

# Diplomacy World

## Issue 101

[www.diplomacyworld.net](http://www.diplomacyworld.net)



**~~Variety Melange~~ Variants: The Spice of Life**

# Notes From the Editor

Welcome back to another issue of Diplomacy World. This is now my fifth issue since returning as Lead Editor, and in some ways it was the hardest issue to do. I believe this was simply a case of all the additional time and effort that went into doing Issue #100. It wasn't until #100 was finished and uploaded to the web site that I realized how many extra hours I'd been spending each week trying to assemble all that material. Sitting back the next day, I was a bit worried about whether I had run the well (or my personal gas tank) dry.

Fortunately, that wasn't the case. First of all, we had a few wonderful pieces of material set aside for this issue, starting with Stephen Agar's variant symphony and David McCrumb's designer notes on 1499: The Italian Wars. That seemed like enough to direct us towards Diplomacy Variants as a theme. I still prefer original Diplomacy over all other choices, but anytime I feel the experience growing even slightly stale I get myself involved in a few variant games. Whether they are global games like Colonia VII or Youngstown IV, or map changes like African Diplomacy, or old favorites such as Woolworth, Fog of War, Balkan Wars VI or even simple Gunboat, I enjoy the challenge of the differences and the new obstacles and opportunities they represent. After a few variant games I find my drive to play regular Diplomacy to be thoroughly refreshed.

More importantly, I also found new energy because of our new Variant Editor Jack McHugh. Jack and I have collaborated on a number of Diplomacy projects in the past, so when he agreed to become Variants Editor I knew I'd find myself relying on his good nature and occasional bursts of enthusiastic production not just to provide some entertaining material, but to inspire me to do some of the same. That's why you'll find his name sprinkled liberally throughout this issue...and let's hope

that continues in the coming issues as well!

This issue you'll also find the results of the latest Diplomacy World Writing Contest. While I would have liked to get more entries than I did, at least we received enough to actually award the prizes this time! Congratulations to our winners, and keep your eyes open for future writing contests, or contests of other types. If you have suggestions, please let me know.

Which leads me into the usual quarterly mantra: this particular issue, and Diplomacy World as a whole, is only as good as the articles you hobby members submit. I can't write the whole thing myself, not even with the assistance of the DW Staff...we need your ideas, your input, and most crucially your articles. If you need ideas, just send me an email to [diplomacyworld@yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@yahoo.com) and I'll be happy to give you a dozen or more! And while you're doing that, be sure to keep checking out our web site at <http://www.diplomacyworld.net> and the DW Blog at <http://blog.diplomacyworld.net>, for updates, changes, news, and additional back issues. We've got almost every issue of Diplomacy World posted there, from #101 back to #42 (plus #1 and #2), and slowly but surely we are adding the rest. Oh, by the way, if you happen to have any old classic Diplomacy zines or other material you think deserves to be seen again, get in touch with me. I'd be happy to scan it and post it to one of the websites, depending on what it is exactly.

***I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is July 1st, 2008.*** If you won't consider writing a full article, we'd still love to hear from you with feedback on this issue, or ideas for future articles. See you in the Summer, and happy stabbing!

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

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# The Roving Diplomacy World Reporter: A Visit with the East Coast Clique

By Douglas Kent

Due to some happy circumstances and coincidences, I found myself in the Philadelphia area a few weekends ago as a number of the famous “East Coast Clique” Diplomacy hobby bigwigs were enjoying a get-together at Paul Kenny’s place. With Paul’s wife Sandy playing mother hen, and the kids running around, it was difficult to relax and enjoy some rude and raucous Diplomacy maven-style humor. Plus Sandy didn’t want us getting drunk in front of the kids, even if we offered them a taste or two. So, using the weak excuse of “taking Annabell (the dog) for a walk,” Paul managed to escape his house for a little while in the company of Tom Swider, Brad Wilson, and Diplomacy World’s new variant editor Jack McHugh. With Jack’s wife out at work, his apartment was a natural convergence point. We met up there, where I conducted an impromptu Diplomacy World Interview Roundtable. For accuracy, I pulled out my mini tape recorder and set it on the coffee table.

Sitting around the coffee table were:

Doug – That’s my, Doug Kent, Diplomacy World Lead Editor and an all-around jerk. Also known as the Surly Creep.

Jack – Jack McHugh, hobby legend, my #1 toady, and new Diplomacy World variant editor. Also known as Sack McHugh, Flapjack, and the Flapper.

Tom – Tom Swider, long-time hobby maven, and former publisher of the award-winning Diplomacy zine Comrades in Arms. Known to his friends as Little Tommie Swiper.

Brad – Brad Wilson, also known as Bwad. A man of mystery, former publisher of the zine Vertigo. I’m still trying to get him to come out of retirement and write a sub-subzine for my subzine Eternal Sunshine.

Paul – Paul Kenny, father, husband, philanthropist, inventor, time-traveler, and publisher of the zine Absolute. I’d say “former publisher” except he never officially folded; the next issue is due out any year now.

What follows is an unedited transcript of the event. I’ve added links where appropriate, for those who are interested.

(click, moment of fuzzy dialogue)

Doug: ...should be able to pick us all up if we stay in this room.

Jack: It’s not going to pick anything up you idiot, you

didn’t plug the microphone in. Geez, you’re a moron. Haw haw haw.

Tom: Uh, Jack, it has an *internal* microphone.



Jack: Oh.

Paul: We should try to make this quick guys, Sandy is going to get suspicious if we are gone too long.

Brad: Don’t you think leaving the dog at home was a big enough hint that you were lying? She’s going to roast you alive for sure.

Jack: Just do what I do when get caught in a lie: bring her home some Dunkin’ Donuts. It’s almost Valentine’s Day, just get a box of the ones with pink frosting and tell her it’s a Valentine’s Day surprise.

Tom: You’re a regular Romeo, Jack. I bet the women go wild for your Chocolate Honey-Dipped tokens of affection.



Brad: Well, to be technical, they don’t call them that anymore. They now refer to them as Chocolate Glazed. I think they may have changed the recipe a bit too.

Doug: Fellas? Can we focus for a minute here? I know we don't have much time, so I wanted to try and get through a few roundtable questions before we break this up, or before the tape runs out of room.

Paul: Aren't they 30 minutes long per side?

Doug: Well, I've used part of this tape already so there isn't too much room left.

Jack: If you used it to record one of your love-making sessions with Heather, that still leaves 29 minutes.

Brad: Got anything to eat?

Jack: There's some chips in the kitchen, but only take one bag. Carol needs to bring the other ones to an Undercover Party she's hosting tomorrow.

Tom: Geez Jack, how many jobs does she have?

Jack: Beer isn't free Tom. We all know that.

Paul: Speaking of beer, (yelling) Brad, get some cold ones.

Brad: I've got pretzels, Bon-Ton chips, Pen Oktoberfest, and some Longhammer India Pale Ale. Dig in guys.



(crinkles and pops)

Jack: Jeez, can you guys be careful? You're dropping crumbs and dripping beer all over the floor. Carol is going to kill me.

Paul: Whatsamatter, you're not allowed to have people over?

Brad: When he's a good boy he is.

Doug: Okay, let's please get this started. We'll start with something simple. What's the weakest Diplomacy nation, in your opinion?

Jack: (loud belch)

Tom: Eww, what did you eat, that reeks?

Brad: Something with onions, obviously. Ugh, cover your mouth.

Jack: Okay Miss Manners, sorry to offend your delicate sensibilities. I didn't get my panties in a wad when you stunk up the car with one of your famous seat-cushion explosions.

Tom: That wasn't me!

Paul: Puh-lease, I believe I detected the rancid aroma of digested Andy Capp Hot Fries in it.

Jack: No, that was later when I farted. I meant the first one, the one that smelled like a wet flophouse mattress in Elizabeth, New Jersey.



Brad: Shut up and gimme those chips.

Doug: Hello? Somebody? Am I even sitting here?

Tom: Well, it's a boring question. But I'll say Italy.

Paul: Italy? You've got to be kidding. It's England!

Tom: How can the major naval power on the board be the weakest nation?

Paul: Because it is the only power that doesn't have a guaranteed neutral supply center in 1901.

Jack: What are you talking about? England gets Norway.

Paul: It isn't guaranteed though.

Brad: You mean if Russia moves Moscow to Saint Pete and then bounces him? How often does an England see that?



Jack: I see it all the time when I'm England.

Paul: That's because everybody hates you. But you see my point.

Tom: No, I don't. England can support himself in.

Jack: How can he do that?

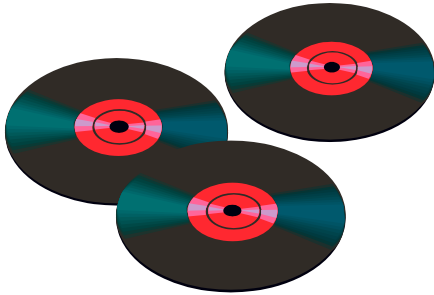
Tom: Let me get a board out and I'll show you.

Jack: I think there's one in those cabinets down there.

(cabinet door opening, rustling)

Brad: Anyway, Austria is the weakest power overall. Italy is actually weaker, but because Italy is considered harmless it usually can survive and grow. Playing Austria is like walking across the Amazon on a wet log. One slip, and you're piranha food.

Tom: (off-mike) Where's the board? All I see are books and some old records. Geez Jack, Thompson Twins?



Jack: Shut up, some of those have extended club mixes on them which haven't been released on CD.

Brad: Who cares if they ever are, the digital compression required to put music on CD destroys the true ambient sensation.

Paul: Oh please let's not have that argument again!

Brad: But it's true, LP and reel-to-reel maintain music in a true form. And don't even get me started on digital downloads!

Tom: Here, I found it. Oh crap, what is this?

Jack: That's my old Ouija board! I haven't seen it in years.

Paul: Maybe we can use it to communicate with your dead brain cells?

Doug: Okay, this isn't going very well. How about, in honor of Jack's new post as DW Variant Editor, I ask what the best variant ever designed is?

Brad: (shouting, unintelligible)

Tom: This isn't Jeopardy, Brad, you don't have to be the first to shout the answer out. Try swallowing those chips!

Brad: (mumbled through a full mouth) Gimme another beer, I can't get these down.

Tom: The best variant in terms of play balance and enjoyment is obviously Final Conflict. [[Published in Diplomacy World #37, available online soon as we continue to scan back issues at <http://www.diplomacyworld.net/>]]

Jack: Oh there's a surprise! Little Tommie Swider and his Final Conflict. You must dislocate your shoulder a lot patting yourself on the back like that.

Tom: What? Just because I designed it doesn't mean I can't say it's the best. Are you going to make that a rule?

Brad: He better not, because I like Balkan Wars VI the best. [[Page 25 of DW #98 - <http://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw98.pdf>]]

Jack: Oh, this is ridiculous. Why even ask the question? What about you Paul, gonna vote for Irish Diplomacy?

Paul: Northern Ireland Diplomacy, to be specific. [[[http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/n/Nl\\_diplomacy.htm](http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/n/Nl_diplomacy.htm)]]

Jack: This is so stupid. You can't vote for your own variants!

Brad: So if Fred Davis was here you'd say he couldn't vote for any of the variants he designed, just because he designed them?

Tom: How does this Ouija board work anyway?

(phone ringing)

Jack: (off-mike) Great, keep it down in case it's Carol.

Paul: I always wanted to design a variant based on the Hundred Acre Wood.

Brad: Huh?

Jack: Hello?

Paul: You know, the Winnie the Pooh characters.

Jack: How the heck did you know—

Brad: Winnie the Pooh?

Tom: All spirits, I call to you, through the power of this Ouija board, speak now and help us determine, is Final Conflict the greatest variant ever?

Jack: Okay, hold on. Hey, it's Fred Davis on the phone. He says he had a psychic message that we were discussing variants and his name was mentioned, so he wants to be included in the conversation. Should I put him on speakerphone?

Doug: What?

Brad: No way, we'll never get a word in edgewise.

Paul: Yeah, I figured they could battle for control of the Hundred Acre Wood. All the great powers, Christopher Robin, Pooh, Eeyore, Tigger, Kanga and Roo.

Brad: They don't have **armies**. Pooh isn't about armed conflict. Why are they at war?

Paul: Maybe they all want the honey?



Jack: Okay I'm back.

Tom: I felt the Ouija board move. That's proof, the spirits agree, Final Conflict is the best variant!

Jack: That was me kicking the table.

Doug: What did you do with Fred?

Jack: Nothing, I asked him what he thought the Orioles' chances were this year, and put the phone on hold. He'll be talking for hours.

Doug: Good thinking.

(loud booming thunderclap)

Deep Voice: **Fools, Colonia VII-B is the greatest variant ever!**

[\[\[http://www.badpets.net/Diplomacy/Colonia\\_VIIB/index.html\]\]](http://www.badpets.net/Diplomacy/Colonia_VIIB/index.html)

Tom: Aaaahhhh, what the hell is that, did I summon a demon?

Brad: Run!

Jack: Calm down idiots. You didn't summon anything. That's the ghost of Fred Hyatt.



Paul: What the heck is he doing here?

Jack: He's always here. The last time I signed up for a game in The Home Office he told me that if I NMR'd he haunt me for all of eternity. Just my luck, I missed the deadline and two weeks later he had his heart attack. Now it's like living in "The Ten Commandments."

Brad: How does Carol handle it?

Jack: She doesn't mind, they trade recipes and Hyatt tattles on me if I don't do my chores, or if I watch any porn, the rat bastard!

Tom: Screw this, I'm not hanging around the Haunted Mansion. Let's go back to Paul's place.

Jack: Watch it jackass, you're gonna spill that beer! Damn it, you knocked it over and it's getting all over the table! Doug, move your tape –

(buzzing noise)

That's all the tape recorder got before a beer bath shorted it out. I'll try to return in a future issue with another Diplomacy Roundtable!

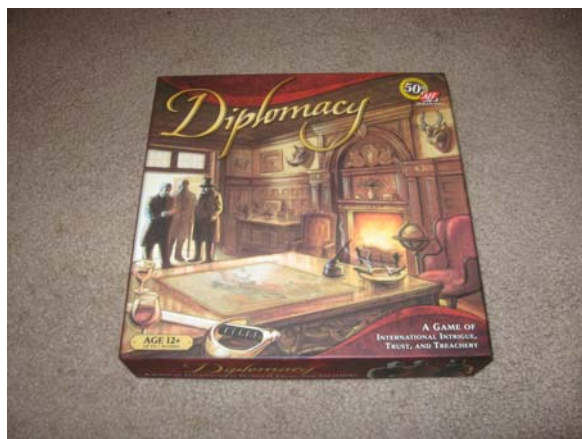
# The New Avalon Hill Diplomacy Set – A Review

By Douglas Kent

It was purely by chance that I happened to stumble across the news of the As the Grand Poobah of the Diplomacy hobby, and the Lead Editor of Diplomacy World, I carry power within the gaming community undreamed of in most lands. I can crush an enemy with a wave of my hand...players line up outside my door with promises of allegiance in order to gain my favor or, if in any way possible, to ally with me in a game of Diplomacy. Of course, for someone to be my ally is akin to being a slave or servant; in Diplomacy jargon, a toady. Jack McHugh, our new DW Variant Editor, is my Chief Toady and Head Muckety Muck, and he is in charge of maintaining my stables of lesser toadies, from each smaller hobby group, all over the globe.

So, you'd think that with all this awesome power, and the legions of zombies who follow my every command, that I'd get a free copy of the new Diplomacy set, just released by Avalon Hill owned by Wizards of the Coast (who is then owned by Hasbro). Maybe even a case of sets, with which I could hatch nefarious schemes and – like a young Bobby Fischer – play fifty simultaneous games, being victorious in all of them? You think I'd have a shipment from Avalon Hill waiting at my door the same day the game hit the shelves. To quote the late great John Belushi: but nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

So screw it, I bought myself a few. And now I'll try to give you the details on what you can expect if you do the same.



The Box: Typical gaming quality, nothing special but a nice job nonetheless. Appealing design, featuring a wood-paneled room, complete with hunting trophies, cigars, brandy snifters, and three diplomats conferring in the corner. I also appreciate the prominent display of the Avalon Hill name, for us old timers who always associate Diplomacy with AH (or GDW if you go back that far). The bottom of the box features the same photo as the Diplomacy ad we ran in DW last issue, which includes the cardboard playing pieces. Overall it feels

sturdy, and not especially prone to the corner-tears many boxes suffer.

Components: When you open the box you find five items. At the bottom is simply a one-piece parts tray designed simply to keep your pieces from slipping under everything into the true box bottom. The raised edge of the tray makes the other components fit snugly to the box top, which is another nice feature, as it will help avoid the top being crushed if something sits on top of it.

Next are the rulebook, and the board, both to be discussed later. You have a 20-page pad of conference maps, which are simply smaller representations of the board itself. It's always nice to have extras, and not only do you get 20, they are printed on both sides, so you have 40 in total. This way if somebody takes it upon themselves to mark one up in pen, you're not screwed when it comes time to play again. I haven't tried it, but it appears that light pencil should erase without damaging the printing.



The counters are always a source of debate. Wood or plastic, which do you prefer? Or perhaps you are a fan of the metal pieces from the 1999 set? No matter, as this set introduces a new contestant: standard cardboard. There are three sheets of counters, and each is of a good quality. These pieces should last quite a while if treated properly, but if you prefer wooden or plastic or metal feel free to recycle them from an old set (or make your own wooden ones).

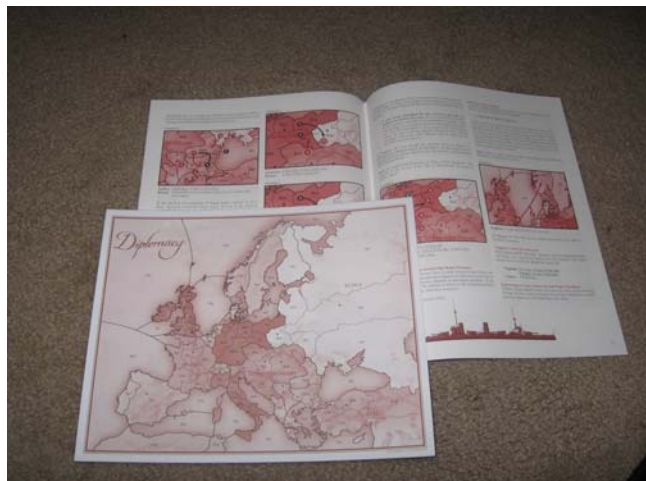
Taking a cue from the original wooden pieces, the fleets are rectangular and long. The designs are the same on all the fleets, their ownership determined simply by the color of the naval vessel depicted there. Here Avalon Hill uses the normal color scheme: Russia is white (or whitish), Turkey yellowish, England a deep blue,



Germany black, Italy green, Austria-Hungary red, and France that swimming pool blue/green which I can never find a proper name for. I am sure there is one, I just don't know what it is. The armies are square, and differ both by color and by the fact that each nation has its own cannon design. You are provided with twelve armies and twelve fleets for each nation.

There is a third set of counters, which are meant to be used to designate supply center ownership. Strangely, you get 21 of these for each nation, but I suppose a few extra counters never hurt! The designs on these round pieces are based on the flag of the nation in question.

For those of you who are historically challenged when it comes to flags, or who simply don't like the designs of any of these pieces, I have good news for you. Avalon Hill smartly printed on both sides of the entire counter set! The backs of all three sheets of pieces are marked in solid color, depicting the respective great power. This gives you a simple choice if you're having trouble with any of the designs: use the backsides, where the color is much more prominent, or simply flip a piece over to confirm its owner whenever you are unsure. It's a nice touch.



The Rulebook: I've never owned the 1999 set, but I am led to believe that this rulebook is similar, or exactly the same, as that one. It seems to be a decent job, with 24 glossy pages. The rules are described with examples and plenty of diagrams, and there is the typical two-year demonstration near the back for those who have never seen a game played. The back of the rulebook is a list of province abbreviations, using typical examples. I prefer Nwg to Nrg, Lyo to GoL, and Erme to Eas but none of that should matter too much. The abbreviations match those on the conference maps, so there is consistency which is important to groups which include any newer players who may not have been exposed to other abbreviations. I also like the use of Page 23, which is called "22 Rules to Help You Resolve Orders." My only real regret with the rulebook is the lack of any mention of a web site besides [www.avalonhill.com](http://www.avalonhill.com). I

suppose that was to be expected, but it would have been wonderful if we could have convinced Avalon Hill to include a tiny paper flyer like the old sets had, giving some contact information or web information about the hobby-at-large. Still, with search engines and a presence on their site forums, I expect newcomers will find their way to the hobby eventually. Let's hope so; and let's all do our best to direct them to publications like this one and the Diplomatic Pouch, so they can enhance their Diplomacy experience as much as possible! Okay, off the soapbox.



The Game Board: It's a single-piece folded board, well assembled and mounted. Each segment is about 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches square, giving a total size of about 28 inches by 19 inches. I believe that makes it slightly larger than the 3-piece mapboard found in the old familiar Avalon Hill Bookshelf format. Aside from some questionable spelling in a few sea spaces, I didn't notice any major problems. Some of the province borders are of a different design than I am used to, but they still serve the same purpose. To a new player it won't make a difference, but I think the unusual shapes are caused by a combination of trying to be historically accurate and correcting mistakes which were made early in the design process. No matter, the board is attractive and big enough that the provinces are not all cramped (except Rome, but you can't have everything).

The Price: Awesome. To get this game in a well-designed set for \$30 or less (MSRP is \$30 but I've seen it for less just about everywhere) is a great deal these days. Heck, a set of Boggle runs you \$15! Obviously some may quibble with the cardboard counters, but a lower price point is critical to a successful sell-through. And remember, the better it sells, the more new Diplomacy players we're going to have!

So despite my displeasure at having to lower myself to the ranks of the common folk and buy a copy (actually I bought four so far), I give this new Diplomacy set a whole-hearted thumbs-up. Good job Avalon Hill!

# Ask the GM

## An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Hosted by Game Master

Dear GM:

I am never able to find six other people to play Diplomacy in person. Why is it so hard to set up a face-to-face Diplomacy game?

Lonesome

*Dear Lonesome*

*Don't you have any friends? Do you still live in Mom's basement? Are you over 20 years old and still haven't kissed a girl??? How hard is to find six other people willing to tolerate your presence for a few hours? Are you really that obnoxious that even nerdy Dip players can't stand you??? Do you shower and take care of personal hygiene on a regular basis??? How pathetic are you?!?!?*

*You can play games online or you can try a variant that requires less people. Intimate Dip for example, requires only two players. You can find at least one other loser who will hang around with you for that can't you?*

Your pal,  
The GM

Dear GM:

I like Diplomacy but I can't seem to get people to do what I want in games. Here's an example—I'm playing Austria and I told Russia I'd support him into Rumania but he still balks at allying with me.

What can I do to get allies?

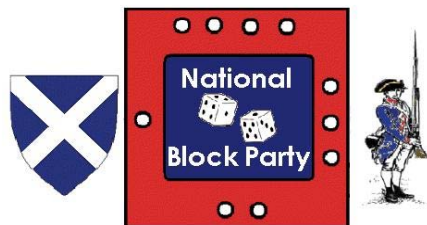
Allied Deprived

*Dear Deprived:*

*What a whiney bastard you are! Stop feeling sorry for yourself—think outside the box, fool. For example, is Russia married? Perhaps you could threaten to have a fling with his spouse? Maybe you could slip Russia a twenty dollar bill before the next move—don't be limited by wimpy players who think Diplomacy is only a game.*

Your buddy,  
The GM

**Got a question for Game Master? Send it to [gamemaster "of" diplomacyworld.net](mailto:gamemaster@diplomacyworld.net) and maybe it will appear in a future issue of Diplomacy World!**



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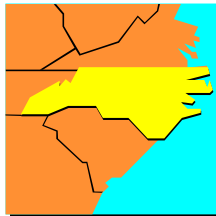
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# Olly Olly OxCon Free

By Mark Stretch

Oxford, city of the dreaming spires. Since 1993, it has also held a games convention. Back in the early days it was a Diplomacy tournament, then events were added for Settlers, 15-1 and Lost Cities together with lots of ad-hoc gaming. By 2007 the size of the Diplomacy tournament had dwindled, and was replaced by a Puerto Rico tournament. This format was continued for 2008.

So, as always the last Saturday in January saw me taking the train to Oxford, to enjoy OxCon. OxCon's home in recent years has been the Mitre. The first stab of the weekend was made by the pub's owners. It was under new management, and as a result they weren't prepared that we might be ordering food or ordering copious amounts to drink. A trip to the bar therefore tending to take a while. You'd have thought that the previous owners might have warned them. Next year I guess they will be better prepared.



**OxCon Tournament Games in Progress**

The main event of the Saturday was the four round Puerto Rico tournament. A few people were however hankering for a return of the Diplomacy tournament and tried to get a game of Colonial Diplomacy going. Unfortunately, there weren't enough takers. No doubt they will try again next year.

The acknowledged UK Puerto Rico Grand Master is Markus Welbourne, and true to form he annihilated everyone else and had an easy stroll to the title. There were at least as many non tournament games going on in the other half of the room, with around 50 people in all. JKLM Distribution brought along a selection of games for sale and I believe managed a brisk trade.

After the Puerto Rico, The gamers split into two halves. One half joined in the 15-1 quiz followed by the

traditional curry, whilst the remainder carried on gaming till closing time, or in my case the last train home and a quiet night's sleep.



**Some of the Non-Tournament Action at OxCon**

Since 1997, the Sunday at OxCon has seen a Settlers tournament over 5 rounds. The winner gets to represent England in the World Championships, which this year will be held in the USA. Nine tables were in play during the day, slightly down from the heyday of the event. Quality was high with a number of former winners and experts about.

With one round to go the event was wide open, a top table was drawn to decide the title. This consisted of Markus Welbourne (2005 & 2006 champion), James Pinnion (2000 & 2002 champion), myself (2001 champion) and James McDermott after a first title, all of whom had 3 wins from 4 at that point. As you might guess this was a tight game, but James P & I dropped out of the running by mid-game, leaving the other two to battle for the title. At the end, James McD had a lucky dip development card draw to win, but didn't get lucky. This meant that Markus had to steal the right card with his robber to win. He managed to, and thus managed the double.

Congratulations to Markus on his wins, thanks to everyone for turning up and making it an enjoyable event and of course to the committee for organizing it.

***Hopefully next year we can get some more Diplomacy players to show up for OxCon, even if it is for a non-tournament single board. Food, beer, and fun; what else do you need?***



# Medieval Warlords

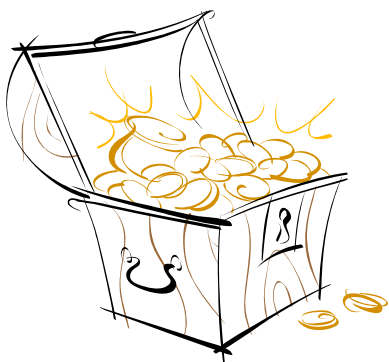
by Tim Haffey

This is a great game, also known as Medieval Diplomacy II. The following is a short introduction to the game taken from the agegames.com website:

Rule a historical Medieval Realm in the quest for empire circa 1320 AD (blood and conquest on the battlefields of Europe - our most popular game)

"Welcome to the Middle Ages, when mighty Kings ruled by fire and sword. The current scenario available is Medieval Diplomacy II, which is a strategic-level wargame, where players rule historical kingdoms, leading their armies of armored warriors. To stay on your throne, you will need to use well-planned tactics, clever scheming, and ruthless determination. This game is provided as a complementary service to the web gaming community - all who enjoy wargames are welcome to join."

Now, there are two ways to play the game. The free version is where you play as a commoner. You cannot build commanders, which give you a 5% advantage in combat, and you can only annex 7 provinces. The paid version is \$2.29 per turn, which does allow you to build commanders (up to five) and annex 70 provinces. Players who play the paid version are called Royals, and have a money advantage over the commoners. But, commoners very often win this game, or are at least included in a coalition victory.



Each province provides a certain amount of gold, which is used to pay upkeep of units, buy new units, and upgrade garrisons. An annexed province provides the maximum amount of gold possible. If you do not annex newly-taken provinces, they do not produce any gold. However, you can pillage the province and earn around half of what it is worth.

This is not a small game; in fact it is quite large. There are 23 Realms at the start of the game. Each player starts out with four provinces. As in Diplomacy, alliances

are very necessary to get ahead. You cannot do it alone. The first two or three turns are spent capturing independent provinces. After that, WAR is the only way to grow.

I have played in two games so far. The first, as Aragon, was more of a learning experience than anything. Yes, I lost. The game I am in now is much better. It is Turn 5 and I am up to 16 provinces and the Realms on both sides of me are my allies. How long this will last is anyone's guess. Right now we have a couple of Realms that have "gone local." That means they are locally controlled because the assigned player either quit or failed to enter his moves. When that happens, everyone around him declares war and jumps on him, because the Realm can only defend.

It is really a fun game. Turns are weekly, so you have lots of time to negotiate and plan your moves. Battles are sort of like "Risk" in nature: winner takes all. If anyone might be interested in the game, go to [www.agegames.com](http://www.agegames.com) and check it out. I hope to see you in a game there.

They have other games as well. Among them are a fantasy game with Wizards and monsters and such, and another one based in the early 1800 after the Napoleonic wars. There is also a space version and one based on medieval Japan, and a final one based around 350 BC where you can see if you can change the outcome. Less players, but lots of fun.

The combat system is pretty neat too. You have several different units (infantry, cavalry, nobles, etc.) that you can buy and form into armies or navies. You then place those armies or navies in ranks within the army. This allows the more expensive units to be placed in the rear and be protected, more or less, while the cheaper units in front take most of the punishment. Some units can move farther than others, which makes it easier for you to bring those units forward. This allows for lots of sneaky movements and stuff.

However, all battles are to the death: the last man standing wins the battle. So you do not just jump into a battle; you usually try to make sure you have overwhelming force so you do not take a lot of losses. It really is thinking man's game. It probably is not for everyone but, I have become addicted to it in only a short time.

***Tim Haffey is a former Lead Editor of Diplomacy World, and likes to be in charge!***

# 1900: Feedback on the Comments and Suggestions of Fred C. Davis, Jr.

by Chris Dziedzic

Back in the Summer 2007 issue of Diplomacy World, Fred C. Davis, Jr. made a series of comments on and raised a number of questions concerning **1900**, the variant designed by Baron Powell. I have been a good friend of Baron Powell for many years, and am proud to have written extensively about the play of this variant, mostly in the Diplomatic Pouch 'zine. I wanted to take a moment and offer some feedback to the comments and some answers to the questions posed by Fred.

Fred organized his thoughts under two headings: those concerning map changes for the variant, and those concerning rules changes.

## Map Changes

o Why aren't the arrows more prominent?

That's a good aesthetic question. The map used for the **1900** variant is a true piece of art that Baron Powell labored over long and hard. Personally, I like the fact that the arrows illustrating legal moves do not detract or distract from the visual impact of the beautiful color map of Europe that is presented to us. However, there is nothing preventing game masters from tweaking the map for use in their games. Going to a starker black and white map, or highlighting the arrows with greater length or width for a more significant visual impact are definite possibilities. Especially in games involving players new to the variant, the game master may wish to add that emphasis.

o Why is the name of the province "Southern Algeria" and not "Sahara?"

Another great question. This is an issue of consistency throughout the variant. If you look at the provinces names throughout **1900**, most of those names borrow from political geography, and not physical geography. While that new province certainly could have been named Sahara, it would have been less than optimal. The consistency of naming conventions within this variant is one of the appealing aspects to it. It shows how much care and attention the designer put into this creation.

o Why not simplify the shapes of certain provinces, both to appear similar to those in Standard Dip and to eliminate unnecessary "wiggles?"

This is one issue Fred Davis and Baron Powell would no doubt disagree. Fred appears to be a proponent of the simpler boundaries that would make for an easier-to-

understand map, while Baron Powell listed increased historical accuracy as one of his three main goals in creating this variant. Many of the "wiggles" represent borders that were actually in effect in the year 1900. These changes do not affect game play, but I find they add to the atmosphere of **1900**.

I remember when Baron redrew the borders of Berlin, Prussia and Silesia in eastern Germany. He did not alter the relations between those three provinces, but did replace the anachronistic Oder-Neisse line, which did not exist before 1945, with a border that follows the eastern borders of the contemporary provinces of Pomerania and Brandenburg. Again, I find that this adds to the sense of authenticity in the variant. I love the little wrinkles of Hessen-Kassel that I can pick out in the boundary between Munich and Cologne.

o Why Smyrna is renamed Konya?

This is another example of the consistency of naming conventions that Baron Powell has implemented in this variant. Going back to the original **Diplomacy**, cities have been used for the names of home supply centers eligible for winter builds, while non-supply center provinces have used more general names – regions, provinces, and internal subdivisions – from political geography. Smyrna is a specific city, a perfect name for a supply center, as in standard **Diplomacy**. In **1900**, however, this is just another buffer province, and Konya was the name of the Ottoman vilayet in which included that part of Anatolia, not only the name of a single city within it.

## Rule Changes

o Why not increase the victory criterion to nineteen supply centers?

There are thirty-nine supply centers in **1900** and only eighteen supply centers are needed to win, just as in **Diplomacy**. This was a conscious decision by the designer to encourage more solo victories and reduce stalemates.

I have heard many skilled and thoughtful players in the hobby come down on different sides of this issue. Some prefer to see more solo victories. Others enjoy the challenge of finding, holding and breaking stalemate lines. We will never get everyone to agree, and if the beauty of stalemate lines and infrequent solos appeals to you, **1900** may not be your variant of choice. The standard game will be more to your liking.

Furthermore, I am not sure what is to be gained by placing a standing army in Switzerland at game start. Does the new F/G/I triangle lead to undesirable friction rather than opening up the board? Would an army in Switzerland reduce the friction? Is the F/G/I diplomatic triangle centering on Switzerland unbalanced? Would an army in Switzerland redress that imbalance? These are some of the issues addressed in Chapter 9 of the Gamers' Guide to **1900**. I appreciate that an armed

Actually, Baron Powell did consider such an option. In the end, he rejected it as making the Suez Canal rules just that little bit more complicated. Ultimately, he did not believe that any realism that might be gained would outweigh the benefits of the simplicity of the current rule.

***Chris Dziedzic has been playing Diplomacy since 2000. Most recently he has authored the 'zine articles Mackinder's Heartland: Russia in 1900, and Tripolitania in 1900: the Keystone to North Africa about the 1900 variant for the Diplomatic Pouch. Chris would like to thank both Charles Roburn and Baron Powell for their contributions.***



# Diplomacy, the Internet and Community

By Chris Babcock

Why do Diplomacy groups often level out around 100 members? Why do people cheat, go CD and otherwise behave badly in online games? Why don't things stay as they were in the 'early days' of the hobby? In particular, what happened to the ethics and to the sense of community?

One thought is to blame the game itself. One view is that the game intrinsically promotes certain negative values - conspiracy, paranoia and betrayal. Another view is that it is too cerebral; lacking mass appeal, Diplomacy is condemned to a cult following with all the attending perils of isolationism. Small groups tend to resist outsiders and outside ideas, even those groups that actively proselytize. I rarely agree with blame, but I particularly disagree with these sentiments.

These two flaws either cancel one another out or amplify one another. All evidence points towards the former. Most of the people who are intellectually capable of playing Diplomacy are also capable of differentiating between in-game and out-of-game behavior. There are exceptions, but the fact that this failure is more common in novices than experienced players suggests that the game itself does not promote these behaviors even though it may attract those who find them appealing. The intellectual rigors of the game do limit its appeal, but the hobby shows no sign of the insular behavior and "unity through exclusion" characteristic of a pop cult. Furthermore, the Diplomacy hobby is fairly fragmented, but attempts at power plays or conspiracies within groups are rare. This argues against players mistaking politics within the game for acceptable behavior elsewhere and against the small group mindset being the limiting factor in growth.

Some issues can be connected to the Internet itself, or the rather the nature of humanity in response to power and anonymity. If you've read "The Invisible Man" or seen the Kevin Bacon movie "Hollow Man" then you have seen an illustration of this principle. People don't behave as though they are dealing with other people when they interact over the Internet because they perceive their actions as anonymous. They do things that they wouldn't do otherwise because they don't think about how their actions affect other people and because they think they can get away with it. When the computer is your interface to the player community, it is easy to think of Diplomacy as a computer game complete with fairly competent AI opponents and possibly even cheat codes. The psychological principle is called objectification. It's what we do naturally when we go to war, play sports, drive a vehicle or engage in other aggressive behavior against people. We reclassify them as "not people" to justify our actions whether those actions involving killing and enslaving people or just

being rude.

The computer makes this easy because it appears to anonymize our actions. If we want to lie about who we are then most of the people with whom we communicate over the Internet lack the technical ability to detect the falsehood. That can feel powerful. We can be two or more people if we want to be... except that we can't. I mean that this act is never as successful as it appears socially and that technically it is getting more difficult to accomplish. This is a good thing, because it means that some of the negative issues associated with the Internet are being resolved and therefore some of the potential of the Internet as a communication mechanism are that much closer to being realized.

We are still experiencing growing pains. The Diplomacy hobby in general, and the online Diplomacy hobby in particular, are neither what they were nor what they will become. The potential for the geographically, culturally and linguistically dispersed player base to come together into a larger community is there, but there are still obstacles.

One obstacle is rules. The obstacle is not that there are rules, but that they are outdated, inconsistent and not consistently enforced.

The EP House Rules were an important development for play on automated systems, but they were out of date before the systems were in place to make them enforceable. A rewrite for clarity and emphasis is needed to address the state of technology and the influx of players whose values and backgrounds differ from the players initially addressed by the document. Additionally, judge keepers and other administrators who employ these rules should probably change the apodictic "Thou shalt not..." language to the language of consequence - "Violation of this rule is punishable by..." or words to that effect. Communicating consequences is a key factor in successful administration. "Wet paint. Do not touch," is an irresistible lure. The psychology student who used a sign that said, "Please wash your hands after touching," had better results.

For non-judge play the model house rules, [www.diplom.org/Zine/S2001M/Cohen/HouseRules.html](http://www.diplom.org/Zine/S2001M/Cohen/HouseRules.html), provide some structure, but they do not address the behavior issues. It may be that interacting more directly with the human GM is a deterrent to the objectification of the other players and the attending issues. Those issues that it does treat have the nice feature of presenting the GM with choices for how to run his games, which is an important adaptation but confusing to some. I have seen at least one group, for example, confused over NMR rules even to the point of using loaded words like



"abomination" against the opposing viewpoint.

There is the need for a unified outline of how to define rules that includes behavioral and procedural issues as well as adjudication issues. It should contain definitions applicable to both hand adjudicated and automated games in order to begin narrowing the gap between these two player pools. This is essential to addressing the next issue for reasons upon which I might be encouraged to elaborate in a separate article.

That issue is respect. How do we earn it and foster it towards other members of the community? By knowing each other and by making ourselves known as people. In game, it is fine to be "England" or "the Czar". In the broader community of the hobby, however, we need humanizing influences. We need to be identified by name and by cooperative behavior. What constitutes social and anti-social behavior is largely defined by the rules. Likewise, those rules should also (with the obvious exceptions of gunboat games that are in progress or where the results could affect someone's judgment in another game) be conducive to being identified as people by other players - to letting people "know" you.

From more than one person who been involved in the hobby for awhile, I have heard the sentiment that "I don't know people like I used to." This is accurate for more than one reason. There is the fact that you remember the people you know and forget the ones you don't. There is also a certain amount of turnover, especially in low-level judge games. Last, there is growth. The clearest evidence of this is the re-printing of the Diplomacy game by Hasbro. Specifically, growth has not been managed. There is a legitimate need for privacy, but the security structure has not been implemented to give the majority of players the confidence to share the personal information that would create this sense of knowing.

There are also limits on growth, or rather there are limits to the kind of growth that is healthy for a community. That growth is governed by the cube law. Simply put, an organization that doubles in size requires eight times the resources to maintain because it must also grow in other dimensions. That means organization, time, effort and sometimes even money. When the infrastructure is not there to supply those resources then growth is constrained.

Usually leaders see themselves as being forced into a position of choosing between quality and quantity, but there is a third option. Grow the infrastructure. Take on the challenges of player retention and maintaining quality by being clear about what makes an individual a valuable part of the community and legitimately assuring them that everything is in place to protect the investment they make in the hobby.

"Everything" is a very broad term. It will involve different things for different people. It also involves the double paradox of seeing that other people have made similar investments and are reaping the rewards. It has a beginning, however. That beginning is in clear, consistent communication. Rules are involved. Creating, interpreting and enforcing those rules requires leadership. Effective leadership is a challenge of its own.

Specifically, the rules only go so far towards establishing community. They define who belongs and who does not belong on the basis of their observable behavior. Leadership of the quality which encourages people to go beyond the requirements is rare. Groups governed by committee tend to have the general membership and the committee membership converge, usually at a very small number, because committees run counter to the principle of individual accountability. Groups with strong individual leadership tend to be limited by the charisma, ability and stamina of that individual.

The limiting factors in population growth for small groups are the 80/20 principle and the imperfect replication of leadership. First rate leaders can directly manage (whatever that means for a specific group) up to five people. Each person in this level can probably manage three others. In any group, 80% of the production is achieved by 20% of the population. In this case, that is 20 people. That is what constrains the active membership of many groups to around 100 individuals. That isn't a hard limit, any more than the speed of sound is, but it does represent a quantum increase in the challenges faced by leadership. Groups that grow beyond this level tend to do so because they train and retain leaders. They have a structure, whether a charter or some other set of rules, that defines the roles of the participants, including leaders, in an open ended and flexible way.

More importantly, membership in a group or community carries weight, expectations and a sense of belonging. There are opportunities for fulfillment in work for the group and cooperative efforts. There is an identity with the group that makes it important to the individual. That makes the rules enforceable and meaningful - a structure for growth, a foundation for ethics and a basis for relating to one another as people. The tools we have available now, intelligently applied, give us the potential to achieve the depth the hobby has experienced previously, but in greater numbers - numbers that enable a greater variety of games, a higher level of competition and a more fulfilling experience with other players. Membership in the community gives rewards that make the structure as rewarding as it is necessary.

***Chris is the driving force behind a number of hobby activities, including a new Yahoo group dealing with game and Judge security measures.***

# Intimate Diplomacy Ia Rules

by Adrien Baird and Steve Doubleday



Introduction (By Steve Doubleday): Unlike most variants, this game has been widely played, even having had its own tournament with a cash prize. It is widely acclaimed as far superior to the two player game described in the official rules. It is, however, not suitable for players who are just getting to know Diplomacy, and two people wishing to learn the rules by playing should stick to the official version.

ID (Intimate Diplomacy) is a two-player variant. Each player controls one country (his "Home" country) for the entire game. The remaining five countries are known as "mercenaries".

The official rules of Diplomacy apply except where amended below.

- 1) To determine home countries, each player submits a preference list of seven countries. If their first choices are different, both players get their first choice. If their first choices are the same, but their second choices are different, then both players get their second choice. If the second choices are identical then each gets their third choice etc. If both preference lists are identical then the players draw lots with the winner getting their first choice and the loser their second choice.
- 2) Control of the five mercenary countries is determined each game year by bids. The bidding seasons occur before Spring 1901, and thereafter between each Winter and Spring season. Bids are written down and both players reveal them simultaneously. The highest bidder for each country has the size of their bid deducted from their reserve and gains control of that country for the following year --- including the winter adjustments.
- 3) Credits used for bidding are awarded following each Fall season. Each player is given one credit for each SC owned by his home country. (E.g., If your home country controls 10 SCs, 10 credits are added to your credit balance.) At the start of the game, countries have the following credit levels: E, F, R & T are given 20 credits, G

22, A & I 24. The difference in starting credits is to even out the relative strengths of the countries.

- 4) Players are permitted to bid more than their credit will cover. However, if a player's successfully bids more credits than they hold, they lose all their reserve and their opponent then gains control of all countries they bid for at half price, rounded up.
- 5) When bids for a country are equal, neither player controls it, and it is treated as if in Anarchy for the year.
- 6) Play is carried out exactly as in regular Diplomacy with each player submitting orders and retreats for the countries which they control. In the winter season, all builds due to neutral countries must be taken where they are possible. The sequence of play during one game-year is Bids, Spring moves and retreats, Autumn moves and retreats, Winter builds and disbandments.
- 7) Mercenary Builds: If the player controlling a Mercenary country fails to order builds which that country is due, the GM will build armies alphabetically in home centres (fleets for England).
- 8) Victory Criterion: The game ends when one player occupies one of their opponents home centres with one of their home country's units in any season. If this happens to both players simultaneously, then the player occupying the most home SCs of his opponent wins, with the exception that occupying 4 Russian home centres counts as no better than owning 3. If a tie remains, the game is won by the player with the largest credit balance (counting credits won during the season in which the home centres were invaded). If a tie still remains, the game continues until the next Fall, when all of the above are reconsidered.
- 9) A game may develop into a stalemate situation once all neutral countries have been eliminated with neither player being able to break through a defensive line to meet the standard victory conditions. In this case the winner is the player with the most supply centres. Note that unlike Diplomacy, a game does not end just because one country reaches 18 Supply centres.

# Intimate Dip: A Series Replay

By Douglas Kent (*Bold Italics*) and Jack McHugh (Normal Font)

I suggested to Doug that he and I play intimate Dip for several reasons. First of all I think it is a great variant. It allows you to play Diplomacy with only two players so you don't have to round up six other people—one will do.

Second, it allows you to explore tactics without the distraction of regular Diplomacy. You don't have to worry that your brilliant move will be screwed by a recalcitrant ally or unexpected enemy interfering.

Third, it was a game that we could easily play via e-mail so that we could capture the results and write up for DW. This would also help as Doug is in Texas and I am in New Jersey so we weren't going to be doing any face-to-face gaming anytime soon.

My thoughts on the game itself are that I prefer a center country as they not only get more points but you are able to come to grips with your opponent's country much faster and with less dependence on the bidding. Consequently my preference list will be for Germany first then Austria, Russia, France, Italy, Turkey and England.

You're probably wondering why Italy is so low on my list since it is both a center country and one with a high number of bid points, only Austria gets the same number, 24, as Italy. I think Italy is a weak country because unlike the other center powers, Germany and Austria, Italy cannot get to very many neutral supply centers and is easily hemmed in by Austria and France which requires you to bid high on those two countries as Italy. Austria only has to be sure to get Italy and Germany only needs France.

*This will be my first experience playing the Intimate Diplomacy variant. I think I remember seeing it played in Stephen Agar's zine Spring Offensive many years ago, but at the time the idea of a two-player variant was not of interest to me. I preferred map variants like Balkan Wars VI, African Diplomacy, Middle East Diplomacy, or 1499: The Italian Wars. I've also really enjoyed variants like Colonia or Youngstown.*

*Recently though, our new variants editor Jack McHugh brought up the idea of running some variant Demo Games in Diplomacy World, and suggested the two of us start things off with a game of Intimate Diplomacy. Aside from Jack's two-sentence description, the only hint to how to properly play this game came from reading the rules themselves, and an article Stephen Agar wrote on strategy (which can be found at [http://www.variantbank.org/articles/id\\_tactics.htm](http://www.variantbank.org/articles/id_tactics.htm)). I see the basic problem is learning how to balance using your mercenary forces to attack your enemy*

*with taking the mercenary nation's dots yourself. There is a lot a lot of necessary planning on where to leave mercenary units; you never know for sure if you'll control the forces the next year. I also realize this game could drag on for quite some time, or it could end very quickly if somebody leaves themselves open. I suppose it has similarities to a fencing match in that regard.*

*One thing I am really blind about here is the best bidding levels to use. If I'd watched even one game before maybe I would know how to handle this aspect, but instead I'm simply going to have to guess. What's a reasonable price to pay for each power? Too bad the bids don't work in eBay fashion, where you only have to pay one point above the other player. I can see myself royally screwing this part of the game up, either bidding far too low and losing a necessary power, or bidding too high and running out of funds quickly.*

*I thought Jack had some experience with this variant, but he tells me he hasn't ever played it either. Great, so you get two watch two novice makes fools of themselves. Still, maybe you can learn from our successes and failures along the way. If nothing else, this looks like a fun, fast variant which could be used as a diversion on those occasions when you have a couple of extra players after you've filled your Diplomacy board.*

*So, first up is the preference list for our home countries. I am trying to decide whether France or Austria might be more fun to play. I'm leaning towards Austria – there are plenty of dots within reach, and plenty of directions to move. I'd prefer to win this game, but I want to have as much fun as possible while learning how to play, and Austria seems like a great choice. Germany is tempting too, but as the variant rules suggest, it is one of the hardest Intimate Dip nations to win with. So I'm going to submit Austria, France, Russia, Germany, Turkey, England, and Italy in that order and see how things go.*

## Preference Lists:

Jack GARFITE – Assigned Germany  
Doug AFRGTEI – Assigned Austria

On with the game....

Spring 1901: Since I have Germany and he has Austria, we are very close together so this will likely be a short game. Therefore I bid very high on Italy (13) and Russia (7) and low on France (2). My reasoning is that if I can control Italy and Russia then I can try and force my A

Mun into Vie right away and end the game quickly.

*Okay, I've got Austria, Jack has Germany. This could be a very short game. If one of us sneaks into the other's home center in the Fall, it is all over. Actually, Jack could lose the game for himself entirely if I manage to control France and Italy: moving to Tyr, Bur, and Boh would allow me to support myself safely into Munich – assuming he isn't smart enough to move Mun – Boh in the Spring. Ooh, if I get Russia I could move to Sil too. But if all this fails, who knows what could happen.*

*Because this looks like a short game, I think I need to bid a bit higher. I'll roll the dice, try to get Italy and France, and then Russia and Turkey too. All my evil little strategies could be cancelled if he bids high too. Let's see...I get 24 credits. I could just bid 6 each for Russia, France, and Italy. That would leave me a few in the bank if this doesn't work. Screw it, let's just go for it. If the game ends in 1901 we can do a second game! Those will be my bids.*

**Bids:**

Doug – Old balance = 24. France 6, Russia 6, Italy 6. Wins France. Spent 6, new balance 18.

Jack – Old Balance = 22. France: 2, Italy: 13, Russia: 7, wins Italy and Russia. Spent 20, new balance 2.

I will move into Tyr and Mun and then support myself into Boh. Once there I can try and take Vie in Spring of 1902.

*Damn, and I though \*I\* might be overbidding. Jack is down to 2 credits. If I can survive this year, all I'll need to do is bid 6 or 7 per nation that I want to control and I should be good to go. Damn, if I had spent one on England I could have set myself up nicely. Oh well. My first task is to survive 1901!*

*I figure Jack will try to grab Tyr, Boh, and Gal in the Spring. Then in the Fall he'll want to take Vie and win. Too bad for him, I think I can stop him regardless. In the meantime, with the French forces, I can march into Bur and Pie, setting up a strike at Mun (which he will have to cover) and Ven. Sure, I might wind up with zero or only one build for the year, but so what? Next year will be mine. Austria needs to play defense in the Spring, and then in the Fall I can take Ser and/or Ven somehow.*

**Spring 1901 Results:**

Austria: A Budapest - Galicia (\*Bounce\*), F Trieste - Venice (\*Fails\*), A Vienna - Tyrolia (\*Bounce\*).

England: F Edinburgh U, A Liverpool U, F London.

France: F Brest - English Channel, A Marseilles –

Piedmont, A Paris - Burgundy.

Germany: A Berlin - Munich (\*Fails\*), F Kiel – Holland, A Munich - Tyrolia (\*Bounce\*).

Italy: F Naples – Apulia, A Rome - Tuscany, A Venice Supports A Munich - Tyrolia (\*Cut\*).

Russia: A Moscow – Ukraine, F Sevastopol - Black Sea, F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Warsaw - Galicia (\*Bounce\*).

Turkey: F Ankara U, A Constantinople U, A Smyrna U.

Fall 1901: Doug blocks me in Tyr—I had forgotten F Tri could bounce with A Ven—I should have moved A Ven with A Mun supporting and moved A Ber-Sil—instead I wanted to hit a home run and ended up with a pop out to the catcher.

This time I will take the sure thing and move A Ven-Tyr with no support and move my armies to Boh and Sil. I'll have Russia support me into Sil as well. I'm also going to bounce over Rum to keep Austria out. I'll probably lose Mun but who cares—I'll stay even by picking up Hol or Bel in the north.

*Well, the turn went about as well as I could have hoped. Jack didn't trick me with a move from Munich to Bohemia. Instead, none of my home centers are in the slightest danger. Phew, that was close. But the future is looking bright. I can grab Serbia for a build and gain four points, position myself in Tyrolia or Bohemia, and use the French A Bur to my advantage as well. Jack can't afford to leave Munich open, so perhaps I'll order Bur to Ruhr or support France into Belgium.*

*With both of us limited to one build, I will have 22 points to Jack's 6 after Winter. Worst-case scenario I can control France, Italy, and Russia automatically next year. Positioned properly, I hope to win next year. Otherwise we are both going to be very low on points to spend!*

*Okay, on to Fall...onward to Tyrolia, Ruhr, and Bohemia!*

**Fall 1901 Results:**

Austria: A Budapest – Serbia, F Trieste - Venice (\*Bounce\*), A Vienna - Bohemia (\*Bounce\*).

England: F Edinburgh U, A Liverpool U, F London U.

France: A Burgundy – Ruhr, F English Channel - Belgium (\*Bounce\*), A Piedmont - Tyrolia (\*Bounce\*).

Germany: A Berlin – Silesia, F Holland - Belgium



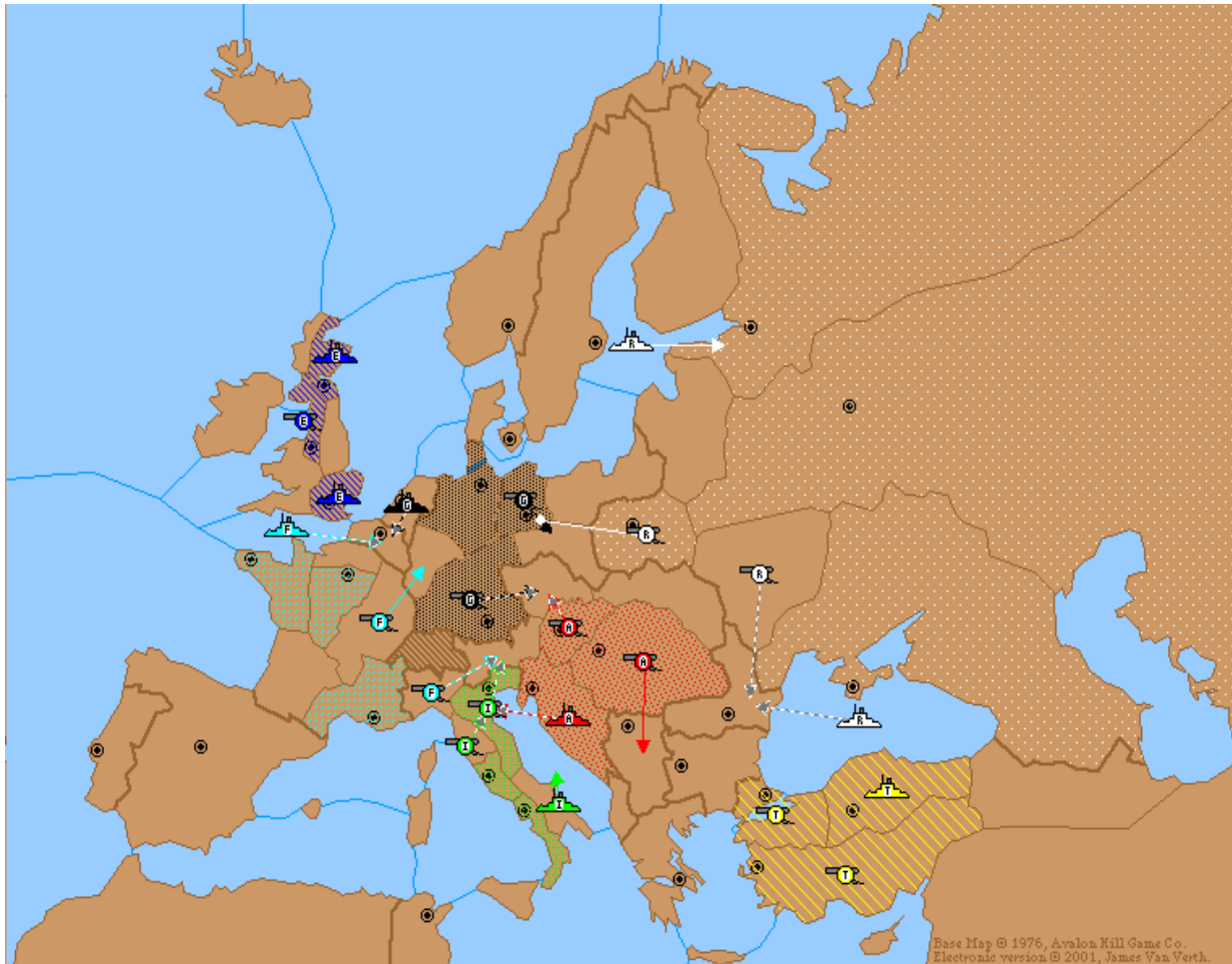
(\*Bounce\*), A Munich - Bohemia (\*Bounce\*).

Italy: F Apulia - Adriatic Sea, A Tuscany - Venice  
(\*Bounce\*), A Venice - Tyrolia (\*Bounce\*).

Russia: F Black Sea - Rumania (\*Bounce\*), F Gulf of

Bothnia - St Petersburg(sc), A Ukraine - Rumania  
(\*Bounce\*), A Warsaw Supports A Berlin - Silesia.

Turkey: F Ankara U, A Constantinople U, A Smyrna U.



Fall 1901 Movements

#### Ownership of supply centers:

Austria: Budapest, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.

England: Edinburgh, Liverpool, London.

France: Brest, Marseilles, Paris.

Germany: Berlin, Holland, Kiel, Munich.

Italy: Naples, Rome, Venice.

Russia: Moscow, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Warsaw.

Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna.

Unowned: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, Spain, Sweden, Tunis.

#### **Austria Builds 1, Germany Builds 1**

Winter 1901: I was not able to move forward as I had hoped against Austria in the South but then I figured I would not get too far. Things are simply too jammed up there for my units to go anywhere.

I am building an A Ber. This should allow me to keep trying to outflank Austria to the East. I don't expect to get Italy again next year but I should be able to get Turkey. I don't think Doug will let me have Italy or Russia again as he will have 22 points to my 6, so I only plan on trying to steal Turkey to harass his Russia and Austria.

*Well that didn't go quite as well as I had hoped. Jack was smart enough to cover Bohemia, so now I do not have an Austrian unit bordering his supply centers. Still, all in all, I think 1901 was a successful year for me. Now I can build my army in Budapest, and look to somehow take Munich in 1902. Let's see...no, I cannot guarantee success. So my 1902 needs to have dual purposes: try and take Munich, while also setting up to gain additional builds ...those builds not only will give me more forces, but also more points!*

### Winter 1901 Results:

Austria: Build A Bud. Gains 4 points, new balance 22.

Germany: Build A Ber Gains 4 points, new balance 6.

I bid 2 points each on France, Russia and Turkey—hoping I get France and Turkey—I don't think Doug will let me have Russia again.

***So now the bids. I will bid 7 for each Russia, France, and Italy. If he wants to take Turkey or England and waste his saved points, he can be my guest!***

Austria bids 7 for Russia, 7 for Italy, 7 for France. Spends 21, leaves 1.

Germany bids 2 for France, 2 for Russia, 2 for Turkey. Only wins Turkey. Spends 2, leaves 4.

Spring 1902: I have no choice but to *Dracht nach Osten* as I only have Turkey as an ally while Doug has Italy, Russia and France. I decide to try and slip over into Boh, Gal and Pru. My goal is to try and set up to take Bud in the fall and hope he can't take Mun.

***Crap, I should have only bid 6 each. But I wanted to make sure I controlled them. No sense taking a chance on losing out. Jack rolled the dice in 1901, and I am going to roll them in 1902.***

***The problem here is Bohemia. If I want to win, I need to get my Army Vienna into Munich in the Fall. But if I support my A Vie into Tyrolia, I cannot guarantee I'll have enough forces to take it.***

***I need to think like Jack. If I were Germany I would try moving to Boh. If I bounce, big deal, I'm set in Munich. But if I make it in I have the chance to attack Vienna. So the best course of action for me is to support myself into Tyrolia with the army in Venice. Meanwhile I can get the Italian fleet out of the way, and move the French army south to take Rome. The sooner Italy is reduced in strength the better – in case I lose Italy as a mercenary next year. If I am going to leave Bohemia open, however, I need to be sure I have an army in Gal. That has to come from Ukraine, as I need my army in Warsaw to cut any support from Silesia in the Fall. Hmmm, if that works I can cut support in both Bohemia AND Silesia, whichever he happens to be in.***

***Berlin is the wild card here. If he plays it smart he'll order that to Kiel, in which case I'm screwed. I'd try sneaking into Kiel to stop him, but it would be bad for me if I made it, because then he could order F Hol-Kie in the Fall and cut my support of a move into Munich. That's the catch here: I can take Munich, but I need to take it with my Austrian army in order***

***to win! I could just focus on taking the center outright without concerning myself with winning in 1902, but I'm now behind on funds, so next year he can easily outbid me on one or two critical powers. No, it has to be my Austrian army.***

***I'm actually tempted to move Bud-Rum to get an extra build, but I'll play it safe and order Bud-Vie. The Turkish units will not be a problem for me this year; the only damage they can cause is a sneak into Sev in the Fall if he moves to Arm, and that's not an issue for me at the moment.***

***Okay, so I think I'm all set. I suddenly don't feel that good about my chances to take Munich.***

### Spring 1902 Results

Austria: A Budapest – Vienna, A Serbia – Greece, F Trieste - Adriatic Sea, A Vienna - Tyrolia.

England: F Edinburgh U, A Liverpool U, F London U.

France: F English Channel – Belgium, A Piedmont – Tuscany, A Ruhr Supports F English Channel - Belgium.

Germany: A Berlin – Prussia, F Holland - Belgium (\*Fails\*), A Munich – Bohemia, A Silesia - Galicia (\*Fails\*).

Italy: F Adriatic Sea - Ionian Sea, A Tuscany – Rome, A Venice Supports A Vienna – Tyrolia.

Russia: F Black Sea - Bulgaria(ec) (\*Bounce\*), F St Petersburg(sc) - Gulf of Bothnia, A Ukraine – Galicia, A Warsaw Supports A Ukraine - Galicia.

Turkey: F Ankara - Black Sea (\*Fails\*), A Constantinople - Bulgaria (\*Bounce\*), A Smyrna - Armenia.

Fall 1902: My plan to slide eastward didn't work....I'll have to try and hold Mun now.

***Unbelievable! If I am reading this properly, Jack's boneheaded move to Prussia may have just won me the game. Why would he do that? I'm sure he had a reason, but I can't see what it was (which is one of my general weaknesses as a Diplomacy player...too often I can only see the map from my perspective). Now let's see. Munich is empty. He has two armies bordering it, I can order Tyr-Mun, support myself in from Ruhr, and by moving Gal-Boh and War-Sil I cut the support of whichever unit he uses to offer support to the other. I think this is it! He can't take Vienna, and can't reach any other dots. Munich here I come!***

### Fall 1902 Results

Austria: F Adriatic Sea – Venice, A Greece – Bulgaria (\*Bounce\*), A Tyrolia – Munich, A Vienna Supports A Galicia – Bohemia.

England: F Edinburgh U, A Liverpool U, F London U.

France: F Belgium – Holland (\*Fails\*), A Ruhr Supports A Tyrolia – Munich, A Tuscany – Rome.

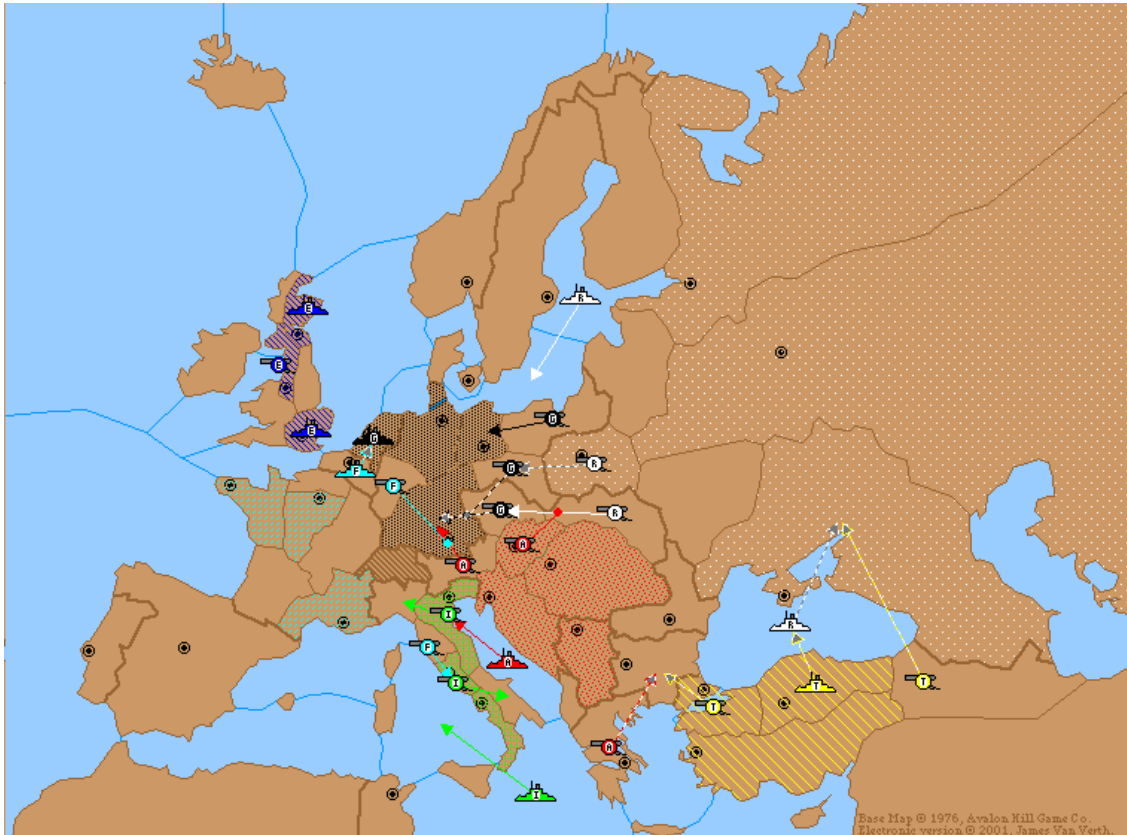
Germany: A Bohemia – Munich (\*Dislodged\*), F Holland Hold, A Prussia – Berlin, A Silesia Supports

A Bohemia – Munich (\*Cut\*).

Italy: F Ionian Sea – Tyrrhenian Sea, A Rome – Apulia, A Venice – Piedmont.

Russia: F Black Sea – Sevastopol (\*Bounce\*), A Galicia – Bohemia., F Gulf of Bothnia – Baltic Sea, A Warsaw – Silesia (\*Fails\*).

Turkey: F Ankara – Black Sea (\*Fails\*), A Armenia – Sevastopol (\*Bounce\*), A Constantinople – Bulgaria (\*Bounce\*).



Fall 1902 Movement

### **Austria wins by taking a German home center (Munich)**

My mistake is not moving Russia AWAY from Austria since I knew I wasn't getting it in 1902. I also should have tried to save a few points so I could bid in 1902, but I was determined not to lose with lots of points, as I had done in the past. Doug did a much better job of bidding and my idiot move to Pru in Fall of 1902 sealed my fate.

Next time I will have to try and balance my bidding, holding back some but not most of my points, so I have some left for later game turns. I also should have taken move sure thing moves in 1901, maybe picked up another supply center when I had the chance. This would have given me more points to bid as well as more units to help defend my country.

*I have no idea whether this was a typical game of Intimate Dip or not. England was never used, Turkey was useless, but the other nations played key roles. Jack rolled the dice in 1901, but if he hadn't moved to Prussia we'd now see momentum swinging his direction in 1903 again. I think neither of us have developed the skill of knowing where to leave the mercenary units...Russia would be a major headache for me if I hadn't won this turn. And proper bidding is still a mystery to me. I need more experience – which means we need to play again!*

*Watch for another Intimate Dip game in an upcoming issue of Diplomacy World! Jack McHugh is the new DW Variant Editor, and Doug Kent is the current DW Lead Editor.*

# LinCon 2008

- allt kommer att bli super -

## The Swedish Open National Diplomacy Championship

**What?** Join the Swedish C-diplo stabbing fest

**Where?** At Linköping University

**When?** May 1-4 2008. 1st round Thursday 21:00; Final ends before Sunday 14:00. 4 rounds in total, one each day.

**Cost?** 150 SEK for foreigners (approx €16)

**Lodging?** For free at the campus (bring a sleeping bag) or at the home of a local player (subject to availability). Hotels or hostels are available in any price range.

**How to get there by train?** From Copenhagen (Denmark) or Malmö (Sweden) take the train bound for Stockholm. Get off in Linköping. Arrangements can be made to pick you up at the station or take local bus 202 to the University or take a taxi.

**How to get there by flight?** Go by RyanAir to Stockholm/Skavsta (NYO). From there take the Airport coach directly to Linköping (takes 90 minutes). Or fly directly to Linköping airport via Amsterdam (KLM) or Copenhagen (SAS/Skyways). Or fly to Copenhagen or Stockholm and take the train from there. Arrangements can be made to pick you up at the airport or take a taxi to the University.

**How to get there by car?** From Malmö follow route E6 60 km north to Helsingborg. From there follow route E4 north towards Stockholm for 360 km. Get off at the first Linköping highway exit and follow the signs towards Linköping University (Linköpings universitet in Swedish)

### **Some useful links**

LinCon games convention: <http://www.lincon.se>

Aiport coaches: <http://www.flygbussarna.se/Default.aspx?lang=EN>

RyanAir: <http://www.ryanair.com>

SJ (THE railroad company): <http://www.sj.se/sj/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=10&l=en>



# A Life in Variants

By Stephen Agar

I struggle to come to terms with the concept that I am now 47 – the sad fact that I have the emotions and urges of a 16 year-old trapped in a very middle-aged body. My involvement with the postal Diplomacy hobby (RIP) has shaped far more of my life than would have seemed possible when I first responded to the flyer in the Diplomacy box back in 1976 (the happy time when my mental and physical age briefly coincided). The first zine I saw was Richard Sharp's *Dolchstoß* and it was completely incomprehensible; but I was hooked.

I published my first Diplomacy zine, *Pigmy*, on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1977, albeit only 2 pages long. I only intended to run one game, therefore a name which indicated a diminutive size seemed appropriate. It was clearly a summer holidays sort of project – schoolboy editors were rather looked down upon by established editors (often university students) for the obvious reasons that they tended to be immature and unreliable. I kept *Pigmy* very short for the first year, as it was dependent on my father doing the photocopying illicitly at work. But I kept going and by the time my zine had reached its teens, I had branched into stencil duplication and was running lots of games, including quite a few variants. I found variant rules quite fascinating and liked to reprint those with interesting new ideas, but it wasn't until issue 19 (November 1978) that I published my first variant – self-effacingly entitled *Unplayable Card Diplomacy*. Although I have always enjoyed drawing maps (another teenage hobby being wargaming and running wargames campaigns), the difficulties of reproducing maps using a stencil duplication process was so off-putting, that a simple rule-change variant seemed a good place to start. I don't think this variant has ever been played at all – it is a bit like *Vain Rats* save that the players hold "cards" they can use with additional powers and the more SCs a Power has, the more cards they get. A simple idea, but clearly it entertained me. The title was a mistake though, as people assumed it really was unplayable, which it wasn't!

The fact that I hadn't published a single original map-change variant did not inhibit me from writing an article on variant design and play balance in *Pigmy* #25 (April 1979) – which even included as illustrations new board designs which were subsequently turned into variants by others. Trying to put some of my theory into practice my next variant, *English Civil War*, was a 2-player variant which was published in *Pigmy* 27 in June 1979 (just as I finished my "A" levels) and was played on a map of England and Wales circa 1642. As a game I think it played fairly well and was unusual in being designed for two players. There is a valid debate as to whether a 2-player Diplomacy variant is not something of a contradiction in terms due to the absence of any

diplomacy, but I think they have their place. In due course this variant even gave rise to zine called *Bats*, published by Michael Heaton, which was just dedicated to running games of *English Civil War*.

*Pigmy* continued until November 1979, by which time real life was just starting to be too interesting to devote half my spare time to running a Diplomacy zine. Hell, I was just 19, had discovered girls and alcohol, and had a gap year to look forward to before I took up my place at Oxford in the Autumn of 1980. Getting to 32 issues wasn't too bad for someone of my tender years.

But if you have the zine itch, you often find that you still need to scratch it. So, in May 1980 I started up a new zine devoted exclusively to Diplomacy variants, called *Variants & Uncles* (a title rather confusingly re-used by Mark and James Nelson in 1987 when they re-launched *V&U* starting at issue 7, so they could continue where I had left off). Issue 1 of *V&U* included a couple of variants under my name. First was my attempt to produce an exhaustive set of *Stab* rules (a game originally devised by Andy Evans), under the name *Universal Stab*.

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/s/stab.htm>

Not a very original idea and more of a book-keeping exercise to document what had gone before, so not one I would claim for myself. *Young Kingdoms* was more interesting, being a fantasy variant set in the world of the Elric of Melniboné novels of Michael Moorcock and with something of the feel of the Third Age variants to it.

There then followed a burst of creativity. *V&U* #2 included *India* – a five-player variant set in 16<sup>th</sup> century India. Issue 3 has an article on variant design which went through the thought process in designing a nine-player historical variant called *Warwick* (published subsequently by John Dodds in *Perspiring Dreams* #4).

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/w/warwick.htm>.

I also managed a new rules-change variant called *Revolution* with the premise that during a regular game, players could also ferment rebellions in each other's territories. *V&U* #4 was published just before I went to Oxford and included a complete redesign of Wayne Hoheisel's *Game of the Clans*, named rather originally, *Game of the Clans II*.

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/g/gotc2.htm>.

*GotC* was an interesting variant, set in 15<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, which had the novel feature of having the



home SC mixed up – hence the early game was about the clans trying to establish themselves as distinct contiguous entities. In the meanwhile England, who was a strong 9<sup>th</sup> player and the only one with a proper navy, invaded Scotland from the south. I liked the basic premise and had GM'd a game of **GotC** postally, but the map was so constructed that an unfortunate clan could lose all its home SCs on the first move and the sheer number of clan SCs in coastal spaces helped the English far too much. So I redesigned the map from scratch to eliminate these issues (and, at the risk of being immodest, I think I made quite a good job of it).

Of course University was a disaster when it came to zine publishing. For me a student lifestyle was far less conducive to zine production than being at school – basically because of girls. **V&U** did limp along for a while. Issue 5 was produced during the 1980 Christmas break and included a revised **English Civil War II**

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/e/ecw.htm>

and a new 5-player historical variant called **Napoleon**. In the final issue of **V&U #6** (April 1981) I published **Mobtown II**,

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/m/mobtown2.htm>

being a complete redesign of **Mobtown** (a variant designed by Nick Morris based on a Gangster-type scenario), completely redesigning the board from scratch in an attempt to improve what appeared to be some very poor balance issues. But I was on my last legs and Dip disappeared from my life, as I concentrated on enjoying being a student, occasional bouts of studying and, most distractingly, the tribulations of my unstable relationship with the first girl I really fell in love with.

And so it really should have ended. But University came and went, girlfriend ditched me, I qualified as a lawyer and found a new love and married her. So by the 90's I was settled and entering my 30s. Enjoying pre-children domestic bliss I decided to revisit the hobby of my youth – not Diplomacy, but ancient wargaming. I put together a couple of Second Punic War armies and started to read wargaming magazines. And then it happened – I saw an advert for a postal Diplomacy magazine in **Wargames Illustrated**, so I wrote off and suddenly rediscovered postal Diplomacy all over again.

To my amazement Pete Birks was still publishing **Greatest Hits**, Richard Sharp's **Dolchstoß** was back, John Marsden was (and still is) publishing **Ode**, while **NMRI**, the zine I had passed my **Pigmy** orphans to in 1979 was also still going strong. The urge to publish a zine again was irresistible. The technological changes meant that zines could now be word processed and scanners meant that hand-drawn maps could be reproduced easily. PCs were falling in price and Windows was had just got to a rather more stable

version 3.1. It was a great time to be producing a zine, although in time the technological changes would ultimately kill off the physical medium.

The first issue of my new zine, **Spring Offensive** (so named after the poem by Wilfred Owen) appeared in June 1992 and featured my first new variant for a decade, a 5-player ancient variant called **Rise of Rome**.

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/r/rise1.htm>.

It was another creative period. **Shell-Shock Diplomacy**, an attempt to introduce the wargaming concept of morale into Diplomacy, appeared in issue 3.

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/s/shellshock.htm>

A revised **Young Kingdoms II** was included in issue 4

[http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/y/young\\_kingdoms2.htm](http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/y/young_kingdoms2.htm)

and I returned to my ancient history theme with **Hoplite Wars** a 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Greek variant in issue 6.

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/h/hoplite.htm>

Interesting to see that the Xmas 1992 issue of **Spring Offensive #7** contained a list of variant waiting lists in UK zines – some 39 variants in 17 different zines. How times have changed!

By issue 9 the playtest of **Rise of Rome** had suggested a few weaknesses, so **Rise of Rome II** was developed as a 7-player game adding both a Barbarian power and the Greek States (basically the Achean League and Aetolia) to the original five of Rome, Carthage, Macedonia, Seleucid Persia and Ptolemaic Egypt.

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/r/rise2.htm>

As far as wacky ideas for a variant are concerned, Jeremy Maiden's **Cannibalism** was always up there with the best of them. The premise is that the players are all survivors on a desert island who have to kill and eat each other to survive and the last one left alive is the winner. Unfortunately, as a game it didn't really work, so issue 11 featured a comprehensive revision, new map etc. called **Cannibalism III**. I ended up running a postal game with no less than 18 players.

It is always easier to revise an old variant than invent a new one. So issue 14 saw **India II** and the beginning of some articles which culminated in **Diplomacy II** in issue 19. **Storm from the East** which appeared in issue 16 was a far more original variant, being based on the Mongol invasion of Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with fun rules to allow the Pope to excommunicate other players. I followed this up in issue 18 with **The Enemy Within**, which was a reinvention of the variant **Revolution** which I had put together in 1980.

Issue 21 of **Spring Offensive** was the culmination of everything I had always wanted to achieve in postal Diplomacy, as it carried the news that **Spring Offensive** had won the 1993 UK Zine Poll. It may seem silly now, but I was really proud to achieve something which put me on a par with the likes of Richard Sharp, Pete Birks, Richard Walkerdine, John Piggott et al.

Continuing my ancient history theme even further, **Spring Offensive** #28 featured **Latin Wars**, which was based on the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC conflicts in the Italian peninsular, which gave rise to the domination of Rome. The six principal powers were supplemented by three minor powers, whose movement was controlled by the votes of the six players. I quite liked this variant, but by this stage **Spring Offensive** was running so many games that postal playtests were out of the question and I don't think the game has ever been played.

Issue 29 of **SpOff** which was published in November 1994 was a very special issue for me, containing as it did news of the birth of my first child Kate, on 31<sup>st</sup> October. To think that she is now a teenager! Perhaps understandably, I didn't seem to have much time for inventing new variants for some time – though it was pleasing to win the 1994 Zine Poll again (jointly with **Take That You Fiend!**).

It wasn't until April 1996 that another new variant appeared, and some thought it in spectacular bad taste. It was **War in Bosnia**,

[http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/w/war\\_in\\_bosnia.htm](http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/w/war_in_bosnia.htm)

a seven player game which portrayed the break-up of Yugoslavia, including rules on UN safe areas, ethnicity, hostage taking etc. Looking back on it I think I was trying to be deliberately provocative to test the limit on what is suitable material for a game? How long after a conflict does it have to be for it to be acceptable to base a game on it? How about an Iraq variant including Turks, Kurds, Sunni, Shi'ite, Iran, Syria and the US/UK Coalition?

The arrival of my son, Freddie, in November 1996 marked the end of **Spring Offensive** and I tried my best to wind the zine up tidily in February 1997 at issue 50, passing all the games on to a new zine called **Carpe Diem**. My intention was to produce the occasional Diplomacy chat zine, without the urgency required of running games. However **Carpe Diem** folded after a few months (the editor, Gihan Bandaranaike having been fired from his job for photocopying the zine at work) and I ended up having to re-launch **Spring Offensive** to save the games.

From then on variants were thin on the ground. Issue 58 (February 1998) featured **Hoplite Wars III**, which was basically a simplification of the earlier design. **Star Trek Diplomacy**

[http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/s/start\\_trek.htm](http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/s/start_trek.htm)

appeared in issue 64 (September 1998), although based on an earlier variant called **Masters of the Vortex**. **Spring Offensive** folded at issue 68 in April 1999. It had had its day.

After **SpOff** I did run a zine called **Armistice Day** for a while, which made it to 22 issues. Although it was primarily an internet zine, a few hard copies were posted. The only new variant in this period was **Xenophobia**

<http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/x/xenophobia.htm>

in issue 11 (February 2002), which was a light-hearted variant based on the idea in **Draughts** that if you can attack, you must do so whether you want to do so or not.

In recent years my interest in Diplomacy has waned as a career running a business division within Royal Mail has taken up more and more time, while divorce has also taken its toll. In retrospect, Richard Sharp's death was probably the last straw for me, as that more than anything else symbolised that the Diplomacy hobby I loved had gone forever. I loved producing and receiving zines – tangible paper zines which came through the letterbox. Adjudication programs running on servers just doesn't do it for me.

And there you have it. And I am sure I have forgotten some of the variants along the way. It's not exactly a legacy to rival someone like the great Fred C. Davis Jr., but a legacy of sorts nonetheless.

### **Stephen Agar's Variantography**

Unplayable Card Diplomacy (1978); English Civil War I (1979) and II (1981); Young Kingdoms I (1980) and II (1992); India I and II (1993); Revolution (1980); Warwick (1980); Game of the Clans II (with Wayne Hoheisel) (1980); Napoleon (1981); Mobtown II (with Nick Morris) (1981); Rise of Rome I (1992) II (1993); Shell-shock Diplomacy (1992); Hoplite Wars I (1992) and III (1998); Cannibalism III (with Jeremy Maiden and Andrew England) (1993); Storm from the East (1993); The Enemy Within (1993); Diplomacy II (with many others) (1993); Latin Wars (1994); War in Bosnia (1996); Star Trek Diplomacy (1998); Xenophobia (2002).

***Stephen Agar was at one time the Lead Editor of Diplomacy World, among all his other achievements. I will always remember my personal excitement when a new issue of Spring Offensive would arrive in my mailbox. Now if I can just find those rules to Cannibalism III, I might offer a game in my own zine! I added links to Stephen's variants when I could find them on-line. I strongly suggest, if you are a fan of well-designed variants, that you take some time and check them out.***

# Two Bad Experiences with Diplomacy

By Jamie McQuinn

In 1995 I was invited to play a *Diplomacy World* demonstration game. You can find it starting with Issue #76. (<http://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw76.pdf>) A DW Demo game usually involves seven experienced Diplomacy players in a standard game, with several observers making comments on each phase. While this game turned into one of my most unpleasant Diplomacy game experiences, it actually started out with one of my proudest moments. As Italy, I opened with a move to Piedmont, then negotiated with Germany and England to screw France out of ANY builds in the first Winter phase! I supported A Spain back to Marseilles (where he hoped for a bounce with Burgundy), and England and Germany kept him out of Belgium. The observers applauded the move. France never recovered.

The game proceeded with moderate success and much of my attention was shifted to my relations with Dave Partridge as Austria and Mark Fassio as Turkey. Dave I knew as a subscriber to my DipZine, Crossing the Rubicon, and he was one of my first subzine Editors, (with *Tinamou*). Mark and I became friends when we met at a World Dip Con in Chapel Hill. Dave and I worked together pounding Mark, but the Diplomacy champ never gave up and kept working on me to arrange a turnaround. Right about this time, Dave, who lives in New Hampshire, was going to be in Columbus, Ohio, for business, and I jumped at the chance to drive out and meet him for dinner. I always enjoy meeting my Dip correspondence friends face-to-face. Unfortunately just before our scheduled meeting, Mark had succeeded in convincing me that my best move was to stab my Austrian ally and take advantage of some openings he had left for me. This created an awkward situation at dinner, as we naturally discussed the game, and made plans for our strategy. It was very uncomfortable lying to him to his face all evening. I felt pretty dirty afterwards. The game dragged on and in yet another example of why I suck at Diplomacy, Mark went on to win the game.

Now I have played plenty of FTF Diplomacy, and am accustomed to lying to someone's face whenever necessary, but that is usually in the heat of the game, and that is all we're doing at the time; playing the game. But this was a bit different. It just felt wrong. I swore after that to never discuss an active game with any player outside of the context of the game (in other words, near the table, or by mail only.) I won't say that this experience contributed to decision to drop out of the Hobby, but it certainly helped convince me that I'm not enough of a cutthroat to succeed in the game.

As described in my article in *Diplomacy World* #100, I have moved on from Diplomacy to the other board games that have become my passion. It had been years

since we had played a game of Diplomacy at Rubicon Games, my annual housecon. However, Sam\*, another of my old Dip buddies, REALLY wanted to get a game going. So, for old time's sake, I told him if he could get six players together to play, I would be the seventh. So he got Greg, another Diplomacy veteran, teenage Sam Jr., Junior's friend Lars, and Brad and Karl; new to the game but willing to give it a try. I suggested, at the beginning, that since four of the seven players were newbies, we ought to treat this as a teaching game.



Unfortunately, Sam's cutthroat nature prevailed. In 1902, Brad mis-ordered his units. It was apparent what Brad was trying to do, but Sam insisted on "all units hold", in spite of the fact that this was only the second game year of Brad's first game ever. As it turns out, Sam needed those units to hold for his stab of Brad to be effective. As the game progressed, Sam and Greg teamed up and took Lars under their wing. They led Lars by the nose into making moves that helped the alliance, but left him wide open for the inevitable stab and destruction by Sam and Greg. All of this was painfully obvious to me, because of my experience, but not necessarily to the others. So, I guess you could say Sam and Greg outsmarted me, if our only purpose that day was to win by taking advantage of the newbies. In exasperation I blurted out my frustration. I asked Sam and Greg, "How could you be the least bit proud of this win?" I can beat the crap out of a 6 year old at checkers, but I don't feel proud. Instead, they probably turned Karl and Brad off of the game forever. Next year, Sam is even less likely to get his seven together for a Dip game, and I certainly will not be playing. A missed opportunity to grow the Hobby.

\*All names changed for this story. "Sam" and "Greg" no doubt have a different interpretation of these events, and don't have a chance to defend themselves here.

**Jamie McQuinn is a great guy and an awesome host. Join his for a future Rubicon Games if you'd like to have a terrific gaming experience...just be willing to have fun, but not at the expense of other people.**

# In-Jokes Found in “Selected News Items from Universe 1966-AA” (which appeared in Diplomacy World #100)

By Rod Walker ©2008

*(Absolutely none of you have asked for explanations of some of the more (or less) arcane references in last issue's article. I suppose you may as well have them anyway, since I already wrote them down.)*

*(How many did you know? Geek-scoring the ones you knew before you read this: 0: Not surprising these days; 1-5: Somebody went to college; 6-10: Somebody went to college a lot; 11-15: Somebody went to college a lot and changed majors 5 times; 16-19: Somebody is as anal-retentive as I am, which is really, really, really unhealthy; 20 & up: TILT!!)*

1. *the Katzenjammer (“Cats’ Howls”) Kids*: A popular comic strip in the papers in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They were also animated under the title “The Captain and the Kids”. The kids were always up to outrageous pranks, although the Captain and his friends were very capable of getting into trouble on their own.

2. *His Holiness, Pope Innocent XVII, Apostolic King of Italy ... [and] ... His Holiness’ daughter, Principessa Lucrezia di Borgia*: In the background of this lies the Borgia triumph in Italy. Cesare Borgia, son of the current Pope, Alexander VI (né Rodrigo Borgia), made himself master of Italy in 1503, and was later crowned as Pope Hyperion in 1512. His sister, Lucrezia, had a reputation as a *femme fatale* whose favorite tool was a good poison. Actually, it was Cesare who went around poisoning people.

3. *Sultan Timbur the Shivered of Turkey*. As in “Shiver me timbers” – the first pirate reference in this piece (see Lady .

4. *the portly frame of Wan Phat Bhut, the Crown Prince of China*. Do I really need to explain this one?

5. *Howlee missionary*: “howlee” was a general Hawaiian term for European interlopers – rather an appropriate one. One fails to understand how the Hawaiians, a generally sensible people, took missionaries seriously.

6. *“In We Cest”*: As in ancient Egypt and other oriental monarchies, brother-sister marriages were used to cement the royal inheritance of each generation of rulers.

7. *Prince Maximillian was asked to comment on the career of his father, Moctezuma IV – who, having already been on the throne for 9 years, has had the longest reign of any Mexican ruler in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*.

*“Well,” replied the Prince, “once they ran out of junior Hapsburgs willing to risk life and limb, ...: Maximillian was the only Hapsburg to reign in Mexico, and he was shot. The family of Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II still survives and its senior member bears a title of Count Montezuma.*

8. *after he started building the new pyramids*: Technically, the “pyramids” of Mexico and the Mayan lands weren’t pyramids, but trapezoidal platforms. These supported temples which were the sites of human sacrifice.

9. *nudge, nudge, wink, wink*: Monty Python fans will recognize this.

10. *gold mesh snood*: A snood is a sort of hair net but with a wider mesh

11. *PDQ Bach’s masterpiece, “The Abduction of Figaro”, was interrupted by an announcement of the sad tidings. This was followed by a performance of the same composer’s Missa Hilarious. The audience spontaneously stood during the Ho-ho-hosanna*: I’m not making this up, you know. The opera may be obtained on DVD. The Missa is on a Vanguard CD. PDQ Bach composed the latter shortly after his conversion to Catholicism. The score, once thought lost, was discovered in the Vatican file regarding PDQ’s excommunicaton.

12. *Replacing Prime Minister Josef Niemand-Schläft will be Giuseppe Nessun-Dorma. In place of the unpopular foreign minister, Graf Rückhol Siegreiches, is Her Imperial Majesty’s dearest ... um, friend, Count Ritorno Vincitore*: Both in German and in Italian, the Prime Minister’s name means “Nobody sleeps”; *Nessun dorma* is an aria in Puccini’s *Turandot*. The Foreign Ministers’ names both mean “Return victorious” – in this case slightly altered from Aida’s big outcry in the Verdi opera of the same name.

13. *His ex-Holiness had been disguised as a large frog wearing goggles and driving gloves*: The reference here is to Mr. Toad in “Wind in the Willows”

14. *Hedda Gablber revealed in her Gazetto di Roma gossip column...: A dual pun on 1930s-40s gossip columnist Hedda Hopper and Ibsen’s play Hedda Gabler*.

15. *Her Holiness took the name of Joan II, in memory of the recently sainted Pope Joan (9<sup>th</sup> Century or*



thereabouts). "After all," the Principessa had explained earlier, "She was getting ready to give virgin birth...". "Pope Joan" was the name given to a putative female Pope during the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> Century. During much of that period the Papacy was under the control of a Roman Senatorial family, often dominated by a woman. Many of the Popes of that time bore the name of John, one of which was what we would now call a "screaming queen". These circumstances gave rise to the probable fable of a female Pope. John is said to have given birth, wearing her tiara, during an Paschal procession – which gives a whole new meaning to "Easter bonnet" and "Easter parade", yes yes? She was in consequence torn to pieces by the crowd. There is a film (on DVD) on this subject: Pope Joan (or The Devil's Imposter). It doesn't cover the historical circumstances surrounding the Pope Joan story.

It was certainly like Joan II to canonize the first Joan and to take her name. Joan II died at the age of 110 in 1991, while holding a ... um, private audience ... for 3 Olympic wrestlers and the entire Brazilian soccer team.

15a. yes yes? Courtesy of Niles Standish of Crank Yankers (a fine gentleman and in fact a close boozing buddy of Joan II).

16. *amico di mezzanotte*: "midnight friend". That was the time of his daily reservation.

17. *the Imperial Zulu ambassador, Chief Rumpa-Mpumpa XVI*: from the delightful British expression, *rumpy-pumpy*, a term defined by the Church of England as "of obscure meaning".

18. *LUCY*: *Spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, eggs, bacon, and spam.*  
*VIKINGS (singing)*: *Spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, spam, ....* More Monty Python.

19. *LUCY*: *Oh, some fava beans and a nice chiaanti.* A nice bit of Hannibal Lecter. "Chiaanti" is spelled that way to show Lecter's flat "a" pronunciation. This is a key sentence in the film, in which Lecter reveals his own lower-class origins (giving the lie to his derision of Clarice Starling).

***You all need to send letters to me praising Rod's contributions, so he'll keep doing them...otherwise you'll just get more of my foolishness!***

## Selected Upcoming Conventions

Find Conventions All Over the World at <http://diplom.org/Face/cons/index.php>

2008 Whipping – Saturday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – San Francisco, California – contact Edi Birsan by email at edibirsan "of" astound.net

San Marino Con 2008 – Friday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – San Marino (no, that's in Europe, not Texas) – [http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page\\_id=5](http://www.asgs.sm/smc/viewpage.php?page_id=5)

National Block Party – Friday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – New Albany, Indiana (a suburb of Louisville, Kentucky), <http://ohiovalleygamers.org/nationalblockparty.html>

Kubla Con – Friday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 to Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – San Francisco, California, <http://www.kublacon.com>

DixieCon 22 – Friday May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 to Sunday May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – Hickory, N. Carolina <http://www.dixiecon.com>

Origins Game Fair – Wednesday June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio <http://www.originsgamefair.com/2008>

Trophee de la Brie – Saturday June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – Champs sur Marne, France – <http://www.18centres.com>

Utrecht Diplomacy Tournament – Saturday July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – Utrecht, Netherlands – <http://udt.diplom.nl>

DipCon – Thursday July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – University of Maine Orono – websterdtpl "of" gmail.com

ManorCon XXVI – Friday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 – Stamford Hall, University of Leicester, United Kingdom – <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

HuskyCon VI – Friday August 1st, 2008 to Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 – Long Island, New York – <http://www.huskycon.com>



# 2008 Grand Prix Watch

By Jim O'Kelley

With the first three legs of the 2008 North American Diplomacy Federation Grand Prix completed, Graham Woodring (of the Long Island Woodrings) and Brian Shelden of D.C. are the early leaders. The two placed on the top boards at both Seattle's WACCon in January and PrezCon, held in Charlottesville, Va., in February.

Woodring, who won Carnage for the second straight year last year, is a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania. Shelden is currently training for "iron man" competitions, which likely will cut into his tournament travel.

"Graham is a better player than me anyway," Shelden says, "so I don't think I could overtake him."

If you detect sarcasm in that response, you're probably right. Confidence is one thing most tournament players have in spades.

"He may be employing sarcasm," notes Woodring, "but it is in fact true that I am a better player than he is."

See?

Shelden expects to play at Tempest in D.C. in the Fall and may try to attend DixieCon in Chapel Hill, N.C., over Memorial Day Weekend. If he goes to Dixie, he'll run into Woodring again, as well as Maryland's Andy Bartalone, who's currently in fourth. Bartalone won PrezCon, which was the launching pad for last year's Grand Prix champion Doug Moore, also of Maryland, the only two-time winner. A fixture at many tournaments, Bartalone is in the Grand Prix mix every year. He won it all in 2002.



Jeff Dwornicki of Portland started the Grand Prix in 1999 to promote tournament travel and reward strong play. Long-time hobbyist Buz Eddy of Seattle took over administration and helped build it up. Today, the Grand Prix is one of the few institutions in the largely decentralized face-to-face hobby that is widely accepted and respected.

"Winning the Grand Prix means something," says Nathan Barnes of Seattle, a host of the prestigious WACCon, which annually kicks off the Grand Prix. The 2005 and 2006 champions both started their runs by winning WAC. "Everyone is actually almost universally interested in it."

By everyone, Barnes mostly means the relatively small group of grizzled gunslingers who criss-cross the country each year to play tournament Diplomacy against regional foes, while battling their fellow travelers and friendly rivals for the coveted Grand Prix title. In addition to bragging rights, the title conveys an individual plaque and a place of honor on the permanent Grand Prix plaque, which is currently housed in Eddy's Seattle bunker.



This year, there are 18 stops on the Grand Prix circuit, although each event must qualify by fielding at least five boards of standard, seven-player Diplomacy over multiple rounds. TempleCon, held in Providence, R.I., in February, failed to qualify. Last year, 14 events requested inclusion, but two failed to qualify.

For scoring, an event is worth 10 times the total number of boards in the three largest rounds. WACCon, for example, was worth 90 points; PrezCon, 60. The tournament champion receives all the points. Each subsequent position scores 90 percent of the previous position, down to a minimum of 5 points just for showing up. (For the annual North American Diplomacy Championship, a.k.a. DipCon, the minimum score is 10 points.)

For example, Andrew Neumann, a graduate student at the University of West Virginia and the 2005 Grand Prix champion, scored 90 Grand Prix points for winning this year's WAC. That puts him in third place in the current standings, although players must participate in two Grand Prix events to be eligible to win. Jon Saul of Denver, meanwhile, finished second at WAC, scoring 81 points, 90 percent of Neumann's total. The third-place finisher, Shelden, scored 73 points.

The next leg of the race is the CODCon Open, which will be held April 12-13 in the Chicago area. Thomas Haver of Columbus, Ohio, will make his first appearance of the year there. Last year, Haver won both Gen Con in Indianapolis and Origins in Columbus. At CODCon, he'll run into traveling Chicago players Thom Comstock, Greg Duenow, Kevin O'Kelly and Jeremiah Peterson, all of whom have signed on for the showdown at Dixie. Traveler Mike French of St. Louis also will be on hand to defend his CODCon title.

The following weekend, West Coast action resumes with the Bay Area Diplomacy Association's Whipping tournament in San Francisco. Four Pacific Northwest players have committed, including Barnes, two-time Grand Prix runner-up Eric Mead, and the 2000 champion, Matt Shields. Dave Maletsky of D.C., another seasoned traveler and perennial contender, also will attend. Local players will include travelers Edi Birsan and Siobhan Granvold.

Then it's on to Louisville for the National Block Party, May 16 to 18. Haver is expected to play there, although the event failed to qualify last year.

Memorial Day Weekend will feature another Bay Area event in KublaCon, as well as the duel at Dixie. The Bay Area's Adam Silverman will get to play at KublaCon after

running Whipping. The first half of the Grand Prix race will wrap up in Columbus with Origins, June 25 to 29.

These next six events may help bring the race into focus, but there are nine events scheduled for the second half of the year. One of them is the North American Diplomacy Championship, which is expected to have the largest attendance in years.

With so many new events on the circuit and tournament travel gaining popularity, the 2008 Grand Prix won't be decided any time soon.

*You can find the most current Grand Prix standings at the excellent European Diplomacy Association website maintained by Laurent Joly:*

[http://eurodip.nuxit.net/php/rencontre/affiche\\_circuit.php?id\\_circuit=82&lang=Ang](http://eurodip.nuxit.net/php/rencontre/affiche_circuit.php?id_circuit=82&lang=Ang)

*For more information about the rules, eligibility and upcoming events, check out the new North American Diplomacy Federation Grand Prix site at [www.diplom.org/~seattle/grandprix](http://www.diplom.org/~seattle/grandprix).*

***Jim O'Kelley is the new Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor.***

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## To Bounce or Not to Bounce – That's Not a Question...

By Lars Topholm

### Playing Germany? Go to Sweden...

At first look, it seems a matter of the taste of Der Kaiser whether or not to grant Sweden to Russia in Fall 1901. Bouncing may create a conflict with Russia, and the potential of winning the dot by doing the bounce is next to zero – and even if you do win the dot, that will most likely be a dot won in Sweden instead of Denmark. And hey, if you don't bounce, you don't even need to move to Denmark in the Spring! Instead you can focus on the lowlands, and maybe even build three! Thus – as supported by the data – the question of bouncing is not a question of increasing the number of builds in 1901. This is probably why, statistically, two out of three players do not make the bounce – they go for the same number of builds, maybe even an extra by focusing on the lowlands AND get peace with Russia. Good deal, right?

No. Failing to bounce Russia in Sweden in Fall 1901 is more often than not a big mistake, as the statistics clearly demonstrate that if Germany bounces Russia in Sweden, the German chances of success in the game are dramatically increased. So the good news is: you'll never have to think about it again, just bounce him!

Playing Germany, by ordering to Sweden in Fall 1901 you will reduce the risk of an early elimination (elimination in the first five years) by 28%. Furthermore, in two out of three games you will end up with more armies in 1905 if you do the bounce, than if you don't. So – unless you like to play against the odds, whack the Tsar in Sweden.

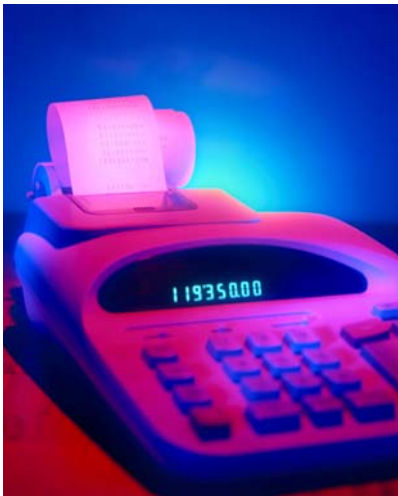
### Data

This article is based on observations made in 123 games which have finished on the Dip2000-site (<http://www.dip2000.com>). The games selected were selected randomly, according to the first letter in the game name, and games were disregarded if they involved a German or Russian anarchy within the first five years, or if either Germany or Russia NMR'ed in Fall 1901. Games were not disregarded if another country went into anarchy, as anarchies, unfortunately, become a reality in many games, and so these results hopefully reflect what happens in the average game of Diplomacy.

The 123 games monitored were divided into two groups: those in which Germany did not order to Sweden in Fall 1901 (the group of games called "no bounce"), and

those in which Germany ordered to Sweden in Fall 1901 (the group of games called “bounce” – even in the rare cases it wasn’t actually a bounce, i.e. if Russia ordered F(GoB) – BAL, which happened in two cases).

Subsequently, the number of centers controlled was registered for the first five years – five years based on the assumption that the decision of bouncing or not bouncing in Swe affects primarily the early phases and the mid-game. Based on these games, the average number of centers under either German or Russian control was calculated for each of the years 1901-1905, and the number of early eliminations (eliminations in 1905 or earlier) was registered.



### **Results**

The results are as follows (outcome expressed as the average number of centers controlled by Germany, calculated as a simple average by dividing the cumulative number of dots for a country in any given year with the number of games in the group).

#### **Average number of Germany-controlled supply centers**

The no-bounce games (81 games):

1901: 4.80

1902: 5.27

1903: 5.09

1904: 4.72

1905: 4.59

Early eliminations: 16 (corresponding to a 19.8% probability of elimination in 1905 or earlier)

The bounce games:

1901: 4.62

1902: 5.33

1903: 5.93

1904: 6.19

1905: 5.98

Early eliminations: 6 (corresponding to a 14.3% probability of elimination in 1905 or earlier)

These results show statistically that by bouncing Russia in Sweden, Germany increases his average dot-count by

30%. The average number of dots in 1905 in the no-bounce games was 4.59 – by bouncing, an 1905 number of dots of 5 or higher was achieved in 28 out of 42 games. This means that statistically, there is a 66.7% probability that you will do better by bouncing than if you don't.

Expressed the other way around, the average number of German centres in 1905 was 5.98 in those games where Russia was bounced – in the no-bounce games, Germany only did better than this (by holding 6 or more centres) in 22 out of 81 cases, corresponding to just 38.2%.

### **The Russian side of the coin**

From Russia's perspective, the same statistics show that the question of Sweden is by far the most important element in 1901. Sure, BLA is also important, but Russia has a say regarding BLA, whereas the Russian player is entirely in the hands of Germany when it comes to Sweden; I have not calculated statistics on all other strategically important spots, but judged from the observations around the Sweden bounce I would argue that the single most important diplomatic activity in the early phases of the game, taking into account all seven powers, is Russia trying to secure access to Sweden in 1901. Any Russian player who disregards this makes – in my view – a huge error.

Look at the results: The risk of an early Russian elimination increases a stunning 533% if there is a bounce in Sweden (13 eliminations in 42 bounce games compared to just 4 eliminations in 82 no-bounce games). It would actually be fair to say that Russia is close to certain not to be eliminated before 1905 if there is no bounce in Sweden.



Furthermore, the average number of Russian controlled centres by 1905 was 6.83 in the no-bounce games, compared to just 3.71 in the bounce games. This corresponds to an increase in the number of dots of 84% if there is no bounce. Only in 26% of the bounce games did Russia reach 7 dots or more by 1905. Put the other way around, only in 32% of the no-bounce games did Russia do worse than the 3.71 average from the bounce games.

### Conclusions

To me it is clear: If there is not an exceptionally good reason to do otherwise - not just a good reason, but an exceptionally good one - order Den-Swe in Fall 1901. It significantly increases the likelihood that you are still around after 1905, and statistically, you will have a higher number of dots from 1903 onwards.

I have not analyzed the reasons for this outcome – other people are way better than I for that. A few general observations, though, could be that by not bothering about the Sweden bounce in 1901, Germany potentially has a better chance to build three in 1901. This, in my personal view, is a disadvantage to Germany as Germany very quickly becomes a target. Another possibility is that a weak Russia is simply generally good for Germany; if the effect of a bounce has a visible effect on Germany's average score in the first five years, the effect on Russia's score is dramatic...so dramatic that I would not hesitate to call the "Sweden question" the most essential question for Russia in the whole game.

Another subject to discuss would be when NOT to bounce in Sweden, if ever. Well, if England behaves in a very hostile manner, clearly Germany would want to have a Russian friend from the early days. However, any skilled English player will be able to conceal anti-German plans until after Spring 1901, when Germany has to make the decision about Sweden. I mean, how often can you take a look at the English Spring 1901 orders and conclude an attack on Germany is building up?

So...as the headline says, to bounce or not to bounce is not really the question. Just bounce the Tsar every time you get to play Germany, and in most cases you will be better off.

***Lars Topholm is a new contributor to Diplomacy World, and a force to be reckoned with, both in Dip2000 (<http://www.dip2000.com>) and in the Weird Club...be careful, as I expect him to expand his Diplomacy empire at a moment's notice!***



# WDC 2008

Lockenhaus Castle / Austria

August 14th – 17th 2008

**!Deadline approaching! – Please register soon!**



[www.wdc2008.org/en](http://www.wdc2008.org/en)





# Tales from the Tournament Trail

By Jim O'Kelley

WACCon 2008

The Washington Athletic Club

Seattle, Washington

January 25 to 27, 2008

I hadn't planned on attending WACCon 2008. Although I had a blast the previous two years, organizers Mark Zoffel and Nathan Barnes were scaling down the event to focus on building up the local hobby, so I figured I'd sit this one out. However, about two weeks before the tournament, I found a great flight on Southwest. So, at about 6 p.m. on January 25, I was once again sitting in Haggerty's, a pub on the second floor of the opulent Washington Athletic Club in downtown Seattle, schmoozing with other players and waiting for the tournament to start.

And that's when Buz Eddy walked in.

Buz is the dean of hobby service. From his bunker in Seattle, Buz maintains the North American Diplomacy Federation's player rating system, runs the Grand Prix competition, and conducts the annual NADF All-Star voting. His tireless efforts lend an air of legitimacy to our pastime.

Now, last year, I was elected an All Star. For that, I was due a handsome blue jacket, which I expected to receive at Weasel Moot 2 in Chicago later this year. But upon learning that I was coming to WAC, Buz quickly procured my jacket, and that was the reason for his appearance.



He walked into the bar, called everyone to attention, briefly explained the meaning of the All-Star designation, and tossed the jacket to me. Then he turned on his heel and walked out, not to return. I didn't even get a chance to thank him.

The first round started a short time later, and that first round was as good as it got for me at WACCon 2008. In a crisp four-hour game, my Austria shared the board top with Andy "Buffalo" Bartalone's England. We each finished with nine centers.

Afterward, I went out with Siobhan Granvold of the Bay Area, my Italian ally who finished with eight centers; Andrew Neuman, who's now in Grad School at the University of West Virginia and who went on to win the tournament for the second time; and John Saul of Denver, who had soloed in his first-round game.

We got back to the Presidential Suite at about 3 a.m.

Generally, you can make tournament travel as cheap or as expensive as you want. I used to get my own room when I traveled. Now, I prefer to have a roommate. This year at WAC, I had 10 roommates.

We were staying in the Presidential Suite, a spacious apartment with two adjoining bedrooms. One of the rooms was reserved for Buffalo and Saul, both severe snorers. The other belonged to Siobhan, the only woman in the suite. The rest of us had to jockey for spots on a large L-shaped couch or a Murphy bed, or fight for plum floor space.

By 3 a.m., all the best spots were taken. When I left earlier, there had been a stack of blankets for us. Now, they were all gone. So, I stole a pillow from Siobhan's room and headed for a far corner of the suite, where I curled up on the floor using my winter coat as a blanket.

The floor was like granite, only harder. And the room was freezing. I might as well have been sleeping outside.

I tossed and turned, trying to get comfortable, and even briefly considered relocating to the snoring room and squeezing myself between Buffalo and Saul. At one point, probably about 4:30 a.m., I heard someone, I think Jerry Fest, cry out in pain: "Dude, you broke my finger!" Nathan had stepped on him while walking to the bathroom.

I chuckled at that, but deep down, I was certain I was going to die. I was cold, and sore, and uncomfortable. I couldn't sleep ...

I bolted upright. Sudden inspiration! I grabbed my bag, savagely dug through it, ripped out the All-Star jacket, and covered my head with it.

With the newfound warmth came sleep, and as I faded, I thought to myself, "Thank God I'm a good Diplomacy player."

***Jim O'Kelley is the Diplomacy World Club and Tournament Editor***

# Designer's Notes - 1499: The Italian Wars

By David McCrumb

I have always loved Diplomacy variants. While I enjoyed Diplomacy, I quickly grew bored with the limited map and pieces. A variant requires a new analysis regarding strengths and weaknesses of each position, basically relearning Diplomacy again.

My decision to design a variant was not due to any desire to create but rather to play. The Saturday night variant game at DixieCon was a staple beginning their first year. I always looked forward to that night. One year we had trouble filling the variant selected for play. I cannot remember if we played the game without a full compliment or we drafted folks who didn't really participate but I remember that it was very unbalanced, not due to the quality of the variant but the number/interest of the players.

I thought for several months about how we could get better participation. The primary problem is that many people do not want to play variants; many of those that want to play the variant during the evening round might be caught in a long game of Diplomacy and miss the start time. [While this might cut into participating in a second round, unlimited game times are one my favorite features of DixieCon.] There needed to be a solution. The obvious idea was to use fewer than seven players.

I began researching variants that required fewer participants. Comments by players were primarily negative. It appeared that very few were both balanced and challenging yet used the same basic rule structure of Diplomacy. I tested several that looked promising but quickly agreed with my consultants; after analysis every game broke down into an obvious alliance, a free-for-all with little or no diplomacy, or a never ending game. In addition, experience had shown that four or less players effectively eliminated diplomacy, a function of the game that I felt was necessary to retain. I was not looking for a strategy game.

What was needed was a new game. The design criteria was: fewer than seven players, fewer centers, no new units nor new characteristics for the standard army and fleet units, no obvious or required alliances, and no stalemate line. A tough set of standards.

I had begun extensive reading that autumn about the development of the modern Italian state. The early period when the individual city-states were negotiating and fighting for control of larger areas of the countryside intrigued me. As I was reading an article one day it suddenly dawned on me that there were four major powers fighting for territory in Italy at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century: Venice, Naples, the Papal Crown and Spain. In addition Genoa and France were major players but

French interference kept a block on Genoese expansion who stimulatingly thwarted all French incursions. By using a map from this time period I was able to develop a six-player game.

It quickly became apparent that this would not work. As in real life, France and Genoa were doomed to slug it out until the game was over. Also, a six-player game tends to form into 3-on-3 slugfest.

The obvious fault was France-Genoa. With apologies to the Genoese I decided to drop them and retain the French. I felt this placed more of a threat on the Spanish holdings while making it more difficult for France to move newly formed units into the immediate battle. So with one fell swoop I had reduced the number of players to what I considered the minimal amount necessary, combined two historical powers so that the new power was viable, and threatened what I had seen as the most powerful force.

I next began placing supply centers. The location of the Home centers was set based on historical facts. Fortunately they also made sense from a gaming standpoint. The only question was the placement of the home centers for the 'French' power. I ultimately decided not to include Genoa because I felt that placed their building capability to close to the center of the board.

My next step was to evaluate supply centers. I had 30 on the board with a desire to reduce that to 20. I first eliminated several centers in the north since they were only available to France and Venice. Easily defended, ownership ensured not only that these powers could not then be eliminated but that they would then form an obvious 2-way alliance. I also eliminated some supply centers in the south because I felt that Naples would be playing 'cover my centers' as they tried to fend off Spain, Venice and the Papacy. After playing with the balance I eventually decided I could not get down to 20 centers. I settled on 24 centers that fortuitously equaled the 29% reduction in the number of players, an unplanned occurrence but a nice outcome.

I next selected home starting units. Being a huge fan of fleets, I assigned one fleet to each country. An obvious problem was that the Spanish army could be stuck on an island for the entire game. I refused to allow the A/F convoy unit as I have always despised that rule. (I have used it successfully in other variants as I am not above taking advantage of existing rules.) Spain needed two fleets. In addition, if the Papacy had fleet Ancona it meant automatic war with Venice. To avoid this disastrous diplomacy killer they needed to begin with two armies.

A second factor in selecting starting centers involved a desire to increase the importance of diplomacy. Without it, only Venice is guaranteed two builds during the first year. Those first moves are critical to everyone because each power is so close that every move can impact the following season.

The final change I made was to combine several non-supply center provinces in the north. This was to make an attack between France and Venice more feasible and to reduce the warning time. I had removed supply centers from the original map but not changed the province layout. By combining several provinces, both powers must now maintain vigilance and balance their fleet/army strength even when allied.

My final review at that point indicated I had met most of my goals. I had a smaller game that required fewer players. I had balanced it such that there were no obvious alliances that would work in all situations. I was not able to find a stalemate line. And I felt that diplomacy would not only be as important but it might even be more important due to the closeness of each power.

I talked to David Hood and he agreed to offer 1499 as the variant at DixieCon that year. I thought we could easily get a board and perform a real play test. We actually filled four boards. The play was very interesting.

I had fully expected the Papacy to be a sacrificial lamb in this game. Starting from the middle of the board they are adjacent to everyone else. They have the largest concentration of nearby centers which I expected them to initially accumulate but subsequently draw competition rather than serve as a long-term base of support. I was shocked when the first game to end was a solo win the Papacy. Since David Hood achieved that victory, one of the best diplomats I have ever faced, I assigned that to his skills rather than any real strength in the power. Subsequent games that night and during future play has shown that the Papacy is much stronger than I had anticipated.

I had expected Venice to be the strongest power in the game. The unanticipated strength of the Papacy reduced the effectiveness of Venice. It also became apparent that my goal of increasing the interaction between France and Venice had worked. Venice had to worry about everyone early except for Spain. In addition, the paucity of centers on the eastern coast made an alliance between Venice and the Papacy a possibility.

The lack of a stalemate line was one of the points that had been stressed during opening rules review. Of course, this challenged some players. After elimination, several got together and eventually found a stalemate line. To my relief it would take all 12 units of one side perfectly arranged for it to be effective. In a game situation this would be very unlikely.

The gaming that night seemed to go well. Everyone that played seemed to enjoy the game. It went quickly because there were fewer people with which to negotiate and fewer units and centers to discuss. Due to the lower victory condition yet an ability to pick up one or two centers per game year not only did the games end sooner they tended to play out to a solo victory. Players did not get tired of a slugfest and vote for a draw due to fatigue.

I am aware of approximately 40 f-t-f games and 20 by mail. Every power has won and every power has been eliminated. If any power is dominate, it is the Papacy. The weakest is either Spain or Naples due to the fact that they are normally fighting over the same initial centers. Diplomacy between them is very similar as that between Italy and Austria in the standard game.

Overall I am very pleased with my design. After all these years the only changes I would consider are some minor border adjustments to make it easier to attack the Papacy from the north and some sea border adjustments to make a Spanish-Napoli alliance more workable.

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## 1499: The Italian Wars

by David McCrumb

Standard Diplomacy Rules apply (version used is determined by the GM) with the following exceptions:

The game begins in 1499.

The Great Powers and their starting positions are:

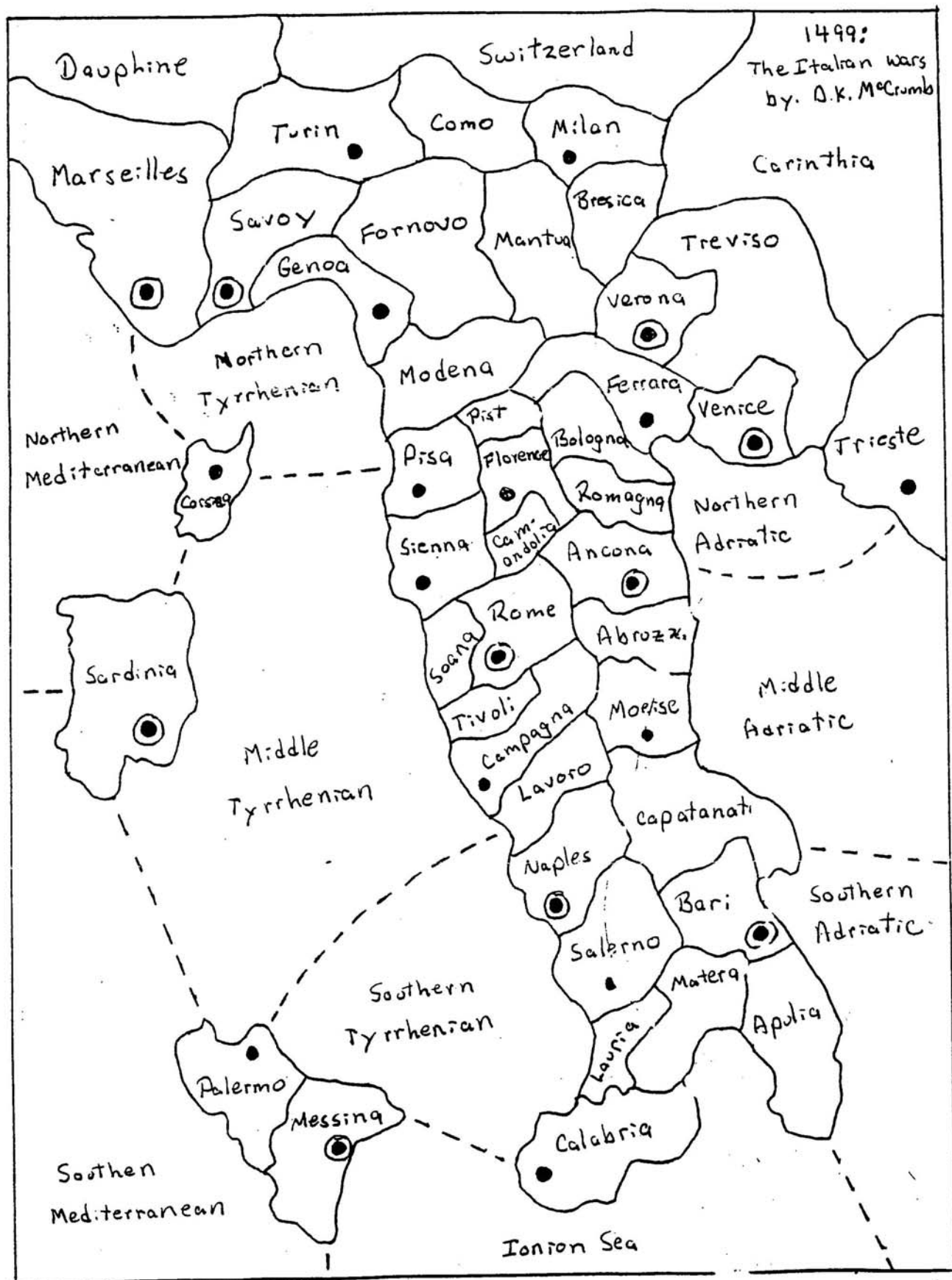
FRANCE: Fleet Marseilles, Army Savoy  
SPAIN: Fleet Sardinia, Fleet Messina  
NAPLES: Fleet Naples, Army Bari  
PAPACY: Army Ancona, Army Rome  
VENICE: Fleet Venice, Army Verona

Victory is achieved by control of 13 of the 24 supply centers after a Fall turn.

If owned, the following Powers may build fleets in these centers:

France – Ferrara  
Venice – Genoa  
Papacy – Sienna

Venice is considered a coastal province for movement purposes.





# The Adventures of Fatman and Frottage

## The Case of Lady Windbottom's Fan

©2008 Rod Walker

### *Fit the First: A Long-Awaited Party*

The Winter of 1900-1901 was a particularly festive one in Vienna, even for a Vienna Winter. There was, on 31 December 1900, a lavish celebration of the advent of the new Century. Emperor Friedrich the Surprisingly Healthy made a lavish speech – lavish in the sense that he droned on for a couple of hours. The increasingly dispirited and dwindling crowds were particularly depressed by the fact that they would probably get another one at His Imperial Majesty's wedding the next day in Salzburg, where the ceremony would be conducted by the even more boring – but also tantalizingly loopy – Archbishop Rosenkrantz Guildenstern X (not his number but his rating). Those who hadn't bought rail tickets to the spiritual capital of Austria were seriously considering putting the purchase off for a further couple of days.

However, after the huge and delectable post-address buffet they were running to the Almost-Emperor Rudolf Memorial Railway Station to snap up the few remaining tickets. Many hired private coaches in the hope of arriving early and finding a good vantage point from which to view the Principessa Borgia as she bent over to kiss the top of Friedrich's head – or his lips, which meant she would have to bend even lower, even if the Emperor stood tippy-toes. Beyond all the bending, the Principessa was well known for her daring *décolletage* – which had caused her to be regarded as an *agent provocateur* in a dozen uptight nations, particularly the United States, Ethiopia, Nejd, the Wahhabi (or Sa'udi) empire, Yemen, Oman, Turkey, and Ireland.

The Winter Ball season was also at its height. All of the balls sponsored by the imperial family and the nobility had already enjoyed glorious successes. Next would come the balls sponsored by various trade and professional groups. The first of these, on the night of 3 January, was the Pimps', Prostitutes', Pickpockets', and Pigeon Pluckers' Ball – always very well attended, partly owing to unfounded but persistent rumors that certain services were free after midnight. (The reader must not imagine that people went in the hope of having their pockets picked or their pigeons plucked.) A more well-founded rumor circulated to the effect that Herr Strauss had written 2 glamorous dances for the occasion, The Pavement Pounders' Polka and the Exact Change Quadrille – as well as a trifle for another guild, the Fondly Fraternal Order of Trap Drivers, Beaver Trappers, Parent Trappers, Trap Door Installers,

Trappist Monks, and von Trapps: the Trap the Light Fantastic Tango.

The night of the PPP&PP Ball was cold, crisp, and clear. Traffic to the affair was so heavy that the Ringstrasse became a huge (and ill-tempered) traffic jam.

"Boy, I'm glad we decided to walk," observed multi-multi-multi-millionaire American tourist Puce Waynecloud to his young ward (nudge, nudge, wink, wink), Tick Crayfish. The pair were of course secretly the hugely successful crime-fighters, Fatman and Frottage.

"Holy friction," said Tick, "this is great. It's a wonderful opportunity to rub elbows and shoulders and cheeks and butts and thighs and ankles and toes and thumbs and ..."

"Curb your enthusiasm, Tick."

"... and ... all that ... with the people of Vienna."

"Not that difficult to do anyway." Puce muttered, "judging from the number of complaints I get."

"Mmmm," opined Tick. "Skin."

"Especially after we've caught anyone who looks like a suspect."

"Holy false arrest," said Tick, smiling disturbingly. "Mmmmm. Latex."

"Well, you're on notice. Squirring into the nearest crowd of onlookers is out!"

"Holy paparazzi, Puce, that's easy for you to say. With you in it by yourself an elevator's already crowded."

By this time they had reached the site of the PPP&PP Ball, the Schekegrabber Synagogue and Dance Hall. One of the parking valets tried to park Puce, but gave up when he couldn't find a driver's seat on top – a situation complicated by Tick's assurances that there was a seat and offers to give him a thigh up.

"Waaall," admitted the valet, chewing his cud, "I did wonder where the horses was. Thought maybe you was one o' them horseless thingies. Go on in, gennamen."

The Ballroom was glamorously decorated with strings of historic morals violation citations from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries – garlands of pigeon feathers – collages of salacious wanted posters from France, Italy, Spain, and south Buda-Pesth (below the railroad tracks) – and, of course, red lanterns. Great crowds had already gathered, especially on the strength of the rumor that the Principessa Borgia (a longtime member of the PPP&PP Guild) would be in attendance. Rumors that the ballroom would be covered with gold foil turned out to be unfounded, since of course the members of the Guild felt no guilt (*Titusssssssss ...*) (*That was a Groan, son*).

Puce and Tick headed for the table of punch bowls – as well as a booth manned by a rather weatherworn boxer. There was a sign reading “Punch, 1 Krona”. A line of masochists were waiting enthusiastically. Nearby they encountered the famous Ali Baba, Turkish *Chargé d’Affaires* and owner of the international law firm, Forty Guys Will Sue You.

“I’m frankly apprehensive,” Ali remarked to the pair after greeting them with a friendly fedayin forehead rub. Tick was asking for another when Ali launched into his misgivings. “The Imperial fleet at Trieste is making motions and I’m sure they’re going to head directly for the Ionian this Spring. And the Russians are making unfriendly noises as well. The Sultan is just sick about it. Attacking us isn’t really the best idea. If the infidels take Istanbul and kick us out of Europe, who’s going to be your sick man then, I’d like to know?”

Puce thought, “Does Europe really need a guy who’s sick all the time?” and was about to say it when a booming voice behind him called out, “Why shiver me timbers and batten me hatches, it’s Waynecloud, Puce Waynecloud! And Tick Crayfish his young ward (wink, wink, nudge, nudge). Well met, me hearties!!”

Puce whirled around. Bearing down on him was a vision – well, a nightmare actually – of 6 ½ feet of tight black ballgown, vast female muscle, graying locks piled a foot or so on her head, and ruby-encrusted peg leg. The voice was certainly loud and deep enough to shiver any timber that happened to be around. The gown was ... effectively ... set off by the white Jolly Roger embroidered on the bosom.

“Ye gods! It’s Pirate Jenny!!” And so it was. Jenny had once been the terror of any sea she happened to be in. Her ship, the Wurt Keill, sported 8 sails and 50 cannon. It led the siege and burning of Cuxhaven when her crew rescued Jenny from captivity and servitude with a pail and mop in a local inn. Rumor has it that some of the town’s inhabitants survived. However, years and the march of science had not been kind to the great ship. Steam engines and ironclads filled the seas, and no sailing ship, regardless how many cannons it had, could stand up to them. So Jenny abandoned piracy and

joined the Imperial Opera, playing roles written for voices well below the contralto range – such as things by Wagner and Mahler ... and of course by PDQ Bach.

“Holy cross and skullbones,” exclaimed Tick.

After introductions and some catching up, Jenny continued, “And now I’m retired ... and very nicely married.” At that point, as if on cue, a male voice called out, “What ho!” Jenny looked to her left and exclaimed, “Well, furl me topgallant! It’s me Old Man.”

Sure enough, stalking toward them was Malvolio Mugwump, Lord Windbottom, Viscount of Notsobadchestershire, and England’s Lord of the Admiralty. His 5-foot-5-inch frame, clad in elaborate neo-Georgian style with lots of lace, was also supported by a peg leg, this one in ivory and silver. “Well, haul me keel” he exclaimed. “Ausländer! From the old colonies, I’ll warrant.”

“From Gotham City,” Puce confirmed – pronouncing it “Goddamn”, as he was wont. Puce Waynecloud had oft expressed the desire to see Gotham under 3 feet of lava, 6 feet of ash, 15 feet of debris, and 30 feet of water.

Mugwump turned to his wife. “Jenny, me dearie, no luck with the fan.”

Jenny seemed close to tears. “Topple me mizzenmast! Ohhh ... I’ll never get it back, curse whoever took it; curse them to Davy Jones. I’ll never ... never ... (sob!).”

Puce turned to Tick who had been rubbing shoulders with a particularly willing waitress. His dramatic whisper was unaccountably heard by no one save his young ward (nudge, nudge, wink, wink). “It’s valuable, obviously. This looks like a job ... (and here his voice lowered an octave for dramatic effect) ... for Fatman and Frottage! Hence away! On with the latex!”

Tick smirked. “Holy body contact!”

**Next:** *Fit the Second, “The One Fan”.*

**ANYONE WHO WISHES TO IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN IN-JOKES IN THIS CHAPTER MAY SEND HIS I.D.s TO ME AT [catu11us “of” pacbell.net](mailto:catu11us@pacbell.net). THERE WILL PROBABLY BE A SUITABLY DWEEBY PRIZE (i.e., of no cash value) FOR HIM OR HER OR IT WHO CORRECTLY IDENTIFIES & EXPLAINS THE LARGEST NUMBER OF THEM. WELL, AT LEAST YOU GET YOUR NAME IN PRINT AND THEREFORE A PALPABLE HIT ON GOOGLE.**

**Rod Walker, a long-time Diplomacy hobbyist, is determined to bring the arts of press-writing and Diplomacy fiction back to the masses.**

# Modern Diplomacy: Part One

By Jack McHugh

Modern Diplomacy, or Modern Dip as it usually referred to, is an updated version of Diplomacy set in 1995. It is a map variant, meaning the rules are the same and only the map and the layout of the countries has been changed. In this case the designer, Vincent Mous-Harboesgaard, decided that any country in Europe with 30 million inhabitants or more would be a three center great power, those with 60 million or more would be 4 center great powers and those with 200 million or more were given 5.

In game terms this means that there are three 3-center powers: Egypt, Poland and Spain. There are six 4-center powers: Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey and Ukraine, and one 5-center power: Russia. The game, as you can see from the powers mentioned, includes North Africa and the Middle East, but to keep the map playable, Mous says he made a design decision to leave out Iran (as a great power). This kept the map from extending into Asia. Iran is in the game but merely as a neutral supply center.

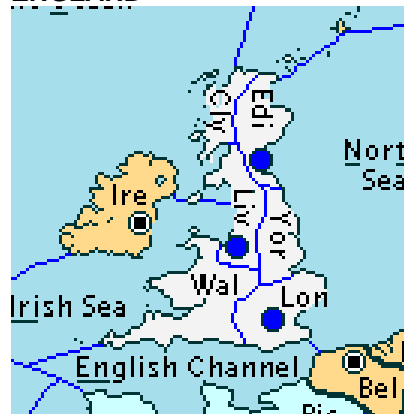
The map is much larger in terms of provinces and supply centers than the regular Diplomacy map. In Modern Dip there many more spaces and supply centers. There are 38 home supply centers and 26 neutral centers for a total of 64, and you need 33 centers to win. In regular Dip there are only 36 supply centers, and only seven great powers with 22 home supply centers.

The main difference to the board is Austria is gone, but the Balkans are flanked by Poland and the Ukraine. Russia is pushed further back into the northwest corner of the map, and Egypt flanks Turkey to the south. In addition there are several new provinces, as well as new neutral ones. There is also a new power in Western Europe: Spain.

The Balkans, for example, now contain the neutral supply centers of Croatia, Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary, in addition to the more traditional centers of Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece. In Africa and the Middle East, there are several new countries, provinces and sea zones. In addition to the 3 home supply centers for Egypt, there are neutral supply centers in Morocco and Libya to go with traditional Tunis (now renamed Tunisia). The Near East (or Middle East) features supply centers in Israel, Iran, Georgia and Saudi Arabia.

I'd like to go over each of the ten powers and discuss the new board as it affects them. I'll be splitting the powers into two groups, one in this article and one in Part II next issue.

## ENGLAND



England remains a corner power, but with a couple of new sea zones in the western part of the board: White Sea, Arctic Ocean, Bay of Biscay and the South Atlantic Ocean. The addition of Iceland adds another center to the mix and makes England more viable against Germany

and France. England also starts out with all fleets, include an extra fleet in Gibraltar.

The addition of Spain as a Great Power also helps England by distracting the French, although the English often end up in conflict with the Spanish too. This is because Spain now blocks England's access to the Mediterranean, the same way France often does in regular Diplomacy. Spain also limits the mobility of the F Gibraltar as the English player has to ask himself if he wants to risk losing the dot by moving the fleet.

England's prospects are better than in Regular Dip but she is still a constrained power. Russia has picked up a new center in the north, Murmansk, which replaces St Petersburg (north coast) for fleet builds. While the Russians can still annoy England, Russia is also distracted by her new neighbors—Poland and Ukraine.

## FRANCE



France has lost Iberia. Portugal is still there but will now go to Spain, and Spain is now three centers and a new power. On the other hand, France gets two new centers on its border—Switzerland and Mon. In addition, old friends Belgium and Holland are still there

France tends to do worse in Modern Dip. I believe this is due to adding Spain as a power, as well as the fact that Italy and Germany do much better because of all of the new dots. These new dots are where Austria used to sit. Now there are four neutral dots where Austria once was

on the board, and there are still the same dots in the Balkans as before (Ser, Rum, Bul, and Gre are all still supply centers in Modern Dip.)

## SPAIN



In Modern Dip, Spain starts out with a fleet in Bar (basically the same as Spa/nc in Regular Dip) and two armies (in Mad and Bar). Spain also has an English F Gibraltar sitting right next to Bar.

Spain acts as a counterweight to both France and

England. Spain can also block Italy's advance, but Spain is another country I have rarely seen do well in Modern. She ends up being bogged down in war with England or France which keeps Spain from heading toward the Balkans where all the dots are.

The biggest problem with Spain is the lack of any opening neutral centers that easily fall into Spain's hands. Yes, she gets Portugal, but that's about it—Mor can be taken by the English F Gibraltar and Spain's fleet has to pass through TWO sea zones to get to it (MAO and SAO.)

## ITALY



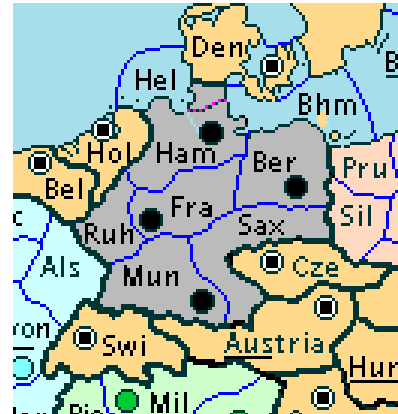
Italy gets another supply center and army in Milan, and sits among the biggest concentration of supply centers on the board. She has four supply centers directly boarding her home country—three next to Mil and Ven—and there is another center in Africa (Libya). As I

stated above, there are still four neutral dots in the Balkans and one less major power nearby with Austria gone, although there is another power, the Ukraine, farther away.

I have yet to see a Modern game where Italy did not do well. Italy is usually up to 8-10 centers by the end of 1902. This is my biggest gripe about the game. I think Italy is too strong—I would take out the centers for Croatia and Serbia to correct that problem. These two

centers are too close to Italy and too far from anyone else, so they generally fall to Italy within the first three seasons of the game.

## GERMANY



Germany has it much harder in Modern Dip due to the addition of Poland to Germany's east, which more than makes up for the loss of Austria. Austria was rarely, if ever, an early threat to Germany and often not even a late threat. This is not the case with Poland. Poland and Germany butt heads early and often.

What's worse for Germany is Poland has neutral centers to the east that will make her bigger and stronger. The Ukraine, to Poland's south, should act as a counterweight to Poland in theory...but rarely does. Russia/Ukraine/Turkey typically start off the game going at it over the neutral centers in the Balkans and the Caucasian Mountain areas. This distracts those three from bothering too much with Poland.

Since England and Italy are both bulked up through more neutrals, they are more likely to be a concern for Germany. Although Germany does start out with another home supply center (Frankfurt), that does not compensate Germany enough for a much worse position in Modern Dip.

## CONCLUSION

Italy has the best chance, followed by England with France, Spain and Germany being trailing in that order. But I don't want to leave you with the impression that only Italy and England can do well. Quite the contrary... the game is quite fluid.

Based on my own experience of playing about half a dozen games of Modern (mostly gunboat), the game could use a nice face lift, as the design is over 10 years old and showing its age.

Next issue I will discuss the five eastern powers: Egypt, Poland, Russia, Turkey, and the Ukraine.

**Jack McHugh is the new DW Variant Editor. Please send me "letters to the editor" telling us how great Jack is, so he will feel motivated to continue submitting articles like this one. He has a tendency to get very depressed once the Phillies start losing.**



# Modern Diplomacy II (qp07) Rules and Map

by Vincent Mous

Modern Diplomacy is intended to be diplomacy with an updated map, circa 1994, taking place in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Any country with more than 30 million inhabitants was made a power. Those with more than 60 million inhabitants were given 4 home centers, while Russia (with 200 million plus) was given 5. Iran would have qualified as a 4 supply center power, but this would have made it necessary to extend the map into Asia, so it was not done.

Historically, we have to consider that the European Community and all international alliances and organizations such as NATO and the UN were broken down. Perhaps the United States suffered a major cataclysm, or simply decided to ignore the outside world - but in any case, it will not intervene in Europe.

## **Powers:**

3 center powers: Egypt (E), Poland (P), Spain (S)

4 center powers: Britain (B), France (F), Germany (G), Italy (I), Turkey (T), Ukraine (U)

5 center powers: Russia (R)

## **Starting positions (Spring 1994):**

Britain (B) : F EDI, F GIB, F LIV, F LON

Egypt (E) : F ALE, A ASW, F CAI

France (F) : F BOR, A LYO, A MAR, A PAR

Germany (G) : F BER, A FRA, F HAM, A MUN

Italy (I) : A MIL, F NAP, A ROM, F VEN

Poland (P) : F GDA, A KRA, A WAR

Russia (R) : A GOR, A MOS, A MUR, F ROS, F STP

Spain (S) : F BAR, A MAD, A SEV

Turkey (T) : A ADA, F ANK, A IST, F IZM

Ukraine (U) : A KHA, A KIE, A ODE, F SEV

## **Winning Conditions:**

38 home centers + 26 neutral = 64 total centers

33 needed to win

## **Notes on Geography:**

Cairo, Hamburg and Istanbul behave as Kiel and Constantinople did in the original game: they have no coasts but fleets can pass through them to bodies of water of both sides.

There is another canal linking Rostov and Volga, thus permitting access to the Caspian Sea to ships. Rostov is situated along the Don River which empties into the Black Sea, while the Volga empties into the Caspian Sea. In the real world there is a canal at Volgograd linking the two rivers, somewhere in the southern Volga region on the map. This is the only way to get ships into and out of the Caspian Sea.

Iran is the only territory with multiple coasts in the game - the south coast touches the Arabian Sea and the

Other than this, borders and neutral supply centers were distributed to even out the game. Monaco was made a neutral SC (it has lots of money) even though it's size does not warrant it, and Gibraltar was made a British home SC, but to give Britain a port in the Mediterranean, and to give Spain more than one neighbor).

Also, there was originally, a new type of unit - planes - added to the game. Planes could go over water and land but could not capture a supply center. Therefore, if France managed to move a plane over London, England would still own it, but not be able to build there. The game was play-tested both with and without planes, and it was felt that both were valid games. For reasons of simplicity in moving it to the judge, what is discussed below is the game without planes.

Persian Gulf, while the north coast touches the Caspian Sea.

Where possible, the full name of a territory was put on the map. Abbreviations for territories are the first 3 letters of the territory, except for:

barents sea: bare, bars (conflict with barcelona)  
bornholm sea: born, bors (conflict with bordeaux)  
eastern black sea: ebs  
eastern mediterranean: emed  
eastern sahara: esah  
gulf of bothnia  
gulf of lyon: gol  
libyan sea: lbn  
north atlantic ocean: nao  
north sea: nth  
norwegian sea: nwg  
seville: sve (conflict with sevastopol)  
western black sea: wbs  
western mediterranean: wmed  
western sahara: wsah



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# The Diplomacy World Interview: Conrad von Metzke

(Diplomacy Szine Publisher, Raconteur, and All-Around Fun Guy)

By Jim Burgess – DW Interview Editor

**BIOGRAPHY:** So first I'm supposed to introduce myself? Okay: I was born 2-2-44. I am not yet dead. That about cover it, Jim?

A wee more? Okay – birthplace San Francisco. Full name, the ponderous Conrad Friesner von Metzke. Looks a lot more pompous than it really is. The Conrad is for my dad's favorite author, Joseph Conrad. Friesner was my mom's maiden name. And as for the 'von,' the badge of the old German aristocracy, there's a good chance it's fake, or at best a "personal grant" to one of my ancestors that wasn't supposed to carry forward into the next generations, but once the family got to the New World and nobody knew the rules, it stayed.

I have lived on the coast of California all my life, in San Diego since 1957. A youngster of brilliance and great promise, I eschewed appropriate contributions to the societal good and instead became a 60s dropout, albeit without any help from drugs; and thus I've never finished college (the only person in my family, beginning with my parents, who can make that statement) and spent my working life employed by the US Postal Service, retiring after 36 years in 2004. (If it makes anybody feel better, the inventor of Diplomacy, Allan Calhamer, has a nearly identical working background, though I think he maybe actually got a piece of paper from his college?) Married since 1975 (previous marriage was forgettable and, as the legal papers say, "without issue," which is rubbish because we had lots of issues which is why we dumped each other). Spouse, the former Jean Karlan, whose surname was "de-Semitized" from Kaplan at the insistence of her mother who was an anti-Semite but who was marrying a Brooklyn Jew, which pretty well tells you the kind of loony life Jean had. Two children, Ross (1979), now a journalist and editor for GayWired online media in Hollywood; and Eric (1981), now an enrollment counselor for the University of Phoenix, which in case you don't know is one of those national high-priced chains like National U. or ITT Tech., so he works here, not Phoenix, which is also insane.... couldn't they at least call it "U. of Phoenix and Colonies" or something? Eric is engaged to marry Sara Spafford, teacher of music and daughter of John Spafford, the director of entertainment for Sea World.

Things I'd rather have done with my life, but didn't: Teach history. Teach English lit. Write. Sing (classical). Conduct an orchestra. Become an oceanographer. Own and operate a used bookshop, or a tropical fish shop. Explore Mexico with a view to contributing something to the anthropological studies of the native people. Visit various really exotic places (first on my list, Portland, Oregon; second, Budapest; third, Brunei

Darussalaam; fourth, oh, I dunno, how about the island of Tristan da Cunha?). (This is only very slightly silly.)

Games hobby: I first discovered Diplomacy in a classified ad in fall 1961, my first year of college. I had no money, but my new college friend Rod Walker did, and he bought it, and we recruited various friends and played extensively until May 62 when Rod graduated. The very next question-and-answer below will discuss what ensued at this time.

I discovered the postal hobby in January 1965 by way of receiving in the mail a sample copy of the first issue of WILD 'N WOOLY, a szine just starting in Los Angeles. Via the editor, who went by two names (Steve Cartier or Dan Brannan – his actual name was Charles Brannan!), I learned about the fledgling hobby in existence since the summer of 1963 when Dr. John Boardman started it all in Brooklyn. ("A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" - and man!, what a tree it became!) I started my own first szine in the spring of 65 and, with occasional gaps or lapses owing to life-style interruptions and/or burn-out and/or periodic laziness and/or existential catharsis, kept going to some degree or other until about 2005, when I finally finished off the last Dip game I was running and gave it up altogether. Instead, I now run games of Railway Rivals, which I started doing in 86 and have been at ever since WITHOUT any lapses! Wow! I didn't realize until this minute that I had it in me to be so reliable!

It all started downhill in kindergarten....

**Interviewer Jim-Bob Burgess (J):** *Of course it did, so has it happened to us all, kindergarten is the apex. Thanks, Conrad, I'm not sure if you've ever been through one of these interviews before.*

**Interviewee Conrad von Metzke (C):** NOPE, nobody was ever dumb enough to ask!

**J:** *You of course do have that famous one where you interviewed yourself! ((see the Diplomacy World archives -- <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/brink.htm>)) I'm going to ask you about all sorts of other things, I'm uninterested in revisiting that part of "postal Diplomacy on the brink" unless you bring it up. I think one must always begin at the beginning, I know you've told this story numerous times, but no one started up Diplomacy szines in more decades than you have, beginning of course 46 years ago, one year before John Boardman started up Graustark, the generally acknowledged first Diplomacy szine. The event? Conrad von Metzke attempts to start up the first game of postal Diplomacy.*



*So how, why, and why didn't it work? Did you have any idea that the general idea itself would have such legs?*

**C:** I don't recall giving any thought whatsoever to the "trappings," if you will, of what we now know as the postal Dip hobby. Actually, I don't recall ever thinking in terms of a "hobby" at all. My point, my only point, was to try to figure out a way to keep playing Diplomacy after several of our mainstay local players graduated from college and went to grad school or the military. (The notable name here is Rod Walker, who got his BA in '62 and went into the Air Force.) And the first postal game, and first postal szine (Rod would later dub it *MONGO* in an attempt to tweak John Boardman's nose, but there was in fact no name – there wasn't even a szine, just carbon-copy letters), were organized at my suggestion because I couldn't figure out where to find seven people to play the game after four of our regulars left town. If I remember correctly I sent out two letters: One to assign countries and tell people to send me their first orders (I was also playing, and we had sort of agreed to rotate being GM – though we didn't know that term at all, we said something like "person whose turn it is to do the orders" and I as the stay-behind had taken the first turn), and a second one to find out why I got so little response to the first letter. Getting no better response to that second one, I gave it up and went out and found local players anyway for in-person play, and forgot all about postal.

But when I said before that we didn't devise any "trappings," I meant almost literally everything there was about the characteristics of a Dip szine. No szine at all, just typed letters with carbon copies. No subscriptions or game fees. No game numbers. No separate GM, just one of the players taking the turn in rotation. No chat, no letter column, no nothing. Now, knowing perfectly well that I can never resist using fifty words for something when ten would have done – just parse this sentence! – there's no way to tell what might have developed had enough people bothered to respond to my first entreaty. But that didn't happen, so I left the stage open to John Boardman, who was older and wiser and understood how these things might be made to work, and had lots more friends anyway – and even he had trouble at first, given that 1963A was a five-player game for lack of ability to find two more.

So – the general idea having any legs? Hell, I didn't even know I'd had a general idea!

**J:** *And of course, who has more "legs" than you? You are generally credited with being 6' 7". I know I'm about 6' 1" or so and it seems from meeting you that you are something like six inches taller than me. Isn't being tall something you never quite get used to?*

**C:** Oh, I had to get used to it in some senses, or else the doorways and chandeliers would have taken me out long ago. I've never entirely gotten used to the price I

have to pay for clothes and especially shoes (size 17), but even that's getting better as the population grows a bit – speaking of which, I'm in reverse mode now, shrinking and officially 6'6" at this writing.



Two asides on this: One, it was REALLY easy to get used to the great height factor 45 years ago, when we still had a military draft and a burgeoning invasion of Vietnam to worry about; at 6'7" officially measured by the army at that time, I was over the draft height limit and thus exempt. So no Viet slaughtering for me, and I got to burn my draft card with impunity.

And two: The one thing I really have NOT gotten used to, and this comes up more frequently now than before, is running into people who are actually taller! I've gone back to college these days just for fun, and there's a man working in the school cafeteria who is 7'3". I see him twice a week, and he isn't just startling, he's terrifying to someone with my experiences. I think it's also meaningful that a generation ago every third person I'd meet would ask how tall I was; now, very seldom. I'm no longer the standout I used to be. (Added weight helps a bit, I'm also no longer the broomstick-thin type.)

**J:** *Ah, of course. Well, anyway, you got it started again for real with the first Costaguana, in April 1965. Since you always loved your "April Fool's" issues, was that first issue by any chance an April 1, 1965 spoof? If not, was any of it what we would call at least "lame attempts at humor"?*

**C:** Virtually everything I ever did in this hobby might just be a "lame attempt at humor," emphasis on lame, but as for April Fool's that was just coincidence in this case. I dated it the day I typed it, April 1. By the time it was mailed, several days later, the April Fool bit would have been obsolete anyway. Years later when I happened to see an old copy of *COSTAGUANA* Number One, and noticed the date, I remember wondering if that had any particular meaning at the time; I couldn't recall that it did,

a mere few years after the fact, so I guess not.

**J:** OK, well, tell us about your all-time favorite April Fool's Day Dip szine, was it one of your own or someone else's?

**C:** Let's do this one later. The answer is, my own fake of Michel Feron's *MOESHOESHOE*, and based on an advance screening of your questions, I happen to know we'll be discussing that down the page anyway! So – we'll get back to this one.

(But I guess somewhere I had better mention my biggest "goof" – an April Fool's issue of my own szine in which I announced that I had lung cancer. I never ever expected the reaction. John Fleming in New York offered me free room and board while I consulted at Sloan-Kettering. Fred Davis spent god-knows-how-much on long distance phone calls – those suckers weren't cheap in the 60s – expressing his concern and sympathy and so on, and after I told him the truth I have to say he covered up what has to have been a good deal of indignation very well. Bob Ward, whose parents lived here but who was actually working in Sacramento (600 miles), dropped everything, got on a plane and showed up at my front door the day after he got my issue – what could he do to help? ("Well, I was just in town to visit at home anyway...." Yeah, sure; turned out his parents were off on a trip!) And on it went like that, except for good ol' Calvin White of Toronto, who was the only one to catch on; his letter in reply said the equivalent of "Yeah, right, so next tell us about how you created the universe!" For just one moment I was really offended that he hadn't cared enough to fall for it! That went away p.d.q. though, with my admiration that he saw through me so unerringly.)

I still have a slight feeling of guilt about such an extreme and insensitive "joke." It wasn't funny, it was just plain mean.

**J:** Yeah, we've all made mistakes like that at times. Another thing about those early Diplomacy szines was the stories about the strange reproduction techniques. In the 1960's, roughly what was your largest circulation size?

**C:** Honestly I don't remember, but I suspect about 150 for *COSTAGUANA*, only I think that was more like early 70s than 60s. In terms of quantity publishing, it was the period 72-74 that I did the most, to take my mind off being between marriages. To be specific about the 60s, I don't recall any one szine ever going above 100 in those days – and come to that, it wasn't really until the 70s that I got into the multiple-szine madness anyway. I know this is very vague, but you didn't really expect my memory to be that good; I mean, get real, I'm officially a Senior Citizen now!

**J:** Uh, huh, that 150 level is the largest my The

Abyssinian Prince has ever gotten. I didn't really expect precise numbers, but how did you produce those issues?

**C:** Oh yeah, you mean about the "strange reproduction techniques" of your last question. Well. They hadn't invented photocopy yet, nobody had yet made a fortune on Xerox stock, and generally there were two repro methods available: Mimeograph and ditto. The former involved typing on a filmy master, thus cutting letter-shaped holes, and then running the master through a machine that forced ink through those holes. The latter, which is mostly what I used, required typing on a master that caused letter-shaped blobs of purple ink to adhere to the reverse side of the master sheet, and then running the master through a machine that used a combination of pressure on the paper, and a petroleum-based fluid, to cause some of the purple goop to transfer onto the page. A mimeo was good for a vast number of copies, whereas a ditto lasted on a really good day maybe 200 or so. (Although I got really good, and frequently managed 500 at times – once I made it to 900. But these were at college for the political science dept., not for my hobby.) I used ditto copying mostly because it was cheaper: At first because I had a friend who could run off the copies at the school where he worked, later because I had a very old typewriter that no longer made clean letter-shaped holes in a mimeo stencil, whereas it was okay for ditto, so I bought a ditto machine at Sears for about \$100 and didn't need a new typer to boot. This was a manual machine; I had to stand there and hand-crank the paper feed, one page at a time. Really good way to get a sore shoulder! If I'd had enough money to spare I could have bought an electric machine, but I was a bottom feeder in those days so, for me, the ol' crank. Eventually I owned three of those old Sears machines, just so I could always keep going even if one of the buggers had to go in for service. And "service" on those machines may have been the strangest part of all: The usual reason for service was that one of the rubber parts on the paper feed was starting to wear, so when that happened I'd take the whole machine back to Sears and they in turn would send it to the factory in Oklahoma. Four or five weeks later I'd get a call, and go get my repaired machine – but they always just sent me a NEW machine instead of my old one, and they never once charged me a penny! This happened five or six times and always with the same result – replacement machine entirely, no cost. Weird!

There was also a brief time, this in my very early days (65-66), when I made use of a really archaic technology even for then, called hectograph. If memory serves I did seven issues of *COSTAGUANA*, numbers 4-10, on that crazy device. (My first three issues were mimeo and were printed on the machine at the local Democratic Party headquarters where I was volunteering a lot.) A hecto is a wooden tray, into which can be put a very tacky gelatin-like substance the size of an open sheet of paper. The gelatin is slightly dampened and then a

carbon ditto master, typed as for a ditto machine only mirror-image, is laid out and allowed to sit for a short time. The gelatin absorbs the purple ink, and after a while the master is removed and then one sheet of paper at a time is pressed against the gelatin to make copies. Each process was only good for maybe 15 or so of each page; then the gelatin had to be dampened thoroughly so any remaining ink would sink to the bottom, and then dried out, and then re-moistened to allow use of a new master. At this rate it took about 24 hours per page; I had a double tray, so for a six page issue I required three days. And the gelatin was only good for about four re-uses, then had to be replaced.

**J:** Wow, I've never even heard of that method!

**C:** A fourth process existed in those days, called the 'dry copier,' that had something to do with the transfer of ink via heat lamps; the copies all came out printed in red and I'm told you could get a nasty burn from the hot rollers (just as you can today if you stick your hand onto the wires of a warmed-up photocopier, which I've done many times clearing a jam). I never used a dry copier, the only GM who did as far as I know was Crazy Charlie Reinsel of *BIG BROTHER* infamy.

Finally, there was once when I actually prepared an issue of *COSTAGUANA* by hand; that is, I hand-wrote the ditto master. Just one: It was an "interim issue" telling the players that I'd have to skip one issue owing to a hand injury in an auto crash. Bob Ward – see above, the guy who flew in from Sacramento because I played a cancer joke – printed it for me at my house, on my machine; because, as the notice said, I couldn't. It was my left hand, I'm left-handed; I'm a two-finger typist; do you have any idea how slow it is to type anything with exactly one finger on the wrong hand? And the machine was a two-handed job, one for the crank, one to help feed the paper to avoid skips. (Years later, Richard Walkerdine did an entire issue of *MAD POLICY* – complete with game reports – by handwriting on mimeo stencils, owing to a broken finger he suffered in Tunisia. I always felt upstaged by that; the audacity of the man, actually troubling to write out order reports when I hadn't bothered! Humph! Years later I got back at him, though he never knew it: I literally hand-wrote several pages of an issue, just 5 copies because that's all I needed at the time, but each individually written out. This was in '87 for one of my little railroad-game szines, *PEDRO IN THE RAIN FOREST*, and it happened because I needed to get an issue sent out but was confined to an alcohol rehab unit, no access to typer or copier – so, I sat up late a few nights and did it by hand.)

**J:** I used to use handwriting as part of the original Boob Reports that I used to do, and I still handwrite all my maps. It is part of what keeps the "assembly" of my szine still firmly planted in the last century. You also are credited with the idea of creating szine subscriptions and getting away from the idea of a gamefee which gives you

a "life of the game subscription"? I've also always been confused about how many people were seeing these early dipszines, many of which were only running one game. Can you tell us what you remember about all that?

**C:** I don't think I had anything to do with the creation of any fee structures that weren't already in use by someone. My recollection is that most of the hobby, in the earliest days, simply charged a "game" fee to players that would cover the life of whatever game they were in. (Boardman still does that.) With the growth of "reader" szines there also developed a category of just-subscription recipients, people who might well not play a game but contributed to the letter column or the other extraneous material. And then we had the trades, szine for szine regardless of who published how many issues of what size, and later still the complimentary copies (mostly Calhamer and the Games Research Co. at first, but later others – I still get a few). But I have no recollection that I contributed to this process, I merely copied others' ideas. I did, for a long time, get very liberal about paid subs and game fees, i.e. if somebody wanted my publication, basically all they had to do was ask. Late in my "career" I was no longer even discussing money, nor was I getting any, nor did I care. It was my hobby publishing szines for other people to have fun with (me too of course). If I couldn't afford to pay for my hobby, I needed a cheaper hobby, not bloody game fees and subs, which then brought with them the need to keep books, at which I've always been awful.

**J:** Were you also one of those early Science Fiction fandom crossovers? What were your favorite aspects of those related hobbies at that point? Did you prefer any of them to the Diplomacy fandom at any point?

**C:** Okay, that's three questions, so in order: Sci-fi crossover, actually I went the other way; it was the fledgling Dip hobby that led me to sci-fi fandom. As I had learned about postal Dip from a very involved sci-fi fan (see the bio at the beginning), I later gravitated into s-f as well. Favorite aspects of those related hobbies? Well, just one 'related' hobby, namely s-f fandom, and what I liked about it was what I also liked about Dip fandom – the people. A few were toads but mostly they were bright, imaginative and lots of fun. (Sometimes in small doses, but then that's true of me too.) Did I prefer one over the other? Well, in the sense that s-f got me to a fascinating and stimulating body of literature that I really hadn't known before, yes; but reading the literature really isn't part of the fan experience per se, and so in the fan sense no, I can't say one was "better." But I also have trouble separating the two in my life; s-f meant such people as Cartier, Phil Castora, Dan Alderson, Jerry Pournelle, John Boardman, and half a dozen local friends, all of whom were also gamers. And later came the late Don Miller of Washington DC, and the late Jack Chalker of the same vicinity, and both of those were major figures in s-f as well as in Dip. (Though I can now

confess, inasmuch as he is deceased, that I could never stand what Chalker wrote....)

**J:** I've always wondered how and why you didn't take your creative interests and the relatively larger amount of time you had with the job choices you made than some of the rest of us (I have two jobs, work way too much, and have nowhere enough time to put into my hobbies!!), and go in some other direction with your fandom interests, why Diplomacy?

**C:** Because it was there? Hell, Jim, I can't possibly answer a question like that!

**J:** Hey, tough, I still get to ask these "expansive questions" and see how you respond.

**C:** Why did I like Diplomacy and a rather exotic form of creative writing, rather than racing cars or surfboarding or whatever? Why do I like green but not purple? Or Brussels sprouts but not artichokes? I could give you a list of things that made me like the Dip hobby – the people were mostly nice, I liked to write, I enjoyed getting letters from all over everywhere, the game made me think and was a mental challenge, I enjoyed studying and learning about the real-world events that inspired the game, etc., etc. - but as to why I liked those things more than any other given set of things, I can't answer. I was at various times, on and off, an avid stamp collector; maybe that helped. I also had lots of pen pals at one time (see a later question about this), maybe that helped too.

I think maybe "because it was there" is the all-in-one answer I should have stayed with, and left it at that.

**J:** You are known for wading into all sorts of hobby debates. I know there is at least one of those early rule debates that led to a rule called the "von Metzke rule" (at least so says the oracle Jim Meinel). But I don't know what the rule is. What is the von Metzke rule?

**C:** It was an outgrowth of the attempts to fix the convoy rules which in a number of ways were unclear. My rule simply said that "support may not be convoyed." It was a technical fix of the wording (or rather the lack of it) in the 1961 rulebook – it was fairly easy to infer, by reading somewhat between the lines, that support was not supposed to be deliverable by convoy, but nothing actually said so, and those were the days when the postal hobby was arguing over every little technicality imaginable in an attempt to get a booklet that was unassailable. These days I believe the rules do state that support does not involve the movement of the supporting unit, which takes care of any need for my old 'fix.'

**J:** Got it. I believe you also are credited with beginning the idea of orphan game placement, calling yourself "Orphan Game Honcho". I was the U.S. Orphan Service

Custodian for quite a few years, which was the immediate successor of this project, and it is a period of the hobby that I remember both for great consternation (trying to work with folding szine editors, some of whom did not want to admit that they had in fact FOLDED!) and great delights. First off, is that correct as far as you know, that you did some of the first organized orphan game placement? And what were some of your early experiences with doing it? What made you stop handling orphans?

**C:** Well, I gave myself the Honcho title just to have a title, and I guess I'm the one who set in stone a 'hobby officer' doing such work, but I wasn't the first to do it at least informally; John Koning and Rod Walker had dabbled in it too, before I got involved.

But when I took over the Boardman Numbers – was it 1970? '71? Can't recall, but about then – I was given all the number-assignment and game-statistic files in the form of fat 3-ring binders with one game per page all the way back to the hobby's start. And in going through these data to keep up the records, and also to generally familiarize myself with what we had, I was quickly struck by the fact of how many games were considered 'abandoned' or 'on hiatus' or something – meaning, the GM had absconded and the game was dead and had simply been written off.

I had the brilliant (???) idea to try and clear those old games, either by determining through player contact that they really were hopeless, or by getting them started again and finished. To do this I frequently had to try and track down players I'd never been in touch with, who hadn't heard of me, who might not even know there was an organized hobby (local friends of the GM, for instance). So I invented my title to make it seem "official." And I did get some old games back in business, and brought to conclusion; of course, lots more were just closed down for good, but at least we were sure that was the only possibility.

I'm not sure there are really any 'experiences' to relate here. Of all the things I did over the years, this was probably the most consistently straightforward: Find out what the actual status of the game was, if need be try to find addresses for all the players, see who was interested in going on, get a new GM to take over (as often as not I did it myself), get replacement players as needed, and get it done. And as you said, there were frustrations, but also a good feeling when things worked out well. I started off getting upset whenever one of the games wouldn't come together again, but after a few of those I simply told myself: "Every single orphan game there is, is dead. If I do nothing, every single one still will be. But if I do something, I'll save a few." And I never again worried about the ones that wouldn't work. Pop psychology usually leaves me cold, but this time it had its uses.



**J:** You are just so much healthier in your attitudes than I was. I got myself into all sorts of strange situations doing the orphans, I think there were two reasons for that. First, people started to "expect" games would be orphaned and moved if needed, so players started to agitate for their games to be moved when pubbers were late, and second, that we started to be more "proactive" in dealing with those publishers who were chronically late. I shudder to think what would happen to me with my latest delay.... but anyway, this is your interview, not mine, and clearly you had a more completely positive experience. How did you come to leave it behind?

**C:** I gave up doing the orphans – Greg Warden took over from me – because eventually I was just overwhelmed; I'd taken on much too much at once and was on the way to a big fat burn-out. So I tried cutting down drastically – orphan games, Boardman numbers, Miller numbers – and that got things back on a better footing both for me and for the hobby.

**J:** I also want to ask you about your old friend, John Koning. We all know that Koning was the co-founder of DipCon, a brilliant Diplomacy player, and part of the famous Youngstown Diplomacy Club and invented what might be the first most famous variant, that he named Youngstown, rather than "Koning". I know one of your first orphan efforts was taking over sTab for John as he unfortunately passed away way too young. Tell us about John, please?

**C:** It's odd really; I barely knew the man, and yet I did. See my next answer, that will help explain; but in the specific sense, Koning came into the hobby just after I did – a few months maximum – and stayed perhaps five years before his health started to wane. During that time we traded szines and letters, played in each other's games, but never met and spoke on the phone twice at most. And yet from very early on until he stopped participating, I had the sense that in terms of a "print persona," John was another one of me. I think his reciprocal view was a bit more grounded and sensible, but still in the same ballpark. (Or so John Smythe eventually told me.)

John Koning once wrote this to me (I paraphrase): "Only your good friends are worth the trouble to insult." And that's about how I feel in life too: Flippant and irreverent, but not hurtful. I know I've crossed the line a few times, but I don't recall that John ever did; perhaps I should have studied publishing ethics with him!

**J:** And your own szine Costaguana is going to come up multiple times, in multiple ways, but how much of what I think of as invented as Costaguana and its style owes itself to sTab and Koning and how much did Koning owe what he did to you?

**C:** I don't know, and I don't know, but in both cases a fair amount I think. John said so anyway, and I know he

had an influence on me of real importance. I think the best way to explain what I feel happened is to say that John and I discovered that we had a similar style of publishing, a roughly similar writing style, and overall a parallel outlook on life as expressed in our amateur-magazine faces; and so each of us read the other's work avidly and sponged up whatever we liked – entirely unconsciously, I think. The process went something like, I'd read what John had done when the latest *MASSIF* showed up and think, "Gee! I wish I could do things that way," and by the time my own next issue was ready, it would turn out that I had done something John's way without knowing it – the conscious process of admiration also became the unconscious process of absorption. Now I don't want to carry this too far; neither of us was copying, we were hardly twins in any sense. "Creative bonding" might be as close a phrase as I'll ever coin.

**J:** You aren't especially known for traveling to the hobby FTF get-togethers. How many of those have you been to over the years? Any particular standout memories from the ones you did go to? Larry Peery famously has described being at one in Portland, Oregon in 1967 with you and Rod Walker. I really wish I could go to more of them.

**C:** Larry has famously misdescribed, you mean – I've never been in the state of Oregon in my life. (I wrote a short bit for Charles Roburn just last fall specifically correcting this old error.)

**J:** Hmmm, clearly I should have been paying more attention to this. Anyway, what cons did you end up actually attending?

**C:** Apart from a number of local gaming get-togethers (here and in Los Angeles) that were hardly "cons" in the formal sense, I've been to just two: '73 in Chicago and '76 (I think) in Lake Geneva. That's it – I never even attended the one, or ones, held here. For one thing I didn't have the money for all the travel and hotels most of the time. For another thing I am absolutely terrified of airplanes and avoid them where possible. (I'm getting a wee bit better though over the years.) But mostly, I think, the awful truth is that I'm just not a "true gamer." Dip was fun, but I hardly wanted to travel cross-country to stay stuck in a hotel stabbing France or Russia. And most of the other games that seemed to pop up at these cons held no interest for me. I specifically recall sitting down with the late Gary Gygax (you did note he just died last week? I'm writing in early March), inventor of D&D, and having him try to explain what at the time was a still-germinating concept for a wonderful new role playing game. I was so completely lost I think Gary wanted to throttle me. So I generally wanted to visit gamers, if at all, on a selective one-to-one basis such as you and I have managed a couple of times, not en masse.

**J:** Yeah, the hobby press got very active around the Gygax passing, including lots of Edi Birsan's

reminiscences of him. I never did meet him, though I connected into the D&D thing at the very, very beginning through the Diplomacy hobby. What other meeting memories did you have that were significant?

**C:** Apart from the Gygax moment above, my best memories are of a few special people I got to know a bit: Doug Beyerlein, Jeff Key, John Smythe, Cal White – damn!, I wish I could wander off to Nunavut and look him up again! - and Walt Buchanan – there are many others, then and later, and I know by listing any names at all I'm going to offend someone who hasn't been noted, but I either stop the list now or I take up six more pages, so sorry, that's it. Oh, except for Lew Pulsipher, the one person in this hobby known to me (and Beyerlein has or had a photo of us proving it) to be exactly my height. Except he weighed more, so it was kind of like the Beanstalk and the Giant, and I guess Doug filled in for little Jack....

**J:** To move to more creative subjects, I'm also going to have to ask you about your experience with fake Diplomacy szines. The font of all szine wisdom, Jim Meinel, believes that your fake of the Belgian szine Moeshoeshoe in 1972 with Michel Liesnard and John Leeder was perhaps the most spectacular fake ever. Did you do it in French (do you even speak/write French?) or did Michel translate for you? Leeder, I believe, was fluent in French. But what was so spectacular about it, tell us that story, I've long wondered how you did it?

**C:** At the risk of seeming pompous, I happen to agree with Meinel – it was a wonderful fake, and though I haven't seen them all, I'd call it the best of all I'm familiar with. One of its chief merits is that it came from an unbelievable source: me, 6000 miles across the Pond, someone who knew not one word of French. To this day I have no idea if Michel Feron ever found out who did it....

**J:** We'll have to track him down and tell him. I've not heard anything about him in a very long time. Go on.

**C:** The one thing I can't recall is how I cooked up the idea in the first place. It was something along these lines: I wanted to fake something, I wanted to make it magnifique (oh, okay, I know one word), but I wanted to make it relatively easy. *MOESHOESHOE* fit the bill: It was normally 4 or 6 pages, printed on a spirit duplicator (ditto machine) like mine, using American sized paper and a typewriter quite similar to my own. And it was bilingual, French-English, so I could do a lot of it myself; I just needed two helpers: (1) Someone to work with me on the French part, and (2) Someone to mail it, hopefully on April 1st from Feron's home town, Hannut (near Liege, c.70 km. from Bruxelles).

I knew that John Leeder was a French teacher in Ontario, so I phoned him and asked. Yes, he'd love to!

Then I wrote Michel Liesnard a letter explaining what was wanted and would it be possible if I paid for the postage, and he said yes, volunteered to take the train to Hannut for mailing, got Feron's mailing list for me, and also included a contribution (in French – he spoke it also!, as he pointed out) to the body of the szine. So I did it, printed enough copies, packed them up and sent them to Liesnard in plenty of time. Everything worked perfectly except that on April 1st, Liesnard had a conflict come up at work and couldn't get away to go to Hannut, so he mailed them in Bruxelles. But this wasn't that big a problem; Feron had sent a few issues in Bruxelles himself, when he happened to be going there on mailing day anyway; so only Feron's local circle in Hannut would have known it was fake just by the postmark.

Yes, I did love that one. Shoulda had some kinda award, just for that if nothing else ever, grump grump....



**J:** You had some of the greatest contacts with the hobbies in other parts of the world, back when it was much harder to do. Tell me about the beginnings of that, how many foreign szines did Costaguana trade with, roughly? What were some of the most memorable of them to you?

**C:** I'd had an interest in foreign contacts for a long time anyway; I had numerous pen pals starting in junior high (Poland, East Germany, Wales, Costa Rica, Vietnam, even one – believe it or not – on Pitcairn Island. Betty Christian, direct descendant of the Bounty mutineer leader Fletcher Christian). I had also taken an interest in studying foreign language, eventually getting reasonably good in Spanish and German, passable in Russian, and taught myself from a book to read and write Polish. (Side note: A couple of years ago Jean and I took a cruise to Alaska, and our head waitress on the cruise

was Polish. So just for the hell of it I tried a few phrases I remembered, spoken as well as I could recall from the 'pronunciation guide' in the book – I'd never heard it spoken in my life! She was very nice about it, and understood what I wanted to say, but I was later able to get her to admit that the accent was dreadful – but better than she expected, she said, which was probably my memories of Russian helping out. Or her innate politeness.)

So when, in the late 60s, I began to hear rumors of British szines, and then later French, Italian, Australian, South African, Swedish and of course Belgian – well, I just had to check all these out, and eventually got in touch with nearly all the editors and got samples or a trade going. Later when I became Boardman Number Custodian it was my intention to get all these foreign games numbered too, and in this I mostly succeeded although one or two editors had no interest in an American-dominated formality. (P.S.: I never really considered Canadian szines 'foreign,' though of course they were – perhaps because the postal transit times weren't long enough to make them seem foreign, nor was the cost of stamps.)

At one time or another I had at least thirty foreign trades going, mostly in Britain of course; that was the only foreign country (other than Canada) that ever did it up big-time. My two greatest favo(u)rites were Richard Walkerdine's *MAD POLICY* and Mick Bullock's *1901 AND ALL THAT* for no specific reason that I can tell you except the editors seemed to buzz along on the same wavelength that I did mentally – this means I laughed at their jokes and they claimed to laugh at mine! And if I may now give Canada its rightful place as a sovereign nation, John Leeder's *ARRAKIS* was the best foreign szine I ever knew, anywhere, anytime. If only I remembered enough detail, I'd tell you all about our insane press release exchange for a while, me with my French Admiral Antoine "Puffa-Puffa" de Grasse, him with his Indian guide Stadacona Silverman.... But I can't remember enough, so that's all you get. (I'm not even certain it was in *ARRAKIS*; might have been my *SAGUENAY*. Damn! I'm getting old!)

**J:** One of the key things (I told you I was going to ask you about this!!!) that you did with your overseas contacts is bring Railway Rivals to the US. Were you the first one in the US, to your knowledge, to be familiar with it?

**C:** No, Don Del Grande in the San Francisco area had a szine in which he was offering the game before I ever heard of it. But I had gaming contacts that he didn't, so in the end I got his game filled as well as my own first one. I don't think Don ever bothered doing a second game, but as you know I kept on going and am still at it in a limited way. There were a couple of other "pioneers" of the Rivals hobby who knew the game before I did, I think; one was Eric Brosius of Boston

whom I believe you know. But they weren't trying to publish at least then.

I guess in a way that makes this situation the reverse of my Diplomacy start-up: With Dip I was chronologically first, but failed; with Rivals I was second, but succeeded first. This will probably not show up in Trivial Pursuit....



**J:** Oh, it would in Diplomacy Trivial Pursuit for sure. Why did Railway Rivals and the other Choo-Choo games get so popular with Dippers, I have NEVER understood this? I've never played a choo-choo game postally, I don't believe, but that makes me a bit of an anomaly, especially from my era.

**C:** You asked me this a couple of months ago and ever since I've been talking to other Rivals and Dip people about it, and the consensus seems to be just what I thought it was going to be: Rail games are not inordinately or unusually popular with Dippers, nor the reverse; I can only believe that you personally just happen to know a lot of those for whom it does happen to be true. Most of the Rivals players I've come across over the years (I've been doing Rivals now for 22 years) really have no interest in Dip; some have never tried it at all, others have and have found it wanting (for them). Now, let's be fair, I'm significantly out of touch with mainstream games hobbing these days, so perhaps you do know more than I; for instance, I do know that certain American-produced rail games such as Rail Baron and Empire Builder have a bigger fan base here than Rivals does, and since I've never played Rail Baron (some of the Brit gamers call it "Rail Boring") and only tried Empire Builder a couple of times (and wasn't excited by it), I may not know what the hell I'm talking about. But I do suspect I'm not too far off when I say the Dip hobby hasn't gravitated to rail games any more than any other gamester demographic has.

**J:** OK, hey, if that was one of the points of my interview, we're still doing pretty well with lots of other interesting stories, but let's push it just slightly more so I can justify asking it in the first place. Hey, the interviewer has an ego too!! You've run lots of subszines, especially in Brit

szines, running Railway Rivals, haven't you? Can you give us an idea of how many of them there have been? Any special moments you would like to tell us about?

**C:** Er, well, actually I've just done one that I can recall – the one I'm doing now, which just happens to be all I'm doing now. I've contributed to a lot of Brit szines, and even run off a number of games orphaned over there (before e-mail even!!), but the true subszines – Jim, that's awful!, "subszines???" - makes it look Polish or Czech! - anyway, my true subszines (hack cough) total just *Calafia's Island* which is part of Dave Oya's *WIMM?* produced in Banbury, north of Oxford. It is actually still a print, truly postal szine, one of the handful left. I don't even know how many issues I've done so far, maybe 30 or 40 and hopefully more to go. The name, *Calafia's Island*, is a modernized version of a legendary Spanish name for California before it was actually discovered and mapped.

Special moments? When you get to be a senior citizen, they're ALL special, Jim! But to be honest, no, not really there haven't been any that leap out at me now; I just do what I've always done, write a batch of gibberish, and print game reports, and have a ball in the process, and the readers don't seem to mind too much. But then Dave's circulation is down to an abysmal two dozen these days, so I'm afraid my fame as a Great Writer is dwindling fast. I guess I'll just have to write more for *DW*, eh?

**J:** Sure, we'd be happy to have your input!! Have you ever been to Europe to any of the Diplomacy Cons there? Some of my favorite all-time hobby moments have been meeting people like Richard Walkerdine, Iain Bowen, and Pete Birks. Which of the European hobbyists have you met and can you tell us about them?

**C:** Well, listen, Jim-Bob, I hope you know I now hate you – I would kill to meet Walkerdine, in my view one of the Great Ones.

**J:** But you're in much better regular touch with him, aren't you?

**C:** Yeah, hey, Jim, guess what Walkerdine is doing right this minute as I type this? He's in Antarctica!!

**J:** Very cool, I trust he wasn't on that ship that foundered, no, that was back in November. I'm sure he's having a great time. How about some of the others?

**C:** I did meet a couple of people – Peter Sullivan twice, actually, once with Aileen – but of course they had to come here, I have never been there. Back to fear of flying, and until '06 fear of how I was possibly going to survive cross-ocean without a damn cigarette. Jean (my wife) keeps trying to get me (us) to go, but for now I think

I'd rather wait for the dollar to strengthen so we won't bankrupt ourselves just buying coffee.

**J:** Yeah, I get worried about that, but Europeans should just come here and visit us, any of them are welcome to visit me here in Rhode Island any time (hint, hint), I'm sure you would say the same. Let's end this up with my favorite "unrelated hobby". Are you still singing? Finally after all these decades I'm back to improving in my own singing and rediscovering a slightly different voice at age 50. I took a few lessons, and need more, what is current in the life of Conrad von Metzke, the best singer that not enough people have heard or heard of?

**C:** Well good for you! Keep it up! I on the other hand 'retired' years ago; a combination of not wanting to spend too much on lessons to really do what I wanted to do, and too many cigarettes. I've quit smoking now, but not in time to save the voice I fear. (Saved the rest of me apparently, though.) But thanks much for the compliment! I'll remember you in my will for that one. Do you want the pet rock, or the mood ring?

**J:** Mood ring for sure, it actually does something!

**C:** I really think if I could start all over tomorrow, one big thing I'd do another way is to get serious much earlier about singing, and put some real work into it, and maybe try for a scholarship or a fat loan so I could do it properly, and see where it went. I had the time of my life in those days, frequently if not every time - often enough to wish I'd tried harder. Maybe reincarnation exists? I doubt it, but just in case maybe I'll ask to be buried with all my music scores.

**J:** Good idea. Thanks much for this wide-ranging and fun interview. I've done loads and loads of these, and I think this one is in the top couple for what I learned and how much I enjoyed doing it. Did you want any last words?

**C:** Yes I do. Whaddaya mean, "top COUPLE?????" Do I need to expand or change something so I can be Numero Uno?? How much money is involved???

Okay, really. I would like to say Thank You. To you for the interview. To Doug Kent for the vehicle to print the interview. To Allan Calhamer for the underlying reason for the interview. And to all the hobbyists I've known - well, all but a small handful I suppose - for a lot of pleasure and a good bit of joy and, well, really a very large and wonderful part of my life so far. I may have retreated now to the hobby periphery, but I'm not gone and am in absolutely no hurry to change that.

**J:** You're quite welcome. I'm always looking for more people to interview. And volunteers are always welcome, as are suggestions from the readership.



# Diplomacy World Demo Game

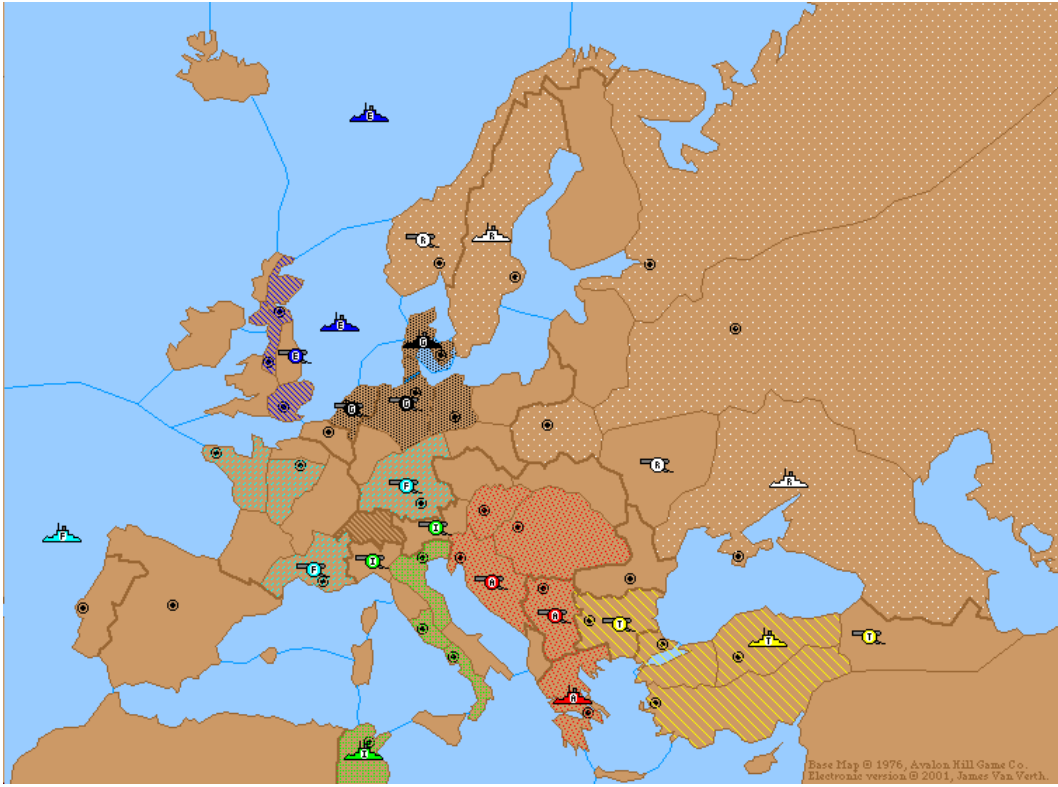
## Regular Diplomacy – “After the Rapture”

### Cast of Characters:

GM: Rick Desper  
Austria: Adam Silverman  
England: Dan Lester  
France: Jake Mannix  
Germany: Mike Hall  
Italy: Doug Moore

Russia: Mark Zoffel  
Turkey: Andy Marshall

Commentators: **Jim Burgess (Bold)**,  
*Eric Hunter (Italics)*



### Winter 1901 Results:

**Austria:** Build A Budapest, Build A Vienna  
**England:** No activity.  
**France:** Build F Brest  
**Germany:** Build A Berlin

**Italy:** Build F Naples  
**Russia:** Build A Moscow, Build A Warsaw  
**Turkey:** Build F Constantinople

### Winter 1901 Commentary:

Commentators: **Jim Burgess (Bold)**, *Eric Hunter (Italics)*

*Austria: Obvious and forced, and hence uninformative.*

**Agreed.**

*France: Ummm, okay.... I suppose it gets Jake Iberia, but with A Mun, it seems odd.*

**Remember what I suggested, France is attacking England for sure. F Mid-Iri, F Bre-Mid. I completely agree that it reads odd since Germany wouldn't seem to be on his side.**

*Germany: To take back Munich.*

**I now agree with that.**

*Italy: The standard Italian build, but what is Doug going to do in '02?*

**I think that's the key here. What is he going to do with France? With Turkey? I think by this build he is showing that he must ally with Austria for the**

moment, or else face the Austrian armies.

Oh, we can play WWDD (What Will Doug Do?). How about Tun-Wes, Nap-TyS, Pie-Mar, Tyr-Mun (with German support) followed by IA Mun-Bur with German support in the Fall as Mike retakes Munich? If Jake does order MAO-Iri, there's a small chance of an Italian build this year, or a certain two next year.

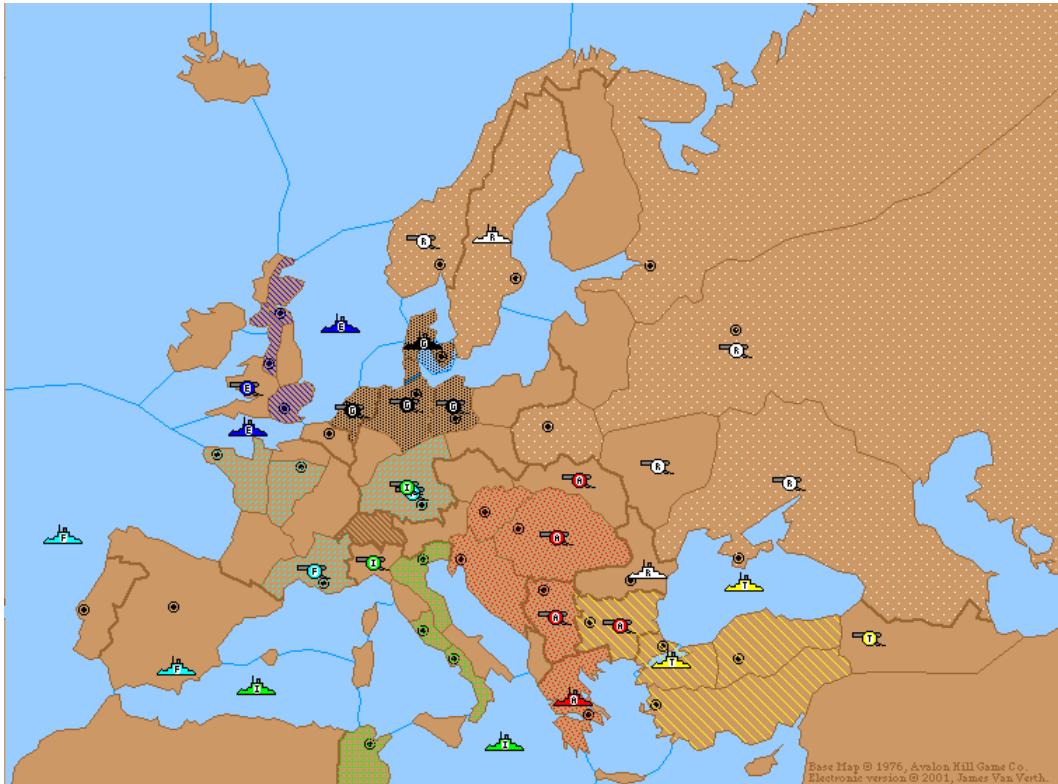
And the other option is A Tun S F Nap-Ion. Clearly he has to TELL Jake he is doing this to cause F Mid-Iri to happen. Whether he does it or not? Well, that's the obvious question. My suspicion is that Italy attacking France and a Anschluss PLUS Italy is made more likely by the French Munich stab and the Russian builds.

*Russia: This shores up Mark's defense in the south, but now Adam's Austria is in the driver's seat, I think.*

**This shores up Mark's defense in the south, but now Adam's Austria is in the driver's seat, I think.**

*Turkey: Will Andy force Bla? Should he?*

I actually don't think he should. But he might. Where are the Italian fleets going? I didn't agree with the Italian build, but once built, they should concentrate either East or West, not one in one direction, one in the other. He does have these as options.



### **Spring 1902 Results:**

**Austria:** A Budapest Supports F Sevastopol – Rumania, F Greece Supports A Serbia – Bulgaria, A Serbia – Bulgaria, A Trieste – Serbia, A Vienna - Galicia

**England:** F North Sea - English Channel, F Norwegian Sea - North Sea, A Yorkshire - Wales

**France:** F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Marseilles Hold, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Spain(sc), ~~A Munich – Ruhr~~ (\*Dislodged\* - retreat to Bohemia, Burgundy, Silesia, or OTB)

**Germany:** A Berlin Supports A Tyrolia – Munich, F Denmark - Kiel (\*Bounce\*), A Holland - Kiel (\*Bounce\*), A Kiel - Ruhr (\*Bounce\*)

**Italy:** F Naples - Ionian Sea, A Piedmont - Marseilles (\*Fails\*), F Tunis - Western Mediterranean, A Tyrolia - Munich

**Russia:** A Moscow Supports A Ukraine – Sevastopol, A Norway Supports F Sweden,

F Sevastopol – Rumania, F Sweden Supports A Norway, A Ukraine – Sevastopol,  
A Warsaw - Ukraine

**Turkey:** F Ankara - Black Sea, A Armenia - Sevastopol (\*Fails\*),  
~~A Bulgaria Supports A Serbia – Rumania~~ (\*Disbanded\*), F Constantinople Supports F Ankara - Black Sea

### **Spring 1902 Commentary:**

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

**Austria:** Well, a whole series of very clear choices made in Spring 1902, much can be made of this now. Austria has a very good position now. Turkey is in big trouble, there looks like there is clear Central Power Anschluss Plus Italy alliance as I suggested was evolving last time.

*Which would increase the odds of ER vs. G, I would say.*

In the long run, that will be big problem for Russia, so the key Diplomatic question now is whether Austria intends to try to sell Russia on an alliance against Turkey and whether Russia wants to listen. Budapest chose to support Sevastopol to Rumania while moving to Galicia. The support to Rumania was unneeded and since Austria probably knew what Turkey was doing (didn't accept the Turkish support) one could ask why he didn't bounce Russia. This did place Russia more "east" and out of Warsaw.

*F Rum is also no threat to Austria, since it cannot support moves to Ser and Bud. Adam might try to pop the Russian Fleet this Fall, but that would just result in another Russian Army build, so I don't see that as Adam's best move.*

I can't see how Austria convinces Russia to ignore the evidence on the board, but one could give it a try. I think Austria made the right choices.

*Pro-Russian except for Vie-Gal, which might be excused as appropriate caution. Very trusting of Italy, though, which suggests he was aware of the Italian move against France.*

**England:** Eric was right, I was wrong, Russia and England are still tight, the old alliance from the "last game" seems set.

*I don't know whether they are allied, or just agreeing to not interfere with each other at the moment. The rise of the Anschluss does favor them cooperating against Germany, though.*

I'd like to comment on that. Speaking personally, if I allied with someone in one game and worked closely with them and then was immediately in another game with them. My inclination would be to exploit vivid and fresh knowledge about how they think and attack them with a particularly devious stab (all in

context of what else was going on).

*I would rather expect Dan to be thinking this way, and waiting for the right moment. I don't think that moment has arrived, yet.*

This kind of behavior by me gets me in trouble more often than not. One wonders if really good players do not do that and try to build alliances game to game. This would be human, I suppose, but somewhat regrettable in a bigger picture.

*I have had the pleasure of playing with a lot of really good players, and I'd say that's not the case. There is a tendency to ally with known quantities over unknowns, but really good players play to win in almost all circumstances, so in any alliance between really good players they are always looking for the advantage and the chance to stab. (Unless they are trying to teach me a lesson. ☺)*

To keep adding to the levels of the game, though, the correct reaction by players in this game is NOT to "decry unfair cross-gaming behavior", but to exploit the expectation that they are likely to continue to coordinate. The Central Powers alliance has done that. Ding Dong, the witches are dead (almost, of course they're good players, but they're not doing well). OK, so England is going to pile in on France as a third wheel behind Italy and Germany, doesn't look good. But OK.

*Will Nth and Swe combine to take Den? Probably not, but I wouldn't rule it out. I'd bet on Nth S Wal-Bel, and ER vs. G next year. Given the moves, we could easily see ER vs. G next year, while England leaves France and Italy in a one-on-one battle.*

**France:** Poor Jake, he seems in over his head to me.

*MAO-Por, Bur S Wal-Bel, B F Bre to deal with Italy, and Jake will be fine, I think. Not strong, but not on the way out, either.*

He's just not making ANY progress. All his neighbors are against him, with no legitimate concerns stopping them from descending on him. Still, he has some good defenses that he can mount and perhaps he can deflect some attacks, as Italy has to get out of Munich. I probably retreat to Burgundy, and what happens to Belgium in the fall

can be influenced. Jake could be really stupid here and retreat east to "shake things up" -- this would be in line with what he's done up to now. But what would be the point? More on this below, but Burgundy is safe for the moment, if he retreats there. Jake needs an ally badly, and he needs Russia's help to secure it. Russia does NOT want France to fall, so why is his English ally joining in? There are diplomatic entreaties that can be made here. Don't be tempted by being silly, Jake!

*Jake goes for Iberia after threatening England with his build. Does he risk MAO-Por at this point? Does Doug respond with Wes-MAO? I'd say yes for MAO-Por, and no to Wes-MAO. Burgundy is the obvious retreat choice in this case.*

**Germany: Way cool moves here. But there are questions for Germany. How much can Germany trust the Dan and Mark show? NOT very much at all. I don't think the ER is playing that well, but Germany eventually will be challenged there. Can Germany get Munich back this year and if not does Germany get Belgium? Lots of diplomatic questions here. I think Germany should go to five this fall or risk the AI alliance being the more dominant down the road. Still, Germany is still in good shape.**

*I disagree. Mike needed to be much more aggressive about achieving position this Spring. I fear he will sit in his current position and be whittled down in a few years. As I thought (A Ber S A Tyr-Mun), but the rest of these moves will result in Italy holding Munich, most likely. The bounce in Kie is to prevent Mun retreats to Kiel, but Mike probably should have risked it, or ordered Den-Kie, Hol S Kie-Ruh to set-up Ruh S Mun-Bur, Hol-Bel, Ber-Mun, Kie-Den. With the bounce in Ruh Mike has no way to support Doug to Bur, so IG vs. F could easily morph into IF vs. G.*

**Italy: Doug is manipulating the board very well. He wants to get most of the French centers, but Jake might oppose him and try to throw them all to Dan. Jake is known well by Doug, so he may try a trick on Jake this time. Could Doug walk into Marseilles? Possibly.**

*I don't see it. Mar S Par-Bur, Mar Hold, Mar Hold, followed by Mar-Spa with the Italian Army in Pie? Nope, we'll see Mar Hold again.*

**Lots of choices and England could convoy to Belgium, so Doug could subtly convince Jake to try to put Marseilles into Spain. "Hey, Jake, I'm here**

**to help you...." Yeah, right. In the East, Doug is setting up to get his share of Turkey. What Russia does now is key since Russia COULD just help Austria and Italy take out poor Andy. Either way, Turkey has the fleets out of position, so Doug can walk into Eastern Med, and Turkey has nearly zero chance of building, so he will be stuck with the two fleets and only one army.**

*Will we see Ion-Eas, Gre-Aeg? Given the Austrian position, I think Doug can risk splitting his forces that way.*

**Russia: OK, so where is the risk taker???? A Norway S F Sweden, F Sweden S A Norway? Yuck. Well, what now? How can Mark make up with Andy? If not, he's in trouble.**

*What would you have done? I can see ER cooperation this Fall, but next Spring is more likely. Though if Jake offers Bur S Wal-Bel, Nth S Swe-Den to give Mark an extra build could shift the balance away from AGI. So far pro-Austrian, all the way. Will Adam let Mark hold Rum?*

**If there was a stronger ER from the start, I might have tried F Swe-Bal, A Nwy-Swe, that would have been Mark-like aggressive. But perhaps he was not sure of Dan this turn. Eric and I both agree that everything points to ER cooperation next though. And then I think Mike (Germany) will be aggressive for the fifth center. If not, then I agree with Eric that Germany will start getting whittled.**

*I think he needed to be aggressive this Spring, and instead he played cautious. Hol-Bel, Ber S Kie-Mun gets him his fifth, if ER don't take Denmark, but then he has to convince Doug to keep working with him next year. I'm not sure Mike will be able to do that.*

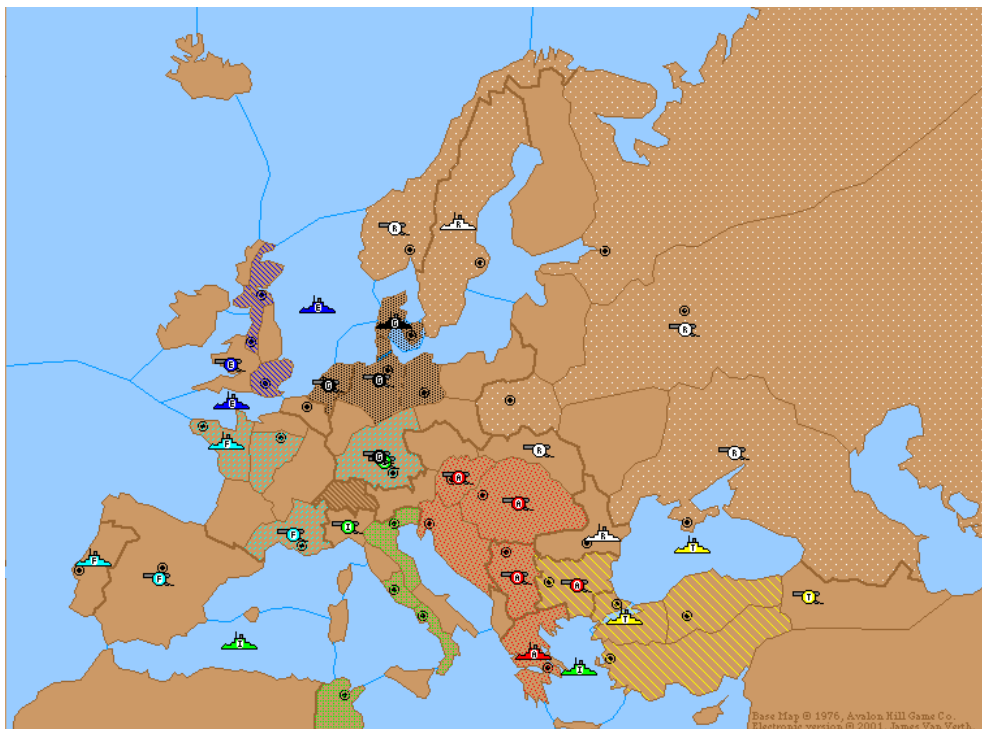
**If you're right, then he let Doug spin him a line. I would not have agreed to readily to Doug's plan without a clear path to that fifth center this fall. It could be that he HAD a plan, but it fell through. I think we both agree the issue of who gets Belgium now is a key issue for the future of the game.**

**Turkey: Poor Andy. The reverse question goes here, can he make up with Mark? If he has no allies, he goes out even faster than Jake. No great options.**

*Andy has a problem that could easily be a crisis next year. Rum S Arm-Bul? I'm not sure it is possible, though.*

## Summer 1902 Results:

**France:** A Munich retreats to Burgundy



## Fall 1902 Results:

**Austria:** A Budapest - Serbia (\*Fails\*), A Bulgaria - Constantinople (\*Fails\*), A Galicia - Vienna, F Greece Supports A Serbia - Bulgaria (\*Fails\*), A Serbia - Bulgaria (\*Fails\*).

**England:** F English Channel Convoys A Wales - Belgium, F North Sea Supports A Wales - Belgium (\*Cut\*), A Wales - Belgium (\*Bounce\*).

**France:** A Burgundy - Marseilles, A Marseilles - Spain, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Brest, F Spain(sc) - Portugal.

**Germany:** A Berlin - Munich, F Denmark - North Sea (\*Fails\*), A Holland - Belgium (\*Bounce\*), A Kiel Supports A Berlin - Munich.

**Italy:** F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea, A Munich Supports A Kiel - Ruhr (\*Dislodged\*, retreat to Ruhr, Burgundy, Tyrolia, Bohemia, Silesia, or OTB), A Piedmont Holds (no move received), F Western Mediterranean - Ionian Sea (\*Fails\*), A Marseilles - Piedmont (\*illegal\*, no such unit).

**Russia:** A Moscow Supports A Sevastopol, A Norway Supports F Sweden, F Rumania Hold, A Sevastopol Supports F Rumania (\*Cut\*), F Sweden Supports A Norway, A Ukraine - Galicia.

**Turkey:** A Armenia - Sevastopol (\*Fails\*), F Black Sea Supports A Armenia - Sevastopol, F Constantinople Supports F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea (\*Cut\*)

Ownership:

Austria: Budapest, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.

England: Edinburgh, Liverpool, London.

France: Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain.

Germany: Berlin, Denmark, Holland, Kiel, Munich.

Italy: Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice.

Russia: Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.



Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna.  
Unowned: Belgium.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 6 Unit 5 Build 1  
England: Supp 3 Unit 3 Build 0  
France: Supp 5 Unit 4 Build 1  
Germany: Supp 5 Unit 4 Build 1

Italy: Supp 4 Unit 3 or 4 Build 0 or 1  
Russia: Supp 7 Unit 6 Build 1  
Turkey: Supp 3 Unit 3 Build 0

**Fall 1902 Commentary:**

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

GM Rick Desper – “Congratulations are due to World Champion Doug Moore, who wrote two illegal orders for four units!”

*Well, technically, there is nothing illegal about Mar-Pie. A Mar just isn't his Army...*

**Indeed. There is something to be said here about who is putting time into the game. Clearly Doug was not this turn. Let me just comment quickly on all the players from what we can see, maybe sometime after the game we can get some comments from the players on this. Austria seemed to get off to a slow start in negotiations, but seems to have kept up in negotiations just fine since then. England? Well, Dan is always busy and he seems to me to be too busy to play his best again here, at least so far. Jake in France I think has been communicating a lot, just not to especially productive effect. Germany seems also to be an undernegotiator to me, this is fueled partly by Italy, the one he seems to have been talking to most, who has gone downhill consistently from the beginning. In my view, Doug was the #1 negotiator in Spring 1901, talking to everyone, but with less and less negotiation involvement as the game has progressed. Mark has been negotiating well throughout and his position is looking better and better as well. Finally, I don't think Andy has been in the game much at all so far. That's how it looks from here.**

*Austria: Yuck. An entire string of orders that would succeed only if Turkey moved out of Con. Adam is positioned to move against Russia, but makes an ineffective attack on Turkey, instead.*

**Agreed, boy, is this a terrible set of moves. Clearly, he thought he would be successful at getting into Constantinople, but it is rather unclear why he thought this.**

*I admire your gift of understatement. I can't see any circumstance in which Con would move, unless it was Con-Bul. I would have expected Con & Rum S Arm-Bul, myself.*

**All things considered, though, Italy probably got**

**approval from BOTH Austria and Turkey to go to the Ionian Sea. That is always a good thing to have. So, once Italy is there, just because Turkey supported it and Austria didn't need to, doesn't mean Turkey still isn't in huge trouble.**

*A Galicia – Vienna: Worried about an Italian retreat to Tyr/Boh? Why not take Rum and War and build in Tri and Vie instead?*

**Yeah, I don't get this. I think Eric is right, and I'm sure Russia was VERY persuasive about being "in on taking Turkey out" as long as Rumania with the fleet (safe for Austria) remained his. Of course, did Russia stay out of Galicia? No way. So Austria gave this province up for what? Almost a disastrous set of orders for Austria. No one takes his centers this fall, most likely (though Bulgaria certainly is threatened), but neither does Austria have all the opportunities it looked like he had.**

*Probably B A Tri, though an argument could be made for a Fleet.*

**I still think a strong Central Powers alliance is called for, but it isn't clear how committed Doug is to it. I can't see Doug supporting the fleet idea.**

*England: About what I expected Dan to do, but it seems that Mike is daring ER to form.*

**This all was pretty predictable, I might have conveyed to Picardy instead and set up for next year. Still, Eric again is correct, there is an ER and nothing to suggest it is about to break up.**

*France: Jake gets to five Centers a year late, but only Paris is open for a build, and he really needs a third Fleet, more than a third Army. This is a decent set of NoPress moves, but Jake should have been able to negotiate a better set. Who is his ally? Who is his enemy? Where does he go from here?*

**Since I've been dumping on Jake, he MAY have convinced Doug to "appear to be lost in space" and this is a set up for Italy and France BOTH coming into the Atlantic, working together (that's the best**

face to put on this), but Jake had to move a bit out of position by getting into Marseilles. We do see the following though: Doug allows Jake to get the five centers and can tell all of Jake's neighbors "darn, I screwed up"; Doug not bouncing Jake means there is no risk to Italy of F Marseilles, allows his dislodged army from Munich to retreat to Burgundy, and in fact since Jake covers Brest too, no chance of a fleet at all!!!; Jake now builds A Paris, of course. If there is not a secret Jake/Doug deal, then Jake remains in just as much trouble as before, even with five centers now, especially if Doug does retreat to Burgundy. ER vs. G still gives Jake an opportunity though. So I'm going to be more open about Jake than Eric is being. But Jake HAS to make the next game year count for something.

*Jake defended his Home Centers and picked up both Iberian Centers to offset the loss of Munich and gain a build, so that's good. He seems to be playing by himself, though, and that is bad. Bur S Wal/Eng-Bel, or Bur S Hol-Bel would have been better.*

*B A Par is forced, unless Jake waives it, and that would not be wise, if I'm right about Doug.*

**No way, he can't waive it.**

*Germany: Retakes Munich to join France at 5 Centers, and keeps England from building. Ber S Kie-Mun, B F Kie, might have been better. If Mike builds F Ber, her risks annoying the sleeping bear to the north.*

**These are good moves, I think, and as I've been writing these comments I'm more and more coming to the feeling that there is a STRONG GI alliance going here. This is all part of the plan, I think.**

*Agreed, but if it was part of a Central Powers Triple, I would have expected Adam to attack Russia this turn.*

**I agree with that too. I am on record as stating that I think a Central Powers Triple would be stronger, but I don't think there is one. Adam is a better player than this, and I wouldn't think he would just give up Galicia like that. Austria needs to be more engaged with every power on the board to succeed. He now faces a real risk that Mark and Andy will set up a late RT and work with Italy to take Greece and Bulgaria this next year.**

**It might not be that wonderful for Germany, but still no one has Belgium and the GI has a good shot of getting it next game year. So, I think that's what is happening. Lesson to newbies: if you have an alliance with someone, and want to "retreat forward" without people seeing how closely you're allied, why not have the dislodged unit for your ally support an order of yours that you have no intention of making (and did we really think he NEEDED that support**

**were he trying to move to Ruhr???) to disguise the move. I don't think this is credible. The evidence seems clear.**

*Given the bounce in Bel, I would think B F Ber, but an Army could work.*

**It depends if he thinks Russia is going to mount a land attack from build A War and A Gal. I would build a fleet if I were him, you like Germany building fleets.....**

*Italy: Two mis-orders from the World Champ? Care to bet that they were both deliberate? I'm thinking Jake asked for Bur-Mar, Pie-Mar (\*Bounce\*) so that he'd have the option to build a Fleet and go after Dan. Doug agrees to send F Wes back to Ion and disengage, but then does the double mis-order. Now Doug retreats to Bur, and takes Mar next year.*

**I've left my train of thought working through here intact as a lesson. Think carefully before you think someone screwed up. I think now that all of these orders were ENTIRELY intentional. Eric clearly agrees. Jake is in major trouble. If Dan had convoyed to Picardy and bounced Belgium instead (risky of course because he could have gotten in and taken the build, but let Germany into North Sea) I think it would have been the better move for Dan and then the GI wouldn't look quite so strong. Does France work with England this time? I don't see it. But Jake needs an ally!**

*I don't see any reason to disband and rebuild.*

**No way. The whole set of moves was the setup to get Burgundy.**

*I'm thinking he retreats to Burgundy.*

**I'll be shocked if it isn't Burgundy.**

*Russia: Well, it worked, and it got Mark a build, but this is definitely the Allen Schweinsberg school of Russian play. Will we see F StP/SC or A War? Either could be bad for Germany.*

**Yes, I agree, I take back what I said a few seasons back, Eric is right, Mark can be patient when he needs to be. I still don't think the ER is a winning hand, but good move by Mark faking Austria out of Galicia.**

*My guess would be B F StP/SC, but that's my aggressive nature. Given the slow and steady approach, B A War is certainly possible.*

**I think it is A Warsaw, especially since the ER is more and more committed. But F StP(SC) might be better if he expects Germany to build F Berlin. The**

more I think about this one, the more I think we'll see the fleets.

*Turkey: Con S Ion-Aeg is interesting. Is it just designed to worry Adam, or does it have deeper significance? I wonder why Andy and Mark are locked into this conflict? It's not going to get Andy anywhere, and it is hamstringing Mark.*

What now, does Andy go into Turtle Turkey mode? He can hold out for awhile, but not long. Or can he get Russia and Italy to turn on Austria instead. Why don't Mark and Doug take out Andy first and THEN Austria. That's what I think they'll do, though Mark is going to attack Austria before Italy does, I think.

### Autumn 1902 Results:

**Italy:** A Munich retreats to Tyrolia

### Winter 1902 Results:

**Austria:** Build A Trieste

**England:** No activity.

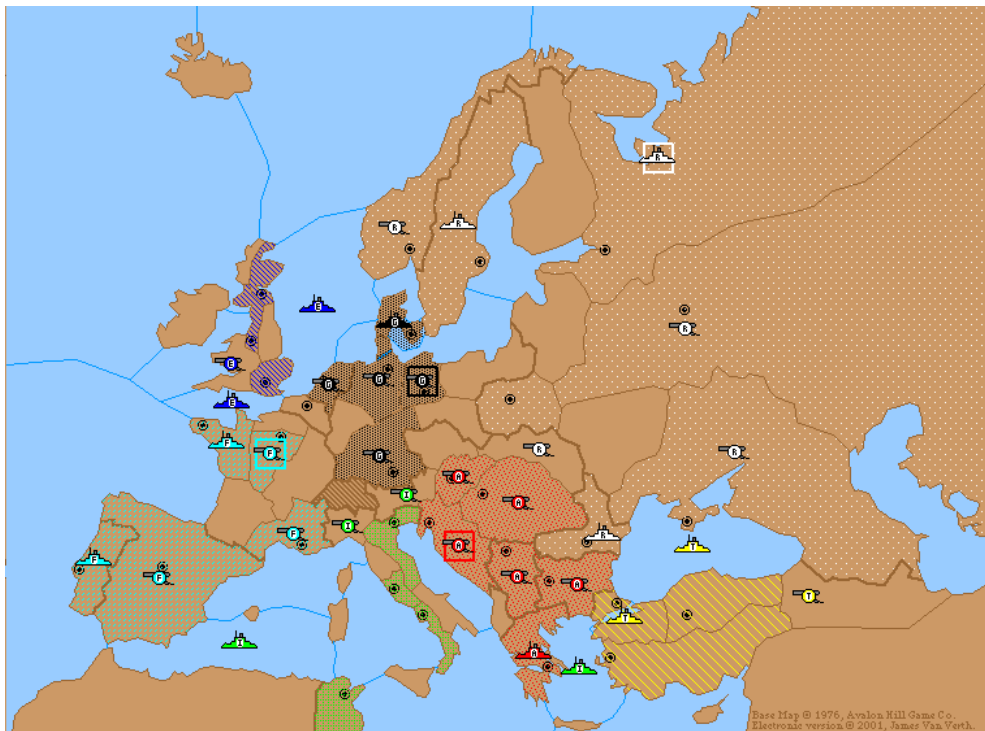
**France:** Build A Paris

**Germany:** Build A Berlin

**Italy:** No activity.

**Russia:** Build F St. Petersburg (north coast)

**Turkey:** No activity.



### Autumn and Winter 1902 Commentary:

Commentators: Jim Burgess (**Bold**), Eric Hunter (*Italics*)

GM Rick Desper on Italy's Retreat: Boring!

*In Rick's world, maybe. Tyrolia was the last place I expected Doug to retreat to.*

*Austria: Boring!*

*France: Boring!*

*Germany: Headed east?*

*Russia: North Coast? NC-Nwy, Nwy-Swe, Swe-Bal still sets up an attack on Germany, but ... This requires more thought.*

I agree with Eric, there isn't much more to say, except to ask about why Russia is building north coast. I think it is an issue for how to attack Germany and this is still part of an ER relationship. But we will see.

# WACCon 2008 – A Group Perspective

By Nathan Barnes and Friends

WACcon 2008 was once again a rousing and glorious opportunity for the Diplomacy hobby to get together, and to treat each other with the respect and kindness we all associate with a game like Diplomacy. Ok, not really, it was mostly devoid of kindness, and respect was a scarce commodity, being buried under an avalanche of backstabbing, lies, and guile. Not to mention a swanky location, generous hosts, and healthy helping of good times.

Traditionally, WACcon is a three-day, five-round event, running Thursday through Saturday, with Sunday reserved for a short awards ceremony. This format has worked well for us in the past, as it allows the final round to go on just as long as it needs to, without that pesky temporal deadline of the weekend coming to a close, and attendees regrettably tugged back to airports and homes by real world responsibilities. In previous events we've worked hard to get travelers from all over the United States, Canada and Europe to attend WACcon, in the hopes that the great experiences they have will be spread to other players when they return home.

This year however, WACcon was on the heels of a WDC held just to the north in Vancouver, British Columbia. This, coupled with the traditional holiday exhaustion that comes with an event being held in late January, led us to plan for a slightly smaller turnout in 2008. Accordingly, we changed our format, going to a more traditional Friday through Sunday four-round event, and downplaying our promotion of the event overseas and on the East Coast. Instead we focused more on local turnout. Our thought was that we would give the Diplomacy world a little break, then come back strong in 2009.

Despite our goal of having a smaller event, we still ended up with three or four boards per round, with a great turnout of people from all over the US and Canada. Gone this year were our usual catered meals and open bar, but they *will* be returning in 2009. Despite the pared-down amenities, a good time was had by everyone, and in the end Andrew Neumann rose victorious over the rest of the playing field, adding another WACcon victory to his collection.

I had some help putting together a couple of thoughts on the event, from play attendees that were kind enough to share. They say it much better that I ever could.

## **Graham Woodring**

*For the past four years, the illustrious Nathan Barnes has invited me to come out to his tournament WACcon. Held in Seattle on the third weekend every January, I have been told repeatedly by trusted sources that this*

*tournament is one not to miss. Unfortunately for me, this particular weekend has also always been the first weekend of the spring semester. Therefore, I have never made it out there, but I have told Nathan every time that I will make it out eventually.*



*This year, Nathan and his fellow directors decided to scale back on the tournament. Thus, I did not receive an invitation. The crew was not actively lobbying people to show up because they wanted a smaller tournament, so they could save up money for the coming years. Because I did not receive an invitation, naturally I completely forgot about it. That was until about two weeks ago when Jim O'Kelley - one of my favorite drinking buddies and partners in crime - sent me a text message saying that he just booked a flight to WACcon and that I should try to make it out. The reason? We would be playing in a bar.*

*Needless to say, everyone got very drunk and we had a great time. John Saul and I were crashing in Andy Bartalone's hotel room that first night, and he ended up getting tanked and heading back early. So John and I arrived to his room later that night to a most peculiar sight: it appeared that Andy had gotten into a fight with a bag of Chex Mix and a bag of popcorn, and lost. It was quite funny except for the fact that I was sleeping on the floor that night; not so funny.*



*Instead of boring you with the details, I will summarize by saying that I had an awesome time at the tournament. I'm sure if you're reading this, you know me well enough to know that I don't really travel to tournaments for the*



*Diplomacy. The game is just a bonus. I travel to these tournaments to see all the friends I've made over the years traveling. Really I wouldn't get to see these people if I didn't travel to the tournaments, and I always have a blast hanging out with them.*

*Despite the fact that I was drunk for three of the four rounds in the tournament (and hung over in the fourth), I managed to bring home some hardware. Go me! ...though I did find it a bit irksome that I was just squeaked out of third place by Brian Shelden. Shelden was on my first board, and my poor play caused him to gain a few more points after the game should have ended. If I had not foolishly decided to keep playing, I could be third. Damn you Brian Shelden! On top of that, I was just barely beaten for Best Germany by Andrew Neumann, the tournament winner. We both had 12 centers as Germany on top of the board, but the differential between him and the next highest player was greater than mine, so he got a tiny bit higher score. I'd like to reflect on the irony that the first time I wasn't invited to WACcon, I showed up. On top of that, I brought home some trophies, some very cool trophies. All in all, a great weekend.*

### **Siobhan Granvold**



*I do not usually write these accounts of diplomacy tournaments. This is because someone else usually does it. But, I have been asked twice in the past few days to offer an account of my experience at WACcon 2008, so here goes nothing.*

*I had, until this point, only played Diplomacy within the Bay Area. To those of you who also have played in the Bay Area with any frequency, you know this can come to feel like a bit of a small pot on occasion. So, when Edi told me that they would figure out how to get me the travel funds, I was excited. It was a bad weekend for me, that's for sure. But I could not turn down the opportunity to travel to Seattle with my airfare, con fare, and room and board taken care of.*

*That said, I had three objectives for this tournament. The first was for Andy Hull, who as many Bay Area players know has an inexplicable connection to playing Austria. When he told us he was going to be unable to*

*make it to Seattle, I told him that if I drew Austria that I would do him proud. Now I meant this as a bit of a joke, as my exact words were, "I'll die gloriously for you", as that is what he does as Austria 80% of the time. He told me, instead, to reach ten centers or bust. (The busting went unsaid, but I believe the intent of it was there). Second, I wanted to play in a game with Eric Mead. Up until this convention we played in two (possibly three) full tournaments with one another and have never been on a board together. The odds of this were low, as they were not large tournaments, and sheer odds should have dictated us being on a board together. The first time I met him I knew that any game I played with him would be a good one, not necessarily that I thought I would do well, but that our personalities would mix in such a way as to make for a fun game, and he said much the same to me. Third, I wanted to make it to the top board. What I would do once I got there was irrelevant. I figured that I would sort that out if and when I got there. So, these were my three goals in coming to Seattle aside from, of course, having a good time.*

*I very happy I went, if for no other reason but because it gave me a chance to play with a group that I was much less familiar with. I learned a lot, both about the game and about the players as well. But, my one regret was that Eric and I never did get to play together on a board.*



**Eric Mead**

*But, two out of my three aspirations were met. And the one that wasn't was the only one I could do nothing to affect.*

*So thanks again to the Seattle crew and all those who made the efforts to get me up there. I plan to make all the attempts possible to be back next year and travel around to others as well. I enjoyed the tournament, and look forward to traveling more. I am still learning A LOT in this game, and I've got a ways to go yet.*

*CHEERS, and thanks for a great weekend!*

### **Dave Maletsky**

*I've been trying to think of a story from WAC, but all I've been able to remember are two things: LeMere [having a few too many], and the board I was on where the east raced up to the stalemate line & held. You're better off nabbing me within about a week of an event... the mind*



goes as old age sets in!



[I had to include Dave, as his response so typifies his Diplomacy persona.] And for those of you that are interested in the numbers:

## Final Results

<b>Player</b>	<b>Place</b>
Andrew Neumann	1
Jon Saul	2
Brian Shelden	3
Graham Woodring	4
Adam Silverman	5
Nathan Barnes	6
Edi Birsan	7
David Maletsky	8
Jake Mannix	9
Stephen Wiengarten	10
Micah Krabill	11
Siobhan Granvold	12
Kyra Olson	13
Andy Bartalone	14
Eric Ozog	15
Mark Zoffel	16
Kirk Petersen	17
JT Fest	18
Blane Hickey	19
Ken LeMere	20
Eric Mead	21
Jim O'Kelley	22
Matt Shields	23
Chris Prichard	24
Mary Kuhner	25
Ryan Blaney	26
Chris Brand	27
Nathan Schlaud	28
Johathan Keith	29
William McDuff	30

### Best Country

Austria	Stephen Wiengarten
England	Brian Shelden
France	Jon Saul
Germany	Andrew Neumann
Italy	Siobhan Granvold
Russia	Graham Woodring
Turkey	Nathan Barnes

### Player

### Other Awards

### Player

Best Pirate	Jim O'Kelley
Best Stab	David Maletsky
WACcon Award	Jon Saul

Mark Zoffel and I were really pleased with how the whole event came together, and can not thank all the attendees enough for coming out and supporting WACcon.

We'll see you in January 2009! Your Hosts,

### **Mark Zoffel**



And

### **Nathan Barnes**



*As much as everybody loves Nathan, WACcon is probably not the best place to go the week that you give up drinking! You'll wind up like a scene in Airplane – "I picked the wrong week to give up drinking...I picked the wrong week to give up sniffing glue...I picked the wrong week to give up shooting heroin."*

# MANORCON XXVI

**Stamford Hall, University of Leicester. 2pm Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July – 2pm Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

If you've never been to ManorCon before, you might want to start by reading the back of the flyer first. If you're a regular attendee, then keep reading.

Following on from last year's successful move to Leicester, ManorCon will once again be held at Stamford Hall, University of Leicester, in 2008.

**This year, we have four big pieces of news to bring you.**

Firstly, we are now offering Internet Booking. The booking is handled by [www.boardgamers.org.uk](http://www.boardgamers.org.uk), and the payment is processed through PayPal (which can accept payment from a PayPal account or a credit card). A link to the booking system can be found from the ManorCon website, <http://www.manorcon.org.uk/book.htm>. Because we are now accepting bookings over the Internet, we will no longer accept foreign bookings without payment in advance. Foreign attendees should book using the Internet Booking system.

Secondly, at ManorCon this year, we will be accepting bookings for ManorCon XXVII in 2009 – so you can book your place for next year before you go home at the end of the convention.

Thirdly, we've changed the bank account name. After 26 years, you can now actually make your cheques out to "ManorCon".

And fourthly, from this year, ManorCon is the new home of the UK SpielChamps. Formerly known as Intergame, this is a tournament for teams of four players. The tournament consists of four rounds, each round being a different game, and each player competes against three different opponents in each round. The highest scoring team across the four rounds wins the tournament, and the top four teams are invited to represent the UK at the European Spielchamps in Essen, Germany in October. The games have not yet been chosen, but will be announced well in advance to allow plenty of time to practice. Players who wish to take part should indicate this on the booking form, and should try and form teams of four in advance - the organisers will help people find teammates, and if necessary, scratch teams may be formed on the day. There is a forum at <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/SpielchampsUK/> where the organisers can be contacted.

Once again this year, we have a limited number of twins, about 5 minutes walk from the convention hall. However, for various reasons that are too complicated to explain here, we can only accept bookings for twins up until mid-April. If you do not book by mid-April, you will not be getting a twin room!

ManorCon works because of the number of people who volunteer to help. One such way that you can help is by spending an hour on the registration desk. If you could spare an hour of your time, it would be appreciated. Please tick the appropriate box on the booking form.

P.T.O.

**To book, please complete BOTH SIDES OF the form and return by 20<sup>th</sup> June (13<sup>th</sup> April if a twin room is required) to: Neil Duncan, MANORCON, 25 Sarum Hill, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 8SS, UK. Please make cheques payable to: ManorCon.**

**This form should be returned to Neil before 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008 (13<sup>th</sup> April 2008 if a twin room is required). PRE-BOOKINGS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE.** However, there will probably be some rooms available if you arrive and pay on the door (we wouldn't like to guarantee which type of single room will still be available at this stage). Please note that room prices will be higher if not booked in advance.

The prices are subject to variation in the event of VAT changes. Cancellations may be made up to June 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 for a full refund. It is the responsibility of delegates to look after their valuables. ManorCon cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items.

**If you are booking a twin**, please note that we may not be able to offer any twins. We will initially accept your booking, but may be unable to fulfill the booking. If this is the case, we will contact you, and will give you the choice of converting your booking to two singles, or cancelling your accommodation for a full refund.

Data Protection Act : Details of your booking are stored on computers. We do not sell our mailing lists to any other individuals or organisations, but we may share them with other games conventions.

Please tick here if you would like information about other UK Conventions to be sent to you via email ☐

**Please sign here**.....

If you've never been to ManorCon before and are wondering what it's all about, ManorCon is the largest board games convention in the UK. It's held annually in July, in one of the halls of residence of Leicester University. Approximately 200 gamers come along for a weekend of intensive board gaming, some entering tournaments, others simply playing socially. It's great fun, and makes a change from your humdrum everyday life. If you've never been before, why not try it? Further details of the tournaments and other events can be found below.

With so many people at the Convention, you should be able to find plenty of other people who want to play the same sort of games as you. Either look around for someone setting up a game and ask if you can join in, or look for a group already playing a game, and ask if they know where you can get into a game. If you see a game that looks interesting, then ask about it. Most people are happy to teach a new player. Alternatively, try asking one of the Tournament Directors to help get you into a game, or if you don't know how to find him, one of the ManorCon Committee will be "on duty" to answer queries, solve problems, etc., throughout the weekend – we can help to point you in the right direction.

The aim of ManorCon is to play games and have fun, and our aim is to help you to succeed in doing both!

Tournaments will include: Diplomacy, 18XX, Puerto Rico, St Petersburg, Settlers of Catan, Acquire, Imperial, Midnight Party and Croquet. There will also be plenty of non-tournament games on offer – far too numerous to mention! There will also be a games stall, a second hand games sale, a pop quiz and a treasure hunt.

For further details please contact:

Steve Jones, 59 Sudeley Walk, Putnoe, Bedford, MK41 8JH, UK Tel. +44 (0)1234 405878  
email us at [info@manorcon.org.uk](mailto:info@manorcon.org.uk)  
or check out our website at <http://www.manorcon.org.uk>

To book, please complete BOTH SIDES of the form below and return to Neil Duncan, address overleaf.

NB. Please complete a SEPARATE form for EACH person booking

Name				Male/Female
Address				
Telephone no.		email:		
If this will be your first time at ManorCon, please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If you are willing to help out on the registration desk, please tick here:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	If you are a qualified first-aider, please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/>	If you wish to take part in the UK Spielchamps, please tick here: <input type="checkbox"/>	
If non-resident, please tick to indicate which days you will be attending: Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/>				
Registration fee: £5 for one day, £8 for the weekend. (NB. If paying on the door, prices rise to £6 and £10)		Enter £5 or £8		
Accommodation: <input type="checkbox"/> £29 per night for a single <input type="checkbox"/> £29 per person per night for a twin (see note overleaf on booking twins) <input type="checkbox"/> £45 per night for a single en-suite (NB. If paying on the door, prices will be £2 extra per person per night)	Friday	Enter £29/£45		
	Saturday	Enter £29/£45		
	Sunday	Enter £29/£45		
	Total enclosed:			
If twin, name of person sharing with:				

P.T.O.

# WACCon 2008 through the Eyes of a First-Time Traveler

By Siobhan Granvold

## PREFACE

I do not usually write these accounts of diplomacy tournaments. This is because someone else does it! But, I have been asked twice in the past few days to offer an account of my experience at WACcon 2008. My shorter account you can find in Nathan Barnes' article elsewhere in this issue. But I also wanted to provide a more detailed account...so here goes nothing, again!

## THE BUILD UP TO WACCON

As I explained in Nathan's article, I had three objectives for this tournament. The first was because of Andy Hull, who as many Bay Area players know has an inexplicable connection to playing Austria. When he told us he was going to be unable to make it to Seattle, I told him that if I drew Austria that I would do him proud. Now I meant this as a bit of a joke, as my exact words were, "I'll die gloriously for you," as that is what he does as Austria 80 percent of the time. He told me, instead, to reach 10 centers or bust. (The busting went unsaid, but I believe the intent of it was there.)

Secondly, I wanted to play in a game with Eric Mead. Up until this convention we played in two (possibly three) full tournaments with one another and have never been on a board together. The odds of this were low, as they were not large tournaments, and sheer odds should have dictated us being on a board together. The first time I met him, I knew that any game I played with him would be a good one, not necessarily that I thought I would do well, but that our personalities would mix in such a way as to make for a fun game, and he said much the same to me.

Third, I wanted to make it to the top board. What I would do once I got there was irrelevant. I figured that I would sort that out if and when I got there.

So, these were my three goals in coming to Seattle aside from, of course, having a good time.

The morning I flew out of Sacramento was bad for me. I had, just the day before, moved, and at eight o'clock the night before I flew, my ride to the airport cancelled on me. I called just about everyone I knew and begged, pleaded, and cried to get a ride. That might be a bit of an exaggeration, but it conveys how I was feeling after having spent a day moving heavy furniture and other arduous tasks. On top of that, I was up until about 2:30 in the morning doing laundry, packing, and finishing getting everything set up in my new apartment.

My cat, also, decided to run away at some part of the evening. I have no doubt that she was just disoriented by all the goings-on that day, but searching for my cat at 10

or 10:30 at night was not fun.

So, Friday morning I woke up to a phone call from my ride obscenely early (around 4:15 I think), and we get on our way to the airport. I've made myself some coffee, I'm grumpy, but awake and ready to go. I boarded the plane with little incident, and did not sleep a wink the entire way to Seattle. I was heading to the convention with only 1.5 hours of sleep in me, not a great start.

Now in the time I was waiting for my ride (Nathan Barnes) to pick me up for the airport occurred the first stab of the entire tournament. It was not intentional, but it was slightly annoying after the night and morning I had. Nathan thought that Andrew Neumann was getting in at 11 (1.5 to 2 hours after me), and so I waited for Andrew to get off of his flight. He never did. I called Nathan, and eventually we gave up waiting for him and left. Turns out that Andrew was getting in to his LAYOVER in Denver (I think) at 11, not Seattle. Nathan misread the information. So the Nathan Barnes SUPPORT Siobhan to WAC came a couple seasons late. Stab No. 1. But, no hard feelings, we went to lunch, talked and waited for the others to arrive.

## ROUND NUMBER ONE - Friday Night

I was ready. Despite the lack of sleep and stress that I brought with me, by the time 6 rolled around I was set to play a good game of Diplomacy. And I drew Italy. Which I didn't mind so much. It is probably my third favorite country behind Austria (No. 1) and Germany (No. 2).

But then they called the rest of the board.

I don't remember a lot of the night, but I remember immediately knowing it was going to be a painful round. I know I did okay, but I can not, for the life of me, tell you what happened in the game. There were (especially on one side of the board) a lot of behind-the-scenes personal politics and conflicts, which were sure to (and inevitably did) affect the game. Lucky me.

It sounds, at this moment, as though I'm griping about the way it all went. I'm actually not. The games that annoy me the most are the ones I remember most fondly. This game found its way up there.

The game ended in a four-way draw between myself at 8 centers, and the three others at 8, 9 and 9<sup>1</sup>. I couldn't tell you who I even played with, or who stood where. It was one of those games. Part of me wanted to continue the

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<sup>1</sup> The other players were Jim O'Kelley as a nine-center Austria, Andy Bartalone as a nine-center England, and Edi Birsan as an eight-center France.

game, but knew better than to prolong that setup.



My room was taken care of<sup>2</sup>, and I ended up on the bed with pretty much everyone else camping out on the floor in the next room. I felt a little indulgent, but took the bed as a bit of an advantage. If everyone else got a bad night of sleep on the floor, maybe I'd have a slight edge. Didn't do much for me in the end, but it was a thought...

#### **ROUND NUMBER TWO - Saturday Morning**

New day, new board. I was ready. Again. I woke up around 8:30 or so, and Chris Brand (Vancouver) and I went out for some coffee. Side note: apparently an English accent makes "tea" sound like "venti latte." He and I couldn't quite figure it all out. But, thus armed with caffeine and some optimism, we set back to the WAC.

I sat down with Eric Mead, and we talked about our mutual desire to finally be on a Diplomacy board together. Alas, it was not to be. The boards were called, and yet again, I rolled my eyes at the arrangement. I was playing Russia (my once favorite country that is rapidly falling in ranks). It was going to be an adventure...and so it was.

Andrew Neumann (Germany), who I love to work with (when it can work), and I worked something out early, and I talked with Turkey about an RT, and Austria (Graham Woodring) about an AR, and it became apparent that killing Turkey was the issue of East. Well, that was harder than it seemed.

I was fatally honest with my Austrian neighbor for the ENTIRE game, barring possibly one exception. And every single time, he lied to me, stab No. 2. I learned quick and early in that game why Graham was called

"Weasel." I really, really wanted to work with him, but he wouldn't.

We bottlenecked quickly and fatally, allowing Andrew (my only real ally) to grow exponentially bigger every year. So, Italy and I worked some stuff out, and he sent some fleets east to help with the Turkish and Austrian situations. Well, every year kept taking longer, and I genuinely believe that Andrew wanted to help me, but it became increasingly obvious to me that he couldn't. But, by the time that I realized this, it was too late.

Austria and Turkey finally coordinated and attacked me. I, being frustrated yet again, gave voice to the nagging issue in the back of my mind. These problems in the east were only going to HELP Andrew top this board by even more. But all the AT gave me was, "well ... go attack him, and we'll see." Which didn't go over well with me because it came down to the fact that they were both tying me up around the Black Sea and telling me to go the other way.

They did not let up on the attacks for one season, saying that I needed to move the other direction before they would move away as well. Well, that would be an issue for me, as it would mean losing both Sev and Rum (and being at five centers, that was quite a blow). You can imagine I wasn't thrilled with this. So, it drug on, and who topped the board? Andrew Neumann. By how much? Well, let's just say that board was his "Best Germany" in a close race. I was not happy. I was eliminated...making for a slightly aggrieved Siobhan.

#### **ROUND THREE - Saturday Night**

Following this even poorer showing, I was more determined than ever to do well in the third round. Eric and I figured that just due to the odds of the board draws, that we would almost certainly end up on a board together. I wasn't ready, but I was in the mindset. I enjoy Diplomacy conventions so much mostly due to the fact that I enjoy being around most (operative word is most) of the people there. And this break between games was no different, we talked, ate, and drank and had a wonderful time. Diplomacy players, by nature, are social creatures and we revel in being around other people.

So, there I am, nowhere near ready, but resigned to make something respectable of this tournament, waiting for the boards to be called. And what do you know? I get my favorite country, Austria, the very same one from goal No. 1.

So, here I was, ready to prove something to myself and everyone else. I was happy, I'd just had a glass of wine, and the board looked fun. And it was. It was eternally frustrating, but it was fun. I'm not sure I played that game right at all turns, but overall I think I did well. The game for me peaked at the moment when I had to waive several builds due to a growth of three (and a disband) in one season, I've never had to waive builds before,

<sup>2</sup> The North American Diplomacy Federation maintains a travel fund to help people attend tournaments. For more information, contact Dave Maletsky at dmaletsky "of" comcast.net.



and even if all of my home centers had been open, I wouldn't have been able to build them all. That was a fun feeling. I did indeed yell "For ANDY!" At the moment I built my 10th unit.

Now, that being said, by the point at which we moved the game downstairs at 1 a.m. or so<sup>3</sup>, we had already called three draw votes. And each one was vetoed, by a different person each time. Tensions were high and a couple of us wanted out.

When we did move downstairs, there was some wine circulating, and a few people had drank a few more than they probably should have, and others still had a few more than the few the others had, and that made running commentary on the board interesting. The running commentary was hilarious, and some of the suggestions were beyond ludicrous, but it kept the mood on the board light as we drug on through the wee hours of the morning. Had it been earlier, I might have pressed in an attempt at topping the board, but as it was, I was happy with the game, and it paid off. I squeaked into the seventh spot on the Top Board, shockingly enough. Goal No. 3, check!

Tired and in need of sleep, Nathan and I did the one thing that made the most sense to us in the moment, we tried to get a board going around 4 o'clock that morning. And I have no doubt had we found 7 people willing to play a board, we would have done just that. I don't know what possessed us to try and squeeze in another board, but we did try...

#### **ROUND FOUR - Sunday Morning - TOP BOARD**

Now this was a board that the fates decided to set up just to see how quickly it would blow up. I am sure of this. As soon as positions were read we all knew how bad this could end up being. But it ended up being worse for me than I had anticipated. I could not make an alliance work, and Graham (from my Russia board) again did not truly trust me ever. Andrew stabbed me, quite effectively, and with that, took the board and the tournament. Congrats to him again.

My favorite moment in the game came in Fall 01, when I was reading the orders. I read my own, which were terribly droll, and then picked up Italy's. Now Italy was (apparently) very concerned with what he was going to do with his Army in Venice. And so his orders were as follows:

A Venice H  
A Apulia -> Venice  
F Ionian CONVOY Apulia -> Venice

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<sup>3</sup> There are no time limits at WAC. The Saturday night games were played in meeting rooms and a restaurant. When the restaurant closed, the boards that were still playing paused to relocate to a sitting area off of the downstairs lobby.

Now, of course Apulia was meant to go to Tunis, but this set of orders left me speechless for a few moments before the board just broke down laughing. This misorder made everything that happened later in the game much better just out of sheer amusement factor.

Italy was eliminated first, and then I went a couple of years later myself. There was little I could do as England, at four centers and with France, Germany and Russia all determined to see me fall. What puzzled me, and a couple of others on the board was 1) How I managed to keep control of the North Sea until right before I died, and 2) Why the hell I didn't die much earlier!

Two theories cropped up to explain these two. The first was that it was due to my own merit. The second was that my enemies just couldn't get it together all at once. Either way, it was wierd, but funny. The board was intense, and I have no regrets about most of the things that happened in the game. I just hope that next time I represent myself better.

#### **REFLECTIONS**

I very happy I went, if for no other reason but because it gave me a chance to play with a group that I was much less familiar with. I learned a lot, both about the game and about the players as well. But, my one regret was that Eric and I never did get to play together on a board.

But, two out of my three aspirations were met. And the one that wasn't was the only one I could do nothing to affect.

I did not pay too much attention to the boards that I was not on, and so cannot recount those escapades, but I hope that this was sufficient for now. I hope others will put in their perspectives on the tournament and how it went. I'd like to see how the perspectives change. :)

So thanks again to the Seattle crew and all those who made the efforts to get me up there. I plan to make all the attempts possible to be back next year and travel around to others as well.

I enjoyed to tournament, and look forward to traveling more. I am still learning A LOT in this game, and I've got a ways to go yet.

**Cheers**, and thanks for a great weekend!

***Siobhan hopes to travel to many more Diplomacy tournaments. So she doesn't bankrupt the club travel fund, I think we need to be on the lookout for a long-distance Sugar Daddy to sponsor her. I'd volunteer myself, but my wife Heather would get jealous, and besides, I didn't win the lottery yet.***

# Diplomacy World Writing Contest Results

While we still didn't get the quantity of participation I was hoping for, I am glad to report that the latest Diplomacy World writing contest – the second since I returned as Lead Editor – at least generated the quality! All three of the prize-winning entries are well done, and deserving of praise. Plus, the authors get to enjoy both the prestige of having thie name in Diplomacy World and the prizes they've been awarded! Keep your eyes open, I plan on running another Diplomacy World Writing Contest sometime in the next few issues. Now, go look in the mirror and ask yourself why YOU didn't submit an entry this time?

## Diplomacy World Writing Contest Winner



3<sup>rd</sup> Place:

### **Re-Thinking Diplomacy Strategy**

By Alfred Nicol

Whilst many strategy articles can provide helpful insights into the game and its various tactical conundrums I would like to hypothesize that they approach the game from a fundamentally flawed perspective. It is the purpose of this article to challenge two of the most widely held views of the diplomacy game; that of opening strategies and the principles of stabbing. *Both opening strategies and stabbing are in danger of overlooking, and even undermining the most distinctive feature of the game Diplomacy, the diplomacy itself!*

#### **Opening Strategies**

Go to any diplomacy web page and amongst the majority of the tactical articles, there will be a detailed analysis of the various openings available to each nation. These make for fascinating reading and attribute a certain degree of "chess like" gravitas to the hobby. In fact the openings are even named in a manner analogous to the openings of chess such as; The Bulgarian Gambit, Bismarck Opening or Churchill. Many players place great store by the advice they offer and discuss the relative merits of each suggestion. I have even written such articles myself but have now decided, and shall attempt to argue, that they are fundamentally flawed.

Such openings are suitable for the game of chess. This is a game which is one hundred percent tactical with no diplomacy at all. Diplomacy is, however, a game all about diplomacy, and this should be the driving engine of a players' decision making. Opening strategies turn the game into a purely mathematical, logical experience. This is an understandable mistake to make, given that there are no dice and certain moves can be guaranteed to succeed or fail. *However it is diplomacy that should*

*determine everything.*

Let me give an example. For England, the best opening in my move is a German alliance against France. The channel can either be demilitarized or taken by stealth. Germany can be persuaded to support you into Belgium and the real conflict begins 02. An alliance with France against Germany is safer, but means that the already powerful France will grow quicker and get indestructibly entrenched. England will always play second fiddle and the best that can be hoped for is a draw. So one plays the snail removal strategy, and all is going well until Germany takes Belgium, or even supports France into it and their fleet steals into the North Sea: England's doom is more or less sealed. What was wrong with the opening strategy? Nothing, other than it failed to take into account that the game is about diplomacy and nothing works without it. The reliability and capability of your allies is all that matters.

One more example: Turkey takes Bulgaria and agrees, with the support from a Serbian army of Austro-Hungarian descent, that it will move on Rumania in an autumn stab, followed up with a crafty fleet from Ankara to the Black Sea. The trap is set, Russia has been promised a juggernaut but is about to take an early bath, and a Turkish one at that. However, Serbia supports the Russian fleet into Bulgaria which has no defensive support (it was moving). Furthermore, the Italian army isn't convoyed into Tunis (the dot will still be there in 02), and goes to Greece instead. The Turkish Balkan attack is decapitated, and matters become even more perilous when the army from Moscow occupies Armenia via Sevastopol. Turkey's hopes are ruined. What was wrong with the anti-Russian alliance with Austria-Hungary?

Nothing other than it failed to take account of the fact that this is a game of diplomacy, where alliances and the ability to trust your allies are of infinitely greater import than any mechanistic opening strategy.

So what do I suggest as an alternative? *Play people, not nations*. The most important question is not which is the most effective opening, as this in itself is unanswerable, but rather who is likely to make the most competent and reliable ally. Therefore throw the opening strategies out of the window and consider your potential allies. Talk to them all without making or offering firm commitments either way. If it is by e-mail make sure you are the quickest and promptest player on the board, returning e-mails quickly and forming nice, chatty and authoritative relationships with whoever will reciprocate. This correspondence will enable you to evaluate the two most important questions: who is reliable, and who knows the game well? Good players make better allies. Bad players often stab unnecessarily, mess up moves, and can be easily persuaded by other players of things that simply are not the case. Weak players may seem to be good allies as they can be manipulated and won't accurately be able to measure the relative value of any deal struck. All this is true, too true, and equally applies to all their dealings with the other players. So always choose to be allied with the stronger players.

My personal preference is to try to weigh up the two strongest players on the board and ensure I am allied with one and plotting the downfall of the other. Reliability is not something that is easy to tell when playing by email. You can't read their faces or see them sneaking off to the kitchen for a beer just as Germany leaves the room. There is, however, a direct correlation between the quality of the player and their willingness to stab. Any player will stab for the solo, but the good player won't put short term gain ahead of long term strategy. You can, however, be forewarned of an impending stab through a careful analysis of peoples' language and possible change of tone, even if it is in an email. Then ask, what have they got to gain from sustaining the alliance compared to breaking it? If the answer weighs on the side of them breaking the alliance then prepare yourself for the worst.

So first and foremost when making strategies and plans, don't base your decision on the nation you are playing and the associated openings, rather base all decisions on your perceptions of your neighbors' ability and reliability which can be gleaned from diplomacy.

### **Stabbing**

This leads on to my second reassessment of popular diplomacy folklore and strategy writing; the infamous stab. Ask any player to describe diplomacy to you and within three or four minutes they will have mentioned the potential unreliability and downright treachery of the game. People encourage this further with the now popular "Happy stabbing" epithet. Article after article

discusses the optimal time to stab and its integral part to any good player's tactical decision making.

The pre-eminence of the stab has also found fertile ground in the growth of play by email games where unreliability and duplicity are harder to read and easier to dish out with fewer consequences. You won't have to see the tear-filled stare of disbelief across the table, one can always just delete the email, and you probably won't ever have to play with the same group ever again, so stories and memories of your evil deeds will never haunt you. This is obviously not the case in face to face diplomacy with a group of friends. Practice the stab too frequently and you may win your first game but you will never win again. It is for this and the following reasons that I think the emphasis on stabbing is in my opinion wrong. As with the emphasis on openings it doesn't take into account the driving feature of the game, and that is diplomacy. The game presents one with wonderful opportunities for Machiavellian behaviour and we can all remember successfully executed executions as we can remember being on the receiving end of such dastardly behaviour. But this misses the point of diplomacy. Diplomacy is about building relationships across the table. Diplomacy is based on trust not dishonesty. Therefore the good diplomacy player is not the person who stabs but the person who is loyal. Diplomacy isn't about treachery but reliability. Whilst this is contrary to popular opinion it is however an approach that takes seriously the diplomatic nature of the game. The basic mechanisms of movement and conflict, combined with the equality of forces means that no success can be gained from a nation working alone. Every solo is built upon sustained trusting relationships based on mutual cooperation and respect. Therefore don't enter the game with stabs in mind, but with trust. This isn't in any way ethically driven; it is entirely based on simple principles of utility. The reliable player will do better than the unreliable. In practice it is fairly clear when two or more nations are in an alliance. If one then stabs the other for no real gain then everyone worth their diplomacy salt should take note and be wary. If they've done it to Italy then they will do it to you. In practice never stab for short term gain. If England moves on Sweden or Saint-Petersburg they will gain a single unit but probably end up helping Turkey or Austria-Hungary much more. They will also ruin the chance of forming an important mid game alliance with the now decidedly angry Russian bear. One must always consider what one will gain from the stab compared to:

- What other people will indirectly gain
- What you will lose in the loss of an ally
- What you will lose in terms of your perceived reliability.

Unless the stab is absolutely fatal to the recipient and opens up huge opportunities for you, then according to my principles it almost always isn't worth it. Some practical examples might include a stealing of a centre

from an ally when they are engaged elsewhere, or entering into a previously agreed demilitarised zone. A clumsy stab will perhaps give an immediate boost but the long term indirect consequences are often much harder to measure, so don't do it. In an Anglo-French alliance a stab to the channel may get you Brest but Italy will gobble up the Iberian centres and Marseilles.

Germany might revitalise and set its sights on Scandinavia, or Russia might be emboldened by your distractions and restart their Northern campaign, who knows? An attack on your neighbour may well yield you some supply centres but could result in another player reaping much bigger rewards from the disbands you inevitably bring about. Therefore my suggestion is that good allies, not good stabbers make the best diplomacy players. Once in a game I will aim to forge one lasting alliance which I will have every intention of keeping for the majority, if not the whole of the game. I will only stab that ally to prevent them from getting a definite solo, or to get a solo myself. They know that from the start because they will be a good diplomacy player. My only real bit of

duplicity will be in the opening few moves when you can hardly tell people who you are going to attack. My other offensives won't be declared but they won't be veiled in endless fake promises. This way one can ensure that players will take your offers seriously and you will stand a much greater chance of doing best the very thing that matters most in diplomacy; and that is diplomacy itself.

### **Conclusion**

So in conclusion Diplomacy is a game driven by diplomacy. Therefore don't rely on opening strategies that take no or little account of the ability and reliability of your potential allies. And if diplomacy is at the heart then avoid short term and excessive stabs as they will undermine your chances of engaging in the meaningful and sustained diplomatic relationships necessary to winning the game.

*I am very happy to see Alfred Nicol return with his second Diplomacy World contribution. I hope he'll become a familiar face around here!*

## **Diplomacy World Writing Contest Winner**



**2<sup>nd</sup> Place**

### **Rethinking Solo Strategy: Strategy vs. Tactics**

by Bill Coffin

Conventional wisdom in Diplomacy requires that if you are serious about getting a solo victory, then you need to plan for it from the beginning of the game. This is certainly a point brought up time and again by the late and legendary Richard Sharp, in whose book, The Game of Diplomacy, every chapter on national strategy outlines the 18 centers that should be targeted for solo glory.



Now, I hardly have Sharp's pedigree in this game, especially since I have only one solo win to my credit -

as Austria-Hungary. But in the many games I have played that have ended with a solo win, I must wonder if an 18-center strategy was really being followed. After all, it's possible to win without any larger strategy except to just beat up whoever you can. These games often end in solos not so much by the victor winning but by everybody else on the board losing; i.e., failing to stop a solo bid. It happens often enough, in fact, that one might not be blamed for eschewing large-scale solo strategy altogether, in favor of simply swinging for the fences and hoping that the game has a player makeup that will allow for an easy solo outcome.

That attitude is certainly one I've encountered more than once in my Diplomacy career. But for me, it's all a bit reckless. After all, I'm in this thing to win. I'm certainly not in it to make friends at the table - the buddy factor will come in after the smoke clears. But to win means to get a solo; and to get a solo, I need those 18 centers. But do I really have to shoot for those 18 centers? Is there a better way, or at least a more sensible way to go about it? I think there may be.

In every Diplomacy game I have played where there has been a solo outcome, the tipping point of the game always seemed to center on taking out two other player countries, rather than collection of supply centers. Just as Calhamer himself set the winning criteria for the game at 18 SCs, because once you have those it's a foregone conclusion that you'll eventually collect the rest, so do I think that once you have total control of two other countries, your solo is pretty much in the bag. But why? I think the reason for this is simple. Even though any two given neighbors are going to give up 6 or 7 SCs total in addition to the 3 or 4 you start with, to accomplish those takeovers will require the conquest of at least 3-4 neutrals in the process. Conservatively, this gives you 12 SCs at a minimum. Picking up the other 6 becomes a trickier matter, but to look at it like this is to take a tactical approach to what is a strategic problem. And fundamentally, Diplomacy is a strategic, rather than tactical, game. Entirely too many players see it as a form of Risk where you can negotiate with your opponents, but the game is much, much more than that, and I think those who understand that are those who are more likely to solo.



Looking at the game strategically, here is a basic example of how the "two-nation" approach to soloing might work. You begin the game by finding a neighboring ally (or allies) and a neighboring enemy. You dog-pile your common enemy, both to grab some SCs and to build trust with your partner(s). Assuming that endeavor doesn't fly off the rails, you take its successful execution to build further trust with your long-term partner. Then you either double-team another neighbor, or else you both go off in separate directions. Perhaps you will repeat the double-team magic with other countries, while always thinking that you and your original ally will stick this through to the end. Ultimately, once a second target country has fallen, you are getting near to solo territory, and now is the time to execute that stab of your original ally you've been thinking about since the Fall of 1901. The stab goes off, and if you've done it right, even a well-executed rally by the remaining powers cannot stop you from getting the solo. Sounds

easy. But is it?

Let's take England as an example of how this whole thing might look in practice. In this hypothetical game, Albion teams with Germany to take out France in a quick and ruthless coordinated campaign. This leaves England holding BRE, POR, SPA and MAR. Germany gets PAR, BEL and HOL and turns east to contend with Russia. Meanwhile England uses his southern naval position to jump into the Western Med and give Italy the business. (Why poor Italy always seems to be taken aback by this turn of events boggles me, by the way). Perhaps working in concert with Turkey, or even Austria-Hungary, England grabs TUN and ROM, while his partner grabs VEN. NAP is a flex center, and might either go to England or perhaps his partner. Anybody cagey would almost certainly try to deny England NAP since it also provides access to points east and further expansion. So let's just assume for the moment that NAP stays out of English hands. During this time, it's reasonable to assume that England has also grabbed NWY, and might very well have either done the predictable shoot-and-scoot into STP or worked with Germany to spearhead a more meaningful invasion of the Motherland. Let's assume that STP is in English hands.

At this stage, England is sitting pretty with France and Italy eliminated, and itself holding 11 centers - EDI, LVP, LON, NWY, STP, BRE, POR, SPA, MAR, TUN and ROM - with the opportunity of stabbing his partners to grab perhaps PAR, NAP, BEL, HOL and DEN. To gain 5 centers in a single pickup would be no small feat, and would require major diplomacy up to this point to allay any fears from friends and acquaintances that such a stab will not occur. But it is possible. (Especially in a situation where England is allying with Germany; that situation is just begging to be exploited.) Provided that England can cross a stalemate line somewhere - and if he's already hitting Italy he's well on his way - after the big stab, it will be clear that England is on his way to a solo. The real question will be whether the rest of the board has the wherewithal to stop him. At this point, the game truly does become a tactical exercise, since one's strategy has already been played out. But I think that by following the strategic aim of conquering two countries, rather than the tactical aim of collecting 18 SCs, one might find himself more easily in the position of a viable solo bid. Of course, that's just my opinion, and mostly as a bystander of other successful solo bids. But I will say this: the one time I tried to play this way, that's when my solo win came up. And it never felt particularly difficult, either, so take that for what you will. Happy stabbing!

***Bill Coffin wants me to remind you not to worry if he's playing England and you are playing Germany...he won't stab you. Trust me.***



# Diplomacy World Writing Contest Winner



1<sup>st</sup> Place

## The One-Dot Victory

By Chris Sham

Every Diplomacy player has heard the legend of the Austrian (or Italian, in some versions) who was knocked down to a single supply center and managed to spring back to total victory. It's an astounding story, thoroughly inspiring and almost impossible to believe. I'm willing to accept that it really happens from time to time, but like many people, I've never really considered it anything more than a weird fluke before. More often than not, I hear this story repeated to new players who haven't done so well in the early game and need some reassurance. (This reassurance is usually delivered by somebody who needs the newbie to hold off a third-party attack for a few rounds, after which the newbie can be formally introduced to the concept of "back-stabbing".)



But now I'd like to take a more serious look at the One-dot Victory, and see what practical advice I can give on how to come back from only one supply center; that is, after all, a disaster that can happen to anyone. But if more of us had the skill and tenacity to come back from the brink of defeat more consistently, I think the whole game would become more challenging and interesting. To achieve such consistent survival, players need reliable strategies to lead the way. This is my attempt at defining such a strategy.

Dumb luck aside, I think you probably don't have many military options in a situation like that, which means we should be able to work out the ideal One-dot Victory strategies quite easily. This will necessarily be a fairly general overview, since the collapse down to one supply center can happen in a number of different ways, ranging from half-hearted opportunism by so-called allies, to the full onslaught of a major alliance, and so the diplomatic tricks needed to survive will be very different in each case.

Let's start with an assumption: When you're down to your last supply center, your only immediate concern is

survival. Re-establishing and expanding your empire are obviously also important considerations, but for now they are moot points if you can't stop other, bigger powers from crushing your last supply. With only one army or fleet (which must be used defensively at first), you have virtually no hope of fighting off a larger power in battle, so you need to resort to some serious diplomatic activity.

Most obviously, you need to talk to your immediate neighbors, who undoubtedly have their forces camped right outside your last city. You've lost most of your supply centers, and it was inevitably to one or more of these people, so we can assume that relations are not currently good between you. If nothing else, they probably feel contempt for you and your puny military. This is a situation that calls for desperate measures, and you may have to totally empty your diplomatic pouch to secure your border now. Exactly how you go about this will, of course, depend on who you're dealing with, but I suspect a useful general plan for this situation would run something like this:

Start by trying to convince your neighbor that you respect/forgive the recent attack against you, and by offering an alliance against your common enemies. This would be the ideal outcome for you, since your new "ally" may even help you expand into new territory.

If that fails, try to use the "don't be distracted by little old me, or your real enemies will catch you by surprise" routine to convince your neighbor to simply leave you alone. Emphasize the short-term consequences ("massive enemy invasions against unguarded borders!") and try to steer your opponent's mind away from the long-term risk of letting you stay alive.

If all else fails, beg, plead and do anything else you can to play on your opponent's senses of guilt and pity. A few dedicated players have had these emotions surgically removed, but it can work against most other people. Tell your neighbor that your puppy just choked to death on your kitten, you've got Aids AND cancer, and all the other kids at the orphanage will be so terribly disappointed if you get knocked out of the game this early. If you're really desperate and your neighbor proves to have a heart of ice, you could appeal to colder

sentiments with bribes, threats of physical violence and other out-of-game means of coercion.

If all of these options (and any others your increasingly-panicked brain can come up with) still fail, then you're dead. Sorry.

If not, let's carry on to stage two of the One-dot Victory: Other players. That is, players who aren't your immediate neighbors. Their use should be clear: Engaging and distracting your neighbors, keeping them from focusing on you and freeing you to make surprise attacks from the rear. This should be a relatively straightforward affair in most cases, since most of the other players will probably already be fighting (or on the verge of fighting) with your neighbors. But sometimes they need some encouragement, perhaps because they're closely allied with your neighbor or because they're too busy dealing with someone else they consider a more urgent threat.

You could try offering your help later in exchange for their help now, but I know I wouldn't accept a deal like that, especially from a power so obviously doomed. Instead, I'd try to convince the other player that my neighbor is a serious and urgent threat (especially now that I'm not able to balance things out anymore). If you can convince the other players that your neighbors are threats to them, they will have little choice but to focus at least some of their attacks on your neighbors' borders. And every battle that happens in those distant regions is a battle that isn't taking place in your own throne room.

Bear in mind that it may take several rounds for stage two (getting everyone else to distract your neighbors) of this strategy to come into effect, so you absolutely need to get stage one (convincing your neighbors not to eat you) completed as fast as possible. However, there's no reason why you can't start working on both of them at the same time. If you have multiple immediate neighbors, you could even try to combine stages one and two by tricking them into attacking each other, rather than fighting over you.

So now you're safe again, at least temporarily. Maintaining this safety, by repeating stages one and two over and over, will have to become a part of your routine until you've got the military strength to protect yourself directly. But we also need to move on to stage three: Rebuilding. Your biggest priority should be your home centers, because without them you'll just never get the troops you need for further defense and expansion. Unless you executed stages one and two remarkably well, your neighbors will probably still have a few armies defending these, and you'll need to be very sneaky with your solitary unit to get past these. You'll have to play a guerrilla general here, since deception, surprise and

misdirection will probably be the only support you get. If you can convince a third party to give you real support, then all the better, but I wouldn't count on it.

(It occurs to me that an interesting strategy to try at the start of stage three would be playing dead. If you sit and do nothing for a round or two, the other players may forget you're even in the game anymore, and will let down their guard a little. Of course, playing dead with threatening units nearby can be more risk than it's worth.)

Also don't forget that you're leaving your only occupied supply center undefended while you make your attack. It simply can't be avoided, but at least try to steer clear of stupid mistakes like leaving your base when there's already an enemy unit right next to it. Time is of the essence at this point, since the longer you take to capture center #2, the longer you leave center #1 vulnerable, as well as giving your neighbor more time to figure out what you're up to and launch a counter-attack.

Repeat stage three a couple more times, and you should be a genuine Power once more. If nothing else, you can try to hold your territory for a draw, but you now also have the option of progressing to stage four: Expansion. At this point, you can start to play the game as normal again, and I won't go into any details on what you should do, since that's covered in all the other strategy guides that exist. But if you're skilled enough to claw your way up from one supply center to the start of stage four, then I have no doubt that you're capable of going all the way to a One-dot Victory.

### **Instructions for the Other Side**

If you knock an opponent down to a single dot, show no mercy. You may have to weaken your defenses/attacks against a larger power for a round or two, but rather do that than allow a guerrilla war to flare up on another front. Your puny little victim may not look like much of a threat, and may even offer you all sorts of neat things in exchange for your mercy. But as I've explained above, all of this is just a means of beating you back down again later. Finish your opponent off and never regret it.

And if a one-dot power on the far side of the board asks for your help with its menacing neighbors, then I strongly recommend lending what support you can. The disruption this will cause to the larger powers will almost always be worth it. You'll only have to attack once, and the ongoing annoyance from the one-dot power will effectively double your disruption of the larger power.

***I guess the moral of the story is – if you're in a game with Chris and he's down to one dot, knock him out of the game before he can rise from the ashes and do any damage!***

# Recent North American Tournament Box Scores

## **WACCon 5**

Seattle, Wash.

January 25-27, 2008

Director: Mark Zoffel

Players: 30

Rounds: 4

Boards: 12

Top Board:

- 1) Andrew Neumann
- 2) John Saul
- 3) Brian Shelden
- 4) Graham Woodring
- 5) Adam Silverman
- 6) Nathan Barnes
- 7) Edi Birsan

Best Countries:

Austria: Edi Birsan

England: Brian Shelden

France: John Saul

Germany: Andrew Neumann

Italy: Siobhan Granvold

Russia: Graham Woodring

Turkey: Nathan Barnes

## **TempleCon 2008**

Providence, R.I.

Feb. 2-3, 2008

Director: Jim Burgess

Players: 7

Rounds: 2

Boards: 2

Top Board:

- 1) Melissa Nicholson
- 2) Sam Jackson
- 3) Peter McNamara
- 4) Alan Lange
- 5) Buz Eddy
- 6) Sid Wong
- 7) Jim Burgess

Best Countries:

Austria: Melissa Nicholson

England: Melissa Nicholson

France: Sam Jackson

Germany: Jim Burgess

Italy: Buz Eddy

Russia: Peter McNamara

Turkey: Peter McNamara

## **PrezCon 2008**

Charlottesville, Va.

Feb. 22-24, 2008

Director: Tim Richardson

Players: 21

Rounds: 3

Boards: 6

Top Board:

- 1) Andy Bartalone
- 2) Tob Kobrin
- 3) Jeff Ladd
- 4) Graham Woodring
- 5) Claude Worrell
- 6) Brian Shelden
- 7) David Maletsky

Best Countries:

Austria: Andy Bartalone

England: Andy Bartalone/Jeff Ladd

France: Chris Barfield

Germany: Tom Kobrin

Italy: Brian Lee

Russia: Jeff Ladd

Turkey: Andy Bartalone

Find complete results at the excellent European Diplomacy Association website maintained by Laurent Joly of France:

[http://eurodip.nuxit.net/php/rencontre/affiche\\_rencontres.php?lang=Ang](http://eurodip.nuxit.net/php/rencontre/affiche_rencontres.php?lang=Ang)

## Knives and Daggers The Diplomacy World Letter Column



**Walt Buchanan** – You've succeeded in producing a masterpiece! Reading the accounts of the old timers certainly brings back memories. Thanks for keeping DW alive and in such great shape. I'm looking forward to #200! A triple gig'em,

*Thanks Walt, coming from you that means a lot!*



**Richard Walkerdine** – Superb issue #100 – many, many congratulations. And an article from Birks as well?

My goodness. Almost makes me tempted to re-enter the hobby (JOKE!!!) I will contact Conrad [von Metzke] later today - heaven only knows what that will lead to... Interesting that we are out of touch for 20 years and then end up side by side in your 100th issue - funny old world.



**Paul Kenny** – Congrats on getting Issue 100 out in such a timely manner. I loved the pictures that you used for my article, and that copier drawing actually looked like my old Sharp copier, nice touch. I am mad at myself as I managed to have two typos in that article even with the spell checker. I typed "gem" instead of "game" and WWI instead of WWII. Oh well, I guess it wouldn't be an article from me without some type of typo. Oh, and I got a kick at seeing the before and after Tom Swider pictures.



**Larry Peery** – You did a superb job in putting it all together, but I have to admit that I never knew that so many of my hobby "peers" were afflicted with PBS (peeriblah syndrome).

Now, that you've done the retrospective issue, why not look ahead to DW 200, in another 30 years, and let's have some fun predicting where the game and hobby will be?



**Gabriel Lecointre** – I am discovering only now Diplomacy World. It's fantastic labor! Thanks you and thanks to all staff and contributors.

For the French name, it's Jérémie Lefrançois and not Jérémie Lefrancois with a cedilla under "c" ;-)

For the announce of tournaments, for "Diplomacy World" and not "Diplomacy Parts of World", you must announce all known tournaments and not only a selection.

You can say to Larry Peery too, it's not Francois Rivassou but François Rivasseau (with cedilla and -eau and not -ou). The problem of the flags is the colors are not the same in all edition (in all languages). If choice: I prefer the first proposition.

An other proposition could be a flag like this of Cyprus : the map of the game and instead of two olive branches, a crown of laurel with 18 leafs or 7 crowns.

For Ber - Vie by Julian Ziesing the French notation for dates is on the form dd/mm/yy or dd/mm/yyyy.

Examples : in the last French edition : England in grey, France in blue, Germany in black, and yhe orthers countries... I forgot ! and the French edition of 1994, English in pink, France in blue, Germany in black, Italy in red, Austria in Yellow, Russia in white and Turkey in

Green.



**Bruce Linsey** – DW 100 arrived today, and I'm extremely impressed with all the obvious effort and hard work that went into it. My wife and I are leaving for Bonaire (in the Caribbean) in six days, and I think I'll bring it along and read through it on the beach. The name I was most surprised to see was that of Craig Reges -- I had no idea he was still around. Craig produced the novice packet which was the predecessor to my Supernova, and which helped bring me into the hobby.

I was very happy, by the way, with the presentation of my article. Thanks again to Mark, Rod and Jim for helping me with it. Keep up the good work, and I'm happy to be a DW participant once again. ☺



**Hugh Polley** – The three things which have stymied me over the years in various games are:

- Players stop sending in moves once their situation become a poor one because of low unit counts, or impossible diplomatic positions.
- Having an army in St Pete when I require a Fleet to get at England. As England having a Fleet in Bre when I need an army.
- Having to settle for a draw because a solid stalemate line exists.

In one of my postal games, by hard work I took out four opponents, while England moved in only when an opponent could no longer hold out against my units. He established a line I could not break through and gained a draw.

As England I made an agreement to not build armies. I did capture lots of coastal supply centers, but when ready to break said agreement I could move nowhere because I had no armies. Germany won the game because I was not able to create any pressure upon him by sending armies inland.

As Austria I was doing very well and had some hope of winning a game if the minor powers continued to at least make an attempt to hold on to their SC. These two and three unit positions stopped sending in moves enabling France to gobble up their open SC. With no rear to worry about the French/Turkey combination soon had me under control.

Could Subscribers/Editors list some Variants which attempt to reduce the affects of these Diplomatic situations?

*Perhaps you will get some responses from this letter, but from my standpoint the only one of your concerns which is actually a problem is the first. The other two are aspects of the game which I find enjoyable. I may be in the minority – I have no idea – but saying that stalemate lines are a negative, or saying that you want to be able to morph armies into fleets because of poor planning, is akin to complaining that your bishop can only move diagonally, in my humble opinion.*



**Conrad Woodring** – I finished reading DW #100 yesterday afternoon. It was impressive in size, but I felt that the content was sacrificed to achieve this size. The massive section of stories from the old timers was too much. Everyone wrote very different things and some people's stories were boring, uninteresting, or did not fit well with the majority of styles. I guess you don't have much of a choice because if you ask someone to write something and then you don't publish it they won't write for you ever again, right?

**Admittedly the styles were different, but I thought the theme to mesh the pieces together was there: the most cherished memories the authors have of their time in the Diplomacy hobby are centered around the people they met and the friendships they built – not the games themselves. It may also be a function of perspective, in that if you don't know who most of those people are, or you never had occasion to interact with them, you simply don't care about what they are doing now or what they wrote.**

Oh, I never knew about this Diplomats movie that Ray Setzer made until reading this issue. Thanks!

***I was glad Ray was able to find time to write something about it. I'd been after him for a number of months!***



**Bill Coffin** - I'm really, really enjoying all of those old-timers weighing in, in DW #100. These are all guys I've read articles from at one point or another, real legends in the Dip community, and it's great to see them chime in about our hobby. Kudos on gathering all of these blokes together! Also, kudos on such a thick issue - 130 pages of pure content is no trifling thing, and those of us with long train rides home from work thank you for it!

***I remember how useful I found the Diplomacy zines I used to get when I had to ride Jersey Transit and the Tubes into NYC every day.***



**Jack McHugh** - I found Alfred Nicol's article

"Making Italy 'Al Dente'" very well written but I think he over looked a major issue regarding Italy when writing the article. Namely he did not address the issue of whether or not Italy is a land or a sea power. Alfred correctly made Italy a sea power for the purposes of his article, i.e. Italy allies with Austria against Turkey but he did not discuss the reason for it. He also failed to discuss other options for Italy, such as being a more balanced power and attacking Austria or France.

I disagree that Italy must fight Turkey in every game. First, it is not always possible to make peace with France and Austria, especially the latter. Second, you may need to work with Turkey if Russia or Austria gets too big too quickly. It makes little sense to be convoying to Smy when Russia controls Bud, Vie and Ser.

I agree that Italy will, at some point, in any game need a substantial fleet. Unlike the other Eastern powers, like Russia, Austria and, to a lesser extent, Turkey, Italy will need a fleet. This is mostly due to Italy's geographic position and the fact that Swi is impassible. This makes it difficult for Italy to deploy armies by land. Italy has one impassible province and two occupied by home centers (Mar and Tri) that make it hard for Italy to move armies into the heart of Europe.

Italy can be a successful balanced land and naval power but it requires a much more aggressive opening by Italy against Austria for it to work. Tri and Bud or Tri and Vie must be viewed as Italian provinces just as other powers view neutrals as "theirs" based on the ability to get to in 1901. Taking Austrians centers removes Italy's chief rival, opens up avenues for land deployment and gives Italy more blocks to work with. Best of all, you don't need to share the centers with anyone and Italy becomes a serious player with 5-6 centers by the end of 1901 and 6-7 centers by the end of 1902.

I'm doing well with Italy in 2 of the 3 7 x 7 tournaments I'm in. Mostly by playing Italy very aggressively right from the start and not taking any prisoners.

I'm impressed you got so many hobby old farts and burnouts to write for the last issue. I also found out a lot of new things. I never knew Dick Martin was such a tall black man—this explains why he kept trying to major in basketball. The old 1983 DipCon pictures were amazing....so Brad Wilson and Tom Swider really did have hair at one time and the Madcons people were nerds before they became Diplomacy's version of the Brady Bunch.

PS - You Are My Hero (don't let me deny it; you know it's true, I am a SACK!)

***You're probably only doing well in those 7x7's because nobody knows it's you! PS – For those of you wondering, I did no editing of Jack's letter whatsoever.***



# Pontevedria #84

compiled by W Andrew York  
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wandrew88@gmail.com

*Pontevedria* historically was produced by the Diplomacy hobby's Boardman Number Custodian, or their designee, and listed the currently available 'zines and game openings within the hobby. Over time, it expanded beyond traditional games of Diplomacy, and its many variants, to include similar multi-player games offered within Dip 'zines and the postal hobby. *Pont* was last published and mailed in the late 1990's as the hobby moved more and more into the electronic realm. This is an attempt to resurrect the purpose of *Pont* as a column within *DW* and provide a one-stop place to find GMs, 'zines (in whatever form) and game openings that are part of the non-professional, human monitored/moderated gaming hobby.

This isn't the place to find solely computer moderated games, commercial enterprises, on-line gaming or interactive/real-time gaming. This is the place for folks to find openings in traditional face-to-face or beer-and-pretzels multi-player board games overseen by a human game master and which encourage player to player contact and interaction (even though some games are "Gunboat" style). Also, in the future, this column hopes to foster a "GM wanted" section where folks can post the multi-player games they would like to PBM/PBEM but don't have a GM available - and help those publishers and GMs learn about games people want to play.

Disclaimer: Especially with this early effort and in similar columns, the listings are certainly incomplete and may have some inaccuracies as the word of the effort spreads and the nascent effort solidifies and matures with the publishers and GMs around the world. Updated and additional information is solicited and very welcome, presuming that it fits within the guidelines of the purpose of the column, and all appropriate submissions will be included. In general, a GM/publisher has to agree with inclusion in this column before they are listed.

Information listed is the most current available at time of publication and, when possible, is verified quarterly with the listed publisher, game master or responsible party. No listing should be accepted as assured or guaranteed; but, rather, should be confirmed with the indicated contact person prior to exchanging funds or making any arrangements/commitments/agreements.

The publisher and compiler have no financial stake in any of the listings and make no promises or guarantees regarding the entry's accuracy nor of future publication schedules, game mastering or any efforts by the listed individuals.

## Zine Listings

### Boris the Spider

Publisher/Country - Paul R. Bolduc/USA  
Contact Information - 203 Devon Ct, Ft Walton Beach FL 32457-3110, [prbolduc@aol.com](mailto:prbolduc@aol.com);  
[http://members.cox.net/boris\\_spider/BorisHome.html](http://members.cox.net/boris_spider/BorisHome.html)  
Frequency of Publication - monthly  
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Mar 85 / Mar 08  
Subscription Costs - \$12.75/yr (12 issues) for hardcopy; \$1/yr for e-version (waived if overseas player)  
Game Openings - Diplomacy, Wizard's Quest, Circus Maximus, Colonial Diplomacy, History of the World  
Other Games Currently Underway - Machiavelli, Kingmaker, Kremlin, Britannia, Dune, Silverton, Merchant of Venus, Blackbeard  
Potential Future Offerings - 18xx, Age of Renaissance, Gunslinger, Magic Realm, Puerto Rico

### By the WAY

Publisher/Country - W Andrew York/USA  
Contact Information - POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117 or [wandrew88@gmail.com](mailto:wandrew88@gmail.com)  
Frequency of Publication - an issue included in each **The Abyssinian Prince**  
Date of Last Publication - February 20, 2008 (Issue #16)  
Subscription Costs - Free  
Game Openings - Metropolis  
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**

### Damn the Consequences

Publisher/Country - Brendan Whyte/Thailand  
Contact Information - [obiwonfive@hotmail.com](mailto:obiwonfive@hotmail.com)  
Frequency of Publication - c. 6-weekly  
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Began 1987. Latest issue #142, March 2008  
Subscription Costs - 35Baht to Asia, 45 to Europe/Australasia, 50 to the Americas/Africa, (US\$1=30baht)  
Game Openings - Railway Rivals, Origins of WWI, Tactical Sumo, Diplomacy, Britannia, Maharaja, Sopwith, Snakes & Ladders, Machiavelli, Mornington Cres NOMIC, World Record, Dream Mile  
Other Games Currently Underway - Railway Rivals, Bus Boss, Diplomacy, Wooden Ship and Iron Men, Sopwith, Banbury Merton St, By Popular Demand, Where in the World is Kendo Nagasaki, Robo Rally, Maneater

### **Cheesecake**

Publisher/Country - Andy Lischett/USA  
Contact Information - 2402 Ridgeland Ave; Berwyn IL 60402  
Frequency of Publication - Every Six Weeks  
Date of Last Publication - February 21, 2008 (Issue #278)  
Subscription Costs - Free  
Game Openings - Diplomacy

### **Eternal Sunshine**

Publisher/Country - Douglas Kent/USA  
Contact Information - 11111 Woodmeadow Pkwy #2327, Dallas, TX 75228\  
dougray30@yahoo.com, <http://www.whiningkentpigs.com/DW/>  
Frequency of Publication - Monthly  
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Feb 2007/Mar 2008  
Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - Free, available in pdf and html or appearing in **The Abyssinian Prince**  
Game Openings - Balkan Wars VI  
Other Games Currently Underway - Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, By Popular Demand, By Popular Opinion  
Potential Future Offerings - Colonia VII-B, Youngstown, Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney  
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**  
Notes/Comments - Andy York loves cats (sic)

### **Graustark**

Publisher/Country - John Boardman/USA  
Contact Information - 234 East 19th; Brooklyn NY 11226-5302  
Frequency of Publication - Monthly (or so)  
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - 1963/8 December 2007 (Issue #784)  
Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - \$15 for 10 issues or \$35 game fee (higher outside US)  
Game Openings - Diplomacy

### **Northern Flame Volume 2**

Publisher/Country - Robert Lesco/Canada  
Contact Information - 49 Parkside Drive, Brampton, Ontario, Canada L6Y 2H1 rlesco@yahoo.com  
Frequency of Publication - I try for every two months but in practice it's quarterly at best.  
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Originally December 1987;  
I took over in September of 1994 and I am assembling the newest issue just now.  
Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - \$1.00 per issue  
Game Openings - Regular and gunboat (press and non-Press)  
Potential Future Offerings - I always hope to be able to run a variant other than gunboat  
Notes/Comments - I should point out that NFV2 is not a particularly attractive publication and it is not for people in a hurry or those who take things terribly seriously.

### **S.O.B.**

Publisher/Country - Chris Hassler/USA  
Contact Information - 2000 S. Armour Ct.; La Habra, CA 90631; [hompages.roadrunner.com/sobhome](http://hompages.roadrunner.com/sobhome);  
chassler@roadrunner.com  
Frequency of Publication - Every 6 weeks  
Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - First: April 1993; Latest: March, 2008  
Subscription Costs - Paper: \$2.00/issue (inside U.S.), \$3.00/issue (outside U.S.); Web: Free  
Game Openings - Machiavelli, Gunboat Machiavelli, Gunslinger, Merchant of Venus, History of the World, Industrial Waste, Outpost, Power Grid  
Other Games Currently Underway - Kremlin, Silverton, Seafarers of Catan, New World, Dune, Puerto Rico, Age of Renaissance, Republic of Rome  
Potential Future Offerings - I'm open to suggestion...  
Notes/Comments - The zine is mostly about the games, but it also hosts a letter column, and a regular column about science.

### **Tinamou**

Publisher/Country - Dave Partridge, USA  
Contact Information - rebhuhn@rocketmail.com or at  
<http://www.diplom.org/DipPouch/Postal/Zines/TAP/Tinamou/index.html>  
Frequency of Publication - approx every 6 weeks  
Date of Last Publication - January 2008 (Issue #69)  
Subscription Costs - No costs, no requirements. To receive a postal copy must subscribe to **TAP's** postal list.  
Game Openings - Railway Rivals, Perestroika Diplomacy, Standard Diplomacy, Just the Results Please Diplomacy, Snowball Fighting, Outpost, Golden Strider, Settlers of Catan, Puerto Rico, Wooden Ships & Iron Men.  
Other Games Currently Underway -- Sopwith  
Potential Future Offerings - Just about anything, if there's interest I'll run it.  
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**