt Egypt belonged to them. Having a British SC within arms reach of Turkish territory dramatically increases the need for British (and therefore French and German) interaction with not only Turkey, but also Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia.
- Syria has been renamed Damascus and is a Turkish SC. At the same time, Smyrna has been renamed Konya and is no longer a Turkish SC. This flip-flop makes it more difficult for Turkey to establish a dominant position in the southeast corner of the map.
- Two additional Turkish spaces appear on the map, Palestine and Hejaz. Palestine's primary purpose is to serve as a buffer between Turkish Damascus and British Egypt.
- A new neutral space, Arabia, is sandwiched in between Damascus, Palestine, and Hejaz. Turkey controls a large territory in the Balkans called Macedonia. Macedonia has two coasts, east and west, and touches no less than eight other spaces. Albania, which came into existence in 1912 after the Balkan Wars, no longer exists.

- Moscow is split into two spaces: Moscow and Siberia. This division frustrates the formation of stalemate lines.
- Trieste is split into two spaces: Trieste and Bosnia. In 1900, Bosnia was under Austro-Hungarian administration, but was not technically a part of the Dual Monarchy. The Dual Monarchy's annexation of nominally Turkish Bosnia in 1908 nearly resulted in WWI erupting six years early.
- Vienna no longer touches Galicia. Instead, Budapest now touches Bohemia. Not only is this geographically correct (just look at a map of the Czech Republic today), it also prevents a particularly nasty tactic that Austria-Hungary and Germany could use against Russia given the new unit at-start positions discussed shortly.
- Venice is no longer a SC. This diffuses the tension between **Diplomacy's** weak sisters, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Venice is also renamed Venetia.
- A new space, Milan, is an Italian SC.
- Tuscany no longer exists. Rome now borders the Gulf of Lyon, Piedmont, and Milan. This helps Italy reinforce its northern position.
- A Gibraltar space is added. Gibraltar divides the south coast of Spain in two (i.e., Spain now has three coasts: north, east, and west). Gibraltar is a sea space for convoy purposes, but an army can move there from either Morocco or Spain, and prevent a fleet from entering.
- Ruhr is renamed Cologne and is a German SC. This additional SC makes the Reich more formidable and allows it to serve as more of a counterweight to **Diplomacy's** Big Boys, France and Russia. From a historical perspective, this change makes perfect sense. **Diplomacy's** Germany is, in my mind, somewhat wimpy (curiously, its record in America Online games is particularly abysmal). Now Germany has some teeth. Interestingly, despite fears by some that I turned Germany into an unstoppable monster, its track record to date suggests it needs all the teeth it can get.
- A new space, Alsace, separates French Burgundy from German Cologne and Munich. This prevents the Kaiser from taking advantage of the new German unit at-start position to perpetrate evil on France during the first game-turn.
- Holland is renamed Netherlands.
- Switzerland is a neutral SC. This makes for some very (very!) interesting dynamics between France, Germany, and Italy.
- Ireland borders the Mid-Atlantic Ocean.

## UNIT CHANGES

Given the map changes above, my desire to capture some of the historical feel of the period, and the critical goal of maintaining (if not improving) play balance, I felt changes to the at-start forces of some of the Great Powers needed to be made. These changes can be summed up as follows:

- Austria-Hungary starts with an army in Trieste instead of a fleet. The Imperial Army was the glue that held the Empire together. The undernourished Imperial Navy was little more than an afterthought. This third army greatly enhances the Dual Monarchy's flexibility and options.
- Britain starts with four units: F London, F Edinburgh, F Gibraltar, and F Egypt. Note that Liverpool is still a SC, but the army that starts there in **Diplomacy** is gone. At the same time, note that Gibraltar is not a SC. Britain was the premier sea power at the turn of the century, but its puny army was almost embarrassing for a nation of Britain's stature. The vaunted (and diminutive) British Expeditionary Force wasn't formed until just before WWI.
- France starts with four units: A Paris, F Brest, A Marseilles, and A Algeria. The last unit reflects the military presence France maintained in its African empire. The strong French garrison was no doubt a prudent deterrent given Italian ambitions to establish an empire in Africa that the Romans themselves would have been proud of.
- Germany starts with four units: A Berlin, A Cologne, F Kiel, and A Munich. The supremacy of the German army was acknowledged (grudgingly) by all of the Great Powers. In

**Diplomacy**, however, Germany seems pathetically weak when compared to the actual colossus that was the Second Reich. The additional army gives the Kaiser real options to conduct a two-front war if necessary (or desired).

- The Italian army that started in Venice now starts in Milan.
- The Turkish army that started in Smyrna now starts in Damascus.

## **RULE CHANGES**

As I said earlier, I did not want to make dramatic changes to **Diplomacy's** basic rules. With the few exceptions discussed below, the rules for **Diplomacy** apply to **1900** as well. In all but one case, the rule changes represent little more than minor revisions to account for the new map. The one major exception involves a series of rules that I call the "Suez Canal Rules" or SCR. This set of rules dramatically increases the need for all of the Great Powers to talk to each other from the beginning of the game, an end state I definitely hoped to achieve. The SCR serve to give **1900** a distinct character.

The minor rule changes go as follows:

- Victory conditions have not changed. If a Great Power gains control of 18 SCs, the game ends and the player controlling that Great Power is declared the winner. With 39 SCs, though, it is now possible for two Great Powers to get 18 SCs on the same game-turn. Should this happen, the player representing the Great Power with the most SCs is the winner. If the two Great Powers each control the same number of SCs, play continues until one Great Power controls at least 18 SCs and that Great Power controls more SCs than any other Great Power.
- Iceland, Ireland, and Switzerland are now passable.
- Movement between Clyde and Ireland is allowed. This is true even if an enemy fleet is in the North Atlantic Ocean. A convoy is not required to move an army back and forth between Clyde and Ireland.
- Army movement is allowed between Gibraltar and Morocco. No convoy is required in this case. Gibraltar is considered a sea space for convoy purposes.
- None of the Great Powers can build new units in Africa even if they control a space in Africa at game-start.

The Suez Canal Rules go like this:

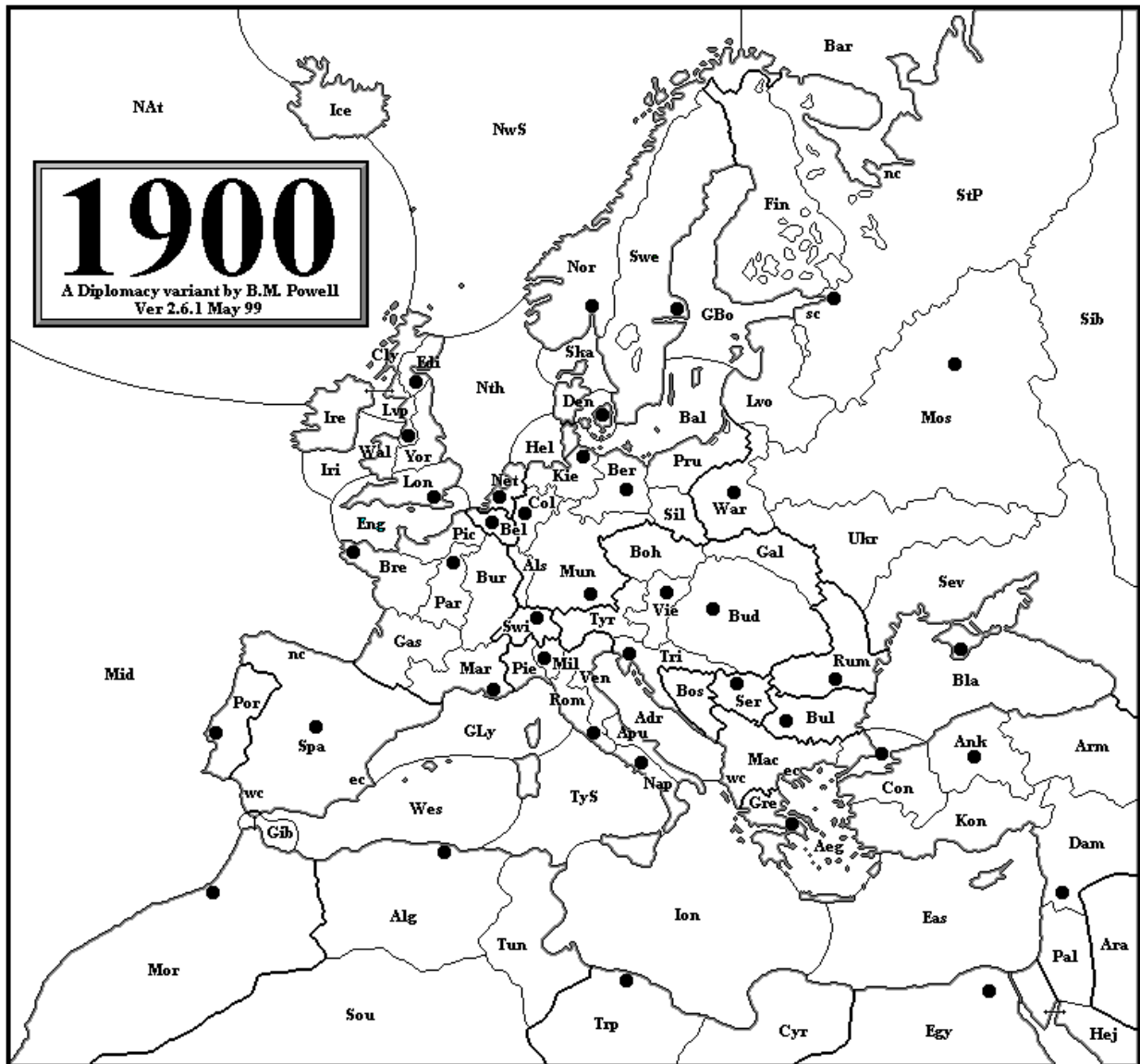
- Movement between Egypt or Hejaz and the Mid-Atlantic Ocean is allowed. It is assumed the unit travels around the southern tip of Africa. A unit that moves in this manner does so at half strength. This means that a unit adjacent to Egypt or Hejaz succeeds in moving there if opposed only by a fleet moving from the Mid-Atlantic Ocean and a fleet adjacent to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean succeeds in moving there if opposed only by a fleet moving from Egypt or Hejaz.
- A fleet in Egypt or Hejaz cannot support a unit holding in or moving to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean. This is true even though the fleet in Egypt or Hejaz can itself move to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Likewise, a fleet in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean cannot support a unit holding in or moving to Egypt or Hejaz.
- A fleet moving from Egypt or Hejaz to the Mid-Atlantic Ocean does not cut support being provided by a fleet already in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean unless the attack results in F Mid-Atlantic Ocean being dislodged. The opposite is equally true. A fleet moving from the Mid-Atlantic Ocean to Egypt or Hejaz does not cut support being provided by a unit already in Egypt or Hejaz unless the attack results in the unit being dislodged.
- F Mid-Atlantic Ocean can convoy an army from or to Egypt or Hejaz. An army convoyed from Egypt or Hejaz attacks its destination space at full strength. An army convoyed to Egypt or Hejaz attacks at half strength.



- If two units may retreat only to Egypt/Hejaz or the Mid-Atlantic Ocean, and one of them must travel around the southern tip of Africa, the unit that does not travel around southern Africa may retreat while the other unit is disbanded. Similarly, if two units are retreating to Egypt/Hejaz or the Mid-Atlantic Ocean, and one of them must travel around the southern tip of Africa, the unit that does not travel around southern Africa may retreat while the other unit is disbanded.

So, there you have it. As you can see, **1900** is, at heart, just like the game of **Diplomacy** that we have all come to know and love. The map, unit, and rule changes do, however, alter the dynamics of how the Great Powers interact with each other. Perhaps, if Scott is in desperate need of material to fill the Variants Section of future additions of *Diplomacy World*, I'll be able to address these new dynamics in-depth.

If you have any questions or comments on what I've written here, please contact me. I'd be delighted to hear from you.



# **Warlock Diplomacy**

**by Scott Morris**

I created Warlock Diplomacy to fulfil the wish to be able to destroy an enemy unit on a whim. I also wanted to have the power to overwhelm superior forces with a super unit. Not to mention the ability to confuse and make my enemy appear on the far side of the board. Combine all of this and think of Gandolf in "The Hobbit" and you have Warlock Diplomacy.

All the standard rules of Diplomacy apply but each ruler is a Warlock with powers listed below.

-Once a power is used, successful or not, it is gone.

-Each Warlock has the 20 powers that can be used anytime.

-Spells may be combined.

-You may use your magic on your pieces or others. (with the exception of Move home SC, Balloon and Illusion please note their special rules)

- At the end of Fall 1906 Extra spells will be handed out. Every country will count it's SC's then divide by 2. You drop any remainder. The countries will be given that number of random replenishment of spells. (Undead, and Balloon will not be a choice) All countries will receive at least two spells. The spells will be kept secret until played.

1 - Vaporize any unit on the board.

1 - Move a Home SC. Moves regardless of fleet or Armies in the area. Cannot be moved onto another SC. MUST move just like an Army. (to an adjacent space or convoyed in the spring or fall) You must have ownership. Though it can be convoyed it moves UNDER all other fleets and armies. (done under normal adjudication)

2 - Double-orders (the army or fleet under the magic spell moves one space, then all units including the magic piece adjudicate normally with the magic piece moving it's second move) OR the unit under the spell can do a convoy or support order for any unit (whether of the same or any other country) which is also engaged in a Double-Order)

EXAMPLE - F North Sea (double order spell) F NthS CA A Edi > Norway. A Edinburgh (double order spell) A Edi > Norway. If Norway is vacant, they move there first. THEN when all the rest of the units adjudicate. F NS CA A London > Denmark. A Edi > Norway > Sweden. If a unit is ordered to attack to cut support and it is dislodged by a double order spell, it fails in this attempt. It is dislodged before it moves. IF ANOTHER DOUBLE ORDER SHOULD DISLodge OR BOUNCE YOUR UNIT THE SECOND PART OF YOUR ORDER IS MOOT IF INCORRECTLY ORDERED.

(done under normal adjudication)

1 - Add 1 support to hold or move (done under normal adjudication) If part of a double order must specify which leg it is used for.

1 - Add 2 supports to hold or move. (must be for one piece) (done under normal adjudication) If part of a double order must specify which leg it is used for.

1 - Extra build (one unit must be dropped next winter unless a real SC is gained, or may be used to put off a -1 SC loss for on year) (Winter)

1 - Cut support (for any units attacking Trieste, or any units supporting Trieste choose one) (done under normal adjudication) If two different countries attack an SC independently with one support, this spell cuts BOTH attacks.

1 - Cut 2 supports. (same as above, cannot be divided, one for Trieste, one for Serbia) (done under normal adjudication)

1 - Power Impervious. Super Hold. The unit cannot be dislodged or destroyed by anything for one turn. This spell requires a lot of concentration and thus cannot be used in conjunction with a double order. EXAMPLE unit move to Space X then casts Power Impervious. (supercedes all other magic, including vaporize and spin the bottle) The unit may issue a normal support order while standing in place.

1 - Make unit invisible. The army or fleet turns invisible until it changes ownership of an SC, Bounces with another unit, or supports any unit.(used in conjunction with normal orders) Turkey would order F Smyrna make invisible. That is all the other players would see. The GM will then adjudicate normally until one of the above conditions make the unit visible to all again. Invisible also "hides" double order spells, swim in land or walk on water. Once the unit is revealed any of those spells used on that unit will be revealed. (Marked in priority list)

1 - Spin the bottle. One random space on the board is destroyed and impassable for two turns. (starting on the turn it is used) SC count not affected. Adjudicated first. Any unit residing there is destroyed on impact. If Cast in the Fall turn and it lands on a Home SC. That space may not build in the Winter.

1 - Catastrophe. Any 1 territory (non SC space) can be declared a catastrophe zone. No unit may pass through or move in during that season. You may leave it, but if you didn't leave it then you will be destroyed at the end of this seasons move. (marked in priority list)

1 - Walk on Water. An army may walk across any body of water as if it was land. Lasts for one full year. (Spring and Fall or Fall then spring) If it is still at sea at the end of the year (2nd turn) it will drown and be destroyed. (done under normal adjudication)

1 - Swim in Land. A fleet may cross through land as if were a body of water. If it is land trapped at the end of the year then it is beached and destroyed. If it ends up on a coastal territory it may choose the coast. A Fleet on the North Coast of Spain can enter the Gulf of Lyon using this power. A fleet in Gascony may enter Mar using this power. A fleet in Sev may move to Moscow then move to STP and choose the coast using this power. Lasts for one full year. (Spring and Fall or Fall then spring) If it is still landlocked at the end of the year (2nd turn) it will be beached destroyed. If a Fleet is inland on the second turn, it claims any SC it is on, then disbands. (done under normal adjudication)

1 - Illusion. Illusionist : The swapping of two provinces may be ordered. The provinces must both be of the same type (i.e. supply centre/non-supply centre, inland/coastal, or sea/land). Any unit moving into either of the areas concerned, actually moves to the other. Supports apply. (ex: Illusionist swaps Paris and Moscow ; Germany's A(Liv) S A(War)-Mos, A (War)-Mos, France's A(Par) stands. The A (War) would move to Paris, and the French army would be dislodged; in the subsequent retreat phase it would retreat normally. Units moving out of either province are not affected. The illusionist himself is not allowed to move or support into one of the swapped provinces for he sees the truth of the spell. Under the above example with no supports A Livonia > Moscow and A Gascony > Paris would pass each other with no bounces. A Livonia would land in Paris, A Gascony would land in Moscow. If a third unit was in Paris to begin with and was ordered to HOLD all orders would bounce.

If two countries plan out an illusionist spell, you want to support the army to Moscow in the above example. Simple change the names on your board. A (Liv) S A War to Paris would be a misorder. If a fleet needs a coast to be specified, the fleet will be placed on the coast that is closest. F BS > Con (Con swapped with Spain) F Black sea would land in Spain (sc). If the coast has equal distance the GM will make a random selection. The below swaps can be made inside but not outside groups.

Landlocked SCs:

Par, Mun, War, Mos, Vie, Bud, Ser

Coastal SCs:

Edi, Lpl, Lon, Nwy, Swe, StP, Den, Kie, Ber, Hol, Bel, Bre, Spa, Por, Mar, Tun, Rom, Nap, Ven, Tri, Gre, Bul, Rum, Sev, Ank, Con, Smy

Sea Provinces:

BAR, NWG, NAO, IRI, ENC, MAO, NTH, HEL, SKA, BAL, GOB, WMS, GOL, TYS, ADS, ION, AEG, EMS, BS

Coastal Non SCs:

Fin, Lvn, Pru, Cly, Wal, Yor, Pic, Gas, NAF, Pie, Tus, Apu, Alb, Syr, Arm

Inland Non-SCs:

Ruh, Sil, Boh, Gal, Tyl, Ukr, Bur

If two warlocks invoke the illusion spell using the same province the truth of the spell is seen by all and the illusion fails.

1 – Undead - Once a Warlock loses all his SC's he has 3 years to invoke his undead spell. It must be played on a spring turn. Then the Warlock has an army or fleet randomly placed on the board. (the Warlocks choice of a fleet or army once the space is revealed) All of his unused spells are still intact. Once the unit is placed if he has not taken control of a SC by the end of fall, he is gone forever to Warlock purgatory. IF the undead Warlock does gain control of a SC, that is his home SC for the rest of the game until he gains back one of his original home SC's. Once a Warlock gains back a home SC, his previous SC can be used for one more build, then is shut down forever. A Warlocks power is always called home if possible. Warlocks who are out of the game but have not cast their undead spells yet still have a vote in any game ending decision. Once a player has 18 SC's the game is over, and you cannot invoke the undead spell.

1 – Discord Spell - The person casting the spell may decree that two countries may not support each other for that season. Warlock A cast's Discord on X and Y. Any unit from X supporting Y or convoying Y is invalid, the same for support from Y to X. The spell has no affect on support of it's own units or other countries not named in the spell.

1 - Balloon spell. You may float any unit up into the air. It will move above the field of battle until you order it to land. It takes one move to float up and one move to float down. A Unit that is in the air may not support any other unit. The Balloon unit may, however, be supported down. If two balloon units bounce they both drop to the map. If the space under them is occupied the piece is treated as one that was just dislodged and then chooses a space during the retreat phase.

1 – Ghost spell - A fake unit may be created and ordered. EXAMPLE England F Edinburgh > North Sea, F Edinburgh > Norwegian Sea. Both will be announced by the GM only the player will know which unit is the real one. Ghost units may not support or claim an SC. They fade into mist after they come into contact with another unit without impeding the other units progress.

Once a Warlock loses all his SC's and his undead powers expire he is out of the game and his magic is gone.

**Game Sequence**

- 1) Power Impervious supercedes all orders and negates vaporize or spin the bottle.
- 2) Vaporize and spin the bottle.
- 3) Make invisible, Catastrophe, Illusionist
- 4) Normal adjudication.
- 5) Extra Build (winter only)

# Diplomacy Diary

Provided by the [Diplomatic Corps](#)

## United States

**Peericon XIX** will be held **28-31 July 2000** in **San Diego, California**, with realtime internet links to Rome and Hong Kong. For details, contact host [Larry Peery](#).

The Boardgame Players Association is presenting the **World Boardgame Championships** on **1-6 August 2000** at Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn in **Hunt Valley, Maryland** (near Baltimore). Joining the usual cast will be the worldwide diplomats of **DIPCON XXXIII** and **World DipCon X** which will be combined within the conference for the biggest collection of Diplomacy players on the planet. The BPA website, featuring information on this convention, is at [www.boardgamers.org](http://www.boardgamers.org). The schedule, houserules, and past winners can be found on the BPA site's [Diplomacy page](#). You may request email copies of this information at [doncon99@toad.net](mailto:doncon99@toad.net). The 2001 WBC is scheduled for **June 26th - July 1st, 2001** at the Hunt Valley Inn.

**GenCon** will be held **10-13 August 2000** in **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**. This large annual convention features all kinds of boardgames and role-playing games, including a Diplomacy tournament. For details, contact [Edi Birsan](#). Future GenCons are scheduled for **2-5 August 2001** and **8-11 August 2002**.

**Dragonflight** will be held **25-27 August 2000** at Seattle University in **Seattle, Washington**. This large annual convention features all kinds of boardgames and role-playing games, including a Diplomacy tournament. For details, contact [Buz Eddy](#).

The next **Diplomatic Incident**, a twice-a-year informal gathering for Diplomacy and other games, will be held in late September or early October of 2000 in the **Boston, Massachusetts** area. For details, contact [Dave Partridge](#) or watch future issues of Dave's Diplomacy subzine "[Tinamou](#)".

For a decidedly informal time, **Vertigo Games XIV** will be held in the **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** area over the **Labor Day holiday weekend**. Traditionally this house con has featured one dozen to two dozen people including longtime postal and tournament Diplomacy veterans from several states. Event details are still being arranged due to the sale of the home that hosted most of the previous Vertigo Games. For more details, contact the host, [Brad Wilson](#), or see his postal Diplomacy zine **Vertigo** with [recent issues](#) posted on the web.

The 2nd annual **Tempest in a Teapot** will be held in the **Baltimore-Washington** metro area in **October 2000**, with the site and date not yet announced. For details, visit the [Potomac Tea & Knife Society website](#) (which has recently been moved) or contact [Tim Richardson](#).

## Canada

The umpteenth **Can-Con** will be held **18-20 August 2000** at the familiar surrounds of U. of T. Scarborough, a suburb of **Toronto**. Pre-registration is \$10 for the week-end or \$5 per Diplomacy round you end up in for not pre-registering. Townhouse rooms will be charged at \$40/night. Details are in [this release](#). Send pre-registration info and/or money to: Doug Acheson at 80 Bradford St., Suite 231, Barrie, Ontario L4N 6S7 CANADA or E-mail at: [nithgrove@on.aibn.com](mailto:nithgrove@on.aibn.com). Land line link (fax) at 705 730-0510.

For details on the 8th annual **Canadian Diplomacy Championship**, to be held **6-7 January 2001** in **Calgary, Alberta**, send e-mail to host organization [Stratagem](#) or visit [the Stratagem Gaming Society's CDC information page](#).

## Australia & New Zealand

The **Don Challenge 2000** will be held **25-26 November 2000** in **Preston, Victoria, Australia**, with three rounds of Diplomacy. For details, contact tournament organizer [Jason Whitby](#).

[link] Links to a number of websites for conventions/tournaments in Australia and New Zealand are listed on the DAANZ site's [Tournaments page](#). Listed events include:

the **Australian Diplomacy Championships**, Canberra, **28-30 January 2000**

the **Waikato Diplomacy Open**, Hamilton, **25-27 February 2000**

the **Victorian Diplomacy Championships**, Melbourne, **21-24 April 2000**

the **DAANZ Tournament**, Wellington, **20-21 May 2000**

the **New South Wales Diplomacy Championships**, **10-12 June 2000**

the **Queensland Diplomacy Championships**, **July 2000**

the **Canberra Capers Diplomacy Tournament**, Canberra, **30 September-1 October 2000**

the **New Zealand Diplomacy Championships**, Auckland, **21-23 October 2000**... For schedule, location, rules, past winners, and other details, see the [NZ Dip Championships](#) website.

## Denmark

**Viking Con 19** will be held **14-15 October 2000** in **Copenhagen, Denmark**. For details, contact [Erik Swiatek](#).

## France

**European DipCon** will be held **24-26 November 2000** in **Paris, France**. For details, contact [Thibault Constans](#). If you're coming from outside France, you can contact [Shaun Derrick](#) for travel arrangements.

## Germany

**German DipCon IV** will be held **13-15 October 2000** in **Waldkappel, Germany**. For details, see the [German DipCon website](#) or contact [Andre Illievicz](#).

## Ireland

The first **Irish National Diplomacy Championship** will be held **28-30 October 2000** in **Dublin, Ireland** in conjunction with **Gaelcon**. For details, send e-mail to Fearghal O'Donnachu at [DipIreland@yahoo.com](#).

## Sweden

**BovCon** will be held **15-17 September 2000** in **Bara, Sweden** (near Malmo). More details can be found on [www.sverok.se](http://www.sverok.se), or you can contact Tobias Tofft at 040-40 02 19.

**Boras Spelkonvent** will be held **3-5 November 2000** in **Allhelgonahelgen, Sweden**. For details, contact [Adreas Carlsson](mailto:Adreas Carlsson) at 033-12 31 59.

The Swedish Diplomacy Association is compiling a "Swedish Championships" page for their upcoming website, with information about the 2000 national tournament. A link will be added soon.

## United Kingdom

[link] The long-running annual convention **ManorCon** carries past results and information about the next ManorCon, **21-24 July 2000**, at the [ManorCon website](#).

[link] The **Mind Sports Olympiad 2000**, to be held **26-28 August 2000** with the Diplomacy tournament on Saturday the 26th, has Diplomacy-related information posted at [www.lancedal.demon.co.uk/dip2000/chat/msocon.htm](http://www.lancedal.demon.co.uk/dip2000/chat/msocon.htm). For more details, contact [Stephen Agar](#) or [Mark Stretch](#).

**BreCon** 28<sup>th</sup> October at Christ College, Brecon. The first ever Welsh Open Diplomacy Championship. Form more information contact Tony Reeves, Maes-y-Dderwen, 15 Oakfield Park, Cradoc, Brecon, LD3 9QA. Email: [tonypims@hotmail.com](mailto:tonypims@hotmail.com)

[links] The long-running annual convention **MidCon** has for several years hosted the **UK National Diplomacy Championships**. Past results and information about the next MidCon, **3-5 November 2000** in **Birmingham**, can be found on the [MidCon website](#). More specifics including prices, travel information, and a method to book reservations can be found on the [MidCon details page](#).

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## Hobby Contact Points

For info about the North American Postal Diplomacy Hobby contact Phil Reynolds, 2896 Oak St., Sarasota, FL 34237-7344, USA. Phil edits [The Zine Register](#)

For info about the UK Postal Diplomacy Hobby contact John Harrington, 1 Churchbury Close, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3UW. John edits [Mission from God](#). Alternatively check out <http://www.postalgames.org.uk>

For Diplomacy on the Internet we recommend:

The Diplomatic Pouch (<http://www.diplom.org>)

Diplomacy-Archive (<http://www.diplomacy-archive.com>)

The Internet Diplomacy Search Engine (<http://www.onesite.org/dipsearch/search.php2>)

## **Backpage Comment**

**by Phil Reynolds**

I'll say it once again. I am interested in the North American PBM Dip hobby. Of course, there are many people plying exclusively electronically, even some via telephone, and certainly playing completely other games by whatever means. Good for them -- but I don't particularly care. I am interested in a certain niche. It seems you can't appreciate that. So be it. What I am asking is, let me contribute in my way to this niche. Let others contribute in their ways to other niches, or bringing together the niches, or whatever. Why do all of us have to be interested in everything that is going on? As I have said recently, I don't have any ill will against the other aspects of gaming. Let them do their thing. I want to do my thing.

There is something else which has yet to be discussed. What, really, is the PBM Dip hobby and does it even exist? I say it does exist, though not in the purer way it did before the Internet and e-mail exploded into most of our lives. Mike, you know quite well that there are some people (like Steve Mayers) who don't have e-mail and perhaps never will. Don't we want to have a hobby that allows such people to play - by mail? As I have said before, as long as there is a U.S. Postal Service, there will be a play-by-mail Dip hobby. True, almost all of us (if not all of us) who have e-mail refrain from writing conventional letters unless we are communicating with someone who doesn't have e-mail. I certainly love using e-mail, and I don't have to list the many reasons why - they are obvious. So since it's safe to say that an easy majority of people in the PBM Dip hobby use e-mail regularly, how can we still call the hobby PBM? Perhaps it's splitting hairs, but I have an answer: It's because zines, with game reports and other Diplomacy-related materials, are still distributed via the U.S. Postal Service.

Although some zine publishers also post their results on the Web, they still "snail mail" out copies of their zine. For many of us who have e-mail, this is the primary way we get game results - by mail - even if a publisher has his results posted on a Web site. Because these results are distributed by mail, and because some people still play exclusively by mail, I would argue that all of these factors point toward the existence of a PBM Dip hobby.

One other distinction that I would make: There is nothing quite like getting a formatted, nicely presented hard copy of a zine, graphics and all. It's the difference between reading a paperback that you can hold in your hands vs. reading a book by staring at your computer monitor (or certainly compared to listening to "Books on Tape"! ). Looking at a game's results on a Web site does nothing for me aesthetically - the only reason I would look at such is if I simply was DYING to see how a game turn shook out, but almost always I can wait a few days for the snail mail version to arrive. For those of us who love books, magazines, newspapers, etc., this is a very important distinction.

*If you would like to comment on Phil's view of the world or even write your own "Backpage Comment" for the next issue, please contact Stephen Agar, 47 Preston Drove, Brighton, BN1 6LA, UK. Email: [Stephen@meurglys.com](mailto:Stephen@meurglys.com)*

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This was **Diplomacy World** 85, edited by Stephen Agar and Jim Burgess, ably assisted by Scott Morris, Tim Miller, Edi Birsan, Conrad von Metzke, Baron Powell, Mark Fassio, Doug Kent, Phil Reynolds and David Partridge.

Contributions for the next issue should be in to Stephen Agar (address above) by

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2000**