

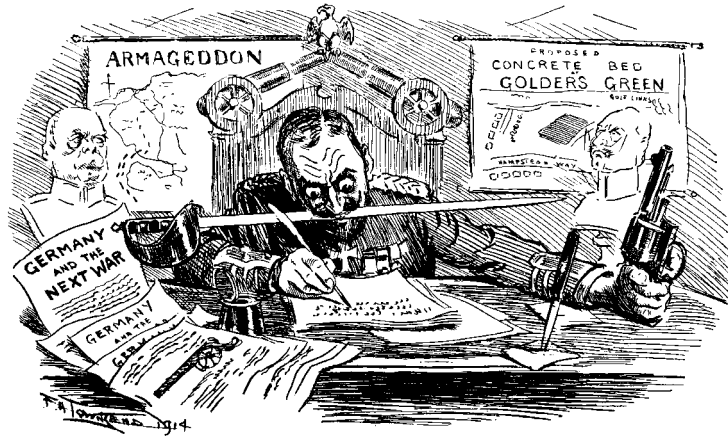
# Diplomacy World No.88

Spring 2002



## THE LAST THROW

*Punch, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1917*



*Diplomacy World* appears twice a year and is available as a postal zine – cost \$3 per issue in North America, £2 per issue in the UK and £3 per issue in the rest of the world. It is edited by Jim Burgess and Stephen Agar .

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Contributions for the next issue should be sent to [Jim Burgess](#) by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2002

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## **Editorial: Maybe I Should Get Out More?**

**By Stephen Agar**

I wouldn't go as far as to call it a mid-life crisis, but the thought has recently occurred to me that my life is to a substantial extent devoted to trivia. Since May 1992 my leisure time has been almost wholly devoted to Diplomacy – that's only a few months off ten years. As I got married in April 1992, Esme could be forgiven for thinking that I hid my obsession from her until there was no turning back.

My current Diplomacy-related activities include:

- Running the [www.diplomacy-archive.com](http://www.diplomacy-archive.com) web site (which aims to be the single biggest reference point on the web for articles about Diplomacy)
- Running the [www.variantbank.com](http://www.variantbank.com) web site (which is the home of what was the NAVB – now renamed the VB (as all the other regional Variant Banks seem to have disappeared))
- Editing the Diplomacy zine *Armistice Day* (which appears more or less monthly), running about 10 games of Diplomacy in it and maintaining the associated website [www.armisticeday.com](http://www.armisticeday.com).
- Maintaining the UK Diplomacy Archive, which consists of several thousand postal Diplomacy zines running to some 60 boxes.
- Co-editing *Diplomacy World* and maintaining the [www.diplomacyworld.org](http://www.diplomacyworld.org) website.
- Collecting Diplomacy sets (and published variants) from around the world – currently I have over 40 sets of Diplomacy scattered around my study.

The \$64,000 question is whether all the above is symptomatic of an inquiring mind in search of a little harmless intellectual diversion, or whether it is really all the hallmarks of someone in the grip of an unhealthy obsession. My own view (though I don't suppose for one minute that the patient's view is very relevant) is that it is somewhere between the two. But supposing for one minute that I cut back on Diplomacy, what else would I do with my spare time?

I tend to spend time on Diplomacy in the evenings when the kids are in bed and when there's nothing on TV to tempt me. Esme often studies in the evening (she's doing an Open University science degree), and while we probably should get out more as a couple, that does require a bit of forward planning. If I had more spare time I'd probably end up completing my website devoted to the very little known eccentric UK pop band The Freshies ([www.thefreshies.com](http://www.thefreshies.com) if you're interested) and maybe even put together a glam rock website at [www.glamrock.org.uk](http://www.glamrock.org.uk) (a domain name I've never got around to using) – or maybe I'd write the First Novel I fantasize about in bored moments (it would be a kind of 1960s Hans Christian Anderson meets Hannibal Lector). Or I suppose I could search the web hoping to increase my collection of Peter Hammill bootleg tapes or maybe go back to painting 15mm metal soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Punic War. Not exactly life-changing stuff.

Funny thing is, none of that sounds any healthier than the way I spend my time now. So clearly I need some help. Answers on a postcard as to what I should be doing with my life to [stephen@meurglys.com](mailto:stephen@meurglys.com) (and any suggestions which involve physical exercise will be treated with the disdain they deserve).

# Voting At An End

*Top Table Experience - WDC 2001 Paris*

by Edi Birsan

## **Background**

At WDC 12 in Paris there was a Top Board set up with the Championship reserved for the player with the most Supply Centers held at the end of the Top Board game. In case of a tie in centers, the first tie breaker was a vote of the non drawing survivors on the Top Board. This was the first time in World DipCon play voting was used as a tie breaker or in any other format. In the first known Diplomacy Tournament (1970 the DipCon III in Oklahoma City, USA) the winner (John Smythe) was chosen by the TD directors (Jeff Key and Eric Just) as there was no scoring system; that was the closest case of any voting or selection used in a major convention, but that was about 20 years before the start of the World DipCons. There were many questions and aspects of this Tie Breaking voting method that the creators and organizers (Yann Clouet and Thibault Constans) were experimenting with. What follows is a review of some of those aspects.

## **Voting as a Negotiations Tool**

There were no predetermined ethics on whether the voting should or should not be used in the negotiation techniques of the Top Board. What the creators thought of the ethical aspect was not known in advance. As far as can be seen, France (Edi Birsan) was the only one who tried to use it in the final stages of the game. It was used as follows:

1. With Italy (Thomas Sebeyran): Thomas was opposed (like all of those on the top board) to the voting method as a tie breaker. He had taken a public position at the start of the game that if there was a vote and he was casting it he would abstain as a protest. As the game entered the final year he had a strangle hold on France's 8th center: Tunis, which would have made a 3 way tie for the top position with Germany (Cyrille Sevin) and Turkey (Brian Dennehy). If he would take the center then there would be most likely a two way and there would be three people voting as Austria and England were dead. Edi argued that if there was a 3 way tie it would be a more chaotic choice and his abstention would negate the vote entirely as it needed to be passed by a clear majority as yes with the no's and abstains being counted to make the majority. Furthermore as his ally through most of the game was Turkey (Brian) the next tie breaker was tournament points and Brian would win over either Cyrille or Edi. A combination of temptation for the center, wanting to get the most points for himself, and the fear that the same argument would prevail over Cyrille in regard to Edinburgh -- thus giving Edi 9 centers and a championship -- was too much for him. Thus, Thomas turned the offer aside.

2. With Turkey (Brian), Edi argued that if he used his southern fleet in Greece to come to the Ionian with the idea of supporting France in Tunis then it would be a 3 way tie. Otherwise he was going to vote for Cyrille and with Thomas' stand on abstaining it would be a Cyrille win. The argument was: if there was a three way tie then Edi would not be in the vote and it would be just Thomas and Pierre. Here there was a genuine misunderstanding on Brian's part and a failure of Edi to communicate fully the consequences of the vote. Brian did not realise that if there was an abstain and a vote for Cyrille (since Pierre had been telling Brian he was going for Cyrille for some time) that the result would be an undecision and therefore it would go to the next tiebreaker that would mean that Brian would win. So Brian, who could have won the game with the second tie breaker did not see it, did not support Tunis and France was knocked out of the three way tie.

3. With Germany (Cyrille) the approach was similar in regard to Edinburgh where his support for French Army Yorkshire could have given France (Edi) a center to make up for the loss of Tunis. Of course if Tunis held and Edinburgh fell then France would have 9 and would win. However, Cyrille rejected it out of hand, as a matter of general policy he saw no reason to help anyone near him in the center count to another center on the last turn of the game and preferred to take his chances with the vote.

So in all cases where the attempt was made to use the voting system it failed to produce positive results. In two

of the cases it would have resulted in Brian (Turkey) winning the game on points and the collapse of the vote as a tie breaker.

### **What happened at the vote?**

We believe it was Thibault's plan to have an immediate vote without discussion. It was thought this would be a disaster as with Thomas determined to abstain there was a good chance that the vote would be 2-0-1 for Cyrille. With two French players and an American there would be enough paranoia for people to perceive that it was erroneously the French voting for the French. Also despite somewhat negative feelings all round, the three of the players wanted to give the method a fair shake. Thibault was easily enough convinced to give the three voters some time to discuss things in secret amongst themselves. Something that should be a regular feature in future cases since it was a bonus to the application of the concept.

### **The Discussion on the Vote**

1. First issue was that the decision should be unanimous and no one should abstain. The importance of avoiding paranoia nationalism was stressed and Thomas reluctantly agreed.
2. Then we went through various quick categories:
  - a. Who played the pieces better
  - b. Who screwed who the most
  - c. Who had the most 'diplomacy'
  - d. Who had a harder time getting to the same center count

We tossed out item b. as a determining factor since we wanted to keep the voting as objective as we could, since it was the first time it was used, let someone else come along and screw it up with revenge. In all 3 remaining categories it was felt that Germany's play had more strong points than Turkey's. Though interestingly enough the three of us put different emphasis on each of the three areas.

So in the end (8 minutes) it was unanimous for Cyrille's Germany.

### **On Reflection**

It was the first time a voting tie breaker was tried in a C-Diplo system as well as a WDC. It was worth the effort and a fair and honest effort was made to treat it as a possible feature of the system. Discussion amongst the voters is critical to getting the fairest result. Secret ballots are needed and absolute majority with no+abstains counting is reasonable. However, on reflection is not recommended because the temptation to partisanship and subjectiveness is too great and alien within the concept of the very focused Top Board structure and supply center count of a C-Diplo system and with the stakes being the World Championship. There are enough places for paranoia to slip in without creating more places along the way.

### **Alternatives**

This is not the place to discuss alternative Tie Breakers, but it would seem that the current experiment succeeded in telling us that maybe Tournament Directors should try a different methodology in approach to Tie Breakers.

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## **First is the Worst, Second is the Best**

**by Brian Dennehy**

Hi all. This is my story about the World Diplomacy Championships which took place in Paris in the Summer of 2001. It is probably going to be long and winding (knowing me), so stick on a pot of coffee and get yourself comfortable ... oh and if there's any beer – I quite fancy a brewski – so just pop one over to me and let's have a

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little chat.

Paris, land of the French, where art is everywhere, and most of the people have the audacity to speak French. Driving is akin to the chariot racing in Ben Hur, in fact – I definitely recall that some cars had those spikey things sticking out of their wheels, and there were at least two drivers attempting to whip other drivers. But the aura of chic which surrounds the place is fantastic.

And so a merry band of Diplomacy players, from Oireland, arrives, welly-boots on, hair slicked back - wolly jumpers on - all in the middle of July. Being Irish - we of course flew into Belgium, to get to France – it's a strange Irish custom really, and when you think about it, well - it just makes absolutely perfect sense. So we took a bus from the wonderful airport at Beauvais ... by wonderful, naturally enough, I mean terrible. The bus driver was obviously not French, because he drove to Paris at an average speed of "walk". In fact - I saw two guys in zimmer frames racing us - but they outdistanced us quite quickly. So the trip into Paris took approximately 42023023445134 hours (not that I would \*ever\* exaggerate ;- ) ).

Our touring party consisted of - Myself - Brian "Mallet" Dennehy the most experienced of the Belgium fliers, then there was Paraic "Fred" Reddington a top diplomacist who likes to eat his prey after he has finished stabbing them to death, Stuart "Jessy" Evers who was on his first ever diplomacy tournament outing, after playing 1 full game EVER, Fintan "Chilli" Palmer the jester of the bunch, who was recruited to carry the trophies of the "Mallet" :-). Also attending from Ireland were Fearghal "Twerg" O'Donnchu, and Muiris "Twerg's evil brother"

O'Donnchu, but they actually flew into France itself on a much earlier flight. So the Irish party was six strong and certainly there was alcohol to be drunk. The Belgium contingent arrived into Paris itself quite late - about 11pm or so.

We checked into the hotel and went up to our rooms. Fred's very distinctive Bass-voice induced a drunken call from Twerg (who had retired for the evening at this stage, since he was drinking since very early) consisting of "Fred u big git" or something equally as profound as that. We resolved to go somewhere to drink vast amounts of beer - to relax from that rather long drive.

As we exited the rooms - a Yeti-type animal came down the corridor -bouncing off the walls, stumbling down the narrow alleyway, a can of beer in its hand - tilted to almost 90 degrees, 90 degrees towards the yeti itself, causing said beer to flow (due to gravity) down the front of the yeti. A very scary sight indeed. Quickly the yeti called out - Brian, you \*\*\*\*, it said in a rather thick London accent. Although rather slurry. Was this some new life-form we wondered!!! Then the light hit the thing and it became clear (after a while) that it was, in fact, Toby Harris, who was at a stage of drunkenness usually reached by Twergs ... and perhaps Tim Richardson.

We went downstairs, with the yeti hot on our heels, to say hello to a few guys who were playing games in the lobby. We said hi and then went straight out - attempting to avoid the yeti - as we didn't want to be arrested for playing with nature. So we went walking up the road towards pubdom. As we exited the yeti followed - still bouncing off walls, and various other things which were on the street. The yeti apparently wanted to come with us to the pub. We informed the yeti that it was way past its bedtime and that it should retire as any further dicing with alcoholic beverages could result in death for the creature.

So we went up the road and met plenty of diplomats at the pub, Sascha Hingst (Germany), Cyrille Sevin - the man with no cigarettes (France), Yann Clouet (France), Ian Cowburn (Scotland), Yair Zvilichowski (Israel), Bear Barrow (America), Sean Colman (Australia), Niclas Perez (Sweden), Leif Bergman (Sweden) to name but a few. The Irish contingent immediately began to attack the beers with gusto.

There was many a tasty beverage downed that night - and we also met up with the London "mafia" contingent - who were surprisingly alcohol ridden. Normally such lightweights as Simon "SuperGirl" Bouton and Chetan "one-pint" Radia are sipping a nice baby-sham or perhaps a tasty peach-schnapps and orange juice, while the Twergs of this world are busy lying asleep in their own vomit... hmmm... when I say it like that the peach-schnapps option sounds ok... no wait - pints it is :-).

So - there were basically players from all over - all drinking and carousing the night before the games would commence. We finally got to bed at some ungodly hour of the morning and tried to get some sleep to prepare for the next days dipping. We arose at some arbitrary time - and off we went to the diplomacy hall for some diplomacy action. There were lots of people there - as you would expect for a WDC - so hats off to the organisers and advertisers for getting so many to turn up.

The boards were drawn and my board went something like this:

France: Emeric Miszti (UK)

England: Richard Orme (Australia)

Germany: Bjorn Westling (Sweden)

Turkey: Thomas Sebeyran (France)

Italy: French guy who's name escapes me (I'm appalling with names)

Austria: Suzanne Castagne (USA/France, I think she was playing for France this time)

and Russia : Brian Dennehy (Ireland)

So it was quite an interesting mix. When I drew it I figured it was gonna be an ok draw - I figured I could work with either Suzanne or Thomas, and I was expecting Emeric to apply pressure on the North giving me some options there - so on the face of it, it looked like an ok draw. Well - I was a tad wrong about some of those ideas. Emeric, just went South, allowing an EG to form to attack me in the North. I figure that Emeric regarded me as somewhat of a threat to his doing well on the board so he decided to chop my legs out from under me by undertaking a Southern strategy. I was swift in my response, and joined forces with Thomas in Turkey, to form an RT. Austria had to fuel the defence of the North, so I had to hit Suzanne. So myself, Thomas and the French guy playing Italy just took Suzanne out - while Bjorn and Richard were working the North against me. The EG alliance wasn't exactly rock-solid however, with both of them rather nervous of each other, and to add to that Emeric was rather nervous too - leaving lots of units for defence - even though he was attacking Italy hard.

On one particular turn - a German army was convoyed to Livonia, coupled with a move to Silesia. OH GOD, thought I, as my defence consisted of F Ska, A StP and A Gal - versus - A Nwy, F Swe, F Bal, F Den, A Lvn, A Sil. Luckily for me - Emeric told Bjorn that he wouldn't attack Munich. Bjorn covered Munich, and attacked England in Sweden (convoying back out of Lvn). Richard immediately came to me and said "Let's be friends". I replied - "OK" and off we went - I dived into Bjorn in the North and myself and Richard really had a good alliance up there - even though we could both have damaged each other had we tried.

Thomas and myself had been working very very strongly all this time - and we were leading the posse at the moment. Emeric was doing quite well - but was getting bogged down in Italy - because the Italian just turned around and defended against him, with some help from Turkey.

So with the final year approaching - it was 10 for me in Russia and 10 for Thomas in Turkey, England was on 4, France was on 5, Germany was on 2 or 3 or something, Italy had one or two and Austria was out. Myself and Thomas had some discussions because he could take an Italian centre, while I had access to two centres in Scandinavia. We discussed the tournament and our goal as an alliance. We came to the conclusion that we should finish joint-first as we had played a game-long strong alliance and it would set us both up to have an equal chance at getting onto the top board. So - we agreed to not play to gain any more centres - but instead to keep Italy alive, to put England into joint third, and to play for joint-top ourselves. Well I tell you - that was quite a nervy experience - but we both did as agreed - and the two game-long allies showed why alliances are good in diplomacy, and I got to pay Richard back for his help, and pay Emeric back for his hindrance (he'll love this).

That was the first day - and when I met anybody and they began to find out what happened and that I had a chance to win, and instead of taking it - I didn't - I took a joint-top - well they were ALL appalled - to a man. Not ONE player who I met - said that it was a good idea. I stuck to my guns, happy in the knowledge that Thomas had an equal chance to get to the top board, and there were still 2 more rounds to play prior to that. So off we went again - for some food and some light refreshment (i.e. many beers :-), with some dip players and I

can't actually remember what we did - but I'm sure it was all good :-).

Another early start for Day 2, which was also the team round. My team consisted of Niclas Perez, Fearghal O'Donnchu, and myself (the current European Team Champions) and Yann Clouet which were the 4 members of the Current Swedish Team Champions) so we had high hopes, however there were some other excellent teams in contention - Team Asians (current World Champs (at the time)) and European Champs in 1999 - before we wrested the title from them) had such greats as Simon Bouton, Gihan Bandaranaike, Vick Hall, and Chetan Radia - all great players and definitely a force to be reckoned with. But there was another team which had arisen: - Toby Harris making a return to FtF diplomacy had put together an awesome team of former World Champions (and he added himself to it too ;-). Harris himself, Cyrille Sevin (damn his hide), Bruno-Andre Giraudon, and Pascal Montagna. However - Pascal dropped out - but Toby was able to recruit the top Israeli player - Shlomi Yaakovovich. There were others - but these were the two which we had marked for attention - but usually at least one more comes in under the radar. In the run up to the competition there was quite a lot of banter about who was going to be team champs - so it was quite a high profile event.

Anyhooo - the countries were drawn and I got the following draw:

Me - England ... not too bad - but it can be painful in C-Diplo

France - Ronald Lokers – didn't know him – he's a Dutch guy

Germany - Simon Bouton - current World Champ - facing the Current 2nd Placer in EG - oh god - and he was on Team Asians - this was a BIG matchup

Russia – can't remember the name - a French guy

Italy – can't remember the name - a very new Swedish guy

Austria - Sid Ahmed Sedjai - a top French player

Turkey - Shaun Derrick - very well known English player - very very good too.

So the board actually looked very tough indeed. Squaring off against Simon was not something I particularly relished. However I got down to the job and well - I think I did ok – cos:

In Spring 1901: France - supported himself to Burgundy; Italy - went to Tyl; Russia - went to Sil; I opened Standard.

In Fall 1901: Russia - went to Ber; Italy - went to Mun; France was \*supposed\* to support Italy to Mun - but got Greedy ;-), and hit Bel

England (me) - convoyed to Holland and got in.

And Simon was basically killed by 1903 - and my, oh my - does he throw a top queenie fit. If you are ever on a board with Simon - I highly recommend that you kill him early - just to see his face - MAAAAAANNNN was he annoyed. He blamed me for the whole thing - unsurprisingly ;-), and he even went so far as to disband everything except his F Hel - just to try to annoy me, even though he had an outside chance of surviving in Munich. Pheewwwweee - it was pretty sweet though - he stormed off all in a huff and everything (if you are reading this Simon - I love you really!!!). In fact - he came back at various intervals to give Russia, Italy, and then France a good slugging - as each, in turn, was consigned to the ash heap. I ended with 17 centres - which was the best England.

This also served to prove my righteousness in taking the tie-top as now I had a 17 top and a 10-tie top which was the equivalent to two 7.5 centre tops (thanks Twergy for the maths ;-). Two tops is usually enough to get you to a top board - so I had two here - so I figured I needed just a result of some description to make sure - a third or a second or something. But again - I wasn't sure as the tournament was quite big - so it was always going to be hard to tell who had what score. But two down - and two good results - I was certainly a happy camper as we took a break between the two dip rounds, to grab a bit of food - in preparation for the evening game - which was the final one before top-board allocations.



Well, I drew another doozy of a board this time:

Italy - Me (and if you know me - I HATE Italy, I am absolutely APPALLING at it - I cannot play it at all whatsoever - I just don't get Italy)

France - Toby Harris (and maaaaaannnnn do we have a rivalry :-), In fact I played Italy to his Turkey in ManorCon the week before and he eliminated me - and I played Italy to his Russia in Boasters email game, which some of you will know, and again I did crap - so 3 times playing Toby - 3 times drawing Italy - which is quite ironic cos its his best country and my worst!!)

Turkey - Christian Ziethen - I seem to draw him at every tourney we are at together – it's quite funny actually – he's a top Swedish player

Russia - Benoit Clergeot - oohh Benoit - he was Turkey to my Russia in WM2000 Round One - and he and I basically sparred for the WHOLE GAME – that's 6 months of annoying each other - a fact that seemed not to be forgotten in the game. He's also a super player - been ranked No. 1 in Europe for some time.

Germany - Stephane Derdi - so with Christian and me - this is the third player from the Swedish NDC Top Board, and he's been Belgian Champion too - another great player.

Austria - I cannot remember.

England - I cannot remember.

Well - this really was a mad game. Toby Harris must have come up to me 14 times before Spring 1901 asking me was I moving to Piedmont - each time I assured him I wasn't :-). There was such a frenzy of diplomacy surrounding the well-known Dr. Harris that the game was just buzzing with anticipation. It seems that in a 1907 game - everybody knows the power of the French defensive position, and also - everybody knows the power of Toby Harris - so it was appearing that Benoit in Russia, and myself in Italy were quite willing to allow EG the space to give Harris a good going over - I mean - anything had to be better than letting the flouncy git win!! So with all this frenzy of anticipation over Piedmont in the air - I opened to Trieste and Venice - for the first time ever in my diplomacy life - and it worked a charm - wowie. Well the game went on - and it really was a cracker - Toby defended supremely against EG and they never took a centre from him - despite being in his face for 6 of the 7 years, however - I never really joined to attack Toby - not that EG particularly asked me to - but Toby was very much anti my help - even when MAO was threatened he was still bouncing with me in WMS :-).

But - the game came down to an E vs. I conflict and with some bad blood and some acrimony the game came to a close with Italy on 12 (me) and Germany on 11 (Stephane). I won't go into the acrimony here as those who were there know all about it. Toby finished in 3rd with 7 or 6 I can't remember exactly. Stephane and Toby both missed out on the top board - Toby by 4.5 points and Stephane by 5.5 points. Well it's amazing really - as Toby gave Spain to me in the last season - which cost Stephane a place on the top board. It just shows how close these things can get.

So - I had secured another top slot - and low and behold - my plan to take the draw with Thomas paid off - as ... guess what ... Thomas had secured a first also ... and a third I believe - so we were both on the top board. I defy anybody to say that the strategy was flawed - it took a lot of trust to take a joint first - and we had kept that intact going onto the Top Board.

Anyway - there was lots and lots of rumours about who was on the top board. I was on for sure - and likely the highest scorer, and Cyrille Sevin was on for sure with two tops and a 2nd to his name, Edi Birsan was reputed to have 2 tops, Thomas Sebeyran was pretty much there, Doug Massie (not the judge guy) had two wins. The rest was getting kinda murky, Mark Wightman was a contender, as was Toby Harris, Vincent Mous ... and there were sure to be guys which we missed around the scene.

So off we went to the pub and had some beers - I wasn't hitting the beer very hard - as I wanted to be fighting fit

in the morning for the final. Still - we had some beers and ended up back in the hotel playing modern art with a VERY VERY drunk Yair Zvilichowski. This made the game last about 4 hours - when it normally takes about 45 mins - so it was quite late when I got to bed – after all my being wise and not staying out drinking. In point of fact - a number of those who did stay out - came in and went to bed while we still played. Eventually we packed up and went to bed ... not that I could sleep what with diplomacy pieces going around my head - and strategies for different countries - and the traits of the different players I expected to face - and what country would I like - and what country would I hate ... and so on and so forth. Eventually I nodded off ....

... Only to be woken up 5 seconds later (well it felt like 5 seconds), by Fred (my room-mate) kicking me awake. It was time to get up, wake up, and make myself presentable for some dip action. The butterflies were already going... I mean this was the world final baby - it don't get any bigger than this. So up we went to the hall and the expectation was immense - and up on the board - in bright letters for all to see was the list of the players to play the final board in order of their scores going into the final - there were also three other names and the total points which they missed the final board by \*ouch\*. The final board consisted of, in order (well ok, not in order - in order of memory):

Brian Dennehy (top scorer going in - aren't I great :-))

Cyrille Sevin (truly a bad bad man)

Edi Birsan (very well known, been around for years - there is talk that he is actually Allan Calhamer's brother)

Pierre Malherbaud

Doug Massie (not the judge guy)

Thomas Sebeyran (well that's a turn up for the books - my old pal Thomas!!)

Mark Wightman (awww nuts - not him - he's sure to go after me ;-))

The other three were:

Vincent Mous -- 1 point shy

Toby Harris -- 4.5 points shy

Stephane Derdi -- 5.5 points shy

Basically - that centre that Toby chucked me in the previous round cost Stephane about 10 points - and therefore a place on the top board - ouch!! So now we stood around looking at each other - not knowing the country assignments - as Thibault - the super Tournament Director - called out each of the other boards. Well - I stood looking at the other guys - and well, things tend to go through your head as you see them ... I can't remember much but I am sure that some of it was - what country will I get and what I knew about the other guys.

So here's my take:

Cyrille - played him once before - I played G to his E, France opened to the Channel - and he blamed me for it - and played against me for the whole game - going so far as to make sure that I didn't tie for top - after I had actually played a blinder for the rest of the game. Slippery as an eel and former World and Euro Champ so definitely a big challenge. I had no doubt I could work with him - but I would have to watch my back here.

Edi - never played him - but his reputation precedes him – he's done it all - and he is most likely a strong competitor. I had no idea what his style was like so he was a wait and see.

Thomas – well, our game long alliance in round 1 was a superb example of how myself and Thomas can work together - I think we compliment each other very well and he's a great ally - somebody I would like to have around me in a world champ game. Fingers crossed we would be nearby.

Mark - played him once - and he tore me a new a-hole - current English Champ so he certainly had the calibre - and he's been around for years. Something just made me worried about working with him - I think it was mainly my belief that he wouldn't like to work with me. I think Mark is more of a "take out your threats" kinda guy

rather than work with the good players. So I didn't really want him near me.

Doug - played with him at least once - we got on fine - I get on pretty good with him in general - he's quite open and generally honest - although he will scoop out your liver with a spoon and eat it if you give him half a chance - but quite a solid player - I would be happy to have him near me too.

Pierre - never heard of him before - so he was completely unknown to me - so I guess this was the guy who came from nowhere.

So players I wanted near me in order were: Thomas; Doug; Pierre; Edi; Cyrille; Mark.

Course it never works out like that - but that's just the way the cookie crumbles. As it turns out - we filled in a sheet on the first day with 3 country preferences. Now at the time - nobody told me that this was a sheet which would be used when you got to the top board. I had filled in TEF as my preferences - mainly cos I thought it was a first preference for each of the three rounds - it had nothing to do with what I would pick on a top board which would be GRA or something like it. Also - the way it was done was - whoever had the highest score got their first choice - so I got Turkey - oh god, I thought - bloody Turkey ... in a top board? Oh GOD!!! And so the rest were read out:

Cyrille was Germany - so that wasn't too bad - he was far enough away so that he couldn't annoy me.

Doug was England - a little too far away for my liking - he certainly looked the most nervous - and I didn't really want him to capitulate too quickly.

Edi drew France - ok - that's ok - F and T could have a decent relationship and his obvious strength should mark him for attention.

Thomas drew Italy - result - that should help me stop any Lepanto plans - hopefully!!!

Pierre drew Russia - well, it remained to be seen whether this was good or bad.

Mark drew Austria - utterly terrible - I figured he had nothing else on his mind except putting me into a box and keeping me there for as long as possible.

And so we started, E and F got off to a joint forces start while Italy moved North, standard for T and R and that's all. England pushed North against Russia - who responded with German help against him - while Italy played to Munich (by agreement) and then to Burgundy. And low and behold - Mark (Austria) sat on me by getting supported to Bul. By this time I had captured Bla though - and I also now moved to capture Aeg - so while I was down to three pieces - I was still ok, cos they were F Aeg, F Bla and A Con which is still not terrible for Turkey, and I was able to keep Mark off balance by helping Thomas (Italy) into Greece.

However - in the North disaster was striking - Doug (England) was being very nervous and was now making mistakes - his attack on Russia went badly as he misordered and it wasn't looking good as Russia retreated to Nwg and Doug was in a whole heap of trouble. I felt bad for the guy - I really did - cos I know how it feels to be that nervous - and screw up in a game so important - I did exactly the same in the EDC top board 6 months earlier \*sigh\*. Italy was still being friendly - and Mark was getting more and more agitated as Russia didn't want to advance in the South - and I was continually trying to get him to get up off me - but he was now very fearful of what would happen if he did get off - although he was getting nervy anyway - cos he was being bottled up by Italy on one side - he couldn't move cos he was holding me down and he couldn't manage to get a build from anywhere.

Then the first major shift happened - Cyrille hit Pru and Sil. I know that I asked him to - but I really don't know exactly how much I had to do with it. My logic was that he really needed me to put some pressure on somebody - cos it was getting into 1904 now and I was on 3 centres - but I couldn't do anything cos I couldn't get out of my box. And Cyrille moved. Well, the board went crazy - War was sure to fall - as was Swe - that's minus two for Russia - and Cyrille in a superb position. So I made Russia a simple offer - I support him into Bulgaria - and we start being friends. It would save him a piece and he could defend better against Cyrille. It was good for me too - and he took me up - so I supported him. Now Mark was looking rather shaky - cos not only did I support

him but Cyrille completely called off his attack - taking no centres from him and pulling back west. Wowee - so Russia took a build, plonked a unit to War, and supported himself to Rum and went to Gal, I went to Bul with two supports and well, now I was back in the game. However now France was the threat - and England had just been eliminated 1 each for FGR and the East side was looking bad - somebody had to send something after France and the only person was Thomas - so we agreed that we would just take out Mark, as we needed his centres to fuel our moves in other areas of the board. So in one move - we hit him for 5 SCs - I took Ser and Gre, Russia took Bud, and Italy took Trieste and Vienna - Vie was a loan until Thomas could get something from France. Well that's the way I remember it - it was something like that - but perhaps not it for sure. And so we had two eliminations.

Well, the rest is kinda sketchy - F and I fought - myself and Cyrille hit Russia - who was on 9 at this stage - and somehow we managed to grab 8 SCs each. I had a \*shot\* at the ninth on the last turn but alas I was foiled. It was a nice tricky little slick move but unfortunately it didn't come off - or I would be world champ. So 8 each was the result - with Edi on 7, Pierre on 6 (I think), Thomas on 5. And onto the next stage - resolving the tie-break. Well, this tournament had a voting system - where each surviving player had one vote to decide the winner. Pierre had said he would vote for Cyrille cos I stabbed him (forgetting the fact that so did Cyrille, but there you go), Thomas said he would abstain as he didn't want to be kingmaker - as he gets on well with both Cyrille and myself and Edi basically had the casting vote - if he voted for Cyrille he would win - if he voted for me - the vote would be tied and I would win as the next tiebreak was score going into the final board - which favoured me.

Myself and Cyrille just went to the window together and had a smoke - and left the survivors to talk about it and decide. We had both played very well so it was always going to be a tough decision for them to make. They made it and it was unanimously Cyrille who was voted World Champ ... for the second time. \*sigh\* - I got the distinction of being 2nd for the 2nd year in a row. Absolute heartbreak ☹

Oh well - sometimes these things happen like that and we play on.

The convention was absolutely superb - the hall was great, the hotel (free) was excellent, the people were brilliant - I met lots and lots of new faces and got to re-meet some oldies too - utterly a great time was had - the only blemish being that I didn't win ☺.

The moral of the story is ... first is the worst ... second is the best ☺

Oh ... and if you see Cyrille on a board - please kill him for me -there's a beer in it for you !

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## **Diplomacy World Interview IV**

### **Jim Burgess Discusses the British Hobby with Richard Sharp**

This is the fourth interview in our series of major hobby figures for *Diplomacy World*. Richard Sharp has been a major figure in the British hobby for 30 years and I thank my co-editor, Stephen Agar, for assisting me in convincing Richard to answer my wide ranging questions when he would prefer to be tooling around France drinking and smoking. Stephen also gave me some assistance in formulating questions. 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 continue to move all around the world seeking good interview candidates. We presently are working on an extended interview with Allan Calhamer and have been accepting questions that you want him to be asked.

Background: Richard Sharp was born in 1942, while the world was preoccupied with more interesting matters taking place at Stalingrad and El Alamein. He grew up in a games-playing family, learning bridge at the age of 11 and playing it regularly at public school (where cards were banned) and then almost continuously for three years at Oxford. Following this waste of an expensive education, he was briefly the world's most incompetent

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bank clerk before finding a congenial niche as an editor in a London publishing house. He launched his Diplomacy zine, *Dolchstoss*, in 1972, and is still publishing 30 years later, give or take a slight hiccup from 1979 to 1983. He left publishing in 1976 to write books, and had four of them published, noting in the process that the only time he made any money out was by translating other people's or teaching bridge. In 1979, having spent three years working out the obvious, he went to work as a freelance for a translation agency, and is still doing so 22 years later. He now lives quietly with his second wife, Bronwyn, in a decrepit 17th century house in a small town outside London, drinking lots of beer at the pub three doors down, smoking a hundred fags a day, and spending a couple of months a year driving around Europe and the rest working 60-hour weeks to try to pay for it all. His two children by his first marriage, Dominic and Pippa, have both married recently, so his outside interests are now confined to bridge, beer and baccy. His ambition is to live in France, preferably at someone else's expense.

**SA (Stephen Agar):** Jim Burgess (co-editor of *Diplomacy World*) has asked if I would pass this list of questions to you that he has prepared for your thoughts – to be published in the next issue of *Diplomacy World* as a virtual interview. Jim and I would be very grateful if you could find the time to jot down some answers – or even answer some questions that you haven't been asked, but think deserve answering.

**JB (Jim Burgess):** Richard, as an American looking from afar you are known most for inventing names for practically every possible opening that players can make, for being one of the game's best but idiosyncratic players, and for being one of the Brit hobby's most consistent zine publishers. I intend to ask you about all of that and more, but first could you please recount "your beginnings", how you got interested in Diplomacy in the first place and what hooked you on it for life?

**RS (Richard Sharp):** Hollow laughter about my being "one of the game's best players"!

**JB:** Hey, I have to snag people and get them started answering these questions somehow!

**RS:** But I first heard of the game in late 1971, from friends, and first played it on Boxing Day that year. I was hugely impressed, even though my debut was a brief one: as Italy, I was alarmed to see my German ally talking eagerly to Austria in about 1903. When I tried to cut in, Germany turned a cold eye on me and said, "Go home, greaseball." In the early months of 1972 I was turning my thoughts to inventing a postal version of the game ... then out came issue 1 of *Games and Puzzles* and I found that someone had beaten me to it. I signed up for the British Diplomacy Club (BDC), found myself in a game by midsummer, formed a friendship in that game that endures until today, was talked into running "a game or two" myself, and that was how it began.

**JB:** Ah ha! Then, I'd like to ask you about *Dolchstoss* first. It is said that you once had about 350 subscribers. Is this true?? As someone with what I believe is the largest extant postal mailing list (my szine *The Abyssinian Prince* goes out by mail to about 140 every three weeks, and more by Web/E-Mail) and knowing what a major chore this is, how ever did you manage that many people? What is your mailing list down to now??

**RS:** I'm honestly not sure now, but it was in the region of 400 for a brief period, during the heyday of the National Games Club (NGC), of which *Dolchstoss* became the house zine. It was a complete nightmare producing that many copies on an old duplicator, and it clearly couldn't last. Circulation today is in the low 90s and falling, which is fine.

**JB:** Do you believe there is a continued future for Postal Diplomacy zines? Does that future include you for a foreseeable period of time??

**RS:** I think we're maybe coming to the end of the road, slowly. E-mail Dip seems to be killing the postal hobby, though by all accounts the e-mail version has some serious weaknesses. As for me, I am finding it increasingly difficult to maintain standards with my huge workload as a translator, but I don't have any plans to fold just yet. If I find my standards have become unacceptably low, I might have to think again.

**JB:** Since I don't receive your zine (though I have inquired about trading in the past), some of these questions

might seem a bit trivial or obvious, but how integrated is your zine into E-Mail? Are you considering a web page at any point in time?? Do most of your players E-Mail orders, letters and press?

**RS:** Nothing personal there – I don't trade with non-UK zines simply in order to keep my circulation down. As for e-mail, it's only a couple of months ago that I reluctantly began accepting e-mail orders, though I welcome letters by that route. I have no plans for a web page, not wanting to do anything that might attract more subscribers!

**JB:** How did you come to write the only published book on Diplomacy? And did it make your fortune?

**RS:** It just so happens that one of the *Dolchstoss* subbers at the time, the late Simon Dally, was managing director of Arthur Barker, an imprint of the publishing house Weidenfeld & Nicholson. He commissioned the book. It certainly didn't make my fortune – just a few hundred pounds to supplement my then meagre income as a bridge teacher. Not only that, but it wrecked my Dip playing career, because I became "famous", always a bad move in Diplomacy.

**JB:** Enough of the boring background, let's get to some of the fun stuff! What is this thing called "Bedbug Island" and where did you get the idea for it??

**RS:** I vaguely remember that "Bedbug" started life as a character (an Orc) that I used in press for a Tolkien variant. "Bedbug Island" was the setting for quite a long series of articles I wrote in *Games and Puzzles*: a windswept island in the South Atlantic used as a detention centre for incurable games addicts. I later used it, and still do, as my dateline for GM press in *Dolchstoss*. It caused a furore when someone, Nicky Palmer I suspect, sent in some bogus press from "Bedbug Island" (with a lower-case L instead of the capital I); this was not against house rules, so I printed it, and it caused mayhem in the game, the players reasonably claiming that with such small and indistinct print it was impossible to tell the two apart.

**JB:** Heh, heh, I allow the players in my szine to impersonate the GM in the press and think their pathetic attempts to do so are lame rather than mayhem causing. I believe you used to be involved with the British Diplomacy Club and the National Games Club. In the US hobby we have had our fair share of associations and clubs too. Do you think they were all doomed not to work, and are we better out without them today?

**RS:** No to both of those. The BDC, and its successor the NGC, did in fact work well for a considerable period. Their main value was that they offered some sort of guarantee of continuity at a time when zines were appearing and disappearing all over the place. I don't think we miss them now that the hobby has shrunk so much, but they did no harm and quite a bit of good at the time.

**JB:** Do you have very many new subbers and players, or are most of the games amongst the old crew from the 1970's?

**RS:** Roughly a third of my current readers were receiving the zine in the 1970s. About a third of current players, too, were active in the 1970s, though this figure is distorted by the fact that one of the six current games was restricted to players from that era. I get very few new subbers nowadays, maybe 2-3 a year.

**JB:** How much press do they write? How do you encourage it, or do you? What do YOU think the role of press should be, what would you like to see in *Dolchstoss* and elsewhere?

**RS:** Years ago I was a very enthusiastic press writer, but not any more. Most of the press in *Dolchstoss* seems to consist of apologies for failure to write enough letters. In my early days in the hobby I used to love the long and sometimes inspired press series that appeared in British zines, especially *Ethil the Frog*. Today I neither encourage it nor discourage it: the fact is that I hate copy-typing anything, even press.

**JB:** In my view, good press games help to bind the players together better, but sometimes that can lead to LESS dynamic alliance play, not more. You are famous for your opposition to what the Internet world today calls "carebear" play (in your case, the famous battle against the "Karma League"). Could you expand on your thoughts about player relationships and the wider view of the game – and of course shifting alliances?? There also is the "Armoured Duck" (the player who plays pure tit-for-tat game theory and takes all stabs as "forever")

that is a dagger in the heart of shifting alliance play. Do you have some thoughts on these issues?

**RS:** The Karma League? Good grief, that was a long time ago – I can barely remember it. There is no doubt at all that the best games I have played in, and run, have seen constant shifts in alliances. The most enjoyable game I ever played, a very long 1976 one in which I was Germany, involved me in alliances with all the other players at different times, several of those alliances breaking and reforming as necessity dictated, with three different players reaching 14 or more centres at various times, though the eventual result was a 4-way draw. Equally, there is no doubt that the best players bear no grudges and, more importantly, expect none to be borne against them. I have just suffered at the hands of an "armoured duck" who stabbed me early on and wouldn't withdraw even when disaster loomed; I was eliminated, sure, but he won't be far behind, and that style of play does annoy me.

**JB:** Now let me turn to "oddities" which you are famous for. I believe you have stated that in British postal play there never has been a Diplomacy game that did not have at least ONE standoff in Spring 1901. I can't cite an example, but I'm SURE that such a thing has happened before in both the E-Mail and US hobbies. One explanation for this might be a Brit style fascination with arranged Spring 1901 standoffs in various parts of the board, do you have an explanation for this?

**RS:** No. To be honest, I don't remember saying that, but if I did I'm sure it was true. Because of stereotyped opening play, a standoff in BLA is almost invariable in British games, while those in Gal and Bur are also extremely common. Personally, I prefer not to be involved in S01 standoffs, except that when playing France I do like to play Mar-Bur and have it stood off. The BLA standoff is bad for Turkey, in my view, and the Gal one bad for Russia. I have formed the impression in recent years that face-to-face tournaments have influenced the choice of openings in Britain, so that S01 standoffs are becoming more common, not less.

**JB:** We want the REAL truth on this one. Who REALLY invented the Vain Rats variant? The party line is that if it wasn't you, then it was either Steve Doubleday or Doug Wakefield (for the readers, the Vain Rats variant gives "secret powers" to each player that they can exercise in the game – mostly played for silliness). Do you run games of Vain Rats in *Dolchstoss*??

**RS:** I didn't know this was controversial. Anyway, there's no doubt about it: it was my idea. The first description of the variant appears in *Dolchstoss* 45, published in the late summer of 1976. It says in the preamble "some time ago I suggested to Steve Doubleday that ...", so probably Steve and I had discussed it. I certainly ran the first postal game, NGC 206V, which must have started in early 1977. I believe I ran further games, but can't now be sure. Nowadays, I no longer run variants at all, sadly: they take too long to adjudicate, and God knows I have enough trouble adjudicating regular games!

**JB:** In a shift toward discussing openings, you have named the devastating "Hop, Skip, and Jump" opening where Austria moves to Rumania and then is convoyed by a Russian fleet that has gained the Black Sea into Ankara. As Russia you are said to have pulled off this opening in a game with Paul McGivern as Austria. There also is supposed to be some silliness about Paul's wedding and Steve Jones. Can we have your official side of what seems to me to be a fascinating story? I understand, of course, that you won the game.

**RS:** It's a long story. One of the better games, certainly. This account is off the top of my head, because I no longer have a copy of my game end statement. Incidentally, I don't believe I did name this opening. Paul, a very old friend, and I found ourselves playing Russia and Austria in that game to Steve Jones's Turkey. Steve had a ferocious and well deserved reputation; we had never played against him before. We hatched a plot to take this 1980s upstart down a peg or two by making him the first Turkey ever to be eliminated in 1902.

**JB:** As an aside, I was eliminated in 1902 as Turkey in the US postal game Missionary Position in 1982, so that would have been in the British hobby (I suppose I shouldn't be admitting this, but it was a fun game).

**RS:** Against a less good player than Steve it would never have worked, but it went like a charm, and after the S02 moves we were indeed in a position to take him out. At this point Steve wrote, I think, the best Dip letter I ever received, offering in effect to provide naval resources for the A/R alliance if we would let him survive. It

was cogently argued, and I was convinced. (Paul was less keen: "Let's kill the crafty bugger off!") And so we left Steve alive, and all went well. Then Paul got married, and I travelled to Newcastle to officiate as his best man. The rat had promised me I wouldn't have to make a speech ("No, no, bonny lad, certainly not!"), but this proved to be a stab. Well, two could play at that game. I told Paul I was a bit worried about his possibly NMRing, because of the pressures of honeymoon organization, and offered to order for him for one season, an offer he accepted with pathetic gratitude. So, of course, I moved all the Austrian units out of their supply centres and all the Russian ones followed straight in. GM Pete Calcraft marked the occasion with the memorable headline "May the Best Man Win". And I duly did, eventually, after some spirited resistance from the inevitable Steve Jones, who managed second place despite his close thing in 1902. The moves are all on record somewhere, but I don't have them. I think the orders for the relevant units were:

- S01:** Austria: F(Tri)-Alb A(Vie)-Bud A(Bud)-Rum  
Russia: A(War)-Gal (smokescreen) F(Sev)-BLA A(Mos)-Sev  
Turkey: F(Ank)-Con A(Con)-Bul A(Smy) stands
- A01:** Austria: A(Rum)-Ank A(Bud)-Ser F(Alb)-Gre; Builds F(Tri), A(Bud), A(Vie)  
Russia: F(BLA) C AA(Rum)-Ank A(Gal)-Rum A(Sev)-Arm; Builds A(Sev)  
Turkey: F(Con)-AEG A(Bul) S RA(Sev)-Rum A(Smy)-Con; No change
- S02:** Austria: A(Ank) S RA((Arm)-Smy F(Gre) S A(Ser)-Bul  
Russia: A(Arm)-Smy F(BLA) S AA(Ank) A(Rum) S AA(Ser)-Bul A(Sev)-Arm  
Turkey: F(AEG) S A(Bul)-Con A(Con)-Smy  
Turkish A (Bul) annihilated

... and Turkey is a dead duck. I know his defence wasn't perfect in S02, but he had some hideous guesses to make.

**JB:** Great! You must have named more Diplomacy openings than any person, living or dead. You seem to have a special fascination with Central Powers openings (Austria, Germany, Italy). Can you give us some of your general views on openings, as well as on why you have a compulsion that does not allow you to permit any observed opening to go unnamed?

**RS:** I did name a lot, though clearly not as many as I'm credited with! As for my general views on openings, they reflect my general views on the game as a whole: that if you don't play to win, you should give up your place to someone who will. The only exception I make here is Austria: Austria used to go out 02/03 in countless games and the ultra-defensive Southern Hedgehog opening at least makes sure that doesn't happen (in 02 anyway). However, if Austria feels he can trust Italy (a) he's probably wrong but (b) if he isn't the Key Lepanto is his best winning opening, as of course it also is for Italy. As Russia I virtually always open Mos-StP, because in a good game Russia rarely wins without doing well in the north. As Turkey I never open to BLA: I hate playing Turkey anyway, the only country I've never won with, and F(Ank)-BLA lays him wide open to the Lepanto in all its forms and guarantees a long defensive grind. As England I virtually always open to ENG, whereas most Englands rush into the StP bottleneck and then try to negotiate a draw – all winning chances have gone. And as France, logically enough, I let England into ENG if he wants it. Some openings were named before I was started, you know: the Lepanto and the Northern Dash are two that come to mind. And I don't think the Maginot was mine, though I'm not sure. I named a lot for the book, thinking it would make it more readable. I had some fun doing it, anyway!

**JB:** I'd next like to ask you about a few of those openings, probably driven quite a bit by ones that I have encountered recently. First, the Hedgehog and its better relations. The F Tri-Ven move is seldom seen in either the US postal hobby or the worldwide Internet hobby. As I am exposed to Brit players quite a bit, I have come to appreciate the Hedgehog's subtleties (though the Alpine Variation [A Vie-Tyr] is distinctly unsubtle). Do you have any explanation why this opening continues to remain popular in Brit circles but has not travelled well? Do you see any significant shifts in which of the Hedgehog variants is most popular these days?

**RS:** The Southern Hedgehog still seems popular here. There are good reasons for this. If you trust Italy, you



may as well play the Key Lepanto, good for both of you. If you don't, F(Tri)-Ven stands out a mile: it draws the teeth of the most popular Italian opening over the years, Ven-Tyr, Rom-Ven. I admit it's defensive, but it works. As to why it hasn't travelled, search me! It would be interesting to know whether 02/03 exits for Austria are more common over there; they should be, because their frequency went down sharply when the Hedgehog became fashionable.

**JB:** Yes, I'm sure that Austrias around the world should pay attention to this and stop getting eliminated from the start. Since I have all of these moves in my repertoire it makes Austria lots more fun to play. Next, the Crimean Crusher (Turkey attacks toward Russia with all three pieces, successfully). I must admit, this one is personal since I recently pulled this opening and then got ZERO 1901 builds. Not to digress too much, but this was supposedly with a strong AT alliance, and I wanted to "test" the Austrian from the start and he failed (at least from my perspective). I would assert that this opening isn't really as powerful or successful for Turkey as one might think. What are your current feelings about the Crusher?

**RS:** I'm going to plead ignorance here. I certainly didn't name this one, and have never seen it tried. How do you stop Russia making the almost invariable move to BLA?

**JB:** Brilliant negotiating, of course. It practically requires close Austrian assistance, so that BOTH can assure Russia that moving the fleet to Rumania will be a successful and productive move. Russia has to be inclined this way a bit to start, but is more likely to believe that Turkey really is moving the fleet to Con when he hears supporting information from Austria.

**RS:** I suppose it has the merit of being non-defensive, but ... no, not for me!

**JB:** Keeping with other openings that "don't really work", what about the Barbarossa (Germany attacks Russia strongly from the start)? Do you believe this opening has viable options for German success?? Have you ever seen it work? The only time I tried it, I was crushed, though admittedly that was with Kathy Byrne (now Caruso) as Russia and she knew how to take advantage of every predicament.

**RS:** No, I think it's hopeless: all the tries I've seen have resulted in an early exit for Germany, though admittedly Russia has a horrible time too. There is this crazy notion, apparently popular in British FTF games, about a 3-way EFG alliance, where Germany starts with Barbarossa. I cannot believe that Germany has ever survived to the end of a game after that start.

**JB:** And next, one that always has mystified me a bit, but I think that you have a fondness for, the Anschluss (the strong Austria/Germany alliance). When offered this alliance from either side, I have not been able to trust the offerer and thus have not made it work. Still, theoretically it seems to be VERY strong, but you see it so seldom in games I play. Do you know why? How would players approach it more effectively??

**RS:** I am completely convinced of the merits of the Anschluss. Attacks by A on G or vice versa are so rare anyway (for good reason) that there is, quite simply, no case to be made against it. There are countless games from the early days of the British hobby where Austria goes out in 03 followed by Germany in 04. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose by standing firmly back to back. If A is really confident in G, he can even afford to abandon the Hedgehog for something more aggressive; as long as G leaves A(Mun) at home in S01, the threat to intervene on Austria's side is a genuine deterrent to Italy.

**JB:** There are just two more things that I want to touch on. First, your other writing. Your range (that I know of) goes from your famous satire on "Scatter Theory" (the idea that one spreads out one's units at the start of the game, rather than concentrating power anywhere – I find this an especially effective German strategy for real though) in *Games and Puzzles* to your book, *The Game of Diplomacy* (which is very organized and to some minds even a bit dogmatic). Is the range of writing styles that you have used something that you have developed actively, or has it just "happened"? What do you see as the "growing edge" of your writing today?

**RS:** First, I didn't invent the Scatter Theory – that was Nicky Palmer. I've written in various styles, I suppose, to suit my subject matter. My articles in *G&P* were all facetious, satirical if you like. The Dip book was supposed

to interest people in the game, and therefore needed to be relatively serious, though with a light touch. My bridge book was entirely serious, with only the occasional pale gleam of humour. Today, I fear, I do no creative writing at all except the tiny bit that appears in Dolchstoss: I learnt long ago that, unfair as it seems, I can earn far more by translating 60,000 words of other people's garbage than sweating to produce the same amount of my own! If I had more time I would like to try my hand at a distinctly light-hearted "motorist's guide to France", and occasionally compose a few pages in my mind ... but I don't see myself ever having the time.

**JB:** And lastly, you are famous for your love of Tolkien and your involvement in Tolkien fandom. This is far from unusual in Diplomacy players. I'd like you to comment on the relationship between Tolkien and Diplomacy from your point of view. Also, how do you feel about the recent "revitalization of Tolkien" with both increasing serious academic thought about his work as well as a new series of movies that have just begun?

**RS:** It is no surprise to me that Tolkien is so popular in the hobby. Diplomacy, after all, takes place in a fantasy Europe; more generally, all games are escapist. The Dip variants based on Tolkien, to which I have made occasional contributions, are great fun to play, especially with good press writers. I have not come across any serious academic thought on Tolkien, and hope I never do! I feel sure that the Prof. himself would have been torn between outrage and hilarity at such an idea. Academics can make anything boring, even Tolkien.

**JB:** As an American academic, perhaps I resemble that remark. An America anyway, there are scholars doing academic work on Tolkien.

**RS:** As for the recent films, I have just reviewed the first at length in Dolchstoss. I am all in favour of them, and can accept their shortcomings (from the Tolkien purist's point of view) with a good grace. To film Tolkien is clearly impossible, but creative artists love to attempt the impossible, and why not? I just wish they'd let me write the script.

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## **First Dip At Sea Adventure Sails Into History**

by Larry Peery

I didn't realize when I proposed a Diplomacy convention event be held aboard a cruise ship at the WDC in Baltimore two years ago that I was about to embark on a whole new Dip adventure, but that's the way it turned out. Here's my report on the first Dip\_at\_Sea\_Adventure (DSAI for short).

Since I was already taking a course in cruise ships and cruising as part of my T&T studies program this term it didn't take a lot of persuasion to get me to sign up for my first real cruise. In fact, the professor was encouraging her students to do just that, but she was thinking in terms of a three day quickie RT from Los Angeles to Ensenada on a Carnival party ship! I had something a bit classier in mind. So, after checking out the possibilities I decided on the Holland American RYNDAM for a ten day RT cruise out of San Diego that would include stops in Puerto Vallarta and Mazatlan on the Mexican Riviera; and La Paz, Santa Rosalia, Loreto, and Cabo San Lucas in Baja California. The cruise also provided for three days "at sea" (e.g. without any port calls), I figured those would be good days for playing Dip.

Put most simply the RYNDAM is a \*\*\*\*+ star hotel that moves at 20 mph. Other than that it isn't much different than a fine resort hotel. Naturally you do have the various optional shore excursions that you can take part in or not, as you wish and as you pay for. But there are other differences. The cruise includes an endless array of meals from sunrise until midnight and it is easy to gain a pound a day on a cruise. It was a shock to me to discover that I had actually lost some weight on the cruise, mostly because I did a lot more walking and stair climbing than usual. The cruise also includes a wide variety of entertainment of all kinds and many other special events, all part of the package price. So, when you add it up the total cost on a per diem basis isn't much more, if any more, than a traditional resort vacation. Just keep in mind that the cruise cost doesn't include transport to

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and from the ship, most shore excursions, most beverages, gambling, and other personal items. Tipping may or may not be included, depending on the cruise. All those things can add up if you don't watch your bill. It's possible to bring your wife and family along and then not see them all day, if you like. Most of the cruise ships have programs designed to keep the kids happy and busy away from the adults. All in all it seemed like a great venue for a Diplomacy event.

I decided to make the first DSA a test to see how the game and a Dip event would be received on board a ship. If that worked well, I figured next time I'd work on getting some Dippers on board a cruise and see how they reacted. All cruise ships have various rooms suitable for gaming purposes. The RYNDAM, built in 1994, is a medium sized ship of some 55,000 tons (the newest mega-ships are more than double that size) carrying almost 1,300 passengers and 600 crew members. It's longer than two football fields and about as wide as one with ten decks. There are more than forty different public rooms available for the guests to use. My attention was focused on those that were suitable for Diplomacy activities. The RYNDAM had a library, a small puzzle alcove, and a card room that collectively had about 100 seats. All of these could be used for Dip game playing. In addition, nearby were several meeting rooms that could hold a hundred or so people. The only drawback to them was that they had no windows. It was much more fun playing in the game rooms where you could watch the world go by. But the private meeting rooms were certainly that. I never saw them used during my cruise, except once as a storage room by the ship's art sales director. The ship also had a 250 or so seat theater that can be and was used for everything from movies to cooking classes to religious services. So, the facilities were there. I spoke to the RYNDAM's activities director and she said that once the arrangements for the group had been made through their corporate meetings staff on land, the ship's hotel staff (that's what they are called) would do whatever was needed for the group. So, the staff support was there.

What I was really curious to see was how the passengers on the ship would react to Diplomacy. I had discovered a large cabinet in the card room filled with board games, mostly old copies of Monopoly, Scrabble, Trivial Pursuit, etc. I even found one copy of Battle of the Bulge from the early A-H days. Alas, no copy of Diplomacy. And that got me to thinking. Wouldn't it be cool if we could collect old copies of the game and place them (with a flyer or two, of course) in the game rooms of these ships? Anyway, I had made up some simple flyers inviting people to join me for an intro to the game and to schedule some games. I put a few of these up in the gaming rooms (Amazingly, they remained up until the last day of the cruise. Even the cleaning people didn't bother them.) I even got the ship's newspaper to put a little blurb in the daily paper about Diplomacy, perhaps the first ever "at sea" Dip press release. I scheduled two sessions, AM and PM, on the second and third days of the cruise; when we would be at sea. After everybody had recovered from their flights to the ship and the embarkation on Monday with a good night's sleep (Yes, you really do sleep better on a ship!) and hearty breakfast, people started moving around the ship, exploring what it had to offer.

You have to understand that ships like the RYNDAM attract loyal fans, just like a fine resort hotel. More than half of the passengers had been on the ship before. You could tell who they were because they were the ones giving the newbies directions on how to find the dining room, the pool, etc. You also need to know that the average age of the passengers on my cruise was somewhere between 70 and death! I was actually one of the younger people on the ship and one of the few men traveling solo. That got me a lot of attention from the old ladies! :-). When I walked into the card room at 0900 there were already four tables filled with bridge players going at it. I found a spot in the corner but near a window into the main hall, and set up my Diplomacy board (I took a new copy so it wouldn't look so tacky!). Within five minutes I had my first customer, a gentleman wanting to know if the bars were open yet (The ship has five or six different bars, but they don't open until 1100, I think.). Well....

But, by ones and twos people would stop by and ask what I was doing. I briefly told them and invited them to come back at 1400 for a real demonstration with real players, and crossed my fingers that I'd have enough to fill a board. The first morning I had 25 or so inquiries. And, at 1350 when I went back down to the room I had ten people waiting for me. A couple of them had actually played Diplomacy sometime in the past. One gal remembered playing it with her boyfriend in grad school at USF. After a much shorter but not nearly as funny as Edi style rundown on the rules and how to write orders, I suggested that we play a mini game of just

three years instead of a full length game to give them a feel for what it was like. They all agreed to that. While they played (much to the annoyance of the bridge players, I'm sure) and negotiated, more people wandered by and asked questions. I suggested they come the next morning for an intro and told them we'd have another mini game the following day.

The first problem came at the end of year three of the mini game. They didn't want to quit! A male octogenarian playing France had just stabbed a female septuagenarian playing Germany and she wanted blood! His!! They were ready to go right on playing, but I persuaded them to return on Wednesday for another go at the game and each other.

The next morning a half dozen of my original group were back, along with about a dozen new faces. I let the old-timers explain the game to the new ones; and that worked pretty well, although I had to reexplain a few things. Since we only had one board I suggested doubling up with one old-timer and one newbie playing each position as a pair. That definitely was interesting to watch! I doubt if that card room had ever seen so much activity. We even attracted a few people from the nearby casino who wanted to know what was going on.

That afternoon there were enough people to over-fill two boards; so I let the newbies use the big board and after telling them they were all so good by now they could deal with it, I let the old-timers use conference maps to play with. They all seemed to be enjoying it, especially the couple who were downing old-fashions as they played.

As we finished up the afternoon, I told them I would leave my game in the game cupboard, so if they wanted to play during the next few days they were welcome to use it, but I wouldn't be available much since I wanted to see some of our ports of call. I also told them all that on our last at sea day the following Wednesday we'd have a real mini-tournament and game. I checked the cupboard each night and I could tell the game was being used each day. I found some really cute orders in the box. Amazingly, not one of the pieces disappeared. I headed off to B deck to find the ship's printer (the ship actually has its own print shop) and he put together three enlarged boards blown up from a conference map for me, printed up some more conference maps, and some extra copies of the rules. All at no charge! It was amazing. He seemed to enjoy having something different to do. The next challenge, of course, was finding pieces. Hummmm. Where would you find them on a cruise ship?

During the next few days I met some of the players on shore excursions, by the pools, etc. and they all said they were looking forward to a "real" game of Diplomacy. And who were these players? Well, they were an eclectic group to say the least. The oldest (that I could get an age out of) was 81 years old. The youngest was 10! They came from all over the USA, but mostly southern California; Mexico, with a few from Europe. There were three of them, all women in their fifties or sixties, from New York who reminded me of Edi; and they played Dip a la Kathy Caruso! The average age was probably at least sixty, but that didn't stop them. One old guy could barely get out of his chair, was almost blind, and had two hearing aids; but he was lying with the best of them.

On the appointed day and at the appointed hour I went down to the game room. And lo and behold, most of them were there waiting. They'd even gotten out the game board and were arguing tactics like old-timers. I was amazed at how well behaved and cooperative they were, unlike most land based Dippers. I passed out the enlarged conference maps, the pieces (they got a big laugh), copies of the rules, etc. I told them that because of time constraints we'd only play five game years. At that point I was roundly booed! Hmmmmmmmmm. Anyway, they were on their way. Except for the blue skies and blue sea outside the windows you'd never have known we were sailing up the coast of Baja California heading for San Diego.

We had a steady stream of visitors during the tournament, some from the bars and some from the casino. I noticed the bridge players had disappeared, bless their hearts. They'd move into one of the meeting rooms, no doubt seeking peace and quiet. The chef stopped by to see how his pieces were holding up and I thanked him profusely for his help. He gave me a big smile and disappeared. He had had one of his cooks color sugar cubes of two sizes and then coat them with something to harden them! They worked perfectly and definitely tasted great. Han ate at least half of his pieces until he realized he might need them eventually. Later on one of the pastry chefs appeared with a big platter of cookies decorated in the colors of the pieces! :-) Isabel, the activities

director, dropped it during a quiet moment and I explained to her what was going on. She was a French Canadian and a wonderful person. She handed me an envelope and went off on her rounds. When I opened it I found the printer had made up a souvenir certificate for each of the players. Ian Napier, the ship's assistant F&B director, and I had become good friends since I'd won all the prizes at the ship's wine tasting event; and he brought along a few ship mugs, fanny packs, etc. for prizes for the tournament winners. It was all so low key and so much fun. People were really enjoying themselves. It's been a long time since I've been to that kind of a Dip event.

Well, when I called time (to more boos!), I decided to give them another game year just for fun. Boy did that go over big! Especially at the board where the wife had just stabbed her husband. :-) They played on another year and I did some fast dot counting. After six years one table had an eight center England and seven center France, strongly allied against just about everybody. The second table still had all seven players active, although Austria was down to one center. The third table looked like it would have ended in a German win eventually. The top three positions were the eight center England and an eight center Germany, and the seven center France. The poorest performance was an Austria eliminated in 1902. Since I hadn't stated a formal scoring system, I gave the two eight centers powers a tie for first and the seven center power third place! The two first place finishers were: Sylvia Cuomo (of Rancho Mirage, CA and New York) and Carlos de Uriarte (of San Antonio, TX and Mexico City, MX). Third place went to our ten year old, Han Zhen (of Monterey Park, CA). The prizes and certificates were passed out to cheers from all; and we retired to the closest bar to celebrate!

At the captain's reception at the farewell banquet that night the captain mentioned that he'd been told about a meeting of diplomats on board. I just smiled, tried to look modest in my tux and charro hat, and wandered off in search of a glass of champagne.

Since returning home I've had four emails from people who participated in DSAI wanting to know when the next one was scheduled. Now we'll see who turns up on the QEII.

For more info on the second DSA, contact Larry Peery at [peery@ix.netcom.com](mailto:peery@ix.netcom.com)

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## **Across the Whole Board**

**by Allan Calhamer**

### **I. Drawing the Network**

From the start of the game until such time as one Great Power is knocked out of contention (at which point the network changes), almost every war that takes place will occur along one of the twelve lines on the diagram, and almost every agreement will be aimed at preventing a war along one of the twelve lines of the diagram (fig. 1).

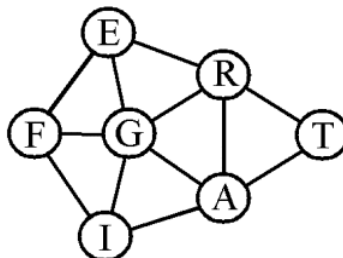


Fig. 1

### **II. Relation between Strength of Country and Number of Neighbours**

As Diplomacy progressed from its initial form to its final market form, it was played frequently by a group of good players who steadily progressed in their understanding of the game against steadily improving opponents.

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The strength of the countries as determined by experience within this group ran from Turkey at the strongest down through Britain, France, Italy, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and lastly, Germany. We note the close correspondence of that list to the list of countries in reverse order of the number of neighbours, as read off the network: Turkey, 2; England, France and Italy, 3; Russia and Austria-Hungary, 4; Germany 5.

### III. An Aside concerning Strength of Countries

The relative strength of countries in postal play had generally followed the pattern given above, except for the single major anomaly that Russia was considered to be the strongest country. Her apparent strength diminished as that of the more defensively placed countries increased as the players gained experience.

Recent careful analysis has revealed a satisfactory opening variation for Italy against Turkey, called the Lepanto Opening. The remarks in the first part of this article assume that that opening is *not* being used. Later in this article we will describe and discuss the Lepanto Opening directly.

### IV. Certain Alliances Schematized on the Network

Germany and Russia frequently lead off by forming an alliance in which both agree to refrain from moving to the Baltic Sea, Livonia, Prussia or Silesia. Russia may demand, and Germany may agree to permit, Russia entry into Sweden in Fall 1901 as part of this alliance. Germany may threaten to block that entry unless he gets the alliance. Germany and Austria-Hungary also frequently agree to refrain from moving to Silesia, Bohemia and Tyrolia.

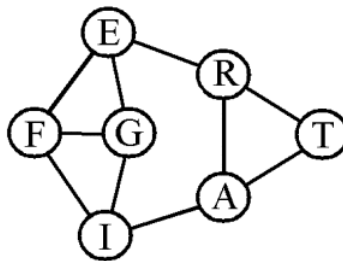


Fig. 2.

If these agreements are kept, and they usually are (for neutralization agreements work fairly well in this game), then there will be no German-Russian or German-Austrian war in the early stages of the game. Thus we may erase those links from the diagram to see the effect on the whole-board considerations (fig. 2).

We now note that six countries each are linked to three neighbours, only Turkey differing in being linked to two. Thus we see the graphic illustration of this writer's belief that Germany needs two alliances, and Russia and Austria each one, in order to start the game on something like equal footing. This assumes that the other players have not yet made any alliances at all.

In thus modifying the network, it should be pointed out that an alliance is hardly as good as a defensive guarantee as geographic separation, for the alliance may be broken, and also a third party might come through the demilitarized zone sooner or later; but then schematic geographic separation is not ideal either, since it is not a perfect representation of the board.

Suppose we ask whether there is a likely alliance structure that can equalize the number of neighbours among all seven countries. There is: if, to the two alliances noted above, we add a Russian-Austrian alliance (neutralizing Galicia at least), and a German-Italian alliance (neutralizing Tyrolia) and an English-French alliance (neutralising the Channel, the Irish Sea and the North Atlantic), then each Power has just two links left on the network (fig. 3).

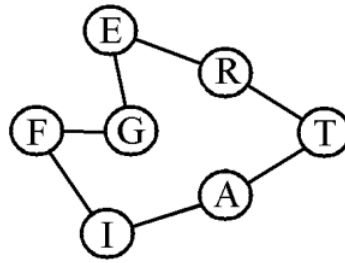


Fig. 3.

Needless to say, players would still regard one country or another as stronger or weaker, in part because an alliance is not as sure a defence as geographic separation. Suppose, then, that we devised an experimental game in which these alliances were made as binding as geography itself. Suppose we introduced into the experimental game the rule that no pieces could be moved to the aforementioned neutralized zones by any player. Suppose we also rules that no order was valid calling for an attack on a supply centre or province currently occupied by a unit unless the two countries involved were joined by a link in the reduced network shown in our last diagram.

Only after the imposition of those quite restrictive rules would the “number of neighbours” factor be removed from consideration. There would still be differences in strength, due to such factors as sea defences, number of early grabs, rapidity of build-up, and so on. By analysing or actually playing this reduced game, however, the player might help to separate in his mind the pervading number of neighbours consideration from the remainder. This separation might in turn help him to reconstitute the question of relative strength of countries in new situations as they arise.

**V. Reverberation Theory**

Suppose that after the first move (Spring 1901) has been played, we look around the board and determine apropos of each Power whether its first set of moves has been as expected, better than expected or worse than expected. We also determine whether each Power has been treated as expected by the events of the move, or better, or worse than expected. Our subjective opinion of the whole development for each Power relative to our subjective notion of the expected, may then be entered on the network diagram, alongside that Power’s initial. Usually a simple plus or minus sign is all that can be justified, but double or triple signs may be employed.

Let us suppose for purposes of example that nothing unexpected has happened on the first move, except at one point, at which the development appears to benefit Italy and Austria-Hungary and harm Turkey. The Lepanto Opening might be one such development. Listing the Powers in the first column (see table) we enter +1 or -1 in the second column as appropriate, representing the primary effect. The third column is derived by taking each Power’s figure in the second column, reversing its sign, and awarding it to each of that Power’s neighbours. Thus, if Italy has received a +1 in the second column, each of France, Germany and Austria-Hungary receives a -1 in the third column. Each Power’s receipts in the third column are then added up to form the fourth column.

This process may then be represented as often as one wants: the figures for each country found in the fourth column may be reversed in sign and attributed to all that country’s neighbours, forming a fifth column, with the accumulated partial results in that column added to form the sixth column and so forth.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
England			0	+++	+3	-3 -2 -3	-8
France		-	-1	+++	+3	-3 -2 -3	-8
Germany		--	-2	++	+2	-3 -3 -3 -4 -3	-16
Italy	+1	-	-1	+++	+3	-3 -2 -4	-9
Austria	+1	- +	0	++++	+4	-2 -3 -3	-8
Russia		- +	0	+++	+3	-3 -2 -4	-9
Turkey	-1	-	-1		0	-4 -3	-7

The second column shows that Italy and Austria have benefited, and Turkey lost, the result of the subjective appraisal of the position. The fourth column places Austria (0) ahead of Italy (-1), indicating that the event may have benefited Austria more than her ally. The reason is that the country harmed is a neighbour of Austria, but not of Italy. Among the countries not involved in the primary effect, Germany (-2) has lost the most as she neighbours two countries which have benefited; France (-1) neighbours only one country that benefited; England (0) neighbours no country that benefited or lost, and Russia (also 0) neighbours one country that benefited and one that suffered. The sixth column fails to separate England and Russia, but the eighth column indicates that England has done a hair better than Russia, apparently because Austria's gains pose a greater threat to Russia than to England, while Turkey does not appear quite correspondingly weak, apparently again because of his small number of neighbours.

Thus the greatest benefit from this development apparently accrued to Austria, and less in order to Italy, England, Russia, France, Germany and Turkey. The high standing of England in this list make some wonder whether England should suggest the Lepanto Opening to Italy during the first Diplomacy period, a notion that would never have occurred to me if I had not analysed the matter as shown above. The answer nevertheless is probably no; for other Italian plays such as an early attack on France would score higher for England; and perhaps France should have been awarded a plus at the outset, because the opening turns Italy away from his door, at least for a while. In an ordinary game I would probably also arbitrarily reduce the contribution between Germany and Austria, or eliminate it altogether, when reverberating the first move results; but for the purposes of conveying the principle here we did not want to introduce arbitrary factors, which each user of the tool would introduce for himself.

## **VI. Diamond Theory**

When there are just four countries left in a game, they frequently, though not invariably, neighbour each other in such a way as to form a diamond-shaped diagram (fig. 4).

We note that the two centre countries have three neighbours each, whereas the two apex countries have only two. Theory would lead us to believe that the apex countries would have the advantage. Naturally, then, as a player lays out his early strategy, and as the possibility of his being left in the Council of Four increases, he wants to jockey himself into an apex position rather than a centre position. Thus we see another reason for the advantage that edge and corner countries have in this game: if they arrive at the Council of Four, they are much more likely to do so as apex countries, than are the centre countries.

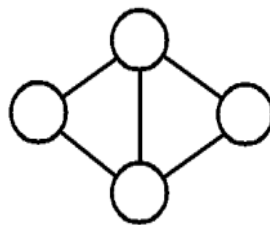


Fig.4.

It is informative in this regard to turn again to the network of seven countries, and imagine each country eliminated in turn, considering the more likely connectivities to occur across the territory of the defeated, then altering the diagram appropriately; then considering the likelihood of being left on the apex, or the centre, if various successful endeavours are conducted on the six-Power network. Imagining himself playing each Power in turn, the player can postulate sufficient alliances to knock out two of the remaining powers in various combinations, noting that some of these successes may leave him as an Apex Power and others as a Centre Power.

Naturally, then, one would expect alert Centre Powers to attempt to ally with each other to fend off the Apex Powers, and one would expect Apex Powers to act to keep the Centre Powers apart. Centre Powers cannot always keep off each other as they might like to, because the vagaries of the position, including the important



division of earth-space into land and sea and of forces into land and sea forces, interferes with theory; and all such interferences tend to favour the Apex Powers.

As Diplomacy players, however, we do not want to rest with a mere all-other-factors-being-equal analysis. The player will want to determine in general how important the apex position is in relation to other matters such as number of units. suppose for simplicity that the two Centre Powers are of equal size, and the two Apex Powers are of equal size. Do we tend to arrive at an equal game when the Centre Powers are twice as large as the Apex Powers? Three times? One and a half times? With a workable ratio in mind, the player has more flexibility; he can allow himself to be jockeyed into the centre position if he gets enough advantage in units to compensate. He may know how many units he can offer in his effort to jockey someone else into centre position.

### **VII. Alliances of Three Countries Not in Contact with All the Other Four**

Four countries in alliance ought to be able to defeat the other three, sooner or later, but four-Power alliances are hard to put together and hard to keep together. It can be expected to be easier with three Powers and still easier with two. Indeed, most alliances in most games turn out to be two-Power alliances, and they seldom amalgamate quite completely into four Powers against the other three. (one recalls World War II in which Russia did not go to war against Japan until 1945.) I think that the three-Power alliance has sometimes been underestimated, in particular a three-Power alliance in which there is one Power remaining among the other four Powers who does not border on the allied three can be quite good. Suppose, for example, that England, France and Germany allied with one another, sorted out the small states in their area into appropriate spheres of influence, set up sufficient neutralized zones, and began pressing outwards against Russia, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Sooner or later one would expect, in the worst case, a wall of resistance to form among those three. What, then, would Turkey do? Turkey's mere physical presence in the rear of Russia-Austria-Italy is a serious detriment to them, which is not matched by anything in the rear of England-France-Germany. Thus, in most cases, Turkey will find herself thrown in automatically with the original three. The result is a four to three alliance structure, but one in which the side containing four members has actually had the burden of negotiating among only three.

The network diagram makes it easy to determine the few cases in which such three-Power alliances may be formed. Out of 35 possible three-power alliances drawn from a population of seven countries, just seven will be such that the three countries are not in contact with all the other four (Fig. 5).

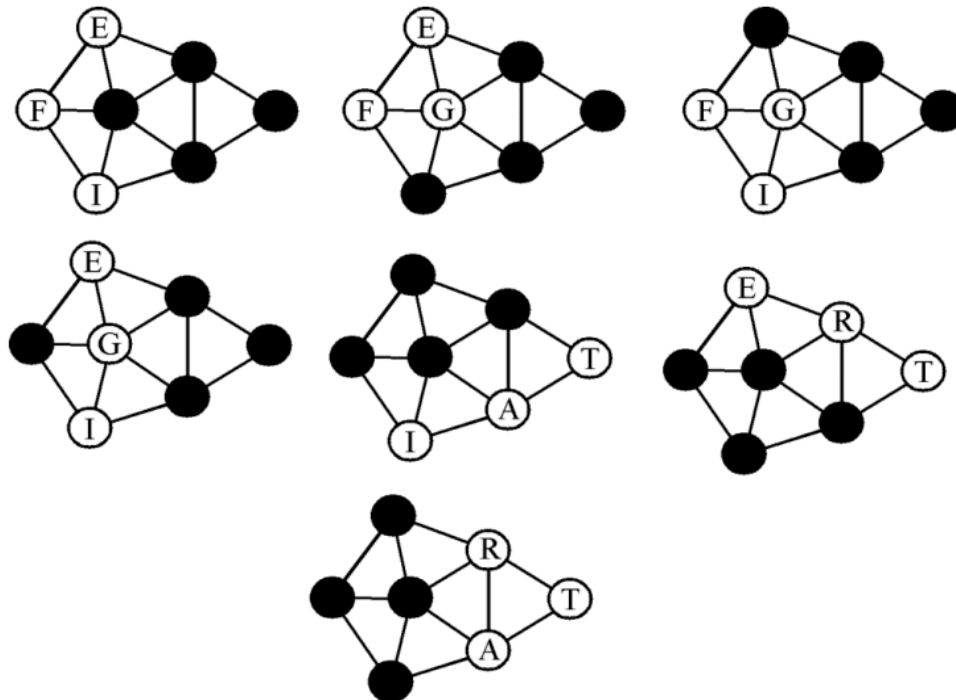


Fig. 5.

Let us now consider a modification of the network involving the Lepanto Opening. This cleverly calculated opening in a way reminding one of the Hypermodern openings in chess (which appear to contradict principle) calls for Italy to open with A(Ven) hold, A(Rom)-Apu, F(Nap)-ION. He continues with A(Ven) holds, F(ION) C A(Apu)-Tun, build F(Nap). Then, A(Ven) hold, F(ION)-EMS, F(Nap)-ION. Finally, A(Ven) hold, F(ION) & F(EMS) C A(Tun)-Syr. Austria usually rushes into the Balkans, leaving Trieste exposed in order to gain the upper hand against Turkey.

There is also some question whether the Italy-Germany connection is important enough for the network. Italy uses it only rarely and Germany hardly ever. It is something of a matter of choice whether to include it or not - suppose we eliminate it here. Then we find that the diagram taking into account the Lepanto Opening changes as indicated below, and the number of three power alliances which do not neighbour all the other four Powers, is reduced to four (as indicated in Fig. 6.).

Creating an initial three-player alliance seems to work quite well in over-the-board play, but not so well in postal play. Over the board it is easy and fast for three players to talk things over. A group of three contains three different pairs and there is not time in postal play for various

proposals and counter-proposals to move up and down the three sides of a triangle.

When the alliance is undertaken in a certain way, however, there is too much time in postal play rather than too little. I experimented recently with planning one of the above three-power alliances on a fair basis for all three, but then arranging it closely with just one of the others, after which we two offered the alliance to the third along with an ultimatum that we would jointly attack him if he refused. In the over-the-board game the alliance was accepted at once and worked out well. There was, however, only a few minutes available to the third man in which to make his decision. When I tried the same thing in postal play, the third man had a couple of weeks in which to brood over the ultimatum, during which he agreed and then refused, protesting the nature of the ultimatum, demanding compensation for his injured feelings, and finally withdrawing from the game, an act which relieved us under the circumstances.

Possibly for better results in the postal game the ultimatum (which should never be called that, or be otherwise offensively worded - it should be moderately worded, but clear) should be sent at such a time that the recipient will have to accept it or reject it within a couple of days.

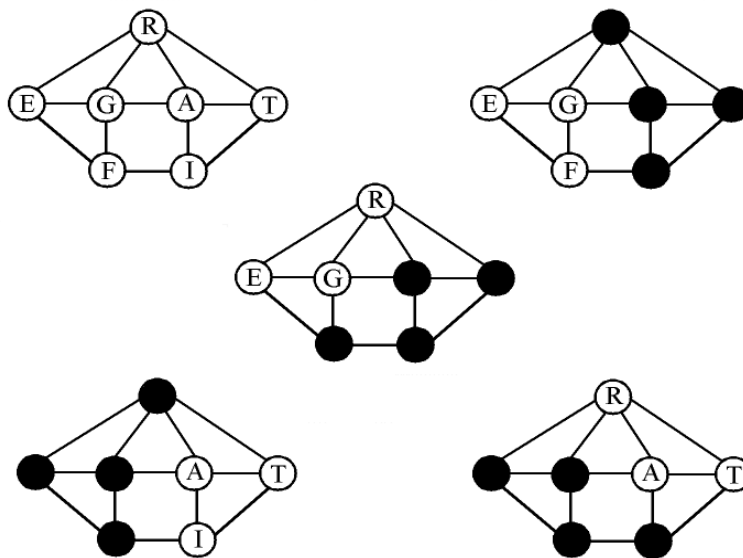


Fig. 6.

*Originally published in Games & Puzzles No. 21 (1974)*

# **The Too Great German Empire**

*Or how to get three builds in 1901 without getting bumped off in 1902*

**By Thomas van Dam**

One of the very unique things about Germany is that it can get three builds in the first year without foreign support. It's attractive to do. In one blow you'll have as much armies as Russia on the map. As all things in life, it has a 'dark side'. England, France, Russia and probably every other power on the board will be frightened to death, and therefore join with the other powers to get you off the board as soon as possible. Of course there are times it CAN work.

## **Willy & Nicky**

Once upon a time (no, this is true, not a fairy tale) I played a FtF game with some friends. I drew Germany, a friend of mine which I have known for a very long time (we always played dip together) drew Russia. One of the best things that can happen in a diplomacy game is me drawing Germany and he drawing Russia. As I was always assured that he wouldn't attack me, I could fully concentrate on the west. As he was sure that I would never attack him, he could fully concentrate on the south (Turkey). So I opened A (Mun) -> Ruh; F (Kie) -> Hol and A (Ber) -> Kie. Because I was assured of Russia's friendship, I could easily do that. The game went on and finally we got to a two-way draw.

## **Reality**

In reality, or even in PBM or PBEM games, people don't know each other. If a German player wishes to use this opening, be sure of Russia's friendship. If he sees your fleet not entering Den he will be friendly, as you have clearly showed him that you are not going to contest his gain of Sweden. The psychological effect should not be underestimated. The Russian player must be very wicked if he chooses to stab you. He never will, because he has to deal with the Sultan and the Archduke first. Another advantage is that you have a fleet in Hol ready to enter the NTH. Even if the English hold the NTH with all their force, you can still play a role in the naval theatre because you can support or bounce from Hol. France will be very alarmed at first. There actually isn't any reason, because France can still get Spa en Por. But it is the psycho-effect that matters. You are very close to him and his country and he won't like it. After all, would you like it when a six-centre France was breathing down your neck in autumn 1901? Of course you won't. You'll probably smash your head against the wall from pure frustration and the idea that you have no chance to even get Hol. In this case, a six-centre France is worse for Germany than vice versa.

## **Loneliness**

When you have six units everyone is scared, and wants to attack you. Face it, six German units are weaker than four English and five French units operating together against you. This opening is a way of making sure you are not attacked in the east, but you'll need all your force in the west.

## **Sitzkrieg**

Your fleet in Hol also has another important role, together with the units in Mun, Kie, Bel, and if you can in S'02 also another unit in Ruh (you can move A (Mun) -> Ruh and A (Ber) -> Mun). If you order all your units to support each other, no Brit or Frenchman will ever come through that line. You should use that time to negotiate, negotiate, and you should also save some time to negotiate. With England, of course. France would never join you, and what's the point of all those armies if you attack England? Right, so you need to get along with England. Give him Iberia, keep France for yourself. You can always make a move for Italy then, although it's time then to put a bearskin in front of your fireplace. As I've already said, negotiate with England. You can use your fleet in Hol to put some pressure up.

## **Other side of the coin**

This looks like a powerful Germany in 1901, and like you'll reach 18 in no time. But don't be fooled. To get

Russia as far not to disturb him by the not-to-Denmark move is quite simple. To get your three builds, just make sure England and France are divided. But after you've done that, it will be very, very tough. Don't expect easy talk with England, as he is also shocked by your move. And you can also expect France talking to England, and it doesn't require a lot of imagination to know what they're saying..

### **The Moves**

First of all, in case you missed the moves, I have them here:

#### **SPRING 1901**

A (Mun) -> Ruh

A (Ber) -> Kie

F (Kie) -> Hol

#### **AUTUMN 1901**

A (Ruh) -> Bel

A (Kie) -> Den

F (Hol) -> supp. A (Ruh) -> Bel

Build: A Kie, A Mun, A Ber.

(Don't build fleets. It either gets you into trouble with Russia, or you'll have an even harder task to get England on your side.

### **Conclusion**

This opening is a way of getting rapid growth in 1901. You probably won't get builds in 1902. You need to do some very, very considered negotiating for it to succeed. In case you fail, you'll be standing in the trenches until the Russian comes from behind. Use this opening, but only if you are prepared to face the consequences.

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## **Game of the Clans III**

**by Stephen Agar**

*loosely based on an original design by Wayne Hoheisel*

### **Introduction**

The appeal of this variant is the fact that the home centres of the various players are mixed up, which means that diplomacy is at a premium. I ran a game of Wayne Hohiesel's Game of the Clans I postally back in 1978 and it soon became apparent that the game was distinctly biased in England's favour. Therefore I developed it into Game of the Clans II, reducing the pro-English bias by completely redesigning the map so as to move more of the clans home centres inland, introducing a new rule to ensure that the clans can always build, and gradually removing England's off-board supply centres. Game of the Clans III removed the Boat Bunch rules which added complexity for no additional gameplay - and thus increased the pace of the early game.

### **Rules**

0. The usual 1971 Diplomacy rulebook applies, except as amended below.
1. This is a ten player variant with the following starting positions:

ENGLAND: A(Carlisle); A(Newcastle); A/F(South Channel); A/F (Blyth Bay)

CAMPBELL: A(Stalcair); A(Tarbert); A(Rothesay); A(Loudoun); A(Cawdor).

FRASER: A(Dingwall); A(Tordarroch); A(Invergarry); A(Philorth); A(Muchalls).

GORDON: A(Rothiemurchas); A(Cluny); A(Aboyne); A(Gight); A(Aberdeen).

GRAHAM: A(Montrose); A(Claverhouse); A(Mugdock); A(Dalhousie); A(Avandale).

KEITH: A(Berriedale); A(Inverugie); A(Caskieber); A(Dunottar); A(Crichton).

MacDONALD: A(Kiessimul); A(Armadale); A(Eilean Tioram); A(Finlagan); A(Skipness).

MacLEOD: A(Lewis); A(Aultbea); A(Eilean Donan); A(Duart); A(Ardverck).

STEWART: A(Blair); A(Buchanan); A(Stirling); A(Crookston); A(Morton)

After the first Spring 1491 moves (and retreats) England builds another A/F in both Blyth Bay and South Channel, ready for use in Autumn 1491.

2. Calendar. The first move of the game is Spring 1491.

3. Builds.

(a) The Clans may only build armies in their home centres, though in the event that a Clan controls less than two of its home centres it may nominate another centre or two under its control to be a temporary build centre until home centres are regained.

(b) England may build either armies in Carlisle and Newcastle or fleets in Blyth Bay or the South Channel. Save where noted above England may not build A/F's. England starts the game with eight off-board supply centres, but loses one of these eight off-board supply centres at the beginning of every year from Spring 1492 onwards.

4. Scots armies are deemed to have available to them sufficient local fishing boats to enable them to move through sea spaces as if they were land spaces, subject to the following rules:

(a) Scots armies may not enter Seas or Oceans (e.g. Upper North Sea, Central Atlantic Ocean etc.).

(b) A Scots unit is always dislodged by an English fleet, irrespective of supports etc.

5. English A/F's. English fleets may convoy as in regular Diplomacy. In addition they may form A/F units and carry armies around the board. Embarkation and disembarkation of an army takes a full move, during which the fleet must stand (not support). A/F's can only exist at sea. A fleet carrying an army may not attack a coastal province or support any land action (Eg. A/F(Cuillin Sound) may not support F(Sound of Arisaig)-Duart). An army may not retreat on to a fleet.

Due to excessive draughts, English fleets may never enter the following spaces: Solway Firth; Wigton Bay; Luce Bay; Galloway Strait; Firth of Clyde; Bute Sound; Wemyss Bay; Sound of Jura; Firth of Lorne; Loch Linnhe (but note they may enter coastal spaces – e.g. Carlisle, Gretna etc.).



6. Victory Criteria. England is eliminated if both Carlisle and Newcastle are captured by Scottish armies, irrespective of how many other units England has on the board and all remaining Clans then share a joint victory. There are 68 supply centres on the board. A player must control 35 centres to win outright or any two players can announce a joint win provided they have 35 supply centres between them (and the smaller of the two has at least 12 centres).

### **Notes on the Map**

Finlagan and Oban are considered to be connected by land, but there is also a sea passage between them permitting movement between the Sound of Jura and the Firth of Lorne.

Duart and Morvern are not connected by land, neither are Skipness and Brodick.

Multi-coast spaces are Armadale (nc and sc), Eilean Donan (nc and sc) and Tarbert (ec) and (wc). Ireland is impassable.

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## **Tournament Tryouts**

**by David Partridge**

I've been playing Diplomacy for a long time (since sometime in the late 70's) and while I've played a lot of Face to Face, Postal and Email, the one thing I've never done was play in a tournament. So, when the 1999 Worldmasters Email tournament was announced I figured here was my chance. A tournament where I didn't have to find a free weekend or travel to get there, what could be better?

After signing up, the first thing I decided to do was try to figure out how playing in a tournament would change the game. There were two obvious differences from most games, the forced game ending at the end of 1912, and, given the number of players, that being in a draw wasn't going to matter, only topping the board. With that in mind I opened negotiations with my neighbors (playing France in the first round) and started to take stock. England was a pleasant seeming Frenchman, seemed a solid but unimaginative player (which of course goes to show how much I know, as I found out when it was all over that it was actually Vick Hall, English face to face player extraordinaire in his alter-ego as a mild-mannered Frenchman), Italy seemed to be quite competent and willing to play an adventurous game, and Germany frankly scared me silly as he seemed so coldly competent. That pretty much decided my approach right there. Germany was to be the number one target, and England was the prime choice for an ally, so I immediately proposed a long term alliance to the Prime Minister. We agreed to joint and balanced growth until we reached 10 centers, then an open race to the finish.

With England on board, the question was now how to make sure that the Kaiser never had a chance to become a threat. The first step was of course to appear friendly with him while rounding up as many allies as I could. I started talks early with Italy, expressing my concerns about Germany and my willingness to support him into Munich in the fall of 1901. When he agreed to this I then asked that he do whatever he could to heighten the tensions between Russia and Germany. I discussed the same with England, and with the three of us all spreading rumours it seemed likely that G/R relations would be tense at best. Then, pretending to be friendly to Germany, I agreed on a plan with him that had him opening to Denmark rather than Holland.

The spring moves came and as expected, Germany was in Denmark, Kiel and Munich. Because I had insisted that I was going to open to Burgundy as a safety measure I'd expected that he'd stay in Munich. Italy was in Tyrolia and things looked like they were going according to plan. In the fall I did my best to convince England to bounce Germany in Holland, but was unsuccessful. However, Italy was still planning on moving to Munich and the rumor campaign had payed off with Russia. It was easy both to convince Germany to move to Sweden, and to convince Russia that Germany would do so, so 1901 ended with Italy in Munich, Germany in Holland

and Kiel (retreated from Munich) and Russia in the Baltic Sea while I had taken Por and Spa and England had Bel and Norway.

As we closed in on Germany, I used a tactic with him that was to prove successful throughout the game and which was in the end directly responsible for my winning the board. With only the board top having even a chance of going on to the next round, it was obvious to Germany that he had no chance at advancing and therefore he was quite amenable to my offer of a chance for at least a measure of revenge. Using his last army as a Janissary, I support him into Munich at the same time as my fleets abandoned their faked assault on England and headed south. I coordinated this with a stab of Austria by Italy as we both agreed that we needed to act quickly and boldly to have a chance at the win. Sliding into Kiel behind Germany gained me a build and while I could not take an Italian center on the turn of the stab, with my build and the stab by Austria it was obvious to Italy that there was no way to defend his homeland. Once again the offer of revenge was made and accepted, and Italy kept his armies, retreating from Munich to Boh and moving from there into Galacia while taking Greece with the other.

Turkey had been pinned down by the AIR alliance and was no threat, and England was now moving against Russia as I moved into Italy in conjunction with Austria. With the Italian marauders pinning him down, Austria was unable to fortify his Italian possessions and I soon conquered them and started moving against Austria's homeland. At this point Italy made a valiant effort to form an alliance to stop EF, but once again the fact that it was a tournament came into play. Some quick talk with Austria and he agreed that no matter what he did, it wouldn't let him go in the game so he'd really get more satisfaction out of taking out Italy, who's "irrational" play had taken him out of contention, and I managed to keep rolling on.

Now, having used the tournament conditions to such good effect, I managed to almost shoot myself in the foot. Rather than go for the solo, I decided to reward England's loyalty by letting him have a decent finish (useful in his case as his team was still in the running) and to let Austria survive. With England's team doing well I figured that there was a reasonable chance that I'd meet up with one of them in the next round and a little good will wouldn't hurt. Also, a reputation as a solid ally might be useful and make someone wait that one extra turn before making a stab. I had 16 and figured that ought to be more than enough to move on, especially based on where other games stood at the time (it being 1908) so I accepted a draw proposal. It should have occurred to me that the strategy that worked so well for me would be used by many others. As the final years of the games wound down players started throwing games left and right. I squeezed into the semi-finals by the skin of my teeth tied for last.

The next round proved to be a much different game. I was playing England and opening negotiations made it obvious that there were no weak neighbors waiting to be exploited. Opening negotiations with Germany seemed to go reasonably well, and things seemed cordial with France although no one was committing to anything. Russia seemed to be reasonably friendly as well although he asked that I not move an army into Norway. Then came the spring moves and France was in the Channel and Picardy and Germany was in Denmark and things didn't look so great anymore. I made the usual protestations to France, who of course blamed Germany for telling him I was going to attack while Germany expressed innocence and said he had no part in it. After making it clear to France that I'd be covering London I decided to protect against the Sea Lion and supported North Sea while convoying into Norway. So much for my predictive abilities, France took Belgium from Picardy, Germany made no move on me and Russia was offended and hostile because of the army in Norway and built a fleet in STP/NC.

Germany seemed the only choice for an ally at this point, and he agreed to support me into Belgium. Spring moves came and the first of many little German surprises was there. He had indeed attacked France so I didn't have to worry about an FG, but he'd moved into Burgundy rather than supporting me to Belgium. More talks and he agreed to support me to Sweden in the fall, although he was going to take Belgium for himself. Not having any better options as France still hadn't vacated the Channel and didn't seem trustworthy I decided to go along. I'd shifted the second fleet to cover the back door against France, so I really didn't expect the attack to do more than bounce with Russia, so I talked with Russia who seemed to have thawed a bit and we agreed that he'd



attack Norway from STP instead of from Sweden and we'd swap the centers. Since he wasn't getting along with Germany very well, he agreed. After much thought I decided to take the small stab and bounced him from Norway with North gaining a build. Italy joined in the attack on France and Mar fell as well as Bel.

1903 and France was finally willing to look for peace, although Russia was of course hostile and had retreated to Ska. Germany's tone was still very superior, he was doing me favors and I had no other friends and really just had to go along with his plans according to him. Not trusting him at all, I brought up the old ploy with France about revenge, and tried to see if there was any way to repair the fences with Russia. Things didn't look too hopeful as IG continued to press France and Russia and I stalemated with Germany moving a fleet into the Baltic. Then came one of those lucky chances that can make or break a game. Germany and Russia had worked out a stab for the fall turn, with Germany supporting Denmark into Sweden while cutting my support from North with his fleet that was in Holland and Russia would take Norway with Ska and Stp. However, Russia planned a stab, moving to slide into Denmark behind Germany. By his figuring I'd lose Sweden, Germany would not gain and I'd end up as a Russian ally because of the German stab and not a threat because of the center loss. However, Germany swapped his orders and supported Baltic into Sweden instead of Denmark. Russia's attack cut his support and I held both Norway and Sweden, with all chances of the RG alliance torn apart. That was the turning point in the game for me.

The next year, Germany imploded as ERFI all attacked with France providing support for both English and Italian attacks. I occupied Brest as well and suddenly was back in the business of recruiting Janissaries. I reached an agreement with France to let him survive and maintain his center count as he pushed south against Italy and convinced Germany that he too could survive if he'd attack Russia. Russia had left himself opening to a convoy to Livonia assuming that Germany had to defend and would not consider abandoning his homeland. Once again revenge was serving me well and from a desperate position I was suddenly leading the board. This time however I was not going to take my eye off the tournament as a whole and I started doing some careful calculating. Several things stood out as potential dangers. My position was solid and I could probably hold on as board top against a concentrated attack, however, it was also possible that merely topping the board would not be enough if on one of the other semi-final boards there was a two way tie for top with a high (16 or 17) center count. There was also the possibility that while I didn't think any other power could grab the top from me, several of them could combine to throw the top to one of them. The players on this board were not going to collapse as had happened on the first board and Turkey and Italy were working hard to bring Russia into their fold and form an alliance that could contain me.

Due to the board positioning, and the personalities involved, it seemed obvious to me that the one real danger was that Italy, and perhaps Turkey would conspire to throw the win to Russia. There was no doubt that Turkey would do all he could to keep my center count as low as possible. The argument of "don't you want someone from our board to go on" held no sway, he was clear that he'd consider it a victory if he could in fact prevent anyone going on since he wasn't going to be topping the board himself. An admirable stance, but also an annoying and threatening one!

So began a careful dance with Russia who was actively playing both sides of the fence. I helped him pick up centers from Germany while he stalled IT and put off making an open attack on me. I knew it was coming sooner or later however and that there was no real way to prevent it, so the strategy I adopted was to make it seem that he actually had a chance to grab the top by himself if he moved on both myself and Italy. While he might take the top for a moment, I was confident that in the face of this move, IT would turn on him with a vengeance and I would be able to regain my position. Sure enough, the time came and Russia made his move, stabbing both Italy and I for centers. The response from Italy was quick and ferocious. He couldn't believe the greed and lack of thought from Russia. He'd been prepared to throw the win to Russia and now this. Just as hoped, IT charged against Russia and I was able to hold my lines and regain my top position.

Now came the time for a final bit of tournament meta-play. I was pushing hard for my top and possible solo as one of the other games looked like it might well end in a 17-17 draw, but at the same time I started immediately courting Russia again. There was no way that he could top the board and he knew it, so the carrot I held out was

that if he worked with me I'd set him up for a solid second. The purpose behind this was a serious attempt on my part to bring him up to an eighth place finish. This was on the off chance that a replacement was needed for the final board, in which case that replacement would be someone whom I had worked well with and who would have at least some inclination to feel friendly towards me. When the other board ended in a solo, I actually threw two centers to Frank in the last year, but unfortunately, I'd had to keep my options open for too long and it was only enough to bring him to 9th place. As events turned out, a replacement was indeed called for the final board, and that replacement, Lee, went on to win the tournament. I played Russia in the final and while I have no idea what the outcome would have been I can only say that I'm sure it would have been different had Frank been the substitute England, and anything different would have had to have been better for me!

Unfortunately I have to say that the final board was the most unpleasant game that I've ever played in. The level of animosity made the entire game something I'd really rather forget. Things started out reasonably. I drew Russia, never my favorite. I seem to be all or nothing with Russia, with nothing outnumbering all by a fair bit. After opening negotiations what I saw forming was an FG attack on E in the north. In the south I had hopes for an alliance with Italy. Turkey seemed to want to work with Russia, but only on his own terms, which were basically that I, in his own words, "never be in a position to threaten him". It was pretty clear to me from the start that Turkey was going to be a problem as there was no way that he was ever going to work with me unless I ceded everything I had in the south. Of course there was nothing to be gained by being overtly hostile, so in 1901 I opened peacefully to Rumania and agreed to join with FG against England. At that point my plan was to take Norway, then to join with either F or G against the other. If France I'd back off of England who (being Toby Harris) was sure to go on fighting until the last and move on Germany with France. If Germany, I'd continue on trying to land in England and establish a strong naval presence. Meanwhile it was my hope to have an AIR vs T, flowing into an RI vs A.

A fine plan and one that was on track until 1902 when everything fell apart. France managed to offend England to the degree that he resigned from the game. A new England came on board, not necessarily a problem, but then Germany changed sides and attacked France with the new England while not letting me know that he was doing so. So, at the end of 1902 while I had Norway, England was not disbanding and he had no credible threats other than me. At the same time, in the south, Austria opted to attack me and take Rumania rather than accept my offer of support to Bulgaria. The deciding factor was apparently that Turkey offered him help into Rumania in the spring while I was only going to support him into Bulgaria in the fall, so he went for the immediate results. Results only count in the fall though, and faced with no real alternative (Turkey was in Black and Arm), I offered to support Turkey to Rum and offered him full support from then on. He accepted and convoyed into Rum in the fall.

Unfortunately the personal hostility had really locked the game down. Austria was never going to work with Italy, so there was never a chance to really put the brakes on Turkey. France was going down and there was no play to work with England or Germany against the other. Eventually I could put off Turkish demands no longer and had to make a move on Germany. Italy however failed to follow through on what was supposed to be a coordinated attack and once again I was high and dry. My final chance at pulling something out was in reconciling with Germany and working against England. I thought there was a good chance of this and that it should have been obvious to Germany that the stab was coming, but he thought he had one more turn and then it was too late. At that point, the scoring system kicked in again. In a non-tournament game I'd have played hard to be in the final draw, but this game had a hard limit of 12 game years, and members of a draw were not equal, center count was everything. Based on that there really was no point to hanging on to a small position just to ensure someone else second and third and so, in the end, I joined the group that decided that it made more sense that England win outright, and the rest of us tied as "finalists". That's not to take away from Lee's play, he played very well to place himself into a position where there was no chance for anyone to prevent his topping the board.

So, in the end, I enjoyed the tournament a lot, but I think it really is a variant, and I'd rather play the original. When playing in a tournament one needs to play the system. Playing for the score, avoiding being a target, all is part of the "variant". On the other hand, one of my best talents in Diplomacy is forcing my way into a draw as a

small power (perhaps because I've had so much experience as a small power!), and so I like a system where all players in a draw are considered equal. I still hope to try a face to face tournament sometime, but as for my own Con, Diplomatic Incident will remain play till the game is over because that's still the way I prefer.

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## **So You Think You're Playing Diplomacy?**

**by Stuart Eves**

Many of us play the game Diplomacy believing that it is just that - THE game – a single design with a set of rules, end of story. But that's not true, as this article will demonstrate.

I'm not talking here about deliberately devised variants of the game. These do not purport to be THE game – merely A game with facets in common with the original. No, I'm talking about different versions of the game which, at different times have been marketed as the definitive game of Diplomacy itself.

There have been four significant versions of the game: the original version published in the late 1950's; a far more recognisable version which was marketed in the early 1960's; a version from the early 1970's containing a rulebook which some still consider definitive; and a 1980's version which contained some further amendments to the rulebook.

To illustrate the problem, let's suppose we try to define the game, and see how far we get :-

***“Diplomacy is a game played on a map of Europe”*** Ah yes! But which map. As you can see from the attached map, the original version of the game dating to the late 1950's was played on a map very different to the one we use today. There are more spaces, and the arrangement of the supply centres is different. Indeed, Switzerland is not only passable, it's an additional supply centre! The current configuration was developed in the early 1960's, and has been unchanged, (except for cosmetic modifications), since.

***“The seven major powers move their units around the board in an attempt to gain control of 18 supply centres”***. We do now, but until 1971, the victory criterion was subtly different. Players were required simply to have “the majority of pieces on the board”, so a victory could be obtained through having 17 units versus a combined opposition force of 16, (and so could, in theory, be obtained following the enforced removal of a unit following a Spring season). Curiously, Allan Calhamer, the inventor of the game, seems to have forgotten this rules amendment when writing his recent book “Diplomacy and Diplomatic History”, since in a couple of places he makes reference to the original victory criterion. (Indeed, it was this anomaly which originally inspired me to write this article in the first place.)

***“The rule book specifies how the units move, and how conflicts should be resolved”***. True, but a number of rules for the game have changed noticeably over time. The version of the rulebook that accompanied the original game had totally different rules for convoys and builds. Armies had to embark on a single fleet, and were then carried around the board by that fleet until they disembarked, (which obviously made the game much slower). Builds could be made in home centres, whether or not they were occupied by one's own units, and hence it was possible to have more than one unit in a space in some circumstances. The rules on builds were changed in the early 1960's, and haven't been amended since. And though the mechanics of convoys, (i.e. the use of (multiple) fleets to transport armies from one territory to another in a single season), haven't changed since that time, the detailed rules have remained somewhat problematic.

For example, one of the changes introduced in the 1970's rulebook was the so-called “convoy protection rule”. Previously, if an army was convoyed to a space in which there was an enemy fleet, and that fleet was ordered to support an attack on the convoy, then the support would be cut. This wasn't particularly logical, (since units can't cut the support of their own attacker usually), and so now in the following situation:-

ITALY: F Rom-TYS; F Nap S F Rom-TYS

FRANCE: A Tun-Nap; F TYS C A Tun-Nap

the French fleet would be dislodged.

*(Incidentally, in the 1971 rules, the text of this rule reads:- “If a convoyed army attacks a fleet which is supporting a fleet which is attacking one of the convoying fleets, then the support is not cut”. This is clearly somewhat contorted, but is accurate. The 1982 rulebook attempts greater clarity with “If a convoyed army attacks a fleet which is supporting an action in a body of water; and that body of water contains a convoying fleet, that support is not cut.” Legally speaking, this is less than helpful, since if one adds:*

*TURKEY: A Gre-Nap; F ION C A Gre-Nap*

*to the above example, one might conclude that the Turkish moves had no effect! Basically, the word “convoying” by itself is insufficient here.)*

Another change to the rulebook covers the situation where a unit is dislodged by an opponent coming from the space which that unit was attacking. For instance:-

TURKEY: A Ser-Rum; A Bul S A Ser-Rum; A Gre-Ser RUSSIA: A Rum-Ser

Though all rulebooks would concur that the Turkish move to Rum should succeed, the difference lies in the adjudication of the move A Gre-Ser. Prior to 1971, the official interpretation would have been that the army in Gre would be stood out of Ser by the move of A Rum. Now, of course, the Turkish army would reach Ser, under the principle that “a dislodged unit has no effect on the space its attacker came from”.

Despite the amendments to the rulebook, it’s still possible to come up with situations where the rulebook appears self-contradictory. For instance,

ENGLAND: F NTH C FRENCH A Bel-Hol

FRANCE: A Bel-Hol

RUSSIA: F Den-NTH; F Hol S F Den-NTH

Under Rule X, the French move A Bel-Hol cuts the Russian fleet’s support, and the English F remains in NTH. However, the convoy protection rule (XII.5) says that the convoyed army’s attack does not cut the support of F Hol, so in this situation the attack succeeds and F NTH is dislodged. The basic problem is that the two rules are in conflict, and there is no way to decide which takes precedence.

Though paradoxical situations like this have been described eloquently by some of the early postal hobby luminaries, they haven’t been fixed in later versions of the rule book dating from the early 1980’s. Instead the amendments have attempted to “fix” problems which almost never occur. For example, in the 1971 version of the rulebook, (which is treated as definitive by most GM’s), it is stated that if an army has multiple convoy routes to reach its destination, the move only succeeds if neither convoy route is disrupted. In 1982 this was changed, and now, provided that one of the convoy routes survives, the move succeeds.

Another seldom encountered anomaly, somewhat similar to the paradox described above, is the unwanted convoy. Imagine a French army ordered to move from Gas-Spa, and an Italian fleet sitting in MAO. Just suppose the Italian player orders F MAO C FRENCH A Gas-Spa, and his fleet is then dislodged by a couple of English fleets. There’s no obvious way under the 1971 rulebook to decide whether the army moves or not, since if it’s being convoyed, and the convoy is disrupted, it shouldn’t arrive, whereas if it’s going overland, there’s nothing to stop it. By analogy with the original 1971 multiple convoy rule mentioned above, some GM’s at the time considered that if one route failed the move should fail, and hence the army should stay put in Gas.

This was not, apparently, the view of the authors of the subsequent rulebooks, since the 1982 version attempts to deal with this rare situation by suggesting that the “intent” of the owner of the army should take precedence. Exactly who determines this “intent” is not specified, but it looks like a spectacular example of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

Having modified the multiple convoy rule to read effectively “if one route succeeds, the move succeeds”, surely it would have been easier to generalise this principle to cover the situation where the army has one route by sea and one overland? (In doing so, consistency with another rule, sometimes called “the loop”, would be established. This specifies that two units may exchange places if one or both are convoyed. Hence, if the orders read A Tri-Alb, F ADR C A Tri-Alb, A Alb-Tri, the two armies change places, irrespective of their nationality. Clearly it is assumed here that the convoy route takes precedence, but there’s no particular reason why this should be so, and obviously if the two armies were considered to be moving overland they’d simply stand each other off.

In summary, the only conclusion that can be drawn here is that there is no really definitive version of the rulebook. We might think we’re playing Diplomacy, but we’re all actually playing a subtle variant of the game.

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## Face-to-Face Diplomacy

### **World DipCon [the world Diplomacy championship]:**

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 [daanz.org.au/wdc2002/](http://daanz.org.au/wdc2002/).

**World DipCon XIII** will be held on **14-16 February 2003** at the **Marriott Denver Tech Center** in **Denver, Colorado, USA**, hosted by the 4th annual **ARMADA Regatta** as part of the multi-game convention **GenghisCon XXIV**. Here are the [locations and dates](#), [tournament format](#), [description of Denver's February climate and events](#), and [host organization](#). For more details, contact [Manus Hand, manus@diplom.org](mailto:Manus.Hand@diplom.org).

### **Australia & New Zealand:**

The annual **NSW Diplomacy Championships** will be held on **8-10 June 2002** in **Sydney, New South Wales, Australia**. For details, contact [Craig Sedgwick, craigsed@ozemail.com.au](mailto:Craig.Sedgwick@ozemail.com.au).

The annual **Auckland Diplomacy Championships** will be held on **14-15 July 2002** in **Auckland, New Zealand**. For details, contact [Will Black, willb@esp.co.nz](mailto:Will.Black@esp.co.nz).

The annual **ACT Diplomacy Championships** will be held in **September 2002** in **Canberra, A.C.T. Australia**. For details, contact Arianwen Harris at (02) 6248 5348.

The annual **New Zealand Diplomacy Championships** will be held on **26-28 October 2002** in **Auckland, New Zealand**. For details, contact [Grant Torrie, grant\\_torrie@wilsonandhorton.co.nz](mailto:Grant.Torrie@wilsonandhorton.co.nz) or [Quentin Ball, sandq@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Quentin.Ball@sandq@xtra.co.nz).

**GongCon II** will be held in **November 2002** at a location to be announced. For details, contact [Sean Colman, scolman@optushome.com.au](mailto:Sean.Colman@optushome.com.au) or [Shane Cubis, rubikcubis@dingoblue.net.au](mailto:Shane.Cubis@dingoblue.net.au).

### **Belgium:**

**LudoNam**, including the open Belgian Diplomacy Championship, will be held on **30-31 March 2002** in **Namen, Belgium**. For details, contact [Jean Louis Delattre, jeanlouis.delattre@win.be](mailto:Jean.Louis.Delattre@win.be).

### **Brazil:**

**CoBraDip-II**, the second annual Brazilian Diplomacy Convention, will be held on **6-7 April 2002** at the University of Campinas in **São Paulo, Brazil**. Here are the [CoBraDip-II website in English](#) and [CoBraDip-II website in Portuguese](#). For more details, contact Cristiano Corte Restitutti or Wolfgang Lenk at [cobradip@bestway.com.br](mailto:cobradip@bestway.com.br).

**Canada:**

The third **Stratagem's Diplomacy Variants** event will be held on **11 May 2002** at the **Sentry Box** in **Calgary, Alberta**. Colonial Diplomacy and Machiavelli will be the featured variants. For details, see the [Stratagem website, members.home.net/stratage/](http://Stratagem website, members.home.net/stratage/), or contact [James Istvanffy, j.istvanffy@home.com](mailto:James.Istvanffy@home.com).

The second annual **Victoria Diplomacy Tournament** will probably be held in **early June 2002** in **Victoria, British Columbia**. When details are determined, they will be posted on the [Diplomacy Victoria website, members.home.net/diplomacy.victoria/](http://Diplomacy Victoria website, members.home.net/diplomacy.victoria/). For more details, contact [Mike Hall, diplomacy.victoria@home.com](mailto:Mike.Hall@home.com).

**Denmark:**

The second **Danish National Diplomacy Championship** will be held in **October 2002** near **Copenhagen, Denmark** as part of the annual multi-game convention **Viking-Con XXI**. Details in Danish will be posted at [www.viking-con.dk](http://www.viking-con.dk). For more details, contact [Vincent Mous, vim2@rocketmail.com](mailto:Vincent.Mous@rocketmail.com).

**Finland:**

**FinDipCon IV**, the fourth annual Finnish Diplomacy Championships, will be held on **5-7 April 2002** in **Tampere, Finland**. Details will soon be posted at [www.melankolia.net/sds/fdc4.html](http://www.melankolia.net/sds/fdc4.html). For more details, contact tournament director [Mikko Saari, msaari@iki.fi](mailto:Mikko.Saari@iki.fi) or FDA chairman [Vesa Virri, vesvir@utu.fi](mailto:Vesa.Virri@utu.fi).

**France:**

The XVIIth annual **French National Diplomacy Championship** will be held in **November 2002** in **Paris, France**, hosted by the convention **Jeux en Feres**. It will be a four-round tournament with a final (top 7) table, using the C-Diplo scoring system. Over one hundred players have attended this event in recent years. For details, contact tournament director [Yann Clouet, yannc@pt.lu](mailto:Yann.Clouet@pt.lu).

**Germany:**

**NordCon** will be held on **25-26 May 2002** in **Hamburg, Germany**. For details, contact [Michael Goetze, mgoetze5@yahoo.com](mailto:Michael.Goetze@yahoo.com).

**German DipCon VI** will be held in **October 2002**. Details will be posted when available.

**Netherlands:**

The **DucoSim Spring 2002** convention will be held on **25 May 2002** in **Utrecht, the Netherlands**. For details, see the [DucoSim](http://DucoSim website) website.

**Norway:**

The annual convention **ARCON 18** will be held on **28-30 June 2002** in **Oslo, Norway**, including a Diplomacy tournament.

**San Marino:**

The **Associazione Sammarinese Giochi Storici** in the independent republic of San Marino is scheduling Diplomacy events in 2001 and 2002. For details, see the Italian-language [ASGS website](http://ASGS website). Currently scheduled for 2002 are:

The second annual **San Marino Con** will be held on **26-28 April 2002**.

There will be a Diplomacy tournament at the annual **Diplomaticamente in Treno** (Diplomacy and Trains), which will be held in **2002**, with its schedule not yet announced. Details can be found on the ASGS website (linked above) and on its [Diplomaticamente in Treno page](http://Diplomaticamente in Treno page).

There will be a Diplomacy tournament at the annual **Giornate Medioevali** event, which will be held in **2002**, with its schedule not yet announced.

There will be a Diplomacy tournament at the annual **Il Palio de la Daino** event, which will be held in **2002**, with its schedule not yet announced.

There will be a Diplomacy tournament at the annual **Gradara Ludens** event, which will be held in **2002**, with its schedule not yet announced.

**Sweden:**

**BSK 20** will be held on **1-3 November 2002** in **Boras, Sweden**. For more information, contact Bjorn Westling, [bwestling@yahoo.com](mailto:bwestling@yahoo.com).

**United Kingdom:**

The long-running annual convention **ManorCon XX** will be held on **19-22 July 2002** at **Chamberlain Hall** in **Birmingham, England, UK**. You can find schedules and directions at the [ManorCon website](#) and its [ManorCon flyer page](#). For more details, contact Steve Jones or Kath Collman at [manorcon@diplom.org](mailto:manorcon@diplom.org).

The annual convention **Mind Sports Olympiad** will probably be held in **late August 2002** at a location to be announced. A Diplomacy tournament is expected. More details will be posted here when available.

The **Yorkshire Trophy** Diplomacy tournament will probably be held in **October 2002** at a location to be announced. More details will be posted here when available.

**MidCon** will be held on **1-3 November 2002** at the **Birmingham City Thistle Hotel** in **Birmingham, England, UK**. This convention (annual since 1980) has for many years hosted the **UK National Diplomacy Championships**. Find details at the [MidCon website](#). For more information, send e-mail to [midcon@sfcpc.co.uk](mailto:midcon@sfcpc.co.uk), or write to Midcon, 17 Crendon Street, High Wycombe HP13 6LJ.

**United States:**

**PrezCon 2002** ("the Winter Nationals") will be held on **20-24 February 2002** at the Doubletree Charlottesville in **Charlottesville, Virginia**. This longtime multi-game convention will include a Diplomacy tournament. For details, see the [PrezCon website, www.prezcon.com](#). For more PrezCon details, contact [kingmaker96@mindspring.com](mailto:kingmaker96@mindspring.com). For more Diplomacy tournament details, contact Tournament Director [Dan Mathias, dcmathias@erols.com](mailto:Dan Mathias, dcmathias@erols.com).

The second **Missouri Compromise** Diplomacy tournament might be held on **10-12 May 2002** in **St. Louis, Missouri** as part of the **Name-That-Con 15 / ProtoCon** annual convention. For details, see the **relocated Name-That-Con website, www.namethatcon.com** or contact [Mike French, md\\_french@yahoo.com](mailto:Mike French, md_french@yahoo.com).

The large annual convention **Origins** will be held on **4-7 July 2002** at a location to be announced. Origins features all kinds of boardgames and role-playing games, including a three-round Diplomacy tournament. For details, contact [Bruce Reiff](#) or Diplomacy tournament director [Dan Mathias](#).

**DipCon XXXV**: The North American Diplomacy championship **DipCon XXXV** will be held on **Memorial Day weekend of 2002** in **Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA**, hosted by **DixieCon XVI**. Here are some [details](#) of the 2002 plans and 1987-2001 DixieCon history. If you have any questions, send e-mail to [David Hood](#) of the DipCon Committee organizing the event.

The Boardgame Players Association is presenting the **World Boardgame Championships** on **30 July to 4 August 2002** at Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn in **Hunt Valley, Maryland** (near Baltimore). One hundred different strategy boardgames have major tournaments at this event, including Diplomacy. In 2000 this event hosted World DipCon X/DipCon XXXIII. The BPA website, featuring information on this convention, is at [www.boardgamers.org](http://www.boardgamers.org). The schedule, houserules, and past winners can be found on the BPA site's [Diplomacy page](#). You may request email copies of this information at [doncon99@toad.net](mailto:doncon99@toad.net).

The next **GenCon** will be held on **8-11 August 2002** in **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**. This large annual convention features all kinds of boardgames and role-playing games, including a Diplomacy tournament run by the CAT23

group. As Diplomacy details are developed, they will be released on the [CAT23 group's website, www.cat23.com](http://www.cat23.com). For more details, contact [gencondip@cat23.com](mailto:gencondip@cat23.com) or [Edi Birsan, edi@mgames.com](mailto:Edi Birsan, edi@mgames.com).

The next **Dragonflight** will be held on **23-25 August 2002** in **Seattle, Washington**. This longtime multi-game convention will include a Diplomacy tournament. For general convention details, see the [Dragonflight website, www.dragonflight.org](http://www.dragonflight.org). For more Diplomacy details, contact [Buz Eddy, BuzEddy@aol.com](mailto:Buz Eddy, BuzEddy@aol.com).

The 4th annual **Tempest in a Teapot** Diplomacy Tournament will be held on **11-13 October 2002** at a yet-to-be-determined location in the **Baltimore-Washington** area. For more details, visit the [Potomac Tea & Knife Society website](http://www.potomac-tea.com).

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