

Diplomacy World

Issue 102

www.diplomacyworld.net



Diplomacy: The Roleplaying Game

Notes From the Editor

Welcome back to another issue of Diplomacy World. The summer heat is blasting here in Texas, gasoline prices are skyrocketing, and 1980's teen music act New Kids on the Block have reformed for a tour. I am pretty sure that last one is a sign of the apocalypse, but I need to do more research. But in the meantime, the Diplomacy World staff continues to produce quality issues for you on a dependable schedule!

There are a number of items I need to touch on in this column, so let's get right down to business. The first is a very time-sensitive situation. Tim Haffey, our current Archives Editor, holds in his possession about 80 banker boxes full of old Diplomacy material. He lives in the Oakland, California area, but health issues are forcing him to relocate in the very near future – possibly as soon as September 1st. **Tim will not be able to move those boxes with him.** So we need to find someone else to arrange to pick them up and become the new holder of these Diplomacy archives.

The ideal candidate would be able to arrange to get the boxes, move them somewhere safe, and then begin the task of going through them, selecting the most interesting material. He or she could then a) scan the material and build a website of it; b) scan the material and send it to me to post it on the internet; or c) be willing to send me the best or most important material a bit at a time (say a flat-rate box or envelope) for me to scan and return. This way we can digitize and preserve Diplomacy material which may otherwise be lost, and also make it available for all interested parties.

Now, we may not be able to find the ideal candidate.

So the second preference is simply to find someone who can get the boxes and store them safely until the ideal candidate **CAN** be found. That person could then get the boxes from whoever is holding them. This could take months, but the idea here would be to make material safe until better plans can be arranged. In either case, if you are interested or know somebody who is, please email me at diplomacyworld@yahoo.com as soon as possible and let me know.

Next, I want to take a moment to encourage you to visit the Diplomacy World website more often. I've been trying to do what I can to make it more user friendly, and to produce interesting material between each Diplomacy World issue. For example, there's the Article of the Week. The AOTW is a classic article from an older issue of DW; one which hasn't been available before except as part of one of the large back-issue pdf files. Sometimes it's an article on strategy; sometimes it's a variant piece; it could be something humorous, or an old convention report, or just about anything! Each week between Wednesday and Friday, the new article is posted. The old article isn't gone forever though; I

simply add it to the menu of old articles, broken down by subject matter. The Article of the Week can be found by clicking on the Articles button on the main menu.

We also continue to build our collection of DW issues. We have every issue from #28 to #102 scanned and posted on the web site, as well as issues #1 and #2. Every few weeks another batch of three or four issues are scanned and posted, which means that by the end of the year (or soon after) I hope to have **the entire publishing history** of Diplomacy World available for free download. That's nearly 35 years of Diplomacy, just a mouse click away!

Another thing to keep an eye on is the DW Blog. You can find that at <http://blog.diplomacyworld.net>, and it contains announcements about any additions to the DW web site. It also contains convention and tournament news (both to remind you to attend and to let you know how it went), notable game announcements, and anything else I happen to stumble across. The blog includes a free subscription feature, which will email you each new entry as they are posted. Or, you can use RSS to subscribe to the feed itself. The other best place to get news on Diplomacy World is the DW Yahoo Group, which you can join for free at <http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/diplomacyworld/>

Like the original cover art this issue, and the drawings in Rod Walker's piece? That's the work of Nemanja Simic. Check out the DW Staff section if you'd like to email and congratulate Nemanja on the awesome contributions!

Finally, we're making an effort to let you know, with much more advance notice, what the themes of upcoming DW issues will be. That way, if one of the topics catches your fancy, you'll have time to put an article together. **Remember: the theme of each issue does not mean we are only publishing articles on that topic!** It just means we are hoping to get a few quality articles on the theme. **The rest of the issue will contain all the usual articles** on any possible Diplomacy topic: variants, strategy, history, humor, conventions, tournaments, interviews, and anything else you can come up with. **Likewise, just because we're using a theme for a particular issue doesn't mean we can't use an article on a similar topic for a different issue.** If you want to write it, we want to publish it! Check elsewhere in the issue for a list of upcoming themes and deadlines.

I'll close by reminding you the next deadline for Diplomacy World submissions is October 1st, 2008. Besides articles, we LOVE to get letters, feedback, input, ideas, and suggestions too. So email me! See you in the Fall, and happy stabbing!

Diplomacy World Staff:

Managing Lead Editor:	Douglas Kent, Email: diplomacyworld of yahoo.com
Co-Editor :	Jim Burgess, Email: burgess of world.std.com
Strategy & Tactics Editor:	Mark Zoffel, Email: zoffel of earthlink.net ← NEW!
Variant Editor:	Jack McHugh, Email: jwmchughjr of gmail.com
Interview Editor:	Jim Burgess, Email: burgess of world.std.com
Club and Tournament Editor:	Jim O'Kelley, jimthegrey1013 of yahoo.com
Archive Editor:	Tim Haffey, Email: trhaffey of aol.com
Demo Game Editor:	Rick Desper, Email: rick_desper of yahoo.com
Original Artwork	Nemanja Simic, Email: nemanja.painter of gmail.com ←NEW!

Contributors in 2008: Stephen Agar, Chris Babcock, Nathan Barnes, Edi Birsan, Jim Burgess, Doug Burgoyne, Bill Coffin, Rick Desper, Chris Dziedzic, Siobhan Granvold, Tim Haffey, Jérémie Lefrançois, Lilith, "Game Master," David McCrumb, Jack McHugh, Jamie McQuinn, Alfred Nicol, Jim O'Kelley, Luca Pazzaglia, Hugh Polley, Chris Sham, Grant Steel, Mark Stretch, Matt Sundstrom, Lars Topholm, Rod Walker, Richard Walkerdine, Andy York. Add your name to this list!

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.

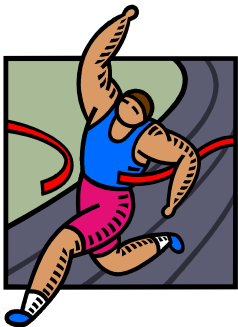
Themes for Upcoming Diplomacy World Issues:



Diplomacy World #103:
Science Fiction and Fantasy
Deadline for #103 Submissions:
October 1, 2008



Diplomacy World #104: Worldwide Variants
Deadline for #104 Submissions – January 1, 2009



Diplomacy World #105: The Endgame
Deadline for #105 Submissions – April 1, 2009

In This Issue:

Editorial: <i>Notes From the Editor</i> by Douglas Kent	Page 2
Hobby Service: <i>Ask the GM – An Advice Column for <u>Diplomacy World</u></i> by “Game Master”	Page 5
Convention News: World DipCon 2008 Advertisement	Page 5
Feature: <i>Approaches to Scoring Tournaments: Cultural Gamesmanship</i> by Edi Birsan	Page 6
Con Report: <i>The View From Second Place</i> by Matt Sundstrom	Page 8
Feature: <i>The Worldmasters Tournament: A Look Back at History</i> by Ray Setzer	Page 10
Convention News: French Cup at Dip’ on the Beach Advertisement	Page 11
Con Report: <i>We’ve Found That Tournament Feeling</i> by Jim O’Kelley	Page 12
Cover Story: <i>Diplomacy the Roleplaying Game</i> by Chris Sham	Page 13
Con Report: <i>Tales From the Tournament Trail</i> by Jim O’Kelley	Page 16
Convention News: GenCon Indianapolis Advertisement	Page 18
Humor: <i>The Adventures of Fatman and Frottage</i> by Rod Walker	Page 19
Hobby Services: <i>Why We Need the Boardman and Miller Numbers</i> by Douglas Kent	Page 21
Convention News: 2008 Grand Prix Watch: <i>Beware of Charing Buffalos</i> by Jim O’Kelley	Page 23
Convention News: World Boardgaming Championships Advertisement	Page 24
Con Report: <i>Whipping 2008: A Horde of Drunk Diplomacy Players</i> by Siobhan Granvold	Page 26
Con Report: <i>Just Your Friendly Neighborhood Block Party</i> by Thomas Haver	Page 27
Puzzle: <i><u>Diplomacy World</u> World Search</i> by Lilith	Page 31
Tournament News: <i>After the DNWC: the Wonderful Mansion Tournament</i> by Jérémie LeFrançois	Page 32
Convention News: Buckeye Game Fest IX Advertisement	Page 35
Feature: <i>Make Your Own Mini-Magnetic-Travel Diplomacy Set</i> by Chris Sham	Page 36
Convention News: <i>Can You CanCan?</i> By Mark Zoffel	Page 38
Variants: <i>Civilization Diplomacy</i> by Doug Burgoyne	Page 39
Feature: <i>Technology and Game Quality in Diplomacy</i> by Chris Babcock	Page 41
Tournament News: <i>Diplomacy National World Cup First Round Report</i> by Jérémie LeFrançois	Page 43
Feature: <i>The Background to a Whipping: Planning A Small Stand-Alone Tournament</i> by Edi Birsan	Page 47
Con Report: <i>Cricket and Kip: The 2008 Auckland Championships</i> by Grant Steel	Page 49
Variants: <i>Modern Diplomacy: Part II</i> by Jack McHugh	Page 51
Con Report: <i>Reaching for the Brass Ring: My Top Table at EDC 2008</i> by Luca Pazzaglia	Page 55
Feature: <i>Celebrations</i> by Richard Walkerdine	Page 58
Variants: <i>What I Learned From Playtesting My Version of World Diplomacy</i> by Hugh Polley	Page 61
Convention News: <i>North American Tournament Box Scores</i> Compiled by Jim O’Kelley	Page 64
Selected Upcoming Conventions and Diplomacy Events	Page 65
Demo Game: <i><u>Diplomacy World</u> Demo Game “After the Rapture” – Spring 1903 through Winter 1904</i>	Page 66
Letter Column: <i>Knives and Daggers - The <u>Diplomacy World</u> Letter Column</i>	Page 80
Game Openings: <i><u>Pontevedria</u> #85</i> by W. Andrew York (Zine Game Opening Listing)	Page 82

Ask the GM

An Advice Column for Diplomacy World

Dear GM:

I like economic variants but I can't find anyone to play them. What can I do to get players?

Signed,
Have money will play

Dear Money,

Are you really that stupid? Economic variants always involve some silly monetary rules that require you to do all of this dumb bookkeeping. Its real simple: if you make Diplomacy like most players' jobs, then you'll have to pay your players, just like your boss has to pay you to get you to show up for work every day. Offer a salary; hell, I hate economic games and I'd sign up for that.

Your pal,
The GM

Dear GM:

We need people to write for our szine but we can't seem

to find anyone. We don't just want it to be about us. What can we do to get people to write for ~~Diplomacy World~~ our szine?

Signed,
Sack & Boob

Dear Sackboob:

First of all, this column is for the readers so I think the editors of Diplomacy World should not write me here. Second, I understand you've got several new writers, and several great ideas from your crack staff make this a much better szine. Third, I'm writing this great column so stop bugging me and get off your lazy asses and get to work.

Your pal,
The GM

Got a question for Game Master? Send it to gamemaster "of" diplomacyworld.net and maybe it will appear in a future issue of Diplomacy World!



WDC 2008
Lockenhaus Castle / Austria
August 14th – 17th 2008
Last call!



www.wdc2008.org/en



Approaches to Scoring Tournaments: Cultural Gamesmanship

By Edi E. Birsan

Take any collection of competitive players over time, and there will be a core swelling of emotion to create a ranking system to justify bragging rights. Many two-player games have a simple knock out system: you win and you go to the next round, you lose and you are out. Ranking is done on the basis of which round you were knocked out on. There are then different approaches on how you place players at the start of the tournament: do you group the elite players against each other and the newcomers against each other, so as to allow for the advance of the newer players to the middle levels at least, or do you use a simple random method, or some sort of class/category system based on prior performances?

Multiplayer games represent a real challenge to organizers of tournaments. There may be a need to scale or create a ranking system for achievements with the various performances of the players, when there is no consensus on what constitutes achievement other than winning. In the course of hobby development there may be born a dominant hobby organization that may or may not be associated with the manufacturer of the game. A quick study will reveal that where there is a single dominant organization and they have 'sanctioned' or official tournaments, there is a tendency towards one tournament system structure. The nature of that system is then an amalgamation of the back room hobby politics and battles, fought with conflicting egos. These battles are centered over the control of prizes, and the term 'sanctioned' or official is affected mostly by economic considerations of the product line, or those that control the purse strings of the organization.

The game of Diplomacy has been around for over 40 years, and is played on all continents through Face-to-Face, Postal and E-mail play. It is played on an approximate map of 1901 Europe, and is a seven player game. Players start with 3 or 4 supply centers, supporting an equal number of units, and struggle to control 18 out of the total of 34 supply centers in the game to force a victory. It represents a unique insight into the interplay of game culture and scoring systems, precisely because there is no consensus in the hobby as to what achievement is, other than winning a game. Even in victory, the relative value of a game being won (versus combinations of draws or secondary finishes) is an open war zone of attitudes. Adding to the interesting use of Diplomacy as a cultural case study is the lack of 'official' or sanctioned events, and a hobby tradition in which the very concept of a single hobby organization bringing out a scoring system is repulsive to those who support the creation of such organizations. Therefore the creation of scoring systems, and the running of tournaments, has been left in local hands throughout the

world, thus allowing the events to reflect the local bias and approaches to gaming.

It should be stated that in the rules of Diplomacy, the only thing that is said about objectives is that the goal is to win. If the game is not won, then 'Draws Include All Survivors'. The designer himself has been vague on what is achievement other than victory and has wisely stayed mostly out of the discussion conflicts.

Furthermore, Diplomacy is a negotiation game built around power politics, with the philosophy that there are no rules in negotiations. It has attracted a hobby leadership and base that lends itself toward ignoring whatever is written in the rules. After all, Diplomacy is a game where lying and numerous activities, which would be considered as "cheating" in other game fields (such as listening to people's private conversations and peeking at their secret written orders), are considered acceptable and somewhat laudable.

The classic questions in making a Diplomacy tournament are:

1. When will the game end?
 - a. When someone wins or a draw is agreed or forced?
 - b. A specific time of the day?
 - c. A specific game year?
2. If the game ends without a winner at the ending period, how do you score people?
 - a. Is the game considered a draw?
 - b. Is the concept of a draw ignored and the number of supply centers owned used?
3. If there is a draw system:
 - a. Are all people equal in the draw, or does the size of the country matter?
 - b. Does the game end with all survivors in the draw, or only those who constitute major positions, and how do you determine that?
 - c. Can people vote to create a draw?
 - d. What is the value of the various draw sizes relative to each other and to that of a win. For example, if you survive in seven games, with one center as one of seven players in a draw, is that the equal of a single Win?
4. If there is not a draw system, what do you use to rank the players?
 - a. The number of supply centers?
 - b. The number of players knocked out of the game?

- c. What is the relative value of the supply center count relationship? For example, in one game there are three players left and the supply center count is 13-12-9, and in another game there was no one eliminated and the supply center count is 7-5-5-5-4-4-4. Who has done better: the player with 12 centers in game one, or the player with 7 centers in game two?

Given the individualistic approach in game play that is typical for Diplomacy, we should and can expect that there would be many different approaches to these questions; however, over time there has been a very sharp distinction between American and European styles. That difference has been sustained on each continent. In trying to explain this, I looked at the history of the current game hobby and its traditions. But one is also forced to agree that the most probable explanation is something in a cultural approach to the game.

In America, the emphasis in Diplomacy is on draws, with the smaller the number of people in the draw the better. In Europe the emphasis is on supply centers, and the gap between yourself and the others is the focus. In America the emphasis is on longer-term alliance play where in Europe the emphasis is on short-term alliances. In Europe balance of power is taken as an individual approach to each country, so that your own ally will attack you to maintain the balance; while in America, the goal is to have an imbalance of power in favor of your alliance, with the differences between the allies less a matter of focus than in Europe.

Historically, the American hobby started first, with the game commercially published in 1961 after a small run of private production in 1959 by the inventor. The development of postal play started in New York in 1963. In postal play, the game was played to a solo victory, or else the game was considered a deadlock or a stalemated game with, typically, two power blocks forming a defensive line across the board that could not be penetrated, combined with the emotional commitment to not break the alliances. American players, when they met socially to talk about past games, spoke of being in a three-way draw or a five-way draw, and ignored the mention of supply centers for the most part. Tournament systems developed around the idea of wins and draws, and then around the use of supply centers to break the tie of having the same number of draws. However, in most cases the emphasis is on draws. The postal players who wanted an excuse to travel to meet their postal contacts created the face-to-face tournament hobby. So the experienced elite of the American hobby maintained the draw emphasis, and it is the elite that supports and provides the organization to run and direct tournaments. The American hobby also grew out of homemade 'house cons' where time was not a constraint, so games tended to go on for most of a day.

As the commercial game convention began to exist, the Diplomacy postal players who would travel great distances to attend the conventions were gaming elite. They had added commercial clout, in that since the Diplomacy players were long distant travelers, it was the Diplomacy hobby that was an early key component to convention organizers, notably by making their hotel room commitments which gained favorable rates for conference/game rooms at game conventions. So the Diplomacy tournament directors dictated the lack of time constraints on the game period.

In Europe, where the postal and the face to face hobby started more or less the same (although years later), there was a quick shift away from draw-based systems, to go to a fixed time period in the game and with great emphasis on supply count. It did not matter if you had 7 centers and there were six other players on the board; what mattered most was that you had 7 centers and everyone else had 6 or less. Players talked about topping the board or even "winning," where the idea of winning was having one more center than anyone else, regardless of the strength of that center count. So popular was the concept of focus on supply centers that for much of the last decade, not a single scoring system in Europe's face to face tournaments had any concept of a draw as a measure of achievement; everything was based on different systems of counting supply centers. In America, of the 100+ tournaments run in the same decade, 80% or more were draw based. The idea of shorter time periods was more influenced by the dominance of the face-to-face players who were local, and had not made the economical commitment to travel thousands of kilometers to spend maximum time with contacts that they knew only from postal play. Further, there was a catering to the casual player whose time commitment was shorter compared to the hard core.

These factors have contributed to bring us to a point where there is a shift in the email play of Diplomacy. The European gamers are tending to run with an absolute game year deadline and, when scoring systems are used, they are playing email with the idea of supply center counts as the emphasis. Meanwhile, American hobbyists are maintaining an emphasis on open-ended games and using a draw-based system.

There is also another aspect of which scoring system is favored that is more a reflection of the culture of the participants and the play styles that they encourage (and sometimes force). European players for the most part reflect a keen emphasis on balance of power, playing against the leader even when those leaders are their allies. Under this view, if your ally is ahead of you in the supply center count, he will not be your ally for long, as an alliance is only a way to make oneself better. An enemy is not someone to be destroyed and crushed, but merely an opponent that could be useful later to help you maintain your advantage. In this sense, the Europeans are very much opposed to taking someone totally out of

the game, since in their center count emphasis it is to their advantage to have a lot of very weak players around, rather than have to deal with fewer larger powers, even when they are one of the larger powers.

The flexibility in alliances that the balance of power play brings in the European approach is also reflected in the sensitivity to deception and outright lies. This is another marked difference between American and European veteran play styles. Veteran European players will often comment that Americans take lying much too seriously; because there are so many shifts in position required to maintain a balance of power, Europeans are much less concerned with that. For example, in a recent World Championship game, the American player (England), in explaining why he went after the Swedish player (France), had this exchange:

"You had said that you were not going to build a Fleet in Brest, but then you did, so you lied to me."

"In Sweden we do not consider that lying."

Europeans, as a collection of many different cultures and nationalities, tend to define themselves against the backdrop of a fractured dynamic where size matters greatly, and alliances are generally provided only to balance the field. There is almost no country in Europe whose neighbors have historically not been both deadly enemies and steadfast allies. None of this is present in the American player backgrounds. A monolithic **Us** versus **Them** is the emphasis first and foremost, with the differences between the "us" side ignored. Time perspective is shorter culturally, so the tendency to look beyond the current conflict is less likely. Americans look at sweeping the board in an alliance win, rather than just dominating a game that is not played to a victory.

To some extent if we look at the real world, (always a disappointing and dangerous thing for a true Diplomacy player) it is totally understandable from a European game culture that the French would want to operate in

some way against the American movement in the world, as a matter of trying to balance the power of the United States, once the U.S. was no longer needed to stalemate the Soviet Union. Americans, on the other hand, look at the French as double crossing an alliance. The Americans see only an alliance and someone opposed to it; the French see only countries and one getting more supply centers than they have, and thus they need to oppose it. The Europeans are critical of the U.S. in the Middle East for not thinking ahead to what happens next, and for not being able to shift structures, but only able to bound along in a linear path. The Americans do not understand why the Europeans can be so flexible in their foreign policy approach, and treat it as duplicitous and opportunistic, while the Europeans see the American foreign policy approach as arrogant and self-centered.

In Diplomacy terms, the Europeans are playing to have one more supply center than the lead power, and feel there is a better chance for them if there are a lot of powers, whereas the Americans are looking to reduce the number of powers on the board and form a winning alliance. Thus we have cultural problems in the hobby when it comes to tournament scoring systems: concepts of achievement are not universal.

I hope this article generates some discussion and letters among the readership. How do you view cultural differences in Diplomacy, and how has it changed your playing style? When did those cultural differences expose themselves in a Diplomacy game you were a part of? Edi's piece was actually first published in Italian in Gian Carlo Ceccoli's book, which you can view at http://www.asgs.sm/readarticle.php?article_id=40, or <http://www.aiepeditore.net/default.asp?cmd=getPr od&cmdID=254>. Gian Carlo, of course, is the major force behind the San Marino Diplomacy hobby! If you'd like to learn something about San Marino, see his terrific article in Diplomacy World #97

The View from Second Place

By Matt Sundstrom

Proving that history is not always written by the victors, runner-up Matt Sundstrom recounts the action at the 2008 CODCon Open, played April 12-13 in Glen Ellyn, Ill., a western suburb of Chicago. His account is annotated by Jim O'Kelley. The 2008 CODCon Open was Matt's third tournament. The first two were last year's CODCon and Weasel Moot, the annual club championship of the Windy City Weasels. He finished fifth and third, respectively.

In tournament Diplomacy, every point matters. That lesson became brutally clear during the award ceremony

when I fell just 2 points short of the CODCon championship. Looking back on the tournament, I can see those points were left on the table, but I'm not saying I would have played differently.

In Round 1, I drew Turkey. I got started quickly by picking up Bulgaria and Greece. Russia (Greg Duenow) was under pressure in the north and Austria (Paul Pignotti) needed help to make a breakthrough. I turned on Russia to take Sev, and then Italy (Christian Kline) and I hit Austria to take Rum and Trieste. Both neighbors were weakened beyond repair after that. It was another

Weasel game where Russia came under pressure from all sides¹.

Turkey got the better of the gains in the southeast, and Italy had to deal with a Frenchman (Grant Smith of the Milwaukee Mafia) moving east. I didn't pay a lot of attention, but England (Eric Brown) and France took out Germany (Craig Reges) and decided they would keep going east. Christian was stuck and bristling at not being able to attack me. It was fun to watch.

EF met IT on traditional lines, but EF had Munich. The last German army was in Marseilles and was essential to the IT line. Italy couldn't take him out without taking a risk, and France couldn't do it at all (I believe). There was no way to break through in the east. So a four-way draw became a five-way². This was my first opportunity to pick up the points needed to win. At least I topped with 11 centers³.

Game 2 was a brutal draw, especially after game 1. Christian Kline was France to my Germany. Thomas Haver was England and an unknown commodity⁴. France opened aggressively and allowed England to get into Bel. Le Roi then turned on England and started his roll to Best France. Both me and England were stabbed and hobbled for the rest of the game. I went out first, but at least that got me home early⁵.

Turkey (Eric Brown) did well in the southeast. He got to 11 centers but did not top the board. That allowed my 11-center Turkey in game 1 to remain "Best Turkey" as I did get the board-topping bonus. I don't know if Eric could have done anything about it or if he even realized that difference mattered. He had a nice tournament and only played the two rounds on Saturday⁶.

I drew France in game 3. I had played with England (Craig Reges) and Germany (Rob Rossi) before, but I don't know how much they had played each other.

After getting through a blinking contest with Italy (Thom Comstock said he would not move Pie-Mar in fall '01 and

he didn't), I was at six. That made it easy to go north and keep Germany from doing any damage, so FG set off for England.

England was quickly weakened, so Germany and I stabbed each other at the same time. I had a slight edge as I took a center that was designated for Germany (Edinburgh) while we traded Belgium for Munich in the south. I believe England had tried to rally Germany to stab me earlier in the game but was declined. So he offered to help me, which I accepted.

While all this was happening, Russia (Thomas Haver) jumped from 7 to 11 in one year. FR were the big powers on the board, and the endgame needed to accommodate both of us. (Turkey, played by Grant Smith, was in no position to hurt Russia after the jump to 11.)

The tsar was happy with best Russia, which only required 10 (I think, but more evidence it's hard to play Russia here), while I was content with a board top. Everyone else was happy with their existing positions. So we danced to that position and approved the six-way draw. England survived with one⁷. Ironically, Craig also survived with one as Germany in my first game.

Hmmm...If I had cut Craig out of either draw, I might have won CODCon. But I don't regret that too much.

Champion Mike French and I did not play a single game together⁸ but he knew that we were running neck and neck for the title. My game finished before his, and as the draw was declared, he tried to view the result so he could calculate my score. Much thanks to Thomas Haver for disrupting the board and forcing Mike to keep guessing. Alas, he did well enough on his own to earn the title.

Thanks to Jim and the other organizers. The tournament ran very smoothly with time for dinner on Saturday between rounds 1 and 2. I'm looking forward to Weasel Moot⁹.

Matt is one of Jim's protégés. Or is it the other way around?

¹ In 41 club games, Russia has been eliminated 15 times and has eight survivals. It's best results are two three-way draws and three four-way draws.

² At our tournaments, we use a modified version of the BADAss Whipping system. The system is center based but includes a modest draw pool of 60 points, which is divided evenly among all draw participants, and draws include all survivors. The difference between a four-way draw and a five-way is 3 points.

³ In addition to awarding 10 points per center, our system awards a topping bonus of two points per center, but only if the top is not shared. Matt's 11-center board-topper here in a five-way draw was worth 144 points: 110 center points, plus a topping bonus of 22, plus a draw share of 12 points.

⁴ Haver traveled to CODCon from Columbus, Ohio, to help promote the new Central Shuffle minor circuit. Last year, Haver won Origins and GenCon, two stops on the 2008 Central Shuffle circuit.

⁵ At CODCon, we count a player's best two rounds for score. This was Matt's throwaway round.

⁶ Brown finished fourth in the tournament.

⁷ The difference between a six-way and a five-way is 2 points, the margin of victory at CODCon. In addition, if Matt had taken Craig's last dot, he would have had 10 more center points. Those 12 points would have given him a comfortable margin of victory. Instead, Matt settled for 130 points, 2 less than Mike French's first-round score. French, meanwhile, posted 144 points in the third round, matching Matt's first-round score. French, a cagey veteran from St. Louis, also won last year's inaugural CODCon Open.

⁸ We use the Diplomacy Tournament Manager to seed our rounds. It's a great program, but works best with a large number of players. CODCon had only 19, and we put greater emphasis on diversity of powers and spheres than diversity of players.

⁹ November 14-16 at the Day's Inn Chicago. Make your plans to join us!

The Worldmasters Tournament: A Look Back at History

By Ray Setzer

Douglas has been after me to write up a narrative of the Worldmasters Tournament for a while now, but, being somewhat less than reverent towards historical traditions, I'd just keep putting it off. However, after a recent, and rather short flurry regarding the discontinuation, and potential passing off of the name, I think I've finally arrived at the point where feel a narrative is useful, if for nothing else, than as a fitting eulogy.

Back in 1999, Internet Diplomacy, and, quite specifically, Cat23 Internet Diplomacy, was at its peak. Legions of people had flowed out of the captive BBS formats onto the whole expanded web. Cat23 had made a couple short attempts at an internal tournament with mixed results. What was clearly missing was the competitive aspect that came from different groups of people meeting.

One of the things that we had experimented with in those Cat23 tournaments, was the idea of a Team Tournament. Players would form teams, and those players would be spread around different boards to face off against other teams. The major obstacle to this format was numbers. You needed a fairly large number of people to make it at all interesting. This is where a chance conversation with a gentleman named Emeric Miszti comes in.

Emeric was well known in the UK Diplomacy circuit. At this time, there were lots of individual Diplomacy clubs on the net, and, additionally, even more individual's who played in a very active collection of FTF tournaments in the UK and the European mainland. Clearly, there were thousands of Diplomacy players all around the world, but few of them had any real way to develop consistent contact with other groups around the world. Emeric, as part owner of a small ISP in the UK called Cloud Nine, had offered to provide all the resources necessary to run what was hoped would be multinational tournament.

Since FTF meetings are far more effective at building relationships than email alone, I got on a plane and made my first ever trip to Europe, (A trip I credit for giving me a taste for travel in Europe as I've made nearly a dozen since) and Emeric introduced me to a gentleman by the name of Toby Harris. Between Toby and Emeric, they both knew virtually everyone who was everyone in the European hobby community, and, more importantly, had the reputations that allowed this idea to be taken seriously. A weekend trip to a tournament down in Bognor Regis, where I met a number of interesting characters who I consider friends to this very day further convinced me that somehow, we had to create a way where all the interesting characters from all over the world could meet on neutral ground.

Back in the States, I continued work with Emeric and Toby and we developed the initial format for what we named the Worldmasters Email Diplomacy Championship. We placed the emphasis on it being a team tournament in anticipation that there would be national groups and also club groups. We threw in a individual champion aspect as an extra twist, but, since it never occurred to us that we would attract the numbers we did, we kept it quite small, only 49 out of the initial pool would advance to the individual semifinals. And in an ironic and very annoying twist, I finished 50th in the individual standings.

Without the resources of Cloud Nine, this would have been nearly impossible at this time. Web sites with full featured BBS's were expensive. The webboard that Emeric provided allowed people to participate either by Web or by Email. Basically our own collection of private Yahoogroups before Yahoo was providing the service. Once things were set up, we recruited a number of people to act as greeters, to help people get set up, and to help form individuals into teams. Then Emeric and Toby started the grapevine humming over on their side and I started it humming on my side. The lights were turned on on the marquee and Worldmasters.net was open and ready for business as a neutral site for Diplomats to meet. We waited by the front door to see if anyone would come to the party.

And come they did. And they kept coming. National teams were springing up all over the globe as word spread. It was not a shock that more than one team came from well established Diplomacy regions such as France and the UK, but what we did not expect was that nearly every country where Diplomacy was played formed a national team. Multiple teams out of Scandinavia and Germany, and Australia. Teams from Ireland, Brazil, New Zealand, even Yugoslavia brought a team in addition to multiple players from almost every country in Europe. Canada and the U.S. provided another flood of players and individuals trickled in from South Africa, Argentina, even the Middle East. By the time we had a chance to catch our breath, over 100 boards were filled.

Well, if we thought setting things up was going to be hard, getting it started and keeping it going was going to make that look like child's play. We never, in our wildest dreams thought we would have over 100 teams filling the room. We needed GM's, lots of GM's, and we needed administrators to help keep groups of boards running, questions answered, help, assistance and rulings given. Ted Miller had taken on the task of Tournament Director, and a board of directors was set up to support him to handle the inevitable adjudication

rulings, dropouts, and pretty much anything else it did not occur to us to provide for. Those guys did one hell of a job. Being able to work through what was not a mature format, in a tournament filled with an enormous number of individuals, keeping things running and keeping things cordial all the at the same time, was a huge huge task. I cannot say enough about that group of people and their dedication. Its so long ago, and the names changed from tournament to tournament, but folks such as Rudy van Hal, Jim Burgess, David Norman, Peter Richardson, come to mind. I apologize in advance for omissions, but there were literally dozens of people who made invaluable contributions and made the tournament the success it turned out to be.

But why was it success? I think a number of factors. One, we were in the right place at the right time. Groups from all over were excited about the prospect of being able to all meet in a neutral venue. The team idea was fairly novel, and that also helped foster both camaraderie and competition. People really took to heart the idea of performing well for their team. The web tools allowed for an easily accessible way to keep track of more than just the game you were in. Also, the chat tools really turned out to be popular, as they became a source of information, disinformation, and amusement. Perhaps the most popular in that area was an odds maker named Nathan Detroit. A name lifted out of the Broadway musical Guys and Dolls, Nathan would comb through all the games the top teams were in, and provide gossip, odds, and taunts. When Nathan spoke, people listened. This added a whole new, and unanticipated element to the tournament. In essence, Nathan was engaging in some very subtle and not so subtle, cross gaming that

illuminated a rather lively behind the scenes set of negotiations going on between teams and boards. Debates about the legality of this sprung up, the the tournament board wisely (IMHO) took the stance that since it was impossible to police, that no opinion either pro or con should be offered. Privately, I admit that this kind of aspect was something that I had originally hoped would happen, with entire teams negotiating with other teams.

So, who won? Surely it must have been one of the national superteams right? Nope, not at all. When the dust settled, the Team Championship went to a scratch team. A team of players who had joined as individuals and who had been formed into a team by one of the assistants. Basically they just grabbed seven people and said - poof, your a team, pick a captain. And this was the humble beginnings of Stan's Also Ran's, the 1999 Worldmasters Team Diplomacy champions.

Looking back on it, it was good times. I made a whole lot of friends all over the world because of this. I ended up going to a couple World Diplomacy Championships in Paris and Birmingham pretty much because of this tournament. I have friends in many countries around the world because of this, heck, my wife is an honorary card carrying member of the Irish Teachers Union because of Diplomacy. I cannot think of any hobby where one would meet a more diverse, articulate and educated group of people.

By harassing Ray, I have now coaxed two articles out of him. Shall we go for three ?

French Cup at Dip' on the Beach September 13th-14th, 2008 - Frioul Islands, Marseille, France

For those who've played at Dip' on the Beach previously, I've no doubt that you've already reserved your place. For those who haven't taken part previously, there's still room for you ☺

This tournament takes place on a beautiful Island with an amazing view just off the coast of Marseilles. For sure we'll be playing Dip', but for the unluckiest of us who are eliminated faster than the others, you can keep smiling, because you'll be able to swim, tan, take a walk, play pétanque and even drink free Pastis...

I already know some of you will lose faster in order to drink more (and I don't just mean you, Igor!)

A few words about the schedule : 1st round Saturday 14:30, 2nd round Saturday 20:30, 3rd round Sunday 9:00

The scoring system will still be Win Pastis.

You will be accommodated in the Léo Lagrange holiday centre, which in addition to offering a 100 square meter tree-shaded outdoor playing area on the sea front, enables us to offer an all inclusive package, including 1 night bed and breakfast, 2 main meals, and the tournament fee, all for the very cheap price of €51. You also have the option to book for the previous day (Friday), the cost of each extra-night bed and breakfast with 2 meals is €51.

For registering, or more information about the tournament, send an email to [gwenmaggi "of" yahoo.fr](mailto:gwenmaggi@yahoo.fr)

We've Found that Tournament Feeling

By Jim O'Kelley

I come from a family that loves its traditions. And we have a lot of them, because we define a tradition as anything we do more than once. Two of the most enduring are the family Christmas picture, which we always take at Thanksgiving, and the Christmas Dinner Talk of Death, where my parents update us on their estate plans.

Who, Me?

Haven't been to a tournament lately? You're missing exchanges like this one from the Spring 1904 turn, Round 2, Board 2, at the CODCon Open. The players are Craig Reges, a new Weasel but a Diplomacy veteran who broke into the postal hobby in the early '70s; Weasel Paul Pignotti; and college students Andrew Bartlein and Grant Smith of the Milwaukee Mafia.

Craig Reges: Let's take a vote, is Andy a dick?

Paul Pignotti: [Looking at Andrew Bartlein.] Are you Andy?

Andrew Bartlein: **[Points to Grant Smith.] He's Andy.**

So, hopefully I'm not being overly optimistic when I tell you that CODCon developed a couple of nice potential traditions in its second year.

Held April 12-13 at the CODCon gaming convention in Glen Ellyn, Ill., the Open is a three-round Diplomacy tournament with two rounds on Saturday and one on Sunday. Last year's Open was the Windy City Weasels' first attempt to host a tournament, and the effort was a qualified success. We drew 30 players--including travelers from Milwaukee, St. Louis and even France--and fielded nine boards. But the tournament structure was a bit rigid, and the whole event lacked a certain feel.

This year, we went with untimed rounds and allowed enough time between Saturday's rounds to permit players to go out to dinner if their games had ended. As it turned out, both games were over by about 3:30, so a

big group of 14 or so headed to a nearby restaurant called Alfie's.

We ordered drinks and started rehashing the games, and then the conversation turned to other pursuits...like Paint Ball of all things. Turns out Paul Pignotti used to play competitively. The conversation flowed freely and was more memorable than the food. We finished our drinks, split the tab, with me paying for our young Milwaukee Mafia friends, and it was back to the con for more lying, cheating and backstabbing. But we'll always have Alfie's.

Later that night, the final board ended at around 1:30 a.m., so I headed home with my seven charges: Weasels Thom Comstock and Paul Pignotti; guest Thomas Haver of Columbus; defending champion Mike French of St. Louis; and the three Mafiamen, Grant Smith, Andrew Bartlein and Alex Wyler.

Despite the 10 a.m. start for round 3 and the need to run eight people through two showers, only Wyler had sense enough to go to sleep. He slinked into the basement while the rest of us settled down at the dining room table for a game of Junta.



We played until 4:45 a.m., with French winning. (It was a sign of things to come for him, as he went on to win the Open later that day.) Junta was a heck of a lot of fun, and I won't soon forget the image of Pignotti shaking with laughter as the Air Force Commander dropped bombs on protesting students. Good times.

Oddly, as round 3 began, it was the rested Wyler who screwed up his opening moves. The other guys looked tired, but to me, they also looked familiar. They looked like tournament Diplomacy players.

Our second CODCon Open was smaller than the first, at 19 players and eight boards. But thanks to Alfie's and Junta, the Open feels like a tournament now.

Jim O'Kelley, despite threats from outside forces, remains the Diplomacy Would Club and Tournament Editor.

Diplomacy: The Roleplaying Game

By Chris Sham

Mr Dobbs, the British ambassador's aide, sat nervously and opened the morning paper, unable to concentrate on what was written there. The lobby of his Zurich hotel was unusually crowded, and he was sure that among the throng was at least one unfriendly foreign agent, sent to do who knew what sort of horrible things to him.

"Bon journo, Mr Dobbs!"

Dobbs almost leapt out of his seat with fright, as his bulky Italian contact appeared out of nowhere and sat down next to him. As always, the Italian drew far too much attention to himself, and Dobbs could feel a dozen pairs of eyes swing his way.

"Must you be so damned conspicuous, Alfredo?" he whispered nervously to his associate, "Never mind. Have you got the documents?"

"Si! The complete operational records of the French navy, current up to yesterday morning, and including their full set of plans for a marine invasion of Belgium!" the burley Italian beamed proudly.

"Not so loud, you fool! You want everyone in Zurich to hear you? Here's your payment, now get out of my sight... with the gratitude of His Majesty's Foreign Office, of course."

Most roleplaying games require little in the way of playing equipment; normally just dice, paper, pencils and perhaps a copy of the rules. But there are a small number of games where it becomes appropriate to bring in some sort of miniatures or tokens to help simulate combat on a scale that the vagaries of imagination alone might struggle with. Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, for example, was specifically designed to work together with the established Warhammer miniatures game, allowing small groups of adventurers to seamlessly join massive armies when the plot called for it. And more recently, Wizards of the Coast have caught on to the idea, selling a wide selection of overpriced minis to complement their Dungeons & Dragons and Star Wars RPGs.

In light of this, it occurs to me that the same principle could be applied to Diplomacy, although its scale is much larger than that of a typical miniatures game. That is, each piece in Diplomacy represents not an individual soldier or even a platoon, as in most minis games, but rather a whole army or fleet. But that's a relatively minor detail. I'm sure I'm not the first person to think of setting a roleplaying game within a Diplomacy game, but I have quite a few ideas that might be useful to anyone wanting to try this, so I thought I'd write them up for DW.

Roleplaying: More than just dice-rolling

First, let's consider why you'd want to do this. The point of roleplaying is to get together as a group and tell a story, purely for entertainment. Yes, there are those who think that roleplaying is all about endlessly bashing monsters and stealing their treasure, with only a minimal plot to justify this, but I represent a more highbrow school of roleplayers. Characters' personality development and an in-depth plot are vital to me. And Diplomacy does provide a perfect setting for a roleplaying game of that calibre. It offers a well-defined set of locations, the societies to settle those places and the underlying conflict between them. More than that, the duplicitous nature of Diplomacy also leaves room for some good plot twists. (I am assuming that we're talking about the standard 1901 Europe variant. But you can extend these principles to most other 'realistic' variants, even if they're based on fictional realities.)

Character Types & Game Mechanics

But what do you do with such a setting? Your first instinct might be to make the player characters high members of government in one or more of the competing powers. That would be wrong, however, because that's essentially the same as playing Diplomacy normally. As it is, Diplomacy is already partly a roleplaying game, since each player takes on the role of head-of-state. The game already covers that angle very well, especially for mail players who like to write in character or, less commonly, for face-to-face players who enjoy getting dressed up in period attire and talking in silly accents. So let's not mess with that aspect of the game; it already works fine.

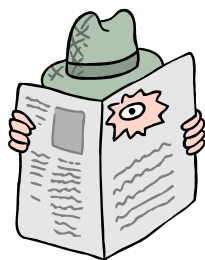
The opposite extreme would be to make all the player characters individual soldiers or sailors, fighting the battles ordered by some hypothetical leaders back in the capital. I don't want to dismiss that possibility out of hand, but it does seem rather limited to me. What, after all, is there really for soldiers to do other than fight? And if they're not fighting, then why make them soldiers in the first place? Beyond that, fighting mass battles, army vs. army, is essential to the setting of Diplomacy, but it makes for horribly restrictive and monotonous roleplaying. Perhaps in more futuristic settings you could cast the player characters as some sort of special operations team, conducting interesting little covert missions in support of the main army, but even that has its limits.

However, if you choose to go that route, linking the roleplaying to the board game seems straight-forward enough: If the player characters achieve their objective in a given battle, then their army wins, either holding

their territory on the board, or advancing into an enemy territory. (More on what happens with the board later.)

To me, the most interesting possibility for a Diplomacy RPG would be an espionage game. The player characters would be minor diplomats, agents and spies for their government(s), and some could even be double- or triple-agents. And depending on how successfully they manage to steal enemy secrets, the better informed their leaders will be, and thus the better the war will go for their side.

From a game mechanics point of view, I'd say that each session represents one season in the board game, and the games master should control all 7 powers directly (since we're telling a story, not playing a board game). Before each session, the GM should define the orders for all the "bad" powers, i.e. those that the player characters are not working for. During the session, the players will have the opportunity to uncover some, if not all, of those orders and transmit them home. Then the GM can put himself into the position of the leader of the "good" power and decide its orders based on the intelligence uncovered by the players. Then resolve orders as normal.



This could become a little complicated if any of the player characters are double agents. In that case, the GM would need to define provisional orders for all the "good" powers, so that player characters can trade these secrets away. But afterwards, the GM would have to adjust the provisional orders based on whatever intelligence the players uncover. This also raises the possibility of counter-espionage agents who intentionally feed the player characters with false intelligence. It's also possible that enemy agents could discover what the player characters have learned (if their spying is sloppy and unprofessional), giving the "bad" powers a chance to change tactics at the last minute to make up for these intelligence leaks.

Naturally, the GM will have to be careful not to confuse his or her actual knowledge with the knowledge that any given leader is supposed to have.

Humble Civil Servants or Edwardian Super-Spies?

The GM also needs to decide in advance how realistic the game is supposed to be. In a purely historical setting (ignoring for a moment the historical inaccuracies of Diplomacy itself), warfare and espionage weren't all that

sophisticated. Soldiers fought in strict formations and impractical uniforms, warships still sailed in the methodical lines that Nelson had rejected a century before, and spies were not all that different from common confidence artists and blackmailers. For a good idea of what to include and exclude from a realistic setting like this, read Thomas Pakenham's *The Scramble for Africa*. Although it's about the colonisation of Africa, it deals much more than anything else with the politics and warfare of Victorian Europe, which is close enough to what we're interested in.

If you don't want a totally realistic game, Alan Moore's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* comics (or the movie based on them, if you prefer) provide some good material you can steal. The idea here is to suspend the laws of physics in favour of the laws of drama, and to give your players (and their opponents) James Bond-style super-technology, or at least what would have passed for it in 1901. All manner of modern weapons and spy gizmos (e.g. submachine guns with laser sights, bullet-proof vests and mini-cameras) can be made available to spice up an otherwise-dull adventure, so long as they all retain the look and feel of contemporary 1901 technology. And feel free to make up devices that have never existed at all. If you want to take this kind of setting to the extreme, then look up the 'steam-punk' roleplaying game, *Space 1889*. However, I must warn you that fancy gizmos alone will not make for a very good roleplaying game. Whether you include them or not, you really must first come up with a good plot to use them in.

It's also possible to straddle a sort of middle ground between ultra-realistic settings and crazy-scifi settings. Consider, for example three technological breakthroughs of 1900:

1. The US Navy buys its first submarine from Mr Holland.
2. Graf Zeppelin flies his first rigid airship.
3. The first human speech is transmitted by wireless radio.

Those would all have seemed like tremendously exciting new technologies at the time – almost science fiction material – and yet they were all successful (if untried) by Spring 1901. It doesn't take much of a leap of imagination to see how you could fit real, contemporary technology like that into a Diplomacy RPG, and it can give players all the excitement of having "neat new stuff" without totally throwing realism out the window.

What Roleplaying system suits Diplomacy?

Frankly, I say use whatever you like. I'm of the school of thought that says strict adherence to the rules makes for bad roleplaying. You're trying to act like real people, not machines, so you really shouldn't worry too much about what the dice say.

That said, there are a few systems that I would recommend for a setting like this. Probably the best is *Call of Cthulhu*, which is just so incredibly easy to use that you can't help but get into character and forget the rules. The *Cthulhu* rules are especially good if you don't plan on having much physical violence in your game, though you may also want to leave out its rules regarding insanity. This system is also already geared towards an early-20th century setting, which saves a lot of thinking for both players and GMs.

For a more combat-oriented game, you could do worse than to use one of the many modern variants of the *d20* rules. Variants like *d20 Modern* and *Spycraft* can both be adjusted to a 1901 setting without too much extra homework for the GM, while *Call of Cthulhu d20* (not the same as the original *Cthulhu* game) has the benefit of having already done some of that work for you (though not to quite the same extent as the original *Cthulhu*).

Some Diplomacy variants (such as the various Star Trek, Star Wars and Lord of the Rings variants) already have extensive roleplaying systems designed for their specific settings. If you wanted to base an RPG on one of those Dip variants, you could obviously save yourself a lot of trouble by using the appropriate pre-made roleplaying system. However, these systems aren't necessarily always very good and they may not be appropriate for the style of play you're after, so don't feel compelled to use them either.

Campaigns

It seems a shame to use the Diplomacy setting for a once-off adventure, since the really interesting part of Diplomacy comes only after a while, when you can see the shifting alliances and the outright backstabs. On the other hand, a typical Diplomacy game can go on for ages, which may be longer than a roleplaying campaign can be sustained. (In my personal experience, it's unwise to plan a campaign more than about 5 adventures long; games that continue for years are nice, but very rare.)

Perhaps the best way of handling this problem would be to limit the scope of the game from the start. The GM could, for example, decide right at the start that the players will be focusing solely on a war between France and Germany, and once the player characters succeed in their long-term goal of getting Russia to attack Germany, then France can focus elsewhere and the story is considered resolved. The other 4 powers can still be involved in the game, but they're not the players' primary concern. Perhaps breaking up the England-Italy alliance could make a good sequel campaign, if there's demand for it. (There's also no reason you couldn't involve states other than the 7 major powers in your storyline. Securing trade agreements with the US or China could clearly influence the game without ever bringing American or Chinese units onto the board.)

Alternatively, the GM could simply set the players up for failure from the beginning: The opposition's counter-espionage teams are already onto them, and it's just a matter of doing as much as they can before they're finally arrested and lined up before a firing squad. That gives them less certainty about when and how their story will end (which in turn gives the GM much more flexibility), but it may also lead to some resentment if the GM doesn't handle it carefully. After all, no players ever like to lose their characters, even if they saw it coming well in advance.

And finally, you don't strictly need to include my mechanics for linking the board game to the RPG. As I said, Diplomacy provides an interesting and largely untapped setting for roleplaying games, and there are all manner of stories you could tell in that setting that don't directly relate to the movement of armies and fleets across Europe.

Partial Bibliography

These are just some of the many books I think would be useful to anyone running a Diplomacy RPG. Sadly, not all of them are in publication anymore.

Barton, W., *Cthulhu by Gaslight: Horror Roleplaying in 1890s England*.

Ignoring the occult stuff, this is a well-written guide to what life was like just over a century ago, albeit focused mainly on London.

Chadwick, F., *Space 1889*.

The Scramble for Africa, in space. A roleplaying game of stereotypical European colonials with ludicrously advanced technology. Useful for jazzing up your Diplomacy RPG with amusing gizmos. Also a much shorter and easier read than *The Scramble for Africa*.

Dobson, C. & R. Payne, *The Dictionary of Espionage*.

Although it mostly covers the Cold War, it does give a very good idea of what human intelligence gathering really involves. And since almost all espionage back in 1901 was 'HumInt', this will no doubt be useful to any spy-related Diplomacy RPG.

Pakenham, T., *The Scramble for Africa*.

An extremely detailed account of the European conquest of Africa during the Victorian period. Despite the massive scale of this topic, Pakenham manages to convey a lot of the individual thought processes behind all the plotting and planning that took place in Europe at the time, just like a real-life game of Diplomacy.

Got any additional ideas on Chris' article? Drop DW an email to [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@yahoo.com), or write up a full article!

Tales from the Tournament Trail: Old Times There Are Not Forgotten

By Jim O'Kelley

**Dixie Con 22
Granville Towers
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
May 23 to 25, 2008**

It started innocently enough.

The awards ceremony had ended, and Tournament Director David Hood was counting heads for the traditional post-tournament dinner when fellow Weasel, traveling companion and avowed hippie Greg Duenow said:

"I don't want to go to a formal dinner. I'm going swimming, and then I'll grab something to eat."

I had lobbied specifically for a Monday morning flight so that we *could* attend the dinner, but I didn't want my pal to dine alone, so I said, "Why don't we go get pub food? I'll ask the others to join us."

Kevin O'Kelly and Thom Comstock accepted the invitation, but Jeremiah Peterson politely decline, since he sees us all the time...until Dave Maletsky and one of his groupies muscled in.

So, now we were seven and headed off for town when we encountered Graham Woodring and Adam Sigal wandering aimlessly in the parking lot.

"Where are you going?" asked Graham.

"To a bar," I said.

"We're in," he replied, and they fell in behind us.

On Frankin Street, we ran into a pack of six or eight players who had mistakenly gone to the wrong restaurant and were now trying to find the right one. Two—Thomas Haver and Eric Grinnell—abandoned that search in favor of greener pastures with us.

Eventually, we found a bar toward the end of the strip that had a decent menu and good drink specials, so we settled in. I think I had the Buffalo Chicken Sandwich, and I think it was pretty good, and I know I had a Jack and Ginger and two or three Bacardi and Sprites (or some other frilly combination recommended by Graham).

I was feeling pretty good as our party of 11 settled the tab and started back for all-night gaming at the con, and I knew my White Sox would be playing on Sunday Night

Baseball, so I said, "I kind of want to go to a bar and watch the Sox."

"Bar?" asked Graham and Greg in unison. "We're in."

So, we disengaged from the pack and moseyed over to a bar called the Blue Horn that we had discovered Friday afternoon when we met Graham and Tim Richardson there. Because of the name, the décor and the fact that Graham, Tim and another guy were the only customers, I pegged it for a gay bar. Which would have been fine. It wasn't though, which was also fine. When it comes to bars, I don't see "gay" or "straight," I see "Yuengling on tap."

It did have a swank restroom, though, with a sleek, black toilet, matching sink, a gold-framed mirror, and a red floor, ceiling and walls. I'm still not convinced it wasn't a gay bar. (Again, which would have been fine.)

I asked the chatty bartender to put on the Sox game, ordered a round of beers, and settled into my stool.

The only other patrons were a young couple, and when the bartender turned on the game, the guy said, "Oh, you're from Chicago. I assumed you meant the Red Sox."

"No, the White Sox," I said, and Greg asked if he were from Chicago.

"No," he replied. "I'm from Cincinnati, so I hate the Cubs."



I bought him a drink, too.

I asked for a round of Jaeger shots, but Greg wanted Maker's and Graham, chilled Jameson. Prima donnas.

The young couple left, replaced by two older couples.

Graham talked a lot about hockey (he looooooooooooooves the Sabers) while I watched the game. Then Greg finally said, "I'm sick of hockey. Let's talk about something else."

"How about this game?" I asked, nodding toward the television. "It's 2-2. Contreras is working on a two-hitter, and Lackey has been just as tough."

"What does this have to do with hockey?" asked Graham.



The two couples left. Another one entered. We ordered another round of shots, and then argued about dinner and whether we should have been more inclusive with our guest list.

"I'm disappointed in you, Jim," said Graham.

"What does *this* have to do with hockey?" I asked, and then said, "I didn't want to pull people away from the real dinner. It was supposed to be a small group."

"Why does there have to be a 'real dinner'?" Asked Graham. "Why can't we all just have dinner?"

"That's heavy, Man," Greg said. "Real heavy."

After 20 minutes of talking in circles, we finally changed the subject, and Graham started talking about his relatives. Turns out he's part of the Fairbanks family, one of America's oldest families. Also, there's an association of Woodrings, and they have an annual family picnic numbering in the thousands. (This news scared the crap out of me. Thousands of Woodrings? The four I know will probably kill me.) I countered by sharing two of my darkest family secrets. I won't tell them here, but get me drunk some time, and we'll see.

After a third round of shots and a walk-off homer by Carlos Quentin, his second of the game, we decided to leave. Drunk and feeling generous, I picked up the tab (\$140). We literally staggered out of the Blue Horn and headed back to the con, stopping at a liquor store on the way to pick up two six-packs and a cigar.

But before reaching the gaming lounge, I slipped away to make a deposit in my secret bathroom (the one at the con site smells like the Orc Pits of Mordor, and I like privacy). When I returned to the lounge, I found a bunch of people intent on their games but no Greg or Graham.



I approached Jeremiah, who was playing *Here I Stand*, I think.

"We have to arrange transportation to the airport," I said.

"Okay," he said. "Talk to Hood."

"I'm hammered, Man," I said. "I can't talk to Hood like this. You have to do it."

"All right," he said. "I'll take care of it."

I found Greg and Graham in the pool, swimming in their underwear. I sat down, cracked a beer, and lit my cigar, enjoying the night. They joined me, and we talked about nothing, or maybe hockey, for a good while, until a security guard eventually kicked us out.

So we wandered off toward Greg's room, but since I still had a cigar going, we made our way to the fire escape instead, still working on our first beers and carrying nine unopened ones with us.

What happened next is better left unsaid. It was captured on video, though, and I'm really surprised it's not on YouTube yet. Just a matter of time, I guess.

Anyway, I said good night and went to bed. Three or four hours later, at 5 a.m., I climbed into David Hood's van with my fellow Weasels and a raging hangover, and headed for the airport.

Obviously I love Diplomacy, and playing in tournaments against the best players in the world is a huge thrill. But it's the unexpected adventures I share with guys like Greg and Graham that keep me coming back for more.

Those pesky cell-phone video cameras...curse of the celebrity, and the Diplomacy player.

GENCON INDIANAPOLIS

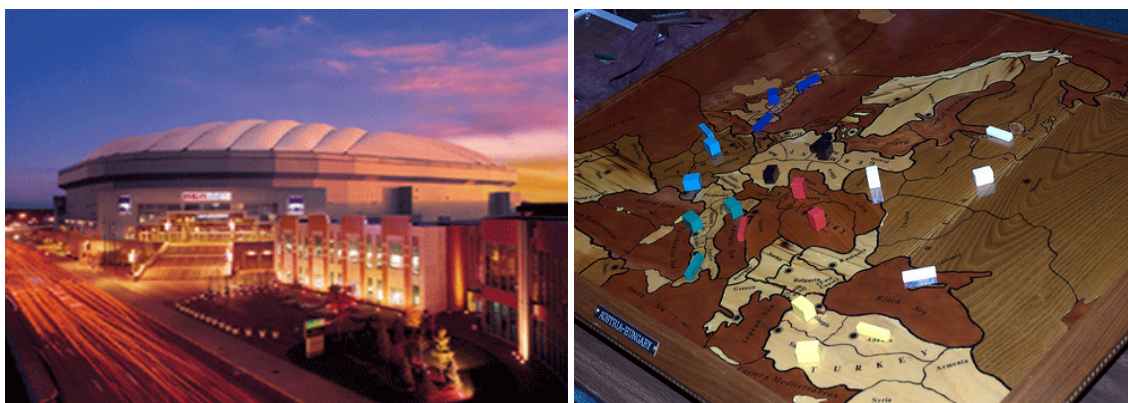
23ND ANNUAL DIPLOMACY TOURNAMENT

August 14th-17th



Four qualifying rounds of Diplomacy running from Thursday afternoon through Saturday morning. The seven best country winners are selected to compete for the championship on Saturday night, which is played until a concession or solo is achieved.

GenCon is held at the Indianapolis Convention Center in downtown Indy. Register for the tournament through the GenCon registration system, which also gives you access to hotel room blocks in the downtown area.



"Gen Con Indy is the original, longest running, best attended, gaming convention in the world. For nearly 40 years, Gen Con Indy has been setting the trend and breaking records. Last year, more than 26,000 unique attendees experienced Gen Con Indy. The biggest complaint we hear is that there is simply too much to do, see, and experience. Get lost in a phantasm of art exhibits. Stare at jaw-dropping costumes, or better yet, wear one of your own. Meet the movers and the shakers in the gaming industry. Check out the newest games and get a sneak peek at the latest editions."

Contact Thomas Haver for details at tjhaver@gmail.com
<http://www.gencon.com/2008/indy/>

I WANT TO THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR CARDS AND LETTERS. I HAD NO IDEA CUTTING AND PASTING WORDS OUT OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES WAS STILL SO MUCH IN VOGUE. IT WAS DELIGHTFUL TO LEARN THAT SO MANY OF YOU HAD GUNS. THE SECOND AMENMENT IS OBVIOUSLY IN FULL STRENGTH AND VIGOR – MUCH LIKE DEATH CAMPS IN SOUTHEASTERN CUBA. IN RESPONSE TO ALL THIS ARMED ENCOURAGEMENT, WE WILL PROCEED ANYWAY. NONE OF YOU IS HOLDING THE RIGHT HOSTAGE.

THE ADVENTURES OF FATMAN AND FROTTAGE

THE CASE OF LADY WINDBOTTOM'S FAN

©2008 Rod Walker

Fit the Second: The One Fan

Party Time

In Vienna, Winter of the 20th Century's first year faded into Spring and Spring just sort of faded. The year had begun on a promising note with a spectacular continuation of the Ball Season. The last of the great Viennese terpsichorean celebrations that Winter was the Forgers', Four-Flushers, Finks' and Finaglers' Fête of Feathers. A number of highly suspicious-looking ostriches arrived around midnight and a wonderful time was had by all during the subsequent police raid. And after, since festivities continued under the leadership of Frosch, the local jailer. Things sort of broke up after it was revealed that one of the guests, Count Draculya, wasn't actually wearing a bat costume. Alas, the poor Duke of Yorick, whom we all knew well, didn't get out in time.

The Season now having ended, the attention of the social set turned to the nuptials of Prince Friedrich the Startlingly Healthy and Princess Lucrezia Borgia of Italy – Vienna having become a last-minute change of venue from Salzburg because the parties were much better in the Imperial Capital. The ceremony was performed by His Holiness, Pope Innocent XIV, né Prince Rodrigo Borgia, who also gave away the bride and temporarily misplaced the rings in a side pocket of his red velour cassock. At the post-nuptial banquet, Princess Lucrezia hand-fed to her husband choice bits of a small wedding cupcake she had baked with her own pale hands. He said it was delicious, but nobody else was allowed a taste (although when the Pope asked for a bit, Lucrezia hesitated a bit before suggesting that His Holiness had had quite a bit of the huge official cake already.

The subsequent week-long celebrations were the most lavish seen in the Imperial Capital since the inauguration of Maria-Theresa's 1000th Official Paramour in 1776 – an event whose significance was unfortunately overshadowed by the American Revolution. The fireworks were often so bright as to out-glare the sun. Of course the smoke created by the subsequent mass production of dark glasses caused a good deal of eye, nose, and throat irritation – and a number of amusing false fire alarms answered by the Keystone Firemen.

Good times, good times. Thereafter, however, the Spring of 1901 went decidedly downhill. Expert observers later recalled that the first sign of this problem was Prince Friedrich the Fabulously Healthy's departure

for his honeymoon. "I don't," he said slowly, "feel all that well."

Fatman en Tauride

The Hôtel Metropole (or, more properly, Metro-Pole), on Taurostrasse in the medium-fashionable area of Vienna, was a popular watering- and sleeping-hole for the mask-spandex-and-cape set – especially the sort who like to do costume changes while sliding down poles. There are more of those than you might believe. (Poles were currently in short supply in Vienna, having recently become very popular in night clubs – Zeus knows why.) Rooms were always in 2 storeys, connected by poles (conveniently bypassing the stairs).



Fatman, in his guise as billionaire playguy Puce Waynecloud, was leasing rooms decorated partly in the Napoleon VI style and partly in the related but clashing Louis XXI – both the usual short-term French monarchs. Both are tied at 21 months each, although their followers stage riots over the odd month, claiming 20-22 or 22-20. Puce sprawled – brooding – in a Napoleon VI chaise on the upper floor salon. It was mid-morning. Waynecloud's ward, the young ward (nudge ... oh, you know), Tick Crayfish. Tick was singing, *sotto voce*, one of his favorite songs (to a possibly familiar tune):

*"Ooo-oh, say shall I rub,
By the dawn's early light,
What so slyly I rubbed
By the twilight's last gleaming?
You may give me a glare;
You may give me the air;
But when hip's next to thigh,*

*A bit of frotting is fair.
O-oh say, do-oo you-hoo...*

...and so on. We could continue, but this is a family 'zine.

Puce snorted. "Where have you been?"

"At the Excelsior. They have elevators and lots of guests using 'em, nudge, nudge, wink, wink," Tick chortled.

"You're in a jolly mood," Puce observed. "In spite of the dire news."

Tick laughed. "Holy headlines, Fatman. Do you believe everything old Alöis Hitler prints in the *Heiligen Überschriften*? Ha! 'Stürm und drang, stürm und drang!'"

"Well, you'll have to admit things look fairly gritty. Look ... Emperor Franz Joseph up and dies mysteriously. The new Emperor, Friedrich the Apparently Not So Healthy isn't feeling at all well. War's in the air. The Austrian fleet has sortied for the first time since their defeat by the Holy Italian Navy in 1866, seizing control of the Adriatic Sea. ... And the Italian fleet has swarmed all over the Ionian. There's talk of a pitched battle near Corfu. The Austrians have upset the Russians by invading Serbia. Don't even talk to me about the Turks. And worst of all ... "

Lady Windbottom Drops the Other Shoe

There was a knock on the door. Tick went to answer it, in order to stand as close as possible to whomever came in. It proved to be none other than Pirate Jenny, Lady Windbottom. Her ladyship was in full pirate regalia, right down to a very aggressively red parrot on her shoulder. Her ruby-encrusted peg leg was now set off by a number of oversize diamonds (or cubic zirconia, as malicious gossip had it). "Puce Waynecloud!" she boomed, "Where is my fan?"

Fatman cleared his throat. "Well, you know, we've had a number of cases. Solved most of 'em, too. Even the Case of the Even Larger Giant Rat of Sumatra. First one went to that phony Holmes. Doesn't even wear a proper cape. No spandex. Just a funny hat and a violin. Has a *doctor* for a sidekick. I ask you ... is that overcautious or what?"

Jenny plopped into a pink Louis XXI overstuffed that was decorated with white dots, blue and purple bows, and little yellow fuzzy puffballs. "The fan, man, the fan!"

Fatman did a considerable bit of throat-clearing. "Oh, that. You know, we did have a lead on that pointing to a pawn shop. But when we got there, it'd been sold. We're still looking."

"He wears an opera cape, you know," observed Tick.

Fatman choked. "Who?" he finally managed to say.



"Holmes. He sometimes wears an opera cape. *That's* proper, isn't it?"

"Hmph!" Fatman turned to the actually important matter at hand. "Lady Jenny, what exactly is so important about the fan?"

Jenny stood up dramatically, leaving the overstuffed looking a good deal less plump. "You fool! It is *the* fan! The *One* Fan!!"

Two voices went "Huh?"

Lady Windbottom's voice seemed to echo and amplify as she intoned:

"One fan to rule them all, one fan to find them; One fan to bring them all, and in the fandom bind them."

Plop.

Next: *Fit the Third, "The Fellowship of the Fan" or, "Just How Derivative Can This Guy Get?"*

P.S. IN VIEW OF THE UNDERWHELMING RESPONSE TO THE IN-JOKE CHALLENGE (TOTAL: 0) I SUPPOSE THAT IT ISN'T GOING ANYWHERE. I SUPPOSE NOBODY WANTS TO ADMIT TO BEING A DWEEB. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THAT IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE? AFTER ALL, NOT ONLY DO YOU PLAY DIPLOMACY BUT YOU ACTUALLY READ A MAGAZINE ABOUT IT ...

HOWEVER, HERE IS AN INTERESTING CHALLENGE. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE REFERENCES TO "FROTTAGE" IN THIS STORY? SEND ANSWERS TO [catu11us "of" pacbell.net](mailto:catu11us@pacbell.net) – AND WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

Good luck with that idea...when I offer cash prizes for the top three entries in a contest, I'm lucky to get three entries. It isn't that nobody reads this; each issue is downloaded thousands of times. But participation? That's another story.

Why We Need the Boardman and Miller Numbers

By Doug Kent

I'll admit it; I'm a bit of an old fogey when it comes to some new or popular things. I don't mean that I can't appreciate the new and the innovative...I just mean that I seem to find myself disinterested in a lot of what passes for improvement or the rage of the modern era. I don't watch American Idol, Survivor, or any of the other reality TV shows. I don't own an Ipod. I use my cell phone to make phone calls, and nothing else. I don't own an Xbox or a Wii. Most of today's music sounds like a five song rotation played over and over. I look at an issue of Us Magazine or Entertainment Weekly and I can barely identify one celebrity in ten. I simply don't fit in with portions of society these days.

Still, a lot of my tendency to enjoy or appreciate things from the past is, in my opinion, because those things were good! I love to read Vonnegut. If you want to put in an episode of The Prisoner, Columbo, Monty Python, of The X-Files, I'm ready to grab a seat and watch them with you. I have the original Railroad Tycoon loaded on my laptop. Diplomacy remains one of my favorite games (if you hadn't noticed) despite how long it has been around. Give me an old issue of National Lampoon, the original Willy Wonka, Get Smart on TV instead of a movie.

When it comes to the Diplomacy hobby, I've made my preference quite clear: I miss a lot of things which have gone the way of leaded gasoline and ditto machines. I miss finding a zine in my mailbox a few times a week. I miss hand-written letters. I miss pages of press. I miss the sense of community, the classic literary flavor, the rowdy sense of humor. Maybe parts of the hobby I miss will reassert themselves, or maybe not. But I am here today to make the call for the return of two aspects of the "old" hobby which I think need to be brought back: the Boardman Number Custodian and the Miller Number Custodian.

Some of you may have some knowledge of these hobby service offices, but for those who do not I will provide a brief description. The Boardman Number Custodian provides registration numbers for regular Diplomacy gamestarts. A gamemaster submits the player names and country assignments to the BNC, as well as where the game is being played (a Diplomacy zine, web site, specific Judge, etc) and any name it might be known by. In return, the GM receives a unique Boardman Number for that game. These numbers include both the year of the gamestart, and a registration code comprised of one or more letters. For example, the first Boardman Number issued in 2008 would be 2008A, the next 2008B, and so on (when the original letters are used, the next game becomes AA, then AB, etc). When a game is over, the GM submits an end-game report which includes a supply center chart broken down by great

power and year, any player changes (drops, resignations, etc.) and the final game result. The BNC then regularly publishes a compilation of these starts and ends.

The Miller Number Custodian performs the same task, but for variant games. The MNC game numbers also include a code designating the variant (using the arda catalog numbers used by the North American Variant Bank). Gunboat Diplomacy, as an example, has a code of rb32 (being the 32nd variant cataloged which uses the regular board). So if the third number issued by the MNC in 2007 was for a game of Gunboat Diplomacy, the MNC number would be 2007Crb32. Again, as with the BNC, the MNC publishes a compilation of the game starts and game ends, with the exception that the players in any anonymous or Gunboat game are not released by the MNC until the game ends.

It might surprise you to know that the Diplomacy hobby does have a current Boardman Number Custodian and Miller Number Custodian: Tom Howell. In fact, if you submit a gamestart to him, he will issue a registration number to you. The Diplomacy game I'm running in my subzine Eternal Sunshine was assigned 2008A. That's not really surprising, because almost nobody outside of postal Diplomacy zines make use of the service (and the gamestart rate in those postal zines is minute compared to the Diplomacy hobby on web sites, social networks, and Judges). And I think that is a loss to the hobby.

Some of you may be thinking "it sounds like a big waste of time to me. Why should I have to submit anything to anybody?" Well, you don't have to; even in the old days of the hobby nobody had to. But I see true benefit in doing so. And since I'm trying to make the case that gamemasters should once again voluntarily make use of this service, I suppose I should give you a few of my reasons.

The first, and most obvious reason, is that collecting Diplomacy and variant gamestarts and game results makes accurate statistical analysis of the hobby (and the game itself) much easier. If you have access to a nearly complete list of results, you can crunch numbers, make comparisons, and draw conclusions. How often does a Germany with three builds in 1901 win the game? Has a particular variant suddenly become more popular, or dropped off the radar? Why does the Website A see such strong results for England, while Group B favors France? With this data, you can track and gauge growth in various segments of the hobby. "Wow, look at all the games running on that web site. They must be doing something to bring new blood into the hobby. I need to investigate and emulate that!" It also allows much more

complete analysis of variants. Instead of looking at three game results for Buffy the Vampire Slayer Diplomacy, all from one community and with the same group of players, you might find ten games. This allows a variant designer to better measure balance flaws. "Hmm, I thought I might need to strengthen the Willow forces based on the three games I watched, but I see that over in this group Willow has won two of four games. I need to see what the differences were."

Statistics aside, the summary reports from the BNC and MNC were always fun for me to look over in quiet moments. Sometimes I'd discover a variant I hadn't heard of but which seemed to be popular (or obscure). Or I'd stumble across a new place to play; maybe a new web site, a new ezine, or something else. This allowed me to expand my hobby participation, and to do what I could to bring segments of the hobby together.

Finally, the reports serve another purpose: they let GM's and players get a feel for the history of fellow players. Who is this guy Ryan Hyde who has five solo wins this month? And what about Morrie Albrom, who dropped from six games on this web site, but has suddenly appeared in gamestarts on this other one? Open documentation of a player and his or her results helps players see if a potential ally is reliable, or a GM to see if a player can be counted on to see a losing position through to the end. In fact, if the data become widely used enough, actual "rehabilitation games" could be formed to allow players who have a history of dropping to play against each other in an effort to prove they have mended their ways. Collecting all this data, from so many diverse communities, nations, websites, judges, publications, and groups, can only help bring us together as a real community again. The greater the interaction, the better for everyone concerned. That's my personal opinion, anyway.

When postal Diplomacy was the major (or only) area of hobby activity besides face-to-face, the BNC and MNC positions would be handled by an individual who had attention to detail, although they could present quite a bit of work assembling the data, especially when you consider the manual processes required in the pre-internet age. As Tom Howell points out, burnout among the custodians was common. "It was the rare custodian who turned the job over before getting at least a little singled."

These days, because of the countless gamestarts and game ends all over the internet, much of the process needs to be automated. I'm told that the infrastructure for this automation remains in place from years ago, although I imagine additional work would need to be done, especially on the BNC/MNC side. Ideally, a combination of automation and web-form submission

could be combined, building a large database that could be examined on-line. The old days of manually typing up the game report and publishing the results in a printed zine like Everything or Alpha and Omega are gone, although pdf versions could be put together with little effort.

So where would we start? First there would need to be an agreement among some of the major internet and Diplomacy community forces to make use of such a system again. Then it would need to be implemented, and publicized. Tom Howell has written a web site which can handle both Boardman and Miller numbers, with a code in python and an underlying MySQL database. There still remain some holes in Tom's data, as he is missing some regular Diplomacy games, but with luck and some outside assistance I hope we should be able to complete that. Tom admits "the biggest single task is going to be entering the backlog of postal games into the database."

Once the database is complete, Tom is going to send the data and website code to a few individuals for comments. Then it'll be off to the races. Well, it **SHOULD** be. Much of the programming to automate the submission of Judge games will be in place, but the driving goal of making the numbers as complete and far-reaching as possible will require constant publicity. Anything is better than nothing, but the goal should be to have every web site and gaming community submitting their games and results to the respective Custodian, either through an automated process or via the web site.

Tom says he'd be happy to participate in the resurrection, as long as the job isn't as time-consuming as the job was back in the 70's and 80's (and early 90's). Otherwise, I imagine Tom would prefer to be replaced by someone who has the time to commit to such an endeavor. Of course, the BNC and MNC positions could be held by separate individuals (as they were in the "old days"), and as long as they had the support of people with programming skill, they wouldn't necessarily have to be able to do a large amount of programming themselves. This cannot be a personal project; like Tom Howell now, and all those before him, accepting the post of Boardman Number Custodian or Miller Number Custodian is not an ownership of those positions. They are merely performing a stewardship, doing their best to accomplish the goals of the office until it is time to pass it along to the next steward.

Perhaps I am alone in my desire to see these hobby offices returned to prominence. But whether you agree or disagree, I would really like to hear your opinion. Please send your comments to me at [diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com](mailto:diplomacyworld@yahoo.com).

2008 Grand Prix Watch: Beware of Charging Buffalos!

By Jim O'Kelley

After eight steps, Andy "Buffalo" Bartalone has stampeded to the front of the pack in the 2008 North American Diplomacy Federation Grand Prix, racking up 253.07 points in four events. A perennial contender, Buffalo won the Grand Prix in 2002, finished second in 2004, and took third the past two years.



After winning the six-board PrezCon in February, Buffalo thundered to the lead with strong showings at Dixie Con in May (second place) and the Boston Massacre in June (fourth). At 10 and 11 boards, respectively, they represent the two largest tournaments to date.

"I haven't really been paying attention," Buffalo says of his charge to the front of the Grand Prix pack. "I travel to tournaments mostly to hang out with all the great friends I've made in the hobby. If I do well in the Grand Prix in the process, that's just icing on the cake."

Dogging Buffalo is fellow Potomac Tea and Knife Society board member Dave Maletsky, at 237.05 points. Maletsky has competed in five events thus far and plans to play in a few more, but he doubts his staying power in the race.

"I'm running Tempest," he explains, "and that will probably be the largest event of the year." Tournament directors often don't play in their tournaments, and when they do, they're typically ineligible for placement.

In third is Thomas Haver of Columbus, Ohio, one of the newest players on the circuit. Last year, Haver announced himself by winning Origins and Gen Con. In May, he traveled to his first tournament outside the Midwest, the venerable Dixie Con, and promptly won it. He has scored, unofficially, 210.9 points in four events. (His total is unofficial because the recently completed

Origins has not announced its official results.)

Haver hopes that his travel will encourage more East Coast players to attend Midwestern tournaments, especially with the 2009 World Diplomacy Championship set for Columbus.

"Diplomacy is taking off again in the Midwest," Haver says. "GenCon has rejoined the hobby scene, and Buckeye Game Fest will hold a tournament for the first time. We now have six Grand Prix eligible tournaments in the Midwest. There's a lot of interest and excitement. I think you're going to see more travelers emerge from the Midwest in the future."

Graham Woodring is lurking in fourth place with 201.62 points, followed by rival Brian Shelden, another PTKSer, with 197.43. After two events, these two were atop the heap. But Woodring fell on tough times after PrezCon. He finished 14th at April's Whipping, 11th at Dixie, and 12th at Massacre.

"Everyone keeps ganging up on me," he laments. "What the fuck?!? I'm not *that* good a player."

"Don't listen to him," warns Shelden, the iron man competitor. "He really is *that* good."

"I only wish I had had a hand in ganging up on him," Shelden adds. "Not because of the Grand Prix, but because that's just fun."

Rounding out the top 10 are hobby legend Edi Birsan (an unofficial 175.11), Eric Grinnell (an unofficial 167.91), Chris Martin (157.83), Nathan Barnes (118.75) and Thom Comstock (an unofficial score of at least 103).

Next up on the circuit is the North American Diplomacy Championship, which will be held in Maine July 24 to 27. Five events will follow in August: Husky Con in Long Island and Dragonflight in Seattle the weekend of August 2; the World Boardgaming Championships in Lancaster, Penn., the weekend of August 9; and Gen Con in Indianapolis and Victoria Con in British Columbia the weekend of August 16.

It should be an interesting summer with action on both coasts and the Midwest. To follow along or for more information, visit the Grand Prix website at <http://diplom.org/~seattle/grandprix>.

Jim O'Kelley is our highly-prized (and highly appreciated) Club and Tournament Editor.



We'll see you at the World Boardgaming Championships!

**Register
today!**

Get a discount
over on-site
admission.

August 5-10, 2008
Lancaster Host Resort
Lancaster, PA

www.boardgamers.org
info@boardgamers.org

Pre-Cons begin August 2.

(Admission fees included in Tribune Membership.)

1500+ Boardgamers
150+ Tournaments
Dedicated GMs
No Event Fees
Open Gaming
Demonstrations
Spouse Activities
Juniors Program
Teen Events
Yearbook
Seminars
Vendors
Auction



Sportsmanship Award:
Rebecca Hehner



Caesar Award:
Raphael Lehrer



GM of the Year:
Ivan Lawson

***Will you
be a Centurion
in 2008?***



What's on the schedule for WBC '08?

1776
1830
1960: Making of the President
Ace of Aces
Acquire
Adel Verpflichtet
Advanced Civilization
Advanced Squad Leader
ASL Starter Kit
Afrika Korps
Age of Empires III
Age of Renaissance
Age of Steam
Agricola
Air Baron
Alhambra
Amazing Space Venture
Amun-Re
Anzio
Athens & Sparta
Atlantic Storm
Attack Sub
Auction
Axis & Allies
B-17
Battle Cry
Battlegroup
Battleline
BattleLore
Bitter Woods
Brawling Battleship Steel
Breakout Normandy
Britannia
Bulge '81
Candidate
Can't Stop
Carcassonne
Caylus
Circus Maximus
Clash for a Continent
Combat Commander
Commands & Colors Ancients
Conquest of Paradise
Crusader Rexr
Cuba
Die Macher
Diplomacy
The Downfall of Pompeii
Dune
El Grande
Elchfest
Empire Builder

Empire of the Sun
Enemy In Sight
Euphrat & Tigris
Facts In Five
Fast Action Battles: The Bulge
Flying Colors
Football Strategy
For the People
Formula De
Formula Motor Racing
Galaxy
Gangsters
Gettysburg
Goa
Great Campaigns of ACW
Hamburgum
Hammer of the Scots
Hannibal: Rome vs Carthage
Here I Stand
History of the World
Imperial
Ingenious
Ivanhoe
Kaiser's Pirates
Kingmaker
Kremlin
Liar's Dice
Lost Cities
Manoeuvre
Manifest Destiny
March Madness
Medici
Mémorial '44
Merchant of Venus
Monsters Ravage America
Monty's Gamble
Mystery of the Abbey
Napoleonic Wars
Naval War
Notre Dame
Nuclear War
Panzerblitz
Panzergruppe Guderian
Paths of Glory
Paydirt
Pillars of the Earth
Pirate's Cove
Power Grid
Princes of Florence
Pro Golf
Puerto Rico
Queen's Gambit

Ra!
Race For the Galaxy
Rail Baron
Red Star Rising
Republic of Rome
Risk
Robo Rally
Russia Besieged
Russian Campaign
Saint Petersburg
San Juan
Santa Fe Rails
Saratoga
Settlers of Catan
Shogun
Slapshot
Speed Circuit
Squad Leader
Stockcar Championship Racing
Successors
Superstar Baseball
Sword of Rome
Through the Ages
Thurn & Taxis
Ticket To Ride
Tigers In the Mist
Tikal
Titan
Titan Two
Titan: The Arena
Trans America
Twilight Struggle
Union Pacific
Up Front
Vegas Showdown
Victory in the Pacific
Vinci
War At Sea
War of 1812
War of the Ring
Waterloo
Waterloo: Fate of France
We The People
Wellington
Wilderness War
Win, Place & Show
Winds of Plunder
Wooden Ships & Iron Men
World At War
Year of the Dragon
Yspahan

Italics: Trial Event; Bold: New Event; Regular: Century (Featured) Event; see previews at boardgamers.org/yearbkex

Whipping 2008: A Horde of Drunk Diplomacy Players

By Siobhan Granvold

I have attended Whipping every year since its inception in the Bay Area. This is due mainly to the fact that it is both nearby and convenient for me. And so, Whipping 2008 was an obvious commitment for me. I'm not yet sure I love the April scheduling instead of the traditional October nor am I entirely sure I love the San Francisco location. Yes, it's a better area, and sure April seems to work better for most people, but it just didn't FEEL like Whipping to me.

I, unfortunately, missed out on the festivities that took place on Friday night, as I didn't come in from Sacramento until late Friday night. Though from what I've seen of the pictures, I missed some entertainment. However, if my desire was to be entertained by a horde of drunk Diplomacy players, my disappointment was short lived. I made it through the first round relatively unscathed, if a bit bitter about the outcome. It has been too long now for me to tell you exactly what I was angry about, but I'm sure I had some brilliant alliance lined up that fell through to the demise of both me and the person who was allied to me. That's usually why I'm disgruntled in games. I don't mind so much that people screw me over, it's when they do it badly that frustrates me.



So, in the end of the first round and the time in between the two rounds a few of us spent our time finding the nearest BevMo (Costco for alcoholics, if you don't know) and making trips to the bar downstairs. So, thus lubricated, the lot of us made our way into the second round. We were, by no means (at least I wasn't) drunk yet. Notice the use of the word "yet" because as Louis Abronson would have told you at the time, my drunkenness was well on its way in coming.

Now, I did poorly at this tournament, which is why I choose not to spend my time in this article relating the

events of the tournament. Also, it has been far too long and I don't even remember how everyone fared.

So, as with many Diplomacy tournaments, we played, we drank, and all around we were highly inappropriate. The few highlights I do remember are these gems:

"I'm a KITTEN!" This jewel of a snippet came out of Josh Shank's mouth at some point on Saturday. I don't know what it was in response to or what the context was, but everyone else at the table seemed as baffled by it as I was. So, I must conclude it was a momentary bout of insanity. But seeing how Josh fared in the tournament as a whole, it may do me well to give in to my own insanity.

"I just keep trying and trying and I never get anywhere,"

"Are we talking about my sex life again?" (Josh Shank). Josh, I've known you for a long time, and I consider us to be some semblance of friends (at least as much as any two Diplomacy players can logically be), but that was more information than I needed.

And last, but I'm sure certainly not least, was Micah's stalwart proclamation that he would never play in the hobby again. Now, Micah, diplomacy would not be what it is if we did not all gain a few grey hairs from our participation in it. We do want you there, but if it something you no longer have fun doing, maybe it's time to go. I, myself, enjoy the social aspect of the game more than the game itself. But that's just me.

So, there you are, Whipping 2008. Drinking, sleep deprivation, inappropriate behavior, smoking (yes, Graham, you only smoke when you drink....but then, you drink all the time), and of course travel. Thank you, San Francisco. for dealing with our lewd inappropriateness. Oh, and let's not forget the Diplomacy. There was that too...

Until next time everyone. I've recently done acupuncture, and I'm quite a fan of it. So all you Diplomacy players I'm going to see in the near future, make sure you get the knife in the right spot, it would help with the treatment.

Siobhan is the Goddess of West Coast Diplomacy, and don't be shy about telling her so!

Just Your Friendly Neighborhood Block Party

By Thomas Haver



The National Block Party is a convention held every year in New Albany, Indiana by the Ohio Valley Gamers. The main focus of the Block Party is traditional “block” or war games, with wonderful euros such as Puerto Rico and Agricola added for flavor. Ric Manns served as the convention director and the GM of the Diplomacy tournament.

Last year’s Diplomacy tournament saw only three boards over three rounds. However, this year the NBP had a larger local turnout after Ric heavily promoted the event. The newly formed Central Shuffle (Midwest Grand Prix) brought additional players to the tournament, and the convention even had two players travel from California to participate.



Ric Manns – Don’t Trust That Smile!

Friday

Edi Birsan started with his Diplomacy teaching session for any new or rusty players looking to get some last minute pointers before being thrown to the sharks. We moved the boards to the hotel lobby for better for more space so the wargamers could enjoy their tournaments in privacy. This Dip crowd was going to be rowdy once

the boards started.



Edi Holds Court During the Teaching Session

Board 1

Scott Bowling – Turkey
Bill Beswick – Austria
Edi Birsan – Italy
Bob Goodard – France
Grover Browning – England
Wesley Chatman – Germany
Thomas Haver – Russia



Round One, Board One, R/T Marches Across Europe

There were three less experienced players at the board, so at the suggestion of Edi and myself we put them in England, France, and Germany. Bill Beswick’s Austria was set on destroying Edi Birsan’s Italy from the beginning, so Russia and Turkey quickly found an ally pushing in the opposite direction. Spring 1901 found Austria opening with F Tri-Adr, A Vie-Tyr, and A Bud-Tri. Edi immediately called for a RAT, but he was actually

looking at an RT with Austrian shock troops.

The West began with stock openings after hearing grand schemes from Italy and Russia on how to deal with the other. When Wesley Chatman (Germany) asked how to properly designate a Hold order, Edi responded "You put an 'H' or S-W-E." Germany ended up not bouncing in Sweden, and Russia got two builds. Austria captured Venice from Italy and Turkey walked into Greece unopposed.

From there, the game proceeded as one would expect from a RAT. Austria pushed into Italy and Germany, Turkey controlled the Mediterranean, and Russia kept on building F STP(nc). During the course of the game, Russia ended up building five fleets STP(nc) in seven years.

Edi's Italy put up a valiant fight, surviving until 1906 when at last a Turkish army captured Rome. Leading up to the stab of Austria, Turkey and Russia agreed to turn on each other for the sake of appearances, slipping into the Black Sea and Armenia. This left Austria unsuspecting of the forthcoming crippling blow. Austria had fully committed himself against Italy and Germany by 1905, so that when the stab finally came, he was taken down from 5 to 1.

During the course of the game, Edi attempted to rally the board against the R/T.

Edi Birsan: "Russia is at twelve, Turkey is at nine and the rest of you are in denial. We need to –"
Eric Grinnell (from the other board): "What do you mean we, Edi? We is reserved for people still in the game."

Unfortunately, the West could not rally a successful counterattack against R/T to halt the Juggernaut. All three nations had been trading centers since the calm opening of 1901. Three nations were eliminated by game's end (Italy, Austria, Germany) with England and France left with three and six, respectively. The game ended in a two-way draw with Russia at fourteen and Turkey at eleven. Edi took his beating in stride and helped the new players while consistently cracking jokes about his position ("OK, whose turn is it to lie to Italy?"). Wesley Chatman, in his second ever tournament, played a very aggressive game and showed promise for future tournaments.

Board 2

Eric Grinnell – Austria
James McClure – England
Mark Kusnir – France
Brian Schmidt – Germany
Phil Burk – Italy
Brian Leonard – Russia
Charles Stucker – Turkey

The second board had a caustic tone the entire game.

Phil Burk's Italy and Eric Grinnell's Austria were consistently at odds with one another, but somehow found a way to stave off a strong France (11 centers) and Russia (8 centers) from the two-way.



Round One, Board Two, in the Hotel Lobby

I was not paying close attention to the second board, but I remember there being a lot of yelling and fighting and a few tears being shed. However, the mood was at times lightened by Phil Burk's jovial attitude and sarcastic wit. Eric Grinnell was also having a fun time with the mayhem. At one point when two players were arguing over who stabbed whom, he barked back: "You're talking out of your ass. Stop debating this like baseball stats."

Turkey was quickly eliminated in the game, and ended up being the only power eliminated. Germany managed to peak at seven, but was quickly cut down by a stab in 1905. With tempers flaring, the board agreed to a 4-way AIFR draw.

Saturday Round 2 Board 1

Brian Leonard – Austria
Philip Burk – England
Edi Birsan – France
Thomas Haver – Germany
Mike French – Italy
Eric Grinnell – Russia
Wesley Chatman – Turkey

The Second Round began promptly on Saturday morning. Mike French, 2007 & 2008 CODCon champion, made the drive from St. Louis to play in the tournament. Although he was late for the first round, he did get an opportunity to sub-in for a player that had to leave early. The Second Round had only one board because other players from the previous night had decided to play in other tournaments on Saturday. However, the board did have four very experienced players all aiming for the tournament crown.

The game saw Eric Grinnell as Russia jump out to an early six centers while Germany and France began their game long deadlock on the Western Front. However, Grinnell was quickly beset by an AT in the South and Phil Burk's England moved into the Barents in Spring 1902. Russia requested Germany support, but Germany could not afford to stab England because the Western Powers were bogged down with each other figuring out who would be the odd man out (Russia's response to my denying his request is shown below). The TAE triple of Russia knocked him down from six to three in the second year, while Mike French's Italy better positioned for a stab of Austria.



Eric is Not Having a Good Weekend

I get along fine with Eric Grinnell outside of Diplomacy. We help each other out often in matters of family and business. However, we have completely different views on the game of Diplomacy. So at the beginning of 1903, Grinnell took Turkey out into the hall for "the talk." Grinnell's speech is one I've heard before at a table and usually scares another player into doing what he wants. So I followed them out into the hall with Phil Burk to observe this in action. As Russia and Turkey were discussing the situation, I lean over to Phil and say, "Watch. He'll tell him he may not be the best Diplomat, but he knows how to push blocks around the board." Immediately following my remark. . .

Grinnell: "I may not be the best Diplomacy player, but I know how to push blocks around the board. I will give you nothing."

Phil and I start laughing like hyenas. Grinnell looks over, winds up, and chucks his notebook at me. This made Phil and I laugh even harder as Eric laid into us with expletives that shall not be repeated. Later, Grinnell and I had a chat over the incident; there were no hard feelings, but that was all Turkey needed to see to finish off Russia in the game.

The board also saw a unique situation that required a decision from Ric.

Russia ordered:
A Sev-Rum
F Bla C A Sev-Rum
A Ukr S A Sev-Rum

Austria ordered:
A Rum Hold.

The Austria chose to retreat to Sev. Using the 1985 Deluxe rules, you cannot retreat to where the attack came from, but the convoy order means the attack came from the sea. Ric ruled that the Austrians can in fact retreat to Sev.

Russia was the first nation to fall in 1905. Italy and Turkey stabbed Austria early, and then Italy stabbed Turkey as soon as Austria was gone. Meanwhile, the Western Powers were all trading centers back and forth without gaining any ground. When England dotted Germany for one center, the Germans responded by stabbing back for four while France picked up one; this brought England from 8 to 3 in one year. The Italians took advantage of the situation by grabbing two from Germany at the same time.

The game ended in a three-way draw between Italy, France, and England after numerous draw votes failed. Mike French did not want Germany to be in the draw, as I was the tournament leader at the time. I agreed to be cut out of the draw so long as Phil Burk's 2-center England would be left in – and astoundingly the draw passed. Phil ended up earning a Best England with a 2 SC three-way draw.

After the Round ended, we went for dinner at a restaurant called Buckhead, which is located on the Ohio River in Louisville. At every tournament, the part I most enjoy is spending my free time with the other players at the bar or at restaurants. Mike French and Edi Birsan are great people with some amazing stories to tell. We enjoyed a nice dinner over some fine conversation that strayed away from game. Diplomacy players are some of the most interesting people you'll ever meet.

Sunday

The Sunday round had two boards that were over an hour apart. There were some players, such as Scott Bowling and Charles Stucker, who had to finish up the final round of other tournaments. Scott is pictured below (left) playing in the Final Round of the "Hammer of the Scots" tournament.

Round 3

Board 1

Edi Birsan – Austria
Mike French – England
Bill Beswick – France
Eric Grinnell – Germany
Mark Kusnir – Italy

Wesley Chatman – Russia
Philip Burk – Turkey

The first board began with a blunder when Phil Burk ordered A Bul-Con in Spring 1901. England, Germany and Italy all tripled France in 1901, preventing Bill Beswick from getting a build. While Phil's Turkey never saw another build, Bill managed to bring back France to six at the end of 1902 and peaked at nine by the end of 1904.



Bill States His Case

After facing a triple from ITR, Edi Birsan's Austria slowly crept back into a position of power, eventually topping at eight centers and a commanding position on the board. Edi considered this board to be acrimonious, that saw a lot of alliance flipping and harsh words between players. Eventually the tug of war ended in a four-way draw between AEFI, with Turkey the only power to be eliminated.

The event also saw some open gaming. Here, Eric Beswick plays Danny Grinnell in a game of Lost Cities while their fathers duke it out in Diplomacy.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/26210189@N06/2505163495/in/set-72157605139734734/>

Board 2

Charles Stucker – Austria
Eric Grinnell – England
Scott Bowling – France
Philip Burk – Germany
Brian Leonard – Italy
Ric Manns – Russia
Thomas Haver – Turkey

The second board had a couple of duplicates in Phil Burk and Eric Grinnell, as they were either eliminated or lost on Board One by the time the Second Board got

underway. The TD Ric Manns decided to play a round and then proceeded to dominate the board.

Spring 1901 saw Austria and Russia open up against Turkey. At the same time, France and Germany opened up against England. It was time to kill the witches. FG and AR steamrolled the witches and eliminated them by 1903 without much trouble. Meanwhile, Italy was stuck in the middle, as Italy often is, without much to accomplish.

The Austrians and French quickly turned on the Italians to the south, with Germany slipping into Tyrolia and Bohemia. Russia and Germany proceeded to tear about Charles Stucker's Austria, while Scott Bowling's France kept Italy occupied. The board moved quickly, with RFG cleaning house in 1905 and calling for a three-way draw.

Results



Scott Bowling is your 2008 National Block Party Diplomacy Champion

- 1st – Scott Bowling
- 2nd – Thomas Haver
- 3rd – Mike French
- 4th – Phil Burk
- 5th – Edi Birsan
- 6th – Mark Kusnir
- 7th – Brian Leonard

Best Countries:

Austria – Edi Birsan
France – Scott Bowling
Germany – Phil Burk
Italy – Mike French
Russia – Thomas Haver
Turkey – Scott Bowling

These results prove that you always play better when you're going to write an article about it for Diplomacy World.

Diplomacy World Word Search

By Lilith

The following puzzle contains 100 Diplomacy-related words, most of which are words found on the Diplomacy map. See how many you can locate. Want the solution? Email me at **diplomacyworld "of" yahoo.com** and I will be happy to provide it!

How about this: I'll offer a little prize...

One reader who emails me either a list of all the words in the puzzle, or a scan of a completed puzzle, will be chosen at random and receive a free set of a Lewis Pulsipher Diplomacy Variant Package. If you want to send me your puzzle postally, email me and I will provide the mailing address.

F	P	I	C	A	R	D	Y	E	D	I	N	B	U	R	G	H	U	N	G	A	R	Y	E	R	B	L
K	L	W	B	U	D	A	P	E	S	T	A	W	A	R	S	A	W	H	O	Q	B	A	D	H	L	B
G	R	E	E	C	E	R	T	A	M	O	S	C	O	W	I	I	R	U	H	R	N	R	P	B	A	G
X	X	S	E	C	I	R	I	S	H	N	C	P	G	N	C	D	A	M	M	R	A	T	E	T	C	V
F	B	T	P	T	O	R	G	A	G	E	R	M	A	N	Y	G	G	A	Y	N	P	J	S	S	K	J
Q	U	E	S	S	T	N	E	D	T	R	K	M	L	I	S	B	R	M	E	C	L	Y	D	E	T	W
E	R	R	I	S	I	C	S	T	E	I	U	F	I	E	N	A	S	D	R	W	E	N	A	F	A	P
A	G	N	U	R	I	T	Y	T	R	R	C	P	C	N	K	P	E	T	E	R	S	B	U	R	G	J
S	U	A	P	N	R	N	N	U	A	E	E	N	I	N	O	W	I	P	A	R	I	S	D	M	I	D
T	N	S	E	H	O	I	Y	R	K	N	A	M	A	E	S	R	S	E	V	A	S	T	O	P	O	L
E	D	V	F	C	W	O	I	K	B	R	T	T	O	S	D	A	T	L	A	N	T	I	C	I	E	E
R	Y	I	S	F	V	D	A	E	F	D	A	I	G	V	I	M	Y	H	U	V	S	E	A	P	L	I
N	U	A	P	N	I	Z	P	Y	F	Y	E	I	N	R	E	L	O	R	B	I	G	H	T	L	Y	G
S	G	S	O	L	C	N	U	X	G	W	G	P	N	O	A	A	E	N	J	E	Y	K	I	E	L	H
U	Y	C	S	H	O	L	L	A	N	D	E	B	W	E	P	F	E	S	T	N	T	H	B	E	L	T
M	T	R	H	I	O	M	I	A	E	J	A	A	H	G	O	L	R	W	I	N	N	R	M	L	I	E
M	S	E	I	D	A	G	A	N	I	N	R	M	V	A	V	E	I	O	A	V	O	A	E	V	E	E
E	U	N	F	A	B	Y	W	C	N	D	G	E	T	G	B	G	X	T	C	I	R	C	T	Y	E	N
R	P	G	L	A	G	X	E	A	Y	U	I	N	U	P	T	V	V	Z	E	A	J	A	N	D	R	Q
P	P	L	O	U	X	C	B	M	E	D	I	T	E	R	R	A	N	E	A	N	M	L	O	E	P	H
A	O	A	N	T	N	L	O	U	W	A	R	S	A	F	X	U	C	R	N	E	N	H	R	N	O	U
I	R	N	D	U	A	C	H	N	S	O	B	B	E	R	L	I	N	L	L	B	O	A	W	M	O	S
T	T	D	O	M	F	V	E	I	P	I	W	U	A	H	X	O	Q	A	W	W	R	M	E	A	L	E
U	Z	B	N	N	M	H	M	C	D	M	F	W	I	L	Y	K	T	N	N	A	W	E	G	R	P	R
I	O	N	I	A	N	S	I	H	L	L	M	R	Y	L	T	S	B	D	V	L	A	R	I	K	E	B
L	I	V	O	N	I	A	A	K	U	I	T	A	L	Y	D	I	E	D	N	E	Y	F	A	L	L	I
B	E	L	G	I	U	M	K	G	A	V	A	L	O	N	N	A	C	T	U	S	C	A	N	Y	W	A

After the DNWC: the Wonderful Mansion Tournament

By Jérémie LeFrançois

The Stabbeurfou site is proud to invite you to pre register (by email or on site) for its next tournament, standard game with negotiations, starting in September 2008, and which hopes to achieve the same quality standards as the DNWC.

NAME OF TOURNAMENT

The tournament is named "Wonderful Mansion", as it is a social experience on the internet for which the Diplomacy games will serve as an excuse. It is intended to help mixing the broadest possible set of different technological cultures and language cultures (at least English, French, Chinese, Russian).

As in the Interzines tournament, players are encouraged to team up according to the community they come from (website, face to face association, etc...)

To summarize, Wonderful Mansion :

- shares the same advancement system as the the World Masters
- uses the same support (stabbeurfou site) than the Diplomacy National World Cup
- has the same aim as the French speaking Interzines (making communities of the world hobby meet)

TIME AND ADVANCEMENT

The Tournament will have four¹⁰ consecutive rounds, all played between September and May.

(Overview) Round one will have at least 42 boards; round two will have at least 28 boards, round three will have exactly 7 boards and round four will have exactly one board. If round one has less than 42 teams then round one and two will merge.

(1 to 2) The 2/3 (rounded upwards) best individual players from round one will advance to round two (but this may not lead to more than 49 boards for round 2, so extra players will not advance).

(2 to 3) The 49 best players from round two will advance to round three (round three = semi final).

(3 to 4) The 7 winners of the 7 boards of round three will advance to round four (round four = final).

(4 to title) The winner of the final wins the title.

Only results in the current round determine advancement or game victory (except advancement towards semi final, which takes the sum of second round result and half of first round result).

REGISTRATION AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Games will be played in two modes: automatic and manual, at player's discretion. Some games will be automatic, some games will be manual. Players will be requested to tell tournament organizer in which mode they wish to play (if they mind) at registration.

First round games will be set to gather separately technology confident players in automatic games, and technophobic players in manual games.

Other rounds as well, unless other matching considerations make it impossible.

=> It will never be imposed on any player to play in automatic mode.

- Automatic mode: This is the standard mode for all games played on the stabbeurfou site (DNWC and Interzines). Players have an account that they must have created themselves (quick operation). Orders are submitted on site and checked (there cannot be mis-orders), and password is required to enter the orders. Human game master simply clicks to adjudicate. Players have access to all usual site facilities.

¹⁰ (or, if fewer players than expected, only three)

- Manual mode: This is a special mode for players not confident in technology (specifically designed for this very event.) Registration (and account creation) is handled directly by human tournament director (email). Players automatically receive an email with a link to a page they must use to drop orders (link will be changed after every adjudication for security reasons.) Orders are dropped on site but not checked (so there can be mis-orders), and no password is required. Human game master will correct any non ambiguous mistakes (according to a certain defined set of rules) in the orders and click to adjudicate with orders as dropped by players. A very large set of geographical codes and syntax is tolerated (as if sent to human Game Master) Players have access to limited site facilities.
- Common to both modes: All game maps and all tournament rating will be available to anyone (on the Stabbeurfou site). Dynamic information is also available about games on site, typically the reason why the deadline has just been postponed.

Note: since manual mode gives more work to tournament directing staff, automatic mode is encouraged (but not enforced).

SCORING SYSTEM

The scoring system will award 63 points for a solo, and none for the others.

Other configuration will offer 32 points bonus for a first place, 16 points for a second, 8 points for a third and so on (as well as points for every center owned). These bonuses are shareable.

TEAMS

Players are supposed to register within a team (7 players) but players that are not in any team may be put in any team by tournament organizer.

During the games of team round, team captain will be allowed to change players at any time from within the team, and to have any player at one moment involved in up to three games (but not at start nor at the end where there must be 7 actual players). Players of leading teams will get small scoring bonuses.

Team considerations will not apply any more after first round (since not all teams then will have the seven required players).

GAMES

- Game style: This is standard negotiations play (this is no gunboat). Negotiations either use the site or private emails (automatic games), either use private emails only (manual games).
- Complaints: Complaints about private messages content (messages from a player of a game to one or more players of a game) will never be accepted, no matter what the content is. Complaints about public messages content (like messages posted on forum on site) may only be addressed by removing the offending message (or part of) from the site (when applicable).

Secrecy of identities (will not apply unless voted at tournament start)

- Identity of players (only for first round) will not be available to players, but providing this information (true or false) will never be illegal. This will serve the purpose of protecting famous players from being attacked only for considerations of reputation.*
- So finding out who plays what and where will be part of this new experience. Pretending to be any other player as well.*
- Overall list of all players involved somewhere in the tournament will still be available, without any clue on who players where.*
- Therefore players for manual mode are strongly encouraged (but not compelled) to provide at registration a specific email address in order to avoid forsaking anonymity (since negotiations is performed with emails in manual games).*
- (e) All identities will be revealed at the end of the round.*

- Game duration: All games will end before adjustments for year 1911 (or even before if a vote to stop is agreed - the game then stops as is.)

SPECIAL AWARDS AND REWARDS

- Awards: Players will be requested to suggest name (and description) of awards to tournament organizer with orders for Autumn 1901. Then a list of these awards will be selected by tournament organizer team and made public. All players will be asked to vote for attribution of these awards to other players in their games with orders for Spring of last year played.
- Rewards: According to the number of player that registered to the event, best players qualified for the final will be rewarded a game from Hasbro company¹¹ :
 - less than 100 : one game
 - between 100 and 200 : two games.
 - between 200 and 300 : three games.
 - more than 300 : seven games.

PRESS

Press is information made public by players on the site on a special page (one per game).

Players from automatic mode may issue press using their account (they will be required not to press on game they do not play on).

Players from manual mode (not using any account) may do so for the game they play in (asking the Game master to relay message on site).

*(will not apply unless voted at tournament start)
On this tournament, all press is anonymous, except press from Game Masters.*

CROSS GAMING

Cross gaming is not forbidden, but every effort will be made to discourage it (but it will never be sanctioned).

SPECIAL FEATURE

- A specific mailing list will be set as a very convenient way to provide last minute information to all players (only tournament officials will be allowed to post).
- A specific FAQ for the tournament is available on the site and will be enriched until the actual beginning of the event.
- A little test will be set in order to rate players after registration. It will be some sort of quiz with the aim to detect and possibly select players with best Diplomacy tactical skills.
- Several polls will be set up and used to detect players preferences before tournament start, if necessary, as an effort to match player's tastes as closely as possible
- There will be several dummy games running a couple of months before the event so that people uneasy with technology may have a go and try the interface (especially the simplified interface "manual mode"). These games will be gunboat and potential players may only play a few seasons to have an opinion if they can handle it and either confirm or cancel their registration. For these short dummy games, AI software may be used to play some of the orders to complete the game.

YES!

This tournament is the best opportunity you will get to bring together players from all backgrounds, traditional mail, traditional email, electronic judge and web adjudication worlds and to allow you to play the best of them.

=> If you wish to register, please EITHER :

(aa) send an email to jeremie.lefrancois@gmail.com (with First Name, Last name, email address, sex, and (not compulsory) year of birth (only if male) and possibly team name (manual mode).

(bb) register on the www.stabbeurfou.org site (if not done already) and affiliate yourself to the "Wonderful Mansion" tournament (use the « My registration » page.) (automatic mode)

¹¹

Boxes available are : 3 Diplomacy, 3 « Axes and Allies » and a futurist Risk.

Buckeye Game Fest IX

October 3rd - 5th, Columbus, Ohio



Tournament Details: The Buckeye Game Fest will be held for the ninth time this October featuring many Ohio Boardgame Championships. The Diplomacy Tournament will be FOUR rounds running from Friday through Sunday. Best Country Awards and a Championship plaque will be awarded on Sunday following the fourth round. Game Fest is part of the Central Shuffle and eligible to be part of the Grand Prix. Every player who plays at least one round will receive a FREE boardgame. Registering for the convention is the only fee required to participate in the tournament!

Round One – 6pm Friday; Round Two – 10am Saturday; Round Three – 6pm Saturday; Round Four -- 10am Sunday

Scoring: Carnage; Rank: Best three out of four rounds; The convention is sponsored by the Columbus Area Boardgaming Society (CABS).



Hotel: Ramada Columbus North, I-270 Exit 27, 6767 Schrock Hill Court, Columbus, OH, 43229. This recently renovated 123 room hotel offers the latest in hotel amenities. The room rate is \$79/night - ask for "Columbus Area Boardgaming Society Room / Buckeye Game Fest Block". According to the hotel website there is:

- Free Hotel Shuttle to Airport/Businesses/Restaurants ; Free Wireless High Speed Internet Access; Free Deluxe Continental Breakfast; http://www.ramada.com/Ramada/control/Booking/property_info?propertyId=17558&brandInfo=RA

Gaming: Open Gaming will start at Noon on Thursday and run until 5pm Sunday. Scheduled events will begin at 2pm on Thursday (October 2nd) and run the length of the con.

Auction: We will again feature an awesome auction on Saturday. Last's year's auction was a huge success.

Dealers: We've already got a commitment from RC Hobbies to attend and we are looking for many more!

Contact Thomas Haver for details at tjhaver@gmail.com
<http://buckeyboardgamers.org/buckeygamefest.htm>

Make Your Own Mini-Magnetic-Travel Diplomacy Set!

By Chris Sham

How many times have you found yourself lounging around on some tropical beach, fruity alcoholic beverage in one hand, stunningly attractive partner in the other, and thought to yourself, "Bugger this, I'd rather be playing Diplomacy," only to find that nobody brought the board along? I imagine that problem is much more common than you might think, although I'll grant that I don't really know how many of you like fruity drinks. Regardless, there are plenty of situations where you might want to carry on a game, but can't because you don't have the space or transport capacity for the full, official game set. Realpolitik on a laptop is a good alternative in some cases, but I'm sure you can imagine several other cases where your electricity supply would be too limited for that (like on a tropical beach, perhaps).

The solution: Construct your own miniature travel Diplomacy set. I did so a few years ago, and to make up for the fact that I never actually use it for its intended purpose, I'm now going to use it as an example piece to show you how to make such a thing yourself. My method is by no means the only way of doing this, and you can certainly learn from several mistakes I've made. It's also worth noting that I absolutely never do anything arts-and-crafty, so my relative success with this project suggests that any paraplegic marmoset could manage it too. (Too be fair, marmosets are well known for their creativity and tenacity.)



My own version of the Mini-Magnetic-Travel-Diplomacy set, ready to slip into my carry-on luggage, in case I and 6 other people get bored of any tropical beaches we might find ourselves on. (My hand gives a rough sense of scale.)

So let's look at how I did it. Step 1: find a box. It should be sturdy, but small; perhaps the size of a medium-sized book. I found my box by happy chance, when an empty box of *McDermott and Sons Chocolate Coated*

*Almonds** happened to come my way. It was ideal, just the right size, and made of nice, thick aluminum (I think). Better still, its top had a big window of sturdy, transparent plastic, so you can see the contents without opening the lid. Absolutely perfect.

Then came the real beans of my magnetic design: The metal base under the map and the magnetic pieces. The metal base is there for the magnets to stick to and to raise the map higher off the floor of the box (which in my case was a little deeper than I wanted it). I did it quite simply, taking a square sheet of thin scrap metal and manually bending two opposing sides downwards, giving it an n-shaped side profile. This made the sheet rectangular (so it could fit into the box) and gave it a pair of 'legs' on which to keep itself up. Even though I had taken a random box and a random sheet of metal, without properly measuring either of them, the whole thing came together perfectly. You'll probably want to use a ruler, though.

To make the magnetic pieces, I printed a sheet of 119 armies and a sheet of 119 fleets (17 of each for each of the 7 powers, the maximum you could ever possibly need without cheating). I then cut these all out, cut up some of that rubberized magnetic stuff to the same dimensions, and simply glued the paper bits to the magnetic bits using normal paper glue. The glue did come undone on one or two pieces, so perhaps something stronger would have worked better, but 2 out of 238 isn't bad. Out of interest, I got the rubberized magnets without paying a cent. I'm not sure what the state of advertising is like where you live, but over here (in deepest, darkest Africa) companies will often give out their contact details printed on cheap little fridge magnets made of that stuff, and I believe I cut up two of those to make my pieces. The big advantage of rubberized magnets is that they can be cut with normal scissors. Remember to make sure that your pieces are an appropriate size. If they're too small, you won't be able to use them, and if they're too big, it'll be impossible to tell what region they're supposed to be in.

Next you'll want the map itself. I grabbed one of the many Jpeg versions of the standard European map available online, cleaned it up a little (mostly by removing all the redundant islands) and then printed it out quite small. I could simply have glued that directly to my metal base, but I decided I wanted to make it look a little fancy, so I wrapped the whole thing in red tissue paper, and then stuck the map on top of that. Luckily, I was smart enough to test the magnetic pieces with that arrangement before I made it too permanent, and I discovered something really important: The magnets have very little range. In fact, they were weak enough

that even the natural layer of air between the tissue paper and the metal base was too far for them to stick properly. So I had to make sure the tissue paper and map were both glued as smoothly and flatly to the metal base as possible. Watch out for similar problems if you decide to try using magnetic pieces.

At that point, I technically had a fully functional Diplomacy set, with a map, a full collection of armies and fleets, and a box in which to transport it all. However, I wanted to add 7 separate compartments for keeping the pieces apart. These were simple enough to make, just using cardboard and tape, all covered in tissue paper for prettiness sake, and the only minor problem came from the rounded corners of the box (which just required some creative use of additional cardboard and tape). The whole tray, with its 7 compartments, was permanently fitted into the small gap left next to the metal base piece, and I later added an outward-hinging lid to it when I found that the pieces could jump the barriers between the compartments if I jiggled the box too much. The lid, just like the rest of the pieces' tray was simply cardboard, tape and tissue paper.

So that's all it took: Find a box, stick in a map on top of a metal sheet, make pieces out of paper and magnets, with maybe a few decorative touches added in along the way.

What I did wrong

Of course, I'd be lying if I told you I thought my travel Dip set came out perfectly, and anyone attempting to try something like this themselves can learn a lot from my mistakes.

First and foremost, I think I may have made the map and pieces too small. I'm very happy with the size of the box I used, but the map doesn't fully take advantage of the space inside. If I were to do it over, I'd carefully measure to make sure I'm fitting in as large a map as possible. Similarly, my playing pieces were forced to be small enough to fit on the map, and as a result I often need tweezers just to pick them up. If I had a larger map, I would have had space for larger, more practical pieces.

Secondly, I don't think using a metal box for a magnetized game was too smart. It's certainly very light and yet also very robust, making it ideal for a travel version of the game, but I'm also forever picking wayward fleets off the box walls, which is just fiddly and annoying. I suspect that a wooden box (perhaps something like a cigar box) might work a bit better.

Third is not so much a mistake as a problem I have yet to find a solution to. As it stands, my map is literally just a piece of paper stuck inside the box. That means that every grubby finger, every pen used as a pointer, and every slip of a sharp set of tweezers damages it a little bit more. Ideally, I'd like to add some sort of protective layer over the map. But as I say, the magnets need to be

surprisingly close to the metal base in order to work effectively, and every extra layer makes that all the more difficult.



The travel set, opened up and ready to play. My money is on a Russia-Turkey alliance in this game. (Unfortunately, I'm playing Italy.)

You might add that my fourth mistake was in starting this project in the first place. After all, when am I ever going to need a mini-magnetic-travel-Diplomacy set? As it happens, I have used it in almost all my games since then. In email games, I find it useful for plotting and scheming long after I've gone to bed, and in face-to-face games it certainly impresses the ladies** when you can walk around with your own little replica of the board, without resorting to messy paper copies. But I cannot honestly say that I've ever *really* needed it. For one thing, I never travel anywhere (can't stand bloody tropical beaches), so why would I need a travel version of the game?

I think the point is that it was quick, easy and cheap to make. I enjoyed making it and now I enjoying using it, even if it's not being used for its intended purpose. And that's really what any hobby is all about.

If anyone feels inspired enough to try their hand at a project like mine, I'd be quite interested to see how you've gone about it, and I'm sure Doug the Editor would also be grateful for a few words and maybe a photo or two showing off your creations, which he can include in future issues of DW.

** The author in no way endorses any McDermott and Sons product; he just likes their choice of packaging.*

*** The author feels obliged to mention that he hasn't actually played Diplomacy with any ladies since before he constructed his travel Diplomacy set. This may or may not be related to the fact that he spends so much time constructing and writing about semi-useless gaming apparatus.*

Chris Sham is nothing but trouble. Believe me. He's a bad seed.

Can you CanCan?

By Mark Zoffel



Well, can you?

Every year the Seattle Diplomacy groups host committee (Nathan Barnes, Mark Zoffel, Jake Mannix, and Eric Mead) try and come up with new ideas that will make the annual diplomacy tournament gathering at WacCon more memorable than the last. We've tried a lot of different approaches successfully, from recruiting the top foreign players (Yann Clouet, Dan Lester, and Cyrille Sevin) to come across the pond and play, to trying a 3-day 6-round non-timed tournament. So when we brainstorm for ideas, everything is on the table. Last year we set off on a new proposal that will range over a three year period, culminating with having the WacCon tournament in Paris, France in 2010.

Yes, that's right...WacCon in Paris, France in 2010.

The details of the tournament, its location, and its official date will be set in 2009, but we plan on playing C-Diplo rounds (along with those found in the States) to make it a truly international tournament. Yann Clouet of France and Dan Lester of England have agreed to be co-hosts of the tournament, along with the Seattle committee. Together, we hope to bring players from across the world to play in this tournament.

"I don't have any coordination, but I want to come to the dance!" (Translation: I've got little money, but I still want to come).

Beginning last year, and continuing this upcoming year at WacCon (hosted in Seattle in January 2009), we've set up a system where you can win reduced airfare to Paris from anywhere in the US. The bonuses below are the % you win off of your airline ticket to WacCon 2010 in Paris, and the bonuses in 2009 are doubled. By the way, if 2008 WacCon winner Andrew Neumann wins in 2009, he will get a companion fare as well.

	2008	2009
Winning tournament:	40%	80%
Other Top board players:	20%	40%
Best Country award:	20%	40%
Other awards :	20%	40%
Playing in 2009:		10%

Totals through the first half of this two-year results competition:

- 1) Andrew Neumann - $40\% + 20\% = 60\%$ of his airfare paid for
- 2) John Saul - $20\% + 20\% + 20\% = 60\%$
- 3) Brian Shelden - $20\% + 20\% = 40\%$
- 4) Graham Woodring - $20\% + 20\% = 40\%$
- 5) Nathan Barnes - $20\% + 20\% = 40\%$
- 6) Adam Silver-Tongue - 20%
- 7) Edi Birsan - 20%
- 8) David Maletsky - 20%
- 9) Jim O'Kelley - 20%
- 10) Siobhan Granvold - 20%
- 11) Steven Weingarten - 20%

The WacCon Committee hopes that you all come out for this year's WacCon tournament, being held January 23rd-25th, 2009 in Seattle. Maybe you can get your airfare to Paris for WacCon 2010 paid for!



We are hoping to work the Diplomacy hobby's network of people to arrange very affordable housing in Paris, and for those making the trip the tournament fee will be waived.

If you have any questions about this exciting idea – and generous opportunity - feel free to email Mark directly at zoffel "of" earthlink.net

Civilization Diplomacy

By Doug Burgoyne

The game of Civilization Dip (or Civ Dip for short) is a popular variant that is played blind on a map which needs to be explored. By "blind", I mean that players are not allowed to see the full map; they can only see those provinces that their units and cities (SC) can see. Normally each player starts with a single home SC, and must explore to find more and build a nation. Players eventually come into contact with other nations at which point, communications can begin between those players in contact.

I have run many of this type of game. My games, as a variant, are always run double blind. By double blind, I mean that each player plays under an assumed leader name of his nation. All communication comes through me, and I forward emails and protect everyone's true identity. I do this for two reasons. The first is because this way I get to read all of the press, which makes things a lot more fun for me. The second is that for players that see the same old people often in dip games, they must play without prior knowledge or grudges against other players.

Map design is normally done by the GM. I personally always make my own brand new maps for these games. Some GM may take a pre-made map from another variant, but I think this is both lazy and an inferior way to play. In general, normal diplomacy maps are not well suited for Civ Dip. Firstly, it might be possible for a player to guess the map he is on, if he has played it before. And secondly, the natural areas of exploration may or may not give a fair start in a Civ Dip variant. By making my own maps, I can design more interesting, unique maps, with a roughly equal start for everyone. I use MS Paint, and draw my maps in a way that makes it easy for me to click and fill to blacken areas out to issue private maps for adjudication.

For those of you making maps, make sure that when you name provinces, use a small pixel to open up all the letters, so that one mouse click can make an entire province vanish. This will save you massive amounts of time in making the individual maps.

The most critical aspect of a new map to consider is the average distance between starting home centers. In theory, home SC could start right next to each other, like Venice and Trieste in normal Dip, but this is a very poor way to start a Civ Dip game. More likely, a GM will design his map to have a minimum distance of THREE spaces between home SC; four is even better. I try to have a distance of FOUR; some players might have five, which is very spacious.

The next aspect of design that I consider is "natural

zones of expansion". I visualize the areas near each player that are closer to him than any other player, usually within 1 or 2 places, and I consider all of those SC "easy grabs". I try to give each player roughly the same number of "easy grabs". Next I look at SC that are "contested" - that is in nomads lands between players, where it is not clear which player will get there first. I also try to provide roughly equal chances and number of "contested" SC. Often, I will make special map features like secret islands with extra SC, or other special features like tunnels, or places of power with special rewards. These sorts of things reward players that EXPLORE, because they are usually in the most out-of-the-way places.

Also, my maps are always made with Mobius wraps: a large oval or circle that wraps in ALL directions. It makes no sense logically, in terms of geometry or geography, but it makes a better game, because there are no edge and no corner players. This one thing is why I would NEVER use a regular Dip map for Civ Dip, because almost all normal variants have "edges" and "corners" and in Civ Dip a corner position is a massively unfair advantage. All my maps have neither edges nor corners; you can always go in every direction.

Another designed feature that I always include is that in your first year, whatever unit you build and whatever direction you move it, you will get a second build. To design a map otherwise where most get a second build and some do not is incredibly unfair to those without a build; it virtually cripples them for the entire game.

Now, this is not a perfect science, no map is equally fair to everyone.

Strategies

Here is a basic checklist of strategy

- 1) Explore
- 2) Avoid all conflicts until you are "hemmed" in
- 3) Communicate in an open and friendly manner with everyone you meet
- 4) Trade maps with everyone you can
- 5) Once "hemmed" in, join with allies that you have established and team up on weaker players.

How best to explore?

If you start adjacent to a SC, a conservative move is to move onto it. In this way, if you bounce on your second move, at least you are on a SC. More aggressive is to

move adjacent to that SC in order to gain more map info. Bouncing on your second move is unlikely - another player must have his home SC exactly four places away and you both must move directly towards each other and then bounce on turn 2. This can happen, but it is very unlikely.

If you do not already see a SC, then do map analysis on the black areas. Often you can guess at how many provinces a province may border by how many changes of directions its borders take. This rule is not perfect, but it is a good rule of thumb. Also the greater the length of the perimeter of a province is also an indicator that the province has more adjacent provinces. You want to move to province with a large perimeter length of black area, and with an irregular shape. This will maximize your chances of finding new provinces, and hence more SC.

Make sure that you ALWAYS explore 1 space in EVERY direction from your start. If you fail to do this, you will likely give away your "easy grabs" to someone else. Everything within 2 provinces of your start the GM intends for you to get; don't give these away. I have seen players go off 3 or 4 places in one direction and never look 1 place in the other. They are giving away free SC by doing this; their "easy grabs" will be grabbed by someone else.



The principal of analyzing the black areas can be used repeatedly. As you explore, try to go to places that have lots of changes in direction of their perimeter, as well as long perimeters. Also you can sometimes project coastlines based on the way a province border curves.

Another aspect you can use for exploring is that army should go to an INLAND province, not coastal provinces. Fleets should go out to sea, not along coasts, unless you have a very good reason to hug the coast. The reason for these two rules is that SC are always on land, so an inland army move should give you more access to more provinces, and hence more SC. If you move an army along a coast, you cut your chances significantly. Now the same applies for fleets. Usually, on most Dip maps,

seas are much larger than land provinces, so a fleet out in an open ocean can often have access to many provinces and hence SC. On my maps, there are always many islands as well. Sometimes, black map analysis can show possible islands. A sea zone that looks like it has islands is a great place to move to in order to find a SC.

It is especially important not to move along a coast. If moving to sea you will be able to see what you would have been able to see along the land anyway, and more. Let me explain. Suppose you build a fleet, and you are choosing to move to one of two places. Place A is a coast; the coastline you can see is one inch long, and it borders place B. The other place you can move to is place B, a water province that borders place A. The line that touches place A is two inches long. Got it? My point here is that is you move to place A, along the coast, you will see the province that lies beyond in on that coast. Anything you see inland, you can't get to anyways, so that doesn't help you. But if you move to place B, you will certainly see the same province along that coast that you would have seen from place A, but you will also see a lot more from that water in all other directions.

To me, the above is obvious, but I have seen many players goof it up!

Also, if you have already been someplace and know there are no new SC to be had there, then don't move there again! Later, once exploring is done, you may need to return for other reasons, but while exploring, it's pointless and stupid. And yes, I have seen this done too!

What to build is critical for exploring as well. Don't build a unit in a place unless it can move to a new SC within two moves. Just pretend there are SC in the black, and make sure your new builds can get to new black places. Eventually, you can no longer do this, but I seen this error made repeatedly.

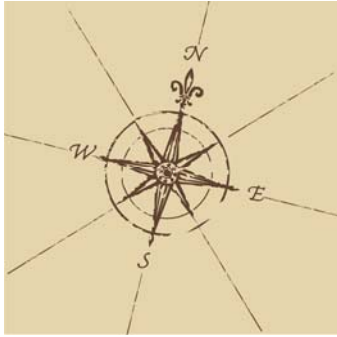
It is helpful to take your map and label provinces with a number that indicates the distance from your home. All the places next to your starting province, I label "1", then the next ring out "2", etc. Make sure you explore in ALL directions, and be certain to check out every province with a number 2 and under. All SC in this close ring should be yours for the taking. Once you get out to "3" and "4", the chances of bounces and conflict increase dramatically.

First contacts with other players

Make polite and peaceful contact with new players. Starting a war blind against the first guy you meet is incredibly stupid - don't do it. Yes, I have seen it done. Any SC that you have to fight for is a free grab someplace else that you are giving up! You waste resources by fighting at all during the exploration phase.

Do not fight until you are totally explored and hemmed in on all sides!

Try to win with words any contested SC that come across; do not fight for them, just try to win them with diplomacy. Remember, the other player can't see what you can see. You can project what you think he can see. Try to negotiate your way into these early contested SC. Any extra builds you gain early on will make for faster exploration, and more free grabs for you, which makes you larger and stronger for when the conflicts begin in earnest.



Do not fight with your first neighbors.

Next, trade maps, with anyone and everyone you can. It is worth it to give away your map to anyone to get another map. Use MS Paint and piece the maps together. This will show you which SC are already claimed by your neighbor, and which areas are still "black". The amount of movement this saves is incredibly valuable, and will lead you to more free grabs early in the game. It also starts the beginning of a working relationship with your nearest neighbors.

The players that guard their info as "secret" are only hurting themselves!

Imagine that you could give your map to everyone else in the game, and in exchange they gave you theirs. Pretend that no one else shared maps. Every other player in the game would have two maps, theirs and yours. But you would see the full entire map! Imagine how that could guide your paths of exploration! This is a hypothetical example, but it follows that the more maps you can get a hold of, the better you will explore, the more free grabs you will get, and the stronger will you start.

An important part of this early cooperation is learning which allies are easy to work with, which ones share with you, which ones write back more often, which ones are willing to discuss and come to fair agreements on things, which ones are trustworthy, etc. As this process builds, you should start to form a large team. Most games of this sort have far more players than normal Diplomacy, maybe 15, 20 or more!

The players that win join large block alliances and these large groups pounce on lone players. The goal is to have your block dominate the entire map, and then form a smaller team within that team to pounce again, until you are the last player and grab 51% of the map. This can take a long time, as some of these maps contain more than a hundred SC!!

Okay, that's a good introduction to the ins and outs of Civilization Diplomacy. Now, find yourself a game and join in the fun. Good luck!

If you'd like to get in touch with Doug to see if he's offering a new game, send him an email at dougburg@ix.netcom.com

Technology and Game Quality in Diplomacy

By Chris Babcock

Can a Next Generation Diplomacy Server deliver quality full-press Diplomacy? While this problem is not exclusive to Diplomacy games with a web interface, it is certainly more noticeable in games that are at least partially web-based than it is in email-only games; Press seems to be drying up in partial press games. Why is this so? What are the factors involved? More importantly, can this be fixed in future adjudicators, and how?

First, most Diplomacy web interfaces still deliver press by email. DP Judge deliberately requires an email command to join a game, because press and results must be delivered to a valid email address. Quality and quantity of press still suffer from the fact that press is not

delivered via the web site. There are consistently players who do not read or respond to email. Similar complaints have been made about Face Book Diplomacy, based on the PHP Diplomacy engine. It is hard to judge how much the bulletin board impacts play on StabbeurFou.org, where the site owner has chosen to specialize in tournaments. PlayDiplomacy.com seems to benefit from having its press delivered in messages on-site, while having separate delivery methods for press and orders seems detrimental to other on-line Diplomacy adjudicators.

Second, web interfaces lower the barrier of entry to the game. More people can find and participate in

Diplomacy games. That's good, right? Well, yes and no. Expanding the player pool is good only to the extent that new players can be successfully absorbed into the culture of the Diplomacy hobby. If players can't be integrated into the community, then the values of the established community die with this generation. Mentoring, clubs, and team events that deliberately recruit across generational lines are needed if values like the Dipster's "civil and frequent press in press games" are to be perpetuated.

Third, games are created without regard to the quality of the play possible with those parameters. Can any realistic negotiations be conducted with 24-hour deadlines? Are there really enough players on-line who can consistently negotiate over the 6 to 8 weeks needed to play a 24-hour deadline game? Anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that players who do have that capability habitually overextend themselves. Real time and fast games are often de-facto no press, even when the games otherwise permit press. This is a serious issue. Those with the time and desire to maintain communication under those conditions play in the same games as many other players, who are unable (or unwilling) to conduct diplomacy at that breakneck pace. Those most dissatisfied with this situation are those whose values more closely resemble those of the existing community.

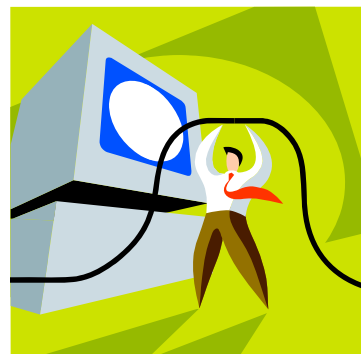
Last, if established players use email with judges and human GMs, while newer players use web interfaces, then an additional barrier is erected in communicating the values of the existing community to its new members.

The technology has created social problems within the Diplomacy hobby that threaten the quality of play. There is a high probability that players who would appreciate slower, more press-intensive games are being lost to the hobby because of the shallow level of play on the more accessible servers. Technology should be enlisted in finding solutions to these issues, but it needs to be recognized that the problems are social in nature regardless of the contributing factors involved. The social needs include player retention, the creation of player communities, and communication vectors linked to the game format.

Fast games cannot rely on email or bulletin boards for communication. The judge player community recognizes this. Few, if any, press games with deadlines shorter than 48 hours are created. All games on playdiplomacy.com are partial press games, however, and over 70% of the games have move deadlines of 12 or 24 hours. A quick look suggests that play on the PHPDiplomacy framework is paced similarly.

Games with deadlines between real time and 48 hours need to support a chat protocol in order to viable as press games. By 'support', I mean that the adjudicator

itself needs to be aware of whether the player remains logged in for real time games, or whether the player logs in to chat during time windows established for fast games, where the deadlines are too far apart to make continuous log-in realistic. This would be an enabling technology to accommodate an existing set of behaviors. It still requires players - and those who create games - to exercise the restraint to create and limit their participation to games that are personally playable.



In order to help with player retention, the server should facilitate community-building and mentoring efforts. A variety of general-purpose mailing list and bulletin board sites currently fill this role, but the success of the Facebook application in spite of its other shortcomings indicates that integrating the server with the community has its advantages. (Facebook Diplomacy has twice as many active games as of this writing as its parent, despite the fact that it is running an earlier version of the software.) Ideally, then, the adjudicator and the general player community should share an interface.

The last issue is bringing new players into the existing player pool... or bringing existing players into communication with the new and growing player pool. Part of the solution is an adjudicator that can be used completely from the web, and that is completely compatible with the installed Judge. More importantly, this adjudicator must be able to import the player base of one or more existing judges, as well as attracting web players. The mechanisms should be in place so that quality play, as defined by existing player communities, can be measured and supported. Once the technology is in place for multiple playing interfaces, and for a common set of quality measurements on a single replicable Diplomacy server, then players can communicate seamlessly among user interfaces, choosing the best interface for any individual game. They will also be able to communicate with the larger player community and qualify for sub-communities such as Dipsters and Vermont Group regardless of their preference in user interfaces.

Chris Babcock remains the driving force behind much of the Diplomacy Judge community. Plus he's a nice-enough guy, so stop trying to sign up for games under four different emails, okay?

Diplomacy National World Cup First Round Report

By Jérémie Lefrançois

[[Editor's Note: Back in Diplomacy World #97

(<http://www.diplomacyworld.net/pdf/dw97.pdf>)

Jérémie Lefrançois and Dorian Love introduced their plans for the Diplomacy National World Cup

(DNWC), a tournament to be run on the web site

<http://www.stabbeurfou.org> between national teams.

The first round has now been completed, and what follows is the report Jérémie compiled on that round. He had a great deal of data which would not fit into this article, so check his site for more interesting statistics and results from the DNWC, as well as the ongoing play in Round 2. Elsewhere in this issue you will also find his announcement for Wonderful Mansion, the next tournament he is organizing]].

The second round of the DNWC is due to start around mid September, and the teams will have to be as close as possible to the teams that actually qualified (see the regulations for more details). Surely the seven captains will be fully ready!

Introduction

Out of the 25 original games, some finished earlier :

- ChamberSecrets (Ravenclaw) had ended with an outright victory (solo) for team France2 playing Austria
- Umbridge (Hufflepuff) had ended with a draw (vote to stop the game)
- Griphook (Slytherin) had ended with a draw (vote to stop the game)
- Aragog (Slytherin) had ended with a draw (vote to stop the game)

Out of the remaining games, some interesting facts on the last year:

- Hagrid (Hufflepuff) ended with an outright victory (solo) for team Russia playing Italy
- Dobby (Slytherin) had a last retreat of Russia (played by Brazil) with possible retreat on centre owned by other player so this retreat had to be waited to close the rankings

Qualified teams

The seven qualified teams are the teams with an asterisk in the following list, along with the overall team statistics and which portion of the tournament they were playing in::

*1	<u>France2 (Province)</u>	1	354.5	92	Ravenclaw
*2	<u>Argentina</u>	1	263.0	56	Slytherin
3	France1 (Expatriate)	1	251.5	48	Hufflepuff
*4	<u>Russia</u>	2	233.5	68	Hufflepuff
*5	<u>Australia1 (New Sout</u>	2	223.5	48	Slytherin
*6	<u>Italy</u>	2	217.0	55	Ravenclaw
*7	<u>China</u>	3	210.0	47	Slytherin
*8	<u>Germany2 (South)</u>	3	206.0	52	Hufflepuff
9	Romania	3	140.0	36	Ravenclaw
10	USA6 (North East/Mid	4	168.0	41	Hufflepuff
11	Germany1 (North)	4	156.0	31	Slytherin
12	USA2 (West/Pacific)	4	127.0	31	Ravenclaw
13	USA10 (restricted to	5	135.5	28	Slytherin
14	Sweden	5	89.0	20	Hufflepuff
15	Canada	5	85.0	20	Ravenclaw
16	USA9 (South/South At	6	134.5	34	Slytherin
17	USA4 (Midwest/East N	6	75.0	22	Hufflepuff
18	Turkey	6	69.0	15	Ravenclaw
19	Brazil	7	115.0	30	Slytherin
20	Austria	7	51.5	17	Ravenclaw
21	UK	7	33.0	11	Hufflepuff
22	Ireland	8	83.0	17	Slytherin
23	South Africa	8	30.0	10	Hufflepuff
24	Australia2 (Victoria	8	15.0	6	Ravenclaw
25	France3 (Paris)	9	69.5	15	Slytherin

Note that there are two French teams within the seven best, but the second one is not qualified since only one team per country may play the final round.

Best powers

Best England	tied to 49 between a Ravenclaw and Slytherin game
Best France	tied to 66 between a Ravenclaw and Slytherin game
Best Germany	Ruben Sanchez (France2) on Gringotts (Ravenclaw) : relative victory with 65 points
Best Italy	R Mitya (Russia) on Hagrid (Hufflepuff) : Solo 1909 with 73 points
Best Austria	Fabrice Essner (France2) on ChamberSecrets (Ravenclaw) : Solo 1908 with 73 points
Best Russia	tied to 65 between a Hufflepuff and a Ravenclaw game
Best Turkey	Hao Mi (China) on Buckbeack (Slytherin) : relative victory with 67 points

Some stats for each sub tournaments :

Stats / Sub tournament	Slytherin	Ravenclaw	Hufflepuff
Average number of message sent by player	183	184	101
Average number of replacement by game (1st month excepted)	1.77	1.37	2
Details of Civil Disorders	Brazil : 1	Australia2 : 1	Sweden : 4 France1 : 1

Informal awards

The Huygens trophy is awarded (by tournament director) to team USA9 (no delay, and no orders ever entered by captain on Slytherin).

Informal "players' awards". These are :

- **"Boulanger"** (name of a popular French general) : player you enjoyed the most to play with, of that you look the most forward to play against again
- **"Napoleon"** : players who impressed you the most with strategic and/or tactical skills
- **"Machiavel"** : worst stabber, least reliable player or whatever
- **"Balzac"** (name of a popular French prolific writer) : player that writes the most, the longest and the most numerous messages

The idea is to give the awards to teams by adding the votes received by the team players. A next message from myself will officially award these informal trophies.

The Boulanger (nicest) Trophy goes to China (Slytherin) 11 votes

The Napoleon (strategy and tactics - skills) Trophy goes to France2 (Ravenclaw) 18 votes

The Machiavel (treachery) Trophy goes to USA10 (Slytherin) 12 votes

The Balzac (lot of writing) Trophy goes to USA10 (Slytherin) 11 votes

Hufflepuff:

Team	Boulanger	Napoléon	Machiavel	Balzac
USA4 (Midwest/East North Central)	7		5	4
France1 (Expatriate)	2	14	7	4
UK	7		4	5
South-Africa	5		2	1
USA6 (North East/Middle Atlantic)	4	9	6	7

Russia	5	8	5	8
Germany2 (South)	5	7	6	2
Sweden	2	2	4	4

Ravenclaw:

Team	Boulanger	Napoléon	Machiavel	Balzac
Canada	7	3	2	3
Italy	7	4	5	8
USA2 (West/Pacific)	9	4	5	4
France2 (Province)	4	18	11	8
Austria	6		5	5
Australia2 (Victoria)	4	2	3	5
Romania	4	2	2	2
Turkey	4	4	5	3

Slytherin

Team	Boulanger	Napoléon	Machiavel	Balzac
Brazil	7	1		
Australia1 (New South Wales)	8	3	8	8
USA9 (South/South Atlantic)	4	5	7	5
Germany1 (North)	4	4	4	2
Ireland	5	4	2	2
France3 (Paris)	1		1	1
Argentina	4	12	8	9

USA10 (restricted to Ohio)	5	6	12	11
China	11	6	4	7

Opening stats

How many times each opening has been used on the tournament and how successful it turned up to be...

England

# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers at present time
14	56.00 %	F EDI - NRG; F LON - NTH; A LVP - YOR	4.43
5	20.00 %	F EDI - NTH; F LON - ENG; A LVP - YOR	5.40
4	16.00 %	F EDI - NRG; F LON - NTH; A LVP - EDI	3.75
1	4.00 %	F EDI - NRG; F LON - ENG; A LVP - YOR	8.00
1	4.00 %	F EDI - NTH; F LON - ENG; A LVP - WAL	6.00

France

# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers at present time
5	20.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR - SPA; A PAR - BUR	4.40
4	16.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR S A PAR - BUR; A PAR - BUR	6.50
3	12.00 %	F BRE - ENG; A MAR S A PAR - BUR; A PAR - BUR	6.00
3	12.00 %	F BRE - ENG; A MAR - BUR; A PAR - PIC	4.67
2	8.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR - SPA; A PAR - GAS	8.00
2	8.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR - PIE; A PAR - BUR	4.00
2	8.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR - BUR; A PAR - PIC	2.50
1	4.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR - SPA; A PAR - PIC	8.00
1	4.00 %	F BRE - ENG; A MAR - SPA; A PAR - PIC	6.00
1	4.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR H; A PAR - PIC	2.00
1	4.00 %	F BRE - MID; A MAR -	2.00

	BUR; A PAR - GAS	
--	------------------	--

Germany

# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers at present time
7	28.00 %	A BER - KIE; F KIE - DEN; A MUN - BUR	4.00
6	24.00 %	A BER - KIE; F KIE - HOL; A MUN - RUH	4.33
5	20.00 %	A BER - KIE; F KIE - DEN; A MUN - RUH	8.00
4	16.00 %	A BER - KIE; F KIE - HOL; A MUN - BUR	3.25
1	4.00 %	A BER - MUN; F KIE - HOL; A MUN - RUH	12.00
1	4.00 %	A BER - KIE; F KIE - DEN; A MUN - TYR	11.00
1	4.00 %	A BER - KIE; F KIE - DEN; A MUN H	5.00

Italy

# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers at present time
5	20.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - APU; A VEN - TYR	6.20
4	16.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - APU; A VEN H	4.75
4	16.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - APU; A VEN - PIE	3.00
3	12.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - VEN; A VEN - APU	2.67
3	12.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - VEN; A VEN - TYR	2.33
2	8.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - VEN; A VEN - TRI	4.50
1	4.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - APU; A VEN - TRI	4.00
1	4.00 %	F NAP - TYN; A ROM - TUS; A VEN - PIE	2.00
1	4.00 %	F NAP - ION; A ROM - VEN; A VEN - PIE	2.00
1	4.00 %	F NAP - TYN; A ROM - APU; A VEN H	2.00

Austria

# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers
------------	-------	---------------	----------------------

			at present time
7	28.00 %	A BUD - SER; F TRI - ALB; A VIE - TRI	1.71
6	24.00 %	A BUD - SER; F TRI - ALB; A VIE - BUD	7.33
6	24.00 %	A BUD - SER; F TRI - ALB; A VIE - GAL	6.33
2	8.00 %	A BUD - SER; F TRI - VEN; A VIE - GAL	3.50
2	8.00 %	A BUD - GAL; F TRI - ALB; A VIE - TRI	1.50
1	4.00 %	A BUD - RUM; F TRI - ALB; A VIE - GAL	0.00
1	4.00 %	A BUD - SER; F TRI - ADR; A VIE - TRI	0.00

# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers at present time
12	48.00 %	F ANK - BLA; A CON - BUL; A SMY - CON	4.92
8	32.00 %	F ANK - BLA; A CON - BUL; A SMY - ARM	6.13
2	8.00 %	F ANK - CON; A CON - BUL; A SMY - ANK	8.00
2	8.00 %	F ANK - CON; A CON - BUL; A SMY - ARM	6.50
1	4.00 %	F ANK - CON; A CON - BUL; A SMY H	0.00

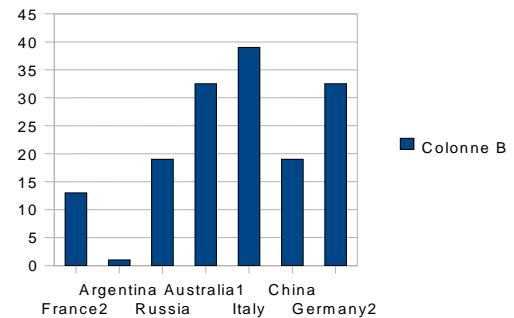
Graphical display of results of qualified teams for the seven powers

Russia

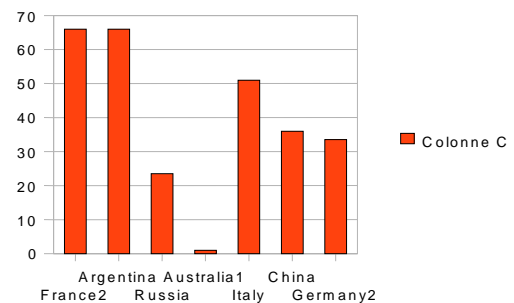
# of cases	Ratio	Set of orders	Average # of centers at present time
		A MOS - UKR; F SEV - BLA; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - GAL	7.36
		A MOS - STP; F SEV - RUM; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - UKR	1.33
	8.00 %	A MOS - SEV; F SEV - BLA; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - UKR	6.50
1	4.00 %	A MOS - STP; F SEV - RUM; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - GAL	11.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - STP; F SEV - BLA; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - UKR	11.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - SEV; F SEV - RUM; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - UKR	6.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - UKR; F SEV - BLA; F STPsc - FIN; A WAR - GAL	4.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - UKR; F SEV - BLA; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR H	2.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - UKR; F SEV - ARM; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - GAL	1.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - LVN; F SEV - BLA; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - UKR	0.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - UKR; F SEV - RUM; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR - GAL	0.00
1	4.00 %	A MOS - SEV; F SEV - RUM; F STPsc - BOT; A WAR H	0.00

Turkey

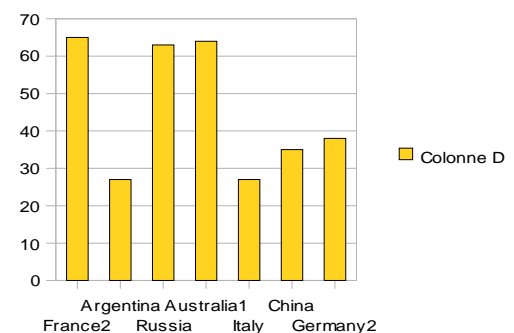
ENGLANDS

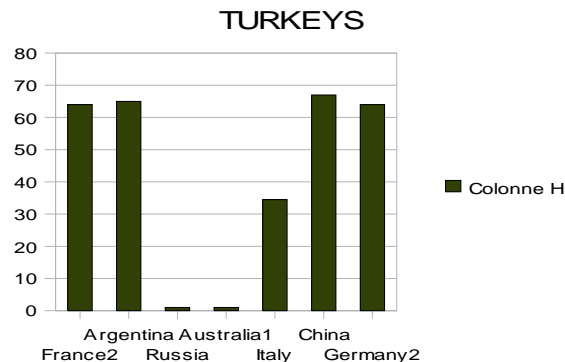
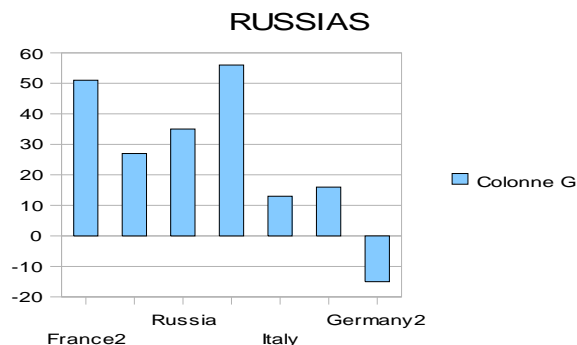
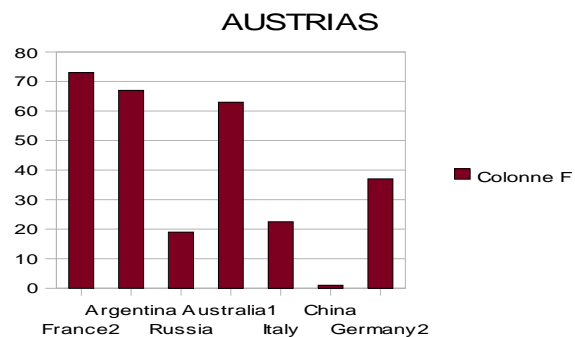
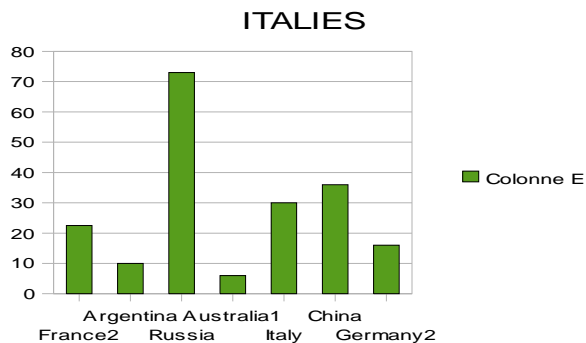


FRANCES



GERMANIES





The Background to a Whipping: Planning a Small Stand Alone Tournament

By Edi Birsan

Generally the first advice you hear when you consider running a stand-alone tournament is "Don't! Are you nuts?" However, most people who are determined to go ahead anyway ignore the first piece of advice that they get. For those of you who fall into that category, here is some more advice:

Do not do this ALONE - it is bad for your health!

Get someone else to help out that you can talk to. Anyone doing *anything* is helpful. Typically, it works well if you try to get one person to act as a Tournament Director, while the other member of the pair carries the bulk of the organizational and setup work. It is a **bad idea** to do both yourself, because while any load sharing is good, conversely carrying the whole load yourself is universally bad. Think of it this way: if you cannot talk ONE person into helping you, then what are you doing trying to run anything called 'Diplomacy'?

What do you need to do in advance of the event?

There are some basic things you'll need to have on hand for a successful event:

1. The House Rules

2. The Scoring System
3. The Venue/Date
4. The awards/prizes
5. The list of players
6. The games to be played
7. Pens/pencils papers
8. Timers
9. Supply charts
10. Money

You can find House Rules and Scoring Systems aplenty on the Net. If you can't, (or are too lazy), then give me a shout and I will direct you to some, or send you a bunch directly.

A Venue is an important cost issue. You can get some free venues at places like schools or community centers. However, sometimes they will ask for insurance papers, in which case you are screwed...because no one is going to get (or give) an insurance policy for such a one-shot deal. Instead, a good starting point for potential locations are hobby game stores where you can typically get space for 3 or 4 boards of players. The cost can range from completely free to something like a \$100, plus a deal to split any 'profits' (of which there are generally none anyway). The alternatives are

hotel/motel gathering rooms or event rooms. These will run between \$125 to \$500 a day, depending on the location and duration.



When doing the Whipping in the Bay Area, we first started with a hobby store in Fremont. We used that location for two years, and it was free. As part of supporting the store and making awards, we gave out a hundred dollars of in-store gift certificates in quantities of \$20 and \$10. The idea was that since most games cost more than \$20, by giving out 5 of these certificates the players would spend a lot more using the \$20 dollar gift certificate as a subsidy; this keeps the store owner happy. We then moved to a more centrally-located game store in Oakland for two years, until we out grew their venue (and until they took a rather un-business like attitude towards one of our organizers). It seemed the time had arrived to move to the big city, and to use a hotel setting where the upfront costs were \$600 for two days. It was more expensive, but it was also a classy setting .

Money is always an issue and needs to be considered. For the most part, you can get some of your expenses back from the entrance fees. However, the reality is that as the entrance fees go up, the attendance goes down.

For the Whipping we started with the idea of \$15 for three rounds, or \$5 for students. For a gathering of three boards, this will just about cover a hundred dollars for the venue, and make a little dent in the prizes and awards. When we moved to a hotel venue, where there was a \$600 dollar cost just for the venue, we changed to a fee of \$30 (with half off for students). To cover the venue cost you need about 28 people, but then what about the prizes?

Prizes and Awards are the momentos of the event. They are put the prize in Sur'prize. They are also the ego awards, and the event's advertisements in people's

homes or closets for the future. Typically I spend a lot of money on prizes in the hobby as a whole, contributing to make plaques for the European and North American World DipCons and other events as the spirit moves me. When it comes to the Whipping, we like a lot of little stuff, plus what has become fairly standard for the American/Canadian hobby:

1. A nice prize plaque for the Winner
2. Six plaques for positions 2-7
3. 7 awards for best country, sometimes plaques. We've used resin figure heads of different animals (Bulldog for England, Eagle for Austria) or knights-romans-barbarians etc.
4. Best Pirate (person hanging on with one fleet)
5. Best Defense
6. Victim award, sometimes called Hammered/Whipped/Dead Meat/Captain Bligh etc.
7. Awards for semi-team stuff (in the Whipping we divide the players into two big teams such as 49ners and Raiders, Heroes and Villains, and this year Ninja and Samurai and the top of each team under the team criterion gets a prize).
8. Different instant awards for things unknown in advance but come as they occur. For example, the first time an English army was convoyed into France a player was given a D-Day game. Likewise, the first person to stab a player nicknamed Duck was given a letter sharpener in the shape of Duck.

Give some thought to what you want to do with prizes, and if it is something that you want to put an emphasis on. For many years some events had simple printed paper certificates of achievement, and that was locally acceptable and worked fine. In others, like in the San Francisco area, we like to have fun with our prizes.

When you consider that even a cheap plaque can cost \$12, having just 14 (for the top 7 and the Outstanding play of each country), it will run you almost \$200 in total.

Hidden costs come in things like picking people up at the airport, which is a nice thing to do for travelers. Leave some bucks aside for tipping the hotel clean-up crew, which may have to be recruited to do special clean-ups.

Nearly all stand alone events are subsidized by the organizers. Be prepared for it!

Edi Birsan remains a driving force in many face-to-face hobby events. He also is a frequent traveler to major international and European Diplomacy shindigs. You can contact Edi directly at EdiBirsan "of" astound.net

Cricket and Kip: The 2008 Auckland Championships

By Grant Steel

The 2008 Auckland Champs were held Saturday February 9th and Sunday February 10th, 2008, in Auckland, New Zealand. I had been looking forward to the event for some time, and had high hopes that I could make a decent showing.

I had to get up very early on Saturday morning, as my two Taiwanese English students had to be in the city at 6am to catch their flight home. So I roll out of bed at 5.30 and chuck some clothes on, and off we go. That leaves a quiet house when I get home, and so until the rest of the family wakes up I practice my diploming with my son's mouse. Then I'll get ready for the 10.00am start. I have heaps of time...

8.30am Quentin rings me asking where I am. The family had just gotten up and are getting ready. We are set to leave at 9.00 for the 10.00 start. Off we go.... Halfway there I realize that I have forgotten the board, and we have to turn around and go home again.....

9.30am Arrive at the hall – This is filled to the brim with gamers. We have our own room put aside near the entrance, so people can see what we are playing and hopefully come in and take a look.

Round 1

10.03 Start game – not bad for a planned 10.00 start!

I get Austria. Qball gets England. Will – Italy, Craig P (old Craig) – Russia and 3 NEW players are ready as well: James – France, Glen – Germany and Craig B (new Craig) – Turkey.

The plan is to be nice to everyone, Will and I agree to especially be nice to each other. Old Craig and I bounce in Gal, and I am “happy families” with new Craig. Will has opened to Pie in Spring and moves to Tyr in the Fall, France covered Mar and only got 2 builds, leaving Spa free. All goes well for me, and at the end of 1901 I have the usual 2 Austrian builds (Gre and Ser) whilst still owning Tri. Old Craig has 2 builds, while in the west we are all sure that Qball has the new guys in an EFG. A pretty uneventful start really.

1902 continues that boring phase where lots of talking is going on and not much is happening, Will sets up for the attack on Turkey, and the EFG is still sorting itself out.

1903 arrives, and Will and I take it to Turkey. I pick up Bul and Will gets Smy. In the north Qball decides that Stp is much better under English control. At the same time Germany gets Hol from England so it all looks like the EFG is still getting started. Qball appears to be having fun with them, but not really committing himself either way.

1904 sees me take War. With Quentin looking to come over the top, I had to be in position to stop his armies from rolling through. Will loses Smy back to Turkey whilst old Craig sends an army walking around Europe.

1905 is next, and there is no EFG. Germany and England decide to go for France. At the same time I pick up Sev and Rum while Germany has STP, exchanging dots with Qball as he takes Mos and Por. Old Craig is now down to just 1 Supply Center in Venice.

At this stage we agreed to draw the game. New Craig, the Turkish player, had to go, and the French player James also had to go soon (kids were starting to act up – mine were excellent though). We looked at putting France into Civil Disorder for the last 2 turns but he only had one unit actually sitting on a SC. This would have meant an unfair advantage to both Germany and England, who would have picked up 2 each in the next turn. So an early draw was called. I was lucky enough to top the board on 9 with England and Germany both on 7. So a good start for me.

The next round was not scheduled to start until 7.30pm, when all the other games started. I was able to go home and drop the kids off, plus have a beer and a kip while watching the cricket. Then, back to the venue for the next round.

Round 2 – and who is the prince of Denmark?

We see another new player, plus the return of one who has not played for quite a while. Quentin graciously stepped down from this round, so we had 7.

The players were: Ewann – Austria, Will – England, Jack (new player) – France, James – Germany, Old Craig – Italy, Man of Steel (me) – Russia, Patrick – Turkey.

Quentin offered to mentor any of the new players with order checking etc, whilst updating us with the cricket scores ☺. I started this game with an open mind, not sure which way to go. I talked with Will and we decided to be friendly; Will is good like that. So now I could concentrate on the south. I picked up Swe and Rum in the Fall and, Old Craig picked up Mun - clearly signaling his intentions. Germany stayed on 3, bouncing in Hol, and it was all on.

I thought that things were all fine in the south until 1902. That's when Austria and Turkey decided that I had to die. They took Sev and Rum in the Spring, and I was in deep trouble. I pulled back to Mos and War to hold the line, and explained to Germany that I needed Denmark in order to keep said line intact. Will and I tried to explain the need to form a solid alliance to stop the evil foes, but

after I took Den, Germany pretty much had the aim in the game to get it back. I then had to defend Den for the rest of the game, while fighting a losing battle against A/T.

Somewhere around that time I recall telling the board that for the first time this tournament "I hate this game". I pulled back to STP to form the last line. A/T continued to roll up the board. Will wound up taking Den at the end of 1905, as he decided that we needed to keep Germany in check. France stayed on 6 SCs for 5 years before picking up Tun in 1906 and then Hol in 1907.

In the Fall of 1907 I was down to only 2 SCs, Stp and Nwy. Instead of bouncing England out of Nwy, I decided to support Turkey in Mos, since Austria was going for the center grab at the time. This support stopped Austria from getting the leader bonus, and France and Austria tied on 8 each. Turkey got 7, England had 5, then 3, 2, and 1 respectively for Germany, Italy and Russia.

The day ended with me ahead in the tournament totals, and the black caps with a win over England...so all was well.

Day 2 / Round 3

New Craig came back again for another round, and we had the 5th new player: Sebastian. This time I was England, with Will B as Russia ... hmm shall we be friends again??? Old Craig was France and he announced straight away that he was going to attack me, so yes Will, lets be friends! Sebastian was Germany and on the other side of the board new Craig was Italy with Erwann Turkey and Qball Austria. I picked up Nwy while Old Craig got 3 builds as France – making him the early leader. Will was bounced out of Swe, which didn't make him that happy. We looked at finally getting an EFG going, and that meant unfortunately that my tournament-long ally, Will, had to bear the brunt of my attack. Old Craig put down fleets and headed into the Med, and Germany sort of hung around in the middle.

Austria went for Italy with the help of France, and that meant our first and only elimination of the tournament. Sadly for New Craig, he was stuck between 2 sharks and was swallowed by the end of 1904. I picked up STP straight away, and got Mos for a year in 1904. Austria and France, after they had finished off Italy, came to a head and started to fight over their newly-acquired centers. At this time, Qball got very upset. He felt that there was no diplomacy between him and Turkey, and he was getting rather heated over it. Turkey kept nibbling at his centers. A hasty word meant in jest from me backfired, and led to Quentin leaving with the last turn of the game approaching. I apologized to him many times and I know that he hasn't taken what I said personally. I had turned on Germany and picked up Hol, Den and Swe. France was pretty tied up in the Med so he couldn't get around in time to stop me. That game ended in a 3-

way 8 SCs with E/F/T. Russia clawed back to 5, Austria on 3 (down from 7 in 1906) and Germany on 2.

It ended up being a pretty close tournament, although the final scores did not really indicate that. If Erwann had topped either board in the 2nd or 3rd round he would have taken it out, and if he played the first round it may have been totally different altogether. . The results finished up like this:

Rank	Player	State	Rnd 1	Rnd 2	Rnd 3	Score
1	Grant Steel	AKL	48	2	28.667	78.667
2	Erwann Sbai	FRA	DNP	35	28.667	63.667
3	Jack Benson-Rae	AKL	DNP	35	DNP	35
4	Craig Purcell	WAI	2	3	28.667	33.667
5	Quentin Ball	AKL	18.5	DNP	4	22.5
6	Glen Patel	AKL	18.5	DNP	DNP	18.5
7	Will Black	AKL	4	6	6	16
8	Patrick Shirley	AKL	DNP	15	DNP	15
9	James Hoskins	AKL	5	4	DNP	9
10	Craig Bishnell	WEL	4	DNP	1	5
11	Sebastian Olsen	AKL	DNP	DNP	3	3

The tournament was on the whole a good event. It was interesting to see the new players and, from what I saw, the two distinct styles of novice play:

- 1) Trust No One. Basically, this was the idea that one could be stabbed at any time and therefore do not commit to any alliance. Never go out of the comfort zone of one's home centers, but always ask for other SC's solely, as that is what the game dictates one does. This was a bit difficult to work with, obviously, but I remember playing this style when I first started playing. The intense negotiation under a strict timing system puts a lot of pressure on a player, and it is often difficult to remember what one had agreed to as well as what one has planned.
- 2) Go Along for the Ride. Again, a style I have played. You pick a person and stick with them, are told what to do and move accordingly, and no amount of diplomacy from anyone else can change the way you are playing. In a short game – i.e. finishing in 1907 - this is often a good strategy. I can see, though, that the stab would come as the game progressed, and this can sometimes disillusion a novice.

Next year we hope to hold the Auckland Champs at the same venue. I know I'll be there. Will you?

If you haven't figured out who Grant roots for when it comes to cricket, you haven't been paying much attention, have you?

Modern Diplomacy: Part II

By Jack McHugh

This issue I will be discussing the five eastern powers in Modern Diplomacy: Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and Egypt. Two of the powers - Turkey and Russia - are holdovers from regular Diplomacy. The other three - Ukraine, Poland & Egypt - were all added by the designer, Vincent Mous-Hoarboesgaard. As mentioned in the last issue, this was based on the criteria that any country with at least 30 million citizens and no more than 60 million (in 1990) was a three center power. Those countries between 60 and 200 million were four center powers, and those over 200 million were 5 center powers.

Using this population yardstick, Russia is a five center power, Ukraine and Turkey are four center powers, and Egypt and Poland are three center powers. As I said in my previous article, the main difference is the removal of Austria-Hungary from the middle of the Balkans, and the addition of more provinces and supply centers.

In the East, the new map is much more pronounced than in the West. In the West there is only one new country (Spain) and one additional supply center for each of the Western powers. Germany gets Frankfurt, England gets Gibraltar (with A Liverpool replaced by F Liverpool), France trades F Bre for F Gas and A Lyo, and Spain is subdivided from one dot into three.

In the East there are **three** new countries in Poland, Ukraine and Egypt. In addition, Turkey and Russia both pick up a center each. Russia gets a new center and gets shifted more to the northeastern part of the board, but in keeping with the Diplomacy tradition, Russia has F Rostov in the southeastern corner of the board as well.

Poland now stands between the Ukraine, Russia and Germany, but Poland only borders directly on Germany and the Ukraine. There are four neutral provinces, two with centers, between Poland and Russia.

The Ukraine takes over for Austria on Russia's southwestern boarder, and borders directly on Russia and Poland, but is separated by Rostov and the Black Sea (now divided into an Eastern and Western Black Sea provinces) from Turkey.

Turkey looks remarkably similar to her regular Diplomacy counterpart, except for the loss of Armenia. This is replaced by two more provinces: Adana and Anatolia. The Turkish A Smy is replaced by a much more useful fleet, and an A Anatolia gets added to the map as well.

Egypt is placed to the south of Turkey and Egypt, like Spain, now is subdivided into several provinces with three supply centers: Cairo, Alexandra and Aswan. All

three have coasts, the first two on the Libyan or Eastern Mediterranean (or both) and the last one on the Red Sea. The Red Sea uses the Suez Canal to allow fleets into the Eastern Mediterranean. Unlike some variants this one does not allow fleets to transit around Africa to the South Atlantic Ocean, which makes Egypt's southern flank very secure indeed.

I will now discuss each Modern Diplomacy eastern power in more detail, moving from west to east and north to south.



Poland has its quasi-historical problem of being between three other powers: Ukraine, Germany and Russia. I say "quasi-historical" problem because Poland and the Ukraine have never

really been great powers together at the same time in history.

The last time the Ukraine was a great power was before the Mongols showed up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to obliterate the source of their emerging power: the advanced city-state of Kiev. At that time, Poland was still concentrating on its northern and western borders, being more of regional power centered on the Baltic. Later, when Poland does become a great power and turns south to the Ukrainian area, the Kiev-Ukraine state is only a historical memory as the area is controlled by Russia and the Ottoman Empires.

In Modern Diplomacy, Poland and the Ukraine usually end up fighting over the Ukrainian province of Podolia. Why? Podolia borders on Poland's province of Krakow, and the Ukraine centers of Kiev and Odessa, not to mention the neutral supply centers of Hungary and Rumania. This makes Podolia the most valuable and fought-over province, center or non-center, in the game. Only Switzerland (itself a supply center), which borders on France's Lyon, Italy's Milan, Germany's Munich and neutral Austria, comes anywhere near being as fought over as Podolia.

In the East, the Poles can often find themselves butting heads with the Russians over the neutral provinces of Lithuania and Byelorussia. This usually happens because the Russians have four of their five units in the north: A Gorky, A Moscow, A Murmansk and F St Petersburg. No Russian province borders directly on Norway since a new province, Lapland, now separates

Russia from the Norwegian center. Lapland gives the British time to get to Norway as well. This means the Russians are forced to get at least one, if not both, of these provinces from the Poles, as the Russians have nowhere else to pick up any neutral centers beyond Norway and Sweden —neither of which the Russians usually get.

In the West the Poles have the Germans to deal with. While the Germans are usually distracted by the French, British and Italians, they have to pay attention to the Poles due the mother lode of centers just to the south east of the Reich. Czech, Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece are all neutral centers at the start of this variant.

Poland and Germany both border on Czech, but neither has a center (or unit) next to it in Spring 1995. The Germans do have a unit (Munich) next to Austria at the start of the game. The Germans usually get Austria, but they often don't stop there. The question for Poland is just how distracted are the Germans? The more they are preoccupied with what is happening in the Low Countries, Switzerland, and Scandinavia, the better it is for Poland.

While I have seen Poland do well on occasion, it is, in my opinion, the toughest country in the East to play. This is mainly because of the fact that it will usually end up in a war with Russia, Germany or the Ukraine (or some combination of the three) within the first two years of the game. Poland does the best when Germany is taken out by the West, and when Poland forms a close alliance with Ukraine (preferably) or Russia (less preferable) that allows Poland to grow reasonably fast. If this happens, Poland generally survives into the mid-game.

Given Poland's central position on the board, if Poland can survive the early game she is in a good position to grow, because of all of the centers that surround her. If Poland can take out Russia, she is now a corner power, as it is unlikely anyone will bother to attempt to outflank a Poland that holds some combination of Moscow, Gorky, Murmansk and St. Petersburg.

Poland can also do well taking out Germany as it secures a strong western flank and gives her access to Scandinavia and the Balkans.

The hardest thing for Poland to do is take out the Ukraine but that is probably the most rewarding, as the Ukrainians represent the Poles biggest obstacle to expanding into the Balkans. This is also why the Ukraine is so difficult to take out. The Poles will likely need help from Russia or Turkey (or both) to pull this off, and have Germany distracted by whatever is going on in Western Europe.

Ukraine



We explored a lot of the Ukraine's position when discussing Poland, but the Ukraine also interacts with Russia, Turkey and Italy.

Italy? Is that a misprint? No. The Ukraine, unless jumped on by Russia, Poland and Turkey or some combination of the three powers, will end up dividing up the Balkans (expect for Greece) with the Italians.

The biggest obstacles facing the Ukraine are that pesky Russian F in Rostov and the Turks. The extra province in the Black Sea makes it more, not less, fought over. This is because both sides can't get into the Black Sea, and it is much harder to hold and deny other powers' entry than in regular Diplomacy. There are also five build centers (Russia's Rostov, Turkey's Istanbul and Ankara, and the Ukraine's Odessa and Sevastopol) that can put a fleet on one of the two Black Sea spaces, with two (Turkey's Ankara and Ukraine's Sevastopol) being able to build and deploy to either sea zone.

I have seen the Ukraine do very well - and very poorly - although I think this is another country that does better more often than poorly. Games where the Ukraine gets bogged down in border wars with Poland and Russia, she isn't going to do very well. If she can get out into the Balkans and keep Poland and Russia at each other's throat, or get Germany and Russia to help her take out Poland (or get Poland to help her take out Russia), then she can do very well.

The Ukraine should not expect much help from Turkey against the Russians. Most of Russia's dots, outside of Rostov, are too far north to get the Turks excited about going for them. If the Ukraine wants to go after Russia than England, Germany or Poland are her natural allies.

The one thing that strikes me about the Ukraine as I write this is that she has a wealth of options, as well as threats, to work with. She has potential allies and enemies in just about every direction. Whether or not you want to play the Ukraine has to do with your personality; do you see the Ukraine as a glass half full, with lots of opportunities, or half empty, surrounded by potential enemies? Certainly the Ukraine requires active diplomacy with all of her neighbors to do well, much more than say Egypt, Russia or Italy.

Turkey



Turkey is not the same power as from regular Diplomacy. First of all you've lost your corner position; Egypt is the new corner power. Secondly you've lost two neighbors: Austria Hungary has been replaced by a much stronger Italy, and Russia has been replaced by a stronger Ukraine. Meanwhile, your southern border features a new power in Egypt. Russia still has a fleet in Ros but this doesn't usually survive for very long against competent players, so Russia really isn't much of a player in the Black Sea spaces in this variant.

The cons of this position are you're much more surrounded then you were in standard Diplomacy. All three of the powers I've mentioned are more powerful than most powers you've faced in standard Diplomacy. You're still need the biggest concentration of centers on the board in the Balkans but you've got two more powerful nations to contend with in the Ukraine and Italy than you did before.

In addition, Egypt and Turkey have the second most amount of trouble getting along in games I have seen. The first most troublesome pairing is Poland and Russia, but the third is Turkey and Ukraine. For some reason, Ukraine usually looks south, unless distracted by Russia, almost immediately. Egypt is usually trouble for Turkey because Egypt has no where else to go for builds. Once the neutrals in Isr, Sau and Lib are gone, the Egyptians are usually looking north for dots.

So is there any good news in all of this? You do start with another center in Ada and Smy becomes Izm. Ada gets an army, and Izm retains the fleet. There are also centers to your east and south so you don't have to go for the Balkans for builds, although you'll probably have a fight from Egypt if you go too far to the south. Turkey usually picks up neutral centers in Geo and Irn as well as Bul and Gre, so you'll have a nice base to start out the game.

The key for Turkey is having one her neighbors taken out, either by Turkey or by Turkey and allies, or just allies. Once you remove a country from this part of the map, Turkey becomes a corner power again and is now a 12-15 center power. Turkey's survivability is much better and you now have room to maneuver against the remaining two powers.

Overall I'd say Turkey's position is much more

interesting but much dicier than in standard Diplomacy. I have found that Turkey is a snorefest in standard Dip, but much more interesting in Modern.

Russia



Russia gets an extreme makeover in Modern Dip. No longer is Russia the country everyone (but Italy) wants to talk with in Winter 1900. Why? Now she is a much more compacted regional power in the northeast corner of the board. The designer tried to keep old Russia around by leaving a Russian fleet in Rostov. But it is really not the same, since Russia's other four units are all concentrated in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Murmansk and Gorky. These are all able to support each other, and able to get to Scandinavia and the Baltic states, which is where Russia will get her early builds.

In the North, Russia still has her usual rivalry with the English, only now there a few more provinces such as Lap and another sea zone or two, (Brn, Whi, Arc) to deal with. Russia also gets another army in Murmansk and Gorky, as War is now a Polish center. Russia keeps her F StP(sc) but in this game it's actually useful. Of course the Dip gods do not always favor Russia as the designer has given Russia a useless F Ros. Russia is forever saddled with useless fleets.

Since I've covered most of Russia's issues when discussing other powers, I will concentrate on what Russia's problem is. She is, in my opinion, one of the weaker powers in the game. Russia's ability to do well often hinges on things that the Russian player cannot control, such as was Poland attacked by the Germans? Did the Ukraine make peace with Turkey?

My biggest complaint regarding Russia is the map. Although the designer has opened the map up some, I don't think he has gone far enough with regards to Russia. Specifically I think the Vol and Sib provinces should be subdivided further, and I would add another dot or two to the east edge of the map to give

Russia/Turkey/Ukraine/Egypt a bit more expansion room. I would also add another dot or two up north - maybe make Ice and Fin supply centers as well.

I would also change that useless F Ros to an army (or remove it entirely), and I would make StP an army and Mur a fleet. I would also add the White Sea canal to allow ships to move between Whi and Bal through Mur and StP. This would give the Russians some real flexibility up north. The extra army in the south would make Russia a real player with regards to Turkey and the Ukraine since most of the centers in the south are between the Ukraine/Turkey/Russia which cannot be reached by a fleet.

Egypt



Egypt, while a corner power, has a terrible position, and one shouldn't expect to do well at all with it. Egypt is kind of stuck in the corner of the board, and after she gets her three or four neutral dots, then what? She really can only go after

Turkey and, maybe, Italy. The only problem with this opinion of mine is that I am currently playing a Wings gunboat game as Egypt and I'm at 16 centers after just 8 game years.

My own game notwithstanding, Egypt's problem is similar to Russia's: namely it is stuck off in the corner of the board away from most of the centers. It is difficult for Egypt, even when it does well, to deploy effectively to the rest of the board.

There are also not any concentrations of centers around Egypt. Once you get your neutrals you have to go after Turkey or Italy. Why those two? Anybody else is clearly too far away. You can't get to the Ukraine while Turkey is in the game, and the same is true for Spain while Italy is in the game.

Although I am the largest power in my current game by two centers, I probably have the weakest position of the major (9 centers or more) powers. My home centers are the furthest removed from the Balkans/Central Europe concentration you must get to win the game. I am also under attack from both Spain and the Ukraine in this gunboat game, and Poland is even going around the Ukraine to get to me!

Africa is a waste in this game, as besides Egypt's home

centers it has only three centers. Egypt gets one (Lib) but usually not the other two (Mor & Tun). Egypt does generally get Sau and Isr and often gets Irn, but getting Irn is real pain as it will mean the unit that takes it is out of action for two years: a year to move to it and another year to move back.

Italy is Egypt's biggest issue, as the Italians usually do well. I was fortunate that a Spanish-German alliance took out Italy while E/G/S went after France. This meant my western flank could be ignored as I swallowed up Turkey. For some reason the Ukraine and Poland have refused to go to war, and the Ukraine has been concentrating on me ever since I took out the Turks (during which time the Ukraine was taking out Russia and getting Italy's dots in the Balkans).

Once I took out Turkey and the coalition got rid of Italy, it made life a lot easier for Egypt. However, being a corner power means I have less room to maneuver against the current Spanish (from the West)/the Ukraine (from the North)/Poland (from the East) coalition that is attacking Egypt.

My assessment is that Egypt is better off than Turkey in regular Diplomacy for the opening game, but has issues with middle and end game. I think adding more centers, as I suggested earlier for Ukraine/Turkey/Russia in the east, would go a long way toward helping Egypt. I would consider adding some more dots in the Med, like Cyprus or Crete and in Africa...say Benghazi in addition to Lib. I might also divide Sau into Esau and Wsau, each with its own dot.

Conclusion

This concludes my look at each power in Modern Diplomacy. Despite my criticisms, this is one of my favorite variants to play, as I think it offers different powers different challenges and gives each country a fair amount of maneuvering room. No power is locked into a particular area or opening, so every game is different, and diplomacy is encouraged among all of the powers. This game also makes an excellent gunboat game, and can be also be spiced up with the Wings variant rules that allow for air units to be built and used.

If anyone wants to write a reply or is interested in GMing a game I can put in [DW](#) with commentary, please drop me a note and I'm sure we can arrange something. I'm also interested to hear if there are any variants out there you think I should publish in [DW](#)'s variant section. You can email me at [jwmchughjr "of" gmail.com](mailto:jwmchughjr@of@gmail.com).

Jack McHugh is the Diplomacy World variant editor, a skilled Diplomacy player, a lover of good beer, a Phils fan, and my #1 toady.

Reaching for the Brass Ring: My Top Table at EDC 2008

by Luca Pazzaglia

This year's EuroDipCon was held in Brunate, Italy from April 11 to 13. After three games I found myself second in the overall ranking, which meant I was fortunate enough to be playing on the Top Board against the other highest-ranking players. Checking the scores, I could see the rest of the board was going to be set as follows:

- 1) Igor Kurt (from Germany)
- 2) Davide Cleopadre (from Italy)
- 3) Gwen Maggi (from France)
- 4) Frank Oschmiansky (from Germany)
- 5) Toby Harris (from the UK)
- 6) Cyrille Sevin (from France)

So, two French, two Germans, two Italians and one English; the perfect European Top Table ☺.



"How is it possible to win a top table at an EDC?" I asked Toby Harris this question during Saturday's evening dinner, which we enjoyed at a panoramic restaurant over the Como's Lake. Toby had already won once in 1998, so I valued his expertise. Toby responded that it would not be a "normal" game. According to him, in a top table game such as this, as soon as people realize that you are gaining strength, your allies will attack you no matter what. Every player dreams about winning a EDC. The trick is to start slow, grow step by step, try to put a good stab in the middle of the game, and avoid a bad reaction from the rest of the table. It's necessary to grow and gain supply centers, but ideally you try to remain under the radar. Not so easy!!!

With these suggestions in my mind, I started to play my very first European Final on Sunday morning.

The draw of the powers was casual. For the second time in the tournament, I drew Italy. The other players drew as follows:

Austria – Frank Oschmiansky

England – Davide Cleopadre
France – Igor Kurt
Germany – Cyrille Sevin
Russia – Gwen Maggi
Turkey – Toby Harris

I did not feel too great about the way the table had shaped up. My natural enemy (Toby Harris' Turkey) was very strong, and Italy's natural ally (Austria) was being played by someone I haven't had much success working with. In fact, the last three games that Frank and I have played together (two times in London in 2005 and one in Berlin in 2006) we have always played as enemies. Let me also mention that "Frank, dear buddy" is a magnificent beer drinker. I remember that in Berlin I played a game with him when he was almost drunk, but this did not save me from being stabbed and eliminated from the game. So I decided that maybe it would be a good idea to start counting the beers he drinks ...☺.

A few seconds before starting the game Daniele Belardinelli told me that, in a previous game, where he had Italy and Frank had Austria, the German (Cyrille) had tried to hard to build an alliance. Considering this new information, I quickly went to talk to the German. Slowly drinking his first beer, he proposed that we make a solid alliance to immediately attack Turkey. Obviously I would only build fleets and he only armies. I accepted, as I couldn't do anything else. To stab the Austrian in 1901 in such a game as this would surely mean my death.

The only positive thing I saw on this table was the presence of Igor Kurt as France. In fact, I have a great relationship with him, and in the two previous games we had never betrayed each other, demonstrating respect and honor. I grabbed his arm and made a simple proposal: we would not attack each other for the duration of the game. Whichever of us winds up stronger will win. If one of us is doing poorly, the other, if possible, will go to help him. He smiled, and accepted my plan.

1901 – The Alliance with Austria

With a sad heart I started this game allied with Austria. I wrote the usual peaceful opening moves:

A Ven Hold, A Rom – Apu, F Nap - Ion

But just before the deadline arrives, Igor asks me to move to Tyrolia, because he fears an Anglo-German alliance against him. I accept, but before doing so I inform the Austrian, who approves of the move.

The rest of the opening moves are more or less classic, except for Davide's. He sends a fleet into the English Channel but then, in Fall, moves it to Belgium.

For myself, in the Fall I decide to try to sneak into Munich, but Cyrille bounced me. At least Germany did not have three builds!

1902 – Attacking Turkey

After 1901, Gwen, Frank and myself decided that the first thing we needed to do was to eliminate Toby Harris' Turkey. We all knew the playing style of the English Champion: he has a powerful tactical ability, and most of all he never takes prisoners. I still remember a game that I played with my friend Leonardo Quirini at the London EDC in 2005, during which we all started as allies; Leonardo and I finished the game almost completely destroyed by Toby's hands. So, accordingly, Austria, Italy and Russia decided to move against the Turkish centers.

Frank and I agreed to attack the Aegean Sea and Eastern Med simultaneously. Toby decided to bounce me. Frank, in the Fall, took Bulgaria and, pressured by Gwen (who did not want to let Frank grow too quickly), gave me Trieste. At the end of the year I found myself with 5 centers thanks to the considerate (albeit forced) concession of my Austrian ally, who keeps repeating to me that he does not want to see Italian armies built. So, I build a fleet in Naples. Toby was still with three centers.

1903 – Stabbing the Austrian

At the beginning of 1903, my position on the map surely was not one of the best. Even with the five units, the Italian peninsula was practically defenseless. I had one fleet in Naples, one army in Trieste surrounded by 3 Austrian armies, a useless army in Tunis, a fleet in the Eastern Med, and one in the Ionian. If Austria or France suddenly decided to move on my Italian centers, the result would be a complete disaster for me. Fortunately it was a bit too early for them to consider it. But I knew I could not remain in this situation for very long.

During the Spring, Igor asked me why I built F Nap. I explained that it was a condition "sine qua non" to get Trieste. I promise him I'd move the fleet to Ion or Apulia. My other moves are very simple: F Eas - Smy to cut the Turkish support, thereby allowing Frank to take Con. All the rest of my units were to hold. In the same season, Gwen took Ankara.

During the Fall, however, things changed. Frank told me that, supported by Toby, he was going to take Ankara from Gwen. Frank was also going to Attack Gwen's Bulgaria from Greece. He asked that I move to Tyrolia while he would move Vie-Boh, setting up a move against Germany. If I accepted the plan, he would give me

Greece (to be taken with my fleet in the Ionian Sea). At first this sounded like a good deal, but looking over my units I realized how badly positioned I was. Between my poor position and a strong Austria (commanded by a player I'd had bad experiences against), I felt I didn't have any guarantee of surviving the game.

I started to think...

- a) I could move my F Apulia to the Adriatic;
- b) Instead of moving to Tyrolia, I could move Tri – Vie (since he planned on moving from Vie to Boh)
- c) I could take Greece A Tunis instead of F Ion;
- d) I could use the fleet in the Eastern Med to keep Frank from getting Ankara, cutting Smyrna's support;
- e) Frank was at his third beer...☺.

...damn!! What a stab!!

I wrote out my orders, realizing that with this single set of moves I was gambling my chance at winning the EDC. When they read the Italians moves I watched Frank's face. His face was full of wrinkles. The stab was complete and well done! ☺

I now had two builds, while my former ally remained at 5 centers thanks to picking up Constantinople. At this point I'm in the lead with 7 centers, followed by Gwen with 6 (who took back Sweden from Cyrille).

In the north everything remained quiet. Germany, France and England were at 5 centers each, and they continued to fight each other. Toby's Turkey was down to one center. I built armies in Venice and Rome just to keep Igor quiet, and I started to dream that I might get to mount the podium after all.

1904: Trying to Maintain Position

I am always more convinced that the better stab is the one that permits you to look your ex-ally in the eyes and be able to say "In my place you would have done the same thing". This is exactly what I told Frank at the beginning of 1904 when he grabbed my arm.

He thought about it for a second and then replied "Yes, it's true" ☺. I received compliments from Toby and especially from Cyrille, who would have been Frank's next victim. Now I wanted to position myself well on the map. So in the Spring I moved to A Ven – Tri, and into the Aegean Sea. In the Fall I supported myself in Vie and Greece. At this point, maybe, I made a little mistake. I could have taken Budapest but, as I was afraid to draw too much attention to myself, I chose not to make that move.

Frank lost Rumania to Gwen, but took Munich from Boh. At the end of the year I still had 7 centers, but Gwen had

reached 7 too. More bad news came from the west as Igor put a fleet into Western Med, threatening Tunis. France, England and Austria were at 5, Germany at 4, and Turkey remained at 1.

1905: Stopping Russia



In 1905 I made my little tactic and diplomatic masterpiece. We were three years from the end of the game.

First, I talked to Igor and tried to make him understand that fighting now would mean letting Russia or Germany win. Igor was first in the overall ranking, so he could easily try to win the tournament. But to do so he would have to take at least 2 centers from me, and with 3 Italian fleets in the surrounding area that would not be so easy.

I suggest he move everything from the south and hope that Davide's England does not stab him. Igor thinks for one second and asks me to bounce him in Tunis. I tell him that I will move to the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Ionian Sea. If he takes Tunis with his lone fleet he would not be able to keep it until the end of the year, because he didn't have a second fleet for support. So I gently asked him to move away from Wes. He thought for a second, smiled, and said "Yes, I agree". The France problem is solved!

Now all that remains is Russia with who, at the moment, I am allied. But this is not a normal game; the European Champion is only ONE person, and I cannot keep supporting Gwen. In Spring I exploit Gwen's tactic abilities, which gives me a couple of good ways to take Serbia.

I should have attacked from Greece, supported from Trieste, cutting Budapest's support with Vienna. The move is so good that I could also take Budapest, because Frank moved against Gwen's Bulgaria. He told

me before, but I did not want to believe him. Two centers in one shot!!

Gwen, of course, sees the opening and he asks me for one center. At that point I decided to support Frank against Gwen, and to not cut an Austrian support for Toby to take Russia's Ankara. The new maneuver came out well, and I don't give anything to Russia, while I also make him lose Ankara and Rumania.

Taking Serbia and Budapest I am now at 9 centres. Davide with his England is at 6, Gwen's Russia is reduced to 5 together with France. Germany is at 4, Austria at 3, and Turkey is at 2 thanks to taking Ankara. At my suggestion Toby built an army. Only four turns until the game ends. Now I really start to believe it. I can make it. I can WIN the EDC! Davide now called for a draw. Obviously I accepted and so do the others, but Igor was not present at that moment. When he arrived he says that he wants to keep playing. The game goes on.

1906: The Last year

When you want to force a player to accept a draw, what do you need to do? Simple, you send an army or a fleet close to one or more of his centers and usually he changes his opinion...☺. This is exactly what I did with Igor. I wanted to finish this game as soon as possible. I was winning and I didn't want to risk making a mistake and missing out on the big victory.

So, in the Fall I sent a nice fleet to the Western Med, close to Igor's Spain. In the Balkans I started to work with Gwen again who, forgiving my stab, had asked me to help him take Bulgaria. I supported him but I asked for Rumania. He accepted and, in this way, I grew to 10 centers. Gwen grew to 6, as does Igor who takes Belgium from Davide. Austria now is at 3 centres. All the rest remains unchanged.

After Winter I called for the draw myself. Everybody accepts, and the game ends. Finally! I am the European Champion! I hug Luisa first, then I shake everybody's hand. I am the first Italian to ever win an EDC! It is only fitting that I did so while the tournament was held in Italy, and with me playing Italy! (By the way, to top it all off I took the Best Italy prize as well ☺).

I had just realized a dream!! ☺ Igor Kurt finished second, and Gwen Maggi third. It's a true European podium ☺.

Now that Luca has made one of his dreams come true, perhaps it's my turn. Where is Kate Winslet in her latex dress from "Romance and Cigarettes" when you need her?

Celebrations

By Richard J Walkerdine

It is always nice to win things and few people enjoy it more than me. In the Diplomacy hobby, particularly in the 70s and 80s, we had any number of polls, tournaments and awards for all sorts of things. I was lucky enough (or maybe I simply deserved it?) to win quite a few. It started in the late 70s when I won the IDA's Calhamer Award for Meritorious Service to the Hobby, which as the first non-American winner was quite an honour. Around that time there was also the offer of a food-parcel from Edi Birsan, but that wasn't really an award so that story can wait for another time.

But my really golden period was the mid 80s. In 1985 my zine Mad Policy won the annual British Zine Poll. In 1986 my team (the MP All Stars) won the team Diplomacy tournament at the annual Manorcon games convention in Birmingham and later that same year I won three of Geoff Challinger's annual Gladys Awards (Best Diplomacy Zine, Best Zine for Hobby News and Best Diplomacy GM). I was of course delighted – not least because nobody had ever before won three Gladyses in the same year. So in the next issue of Mad Policy I wrote the following article.

It is little more than a huge ego trip, creating a story around my then recent achievements and picking up threads from some of the long running press sagas that were appearing in my zine. It also pulls in references to some of my favourite books and TV shows (Tolkien, Doctor Who, and The Avengers) and several major figures of the time in the British hobby. A bit of fun, but also my way of saying thank you for what I had been awarded and hopefully leaving nobody in any doubt that I was well pleased and would be celebrating....

Three zines for Soccerboss under the sky,
Seven for the Watford Mob in their halls of
stone,
Nine for Railway Rivals, doomed to die,
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
In the world of Diplomacy where the shadows
lie.
One zine to rule them all, one zine to find
them,
One zine to bring them all and in the darkness
bind them,
In the world of Diplomacy where the shadows
lie....

....thus thought WALKERDINE, first and greatest of the Secret Masters of Diplomacy. For countless years he ruled the Hobby with his One True Zine and no editor could stand against him. But the passing years brought complacency and, faced by a Grand Alliance of all sectors of Fandom, he was eventually forced to fold his

mighty zine and so end the First Age of the Hobby. But in defeat he swore a mighty oath of revenge, and one day would return....

....and so it comes to pass. Many years have gone by and the Old Ways have long since been forgotten. The Hobby is now split into many warring factions, each one claiming to be players of the One True Game. With old battles, and old foes, now nothing but a distant memory Walkerdine sees his chance to re-establish his supremacy. He re-launches MAD POLICY, regains contact with some of his most trusted former colleagues and begins devising new schemes for Hobby domination....

At first everything progresses smoothly. The Zine Poll is already under his control and no serious rival will ever achieve success while it remains so. The Hobby Archives are established, and history can now be re-written in any way he chooses. With assistance from ULRICA MEINHOF, the beautiful psychotic killer who is now his closest companion, he ousts Pete Calcraft from his position of Stats Supremo and causes widespread confusion when hobby stats publications fail to appear. When Walkerdine eventually offers to rescue the stats he is hailed as a hero by a grateful Hobby.



With success following success it is perhaps inevitable the he should suffer his first setback. In an unguarded moment he is locked into an ancient press saga and captured by henchmen of JOHN PIGGOTT, another Secret Master from the First Age and a life-long rival of our hero. The evil, twisted mind of Piggott devises his own scheme for Hobby domination and incarcerates Walkerdine in the Tardis seven years in the past, replacing him in his own era with a simulacrum. He is eventually rescued by THE DOCTOR, disguised as Janet Tweedy, and by dancing the TIME WARP the two return to the present. Much confusion is caused when Walkerdine and the simulacrum finally confront each other and is not lessened when they both depart in an escape pod, hotly pursued by two Ulrika Meinhofs – for she too has now got a simulacrum to contend with. In the ensuing battle the two simulacra are obliterated but Walkerdine is again captured by Piggott and Ulrika sets off in pursuit. With assistance from EMMA PEEL another rescue is performed and Walkerdine is finally able to concentrate on the next stage of his plan – the winning of the Zine Poll.

With the delay caused by his recent adventures Walkerdine realises that desperate measures are called for. An elaborate hoax is perpetrated in which Ulrika is apparently killed by an unknown assassin and Walkerdine, stricken with grief, organises the most spectacular funeral the Hobby has ever witnessed. Then, his ambitions of Hobby domination now apparently shattered for ever, he withdraws into the life of a recluse.

Two months later, on a tidal wave of sympathy, the Hobby votes Mad Policy winner of the Zine Poll with one of the largest victory margins ever recorded. The plan has been a spectacular success – and Walkerdine is once again set fair on his quest for total domination.

But yet again the deformed features of John Piggott appear to upset his careful scheming, though on this occasion Walkerdine turns it to his own advantage. The Zine Poll has now served its purpose, so when Piggott uses blackmail to wrest control of it from our hero Walkerdine allows it to be taken with no more than a token show of resistance – allowing him and Ulrika to continue with the preparations for the next stage of the plan....

....For several months they roam through time and space, seeking out the greatest military experts in past and future history: Alexander, Hannibal, Drake, Chung-Wa, Khan...none are overlooked. Walkerdine then transports them to his secret headquarters buried deep within an uncharted asteroid, and there they see a bank of newly installed vidiscreens displaying all the boards in the Manorcon Team Diplomacy Tournament!

The plan is simple and foolproof. With the assembled military experts analysing every move and Walkerdine relaying their advice to his players the MP All Stars can

do no wrong. After a few hours play the result is inevitable and Walkerdine is heading back to Earth, ready to receive the trophy for which he has planned so carefully.

But even now our hero remains unsatisfied, and with the applause that greeted this latest triumph still ringing in his ears he and Ulrika quickly return to his secret headquarters. They enter the IT room, a gigantic cavern filled with countless rows of computers receiving all the game statistics throughout the Hobby. But today the usual quiet hum of activity has changed. Instead of merely receiving statistics the massed ranks of machines have all been re-programmed and the cavern is now filled with the deafening clatter of countless word processors printing thousands upon thousands of letters – and every one is addressed to Geoff Challenger!..

NOW READ ON....

In a Gigantic Cavern, deep within an uncharted asteroid:

“Are you sure this will work?” asked Ulrika, her frown deepening.

I looked at her and smiled. “How can it fail? Challenger’s only an accountant – all he’ll do is add up the numbers. He won’t worry where the ballot papers come from so long as his precious Gladys Awards achieve a decent turnout....”

“Well, okay,” she replied, still sounding unconvinced.

She glanced down at her munitions belt. “But I still reckon it would be easier to rub out some of the other voters....”

That same evening:

I watched with satisfaction as the last batch of votes disappeared into the transporter. No matter what turnout my opponents had been able to achieve there was no way they could match this. At long last I would achieve the sort of crushing victory I needed to finally eradicate the memory of that ridiculous ‘Hobby Hitler’ Rusty Bolt award they had given me back in 1983...

I walked back into the IT room and switched the computers back to their normal function. Just two weeks to wait, and then the results would be out....

Two weeks later:

It seemed like hours before the post arrived (and was – we had both got up early, impatient for the news) but at last the usual bundle of assorted envelopes fell into the box. I quickly found the one with the Kent postmark and ripped it open. Pausing only to blink at the garish cover I flicked through the pages until I came to the section I

wanted, the results of the Gladys Awards, and began to read.

"Well?" asked Ulrika, breathlessly.

I grinned. "See for yourself – and then go and get the champagne."

She squealed with delight as she took the zine from my hand and saw what I had seen already. Best Diplomacy Zine, Best Diplomacy GM and Best Zine for Hobby News had all come my way – three Gladyses in one year, more than anyone had ever achieved before.

But my reverie was broken as I realised Ulrika had a far-away look in her eyes. "Wha...what's the matter?" I asked, suddenly gripped by an uncertain fear.

"The Zine Poll, Manorcon, and now the Gladyses," she murmured, half to herself. "Yeah, that's great for you Walkerdine – but when am I going to get some real action again?..."

And at that moment I realised that some people just never change....

(First published in Mad Policy 121, Aug 25th, 1986)

Afterword – Looking Back

So what does it mean to me now? Well, first of all it was a lot of fun. There was an element (probably quite a big one) of enjoying the acclaim associated with being a big fish in a small pond, and there were a lot of ego trips in those days (and by no means only from me) that reflected that. But most of all it really was fun. We wrote nonsense, we dreamed, we had impossible adventures, we created fantastic and impossible worlds and realities, then we inhabited those worlds with ourselves and our friends! A press saga might go on for years, with two or three people each writing the next account, changing the story line, creating the problems for the others to deal with – it was a game within the actual Diplomacy game and it was both mind stretching and hugely enjoyable. I miss all that.

Addendum

It's probably best that you get this from me, before someone else tells you.

My team (the MP All Stars) did indeed win the national Team Diplomacy tournament at Manorcon in 1986. However, I didn't actually play in the event myself that year!

In 1986 Manorcon clashed with a Queen and Status Quo concert at Wembley stadium in London. As those were my two favourite groups of all time I had arranged with Claire and two of our friends to attend. So on the Friday I drove to Birmingham to set up Manorcon then on

Saturday (the day of the team tournament) drove down to London to meet the others and go to the concert. And what a fantastic concert it was – the only time I ever saw Freddie Mercury perform live and he was just amazing. Then after the show our friends took Claire home and I drove back to Birmingham.

I got back to Manorcon at around two in the morning (and of course plenty of people were still playing games) and the first person I saw looked at me and said, "Hey, well done Walkerdine – you won!"

Of course I had to suffer plenty of wisecracks about my team finally winning only when the captain was absent! Probably the best of these was a poem which Steve Howe wrote for me....

THE TEAM THAT WON THE TROPHY

The team that won the trophy was,
Without the slightest doubt,
Triumphant in the main because
They'd left the captain out.

In former years this gallant band
Were proud of how they'd done
With six top-ranking players and
A handicap of one.

You see, they'd had to let him play
As founder of the team –
Which he viewed as a useful way
To boost his self-esteem.

But now they yearned to finish first –
Not bridesmaids but the bride –
And thus they had to ditch the worst
Dip-player in the side.

They tried to tell him, gentle-like,
And hoped he'd take it well,
But what they meant was: "On yer bike,
Get lost and go to hell!"

"They must have felt remorse," you say,
"For how they'd stitched him up."
Like hell – without him in the way
They carried off the cup!

Yes, well, so much for friends... But the final chapter in this story is that a few years later the MP All Stars won the tournament for a second time, and this time I WAS playing. In fact I contributed more victory points to our total than any other member of the team. So honour was finally satisfied....

[[We must be entering a new Golden Age of Diplomacy, considering I've been able to bug Richard into appearing in more than one recent issue of Diplomacy World!]]

What I've Learned from Playtesting My Version of World Diplomacy

By Hugh Polley

There have been various versions of World Diplomacy, with various world map setups. The two I used as a basis for my variant are: World 2 Diplomacy (by David Noman; Map by John Frederick, David Knight) and World War 4 Diplomacy (by Tom Reinecker and Tom Mulledy). Some of the original World variants can be viewed at the on-line Variant Bank (<http://www.variantbank.org/>)

This web site contains a John Boardman two player game with the title WORLD WAR ONE. Well, we can't have two games with the same name, especially when one was created by a legendary figure within the hobby. So first order of business is a new name! It's best to keep the world war designation, so the new name becomes 'WORLD WAR IS ENGINEERED'.

The playtest game was a combination of the above 17 player games, with the World 2 map, and Engineer Diplomacy rules grafted on. I had a number of objectives for my test game: to create a game onlookers would enjoy following; a game which would not grind to a halt because of 'no moves received' turns; and a game which would test how well the rules worked. The game failed to meet only the first, perhaps most important objective.

My first lesson! I learned from the playtest that half measures do not work. For non-players to follow the game, you must create some entertainment for them. I created the press rules, thinking I would have more than eight players. With fewer than 10 players, the number of unknown players steadily diminished along with the press.

Here are the original inadequate Grey Press and Player Email rules:

Player's Email address and last names will not be revealed by the GM except by player request. Players can send the GM a Name Handle; otherwise the Game Master will use the Player's first name. If a Player's first name is already taken the GM will make up a Handle for that player. Players can ask the GM for an exchange of email address, if both agree then each get sent the others address.

I think you will agree, the entertainment objective cannot be reached if the players do not feel any need to publicly communicate with one another. The press is what observers of a game can best tune into. By using first names and allowing email exchanges, the press soon stopped revealing the diplomatic flow of the game. What

do you think? Would not the removal of the escape clauses encourage informative and entertaining press throughout the game? Here is the revised press rules with the escape clauses removed.

Grey Press and Player Email

Players Email address and names will not be revealed by the GM until the end of the game. The GM will ask for a byline handle from each player, if a handle is not received one will be made up for the player.

Grey Press: Country, Area and UN bylines can be used for all press, there is no requirement that the press be authored by the assumed writer of the byline.

White Press: The byline handle can be used for individual unit order proposals made to another named Handle, and for UN Proposals. Your press can not use the Game Masters handle, or another players handle, as your own.

White Press Examples: MAX to SAM: If you move Mos to Sil I will move Mun to Sil. MAX: Proposes SAM for Emperor of USoA.

The second lesson, I believe you will agree, applies to many game rules. The UN rules cannot be so complicated as to be impractical. Asking the audience and players to wait three seasons from vote proposals to outcomes is a bit much. So let's take a hard look at the UN Rules. Can you agree with these more practical UN rules, which do not result in weeks passing by before an issue is resolved?

'The GM represents the Security Council and decides what motions are voted upon in the Winter and Summer season. Votes, including those caused by a surprise attack, can be proposed in any season and voted upon in the Summer or Winter season.'

This is what the players had a tendency to do - so why not go with the flow.

I believe the Empire rules, which were never taken advantage of by players leaving the test game, contain a flaw which needs to be removed. Let's change the Empire UN rule to read:

'If a Power controls all of another Countries Home Supply Centers it gains that countries

seat and vote in the UN unless that player is a member of an empire. In the case of an Empire, the Emperor casts votes for all Countries represented by the Empire, even if the Empire does not control at least one of that country's Home Supply Centers. The Country or Empire controlling the Home Centers does not get to cast that country's UN vote. In short! If a Player is a member of an empire he keeps his seat but the Emperor casts his vote at the UN.'

I contributed to the messy UN voting procedure, and it is a miracle any votes were held. The players were as confused as I was on how to vote. This was because I did such a bad job of explaining how preference voting worked. Do you think the following is easy to digest and improves the voting process?

'Preference votes ask a player to list a number of choices in order of preference. A number of votes are then held equal to the number of choices allowed by the Security Council. When a vote gives a result with a majority of one vote over 50% of the vote cast, that result is declared the decided outcome.'

WAR and PEACE: A very important part of the game! Because of the vast number of supply centers and size of the map, the requirement to declare war on a power before launching a supported attack on one of his units keeps chaos from running amuck. When you view results, it is informative to be able at a glance to see which powers are in conflict. This rule further adds to the UN powers, and makes clearer to followers of the game the state of conflict across the world. The first nasty problem to deal with was who could petition the UN for an enforced peace. The rule "anyone at peace could petition the UN for redress" became a problem when everyone was at war. It occurred to me, as I listed declarations of war by the country declaring war, that the country under attack should be able to petition the UN for sanctions against the attacking country. So we have this rule now reading:

'In any Season, peace for an Aggressor power that has declared war upon more than one Power, can be proposed by one of the Countries the Aggressor has declared war upon. If 50% of UN members +1 vote for war sanctions against the Aggressor, there will be a vote each Summer and Winter Season, on which sanctions will be applied against the Aggressor nation. This will continue until the Aggressor nation has declared peace with all powers he is at war with.'

Voting for a draw became an issue, because most players were at war. The proposed vote asked that all players declare peace with all other countries. One part

of the rule reads 'For the declaration of world peace to come to a vote, no Empire or country can be at war.' You can see how a complicated barrier to ending the game might prove frustrating for all concerned. Can we agree that this should make it easier to end the game?

Victory by UN Resolution: One of the two following Resolutions receives more than 65% of the UN membership Vote.

1. A Resolution declaring that One Country or a multi player Empire is to take control of the UN Security Council.
2. A Resolution declaring that a new UN Security Council will be seated with the listed Countries and Empires. Their military will unite to enforce the UN's religious tolerance and human rights laws on every member state.

The first Resolution requires the power taking control of the Security Council to have more SCs than any other power. The second Resolution requires a new seating arrangement with less than seven Security Council members. Either of the above declarations must pass with greater than 65% of the UN membership voting for the Resolution.

I bet the question in your mind now is: did anything work as planned? Yes! The Madman rules resulted in a number of proxy wars over neutral countries. The GM (myself) enjoyed observing player discomfort as unexpected moves were made by units no longer under a single command. They also enabled the game to continue despite a number of players dropping out. The game did reveal some rare adjudicator bugs which were easily repaired. And the Engineer rules made for some unexpected attacks. I happily noted how popular the convert rule became as the game wore on.

Here are the rules I changed, thanks to vital player input and weakness observed in the rules as previously written.

United Nations Assembly Exists to Take Votes and Place Sanctions

The GM represents the Security Council and decides what motions are voted upon in the Winter and Summer season. Votes, including those caused by a surprise attack, can be proposed in any season and voted upon in the Summer or Winter season.

- A. The UN is comprised of all countries in the game. Each country has one vote and each vote has the same weight.

- B. If a Power controls all of another Countries Home Supply Centers it gains that countries seat and vote in the UN unless that player is a member of an empire. In the case of an Empire, the Emperor casts votes for all Countries represented by the Empire, even if the Empire does not control one of that countries Home Supply Centers. The Country or Empire controlling the Home Centers does not get to cast that countries UN vote. In short! If a Player is a member of an empire he keeps his seat but the Emperor casts his vote at the UN.'
- C. If only one vote is received by the Security Council (GM) the UN will not bring that resolution to a vote.
- D. UN Votes are Public and should be included with a players Press.
- E. Votes with unclear authorship by country or byline do not count. eg. (MAX: votes yes to proposal 1) not (vote yes)
- F. Preference votes ask a player to list a number of choices in order of preference. A number of votes are then held equal to the number of choices allowed by the Security Council. When a vote gives a result with a majority of one vote over 50% of the vote cast, that result is declared the decided outcome. For a proposal such as choosing from one of three possible Emperors an individual could vote; EP1, EP3, EP2 or list just one EP3. If he lists just one Emperor, his vote will count in the first round of voting only, with votes after that, the majority required to elect an Emperor will decrease by one.

Imposing Peace upon a Power at war

In any Season, peace for an Aggressor power that has declared war upon more than one Power, can be proposed by one of the Countries the Aggressor has declared war upon. If 50% of UN members +1 vote for war sanctions against the Aggressor, there will be a vote each Summer and Winter Season on which sanctions are to be applied against the Aggressor nation. This will continue until the Aggressor nation has declared peace with all powers he is at war with.

Possible Sanctions:

- a. Economic: The Aggressor cannot build more than one unit per Winter season. The Aggressor cannot convert units.
- b. Military: The Aggressors Navel Units cannot make any convoy orders. Any power supporting an Aggressor unit can be sanctioned by UN even if at war with victim of supported attack. A Power at peace with the Aggressor may attack the Aggressor without being sanctioned by UN but reverse is not true.
- c. Logistic: Any Aggressor unit more than two areas from one of his SC or another Aggressor unit becomes a Neutral unit on the Winter Season.

[V] Victory Conditions:

An uncontested Victory happens when a Player or Empire is declared the winner because it controls 1/2 plus one of the World Supply Centers at the end of a Winter turn.

Victory by UN Resolution: One of the two following Resolutions receives more than 65% of the UN membership Vote.

1. A Resolution declaring that One Country or a multi player Empire is to take control of the UN Security Council.
2. A Resolution declaring that a new UN Security Council will be seated with the listed Countries and Empires.

Their military will unite to enforce the UN's religious tolerance and human rights laws on every member state. The first Resolution requires the power taking control of the Security Council to have more SCs than any other power. The second Resolution requires a new seating arrangement with less than seven Security Council members. Either of the above declarations must pass with greater than 65% of the UN membership voting for the Resolution.

A brief summary of 'WORLD WAR IS ENGINEERED'. The game follows the standard rules as published in 1971 with some changes to eliminate convoy paradoxes. Added to the standard Army and Navy units are Fighter and Engineer units designed so chance is still a stranger to this game. The map is a world map with 17 countries. The democratic UN, made up of country seats controlled by the players, can intervene in world affairs. Countries must declare war before supporting attacks on another countries units or risk UN sanctions.

Countries may group together to form empires ruled by internal madman unit bids. Once you have sent in moves you are in the game till it ends, or your country's units are given to the Neutral Power. No Move Received countries units are in madman mode for that turn. With certain restrictions you may place a mortgage on one of your units in an effort to move a unit in civil disorder. If your bid works the mortgaged unit holds instead of moving. This is a game best played by experienced players ready to play a more challenging game of Diplomacy. If you think you are up to the challenge send Hugh an email and sign up for the improved game. Hugh's email is [hapolley "of" yahoo.ca](mailto:hapolley@of.yahoo.ca) (note the .ca instead of .com)

"World War Is Engineered" notes can be viewed at <http://www.variantbank.org/results/rules/w/ww1Dip.htm> and http://ca.geocities.com/hapolley/HTML_FILES/VARIANTS_RULES/world_war_is_engineered.html

North America Tournament Box Scores

Compiled by Jim O'Kelley

CODCon Open

Glen Ellyn, Ill.

April 12-13, 2008

Director: Jim O'Kelley

Players: 19

Rounds: 3

Boards: 6

Top Board:

- 1) Mike French
- 2) Matt Sundstrom
- 3) Christian Kline
- 4) Eric Brown
- 5) Andrew Bartlein
- 6) Thom Comstock
- 7) Kevin O'Kelly

Best Countries:

Austria: Andrew Bartlein

England: Mike French

France: Christian Kline

Germany: Mike French

Italy: Thom Comstock

Russia: Thomas Haver

Turkey: Matt Sundstrom

National Block Party

New Albany, Ind.

May 16-18, 2008

Director: Ric Manns

Players: 16

Rounds: 3

Boards: 5

Top Board:

- 1) Scott Bowling
- 2) Thomas Haver
- 3) Mike French
- 4) Philip Burk
- 5) Edi Birsan
- 6) Mark Kusnir
- 7) Brian Leonard

Best Countries:

Austria: Edi Birsan

England: Philip Burk

France: Scott Bowling

Germany: Philip Burk

Italy: Mike French

Russia: Thomas Haver

Turkey: Scott Bowling

BADAss Whipping

San Francisco, Calif.

April 19-20, 2008

Director: Adam Silverman

Players: 22

Rounds: 3

Boards: 9

Top Board:

- 1) Joshua Shank
- 2) Matt Shields
- 3) Eric Mead
- 4) Nathan Barnes
- 5) Mike Hall
- 6) Edi Birsan
- 7) Micah Krabill

Best Countries:

Austria: Mike Hall

England: Graham Woodring

France: Micah Krabill

Germany: Matt Shields

Italy: Don Williams

Russia: Edi Birsan

Turkey: Eric Mead

KublaCon

Burlingame, Calif.

May 24-25, 2008

Director: Edi Birsan

Players: 16

Rounds: 3

Boards: 4

Top Board:

- 1) Louis Abronson
- 2) Chad Eller
- 3) Scott Ross
- 4) Darryl Rue
- 5) Jonathan Howry
- 6) Nathaniel Holzgraffe
- 7) Samantha Ipser
- 7) Cody Sickinger

Best Countries:

Austria: Ed Nieni

England: Steve Ross

France: Samantha Ipser

Germany: Steve Ross

Italy: John Brehbobl

Russia: Cody Sickinger

Turkey: Chad Eller

DixieCon 22
Chapel Hill, N.C.
May 23-25, 2008
Director: David Hood
Players: 28
Rounds: 3
Boards: 10

Top Board:

- 1) Thomas Haver
- 2) Andy Bartalone
- 3) Eric Grinnell
- 3) Corey Mason
- 5) Doug Moore
- 6) Thom Comstock
- 7) Jim O'Kelley

Best Countries:

Austria: Andy Bartalone
England: Andy Bartalone
France: Thomas Haver
Germany: Chris Barfield
Italy: Jim O'Kelley
Russia: Corey Mason
Turkey: Thomas Haver

Boston Massacre
Cambridge, Mass.
June 21-22, 2008
Director: Melissa Call
Players: 29
Rounds: 3
Boards: 11

Top Board:

- 1) Chris Martin
- 2) David Maletsky
- 3) Brian Shelden
- 4) Andy Bartalone
- 5) Peter McNamara
- 6) Alex Amann
- 7) Charles Steinhart

Best Countries:

Austria: Peter McNamara
England: Amanda McLean-Thompson
France: David Maletsky
Germany: Seth Vaughn
Italy: Christian Pedone
Russia: Chris Martin
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

Selected Upcoming Conventions

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

DipCon – Thursday July 24th, 2008 to Sunday July 27th, 2008 – University of Maine Orono – websterdtpl “of” gmail.com and <http://www.dipcon41.com>

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

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

World Boardgaming Championships – Tuesday August 5th, 2008 to Sunday August 10th, 2008 – Lancaster Host Hotel, Lancaster, Pennsylvania – <http://www.boardgamers.org/>

BerliCon V – Friday August 8th, 2008 to Sunday August 10th, 2008 – Berlin, Germany - <http://www.diplomacy-bund.de/cons/berlicon2008/int/>

GenCon – Thursday August 14th, 2008 to Sunday August 17th, 2008 – Indianapolis, Indiana - <http://www.gencon.com/2008/indy/>

World DipCon 2008 – Thursday August 14th, 2008 to Sunday August 17th, 2008 – Burg Lockenhaus, Austria – <http://www.wdc2008.org/>

ConQuest/AvalonCon San Mateo – Friday August 29th, 2008 to Sunday August 31st, 2008 – Santa Clara Marriott Hotel, San Mateo, California – <http://www.conquestsf.com/>

Dip on the Beach – Saturday September 13th, 2008 to Sunday September 14th, 2008 – Marseille, France – <http://diplom.free.fr/>

Buckeye Game Fest IX – Friday October 3rd, 2008 to Sunday October 5th, 2008 – Columbus, Ohio - <http://www.buckeyeboardgamers.org/buckeyegamefest.htm>

Milan Med Championship – Saturday October 18th, 2008 to Sunday October 19th, 2008 – Milan, Italy - <http://diplomacy.cleosolutions.com>

MileHi Con 40 – Friday October 24th, 2008 to Sunday October 26th, 2008 – Denver, Colorado - <http://www.milehicon.org/>

Diplomacy World Demo Game

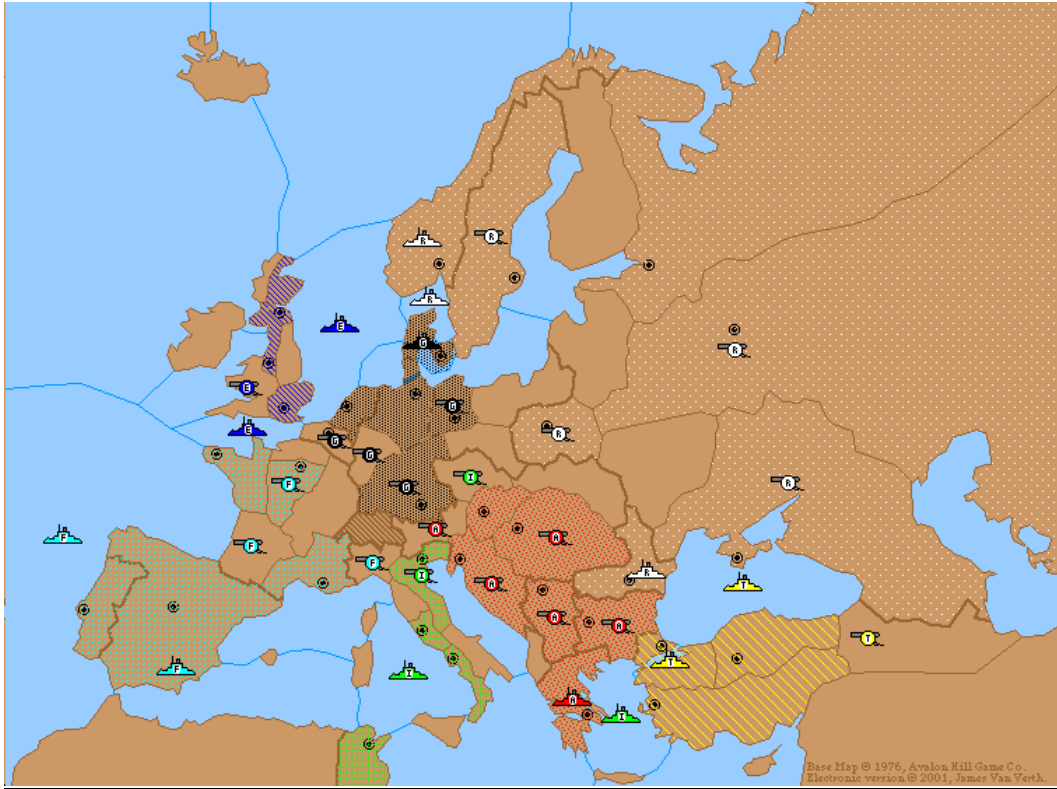
Regular Diplomacy – “After the Rapture”

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)



Spring 1903 Results:

Austria: A Budapest Hold, A Bulgaria Supports A Rumania, F Greece - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*),
A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria, A Trieste Supports A Vienna – Tyrolia, A Vienna – Tyrolia.

England: F English Channel, no move received, F North Sea, no move received,
A Wales, no move received.

France: F Brest - Mid-Atlantic Ocean, A Marseilles – Piedmont, A Paris - Burgundy (*Bounce*),
F Portugal - Spain(sc), A Spain - Gascony

Germany: A Berlin - Munich (*Fails*), F Denmark - North Sea (*Fails*), A Holland – Belgium,
A Kiel – Ruhr, A Munich - Burgundy (*Bounce*)

Italy: F Aegean Sea - Ionian Sea (*Bounce*), A Piedmont – Venice,
A Tyrolia Supports A Piedmont - Venice (*Dislodged* - retreat to Bohemia or OTB),
F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea

Russia: A Galicia – Warsaw, A Moscow Supports A Sevastopol, A Norway – Sweden,
F Rumania Supports A Bulgaria, A Sevastopol Supports F Rumania, F St Petersburg(nc) – Norway,

Turkey: A Armenia, no move received, F Black Sea, no move received,
F Constantinople, no move received

Spring 1903 Commentary:

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

I'll comment later on the full positions, I'm trying to absorb the shifts. But I will say this more generally. I was hoping that this game was a No-NMR game. It isn't, obviously, and if you had asked me beforehand (and I think I might have commented on this), I would have said that Dan and Andy were the greatest risks for NMRs. And here we are. I would be against replacements and for a rule that makes this a No-NMR game.

If the players can't be bothered to send in orders, I'm not sure why we should bother to comment. I'm primarily a Judge player where No NMR is almost always the rule, and I have been playing most of my games in Dipsters and the Academy of Creative Destruction where players are expected to not abandon and to get their orders in on time, so I'm disappointed that the two players with the most challenging positions didn't submit orders. This is the point when they should be devoting more energy to the game in an effort to turn around their positions, not less.

Well, Eric and I have complained a bit. I don't really think Demo Games should go with NMRs, depending on the rules of your gaming group you may or may not permit them. It is worth a small digression for this purpose on this issue, I think. As most of you may know, the biggest popularizer of Electronic Mail diplomacy games in the late 1980's was Eric Klien. This was a period of so-called "gateways" between parts of the Internet which wasn't as unified as it is now. These gateways between major domains (e.g. between CompuServe and ArpaNet and BitNet (the US academic system) and particular country domains frequently became clogged with traffic and might go down for hours or even days at a time. One could even specify one's own gateways for E-Mail to bypass particular bottlenecks to sometimes get E-Mail through. But frequently it was delayed for unknown periods of time. It was for this purely technical reason that Eric Klien originally argued for and obtained a pretty universal standard against NMRs, since it could easily be a Gateway delay that caused a particular set of orders not to come in on time. Eric Klien's "Electronic Protocol" E-Mail community evolved fairly seamlessly into the Judge E-Mail community and the No-NMR practice stuck, even as these sorts of E-Mail delays became much less frequent. Other E-Mail communities evolved independently and many of them permitted NMRs, citing the rulebook or postal Diplomacy practice that usually permitted NMRs. But many long standing

players (me included) grew to believe that NMRs were fundamentally abhorrent to the game. They benefit players who happen to be next to them, and "playing the NMR" by either predicting them or trying to induce them is a game that has been played out in the postal hobby in quite destructive ways. I myself became almost completely estranged from a postal player for five years who thought I had manipulated NMR risks in "unfair ways". I was quite upset and devastated. But also worried because if the NMR is part of the game, then it IS part of the game to be manipulated, and has to be a level of the game to be evaluated. I do NOT want to do that here. So, I'm going to take the positions below as given, as if the players had ordered holds and go on. But, as we all know, we get busy and people miss deadlines. And sometimes we can predict who will miss deadlines. And that affects games in deep and complicated ways.

Austria: Adam is in excellent shape here. He is in NO danger whatsoever from any of his adjacent neighbors and has options against all of them except his natural ally, Germany. Options are the key, which puts Adam in the driver's seat. Now, he did this with very few actual movements, also striking. There was a "badly written order" not noted, as A Bulgaria supported A Rumania, but that is a Russian F Rumania. I just note this since there is no notation, so I'm not sure if it would have been valid if needed (also not possible, since there was only one adjacent Turk). This could have been an attempt to signal friendship to Mark's Russia (note Budapest just held). Anyway, let's start there, I think that Russia MUST be Austria's long term target the way this game is playing out, but it is equally clear that Russia is not a short term target. As long as Russia has the F Rumania (why it was even more interesting with the badly written order!), he is no risk to Austria. But what will Russia do with its armies? What of Germany? Turkey and Austria could easily attack Russia right now and make some progress. Austria instead has committed to attacking Italy, probably in conjunction with that infiltrating French unit. But then, once some Italian centers have been taken, Austria must choose between Russia and Turkey, and still risks a late forming Juggernaut. This is one of those cases where the diplomatic situation trumps the tactical situation though.

The Italian retreat to Tyrolia after F1902M was anything

but boring. Retreating to Burgundy would have allowed Doug to influence Belgium, or force Marseilles. Why, then, did Doug retreat to Tyrolia? Most likely because he decided to give up on attacking France, and attack Austria, instead. These moves from Adam, while overly cautious, suggest that Adam reached the same conclusion

England: England still has no clear prospects. Russia threatens a supported attack on North Sea although as previously commented, we believe that Mark and Dan are working off a previous alliance and that Mark's aim is Denmark. This leaves potential guessing games with Germany over Belgium and Holland and perhaps convoying to Picardy. But of course this should have happened in the Spring. Likely ends this year still with the original three, though Dan is smart and may outguess for a center.

The English position, while weak, is far from hopeless. In these types of positions, the thing to do is to talk more, not less. Don't give the other players an excuse to eliminate you; make them want to keep you around for your humor, your tactics, or your potential as a puppet.

France: Way to turn it around, Jake!!! France finally has legitimate options. Probably must let Adam have the Italian Venice center if he wants to attack Italy in revenge for giving him problems earlier, but could now attack Italy himself, or perhaps more productively back up Italy while attacking England, or could ally with England against Germany. All these are now possible, and I don't think Jake has had options like this since Spring 1901. He needs to be VERY active diplomatically this turn and act decisively. Best long term option is a FER now that leads to FR attacking England later, but we know Jake should be wary about Dan and Mark. Best short term option is a FAG alliance that either puts the big hurt on Italy while playing defensively up north, or a full commitment north, with just keeping the army in Piedmont helping Adam. I expect the latter as most likely.

If it wasn't for Ber-Mun, I'd say that the bounce in Burgundy was arranged. Will Adam support Jake into Venice? Should he?

Germany: This looks like a strong Anschluss that has kicked Italy out. But Germany is in some big trouble against a concerted ER attack. It is a bit difficult to see what Germany was expecting, I guess Mark lied to him about attacking England? Denmark falls now if that is correct. Germany probably needs to make peace with France (see

above) and oppose ER more vigorously. This is especially true if the Russian armies get less patient and move on Berlin as well.

Hmm, Mike has a problem... How does he defend Belgium, Denmark, and Holland?

Italy: Hmmm, after being in control much of the game, Doug has lost his mojo. Yes, he backed off France, but France kept coming and now he's in trouble. He MUST get France not to support knocking him out of Venice, since if he loses Venice and has two French fleets coming his way, it is only a matter of time. It seems Doug was a bit too pushy with his neighbors in retrospect.

Doug pulls back from France, and defends against Austria, but in doing so he loses the initiative.

The retreat to Boh accomplishes little. Will Adam and Jake combine to take Venice? They probably should. Would Doug have been better off disbanding A Tyl, and cutting a deal with Adam to take out Turkey? I'd think so, but it doesn't seem that they are interested in cooperating.

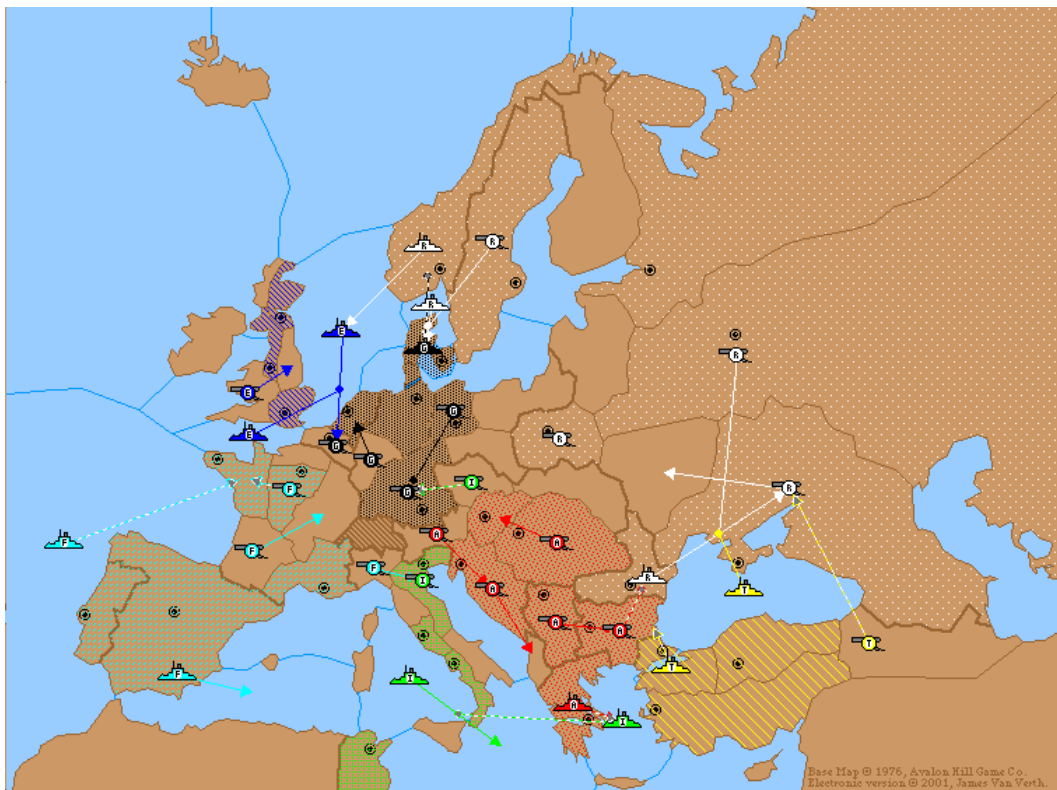
Russia: OK, so your ally England didn't move last season, but you still get Denmark if you want it. There isn't any risk England supports Denmark to hold, is there? Do you attack England instead? Nah, I don't think so. I think Mark will stick to the plan and attack Germany. He risks having a stronger Austria in the south, or worse that Austria and Turkey will team up against him. But he is still in relatively good shape.

Extremely passive play from Mark in the South. Granted there is almost no way for AR to eliminate T given the current position, but they could have done something like Gal Hold, Vie S Bud-Gal, Gal Disbands, and then Mos-Sev, Rum-Sev, Sev-Ukr, B F Sev.

We could see Swe-Nwy, Nwy-Nrg, Den S Ska-Nth, but I'm thinking War-Sil, Swe S Ska (or Nth) -> Den is more likely.

Turkey: Still trapped in the corner. Italy might now be willing to do a support to Bulgaria. Expect that, but also expect it to be parried. Not much going on in this corner. Alternatively, I would try to ally with Austria, but it doesn't seem to be in the cards of how Adam and Andy are playing it so far.

Andy can hold off AR for years, even without issuing orders, but he needs to make a deal with Mark or Doug, if he wants to grow.



Summer 1903 Results:

Italy: A Tyrolia retreats to Bohemia

Fall 1903 Results:

Austria: A Budapest – Vienna, A Bulgaria Supports F Rumania (*Ordered to Move*),
F Greece - Aegean Sea (*Fails*), A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria, A Trieste – Albania, A Tyrolia - Trieste

England: F English Channel Supports F North Sea – Belgium, F North Sea – Belgium,
 A Wales - Yorkshire

France: A Gascony – Burgundy, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - Brest (*Bounce*), A Paris - Brest (*Bounce*),
 A Piedmont Supports A Venice, F Spain(sc) - Western Mediterranean

Germany: ~~A Belgium Hold~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Pic, Ruh, or OTB), A Berlin Supports A Munich,
~~F Denmark Supports F Skagerrak – Norway~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Hel, Kie, Bal, or OTB),
 A Munich Hold, A Ruhr - Holland

Italy: F Aegean Sea Supports F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea (*Cut*), A Bohemia - Munich (*Fails*),
 F Tyrrhenian Sea - Ionian Sea, A Venice Hold

Russia: A Moscow Supports F Rumania – Sevastopol, F Norway - North Sea, F Rumania – Sevastopol,
 A Sevastopol – Ukraine, F Skagerrak – Denmark, A Sweden Supports F Skagerrak – Denmark,
 A Warsaw Hold

Turkey: A Armenia - Sevastopol (*Fails*), F Black Sea Supports F Rumania – Sevastopol,
F Constantinople - Bulgaria(ec) (*Fails*)

Ownership:

Austria:	Budapest, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Trieste, Vienna.
England:	Belgium, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London.
France:	Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain.

Germany: Berlin, Holland, Kiel, Munich.
 Italy: Naples, Rome, Tunis, Venice.
 Russia: Denmark, Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.
 Turkey: Ankara, Constantinople, Smyrna.

Adjustments:

Austria: Supp 6 Unit 6 Build 0
 England: Supp 4 Unit 3 Build 1
 France: Supp 5 Unit 5 Build 0
 Germany: Supp 4 Unit 3, 4, or 5 Remove 1, even, or Build 1
 Italy: Supp 4 Unit 4 Build 0
 Russia: Supp 8 Unit 7 Build 1
 Turkey: Supp 3 Unit 3 Build 0

Fall 1903 Commentary:

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

GM Rick Desper – "Glad to see that Dan has joined the ranks of "people getting builds".

Even if he has to give up Nth to do it...

Yeah, and I think he KNEW he was giving up Nth to do it, which makes it yet a bit more problematic. Each of you might productively think about what YOU would do. All things that I know considered, I probably would have done it too. But it is not that easy a call.

Austria: Adam failed to garner French assistance against Italy, and rather than futile attempts to attack, reoriented to defend Greece and the homeland. The main "error" if it can be deemed one is the support (correct this time) for the Russian F Rumania, which pulled back instead. The RT Juggernaut waves are on the horizon and Italy also is coming (although we'll see below what actually is happening there). Austria did not have a good season, though he can still redeem his position. Presumably Russia puts an army in Rumania in the spring. Though, Russia also moved so that his only place for his build is Stp, I'm not sure I understand that, but more on that below also. Lastly, I still think that Adam is missing the strength that a more active Anschluss might have given him. This option is fading. Still, the good side is that only full cooperation between IRT in the spring brings immediate losses

True, and I don't see that happening. If I'm correct that Mark was looking to build F Sev, then the AR "alliance" is still in place, but it is still not making any progress.

(Turkey convoys A Arm-Bul w/Con support, Italy cuts Greece support with F Ion-Gre, and then supports the convoy while Russia supports himself into Rum is only stopped by A Alb-Gre, F Gre-Aeg, A Ser S A Bul. And of course even that defense is ineffective if Turkey instead supports Italian F Aeg-

Bul(SC), though I'm not sure how likely that is. But regardless, if Russia gets back into Rumania in the spring, then Bulgaria surely falls in the Fall with that cooperation).

These are defensive moves. Given the strength of his position, I think Adam should be attacking while the opportunity presents itself. Quite often, when you lose the initiative, you lose the war.

I quite agree, I see it as a failure of Diplomacy. Clearly if he approached Jake about working together he got no positive vibes. Equally clearly, he got nowhere with Russia or Italy or Turkey, but that really makes no sense, Austria MUST be allied at this point in the game, even oh so temporarily, with at least one of these powers! These defensive moves were the evidence of that failure.

England: OK, Dan builds, big deal. He also has to let Russia into the North Sea in return, so has to beach his fleet. There are no favors in this. I might have declined the build to oppose Russia more forcefully, but did not expect Dan to do this. Is Dan just Mark's lackey again?

It is generally suicide to give up control of Gal, Nth, MAO, Ruh, Ion, Ukr, or Bla, for each of the seven Powers, but I think Dan made the right decision here. France is moving into the Med, and Germany is under attack from Russia. With a build, Dan should be able to convince Mark to order Den-Bal, Nth-Den, or Nth-Hel and let Dan reoccupy Nth.

Dan trades control of the most sensitive spot on his board for a build. (Shall we discuss key provinces?) Normally, I'd say this was a bad trade, but Dan and Mark have a relationship, and Dan let Mark's Turkey into Ion as Italy in Prometheus without cost, so he may feel he can trust Mark, here.

Eric and I clearly agree on this. I think the next

question is where do Jake and France fit into that ER trust.....

England should build what, F Lon? I'd follow with Eng S Bel, Bel S Lon-Nth, Nth-Hel.

France: Jake is really impressing me, I'm going to have to take back everything I said earlier if this keeps up. He pulled Italy back East, and then moves to Western Med that now has TWO Italian centers at his mercy. If Italy keeps focusing East, Jake can steal Tunis, and still can also decide whether to help Austria get Venice or go for Rome. He also can assist in the dismantling of Germany. Although Jake must be careful. This only is a good strategy if Mark eventually will help France against England. I think the diplomacy here is hot and furious and Jake is now holding his own.

Jake supports Venice and moves to Wes. This presents something of a mixed message to Doug in Italy, I'd say. My interpretation would be that Jake wants the Italian dots, and couldn't negotiate a deal with Adam.

FR is a strong alliance in theory, and Jake may feel that he can count on Mark to stab Dan. Given the history of Prometheus, that is a potentially deadly assumption, though.

And does he make a deal with ER and crush Germany? I think he almost has to, but again it is a choice and not a good one as if ER stay together, he is clearly next on the chopping block. But Jake's A Burgundy is key to what happens next.

Germany: Not a good turn for Germany at all. The Denmark order wasn't even legal, though it might have been hopeful. I don't see a great choice for Germany right now, though on the good side the Russian A War held. Italy is still hanging out in your rear, France has an A Bur, no good choices for a removal. He probably needs the A Ruhr after retreating there. But then does he disband the fleet? Probably he needs to figure out who to defend hardest against. I might defend against everyone BUT Mark and see if I could generate some anti-Russian moves from elsewhere.

Probably the best option available to Mike.

Mike's position was problematic, but two holds and two supports was not the way to improve it. Germany is in deep trouble. I wonder if he ordered "Den S Ska -> Nor", thinking it was North, or deliberately, hoping to "support" Mark without actually helping him.

I still see this fundamentally as Anschluss failure, both Mike and Adam have failed to take advantage of opportunities from coordinating their diplomacy.

German Retreats: Ruhr, obviously. Mike can't afford to annoy Jake right now. And Kiel probably makes the most sense. Builds? No good choices here. Probably R A Ber, but A Mun might be possible if Mike can make a deal with Jake.

Italy: OK, what now then? I would have moved A Boh back to Tyrolia if I knew Austria was moving back, and I should have known that through discussion with France that he was supporting me in Venice. Would it have been better to retreat off the board? Is Italy willing to do the devil's deal with the Juggernaut? Amazing how Doug being in the catbird seat has turned on him in recent seasons. Probably he manipulated everyone a bit TOO much and now everyone is wary of him. I would try to get one, just ONE real ally at this point. Classic play suggests that be Austria, but I don't know if he can pull it off. Austria also is looking for an ally though.

No cooperation with Turkey, Russia, or Austria, but Ven Hold, Boh-Mun suggests that Doug knew Venice was safe, and that Adam was moving away(Tyl-Tri), rather than attacking. He's going to have a real problem with France next year, assuming Lon-Tun, Wes-TyS, in the Spring.

In Doug's shoes, I'd probably offer Aeg S Arm-Bul, Lon-Gre to Andy. Allying with the weaker Power might be better for Italy's chances.

While true, as I said, if he knew Austria was retreating, I think he should have moved to Tyrolia. Boh-Mun might have been the price for Pie S Ven. If that's true, then MAO-Wes must have been a rude surprise.

Russia: Good patience, I think. Russia is in good shape and did NOT press the attack on Germany by moving Warsaw west. But now, he does have to build in Stp. I see three ways to interpret that. 1) He really is going after his old pal Dan now and wants the excuse to build F Stp(NC) with "gee, that was the only place I could build". This is lame and beneath Mark's skills, but it might be somewhat factual. 2) Mark forgot to think about the implications that he would be building (equally lame!) 3) He intends to build a F Stp(SC) and then press the attack on Germany. But that really doesn't make sense either. Why would he build an army up there? And would he waive the build? Perhaps. My third choice devolves into "he has a focused plan, but I'm not sure what it is". If so, this is very cagey since it is not obvious. He does have the general concern about what to do with England, ally or foe? Talking his way into the North Sea deserves a prize.

I'm thinking Mark was expecting Bla S Arm-Sev, and planning to bounce Rum-Sev off of it as he moved Sev-Ukr, to open Sev for a Fleet build, but Andy out-guessed

him. War Hold seems odd, given the attack on Denmark. War-Sil would open a second front against Germany, and presented opportunities to cooperate with France or Italy.

Eric has an interesting take there, I think he may be right and that he expected Rumania to bounce. And I also thought Warsaw would advance. Even if you thought you were right in the Sev bounce, opening Warsaw for a build just in case would have been prudent, this is a blunder unless he really intended to build in Stp all along.

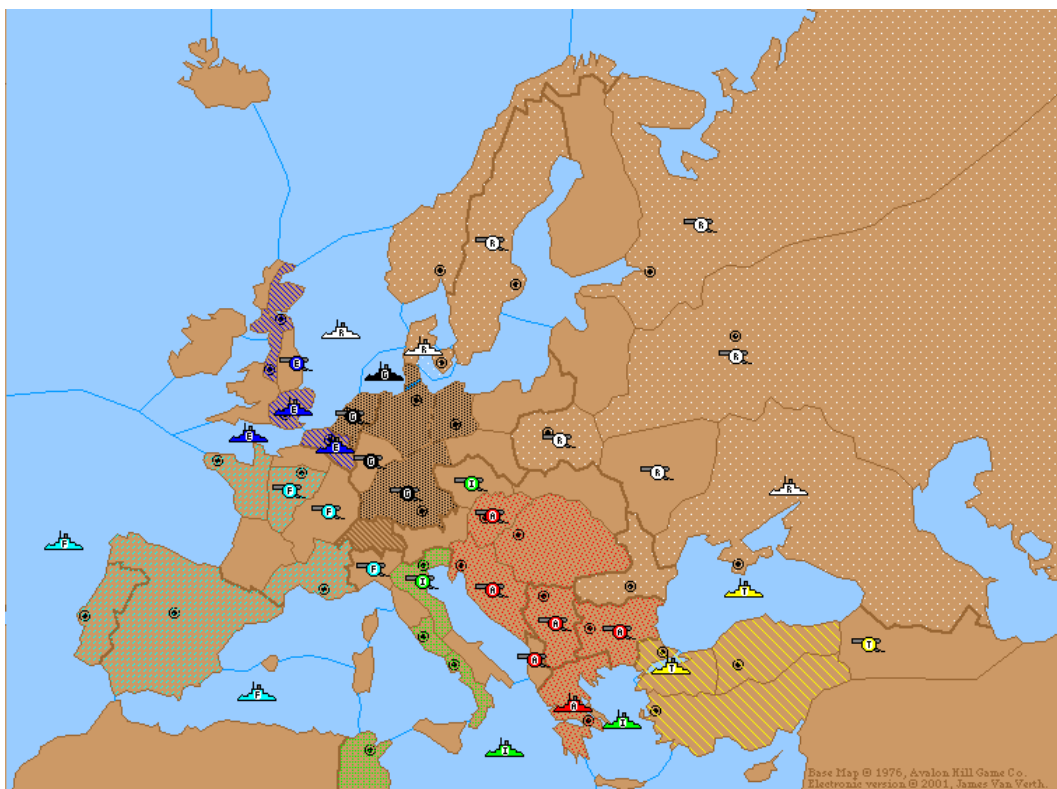
I suppose this gives Mark the option to suggest to Mike that if he retreats to Hel and disbands A Ber, Mark will attack Dan. I wouldn't buy it, but it would fit Mark's negotiating style.

Russia should build F StP, either coast.

Turkey: Still going nowhere, does he ally with BOTH Russia and Italy to advance? Looks like that's the strategy.....

I think Andy knew, or at least guessed, that Mark was going to try to open Sev for a build, and he issued these orders to do what he could to minimize that possibility. With Mark's build in StP, Andy should be lobbying him hard for a Juggernaut.

I also think the board has been screaming Juggernaut for a while and it hasn't moved Andy and Mark together one bit.



Autumn 1903 Results:

Germany: A Belgium retreats to Ruhr, F Denmark retreats to Helgoland Bight

Winter 1903 Results:

Austria: No activity

England: Build F London

France: No activity

Germany: Remove A Berlin

Italy: No activity.

Russia: Build A St Petersburg

Turkey: No activity.

Autumn and Winter 1903 Commentary:

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

There is not a lot to say about this whole season, to sum up quickly.... Russia builds the Army Stp, which makes us wonder if he knew what he was doing in

not leaving Warsaw open for the build. Clearly he did NOT build a fleet that would antagonize his English ally, but neither did he get the second army

build in Central Europe that could set up the pincer annihilation of Germany. Germany, in turn, removed the Army in Berlin, which he could not have done if Russia made a build in Warsaw with the two armies then set to pounce. This COULD signal a German/England/Russia cooperation for a bit, but that would be devil's deal for Mike. England always wants fleets, so that build was completely expected. We'll see what happens next, but Jake's hard won advantages appear to be in trouble.

I see it as confirmation that Mark expected Andy to make a supported attack on Sev last Fall, and ordered to bounce that move, planning to leave Sev open for a second southern Fleet. I'd say Andy out-guessed Mark and left him with only StP to build in. The rest of the board would have seen War-Sil, B A War and a major push to cross the stalemate-line, and Adam would, presumably, have been forced to react.

While I agree, and patience in Russia is generally rewarded, I've been quite underwhelmed by the ability of the Anschluss to defend the stalemate line

thus far. I might have risked it. After further pondering though, Eric is right about Mark's expectations for being able to build in Sev, his error was in not pondering the contingencies. War might have moved more "backward" than forward to appear less threatening, Warsaw itself really wasn't under attack.

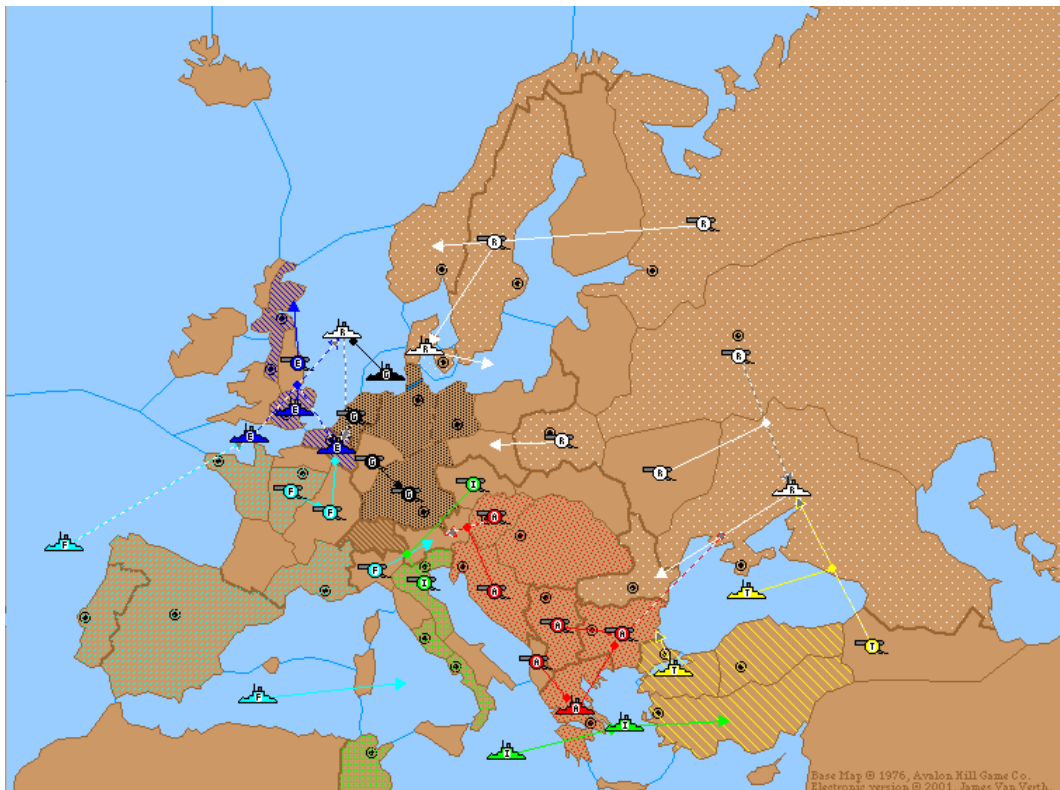
The German retreat to Ruhr is fairly obvious, since the retreat to Pic would do him no good. But given F Bel, F Nth, and F Den, why retreat to Hel, and disband A Ber?

On the builds:

England: We will no doubt see Bel S Lon-Nth this Spring.

Germany: Pressuring England by offering growth to Russia, I would guess.

Russia: Non-threatening to England. Will we see StP-Nwy or StP-Lvn/Mos? I'm sure we'll see Swe S Nth-Den, Den-Bal.



Spring 1904 Results:

Austria: A Albania Supports F Greece, A Bulgaria Supports F Sevastopol - Rumania (*Cut*), F Greece Supports A Bulgaria, A Serbia Supports A Bulgaria, A Trieste Supports A Vienna – Tyrolia, A Vienna - Tyrolia (*Fails*)

England: F Belgium Supports F English Channel - North Sea (*Cut*), A Yorkshire – Edinburgh,

F English Channel - North Sea (*Fails*), F London Supports F English Channel - North Sea

France: A Burgundy Supports F Belgium, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - English Channel (*Fails*),
A Paris Supports A Burgundy, A Piedmont – Tyrolia, F Western Mediterranean - Tyrrhenian Sea

Germany: F Helgoland Bight Supports F North Sea, A Holland - Belgium (*Fails*), A Munich Hold,
A Ruhr Supports A Munich

Italy: F Aegean Sea – Smyrna, A Bohemia Supports A Piedmont – Tyrolia, F Ionian Sea - Aegean Sea,
A Venice Supports A Piedmont - Tyrolia

Russia: F Denmark - Baltic Sea, A Moscow - Sevastopol (*Bounce*),
F North Sea Supports F Belgium - Holland (*Void*), F Sevastopol – Rumania, A St Petersburg – Norway,
A Sweden – Denmark, A Ukraine Supports A Moscow – Sevastopol, A Warsaw - Silesia

Turkey: A Armenia - Sevastopol (*Bounce*), F Black Sea Supports A Armenia – Sevastopol,
F Constantinople - Bulgaria(ec) (*Fails*)

Spring 1904 Commentary:

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

Austria: Supporting Eric's position, Mark is clearly trying to keep Adam on his side, Adam reciprocates by doing very little, though tries to help Mark free up Sevastopol (by the way, waiving the build rather than building Stp might not have been bad for Russia if he really thought he would be successful this year, note that Russia freed it now and has good hopes of keeping it free in the Fall). And despite the general inanity of the French moves, Adam is in trouble in the west too. He needs a diplomatic victory somewhere. It isn't coming from Mark and he has little to offer anyone else. Fall could be a BAD turn if Russia and Turkey FINALLY see the point of the late Juggernaut. Even worse if Italy and France join in too.

This passivity will cost Adam, soon. Given the inertia of the RT moves, and the Italian invasion of Turkey, all the steam has dissipated from any potential Juggernaut. IR vs. A is very likely, though.

England: Miscommunication with Mark? A stab to Mark? Either way, it doesn't make any sense. If he were stabbing Mark, and trying to get Germany on his side, obviously it failed (more on Germany's choice below). I think it was an attempt to ally with Germany and France (note support for Belgium from France) to form a late Western Triple. Well, we all know that Germany benefits least, so now the removal of Berlin and the refocus could pay dividends for Russia/Germany. We shall see.

Well, basically what I predicted. I wonder if they got too clever, and tried for a forward retreat, only to be caught by the old unwanted support gambit? My read on this is that Dan (with encouragement from Mark?) expected Germany to defend Kiel, and tried to set up a forward retreat for Mark's North Sea Fleet. Did Mike make an inspired guess, or did Mark leak the plan

to him to set up a potential Fall stab of England? I suspect a leak.

France: Jake is playing this like Tyrolia is part of an attack with Italy on Austria. I would have made it an attack on Germany, but I expect Tyrolia to attempt to work with Italy, we shall see though since Bohemia also is adjacent to Munich, and so is the Russian A Silesia. All the diplomatic choices are in play, but IF is not going to break in the fall, I don't think.

Working with England, with Italy and against Italy? I can't see a player of Doug's ability inviting France into a position to devastate Italy. Doug's position isn't bad enough for him to rationally invite France to occupy the Ionian.

I'm not convinced completely of the France with Italy and against Italy issue. Sure, Italy can lose Naples, but France doesn't have to take it, I was assuming it was a strong trust passing through to Ionian. We will, ultimately quickly, see which it is.

Germany: Touche. The Western Triple is proposed and Germany supports Russia. Russia comes to his aid (?) in Silesia. Now what are the tactics, who wins, if the FEE FIE foh fum alliance sticks together against the RAG from the east? I will let our tactical genius, Eric, say for sure, the Diplomacy still has the wild card of Mark and Dan, but my intuition says that RAG at least holds if they play it right.

IF looks awfully IFfy as an alliance, and I suspect that G is R's target, rather than his ally. This could very easily be Mark's game to not bother winning, once again. Did Mark leak the ER plan to G in order to remain in Nth? That would be Mark's style.

Italy: The crack finally appears, Italy makes it into

one of the Turkish home centers. Does that change anything diplomatically? While AI are at war, the RT juggernaut continues to make sense for both Russia and Turkey, but it still doesn't happen. I don't expect it to this time either, Austria wants somehow to make peace with Italy, but I don't see that happening either. This ultimately is bad for Austria anyway.

Italy takes Smyrna, and loses Naples. Can Doug take Con as well for a build? Depending on what France does, we could easily see IR crush TAG this year and next.

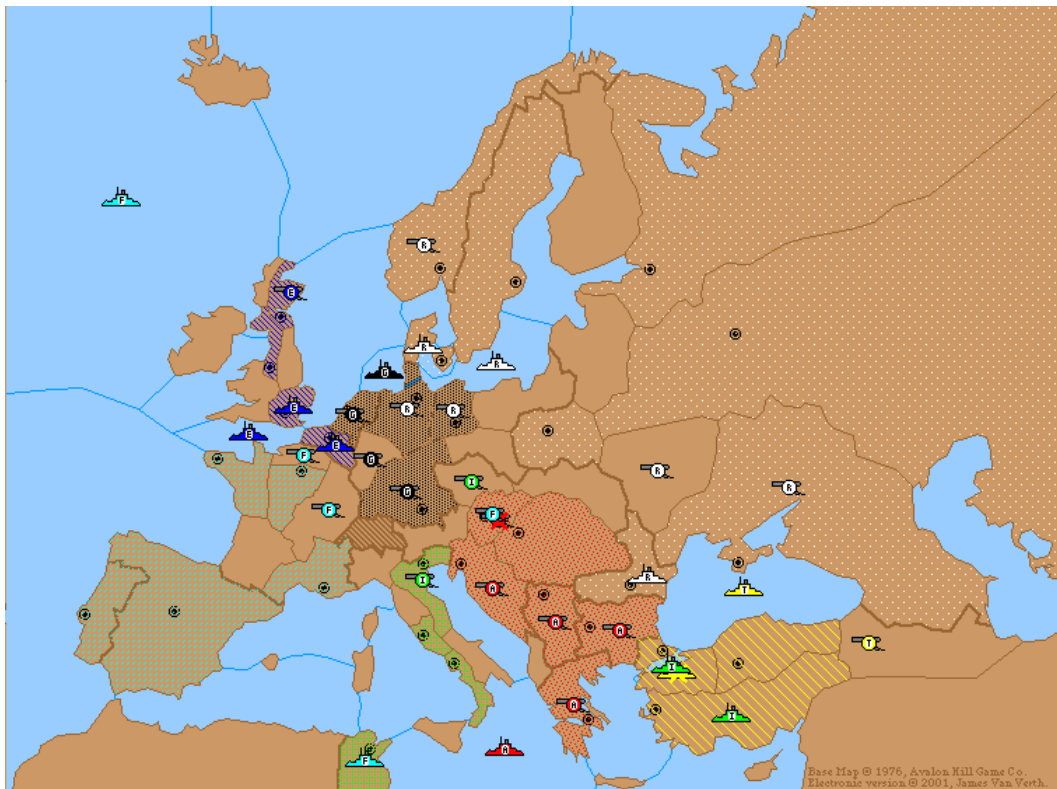
Russia: I'm not entirely sure if Germany TOLD Russia what he was doing (it is possible F North Sea S F Bel-Hol was just plausible deniability), but Germany and Russia theoretically are thrown together now. Germany should have bought some support. But Mark is ruthless, so there are no guarantees. I think the question is: is there hot and heavy diplomacy this turn or not? It could go either

way.

My guess would be that Mark told Mike how to keep him in Nth. Mark moves on Germany, while stranding Dan on the Island.

Turkey: Andy now has a problem, does he keep trying to maneuver around Sev and try to outguess Mark to avoid a fleet build (and without Mark waiving the build last turn there is a small question of where the build comes from!) or does he try to take back Smyrna (unlikely without the Austrian help by cutting Aegean support and not attacking Constantinople). The best for Turkey in the short run is the pig pile on Austria, best in the long run is problematic, but probably the Eastern Triple. Options are shrinking.

Yup, I see Andy as a dead-man walking. With a little AIR cooperation, Andy could be down to one Center this year.



Fall 1904 Results:

Austria: A Albania – Greece, A Bulgaria Supports A Constantinople (*Void*), F Greece - Ionian Sea, A Serbia Supports A Vienna - Trieste (*Fails*), A Trieste - Venice (*Fails*), A Vienna – Trieste (*Dislodged*, retreat to Budapest, Galicia, or OTB)

England: F Belgium Hold, A Edinburgh - Yorkshire (*Bounce*), F English Channel Supports F Belgium, F London - Yorkshire (*Bounce*)

France: A Burgundy Supports F Belgium, F Mid-Atlantic Ocean - North Atlantic Ocean, A Paris – Picardy,

A Tyrolia – Vienna, F Tyrrhenian Sea - Tunis

Germany: F Helgoland Bight - Kiel (*Fails*), A Holland Supports A Ruhr – Belgium, A Munich Hold, A Ruhr - Belgium (*Fails*)

Italy: F Aegean Sea – Constantinople, A Bohemia Supports A Tyrolia – Vienna, F Smyrna Supports F Aegean Sea – Constantinople, A Venice - Trieste (*Fails*)

Russia: F Baltic Sea Supports A Denmark – Kiel, A Denmark – Kiel, A Moscow – Sevastopol, F North Sea – Denmark, A Norway - Holland (*Fails*), F Rumania Supports A Bulgaria, A Silesia – Berlin, A Ukraine Supports A Moscow - Sevastopol

Turkey: A Armenia Supports A Moscow – Sevastopol, F Black Sea Supports F Constantinople - Bulgaria(ec), ~~F Constantinople – Bulgaria(ec)~~ (*Dislodged*, retreat to Ankara or OTB)

Ownership:

Austria:	Budapest, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Trieste.
England:	Belgium, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London.
France:	Brest, Marseilles, Paris, Portugal, Spain, Tunis, Vienna.
Germany:	Holland, Munich.
Italy:	Constantinople, Naples, Rome, Smyrna, Venice.
Russia:	Berlin, Denmark, Kiel, Moscow, Norway, Rumania, Sevastopol, St Petersburg, Sweden, Warsaw.
Turkey:	Ankara.

Adjustments:

Austria:	Supp 5 Unit 6 Remove 1
England:	Supp 4 Unit 4 Build 0
France:	Supp 7 Unit 5 Build 2
Germany:	Supp 2 Unit 4 Remove 2
Italy:	Supp 5 Unit 4 Build 1
Russia:	Supp 10 Unit 8 Build 2
Turkey:	Supp 1 Unit 3 Remove 2

Fall 1904 Commentary:

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

GM Rick Desper: Russia and France are leading the board with substantial gains. At the other end of the scale, we have Turkey and Germany. My favorite order of the season is Bul S Con. It's so hopeful!

Hahahah, yes, indeed. And it does show that what Eric and I thought was most likely is on the plate, pig pile on AT. Turkey will not hold Constantinople, even with the support, but it is a gesture.

I think it points to a failure of communication between Adam and Andy. Andy could have held two easily this year, or regained Smy, or taken Rum with Adam's help.

Austria: So, this is a bit weird (more below), but Austria pushes out into the Ionian Sea. France could have bounced this, but instead will take Tunis and get support into Vienna from Italy. Since the move to Ionian was quite predictable, this is a bit strange and a bit of a coup for Adam. This also requires, though, that he not REMOVE the F Ionian.

Where does Vienna retreat to? I suppose that could go off the board, couldn't it? Or it could go to Budapest and Serbia could be removed. I would keep the thorn of Ionian, though that is the most obvious removal.

Agreed that it will be Serbia, unless Adam (and Doug and Jake) recognizes the Russian threat.

Adam finally decides to move against Italy, a year or so too late. Bul S Con isn't as cute as Rick makes it out to be. If Adam talked to Andy, but Bul S Bla-Con, Arm S Con-Smy would have been better, since it would have given Andy a good shot at staying at three. Removing A Ser probably makes the most sense, but Adam may sacrifice the Fleet.

This will be more evidence to see if there is any discussion of an anti-Russian arrangement, removing the fleet is the anti-Russian move.

What really makes no sense in this game so far is people talking to Andy and getting obvious deals done. Unfortunately, my suspicion is that this end of the board is characterized by very poor communication. I'd bet if we asked later that Andy really isn't negotiating.

England: For the late readers, Dan was away on a work trip for much of this deadline time, it shows. These are pretty much nothing moves. He does keep French support and Russia seems not to be attacking, but I'm not sure Dan said much to anyone this turn.

That makes sense, though in Dan's shoes I probably would have risked Bel S Lon-Nth. Safe, but uninspired moves from Dan. Was he unaware of what Russia was doing?

Given the delay for Dan's trip, I think we also see the evidence of little negotiation from Dan this season, as well. Us observers are not all that happy to keep watching these obvious silences.

France: Jake is REALLY having fun with this. It looks like Tunis actually is a deal since he gets the support to Vienna at the same time. Now, Italy will build F Naples and I think Italy and France will work together against the rogue Austrian F Ionian (presuming he keeps it). France has worked up points with England but also moves to Picardy so he could go for Belgium himself. What are the French builds? The continuing IF suggests A Paris, F Brest and that's most likely. Does he do that and continue to stay aligned with England? Probably, but this could go either way. Germany is collapsed and gone, so France should be securing Munich if England is on his side.

Given the Austrian F Ion, F Mar is almost forced to allow Mar-GoL, Tun-TyS, Nap-TyS in the Spring, and then GoL-TyS, and a supported attack on Ion in the Fall. Of course, then Doug had better start worrying about IF breaking down. With the two German disbands, A Paris more likely than I first thought, though.

Jake still seems to be working at cross-purposes, but it is working. I suppose MAO-NAO could be to help Dan with his "Russian problem", and TyS-Tun could have been with Doug's agreement, but to me they seem contradictory. Build F Bre, F Mar?

I think so, fleets, fleets, more fleets for France. I think Jake's at least negotiating with everyone. He had Doug over the barrel, so I think taking Tunis was a deal.

Germany: I'm sorry, too boring, Eric really called the Russian attack, I was thinking there was some hope here, but no, just holding in Munich and letting

Russia into Berlin. Do we really think this was a coin flip? Did he even try to suggest something to Mark, like an arranged bounce in Berlin? Yes, Mark could still have stabbed, but this looks horrible for the Anschluss.

Why not Mun S Hel-Kie, or Mun-Ber??? Is Mike playing a "Make Russia such a threat that everyone has to react" strategy? It might work, but I doubt he'll survive to see it happen. I might keep the Fleet and offer Mark support back into Nth, but F Hel and A Mun seem to be likely disbands.

This is SURELY a "Make Russia a threat" set of moves. I also agree it is not likely to work. Agreed on that removal prediction.

Italy: Cagey, very cagey, I think Tunis was a deal with Jake all along, though I would have gone for the bounce in Ionian from Jake. He did not really get help from Russia and still was really successful. BUT, Russian support for the next step is really important. Turkey is gone, but Russia decides Austria's fate. The initial evidence (supporting Bulgaria) is that Russia will be opposing Italy and France and supporting Austria.

I'm wondering if Mark will flip at this point. He and Jake are both West-coasters, and this would be a good time for Mark to stab Adam and Dan with Jake's help. Doug gets a build, but France gets two, and Austria is in Ion. He seems to be setting up FR cooperation, but I'm not sure why. Almost certainly Build F Nap.

The long term is FR, my favorite long term alliance on the board. And for Jake, who would have guessed that, based on what France started with. Agreed, build has to be F Naples.

Russia: Eric said it last turn, I'll repeat it now, Mark is quite impressive, back in the driver's seat here. Germany and Turkey are gone, potentially Austria and England require his backing. This could be ARE vs. IF and IF it is, we ARE sure that ARE prevails. Or it could be more complicated than that.

Mark grows to 10, and AT both disband. Can Mark be stopped? Will anyone bother to do it?

Doesn't look like it, Turkey has to be the #1 signee onto the stop Russia alliance and there just is no evidence he's talking to any of them or any of them are talking to him.

Build A War and F StP/NC?

Here is where I would withhold a build, and Mark is well capable of doing that. I would build A War and save the other. Will Mark try to keep Dan on board? That would help this.

**nod* My natural inclination is aggressive and attacking, but Mark is a devotee of the Schweinsberg School of Russian Reluctance, so a Waive is very possible.*

Otherwise, building the F Stp(NC) means that Dan also gets pincered with help from Jake.

**nod* And my feeling is that an FIR attack on AgE at this point would put Mark in a position where he couldn't be stopped.*

Turkey: I don't like to say this, but Andy just seemed too busy and too overmatched in this game. I might keep the Fleet Black Sea and try to have some say

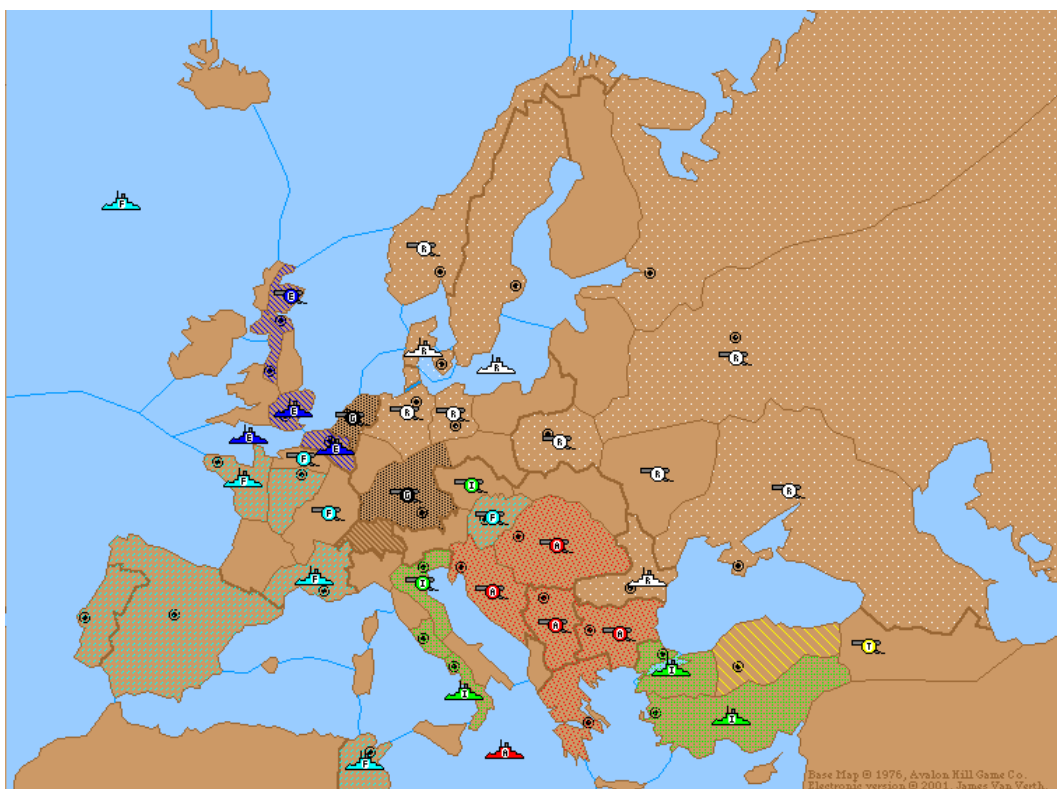
over what happens next as I'm eliminated, or he can retreat an army to Ankara and hold that for awhile since Italy has a F Smyrna. But that's boring, I'd keep Black Sea.

Me too, probably. Does it matter?

Not really, but they should recruit his last unit to keep helping vs. Russia. We expect no communication, though.

Andy again tries to keep Mark from building a second southern Fleet, but ends up surrendering to Italy.

Andy sees the Russian threat, but he just doesn't seem to be discussing it with anyone else.



Autumn 1904 Results:

Austria: Retreat A Vienna - Budapest

Turkey: Retreat F Constantinople - Ankara

Winter 1904 Results:

Austria: Remove A Greece

France: Build F Brest, Build F Marseilles

Germany: Remove F Helgoland Bight, Remove A Ruhr

Italy: Build F Naples

Russia: Build A Warsaw, Build A Moscow

Turkey: Remove F Black Sea, Remove F Ankara

Autumn and Winter 1904 Commentary:

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

GM Rick Desper: Sgt. Major Dickerson: "What does three up and three down mean to you?"

Adrian Cronauer: "End of an inning?"

Austria: No surprises.

England: What does Adam expect Andy, Doug, and Jake to do? What does Adam expect Mark to do? If he's thinking AR vs. IF then he is counting on Mark to support Budapest this Fall, and he's in for a rude awakening. R F Ion and a plea for FIAT vs. R would have been better.

It smacks to me of "I'm not sure what I'm going to do". I don't think Adam is counting on anything, but neither does he have a clear plan.

Agreed, and that is a horrible way to approach the Adjustments Phase of a Diplomacy game. You should ALWAYS have a plan, and a couple of fall-back options. Adam faces a pretty clear choice, here. Remain allied with Russia, and attack Italy, or form a Stop-the-Leader alliance against Mark. If he wants to attack Italy, then Serbia or Budapest was the proper disband, and Gre-Apu, Convoyed by Ion, would be a good idea in the Spring. To bring IF into a Stop-the-Leader Alliance, F Ion was the obvious carrot.

Putting lipstick on the pig, it does give him some options.

I think it just gives him a tarted-up pig... ☺

France: As expected. Jake could easily take Bel and Lvp this year.

Germany: I don't care for these disbands. Leaving yourself two isolated Armies holding Centers just invites your opponents to eliminate you.

And who is going to get those centers? Russia. I expect Germany to keep trying to move those units West.

Perhaps, but Ruh S Ber-Mun would have been a better way to give Russia Munich. Granted, Mike is in a rough position, especially with Mark remaining allied with Dan, but generally two Units together are more effective than two Units separated. Hmmm, Hol S Pic-Bel, Mun S Boh-Sil could make Mike useful to IF... Let's see if that happens.

Russia: Securing Munich, or attacking Austria?

My vote is both.

Possibly, but with Germany pro-Russia, and the middle of the board such a Power-vacuum, a strong attack on Austria has the potential to put Mark near a forced-win.

Turkey: Keeping the Army actually makes it difficult for Doug to eliminate him.

Oh, yes, IF he keeps bouncing Ank. I don't think he will, I expect two moves of A Arm-Sev.

Probably, but the play in the corner could be fascinating, if he doesn't.

Not much to say here about the adjustments as a whole. We should not be surprised that Mark is standing behind Dan, and he does build two armies. That suggests he might be planning to try to move the F Rum-Bla and support himself to Galicia from Ukr and move Mos-Ukr. Otherwise, I think he would have withheld the second build. Andy opposes Russia to the last, I expect him not to contest Italy taking Ank while he continues to cut Sev support. Everything else was more or less as expected, except that Adam tried a middle choice in removing Greece. The fleet could retreat to Greece if an anti-Russian agreement is made.

With Turkey and Germany all but gone, we move firmly into the mid-game, though with Russia at 10, the end-game could be upon us before we know it. The alliance structures so far have been REf vs. G, IF vs AT, and AR vs. T. Do the Russian Army builds indicate that we will see a shift to FIR vs. A? If that happens, the Russian Solo threat will get huge, real fast.

Implicitly, perhaps. I think the bigger structure is still ER vs. IF with Austria caught between. Adam shows no evidence of breaking that. On both sides of ER vs. IF I can see hopes of being able to prevail which should be both a disincentive toward breaking it this year and a force driving them forward. Among the little powers, I've already said I expect Turkey to suicide out attacking Russia and give his last center to Italy, and Germany will suicide out attacking France and give his last centers to Russia. Austria will be the wild card. Eric, I trust your judgment, if you were in Adam's place and ER/IF weren't breaking, which way would you go? My intuition says, oppose IF and force them to confront the Russian solo spectre.

Almost certainly. Adam has remained allied with Mark, and largely passive, so I expect he will continue to fight IF. Mark will order Rum-Bla this Spring, and if it succeeds, we could see the long-delayed AR attack on Turkey finally take off.

Knives and Daggers

The Diplomacy World Letter Column



David E. Cohen – I read Chris Babcock's article with interest, and he makes many good points, but I just wanted to point out that the version of the Model House Rules for Non-Judge E-Mail Diplomacy discussed in the old Pouch article Chris cites is woefully outdated. The current version of the MHR (3.5) can be found at: <http://diplomiscellany.tripod.com/id7.html>

The MHR has been used as a basis for house rules by many GMs, at least one popular forum, and several Diplomacy Tournaments, and can be adapted for almost any purpose. This current version does deal with player communications in PBEM, and player nastiness is specifically dealt with in rule X.(5), with three possible alternatives for a GM or forum to choose from. The alternatives are as follows:

(5) Communications Found Objectionable by the Recipient:

Alternative A: Each player acknowledges that he or she may receive one or more messages with content objectionable to the receiver from another player or players during the course of the game. Except as provided for elsewhere in these House Rules, the GM will not become involved in disputes arising from communications between players.

Alternative B: After a player has sent an email which the GM or a receiving player found objectionable for any reason is informed of the objectionability by the recipient, email of that type will not be sent in the future to that recipient. Repeated communications of a type known to be unacceptable to the intended recipient will be grounds for immediate replacement of the sender. Abuse of this rule by a player claiming to be offended by emails which the GM, in the sole discretion of the GM, finds inoffensive, will be grounds for immediate replacement of the receiver.

Alternative C: Any communication sent by a player to the GM, another player or players, or one or more persons not involved in the game, which in the sole opinion of the GM is objectionable, will subject the sender to possible discipline by the GM, who may caution the sending player, replace the sending player immediately, or take such other action as the GM deems appropriate.

As editor of the MHR, I invite GMs, players and forum administrators to review the MHR, in order to improve their existing house rules, and also to provide suggestions. The MHR is a collaborative effort, and new ideas are welcome.



Edi Birsan – I have some counter views on Lars' proposition that you always need to bounce in Sweden ["To Bounce or Not to Bounce: That's Not a Question, Diplomacy World #101]. I find this sort of advice very counter-productive.

Take for example the obvious counter to the move: England Convoys Army York-Den and Russia moves Bothnia to Baltic along with the move army Warsaw to Silesia. There is also the serious issue of initiating a relationship with another player by a double cross.

Then there is the issue of his data selection, which I think is skewing his conclusions. It is taken only from email games, and only email games that are not played in a common background. What about the multiple tournament structures? What about the different scoring systems? What about the structure of alliances that shift when it becomes clear that the German player is playing some sort of statistical oriented motivation rather than an interaction with the real pieces in the game: the players?

Players are not AI's, and if you orient yourself towards that sort of approach you lose the very essence of the game: the players.



Lars Topholm – (in response to Edi) Actually, I agree. And my proposition was not to always bounce - I actually point out that there are situations where a bounce makes no sense. And I do not claim to possess the universal truth, I simply wrote about my conclusions based on a number of Dip2000 games, I don't claim that I am doing rocket science.

What I do say is that unless you have a reason NOT to bounce - then bounce. Would using another data set yield other results? Quite possibly, and then again, maybe not, I don't know. What I do know is that the statistics in the data set I used lead to a rather clear conclusion: Bounce if you don't have a reason not to bounce, and I assume that as long as I loyally present my data selection, I am not making conclusions in a wrong context.

That being said: Can you find a set of data which suggests that Germany - statistically - is better off by not bouncing in Sweden? That is the scientific approach (if that is what you want): You have a hypothesis that the conclusions would be different under different circumstances. You could be right, but how are we going to ever know for a fact?

Anyway, I am glad someone read the article, but please respect the nuance in the conclusion: Bounce if you have no reason to do otherwise - I am NOT saying: Always bounce. Oh - and I don't always bounce Russia when I play Germany. And I generally get decent results when playing Dip.



Edi Birsan – (in response to Lars) I take the opposite approach: do not bounce unless you have a reason to do so. This is a fundamentally different approach regardless of data work or scientific or otherwise approach. Your approach seems to be that the statistical aspects provides for a motivation when there is no motivation. My advocacy is that everything in Diplomacy should be motive oriented amongst the set of motives that you can control or at least try to control. Therefore to take an action such as a bounce should be done within the confines of a mindset that places the action within an overall plan or scheme of things so that the player from the beginning is always thinking of consequences as well as trying to control the structure of the game. When you start to introduce default actions related to things outside of the specific game you are already in the process of yielding control of the game to someone or in this case someTHING else.

I did not mean to be overly harsh on your approach; it is just that I see it as fundamentally flawed. Additional datasets may conflict with you statistical source, but the real issue is not the statistics but the approach and the understanding that it is the dynamic background of the game's structure such as FtF - Email – Tournament – Social - game culture of what is perceived as achievement - game length - motivation of the players/games in which the original players are the end players/ etc. that is the critical issues in the game records. The mixing of random games will give no real results and back to the original issue: statistics is not a real viable approach to the game if you want to play on an elite level.

I hope that it makes it clearer, at least it will give Doug a page of two for his letter column and that we can all agree with. By the way have you played face to face tournaments? If not, then why not?



Lars Topholm – (in response to Edi) I have played very little FtF. I am too hooked up with real life (work and family - I've got two small kids) to invest the time in it, and when I do get the chance there is usually someone taking it too seriously.

I'd simply love to play a FtF tournament with dedicated dippers. I wanted to play the German Open a couple of years back with Jan Willem Omlo (who won - we are good diplomacy friends) but the dates didn't fit. E-mail is a good format, but in reality, I think negotiating face to

face adds so much more to the whole game, it's so easy to stab someone you've not looked into the eyes. There aren't enough FtF tournaments here in Denmark, unfortunately.

And you were not harsh, I really appreciate the discussion, I just disliked when you quoted me for suggesting you should ALWAYS bounce. I always try to read my opponents before deciding on the bounce. Particularly in e-mail diplomacy, communication means everything. I would very rarely stab a good communicator unless it was for a big win. In fact, I very rarely stab an opponent if it is not done to kill him completely, I find too many players break an alliance just to gain a dot or two (in my view, that is more often than not bad play - and you quickly build up a reputation).



Edi Birsan – (in response to Lars) To me these four statements come as close to saying always bounce in Sweden:

- 1) To Bounce or Not to Bounce – That's Not a Question...
- 2) So the good news is: you'll never have to think about it again, just bounce him!
- 3) So – unless you like to play against the odds, whack the Tsar in Sweden.
- 4) To me it is clear: If there is not an exceptionally good reason to do otherwise - not just a good one reason but an exceptionally good one - order Den-Swe bounce in Sweden,



David Partridge – Enjoyed the article on Intimate Diplomacy. I've run a few and played a few games of something similar which we used to call Duel Diplomacy. Ted Miller used to run a fair sized tournament of it. Not having played Intimate Diplomacy, I'm not sure how it plays out.

The win by getting into the home country is obviously a large difference. Second large difference is that in DD you have to submit the spring orders without knowing which powers you'll actually control. I think I like the bidding in DD better, everyone always has an even chance each round for the other powers. It seems to me that ID could get unbalanced. I think I'd like it better if all bids were spent, even if they weren't successful, but I guess that is sort of the balancing mechanism, if you win all your bids this year you know you'll be losing out the next year. Again, I haven't played it, so it's hard to say.

Diplomacy World Readers can see more of the differences between the two (and the rules) in an upcoming issue, as we are now completing Series

Replays of both Intimate Dip and Duel Dip. Watch for them in the near future! When the Series Replays are publishes, we'll include the rules to both variants as well.



Gary Behnen – I finally got around to reading issue #100...it simply blew me away. Thank you for all your effort, it was a wonderful issue and I'm very impressed with what you have done. By the way, the new game release will definitely give you an opportunity to find a whole new legion of Diplomacy players. That's why we created the Leviathan Demo Game and Gamer's Guide last time around. Too bad they didn't reach out to you but don't give up on trying to get a flyer inserted in future games directing them to your site.

It was actually hard enough just to get the pre-release information that I managed to collect. And when I sent them a list of questions for this issue, regarding future plans, reasons for design choices, sell-through success, etc., the responses I got were so brief and vague that a follow-up article wasn't possible. Still, I'm happy to have the game back in print. I bought myself a set, and a few extras to use as future prizes.

Oh, and thanks for the kind words on issue #100. It truly was a labor of love. But enough of that...I've got to put this baby to rest so we can start work on #103!

Pontevedria #85

**compiled by W Andrew York
POB 201117; Austin TX 78720
wandrew88 "of" 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 with similar columns, the listings are certainly incomplete and may have some inaccuracies as the word about it spreads to 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 column's purpose, 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

By the WAY

Publisher/Country - W Andrew York/USA
Contact Information - POB 201117; Austin TX 78720-1117 or wandrew88@gmail.com
Frequency of Publication - included in each **The Abyssinian Prince**
Date of Last Publication - February 20, 2008 (Issue #16)
Subscription Costs - Free
Game Openings - Metropolis, Tombouctou, Grey Ranks
Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**

Damn the Consequences

Publisher/Country - Brendan Whyte/Thailand

Contact Information - obiwonfive@hotmail.com

Frequency of Publication - c. 6-weekly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - Began 1987. Latest issue #143, May 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

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/Jun 2008

Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - Free, available in pdf and html or appearing in **The Abyssinian Prince**

Game Openings - Diplomacy, Treachery

Other Games Currently Underway - Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, By Popular Demand, By Popular Opinion

Potential Future Offerings - Youngstown, Diplomacy, Gunboat 7x7 Tourney, Cannibalism

Zine in Which Subzine Appears - **The Abyssinian Prince**

Notes/Comments - Andy York loves cats, especially mine, and he hopes to visit them very soon (sic)

mais n'est-ce pas la gare?

Publisher/Country - Steve Thomas/UK

Contact Information - maisnestce@aol.com

Frequency of Publication - monthly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - April 2001/May 2008

Subscription Costs - nil by email, 75p by post to the UK

Game Openings - most 18xx other than '25, '29, '30, '35, '56, and '70; Phoenicia

Other Games Currently Underway - none

Potential Future Offerings - more 18xx

Minstrel

Publisher/Country - Rob Thomasson/UK

Contact Information - rob.thomasson@virgin.net; rob.thomasson.com

Frequency of Publication - Monthly

Subscription Costs - none for electronic version

Game Openings - 1829, 1830, 1835, 1856, 1870, 18EU, Railway Rivals, Outpost

Other Games Currently Underway - St. Petersburg

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 its 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 - \$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 - Two gunboat games are starting in the upcoming issue and I do have openings for a regular game.

Ode

Publisher/Country - John Marsden, UK

Contact Information - 91 Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, NR33 9RS, United Kingdom

e-mail: jandcmarsden@iclway.co.uk

website is currently dormant but will return one day: "Ode-online.net"

Frequency of Publication - every 5 weeks

Date of first publication - October 1979/Current issue number: 295

Subscription Cost - 95p to UK subscribers, £1.20 overseas by surface mail.

Non-UK players are welcome and can receive non-games content and their game report(s) by e-mail at no subscription cost.

Game openings - Diplomacy, Diplomacy variants, Railway Rivals, Acquire, Maneater, Choice

Other Games Currently Underway - Diplomacy (6), Gunboat Diplomacy, Deluge, Railway Rivals (8), Bus Boss (2), 1830, 1837, Puerto Rico (3), Hare & Tortoise, Acquire, Sopwith

Subzine - **Elephants Never Forget** from Kevin Lee

Notes/Comments - **Ode** is, as far as I know, now the only place in Britain offering Diplomacy by post.

Normally there isn't a lot apart from game reports, but issue 300 should appear at the end of the year, with additional material to mark the anniversary.

off-the-shelf (currently on hiatus)

Publisher/Country - Tom Howell/U.S. of A.

Contact Information - 365 Storm King Road, Port Angeles, WA 98363; off-the-shelf@olympus.net;
www.olympus.net/personal/thowell/o-t-s

Frequency of Publication - traditionally six weekly

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - 18 Oct 1992/ 31 Mar 2007

Subscription Costs/Special Requirements to Receive - postal: US\$1 per issue / free play on web site

Game Openings - none at present

Other Games Currently Underway - Diplomacy (2), Woolworth Diplomacy II-A, Fog of War Diplomacy, Breaking Away!, By Popular Demand, Downfall

Potential Future Offerings - see openings

S.O.B.

Publisher/Country - Chris Hassler/USA

Contact Information - 2000 S. Armour Ct.; La Habra, CA 90631; hompages.roadrunner.com/sobhome;
chassler@roadrunner.com

Frequency of Publication - Every 6 weeks

Date of First Publication/Date of Last Publication - April 1993/ July 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**