

# DIPLOMACY WORLD

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*German Prisoner.* "Vy vos you spare mine life?"  
*British Tommy.* "'Cause ye're so much like a little gal-friend o' mine as I left behind me down  
Whitechapel way."

*Punch* August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1918

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## Subscriptions

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## Editorial

*“The movie “Full Metal Jacket” chronicles US Marines undergoing initial military training, then follows them to Vietnam. During boot camp, the drill inspector performs a nightly review of his troops and their quarters. One evening he is incensed to find that Private Pyle has not locked up his gear. In a fury, he scatters Pyle's possessions and says, “If there's one thing in this world that I hate, it's an unlocked footlocker!... if it weren't for dickheads like you, there wouldn't be any thievery.”*

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*An example of blaming the victim? Definitely. But also a commentary on human nature. Because people might be tempted by our possessions, we can help others quell the criminal within by providing an environment that favors honesty.*

*Similarly, recognizing the selfish nature of friendship can, perhaps paradoxically, strengthen our relationships. Each of us has a unique set of genes. Their ruthless self-interest leads us into conflict with strangers, friends, and even our families. Understanding that genetic self-interest underlies both conflict and cooperation, we can construct situations to induce cooperation.*

*Friend and foe are fluid categories. Because cooperation is driven by mutual interest we shouldn't be completely averse to seeking and cultivating opportunities with our antagonists. We should learn to be nicer to our rivals because they may be friends or spouses next week. Similarly, it pays to be more guarded with allies. Weaknesses we reveal may be used against us in the (near) future. Finally, we should be nicer to ourselves, our only permanent ally."*

From "Mean Genes -- From Sex to Money to Food: Taming our Primal Instincts" by Terry Burnham and Jay Phelan.

The Diplomacy connections in this quote are so obvious to be almost trivial, but that's not why I selected it for this issue. This book is about how our genetic code drives our behavior, sometimes in ways that are not appropriate for our modern society. Reading this wonderful book about the need to control our genetic animal passions reminded me about a key reason why Diplomacy is THE game. Playing this game helps us to do what Burnham and Phelan conclude from all of this: "The key to a satisfying life is finding a middle ground that combines free-flowing pleasure, iron willpower, and the crafty manipulation of ourselves and our situations." Check out the book, it's lots of fun.

This second issue in the collaboration between myself and Stephen Agar is a little bit late, but I think you will find well worth it. I continue my series of interviews by following the America's Cup and Olympics down under to talk to Brandon Clarke for quite some time about all aspects of the Diplomacy hobby. The focus we take WILL be international in all respects. Rick Desper reports on the demo game Ruffians, which is part of a continuing series that is now under the aegis of Diplomacy World. Ruffians was aggressively international and the new demo game, of which we will say more next issue, will be played using Vincent Mous' excellent variant Modern Diplomacy. The lineup for that game is nearly set as of this writing. Scott Morris also will be running a demo game of the variant 1900 that we wrote about last issue. Scott will continue to talk about other variants in each issue, despite the attitude of our interview target, Brandon Clarke, who describes why he really can't abide them. Stephen reckons the reprinted article by Richard Sharp from *Dolchstoss* this issue is one of the most helpful ever written on how to play Diplomacy. Edi Birsan talks about AIRheads (that's an Austria, Italy, Russia alliance!) and through his website contributes the latest list of Worldwide Diplomacy Tournaments. Wherever you live, think about visiting a Diplomacy Tournament in another country, you'll be glad you did! Kath Collman and Mark Wightman give us their experiences of two of the premier UK Diplomacy cons, while Stephen Agar describes four of the most common ways of playing Diplomacy at the present time, along with up-to-date links. I've tried all four, have you?

Why don't YOU write something for us to help us with the next issue? ☺

***Jim Burgess***

## Diplomacy World Interview II

### Jim Burgess Discusses the Australasian Hobby with Brandon Clarke



This is the second interview in a series that we expect will appear in each issue of the new *Diplomacy World*. Brandon Clarke is a major figure in the New Zealand hobby. The hobby in New Zealand is not large but they have been doing really exciting things I think you'll all enjoy reading about. 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: When Brandon was 14 his Aunt returned from an overseas trip to China and brought him back a book called *The Playboy's Winners' Guide to Boardgames*. It profiled around 100 boardgames and gave detailed analysis of them, including tips on winning strategies. The book really grabbed his interest since he always was a keen boardgamer. One chapter in this book is a 14 page review and analysis of a boardgame called Diplomacy. He had never heard of Diplomacy before, but before he had finished the second page he knew it was something special.

He then ordered a set from his local game shop, and a few months later it arrived (the joys of living in New Zealand in the mid 80's). He and his friends played Diplomacy in the weekends, and then when he was at university he discovered PBM Diplomacy and played several games postally. But Brandon is a here and now kind of guy (as we'll see below) so Postal Diplomacy never really excited him - it was too slow – and after university he stopped playing for a few years.

In 1997 he found the [Diplomatic Pouch](#) web site and his love affair with Diplomacy blossomed again. He started playing on the judges, particularly in real time games - 6 minute deadline NoPress games. He registered his name in the [Diplomatic Pouch Registry](#), and that's when things really changed. He got an email from a guy called Bob Blanchett from Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. He had seen Brandon's name in the Pouch Registry, and he said he was setting up an email mailing list for the Australian Hobby and invited Brandon to join. It was then he learnt that there was a thriving FTF Tournament hobby scene in Australia, and he set about trying to find the New Zealand one... He was sorely disappointed. There hadn't been any organised Diplomacy (as far as he could tell) in New Zealand since 1990. So he talked to the Australians via the OZDIP-L mailing list and found out how things worked over there. Then in late 1997 he flew to Melbourne to play in his first Diplomacy Tournament – see his Diplomatic Pouch Article on [Discovering the Religion of 'Donism'](#).

He was now TOTALLY hooked, and came back to NZ determined to set up a New Zealand hobby. Through the methods described in his article "[How to run a Diplomacy Tournament](#)" he gathered up contacts of Diplomacy players in NZ, and they held their [First Club Game](#) in Auckland on August 1st, 1998. This was a warm up for the New Zealand Diplomacy Championships which Brandon ran at the end of August with 29 entrants including 4 Australians. Since then the New Zealand Diplomacy hobby has blossomed. They now have active Diplomacy clubs in Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington, and one forming in Dunedin. They have four tournaments of the D.A.A.N.Z.'s 10 regularly scheduled tournaments each year, and so far in 2000 New Zealanders fill 3 of the top 4 spots in the [Bismark Cup Rankings](#) for the year (The Austrasian Championship) and they also now hold 5 of the ten D.A.A.N.Z.'s trophies (with Rob Stephenson's victory in the recent [NZDC](#) in one of the most commanding performances ever seen in the Australasian hobby) including the Bismark Cup which Brandon Clarke won last year. The 2000 NZDC had 32 players: including 7 Australians, one American and the current UK champion. Also, New Zealand boasts the top ranked female player in the world according to the DPTR and for the first time the NZDC was the biggest tournament of the DAANZ calendar year...

Finally, Brandon travelled to Baltimore in August to head the D.A.A.N.Z.'s bid to host WDC2002 in Canberra which was successful, and he finished 19th out of 141, which was excellent against the stiff competition. Now to the interview, my questions are headed by my initials (JB) and his answers with his (BC):

*JB: Thanks for that background. That gives me lots of ideas about some interesting things to ask you about. First, you didn't mention what you are doing since you left university. What do you do for a job now?*

BC: I'm an Oracle applications developer and a Business Analyst for a privately owned Quarrying, Building supplies and Civil Engineering company called W. Stevenson & Sons Ltd. in Auckland, New Zealand.

*JB: Does it have anything to do with Diplomacy?*

BC: Well, the Business Analyst side of it does in some ways. I'm required to go out and consult with people in the business, find out what they do and how they do it, and then look at business process redesign to try and come up with a way to make their jobs easier. There's often some negotiating and selling of the advantages as people tend to say "But that's not the way we've always done it!". I also work as a translator between the front line troops and the code writers in our IT department, neither of whom understand a word the other is saying half the time. That also uses Diplomacy skills to influence others, and steer them to a position I want them to be in.

*JB: Very interesting, are there any things you do better in these areas because of your experience with Diplomacy??*

BC: Read body language. Analyse what people are saying, and figure out what it is they want, and rephrase what they say and ask them if that's actually what they want.

*JB: Indeed! Well, let's get to some specifics. I'd like to start with a series of questions about tournament play, leading up to your experience in the latest World DipCon. Your first article on tournament play (in the [1997 Don Challenge Cup](#)) was my introduction to you. And having known Don Del Grande for years (he loves to travel, but he's never been well known for brilliant tournament play as I'm sure you've gathered from other evidence), I laughed my head off at the idea of a "Don Challenge". The whole thing seems very Aussie in nature.*

BC: \*smile\* It is very Aussie in nature. I met Don Del Grande myself for the first time in Baltimore, and actually have a photo of me with him. He's a really nice guy. The Legend of

the mythical Don has been blown up in all proportions, and "The Don" is really no reflection on Don. His Diplomacy style in 1992 caught a lot of the Australians off guard - it wasn't what they expected from someone who'd come all the way from the USA and had been active in the hobby there. It served as the catalyst, and from there imagination and drunken humour really just built on the legend of the mythical character "The Don", and it continues to build to this day. The Don Challenge Cup has a special atmosphere about it. Nestled as it is at the end of the DAANZ tournament calendar, the Bismark Cup is often decided at the Don Challenge Cup, so in terms of the Diplomacy at the tournament it's often for "All The Marbles". At the same time, the social side of the tournament tends to be very amusing. People tend to celebrate the sentiment of Donism, and act up and play silly buggers more so than at other tournaments. It's lots of fun.

*JB: As you look back on that article and that tournament, is there anything that you would like to add with three years of perspective to your thoughts there?*

BC: I've reread that article several times since I wrote it and I'm surprised how little I would change. When I read it, it feels like I caught the whole thing on video and am just playing it back. The Don Challenge Cup is a special tournament - you just have to come down to Melbourne and experience it for yourselves.

*JB: I was struck by how well the Aussies and New Zealanders seem to have grabbed the fun of interacting with the personalities and the competition of tournament play in the same venues. My experience in the US has been that we separate these two types of experiences into "housecons" and "tournaments". I really prefer housecons and don't go to too many tournaments as a result. Are there any secrets you can share about how that sense of fun and personal interaction happens Down Under?*

BC: Yes. The hobby down under is very well organised. We have a mailing list OZDIP-L which is used as the central hobby channel of communication. The active tournament players almost all subscribe to OZDIP-L, and so we're in constant touch with each other. D.A.A.N.Z. politics are discussed on the list where everyone can see what is being said, but tournaments are promoted on the list, people ask for rides to and from tournaments, tactics and strategy is discussed, results posted, peoples' reviews of tournaments are posted to the list... so it's very social... we all stay in contact between tournaments, and so when tournaments come around we all just walk in, and pick up where we left off on the list a couple of days before. There's a very strong sense of community.

*JB: I see, that really does help. So it is easier to pick up on social things as well.*

BC: One of the things that the participants on the list mostly all feel is that the key to our hobby scene downunder is the social side of things. We all go to tournaments partly to play, and test ourselves, and to try to do well, but mostly we go because some of our best friends are Diplomacy players and we only get to see them a few times a year at tournaments. We play, and we play hard, but once the round is over we really light up - it's time to find a restaurant, and we go out to dinner together... then we might go dancing, or often we'll go back to one of the local player's houses, or the Motel we're all staying at, and we stay up playing games, drinking, laughing and joking with our good friends... that's what keeps the veterans from burning out and keeps them coming back. Our Diplomacy tournament weekends are too much fun not to keep going to.

*JB: So there is careful attention to the social as well as the tournament aspects of the event?*

BC: How do we do this? Before the tournament, one of us will post to the list and advertise that there will be a pretournament dinner at a restaurant the night before the tournament starts. Most of the people coming from out of town try to get there in time for the pretournament

dinner. Any new tournament players are strongly encouraged to come to the pretournament dinner. This gets them into the social scene, and gives them a chance to break the ice and get to know people before the first round. After day one we usually go to someone's house for a BBQ and games - we actively encourage the new players to join us, and try to make them feel welcome... these are the good times that make me go back to DAANZ tournaments.

*JB: One thing I regret at World DipCon is that I didn't really get much of a chance to meet anyone very well, except for some of the people who were in my games. Did you find that you successfully carried that fun attitude and personality approach into World DipCon? We didn't get any real chance to meet, for example.*

BC: I met so many people at Baltimore. I had an absolute whale of a time. My only regret is that I didn't get to meet everyone. WDC was just like a DAANZ tournament to me, only bigger and better. I got to Baltimore on August 1st - I had spent two days in DC with Tim Richardson and David Norman and Gordon Aicken from the UK, as well as Fearghal O'Donnchu and Brian Dennehy from Ireland. We met up with Gihan Banderanaikie just before we left DC and played family business on the train to Baltimore while drinking some beer we'd bought in DC. Fearghal and I shared a room, and he and Brian and I went down to the wholesalers, bought 6 dozen beer and went back to our room and filled the bathtub with ice and water to make a beer fridge. We played games and drunk beer the first night with Gihan. I spent the next couple of days looking around the BPA tournament and then Diplomacy players started arriving. I was inundated with people who I'd corresponded with by email who it was really great to meet. Others had read my articles and came up and introduced themselves to me... that was also a little overwhelming. I've never had "fans" before. Then there were the cool people I met in all my games - Ku, Andy Marshall, Doug, Chuck Liebenauer, Rob Vollman, Daniel Orłowski to name but a few of them, all of whom I really enjoyed playing with and many of whom went out to the bar with me and sat up drinking beer and talking till late... all the Real Time players who I've corresponded with extensively for a couple of years... Larry Peery and Edi Birsan... Tom Pasko, Ike and the rest of the Pitkissers the list just went on and on, and I simply didn't have enough hours in the day to spend all the time partying with all the people I wanted to party with.

*JB: Ditto! If you were going to describe some parameters and experiences that Americans and other visitors would have coming to WorldDipCon 2002 in Canberra, what would they be? Why should we trek halfway around the world to this event?*

BC: Firstly, and mainly, because it great fun. Diplomacy players the world over in my experience are great people to socialise with - they have to be because it's a game of social interaction. They also tend to be gamers a lot of the time too, and so tend to like playing games after the Diplomacy.

Secondly, because Canberra, while it might not be on everyone's list of the world's top ten cities you must see, it **IS** a great place to play Diplomacy. All the facilities (restaurants, night-clubs, accommodation, Goffy's house) are all close to the venue, and the venue itself is a great place for a Diplomacy tournament. And besides, with the enticing social scene at our tournaments - most people don't think of going to see museums anyway - but if you love museums and other such attractions, some of the best in Australia are in Canberra.

*JB: Obviously, what would draw me to Canberra is that sense of FUN!*

BC: \*nodding\*

*JB: You are really making me want to go. But, some of our readers are more tournament oriented and I need to ask some questions about that too. What can you tell us about the scoring system and game play system [rules for draw proposals, length of game, etc.] at this*



*point in comparison to some of the other European and American systems that are commonly being used these days?*

BC: That's another reason to come... our systems are a little different to many that are used in the Northern Hemisphere and coming down to WDC2002 in Canberra will give you a chance to experience different ways of doing things. I found going to Baltimore very exciting and very interesting. I learned a lot. Okay, none of this is official as we are still deciding exactly how things will be run for WDC2002, but here are some observations on how we run things at most of our tournaments in Australia and New Zealand.

I've found that scoring systems tend to incorporate one, some or all of the following four factors when valuing positions in a drawn game of Diplomacy:

1. SC Count - how many supply centres you own when the draw is passed;
2. Rank - whether you are the biggest power on the board, the second biggest power, etc.;
3. Size of the lead - if you are the leader (in SC count) - how far you are in the lead (in number of SC's);
4. How many people are in the draw.

Generalizing here, North American systems tend to be based primarily on how many people are in the draw, with some weight given to SC count. European systems in contrast tend to be primarily rank based, with some weight given to SC count. In Australasia our systems are primarily SC based, with some weight given to size of lead and rank, but very rarely any weight given to the number of people in the draw.

For example the two most common systems in [DAANZ tournaments](#) are Detour98f and Cricket. Both give the most weight to SC count. It is likely that one of those systems will be used at WDC2002 although no decision has been made on that yet. Because of the fact that our scoring systems are primarily SC based our style of play tends to be less focused on eliminating other players, and players tend to be happy to be the second biggest power on the board, as long as they are getting lots of SC's out of the deal.

Our draws voting systems are all DIAS - Draws Include All Survivors - so you can't vote people out of draws, and you can't concede centres. If you want a two way draw you have to play it out to 17 - 17. Talking to several North Americans in Baltimore they were aghast when I told them this and immediately asked "Well don't you get lots of 6 and 7 way draws?" The answer is that while they do happen, 3, 4 and 5 way draws are by far more common. While there is no direct bonus for eliminating players, it's still good business from a tournament point of view for as many of your opponents as possible to get zero SC's.

The other part of this equation is we play more turns than is typical in the Northern Hemisphere. In Europe games often finish at a set year (often 1907 - 1909) and in North America time constraints see many rounds finish at between 6 - 8 hours which is often 1907 - 1910. We play with faster deadlines and so get more turns per hour than is usual anywhere else. We often play with 15 minute deadlines. But when I say a 15 minute deadline I mean something a little different to what you might think - when 15 minutes are up your orders must be in the box (there is no separate order writing period) - if they are not you NMR. And as soon as time is called the clock starts ticking for the next 15 minutes - the time you take to resolve a turn eats into your Diplomacy time for the next season... so, we often play 2 game years an hour, so for us a 8 hour game goes to somewhere around 1915 - 1916. Most game in DAANZ tournaments finish between 1909 and 1914. The other thing we do a little differently is our tournaments run on a central clock... all boards run to the same centrally administered deadlines.

*JB: What about your personal thoughts? What makes a good tournament system to you? You've run your own New Zealand based tournaments as well. I know you've written some of*



*your thoughts on this in your [DipPouch article](#), but I'm looking for the things that get Brandon's blood boiling and what motivates the type of play that you enjoy personally.*

BC: I'm unashamedly from the anal retentive rules lawyer end of the spectrum. When I run a tournament I tell the players up front I'm going to be strict about things - if you write "NOR" it will be ruled ambiguous no matter what - even if there is only one unit on the board in a space starting with NOR - you might have been intentionally misordering. To me what makes a good tournament system is if everything is as clear as possible to the players. As long as they know where they stand, and know what the do's and don't's are, then things should run smoothly. I like our faster paced tournaments, and I like our centrally timed centrally run method of running tournaments.

With regards to scoring systems, I personally prefer a Calhamerian system, perhaps with SC count just used as a tie breaker. When I started tournament play in 1997 the systems in use in Australia were purely SC count based. In a draw you got 1 point per SC you owned, period. I didn't like that at all, as I feel that rank, and size of the lead are just as important as SC count, and that since: "A win is better than a draw, which is better than a loss/elimination" the number of players in the draw is very important too. In a 3 way draw you have done equally as well as two others, and you've beaten 4 others. In a 6 way draw you've done equally as well as 5 others and you've beaten 1 other; so in a 3 way draw you've beaten more people than you have in a 6 way draw, so a 3 way draw is better.

Detour was a compromise. Ideally I would have liked to start using a Calhamerian system, but I settled on Detour because at least it was a step away from "SC count only" scoring. It's now quite popular, so I continue to use it.

When I play in club games my own results are not important to me. What matters is helping other players develop their play. But when it comes to tournament play the only results that matter to me are mine. Tournament play is a place where there are no favours, the gloves come off and it's all on for young and old. Good tournament results are what I participate in the hobby for. I've put the effort into building the New Zealand hobby up because I wanted people to play against in tournaments – in 1997 there was me and no one else in New Zealand.

*JB: And what about the ethical issues that push your buttons?*

BC: Firstly, when you start a game you're committing to the other 6 players that you are going to play the game out. Throwing a position to another player, or quitting and leaving your country in Civil Disorder really bugs me. Similarly throwing a solo really bugs me. Players who find themselves being attacked and just give up and offer mutual supports and don't even bother trying to Diplome their way out of it annoy me intensely too.

Secondly cross-boarding - taking or giving advice from or to players on other boards in a tournament is just not on. Only the seven players involved in the game should have any input to it, looking at other boards is somewhat more of a grey area.

*JB: Well, at least looking.... I am addicted to mild kidding styles of kibitzing and would hate to be shut out entirely. Yet I still am sympathetic to your point of view.*

BC: I understand people getting annoyed about players who look at other boards and then make decisions on their own board based on what they saw... but the question is how do you police it?

*JB: Ah, you mean more issues on "playing the tournament". No, I actually really hate that too.*

BC: I've done both of those things in tournament play in my quest to win the [Bismark Cup](#) but that doesn't mean I approve of them. As I said in that article, I got to a point where I decided others were stooping, and I'd just beat them at their own game and stoop better than they could.

Thirdly, deceiving the Tournament director - this is just out of bounds in my opinion. For example: fiddling the SC Chart to make it look like it reflects a position that wasn't actually reached on the board - even with the agreement of all the players. I strongly believe all positions should be played out. It's all very well for two players on 12 SC's each to say they're going to play out a two way 17 - 17 draw, but to actually do it is another thing entirely. Working under time pressure does funny things to people. People misorder; people stab when they shouldn't stab; people get spooked and convince themselves they're about to be stabbed and so stab pre-emptively. And when two players are each moving towards 17 - 17 this is when these things are most likely to happen. Saying at 12 - 12 that you won't stab, and that you will trust the other player not to stab for the solo is much easier to do than it is to follow through with when you get to 16 - 16. One player can misorder, the other sees that as a stab, and all bets are off. Or one player can look at the other, see the tension in their face and decide they just can't trust the other player not to stab for the solo. Likewise with conceded victories: there is no such thing as an inevitable solo, even if the moves are all clear cut, the player could misorder. Okay, I suppose if after the spring the player was already occupying 18 SC's and there were no enemy units adjacent to any of those 18 SC's then the player could just not submit orders, all their units would hold by default and the solo would be assured. But in reality that's never going to happen, and the larger player can always still misorder. And while that might not necessarily erode the security of the forced win, it might delay the effecting of that forced win, and that delay might see a time draw called.

*JB: It was a long trip for you to WorldDipCon, I am assuming this was your first time meeting and playing against large groups of Americans face-to-face.*

BC: It was.

*JB: What were your reactions? As is well known to anyone who peruses the results, you foreigners generally kicked our butts! We aren't all as easy to beat as Don Del Grande and Larry Peery, are we?*

BC: I think the good results had by the non North American players is symptomatic of the increasing links between the various continental hobby bases due to the internet. Ten years ago foreigners would turn up in North America and wouldn't know the players there nearly as well as they did this year. I met over 30 people who I'd never met face to face before but who I knew very well. Roy Rink is someone I've played over 50 games of email Diplomacy with and I knew his strengths and weaknesses. Ten years ago those advantages existed due to postal contacts, but it would be much harder for players to turn up somewhere they had never played before and do well. The Internet makes the world much smaller. You can get to know people, and playing styles in other continents quite well before going there. When you turn up at a Diplomacy tournament and you're the new guy who doesn't know anyone, and no one knows you, but nearly everyone else knows each other, you're greatly disadvantaged. With the Internet, and easier communication between continental hobby bases this happens less now. I think the incidence of non-native players doing well at WDC will continue, and that when we look back in 10 years time 2000 will just be the beginning of a trend, not a stand out occurrence.

*JB: Perfectly said. That is precisely what I keep saying, but many Americans look at me like I'm nuts.*

BC: My reactions were that the North American players were a great bunch of people. I loved WDC in Baltimore, and I look forward to the growth in intercontinental participation in the next few years. As more North Americans travel to Europe and Australasia (and vice versa) to play I think only good things can happen. The relative lack of face to face interaction between the continental hobby bases in the past I think has contributed to the lack of understanding of the other's methods of doing things and reasons for thinking about the hobby the way they do. As we interact more we will understand each other more, and from there I think the possibility of the feuds of the past will slowly disappear.

David Norman and I recently wrote two articles about this that Manus, David and I began formulating while driving around the Rocky Mountains in Manus' car the week after Baltimore. These are in the Fall Movement Issue of the Pouch: [Why We See Things the Way We Do](#) and [Discussion of the Location of WDC in 2003 and Beyond](#).

*JB: One thing that I enjoyed at this WorldDipCon as opposed to others I have been to was that there was absolutely no "nationalistic ally" play that I could see. This is, of course, the other side to the previous question. Do you concur with that perception?*

BC: Absolutely. On all of my boards in Baltimore it was just seven people playing Diplomacy. Where everyone came from was only ever brought up out of social interest as the players chatted between turns and became friends. The reason for it in my opinion was again the way that the Internet has broken down the barriers that once existed between the continental hobby bases. People used to make friends postally, but they can do it on a much larger scale now by email. People turning up to WDC in a foreign continent are turning up to meet friends now more so than ever before. They're not the new guy that no one knows no one and who no one knows anymore. They're there as another member of the International Hobby, and everyone is happy to have them there.

*JB: You personally did pretty well, getting three draws in the first three rounds and then getting blown out in the last round (the opposite of me, I only got a draw in the last round). Do you have any specific comments on your experience in those WorldDipCon games?*

BC: I was very pleased with my performance in Baltimore. Twice I was stabbed by allies when we were in a position to roll the board. I failed to sufficiently assess what was motivating them - both times they revealed afterwards that while they agreed that continuing to work together would have gained better results, they said they stabbed because they thought it would be more fun to see what happened if they did. I assumed they were trying to maximise their results, when they were trying to maximise the fun. That was a big mistake by me. Had I not made that mistake I think I would have finished in the top seven, and as a first up effort at WDC I'm absolutely thrilled with that. I proved to my self that I can play with the best in the world without looking like a complete novice... that was nice.

*JB: Yes, that just reminds us that even in Tournament play, we must recognize the effect of individual styles and preferences. I can play like you are describing. What about your last round game?*

BC: I actually resigned from my game in the last round when I was Germany on 4 SC's and Edi Birsan took over and played it out to a 2 SC survival. I resigned because Ray Setzer called Chris Martin over from another board and asked him for tactical advice. Chris didn't actually say anything before I interrupted and said "Guys - that's cross-boarding, and that's not on." I was so upset by the incident that I went to Jim Yerkey and told him I didn't want to play on - the game had ceased to be relevant to me. If I had played on I was pretty sure I would not have played very well at all. I might have even tried to get eliminated, but I felt that was unfair to the other players, as my position was key to the strategic disposition of the board, so because of my obligation to the other players to play to the best of my ability no matter what I

didn't feel that was an option. I felt getting a replacement player who would do the position justice would disrupt the game less than my quitting.

*JB: That's really too bad. I did a lot of walking around making "fun" comments, which definitely itself is at the edge of what you are talking about. Clearly a specific request for tactical advice from external parties is WAY out of bounds.*

BC: That game was a highlight for me up until that point. I got to play tournament Diplomacy against Allan Calhamer, who was Turkey, and he played the best Turkey I have ever seen up to S1903. He captured Greece and Bulgaria in 1901, Serbia and Rumania in 1902 and occupied Sevastapol and was pushing forward against Austria in S1903. Every move he had tried with the exception of what looked like an arranged bounce in the Black Sea in S1901 came off, many of them unopposed. I was having a great time with all the players in that game, and I had a great time in all my games. Rob Cochran (G), Blue (R) and I (F) had a great alliance in round one and were very close to rolling the entire board when an inspired piece of diplomacy by Brian Dennehy (A) got Rob to stab and break up our alliance. That game was a blast.

*JB: Any little tidbits from Round 2 or Round 3?*

BC: In round two I had the pleasure of playing with Chuck Liebenauer for the first time in the tournament, and despite eliminating his Turkey (I was Italy) very much enjoyed his play. That game saw some great friendships developed. Andy Marshall was France and him and I had a blast together. Doug Faust and I worked together and later went head to head, and Chris Kulander stabbed me (and everyone else he could get to) all in one turn to go from 7 SC's to 13 in one turn and win the Golden Blade award.

*JB: Ah, so you were in THAT game. I was in the game that Simon Bouton won to take the whole tournament. At least I feel good that I offered the warnings, which were not heeded....*

BC: In round three I was Russia with Grant Flowers as Turkey and Chuck Liebenauer Austria and Rob Vollman Italy. In the end we all formed a grand alliance to stop the forces of the west from rolling us, and we only just got it together in time. That game was a huge buzz, all the players were really enjoyable to play with.

*JB: Last question on WorldDipCon, I am not fond of that game system/scoring system with the 29 center rule. What do you think about it?*

BC: How many words am I allowed to use?

*JB: Keep yourself under control and that word needs to respect that this is a "family friendly" zone.*

BC: If the limit is one, then my answer would have to be "Crap".

*JB: Well, you could say a little more than that.*

BC: I understand what it tries to do, but I am a very strong proponent of DIAS draws with no concessions as I said above. The whole concept of voting people out of draws is abhorrent to me. I've discussed this with Edi Birsan, and he says he finds the elimination of people and the playing out of solo victories a gross display of power, and would far rather use the power of persuasion to Diplome others into agreeing he would win. He sees this as a far better display of Diplomatic skill than the achievement of a solo victory on the board. I can see where he is coming from, but I still disagree. I don't mind NoDIAS draws in and of themselves so much, as long as the vote is unanimous. Non-unanimous NoDIAS draws are just crazy to me.

Craig Sedgwick from Sydney, Australia said to me on the morning of Day 2: "I did something I NEVER thought I'd do yesterday - I voted myself out of a draw because I got more points for doing that than I would have for playing on." To me that's silly.

Something I was more against however than the 29 centre voting rule was the scoring system and how it handled losses to solos. As I said before I firmly believe "A win is better than a draw, which is better than a loss/elimination". I feel that is an inviolable rule of Diplomacy scoring. As I understand it, in Baltimore you got 1 point per SC you controlled if someone soloed. So if you controlled 14 SC's when someone else got 18, you scored 14 points. Contrast that to if you had a 2 SC position in a 5 way draw - you got 2 points, plus a 1 point bonus for the 5 way draw giving you three points. So in this case a loss position was worth more than a draw position. That to me is just completely wrong.

*JB: Let's shift gears to game speed. You are something of a turbo player. I noted in the biography above that you haven't played much postally and you are a highly experienced Real Time Dip E-Mail player. Are you extremely focused when you are playing? Totally into the game at hand? What do you like so much about fast games?*

BC: Yes, when I play Diplomacy Face to Face I'm totally focussed. I think you have to be. I like that about the game. It's cleansing. You can be having a really crap week, and go to a tournament, and you just have to leave all the crap behind. There's no room for baggage, you have to concentrate on Diplomacy, and COMPLETELY on Diplomacy.

When I'm playing email Diplomacy it's a little different. I do think about my games all the time though, when I'm shaving, when I'm driving to and from work, on the toilet. I'm constantly tossing the situation around in my head trying to come up with better approaches and constantly trying to look at it from different points of view. Deadlines of a week are hard for me, because they are too long. I look at the board, I figure out the moves, I do my Diplomacy, I amend my moves accordingly. And then I have to wait for 5 days for the results. It's hell. 3 day (72 hour) deadlines are about as long as I can stand.

I guess it's to do with the reasons I play email Diplomacy. It's a training ground for Face to Face tournament play for me. It's where I try new things, but mostly it's where I polish my tactics. Being able to look at the board and assess the tactical situation in 30 seconds is a HUGE advantage to a FTF Tournament player. NoPress games are what I use to practice this ability. In a NoPress game there's no negotiating to distract you. All your information comes from the board, so it's all about figuring out what people will do based on the tactical situation. If you can do this in tournament play you have a big advantage, because when what someone says doesn't match what you've assessed their best tactical move is it immediately sets alarm bells off in your head. I play Real Time NoPress to practice this skill - 6 minute deadlines mean that in 4 or 5 hours you can play a whole game, and it's throughput of turns that helps develop this skill. Other NoPress games (I play about 5 at a time) run on 24 hour deadlines, which is heaps of time because all you do is get the results, look at the board for 2 or 3 minutes and send your moves in. 24 hours gives everyone a chance to do this no matter what time zone they are in.

*JB: I am not a fan of the tactical experience of that kind of fast No Press (no communication with other players except through moves) game. Do you think it sharpens your tactics that much?*

BC: Enormously. You only have 15 minutes in a tournament game to talk to everyone. Being able to look at the board and decide on the best set of orders for all 34 pieces in less than a minute is a HUGE advantage. Not only does it give you more time to negotiate, but it also means you can assess the situation, and be comfortable with it, and then start talking to other players before they have assessed the situation. Then you catch them off guard, and the truth

comes out. If you can get your head around the board position faster than others can you can then negotiate with them with the advantage of a more complete understanding of the board than they have. If they are unsure about something they'll let it show, and people are usually unsure about the parts of the board they are paying less attention to. By implication you can then see what part of the board they are paying attention to. A simple "I haven't really looked at that part of it yet" from one of your opponents can tell you everything you need to know about what they are planning, and all very unobtrusively.

*JB: Yes, that does make sense. I know for me, that is one reason why I GM by hand, and in my head, in my postal szine. It keeps my tactical chops up to snuff. You have to get to people to influence them BEFORE they solidify on a plan.*

BC: Furthermore, players often tend to go with the first good plan proposed to them. Being able to assess the board quickly, and then get in the first proposal makes it MUCH easier to shape the board to your liking. People who are undecided will also tend to side with the player who seems most self assured and most in tune with what is going on on the board. By being able to analyse the situation quicker than other players you naturally give yourself this advantage. You can also identify who you need to talk to first more quickly than others, and grab them before someone else does.

*JB: Have you personally developed any particular tactical ploys that you see as particularly novel?*

BC: Yes, but that would be telling wouldn't it...? :o)

*JB: Oh come on... well, OK. I see you almost entirely as a player of the regular straight Diplomacy game. Is that true?*

BC: Almost entirely.

*JB: Are there any variants you particularly like?*

BC: \*shudder\* Variants-Schmariants!!!! I said earlier I was unashamedly an anal-retentive rules lawyer type... I'm also unashamedly a hater of variants. I don't automatically think variants are bad, but in my experience only about one in ten are worth playing. I'd rather not spend nine crap sessions playing crap variants when if I just played standard Diplomacy all the time I KNOW I'd have ten good games.

There are some variants I've played and will play again. Manus Hand's Payola is just brilliant. It takes the crux of Diplomacy - that you don't know who you can trust until after the move has processed and makes it even better because in Payola you still don't know who you can trust even after the move has processed. I love Payola. It's almost better than Standard Diplomacy. I also like Chromatic, which is good if you only have 5 players. Apart from that variants have tended to leave me cold.

*JB: That's interesting, would you like to expand on that answer a bit, why do they leave you cold?*

BC: The same reason I order a Chicken Avocado and Bacon burger every time I go to Burger Wisconsin (a local gourmet Burger chain in New Zealand). I'm sure their other burgers are absolutely wonderful. But ordering one would be one time I'd missed out on a C-A-B, and that's just criminal... Playing a variant is like that - it might be good, but nine times out of ten it will be crap. Why miss out on 9 good games of the best board game ever made?

*JB: Is that attitude about variants fairly typical of other New Zealanders and Australians that you know (feel free to tell me if I am asking for generalizations that don't make sense about two whole countries)?*



BC: On this point. Australia and New Zealand are two distinct countries. With regards to Diplomacy though we've tried really hard to consciously treat them as one hobby - we're both better off with closer ties between us, as it makes our hobby bigger, stronger and better. There's fierce national pride and competition between the Aussies (pronounced Ozzies, not Ossies as the people on ESPN and CNN insist on saying) and the Kiwis, but this is a friendly rivalry that is inherent in all competitions between Australia and New Zealand. A couple of times in Baltimore people, Edi Birsan for example, referred to the Australian hobby. This really offends me... it's the Australasian hobby - Australia and New Zealand. We are not part of Australia. We're our own country with our own identity. This same feeling I think is a problem in North America that a lot of "Americans" (people from the USA) might not understand. Canadians HATE being lumped in with "Americans". They're NORTH Americans - Canada and the USA. - to be lazy and just say "America" instead of "North America" offends Canadians in my experience. It's not the "American" hobby, it's the North American hobby. Canada and the USA should work together in Diplomacy like New Zealand and Australia do. Attracting cross border players within North America HAS to be a good idea. Referring to the hobby as "The American Hobby" doesn't help in this regard. It alienates the Canadians and makes them feel overlooked in the same way that referring to the Australasian hobby as the Australian hobby offends and isolates us Kiwis.

*JB: Great point, back on the variant issue, I know I couldn't answer a question like that about Americans.*

BC: No, my attitude about variants is pretty extreme. Jimmy Millington and Rob Schone from Wellington, New Zealand co-designed Chromatic with Nick Fitzpatrick for example.

*JB: Lastly, I want to ask you a series of questions about clubs and the people you've met in Diplomacy. How often do the New Zealand clubs meet?*

BC: The Auckland Club is the most active and we meet every two or three weeks. Leading up to a tournament though there might be 5 games in a two weeks. We use club games as warm ups. Wellington meets about once a month, and the Hamilton Club varies - probably about once a month too at present.

*JB: Do they meet just in tournament style play or do they sometimes just mess around and play games?*

BC: We record the club results and have [full club results and rankings on the Web](#), so they can be quite serious. People pay quite a lot of attention to the club rankings for example. We often play other games too, and club scene is very social so often we'll get together for a game, find we only have 5 people in the end and so go out to the pub or a restaurant instead.

*JB: The percentage of female members of the New Zealand diplomacy hobby is one of the highest in the world. First, can you explain this success at having more sexual balance?*

BC: Yes. We have made a conscious effort to nurture this. Actually it has been part of a conscious effort to nurture new players, but there has been a particular effort to make the playing environment non-male only. We have had an advantage I think in that everything we've done has been new. There's been very little inertia, very few people set in their ways. Because everything has been new, the effort to nurture new players has not stood out on its own as an identifiable project. It's actually been core to everything that has been going on. I started with one player, me, in mid 1997. Games were quite hard to get organised then, and the level of inter-player interaction then was minimal. ☺

Right from the beginning I decided that the way to make the hobby thrive was to have an active club scene below the tournament scene level that would act as a feeder to the tournament scene. Players would be blooded in the club scene and then move on to



Tournament play. We started with club games, social games at players' houses, with the emphasis on having a good time, and teaching players to play better Diplomacy. My goal was to get them to want to play in a tournament, and in my experience in Australia the social side of Diplomacy tournaments was very appealing. So after club games we would sit down and have a few drinks, and discuss the game - analyse it, review the humorous parts of it, and spend time together as friends. Often during a game we'd have a lunch/dinner turn where we'd take an hour for a turn and have a BBQ together, or go down the road and get a pizza or something, and we'd sit down and eat together and chat and socialise.

This made the social scene of our club play very welcoming to new players. The experienced players all want more players to play against, and we all agree that smashing new players won't make them come back. We all try to teach them during club games. Often if we have 9 or 10 people the three senior most members of the club will not play, and one might GM while the other two offer tactical and rules advice to the newer players. Afterwards the new players can ask the senior players what they thought of the game etc. The fact that this is how club games work is very important. It means that the senior players don't feel the need to excel in them, they go to tournaments for that.

This has several positive effects. Firstly, new players don't tend to get carved up as often, and when they do we talk to them about it afterwards and use it as a learning tool. They're made to feel that it's not unusual to get eliminated early in your career, and since it's a club game we're only too happy to help them play better. Sometimes we'll allow them to correct misorders - the goal of club games is to develop the player base, not prove who is the best. Well, sometimes we have club games with just the senior players playing, and then the gloves come off, but often games are set up expressly to nurture new players.

Secondly this whole culture of newbie friendliness is critical to our success in attracting female players. Because club games are not a newbie hunt, and because we concentrate on the social side of the game so heavily, the environment is not as male centric as a lot of gaming environments. Hardcore Diplomacy can be very ego-driven. Experienced (mostly male) players trying to climb to the top of the pile and assert their dominance, showing little mercy, and with little emphasis on social learning interaction after the game. The fact that we take the time to do all this, I think, makes it much more of a welcoming environment to women.

Another way in which this concerted effort to train new players has helped women is a lack of traditional male banter during the down times during club meets. Often in a group of male players, before the game, or during it in lulls, and afterwards, there's a tendency to talk about sport - usually heavy male contact sport. What you actually talk about in your part of the world varies, but we all know the sorts of conversations I'm talking about. Males slip into these conversations quite easily - at parties, in bars, and at Diplomacy games. Not all women are alienated by these discussions, but the fact that these discussions the world over tend to be held by groups of men standing around drinking beer together seems to indicate that they don't inherently appeal to women. The fact that we spend time talking about the game, and helping the new players learn from the games, takes up the time in which these male centric discussions usually fill, so they don't tend to take place, which makes the whole environment less male centric.

*JB: And second, with your considerable exposure to female players, what do you have to say about the differences in the ways that men and women play the game?*

BC: Very little. Women are just as ruthless, make just as many mistakes, ally and stab in just the same way as men do. I think any traditional views on the differences between men and women's play of Diplomacy have been extrapolated from the few women people have encountered and decided that they must be indicative of all women. I think. That's unfair for two reasons. One, the sample of women is so small it's just as likely to be misrepresentative

as it is likely to be representative; and two, many of those women players have been newer players - not veterans, so their style has been largely influenced by the fact they're still coming to grips with the game, so for a fair comparison you'd need to compare them to new male players who were still coming to grips with the game.

The one difference I have experienced is women can flirt with male players. This is a two edged sword, but it is one extra dimension they may have at their disposal that many male players might not have.

*JB: Is your description of the "Don Challenge" (to end this interview back where we started) pretty typical of the word play and hilarity that takes place when you get together?*

BC: At tournaments yes... very much so... like I said earlier it's like I videotaped a DAANZ tournament. Look at the [Cult of Cubisology](#) in the F2000M issue of the Pouch. It's another article in the same vein as ["Discovering the Religion of Donism"](#).

*JB: Wow, thanks a lot, Brandon. All of the hot links in this article should work (I noted that you just updated the New Zealand pages) and give you all lots of great follow up reading. We're setting some great standards for scope and size for these interviews. I'm looking for a North American to interview for next issue. Volunteers anyone??*

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## **Variants**

**Scott Morris**

Hello Dip variant lovers,

I am going to get right to it this issue. I am going to run the Variant game 1900. I sent out the map and rules last issue. Email me at ([Scottm221@aol.com](mailto:Scottm221@aol.com)) if you want the map and rules.

In this issue, we have two map variants.

## **Northern Cal Diplomacy II**

**by Chris Trent**

[christrent@earthlink.net](mailto:christrent@earthlink.net)

The variant was born out of my own unusual love of geography and the opportunity to aggrandize my local area. The board started out much larger and without Bridges. The Bridges came about when I envisioned military activities in the Bay Area and the Delta and I realized that the numerous bridges that make the area compatible with modern urban life would be invaluable resources and important targets. Besides, it didn't make sense that a unit in San Francisco had to convoy itself across two sea spaces just to get Oakland. (That's WHY they built the bridges in the first place!) The reduction in map size was done after playing out a few rounds of Version I of this variant and realizing that Sacramento and Stockton were simply too far away. The map is still larger than the standard Dip map which would be a major factor in game play. (San Jose cannot take a single opponent's home SC in the first

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year.) Therefore this version does not include Sacramento and Stockton and replaces them with Vallejo and Concord as Powers.

I've created one other variant based on Southern California that has not worked very well. I've also thought about variants based on other concepts or issues like development and local politics. In reality, it is highly unlikely that a war like this could ever happen but it's a good analogy for the various "wars" that occur constantly among the communities of Northern California.

I have educated guesses on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the Powers. I foresee dominance for San Jose due to its inaccessibility, "Italian-style" play for Marin, and a Valley Alliance more powerful than the Steamroller. I would also be interested to see a group of locals play it by mail and watch what kind of press might come out of it. Any other questions, please feel free to ask. I love telling NorCal stories. :-)

The map was drawn according to political and physical aspects of the region's geography, both historical and modern, but I obviously had to take some liberties for the sake of game play. Sonoma and San Jose are both, in reality, quite landlocked. Skaggs Island is just a depot. I have no idea what its naval capacity is but the channels around it, visible from the highway, are narrow and shallow, even for a fishing boat. Land dimensions were also simplified.

## **Rules**

The game begins in the Spring of 1998. (There's no real "time period" for this game and is explained later in the notes) Turns progress as in regular Diplomacy. All orders, units and the like are identical to regular Diplomacy. There is a new set of abbreviations and a new board with some rules for it. Plus there are bridges.

### **The Board**

Marshlands - the coasts of Sears Point, Fremont and Santa Clara are all shallow water areas and inaccessible to fleets. Fleets cannot occupy these coastal territories or convoy armies into or from them.

### **The Bridges**

Benicia-Martinez Bridge - Connects Benicia with Martinez and is controlled by Grizzly Bay

Carquinez Bridge - Connects Maritime Academy with Hercules and is controlled by Carquinez

Dumbarton Bridge - Connects Fremont with Palo Alto and Redwood City and is controlled by Dumbarton Bridge

The Golden Gate Bridge - Connects Presidio with Tiburon and is controlled by The Golden Gate

Richmond-San Rafael Bridge - Connects Richmond with San Rafael and is controlled by Pinole

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge - Connects Cypress with Market and is controlled by Alcatraz and San Quenton (army must have support from both sea spaces)

Armies may move, but NOT support, from one territory to another via a bridge in one turn. However, each bridge is controlled by a sea space and is subject to control by an occupying fleet. Armies may move across a bridge and attack a territory if the controlling sea space is a) vacant or b) controlled by a power granting bridge support.

Before each season all players must declare bridge support for each other power, yes or no. No Bridge Support Received is treated as a "yes."

An Army uses a bridge by simply ordering the move (i.e. A Mtz-Ben). Remember that Armies cannot provide support over a bridge but can always be supported. When a bridge move is given, the action is set aside until after all resolutions of fleet actions. Essentially, Armies move across a bridge AFTER fleets move about underneath them. Still, the simultaneous nature of Diplomacy exists as the army moving across a bridge still arrives at the same time as another unit arriving into the same territory. The power that controls the bridge declares whether it has given bridge support only if a power is attempting to cross one of it's bridges. This is to protect the controlling power's anonymity.

### **Examples**

Oakland: A Hay-SMa (BS from S.F.: Yes)

San Francisco: F SFr H

Oakland's army moves from Hayward to San Mateo. If it encounters anything in San Mateo, it is treated as any other incident, including 'bouncing' back to Hayward.

Concord: F Gri-Car

Sonoma: A MAc-Her (BS from Con: No)

Even though Carquinez was vacant when Sonoma ordered the move, bridge movements take place after fleet actions and Carquinez was then controlled by Concord.

Oakland: A Frm-Pal (BS from S.J.: No)

San Francisco: F Dum H (dislodged-ret ???)

San Jose: F Red-Dum, F SFr S F Red-Dum

Oakland expected to cross the bridge and have support from San Francisco but San Francisco's fleet was dislodged by a San Jose fleet and so Oakland must now have bridge support from San Jose not San Francisco. As a result, San Francisco's bridge support of Oakland for this turn is not revealed to the game.

Bridges may be employed in retreats, however, as before, if a fleet retreats into the sea space controlling the bridge, the retreating army must have that fleet's bridge support.

### **Starting Positions**

Concord: F Chi, A Mnm, A Wal

Marin: A Nov, F SRa, A Tib

Oakland: F Ala, A Cyp, A Pie

San Francisco: F Can, A Dal, A Mkt

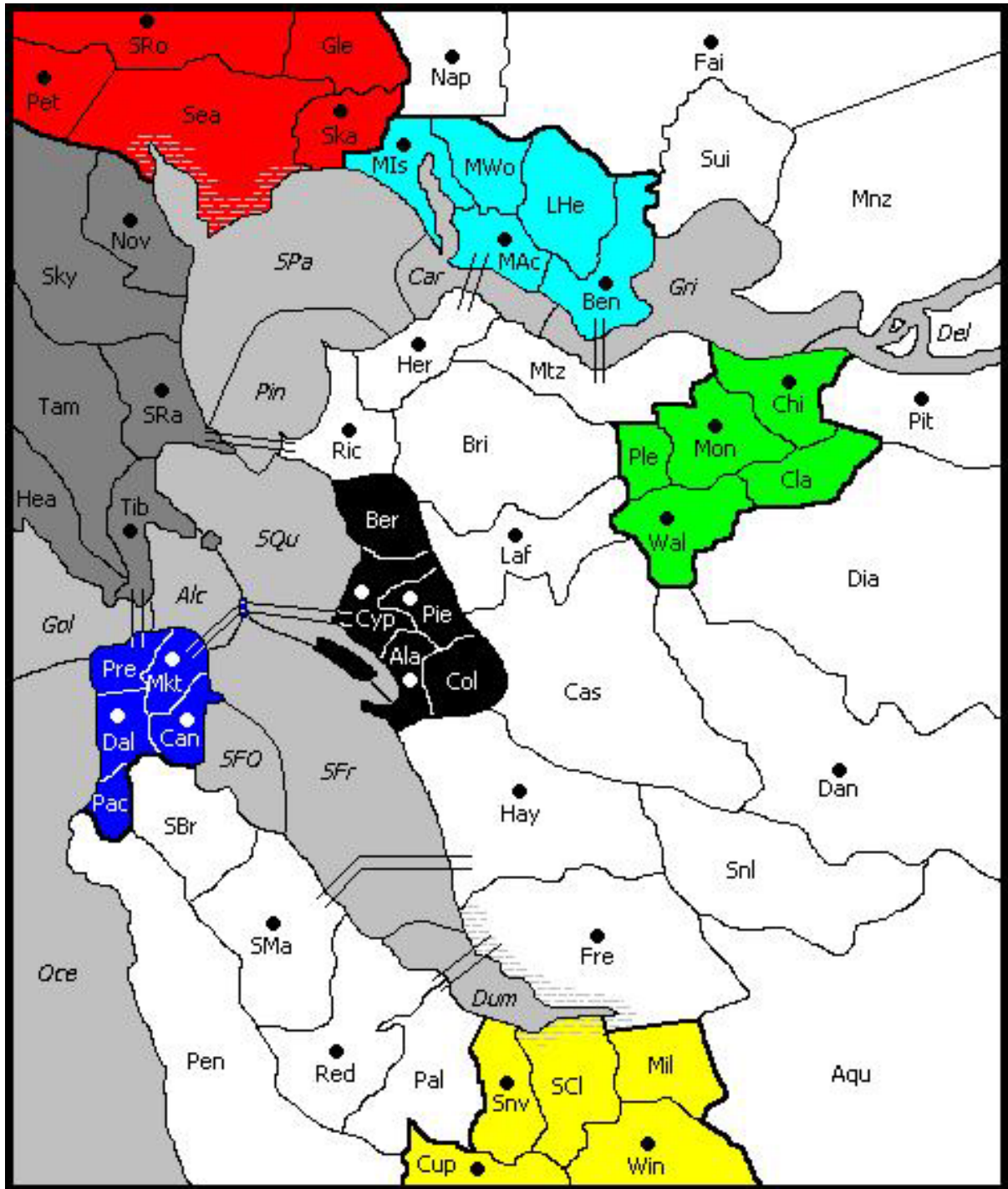
San Jose: A Cup, F Snv, A Win

Sonoma: A Pet, A SRO, F Ska

Vallejo: F MIs, A MAc, A Ben

### **Victory**

A Power must take control of 17 centers to win. Draws and concessions are allowed by unanimous player vote.



## **Abbreviations**

### **CONCORD**

Clayton = Cla  
Monument + = Mnm  
Pleasant Hill = Ple  
Port Chicago + = Chi  
Walnut Creek + = Wal

### **MARIN**

Mount Tamalpias = Tam  
Novato + = Nov  
San Rafael + = SRa  
Skywalker Ranch = Sky  
The Headlands = Hea  
Tiburon + = Tib

### **OAKLAND**

Alameda + = Ala  
Berkeley = Ber  
Coliseum = Col  
Cypress + = Cyp  
Piedmont + = Pie

### **SAN FRANCISCO**

Candlestick + = Can  
Daly City + = Dal  
Market + = Mkt  
Pacifica = Pac  
Presidio = Pre

### **SAN JOSE**

Cupertino + = Cup  
Milpitas = Mil  
Santa Clara = SCl  
Sunnyvale + = Snv  
Winchester + = Win

### **SONOMA**

Glen Ellen = Gle  
Petaluma + = Pet  
Santa Rosa + = SRO  
Sears Point = Sea  
Skaggs Island + = Ska

### **VALLEJO**

Benicia + = Ben  
Lake Herman = LHe  
Mare Island + = MIs  
Marine World = MWO  
Maritime Academy  
+MAc

### **Other:**

Aqueducts = Aqu  
Briones = Bri  
Castro Valley-MoragaCas  
Danville-Pleasanton +Dan  
Fairfield + = Fai  
Fremont + = Fre  
Hayward + = Hay

### **Hercules + = Her**

Lafayette-OrindaLaf  
Martinez = Mtz  
Montezuma Hills = Mnz  
Mount Diablo = Dia  
Napa + = Nap  
Palo Alto = Pal  
Peninsula = Pen  
Pittsburg-Antioch +Pit  
Richmond + = Ric  
San Bruno = SBR  
San Mateo + = SMA  
Suisun City = Sui  
Sunol = Snl  
Redwood City + = Red

### **BODIES OF WATER**

Alcatraz = Alc  
Carquinez StraightCar  
Dumbarton BridgeDum  
Grizzly Bay = Gri  
Pacific Ocean = Oce  
Pinole = Pin  
San Francisco BaySFf  
San Pablo Bay = SPa  
San Quenton = SQU  
SFO Airport = SFO  
The Delta = Del  
The Golden Gate = Gol

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# **Migraine Diplomacy**

**by Stephen Koehler**

Imagine: you sit down at AvalonCon or Origins and get ready for a grueling eight-hour slugfest in the first round of the Dip tourney. You reach into the box, held high over your head, and pray: "France, please let it be France. Or England, I'll take England. I'll even take Turkey. Please, please, please, please, please!" You find a plastic anchor and pull down your have and, with trepidation, unclench your fist so that only you can see the result: Red! "Argh! Austria!" you scream. Well, at least the tourney is best two out of three!

I have often gotten into discussions with people about "game balance," weak powers versus strong ones, and such. Who hasn't had the feeling described above? Whether you hate Germany, Italy or Austria in Diplomacy, China or France in Colonial, or Milan or Florence in Machiavelli, there are certain countries that you would rather not play, or, at least, those you find difficult to win with.

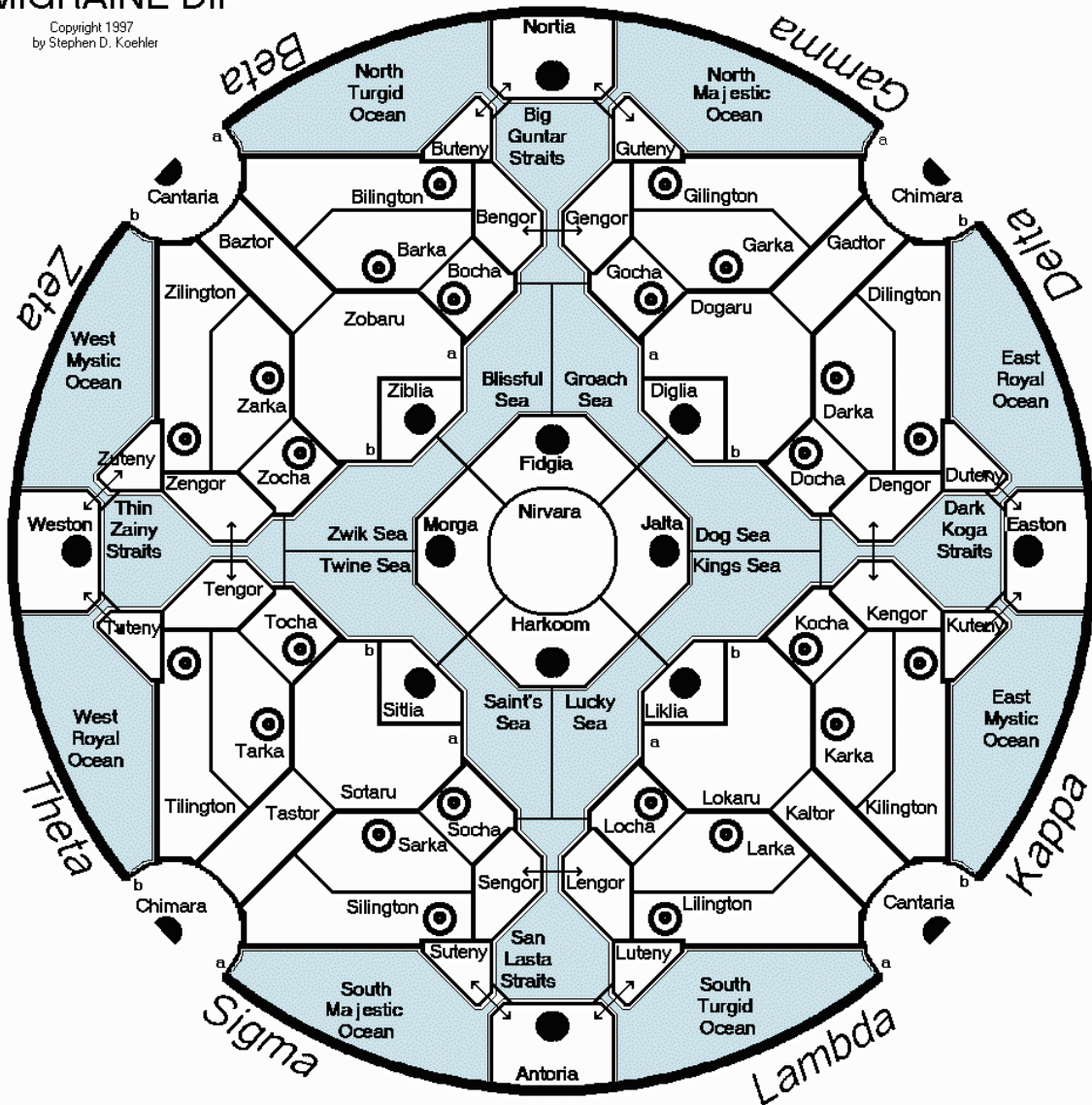
I've been toying with a concept, which I suppose is not original, of inventing a Diplomacy variant that removes the luck of the draw from the game. What would such a variant look like? How would it work.

There were several concepts that seemed to work well. First, everyone had to be in a similar position at the beginning of the game. That seemed to me to dictate a circular board, with the players arranged around the outside edge. There could be no central powers. In fact, every power should be identical.

I scribbled on a napkin while drinking coffee and realized that simply having the players all look the same and all face, say, clockwise, was rather boring. It also meant, if there were seven players, dividing the circle into seven pie pieces, each identical, and placing a player on each slice. This did not seem satisfying since it resulted in little interaction between the slices. It also meant each territory would be identical to six others. On the second cup, I scribbled some more, and realized that I could attain equality of position even if all players were not strictly identical. As long as they were symmetrical, the fairness issue would be solved. This meant making the player's territories mirror images of each other, with two players located on each slice. This, in turn, meant that there had to be an even number of players. I decided on eight.

### MIGRAINE DIP

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by Stephen D. Koehler





I quickly realized that a player would be faced with two players to contend with. There would be no direct interaction with the others. This was more difficult to solve. The center of the circle could be opened and neutrals placed there, but still confrontation would be with your neighbors as they pinched your progress to the center. My solution was to allow travel across the perimeter of the circle, to the opposite side. This immediately doubled the potential allies/foes. Scatter some neutral supply centers around the perimeter, and some wild possibilities emerged.

I tried to make the proportions of land territories to seas basically equivalent to regular Diplomacy, but with eight players, it had to be a little bigger. The more I look at the game, and try to imagine how it might play out, the more confused I get. Hence, the name, Migraine Dip! Well, below is my offering for your consideration. There are Eight Powers: Beta, Gamma, Delta, Kappa, Lambda, Sigma, Theta, and Zeta. Played using regular dip rules, except that each player, at the start of the game, determines which of his three units are fleets. 20 centers to win.

### **Map Notes**

The edge of the map is connected to the edge on the opposite side of the circle. Therefore, sea-zone "West Mystic Ocean" is adjacent to sea-zone "East Mystic Ocean", and land-zone "Nortia" is adjacent to land-zone "Antoria".

The land-areas "Cantaria" and "Chimara" (the half-circles) are each just one area.

- Therefore, a unit could move from "Bilington" to "Cantaria(coast 'a')" to "Lilington".
- These land-areas have two coasts, like Spain in regular Dip.
- Note that the coasts are a bit counter-intuitive. At the top, "Chimara(a)" is on the right, while at the bottom "Chimara(a)" is on the left.
- Land areas "Zobaru", "Dogaru", "Lokaru" and "Sotaru" also have two coasts.

There are 12 crossing arrows ("<----->").

- They work to allow armies and fleets to pass across a narrow span of water.
- They have no effect on ships in the span of water, and ships in the sea-zone have no effect on units using the crossing arrows.
- A crossing arrow crosses the "Straits" in the middle, but as noted above, has no effect on ships in these areas.
- A unit can support across a crossing arrow normally.

There is no adjacency across four-way corners. Therefore, "Groach Sea" is not adjacent "Jalta", etc. "Nortia" is not adjacent to "South Majestic Ocean" or "South Turgid Ocean", etc.

### **A Comparison with Regular Dip**

	Player s	Land Spaces	Sea Zones	Home Centers	Neutral Centers	Total Centers	Centers to Win
Regular Diplomacy	7	56	19	12	22	34	18
Migraine Diplomacy	8	63	20	14	24	38	20

## Notes on Naming Conventions

I tried to make the names semi-intuitive.

**Prefixes:** All territories in and near a Great Power's Home begin with that Power's letter. Thus, territories (and one sea) in and around Beta's home begin with "B" (Barka, Bengor, Bilington, Bocha, Buteny and *Blissful Sea*).

**Neutral territories** are named with the nearby Great Powers in mind. Thus, territories in between Beta and Zeta begin with a "B" or a "Z" and also have the other letter in the prefix (Baztor, Zobaru, and Ziblia). *Big Guntar Straits (BGS)* is the body of water between Beta and Gamma.

As a result, from the first few letters of most territories and seas, you should be able to tell where it is located.

**Suffixes:** As a result of the configuration of the board, for each territory and sea, there are seven similarly shaped spaces on the board (four being identical and four being mirror images). Similarly shaped spaces on the board have the same ending.

Thus, the land-locked home-center of Beta is called Barka. Gamma's is called Garka, Delta's is Darka, etc. As a result, it should become possible, after several turns of play, to remember a shape of a particular territory by its name and vice-versa.

## Miscellaneous

- The territories in the "corners" begin with "C" (Cantaria and Chimara).
- The oceans around the edge of the board are given directional names to assist in locating them (i.e. *East Mystic Ocean (EMO)*)
- Care has been taken to ensure that if you use the first three letters of all territories (BAR for Barka) and the initial letters of all water spaces (BGS for *Big Guntar Straits*) you will get a unique abbreviation for each space on the board.
- The five territories in the center are not intuitive so don't try to figure them out!
- There seems to be some confusion about the circular corner spaces and their coasts. There are two coasts because each side is separate. They are not connected.
- The double lines merely indicate the coast of a land province.
- It might be helpful to realize that there are a total of Five land masses in Migraine Dip:
  1. Center Island
  2. Antoria/Nortia Island
  3. Weston/Easton Island
  4. Z/B/L/K
  5. G/D/S/T
- GDST and ZBLK are a bone- or dumbbell-shaped landmass. They each consist of two nodes, joined by Chimera and Cantaria respectively. Chimera(a) borders Gil and Sil. Chimera(b) borders Dil and Til. Cantaria(a) borders Lil and Bil. Cantaria(b) borders Kil and Zil.
- In order for a fleet on Chimera(a) to get to Chimera(b) it would need to travel all the way around one of the nodes. Chi(a)-NMO-BGS-GS-DS-DKS-ERO-Chi(b).

# **Ruffians!**

**By Rick Desper**

Early in 1999, after the conclusion of the Demo game "Pouchtoo," Jim Burgess and I started to work to put together another demo game, for publication at the Diplomatic Pouch website. The general idea behind this series, which has gone through a few GMs and a lot of players, is to put together a set of interesting leading players, collect all of their letters and private thoughts, and to publish everything at the end of the game. This process should allow the novice player greater insight into the inner workings of the Diplomat's mind.

For this game, our theme was "international players". I had recently started a postdoctoral position in Heidelberg, Germany, and was very interested in the European Diplomacy scene. We wanted to include representatives of the French, Swedish, and British hobbies, add a couple American FTF players, and then we added a couple "old farts" representing the postal tradition. Our cast of characters:

1) Chris Martin, 1998 World FTF Champion. Chris has a few other titles under his belt, including the 1999 Dixiecon championship and the 1999 North American Grand Prix. Chris drew Austria

2) Christian Dreyer. Christian came highly recommended by the Swedish community, and justified this recommendation by winning the 1999 World FTF championships in Namur, Belgium, shortly after the game started. Christian has also won a few other tournaments, including the 1997 Colonial Dip tournament at Avaloncon in Baltimore, the British Championship in 1998, and the Swedish Championship in 1999. Christian drew England.

3) John Quarto von Tivadar. John finished as the runner-up to Chris in the 1998 WDC at Dixiecon. John is a leading FTF player and considered an excellent board strategist and tactician, and ended up winning the Escalation tournament this year at WDC in Baltimore. John drew France.

4) Paul Rauterberg. Paul has been a postal player since 1974, and his postal accomplishments include victories with each of the seven powers. Paul drew Germany.

5) Roland Issakson. A leading Swedish player, which perhaps tipped the balance too Swedish, considering Christian's presence. I believe Roland was a WDC team champion, but I'm not 100% sure. (Roland didn't answer my call for a "Dip CV"). Roland drew Italy.

6) Cal White. Our second "old fart", Cal has won CanCon, the Canadian championships twice, but is proudest of his hobby service, which includes publishing the award-winning 'zine Northern Flame, and winning the Miller award in 1993. Cal drew Russia.

7a) Chetan Radia. Chetan is a leading British player, and finished on the top board at Namur in 1999, and was also a member of the WDC Team Champions "Best Asians" this year at WDC in Baltimore. Sadly, Chetan NMRed shortly after Namur and was replaced. We think Chetan doesn't have the patience for email play. Chetan drew Turkey.

7b) Cyrille Sevin. Cyrille had been a choice to play in Pouchtoo, but withdrew after a car accident. We were quite pleased that he could join us as Chetan's replacement in Ruffians, as Cyrille is considered by some to be the best French player, as he won WDC in Goteborg, Sweden, in 1997. Cyrille played from 1902 to the end of 1908, at which point he withdrew because he was changing jobs and would have spotty email access.

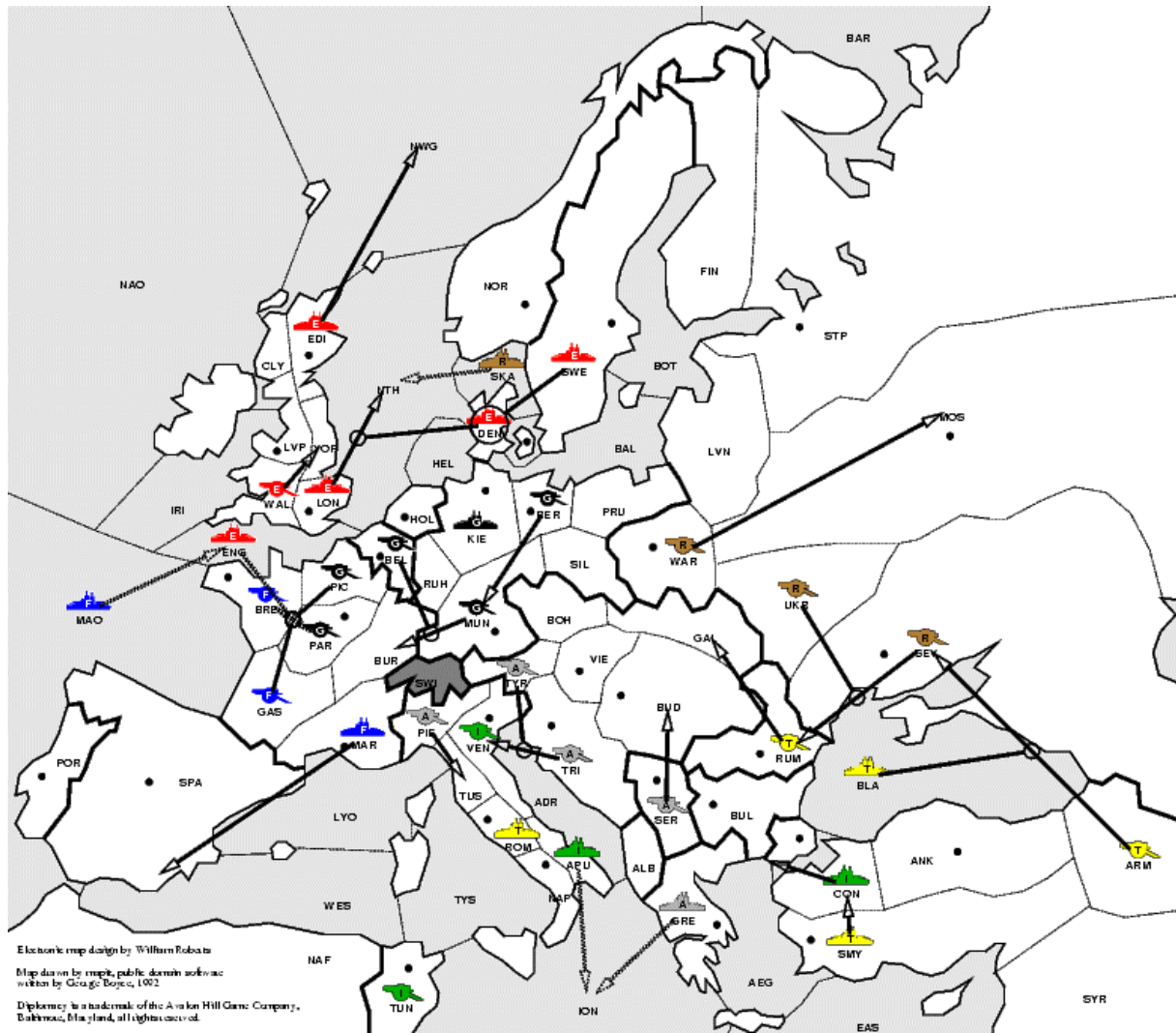
7c) Mike Mehaffey. Mike zoomed to a 21-SC win as Germany in the first round of the 1999 World Masters Email Tournament. Since he had a bit of free time before the second round, he was happy to step in as our final Turk in Ruffians. I was glad to see Mike join the game, as he played Turkey much more actively than either of his predecessors.

The game started in a deceptively straightforward fashion. John wrote Paul a message suggesting the famous Sea Lion opening, to hit England fast and hard. Chetan tried to storm Russia in 1901. Cal responded to the apparent F/G by building F St Pete(south coast) in 1901. Then things started to get very interesting indeed.

In 1902, Paul attempted to use what some people call "Chainsaw Diplomacy". Fearing the effect of being hemmed in by E/G while France romped through England, Paul stabbed France in Spring 1902, just as France convoyed to Wales! This started a long series of catty press broadcasts between F and G where John derided the stab as hopelessly stupid, while Paul defended the move and accused John of whining too much for a player of his caliber. Any hope of F/G was gone. Also at about this point, Chetan disappeared. The Eastern board had organized itself into AIR based on the FG threat and Chetan's diplomatic inactivity, but this aborted once Germany flip-flopped, as Austria and Italy couldn't quite seem to get along. A note in defense of the criticized stab - Paul would certainly have lost the game quickly had he stuck to the Sea Lion, as he was facing pressure from England, Russia, Italy, and Austria all at the same time. Actually, throughout much of the game I was quite intrigued by Paul's style of play. Ultimately, I think I will argue that it should have worked, and only didn't due to another player's mistake. But I jump ahead of myself.

Unfortunately, the 1903 year was most noted by judge flakiness which started as I went to Manorcon in 1999 (which was a lot of fun, BTW. I highly recommend British FTF play to anybody who finds themselves on the Rainy Island. There are a lot of very good British (and Irish!) FTF players.) The FROG judge, where we had started, went through a phase where it sent blank messages to people in response to submitted orders and press. During this time, Cal sent a revised set of orders to the Judge that apparently got lost. The major development in the South was that there was a nominal ART, which AR were going to reverse against Turkey in Fall of 1903. The net result of the change was that, instead of getting a build in 1903 Russia lost a force. From this point on, the game was "spoiled" from Cal's point-of-view, and it's hard to argue against him. But, as the GM, I had no confirmation of his changed set of orders, and felt I could not re-adjudicate without evidence. Cal agreed with my position, and we both agreed that the whole situation was regrettable. Thankfully, Cal played on like a Trooper.

With 1904, we made the move from the FROG judge, which was about to close, to the USEF judge, which has been the hobby flagship Judge since Ken Lowe's USWA closed back in the mid-90s. The board at this point was largely dominated by Chris Martin in the South and Christian Dreyer in the North. Christian played John and Paul against each other for a year or so, and then joined with Germany to plunder Iberia. (Score another point for Germany's stab.) In the South, Italy and Turkey had become hopelessly entangled, with Turkey taking Rome and Italy taking Constantinople at the end of 1903. Fairly quickly, both Roland and Cyrille developed a skeptical distrust of every message sent from the Austrian embassy. But somehow, this wasn't enough for them to effectively work together against Chris. Chris dominated the diplomacy in the South, making enough promises every turn to prevent any anti-Austrian alliance. 1905 saw the most effective I/T collusion, as Turkey supported an Italian convoy from Tunis to Greece. However, Chris effectively countered this by dislodging the convoying fleet, which got him into the Ionian Sea.

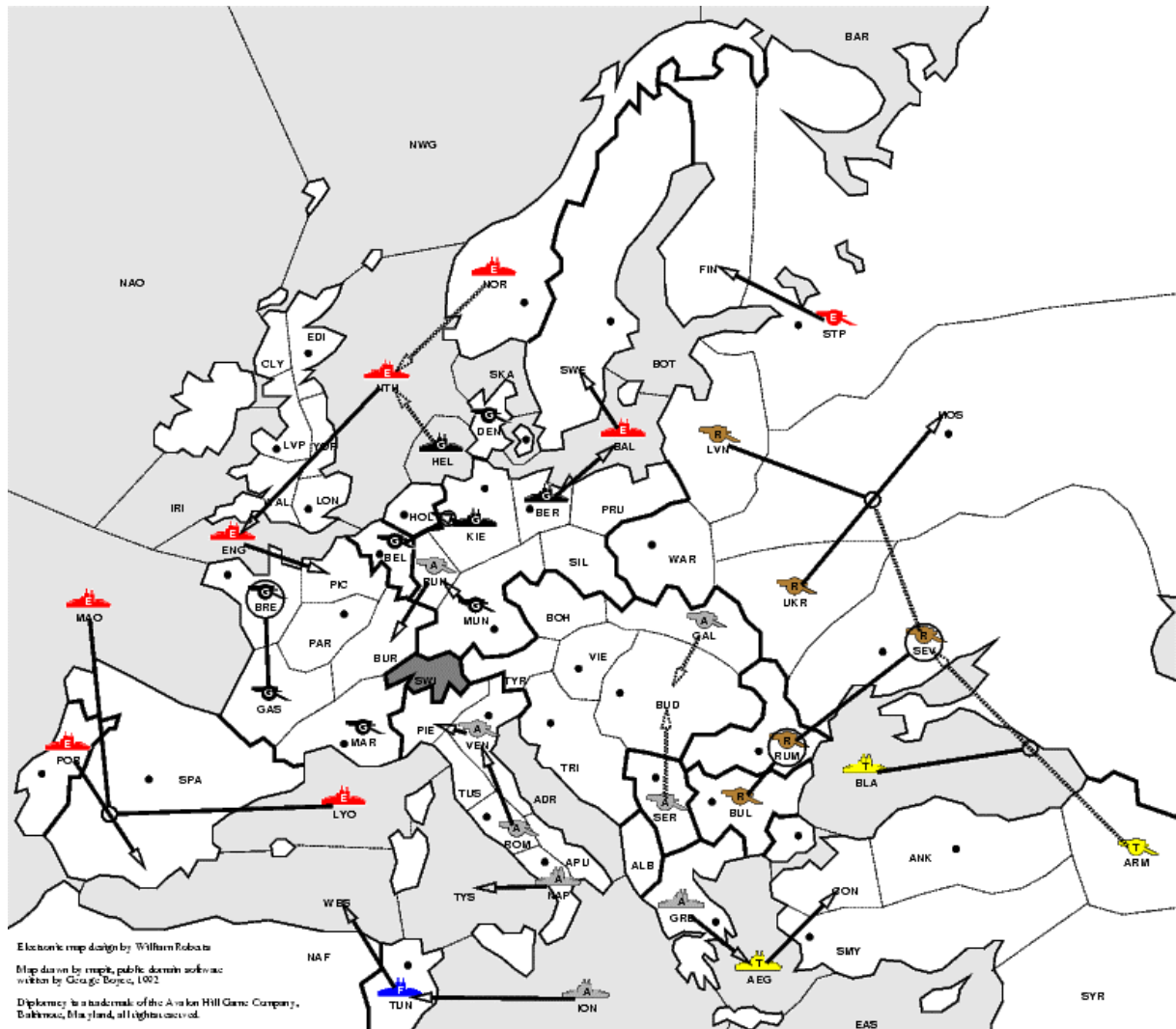


Spring 1904

We could say the mid-game started in 1906, with France dropping to two SCs, and Italy to three. At this point, the ARG talks started. The general idea was for Germany, who had never built any fleets, to start building them quickly. Germany stabbed England, slowly, but effectively, and Russia continued pressuring England from the St. Pete flank.

However, at this point the Chris Martin factor took hold. Rather than simply letting Paul get rolling against England, Chris took Munich in 1907, against the agreement. Still, the next year he retreated to Ruhr, let Paul retake Munich, and Germany actually was the board leader at the end of 1908 with 9 centers.

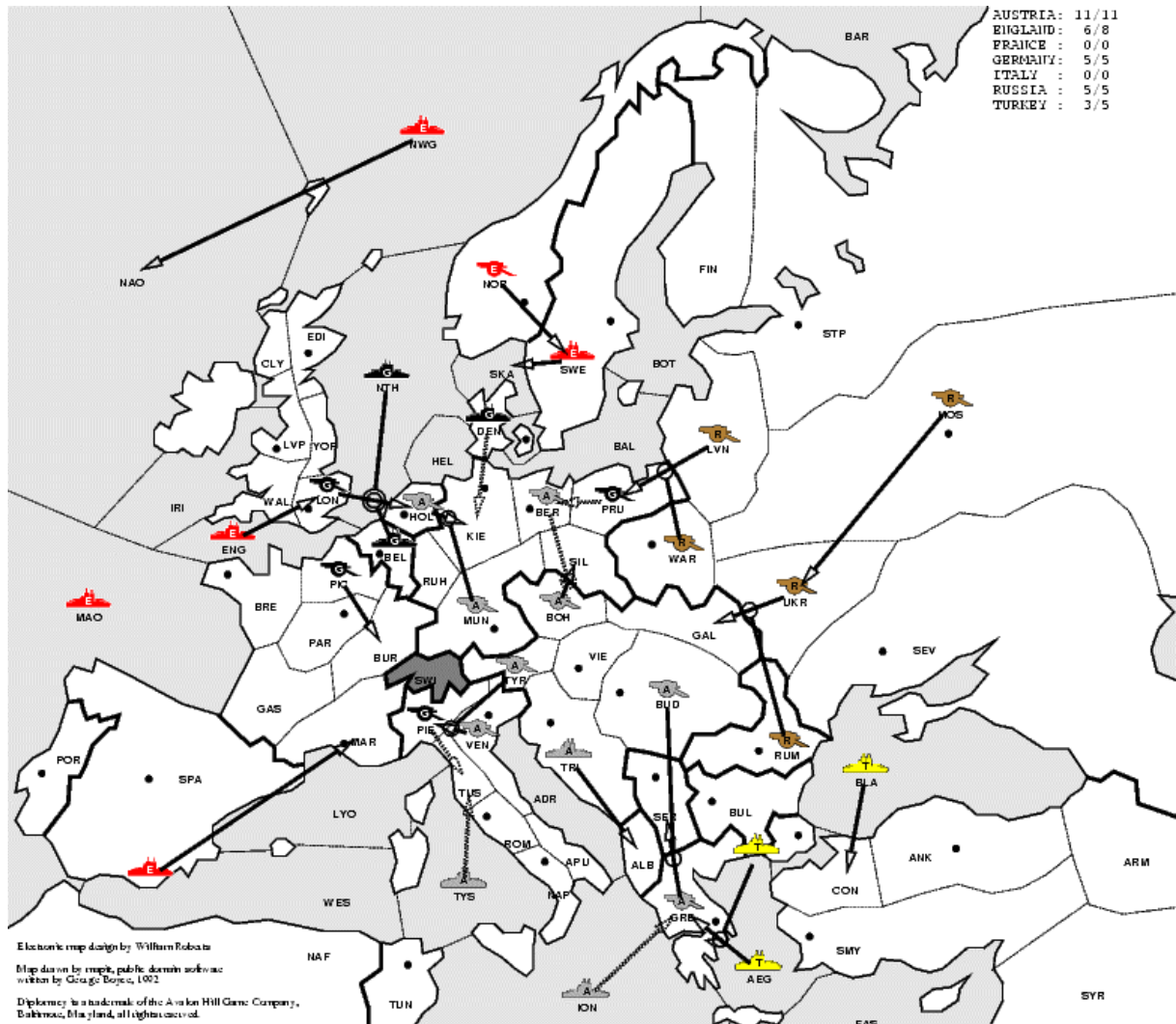
The period from 1908 to 1910 was dominated by Austria in the South and Germany in the North. Germany squeezed England out of the coastal possessions, while Austria turned against Russia. But a new factor entered the game. Cyrille had to leave the game, for reasons described earlier, and Mike "Meef" Mehaffey took over Turkey. This changed the Eastern dynamic drastically. Meef looked at Chris's size, and his own 3-center Turkey, and quickly decided he had to work with Russia, or he would be next. This set up a long-term A vs. RT dynamic which never really resolved itself in the endgame.



Spring 1909

Not content with fighting RT, Chris then stabbed Germany with a retreat to Belgium during a Fall move in Fall 1910. This set up a remarkable sequence where Chris lied to Paul not once, nor merely twice, but an incredible three times, and had Paul move as Chris wanted each time, only to see Chris renege on the deal. The second lie saw Chris move A Bel to Holland, at which point a number of people recalled the adage "Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me." For Paul continued to try to make gains against Christian while Chris wandered through the German dots. The third lie was when Chris agreed to be conveyed by Germany to Edinburgh, but didn't take the convoy.

Personally, I was saddened that Chris didn't take this convoy. I thought it would have been a wonderful thing to see an Austrian army convoyed to the English homeland by a German fleet. People would have talked about it for years. But instead, Chris held in Holland, and continued to try to scrape up as many SCs as possible.

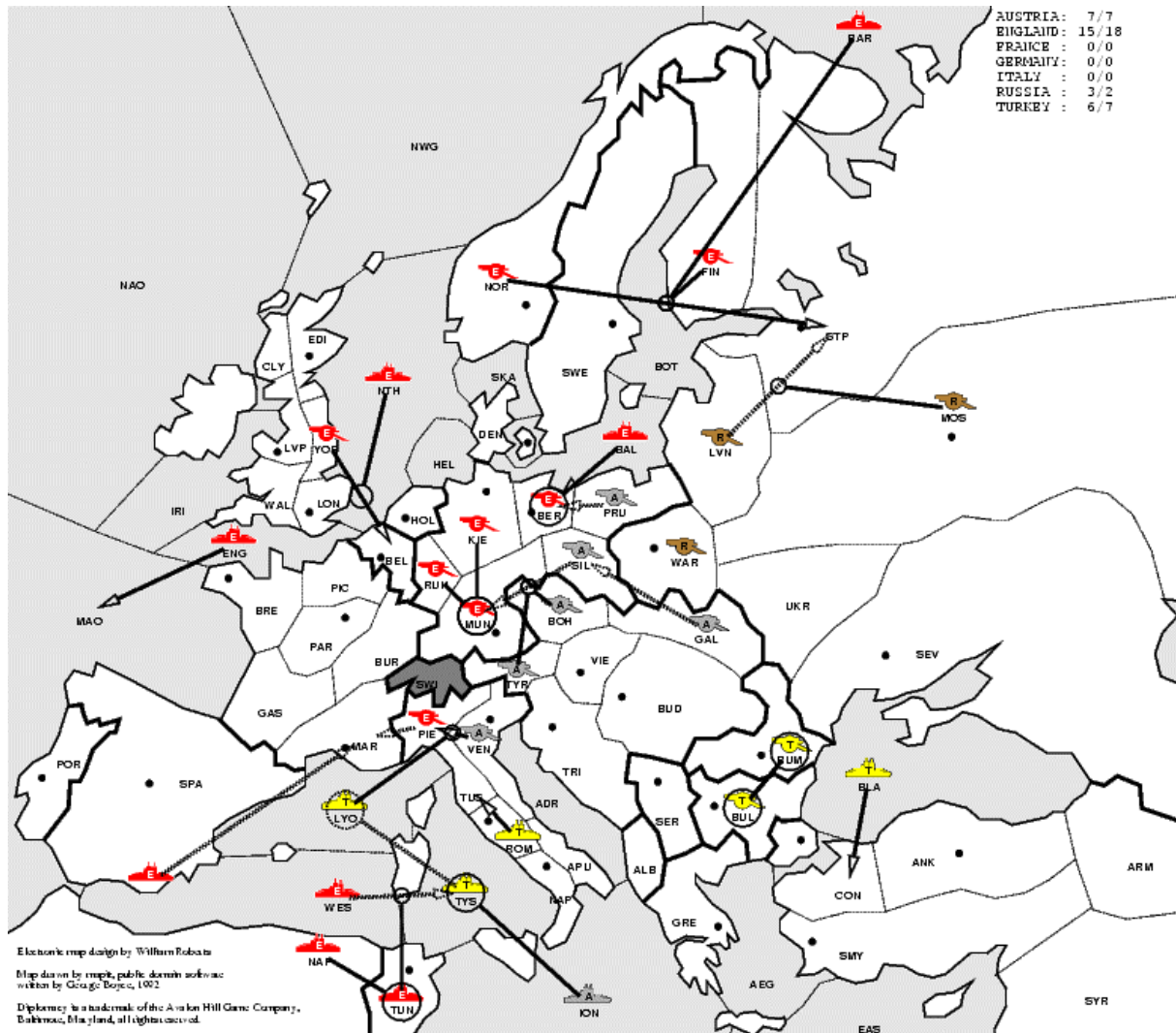


Autumn 1912

We could call the missed convoy the start of the endgame. This was in 1912. At this point, Chris's lies were starting to work against him. Badly. Chris realized his solo chances were poor, as he just could not break through the East before Christian made a recovery in the West. So, Chris started trying to aim for a 3-way draw by playing serious brinkmanship with Turkey. Chris effectively told Meef that Meef had to work with him, or Chris would throw the game to Christian. The game saw a few years of ERT against AG, with Paul's defenses ruined by Austrian meddling, while a steady RT pushed Austria back step by step in the East.

In 1915, Chris made an ultimatum to Meef: if you take any more dots from me, I will throw the game to England. Turkey took the dots anyway. One might argue that Chris wasn't really serious about throwing the game (and Christian certainly thought this was the case), but the Austrian actions were enough to let England into all the German SCs and to establish a strong force in the Med before Turkey could set up a defence of Tunis. By the time there was any real organization to stop an English solo, it was 1918, and Christian had a forced win, which he happily shared with the board.





### Autumn 1918

Some people think that any well-played Diplomacy game ought to end in a draw, and not a solo victory. This had been my attitude for quite a while, but Ruffians really illustrated that this all depends upon one's approach to the game. Chris Martin played with a very aggressive negotiation style, mixed with a huge number of lies, all of which was aimed at getting his forces as large as possible, and spread out as much as possible. Basically a "Cross the Stalemate Lines Quickly" strategy. Ultimately Chris lost because he made an ultimatum to Meef, and Meef resisted the ultimatum because he didn't like the attitude implicit behind it. "Stab or I throw the game" was not received well.

On the whole, Chris played an extremely interesting game. I would hope that readers could take the time to look at <http://www.diplom.org/Showcase/ruffians> and read through the press archives at the Pouch. My feeling was that Chris's big mistake was not taking the convoy to Edinburgh. One army on the island would have crippled England for years. Given Chris's dominance of the land, this would have made for quite a different endgame. Chris said he didn't do this as he feared that Paul was ahead of him and would be more likely to solo. I thought Paul's game was quite solid, as he was a step ahead of the executioner for a long time. His much-maligned stab turned out to work well for him. His downfall could be viewed as more of a mistake by Austria, as it left both of them squeezed by ERT. Cal played a very solid game as Russia, and was hurt a bit by the Judge errors. Before he could recover, Austria was too dominant, and Cal did not find any other realistic alliance until near the end of the game.

Meef had his moments, but for the most part none of the other players ever really had a powerful position. Cyrille and Roland were too intertwined for too long.

Of course, when I say "none of the other players", I am not including Christian. Christian certainly deserved this victory, even if Chris or anyone else thinks it was handed to him. Yes, he had a lot of good luck, including most notably unceasing bickering between Germany and France. But he also didn't make any mistakes. Christian never dominated the diplomatic channels the way Chris did, but he ended up winning the game, so he could hardly be faulted.

The game can be viewed in its "entirety" at <http://www.diplom.org/Showcase/ruffians>. I have asterisked the word "entirety" as there may be a few messages missing, and unfortunately the Fall 1916 Moves mysteriously disappeared from my files. But this archive gives, most importantly, a chance to really follow all of a game played by elite players, including all the behind-the-scene machinations. You'll see some very interesting titbits, including private comments on all the public posturing. Enjoy!

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## **AIRhead Alliance vs. SWAT**

### **Concepts in development of a Triple Alliance by Edi Birsan**

There has been no more well known triple alliance than the Western Triple (F-E-G). In the Summer 2000 issue of Diplomacy World, Mark Fassio began a discussion on the possible development of another triple alliance of Austria, Italy and Russia (AIR) and his idea of an opening overwhelming blow against the west which he sees as coming from the moves to Bohemia, Tyrolia and Silesia in Spring 01.

The problem with this sort of approach is that it creates its own counter by jumping up into everyones face the whole idea of a triple that will inspire counter moves both diplomatically as well as tactically to frustrate the success. It also creates a diplomatic situation where there is a greater tendency to be locked into the arrangement that leads to large scale draws.

The Odd Theory, one of the oldest theories of play is called the Odd Theory which basically says that you always want to have an odd number in your game alliance structures so that ideally a game proceeds from 7 in a state of chaos to 5 vs 2 and then 3 vs 2 and then the game should theoretically have a strategic stalemate. With any triple the key is to make sure that the game does not come down in the opening to 3 vs 4, which is the current very real danger of the Swat opening since it is an In Your Face alliance that will inspire the other players to stop it.

In working any game board you must play with the minds of the players as much as you do with the pieces on the board. Nothing is more frustrating to the game development than a large unbreakable alliance that is seen as such. Therefore there has to be piece development and diplomatic development that lends itself to the strategy of an AIR triple. Therefore the following is just a few of the possible guidelines that I think will lead to a more intense game as well as introduce a lot of tension in the triple which can be used diplomatically as leverage to keep the counter reaction from setting in.

The goal of the AIR is to defeat Turkey in the East and England, France, Germany in the West.

Diplomacy Prior to Spring 01: Vs England: The Italians say they are willing to go to Piedmont and will take support from Germany and England against France. The Russians should emphasize that they do not want to see an army in Norway and that if there is a hint of the Germans standing them out of Sweden then they are willing to play in the Fall to the Baltic and have the English convoy to Denmark. The Austrian says he has a deal with the Russian to stay out of Galicia and he is worried about the Italian and the Turks since they are traditionally the ones who take Austria apart.

Vs. France: The Russians push for the possibility of a mass jump on the English with a Sealion approach. Otherwise the Russians are simply trying to play the south and is unsure of what the Italians are going to do and very concerned about the Austrians going to Galicia.

Vs. Germany: The Italians push the prospect of an early jump on the French, agree that Tyrolia is not interesting at this time and stress that you are counting on the chaos of the Russians and Austrians who do not trust each other to help keep the Turks in their confusion. The Austrians again say that they expect the Russians to stay out of Galicia and they have no clue as to what the Turks are doing. The Russians stress their willingness to go after England but if not hearing the right things from both Germany and France will concentrate on the south since the Austrians are unreliable and who can ever trust a Turk. If Germany is not going to say he is going after England then Russia should push Germany to open Fleet Kiel to Holland to project power on Belgium.

Vs. Turkey Everyone should try to be as confusing as possible with last minute changes of plans always good to accomplish the confusion. Russia should find out if the Turk wants to leave the Black Sea open as usual and can agree to a bounce or not. What you do not want to do is to have the Turks play strong against the Russian by going to the Black and Armenia. The ideal is to have the Turkish Fleet play to Constantinople.

### **The Spring 01 moves:**

Austria:

Army Vienna-Trieste

Army Budapest to Serbia

Fleet Trieste to Albania

Italy:

Army Venice to Piedmont

Army Rome to Apulia

Fleet Naples to Ionian

Russia:

Army Warsaw to Galicia

Army Moscow to Sevas/Ukr

Fleet Sevastopol to Rumania/Black

Fleet St Petersburg SC to Gulf of Bothnia

At this point the confusion diplomatically must be enhanced with various incriminations behind the scenes of the Austrians against the Russians who were not expected to be in

Galicja. Likewise the Italians can have recriminations against the Austrians who were not expected to be Trieste.

The French have got to be a little thrown off balance by the Italian move and if there is a major jump on the French then they can continue with their western involvement, while if there is a jump of the French on the English Channel, then the Italians can look like the savior to England.

The Russian moves are all based on the idea of what happens and what is believable with the Turks. If they are convinced that they are going to get into the Black Sea then the follow up to Sevastopol by the Army Moscow and a direct move on the Black is a hell of a good opening punch, however if there is a bounce in the Black \*the more common issue, then the move of Army Moscow to the Ukraine is required. If the Russian is convinced that the Turk will move the Fleet to Constantinople and fears that the German will be in Denmark in the Spring with the intent of standing off them in Sweden, then moving the Fleet to Rumania is an excellent option.

The Fall 01 Diplomacy Vs the West: confusion must be emphasized and the craziness of the Italians and the disappointment in Russia by everyone including maybe the fear of a RT if there is a tactical position that supports it.

**The Fall 01 moves:**

Austria:

If Russia has a Fleet in Rumania then:  
Army Serbia support Russian Fleet Rumania to Bulgaria  
Army Trieste to Budapest/Budapest  
Fleet Albania to Greece

If Russia has bounced in the Black Sea then  
Army Serbia support Fleet Albania to Greece  
Fleet Albania to Greece  
Army Trieste to Vienna/Budapest

If Russia is in the Black Sea and Turkey does not have a believable threat to Greece then the Austrians are better off with:  
Army Trieste to Serbia  
Army Serbia to Greece  
Fleet Albania to the Ionian

Italy:

Army Piedmont to Tyrolia  
Army Apulia to Venice  
Fleet Ionian to Tunis  
The above is used unless the Germans are in Burgundy and willing to support the Italians into Marseilles that looks like a guarantee.

Russia:

Fleet Bothnia to Sweden (or to Baltic if it is felt that the Germans will stand you out)  
Army Ukraine(or Sevast) to Rumania  
Fleet Rumania to Bulgaria or Fleet Sevast to Black Sea  
Army Galicia support the move on Rumania by whomever

**The Builds:**

Austria: Armies in Trieste and Vienna (or Budapest if Trieste is filled)  
Russia: Army Warsaw and Fleet St Pete, either North Coast or South Coast  
depending on the  
English situation. If he gets a third build then build Army Sevastopol Army Moscow if  
Sevast blocked.  
Italy: Fleet Naples

**Pre Spring Diplomacy vs. the West:**

Once again the west is to be bombarded with the craziness of the Italians, the unreliability of the Russian. The Austrian is to respond to why he supported the Russians against the Turks by the line that this was a way to get the Russians out of Galicia, but that the bum double crossed me and went to Rumania with an Army etc. That and the obvious insane Italian are moving on me now.

The Italians say that they are just as frustrated with the Austrians and that they knew he was unreliable because he moved to the Ionian. The Italian also adds in that he is worried by the Russian who lied to him about attacking the Austrian. The Italian position is that he shifted East because the Russian convinced him to do so.

The whole focus of the Diplomacy is to present a case where there is mistrust and perceived unreliability in the players ...an AIRhead alliance.

**The Spring 02 Slammer:**

Austria

Army Vienna to Bohemia  
Army Trieste to Tyrolia  
Army Budapest to Serbia/Trieste  
Fleet Ionian to Eastern Medit/Aegean  
Army Greece Support Serbia to Bulgaria  
or if with a Fleet in Greece, then the Fleet goes to the Aegean and there is a support  
or an attack on Bulgaria.

Italy

Army Tyrolia to Munich  
Army Venice to Piedmont  
Fleet Tunis to Western Medit  
Fleet Naples to the Ionian

Russia

Army Galicia to Silesia  
Army Warsaw to Prussia

Fleet Sweden-Baltic or Fleet Baltic Support move on Prussia or English into Denmark

Fleet StP sc to Bothnia or Fleet St P/nc to Barents

Army Moscow to StP

Fleet Bul-Black Sea

Army Sevas to Armenia or Army Rumania to Bulgaria if in the Black if you are there.

The key here is the total unloading on the German front with 4 armies and a fleet while Italy is marching against both France and turning corner on Germany. Austria is simultaneously moving on Turkey and preparing for a possible stab of the Italians.

The Turk is bottled up and will be slowly ground down.

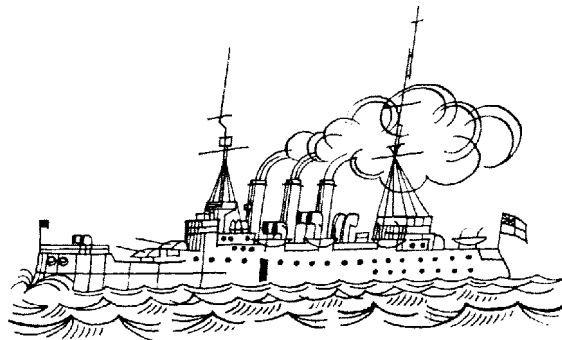
Strategically the slow death of the Turk absorbs the AIRheads extra units and forces them to commit lose units that could otherwise be used to stab one another. The Russian builds of fleets in the North and the hoped for Italians break in the south crushes any stalemate line.

The idea situation is to pick up England as the ally in the West. The key here is the Italian acting in a manner that is not overwhelmingly tied into the AIR alliance and allows the boogeyman image of a triple alliance.

There is plenty of tension in the alliance with Austria needing a good supply of Prozac at various times which is what makes the alliance so deceptive. It also becomes tense for Italy and Russia later in the game as the Austrians will be in the position to make a move against either of them.

However, the strategic structure is what is needed to make sure that the Italian and the Russian realize that if they turn on the Austrian the Austrian can toss the game to the other one, further if the Italian builds are mostly fleets and the Russians push the fleets in the north there is the growing tension that the Austrians can make a big stab.

The potential for stabbing is high, the reputation that is developed for insanity and instability is critical to providing a background that sells the moves and allows the AIRheads to pull off the moves without triggering a massive jump against them. That is why the Turkish campaign is moved slowly and the Italians are always kept on the edge of the alliance commitment with an image of playing crazy since the AIRheads in the middle game want the Italians to be the focus of turning the game into a perception of multiple alliance structures while in fact there is only one dominant and all powerful deal.



# The Art Of Diplomacy

by Richard Sharp

I'm going to try to summarize in a few paragraphs the qualities that make up a good player. Please note that I am not claiming omniscience - just trying to formulate my own ideas that other people can use for comparison. So here are my 'golden rules', in gradually diminishing order of importance.

1. Always stay on good terms with everyone for as long as possible, or longer. The player who commits himself to one ally, and hence against the rest, is unlikely to win many games. It is fascinating to discover how the same set of moves can be presented in two different lights to two opposed parties so that both find them acceptable. The most flagrant stab may be a phoney...and then again, it may not be, after all. A good player who decides to go in for an unambiguous stab should still mend his fences by apologising, pointing out that it was essential for his survival, and trying to negotiate a new deal. Nothing annoys me more than the lunatic who attacks me and then refuses to answer any further letters, convinced that my only aim is revenge. He may be right, at that, but what a boring, cowardly way to play.

2. Try to arrange accidents for neighbours, rather than attacking them. This is not easy to do, but very satisfying when it's done well. A typical sequence would be: tell A to move in a certain way which is "almost 100% safe", except in the remote event that B does so-and-so; then make sure B does do so-and-so; then commiserate with A (who'd have thought B was such an imaginative player?). A may be as suspicious as hell, but he can't prove anything. By getting your neighbours to do your dirty work for you, you commit them to your side while retaining your own friendly relations with the victim, as prescribed in rule 1.

3. Concentrate on home centres. By this I mean that you should play to get your neighbours so entangled with one another that their building potential is zero: as I've said before, the ideal situation for Germany in about A04 is to have English in StP, French in Lon and Lpl, and Italians in Mar! If you can achieve this very desirable state of affairs, you can stop worrying about your "allies" becoming too strong, always a problem otherwise. While they are trying to sort themselves out, you can go on growing, and even if they notice they can't do a thing about it.

4. Use the deadline. Provided GMs are on the phone, considerable success can be achieved by last-minute changes to plan; they give you some security against the danger that your earlier plans may have been leaked. One favourite device is to write to another player saying you have changed your mind and your orders - making sure he gets the letter just too late to act on it (sending it to the house next door is one cunning way of doing this). This will give you chance for a genuine stab that might otherwise cause relations to deteriorate sharply. But you must be able to rely on your GM not to accept late order changes: in at least one zine some players used regularly to phone allies after the deadline to find out how they had moved, then ring the GM and change their orders, which was always allowed!

5. Always tell the truth. Well, nearly always. I rather enjoy the challenge of finding a set of orders which I can confidently tell everyone in advance without damage to my own position. The advantage is obvious: people will tend to get into the habit of believing you, and when you finally hang one on them it'll come as a shock. I can see no virtue in the 'trust no one, lie to everyone' approach, which simply ensures that no one believes a word you say after Autumn 1901.



6. Stab in the Spring. This is the direct reverse of the advice usually given but it works better, beyond any doubt. Spring stabs are much more likely to catch people with their knickers down, and provided you follow sound tactical principles (play to annihilate, aim for home centres) you should be able to consolidate in the Autumn. Many players regard Spring as a time for marking time and picking daisies; by taking advantage of this you can stab at longer range, and bring more units into the struggle.

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## **ManorCon XVIII**

**by Kath Collman**

It seems a long time since Manorcon 2000 – in fact it is a long time since Manorcon 2000, and my memories of the event are growing more than a little hazy ... my perceptions at the time were a little hazy, too, as I was functioning through a veil of total exhaustion after all the fracas of last-minute hitches in the organisation.

Anyway, let's try to pick out a few of the outstanding features of the convention. One of our problems this year was that we were functioning with a change of personnel – existing committee members taken on new roles, new committee members had been elected (or to be brutally honest, had had their arms twisted!) and none of us was operating in a familiar role. However, such are the wonders of email that we were able to have our daily panics and resolve them without resorting to long-distance hysterics by telephone! A major blow was suffered a few months beforehand when Vick Hall, our treasurer, was offered the chance of a contract to work in the USA, to start just before Manorcon. Unfortunately by the time this offer was made, we'd already printed and distributed the flyers asking for bookings to be sent to Vick's address – great potential for confusion and disaster! Vick did his best for us and tried to delay his departure until after Manorcon, but unfortunately ended up having to fly out three days beforehand. Another complication was that there had been a local postal strike. This meant that several people who had left booking until the last minute weren't actually registered at all, and we had to be prepared to ask people for money when they thought they'd already paid. Not an enviable job. However, in the event, most of those attending were very understanding once we'd explained the problem.

Another complication was that Vick had had a call from a TV producer who wanted to film part of Manorcon. The committee debated this at length, with mixed feelings and differing opinions, and in the end thought that we already had enough complications to deal with. Unfortunately no-one had actually told the prospective film-maker of our decision. So on the Monday of Manorcon week, several of us had long and involved phone conversations with the said BBC producer, one Ged Gray, who begged and pleaded with us to reconsider, and eventually persuaded us to permit filming to go ahead. His idea was that he'd get a famous politician (his original idea was Jeffrey Archer, but in the end it was Derek Hatton, the former leader of the Militant Labour Council in Liverpool, who appeared in the film) to come along during the Friday afternoon, be taught the rudiments of how to play Dip., then to take part in the Friday evening Dip. round. This board would be filmed – both negotiations and moves – along with shots of someone explaining the basics of the game during the afternoon. The tournament director, Nick Kinzett, then had to find 6 people willing to play in a game under these conditions – and managed to persuade Paul Spurgeon, Jeremy Tullett, Paul Cridland,

Keith Smith, Conor Kostick and Emeric Miszti to take part. Derek Hatton drew Austria (!) and was eliminated at the end of Autumn 1902. One gathers that he wasn't too impressed with his experience of playing Dip., and was heard to say that it's a sad game and that all who play it are sad. This comment was cut from the final film, which apparently ends with Derek saying "I can't remember finding such a crowd of liars and cheats, even in politics, as I have done tonight"!

Never mind, Derek, you can't win them all. After Ged had taken Derek back to the station to catch his train home, he returned and settled down to an evening's gaming, and possibly sampled the Real Ale in the bar. Yes – I kid you not : the Manorcon bar was stocked with Real Ale this year. We bought in a couple of barrels as an experiment to see whether the punters would like it ... by 9pm on the Friday evening it was all gone, so we're intending to repeat the experiment next year but tripling the number of barrels (the bar only has capacity for a maximum of 6 barrels, but it may last until the Saturday evening with a bit of luck...). And there were other improvements to the venue: the rooms had been improved by the installation of fridges, the provision of new pillows and in some cases, new mattresses also. So I was actually able to get a decent night's sleep (apart from nearly falling out of bed at 3am, but I won't go into that). The food was .. err ... much the same as usual. But then, so were the prices. You get what you pay for after all. Oh yes, and we ourselves made one major change: the main room was declared a non-smoking area, a change which met with almost universal approval.

Something which didn't meet with universal approval however, was the system used to enforce the Dip. deadlines. It had been decided that we really needed to speed up play so that we could get the results in on time and sort out the winners without delaying the main awards ceremony on the Sunday. So, we had a system of boxes for each season's orders – any player not placing orders in the box would be penalised. So far so good. But clearly we needed to make sure that everyone was aware of the exact timing of the deadlines. So we introduced a visible timer running on a laptop computer. Alongside that, we had audible warnings. One idea which had been tried and discarded was to use the 30 second countdown sequence from the programme of the same name: Countdown. This was discarded in favour of using a voice saying "10 minutes to deadline" ... etc. etc. with an actual timed countdown of the final seconds. This was recorded by Steve Jones onto Dave Norman's laptop, and sounded OK when they tried it out in my spare bedroom on the Friday morning – unfortunately by the end of the weekend, poor Steve was a bit sick of the sound of his own voice as it were, and so were one or two other people who were trying to get on with their own games and didn't appreciate hearing yet another countdown. I am given to understand that a new voice will be used next year, and that we will be adjusting the volume.

Not that Manorcon consisted entirely of Dip. of course. In fact only slightly more than a quarter of those attending actually took part in the Dip. tournament. Others played Settlers, 18XX, Acquire, Outpost, Titan, Croquet and a whole host of other games for which we weren't running tournaments. There was the usual Pop Quiz on the Saturday evening, and Paul Oakes once again ran his fiendish Weekend Quiz. The Second Hand games sale was as large and as successful as ever, and this year Nick allowed longer deadlines in the Dip. tournament to allow players (and Nick himself) to visit the sale.

Oh yes I suppose I'd better mention the results of the various tournaments etc. The Team Dip. was won by Globetrotter (John Colledge, Geoff Kemp, Paul Spurgeon, Pete Mason, Chetan Radia, Phil Day and Shaun Derrick), with Team Fat Bastard in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. The individual event was won by Conor Kostick, with Dave Horton in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Feargal O Donnchu 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Irish contingent, some of whom were visiting for the first time, did very well, and one of their

number, Paraic Reddington, took the Best Newcomer award. The Settlers tournament was won by Mark Sheiham with Dave Horton 2<sup>nd</sup> and Jeff Edmunds 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lyndon Gurr won the 18xx with Ian Pendlebury 2<sup>nd</sup> and Jeff Edmunds 3<sup>rd</sup>. Kevin McGowan beat Conor Kostick in the final of the Croquet. Acquire was won by Matthew Greet; Jeff Edmunds won the Outpost tournament and the Titan tournament was a draw between Luke Ellis and Simon Craddock. Unfortunately the Titan was not popular and will not be offered next year. The victors in the Pop Quiz were Norfolk and Chance (Doug Hare, Mark Wightman, Lee Edwards and Gihan Bandaranaike), and the Weekend Quiz was won by The Terrible Trio (Richard Clyne, Simon Craddock, David Smith and Richard Brown). Hmm, the last lot can't add up can they?

And that just about wraps it up, except to say that we're running Manorcon again next year, from 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> July, probably for the last time in Shackleton Hall which is scheduled for demolition. Full details are available (or soon will be) on our website : [www.diplom.org/manorcon](http://www.diplom.org/manorcon). If you haven't been before, how about giving it a try? And if you've been in the past, but weren't there last year, book the date now. See you there!

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## **MidCon 2000**

**by Mark Wightman**

For reasons which will become obvious later in this piece I really enjoyed MidCon this year – far more than in previous years. What probably isn't so obvious is that one of the main reasons that MidCon was so good this year was because it was so well organised.

Gasp! Is that a compliment to SFCP? Well, yes it is. With the exception of the nonsense regarding deposits (See Issue #44), which Theo admits was a mistake, their organisation of MidCon was superb. Gone were all the usual problems with the rooms, booking in etc. Most surprising though was perhaps the complete change in attitude from the hotel staff, who were simply excellent. Friendly and efficient aren't words that you would normally use to describe the staff of the Angus, but they were both of these things.

OK, so there were the usual things which you could complain about. As expected, the beer was uninspiring, they even ran out of Stella on Sunday afternoon (Bandy 1 Angus 0). Plus the Bar food looked pretty awful as usual, but as far as I'm aware nobody died so, perhaps we can count this as a plus.

Speaking of food, breakfast was much improved over last year too – except for the scrambled eggs, but then finding good scrambled eggs always seems to be completely impossible in British hotels. The American don't appear to have any problems though, witness the superb eggs at WDC this year. Perhaps the secret is that the American use real eggs, because I'm not convinced that we always do.

Moving on. MidCon itself seemed a little quieter than in previous years, but Theo told me that the numbers were actually up, by half a dozen or so, over last years figures. Maybe his total just counted pre-bookings, and ignored day/local visitors; because it felt like numbers were down. One possible explanation for this discrepancy between what I saw and what there must have been is that more and more people were playing in the bar, whilst I spent most of my time in the main room playing Diplomacy, where the numbers were certainly down.

Speaking of the Diplomacy . . . as expected, the tournament was again superbly organised by Jeremy Tullet and Neil Duncan. Both of whom deserve our thanks for their considerable efforts. Jeremy once again used his folder system to encourage timely order writing and again it was a marked success. There were a couple of yellow cards handed out, but the games did seem to flow a lot better than at some tournaments I could mention (but won't). Still, something could be done about how long some players take to write retreats and builds, which can eat into the diplomacy time – if allowed.

Now to my games. Sane individuals should just skip this part.

My Friday game was pretty dire. I played Italy to Guy Thomas's Austria with a rabid anti-Italian Turk – played by someone I'd rather just forget. Elsewhere, England was Dave Horton and Germany was a newcomer who Dave appeared to have brought along just for the occasion. To say that the two of them were 'closely allied' doesn't quite do their special relationship justice. Dave may as well have been writing Germany's orders for him and I wouldn't have been surprised to find out now that he was. Predictably it ended with Dave on 15 and his loyal poodle on 3 – go figure. At the very end of the game Dave and Guy got together to gain a German centre each in a move which made sense for both of them (Dave +14 pts, Guy +8 pts), but which by attempting would allow one or the other to lie and prevent the other from gaining their extra SC. Dave insisted that they write their orders in public (to prevent the stab), which I disapproved of – and I said so. Not quite in the spirit of the game, chaps – tsk tsk!

Which bring us to Saturday, where the fun really begins. I got what could be described as a good draw – France. I don't enjoy playing France much, I never have, but I do seem to get some good results with the blue bits. Luckily for me, today would be no different. After a slow start working with England, I changed sides and snuck into Liverpool to get things rolling. Elsewhere, nothing much was happening, with nobody coming out on top in the East, probably because everybody appeared to be changing sides each and every turn. More significantly, England (Neil Kendrick) had fallen out rather badly with Russia (Peter Hawkins). It was the usual argument over StP. England had taken it, with an army, on the turn I pinched Liverpool. Neil wanted Peter to leave it English whilst A(StP) moved back to Norway in preparation for a convoy back to the mainland.

At this point it was only 1904, but things looked very good for me. I was on 8 - (Home, Por, Spa, Bel, Hol, Lpl). There was an isolated Italian A(Mun), supported in by me, whilst Germany was scattered all over the place (with fleets Hel and Bal and A(Ber)). The English position wasn't much better either with scattered units in StP and Scandinavia. I'd just built an A(Bre) to convoy to England, when Italy revealed he was about to stab Austria. I guessed this would involve him moving F(ION) - ADR so, I took the opportunity to convoy to Naf and walked into Tunis in the Autumn. The exact same time I convoyed to Naf - Kenders moved A(StP) to Nwy [hoping to convoy back to Yor], and Peter moved A(Mos) - StP - stabbing him.

Kenders went ballistic and he and Peter had strong words. Kenders was so mad (at Peter) that he believed some total nonsense I told him about not taking London that turn and I snuck up to 10, whilst he played to take back StP. That took us to lunch. Not the best time for it, from my point of view, since the lunch break is normally when the stop the leader alliance begins. Luckily for me it didn't. It's probably worth pointing out that at this point my France was the 'worst' when compared to the other boards, because elsewhere Gihan and Chetan both had 12+ supply centres.

During lunch somebody (Peter?) suggested a draw. I was openly interested, but it was obvious that Shaun wasn't. There was a vote and it failed. Peter was annoyed with this and I think he thought it was Shaun and/or Demis (Austria) who had vetoed it. He said that by continuing to

fight that they were throwing the game to me. He put some orders in (attacking Austria) and walked off.

I was pretty chuffed at this point. Already over the stalemate line (in Tun) I just concentrated on getting the German centres before they sorted themselves out. I took Mun in Spring and played for position elsewhere. Peter came back to the table after Spring and made some rude comment to the others and handed in the same set of orders again (publicly).

Shaun and John Stratford (Italy) used this knowledge to hack Demis (Austria) down from 4 to 1 in the autumn, whilst ignoring my conquest of Germany [even moving a unit out of Tyr in the process]. I took Kiel and Edi in the Fall. At this point I didn't think they could stop me before I hit 18 and neither did Shaun.

There was still some chance that they could though (it would have been close - could they take Mun or Ber back before I got to StP?) so, I got Kenders to ask for another draw. At this point I was on 13 and I said openly that I could easily force 16, and that I would agree a draw only if they agreed to give me the other 3. Of course they couldn't decide who would give them to me. Kenders insisted it should be Russia and Peter suggested Kenders should give them up. They couldn't agree and there wasn't even a vote [not that I would have agreed anyway]. This is the point where Peter said he had had enough and put blank orders in the folder.

The next season he agreed to order, but only from the other room. Shaun would write his orders for him and he would sign them. (Shaun revealed later that Peter wouldn't do some of the things Shaun suggested, which must of made Shaun's already difficult task nigh on impossible.) I suspect though that this didn't actually matter because it was already too late. I was through Germany (taking Ber and Den) and outside Warsaw now.

The 18 could be demonstrated as unstoppable the following turn when I picked up Swe, Nwy and had two units adjacent to the last English F(Stp.sc). At this point there were still 4 full years to play, but the game was over. My first face to face 18 and I was understandably a bit chuffed. I was also the overnight leader (not good), with a small advantage over Chetan in second place and Dave in third.

Of course, the draw on Sunday threw us all together on the same table. Plus Gihan and Simon Bouton, who were in fourth and fifth place!! I drew Germany, France was Dave, Chetan – Russia, Gihan – England, Simon – Austria, Demis – Italy and somebody I didn't know – Simon playing Turkey.

Frankly, I didn't give much for my chances and therefore decided to try and make sure that I dragged down as many of my nearest competitors as possible. Chetan would have made a natural first target, but since late-game alliances against Russia are a lot easier to organise than against France – Dave became my preferred first target. Luckily, Demis didn't need much persuading, nor Gihan, who was having a spirited 'negotiation' with Dave over the English Channel. It was whilst watching them . . .err . . . negotiate, that I decide upon my best prospect for the game. I could see that Gihan was having a real problem making his mind up what to do. The crux of his problem appeared to be that if he worked with any of his neighbours then that neighbour would likely win the NDC and he didn't want to have to make the choice. Therefore I decided my best chance was to make that decision easy for him. So, I decided not to lie to him at all – and to build only armies so as not to give him any excuse to seriously threaten my survival.

Initially the plan seemed to be working, but working almost too well when England, France and Russia failed to get a single build in 1901.

During 1902 I pressed on. Attacking Burgundy, occupying the Ruhr and supporting an English army into Belgium. Meanwhile, Gihan reached an accommodation with Chetan and let him take Sweden – I didn't complain. I was banking on Chetan stabbing Gihan sooner or later and I didn't have to wait much longer as he built in StP.

Elsewhere, France is being destroyed. I'm not gaining anything, but I don't care. Italy is growing large and there is plenty of evidence that he and Turkey had an understanding of sorts that would keep Simon in check.

Spring 1903 – and of course, I'm expecting Gihan to stab soon, because if I've judged the situation right then he almost has to for my plan to work. He doesn't disappoint me, with fleets turning up in Skag and Hel. Luckily, I'm in a position to grab Belgium back from him in exchange for the lost F(Den), which of course disbands to be replaced by an A(Ber). Chetan also took this opportunity to cause trouble in Scandinavia and he and Gihan have words . . .

Spring 1904 – sees Gihan once again prepared to switch sides. France is about to disappear and he needs the help of my A(Bur). He's also fairly cross with Chetan and offers to allow me Denmark uncontested. I of course comply – fully expecting to lose Denmark to him in the fall.

Come the fall the inevitable happens, and Gihan reclaims Den. However, the way in which he did it turns out to be one of the biggest howlers I have ever seen, since he walks out of Sweden (which remains Russian) to gain it. Doh!

OK, so he misses out on a build that shouldn't be too serious. Unfortunately, for Gihan, it was. Dave's France was at this point down to 1 SC and he had to choose whether to keep A(Par) or F(NAO). If Gihan had a build coming then his decision would have almost certainly been A(Par), but with Liverpool hanging he kept F(NAO). Gihan was mortified. Not so much for his position (now pretty crap), but for the fact that he had made such a horrendous boo-boo in front of his friends and peers.

The game started to peter out after that. It was obvious that the only real winners in this game would be Italy and Turkey and that none of the other contenders could gain enough to pass me. We played another year – in which Dave took another English SC (with Gihan's support I might add) and I remained entrenched on 5 SC's. Enough to win me the NDC, providing Guy Thomas or Simon Hornby didn't get in the region of 14+ centres on another board. It looked iffy for a while since Guy had a very strong position, but Simon H organised the resistance. Eventually pegging him back below 10 centres. The Top Ten were:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Mark Wightman	14.00	162.00	15.56	191.56
2. Chetan Radia	81.00	84.00	11.38	176.38
3. David Horton	122.50	24.25	10.50	157.25
4. Guy Thomas	66.33	5.00	60.00	131.33
5. Gihan Bandaranaike	7.00	107.00	15.56	129.56
6. Simon Bouton	75.60	39.00	11.38	125.98
7. Simon Hornby	75.60	19.20	20.89	115.69
8. Bruce Maclean	25.33	36.00	35.60	96.93
9. Doug Massie	18.00	21.25	31.33	70.58
10. Rob Molnar	10.67	12.20	20.89	43.76

Sorry, but I didn't catch who got the best country awards. I'm pretty sure that Dave got best England though. Simon Hornby also had a couple of them and one must have been Chetan's for his Friday game. Best France was pretty easy to remember to, since it was me.

Also awarded at the convention was Jeremy's, rather impressive, trophy for 'Diplomacy Player of the Year'. Which was won comfortably by Dave Horton. For those of you who don't know what this trophy is: Jeremy re-scores all UK tournament games in a given year, using his scoring system (the one used at MidCon) and awards the trophy to the player with the highest score. There's been a bit of a lively e-mail debate about the validity of this and the importance of some of the games scored. For example – Do you count single board tournaments (which are, in effect, little more than open housecons)? I'm staying out of it though.

Quote of the Con: "Oh, dear! I think Gihan is getting excited again."

And that's that for another year. Only the EDC in Paris to come now. No chance of winning that one, but it should be fun regardless.

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## **Let's Play Diplomacy**

**by Stephen Agar**

Although I could not claim to be one of the real "old timers" on the Diplomacy scene (having played my first game in only 1976) I have been around long enough to have tried to play (and GM) Diplomacy in a variety of ways, with varied results. With the popularity of the Internet, there are now more ways of playing Diplomacy than ever before, so I am going to summarise what is out there and what I make of it all.

Putting aside face-to-face Diplomacy (which is Diplomacy as it should be played) the basic options revolve around:

- how often you want the turns to take place (realtime, daily, weekly, monthly)
- the medium you want to use for negotiations (email or postal)
- how you want to get your game results (email, web page or postal fanzine)
- who you want to GM (a human or a computer).

Let's try and break this down a bit.

### **1. The "Snail Mail" Option**

Not everyone is on the Internet or has access to email. Even those that do, may not want to use it to play Diplomacy. The postal Diplomacy hobby dates back to 1963 in the US and 1969 in the UK. The basic mechanism is that the game of Diplomacy is run in a fanzine to which you subscribe (typically \$1.50 or £1 an issue). The fanzine appears periodically (usually 4 – weekly or monthly) and carries with it the game report. The players negotiate between issues of the fanzine (by post, telephone or email), send the orders to the GM, who adjudicates the game and prints the report in the fanzine etc. etc.



The principal disadvantages of postal Diplomacy are:

- You have to pay to receive the zine (though not very much)
- Games have several weeks between moves

On the plus side:

- The fact that players pay for the zine means that you have fewer dropouts than you get in a normal email game
- Zines have far more of a sense of community about them than any web page ever will. It is a proper amateur magazine which you can read on public transport, in the living room or in the bathroom – usually with articles and a letters column far broader than anything currently on the web. Having said that, you don't have to play in a zine to subscribe to it.
- You can still use email for negotiations with those players who have email
- Games have several weeks between moves!

### **Sites to check out**

<http://www.fbgames.co.uk/words/mfg/mfgtoc.htm>

<http://www.postalgames.org.uk>

<http://devel.diplom.org/Postal/>

### **2. The Halfway House**

This is what I intend for my new zine, *Armistice Day*. Although it will be a traditional postal Diplomacy zine as outlined above, it will also carry email games in which all participants have email access. Additionally, once such games have been adjudicated, the game report will be emailed out to the players, allowing them to continue their game before they receive the zine in the post. The zine will also print the game report as normal. The pros and cons are pretty much as set out above, save that you can effectively ignore the zine from the point of actually playing the game and there is a possibility of playing the game to a faster timescale (say a move every 2 weeks) -though you need to be a subscriber to play in the first place (which will hopefully discourage dropouts). A kind of subscribe to the zine to join the club. See <http://www.armisticeday.com>

### **3. An Internet Game using a Judge**

A Judge is a piece of software running on a server linked to the Internet which can be used to automatically run games of email Diplomacy. Players who use it are given a “dedication” rating which increases if you stick to deadlines and decreases if you are late or NMR. Essentially the way it works is this:

- You join a game waiting to be formed on a Judge (waiting lists can be examined)
- Once seven players have registered, the Judge assigns countries in accordance with preferences and sets the deadline
- All communications with other players are sent (and received) via the Judge
- Before the deadline you send orders to the Judge
- Once the Judge gets all the Orders in it sends out the adjudication by email etc. If not all seven sets of order are in, then there is a grace period in which the late player can submit orders – but his dedication rating is affected.

There are some advantages to this approach:

- It's free
- When everyone sends in their orders, it's quick – 48 or 72 hour deadlines are the norm.
- It is possible to configure games so only “dedicated” players may join, which can decrease the dropout rate.
- Usually judge games are no-NMR games.

On the other hand:

- You have to get the syntax *exactly* correct when dealing with the Judge – e.g. if you use the wrong format for orders or the wrong abbreviation for a province (although not ambiguous to a human) the Judge won't recognise it.
- Usually judge games are no-NMR games. That means that if someone NMRs the whole game is frozen waiting for a standby to come into the game to take over the position. Whether you find this acceptable is a matter of taste.
- Because anyone can put their name down to play (and there is no cost) you have a higher rate of dropouts than you would normally get with a postal game.
- There is really no sense of community at all – you send emails to the Judge and all you get back is a game report.
- There are some minor differences between the way a Judge interprets the rules and what the rules actually say.
- 48 or 72 hour deadlines are the norm

Now I have to come clean and say that I have always been instinctively hostile to Judge games. In the main this is because I have grown up in a Diplomacy fanzine tradition in which the game of Diplomacy was the excuse for the zine, but not the be all and end all. Hence, just getting a bare adjudication has never appealed to me. Also, I found the various introductions to using a Judge rather off-putting. To top it all the idea of “NoNMR” games with lots of standbys joining the game didn't appeal at all. However, I hereby pledge to actually use a Judge and report back on what the experience was actually like.

Judges can also be used for “real time” games with deadlines as short as 12 minutes – though organising such a game can be difficult.

### **Sites to check out**

<http://devel.diplom.org/Email/newbie.html>

### **4. An Internet Game using a Human GM**

There are a few variations on this theme – but mostly they evolve around the simple idea that you email the orders to a GM, who will adjudicate and then send the results back to you, setting the next deadline etc. Some are run via a web page, some through some sort of “club” or mailing list, and some are just organised privately.

There are many communities and sites offering this sort of service. Two worthy of mention (and which demonstrate different approaches) are:

**CAT23** – Games organised through various CAT23 mailing lists. Games usually fill quite quickly and many variants are run as well. <http://www.cat23.com>. However, each game is basically run independent of the others.

**Diplomacy 2000** – Games are organised through a frequently updated web site, with a choice of 1, 2 or 3-weekly turn games. Results and maps are put on the site and results are also emailed to the players. A good sense of community for a web site and highly recommended. <http://www.dip2000.org.uk>

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## Diplomacy Tournaments at Conventions

This is largely taken (with thanks) from the [Diplomatic Corps](#) Website

### World DipCon

- **World DipCon XI** will be held **27-29 July 2001** in **Paris, France**. For details, contact [Thibault Constans](#).
- [link] The Diplomacy Association of Australia and New Zealand will host **World DipCon XII** on **29 March to 1 April 2002** in **Canberra, Australia**. Full details of the convention plans are available at [www.wdc2002DownUnder.com](http://www.wdc2002DownUnder.com).
- [DipPouch] Past World DipCon locations (since 1988 World DipCon I ... WDC was biennial in its early years) can be found at the [Diplomatic Pouch's International Convention Results page](#).
- A mailing list has been created for anyone interested in **World DipCon** information. To join, send an e-mail to [majordomo@diplom.org](mailto:majordomo@diplom.org) saying "**subscribe wdc-I**".
- After several years of work, a [World DipCon Charter](#) was presented at this year's World DipCon X. It was ratified as applying to the North American hobby; the European hobby will vote on its ratification in Paris at World DipCon XI in 2001, and the Australasian hobby will vote on its ratification in Canberra at World DipCon XII in 2002. It formally establishes how future events are selected, what convention organizers need to do, and so forth. For the most part, this charter formalizes the methods that have guided the event since its 1988 origin.

### International special event

- Plans are being made to hold **EuroStarCon IV** on the **Eurostar train** between London and Paris in **July 2001**. Tentatively, Part One is planned for **26 July** from London to Paris, and Part Two is planned for **30 July** from Paris to London. "The only truly moving Diplomacy tournament experience." Details and contact links will be added as plans are developed.

### Australia & New Zealand

- [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 for 2001 include:

- 26-28 January 2001: [Australian Diplomacy Championships](#) (Canberra)  
For details, contact [Ken Sproat](#).
- 24-25 February 2001: [Waikato Diplomacy Open](#) (Hamilton, NZ)
- 13-16 April 2001 (Easter): [Victorian Diplomacy Championships](#) (Melbourne)  
For details, contact [Rob Stephenson](#).
- April 2001: [Queensland Diplomacy Championships](#) (Brisbane)  
For details, contact [Gary Johnson](#).
- June 2001: [NSW Diplomacy Championships](#) (Sydney)  
For details, contact [Craig Sedgwick](#).
- 14-15 July 2001: [Auckland Diplomacy Championships](#) (Auckland)  
For details, contact [Will Black](#).
- August 2001: [Wellington Diplomacy Open](#) (Wellington)
- Most if not all of the tournaments run during 2000 will also run during 2001.  
Check the DAANZ site for more events.

Listed events for 2002 include:

- 29 March - 1 April 2002 (Easter): [WDC 2002](#) (Canberra):  
The DAANZ's proposal to host **WorldDipCon XXXV on 29 March to 1 April 2002 in Canberra, Australia** was ratified at World DipCon XXXIII.  
Full details of the convention plans are available at  
[www.wdc2002downunder.com](http://www.wdc2002downunder.com).
- Many of the sites hosting 2001 events will be announcing 2002 dates. Check the DAANZ site for more events.

## Canada

- The umpteenth-plus-one **Can-Con** will be held on **17-19 August 2001** at the same location as this year, the University of Toronto's branch campus at **Scarborough, Ontario**. Send questions to Doug Acheson at 80 Bradford St. Suite 231, Barrie, Ontario L4N 6S7 CANADA or E-mail at: [Doug Acheson](mailto:Doug.Acheson) or telephone or fax at 705-730-0510.

## United Kingdom

- [link] **OxCon 2001** will be held in the Arco Building, Keble College on **10-11 Feb 2001**. <http://www.lancedal.demon.co.uk/dip2000/chat/oxcon.html>
- [link] **MasterCon North** will be held on Friday 2nd- Sunday 4th March 2001 (hosting the 2001 UK Masters Diplomacy Championship) at The Danum Hotel, High Street, DONCASTER. <http://www.mastercon.org.uk>
- [link] **BayCon**, long running games convention **19-22 April 2001** in Exeter. <http://www.downbeat.demon.co.uk/baycon.html>
- [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** at the Thistle Hotel (formerly the Royal Angus Hotel) 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](#). For any other questions, contact Jane Mitton, SFC Press Events Office, 4 Aspen Close, Coventry CV4 9TF, [Jane@sfcpc.co.uk](mailto:Jane@sfcpc.co.uk).

- [link] The long-running annual convention **ManorCon** carries past results and soon will carry information about the next ManorCon, **in 2001**, at the [ManorCon website](#).

## United States

- [links] The North American Diplomacy championship **DipCon XXXIV** will be hosted by the 2nd annual **ARMADA Regatta**, held on **16-18 February 2001** in **Denver, Colorado** as part of **GenghisCon XXII**. For details, see the [ARMADA \(Association of Rocky Mountain Area Diplomacy Adversaries\) website](#) or its [2001 Regatta](#) page or the [GenghisCon website](#). Hotel rooms are available for \$79 per night. Over 50 people have indicated they will attend DipCon. If there's any question not answered by those sites, send e-mail to [Manus Hand](#).
- [link] The 8th annual **PrezCon** ("The Winter Nationals") will be held on **21-25 February 2001** in **Charlottesville, Virginia**. This large annual convention features all kinds of boardgames and role-playing games, including a Diplomacy tournament. For details, see the [PrezCon website](#) or contact tournament organizer [Dan Mathias](#).
- The second annual **PiggyBack** Diplomacy tournament will be held on **9-11 March 2001** at the Coliseum Red Lion in **Portland, Oregon** as part of the **GameStorm** annual convention. The tournament will be held in four rounds: Friday 6pm, Saturday 9am, Saturday 4pm, and Sunday 10am. The final round will feature a Top Table. For details, contact [Jeff Dwornicki](#).
- [link] **Diplomatic Incident XV**, the next of a twice-a-year series of informal gatherings for Diplomacy and other games, will be held on **dates to be announced** in the **Boston, Massachusetts** area. For more details, contact [Dave Partridge](#) or watch future issues of Dave's Diplomacy subzine "[Tinamou](#)".
- [links] The Boardgame Players Association is presenting the **World Boardgame Championships** on **26 June to 1 July 2001** at Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn in **Hunt Valley, Maryland** (near Baltimore). One hundred different strategy boardgames have major tournaments at this event. In 2000 this event hosted World DipCon X/DipCon XXXIII. The BPA website, featuring information on this convention, is at [www.boardgamers.org](#). The schedule, house rules, 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 large annual convention **Origins** features all kinds of boardgames and role-playing games, including a Diplomacy tournament. For details, contact [Bruce Reiff](#). Future Origins are scheduled for **5-8 July 2001** and **4-7 July 2002**.
- The next **GenCon** will be held on **2-5 August 2001** 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](#). The following GenCon is scheduled for **8-11 August 2002**.

